



# NAVY NEWS

JULY 2017



## Women in the Navy

*WRNS centenary special supplement*

## Marham's pioneers

*Met team fly the RN flag at RAF base*

# Yankee Thunder

● ROYAL Marines from Yankee Company, 45 Cdo, fast rope to the desert floor for the world's biggest combat search-and-rescue exercise, Angel Thunder, in Arizona. (see pages 20 and 29)

Picture: LPhot Will Haigh, RNPOTY



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## Fighting G honoured

OFF the Crete coast, divers Lt Tom Foley and AB Harry Poole unfurl a White Ensign before dropping the flag on to one of the Navy's most hallowed sites one mile below.

On the seabed, three dozen miles northwest of the Greek island, lies the wreck of cruiser HMS Gloucester, sunk 76 years ago this spring by German dive-bombers in the ferocious battle for Crete.

Three quarters of a century later, the crew of minehunter HMS Ledbury decided to honour the 722 men killed when the cruiser sank with a service of commemoration over the wreck.

The ship stopped in the water and shut down her engines to pause and remember the lost sailors as CO Lt Cdr James Harkin led a memorial service and read a moving account of the cruiser's last fight, before the two divers entered the warm waters of the Ionian Sea with a specially-weighted White Ensign.

"It is not often that we get the opportunity to pay our respects to those who died many miles away from home," said Lt Foley, Ledbury's Diving Officer. "We are a junior team and a lot of the crew had never been part of such an event. It was humbling to think of their sacrifice 76 years ago."

Just 85 men survived HMS Gloucester's sinking; the cruiser had been dispatched with other British warships to prevent German troops reaching Crete by sea to support airborne forces which had landed on the island, but fell prey to German dive bombers on May 22 1941.

"This was our opportunity to remember the courage, bravery and sacrifice of our forebears," said Lieutenant Commander Harkin. "We know that it is the ethos, professionalism, courage and war-fighting spirit of our people, across the centuries, that binds us together with our history. We today should be immensely proud to belong to this naval heritage."

His crew are nearing the half-way point on their epic 6,000-mile voyage from Portsmouth to Bahrain as they replace their sister minehunter HMS Chiddingfold after more than three years on patrol in the Gulf as part of the UK's permanent naval presence in the region.



Picture: LPhot Sean Gascoigne

## Dutch triumph, RN tragedy

PRINCE Maurits of Orange-Nassau van Vollenhoven is introduced to the Guard of HMS Richmond as Britons and Dutch remember the worst defeat the Royal Navy suffered in home waters.

In 1667, Dutch warships carried out a surprise raid on the Royal Navy's base at Chatham.

Due to a financial crisis, much of the British fleet was laid up; the Dutch caught them by surprise and, in a five-day battle, sank or captured 15 British warships for the loss of just 50 men.

Three and a half centuries later, the 'Battle of Chatham' as it's known in the Netherlands, is justly celebrated by the Dutch.

But it is also regarded as one of the most important moments in the Royal Navy's history – "a wake-up call" in the words of today's First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones. The revolution which subsequently swept through the RN helped pave the way for more than two centuries of British naval supremacy.

Admiral Jones joined his Dutch counterpart, Rear Admiral Rob Verkerk, the ships' companies of HMS Richmond

and HNLMS Holland, the Dutch Ambassador to the UK Simon Smits, Lord Lieutenant of Kent Viscount De L'Isle, and the combined band from the two nations – now staunch allies – in Chatham's Historic Dockyard for the 350th anniversary celebrations.

"From the ashes of this disaster rose a new Royal Navy: larger, stronger and more professional than before," Admiral Jones reminded his audience.

"Most importantly of all, we must never lose our fighting edge. The world is full of instability and uncertainty, and for maritime nations like our own, a strong navy remains our most important line of defence."

For Richmond the Medway visit rode the coat-tails of a few days in London, during which her sailors took part in the traditional Ceremony of the Dues at the Tower, an open weekend when more than 1,500 people had a look around and tried some of the kit the ship's company use, while private visits were organised for Sea Cadets, CCF and other Navy-affiliated organisations from Tooting and Newham to Croydon.



# WHAM, BAM

**IN THE sultry morning heat of a spring day in the tropics, a stick of US Marines from India Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines – the Devil Dogs – files over the crushed coral of Runway Able into waiting helicopters.**

No Merlin has ever been here before – and few Royal Navy personnel are likely to have visited this remote island, 1,500 miles south of Tokyo, 1,600 miles east of Manila and nearly 4,000 miles west of Hawaii.

This is Tinian in the Marianas, once the largest, busiest airfield in the world, today a large, abandoned 'playground' for marines.

Seventy-two years ago, B-29 bombers left this runway at North Field and headed for the heart of the Empire of Japan, raining death and destruction on Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama, Kobe. Finally, two Superfortresses – Enola Gay and Bockscar – devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the world's first atomic bombs.

Since then it's largely been silent. Until...

For the past three months, France's amphibious assault ship Mistral, her consort frigate Courbet and two Merlin Mk3s plus over 60 air and ground crew from A Flight, 845 NAS, have been edging ever eastwards: Djibouti, India, Vietnam, Japan on the Jeanne d'Arc 2017 deployment.

For the French, it's a chance to test their amphibious forces; Jeanne d'Arc is to the *Marine Nationale* what Cougar was and JEF(M) now is to the RN: the regular work-out of its amphibious task group.

For the Commando Helicopter Force, it's some welcome sea time – plus a foray into a part of the world which rarely sees the White Ensign in the 21st Century. The last time the Junglies came out to Asia was the Taurus deployment all the way back in 2009. Since then personnel have changed substantially and the veteran Sea King Mk4 has morphed into the modern green Merlin.

Much of the journey east has been focused on defence diplomacy, mixed with a spot of low-level combined training (officer of the watch manoeuvres, helicopter cross-decking, sailors from the respective navies trading places for a few days).

But as the task group proceeded

– accompanied by Japanese assault ship JDS Kunisaki, a smaller scale Mistral – training moved up several gears for a two-stage Anglo-French-American-Japanese exercise (Forager Deux/Arc 17) intended to strengthen the ability of the four nations and navies to work together.

845 deployed ashore to the island of Guam for Forager Deux, gently-paced combined helicopter (think wader ahead of a full-on amphibious assault).

The original Forager was the codename for seizing Guam from the Japanese, a bitter struggle played out over three weeks straddling July and August 1944.

Its sequel was a much friendlier affair as the CHF crews and machines left the Mistral behind and decamped to Andersen Airforce Base, a USAF base in northern Guam, for a week of essential training ahead of the deployment's main exercise, Arc 17.

The work-up included low-level tactical formation training in Guam's jungle interior and around the smaller outer islands, giving the fliers a front-row seat to some of the most inaccessible and beautiful locations in the island chain.

Rather less beautiful – unless you're





# M, THANK YOU, GUAM

floundering in the ocean – is the US Navy's SH60 Seahawk, operated by US Navy Squadron HSC-25 (aka the Island Knights), responsible for providing Guam's Search and Rescue service.

Some of their personnel hopped across to 845 to share their SAR techniques with the Merlin crews – it's not something the Junglies practise that often.

After a week ashore, it was time for the main event, Arc 17, with the Merlins (branded 'em-kay threes' by the Americans) rejoining the Mistral for the passage to Tinian, 100 miles to the northeast.

Aboard: French commandos, US Marines, Japanese soldiers, ready to assault the tiny island (pop. 3,540) by land and sea; Mistral is a hybrid of Ocean/Albion – helicopter carrier and amphibious assault ship with loading dock.

Waiting eagerly to get ashore, 103 US Marines who had to find their way from Mistral's hangar and safely aboard the helicopters on the flight deck, up to 16 *Semper Fi* guys at a time with all their kit and caboodle... overseen by NA(SE) Atiba Smart, the sole safety equipment expert with the Merlin detachment.

"The assault with the USMC was a pleasurable challenge," said Atiba.

"Moving so many passengers in such a short time would've been tougher had they not been so professional.

"The lack of language barrier helped compared to working with other nations."

With the 100-plus American marines ferried ashore, the Merlins then carried 34 Japanese marines for a night assault.

The aircrew flew seven sorties in two days – a total of 17 hours in their cabs – to get marines ashore, while the French moved equipment and troops by sea using their landing craft.

Over the week-long workout, the helicopters moved 330 troops to and from the Mistral/Tinian.

"I was very happy with Arc 17," said Lt Richard Jenkins, who led the Merlins on their initial airborne assault.

"The French were extremely helpful in the planning process, although doing things differently, working closely together allowed us to insert the US Marines exactly where they needed to be at the right time. For me, professionally, it was a valuable experience."

North Field was abandoned by the

Americans back in 1947. They left... but didn't pack up, simply abandoning the airfield, leaving vehicles, uniforms, food, even unserviceable B-29s behind.

The tropical jungle has reclaimed half of the former air base, but the two principal runways and bunkers, plus the shells of quarters, warehouses and administration buildings remain... and make an excellent urban combat environment.

"If we could train every day on Tinian, we would," said Maj Timothy Patrick USMC. "It's one of the best places in the world to train."

Given its history, Tinian was also a rather surreal place to train.

"Seeing where the nuclear bombs launched from in 1945 was relevant historically as two weeks before some of our personnel visited the Nagasaki peace park when we were alongside in Japan," said Merlin detachment commander Lt Cdr Ed Vaughan.

The Marianas marked the eastern watershed of the Jeanne d'Arc deployment; since then the ships have been gradually making their way westwards (in a roundabout fashion), via Darwin in Australia, Singapore and Sri Lanka; they'll stop in Alexandria later this month before returning to Toulon.

"I was looking forward to Arc 17 – the French do things differently from the UK," said operations officer Lt Cdr Oliver Crane.

"Sometimes that can be quite challenging, aligning our needs to theirs."

"That's why deployments like this are so useful."

Capt John Critz USMC concurred: "We realise that we are never going to do this alone so it's vital for us to build this type of working relationship."

Although it's only involved two helicopters and a relatively small proportion of the RN's 'Jungle' force, the Mistral deployment – and workout around Guam and Tinian especially – has probably been the most useful few months for CHF in its Merlin incarnation for the variety of missions, locations visited and Allied forces the team have trained alongside.

By early June, the fliers had clocked up 155 hours in the skies – nearly one third of them in the dark.

That's thanks in no small part to the efforts of the engineers and technicians, who pulled out all the stops, particularly during the key exercises, to make sure both cabs were ready for sorties.

The cabs have been exposed to the

elements day in, day out on the upper deck – and at the end of a long supply chain to a foreign warship in ports infrequently visited by the RN.

"Jeanne d'Arc has been hard work and very challenging, while at the same time being an incredibly rewarding and insightful experience," said AET Chris Leafe, one of the maintenance team.

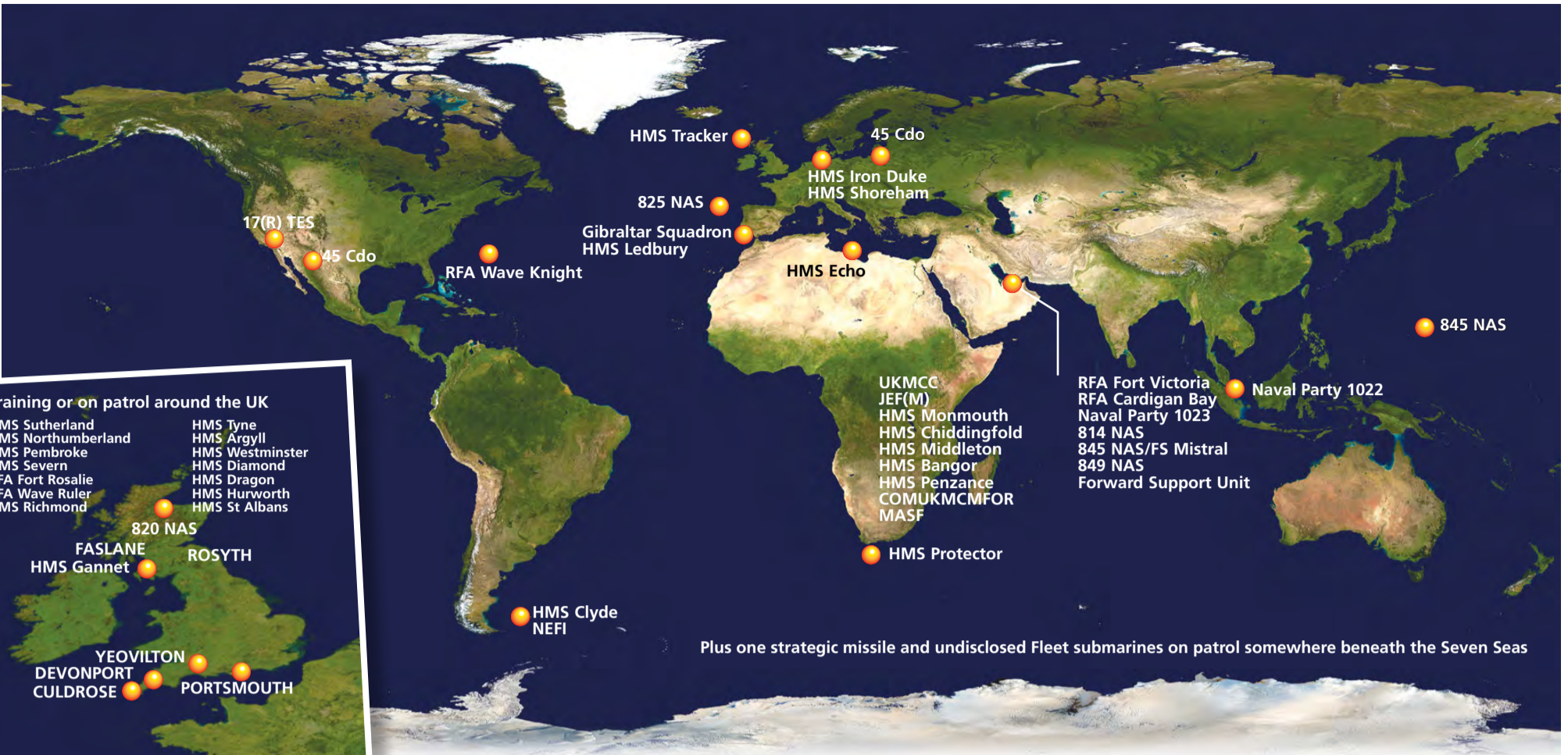
The Brits have been quite taken by the accommodation aboard the Mistral – two or four-man en-suite cabins.

As for their hosts, well they've bent over backwards to accommodate the Junglies: they allowed plenty of space on board for aircrew and engineers to operate in, while the gym aboard is open at specific times for the CHF folk so they can workout together.

And, like many other mariners, *les matelots* celebrate crossing the line (indeed, apparently, it was the French who inaugurated the tradition all the way back in the 16th Century, celebrating Mass as they crossed the Equator).

Although details of this secret ceremony cannot be revealed to the uninitiated, those who are now Sea Knights agree that it was a rare experience not to be missed.





**Training or on patrol around the UK**

HMS Sutherland	HMS Tyne
HMS Northumberland	HMS Argyll
HMS Pembroke	HMS Westminster
HMS Severn	HMS Diamond
RFA Fort Rosalie	HMS Dragon
RFA Wave Ruler	HMS Hurworth
HMS Richmond	HMS St Albans

820 NAS  
FASLANE  
HMS Gannet  
ROSYTH  
YEOVILTON  
DEVONPORT  
CULDROSE  
PORTSMOUTH

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

IT IS 100 years since the formation of the **Women's Royal Naval Service**, and to mark the occasion we include an eight-page supplement looking at the origins, history and legacy of the WRNS (see pages 21-28).

Meanwhile, feeling the heat in the Arizona desert (see pages 20 and 29) were personnel from **Yankee Company, 45 Cdo**, who took part in Exercise Angel Thunder – billed as the largest and most realistic joint combat search-and-rescue exercise.

Also enjoying a much warmer climate are the men and women of **Commando Helicopter Force**, who have been embarked in the French amphibious assault ship **Mistral** during a tour of the Pacific (see pages 2-3). Personnel from Merlin Mk3 squadron **845 NAS** have been the UK element of an Anglo-French-American-Japanese exercise.

Over to the Indian Ocean and **HMS Monmouth** seized drugs worth £65m from a fishing boat spotted in an area not normally known for fishing (see page 5).

To the Atlantic and the Wildcat crews of **825 NAS**, who earned their Wings during a three-week imaginary war off the Portuguese coast (see page 13).

Heading east and **X-Ray Company, 45 Cdo**, are taking part in Exercise Sabre Strike in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (see page 9). The Latvian and US Army Europe-run exercise is designed to give nations the opportunity to deepen their partnerships and develop their ability to operate together at a high level.

Further west in the Baltic, **HMS Iron Duke** and **Shoreham** (see page 6) are taking part in military exercise Baltops – along with 48 other surface vessels and submarines from more than a dozen nations.

More than 4,000 sailors and marines and in excess of 50 aircraft are also taking part in a fortnight of complex naval warfare manoeuvres aimed at showing the resolve – and ability – of Allied nations to defend the Baltic Sea and the countries on its fringes.

Back in the UK and P2000 **HMS Tracker** made a rare foray out of Faslane for a three-week odyssey around Scotland (see page 11), during which the ship visited 15 ports and travelled 978 miles.

Also in Scotland, Britain's largest warship has come alive as the 700-strong crew of **HMS Queen Elizabeth** moved aboard (see page 7). With cabins and messes occupied, watch routines established, ship's rounds, officers of the day appointed, patients treated in the sick bay, three meals a day served up in the five galleys, engines flashed up and combat sensors tested, the ship's company readied the warship for her maiden voyage.

Heading south to Devonport, **HMS Albion** has returned to sea after nearly six years (see page 5). The amphibious assault ship has undergone an extensive £90 million upgrade.

A small **Royal Navy Met** team are fully established at **RAF Marham** – the only Senior Service Met team on an RAF base – as the Norfolk site undergoes a massive transformation ahead of the arrival of the F-35B Lightning II strike fighters next year (see pages 18-19).

Naval Service sharpshooters showcased their skills at the **Fleet Operational Shooting Competition (East)** (see page 15).

Two Royal Navy officers completed the hardest cross-country ski race in the world – **the Arctic Circle Race** – (see page 16).

Finally, a yomping expedition to Nepal proved much tougher than expected for **Royal Marines Reservists** from Merseyside (see pages 16-17). Exercise Khumbu Commando – a 23-day trek in the Everest region – saw much-rehearsed rescue techniques put to the test.

# Full steam ahead



● Type 45 destroyer HMS Duncan will lead NATO forces for exercises in the Black Sea this summer

## VIEW BRIDGE from the BRIDGE

IN the latest of our monthly features on the future of the Royal Navy, we look at a key time for the Fleet.

WHILE the past few months have been dominated by the General Election, the Royal Navy's vital work continued all the same.

At home, the frigate HMS Somerset escorted one of Russia's newest submarines through the Channel while Royal Marines were mobilised to support the police following the Manchester attack.

In Europe, the minehunter HMS Shoreham worked alongside the navies of NATO to clear historic ordnance from the Baltic Sea and the survey ship HMS Echo's life-saving work in the Mediterranean saw another 300 migrants rescued in a single week.

Further afield, the frigate HMS Monmouth seized £65 million-worth of drugs in the Indian Ocean, and Royal Navy Merlin helicopters continued their deployment to South East Asia aboard the French amphibious ship Mistral.

We may live in uncertain times but, as an island nation, the need for a strong Royal Navy is one constant of which we can be sure.

The good news is that with the General Election behind us, the building blocks that determine the shape and size of the future Fleet are confirmed.

The government's manifesto referenced all the Royal Navy's major equipment programmes by name and in most cases by number too, including four Dreadnought-class submarines, two Queen Elizabeth-class carriers, eight Type 26 frigates and five new Offshore Patrol Vessels.

Crucially, the government pledged to take forward the recommendations from Sir John Parker's report into UK shipbuilding, and reiterated its ambition to grow the overall size of the Royal Navy through the construction of a new class of General Purpose Frigate. We shouldn't take anything for granted, but we can be confident in the programme of investment that is now under way.

The formal process to leave the

European Union has now begun. This will inevitably involve a degree of introspection as politicians and the media focus on the detailed negotiations. During this time, the government and the public will expect the Royal Navy to meet our responsibilities at home, starting with the delivery of the strategic nuclear deterrent, alongside a renewed emphasis on counter-terrorism and the security of our territorial waters.

Ultimately, however, the success of Brexit will require the United Kingdom to look outwards in order to forge the global trading partnerships that will secure our prosperity in the decades ahead.

The opportunities for the Royal Navy to prove our growing relevance will come thick and fast. This summer, the destroyer HMS Duncan will lead NATO forces for exercises in the Black Sea, which will underline the UK's continued commitment to continental security, and next year a Royal Navy Task Group will visit the Baltic.

2018 will also see major naval exercises in the Gulf and with India, and HMS Argyll will head to the Pacific to work alongside the UK's partners in South East Asia.

In each case, the more that ministers see and understand how much we contribute to the UK's security and prosperity, the more their own ambition for the Royal Navy's future will grow.

In the midst of all this activity, HMS Queen Elizabeth will be undergoing trials. Some quarters have been slow to grasp the full significance of what will be a national strategic capability, but nothing will focus minds better than the sight of a 65,000-tonne aircraft carrier at sea.

These ships, and their aircraft, send a powerful message about our place in the world. Far from being a diminished nation, withdrawing from the world, the United Kingdom has the means and the intent to protect and advance our interests wherever they may be found.

So, 2016 was full of surprises and 2017 is proving to be just as unpredictable; but against the backdrop of a world that is becoming more competitive and less safe, the UK is rediscovering the potential of its Navy, and not a moment too soon.

# Hi, Hoe, it's off to work we go...

**T**WO months shy of six years since she last moved past Plymouth's iconic waterfront, HMS Albion returns to sea under her own power.

Back in 2011 she was Devonport-bound after leading an amphibious deployment and about to begin a lengthy spell of extended readiness.

Half-a-dozen years, £90m, 110 major improvements and 1.2 million man hours (that's just the civilian contractors, not counting the input of the ship's company) later and the Mighty Lion left her home port to begin six months of regeneration.

By the year's end she'll be able to do what her sister HMS Bulwark has been doing in Albion's absence: deploying around the world at short notice with her Royal Marines, ready to respond to international crises.

The 110 improvements and upgrades – including engines and machinery, improved cooling system for operating in warmer climes through to the ship's 'brain' (the computer system which crunches the masses of data from the assault ship's many sensors such as the newly-fitted Artisan 3D radar) and the Phalanx automated Gatling guns which have replaced the existing Goalkeeper system – will

help Albion potentially remain in service for another 20 years.

Enough of 2037. There's plenty to do in 2017 first. Initial sea trials, then work-up and, towards the year's end operational sea training which will determine whether men and women and machine are ready for all eventualities.

"Albion looks amazing - a credit to Babcock, DE&S and the plethora of contractors," said her CO Capt Tim Neild.

"Now it's all about road testing. Aboard is a hive of activity as my team make sure that all the fabulous new kit works.

"Becoming the UK's very-high-readiness amphibious ship is tantalisingly close. We're very much looking forward to getting stuck into our trials programme and rejoining the front-line fleet."

Newly-qualified aircraft handler NA Jason Symons is keen to see helicopters on the flight deck for the first time.

"It's been busy trying to get the ship ready for sea but it's been all right," the 28-year-old said. "I've been looking forward to getting to sea, putting all the practice I have done into real life."

Picture: LPhot Dean Nixon



## 60-hour hunt reaps £65 million reward

**T**HIS is what £65m of cannabis and heroin look like – and these are the men and women who snatched it from the hands of terrorists.

HMS Monmouth bagged the first haul of her nine-month security patrol – a worthy reward for 60 hours of toil by her RM/RN boarding team in the clammy heat of the Indian Ocean.

They intercepted a dhow sailing far from the usual fishing areas, convinced her cargo was suspicious.

It was – but the 455kg of cannabis and 266kg of heroin were well hidden too.

After removing three tonnes of ice from a large freezer on board, a hidden compartment was found; there the searchers found the haul of narcotics in a hidden compartment.

"After such a long search I had doubts we would find anything, but the reactions of the crew to our activity in certain areas was enough to convince us that there was illegal cargo," explained Lt Alison Ross, one of the Black



Duke's boarding officers, said: "Eventually the breakthrough was made and we could bring the operation to a close."

Once all the drugs had been photographed by the ship's RN police, the narcotics were sent to Davy Jones' Locker so no-one, terrorists especially, might profit from them.

Monmouth's success was one of nine busts carried out by CTF 150 since a combined French-Anglo staff took charge of the force in April; 1.25 tonnes of heroin, nearly half a tonne of hashish and 12kg of cocaine will never reach the streets through the efforts of British, French and Australian warships.

## Brocklesby sails four months earlier

**N**OT out of action for six years but having undergone an extremely thorough mid-life revamp of her own, minehunter HMS Brocklesby has returned to sea to begin trials.

The Hunt-class ship does so four months sooner than her sister minehunters who've gone through the same overhaul in Portsmouth Naval Base, even though the 34-year-old warship underwent the most extensive package of the lot.

The entire class is going through the refit programme which revolves around fitting new,

economic Caterpillar engines in place of the trusty Deltics which trace their history back to late WW2, as well as improving the Hunts ability to operate in hot climates.

The time saving on Brocklesby is thanks to a mix of making use of the ship hall in Portsmouth Naval Base, sparing weather delays, cutting edge technology/tools, and new working methods allowed engineers from BAE to shave four months off the revamp process.

HMS Quorn is next to enter the ship hall.



# WELFARE

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## Cardigan's needed in Bahrain

RFA ship Cardigan Bay is Gulf-bound to resume her duties as mother ship to the RN's minehunters following a successful Operational Sea Training (OST) back home.

The assault support ship, along with her 110-strong crew – including embarked forces – is due to relieve her sister Lyme Bay as the command ship and floating petrol station/ammunition store/warehouse for all four of the Navy's Gulf-based minehunters.

Her four-week OST included testing personnel with simulated fires, floods and casualties.

Falcon and Hawk aircraft 'bombarded' the vessel from the air while Royal Marines aboard RIBs shot at her from the sea.

"After the trials and tribulations of the last few months, I am very proud that we have risen to every challenge and have now successfully deployed," said 3/O (X) deck officer Callum McArdell.

"I have every confidence that with the dedication, devotion and determination I have witnessed throughout the ship, this will be a hugely successful deployment with the high standards of operational support the RFA is world-renowned for providing."

The presence of a Bay-class ship has become crucial to mine operations in the Middle East, allowing the minehunters to foray further and longer than they would without any support at sea.

## Milestone in Kent's refit

HMS Kent has passed the six-month mark in her 18-month-long revamp... in the unfamiliar surroundings of Devonport.

The Portsmouth-based frigate is the latest Type 23 to go through the class's later-life revamp which will keep the younger ships (Kent among them) in service into the mid-2030s.

The frigate was stripped out over a four-week period late last year before she was moved into Devonport's No.7 dock in December to begin the overhaul.

Half a year later, she's still there, high and dry on blocks, covered in scaffolding, tarpaulin, devoid of her outer layer of Pusser's grey paint

Just a handful of ship's company have remained with the warship during the refit, which will see Seawolf replaced by the new Sea Ceptor missile system, a new galley, improved mess decks, sensors and machinery.

Crew will start rejoining in earnest at the end of the year, with the goal of returning Kent to sea in mid-2018.

## FREs Russian about again

THE Spring Bank Holiday weekend was no holiday for either HMS Mersey or Iron Duke as they kept an eye on Russian warships passing the UK.

Both were activated to keep an eye on the intelligence ship Vasily Tatishchev, the depot ship PM82 in company with a Russian tug and the frigate Severomorsk.

First Mersey located and monitored the vessels' progress, then she handed over to the frigate to escort the Severomorsk out of the UK area of interest.

Activations of the Fleet Ready Escort in 2017 are double the number recorded in the first half of last year.



# Big battles in the Baltic

## DUSK in the Baltic and the flight deck team of HMS Iron Duke await the return of their Wildcat during the biggest naval war games of the year.

And normally, Baltops 17 was a tad more exciting than this during its two weeks as 50 warships and submarines thrashed around in the narrow waters between Germany, Poland and the southern shores of Scandinavia.

The Americans have been running Baltops since 1972; in its 45th iteration it has become a demonstration of the resolve and ability of Allied nations to defend the Baltic and countries on its fringes from any aggressors.

For two of the RN's participants – frigate HMS Iron Duke and minehunter HMS Shoreham – these are well-known waters; the latter has spent the past few months attached to the NATO mine group dedicated to safeguarding these waters while the Type 23 has been to the Baltic for the past three years.

This was, however, virgin territory for four P2000 patrol boats: HM Ships Ranger, Exploit, Archer and Smiter – the first time 1 Patrol Boat Squadron craft have taken part in a NATO exercise.

Another newcomer was Wildcat. A Wildcat of 847 NAS. Yes. 847. Not 815 or 825. 847. Jungle. Royal Marines supporting. Battlefield.

With the Navy's Wildcat force still converting to the new helicopter from the recently-retired Lynx and existing Wildcat flights heavily committed around the globe, Commando Helicopter Force were asked to step

in... and they obliged.

They are used to operating their Wildcats at sea – but normally from the much larger flight deck of carrier HMS Ocean or an assault ship like Albion.

And a flight assigned to a warship normally spends six months training for the mission; the 847 team were given just five weeks to prepare for the short but important stint aboard Iron Duke.

After a dash across the North Sea and through the western Baltic, there was a quick pre-exercise get-together for many of the participants in the Polish city of Szczecin before the first week of eye-opening intensive training, with many of the 50 warships and submarines committed to Baltops by more than a dozen nations.

"It was a week-long epic that saw the ships dashing around the high seas conducting all manner of naval war-fighting manoeuvres," said pilot Capt Ollie Bates RM.

In the first week of Baltops, they and Iron Duke endured air defence exercises (11), anti-submarine exercises (four), replenishment under way with FGS Bonn (one), anti-surface warfare exercises (six) and gunnery shoots (four).

The fliers monitored the fall of shot when 4.5in shells from Iron Duke left the barrel at Mach 2.2 (captured by the quick-on-the-shutter fingers of LPT Kurtis Jacques) and crashed down on the ranges as NATO tried to maintain an uneasy peace between the hostile (fictional) nations of Bothnia and Torrike.

The pace was a little slower aboard

Shoreham as she assiduously scoured the waters around the Danish island of Bornholm (renamed Armland for the sake of the exercise) for underwater explosives.

Patience paid off; the ops room team located a dummy mine air-dropped by a B-52 bomber. They thought they'd also discovered some wartime ordnance (the Baltic seabed is awash with the stuff)... but it turned out to be a rock.

Like Iron Duke, Shoreham was called upon to partake in live gunnery and force protection, and even took Swedish minehunter HSwMS Kullen under tow as part of a salvage exercise.

All of which was slightly out of the Sandown-class ship's comfort zone.

But not as much as the 847 NAS Wildcat.

In the closing stages of Baltops, Iron Duke joined the forces of evil – the Bothnian Navy – and attempted to provoke NATO forces by spewing out 'fake news' for the Allies' info ops folk to counter and generally making a nuisance of herself, forever getting in the way of the Danish-led good guys..

Also crossing to the dark side were the P2000s, charged with playing the role of fast attack craft, buzzing around the Baltic at high speed, constantly harassing the NATO forces.

For the 847 fliers, this second week of Baltops was especially eye-opening. The sorties their helicopter carried out were all at sea; the crew never even got a whiff of sand on a beach.

"Operating up to 60 miles from a warship, we looked far beyond their horizon to provide Iron Duke with long-

range situational awareness, all the while never seeing the land – a truly unnerving feeling," said Capt Bates.

"For the land-centric aviators of 847 this was a distinctly unique experience that was challenging and rewarding. Perhaps now that the concept of putting an 847 detachment on board a small ship has been tested it is that we will see more of it in the future.

"We played in a new, bigger pond with its unfamiliar ways and we proved that we should be there."

There was helicopter action too for Shoreham: a Swedish Search-and-Rescue NH90 appeared over the ship to conduct some winching drills, giving one 'lucky' sailor – AB(MW) Joshua Bertman – the chance to be hauled up from the Sandown-class ship's deck.

"It was an amazing experience and something that I never thought I would do," said Joshua.

Shoreham and her NATO colleagues in Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 arrived in Szczecin for Baltops fresh from some lively training with the Swedes in and around Karlskrona on the country's southern coast.

Indeed, much of the combined exercises – seamless tactical manoeuvring, followed by a series of mock attacks on the minehunters – seemed like a scaled-down version of the larger American-run exercise.

And the Karlskrona archipelago made for an interesting backdrop to the exercise as fast patrol boats and low-flying aircraft attempted to do their worst to the slow-moving force of mine warfare vessels.





## (Re)fit for a Queen

BLIMEY, they're pulling out all the stops with refits these days...

HMS Echo's Cdr Andrew Norgate and a shipmate relax in one of the luxury cabins on one of the world's great liners, MV Queen Victoria.

The Cunarder was undergoing a £35m revamp squeezed into just 21 days in Palermo... where the survey ship was also undergoing maintenance.

Echo has been part of the international naval response to the migrant problem in the central Mediterranean since late last year, when she relieved her sister Enterprise.

The Sicilian port is one of the key ports in that operation – be it for taking on supplies or for landing migrants rescued from sinking or unsafe craft.

The 90,000-tonne Queen Victoria is the smallest of Cunard's 'three queens', home to 900 crew and over 2,000 passengers if fully booked, so Team Echo were keen to have a snoop around... while half a dozen Cunarders fancied a closer look at one of the more

commodious vessels in the RN.

The six 'Echoes', led by CO Cdr Norgate, found Queen Victoria a veritable hive of activity as 1,000 dockyard workers strove to finish the round-the-clock refit (which included building and fitting out 30 extra cabins) to a punishing deadline.

And the six Cunard visitors aboard the 300ft survey ship, led by their skipper Capt Chetan Sawyer – a former officer in the RNZN – scoured Echo from keel to main mast in the vain search for a lift, hot tub and sky bar.

"In many ways Echo and Queen Victoria are 'same planet, different worlds', but they're actually more similar than you might think, despite the obvious difference in size and finishing specifications," said Lt Dave Elsey, Echo's logistics officer.

"There are a great many similarities. We both operate a near-identical azipod propulsion system – the only real difference being size! And both ships work to tight schedules which see them spend only a small fraction of their lifetimes alongside."

# All aboard the QE

NO LONGER 'just' a 65,000-tonne hulk, Britain's biggest warship pulses with life and matelot banter.

One by one, from the youngest, most junior able seaman all the way up to CO Capt Jerry Kyd, the 700-strong crew of HMS Queen Elizabeth filed aboard the carrier for the final chapter of the leviathan's construction.

With cabins and messes occupied, watch routines established, ship's rounds, officers of the day appointed, patients treated in the sick bay, three meals a day served up in the five galleys, engines flashed up and combat sensors tested, the ship's company are readying the warship for her maiden voyage in a matter of weeks.

The first sailors were assigned to Queen Elizabeth all the way back in 2012 but worked in an office block a stone's throw away.

Since the beginning of the year, crew have been working on board by day, getting to know the layout, putting various parts of the ship put into operation on a daytime basis, such as the galley, but retiring to nearby Caledonia in the evening.

Living on board full time gives them the chance to give the leviathan her character, personalising bunk spaces and messes... and cuts out a half-hour commute each way.

"We can really see the ship come to life," said Sub Lt Reece Statham-Quilty.

"It is fantastic to be part of such a large project."

There are 1,600 bunks aboard spread around 470 cabins (the most austere accommodation is set aside for 250 Royal Marines



should they join the carrier on operations).

Everyone aboard has access to all the usual 'creature comforts' – messes, NAAFI, six fitness suites (aka gyms, including cardio workout and weights room, even a boxing ring), internet-enabled computers – as well as a cinema (which looks suspiciously like a briefing room equipped with a projector).

With the vast flight deck finally devoid of the scaffolding and tarpaulin which have scarred the carrier's outward appearance, it also allowed the first workout.

Three of the carrier's most

senior officers – Commander Cdr Darren Houston, Head of Logistics Cdr Fiona Percival and Head of Weapon Engineering Cdr Steve Prest – christened the flight deck, donning running shoes for a pre-breakfast jog.

One lap of the 280m/918ft deck – including the 'graveyard' forward of the superstructure and the ramp – is about 650m or 0.4 mile (on Britain's biggest operational warship, HMS Ocean, you're talking about 420m/0.25 mile), or just under eight laps for a 5k workout (or HOD plod as the officers dubbed it).

The trot came ahead of an

assessment of the material state of the new carrier and the ability of her crew by the Navy's principal training organisation, FOST.

They put Queen Elizabeth through a 'fast cruise' – practising taking the ship to sea and coping with emergencies – without actually leaving the basin wall...

...Which may or may not have happened by the time you read this, for as of mid-June the ship stood at short notice to sail to begin her sea trials, depending on the tides and the state of the ship/ship's company.

Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones, HMS Queen Elizabeth

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William Riding, FPS Member



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● Above, Mne Rob Maloney; Right, Mne Fred Clayton; Below, Royal Marines in a Viking armoured vehicle

Pictures: LPhoto Joel Rouse



# Getting under the skin of Sabre Strike

**THE UK, USA, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Slovenia.**

It doesn't get much more international than Exercise Sabre Strike.

Leading the way for the UK element are X-Ray Company of Arbroath-based 45 Commando.

As well as the Royal Marines with their Viking vehicles, the exercise also features a range of armour from light mortars to Apache attack helicopters and F-16 fast jets and B-52 bombers.

Sabre Strike is one of a trio of exercises – Iron Wolf and Sabre Knight are the others – making up a four-week training package.

More than 2,500 military personnel from eight NATO countries are part of the 16,000-strong force deployed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The Latvia and US Army Europe-run exercise is designed to give nations the opportunity to deepen their partnerships and develop their ability to operate together at a high level.

X Coy comprise 150 personnel, including logistic support and 3 Troop Viking Squadron from the Royal Marines Armoured Support Group, and are conducting three separate exercises.

The first phase involves a training exercise, working with Polish troops and their tanks, as well as aviation and close-air support from the USA.

The second phase comprises a combined arms live fire exercise,



giving personnel the chance to fire all of their weapon systems as part of a United States Marine Corps battalion.

The final phase sees troops from the Baltic states defend their land against a Norwegian-led multinational battalion.

Commanders are overseeing the exercise with a system known as MILES – Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System – which focuses on their tactical decision-making.

X Coy were also taking part in an aviation-led assault at the Suwalki Gap on the border between Lithuania and Poland, involving the American 10th Cavalry Air Brigade.

Sabre Strike also includes the Army's 5 Rifle, the Light Dragoons, 23 Amphibious Engineer Troop and 75 Engineer Regiment.

UK forces will help form NATO's Enhanced Forward

Presence in Estonia, as part of a package designed to enhance EU-Atlantic security.

About 800 British personnel will rotate on a continuous basis alongside Danish, French, and host nation Estonian forces, with 5 Rifles providing the bulk of the combat capable infantry force for the first rotation.

A Light Cavalry Squadron, of approximately 150 personnel, is currently deployed to Poland, which falls under the US-led Battle Group.

Additional units include elements from Royal Military Police, Intelligence Corps, Royal Signals and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

In January this year the UK assumed responsibility for NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, contributing about 3,000 personnel and leading a group of partner nations.

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# Tracker on tour

## Northern odyssey for patrol boat

### SO THIS is what the Highlands look like...

After five years of seeing little beyond the confines of Gareloch and the Clyde estuary, the crew of patrol boat HMS Tracker broke their bonds with Faslane for a three-week tour of Scotland.

Normally Tracker, her sister Raider and a cluster of ORCs, RIBs and Island-class patrol craft operated by the Royal Marines and MOD police stray no further than a dozen or so miles from Faslane as they protect ships and submarines coming in or out of the Naval base.

But the chains were briefly broken to allow some extended training for the ship's company – and anyone they might encounter on their 978-mile odyssey.

The first seven days took the 54-tonne boat to Campbeltown, Dunstaffnage near Oban, then Corpach at the southern end of the Caledonian Canal.

It took a day to navigate the 60-mile stretch of waterway with its 29 locks, including the famous set of eight, Neptune's Staircase at Banavie, with an overnight stop in Fort Augustus.

The latter was the final (very small) port of call before entering Scotland's greatest lake. At 22 miles long, with a surface area the size of Middlesbrough and ever-popular with sailors and water sports enthusiasts, Loch Ness has its own RNLI station and boat... who hit the lake to train with Tracker and the Coastguard helicopter from nearby Inverness.

The trio conducted a series of exercises, including transferring people between the boats and winching a dummy casualty to and from the helicopter.

"It was a really enjoyable and rewarding day – it was good to be able to team up with our maritime colleagues from the RNLI and Coastguard and work together," said AB(Sea) Nathan Barnes, responsible for seamanship and lifesaving kit

aboard Tracker.

"Regardless of jobs, all mariners have a responsibility for the safety of life at sea and it was reassuring to know that three different organisations can come to the aid of the public if needed in an emergency."

During the first week of her mini-deployment, Tracker also hosted 50 children from various youth organisations, including TS St Christopher Sea Cadets in Fort William, TS Briton SCC in Inverness and 18th Inverness Muirtown Sea Scouts.

Members of the ship's company showed visitors around the boat, allowing them to sit in the quartermaster's chair and handle the ship's wheel.

Kirkwall in Orkney was the most northerly part of her tour.

HMS Tracker left Wick, sailing through the Pentland Firth and into Scapa Flow, home to the Royal Navy Grand Fleet and later the Home Fleet during both World Wars.

While there the crew took the chance to pay their respects to those who lost their lives on board HMS Royal Oak.

Sub Lt Sam Jacques, who is on board HMS Tracker conducting navigational training, said: "This was my first visit to Scapa Flow and it was a very poignant moment for myself and the ship's company.

"We conducted a ceremony as we passed HMS Royal Oak and took the opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices made by all personnel during both World Wars."

HMS Royal Oak was sunk in October 1939 after a German U-Boat crept into Scapa Flow and torpedoed the warship. 833 of the 1,400 crew lost their lives, and the site is now an official war grave. Each year Royal Navy divers from HMNB Clyde's Northern Diving Group are granted special permission to descend to the wreck to change the White Ensign.

HMS Tracker then called in on

Stornaway before travelling south, calling into Portree, Kyle of Lochalsh, Tobermory, Craobh and arriving in Portrush in Northern Ireland.

While in Stornaway the crew took part in a training exercise with the search-and-rescue helicopter before moving on to Tobermory to take part in sea training with the RNLI.

The sea training involved Tracker teaming up with the all-weather Royal National Life Boat Elizabeth Fairlie Ramsey.

The two crews spent the day transferring personnel from boat to boat, allowing the RNLI team to simulate trying to get on and off vessels in distress.

Once the crews had perfected the ability to move between the two vessels, they took part in a number of casualty handling exercises, which involved the transfer of casualties on stretchers from one boat to another.

The teams finished off by taking the opportunity to pass towing equipment to complete a successful day's training.

LETME Graham Henderson said: "It was a thoroughly enjoyable day and it was good that we were able to support our colleagues from the RNLI in achieving some of their training."

Fifteen ports later Tracker returned to Faslane, with CO Lt Cdr James Mitchell saying: "The three weeks were a great opportunity for the team to engage and train away from our base port.

"Not only have we been able to prove our operability with other maritime organisations but we have learned a great deal along the way.

"We have received a warm welcome from all the communities we have visited and I am pleased with what my ship's company has achieved.

"Whilst we're one of the smallest vessels in the Royal Navy our ability to visit some of the smaller ports means that we can continue the strong maritime connections that the UK has with its Navy."

Pictures: LPhoto Pepe Hogan



THIS, believe it or not, is a bomber flown by Royal Navy aviators.

Our rummage around in the photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum for the centenary of the Great War takes us to July 1917 and one of the most daring exploits in the history of air power.

The exploits of Sqd Cdr Kenneth Stevens Savory and his Handley Page O/100, No 3124, ought to be chiselled into the memorials to the pioneers of Naval aviation in the same way the RAF trumpet the Black Buck raids over the Falklands 65 years later.

Back in 1915, neither the Royal Navy nor the Allied armies had reached the heart of the Ottoman Empire: Constantinople.

The Fleet had been thwarted by the formidable defences of the Dardanelles. The Army had run into the equally formidable 'Johnny Turk' on the Gallipoli peninsula and finally abandoned their attempt in the winter of 1915-16.

Across the Levant and Middle East, though sorely tested, the Ottoman armies continued to hold their ground.

Perhaps a surprise blow against the capital might unnerve the foe.

Few objects were a greater source of pride to the Ottomans than their greatest men o'war, the battlecruiser Yavuz Sultan Selim and cruiser Midilli.

Few ships had brought greater embarrassment down on the Royal Navy. Under the Kaiser's flag as SMS Goeben and Breslau, the two vessels had escaped the clutches of the RN in August 1914, fled across the Mediterranean and up the Dardanelles to Constantinople.

While Britain was confiscating two nearly-complete battleships paid for by the Ottomans, Berlin was drawing Constantinople increasingly into its sphere of influence; it gifted the two warships to Turkey. With no native sailors to crew them, the vessels retained their German crews... who donned Ottoman uniforms and fezzes, though no one was fooled.

The two ships never engaged the Royal Navy. But they were frequently committed in the Black Sea against the Russians.

Kenneth Savory planned to put an end to these forays – and he had the



means to deliver such a blow.

Just 11 years after the Wright Flyer made its first tentative flights, the head of aviation at the Admiralty, Cdre Murray Sueter, asked the British aviation industry to design a "bloody paralysing" of an aircraft.

The firm of Handley Page in Cricklewood responded. Within a year, the prototype of O/100 was airborne, within two the first production models were being delivered to the front-line units of the Royal Naval Air Service.

Powered by two engines and crewed by four people, the lumbering giant could stay aloft for seven hours at a cruising speed of about 60mph, dropping three quarters of a ton (1,680lb) of bombs on to its target.

A generation later, the Lancaster would deposit 14,000lbs of explosives upon German cities. But by the standards of the day, the O/100 was a monster; the famous German Gotha bombers which took part in the first Battle of Britain came later, were

smaller and carried lighter payloads.

By late May 1917, Savory was ready... once his bomber had reached the Mediterranean.

In hops of roughly 200 miles at a time, the Naval officer and his crew made his way to Mudros air base on the isle of Lemnos, the hub of Royal Naval Air Service operations in the eastern Mediterranean.

It took two weeks. At every stop, the fliers were feted – at 2,000 miles in total this was the longest flight yet attempted – apart from in Albania where tribal horsemen chased the aircraft in the hope it would be forced to make an emergency landing.

It wasn't and once in Mudros, Savory and his crew set about preparing their Handley Page for the strike at Constantinople. The enemy warships were reportedly anchored in Stenia (today Istinye) Creek, about eight miles north-east of the Golden Horn.

Mechanical problems and poor

weather postponed the mission on several occasions until the night of July 9 1917. At sunset, Savory lifted off with four comrades and a dozen 112lb bombs and headed for the heart of the Ottoman empire.

Shortly before midnight, the bomber appeared over Constantinople, circling the city at a height of about 800ft as Savory sought his targets; the Goeben was especially easy to find, despite the hour. There was no blackout; the warship was lit up, crew clearly visible on deck.

The bomber's commander would claim several hits on the cruiser. The bombs almost certainly struck the destroyer Yedigiar i Milet – another German-built warship, formerly SMS S166 – moored adjacent to Goeben, causing extensive damage. She rapidly took on water, drowning 25 men as she sank. Four more sailors on another destroyer were also killed. Other bombs either struck a converted liner, now acting as the German HQ in

Turkey, or tumbled into the water. And Savory reckoned he hit the Turkish Ministry of War twice, before Turkish flak belatedly woke up and riddled the Handley Page with bullet holes. After half-an-hour raising havoc over Constantinople, Kenneth Savory turned for home.

By the time he touched down at Mudros, his Handley Page had been airborne just short of seven hours.

The Yedigiar i Milet was the largest warship sunk by air power in the Great War. The 22-year-old Savory earned a bar to his DSO for his exploit, after which he seems to disappear from the history of naval aviation (he did, however, survive the war).

Breslau/Midilli struck a mine and sank, taking many of her crew down with her, during the Battle of Imbros in January 1918. The Goeben/Yavuz Sultan Selim was also mined in the same encounter, but survived.

It took nearly two decades to repair and restore the ship in the chaos of post-Ottoman Turkey. Renamed Yavuz she remained in service until 1950, and wasn't broken up for another two decades – the last dreadnought in European waters.

Despite a shortage of spare parts, Savory's Handley Page bomber continued to conduct sporadic raids against Ottoman targets or carry out lengthy anti-submarine patrols when serviceable.

On the last day of September 1917 it was forced to make an emergency landing in the Sea of Marmara during an abortive raid on railway infrastructure outside Constantinople, when an oil pipe failed.

The three crew – Lts Wise, Aird and Alcock – were picked up by the Turks and spent the remainder of the war in captivity. Alcock would go on to be the first man to fly the Atlantic (Nova Scotia to Ireland) in 1919 with fellow pilot Arthur Brown in a modified Vickers Vimy, similar to the Handley Page.

■ This photograph (Q 65965) 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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# Damn the Torplugans



## ON THE lash(ings) at night...

With its tail and main rotors running, the crew of Wildcat ZZ397 of 825 Naval Air Squadron complete their pre-flight checks before heading into the Atlantic night as four years of training reaches its climax for rookie air crews.

With aviation training ship RFA Argus as their home, trainee pilots and observers were charged with protecting the 28,000-tonne vessel from all threats – and thus earn their Wings during a three-week imaginary war off the Portuguese coast.

By the time the student aircrew joined Argus they'd completed basic flying training in Lincolnshire, then basic helicopter flight training for pilots in Shropshire and observer training at Culdrose, before learning how to fly and operate the Wildcat and its panoply of weapons and sensors at RNAS Yeovilton.

For the final assessment tutors took four Wildcats, five pairs of students and several dozen ground crew – many of them fresh out of training at HMS Sultan – to sea.

There they faced a complex series of

realistic scenarios in open waters about 100 miles off Portugal... or the hostile nation of Torpluga as it became for the three weeks of training.

*This is the PWO in the Ops room with a SitRep: the Torplugans have just sunk HMS Argyll in an unprovoked attack, Surface Threat Warning Red, Sub Surface Threat Warning Red, Wildcats to Alert 15, OPFOR units closing Mother.*

For those of you who don't speak PWO – Principal Warfare Officer – OPposing FORces are approaching RFA Argus on and below the water.

And so begins 12 hours of sitting in a sweaty 'goon bag' (the cumbersome IPG Immersion Coveralls) for the trainees as the wait for the call: Action Wildcat, Action Wildcat.

The pairs of students launch with just 15 minutes' notice into rapidly-changing tactical environments – whilst the pilots are flashing up the Wildcat's two LH Tech T800 engines, the observers are rapidly plotting the tactical picture and configuring the aircraft's extensive sensor suite – including the Sea Spray 7400E Radar and Electro Optical Designator System (a very powerful day

and night camera).

Once ready, the lashings are removed and the aircraft leaps into the air.

On a typical sortie – operating 100 nautical miles (115 miles) from mother, with a radar horizon of a further 100 nautical miles – student crews will search more than 8,000 square miles of sea... which is the size of Wales... for contacts as small as a fishing smack.

Once the target has been found, the students decide if they will engage it themselves with a simulated Sea Venom attack or relay the position back to a friendly frigate or destroyer for an over-the-horizon attack with Harpoon missiles.

The students have been trained in submarine hunting and had to be prepared to conduct simulated Stingray torpedo attacks or to call in Naval Gunfire Support for land targets.

In fact, on any given sortie, students may be asked to conduct anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, search and rescue, naval gunfire support, smuggling interdiction involving firing the M3M gun, load lifting, providing force protection, intelligence gathering,

transporting troops/personnel, and much more (though not necessarily on the same flight...).

And by day and night in Argus' cavernous hangar engineers and avionics technicians toiled to ensure the helicopters were available for their next mission.

The detachment's air engineer officer Lt Dan Boardman said experienced or rookie, his team had risen to the challenge of maintaining four state-of-the-art helicopters around the clock for three weeks.

"This embarkation has been a great training opportunity for the whole squadron," he said. "We flew more than 160 hours in just under three weeks with 100 per cent availability of the aircraft. I am extremely proud to have been the detachment air engineer officer – it's been a real highlight of my career so far."

With the Torplugan fleet defeated, Argus sailed into Lisbon (or should that be Nobsil?) for some rest and a run-ashore for the successful pilots and observers, all of whom earned their Wings.

Pictures: Lee Howard



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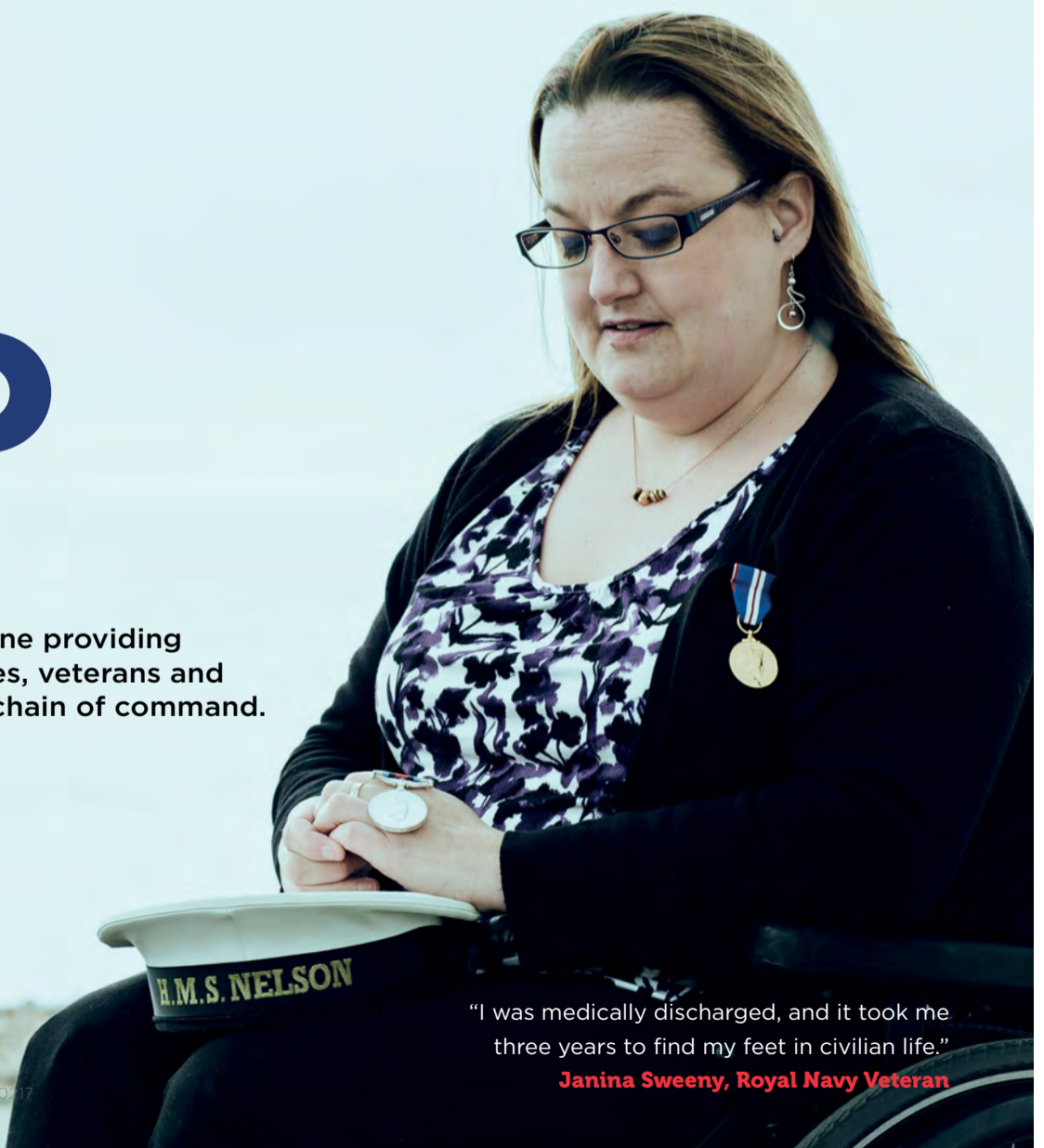
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# Hot shots

## Making their mark on contest

SHARPSHOOTERS got the chance to showcase their skills at the Fleet Operational Shooting Competition (East).

Teams were sent by seagoing units and shore establishments across the Fleet, with HMS Queen Elizabeth, HMS Duncan, MCM2 C2, MCM2 C3, The Maritime Warfare School and the Navigational Training Unit represented, as well as RNR teams from HMS King Alfred, President and Ceres.

The first day was spent conducting the pistol ACMT, where personnel demonstrated their ability to safely and accurately shoot the Glock 9mm weapon.

Sub Lt Matty Bradshaw, from NTU Collingwood, said: "Learning how to fire a pistol was a fantastic experience; it was surprisingly hard to hit a target at five metres."

Competitors had to run 100m (weighted with the regulation 10kg combination of armour, webbing and helmet) and shoot at targets at distances varying from 100-300m from different firing positions.

AB Luke 'Strawbs' Fields from MCM2 Crew 3 said: "Grouping shots was something I struggled with, however it was great fun and something I'd definitely recommend everybody trying."

The second day of the event tested the mental and physical resilience of the competitors, who were required to shoot at targets starting from 500m, then sprint to several different firing points culminating at the 300m mark.

Day three consisted of a firing



● WO1 Paddy Newell receiving the Champion At Arms trophy from Cdr Perry Stowell

practice while day four saw the Pistol Tile competition.

The winners of the event, and of the General's Prize were MCM 2 Crew 3 team, shooting six out of ten targets.

This was the first time that this practice had been scored with the Small Arms Range Targetery System, where electronic devices are used to determine and award scores.

The final day was held at the Ranges at Pirbright Camp. The Rural Contact Assessment saw competitors shoot at targets starting from 500m, work their way down at 100m intervals before finally arriving at 25m and transitioning to pistols.

The final event of the competition was the Senior Officers' Pistol shoot, won by Cdr Perry Stowell (OC MWS WTG).

Portsmouth Flotilla won the Excellent Cup for best team in the Pistol Close Quarter Marksmanship Assessment, while HMS Duncan won the Portsmouth Gun Trophy for best rifle team.

The Ryder Cup for best Tyro (novice) rifle shot was won by Sub Lt 'Percy' Trounson, while WO1 Paddy Newell (MCM2 Crew 3) was overall winner and Champion At Arms.



Pictures: LPhoto Louise George



● HMS Seahawk's field gun run team finished runners-up in the contest at HMS Collingwood

## Seahawk is top Navy team

HMS SEAHAWK ran their fastest ever time in the Brickwood's Field Gun competition – but still finished as runners-up.

It was a very close final where they were beaten by less than a second by the crew from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME).

The contest was the highlight of the HMS Collingwood Summer Show, where teams from all three Armed Services competed for the coveted trophy.

The contest saw 23 crews of 18 people race over the course.

The Seahawk crew are all volunteers who have been trained for the last two years by

WO Andy Penrose, traditionally referred to as 'Number 1'. He was assisted by CPO Martin 'Mungo' Mullins and Sub Lt Dave Robson.

Before the final, REME beat the world record, with a time of 1min 16.19sec.

In the final, REME won in a time of 1min 17.13sec, Seahawk were second in a time of 1min 18.03sec and Portsmouth were third in 1min 19.87sec.

The HMS Seahawk crew have taken part in 16 competition runs over the past two years without conceding any penalty points, where time is added for errors in the run.

Sub Lt Robson said: "This year's Seahawk Field Gun Crew excelled themselves in every way possible; from the mundane circuits in the gymnasium at Culdrose to the rigours of the Royal Marines Assault Course at RM Chivenor, the guys and girl put in their all.

"You have to be in peak physical and mental condition to take part, and what you have to realise is they are all volunteers – all of the training is done in their own time.

"I am so proud of what they have achieved this year; that record of 1min 18.03sec will stand for many years."

## Cash will help preserve Victory

NELSON'S flagship HMS Victory, now part of the fleet of the National Museum of the Royal Navy, has received a gift of £100,000 from the Society for Nautical Research (SNR) towards the costs of ongoing research and restoration.

The gift was presented by the Society's chairman, Admiral Sir Kenneth Eaton, to First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones and Chairman of the National Museum, former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, on board HMS Victory.

Admiral Jones said: "HMS Victory is recognisable around the world as a symbol of Britain's maritime heritage, and for those of us serving in the Royal Navy today, a symbol of the values and standards that continue to guide us.

"This latest very generous gift is further evidence of the SNR's commitment to conserving this outstanding piece of our maritime heritage."

The SNR has contributed £1.25 million to the ship since 1994.

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# Skiing duo more than a match for Killer Hill

TWO Royal Navy officers took on the hardest cross-country ski race in the world – the Arctic Circle Race.

Lt Cdr Carl Isherwood, currently based at HMS Collingwood, and Lt Elly Smillie, based with 11 Signals Regiment, flew to Greenland to join 200 fellow adventure seekers for the three-day, 160km race.

The town of Sisimiut on the coast of the Davis Strait was home for a week to allow the competitors to acclimatise to the -17°C temperatures.

Sunshine greeted the start of the race but the competitors endured side winds, snowstorms and poor visibility later in the day.

After a lap of the arena where the locals positioned themselves near the only hill in the loop to support/laugh at every competitor that fell over – and there were a lot – the competitors headed into the mountains for three days of downhill and uphill skiing.

The first day was long, hard work and tested everyone's ability – every competitor from the well-seasoned to the most novice found the day very difficult, not least because the visibility was less than a metre and it was very cold.

After a day of long plods uphill with skis on the back and fighting through snow storms whipping up and covering the tracks, the signs counting down the distance to go hit single figures and the camp was seen in the distance.

The camp was made up of two long tents; one for drying kit and one for cooking food and socialising. Surrounding these tents were bright orange, smaller, less durable two-man tents.

After changing out of lycra and into thick warm clothes, the team re-grouped to talk about the events of the day. Despite the appalling conditions, spirits were considerably high.

The atmosphere in the cooking tent was electric and every nationality shared stories, food and laughs. Everyone retired to their tents tired and excited for the next day; those that were able to withstand the call of a good night's sleep were treated to a spectacular show from the Northern Lights.

The next day competitors emerged out of their frozen tents to a bright and clear day. The race began and the skiers made their way along the tracks with the apprehension of the Killer Hill which would, at some point during the day, show its ugly head.

The route was challenging but one could take in the sights and appreciate Greenland's beauty.

It wasn't long until the signs started to advertise what was up ahead: "Hill gradient +65 per cent."

Little did the skiers know that it would be 15 minutes of painful, slow snow-ploughing. But Killer Hill didn't pass without taking some victims. It emerged later on that evening that there were a couple of broken bones.

Saturday night offered another opportunity to socialise with other competitors over a traditional Greenlandic dinner of dried fish and whale blubber; it really was as unappetising as



it sounds but worth a try.

Sunday morning was the hardest of them all, not least because temperatures dropped to -35°C in the night which meant very few people slept and most just shivered in inadequate sleeping bags on a cold floor.

But the thought of one final day of skiing before a decent shower and a warm comfy bed got everyone out, packed and on the start line for 9am.

It was a reverse course to the first day, but due to the inclement weather on the Friday, it could have been a very different route as far as we knew. Excitement was high and everyone was ready to start the final day. The finish line was in sight and the locals came out to cheer everyone coming in.

The race was possibly the hardest thing the team will ever do, but the experience was incredible. It welcomed a wealth of experience from Olympians and skiers who have cross-country skied all their life, to 12 Brits, some of whom signed up while in the pub on Friday night because they were bored.

Cross-country skiing is a physically demanding sport; it requires technique, skill and mental robustness to complete arduous routes and races, however it is a very welcoming sport and novices with some motivation and determination to try something new, can exceed their own expectations.

The military environment is an excellent chance to try the sport and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Nordic Ski team are always looking for volunteers.

If you are interested please contact WO2 Billy Rodgers at [3cdox-45cdornrnmnordic@mod.uk](mailto:3cdox-45cdornrnmnordic@mod.uk)

Report: Lt Smillie



# We'll b

## RM Reservists tested to

A YOMPING expedition to Nepal was tougher than expected for Royal Marines Reservists, as *L/Cpl Ben Kessie* explains.

Exercise Khumbu Commando was to involve 14 Bootnecks and 23 days of trekking in the Everest region of Nepal over the area's three highest alpine passes – Renjo La, Cho La and Kongma La – before culminating in an ascent of 6,189-metre Imja Tse. What could possibly go wrong?

It aimed to provide a unique opportunity for Royal Marines Reservists from Merseyside to test themselves against the most austere and challenging conditions the Himalayas had to offer, using all the attributes of the Commando Spirit: courage, determination, unselfishness and cheerfulness. As it turned out, we would need to draw upon all these qualities and training to deal with an emergency high in the Himalayas.

The expedition team, chosen after a meticulous process, represented a wide range of ranks, age and military and mountaineering experience.

After a couple of days orientation in Kathmandu, with visits to the British Embassy and Himalayan Rescue Association (HRA), we flew to Tenzing Hillary Airport at Lukla to begin our trek into the Khumbu Valley.

Over the following days we trekked higher into the mountains, careful not to exceed 500m of vertical ascent a day to allow our bodies to acclimatise to the thinning air. We progressed well and even as temperatures dropped to -18°C, the team felt strong as we arrived in Lumde at just below 5,000m.

The next day at 4am, seven members making up the high altitude team left Lumde to cross the Renjo La Pass while the remainder stayed to act as a support team. Carrying all our necessary climbing kit and safety stores our Bergens weighed heavy on our backs as we ascended the narrow rocky mountain paths.

As the sun rose above the distant peaks we felt the temperature and morale increase as we arrived at the final lake. Our reward for climbing the final steep 400m stretch was a spectacular panoramic view of Everest and its surrounding peaks, shrouded in snow and ice.

After summiting the ridge at 5,405m and taking the obligatory team photos, we began our descent to Gokyo village. The route took us down a steep path leading to a frozen tarn high on the mountainside.

We paused as Lt Peris Roberts (AML) and C/Sgt Chris Marlow (ML1) checked the conditions; even with the midday sun the temperature was still far below freezing and the tarn had been frozen for several weeks so it was rock solid.

After their recce we all donned and practised in crampons, then proceeded down towards Gokyo. As Arctic-trained Commandos and keen winter mountaineers we were all experienced on ice in crampons, and we'd also taken advantage of the icy conditions lower down in Lumde to revise these principles.

Maj Dave Hartley (OIC Expedition) was a couple of places in front of me progressing well when suddenly his foot went through the ice causing him to momentarily lose his balance and fall sideways. We watched in painfully slow motion as he fell and slid down the run off, following the pinball-like channel down the mountainside before stopping against a pile of rocks.

No sooner had we seen him stop I heard a shout and as I turned back to look at the team I saw Lt Roberts also crunch through the ice and follow Maj Hartley's route. Lt Roberts ricocheted into Maj Hartley, taking them both over the edge.

C/Sgt Marlow took charge, directing us until we came to a path, which followed the ice flow all the way down to the lake below. From here we raced down searching for any sign of our colleagues. As we came across them some 300m below none of us could believe how far they'd come.

Maj Hartley had grabbed hold

● C/Sgt Wayne Sanderson RMR looks out towards Everest

Pictures: L/Cpl Ben Kessie RMR Merseyside



# e back to the limit in Himalayas

of a pile of rocks and was perched precariously against this; Lt Roberts was some 25m below in a similar position.

We had rehearsed crevasse-rescue techniques meticulously in the UK prior to deploying and I had recently completed my Summer Mountain Leader assessment at the Joint Service Mountain Training Centre in Wales. This course incorporates rope rescue techniques in a variety of conditions; we were now going to put all this training into practice, alone, at 5,200m in freezing conditions.

All the heavy contents of our Bergens which we'd been cursing for the past few days were about to prove invaluable. It was an incredibly stressful situation but with C/Sgt Marlow's calm manner and quiet confidence our training kicked in and we set to work.

C/Sgt Marlow traversed across the ice to Lt Roberts and tied him into the rope; we managed to drag him off any ice and onto the relative safety of an island of rocks.

The other team members, Marines Chris Carmichael, Tom Rawlins and Kieran Davies, then immediately started delivering first aid. We repeated the process and managed to retrieve Maj Hartley to safety as well.

Maj Hartley had badly dislocated one ankle (which he put back in place himself on the rocks) and thought his other ankle was broken, along with pain in his back; Lt Roberts had bad lacerations to his face and a suspected broken femur.

We stabilised them and covered them in as much warm kit and sleeping bags as we had, while Mne Carmichael rang the Duty Watchkeeper at our UK HQ via satellite phone to inform them of the casualties and our location.

C/Sgt Marlow made the decision that myself and Mne Davies would have to make best speed down to Gokyo village to raise the alarm, whilst the rest looked after the casualties. The

distance to the village cannot have been more than

3km but at an altitude in excess of 5,000m and after being on the go since 4am, it was probably the longest 3km of our lives.

A Sherpa greeted us and soon grasped the severity of our predicament and rang his nephew who as a turn of fortune happened to work for the HRA. Ironically Lt Roberts had been working with the HRA for some months before and we were now calling in every favour he had built up.

The HRA were equally concerned when they realised it was one of their friends in peril, but they explained it was unlikely they would be able to launch a helicopter that afternoon due to the poor weather conditions.

There was only one other party staying at the lone open lodge and, once we explained our situation to them, their Sherpa guides agreed to come back up the mountain with us to try and carry our casualties down whatever way we could. We borrowed a ladder and headed back up to the casualties.

It was late and by the time we arrived back at the accident site it was dark, due to the altitude and our sheer exhaustion the climb back up was horrendous.

Maj Hartley was in the worse position so the decision was made to carry him down first. We strapped him to our new ladder with the ropes and with the help of the two Sherpas we began the awkward descent.

At the base of the mountain where we hit the lakeside we were joined by more people from Gokyo, a mixture of Sherpas, porters and their clients.

Thanking Maj Hartley for the extra 'phys session' we gratefully swapped stretcher-bearer duties with the Sherpas. Mne Davies returned with them carrying Maj Hartley to Gokyo while C/Sgt Marlow and I turned back to ascend the mountainside once more to prep Lt Roberts for either a helicopter rescue or for the Sherpa team to return.

We found him where we'd left him with Mne Carmichael still by his side and together we watched the distant group of head torches far below contour the lake and descend into Gokyo with Maj Hartley.

After an hour or so it became clear neither the helicopter nor the Sherpa group would be coming for us; Lt Roberts broke the grim news that the HRA helicopters don't have any night-vision capabilities.

It was decided C/Sgt Marlow would return to Gokyo

to help treat Maj Hartley and better co-ordinate the rescue the next day and myself and Mne Carmichael would stay with Lt Roberts overnight.

At some point during the early hours, our two porters arrived with Mne Rawlins bringing the welcome treat of hot lemon tea and noodles and extra blankets.

At first light after catching sporadic moments of sleep we saw the sun rise over Everest high above us – this awe-inspiring sight will stay with me for some time (sadly my camera had frozen so it will have to stay as a memory).

Around 9am we heard the wonderful sound of a distant helicopter. The pilot carefully lowered a member of the HRA into place a few feet away from us. Under his direction we transferred Lt Roberts into a stretcher before the helicopter returned and both Lt Roberts and his rescuer were attached to the long-line cable and rose above us out of sight.

After a short stop at Gokyo to put the doors back on the helicopter, Lt Roberts was evacuated to Kathmandu and followed shortly after on a separate helicopter by Maj Hartley.

From here we made the final descent into Gokyo, carrying what remained of the two casualties' equipment. The next day we trekked the 25km down to Namche Bazaar to link up with the support team led by Maj Tony Ward (2IC Expedition) and C/Sgt Stu Beeston.

Without Lt Roberts' AML qualification we were unable to continue with our original plan. Once the team had recovered we progressed once more into the Himalayas, albeit at a lower altitude.

We returned to Kathmandu to recover, enjoy a well-deserved beer and purchase questionable t-shirts.

It is fair to say the team has unfinished business in Nepal and hopes to return in the future.

Maj Hartley and Lt Roberts are recovering well in the UK and even though we didn't complete our original expedition aims, I and the other team members gained a tremendous amount from the expedition.

The challenges we faced were unlike any before and coming through it as a team in those conditions and pushing ourselves to the limit was incredibly rewarding.



**N**ELSON'S County, proclaim the road signs as motorists enter Norfolk.

A reminder of the Royal Navy's historic links to the East Anglia county. But apart from being the birthplace of Admiral Nelson, and having five ships bearing the name HMS Norfolk, it is not normally an area considered to be a Royal Navy stronghold.

That is all changing – thanks to the arrival next year of the first of the UK's new F-35B Lightning II strike fighter jets.

The fifth-generation aircraft will fly from HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales – but when not at sea, RAF Marham will be home to the Lightning Force, featuring both RAF and RN pilots, engineers, avionics specialists, armourers and office staff.

And ready to greet the hundreds of arrivals will be the small Royal Navy team already established at Marham.

An RN Met Office was set up at the base in 2013; initially a team of three, but which now has grown to around 12. The longest-serving there is POHM(M) Richard 'Smudge' Smith, who arrived in July 2013.

And while an RN Met team at an air station is not unusual, it is for the RAF, who historically have had their weather requirements served by civilians from the Met Office.

"The RN Met team are not an RN enclave on an RAF station, they are here to support Marham," said the base's Commanding Officer Gp Capt Rich Davies. "The ethos of the two Services is very different and both have their traditions but anyone coming through this gate is coming to RAF Marham and new joiners for both Services won't know any different.

"The guys at the Met Office have demonstrated how to become part of an RAF base. They are a talented group of people who are working for the base."

The RN Met team, consisting of observers and forecasters, provide 24/5 cover – from Sunday evening to teatime on Friday – from their home which lies in the shadow of the control tower. Their building is one of three, the other two belong to a go-karting club and gliding club.

As well as a main forecast for the station – a lot of low-level flying takes place – they also provide forecasts for units abroad, such as 17(R) Test and Evaluation Squadron operating the F-35Bs at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

Marham is particularly exposed to north-easterly weather, with plenty of fog drifting across from the Lincolnshire Fens.

Temperatures are taken automatically

via sensors on the hour (more frequently in extraordinary conditions), while an anemometer records windspeeds.

"The type of product we produce here will be similar to that on the carriers," said forecaster Lt Kenneth Hume.

"Forecasting is similar for the Met Office here as it will be on the carriers and it is likely that the carrier's team of forecasters will come here to familiarise themselves with our work."

The first weather briefing for the station takes place between 7am and 8am, after which the morning tends to be dominated by producing a forecast for the F-35B crew at Edwards.

The Marham Met team includes CPO Jeanette Jackson, aka the Carrier Queen, as her 27-year Royal Navy career has seen her serve in the old carriers HMS Ark Royal, Invincible and Illustrious.

"I love carriers; because they are big ships you meet more people and the Met Office tends to be a social place as it is open 24 hours," she said.

"It's great that after 27 years in the Royal Navy I can be enthusiastic about serving in the new carriers; there's still another chapter for me."

The weather team are part of the Royal Navy Hydrography and Meteorology Specialisation, with joiners choosing whether to specialise in H (sea) or M (weather) and then undertaking a degree in 19 intensive weeks.

The military require in-depth meteorology – saying 'it's going to rain' won't cut it. They need the type of cloud and cover, exactly when it will rain, what pilots can expect, turbulence, visibility etc.

**T**hroughout history the environment has had a habit of defeating armies and navies – and effective forecasting has prevented catastrophe.

Gp Capt James Stagg, having consulted his team of forecasters, advised Eisenhower to postpone Operation Neptune, the invasion of Normandy, from June 5 1944.

The invasion fleet was loaded and ready to go, but ships were recalled and the boffins again checked their charts before recommending the following day, June 6, should be D-Day.

The forecast of Stagg and his team was spot on – and fortune was with them; had they waited for the next favourable combination of tides, moon and visibility, the invasion fleet would have been battered by the worst weather in the Channel for 20 years.

Today, picking up data from satellites, ground stations and remote sites, the fledgling weathermen and women are trained to analyse charts, to understand what is going on in the atmosphere, and to produce an accurate forecast.

This in turn allows matters such as radio and radar performance, wind forces, sea swells, night illumination and other phenomena to be factored in.

At the end of the day the safety and effectiveness of ships, aircraft and sailors depend on the forecasts.

**T**he first F-35B squadron, 617 RAF, which will comprise both RN and RAF personnel, is due to arrive at Marham next year.

"One of the biggest challenges is that personnel will work in fantastic state-of-the-art buildings but will live in buildings which date from the 1930s," said Gp Cpt Davies.

"The footprint of Naval personnel will increase across the station to include air traffic control, stores and, I suspect, stewarding."

Although Marham is currently a hive of activity as it prepares for the Lightning Force, currently around 90 per cent of the station is geared towards frontline operations in the Middle East with three Tornado GR4 squadrons alternating duty, which they will continue until the aircraft is taken out of service in 2019.

"It will be a bittersweet time for the station as people are our No1 priority and nearly 15 per cent of the RAF engineering footprint is here."

Capt Adam Clink, deputy commander of the Lightning Force, is counting down the days until next summer.

"We will land our first four F-35Bs here in the summer of 2018," he said.

"Elements of this station are already here to support Lightning and we are finalising support spares pack and IT requirements to optimise the expeditionary capability. There are loads of exciting challenges with this aeroplane. The pace is pretty relentless but it is going to be a massively exciting year."

From 2020, the F35 Lightning II will provide the punch of HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister HMS Prince of Wales but in the meantime Marham is working closely with the US military at nearby RAF Lakenheath, where the USAF recently landed the A variant of the F-35.

The RAF's Dambusters 617 squadron will stand up at United States Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort in South Carolina, with Wg Cdr John Butcher named as the squadron's CO designate.

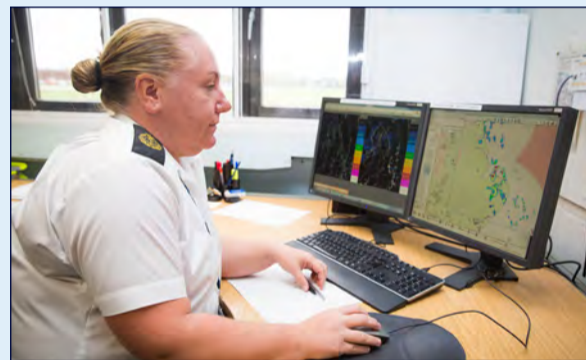
The second F-35B squadron, 809 NAS, is expected to stand up at Marham in 2023. 809 is being resurrected because its longest and strongest affiliation was with the Buccaneer bomber, a legendary low-level strike bomber flown by both the Fleet Air Arm and RAF.

So RAF Marham is set to feature in Royal Navy life for many years to come.

Nelson would approve.



## First RN Met team to be established at an RAF base help prepare for the a



● The RN Met team outside their office, observers AB Ian Killick and LH Graeme Wycherley at work; CPO Jeanette Jackson at her desk which overlooks the airfield, LS Sam Brown takes readings

● A computer-generated image of one of the new buildings constructed for the Lightning Force at RAF Marham

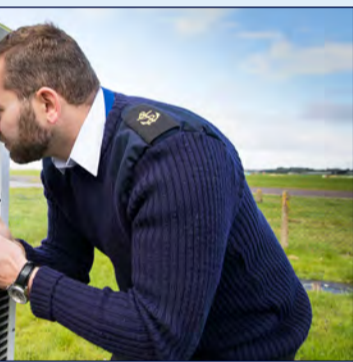
Image: BAE SYSTEMS



● A UK F-35B flew over RAF Marham as the fighter jet made its debut in Britain last year  
Picture: Cpl Paul Oldfield, RAF

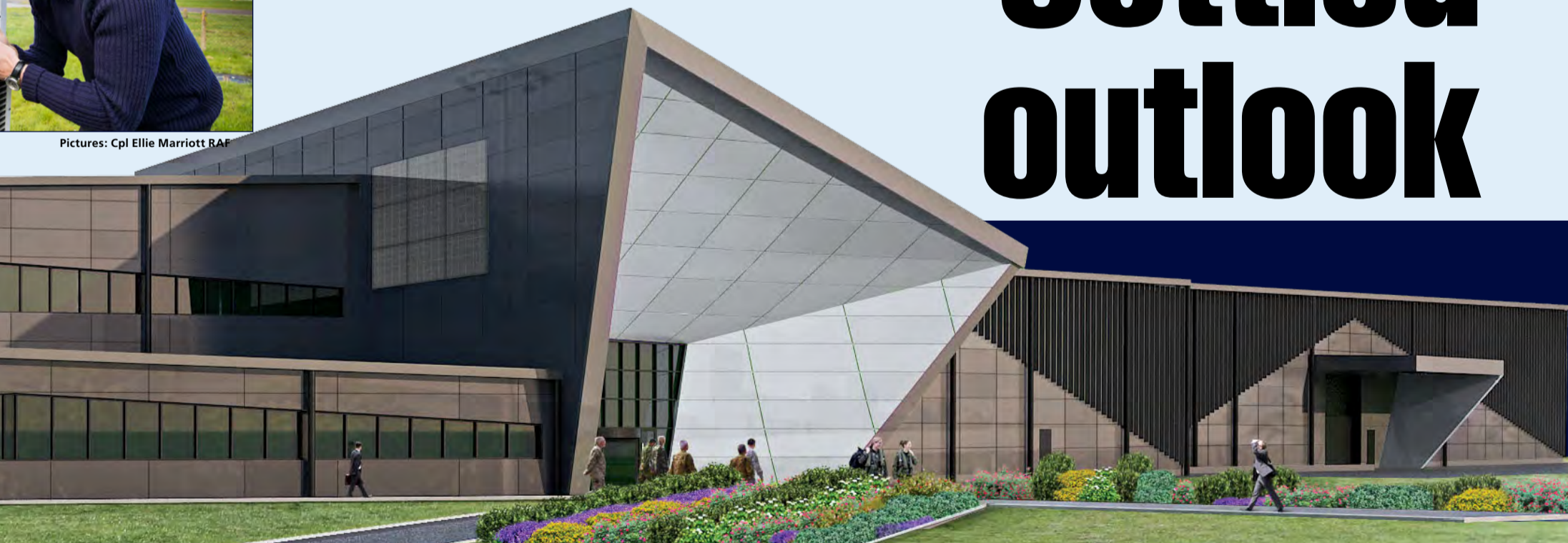


arrival of the Lightning Force – and hundreds of Senior Service personnel



Pictures: Cpl Ellie Marriott RAF

# Settled outlook



JUST like the upgrading of facilities in Portsmouth Naval Base, RAF Marham is undergoing a huge transformation to welcome the F-35Bs.

- Around £167 million is being spent to upgrade and build new facilities at the base.
- The work involves the construction of new maintenance, training and logistics facilities to serve the UK's whole F-35B fleet.
- The maintenance and finishing hangar is almost complete.
- Holes 1 and 2 of the station's golf course are being turned

- into the National Operating Centre for Lightning Force office staff.
- Around half of the base is being dug up for new power cables from a new substation.
- The work, known as Project 'Anvil' – keeping with the 'weather' theme, because the anvil-shaped cumulonimbus cloud is where lightning comes from – will see the number of contractors double from around 1,200 at present to 2,500.
- The work includes upgrading the base's two runways,

- incorporating landing pads for the strike fighter jets.
- As well as new hangars, a new access road is being constructed.
- The state-of-the-art buildings will become a place of work for around 250 military and civilian staff when they open in 2018.
- RAF Marham is second only in size to RAF Brize Norton and is the biggest single employer in Norfolk, with around 5,000 military personnel, Ministry of Defence and civilian contractors and the same number of dependants.



# Commandos swap Arbroath for Arizona to take

# Angels at



**A**RIZONA. The Grand Canyon state, the old frontier, the heart of the Wild West.

Cartoon-like cactuses and scorching sand as far as the eye can see.

A venomous rattlesnake gives a warning with the unmistakable shake of its tail, the desert rodents run back to the security of their burrows, lizards scurry to the safety of shade and the Royal Marines of Yankee Company, 45 Commando, break the stillness of the tableau, riding through in RAF Chinooks.

It may look and feel like something from a movie, but the men of RM Condor know that this is no scene from the silver screen; this is Exercise Angel Thunder 2017.

For three weeks, the Royal Marines of Arbroath have been working 4,984 miles away in partnership with

the United States Air Force (USAF) to conduct 'personnel recovery serials' - rescuing military and diplomatic staff from a battlefield or contested space - in the arid desert terrain of Florence, Arizona.

The state is the rattlesnake capital of the USA, with 12 of the 17 known species found within its borders; exotic names, such as Mojave, Tiger, Coral, Massasauga, Diamondback and Sidewinder are among their number.

Year-round warm temperatures and an incredibly diverse landscape make Arizona a reptile paradise. Home to over 50 species of native snakes, and many more varieties of lizards and desert-loving amphibians, it isn't difficult to find them even in a backyard.

But enough of the wildlife. Angel Thunder comprised

exercise serials involving a downed pilot, isolated personnel lost in unfamiliar surroundings, and the evacuation of embassy staff - all real-world scenarios that UK Armed Forces may be required to assist with.

Military personnel from Denmark, Peru and Turkey have also been involved in Angel Thunder, billed as the largest exercise of its type in the world.

Members of Yankee Coy were aboard trusty Chinooks from the RAF's 7th Squadron as medics, armed with machine guns, are parachuted in to help the injured.

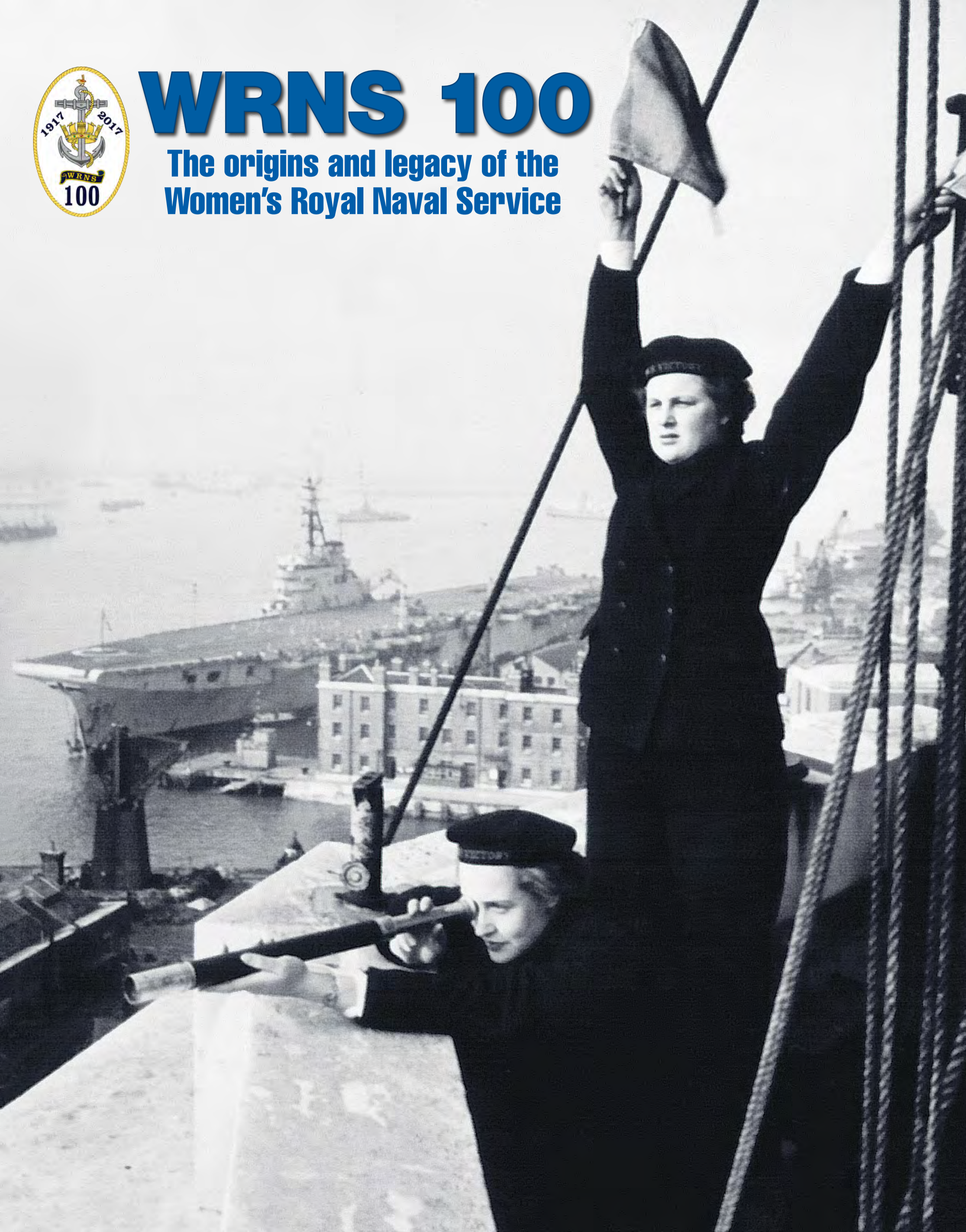
The US Air Force has run the exercise - Angel for the rescuers, Thunder for the ground forces providing the helicopters and medics with security - for the past decade, using Davis-Monthan Air Force Base on the edge of Tucson,





# WRNS 100

The origins and legacy of the  
Women's Royal Naval Service



# Fledgling service la



● Wrens cleaning depth charges in a typical workshop at Lowestoft

## Pioneering women flouted the rules

WHILE 2017 marks the centenary of the founding of the Women's Royal Naval Service, and thus a formal recognition of a role for women in the Senior Service, it by no means marks the first instance of women serving in the Royal Navy.

In fact, records of women serving aboard Royal Navy warships go back more than 250 years.

Hannah Snell joined the Marines as a male soldier in 1747 and was wounded at Pondicherry in India.

She served more than four years as Marine James Gray before retiring.

Having played her part, she claimed a pension from the Royal Hospital Chelsea – and despite submitting the claim as a woman, it was accepted.

Mary Lacy, also disguised as a man, served at sea in the Royal Navy in the latter part of the 18th Century before training and qualifying as a shipwright.

When Mary's 12-year career finished, she applied to the Admiralty for support – and she was also lucky in securing a pension.

Indeed, there are at least 40 recorded cases of women serving as sailors, usually in disguise – but in reality there were a great many more women at sea.

Wives and daughters would regularly accompany their menfolk on board British warships, making themselves useful by mending clothes or cleaning while depending heavily on the support of their husbands or fathers.

And while some made themselves scarce in the hold when the ship engaged the enemy, others would remain on the gundecks, nursing the wounded or perhaps running powder cartridges from the magazines to the gun crews.

While the presence of women at sea was not encouraged by the Admiralty, it was by no means uncommon. And their presence in land campaigns has also been noted in the annals of the Navy – for example, Eliza Mackenzie led a group of six semi-professional nurses who served in the Naval hospital at Constantinople during the Crimean War in 1854, opening the way to the formation of the Naval Nursing Officers organisation 30 years later which became Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS) in 1902.

Just prior to that, in 1897, two nurses were reported to have served in the hospital ship Malacca that took part in the Benin Punitive Expedition of 1897.

THE Senior Service had a problem, and there was a collective scratching of heads in the Admiralty.

The year was 1917, and the Royal Navy was struggling to man both the Fleet and the extensive support organisation behind it.

Actually, the answer was staring them in the face, in that very concept of *manning* the fleet.

And records indicate that it took the perspective of a woman to come up with a solution.

The idea of a women's section of the Royal Navy, thereby allowing the Senior Service to "free a man for sea service", is generally attributed to the Countess of Rocksavage, later the Marchioness of Cholmondeley.

At a social gathering in April, Sir Eric Geddes – who had already made his mark by increasing munition output and organising wartime transport, and was soon to take up the role of First Lord of the Admiralty – remarked on the problem of the pressure on manpower in the Royal Navy.

Lady Rocksavage replied: "The Army uses women for shore jobs, why not the Navy?"

The idea quickly took root and on November 29 of that year the new organisation was established, just months after its Army equivalent, the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, was stood up.

The name of the new Navy formation had been the subject of some discussion, and one of the early possibilities (the Women's Auxiliary Naval Corps) was fortunately not seriously considered, and instead the more distinguished Women's Royal Naval Service or WRNS got the nod.

Dame Katharine Furse was chosen to lead the new organisation, having made a significant impact on the work of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) organisation.

VADs were founded in 1909 with help from the Red Cross and Order of St John in order to provide field nursing support services, mainly in hospitals.

When the Great War began there were 74,000 VAD members – two thirds women and girls – in 2,500 detachments.

At the outbreak of hostilities VAD members were keen to play their part, but the British Red Cross did not like the idea of female civilians working in overseas hospitals – and the military would not accept them on the front line.

But in October 1914 Katharine Furse took two detachments to France, where they began as cooks and canteen staff.

When they suddenly found



themselves close to the front, the VADs were pressed into service and performed valuable work in field hospitals – opening the door for further deployments under newly-appointed Commander-in-Chief Katharine Furse.

As the war ground on VAD members became more skilled and more useful – by the end of the war some 38,000 VADs worked in hospitals, drove ambulances or served as cooks, in the UK and abroad.

As their range of tasks increased they were filling gaps to release trained people, treating minor ailments, doing washing, tending graves, handing out Christmas presents to wounded troops or just talking and listening to them through long, dreary hours.

But VAD leaders became concerned that the necessary conditions for the wellbeing of female VAD members were not being met. Katharine and her management team resigned.

"During the four days following my resignation, I was offered four other appointments by four separate Government departments," Dame Katharine later wrote in *Never At Sea*, an Admiralty chronicle of the first years of the WRNS published on 'Peace Day', July 19 1919.

"Needless to say, the Admiralty offer, which included most of the devoted staff who had worked with me at Devonshire House [VAD HQ] attracted me most, and the Women's Royal Naval Service became a living organisation.

"A few days after I had accepted this appointment, I was offered the organisation of women to work with the Royal Air Force, but having no wish to transfer, even though a big motor car to be attached for my own use was held out to me as a bribe (!) I refused.

"The Wrens know the rest.

"You know what a wonderful chance the Admiralty gave us and the generous way in which the Navy accepted us.

"You all realise as well as I do the tremendous honour afforded to us in being allowed to serve with the Navy.

"It will be one of the greatest regrets of my life that we may not continue in the WRNS, but there is no room for women in the Navy in peace time."

Dame Katharine was to be proved wrong on this – but it would take a further war and massive societal changes (in which the WRNS had their part to play) to shape the modern Royal Navy.

Her influence on the new organisation extended to details of uniform design – she chose the blue braid (gold braid was in short supply) and the three-cornered hat which harked back to the Navy of the Age of Sail.

The success of the early WRNS was in no small part down to the experiences of the VADs, according to Dame Katharine.

"The tradition of the VADs helped the new Services to start, and the knowledge gained before and during the first three years of

the war, tended to promptness and more efficient organisation than would have been possible had we had no foundation to build upon."

Dame Katharine also had high hopes of what her Wrens could achieve in rebuilding the country once back in Civity Street.

"We must go on and help to tidy up the world, and we must teach our children to keep it tidy."

She also observed: "I can never be grateful enough to every member of the WRNS who has so loyally endeavoured to build up what we can proudly look back upon as one of the finest women's organisations in existence.

"The gratitude of the Admiralty has been expressed to us in words, and we may all feel happy in the knowledge that we have done our best under the best possible conditions, to help the Navy to win the war, and that our help has been appreciated, and will never be forgotten."

THE influence of that supposedly short-lived organisation extended far into the activities of the wartime Navy, and *Never At Sea* records, division by division, the breadth of activities and variety of locations in which women replaced men in the Naval bases, out-stations and headquarters.

"In the domestic arts they have once more demonstrated their skill; in the world of pen and paper they have not only been admitted to ordinary clerical duties, but have been employed on important confidential work, or again, have replaced experienced Naval writers on the intricate pay ledgers.

"As motor drivers, mine-net workers, storekeepers, orderlies, they have played an important part, and in other realms where custom in the past has not placed women – as wireless telegraphists, mechanics, electricians, boiler-cleaners – they have proved their worth.

"A clear-sighted man, George Meredith [the Victorian novelist and poet] wrote many years before the war the following words – 'What Nature originally decreed, men are but beginning to see, that women are fitted to most of the avenues open to energy, and, by their entering upon active life, they will no longer be open to the accusation men so frequently bring against them of their being narrow and craven."

Vera Laughton, one of the first WRNS officers and later Director



● World War 1 Wrens working at a lathe in a workshop at Lowestoft, with an audience at the workshop door...

during World War 2, concluded that "the end is not yet.

"Those women who during the war have come forward to join the ranks of the pioneers have taken upon themselves, together with new honours, new responsibilities.

"All eyes are now turned to women as a great new force to be reckoned with in all public questions.

"Men know now what women can accomplish in times of stress and emergency, but there is even greater work to be done in the world of peace.

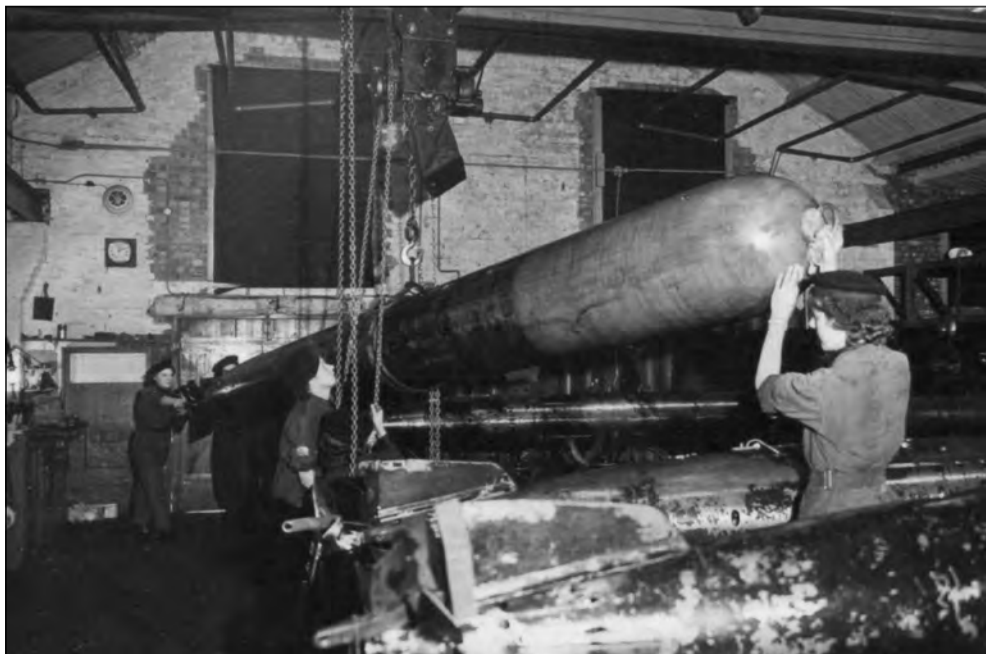
"It is for the women of the Women's Services to lead the way."

*Never At Sea* provides comprehensive reports of how women in the different geographical divisions approached their work, and the types of roles they played.

London Division, for example, acknowledged that with no Naval base, the range of activities was somewhat limited – though a number of WRNS officers and ratings learnt the use of and construction of gas masks, undergoing training at chemical factories in East London.

"Instruction included demonstrations by practical experiments in gas chambers and training in reporting and testing gas masks," wrote the author of the report, the Hon Mrs Evelyn Northcote, Divisional Director.

Another suitable occupation was training in wireless telegraphy, and Mrs Northcote noted that "in the qualifying examination the WRNS ratings



● (Left) World War 2 Wrens move a torpedo at Fort Blockhouse, Gosport

Picture: RN Submarine Museum



# aid firm foundation



the – and attracting something of an

beat all the records of the school.”

Seven of these ratings took on important wireless work at the Admiralty, keeping to the same watch pattern as their male counterparts, including all-night work.

In January 1918 the first Wrens were enrolled as drivers, and the original ten eventually gained another 60 colleagues, undertaking all the motor transport work for the Admiralty, with the exception of heavy lorries.

A cadre of 40 Wren ratings gradually took over cooking duties at the Royal Naval College Greenwich under the Chef “who did not at first welcome them very warmly, but later could not say enough in praise of the women.”

At the Battersea experimental workshops, women were employed in drawing, tracing and preparing designs for new equipment and guns, and also prepared maps for use overseas as well as by flying schools in the UK. Much of this work was highly confidential.

Whereas London was a comparatively compact division, Scotland presented significant challenges to the new force.

Divisional Director Miss Edith May had to set everything up, including her own administrative offices, and she really did start from scratch.

“For one month all the office work was done in a bedroom in the North British Hotel,” she wrote.

“Fortunately, I was able to secure the help of Miss

Gilpin, who began by being my shorthand typist, and by the autumn became Deputy Principal in my office and a loyal right hand to me.

“Early in March we settled into three rooms at 54 Queen Street, Edinburgh.

“For some days we had no furniture, but at least there was a home for the letters, papers and a typewriter, and gradually furniture and stationery began to appear.”

Miss May’s division stretched the length and breadth of Scotland, from Shetland to Luce Bay in Wigtownshire, from the Outer Hebrides to East Fortune at the mouth of the Firth of Forth.

By the time of the Armistice, there were 41 WRNS bases and offices up and running, with a total of 750 Wren ratings at work.

The Portsmouth sub-division was established in January 1918, and initially grew rapidly by absorbing the women already working in the offices and yards.

The first members of the WRNS in the city were enrolled at Eastney Barracks, the headquarters of the Royal Marine Artillery.

With numbers growing fast, the Lion Commercial Hotel was taken over in June 1918, and converted into the Lion Hostel – not a simple task, according to chronicler Frances Schreiner.

“Not merely baptism, immersion was necessary, in order to make the dirty old inn clean and habitable,” she said.

“In July, Miller’s Hotel was secured, and also successfully transformed, for it had now become hard to accommodate all the mobile members working in Portsmouth.”

By June 1918 the number of WRNS members in the town hit 782, and by November that had further increased to 1,148.

The war brought exciting opportunities to some – tracing was a special feature of the work done by the women in the Paravane Department, and two of them, on being sent to special classes by their senior naval officer, became qualified draughtswomen.

Portsmouth Wrens joined the celebrations at the war’s end, taking part in a procession through the town’s streets behind captured German guns.

In early December, when captured German U-boats were brought into Portsmouth Harbour, 300 members of the WRNS, with a Royal Marines band in attendance, marched

from Lion Terrace to the South Railway Jetty, where they had been reserved a place from which to view the procession of coastal motor boats, patrol boats and destroyers which were followed by the enemy submarines.

The death of one of the workers at the Coastal Motor Boat base during the 1918-20 flu pandemic led to the first Naval funeral accorded to a member of the Service, attended by representative of the Naval establishments, officers, senior rates and ratings of the Royal Navy, as well as a large cohort from the WRNS.

Frances Schreiner concluded: “Borne on the books of Victory I, and that means quick pay, within daily sight of the Victory herself, where she lies anchored, feeling one in work and play with the Service that has so generously accepted them as part of themselves, the life of the WRNS in Portsmouth is a good life.”

In the South-West Division a similar process of absorption was followed as had happened in Portsmouth, with the result that by October 1918 the division numbered 750 officers and ratings, with around half of them based at eight air stations.

The largest was the seaplane base at Cattewater in Plymouth, but others included Newlyn, Torquay, Padstow, Penzance and Westward Ho!

Some 200 were employed at the Royal Naval Barracks in Plymouth, working in offices, messes, the bakery, stores and in the ‘sausage factory’.

The most nautical of the South-West Wrens were those in the company in HMS Apollo, the depot ship for the 4th Flotilla of destroyers.

Their work included the roles of sail-makers, turners, fitters and clerks, and Wrens also worked on board HM Ships Indus and Powerful, which in the final months of the Great War was moored out in the stream as an accommodation hulk.

Small groups of Wrens worked in clerical roles at smaller ports such as Newlyn, Penzance and Falmouth.

It was noted that “the Wrens here had the opportunity of coming closely in touch with the force of fishermen and others who manned the drifters and trawlers of the Auxiliary Patrol.

“To these ‘very gallant men’ they pay the following tribute: ‘Everyone knows how they kept the seas clear of mines, patrolled the coast, escorted merchant ships, and attacked the enemy submarines, but everyone does not know that in all their dealings with the Wrens, where possibly a bit of roughness in manner might have been expected, nothing but courtesy was received.’”

One of the more unusual postings for Wrens in the South-West was to the Isles of Scilly, where the Wrens’ contingent consisted of one officer and eight ratings.

The *Never At Sea* chronicler observed: “That they were a well-known feature in the life of the Naval Sub-base may be judged from the fact that ABs came to be spoken of there as ‘male Wrens’.

“Life in the Scillies during the war did not lack excitement.

“In a heavy gale, parts of the house would fall in; German submarines could be sighted at work at intervals; shipwrecked people would be brought in at any hour of the day or night; and nobody knew what might be washed ashore, from a German mine to a cargo of powder-puffs

and ribbon.”

The Wrens of the Humber Division had as long a pedigree as any of their colleagues across the country, with the East Coast Command having drafted in women to replace and supplement men in every branch of non-combatant work since the spring of 1917.

By the end of that year Wrens were not just filling clerical roles, coding, signalling and responsible for telephony, they were also working in the Torpedo Shed, oiling and cleaning the tinfish, and within weeks women who showed a particular aptitude were trained in delicate mechanical work as well.

“The first women who ever learnt to adjust Naval gyroscopes were taught in the Torpedo Shed at Immingham by an old artificer, whose whole existence seemed bound up in his wonderful machines,” wrote Divisional Director Miss Mildred Isemonger.

“Others followed as apprentices in various branches of technical work required for the maintenance and repair of the different mechanisms used in Naval war, from searchlight lamps to hydrophones.”

A quite separate group of women could also be found supporting the war effort on the East Coast, though were not formally part of the WRNS.

“More again, of rougher type, had been engaged during the winter, to construct the wire nets that brought so many enemy submarines to destruction, and to clean the mines attached to the nets, and the casings of the depth charges,” wrote Miss Isemonger.

“Eventually some of the women undertook the priming of depth charges, and many learnt to splice as neatly as any sailor.

“They were quite the most picturesque of the Navy’s women workers at our base; they hailed,



● World War 1 Wrens at work in the highly-productive bakery at the Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham

for the most part, from the fish docks of Grimsby, and their customs and mode of life – those of the quay-side – unfitted them for the terms of enrolment.

“But they worked, on and off, with the best of goodwill, and were most attractive to watch as they sat about the Mining Compound in their gaily-coloured shawls and caps, weaving nets from coils of wire, or wrapping glass floats in long bags of unbleached calico and tying them securely in place.”

So with the creation of the new female force, the East Coast was quick to build on what had already been achieved.

“Naturally, when the WRNS was launched, the Humber contingent of women was merged into it, and thenceforth wore the pretty Service uniform with

pride,” wrote Miss Isemonger.

“But they were already Wrens in all but name and dress, and joined as a compact and efficient body of over 100, not counting the mine net workers.

“This, together with the fact that local conditions compelled the employment, almost exclusively, of women whose homes were on the spot, gave them a special *esprit de corps*.

“They were very proud to be the first Wrens to appear on parade beside the men of the Royal Navy before the King and Queen; this was on the occasion of Their Majesties’ visit to the East Coast in April 1918.

“Lack of space forbids details of other departments in which

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● (Left) Portsmouth area Wrens take a close look at a captured U-boat at HMS Dolphin in 1919



● (Right) World War 1 Wrens at a mine compound on the East Coast of England

● A battlefield on the Ypres Salient in 1917 – the kind of landscape through which Great War Wren Winifred Spencer travelled in 1919



## Day trip through a nightmare landscape

AN EARLY insight into the life of a Wren comes from the Admiralty publication *Never at Sea 1917-19*, “being the story of their beginnings and doings in various parts.”

Winifred Spencer was a WRNS telephonist in Ostend in 1919 when she had the opportunity to take a road trip to Lille.

This is her experience – including an acknowledgement of her limitations in describing the battlefield of Passchendaele, through which they passed.

“Before commencing to describe my day on No Man’s Land, I want to make apologies for my poor attempt, as I could never describe on paper the impression made on me by this visit to the place of one of the most terrible battles of the war.

“It is indeed quite impossible to picture anything so horrible as the utter devastation that has been wrought.

“On Sunday, March 9, 1919, we, a party of four, consisting of two Wrens and two chief petty officers, started out on a day’s motoring through Belgium.

“We intended first of all to visit Lille, and for about 20 miles all went well.

“We passed through Thourout, which was terribly damaged, and then through the Menin Woods, although there are no woods left now, for all the trees are absolutely destroyed.

“We then entered into No Man’s Land, and the car had very great difficulty in getting along.

“However, she struggled bravely through the mud until we came to Passchendaele Ridge, and there she stuck hopelessly.

“We discovered at this point that we had taken the wrong road, and were miles from anywhere.

“At first the men insisted on struggling with the car alone, as there was so much mud, so we two girls went on an expedition among the dug-outs.

“Some of them were full of water, others were quite dry, but oh! so miserable and dreary-looking. There were skeletons of horses everywhere.

“We could scarcely move for fear of treading on bones, for the ground was absolutely full of them, and for miles there was nothing but desolate country, with not even a tree left standing.

“Crosses were to be seen everywhere – Belgians, Germans, and British buried together, some of them in the midst of water.

“Everything was so terribly weird that it made us both feel as though someone were following us all the time, although there was not a soul but ourselves for miles.

“The only company we had were the rats, which were running about all over the place.

“When we returned to the car we found things very little improved since we left it, so the only thing to do was to take off our coats and help.

“We had to get duckboards and corrugated iron and raise each wheel out of the mud on to these.

“Then we had to push the car, but push as we would it refused to move an inch—we pushed it for four hours, but it was no use, and we had almost given up hope of moving it when we saw someone in the distance.

“When we eventually attracted his attention, we found that he was a Belgian, who very willingly came to our aid, and after a little more struggling we were at last successful in moving the car.

“We then had to push it for about a hundred yards, fixing each wheel on the duck-boards as we went!

“At last, about three o’clock in the afternoon, we once more had the car on solid ground.

“We were covered with thick clay mud, and could find no place in which to get a wash, except in a shell-hole, and you may guess the water was not very clear.

“As we washed we stirred up thick green slime, and could see skeletons lying at the bottom.

“After our wash we again resumed our journey, and although very muddy we were very thankful at not having to spend a night in that gruesome place with its terrible associations.

“The next place we made for was Bruges.

“We spent half-an-hour sight-seeing there, and saw many interesting sights.

“One thing which we noticed particularly was the cathedral steeple, which was so unusually high. There were 660 steps to the top of it.

“After having tea and brushing some of the mud off our clothes we started on our homeward journey.

“We passed ruins for miles, and noticed an encampment where we were informed British prisoners had been interned.

“We next passed through Blankenberge, and from there to Ostend.

“The road lay by the sea, and we could see the German batteries all along the coast.

“We arrived home in Ostend at about 7.30, after a day full of experiences that we shall remember as long as we live.

“The horrors we had seen so impressed us that we could not sleep, and we shall admire the brave men who have suffered so much even more than we did before.”

## Undaunted by Dauntless

A CAMP built at Burghfield for munitions workers during the war was transformed in 1946 into the main WRNS training establishment HMTE Dauntless, later (in December 1953) commissioned as HMS Dauntless.

Transformed is perhaps the wrong word – as the *Naval Review* of April 1978 observed, “with its huts, wire fences, dog warning notices, water tower and gate barrier, Dauntless still has a sort of ‘Stalagluft-on-Sea’ appearance about it.”

All Wrens, whether ratings or officer candidates, started their training together at Dauntless – a common background often cited as one of the main strengths of the organisation.

New entries joined on

Tuesdays, most of who arrived by train at nearby Reading.

The first fortnight was a two-way probationary period – the Service or the trainee could say ‘no thank you’ and they would part company there and then.

Until they were issued with uniforms, the new intakes wore ‘bluettes’, described by John Winton in the *Naval Review* as “a sort of coat-smock-overall made of some blue material, faintly furry to the touch.”

At the two-week mark, those who remained were issued with WRNS uniform and allocated to one of four divisions – Victory, Ajax, Theseus and Warspite.

On their fifth Friday the cohort of Wrens attended their course passing-out parade, watched by

parents and friends.

Once finished with Dauntless, Wrens scattered across the country to undergo specialist training at establishments such as HM Ships Dryad, Excellent, Nelson, Pembroke and Seahawk.

A large proportion ended up at RN air stations – swapping the huts of Dauntless for the huts of Yeovilton and the like, as John Winton observed.

By the late 1970s Wrens were pretty much integrated in many departments, but the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act was still a relatively new concept.

Thus an air station captain is reported to have had some misgivings about the direction of travel when he visited a hangar unexpectedly and saw a party of

# Working hard, p making the ulti

Continued from page 23

women work at this base, but one small domestic triumph is perhaps worth recording.

“A Naval officer of some standing, who was heard to say, when the subject was first broached, that only over his dead body should women servants come into his wardroom mess, is among the most openly appreciative now, of the services of the maids who tidy his quarters, wait at table, brush his uniform, and mend his socks.”

Not too far south, in the Harwich Division, the WRNS cohort was scattered around a host of smaller stations.

The two sub-divisions, of Shotley and Osea Island, should have had 90 and 180 Wrens respectively, but lack of accommodation meant the numbers reached just 30 and 50 by the time hostilities ended.

HMS Kingfisher, at Gorleston – the Naval base for Great Yarmouth – was one of the earliest to get under way, and saw Wrens engaged in mine-net work, storekeeping, and working as clerks and telephonists.

At HMS Halcyon II, women could be found undertaking boiler-cleaning on drifters and trawlers, depth-charge work, sailmaking, wirework (“under skilled men electricians”), storekeeping, and clerical work.

Divisional Director Miss Catherine Bennett remarked: “It was rather a disappointment to us that women were unable entirely to replace men as boiler-cleaners, but the thoroughness of the work depended a great deal on the strength of the wrists, for to get into the more difficult corner of the boilers very heavy tools had to be used, and for these the women’s wrists were not strong enough.”

The Parkeston unit, which was relatively short-lived, worked on gas masks using three rooms at the Parkeston Quay Hotel, the respirators being brought to the hotel from ships to be repaired.

The unit also had Wren gardeners.

Some 150 women were employed at the Royal Naval Barracks in the Chatham Division, including clerks, stewards, messengers, cooks and bakers.

Indeed, the bakery was one of the outstanding features of the sub-division, as the 15 women who worked there had entirely replaced men on the day shift, and made bread for 6,000 men.

On the social side, with

(Right) World War 1 Wren despatch riders



● A World War 1 Wren works on a car wheel

the help of Naval officers, the swimming bath was open to the Wrens twice a week during the summer, the miniature rifle range was also made available, and in the dinner hour the gymnasium was open for games.

Divisional Director Miss Ivy Matheson noted there had been 18 motor drivers at the Naval Motor Transport Office, including three despatch riders, who proved ‘very successful.’

Wrens were also employed as life-belt scrubbers on the Admiralty Pier.

Chatham Wrens found that “quite a reasonable amount of recreation is available”, from hockey several times a week to social evenings for singing, dancing and games.

Far to the west, the geographical expanse of the Irish Division supported only a modest number of Wrens in a handful of widely-scattered sub-divisions.

One of the more attractive features of life on the Emerald Isle was the fact that “delightful picnics have been held at different points round the Lough [Swilly], and there have been pleasant dances arranged between the Naval Barracks and WRNS Hostel.”

But the Wrens were by no means isolated from the realities of war, as Divisional Director Miss Katharine Penrose reported.

“The sinking of the Mail Steamer Leinster by torpedo in October 1918 cast a gloom over the whole of Ireland, and many terrible and heart-rending scenes were seen in Kingstown as the

survivors and victims were landed. “I am proud to be able to record the assistance rendered by the members of the WRNS during those trying hours.

“Many of them had friends on board, some of whom were lost, and the anxieties of the Deputy Principal, who was acting for me at the time, were much increased by the knowledge that three recently-enrolled ratings had been placed on board that morning, en route for England to begin work.

“Two of these were mercifully saved, and to the best of my knowledge are at this moment serving in England.

“The third, Josephine Carr [aged 19], was never seen again.

“She has the melancholy distinction of being the first Wren to lose her life on service.

“With the exception of the Leinster disaster, the members of the WRNS have not been called upon for similar help.”

Back across the Irish Sea, the Liverpool Division was an altogether different proposition, with a heavy workload and fewer opportunities to let off steam.

The division was inaugurated on March 19 1918, and apparently “the appearance of the first two Wren officers in uniform caused great excitement and disturbance amongst the population of that city for some time.”

The work at Liverpool was almost entirely clerical, with a few telephone operators and motor drivers.

Particular skills were soon in high demand, as Divisional





# Working hard, and at great sacrifice



● A Wren Boarding Officer leaves a merchant ship circa 1942 after delivering confidential sailing orders to the Master. Responsible for delivering such orders, Boarding Officers were expected to be able to board any ship under any conditions

Director Miss Florence Warnton recounted.

"The Wrens started at Holyhead base early in April, and two officers for decoding were demanded.

"These proved so successful that very shortly others were sent down, and in a very little while six WRNS officers were entirely responsible for all the coding at the base.

"In the month of May women started work at the RNA Station Walney Island.

"These were immobiles [whose lived at home, close to their place of work], but they were on the station from 7.30am, and a large hut was given over to their use for meal and recreation.

"A few clerks were also utilised at Manchester and Fleetwood.

"Plans for huts for mobile women for the RNAS Llangefni, Anglesea, were under weigh for some months; these were finally completed in October, and cooks and stewards arrived to take charge of the Officers' Mess, and to help generally in the work of the station.

"Llangefni was an active service station, with four airships, or 'blimps', for hunting submarines.

"Here again the men did everything they could to make things easy for the women, who in their turn put a cheery face on many difficulties, and helped to brighten the atmosphere of the station considerably.

"The work at Liverpool up to Armistice Day was very heavy; the hours were very long, and as most of the immobile women had long distances to travel from home to office, there was not so much time for the lighter side of life in the way of amusements.

"The girls showed the true Naval spirit, and worked late night after night with always a bright face and a smile."

The London Depot Hostel, was a busy and lively entity.

Created in May 1918 from four houses in Courtfield Road (a fifth was added later), once the chaos of conversion had settled down a sense of routine prevailed.

"By the middle of July the Hostel's activities were many," wrote Muriel Julius.

"Drafting had been, and still was, its main intention,

ward, and all drafting was temporarily suspended.

"Fortunately all pulled through successfully," noted Muriel – the 'Spanish 'flu' was an additional terror for those already worn down by war, and the unusually deadly virus is thought to have killed up to 100 million people around the world and infected 500 million.

Sadly, a second wave of 'flu struck in October, "and great grief was felt at the death of C S L Davies from pneumonia after a few days' illness.

"A Naval funeral procession was arranged as far as Paddington."

With the war over, social aspects of the hostel came to the fore.

"The crowning event of the Christmas festivities was certainly the pantomime performance which took place on New Year's Day at the Bijou Theatre of the Albert Hall," reported Muriel.

"Both words and plot were the work of the Depot Hostel, and 39 of its members took part in the show.

"It is difficult to say who enjoyed it most, the actors or the audience.

"At the urgent request of many people a second performance was given in March, the Director being present on this occasion."

News of the pantomime soon spread beyond London.

"The Chatham Division then invited the Hostel to give their show at the RN Barracks at Chatham, and by the kind permission of the Director the performers motored down, and were enthusiastically received by an audience of over 1,000, which included Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee and officers and a large number of bluejackets and marines.

"The Pantomime was also performed with great success at Greenwich and at Portsmouth."

One final division was set to be a considerable organisation in its own right, but was in its infancy when the Armistice was declared.



● LWren Smith – believed to be the only known World War 2 blacksmith

The Mediterranean Division consisted of a headquarters in Malta, a sub-division at Gibraltar and a five-strong unit at Genoa.

As the war ended, further members of the WRNS were en route to Egypt to set up sub-divisions in Ismalia, Alexandria and Port Said, but instead stopped at Malta and were put to work cyphering and managing accounts.

The Malta contingent of 47 (16 of whom were officers) worked hard and made the most of life of a Naval stronghold in the Mediterranean.

"Malta is an extremely gay place, and the members have seen a great deal of the Navy, having had the most wonderful opportunities of going over every interesting vessels of almost every kind and of several countries," wrote Divisional Director Ida Jermyn.

"The Gibraltar Sub-Division has the great advantage of being

able to get into Spain for little trips, a delightful experience for the ordinary stay-at-home girl, and everyone has a bright and pleasant time when off duty.

"Some of the officers and ratings have been to Tangier by torpedo boat for a day's trip.

"Had the sub-divisions been started in Egypt, those who were fortunate enough to be drafted there would have found delightful quarters at Alexandria, in what had previous to the war been a German yacht club, and had the charm of being right on the harbour.

"The Wrens would have bathed from the quarters and had tea on the landing stage, etc.

"The Senior Naval Officer had taken a great deal of trouble getting ready for us, and we were badly wanted.

"Ismalia is a beautiful little oasis in the desert; there would have been a very small party here working in the office of the

Admiral.

"Ismalia is on a lake, and is reached by a most interesting journey through the Suez Canal or by train from Port Said.

"The Wrens would have been housed in a small villa.

"The scenery is beautiful, and the whole place most picturesque and eastern, with camels and golden sand and blue skies, lakes, palms, sunsets and Arabs complete.

"Port Said would have had a larger sub-division, and the Wrens would have lived in huts almost on the beach.

"Had the war continued there would have been a very large Division in the Mediterranean, Adriatic and Aegean, and we should have had Wrens at Corfu, Taranto, Naples, Syracuse, Marseilles, and possibly Oran and Mudros," noted Muriel.

"This Division considers itself very fortunate, and I think everyone in it fully appreciates the opportunity it has given of interesting travel and social gaiety.

"The Wrens have been remarkably well-received and much entertained in every station, and have really had a charming time."

By the end of World War 1, in addition to QARNNS, more than 7,000 had been recruited to the WRNS, under their own officers, to replace men on Naval shore duties and in some specialist, skilled roles.

Of that total, around 2,000 women transferred across to the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF) when that force came into being on April 1 1918, the same day as the RAF was formed from the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps.

It is believed a total of 23 Wrens died in the course of their duties during the war.

The WRNS, in its first incarnation, came to an abrupt end on October 1 1919 when the Admiralty disbanded the fledgling Service.

But the spirit of the Service lived on, and while World War 1 showed the possibilities for women, the second global conflict allowed them – and not just the Wrens – to really prove themselves.

The Association of Wrens was formed in 1920 to maintain some of the camaraderie of the wartime force, and proved vital when the Admirals came calling once more



● Wren mechanics at work on submarine HMS Ursula during World War 2

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# Wrens rise to

Continued from page 25

as Hitler's ambitions increased. It was also a great compliment to those pioneering Wrens when, with conflict looming, the reconstitution of the WRNS was set in motion with little debate in July 1938.

The decision was enacted in April 1939 when the Wrens – retaining their former title – started in earnest under the leadership of WRNS veteran Mrs Vera Laughton Mathews.

Within days, some 20,000 women applied to join the newly-restored WRNS, although just 1,500 places were available at the time. Many of them had acquired a taste for Navy life and service to their country in the Great War.

Until war was declared, training was limited to weekly drill nights at the main Naval ports, and by the beginning of September 1939 around 1,000 'immobile' Wrens (ie those living at home, close to their work) had been trained in five different categories – writer, driver, cook, steward and communicator, both signals and wireless.

These Wrens were led by a small cadre of WRNS officers, and in addition there was a separate group of specialist WRNS officers trained in cypher duties.

New recruits had to pass an initial medical then waited until they were called up.

Once they reached their training depot they were given a brief introduction to Naval discipline and procedures.

Over the course of three weeks the probationer Wren learnt the basics of Senior Service life, including basic Jackspeak, the language of the Navy.

There was plenty to pack in, both academic and fitness-related, so shore-time was restricted to a few hours.

If she lasted the course and was still keen to join up, the new Wren would be enrolled into the WRNS and issued with kit.

She would then either enter the next phase of specialist training, or head off to her first draft at a Naval base or establishment.

But the service quickly became a victim of its own success as

demand for officers and ratings far exceeded planned supply, so special 'mobile' conditions were drawn up and units created across the country.

Rapid expansion continued through 1941 and 1942, not just in numbers but also in the range of tasks which were opened up to Wrens.

This was in part driven by technological development of ships, aircraft and weapons, and the growing demands of the Fleet Air Arm and Combined Operations.

The first party of WRNS sailed for overseas duty in January 1941 – one officer and 20 Chief Wren special W/T operators, bound for Singapore.

That same year WRNS units were set up in Washington and Gibraltar – but tragedy struck the latter draft in August in the steamship *Aguila*, which was torpedoed without survivors.

Among the victims were a party of 22 Wren officers and ratings, and a Naval Nursing Sister.

A volunteer draft of replacement Wrens set out the following month, and completed the journey without mishap.

Tasks were being added to the WRNS inventory almost by the week, and by the end of 1941 the list included bombing range markers (essentially carrying out the donkey work on RN air station weapon ranges), parachute packers, aircraft checkers and fabric workers (looking over an aircraft's moving surfaces and making minor repairs to the skin of fuselages and wings), vision testers, cinema operators, and the prestigious role of boat crew.

The WRNS Benevolent Trust was inaugurated in 1942 to support Wrens through the war – and to help with the transition back to civilian life, whenever that would come.

At the time there were so many women applying to join the WRNS that applications were only considered in certain specific fields for women with the right qualifications.

And the safety of shipping in the heart of the nation's capital relied to a greater extent on the WRNS – almost 100 women were

trained and deployed to watch for the fall of enemy mines into the Thames, noting the location so that they could be dealt with promptly.

The influence of the Wrens continued to spread as the tide started to turn in the favour of the Allies – there were, for example, WRNS officers on the British delegations at the Allied conferences of 1943 and 1944.

By the autumn of 1944 the WRNS reached its peak, with almost 75,000 officers and Wrens at 50 establishments in the UK and abroad, including the Middle East, the Far East and Africa.

Cypher and coding officers and ratings served at sea in the so-called Monsters, the ocean liners that had been converted to fast troopships, including the *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*.

The value of the WRNS to the Senior Service – and the Allied cause – in the latter stages of the war cannot be overemphasised.

At Bletchley Park and its outstations, Wrens were the sole operators of the vital British code-breaking bombe machines, with more than 1,600 being involved by the end of the war.

The vast majority of Confidential Book Offices were exclusively manned by the WRNS staff, for example.

And the Normandy Landings were amongst the Wrens' finest hours; cooks and stewards ran a round-the-clock catering service for 800 officers at the Combined HQ in the Portsmouth area alone, while down in the harbours, ports and creeks, Wren mechanics carried out work on the various landing craft and ferried sailors and supplies between ship and shore or ship to ship.

At this stage of the war, across all theatres, more than half of the total communications staff of the Royal Navy consisted of WRNS personnel.

And Wrens could also be found supporting Royal Marines formations, a sub-group that had its one unique name, the MaWrens.

It is estimated that around 100,000 women served in the WRNS at some point during World War 2, and the weeks after



## Echoes of the past

AN iconic image from the '90s (above) was recreated earlier this year (below) to help mark the centenary of the creation of the Women's Royal Naval Service.

The group pictured joined Type 22 frigate *HMS Brilliant* in Devonport in October 1990 as part of the first cohort of Wrens to officially serve at sea in a Royal Navy warship.

The recreation below was on board Type 45 destroyer *HMS Dauntless* in Portsmouth, when former Wrens and families of wartime Wrens joined serving sailors before the formal launch of the 'Pioneers to Professionals' exhibition at the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

The choice of ship was deliberate – an earlier *HMS Dauntless* was the former WRNS training base at Burghfield, near Reading, which closed in 1981 when training transferred to *HMS Raleigh*.

Amongst the visiting veterans was former LWren Radio Operator Melissa Thompson, who served in the WRNS from 1989 and transferred into the Royal Navy before retiring from service in 1995.

Melissa, who donated a number of items to the displays in the exhibition, was one of the first Wrens to go to sea, and like the other visitors was given a tour of the state-of-the-art air defence ship.



## 'A new job – and a new way of life'

LITTLE more than half a century after the formation of the WRNS, life for a woman in the RN appeared to have moved on.

A brochure, published by the Director of Public Relations (RN) and the COI stated: "Ask any Wren and she will say that if you join the WRNS you will not only begin a new job, but a new way of life – a life that is exciting and different."

Serving at a Naval base "within sight of sea and ships", a Command HQ or an air station, Wrens were said to keep the Senior Service efficient as an essential part of the Royal Navy.

"Members of the WRNS do many important jobs", the brochure continued; staffing communications centres and carrying out much of the Navy's clerical and accountancy work both at home and overseas.

They could "help" maintain aircraft, drive vehicles, plan and plot exercises, cook, issue stores, assist dental surgeons and operate telephone switchboards.

WRNS officers might work in NATO HQ, undertake meteorological work or act as air traffic controllers at air stations.

Lifestyle was a selling point, with opportunities to travel or to study.

"Accommodation, recreation and social life go with the job," the blurb continued.

"Wrens live in comfortable quarters within Royal Navy or Royal Marines establishments.



Rooms are tastefully furnished and decorated."

Furthermore, "off-duty, Wrens wear civilian clothes and are free to enjoy the social and recreational life of their establishment."

The list included amateur dramatics, mountaineering, sailing, riding, tennis, swimming or dancing in the social centre.

In broad terms, the fields of work open to a Wren in 1970 were technical, semi-technical, communications, secretarial, supply, household, dental, administration, and education and welfare.

Entering the technical field as an Air Mechanic required "a good education, including basic maths" and a minimum height of 5ft 1in.

The work was for "mechanically-minded girls who like the outdoor life, who do not mind being windswept and grease-stained and can tolerate the fairly high noise level of modern aircraft engines."

Another option was Cinema Operator, spending "most of her working hours showing instructional films in Naval establishments", earning extra pay after hours by volunteering to show entertainment films.

This was a job for a "practical, level-headed girl who is interested in machinery and good with her hands" as well as being no shorter than 5ft 2in.

Semi-technical roles included Meteorological Observers (requiring "neat penmanship"), Radar Plotters and Weapons Analysts, responsible for assessing and analysing the results of weapon practices.

Comms posts included radio operators ("a clear speaking voice is an asset"), who should remain calm in an emergency, Radio Operators (Morse) and Switchboard Operators.

Wrens opting for secretarial roles might find themselves as one of three types of Writer – General, Shorthand or Pay – and would be expected to undertake filing and typing duties as well as maintaining files, with specialist training being given when necessary.

Supply posts covered Stores Assistant (Victualling) – accounting for and issuing food, and helping to prepare and issue the daily rum ration; Stores Assistant (Clothing), which included issue and sale of uniform and personal equipment, including cutlery and crockery; and Stores Assistant (Stores), who would issue components, tools and technical equipment.

Household roles included Cook (not surprisingly, "this is a job for a girl with a liking and an aptitude for cooking"), in which the Wren would learn skills of permanent value on Civvy Street or in the home.

Steward (Officers) attended to various domestic tasks in Naval and WRNS officers' messes – making beds, cleaning rooms, waiting at table, caring for uniforms and undertaking the duties of a wine steward.

The Steward (General) looked after the general household duties in a WRNS quarters, serving meals cafeteria style, and keeping public rooms clean and tidy – they should "have a liking for domestic work".

Two options were available in Dental work – surgery

assistant (mixing fillings and sterilising instruments as well as maintaining surgery records) and hygienist, working under the direction of a dental surgeon to advise on oral hygiene and carry out minor treatments.

Administration covered regulating Wrens – responsible for the conduct and wellbeing of WRNS ratings – and Quarters Assistants, who were expected to manage domestic staff, care for linen and ensure Wrens' quarters were "attractive, homely places."

Finally, under Education and Welfare, an education assistant would help an Education Officer as he instructed ratings in academic subjects, possibly run a library, arrange correspondence courses and would also offer resettlement advice.

"Depending on her particular interests and abilities, she may run a music circle, or dressmaking and handicraft classes," according to the brochure.

Welfare workers served in Naval establishments at home and overseas as well as larger cities in the UK, and her work with Naval personnel and their families was regarded as "responsible, varied and rewarding" though hours were irregular and it could involve long journeys.

Before training for this role, a new entrant would be expected to serve as an Acting Regulating PO Wren for a year to gain experience of Naval methods and organisation.

# challenge

the Normandy Landings brought more work the way of the Wrens, as they played their part in keeping the Allied invasion force advancing in France, whether by directly supporting staff in northern France or by repairing landing craft damaged on the French beaches.

By the end of 1944 there was a discernible winding-down of Wrens activities, which continued throughout 1945.

More than half the death toll occurred in three incidents – the aforementioned sinking of the SS *Aguila*, the torpedoing of the SS *Khedive Ismail* in February 1944 when 19 Wrens were lost with the ship in the Indian Ocean, and the bombing of a Wrens' hostel at HMS *Daedalus* in Gosport on September 14 1940, which killed ten women.

Members of the WRNS were involved in secret projects, and a number of them flew operations in Fleet Air Arm squadrons, working radios or carrying out reconnaissance duties.

Navy aircraft were maintained and repaired by both men and women – by 1944 there were almost 1,600 Wren air mechanics.

When the pressure was on, the WRNS stood tall.

In his concise yet detailed book *WRNS: The Women's Royal Naval Service*, social and military historian Neil Storey points out that despatch riders set the bar high.

The first four started work with the Admiralty in 1939, forging a reputation for getting through, no matter what, in the vicious winter of 1939-40.

One Wren, 3/O Pamela George, had her motorbike wrecked by a bomb in Plymouth, so she ran the final half mile, as bombs fell around her, to deliver her message.

Ten Wren despatch riders in Portsmouth won praise from Admiral Sir William James for their reliability despite covering a combined total of 10,000 miles in a fortnight – indeed, Admiral James, of the wider WRNS contingent, wrote in his Portsmouth Letters: "There is nothing these Wrens cannot do."

The Admiral, incidentally, was a keen advocate of integration, saying that Wrens should be an integral part of the Naval Service – an evolution which would not occur for another three decades.

WRNS boat crews also went above and beyond the call of duty in World War 2.

Their normal tasks included patrolling harbours, distributing supplies and mail to warships and running liberty boats, requiring seamanship skills, stamina and the ability to shin up and down Jacob's Ladders in all conditions.

Neil Storey recounts a letter from a 17-year-old Plymouth Wren who crewed a liberty boat.

The Wren describes running a ferry service out to destroyers in the Sound, the last being at midnight as the wind was really picking up.

"We had to take 80 men out and many of them were not sober," she said.

"Before we even had started four of them went over the side."

"Luckily it was moonlight so we had no difficulty in fishing for them with a boathook."

"I just saved a fifth from going over by catching him by his gas mask, just as he was disappearing."

In the face of such compelling evidence, the Admiralty decided that maybe there was place for women in the peace-time Royal Navy.

The WRNS was rapidly reduced in size, but having been caught out before a different approach was applied.

In early 1948 the Women's Royal Naval Reserve (WRNR) was set up to maintain links with experienced officers and ratings who would be prepared to step

forward again if needed.

And the WRNS itself was placed on a permanent footing as an integral part of the Royal Navy on February 1 1949, although it was subject to a different disciplinary code.

Although the size of the organisation was much reduced, to around 3,000, there were still exciting career opportunities both in the UK and overseas, including Malta, German, Norway and the Canal Zone in Egypt.

Many of those demobbed maintained contact with each other and the Service through the Association of Wrens and WRNR.

A smaller force saw a smaller range of jobs open to the WRNS – fewer than 25 – but throughout the post-war period one question kept nagging away at their Lordships.

If the WRNS could deliver in the crucible of war, could women not be trusted to play a fuller part in the evolving Royal Navy?

Social changes and increasing calls for equality added to the pressure, and by the mid-1970s it was decided that full integration was the ultimate goal.

Accordingly, WRNS officer training switched from Greenwich to Dartmouth in 1976, and the initial training of Wren ratings moved to HMS Raleigh (in Dauntless Squadron) on the closure of HMS Dauntless in 1981, which had trained 30,000 Wrens over 35 years.

In between those two events was another red-letter day for the Wrens, when they were brought under the Naval Discipline Act in 1977 – up until that point, Wrens had their own unique terms, and could, for example, resign on the spot, potentially causing problems for personnel planners.

The next major step was the abandonment of the 'Never at Sea' principle, with a group of 20 volunteer WRNS officers and ratings joining Type 22 frigate HMS *Brilliant* in Devonport on October 8 1990, deploying with the warship three months later to the Middle East as part of the international coalition in what was to be the first Gulf War.

It was a watershed in the service of women in the Royal Navy, because a condition of entry for all future recruits, men and women, would be a liability for sea service.

Some serving Wrens also seized the opportunity to go to sea – and 1990 also saw the first woman chaplain in the Naval Chaplaincy Service.

Shortly afterwards the Royal Marines Band Service accepted its first female recruit, and the Fleet Air Arm opened up aviator roles to women.

On November 1 1993 – the same year that the first woman Observer qualified – the Women's Royal Naval Service was no more.

The organisation was merged with the rest of the Royal Navy and ceased to exist as a separate entity, although the rank of Wren was not formally phased out for several more years.

At that point, 4,535 Wrens transferred into the Royal Navy – but the opportunities for women in the Senior Service have continued to widen over the years.

More milestones for women were achieved in 1997, when the first Principal Warfare Officer qualified, a woman won the Queen's Sword at Dartmouth and the first woman attained the rank of Commodore in the Royal Naval Reserve.

The following year, a helicopter pilot gained her wings, and after taking command of their patrol boats, two female names appeared on the sea-gong Bridge Card for the first time.

Today, the pioneering spirit of the earlier Wrens has morphed into a Service that supports equal opportunities for all, promising sailors that they will make



● WRNS officers' mess dress from the 1960s to the 1980s

progress according to talent and ability, not their gender.

This year, women in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines make up just under ten per cent of the force in the UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves.

The percentage of officers who are women in the regular Naval Service is slightly higher, at 10.6 per cent.

Women today serve as submariners, mine clearance divers, pilots, surgeons and musicians in the Royal Marines Band Service – 2017 marks the 25th anniversary since women musicians were permitted to serve alongside their male counterparts as 'Bandies'.

There are still achievements yet to be recorded – commanding officer of a capital ship and the rank of admiral amongst them.

But women have attained one-star rank – commodore, and equivalent to the Director WRNS prior to November 1993.

The most senior serving woman is currently Cdre Inga Kennedy of Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS), who was appointed Assistant Chief of Naval Staff and Head of the Royal Naval Medical Service in April this year – the first time the post has been held by someone other than a doctor.

HMS Raleigh, the Royal Navy's Initial Naval Training establishment in Torpoint, Cornwall, is under the command of a female RN captain.

Capt Ellie Ablett is the first woman to command a training establishment since a female Superintendent WRNS was in charge of WRNS officer training at the Royal Naval College Greenwich.

# Pushing back the boundaries

THE pioneering Wrens of 1917 would probably have been surprised and delighted just to see women serving in the Royal Navy a century on.

So how would they have felt if they had seen LMA Karen Campbell's cap tally?

Karen (below) is something of a pioneer herself – one of the first women to serve in



# Family connection to the original WRNS

PROVIDING service in the Women's Royal Naval Service in both World Wars, former Third Officer Marion Salter's family's commitment to the Naval Service is potentially unique, with careers spanning the last century since the formation of the Service, writes former WRNS officer Lt Cdr Heather Lane.

With her families' Naval memorabilia laid out neatly on the dining room table, 96-year-old Marion Loveland, as she is now, recalled her early life in the Royal Marines' Eastney Barracks, where her father, Charles Salter, was Assistant Paymaster RM.

Marion's mother, Lettice Clarke, and Lettice's twin sister Dorothy had previously served in the embryonic Women's Royal Naval Service, formed in November 1917.

Joining at the age of 17, the sisters were amongst the first group of Wrens to receive the newly-designed female naval uniform and hats in 1918, complete with the heavy serge woollen great coats seen in their photograph (above right).

Growing up amongst the Royal Marines imbued the young Marion with a strong sense of military duty as she learned the routines and patterns of Service life at the military establishments in Portsmouth.

Her father rose through the ranks, becoming the Director of Naval Recruiting during World War 2.

In 1939, Marion was accepted as a secretary at the London HQ of the BP shipping company. However, the outbreak of war changed the course of her life – just one day after war was declared, on September 4 1939, Marion joined the newly re-commissioned WRNS, finding to her surprise that her first draft would be straight back to her former home at Eastney where she was a Writer in the Pay specialisation of the WRNS.

Marion recalls that her tall stature made her the ideal candidate for marker during drill training, and how the RM Drill Sergeant teased the Wrens platoon, calling them 'dancing dolls' as they marched in Divisions.

As the risk from German bombing raids increased, Naval Staff and Wrens in Marion's Pay Office were moved inland to the relative safety of Forest Mere, in Liphook, Surrey, the present-day home of the Champneys Spa.

Marion commissioned as a Third Officer WRNS, training at the Old Naval College at Greenwich and going on to work as Personal Assistant to the Commodore at HMS Collingwood.



● Marion Loveland's mother Lettice Clarke (left) and Lettice's twin sister Dorothy, pictured in 1918 – the sisters were amongst the first women to join the newly-formed WRNS



● Former WRNS Third Officer Marion Loveland, née Salter, with a picture of her father Col Charles Salter RM, wartime Director of Naval Recruiting

In 1944 Marion suffered a personal loss when her fiancé was reported missing, presumed killed during the Normandy landings, prompting a move to Northern Ireland to distance herself from the place she and her fiancé had planned their future.

De-mobbing in 1945, Marion resumed her civilian career with BP, and she met her future husband, Army veteran Stuart

Loveland, in London.

Stuart's career took them both to Africa from 1947, living in Tanganyika, (now Tanzania), Kenya and the British Gambia.

Marion's son was born in Africa and spent his early years growing up there before the family returned to the UK, finally settling down in the New Forest.

Back in Hampshire, many years later, Marion was invited by a friend, Sheila Wise, the Personal Assistant to the Rothschild family then living at Exbury House, to assist with creating an exhibition commemorating the 50th Anniversary of D-Day in 1994.

Exbury House had been an important wartime HQ, loaned to the Ministry then returned to the family after the war.

Exbury's D-Day anniversary exhibition proved to be a success, and inspired by the event, a request soon came for the Exbury Veterans Association (EVA) to be formed to maintain the veterans' re-established camaraderie.

Today Marion Loveland is still the Secretary of the Association, coordinating social events and activities, and she maintains links with other military associations and reserve units in the South.

Describing herself as very much "a woman of my time", Marion said: "I do admire what the modern, talented women of today are achieving but it wouldn't really have been my choice to have served at sea."



● WO2 Ann Miller meets the Princess Royal

Telic in 2003.

Ann taught flute and saxophone at the School of Music before taking the M1's Course and the year-long Bandmasters Course in 2009-10.

She became a warrant officer last year, and is currently serving as Headquarters Co-ordinator at the Band Service's HQ.



● Former Wrens – some still serving – gather at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, to celebrate WRNS 100



● The WRNS 100 perry buoy is handed over at HMS Raleigh by Babcock employees

# Past and present meet to celebrate

## Focus on the women

CELEBRATIONS marking the centenary of the foundation of the WRNS have come in many forms, and the pace shows no sign of slowing.

More than 100 events have happened or are in the diary, from small informal gatherings to major London ceremonies.

Britannia Royal Naval College celebrated with an afternoon reception on the College Quarterdeck, when Commandant Anthea Larken, Director WRNS from 1988 to 1991, was invited to cut a celebratory cake.

Former members of the WRNS – some still serving in the Royal Navy – met Officer Cadets and were given a tour of the College, seeing a display of WRNS uniforms, photos and line books from the College archive.

WRNS Officer training moved from Greenwich in 1976.

HMS Raleigh took delivery of a specially-commissioned perry buoy which they planned to use at a WRNS gathering in the Torpoint training base.

The buoy was received by CO Capt Ellie Ablett and ex-WRNS officer Mrs Jacqueline Clink.

Made by Babcock staff at Devonport, the buoy will feature at WRNS 100 events around the UK, ending up at St Nicholas' Church, HMS Drake, as a permanent celebration of the WRNS.

The Raleigh WRNS 100 was



● Ex-World War 2 Wren Jean Turner at Chatsworth House with Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock, ET Baily Hill, CPO Debbie Faben and RHS project manager (and former Wren) Diana Levy

due to take place as *Navy News* went to press.

World War 2 Motor Transport Wren Mrs Jean Turner, 92, met up with serving Naval personnel at the inaugural Royal Horticultural Society Flower Show at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire.

To mark the WRNS centenary, the RHS commissioned an artist to create a display.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock – a keen gardener – said he was “delighted

that the RHS has recognised WRNS 100, an important naval centenary in 2017”.

Jean also had the opportunity to meet one of today's youngest serving women in the Royal Navy, 17-year-old ET Baily Hill, accompanied by her squadron chief, CPO Debbie Faben, who had initially joined the WRNS but transferred to the Royal Navy when the WRNS disbanded, and was one of the first women to volunteer for sea service.

*PIONEERS to Professionals: Women and the Royal Navy* focuses on the history of women working in the Naval Service.

The exhibition, at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth, reveals some lesser-known stories of women at sea, reaching back more than 250 years to the times when a woman's contribution was disguised or unofficial.

The exhibition highlights women's involvement and impact in both world wars, the Cold War, integration of the WRNS with the Royal Navy and the continued efforts of female personnel today.

Exhibits illustrate the role of women in the Navy in the widest spectrum, ranging from a rare World War 1 rating's uniform (only 5,500 women served during the 20 months the service operated in the Great War) to an oboe owned by a member of the Royal Marines Band Service.

Curator Victoria Ingles said “Historically the work of Naval women was rarely recorded and often overlooked, yet thousands have actively contributed to worldwide naval operations over centuries.

“During this time women have undertaken a huge range of jobs and have often confounded expectations about what they could do, and this exhibition seeks to bring some of these inspirational stories to attention.

“We are also keen to highlight the everyday experience of naval women past and present and are encouraging visitors to contribute their own stories helping us to fully reflect the scale and significance of women's work within the Navy.”

The exhibition runs until January 2018.

## ‘A mighty sisterhood’

THE Association of Wrens – Women of the Royal Naval Services – was formed in 1920 to keep the spirit of the Service alive after the Great War.

It was also instrumental in setting up the Sea Rangers, which ensured that some volunteers for the WRNS in 1939 were already familiar with the culture and skills of the RN.

After World War 2 many Wrens were demobbed and the Association flourished as those who missed the camaraderie, the status of working women, and Naval traditions were able to meet.

However, as the required Service complement diminished, so our numbers decreased.

Looking ahead, the most significant factor for AOW this century is that serving RN women are

taking advantage of our online registration, joining whether at sea, or at home.

We appreciate the effort and support made by our members and the WRNS100 project, which has contributed to this welcome result.

We have recorded over 200 applications (from both veterans and serving women) who have joined this year.

As one of the Association's life members said: “The Association of Wrens is a mighty sisterhood of women who span many generations of incredible Naval service to their country, helping to protect our national interests and supporting our nations' maritime culture.”

www.wrens.org.uk



## WRNS 100 dates for your diary

- Thu July 6: Comms Wrens Summer Lunch – Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth;
- Thu July 6: Launch of exhibition at Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich: *Untold Stories: WRNS at Greenwich*;
- Fri July 7: RBL Commemorative Ceremony *Women at War 100* – National Memorial Arboretum;
- Sun July 9: Sea Sunday Services at Plymouth (St. Andrew's Church) and Nottingham (St. Mary's Lace Market);
- Wed July 12: HMS Vivid, Plymouth – Open evening to commemorate WRNS100 at the RNR unit;
- Thu July 13: HMS Drake, Plymouth – Waterfront Tour, Heritage Centre Open Day, refreshments and Band;
- Sat July 15: The WRNS100 London Celebration at the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich;
- Thu July 20: Seafarer's UK and WRNS100 Centenary Gala Dinner – Holiday Inn, Armada Way, Plymouth;
- Fri July 21: Weymouth – Launch of WRNS100 flower bed display at Greenhill Garden;
- Fri July 28: HMS Collingwood Wardroom, Fareham – WRNS100 Afternoon Tea;
- Fri Aug 4: HMS Sultan Wardroom, Fareham – WRNS100 Ceremonial Divisions and fish and chip lunch;
- Sat Aug 5: WRNS100 Centenary Dinner on board HMS Trincomalee, Hartlepool;
- Thu Aug 10: WRNS100 Cruise and Afternoon Tea on

- board Teesside Princess, Stockton Quayside;
- Sat Sep 9: AOW Barbecue and Disco – Cheltenham Chase Hotel, Brockworth, Gloucester;
- Sat Sep 9: RNAS Culdrose celebrates WRNS100 – exhibition, afternoon tea and dinner;
- Fri Sep 29 – Sun Oct 1: HMS Nelson, WRNS100 Celebratory weekend – including ship visit, ceremonial sunset and dinner;
- Sat Oct 7: HMS President, London – WRNS100 Afternoon Tea Party;
- Mon Oct 9: HMS Victory, Dinner for women serving in today's Royal Navy to celebrate WRNS100;
- Wed Oct 11: Annual Service for Seafarers – St Paul's Cathedral, London celebrating the centenaries of the WRNS and Seafarers UK;
- Wed Oct 18: Joint Force Command, Chicksands – WRNS100 Celebration in the WO & SNR Mess;
- Fri Nov 3 – Sun Nov 5: Dauntless Association Reunion Weekend, Hayling Island;
- Sat Nov 4: Commemorative Service and dedication of WRNS100 Commemorative Stone – Portsmouth Anglican Cathedral, followed by a Celebratory Reception in Portsmouth Guildhall;
- Sat Nov 11 – Sun 12: Remembrance Weekend, London – Festival of Remembrance and Parade of 100 former Wrens at the Cenotaph;
- Sun Nov 12: Remembrance Sunday – WRNS100 wreaths to be laid in 102 locations worldwide
- Fri Nov 24: WRNS100 reception and dinner aboard HMY Britannia, Leith;
- Sat Nov 25: HMS Scotia, Rosyth – WRNS100 anniversary supper and dance evening;
- Sun Nov 26: Scottish WRNS100 church service at Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh;
- Tue Nov 28: RNAS Yeovilton – WRNS100 celebrations to include visit to FAA Museum, Historic flight, tours, lunch, tea and dinner;
- Wed Nov 29: Formation of the WRNS Centenary – private service in the Chapel, National Memorial Arboretum
- Fri Dec 8: AOW/WRNS BT Fundraising Dinner, Union Jack Club, London;
- Sat Dec 9: Annual Carol Service – St Mary le Strand Church (the WRNS adopted church), London.

## Thank you to...

THIS supplement was written by Mike Gray. The following people and resources proved invaluable in its production:

- Victoria Ingles, Curator of the WRNS 100 exhibition at the National Museum of the Royal Navy, which also supplied images;
- Neil R Storey, author of *WRNS: The Women's Royal Naval Service* (ISBN 978-1-78442-039-0)
- Never at Sea (1919 Admiralty publication)
- Cdr Jane Allen (ex-WRNR, now Navy Command HQ lead on WRNS 100) and Lt Cdr Heather Lane (ex-WRNS).

www.royalnavy.mod.uk/wrns100

### Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust

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T: 023 9265 5301 E: generalsecretary@wrnsbt.org.uk WRNSBT  
W: www.wrnsbt.org.uk Registered Charity No. 206529



# part in huge combat search-and-rescue exercise

# and eagles

about 50 miles north of the Mexican border.

"For Yankee Company, this has been an opportunity to practice and rehearse a company-level deployment to an austere and arid environment," said Maj Mick Trafford RM, Officer Commanding Yankee Coy.

"We have seen daytime highs of 40 degrees and the men have been working extremely hard, often at range."

The men from Arbroath were bolstered by Danish Battlefield Medics, attached to the Company to perform specialist medical attention, while the 'Guardian Angels' of the US Air Force, whose sole purpose is that of search and rescue and personnel recovery, have been on hand to give expert advice.

The Angels are also known as pararescue jumpers, or PJs, as they are parachuted into an area, complete with guns as well as medical kit.

The exercise, which started

in 2006, was last held in 2015 and has just been revamped by making it biannual and reducing the size of the individual events.

**S**ponsored by the US Air Combat Command, it was designed to provide training using a variety of scenarios to simulate deployment conditions and contingencies, and also involved night-time exercises, with troops wearing night-vision goggles.

Commandos rescued realistic casualty mannequins – talking dummies which make a lot of noise as they respond to treatment – as well as live casualties, including Republican Congresswoman Martha McSally.

The former USAF Colonel, who volunteered for the exercise, is the first American woman to fly in combat following the 1991 lifting of the ban on women in combat. She

is the first woman to command a USAF fighter squadron, the 354th Fighter Squadron (354 FS) at Davis-Monthan.

According to the US Air Force, it is their "largest and most realistic joint service, multinational, interagency combat search-and-rescue exercise" focused on simulating deployment conditions.

As well as ground recovery personnel, specialist forces and federal agents, this year's exercise involved up to 1,000 airmen and 30 aircraft, including Pave Hawk and Super Puma helicopters, all operating out of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, which is home to several combat-rescue units and A-10 Thunderbolt II close air-support jet squadrons.



Pictures: LPhoto Will Haigh, RNPOTY, Staff Sgt Corey Hook and Technical Sgt Larry Reid Jr, USAF



# PROJECT FIREFLY MARITIME RESERVE & FTRS RECRUITMENT FAIR

(FOR RN and RM SERVICE LEAVERS ACROSS ALL RANKS/RATES AND SPECIALISATIONS PARTICULARLY - ENGINEERS, WARFARE, BATTLESTAFF, CRITICAL CARE, ODP's, CYBER, LOGISTICS and PHOTOGRAPHERS)



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# Ocean's 'blaggers' answer challenge

**A TEAM of four Senior Rates from HMS Ocean, the Royal Navy's largest serving warship, undertook the 'By Any Means' charity challenge to raise more than £10,000 in support of the Child Heart Unit Fund (CHUF) and the Sick Children's Fund.**

The challenge involved an intrepid team of ratings making their way from HMS Ocean alongside in Devonport to Newcastle via Land's End without spending a single penny.

Armed with nothing but their ingenuity and the generosity of local businesses and the general public, the team set off on their journey with the aim of competing numerous challenges along the way to raise money for worthy causes.

The genesis of the challenge came from PO(CIS) Christopher Orkney, whose young son recently underwent surgery; a traumatic experience during which he and his family were supported by both CHUF and the Sick Children's Fund.

The team travelled to Land's



End, London, Bristol, Derby, Birmingham, Nottingham, Sheffield, Manchester, Durham, Leeds and HMS Ocean's affiliated city of Sunderland – over 1,000 miles in total.

The challenges ranged from the unusual to the bizarre; the team sang the *Naval Hymn* in Manchester Cathedral, went skiing in the Manchester Snow Dome, took numerous photos in front of national landmarks and stood on the roof of the Meadowhall

shopping centre in Sheffield.

The generosity of the general public and businesses was key to success; armed only with their natural charm, the team found free accommodation in bunk houses, B&Bs and even a fire station.

For transport they received free rail and coach travel, taxis, lifts from the public and for one trip were even handed the keys to a stranger's car to travel from Cornwall to Bristol (a Mercedes no less!).



## Top honour for star chef

A ROYAL Navy chef has won the Armed Forces Caterer of the Year award.

POCS Lee Bartup was nominated for his work in HMS Enterprise during her marathon deployment, including rescuing migrants from the Med.

Operating at more than 150 per cent of normal capacity, the additional requirement to feed those rescued represented an unprecedented challenge.

In 18 months HMS Enterprise rescued 9,180 people, many of whom were malnourished and in desperate need of sustenance.

Lee played a key part in developing and implementing innovative solutions required to increase the number of meals to more than 2,300 a day – from a galley designed to produce 240 meals.

Employed during the embarkation phase as one of a small team of senior ratings leading activity at the embarkation point, Lee was also responsible for controlling the flow of frightened and confused people onto HMS Enterprise's deck.



Lee regularly boarded the flimsy, overcrowded and inherently unseaworthy migrant craft to control embarkations.

His calm authority and good humour defused several potentially hazardous situations, reassuring the scared, emotional and sometimes recently-bereaved while physically assisting the sick, aged, pregnant and young.

At the worst of times he helped recover the bodies of the deceased in a dignified and sensitive fashion.

Lee received his award from Paul Dickinson, Managing Director of Purple Foodservice Solutions and host Lucy Porter at the Cost Sector Catering

Ceremony in London.

Originally from Brighton, Lee joined the Royal Navy in 1996 as a Junior Steward and now lives in Plymouth with his wife Tanya.

He is looking forward to his next assignment as a catering instructor at the Defence Maritime Logistics School at HMS Raleigh, Cornwall.



● Rob O'Kane, chairman of United Services Hockey Club, with the award given in honour of Lt Cdr Alan Walker

## Posthumous award for RN's Mr Hockey

ROYAL Navy hockey stalwart Lt Cdr Alan Walker was honoured by England Hockey following his death in February after a short battle with cancer.

Alan joined the Service in January 1960 as an Artificer Apprentice.

This was where his passion for the sport of hockey began, and he soon picked up his Colours for representing the RN and UK Armed Forces. He made more than 100 appearances for the RN between 1968-1985.

Alan gained his HA Coach qualification in 1970 and the Senior Coach award in 1978 and was present at the inception of the present-day coach education programme in 1971.

1986 was an eventful year for Alan; he left the RN and took up the role of RN Hockey & Swimming Secretary as a retired officer at HMS Temeraire, keeping his rank of Lt Cdr.

Also in this year Alan was the England team's 'video man' at the Hockey World Cup at Willesden, where they won silver.

Post tournament Alan was invited to take up the role of HA Staff Coach. On leaving the RN Alan had to take his daughters to a new club, Havant HC, where he was soon to be invited to be their club coach. He continued in this post for most of the 90s, with Havant becoming England's top club, qualifying several times for European competition.

In 1992 Alan was asked to take on the role of England U21 Men's Manager. During his reign from 1992-94 he oversaw 61 matches including the 1993 Junior World Cup in Spain. It would have been eight more if the team hadn't had to leave the Indira Ghandi Memorial Tournament in Mumbai after a bomb was detonated near to where the team were staying.

In 1990, as part of the Notts Sport scheme, Alan was at the forefront of resurrecting Gosport HC and by 1996 they were making their mark as an



● Lt Cdr Alan Walker

outstanding example of both adult and junior hockey.

In 1997 on the formation of the new joint English Hockey Association, Alan had the honour of being the first Chairman of the National Coaching Committee, attending the FIH Coaching Conference in 1997 and then staffing the EHA Level 4 Course with Mike Hamilton and Malcolm Wood.

During all this, Alan continued his role as the Chief Coach of the Royal Navy and UK Armed Forces. His dedication to grass roots hockey within the RN in particular has made it one of the most popular sports in the RN.

He managed the CSHA on their tour to Canada in 1988 and oversaw the RN's first Inter-Service win for 24 years in 2004, which they repeated in 2005, and went on their most successful run in Inter-Service history until his retirement in 2010.

No-one knows exactly how many coaches Alan qualified in his time but it is thought to be over 500.

Alan continued his work in retirement as a Vice President to the RN, UK Armed Forces, United Services, Gosport and Nordics' Hockey Club as well as being a patron to the Hockey Museum.

In his final days he was still organising the inaugural fixture for Nordics Ladies, which took place after his death.






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www.rnrmchildrensfund.org.uk

## FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH

HMS VIVID and DEVON URNU



A TEAM of runners from the Devon URNU and HMS Vivid RNR reservists were all conquering in the Inter-Services challenge of the Plymouth half-marathon.

The team, comprising 14 runners from the Navy teams, was organised by OC Matt Reed who's been an Officer Cadet for 18 months at Vivid.

"We've been running for the RNRMC this year, a charity that is close to us as RN Reserves," he said.

AB2 Rosie Johnson, who has been at Vivid for three months in Initial Naval Training, added: "I got one hour 49 minutes. I wanted to go a little bit faster but it was a personal best, so I'm happy."

OC Sebastian Stoakley, pictured, from Devon URNU, said: "It's been really good fun. It's a great crowd here today. I got one hour 35 - I have to beat my parents when they do their half marathon."

The HMS Vivid ranks were the highest placed Services team and were presented with a cheque for £250 by Run Plymouth.



## K2B raises thousands

FOURTEEN staff from Clyde Naval Base raised more than £3,760 for various charities, by walking (and in some cases running) 42.75 miles in a day.

The team, made up of Royal Marines, HMS Neptune Volunteer Band, Royal Navy Veterans, Lockheed Martin UK Strategic Systems, Serco, Forces Financial and Babcock Marine, staff and their families, embarked on the annual 42/75-mile Keswick to Barrow-in-Furness walk (K2B).

The K2B walk event originated in 1966 as a result of a statement made by the late US President John F Kennedy that "every American should be capable of

walking 50 miles a day".

At that time the first Royal Naval Polaris Submarine, HMS Resolution, was under construction at the Barrow Shipyard where several American experts were involved with the project.

Team Clyde's chosen charities are the RNRMC, Marie Curie Cancer Care, Lupus, Parkinsons UK, Alzheimer's Scotland and Arthritis UK.

The funds are presented to the charities at an awards night in Barrow later in the year.

The current record-breaking total given to charity was in 2016 when over £350,000 was given out to over 200 charities.

## Riders pay respects

ROYAL Navy officers from MarCap at NCHQ cycled 150 miles along the Somme to pay their respects to the fallen of World War 1 and raise funds for the RNRMC.

Personnel wanted to mark the centenary of Passchendaele, along with the Battle of Ancre, in which the 63rd Royal Naval Division was involved.

Over two-and-a-half days the group visited the major cemeteries of Tyne Cot, Menin Gate and Theipval.

Capt Paul Carroll was requested to lay a wreath at the Menin Gate as part of the Last Post ceremony - an event

that has been conducted every evening since 1928, except during World War 2.

As well as visiting the main cemeteries, the group visited the final resting place of Capt Barcroft Fayle, a relative of Lt Christopher McElwaine.

Fayle was a Medical Officer in the Royal Army Medical Corps who had been ordered not to 'go over the top' and stay behind. He disobeyed his superiors and charged the enemy with his men before being mortally wounded.

A poignant few days that highlighted the importance of not forgetting the sacrifice that so many have made.

# Sun sets on epic sail



TWO intrepid sailors have returned from their Royal Navy Bosun Challenge - a gruelling bid to sail the furthest ever in a two-man dinghy.

Mark Belamarich and Acting Petty Officer Phil Slade are confident they have broken their own world record, set last year in a Royal Navy Bosun training dinghy.

The pair sailed 331.5 nautical miles through unpredictable and difficult conditions from Royal Marines Stonehouse in Plymouth to North Wales, an increase of 22.25 nautical miles on last year when they sailed from Plymouth to Portsmouth.

Phil, an experienced sailing instructor, and Mark, an MOD sea survival instructor, have also been raising money for Bowel Cancer UK (Mark is a bowel cancer survivor) and the Royal Navy/Royal Marines Charity. They have so far raised £3,500 and are hoping to improve on this.

Phil said: "We are both very pleased to have broken our own world record and made it that bit more difficult to be broken by anyone else. We aimed to raise awareness of adventure dinghy

sailing and benefit our chosen charities."

He added: "This was a brilliant experience and was everything an adventurous activity should be.

"This showed the military ethos and our teamwork at its best. We were pushed to the limit physically and mentally by the conditions.

"We survived everything the sea could throw at us - from flat calm and inevitable boredom when we were either going nowhere, or backwards, to hairy gusting gales making the boat exhausting to keep upright and going in the right direction.

"The waves often swamped us and whitebait were thrown into the bottom of the Bosun. During the calmer conditions dolphins followed us and a sparrow hitched a lift."

Mark said: "We will never forget this experience. We've had the adventure of a lifetime. It was tough, there's no denying it. But it makes it all the more worthwhile being hard and at the same time boosting funds for the charities, especially Bowel Cancer UK, which has a vital role in helping people like me. Look what I've achieved as a bowel cancer survivor."

Tim Corke, Regional Fundraiser for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, said: "What Phil and Mark have achieved is incredible. Sailing such a huge distance in a two-man open dinghy over five days at the mercy of the weather really shows their dedication, skill and moral fibre. We cannot thank them enough for undertaking this incredible fundraising challenge.

"The money that they have raised will be put to good use funding projects to support sailors, marines and their families for life, and also research into bowel cancer to save lives."

Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, the first person to sail single-handed and non-stop around the world, said: "My congratulations and best wishes to Phil and Mark for taking on and completing this difficult challenge.

"The unstable weather and tidal conditions on this coastline make sailing taxing at the best of times, but in such a small boat what they have accomplished is nothing short of remarkable."

To make a donation visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/bosunchallenge500>



## Cabbies make last return to France

GENEROUS drivers of London's iconic black cabs transported WW2 veterans back to the battlegrounds of Normandy for the 73rd anniversary of D-Day.

Funded by the Taxi Charity and the RNRMC, 87 taxi drivers gave up their time to travel with 97 veterans over to France to commemorate the liberation of mainland Europe from Nazi Germany's occupation.

Highlights of the journey included a trip to Pegasus Bridge to attend a ceremony at the Memorial Pegasus Museum.

The veterans also laid wreaths at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery at Ranville, attended a Royal British Legion Service at Bayeux CWGC and a reception given by the Mayor of Caen at the Town Hall.

Six of the veterans were officially presented with the Légion d'Honneur from the



● Peter Kent on the ferry

French Government for their part in freeing the country.

Navy veteran Peter Kent, 94, said: "I've been on numerous trips with the Taxi Charity and

they're a smashing bunch. We have a wonderful time - it's the highlight of my year. I'm very grateful for what they do for us."

Graham Pike, London taxi driver and member of the charity committee, added: "The veterans gave their best years for the freedom that we enjoy today, so it's only right that we cabbies give back our time to them as they grow old.

"When these brave men and women travel across Europe in a convoy of iconic London taxis, people line the side of the road to wave and cheer because they know where we are from and what we stand for.

"We never forget the sacrifice of those who didn't return home."

Due to the stamina and the fitness levels of the veterans, this was the last trip that the Taxi Charity arranged.

## Opinions proffered

SERVING personnel were invited to offer their opinions on what they need from 'their' charity.

The 'needs workshop' was held at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth by the Grants Department of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, facilitated by the charity's Director of Relationships and Funding, Mandy Lindley, and RNRMC trustee WO1 Gary Nicolson.

A wide range of current RN and RM personnel were invited to voice their opinions on what they think the RNRMC currently does for them as well as how they would like to see the charity support them in the future.

The aim of the morning was to collect information and develop an understanding of need as presented by serving personnel which will support the morale and efficiency of the Service.

As the RNRMC looks to plan funding themes and target resources for 2018 and beyond it is important they hear directly from their beneficiaries when planning how best to support Naval Service personnel.

The information collected will directly influence where the Naval Service Amenity Fund (NSAF) is utilised and used to benefit the naval community.

Event hosts included Head of Grants Anne Carr and Grants Officers Michelle Midgley, Sarah-Jayne Craig and David Williamson.





## Entente cordiale for RN pair

YOUNG Officers from Britannia Royal Naval College have been given the chance to take the helm at sea onboard two French Naval Training Ships.

Midshipmen Jonathan Riley and George Walker (pictured above) spent two weeks operating with the French Navy while undertaking their Initial Warfare Officer training.

Throughout that time they were fully integrated into the watch bill onboard the FS Lynx and FS Guépard.

The ships are part of the French *Marine Nationale's* training squadron and are used to teach practical navigation and manoeuvring to students at the French Naval Academy and the Brest Naval Instruction Centre.

During a five-day journey, the two Royal Navy YOs spent time on both ships. They were entrusted with several four hour Officer-of-the-Watch rotations and were able to participate in a variety of training manoeuvres such as replenishment at sea, restricted navigation and man overboard drills.

Mid Riley said: "The time at sea provided real-time shipping situations and reinforced the importance of situational awareness and fixing without relying on radar and other navigation aids."

"Other benefits included a strengthening of our practical rules of the road knowledge, especially at night, and our ability to adapt to the continuous, and at times violent, pitching and rolling of the ship."

The two weeks on board also gave the YOs the chance to develop professional working relationships and friendships with the French Naval Cadets from *École Navale*, the French Navy equivalent of BRNC.

Mid Riley added: "By the end we had formed a strong bond with the French Cadets, likely because of the long hours spent working together, our similar cultures and surprisingly similar senses of humour."

"The Commanding Officers of both vessels were incredibly welcoming and worked hard to foster a sense of inclusion into the ship's crew despite the language barriers."

The exchange was made possible thanks to a twinning agreement between BRNC and the *Ecole Navale*.



## Albion helps prepare hospice for children

YOU can't beat a cuppa after a spot of hard graft.

Sailors from HMS Albion take a break from helping to restore an old monastery on Merseyside so it can care for dying youngsters and their families.

A team from the assault ship headed up the A38, M5, M6 and M62 to West Derby on the eastern edge of Liverpool to help the folk from Claire House Children's Hospice.

The hospice provides specialist care and support to seriously and terminally-ill children – and is one of the assault ship's chosen charities.

With Albion placed in extended readiness for several years, the affiliation was put on hold, but with the ship now fully crewed up and about to return to sea to resume duties, the link with the hospice has been restored.

The Claire House Liverpool Hub – which lies close to the world-famous Alder Hey Children's Hospital – is due to open this summer, with

the hospice team relying on donations and volunteers to ready the building.

"The crew worked really hard to help us renovate the space, so that even more local children and families can receive support from the hospice," said the hospice's community fundraising manager Amanda Mitchell.

"We're really looking forward to being more involved with the ship over the coming years and wish them the best of luck with their return to sea."

Albion's Commanding Officer Capt Tim Neild said he was more than happy to spare some of his ship's company for a few days' work in Liverpool.

"We're incredibly proud to support such an important children's charity. The staff do amazing work to support the incredibly-brave children and their families."

"My crew and I will continue to do the best we can to raise money and support future initiatives."

# Wrens walked 100 miles for centenary

A GROUP of serving and veteran women have walked 100 miles to mark the centenary of the Women's Royal Naval Service.

The walk was the brainchild of WO1 Barbara McGregor, who also wanted to raise funds for Naval charities.

Barbara persuaded colleagues WO1 Annette Penfold, former CPO Wren Radar Annie Lagrue and L/Wren Radio Operator Lorraine Cox to join her in walking 100 miles in nine consecutive days, starting from Newport and ending at HMS Cambria Royal Naval Reserve in Sully, Cardiff.

The walk was carefully mapped out to engage with local groups and personalities en route; ex-Wren branches, community and city councils, local schools, the Lord Lieutenant of West Glamorgan, Naval and Royal British Legion personnel, Naval wives, rugby club supporters, the Dean of Llandaff Cathedral, Aberfan Wives Club, the RNLI,



● From left, WO1 Penfold, former L/Wren Cox, Chief Wren Lagrue and WO1 McGregor at Cardiff Bay

Picture: LPhoto Caroline Davies

and the Swansea University URNU.

On completion of the WRNS 100 walk, a garden party celebration at HMS Cambria was hosted by the Unit Commanding Officer Cdr Steve Fry RNR.

Senior women Naval officers

of the Royal Navy and Maritime Reserves were also joined by WRNS veterans, the broadcaster Roy Noble, current Naval Service personnel, and families and friends.

Barbara said: "We achieved the aims of our 100-mile challenge;

we exceeded the target of raising £3,000 for the WRNS 100 centenary project, all the while integrating with local communities and spreading the message of the importance of women in the military."

Many other WRNS 100 celebrations are being held during 2017 throughout the UK and overseas.

The exhibition, *Pioneers to Professionals – Women and the Royal Navy*, is on show at the National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth until next January.

For more information on forthcoming events visit: [WRNS100 website: http://www.wrns100.co.uk/](http://www.wrns100.co.uk/)

You can also find out more at the WRNS100 feature page: <http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/features/wrns100>

To contribute to the walk fundraising effort visit: <http://m.virginmoneygiving.com/mt/uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserProfilePage.action?userId=WRNS100WalkInglWales&isTeam=true>



## Epic challenge ahead

SAILING charity Turn to Starboard has launched a campaign to help fund a round-Britain sailing challenge.

The Round Britain Challenge 2017 sets sail on Saturday August 5 and the public are being asked to give what they can and come up with ideas to help raise funds towards the £50,000 expedition.

A team of 21 veterans affected by military operations, either physically or mentally, will challenge their minds and bodies by sailing 2,000 miles around the British Isles on board a tall ship.

The eight-week voyage, which is being partially funded by the Royal Foundation, will set sail from Falmouth in a clockwise direction and navigate Britain's coastline visiting places such as Liverpool, Northeast Scotland, Orkney, Isle of Mull, Clyde, Newcastle and Ipswich.

The epic expedition will help the crew – many with little or no sailing experience – to re-engage and gain new skills while helping build confidence which can lead to new careers.

While the voyage is free to participants, the cost to Turn to Starboard is estimated to be £50,000, which will be partially met by the Royal Foundation.

For more information visit [www.turntostarboard.co.uk](http://www.turntostarboard.co.uk)

## Tree tribute for pilots

THE father of a pilot killed in a crash 22 years ago plants a memorial tree at RNAS Yeovilton.

Midshipman Paul Norman and Lt Andy George, of 899 NAS, lost their lives when their Sea Harrier crashed.

Their T4 twin seat Sea Harrier training aircraft crashed five minutes after take-off, three miles north of the station, on February 7 1985.

Their squadron planted a tree, marked with a plaque, at the station but it was severely damaged in storms earlier this year and had to be removed.

Paul's father Tom joined personnel at a service of dedication as a new tree was planted.

Also attending the service, led by Cdre Nicolas Tindal, CO of Yeovilton, were other members of the Norman family, personnel from RNAS Yeovilton and members of the Sea Harrier Association, some of whom were serving on 899 NAS at the time of the crash.

The new memorial tree was planted alongside the original memorial plaque outside the Command Building at RNAS Yeovilton.



## New homes for veterans

WORK is under way to transform a former Army barracks into the UK's first housing and enterprise project for Service veterans.

The multi-million pound development, at the former Erskine Barracks near Salisbury, will see it turned into a campus with homes and an innovative enterprise hub.

The development, the creation of organisation Our Enterprise, will be the first one in the UK built to address the needs of veterans by supporting them into independent living in an integrated community.

Forty-four homes will be built for former Service personnel to rent for between six to 24 months.

During that time they'll receive business and

skills training at the enterprise hub.

The project will provide a range of jobs for veterans who will be running the community café on site and their own ground maintenance enterprise alongside a range of volunteering, training and education opportunities to support their move to independence.

Our Enterprise agreed to a partnership with Redrow Homes to buy the two sites and plans for 292 family properties and 44 one and two bedroom flats for veterans were approved in 2016.

The project has received a £3.5 million grant from the LIBOR Fund and £500,000 from the Armed Forces Covenant. The first veterans are due to move in next year.

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## Lost ships remembered

THE Neptune Association will hold its AGM at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire, on Saturday October 14.

A short service will be held by the Memorial at midday, followed by the AGM at 1.45pm in the Rose Room.

Attendees will remember the 836 men lost in HM ships Neptune and Kandahar on December 19 1941 – the Royal Navy's fifth worst loss of life in World War 2. Relatives and friends are welcome.

[www.hmsneptune.com](http://www.hmsneptune.com)



## Connecting at Surbiton

PROJECT Semaphore has now touched the lives of residents at the Royal Star and Garter Home in Surbiton, providing iPads and support to some of their veteran residents.

Deputy project manager and volunteer Sarah Clewes (pictured above with a resident) said "Such a beautiful place, and I was delighted to meet a number of friendly and helpful volunteers and staff members who are all

# Falklands tributes

A SERVICE of Remembrance has been held in Cardiff to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the end of the Falklands Conflict.

The event took place at the Senedd in Cardiff Bay, where veterans of the conflict joined politicians, serving members of the Armed Forces in Wales and members of the public.

First Minister Carwyn Jones gave an address before Lt Col Manny Manfred, who served in

the Falklands with the Parachute Regiment, read a poem of reflection.

Welsh Guards Bugler L/Sgt Stuart Laing sounded the Last Post in front of fellow Guardsmen.

SHIPMATES at Wansbeck branch of the RNA held a commemorative dinner at the Anglers Arms, Guide Post in Northumberland, to mark the anniversary of the end of the Falklands Conflict.

Some members were unable to attend, but those who did enjoyed a very good meal.

One feature of the evening was the vacant chair draped with the Union Jack for absent or lost companions, which was the toast of the evening.

FORMER Royal Marines officer, TV broadcaster, writer, biologist and inspirational speaker Monty Halls will join Falklands veterans at the Vernon Monument Falklands 35 charity

dinner at Trinity House on Wednesday July 19, starting at 6.15pm.

The dinner will mark the 35th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict and raise funds for the monument planned at Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth to celebrate the minewarfare and diving heritage of HMS Vernon which previously occupied the site.

Tickets, costing £295 per plate or £2,700 per table of ten, may be purchased via the Eventbrite website at [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/vernon-monument-2017-charity-dinner-tickets-34969356286](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/vernon-monument-2017-charity-dinner-tickets-34969356286)

## Summer ball in Llandudno

THE Royal Marines Association (North Wales) is holding a Summer Ball to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict.

The event, on Saturday July 8 will be held at Venue Cymru in Llandudno, and will start at 7pm for 7.30pm.

The evening includes a four-course dinner, dancing and entertainment, and tickets cost £40 per head.

For details, email [rma\\_northwales@outlook.com](mailto:rma_northwales@outlook.com) or see Facebook page [www.facebook.com/events/169725610183483](http://www.facebook.com/events/169725610183483)

The ball will raise money for military charities, and if successful could become an annual event.

## Good first year for Stowmarket

STOWMARKET branch marked its first anniversary by presenting a cheque to Newmarket Sea Cadets to help them in their fundraising efforts for much-needed equipment.

This is just one of the causes that the branch has supported over the past twelve months.

Originally commissioned with just seven 'shipmates', the branch now boasts 23 members.

During its first year, members have taken an active role in not only supporting the town and other ex-Service associations at various events, but also successfully hosted various social events to raise money for Naval charities and local worthy causes.

Branch honorary secretary S/M Nigel Rozier said: "During our first year, not only have we seen our membership grow, but we've had the pleasure of meeting new friends who have supported us, and we thank them for this."

## D-Day veterans receive medals

TWO blind D-Day veterans from Dorset received prestigious medals for helping liberate France from the Nazis.

Peter Oliver, 89, from Bournemouth, and Edward Gaines, 92, from Poole, were formally presented with the *Légion d'Honneur* by Honorary French Consul Capt. Francois Jean on behalf of French president Emmanuel Macron.

The ceremony took place at a reunion lunch held in Christchurch and organised by Blind Veterans UK, the national charity for blind and vision-impaired ex-Servicemen and women, from whom they both receive support.

Edward joined the Royal Navy in 1943, and after initially training on MGBs at Portland, he became a petrol stoker on landing craft.

He and his shipmates sailed their Landing Barge Vehicle, carrying 35 tonnes of TNT and

a bulldozer, to Omaha Beach on D-Day, where they stayed, transporting ammunition, equipment and men, for several months.

Peter Oliver grew up in Southampton and joined the Merchant Navy at 15. He was on the Admiralty Salvage Vessel Help off Omaha and Utah beaches on D-Day. It was their responsibility to maintain clearance to the approaches to the beaches.

'Help' was the first British vessel to enter a French port following the Allied invasion, and

Peter, who turned 16 just before D-Day, and the rest of the crew of 'Help' were tasked with clearing Cherbourg harbour of scuttled German vessels and mines.

On leaving the Merchant Navy Peter did National Service with the RAF Regiment.

Both men started receiving support from Blind Veterans UK last year after losing their sight much later in life due to age-related macular degeneration, a leading cause of sight loss in older people.

[www.noonealone.org.uk](http://www.noonealone.org.uk)



● Peter Oliver (left) and Royal Navy veteran Edward Gaines

## £50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our May edition (right) was Bay-class frigate HMS St Brides Bay, which was originally ordered as Loch-class frigate HMS Loch Achilly.

The correct answers were provided by Mr A Barry, of Plymouth, who wins the £50 prize. This month's mystery ship (above) had a stop-start career from the very first.

Ordered in the war as a light cruiser, her name was changed, then changed back before she was launched – incomplete – in 1945.

She was laid up and not commissioned until 1961, and soon after went back into reserve. In the late 1960s she underwent a major conversion to a helicopter and command cruiser, and was scrapped in late 1982.

1) What was her name, and 2) what is the name of the notorious American island past which she is sailing in the image?



Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Entries must be received by August 11.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our September edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

### MYSTERY PICTURE 269

Name .....

Address .....

My answers: (1) .....

(2) .....

## War dead honoured

THE deaths of 131 Naval men killed during a World War 1 bombing raid on Chatham will be commemorated in a ceremony at the Universities at Medway campus.

A service and parade, organised by RNA Chatham branch in partnership with the universities, will take place on September 10, marking 100 years since the raid took place.

On the night of September 3 1917, 698 men were either asleep or resting in their hammocks in the Drill Shed – temporary overflow accommodation at HMS Pembroke.

The men died when the building suffered several direct hits from German Gotha bombers – one of the first night-time bombing raids in history.

The hands of the clock in the tower stopped at 11.12, marking the time the bombs hit the building – now converted to a state-of-the-art library for students of Greenwich, Kent and Canterbury Christ Church universities.

For details email Chris Stout, at [jim@baydrift.com](mailto:jim@baydrift.com)

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[admin@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com)  
 023 9272 3747  
[www.royal-naval-association.co.uk](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk)



## The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust

Supporting The RNBT Family

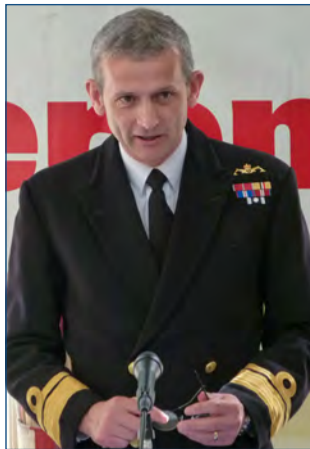




Men and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines serve their country, often at times of danger. Established in 1922, the RNBT helps non-commissioned Sailors, Marines and their families (The RNBT Family) throughout their lives.

Your donation will help us to help them.

Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 8RN  
T: 02392 690112 F: 02392 660852 E: [rnbt@rnbt.org.uk](mailto:rnbt@rnbt.org.uk) [www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk)



## VIP guest signs on dotted line

VIP GUESTS for the early stages of the Conference were Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland Rear Admiral John Weale (above) and the Provost of Perth and Kinross, Cllr Dennis Melloy.

Opening prayers were said by Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Ian Wheatley, who remarked on the fact that this year was the centenary of the founding of the Women's Royal Naval Service.

He spoke of the 22 Wrens who died in the sinking of the steamship SS *Aguila* on a Gibraltar-bound convoy in August 1941, and the fact that Wrens responded by each giving a day's pay, which funded the building of sloop HMS *Wren*.

Cllr Melloy – a qualified ballroom dancing teacher and (of particular interest to the National President) a member of Blairgowrie Golf Club – welcomed delegates and guests, noting that the Association's 15,000 members were “one big family – that's a hell of a lot of Christmas cards!”

Admiral Weale, who admitted that he did not belong to the RNA, said he was well aware of the RNA's initiatives, such as mentoring Phase 2 trainees and Project Semaphore, and that the Association did “a fantastic job”.

Perhaps most importantly, continued Admiral Weale, is the fact that members were such important advocates and ambassadors for the Royal Navy.

He then outlined the roles and duties of the Royal Navy today, observing that on one day last summer he was aware of 8,000 personnel deployed and 30 units at sea, which he described as a “staggering” statistic.

He also spoke of the new equipment coming, including HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, the *Tide-class* tankers, Type 26 warships and *Astute-class* submarines.

As he sat down, a particularly efficient shipmate provided Admiral Weale with an RNA membership form, which he filled in there and then.

The guests had been welcomed to Conference, staged at the Station Hotel in Perth, by members of Perth Sea Cadet unit – they and colleagues from Dundee unit had also been on duty the evening before.

# Conference review wins wide support

THE first of three branch motions proposed that National Council should review the guidelines relating to future Conference venues.

Proposed S/M Arthur Gutteridge (Plymouth) observed that shipmates' enthusiasm for attending Conference has been waning in the face of rising travel and accommodation costs, and a reappraisal could “re-energise” the event.

The motion was seconded by S/M Gordon Strudwick (Liskeard), who said his own situation, having to travel from

Cornwall to Central Scotland illustrated the problem.

Area 10 National Council member S/M Steve Caulfield stated that National Council was in favour of looking at the guidelines, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Motion 2, again proposed and seconded by Plymouth and Liskeard respectively, was designed to build on the 2009 Conference in Derry/Londonderry, when spare time was devoted to the informal discussion of topics by delegates outside the strictures of the rulebook.

S/M Gutteridge declared that it provided ideas for National Council to consider, and S/M Strudwick said discussions sparked by specific gripes “turned out to be of value to all in attendance”.

S/M Brian McKenzie (City of Glasgow) commented that if delegates were going to sit there and debate trivia endlessly, he was against it.

National Council opposed the motion, in part because discussions introduced at such short notice could not be informed by hard facts and figures.

The motion was defeated by a

large majority.

The third and final motion, proposed by St Neots and seconded by Huntingdon, concerned the introduction of postal voting.

S/M Maureen Ridley said that elderly members do not like venturing out to branch AGMs on cold, dark nights, while holding AGMs in the afternoon prevents working members from participating.

S/M Arthur Gutteridge (Plymouth) was against the plan, citing potential manipulation and the possibility of “people not bothering to turn up.”

National Council was against the idea, as there was a strict legal process to follow and there would be considerable cost implications.

The motion was defeated by a large majority.



● Democracy, RNA-style – delegates vote on a branch motion during the Association Conference in the Gramplan Room of the Station Hotel in Perth Pictures: S/M Nigel Huxtable (Assistant General Secretary)

## Veteran on parade

ONE of the more senior veterans to take part in the parade through Perth on Sunday was Cyril Dennis, once of wartime patrol vessel HMS *Kildwick*.

Cyril, who turns 94 this month, lives in Glasgow, and travelled to Perth with Jim Barbour, of Gideons International.

The veteran said he spent part of the war escorting convoys down the coast of West Africa, and served from 1942-46 after training in Dunoon – and was proud to take part in the ceremonies in Perth.

# Financial performance is 'sound'

RNA reserves increased by almost eight per cent last year – just short of £135,000 – as the Association turned in “another sound financial performance”.

The books actually showed a surplus of £403,123, according to Treasurer S/M Ray Barraclough (right), but this included a net increase of £268,844 relating to the unspent grant in respect of the Project Semaphore, which will all be spent.

“The main source of income remains subscriptions which, as expected, have fallen from £140,000 in 2015 to £127,900 in 2016, which is a reduction of 8.68 per cent,” said S/M Barraclough.

“This reflects the increasing age profile of the membership, the loss of associate members largely due to club closures, and the demise of a further seven branches.”

“Investment income of £25,800 appears down for the year but last year's figure included £3,700 extra income



post adjustments made by Blackrock.

“Therefore the comparison figure is actually slightly up by 3.09 per cent.”

Moving on to major projects, S/M Barraclough said: “The Shipmates and Oppos programme again received a

most welcome grant of £45,000 from Greenwich Hospital.

“This pays for the administrator, travel and marketing costs.

“The programme is fully funded to 2019 subject to review for ongoing support.

“Social media marketing also received a most welcome grant of £10,000 from Greenwich Hospital, allowing the recruitment of a social media administrator, on a part-time salary.”

S/M Barraclough added that £75,500 had been received in donations and legacies, following on from last year's £126,000.

Total income recorded amounted to £295,200.

Turning to income, S/M Barraclough said: “Many expenditure items were less than the costs of 2015 as a result of very good housekeeping by the Central Office staff and officials during the year.”

Postage and telephone costs were down on 2015, and some £3,000 under budget.

“Only three ‘hard copies’ of Circulars were posted in the year, thereafter sent online, saving about £3,000 in postage costs for 2016.”

The Treasurer added: “Please note that a massive saving of £7,500 on the production of Circulars, which are now being sent online, with only 19 branches remaining offline and receiving a hard copy at cost.”

Total expenditure was reported to be £331,000 – around £31,900 under budget – which represented in an operating deficit for the year of £35,800.

There was a net gain of £121,600 in investments, contributing to an overall increase of £85,500 in the General Fund over the year.

“The Trustees are pleased to report that the lease for the offices in Semaphore Tower has been extended to three years,” continued S/M Barraclough.

Donations of around £7,700 were received, including the surplus from the Conference raffle of £2,200.

Some £15,700 was paid out in the form of grants, of which £7,700 related to grants made in 2015, which means £8,000 was paid out for 2016.

The Project Semaphore Fund received £598,000 in grants from the MOD, and almost £330,000 has been spent acquiring 600 iPads and protective cases, together with administrative and support expenses.

“As ever, I would like to thank Brooms Professional Services Ltd for all their invaluable help and guidance during yet another busy year,” said S/M Barraclough.

“It is worthy of note that much additional assistance has been provided by them to the Association again at no extra cost.”

## Dublin is ready for 2018

DUBLIN is ready for next year's Conference, shipmates were told – and Area 6 has stepped up to the plate for the year after.

Next year's gathering will take place at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dún Laoghaire, seven miles from the Irish capital.

A brochure produced for the Conference says Dún Laoghaire is a beautiful seaside town on Dublin Bay.

The four-star Royal Marine Hotel was built in 1863-5, and has an illustrious past – heads of state, royalty and celebrities have stayed at the hotel, including Frank Sinatra, Laurel and Hardy and Charlie Chaplin.

Queen Victoria visited Ireland via Dún Laoghaire, and is said to have enjoyed a 16-course breakfast in the hotel shortly after arriving (shipmates should not expect a similar offering during Conference weekend).

And the first line wireless report on a sports event was made from the hotel in July 1899 when Marconi transmitted a bulletin on the Kingstown Regatta.

Conference weekend is due to begin on Friday June 9 with the arrival of guests, an evening meal and a chance for shipmates to catch up on the news.

The following day sees the main business of the weekend with the AGM and conference itself.

For those not involved in the business side of things, there will be opportunities to see some of the sights of Dublin.

An evening gala dinner will be held on the Saturday.

Sunday June 11 will feature an ecumenical service at the Maritime Museum – formerly the Mariners' Garrison Church.

Optional excursions can be booked for those planning to stay on, such as the Guinness brewery in Dublin or the holy site of Glendalough.

For further information on the 2018 Conference contact [rnadublin@outlook.ie](mailto:rnadublin@outlook.ie)

Looking further ahead, a single motion of urgency addressed the 2019 Conference.

Proposed by the St Neots and seconded by Royston branch, the motion called for the event to be hosted by Area 6; further details will follow.

In response to a question from S/M Dave Allen, of Sittingbourne, branch National Chairman S/M Keith Ridley explained that Area 6 stretches from Peterborough in the east to Newbury in the west.

When put to the vote, all 69 delegates backed the proposal.

## Minibuses fitting out

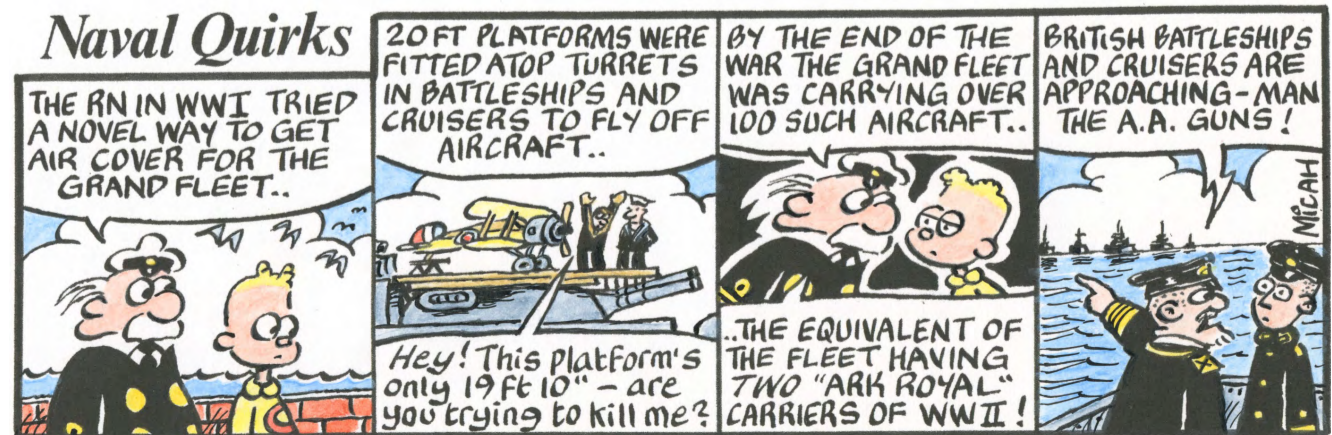
Although plans to bring one of the RNA's three new LIBOR-funded minibuses to Conference fell through, General Secretary Paul Quinn told delegates that the first bus is almost ready to hit the road.

The vehicles will help improve the lives of socially-isolated veterans, he said, and will be based in Blackrock (overseen by S/M Alan McGrath) for the North of the country, in Liskeard for the West and at RNA Central Office in Portsmouth for the rest of the country.

The three buses, based on Peugeot panel vans and each fitted with a tail-lift, will have Association-themed number plates – RN 10 RNA, SM 17 RNA and SM 10 RNA.

A competition to name the buses was held, with the winner – and an additional prize – announced during the gala dinner.

Further details in a later *Navy News*...





## In the footsteps of Knox...

LED by the Perth and District Pipe Band, a parade of RNA members – joined by Sea Cadets from the Perth and Dundee units – marched through the city to the church service at St John's Kirk of Perth.

A total of 22 standards were paraded, with the National Standard wearing a black drape in memory of the victims of the terrorist attack in London the previous evening.

Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Ian Wheatley and the Rev John Murdoch, Minister of St John's – whose father served in HMS Sheffield during World War 2 – welcomed guests including the Lord Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross, Brig Melville Jameson, and the Provost of Perth, Cllr Dennis Melloy.

Speaking from a pulpit once used by theologian and Reformation leader John Knox (in 1559), Rev Wheatley (pictured above) spoke of when Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee, drawing parallels with a Navy banyan (something that all shipmates could identify with, he said, except submariners, who “get no fun...”).

He mused on the disciples' lack of faith in their own professionalism and effectiveness as commercial fishermen – and commended the cohesion and camaraderie that is a particular strength of the RNA and the Royal Navy.

At the end of the service, Jim Barbour, of Gideons International, talked about the organisation and then distributed 200 specially-produced copies of an RNA New Testament and Psalms to shipmates as they left.

# Semaphore is making a difference

SHIPMATES were brought up to date during Conference with Project Semaphore, one of the RNA's most significant initiatives.

Semaphore aims to get ‘digitally-isolated’ veterans online to take advantage of the benefits of the internet, such as keeping in touch with friends and family or enjoying discounts with shopping or services.

General Secretary Paul Quinn told delegates of one “adventurous” member who took possession of his new iPad – and promptly worked through his annual mobile data allowance in five days watching speedway.

“He is now getting broadband installed...” Just over 200 iPads have been distributed as of the end of May, and deputy project manager S/M Sarah Clewes has been concentrating on

care homes such as Pembroke House in Kent. S/M Sarah spoke of veterans with IT skills mentoring fellow residents in homes, and weekly classes where tips and techniques are shared.

One resident was a complete novice, but now communicates with relatives through Skype and recently bought a fascinator online to match her dress for a visit to Buckingham Palace.

S/M Alan McGrath, who takes care of the northern part of the country, said it is “not a walk in the park” going into veterans' homes to mentor them – there are sometimes more pressing problems which need addressing.

But generally the iPad is greeted “with a mix of awe and enthusiasm,” citing one

member “who couldn't tell me enough times how Project Semaphore is the best thing since sliced bread and the people behind it need a big vote of thanks.”

Another veteran has advanced Parkinson's, but the iPad has given him a “new lease of life”.

A keen reader, when the disease took hold he could not use books any more, so “he used to just sleep or stare at the wall.”

Now he is constantly tapping away at his screen, giving his companions things to talk about.

Capt Quinn said: “We want to press the accelerator now and find new people,” adding that he would like to see every branch find three new candidates.

# Thanks from the Chairman

NATIONAL Chairman S/M Keith Ridley began his address to Conference by thanking Scottish Area for their efforts in staging the event.

Among the statistics referred to by S/M Keith were the fact that the rate at which the Association is losing members appears to be slowing down, although he reported that seven small branches had closed over the year, usually because there were not sufficient people to run the various committees.

A total of 414 new members have been recruited – all but two of them full members – and the majority joined up online.

A new branch has opened in Stowmarket, and the Chairman said they were keeping up the pressure by setting up a recruitment and retention working group.

There were further thanks, including S/M Rita Lock for the time she volunteers, and a special mention for General Secretary S/M Paul Quinn who, said S/M Keith, has brought in £1.2m in grants since his arrival – “something never achieved in my 41 years as a member of this Association.”

The Chairman also urged shipmates to continue supporting the Jutland Wood project, and reminded them how successful the Shipmates and Oppos scheme is proving.

# Prizes are spread out

HONOURS were shared out geographically when the President's Awards for Recruiting and Gift Aid Returns were announced.

The Sword of Honour, for the area with the greatest increase in the number of members in 2016, went to No 3 Area, which covers central Southern England.

The Brigg's Dirk, for branches of more than 30 members that recruited the most new members as a percentage of their total membership, was taken this year by Newton Abbot, of No 4 Area, while the Brigg's Rose Bowl for branches of under 30 members was taken by City of Edinburgh.

The certificate for the most successful overseas large branch in terms of recruitment was won by Riyadh branch, of Saudi Arabia – repeating their success of last year – while the certificate for the smaller overseas branch was won by Torrevieja, in Spain.

Finally, the Tasker Bowl for the area which provides most Gift Aid returns went to No 6 Area, which covers central England.

# Bob sets standard

ONCE again the National Standard was in the hands of S/M Bob Coburn, of Inverness.

S/M Bob retained his title at the Standard Bearers Competition, held in May at HMS Collingwood.

S/M Bob won a very close contest with S/M Dave Corrigan (Bletchley), S/M Bob's deputy, taking second place. S/M Steve Champion (Maidstone) took third place.

The Association of Wrens standard bearers competition took place at the same time, with S/M Chris Walker (Cheltenham) taking the honours, from S/M Elaine Smith (South Dorset) with S/M Val Gleave (Portsmouth) third.

S/M Marie Taylor (York) won special mention for competing in both events.

# Delegates 'tidy up' Association rules

DELEGATES were invited to “tidy up” the rulebook in a series of National Council motions.

The first sought to remove the phrase “the votes cast by” from Rule 20(b), dealing with weighted votes, in order to bring it into line with Articles 16(2) and 19.

S/M Chris Lewarne, of Spennymoor branch, objected, as delegates leaving the room would affect the figures, and the requirement of the rule for a two-thirds majority required a figure divisible by three.

But S/M Ivan Hunter, Chairman of the Standing Order Committee, assured delegates that all people present and eligible to vote would be counted – but thoughts of introducing a quorum would be problematic as a failure to achieve the required total would trigger a further Conference within a year.

The rule change was voted through by delegates with just two dissenters.

National Council Motion 2 proposed an amendment to Rule 4(d) to “legitimise the practice by which a Branch appoints a member of another Branch as its delegate to an Area Meeting or National Conference.”

S/M Arthur Gutteridge (Plymouth) objected on the grounds that, while it would increase the number of delegates to Conference, it was “unethical”,

and branches of maybe 80 members should be able to send a delegate of their own.

Suggestions that it would be a moneyspinner for the RNA were scotched by the National President, who pointed out that while a member may join and pay subscriptions to two branches, subs to Central Office should only be paid once (“though the second one would be gratefully accepted as a donation!”)

The motion was carried by 59 votes to seven.

Motion 3 was framed to legitimise an element of Byelaw A3(a), concerning the election of Associate Members to Area committees or as branch delegates at Area meetings and Conference, and was carried unanimously without further discussion.

The final National Council motion was withdrawn, and General Secretary Paul Quinn provided an explanation.

The proposal was to remove the words “over the age of 18” from Rule 10(c), making it possible for

the RNA to encompass members of the Naval Service who are 16 or 17 as Associate Members.

But S/M Quinn ran through a long list of statutory requirements and safeguards which would be required if the motion were to succeed, including the nomination of Responsible Adults and the need to prevent access to alcohol and to be off the premises by midnight.

From the floor came a cry of “we don't need to hear any more!” and the matter was dropped.



● Members of the RNA parade through Perth on their way to a final exhortation from the National President before Conference weekend officially came to a close

# President reviews a busy year

NATIONAL President Vice Admiral John McAnally's address to Conference painted a picture of a busy year, with plenty of activity, a farewell to familiar faces and a welcome to some new ones.

Reflecting on the highlights of the year, Admiral McAnally (pictured right addressing shipmates after the Sunday church service) started with the RNA's scheme to alleviate the problem of a lack of internet-connection for veterans.

“I am delighted with the progress of Project Semaphore, bringing digitally-isolated Naval veterans online,” he said.

“We have been through the process of specifying and purchasing the Phase 1 iPads and the training of volunteers, and we now have 200 iPads deployed.

“For those who come online for the very first time it is an undreamt-of opportunity to have closer links with families and friends by email, Facetime or Skype.

“I am most grateful to Sarah Clewes for facilitating the fitting-out of Pembroke House with iPads and heartened by the relish with which the residents there have taken to the digital age. It really has been quite stunning.

“I should also thank Sharon Brown, the

project officer.

“There is a serious point here – our initial bid envisaged about five shipmates per branch not being on the net and wanting to be. It is actually about three.

“But in fact in many branches all are connected.

“Please go out into your local community and find Naval veterans who can benefit from this really fantastic initiative.

“You know your own patch better than anyone else – so let's find our candidates for coming online and make this project even more of a roaring success.”

The President then went on to update shipmates on the three LIBOR-funded minibuses – worth more than £170,000 in total – that were being fitted out, including the installation of a wheelchair lift on each.

“The idea is to provide transport for Naval veterans to help address social

isolation issues – including going down the pub,” he said.

“Our first bus is completed and awaits inspection by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and subsequent registration.

“We hope to have all three buses at the biennial parade in Whitehall.”

Admiral McAnally added: “A Bravo Zulu for a brilliant project – which makes the RNA sub even greater

value!”

Other initiatives the President mentioned included the approval of the RNA logo as a badge and trademark, the production and distribution of “a very well received” Branch Secretary Guide and Treasurer's Guide, and an ongoing review of the partnering arrangement and the development of a joint Naval Service/RNA Charter.





## Loss of Sheffield recalled

CADETS from the **Portsmouth Division RM Volunteer Cadet Corps** and **HMS Excellent RN Volunteer Cadet Corps** joined veterans and their families to remember those who died in **HMS Sheffield** during the **Falklands Conflict** in 1982.

Cadet William is pictured holding the **Type 42 Association Standard** alongside **John McKnight** (former **LWEM**), standard bearer for the **HMS Exeter Standard**.

The cadets were welcomed by the **Lord Mayor of Portsmouth**, **Cllr David Fuller**, and **Donna Jones**, the **Leader of Portsmouth City Council**.

**Twelve RM** and **one RN cadet** aged between **11 and 17** were led onto the parade by veteran instructors **C/Sgts Mick May** and **Jim Coomber**, who have more than **90 years of service** between them.

The moving remembrance service took place at the **Falklands Conflict memorial** at the **Square Tower** in **Old Portsmouth**, and concluded with a **march-past** of veterans and cadets in front of the **Lord Mayor** and other civic dignitaries.

The **VCC** is open to boys and girls between the ages of **nine and 17**, who can join as a **Royal Naval** or **Royal Marines Cadet**.

For more information visit [www.volunteercadetcorps.org](http://www.volunteercadetcorps.org)

## Cash for courses

A **PRESENTATION** was given to **freemasons** at **Weston-super-Mare** about cadets going on the **Sea Cadets' offshore vessels**.

The cadets can go on these vessels for a **week's voyage** and gain qualifications in **sail and power** as well as gaining **vital life skills** on their voyage, with **teamwork, commitment, courage, leadership** increased aspirations, and **friends for life**.

The **Wessex Lodge** chose **Weston** unit as their charity for this year, and donated **£3,000** to help with the cadets going on these courses.



## High-flying cadets earn their wings

A **GROUP** of **Sea Cadets** completed their **second aviation course** of the year at **Portsmouth Naval Gliding Club**.

During the **week-long course** the cadets spent the first few days on the **airfield** at **Lee-on-the-Solent** updating their **previous groundschool theory**.

They also prepared for their **final exams** while watching the **rain fall**.

However, the **weather improved** and all achieved **three flights** with pilots **Lt (SCC) John Reeve RNR**

and **CPO (SCC) Carl Mason**, pictured left with a student.

The cadets were able to put their **navigation theory** into practice as they flew several routes over the **Isle of Wight** and the **Solent** in their **Grob trainer aircraft**.

All the cadets passed and were presented with their **Silver Wings** by **HQSO Aviation Lt (SCC) Marc Pether RNR**.

Pictures: **CPO (SCC) Mason**

# New vessels bear names of former Whitehaven pair Boats honour shipmates



● **James Ryan's nephew, Tony Fox, left, and Kevin McNamara, representing David Batty's family, unveil the names on the Trinity 500 rowing boats at Whitehaven**

**TWO former members of Whitehaven Sea Cadet unit were remembered as the unit's new Trinity 500 rowing boats were named in their honour.**

The well-attended ceremony took place on **Whitehaven's harbourside** as the boats were named in memory of **James Ryan**, a former **Commanding Officer** and dedicated supporter of **Whitehaven Sea Cadets** right up to his death earlier this year, and **David Batty**, a former cadet who attended every event and "always gave 110 per cent". **David** sadly died a number of years ago while still a **Cadet**.

Speaking at the naming ceremony, which was attended by representatives from both families, the **Sea Cadet unit's chairman David Abbott** thanked the cadets and staff, who had spent around **18 months fundraising**, and supporters including **Cumbria County Council**, who had helped with funding.

"In the difficult times our unit is going through these boats represent a significant investment and are a statement of our, and

our supporters', confidence in the future" said **David**.

"In naming them for two very special and outstanding shipmates we are also maintaining links with our past.

"Sea Cadets have been a proud part of **Whitehaven** for the past **75 years** and we look forward to being here for at least another **75 years**."

The **Trinity 500** is now the standard **Sea Cadet rowing boat** nationally.

It is a modern design which is easier to maintain and light enough for even the youngest cadets to enjoy the sport of rowing, or to simply have fun on the water.

Last month **Whitehaven cadets** took part in the **Lakeland District regatta** and came first in **power-boat handling** while the **rowing-boat handling team** – the first **Whitehaven team** to have been entered in the competition for several years – came third.

Anyone interested in joining **Whitehaven Sea Cadets** should email [enquiries@tsbee.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@tsbee.org.uk). Alternatively visit [www.tsbee.org.uk](http://www.tsbee.org.uk), or find them on **Facebook** or **Twitter @WhitehavenSCC**.



CADETS from **Belfast Eagle** are pictured signing a book of condolence for the victims of the terror attack at **Westminster**.

Led by **Officer-in-Charge Lt (SCC) Claire Stephenson**, the cadets held a **divisional night** at **Belfast City Hall**.

**Lord Mayor Alderman Brian Kingston** gave the cadets a guided tour of the building.

## Chief soaks up family fun

**CPO Dave Messler** became the star attraction at **TS Cardiff's families day**.

Cadets lined up to pay a bargain **50p** to lob three soaking wet sponges at him as he was 'locked' into the stocks.

The day began with a **slow-time demonstration** run by the **field gun crew** for the families in attendance, followed by a **full-speed, timed run**.

Next up was a **fete**, organised by the unit's **Parents & Friends Association**, which included the usual **tombola, burger, hot dog and cake stalls**.

After the festivities concluded, the cadets having already observed a **minute's silence**, they headed off to a local **Morrison's supermarket** to run the **bucket collection** in aid of the victims of the **Manchester Arena terrorist attack**, which happened earlier that week.

Together with the **Community Manager Mr Rhys Pursey**, and **Assistant Community Manager Miss Amber Day-George**, the cadets helped raise **£1,027** for the cause.



## Field gun battle looming

TEAMS of young people will be entering the final phase of training as they prepare for the annual Junior Leaders Field Gun competition.

The 18 crews will get to grips with the guns at the start of this month, less than a week before the competition at HMS Collingwood on July 7.

They were selected from a list of 47 applicants, and the chosen ones include ten UTCs as well as a 'national' team representing the Sea Cadet Corps.

The week promises to be a busy one for the gun crews, aged between 16 and 25.

They will learn how to handle and run with the gun and limber – the course is a simpler, less-taxing version of that used for the old inter-Command competition, without the need to remove wheels, swing cross chasms and the like.

But it still requires fitness and deft technique to give a crew a chance in the arena.

Finals day will see the teams run in three heats, with the six teams in each heat undertaking two runs.

That will determine the make-up of the Plate 2, Plate 1 and Final lists, ensuring all the teams get a good number of runs even if they do not qualify high up the rankings.



## Keeping up with the news

SEA Cadets Casey and Jack keep up with events in the Naval Service with their copies of *Navy News*.

The pair are members of Poole-based unit **TS Drax**, and visited HMS Hurworth at the Poole Harbour Boat Show.

Thousands of visitors flocked to the South Coast town for the maritime show.

Casey, 12, and Jack, 13, joined fellow cadets fundraising on their stand and assisting with public tours of *TS Royalist*, pictured above, berthed at Poole Quay.

Both cadets are very interested in joining the Royal Navy.



## Top civic role for Caitlin

A SEA Cadet is said to be the youngest mace-bearer in Britain after being appointed by Tiverton Town Council.

Caitlin, 16, took on the role following mayor-making and has already taken part in various civic functions across the town, with her first engagement at the Mayor's Parade, as reported by [DevonLive.com](http://DevonLive.com)

The Tiverton High School pupil, who is now completing her exams, spent the last year getting to know the workings of Tiverton Town Council as the Mayor's Cadet, representing Tiverton Sea Cadets.

Caitlin said: "The council said they wanted someone young and I thought why not?"

"I did the Mayor's Parade as my first event, I was a bit nervous, but everything is on your first go, once you get there you're fine."

Caitlin is working with fellow mace-bearer and Tiverton Councillor John Jordan.

She added: "John has been telling me how to hold the mace and how to put it in place. You have to have it on your shoulder then hold it with one hand. It hurts your shoulder quite a bit, it's quite heavy."

"It's pretty amazing to have been named the youngest in the country. I didn't think it would be me but it's pretty good to have. It's made me proud because not many other 16-year-olds would choose to be a mace-bearer, so it's an achievement."

"I'm hoping to do it for more than a year so I can march with my Sea Cadets in my final year as a cadet which would be nice to do."



● *TS Cardiff's team in action*

## Home win at contest

HMS **Collingwood** Volunteer Cadet Corps won the annual Portsmouth-area VCC field gun competition.

Crews of 19 cadets, aged between 10 and 18, manhandle and manoeuvre a 7-pounder field gun and limber, weighing over 900lb in total, over a distance of 170 yards, carrying out a number of 'drills' on the way.

The competition mirrors that of the Royal Navy, widely acknowledged as being one of the toughest team events in the world.

Sultan finished second with *TS Cardiff* third and the Royal Marines fourth.

# Volunteers are put in the TV spotlight

**YOUTH** charity Sea Cadets has thanked its amazing 9,000 volunteers following a national awareness campaign that celebrates those who give their time for free.

The registered charity offers land-based and water-based adventure for ten- to 18-year-olds – but without volunteers, this would not be possible.

That is why it marked Volunteers' Week 2017, which ran in June and recognised the thousands of people across the country helping out in their communities.

At Sea Cadets, volunteers put in 4.21 million hours between them every year. They receive full support, as well as training and an induction, with roles available in a variety of areas, from managing finances and budgets, fundraising for the unit and organising events, to teaching cadets first aid, navigation, drill, sailing, powerboating, kayaking and windsurfing.

Volunteers vary in background and age, from those who have just left Sea Cadets aged 18, to people in their 90s – such as Colin Marshall.

Colin, who turned 90 on June, helps at **Peterborough** unit, which he joined as a cadet in 1942.

His achievements were featured by the



● *Colin Marshall is interviewed about Sea Cadets volunteering by the BBC*

BBC, which paid a visit to the unit.

The unit's chairman, Andy Tannock, said: "He has been a role model for both adults and cadets alike and has a great knowledge of all of his subjects, the Sea Cadet Corps and the local history of Peterborough."

"Colin has been a staunch supporter of the Sea Cadet Corps, and he is also a member of

Peterborough Royal Naval Association, where he is now the chairman.

"He is also in the historical society, where his knowledge of Peterborough and particularly our headquarters building is invaluable."

"Colin attends most parade evenings and he attends every civic parade in uniform. He is very proud of his association with the unit and the affiliation with Peterborough."

"We are very proud of him and feel that Colin deserves recognition for his hard work, commitment and loyalty to the Sea Cadet Corps, and the city of Peterborough."

With Sea Cadets, young people enjoy activities such as sailing, drill, first-aid training and band practice at 400 units, which helps to boost their confidence and self-belief.

Sea Cadets gives young people a new perspective. The organisation broadens horizons and creates possibilities.

Working across the UK with 14,000 young people between 10 and 18, Sea Cadets help them see the world with confidence, gained through the challenge of nautical adventure and a Royal Navy ethos.

The aim is to help more young people to see the future that they want – and make that future happen.

Visit: [www.sea-cadets.org/](http://www.sea-cadets.org/) to find out how you can join.



## Award for officer

A SUSSEX Sea Cadet officer has been recognised in the form of an award from his local council.

Lt (SCC) Brian Osborne RNR was presented with a Littlehampton Town Council Merit Award by town mayor Ian Buckland, who has now stepped down from the post.

Lt Osborne has spent 50 years supporting young people through the Littlehampton unit.

# All aboard Trumpeter Appeal sees launch of new training ship

**COLCHESTER** Sea Cadets visited HMS Trumpeter at Ipswich Docks.

Twelve cadets and five staff were treated to a tour of the P2000 and an introduction to life at sea on a warship.

The cadets will be going to sea on HMS Trumpeter in September so really enjoyed the opportunity to see the ship and get to know all about her.

The cadets are avid *Navy News* readers aboard their ship *TS Colne Light* (a 1953 former Trinity House Lightship).



SEA Cadets from **Falmouth, Penryn and Torpoint** attended the commissioning of a new yacht, which will open up opportunities for more young people by allowing them to go out to sea.

Training Ship City of London was launched at the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club in Falmouth, and follows a £400,000 fundraising appeal by the Sea Cadets Corps.

The yacht – a Rustler 42 – was built in the town, and can take up to six cadets, along with a skipper and mate.

Sea Cadets' Chief Executive

Officer Martin Coles (*right picture*) said: "We are delighted to launch our new yacht, which will allow us to get even more young people out to sea, boosting their confidence and self-belief."

"I would like to thank everyone who attended the naming and commissioning, and in particular Lord and Lady Mountevans, whose support during last year's Lord Mayor's Appeal was instrumental in raising the £400,000 needed."

The charity is fundraising for a second yacht. To donate, visit: [www.sea-cadets.org/donate](http://www.sea-cadets.org/donate).



● *Dignitaries and guests toast the success of the new Corps yacht TS City of London*

A little while ago, in a galaxy not so far, far, far away...

# FARADAY

TURMOIL has engulfed the Empire's Galactic Systems (EGS). Deep inside the Death Star, Overlord Man Dar Rin (OMDR) and his cohorts of clarity plotted. On a distant world, troopers of the Complacent Empire scour the planet's surface for remnants of the Diagnosian rebels. Meanwhile, an engineering technician is tinkering with his reconditioned CPO3 droid, when suddenly the apparition of a figure appears pleading for assistance. "Help me ET1 Ken Obe, you're my only hope..."

OK. Having established that I am not going to be a Hollywood scriptwriter, down to business, writes WO1 Si Smith.

As the Faraday programme team (one commander, one lieutenant commander and two WOs) go out and about there are a number of consistent views we encounter, including: "Project Faraway delivery is too far off to worry about" and "Faraday is 'done and dusted' - isn't it?"

So how far away is Faraday?

The answer is simple really: Faraday is already here.

Here are the 'headlines'.

ETs: Redesign of ET training for ME and WE is complete. The new courses have been running at Sultan and MWS for over a year. ET(ME)s who are Individual Competence Framework (ICF) trained have been progressing to the Fleet from Sultan since spring 2015. By Christmas 2016 the number of ICF-trained ET(ME)s in the Fleet was over 50 per cent of the cadre.

From September 2016 onwards the first ICF trained ET(WE)s joined the Fleet. Every two months another course completes. They were followed by the first ET(WE(CIS)) from November last year.

LET(ME) is done and the first ICF-trained LET(ME)s completed course in March this year, followed quickly by their submariner counterparts. The first LET(WE) Faraday course is currently moving to its last stages and later this summer will produce the first ICF-trained WE LETs to the Fleet.

POET: The first Faraday POET(ME) courses are under way at Sultan and will deliver the first ICF-trained ME POETs later this summer. At MWS redesign of the POET(WE) course will complete by autumn 2017 and introduction of that new course will take place in 2018.

CPO and WO: Redesign of courses was completed in early 2016. The first CPO(WE) ICF-based career course passed out at MWS in April.

So what does this mean?

It means that Faraday is completing the first 'half' of its mission. Four years of work redesigning the career courses for ME and WE is drawing to a close and revised courses are going into place. It has not been a simple process - but it has been successful.

Now the focus will move more to the front line - having invested heavily in our training pipelines, our people are better prepared for their roles. They will now deliver those skills and competences into the Fleet - this is true delivery of 'Faraday'. It is in the minds - and hands - of our people. It is now going to be the ME and WE engineering departments at sea who put to work those skilled individuals - particularly the LETs. Our training investment has been high - it is now time to put it to work to deliver improved OMDR in the Fleet.

Over the past six months the Faraday core team has continued to deliver

workshops and make visits to Faslane, Rosyth, Devonport and Portsmouth. Sixteen ships, MCM1, FOST and Flotillas have been visited, where updates on Faraday progress and issues have been discussed.

The workshops are intended to not only tell people in the 'real world' what is happening but also to continue to explain the Individual Competence Framework (ICF) and Career Development Journals (CDJ). They also offer the opportunity for Q&A sessions, a chance to expel myths, gather feedback and for individuals to express their concerns - and hopefully also tell us where things are going well!

All units have 'Faraday champions' capable of giving advice and guidance; they should be used as the first point of contact. Do you know who your champion is? If you have any Faraday-related issues, require clarity or would like a visit please drop us a line or give us a call, after all that's part of the reason the Faraday team exists.

Regardless of your ME/WE engineering flavour (EL, ML, CIS, weapons or sensors) whether you have completed a Faraday course or not, Faraday will continue to play a part in our role as engineers for the foreseeable future.

Adding enhanced knowledge and skills to our training and putting these into practice in our ships and submarines will only aid our development as engineers as we move to accept the Queen Elizabeth class and then the Type 26. Put simply: Faraday will help engineers to do what we have always done; if it's broken we'll fix it.

So it's all 'sunshine and roses'?

No. The delivery of redesigned POET(WE) career courses and CIS conversion courses has been particularly difficult to achieve. The POET WE course 'first starts' for the ICF variant have been delayed until 2018. Delivery of ICF-based CIS training has been the most difficult piece overall. It is widely recognised that there are a number of, as yet, unresolved issues relating to WE/CIS integration. A commodore has been tasked to act as a WE/CIS 'champion' and report progress. Although not directly a Faraday issue, because it includes things such as future roles at sea, network engineering skills etc, the Faraday team will continue to take feedback on CIS integration issues.

So what's next?

Faraday has invested more than £20M to date in resetting ME and WE training, delivering Career Development Journals, delivering the fast-track scheme and delivering provisional examinations. What's next is that our up-skilled ETs, LETs and POETs will begin to carry their new skill sets to the Fleet.

We need to put them to work and reap the benefits of this investment; some of this will happen with little or no effort, other areas will require continued support to drive progress.

In summary, perhaps Faraday isn't too far away after all!

Further information can be found on the Faraday webpage [http://defenceintranet.diif.r.mil.uk/Organisations/Orgs/Navy/Organisations/Orgs/ACNS\(Spt\)/ACOS\\_EngSup/Pages/Faraday.aspx](http://defenceintranet.diif.r.mil.uk/Organisations/Orgs/Navy/Organisations/Orgs/ACNS(Spt)/ACOS_EngSup/Pages/Faraday.aspx) or by contacting the team: WO1 Si Smith NAVY ENG SPT-HUM CAP WO1A (93832 7440) or WO1 Sam Salt (93832 7439) NAVY ENG SPT-HUM CAP WO1B.



# Naval Families Federation

HERE are some of the issues raised by or affecting you which are keeping the NFF team busy this month:

## It's Good to Talk

This spring it was announced that the UK's largest broadband and media providers had agreed to treat Armed Forces families fairly when moved for Service reasons.

Customers of BT, EE, Plusnet, TalkTalk, Sky and Virgin Media are safe in the knowledge that their providers have committed to fair treatment if they need to cancel their contracts if they are moved to an area that their provider does not cover.

Until this announcement, members of the Armed Forces who are deployed overseas or to different parts of the UK not covered by their provider could be forced to pay a cancellation fee. They will no longer have to face this cost and be disadvantaged due to the mobile nature of Service life.

## Removal Costs

Normally, first and final house moves in the Armed Forces are not paid for at public expense. However, provision does exist for funding for both Disturbance Expense and the Removal of Personal Effects at public expense for a final move, providing that a request to live and work in a particular area has previously been made to the appropriate career manager.

If the career manager is unable to meet the needs of the Service person by posting them within 50 miles or 90 minutes of travel time to their requested area, then they may be entitled to Disturbance Expense and Removal of Personal Effects for their

final move. Details on the qualifying criteria can be found by searching 'transition' at our site.

## Service Pupil Premium

Did you know that you are able to claim for Service Pupil Premium (SPP) up to six years after leaving the Armed Forces? This is an amount of £300 that is paid directly to state schools by the Department for Education at the beginning of the academic year.

All Service children are eligible providing they are in reception to Year 11 in England.

It was introduced to enable schools to provide extra, mainly pastoral, support for children with parents in the Armed Forces. DCYP have issued a guide booklet. Search 'education' on our website ([nff.org.uk](http://nff.org.uk)).

## Housing and Finance Transition Briefs

Did you know that as the spouse/partner of a serving person you are invited to attend the resettlement, housing and finance briefs that each serving person is entitled to as part of their resettlement package? Hosted by the Career Transition Partnership, these provide valuable information and advice about the different housing and finance options that are available to you when you leave the Armed Forces.

To find out where the next briefings near you are, see [www.ctp.org.uk/resettlement-guides/housing-396670](http://www.ctp.org.uk/resettlement-guides/housing-396670).

General transition information can be found on the NFF website, [nff.org.uk/news/employment/transition/](http://nff.org.uk/news/employment/transition/)

For other queries, feedback and questions, email us at [contactus@nff.org.uk](mailto:contactus@nff.org.uk), find us on social media or telephone 023 9265 4374.

## Successful start for new DARE Force

A LIFE raft which automatically deploys if a sailor falls off the Navy's new carrier and using gaming technology to win the war of the airwaves are just two inventions green-lighted after the Navy held an innovation contest.

Navy HQ's new innovation team DARE ran an open competition to harness talent and sample ideas which might make a difference to men and women on the front line.

Over the fortnight of the competition, 48 ideas or proposals were submitted by sailors from leading hand up to commanders tackling problems as diverse as smarter ways of managing and completing task books through to using Raspberry Pi computers to help electronic warfare experts.

Of those 48 ideas, the MoD is

going to push ahead funding five:

Lt Cdr Peter Whitehead submitted a proposal to deal with a man overboard on HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales using a drone, commercially-available sensor and an intuitive wake-following advanced search algorithm which would result in a six-man life raft being launched automatically to save the stricken mariner's life.

The RN's dedicated drone experts - 700X NAS at Culdroe - Devonport Naval Base and the DARE team will set up a technical workshop with 3D printer and laser cutters so people can design and build their own prototypes.

Equipped with tablets, cameras and other media equipment, students and staff at BRNC will be able to demonstrate novel

digital solutions to any problems; if successful, this model could be mirrored in other establishments such as Lymington and HMS Collingwood.

Reservist Lt Cdr Ed Oates is looking into using serious gaming electronic warfare requirements. This conceptual approach will see users from across BRNC and MWS work with the game designer to optimise the structure and interface of an EW game, such that the output is the best possible look and feel for the user.

And Royal Marine Lt Col Aran Jess will run a number of events to raise people's ability to think, understand and reason (cognitive capability) through a series of mind games, placements in industry and advanced thinking skills programmes.

## HMS Ocean: An EW hope

UNSTINTING efforts on front-line operations in the Middle East and a string of exercises from the expanse of the Atlantic to the narrow waters of the Baltic and Adriatic earned Britain's biggest warship an effectiveness award.

The nine-strong electronic warfare team aboard HMS Ocean headed 180 miles from their native Devonport to Portsmouth to receive the Fleet EW Effectiveness Trophy, presented to CPO(EW) Toby Hunt by Rear Admiral Paul Bennett, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Capability).

EW is a trade which doesn't often pop its head above the media parapet because of the nature of the job: detecting, identifying and, if necessary, countering electronic emissions from ships, submarines and aircraft.

But just as a well-trained sonar operator can identify a class of ship or submarine from its noise signature, so an experienced EW sailor can do

likewise based on electronic output.

Ocean's EW team found themselves thrust into anti-submarine warfare (Exercise Deep Blue 2) in the Atlantic, amphibious exercises Griffin Strike (around the UK) and Albanian Lion (in the Adriatic), as well as the annual amphibious task group workout, JEF(M), to the Mediterranean and Gulf.

Throughout, Ocean's EW team provided both the ship and the wider RN with a first-rate service, acknowledged by Admiral Bennett, in a very strong year across the board by the department who headed to Portsmouth to receive the trophy in the presence of the Mighty O's CO Capt Robert Pedre and the Association of Old Crews, who were equally impressed by the assault ship's contribution; its representative John Clifford presented a cheque and trophy to reinforce the ringing endorsement.



● Lt Cdr Phil Dickinson is applauded out of his office

## Veteran retires after 48 years' service

ROYAL Navy veteran Lt Cdr Phil Dickinson has left the Service after 48 years.

Phil, who was officially the longest-serving commissioned officer in the Royal Navy when his extended contract was finally complete, said: "Now I'm going to have my first free summer since 1969."

A veteran from the Falklands Conflict, Phil saw active service flying with 826 NAS, serving in a number of ships, including HMS Hermes and RFA Fort Austin.

At a reception to celebrate his retirement at HMS Excellent, Phil received his certificate of valediction from Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock.

Phil said: "The years have gone past in a flash. I can barely believe I've reached this point already."

"The most memorable times in my long career are when I was the Commanding Officer of a Sea King helicopter squadron, during the Falklands Conflict - recovering people from HMS Coventry and remembering vividly the 36 separate air raids endured in Falkland Sound.

"I also enjoyed a three-year appointment serving in Lisbon with NATO."

He joined BRNC Dartmouth as a Cadet on September 18 1969. After sea time in home waters, the Mediterranean and the Far East in the minesweeper HMS Highburton and the aircraft carrier HMS Eagle, he studied for a politics degree at Lancaster University, where he met his American wife Susan, before returning to BRNC to complete his training.

He began Observer training in 1976 and accumulated over 2,000 flying hours. He went on to command 824 NAS in which he spent many flying hours trialling anti-submarine capability at the Atlantic Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre ranges in the Bahamas.

Phil was then appointed to the Maritime Warfare Centre to conduct operational analysis in support of the FAA and became known as 'Mr AUTEK' for the next ten years.

Phil returned to the UK to serve as the Fleet Adjudication Officer for six years. In his final year, he was employed as the Maritime Reserves Mobilisation Officer.

Phil added: "I will very much miss the people I've been in contact with on a daily basis. I've learnt something new every day."



Role models help in push to recruit more female engineers into the RN and

# Improve the ratio

WITH the Year of the Engineer just months away and International Women in Engineering Day (June 23 for the record) just passed, some of the RN's senior female engineers are leading the drive to encourage more women to join them.

Of the 29,500 trained men and women in the Senior Service, a little over one third are engineers – marine or weapon – to keep ships and submarines moving, provide them with electricity, fresh water, ensure communications, sensors and weapons systems are fully functioning... among other duties.

But of those 10,650 engineers, just 572 were women as of October 2016, when the latest statistics were compiled – 134 officers, 438 ratings.

In short, in the realm of RN engineering, women are outnumbered by their male counterparts 18 to 1.

Taking the lead set by some of the Royal Navy's female engineering ambassadors, however, might tip the balance more favourably.

The highest-ranking female engineer in the RN is Capt Sharon Malkin, who rebelled against the suggestions of her headteacher at school – she wanted the then teenager to study philosophy, politics and economics at university – and plumped for engineering instead due to her proficiency in maths and physics.

That subsequently led to a (to date) 23-year career in the RN, chiefly working with carriers and Fleet Air Arm squadrons, but her expertise has been called upon in the design of HMS Queen Elizabeth and her F-35 jump jets, investigated structural failures, provided expert advice on the RN's air engineering policy and is currently at the tip of the technology spear with the Navy's innovation team and the almost mind-boggling potential of robotics, artificial intelligence and nano/biotechnology.

"There are so many opportunities as an engineer in the RN," she says. "You can work with aircraft, ships, submarines, complex integrated mission systems, data analytics, offensive and defensive cyber defence systems, complex propulsion systems and new weapons systems."

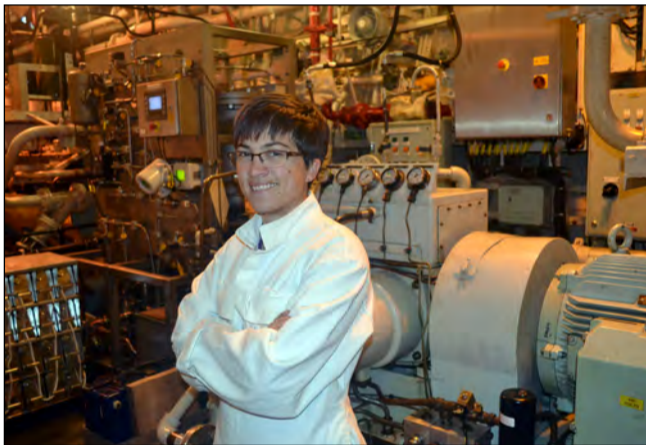
"There is a need for both very practical, hands-on engineers and those who can apply their engineering principles in design, support and capability development. Engineering underpins everything the RN does."

Air engineering mechanic CPO Nicola Howse joined the RN back in 1998 as a 17-year-old and spent the bulk of her first dozen years working with Sea and then GR7/9 Harriers.

When the jump jet's career ended, Nicola switched to helicopters; maintaining Apache gunships on two tours of duty in Afghanistan and nearly three years back at RN engineering's alma mater, HMS Sultan, to



● CPO(AEM) Nicola Howse takes a very short break from fixing an Apache gunship in Afghanistan and (below) HMS Somerset's ME0 Lt Cdr Jenna Kelway in one of the frigate's machinery spaces



pass on her knowledge as an instructor.

Most recently she's joined 1710 Naval Air Squadron, the specialist helicopter repair/design modification unit based in Portsmouth.

"I chose engineering because I was always better at maths and sciences at school than humanity subjects and I wanted a career that would suit me."

"I enjoy the variety that comes with my job. Every day has the potential to be different when working on aircraft as every fault is different."

"It's a great career choice – although it is hard work, it is challenging and rewarding. There are multiple opportunities to train and work on state-of-the-art equipment and gain useful engineering qualifications and practical experience."

It's not all about air engineering, of course. Lt Cdr Jenna Kelway ensures HMS Somerset keeps powering along as she oversees the Type 23's marine engineering department.

She chose life as an engineer over other options because she was interested in how/why things work... and "being brutally honest, back in the early 2000s – and it still remains the case – is that I knew that the engineering sector offered more secure and often better-paid careers than other areas."

There is more to the job than money, naturally.

"A distinct sense of pride comes with the knowledge that every day everything we do as a department is key to the smooth running of the ship – after all if our kit doesn't work we can't go to sea!" Jenna explained.

"I feel an immense sense of satisfaction when standing on the flight deck, looking back at our wake knowing the team I lead are responsible for ensuring that a 4,500-tonne warship can power through the sea at 28kts."

"I know that the hard work and often long hours put in by the team results in Somerset being able to deliver tasking of national importance."

## Bury has its Vengeance

AFTER a 17-year affiliation with HMS Vengeance, Bury St Edmunds bestowed its highest honour – Freedom of the Borough – upon the ballistic missile submarine and the town's Sea Cadet unit, TS St Edmund (also affiliated with the V-boat).

The town council chose their annual mayor-making service to invite representatives from the two Naval units to receive the award.

It's thanks largely to a member of Vengeance's first crew 17 years ago, now CPOME(SM) Dave Allen, that the bond between boat and town are so strong – even though he's now left her – as he's striven throughout to keep the affiliation going.

Three of Vengeance's starboard crew made the 820-mile round-trip to Suffolk for the occasion.

"The affiliation between the borough and the boat go back nearly 17 years, when HMS Vengeance was launched as the fourth Trident missile submarine," said CO Cdr Neil Lamont.

"Over those years many submariners have had the opportunity to visit the borough and all have had the pleasure to experience the warm hospitality Bury St Edmunds has to offer."

The boat and unit join a select group of just 14 people or institutions awarded the borough's highest civic honour since 1974.

## REWARDING JOB VACANCIES IN RECRUITING

Apply to become a Careers Adviser

Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WO's, Senior Rates and SNCO Service Leavers and former Service (those that left Service under 2 years), to work in Armed Forces Careers Officers around the UK, as listed on the map.

Employment is on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £29k with promotion opportunities to rise to £41k.

FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PSTN- 01929 403172 Mil 94374 3172

E-mail-

navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.uk



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# WHAT INTELLIGENCE DOES SHE HAVE?



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## Triathletes are off to a flyer

THIRTY-TWO athletes from Clyde Naval Base competed in the annual HMS Neptune triathlon.

The event consisted of a 400-metre swim, 20km cycle and 5km run.

The winner, with a time of 1hr 1min 32sec, was Neill Barton of the Clyde Naval Base Emergency Planning Department. Neill finished almost ten minutes ahead of the runner-up, AB Matthew Fayers who has represented Great Britain in triathlon.

The fastest masters (aged 35 and over) were PO Richard Wearmouth, with a time of 1hr 11min 5sec, and runner-up Alan Fleming, who finished in 1hr 12min 16sec.

Keen triathlete Neill (pictured left), who is involved with a local triathlon club, said: "It was great to take part in the HMS Neptune inter-part triathlon and it was a perfect season opener."

"As head coach at the Lomond Swimming and Triathlon club it was good to see some of our club members compete, and for one member, it was his first triathlon. The event was very well organised and marshalled, so a big thank you goes to the Sportsdrome personnel and marshalls."

Organised by LPT Will Callen, the competitors included both military and civilian personnel ranging in age from 17 to 50.

Picture: LPhot Pepe Hogan



## Climbers put to the test at championships Up against the wall

**ROYAL Navy senior rating Thomas Hinchliffe makes quick work of a climbing wall.**

The POET(ME) was one of 39 climbers, from the experienced to novices, who gathered at the Quay Climbing Centre in Exeter for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Climbing Championships.

After a hectic registration period, everyone was ready to see climbing legend Emma Twyford demonstrate the qualifying routes; her effortless style and sheer power made even the hardest route look achievable. They were not.

For the first time, newcomers were given the opportunity to compete in a league-style competition – showing that even if you haven't climbed before, with five minutes of tuition you are ready to pull hard and scale the formidable overhangs.

Topping the event was Sub Lt Connor McNair with an impressive 500 points, followed closely by his HMS Sultan team mate Sub Lt Matt Shaw with 485 points.

Sub Lt Matt Walker was third with 467 points.

This event showed off some promising talent for future Royal Navy and Royal Marines competitions.

After the impressive climbing display, it was time for the Open Category competitors to try their three qualifying routes.



● (Top) Climbers at the event; (Left) Elaine Tyler has a go; (Right) climbers rest while they watch

Pictures: LPhot Barry Wheeler

This was a tense three hours of climbing, with not much separating the top ten climbers and some of the new contenders putting in strong performances.

After a hard qualifier the top climbers for each category were selected.

For the men it was PO Thomas Hinchliffe, AB Jack Pinnegar, Lt Cdr Hamish McKee with 283 points, Mne Nick Boreham with 278, Maj Rich Mackie and AB Lloyd Harris with 264 points.

For the women Midshipman Emma Reynolds was top with 300 points and LH Claire Hudd

second with 278 points.

The women's final was a display of determination and courage, made all the more impressive as both of these climbers were new to lead climbing.

In fact, for Claire this was her first time lead climbing – quite the baptism of fire.

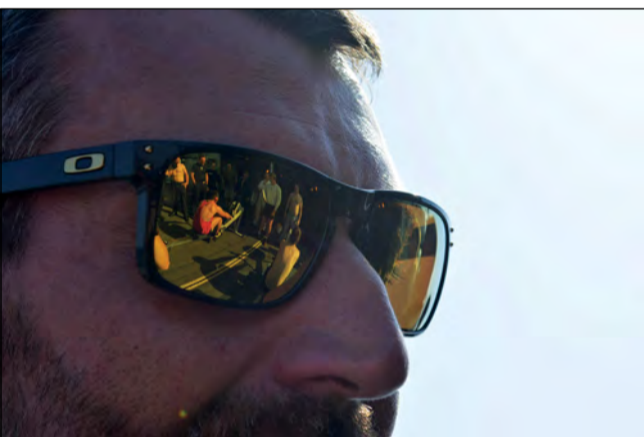
In the end it was Emma's bouldering strength that prevailed, allowing her to take the victory and winning best fall in the process.

The men's final was a very closely-fought affair with all six climbers at a very similar level.

First out was Lloyd Harris, who set a formidable standard, but one that was immediately bettered by Rich Mackie in a display that would turn out to be the winning performance of the final as the remaining competitors all fell off on the hold below.

The final result was: First, Maj Rich Mackie; second, AB Jack Pinnegar; and third, Mne Nick Boreham.

The event was sponsored by Cotswold Outdoor, DMM and Entre-Prises.



## Monmouth set good Suez time

IFYOU look at his mirror shades you can see the crew of HMS Monmouth rowing the Suez following their transit through the canal.

The Suez is 162km in length and the event saw 101 personnel take part.

The event took place on the flight deck on two Concept 2 rowing machines.

With nine Royal Marines on board there was always going to be some clear determination on who wanted to win.

L/Cpl Crampton stepped up – and played down any chances of winning the quickest time of

the day, but how wrong could he be?

The 'lean, mean, muscle machine' took to the rower and used his height to his advantage.

After slogging it out for 6min 28.5sec his 2km was complete.

The second quickest time of the day was 6min and 53sec by Lt Cdr Giffin.

Monmouth's Commanding Officer, Cdr Ian Feasey, had kindly accepted to take the ship over the final line with a time of 7min 31sec.

Monmouth completed the challenge for the Fleet Trophy in 9hr 57min and 27.7sec.

## Windsor farewell for Rabbit and Co

TWO Royal Navy senior show jumping teams joined 26 other sides at the Royal Windsor Horse Show.

One of the largest horse shows in the UK, it attracts international as well as UK competitors in a wide variety of equestrian disciplines.

The first two Senior Service riders from each team jumped clear – putting the final riders under pressure. The White Team finished with four faults, earning a place in the second round jump-off. The Red Team were eliminated following an uncharacteristic bout of 'acrobatics'.

Following the team parade and march-past to salute the Queen in the main Castle arena, the second round jump-off saw PO Sophie

Fuller and Smiler represent the RN in front of jam-packed stands that created an electric atmosphere.

As one of three teams sitting in equal first place with four faults there was all to play for. PO Fuller's round combined accuracy and speed, but a very unlucky pole at the final fence put the White Team into third place behind Pangbourne College Cadets and the eventual winners, the Bahrain Defence Force.

It was the RN's best finish for seven years at the event, and the White Team were the highest placed of all UK military teams – even surpassing the winners of the Military Working Horse Section, who finished on a greater number of faults having dropped more poles.

The culmination of the competition saw the team awarded their rosettes in front of the Queen.

This year's squad riders – Cdr Jo Bollen on Titus, Lt Cdr Suzanne Clark on Rabbit, Lt Becca Brown on Gibson, PO Amy Taylor on Zenna and PO Sophie Fuller on Smiler – and their team of willing helpers did the RN proud.

The season is tinged with sadness as Lt Cdr Suzanne Clark decided to bow out of representing the RN at the high-profile event in future with her horse Glorious Prospect, aka Rabbit.

They have been stalwarts of the RN's Royal Windsor teams every year for the last 12 years.



● Four of the team with trainer Wendy Foot and RNRMEA chairman Capt Nick Cooke-Priest  
Picture: Penny Bradbury

# Navy stars leading UKAF bid for glory

AS WOULD befit three Senior Service players selected for the United Kingdom Armed Forces Rugby League World Cup tilt, they will be providing pace, power, precision and of course the captain of the ship.

The 24-man squad, which was announced by head coach Flt Lt Damian Clayton, will be led by skipper LAET Ben Taylor, while LS(WS) Ryan Matthews provides the team's kicking expertise and LET(ME) James Parry is part of the powerhouse that will look to drive the side to victory at the Festival of Rugby League World Cups starting in Sydney on July 7.

Second-row Taylor, 26, who was involved in the team's previous tour to Australia in 2015, said: "We lost in the last minute against Australia last time out, so this feels like an opportunity to put things right. "I am also relishing playing against the Fijians; I've played alongside plenty in the Forces and they're fierce competitors so I'm expecting an explosive game against them.

"I've also been lucky enough to face up against the Haka a couple of times before and that's an amazing experience."

Taylor, who is based at RAF Waddington, and his teammates were speaking before their last warm-up game, played as



● James Parry, Ben Taylor and Ryan Matthews at Leeds Rhinos' Headingley Carnegie stadium  
Picture: SBS

the curtain-raiser to the Leeds Rhinos' Super League clash against Leigh Centurions.

"We're supposedly the best 24 RL players the Services have to offer, so we have a responsibility to do that title justice and prove why we were selected.

"As I've always said, you won't find anybody prouder to represent their country than me. I love belting out a national anthem, and to do so as part of the RN as well... words are difficult to find what this all means."

Despite losing their closing game at England Universities, Matthews, who got on the scoreboard by slotting over two conversions, was proudly part of

the team's lap of honour, side-by-side with AET Luke Cooper ET Mike Haldenby and Mne Jamie Birdsall RM, the remaining Naval Service stars selected to head Down Under.

Serving at Faslane, Matthews, whose father was in the Navy, said: "Prep has gone really well for the World Cup - we've had four training camps with four tough games. We've tested ourselves against top-level professional opposition, which is a real testament to where we see ourselves as a squad.

"Competition for places is always intense, but I've had the added motivation on missing out on the Test match against the Aussies in 2015 which has always

been in the back of my mind and spurred me on not only on the UKAF Camps, but to prove myself at the annual Inter-Services for the Navy."

The half-back added: "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have the chance to win a World Cup Down Under; although we have no doubts about the challenges we are going to face, we are confident we can do the job."

Parry, 28, who serves at HMS Sultan, may well be cheered on by his sister Amy, who lives in Sydney.

He said: "This is the highlight of my sporting life - it is such a huge honour to be part of the squad. To have played at grounds such as Headingley is all part of an amazing journey for us."

The UKAFRL team will begin their Festival of Rugby League World Cup bid when they face Fiji on July 7, before taking on the hosts just two days later on July 9, then playing New Zealand on July 12.

The third and fourth place play-off match will be held on July 14, with the final taking place at the Pepper Stadium, Sydney on July 16.

To keep up to date with the UKAFRL team visit Twitter: @UKArmedForcesRL; Facebook at: United Kingdom Armed Forces Rugby League and on YouTube at: ukafri2017.

Report: Daniel Abrahams



● England manager Gareth Southgate exits the sheep dip at CTCRM, Lymington  
Picture: LPhoto Barry Wheeler

## RM experience for England team

ROYAL Marines have helped the England football squad get fitter and become a stronger unit.

Manager Gareth Southgate gathered his players and support staff at St George's Park, the national football centre - where a member of the Royal Marines informed them that they would immediately relocate to Devon for the next 48 hours.

Upon arrival at Commando Training Centre, Lymington, the group changed into their rig.

The following days saw them experience an array of activities that Royal Marines recruits undertake, including a night camping on Woodbury Common.

"We wanted to come and put the guys into a different environment, something they weren't expecting," Southgate explained. "We wanted to expose the guys to an elite environment with one of the elite forces in the world.

"We wanted them to see that there's another world out there. "These guys represent Queen

and country, and we do the same - but the consequences of failure for the Royal Marines are far higher. That gives us a good context and comparison.

"For me, the greatest outcome was that we worked as one team - support staff and players. I think there was a real connection formed between everybody, and it was also a great life experience for everybody.

"We're always thinking about football and the small world we're in, but there are life experiences that'll stay with you forever and I think this will stay with everyone - from our side and the Marines' side."

CTC's Commandant, Col Mike Tanner, said: "It has been a real pleasure. They threw themselves into every challenge with enthusiasm and good humour.

"The Royal Marines and England football team have much in common, and the opportunity to share experience was valuable."



● HMS Ocean, in red, won the women's 7s contest while HMS Seahawk, in black shorts, won the men's



Pictures: LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum

## Ocean's seven take honours

MORE than 250 sailors and marines gathered at Yeovil RFC to take part in the annual Royal Navy Rugby Union 7s competition.

Twelve men's and six women's teams travelled from around the UK to compete.

HMS Seahawk were crowned the victors of the men's competition while HMS Ocean's team won the inaugural women's touch rugby tournament.

The men's competition took the form of three leagues of four teams to warm the players up before the knock-out stages commenced.

Group winners HMS Heron, Commando Logistics Regiment and HMS Seahawk went through as the favourites.

Heron met BRNC in the first semi-final, winning 15-10, and in the other semi-final, HMS Seahawk triumphed 26-7 over CLR.

In the final Heron were outclassed by their

fellow air station as Seahawk romped home winners 26-0.

For the first time a women's touch 7s competition was played alongside the men's 7s tournament.

Teams took part from HMS Sultan, HMS Heron, HMS Somerset, BRNC, HMS Ocean and a combined team from the University Royal Naval Units.

All the teams played each other in the league stage and then the top four teams went through to the knock-out stages. HMS Heron beat BRNC and HMS Ocean won against the URNUs in the semi-finals.

In the final, HMS Ocean triumphed over HMS Heron 4-2 to be crowned champions.

The event was organised by the RNRU Community Rugby Coach from the Eastern Region, Mr Dave Wakefield. He was ably supported by a team of officials from the

RNRU Referees Society.

The trophies were presented by Capt Ellie Ablett, RNRU Vice President and Commanding Officer HMS Raleigh, and Mike Connolly, RNRU Life Member and Trustee.

The next event in the RNRU calendar is the annual beach rugby festival which will take place on July 19 at Weymouth.

If you are interested in taking part please contact the RNRU Rugby development Officer, Ady Cherrington, [adycherrington@rfu.com](mailto:adycherrington@rfu.com) or go to the website [www.navyrugbyunion.co.uk](http://www.navyrugbyunion.co.uk) for more details.

The full list of the men's 7 teams taking part was HMNB Devonport, Viking Sqn, HMS Heron, University Royal Naval Units, CLR, HMS Ocean, HMS Sultan, BRNC, HMNB Clyde, HMS Somerset, 40 Cdo RM, HMS Seahawk.



## Victory for CLR in battle of Royals

COMMANDO Logistics Regiment won the football battle of the Royals in the 2017 Navy Cup final.

The CLR team emerged 3-1 victors against 45 Cdo in the final at HMS Drake.

CLR started the game very brightly and had 45 Cdo on the back foot from the very start.

But it wasn't until the 20th minute that Logs got their breakthrough with a fine one-touch finish from forward L/Cpl Matt Dawson.

Man-of-the-match Dawson doubled CLR's lead one minute later with a fine finish from some very good build-up play.

45 Cdo were struggling to get a foothold in the game, however on 30 minutes a superb individual goal from L/Cpl Scott Patterson gave the team from Scotland a lifeline.

The second half continued in much the same way as the first with CLR dominating possession.

They increased their lead on 65 minutes when L/Cpl Kalum Radley tapped in from close range after the 45 goalkeeper failed to hold a shot from distance.

The remainder of the game witnessed 45 upping their efforts in search of an equaliser but to no avail.

Captain L/Cpl Charles was presented with the trophy by Phil Abbott, Managing Director of the tournament sponsor Ivor Dewdney Pasties Ltd.



● PO Neil Robinson from HMS Collingwood tries to escape the bunker

## For info: Warfare win Navy Cup title

NAVAL Service personnel from across the Fleet took part in the Navy Cup golf finals at Southwick Park.

Teams consisted of four players, from which the best three scores from each round counted towards their team's collective score.

An individual competition was played alongside this with prizes awarded to the players with the top three individual Stableford scores accrued over the two rounds.

With such a large entry – 19 teams – a shotgun start enabled everyone to start and finish at the same time.

After the first 18 holes RNAS Culdrose A team were leading the pack with 107 points, closely followed by Navy IW, whilst in the individual event, PO Daniel Filby (Culdrose A) led the field scoring a huge 43pts.

The second round of 18 holes proved to be just as challenging as the first for some, with less than ten per cent of the field playing to handicap.

CPO Chris Harris (HMS Ocean) and Cdr Jack Hawkins (NCHQ) both scored 39 points and were in contention to win the individual event whilst the team event was also proving to be a close contest.

The Navy IW team – 2/O Danny Stather, WO1 Julie Palmer, WO2 Rick Shepherd and Darren Copus, all based at NCHQ – played steady throughout the day and finished with 203 points, beating both RNAS Culdrose A Team and HMS Prince of Wales into second and third place respectively on 201 points and countback based on the originally discarded fourth player's score.

In the individual event, three players each scored a total of 73 points and tied for first place.

On countback (decided on best second round), it was 2/O Stather (Navy IW) in first place scoring 37pts and Darren Copus (Navy IW) and PO Daniel Filby coming second and third respectively.

Golf wouldn't be golf without the little extra competition in the scoring of twos. Every player entered this competition and out of 76 players, 18 shared a slice of the winnings. Mne Ben Adams (CTCRM) scored a total of three twos throughout the day.

The 2018 Navy Cup event will take place at China Fleet Club on May 15. The RNTM containing details on the event will be released towards the end of the year.



● Navy IW receive the trophy from Rear Admiral John Clink

## Golfers on course to help

THE Royal Navy took part in the second charity golf match against On Course Foundation (OCF).

The first match at Cams Hall, Fareham, was a four-ball-better-ball format, based on handicaps, which meant that the Royal Navy had to give lots of shots to their opponents.

Kate Surman (OCF) played exceptionally well and, along with her play partner Richard Marsden, beat AB Holly Greenaway and LPT Gareth Reid on the 14th (5&4).

WO2 Rick Shepherd and PO Geoff Wernham halved their match on the 18th with other matches being closely-fought contests, and at the

end of day one, the RN were just ahead of OCF 3½ to 2½.

Day two saw Kate Surman beat Holly Greenaway on the 16th, 5&3.

RN team captain Lt Scott Gilbert had a closely-fought round against John Coupe which ended in a half, while Lt Gav Waring also halved his fixture against Nigel Beasley.

WO Jimmy Forwell beat double amputee Kushal.

The RN went on to win the singles 6½ to 5½, making the overall match score 10-8.

OCF helps ex-Service personnel recovering from physical and mental injuries.

The two sides first met last year and decided to make the fixture an annual event.



# Epic Masters journey

## Veterans narrowly miss out on medal

THE Royal Navy Masters Hockey squad had a tough time at the World Masters Games in New Zealand.

The 18-strong squad faced playing nine matches in 11 days at the Auckland event, which featured 28,000 competitors taking part in 45 disciplines across 28 sports.

First up was a friendly against the Royal New Zealand Navy, which gave the visitors a chance to adjust to the surface – and the Kiwis' more liberal interpretation of the rules.

A close and cagey first half saw the RN go 1-0 up, courtesy of a penalty stroke by LPT Sam Howard, but after the break the Kiwis figured out a way to counter the RN's formation. The younger side's fitness eventually saw them come through with a 3-1 win.

The team, complete with White Ensign, took part in the Games' opening ceremony spectacular at Eden Park before getting back to business on the pitch.

The standard of competition in the over-35s category was high, with three teams from New Zealand, one from South Africa and the RN.

Game one was against Hammered Heads, a local team from the Auckland area. The RN started strong and defended well in a very hard-fought match with both teams going close in the first half.

A turnover goal mid-way through the second half, followed by a fantastic tomahawk late on, saw Hammered Heads win 2-0. RN goalkeeper C/Sgt Steve Payne was named man of the match.

The RN produced the performance of the tournament against favourites Tiger Turf, a reunion of the NZ team that won silver at the 2002 Commonwealth Games.

With more than 1,500 caps between them, a packed crowd turned up to watch, with the RN defending heroically to keep the score at 2-0 with eight minutes remaining.

A late flurry of goals gave Tiger Turf a rather flattering 5-0 win, but the RN knew they had done well when the partisan NZ crowd applauded them off the park.

The next game was a must-win against a strong, physical South African side, Mufasa Cubs. Starting strong, POET(ME) Danny Makaruk and LPT Rowan Edwards turned a penalty corner into a stroke, which was converted by LPT Howard after ten minutes.

Some energy-sapping end-to-end hockey followed and half-time was a welcome break. The South Africans piled on the pressure in the second half, which saw more great defensive efforts and another great performance from C/Sgt Payne. A 1-0 win that was anything but boring saw the RN put three points on the board.

The only rest day fell on ANZAC Day, a day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand. It was an honour to join the NZ Defence Force in a parade to mark



the occasion.

Back to the hockey and game four against Black and Blue, featuring former 'Black Sticks', including former captain Dean Couzins with over 300 caps.

The RN started well and scored an early, well-composed field goal by Lt Mark Dixon, before Black and Blue started to turn the screw, forcing the Brits to defend deep and getting back on even terms, then taking a half time lead of 2-1.

An attacking formation change saw some great leg work in the centre of midfield from WO2ET(MESM) Russ Garner and more of the 'do or die' defending that the RN were building a reputation for.

The work-rate and intensity of the games began to tell with a few injury problems affecting some players.

The RN won several penalty corners with no reward, however the skilful Kiwis got into their rhythm and ran out 6-1 winners in the searing midday heat.

A bye game followed against HPHC, from the over-45s category, which ended in a 2-2 draw, before the business end of the tournament began.

Game six saw the RN play Hammered Heads again, a team they had become good friends with off the pitch, but where victory would guarantee a medal game. Now deep into the tournament, the fatigue was far from showing. Both sides were at full tilt and matching each other stroke for stroke.

The RN conceded an unlucky goal to the speculative swing of a stick in the first half and went for broke during the second half, coming close on several occasions, with characteristic strong defence while being left slightly exposed at the back in the search for a goal that didn't materialise.

A must-win game against Mufasa Cubs for a place in the bronze medal play off saw the weather turn to torrential downpour.

The conditions played into the RN's hands, feeling much more at home than the South Africans. The game started well, but the Cubs broke early and got the first goal. This only spurred on the RN and goals were scored in open play from Danny Makaruk and CPOET(WE)



Andy Hyder.

The RN had the Cubs on the ropes with pressure mounting until the rain got heavier, flooding the water-based pitch, and forced a break in play to assess if the game could continue.

The break favoured the Cubs and the RN lost their hard-won momentum. A late goal from a penalty corner saw the game end 2-2 with the dreaded prospect of penalty shuffles.

After five penalties the score was tied at 2-2 and it went to sudden death. POAET Rich Potter pulled off some cracking saves and Lt Carl Perry scored the decisive winner to put the RN through to play for a medal.

The final game of the campaign saw the RN play Hammered Heads for the third time. Growing in strength throughout the tournament confidence was high with hope that this could be third time lucky.

In another epic contest that kept the crowd enthralled, the RN scored first with a well-hit strike from a penalty corner by Lt Cdr Adam Duke.

The RN managed to hold on to the lead for 45 minutes, defending well, but continued pressure led to conceding from a penalty corner to level the game at 1-1, and despite hitting the crossbar with two minutes to go, that's how it finished.

A penalty shoot-out would determine the result. Hammered Heads were clinical in front of goal and the RN lost 2-1, narrowly missing out on the bronze with reputation intact and heads held high.

The whole experience was relished by all; the great teams, top-class facilities, atmosphere and location in Auckland.

Player of the tournament was awarded to Lt Cdr Duke and Top Tourer was shared by PO(UW) Timmy Mallett and CPOSC David Hammond.

Special thanks should go to Lt Carl Perry, Mr Steve Lemon and POET(ME) Danny Makaruk who put the tour together and made things run smoothly.

The RN Masters Hockey team are now hoping to follow the success of their first Games with sights set on Japan 2021.

**Report: CPOSC David 'Hammy' Hammond and Lt Carl Perry**  
**Pictures: CPOSC Hammond and CPO Andy Hyder**



# Paddy power



Picture: 700X NAS

## ROYAL Marine Paddy Daniel of 40 Commando puts on a powerful display en route to winning the Inter-Service Surf Championships Men's Open Title.

The Royal Navy/Royal Marines Surf Association, who hosted this year's championships at Penhale Beach in Cornwall, were aiming to deliver a better showing than last year, when both men and women's teams finished last.

As well as Mne Daniel, titles were also won by Sub Lt Sandra Olmesdahl, of 703 NAS, who retained the women's

open title, and Lt Ollie Judd, of DES Abbey Wood, who took the men's bodyboard title.

The RN/RM surf squad fielded a strong team and hopes were raised further on day one of the contest when the surfers were greeted by a solid swell with head-high (and bigger) waves breaking from Penhale Camp, across the bay to Perranporth.

Due to the size of the surf and the associated difficulty in paddling out to the breaking waves, 25 minutes were allotted to each heat to ensure that competitors had a reasonable chance

of securing two or more scoring waves per heat, with the best two scores determining overall positions.

Given the understandable rivalry between respective Services, a head judge was appointed by the RNRMSA to oversee continuity and fairness of scoring.

Mr Mike Durkin, a professional judge who has adjudicated around Europe at the highest level, provided all three Services with invaluable coaching on how to score waves in a competitive environment.

From the earliest stages of the

competition it was clear that the Senior Service was going to improve on its 2016 performance.

With extremely strong performances coming from both men's and women's categories, expectations increased throughout the first day.

With weather deteriorating and cold, blustery showers prevailing throughout the afternoon, the competition pushed on until twilight, as all were conscious of the fact that surfing conditions were forecast to change on day two.

While conditions had dropped in size for the second day of competition,

surfers were greeted by smaller but glassy conditions and an immediate decision was taken to continue with the event.

As a real boon to the association, RNAS Culdrose provided support to the event through the provision of an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) from 700X Naval Air Squadron.

The Army pipped the RNRMSA into second position overall after an incredibly tight competition – the first time the Army had won the championships.

Words: Cdr Paul Matthews

## Record-breaking swimmers

ROYAL Navy swimmers netted 28 medals at the World Masters Games in Auckland, New Zealand.

Eleven members of the RN Amateur Swimming Association made the journey, with Lt Emma Miles starting the celebrations with a bronze – and an RN record – in the 800m freestyle.

The team went from strength to strength, with gold medals for Lt Rhodri Humphreys in the 100m freestyle, Lt Miles in the 200m backstroke and LNN Samantha Eagle in the 100m freestyle and 100m backstroke.

Lt Humphreys also grabbed two silvers, the 200m freestyle and 50m backstroke, while POACMN Liam Armstrong got silvers in the 800m and 100m freestyle events.

LNN Eagle got two more silvers in the 100m backstroke and 200m freestyle, while Band Cpl Caitlin O'Malley picked up a silver in the 400m individual medley.

Bronze medals were won by POACMN Armstrong in the 400m freestyle, LNN Eagle in the 50m freestyle and Mne Ashley Dougan in the 100m fly.

A further gold came in the 120-159 age group (that's the total age for the team of four, not a team of very old swimmers...) mixed medley relay with another four silver and two bronze medals for other relay teams.

During the seven-day pool contest, Royal Navy swimmers broke 13 Senior Service records, along with six relay records.

The final day of the World Masters Games saw athletes travel to Takapuna Beach for the Open Water Swimming competition.

The Royal Navy had five serving open water competitors over two distances, 1500m and 5km. Lt Adam Coomer was first to swim in the 1500m – his first open water



• Members of the RNASA who travelled to Auckland

competition. Despite the rain and poor visibility at the beginning of the race, he claimed a bronze medal in the 25-29 year age group.

The rain had cleared by the end of the 1500m races but the wind had picked up to make conditions challenging.

Lt Humphreys, PO(ACMN) Armstrong and Major Andy Mason were next up in the men's 5km, again producing brilliant swims to gain two more gold medals and a sixth position respectively.

The final Royal Navy swimmers to compete at the games were Lt Miles and Bnd

Cpl O'Malley in the women's 5km.

Despite a great swim, a podium swim evaded Bnd Cpl O'Malley who had to settle for fourth position.

Lt Miles was able to stick with the leader for the first lap but was unable to hold the pace and swam in to claim the silver medal.

The final medal count saw the RN swimming team end the World Masters Games with seven gold, 12 silver and nine bronze medals.

The next target for RN Swimming is to retain the Men's Inter-Service title this month.



## Naval Service make UK Invictus team

A DOZEN Naval Service personnel – serving and veterans – were named in the 90-strong UK team for the **Invictus Games** in Toronto this September.

Serving personnel are: Lt Col Mark Bowra RM, who will compete in cycling, rowing and swimming events, David Watts RM, who will compete in archery and swimming, and Dominic Nott RN, who was selected for athletics, rowing and swimming.

Navy veterans Faith Fordham, Paul Guest, Kirk Hughes, and Jamie Weller, along with RM veterans Alex Krol, Alex Moulder, Poppy Pawsey, Ian Ronald and Mark Ormerod are also in the team. Prince Harry, patron of the Games, joined the 2017 UK team of Wounded, Injured and Sick (WIS) Service personnel and veterans for their first official team photograph at the Tower of London.

More than 300 WIS personnel and veterans applied for one of 90 places available on the team. Of those selected, 62 per cent are new to the Invictus Games with only eight per cent having competed in the two previous games, London 2014 and Orlando 2016.

The UK team will join 16 other nations at the third Invictus Games from September 23-30 in Canada. They will compete across 12 sports: athletics, archery, wheelchair basketball, road cycling, powerlifting, indoor rowing, wheelchair rugby, swimming, sitting volleyball, wheelchair tennis, the Jaguar Land Rover Driving Challenge, and a new sport for 2017, golf.

The 2017 UK team captain has been named as former Army Major Bernie Broad. He served in the Grenadier Guards for around 30 years and due to injuries sustained in an explosion in Afghanistan 2009 lost both his legs below the knee.

Between now and the Games, training will take place across the country at recovery centres and other external venues.

The UK delegation to Toronto is being delivered by a partnership comprising the Ministry of Defence, Help for Heroes and the Royal British Legion.

## Clean sweep in Canada

BRITANNIA Royal Naval College rugby team returned unbeaten from a tour of Canada – and didn't concede a single point.

The squad of 32 travelled to Kingston and Toronto to take on the Royal Military College Canada and a team from the University of Guelph.

BRNC proved too strong for the RMCC team, crossing the line for the first time around ten minutes into the game. The tries and points then started to come thick and fast with no reply from the Canadian side. BRNC won the game 57-0.

Two days later in Kingston, BRNC took to the field again against the University of Guelph 1st XV, who proved to be much tougher opposition. Nevertheless the first score was to

BRNC late in the first half and the team led 12-0 at half time. BRNC continued in the same vein in the second half and, despite the snow, emerged from the game 27-0 victors.

At the start of the tour BRNC RFC hosted a community rugby coaching session in the Kingston Sports Dome for 60 high school students.

The whole squad also took the opportunity to indulge in some extra-curricular activities. A favourite was the trip from Toronto down to Niagara Falls.

Many of the team went up to the top of Toronto's CN Tower and visited the world famous Real Sports Bar & Grill.

BRNC RFC is led by head coach Lt Sean Hammond and POPT Sion Jenkins.





Pictures: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum

# Life in the fast lane

## Riders battle wind and rain for Inter-Service time trials

ROYAL Marine Aaron Kneebone puts the pedal to the metal at the Inter-Service **Cycling** Time Trial Championships.

The rider was one of 90 who competed in a ten-mile time trial on roads around RNAS Yeovilton.

Light rain showers greeted the riders on the A303 as they battled uphill against a steady headwind for the first five miles of their route out of Podimore.

The Tintinhull flyover, the point at which the competitors changed direction, couldn't come quickly

enough, but the return leg, which was blessed with a steady tailwind, led to some impressive speeds and times.

Excitement and expectation was high in the event headquarters as the times started to come in – each of the three Services were in with a good chance of victory in the men's solo event.

In the end only 31 seconds separated the fastest three riders, with the Army's Ryan Perry taking the honours in a time of 19min 53sec. Second was the Royal Navy's Gary Chambers with a time of 20min 15sec, while the RAF's Ryan Morley took

third place in a time of 20min 28sec.

The most impressive performances of the evening though were from two competitors on ordinary road bikes, both competing in their very first time trial event.

ABWtr Taegan Pomeroy posted a time of 27min 30sec to become the Naval Service 10TT Female Champion 2017 and Rear Admiral Paul Bennett posted an equally impressive time of 27min 17sec – but sadly didn't win anything at all. He did a cracking job of presenting the prizes to the winners though.

Major Leon Marshall and Mrs

Rachel Hickman won the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Cycling Association Time Trial Championships in times of 21min 8sec and 26min 48sec respectively.

Winners:

Inter-Service 10 TT Championship: Men's competition: First, Ryan Perry – Army; second, Gary Chambers – Navy; third, Ryan Morley – RAF.

Women's contest: First, Christina Murray – Army; second, Sue McFarlane – Army; third, Samantha Wilson – Army.

The Team Event, based on an aggregate of the fastest six times

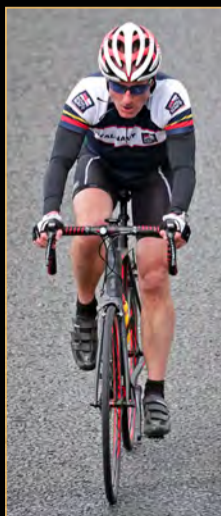
from each Service, was won by the Army.

Naval Service 10TT Champions: Men: AB Gary Chambers; Women: ABWtr Taegan Pomeroy.

Special thanks go to Tom Cox and the Northover Vets Cycling Club for organising and marshalling the events, and to CPO Tam Fraser for co-ordinating the weekend's events.

The RNRMCA Inter-Service XC MTB Championships take place at Newnham Park in Plymouth on Wednesday July 5.

Entry forms are available at [www.navycycling.co.uk](http://www.navycycling.co.uk)



● Clockwise from left, Rear Admiral Paul Bennett, Lt Col Si Rogers RM, Maj Leon Marshall RM, AB Gabriel Cox RNR, Rachel Hackman, CPO Tam Fraser; Below Capt David Hall RN and Chis Vellacott

