



NAVY NEWS

JULY 2018



They're here

Fleet Air Arm pilot Lt Cdr Adam Hogg touches down in his F-35B as the first of the nation's Lightning Force fifth-generation strike fighters arrives in the UK (see pages 2-3).

Picture: Sgt Nik Howe

Cat's whiskers

Anglo-French exercise off coast of Brittany

Sayonara

Fleet Flagship Albion bids farewell to Japan

d'Arc view

847 NAS shine on Asia-Pacific deployment

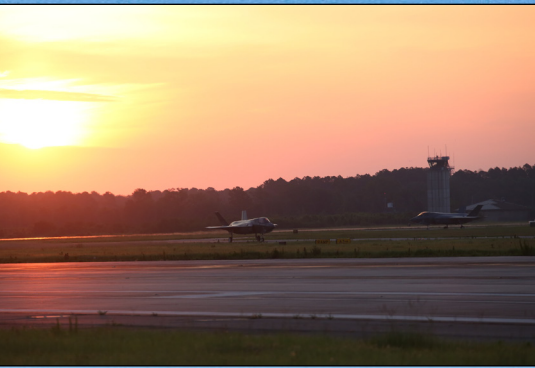


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After years of hard work involving thousands of Armed Forces

Lightning strike



THE flight of more than 4,000 miles took around eight-and-a-half hours.

A mere heartbeat when compared to the years of work which have gone into the historic moment of seeing the nation's first F-35B Lightning fifth-generation aircraft land on UK soil.

It was back in 1992 when work began on the new strike fighter programme in the USA.

Eight years ago the Royal Navy bade farewell to the Harrier, signalling the start of a huge effort to maintain skills, with pilots and groundcrew working Stateside on long-lead programmes.

The first of Britain's F-35Bs arrived two months ahead of schedule in a major milestone for the Royal Navy and RAF.

The jets, which will provide the aerial punch for HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, touched down at RAF Marham in Nelson's Norfolk, which will be the land base of the Lightning Force, featuring both RN and RAF pilots, engineers, avionics specialists, armourers and office staff.

"The arrival marks a significant milestone in the regeneration of carrier strike," said Cdre Andrew Betton, Commander of UK Carrier Strike Group.

"With the commissioning of HMS Queen Elizabeth and the completion of her sea trials, the next major step for the development of carrier strike capability is embarkation of the first trials aircraft towards the end of the year.

"The embarkation of 617 Squadron will follow shortly thereafter but each is an incremental step towards the regeneration of the UK's Sovereign carrier strike capability.

"The introduction of these two new supercarriers and embarked Lightning squadrons will give Her Majesty's government unrivalled, unparalleled utility on the world stage, able to bring fixed-wing aviation to bear wherever the government may require it."

The F-35Bs took off from Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort in South Carolina and were flown by British pilots of the newly-reformed 617 Squadron, which was immortalised by the famous Dambusters' raid of World War 2. Around 150 UK personnel continue to train in the USA.

The second plane to touch down at Marham was flown by Lt Cdr Adam Hogg, who was met by Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key.

"We may be the pilots that arrived here today but there's been a lot of people who have enabled us to get here," said Lt Cdr Hogg.

"It's a great moment, we are very pleased to be back. The clouds parted as we came over the UK and we could see our home base for the first time."

Lt Cdr Hogg was preceded in landing by officer commanding 617 squadron, Wg Cdr John Butcher, who said: "What a day, what an opportunity for us to show the F-35 off."

"It was a good flight across from the United States, the weather was in our favour and it felt absolutely brilliant bringing the jets back here."

Describing how there were intense periods as well as moments where the pilots could relax during the sortie, he said the jets coped well with the trip, that they carried out nine refuelling serials, and how there were no issues with any of them during the crossing.

An RAF Voyager, call sign Ascot 9101, supported the first four F-35Bs, providing air-to-air refuels on their trans-Atlantic journey. Lightning has a range of about 1,000 miles, hence the need for air-to-air refuelling (aka 'tanking'), several times.

A fifth Lightning jet watched as first refuelling was successfully completed, then turned back to Beaufort.

As the formation flew up the eastern seaboard past New York, each of the F-35s was refuelled three times.

On reaching Newfoundland, two Voyagers from Gander in Canada overtook the formation and the F-35s divided into pairs and joined each tanker for the onward journey to the UK.

"Air-to-air refuelling is about providing a slick and easy solution for the F-35 pilots," said Voyager captain Sqd Ldr Jonathan Dainty of 101 Sqn.

"We sat down with them the day before the trial, which was invaluable. It's been a collaborative effort."

Wg Cdr Butcher added: "The combat capability that the F-35 brings is absolutely exceptional."

"When you are looking to have the fighting edge you need F-35 and certainly F-35B – working Royal Air Force and Royal Navy side by side gives us that combat air advantage and we can do it from the land and sea. That is really what makes it different."

Cadets, military personnel, as well as the families of those from 617 Squadron and the wider base lined up on the edge of the taxiway to watch the wheels hit the tarmac. And as the jets pulled up in a line and turned their engines off following the landing on to the runway, those watching could be heard clapping the new arrivals. Also watching were members of the RN Met Office, which was set up at the base in 2013.

617 Squadron will now spend the next six months working towards declaring initial operating capability from land by the end of December.

This autumn, the first landing of the F-35 will take place on HMS Queen Elizabeth in the next phase of trials. Having both ship and aircraft operating together for the first time will be another significant moment for the Armed Forces.

First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones said: "Ever since aircraft first operated to and from ships, the Royal Navy has been at the forefront of maritime aviation and the arrival of our first F-35Bs in the UK, flown by both RAF and Fleet Air Arm pilots, is another important milestone on the way to restoring our place as leaders in the field of aircraft carrier operations."

"Once combined with our new aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister ship HMS Prince of Wales, these extraordinary jets will sit at the heart of our country's globally-deployable expeditionary forces and provide the potent conventional deterrent we need to ensure our national security."

The Lightning, as the aircraft will be known in the UK, is the first to combine radar-evading stealth technology with supersonic speeds and the ability to conduct short take-offs and vertical landings.

Just like the upgrading of facilities in Portsmouth Naval Base, RAF Marham has undergone a huge transformation to welcome the F-35Bs.

Around £550m has been invested in the base, including an upgrade in facilities, resurfaced runways and the addition of new landing pads to accommodate the jet's ability to land vertically. The work, known as Project Anvil – keeping with the weather theme, because the anvil-shaped cumulonimbus cloud is where lightning comes from – saw around 2,500 contractors working at the station.

Before the arrival at Marham, the focus for personnel from HMS Queen Elizabeth was back in the USA, where sailors got their first taste of the jet they'll be working with before the hi-tech stealth fighter makes its debut on their flight deck.

Members of Flying Control and

flight deck handlers from the future flagship crossed the Atlantic to see live F-35B Lightning jets in action – giving them a flavour of the smells, noise and heat generated by the Navy's first fifth-generation fighter.

Their Portsmouth-based carrier is due to conduct flying trials with the state-of-the-art aircraft in the autumn off the eastern seaboard of the USA.

Preparations for that moment – nearly a decade after a Royal Navy warship last hosted a fast jet – have been taking place for months, even years, on both sides of the ocean.

The carrier's flight deck team have trained with replicas at Culdrose to get a feel for their size and weight as they move them around a mock-up of the new carrier's sprawling deck.

And useful though the models have been, they stop short of the experience with the real thing.

So around 20 sailors watched F-35B test aircraft BF-02 and BF-04 taxi, perform two vertical landings apiece, and conduct a couple short take-offs at Pax River air base, 50 miles outside Washington DC.

The ground reverberated as each aircraft approached the tarmac for its vertical landings, hovering for several seconds before descending.

Having watched the Pax experts handle the jets, the QE team took over, taxiing a working F-35B for the first time.

The carrier's Wings – Commander Air James Blackmore – said the few days at Pax proved invaluable for many of his team.

"It's the first time they've ever seen the jet or been up and close to it as it's performing its flight manoeuvres, so they got to feel the environment of what it's like, the sort of noise, the heat, the sound and the pressure of the aircraft, so that when it comes to deck for the first time, it's not a surprise," he added.

He flew the last Harrier to take off from HMS Ark Royal at the end of 2010 before both the jump jet and carrier passed into history.

"If you like, I almost closed down what we used to do," Cdr Blackmore added. "The fact that eight years later, I'm now here opening that back up with the team is really good."

Earlier this year Pax River saw former Royal Navy pilot Peter 'Whizzer' Wilson fly the final flight in the 11-year System Development and Demonstration programme.

The testing has seen more than 9,200 flights, accumulating more than 17,000 flight hours – nearly two years – for all three variants of the F-35.

The final development flight saw Wilson fly US Navy test aircraft CF-2 as it completed a mission to collect loads data while carrying external 2,000-pound GBU-31 Joint Direct Attack Munitions and AIM-9X Sidewinder heat-seeking missiles.



Forces personnel, the future is here... the future is now...

akes UK soil

More than 1,000 development flight test engineers, maintainers, pilots and support personnel took the three variants of the F-35 to their full flight capability to test aircraft performance and flying qualities.

The developmental flight test team completed 183 Weapon Separation Tests; 46 Weapons Delivery Accuracy tests; 33 Mission Effectiveness tests, which included numerous multi-ship missions of up to eight F-35s against advanced threats.

Five more UK F-35 are also expected to arrive from the US at RAF Marham by the end of this month or the beginning of next month. Overall the plan is buy 138 of the jets – 48 of them by 2025.

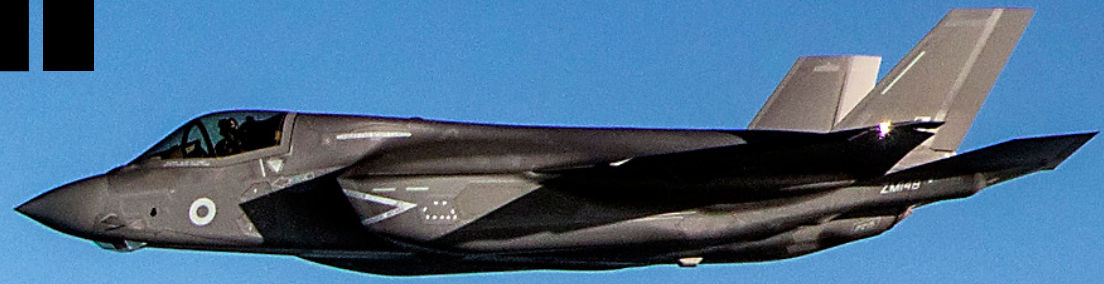
The UK currently has 15 F-35B aircraft in total, the remainder of which are stationed at MCAS Beaufort or Edwards Air Force Base in California, where they are involved in testing and training.

Around the world, there are now nearly 300 F-35 aircraft operating from 15 bases globally and the programme has achieved more than 140,000 flight hours.

The F-35 is the world's largest defence programme at over \$1.3 trillion, and UK industry is providing 15 per cent of every one of over 3,000 jets set for the global order book.

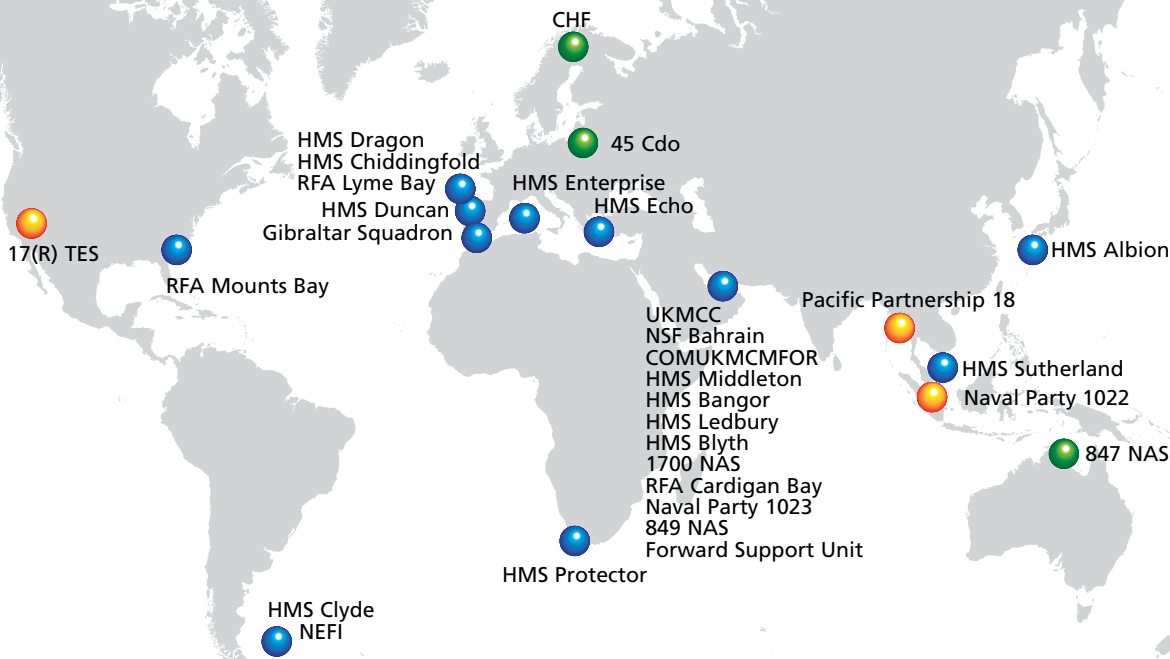
The second F-35B squadron, 809 NAS, is expected to stand up at Marham in 2023 and be operational by the end of 2024.

809 is being resurrected because its longest and strongest affiliation was with the Buccaneer bomber, a legendary low-level strike bomber flown by both the Fleet Air Arm and RAF.



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Northumberland
HMS Mersey
HMS Argyll
HMS Defender
HMS Diamond
HMS Hurworth
HMS St Albans
HMS Montrose
HMS Cattistock
HMS Westminster
HMS Queen Elizabeth
RFA Tidespring



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

FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

THE 'missing' piece in the UK Carrier Strike puzzle arrived in Britain as the nation's first **F-35B Lightning** aircraft touched down in Nelson's Norfolk (see pages 1-3). The strike fighters will debut on **HMS Queen Elizabeth** later this year.

But while all eyes were on the Fleet Air Arm, Royal Navy warships continued to operate around the world.

Fleet Flagship **HMS Albion** (see page 13) has left the Japanese city of Sasebo, the first Royal Navy vessel to visit the port in nearly 30 years. The amphibious assault ship has eight RN engineers from Torbay onboard and they talk about their work and the deployment in the Year of Engineering (see page 19).

Also in the region is **HMS Sutherland** (see page 17) and her ship's company paid their respects over the wrecks of HMS Prince of Wales and Repulse, both lost in December 1941.

Wildcats from **847 NAS** are also in the Asia-Pacific aboard the French assault ship FS Dixmude (see centre pages). The ship took part in a fleet review as the curtain-raiser to Exercise Komodo.

Heading east is **HMS Argyll** as the frigate departed Devonport (see page 5) for a nine-month deployment. She is the first Type 23 to head off equipped with the new Sea Ceptor air defence missile.

Nearer to home and **HMS Dragon**, **RFA Lyme Bay**, **HMS Chiddingfold** and Royal Marines from **45 Cdo** were among more than 2,000 military personnel taking part in exercise Catamaran 18 (see pages 14-15) off the coast of France.

The men of **Zulu Company, 45 Cdo**, were in Latvia, working alongside troops from 18 nations in Sabre Strike 2018 (see page 15). The huge exercise stretches from Poznan in western Poland through the woods and lakes of Masuria to eastern Latvia, with the ground combat phase focused on the Latvian Army's training areas outside Riga.

In the Mediterranean **HMS Duncan** went to the assistance of two Algerian fishermen, stranded at sea for four days (see page 6).

Fishermen were the focus of **HMS Mersey** (see page 9) as she undertook her Operational Sea Training in the Channel, allowing her crew to hone their board-and-search duties.

The first of the Royal Marines' next-generation 'flying buses' has been handed over (see page 14). The delivery of the first pale grey Merlin Mk4 marks the end of a six-year transformation of the **Commando Helicopter Force**.

The folding rotor heads/tail boom and a strengthened undercarriage with lashing points make the fourth variant perfectly suited for operations from HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

Emotions ran high as the crews of **HMS Shoreham** and **Brocklesby** left their respective homes in Faslane and Portsmouth for a 6,000-mile voyage to the Gulf (see page 7).

Last month marked the 50th anniversary of the first nuclear deterrent patrol by a Royal Navy submarine (see page 11). **HMS Resolution** left Gareloch – and later returned – unseen after completing the first of 229 nuclear deterrence patrols by Polaris-missile equipped boats.

Royal Marines from **11 (Trials and Training) Squadron** weighed in with heavy kit to shift tonnes of sand which had been washed up on the main road at Instow in Devon (see page 17).

Also in Devon, but this time at Commando Training Centre Royal Marines, were **URNU** students who enjoyed a day at the Sniper Wing (see page 28).

Commando heavy weapon specialists went to Wales to test the High Velocity Missile (see page 13). Members of the **Air Defence Troop** fired the missile at drones, known as Banshees.

Finally the **Royal Marines Band** thrilled crowds at this year's Beating Retreat in London (see page 25). With 2018 marking the centenary of the end of the Great War, the emphasis was on the sacrifices made between 1914 and 1918 as well as the continued commitment Britain's Forces make right up to present day.



● Type 45 destroyer **HMS Dragon** has been taking part in Exercise Catamaran

Stronger together

IN an increasingly unstable world, international cooperation is a vital component of ensuring our national security and promoting our national prosperity.

So wherever we are operating, we look to work with our allies and partners.

As a case in point, throughout her time in the Pacific region HMS Sutherland has routinely been operating with the Australian Navy and both she and HMS Albion have interacted regularly with several Navies across the region.

Meanwhile in the Gulf, the UK Maritime Component Commander's enduring role as the Deputy Commander of the Combined Maritime Forces coalition, and the UK's current Command of Combined Task Force 150 showcase our standing at the vanguard of coalition operations.

For nearly 70 years, NATO has been the cornerstone of our nation's defence.

In the maritime environment a key element of NATO activity is the four standing maritime task groups, two operating in Northern Europe and the Baltic and the other two operate in the Mediterranean and Black sea.

For the last 12 months the Royal Navy has been in Command of both standing NATO task groups in the Mediterranean and our contribution of both ships and Command expertise serves as a clear

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

expression of our commitment, not just to be willing members of NATO, but to take a leading role.

Against a complex backdrop of security challenges, these task groups are doing important work to maintain a constant presence in the region, upholding international law on the seas. But perhaps more important than this is the interaction we achieve with the other member nations in the process.

It serves as a vehicle to build relationships from the national to the individual level and by operating together we can identify ways to improve our interoperability both in terms of equipment, tactics and procedures.

All of this means that we will be better prepared to work together again in the future, should a sterner test ever present itself.

Closer to home the similarities between the Royal Navy and Marine Nationale, Europe's two largest navies, are plain for all to see.

In 2010 at Lancaster House the UK and France agreed to improve our collective defence capability by working more closely together, an agreement reaffirmed at Sandhurst in January this

year. At the heart of that agreement was the formation of our Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, bringing together French and British units capable of rapidly deploying to a broad range of potential missions, be that on a bilateral basis or as part of NATO, EU or UN forces.

Last month's Exercise Catamaran 18 around the Brittany coast was the latest opportunity to make sure that, if called upon, the Royal Navy and Marine Nationale are ready to work together seamlessly from day one.

But it's no secret that of all our allies, the one with whom we work most frequently is the United States. Wherever we are operating in the world, it is often the case that there will be a US presence too and our collaboration over aircraft carrier and submarine programmes are just two examples of the strength of the relationship we enjoy between our navies.

We must never lose sight of our own sovereign capabilities and retain the ability to act unilaterally if needs be in defence of our country's interests.

But whatever we are called upon to do around the world, from humanitarian assistance through to high-end war fighting, there can also be no doubt that by working with our allies and partners, we are stronger together.



The Pacific? Looks terrific

THIS is what going on on a nine-month deployment means to the senior rates of HMS Argyll.

They posed for a quick selfie as the frigate left the jetty wall in Devonport to begin a tour of duty which will take them to the Pacific Rim... and into 2019.

In doing so, the veteran frigate becomes the third RN vessel to visit the Asia-Pacific region this year – following her sister Sutherland (now making her way westwards) and Fleet flagship HMS Albion (currently in Malaysia).

Not only is Argyll the oldest Type 23 in service (29 years since she was launched) but also the first of the souped-up ships in her class to deploy.

The flotilla is going through a major late-life revamp which will help the youngest vessels in the class remain on front-line service into the mid-2030s, by which time their successor Type 26 and 31 frigates will be on patrol.

Argyll's also the first 23 to head off on deployment equipped with the new Sea Ceptor air-defence missile, replacement for the obsolescent Seawolf (more on that below).

It will stay cocooned in its silos on the forecastle for the next nine months while Argyll takes part in several exercises with the UK's allies in the

region – chiefly Bersama Lima, the regular test of Commonwealth navies off the Malay peninsula involving the forces of Britain, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand as part of the Five Powers Defence Arrangement, and combined training with the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force.

Before reaching the Far East, the ship will patrol the Red Sea and Gulf, protecting civilian shipping from piracy and terrorist activity as part of the wider international effort to tackle criminal activity on the high seas.

"This deployment, sharing the Royal Navy's expertise and experience with our partners and allies right across the world, emphasises the UK's commitment to promoting international security and stability," said Cdr Toby Shaughnessy, Argyll's CO.

Before departing Devonport, the ship hosted some of the men who brought the ship out of build three decades ago.

Two dozen members of the Argyll Old Boys Association – all with matching T-shirts featuring the frigate – were hosted on board by Executive Warrant Officer WO1 Steve Harvey and his shipmates.

The association, now in its third year, gets together in Plymouth, with a visit to their 'old ship' the highlight of the reunion.



Ceptor cleared for the kill

THE RN's new air-defence missile has been declared fit for front-line duties after a third series of successful firings.

Already tested by HMS Argyll and Westminster, the confirmation of Sea Ceptor's ability to cope with the latest aerial threats came with successful launches from the third Type 23 frigate to be equipped with the successor to Seawolf, HMS Montrose.

Like her sisters before her she headed to the ranges in the Hebrides. And like her sisters before her, she was 'attacked' by Mirach drones – small, subsonic jets designed to mimic either incoming enemy missiles or fighter-bombers.

Keenly observing the firings was Montrose's CO Cdr Conor O'Neill, who was markedly impressed by Seawolf's replacement after seeing it leave the 'mushroom farm' – the silo on the forecastle – and smash a Mirach into a million pieces.

"Sea Ceptor represents a vastly-improved capability for the Royal Navy – it puts us ahead of the game in being able to defend ourselves and our new aircraft carriers from threat," he said.

And that's important.

Seawolf was a child of the 60s, entered service the following decade, saw action in the Falklands and has been updated through the years to extend its range and rise to the challenge posed by missiles and aircraft which have entered service during its 40-year career. It could, however, only defend the ship which carried it.

Sea Ceptor is able to defend an entire task group if necessary, shielding an area the size of Manchester.

The £850m upgrade to the Type 23 flotilla will be followed by the system being installed on their replacements, the Type 26.



Picture courtesy of MBDA



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Echo to the rescue – for a second time

FOR the second time in a matter of weeks, the Royal Navy's No.1 rescuers shared their expertise with counterparts in Cyprus.

Survey ship HMS Echo – which has been assigned to the international force dealing with migrants in the central Mediterranean for the past 18 months – was invited to join ships and aircraft from half a dozen nations off Cyprus for two days of combined training.

Just a few weeks ago, Echo took part in an Anglo-Cypriot exercise testing their joint ability to deal with a ship sinking off the island.

Training was raised a few notches thanks to the question posed by Cypriot authorities running the larger Exercise Argonaut: could the island's emergency services and rescue/military services of its friends and allies in the eastern Med cope with

two major search and rescue operations at sea?

The first disaster: an airliner crashed in the waters around Cyprus at night – not an unusual scenario for the Plymouth-based survey ship which was involved in the hunt for the missing Malaysian airliner MH370 four years ago.

This time around Echo played a lead role in searching her designated area through the hours of darkness to look for survivors.

Come daylight and the exercise planners had a new mission for Echo: find and rescue survivors from a passenger vessel in distress.

Echo located and recovered all 'survivors' in her assigned area; they were subsequently winched off the deck for evacuation to Limassol hospital by

an RAF helicopter from 84 Search and Rescue Squadron based on the island.

"As part of the ship's first aid team, I was responsible for getting casualties to the helicopter winchman and securing them, and I thoroughly enjoyed being involved," said StD Rachael Rudd.

"The ship's company really came together for the exercise – I'm looking forward to future exercises on board."

Also hoisted up into the Bell 412 – a civilian version of the legendary Huey helicopter – was Echo's 1st Lieutenant Lt Wendy Hems to give the RAF rescuers a 'live winching weight' with which to practise... and the naval officer a bird's eye view of her ship.

During the ship's attachment to Operation

Sophia – the EU-led effort to prevent migrant trafficking from Africa to Europe – Echo has saved the lives of more than 6,000 people, destroyed 65 dangerous rubber boats and skiffs, and handed over 15 suspected smugglers to European Naval Force authorities for potential prosecution.

"In addition to being great fun, the exercise provided good training for the ship's company and highlights the UK's commitment to multi-national operations in Europe and the Mediterranean," said Cdr Andrew Norgate, Echo's Commanding Officer.

"Our participation in Exercise Argonaut reflects the UK and Royal Navy's commitment to the close relationship we enjoy with the Republic of Cyprus."

Once Argonaut ended, Echo returned to international waters off Libya and rejoined the EU Naval Force policing the region.



Merlins share Scottish skies with Aussies

THE guardians of HMS Queen Elizabeth found themselves hunting submarines with the Australians for the first time.

The Merlins of 820 Naval Air Squadron are normally assigned to Britain's new carrier, shielding her against underwater threats.

A rare visit to the UK by a couple of Seahawk MH-60Rs from the RAN's 816 NAS coincided with the Submarine Command Course (aka Perisher) and Dutch and Norwegian boats all in or around the British Isles at the same time.

Let the mayhem begin...

Operating side-by-side with 820's Merlin Mk2s from Stornoway Airport on the Isle of Lewis, the Seahawk crews hit the ground running in Scotland after a journey quite literally half-way around the world.

The Seahawks were partially dismantled, loaded aboard Royal Australian Air Force C-17 transports, flown 10,500 miles to north-west Scotland and re-assembled.

It's the first time the RAN Fleet Air Arm has done something like this – and 816's CO Cdr Anthony Savage said it had been hugely beneficial... for both naval air arms.

"The exercise was testing for our crews, our tactics, our aircraft and our engineering team," he added.

"Working alongside 820 Squadron gave us the chance to develop our joint tactics. The results have been very positive."

His 820 NAS counterpart, Cdr Jon Holroyd, agreed.

"It's really important for us to take part in large-scale exercises to keep our skill sets in that area honed."

"Our day-to-day activity supporting HMS Queen Elizabeth at sea keeps us very busy, but it's the results of exercises such as this that really prove to me that the Merlin Mk2 helicopter – and the men and women who fly it – really do provide the world-class performance that the Royal Navy is renowned for."

POAET Nick Astill is an 820 NAS engineer who detached for the entirety of the exercise to Stornoway.

"It was great up there," said Nick. "We had excellent weather and the Isle of Lewis to explore in our down time."

"It's really gratifying to be a part of a large team all striving for the same goal; to hunt and destroy the submarine – which we did successfully!"

Having returned to Culdrose, the Flying Fish are preparing for their key deployment of 2018: supporting Queen Elizabeth and her inaugural fast-jet training off the Eastern Seaboard of the USA this autumn.



WW1 mementoes digitised

THE Commonwealth War Graves Commission has been given £87,000 of lottery cash to keep memories of the Great War alive by digitising artefacts.

It will hold *Antique Roadshow*-esque events across the country, encouraging people to bring WW1 heirlooms and

mementoes. A team of experts will shed historical light on the objects and record them digitally to create an archive which anyone will be able to browse.

The digitised collection will be viewable from November – 100 years after the end of WW1 – at lwf.web.ox.ac.uk.



THIS is the moment of salvation for two Algerian fishermen, stranded at sea for four days with no supplies and losing hope.

The sharp-eyed officer of the watch on HMS Duncan spied the men's boat by chance in the western Mediterranean – and the destroyer immediately offered food, fuel and life-saving assistance.

The Portsmouth-based Type 45, which has spent 2018 leading a NATO task group in the Black Sea and eastern Mediterranean, was making her way to Portugal when she came across the stranded fishermen about 70 miles off the Algerian coast.

So small was the men's boat that the destroyer was just 600 feet away before it was spotted by Officer of the Watch Lt Rob Coatsworth, who was scanning the horizon for anything unusual.

"The fishermen were incredibly lucky to be spotted," he said.

"The sun was low on the horizon, the swell was heavy and they had no signalling equipment. The odds were very much against them as they were 70 miles North of Algeria and outside any shipping lanes."

"There was absolutely nothing on radar."

Duncan immediately launched her sea boat with Royal Marines, a medic and an engineer aboard to offer help.

MA Rhiann Dilmore said the two men in the boat were "in a bad way. They had been eating raw fish and were drinking sea water."

"We patched them up and gave them hot drinks and halal food and made sure that they were warm

and reassured. Their engine had run out of fuel so we got it going."

PO Daniel Law, who normally looks after Duncan's diesel engines, continued: "They had been adrift for nearly five days."

"I filled the tank and primed the engine and she started first time. We all just smiled."

"I cannot speak Arabic and they had no English but the smiles said it all. It was really humbling to see the look of gratitude by those we had rescued."

Duncan's assistance did not end there. She accompanied the small boat for several miles until an Algerian Coast Guard vessel arrived to take over the rescue effort.

"Being adrift in an open boat at night must have been petrifying. We quickly made contact with the Algerian Coast Guard and arranged for a suitable rendezvous for the early hours of the morning," said operations officer Lt Cdr Ben Dorrington.

"Our sea boat escorted the fishermen throughout the night until a positive handover was made with Algerian authorities. We wish our fellow mariners well."

Everyone aboard is convinced without the destroyer's intervention, the fate of the two men would have been bleak.

"The efforts of the crew were heart warming," said Lt Cdr Florentine Dhellemmes, a French exchange officer aboard HMS Duncan.

"The fishermen would have had no chance without rescue. A good night's work."

Picture: LPhot Paul Hall, HMS Duncan



Prince takes control Diamond keeps spies in her eyes

THE heart of HMS Prince of Wales is now in the hands of the men and women who will watch over her as the second of the UK's new carriers takes a big step towards completion.

The Ship's Control Centre has been formally handed over to the crew to maintain and run by engineers and technicians from the Aircraft Carrier Alliance who've built and fitted out the ship.

They gave the ship's company the keys to the compartment 18 months ahead of when the ship is formally handed over to the Royal Navy.

"If the bridge of a ship is considered its eyes, and the operations room its brain, there is no doubt that the Ship's Control Centre is the beating heart," said Cdr Pete Buckenham, Commander Marine Engineering.

All the carrier's machinery – from propulsion to her sewage and water works

– are controlled from the SCC, with a team of engineers watching over the displays and read-outs 24 hours a day, every day, until the warship decommissions in 50 years' time.

And in time of war, the SCC becomes the headquarters for the 'internal battle' – it's where all information from around the ship about damage sustained – fires, floods, breakdowns and casualties – are reported and the damage control officer determines where to send repair teams, firefighters and first aid parties with the goal of keeping the ship in the fight.

"Compartments are normally handed over after sea trials, so to achieve this at such an early stage, to the high quality and specification required by the Royal Navy, is a very significant milestone for the team," explained Sterry Matthews, ACA production manager.

HMS Diamond was 'scrambled' to keep a very close eye on the Russian Navy intelligence-gathering vessel Yantar – whose upper decks were peppered with sentries – as she made her way through the Channel.

Diamond and a Wildcat from 815 NAS at Yeovilton were both alerted to monitor the progress of the 5,700-tonne vessel as she sailed towards the North Sea.

The destroyer took over from the French Navy, who'd shadowed Yantar through Biscay.

The Russian vessel is a specialist reconnaissance ship carrying two unmanned submersibles which can descend to the seabed and send back images as well as collect items.

"This is routine business for the Royal Navy, and my ship's company are well-trained and ready at short notice to deploy for such tasking," said Cdr Ben Keith of Diamond's mission.



● HMS Shoreham departed from Faslane while HMS Brocklesby left Portsmouth a day later

Pictures: LPhotos Ben Shread and Louise George

Smiles ahead of miles

Emotions run high as minehunters depart for the Gulf

THERE were smiles, hugs, and a few tears on the Faslane jetty as the 40-strong crew of HMS Shoreham bade farewell to loved ones at the beginning of a 6,000-mile odyssey.

The minehunter left her home base at the start of a six-week journey to the Gulf.

On the way she'll join up with HMS Brocklesby – which left Portsmouth a day later – and pass her sister HMS Bangor, plus HMS Middleton, heading in the opposite direction as the latter two ships complete their stints in the Middle East and return to the UK.

In preparation for the mission, Shoreham's crew completed a gruelling five-week Operational Sea Training package, followed by a fortnight of Joint Warrior where their ability to work as part of an international task group was tested.

Which is handy, because for the next three years that'll be what she's doing day in, day out, as part of the Combined Maritime Forces mine warfare presence in the Gulf.

"OST prepared us well for operations. We conducted a vast range of evolutions, ranging from diving and live explosions to gunnery. Now the team is ready to conduct whatever task is given to us in the deployment ahead," said a confident AB Elliott Pendrous, 22, from the West Midlands.

Shipmate AB Dylan Toomey, 24, from Sunderland, is embarking on his first deployment.

"I am excited – I'm looking forward to getting stuck into the work in the Gulf but also for the chance to experience some different cultures and different cuisines," he said.

And at the other end of the spectrum... it's the final tour of duty for engineer WO Paul Hutchinson, 58, and from Kent.

"As my 27 years in the Royal Navy draws to a close,



● Brocklesby's LS(MW) Will Clayton and his son Oliver

I can say I have some fantastic memories and have visited places many people don't get to see. I hope to make the most of my retirement trip!" he said.

"I will miss the Royal Navy, but I've got many plans for retirement, starting off with walking from Land's End to John O'Groats next year."

By which time his shipmates should be back in the UK. They'll stay with Shoreham for five or six months once they get her to the Gulf, before trading places with another Sandown-class crew from First Mine Counter Measures Squadron.

"I am immensely proud of my crew, who have worked hard this year to ensure the Royal Navy's mine counter measures capability remains first class," said Lt Cdr Adrian Visram, Shoreham's CO.

"We are looking forward to putting our training into action during our Gulf deployment, carrying out seabed surveys and working as part of an international force helping to keep the region's sea lanes safe."

The CO of HMS Brocklesby, Lt Cdr Paul Irving, said: "After a busy period of maintenance and a lot of hard work from my ship's company it was a fantastic feeling to sail to the Gulf."

"We are looking forward to getting into our primary role by ensuring we keep shipping lanes safe and working with our regional partners."

Brocklesby will spend the next couple of years based at the new Naval Support Facility in Bahrain with the crew rotating every six or seven months. Her current crew, Crew 3, will return in time for Christmas.

US pair hosted for mine lesson

CREW from HMS Bangor gave their American counterparts a taste of minehunting RN-style when they struck out into the Gulf for a training exercise.

Both navies maintain a permanent mine warfare presence in Bahrain – the UK's two Sandown-class, including Bangor, for hunting in deeper waters, plus a pair of Hunts for finding mines in shallower seas; and the US Navy operates several Avenger-class vessels, among them the USS Dextrous.

The latter is undergoing an overhaul at the US Naval Base in the kingdom, allowing two of her crew – Ensign Andrew Sparrow and PO (Second Class) Mark Poirer to join Bangor.

Despite the two minehunting forces training side-by-side on an almost daily basis in the Middle East, American sailors didn't necessarily know the specifics of how Brits locate, identify and finally neutralise mines.

Which isn't actually too different. At the heart of the hunt in both navies is Seafox, a small, remote-controlled submersible which is sent out to identify mines located by the ship's sonar, sending TV footage back to the operations room. If the device located turns out to be a mine, it can use an explosive charge to safely detonate it.

The American guests were also thrown into typical Royal Navy training exercises at sea: machinery breakdown drills and an engine room fire exercise that forced the ship to Emergency Stations – when every single member of the crew goes to their pre-designated location and role to fight to save the ship.

Bangor's crew simulated the disastrous consequences of losing all propulsion and suffering a casualty.

Throughout the drill, the US Navy guests were shown what each area of the ship was doing to fight the internal battle from the team at the forward control point to the internal battle coordinator in the ship's control centre.

"It was also a chance to show Ensign Sparrow the pilotage into Bahrain," explained Bangor's Navigator Sub Lt Henry Kilby. "It gave him the chance to see which navigational marks are visible in real life, compared to the bridge simulator which he has been training in."



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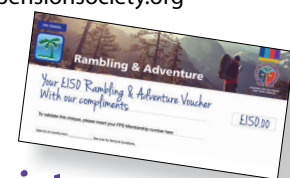
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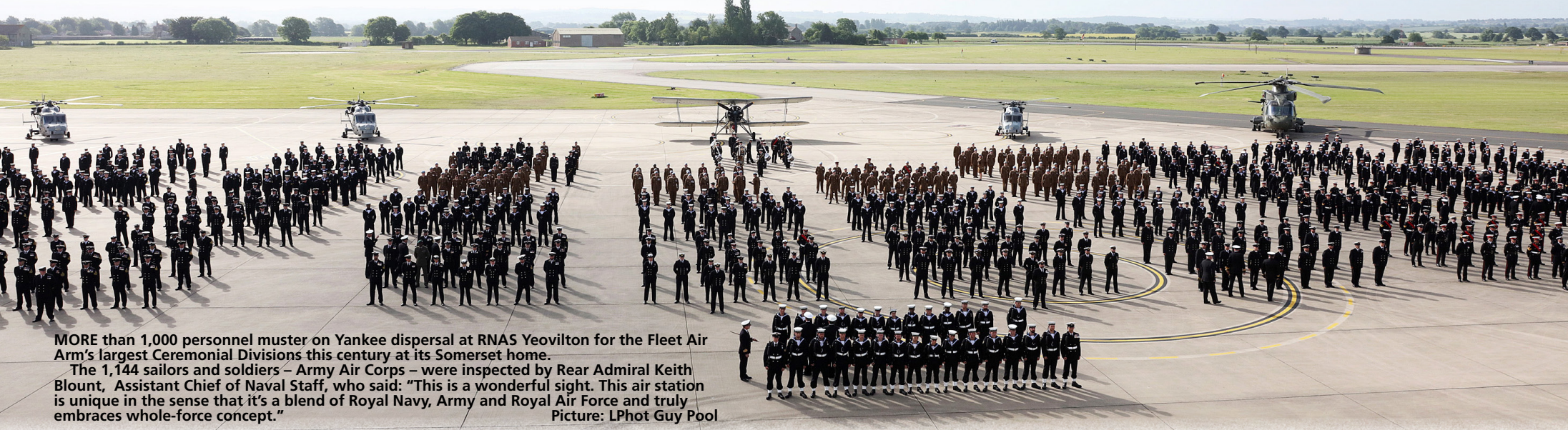
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MORE than 1,000 personnel muster on Yankee dispersal at RNAS Yeovilton for the Fleet Air Arm's largest Ceremonial Divisions this century at its Somerset home.

The 1,144 sailors and soldiers – Army Air Corps – were inspected by Rear Admiral Keith Blount, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff, who said: "This is a wonderful sight. This air station is unique in the sense that it's a blend of Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force and truly embraces whole-force concept."

Picture: LPhoto Guy Pool

They really need to know their place...

Arctic convoy gift taken back home

ABOUT to embark on the training and assessment which determines they're fit for front-line duties are the men and women of the Navy's only 'fishhunter': HMS Mersey.

The patrol ship is half crewed by traditional fishery protection squadrons... with the remainder made up of sailors normally assigned to Portsmouth's flotilla of Hunt-class minehunters... hence the unofficial designation.

The mine crews are helping the 'Cod Squad' (officially the oldest formation in the Royal Navy) transition from first to second-generation River-class vessels, taking over from colleagues who've gone on to learn how to run HMS Forth and Medway.

Having spent the past few months getting used to their new surroundings and different machinery and systems, the final hurdle to overcome is Operational Sea Training – several weeks of assessment where the Navy's expert trainers determine whether the 40 crew can cope with every eventuality.

The last act of preparing for that rigorous test was a few days in the Channel honing board and search duties.

Among the vessels inspected by boarding officer Lt Adam Williams was the trawler Rubeno, whose nets, catch and logs received a thorough inspection before resuming fishing.

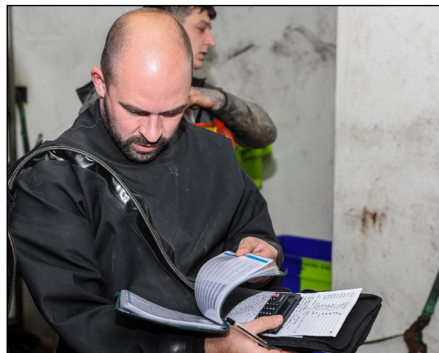
"You start with hailing the vessel over VHF radio, letting them know you're coming so you can prepare," he explained.

"We conduct our inspection trying not to inconvenience the crew – we chat with the master, check his paperwork, then head down to the 'fish room' to assess the catch, identify the fish and check the nets to make sure they're the right size."

Boardings have dropped dramatically in recent years as the squadron makes increasing use of satellite imagery and intelligence to focus its efforts on specific vessels in specific areas; last year 257 fishing boats were inspected by



● Clockwise from above, HMS Mersey; Sub Lt Lucy Carmichael on watch; Lt Adam Williams checks his notes; Lt Williams checks the nets of the trawler Rubeno Pictures: LPhoto Joe Cater



Mersey's boarding team. One area where knowledge rather than technology is still key, however, is in fish identification.

Boarding officers like Lt Williams are expected to know 54 different varieties of fish on sight.

Before beginning OST, Mersey was the

centrepiece (on the south coast at any rate) for National Fish and Chip Day.

Viewers of BBC1's *Breakfast* programme may have seen Mersey and her crew talking about their fishery protection work... or tucking into a fish supper (or rather breakfast) courtesy of Long John's Fish and Chips from Poole who brought their van quayside.

A RELIGIOUS icon has been returned to worshippers in Russia – 76 years after they gave it to a British sailor to protect his ship on the Arctic convoys.

The small framed portrait of Jesus was presented to junior officer Lieutenant William Painter as a thank-you by the Roman Catholic community of Murmansk in the summer of 1942.

Lt Painter is believed to have been a survivor of the ravaged convoy PQ17, which was mauled by German aircraft and U-boats on its passage to the north Russian port in July 1942.

More than 60 ships set out to deliver aid to Murmansk, but two dozen merchant ships were sunk – the darkest hour in Allied assistance to the Soviet Union.

Scarred by the ordeal Lt Painter, a devout Catholic, sought out the local Catholic church to give thanks for his survival.

He succeeded, despite the fact that he spoke no Russian, there was no church building in Murmansk at that time – religion was severely repressed under Stalin – and the Catholic congregation met, largely in secret, in apartments and other small meeting places.

When the officer saw the dreadful state in which they were barely surviving, suffering from constant air attacks and threatened starvation, he arranged for a significant proportion of his ship's food supplies to be handed over to his new friends, leaving only the minimum onboard for the journey home.

In gratitude, they presented him with an icon of Jesus to protect him on his return to the UK.

It did – and continued to safeguard him for the rest of the war.

Many years later, after being in the hands of the family and a convent, it was bought from a Kent antique shop by Phyllis Barton.

Having read the paperwork that came with the icon, Mrs Barton was determined that it should be returned to its original owners and enlisted the help of former Royal Naval attachés to Moscow and ex-RN Russian interpreters who helped piece together the remarkable story.

Finally it fell to Britain's Defence Attaché to Moscow, Capt Chris Connolly RN, to hand over the artefact to Murmansk's Roman Catholic community.

They no longer meet in secret but worship at Murmansk's Holy Michael the Archangel Catholic Church, where Father Alejandro Carbajo and members of his congregation gladly received the relic.

"Over tea, cake and many stories, the church members expressed their delight and surprise that so much effort had been taken to return this important symbol of the friendship between the British and Russian people," said Capt Connolly.



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THIS twisted mass of metal was once the cutting edge of aviation technology, a machine in its time as impressive as, say, the Space Shuttle.

Housed in a gigantic double shed, this is what was either L54 or L60, Zeppelins which had dropped nearly ten tonnes of bombs on British soil as part of Germany's long-running campaign to destroy the morale of the mother country.

By the summer of 1918 the Zeppelin's heyday had passed. The heavy bomber such as Germany's Gothas and Britain's Handley Page O/400s were faster, more manoeuvrable and less vulnerable than a gigantic hydrogen-filled balloon; one in three Zeppelins was lost, mostly to accidents rather than to enemy action.

And although anti-aircraft guns began to get the measure of the airships, all too often contemporary fighters could not climb high enough and quickly enough to intercept the Zeppelins before they disappeared.

"The best and easiest place to attack a Zep was at her home base," VC winner and pioneering naval aviator Richard Bell-Davies declared.

One such base could be found at Tondern on the Schleswig-Holstein peninsula. One main 730ft shed, Toska, housed operational Zeppelins and two smaller 500ft ones Toni and Tobias ('To-' for Tondern) were used by training balloons.

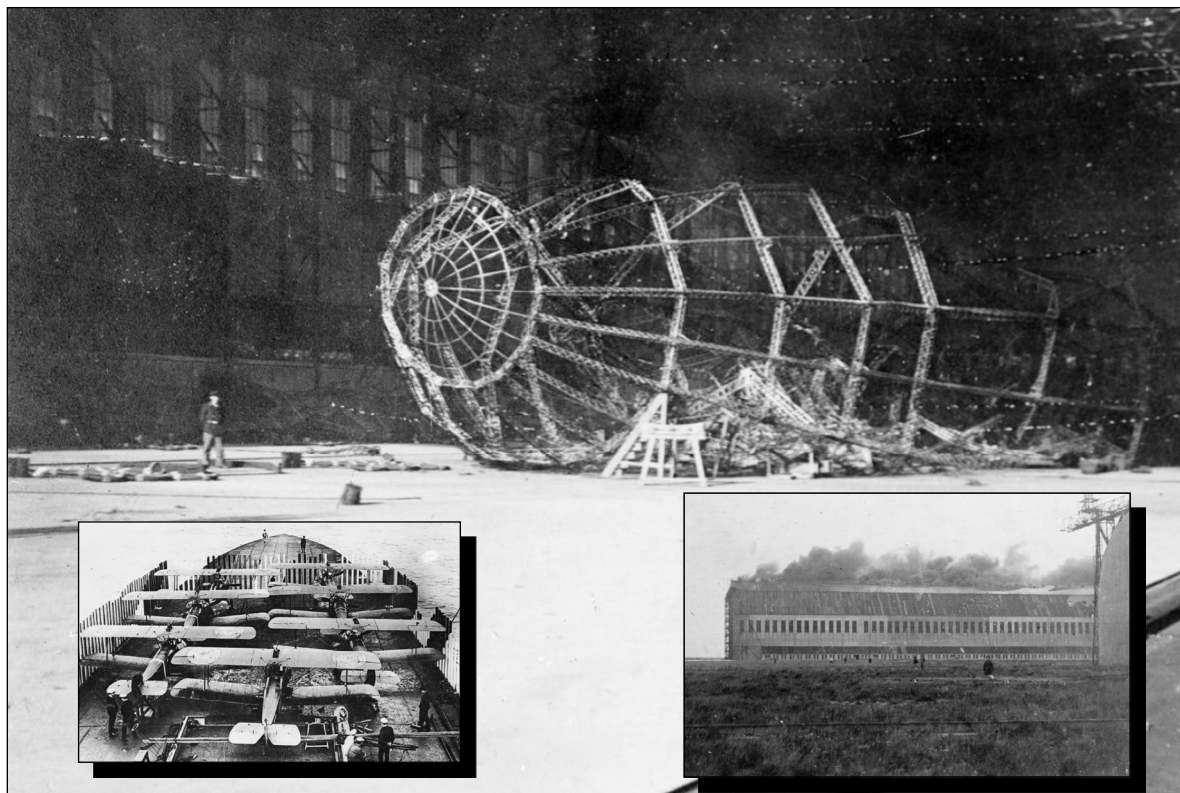
In addition, there were gasworks, petrol and hydrogen storage tanks, flak guns to defend the base and a garrison of 600 troops.

The open waters of the North Sea lay two dozen miles to the west – making Tondern out of range of the guns of the Grand Fleet, not that the Admiralty would risk committing its dreadnoughts in the German Navy's backyard.

But she was within range of HMS Furious and her specially-adapted Sopwith Camels.

In her latest incarnation in mid-1918 Furious was the strangest looking vessel in the Fleet.

Having started life as a battle-cruiser, part-way through construction the decision had been taken to build a 'flying deck' on her



forecastle to launch aircraft. Then her 18in gun turret aft was removed to create a 'landing deck'. But the central part of her superstructure – funnel and bridge/main mast – were left intact.

It was far from satisfactory. Neither the short take-off deck (pictured inset, left, crammed with seven fighters on the eve of the attack), nor the longer landing deck, were really suitable for setting aircraft down; turbulence from the superstructure aft and the design of the Camel caused the fighter to pitch forward upon landing and smash its nose.

For the attack planned by Richard Bell-Davies, Furious' Commander Air, the aircraft would not be landing back on the ship. Pilots would either ditch in the North Sea or, if they could not

make it, fly on to neutral Denmark, destroy their Camels and sit out the war as internees.

Weather thwarted the attack on three occasions. But before dawn on July 19 1918, conditions were favourable and, after a hearty breakfast of bacon and eggs, the pilots took off in seven Camels, each armed with two 50lb bombs, and headed in the direction of Tondern.

It took the tiny aircraft – not 19ft long and with a wingspan of 28ft – more than an hour to reach the coast of Schleswig-Holstein, from where the sheds of Tondern immediately stood out.

The first flight of three Camels inflicted the bulk of the damage, wrecking Toska – and the two Zeppelins within, L54 and L60. While an inferno raged inside the shed,

black smoke spilled out of the holes in the roof caused by the bombs penetrating it (pictured inset, right).

L54's commander, Horst Julius Freiherr Treusch von Buttlar-Brandenfels, arrived at the site within minutes and was faced with a "gruesomely beautiful" sight as the two Zeppelins burned inside the shed. "I stood facing the burned-out wreck of my ship," he recalled. "I had watched many ships perish, but this was the first time I saw my own destroyed."

Ten minutes after the first raid, the second flight appeared. Lt Bernard Smart, leading the formation, found the defenders had woken up and the three anti-aircraft batteries – their crews dressed only in their trousers or underwear – were now spewing flak.

Smart lined up the second large shed, still intact, and dropped his bombs at a height of about 1,000ft.

The first missed; the second smashed through the roof and threw up a cloud of smoke and dust, but he could not ascertain if the training Zeppelin inside had been destroyed (it had, as it turned out) for the furious fire his Camel came under.

"The whole surroundings were thick with mechanics or soldiers armed with rifles and machine-guns, which gave so disconcerting a fire that I dived with a full engine to 50 feet and skimmed over the ground in a zigzag course to avoid it," he recalled.

To von Buttlar-Brandenfels it appeared the "English" were attacking with impunity, circling the air station, the pilots "waving in a most friendly manner" at the troops on the ground.

Indeed, for all hellish scenes being played out at Tondern, the raid (codenamed F7) was conducted with chivalry. Never once did the airmen turn their guns on the Germans running around pell-mell beneath them.

Of the seven Camels, only three made it back to the fleet waiting in the North Sea to take them home; a fourth pilot, Walter Yeulett, had vanished with his aircraft. The rest chose internment in neighbouring Denmark... where Tondern, or rather Tønder, can be found today; Germany ceded this part of Schleswig-Holstein to the Danes after the war.

Tondern was not the first carrier strike raid, as we would call it today – the distinction is held by the attack on Cuxhaven at Christmas 1914.

Cuxhaven had been a pinprick, a morale boost in the depths of winter with little damage caused. Though repaired, Tondern would never again be an operational Zeppelin base.

The raid was a harbinger of the potential of the aircraft carrier, potential which would be fulfilled at Taranto and Pearl Harbor.

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● The white heat of 1960s technology... the (now very dated looking) missile control centre of HMS Resolution, complete with pistol 'trigger' for launching Polaris

Pictures: National Museum of the Royal Navy

UP AND ATOM

ON SATURDAY June 15 1968, HMS Resolution slipped her moorings in Gareloch.

There was none of the fanfare or ceremony which had accompanied her launch 21 months earlier, commissioning the previous October, or the official opening of her new home barely four weeks ago.

Resolution departed unseen and returned unseen, in the process completing the first of 229 nuclear deterrence patrols successfully carried out by Polaris-missile equipped Royal Navy submarines.

Beyond bare statistics and facts, and a few mostly academic study, it's a story largely untold.

The 50th anniversary of the maiden deterrent patrol – the continuous at sea deterrence would only begin in 1969 when all four R-boats – has prompted historians at the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport to shine a rare light on what is a true naval success story.

Silent and Secret adds to the existing display dedicated to the Cold War Submarine Service – almost exclusively dedicated to the world of hunter killer and diesel boat operations – by telling the story of the first generation of nuclear deterrent, the Polaris missile and the four boats which carried it: Resolution, Renown, Revenge and Repulse.

Polaris arrived at a time of intense political, social and technological upheaval.

The Soviets and USA were striving to put a man on the moon, Harold Wilson was embracing the white heat of technology, British firms were producing world-leading jets like the Harrier and Buccaneer, wealthier Britons might watch colour television and cruise the world aboard the new QE2.

And yet... the pound had recently been devalued, the Empire was rapidly becoming the Commonwealth, Britain was withdrawing its forces from east of Suez, CND regularly staged major rallies, and the military had just suffered swingeing cuts: the RAF's new supersonic reconnaissance jet, the TSR-2, was axed, while the Navy lost its new aircraft carriers (and a couple of old ones).

It also lost its fifth Polaris boat, but otherwise the programme persisted. It proved to be one of the most remarkable projects ever embarked on. In the space of a decade, the Silent Service received nuclear power, nuclear missiles, and a new base in Scotland with all the attendant facilities needed to support the new machines.

"Polaris is held up as one of the great success stories in the defence programme – brought in on time, on budget," explains George Malcolmson, one of the curators of the exhibition.

What the nation got was military might undreamed of just two decades before. Each Polaris missile carried a warhead eight times more potent than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Each Polaris submarine carried more destructive power than all the munitions expended in World War 2.

Should the order to fire ever come, after a complex series of checks to prevent accidental launches or some Dr Strangelove-esque scenario, pressing a trigger on a gun handle was the rather theatrical method of sending the 16-tonne Polaris on its 2,800-mile one-way journey.

High-pressure air propelled the missile out of its tube and above the surface of the ocean, where the rocket would kick in.

In the event of Armageddon, a Polaris crew would be expected to launch all 16 missiles at 15-second intervals.

Which is why Polaris wasn't hugely popular with the general public: one in three Britons objected to nuclear weapons. Some turned objection

into protest: there were demonstrations at the US Polaris base in nearby Holy Loch, while in time a 'peace camp' would appear at Faslane.

As one R-boat senior rate complained: "As I look out of my window, the base looks like Stalag 13 – barbed wire fences, police with dogs, searchlight towers and police patrols – there always seems to be somebody wanting to get at us."

The camp is still there, but there's nothing like the 'ban the bomb' movement of the 1960s and 1980s in today's UK – something anyone under 35 perhaps won't have realised.

"The whole exhibition has been an interesting learning curve. Polaris was very much a closed world – even to those who were in the Navy at the time like me," says George, who served through most of the Polaris era in the surface fleet.

"It was so removed from the rest of the Navy, even the rest of the Submarine Service. But in recent years there's been a gentle easing of Cold War secrecy, so the time is definitely right to tell the Polaris story."

Polaris meant a massive expansion in the post-war Submarine Service: new boats (Fleet submarines as guardians, ballistic missile-carrying boats as the ultimate weapon), new base (Faslane), new armaments depot, new technology (nuclear power, intercontinental ballistic missiles).

And it meant a slew of additions to Jackspeak. The origin of 'bombers' is uncertain. The Americans call their deterrent boats 'boomers'. Brits, who trained to operate their Polaris boats in the USA, possibly borrowed and 'tweaked' that nickname, or simply stole it from the RAF's V-bomber force... which the new submarines replaced.

Crew were nicknamed 'Polaroids' or, less favourably, 'bomber queens' (life aboard was deemed cushy compared with the rest of the Silent Service).

The missiles themselves 'lived' in 'Sherwood Forest' as the two rows of eight tubes were called (they looked like tree trunks supposedly...).

Families had to learn a new language too. They had to learn the art of one-way communication – familygrams, 40-word messages sent to crew (who could not respond). No bad news could get through (crew had to focus 100 per cent on the mission), although occasionally it did...

One submariner received one missive from his missus which featured the lines: "Missing you. Missing sex." The next familygram merely said: "Missing you." According to the boat's captain, the young man was distraught, convinced his wife had found a lover...

And sex certainly featured heavily on the minds of the bomber crews; most of the newsletters and news sheets produced on board are a little risqué, crammed with *Carry-on* style humour and cartoons.

One which survives hails from Resolution's Yuletide patrol in 1968. Older matelots will remember the daily news printouts before TV, radio and internet were widespread on RN ships. Christmas 1968 was dominated by Apollo 8's flight around the moon – described in detail in Resolution's 'paper' – George Best being named European Footballer of the Year ahead of Bobby Charlton... and St Pancras station avoiding the wave of architectural vandalism in the 1960s by being spared demolition.

It seems like a different world – and it was – yet 50 years on, news sheets and familygrams remain the only communication with the outside world of today's bomber crews.

■ Silent and Secret is a permanent exhibition included in the normal entry fee to the submarine museum

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Banshees are blasted in missile test

Picture: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, RNPTOT

COMMANDO heavy weapon specialists tested their ability to down enemy air power by hitting the Welsh ranges – and hitting drone targets thrown at them.

The High Velocity Missile is the Corps' last line of defence against jets and helicopters – a lightweight, portable weapon which can be fired over the shoulder or from a specialist launcher.

It's operated by Air Defence Troop – one of the commandos' three specialist heavy weapons teams (the remaining two are anti-tank and mortars) – who headed to Manorbier Range near Tenby to test the missiles... and test their aim.

The HVM missile has a first-stage motor which throws it forward from the launcher after which the second stage known as the "bus" kicks in and boosts the missile to over 2,000mph – more than three times the speed of sound, or faster than a rifle bullet.

The "bus" burns out after less than a second and then three small "darts" separate which are guided to the target by the operator using a laser beam, directed by a small joystick on the launcher known as the aiming unit.

Months of planning was completed before the Plymouth-based marines rocked up in south-west Wales.

Each operator has to complete hundreds of shots on a simulator to prove that they are ready to fire a live missile by repeatedly tracking a target drone with a laser.

Those drones – Banshees, about two metres long

and designed to survive the impact with the missile – are fitted with a sophisticated radar which allows the controllers to estimate if the missile would have destroyed a full-sized aircraft.

And each missile launch is studied in detail by technicians from manufacturers Thales, who provide telemetry feedback which allows the Gunnery Training Team to evaluate the success of each engagement.

All of the science doesn't detract from the thrill of firing a weapon which travels at Mach 3.

"Using the shoulder launch missile, I was lucky enough to shoot down the Banshee," said Mne Anthony Darver, one of the specialists being assessed.

Given the training that preceded the exercise, luck didn't come into it.



Hurrah for Hussar

MINESWEEPING is back with a bang in the Royal Navy as it tests its first autonomous system to deal with 21st-Century mines.

Motor boat Hussar can be sent off on missions, using a series of small, hi-tech boats trailed behind it to detonate the latest underwater explosive devices – potentially clearing minefields en masse.

The RN last conducted real-world sweeps off Iraq in 2003 using remote-controlled boats, while HMS Ledbury conducted the final run out of traditional sweeping gear off the Isle of Wight in 2005.

Following four months of successful initial trials and evaluation, Hussar has been handed over to the Royal Navy's specialist assessment team to assess, test, and determine how it might be used in action.

"In the digital age, magnetic minesweeping was becoming obsolete – it goes back to World War 2. It could not deal with modern, digital mines," explains Cdr Mark Atkinson who oversees providing the mine warfare branch with new kit.

Hussar is an 11-metre-long 'mother ship' which is followed by the 21st-Century sweeping system, a series of small 'coil auxiliary boats' or CABs. The CABs are designed to replicate ship signatures to trigger the mines.

Some £13m has been invested in the system to date and, should the trials in the hands of the Navy's Portsmouth-based Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team go well, the intention is to invest in four Hussars with all their associated equipment and support.

"It's a very basic system which performs outstandingly when out on the water," explained Lt Cdr Dave Stanbury of MASTT.

After basic and signature trials, Hussar will be sent to the Canadian Arctic to see how it operates in cold weather, then to the Gulf for the opposite end of the temperature scale.

Fleet Flagship first RN vessel to visit Sasebo in 30 years

Rekindling old friendships

BRITAIN'S flagship HMS Albion has left Japan after a short visit to its western naval base which gave sailors and Royal Marines the chance to explore the land of the Rising Sun.

It's nearly 30 years since the White Ensign was last seen in the city of 250,000 souls, Sasebo, which lies about 600 miles west of the capital.

That previous visitor was Hong Kong-based patrol ship HMS Peacock (700 tonnes, 40 crew)... whereas Albion is 19,500 tonnes and carrying well over 400 sailors, Royal Marines and all their kit and caboodle.

The naval base was founded by Admiral Togo, who led the Japanese Navy to a famous victory over the Russian Fleet at the Battle of Tsushima in 1905, for which he earned the nickname 'Nelson of the East'.

Today that same base is home not just to the Maritime Self Defence Force, but also elements of the US Seventh Fleet, such as the USS Wasp – a hybrid of Albion and now-retired HMS Ocean... but twice the size... and capable of operating Harrier/F-35B jets.

LAC Jack Kaliban was among a group from HMS Albion's aviation department who visited the American assault ship.

"It was great to be able to tour the Wasp and to speak to some of my counterparts about how they manage flight deck operations," he said.

"The Wasp recently became the first ship to embark an operational squadron of F35B Joint Strike Fighters, so their experience is directly relevant to the Fleet Air Arm as we introduce the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers into service."

During the early 1950s, Sasebo became a familiar port-of-call for British and Commonwealth sailors, including the grandfather of HMS Albion's clubz POPT James Buttle.

"My grandfather was serving on the destroyer HMS Constance during the Korean War when it was damaged by enemy action and came to Sasebo for repairs," the PTI said.

"He spent a lot of time in this part of the world, so it's special for me to be



● HMS Albion departs the Japanese port of Sasebo; the Rev Eddie Wills in front of the window depicting St Anselm



The window depicts St Anselm, who helped found the original monastery upon which Chester Cathedral is built, and was donated by Laure Reed who works at the Cathedral

It has been mounted and illuminated in an oak frame specially constructed by HMS Albion's shipwright, PO Tom Randall, and was unveiled at sea on St Anselm's Day.

Albion's Chaplain, Rev Eddie Wills, said: "HMS Albion's chapel is a special place which provides sanctuary for contemplation and worship."

"The light from the image of St Anselm will be a source of spiritual strength and reflection for the ship's company as they navigate the unique demands of life at sea."

Capt Neild added: "Throughout our time in the Far East we've been hosting a large number of visitors and I take great delight in pointing out the Chester street names which are displayed around the ship."

"Now we also have a wonderful new window to show them. I am hugely grateful to Laure Reed for presenting us with a gift that is full of meaning and will serve as a constant reminder of friendship between HMS Albion and the people of Chester."

Among those onboard is CPO Gary Fletcher, who was born in Chester and still lives locally today, who said: "I've been in the Navy for the best part of 20 years but this is the first time I've been to the Far East and the fact it could be my last seagoing deployment makes it all the more special."

"Singapore has played such a big part in Royal Navy history that it was right at the top of my bucket list."

"I was also previously involved with training cadets from both Singapore and Brunei at Britannia Royal Naval College, so it's a privilege to visit these places with the Navy and experience a side to them that most tourists never get to see."

Although the UK's flagship has left Japan, she's continuing to train and working alongside Japanese ships, as well as the US Navy and other international partners in the region.

Report: Lt Cdr Jeremy Olver

back in Asia-Pacific with the Royal Navy all these years later."

The opportunity to visit Japan was a first for the vast majority of HMS Albion's sailors and Royal Marines.

Many chose to go cycling or hiking in Saikai National Park or to explore the historic trading post of Hirado, famous for its connection to the novel *Shogun*. Others opted to visit the nearby city of Nagasaki.

"The visit to Nagasaki was really interesting," said Sub Lt Ashley Purchase. "At the Atomic Bomb Museum there was a clock with the hands frozen at two minutes past eleven – the very moment of detonation. Having studied World War 2 at school it was quite profound to stand in the very place where it came to an end."

Weapon engineer POET Stephen Gray added: "I've been all over the Mediterranean and the Gulf during my 19 years with the Royal Navy, but

I've never been to the Far East before. In fact, HMS Albion is the first British warship to visit some of these parts for six or seven years.

"I really enjoyed Singapore as it was my first taste of a totally different culture. Brunei was interesting too as it's the kind of place that's not on the usual tourist trail and I wouldn't get to see were it not for the Navy."

Before departing Sasebo, Albion was joined by 44 officer cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College who are beginning their Initial Sea Time. The six-week programme offers the cadets their first experience of an operational deployment and is designed to provide them with an insight into the day-to-day management of a warship.

"It's very exciting to join HMS Albion in Japan because I know how long it's been since the Royal Navy was last here," said Officer Cadet Jonathan



Entente with



CHuFfed with new Merlins

PALE grey is the new green.

And 4 is the new 3. This is the first of the commandos' next-generation 'flying buses' now in the hands of the Commando Helicopter Force, marking the end of the beginning for a six-year transformation of the wings of the RM as the Lynx gave way to new Wildcats and Sea Kings were retired in favour of the RAF's battlefield Merlin Mk3, transferred to the Fleet Air Arm.

A marked improvement though the Mk3 is over its predecessor, it's not suited to operations at sea – so £15m has been spent turning each Mk3 into a Mk4.

The former is (a) great for carrying troops and kit around the battlefield and (b) a marked improvement on the venerable Jungly Sea King... while the Mk4 is (a) great for carrying troops and kit around the battlefield; (b) a marked improvement on the venerable Jungly Sea King; and (c) perfect for naval operations.

The Mk3s enter the Leonardo works in Yeovil where they removed the rear fuselage... and the fuel system... and the flight controls... and the tail pylon... and the rotor heads... and ramp.

And in went improved rapid roping support, then the new rear fuselage, then new flight controls, the fuel system, the tail pylon, a new main instrument panel, folding rotor heads, the livery was changed from green to grey, the engines replaced, rotor blades returned and, hey presto, one Merlin Mk4.

The folding rotor heads/tail boom and a strengthened undercarriage with lashing points make the fourth variant perfectly suited for operations from our new carriers, improved comms and fast roping fixtures mean the helicopter is commando-ready.

Recently HMS Queen Elizabeth successfully fitted a Chinook in her hangar... although they couldn't fold the RAF helicopter's rotors. In the same space taken up by the wocca-wocca you could accommodate four Merlin Mk4s.

All of which is why the head of the Commando Helicopter Force, Col Lenny Brown, is excited for the future of the group which has gone through six years of transition – all the while continuing front-line operations such as helping Caribbean islands hit by hurricanes last autumn.

"With the Commando Merlin, the force is able to deploy further, faster, carry more for longer," Col Brown said.

"Once again, the Jungly cunning seen on numerous operations is being put to the test as we prepare to support Royal Marines across what is an uncertain world, in all weather conditions, any time of the day or night, and often against a range of ever-changing threats.

"The arrival of the Commando Merlin heralds a step change in our ability to be able to do just that."

The Mk4 can carry up to 24 commandos (more typically 16), or an eight-tonne load. The cabin is large enough to fit a Land Rover (although generally speaking it would be slung underneath the helicopter). And as well as being able to operate from Albion, Bay and Queen Elizabeth-class ships, the Merlin can be transported by one of the RAF's giant C-17s.

Less well known is that all the improvements and alterations, troops being ferried around in a Merlin Mk4 are as safe as drivers/passengers of a car with a five-star NCAP safety rating such as a BMW X3, latest Ford Fiesta or Nissan Micra. No other British military helicopter enjoys the same rating.

Delivered to 845 and 846 Squadrons at Yeovilton, the next challenge is to integrate the Mk4 with HMS Queen Elizabeth through training in the UK and in the USA this summer and autumn.

The last of the 25 machines to be converted will be delivered by Leonardo by the end of February 2021; the upgrades will keep the Mk4s in service till at least the end of the 2020s.

Gallipoli tragedy honoured

SAILORS and officers from HMS Collingwood swapped Fareham for Blandford Camp in Dorset to remember their namesakes killed at Gallipoli.

The Collingwood Battalion was wiped out in under 45 minutes when it was ordered to storm formidable Turkish defences on the Gallipoli peninsula in June 1915.

In three quarters of an hour, the battalion of sailors and Royal Marines suffered more than 1,000 casualties – losses so horrendous that the battalion was subsequently disbanded and never re-formed, its survivors distributed among the rest of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division.

Before heading to Turkey, the battalion had trained over the autumn/winter of 1914-15 with the rest of the division at Blandford, where a monument was later erected in their memory in 'Collingwood corner'.

It's become the focal point for tributes by personnel at today's HMS Collingwood, the RN's home of warfare/weapon engineering training.

The establishment's CO Capt Rob Vitali was joined at the service of remembrance by his chaplain, the Rev Tom James, former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas, a Guard of Honour from the Fareham base and musicians of the Royal Marines Band, Collingwood.

THAT'S one small step for a Frenchman.

One giant leap for Anglo-French naval cooperation.

A member of the boarding team from French frigate La Motte-Picquet climbs aboard HMS Dragon off the Brittany coast to inspect the Portsmouth-based destroyer during the largest cross-Channel exercise of the year.

For the first time British forces were invited to join their Gallic allies' annual amphibious workout – Exercise Catamaran – a vital stepping stone down the path towards the two navies creating a joint task force in a couple of years' time.

From 2020, the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force or CJEF (pronounced 'see Jeff') will be created whenever London and Paris determine there is a need to respond together to international events, be it a humanitarian crisis or natural disaster, through to intervening in a conflict.

Amphibious forces – British and French marines, their helicopters and vehicles – will be at the heart of that force... and were at the heart of Catamaran 18, played out along a 130-mile stretch of the French coast from Quiberon southwards.

More than 3,000 personnel from both sides of the Channel were involved, as well as 11 warships (Dragon,

amphibious support ship RFA Lyme Bay and minehunter HMS Chiddingfold from the UK) and 11 helicopters, including Dragon's Wildcat and RAF Chinooks.

Any task group needs protection – in this case HMS Dragon shielding the group from air attack – while the commandos need firepower once safely ashore, either steel and thunder from the destroyer's main 4.5in gun or a pummelling from friendly air power whose actions were directed from the British destroyer by Frenchman Lt Bastien Fricot.

He has been on exchange with the Type 45 since October last year as a fighter controller, whose task is to guide Allied aircraft on to their targets.

"As a ship, this exercise has trained us for missions by giving us the chance to integrate a large multinational task group with all the challenges that implies," Lt Fricot said.

"On a more personal note, as a fighter controller I had the opportunity to control French Navy Rafale for the very first time, during a short but complex mission."

Catamaran opened with Dragon working in the French task group with destroyer FS Jean Bart, frigate La Motte-Picquet and tankers Marne and Somme, developing ways of working and training together to improve and develop the force's ability to identify and

respond to air, surface and submarine threats.

At the same time, British and French board and search teams were tested as Dragon looked for, found, tracked and finally oversaw inspections of suspicious vessels in the Bay of Biscay.

As the exercise progressed, Dragon found herself supporting troops as they landed with highly-accurate gunfire support, while her Wildcat helicopter scouted the Brittany coastline and hinterland for 'enemy' troops bearing down on the commandos.

The green berets – British and French – came ashore, in part, from Lyme Bay; her loading dock was home to 30 different vehicles in all, from several AMX 10RXs (French light tanks) to British military hovercraft (or Landing Craft (Air Cushioned) in official terminology, LCACs – pronounced 'el cacks').

Hovercraft are used to quickly land small parties of commandos – or rapidly extract casualties from a beachhead.

To move larger numbers/heavy kit and vehicles ashore, the French brought along CTM (chaland de transports de materiel) or transport barges for material) landing craft to work alongside Lyme Bay's own Mexeflote powered barges which are run by the Royal Logistics Corps.

Lyme Bay linked up with French assault ship FS

Tonnerre (Thunder) to form the amphibious core of Catamaran which was spread along a 130-mile stretch of the French coast between Quiberon Bay to La Rochelle.

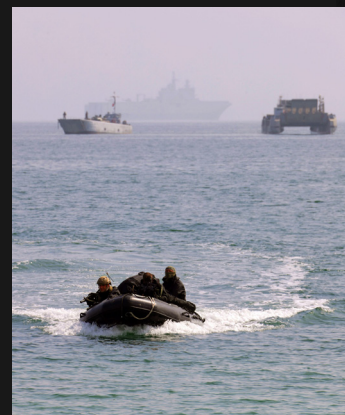
The landing capabilities were tested first on the Ile d'Oléron – home of the world-famous sea fort Boyard – as Royal and French marines came ashore.

"It has been a good experience working with the French Marines, they are a professional force. The only problem we have encountered has been the language barrier, but we are working around that," said Marine Scuneman from X Company, 45 Commando.

The final landings around Quiberon were witnessed by the Head of the Royal Navy, (Admiral Sir Philip Jones.) And the head of the Marine Nationale. (Admiral Christophe Prazuck.) And the British Ambassador to Paris (Ed Llewellyn) who was especially impressed by the display of military precision – and by how much the two navies are behind the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force concept.

"Commanders were very clear how our respective strengths combine to make a formidable joint force," the ambassador said.

For Lyme Bay's Commanding Officer Capt Robert Anders, the Anglo-French workout capped an interesting spring for his ship.



Pictures: LPhotos Dean Nixon and Barry Wheeler



th intent

"We've been very busy in the amphibious arena recently, having completed Joint Warrior ahead of Catamaran."

"We've had on board personnel from the French Army, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Royal Navy and British Army – truly demonstrating an international joint capability."

"The integration between the French and British units onboard has been very effective and we are forging links that can only be beneficial for the future of the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force."

Indeed so much progress had been made by the time Catamaran ended that the two participating navies put pen to paper, confirming the abilities of the Navies of Britain and France to work side-by-side to react to world events.

France's Rear Admiral Olivier Lebas, in charge of his country's rapid reaction naval forces, and Cdre James Parkin, Commander of the UK Amphibious Task Group, signed the joint concept of operations – effectively the operations manual for the future task group.

"Catamaran 18 was a huge

success, confirming the ability of Europe's two pre-eminent navies to work side-by-side," said Cdre Parkin.

"It bodes very well for the future of the combined joint expeditionary force, which we aim to declare at full operating capability."

"With the recent announcement by the First Sea Lord and his French opposite number regarding the provision of frigates as part of each other's carrier strike deployments, we look forward to continuing to work together, around the world, to protect our mutual interests."

As the exercise reached its climax, HMS Dragon was tested in every dimension of warfare to provided protection and support to FS Tonnerre and Lyme Bay, testing our ability to rapidly identify and respond to potential threats to the task group.

"Catamaran was a great opportunity for me to work with my Navy and be the privileged link between the ship and our French counterparts," said Lt Fricot.

"We also seized the chance to work hard towards better

joint working between the Royal Navy and the French Navy as we completed a number of serials with the 'Mighty' Jean Bart to enhance our capability to provide air defence to a large task group."

For Dragon, the exercise came hot on the heels of eight weeks of intensive training and honed skills which will be needed when the destroyer sails on a nine-month deployment later this year after a spot of maintenance.

"Catamaran was an excellent experience – superb, realistic training to test our resolve and ability to fight together," said Cdr Michael Carter Quinn, Dragon's CO. "It demonstrated the enduring ability of the Royal Navy and Marine Nationale escorts to integrate quickly and operate effectively together."

"Working with the French Navy has been of mutual benefit allowing us to refine and improve our ability to operate within a wider task group in support of the amphibious operations."

Pictures: LPhoto Dean Nixon, 30Cdo IX Gp



BANGS IN THE BALTIC

IN SEARING summer heat close to the southern shore of the Gulf of Riga, Royal Marines in Jackal reconnaissance vehicles prepare to move off during this year's premier military exercise in the Baltic.

For a fortnight, the men of Zulu Company, 45 Commando, 'fought' alongside troops from 18 nations in Sabre Strike 2018.

The huge exercise stretches from Poznan in western Poland through the woods and lakes of Masuria to eastern Latvia, with the ground combat phase focused on the Latvian Army's training areas outside Riga.

The commandos from Arbroath comprised a fraction of the 18,000 military personnel (12,500 of them Americans) committed to ninth iteration of the exercise, forming an international 'Viking Battle Group', alongside counterparts from the US Marine Corps, US National Guard and Norwegian Army.

Adazi, 25 miles east of Riga, is a large sandy training area in the woods, where Zulu Company's close combat troops practised close quarters battle and section attack training, while the Fire Support Group integrated with their Michigan National Guard counterparts for off-road training and capability demonstrations.

"The dynamic between the US and British has been great. The British, relying mostly on their vehicles, move faster and cover longer distances," said US 1st Lt Jonathan Puwalski.

The first stage of Sabre Strike concluded with the battle group advancing until it made contact with 'enemy' forces... before forming a convoy west across central Latvia to a site which was top secret throughout the Cold War.

For decades Skrunda-1 was off limits to all but the 5,000 Russian military personnel stationed, manning once top-secret radar installations.

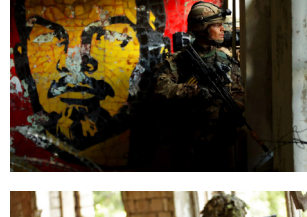
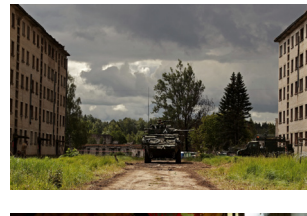
It's become a centre for urban combat training – and an eerie relic of Soviet rule; faded murals extolling the virtues of Communism with kitsch portraits of Lenin.

The derelict town was the setting for the final battle, played out before political leaders and dignitaries from across NATO.

They saw 45 Commando's assault engineers come to the fore, demonstrating not only how they might force their way inside the apartment blocks such as explosive door entry, but also simulat mortar and artillery fire and air strikes

"It's been a great exercise. Working with the American Marines is always good – we have a long history with the USMC and this has strengthened our bonds further," said Lance Corporal 'Gibbo' Gibson of 45 Commando.

"This is the first time I have worked with the Norwegians but it has been a good experience and I hope to work with them again in the future."





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Respect to men of Force Z



ABs Jefferson Geggus and Alex Clifton bow their heads in reverence as sailors and Royal Marines pay their respects over one of the most hallowed sites in Royal Navy history.

The location 3°33'36"N, 104°28'42"E – the South China Sea, 75 miles east of the Malaysian city of Kuantan.

Here lie the wrecks of HMS Prince of Wales and Repulse, last resting places of 840 men killed when the battleship and battle-cruiser were sunk by Japanese bombers in December 1941.

Seventy-seven years on and Devonport-based frigate HMS Sutherland paused as the sun set over the location for a service of remembrance.

The act was particularly poignant for the men and women of the Fighting Clan; their ship sailed from the very same dockyard in Singapore and passed through the exact waters as their forebears in 1941.

Brand-new Prince of Wales and the veteran battle-cruiser – armed like a battleship, but without the same armour protection – HMS Repulse were dispatched to the Far East in the autumn of 1941 by Winston Churchill to deter Japanese aggression.

They did not; when the Japanese invaded Malaya, the two capital ships – collectively known as Force Z – were sent from Singapore to halt the attacks. Instead, they fell prey to medium and torpedo bombers. Within two hours, first Repulse, then Prince of Wales were lost.

Lt Max Cosby, Flight Observer (navigator/warfare specialist) in Sutherland's Wildcat helicopter, outlined the battle – and the fate of the men – for his shipmates.

"It is easy for history to become merely a list of facts, so to be able to draw on first-hand accounts of the battle from stokers and gunners made it much easier to close the gap of seven decades," he said.

"I have been fascinated by the story of Force Z since I was a young boy, so it was very special for me to be involved in commemorating their loss over the wrecks themselves."

Engineer ET(ME) Jacob 'Eddy' Edwards was struck by how similar his plight might be to the stokers keeping Prince of Wales going in the heat of battle.

"Hearing the stories from the sailors onboard during the battle really makes you

think about it, and how they were just like us.

"The photo on the order of service showing the escorting destroyer taking off men from Prince of Wales as she began to capsize made me realise just how quickly things can change in a warship."

A wreath, dedicated to the men of Repulse and Prince of Wales and their families, was laid at the edge of the flight deck by Commanding Officer Cdr Andrew Canale, ahead of a minute's silence at the going down of the sun.

"Seventy-seven years ago the Royal Navy was engaged with the forces of Japan, but fortunately we are now allies once more, and in the last few months we have continued to build a strong partnership with our naval counterparts from Japan," he said.

"These relationships are key to the UK's future in the Asia Pacific region and I know we will continue to remember our forebears whilst looking to the present and the future."

Following the service HMS Sutherland resumed her passage to Malaysia to conduct further defence engagement activities aimed at strengthening international partnerships and increasing training opportunities in the region.

Picture: ETWE Andrew Forsythe



Tribute paid to US fallen

SAILORS from the UK's newest aircraft carrier gathered in Edinburgh to pay their respects to American soldiers who gave their lives in WW1.

Crew members from HMS Prince of Wales formed a Colour Party at the monument in Edinburgh's Princess Street Gardens along with Airmen from the US Air Force.

The monument, known as 'The Call', immortalises the sacrifice made by the 199 men of the American Expeditionary Force who died at the Battle of Cantigny on May 28, 1918.

Captain Chris Smith, Naval Regional Commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland, laid a wreath at the event on behalf of the UK Armed Forces.

He said: "It is a real honour to be part of this commemoration on the centenary of the first American combat in the First World War, and to acknowledge that they made the same sacrifice that British troops did on the Western Front. The involvement of US troops tends to get lost amid the focus on more well-known battles, but their contribution was absolutely essential to the Allied success."

The memorial was erected in 1927, funded by Americans of Scottish descent who wished to recognise the bravery and sacrifice of Scottish soldiers during WW1.

It depicts a seated, kilted, soldier on a low plinth with a rifle across his knees.



Little Elbe room at city festival

ANYONE here been to an 829th birthday party? If you're a member of HMS Somerset's ship's company, your hands should be in the air after representing the RN at one of the world's premier maritime events.

The Plymouth-based frigate sailed up the Elbe to Hamburg to celebrate its *Hafengeburtstag* – harbour birthday – marking the date back in the late 12th Century when Emperor Frederick Barbarossa lifted custom duties, allowing free trade to flourish and Hamburg to boom.

Eight centuries (and a bit) later and the anniversary is an excuse for a weekend-long seafaring party, attracting ships and craft from all over the world.

The RN's No.1 Frigate (she holds the Fleet efficiency award) spent ten hours sailing up river to her plum berth at the Überseebrücke – where people once left the Old World for the New – outboard of German sub-hunter FGS Augsburg and in the shadow of the magnificent new Elbe Philharmonic Hall.

The strains of *God Save the Queen* drifted across the Elbe as Somerset arrived to witness

a parade of hundreds of craft, from tall ships to pleasure boats, jostling for position on the river.

Throughout the festival, Somerset's gangway was opened to the public with 13,000 Hamburgers taking advantage – not least because her forecabin provided the best viewing platform of any participant to observe events on the water.

A good few of them left with HMS Somerset T-Shirts and baseball caps as the frigate's shop did a lively trade, boosting the coffers of the ship's welfare fund by well over £1,000.

Besides the general public, there was a joint cocktail party hosted by Somerset and Augsburg for local, national and international dignitaries.

And a number of German liaison officers had the best seats in the house for the fireworks celebration on the Saturday night, as Somerset towered over the civilian boats in the river.

Festival over, the attention of German seafarers switched to Kiel Week, while Somerset returned to UK waters for intensive flying training with the Wildcats of 825 NAS.

Pictures: Karsten Bebensee/Bundeswehr



Putting a shift in to clear the way

ROYAL Marines weighed in with heavy kit to shift sand... to stop shifting sand imperilling motorists in a Devon village.

More than 300 tonnes of sand, pebbles and dust were dug up on the edge of the beach at Instow and moved along the waterfront by the earth movers.

With the prevailing westerly winds, the sands on the right bank of the River Torridge drift along the front ad build-up at the sea wall separating the beach from Marine Parade – the main road along the sea front.

So much sand built up that it poured over the wall and on to the road and footpath; the local council cleared that to spare pedestrians having to walk in the centre of the roadway.

It needed a little more muscle to clear the build-up on the beach-side of the wall, which is where a team of Royal Marines from 11 (Trials and Training) Squadron – based just a few hundred yards away – came in.

At times, they've moved up to two thousand tonnes of sand; on this instance, they faced only around 300 tonnes which needed dumping further along the beach – just a day's work.

"We share the beach and seafront and we like to think that we are part of the community here, so this is just good community spirit on our part," said Major Martyn Heenan, Officer Commanding 11 Sqn.

"We are not going to beat Mother Nature, but we can help hold her at bay for a little bit longer."

The Taw and Torridge estuaries have been used to train and develop landing forces since the middle of WW2 and 11 Sqn continues that work by assessing and developing potential amphibious craft of the future, training landing craft, and adapting and modifying vehicles so that they can bridge the gap between sea and land.



Slick look for oil depot

WORK is well underway to replace the tanks in the Oil Fuel Depot at Gosport.

Once completed, the multi-million pound investment will safeguard the future of the depot.

Some of the tanks on the Gosport site are nearing the end of their life, and are being replaced to ensure it will be fully equipped to meet future requirements, which will include servicing the new Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers.

To ensure that the site remains operational, and to meet the enduring Royal Navy requirements throughout, the rebuild will be conducted in a phased approach.

A number of assets, including product tanks, will be demolished and rebuilt to the latest modern standards, and the project will be completed by 2021.

The construction phase will last approximately 36 months.

Additional work on the site includes replacing the laboratory building, in addition to the operations and control building, as well as a revised layout of the main site entrance, which includes replacing a guard house and a gate house.

Cdre Matthew Clarke, Assistant Chief of Staff, Support, said: "I am excited to see the start of this redevelopment project. The current tanks have done their job for the last 100 years but it is now important to have a modern storage facility to support the Royal Navy of the 21st Century."

Adrian Jackson, Chief Executive of the Oil Pipelines Agency added: "The redevelopment works will ensure we are equipped to meet the future requirements of the Royal Navy, serving an essential role in the era of the new Queen Elizabeth-class carriers."

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● HMS Albion's engineers, front row, from left, CPO Daniel Whitcher, PO Mark Green, CPO Neil Hellier, Cdr John McCombe, PO Michael Monnington and PO David Whitehead. Back row, from left, PO Stephen Shannon and PO Jason Priddle
Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Jenkins



● LET Marc Dredge and CPO Russell Kerwin

Dredge judged best in new ship awards

TWO annual engineering awards have been established and given out for the first time in HMS Prince of Wales.

The Admiral Wildish Award for Engineering Innovation was presented to CPOET(EL) Russell Kerwin, the Power Group Head within the Marine Engineering Department, while the Commander ME Award for Engineering Excellence went to LETME(EL) Marc Dredge.

CPO Kerwin, who received his award from VAdm Wildish's daughter Angela Nicholson, also received a cheque for £200 and his name was engraved alongside a silver salver, which was presented to the Admiral by the Wardroom of HMS Prince of Wales in 1941.

The award is open to all Junior Rates, Senior Rates, Warrant Officers, or Commissioned Officers of any engineering department serving in the aircraft carrier.

The carrier's Propulsion Engineering Officer Lt Alex Chenery said: "CPO Kerwin has been an indispensable figure in preparing both ship's company and Prince of Wales herself for becoming high-voltage live."

"When it comes to providing assurance to command that Prince of Wales and her crew will be safe to work and live in a high-voltage environment both in build and in service, CPO Kerwin's efforts have been exemplary in all respects."

"He has worked relentlessly and pragmatically to ensure the ship is ready to transform from a dead barge into a high-voltage live ship."

LET Dredge received his award from Cdre Barry Brooks, from the Worshipful Company of Engineers, one of the sponsors. He also received £100.

Propulsion Manager WO1 Mark Hinton said: "LET Dredge has had an exemplary start to 2018 as the team moved into deeper integration within Power and Propulsion, focussing on the goal of high-voltage live before the end of term."

"To support this LET Dredge was tasked with conducting in excess of 30 installation audits of varying HV system components, often without supervision, providing first-class feedback to the commissioning lead."

"Within the department, LET Dredge delivered what has been proclaimed as possibly the best technical brief this year, providing highly-detailed information in an amusing, comfortable manner which belies his current rate."

"Knowledgeable, inspirational and enthusiastic to boot, LET Dredge continues to impress his peers and superiors with his unwavering determination and willingness to get the job done."

Both awards are sponsored by the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology and The Worshipful Company of Engineers.

Flying Torbay flag out in the Far East

EIGHT Royal Navy engineers from Torbay are taking part in a major deployment to the Far East.

HMS Albion, a 19,000-tonne amphibious assault ship, left Plymouth in February to undertake exercises in the Mediterranean, after which she crossed the Indian Ocean bound for Singapore.

The presence of the Fleet Flagship in the Far East is designed to strengthen the United Kingdom's partnerships in a part of the world that is growing in strategic importance.

The eight men, all of whom grew up in the Torbay area or live locally today, are part of HMS Albion's Marine Engineering Department.

"We've each served on different Devonport-based ships over the years, so there's a real camaraderie now that the eight of us are all together on HMS Albion," said CPO Neil Hellier, who has lived in Torbay for the past 21 years.

They have decided to speak out about the importance of their work in order to support the government's 'Year of Engineering' campaign, which seeks to encourage more young people to consider careers in science, technology and engineering.

"Stokers have traditionally been the unsung heroes of the Royal Navy but we're really proud to be Marine Engineers and for people to understand what we do," said Chief Hellier.

CPO Daniel Whitcher worked at Volksburg Motors in Torquay before joining the Royal Navy. Along with PO David Whitehead he runs HMS Albion's propulsion plant.

"Since we left the UK, HMS Albion has travelled more than 17,000 miles, but if it weren't for the team from Torbay she'd still be alongside in Devonport."

"The eight of us not only provide propulsion and steering, but we produce 15 mega watts of high voltage electrical power and 80 tonnes of freshwater every day, which powers the ship's weapons systems and supports the 550 people living onboard. We also maintain the equipment that the Royal Marines use to launch and recover their landing craft. There's not a system onboard that we don't support in some way."

PO Whitehead, a former pupil of Knowles Hill School, added: "Being a Marine Engineer



2018. YEAR OF ENGINEERING

is a more varied career than people think. Although I'm in the Navy I've previously worked with the Royal Artillery supporting their self-defence weaponry and I later served in Umm Qasr, Iraq, teaching and maintaining outboard motors."

For PO Jason Priddle from Dawlish, marine engineering is something of a family tradition.

"My grandfather served as a stoker on midgeet submarines during the World War 2 so I followed in his footsteps by becoming a Marine Engineer."

"I think all of us enjoy fixing things and the Navy gives us the opportunity to work within a technology-focused role while getting to see the world."

Together, the men have given 150 years of service to the Royal Navy, spending a combined 15,000 days at sea in 30 different ships, and yet this is the first time that seven out of the eight have deployed to the Far East.

PO Mark Green, who went to Paignton Community College, said: "This is my first deployment to the Far East and the first time I've crossed the Equator. I feel quite fortunate to be on HMS Albion because we're getting the opportunity to visit places where the Royal Navy hasn't been for six or seven years."

In April, HMS Albion exercised with a French Task Group in the Java Sea and became the first Royal Navy warship to visit Indonesia in seven years. Meanwhile, her embarked Royal Marines undertook a jungle training exercise in Brunei.

PO Michael Monnington, who also went to Knowles Hill School, was among a group of sailors and marines who were invited to share lunch at an orphanage in the Indonesian capital Jakarta.

"The visit to the orphanage was really interesting because it took us away from the tourist areas and into the backstreets of Jakarta to see how local people lived. The orphanage didn't have much but still wanted to provide us with a traditional Indonesian

meal. We were quite overwhelmed by their generosity."

From Brunei, HMS Albion headed north through the South China Sea toward Japan, from where she will work alongside the UK's allies and partners to support maritime security in the region's busy shipping lanes.

PO Stephen Shannon said: "A highlight for me was visiting the Atomic Bomb Museum and Peace Park in Nagasaki. Japan is the kind of place I probably wouldn't get to visit were it not for the Navy."

For PO Monnington, this part of the world has a special link to his family.

"My grandfather was a prisoner of war during the Korean War in the 1950s so it is quite poignant to be back here all these years later protecting the security and freedoms he was fighting for."

HMS Albion's Marine Engineering Department is headed by Cdr John McCombe who is himself a former pupil of Torquay Boys Grammar School and Dartmouth Community College.

"Like the others from the Torbay area, the Royal Navy has given me a great career as an engineer. I joined straight from school and have gained an engineering degree while serving. I have also thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity the Navy has provided to travel the world."

"The Royal Navy has always been a technological service and it's a trend that will continue as our ships become more automated and data driven. That's why it's so important that we reach out and inspire the next generation of engineers and technicians to follow in our footsteps."

HMS Albion's Commanding Officer, Capt Tim Neild said: "HMS Albion is a hugely sophisticated ship, capable of a range of operations, be it delivering humanitarian aid and disaster relief, providing maritime security or projecting Royal Marines ashore. In all these tasks, I rely on my engineers to keep the ship powered, maintained and ready for action."

"I consider myself very fortunate to be able to draw on such a close-knit and experienced team. They are great ambassadors for naval engineering and I know how proud they are to fly the flag on behalf of Torbay out here in the Far East."

Report: Lt Cdr Jeremy Olver, HMS Albion

Passion for job helps to bring profession alive

AS one of the largest employers of engineers and technicians in the country, the MOD is wholly reliant in its professional engineers for delivering defence outputs and in doing so makes a significant contribution to the UK's engineering skills base.

The same is true of the Royal Navy, which employs over 12,500 engineers as an equipment and technology centric service, with engineers and technicians being its largest cadre.

Recognising the importance of the YOE18 to the country and its future prosperity, the Royal Navy is a proud strategic partner of the wider pan-government Year of Engineering campaign.

To promote the YOE18 and ensure its success, the Royal Navy is leading the way with a wide and varied programme of events throughout the year, aimed at celebrating engineering success and demonstrating to the nation the diversity of engineering opportunities in the Royal Navy.

It is hoped that the campaign of national engagements will reach those that are unaware of the fantastic opportunities that exist for careers in engineering, with parents and teachers being essential when inspiring the young and making engineering and the enabling studies a more attractive choice for many students.

The Royal Navy's role throughout YOE18 is to showcase its engineering, both people and equipment, though events and activities which you could be involved in or you could register as a Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) ambassador.

You can also look to run events yourselves. Being a STEM ambassador does not demand a great deal of your time, but provides fulfilling and rewarding opportunities to demonstrate why you decided engineering was the right career and to describe your individual experiences 'first-hand'.

It can involve assisting in judging student competitions, helping run science experiments in schools, assisting in mock interviews or simply delivering first-hand accounts of your engineering experience; the fact that you are in the Royal Navy and can highlight the variety and reward of being in the Service role is a bonus.

In my experience, it really brings the profession alive when somebody who is passionate about what they do describes their professional life directly to students, parents and teachers, especially those who have had no experience of the Royal Navy and what we do across the globe.

YOE18 is also an opportunity for us to celebrate what we do as naval engineers. We should be proud of our profession, seek to build on past achievements and always strive for excellence in the future.

CNEO, Rear Admiral Richard Thompson

d'Arc skies



AND when Alexander saw the breadth of his domain, he wept, for there were no more worlds to conquer...

This is a stunning cockpit-eye view of three dozen ships massed for a fleet review with the tropical backdrop of the Indonesian islands of Bali and Lombok – and just one of the exotic destinations visited by 847 Naval Air Squadron and their Wildcats.

The fleet review was the curtain-raiser to Exercise Komodo, one of the largest naval exercises held in the Asia-Pacific region.

More than 40 nations committed equipment or personnel – or both – to Komodo, including Australia, China, the Philippines, Indonesia and France.

The French involvement was spearheaded by assault ship FS Dixmude (seen foreground left in the main image), leading her nation's annual amphibious deployment to the Asia-Pacific region, Jeanne d'Arc.

Aboard throughout are two Wildcats from 847 NAS – which typically act as

the eyes of the Royal Marines on the battlefield – and their 30 or so crew and engineers, providing aerial support... just as a couple of Commando Helicopter Force Merlins did 12 months ago aboard Dixmude's sister Mistral.

Once again the detachment to a foreign ship has given the commando fliers experiences beyond the ordinary realm of purely working with British forces.

So big was the flypast which accompanied the Komodo 'fleet review' that it was split into three parts, with the helicopters decamping to an abandoned airfield to choreograph their formations over the 37 ships massed for the exercise.

The two Wildcats shared Indonesian airspace with a Royal Australian Navy Seahawk, two Indonesian AW109s, three Philippine Navy Hueys and a Chinese Navy Z9. It had all been meticulously planned by the host nation – though there was no time for rehearsals.

"The aircraft moved to their holding areas over the golden beaches and

turquoise waters of Lombok and stood by for the 'go'," said pilot Lt Olly Leisk. "Exactly on time, the aircraft moved away, reduced height and tipped in for the flypast."

"Flying in formation with aircraft from so many different nations is something that the Fleet Air Arm and its personnel doesn't regularly take part in."

"The view from the air was an impressive spectacle given the massive number of ships involved – and from the sea the flypast was a striking display of modern aviation from a great number of nations working together."

The four-day-long exercise is held every two years by the Indonesians with the emphasis on getting navies which operate in the Pacific region to work together, particularly on humanitarian projects, from civil engineering to combined rescues and providing medical aid for civilians.

There's also a busy sporting diary with fun runs, crossfit competitions and team events; more than 2,000 runners from 20 nations lined up for the 5km and 10km races.

"Exercise Komodo was an incredibly unique event. We were privileged to be involved in such a large formation from such a wide range of aircraft and nations we wouldn't normally get to operate with," said Lt Paul Melling, the 847 detachment's training officer.

A little over 1,000 miles east of Lombok lies Dixmude's next port of call: Darwin.

The capital of Australia's vast but sparsely-populated Northern Territory proved a suitable location for 847 to rotate most of its detachment as participants of the first half of Jeanne d'Arc flew home to Yeovilton and their replacements flew 9,000 miles in the opposite direction.

Both incomers and outgoers did have a chance to enjoy Darwin and especially its environs before heading home/back to sea.

PO Gareth Harvey hired a motorbike and in true *Easy Rider* fashion headed out into the unknown (aka the Outback). Nature and wildlife parks are within easy reach of the port.

"What can be cooler than riding bikes

through the Outback?" he asked... then answered. "Riding bikes through the Outback and being paid to do so. A definite perk of RN life."

"Some of the waterfalls and views in Litchfield National Park were like scenes you'd find on a postcard."

The region is also famous for its crocodile populace – there's one reptile for every human being.

Rather than get up close to 'Crocodile Darwin', the 847 fliers decided to take a look at the beasts from afar courtesy of the Wildcat's state-of-the-art electro/optic camera.

After Dixmude sailed from Darwin, the Wildcats practised their navigational skills over the Northern Territory, flying side-by-side with a French Alouette helicopter.

"The Alouette I fly is 53 years old – the first flight of the model was in 1959," explained Lieutenant Henri, Dixmude's Alouette pilot.

"This was my first time flying with





pictures: po(phot) des wade, chf, and cindy motet, marine nationale

the British detachment – it was very interesting having two aircraft from two very different generations flying together. A good contrast of the old and the very new.”

Lt Melling added: “It was fantastic to experience the Outback which we’d seen on the ground from the air and working closely with the French was a real pleasure.”

“It also allowed us to practise some reconnaissance skills on the local crocodile population.”

Such as using the electro-optic camera, which can see objects several miles away by day or night, in colour or black and white, and record it in high definition.

Each port visit has offered something different to the 847 detachment: brief pitstops for fuel and supplies, cultural visits, sales visits, crocodiles – and almost every stop has been at a city rarely frequented by the Royal Navy.

IT expert ET Will Day was “a bit apprehensive” ahead of the visit to

Beirut given the troubled recent history of the Lebanon.

“We were surprised at how metropolitan the city was. We then took a bus tour with some of the French crewmembers away from the city and into the mountains. The scenery is stunning and the Hermitage of Saint Bichay, built in 1215, was a particular highlight – it gave a fascinating insight into early Christianity in the region.

“Safe to say that the few of us that took the tours around the region now think differently as to how unique and stunning Lebanon can really be.”

In Kuala Lumpur one Wildcat touched down at a rooftop exhibition promoting UK trade with the Far East and stole the show.

The local delicacy in Chennai, India, raised eyebrows: brain roast with egg.

There are no such treats on the Dixmude (thankfully), where the Brits have had to earn their supper (or rather *souper*).

Upon sailing from Darwin, the newly-arrived Wildcat crews needed to show they were ready for all eventualities

during the remainder of the Jeanne d’Arc deployment: winching people and supplies, search-and-rescue duties, landing and taking off by day and night, and transferring loads between the two ships in the force.

The French were impressed by the hi-line method used by the British aviators to safely winch people up from particularly tight spots, such as yachts, as well as their efficiency in shifting loads between the Dixmude and Surcouf.

The French set aside three hours to move 16 loads of 500kg of ammunition apiece. The Wildcat fliers completed the transfer in two.

“Multinational deployments to the Far East are few and far between,” said aircrewman PO Pat Whitcomb.

“I was very keen to get involved. The work side of things has involved a heavy flying programme of training to get us up to speed and get the new crews qualified.

“I’m looking forward to settling in on the ship, learning about the integration works from the flying side of things, and

general day-to-day life on board.”

It’s not all work for the eclectic mix of British, French, Americans and Spanish aboard the Dixmude.

For French Navy day – May 23rd – Dixmude’s well dock, normally used for landing craft operations, was turned into a swimming pool.

847 personnel joined the ship’s aviation department and helped them to third place in the relay competition, which required sailors in pairs to complete two lengths of the 50m ‘pool’.

Such events have helped the Brits bond with their shipmates.

“Working with the French has been an eye-opening experience,” said PO Harvey.

“Initially I was apprehensive, especially given my rudimentary French. But after spending a few months with them, I can safely say they’re a decent bunch of lads whose professionalism and willingness to help is inspiring.”

This *entente cordiale* has led to deck crews and engineers merging, some senior ratings completing professional qualifications, and some French sailors

have learned about RN flight deck operations from their British shipmates.

And even when the deployment ends in Toulon, the Brits are talking about coming back for another deployment either with Dixmude, or her sister Mistral, before 2018 is out.

Above all, Jeanne d’Arc has cemented the idea that Fleet Air Arm units can operate safely and effectively from Marine Nationale vessels... which will be a vital element of the Anglo-French task force (CJEF) which the two navies intend to form in the event of an international crisis.

“As always 847 Naval Air Squadron is punching well above its weight. It’s flown the RN’s flag with distinction all the way across the globe,” said detachment commander Maj Richard Moore.

“The deployment has been an excellent opportunity for the men and women of 847 to represent the RN and to gain experiences which will stay with them for years to come.”

And it’s far from over yet. Next stop: Vietnam.





Choir set to sing on the Somme

THE voices of three dozen military wives from the Portsmouth area will echo around the hallowed fields of the Somme this summer.

The city's Military Wives Choir heads to Amiens and the former killing fields of the Western Front to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War, the men lost in it – and the women left behind on the home front.

In doing so they will perform some of the tracks they have just recorded with fellow forces wives from across the land – and beyond – for a commemorative WW1-themed album.

More than 1,100 singers from 69 choirs – including 93 choristers from overseas – recorded 12 tracks for the album *Remembrance*, a mixture of new compositions such as the opening track *Poppy Red*, which merges the voices of every single singer, and classics such as *Abide With Me* and *Keep the Home Fires Burning*.

Around 35 women from the Portsmouth choir – which rehearses at HMS Collingwood in Fareham on Tuesdays – took part in the recordings in London, as did military musicians including the Royal Marines Corps of Drums.

"This album is not just about remembering those who gave their lives in the Great War, but also those that stayed behind, not knowing when or if they would see their husbands, brothers, fathers and sons again," said warfare officer Lt Cdr Marie Whitehouse, who serves at HMS Excellent.

"This is still significant today among military families, a story that we as the Military Wives Choir can uniquely tell, and a chance for those of us who serve to show how truly grateful we are to those that we leave behind for keeping things together in our absence.

"It was an honour to record the album, the tracks are beautifully written and composed and very thought-provoking."

Fellow vocalist Juliet Swann said the whole experience gave the local choir "a chance to be part of something much bigger than ourselves, something that will live on, and a chance to honour both those who have fallen and those who continue to fight."

The album, priced £12.14, was released on June 29 and you can listen to the opening track for free on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8hJyrmY3-A>.



Apprentices climbing the engineering career ladder

A GROUP of apprentices from HMS Sultan became the first within their specialisation to qualify as Leading Engineering Technicians as part of their training on the Royal Navy Marine Engineering (Submariner) Nuclear Undergraduate Apprenticeship Scheme (NUGAS).

The apprentices moved from probationary to full Leading Hands status after completing 18 months' worth of training on topics such as electrical/mechanical engineering principles, equipment fault-finding and repairs and air purification and will now progress on to learn about nuclear reactor engineering theory and operations at HMS Sultan and onboard a submarine.

The NUGAS scheme offers an apprenticeship which starts with three-and-a-half years of training and education, followed by a

further three-and-a-half years on active duty in the Submarine Service. This is followed by a year's study on a BEng (Hons) Engineering Degree.

NUGAS apprentice Daniel Hagen said: "I'd been working as a joiner before I joined and I thought working on submarines would give me lots of opportunities and some stability.

"Although I'm a little older than some of the others on the course, I had the right grades to apply from school for the course. It's good fun, I'm really enjoying it and it's very rewarding.

"It's been a steep learning curve as the first group on the course, but we've kept each other going.

"We have further courses to do before we can get our dolphins and we will do further training onboard a submarine before we re-join Sultan in around a year for Petty Officer training."



Archer hosts Anne for parade of sail

ONE OF the world's oldest yacht clubs has marked its 150th anniversary with a visit from the Princess Royal.

The Royal Forth Yacht Club was formed in 1868 by a group of 26 local gentlemen seeking to promote boating among the people of Edinburgh.

For generations they have operated from Granton Harbour, offering members the opportunity to experience sailing on the sheltered waters of the Forth estuary.

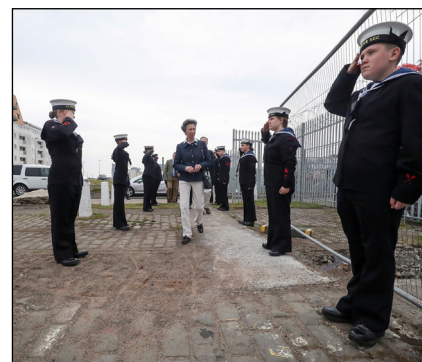
In her role of club patron, Princess Anne boarded Royal Navy Patrol Boat HMS Archer to take the salute from yachts participating in the club's anniversary parade of sail.

The Princess also unveiled a plaque marking a century-and-a-half of the Edinburgh institution with the Lord Provost of Edinburgh Frank Ross also attending.

Charles Morton, Commodore of the Royal Forth Yacht Club, said: "We are proud to have been sailing from Granton for 150 years and intend to be here for many years to come.

"Our link with recreational sailing goes back even further, to 1836 and the founding of the Royal Eastern Yacht Club which amalgamated with the Royal Forth in 1969. Yachts in those early days were large and needed paid crews, today sailing is enjoyed by people from all walks of life."

Less than a 15 minute drive from the city centre, the Yacht Club features a purpose-built club house with showers, changing rooms,



lounge and a licensed bar with catering.

It is the ideal location for the sport, with the Forth estuary off Granton used almost exclusively for sailing and boating and offering a spectacular backdrop of Edinburgh Castle.

"The Royal Navy were delighted to help support the Royal Forth Yacht Club's 150th anniversary," said Capt Chris Smith, Naval Regional Commander Scotland and Northern Ireland.

"Much like the Navy, the Royal Forth Yacht Club is an organisation with a long and proud heritage on the River Forth. Its role in developing an understanding of the sea, whether that be for recreational or



commercial use, is important to all of us living in this island nation."

He continued: "The crew of HMS Archer were honoured to host Her Royal Highness and to be part of the event, especially since the ship is Edinburgh-based and is the training vessel for Edinburgh University Royal Navy Unit."

The Club's Royal connection goes back to 1883 when Queen Victoria was "graciously pleased to command that henceforth the club would be known as the Royal Forth Yacht Club". Prince Philip is also an honorary member with his name appearing as winner on club trophies.

Pictures: LPhot Ben Shread



● Lt Cdr Andrew White with daughter Emily Pictures: LPhot Guy Pool

Families join loved ones at work

QUESTION. How much fun can you have on an overcast day in Somerset in the spring?

Answer. Lots – if you were lucky enough to receive an invite to RNAS Yeovilton's families' day.

The gates of the air base were opened to loved ones to give them a glimpse of what mum, dad, brother or sister gets up to while serving at the air station.

The air was filled with the sound of turning rotors and the whiff of burning aviation fuel as the Merlins and battlefield and maritime Wildcats from the Commando Helicopter Force, 825 and 815 Naval Air Squadrons and the Army Air Corps were flashed up. Visitors

from RAF Benson (a Puma) and Culdrose (a submarine-hunting Merlin Mk2) also dropped in.

Families were not merely given the opportunity to clamber over and peer inside the numerous whirlybirds wheeled out for them, but even enjoy a short flight as passengers.

"Families Day is our small way of saying 'thank you' to families of those who work at Yeovilton; they endure much with long hard working hours and lengthy periods of separation," said Yeovilton's CO Cdre Nick Tindal.

"We are incredibly grateful and could not do the important work we do without their help. We hope that they enjoyed their day."



● Brandt Van der Schyff, five, on the climbing wall

Freedom honour for HMS Sherwood

THUNDERY rain kept neither the public nor the sailors of HMS Sherwood from Nottingham's historic Market Square as the East Midlands city hosted the unit's first Freedom parade.

Just a few days after civic leaders bestowed their highest civic honour on a military unit, Sherwood's sailors formed up in front of the city hall alongside the Band of HM Royal Marines, Portsmouth, Sea Cadets and naval veterans – including former crew members of Type 42 destroyer HMS Nottingham.

The reservists were inspected by Nottingham's Lord Mayor Cllr Liaqat Ali before they marched through the city with their "swords drawn, bayonets fixed, band(s) playing and Colours flying", as members of the public applauded the spectacle.

"After many months of planning and coordination with Nottingham City Council and other agencies it was great to see the ship's company finally parade through the city which they have been based in for so long," said Lt Cdr Rod Grant, HMS Sherwood's Operations Officer, who helped organise the march.

"Everyone was obviously enjoying themselves and they received a warm welcome from crowds that had taken the time and effort to support their region's own naval unit."

Among the marchers was Officer Cadet Afton Fitzhenry – a 2020 Tokyo Olympics contender for Team GB in the canoe sprint – who joined the Sea Cadets a decade ago but wanted "that little bit more excitement".

"In the Reserves I meet like-minded people from different backgrounds. We're all determined, sport-orientated and looking for something more. We've learned about each other, but we've also learned more about ourselves."

In receiving the honour, Sherwood joins a list of civic luminaries and heroes either from or associated with Nottingham, including WW1 ace Albert Ball VC, playwright Alan Sillitoe, football manager Brian Clough and skating legends Torvill and Dean.

Cllr Brian Grocock, Nottingham City Council's Armed Forces Champion, said after nearly 70 years' association, the time was ripe to formally honour the RNR unit.

"As a city we are immensely proud of HMS Sherwood and honouring the unit with the Freedom of the City is our way of showing our gratitude," he said.

"We are pleased to have HMS Sherwood as part of our broader community."



Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury



Well done dad

A SAILOR now based at HMS Raleigh has been recognised as the Royal Navy's top Physical Trainer thanks to his work on board HMS Monmouth.

LPT Aaron Squance, pictured with his five-year-old daughter Lily-Mae, was presented with the Tony Trywhitt-Bettridge trophy by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Tony Radakin.

The Plymouth sailor was a member of HMS Monmouth's ship's company for a nine-month deployment, which saw the Type 23 frigate patrolling the Middle East on operations.

The 31-year-old was selected for the award for his drive, determination and dedication which was a key contribution to the morale and wellbeing of the ship's company.

During 17 port visits to 13 different countries LPT Squance arranged 23 different fixtures for the ship's football, rugby and cricket teams. He also provided 15 days of adventurous training.

LPT Squance said: "Over the long, arduous deployment there was plenty of opportunity to balance out the difficult times with some good memories."

"The highlight for me was the high interest from the ship's company in the visit to Tsavo East Safari in Mombasa, Kenya. The planning and the admin behind the visit was difficult but to see 150 of the ship's company happy, full of smiles and having completed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity was great."

"I also ensured HMS Monmouth entered seven Fleet competitions, running and rowing relay events, when all ships and submarines compete against one another for the trophies. HMS Monmouth won six trophies and we were runners-up for the seventh."

LPT Squance joined the Royal Navy as a Marine Engineering Mechanic in 2006, but achieved his long-term ambition to become a Leading Physical Trainer three years ago. HMS Monmouth was his first ship in his new role.

"It feels good to have recognition for all my hard work during the deployment. In my 12 years' of service I believe the Physical Training specialisation is the most professional in the Royal Navy and really hard-working. Everyone is very ambitious, and everyone is continually trying to better themselves to be the best. I'm really proud as I was also awarded a Joint Commander's Commendation, so both of the achievements are massive."

The Tony Trywhitt-Bettridge trophy is named in memory of a well-respected Royal Navy CPOPT.

Home James... for the second time

ONE of HM Naval Base Clyde's most well-known faces has retired – for the second time.

Cdr James Leatherby was joined by his wife Beverly and son Peter as Naval Base colleagues bid him a fond farewell.

After a 35-year career in the Royal Navy, James retired from Service in 2006. After a two-day break he was back at his desk as a uniformed civil servant serving another 12 years.

"James will be truly missed," said Cdre Mark Gayfer, Naval Base Commander Clyde.

"His encyclopaedic knowledge of HM Naval Base Clyde, its workings and its history, have been invaluable to me in my time as Naval Base Commander."

James joined the Royal Navy in 1971 and served a full career on operations and in support, including submarine service on HMS Renown and with the frigates HMS Lincoln, Cleopatra, Minerva and Norfolk.

Ashore he also spent time as the Captain's Secretary at Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth, Naval Assistant to Director General Submarines and Secretary to Flag Officer Submarines.

Joining HMS Neptune in 1996 as the Base Supply Officer he later went on to Rosyth where he was Commanding Officer of HMS Caledonia and Queen's Harbour Master Rosyth.

In June 2001 James returned to HM Naval Base Clyde as the Commander of HMS Neptune and completed his service on the Active List as the Requirements and Programme Manager for the Captain of the Base.

After 13 years continuous association with HMS Neptune, as a civil servant he became the Chief of Staff to the Naval Base Commander Clyde. Most recently he was employed as the Liaison Manager for NBC's Board of Directors while retaining his role as one of the Duty Base Incident Commanders.

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines
Children's Fund

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

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

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

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

Charity round-up

■ UK Forces personnel have generously donated 150BD to the 'Bahrain for All' charity, working towards the provision of activity books for disabled children in 34 centres throughout the Kingdom of Bahrain.

They attended a children's fun day as part of the Bahrain for All charity year-round activities, held at the Hidd Rehabilitation Centre in Bahrain.

A total of 150BD was donated to the staff by UK personnel, raised through a 24-hour fitness event held at the newly-opened UK Naval Support Facility in Bahrain.

■ NAVAL personnel and civilian staff took part in a national plastic pick-up event.

Led by CPO Craig Brook-Hewitt, 75 members of the public and military personnel from HMS Raleigh and Devonport ships, visited Tregantle beach to clean up any waste that had washed ashore.

Just on the cove called Blackie Ball which is only accessible for 45 minutes between tides, the team managed to remove over 25 bags of plastic alone before concentrating on the rest of the beach.

Scouring the beach, in total the team removed over 40 bags of rubbish, multiple fishing trays, two tons of rope and much more.

■ A NEW tri-Service youth project which aims to improve support and services for children and young people from Armed Forces and veteran families in Scotland has received the green light.

The national youth participation project, which will run for three years is being launched by Scotland Armed Forces Children's Charity, the Royal Caledonian Education Trust (RCET).

The funding, which will help 12 to 24-year-olds, has received a £40k grant from The Soldiers' Charity.

■ THE Victory Swim, the annual water-based challenge supported by the Royal Navy, has announced its dates and details for both 2018 and 2019.

The 2018 event, which will raise money for the Felix Fund, will take place on September 6 at Waterland Outdoor Pursuits, Lake 32 Cotswold Water Park near Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

The Felix Fund supports disposal experts, the EOD community and their families. Entries are now being accepted for the Victory Swim 2018, priced at £20 per competitor.

Swimmers will have an option of swimming 400 metres, 700 metres, 1,500 metres or more.

The 2019 event will take place in September and involves swimming the English Channel. The cost of entry is £500.

To get involved or to find out about sponsorship opportunities, call 0131 357 8977 or email pr@redheadpr.co.uk.

■ PERSONNEL from HM Naval Base Clyde headed to Cumbria to take part in this year's Keswick to Barrow Walk.

The event challenges participants to cover the 40 miles between Keswick and Barrow in just one day and some 18 staff from the Naval Base took part to raise £4,700.

This year the charities benefiting from the Clyde team's efforts include: the Beatson Cancer Charity, the RNLI, Erskine, the Stroke Association, Arthritis Research UK, Parkinson's UK, Combat Stress and the RNRMC.

There is still time to donate. Visit the events page at: www.keswick2barrow.co.uk/home to find out more.



● WO1 Dave Bathgate, centre, with fundraisers at RNAS Yeovilton

Picture: LPhoto Guy Pool

Dave keeps going to keep promise

A DEATHBED vow to his brother led to veteran submariner Dave Bathgate taking on his toughest challenge to date: beating cancer.

In a grim 18-month period, the warrant officer watched the disease take his uncle and aunt. But it was the death of his brother John, who worked in the cruise ship industry, which was the catalyst for Dave to act.

"From sitting having a beer and a barbecue in my back garden to John being in a coma on life support which he would never wake from was five hours," said the senior NCO. "It wasn't actually cancer that killed him - he had cancer of the colon and his colon ruptured one afternoon spreading sepsis throughout his body."

"As we switched off his life support I promised him I would do all I could to ensure as few people went through what my family endured and are still enduring to this day."

The result is Military vs Cancer - not a charity, but a massive fundraising effort involving all three Services under the banner 'By Sea, Land, Air and All, together let's make cancer fall'.

Dave's set himself the goal of raising £100,000 for both cancer research and

Military vs Cancer 2018



assisting sufferers and their families.

Hence the pilgrimage around the UK's military bases (e.g. Yeovilton and Culdrose) and environs (such as the Gosport ferry) which, coupled with online fundraising efforts, have so far brought in over £13,000.

"A friend once said: 'Think big, aim high,' and that is what I intend," adds Dave. "Although it's been started by a submariner, this isn't the Submarine Service against cancer, nor is it the Royal Navy. This is the United Kingdom Military versus Cancer."

The reasoning being if you can beat Boney, Kaiser Bill, Hitler, the Argentine junta and Saddam Hussein (inter alia), you can beat cancer - Britain's military has a proven track record of victory.

Much of the fundraising has been carried out by personnel giving up their time to rattle tins - you'll see them

in their bespoke Military vs Cancer hooded tops, paid for by the crew of HMS Vigilant during a deterrence deployment.

Collections at Faslane, HMS Excellent, RAF Scampton and Waddington are next up.

But Dave has also received donations of a submariner's Breitling Watch, a sword from Crown Swords, a cushion from the Company of Makers, a £200 voucher for body art from Black Sails Tattoo Studio and an Oath of Allegiance courtesy of the Sandbag And Lamp Veterans - all of which are being raffled: tickets are £10 for the watch, £5 for the sword, £3.50 for the tattoo or oath of allegiance.

And the submariner has one eye on a marathon field gun run... from John O' Groats to Land's End "but as you can imagine, this will take some planning."

To buy raffle tickets for the items listed above visit <https://www.paypal.me/militaryvscancer> and you can get involved in the campaign via <https://twitter.com/milvscancer2018> and <https://www.facebook.com/MilitaryVsCancer/>



Nine notch up 247 years of service

NINE members of 1710 NAS received Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and Clasps at a ceremony aboard HMS Victory.

Family members watched as the head of the Fleet Air Arm, Rear Admiral Keith Blount, rewarded achievements that cover, accumulatively 247 years loyal service to the Armed Forces.

Cdr Chris Ling, Commanding Officer of 1710 NAS, said he was proud of all of his team at the unique specialist unit, which deploys globally to support the Fleet and MOD in recovering, sustaining and enhancing military aviation aircraft and capability around the world.

"It's a huge privilege to stand with these air engineers as they are recognised for their dedication to the Armed Forces and their profession," said Chris.

"In this Year of Engineering, the specialist scientific and engineering support 1710 NAS provides is brought into focus. My remarkable men and women enable the squadron to attain its important and outstanding contribution



across the whole of Defence."

Based in Portsmouth Dockyard, 1710 NAS has three main functions: globally deployable repair teams, service modifications and materials and monitoring through its world-class laboratories.

Receiving medals were: WO1 Baz Firth MBE with 28 years service, PO Mick Cade (29 years), CPO Julian Norman (29 years), WO1 Iain Cordner (38 years), Cdr Chris Ling (24 years), PO Jonathon Skinner (15 years), PO John Carter (28 years), PO Stephen Roberts (28 years) and Chief Tech

Richard Marshall (28 years).

"It was wonderful to reward over 247 years of experience and commitment to the services," said Admiral Blount. "Even more important was that families were able to witness the presentation in such a magnificent setting as a thank you for their support."

CPO Norman said: "To be presented my award from Admiral Blount, alongside my friends and close work colleagues was a huge honour. The ceremony on board HMS Victory made it a special occasion that I will remember and cherish."



FOST makes his final visit to Raleigh

FLAG Officer Sea Training, Rear Admiral John Clink, has paid his final visit to HMS Raleigh ahead of his retirement from the Royal Navy.

Rear Admiral Clink, who is in overall charge of shore and sea-based training, was the guest of honour at the latest passing out parade.

The parade marked the successful completion of initial naval training for 45 recruits made up of 30 budding engineering technicians, nine warfare specialists, six submariners and one chef.

In addition to inspecting the parade Rear Admiral Clink also presented prizes to the top trainees as well as medals to members of HMS Raleigh's ship's company.

He said: "The passing-out-parade is the culmination of an intensive ten weeks of training. It was a proud day for our newest sailors and their families and they paraded with their heads held high."

"It was a huge privilege for me to be the Inspecting Officer and welcome everyone into the Naval family."

During a day at HMS Raleigh Rear Admiral Clink was updated on the training provided at the base and toured the establishment to see for himself some of the activity taking place.

Rear Admiral Clink joined the Royal Navy in 1983. His early career was spent entirely at sea in navigating and bridge watch-keeping appointments.

He saw active service in the Adriatic on board HMS London operating as part of the UK and NATO peacekeeping forces in Bosnia.

Rear Admiral Clink also commanded HMS Kent when the ship was at the forefront of Coalition Forces enforcing UN sanctions against Iraq as well as conducting Operation Enduring Freedom against the Al-Qaeda network.

He later commanded the aircraft carrier and Fleet Flagship, HMS Ark Royal. He was appointed FOST in 2015.

Comic pulls in the cash

COMEDIAN Jim Davidson was the guest of honour at a fundraising dinner at the Warrant Officer and Senior Rates Mess at HMS Sultan.

More than 100 Mess members enjoyed hearing him talk in his role as the CEO for the charity Care After Combat.

The charity, formed by Davidson and Simon Weston, aims to support veterans with alcohol and substance misuse problems.

Base Warrant Officer and WO & SR's Mess President, WO1ET (MESM) Stephen Micallef said: "His speech was very funny and he had everyone in stitches."

"We were delighted to be able to present him with a total of £4,000 raised for the charity."



● From left, Robert Robson, Kath Hutton, Nigel Turner and Gavin Williamson

Simply the best

Moving message from RN veteran

THE second in line to the throne was guest of honour as the Royal Marines Band brought the curtain down on this year's Beating Retreat event in the capital.

Over two nights, more than 250 musicians formed the Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines for the biannual celebration of naval pomp and ceremony in the magnificent setting of Horse Guards Parade.

It's a spectacle enjoyed by thousands of members of the public (among them this year former ITV newsreader and Classic FM presenter John Suchet who described the event as "incomparable" and a display of "military precision and exceptional musicality") as well as military leaders (First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones, was guest of honour on the first night and took the salute; Commandant General Royal Marines Maj Gen Charlie Stickland hosted his US Marine Corps counterpart Gen Robert Neller and the Duke of Cambridge on the closing night).

The event draws pretty much every trained musician in the corps: each of the five bands (Portsmouth, Plymouth, Collingwood, Lympstone and Scotland) number 54 men and women. More than 250 musicians are corralled to form the Massed Band required to perform Beating Retreat.

This year's event was the first held under the direction of the Band Service's Principal Director of Music, Lt Col Jon Ridley, who admitted to being "a little nervous" beforehand.

He need not have worried.

"It was a great performance – and the Royal Marines put on a fantastic show," he said.

After the traditional opening with the bands arriving, the Corps of Drums took centre stage ahead of the third and final act or phase which is unique to each Beating Retreat.

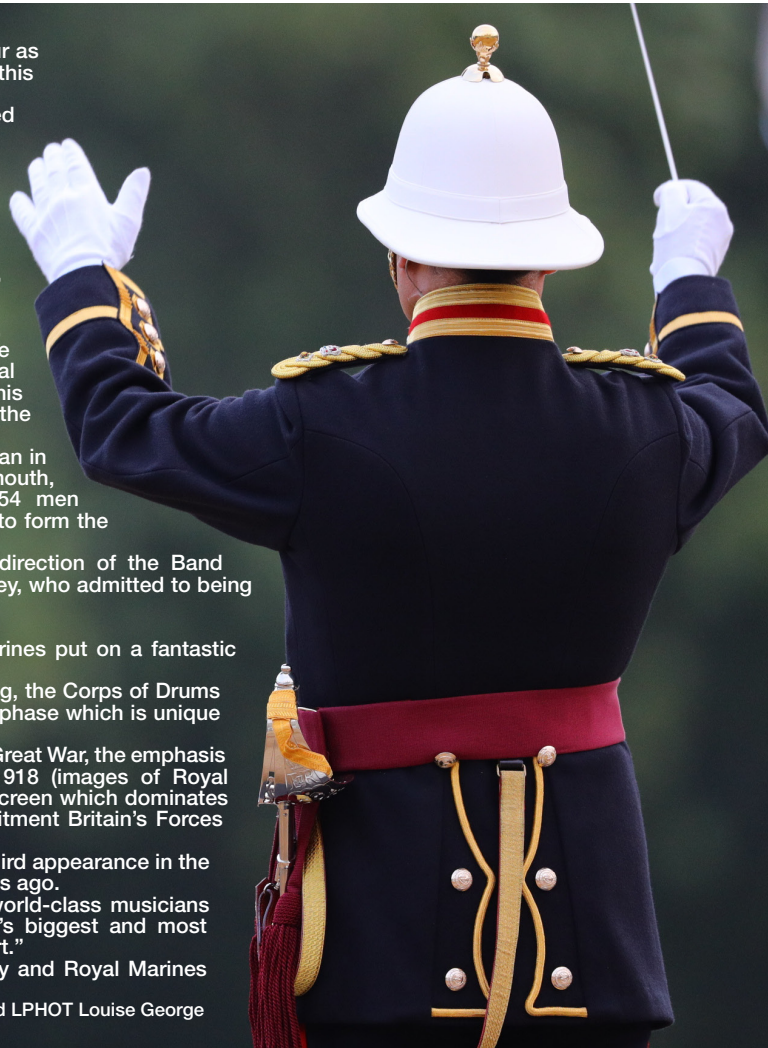
With 2018 marking the centenary of the end of the Great War, the emphasis was on the sacrifices made between 1914 and 1918 (images of Royal Marines serving in WW1 were projected on a giant screen which dominates the parade ground) as well as the continued commitment Britain's Forces make right up to present day.

Cornet player Msn Ashley Gibbs was making his third appearance in the ceremony having joined the Band Service seven years ago.

"It's a great privilege to be marching alongside world-class musicians – who are also my friends – on one of the world's biggest and most prestigious stages. I feel very lucky to have taken part."

All proceeds from the event go to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

PICTURES: PO(PHOT) Owen Cooban and LPHOT Louise George



Food, fire and floods on agenda at Raleigh

FINAL preparations are being made for HMS Raleigh to open its gates to members of the public on August 1.

Among the attractions will be the Royal Marines unarmed combat display team, a police dog display and a junior and senior field gun run. Members of the public will be able to try their hand at drill training.

The open day will include the usual favourites with visitors able to look around the Royal Navy Submarine School to see how sailors are trained to operate beneath the waves.

They will be able to find out how recruits are turned from civilians into sailors and take a tour of an accommodation block where trainees live during their ten-week course.

Visitors will also be able to see where sailors learn vital skills in fire-fighting and how to deal with floods at sea using HMS Raleigh's simulators.

It is hoped that the Royal Navy Raiders Parachute Display team will drop into Raleigh to close the event and a Wildcat helicopter will be on site for guests to take

a look inside.

Chefs from the Defence Maritime Logistics School will give visitors a real taste of the Royal Navy with a series of cooking displays.

For younger visitors the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Stables will be offering pony rides.

There will be an inflatable play area and a climbing wall. In addition, HMS Raleigh's physical training staff will be putting on a Ninja Warrior assault course and an interactive martial arts display.

Lt Ross Lyth, the organiser of this year's event, said: "We are hoping that this year's open day will build on the success of previous events and be a free family day out for all; whether that be youngsters interested in a career in the Royal Navy to local families and those on holiday and veterans who'd like to take a trip down memory lane."

Gates will be open between noon and 5pm. A number of charities have been invited to attend. There will also be representatives from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Careers Office.



Fun for Faslane families

HUNDREDS of local residents headed to Helensburgh Rugby Club to join military and civilian personnel for the HM Naval Base Clyde Families Day.

The event, which was linked to the base's 50th anniversary celebrations, featured a host of entertainment, with the Royal Marine Display Team, Europe's leading BMX stunt display team, a climbing wall, pony rides, performances from the West of Scotland Military Wives Choir, and HMS Neptune Volunteer Band among those featuring.

There was also an anniversary

cake-cutting at the event, with Base Executive Officer Cdr John Livesey assisted by members of the PT department.

The Naval Base marked the 50th anniversary of HMS Neptune with ceremonial divisions with First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones the guest of honour. The event was restricted to military and civilian workers at the Base, but the event in Helensburgh gave their families and locals the opportunity to also mark the occasion. The RNRMC provided £5,000 to fund the event.



Sporting support

STAFF from HMS Collingwood raised money for the RNRMC after being inspired by the annual Army vs Navy rugby match at Twickenham.

The HMS Collingwood Road to Twickenham Challenge aimed to cover the distance from HMS Collingwood to Twickenham Stadium over the course of the week, without leaving the base.

This was a challenge thrown down by the RNRMC to all Royal Navy and Royal Marines Bases across the world and in HMS Collingwood's case this distance equated to about 73 miles or 117,482 metres.

Trainees studying at the base filled the sports and recreation centre to cover the distance and were given the option to use various methods of travel.

Some opted for running, while others took the harder route

of carrying their colleagues, hopping or crawling, with one intrepid soul "rowing" his part of the challenge.

Tim Corke from the RNRMC was present to watch and applaud the trainees' efforts.

He said, "We're delighted that the trainees from HMS Collingwood have chosen to support the Twickenham 100 challenge in such a creative manner."

"This exceptional fundraising effort will, in a very real way, help the RNRMC to support the entire naval family – regardless of rate, rank or specialisation. Thank you very much to those who've taken part."

By the end of the week, the Base had collected £115 which will be passed directly to the RNRMC to further their good work.



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● Cdrns Jim Perks and Bob Anstey welcome deeps to the Silent Service's annual conference
Picture: LPhoto Will Haigh

Submariners enter the third dimension

HUNDREDS of submariners of all ranks gathered at HMS Neptune for their annual conference – this year focusing on innovation and how it will impact Faslane.

The base will be future home of the entire Submarine Service by 2020, the final four Astute class will join their three sister boats by the mid-2020s and the Dreadnought-class of deterrent submarines expected in service from the early 2030s.

Dreadnought was the subject of this year's key address from Paul Blythe of BAE Systems, who showed deeps a 3D 'fly through' of the future boat. Among the innovations aboard, a new lighting system which will allow the crew to simulate night and day – a first for a Royal Navy submarine.

The head of the Silent Service, Rear Admiral John Weale, thanked the 'submarine community' – crews, instructors, contractors and industry – for their continued hard work and support over the last year.

He spoke of the change of operational focus from engineering to capability and warfighting, highlighting the importance of innovation in Scotland and in the wider Royal Navy.

Admiral Weale said that if the Royal Navy was to retain its world-class capabilities, it would have to continue to innovate, adapt and evolve to meet changing operational circumstances.

Latest comms comms

THIS has been a very busy month for CIS Specs as we continue to achieve a steady state, so what has your management be up to? writes WO1 Daniel 'Bouncy' Castle. Well...



Comms Shack

continual support for future assignments.

I have also set up a Defence Connect site, to allow us all to keep up to date and for us all to stay 'connected'.

I would encourage you to join that page, so you have the latest information to hand as I think you would agree there is still some confusion out there. As I've now been in post for seven weeks, I welcome any feedback via Defence Connect, email daniel.castle304@mod.gov.uk or phone 93832 8981.

This is our time to continue the great work of the MDT and make a real difference.

So just like a lot of our CISers have already done, get in contact and let me know. I hope you all could keep a connection long enough to establish a phone call, send an email or even post a blog.

Britain's got Talent back

(NOT to be confused with Britain's Got Talent is back...)

After some time away from the front line undergoing an extensive maintenance period in her home base, the second youngest Trafalgar-class submarine is ready for her final stint of active service.

The revamp of the hunter-killer will ensure the submarine is at the top of her game until she pays off early next decade after more than 30 years' service to make way for her Astute-class successor.

To mark Talent's return to the Fleet, her 100 crew held formal divisions on the jetty at Devonport, overseen by Cdre Jim Perks, Commodore of the Submarine Flotilla.

Crew were joined by family and friends for the occasion... and treated them to games and a barbecue once formalities were done.

After extensive training in the Talisman simulator, real-world assessment for Talent's crew now begins with Operational Sea Training in the hands of FOST.

Play games without frontiers

IFYOU can dodge a wrench, you can dodge a ball.

And if you can complete *The Crystal Maze*, you might just give the RN the winning edge in battle.

For although the Royal Navy has a set of procedures and a pattern of thinking which are instilled in all personnel from the moment they join, as technologies and our enemies develop, it needs – at the very least – to keep up and use some 'out-of-the-box' thinking to stay ahead of the game.

The result: Project Mind Games, aimed at encouraging the belief that cognitive skills should be considered as important as defence sports; challenging



and developing our minds as we do our bodies, and be a way of developing innovative and creative thinking, and disrupt the current way of thinking across the fleet.

Mind Games began with a series of riddles and challenges run on Defence Intranet, including crypto, logic and picture puzzles, with each getting progressively harder.

Personnel in Portsmouth, Cuba, and even Diego Garcia rose to the challenge.

The answers to each puzzle collectively revealed the prize: a day out for 80 successful candidates and supporters at The Crystal Maze Experience in London – a reward for innovative thinkers as well as in the Fleet who'd actively put forward ideas and delivered value in innovation.

Split into teams, they competed in 12 games across four 'zones,' ending with time in the famous dome to collect golden tokens. Competitors faced a series of problem-solving and decision-making serials, including physical, mental, skill and mystery challenges.

The real benefit, of course, was in the conversation that the games inspired both in terms

of an increased understanding of neuroscience, thought biases and cognitive skills, and an increased awareness of the human capability element of the innovation agenda.

Following the success of this pilot, the online riddles and challenges will be continued on a monthly basis. It's hoped that it will continue the momentum of personnel across the Fleet getting involved with DARE and developing the innovation culture in their respective parts of the Royal Navy.

■ If you want to challenge the status quo and adopt innovative and creative ways of thinking, join the DARE community – check out RNTM 01-075/17.

Dath wish is a reality

WHEN is a lobby not a lobby?

When it's an innovation space.

CPO(Wtr) Bernie Dath decided much better use could be made of a large open area at the HQ of NATO's Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia.

It's the task of the headquarters to look at the alliance's tactics and doctrine when forces from various nations are working together and to look at the equipment the armies, navies and air forces of tomorrow might need – and how that technology might be used on the field of battle.

That means some of the best and brightest military personnel from the two-dozen-plus members of NATO are concentrated at the HQ...

...but they spend a lot of their time confined to desks in offices... which doesn't lend itself to free thinking.

This is where Bernie comes in. The 48-year-old from Wallasey on Merseyside is one of 43 Brits serving at the Virginia establishment.

He decided that much better use could be made of a lobby/reception area which 300 to 400 people pass through on a typical day.

The result is a brainstorming zone, dubbed The Bridge, where groups can thrash out ideas, scribble on the walls – graffiti is positively encouraged – and leave behind post-it notes for other members of the HQ to study if they wish – and add to, or throw in their own ideas.

"The Chief of Staff coined the phrase defining NATO's Allied Command Transformation mission: Improving Today, Shaping Tomorrow, Bridging The Two," said Bernie. "I knew that something needed to be done to better align with our leadership.

"An innovation space is essential for an organization like Allied Command Transformation. In The Bridge, leadership, staff members and interns can come together to talk about issues that they may otherwise not want to bring up.

"It is a comfortable environment where rank and country-affiliation does not matter. The space allows for a free flow of thought with no judgement. All the ideas discussed here can lead to something inspiring and help solve problems."

The Bridge is now used for brainstorming on a daily basis and the simple, extremely useful concept has the full backing of NATO commanders, including the HQ's chief-of-staff, RAF Air Marshal Sir Graham Stacey.

"Over the last few months, I have seen some tremendous use come of this space and valuable thought develop because of its presence," said the air marshal.

"I have even held some of my meetings here. It was very astute of Chief Dath to use the idea of innovation to craft an innovation space."

● CPO(Wtr) Bernie Dath with Gen Denis Mercier, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation and Air Marshal Sir Graham Stacey Allied Command Transformation Chief of Staff formally open 'The Bridge'



Got a GEM of an idea?

PROVING you are never too old to innovate is WO1 Spike Hughes, the new GEMS manager at Navy Command.

WO1 Hughes, who joined the Royal Navy in 1971, is helping to relaunch the scheme which rewards those who work in defence for coming up with innovative ideas.

The GEMs scheme is not only about producing savings, it is about creating improvements in the way which we work across the MOD.

It is one of the most successful schemes of its kind worldwide, across both the public and private sectors, and is ranked third in the world by ideasUK (an association that promotes employee involvement programmes).

It receives approximately 2,000 suggestions annually, generating average savings of £13.2 million per year. These ideas have also made MOD safer, more environmentally friendly and operationally effective.

The suggestions currently being considered include an improved way of recovering casualties in the field and an automated fire-fighting system.

Two Royal Marines SNCOs were each awarded £750 for suggesting improvements to carrying equipment on the Viking armoured vehicles.

They designed a system which allowed kit to be mounted externally, therefore eliminating the delays on embarkation and disembarkation as equipment is loaded and then unloaded.

They had to consider the fact that the Viking is allowed to 'swim' at a maximum weight of 12 tonnes and the current loading scheme would not enable the vehicle to carry the required payload.

Their solution? Waterproof bags attached to the outside of the Viking which could carry equipment. The bags (pictured above) would also act as extra floatation devices, as well as relieving the problem of blocking the egress of embarked personnel.

If you have an idea contact WO1 Hughes at NAVY MARGAP-INNOVATION-INT MGR.

Bahrain-based minehunter loggies move warehouses

LOGGIES in Bahrain shifted 2,500 lines of equipment and spare parts – worth £5m – about 600 metres from one warehouse to another as they moved into their new home.

A purpose-built facility to house the minehunter support facility is at the heart of the new UK Naval Support Facility in the kingdom – and it's only 20 metres from the water's edge.

Aided by three Supply Chain ratings from the Maritime Battle Staff, 100 per cent musters were undertaken before and after the move to ensure that nothing was left behind – and all the while, the four RN minehunters based in Bahrain received the support they needed.

The whole move took less than a fortnight and was carried out in scorching temperatures of over 42°C.

The equipment and parts mostly belong to the forward inventory – which consists of spares for the engineers and crewmembers on the two Hunts and two Sandowns.

"This makes things a lot easier," said logistics officer Lt Tommy Murphy. "We're less than 20 metres from the jetty and that serves to increase operational output."



Award for marine engineer

COMMENDED by the nation's second most senior sailor for his efforts while marine engineer officer of HMS St Albans is Lt Cdr Jamie Walker (pictured here outside the US/UK headquarters in Bahrain where he was visiting as part of a roving team from FOST).

The 39-year-old from Shrewsbury helped guide the Portsmouth-based frigate through a nine-month deployment to the Gulf region, then ensured her machinery was in full working order upon her return as the Saint was heavily committed on FRE/anti-submarine duties in home and European waters.

The father of two received a Fleet Commander's Commendation from Vice Admiral Ben Key, although Jamie, from Shrewsbury, says the award truly belongs to his entire team.

"I was lucky to be surrounded by a team of highly-motivated and professional Servicemen and women who helped achieve the significant success which we enjoyed," he said.

"I have no doubt we made a difference to the region and represented the UK's strategic interests in both the region and amongst our allies."

New crèche in Faslane

BRITAIN'S most senior sailor performed the honours as a new facility was opened at Faslane to help mothers returning from maternity leave to raise their fitness levels.

HMS Neptune Sportsdrome crèche, unveiled by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones, will allow parents to keep their children entertained in a safe and secure environment while they take advantage of the on-site facilities.

Run by staff from the local Dinky Dolphins crèche, the new nursery area takes over space previously occupied by a stationery store and offices.

At present, the crèche is open every Tuesday and Friday between 9.15am and 11.15am.

FOST in transition

THERE'S a new face and name at the head of Navy training after the RN bade farewell to one FOST... and welcomed his replacement.

Rear Admiral John Clink handed over the responsibilities of Flag Officer Sea Training after three years at the helm to Rear Admiral Will Warrender, previously in charge of RN forces in the Gulf.

The departure marked the end of 35 years' service by Admiral Clink.

Hunters host a holy feast

HER Majesty's ships Bangor and Ledbury were the setting for one of the most keenly-observed acts in the Islamic faith when they hosted their Bahraini friends and allies.

Around 40 dignitaries from politicians to religious leaders were invited into the new RN naval support facility in Bahrain by staff from UKMCC, the Navy's HQ in the Middle East, to celebrate iftar.

Each day during the holy month of Ramadan the fast is broken just after sunset: *iftar* (which literally means 'break a fast') – a special meal for sharing with friends and family.

Imam Asim Hafiz, Islamic advisor to the UK Chief of the Defence Staff, flew into Bahrain to lead guests through their breaking of the fast and prayers; a marquee had been put up by sailors, who toiled in temperatures which touched 46°C.

"It was mega hot! And a lot of the jobs had to be done at the last minute, like turning the ship around," said Lt Peter Warwick-Brown, Bangor's gunnery officer.

"But the guys dug out blind and we are used to working on things at short notice, no matter what the heat is and it did all go to plan."

Imam Asim told guests: "Sharing another person's religion or culture with them like today's *iftar* during Ramadan, the holiest time of the holiest month, is a tremendous way to show that we support their religion and demonstrate what life is like in Britain."

"We can improve the understanding of Britain's values as well as better understand those of Bahrain."

Bangor, whose crew are now



bringing their ship home to Faslane after more than three years in the Middle East, found the event very different from her usual engagements.

"It was certainly different from the capability demonstrations that we normally do. This *iftar* had a particular purpose and focus and is a big deal during Ramadan," said Lt Warwick Brown.

Cdre Steve Dainton, UKMCC's CO, used the occasion to host the head of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force, Cdre Mohammed Yousif Al Asa.

The Briton said the two countries had enjoyed nearly two centuries of working alongside each other at sea.

"It's an exceptionally close relationship, even more so during Ramadan," Cdre Dainton continued.

"Here in the Gulf, the Royal Navy works with lots of different

countries, with lots of different cultures and lots of different religions, all united in a common cause to protect the free flow of commerce around the world."

Imam Asim added: "It was a wonderful evening with a really good atmosphere – a great opportunity to bring communities together, build bridges and have a dialogue."

"The more of that we have in today's world, the better."



Freddie earns six weeks' study in Oz

ARE naval forces the right tools to use in an international migrant crisis?

The question posed by Lt Freddie Huntley has earned the junior officer a six-week stint in Australia.

Lt Huntley, currently the Regional Legal Adviser (West), won a closely-contested competition involving eight finalists to win the 2018 Naval Review Centenary Fellowship Award, jointly sponsored by Ultra Electronics and the *Naval Review*.

The award allows a junior officer to undertake a study period with the Royal Australian Navy based on their winning proposal.

Lt Huntley (pictured above receiving her award aboard *HQS Wellington* in London) will tour defence establishments across Australia investigating how the Commonwealth Navy deals with 21st-Century migrancy problems – compared with the RN's efforts in the same field (currently HMS Echo working with EU vessels in the central Mediterranean, but post-Brexit the issue could move closer to home).

Immigration policies and, more relevant here, implementation strategies in both the UK and Australia have come under intense public scrutiny.

Lt Huntley is looking, from Australian historical experience, to examine the legal basis given by our respective governments for the deployment of warships as part of their strategies; and how the relevant legal mandates are initially reflected in naval doctrine and subsequently translated into the reality of naval operations to counter people-trafficking.

The findings will be published in the *Naval Review* later in the year. Details of the 2019 award will be published in an RNTM in the autumn.

ASK YOURSELF:

- Were you made in the Royal Navy?
- Do you want to give others the opportunity to make it in the Royal Navy?
- Are you seeking a rewarding Second Career?

If the answer to any is yes then...

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Where to look

DIBs

05/18 AFCAS 2018 results

06/18 Functional Knowledge, Skills & Experience Career Management Tools

DINs

01 Personnel

DIN 2018DIN01-083 Women in Defence Awards 2018

DIN 2018DIN01-078 Supervision of Naval Service General Duties Medical Officers

DIN 2018DIN01-076 Operational Welfare Communications – WelComE

03 Defence Policy and Operations

DIN 2018DIN03-014 SSBN Crew Rotation HMS Victorious (Stbd) and HMS Vigilant

05 Defence Management, Organisation and Business Practice

DIN 2018DIN05-016 Data Protection Rights – How to Recognise and Process Subject Access Requests.

DIN 2018DIN05-017 Declaration of IOC for Joint Force Cyber Group Cyber Vulnerability Investigations Operations Cell

DIN 2018DIN05-018 Data Protection Rights – How to recognise and process data subject rights including the right to erasure

DIN 2018DIN05-020 Cessation of High Grade Messaging via Restricted Email.

07 Training and Education

DIN 2018DIN07-067 Pacific 22/24 MkIII/24 MkIV change to emergency stop procedure

DIN 2018DIN07-072 United Kingdom Special Forces Selection Application Instructions – 22 SAS, SBS, SRR and SFC

09 Honours, Awards, Royal and Ceremonial Events

DIN 2018DIN09-012 Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) Innovation Awards 2018, Royal Navy Nominations

10 Sports and Social Events

DIN 2018DIN10-020 Combined Services Chess Championship 2018

RNTMs

01 Personnel

RNTM 01-028/18 RNRMW – change of RNRMW portal contact hours and the new emergency RNRMW out of hours national

duty worker cover

RNTM 01-031/18 Submarine Service Golden Hello

RNTM 01-032/18 ESM Branch Management Roadshow Schedule Spring 2018

03 Policy and Operations

RNTM 03-019/18 Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) transfer of responsibility to Warfare Branch

04 Equipment, Support and Estate

RNTM 04-025/18 Provision and Support of Office Machinery

RNTM 04-027/18 Hand-held power tools

05 Management, Organisation and Business Practice

RNTM 05-006/18 The Naval Engineer

RNTM 05-007/18 Navy Command Organisational Change – Transfer Project Libra Engagement Teams to CNR

RNTM 05-008/18 First Sea Lord's 2018 Senior Officers' Conference

RNTM 05-009/18 Warrant Officers and Senior Ratings Warfare Specialist (Tactical Submarines) AGM September 19

RNTM 05-011/18 Exercise Joint Caterer 2018 – Naval Service Culinary Arts Team

RNTM 05-012/18 1SL Warrant Officer conference 2018

07 Training and Education

RNTM 07-042/18 Joining instructions for personnel attending courses at HMS Raleigh

RNTM 07-043/18 Flotilla Engineering Technician Development Support Visits

RNTM 07-045/18 Change in Naval Service Diversity and Inclusion mandatory training

RNTM 07-047/18 ME (General Service) training delivery shortfall management process trial

RNTM 07-048/18 RNLA membership of the Leaders Club – programme of events

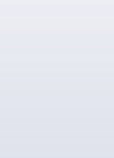
09 Honours, Awards, Royal and Ceremonial Events

RNTM 09-009/18 The First Sea Lord's Greenwich Hospital Prize

RNTM 09-010/18 Royal Navy Effectiveness Trophies

10 Sports and Social

RNTM 10-017/18 Royal Navy Sea King 'End Of An Era' Dinner – 04 Oct 18



Havoc on the Hamble

THIRTY-SEVEN URNU students from Southampton were hosted by the 6th Hamble Sea Scouts for an evening's rowing, aptly named the Hamble Havoc.



Focus on role of RM Sniper Wing

STUDENTS from Oxford URNU conducted a visit to the Sniper Wing at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines in Lympstone, Devon.

They were joined by members of London URNU and Southampton URNU.

Upon arrival they were met by the head of the Sniper Wing, Capt Andy Miller who took the visitors to the Officers' Mess.

Following an introductory chat, the students were escorted to the outdoor display of sniper rifles and equipment.

The comprehensive briefs that followed from Sgt Moon, Cpl Wynne and Cpl Warren covered their intense training as well as the world-class sniper rifles and equipment they use.

After the students had a chance to handle the weapons and equipment, the group were taken over to the sniper wing armoury.

They were shown the extensive collection of foreign weaponry, from pistols to rocket



launchers, which are used in sniper recognition training.

Lt Will Jones RN, Commanding Officer Oxford URNU said: "The visit was a fantastic insight into an amazing capability and the passion of the Royal Marines for their specialist and highly-trained role shone through."

2018 is the Year of Engineering in the Royal Navy and Oxford is one of 15 URNUs located across the UK offering opportunities to 750 undergraduates from the country's leading universities.

The URNU's mission is: "To develop an understanding of the Naval Service in



undergraduates, so that those who go into civilian employment are positive advocates thereof and to facilitate a Naval Career for those who choose one."

The URNU is a chance to experience military life without commitment and gain new skills applicable to all walks of life.

Students peak on mountain quest

TEAMS from Wales and Devon University Royal Naval Units embarked on the South Wales Three Peaks trial.

This spanned 17 miles with 5,000ft of ascent from Llanthony Abbey to Abergavenny in the Brecon Beacons.

The peaks consisted of Bal Mawr, Pen Cerrig Calch and Sugar Loaf.

Although the Platinum route was shorter than the Gold, the ascents were steeper and navigation was more challenging.

The event was organised by the Cardiff Outdoor Group and supported by the Longtown Mountain Rescue Team and the teams raised money for their chosen charity, LATCH who support children and their families who have been diagnosed with cancer.

The team conducted outdoor and navigation training in preparation for the event, practising their compass and orienteering skills as a team.

All this paid off as the teams completed the challenge in just seven hours.

OCdt Dom Gilberts from Wales URNU said: "I knew it would be a tough and challenging day especially on a cold spring day in Wales, however this is one of the reasons I joined the URNU, to be able to take part in events like this, and it was such a great feeling when we finished. Plus I got to do it with my good mates which always helps with morale."

Officer Cadets from Wales URNU also had the opportunity to try some adventurous training at Tirabad Outdoor Education Centre in mid Wales, just north of the Brecon Beacons.

They experienced a multitude of challenging activities with caving and gorge scrambling being some of the highlights.

The students were also taught how to enter and navigate the waterways safely and even got the opportunity to do some cliff jumping and bouldering throughout the valley.

They also learned about the formation of the caves and had a chance to practise some rope work as abseiling was required for parts of the route.

OCdt L Colyer said: "Whilst many of the activities were pushing me out of my comfort zone, it was the caving that was the most challenging for me. Overcoming the fear of confinement and darkness was tough, and at points my whole body was submerged in water in the pitch black."

Adventurous training gives Officer Cadets the opportunity to experience challenges that they don't get as part of their university degrees.

This annual trip helps with team bonding and is a highlight for many of the first years that pass through Wales URNU.

Students from the URNU can take advantage of the many opportunities available to those of the Royal Navy with members of the URNU partaking in paragliding, skiing, orienteering and much more all within the past 12 months.

Bowled over by SPAG unit

MIDSHIPMEN and Officer Cadets from the Oxford University Royal Naval Unit were fortunate enough to receive a visit from the Commanding Officer of the Submarine Parachute Assistance Group (SPAG), Lt Cdr Griffiths.

He spoke in great detail and with great passion to the students about his life-saving work.

With much interest being paid by the students to the SPAG's method of insertion to a stricken submarine and their 'floating village' as a means of first aid assistance to a stricken submarine.

Lt Cdr Griffiths also spoke about where SPAG has been deployed in recent years.

As a NATO asset, they are on standby to deploy within eight hours to any allied submarine in need of assistance, anywhere in the globe.

Additionally, for instance they also deployed to the Falkland Islands at the end of last year to assist the search for the ARA San Juan.

His experiences as a qualified submariner and passionate skydiver were a great insight to those students who are hoping to join the Submarine Service and/or jump out of an aircraft after they graduate.

Report: OCdt Luke Harris

Farewell to our LURNUs

A PASSING-out parade took place for Liverpool University Royal Naval Unit (LURNU) students who will be leaving the unit this summer.

The Liverpool URNU parade took place at HMS Eaglet and of the 40 students on parade, 11 members of the unit will be graduating from university this summer.

Naval Regional Commander Northern England and Isle of Man, Cdre Phil Waterhouse, took the salute and the Mayor of Sefton, Cllr Robinson, and Commander Universities, Cdr Andy McLennan, were also in attendance to inspect the Officer Cadets.

Presentations were made during the parade for the best division, best first year officer cadet and best overall officer cadet.

Lynx Division were awarded the best division, OCdt Ryan Davidson was awarded best first year and OCdt James Brackenbury, was awarded best overall cadet.

Lt Adam Warland RN, Commanding Officer Liverpool URNU, said: "It was a great evening for the family and friends of those leaving the unit to get a chance to see them on parade, and to hear about some of the activities that the students have experienced during their time at Liverpool URNU."

"We hope that the students have enjoyed their time with us and we wish them well in whatever careers they choose to pursue."



● OCdt James Brackenbury receives his best overall cadet award from Cdre Phil Waterhouse, NRC

As well as being the Royal Navy's regional hub for Northern England and Isle of Man, HMS Eaglet is also home to the HMS Eaglet RNR unit, RMR Merseyside, Liverpool URNU, HMS Biter, HMS Charger and the local Sea Cadet Corps.

For further information please contact Lt Warland, adam.warland100@mod.gov.uk; 0151 707 3438; 93441 3438).





Keeping up the Royal standard

SAILORS and Royal Marines were among 250 members of the Armed Forces on duty at the Royal Wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.

Units that hold a special relationship with Prince Harry were chosen at the request of Kensington Palace. Sailors from the Fleet's Small Ships and Diving Units and 30 Commando IX Group Royal Marines from Plymouth were on duty for the wedding in Windsor.

One half company (24 ratings and one officer) from the Royal Navy, and the same sized contingent from the Royal Marines, lined the streets within the precincts of Windsor Castle along with their counterparts from the Army and RAF.

Royal Navy State Ceremonial Officer, Warrant Officer 1 Eddie Wearing is in charge of training all personnel for their ceremonial duties. He said: "It was an honour for us to be involved in such an event and bolsters the already great relationship between the Royal Family and the military."

"We have done a lot of ceremonial duties in the last 12 months, including Royal duties in London, which was a first for the Royal Navy, and now a Royal Wedding. It's going to be hard to top that."

Prince Harry was appointed Commodore-in-Chief Small Ships and Diving by the Queen in August 2006. Since then he has maintained close links with this community within the Royal Navy. He was also appointed Captain General Royal Marines in December 2017, taking over from his grandfather, the Duke of Edinburgh, who held the title for 64 years.

AB(D) Andy Waller, who represented Southern Diving Unit 2, said: "It's a great feeling to be a part of this. Prince Harry is well loved by the military so we're very proud to be taking part."

The military contribution began early in the morning with the Band of the Irish Guards entertaining crowds as they gathered to watch events unfold around Windsor.

The State Trumpeters of the Band of the



● Royal Marines march through Windsor for the Royal Wedding

Household Cavalry played fanfares in St George's Chapel to mark the arrival of the Queen and Ms Markle ahead of the wedding service.

Members of the Household Cavalry lined the steps of St George's Chapel as the guests left the wedding service.

After the service, a travelling escort of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment accompanied the now Duke and Duchess of Sussex during the carriage procession through Windsor.

The streets inside Windsor Castle were lined by Servicemen and women from Royal Navy Small Ships and Diving, 30 Cdo IX The 1st Battalion Irish Guards, 3 Regiment Army Air Corps, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, and personnel from RAF Honington.

Members of the Royal Navy who took part in guarding duties at the Royal Palaces last year have been presented mementoes by a charity.

Greenwich Hospital, the Royal Naval Charity that can trace its roots back over 300 years, was keen to thank those members of the Senior Service who had volunteered for the duty for their efforts and dedication in mounting the guard at Buckingham Palace, St James Palace, the Tower of London and



● Hugh Player hands over the memento to WO1 Wearing

Windsor Castle.

"It was a great occasion, when the Royal Navy carried out London duties for the first time," said Hugh Player, Director of Greenwich Hospital.

"This occasion really provided a focal point for the Senior Service and they really did stand out, as they do at the Cenotaph during the November ceremonies each year. They took their place centre stage and everyone was delighted; it also showed the tri-Service nature of our Armed Forces."

The man responsible for ensuring the Naval Service is understood, respected and valued in London is Cdre David Elford, Naval Regional Commander for Eastern England.

He was at Wellington Barracks in London to witness the handing over of the first Queen's Royal Navy Guard memento to WO1 Darren 'Eddie' Wearing.

"We are always looking for suitable opportunities and mounting the Royal Guard during the Year of the Navy was a great chance, which I am glad we were able to take," he said.

"The important thing we are doing today is recognising the sailors who invested their time and effort in making it all happen."



Heron's heroes bag top trophy

HERON's field gunners lifted the coveted trophy in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Field Gun Competition – by just one tenth of a second.

The Yeovil team (pictured above in action and below celebrating by Keith Woodland) beat defending champions REME by the narrowest of margins – the soldiers were actually three seconds faster... but incurred three penalties during the crowdpleaser, the highlight of HMS Collingwood's annual open day.

The event drew 23 teams from across the military... and across Europe (Naples and Gib fielded sides), with the Royal Engineers lifting the first plate, Cyprus taking plate 2 and the Maritime Reserves triumphing in the third plate contest.

The Maritime Reserves Crew included MRC Captain, CPO Ralf Swindell, of HMS King Alfred, who, at 59, was the oldest person running in the competition this year.

He said: "I have been on the crew since it was founded ten years ago and seen it become more experienced on track each season."

"It's been great to be part of this journey, and if I can come back again next year and run at 60, I will!"

Field gun officer, Lt Cdr Nick Carter, a member of the Media Operations branch, said: "Field Gun is a very unique sport, it really brings out the best in people and relies heavily on team cohesion."

"Unlike in football or rugby, where an outstanding player can carry a team, everyone on the crew plays a critical role, and if anyone gets their drill wrong,

your loose the momentum and everything grinds to a halt."

Sub Lt Joe Jamie, who took a break from his work as a tree surgeon, added: "It's a brilliant experience. Hard work, a great team and incredible camaraderie. I would recommend it to anyone."

In what was one of their best runs of the season, the crew crossed the line a fraction of a second ahead of HMS Raleigh, and went on to win the Soapy Watson trophy for the first time.

No1 trainer, CPO 'Ziggy' Huntington said: "I am extremely proud of what the crew have achieved."

"We have had our share of ups and downs this season, but they remained committed and focussed throughout, and worked very hard. I couldn't have asked for more than eight clean runs and a win in the final."

AB Rory Penfold said: "I felt honoured receiving this trophy, not just because of the great team achievement, but also because of the man it was dedicated to. As my dad's best friend, Soapy was a big part of my life growing up, and inspired me to run field gun."

For more information about the Maritime Reserves Field Gun crew, or to sign up to the distribution list for next year, contact Lt Cdr Nick Carter or look on Facebook @ [MaritimeReservesFieldGun](#).

Thousands of people passed through the gates of the Fareham establishment to enjoy a free fun fair and live bands, try the high ropes challenge, and re-live HMS Queen Elizabeth's entry to Portsmouth Harbour via the hi-tech navigation simulator.



Cape Town crusaders restore WW1 cross

GLEAMING once again after a century's exposure to the elements is one of the lesser-known monuments to the Royal Navy's fallen – in one of the most spectacular locations on the planet.

This is the memorial high above Simon's Town, overlooking False Bay, a white obelisk surmounted by a cross and inscribed with the words: *In memory of the officers and men who died on the Cape Station during the Great War 1914-1918.*

Not being very accessible on Signal Hill – although close to the grave of legendary WW2 dog (and sailors' friend) AB Just Nuisance – the monument had deteriorated over the years.

With the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1 approaching, the Naval Heritage Trust in Simon's Town arranged to have the porous and fading stone-work restored and then repainted under the direction of WO Harry Croome SAN (who also took these 'before' and 'after' images. "The results speak for themselves and

you can be assured that we still care for the memory of those members who died in service so far from home," said former editor of South African Navy News/retired Rear Admiral Arne Soderlund.

Throughout WW1, the recently-enlarged and enhanced naval base was a key overseas base for the Royal Navy, in particular light cruisers which operated against German commerce raiders trying to disrupt Allied merchant trade in African waters.





● National President S/M John McAnally addresses delegates during the traditional Sunday service in the National Maritime Museum of Ireland – housed in a former church

Éire and graces

THE traditional Conference Sunday service took place in the National Maritime Museum of Ireland, housed in the former Mariners' Church in Dun Laoghaire.

The church was built to minister to the spiritual needs of Royal Navy and merchant sailors using the town's harbour, built in the 19th Century to provide a safe haven after 400 men died in the wreck of two troopships, the Prince of Wales and Rochdale, driven ashore in a storm in 1807.

The church was closed in 1972, but six years later reopened as a museum, with a collection that is now dominated by the eye-catching Baily Optic, the ten-tonne lens from atop the nearby Baily Light.

In his sermon, Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Ian Wheatley spoke of the Zeebrugge Raid of April 1918 and of the role of Lt Cdr George Bradford VC, who sacrificed his life to ensure storming parties could disembark from the converted Mersey ferry HMS Iris II.

His actions (also demonstrated by his younger brother Roland, who won the VC in 1916 and died in action the following year) chimed with the reading, from *John 15*, that "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

That love is shown in many ways in the RNA, said the Chaplain, whether in a chat over a drink or in countless other acts of kindness – and that was why he was so proud of the Association.

Sermon over, the Ven Wheatley grabbed his bags to jump in a car (he had a pressing appointment back in the UK that afternoon), but not before flicking the switch (prompted by General Secretary S/M Paul Quinn) to set the massive Baily Optic rotating behind the National President as he gave his closing address – a memorable, if slightly bizarre, image to close the weekend.

Not quite the final act, though – a couple of dozen shipmates left the museum and made their way down to the harbour to wave off Lt Cdr Nessa Maloney, a principal guest at the gala dinner, who as XO was taking the Irish Naval Service flagship LE Eithne out of harbour for the first time in the absence of the patrol ship's CO.

Subs increase balances books

THE RNA's top money man delivered his 30th – and final – report to Conference, and has signed off with "another sound financial performance."

Association Treasurer S/M Ray Barraclough told delegates that the success of the motion in 2016 to raise subscription rates had "restored the balance for the longer-term financial position of the Association."

The accounts cover the year to December 31 2017 – "a point in the calendar when a guillotine cut is made across the accounts of the Association and, effectively, at midnight all income and expenditure transactions cease, the ledgers are closed, and the candles snuffed out for another year..."

The headline figures saw RNA reserves rise by over seven per cent with an operational surplus of over £155k, which was greatly boosted by "yet another excellent year for legacies and donations" – over £122k.

Subscription income increased from almost £128k to £159k,

despite the loss of ten small branches which meant a £20k hit.

Investment income rose by more than 50 per cent, from £41k to more than £66k, and almost £34k was received in donations,

Total expenditure for the year was £338k, almost £53k less than budgeted – prudent housekeeping by Central Office staff and a tight grip by the National Council saw such savings as a reduction of almost £5k on the production of circulars, which are in almost every case now sent to branches electronically rather than in hard copy.

S/M Barraclough thanked Brooms Professional Services Ltd, who have been associated with the RNA since the 1970s and who provide much additional assistance at no extra cost.

Although he is stepping down from the national job, S/M Barraclough plans to continue as No4 Area treasurer. His successor is S/M Ian Irvine, of Edinburgh branch.

... and awards aplenty

THERE were two familiar names when the winners of the President's Awards for Recruiting and Gift Aid Returns were announced.

First up was No 3 Area, which covers central southern England, and which retained the Sword of Honour as the area with the greatest increase in members in 2017.

Also maintaining their place at the summit of recruiting were the shipmates of Torreveja in Spain, who managed to attract most full-time members as a percentage of the branch's strength and took the honours for the overseas branch of more than 30 members.

The best recruiter of the UK-based large branches was Reigate, of No 2 Area, which was awarded the Briggs Dirk, while the Briggs Rose Bowl for branches of 30 or fewer members went to Coventry, in No 8 Area.

The most successful small overseas branch was Jersey.

The final award was for the area that amassed the most Gift Aid returns, and that prize – the Tasker Bowl – went to No 9 Area, which covers Lincolnshire, parts of the East Midlands and the far south of Yorkshire.

■ See next month's *Navy News* for more from Dublin

Clash over central record of members

THE business side of the 2018 Conference was a slick and harmonious affair – with just one exception.

National Council motions 1 to 4 rattled through at pace, and three of them were carried unanimously after minimum discussion.

The first proposed a change to the RNA's Supplementary Royal Charter to allow former members of the Merchant Navy who have been awarded the Veterans Badge to become full members of the RNA.

S/M Peter Godwin, National Council Member (NCM) for No8 Area, said the badge was not given freely – the criteria for it could be more onerous than those required for a military medal – and it was right that the Association should recognise their valuable service.

With no shipmates feeling the need to comment, the motion was carried unanimously, as was the second, linked, proposal, under which delegates agreed the change of rules required to enact the Merchant Navy veterans proposal.

National Council motion number 3 raised the idea of adding a new rule which would allow members to "advance its objects through sports and social groups (SSGs)".

Once again there was a minimum of discussion – National Chairman S/M Keith Ridley introduced the motion, nobody wished to comment, and it was carried with just a lone hand raised against it.

The fourth and final National Council motion, in response to guidance from the Charity Commission, sought to regularise the payment of authorised expenses in relation to National Council, area or branch business, which was carried unanimously.

In the first of two branch motions, S/M Noel Williams (Crosby branch) proposed that the 2020 Conference should be held at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool.



● 'Who wants to tour the Guinness brewery...' One of the less contentious motions is easily passed
Pictures: S/M Nigel Huxtable

Reports by Mike Gray

S/M Arthur Gutteridge (Plymouth) reminded delegates that when the city-centre hotel last hosted the event in 2013 it was "an outstanding weekend" and "the price was right".

NCM for No10 Area, S/M Dave Wright, said the National Council welcomed the proposal, and that provisional work on prices has resulted in a three-night stay on the weekend of June 5-8 for £168 bed, breakfast and evening meal, with both accommodation and conference in the same venue.

"The big change is that we will probably not have a three-hour SODS Opera like we did in 2013..." added S/M Wright.

The motion was carried unanimously, leaving delegates to consider the second and final branch motion, that the National Council should "set up a study group to investigate the feasibility and implications to the Association of managing

membership centrally rather than at branch level."

Proposer S/M Soapy Watson, of Lee-on-the-Solent and Stubbington branch, told delegates that such a move would take pressure off smaller branches in terms of administration, allow for the creation of a central membership record and would produce more accurate management information, amongst other benefits.

The proposal was seconded by S/M Rosalie Atack (Portsmouth).

S/M Gutteridge opposed the motion, saying it had created "an air of unease" at Plymouth branch, adding that "in 21 years of going to Conference I have never experienced such a negative response to a branch motion" and that he had a 30-page file outlining shipmates' concerns.

As it would remove independence for a "cosmetic improvement", S/M Gutteridge said Plymouth would in no way comply with the idea.

But Royston branch shipmates had come to a different conclusion

– this motion proposed a study group to investigate the issue, and the proposal was in no way binding one way or another.

Deputy National President S/M Mark Slawson took up that theme, saying that those opposing the motion were rather forward-thinking – their points could be made when the study group was authorised to carry out a study (the motion specifically stated that the group would "report its conclusions and recommendations and, if appropriate, submit a further motion or motions to the 2019 Conference.")

S/M Slawson said such a group may well decide that central management would not be a good idea – the points raised were "perfectly good points" for the group to consider, but they were not good enough grounds for the study group not to be set up.

When put to a vote, 35 of the 57 registered delegates approved the proposal against 21 who opposed it, so the motion was carried.

Danny buoy, o Danny buoy...

THE relationship between the UK and Ireland was a theme running through Conference weekend.

Proceedings began when two standards were marched on, the RNA National standard (carried once again by S/M Bob Coburn, following his success in the National Standard Bearers competition) and that of the Irish Naval Association.

Senator Neale Richmond formally opened the conference, held at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire, and won acclaim from delegates and officials for an address that began with a history lesson of the port town where he cut his teeth as a local representative and moved on to a wry look at Brexit (the Fine Gael politician chairs the Irish Senate Select Committee on Brexit) – finishing with the pledge that after Brexit happens the greatest friend Britain will have will be Ireland.

The second VIP guest to address delegates was Vice Admiral Mark Mellett, Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces of Ireland, who spoke on the theme 'no man is an island'. Admiral Mellett outlined the Irish



● Shipmates bid farewell to Irish patrol vessel LE Eithne which spent much of conference weekend supporting the event

contribution to international operations, in which 87 soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice for international peace, and spoke of the challenges faced by those nations seeking stability.

He said the role of technology and the use of data and knowledge was becoming of

critical importance, and that it was vital that nations such as Ireland and the UK collaborated for the greater good.

In his conference address, National President S/M John McAnally started with thanks to those who made the event possible, including Dublin

branch and No12 Area (Ireland).

National Chairman S/M Keith Ridley reported on the National Council's year, including progress in reviewing guidelines for hosting conference, then S/Ms Paul Quinn and Alan McGrath, and project manager Sarah Clewes, brought delegates and observers up to speed with the initiative to issue iPads and training/mentoring – the session included a bit of myth-busting and plans for the next phase.

Conference day finished with a gala dinner, when shipmates were entertained by a traditional Irish harpist and watched an energetic display by seven dancers aged between seven and 16 from the Finnerty School of Irish Dancing, based in nearby Enniskerry.

Principal guests at the dinner were the British Ambassador to Ireland, Robin Barnett (who picked up on the earlier theme of co-operation between the UK and Ireland), and Lt Cdr Nessa Maloney, the XO of Irish Naval Service flagship LE Eithne, which was berthed in Dun Laoghaire harbour to support the conference and welcomed parties of shipmates on board earlier that day.



● Sarah Clewes, Project Semaphore's manager, hands over an iPad to a delighted Royal Star and Garter home resident

Pads make a difference

MORE than 500 iPads have been distributed under Project Semaphore, the RNA's initiative to combat loneliness and help people connect with friends old and new.

The touch-screen devices haven't just been distributed to individual branches, but also to care homes such as the Royal Star and Garter (Surbiton and Solihull), Pembroke House (Kent), and Royal Alfred Seafarer's Society (Surrey), with the aim of addressing isolation from families – as well as providing the opportunity to explore or develop interests and hobbies including photography, games, researching ships, naval and family history.

Among the feedback received by the team at HQ in Portsmouth:

"It's good to see 95-and-96-years-young members using the iPads. I think the Semaphore Project is excellent – to see those smiling faces when they have taken a photo and sent it onto family and friend abroad and received a reply."

"...A whole new way of being in contact with friends and Navy, I would not have known about. I wonder what I did without it."

"The iPad is a godsend for me. On New Year's Day I put a message on Raleigh Facebook page and had 248 responses. I talk to an old buddy every day, he is 86. I am a young sprig, I am only 83."

In the early stages of the project, offering iPads in groups and in particular in care homes to RN and RM veterans only proved divisive, so the offer now extends to former soldiers and airmen who are part of a veterans group such as Princess Marina House for serving and former RAF personnel.

"Without doubt this is the project I have been involved with that has the biggest impact on individuals – I am so proud to be part of it," said Capt Paul Quinn RNA General Secretary.

"Digitally isolated veterans are blind to and invisible to the digital world. Bringing someone online is like throwing the curtains back in a dark room."

To see if you're eligible for an iPad – or to volunteer to help veterans use them – contact julie@royalnavalassoc.com.

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



Gordon Kinsella/corkphotography.ie

Cobh honours Jutland dead

ONE hundred and two years after the greatest naval battle of the modern era fought in European waters, the people of Cobh in southern Ireland unveiled a memorial to their Jutland dead.

Twenty sailors from the town – then known as Queenstown when the country was part of the British Empire – died in the enormous clash between British and German men o'war in the North Sea, a fraction of the 350 Irishmen killed in the battle.

Cobh was a key harbour for both merchant and warships; it was the final port of call for the Titanic before her fateful voyage across the Atlantic, it was the reception point for survivors and the dead from the torpedoed liner Lusitania, and in the second half of the WW1 was a major base in the fight against the U-boat.

The biggest single blow was delivered by the Battle of Jutland on May 31/June 1 1916 – the failure of the Royal Navy to destroy the German Fleet and the heavy loss of life severely impacted on public morale.

The Jutland Memorial Society has spent several years campaigning/fundraising to erect an 8ft obelisk as a monument not just to the 20 Cobh men lost at Jutland, but all locals who died in the Great War at sea.

Having raised nearly £6,000, the memorial was installed in the Bible Garden of the Benedictine Nuns, overlooking the harbour.

A joint Catholic-Church of Ireland service was held in St Colman's Cathedral with the pews packed as locals were reminded of the impact Jutland had on the town; a joint blessing then took place of 20 sailor's caps, each representing the rank of those Cobh men killed in action in the clash of dreadnoughts, including one for Cdr Richard Herbert Denny Townsend, the highest-ranking Irishman to die at Jutland.

"It was a very dignified and emotional service," said Eithne Wright, Chairwoman of the Jutland Memorial Society and great niece of Shipwright William McGrath.

He died when battle-cruiser HMS Queen Mary blew up – a tragedy which prompted Admiral Beatty's famous remark: "There seems to be something wrong with our bloody ships today."

Afterwards, a short procession led by Piper Adam Duggan and a symbolic pall bearer detachment from the Irish Naval Service Reserve, the flag standards of the Royal Naval Association of Ireland and descendants carrying the 20 caps moved to the grounds of St Benedict's Priory – Admiralty House under British rule.

There sculptor James McLoughlin's monument was unveiled by County Mayor, Cllr Declan Hurley and blessed by Father John McCarthy and the Reverend Paul Arbuthnot.

Wreaths were laid and a bugler sounded the *Last Post*. This was followed by a two-minute silence which was concluded with a bell being rung eight times – as traditionally used to mark the change of watch on ships.

The event was concluded by Chev Adrian Gebruers of St Colman's Cathedral where the service began. At 4.03pm, marking the moment the HMS Indefatigable sank, he played the Naval Hymn on the Carillon Bells, followed by *Abide with Me* at 4.25pm – marking the moment HMS Queen Mary met her fate.

D-Day 75 plans take shape

VETERANS of the Normandy invasion are being urged to register with the Royal British Legion to take part in the 75th anniversary commemorations planned for next June.

Events are likely to be the last on a grand scale featuring participants of the great crusade in 1944 – the youngest will be aged in their mid-90s, with many veterans organisations having disbanded given the passage of time and dwindling numbers.

The RBL is working with the government, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Normandy Memorial Trust and Spirit of Normandy Trust to plan events on both sides of the Channel, including the unveiling of a new liberation monument to British veterans overlooking Gold Beach at Ver-sur-Mer.

You can register via www.britishlegion.org.uk/community/d-day-75/



R08 is great – just ask Norwich

WITH chances to visit the nation's future flagship at a premium given her busy programme, Norwich branch snapped up at the opportunity for a look around HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Thirty-three members made the trip from East Anglia to Portsmouth where they were hosted by CPO 'Nev' Southall and LS Joe 'Bungy' Williams.

It was the first visit to the dockyard for a good number of years for many of our members, and a vast amount of changes were noticeable, especially the facility that has been built to accommodate the new carrier.

Once through the security cordon the association made its way up the gangway and was escorted to the hangar. To say that everyone's mouth was wide open and chins were dragging along the deck wouldn't be too much of an exaggeration.

Once in the hangar Officer of the Day Lt Matthew Williams gave a brief welcome to the ship before the guests were given a short talk on the hangar itself, explaining the layout and the facilities. The group was then split into two; one, escorted by CPO Southall and AB Elizabeth 'Beth' Ray, heading forward to the foc'sle and bridge, and the other group heading aft, being escorted by Lt Mathew "Artie" Shaw, LS Williams and AB Rachel Quanbrough. The tours lasted approximately an hour and a half and took in the Bridge, FLYCO (Flight Control), some of the FRPP's (Fire Repair Party Post), and numerous other locations around the ship.

Meeting up on the flight deck – the size of four football pitches – before leaving the ship a photo opportunity was taken with members of the branch and our hosts.

It is believed that Norwich is the first RNA Branch to visit the ship; everyone present was extremely impressed with one of the latest additions to the Royal Navy.

Caribbean sacrifice to be honoured

AN AMBITIOUS £500,000 campaign has been launched to create a memorial for men and women from the Caribbean who have served under the Colours of the Commonwealth.

The National Caribbean Monument Charity intends to erect a monument at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire by 2021.

Trustees visited the 150-acre site to view suggested locations for the monument which will represent the Army, RN, RAF, the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the Merchant Navy.

The memorial drive was prompted by a visit to Alrewas a few years ago by Army veterans Pauline Milnes, Carol Curtis and Patsy Davis along with civilian Valdene James.

The only mention they could find of Caribbean sacrifices was a 17-year-old Jamaican shot at dawn in WW1, Pte Herbert Morris.

"I think the message about how important it is to make sure the story of the valuable contribution that was made by people of the Caribbean is told is getting out there," said retired RAF WO Donald Campbell.

"We have a sketch of the proposed monument which will be worked into a full design.

"It's all going well so far."

Among fundraising events held so far: a sponsored parachute jump at Hinton Airfield in Banbury.

You can find out more about the campaign by following @ [tncmcharity1](https://twitter.com/tncmcharity1) on Twitter.

Really hectic in Rayleigh

IF YOU are looking for the liveliest branch in the association, you could do a lot worse than Rayleigh.

The Essex branch has welcomed two new members (shipmates Ken Benson and Graham Dunnill-Gosling), but sadly bade farewell to S/M Bill Harrison who crossed the bar.

A member since 1996 – and a regular at meetings until around four years ago, when he was diagnosed with dementia – Bill served between 1940 and 1954 earning the Atlantic, France and Germany, Africa, Italy, 1939-45 and Arctic Stars.

At the spring uckers night, S/MS Mike Sandbrook Sr and Jim Hammond smashed S/MS Dave Bishop and Mike Sandbrook Jr off the board – they're planning their revenge for the next contest in November.

Also on the sporting front, the twice-yearly RNA vs RBL darts clash was particularly closely-fought, with a head-to-head involving the two captains deciding matters in the legion's favour (for now).

Many branch members took a bus ride to the Museum of Power in Langford, where volunteers keep classic engines in working order in an old pumping station.

The site is also home to the Astaria Model Village. Built and run by two RNA Shipmates – Dave Mead (Rayleigh) and Alan Walker (Basildon) – it is "like entering a world of fairies with miniature houses,

people and animals of different kinds". Back in Rayleigh, the branch was treated to an unexpected visit by author S/M Bob Clarke, the man behind *If You Can't Take a Joke...* and who most recently helped HMS Prince of Wales survivor recount his memories.

Sadly Chris Peacey died just days before his autobiography *War and Peacey* was published. Copies are available in bookshops/online (ISBN 0992760119, £10.99)

Branch members were out in force for the newly-resurrected Trinity Fair which dates back to 1227.

Victorians put a stop to the event in 1899 as it had become 'too rowdy', only for locals to bring it back in 2017 – a decision justified by the fact that more than 10,000 people attended.

Shipmates set up a hospitality/recruiting tent with volunteers completing 'watches' of 60 minutes to ensure the stand remained occupied.

And finally... S/MS Les Holyome, Len Hobbs and Joan Crick were recognised at a meeting of the town council.

Len (branch member since 1987) and Les (2001) were made knights of the *Légion d'Honneur* for their contribution to the liberation of Normandy in 1944. And Joan (honorary treasurer) received the town council chairman's 'special award' for services to the community.



LOOKING FOR RETIREMENT ACCOMMODATION?



Greenwich Hospital Sheltered Housing Managed by CESSAC

Provide affordable rented self-contained flats for former Royal Navy & Royal Marines, WRNS, QARRNS or RFA aged over 60, their spouses, partners, widows and widowers.

3 locations: Trafalgar Quarters, Greenwich; Greenwich Place, Saltash, Cornwall, and Greenwich Court, Southsea.

Enquiries to: ian.wilson@cessaha.co.uk Tel: 02392 829319

Or

Download an application from our website www.cessaha.co.uk



Cadets overcome the spider's web

A GROUP of enthusiastic cadets from the **Leys School** in Cambridgeshire travelled to Hampshire to experience a taste of Naval life, culminating in leadership training at HMS Collingwood.

The school, founded in 1875, runs a successful Combined Cadet Force (CCF) programme for its pupils, giving them experience of either the Army or the Royal Navy.

This particular group had already spent a night on HMS Bristol and toured both HMS Diamond and HMS Victory prior to their visit to the Royal Navy Leadership Academy (RNLA) where instructors tested their mettle on the academy's Low Ropes Course.

The course was jointly supervised by Flt Lt Stuart Sale RAFAC and Lt (CCF) Springall RNR.

"This experience teaches them

positive communication and how to fit into a team," said Flt Lt Sale.

"They can apply the principles of leadership that they've been taught and they can push themselves, taking risks and making decisions, communicating and solving the problem."

The students split into groups to tackle different obstacle on the course, which include the "spider's web" where students have to traverse through a series of ropes without touching them, or balancing on wires, both impossible to complete without excellent teamwork.

Cadet Imogen said: "There are really good facilities here. We've never really had to work as a team like this before."

Fellow cadet Jonathan added: "The activities here are very interesting, I'm having great fun."



Paul's work recognised

CPO Paul Clarke of **Rushden Sea Cadet Corps** was presented with a mayor's award from the Mayor of Rushden, Cllr Barbara Jenney.

The award, held at Rushden Town Hall, recognised his many years of dedication to the local community and especially the Rushden Sea Cadet Corps where he has worked tirelessly for a number of years helping bring a sense of worth to a large number of young people.

Focus on leadership skills

MEMBERS of **Southern Area Sea Cadets**, including three senior cadets, have completed an ILM on leadership and management Level Three.

They undertook two weekends and project work to submit their projects for assessment.

The courses are run as part of the leadership packages offered in Southern Area under the instruction of Lt Cdr Jon Vanns RNR.

The cadet instructors joined first line managers of British Gas in an awards ceremony attended by CVQO Manager Mike Askem.

The awards were presented by Cdre Barry Bryant CVO, who is the Director General of Seafarers UK.

Top honour for hard-working Otters

TEWKESBURY Sea Cadet unit TS Otter has received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, one of just 250 organisations to be honoured in the annual awards.

It recognises 75 years of transforming the lives of young people in Tewkesbury while giving back to the community from which its cadets are drawn.

The UK national honour was created by the Queen to mark her Golden Jubilee in 2002 and to recognise the outstanding contributions made to communities by groups of volunteers.

With cadets aged ten to 18, Tewkesbury is one of the longest-standing sea cadet units

and, with headquarters in the middle of the town, has strong links with the community.

TS Otter already holds the Honourable Company of Gloucestershire's Exemplary Service in the Community award and the Mayor's Tewkesbury Town Community Service Award.

Residents are used to seeing the cadets play a leading role in the town's remembrance Sunday and other ceremonial events. Cadets are also active behind the scenes, organising a significant donation to the town's food bank and providing an annual day of boating activities for the children of Belarus whose lives were blighted by the Chernobyl disaster.

The cadets themselves enjoy a packed and varied programme of events and training, both at the unit and on Tewkesbury's rivers.

Commanding Officer, Sub Lt Tristan Cooper, said: "We have always been very proud of the esteem in which we are held by the local community, but this unexpected and prestigious award is a huge honour for the unit and everyone associated with it."

"Coming into our 76th year, and with exciting plans in hand to make major improvements to the facilities we can offer at the unit, it pays testament to everything the staff, cadets and our supporters have achieved."

Only way is Essex

Unit adds new dimension to school opportunities

A **ROYAL Navy Combined Cadet Force (CCF)** section has been established alongside the existing Army CCF section at Westcliff High School for Boys in Essex.

At a special parade to mark the inauguration of the new Royal Navy CCF section, Cdre David Elford, Naval Regional Commander for Eastern England, took the salute.

The RN Section had formally begun parading in January and took their place alongside two platoons of cadets from the Army CCF section, commanded by the Cadet RSM Philip.

During the parade, Cdre Elford inspected the RN section escorted by the Senior Royal Navy Cadet, Leading Hand Joseph before presenting a small number of awards and promotions.

Cdre Elford also took the opportunity to address the cadets before the parade marched past.

In the evening, Cdre Elford was also the guest of honour at the CCF annual formal Mess Dinner, where all ceremonial roles are taken on by the cadets and speeches were made by the headmaster, Contingent Commander, senior Army and Navy cadets as well as the Commodore.

The CCF at Westcliff High School consists of more than 140 cadets at present in two sections, 18 Royal Navy and 125 Army.

The new Royal Navy section provides an opportunity for pupils who are not interested in the 'green' side of being a cadet, but still wish to enjoy the massive benefits offered through the CCF.

The Navy section has also expanded the opportunities and benefits on offer to students at the school, adding many new courses and qualifications as well as appealing to a wholly different cohort of students.



"Westcliff High School is very excited to welcome the Royal Navy to our CCF Contingent," said Major Jonathan Bleakley, CCF Contingent Commander at the school.

"It is exceptionally exciting to add another section, which has grown from just 25 cadets to nearly 150 cadets in just over five years."

"The Royal Navy add a new and exciting dimension to our provision, providing unparalleled and life-changing opportunities to an even greater range of pupils, reflecting their interests and aptitudes in a different way to what we had before."

"We are especially fortunate to have outstandingly committed cadets and staff as well as strong leadership from Sub Lieutenant Darryl Hill as Officer Commanding the Royal Navy Section."



Phoenix Rising leads to new facilities

LOUGHBOROUGH Sea Cadets held the official opening of their new £40,000 cadet shower and toilet block, replacing the old facilities which were damaged in the devastating fire, due to an arson attack, back in 2011.

At that time specific fundraising, named Phoenix Rising, was set up to replace buildings and items lost to the fire, this continues today.

In 2011 donations from the public flooded in, allowing the unit to purchase pods to replace the original building fairly quickly and although many of the cadets were not at the unit when the fire happened, they, the staff and the committee, have never stopped working for the Phoenix Rising fundraising.

The block was opened by District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) David Nichol RNR, who cut a ribbon in the unit colours watched by the ship's company and parents.

Lt Cdr Nichol said that he had "visited many units but Loughborough had truly risen like a Phoenix from the ashes".

He went on to praise the



● Lt Cdr (SCC) David Nichol, left, Mrs Sarina Martin, Lt (SCC) Kay Adey and members of the ship's company join parents for the opening of the new block

sense of family at the unit and the dedication and hard work of everyone at the unit, a sentiment echoed by Chairperson Mrs Sarina Martin.

One cadet who was at the unit when the fire occurred was Leading Cadet Harrison, who

joined aged ten. The night of the opening was her last night at the unit as she turned 18.

Officer in Charge Lt Kay Adey RNR said that LC Harrison would be much missed as she had been a tower of strength within the unit, a big sister to younger

cadets, a helper to staff and a dedicated person who portrayed the very essence of what cadets stood for and were all about.

The rebuilding of the unit would be a testament to her as she had put a great deal into raising funds towards it.



Safe in the hands of senior cadets

SENIOR Sea Cadets, Able Cadets Josh, Ivor and Joe from Hereford Sea Cadets, were key members of the Safety Team in supporting river safety at the Hereford River Carnival festivities.

Hereford Sea Cadets Boating Officer, Lt Cdr Rob Shiels, said: "It is important that young people take an active role in community events and what better stage than the River Carnival when the focus is around the river; these young people have a significant level of skill and I am really proud of them."

Able Cadet Joe said: "It was a pleasure to be involved in the river carnival as a Safety Officer as it allowed me and my fellow cadets to put into practice the powerboat skills and qualifications we have gained through the Sea Cadets."



Small unit makes big waves in the pool

ALTHOUGH it is a new, and the smallest, district in the Eastern Area, Cadets from Leicestershire certainly went for Gold at their Swimming Gala held at RAF Cranwell.

Every cadet entered, whether they were Junior Sea Cadets (ten to 12 years), junior category (12 to 15 years) or senior category (15 to 18 years), and came away from the gala with at least one gold medal and placed no lower than bronze in the majority of their races.

The Junior Boys' Team comprising Marine Cadet 2 Robinson of South Leicester Unit, Cadet Bedder of Hinckley Unit and Cadet Geary of Loughborough Unit, took the Area Junior Boys Trophy.

The Senior Girls Team placed joint second and the junior girls team third overall out of seven districts.

While the results of the Junior sea cadet overall placement has not been confirmed, it is highly likely that Leicestershire also won.

District Officer Lt Cdr David Nichol said: "I am extremely proud of all the cadets who took part."

"It is wonderful to see the units working together as a district."

"The atmosphere at the gala has been fantastic with sportsmanship very evident. I am very proud of Leicestershire."

Members from the district then went on to enjoy a picnic in the countryside to celebrate their achievements.

African adventure for winning Katie

WARSASH Sea Cadets are celebrating major achievements by some of their number.

Katie, 16, has just passed her Leading Cadet Board, while Able Cadet Jessica won a national award for seamanship.

Jessica, 16, received an engraved shield, certificate and book token, from John Johnson-Allen, Chairman of the Institute of Seamanship.

LC Katie is one of only three Sea Cadets, nationally, to get to the final of the education charity CVQO Westminster Award 2018.

Her prize includes a trip to South Africa and lunch at the House of Lords. This story was also covered in the April edition of *Navy News*, when the shortlist of ten Sea Cadets was announced.

"My four days experience of the Somerset Selection at Outposts was amazing," said Katie.

"I met some incredible people and made some great friends, some of whom I know will be friends for life."

"I'm very excited and honoured to have been selected as one of the 11 going to the House of Lords and to South Africa."

"I was sad some of my new friends from selection weren't picked as I would have loved to share this experience with them even more."

"I've always wanted to travel the world ever since I was young, so having this opportunity is like a dream come true and I can tick



● Katie, left, is heading off to South Africa this summer, while fellow cadet Jessica received her award from John Johnson-Allen

another wonderful country off my list.

"The entire process has taught me many things about myself and I can't wait to see what the future holds, bring on Westminster Awards 2018."

Guy Horridge, CVQO Chief Executive, said: "Katie made an instant impression on us down in Somerset with her infectious smile and can-do attitude."

"She was nominated for the CVQO Westminster Award by

her unit on the strength of her personality and the huge amount of charity work she regularly undertakes to support her local community.

"She is a worthy finalist and we are sure she is looking forward to the House of Lords lunch and the South Africa expedition later in the summer."

Warsash unit is also celebrating the achievements of two other cadets.

Able Cadet Harry, 17, was



appointed as Mayor's Cadet and will support the new Mayor of Fareham, Councillor Susan Bayford, at her duties within the community, including those which take place at HMS Collingwood.

Able Cadet Kirsty, 15, organised and held a cake sale in order to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support, a charity with which she has had recent personal experience. She raised over £100.



Friends make music

MEMBERS of the Red Heralds Band pose for a picture at the iconic Pantiles in Tunbridge Wells

The band, from Wiesbaden in Germany, were visiting Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadets at **TS Brilliant**.

The two towns are twinning and the unit has had an affiliation with the group since 1970 and keeps the friendship alive by joining with cadets from the town in activities.

The Red Heralds were welcomed at a meal at the cadet HQ in Albion Road.

The following day the group had a walking tour of the town, followed by a barbecue and joint band practice with the Sea Cadets.

The group also enjoyed a day out in Brighton, which culminated in a formal dinner with the mayor of Tunbridge Wells.

Unit Officer Commanding, Sub Lt Matthew Vanns RNR, was presented the Cadet Forces Medal and the groups exchanged gifts of friendship.

Top honour for Rhondda

RHONDDA Unit was awarded the Best Youth Organisation that engages Young People in Formal Education.

The unit was shortlisted from a large group of other youth organisations to make the final two at the awards ceremony.

The award criteria was all about engaging young people in activities and educational activities that then leads to the young people improving or re-engaging in formal education.

This year was the first time that non-statutory sector

youth organisations could be nominated so it was very humbling for all at Rhondda Unit to be judged as being the best in this category.

Rhondda Unit's cadets made sure their presence was felt at the awards ceremony – sending some 36 cadets and staff, they all barely fitted on the stage.

Staff at the unit are extremely proud of each and everyone of their cadets and juniors who put in real hard work, gaining so many qualifications during the past year.

Honours

MEN and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines have been recognised for their public service in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2018.

A total of 23 sailors and marines from Leading Hands to Admirals have been recognised for their efforts in protecting the nation and its interests by being awarded MBEs, OBEs, and CBEs.

Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (CB): Vice Admiral Tony Radakin; Rear Admiral Nick Hine; Major General Rob Magowan CBEC

Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE): Capt Mike Knott
Order of the British Empire (OBE): Cdr Stephen Anderson; Col Steve Francis; Cdr Ian Harrop; Cdr Tris Kirkwood; Cdr Graeme Knox; Cdr Chris New; Lt Col Lloyd Purser MBE

Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE): Lt Cdr Johnnie Ball; Lt Cdr Hugh Botterill; WO1 D Castle; WO1 J Early; Lt Cdr Fiona Haynes; LET James Jose Cdr Andy Kellett; Lt Cdr Alastair Ley; Mne N Purja; Cdr Heather Rimmer; Lt Cdr Brian Trim

Queen's Voluntary Reserve Medal (QVRM): WO1 J Cox

Deaths

Adm Sir James 'Admiral Jim' Eberle GCB. June 1. Aged 90. Donations to the Royal British Legion.

Cdr John T Fremantle: (Lord Cottesloe). Joined the RN 1945 and served as a junior officer in HMS Concord when she escorted Amethyst to safety after she was shelled by Communist forces and was severely damaged "Yangtze Incident". He campaigned for Concord's crew to receive recognition but her ship's company were denied the "Yangtze 1949" clasp to the Naval General Service Medal. In the 1950s he served in Malaya during the communist uprising and the "Cod Wars". He retired in 1966 after further service in Paris, Aden and at the MoD in London. He served as High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire 1969 and as Lord-Lieutenant of the county 1984-97. May 21. Aged 91.

Cdr Peter T Selfe. May 23. Aged 87.

Lt Cdr John Parfitt. May 18. Aged 87.

Gordon S Passmore TAG FAA. Served over the Western Desert, the Med, Arctic, Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. On the last flight in his Fairey Swordfish he crashed over the side of HMS Campania and landed upside down over a gun emplacement with him dangling from his harness. He flew Barracuda and Avenger from HMS Implacable. April '45 his pilot suffered

detached retinas and lost control of the aircraft over China Bay, Ceylon, but instead of baling out Passmore and another crewman helped make a safe landing; he received the Commander in Chief's Commendation. After a night attack on the Japanese fleet at Towi Island he was shot down and after several hours in the water was picked up by HMS Teazer. He flew over 230 sorties. Post war he continued to fly as a reservist. He was Mayor of Wandsworth in 1970 & 1989 and in 2007 was made Honorary Freeman of the Borough. In 2015 he was awarded the Legion d'honneur.

Terence 'Terry' C Jenkins, CPO (OPS)R. Served 1956-85. HMS Ganges, Dryad, Ark Royal, Protector, Woodbridge Haven, Victory, Torquay, Pembroke, Leander, Drake, Penelope, Tyne, Matapan, Lynx, Salisbury, Galatea, Ajax and Nelson CinC Fleet. Ships diver and Diving Supervisor. Awarded 2 Herbert Lott awards and Flag Officer Portsmouth's Commendation for bravery in 1980. RYA Coastal Skipper. Member of the PRI's Club HMS Dryad. March 14. Aged 77.

Alan R 'Thomo' Thomson CPO. Served for 22 years from 1957 HMS Centaur, Triumph, Urchin, Penelope, Ajax, Reclaim, Eastbourne, Grafton and Venus. May 20. Aged 78.

Alan L Hawken CPO Writer. Served 1945-73 Royal Arthur and

HMS Drake. Mar 28. Aged 89.
Roy Jennings, PO/REL(Air) FAA. Served 1956-68. On board HMS Ark Royal and with 831 Sqn at Watton, Norfolk. Telford & Wrekin Fleet Air Arm Association from 1997. April 17. Aged 77.

John 'Dusty' Miller. Elec Mech. Served HMS Aisne, Loch Fada, Portcullis, Gambia, Liverpool and Bulawayo. Chairman of HMS Bulawayo Association. June 2. Aged 86.

PO(Tel) Terence 'Terry' M Hoare. Joined HMS Ganges aged 15 then served in HMS Illustrious before being drafted to submarines where he spent more than ten years including a 12-month refit in Singapore. Left the RN to travel to Australia early '60s where he joined the RAN Naval Police. He became a Commissioned Officer and promoted to Superintendent of Naval Police, Chief Provost Marshall Australia, Chief Fire Officer for Eastern Australia and Acting Deputy Director of Naval Security retiring in 1990. Committee member, previous vice president and treasurer of the Bowen Mountain Association, Australia. January. Aged 83.

Archie S Aitken ST.PO(S). Served aboard HMS Orion 1945-58 in Supply. Orion Association. Aged 100.

Stanley 'Stan' R White, Sto/Mech. Served HMS Sharpshooter/Shackleton 1951-53. Survey Ships Association. April. Aged 86.

Ask Jack

All Ship Associations. HMS Opossum Association has been running since 1994 but is now struggling to make up sufficient numbers for 'group' hotel bookings and would like to amalgamate their reunions with

other like-minded associations. The Opossum's usually meet in May and alternate between the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea and The Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford but would be happy to consider other venues and months

(apart from June). Contact the secretary Eddie Summerford on 0161 764 8778 or email robopovan@btinternet.com

GAFSC Hamburg. The German Armed Forces Staff College

(GAFSC) Hamburg is keen to maintain links with former advanced staff training students and would like to contact the following retired personnel: CAS 'Stuart' Batten (student 1989-90), MJ 'Matthew' O'Grady (student 1993-94), JR 'John' Toon (student 1995-96) and CCE 'Christopher' Robin (student 1996-97). Some potential students are put off by the prospect of undergoing advanced staff training overseas and it can be useful to show them that graduates of GAFSC have a career ahead of them. Information on final rank attained; final appointment in the RN; date retired; and what ex-students did after leaving the RN would be useful. Contact British Liaison Officer Lt Col David Hercus at GAFSC
HMS Ark Royal 1958. I was still in Malta when I should have gone on demob leave Dec 23 1958 so I returned to the UK onboard HMS Ark Royal. I remember arriving in Plymouth on a Tuesday in December 1958 but not the exact date. Can anyone tell me the exact date that HMS Ark Royal arrived in Plymouth? A Wright 01623 722971.

Reunions

SEPTEMBER
HMS Arethusa F38. A get-together for all crews will be held at the Best Western Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, PO4 0NR from Fri Sept 28 - Mon Oct 1 and includes a shuttle coach to visit the highlights of Portsmouth and Chichester. Book now as places are limited: Darby Allen 01903 505918 email: johnrallen883@btinternet.com or Isle of Wight Tours Ltd., 3 New Road, Lake, Sandown Isle of Wight, PO36 9JN on 01983 405584 email: enquiries@iowtours.com

OCTOBER
Neptune Association Memorial. A Service of Remembrance will take place at the Neptune Association's memorial, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire on Sat Oct 13 at noon to remember the 836 men lost from HM Ships Neptune and Kandahar on Dec 19 1941. A private AGM for members will follow in the Rose Room at 13.45. Details from Graham Davies on 01256 474641 or 07941 440113.
HMS Diamond Association (D35). Reunion to be held at Judds Folly Hotel, Faversham, Kent Oct 19 & 20. Further details from Ian 'Daisy' Adams on 07749112634, email ianadams50@icloud.com

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the May edition of Navy News (right) was, the Salisbury-class frigate HMS Chichester.



Leo Leonard, from Ireland, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) was the last paddle tug in operation for the Royal Navy.

1) What was her name, and 2) what was the name of her bosun, who spent 24 years with her?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw

to establish a winner. Entries must be received by August 14.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted.

Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our September edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 281

Name

Address

My answers: (1).....

(2).....

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in August's Noticeboard must be received by **July 14 2018**

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Party at the palace was just the ticket

ROYAL Fleet Auxiliary PO(CIS) Steve Gill successfully applied for a ticket to attend a Royal garden party at Buckingham Palace. He describes his big day out in London.

The day started with a photo visit to 10 Downing Street, and why not, even though there was a 'welcome committee' camped outside for the visit by the Turkish Prime Minister, the protection staff were very accommodating with my request.

Once through the big gates I was allowed to wander down the road to have my photo taken outside No10.

I then made my way to the Palace. The queue was very fluid (I think they've done this before) and it was not long before I was presenting a very tall Guardsman with my ID and I was through the front gates.

Then through the doors of the Grand Entrance, which is a very apt name for this 'door' where you get a glimpse of the magnificence of the Palace and are hit with the full bouquet of fresh cut flowers filling the hall.

I passed the grand staircase, which leads up to the investiture hall for those lucky enough to make it there, and entered the grounds, music greeting me from the Band of the Coldstream Guards.

It is very relaxed, helped not least by the sheer tranquil nature of the place. If it were not for the police helicopter overhead you would never believe you're in the capital.

I felt as if I knew the place thanks to Sir David Attenborough and Alan Titchmarsh and guests



are encouraged to walk the grounds (those that watched the David Attenborough programme will be pleased to know the sundial has been moved to a sunlit area).

The Queen arrived promptly at 4pm to a fanfare and the *National Anthem*.

She made her way through the crowd, graciously acknowledging as many people as she could.

Other members of the Royal family try to catch those the Queen misses. Prince Andrew indeed pointed through the crowd and announced "Fleet Auxiliary" before moving on.

RFA Honorary Commodore in Chief Prince Edward was busy welcoming guests on the

other side of the gardens, yet his wife the Countess did smile and nod in acknowledgement as she passed dressed in a radiant red.

All in all it was a thoroughly enjoyable day, with some wonderful memories to boot.

It was an honour to be selected to attend the Royal Garden Party and represent the RFA.

Whilst I thought I would be 'part of the crowd', it was humbling as to how many people approached me and recognised the RFA in its own right. The tea and sandwiches weren't bad either.

So when you see the calling notice next year I recommend you go for it, it isn't just for the elite.

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NAVY LISTS

NAVY LISTS 1827 to 2014. Available to view online: www.NavyListResearch.co.uk

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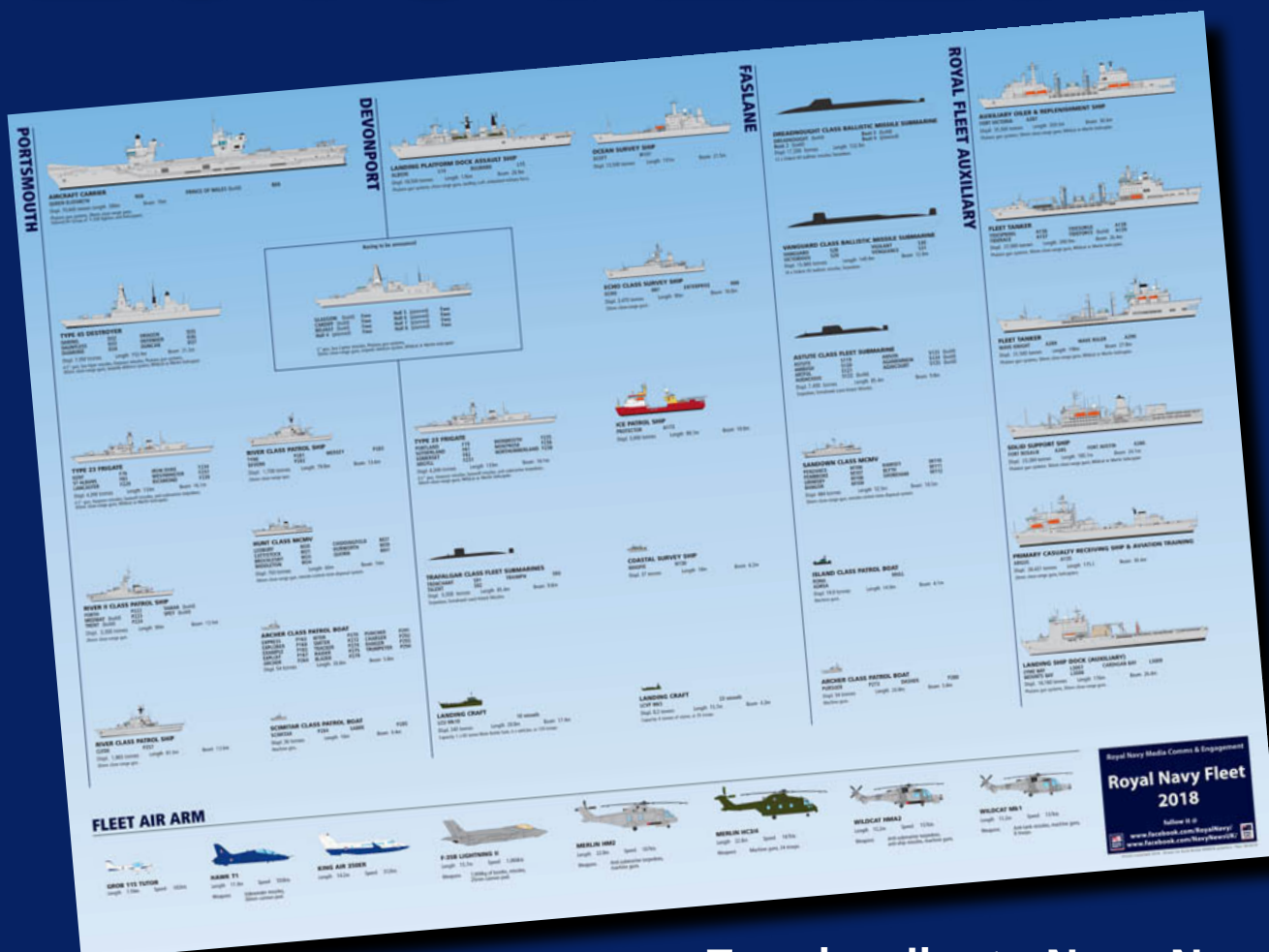
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Attempt to halt naval inter-war arms race

THE Washington Treaty of 1922 declared a 'battleship holiday' – no capital ships (battleships or battle-cruisers) were to be built by the three major naval powers for ten years, none, that is, except two battleships the Royal Navy had managed to negotiate in order to compensate them for extra 16-in gun vessels built for the US and Japanese navies, writes Prof Eric Grove.

The two battleships, Nelson and Rodney, were built to the limit for new construction under the treaty – 35,000 tons, defined as a new 'standard' displacement. The 'holiday' was extended by the London Treaty of 1930 to the end of 1936 but attempts to control the size and gun calibre of new construction in the Second London Treaty of 1936 soon broke down, although not before the King George V class were built to these limits.

This suspension of capital ship construction forms the centrepiece and title of a new book by Robert C Stern, the American photographer and warship enthusiast, who has already written a number of books: on destroyer battles, surviving the Kamikazes, the US Navy and the war in Europe, and big-gun warship duels in World War 2. All have been published by Seaforth of Barnsley who are the producers of this new work: **The Battleship Holiday – The Naval Treaties and Capital Ship Design** (272 pages, ISBN 978 1 84832 344 5, £35).

In fact, the book turns out to be broader in scope than one might have expected. It has an introduction on armoured ship development in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, a chapter on the 'last generation' (in fact, the first generation of dreadnoughts and super-dreadnoughts 1906-1914), World War 1 up to and including Jutland, and 'The Art and Practice of Fire Control' in 1916.

The next chapter covers the failure of the Geneva conference in 1927 – a section that would have benefited from more discussion of the cruiser question and the way in which the naval powers saw the large 8in-armed 'light cruisers' (as they were called at this time) of the period as substitute capital ships. Geneva was a failure with dire effects on Anglo-American



● HMS Nelson – here in dazzle paint camouflage – on gunnery trials in the middle of WW2; all her nine 16in guns were, uniquely, mounted forward of the superstructure Picture: Imperial War Museum

THE GROVE REVIEW

relations that Stern rather underestimates, although he has a point that lessons were learned for greater success next time in London.

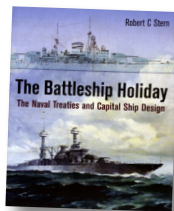
A long chapter follows on the ships that emerged from the ending of the treaty limitations in the 1930s. The experience of war is next examined which allows the author to reprise some of his earlier work. He limits himself to actions involving modern ships which is a bit of a pity as one feature of the 'holiday' had been modifications (sometimes very considerable) to older vessels to bring them more up to date.

Finally the author covers the demise of the battleship as he puts it 'concisely'. In fact the coverage is a little too concise as it does not bring out the major weakness of traditional capital ships, their huge demand for manpower in fleets with other priorities.

A more detailed study of HMS Vanguard's career might have helped make this point; she was at seriously reduced complement throughout her latter period as Home Fleet flagship. Moreover the perceived threat of the Soviet Stalingrad-class battle-cruisers as a factor in keeping gun armed capital ships as part of the NATO Striking Fleet in the early 1950s is not mentioned.

This all reflects a generally 'amateurish' approach taken by the author. Research is patchy, especially from original sources,

notably no mention of the ships covers at Woolwich and confusion over whether official histories are documents. The author, relying on secondary material of varying quality, makes some rather old-fashioned assertions on Fisher's attitude to speed (he saw it as the 'weather gauge', not 'armour') and the reasons for British battle-cruiser vulnerability at Jutland (no mention of Warrant Officer Grant's vital role in saving HMS Lion). He also cannot resist the old canard about HMS Hood being laid down on the day of the Battle of Jutland, something that has been firmly knocked on the head by recent research in the builder's archives.



Despite such blemishes there is much good in the book. The descriptions of both fire control and conference negotiations are both useful summaries, as is discussion of the often-neglected French and Italian dimensions of the period. The coverage of the Germans (limited by Versailles not Washington) is also interesting, although I would not have spent so much time on their 'pocket battleships' which, despite their nickname, were really cruisers as their owners later admitted. However, the book is an interesting read and all readers will learn something from it. It is attractively produced and very well illustrated and a worthy addition to any naval library – as long as the above reservations are borne in mind.

How to run a nuclear submarine

THE canon of Haynes' guides which started with the Austin Sprite over 50 years ago now embraces not just motor vehicles, but aircraft, ships, spacecraft and fictional vehicles such as the USS Enterprise from Star Trek.

The latest owner's workshop manual focuses on the Astute-class Nuclear Submarine (£25, ISBN 978-1-78521 071-6).

And given the fact that both the way the Silent Service works and much of what is inside of an A-boat is top secret, author Jonathan Gates concedes he has, at times, had to apply "engineering judgment" in certain classified areas, such as an Astute's maximum diving depth.

Which won't mean a great deal to the casual reader. And it certainly doesn't mean this is some vague piece of guesswork. This is a book jam packed with facts, statistics and snippets which don't just tell you how an Astute works, but give a comprehensive insight into the mechanical workings of any modern nuclear-powered submarine, from the principles of buoyancy to underwater communications, the workings of a reactor, how to load torpedoes and Tomahawk missiles and the incredibly complex computer system – ACMS – which is the digital brain of the submarine.

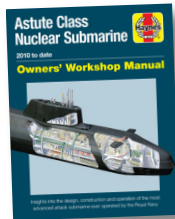
In the two decades we've been writing about

A-boats we've frequently rolled out the throwaway line "as complex as the Space Shuttle." Flick through Gates' manual and you quickly realise that is no understatement. The complexity of this underwater man o'war is staggering: 13,000 hydrophones in the flank array, 39,000 acoustic tiles on the hull, and a neural network of 1,000 processors analysing radar 'returns' when the digital periscope is raised and does its sweep of the area before retreating back inside the casing.

Such hi-tech kit is all well and good, but utterly useless without a well-trained crew. Astutes may be the first hunter killers where 'hot bunking' has been banished to the realm of history, but quarters remain "austere" and "comfort is a secondary consideration". Each bunk is 1m wide, 2m long while headroom is a mere 80cm.

The messes are barely more spacious – particularly once the TV, DVD, games machines are in situ and the plates and dishes from meals (30,000 are served on a typical patrol...) are cleared away.

Otherwise, for all the advances in 120 years of submarine building, there's not a whole lot to separate an Astute crew member from someone on Holland 1: the Silent Service still needs "exceptional individuals who can cope with such mental, physical and emotional demands."



● HMS Tribune prepares for sea in 1942 in this early colour photograph taken for the Ministry of Information as part of a wartime propaganda campaign Picture: Imperial War Museum

Deep knowledge

HAVING shed light on the (very) murky world of Cold War submarine operations to critical and some financial success in *Hunter Killers*, naval journalist and author Iain Ballantyne casts an even wider net for his latest delve into the depths.

The Deadly Trade (Orion, £25 ISBN 978-1-4091-58516) aims to cover the entire story of those who have served beneath the waves from Archimedes to the present day.

Ok, Archimedes wasn't a submariner; but it's his principle of buoyancy – and above all maintaining neutral buoyancy – which is the science behind every submarine. Simple in theory, it took two millennia to master.

Although primitive submarines were used in the American War of Independence and Civil War it's the advent of the torpedo and the combustion engine in the late 19th Century which truly made underwater warfare a realistic prospect.

The RN came to the submarine world not late, but not first either. It invested in these strange craft (i) because other navies, France especially, were developing the capability and (ii) the best way to counter a submarine was to have one of your own (from the outset the Admiralty envisaged using boats to hunt down other boats, not attack shipping on the surface).

In fact, no navy really knew what to do with these new men o'war. Every navy of any standing wanted submarines in the first decade of the 20th Century. They didn't really know why. The advent of the Great War changed all that.

Within a month, both the Germans and British had demonstrated the potency of the submarine, the former especially by dispatching three aged cruisers in an hour off the Dutch coast, prompting widespread fear of dangers in the depths: periscopeitis. The sight, or even rumour of the presence of a submarine was sufficient to paralyse and terrorise surface fleets. It's a propaganda tactic used to this day given the secrecy surrounding submarine operations: say you've sent a boat even if you haven't.

Three wars – two hot world ones, one cold – are the centrepiece of the book, picking key episodes from all, set against the broader canvas of the campaigns and conflicts.

And there's a lot to embrace: X-craft operations, specialist raids such as U-47's sinking of HMS Royal Oak, German wolf packs in the Atlantic, American packs in the Pacific – which is why the source notes and bibliography extend for 80 pages, just in case your hunger for tales of the deep has not been satiated.

Much of the book covers well-furrowed ground (or rather well depth-charged waters); it's the coverage of operations post-1945 which are still the stuff of secrecy, legend and misinformation which the specialist reader will probably glean most from.

Ballantyne paints a chilling picture of the 'Third Battle of the Atlantic' which would have raged had the Cold War turned hot; the Royal Navy would have borne the brunt of dealing

with Soviet wolf packs – upwards of 80 boats assigned to attack Atlantic convoys alone, not counting the hunter-killers and ballistic boats. And that was all if nuclear weapons weren't used.

Thankfully such a doomsday scenario never came to pass. Instead, submarine triumphs were limited to individual raids or targeted strikes.

Operations in Iraq in 1991 remain largely classified to this day. Veteran diesel boats Opossum and Otus were committed in the Gulf on missions which were right out of the Great War playbook – akin to E-class boats negotiating the Dardanelles or German submarines running the gauntlet of the Dover barrage.

Whatever Opossum did, she did it in Kuwaiti waters peppered with mines by Saddam Hussein's criminal regime.

Packed with 70 men aboard, snorting or surfacing at night to take 'fresh' air in to recharge her batteries, Opossum "smelled of diesel, sweat and cabbage" her commanding officer recalled. Those aboard grew used to it – so much so that when the hatches were opened once the boat's mission was complete, the smell of fresh air made many crew vomit.

It's a shame there aren't a few more anecdotes like that in these 700 pages. The author leaves you in no doubt that submariners of all nationalities committed brave deeds as the book is packed with such acts. Perhaps less evident is the monotony and tedium of life on patrol, although Lt Dick Raikes, CO of HMS Seawolf, paints a vivid picture of operations in the Arctic in the second half of WW2.

Gauges froze. Men on watch on the conning tower had to be lashed to the periscope mast otherwise the sea would carry them overboard. Spray turned to ice and lashed any exposed skin. There was some compensation for such travails, notably the natural beauty of the Northern Lights ("like a gigantic fireworks display").

And whichever navy in whichever war, the submariner's plight has been a precarious one. U-boat losses in WW2 are well known (three out of four crew died). In the RN Silent Service, the casualty rate was one in eight – far higher than the rest of the Fleet (one in 20). The Americans lost over 50 boats, the Italians 85, the Russians over 100 and the Japanese more than 125.

'The Trade' – a name given it by Rudyard Kipling – remains a dangerous and occasionally deadly affair. Accidents and mishaps involving surface ships are commonplace. The ships and their complements generally survive. A submarine accident rarely has such a positive outcome. Despite technological progress, crews face the same two foes as they did when the first submarines entered the water: crushing and suffocation. They do business in great waters convinced, says the author, they can beat the odds.

Rarely has the deck been stacked in their favour.





Picture: N&M Rogers

Jimmy keeps cool to top leaderboard

A GLORIOUS sunny Silverstone welcomed the Royal Navy and Royal Marines **Car Racing Team** to Round 2 of the Armed Forces Race Challenge.

PO Jimmy Cantwell, Mne Adam Dewis, CPO Gareth 'Stirling' Moss and Lt Cdr Keith Attwood ventured to the home of British motorsport hoping to improve on reliability issues that had scuppered a strong team performance during the first round.

Qualifying saw no major issues for the team and out of the 30 starters, the Class B Vauxhall Astras of Adam and Stirling were the highest RN/RM cars on the grid in 11th and 14th places, Keith's Class C Mini Cooper was in 17th with Jimmy in the RN-owned Peugeot 206 in 26th spot.

The start of the race is always critical and off the line Keith continued his fast starting trend making up five places, overtaking the faster cars of Adam and Stirling in the process, both of whom slipped down the field slightly in the opening lap.

Jimmy also got away well taking two places in the initial corners. Adam and Stirling soon started to recover though and the greater power of their cars allowed them to claw back the places lost and they started making progress

through the field.

Sadly though the curse of reliability struck Adam and Stirling again. Adam retired from the race with a drive shaft issue and Stirling lost all coolant, overheating his engine.

This left only Keith and Jimmy on track for the team. The chequered flag fell with Keith in 15th place (seventh in class C) and Jimmy in 20th (12th in class C).

Getting stuck into some battle-damage repair was a necessity for the team as they worked hard to try and get Stirling and Adam back out for race two.

Adam successfully replaced his drive shaft, but still had an underlying concern that there was something more untoward with his gearbox, however the diagnosis on Stirling's car was less optimistic.

Coolant was getting into one of the cylinders, pointing towards head gasket failure, this would see a premature end of the day for Stirling.

With the team depleted to three cars for the second race and with the certainty of team points penalties for Stirling's non-start, the team were competing for damage limitation.

Another set of solid starts from Keith and Jimmy gained them places in the opening laps and they battled hard to

continue to capitalise on this. Adam would only survive for five laps before a terminal driveshaft issue forced him to retire again, this is pointing more towards a diff/gearbox issue for the continual problems.

It wasn't just the RN that were suffering, the heat was having impact throughout the field with seven retiring as the race progressed. Come the end Jimmy had progressed to 19th (11th in class) and Keith up to 13th place (fifth in class).

For AFRC Championship points (awarded for lap consistency) Jimmy left round two with 17 and Keith 16.

Both saw them climb the AFRC Championship ladder, with Keith now in seventh place and Jimmy in ninth. The team points took a battering with the RNRM Team remaining in last place. The novice championship is going well for the RN with Jimmy in first place.

Anyone wishing to get involved, either racing or supporting, should contact Lt Cdr Keith Attwood at rnrnrcr@rnrnmsa.co.uk.

There are opportunities to race in the RNRMMSA-owned Peugeot 206 and most safety equipment can be provided.

For more details on the Armed Forces Race Challenge visit www.armedforcesracechallenge.net



First win of year for karting team

GO-KART drivers LAET Craig Beesley and LA(ACMN) Liam Waterhouse recorded the first victory of the year for the Royal Navy Royal Marines **Karting Team**.

The team had two karts competing at the second round of the RAFMSA Inter-Service Championship held at the Lydd Kart Circuit in Kent.

Kart 45 was driven by new drivers Sub Lt Jean-Luke Laister and LAET Sam Cresswell, with kart 98 in the hands of team manager Beesley and Waterhouse.

Race day was warm and sunny with a dry and sticky track, resulting in ideal conditions for timed qualifying.

P1 was taken by RAF Waddington in kart 50 with a time of 43.82 seconds. Laister, in kart 45 qualified P3 with a time of 43.93 while Waterhouse qualified with a time of 44.30 in kart 98, putting him in P8 for the start of the race.

The two-and-a-half-hour endurance race began with Laister getting a great start and taking P2 into the first corner.

Over the next few laps Laister and kart 50 of RAF Waddington switched places several times until Laister was finally able to break away from both number 50 and the rest of the pack, setting the second fastest lap of the race in the process.

Unfortunately delays in the pits due to a loose steering wheel and a fault with the fuel nozzle when refuelling meant that despite the best efforts of Cresswell and Laister, they were unable to compete for victory.

The two drivers made up a number of places over the remainder of the race, eventually finishing sixth.

In kart 98, Waterhouse made steady progress in the first stint, making several overtakes, especially at the re-start following a red flag caused by two RAF drivers taking each other out of the race.

Beesley and Waterhouse's consistently quick driving and faultless pit stops meant Beesley was able to begin the last stint of the race in third behind No.5 from REME and No.50 from RAF Waddington.

Beesley quickly picked off 50 and with ten minutes left of the race was right behind No.5.

After a couple of laps battling for the lead, Beesley found a gap and squeezed through to take the lead at the first corner, going on to put a five second gap between the two karts, taking the chequered flag.

The Navy Kart Team plans to continue its success into the rest of the season, with spaces open to new drivers. Please search for RNRM Karting on social media for more information.

Riders launch their bid for team championships



Picture: Jack-Snaps

THE first round of the RNRM **Road Race Team Championships** at Oulton Park in Cheshire saw more than 40 riders on the grid for the CB500 contest.

The RN's three riders, Cpl Dave White, *pictured left*, Sgt Luke Terry and Cpl Charlie White, were in their first race of the day.

Charlie's poor start left him last into the first corner, however he managed to claw his way back through the pack and finished in 30th place.

Luke and Dave started well, with Luke able to make up places quickly. Both were neck and neck into the first corner until David managed to slip past Luke at Shell Oils. Luke mounted a strong comeback battle but just finished behind Dave.

Race two and Charlie had another difficult start and quickly found himself sandwiched between two riders into the first chicane but managed to fend them off and continued his momentum gaining four places in two laps and finishing 27th. David and Luke again both had good starts and continued to battle between them gaining places respectively.

LH(AH) Alan 'Spongebob' Curtis was the sole RN rider in the Golden Era Super Sport race. After qualifying 23rd, his main focus was his race start. The lights went out and he got away to a good start but had to act quickly to avoid hitting a rider that stalled on the grid in front of him. After finding his confidence again, he managed to knock four seconds off of his lap time and finish in 14th place.

Race two and Alan found himself fighting for position whilst trying to pick his way through new comers and back markers, more than once the hand of 'sorry' was raised for diving underneath new comers and coming more than a little close at times. Overall Al finished 13th on the grid.

Cpl Dan Greenwood, C/Sgt Brian "The Luge" Fudge and Mne Callum Scott took part in the Pre-National 600.

Qualifying went better than expected for Scotty with a new PB and 23rd on the grid. Dan and Bri also placed well, setting the scene for a good battle. The riders set off under the green flag for warm up but two other riders went down and left a huge oil spill on the track. After the restart Scotty spent three laps chasing down some of the fast guys the race was red flagged due a serious accident. The race was then abandoned to be replayed at a later date.

Race two got underway and all three riders were battling it out, Scotty got himself into a good battle with some of the faster riders and managed a 1:50 lap, 19 seconds quicker than last year.

Bri on his Fireblade was keen to get stuck in to the GP1. After changing his gearing the Blade felt much more settled and he was able to concentrate on being smooth and getting every thing to flow, which changing from a 600 to a 1,000 is harder than it sounds. With this being the pre TT round there were a number of top riders making life very fast.

Bri Managed to get to 1:04, a personal best.



Duncan's dozen not enough for sweet Georgia

HMS Duncan's rugby team took on a combined team from the Georgian Armed Forces during her recent deployment which ends this month.

Duncan lost the toss and received the first ball of the game which was taken securely and an attack was mounted. The hosts had a strong defence and won the ball back and immediately counter-attacked to score the first try of the game.

Duncan withstood the next attack with strong tackles from centre LET(WE) Stef Howells, fly half Lt Steve 'Jimmy' Carr and prop POET 'Sticky' Green.

Following a strong passage of play from the GAF, Duncan conceded a penalty which was taken quickly and the Georgian backs sped for the line, unfortunately (of fortunately for Duncan) the referee, Duncan's own PO(AWT) Stuart 'Jumper' Collins judged the final to be forward.

Within 32 minutes the hosts had scored another three tries, with two of them converted to leave the score 36-0.

The start of the second half saw the Georgian forces down to 14 men for seven minutes. A revitalised Duncan team saw forwards and backs interlinking until No8 POET Pedro Terise made a decisive break through midfield.

With players in support either side he managed to offload in the tackle. Unfortunately he found the opposition winger who blasted his way up the field, resulting in a try and a score of 41-0.

A fantastic chase saw the Duncan No7 Capt Callum Bridger RM pressurise his opposite number, forcing an error. Duncan were awarded a penalty and opted to kick to touch. Eventually the Georgians infringed and Duncan opted to kick for goal, but narrowly missed.

The following 22 restart led to a line out to the hosts with Duncan competing and then securing the ball. Hooker Lt Cdr Smith collected the ball and seeing a gap started off up the park with CPO(ET) "Slinger" Woods in support. One missed tackle and an off load and Duncan were on the scoreboard; CPO Woods crossing the line under the posts. LCH Matty Tew added the conversion to make the score 41-7.

A series of offloads, too much for the Georgians to handle, saw a pass to hooker Lt Cdr Smith on the 22 who stormed down the field scoring the ship's second try in less than five minutes. This time the conversion was missed.

The home team scored a final try in the 74th minute with the final score 51-12. Unofficial man of the match was the referee PO(AWT) Collins.

Duncan's rugby officer Lt Cdr James Smith said: "We faced daunting odds against a very strong and typically Georgian squad. The ship's company did not flinch from their task however, and won many admirers. Above all, we earned the respect of our Georgian colleagues and made many new friends."

Report: CPO(AWT) Chris Smith

Dark blue at Copper Box

ROYAL Navy netball players were in action for the UK Armed Forces Netball Association squad at the Copper Box Arena in London.

LH Megan Bailey, Sub Lt Kiani Pay, LNN Abigail Wrigley, POMA Sam Usher and AET Anthea Kaptein were selected from a 19-strong squad to make the final cut of 12 players to play against Benecos Mavericks U21.

This was a fantastic and unique opportunity for the RN women, playing against a number of the England U21 players and future Super League players in a 7,000-seater venue.

Supporting the team on the bench was MA Jordan Ayton, who, selected for the 19-strong UK AFNA squad, had been at sea prior to the fixture so conducted the tactical analysis of the match to support decision making.

Jordan is a starting shooter for the RN Open Team and played in every game of the UK AFNA's recent tour to Guernsey.

With a number of UK AFNA fixtures under her belt, Jordan's experience and technical knowledge was an asset to the team.

The UK AFNA has gone from strength to strength over the last four years, which is displayed by the number of high-quality teams wanting to play a UK AFNA fixture.

Benecos Mavericks are a well-established and highly-supported Super League team and are also one of the primary feeder academies into the England squad.

The Mavericks senior team have an England Roses player, who won a show-stopping gold medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Archers spot on in quest for victory



THIRTY-FIVE archers from Royal Navy, Army and RAF Archery Associations competed against a crack team of archers from Blind Veterans UK (BVUK) at their annual tri-Service archery match – and won.

Perfect shooting conditions at HMS Sultan provided the setting for the turnaround in fortunes for the Tri-Service Archers.

Team BV didn't go down without a fight though, the winning margin was very narrow.

Explaining how this can be a fair fight, Cdr Gavin Edward, RN Archery competitor, said: "With the handicap system applied to sighted archers much the same as in golf, our scores are moderated to allow everyone to compete together."

"Using a spotter and a specially-designed alignment rig, it is quite remarkable how accurate blind archers can be, often putting even the most seasoned sighted archers to shame."

The RN Archery Association is there to support all serving, retired and service dependants. For further information contact the secretary, Lt Cdr Jon Parker by emailing Jonathan.Parker536@mod.gov.uk

Picture: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper

Marine on target in overseas victory

ROYAL Marine Mark Drysdale was on target as the UK Armed Forces Football Association beat the Bundeswehr – the German Armed Forces – in Rostock.

Mne Drysdale's goal was followed by one from Spr Danny Stoneman as the visitors sealed victory in front of a loud and appreciative 5,000-strong crowd at the Ostseestadion, home of FC Hansa.

Head coach FS Nick De Long said: "To perform like we did with and without the ball was a real statement of how far we have come and as an airman seeing the very best of the UK's military footballers adopt and almost deliver a perfect European performance was an absolute honour."

In control throughout the match, the visitors started brightly, exposing the hosts' weaknesses at full back with probing runs from Stoneman and AET Danny Earle, while Cpl Alex Woodhouse kept the midfield ticking over.

A constant willingness to overlap or receive the ball had the hosts in all sorts of problems, and in the 14th minute Drysdale, who was being shown out wide by host midfielder Martin Pett, jinked inside; the casual move caused havoc with no German player seemingly willing to close him down.

Drysdale pushed forward and



● Mne Drysdale is mobbed by his teammates

Picture: SAC Beth Roberts

from 20-yards out curled in a wonderful strike that gave Sven Steingraber no chance, with the effort bouncing in front of him before nestling in the bottom right-hand corner.

Now fully in control, the visitors calmly played out on 35 minutes and a subsequent mix-up in the host's defence was eagerly pounced on by Stoneman, who lobbed the German keeper from 30 yards for his team's second.

A bright start after the break from the hosts fizzled out after a brace of Cairney saves.

Prior to the match in Germany, the UKAFFA began their Kentish cup preparations with a comfortable 3-0 win, their first in

three attempts against the Irish Defence Forces in Barry Town, Wales.

Having lost out to a penalty in Ireland in Kilkenny last April, De Long's side produced a superbly-drilled performance, hounding the Irish throughout, producing flair when flair was needed and tough tackles when called for.

The Irish had a number of new players in their squad and the UKAF took a good 20 minutes to get into the fixture, with the IDF having a higher percentage of possession moving the ball well up to the UKAF final third.

The Irish pressure continued with a couple of well-worked set pieces, hitting the bar direct from

a corner, to rattle a few nerves in the UKSAF defence, who held strong producing some good tackles to halt Irish break in their 18-yard-box.

Having weathered that early storm UKAF produced a series of breaks, with broke well into the Irish half on a few occasions with Sub Lt Andrew Todd leading the line well and Earle and Stoneman supporting well from wide areas.

Earle in particular was getting the better of the IDF right back and created a few good opportunities before Navy man Todd broke the deadlock at 30 minutes, heading in powerfully following a rebound following a good strike from Earle.

Following the break UKAF extended their lead after 50 minutes with S/Sgt Keith Emmerson's wide delivery evading everyone before finding the net at the far post.

From that strike it was total dominance form the UK side, and a third goal sealed the win, this time coming from the boot of Cpl Mike Campbell on 70 minutes. The goal came after a great solo run by Emmerson, who cut the ball back to Campbell, who fired well into the top corner.

The UKAFFA face professional clubs in July and September, with the ultimate aim of winning a fourth Kentish Cup in October.

Follow the team on Facebook [@ukarmedforcesfootball](https://www.facebook.com/ukarmedforcesfootball) and on Twitter [@UKArmedForcesFA](https://twitter.com/UKArmedForcesFA)

Report: Dan Abrahams

Valiant effort by the men of 1AGRM

MEMBERS of 1AGRM answered a plea for help from the Help for Heroes gig-racing team, writes C/Sgt Gav Young.

The gig Valiant was transformed outside and in at 1AGRM's 'hover hangar'.

With the paint dry, it was time to launch Valiant in her new colours back into the River Tamar from the slipway at RM Tamar in preparation for the Three Rivers Gig Race.

When we launched her, she immediately filled up with water to above the footboards. This is common when launching wooden boats that have been allowed to dry out as Valiant had, however quite not to this amount.

Eventually all was well and Valiant was rowed away by the H4H team from RM Tamar Marina.

The Three Rivers Gig Race is a six-miler which saw 79 gigs compete in both men's and women's team race events over a course which takes in the rivers Lynher, Tavy and Tamar.

Most gigs complete the course in around an hour, and Valiant did it in one hour and 45 seconds.

RM Tamar's gig Gibraltar, crewed by the A team, completed the course in 57min 30sec, with the B team, in Daedalus coming in at 1:05:10. RM Tamar's women's team completed in 01:06:11.





Winners don't hang around...

CLIMBERS from across the Royal Navy and Royal Marines met up for the Service's annual climbing championships.

The Quay Climbing Centre in Exeter played host to some fierce competition which ended with LMA Matt Rust, of 16 Medical Regiment, and Lt Emma Evans, from HMS Excellent, winning the men's and women's titles respectively.

A separate grass-roots competition saw David Traner, of HMS Scott, take first place.

The judges were Mick Cooke, of Entre-prise Climbing Walls and Ryan Lang, from Helix Tactical.

"Competitions are the highlight of indoor climbing for me, not just because it is a chance to pit myself against other climbers and see where I can improve, but also due to the nature of the routes one tends to find in a competition environment," said Sub Lt Matthew de Visme Hoffman.

"There is a freedom and intricacy to the setting that really makes the climber think and challenges us in a number of different ways

(sometimes leading to more than a little frustration!).

"I am always eager to climb with the RNRMMC as not only are they a great bunch of climbers, but also a great bunch of people who demonstrate sportsmanship and camaraderie in a way that is not commonly seen."

Lt Cdr Lee Packer added: "Climbing is rapidly becoming a fun alternative to athletics, gymnastics and crossfit; an all-over exercise designed to push your limits."

"The navy club, RNRMMC, is designed to allow new members to integrate, be part of the family, and pursue their goals, from phys to cliffs to mountains and everything in between."

"Grassroot competitions are designed to let new climbers try out the sport, in a fun competition, and meet other climbers."

For details visit climbnavy.com

Picture: LPhot Barry Wheeler



Complimenti Jon

ROYAL Navy officer Jon Pollard has successfully completed a UCI Gran Fondo World Series cycling event.

The Lt Cdr, from the Training Equipment Project Management Team at HMS Collingwood, started the series as a personal challenge.

The programme, which is overseen by the world governing body for sports cycling, is aimed at competitive riders who miss the skills and talent to become a pro-elite rider, but who still want to compete at a high level.

Jon entered the UCI Tour of Cambridgeshire 79.3-mile Gran Fondo Road Race. Starting in Peterborough, the event was held on closed roads last month, giving amateur cyclists from all over the world the chance to compete in professional conditions.

The fastest riders qualified for the Great Britain Age Group Masters places at the UCI

Gran Fondo World Road Race Championships.

Following five months of dedicated training, Jon completed the gruelling race, finishing 22nd out of 450 riders in the 45-49 age group category in a time of 3hrs 2mins 46 secs (averaging 26mph overall) – and finishing just six seconds behind the winner.

Having successfully gained a qualification place, Jon has been invited to the UCI championships, as an GB age group master, in Varese, northern Italy, in September. The winner will be awarded the coveted UCI Rainbow Jersey.

"By its very nature bike racing is a demanding and somewhat dangerous sport," said Jon. "Fortunately I managed to avoid the crashes during the race and remain focussed to remain with the lead group until the finish, achieving my aim of qualifying for Italy."

AB smashes record

A ROYAL Navy submariner broke his own record at the Northern Region Powerlifting contest at HMNB Clyde.

AB Hall, of HMS Astute, broke his own previous Royal Navy record in the under-110kg bench press event by 10kg, lifting 182.5kg.

"I felt really good going into the competition and based on my training I knew I was going to break the record," he said.

"I'm now looking forward to the Navy Powerlifting Championships in the summer and the Armed Forces Championships, where I hope to break the record again and get near the 200kg mark."

While at sea AB Hall maintains his training using weight equipment to bench press up to 120kg and he is currently on the lookout for new training partners as one of his two 'spotters' has left the boat.



Marines triumph yet again

ROYAL Marine ascendancy continued for the fourth year in succession as 42 Cdo defeated HMS Collingwood 2-0 to lift the 2018 Ivor Dewdney-sponsored Navy Cup.

HMS Collingwood last appeared in the football final in 2002 and, having beaten HMS Neptune the week before, were the first naval team to reach the final in the last four years due to the dominance of Royal Marine units during this time.

42 Cdo came through a very tough semi-final against RNAS Culdrose to earn the right to appear in the final and had the edge in a very tight first half with a goal from Mne Surrette, who capitalised on an error from the Collingwood keeper.

Collingwood came out in the second half with a lot more purpose, however had the wind taken out of their sails when again another goalkeeping error allowed AB Babington to score from close range.

Collingwood, driven on by man of the match ET McGuirk, threw everything at the royals, however strong defending and poor finishing meant the men from Devon lifted the cup, their last success coming in 2001.

The RNFA Executive would like to thank both Phil and Nick Abbott, Executive Directors of Ivor Dewdney Pasties Ltd for their long-standing support.

Glorious in the mud

ROYAL Navy and Royal Marines **Motocross** rider Nick Carbury battles the mud as he hunts for glory in this year's Inter-Service Championship.

Bad weather and mechanical issues blighted the start of the campaign, leading to the L/Cpl, from RMR Scotland, being the sole RN representative for the first round at the Fatcat Motorparc in Doncaster. The assistant manager of the RNRMMXT reports on how he got on.

The first race got off to a great start as I made it around the first corner in the top-five, though this would be short-lived as I tangled with another rider. After picking myself up I resumed near the back of the pack, but I was now subject to every mistake the riders ahead were making. This led to another face-plant as two riders went down just in front of me. My pace never picked up and I finished a disappointing 31st.

This meant a poor gate pick for the remaining four races. A few suspension adjustments after the first race proved worthwhile as after a hard-fought 18-and-a-half minutes I'd managed to salvage 23rd.

I switched things around for the third and final race, choosing the farthest gate to the outside. The tactic worked as I managed a mid-pack start. Towards the middle of the race I'd pushed and caught a group of slower riders before having a major upset coming through a set of rollers where the bike kicked one way and then the other, finally settling on a course heading off the track – and into a gully full of water!

The weather continued to wreak havoc, leading to the cancellation of a training day and a round of the RNRM Championships.

The second round of the Inter-Services saw me joined by teammates Lt Adam Figgins and debutant ETME(SM) Piers Stanley at Brampton in Cumbria.

The first race began with an uphill drag race into a sweeping left-hand 180° bend, with Figgins coming out on top with a firm top-ten start.

I sat around 20th place and Stanley, suffering after a crash shortly after the start, was near the back of the pack.

A lack of bike fitness proved pivotal for Figgins as he steadily lost positions, finishing in 15th. Stanley spent the entire race pushing from the back, managing 28th, narrowly beating me to the line as I finished 29th.

Stanley's debut was cut short as mechanical issues meant he missed the second race and had to retire.

Figgins and I both got starts placing us in the 20s. Fitness again wreaked havoc on Figgins' efforts with him getting pushed back slightly and eventually finishing in 23rd, whereas I had trouble stalling the bike on tight corners and having to re-pass the same riders again and again. I finished in 26th.

Sunday allowed for much faster action as the racing the previous day had stirred the sand up, allowing it to dry out a bit.

The third race of the weekend saw Figgins get a start just inside the top 20, whereas I was in 30th. Figgins made up one position early on but then faded towards the tail end of the race, finishing in 20th. I spent the entire race pushing from the back, finishing 24th.

I thought my luck had turned as the fourth race began. I jumped out of the gate and rounded the first corner in the top ten. My luck was shortlived as another rider went down in front of me in the second corner, meaning I was

held up.

Figgins traded places up and down around that 20th marker, but ultimately finished in the same position as he started. I was pushed back to 24th in the first couple of laps and remained there until the chequered flag.

We come to the fifth and final race of a tough but enjoyable weekend. Figgins got a start just inside the top 20, but a first-lap crash saw him drop to 26th.

I started towards the back end of the top 30, but made quick work on the opening lap, managing to work my way to 23rd.

By lap three Figgins had moved himself up to 24th and had settled in behind me, happy to follow my pace as we worked our way to 20th and 21st respectively, looking at making a pass on the final lap. This was unnecessary as I stalled, allowing Figgins and another rider past. Figgins made his last-ditch pass to finish in 19th and I was 20 seconds behind in 22nd.

The MXT is always after new members. Email rnrmmxt@outlook.com

