



NAVY NEWS

JANUARY 2018

Royal approval

Queen at commissioning of new aircraft carrier

Polar patrol

Protector sails into the unknown



■ Lt Cdr Nicola Cripps became the first female Royal Navy officer to lead the changing of the guard as the Senior Service made history at Windsor Castle, plus Buckingham Palace, St James's Palace and the Tower of London (see pages 2-3)

Picture: PO Phot Arron Hoare

On guard



Off-sale date: January 31 2018

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CAPTAIN of the Queen's Guard Lt Cdr Steve Elliott can't hide his delight as the Royal Navy takes their place in history at Buckingham Palace.

Eighty-six sailors, representing 45 ships and shore establishments of the Senior Service, donned their traditional navy blue uniforms to replace Foot Guards wearing grey greatcoats.

Starting at Buckingham Palace, the Royal Navy also took over guarding duties at Windsor Castle, St James's Palace and the Tower of London.

"The last time the Navy had an operational role guarding the Queen was with Elizabeth the First, when Sir Walter Raleigh was appointed Captain of the Queen's Guard in 1587," said Lt Cdr Elliott, Sir Walter Raleigh's successor in the role. "So it goes back a little while."

Lt Cdr Elliott, 42, added: "I'm very proud of my sailors and they can be justifiably proud of themselves."

Some 20 miles west of Buckingham Palace and the Captain of the Windsor Guard Lt Cdr Nicola Cripps was leading her sailors into the castle to take over from the Household Division.

"It's a very proud moment for me," said Lt Cdr Cripps, 36, who grew up in the borough and attended Newlands Girls School in Maidenhead.

"Everywhere we go, people have said how pleased they are to see the Royal Navy mounting the Guard, and it is a tremendous honour, not just for my sailors, but the Naval Service as a whole," added the Training Management Officer.

"This will be one of the highlights of my Service career and I'm quite sure that everyone in today's Guard will be telling their grandchildren in years to come what an honour it was."

The two Lt Cdrs swapped duties during the Royal Navy Guard period with Lt Cdr Cripps confessing she thought the role at Windsor was easier.

"There are fewer people lining the streets which means the pressure is slightly less. But we should thank the general public for all their support and encouragement."

"It's an amazing honour and we have all been bursting with pride."

The Guard learned the 120 intricate routines and drill movements needed for their duties at the Royal Navy's headquarters at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth.

Royal Navy ceremonial instructors were supplemented in the latter stages by drill instructors from the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, who were impressed by the Royal Navy's agility on the parade square.

C/Sgt Elliott Fox, of the Coldstream Guards, said: "There are differences in language, ranks and the drill which has been a bit of a small hurdle to get over, but it's really a good relationship."

"Everyone's applied themselves to a really high standard. The Royal Navy ceremonial instructors have put a lot of effort into making our job relatively easy."

WO1 Eddie Wearing, the Royal Navy's state ceremonial training officer, said: "To be the conducting Warrant Officer for the

● From far left, AB Sean Slater on duty at Windsor Castle; AB Michael Lynton, also at Windsor; AB Alex Stacey at Buckingham Palace

Pictures: PO Phot Arron Hoare

first mount ever in the Royal Navy is a massive privilege and an honour.”

Each period of guard duty lasted for two days, with each new guard assembling at Wellington Barracks parade square before marching with the Royal Marines Band out to meet their ceremonial duties.

HM Royal Marines Bands from Portsmouth, Scotland and Commando Training Centre accompanied the Royal Navy Guard throughout their duties.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones said: “It is fitting that the Royal Navy has been granted the honour of mounting the Queen’s Guard to coincide with the commissioning of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

“The sight of sailors undertaking public duties in our capital city is a sign that the Royal Navy is back where it belongs, at the very heart of national life.”

Other members of the Naval Service – The Royal Marines – have completed the Queen’s Guard on three occasions.

The Changing of the Guard can be traced back to the reign of Henry VII, when a ‘Royal Body Guard’ was created to protect the Sovereign.

Guards Regiments were formed to protect King Charles II in 1656, when he was in exile and since then have provided highly-trained officers and soldiers for the Royal Guards.

The Royal Navy mounted simultaneous Royal Guards at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle for the final time, to coincide with the commissioning of HMS Queen Elizabeth, see pages 10-11.

As the duties came to a close, Lt Cdr Elliott said: “I’m proud to have led the Royal Navy detachment for public duties.

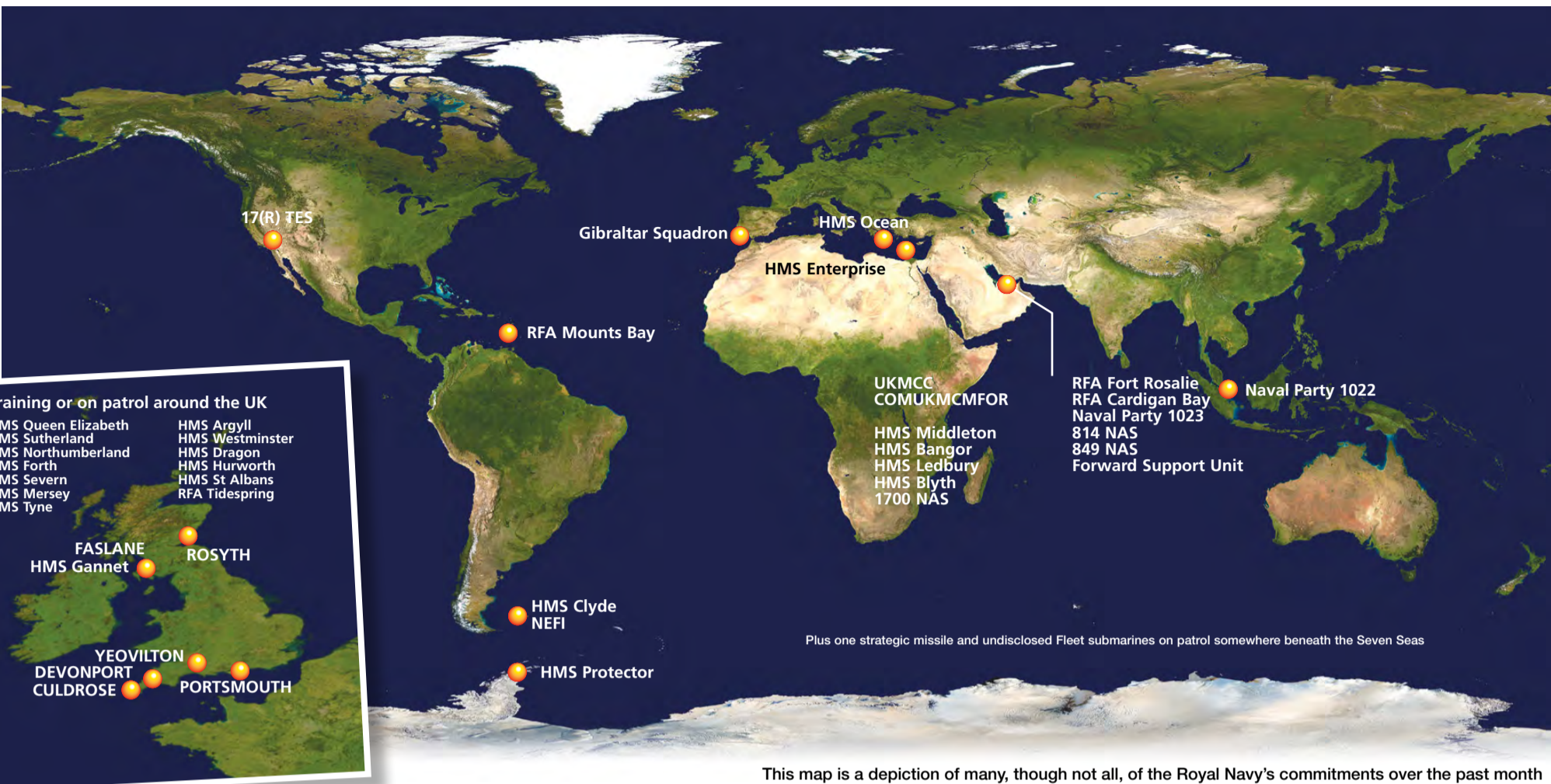
“The team have delivered to a high standard and I hope that we will have the opportunity to stand guard over the London Palaces again in the near future.

“When placed together with the commissioning of HMS Queen Elizabeth we have shown that the modern Navy is fit to fight in the future and also able to contribute to tasks outside of our normal remit.

“This experience has been a fantastic way to end the Year of the Navy and I’m glad I was able to play my part.”



Move over, we're making history



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

WELCOME to 2018. This year has been designated the **Year of Engineering**, a campaign fully endorsed by the Royal Navy (see page 21).

But before we look ahead, it is only right that we look back as the Senior Service ended 2017 in style. Top of the list is the commissioning of **HMS Queen Elizabeth** (see pages 10-11) by her Lady Sponsor the Queen. More than 3,000 guests attended the service aboard the carrier in her home port of Portsmouth.

The first of the RFA's new tankers, **Tidespring**, was welcomed into the Naval Service following a unique service in Portsmouth Naval Base (see page 6).

In London, the Royal Navy made history as personnel took on the role of the **Queen's Guard** (see pages 2-3) at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, St James's Palace and the Tower of London.

On the other side of the world **HMS Protector** has completed her first work package of the austral summer (see centre pages). The ice patrol ship surveyed areas never charted before as she travelled to the remote South Sandwich Islands.

Into the Med, where Fleet Flagship **HMS Ocean** led more than 20 ships – along with more than 300 British, Greek and US Marines – for the Hellenic Navy's main autumn war games (see page 17).

Back in the UK and **HMS Albion's** ship's company have been put through their Operational Sea Training with a disaster-relief exercise ahead of the ship returning to front-line service (see pages 18-19).

Also in Devonport, **HMS Montrose** was officially welcomed back into front-line service at a rededication ceremony (see page 5).

Back from 11 months of training are 15 students on **846 NAS's** 27 Operational Conversion Course (see page 20). They are now qualified to fly the battlefield Merlin on front-line duties wherever the Royal Marines go.

Also returning home in time for Christmas were **HMS Monmouth** and **HMS Diamond** (see pages 6-7). The former spent nine months on patrol in the Gulf, while the latter led a NATO task group in the Med.

A group of **Royal Navy medics** are ready to leave the UK and take over at a United Nations peacekeeping mission in South Sudan (see page 16).

A **Vanguard-class submarine** marked the 350th deterrent patrol (see page 5) – 49 years after submariners headed out from Faslane aboard HMS Resolution on the maiden sortie.

Today's sailors were given a 19th Century experience by crewing a replica schooner of **HMS Pickle**, the vessel which brought back news of Nelson's victory and death at Trafalgar, (see page 13).

One of the **Cockleshell Heroes**, former milkman James Conway, was honoured in his home town of Stockport (see page 14). Descendants of the Royal Marine, veterans, serving commandos and civic leaders gathered for the unveiling of a monument to the canoeist.

In Scotland, reservists based at **HMS Dalriada** are benefiting from state-of-the-art training at a Glasgow shipping company (see page 23).

The medals and personal documents of forgotten WW1 Naval hero Lt David Wainwright have been returned to **Britannia Royal Naval College** (see page 14).

Finally, a surgeon and a scientist have been singled out as women of the year in the **2017 Women in Defence awards** (see page 9).

Summit to savour

Foreign forces put through their paces

HI-HO, hi-ho, it's up the slope we go...

Royal Marines lead their American and French counterparts up a Highland trail as they prepare the US Marine Corps for the rigours of Arctic warfare.

Cold-weather warriors from 45 Commando in Arbroath invited the Americans and French to join them on what has become their annual 'pre-Arctic taster', Green Claymore – an introduction or refresher to the art of first surviving, then moving and finally fighting in mountain terrain.

Using Cameron Barracks in Inverness as their base for training in the North-West Highlands, where the changeable weather, isolation and rugged terrain make for a very challenging environment, the RM Condor men – the UK's acknowledged experts in cold-weather warfare – led their guests into the mountains.

The aim, in the words of the USMC, is to attain "high-mountain mobility" – to be able to move around peaks and slopes quickly, engaging the enemy in temperatures

down to -30°C, which the Americans will face in the new year when their Arctic training continues under the wings of the RM in northern Norway.

Still, at times, the Arctic blast they faced in Scotland – temperatures as low as -10°C – were pretty demanding.

"While we're up on the mountains, you're always moving. Once you take your break, it's no more than five minutes, otherwise you can 'hype' out," said team leader Cpl Karen Budgin USMC; by hype out he means begin to suffer from the effects of hypothermia.

"The British harp on about always staying moving – once you stop it's got to be a quick stop. Just a quick something to drink, something to eat, put your beanies on. The British are on top of it in just making sure you're moving. If you sit around for too long, people start catching hypothermia."

1st Lt Patrick Tabb found the Scottish landscape the greatest challenge facing his men as they performed "tons of mountain movement in arduous terrain, with a pack on your back which carries everything

you need to survive."

He said: "I think this is some of the hardest terrain we've worked in. I thought Scotland was just going to be rolling hills and raining and it turned out to be a whole lot more, so it's been good. It's just terrain we don't see in Camp Lejeune. And it's sunny one minute, five minutes later snow and after that it's raining, all in a span of 15 minutes."

His men can claim to have scaled Britain's highest peak, Ben Nevis. "It took about six hours – above about 700 metres we were moving through snow and ice to the summit and it was a good test," Lt Tabb added.

Watching over marines was Mountain Leader Sgt Richard Jeffrey, who was impressed by the American and French marines' fitness, determination and willingness to learn.

"This proves we can work together in a mountainous environment. And if we can work together as troops on the ground then it builds good foundations which hopefully passes up through the chain of command," he said.

The US Marines left Scotland delighted with what they learned.

"I've been through a couple of mountain courses before and this one is by far my favourite. It's real good training," said Cpl Budgin.



Picture: LPhot Dean Nixon, FRPU West



'rose blooms

IN A month of welcomes and dedications, here's the return of an old friend: HMS Montrose, the third Type 23 frigate to receive a later-life refit/upgrade (after Argyll and Westminster).

The parade of the entire ship's company and a 12-man Guard of junior ratings was witnessed by the ship's Guest of Honour, the eighth Duke of Montrose, and Rear Admiral Chris Gardner, Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Ships).

"Your tremendous hard work has brought this ship into fine shape," he told the crew. "I wish you all safe passage as you move through to your next stage of training and work up into the Fleet."

As well as basic sprucing up, software and sensor upgrades, Montrose received Sea Ceptor, the air defence missile system which replaces SeaWolf.

The Royal Marines Band of Plymouth entertained the watching families and affiliates as the ship was

rededicated in a ceremony led by the Chaplain of the Fleet, the Ven Ian Wheatley.

After the formal ceremony, a rededication cake was cut by the youngest sailor aboard, ET(ME) Harry Austin from Bristol...who's seven years younger than the frigate.

"Joining the ship last December has been an amazing experience for me. Wearing my No.1 uniform at this event made me feel very proud to serve."

"I joined the Royal Navy to travel and it looks like I'm certainly going to be doing that in the next few years."

For the next few weeks neither Harry nor Montrose will go much further than the South Coast Exercise Areas as they go through a spot of Operational Sea Training, before the frigate is ready to deploy later in the year.

AN OFFICER on the fin passes instructions to one of the upper deck party as Britain's ultimate weapon returns to Faslane, mission complete.

And not any old mission but the 350th deterrent patrol performed by the men and, more recently, women of the Silent Service – 49 years after submariners headed out from Faslane on the maiden sortie.

It took 39 years and 50 million 'man hours' to reach the 300th patrol milestone back in the summer of 2007... and another ten years and three months to add the next 50.

There was no fanfare or send-off to mark the inaugural patrol by HMS Resolution, armed with Polaris missiles, back in June 1968 (round-the-clock patrols did not begin until the following spring when there were sufficient boats in service to maintain a constant presence).

The boats, the technology, the uniforms, the hairstyles have all changed, but what then Defence Secretary Denis Healy called "the awesome responsibility" borne by the crew, has not.

With the same understatement – and resolve of purpose – the 350th mission for what is today known as Operation Relentless concluded on the Clyde (for security reasons we cannot disclose which of the four V-boats it was).

"Our nuclear submarines are among the most complex machines ever built and ensuring that one is at sea continuously is a huge challenge," said Rear Admiral John Weale, Head of the Silent Service.

"That the Royal Navy has completed 350 deterrent patrols without once breaking the chain is simply a momentous achievement."

Picture: CPO(Phot) Nick Tryon, FRPU North



350 not out



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The Black Duke and



IT'S amazing what a stoker can fit in his breast pocket. Screws. Torches. Tools. Teddy bear...

Marine engineer WO1 Chris Saunders gives a hearty wave to his sons Benjamin and Matthew and his wife Fiona as HMS Monmouth returns to Plymouth after nine long but fruitful months away, mostly in the Gulf.

The Saunders were just four of around 850 people – wives, children, partners, parents – anxiously waiting on the Devonport jetty for the return of the Black Duke.

More than 40 friends and family needed no reunion for they sailed with the ship on the final leg of her deployment, the 1,000-mile trip from Gibraltar to Plymouth.

That was largely uneventful. Not so other parts of the lengthy tour of duty which added 40,000 miles to the Monmouth odometer.

Not long after arriving in theatre, an extensive search of a dhow yielded three-quarters of a tonne of heroin and hashish worth an estimated £65m on the streets of the UK.

"It's been a challenging and hugely varied deployment that has tested my ship and her company. Despite encountering temperatures nearing 50 degrees in the Gulf, my team continued to deliver all that was asked of them. I'm very proud of them all. Throughout the deployment the ship's company have represented themselves, the Royal Navy and their country with distinction," said Cdr Ian Feasey, the frigate's Commanding Officer.



Consumed by the sailors and marines over nine months



2,400 3kg tins of baked beans – enough to fill ten standard bathtubs



56,000 sausages – laid out end-to-end they'd stretch the length of more than 50 Monmouths

90,000 eggs – enough to make 30,000 omelettes

60,000kg of potatoes – that's about 480,000 spuds... or 2,285 potatoes per person over the deployment... or about eight a day.



"None of this would have been possible without the unstinting support of our families and loved ones back at home in the UK who, arguably, had a much tougher job than us.

"To see all the hundreds of families and friends on the jetty is very uplifting and it gets emotional."

He was greeted on the jetty by his wife Caroline, five-year-old daughter Maisie, and parents Eileen and David, all from Devon.

AB Lewis Ingram from Portsmouth was embraced by his wife Juliane, from Norway.

"This was a long and hard deployment which was rewarding. But it is really good to be back home and to see Juliane again," Lewis said.



"We have hardly seen each other in the past two years because she lived in Norway and I was here or training. Now she is studying in Portsmouth, so it makes coming home extra special."

This was Lewis' first ever deployment and the chance to see Goa and work with the Indian Navy were experiences which will live long in his memory.

As for his wife: "I'm very happy to see

Diamond's day

FAMILIES and friends of sailors on board HMS Diamond welcomed their loved ones back to Portsmouth six months sooner than expected.

But the Type 45 destroyer's three months away were not without excitement and interest – not least an unplanned stint as flagship of NATO's Standing Group 2 in the Mediterranean when HMS Ocean was diverted to deliver disaster relief in the Caribbean.

Diamond joined the task force in Montenegro – the first Royal Navy ship to visit the country since it joined NATO – sailing with the French frigate FS Lafayette, Greek vessel HS Limnos, Turkish ship TGS Barbaros and Spanish frigate ESPS Blas de Lezo.

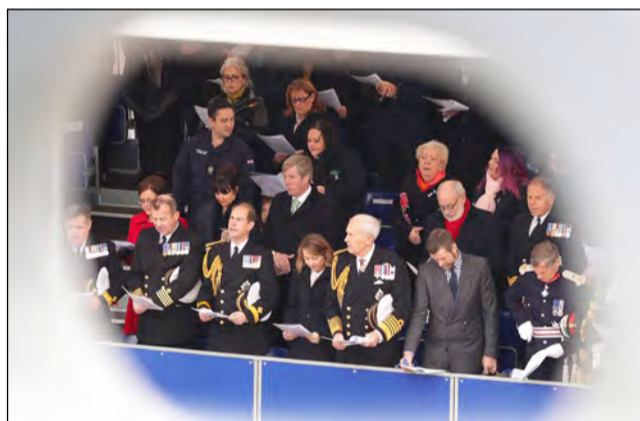
The destroyer then took part in Exercise Brilliant Mariner alongside 27 NATO warships, testing Diamond's ability to direct the activities of a large group of ships and how navies can work together.

"We've done a lot of very high level engagement while we have been away," said Cdr Ben Keith, the destroyer's CO.

"I am really proud of my ship's company who have really worked hard and consistently delivered in support of the UK's interests while in the Mediterranean.

"While our return was earlier than planned, it was fantastic to see all of our families waiting here for us on the jetty; everyone on board was incredibly excited."

Picture: LPhot Joe Cater, FRPU East



Singing for 'spring

THE Blue Ensign, defaced with a gold killick anchor, flies on the flagstaff of the largest vessel ordered for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary after she was formally dedicated.

Tanker Tidespring is now officially a member of the RFA family following a unique service in Portsmouth Naval Base.

The honorary head of the service, the Earl of Wessex, was guest of honour, joining the 37,000-tonne ship's sponsor Kim Rutherford in the specially-erected stand facing the vessel.

Before taking her seat, she was presented with a bouquet of flowers by young Evie Medcalf, whose dad, 31-year-old senior deck hand William and granddad Gary, a petty officer engineer, both serve aboard.

Typically, RFA ships simply enter and leave service without any pomp and ceremony, but the Service is making an exception with the new breed of support vessels, especially as they are fundamental to the operations of the RN's future carrier battle groups.

So there was a Royal Marines Band, Guard of Honour, senior officers, stand and religious ceremony akin to a commissioning to bless the new ship and all who'll serve in her, before guests were invited on board to look around and see what Tidespring can deliver.

For starters, she can pump fuel into the tanks of the new carriers at the rate of two Olympic-sized-swimming-pools-worth per hour (the fuel tanks of HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales can take seven million litres of black gold – four million litres of F-76 to power the ship herself, the remainder for the helicopters and F-35 jets operating from their flight decks). The ship also carries food and stores to sustain the RN around the globe, while the Tidespring can also conduct independent operations on behalf of the nation such as counter-piracy/drug-running, aided by a flight deck large enough to accommodate a Chinook helicopter.

Barely were celebrations over than the tanker was back at sea conducting further trials and training before a break for Christmas.

Picture: LPhot Louise George, FRPU East

29 Cdo save crew in 'rife encounter

COMMANDO gunners from Plymouth saved five yachtsmen off Tenerife when their boat capsized

The Tyger lost her keel and turned over in a matter of seconds a few miles off the southern tip of the Canary Island, throwing her crew into rough seas – only for troops from 29 Commando Regiment RA to pluck them out of the water.

The soldiers, normally based at Plymouth's Citadel, provide artillery support for the Royal Marines, but eight of them, led by the unit's Commanding Officer Lt Col Neil Wilson, were on an adventurous training expedition in their yacht St Barbara when they watched the Tyger turn turtle.

The men immediately sent out an SOS, then motored to the scene against 10ft waves.

"As we got closer we saw some bodies in the water – at first it only looked like three, but by the time we got to them they

had separated from each other a fair distance," said L/Bdr Luke Templeton.

"We shouted over to them how many there was and the skipper, with a German accent, confirmed there were five."

St Barbara sailed around the upturned hull until the other two crew had been sighted – one had been trapped briefly under the upturned hull until freed by a shipmate – and then began hauling the sailors out.

"Our arms were burning and our hands on the verge of bleeding from rope burns," said Luke.

"The female, who was clearly in a lot of shock, couldn't compose herself and climb up the ladder, so we had to haul her up on to the deck with brute force."

The shipwrecked yacht crew – a mix of Germans and Swiss – were taken to the nearby port of Las Galletas, where local authorities were on hand.

Eastern promise for 23s

YOU wait five years for a Far East deployment... and then two come along in a matter of months.

Not one but two Type 23s are heading to Asia this year – the first time the RN has ventured beyond the Indian subcontinent since HMS Daring's world tour of 2013-14.

HMS Sutherland is the first to head east to work with our Japanese, South Korean and US allies then turns south to visit three cities in Australia to work with the Commonwealth country's Navy and to showcase the Royal Navy's anti-submarine technology.

Later in the year, the Fighting

Clan's Devonport-based sister HMS Argyll will also be making for Asia, participating in the long-running Five Power Defence Arrangements exercise with Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia before sailing to Japan.

The two forays into the Asia-Pacific region take place against the backdrop of increasing tension in the region thanks to North Korea's ongoing missile tests and bellicose rhetoric.

New Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said the deployment of two British warships to Asia was "a clear demonstration of the UK's commitment to the peace and prosperity of the region."

I beige bear...



Lewis again and that he's safe after a long patrol. I missed him every day."

LStd 'MG' Milton-Gorvie was hugged by his wife Linda and children Jason (nine) and Beryl (14) as he stepped off his ship. "I've had a very busy time away with defence industry days and capability demonstrations on top of my normal day-to-day job. I'm so happy to be back with my family."

Linda said: "It's been a very long nine months. I have a stressful job as a manager in a dementia care home and there were many days when I wished he was there to moan to. Now I'm looking forward to quality time as a family."

Jason is keen on resuming kickabouts with dad, while his big sister is looking forward to days out as a whole family again.

Newly-promoted Wildcat engineer CPO Nicholas Smith was welcomed home by his wife Alice and their children Thomas (two) and Beatrice (five). "The children have been very excited to see their daddy for a long time now. It seems like a long nine months. The first time he was deployed was only for four months. But there has

been lots of phone and other contact. He's back on duty on the ship soon, but off for Christmas which will be a special time."

His 205 Flight comrades were welcomed back to 815 NAS at Yeovilton with praise ringing in their ears.

The Wildcat flew more than 200 hours of missions, from 'overwatch' sorties over choke points such as Hormuz or the Bab-al-Mandeb to rescuing 11 crew of a stricken vessel in the Indian Ocean.

Engineers and aircrew alike faced punishing Gulf-region temperatures, whether servicing the helicopter in the hangar or on Monmouth's flight deck, or conducting strength-sapping security patrols on the lookout for unusual activity.

The frigate also faced an equally-punishing schedule; not a single day of patrol was lost, testament to the efforts of the 200-plus souls who live and work on her.

She passed through Hormuz on a dozen occasions and Bab-el-Mandeb at the foot of the Red Sea eight times to ensure merchant shipping passed through the choke points safely.

Pictures: CPO Matt Ellison and LPhot Caroline Davies, FRPU West

(Two-One) Six of the Best

AN EMBRACE for Lt Amy Gilmore from husband Lt Cdr Steve Gilmore on the damp Yeovilton tarmac as a seven-month Wildcat mission in the Caribbean ends.

Friends and family of 216 Flight/815 NAS gathered at the home of the Fleet Air Arm's newest helicopter to greet returning air and ground crew after one of the most fulfilling deployments in recent years.

The helicopter and her air and ground crew headed west to join RFA Wave Knight – already deployed to the region – in April.

After a few weeks aboard the tanker – including observing America's Cup events in Bermuda – the flight shifted to RFA Mounts Bay for the bulk of her time away.

Otherwise the deployment was largely routine, until hurricane season arrived and a series of ferocious storms steamrolled through the heart of the Caribbean.

Cue hectic activity – initially by the Flight and Mounts Bay alone – then (figuratively) by the cavalry as aid was flown in *en masse* from the UK and delivered by HMS Ocean which steamed across the Atlantic.

Over a 33-day period spanning September and October, the Flight delivered 22 tonnes of aid including shelter kits, water, food, medical and baby supplies during 90 hours of sorties.

"As my first deployment as Flight Commander this has been the most demanding flying I have ever conducted and it has also been the most rewarding," said Lt Gilmore.

"We were able to make a real difference in helping the local people recover from the devastation these hurricanes caused. That's because of the



Picture: LPhot Barry Swainsbury

fantastic team I've had the privilege of working with and the Wildcat, which delivered beyond all expectations – an absolutely fantastic aircraft."

Bay-class ships have no hangar, so a makeshift 'air shelter' – basically a big tent – was put up on the flight deck for engineers to work on the helicopter.

There was no ventilation, it flooded when it rained and temperatures inside were regularly above 35°C – making conditions demanding for the engineers and technicians.

And while they enjoyed the island-hopping nature of a deployment to paradise initially, the mood changed instantly when the hurricanes struck, according to AET Emma Dell.

"There was a shift in atmosphere on ship – we knew that whatever came next would be very different from anything most of us had experienced," she said.

Despite steeling themselves and having helped out the people of Anguilla, the scale of devastation in the British Virgin Islands – which had only

recently been visited by the ship – was jaw-dropping.

"Not one building had been left untouched, and some of the places we had visited during our time there were completely destroyed," Emma added.

"Cars and boats, twisted and broken, littered the roads and fields. The lush green vegetation covering the islands had been stripped down to bare branches."

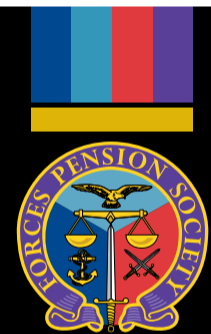
What Emma remembers most is how everyone involved in the relief effort 'mucked in' to help in a crisis.

"Once, I looked up and saw the long line of people from the Navy, Army and RFA making a human chain, passing ration packs and bottled water to the Wildcat, loading it with as much critical aid as was safe to do so.

"It was that cohesion, teamwork and dedication that touched me in a way I will forever remember.

"It gives perspective and meaning to the 20-hour days, the meals on the go, the constant sweating and days without proper sleep."

This widow was offered less than half the pension to which she was entitled as a result of a simple calculation error.



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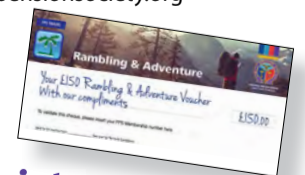
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Cane and able

FOUR Senior Warrant Officers were handed their canes at a ceremony aboard HMS Victory.

Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key presented the Command Warrant Officers with their canes – the first time such a ceremony has been held as canes are usually handed over at supersession.

Those receiving the canes were: CWO Royal Marines, WO1 Ed Stout, CWO Surface Ships, WO1 David Smith, CWO Submarines, WO1 Andy Knox, and CWO Fleet Air Arm, WO1 Paul Stevenson.

The four are pictured with Fleet Commander and Kim Richardson, of Greenwich Hospital, the charity that funded the canes.

The canes are carried as a 'badge of honour' and distinguish the position from other ranks.

The canes, which consist of a black lacquered hardwood shaft, are 37in long and have a nickel silver Royal coat of arms badge on the head.

Picture: LPhoto Louise George



Crews are put through paces

ARMED men make their way towards Royal Navy ships in Crete.

HMS Pembroke and Enterprise, along with the Italian minehunter ITS Crotona, were undertaking firearms training.

NATO's centre on the island offers training opportunities for divers, fast-moving attack craft, mock helicopters and ground assaults on a variety of vessels previously in service in the Greek Navy.

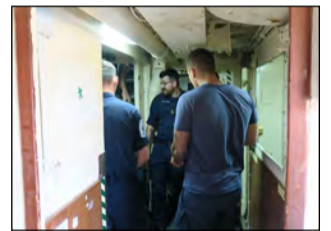
Personnel from the three ships, all part of Standing NATO Mine Counter Measures Group 2 (SNMCMG2), played out various intruder scenarios.

The exercises included a worst-case scenario – an intruder who had infiltrated a ship and needed to be tracked down.

The heart-pounding exercise placed a team of four specially-trained sailors against a variety of targets throughout an old Greek minehunter.

The drill allowed the teams to brush up on their maritime compartment clearing skills while also testing the accuracy and effectiveness of the swift reaction shots taken by the teams, at the same time also placing an important emphasis on stealth, speed and skill.

External threat simulation



● Inside a training vessel

consisted of two gangway staff coming under fire from ashore. This took place on a gangway, allowing for the most accurate simulation of the real event possible.

The staff had to react to an external attacker while also working within rules of engagement, testing the staff's ability to deal with an ever-escalating threat.

The simulated ammunition tested the accurate controlled fire of the gangway staff and also stressed the importance of cover and firing positions.

Ultimately this was a rewarding experience that was also enjoyed by all, allowing for cross-nation training in a cutting-edge training environment that we were all honoured to be a part of.

Report: AB(HM) Jonathan Talbot, HMS Enterprise

Trailblazers singled out for contribution to defence

Our superwomen

A SURGEON whose research could revolutionise the way serious leg injuries are treated and a scientist whose forensic analysis prevents or explains air crashes have been singled out as 'women of the year'.

Surg Lt Cdr Pippa Bennett was named the 'emerging talent', while civil servant Rachel Fricker of 1710 NAS took the 'outstanding contribution' title at the 2017 Women in Defence awards – out of 24 serving personnel and civilians put forward across eight categories.

As a surgeon training to specialise in lower limb trauma – serious leg injuries – the research Surg Lt Cdr Bennett conducted with colleagues across the military's medical services will change the way doctors and surgeons around the globe treat men and women with the most severe injuries below the waist.

The enemy's widespread use of improvised explosive devices – roadside bombs – in Iraq and Afghanistan killed scores of British Servicemen and women and maimed hundreds more.

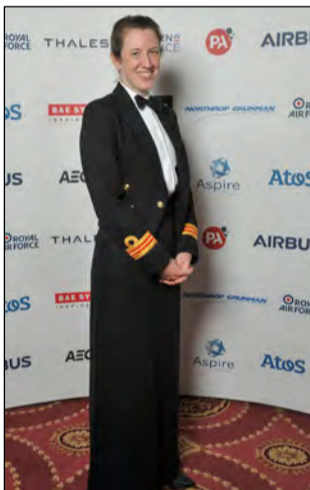
Military surgeons both in theatre and back home in the UK faced treating some horrific injuries as a result.

As men and women who've sworn the Hippocratic oath, their instinct is to 'save, save, save' – to repair the body as best they can.

Traditionally that has meant saving limbs wherever possible.

But what Surg Lt Cdr Bennett and her colleagues discovered studying upwards of 400 casualties over the past seven years was that, despite the initial trauma, patients had better mobility and less pain with amputation and prosthetic limbs than undergoing months or years of reconstructive surgery.

Surgeons can amputate through the lower leg (calf), at the knee, or through the thigh depending on the injury sustained.



● Surg Lt Cdr Pippa Bennett and Rachel Fricker



What counts, says Surg Lt Cdr Bennett, is "getting the best mobility, the best bodily function available," whether it means amputation or reconstruction.

"As a surgeon, amputation rather goes against the grain, but when looking at some of these really complex fractures, these injuries can actually be more stressful to deal with, more painful, and offer less mobility if you don't amputate."

The results of the study have been published around the world in the *Bone and Joint Journal*.

It means there is a considerable body of evidence for medics around the world to consult should they face patients with similar injuries and they will be able to advise almost immediately on the best course of action/treatment.

"This is the first time we have been able to tell a patient with these severe injuries from the outset what would work best for them," Surg Lt Cdr Bennett explained.

As a result the team behind the study have received several awards, of which the 'emerging talent' for Surg Lt Cdr Bennett,

who joined the RN in 2007 and is currently attached to the trauma and orthopaedic department at Poole and Royal Bournemouth hospitals, is the latest.

"It's both surprising and very flattering. Just to be nominated was special. We do what we do because it's our job, so to be recognised outside that makes me feel very fortunate – and this work was very much a team effort."

■ We've probably all put the wrong type of oil or lubricant into a car engine at some stage or, worse still, put diesel in a petrol tank.

It's a pain in the bum.... And a dent in the wallet.

It is not a matter of life and death. Unless you're a naval aviator.

All these fluids – and many others – are analysed intensely by a small team in Portsmouth to assess the effects they'll have on an aircraft engine or other key parts of a multi-million pound flying machine.

And if something does go wrong, the same minute forensic analysis applies in tracing the cause of an accident.

An acknowledged worldwide expert in her field, the head of the Forensic Chemical Investigation and Fuels and Lubricants team Rachel Fricker has undertaken over 1,000 investigations into military aircraft-related issues in a career with the MOD going back to 1999.

Like the loss of an RAF Puma in Afghanistan in 2015 which killed five people.

It's thanks to the forensic evidence of Rachel and her colleagues that proof was provided of a rotor striking the tether of a surveillance balloon... which set in motion a catastrophic chain of events which ended with the helicopter crashing.

If it sounds a bit like 'CSI: Fawley'... it isn't.

"In CSI there's normally one answer and they have the case wrapped up inside an hour," said Rachel.

"In our world, there can be many different answers, but that's what makes it interesting and challenging. It can be fast-paced, it's certainly diverse and I work with a great team."

The work of the team – part of 1710 Naval Air Squadron, best known for repairing helicopters on the field of battle and coming up with solutions when a front-line squadron urgently needs a helicopter adapting or enhancing – is unique in the military.

"The award was a total surprise and very humbling," said Rachel. "I was delighted just to be nominated and I feel very proud not just for myself but for everyone here because I have a great team."

It's all Dover for Zeebrugge Bell

THE Zeebrugge Bell has returned to Dover following restoration and cleaning.

The bell was given to the people of Dover by the King of the Belgians, Albert I, as a souvenir of the Naval raid on Zeebrugge Harbour on St George's Day, April 23 1918.

The bell was welcomed back to Dover by Cllr Neil Rix, the Town Mayor of Dover, Cllr Sue Chandler, the Chairman of Dover District Council, and Tony Yelverton, Managing Director of Hipperson Builders, the project contractors who also completed conservation work to the bell housing and tower.

The bell is housed at Dover's Grade I-listed

Maison Dieu and is struck each year by the Town Mayor at noon on St George's Day as part of annual commemorations organised by Dover Town Council.

The centenary of the Zeebrugge Raid will be commemorated in Dover on April 23 with a series of events organised by Dover Town Council.

Later in the day, Royal Marines Heritage Trails will be launched in Deal.

The Royal Marines played a pivotal role in the raid on Zeebrugge with many of them trained at the Royal Marines Depot in Deal.

The bell was restored at the Loughborough bell foundry of John Taylor & Co.

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pictures: po(phot) arron hoare, lphoto joe cater and sam seeley



'You've got to

THE time: 12 minutes after noon on the seventh day of the Year of our Lord 2017.

The place: The stern of Her Majesty's Ship Queen Elizabeth, the Princess Royal Jetty, HM Naval Base Portsmouth.

The occasion: one for the history books, the hoisting of the White Ensign for the first time.

At the foot of the flagstaff, ABs Ellie Smith and Jessica Hewes battled with the elements – the tail end of Storm Caroline – to raise the flag.

Until nearly at the top of the staff, the banner resolutely refused to unfurl. In the ship's hangar 30 feet below, nearly 3,000 people held their breath – ship's company, ambassadors, shipwrights, military leaders, families, musicians, politicians, royalty.

And then, caught by a gust, the Royal Navy's standard was revealed in all its glory, billowing in the strong winds. A very audible 'Yes' passed through the cavernous hangar.

It was the moment that the aircraft carrier announced to the world that "we are here, we have arrived" in the words of her first Commanding Officer, Capt Jerry Kyd.

"The White Ensign is synonymous with British warships and British seapower. For centuries it has said a lot about our country."

Seconds before he had stood in front of an expectant audience to read the formal commissioning order issued by Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key: *You are to proceed forthwith for service. Upon commissioning you will be under my full command.*

Those words opened a 30-minute ceremony – for the uninitiated, akin to a christening – which has changed little down the years in its format: the act of dedication, the blessing, the National Anthem, the Naval Hymn, the Lord's Prayer.

Otherwise, HMS Queen Elizabeth is the latest stitch in a golden thread of Naval history going back centuries.

"You see echoes of old ships in her," said retired lieutenant commander Andrew Kern whose last ship was destroyer HMS Cardiff. "Some things are updated, others stay the same. What is different is the size. She's a huge ship. Although the Navy is smaller today, this ship is a massive improvement in our operational ability."

He was the guest of his son, 34-year-old PO Ben Kern, one of two section heads responsible for the high-voltage electrical system aboard.

The senior rate from Chichester helped bring destroyer HMS Dragon out of build and, since January 2018, has been doing the same with HMS Queen Elizabeth. He described the occasion as the pinnacle of his career to date.

"I am serving on the biggest,

most modern warship in the Navy. That's never going to happen again.

"It's been hard work and challenging to get the ship up to speed. We are the ones who are laying the foundations for everything which is yet to come. But that is also hugely rewarding. We've been working to this day all year, so I would say the mood aboard is buoyant."

Or as Std Andrew Gwyn, 32, from Cardiff, put it: "You've got to enjoy a commissioning, haven't you?"

He's one of four naval reservists who've joined the ship for up to three years. They arrived just four days before the ceremony... and then spent the next few days largely getting lost on board.

On the commissioning day itself, the stewards and caterers were up at 6am... and wouldn't stop working until gone midnight, for after Royal proceedings were over, there was the small matter of a charity commissioning dinner to attend to.

So a long day. And one many weeks in the making. Four



love a commissioning...'

dozen chefs had to cater for up to 3,000 anticipated guests, while a specialist eight-strong team under PO Dean Allen prepared a meal fit for the Queen.

From a galley normally used to producing 1,000 loaves a day and working through 60,000 packs of bacon and 40,000 tins of beans (not daily, thankfully) came a salmon tian followed by a lamb chop with mixed bean cassoulet and finished with a blood orange tart.

The 96-strong Royal Guard of ratings plus four officers and senior ratings drilled relentlessly, their feet stamping the metal deck to give the impression of an army of heavy-booted ants as they first marched on, then shuffled to make sure they were properly in position for the Queen to inspect them.

Dressed in a heavy purple coat, the 91-year-old monarch and ship's sponsor, paying her first visit to the aircraft carrier, moved quickly along the line of immaculately-presented sailors, before ascending a small dais.

Flanked by her daughter and Capt Kyd, the Queen told the ship's company they would go on

to "represent the country's resolve on the global stage" for decades to come.

"As the daughter, wife and mother of naval officers, I recognise the unique demands our nation asks of you and I will always value my special link with HMS Queen Elizabeth, her ship's company and their families," she continued.

"The Lord High Admiral, the Duke of Edinburgh, joins me in wishing you well in all your endeavours."

As for the ship herself – the grey hull almost merging with a very leaden sky on a wet and windy December day – the Queen said she embodied "the best of British technology and innovation, a true flagship for the 21st century."

In thanking the monarch for making the trip by train to Portsmouth for the occasion, Capt Kyd said everyone aboard the carrier "cherished" the unique bond with her.

"We are proud and honoured to enjoy a special relationship with Your Majesty. Long may it last."

Three thunderous "hoorays" bounced off the four sides of the hangar as sailors doffed caps, then rotated them in a traditional salute.

Just 11 months earlier, this was a lifeless hull, toiled on by thousands in Rosyth, but not a home. Since the ship's company moved aboard, HMS Queen Elizabeth's "soul and character" had begun to form. "No longer a cold, metallic

hull, she is a living, breathing warship."

Two spells of sea trials later – during which, Capt Kyd said, "she handled beautifully; I knew that we had a good ship" – and the 65,000-tonne vessel was ready to pass into the RN's safekeeping for the rest of her active life... up to 50 years.

The last act of the 30-minute ceremony was to thrust an officer's sword into an 8ft replica of the carrier in cake form, a tradition performed by the carrier's youngest sailor, Std Callum Hui, just 17, from Lynton in Devon, and Dr Karen Kyd, whose husband is the teenager's captain.

Some 7kg of flour and 160 eggs were consumed by David Duncan and his team of confectioners at Edinburgh firm 3D Cakes in creating the baking masterpiece, gingerly transported to Portsmouth in a ten-hour journey, with constant halts to check no harm had befallen it.

The sword barely grazed the icing on the flight deck: the cake will actually go on display at the RN's catering school at HMS Raleigh.

But you can't deprive matelots of their cake on commissioning day. Enter the RN's very-own cakemeister, WO1 Jon Boreham, catering branch manager and confectioner extraordinaire.

Longer-standing Navy News readers may remember the elaborate, humorous cake he produced for HMS Dragon's

big day back in 2012.

There were pilots practising on the flight deck (one fell off and needed the medical party); club swingers trying to drill the crew; a sailor passed out on divisions in the heat; and a miniature monarch.

He toiled for eight days to produce a clutch of characters – all edible "though you'd be awake for 24 hours if you ate a whole one from the sugar rush..." scattered across two huge icing-topped madeira cakes.

The warrant officer loved creating it. "I was in the galley, giggling away to myself as I made it." So it would be a crime to start slicing it up, right?

Wrong.

"This is made for eating. As far as I'm concerned, I want the crew to crack on and enjoy it." And just in case there wasn't enough cake to go around, Jon also produced 2,400 cup cakes... with the Queen Elizabeth crest on each...

Before formal proceedings began, the commissioning cakes were by far the biggest draw in the hangar. No one, not even the Queen herself, could pass without pausing to admire the craftwork. You couldn't hear Her Majesty as she inspected the cakes... but you could lip read her reaction on the giant screens peppered around the deck: Amazing.

The cavernous hangar was turned into an auditorium for the occasion with banks of seating for guests. Even with

those three 'stands' erected for a 'crowd' similar in size to lower league football matches, only half the hangar was used up – which gives an insight into the size of the leviathan.

"She is huge," said Graham Baxter from Torquay, guest of his 19-year-old son, marine engineer Matt. "The atmosphere is amazing and the pride you feel to be here in the presence of Her Majesty is immense."

Matt added: "The ceremony was amazing. The hairs on the back of my neck stood up at times."

As families milled around before the ceremony, taking snapshots of the unique occasion, the strains of *World in Union* suddenly filled the hangar.

"What a beautiful voice she has," one guest remarked of the vocalist.

The 'she' referred to was opera singer Katherine Jenkins who picked up the microphone with no announcement or fanfare and simply began an impromptu performance... which almost drowned out interviews. First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones was conducting with the media nearby. She received a round of applause at the end, but it wasn't the loudest sign of approval of the day.

That was reserved for the ship's company as they marched off at the ceremony's end. It will not be the last time they take centre stage.



For all the technological marvels the arsenals of the world produced to feed the moloch of war between 1914 and 1918, it would take a second global conflagration a generation later to truly harness their potential.

There were the mighty castles of steel, great flotillas and squadrons of dreadnoughts, the most powerful war machines on the planet, belching smoke, hurling 1,400lb shells at targets more than 13 miles away, powering through the waves at speeds of up to 30kts... yet with guns directed – with a little help from optics – by the Mk1 eyeball and orders passed by flag, as they were in Nelson's day.

There were monsters on the battlefield, too. Metallic beasts which rolled over barbed wire and trenches, punching through seemingly impenetrable enemy positions.... only to break down a few minutes later.

In the skies, cigar-shaped zeppelins rained bombs down on a defenceless civilian population. But a single incendiary bullet fired by an intercepting fighter could ignite the

hydrogen gas which kept the airship aloft... and bring the floating Achilles to earth in flames.

When Europe went to war again, radio and radar would control warships and target their guns. Tanks would roam across Poland, France, Russia and North Africa. And armadas of bombers would lay waste to entire cities: Warsaw, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Dresden.

Only beneath the waves lacked the same sense of progress. The submarines Britain and Germany went to war with were essentially slightly improved models of those the men of 1914-18 had served in.

They were still slow on the surface, even slower submerged, with a limited battery life. It would take a new form of power – nuclear – to truly revolutionise underwater warfare.

And that puts the technological leap naval architects made in the second half of the Great War into context as they strove to create a submarine which could keep up with the surface fleet.

Their solution: the K-class

(represented here by HMS K16), battery-powered like conventional submarines when submerged, driven by steam at speeds of up to 24 knots on the surface.

Steam may have given the boats speed – but only as long as they didn't have to dive; it could take as long as 30 minutes to secure a K-boat, closing all the inlets, outlets and valves, extinguishing the boiler fires, lowering the funnels; a very skilful crew might perfect an emergency dive in under five minutes.

At 1,800 tons, the Ks were also five times the displacement of the popular and successful H-class. That and their 338ft length – 138ft greater than their 'maximum operating depth' – made them hideously unwieldy, above or below the waves.

Combined, these shortcomings were catastrophic. Of the 18 K-boats built, six were lost – not one of them to enemy action.

K13 sank on trials in Gareloch, only to be salvaged and put back into service as K22... which then collided with K14 during night manoeuvres

with the Grand Fleet in January 1918.

Those manoeuvres turned out to be the Black Day of the K-class: the cruiser Fearless collided with HMS K17 and sank her. The boats astern of her manoeuvred to avoid collision, only for K6 to all-but slice K4 in half... then finished her off.

There were other bumps and numerous near misses before the brief 'Battle of May Island', as it became known, ended; every man aboard K4 (55 souls) was dead, most of K17's crew too (47), with two men lost on K14 – 104 submariners in all. Two boats had been sunk, four more plus Fearless damaged.

Yet it wasn't the nail in the coffin for a class dubbed 'K for Kalamity'. They continued to serve – with continuing mishaps – into the early 1920s.

Only one boat ever engaged the enemy (fittingly, its torpedo failed to detonate, although the speed the steam engine did at least permit HMS K7 to escape before the Germans could respond).

Everyone aboard HMS K5 died when she simply vanished on

exercises in the Bay of Biscay in 1921, while HMS K15 sank next to her depot ship in Portsmouth Harbour when her valves accidentally opened.

By 1926, only HMS K26, the apotheosis of the class was still in service. Many of the shortcomings of the earlier boats were gone – no longer did water spill in and extinguish the boiler fires in heavy seas. As for diving, she could be down to 80ft inside 200 seconds. To prove the boat's safety, the RN dispatched her on a Far East deployment. K26 made it all the way to Singapore – and back again.

The curate's egg continued in service until 1931 when she was paid off. The RN would not return to steam power beneath the waves for another 30 years when the advent of mini nuclear reactors allowed the construction of HMS Dreadnought.

■ This photograph (Q 70007) is one of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs, or by calling 0207 416 5309.



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Pickle knights

IN THE half light of a November night, half-way through the Middle Watch, the weather's less-than-clement and the 73ft vessel crashes up and down continuously.

Ahead, the notorious Goodwin Sands, graveyard of many a mariner passing through the Dover Strait.

At the helm Steve 'Rasher' Bacon can barely feel his hands, while HMS Pickle hardly responds to his movements.

And he's loving every minute of it.

Well, perhaps not every minute. Most minutes.

But experienced sailors jumped at the opportunity to crew the replica of the 19th Century schooner – the first time today's RN personnel have helped man the vessel.

The ship was invited to sail into Portsmouth and berth close to Victory for Pickle Night celebrations – the lower decks' counterpart to Trafalgar Night.

As part of commemorations – and with a little help from the RNRMC and long-time RN supporter Sir Donald Gosling – places as crew were made available to serving sailors and Royal Marines as Pickle made her way from and then back to her home port of Hull.

Pickle is not a replica of the Georgian schooner, more a doppelgänger; she was built originally to sail the Baltic before being converted to look like the warship to mark the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar. Present-day safety requirements mean she's equipped with modern comms and an engine, there's a galley and, instead of hammocks, bunks.

If you're thinking: jolly...

"It's not about comfort, it's about sailing a ship like one which was at Trafalgar," said C/Sgt Steve 'Rasher' Bacon, a Royal Marines Musician who's spent 36 years in the Service, eight of them aboard Britannia.

The Pickle of 1805 was dispatched to report both the crushing defeat of the Franco-Spanish Fleet at Trafalgar and the death of the man who led the Royal Navy to victory, Admiral Lord Nelson.

It took ten days for Pickle to reach Falmouth – then another 37 hours for her captain Lieutenant John Lapenotière to reach the Admiralty in London, where he began his report with the words: "Sir, we have gained a great victory but we have lost Lord Nelson."

There's no such dramatic news to report from

the journey from Hull-Portsmouth and back – though skipper Mal Nicholson wants more of the Naval family to sample Pickle: cadets, URNU students as well as serving personnel.

Mal was delighted by the hospitality he received when in Portsmouth – "second-to-none, British at its very best":

"Thank you all for the wonderful way in which we have been received and the support you have given HMS Pickle and her crew," he told today's sailors. "It does not get better than this."

Steve agrees. "What an experience. When you see square-rigged sails with the wind catching them, it's a fantastic sight."

But back to the North Sea in the middle of November... Crew have the benefits of the latest wet/cold weather clothing... not that it makes much difference in the winter.

"You can understand how cold and damp it was for the guys back then. We had the latest gear, but we never felt warm or dry," said Steve.

"When you see people going up in the rigging in cold, rough weather, you appreciate how fit and fearless the men of 1805 were. It's a long way down – we had the benefit of harnesses. And try tying a knot when you cannot feel your hands..."

"If you move the tiller it takes about a minute for Pickle to respond. And she moves up and down very quickly – the pitching and rolling is relentless."

We're still struggling to see the attraction... but it's this raw, unvarnished experience which makes sailing aboard Pickle as a sailor, not passenger, unforgettable says the senior NCO.

"You're going back to the Navy's roots, as it was 250 years ago. You are able to re-live it," Steve added.

"One thing that we learned from this is that today's sailors can enjoy an 1805 experience."

The highlight of the round trip was sailing into Harwich, dodging the many container ships heading to and from Felixstowe, to appear off the Royal Hospital School at Holbrook.

The Combined Cadet Force filed aboard to join the crew in an act of remembrance on the Stour, casting wreaths into the river watched by 1,000 people on the school's parade ground, before the thunder of cannon aboard Pickle marked the end of two minutes' silence.

Pictures: LPhoto Kyle Heller and Chris Reeve





Town honours own Cockleshell Hero

Documents are back at BRNC

THE medals and personal documents of a forgotten Naval hero can now be seen at the spiritual home of the Officer Corps.

Lt David Wainwright, pictured right, served with distinction through the first half of the Great War – until his destroyer was sunk at Jutland while trying to torpedo the German battlefleet.

Having spent the rest of the war in captivity, Wainwright went back to sea upon release in 1918, joining minesweeper HMS Penarth.

During a sweep off the Yorkshire coast on February 4 1919, Penarth got lost in a blizzard and drifted into an uncleared minefield... where she struck a mine and began to sink.

Lt Wainwright took charge of the situation, overseeing the launch of survival rafts and making his way below deck to rescue an injured crewmate.

Already crippled, Penarth's plight worsened when she drifted into another mine which blew her bow off.

Still below decks, Lt Wainwright was forced to wait until the compartment he was in had filled with water before he could float to the surface and escape.

He was one of seven men who survived the sinking; they spent 43 hours drifting in freezing conditions without food or water before a patrol boat found their raft.

Lt Wainwright received the Albert Medal for saving life at sea – the equivalent today of the George Cross, the second highest decoration in the land.

He remained in the RN for another year after the Penarth disaster, briefly served in the Royal Irish Constabulary at the height of the campaign to break



away from Britain, then joined the British Gendarmerie policing Palestine before returning to the UK to re-join the RN.

He was one of the British observers sent to oversee the German occupation of the Sudetenland after the Munich agreement and had just completed a minesweeping course at Portland when he vanished in March 1939. His body was washed up three months later.

More than seven decades later Lt Cdr Wainwright's grandsons Simon and Jonathan have loaned their grandfather's papers to the small museum at Britannia Royal Naval College; the young Naval officer was a contemporary of the future Edward VIII during his instruction at Dartmouth.

"My grandfather's story serves to remind us all of the bravery and selflessness of the young men of his generation who fought for us," said Jonathan.

"What impresses me most about him was his concern for the men who served under him, often in the most appalling conditions.

"It seems fitting that after all this time his papers and medal should return to Britannia Royal Naval College."

THE people of Stockport honoured their own 'Cockleshell Hero' – former milkman James Conway who took part in the Royal Marines' most famous wartime raid.

Descendants of the 20-year-old Royal Marine, veterans, serving commandos, Royal Marines Cadets and civic leaders gathered in the snow to see the monument unveiled to the canoeist who volunteered to strike a blow at the Nazi war machine.

With 11 comrades, Conway set out to sink German shipping in the occupied French port of Bordeaux in December 1942, paddling 80 miles up the Gironde in canoes – codenamed cockles – to place mines on the enemy vessels.

Just two men survived the mission – Operation Frankton, but better known by its post-war book/film title *Cockleshell Heroes*. James Conway was not one of them.

He and his comrade Lt John Mackinnon were forced to abandon their canoe Cuttlefish after it was damaged several days into the raid.

The two men fled through occupied France, eventually reaching the small town of La Réole three dozen miles southeast of Bordeaux, where the pair were betrayed to the local authorities when Lt Mackinnon needed treatment for a knee injury.

The two men were handed over to the Gestapo, but never betrayed their mission or their comrades.

They were subsequently executed under Hitler's infamous 'Commando Order' – though the date and location are not known.

By then, however, the Germans had six damaged ships to deal with – one of them needing extensive repairs.

Just two of the original six cockles reached Bordeaux but the limpet mines the marines placed on vessel caused havoc; future First Sea Lord Lord Mountbatten subsequently called Frankton a "brilliant little operation carried through with



● James Conway's descendants study the new memorial

Pictures: Courtesy Stockport Council



● Raid leader Maj Blondie Hasler, front, trains off Eastney



● Mne James Conway

great determinism and courage."

To mark the 75th anniversary in James Conway's home town, artist Luke Perry was selected to create a memorial.

He spent months researching the clothing the marine wore, and met his family to capture a near-exact representation of James on the monument, which depicts him paddling.

"James Conway's role as

one of the Cockleshell Heroes makes him a true Stockport – and national hero," said Cllr Kate Butler, Stockport Council Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration,

"I'd encourage residents to commemorate the bravery and the life of a local young man who paid the ultimate price for this nation."

Former Commandant

General Royal Marines Maj Gen Martin Smith said the Corps felt honoured "that on the 75th anniversary of James Conway's death, Stockport recognised one of its sons who bravely served in our Corps and gave his life in the service of his country.

"The raid sent a message to friend and foe alike that in the dark days of 1942, Britain would not give up, no matter what."

Tribute to trawler

MOROCOCALA. The name probably doesn't resonate like HMS Queen Mary. Or Invincible. Or Lusitania.

But to the descendants of John Henry Wingate, the name of the small trawler is every bit as important as the more famous vessels lost in the Great War.

A century on, they headed to the spot where the Morococala spectacularly – and almost instantaneously – blew up off the coast of southern Ireland.

The trawler sank in seconds, taking all 13 crew down with her as she swept the approaches to Queenstown (today Cobh) harbour for recently-laid German mines in November 1917.

The Morococala had been built in Aberdeen for the North Sea fishing trade, but was snapped up by the Admiralty to support the war effort.

She spent two years patrolling the waters off Cobh, but as the U-boat campaign intensified in the spring of 1917, the approaches to the harbour were increasingly peppered with mines dropped by German boats.

At first light on November 19 1917 the Morococala set out with another converted trawler, the Indian Empire, to clear a route out of Cobh so a convoy could leave Cork at 11am.

Barely had the two trawlers



begin their sweep – trailing a wire between them – than an explosion rocked the Morococala just behind the bridge.

In six seconds it was all over. The waves of the Atlantic closed over the wreck and despite an extensive search by the Indian Empire, none of the crew was ever found.

As far as the descendants of 35-year-old Second Hand John Henry 'Harry' Wingate know, there's no monument to the Morococala, although the crew's names are listed on the Chatham war memorial.

That prompted them to take a boat from Cobh to the wreck site.

"We had a nice time and a greater understanding of the crew's situation," said Kevin Smith, one of the five family members to pay his respects.

Sale sets medal record

ONE of the most famous and celebrated Victoria Cross medal groups of the 20th Century has been sold for £840,000 – a new world record for the auction of a VC and any group of British medals.

The VC was awarded to Vice Admiral Gordon Campbell, pictured, (1886-1953), who as captain of the Q-Ship Farnborough destroyed German submarine U83 on February 17 1917.

Gordon Campbell's complete group of 11 medals, also including the DSO with two bars and France's Légion d'Honneur Chevalier's badge and Croix de Guerre, 1914-1918, will now stay in the UK on public display having been acquired by his great-nephew Baron Lorne Thyssen-Bornemisza.

"These medals have enormous historic value for the UK, as well as personal value to me and my family," he said.

"I am offering the medals for display in a UK museum, where I hope as many people as possible will have the opportunity to learn about Gordon and his incredible story."

On a secret mission, Gordon

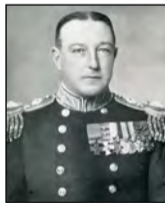
Campbell deliberately steered his vessel, disguised as a merchant ship, into the direct path of a U-boat torpedo, only changing course very slightly at the last moment to prevent a direct hit on the engine room.

As soon as the torpedo struck, the British crew went through their pantomime of panic and the deployment of the lifeboats. Then only when the enemy vessel was almost upon them did Campbell order his guns to open fire in "what may be regarded as the supreme test of naval discipline".

A few months later Campbell, while captain of HMS Pargust, deployed the same tactic and sunk the submarine UC-29 on June 7.

Then, as commander of HMS Dunraven, he saw action on August 8 1917 with another enemy submarine – SM UC-71. After this action, and despite the sinking of Dunraven, King George V decreed that two Victoria Crosses should be awarded to the ship – to an officer and a rating respectively.

The medals were sold on behalf of the Fellowship of St John (UK) Trust Association.



Cruiser's a star

THE Navy's sole survivor from its greatest 20th Century battle has been named the big tourist attraction to see in the UK.

Cruiser HMS Caroline saw action alongside the dreadnoughts of the Grand Fleet when they clashed with the German High Seas Fleet at Jutland in May 1916.

But while the castles of steel were sunk, scuttled or subsequently broken up, Caroline survived; she spent nearly 90 years as the base of the Royal Naval Reserve in Belfast.

When the sailors moved to new premises, ambitious plans to turn Caroline into a floating museum to both Jutland and Irish sailors in WW1 swung into action.

Several years and nearly £20m later and the veteran cruiser has been singled out as the 'large visitor attraction of the year' during the World Travel Market trade fair in London – when holiday/tourism firms and leaders from around the globe pick destinations for the coming season.

The 4,000-ton light cruiser, intended to scout ahead of the main battle fleet, was opened to the public in June 2016 – one of the key attractions in Belfast's regenerated Titanic Quarter.

She closed over the winter and spring as work on her dock and ticket office (housed in an old pump house) was carried out; Alexandra Dock is being recobbled using original 19th-century stones with the entire site due to be finished by Easter.

The latest phase of the regeneration was installing a 25-metre footbridge to span the mouth of the dock to improve access to both the pump house and the ship herself.

Despite only being open for half a year in 2017, Caroline was expected to pull in 35,000 visitors by December 31.





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Figures on move for overhaul

NOTHING to see here... just a 200-year-old figurehead about to be moved.

Two iconic figures which once adorned the bows of British warships will take centre stage at Plymouth's new £37m cultural/heritage/history centre, The Box.

'King Billy' – from the first-rate battleship HMS Royal William – and Topaze from the fifth rate of the same name will undergo restoration before being installed at the entrance to the new complex when it opens in 2020.

The work on the wooden pieces of art – in their day used to help identify ships in the same way pennant numbers and crests act today – will help experts in Plymouth Naval Base's Heritage Centre care for a dozen other figureheads which are in need of attention.

"The figureheads are a popular highlight with visitors to the Heritage Centre, but their colourful exteriors are not original and the paintwork hides possible internal decay, a multitude of repairs and layers of paintwork," explained WO1 Mark Portman.

"To restore them to their original condition we need to use scientific techniques such as X-ray and sonic investigation methods. These will identify what fillers, fibreglass and paint have been used over generations of care and repair."

Topaze was made for HMS Topaze, a 51-gun 'screw frigate' – a steam-driven wooden ship – which served from the 1850s into the early 1880s.

King Billy is a standing figure of William IV – the 'Sailor King' who sat on the throne before Victoria – which was originally attached to the 120-gun warship HMS Royal William.

Tributes to Ypres fallen

A group of personnel from HMS Collingwood travelled to Belgium to pay their respects to the fallen of the Royal Navy on the third Battle of Ypres.

The five-day mission, part of MIXG's Adventurous Training (AT), saw six sailors from the Base's Maritime Information Exploitation Group (MIXG) travel to Belgium to follow the exploits of the Royal Naval Division in the region around Ypres during 1917.

The team began the tour by visiting war cemeteries and the Messines Ridge, scene of an operation launched in June 1916 to detonate 19 underground mines beneath the German lines.

They then travelled to Hill 60, east of Ypres, which was the scene of horrific gas attacks that left hundreds dead.

Moving to Hooge Crater, WO1 Simon Geen took the opportunity to brief the team on his family ties to the site where his great-grandfather fought and died in 1915.

The final day coincided with a memorial held at Varlet Farm in Passchendaele.

Let's get to work



● From left, Navy medics Sub Lt Emily Harding (QARNNS), LMA Gemma Strong, CPONN Darryl Newman (QARNNS), LNN Sarah Belcher (QARNNS) and LMA Lynsey Ennis don their United Nations berets ready for Operation Trenton

Pictures: LPhot Will Haigh

Medics ready for UN Mission in South Sudan

ROYAL Navy medics have swapped their dark blue berets for the sky blue of the United Nations as they prepare for a peacekeeping role in South Sudan.

Personnel are taking the equivalent of casualty ship RFA Argus to a UN camp at Bentiu, where the Royal Navy will lead the medical mission for the first time, providing support to troops as well as refugees.

A team of 78, including 54 Royal Navy personnel, will take over from the Army at the United Nations Mission, known as UNMISS.

South Sudan is the youngest country in the world, having gained independence from Sudan in 2011, but is still suffering from civil unrest.

Following a commitment made in 2015 by the then Prime Minister to double the country's commitment to global peacekeeping initiatives, UK forces began deploying to South Sudan in May 2016 under Operation Trenton.

With nearly 400 UK military personnel supporting UN efforts in South Sudan, it is one of the UK's largest operational deployments in the world and the UK's first large-scale UN peacekeeping mission since Bosnia in the 1990s.

The team, led by Cdr Jason Davies, will include doctors, nurses, dentists, physiotherapists, radiologists, laboratory technicians, and an



ambulance troop.

Cdr Davies, Commanding Officer of Maritime Deployed Hospital Care, said: "Maritime Deployed Hospital Care is a hospital-based capability the Royal Navy is able to deploy globally aboard RFA Argus.

"The United Nations mission to South Sudan is a peacekeeping mission to protect civilians and to promote humanitarian affairs."

Cdr Davies and his team have spent three months preparing for their mission, including three weeks at the

Army's training camp at Catterick in Yorkshire.

"The training we've been conducting is called Trenton Serpent 4.3 and it's a series of exercises to prepare for our mission," said Cdr Davies.

The training culminated in a full-scale exercise, with each element assessed by medical experts to ensure the team are fully up to speed.

UK forces are supporting the 'Protection of Civilians' sites in the north of the country, at Bentiu and Malakal, where hundreds of thousands

of people are seeking shelter from fighting and relief from famine.

The hospital facilities at Bentiu include an emergency department, surgical theatre, laboratory, x-ray and head CT scanner, an aero-medical evacuation team and wards including an isolation facility.

Consisting of the ten southernmost states of Sudan, South Sudan is one of the most diverse countries in Africa; it is home to more than 60 different major ethnic groups and the majority of its people follow traditional religions.

Independence did not bring an end to the conflict; the 2013-15 civil war displaced 2.2 million people.

The UN mission is mandated to protect civilians, provide conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian aid, investigate human rights abuses and support the peace process.

UK military engineers have been delivering infrastructure support to the UN, such as the improvement of helicopter landing sites and a jetty on the White Nile, constructing UN military accommodation, and building a permanent hospital.

Defence is also assisting with operational direction at the UN's headquarters in South Sudan's capital, Juba, and the Department for International Development has provided more than £900m in aid to South Sudan since 2011.



A MERLIN Mk3A from 845 NAS, Commando Helicopter Force, provides support to Fleet Flagship HMS Ocean in the Med.

More than 20 ships, led by Ocean, and over 300 British, Greek and US Marines stormed Crete for the Hellenic Navy's main autumn war games.

The Greeks host Exercise Niriis to test a sizeable international naval force and its ability to respond to a major crisis in the region – not unlike the Turkish exercise HMS Ocean and the NATO group she leads has just completed.

The 2017 incarnation of Niriis involved ships/aircraft/personnel from Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Israel, the USA and the UK.

The UK contribution was significant: helicopter carrier Ocean, survey vessel/minehunter mother ship HMS Enterprise, over 150 personnel from Bravo Company, 40 Commando and soldiers from 24 Regiment Royal Artillery and 29 Regiment Royal Engineers, Wildcat helicopters from 847 Naval Air Squadrons and Merlins from 820 and 845 NAS.

As part of a fictitious UN force they had to conduct boarding operations, deter and interdict illegal activity at sea, building up to an amphibious assault which paved the way for a safe extraction of civilians from Cretan soil.

Greek, Royal and US Marines were embedded in each other's units as they carried out combined reconnaissance patrols and raids leading up to the final main effort.

"Niriis has provided an invaluable opportunity to conduct large-scale amphibious operations with both US and Hellenic Marines," explained the Mighty O's amphibious operations officer Lt Col Tony Lancashire.



Picture: LPhot Paul Hall

"It's meant a range of mission types from small-scale reconnaissance to simultaneous company raids and a unit level assault which really enhanced our ability to operate successfully with one another."

The Royal Marines of Bravo Company, 40 Commando, normally based at Norton Manor camp near Taunton, made extensive use of the Commando Helicopter Force assets, which shifted base from HMS Ocean to Maleme airfield on Crete's northwest coast.

There the green berets rapid roped repeatedly from both Wildcats and Merlins – more than 500 descents successfully performed by the 93 men of Bravo Company without a single injury.

When Niriis kicked in, the Merlin Mk3 was committed on low-altitude troop insertions and extractions, as well as being held at readiness for

medical evacuations. And the Wildcat proved invaluable in conducting intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance missions – one of the most comprehensive tests for the battlefield variant of the helicopter, with the added pressure on one sortie of carrying the land forces commander for the exercise who joined the 847 NAS helicopter for a bird's eye view of the event.

"The intelligence-gathering serials accompanied by the Land Force Commander were extremely challenging but immensely rewarding flying," said Wildcat pilot Lt Dave Burnett.

"The sophisticated camera and mission system on the Wildcat significantly enhanced our picture of the enemy and proved invaluable during the amphibious raid."

Having just participated in a similar Turkish exercise, Ocean's Commanding Officer Capt Rob Pedre said Niriis kept his men and women on their toes.

"HMS Ocean has once again demonstrated her amphibious capabilities during this multi-national exercise. This has been a great opportunity to bolster our ability to operate with NATO and other regional partners."

Crete expectations

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MASTERS OF DISASTERS



I'M going to take a wild stab here: I doubt many of the crew of HMS Albion have heard of German general Helmuth von Moltke.*

They might be aware of his most famous maxim: *no plan survives first contact with the enemy.*

Because right, now – 11.15 on a cold November Saturday morning – the very thorough plans made by sailors and marines over the previous 36 or so hours are looking a little shaky thanks to their enemy, Hurricane Vanessa.

Colin Rubber has smashed his car into a wall on the main street, severing the town's main water supply, wrecking his car and doing himself some considerable injury.

Scores of youngsters – played by students from Loughborough College and Plymouth RM Cadets – wander around in a daze trying to find their parents.

Albion's 'bish' Fr Charles Bruzon is being pulled left, right and centre as he moves through the village, trying to decide where help should be provided. "I will find help and come back with them. I'll be right back," he repeatedly assures Bull Pointers.

For a good half hour, a fire has been raging in a car up the road, its driver lies immobile on the verge.

A teenage babysitter is trapped in a tunnel by the floodwater and penned in by a wall which is about to collapse. She's tired. Cold. Hungry. And so is the infant she's cradling.

There's a lot of hustle. And bustle. There are promises of help. And anxious people with personal role radios and clipboards dash up and down Bull



After seven years out of action as an active warship, HMS Albion is ready to deploy around the world once again. Richard Hargreaves joined the assault ship for one of her toughest training tests.

Point's main street.

But in terms of sailors and commandos getting stuck in, rolling their sleeves up, physically helping people, there doesn't seem to be a whole lot happening.

Rewind 15 hours and it all seemed to be a formality. The bow doors of the assault ship's landing craft would lower and salvation would come streaming out in the form of the cavalry – 65 sailors and Royal Marines, each one primed to help.

Everything had been planned down to the minutest detail. There was nutty to hand out to youngsters. Engineers with tools at the ready. Medics with all manner of drugs and medicines, bandages. Fire-fighters not just with hoses and extinguishers, but cutting gear. Marines with JCBs to clear bulk debris. Stewards to provide first aid and carry casualties away on stretchers. Chefs with urns and vats to dispense warm drinks and hot meals.

They received advice on what to do if enemy forces closed in on the site and immediate evacuation became impossible (hide near the shore and the marines will rescue you after dark); Albion's clubz PO Mike Setterfield reminds shipmates not to over-exert themselves. "If you break, you become a liability. Go ashore as the A-Team. Come back as the A-Team."

The 65-strong disaster relief team was itching to get ashore and get stuck in. Should they experience the worst sights and scenes, trauma experts would be on hand to help when they returned to Albion.

It was, Albion's CO Capt Tim Neild declared at the final briefing on Friday night, "a superb plan – all the skill and experience bodes well".

He offered some final words of advice. "Don't steamroller in. Listen to the people on the ground, listen to the village's leaders. And remember to show compassion – these are people hit by a hurricane who have been without food, water, gas or electricity, and shelter."

Back to Saturday morning and the recce teams spill ashore from landing craft exactly as planned. And they fan out around Bull Point, which covers a six-acre site next to the amphibious HQ of 1 Assault Group at Weston Mill in Devonport.

It's here that the human element comes into play. It's hard not to treat the first casualty, however minor their injury. Or to ignore hungry youngsters pleading for Haribo. It's easy to find a teenager trapped in his home by rising floodwater, but miss the young girl stuck in a tunnel behind the house. Or to spot the broken water mains, but not the prone motorist stuck in the car which crashed into it.

So after an hour on the ground, and with the cavalry now on site, JCBs et al, the bulk of the rescue effort hasn't really got going.

"I wish they'd hurry up," grumbles one FOST assessor. "I want to be back home in time for the rugby."

And in the space of a few minutes, his wish begins to come true. The plan starts working.

In one ramshackle building a young lad is perched on a chair surrounded by rising floodwaters, pleading to be rescued. The water, the teenager insists, is electrified. "He's just making that up," a FOSTie says.

Still, the lad has been there for

hours. He's got cramp in his legs (older readers might remember the 'bomb in the toilet' scene from *Lethal Weapon 2*) and needs lifting off. Enter a couple of strapping matelots, wading through filthy, debris-peppered cold water.

It's one of the easier rescues effected... and it brings the rescue team's attention to Lauren, the teenager trapped in a partially-flooded tunnel behind the building.

Std Charlotte Denham tries to make herself heard above the tumult caused by the torrent of water spewing into the tunnel.

"The baby is crying. That's a good sign," she assures the teenager. The howling and sobbing continue.

A chief medical assistance hurrying past is buttonholed by the young steward. There's a brief discussion. "That's not a priority," the senior rating tells her firmly. "There's another baby trapped in a collapsed building down the road..."

Most sailors under training pass through Bull Point on a Friday morning – a DISasTer relief EXercise is a staple part of Operational Sea Training.

Capital ships face a three-day test – a disaster followed by an evacuation of entitled citizens caught up in a crisis (as we've done for real in Lebanon and Libya).

The assessors aren't looking at how the sailors and marines put out fires, provide first aid and perform basic engineering tasks (unless Albion's crew do a really poor job) – by now the ship's company have already proved their ability. No, the FOSTies want to see how the leadership perform, if they're making the correct decisions, if the right victims are being treated in the correct order – there's little point tending to a civilian with a few scratches while Colin Rubber is about to take his last breath in his smashed-up car.

"You have to resist the urge to deal with the first thing you come across – that's why searching the site is vital," explains Lt Cdr Rob Brann, the senior FOSTie directing the exercise.

So the decision to rescue a baby in a collapsed building before one stuck in a tunnel is probably the right call – but a tough one.

There are now 65 people swarming over the site – space at Bull Point is limited and too many cooks, as they say... But if you think the three quarters of the ship's company who've not gone ashore are enjoying a lazy Saturday... nope, the FOST staff aboard are causing mayhem, digging into their box of tricks and pulling out fires, electrical failures, floods and breakdowns; the ship must prove, even with reduced numbers, she is still in a position to fight and survive.

Colin Rubber is just about in a position to survive. Patching up the broken water main, two engineers spotted the injured driver still stuck in his vehicle. Cutting gear and jacks grant them access to the motorist, who's finally extricated and taken back to Albion on a special neck/spinal injury stretcher.

It's too late for another Bull Point car driver. Fred, who crawled from his blazing vehicle, is now Ex-Fred – it took too long for the fire party to get to him.

But what of young Lauren trapped in the tunnel?

Finally, two sailors turn up in wet suits, determined to get stuck in. Armed with planks and wedges of wood they begin shoring up the unstable wall – at least three buttresses are needed along its length. With two struts across, calamity. The kit bag has vanished. Left lying around in the street, it's been swiped by a villager determined to do their own repairs

rather than wait for the Navy. It stalls the rescue effort for a few minutes while a replacement hammer is found and the final makeshift support installed. Nearly two hours after her ordeal began, Lauren is lifted to safety, a blanket wrapped around her and the 'baby' – just a battery-powered doll – as medics crowd around the pair to offer help.

"This is what we train for, this is what we're here for," says LMA Claire Field, on her third disaster relief exercise.

"It's great to put your training into practice. You learn something every time you do this, which makes it really fulfilling. And it's great to see everyone from the ship, from all departments, coming together as a team and all working together."

Lauren was one of several actors – or trainee actors – on site. The local Casualty Union regularly play victims at these exercises. Four drama students from Loughborough College were given special roles as vulnerable residents trapped by rising waters, while tutor Vicki Calvert-Gooch played Lauren's distraught mum.

"There's very little like this anywhere in the country, so it's a fantastic training environment and the students can really get their teeth into their roles, creating back stories to make everything realistic," Vicki explained.

Also acting her way around the site, Cllr Razia Daniels, Lord Mayor of Bull Point... and in real life Lord Mayor of Chester, Albion's affiliated city. With the ship mothballed for five years, the famous Roman city is looking to rekindle the relationship. She acted as politicians do in such crises: showing her gratitude for help, but also eager to steer the aid in specific directions.

She found the whole experience "very inspiring". The 37 youngsters from Plymouth RM Cadets found things most entertaining. Their supervisor Capt Paul Cook told them to act "tired, hungry and cold"... which they did with aplomb. And he and his assistants reminded them (repeatedly) *never* to use the word 'safeguard' unless there really was an injury or incident. Which is a bit like telling kids: don't touch the wet paint, or don't press the big red button...

As far as I know, they didn't pause the exercise, however tempted... but they did get free sweets, watched a helicopter land and take off, and also saw a matelot fall down a drain when a manhole cover gave way (he was ok, if a tad embarrassed... and to two ten-year-old lads it was the funniest sight ever...)

By 12.30, it was pretty much all over. Capt Neild has been and gone, satisfied with progress.

"This is a massive exercise for us – one of the key parts of our training and one we have to get right," he explains.

"We have seen HMS Ocean and RFA Mounts Bay do this for real in the Caribbean recently. It's down to us to emulate their success.

"It's an exercise where we roll up our sleeves and get stuck in. When it's real, the reputation of the United Kingdom is at stake."

The plan he endorsed the previous evening has, after a bumpy start, worked, by and large. Fred is dead, admittedly, although the fire in his car is out. But Colin Rubber is poorly, but stable. Lauren and her baby are safe. The fresh water supply has been restored. The hospital has been patched up. The smoke-filled doctor's surgery is now clear. The JCB has shifted debris.

On the high ground in front of Bull Point community centre, caterers have set up a field kitchen and are dishing out hot drinks as a (very real) hailstorm hammers rescuers and rescues alike. A nice hot cuppa.

Perfect.
* For the uninitiated... Chief of the Prussian General Staff and architect of the crushing defeat of France in 1870-71.



● A grocer in the replica Middle East town chats with Capt George Eatwell and an interpreter
Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Gallagher, 30 Cdo IX Gp

X+Y+IX=CUX

NO, that's not a GCSE algebra puzzler for you, but just some of the British units – including the Royal Marines' information warfare experts – who headed to the States for a unique training exercise hosted by the US Marine Corps.

Personnel from 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group made the trip from Stonehouse in Plymouth to Quantico in Virginia – better known as home of the FBI Academy.

The Combined Unit Exercise or CUX (pronounced 'see-you-ex' rather than 'cooks') was aimed at testing personnel in how they conduct information operations.

"We base the decisions we make on the information we receive, and to make good decisions we need good information," explained Operations Officer Capt James Smith.

"Information operations are about controlling, manipulating and disseminating our message while mitigating an adversary's ability to communicate theirs."

The joint exercise involved the planning and tactical delivery of information operations with allies from around the world, including US, Dutch, French, Australian and Canadian partners.

The team from 30 Commando included the Information Activities Cell, representatives from Y Squadron (the electronic warfare experts), the Combat Camera Team and an Information Warfare Team (IWT) from the Army's Information Activities and Outreach specialists, 77 Brigade (77 X).

The exercise, which is run by the USMC Information Operations Centre, is viewed as the premier information operations collective training event in the world.

Personnel were tested during a scenario focused on supporting a humanitarian and disaster relief operation. With over half the team on the CUX recently deploying to the Caribbean in the wake of Hurricane Irma, the experience among the group proved instrumental in delivering success.

Building on lessons learned from the relief operations across the British Virgin Islands and Anguilla, the team faced additional challenges such as language barriers and insurgent groups.

Personnel found themselves in a mock town, complete with residents, at Quantico's 86.169 square-mile site – the size of Swansea in Wales.

LPhot Joel Rouse, a member of the Combat Camera Team, said: "This has been a unique training experience. We've had the opportunity to conduct serials we have never done before such as leaflet drops from Osprey MV-22, and have learned from specialists like the USMC MISO and 77 X teams."

Lt Sophie Wadsworth, of 77 X, said: "This exercise has provided a robust, realistic and interesting scenario for my team to exercise their skill set."

"Working in a truly joint environment and with the opportunity to use the impressive assets from the US Marine Corps has been a great experience for my soldiers."

Sgt John Ward USMC added: "Working with the Royal Marines as part of the UK team has been an enjoyable and memorable experience. The opportunity to work together and the exchange of knowledge has been invaluable. I look forward to working together in the future."

Party at RM Condor

WAVE your arms in the air if you're Gordon Lindhurst, Tory Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian, enjoying a ride in a Royal Marines Jackal armoured vehicle...

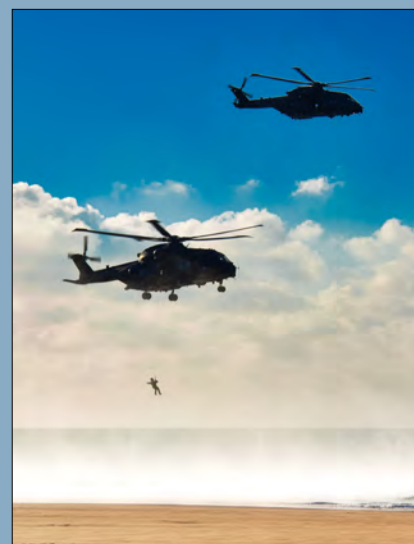
A cross-Party group of MSPs were invited to RM Condor to meet the men of 45 Commando and their families and learn more about life in the Corps as part of the Armed Forces Visit Programme.

They witnessed – or experienced – RM marksmanship, all-terrain driving, stalking by snipers, artillery, met RN bomb disposal experts from Faslane and families from Condor and the Naval Families Federation.

"While defence is clearly reserved for Westminster, it is the Scottish Parliament's policies and decisions that affect the day-to-day lives of Scotland-based personnel," explained Naval Regional Commander Capt Chris Smith.

"This is why it is essential that our elected representatives better understand military life – all the more so given that Scotland will be home to the entire Submarine Service from 2020, as well as an Army infantry brigade, the RAF's Quick Reaction Alert interceptors and submarine hunting Maritime Patrol Aircraft flying from Lossiemouth."

Picture: LPhot Pepe Hogan, FRPU North



Wings with desire

SILHOUETTED against sepia-tone clouds, two Jungle Merlins return home to Yeovilton, mission complete after 11 strenuous months of training.

Eight rookie fliers – four trainee pilots, four hopeful aircrewmembers – plus seven experienced naval aviators swapping the now-retired helicopters for 21st-Century models are qualified to fly the battlefield Merlin on front-line duties wherever the Royal Marines go.

Every one of the 15 students on 846 Naval Air Squadron's '27 Operational Conversion Course' passed – the eight rookies collected their coveted wings, the experienced crews mastering an aircraft light years ahead of their previous steed.

Despite enhancements and improvements over the years, the Commando Helicopter Force's Sea King was '50s/'60s technology. Merlin is bang-up-to-date with an entirely computerised 'glass cockpit' – no analogue dials, switches and knobs. It's also bigger, faster, stronger and has longer legs than its predecessor.

The students began the year at RAF Benson – the battlefield Merlins were originally flown by the Air Force until they were transferred to the Fleet Air Arm.

The 'green' Merlin simulators remain in Oxfordshire, so students spent five weeks learning about the new helicopter in the classroom, then a couple of months 'flying' basic and advanced sorties in the sim.

After that, training moves to the real thing: an 11-tonne beast which powers through the skies at speeds upwards of 170mph, carrying more than a dozen Royal Marines in full battle

gear perhaps hundreds of miles from their launch point.

Crews must be able to set down in tight spots, carry heavy loads such as 105mm field guns, supplies, BV or Viking tracked vehicles, and Land Rovers – where the aircrewmembers come into their own in guiding the two pilots in the cockpit.

The helicopters must be able to go wherever the Royal Marines go, such as the mountainous Arctic terrain of northern Norway, so the students decamped to Scandinavia for a week – a trip which also tested their endurance, navigation and diplomatic/language skills.

After Norway came Scotland and the ranges at Kirkcudbright in Dumfries and Galloway to practise weaponry – the aircrewmembers man machine-guns when necessary, and got down plenty of lead on the ranges during four days of live shoots by day and night.

No commando flier can earn their spurs without going to sea – the ability to ferry Royal Marines into action from a warship by helicopter played a key role in Iraq in 2003 in particular.

Training ship RFA Argus is used to give the aviators a taste of life at sea and the challenges of operating from a pitching, rolling, yawing flight deck in all weathers.

"A particular highlight for me personally was achieving my first deck landing and take-off from Argus over the summer – we were the first Merlin Mk3 course to receive a full embarked training package," said pilot Lt Tom Pritchard, one of the students "new to the trade".

"I'd been extremely keen to get to grips with the Merlin and learn just what such a large aircraft could produce."

All that the students had learned over ten months in classrooms, simulators, mountains and ranges is tested to the limit with the course's climax, a 'MILEX' – military exercise – making use of the huge Commando Logistics Regiment base at Chivenor in North Devon.

The week-long exercise, known as Merlin Storm, was played out over Dartmoor and the Devonshire coast, made use of green berets from 42 Commando at Bickleigh, assault ship HMS Albion undergoing her own operational training off Plymouth, the gunners of 29 Commando Regiment RA, whose 105mm guns took to the skies – as did Land Rovers and trailers.

Aircrews operated in unforgiving conditions on Dartmoor, kicked up blizzards of sand as they touched down and lifted off from beaches around Plymouth, ferried troops around in all weathers, and practised recovering comrades from the Channel in a mock rescue before Merlin Storm concluded.

Among the successful aircrewmembers candidates, 28-year-old LS Ben Fagan from Dorchester, watched by his uncle CPO John 'Fags' Fagan – the oldest and longest serving aircrewman in the Fleet Air Arm with 4,000 flying hours under his belt as 'Father of the Branch'. Ben's now assigned to 845... as is Lt Pritchard.

"Being awarded my 'wings' was a proud day for me – and my family – and the culmination of the last seven years of hard work," Tom added.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, RNPOTY





Dawn breaks on Year of Engineering

THE Royal Navy is backing the Year of Engineering 2018 and will highlight the integral part engineers play in delivering front-line success.

“Our engineers are the beating heart of the Naval Service – no ship, submarine, aircraft, or land vehicle can function without their skills and knowledge,” said Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock.

He was speaking at a University Technical College event at HMS Sultan, during which he said the RN will play an active role in the Department of Transport campaign.

Admiral Woodcock added: “Defence is one of the UK’s largest employers of engineers and at around 12,250 personnel, engineers make up over a third of core strength in the Navy.”

“Year of Engineering provides a huge opportunity to showcase the creativity of our engineers and engineering and the variety of modern world-class equipment, supported by world-class training, to inspire and encourage the young people of today, to educate parents and teachers to help them support engineering branch recovery and leave a legacy to the Naval Service and the UK as a whole.”

From engineering cups of tea to helicopters

AET Emma Dell spent seven months deployed in the Caribbean with 216 Flight.

The engineer, from 815 NAS at RNAS Yeovilton, was embarked in RFA Mounts Bay.

When category 5 hurricane Irma struck the small islands, the Wildcat helicopter was airborne from day one conducting reconnaissance sorties for Anguilla’s Governor and disaster relief co-ordinators.

Here AET Dell talks about some of the engineering challenges she faced while in the Caribbean.

“It was during the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Irma, when we were off Anguilla that we hit a snag and needed to conduct essential maintenance to the aircraft in order to maintain its serviceability and deliver vital aid and assistance.

During a ground run, we encountered an oil leak. This requires immediate attention and we brought the cab into the hot, humid temporary air shelter (our hangar).

We had been working all day but if we were to be of any assistance to BVI, we needed to fix the issue. A few of us worked throughout the night and into the morning fault diagnosing and repairing the issue.

We had to bring the spare engine up from storage and were close to having to possibly conduct an engine change. But thanks to the expertise and experience of the team, the issue was identified, the part needed was sourced and all maintenance and function checks were conducted. Paperwork was completed and the cab was returned to a serviceable state.

We had worked extremely hard but had got the job done. We were ready for the next evolution.

Trying to keep equipment in a serviceable state whilst on ship was challenging. The salt in the air encourages rust so quickly – even tools in covered tool boxes – went rusty.

We had to keep on top of it or the tools would be ineffective. So while you only really think about big jobs of engineering, like rotor blade changes and component rectification, you have to bear in mind that all the equipment we



use, not just the helicopter, needs a strict and meticulous maintenance programme.

Everybody on board knew their roles and how to work around each other. This includes the ship’s company, the Army and the Royal Marines.

The level of professionalism was second to none; we all maintained a fun yet acceptable level of camaraderie and sense of humour between the forces. I will always remember this trip with a fondness and pride that I think I will most definitely struggle to find elsewhere.

The bonds you form on these trips are strong and you know that when you meet with anyone from it again, you will likely recount the memories and smile and laugh about them always.

Previous to joining the Navy, I worked in the NAAFI for Expeditionary Forces Institute in Afghanistan. I worked in



● Main image: Emma’s Wildcat on the deck of RFA Mounts Bay off the British Virgin Islands; Left, Delivering aid to the hurricane-hit communities; Above, some of the aid; Below, a hurricane-hit community



the shops and the coffee shops on the bases.

To go from engineering cups of tea and coffee, to working with helicopters is quite a strange leap.

However, whilst out there, I really enjoyed being around the military and my fitness improved to a level where I was eligible to join.

I was shown around a hangar by some AETs and I chatted to them about what they did. It seemed to appeal to my inquisitive mind and practical nature. I thought it was now or never, so applied to join.

I had to fight tooth and nail to get in – I was originally rejected on medical grounds but appealed and was successful.

And I am so glad I did.
■ Flight home, see page 6



Students facing warship task

ENGINEERING students take a peek at the engine room of Type 23 frigate HMS Montrose.

The students, all of whom are studying at Plymouth University Technical College, are mentored by the Royal Navy and Babcock for a national competition.

The group, who visited the frigate alongside at Devonport Naval Base, have been tasked to produce a device to conduct visual inspections of unlit and enclosed areas within the gas turbine engine uptakes on board warships.

The UTC team are among a number of schools across Devon and Cornwall who are taking part in the Engineering Education Scheme (EES), which runs in England and Scotland.

The scheme, launched at HMS Raleigh, links teams of Year 12 students and their teacher with local companies to work on real, scientific, engineering and technological problems.

Working in teams of between four and six people, each group will have six months to complete the task set for them by their sponsoring company.

Two of the teams are being sponsored by the Royal Navy.

Lt Cdr Neil Sandle, who works at the Naval Base in Devonport, is the lead mentor for the UTC team. He joined the Royal Navy in 1990 as a Marine Engineer Officer, directly from sixth form.

“I volunteered to become involved with the EES as I believe it is a great way to get students involved with industrial

STEM issues and provide them with an insight into the role of an engineer.

“I’m really looking forward to see how the students respond to the challenges we set them.

“From this initial visit to HMS Montrose we now plan on visiting the UTC every two weeks to see how the project design and manufacture is progressing, and provide the students with ongoing advice and guidance.”

Lt Paul Armstrong, who has been paired with a team from Tor Bridge High, originally joined the Royal Navy in 1991 as an Artificer Apprentice and was selected as a weapons engineering specialist.

He completed a four-year apprenticeship with the Royal Navy and rose through to the ranks to WO1 before being selected to join the Officer Corps. He completed his training at Britannia Royal Naval College in 2012 and is now the Platform Manager for HMS Montrose.

The schools taking part also include Devonport High School for Boys, Coombe Dean School, Ilfracombe Academy and Tavistock College, who were the winners of last year’s regional heat for a second year.

Around 65 students visited HMS Raleigh for the launch where they were introduced to the requirements of the EES and took part in some practical team-working challenges similar to those undertaken by the Royal Navy’s new recruits.

Deep on a high for repair honour

A TEAM of submariners received one of the highest accolades in engineering for their skill and ingenuity in repairing a nuclear reactor.

Judges at the Institution of Engineering and Technology say the T-boat team who effected the repairs to their submarine’s powerplant are worthy winners of the Churchill Medal – named after the wartime leader and previously presented to luminaries such as the men behind the hovercraft, Sir Christopher Cockerell and jet engine Sir Frank Whittle.

The medal is presented annually to the individual or team in the Armed Forces who’ve made the greatest engineering contribution to military operations.

Nearly 30 citations were submitted for the 2017 award, but it was the efforts of the Trafalgar-class engineers which impressed the judges most.

So what did the nuclear experts do to become the first RN winners of the medal since it was reinstated in 2011?

Well they carried out a “technically-challenging” repair to a submarine’s nuclear reactor.

According to their citation: “Nuclear submarines are necessarily complex, which makes their maintenance and repair similarly so, and those who operate them are without doubt

at the zenith of military training, education and assessment (imagine taking your driving test two or three times each year and it gives you a flavour).

“Whilst freeze seals are tried and tested, the limited space required a fresh, innovative approach, based on the use of large-bore freeze seal isolations, on three pipes.”

Lack of space and absence of some specialist equipment, meant the engineers had to come up with ingenious solutions to some of the problems and a mock-up was built before and practised on repeatedly before the actual repairs were carried out.

And when the engineers were ready, the repairs demanded continuous shift work for 25 days, and once started, had to be completed successfully.

“The challenges simply cannot be underestimated – it was the first ever deployment worldwide of a triple freeze seal,” explained Cdr Philip Parvin from the RN’s Submarine Mechanical Specialists team.

“We are really stunned and honoured to win this prestigious industry medal, particularly when we were up against teams who are dealing with very complex areas of engineering, such as cyber. It is testament to the hard work and efforts of the whole team.”

Naval Pedigree

AW159

Operating worldwide in the most demanding open ocean and littoral environments, Leonardo Helicopters extend theatre horizons to provide force projection for Maritime Commanders.

Embarked multi-role platforms capable of autonomous detection, identification and engagement against surface and sub-surface targets, capable of rapid re-role to SAR and humanitarian support.

Inspired by the vision, curiosity and creativity of the great master inventor - Leonardo is designing the technology of tomorrow.



● Lt Chris McDade and Cdr John Cunane explore the simulator with Teekay instructor John Williams

Deal allows RNR to broaden horizons

NAVAL Reserves based at Glasgow's HMS Dalriada are benefiting from unique, state-of-the-art training.

The city is home to Teekay Shipping Glasgow Ltd – and the gas giant has opened up its navigation and cargo operations simulator.

Hundreds of Teekay seafarers a year undertake the simulation training and it is now being offered to Naval Reserves through a partnership established by one of its employees Chris McDade, who is a Lieutenant in the RNR.

Chris, manager of Marine HR at Teekay, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for Reserves to gain unique access to Teekay's world-leading simulator and gain an unparalleled level of expertise.

"Working at Teekay and being a Reservist myself I couldn't think of a better initiative. To share expertise and resource in this way allows us to build on the rich history between the Navy and the Merchant Navy.

"This calibre of training is not readily available to Reserves so it's a really exciting prospect to know this is happening right here in Glasgow."

Seafarers across the world travel to the



● Reservists from HMS Dalriada at Teekay Shipping Glasgow Ltd

Teekay training site which delivers intensive courses in ship handling; navigation; bridge teamwork; ship-to-ship interactions; cargo operations; heavy traffic situations, and harsh weather conditions.

In conjunction with HMS Dalriada, Teekay has devised two key exercises for Reserves to undergo. The first is in basic skills and ship handling while the second will see Reserves situated in the English Channel and challenged with simulated terrorist threats.

Cdr John Cunane, Commanding Officer of HMS Dalriada, said: "The Maritime Reserves and HMS Dalriada in particular are delighted with the growing association with Teekay.

"It has continued to support serving and upskilling Reservists and this latest offer to make their state-of-the-art bridge trainer available to support career development of officers and ratings in the Warfare Seaman Branch is most welcome."

Cadets put through drill paces

MORE guns than you can throw a stick at greeted Officer Cadets during a visit to HMS Collingwood.

The group from Oxford URNU were treated to some training in the simulator off 'Rubber Road'.

The Dismounted Close Combat Trainer includes General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMGs), a minigun and an SA80 assault rifle. The weapons are rigged up to gas which activates the working parts when fired; the difference is that no bullets are actually fired and the targets are projected onto a wall in front of the firers in a number of realistic computer-generated scenarios.

After a brief on how to operate each of the weapons safely and how to load them correctly the group got straight into it.

The first task was a firing range with the standard figure 11 targets; each of the group emptied the entirety of their various magazines.

Once all ammunition had been expended the group were given their shooting scores. They were understandably curious to see



whether they had actually hit anything and to their shock some of the group only managed 4-5 hits for their 200 rounds fired!

OCdt Emily Herbert demonstrated she was a dab hand at firing the Minigun by getting the vast majority of her 800 rounds on target.

After the group 'got their eye in' on the simple range targets, the scenarios became increasingly more complex.

DCCT's Stephen Kybert acted as the gunnery officer and informed the group that they were now the 'Starboard Battery' and gave the orders for when to engage or cease firing when the

group undertook the dynamic simulations.

Some instances required firing warning shots at suspicious small boats after all other passive efforts to stop them had failed – ultimately ending up with the need to sink them.

Having each rotated around the various weapons the group then moved onto the M3M 0.50 calibre simulator, the 20mm simulator and finally the 30mm simulator.

After lunch the group made their way over to HMS Sultan for a rifle drill lesson courtesy of Royal Marines Sgt Tony Galacki. After initial instruction, a drill

off was held with the contest ending as a tie between Lt Jon Adair and Mid Benjamin Clarke.

The session concluded with a march down the parade ground as a squad to the Quarter Deck, for a photo, before heading back to Oxford.

Mid Clarke said: "The visit proved to be a fabulous opportunity to experience first-hand some aspects of the Royal Navy that we rarely get to see, as well as appreciate just how much stamina and willpower must be required to stand for hours during a parade whilst carrying a rifle."



We're having a ball

OFFICER Cadets took to the floor for ballroom dancing lessons – a skill which used to be taught at Britannia Royal Naval College.

Dance instructor Ellis-Anne Dunmall, a civil servant on the fast track scheme, began by leading the group of 30 from Oxford URNU with warm up exercises.

The large group was then divided into men and women to learn the basic steps for a waltz.

After several practice steps and a brief on the technique required for dancing together the groups paired off and began dancing.

Throughout the evening dance partners were continually switched over and it was clear that some were far more coordinated than others.

A more advanced step was then introduced which enabled everyone to dance in pairs across the entire floor in unison to complete the lesson.

The evening, the brainchild of Lt Freddy Mounsey and Lt Chris McElwaine, was financed by the Guy Hudson Memorial Trust, who provide support to the URNU.

"A brilliant night, I can no longer justify my matelot two step," said coxwain CPO Gary Maskell.

Lt Will Jones, Commanding Officer of the Oxford URNU said: "It was fantastic to see so many of the Officer Cadets giving this Naval tradition a try.

"It was a great evening and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves; as such we'll definitely be doing this again and we'll be looking to learn some more advanced steps next time."

Oxford is one of 15 URNUs located across the UK offering opportunities to undergraduates from UK universities.



Keith bids farewell

A RESERVIST at HMS King Alfred has retired after 41 years service to the Ministry of Defence.

Lt Cdr Keith Whitehead, pictured right, was first an employee of the Ministry of Defence and then as a member of the Royal Naval Reserve for the past 32 years and seven months.

Keith was dined out by the Wardroom of HMS King Alfred at their annual Trafalgar Night Mess Dinner, where he was thanked for his extensive loyal service and active contribution within the RNR.

Before he retired, Keith donated a special gift to HMS King Alfred, the RNR unit in Portsmouth where he has attended training evenings weekly over the years.

The framed collection of illustrative and rare stamp covers feature naval events and occasions that are symbolic of Keith's own experience in the Senior Service.

Keith has enjoyed an extensive, varied career across a number



of key warfare disciplines, from the Seaman Officer branch to the Naval Control of Shipping specialisation and then finally into the Ops HQ branch where he specialised as an analyst.

On his retirement, he received a formal letter from the Leader of Hampshire County Council, where he works as a Chartered Building Surveyor, a Valetory Certificate signed by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock, and a retirement gift from HMS King Alfred.

TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO



THERE are areas on charts around the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands which have the somewhat ominous warning “unsurveyed”.

Other areas have sparse soundings based on lead-line measurements – a lead line was a piece of calibrated rope with a lead weight on the end – dating back to the 19th Century.

For the first work package of the 2017-18 ice patrol season, HMS Protector was tasked by the UK’s Hydrographic Office to go to survey some of these areas to provide detailed, high-resolution data to enable charts to be updated and to improve the safety of navigation in what are increasingly popular destinations for the tourism industry and commercial vessels alike.

Sailing from the Falkland Islands, Protector gathered seabed data *en route* to Grytviken, a former whaling station on the north coast of South Georgia, some 850 miles from the Falklands.

Once on station the survey operations could really get underway. This included the deployment of a ‘tide team’ for more than 25 hours to set up

gauges and monitor the rising and falling of the sea on a tide pole – installed by LS(HM) Richard Bullivant and AB(HM) Sam Collins – which would allow the soundings to be correctly referenced.

For PO(HM) John-Paul Priestley and his team the weather was challenging with air temperatures dropping to -14°C and frequent bursts of sleet and snow driven by fierce katabatic winds, which sweep down the mountain sides with almost no notice and cause temperatures to plummet even lower.

Having been fully equipped with cold-weather clothing the team worked in all conditions to achieve their goal.

Any hardship was offset by the spectacular surroundings, with thousands of seals and elephant seals fighting for primacy on the beach at the height of their breeding season and forming a considerable and potentially hazardous barrier to personnel moving around.

Having established the tidal station, Protector moved round the corner to Cumberland West Bay.

Deploying the ship’s Survey Motor Boat (SMB), James Caird IV, it was possible to conduct

simultaneous survey operations with both vessels, with the SMB pushing into the shallower areas where the ship cannot go.

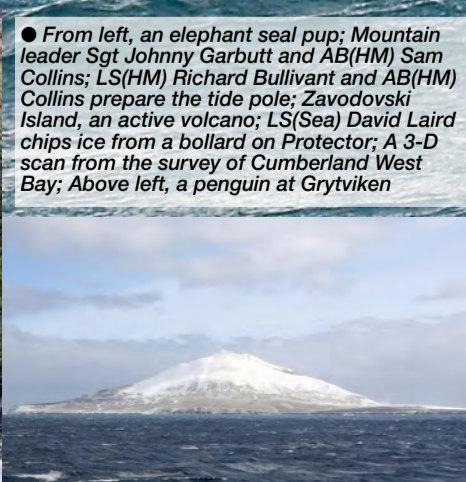
This was a great opportunity for newly-endorsed SMB coxswain LS(HM) Chris ‘Mo’ Morris to test his skills; no mean feat avoiding large chunks of glacial ice, sometimes many metres in size, while keeping a watchful eye on the echo sounder for uncharted hazards.

The ship and SMB went where, almost certainly, no one had gone before, collecting huge amounts of data to chart nearly the entire bay.

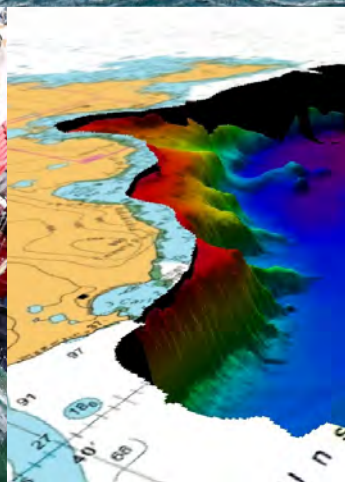
In addition the ship’s company went ashore to monitor glacial erosion in the region and to map the coastline in areas where land has been exposed by recent glacial retreat.

With the SMB safely back onboard, Protector headed further south east to one of the UK’s most remote and least-visited Overseas Territories to conduct a sovereignty patrol of the South Sandwich Islands.

En route through the island chain the ship passed



● From left, an elephant seal pup; Mountain leader Sgt Johnny Garbutt and AB(HM) Sam Collins; LS(HM) Richard Bullivant and AB(HM) Collins prepare the tide pole; Zavodovski Island, an active volcano; LS(Sea) David Laird chips ice from a bollard on Protector; A 3-D scan from the survey of Cumberland West Bay; Above left, a penguin at Grytviken



MAN HAS GONE BEFORE

Words: LS(HM) Richard Bullivant
Pictures: LPhoto Ben Shread



Zavodovski Island, an active volcano made famous by BBC's *Planet Earth II* and home to one of the largest Chinstrap penguin colonies on earth.

The ultimate aim was to visit Southern Thule, the southernmost island in the South Sandwich island chain, but this early in the season the weather had other ideas and, having encountered the first large icebergs of the year, the ship finally reached the edge of the seasonal sea ice in the vicinity of Montagu Island.

The ship's officers took this opportunity to practise their ice-breaking skills before returning to Saunders Island, another active volcano, to conduct the next survey.

Against a backdrop of thousands of penguins watching progress from the shore, the SMB was deployed again to chart the inshore waters while Protector surveyed the approaches.

It was an amazing opportunity for all those onboard to be working in such a beautiful, pristine and extremely remote environment.

Once the collected data has been processed

and double checked by the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton, Saunders Island in the South Sandwich Islands and Cumberland West Bay on the north coast of South Georgia will be safer places for visiting ships.

With more survey operations planned in these areas and the Falklands in the near future, mariners of all nationalities can be assured that HMS Protector is doing her part to ensure that Admiralty Charts remain the most authoritative reference material for their safety for many years ahead.

Having answered a request for assistance made by the Argentinean government to help locate their missing submarine ARA San Juan, HMS Protector arrived in the search area within 36 hours.

En route to the region communications were established with the Argentinean Search and Rescue Coordination Centre and a sector within the search area was pre-assigned to the ship based on the submarine's last known position and course.

On arrival Protector immediately started a comprehensive search, both on the surface and under the water using its full range of capabilities, including radars and infrared sensors to scan the

surface as well as using its multi-beam echo sonar to detect any objects on the seabed.

Weather conditions in the region were challenging with 50 knot winds and five-metre waves degrading visual and sonar detection ranges.

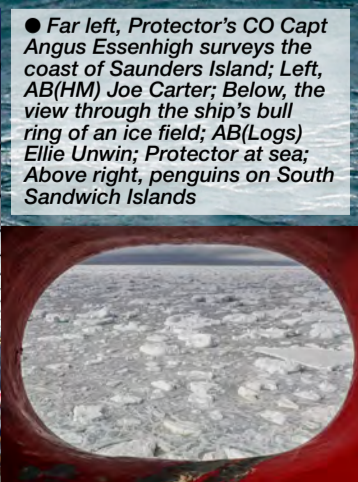
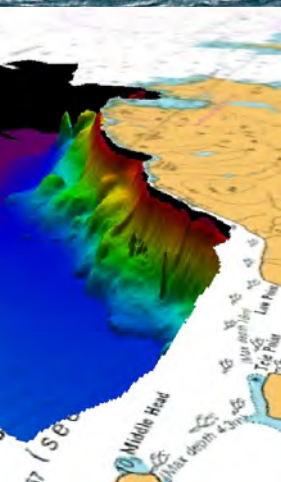
Around two weeks after the boat went missing, the Argentinians changed the mission from search to recovery, believing the submarine was lost with all 44 personnel aboard.

HMS Protector is two years into a five-year deployment to the South Atlantic and Antarctica.

The ship will complete five work packages over the Austral summer season, travelling to various locations in and around the Antarctic peninsula.

During these periods she undertakes hydrographic surveys of the area to improve the safety of navigation, conducts base visits and provides support to UK and foreign research stations as well as assisting the British Antarctic Survey and UK Antarctic Heritage Trust with the study and preservation of this unique part of the world.

You can follow HMS Protector's activities on Twitter at [@protector_hms](#)



● Far left, Protector's CO Capt Angus Essenhigh surveys the coast of Saunders Island; Left, AB(HM) Joe Carter; Below, the view through the ship's bull ring of an ice field; AB(Logs) Ellie Unwin; Protector at sea; Above right, penguins on South Sandwich Islands



Recruitment drive

CHILDREN line up to be fed at a field kitchen during an open day at RNAS Culdrose.

Young people who are interested in either a career in logistics or the wider military visited the air station to find out what life is like as a 'Loggie.'

But it is not just counting blankets and bullets; they learned about the diverse range of career opportunities and also the more general aspects of military life.

There were lots of opportunities to try out, including fire-fighting, first aid and some fitness training.

The schools present were Bodmin College, Penryn College, Pool Academy, Cape Cornwall School, Humphry Davy School, Richard Lander School and Redruth School.

The students heard about job opportunities from Cornish sailors who have had very successful careers as chefs, logistics specialists and caterers.

Ben, from Poole Academy, said: "We are amazed at the great career opportunities available."

"We visited the Unit Personnel Office and saw what sailors get paid. We understand that they work hard for it, but it is a good reward."

Fellow student Lewis added: "I was thinking of joining the Army, but the prospects look better in the Navy."

CPO George Mee, who organised the day, said: "This is the biggest logistics open day in the Royal Navy and I am so pleased that the students got so much from it."



Class act for pupils

LT JOHN Davies and CPO Rick Bonell, of HMS Collingwood's Victory Squadron, supported children at a local school.

The base's field gun crew helped pupils at Crofton Hammond Infant School celebrate Red, White and Blue Day 2017.

The children took part in being part of a field gun crew, pulling a field gun limber around the playground as well as learning a short history of the annual field gun competition.

The school has around 180 pupils of which almost a third have links to military families.

The day culminated in a parade around the school grounds led by Lt Davies and a traditional drummer.

The march was also attended by teachers and parents of both

the infant and junior schools and marked the end of a successful Red, White and Blue Day that raised money for three Armed Forces charities, the RNRMC, ABF The Soldier's Charity and the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Headteacher Mrs Jacky Halton said: "With such large numbers of children from Service families we believe it's really important that as a community we recognise the role that the Services play."

Lt Davies added: "It's a huge privilege to be part of Red, White and Blue Day this year."

"As the field gun officer for HMS Collingwood, today has been a fantastic opportunity to use the equipment and crew to reinforce our close ties with the school and local community."

"I've already identified some future crew members!"

Plenty of fun in store

BATTLING through a darkened ship to find an item of stores was among the challenges faced by school children during their visit to HMS Raleigh.

Around 150 students from schools in Plymouth and Saltash attended the open day hosted by the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS) at the Royal Navy training base in Torpoint.

During the day, which aimed to give the visitors an insight into the role of the Royal Navy Logistics branch, the students were taken on a tour of each of the training squadrons.

There, instructors and trainees were waiting with practical exercises designed to explain the different jobs undertaken by chefs, stewards, writers and supply chain logisticians.

At the supply chain squadron the students became members of HMS Dreadnought's Ship's Company, tasked with searching their way through the storerooms to find a vital piece of equipment as the ship suffered damage and



● The students show off the fruits of their labour

the lights went out. In the writer squadron the visitors had to prepare a ship for its arrival in a foreign port, matching the currency with different countries.

Over at the catering school the students learnt how to prepare nutritious and wholesome food with limited resources, as well as icing cakes that were later served to them as part of their lunch.

Milestone for the RN's only flying MTO

WE all know that pilots fly and that observers are the tactical wizards in Royal Navy helicopters, but flying engineers? That is a rarity.

In the Royal Navy there are a number of engineers that have successfully completed flying training and been presented with their 'Wings'.

Their role is to test-fly the Navy's aircraft following a period of maintenance.

Most are engineer pilots, so they fly the aircraft, but a very few are observers.

One of them is Lt Craig Jordan, a Maritime Test Observer, one of only five in the RN and the only one currently flying. Craig, pictured right, has just clocked up 1,000 hours of flying.

Craig's job is to ensure that the helicopters' weapons and sensors are functioning correctly.

Much of this work can be done on the ground, but certain aspects need to be completed in the air.

In order to achieve the role successfully, the engineer needs to know exactly how the systems work and how they are used, hence the requirement for him to be a fully trained and experienced observer.

Before becoming a Maritime Test Observer, (MTO) his



aircrew time was spent flying the distinctive Sea King Mk7 Airborne Surveillance and Control helicopters, (SKASaC), serving on the front line with 857 NAS and 849 NAS. This included tours in Afghanistan

and the Middle East.

Craig is an engineer first and foremost. He loves flying but fixing aircraft is his passion.

"I just love providing serviceable aircraft to the front line," he said. "I am really

pleased to reach the milestone of 1,000 hours. Not many MTOs fly that much."

After his tour as an MTO, he will hopefully be the lead air engineer in one of the squadrons based at Culdrose.

Navy ships honour their US personnel

A TRADITIONAL US Coast Guard ceremony was held aboard the Royal Navy's Fleet Flagship HMS Ocean.

Ocean, Flagship for the Commander of NATO Standing Maritime Group 2, paused during an exercise in the Eastern Med.

Crew members gathered on the Quarter Deck to watch the award of two Cutterman pins – an insignia which recognises five years' service at sea with the USCG.

HMS Ocean currently has five members of the US Coast Guard serving onboard within the Marine Engineering Department as part of a non-reciprocal exchange agreement with the US.

Electricians' Mate Petty Officer First Class Matthew Kruczek and Damage Controlman Petty Officer First Class Joshua Mathis were both awarded their Cutterman pins by the Commanding Officer of HMS Ocean Capt Robert Pedre.

Before they were pinned on, both insignia were lowered into the water.

Tradition dictates the pins be lowered seven fathoms (or 42ft) to ensure verdigris develops in the crevices of the pin – as long as the pin is never polished.

Commander SNMG2 Cdre James Morley then presented both recipients with their Cutterman Certificates.

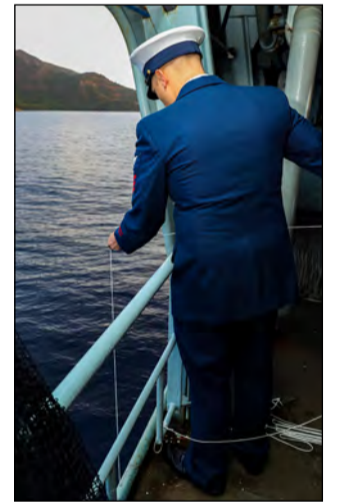
The ceremony was watched by members of the ship's company as well as members of the US Marine Corps who were embarked as part of the ongoing NATO exercise programme.

The Cutterman insignia was instituted on October 18 1974 by the United States Coast Guard as a way to recognise personnel whose "afloat service exemplifies the knowledge, dedication and devotion to duty that are the hallmarks of a professional mariner."

PO Mathis said: "I am honoured to have been awarded the Cutterman pin and can think of no more fitting a place to have



● Caption Pictured: Capt Robert Pedre presents PO Matthew Kruczek with his Cutterman pin. The pins were first dipped in the water, right.



Pictures: LPhoto Paul Hall



● Julie Kirchner pins on her husband's insignia

received it than on the quarter deck of the Royal Navy Fleet Flagship.

Capt Pedre, said: "It was a privilege to host the Cutterman ceremony for Petty Officers Mathis and Kruczek onboard the Fleet Flagship."

"It is a privilege to have US Coast Guard personnel serving in HMS Ocean and I was delighted to present them with Cutterman pins in recognition of their notable achievement."

Meanwhile, in HMS Scott another American was receiving a promotion.

PO Nate Kirchner, the ship's US Coast Guard Machinery Technician, was made a CPO.

In time-honoured tradition, and in the presence of their 21-month-old son Ewan, wife Julie pinned on his Anchor and Shield collar insignia as Scott's CO Cdr Nick Foster read out his citation on behalf of Admiral P Zukunft and Master Chief Calhoun, the USCG Commandant and Master Chief respectively.

Prior to joining HMS Scott in 2016, CPO Kirchner served in a variety of Coastguard cutters,

including USCGC Venturous in Florida and USCGC Midgett in Seattle.

CPO Kirchner, who has been in the service for 16 years, said: "Making Chief is one of the biggest achievements for ratings in the Coast Guard as it marks the rank at which you move away from the Junior Rate's Mess into the Chiefs'. It also comes with huge responsibility, as the saying goes in the Coast Guard 'Ask the Chief'."

Cdr Foster outlined that during his time serving in Scott, CPO Kirchner had made significant contributions to the effective operation of the ship and this well-deserved promotion recognising his hard-work and professional efforts was timely ahead of his return to US Service in June 2018.

CPO Kirchner added: "I have gained a lot of new experiences working alongside the Royal Navy in Scott, particularly due to the different set up of the engineering branch compared to the Coast Guard. It's a real privilege to be able to take these experiences back to the Coast Guard in my new rank of Chief."

Cadbury melts hearts

THE Bird Control Unit at RNAS Yeovilton flew into Yeovilteens Nursery for a show and tell.

Children and staff were introduced to two of the BCU Peregrine Falcons bred at Yeovilton, ten-year-old Cadbury, pictured right, and one-year-old Winkle, named after Captain Eric Brown, the Fleet Air Arm's greatest aviator.

The children of Service and civilian personnel were spellbound by their visitors and the BCU Team endeavoured to explain to the young audience the falcons' role in

flight safety on the station.

The BCU has been at RNAS Yeovilton since 1972, having relocated from RNAS Lossiemouth in Scotland, where it was established in 1965 as an experimental falconry unit for airfield bird control and scaring.

Success at RNAS Yeovilton can be measured by the fact that the average annual bird strike rate on the airfield is 0.6 or approximately one every two years, which equates to one bird strike every 90,000 airfield aircraft movements.



The prince of Dales

SAILORS from Britain's next aircraft carrier swapped the bracing banks of the Forth for the rugged beauty of the Yorkshire Dales to help a community sports project.

A 15-strong team from HMS Prince of Wales made the 175-mile trip from Rosyth to land-locked Long Preston, a village on the southern edge of the Dales National Park, to help residents get their playing fields in order for the winter.

The sailors spent a week toiling on the sports fields and pavilion, fixing the roof and replacing rotten timbers, performing routine maintenance on the play park, refurbishing the tennis court and clearing leaves and overgrown bushes.

Despite the chilly weather, they worked hard to ensure that the playing fields can be enjoyed by local children for many more years to come,

and completed their break in Yorkshire by helping villagers build a bonfire.

For the sailors – whose ship's company will only be 100 fewer than Long Preston's population and whose flight deck is almost the size of three football pitches – the week-long workout was a welcome change from dealing with the engineering challenges aboard the carrier.

"It's really important to give back to our communities, even if it is just for a week," said LS Kevin Makepeace.

"Helping out at the playing fields was good fun and it's rewarding to know that a village community was able to enjoy bonfire night as a result of what we did."

Andy Kay, from the playing fields committee, said: "The guys came into our village and really breathed new life into our playing fields."

All's well at reunion in Britannia sick bay

THE last time Julie Harding was in this sick bay, the Queen, Prince Philip and Prince Edward were chatting to her.

A quarter of a century after she was treated on HMY Britannia, the former wren was reunited with two of the medics who saved her fingers... thanks to a little help from *Navy News*.

Back in 1992 a then 18-year-old Julie McPherson slipped while serving aboard frigate HMS Brilliant; a hatch crashed down on her hand and crushed her fingertips.

The ship did not have the medical facilities to deal with Julie's injuries but Britannia, whom she was escorting on the annual summer cruise around the Western Isles, did, so the wounded wren was transferred.

Twenty-five years later, sickbay manager Eric Birkbeck was reminiscing with former shipmates – this was the first female sailor treated aboard the royal yacht in her 40-year career...except none of the ex-yachtsmen could remember the patient's name.

One plea from the royal yacht – now a floating museum in Leith – to *Navy News* later, a post on social media, and within a matter of hours, the patient, now 43, married, working in insurance and living in Saltash was found.

Cue a reunion aboard Britannia with Eric and his assistant Andy Travis and memories of an incident which still seems "all a bit surreal", says Julie.

"The Queen gave permission for me to come on board and made sure I was well looked after.

"She even asked if she could come down and see me. The Queen, Prince Philip and Prince Edward paid me a visit, spent ten minutes talking to me."

Julie continued: "The Queen asked if I was okay and if I had everything I needed. She sent me down the Royal puddings every night I was there.



● Eric Birkbeck and Andy Travis with Julie; Below, Julie is flanked by Eric and Andy in 1992



"The Royal family ate a different meal to the crew and the puddings were absolutely delicious.

"She let me use the Royal baths. She even sent the band

down to cheer me up.

"They could not have looked after me any better."

Without the care the teenager received she would have lost the ends of her fingers – but what

sticks out from her time aboard is the awkwardness of the sailors at the sight of a female patient.

"We had to transfer her to a bed and make her comfortable but she was still dressed.

"We looked at each other and before we could think she said: "Crying out loud. You guys are married. Have you never undressed a lady?" Eric recalled.

Being gents, they asked one of the Queen's female household to act as chaperone...

"It's fair to say that Julie felt very special during her three days on board," Eric continues.

"She was the first and only female admitted to the sick bay and because of this the Queen made sure her lady-in-waiting dropped by to make sure she had everything she needed – she brought down a wicker basket with things like bath bombs and bath salts in."



Well done my son

IT was a proud day for Lt Cdr Rob Brann as he watched his son pass out from Phase One training at HMS Raleigh.

AB2 (Seaman Specialist) Toby, 17, was embarking on his Phase Two training at HMS Collingwood this month.

Rob, currently serving as the Staff Executive Officer to Flag Officer Sea Training (South) in Devonport, said: "I have had many proud moments in my career since I passed through the gates of HMS Raleigh myself as a Junior Seaman 33 years ago, but this is definitely my proudest so far.

"Toby has done exceptionally well to complete his initial training and I would also like to acknowledge the highly professional staff at HMS Raleigh who supported all the recruits."

Engineering star picks up top award

SUB LT David Lane was awarded the Bateson Award at a ceremony held in HMS Collingwood.

Serving as a CPOET(WE) in the Fleet Intelligence Unit when he was nominated, David stood out from his peers as an exceptionally effective and professional engineer within the General Service Engineering sub-department.

His citation reads: "Operating in a highly-sensitive and dynamic operational support environment, David can be relied upon to intelligently apply his skills and knowledge in any situation to consistently deliver to a very high level. Often working in demanding and unsociable circumstances, sometimes with little or no notice, afloat and ashore, his professionalism is clear in his positive demeanour and ability to adapt to any scenario to achieve success."

The award is named after Rear Admiral S L Bateson, who was tasked with the job of forming the Electrical Branch in 1946. The branch evolved over the years into what is now the Weapons Engineering sub branch.

Cadets inspired by new carrier

OFFICER Cadets from Oxford University Royal Naval Unit visited Rosyth where HMS Prince of Wales, the second Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier, is being built.

The Officer Cadets were given an overview brief on the ship with many impressive facts and figures by Lt Glen Kerrigan and Sub Lt Jake Cuddeford.

They also learned about the design of the carrier, the advanced diesel and gas turbine systems, the advanced navigation and sensor systems, the new F-35B fighter jet aircraft that will operate from the ship and an overview of project timelines.

OC Tom Davis said: "The visits were truly inspirational, educational and provided a taste of the Royal Navy's bright future and place within the world."

Lt Will Jones, Commanding Officer of the Oxford URNU said: "HMS Prince of Wales is a colossal project and a fantastic ship that will bring a huge amount of capability to the Navy."



The only charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents serve, or have served, in the Naval Service.

Originally set up as an orphanage, we now assist children with a wide range of needs and at times of family crisis. Applications can be made at any time and those seeking assistance can contact the office directly for an application form, or download it from our website.

311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN • t 023 9263 9534 e caseworkers@rnmchildrensfund.org.uk
www.rnmchildrensfund.org.uk

RNRMCF Registered charity number: 1160182 • Patron: HRH The Duke of York, KG, GCVO, CD

■ TWO former Royal Marines completed a non-stop relay cycle and run from John O’Groats to Land’s End.

John Evans and Owen Leist were expecting to reach their target of £5,000 for Great Ormond Street Hospital and Help Our Wounded Royal Marines and Supporting Arms charity.

Over six days they each ran 100 miles on foot and cycled 340 miles on a bike.

To support the pair visit www.justgiving.com/teams/Pairorfools

■ AN AET from HMS Sultan scooped one of the top prizes in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sports Lottery.

AET Thomas Grossett was presented with a cheque for £800 by 764 NAS Air Engineering Officer, Lt Adam Miller.

■ STAFF at HMS Collingwood enjoyed a combination of sweet treats and valuable advice at a cake sale held in support of Combat Stress and SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity.

Keith Edgar who, among other postings, had served at HMS Collingwood three times in the 1980s, was on hand to provide a first-hand account of how valuable support from these charities can be.

The final total raised from a raffle at the Electronic Warfare reunion, Chaplaincy bacon butty sales and the cake sale was £880.68.

■ A ROYAL Marines musician from Torpoint has been voted the winner of an award by his fellow members of the Band Service.

Musician David Gallie was presented with the honour by Eric Greenleaf, the sponsor of the annual award, during a ceremony at HMS Raleigh.

Eric, 97, is a former Royal Marines Musician who served throughout WW2 and was a veteran of the Atlantic Convoys.

■ THE Baggers of 849 NAS from Culdrose took a break from navigational training around the West Country to drop in on two schools – one with a long-standing association with the Fleet Air Arm, the others never visited before.

The eyes-in-the-sky Sea King set down in a field next to Bishopsteignton School and then went on to visit nearby Trinity College in Teignmouth.

■ VISITORS to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard were stunned to see a Naval Field Gun pulled by a 22-strong team of sailors race past them.

The crew led by PO Daniel Tregarthen, took on the challenge of hauling the gun, which weighs as much as a family car, to raise money for Cancer Research UK (CRUK) and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

They pulled the gun from Portsmouth’s Historic Dockyard to the Royal Marines Museum at Eastney and back – a total of ten miles – in four hours.

■ GENEROUS trainee sailors based at HMS Raleigh have donated their spare cash to charity, having been inspired by one of their mentors.

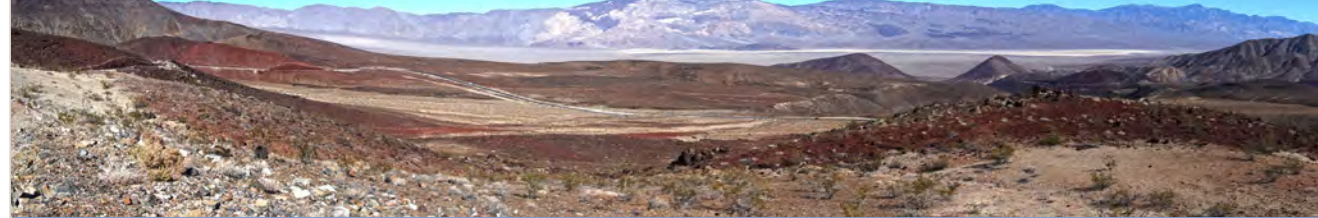
The 58 recruits of Fisher Division 17/12 entry put aside money throughout their ten weeks at Raleigh to purchase souvenirs at the end of their training.

When time came to buy the keepsakes, the group had exceeded the money they needed by £135 and so decided to give it all to Terry Whitty, one of their (RNA) mentors, for him to donate to charity.

He chose the RNBT, SSAFA and the Mayor Liskeard’s charity.

■ THE annual comedy club evening in the senior rates’ mess at HMS Nelson raised £500 for Portsmouth Down’s Syndrome Association.

The evening, sponsored by Club Nissan, attracted 120 people.



Pushed to the limit

UK personnel undertake toughest of tasks

A GROUP of Royal Navy and RAF personnel working in the USA took on one of the greatest all-American challenges.

They cycled 135 miles across California – from the burning heat of Death Valley to the wind-blown peak of Mount Whitney.

They started from Badwater Basin which, at 282ft below sea level, is regarded as the lowest point of North America and completed their trek at the highest point in the lower 48 states, 14,505ft above sea level.

Both cyclists, and those who would hike 6,000ft of Mount Whitney, had 12 weeks to prepare for the challenge.

Within a month the personnel were cycling a weekly minimum of 150 miles, while those who would hike were completing ten miles.

In addition to primary duties, the brutal training regime wore the participants down into three camps; the hikers; the cyclists; and the select few crazy enough to seriously attempt the whole challenge.

It wasn’t just the event team busy during that time; the support team had a huge amount to accomplish.

The route was recced for the best maintenance and water stops, and the preparations necessary to make sure 15 very hungry and tired people were fed, watered and looked after over 150 miles required a serious amount of planning.

A medical plan was drawn up with assistance from US Air Force medics to ensure that nothing was left to chance.

Finally, a training camp was set up at Mount Charleston to prepare the team for what lay ahead.

The plan was to set off at 7am, getting away from Badwater Basin before the early-morning sun had a chance to send temperatures skyrocketing. The team would then navigate the lonely roads through Furnace Creek before making sea level at Stovepipe Wells 42 miles in.

After that was the first major challenge: the towering hills of the Panamint Range, with the sun beating down.

The Coso Range of mountains came next, after 100 miles in the



unforgiving heat, with the relative flat from there to the town of Lone Pine 122 miles in.

It is here, at this point so close to the end, that the cycling becomes outrageous. The remaining 12.7 miles contain nearly 4,600ft of climb. The cyclists would then dismount at the camp at the Whitney portal, grab some food, water, and much-needed sleep before rising at midnight to begin the punishing hike up to the summit of Mount Whitney for 7am the next day.

By the Panamint hills three members of the team has already been forced to finish, one in serious need of an IV drip due to his efforts and the extreme heat of the day.

Another two suffered as their bikes let them down; one having two tires blow out and the other’s gears failing under the stress they were under. Both bravely battled on to finish as darkness fell. Another made it all the way to Lone Pine before realising the sheer scale of the climb remaining in front of him.

All told, it was a weary and utterly spent group of people trickling in to the Whitney portal camp as the sun went down.

A team of 11 was deemed healthy enough to attempt scaling the mountain, with a USAF medic in tow.

Initially spirits were high but altitude sickness began as its presence felt. The USAF medic had to be escorted down the mountain by

two of the hiking team as he experienced extreme symptoms of altitude sickness.

Each team member who could no longer carry on also took a healthy participant down with them as a precaution, meaning the ranks of the team decreased at twice the rate.

Eventually, at the top of the ridge with the summit in sight and the sun rising, three members of the team, including the final two members attempting the whole challenge, decided they had to turn back, 13,500ft into their climb.

This left a final pair to race to the summit, with thin air in their lungs, and the night’s climb behind them, they pushed themselves to get there in time.

Agonisingly, they staggered to the top at 0741. Too late for the 24-hour time limit, but elated to have made it nonetheless.

The effort saw the team raise nearly \$5,000 dollars (approx £3,717) for RAF charities, to mark RAF100 in 2018, and the American Red Cross.

The sheer scale of the challenge: distance, ascent, terrain and weather truly brought out the best of people, forging a shared understanding of each other through something genuinely special.

An epic challenge which pushed people to their absolute limits.



Skills earn LAET a silver medal

AN engineering apprentice from HMS Sultan was awarded a silver medal at the nation’s biggest skills, apprenticeships and careers event, The Skills Show.

LAET Michael Lee, 27, achieved silver in the finals of the Aeronautical Engineering: Avionics category.

The apprentice narrowly missed out on gold to QinetiQ avionics apprentice Matthew Milford, with fellow Royal Navy apprentice LAET James

Senior from RNAS Culdrose claiming bronze.

Aeronautical Avionics was just one of 55 different skills categories on display to more than 80,000 spectators who visited the NEC in Birmingham across the three days of competition.

Michael, who joined the RN five years ago, said: “The show was really interesting. It was really rewarding to take part and step outside of my comfort zone.”



New route added for race

ATHLETES will have the choice of running a half or full marathon at this year’s Yeovil Marathon.

The addition of a new race was revealed as the founder, POAET Bryn Phillips, *pictured right*, handed over £3,250 to charities.

The RNRMC, Yeovilton Military Wives Choir and HMS Heron Sports Fund all benefited from the 2017 event.

The Yeovil Marathon is back for its fourth year on June 10 2018. The new half-marathon race will be named the



Heron Half and will be hosted by Yeovil Town RFC.

The route is also changing; runners will no longer go through the villages of Podimore and Yeovilton but through Ilchester and the tiny hamlet of Urgushay.

There will be plenty of entertainment at the event, including a free children’s fun run, bouncy castle and soft play. The race’s main sponsors Thales will be on site with their very own mascot Faybot.

RNBT help road-crash survivor

THE Royal Naval Benevolent Trust stumped up £10,000 to help the victim of a road crash return to the UK from Thailand.

Rose Weatherill, 79, was seriously injured in the crash, in which her ex-Royal Navy husband Arthur, 81, and son David, 54, both died.

The RNBT and the Royal British Legion both put forward £10,000 to pay for repatriation costs and Rose was flown back to the UK.

Chief executive of the RNBT Rob Bosshardt said Rose’s ‘exceptional circumstances’ warranted the release of funds from the charity.

“The RNBT exists to provide aid to those in need of support,” he said.

“We were made aware of the tragic circumstances regarding Mrs Weatherill and so we made the decision to repatriate her to the UK after speaking to the Royal British Legion, which said it would appreciate our assistance.

“The trust exists to look after the family of those serving or who have served by providing assistance for those who are in need of it.

“This was a circumstance that we had never come across before and exceptional circumstances require exceptional outcomes.”



Double top for players

INGENIOUS Ministry of Defence apprentices from Devonport Naval Base have unveiled a dartboard for use by recovering Service personnel and veterans.

Two leading darts players, Maria O’Brien, (world No.12 woman) and former soldier Snowy Dyson, who inspired the project while receiving support from Help for Heroes, launched the dartboard in Devonport.

Snowy, a double leg amputee due to diabetes, said: “I helped the apprentices draw up the criteria and they have done a fantastic job.

“My aim is to spread the word about playing darts among veterans like me of any ability and with any disability, whether it is post-traumatic stress or those who have lost limbs.”

Engineering management apprentices Chris Nowell-Smith and Lawrence Parker were asked by the Help for Heroes charity, which funded the cost of materials, to design and build a dartboard which could be used by standing and wheelchair users in the Recovery Centre within Devonport.

Lifeline for Naomi

Former ET thanks charity for vital support

A FORMER Royal Navy Weapons Engineer whose life has been transformed by new recovery equipment has described the charitable help that she received as a godsend.

Naomi Lynch, 35, from Plymouth, was serving in the Gulf aboard HMS Northumberland when she tore her hamstring on a treadmill and fell, severely injuring her hip.

Naomi underwent several operations and spent prolonged periods in hospital. Following surgery, she was unable to feel below her left knee and subsequently had to learn how to walk again. The effects of her injury meant that she would often fall over as her leg gave way.

"It was a very difficult few years, I suffered very dramatically and had to learn to walk again but it was the effect it had on me mentally that was the most difficult on me and my family," said Naomi. "I have had to rebuild my life but it's getting there."

Her recovery has been significantly improved by the regular use of a Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) machine. Having used the facilities at Headley Court, Naomi found her mobility greatly improved.

Unfortunately, Headley Court was

unable to provide funding for a machine and instead supported Naomi's charitable application to the RNRMC to receive her own unit and a year's support package.

"Receiving the wireless FES machine is going to have a massive impact on my life," she said. "To be able to wear it all day, every day, is only going to amplify my recovery. I am so excited and thankful."

FES devices use small electrical signals to stimulate the nerves in the leg and help the muscles to contract and create a movement that can help walking.

"I just want to say a massive thank you to everyone for all the help and for funding the equipment that helped fix my leg and improve my future."

"Since falling pregnant it has been a godsend. My falls, due to my leg not working, have been significantly less."

"I was so worried because I didn't want to harm my baby. Thank you all, so, so much."

Head of Grants at the RNRMC, Anne Carr, said: "We're delighted to hear that Naomi is progressing so well after her life-altering injury."

"One of the key aims at the charity is to make sure that those who have suffered while serving, remain fully supported for as long as it's needed."



● Naomi Lynch, far left, on HMS Northumberland



Recipe for money

ROYAL Navy personnel from HMS Neptune, HM Naval Base Clyde's shore establishment, donned their oven gloves to raise cash for the RNRMC.

Unit Personnel Office staff baked cakes at home at the weekend and brought their goodies to work to sell to colleagues around the base, raising a total of £180 for the charity.

While raising cash for the RNRMC was the main objective of the bake-off, there was also a competitive element to the event. Two teams, sections one and two, competed against each other for the coveted RNRMC Bake-off Team Trophy and first, second and third prizes were also awarded for best individual bakers.

"I really wanted to raise as much money as possible for the RNRMC and raise their profile. I also wanted everyone to enjoy the event, have some fun and build team spirit," said Leading Writer Caerwen Makepeace, the organiser of the bake-off.

As Paul Hollywood was busy, Base Executive Officer Cdr John Livesey was given the difficult task of judging the competition. Section two won best team and was awarded the team trophy, while in the individual category, first prize was awarded to Wtr Ieuan Carruthers, second place went to LWtr Caerwen Makepeace and third place went to LWtr Laura Young.

Around 50 base personnel attended the event in the Argyll Conference Room.

24-hour workout at Clyde

PERSONNEL from HM Naval Base Clyde undertook a gruelling fitness challenge to raise money for two causes.

Base staff participated in a workout conducted on the hour, every hour, for 24 hours.

The event, which was held in Clyde's Sportsdrome facility, was in aid of both the RNRMC and the Helensburgh branch of Enable Scotland.

More than £700 was raised through the efforts of all who took part, in particular Brendon Hislop and Steve Irvine, who raised the majority of the money.

POPT Lee Foxhall, who helped organise the 24-hour workout, said: "Around 20 people took part in the challenge, each of them paying £5 towards their chosen charity."

"A lot of planning and organisation has gone into the event, but we felt strongly that we wanted to do something to support these two great charities. The event has also given us the opportunity to raise awareness of the Crossfit Deterrent at HMS Neptune."

The participants maintained the physically punishing pace throughout with the final workout – dubbed "Murph" – consisting of a one-mile run, 100 pull-ups, 200 press-ups, 300 squats and a final one-mile run.

Enable Scotland is a Scottish charity, working to make life better for people who have a learning disability.

In the running

PERSONNEL from HMS Sultan took part in a Trafalgar Day fun run to raise money for the RNRMC.

Around 500 runners, including the base's CO Capt Peter Towell, ran around the technical side of the establishment on a course which included an inflatable, rugby shield-clad centurions, and an off-road trek round Fort Rowner.

ETME Michael Burns and AET Emily Newton won the male and female races respectively.



● ET(WE) Richard M Jones signs copies of his book about his great-great grandfather

Shining light on hero

A SAILOR based at HMS Collingwood has revived an overlooked slice of history with a new book highlighting the career of Royal Marine Lt George Cutcher.

ET(WE) Richard M Jones specialises in researching and documenting forgotten historical events so was intrigued when a colleague showed him his great-great grandfather's WW1 diary.

Offering to scan the fragile document and get it bound for the colleague to give as a family Christmas present, Richard realised he wanted to know more about Lt Cutcher.

In July 1896 George Cutcher was on his way to join the Royal Navy when a Royal Marines officer persuaded him to enrol in the Marines instead.

From there, after basic training at Deal Barracks, George began his career at Spithead during Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Review of the Fleet.

After serving in several ships across the world, George finally ended up at Dartmouth as a PTI where he managed to save the life of the future King Edward VIII during the latter's over-ambitious gymnastic display.

In July 1915 George served in the Gallipoli Campaign. Evacuated in January 1916 and promoted to Lieutenant, in June of that year George was then sent to the Somme, where he took part in the offensive. With his health deteriorating, George was invalided back to the UK in March 1917 and left the Forces.

He became attendant of the Time Ball Tower at Deal which, at the time, was an essential aid to marine time-keeping, and began his own Freemasonry Lodge – the Globe and Laurel Lodge.

He was unable to fight in WW2 but instead wrote



● Memorabilia belonging to George Cutcher

letters to those who'd suffered in combat, drawing on his personal experiences of the stresses of war to raise morale and hope.

George retired in 1962 and died aged 87 in February 1967.

Richard launched his new book about George's life *The Diary of a Royal Marine, The Life and Times of George Cutcher* at an event in Gosport, attended by members of George's family.

His book is available from shipwreckdata@yahoo.co.uk and all profits will go to the RNRMC.

"I'd have loved to have met him, I think he'd have had a lot more stories than I've written but I'm proud to say his life is now remembered forever," said Richard.



● Joe Price and Luke Steele take part in the challenge



Team's weighty effort

A TEAM of sailors completed a mammoth challenge for charity in Fareham town centre.

LPT Luke Steele, together with colleagues LET Callum Toft, AB Joe Price and AB Jake Caddy, squatted the combined weight of 30,000kgs, the equivalent of picking up five Wildcat helicopters, over six hours.

Taking on the challenge to raise money for the RNRMC, organiser Luke said: "The RNRMC have provided and continue to provide so much support, not only for establishments but frontline sea-going platforms too. They have recently supported me financially when establishing the maternity suite at HMS Collingwood. I just wanted to extend my appreciation through a little financial return for a change."

The team raised £106 for the RNRMC.

Free wills earn cash

THE RNRMC joined forces with solicitors for an initiative that offers affordable will creation in exchange for charitable donations.

The 'Make a Will Fortnight' project asks solicitors from across the South Coast to waive their fees on standard wills. In exchange, those who require the service are instead encouraged to make a charitable donation to the RNRMC.

Between May and June 2017 three firms were involved across six locations in Hampshire. Within the fortnight, the firms of Churchers, O'Hara's and Walter Grey & Co generated 60 appointments and 51 donations from individuals and couples.

As a result, the solicitors helped raise almost £7,000.

Lauren McIntosh, an associate from Churchers Solicitors, said: "Being a community-based firm in an area where the military plays such an important role, this is a cause which we view as incredibly worthwhile."

"As a firm we offer discounts to military personnel and we were very pleased to support them further with this scheme."

For more information on 'Make a Will Fortnight' please visit: <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/makeawillfortnight>



● A Royal Navy medical assistant checks the vital signs of a patient in the back of a Merlin Mk3 using the new Tempus Pro system

Vital signs recognised

A ROYAL Navy-led team of medical experts have been recognised for helping to introduce a hi-tech life-saving device to the battlefield. The Tempus Pro replaces seven previous pieces of equipment, providing key medical data for those treating casualties in the field – or injuries on a ship – such as blood pressure, pulse and respiratory rate.

The monitor is also able to transmit that information back to a field hospital or sickbay, so that doctors, surgeons and medical staff are fully prepared when the patient is brought in.

The monitor is sufficiently small and lightweight to be carried easily by medics – and rugged enough to survive the rigours of being used by the military in all environments.

Swapping seven pieces of monitoring equipment for one device saves space, money, training and, crucially, time – and with it lives.

A 21-strong ‘physiological monitoring project team’, headed by Capt Danny Follington and Cdr Lee Hazard, assisted by Surg Cdr Dan Connor and Lt Cdrs Mark Middleton and Steve Thornhill, has been key to the introduction of the Tempus Pro into service five years ahead of schedule and, thanks to working side-by-side with the device’s producers and NATO, have helped to keep the cost of the new monitor down.

As a result, the team received a Minister (Defence Procurement) Acquisition Award.

Nearly 1,350 Tempus Pro monitors are being bought for the UK Armed Forces, sustaining 60 jobs at Basingstoke-based Remote Diagnostic Technologies.

Meanwhile, two medical experts from the Institute of Naval Medicine have been recognised for their efforts to save lives and money.

Lt Cdr Darren Parker and CPO(MT) Carolyn Wilson received the ‘Quality Improvement’ award after the former determined that resuscitation training – previously delivered by outside experts at considerable cost – was not fully meeting the RN’s needs.

The Training Division team is now able to deliver life support courses, using existing resources and facilities – and at a lower cost.

CPO Wilson oversaw the development of a maritime-focused resuscitation faculty, allowing bespoke training which represents the intricacies and limitations encountered by personnel when deployed on operations.

This allows candidates to be trained, mentored and assessed in a realistic environment that brings direct operational benefits and is well matched to the challenges encountered across the breadth of operations at sea and on land.

Mass observation for Raleigh and Albion

BISHOP of Galloway William Nolan tries out the captain’s seat on the bridge of HMS Albion – one of the highlights on a visit to the RN in the South West.

The Scottish clergyman spent three days in the Plymouth area as the guest of the ‘bishes’ at HMS Raleigh to learn about the work of men and women of faith in the Senior Service.

Only seven of the 12 billets for Catholic priests are currently filled – and the figure is about to drop to half a dozen, with four of those posts occupied by Scots.

Unlike other denominations, Catholic priests can be recalled to their original dioceses and parishes... so a visit by one of the most senior clergy north of the border to the RN’s principal training establishment for ratings was a useful and timely reminder of the important spiritual, emotional and moral support provided.

“The bishop was very much ‘on side’ with what we are doing and impressed by the standard of the recruits coming through,” said Father David Conroy.

He joined the RN intending to stay for six years. So far he’s been in 18.

Fr David continued: “Church is frequently cited by trainees



as one of their favourite parts of their time at Raleigh. Even if you’re not religious, it’s a de-stresser, a place to relax.”

While Mass at the Torpoint establishment on Sunday typically enjoys a congregation of nearly 150 souls, it’s not the only function of ‘bishes’ – one of several affectionate nicknames for chaplains in the RN – perform at Raleigh: they teach ethics, rules of engagement and help trainees understand what they are going through and impress upon them the responsibility of representing the nation and Navy at religious and civic events.



● Seamen specialists toil on HMS St Albans’ foreccastle as the frigate arrives in London’s dockyards for a high-profile visit to the capital last spring
Picture: PO(Phot) Donny Osmond

Sea here for careers

FOR the first time in a dozen years, the Royal Navy’s seamanship branch once again has a newsletter to keep them up to date on developments.

The branch’s leaders have resurrected and retitled the old newssheet *Messenger* and will be sending out a twice-yearly newsletter featuring the latest kit, courses, first-hand accounts from fellow seamen, an overview of the branch from the bosses, and a guide to where you’ll find shipmates of PO(SEA) rank and above.

Bringing back the newsletter is part of a wider effort to foster a sense of ethos and spirit in the branch which has also seen the first seamanship seminar since the mid-2000s to discuss a gamut of issues: the latest equipment in civvy street, promotions, tips and the like. Some 65 sailors from across the branch converged on HMS Raleigh – home of the RN School of Seamanship – for the inaugural get-together.

“I would like to think that everyone picked up something from the seminar – and will pick up something from the newsletter. The seminar will become an annual event, while we intended to produce the newsletter each autumn and spring,” explained Lt Cdr Jake Dray, OIC the RN School of Seamanship.

The branch in its current format was established in 2006 to create a cadre of full-time experts on handling/operating sea boats, berthing and replenishments at sea. It is also responsible for tactical communications – the ‘bunting tossers’ of old, which takes up the bulk of their training (18 weeks at Collingwood, compared with nine weeks of seamanship at Raleigh for able seamen) and the bulk of their time when serving at sea as junior rates. Or as Lt Cdr Dray puts up “one branch, two disciplines”.

Sea boat operations are the ‘sexier’ side of the role – and a core activity which draws people into the branch.

“The branch has so much more to offer, and throughout a seaman’s career there are always options to do the fun and interesting activities – particularly if you return to the school as an instructor, which could be considered a high point of any seaman’s career,” said Lt Cdr Dray.

“Being a good buffer is great, being an instructor of good buffers is incomparable, and it could be argued, more rewarding.”

“The branch has some great new kit coming into service over the next few years such as the



THERE’S a new course for old tech at HMS Raleigh to save money and prevent potential smashes.

The School of Seamanship has introduced a new course for sailors who drive small boats powered by outboard motors.

Jet boats may be standard issue across most of the RN, but there are still some units and formations – divers in particular – which use propeller-driven craft with outboard motors.

And if you try to drive a boat with outboard motors in the same way as a jet... you’re going to crash.

So instructors at Jupiter Point, the RN’s home of small boat training, have come up with a five-day course which gives successful students a qualification – and seamanship specialists peace of mind.

RN dive teams rely on the seven-metre Delta RIB with twin outboard engines for bomb disposal operations at sea – it’s got plenty of space to carry all the kit the divers need, is stable and, thanks to its two engines, is good for towing bombs and torpedoes to safety.

“The principles of driving this type of boat in comparison to water-jets are very different,” explained CPO Chris ‘Crusty’ Pye. “If you were to use those principles on an outboard course, you would crash the boat.”

Take the following simple example: on a jet-propelled boat, the bow heads in the same direction as the thrusters/nozzles are pointing.

But try going full astern with the wheel hard to starboard on a propeller-driven boat and the bow will swing out. Fine if you’re in open waters. Accident material if you’re not.

With no outboard courses available in the past, would-be boat drivers turned to the Royal Yachting Association for a qualification which cost money, while the training delivered wasn’t bespoke. Hence the new course at Raleigh.

“We are teaching all types of port handling principles, so weather, tide, navigation, man-overboard drills, bringing the boats alongside and confined turns – basically everything they need to know to operate the boat safely,” said Chris.

“After five days, students go away with the right qualification for the right boat. It gives us peace of mind that the qualified people are driving expensive boats.”

By spring, 24 people should have completed the course; three were run last autumn, making use of a former MOD Police Arctic 22 (pictured above with trainees aboard).

Among the first successful students was AB(D) Andy Waller of Southern Diving Unit 2 in Portsmouth. “There’s a good approach to this training,” he said. “We are all qualified boat handlers already, so this is a familiarisation acquaint on an additional piece of kit. I’ve not done a huge amount of navigation training recently, so it’s been good to brush up on the skills I haven’t used for a while.”

new Mk4 Pacific 24s which are much more comfortable due to its hydraulic seating and a family of new work boats coming into service under the project name ‘Vahana’.

“When I think back 30 years to the equipment we had then: a whaler and a Gemini on a Type 21. The boats today are considerably better, bigger and faster. And they are used in broader roles – think of the board-and-search operations in the Caribbean and Gulf. For the school that means

a lot more training is required.” The ships are, naturally clearly, more advanced than those of the late 80s, but that does cause some challenges – they require less fuel, for example, which mean replenishing at sea is less frequent.

“Training on the RAS rig is probably the least popular part of the course. It’s generally considered by many to be the most stressful, pressured, fearful part of the job. It demands full-time leadership and eyes in the

back of your head.” The school is aware of this and strives to get all students through the training, and to their ships confident they can conduct the job at sea.

WO1 Peter ‘Mac’ MacSkimming adds: “Seamanship is an extremely varied job. You can be on the bridge in the morning, driving the boat in challenging conditions in the afternoon, jumping on to a buoy, out on the upper deck in good or bad weather. So you have to possess a spirit of adventure, a bit of fearlessness.”

Home ports shake-up

THE biggest shake-up in surface fleet home ports since minehunters were concentrated in Portsmouth and Faslane will see nearly half the Type 23 flotilla swap home bases over the next five years.

Specialist submarine-hunting Type 23s – Sonar 2087/ towed array – are to be stationed in Plymouth in response to increased Russian activity in the Atlantic.

And the general duty 23s will be based in Portsmouth.

It means that from 2023, five, not six, frigates will call the Solent their home, and numbers in Devonport will climb to eight Duke-class vessels.

The base port changes will take place during unmanned maintenance and upkeep periods, beginning with HMS Richmond which sailed from her old home to her new to begin a refit in Plymouth over the summer.

She'll be followed west by HMS St Albans, Westminster and Kent... with Monmouth, Argyll and Montrose swapping the West Country for Hampshire.

The changes will be introduced over five years during refits/maintenance periods to minimise disruption to sailors and their families.

Innovation rewarded

EXPERTS who hosted the very first 'robot wars' – a chance for the best of industry to showcase technology and systems which might revolutionise naval warfare – and the team behind the RN's next-generation frigates were both honoured at the MOD's annual Procurement Acquisition Awards.

The Type 26 team are at the heart of the National Shipbuilding Strategy, helping to rediscover skills lost during a break in the UK's complex warship programme.

As for the team behind the showcase for future weapons and sensors, Unmanned Warrior, held in Scotland over six weeks in 2016, they set the "gold standard for unmanned demonstrations around the world."

Where to look

Galaxy Notices

06 Type 23s Baseport Change Implementation

DINs

01 Personnel

DIN 2017DIN01-179 Armed Forces Weight Management Policy

DIN 2017DIN01-180 Volunteer Cadet Corps – Change of Status

DIN 2017DIN01-183 Service Pupil Premium Details for 2017-18

DIN 2017DIN01-187 Reimbursement of Professional Body Fees for Regular Armed Forces Allied Health Professionals

DIN 2017DIN01-188 Health Service Support for Personnel Assigned to European Joint Support Unit (EJSU) Locations

03 Policy and Operations

DIN 2017DIN03-019 Treatment of Military Terrain Pattern Uniform and Mosquito Nets with Permethrin

04 Equipment, Support and Estate

DIN 2017DIN04-181 Notification of New Contract for Civilian Safety Footwear

DIN 2017DIN04-186 Backloading of L81A2 Cadet Target Rifle (CTR)

05 Management, Organisation and Business Practice

DIN 2017DIN05-017 Contact with Parliamentarians

DIN 2017DIN05-019 Support to Non MOD-Sponsored Cadet Units and Organisations

07 Training and Education

DIN 2017DIN07-123 Joint Operational Planning Course – FY 18/19

DIN 2017DIN07-124 MOD Managed

Maintaining family ties

IS ONE of your New Year's resolutions to make sure that you are up to date with information?

Naval Service families know that relying on your loved one in uniform for this kind of information can sometimes be a little bit like a note in the bottom of a school bag!

Homeport is written and produced specifically for Naval Service families, it's free each quarter and all you need to do to receive it is tell us that you would like to be part of the distribution list!

One of the feature articles this issue is about helping families meet away the miles.

With the Naval Service deployed around the globe and working in locations often away from home, bridging the gap of reading a bedtime story, or sending messages at a special time has been given a real boost thanks to some innovative and thoughtful projects.

Little Troopers have recently launched a brand new tablet app – 'Little Troopers Treasures' – which means no serving military parent needs to ever miss a bedtime story again.

Free to download and use, the app allows parents to read stories to their children while they are away from home.

Serving personnel can choose a book title and record a video reading that captures their face and voice, which is then synchronised to the pages of the e-book which appears as a new story in their child's free app.

The stories can be watched or listened to over and over again, no matter how far away they live, and can even be delivered and timed to 'unlock' to coincide with special days and dates.

Lots of the resources support through times of separation, but many are relevant for military families in general.

What is available?

- Separation packs
- 'Send a Hug' kits
- Certificate templates
- 'Crafty Little Troopers' activity sheets



■ Parents section on website

Find out more about the free support available at www.littletroopers.net.

Aggie Weston's Storybook Waves project has secured funding from Annington Trust to help families connect with others at times of separation through a new nationwide network of Book Clubs.

The Storybook Waves Book Club has just launched in 21 venues close to home port areas. The monthly book clubs will provide families with the opportunity to meet in a secure and friendly environment. While the children are entertained with books and craft activities based around the theme of a popular children's book, parents can chat and build relationships with other families.

An Aggie's pastoral worker will be available at each of the venues to be a listening ear to anyone experiencing challenges that separation can bring, and provide encouragement and support if needed.

To find out more about the Book Clubs and Storybook Waves contact Kathryn Hearn on 0300 302 0183.

To sign up to receive *Homeport* and to see all the latest information visit www.NFF.org.uk.

Manning in Ships (REMS) – Type 45 ME Department Implementation
RNTM 01-077/17 Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm (FAA) limited edition watch
RNTM 01-079/17 Communications SUY Officers migration to the engineering branch – vesting day 15 Dec 17

04 Equipment, Support and Estate
RNTM 04-037/17 Out of Hours Engineering Support Procedures for Ships in HMNB Devonport

05 Management, Organisation and Business Practice

RNTM 05-026/17 Engineering Division Organisation in PORFLOT
RNTM 05-027/17 Engineering Division Organisation in DEVFLOT

06 Safety, Health, Environment, Fire

RNTM 06-019/17 Introduction of Arc Flash Personal Protective Equipment

07 Training and Education

RNTM 07-060/17 Mandatory Information Skills Training

RNTM 07-064/17 Year of Engineering 2018 Campaign

09 Honours, Awards, Royal & Ceremonial Events

RNTM 09-023/17 The Faslane Gambit Dinner (Submarine Service Birthday Dinner) – 21 Mar 18 Commemorating the Malta Submarines of WW2

10 Sports and Social

RNTM 10-030/17 Pussers supper Thu 15 Mar 18

RNTM 10-031/17 New Forest Lodge – Shorefields Holiday Park

RNTM 10-032/17 Narrowboats Emma, Andrew and Trafalgar – Availability for 2018

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- Are you seeking a rewarding Second Career?

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For more information contact:

POSTN- 01929 403172

Mil- 94374 3172

E-mail- navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.uk



Veterans finally visit D-Day HQ

TWO D-Day veterans joined a tri-Service group of military and civilian personnel from 1710 Naval Air Squadron during a training event at Southwick Park in Hampshire.

More than 120 personnel were given the opportunity to visit Southwick Park – the initial HQ for Operation Neptune, the invasion of France in 1944 – for guided tours of the RMP Museum, RNP and RAF Police collections, and the D-Day Map Room within Southwick House.

Operation Neptune was the invasion element of the overall Battle of Normandy, codenamed Operation Overlord.

As a member of the Spirit of Normandy Trust, WO Baz Firth invited the Trust's chairman, Richard Palusinski, and two VIPs, namely Wally Beall and Patrick Thomas, who were both at the D-Day landings.

Wally was a 19-year-old leading wireman in the Royal Navy, serving as a gunner on a tank landing craft delivering crews to Utah Beach on D-Day.

Pat was an RN telegraphist, and his landing craft was part of the first wave on Sword Beach before heading offshore to cover communications for land battles.

At night, his craft joined others in forming a defensive line, while during the day, the crew were either catching up on sleep or taking part in rescues.

His ship was sunk by a mine, and he recalls regaining consciousness in the water, bleeding from the head and covered in battleship grey paint.

After they were given a comprehensive brief on the Map Room by the Curator, Wally and Patrick said that they had never been to Southwick House before and it was fascinating to see and hear about the planning.

During a break between tours Richard provided an overview of the role and focus of the Spirit of Normandy Trust and thanked 1710 NAS for the opportunity.

"The veterans were part of the greatest military action of all time, yet had never previously seen the planning location nor map," he said.

"This visit put their role into perspective, and we are all grateful for the opportunity provided by 1710 Squadron."

The guided tours were well received by all and were very informative, Cdr Chris Ling, CO 1710 NAS, said "This was an excellent opportunity to meet with Wally and Patrick and hear their stories first hand and in-context whilst standing in front of the D-Day planning map.

"This provided the whole squadron, military and civil servants alike, a period of reflection and focus on the role of the Armed Forces."

1710 Naval Air Squadron is a support organisation based in Portsmouth Naval Base that is tasked with the recovery, repair, modification and scientific support of UK military aviation.



● Trainee submariners at HM Naval Base Clyde hand over a cheque to WO1 Andy Knox to help get Harry to London

Submariners get Harry to London

THE unbreakable bond shared by Royal Navy submariners past, present and future was demonstrated when serving personnel and trainees joined forces to aid a veteran in distress.

Last October, World War 2 submariner Harry Melling was the victim of a callous robbery in his Wigan home.

An unknown assailant made his way into the 92-year-old's house and pushed the veteran to the ground before stealing his wallet.

Hearing of the incident, fellow submariner and Command Warrant Officer WO1 Andy Knox decided to pay Harry a visit to see how he could help.

"I learned about Harry's ordeal on the national news as I was driving from Portsmouth to Faslane," explained Andy.

"I got his address from his local church and arranged to call in. I was soon listening to some of Harry's fascinating stories about his time in the Submarine Service."

Joining as a "Hostilities Only" rating, meaning he would serve only for the duration of the war, Harry was drafted to the submarine training course in May 1941.

After a brief period on depot ship HMS Medway, he joined Royal Navy submarine HMS Osiris in July 1943.

The submarine, with the young Harry on board, later went on to play an active role in Operation Husky, the Allied invasion of Sicily.

As British, US and Canadian troops made amphibious landings, HMS Osiris intercepted Italian warships attempting to halt the invasion.

Harry later went on to join HMS Tuna, the submarine involved with clandestinely transporting the Royal Marines 'Cockleshell Heroes' to France in order to carry out attacks on enemy shipping.

"When I visited Harry I mentioned that the Submariners' Remembrance Service and Parade was due to be held in



● Harry Melling meets some young submariners during the Remembrance event in London

Pictures: LPhoto Stevie Burke

London," continued Andy.

"Harry was really keen to attend so I decided to go to my fellow submariners at HM Naval Base Clyde to see what we could do to raise money to get Harry there.

"It became a sort of mission for us – let's get Harry to London!"

Engineering Technician Barwick from HM Naval Base Clyde soon set up a JustGiving page with the initial aim of raising £500, but the response from the submariner community was overwhelming, eventually raising £1,500.

Contributing to the cause were 20 junior submariners who had recently passed out from the Submarine Qualifying Course (SMQ) at Clyde.

During their passing-out parade in November, the trainees presented WO1 Knox with a cheque for £305 to help Harry.

Just a couple of days later, Harry joined fellow submariners at a poignant service at Westminster Abbey and on the Sunday joined an estimated 400 participants at the National Submarine War Memorial in Middle Temple Gardens, London, for the parade and main service.

Accompanied by his great-nephew Matthew and Matthew's fiancée Eleanor, Harry paid tribute to those submariners who had crossed the bar in the service of their country.

"Getting Harry to London was an amazing example of the unbreakable bond which submariners share, regardless of the years which separate them," said Andy.

"We very much take the attitude of 'once a submariner, always a submariner' and were delighted we could help."

Highest standards expected

SHIPMATES might wish to save the date for the upcoming Standard Bearer extravaganza at HMS Collingwood.

Could 2018 be the year that National Standard Bearer S/M Bob 'the Tartan Trojan' Coburn meets his match in S/M Steve 'Bromley Basher' Susans?

Could S/M Marie 'Two Comp' Taylor come through on the rails, or maybe Dave '8 Bit' Corrigan will be the name in the frame when the dust settles?

The National Standard Bearers and Association of Wrens competitions, along with the new Novice Standard Bearers competition, will be keenly fought and promise dazzling displays of accuracy and control.

The event will take place at HMS Collingwood on Saturday May 12, commencing at 10am with a presentation ceremony at the conclusion of the programme.

National Ceremonial Officer, S/M Mick Kieran is keen to encourage novices to experience the ceremony, camaraderie and fun in taking part – entrants will be eligible for the same subsidy as main competition entrants (from £50 to £150 depending on distance travelled).

It is hoped they will then move on to enter the main competition and one day become National Standard Bearer – a prestigious role, appearing at Conference, the Biennial Parade in Whitehall and representing the RNA at national events such as the Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall and other national commemorative events.

It is hoped that the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess will offer accommodation to those competitors and guests who wish to stay in HMS Collingwood on Friday/Saturday. Details will be announced shortly.

The closing dates for entries will be Friday April 6.

No pressure, but Areas 1,4,5,7 and 10 did not have a representative, and were given a challenge and two years' notice after the 2016 competition to produce a competitor...

Incidentally, the third-place trophy is currently missing, so please would standard bearers be kind enough to have a good look around for it and advise Deputy General Secretary S/M Andy Christie if it is found.

Cadet award

RHONDDA branch chairman S/M Kevin Rowan had the privilege of presenting the awards at the Rhondda Sea Cadet unit's awards evening.

The award of 'Best Cadet' – the Les Bryant Memorial Shield – was presented to AC Lewis.

S/M Les Bryant was a Rhondda branch member who served on Atlantic convoys during the war.

Les crossed the bar after a short illness, and the branch hopes their sponsorship of the award will allow Les's memory to live on and his story to be shared by younger generations to come.

Book your places

THE deadline for branch motions to be submitted for the National Conference in the summer is February 16.

This year's conference will be held at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire, on the outskirts of Dublin in the Republic of Ireland.

Any members thinking of attending as a delegate, an observer or just going along as a member is advised to get on with booking their accommodation.

While Central Office acknowledges that the four-star venue for the conference and

gala dinner is not at the budget end of the market there is a range of options available, and the National Council has now decided that each delegate will receive a subsidy of at least £100.

See the November *Semaphore Circular* for more details of travel options by air and ferry and alternative accommodation possibilities.

The Conference runs from Friday June 8 to Sunday June 10, with the main business and dinner being staged on the Saturday.



Keep the buses on the road

THE three Libor-funded minibuses are now alongside in their base ports of Portsmouth, Liskeard and Blackburn.

The points of contact for each bus are:

Portsmouth – e-mail andy@royalnavalassoc.com, or call 023 9272 0782;

Liskeard – e-mail warwickbelfitt@btconnect.com, or call 01579 346606;

Blackburn – e-mail belfastblues_812@icloud.com, or call 07964 721849.

Central Office are keen that the buses are loaned out and on the road rather than parked up in their base ports doing nothing, and to that end have deliberately tried to keep rules to a minimum.

They are free to loan – insurance, maintenance costs and so on are covered by Central Office.

The vehicle is supplied with a full tank of fuel, and should be returned with a full tank, and cleaned if necessary.

They can be driven on a car licence – there is no need for D1.

Loans are on a first-come, first-served basis (the sponsor has final say!) and longer loans may be negotiated with Central Office.

They are covered for insurance for drivers aged from 30 to 70, and insurance cover for over-70s can be bought from the insurer dependent on personal circumstances.

The insurer will require two weeks' notice for this to be arranged – contact details are available from Andy at Central Office.

Only eight passengers and the driver, or up to three wheelchairs plus three carers plus two and one driver can be carried.

Roadside assistance is included.

Eyes of the Fleet gather at Culdrose

MEN and women who've scoured the skies looking for the Navy's foes gathered in Culdrose to celebrate 65 years on alert.

Since 1952, the pilots, observers and aircrew of 849 Naval Air Squadron have stared at cathode ray tubes and, more recently, computer displays for a glimpse of an enemy missile or aircraft approaching a Royal Navy task group, gaining the nickname the Eyes of the Fleet.

Every five years the airborne early warning community – AEW or, in modern military jargon ANYFACE – gather at the spiritual home of the specialist branch of naval aviation.

Guest of honour for the sapphire jubilee of ANYFACE was Lt Cdr Peter Hiles, senior pilot of 849 in 1952, when the squadron began its long association with airborne early warning.

Back then he was flying the Douglas Skyraider, a rather chunky American-built propeller-driven aircraft which was used during the brief Suez conflict.

It was replaced by the equally ungainly Gannet from the 1960s until the demise of HMS Ark Royal IV in 1978.

There followed a four-year gap which left the Fleet largely blind to longer-range threats, a decision which it paid for in the Falklands, chiefly with the loss of HMS Sheffield and the Atlantic Conveyor, both hit by Exocet missiles.

Within weeks, two Sea Kings had been converted into

makeshift AEW helicopters – formalised in 1984 with the reforming of 849 NAS again.

Since then, the chain has been unbroken, although since 2001-02 the aircraft have expanded their mission to Airborne Surveillance and Control.

Their upgraded radar/software suite allows aircrew not merely to track airborne targets – to avoid/evade or guide friendly air power in for the kill – but follow the movements of vehicles on land, as the 'SKASaC' – pronounced 'skay sac' – did extensively over Iraq and Afghanistan.

Veterans were invited to inspect the Sea King Mk7 – the very last variant of the trusty helicopter still flying with the RN after 48 years – and see it in action with its trademark black sack or 'bag' deployed during a weekend of

events at the Helston air base.

It's the last time many of the guests will see a Sea King Bagger – it will retire next year in favour of a Merlin with a large radar dome, Crownsnest, which will act as the all-seeing eyes of the HMS Queen Elizabeth/Prince of Wales carrier battle groups.

Lt Cdr Hiles presented ten members of today's 849 NAS with Long Service and Good Conduct medals, while HMS Seahawk's Volunteer Band and the Culdrose Military Wives Choir provided the music.

The weekend concluded with a wardroom mess dinner, where Lt Cdr Hiles and Cdre Matt Briers – the most senior former 849 NAS member in today's RN – recounted tales of airborne early warning missions nearly half a century apart.



● Russ Tuppen, Nick Byatt, Spike Roper and Jack Daniels reminisce about their time on 849 NAS



● Plymouth branch committee members with VIP guests, including the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Cllr Wendy Foster and Rear Admiral Simon Williams, at their annual dinner and dance

Lord Mayor reflects on links with city

ALMOST 180 people – members of Plymouth branch and their guests – gave a very warm welcome to the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Cllr Wendy Foster, and the Mayor's Consort, Cllr Ken Foster, at the branch's annual dinner and dance.

Rear Admiral Simon Williams, who was accompanied by Mrs Charlotte Williams, represented the First Sea Lord.

An excellent silver service dinner was provided by the Warrant Officer & Senior Rates Mess at HMS Drake, and along with quality entertainment, ensured a memorable evening for all.

The Lord Mayor, responding to the branch's toast to the city, mentioned that this was not the first time she had enjoyed the RNA's hospitality – she had attended the event previously when husband Ken was Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor Wendy reminded members that the city's link with the RNA was very important, further

enhancing the important Naval relationship that has existed for hundreds of years.

With the dinner and dance over, thoughts turned to the Christmas Social, the concluding event of a successful year for the branch.

With an average attendance at the ten monthly meetings of 84, a total of 27 new members and outstanding venue hosts, officials are confident that the future bodes well for the city's Royal Naval Association branch.

Membership currently stands at 205, with three new members joining at Plymouth's most recent meeting.

Serving personnel are automatically members of the Association, and ex-Serving, spouses and partners within the Plymouth catchment area would enjoy the ambience of a very successful branch – anyone interested is encouraged to contact the branch secretary on (01752) 849176.

Details on clothing

SHIPMATES should note that the approved RNA clothing range is now supplied by RLP Embroidery and that badges, ties and buttons will continue to be supplied by Central Office.

A revised price list for items is available from Central Office, and details of RLP Embroidery can be found at the rear of the December RNA Circular – their website is at www.rlpembroidery.co.uk

Specific details can be found in the RNA website, members' area – shop at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/members/shop

RNA Central Office, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.
 admin@royalnavalassoc.com
 023 9272 3747
www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Factory will help veterans

SCOTLAND'S Bravest Manufacturing Company (SBMC), the largest employment development specifically for Scottish veterans in decades, will open at veterans' charity Erskine's headquarters in June.

Renfrewshire-based social enterprise SBMC is projected to help more than 40 Scottish ex-Servicemen and women every year through direct, flexible employment, whilst also offering tailored wrap-around welfare support and accommodation in collaboration with Erskine.

The development is a direct response to a 2015 study into the employment support needs of Scottish veterans, which found that ex-Service personnel are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as civilians across the country.

SBMC will offer opportunities ranging from short to long-term, part-time and full-time roles, all tailored to the specific needs of each veteran, many of whom face significant challenges due to life-changing physical or mental disabilities as a result of service.

As a not-for profit enterprise, it will reinvest 100 per cent of its surplus back into the company, offering greater opportunities to Scottish veterans and ensuring that the factory has state-of-the-art industrial equipment.

The factory will produce rail and road signs, recycle wooden products, and provide print and mail and fulfilment services.

Erskine, which is currently extending the services it provides, is planning to support veterans employed by SBMC by providing access to community social facilities and accommodation adjacent to the factory on their estate at Bishopston.

Steve Sherry, chief executive of Royal British Legion Industries, who is heading the factory development, said: "We know from extensive stakeholder engagement that there is an immense hunger within the military communities of Glasgow and the surrounding areas for skill-based employability initiatives for veterans."

He added: "SBMC will be based on a tried-and-tested, commercially competitive but also socially proactive business model, ensuring a positive and rewarding environment for the Scottish veterans who will work in the factory."

"This, when coupled with the full wrap-around welfare and residential support provided in partnership with Erskine, will offer a lifeline to hundreds of Scottish veterans who have found themselves in difficulty following their return to civvy street."

Veterans' charity Erskine is embarking on a service development programme on their estate, 15 miles from Glasgow.

They will be introducing a new activity centre to provide a venue for veterans from the local community to meet and learn new skills, and building five new assisted-living apartments, with plans for a new apartment block for single veterans and ten new family homes in addition to the existing 44 cottages on the estate well under way.

These developments are expected to support 200 veterans and will transform the estate, creating a mixed community, a vibrant hub for support.

Established in 1916, Erskine has since established itself as Scotland's foremost provider of care for veterans and their spouses.

The charity offers nursing, residential, respite and dementia care in four homes throughout Scotland for UK veterans and their spouses.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our November edition (right) was HMS Caprice, which was originally allocated the name HMS Swallow.

The winning correct answers were sent in by Michael Turner from Edinburgh, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's mystery ship (above) was launched at the Thornycroft yard in the autumn of 1955 and commissioned in August 1957.

Built as an anti-submarine frigate, she also served in the Fishery Protection Squadron (as in the picture above, taken in 1966) and was later earmarked to be a training tender for ratings from HMS Sultan (Engineers) and HMS Collingwood (Electrical) Schools.

She was broken up in the mid 1970s.

1) What was her name, and 2) what was the type number of her class, of which she was the



name ship?

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 February 9.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our March edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 275

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)



Cadets consider options

HERE are a few more details on the annual Sea Cadets Conference, mentioned in our December edition.

Almost 50 young people from Sea Cadets gathered at the Sea Cadets Training Centre Weymouth to make their voices heard on the national youth charity and the way it is run.

The conference for the 48 16- and 17-year-olds, organised as a series of workshops, was introduced because cadets said they wanted to have a stronger voice when it came to the charity.

Their contributions are fed back at area conferences attended by volunteers, meaning the young people can shape the future of Sea Cadets as it moves forward.

Workshops were led by the Corps' six First Sea Lord cadets – senior cadets who represent their respective areas (pictured).

They asked their fellow cadets questions on certain topics and encouraged debate, before feeding back to cadets, volunteers and employees later that day.

Topics included the results of a recent Sea Cadets survey, in which young people were asked what three things they felt were most important to act upon, and why.

They also made suggestions on anything else they would have liked included in the survey.

With safeguarding and safety of paramount importance at Sea Cadets, teenagers were also asked if they feel safe and if there are any ways in which they would feel safer, as well as if there are any ways Sea Cadets can help young people understand more about the safe use of social media and the dangers of sharing images.

The Sea Cadets' training programme was also discussed.

Later, working in teams in a *Dragons' Den*-style session, cadets pitched new ideas for the charity to a panel of senior management from Sea Cadets' London HQ.

This included ways to interact in the digital age – for example, the ways in which they would like to communicate with the charity, and what they would like to hear more or less about.

They were asked to what extent Sea Cadets should embrace the digital age, and whether cadets should be allowed digital devices, such as mobile phones, at their respective units.

As well as giving young people a chance to have their say about Sea Cadets, it was a great opportunity for them to meet other teenagers from across the country, and learn more about their peers.

Valuable feedback at last year's Cadet Conference has been used to good effect.

For example, a volunteer wellbeing ambassador pilot has been launched based on feedback on mental health.

Additionally, it was suggested that there should be more social action at Sea Cadets.

Gibraltar group is proud of Navy link

MEMBERS of the 5th Gibraltar Sea Scout group put on a show to prove their unit has achieved the required standards for continued membership of the scheme.

Master at Arms Claire Bell conducted the formal review – a regular requirement for all units – on behalf of Commander Core Naval Training and Recruiting (COMCORE), Cdre Bob Fancy.

And it was obvious from the outset that the group were keen to impress – MAA Bell was greeted with enthusiasm, commitment and pride.

She was taken out to sea to observe an array of activities from canoeing to single and dual handling yachting to Man Overboard exercises.

On return, she observed lifesaving skills and raft building.

The popular Sea Scout Band played their bagpipes whilst MAA Bell presented numerous awards and certificates to the scouts.

The 5th Gibraltar made it clear how proud they are of their Naval affiliation, and the fact that they support the Royal Navy in Gibraltar throughout the year, including attending the Battle of Trafalgar ceremony and the Remembrance Sunday Parade.

Upon completion of the review Group Scout Leader Elliot Ciohen was delighted to receive the recognition certificate from the Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Lt Gen Edward Davis, the Chief Minister of Gibraltar Fabian Picardo and the Commander British Forces



● Commander British Forces Gibraltar Cdre Mike Walliker, Chief Minister Fabian Picardo, Elliot Ciohen and the Governor of Gibraltar, Lt Gen Edward Davis

Gibraltar, Cdre Mike Walliker.

Since the review MAA Bell has adopted the role of Sea Scouts Liaison Officer and, with the help of LReg Mathew Hempstead from the Joint Police and Security Unit (JPSU) Gibraltar, they have reinvigorated and strengthened the friendship between 5th Gibraltar and the RN.

They have introduced Naval Ethos and Knowledge training which has been received favourably, the first lesson being in piping the still and carry on at Colours and Sunset.

The Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron (RNGS) has

commenced bi-monthly 'days at sea', which are a great success and when the opportunity arises, there are also visits to RN warships.

The most recent warship visit was on board Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon, where the ship's Service Police, RPO Christopher Miller, LReg Charlene Groves and AB(RNP) Adam Hill, gave an enthusiastic and professional tour.

The Scouts found this visit very informative, action-packed, but – most importantly – fun.

They left very happy with a greater overview of the various roles and professions that are on offer in today's Royal Navy.



● MAA Claire Bell and Elliot Ciohen

Helping wounded heroes

STUDENTS and staff heard a story of courage and determination when the Royal School hosted Capt Carol Betteridge from Help for Heroes in the third of the 2017-18 Royal Lectures, a series that welcomes a wide variety of speakers from all areas of life.

Senior students at the Royal School were privileged to learn of the remarkable work undertaken by our Armed Services to rehabilitate wounded service personnel.

Capt Betteridge works as the Veterans' Clinical Advisor with Help for Heroes at Tidworth in Wiltshire, and is herself a former Naval officer who had been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, where she ran the military hospital.

Reflecting on the message of Remembrancetide, Capt Betteridge told of the remarkable courage and determination shown by the wounded and the excellent care, support and encouragement offered to them by Help for Heroes.

Sharing the stories of particular soldiers and their families, she spoke of the advances in prosthetics and in physical and psychiatric medicine that enable our wounded Servicemen and women to find a new confidence and a new way forward for their lives, careers and families.

There was complete silence in the lecture theatre as students and staff listened to these remarkable case studies, and many searching and reflective questions were asked afterwards.

Mrs Anne Lynch, Principal, said: "We are very grateful to Capt Betteridge for giving us an insight into the work of Help for Heroes."

"We all felt a real sense of humility and perspective."

"It was so inspiring to hear again and again of the triumph of the human spirit over adversity."

Castleford are force in community

CASTLEFORD unit has a long tradition of mucking in and being an active part of the community, according to PO (SCC) Keith Jeffery, Officer in Charge at TS Unicorn.

Last year, though, the cadets took that to another level.

Castleford is a relatively deprived part of the country, with many of the local industries having suffered in recent years.

Gone are the days of a job for life, or a youngster walking out of school one day and into work the next.

One thing that Castleford does have in abundance is amazing

community spirit.

The West Yorkshire town has raised not just sporting heroes but wartime heroes too.

There is a strong sense of community and camaraderie that adversity has not diminished.

The Sea Cadets forms an integral part of that community.

Over the past year Castleford unit has worked with the following organisations – many of whom they have organised events for or provided logistical support: the Royal British Legion; Castleford Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club; Yorkshire Volunteers

Regimental Association; Royal Naval Association; Royal Air Force Association; the Forgotten Heroes Charity and 5 Towns Veterans Support Hub.

Along with those the cadets also supported and/or raised money for the Chelsea Pensioners; Macmillan Cancer Support; Dementia Friends; Five Towns Christian Fellowship; Yorkshire Air Ambulance (pictured right); Friends of Queens Park and Race for Life & Pretty Muddy.

In July the unit stepped in to aid a local charity who were struggling to organise a fundraising event.

Smawthorne Welfare Action Team (SWAT) were having issues getting enough volunteers to run stalls and put on events for their local gala.

The Sea Cadets were able to step in and provide gazebos, table and chairs, staff for stalls and labour to erect tents and other items.

The cadets did a litter pick before the event, and even gave the gates a clean-up and fresh lick of paint (pictured left).

They then put on a drill display. All staff and cadets helped close up the event at the end of the day.

Given their role in the community, it is important that all cadets and staff are able to help should someone fall ill at an event.

All staff are encouraged to take up the Activity First Aid



qualification, and cadets are trained in basic First Aid as part of their syllabus.

In recognition of the work they do with veterans groups and at community events, Vinci Construction UK Ltd donated an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) to the unit.

Members of the Castleford Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club and Yorkshire Volunteers

Regimental Association turned up at the unit HQ and were presented with the AED by unit treasurer and Vinci commercial manager Duncan

Summers.

The new defibrillator was quickly deployed in support of the West Yorkshire District Trafalgar Parade and Pontefract Park Walking Marathon for Veterans.

Thankfully there were no emergencies – but it's good to know it is there, just in case.

It was a very busy year in general for the small unit – none of the community work has got in the way of the cadets achieving record boating hours and qualifications, nor has it stopped the redevelopment of the unit.

Citizenship skills are developed

THE first two elements of the Sea Cadet Corps' 2017 National Citizen Service (NCS) project had been completed by the time *Navy News* went to press, with the final part due to be achieved by Christmas.

This time, following the successful pilot scheme in 2016, the scheme was being run in North West, London, Southern, South West and Eastern areas.

In phase one, during the autumn school half-term break, cadets enjoyed various activities at SCTC Raleigh, including tobogganing, skiing, snowboarding and sledding.

They also faced their fears on climbing walls and took on a huge waterborne assault course.

Cadets then immediately returned to their respective areas, where they started phase two of the project.

This included learning employability skills, as well as a session where the teens researched and pitched to link up with community projects.

Phase three is a social action project, and groups choose a charity or cause to support, delivering the programme in their local community.

London Area set up an education stall talking to the public about addiction and sexual exploitation, while Eastern Area cadets ran an action-packed training day and pictures night for Market Harborough Junior Sea Cadets in aid of Action4Homeless Leicester.

Cadets in South West Area ran an activity day at Victoria Centre in Lydney, Gloucestershire, which provides meals and entertainment for the elderly during the week.

And North West Area is working with Veterans in Sefton, a service that offers personalised support to military veterans in need.

Cadets will help distribute rucksacks containing vital items to homeless veterans.

Meanwhile, Southern Area cadets held a Christmas fair early last month in Woking in partnership with Surrey-based Challengers Disability, which provides inclusive play and leisure activities for disabled children and young people in the South East.

Challengers Disability needs to raise £600,000 to renovate its fire-damaged property.

Lucy Seex, Sea Cadets Southern Area Development Worker, said: "The cadets have done an excellent job in planning this event, and it's been great to see them working together."

"They came up with the idea, planned it and organised it, and they should be very proud of their efforts."

"It has been great to see the cadets develop and grow as part of NCS."

"They have learnt so many skills that will be valued by employers, much like they do at Sea Cadets, which encourages young people to develop self-confidence and inspiration and realise their potential."

Dockyard visit

JUNIOR cadets from Yeovil unit visited the Historic Dockyard in Portsmouth during half-term, where they enjoyed the venue's special "Spooktacular" theme.

Nineteen cadets and volunteers spent a fun-filled day on HMS Victory, with activities that included counting cannon balls and learning about onboard surgical operations, before enjoying the ninja assault course and the Royal Marines climbing wall in the Historic Dockyard.

Special tea party for WRNS100



CADETS from Bedfordshire were proud to perform the ceremony of Sunset at an afternoon tea party organised as part of the WRNS100 commemorations.

The event, staged by the Joint Intelligence Training Group (JITG) at JFC Chicksands, was attended by more than 50 former Wrens and women currently serving in the Royal Navy.

Cadets from Bedford and Flitwick and Amptill units, as well as Dunstable's newly-formed Leighton Buzzard division, played a part in the day.

A big welcome, by the way, to Leighton Buzzard, which is the latest addition to the Sea Cadets' family.

Sea Cadets from the three units are pictured (left) with the JITG Director of Training, Cdr Rachel Smallwood.

The WRNS was first formed in 1917, disbanded between 1919 and 1939, and finally integrated into the RN in 1993.



● The Northampton unit Viking goes through a lock – but the focus switched to shore-based activities as the nights drew in

Navy section joins Wells school's CCF

A ROYAL Navy contingent has been formed at a Somerset school – almost 80 years after the other two sections were created.

Cdre Nick Tindal, Commanding Officer of RN Air Station Yeovilton, officially opened the Combined Cadet Force Royal Navy Section at Wells Cathedral School.

The school's Army and RAF sections were formed at the school before World War 2, and the addition of a Naval element brings the total enrolment up to over 120 Cadets.

"The opening of the Naval Section at Wells gives the youngsters an opportunity to assume responsibility and practice leadership within a disciplined and uniformed organisation," said Maj Chris Rondel, CCF Commander at the school as well as history teacher, housemaster and Director of Outdoor Learning.

"It's a great opportunity for the cadets to venture afloat and train with the Royal Navy."

"We're looking forward to an extensive range of excellent camps and courses provided by the Headquarters of RN CCF."

Leading the RN Section is Lt Fiona Robertson, a chemistry teacher, assistant house parent and hockey coach, who was appointed in September 2016, and has already been out and about with the new cadets.

"We have had some really great support from RNAS Yeovilton



● The new Royal Navy Section of Wells Cathedral School's Combined Cadet Force

when we took the cadets to the air station.

Staff from the HQ in Portsmouth have also been keen to get involved and they ran an excellent taster day at the school recently."

Maj Rondel is also looking forward to a new scope for inter-section competitions at the school, and encouraged by the RN section's keenness to get involved.

So far, the cadets have had the opportunity to take part in Try-Dive sessions and sailing

on a regular basis at Bristol Corinthian Yacht Club, as well as attending Royal Navy CCF camps and courses.

Leading the parade from the Navy Section was Cadet CPO Thomas, 16, who recently joined from the Army Section.

"The Navy Section offers a lot more things to do – it's more than just a school activity, it's something that gives you confidence and it's really good fun," he said.

Another student, Cdt Pip, 17, is in her final year at Wells and is

seeking to make the Royal Navy her career.

"I've wanted a Navy Section since I joined the CCF, I'm so happy that's finally happened," said Pip.

"I am also looking to join the Royal Navy as a Clearance Diver, and we are doing Life Guard and First Aid courses in the near future."

"The CCF adds that extra leadership role to school life."

"It's very challenging, and we learn a lot more about managing people and being competitive."

Leicester celebrate 80 years

BACK in January 1937, a group of people got together to discuss the possibility of forming a Sea Cadets unit in Leicester.

On March 31 that same year the first parade by the new unit was held at St Martin's School in Friar Lane, with 32 cadets attending, and by 1939 there were 248 cadets listed.

The photograph on the right was taken on that first parade night.

TS Tiger is on Ross Walk, which is still going strong all these years later, and the unit's 80th anniversary year was celebrated with an audience of the Deputy Lieutenant, representing the Queen, the Lord Mayor of Leicester, the Leicestershire County Council Chairperson, ex-cadets, guests and parents.

If anyone wishes to contact the unit please go to their web page www.sea-cadets.org/leicester or their Facebook page, [Sea Cadets Leicester](https://www.facebook.com/SeaCadetsLeicester).



Full speed into the new year

NORTHAMPTON unit has recently focused training away from waterborne activities to shore-based advancement training.

Now the evenings are darker, it is a good time to practise those skills that make for better leaders and increase the background knowledge and theory to put into practice afloat.

The result of this is that there were seven cadets on a recent advancement board, and with pride, welcome to the unit the newly-promoted PO Cdt Aaron, who was also appointed Lord Lieutenant's Cadet.

That promotion sees the unit continue to count a PO Cadet in its ranks – the unit also sadly said goodbye to PO Cadet Jess, who turned 18 years last year.

Jess will continue as an adult volunteer for the Sea Cadets and had the honour to attend the Christmas Lights switch-on.

There has been no let up in competitions.

The unit took part in the national sailing and windsurfing regatta held at Southport in late September, achieving some great results in windsurfing classes.

The unit also dominated the district five-a-side football competition – all the teams will be competing in the regional finals early this year.

The unit Royal Marines Cadets achieved a 72 per cent 'good' grading in their annual CATSEA assessment – a tremendous achievement.

The cadets were put through their paces by the HQ Royal Marines and tested in a variety of challenging situations.

The unit has held some fun events as part of the training programme.

A Hallowe'en evening, where the cadets dressed up as ghosts and ghouls was followed by the annual Bonfire Night, attended by more than 260 people, raising £175 for SSAFA.

Almost 100 cadets attended the town's Remembrance parade and the unit also supported the Thrapston Parade with two instructors and six cadets.

The unit's RS Quest was formally named Scoobydoo as part of the unit's proud association with the Inland Waterways Association and the new Yole rowing boat was named Ernest after Ernest Shoebridge, a long-term supporter of the unit and a cadet in the 1940s.

Other activities planned for the festive period, as *Navy News* went to press, included a visit to an ice skating rink, a trip to HMS Belfast in London plus the usual festivities such as the Christmas Dinner, disco and carol service.

First night back in the New Year will be on Friday January 5 with Divisions.

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A smörgåsbord for 2018

THE first issue of the new year seems a good time to review the latest edition of the *Seaforth World Naval Review*.

The 2018 edition (ISBN 978-1-5267-2009-2, £35) is a vintage, highly-informative, issue, writes Prof Eric Grove.

Editor Conrad Waters provides his usual overview followed by four regional reviews by the same author and two more specific fleet analyses – one by Mrityunjoy Mazumdar on the impressive South Korean Navy and Richard Beedall on our own Royal Navy, although the latter is inevitably a little out of date (Queen Elizabeth was commissioned last year not this).

It will be interesting to see what next year's edition reports after the current capability review.

There then follows a magnificent chapter on the Arleigh Burke-class destroyers by Norman Friedman.

This puts the ships in their historical perspective and shows how the class is a "product of the 1980s that remains valuable today."

There is no better guide to the variants of the class and their modifications, some of which are less obvious than others.

The discussion of the technological challenges of converting the class to anti-ballistic missile defence is of especial significance in the current strategic climate.

The capacity of these ships to develop their high-level



● Another fine mess... Junior rates on HMS Queen Elizabeth play uckers, watch TV and flick through Navy News in one of the new carrier's mess decks; good accommodation in 21st Century warships is key to retention

Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones



war fighting capabilities puts an interesting perspective on the editor's

description of the latest German 'stabilisation frigates' of the Baden-Württemberg class. This class, built for the inter-war period, when maritime security

was the priority rather than war fighting, looks a little less suitable for current strategic conditions.

Warships are long-term investments and need to be built for the widest possible range of scenarios, something for which the Royal Navy has been wrongly criticised in the past.

Advanced warships can do anything, 'stabilisation frigates'

cannot. One hopes this lesson will be taken into account in the Type 31 programme.

The final class analysis is by Guy Toremans on the Royal New Zealand Navy's Otago-class offshore patrol vessel.

There is nothing wrong in a navy with the RNZN's extensive constabulary responsibilities in a low threat environment investing

in such assets but if New Zealand wants to contribute to more demanding operations she will need to replace her frigates with real combatants.

David Hobbs then gives his usual well-informed annual review of world naval aviation. He covers the US carrier programme and the other carrier operators, France, India, Brazil, China, Russia, Italy and the UK.

Of particular interest are his comments on the problems of mating F-35B with the small Italian Conte di Cavour carrier, problems that dictated the large size of the new British carriers.

He then goes on to discuss the vicissitudes of the F-35 programme, the expanding role of large flat-topped amphibious ships and their aircraft as well as latest developments in sea control helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft

There next follows one of the most useful pieces in a most useful volume.

This is a look at the potential or otherwise of new naval weapons relying on electro-magnetic energy, both beam weapons and rail guns.

Dr Friedman takes a suitably sceptical view that puts these potential developments into a proper perspective.

My only quibble is in his discussion of the British laser dazzle weapons of the early 1980s, which he says only came into service after the Falklands War.

My memories are that they were in service before the conflict and that 'flashers' were

exchanged between ships during the conflict. Perhaps readers can help.

Richard Scott then provides an in-depth analysis of British naval guided weapons programmes.

The potential of Sea Ceptor is clearly explained, although the delays in providing anti-surface ship capability in the context of the end of both Harpoon and Sea Skua cannot but be disturbing given the current return to interstate conflict in which enemy surface ships will have to be engaged.

Finally there is a fascinating piece by Bruno Huriet on 'Modern Warship Accommodation' – a key factor in warship design that does not receive its due emphasis.

Given personnel challenges in many navies, the requirement for adequate accommodation is now a more important factor than ever. Huriet's piece is an excellent starting point for any consideration of the matter.

Both the editors and the publishers are to be congratulated for a vintage edition that is essential reading for anyone who wishes to keep up to date with the rapidly evolving contemporary naval scene. I am sure every reader will learn something from this comprehensive survey. Standards of production and illustration are as good as ever and my recommendations of last year, printed on the back of the dustjacket of this year's edition, can only be confirmed and strengthened. Everyone interested in navies should buy a copy.

THE GROVE REVIEW

Now you can sign app for the Navy...

YOUNG computer experts from a Plymouth college have invented an app to help RN recruitment.

Students and staff from the University Technical College created the app in partnership with the Royal Navy as an aid to those going through the recruiting process as they prepare to sit the Naval Service Recruitment Test.

The test is a timed psychometric assessment forming an important element of the joining process.

"Previously candidates were issued a booklet of sample questions which I thought needed to be updated and brought into the 21st Century," said Lt Cdr George Blakeman, the Royal Navy's Area Recruiting Officer in the South West.

"UTC Plymouth has delivered an outstanding project which will make a positive and tangible impact on the recruitment process."

The app allows candidates to practise answering sample questions similar to the actual test, either on their laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

"I feel very proud to have my name and college linked to this website. It's a worldwide app after all and will be looked at by thousands of people every year," said 15-year-old Kaye Richards, who was charged with making sure the app passed security tests.

"I was asked to try my best to hack into it and find any loopholes and we are confident of its security from illegal use."



Rookies, RNLI and rope work

ON A cloudy December weekend, Northumbrian Universities' Royal Navy Unit's new crop of students were shown the ropes as HMS Example put to sea for the first time in the 2018-19 academic year.

Some 20 'freshers' from Newcastle, Northumbria and Durham universities joined the P2000 over two days as she left her berth at HMS Calliope in Gateshead (pictured above) and headed down the Tyne, guided by new CO Lt Duncan Napier.

The weekend opened with lessons on sea survival equipment, giving the students the chance to try on the full rig of once-only survival suit and lifejacket. They were also talked through the correct handling and names of berthing lines.

This transitioned into a practical evolution, during which the students were the line handlers on part of ship for

berthing evolutions under the watchful eye of the XO CPO Graeme Stroud.

The second batch of new entry students had a slightly different experience, sailing downriver on a balmy Sunday morning and meeting up with the Tynemouth Lifeboat for some man overboard practice in the estuary.

The lifeboat, Fraser Flyer, and Example took it in turns to recover Ruth (the female version of Fred the dummy) from the water and then proceeded back to the river together.

"It gave both ship's company and the new students a perfect insight into how the RNLI conduct their core business, with Ruth recovered cold but conscious on each occasion," said Lt Napier.

"The weekend was well received by all and thanks go to Tynemouth RNLI for taking the time to conduct training with us."



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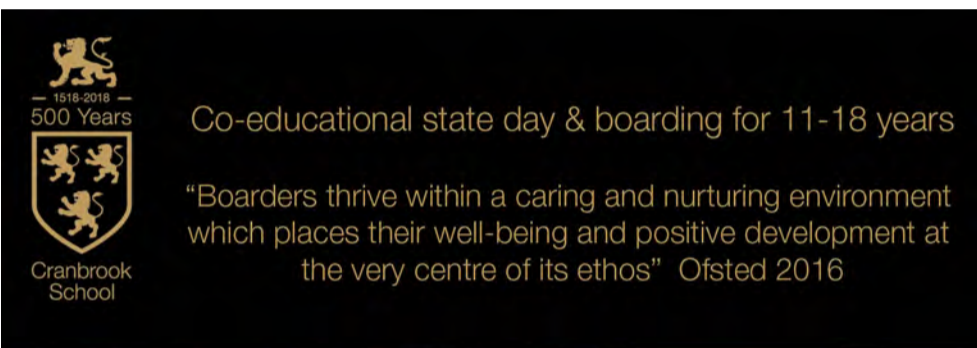
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Active life Pleasing report

THE Duke of York's Royal Military School is a State boarding school for students aged 11-18 on a beautiful 150-acre site on the Kent coast.

The school has been re-accredited by the British Council with the highly prized International Award Accreditation.

In addition to a wide academic choice, Dukies enjoy a full and active life which includes an excellent range of sports, music, drama and representing their

Fulfil potential

"WE aim for all boarders to fulfil their potential and develop as well-rounded individuals."

Cranbrook School is a state-funded Co-educational Grammar School with integrated day and boarding provision. With six boarding houses being home to 250 boarders, the overall school population is 770.

Boarders are admitted from Year 9 (age 13) following a test to assess suitability, and students are from a wide area.

Each boarding house has a unique feel fostered by the strong leadership of our Heads of House and by the expertise of our boarding support staff.

Fees are extremely attractive at just £12,726 (Yr9) to £15,270 (Yr12) per annum.

For a state school the facilities are impressive, with a theatre, lecture theatre, performing arts centre, 6th Form centre and observatory, together with fantastic sports facilities which include an astroturf pitch, gym and swimming pool.

Being keen to educate the whole person, the school runs a wide range of extracurricular activities, offering the CCF and DofE, plus a broad range of sports, music and drama.

school at special parades and events. Students also participate in the DofE Awards.

Last year's expedition saw Dukies and staff venture to Central America for four weeks, trekking through jungles and up active volcanos in Nicaragua then crossing the border to Costa Rica to camp on the beach for six nights. The next biennial expedition is to India.

Centenary House, the dedicated Sixth Form Centre, is where students have purpose built en-suite accommodation.

In a busy boarding school it is important that students have the opportunity for down time. Centenary has four common rooms, each with Sky TV and comfortable seating.

Using our values of courage, integrity, respect, commitment, loyalty and self-discipline, our students are encouraged to apply these in everything they do, particularly in the classroom.

Our students develop a level of maturity, resilience and are socially confident as a result of the school's ethos and wealth of extracurricular ventures.

Students thrive at St John's

LOCATED in the naval city of Portsmouth, **St John's College** – a day and boarding school for boys and girls aged 2 to 18 – has enjoyed a long and established history of educating and supporting Service family students.

They believe children achieve when they feel part of a community. It's why they work hard to create a strong sense of belonging based around their commitment to supporting the individual. It's part of why students thrive at St John's College.

The school welcome parents entitled to claim the Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA),

QUEEN'S College Taunton has a long-standing reputation for educating children from Forces families, including the Navy.

Following the most recent scheduled Independent Schools Inspectorate visit, Head Teacher Dr Lorraine Earps said: "[The inspectors'] judgements of 'excellent' for pupil development and 'good' for pupil achievement were extremely pleasing.

"Throughout the report, the inspectors comment on the 'pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning', 'strong rapport between pupil and teacher', 'high expectations', 'enthusiastic teaching', 'excellent opportunities to achieve in a wide and varied range of activities', 'strong community ethos', 'excellent behaviour', 'strong culture of inclusion', 'celebration of diversity' and a 'high awareness of how to keep safe'."

Forces families receiving CEA pay only ten per cent of boarding fees as part of the Queen's College all-inclusive package. Call 01823 340830 or email admissions@queenscollege.org.uk

providing a fee cap. This caps the full boarding/tuition fees so that the parental contribution remains ten per cent of the total fee payable and the CEA contribution amounts to 90 per cent of the fees payable.

A military discount of ten per cent (of the published full boarding/tuition fee) will be provided to the children of serving military families who do not receive CEA funding.

Visit them during an Open Event – Tuesday January 16 and Saturday March 17, 9.30am. To book call 023 9281 5118 or see www.stjohnscollege.co.uk

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The Duke of York's Royal Military School

Open Morning

Saturday 10 March 2018
9am - 12.30pm

Located on a beautiful 150-acre site in Dover, Kent, The Duke of York's Royal Military School is a state boarding school for students aged 11 to 18.

We welcome applications from any student who wants to study GCSEs and A Levels at our unique and iconic school with its strong traditions.

Why choose us?

- Unique ethos helps promote character and life skills, with students encouraged to achieve their potential in a supportive community.
- GCSE results significantly above the national average.
- An active and separate Sixth Form – with opportunities to lead in all aspects of School life.
- A £24.9m building programme has been completed to enhance our already impressive school site and facilities.
- Students enjoy an active lifestyle including sport, music, drama and outdoor activities, with over 70 clubs and activities offered.
- Good transport links to London and Europe.
- If you qualify for CEA, you will only pay 10% of the fee - £433.20 per term* covers ALL the boarding costs.
- Childcare vouchers are accepted.

If you qualify for CEA, you will only pay £1,299.60 per year. Full 2017/18 fees are just £12,996

Book your place: 01304 245073
www.doyrms.com/Open-Mornings



www.doyrms.com

*Fees reviewed annually - price for those qualifying for CEA

Focus on individuals

SET in 200 acres of Suffolk countryside overlooking the River Stour, the **Royal Hospital School** provides a full and broad education enriched by its Naval heritage and fit for the modern world.

Simon Lockyer, Headmaster, explains the aims and ethos of the school: "We inspire our pupils to have the courage and commitment to be ambitious for their futures, whichever path they choose."

"Everyone can achieve the most exceptional things but we are all different. That is why we focus on the individual, getting to know every one of our pupils and finding out what motivates them."

"By understanding a young person's strengths we can help them to make the right choices at the right time, navigating them through their critical, formative years and ensuring that their education becomes the foundation for happiness and success."

As well as a balanced and enriched academic curriculum, the school has an established reputation for musical excellence, outstanding sports facilities including an RYA Sailing Academy and a cricket academy, a large and committed CCF contingent and the opportunity to pursue a huge range of interests and activities.

With 450 full boarders, there is a real sense of purpose and community where every child feels nurtured, supported and encouraged.

For more information about admissions, visiting and bursaries and discounts for Naval families, contact the Registrar on 01473 326136 or admissions@royalhospitalschool.org

The OU and you

PREPARE for civilian life with the help of the **Open University**.

When you're preparing for a career in Civvy Street, it's important to know you're not on your own.

The Ministry of Defence is strongly committed to resettlement, and works closely with a number of organisations that can maximise your talents and help smooth the path into a job.

One of the best-known and most respected of those organisations is the Open University (OU).

Getting it right

QUEEN Victoria School (QVS) Dunblane exists for the benefit of Service families who have a link to Scotland.

If you are Scottish, have served in a Scottish regiment or are based in Scotland, QVS is proud to offer, by Royal Warrant, continuity of education to Service children.

QVS is funded by the Ministry of Defence, and offers quality boarding-based education to those children who may otherwise have attended several different schools in the approach to their National and Higher exams.

The school's Boarding House teams take the care of your children exceptionally seriously, and past reports by the Care Inspectorate underline that.

In pupil support, QVS has an excellent GIRFEC (Getting It

You can choose from over 600 OU modules across different subjects and levels.

No matter what rank you've achieved, where you've served or what trade you're in, the Open University can help you develop a career path for the future.

Getting financial support

As you're in the Royal Navy, you may be eligible for financial support (whatever you choose to study).

Our courses can be wholly or partly financed by Enhanced Learning Credits (ELCs).

Study to suit you

You can adapt your study

schedule around your military commitments, earning a valuable qualification wherever you're stationed, thanks to the Open University's flexible, practical distance learning approach.

This includes 24/7 online learning you can do on a smartphone, tablet or laptop.

To find out how the OU could help you broaden your career horizons or become better equipped for civilian life, visit openuniversity.co.uk/navynews

Helping seafarers

MARINE Society College learner Lance Corporal Terence Blunt is able to progress in his Naval Service career after passing his exams with flying colours.

L/Cpl Blunt achieved an IGCSE history and GCSE law, having enrolled with the lifelong learning charity in September 2016.

These results will open doors, as he can now apply for a commission.

The results were published at the end of last summer – just weeks after the Elective Learning Awards, in which L/Cpl Blunt was named as Top Achiever in the Elective Learner Domain.

The awards are intended to celebrate the success of Navy personnel who have gone the extra mile in learning and developing themselves.

Marine Society aims to be the first in learning and professional development for seafarers, helping them to learn new skills and gain accredited qualifications.

The charity's offering includes GCSEs and A-Levels, scholarships and distance-learning courses to help people reach their full potential.

To find out more about how the charity can help you, see www.marine-society.org



CUTTING YOUR OWN PATH

The Royal Hospital School is a leading co-educational independent school for 11 to 18 year olds, located in 200 acres of Suffolk countryside. It has a thriving Combined Cadet Force, 65% of pupils board full time and more than 200 pupils have a connection to the armed services.

Fees are discounted for services families eligible for CEA and all RN and RM personnel, both retired and serving, can apply for means-tested assistance with fees.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL

01473 326136

OR EMAIL ADMISSIONS@ROYALHOSPITALSCHOOL.ORG

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15 Jan each year

Queen Victoria School in Dunblane is a co-educational boarding school for the children of UK Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, or who have served in Scotland or who have been members of a Scottish regiment.

The QVS experience encourages and develops well-rounded, confident individuals in an environment of stability and continuity.

The main entry point is into Primary 7 and all places are fully funded for tuition and boarding by the Ministry of Defence.

Families are welcome to find out more by contacting Admissions on +44 (0) 131 310 2927 to arrange a visit.

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Dunblane Perthshire
FK15 0JY



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The Open University

Reservists win recognition



TWO members of HMS King Alfred, the Royal Naval Reserve unit in Portsmouth, have received Meritorious Service awards from the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire.

PO Katherine Pink (pictured left) is the Outreach Coordinator for the unit, identifying suitable recruitment events, coordinating the manpower and planning the resources.

PO Pink works full-time for the NHS as a sister on a Neurological Rehabilitation Unit. In addition, she

is a Practice Tutor with the Open University where she supports first year student nurses, their mentors and their managers.

The second recipient was Lt Cdr Heather Lane, who has served 21 years in the RNR following regular service in the Royal Navy.

The officer has a full-time Reserve post at Navy HQ, and supports HMS King Alfred through media and public relations work, also acting as unit liaison officer.

New edition marks 75th anniversary of vital Enigma seizure

NAVY News readers are being offered a 25 per cent discount on a book celebrating the 75th anniversary of one of the most significant events in World War 2 for the Royal Navy.

The Real Enigma Heroes, by Phil Shanahan, tells how two men and a teenager serving in HMS Petard changed the course of WW2 by capturing vital codebooks from a stricken German U-boat.

First Lt Tony Fasson, 29, from Jedburgh, and AB Colin Grazier, 22, from Tamworth, boarded U-559 on October 30 1942 after Petard bombarded it with depth charges in the Mediterranean.

Both men drowned in the sinking boat, but not before passing Enigma material to NAAFI canteen assistant Tommy Brown, 16, who had boarded the vessel with them.

He survived, only to die in a house fire in the UK in 1945.

The documents seized by the men enabled Bletchley Park's codebreakers, led by Alan Turing, to break the German's four-rotor Enigma naval cipher after a ten-month intelligence blackout.

This helped the Allies to win the Battle of the Atlantic, a victory Churchill described as crucial to the outcome of the war.

For decades after the war the mission was shrouded in secrecy, denying the men the recognition they deserved.

Phil Shanahan was deputy editor of Grazier's home town newspaper in 1998 when he first became aware of the story.

He was stunned to discover that few people had heard of the men, let alone the significance of the action they were involved in, so he launched an energetic campaign to honour the trio.

Phil was later awarded the Freedom of Bletchley Park and invited to open Alan Turing's Hut 8 to the public.

The book title resulted from his spat with the director of the Hollywood film *U-571* which portrayed American sailors as being responsible for seizing vital Enigma material from U-boats.

Phil put the success of the campaign down to the 'incredible' public reaction it attracted – and credited *Navy News* readers with playing a significant role.

"*Navy News* backed the campaign and published regular updates," said Phil.

"Readers not only sent us donations for our monument fund, but also interesting material I used to boost the profile of the story.

"*Navy News* also helped connect me with former colleagues of the three heroes and I was later made a member of the HMS Petard Association.

"For years I met up with many of the men who were involved in the mission, and I feel very privileged to have got to know many of them.

"They contributed so much to my book."

Phil describes the story as



being "like something straight out of a boy's adventure comic."

The Real Enigma Heroes contains eyewitness accounts from the crew of Petard, who were destined to be old men before they discovered the true significance of their action.

The codebooks seized from the U-boat included the Short Signal Book and the Short Weather Cipher, which provided priceless material for the Allies.

It meant the messages used by the German high command to communicate with U-boats in the Atlantic could now be read.

Intelligence gained from the deciphered communications was codenamed Ultra, and revealed the positions of the submarines.

As a result, convoys bringing essential supplies, including food, to Britain from America could be re-routed to avoid attack, and Britain could prepare for the land battles ahead, which came to a head with the D-Day landings.

Phil says the men's sacrifice should never be forgotten.

Thanks to the documents the men got from U-559, the code ('Shark') was solved at Bletchley

Park on December 13, 1942.

Within an hour of the breakthrough 15 U-boat positions were identified. Reading Shark saved an estimated 500–750,000 tons of shipping in the following December and January alone.

Fasson and Grazier were posthumously awarded the George Cross, and Brown received the George Medal, but the need for secrecy condemned the men to anonymity – not even their own families could be told what they had achieved.

But all that changed because of the campaign.

The culmination was the unveiling of the three-anchors monument in Tamworth, each anchor representing one of the men's lives.

On the 75th anniversary in October Phil helped to unveil a new weatherproof storyboard next to the sculpture.

Many other tributes came about as a result of the campaign. In Tamworth there is now a Colin Grazier hotel and roads have been named after each of the men, Bletchley Park, and HMS Petard.

Phil Shanahan stages exhibitions about the story at heritage days and other events, and gives talks on the Enigma heroes. For details email info@enigmacommunications.co.uk or visit <http://enigmacommunications.co.uk/enigma-book/>

Special offer for Navy News readers: The new anniversary version of *The Real Enigma Heroes* (ISBN 9780752457857) is published by the History Press, £16.99. The ebook is £9.99.

Both feature a cover specially designed for the 75th anniversary. *Navy News* readers can get 25 per cent off the RRP of *The Real Enigma Heroes* book (print version) by quoting N18 before January 31, 2018. To order call 01256 302699.

Heroes recognised by Parliament

PARLIAMENT has officially recognised the three heroes featured in Phil Shanahan's book.

Tony Fasson, Colin Grazier and Tommy Brown were commemorated in an Early Day Motion that has so far been signed by 67 MPs.

It is now in the top 20 most supported EDMs out of 557 since the General Election, and Winston Churchill's grandson, Sir Nicholas Soames, was among the signatories.

Dr Julian Lewis MP, chairman of the Commons Defence Select Committee, proposed the motion.

Titled *75th anniversary of the seizure of Enigma documents from the U-559*, it states: "This House salutes the extraordinary courage of the three crew members of HMS Petard who, on 30 October

1942, boarded the sinking German submarine U-559 in circumstances of extreme peril; recognises that the Enigma material they retrieved proved vital in saving countless Allied ships and lives; deeply regrets that two of them were drowned when the submarine foundered and the third did not survive the war; and believes that the example and self-sacrifice of Lieutenant Anthony Fasson GC, Able Seaman Colin Grazier GC and Canteen Assistant Tommy Brown GM must never be forgotten."

Dr Lewis also paid tribute to the men during a parliamentary debate on the evening of the anniversary, saying: "By their sacrifice and bravery, thousands upon thousands of Allied lives were saved."

Clocking up the miles to help Service leavers

Cadets get 3D view of new ships

THE Royal Naval Association's Shipmates and Oppos scheme is already making a difference to Naval Service leavers, with more than 1,000 signing up in its first full year.

In fact, since the scheme was set up in 2016, more than 1,400 service leavers have registered, at no cost – that is more than 55 per cent of all RN ratings and 30 per cent of RM other ranks leaving the Service.

So why have they registered, you may ask?

Shipmates and Oppos is described as “providing an arm around the shoulder” of Service leavers, contacting them annually for the first five years of their time in ‘Civvy’ Street.

Most people find transition easy, but you might be surprised about some of the issues that can be easily solved by the Shipmates & Oppos team, fluent in ‘Jack Speak’.

The team are well-placed to signpost you to the most appropriate charities or agencies that can provide guidance and assist you through the plethora of issues that Service leavers face.

It's now been just over a year since the launch of Shipmates and Oppos, the support programme for leavers of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, and thanks to the enthusiasm and co-operation of the staff within the Naval Service Unit Personnel Offices/Release

Offices, details of willing Service leavers have been registered with the programme.

Supported by Greenwich Hospital Trust and administered by the RNA, the project team, consisting of Andy Christie and Chrissie Hughes, travelled many miles by road, air and sea (that'll be the Torpoint Ferry...) visiting all RN and RM establishments twice in 2017.

The reasons for such visits are:

- ✔ To promote the programme as widely as possible;
- ✔ To put a face to a name; and
- ✔ To restock with updated marketing material.

The data collected from Release Offices has been used to produce an Impact Report which details how the project is performing.

The report is forwarded to all the project partners, including the Royal Navy, Greenwich Hospital, the Royal Marines Association, ARNO and White Ensign Association, along with all Commanding Officers.

If you would like a copy please email the project team at chrissie@royalnavalassoc.com

Looking to the future, the project team would like to significantly increase the number of registrations, particularly at the main bases.

The duo are also planning more road trips to Abbey Wood, the Military Corrective Training Camp Colchester, RAF Marham and other units where



● RN Air Station Culdrose Unit Personnel Office staff; back row, from left: LWtr L Peet, POWtr L Westhead, Wtr J Suter, CPOWtr H Baxter; front row: Wtr T Balsdon, Wtr K Clark, Wtr M Whitehead

RN/RM personnel are serving but have not yet received the S&O presentation – if anyone is interested in a visit from the team, please call 023 9272 0782.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary is also coming on board, resulting in a new partnership with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Association – the S&O team now have the challenge of becoming acquainted with charitable avenues open to ex-RFA personnel.

Every willing participant has been sent an invitation to receive

a year's free membership to one or all the partner associations, including the RMA, RNA, White Ensign Association and Association of Royal Naval Officers.

This programme is free for every Service leaver up to five years after discharge, and complements resettlement provision in the Career Transition Partnership and has been welcomed by RFEA as meeting an unmet need.

Most Service leavers

experience a smooth transition to civilian life, but some struggle, and the challenge can prove more difficult than anticipated.

A call to the S&O team is the first step to solving an issue that has the potential to grow, and early intervention can prevent downstream escalation of the problem.

This signposting service, accessed by a phone call or email to Deputy Project Manager Chrissie Hughes, allows individuals to seek the help they need with the confidence that like-minded ex-Service folk are at the end of the phone and will be able to help them find the support they need through partners, Naval sector charities, Veterans UK or statutory provision.

Part of the programme is an annual wellbeing phone call or email – a good chance for the recipient to highlight any areas of concern or to ‘opt out’ of the programme if they no longer wish to participate.

As a former CPO – one of the first to join the scheme – wrote: “Thanks for getting in touch, it's always nice to have contact from someone connected to the RN.”

“I do miss service life very much and although I'm settled in a civilian job, it's not quite the same. Thanks again for the email.”

For further information please follow the link to the S&O website – <http://shipmatesandoppos.org.uk> – or call Chrissie or Andy on 02392 720782.

OFFICER Cadets and staff at Britannia Royal Naval College have been given a glimpse of the Royal Navy's next generation frigate.

A 3D simulator of the new Type 26 frigate allowed cadets and staff to explore the ship, which will ultimately replace the specialist submarine-hunting Type 23 frigates currently in service.

An initial order has been placed for the first three of eight new global combat ships.

OC Jessica Laing, a budding Warfare Officer, said: “It was very interesting to get an insight into the new frigates and see the ships that I could potentially be working on when I complete my training.”

“The 3D graphics were excellent and enabled me to get a real-life representation of what to expect.”

The new ships are among a number of vessels on order for the Royal Navy, which includes another new batch of frigates, the Type 31e.

Lt David Clark, one of the Divisional Training Officers at BRNC, said: “With a new generation of ships comes a new generation of Naval officers.”

“It's great for them to see the capabilities that these platforms will deliver and how technology can be used to improve the design phase of defence procurement and acquisition.”

The Type 26 frigates will protect the nation's nuclear deterrent and the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers, the first of which, HMS Queen Elizabeth, was recently commissioned.

The frigates' flexible design will allow their capabilities to be adapted throughout their lifespan to counter future threats.

They will be 60ft longer and displace 2,000 tonnes more than their predecessors, will be equipped with bow and towed array sonar, Sea Ceptor air defence missiles and a 5in main gun.

Cdr Andy Kellett, Navy Command HQ Type 26 Requirements Manager, said: “The first two names have been announced as HMS Glasgow and HMS Belfast.”

“Steel was cut on HMS Glasgow in July 2017 by the Secretary of State and full production is under way; they are expected to enter service in the 2020s.”

“The 3D simulator represents the live design and is part of the digital transformation of Naval shipbuilding that the National Shipbuilding Strategy envisaged.”

“It is also a fantastic tool to show the wider Naval community exactly what the ship will look like when it is built, years ahead of delivery.”

‘Give them dignity’

A MAJOR piece of art depicting more than 72,000 Servicemen killed in Britain's bloodiest battle will form a focal point as the nation commemorates 100 years since the end of World War I.

The Shrouds of the Somme project will bring home the sheer scale of human sacrifice in a battle that came to epitomise the bloodshed of the 1914-18 war – the Somme.

The project also gives members of the public the opportunity to take part as a plea goes out for relatives of the dead to participate.

Organisers of Shrouds of the Somme have asked people to search their family archives for pictures and details of those who died during the battle and are commemorated on the largest Commonwealth war memorial in the world – the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme in France.

Somerset artist Rob Heard has had the painstaking task of making 72,396 hand-stitched shrouds, each wrapped around a 12-inch figure – one for each of the Servicemen killed in the Somme with no known grave.

It is estimated around 4,000 members of the Royal Naval Division – sailor-soldiers who were not allocated to a ship – were killed or injured in the Somme.

Artist Rob said: “As I go through the process of putting the figure within the shroud, I cross a name off.”

“It's vitally important that each is associated with a name, otherwise the individual gets lost in the numbers.”

The project has teamed up with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), which built and cares for the

memorial to the 72,000 missing of the Somme – men who died during the battle and who have no known grave.

The CWGC has made available the records of those commemorated on the memorial and created a permanent digital archive to store the public's contributions.

Members of the public will be able to upload their own photographs and stories of these men to the digital archive via the Shrouds of the Somme website.

Throughout this year Shrouds of the Somme will play a central role as the commemorations of the 100th anniversary go nationwide and culminate on Armistice Day on 11 November. As the anniversary approaches, each shroud will be laid out at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London and displayed in what will be an unprecedented piece of public commemorative art.

The scale of the sacrifices will be laid bare as the small figures fill more than 5,000 square metres, on show for members of the public to pay their respects.

Speaking at the official launch, Project chairman Cdre Jake Moores, the former Commander of the Devonport Flotilla, appealed for members of the public to get involved.

He said: “Remembering those thousands who fell as individual men is crucial to honouring their sacrifice – but so little is known about so many of them.”

“We are calling out to the nation. Asking them to send us photos and stories of these remarkable men – these fathers, husbands, brothers.”

“Tell us who they were, where they were from, what they did – make them real, give them dignity.”

“Bringing the individual to the forefront of these unimaginable numbers will help the nation to truly understand the scale of the loss of those who gave their all.”

The installation will also act as a rallying point for public donations to military charities still supporting the veterans of today, such as SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity.

Shrouds of the Somme figures can be purchased and will be available after the final exhibition in November. They can be pre-ordered from shroudsofthesomme.com/shop

Rob Heard used to build timber playgrounds for children – he was renowned for his trademark pirate ships – but following a car accident in 2013, where he injured his

arm so badly that he was unable to continue with such work, Rob came up with the idea for the shrouds, having been inspired by British soldiers returning injured from Iraq and Afghanistan.

His aim was to try to physically represent the vast numbers of those killed on the battlefields of World War I.

The 19,240 Shrouds of the Somme – at that stage each figurine represented a Serviceman of the British Empire who died on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, July 1 1916 – were displayed in Exeter and Bristol in 2016 and led him directly to the much larger project of bringing 72,396 shrouds to London.

● www.shroudsofthesomme.com



● Shrouds of the Somme artist Rob Heard

Handing on remembrance to younger generations

A SERVICE whistle last used by a young officer on the Somme a century ago has now heralded the launch of the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation (CWGF) – a new charity created to keep the memory of fallen Servicemen and women alive.

The Foundation is the brainchild of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), responsible for the preservation and care of records, graves and memorials to 1.7 million men and women who died during the two world wars.

The Commission, which celebrated its centenary last year, cares for war graves and memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries and territories.

Now, 100 years on, the Foundation is taking action to empower young people to carry the legacy forward for another century.

The Hon Ros Kelly, chairperson of the new Foundation, said: “A century after the First World War, and 75 years since the Second, we need to answer a difficult question – how can we expect a

younger generation to remember those they could never have known?”

“The answer was to create a new charity, the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation, whose mission it is to tell the stories of those who died, and help keep their memories alive.”

CWGC Vice Chairman Sir Tim Laurence – who as a rear admiral was Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff – added: “For all of us who enjoy the benefits of a free, open and just society, there is one who has died trying to defend those freedoms.”

“They may have been heroes, boy soldiers, or battlefield nurses; each one has a tale to tell.”

“The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation will help communities collect, spread and honour the stories of the men and women the CWGC commemorates and ensure that we remember those who gave their today for all our tomorrows.”

The Foundation will take the work of the Commission to a much wider audience by offering hands-on opportunities to get involved in various projects – including a new internship.

Headmaster is rewarded

THE former Headmaster of the British Section, SHAPE (Supreme HQ Allied Powers Europe) International School, in Belgium has been recognised for his work with young people.

Rowley Bucknill has recently been promoted and left the Ministry of Defence school, part of MOD's Directorate Children and Young People.

He will now take on the role of Assistant Head MOD Schools (Inspection and Advice), a challenge to which he said he is very much looking forward.

A number of celebrations were held in the school to celebrate and reflect on Mr Bucknill's seven years of service, including an assembly and a staff meal, as well as an evening reception organised by the UK National Military Representative (NMR).



PROJECT FIREFLY

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- Opportunities for continued professional development and promotion
- A more stable work-life balance with the added benefit of a 2 year harmony period (although attending the required annual training days still applies)
- Remain part of Naval/Corps Family with its special camaraderie



Find out more – further information can be found in 2015DIN 01-213 or call the Firefly team on 023 9262 8784



THE JOURNEY DOES NOT HAVE TO END!

Deaths

Surg Capt Thomas H Shepherd. RNH Gibraltar, Plymouth and Haslar, Ioan Brunel and RAN also HMS Dolphin, Antrim, President and St Angelo. Nov 1. Aged 71.

Cdr Michael I Redman. MOD Bath, NATO AFSE Italy, FONAC, CinC Fleet, ACNS, Defence Advisor Canberra. HMS Osprey, Seahawk, Ark Royal, Pembroke, Scylla, Caledonia and Devonshire. Nov 16. Aged 75.

Cdr Lawrence R W Portet RD* RNR. List 1 RNR. Nov 22. Aged 91.

Lt Cdr Gordon F Cracknell. HMS Victory RNB, Cerberus, Minerva and Hind. Nov 4. Aged 93.

Lt Cdr Andrew R Gleadow. HMS Daedalus, Fulmar, Goldcrest, Eagle, Victorious and Ariel. Oct 26. Aged 78.

Lt Cdr Nicholas G T Harris. NATO Iberian and Italy, FOF3, FONAC, HMS Heron, Dryad, Mohawk, Osprey, Naiad, Excellent, Bulwark, and Centurion Oct 14.

Lt Cdr Alan L Hurlbut. HMS Ganges, Tiger, Falcon, Collingwood, Raleigh and Ariel. Oct 26.

Lt Cdr Jolyon S Shimmons. Naval Aeronautical Info Cell, Controller National ATC, RAF Wattisham, RAF Shawbury, HMS Seahawk, Osprey, Heron and Albion. Oct 28.

Lt Colin Churcher. HMS Vernon, Pembroke, Saker, Hubberston, Safeguard, President, and Yarmouth. Sept 29. Aged 91.

Lt John E McMullan RNRV. RNAS Abbotsinch, 882 & 768 NAS also HMS Searcher. 2017.

Lt Walter H Whitelegg. HMS Osprey, Bulwark, Neptune, Jufair, Caledonia and Ark Royal. Nov 12. Aged 85.

Alison Robins CPO W/T. Served 1940-45. Trained as a WRNS stewardess at RNC Greenwich, she later learnt Morse code, changed category, and soon became a Chief Petty Officer WRNS (Wireless Telegraphist). 1941 drafted to the Y-service station at Scarborough, searching wireless frequencies for German transmissions which also played a role in the hunt for the Bismarck. She also served at Withernsea on the Yorkshire coast, Felixstowe, Trimmingham, Sheringham in Norfolk, St Davids, Wales and Torquay. Her final draft in 1944 was to London to search captured documents for names and evidence of war crimes. Oct 15. Aged 97.

Albert R Wilson PO. Served 1942-46 at HMS Raleigh, Drake, Activity, King Alfred, Collingwood, Vernon and HMS Bambrorough Castle on Arctic Convoys during WW2. Life Member of ex-Castle Class Corvette Association. Dec 3. Aged 94.

Fred Martin. Served 1955-67 in HMS Sluys, Eagle, Loch Lomond, Berry Head, Ashanti and Adamant. RN Engineer Association. Nov 18. Aged 82.

Barry Smith LEM. Served 1960-71 HMS St Vincent (D280), Collingwood, Whirlwind, Torquay, seconded to Kenyan Navy (65-67), Tenby and RNAD Plymouth. Nov 19. Aged 73.

John Morrish AB RP2. Served 1942-46 HMS Glendower, Valkyrie, Bann and Collingwood. River Class Frigate Association Dec 1. Aged 93.

Brenda Hannigan (nee Martin) Wren Steward. Served 1947-49 HMS Drake. Involved with the Normandy Veterans, member of the Wrens Association and former president of Ellesmere British Legion. Nov 28. Aged 88.

Royal Naval Association

David Wilson FCWEA. Joined as an Ordnance Artificer 1954 and served HMS Hermes, Lochinvar and Duncansby Head. Trained for the Submarine Service from 1962, completing in 1966 as a system launcher technician and served as Chief Missile Launcher in Resolution (66-73), Revenge (76-78), Polaris Training School as an Instructor (73-76 and 78-80) then again in Resolution (80-81), completing a total of 21 nuclear deterrent patrols. Rosyth & West Fife RNA and Barrow branch of the Submariners Association. Nov 8. Aged 79.

Association of RN Officers/RNOC

Captain Robert M Lawson. BDLS Australia, Capt MCM, DNOR, FOF1, AUWE, HMS Warrior, Mohawk, Osprey, Ajax, Dryad, Victorious, Llandaff and Pellew. Nov 8. Aged 82.

Captain Robert E de M Leathes. FO AIB, MOD Weapons Dept, ACDS Ops, Dir Naval and Tactical Control, HMS Glamorgan, Nubian, Victory RNB, Bellerophon, Alert, Eagle, Ganges, Uganda, Zephyr, Gabbard, Undine, Coquette and Dryad. Aged 93.

Captain Trevor M Quarendon. Naval Weather Service Dept, NATO, BRNC Dartmouth, RNEC Manadon, HMS Collingwood, Nelson, Bulwark, President, Mercury, and Bermuda. Nov 20. Aged 90.

Cdr Robert E B Budgett. Gibraltar Dockyard, HMS Collingwood, Caledonia, Sheffield, Figgard, Hawke, Ariel, Pembroke and King George V. June 14. Aged 90.

Cdr David M A H Hamilton. HMS Whelp, Offa, Fulmar, Vengeance, Theseus, Indomitable, Albion, Ark

Royal, Victorious, RNAS Ford and RAN Nariba; also CO 892 & 899 NAS. 894 NAS. Nov 10. Aged 91.

Cdr David J Lawrence. HMS Vernon, Brinton, Scarborough and Hermes. Nov 29. Aged 78.

Lt Cdr Timothy W Clowes. HMS Mercury II, Sheba, Whirlwind, Ceylon, Ganges and Cumberland. 2017.

Lt Cdr Cornelius Glanton. HMS Defiance, Maidstone, Sea Eagle, Glamorgan, Alert, Cambridge, Duncan, Ganges and Opossum. 2017. Aged 94.

Lt Ian G S Hamilton. HMS Daedalus, Terror, Centaur and Fulmar. Aug 17. Aged 87.

Lt Francis Howitt. HMS Perseus and Victorious. Aug 24.

Lt Cdr Peter F Jackson. HMS Lochinvar, President, Camperdown, Cheviot and Ariel. 2017.

Lt Cdr Peter D Leach. HMS Bellerophon, Newcastle, Cochrane, Defiance, Sanderling and Gorleston. Nov 19. Aged 94.

Lt Cdr Colin Maitland-Dougall. HMS Cochrane, Naiad, Mercury, Gossamer, Protector and Hornet. Oct 30. Aged 83.

Lt Cdr Anthony A Michielson. HMS Lochinvar, Terror, Daedalus, Falcon and Swiftsure. Aged 87.

Lt Cdr B Parr RD* RNR. Mersey Division RNR. Nov 28. Aged 84.

Lt Thomas M Nolan. Dir of Naval

Recruiting. Nov 30. Aged 77.
Sub Lt Anthony J J Simonds-Gooding CBE. Oct 16. Aged 80.
Lt T R C Wilson RMR. Scotland RMR. Nov 7. Aged 78.

Submariners Association
Paddy Bronte-Hearn PO Tel. Served 1945-54 in HM Submarines Seraph, Trespasser, Selene, Stygian, Token, Sportsman, Scotsman, Sirdar and Scythian. Gatwick branch. Nov 2. Aged 93.

David Pritchard AB. Served 1956-58 in HM Submarines Aeneas (56-57), Sea Scout (57) and Amphin (57-58). Lincoln branch. Nov 4. Aged 81.

Jim Wallace L/Sto. Served 1953-58 in HM Submarines Tireless, Token, Teredo, Sanguine, Sturdy and Seneschal. Merseyside branch. Nov 13. Aged 85.

David Burr PO Stwd. Served 1970-81 in HM Submarines Resolution, Cachalot, Sovereign, Narwhal, Opportune, Splendid and Valiant (spare crew). Plymouth branch. Nov 24. Aged 69.

Algerines Association
Gerry Onslow AB. Served HMS Flying Fish.

Derek Haskins LSM. Served HMS Rattlesnake.
Leslie Carter ORD. ART. Served HMS Rinaldo Nov 16. Aged 87.

Reunions

March
RN Communications Association. AGM and dinner/dance to be held at the Palace Hotel, Buxton March 8-10. Further information from association secretary Carl Beeson on 07807 347509 or noseeb@sky.com

HMS Surprise Association
reunion to be held at the Hadleigh Hotel, Eastbourne, March 23-26. Members and guests welcome. For more information call Geoff Prentice on 01394 274813 or geoff.prentice@virginmedia.com

April
HMS Aisne 1966-68. A reunion for all those who served on the last commission is to be held at Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford, April 27-30. For more details telephone 07531 546185 or contact nigeljest@hotmail.co.uk or enquiries@iowtours.com

May
HMS Saintes Association reunion to be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, Friday May 4 to Monday May 7. Members and friends welcome. Contact Ron Miles on 01404 43177 or 38 Cypress Close, Honiton EX14 2YW.

County Class Destroyers Association reunion to be held at the Cavendish Hotel, Torquay May 18-21. Contact the chairman of CCDA, Danny Shea, on 01527 869012 or email charland4@hotmail.co.uk

August
WRNS 1966. A reunion to be

Sports Lottery

November 4: £5,000 – AB R Baillie; £1,800 – LH I Bushnell; £800 – Cpl D White; £600 – AB K Ives; £500 – PO G Mitchell; £400 – Lt Cdr P Boakes.

November 11: £5,000 – Cpl J Cooper; £1,800 – Lt Cdr D Stanbury; £800 – Sub Lt R Martin; £600 – CPO M Faulkner; £500 – LH D Richardson; £400 – CPO D Lowe.

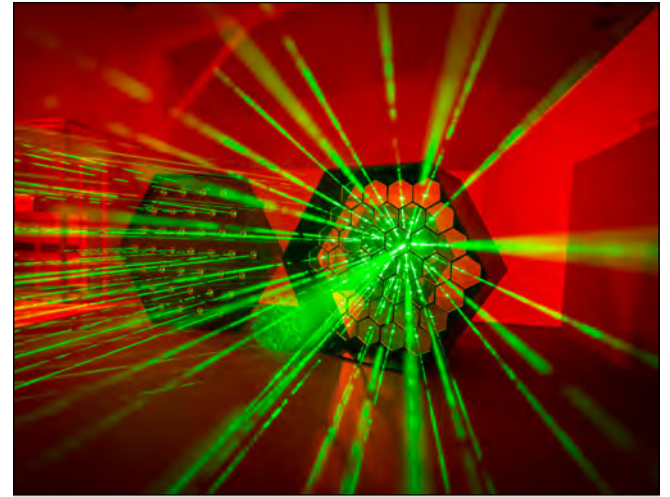
November 18: £5,000 – CPO C Knight; £1,800 – LH E Hindle; £800 – AB A Miller; £600 – PO M Rodway; £500 – C/Sgt A Neighbour; £400 – Lt G Blick.

November 25: £5,000 – Cpl M Gill; £1,800 – AB D Williams; £800 – AB W McGuinness; £600 – CPO L Braes; £500 – AB L Adams; £400 – PO R Wilmot.

Talking Navy News

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in February's Noticeboard must be received by January 12



UK laser centre of excellence opened

A NEW 'centre of excellence' for the development and testing of advanced laser technology has been opened by QinetiQ at its HQ in Farnborough, Hampshire.

The new facility, named Dragonworks, will serve as a test bed for all technologies associated with high-energy lasers for military or commercial applications.

It includes a clean room for work with sensitive optical equipment away from contaminants, and the UK's only Reflective Hazard Assessment Tool (RHAT), which examines how laser energy is reflected from different surfaces.

Further additions to the building over the coming months will create an environment in which customers can conduct full-scale testing of high-energy lasers.

The first project to be undertaken at Dragonworks

will be the assembly and testing of the laser directed energy weapon (LDEW) currently in development by the UK's Dragonfire consortium.

Components will arrive early this year, when QinetiQ will begin building the weapon's laser source in the clean room.

The laser source will undergo a process of evaluation and adjustment before being integrated with the beam director.

The project will culminate in operation at full-power under test conditions inside the facility this summer before it is transported to MOD Shoeburyness for long-range outdoor trials.

Data collected using the RHAT will inform the safety case for these and future trials, ensuring the reflectivity of targets is fully understood and any risk mitigated accordingly.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

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Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

Please send in Reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event.

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PO-werful display

British record for senior rate

A SENIOR rate broke the British bench press record at the British Drug Free Powerlifting Association Masters Championships.

POMA(SM) Chris Martin, who is vice chairman of the Royal Navy Powerlifting Association, competed against some of the UK's strongest men in a cold gym in Glasgow.

The competition was open to athletes over the age of 40 and is broken down into five-year age categories; 40-44 Masters 1, 45-49 Masters 2 etc.

With athletes going all the way up to Masters 8 (75-79) there was literally hundreds of years of experience.

Already the British Bench Press Champion PO Martin entered with the intention of breaking the British record.

He started off by taking the Scottish record, pressing 227.5kg. For his second attempt he pressed 237.5kg, surpassing the previous British record by 2.5kg.



● PO Chris Martin in action during the championships and, right, receiving the BDFPA bench press trophy from William Brown

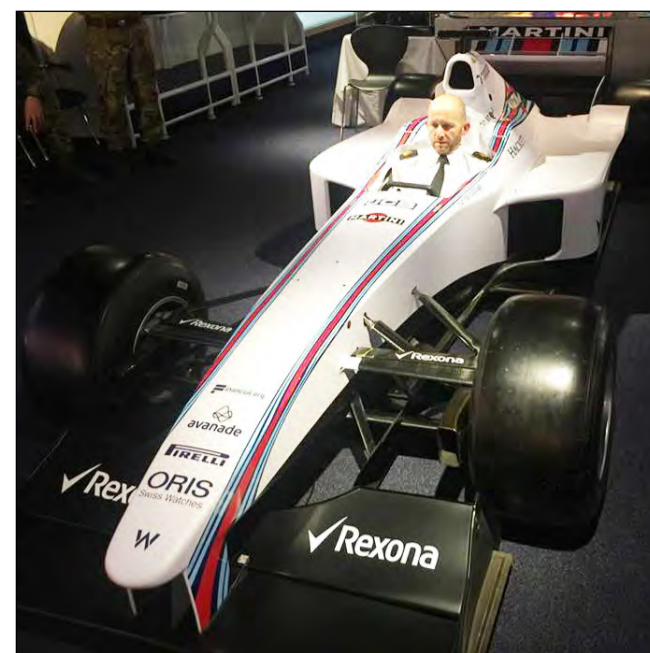
A third attempt saw an unsuccessful effort at 245kg.

PO Martin was awarded the best Bench press trophy of the championships, having lifted nearly 50kg more than any other athlete.

He will compete next in the British Championships in March

with a view to going to the World Championships in Glasgow later this year.

For more information about Royal Navy Powerlifting search for the Facebook page or contact Chris directly at: christhepowerlifter@gmail.com



Taste of life in the fast lane

CPO GARY MASKELL tries out a racing car for size during a visit to the Formula 1 Williams Team Facility in Grove, Oxfordshire.

Members of the Oxford URNU were joined by Officer Cadets from London URNU and SNCOs from Oxford University Officer Training Corps for the visit.

The group toured the Williams Heritage Collection – the largest private collection of Grand Prix cars in the world with more than 40 on display charting more than 30 years of the team's history.

The tour was led by Sam, who recently started working with the team, who gave an extremely interesting, informative and in depth brief on the history of the vehicles, the drivers and the team itself.

As well as the exclusive Grand Prix car collection the group were also shown the Technology Exhibition, the Trophy Room and the Champions' Gallery.

After the tour the group met Sir Frank Williams, the founder of the Williams team, who talked about some of the highlights during his long career in motor racing.

Sir Frank mentioned that one of his favourite movies is *Top Gun*, with his favourite quote from the film being "I feel the need, the need for speed!"

He then offered the visitors the rare opportunity of a personally-led tour of the production factory where new Formula 1 cars are assembled.

The factory production floor was visited as well as the chassis assembly bays, the driving simulators and the advanced model construction department.

The Guy Hudson Memorial Trust, who provide support to the unit, agreed to finance the visit as an engineering education.

CPO Maskell, Coxswain and 2I/C of the Oxford URNU, said: "As a huge Formula 1 fan, the visit was fantastic – everyone we met was hugely engaging and



● Above, London and Oxford URNU members with F1 legend Sir Frank Williams; Below, the visitors are given a tour by Williams team member Sam



genuinely proud of what they do. It was an honour to meet and chat to Sir Frank.

"Although I was taken aback when Sir Frank explained that he wanted to join the military when he was younger, he was amused when I said I thought his current career choice hadn't turned out too bad."

Lt Will Jones, Commanding Officer of the Oxford URNU, added: "The visit was absolutely amazing; we saw scores of world-famous cars, a huge amount of ground-breaking technology, met a motor racing legend and were given an extremely rare tour of the production factory which, as an engineer, was genuinely fascinating."

The Oxford URNU members who took part were: Lt Will Jones, CPO Gary Maskell, OC Henry Warrender. From London URNU Mid Matt Williams and OC Keira Reavill, From Oxford UOTC S/Sgt Matt Edwards, C/Sgt Rob Owen and WO2 George Scott.



In the zone...

ROYAL Marines Sgt Daniel Birks is a picture of concentration as he gets into the zone ahead of his boxing match.

Sgt Birks was one of a number of boxers who competed at 1 Assault Group Royal Marines inaugural southwest boxing dinner.

The event was held in the Senior Rates mess in HMS Drake and was attended by former world heavyweight champion Frank Bruno.

Pictures: LPhoto Caroline Davies



Northwood return to action after ten years with victory

RUGBY players revived the Northwood team this year after a break of ten years.

The team entered the mixed O2 Touch Rugby League, training once a week. After a while the players wanted to move on to the contact sport.

Northwood's Mick Foley also played for Old Albanians – and a game between the two was arranged.

The game was always close with both teams making use of a large bench.

Northwood scored first through Tim Fretter but this was cancelled out by the OA's Chad Williams to make the score 5-5.

Just before the break CPOPT Big T, aka Tony Newcombe, came up trumps with a try to make the half-time score 10-5.

Northwood made some changes at half time, and came out of the blocks just as keen and enthusiastic.

OA had a few runs that looked as though Northwood's lead would have been taken over. Then, despite multiple phases of possession in the opposing 22, Fretter came up again with another well-deserved try.

OA found themselves back defending their own try line. But a break came and then a touch-down with a well-worked try to make the score 15-12.

Referee, Peter 'Polly' Poulain kept a tight grip on proceedings, keeping 30 men on the pitch at all times.

Northwood's Ian Miller picked up on a loose ball and scored another try to make the score 20-12 with eight minutes left on the clock.

Man mountain George Middleton crashed over in the corner but Mr Poulain determined that he had been held up by Big T.

The visitors pushed hard and pushed over the line in the corner and converted to bring the score back to 20-19 but it was not enough and Northwood won the match.

President of Rwanda RFU President Aירה Alexander thanked Darren Ead for supporting Rwanda RFU over the last 13 years, providing boots, kit, balls, tag belts and help with training school level to national level.

During the game, charity donations were made and the club managed to raise £260, half of which has been donated to Help for Heroes and half will be sent to Rwanda RFU.

The team will continue to train and are looking to play another game early in 2018.

Report: Cpl John Creese, RM PTI



● Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock with members of the RN Squash team, from left, Sgt Pat McHugh, Cdr Steve Shaw, Rear Admiral Tony Radakin, Sub Lt Steve Warren, Lt Cdr Phil Clarke, AET Conrad Young and Sub Lt TJ Walters

More silverware for sports stars

The best of the Royal Navy's sporting talent was formally recognised at the 2017 Sports Awards.

Held in the wardroom at Portsmouth Naval Base, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock led the celebrations for the outstanding sports stars who have represented the Navy across a wide range of activity over the previous 12 months.

Sportswoman of the Year went to Leading Naval Nurse Samantha Eagle for outstanding achievements in swimming.

LNN Eagle holds more than 20 Royal Navy records at various strokes and distances and was also a multi-medal winner at the World Masters in New Zealand.

The NATO Cup for the Sportsman of the Year was presented to Marine George Crotty for his exceptional talents in Royal Navy boxing.

He was described as a prodigiously talented boxer, and the Royal Navy's 2016 Young Sportsman of the Year is now the England and GB Light Heavyweight Champion and a 2018 Commonwealth Games hopeful.

"2017 has been the perfect year for me really, I'm really proud and it's thanks to the Royal Marines and the Royal Navy for all the support they've given me and time off work to train that I'm where I am," said Mne Crotty.

Highly-renowned coach POPT Steve Lockton was awarded the Sports Official of Year Cup for his outstanding commitment to Rugby League.

POPT Lockton was described as being the heart of the Royal Navy's Rugby League team and instrumental in the team bringing home the Inter-Service title in three of the last four years as coach.

The Royal Navy Team of the Year, which was presented with the Sports Control Board Cup, were the Royal Navy Squash team for achievements over an outstanding year, including bringing home the Inter-Service



● Sportsman of the Year Mne George Crotty



● Sportswoman of the Year LNN Samantha Eagle

title for the first time in over 55 years.

The Navy team were described as having "an exceptionally strong work ethic and immense determination" over the previous season which resulted in the Men's Senior Squash team dominating the competition right up to the championships at HMS Temeraire in February.

Young Sportsman of the Year was awarded to Midshipman James French for his achievements in Winter Sports.

He has won both Royal Navy and Inter-Service Alpine and Telemark Championships and remains the reigning GB Telemark Champion.

Pictures: LPhoto Louise George



● Sports Official of the Year POPT Steve Lockton and Young Sportsman of the Year Mid James French



Big victories for small team

FOUR Royal Navy paddlers joined larger RAF and Army teams for the Inter-Service Slalom Championships on the river Teifi in Wales.

Olympic gold medallist Tim Baillie made the trip to the championships, giving an inspirational talk on how he and Etienne Stott battled to get to London 2012.

A day of racing saw the Army take the overall honours, with several trophies won by the Navy and RAF.

In the K1 the Army took first and second place, with the RAF in third. The Navy finished fifth, ninth and 12th overall.

The C1 race saw the RN's AB Mark Coleman take first place – the first time the Senior Service have won the trophy since 1976.

In the C2 it was a very close final with only three seconds between first and

second places respectively. The Army took the honours, with the C2 crew of AB Coleman and ET(ME) Chris Harmer taking second.

The team race saw another Army first and second, with the RAF taking third.

With small numbers and limited time, the year was one of the more successful for the Navy team.

AB Coleman has shown an interest to progress further in the C1 discipline of kayak slalom and the team looks towards gaining entry into Premier division from Division 1 in the National Canoe Slalom events.

The RN team, pictured right with Tim Baillie, comprised: ET(ME) Harmer, HMS Queen Elizabeth; AB Coleman, HM Submarines; Mne Jon Mayes, CTM MT and AB Sophie Roche, HMS Westminster.



Record-breakers hold on to U23 title

THE U23 Royal Navy Rugby Union team won the Inter-Service trophy for a record-breaking third successive year with a draw against the Army at Burnaby Road.

The first quarter of the match was evenly matched. Both sides made handling errors and conceded a number of penalties, although within seven minutes the Navy had to mount a resilient defence to prevent the Army from scoring the first try.

The Navy's first opportunity to get onto the scoreboard was as a result of a penalty, however although the penalty kick had the range, it did not go over the posts.

A second penalty attempt on goal followed a few minutes later and again missed.

With both sides conceding penalties, it was only a matter of time before a card was awarded and at 28 minutes Gareth Rees was awarded a yellow card.

With the watching crowd now expecting the Army to take full advantage of a reduced Navy side, ill discipline resulted in another penalty against the Army.

Jackson Acreman was able to successfully kick for goal, breaking the stalemate and giving the Navy a 3-0 lead.

At the restart the Army mounted a determined attack that was halted when Gnr Richards was tackled into touch.

The Navy mounted a strong attack from the lineout, which was stopped following a high tackle.

This penalty was once again within range of the boot of Acreman and the Navy now held a 6-0 lead.

The Navy were able to mount a strong attack following the restart and following another penalty, the Navy made a decision to kick for touch. Winning the lineout, the Navy mounted a fierce attack and crossed



● Gareth Rees returned from deployment; Team captain Scott Makepeace



the goal line.

The ball was held up and a scrum formed on the five-metre line. A strong drive by the forwards resulted in the first try of the match by Dan Mason. Acreman converted and the Navy led 13-0, at half time.

The second half began with the Army applying continued pressure on the Navy defence.

Sig Davetanivalu scored the Army's first try, which was converted by Spr Mercer, resulting in a score of 13-7. Within minutes both sides had once again conceded penalties, however Acreman again scored extending the Navy's lead to 16-7.

A determined Army attack led to a second try, which was not converted. The Army conceded yet another penalty after the restart, which Ackerman again converted.

With only minutes of the game left and the score 19-12, the Army refused to be beaten and yet another resolute attack led to a third

try which was successfully converted to tie the score at 19-19.

As the final whistle blew the Navy celebrated the draw that was enough to ensure victory in the Inter-Services championship.

The Senior XV campaign begins with a match against Oxford University at Burnaby Road on February 7, while the Women's XV begin their campaign with a match against Gosport and Fareham at HMS Collingwood on January 17.

Team: Ben Love, Sam Vernon, Nathan Treveil, Ben Roberts, Scott Makepeace (Captain), Dan Mason, Jarrard Hayler, Shaun Walker Gareth Rees, Dan Rutter, James Griggs, Ben Jeacock, Brad Jones, Charlie Heard, Jackson Acreman.

Replacements: Gareth Yeomans, Isaac Salt, Kai Allton, Joe Morgan, Jonny Stoppard, Nick Burgess, Matt Bratton, Leo Hood, Jonny Stoppard, Josh Townsend

Words: John Brennan
Pictures: Royal Navy Rugby Union/John Walton and Keith Woodland

Free as a bird in the Himalayas

SHARING the skies with golden eagles, ravens, and the huge Himalayan Griffins proved the highlights of a UK Armed Forces paragliding trip.

Surg Lt Cdr Emma Holland, along with Cdr Jerry Owens, were the Royal Navy representatives in the team who travelled to India to experience one of the most iconic of paragliding venues. Surg Lt Cdr Holland describes the adventure.

The vibrancy of India really made the expedition; we were immediately immersed within the culture.

Curry croissants for breakfast, spicy paratha breads for lunch and a wide array of beautiful curries for dinner; while these were a delicious and authentic taste of India, we all looked forward to our first meals back in the UK.

The Bollywood music was a delight to the ears and entertained us during the many taxi journeys to and from the launch and landing sites.

Instead of the classic dice, the taxis' and tuk tuks' dashboards had wonderful deities and prayer wheels spinning.

We flew into Delhi and had connecting flights to Dharamsala, then transited to Bir along some less than salubrious roads littered with pot holes, street dogs, tuk tuks, and plenty of loose and holy cows.

Bir is labelled the 'Paragliding Capital of India' and renowned the world over for its ecotourism, spiritual studies and meditation.

It hosted the 2015 Paragliding World Championships and certainly lived up to our expectations.

Bir itself is also home to a Tibetan refugee settlement with several beautiful Buddhist monasteries and the Dalai Lama residing nearby.

There is also an eclectic mix of a population with Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and Christians. We met pilots from many other nations; USA, Canada, Germany, Finland, India and Russia and this important aspect of the trip



● Emma was joined by a Himalayan Griffon during a flight; The giant flag in Delhi's Central Park



helped us to understand the local environment, and adapt accordingly.

We intended to fly solely from Billing in the Himachal Pradesh region as the take-off site and Bir for our landing; collectively it is known as "Bir Billing", however local elections meant an unexpected ban was imposed on the third flying day.

With no definitive timescale for the ban we used this day to explore some of the local culture. A few within the group discovered a hot thermal spring and waterfalls an hour's walk into the mountains, some took the infamous Royal Enfields out for a spin on the mountain roads and others sampled the delights of Bir and caught up on their jet lag.

The locals were exceptionally inviting and warm. One pilot, Maj Peter Jennings, landed on private property and was subsequently invited to the owner's daughter's wedding – unfortunately, he had to decline the offer.

I landed out in Panjiala after a two-hour flight and was offered help to pack my kit, some food and a friendly taxi journey. The trips were fascinating with tea plantations, rice paddies, tropical fruits and wonderful sweet flowers, monkeys, yaks, mongooses and more.

The Indian Armed Forces were excellent hosts and offered us food, drink and transport. We had a lovely dinner with them and enjoyed exchanging paragliding stories.

We thoroughly enjoyed the excellent hospitality of our host nation and were made to feel very welcome by our friend Col Reece and his pilots visiting on their paragliding camp.

He was also a search-and-rescue pilot for the region and so a useful, knowledgeable contact we were grateful to have.

Due to the flying ban we were forced to leave Bir and moved six hours to Manali.

Manali town had far more to offer than Bir with a wide array of different cuisines; Chinese, Western, Indian, Italian and American foods.

It was certainly interesting watching some tandems take off in tailwinds and local tandem wings which may have seen better days.

The flying conditions were more extreme, higher altitudes, longer transits and more wonderful views.

We were acutely aware of the risks with such environmental conditions and the altitude. We trekked up some distance to reach many of our launches, literally taking our breath away in the thin mountain air.

The wildlife was also a spectacular demonstration of what India can offer. While flying we found ourselves alongside some wonderful birds.

The sheer size of the wing span of the vultures made your heart skip a beat as it flew closer, causing many of us to communicate with them in the air.

A collision with one of these wouldn't

end well. At one time a vulture flew directly towards my wing only a few meters away, it was distracted whilst eating something meaty in the air. I whistled to it and it looked up from its meal that I was rudely interrupting and made haste to fly away.

On our return we stopped in Delhi and sampled some delights of the city close to the airport. The metro and tuk tuks were a fun way to travel.

We saw the enormous India flag looming over the city's Central Park and saw some charming restaurants and shops.

Lots of personal bests were achieved and all pilots exceeded their altitude personal bests; WO Chris Williams topped his cross country distance.

This really was the experience of a lifetime and also an excellent training opportunity for the British Club Challenge rounds and the Inter-Service Competition next summer.

We were looked after exceptionally well by our experienced guides, including Toby Colombe (the tandem cross-country distance world record holder), Yuki Sato, the first female in the Paragliding World Cup in India, and Mike Agnew for their wealth of experience, patience, and commitment to all the logistical challenges we faced.

If you wish to find out more about paragliding in the Royal Navy then please contact Lt Cdr Tim Oatley RN (membership Sec on 07528 069052)



Anglers net cash and fish

FORMER Royal Marine Kelvin Daniels is pictured with former Royal Navy PO Roger Fulbrook at the ninth annual Forces Carp Classic

The event raises thousands of pounds for military charity Blesma, The Limbless Veterans and Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH).

The competition, which took place at Abbey Lakes in France, was the best attended to date with around 100 anglers from serving military, veterans and the emergency services taking part.

Organised by veterans Russ Marsh and Tim Gray, there were plenty of prizes up for grabs including Lake Champion (the competition takes place over five lakes) and Overall Pair (the pair of anglers who catch the heaviest amount of fish over the five lakes).

The event was the fourth that Blesma have been involved in, and the fishing was interspersed with fundraising activities such as fishing games and raffles. These raised £8,000 which was split between Blesma and GOSH.

Roger, an amputee from Portland in Dorset, said: "Kelvin Daniels and myself competed for the third time on behalf of Blesma.

"As with the previous two years we were made very welcome by the other competitors who are serving members of all the forces and like ourselves retirees.

"The match is fished to raise funds for two great causes and over the years they have raised a lot of money. Kelvin is the star of our team and although we both failed in the first year to catch he has kept us in the frame with fish over the last two years. I have still to connect and hold onto a fish so fingers cross for next year."

This year the competition enters its tenth year in its current form, and so Russ and Tim are planning a special invitation-only competition to thank those who have supported them.

Battle of the bases

THE famous battling instinct of the Royal Navy was displayed at an Inter-Establishment sporting contest at HMS Collingwood.

The Battle of the Bases pitted Phase 2 trainees from Collingwood in Fareham against their counterparts from Gosport's HMS Sultan in a range of sporting activities.

Football, rugby (including female tag rugby), hockey and timed assault course runs were held, along with a superteams event which saw two teams of ten trainees on a timed relay around ten stances including squat jumps, rowing, cycling, press-ups and kettle-bell swings.

Having failed to beat their rivals in the last fixture, HMS Collingwood was determined to redress the balance and won the football, rugby, superteams and assault course events, with the hockey clash ending in a draw. HMS Sultan triumphed in the female tag rugby event.

The Commanding Officer of Collingwood, Capt Rob Vitali, presented the trophy to the proud winners.



● Left, A Buddhist temple in Bir; Below, Emma is pictured with Flt Lt Chris Williams and Maj Peter Jennings at Rohtang Pass; Right, A vulture





Marine life

Surfers prepare for championships by training in the Indian Ocean



ROYAL Marine Andrew Briggs rides the waves during a training camp in the Maldives.

He, along with members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Surf Association, travelled to the Indian Ocean to prepare for the Surfing Championships.

The group spent ten days based on a boat, surfing up to four times a day, taking in breaks (a break causes a wave) such as machines, farms, jails and mushrooms – names of breaks to the uninitiated.

The weather in the Maldives wasn't what everyone expected; storms prevented the group getting to the breaks on some days, so the time was passed snorkelling, swimming and fishing.

While some days were lost to poor weather conditions when the surf was phenomenal.

Many of the breaks are formed by the Indian Ocean currents meeting the shallow atolls and they form waves over the reefs that surround the islands.

This is where it gets interesting for those who are used to surfing in the UK.

The waves in the Maldives are faster, invariably bigger and when you get used to that, you're up on your board, slicing through the wave, you look ahead, or sometimes down (not that you're supposed to), and see rocks either sticking up in front of you or so close to the surface that your fins drag on them.

The best surfers on the tour were able to take advantage of everything on offer, fazed by nothing, rubbing shoulders with the locals and perfecting the next manoeuvre with which they wowed the judges at the champs.

For everybody, the consistency of the waves allowed them to develop their skills and it was evident that many of the intermediate surfers had blossomed at the surf champs as they

now find the slower UK waves much more manageable.

Cdr Paul Matthews, Lt Cdr Rich Carthew, Lt Oliver Judd, Lt Devarun Chowdhury, Sub Lt Garreth Hughes, CPO Paul Stainsby, C/Sgt Andy Williams, Sgt John Cauldfield, PO Kelly Gooch, L/Cpl James Bartlett, MA Terina Thomas, Mne Andy Briggs, Mne Patrick Daniel and Mne Darcan Graham made the trip to the archipelago.

The RNRMSA covers long and short board disciplines, body boarding and the growing element of stand up paddleboarding (SUP) wave riding.

The 2017 RN/RM Surf Championships were held at Tolcarne Beach, Newquay, (the impending Hurricane Ophelia created un-surfable conditions at Perran Sands, very near to the old Penhale Camp that many will remember from their days at HMS Raleigh).

There are an enormous number of surf spots in the UK, but sometimes the club suffers from a lack of consistency to prepare competitors and push them to improve.

The RNRMSA holds a spring training tour (often to Portugal) every year in the run-up to the Inter-Service Surf Championships and bi-annually travel further afield in the search of bigger waves and new challenges.

If you would like to find out more, please visit the club's website www.surfnavy.com or contact Lt Cdr Rich Carthew, the membership secretary.

It's easy to get started – we run regular beginners' weekends or if you want to take an office/unit team out for the day we can provide equipment and instruction.

Report: Lt Cdr Rich Carthew
Pictures: Sub Lt Garreth Hughes

