



NAVY NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2018



■ Fleet Flagship HMS Albion proved a big hit during her high-profile visit to Japan. Thousands of visitors flocked to see the largest Royal Navy warship to visit the country for 25 years. (see pages 12-13)
Pictures: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, RNPOTY



Hello Tokyo

Lightning forecast

HMS Queen Elizabeth heads to the USA for her first F-35B deck landing

Perfectly positioned

RFA Mounts Bay helps Caribbean communities prepare for storms

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ALITTLE after 10am on November 24 2010, somewhere off the coast of Northumbria, Lt Cdr James Blackmore thundered down the deck of HMS Ark Royal in his GR9 Harrier.

Not since that autumnal Wednesday morning has a jet been seen aboard one of Her Majesty's Ships.

From his Jaguar-sponsored chair perched on a raised platform above the hubbub of Flying Control, some time in the last week of this month off the coast of Virginia a now Cdr James Blackmore will give the green light to the rebirth of carrier fast-jet flying as an F-35B comes to a hover then slips gently across to No.3 Spot – directly in front of Flyco – and drops to the deck before handlers secure it firmly.

It's been a long eight years.

We've seen the Harriers scrapped... then the carriers which were their home.

And while they were broken up on Turkish shores, we've seen a national effort second only to supporting the London 2012 Olympic Games committed to building their replacements.

We've seen shipyards around the UK toil on giant segments of a warship before transporting them by barge to Rosyth for assembly.

We've seen a giant crane tower over the north shore of the Forth to help with that enormous jigsaw puzzle.

We've seen the monarch both name and commission HMS Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of Rothesay formally name HMS Prince of Wales.

We've seen first the Type 45 destroyer, then the Astute-class submarine and, finally, the Tide-class tanker enter service – each one a fundamental component of the carrier strike group at the heart of tomorrow's Navy.

We've seen the first veteran and, more recently, first rookie Fleet Air Arm and RAF aviators learn to fly the F-35B Lightning II, the jet around which the 65,000-tonne carriers have been built.

We've seen HMS Queen Elizabeth squeeze under the Forth crossings, complete her sea trials and make her debut in Portsmouth, witnessed by thousands.

We've seen her in the shadow of the Rock

– the first overseas port of call.

We've seen a Chinook fit on one of the flight deck lifts... and in the cavernous hangar.

We've seen the boundaries set for safe helicopter operations by Merlins and Chinooks.

We've seen the first British F-35Bs – nine in all – cross the Atlantic and settle into their new home at RAF Marham.

Yes, we've seen it all. Apart from the one thing you expect to see on an aircraft carrier: fast jets – much to both the amusement and chagrin of keyboard warriors. No story has yet been written about HMS Queen Elizabeth without the obligatory 'I see no planes' comment or, perhaps, a social media hashtag 'justadddplanes'.

The time has come to banish that spectre.

Over the coming three months, two specially-modified trials versions of the fifth-generation jet (the Harrier was third generation) will land upon or leave the 900ft flight deck of the nation's future flagship 500 times.

The ship, like the F-35s, will be crammed with instrumentation recording every detail: pitch, roll, wind speed and the flow of air past the unique two-island structure, humidity, basically anything and everything which affects the performance of an aircraft.

Indeed, the ship will be crammed. Period.

Upwards of 1,500 souls are on board at the peak of WESTern atLANTic 18 – 800 ship's company, at least a couple of hundred air/ground crew supporting six Merlins (three Jungly, three Mk2 submarine hunters), a similar number from Pax River in the USA where the test variants of the F-35s are based, throw in a carrier battle staff under Commodore Andrew Betton (40-plus people) and a good 70 Royal Marines from 42 Commando at Bickleigh and

you're approaching the carrier's capacity.

With the lack of the drama (and noise) of an arrestor wire landing bringing a multi-million-pound jet travelling at 140kts to a stop in a second, and the computer wizardry aboard an F-35 doing much of the flying for the pilot, is there a danger that the first landing might be a little anti-climactic as the jet comes to a hover, slips sideways over the deck and gently descends?

"No," says Cdr Blackmore, whose entire career for these past eight years has been leading up to that moment.

"For me, it's the pinnacle of my career. I'll be looking with a little bit of envy at the pilot in the F-35 – but then again I've had a good stab at a flying career."

There is nothing routine about even the most routine landings at sea, however big the flight deck, however automated the aircraft.

"Now imagine it's the middle of night," Cdr Blackmore continues. "The ship is rolling four or five degrees and pitching in heavy seas. You're returning from an eight or nine-hour combat mission. Perhaps your aircraft is damaged. That's when you want to help the pilot as much as possible."

He's been one of scores of Fleet Air Arm personnel to benefit from the Long Lead Specialist Skills programme with the US military. It's been central to keeping the fast-jet flame alive these past eight years.

Without the unparalleled support we've received from our American cousins, we wouldn't have as many trained fast-jet pilots, air engineers and deck handlers. And we wouldn't have the experience of operating a 'big deck'.

Every handler in Cdr Blackmore's team has been on a working flight deck. They moved real F-35s around at Pax River and, more recently, at Marham. They know how much it weighs, how big it is, the smell of its fumes, how loud it is (a Harrier taking off 'only' hit 125-130 decibels; a Lightning will touch 155 dB, louder than Lewis Hamilton's F1 Mercedes racing past you at full throttle at Silverstone).

"The Long Lead Specialist Skills programme has allowed our personnel to maintain a relatively high level of essential

carrier-based aviation understanding and expertise, while also being routinely exposed to the heat and noise of intensive air activity at sea," explains Cdr Mark Deller, Cdr Blackmore's predecessor as Queen Elizabeth's Wings for five years.

He's just led a team of Brits aboard the USS Essex – the first ship to lead a task group with an operational squadron of F-35Bs.

She's two-thirds the size of Queen Elizabeth, wasn't built from keel up around the new fighter and doesn't feature a ski ramp to help the jets off the deck.

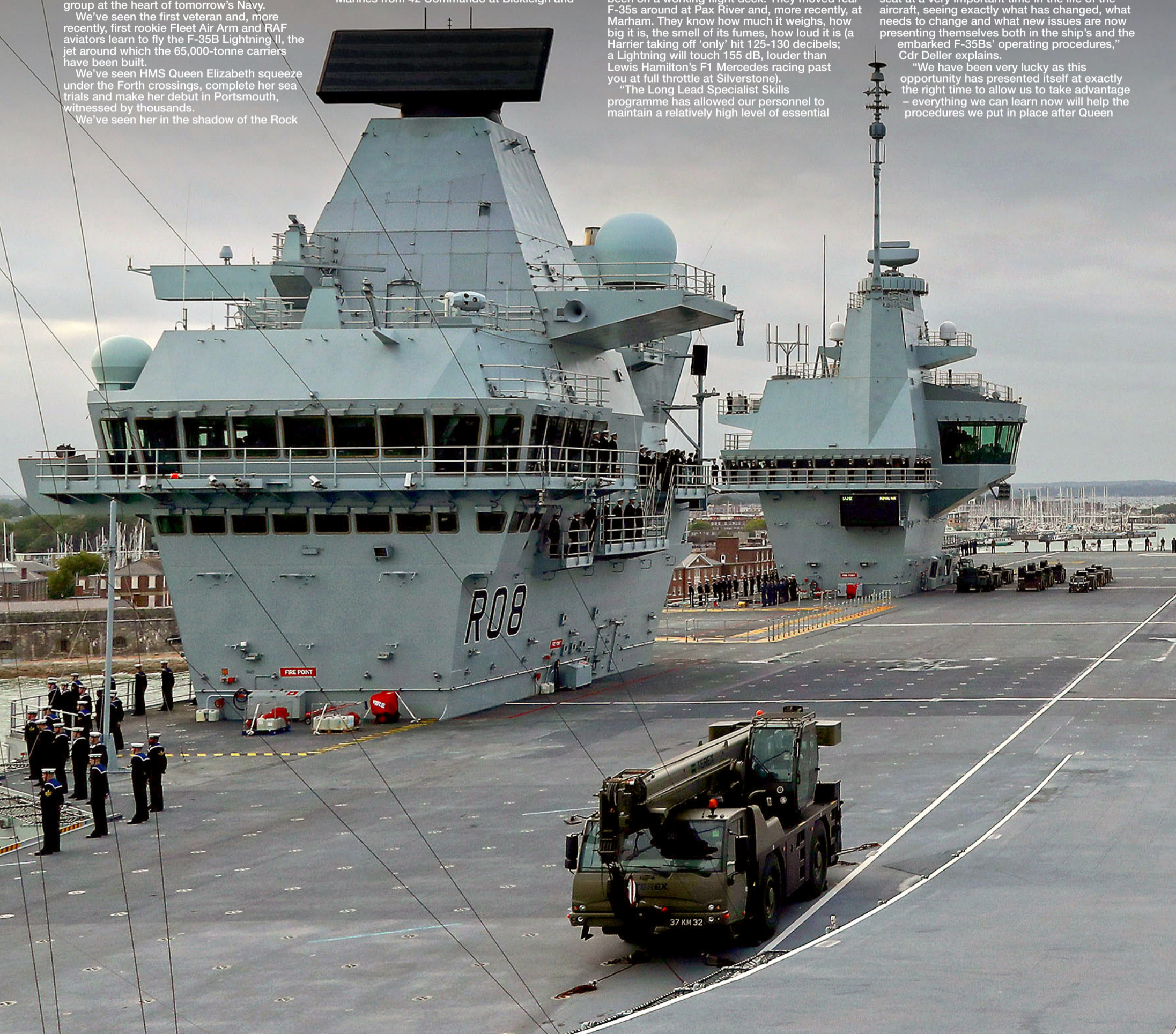
She does, however, have at least a couple of years' lead on us in operating F-35s and, as the flagship of 1st Amphibious Squadron, gives a tantalising glimpse of a carrier battle group with the full mix of striking power you might wish to call upon: the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit – 2,000-plus marines with fighting vehicles and battle tanks, a mix of medium and heavy lift air assets (Osprey MV22 'tilt rotors' and giant Sea Stallion helicopters, plus Seahawk SH60s for Search-and-Rescue duties), with F35-B embarked to support them once in theatre.

British observers were aboard Essex's sister Wasp for her F-35 trials back in 2015/17, an experience which laid the groundwork for Queen Elizabeth's Fixed Wing trials.

But with the US Marine Corps F-35Bs well beyond the trials phase and routinely operating from US assault ships, there are real opportunities for Brits to embed in units deploying with the new jets – the same ones we will be using.

"To be at sea with the US Marine Corps F-35B on their first operational deployment effectively means we now have a front-row seat at a very important time in the life of the aircraft, seeing exactly what has changed, what needs to change and what new issues are now presenting themselves both in the ship's and the embarked F-35Bs' operating procedures," Cdr Deller explains.

"We have been very lucky as this opportunity has presented itself at exactly the right time to allow us to take advantage – everything we can learn now will help the procedures we put in place after Queen



Elizabeth completes her fixed-wing trials.”

The British observers – a mix of officers from the aviation staff at Navy Command in Portsmouth and HMS Prince of Wales’ air department, plus a civilian Mike Larking from DE&S’ Lightning team – have been given full access aboard the Essex, observing operations from Primary Flight Control or PRIFLY (the US version of Flyco, run by the AIRBOSS), the flight deck, and the hangar and maintenance areas.

They’ve been able to observe the full gamut of amphibious carrier operations – day and night – with Osprey conducting troop moves, LCAC hovercraft carrying the ground element ashore, search-and-rescue training and Sea Stallion heavy lift ferrying the bigger loads – interspersed around the Lightning jet operations.

All of which has proved very informative and useful to the development of QEC.

“We will be operating the F-35B in Short Take-Off/Vertical Landing mode across a similar range of activities and will routinely be recovering through a variety of vertical/Short Rolling Vertical Landings onboard,” said Sub Lt Al Hough, deck operations officer on HMS Prince of Wales. “Our problem now is understanding how best to deliver the increased amount of helicopter activity around that jet activity, while managing it all safely on deck.”

That means separating the Lightning jet efflux, the noise and heat from the helicopters operating on Queen Elizabeth’s deck, while below in the hangar there’s the challenge of working on different aircraft types, requiring different tools, spare parts, space and chacon containers... a challenge which becomes all the greater with a marine unit embarked.

“We have been looking at how the Marine Corps maximise their use of the space and squeeze the extra capability out of their deck. It’s tight,” said Lt Cdr Kevin Lawrence from Fleet HQ.

“Similarly, in the hangar, understanding some of the constraints the air engineering teams are working under has been very important.

“Once the Marine Expeditionary Units are embarked, the hangar becomes a very constrained working area with four different

aircraft types to service and a whole load of additional support equipment to work around.”

Perhaps the biggest difference the Brits have noticed from previous experiences with the Americans is the subtle change in mindset now that they are on operational deployment. This is the fifth time the F-35Bs have been on board and, thanks to a meticulous work-up, there’s already a well-honed routine on board. The marines are training hard, ready for every possible mission as the group heads west across the Pacific – even taking lectures from the supporting US Navy War college academics who are experts in the areas they will be visiting.

“They are clearly looking forward to taking their jets into a more challenging environment,” said Cdr Deller.

““They are certainly focused and I sense are quietly getting ready to exploit their new capability in the operational theatres.”

Lt Cdr Mike McMahon, HMS Prince of Wales’ Flight Deck Officer, added: “The deck has been a hive of activity, with a complex daily management task to ensure they are ready for the next activity. There has been a lot to take in, but we’ve been in good hands and our hosts have really looked after us well – they’ve even let us do their jobs!”

“The opportunity to launch four USMC F-35Bs couldn’t be overlooked – that will stay with me until I get my chance to do the same onboard my own ship. I have now experienced the jet efflux – it definitely delivers a punch down the deck. *Ooh-Rah!*”

Again – as they have been throughout the Long Lead programme – the Americans have bent over backwards to accommodate their Royal Navy counterparts... as it’s in the best interests of both navies and nations.

“Our US hosts have been hugely hospitable throughout. Capt Mutty, the Captain of the Essex, and Colonel Nelms, CO of 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit – and their teams – have shown immense interest in the Queen Elizabeth class,” said Cdr Deller. “The fact that we are already discussing our ability to work together on an informal level with the young ab initio F-35B pilots who might be embarking in HMS Queen Elizabeth can only be a good thing.

“They now have an F-35B operator’s expert eye which they can cast over the planned Queen Elizabeth-class procedures.”

And that’s particularly relevant with a USMC squadron due to operate side-by-side with British Lightnings on the carrier’s maiden deployment.

We’re getting a bit ahead of ourselves. The first F-35 hasn’t even touched down on HMS Queen Elizabeth yet...

“Everyone is looking forward to see the jets because we’ve been talking about it for years,” says Capt Jerry Kyd, Queen Elizabeth’s CO.

“By ‘everyone’ I mean across the Royal Navy because they realise that it is an important step. For the past 30 years we have been a country with a navy. With HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales we are a medium-sized sea power.”

At every opportunity Queen Elizabeth’s first commanding officer – he’s due to hand over to his successor in the middle of Westlant – and Cdre Betton underline the importance of the two carriers not just to the RN, but to the armed forces and Great Britain PLC.

“These ships represent a lot of what is great about Great Britain. They give us the opportunity to show the UK in its best light,” Cdre Betton stresses.

Capt Kyd joins in. “Look around the world. What we have here is quite special. We and the Americans are the only nations operating aircraft carriers with fifth-generation aircraft. It puts us firmly in the top league.”

And having benefited extensively from American trailblazing with the F-35B, this autumn’s trials will offer something back.

For the first time anywhere at sea, the test pilots – one Fleet Air Arm, one RAF, one civvy and one US Marine Corps – will attempt a Shipborne Rolling Vertical Landing (SRVL) – essentially a short running landing – setting down at around 35kts (groundspeed) and gently coming to a stop on the deck using only the aircraft wheel brakes. It allows an F-35B to return from a mission carrying more weight (fuel/weaponry) compared with the vertical touchdown.

It’s not all about jets. They’ll always share

the deck, hangar and air space with Merlins, probably Wildcats, possibly Chinooks, and Apaches.

Westlant 18 is the first time jets and helicopters have mingled together on a Royal Navy warship since the days of Ark Royal.

The Merlin Mk2s are aboard as safeguards and protectors – protectors against hostile submarines, safeguards for fellow fliers should an F-35B or helicopter suffer a mishap and require plucking out of the drink.

“It’s a really exciting time for 820 Squadron and for me personally,” said 820’s CO Cdr Chris Knowles, who took charge of the Flying Fish in July.

“To take command of a squadron on the brink of a career-defining deployment, with great people, all of whom are keen, professional and very much looking forward to getting on with their job at sea.

“We’ve been cycling all crews through a thorough pre-deployment training package to make sure everyone is current and qualified to go. Our force protection role will be key to the ship at sea, as will our search-and-rescue capability – we’re ready and able to provide whatever support Queen Elizabeth needs.”

And the Commando Helicopter Force Merlin Mk4s – now fully converted for operations at sea – are aboard to test, for the first time, the Queen Elizabeth class’ potential as a commando assault ship; the 70 green berets aboard will test assault routes in the carrier (how the marines get from their quarters to the helicopters on deck carrying all their kit and caboodle), before the commandos are flown ashore to spend a month on the ground with their American counterparts.

But it’s important too that the 1,500 men and women aboard experience something of their host country during the four months away.

“Thirty percent of the crew have never been abroad before,” says Capt Kyd. “This is exciting for them. There has to be a balance between work and play so they get to see the USA and New York in particular. Life in the navy is more than just work, work, work.”

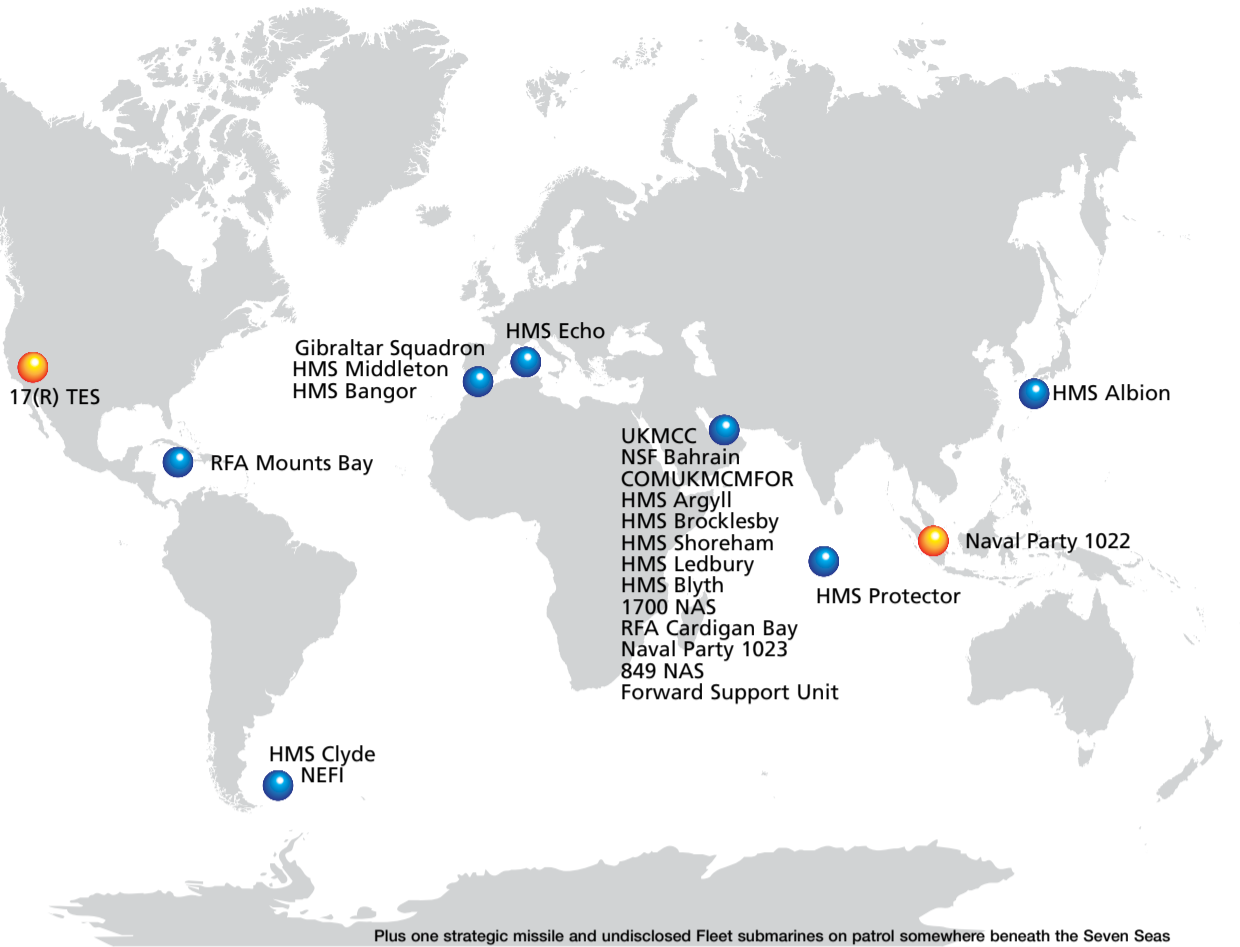
Picture: LPhot Kyle Heller, HMS Queen Elizabeth

All set for Lightning



Training or on patrol around the UK

- HMS Northumberland
- HMS Grimsby
- HMS Mersey
- HMS Defender
- HMS Diamond
- HMS Hurworth
- HMS St Albans
- HMS Montrose
- HMS Cattistock
- HMS Westminster
- HMS Queen Elizabeth
- RFA Tidespring
- RFA Tiderace
- RFA Tideforce



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

FLEET FOCUS
Protecting our nation's interests

WE begin this month's round-up with a look east and the successful deployment of **HMS Albion** (see pages 1, 12 & 13). The Fleet Flagship continues into the second half of her odyssey following a visit to Japan's capital Tokyo, where she carried out a busy series of engagements showcasing the Royal Navy and Global Britain.

On the other side of the world **RFA Mounts Bay** continues her Caribbean deployment, helping British Overseas Territories prepare for the current hurricane season (see centre pages).

HMS Protector has swapped ice for a tropical paradise as she charted waters not surveyed for 180 years (see page 11). The ice patrol vessel was joined by a small group of specialists from the Royal Navy's Hydrographic Unit for work around Diego Garcia.

Heading west is **HMS Queen Elizabeth** as she makes her way to the USA to embark her first F-35B Lightning jets (see pages 2-3). As part of preparations for the return of carrier strike, (see right), a small team embarked the USS Essex to see the US Marine Corps in action on their first F-35B operational deployment.

HMS Montrose also made a debut as she visited the picture-postcard port of Fowey in Cornwall – her first visit since the Type 23 frigate became affiliated to the village five years ago (see page 15). The visit followed one to her namesake town in Scotland.

Next month sees the Royal Navy's newest ship, **HMS Maggie**, begin front-line duties (see page 13) scanning the approaches to BAE's submarine yard in Barrow.

Falmouth welcomed **RFA Tideforce**, the fourth and final super-tanker built to support HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales (see page 7).

Continuing with new kit and **HMS Grimsby** became the first vessel to receive the next-generation Sonar 2093 (see page 5), which enables vessels to find mines and underwater explosives more easily and at greater distances.

In the Med and **HMS Scimitar** made a rare visit out of Gibraltar to exercise with the Portuguese Navy off the Algarve (see page 19).

The crew of **HMS Argyll** paid their respects at the Tomb of the Unknown Sailor in Alexandria as the Type 23 frigate stopped off on her way through the Suez Canal heading to the Naval Support Facility in Bahrain (see page 6).

Wales was the destination for Royal Marines (see page 17) as **Assault Engineers** honed their explosive skills at Caerwent and the **Viking Squadron** undertook live firing at Castlemartin.

Royal Marines medics went to North Devon to help **3 Commando Brigade** prepare for three major exercises (see page 9).

Royal Navy divers from **Fleet Diving Unit 2** swapped the Solent for California (see page 12) as they joined personnel from 25 nations for exercise RIMPAC.

Loved ones flocked to Devonport and RNAS Yeovilton to welcome home **HMS Sutherland** and her **211 Flight** from 815 NAS (see page 6) following their epic seven-month Far East deployment.

Personnel who served in **HMS Daring** as she braved the threat of missile attacks in the Middle East are to receive a new clasp (see page 6). The Type 45 destroyer patrolled the Bab al-Mandeb strait in 2016 to protect merchant shipping.

Royal Navy photographers have lost one of their last links with the World War 2 generation with the passing of Reginald Davis at the age of 93 (see page 31).

The latest additions to the **Royal Marines Band Service** performed a stunning summer concert to mark their graduation (see page 38).

Finally, this month's edition includes a bumper six pages of Naval Service sporting action, from angling to wakeboarding (see pages 39-44).

Giant leap for RN

Final piece in jigsaw for return of carrier navy

THE July edition of *Navy News* captured the excitement we all felt at the arrival of our first F-35Bs in the UK. Two months later it is no understatement to say that excitement within the carrier programme is reaching fever pitch.

Two months later, as this edition of *Navy News* goes to press, HMS Queen Elizabeth and her escort HMS Monmouth are crossing the Atlantic and in a few short days their crews will bear witness to an event nearly two decades in the making as Lightning II jets land on the deck of our aircraft carrier for the first time.

And they won't be alone – stood on their decks will be many of our partners from NATO and across the world, all of them there to share in our success as the Royal Navy takes this giant leap on its way back into the business of fast-jet carrier operations at a scale and tempo that none of us serving have witnessed before.

No-one should underestimate the challenge that this WESTLANT 18 deployment presents.

From the first days of flight the Royal Navy have been pioneers in maritime aviation, but for all this history we never lose sight of the fact that without the skill, the focus and the courage of our pilots, and a whole crew pulling together as one team beneath them, operating aircraft at sea can quickly become a dangerous game. Nor can we forget that for most of those on board, our return to fast jet operations

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

will be a very new experience. Not since November 2010 have Royal Navy sailors heard the deafening noise of jet engines, felt the exhilaration of air being forced from their lungs or experienced the sense of wonder, watching the seemingly gravity-defying feat of a British jet leaping to the sky from a Royal Navy aircraft carrier.

So it's no wonder that an enormous amount of work has gone in to getting us to this point. Fleet Air Arm and RAF pilots working with their US counterparts to master this world-beating new aircraft.

Flight crews and engineers working at sea in US and French carriers, and ashore on both sides of the channel, to grow the necessary experience and to understand the intricacies of carrier operations.

And in Queen Elizabeth, over a year of sea trials and training to make sure the ship and her crew are ready in all respects to host the aircraft she was designed from the outset to operate.

For the ship's company of Queen Elizabeth, these challenging fast-jet trials won't be their sole focus either.

We've always said our aircraft carriers are not just the Royal Navy's future fleet flagships and the heart of our expeditionary forces, but national assets too

– 65,000 tonnes of sovereign territory that can make its presence felt around the world and play host to a variety of governmental agencies.

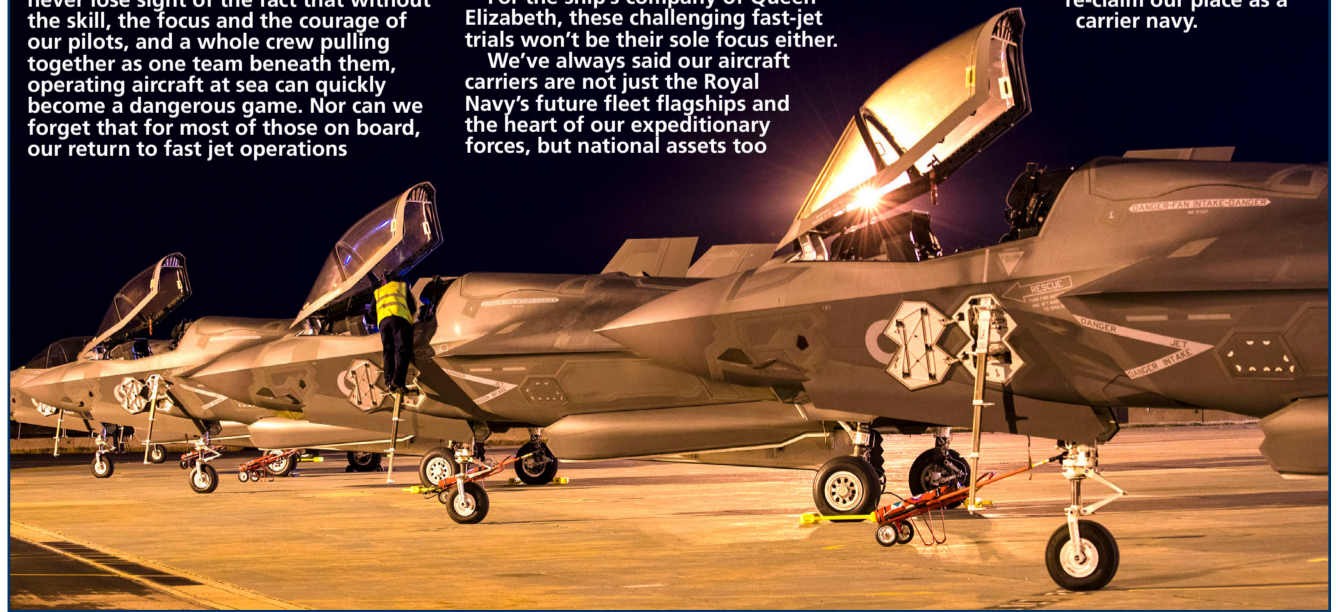
And so it will be throughout her four months around the Eastern Seaboard of the USA.

Representatives of the Department for International Trade will be providing yet another dimension to her deployment as we take the opportunity during port visits to promote Global Britain's prosperity agenda on behalf of wider government objectives.

It's a testament to the inherent versatility and breadth of utility these magnificent ships can offer.

Over the last 12 months we have passed many milestones in our carrier programme: Queen Elizabeth putting to sea and commissioning; Merlin helicopters becoming a commonplace sight on her decks; RFA tankers proving their ability to replenish her at sea; Royal Marines conducting assault drills; and British F-35B Lightning jets arriving in the UK, pictured below.

It's been a remarkable success story so far; now it's time to put all those building blocks together and formally re-claim our place as a carrier navy.





● HMS Shoreham conducts a winning exercise with HMS Argyll's Wildcat helicopter

Shoreham has a swell time

HMS Shoreham has arrived in Bahrain following a seven-week journey from Scotland, during which she battled the southwest monsoon in the Indian Ocean.

The Sandown-class mine counter measures vessel (MCM) will be based in the UK Naval Support Facility in Bahrain and will operate in the region for up to three years with new crews changing over every six months.

Commanding Officer of MCM1 Crew, Lt Cdr Adrian Visram, said: "It's a great opportunity for everyone to develop their professional skills. We have the opportunity to integrate with the other warships in the area and develop our capabilities as a single unit as well as a wider countermeasures force with other MCMVs. The focus is very much on operations and the ability to contribute to the wider theatre."



The next visit was the usual call at Gibraltar which included the famous 'Rock Run' from the dockyard to the rock's summit. Following this, HMS Shoreham visited Malta, where members of the crew enjoyed some scuba diving.

As the ship passed through the Suez Canal, the temperature began to noticeably rise.

As the ship continued in rougher seas through the Indian Ocean, those members of the ship's company from Scotland appreciated the pre-deployment rough sea training.

With the swell being nearly as high as the bridge, both Shoreham and her partner HMS Brocklesby battled through.

Lt Cdr Visram said: "It got pretty uncomfortable for a considerable period of time as these ships can move about a bit in the high seas."

"The crew now really appreciate why it's important to secure for sea and properly batten down, ready for anything."

Those who had previously served in the Gulf were interested to see the Bahrain NSF.

Lt Cdr Visram said: "It's a great facility and the fact that it's on the waterfront is going to allow the ships' companies from all the four MCMVs to utilise all the assets that are there, whether it's the gyms, the café, the shop and the accommodation when required and get back to the ships quickly. That waterfront aspect is great news for us."

AB Toomey said: "Bahrain is certainly different to anywhere I've ever been before and there's a massive military influence in the area. I'm excited to go round and see the place, see a different culture. It's going to be interesting."

HMS Shoreham left Faslane at the start of their 5,700nm journey in June. As ever, leaving home was emotional, but once the jetty had disappeared into the horizon, the crew were able to focus on their individual and team roles, including those taught as part of the intense operational sea training (OST) prior to deploying.

AB (Mine Warfare) Dylan Toomey, 25, from Sunderland said: "OST was testing at times, a bit tough but very beneficial, especially looking back at the transit here and all the things we've done along the way. It was also really good to bond with the crew and see everyone click together."

The first stop on their journey was the city of Porto, where the festival of St John was taking place with an impressive firework display over the river.

Grimsby debuts new sonar kit

NO SHIP can hunt mines in the ocean depths better than HMS Grimsby after she became the first Royal Navy warship to receive revolutionary sonar.

The Faslane-based warship is the first of seven in her class to be fitted with next-generation Sonar 2093 – allowing her crew to find mines and underwater explosives more easily and at greater distances.

The improved sonar uses frequency modulation – similar to an FM radio – which reduces background clutter and allows it to 'see' further. It means it is more likely to detect physical objects, rather than picking up stray sounds beneath the waves.

"This is a unique system, there is nothing as advanced in service worldwide," said Lieutenant Commander Kevin Giles, a mine warfare specialist at the RN's headquarters in Portsmouth. "This capability will enable the Royal Navy to maintain its position as a world-leader in mine counter-measures." "The picture the sonar provides the operator is much clearer, the detection range is much greater."

The existing Sonar 2093 dates back to the 1980s. Not only is it ageing, but sourcing spare parts for outdated tech is proving increasingly difficult and will soon border on the impossible – hence the need to replace it.

The upgraded system – Sonar 2093 CSP



(Capability Sustainment Programme) – exploits the same principles as Sonar 2193, fitted to Hunt-class minehunters for a decade.

On those ships, the transmitter and receiver are flat and fixed to the hull. On Sandown-class vessels – all based on the Clyde – the technology has to be squeezed into a towed body, a device about one metre in diameter which is lowered beneath the ship.

This lowerable sonar means Sandown-class ships can locate mines at much greater depths as it penetrates temperature layers in the ocean – layers which normally block sound waves.

Integrating the sonar into the towed body has posed engineers a significant challenge compared with the hull-mounted Sonar 2193 on the Hunts.

After half a dozen years' work by experts at Thales UK in Templecombe in Somerset, the first set was fitted to HMS Grimsby during her recent refit in Rosyth and following trials has been declared operational.

"It just requires a few days to get used to the new sonar – operators used to working on Hunts picked it up straight away. And in the longer term, it means there should be just one trainer for both classes of ship," Lt Cdr Giles added.

Whitehall is investing £45m in upgrading all seven Sandown-class vessels with the new sonar system which will be installed between now and 2023.



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Daring's crew to be rewarded for mission

TWO years after repeatedly running the gauntlet of 'missile alley' to safeguard merchant shipping, the crew of HMS Daring are being decorated.

The Queen has authorised the Gulf of Aden Clasp for those who served on board the destroyer in the autumn of 2016 as it carried out 20 patrols in the Bab-al-Mandeb Strait at the foot of the Red Sea.

The intense mission began after an attack on a merchant vessel, the MV Swift, off the coast of Yemen in October 2016.

The destroyer and her 260-strong crew then conducted 20 patrols of the area under threat of attack by Houthi rebel-controlled coast defence cruise missiles and explosive boats.

With the ship's advanced surveillance radar and Sea Viper missile system, they ensured the critical choke point for world trade remained open.

During the 50 days of Daring's mission – the first time a Type 45 destroyer has been called on to provide defence against a genuine missile threat – she protected 800,000 tonnes of shipping, including a Royal Navy task group, through the narrows.

Sailors and Royal Marines who were on board at the time will be awarded the clasp, which is worn with the General Service Medal. Those who do not already possess the medal will be awarded that instead.

"Going into action stations for real and not just for exercise was the scariest thing I have ever done," said Leading Chef Chloe Toussaint, who not only fed her shipmates but also was on first aid at action stations.

"We are fully trained in what to do, but when you hear there is an inbound threat to the ship and we could get hit, my heart started thumping out of my chest. After this, the ship's company become like family. It was an experience like no other."

"I am chuffed to be awarded a medal for my work on this deployment – and it is good that the ship's company are being recognised for our hard work."

Commander Phil Dennis, Daring's CO at the time, said the decoration was "wonderful recognition of the immense efforts of my team in HMS Daring during such a vital mission."

"There was a significant and viable threat from both surface and air attack at the time, but throughout that threat my team performed brilliantly."

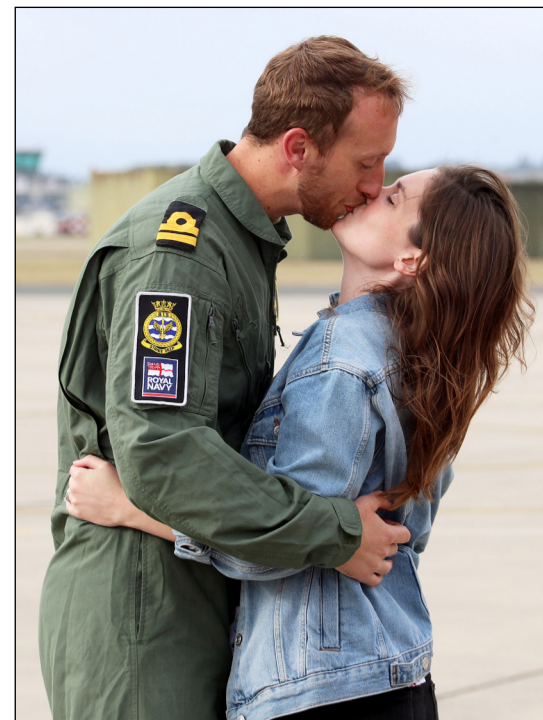
"This achievement shows how capable the Royal Navy's Type 45 destroyers truly are, having successfully defended hundreds of thousands of tonnes of merchant shipping with our radar and missile systems."

Several other RN ships have since conducted patrols in the strait but the threat has not reached the 2016 level.

The Ministry of Defence Medal Office will now track down those who qualify for the clasp with the clasps/medals issued to the individual's current unit before Christmas.

To qualify, personnel must have undertaken 45 days of continuous service on board Daring between October 6 and November 24 2016.

Anybody who believes that they qualify but who does not receive the medal in due course should apply through their unit HR team, using JPA form 003 to the following address: MOD Medal Office, Innsworth House, Imjin Barracks, Gloucester, GL3 1HW.



● AB Ben Northcott greets his three-year-old son Harris at Devonport; Lt Lee Holborn kisses his wife Alice as 211 Flight arrives home at RNAS Yeovilton

One kiss is all it takes to welcome their loved ones home from epic deployment

NOW that's how to end a fantastic, Clantastic voyage...

Seven months to the day that HMS Sutherland left an overcast Plymouth behind, the frigate hove into view of the Hoe... under gunmetal skies. And rain.

Did that dullen the welcome? Nope. It certainly didn't deter 700 wives, husbands, mums, dads, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, partners and friends from waiting on the jetty.

Around the same time as HMS Sutherland was sailing into Plymouth, her Wildcat – 211 Flight – was doing the same in front of 815 NAS' headquarters at RNAS Yeovilton.

It's the first time a Wildcat Flight has been sent to the Pacific Rim with a Type 23 and the helicopter proved indispensable to the Fighting Clan's mission, used as the frigate's eyes and ears.

Sutherland was the first of three Plymouth ships dispatched east this year – and the first to return (Albion is currently off Japan, HMS Argyll is edging her way eastwards).

She left home on January 10, dashing for Australia where she divided her time between exercises with the Commonwealth nation's navy and promoting UK defence industry and especially the Type 26 frigate which will replace Sutherland and her sisters (the sales pitch paid off as Canberra plumped for the British design when it too replaces its frigates).

It's not all been plain sailing: on her way out, Sutherland was battered by nine-metre (30ft) waves in Biscay... and was lashed by a cyclone in Japan.

That didn't stop her exercising with the US Navy Seventh Fleet and Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force, or enjoying a two-week maintenance period at



Yokosuka Naval Base – allowing sailors and Royal Marines to explore the land of the Rising Sun.

Elsewhere, the ship strengthened relations in the Asia Pacific region – viewed as a key area for UK interests post-Brexit – with visits to South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia before joining the counter-terrorism mission in the Gulf and Indian Ocean and escorted Gulf-based minehunters Bangor and Middleton.

Given the variety of visits and nations involved, the Far East is viewed as a 'plum deployment'. It lived up to expectations for warfare specialist Able Seaman Connor Borland, who joined Sutherland about six months before she deployed.

"This has been an amazing experience,"



● Above, the Wildcat crew, Lt James Burrows, Lt Lee Holborn and Lt Max Cosby arrive at Yeovilton; Left, Sutherland returns to Devonport

Pictures: LPhotos Barry Wheeler and Guy Pool

he said. "I'm excited to go home and see my family, but to be honest I can't wait to get back out and do another deployment."

Having added another 42,000 miles – the equivalent of sailing 1¼ times around the globe – to the Sutherland odometer (she's now travelled 600,000 miles in her 21-year career), her Commanding Officer, Commander Andrew Canale, was delighted at the reception awaiting his men and women.

"Morale has gone through the roof today, we have been away for a very long time and a large number of my sailors have never experienced this before," he said.

"After you have travelled all that way you then come around the final bend of the Hamaoze and see 700 plus families

and friends waving on the jetty.

"My sailors have beaming smiles at seeing their loved ones and I am so proud of them having been right to the other side of the world."

Back at Yeovilton and Flight Commander Lt Lee Holborn couldn't wait to embrace his wife Alice as the couple prepared for a belated honeymoon.

His Wildcat clocked up more than 200 flying hours while deployed – a demanding tempo often in demanding climatic conditions... and a very long way from home at the end of the supply chain.

For Lt Holborn, the deployment was "tremendously rewarding". He continued: "The Flight have all worked exceptionally hard to constantly provide the Wildcat for operational sorties in new and interesting areas around the world."

"Exercising with foreign navies such as the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force and the Royal Australian Navy, and reinvigorating closer ties with allies was a highlight – and the opportunity to visit countries the far side of the world including Japan, Singapore and Malaysia as part of the day job was amazing."

His CO at 815, Commander Jamieson Stride, added: "Having operated as far afield as Australia and almost everywhere in between there and the UK, they have blazed a trail for the Wildcat, operating in new areas for the aircraft and impressing operational commanders everywhere they went."

"I would like to thank their families for their unstinting support during this deployment; being apart from your loved ones for over seven months is incredibly tough and their loyalty and devotion has been much needed."



Argyll honours fallen in Alexandria

A WREATH of red poppies rests on the most hallowed site in the Egyptian Navy – the Tomb of the Unknown Sailor.

The crew of HMS Argyll and Britain's Defence Attaché in Cairo Col Ed Sandry paid their respects at the impressive memorial overlooking Al Mina'ash Sharqiyah, the eastern harbour in Alexandria.

The monument, built to honour Egyptian sailors who fought in the Greek War of Independence 200 years ago, today remembers all the sons of Egypt who have died at sea in the service of their country.

Plymouth-based HMS Argyll provided a ceremonial guard for the wreath-laying ceremony at the busy waterfront memorial, before a moment of sombre reflection in memory of the fallen of the Egyptian Navy.

The ceremony was simple yet powerful, with the ceremonial guards from Argyll and the Egyptian Navy facing one another to flank the route of Col Sandry,

senior Egyptian Navy officers and Argyll's Commanding Officer of HMS Argyll, Commander Toby Shaughnessy. Marching up to the monument, the party laid a wreath of poppies, before writing in the book of condolences.

"The loss of a sailor is always a tragedy regardless of where or whom they serve, and Argyll was keen to show her respects," said Lieutenant Commander David Tetchner, the frigate's Weapon Engineer Officer.

"Every sailor has family back home and shipmates they serve with who would be devastated by their loss, making this moment of tribute highly pertinent to all."

Despite having little practice time and not being acclimatised to the beating Egyptian sun – 31°C – HMS Argyll's Guard of Honour was excellent, said Lieutenant Andrew Lawe who led them.

"They all recognised the importance of the event, forming bonds with the Egyptian Navy and members of the public who had turned out to watch,"

he added. "I felt incredibly proud to represent the UK and of the guard for their professionalism under difficult circumstances."

"We were well supported by Petty Officer Richard Peplow and his gunnery team, who trained the guard on Argyll's flight deck and helped us on the day."

Alexandria formed the last port of call west of Suez for Argyll which is now conducting maritime security operations in the Middle East before she continues on to the Far East for the Pacific element of her nine-month deployment.

HMS Argyll will be working with the Combined Maritime Forces, including time supporting both Combined Taskforce 152 in the Gulf and Combined Task Force 150.

The ship will contribute to counter terrorism, including counter-narcotics operations to disrupt the funding of terrorist organisations, as well as strengthening ties with regional partners and allies.

Tideforce makes a complete fleet

MEET RFA Tideforce, the fourth and final super-tanker built to support Britain's two new super-carriers.

The 39,000 tonne vessel, which will deliver fuel and water to carrier task groups on operations all over the world, completed her delivery voyage from South Korea ready to be converted from a tanker into a military tanker.

Over the coming weeks, several hundred Cornishmen will swarm over the ship to fit bespoke Royal Navy/Royal Fleet Auxiliary equipment – comms kit, computer systems, defensive weapons/aid suite – just as Falmouth's A&P yard has done for her older sisters Tidespring, Tiderace and Tidesurge.

For although the quartet have been built half-way around the world, one quarter of the MOD's £600m investment in the ships is being spent in the UK with the money spread across the land among more than two dozen firms.

Days earlier Tiderace became the second of the tankers to be dedicated during a service in Portland.

In a half-hour ceremony, attended by the ship's sponsor, Lady Anita Lister, the head of the RFA Commodore Duncan Lamb and crew, RFA Chaplain the Rev Mike Hills, welcomed the new tanker to the naval service.

There were water jets of appreciation from a tug in harbour as the ceremony in Dorset was blessed with a fine summer's day, while Lady Lister completed proceedings, cutting the dedication cake with the youngest sailor, Apprentice Chef Shania Burns – the apprentice chef of the year.

Commanding Officer Capt Sam Shattock said the efforts put in by the first ship's company to get the tanker through her trials and training had laid solid foundations "for a long future in the RFA, supporting operations for the next 30 years."

"I am immensely proud to have command of this new ship and the responsibility for completing trials and bringing her into service."

Cdre Lamb said the previous generation of Tide-class ships introduced into service 65 years ago had revolutionised the way the Royal Navy was supported around the world – and their namesakes would do likewise.

Each of the four vessels in the 21st-Century generation of Tides can deliver more than 1,500



● The dedication service aboard RFA Tiderace

cubic metres of fuel every hour – nearly 400,000 gallons, or 1½ million litres... enough to fill the tanks of more than 27,000 family runarounds.

Tidespring is already heavily engaged supporting operations and training around the UK; while Tidesurge is being fitted out in Falmouth.

All four ships are designed to be at the heart of a carrier strike group, supporting HMS Queen Elizabeth or Prince of Wales, a Type 45 destroyer, Type 23 or 26 frigate and an Astute-class hunter-killer submarine.

The dedication marked the end of a busy week for the tanker, which started off Plymouth with her maiden helicopter trials when a Merlin Mk2 from 814 Naval Air Squadron touched down on the flight deck for the first time.

Merlins and Wildcats will be expected to ferry supplies to and from the tankers in giant string sacks slung beneath the helicopters (known as VERTREP, or vertical replenishment).

As well as Culdrose fliers, the flight deck team on Tiderace is drawn from the Cornish airbase, 1700 NAS provide handlers and other personnel required to safely operate naval helicopters.

"It is fitting that a Culdrose Merlin made the first deck landing onto RFA Tiderace," said Commander Mike Currie, Commander of the Merlin Maritime Force. "Our Merlins will routinely form a large part of the air group, working with surface ships and F35s to protect the carrier task group above, on and below the waves."



● Tideforce arrives at the A&P yard in Falmouth

Picture: Charlie Perham, DE&S

Diamond monitors Russians

HMS Diamond closely monitored the progress of a Russian cruiser and destroyer as they passed through the English Channel.

The Portsmouth-based warship spent over a day following the Marshal Ustinov and Severomorsk as the Russian vessels passed from the North Sea into the Channel and beyond.

Diamond, which is at 24 hours' notice to sail – responding to incidents and movements in around the British Isles and the UK's immediate spheres of interest – left Dover to meet up with the pair.

The Udaloy-class destroyer Severomorsk and Slava-class cruiser Marshal Ustinov had earlier taken part in Russia's Navy Days in St Petersburg before deploying.

Diamond made the Russians aware of her presence as they entered the busy shipping lanes between Norfolk and continental Europe and stayed with them through the Dover Strait and into the Channel.

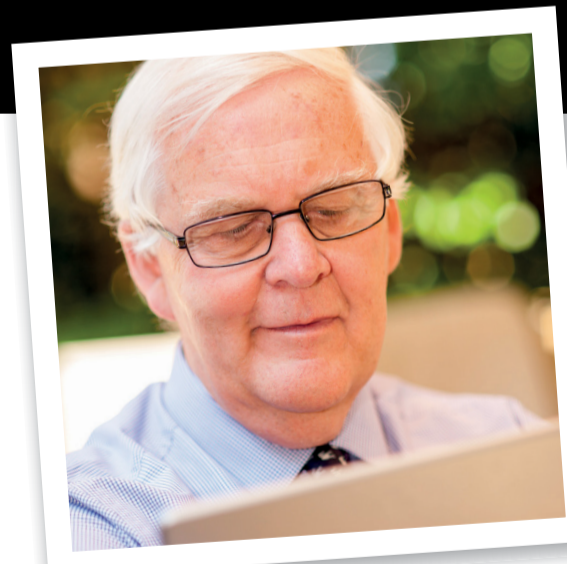
"HMS Diamond is proud to once again be playing her part in protecting the UK by monitoring these vessels on their transit," said the destroyer's Commanding Officer Cdr Ben Keith.

"This is routine business for the Royal Navy and the second time my ship's company have undertaken such an escort duty this summer."

"While many families are enjoying their summer holidays, my ship's company are working hard at sea to keep Britain safe and will continue to do so for as long as we are required."



This FPS Member asked us about his tax-free lump sum, the process of applying for his pension and what pension and lump sum his wife would receive on his early demise.



"How refreshing it is to receive such a comprehensive, succinct and clear answer to what I thought was quite a complex question... it has completely relaxed us in this pension mine-field".

Simon Lloyd, FPS Member

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Victory for QARNNS

THIS lot look h-a-p-p-y.

We're not sure what LPhot Louise George said just before pressing the shutter... but it tickled members of Queen Alexandra's Royal Navy Nursing Service gathered on the world's most famous warship.

Several dozen nursing staff descended on Nelson's iconic flagship in Portsmouth's historic dockyard to see Captain Steve Spencer step down as the Head of Naval Nursing... and Captain Alison Hofman step into his shoes.

Capt Spencer has served 28 years as a naval nurse, joining from a hospital in the East End of London (where he also worked part-time as a nightclub bouncer), and holding the top position for the past three-and-a-

half years.

His successor is QARNNS through-and-through. She joined as an able rate/student nurse, climbing through the ranks to reach the senior position.

"I have been in QARNNS for my whole career," said Capt Hofman. "I joined the nursing service as a student nurse. So for me now to be leading the organisation is a real thrill."

Under her wing are around 300 men and women, largely concentrated at Derriford and Queen Alexandra Hospitals in Plymouth and Portsmouth respectively when not on duty in RN establishments/units/ships, or on special deployments such as the recent UN mission to provide healthcare in South Sudan, Operation Trenton.

Medics prepare for major desert exercise with hot climate training in Devon and find it

Intense in tents

MEDICS from across the Royal Marines converged on North Devon to help prepare the commandos for their key autumn deployments.

Three major exercises are lined up for 3 Commando Brigade in coming weeks – two in the still-searing heat of the Middle East.

In October, the marines will spearhead the UK's premier overseas exercise of the year in the Gulf region, Saif Sareea III ('Swift Sword III') in the sands of Oman.

The 2001 incarnation of the exercise involved more than 22,500 personnel, 6,500 vehicles, more than 20 warships and auxiliaries and nearly 100 helicopters and aircraft from the UK alone, plus more than 11,000 Omani soldiers, sailors and airmen.

The exercise provided crucial lessons for Britain's forces in desert/hot weather combat which served them well particularly in Iraq.

But with combat operations in Iraq ending in 2011 and Afghanistan in December 2014, experience of living and operating in an unforgiving desert/hot environment is beginning to fade.

The Corps' medics get together twice a year for Exercise Med Assemble to refresh their knowledge and discuss the latest treatment, battlefield techniques and general clinical advice – in winter to discuss the rigours of survival in the Arctic and Baltic, in the summer desert/hot/humid environments.

The focus for the latest gathering of medical and surgical experts – not just from Royal Marines and Royal Navy, but Army and RAF – at RM Chivenor, home of the Commando Logistic Regiment (the parent unit for the Corps' medical wing) was a succession of exercises facing commandos: Albanian Lion, followed by Saif Sareea III and finally Qatar Falcon.

"Chivenor has some fantastic facilities and infrastructure, superb simulations for environmental training," said Surgeon Commander David Sargent, 3 Commando Brigade's Senior Medical Officer.

"Hot and cold injuries actually occur more in the UK than they do overseas, so these are bread and butter for our medics."

Temperatures in Albania will be in the low 20s Celsius. Far more challenging will be Oman where even in October, commandos are likely to face temperatures away from the coast as high as 40°C and typically around 37°C, dropping to a 'mere' 15°C in the dead of night. It should be slightly cooler in Qatar.

Now throw in equipment – Royal Marines are expected to carry up to 18kg (40lbs) – and the exertions of an exercise... Small wonder that during the last Saif Sareea commandos were drinking seven litres of water a day (more than three times the norm in the UK).

Corporal Dale Poole, has been a medic for four years and is currently serving with 42 Commando, based at Bickleigh, near Plymouth. He values such meetings of

medical minds.

"42 Commando is running short-term training teams in places like Nigeria, so the latest information on the heat illness side is very important," he said.

"We also have the USA and Oman coming up. You learn that you can very quickly go from being all well and good to becoming a heat casualty."

Writer Jennifer Jones currently works in Plymouth Naval Base but intends to transfer to become a naval nurse and hopes to work alongside the Royal Marines... which means coping with heat illnesses, understanding blood transfusions and treating sepsis as she found out at Med Assemble.

"This is my first experience of working with the Royal Marines – they are very much a 'family unit' and that's something I want to be part of," she said.

Which is exactly what Surg Cdr Sargent wants to hear.

"The symposiums provide an opportunity for medics from across the UK to get together to discuss the best ways of doing things.

"For me, they're incredibly important – it's rare that I get to see my medics face-to-face and be able to understand their concerns. Often the only chance is when we are deployed.

"Medics are an extremely valuable resource and it's fantastic to see them train, develop and progress."

Picture: LPhot Barry Wheeler, FRPU West



Spit tribute at Culdrose

THIS is the rare and magnificent sight of a Spitfire – a Mk IX to be precise – paying a rare visit to RNAS Culdrose.

The legendary fighter, one of six Spits in the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight – here in the livery of the Western Desert – used the Helston air base as a refuelling/overnight stop ahead of a flypast in memory of the one of the last of the 'few'.

The vintage plane flew over Mullion where the funeral of Battle of Britain veteran Geoffrey Wellum was taking place.

Mr Wellum was the youngest Spitfire pilot in the decisive aerial clash with the Luftwaffe during the summer of 1940, downing one Heinkel He111 bomber and, with colleagues, shared the 'kill' of a Junkers 88.

Originally from Walthamstow, he retired to the Lizard Peninsula and wrote his bestselling memoirs *First Light*. He died in July aged 96.

Picture: Bob Sharples



THE LONG WALK HOME

Come and be a part of The Long Walk Home!

Join us from 6 to 11 November as one of 100 Veterans and serving personnel walking 100 miles from the Menin Gate in Ypres to the Cenotaph in Whitehall for National Service of Remembrance and to honour, 100 years on, the many who gave their lives during World War One. You need to be able to undertake 25 miles a day for 4 consecutive days and commit to complete this.

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ONLY the dead have seen the end of war...

A British soldier nonchalantly walks down a sunken road near Quéant in northern France, still littered with the bodies of German soldiers who tried in vain to defend it.

Here a ferocious three-day clash – given the rather uninspiring title of the Battle of Drocourt-Quéant Line – raged at the beginning of September 1918.

When it was done, the sailor-soldiers of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division had smashed through one of the northernmost strongholds on the vaunted Hindenburg Line and dealt another blow to the faltering German Army.

Quéant was – and still is – an insignificant village of a few hundred souls roughly half-way between the cities of Arras and Cambrai.

But over the winter of 1916-17 it had been turned into a formidable obstacle: several lines of trenches with interlocking fields of fire, bunkers, machine-gun posts, and a forest of barbed-wire entanglements.

After the battering German troops had received at the Somme in the summer and autumn of 1916, their leaders decided to abandon hard-won French soil and fall back to a formidable defensive line, 90 miles long, held by 20 divisions, and fortified using the latest technology and based on two years' experience of trench warfare.

But in the spring of 1918, Fritz left the security of his fortified line – called Hindenburg by the Allies, Siegfried by the Germans – and drove Tommy back across the old Somme battlefields almost as far as Amiens before the attack was brought to a halt.

The subsequent series of German assaults along the Western Front throughout the spring proved to be near mirror images: initial enemy success before the Germans ran out of steam. By the summer they were exhausted – and the Allies seized their chance to strike back.

Beginning on August 8, British, Commonwealth and French armies delivered a succession of blows, thick



and fast, giving the Germans little, if any time to recover.

By the beginning of September, the Germans had been pushed back 20 miles or more in places – a tremendous Allied advance by Great War standards when progress was typically measured in yards.

The Royal Naval Division had been pulled out of the line during the early stages of the German March attack.

It had never been routed, but it was exhausted.

Refreshed, the sailor-soldiers and Royal Marines returned to the front in the summer and, by late August, were in the vanguard of the attack around Bapaume.

One week later, alongside Canadian troops, they found themselves at the Drocourt-Quéant position.

Although the pendulum of war was now swinging firmly in the Allies' favour, the shaken German Army remained at formidable foe – as the Drake Battalion found attacking the enemy line at Pronville, just east of Quéant.

As the sailors advanced, heavy German machine-gun fire scattered Prowse's company.

It was here that CPO George Prowse, a strapping Welshman and former miner, rallied his men, rounding up those he could find, before leading them against a

German strongpoint – which he promptly captured, plus 23 enemy soldiers to boot.

Prowse had served with the division for more than three years, from training at Blandford Camp to Gallipoli then the Somme and Flanders and now the Somme once more.

With hindsight, it seems that the 32-year-old was suffering from some form of shell shock, for his actions in September 1918 were not those of a man in full control of his senses.

He was not finished with eliminating the strongpoint; the senior rate now led a patrol under heavy enemy fire, seizing high ground and,

in a third act of bravery, he single-handedly stormed an ammunition limber which was trying to recover ammo. Prowse killed the crew and recovered the limber.

There was still more from the Welshman. On another occasion he led a small group of men two machine-gun posts protected by concrete.

This final assault, on September 4, proved to be a death and glory affair. Prowse was the only survivor of the party which stormed a gun emplacement.

Perhaps Prowse took his lead from Drake's battalion commander Cdr Daniel Beak who led from the front and stormed four German bunkers in a single day.

Possibly concussed from being hit by a shell fragment, four days later on September 8, Beak carried an entire brigade forward on his own initiative, then, accompanied by a lone runner (messenger), assaulted a machine-gun nest and took upwards of ten Germans prisoner. With enemy resistance wiped out, the Naval Division made good progress.

For their actions at Quéant, both men were put forward for the Victoria Cross, but only one would receive it in person.

Prowse knew he had been recommended for Britain's highest decoration – but modestly played down his chances – and his deeds. "I must have done something very great," he wrote to his wife.

"You say I shall not be half 'swanking' but you know there is not very much 'swank' attached to me."

George Prowse died a few days later, characteristically leading an attack on a factory in Anneux, near Cambrai, which the Germans had turned into a makeshift fortress.

One month later his widow Sarah learned her husband would receive the VC. He had been "an inspiration to all".

■ This image (Q 7030), and more than 12 million others from over a century of conflict, is held by the Imperial War Museum. You can look through the database at <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/search>

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Ice in paradise

I SEE no bergs... Antarctic patrol ship HMS Protector edges around the coastline of the tropical island Indian Ocean of Peros Banhos – about as far as you can get from her usual ‘playground’.

Protector swapped ice for tropical paradise as she charted waters not surveyed since the days of sail – 180 years ago.

Despite being a key naval and air base in the Indian Ocean for decades, no-one has accurately recorded the waters around the remote island of Diego Garcia – roughly half-way between Madagascar and Sri Lanka – since 1837.

The tiny island – just 1½ miles across at its fattest point and more typically 140-400 yards wide – is the only one in the Chagos chain which is inhabited, mostly by American military/support personnel.

As it is British soil, however, 30 Brits, under Commander Karen Cahill, are responsible for duties such as policing, customs, tax, even fishery protection.

And the UK is also responsible for providing accurate charts for use by seafarers, which is why Protector was dispatched from her summer base in South Africa.

The ship is on a five-year scientific mission to update seafaring charts and support numerous studies into life in and around Antarctica.

Protector spends the British winters – summertime in the Southern Hemisphere – working around the frozen continent, withdrawing to the more temperate climes of South Africa for the austral winter to undergo maintenance and conduct survey work and training, typically off the west coast of Africa.

This year, however, she was dispatched to Indian Ocean islands just south of the Equator, where the temperature is a balmy 30°C pretty much all year round.

Protector and her smaller survey motor launch are equipped with sophisticated sonar suites and software which can map the seabed in 3D and provide unparalleled understanding of what lies beneath the waves.

In addition to her full-time survey team, the ship was joined by a small group of specialists from the Royal Navy’s Hydrographic Unit to make the most of the short time in Diego Garcia.

After surveying the harbour entrance, Protector headed north to the atoll of Peros Banhos, with the aim of charting the main channel into the atoll – allowing vessels from Diego Garcia to shelter in the calm waters if necessary.

It wasn’t just the survey team that managed to get ashore in this tropical paradise. Sailors explored the deserted islands, swam in the various lagoons and saw the vast array of wildlife. One group were especially fortunate

when a large pod of over 20 dolphins decided to play in the bow wave of one of the boats.

“The atoll was so remote – I don’t think they had seen many humans, let alone small boats before,” said Protector’s Navigator Lieutenant Beau Henricksen.

“They were certainly very curious of us. After accompanying us for 20 minutes they put on a fantastic display, jumping clear of the water in a scene that was more akin to Sea World than their natural behaviour!”

For the crew of Protector’s sea boats, the numerous reefs surrounding the island provided a new challenge.

“I spend most of the year dodging icebergs and leopard seals but here I’ve spent my whole time dodging turtles and coral! It’s been an incredible experience”, said Able Seaman (Seaman Specialist) Connor Mason.

On the main island, Survey Motor Boat James Caird IV was sent around the base and main berths – its shallow draught allows it to inspect places Protector herself cannot get.

That allowed the ship’s company some time off: some hosted British and US personnel for tours of the unique patrol ship (among its many quirks, officers and ratings eat in the same dining room).

Sailors and Royal Marines also supported a team of scientists on the island researching green turtles; they spent three consecutive nights assisting in capturing and satellite tagging of these creatures, all of which were over one metre long and incredibly powerful – they often required four or five people to handle them whilst the scientists got to work.

HMS Protector’s year-long unbeaten record on the football pitch came to an end; they were beaten 5-2 by their hosts.

And finally there was a traditional ‘hands to bathe’ – a chance to swim in the open waters, with the ship’s sea boat close at hand constantly circling Protector to make sure there were no sharks around.

Lieutenant Commander Matt Lindeyer, HMS Protector’s First Lieutenant and Charge Surveyor, said the crew had worked hard and played hard in Diego Garcia and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

“The whole ship has really come together and worked hard to pull off a successful survey, in what has been at times quite-demanding circumstances,” he said.

“The hot weather and sea temperature have proven to be welcome change, but have also presented real challenges for a ship designed to operate in the much colder climates of the polar regions. The team has delivered fantastically throughout.”

The distinctive Plymouth-based ship is now preparing to return to the Antarctic, three years into her epic deployment. She won’t see home until 2020, although her crew will as she rotates one third of them every few weeks to sustain the five-year mission.



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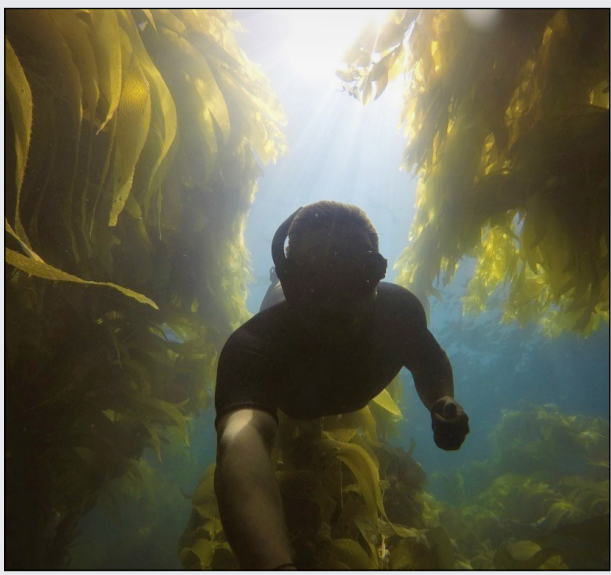
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Action-PACKed adventure for Navy divers

ROYAL Navy divers swapped the Solent for Southern California as they spent six weeks taking part in the world's biggest naval war game.

It's the job of Fleet Diving Unit 2 – based on Horsea Island in Portsmouth Harbour – to keep Royal Navy ships and submarines safe when they visit foreign ports, ensuring the waters are free of bombs, mines and other explosive devices.

And it's the goal of RIMPAC to ensure that navies with a vested interest in the security of the RIM of the PACific region are able to safeguard the world's largest ocean and shipping lawfully moving around it.

First run in 1971, RIMPAC has grown to embrace 25 nations who this year provided 46 ships, five submarines, around 200 helicopters, jets and other aircraft, and 25,000 military personnel – spread across 2,500 miles of the eastern Pacific from Hawaii to Southern California.

The Brits flew to San Diego where the mine warfare element of RIMPAC was concentrated under Task Force 177 led by the US Navy's most senior mine expert, Rear Admiral Dave Welch.

His force accounted for 26 units and around 1,100 men and women representing the United States, Australia, Canada, Britain, Japan, the Netherlands and New Zealand.

For the Americans, the exercise was their first chance to test some pretty impressive new equipment: Seahawk helicopters using lasers to detect and the Airborne Mine Neutralisation System to destroy mines; the latter is similar to the Seafox remote-controlled submersible used by the Royal Navy to identify and eliminate mines – except smaller and controlled from a helicopter.

RIMPAC opened with participants getting used to one another's methods and equipment, before the task force headed out into open waters for the crux of the exercise: to find and neutralise 50 training mines peppering the Pacific.

Leading Diver Will Bowman has served in the Royal Navy for 16 years and "loved every single second of it."

"The diving branch is where I belong and I love everything about it," said the enthusiastic junior rating. "I get to do things which you cannot do in your normal day-to-day job. Getting paid for it – that's a bonus!"

RIMPAC has been a very worthwhile eye-opener for the Horsea Island team.

"We all bring something different and unique to the party – I've certainly enjoyed working with different nations," said Will. "It's good to share ideas and bounce them off one another. We made real progress."

Vice Admiral Welch said exercises such as RIMPAC were vital if ever the allied navies faced a real-world mine emergency.

"Trust isn't something you can surge and it's critical that we maintain and develop these key relationships for the times we really need to rely on one another," he added.



In the land of

THANK God for public votes.

Not only does it give you *Strictly* and *X-Factor* winners, but also Boaty McBoatface.

And here, HMS Albion passes beneath the iconic Rainbow Bridge spanning Tokyo Bay – a name chosen by *edokkos* ahead of the official title: Shuto Expressway No. 11 Daiba Route – Port of Tokyo Connector Bridge. (And if the bridge looks rather monochrome... it's lit up by night, hence the popular name...).

Anyway... After a month's maintenance just along the coast at the US Seventh Fleet's base, HMS Albion resumed her Far Eastern epic deployment as the largest RN warship to call on the capital of the land of the Rising Sun in a quarter of a century – and the largest to call on Tokyo in a decade.

Which probably explains the big welcome she received: from the Japanese Navy, from the Japanese media and from the Japanese people during five days alongside in Tokyo's port.

Barely were the lines across and Albion secured than the ship was greeting a succession of dignitaries, politicians, business leaders and Brits abroad who filed up the gangway to witness

a capability demonstration, enjoy a reception, admire the ship's company ceremonial guard and the Royal Marine Corps of Drums presenting at Ceremonial Sunset.

Barely had the nibbles been put away and the tables cleared than the gangway was open once more... this time for Ship Open To Visitors, with stances provided by every department onboard, including the Royal Marines Special Purpose Task Group from Charlie Company, 40 Commando.

Japanese isn't a language commonly spoken in the mess decks and ward room of Albion. Luckily, the assault ship was hosted by Japanese Navy minehunting support ship Uraga... whose English-speaking sailors acted as translators.

They were much in demand, for despite temperatures touching 30°C for most of the day, more than 6,000 Japanese (and at least one teddy) waited patiently on Harumi Pier – the surrounding area will be the home of the athletes' village for the 2020 Olympics – for their turn to look around Britain's flagship.

"It was impossible to predict how many people would come but the British Embassy in Tokyo did a fantastic job

of advertising our arrival and the open day," explained Lt James Griggs, Albion's aviation officer... and also in charge of the public open day.

"These were a wonderful two days which showed Albion off at her very best."

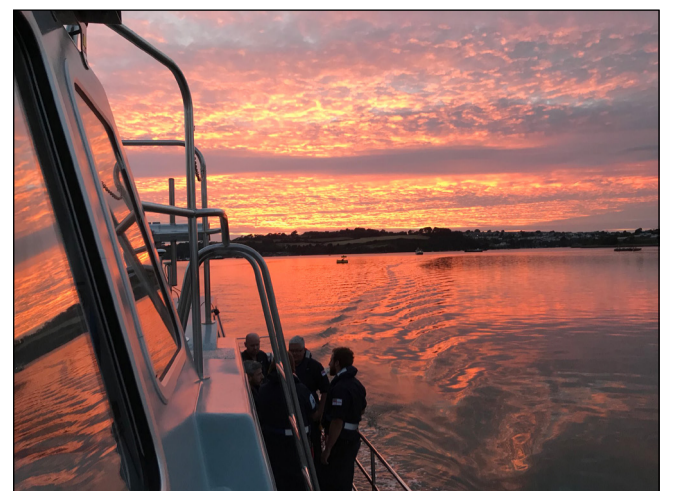
But don't take his word for it. Take that of the Japanese for Albion's visit became one of the most talked about topics in Japan on social media – social media engagement topped over two and a half million impressions.

From the vagaries and lightheartedness of Twitter and Facebook to the solemnity of hallowed ground.

As they have done in every major port of call where there's a significant burial ground for the nation's war dead – most recently Busan in Korea – the ship's company of Britain's flagship paid their respects and laid a wreath, assuring their forebears that past sacrifices are not forgotten by today's generation.

Two hundred sailors, Royal Marines and Army commandos paid their respects at Yokohama Cemetery in Hodogaya, Tokyo – the last resting place of 1,555 Commonwealth servicemen who died in Japanese prison camps or while serving





● Magpie's sailors enjoy a beautiful summer sunset from the stern of the survey vessel during trials off the south coast

Magpie ready to gather

THE first task of the Navy's newest – and almost its smallest – ship will be to pave the way for Britain's biggest ever submarines.

HMS Magpie, which was delivered to the RN's Hydrographic Squadron in May, begins front-line duties next month, scanning the approaches to BAE's submarine yard at Barrow.

It will be upwards of ten years before HMS Dreadnought – the first of four nuclear-missile carrying submarines being built to replace our existing V-boats – emerges from the enormous facility.



Each one will be around 11ft longer than the previous generation of nuclear deterrent boats and, more importantly, displace an extra 1,300 tonnes of water and have a deeper draught.

Which is where Magpie and her sophisticated suite of sensors will come in, providing an unparalleled level of detail about the sea bed and shipping channels – information which will allow charts of Barrow's waters to be updated, assisting not just the Dreadnoughts, but also the remaining Astute-class hunter-killer submarines (HMS Audacious, Anson, Agamemnon and finally Agincourt) which will emerge from the BAE yard first.

So far, the ship has completed sea trials, safety checks, been commissioned in the presence of her sponsor, Teresa Gardner, who smashed a bottle of Salcombe gin over the bow (the namesake Devon town is Magpie's affiliate) to formally name her, received a message of goodwill and good luck from the Duke of Edinburgh – he skippered the previous Magpie (a wartime/post-war sloop/frigate) between 1950 and 1952, and tucked into a rather fine commissioning cake, cut by Mrs Gardner and AB(HM) Ryan Payne.

Before striking out for Barrow from her home in Devonport, Magpie faces her first Basic Operational Sea Training assessment – a mere two days, rather than two months frigates and destroyers endure – in the middle of this month.

Her first CO – and Gleaner's last – Lieutenant Commander William Alexander also hopes to find the time to visit Salcombe and Dartmouth before taking Magpie north.

"It was a great feeling when we brought HMS Magpie into her base port for the first time, we've enjoyed the important milestone of a wonderful commissioning ceremony," he said.

"Since Magpie was delivered to the Royal Navy, the generation programme has been rapid – and successfully achieved by an enthusiastic ship's company."

Magpie is larger than the vessel she replaces, Gleaner (not even an HMS, but Her Majesty's Survey Motor Launch), which means the tag of smallest vessel in the RN now belongs to Sabre and Scimitar of the Gibraltar Squadron.

She's equipped with the latest high-resolution, shallow-water multi-beam echo sounder and side-scan sonar and can launch remote-controlled underwater devices to search wide areas of the sea bed for obstructions and mines.

Her task is survey military or strategic ports around the UK so that Royal Navy ships and submarines – and civilian vessels – can safely use them.

She's the first – and largest – of 33 craft to be delivered to the RN as part of Project Vahana, which is replacing the RN's fleet of workboats. As part of the package, survey motor boats, dive support craft, passenger transports for new carrier HMS Prince of Wales and picket boats for training tomorrow's officers at Dartmouth are all being acquired.

● Magpie's crew – minus CO Lt Cdr William Alexander – pose on the gangway next to their new ship



the Rising Sun

in the country as part of the occupying forces after 1945.

Among the dead, 113 Royal Navy and 65 merchant seamen, victims of the 1941-45 struggle for control of the Pacific.

Radar maintainer POET(WE) Ross Ambury became the first member of his family to have the honour and privilege to pay respects at the grave of his Gunner Edwin Clarke. The Royal Artilleryman – and Ross' great grandfather – died from acute colitis at the age of 38 while a POW in Hakodate Camp in 1943.

"It was a great privilege for HMS Albion to represent the United Kingdom in Hodogaya as part of the Commonwealth War Graves Prisoner of War Memorial Service, honouring and remembering those that gave their tomorrow, such that we may have our today," said Captain Tim Neild, Albion's Commanding Officer, who was among those placing a wreath on the central monument.

The fourth day of the visit was focused on brand 'Great Britain' with the ship providing a platform for UK companies to showcase their capabilities at a Defence Security and Industry Day held onboard, an event attended by over 200 guests

from across the Japanese Armed Forces and the Japanese Defence and Security Industries.

And continuing that 'best of British' theme, before sailing to resume her deployment, Albion welcomed three Aston Martin sport cars on to the neighbouring jetty – much to the delight of the petrolheads among the ship's company.

While it was a busy stop, plenty of time was left for the ship's company to head out and explore the bright lights of Tokyo, like Shibuya junction, supposedly the busiest crossroads in the world (think: Japanese version of Times Square). Some sailors dressed as Mario and rode go-karts around the city centre. Others got their thrills at the top of a roller coaster at Disneyland. Everyone was able to fully immerse themselves into Japanese culture.

On the final day, Aston Martin arrived to show off three cars on HMS Albion's jetty, much to the enjoyment of the ship's company.

"My thanks and all the team at Aston Martin Tokyo for bringing down some fantastic cars to the ship and allowing

the ship's company to have a look around them," said Lt Cdr James Wallington-Smith, the visit liaison officer for the stay in Tokyo.

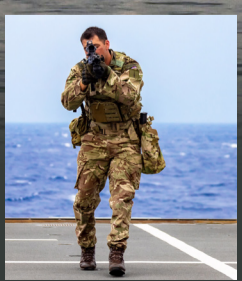
"I know the opportunity to get hands on with some superb vehicles was welcomed by all."

Tokyo, says Capt Nield, provided "a perfect highlight to Albion's Japanese adventure. Our visit is a testament to the global reach of the navy, a very global Britain and of course is aimed at building at our bonds with Japan.

"We enjoyed a spectacular weekend open to visitors in Tokyo – over 6,000 members of the public turned up and supported the event, sharing experiences and reinforcing the friendship between our two great nations."

His ship is now back at sea exercising with our allies in the region before she begins the long journey back to the UK, a four-month epic which will be punctuated by numerous exercises with our allies, chiefly Saif Sareea III in Oman in October – one of Britain's biggest exercises in the Middle East this century.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, RNPOTY



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North and South united

Warm welcomes for HMS Montrose as she visits her affiliated ports

THEY are more than 700 miles apart but united in their support of Type 23 frigate HMS Montrose.

Following a visit to her namesake port in Scotland, Montrose travelled to the picture-postcard Cornish resort of Fowey – the first time the warship has visited the port.

In charge of the ship on the approaches to Fowey was Lieutenant Kevin Cabra Netherton, for whom it was a particular poignant visit as not only was this his last port stop with the ship he has called home for nearly two years, but it was also where 92 years ago his granddad Harry Page Netherton was born.

Harry went on to join the RAF as an engineer, while Kevin joined the Royal Navy as a warfare officer.

“I doubt that nearly a century ago my granddad could have ever imagined that his grandson would be driving a warship in and help moor it just a couple of hundred yards from his house in what was then just a little Cornish fishing village,” said Kevin.

A few hours later and Montrose was hosting a reception and capability demonstration for a range of dignitaries, including the Mayor of Fowey and the

Lord-Lieutenant of Cornwall.

Commanding Officer Commander Conor O'Neill presented the Mayor of Fowey Cllr Ruth Finlay with a framed picture of the ship – a photograph taken that very morning. In return, Cllr Finlay handed a plaque to commemorate the town's affiliation with the frigate.

Despite being moored mid-river, the frigate was able to host more than 1,200 people who were ferried the short distance from Town Quay for a tour of the Wildcat, a damage control demonstration and explanations of weapons systems, including a look inside the turret of the Ship's 4.5 Mk 8 Gun.

Crew particularly enjoyed hosting visitors from both local Sea Cadet units, TS Petroc (Padstow) and TS Hood (St Austell).

The second full day of the short visit focused on attendance at a Sunday morning church service and an official presentation of the crest to Cllr Finlay for display in the council chamber.

“It was a pleasure to visit the town of Fowey and provide the physical



manifestation of the long-standing link the town has had with the Royal Navy,” said Cdr O'Neill.

During the ship's visit to Montrose, Cdr O'Neill paid his respects at the monument to Bamse (pronounced 'bump-sa') – to Norwegian sailors what legendary Just Nuisance was to British and Commonwealth servicemen in South Africa during World War 2.

In the darkest days of conflict, the minesweeper Thorodd, donned a helmet at action stations, enjoyed a pint in Montrose's pubs, rode the local buses and cheered on his countrymen when they played football in nearby Dundee. When he died of a heart attack in 1944, Norwegian sailors broke down in tears and people across Montrose mourned – so much so, in fact, that half a century later they raised £50,000 for this memorial on the waterfront...

...and sailors from today's HMS Montrose paid tribute during a rare visit to the small Scottish port – the first in four years.

The first day of the visit saw the ship host a number cadet and youth organisations, as well as offering prospective candidates wishing to join the Navy a chance to look what could be their future home.

At the same time the ship sent football and rugby teams to play against local sides, a group volunteered to visit one of the ship's affiliated charities, Dorwood House retirement home, others popped into the local British Legion and 15 went to the Montrose-St Johnstone pre-season football match (the Perth Scottish premiership side came away 1-0 winners).

Come evening and the ship was hosting a reception and capability demonstration, offering tours and explanations of what Montrose has been up to recently to a range of people from the local community.

It was also a chance to unveil a painting of the first ship named HMS Montrose, which had been found by a local resident, who wished to donate it to the ship; it depicts her role in the 1940 Dunkirk evacuations, during which she evacuated almost 1,000 troops before being badly damaged.

Finally, an Angus artist was also able

to unveil an updated modern print of the vessel – she has new outline following her £38m refit, thanks to the newly-installed Sea Ceptor Missile System.

With tickets being issued well in advance, Montrose then opened her doors to the public in glorious sunshine on the second day of her stay: more than 3,500 people toured the frigate in seven hours – pretty impressive given the town has a population of under 12,000.

Those coming aboard were treated to an explanation of how the weapon systems work, saw and took part in fire-fighting demonstrations and had the opportunity to sit in the ship's Wildcat helicopter.

“The whole ship's company were very proud to bring HMS Montrose 'home' for the weekend,” said Cdr O'Neill.

“The welcome that the people of Montrose gave us was fantastic and it was a pleasure to show off the ship to them.”

Montrose is now back in Devonport undergoing maintenance and readying for Operational Sea Training before she deploys for the first time since her recent refit in the autumn.

Pictures: Scott Manning and PO(Phot) Jim Gibson





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Assault Engineers and Viking Squadron put to the test



YOU'RE only supposed to blow the doors off...

Which is exactly what Royal Marines Assault Engineers did as they honed their skills during an explosive fortnight on the range in Wales.

Assault Engineers (or AEs) provide vital close-combat support to all commando units: bridging, Explosive Methods of Entry (EMO), clearing obstacles, carrying out demolitions, removing mines and setting up defences among other skills.

The range at Caerwent near Chepstow is the perfect training ground for maintaining those skills – learning new ones and keeping abreast of the last tactics, equipment and weaponry to ensure the Royal Marines remain at the cutting edge on the battlefield.

There are three levels of assault engineers in the corps, from the junior AE3s who've completed their eight-week training at the Royal Marines' training centre at Lympstone, near Exeter, up to AE1s who are the most experienced and knowledgeable members of the specialisation.

At the basic level, the engineers practised forced



entries – something the Corps was particularly adept at in Afghanistan when commandos regularly breached terrorist compounds: explosive, mechanical (forcing/battering doors) and the thermal method... ie burning open a door or window using a blow torch, or thermal lance, to gain access to a

room or building. "Assault Engineers are – and always will be the lead on all close support in all aspects of engineering," explained Colour Sergeant John Dixon of 40 Commando, based at Norton Manor, near Taunton, who led the fortnight's training in Wales. Perhaps the biggest eye-

opener was the insight offered into humanitarian work – assault engineers are also experts in construction.

C/Sgt Dixon led a team of assault engineers deployed to the Caribbean last autumn to help British citizens affected by the devastation caused by a succession of severe storms.

Their specialist training proved invaluable in clearing roads, unblocking storm drains, building emergency shelters and constructing defences before more storms came.

"Our work with 40 Commando in the Caribbean last year demonstrated the true value of engineering support. As some of the first guys on the ground, we were able to have maximum effect at short notice to really make a difference to the people of the British Virgin Islands," C/Sgt Dixon said.

It's back to destruction, however, shortly when later this month assault engineers will train in a new skill – 'vessel denial' – better known to seafarers as scuttling, with the controlled sinking of a large yacht to prevent it falling into 'enemy' hands.

Pictures: LPhot Dean Nixon



Peace and quiet? No, fire and fury

ROYAL Marines brought fire and fury to the peace and tranquillity of high summer in Pembrokeshire as they practised live firing with their Viking armoured vehicles.

For three weeks the armour of the Viking Squadron – normally based at Bovington in Dorset – thundered around the Castlemartin Range to hone their gunnery skills.

The 6,000-acre site – about one third the size of Plymouth – is one of the principal training grounds in the UK for armoured forces, especially when it comes to using live ammunition.

Viking isn't a tank – and shouldn't get into a skirmish with enemy armour. But it does provide improved protection ferrying Royal Marines around in the battlefield – each Viking can carry up to a dozen marines and all of their equipment into battle, either directly from an assault ship and through open water, or in rolling countryside.

Not only does Viking deliver Royal Marines to a battle fresh and dry, without the exertions of a yomp or march behind them, but it can also provide support for the fighting troops: a Viking commander/gunner can pour down plenty of lead from his General Purpose Machine-Gun mounted on the roof of the front vehicle.

Alternatively, instead of hauling a trailer carrying commandos, Viking can haul a specially-adapted sled carrying mortars.

The mortars were left behind for Exercise Iron Fist as Viking crews concentrated on individual and massed gunfire from several vehicles, stationary or on the move.

"Castlemartin is an excellent training area that allows us to use the vehicle to its full potential. I really enjoy live firing – it is one of the best parts of my job," said 24-year-old Viking driver/commander Marine Ben Jones.

The training included Vikings firing close to each other while advancing on the enemy... then withdrawing, providing covering fire to commandos as the vehicles moved over undulating terrain testing the skills of both the driver and commander to the limit.

Crews also extensively practised firing at high-angle targets while on the move, simulating an ambush scenario in a valley or urban area.

And just in case the GPMG jams, commanders resorted to shooting with their SA80 rifles and Glock 9mm pistols from the turret.

And should things take a really bad turn, Viking crews – typically two men per vehicle – practised leaving their 'disabled' vehicles behind and falling back.

Pictures: LPhot Dean Nixon



Hurricane helicopter heroes receive Osprey Trophy

THE Osprey Trophy – the most coveted award in 815 Naval Air Squadron – has been handed out.

The tireless actions of Flight Commander/Observer Lt Amy Gilmore and her team in the Caribbean last autumn saved lives, brought hope and delivered vital supplies to hundreds of British citizens whose lives were blighted by a series of hurricanes which smashed through the region.

Their Wildcat, operating from RFA Mounts Bay, was the first military assistance to arrive on at least two occasions during 90 hours of missions by 216 Flight and its helicopter 'Checkmate' during Operation Ruman, the UK response to the storms.

The aircraft carried out reconnaissance flights to survey damage, delivered 37 tonnes of aid to

inaccessible areas, evacuated medical emergencies, flew in water and food, and rescued three people from a capsized boat.

"As we had spent an amazing week in the British Virgin Islands before Hurricane Irma hit, it was very upsetting to see our favourite place in the Caribbean in such dire need," Lt Gilmore said.

"I was able to get out on the ground in some of the most isolated and badly-affected areas and was really humbled to speak to those affected who were doing a brave job of confronting reality. Locals invariably requested water, food, shelter and medical supplies and were extremely grateful when we were able to deliver.

"I am hugely grateful that we were able to help

many of the people affected and I will certainly remember the events of September 2017 for the rest of my life."

Her nine engineers worked around the clock to ensure Checkmate was available for every mission required of her.

Those collective efforts earned them the Osprey Trophy, presented for the past 11 years to the 815 NAS Flight which has contributed the most to the ethos, reputation and standing of the Lynx – and now Wildcat – Helicopter Force over the preceding year.

It is presented in memory of the four men killed when 229 Flight from HMS Portland was lost on a search-and-rescue sortie in December 2004.

Pat Cole, the mother of 229 Flight's Commander Lt Dave Cole, handed over the trophy to Lt Gilmore during an 'end of term' celebration for the squadron in its Yeovilton home ahead of summer leave.

Other awardees included Lt Simon Hall, who received the Fleet Air Arm Sword. He was serving with HMS Monmouth when his Wildcat was called on to fly an extremely challenging long-distance rescue mission – resulting in the life of a tanker crewman being saved.

Awards were also given for efficiency, to the officer, senior and junior rate of the term – the latter was LAET Joe Harper, who regularly stood in for his bosses, alongside numerous Long Service Good Conduct medals handed out.

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LIFE
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Blighty Bear reports for duty

IT'S long been home of the RAF. Now Lincolnshire can claim to be heartland of the Royal Bear Force – doing his bit for the Navy in the county.

Meet Blighty Bear, brainchild of the North East Lincolnshire's Armed Forces major events team – a group of ex-service personnel who organise and deliver all large-scale military/public events in the county.

Dressed in the uniform of a three-badge killick stoker submariner when representing the RN (bespoke Army and RAF uniforms have also been produced specially for the mascot when he's flying the flag for them), Blighty is used to spread the word in a part of England not necessarily immediately associated with the Senior Service.

The bear, whose name was chosen by young readers of the *Grimsby Telegraph*, visits local schools and engages with members of the public at a myriad of charity and public events.

His job? To promote all three services as part of a continuous effort to maintain the high-profile support the military enjoys in the area.

In particular, the oversized teddy bear is heavily engaged in teaching

Lincolnshire's young citizens the importance of the Armed Forces Covenant.

You can 'follow the bear' via Facebook (search 'blighty bear') and if you'd like him to drop in on an event or school in North East Lincolnshire, call 01472 324355.



New tribute to Acasta stoker

A NEW plaque honouring a Royal Navy stoker has been unveiled 78 years after his death.

John Thomas Merriken was among more than 1,500 sailors killed on June 8 1940 as HMS Acasta and Ardent joined the aircraft carrier Glorious in action against the German warships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau.

The 38-year-old 1st stoker served as a policeman in Leicestershire for 13 years following a five-year career in the Royal Navy.

He was called up as a reservist in 1939 where he joined HMS Devonshire then HMS Acasta. He was married with three sons.

Members of Mr Merriken's family attended a memorial service at Leicestershire Police headquarters at Enderby.

Granddaughters Elaine, Julie and Joanne joined Leicestershire Chief Constable Simon Cole, Crime Commissioner Lord Bach and David Emery of the GLARAC Association – Glorious, Ardent and Acasta – at the unveiling of a new plaque.

"It was an honour a few years ago when myself and my husband carried a wreath for the GLARAC at the Cenotaph in London on Remembrance Sunday, it made you realise just what my grandfather had done in World War 2," said Elaine Glover, who was joined by her husband Bishop Adrian, of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church, for the service.

"It was a great day and we had a beautiful cake, speeches, the



● A wreath was laid in memory of John Merriken, pictured during his career with Leicestershire Police; Below, HMS Acasta



hymn *Eternal Father*, and *Sunset* played by the Royal Marines," she said.

Mrs Glover added she, along with other relatives of those who were lost, continue to seek information as to why the three ships were allowed to leave their convoy and sail on to Scapa Flow in Scotland.

Acasta, the third ship to bear the name, was an A-class destroyer and proved a tough opponent for the larger German ships, laying smoke to hide Glorious and making repeated torpedo and gun attacks.

She scored several gun hits and



one torpedo hit on Scharnhorst, causing moderate damage to the much larger German vessel.

Acasta was finally sunk after roughly two hours of fighting; the battle flag of the Gneisenau was lowered to half mast and her crew brought to attention to honour the brave fight of Acasta and her crew.

The damage to the German vessels inflicted by Ardent and Acasta caused them to retire to Trondheim, allowing the safe passage of convoys carrying Allied troops from Norway.

The single survivor from Acasta, Leading Seaman Cyril Carter, was rescued by the Norwegian steam merchant Borgund which also saved 38 men from one of Glorious's lifeboats.

Severn strikes beyond grave

THIEVES have been fined nearly £250,000 after being caught by the Royal Navy plundering a World War 1 shipwreck.

Instead of nets and beams plucking fish from the Atlantic, the crew of HMS Severn found the huge hydraulic claws of Dutch-registered salvage ship Friendship lifting £90,000 of steel and copper.

The metal was stripped from the wreck of the SS Harrovia, sunk by a German submarine 80 miles southwest of the Scilly Isles in 1916.

The British steamer was heading from New York to Le Havre in France carrying various metals for the Allied war effort – including more than 1,000 tons of copper bars, worth around £5m today – when she was intercepted by U-69.

After the crew were forced to abandon ship, the German submarine sank the Harrovia with its deck gun. No-one died in the sinking.

A century later and HMS Severn was on patrol around the Scillies in August 2016 looking for trawlers breaking international fishing regulations when she was asked to investigate the suspicious activities of the Friendship.

Once aboard the Dutch ship, Severn's boarding team quickly determined the vessel's master, Walter Bakker, had no licence to salvage the wreck – so they impounded his vessel. It took a scratch crew more than two days to sail Friendship to Fowey in Cornwall, where she and her illegal haul was handed over to the Maritime Management Organisation.

It took another 18 months to build a watertight case against Bakker and the boat's owners – and six more months after that for sentence to be passed at Newcastle Crown Court.

Bakker admitted that he did not have the relevant licence and explained how the ship's Automatic Identification System had been dimmed to avoid detection.

He was fined £2,000, the boat's owners Friendship Offshore BV £6,000 – and they were also ordered to pay nearly £45,000 in legal costs. In addition, the judge stressed that the Harrovia was an important heritage asset and that the firm should pay more than £190,000 in compensation under a Proceeds of Crime Confiscation Order.

Severn decommissioned last autumn ahead of new generation River-class ships entering service.

"It's great to hear that the hard work of Severn has paid off with another successful conviction. The fact that it's taken two years to complete the work reflects the unusual boarding – and the magnitude of the infringements," said Commander Sarah Oakley, Commander of the Royal Navy's Fishery Protection Squadron.



Scimitar's Algarve adventure

HMS Scimitar is pictured alongside in the popular Algarve holiday resort of Portimao during a rare visit out of Gibraltar.

The patrol vessel made the near-200 nautical mile journey to the sun-baked Algarve to exercise with the Portuguese Navy.

After calling in at Portimao and the even more popular beach resort of Vilamoura some 50 miles along the coast, Scimitar met up with Centauro-class patrol boat NRP Pegaso off Portimao to conduct a number of training exercises, including officer of the watch manoeuvres, a PASSEX and the obligatory PHOTEX.

Pegaso's main role is to conduct fishery

protection duties around the Portuguese coast, extending as far as the Madeira archipelago.

Scimitar's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Tom Loxton said: "This has been an incredible opportunity; not only to plan and execute an almost 400 nautical mile return passage in demanding sea conditions, but also to conduct valuable maritime training with a NATO partner."

Scimitar and her sister ship Sabre are part of the Royal Navy's Gibraltar Squadron.

The squadron's Executive Officer CPO Craig 'Red' Jones said: "The chance for the squadron's sailors to explore somewhere new was certainly something that won't be forgotten in a hurry."

HMS WARRIOR UPCOMING EVENTS

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Pickle Night 2 November 2018

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Book online at
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Catherine's tribute to Dambuster pilot

OXFORD URNU was represented at the unveiling of a memorial to the crew of an RAF Lancaster who perished during the Dambuster raid.

Surgeon Sub Lieutenant Catherine Moore also represented Trinity College, Oxford, at the ceremony in Holland.

Squadron Leader Henry Melvin 'Dinghy' Young was the pilot of 'A for Apple', one of the Avro Lancaster bombers which flew in the raid on German dams in the Ruhr Valley in 1943.

The pilot earned his nickname after twice ditching his aircraft in the sea and surviving in a dinghy, and he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross.

On the night of the raid, while the first three aircraft missed the Möhne dam, A-Apple hit the dam, as did the fifth bomber.

But as his aircraft AJ-A turned to return for home across the North Sea, just moments from safety, it was hit by the last German position near Castricum aan Zee, Netherlands.

The bodies of the men were washed ashore over the following days and were buried at nearby Bergen General Cemetery.

The crew of Lancaster AJ-A were Young (pilot), David Horsfall (flight engineer), Charles Roberts (navigator), Lawrence



Nichols (wireless operator), Vincent MacCausland (bomb aimer), Gordon Yeo (front gunner) and Wilfred Ibbotson (rear gunner).

Before the war Young attended Trinity College, Oxford, and was a member of the winning crew of the 1938 Boat Race.

He qualified as a pilot through the University Air Squadron.

The 617 Squadron Netherlands Aircrew Memorial Foundation organised the



memorial to mark the 75th anniversary of the raids.

Wreaths were laid at a memorial at Castricum aan Zee and at the Bergen General Cemetery.

"It was a privilege to be able to stand side by side in remembrance with members of the crews families, the Dutch Air Force and the RAF," said Surg S/Lt Moore.

Two Harvards of the Dutch Historical Flight carried out a flypast as part of the ceremony.



Tom's in the driving seat at Silverstone



MIDSHIPMAN Tom Murphy fulfils a dream as he sits behind the wheel of an Aston Martin.

Tom, along with fellow members of Oxford URNU, spent the day as VIPs at the British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

As well as excellent track side views of the racing from one of the highest speed corners of the circuit, this offered the opportunity for the attendees to have full access to the support race paddocks and podium, allowing them to chat to the engineers preparing the cars.

The group said hello to Sir Frank Williams and the Coxswain, CPO Gary Maskell, was able to chat to former F1 driver Nico Rosberg.

The engineering experience was courtesy of the Guy Hudson Memorial Trust who funded the hospitality as 2018 is the Year of Engineering.

The race was won by Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel, with Lewis Hamilton finishing second for Mercedes.

Lt Will Jones, Commanding Officer Oxford URNU, said: "The day was a fantastic engineering and life experience for the unit members."



Pair join thousands lining the way for Royal Marines

MIDSHIPMAN Emily Herbert and Midshipman John Hawke of the Oxford URNU attended the Freedom of Taunton Parade for 40 Commando.

The pair were invited as guests of the Mayor, Councillor Catherine Herbert.

The parade was a reminder of the special relationship that local areas form with their surrounding armed forces units.

Thousands of spectators lined the streets in support of the Royal Marines.

Many watching were family and friends of serving or ex-serving personnel, as in the case of the mayor, whose husband had a life-long career in the Royal Marines.

The Mayor took the salute along with First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones, the Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset,

Brigadier David Godsall, and the CO of 40 Commando, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Maynard.

Despite having to endure their formal No.1s uniform in the scorching heat, 40 Commando put on a disciplined, dignified and impressive show, demonstrating the high level of training that Royal Marines undergo as well as their pride in their own unit and its long tradition of good service.

After the parade, which included various armoured vehicles, 40 Commando and many civilians gathered at the war memorial in Vivary Park to remember the fallen.

"Being able to represent the Oxford URNU at the parade was an incredible honour, and reinforced in our minds the immense importance of the Armed Forces to both the nation and its people," said Mid Hawke.

RNR

A NEW group of Royal Navy Reservists took time out from their civilian jobs for a two-week training course at Britannia Royal Naval College.

The latest group included Midshipman Clive Bull, from Portsmouth, 50, and 21-year-old Mid Ellie Coleman, a student from Sudbury.

Mid Bull joined HMS King Alfred in January 2017 looking to develop new skills, get fit and do things he'd not done before.

He said: "My father joined the Royal Navy as a boy sailor and served in Cyprus and Suez as an Able Rate.

"As a contrast, he was the youngest sailor on board his ship, while I reckon I'm the oldest Midshipman in the RNR and probably also in the wider Navy. Without a doubt the highlight of my training was my passing-out parade. It was the culmination of 16 days of hard training and

months of physical and mental preparation. I was incredibly proud of myself and the other officers who passed out with me. It was hard but a very worthwhile journey for all of us."

Mid Coleman joined the RNR in February 2017 and is a member of the Gateshead based unit HMS Calliope. She is currently studying at Newcastle University for a post-graduate qualification in conservation biology.

She said: "Training was so difficult that passing and passing well was a massive achievement. Especially as the youngest on the course, I felt a little extra pressure going in. Training has set me up with life skills not just for the navy but for civilian life too, including grit and determination, a sense of humour and that even though something feels bad at the time, it's not quite as bad as it seems."



Dragon roars to mark anniversary

ENGINEERS on HMS Dragon had their cake...and ate it in celebration of the 181st birthday of their branch in the Royal Navy.

Hosted on board the Type 45 destroyer, Marine Engineering Officer Lt Cdr Gareth Fowler organised the 'Big Brew' event to celebrate the creation of the branch and champion all those in the Navy who toil on machinery and weapons – particularly pertinent in this Year of Engineering.

"This was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the Engineering Branch's 181st Birthday with Dragon's engineers," said Gareth.

"It was fitting that the opportunity arose to celebrate our illustrious engineering heritage whilst also showcasing the latest, most innovative, technologies the Royal Navy are currently operating on-board Dragon in support of the Year of Engineering."

Engineering in the Royal Navy actually pre-dates the official formation of the branch by a quarter of a century.

Steam propulsion was introduced in 1812, but the early ships were manned by civilian engineers employed on an ad hoc basis.

By 1837 with 27 steam vessels in the Fleet it was clear that more formal management arrangements for engineers were needed.

That year the post of Comptroller of the Steam Machinery and Packet Department was created.

Then on July 19 1837 an Order in Council was issued placing engineers on a permanent footing, "with such rank and pay as appears to be fitting for persons charged with the performance of such important and responsible duties".

Highlighting the critical role that engineers play in today's Royal Navy, Cdre Graeme Little (Deputy Chief Naval Engineer) joined the 'birthday party'.

"Our engineers are the beating heart of the Royal Navy, delivering operational effect with confidence and certainty," he said.

"We employ world-class engineers that are



● ET Matthew Powell cuts the cake watched by Cdre Graeme Little

able to operate, maintain, diagnose and repair some of the most advanced systems and equipment in the world in ships, submarines, aircraft and vehicles."

As a young Naval engineer, ET Matthew Powell has only been in the Royal Navy for just over two years, but sees a bright and exciting future.

"The constantly-evolving technology within the military gives me the opportunity to improve my skills within new and challenging areas of engineering.

"Throughout my career, I am looking forward to working across a variety of different vessels, particularly smaller ships – and the new Type 26 looks like an exciting prospect."



Glimpse of what the future holds

A CHIEF Petty Officer gets to grips with new technology as marine engineers learned about the future of their branch's training.

HMS Sultan hosted a training event to showcase how technology and initiatives could be used by staff to enhance trainees' learning experience.

A total of seven stands were used to cover topics including pre-course and face-to-face learning, the use of physical aids, computer-based training, environment integration, simulation and virtual reality and methods for revision.

Sultan Commander Training, Commander Adrian 'AJ' Coulthard said: "Whether through the introduction of new technology or new systems and processes, training delivery here has always been at the cutting edge of innovation.

"Increasingly technology is leading us to re-evaluate how we deliver the required training and ensure we remain at the fore, relevant and focussed on our trainees' learning.

"The aim of this event is to highlight some of the training technology and initiatives, from the seemingly straightforward to the complex, that we can employ to enhance our training delivery.

"I sincerely hope that this event will spark new ideas to allow us to enhance the learning experience for future marine engineers. It is beholden on us all to constantly improve what we do and I see this as the start of new continuum of development over the coming years."

■ Air and marine engineers at HMS Sultan joined in celebrations to mark the 181st birthday of the engineering branch of the Royal Navy.

The engineering branch of the RN has a rich and illustrious history. Although steam propulsion was introduced to the RN in 1812, the early ships were manned by civilian engineers employed on an ad hoc basis.

Since its first commission in 1956 as a mechanical training and repair establishment, HMS Sultan has made a significant contribution towards the ongoing success of the branch.

Role models in the field of engineering



2018. YEAR OF ENGINEERING

TWO engineers from HMS Somerset received accolades for their professionalism, innovation and dedication.

Lt Cdr Craig Devlin, HMS Somerset's Weapon Engineering Officer, received Commander Joint Force Command Commendation for his innovative work supporting operations by delivering a revolutionary programme that fundamentally changes the provision of near real-time intelligence.

"The rapidly changing face of technology means that we must be able to challenge norms and established processes to harness those disruptive technologies to our advantage," said Lt Cdr Devlin.

"I was able to deliver new systems to Permanent Joint Head Quarters which it is hoped will deliver benefit directly to those on operations around the globe.

"This award is recognition that innovation in the right environment can thrive and that procurement can be an agile process delivering at pace. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in JFC and am honoured to receive this award."

LET(WE) Kath Hunter's outstanding leadership and academic performance during her time at the Maritime Warfare School HMS Collingwood earned her the Armourers



● Cdr Tim Berry presented the awards to Lt Cdr Craig Devlin and LET Kath Hunter

and Brasiers Award for 2018. She said: "I am extremely humbled to have been selected for this award. The engineering training I received at the Maritime Warfare School is second to none and I found the subjects fascinating. Being a trainee is hard work but all that effort paid off now that I am at sea running the Navigational Aids section on board HMS Somerset."

Both Craig and Kath also had the honour of briefing the Prime Minister and the Princess Royal on the importance of encouraging Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects in schools at the Royal Navy Youth Engagement stand at the Armed Forces Day National Event in Llandudno, North Wales.

Unfortunately neither member of the ship's company were able to attend their respective award ceremonies due to HMS Somerset's current tasking.

The Type 23's commanding officer Cdr



Tim Berry, who handed over the awards, said: "These awards very rightly recognise the hard work and dedication that Lt Cdr Devlin and LET Hunter have displayed and it is particularly relevant in this Year of Engineering.

"Whilst on board they have worked hard to promote STEM subjects to young aspiring engineers and I hope that their qualities as role models inspire some to follow in their footsteps."

This year has seen the ship not only escort the HMS Queen Elizabeth through the Strait of Gibraltar, but also participate in numerous events, including the Zeebrugge 100 commemorations, in memory of the raid and lives lost 100 years ago, and celebrations for the 829 Birthday of Hamburg Port as part of the annual Festival of the Sea.

"She also recently visited the City of Liverpool where she started the Tall Ships Race with a salvo from her saluting guns.

general and specifically the training offered by HMS Collingwood, the group visited the armoury where they were introduced to the General Purpose Machine Gun and other small arms.

They then moved on to one of the bigger guns, specifically the 4.5 Mk8 gun which is fitted to the Type 45 destroyer.

PO Alan Bates was on hand to demonstrate the procedure for loading the 37kg rounds into the gun – an operation that needs to be

completed every five seconds to keep the gun firing at its optimum rate.

DTUS students will join the Royal Navy at the conclusion of their university studies and visits such as these are designed to give them a flavour of what the Royal Navy can offer them, together with what it expects from them.

"This visit has definitely made me keen to ultimately join the Royal Navy," said Officer Cadet Joseph Dendle.

Classroom beckons tomorrow's stars

BACK to school is the theme this month for the Year of Engineering 2018 campaign and hopefully you downloaded and used the Holiday Maker's Resources from the DfT website (www.yearofengineering.gov.uk), with ideas for engineering-related activities for children for the summer?

While many in the RN will be returning to work as normal, spare a thought for those who will be starting or continuing courses among the thousands of trainees undergoing career training.

As one of the UK's largest employers of engineers and technicians the RN is recognised as a key training provider, particularly for apprenticeships, which is helping the UK close the skills gap and remedy the nation's shortage of engineers and technicians.

Towards the end of this year the focus of the Year of Engineering 2018 campaign will turn to creating its legacy – the theme for October is Engineering: Shaping the Future, November is Tomorrow's Engineers and December is Year of Engineering Legacy and Next Steps.

Until December 1 there's also still time to enter the RN-UKNEST Naval Engineering Competition, a fantastic opportunity for schoolchildren to engage in engineering and discover how it can be applied to solve real world problems. More information and entry details can

be found at www.uknest.org.

The Year of Engineering 2018 is seeking to reposition engineering in society, highlighting engineering as a valuable and rewarding career choice.

The back to school theme also provides a great opportunity to get involved in the campaign, as every engineer has an individual story to tell of how, and where, they did their training, including how, even at that early stage of their career, they were directly involved in the maintenance, preparation and sustainment of their ships, submarines, vehicles or aircraft for, and on, worldwide operations.

Every engineer can explain why they form the 'beating heart' of operational capability.

If you want to contribute to the RN's Year of Engineering 2018 campaign read [RNTM 07-064/17](https://www.facebook.com/RNTM0706417) or share your experiences on social media, using [#yoec](https://twitter.com/yoec), [#inspireanengineer](https://twitter.com/inspireanengineer) and [#takeacloserlook](https://twitter.com/takeacloserlook), and link into [@RoyalNavy](https://twitter.com/RoyalNavy) and [@YoEGovUK](https://twitter.com/YoEGovUK).

If you're not a fan of social media, then you can still keep up to date with what's going on as part of the Year of Engineering 2018 campaign by joining the YO18 Defence Connect group, visiting the Year of Engineering 2018 page on the Defence Intranet, or by visiting the DfT's own website at www.yearofengineering.gov.uk.

STUDENTS from the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme visited HMS Collingwood to get a hands-on experience of weapons engineering within the Royal Navy.

The group, studying at various universities but all committed to joining the Royal Navy, visited HMS Collingwood, near Fareham, as part of a package of visits to other RN establishments, all giving them a different experience of RN life.

After briefs about weapons engineering in

Winning position



RFA MOUNTS BAY bade farewell to the colourful homes lining the harbour of Curacao as she completed a two-week visit as part of her Caribbean deployment.

The small Dutch island hosted the vessel as she undertook a period of maintenance before continuing her odyssey helping the region prepare for the hurricane season – which runs from June to November.

Last year's storm season was unprecedented and in particular Hurricanes Irma and Maria caused an insurmountable amount of damage to many Caribbean islands.

RFA MOUNTS BAY was first on scene to provide relief and support to overseas territories, supplying over two tonnes of medical supplies, three tonnes of food, 16 tonnes of water, 290 shelter kits, and 25 tonnes of building supplies.

The last two months saw MOUNTS BAY visit a number of British Overseas Territories.

Visits to Montserrat and Tortola gave the opportunity to demonstrate the capability of RFA MOUNTS BAY, in particular the Hurricane and Disaster Relief (HADR) team which the ship can deploy to an area within 12 hours of a storm hitting.

In addition to the emerging possibility of

hurricane damage, Montserrat constantly deals with the threat of disaster from the island's active volcano.

Nicknamed the Emerald Isle of the Caribbean, both for its resemblance to coastal Ireland and for the Irish ancestry of many of its inhabitants, its previously dormant Soufrière Hills volcano, in the southern part of the island, became active in July 1995.

Eruptions destroyed Montserrat's Georgian-era capital city of Plymouth.

Between 1995 and 2000, two-thirds of the island's population were forced to flee, leaving fewer than 1,200 people on the island as of 1997 (rising to nearly 5,000 by 2016).

The volcanic activity continues, mostly affecting the vicinity of Plymouth, including its docking facilities, and the eastern side of the island around the former airport, the remnants of which were buried by flows from volcanic activity in February 2010.

An exclusion zone that extends from the south coast of the island north to parts of the Belham Valley was imposed. Visitors are generally not permitted entry into the exclusion zone, but a view of the destruction of Plymouth can be seen from the top of Garibaldi Hill in Isles Bay.

Relatively quiet since early 2010, the volcano continues to be closely monitored by the Montserrat Volcano Observatory.

The visit by RFA MOUNTS BAY served to reassure the local population of the UK's continued support of overseas territories.

During the visit RFA MOUNTS BAY conducted a HADR Exercise. The initial stages of the exercise involved Hitman 45, the call sign of the Wildcat helicopter from 815 Naval Air Squadron, providing aerial reconnaissance and support.

The ship then launched vehicles and equipment using the Mexeflote, operated by 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC.

The shore parties are made up of the HADR Troop, a mixture of Royal Engineers and Royal Marine Commandos and ships company personnel.

The exercise was witnessed by the Minister of State for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster, alongside British and local press agencies.

During the Montserrat visit they were called upon to assist the local police force in identifying illegal marijuana plantations.



Hitman 45 was police liaison located and marijuana plantations.

Following MOUNTS BAY the British this visit, Ahmed, the Overseas Territories maintaining RFA MOUNTS BAY assisting with many region.

In Tortola, the ship two beach and swamp involved clearing debris and Maria, removing defences and helping of nurseries, all with the the tourism industry in the island. Personnel at Primary School, where rain garden to help prevent

Personnel helped to exercises at Cane Garden Cove beaches.

● Above, Apprentice Chef Jade Girling; Below, Marine engineer 3/O(E) Sam Rutherford



● Left, Members of the HADR team bring equipment ashore on the ship's Mexeflote; Right, Personnel clear debris from the water off Tortola; Below, Communications Rating John Mullineaux operates a signal lamp aboard RFA MOUNTS BAY; Below left, a crew member takes a photo of Montserrat



PICTURES: LPhoto Stevie Burke





s launched with a local onboard and swiftly identified numerous plantations around the

Montserrat, RFA visited Tortola, in the Virgin Islands. During the vessel hosted Lord Minster of State for Overseas Territories. In addition to readiness for disasters, the vessel's team have been involved in other tasks within the

's company conducted clearance tasks. These tasks were from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Following the leadfall, building flood defences and to construct artificial coral reefs. The main goal of restoring the environment and conservation of the island. Also visited Ivan Dawson and they installed a new pump out station to prevent flooding.

clear debris during dive operations. When Bay and Smuggler's

Mounts Bay is also conducting counter-narcotics operations in the area in combination with the United States, who have a team of law enforcement officers deployed in Mounts Bay.

After only three days on task, RFA Mounts Bay was asked to investigate a suspicious vessel. The 'go-fast' was operating in an area well known for illicit drug/people smuggling and illegal arms trading.

RFA Mounts Bay's Wildcat was launched and undertook discrete surveillance of the vessel and gathered vital intelligence as to the vessel's capability.

After various failed attempts to communicate with the boat and its refusal to heave to, warning shots were fired. A small package was jettisoned overboard and warning shots were ignored.

Permission was granted to use non-lethal disabling force on the boat, and this was achieved safely from the Wildcat, as the engine was shot out, leaving the vessel incapacitated.

Authority was then given for the US-led team embarked in Mounts Bay to board the vessel. Later reports would show that the vessel was conducting nefarious activities and the operation was a success.

The visit to Montserrat enabled the ship to demonstrate its HADR capability. 17 Port and Maritime Regiment of the Royal Logistics Corps are embarked with 29 personnel covering six trades – port operators, mariners, marine engineers, vehicle support specialists, a REME mechanic and REME shipwright.

RFA Mounts Bay's HADR troop is a 19-strong troop made up of Royal Engineers from 24 Cdo RE and Royal Marines from 30 Cdo IX group.

The Royal Engineers hold trades including electricians, carpenters and joiners, heating and plumbing specialists, signalers and plant operator mechanics.

Royal Marines provide security, mobility and communications support. HADR Troop have 12 heavy vehicles embarked which enable them to move equipment and people, distribute aid and conduct tasks with engineers. Many of these have previous experience being deployed in Mounts Bay during Operation Ruman last year.

RFA Mounts Bay also has a permanent Role 1 Afloat (R1A) medical facility, with a team of four providing the same services you could expect at your GP surgery.

The Role 2 Afloat (R2A) Forward Surgical Pre-hospital facility is maintained in a dormant state, once activated, a team of between 16-20

including surgeons, anaesthetists, emergency department doctors, operating department practitioners, ITU nurses, emergency department nurses, bio-medical scientists and radiologists will have 72 hours notice to arrive onboard. The medical department borne at R1A will have 72 hours to set up the hospital, including an emergency department, operating theatre, intensive care unit, ward, X-ray equipment and a laboratory.

Later this year RFA Mounts Bay will take part in training exercises with partner nations.

Captain Peter Selby, Commanding Officer of Mounts Bay, said: "It has been a pleasure to command the various teams onboard Mounts Bay. We have had the opportunity to show the Overseas Territories that we are ready and able to assist them during this year's hurricane season.

"While we are not chasing hurricanes, we have been busy on counter-narcotics operations and the team has already had some success; another win for Team Mounts."

RFA Mounts Bay remains on station in the Caribbean until mid 2020. Follow her on Twitter at [@RFAMountsBay](#).

Report: 2/O(C) Paul Fears, RFA Mounts Bay



● Left, personnel clear debris from a mangrove in Tortola; Below left, members of 17 Port and Maritime RLC with an RFA medic; Right, Mounts Bay's Wildcat delivers supplies in Montserrat; Below right, members of the HADR team enjoying their work in Tortola; Below left, Logistics Officer Kate Hood



● Above, 30(X) Charlotte Beeby on the bridge of RFA Mounts Bay; Below, Communications Rating Jack Lindley





Chaos for visitors

STUDENTS from Sir Robert Geffery School in Landrake tackled floods and fires during a visit to HMS Raleigh in Torpoint.

The students spent an afternoon at the Royal Navy training base where they were invited to experience the state-of-the-art simulators used to teach sailors how to deal with emergencies at sea.

On board HMS Chaos, a static training facility built to look like a compartment on board a ship, the group of 10 and 11-year-olds, had to work together in low light, to stem the flow of water.

Chief Petty Officer David Smith, one of the instructors at Triumph Squadron, HMS

Raleigh's School of Maritime Safety, said: "The children had to stop the 'ship' from sinking by shoring up bulkhead's, deck head's and damaged pipework.

"This allowed them to see why the Royal Navy has core values such as courage and discipline, both of which were clearly displayed by all who attended. Team building activities such as these demonstrates perfectly the need for team work, communication skills and leadership."

The youngsters also visited the fire-fighting school where they had the opportunity to learn how to extinguish a range of fires using the correct equipment.

Youngsters call in

PUPILS from across Devon, Cornwall and further afield were among the visitors to Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC).

A group of 49 students from Dartmouth Academy were welcomed by the Commanding Officer, Captain Jol Woodard before being split into groups for a round-robin of activities.

They were introduced to team-working and leadership skills on BRNC's low ropes training facility. The group of 11 to 14 year olds also put their best feet forward during a marching session on the parade ground and took part in a fitness session in the gymnasium.

In addition, a group of 13 students from schools in Plymouth, Callington, Weston-Super-Mare, Bridgewater and Staffordshire, spent a day at BRNC.



Bridging the gap

TRAINEE doctors, dentists and bursars, who are being sponsored through university by the Royal Navy, swapped their studies for a week-long acquint at Britannia Royal Naval College.

Split into two groups over two weeks, the Bursar and Medic Acquaint Courses (BMAC) are designed to be challenging, demanding and exciting.

BMACs give an insight into basic training for officers and are mandated for all those under the sponsorship scheme.

This year the cadets were accommodated on Hindustan, a decommissioned minesweeper, now used as BRNC's training ship, which gave the cadets an opportunity to see what life is like on board a warship.

Sub Lieutenant Lewis Ginger, who led the courses, said: "My cadets are always on the go, learning to deal with changing situations and challenges.

"This is their chance to experience the training delivered at BRNC and push themselves. Through these challenging activities the cadets learn that they can go further than they ever thought possible."

There are currently 113 sponsored undergraduates. They are administered through Blake Squadron throughout their education. The students attend an Admiralty Interview Board alongside other potential officer candidates then, assuming they score highly enough, are offered a place on the scheme.

Nelson family's pride at promotions

ONE family from Bournemouth had a double reason to celebrate as two brothers received their promotions at HMS Collingwood on the same day.

Neil and Nathaniel Nelson both received their promotions from Commander Jonathan Pearce during the presentation at the base near Fareham.

Leading Engineering Technician Neil "H" Nelson, 31, has been in the Royal Navy since July 2003, serving on HMS Invincible, HMS Exeter, HMS York and HMS Iron Duke visiting areas as diverse as the Middle East, the Falklands, the United States and the Baltic.

Neil, who has been promoted to Petty Officer, cites the NATO Baltic Ops in 2017 as his best deployment.

Younger brother Engineering Technician Weapons Engineer Nathaniel "Nelly" Nelson, 24, enjoyed his time on HMS Portland for the same reasons,

although he has also served on HMS Montrose and HMS Northumberland.

Both brothers are currently based at HMS Collingwood where Nathaniel is on a Weapons Engineers Careers Course and Neil is on a Petty Officers Engineering Careers Course.

The brothers partake in a range of hobbies in their spare time, with ex-Bournemouth Grammar School pupil Neil enjoying cycling, rowing and dancing and his brother Nathaniel, who studied at Winton Arts and Media College, favouring football, fishing and squash.

Nathaniel said: "It only seemed like I joined a year ago, these few years have flown by with so many great experiences.

"Now just to look forward to the future and hopefully achieve my next promotion as quick as possible."



● Neil and Nathaniel Nelson celebrate their promotions

Unique ceremony for new Warrant

A ROYAL Navy senior rate received his Warrant in a unique ceremony aboard a US battleship.

Underwater warfare specialist WO1 Justin Lee is assigned to the UK contingent at Dam Neck in Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA.

WO1 Lee received his Warrant from Cdre Tom Guy, both are pictured right, during a ceremony on board the USS Wisconsin, watched by a number of UK Armed Forces members.

Dam Neck is home to the Naval Ocean Processing Facility (NOPF), part of Submarine Force, US Pacific Fleets.

Under the command of Commander Undersea Surveillance, it is one of the few remaining Integrated Undersea Surveillance facilities.

After the ceremony, service members were treated to a tour of the Wisconsin, given by Tom Dandes, Special Events Coordinator



with the Hampton Roads Naval Museum.

In May 2009, NOPF Dam Neck officially became a Joint Command, welcoming the UK detachment and an increased area of responsibility.

This expansion also made NOPF Dam Neck the largest contingent of UK personnel

in the USA. The command comprises approximately 300 Service personnel and civilians from the US Navy, UK Royal Navy and RAF.

The Wisconsin (BB-64) is an Iowa-class battleship that was first commissioned in 1944, and finally decommissioned in 1991 after 14 years of service to the fleet.

She is preserved as a museum ship, and moored next to the Hampton Roads Naval Museum.

It celebrates the long history of the US Navy in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia and is co-located with Nauticus in downtown Norfolk, Virginia.

Admission to the museum is free, simply by-pass the ticket line downstairs at Nauticus and take the stairs or elevator to the museum on the second floor. The museum hosts military ceremonies aboard the Wisconsin and in its galleries for area commands.

Duo's underwater marathon

A PATROL aboard a V-boat was no deterrent (sorry) to fund-raising for Lieutenant Callum Fraser and Petty Officer Lee Benzie who rowed a marathon.

The submariners set themselves the goal of rowing a marathon – 42,195 metres – in under three-and-a-half hours to raise money for the boat's good favoured causes.

With only their off-watch six-hour periods in which to train – and with gym equipment quite often out of bounds to cut down the noise on board – plus any interruptions to the daily routine all hampered the duo's training regime.

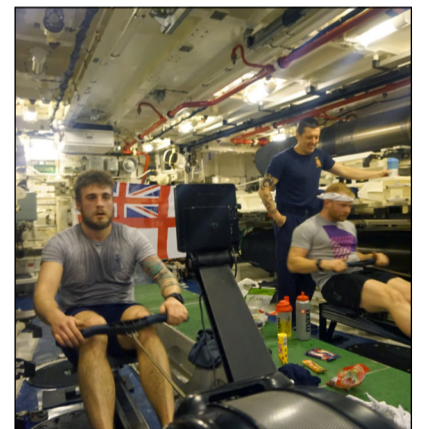
"This was a real achievement, something I've never done before and the money raised

was worth the sweat and hard work," said POET(ME) Benzie.

He and his shipmate crossed the line with more than 17 minutes to spare; their efforts contributed £1,300 of the £1,800 raised by the V-boat on her 38th deterrence patrol for Parklands School in Helensburgh and Fountains Primary School in Burton upon Trent.

"Visiting Fountains Primary School as part of the affiliates visit last summer was a pleasure," said Lt Fraser.

"The school caters for children requiring varied levels of support and care and completing this row was the least we could do to show our continued support."



Princess tells of her pleasure to be

THE Princess Royal visited HMS Collingwood as the Reviewing Officer at the establishment's annual Ceremonial Divisions.

In addition to taking the salute from officers and ratings on parade, the Princess Royal presented awards and prizes to a number of individuals.

Escorted by Capt Rob Vitali, the Captain of Collingwood and the Maritime Warfare School, the Princess inspected the

Guard of Honour before reviewing HM Royal Marines Band Collingwood, who provided the musical accompaniment.

Addressing more than 1,100 personnel, the Princess said: "It's a real pleasure to be back at HMS Collingwood for the annual ceremonial divisions. Some of my family have had this experience – my grandfather King George VI served on the Dreadnought HMS Collingwood at the Battle of Jutland,



Last rest before 72-mile stroll to work

NO time to rest...

In the shadow of Nelson's iconic flagship, RAF Warrant Officer Mark Harvey and Royal Navy colleagues, Petty Officers Phil Monk and Liam Watts, prepare to set off on a 72-mile 'stroll' to work.

They were heading to NATO's Maritime Headquarters in Northwood – 12 months to the day that Mark lost his mum Patricia to cancer at the age of 72.

The lives of all three men, who work in the Maritime Air Division, have been affected in some way by cancer, prompting them to hit the road (at a leisurely 3mph) to raise money for Cancer Research UK, Macmillan and the Royal Marsden Hospital – all of whom helped the Harvey family in particular during their hardest times.

They've been in training since the beginning of the year, out in all weathers, with their backup driver CPO Olivier Vernet of the French Navy rolling slowly along in support throughout the non-stop walk.

Even before setting off, the trio were one third of the way towards their £4,000 target. Donations can be made at: <https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/mark-williams-giving-page>



● From left, CPO Olivier Vernet, PO Phil Monk WO Mark Harvey and PO Liam Watts

Mike's adventures inspire book move

TEN years ago Lt Cdr Mike Klidjian was overseeing sailors and Royal Marines clambering aboard suspicious vessels in Pirate Alley.

"What we do today demands 100 per cent commitment from all of the ship," the then operations officer of HMS Kent reminded his shipmates.

"Things develop quickly and we must respond to them quickly. "This is a very real threat. Take the fight to the enemy."

A decade later and such dialogue and incidents serve as the inspiration for the now-retired officer's new career: novelist.

After 18 years as a naval officer, the 44-year-old left the Senior Service last year and, like many leavers, used their military knowledge and experience to influence their choice of employment in civvy street – in his case full-time writing (in between parenting duties and a



spot of fly fishing).

The result in Mike's case is the *Bluestreak*, a 211-page thriller with a young RN boarding officer as its central character/hero – one Lt Jack Browne – who's trained in fast-rope insertion... like the author.

He served as boarding officer during NATO's Active Endeavour mission – board-and-search patrols in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean in response to the 2001 terrorist

attacks in the USA – was back there in 2008-09 when tackling piracy off the Horn of Africa was the key naval effort of the day, and returned to the region for a third major deployment, this time as second-in-command of destroyer HMS Dauntless.

For Dauntless read HMS Diana in the novel, with the hero and his team determined to prevent a terrorist training camp being established on European soil.

Throw in a spot of espionage and intrigue and a femme fatale and voila, one modern-day thriller with the RN at its heart.

Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce, Lord Warden of Cinque Ports, Constable of Dover Castle says of the book: "This is a novel of exciting pace that does not slacken off from the moment Jack Browne swings into action on the first page."

"He is instantly recognisable as an authentic naval hero for today's dangerous world; but his initiative and daring would also not have been out of place in Nelson's navy."

"With highly accurate references to tradecraft and modern warfare, Mike Klidjian has captured the thrill and excitement of a career at sea in today's Royal Navy."

Bluestreak is available on Kindle or in paperback. For more details see: www.mikeklidjian.com.



Guardians of the marine galaxy

MILITARY guards gave up their free time to clear the waters around HMS Excellent of the plastic blighting the shore.

Half a dozen guards – who provide armed protection for Whale Island and other naval establishments in the Portsmouth area as part of the Military Provost Guard Service – hit the southern foreshore to fill bags of rubbish with flotsam and jetsam.

The clear-up was organised by former logistics-AB-turned-guard Private Tony Cuckson who first noticed the growing tide of trash one day while patrolling the moorings near HMS Bristol.

That prompted him to grab rubbish bags and, er, fill them with rubbish. Eight sacks in all filled with plastic bags, plastic bottles, plastic rings, bits of rope, plus general waste.

It got the 45-year-old thinking about the general state of the oceans – and the detritus dumped in them.

There's now an 'environmental awareness' board in the Whale Island guardhouse to encourage colleagues to recycle and generally think about the damage waste is having – and not just in Portsmouth Harbour.

"A lot of people see HMS Excellent – ferry passengers, VIP visitors as it's the Navy's headquarters. So you want the island to leave a good impression and in the long term we want to help the environment," Tony said.

"The more I've read and studied the problem, the more shocked I am about how much rubbish – plastic especially – there is in the sea. If we don't do something about it, it will just grow and grow."

Pictures: LPhot Joe Cater



back at Collingwood

commanding the forward gun turret. He would be fascinated with this evolution."

Lt Ewan Mackay, who was presented with the British Aerospace Sword, said "To win this award is special, but to have it presented to me by the Princess Royal is overwhelmingly satisfying."

POET Ryan Bramley was awarded the Armoury Prize.

Pictures: Keith Woodland



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

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



● Chef Lee Sellwood and LH Kelroy James both won awards

Loggie students in the spotlight

THE success of students trained at the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS) over the last 12 months has been celebrated at the school's annual award ceremony.

Awards were presented to a range of students from officers attending their Initial Logistics Officer training course to new recruits learning their trade as writers, chefs, stewards and supply chain ratings.

There were also awards for members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the Royal Naval Reserve and the Sea Cadet Corps, as well as prizes recognising the commitment and dedication of the instructors.

Among the winners were Chef Lee Sellwood, from HMS Queen Elizabeth, who was presented with the Robin Hodsdon Apprenticeship prize.

The prize is awarded to the student who demonstrated the most development to achieve an apprenticeship.

Leading Hand Kelroy James was presented with the Chief Naval Logistics Officer Award. The prize is awarded to a member of the logistics branch who has made a significant contribution to delivering or promoting high-quality training and coaching in the Fleet.

A total of 36 individuals were recognised at the ceremony.



Pegasus Bridge tribute

THE Veterans Charity is planning a special tribute to raise funds and mark the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

The charity is looking to recruit 186 sponsored runners for the Run to Pegasus Bridge, following the route taken by six Horsa Gliders delivering men from 2 Oxford and Buckinghamshire Regt, Royal Engineers, Glider Pilot Regiment, RAMC and Paras.

The regiment was relieved at Pegasus Bridge by personnel from 4 Commando, led by Lord Simon Lovat. The charity is hoping to include a special tribute to this moment.

The route is 62 miles to Portsmouth, including a full lap of the former airfield at Tarrant Rushton, from where the gliders took off.

Following the ferry crossing to Ouistreham in France, the runners will make their way to Pegasus Bridge, three miles away. Then, once transported to another location at the river Dives, where the men of 22 Platoon landed in No 4 glider (they had been towed off course), the group will march a final ten miles back to The Veterans Charity Memorial at Pegasus Bridge to complete 75 miles on the 75th anniversary in June next year.

Teams are being encouraged to take part in the anniversary run. For details visit www.veteranscharity.org.uk/rtop

Project is one of top quality

A COMMUNITY project aimed at helping Naval Service families has received a top accreditation.

The Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare Community Volunteer Project is a partnership with Improving Lives Plymouth.

The project is in its first year and has been funded by a £45,000 grant from the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity Helping Hands project, which enables the employment of four volunteer coordinators in Plymouth, Portsmouth, Yeovil and Helensburgh.

Their main aim is to recruit RNRMW volunteers and identify training. So far the service has 62 registered volunteers, who will help with more than 200 community projects to Service

families, such as child and family-centred activities and social events.

ILP is Plymouth's quality accredited local volunteer centre that provides support and expertise to organisations that involve volunteers.

Helen Howlett, Community Business Manager RNRMW, said: "The first year's funding for the project from the RNRMC has enabled significant improvements to be made in the recruitment and development of RNRMW volunteers.

"Partnership with ILP and attainment of the Volunteer Connections Quality Mark has enabled RNRMW CVP to attain a high standard of volunteer management and support."



Scilly season

IT'S the Scilly Season in Culdrose – which means re-forging bonds between the air base and the Cornish archipelago.

A group of Merlin student aircrew – pilots, observers and aircrewmembers – from 824 NAS flew to the islands for four days of community work.

The 18-strong team were put to work by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust which is constructing a pathway made from recycled plastic through woodland and needed help to move several tons of equipment.

A task that would have taken their four-man team weeks was completed in one evening, putting the Trust well ahead of schedule.

Poor weather prevented the fliers from visiting the outlying island of St Helens, but did provide the opportunity to clear the beaches on St Marys, collecting an impressive haul – sweet wrappers and lobster pots, to

fishing nets and even a chest of drawers – and gave the aircrew their first real chance to get to know locals.

"We've been really well received here and a lot of the locals remember seeing the mighty Sea King flying over to the islands to help the people, so it's been good to come back and show them we're still around," said Lt Phil Ross, who flew Sea Kings on search-and-rescue missions to Scilly and is now mastering the Merlin Mk2.

The visit is not entirely focused on fostering close ties with Scilly islanders; it's also aimed at building team spirit and nurturing leadership skills among the fliers.

Acting LACMN 'Buster' Brown said the few days in the Scillies had been "one of the highlights of my career so far – it was great to be making such a difference to the local area whilst getting the opportunity to develop my leadership skills in a new environment. I've learnt a lot that I'll take forward with me."



Cracking good time at tasty showcase

YEAR six pupils from three local schools were invited to Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) as international students under training showcased their cultures and traditions.

Children from Dartmouth Academy, Blackawton Primary School and Stoke Fleming Primary School joined staff and Cadets for BRNC's annual International Day when the international cadets can wear their country's military uniform, or traditional clothing.

With display boards and stalls on the quarter-deck, those attending had the opportunity to sample traditional food, including Arabic coffee, dates and cooked meats.

Captain Jol Woodard, the Commanding Officer of BRNC, was given the honour of

carrying out the 'Cracking the Skull' ritual before the eating could begin.

For the schools this was not only an opportunity to learn about the countries and cultures, but also about the training provided at BRNC itself.

The international cadets made a real effort to interact with the pupils by showing them DVDs, writing their names in Arabic calligraphy and demonstrating traditional dancing; which culminated in a school 'dance off' headed up by the international cadets.

Pupils from Stoke Fleming School were so taken by the international cadets that they invited them to witness their end of year performance.

Chief Petty Officer Jason Wallace, BRNC's international student liaison officer, said: "International Day has become an important

day in the college calendar, and is vital to develop cultural understanding within the college community, which results in a better learning environment and helps everyone to get along with each other."

Presently there are 46 cadets from 23 nations undergoing initial naval training alongside those destined for careers as officers in the Royal Navy. They come from Albania, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bahamas, Barbados, Bahrain, Egypt, Ghana, Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, UAE and Ukraine.

Of the other 66, a group of 25 from Qatar and Saudi Arabia are receiving English Language training, while 41 from Saudi Arabia and Qatar are studying for degrees accredited by Plymouth University.

Sporting heritage in spotlight

A TWO-year programme to promote armed forces and sports heritage is well underway.

Until April 2020, Sporting Heritage is helping to celebrate the history, heritage and collections which share the story of sporting heritage and the armed forces.

Fundamental to the programme are the objectives to preserve, protect and provide access to heritage related to sport and the armed forces.

Through a series of localised partnerships between museums, community organisations, schools, sporting organisations and the armed forces, the company will create a programme of activity which opens up museums, archives and wider collections to new and different audiences, making these collections relevant to the communities they serve.

Sporting heritage and armed forces heritage already has a strong tradition of volunteering and this will be a central theme of our programme.

Sporting Heritage is a not-for-profit community interest company, working in partnership with AMOT, the Army Museums Ogilby Trust.

For more information about the project, or to find out how to get involved, you can contact Lynda Powell, Project Manager, on lynda.powell@armymuseums.org.uk or visit our website <https://www.sportingheritage.org.uk/content/category/news/sporting-heritage-and-the-armed-forces>.



Sporting challenges for children

MORE than 150 children from eight different Portsmouth schools took part in a range of sports and relay games at HMS Temeraire with Royal Navy personnel.

The Pompey Military Kids (PMK) scheme, jointly led by the Naval Families Federation and Portsmouth City Council, hosted an afternoon of sports for children from military families in the Portsmouth area.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Temeraire and lead for Navy Physical Development, Cdr Richard Bird, said: "It was a pleasure to see so many children out and active."

"HMS Temeraire has fantastic sporting and fitness facilities and today was a great way to bring the local community together in supporting our service

families while promoting NAVYfit."

The PMK cluster currently has 18 schools involved, comprising more than 400 children.

It aims to bring together children from service families in the area to help mitigate some of the challenges that they face through shared experiences and mutual support.

Lead organiser for the day, CPOPT Helen Richardson, whose seven-year old daughter Lily was in attendance, said: "Lily's father is currently at sea on HMS Mersey and has spent a lot of time away over the last few years."

"Events like today not only bring the service family community closer together but promote the NAVYfit ethos in a fun way."

"Lily had a fantastic time which she

couldn't wait to tell her dad about."

Nicola Thompson from the Naval Families Federation said: "Today was a fantastic opportunity to get the children together with their parents and experience sport in the Royal Navy."

"A better understanding of where their mums and dads work helps the children as well as informing the school teaching staff who were here today of the unique challenges associated with being a child from a service family."

The event was also supported by the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity and the Royal Navy Sports Lottery.

Any Service families whose children's schools are interested in joining the Pompey Military Kids school cluster should contact Nicola Thompson on nicola.thompson@nff.org.uk.



Team work is the key at Kings Camp

LUKE carries best buddy Harry as more than 200 children took part in a summer sports and fitness camp at HMS Drake.

Run over three weeks, the sports camp has attracted up to 70 children weekly, competing in as many as eight different events every day.

Run in conjunction with Kings Camp at HMS Drake's gym and sports centre, the children of Naval families enjoyed trying their hand at new sports and exploring new challenges.

The children enjoyed playing basketball, lacrosse and dodge ball as well as learning important skills such as swimming lifeguard training. The camp aimed to strengthen team-work skills by putting them into groups to compete for an overall winner over the week.

"This is my first time working here at HMS Drake in Plymouth Naval Base; I'm used to working up in Scotland and on cruise liners around the world," said

Findlay Harkins, site manager for the Kings Camp in Devonport.

"It's been really good fun here and I've been so impressed with the politeness of the children in Plymouth, they have been so well behaved."

"We have something called the 'Kings factor' which we promote though all the coaches running the activities, and it keep everything up to a high energy and high fun level, with all the sports throughout the camp week."

Kings Camp runs more than three dozen activity camps across the UK each school summer break (plus three camps in South Africa). Youngsters have a busy day ahead of them, running around from 8am until 5pm.

Supported by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, Kings Camp Foundation run sports camps in other Naval Bases during the Easter and summer holidays.

Picture: LPhoto Barry Wheeler

Statue tribute to legend of the skies

MORE than 14 million passengers each year will be reminded of the Royal Navy's – and nation's – most accomplished pilot with a statue dedicated to Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown at Edinburgh airport.

No man flew more aircraft – 487 different types – during his career both as a naval flier and test pilot, and no-one has taken off from a carrier more times (2,407) or touched back down again (2,271 times).

Capt Brown, who died two years ago at the age of 97, was born in Leith in 1919, studied German at Edinburgh University and learned to fly with Edinburgh University Air Squadron before joining the Fleet Air Arm.

The university air squadron association was determined to mark the aviator's achievements with a statue at the site where he learned to fly (today's international airport occupies the former RAF Turnhouse) – a bronze statue partially funded by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity with £14,000 and unveiled by the Duke of York, himself a naval aviator, in the presence of RN and RAF veterans, today's generation of students and local Sea Cadets.

As well as the memorial itself, featuring the pilot striding to his aircraft, cap and gloves in hand, there's an extensive information board outlining the details of the naval aviator's accomplishments.

Such was Capt Brown's expertise that long after retiring, his opinion was sought in designing the Royal Navy's new generation of

aircraft carriers now entering service.

So it was fitting that one of those two ships, HMS Prince of Wales, was represented at the unveiling in the form of Executive Warrant Officer Gary Nicholson who made the short journey from Rosyth, where his ship is in the later stages of fitting out.

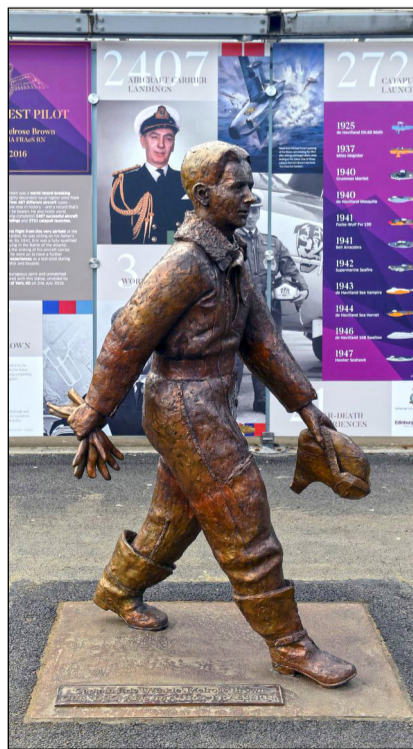
"As someone serving on board an aircraft carrier considered to be the future of naval aviation, it wasn't lost on me that the extraordinary number of deck landings Winkle-Brown completed will never be repeated again," Gary said.

"It was particularly fitting that the statue was housed within the grounds of Edinburgh Airport and takes centre stage at the entrance to the airport."

Group Captain Alasdair Montgomery from Edinburgh University Air Squadron Association added:

"Putting this statue in place to recognise this inspirational aviator would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and our association is exceptionally grateful to them."

The memorial is the first in a two-stage plan to maintain Capt Brown's name in perpetuity in Edinburgh. The next goal is to build up a fund of at least £50,000 which will help today's youngsters – especially those from underprivileged and disadvantaged backgrounds – learn to fly under the Winkle Flying Scholarship. It's estimated that it costs £3,000 to reach the standard.



Open day boosts coffers

THE Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity received a cheque for £1,000 from Warrant Officers and Senior Rates based at HMS Collingwood, near Fareham.

The money was raised partly from the establishment's open day where their Mess was made available to members and their families for a nominal fee of £1 per person.

Money was also raised during a Mess dinner where diners were encouraged to donate their spare change.

It is also tradition at Mess dinners to fine personnel for any misdemeanours that happen during the evening (for example, wearing a clip-on bow tie) and this is usually paid in the form of a bottle of port. For this evening, however, the defaulter was made to donate the equivalent cost of a bottle to the charity pot.

Hilary Jukes from RNRMC who collected the cheque, said: "This money will not only be used just on projects to benefit the moral of those currently serving but also elderly veterans in care homes and wounded, sick, and working age veterans."

Backing of a champion

EUROPEAN Tour Golfer, Chris Hanson, has become the latest supporter of the RNRMC.

A pro-golfer for more than ten years, Chris Hanson is a four-time Europro Tour champion and has had three top 10 finishes on the European Tour.

Chris became aware of the unique sacrifices that those in the Naval Service make when he met his caddy and friend, former Royal Marine, Steve Tooby.

He said: "Steve is one of my closest friends, we have a unique relationship in the golfing world, and having heard so many stories of a Royal Marine's life, I felt it

was only right to try help raise awareness of the charity and to support it in any way I could. I have so much admiration for the job the RNRMC does."

Alongside his corporate sponsors, Chris will now have the RNRMC logo proudly emblazoned on his golf club covers while he plays.

"I also know that many Marines love their golf, so I'm always at the other end of an email for anyone wanting a few tips and help with their game."

Follow Chris Hanson's progress by visiting chrishansongolf.com



Cadets launch bid to #ScrapPlastic

THE Marine Society and Sea Cadets are urging everyone to reduce their use of plastic.

The #ScrapPlastic challenge aims to help clean up waterways and fundraise to get more young people on the water.

Cadets each spend an average of 30 hours on our waterways every year, so the society sees the damage plastic pollution is doing to the environment.

#ScrapPlastic is centred around 13 days of challenges, one day for every tonne of plastic in our oceans.

From cutting out plastic products to finding plastic-free alternatives, the MSSC will show how everyone can make small changes which have a big impact.

At the same time, 90p in every pound you raise will go towards

MSSC onshore bursaries, giving more young people opportunities to get out on the water and experience it for themselves.

The remaining 10p will go to the Marine Conservation Society to contribute towards the work they do in looking after our seas.

You can help by promoting #ScrapPlastic on social media, getting involved with your local Sea Cadet unit or taking on the challenge yourself.

Visit sea-cadets.org/scrap-plastic to find out more and download your challenge pack.

The MSSC have also teamed up with Beach Guardian to create a top tips video for staying safe when cleaning up plastic in your local waterways, check it out at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzlvIXbN90E>

Warsash power to victory

MARINE engineering cadets from Warsash won the QinetiQ Powerboat Challenge for Schools.

The aim of the challenge is to construct a radio-controlled model powerboat using the QinetiQ-supplied propulsion pack.

The powerboat had to be capable of traversing the race course, requiring good turning ability and was also judged on engineering intuition, build quality and teamwork.

“Our team of cadets, ably lead by A/PO (SCC) Alex Lowton and CPO (SCC) Tom Parsons have worked extremely hard on this project and their design and production ideas were developed from our previous entries. Their convincing win at a tough competition, is a well deserved reward for their effort and I couldn’t be more proud,” said the CO of Warsash, Sub Lt (SCC) Adam Travell RNR.



Tiderace tanker treat for Portland cadets

PORTLAND Sea Cadets were invited by the Commodore of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Commodore Duncan Lamb, to attend the service of dedication for the RFA’s newest ship, RFA Tiderace.

Recognising the Sea Cadet’s abilities, the ship’s Commanding Officer, Captain Sam Shattock, extended the invitation further to give the youngsters a far greater involvement than expected by being involved with hosting the 200 guests and dignitaries, and playing an active part in demonstrating the ship’s capabilities.

The cadets took part in the dedication ceremony, which included the blessing

of the ship, and then joined with the fire-fighting and first aid teams to give practical demonstrations as the guests toured the key areas of the vessel.

The ship is the second of four new Tide-class replenishment tankers, ordered as part of the Royal Navy’s Maritime Afloat Reach and Sustainability programme to provide refuelling capability for the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers.

Portland Sea Cadets’ Commanding Officer, Lt Rachel Harris, said: “The cadets were delighted and very proud to be a part of such a prestigious event in the ship’s history, marking RFA Tiderace’s

entry in to operational service. We were extremely well looked after by the ship’s company throughout our time onboard, giving the cadets a real insight to the ship, its purpose and capabilities.

“They particularly enjoyed putting their skills to good use, giving demonstrations to all the guests in fire-fighting responses and first aid life-saving reactions.

“It was certainly a day that they’ll remember for a very long time.”

There are currently vacancies available at the unit, visit www.sea-cadets.org/portland



Time to shine

Youngsters chase glory in field gun contest

YOUNG people from across the country competed in this year’s Royal Navy Junior Leaders Field Gun contest at HMS Collingwood.

The team crews were made up of youngsters who have either recently joined the armed forces, just begun apprenticeships with University Technical Colleges, are attending local community colleges or are part of the Military Cadet Forces.

With no previous field gun experience, teams compete to build and transport a field gun and limber up, back and home, along a specialised marked track measuring 85 metres. Stopping only to complete specific actions and all with the aim of running home penalty free and with the fastest time.

The Junior Leaders Challenge is the only competition open specifically for new recruits and youths, offering them a chance to work as a team and challenge themselves in a unique setting.

Sea Cadets were among 19 teams taking part in the event this year at HMS Collingwood in Fareham, Hampshire. The team won the Plate Three contest in a time of 1:39:48.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Victoria Marson RNR, who was leading the team, said: “Our cadets and volunteers trained hard during the week leading up to the competition, it was great seeing them coming together as a team.

“This was a fantastic opportunity for our cadets and volunteers, to enhance the skills they will have already learned at Sea Cadets, such as teamwork, commitment and self-discipline.

“They did amazingly well to pick up the plate three trophy.”

The teams who took part were: HMS Collingwood, HMS Sultan, HMS Neptune, RAF Cosford, Itchen College, Fareham College, Chichester



College, Greater Brighton Met, Royal Hospital School, Aston University Engineering Academy, Derby Manufacturing UTC, Elutec, Greater Peterborough UTC, UTC Plymouth, UTC Reading, Team Salisbury (South Wiltshire UTC & S6C), UTC Barbarians (Scarborough & South Devon UTCs), Southern Titans (UTC@Harbourside & UTC Portsmouth).

The winning crew this year was HMS Neptune with a time of 1:21:35 – the competition’s fastest time). HMS Sultan finished second in a time of 1:23:22.

Chichester College won Plate One with a time of 1:26:97.

Royal Hospital School finished as the highest non-military team, and won the Microsoft Trainers trophy.

Andy one of the mentors said: “I’ve had been involved in the main competition for years and wanted to give something back to field gun.”

Chairman of the RNRMC Field Gun, Cdre Graeme Little, said: “Junior Leaders is so much more than a competition.

“Whilst the competition is an inevitable focus, the event is a week-long experience for young people, immersed in a Naval Service environment, to develop a range of key leadership and teamwork skills.

“I never cease to be impressed by the achievements of the young people, the progress that they make through the week is always a huge sense of achievement to the individuals and all those involved in the process.”





Chance to learn ropes

SEA Cadets from across the UK participated in a week of science, technology, engineering and mathematics activities at the HMS Sultan Sea Cadets Engineering Summer Camp.

Twenty four cadets aged between 14 and 18 were given hands-on experience of air and marine engineering as part of the Year of Engineering cross-government campaign to encourage young people into engineering.

The week also offered the cadets an opportunity to develop an understanding of leadership within the Royal Naval Leadership Academy at HMS Collingwood, and make trips to QinetiQ, the Royal Navy's research agency, and go onboard HMS Dragon and HMS Westminster.

Before heading home the cadets ensured that their boots were sparkling as they attended a special passing-out parade.

Certificates were presented to each cadet by Cdre Paul Marshall, the Type 26 programme director.

In addition, Cdt Titania, from Hull-based unit TS Iron Duke, was presented with a special prize as the group's top performer.

She said: "I travelled a long way to take part in the week and I'm really glad that I have."

"I didn't think I was passionate about engineering, but then a few years ago I tried for my third-class engineering badge and got into it a bit more and also got into motor vehicles. After that I decided I wanted to start looking at marine engineering and now I want to succeed as a marine engineer in either the Royal Navy or Merchant Navy."

Penarth earn their crusts

CADETS from Penarth Unit helped launch a new range of pies to help the Walking with Wounded Charity.

Charity manager at Morrisons in Cardiff, Rhys Pursey, invited cadets from TS Glamorgan to take part in the launch of the range, called Beef Stew.

Able Cdt Cameron and his grandmother Linda, who just happens to be the South Wales District Padre, spent the day raising the profile of the Sea Cadets and encouraging shoppers to taste and then purchase the new pies.

During the day some 500 pies were sold, with 25 percent of the profits going to charity.

The cadets and staff in attendance also collected £90 in donations from shoppers for their unit.



Seaside treat for TS Laforey

CADETS from Northampton march past the Olympia Leisure complex in Scarborough during an Armed Forces parade.

The unit also had the honour of taking part in the Northampton Armed Forces Day parade.

The unit headed north to take part in the annual field gun championship.

Despite having not seeing a field gun before, Team Laforey, held Scarborough to account with record crowds of over 20,000.

In a series of hard-fought races Scarborough were finally crowned winners. Scarborough are the holders of the Canada Trophy for the best unit in the Sea Cadets, a trophy Northampton won in 2004 and 2010. The young people enjoyed the day and their time by the seaside, building sand castles and enjoying ice creams.

Northampton Sea Cadets have also supported the local community and completed its outreach scheme partnering with local schools through the RYA OnBoard scheme.

The Onboard scheme is also developing the instructional skills of the older Sea Cadets in the unit with the 15 to 17 year old age group leading the instruction under the supervision of qualified adult volunteers.

Cadets supported the Friends of Becketts Park in a river and park clean up. The cadets removed seven bin bags of plastic from the river.

Commanding Officer Lt Chris Read said: "These links with the local community bring our young people closer to the community and demonstrate the positive impact that our organisation has on the development of young people."

It isn't just the older cadets who have

fun, as the unit hosted a Junior Sea Cadet weekend for the younger members of the ship's company.

They had a fun-filled weekend of boating on the river, followed by orienteering in Salcey Forest. The weekend concluded with a trip up the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal on the narrowboat Diamond, navigating through 17 locks over the four-mile connection between the River Nene and the Grand Union Canal.

The unit has also had a busy and successful period in competition with great results at the Area Combined Regatta.

POC Aaron and Royal Marines Cadet Amy showed off their powerboating skills by achieving a place in the Power Boat Handling Class.

Representing the district, TS Laforey had four teams competing in the Trinity rowing and three cadets in the Slide Seat Rowing.

All cadets who participated not only worked hard but showed real team work supporting each other through all their races. The National Combined Regatta takes place at the Excel Centre in London this month.

Many opportunities are available for cadets to participate in and the full unit calendar can be found on <http://calendar.northamptonseacadets.org.uk>, along with further course and event details.

Northampton Sea Cadets meet on Tuesday and Friday evenings and Northampton Junior Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets meet on a Wednesday and Friday evening from 7pm to 9.15pm at their headquarters in Nunn Mills Road, Northampton. For details visit www.northamptonseacadets.org.uk.



Juniors flock to summer camp

THREE hundred Junior Sea Cadets descended upon Kingswood Activity Centre in Doncaster for a week packed full of fun, activities and challenges.

The 10 and 11-year-olds make the annual trip with Sea Cadets' famous Junior Summer Camp, which the highlight of the year for any junior cadet.

More than 500 junior cadets applied to experience the camp, with the lucky 300, from 133 units across the country, getting the chance to go on the adventure of a lifetime and experience new formidable activities such as abseiling and archery.

Although, for the young cadets it's not all about the thrill of propelling themselves backwards down an abseiling wall, the cadets will pick up life skills down the way as the centre tests the cadets' brains through

indoor initiative exercises and orienteering.

Camp Commanding Officer for the past six years, Lt Cdr (SCC) Victoria Marson RNR said: "The activity centre provides a brilliant range of activities that challenge our young people in a number of ways."

"With the aid of our excellent CFAV's and volunteer senior cadets, our juniors experience an amazing week all about meeting new friends, learning to work in teams, stepping outside of their own comfort zone, and learning new life skills."

"All of these can carry forward to help them grow and the camp ticks all the right boxes for our young people's development. Like so many of the volunteers here, I love it, that's why I keep coming back each year."



Test of leadership skills

A GROUP of students from one of the nation's newest Combined Cadet Forces faced the challenges of HMS Collingwood's low ropes course.

Westcliff Combined Cadet Force has only been in existence for two months and was set up under the Cadet Expansion Programme, funded by LIBOR grants.

Cadets travelled from their school in Essex for a taste of naval life, which began with a night spent on HMS Bristol, a Type 82 destroyer moored at Whale Island.

The following morning saw the 13-14 year-olds move to nearby HMS Collingwood where they were put through their paces on the low ropes.

These obstacles are designed to test not only the cadets' stamina and endurance but also their teamwork and problem-solving skills.

Christina Bailey, who accompanied the group from the school said: "Our Royal Navy section has only been up and running for around six months, but in this time, we have been astounded by the quality and variety of activities our cadets have had access to."



Falklands chapel funded

ADMIRAL Lord West shares a joke with Eric Haskell of the Figgard Association as the latter hands over more than £3,500 to support the Falklands Memorial Chapel.

Members of the association, which represents former RN artificers, responded to a rallying cry from Cdr Chris Craig, CO of HMS Alacrity in the 1982 conflict, to help the Memorial Chapel Trust maintain the building at Pangbourne College.

The Berkshire establishment has long-standing ties with the Royal and Merchant Navies and 45 former students of the college served in the South Atlantic conflict, one in three was decorated or honoured.

Hence it was chosen for the siting of the memorial college,

which was opened by the Queen in 2000.

Former First Sea Lord Admiral Lord West – CO of the second British ship lost in the conflict, HMS Ardent – is president of the memorial chapel trustees and gratefully received the donation, which is recognized inside the building alongside other supporters of the Chapel Window and Seat Sponsorship Appeal.

Fourteen artificers lost their lives in the 1982 – their names are carved in stone alongside other servicemen and civilians on a memorial wall in the ante-chapel at Pangbourne, a roll of honour which was scrutinised by Figgard Association members and their families ahead of a service of remembrance.

Sultan hosts blind camp

BLIND Veterans from across the UK converged on HMS Sultan for their annual summer camp.

Hoopla, basketball, deck hockey and an obstacle course were just some of the challenges undertaken by the group of 17 veterans, who were aided by their human 'dogs' – a group of volunteers from HMS Sultan and the retired Service community.

Traditionally supported by the FAA Field Gun Crew, the summer camp has been hosted by HMS Sultan since 1996 following the closure of nearby HMS Daedalus – in fact, many of those gunners involved with the camp at the air station remain involved to this day.

"This is my 11th year here and the best bit is the camaraderie between all the boys which I really enjoy," said blind RN veteran Bryan Durber.

"I'm fairly good at the hoops but got nothing on the basketball but then again I have had a lot of trouble with my dog [David Hazelwood]!"

Guildhall gathering for Tiffs

A NEW collective noun was coined at an iconic London venue when 670 places were laid at dinner to commemorate the 150th anniversary of artificers in the Royal Navy: a Guildhall of artificers.

The Honorary President was the Captain of HMS Sultan Capt Peter Towell, an ex-artificer and guest of honour was former Chief Naval Engineer, Vice Admiral Sir Simon Lister.

Everyone at table received an engraved, personalised firing glass as a memento of the occasion which proved most effective at holding a fulsome measure of port.

From far and wide, of all ranks and rates and of all ages this was without doubt the largest gathering of Royal Naval Artificers ever conceived – "the biggest Tiffies Mess ever".

Upwards of 14,000 years of Royal Naval service were represented and many commented on the wealth

of experience and capability represented.

The furthest travelled group were 13 from New Zealand and 11 from Australia, some in their late 80s.

Most senior of all present was Ordnance Artificer John Harrison at 103. He was treated to first-class travel by Mercedes limousine and accompanied by his wing man Artificer Geoff Bishop, a mere 82 years old. John was made a great fuss of, received a standing ovation and

thoroughly enjoyed this unique event.

There were four sets of fathers and sons, four sets of brothers and six female artificers, one of whom (MEA Dawn Jennings) proposed Saturday's Toast. Other toasts proposed following the Loyal Toast and the toast to 'All Heads of State here represented' were Jackie Fisher (David Woollard) and to Absent Friends (Cliff Fiander).

Artificers may not henceforth provide the engineering

backbone of the Royal Navy but this gathering was an impressive reminder of the strength, quality, service commitment and esprit de corps of the Royal Navy artificer cadre.

A special souvenir edition of the RNEBS Bulletin has been produced by Mark Stevens. It is packed with photos, background articles and lists all the diners.

It is available to all at https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/4e5b93_4bd50d8406d843db89d78cb942ff677b.pdf.

Ready to remember

SHIPMATES at Rosyth and West Fife are determined the 100th anniversary of the guns falling silent in the Great War is marked in style, staging a major ceremony at Caledonia on November 11.

The branch has signed up to support the 'Battles Over' beacon lighting initiative which should see as many as 1,000 fires lit up and down the land in memory of the 17-plus million civilian and military dead on both sides.

Staff at nearby Babcock have volunteered to build the beacon, which will be donated to the community after the ceremony.

The lighting forms just one strand of a day of events beginning before dawn with the strains of *The Battles O'er* played by 11-year-old piper Brooklyn Morris at Inverkeithing Garden of Remembrance.

Youth is a key part of the branch's plans for November 11. Shipmates have engaged with nine primary schools in the area. Year 7 pupils from each have been asked to compose a poem to be read out on Armistice Day alongside famous verse by WW1 poets.

As well as poetry from young and old, the ceremony ahead of the beacon lighting will feature Bruntsland Pipe Band and a service of thanksgiving led by the Rev Mary Anne Rennie and attended by local dignitaries and political leaders such as MPs and Lord Lieutenant John Balfour.

BFBBS will beam footage of WW1 on to a large screen specially erected at Caledonia, and will also stream live coverage of the schoolchildren reciting the poems.

Organising the event on the Caledonia parade ground has been assisted by the base's staff

and £7,850 from the Armed Forces Community Covenant Fund, as well as fund-raising events staged by the branch – and donations by members.

"This is very much a unique, once-only event, designed to honour those who sacrificed so much in this war to end all wars," said Jim Stewart, honorary treasurer.

"The ceremony is also aimed at promoting lasting peace – it's our aim to pass this message down through the youth of today."

To give youngsters a greater understanding of the conflict they will be remembering, S/Ms John Sherwood and Norman Thoroughgood have been visiting local schools, as well as Sea,

Army, and RAF Cadets plus other youth groups to explain both the war and its effect on the Rosyth area.

One hundred years ago, the then new naval base was home to the battle-cruisers which were heavily in action, especially in the first half of the war, and suffered horrific losses at Jutland.

As an enduring legacy, branch members intend to maintain their links with the many youth and community groups and schools involved, and intend to conduct tree planting in the area. And in the even longer term, the branch is looking at the feasibility of a war memorial being erected in Rosyth.

Support Shiny Sheff

HMS Sheffield veterans are pleading for help so a Union Jack from the sunken destroyer can take pride of place in the city's cathedral.

The national standard was flown by the Type 42 destroyer during the early years of her career and donated to an American museum during a goodwill visit four decades ago.

It was returned to the British people last year after restoration work by experts at the Pencader Museum in Newark, Delaware.

Since then it's been handed over to staff at Sheffield Cathedral by members of the HMS Sheffield Association – who hope to see it take pride of place alongside standards from the previous Shiny Sheff.

The Battle Ensign and Union Flag from the wartime cruiser hang in the cathedral's St George's Chapel in memory of the vessel which played a key role in the hunt for the Bismarck and served extensively in the Arctic

and Mediterranean before being broken up in 1967.

The next Shiny Sheff was the first Type 42 destroyer – and the first British casualty of the Falklands conflict, left a burned out hulk by an Exocet missile which struck her on May 4 1982.

Twenty crew were killed while salvage efforts to save the destroyer ultimately failed and she sank six days later – the first Royal Navy vessel lost in action since WW 2.

To site her Union Jack in the cathedral requires around £5,000 (half of that for the bracket and £1,000 for the staff), so the HMS Sheffield Association is looking to crowdfunding to help with the cost so that the standard can be in place in time for the 37th anniversary service marking the destroyer's loss next May.

You can donate via: www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/hmssheffieldassociation/ 80?utm_id=1&utm_term=vyBpk9gnX

Limavady enter the Phantom zone

ONCE Navy, always Navy.

No, we're talking about shipmates of RNA Limavady lined up here, but the magnificent jet behind them.

This is 007/XT864, a McDonnell-Douglas Phantom, one of a batch procured for the Fleet Air Arm in the 1960s and 70s – now lovingly restored (though not to flying order) by the Ulster Aviation Society.

Limavady branch donated some cash to help the folk at the UAS at their home on the edge of an old RAF airfield outside Lisburn and wanted to see the interceptor/fighter-bomber in her finished state once again.

In its prime, the F4 Phantom was the F-35 of its day; the carrier jet of choice for the US and Royal Navies, capable of a top speed just under twice the speed of sound.

XT864 first flew in April 1968 and was delivered to the RN later that year, serving with 700(P) NAS for evaluation, then 767 NAS for training and finally on the front line with 892 NAS, flying from the deck of Britain's last big deck carrier, HMS Ark Royal.

When she paid off in 1978, the Phantoms were transferred to the RAF; XT864 served 111 Sqn at RAF Leuchars for nearly a decade, then became the base's gate guardian.

Leuchars closed as an RAF station in 2015, but the Ulster aviation buffs snapped the jet up – beginning a three-year restoration project, which also saw XT864 immortalised by model makers Airfix who produced a 1:72 scale replica.

"The project to restore the Phantom to its original state has been meticulously carried out by members of the UAS – they should be congratulated on the final results," said S/M John Pudney.

It's not the only former FAA aircraft the Ulstermen are restoring. All in various stages of refurbishment are: Grumman F4F Wildcat JV 482 (WW2 carrier fighter); Hawker Sea Hawk FB5 WN 108 (post-war carrier fighter); Blackburn Buccaneer SB XV 361 (still in RAF colours); Fairey Gannet ECM 6 XA 36; Percival P.57 Sea Prince T1 WF 122 (post-war transporter).



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Today's sailors meet their wartime forebears to ensure the golden thread of Royal Navy history remains unbroken

An inspirational generation

A WORLD War 2 Fleet Air Arm pilot recalled his flying days during an emotional visit to RNAS Yeovilton.

Centenarian Ian Templer watched the only flying Mk1 Swordfish take to the skies, sparking memories of 1940 when he got his wings and a commission as acting temporary Sub-Lieutenant.

Mr Templer spent two weeks at Royal Naval College Greenwich learning about Naval customs and regulations before joining RNAS Crail in Scotland for torpedo training.

He then went to Arbroath to learn the basics of deck landings before going to Detling in Kent to join a detached flight of three Fairey Swordfish biplanes – known as string bags.

“When I heard the Admiralty were recruiting for the Fleet Air Arm in 1940 – I was a meteorology assistant – I jumped at it,” said Mr Templer.

“There wasn't time to think about the risks involved it was a very hectic time. I got my Wings at the end of 1940 and following deck-landing training and night-flying training, I was sent to Detling, to support night time bombardments of the Channel ports. You had a job to do and got on with it.”

His youngest daughter Bryony Blair said: “It's just fantastic to bring him here. I know how much this means to him and the opportunity to see the Swordfish fly. We are immensely proud of him and his contribution all those years ago.”

During his visit to Yeovilton Mr Templer met Cdr Nathan Gray (the two are pictured above by LPhoto Guy Pool), a test pilot currently flying the F-35B Lightning.

“I feel immensely proud to meet Ian, what an absolute privilege it is to shake his hand.



To know what his generation in the Fleet Air Arm achieved in this biplane made of Irish linen during World War 2 is truly inspiring and the foundation on which we operate today.”

Cdr Gray, who flew in the Swordfish during his visit to Yeovilton, added: “We learn from our past to take into the future. Back in the day the Swordfish was cutting edge and their test pilots would work out what was the most advanced way to have the advantage on the enemy.

“Thinking about it now 80 years on we look back on the Swordfish and see it in its historic state, just as 50 years from now our children's children will see the F-35. It's important to know where you came from and to know

what you've got ahead of you.

“Being given the responsibility of operating this fifth-generation aircraft on board the only aircraft carrier purpose built for the F-35 for the first time in history, will be a huge privilege.”

Mr Templer, who lives in Dorset, and celebrated his 100th birthday in June, had not visited Yeovilton since 1944.

Meanwhile, in Gateshead veteran submariner George Crawley became the latest member of our greatest generation to be honoured by the French for his wartime exploits.

Crew from today's HMS Victorious and Vengeance joined the 93-year-old and his family at HMS Calliope, where the wartime ‘deep’ was presented

with the Légion d'Honneur by Brigadier General Herbé Bizeul on behalf of France's President Macron.

Mr Crawley, who lives in nearby Whitley Bay, joined the RN in 1941 at the age of 17 and joined battleship HMS Rodney after completing his training as a signaller at HMS Collingwood.

He subsequently volunteered for the Submarine Service and underwent a two-day crash-course – very different from the intensive 25-week training taken by 21st-Century submariners – before being thrust into action with HMS Talbot, based in Malta, in October 1943.

He subsequently switched to the Free French Submarine Curie. The boat – complete with



canine mascot Radium on board – patrolled off Nazi-occupied French ports in 1943 and 1944.

These were, understandably, highly-dangerous missions; Curie was depth charged and, on the surface, engaged enemy vessels with her gun, which Mr Crawley helped man.

Later in the war, he returned to British boats, serving in HM Submarines Universal, Medway and Upstart.

He was also posted to HMS Elfin at Blyth where, over Christmas 1944, he got to know Freda while delivering signals to her office. In August 1945, the couple tied the knot.

He received the French decoration for his service aboard the Curie – and like most men of

his generation is modest about his wartime service.

“This honour is not just for me, but for all of Her Majesty's Submariners,” he told everyone present, who loudly applauded the veteran off the Calliope parade ground as he left for a private celebration with family, friends and fellow submariners.

“We are in awe of Mr Crawley's achievements as a submariner, as were all who attended.

“It was also a great opportunity to meet the people of Tyneside and raise the profile of the Submarine Service,” said V-boat officer Lt Cdr Simon Barr, who formed part of the ceremonial guard for the medal presentation and is pictured above right with Mr Crawley.

From Kamikazes to the Queen



ROYAL Navy photographers have lost one of their last links with the World War 2 generation with the passing of Reginald Davis.

The 93-year-old (pictured, left, holding a portrait of his young self) became famous in the post-war era as the photographer of choice for the Royal Family as well as Hollywood ‘royalty’.

His portfolio is a who's who of anyone who was someone from the 1950s through to the 1980s: the Queen, Princess Margaret, Prince Charles and, later, a young Prince William, as well as Churchill, the Shah of Iran, and Hollywood greats such as Elizabeth Taylor and Mr Davis' favourite actress, Sophia Loren.

And it was all sparked by a decision he made as an 18-year-old back in training for the Royal Navy in 1943.

Conscious that the war wouldn't last forever and unsure of his future career, when offered the chance to become a Royal Navy photographer he decided it was something he could see himself doing in civvy street.

Before that, however, there was the small matter of winning the war. After completing his training – including aerial photography which he found “rather scary” – Reginald Davis was assigned to the British Pacific Fleet, eventually joining 1836 Naval Air Squadron and its Corsair fighters aboard aircraft carrier HMS Victorious.

While war in Europe was drawing to a close, Victorious



● One of Reginald Davis' iconic wartime shots – a Corsair bursting into flames as it lands on Victorious' flight deck

was one of several British carriers supporting the invasion of the island of Okinawa – during which they came under ferocious kamikaze attacks.

Mr Davis' action stations were either in the photographic section on board – from which there was little chance of escape in the event of a torpedo hit, for it was sealed off and below the waterline – or on deck recording the landing and take-off of his squadron.

On May 9 1945 – one day after the guns fell silent in Europe – Victorious was subjected to a particularly severe assault from enemy aircraft.

“Kamikaze aircraft were all round the fleet – like bees around the honey pot,” Mr Davis

recalled.

“The noise of the Oerlikon guns and the 4.5in shelling coupled with the screeching of aircraft was deafening. Many aircraft were falling into the sea – theirs and ours. It was hell.

“One Kamikaze hit us forward – our deck was 4in steel – and it made a huge hole, tearing the metal apart. I was photographing the flight deck and seeing the sky full of white smoke from the fighting. It was indeed a terrible day.”

The armoured flight deck saved HMS Victorious – and other British carriers – and ensured they were in action again within hours of the Japanese attacks. The carrier remained off

Japan for most of the remaining three weeks of the war.

Mr Davis spent another year in the Royal Navy, but found peacetime life on air bases ‘flat’ by comparison with combat photography and was demobbed in 1946.

He soon joined a press agency, worked on the British classic crime film *Brighton Rock*, joined the *Daily Express* covering Royal events – he photographed more than a dozen royal weddings in his career – film premiers and major social events and even introduced Elizabeth Taylor to her sixth husband.

Just ten days before his death, Mr Davis was interviewed by the Royal Navy's senior photographer, WO1 Nathan Dua, in preparation for centenary commemorations of the photographic branch next year.

“Meeting Reginald was fascinating – from the way he was recruited as a photographer, to the images he took, some of which truly deserve the tag ‘iconic’,” said WO1 Dua.

“Although he became famous for his photographs of the Royal Family and the golden age of Hollywood, his wartime pictures are jaw-dropping – I cannot even begin to imagine the danger he was in to take them.

“We had a lovely chat – and what was striking throughout, as well as the hospitality he and his wife Audrey showed, was that he stressed that he owed his career to the time he spent in the Royal Navy 75 years ago.”



Medal for combating 'untold evil'

THIS is the new medal struck to recognise those involved in the struggle against terrorism and fundamentalism.

Twelve RN personnel out of 38 men and women from across the military received the first Operational Service Medal to be created since 2003 from Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson.

UK forces have been involved in the fight against Daesh since 2014 under the banner of Operation Shader – there remain 1,400 personnel committed to this day.

The RAF have conducted more than 1,700 strikes against Daesh terrorist targets and Britain's three services have helped train more than 77,000 Iraqi Security Forces. As a result, their capacity to defeat Daesh has increased considerably.

Mr Williamson said all could be "extremely proud" of their contribution to defeat "such untold evil".

Among the 12 RN recipients of the first Iraq & Syria medals issued was Lt Cdr Lindsey Waudby who spent six months in Baghdad in 2016 at the headquarters of the Combined Joint Forces, Land Component Command – one of more than 200 Britons spread across the country, just half a dozen of them Senior Service.

At the time, Iraq's Security Forces were locked in a life-and-death struggle with Daesh across swathes of the country, with Coalition forces such as the UK providing much of the support, planning and training needed to defeat the uprising.

Although Baghdad was not in the front line of the fighting with Daesh forces (unlike the city of Fallujah – just 30 miles away from the Iraqi capital), Lt Cdr Waudby was all too aware of the horrors of the conflict and what was at stake for the future of the Iraqi people.

"In Baghdad, mass slayings in the form of suicide bombings were a daily occurrence as Daesh attempted to divert security forces away from the fight," she said.

"Although the RN's contribution was relatively small and despite this very much being a land campaign, our experience and professionalism were highly valued by Coalition and Iraqi forces alike.

"Above all, we were focused on the defeat of Daesh – and Daesh have now lost the fight in Iraq."

A taste of Victory

MEET Portsmouth's sailors of the year – rewarded in style for their efforts over the past 12 months with an evening on the world's greatest warship.

HMS Victory was the setting for the presentation of Portsmouth Flotilla's annual awards – awards which this year took the form of designer prints by artist Gillian Jones representing the winner's ship or unit.

After handing out the prints, Rear Admiral Chris Gardner, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Ships), and Commodore Craig Wood, Commander Portsmouth Flotilla, invited the recipients and families to dine in HMS Nelson's wardroom.

Among those recognised were: Medical Assistant **PO Tom Usher**, who prepared and ran HMS Duncan's sickbay on three operational deployments – earning comments from assessors that it was the 'best in the flotilla'.

In addition, he provided first-rate training and instruction for shipmates which saved time and money sending them ashore for courses and demonstrated his clinical expertise and efficiency when treating a shipmate with a limb-threatening injury, getting the patient safely ashore within 60 minutes of the incident – sparing the victim long-term damage and substantially helping his recovery.

LWtr Elizabeth Arrowsmith of the Waterfront Logistics Support Group carried out tasks normally performed by senior



ratings and acted as a role model to both fellow leading hands and rookie sailors fresh out of training, tackling everything with enthusiasm and diligence.

LET(ME) Kalisiana Koro Junior of MCM2 Crew 4 (HMS Cattistock, Middleton and now Chiddingfold) demonstrated both his skill and leadership as a marine engineer and a leading hand, leading his shipmates by example, coaching and mentoring them to help them to attain their personal goals.

He frequently put the needs of the Service before his personal life, volunteering to plug gaps and regularly being praised by his squadron, FOST staff and shipmates for his all-round efforts and attitude.

And seaboat coxswain **AB(Sea) Steven Court** has been "a standout character" while serving in HMS Mersey around the UK on fishery patrols and especially in helping minehunter crews get used to operating a River-class ship rather than a Hunt.

Mersey is jointly crewed by 'cod squad' veterans and mine warfare specialists – the latter are helping the Fishery Protection Squadron transition to the second-generation River-class ships.

As a reservist, the able seaman has shown how the RNR can work with the regular service seamlessly "with fantastic results".

Winners unable to attend due to being deployed will be recognised at a later date.

Perfect pitch may sway the dragons

HAVE you got a bright idea which you believe will save the RN thousands, perhaps millions?

Then enter the *Dragons' Den*. Like the namesake TV show, the Royal Navy has its very own panel of dragons who meet regularly to determine whether your brainwave is a practical solution to a problem.

Back in 2016, Capt JJ Bailey suggested that replacing normal lighting across the entire Fleet and naval establishments with LED lights could save the RN £1.4m every year.

LEDs go beyond saving fuel/money/the environment. They save time by reducing the number of hours spent replacing bulbs, and effort by requiring fewer upgrades, freeing the ships' company for their main purpose.

Given the numerous 'wins' outlined in Capt Bailey's pitch, the Dragons said 'yes'.

"That's what *Dragons' Den* does best," said Abigail Eardley from the RN's NEST team based at Fleet HQ.

"It provides an opportunity for you to fix problems that take too much time, money, or effort. Whatever your proposal, wherever in the world, whether civilian or military—if you've got a good idea, we want to hear it. Ideas like LED lights don't just allow you to improve the service during your time here, but for years to come."

Submissions to *Dragons' Den* are open on a rolling basis, completed with the help of a dedicated team, and provide you the chance ultimately to present to the Second Sea Lord.

Contact navy-dragonsden@mod.gov.uk or 02392 625513 to discuss your idea.

DNA to ID Korean War dead

DID you lose relatives in the Korean War?

If you did and their bodies were never found, the recent rapprochement with Pyongyang might offer closure.

While most British casualties were eventually laid to rest in the impressive United Nations cemetery at Busan in South Korea – visited only a matter of weeks ago by the ship's company of HMS Albion – the bodies of nearly 300 Britons remain unaccounted for.

Under the agreement signed by US President Trump and North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un, remains of troops who fought under the banner of the United Nations, are being recovered and returned to the US for identification.

These remains may include UK casualties. DNA samples will be used to support identification over the next few years to pick out any British dead from among them.

Those remains formally identified will be buried with full military honours at the United Nations cemetery in Busan; the MOD intends to cover costs for



immediate family members to attend.

At least five Royal Navy carriers, plus escorts, provided air support throughout the conflict; it was Fleet Air Arm, not the RAF, which offered fighter cover in Korean skies, while Royal Marines of 41 Commando saw extensive action on the ground, especially in the withdrawal from the Choisin Reservoir (pictured

above courtesy of the Imperial War Museum/IWM MH 33278); it suffered 31 dead and 17 men taken prisoner during the 15 months the unit was committed on the peninsula.

Family members of those missing personnel who have no known grave are asked to call the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre on 01452 854622 / 855258.

Love me, fender

A SUGGESTION to improve the fenders at HMNB Devonport is among the latest successful ideas from the GEMS scheme.

Run by WO1 Spike Hughes, the scheme is not only about producing savings, it is about creating improvements in the way which we work across the MOD.

In Devonport it became apparent there was an urgent requirement to amend the structure of the backboard fender system.

During spells of bad weather, the current design prevented the backboards from rising with the tide.

GEMS awarded £500 to the idea of changing the design. Existing rubber fenders were replaced with low-friction plastic.

Strips of the same plastic were also installed in

channels down the face of No.1 Jetty.

This move now allows the backboards to float freely when a vessel is alongside.

GEMS 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 £13.2m per year.

These ideas have also made MOD safer, more environmentally friendly and more operationally effective.

If you have an idea, contact WO1 Hughes at NAVY-MARCAP-INNOVATION-INT-MGR.



Comms Shack

THIS has been a very busy month for CIS Specs as we continue to achieve a steady state, writes WO1 Daniel Castle, so what has your management been doing?

1. The JE has completed for GS ET(CIS) Specs and once WESM(CIS) Specs have completed their JE on August 30, PCAP will then receive the final report which will be published.

2. Initial engagement has taken place with the BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT, to investigate what 'standards' we could award our people. I must stress this is only one avenue we are investigating and the team at Collingwood (VQ Centre) is working tirelessly to identify over-recognised awards – more to follow, early stages.

3. Career Courses: Over recent months I've visited all career courses passing out from Collingwood and providing them all with a full update on the current situation regarding the CIS Spec. I consider this engagement vital and I will continue to visit these courses, but I would stress that when your new LH/PO joins, make sure you make the most out of the update and share that information with your teams onboard.

4. As stated before, I've set up a Defence Connect site to allow us all to keep up to date and stay connected. I would encourage you to join the page so you have the latest information to hand, as I think you would agree there is still some confusion out there.

I will end with a challenge: There is a lot of change affecting us and I would ask: 'What have you done to make a difference?' It is very easy to raise issues, it is harder to take the time to fix them, so over to you all – what could you do to make things better?

Contact daniel.castle304@mod.gov.uk or 93832 8981.

Portsmouth's golden touch

SAILORS and Royal Marines living in Portsmouth receive first-rate support from the local authority.

Portsmouth City Council is the first in the South East to receive a Gold award in the Defence Employers Recognition scheme in acknowledgment of its work backing the Armed Forces Covenant.

The covenant aims to ensure that service personnel and their families are treated fairly wherever they live – and are not disadvantaged as a result of serving in the armed forces when it comes to issues affecting home life.

Among the areas focused on by Portsmouth are:

- education and family well-being
- having a home
- starting a new career
- access to healthcare

All 407 authorities and councils across the UK have signed up to the covenant, alongside over 1,300 British organisations and groups, four mobile phone service providers – contracts/bills were among the biggest bugbears affecting personnel – and seven in every eight car insurance firms.

Honorary title for women's advocate

FORMER BBC World Service journalist and prominent women's charity worker Durdana Ansari has been appointed as an honorary Royal Navy officer.

The honour was formally announced on board the Pakistani Navy frigate PNS Aslat, which visited Portsmouth.

The Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Tony Radakin, appointed Durdana in her new role as an honorary Lieutenant Commander in front of officials, family and friends from the Pakistani community.

As an honorary officer Durdana will be an active advocate for the Naval Service, and is the first female Muslim honorary officer in the Royal Navy.

She said: "I am honoured to have been invited to join the Royal Navy as an honorary officer."

"It has given me a real sense of pride and allowed me another platform to contribute to British society as a proud British citizen."

"I am even more honoured to be the first female Muslim honorary officer."

"I have worked hard for our country in many sectors before, and I believe it is my duty to give back to the communities of this great land."

"I am delighted to be given this great opportunity to work with the Royal Navy to reach out to our Asian communities to create mutual understanding and learn more about one another."

Durdana has been involved with many community projects in the UK that motivate women from all educational and social levels to be their best.

She also supports charitable projects in Pakistan and is an ambassador for Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST).

As a journalist, she has interviewed some of the top actors in Bollywood as well as many politicians and heads of states across South Asia.

Admiral Radakin said: "We are absolutely delighted that Durdana has accepted this role with the Royal Navy."

"Her experience as a journalist and as a leader of community projects will only build on the strong links that we have with the ethnic communities that the Royal Navy is committed to serve."

"The Royal Navy has a strong relationship with the UK's Asian community and I am delighted that Durdana is the first muslim woman from the Pakistani community to take on this role."

Picture: LPhot Barry Swainsbury



Commandos DARE to be innovative

ROYAL Marines swapped daring for DARE as they invited technology and industry leaders into their Plymouth home to solve battlefield problems.

3 Commando Brigade and 30 Commando IX Group hosted their first innovation day, asking the best and the brightest from civvy street to showcase some of their latest kit which might be useful on the field of battle.

And commandos from marines to majors had the chance to pitch tech ideas to a *Dragons' Den*-esque panel – with the promise of cash to turn successful bids into reality.

Brigade Commander Brig Gwyn Jenkins and the Navy's Chief Technology Officer Colonel Dan Cheeseman, who attended the event at Stonehouse barracks, both underlined the importance of innovation in an unstable world – and that the Corps was determined to be at the spearhead of technological thinking.

A multitude of kit and equipment was on display from the leading technology firms covering communication systems and advanced sensors to cutting-edge vehicles and weaponry.

"The Royal Marines have thrived for more than 350 years due to their inherent ability to adapt and overcome," explained Capt George Eatwell of 30 Commando IX Group which specialises in battlefield intelligence.

"The complex threats of the 21st Century demand commandos continue their evolution, so the event showed

DARE to INNOVATE

how Royal Marines might fight in the future against an increasingly technologically-advanced foe."

The *Dragons' Den*-style presentation saw three successful bids awarded up to £5,000 funding to develop their ideas, having impressed the DARE (Discovery, Assessment and Rapid Exploitation) team who are looking at the way today's technology can help tomorrow's Royal Navy.

They've already backed a man overboard rescue system using drones and lighting to improve safety for sailors working on flight decks.

Among the Royal Marine ideas which received the green light: one which significantly improves beach reconnaissance, key to the marines' amphibious operations.

Based on the success of the inaugural innovation day, the brigade intends it to become an annual event.

It's your 2-6

REMEMBER: these pages are for you – Serving personnel and their families.

If there's a message, story or initiative you wish to communicate via the Royal Navy's internal communications channels, contact their head Sophie Dennis via navymediacomms-icmailbox@mod.gov.uk

Inspirational women praised

LEADING Writer Rebecca Fyans was named as a Rising Star in Defence at a prestigious awards ceremony in London.

She was singled out as an inspirational role model in recognition of her tireless charity work championing a cause she is so passionate about.

Rebecca was plucked from 1,250 high-calibre entries to win the award.

She joined the Royal Navy in 2007 and her son Sebby was born in 2013 with Down syndrome.

"This is when my life changed for the better, forever," says the mum of two.

"The Royal Navy allowed me to take a career break to dedicate my time to ensuring he had the best start in life. During this time I became closely involved with a children's charity, the Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association.

"Volunteering as a charity secretary, trustee and new parent liaison I have: delivered training to midwives on how to give a positive diagnosis of DS; lectured college students and educational professionals; spoken at charity events and high profile dinners; been filmed for TV; and organised and taken part in multiple fundraising events."

Rebecca, who works in Naval Legal Services at Navy Command HQ, in Portsmouth, added: "I'm proof that you can have a full-time career in the Royal Navy,



● Rebecca (second right) celebrates with fellow Rising Stars

a husband that also serves in the military, two children – one with additional needs – and be a trustee who aims to inspire women to stay in the forces after having children.

"The skills I've learnt in my role as trustee definitely benefit me every day in my job in the Navy, likewise I bring skills and perspective from my military career that has changed the way the charity carries out its business."

The awards, voted for by over 30,000 members of the public and 54 industry judges, celebrate talent below management level, showcasing remarkable women

from across 20 industries and professions in the UK.

Captain Ellie Ablett, who is the Commanding Officer of training establishment HMS Raleigh and founder and Chair of the Naval Service Women's Network, also received an award in recognition of her efforts to champion women in the forces.

Rebecca has since been invited by the Ministry of Defence to become an advisor on the newly-created Chronic Conditions and Disability in Defence (CanDID) Network – set up to support those in the Armed Forces and Veterans with a health condition that requires ongoing management.

Get your nominations in for Soldiering On

NOMINATIONS are being sought for people or groups who make an outstanding contribution to the Armed Forces Community.

Twelve awards are up for grabs at the 2019 Soldiering On Awards – covering a raft of subjects

from healthcare and sporting excellence to inspirational figures, a lifetime achievement award and even pets which play a key role of forces life – plus a 13th 'People's Choice Award', selected by the judges, led by Lord Dannatt, former Chief of

the General Staff.

Nominations must be made on the web – www.soldieringon.org/nominations-for-the-2019-awards-are-now-open/ – and close on September 30 with the winners revealed at a black tie event in Westminster next April.

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...

APPLY TO BECOME A CAREERS ADVISER.

Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WO's, Senior Rates and SNCO Service Leavers and former Service (those that left Service under 3 years), to work in Armed Forces Careers Offices which are listed on the map.

Positions are nationwide, employed on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £30k with promotion opportunities to rise to £43k.

FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PSTN- 01929 403172

Mil- 94374 3172

E-mail- Jane.anneda513@mod.gov.uk





BOARDING & DAY SCHOOL
CO-EDUCATIONAL 11-18
www.dauntseys.org

OPEN MORNING
6 October from 10am



Helping Service

ROYAL Navy and Royal Marines families are invited to apply for bursaries at one of the country's leading co-educational boarding schools.

The Royal Hospital School, in Suffolk, was founded more than 300 years ago to educate boys for a life at sea.

Today, it provides an excellent all-round boarding education for 750 boys and girls aged between 11 and 18 from a wide range of backgrounds.

Its Navy connections remain strong and the traditional values of loyalty, commitment, courage, respect, service and integrity continue to underpin the school's core aims and philosophy.

"We are extremely proud of our connections with the naval community and the tradition of helping the children of seafarers access an outstanding education enriched by our maritime heritage," said headmaster Simon Lockyer.

The Seafarers' Bursary has life-changing potential for the recipients, giving them opportunities to pursue their interests and make the most of their talents at one of the country's leading co-educational independent schools.

Even if you are not eligible for the MOD Continuity of Education Allowance, the Royal Hospital School can offer the children of seafaring families generous bursaries to cover up to 100 per cent of boarding fees.

On Saturday October 6 and Saturday November 10, the school is holding open mornings which are an opportunity for children and their parents to meet with staff and find out what it's like to live and learn at this school.

For more information about the Seafarers' Bursary visit www.royalhospitalschool.org/seafarersbursary or contact admissions@royalhospitalschool.org or 01473 326136.

Located in the naval city of Portsmouth, **St John's College** – a day and boarding school for boys and girls aged 2 to 18 – has enjoyed a long and established history of educating and supporting students from service families.

The school believes children achieve when they feel part of a community. It's why the school works hard to create a strong sense of belonging

based around a commitment to supporting the individual.

The school welcomes parents who are entitled to claim the Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA). This caps the full boarding/tuition fees so that the parental contribution remains ten percent of the total fee payable and the CEA contribution amounts to 90 percent of the fees payable. A military discount of ten percent (of the published full boarding/tuition fee) will be provided to the children of serving military families who do not receive CEA funding.

To arrange a visit, simply telephone 023 9281 5118 or visit the school's website, www.stjohnscollege.co.uk, to book a private tour.

At **Dauntsey's** we believe that adventure not only helps children let off steam, but plays a vital role in equipping them with the necessary skills and behaviours to set them up for life after school.

Understanding risk and not shying away from it is an important life skill. Pupils can develop risk management through being exposed to it while they still have the support of a school environment.

Adventure education enables pupils to demonstrate and adopt behaviours that will help them lead a fruitful and interesting life, in which they are organised and flexible, willing to have a go and learn from their experiences.

The adventure programme at Dauntsey's starts in the Lower School with short experiences that serve as an introduction to adventure.

Examples might be learning to kayak on the Kennet and Avon canal, camping in the school grounds, or a night hike on Salisbury Plain.

As students move up the school, they get involved in more challenging adventure activities such as participating in the Devizes to Westminster canoe race, trekking in the Himalayas or crewing our Tall Ship, Jolie Brise.

The results are remarkable. Pupils who started as relatively quiet and cautious by nature, grow in confidence and are willing to take on new experiences.

Pupils' confidence and self-esteem rise dramatically as they discover what can be achieved, often under challenging conditions –



The Royal Hospital School is a leading co-educational independent school for 11 to 18 year olds, located in 200 acres of Suffolk countryside. It has a thriving Combined Cadet Force, 65% of pupils board full time and more than 200 pupils have a connection to the armed services.

Fees are discounted for services families eligible for CEA and all RN and RM personnel, both retired and serving, can apply for means-tested assistance with fees.

OPEN MORNINGS
6 OCT & 10 NOV, 9AM-1PM
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Our pupils achieve

and this pays noticeable dividends back in the classroom in terms of academic progress.

Dauntsey's is fortunate to count a number of the children of serving members of the UK Armed Forces amongst our pupils, and welcomes new enquiries from service families considering boarding entry for their children.

For further information please visit www.dauntseys.org

This year the **Welbeck Sword** was awarded to Royal Navy sponsored student, Cadet Emma Morley, at **The Defence Sixth Form College's** Annual General Inspection.

The parade was presided over by Air Marshal Julian Young, Chief of Materiel (Air) within Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S).

Parents and VIPs were treated to a military parade by almost 300 cadets, accompanied by the National Marching Band of the RAF Air Cadets.

Emma, who was the deputy head of college, is the sixth recipient of the Welbeck Sword which is awarded annually to the upper sixth student whose engagement in key areas of personal development has been viewed as outstanding; this includes maximising their academic potential, physical and mental fitness and personal officer qualities.

Emma, who has spent two years at Welbeck studying her A-Levels, will now attend her Initial Officer Training at Britannia Royal Naval College to start her career as an officer in the Royal Navy.

"I am honoured and humbled to have received the award amongst such a group of high-calibre students," said Emma.

The Duke of York Royal Military School is located on a beautiful 150-acre site in the Kent countryside.

In addition to a wide academic choice, our students aged 11-18 enjoy a full and active life, which includes an excellent range of sports, music, drama and representing the school at special parades and events. We also offer the DofE Awards as well as CCF.

Centenary House is our dedicated Sixth Form Centre housing 196 students, where students have purpose-built single/twin room en-suite accommodation.

In a busy boarding school it is important that students have the opportunity for down time. Centenary House has four dayrooms, each with Sky television and comfortable seating. The house holds regular activities at the weekends both on site and in the surrounding area.

Using our core values of courage, integrity, respect, commitment, loyalty and self-discipline, our students are encouraged to apply these in everything they do, particularly in the classroom.

Students develop a level of maturity, resilience and are socially confident as a result of the school's ethos and wealth of extra-curricular ventures. DOYRMS students 'look forward with confidence and look back with pride'.

Eighty percent academic and 50 percent sport scholarships are available for high achievers in our Sixth Form. Please enquire for details.

The **Marine Society** has been helping seafarers and serving personnel to reach their full potential for more than 160 years.

We have extensive experience in delivering flexible distance learning allowing you to access life-enhancing education wherever you are in the world, while still providing unique, tailored one-to-one tuition.

So whether you're looking to develop your skills, earn a promotion, change jobs or prepare for life ashore we're here to give you the best possible opportunity to succeed.

From our Learn@Sea apps to GCSE's, A-Levels and even degrees, we can help you navigate whatever future you choose.

As an educational charity, we're here to offer you impartial information, advice and guidance. Our 100 percent pass rate is a testimony to the support you'll receive, and our Good Ofsted rating shows you'll be in safe hands if you decide to study with us.

We have more than 30 GCSE and A-Level options available and flexible start dates, so we're ready when you are.

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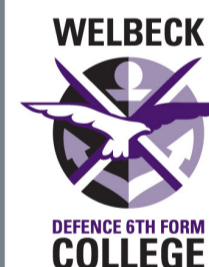
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Ready for the world stage

Musicians mark graduation with stunning summer showcase



THE latest additions to the world's finest military band celebrated graduation in style – joining their colleagues at a stunning summer concert in Portsmouth.

Just 24 hours after completing their three years of demanding training, the 17 newly-qualified musicians were performing inside and outside the city's famous Guildhall at the traditional RM School of Music event.

Some 58 musicians and buglers – conducted by Major Pete Curtis, Director of Music Training – performed in all at the concert, which closed with Beating Retreat in Guildhall Square.

Inside the historic venue, the audience – including First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones – was treated to performances by soloists, the Concert Band, the Big Band and the Corps of Drums.

Musician Lauren Loveridge, aged 23 and originally from Exmouth in Devon was among the 17 graduates. She plays flute and tenor saxophone and will be joining the band based at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone in September.

"Training at the Royal Marines School of Music over the past three years has been an incredible experience," she said. "When I got to the school I had to learn the saxophone from scratch – and it's been challenging – but my time at the school has opened my eyes to the amazing opportunities that a career in the Royal Marines Band Service offers."

"The experience and knowledge of the military instructors and the professors of music at the school has advanced my knowledge of music and developed my abilities, preparing me for the life of a musician in one of the best military bands in the world."

"I've made friends for life, and now I'm ready to serve operationally and musically in the UK and around the world."

Msn Jonathan Griffin, 19, from Poole, plays euphonium and cello and will be joining the Collingwood band after summer leave.

"This is our last event in training, and we've been rehearsing this concert for weeks now. A huge amount of work and effort has gone into making this concert a memorable occasion for everyone," he said.

"There's nothing quite like seeing thousands of people enjoying the brilliant music and the spectacle of Beating Retreat."

"I know my family were proud to see me pass out of training from the School of Music and there were even a few tears!"

Pictures: Bd Sgt Paul Meacham

Best of the loggies

LIEUTENANT Amapola Burr, currently on the staff of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) in Bahrain, has been awarded this year's Gedge Medal for achieving the best overall performance during the Initial Logistics Officers Course (Maritime) – ILOC(M).

Based in Bahrain, Lt Burr is currently employed as the Military Assistant to the Commander of CTF150, Cdre Steve Moorhouse.

CTF 150, as part of the 32-nation CME, is responsible for disrupting the illicit activities of terrorist organisations in the Western Indian Ocean and the Red Sea.

On return to the UK, Lt Burr will rejoin the staff of the Carrier Strike Group, with whom she will be shortly embarking in HMS Queen Elizabeth for her first visit across the Atlantic to the USA later this year.

"I am extremely humbled to receive this award, especially considering its history and the high calibre of junior officers at Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS)," said Lt Burr. "I certainly wasn't expecting it. I must thank the staff at DMLS – this award is a reflection of the excellent support and guidance they gave me during my training."

The Gedge Medal is named in memory of Staff Paymaster Joseph Gedge, who died aboard



HMS Amphion on August 6 1914 – the first British Officer to die in the Great War.

The cruiser struck a mine in the North Sea a mere two days into WW1, killing more than 130 service personnel.

The medal was presented to Lt Burr in Bahrain by Cdre Steve Dainton, the United Kingdom Maritime Component Commander and Deputy Commander, Combined Maritime Forces.

"I have worked with Amapola before and know her to be meticulous and hardworking," said Cdre Dainton.

"I can therefore take great personal pleasure in seeing her recognised in this way."



Peak at navy lark

STUDENTS from Devon, Cornwall and further afield have been given an insight into life in the Royal Navy during visits to HMS Raleigh.

Students on work experience and undergraduates signed up to a leadership programme with the Royal Navy have all spent time at HMS Raleigh over the last two weeks.

In total 34 students from schools in Plymouth, Cornwall, Derbyshire and Surrey were given the chance to undertake elements of the initial naval training course for recruits.

During the week-long programme, they have been taught how to march and undergone PT sessions.

Highlights of the week also included a tour of the Training Ship Brecon, the decommissioned

minesweeper used for training, an opportunity to get out on the river in small boats and a visit to HMS Courageous in Devonport Naval Base.

The week-long programme was designed to show the students the diverse range of training carried out at HMS Raleigh. They have spent time at the RN Submarine School and worked with the chef instructors at the Defence Maritime Logistics School.

HMS Raleigh's Work Experience Officer, WO1 Paul Bell, said: "The main aim is to show the young people what it's really like to be in the military as they make important decisions about their future. Ultimately we hope that everyone will take something away from the week regardless of their final career choice."

Nick's rock SOLIC

MEET the 100th student to graduate from 750 Naval Air Squadron – the Royal Navy's 'Observer School'.

And yes, it's a 'Light Blue.'

After eight weeks of intensive training, Sgt Nick Crofts became that milestone graduate from the Culdrose-based squadron in its latest incarnation.

Since flying training was reorganised seven years ago, it's not just Fleet Air Arm Observers who make use of 750 and its hi-tech aerial classrooms.

To help the RAF meet the demand for Weapon System Operators – men and women who work in the air force's intelligence community – 750's tutors have also been teaching the fundamentals of the job to folk in light blue uniforms.

The instruction sees Senior Operator Lead in Course (aka SOLIC) students spend 20 hours airborne in the King Air 'Avenger' trainer – and many more on the ground in the tactical mission trainer.

Initially students are taught how to operate the state-of-the-art mission training system. Then instructors introduce tactical scenarios, in which students play a central role, involving land based sites and numerous flying assets for them to control.

Being based at Culdrose gives students access to both relatively uncluttered airspace to develop broader aviation knowledge and



awareness – and a target-rich environment as the Cornish peninsula is the Royal Navy's backyard for training.

"750 NAS has provided an essential flying phase in our training – something that cannot be replicated in a simulated environment. It's been fantastic eight weeks, with the added bonus of location, social and great weather," said Sgt Crofts.

"Passing the 100th student here at 750 NAS really is a milestone worth celebrating," said the squadron's CO Lieutenant Commander Alasdair Lang. "Since the inception of the UK Military Flying Training System, we have continually adapted, so it is of particular note that our 100th student is a member of the Royal Air Force."

Off the scale

LOOK what I've caught.

PO(MW) Richard 'Nobby' Clark proudly shows off a giant Siamese Carp which he caught during a trip to Thailand with the Royal Navy Royal Marines Angling Association.

He was one of 12 members of the association who headed east to fish for some of the largest freshwater fish on the planet.

Their destination was Gillhams Fishing Resort at Krabi in the south of the country, run by Stuart Gillham.

The resort, built in a national park, boasts a 12-acre lake stocked with 52 species of fish from around the world.

The team spent six nights in the resort, the visit bracketed either side by a short stay in country's capital, Bangkok.

Sightseeing was the order of the first day with the team visiting the Grand Palace and taking in the sights of the city from the water taxis transiting the Chao Phraya River which flows through the city prior to reaching the Gulf of Thailand.

On from Bangkok the team eventually reached Gillhams resort late into the evening and set about unpacking, sorting bait and readying their equipment for the next five days.

First light saw 12 very happy anglers, coffees in hand peering across a misty lake watching fish bigger than them (in some cases) roll and crash out of the lake's blue waters.

With the pegs allocated the anglers moved to their respective swim for the day. Once there the lake "guides" (there primarily for the safety of the fish and anglers) offered some useful advice and with that; rods were cast and traps were set... the waiting game started.

An hour in and the first fish was landed, 140lb of Siamese Carp was a very good start.

The rest of the day saw a mix of fish/fortunes across the group. A further eight fish were caught during day one with the best of these coming to PO Fez Parker, who had three fish hit in the last few hours of the day.

His catch included a massive 150lb Siamese Carp, a huge 75lb Amazon Redtail Catfish and a 25lb Julian's Golden Carp.

As the swims were rotated each day, every angler got a chance to fish different areas of the lake and by day four all 12 anglers had caught fish, much to the relief of the entire team.

The middle few days of the trip saw some massive Arapaima banked (probably one of the most sought after species in the lake) with three out of the four fish being over the 300lb mark. Arapaima, native to the Amazon River, are among the largest freshwater fish in the world.

As the team moved into the final few days a distinct change in the weather seemed to slow down the action somewhat but most anglers continued to register at least one fish a day leaving the group with a very respectable tally of 112 fish, broken down into nine different species.

The highlights of the haul were the three huge Arapaima, nine Siamese Carp over the magic 100lb mark and a rarely-banked Chao Phraya giant catfish at 100lb.

Report: WO1 ET(ME) Lee 'Jack' Horner.



● Above PO Leighton 'Banjo' Powell with an Amazon Redtail Catfish; Below, ETME Jay Hill with a Julian's Golden Carp



● Below from far left, CPO (AWW) Steve 'Big Red Jones'; Cdr Steve Mardlin with a Siamese Carp; The anglers in Thailand



● Left, LS(MW) Jay Jae Barlow; Top, WO1 ET(ME) Lee 'Jack' Horner with an Arapaima; Above, LAET Matt Pilsworth with his catch





● Cpl James Miller controls the front of 3k steeplechase, while ET(ME) Ashley Smith bides his time at the rear of the field

Baker's dozen of medals for RN

ROYAL Navy Track & Field athletes demonstrated great endeavour and commitment at the Inter-Service Championships hosted by the Army at Aldershot.

The team of 20 men and 11 women won a total of 13 medals: two gold, six silver and five bronze.

Leading the way with victories were CPOET(ME) Liz Edwards (HMS Drake) and Surg Lt Rachel Aldridge (RCDM Birmingham) in the women's hammer (30.72m) and 800m (2 mins 22.7 secs) respectively.

Lt Aldridge later took silver in the women's 400m (62.7 secs) as one of four Royal Navy double medallists on the day.

NA(AH) Dale Willis (NAS Culdrose) has been the Royal Navy's highest achiever in national rankings for the past three years as he has run a succession of fast 400, 200 and 100m times, winning an array of Inter-Service medals along the way.

This year he won silver in both 400m (48.7 secs) and 200m (22.5 secs).

Willis later went on to represent the UKAF at the combined Inter Counties/England National Championships in Manchester, where he reached the semi-finals of the men's 400m (49.2 secs) for the third year in a row.

Two female double medallist debutants starred at this year's Inter-Service championships.

AET Atlanta Wright (846 NAS) had been brought to the attention of senior Navy coach Lt Neal Edwards (CHF) through Brickwood's Field Gun competition and consequently she sprinted to 100m (13.6 secs) bronze and 200m (28.0 secs) silver medals.

OC Katy Singe (BRNC)

Bowling out inequality

ROYAL Navy women cricketers were included in an UK Armed Forces team for an historic match.

The UKAF side took on an Asian women's team in a T20 match as part of the Bowling Out Gender Inequality Campaign.

It was the first time in nearly four decades that a woman's match had been played at Bradford's revamped Park Avenue ground.

The community cricket festival was held to highlight the importance of community cohesion, promote positive health, tolerance and encourage gender equality.

The match went down to the wire with the UKAF side needing six runs to win from the last over and then three runs off the last ball. The Asian team's bowler dropped the ball short, handing victory to the UKAF team by one run.

The trophy was presented to the winning team by Cdre Phil Waterhouse, Naval Regional Commander Northern England and Isle of Man.

The annual game, now in its third year, has previously been

won silver in both the women's 5,000m (17 mins 48.2 secs) and 1,500m (4 mins 50.5 secs).

POPT Julie Stroud (HMS Raleigh) returned after a few years' absence to win the 800m (2 mins 24.1 secs).

Cpl James Miller (CTCRM) took bronze in the men's 400m hurdles (60.4 secs) and went close to medals in the 110m hurdles and 3k steeplechase.

AET Mark Duffett (825 NAS) was rewarded for dogged determination in the men's 1,500m (4 mins 16.7 secs) as his sustained pace over the final 600m led to a close finish and bronze medal.

Lt Col Jamie Summers (PJHQ) has been competing at this level for 30 years, regularly winning men's hammer medals through his annually refined technique, which led to bronze (37.59m), despite being the smallest stature competitor in the circle.

At the other end of the scale was MA Sophie Whittaker (DMS Whittington), making her debut in the women's 5,000m.

The men's 800m was a storming race with Surg Lt Ben Smith (BRNC) and AB Andrejs Safars (RNR Medway) stretching the field from the outset, but just falling short of medals.

AET Sam Barford (RNAS Culdrose) was a late addition to the team in the men's pole vault where he finished fourth.

Also finishing fourth were Cpl Adam Stokes (CLR) in the men's 5,000m, LH Mike Church (HMS Collingwood) in the javelin and Wtr Tammi Mignott (HMS Nelson) in her debut at women's triple jump.

The RAF will host next year's Inter-Service track and field championships.



played at Headingley and The Royal Chelsea Gardens, Burton Court.

Halima Khan, Opening Boundaries managing director, said the event was about raising awareness of women in cricket on and off the field of play and highlighting the unifying nature of sport in general.

She said: "We are trying to engage with local communities at a grassroots level, to engage and inspire them to realise their potential through sport, regardless of their background."

Picture: SWPix.com

Bumpy debut for first-timer Josh

NAVAL Service riders competed in the fourth round of the Acerbis Amateur Nationals at Culham in Oxfordshire, writes Nick Carbury of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Motocross Team.

I was met by AB Josh Dale, of HMS Queen Elizabeth. The WE was making his first appearance with Acerbis and at Inter-Service level.

We set out to walk the track, which seemed much the same as previous years. A testament to the crew who looked after it, as the track was in prime condition. No easy task after the ground-baking weather of the previous weeks.

The first race began with the normal whine and roar of bike engines. I got a decent jump coming around the first corner just outside the top 20.

Josh suffered from a bad jump and sat at the back of the pack. The first lap consisted of the usual jostling for position and real estate. Just as things seemed to settle down, I made my way past the timing booth for the start of lap two, into a 180° right-hand bend.

In trying to make a pass on the rider in front, I moved to the outside line as he stuck to the middle. This would have worked – had the other rider not drifted to the outside line at the exit of the corner. His rear wheel collided with my front, resulting in me being thrown to the ground. The rider behind, who had been following my line, had no time to react and rode over me. By the time I'd picked myself up and recovered, the entire field had gone by.

So began a charge from last place to see where I could finish. Josh struggled to make up ground after starting at the back, and finished in 37th. Whereas my comeback brought me up to 26th.

Josh and I both got better starts in the second race. Josh sat just outside the top 30, whereas I had shocked myself with a top-ten start.

Unaccustomed to getting a start as good as that, I shuffled back to nearer 20th place in the first couple of laps. After a crash in the first race, I was pleased that would be the only excitement in this race.

Josh lost some places early on, but made them back in the latter stages of the race,

finishing in 33rd. I also made up ground in the closing laps of the race, coming back to finish in 16th.

With the track as rough as we would race it, we headed into the third and final race of Saturday.

Josh once again got a start just outside the top 30, whereas I started in the mid-teens.

Josh pushed his way into the top 30 in the early stages of the race, but the roughness of the track and lack of bike fitness saw him drop back to finish in 33rd once again.

I pushed up to 14th by the midway of the race, and closing on 13th. In pushing to catch the rider in front, I washed the front end of the bike on an off-camber part of a turn, sliding out completely. I dropped back to 16th place.

Sunday morning began with a sighting lap, then straight into our first race. As this was the order for every group, and we were the fifth race out, the track was already rough and rutted.

Josh got a poor start, putting him near the back of the pack, whereas I sat just outside the top 20.

Josh charged to 30th place, but once again struggled with bike fitness and dropped back to finish 33rd.

I kept the same pace throughout the race, making my way to 18th spot but going quicker than riders ahead of me.

The fifth and final race of the weekend saw Josh get his best start – firmly inside the top 30 and made his highest finish of the weekend in 31st place.

I started just outside the top 20, made my way up to 17th on the first couple of laps, and finally finished in 16th.

Josh finished 42nd overall for the weekend and I finished 16th overall.

Inter-Service Motocross



Championship (Individual) standings are:

1 Matt Readman (RAF) 527; 2 Nick Carbury (RM) 367; 3 Jason Brice (RAF) 195; 4 Piers Stanley (RN) 176; 5 Adam Figgins (RN) 164; 6 Josh Dale (RN) 80.

Royal Navy (Royal Marines) Motocross Championship standings:

1 Nick Carbury 533; 2 Piers Stanley 184; 3 Adam Figgins 184; 4 Josh Dale 140.

Inter-Service Motocross Championship (Service) standings:

1 Royal Navy 729; RAF 667; Army 0.

Meanwhile, Mallory Park beckoned the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Road Race Team for the second round of the Inter-Service Championships.

With only a few points in it between the RAF and the Navy for the lead, the team had six riders out of the 15 military riders.

Callum Scot, third on the grid for race one, was off like a scalded cat after improving his times all day.

This saw him into the first corner in the lead with Cemal Oram also flying off the start to go into the corner in fourth.

Out the corner and Callum was off, however, coming to the essex means hard on the brakes down three gears and turn left. All was well till he turned and the front wheel decided it had enough and let go.

In the braking zone Brian Fuidge managed to out-brake Cemal to become the lead Navy rider to chase down the two leading RAF riders.

Stuart Goodson had to retire after two laps after issues with the donor bike while Charlie White and Dave White on the smaller bikes did the team proud, fighting all the way to bring the team vital points.

The last race on day two was the second military race. The grid was unchanged and Stu, having gone home early to ensure his injuries were looked after, meant it was down to the rest to pull some good points out.

The lights went out and again the usual suspects were screaming away. This time, however, Callum managed to hold first and was in a tight battle with Rob Vickerman from the RAF all the way to the finish.

Brian and Cemal battled for a few laps before Brian managed to get past and chase down Dave Langley (RAF).

Unfortunately Charlie White had a technical issue and had to retire. With Callum taking the win, Brian managed to get past Dave and defend to the line. This meant the day was finished with Navy first and third on the podium.

Picture: John Barnes, Jack-Snaps



Third time unlucky

IT was a case of third time unlucky for Royal Navy **Polo** as the Army claimed the Hackett Rundle Cup held by the Senior Service for the previous two years.

In front of a crowd of more than 5,000, the Royal Navy took on the might of the British Army for the 2018 Hackett Rundle Cup at Tidworth Polo Club, in Wiltshire.

The day's polo action was started by the Inspire Foundation Charity match which saw jockeys and event riders have a go at polo. The game saw the sponsor's team Baylis and Harding beat Quilter Cheviot 2-1.

A two-furlong dash and a wheelchair race then preceded an appearance by the Royal Navy Raiders Parachute Team. Entertainment was also provided by the Royal Marines Band.

The Pony Club Jorrock match featured youngsters on their young steeds, followed by the Indian Cavalry Officers Association Trophy clash. Hollywood star Tommy Lee Jones was on the sidelines

cheering on his wife Dawn, a member of the American touring side ECUSPA as they took on the UKAFPA. The home side took the honours with 5½ goals to 4.

Finally, with temperatures topping 34°C, it was time for the Rundle Cup, which saw Captain Jess Wood become the first female to play for the British Army side.

The Army team showed dominance from the first countdown on the clock with sensational open play. By chukka two the Navy team showed they were possibly in trouble and, although still devastating on the attack, they just couldn't work around the showman skills and mastermind brain of Capt Paddy Selfe, who sat deep and just kept shutting the back door.

He was letting no one through his line of defence and once with the ball on the end of his stick he was as quick firing into attack to his players Capt Mossy Hamilton, Capt Wood and Lt Rishi

Aluwallia, leaving the Navy side having to work out another strategy.

As hard as the Navy side launched they just couldn't break through the Army defence.

The Army team stormed ahead with the final score Army 6 to the Royal Navy 2.

The Forensic Risk Alliance most valuable player went to Capt Selfe while Best Playing Pony was Salsa owned by Jessica Andrews from Tidworth Polo Club and ridden by Capt Selfe.

The Hackett Rundle Cup is a major event on the military sporting calendar having been first played in Malta in 1909.

The Royal Navy won that first cup and the Army won the last time the match was played in Malta back in 1966.

After that it moved to the UK where the Navy won the first recorded match in 1976 and had a hat-trick of victories from 1994-96.

Pictures: CPO(Phot) Rob Harding



● Lt Cdr Leonard on the helm, Rev Meachin providing tactical thoughts to LETWE(CIS) Haughney and AB(EW) Phillips

Sea Nymph crew tackle Island race

THE HMS Collingwood yacht Sea Nymph III, manned by a team from the Fareham base, competed in the Round the Island Race (RTIR).

Every year the Island Sailing Club, based in Cowes on the Isle of Wight, host the world's largest sailing event.

The RTIR attracts over 16,000 sailors, from professional crews to enthusiastic amateurs to race the 50 nautical miles circumnavigation of the island and this year the Collingwood crew decided to take part.

Sporting a team sailing in 'Sea Nymph III', the last remaining Central Amenities Fund Yacht, the crew was made up by a broad spectrum of personnel, comprising Reverends Mike Meachin and Andrew Hillier, Lieutenant Commander Tom Leonard, Chief Petty Officer (Above Water Tactical) Jaffa

Jefferies, Leading Engineering Technician Weapon Engineer (Communication Information Systems) Paddy Haughney, Leading Seaman (Seaman Specialist) James Kirk and Able Seaman (Electronic Warfare) James Phillips.

Slipping from Hornet Services Sailing Club in Gosport at 5am, Sea Nymph motored into the Solent with another 1,400 vessels bound for the start line off Cowes Royal Yacht Club.

Under sail at the start line and entering the melee of 43 boats in their class. They battled to the front of their group for a start at 8am.

With some daring do from Lt Cdr Leonard on helm and sterling tactics from Rev Meachin, supported by a spirited crew on the lines, they crossed the line in an excellent position and in clean air; beating their way

westbound toward the Needles at the tip of the Isle of Wight.

Lt Cdr Leonard said: "Despite being fairly high up in our class we came unstuck at Hurst Point, the wind (which was fairly fragile to say the least) dropped, the tidal stream reversed and despite some valiant efforts we were unable to beat through the races and make the Needles.

"At this point the decision was made to retire (along with 800 other vessels), motor through the tidal race, and sail around the island as an experience – which it really was."

The sail past the Needles and around the Isle of Wight gave the crew the chance to get the spinnaker flying and despite having extended periods of calm, they made good time back into Portsmouth at 8pm.



Naval fliers take French honours

HOT on the heels of their success at the Inter-Service Paragliding Championships, three members of the Royal Navy paragliding team joined two RAF, seven Army and 113 other pilots from 18 nations at the Chabre Open.

The prestigious international paragliding competition in the south of France sees pilots flying a set course of GPS turnpoints as quickly as possible, using only currents of rising air produced by wind and the action of the sun on mountain slopes.

Conditions in the Alps were among the best in the world for the summer contest.

UKAF Team 1, comprising Surg Cdr Andy Brown (HMS

Vivid), WO2 Nigel Lane (AFCO Exeter), C/Sgt Grant Oseland and Cpl Tom Garner RAF took first place overall in the team competition.

UKAF Team 2, comprising four Army team members took third place.

In the individual competition Surg Cdr Brown took first place in the Sports Class and third overall.

C/Sgt Oseland was third in the X Class and fourth overall and WO2 Lane secured 15th in the Sports class and 29th overall.

C/Sgt Oseland has been awarded a place in the British Paragliding Racing Academy, a development scheme which aims to train up and coming world-class competition pilots of the future.



Reservist steers her way to medal

A ROYAL Naval Reservist, who also trains full-time as a civilian canoeist, has won a bronze medal at the European Canoe Championships in Italy.

Officer Cadet Afton Fitzhenry serves as a reservist with HMS Sherwood, the East Midlands' only Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) unit, joining the unit last year as she has always had an interest in both the Navy and sporting opportunities available through the military.

She took third place in the C1 200m at the Under-23 European Championships in Auronzo, Italy.

Afton, aged 23, said: "I'm pretty busy as I train full-time for the British Canoe Team in Sprint competing all over the world in both general competitions and for the under-23s team.

"I'm also studying a part-time degree in mathematics and statistics, but I still manage to squeeze in my RNR commitments as I'm passionate about developing myself in any way I can.

"Organisation and routine is key to fitting in my RNR training, I'm not a naturally lazy person so I just get on with things and everything usually works out for the best."

Afton, who was skipper of Sherwood's dragon boat at the Nottingham Riverside Festival, added: "In the future with canoeing I hope to qualify for the next GB Team for the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020 and compete there if I can. I'd love to bring home a medal from the games, but I will have to wait and see.

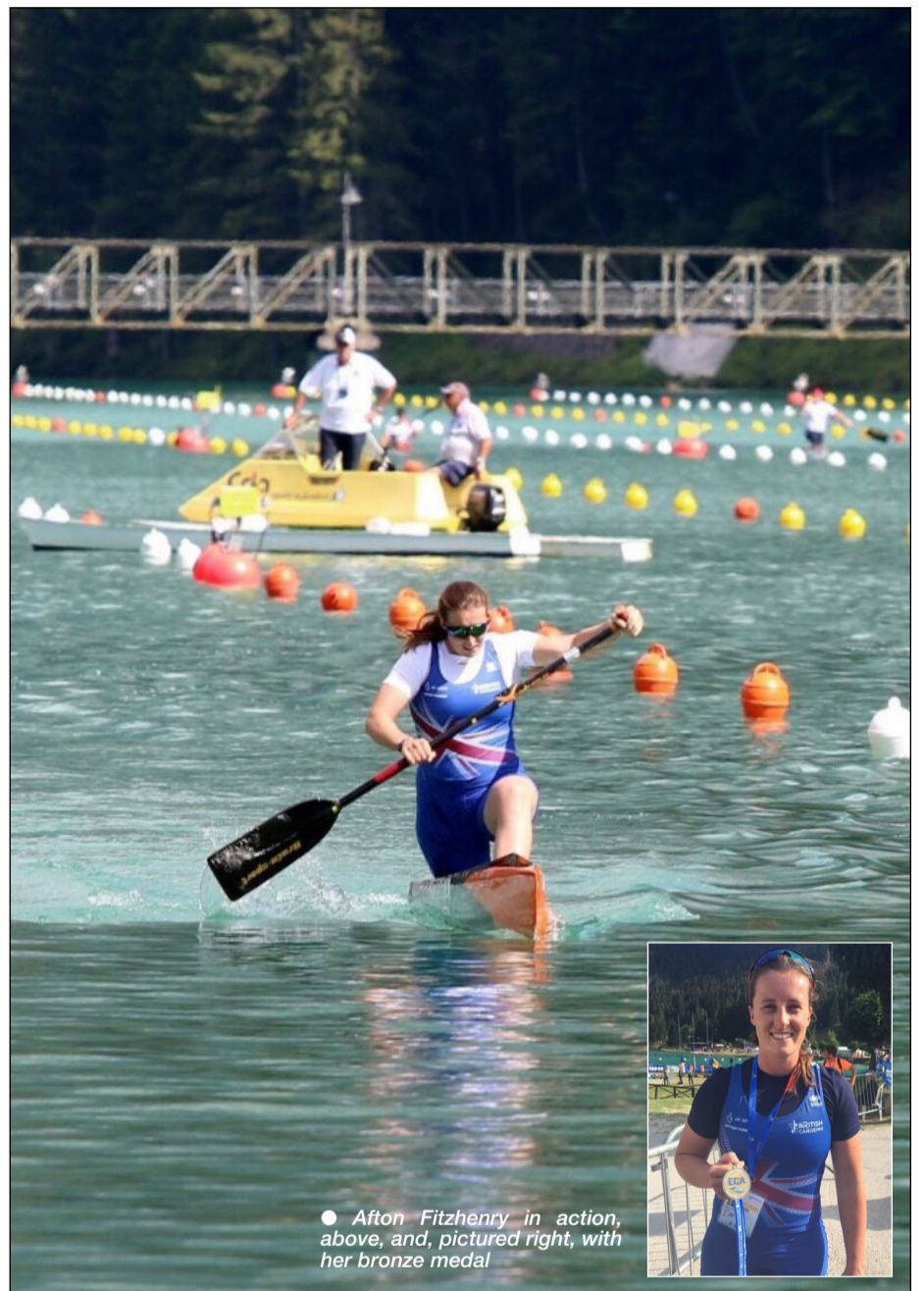
"When I was younger I was a Sea Cadet so I've always had an interest in the Navy.

"After this time I wanted to enjoy and experience opportunities that you can't easily get in your civilian life, I feel very lucky to be able to have two careers I really enjoy.

"I took part in the unit's Freedom of the City of Nottingham Parade in June this year which I was extremely proud to be a part of.

"I am currently learning about the different specialist branches the RNR has to offer and am continuing to attend training sessions on a regular basis.

"My colleagues at HMS Sherwood are really supportive of my canoeing and are always really excited to hear what I've been up to. I think they were as excited about my medal as I was."



● Afton Fitzhenry in action, above, and, pictured right, with her bronze medal



Push to find best riders in Naval Service



TOP Royal Navy and Royal Marines cyclists gathered for a day of expert training, with the Mid Devon Cycle Club at the Torbay Velopark.

Themed as a Criterium Development and Training Day, the cyclists were put through their paces and shown racing techniques that

should help the association peddle its way to success in the future.

The day was also designed to teach and develop new skills to novices in a safe environment alongside racing veterans and more experienced competitors.

As one of the Royal Navy's largest sporting

associations, the RNRMCA also announced a three-year investment deal with BAE Systems.

Chairman of the RNRMCA Col Lenny Brown said: "Cycling is a great way for us to keep our servicemen and women fighting fit.

"With over 700 members, we are keen to

encourage more riders to take the first step into racing, which will in turn help us to become more competitive with our Army and RAF colleagues."

You can join the RNRMCA by visiting navycycling.co.uk

Picture: LPhot Alex Ceolin



Trio of titles up for grabs

ROYAL Marine Rhys Price powers through the water at the Inter-Service **Swimming Championships**.

Hosted by the Royal Navy Amateur Swimming Association at HMS Temeraire, the Inter-Service **Diving** and **Water Polo** contests took place at the same time.

The Water Polo competition started with the Army vs the RAF. The tight match finished all square at 7-7.

The next match was the RAF vs the Royal Navy, with the RAF narrowly beating the Royal Navy 8-6.

The last match saw another exciting encounter between the Army and the Royal Navy, which ended 11-11, handing the trophy to the RAF.

The diving competitions saw the RAF take the women's title and the RAF and Army share the men's title.

The Army women and Royal Navy men were looking to defend their swimming titles.

The Army women produced another team win. Going into the final relay races the men's competition couldn't have been closer, with only a few points separating all three services.

The RAF won the first relay, the 4x2 medley and in the very final race, the 6x2, it was the Navy who came in first.

Therefore the RAF came out on top overall by two points. They scored 91 to the RN on 88, and the Army on 87.

Pictures: LPhoto Joe Cater



Tournament the highlight of season – and sailor stars in Asia

Double delight for Seahawk

MORE THAN 200 Royal Navy officers and sailors and Royal Marines gathered on Weymouth Beach for one of the favourite fixtures of the Royal Navy Rugby Union calendar.

Organised by the Rugby Development Officer, Ady Cherrington, the RNRU Annual **Beach Rugby** competition is a completely different game of rugby.

The teams travelled from far and wide to the glorious sands of Weymouth Beach.

Ships, Naval Air Stations, establishments and Royal Marines units were all represented.

The early part of the competition took the form of three groups, each consisting of four teams.

At the end of the round robin of matches the group stages were won by the Fishery Protection Squadron, HMS Seahawk A and HMS Sultan.

However, with all teams going through to the knock out stage there was still everything to play for.

Despite their early good fortune the Fishery Protection Squadron fell by the wayside in the second round of the knock-out stage.

The only other ship's team, from HMS Northumberland, made it through to the quarter-final stage but even their secret weapon, RNRU Senior XV team captain, LPT Ben Priddey, couldn't help them overcome the might of 40 Commando and they exited the competition.

The women's tag competition consisted of the four teams from HMS Seahawk, Britannia Royal Naval College, HMS Sultan and an all-comers team, The Mermaids.

They took part in an introductory training session ahead of the competition proper.

After some fierce competition between the teams, HMS Sultan and HMS Seahawk made it through to the final.

The men's semi-finals saw HMS



Seahawk A face HMS Sultan while Britannia Royal Naval College A competed against 40 Commando.

It wasn't much of a surprise when the fitness and stamina of the Royal Marines won over the young officers from Dartmouth and the sailors from the air station triumphed over the marine engineers from HMS Sultan.

The stage was set for an entertaining final between HMS Seahawk and 40 Commando.

It was a fiercely contested match and the skills and experience of

the referees from the Royal Navy Rugby Union Referees Society were stretched to their limits in the unconventional setting of hot sand under the glorious sunshine.

At the end of the second half the score was tied at 5-5.

The competition now reached sudden death. The next team to score would be the winner.

It was HMS Seahawk A team who were victorious – cheered on by their team mates HMS Seahawk B and HMS Seahawk Women.

Not to be outdone, the Seahawk

Women were also crowned the champions, beating the women from HMS Sultan.

As the day drew to a close, Capt Ellie Ablett, RNRU Vice-President and Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh presented the women with their awards and trophy.

Richard Powell from QinetiQ, the sponsors of the RNRU Beach Rugby competition, presented the awards and trophy to the winning men's team.

Pictures: Keith Woodland



A RUGBY Union player from HMS Sultan has succeeded in fulfilling his dream of playing internationally.

As reported in last month's *Navy News*, LETME Liam Williams was selected for the Philippines National Rugby Team squad in the Asia Rugby Championship after friends, colleagues and a donation from the Central Amenities Fund at HMS Sultan helped him raise the necessary funds to take part in trials.

A total of 26 players were in the Philippines' squad to take on Singapore across two test matches.

Liam missed out on selection for the first test, which the Philippines won 28-24. However, he was selected to play in the second match three days later.

Coming on as a second-half substitute, Liam was part of a defensive line which stopped Singapore from scoring a single point throughout the second half, as the Philippines claimed a 38-26 point victory and the Asia Rugby Championship trophy.

As a thank you for the support that he had received in making the trials and subsequent tests, Liam presented the establishment with a signed shirt from the clash.

"There were 40 of us who took part in the trial across five days, all trying to win a place in the squad of 26," said Liam. "Training twice a day in temperatures as high as around 40°C was quite an experience."

"The whole experience was incredible. I learned so much from the coaching staff and met some talented players. I couldn't have done it without the support of HMS Sultan and I'm hoping that I get to represent the Philippines and the Royal Navy for many years to come."

HMS Sultan Executive Officer, Cdr Jules Philo, pictured above with Liam, said: "Liam's success provides a great example to all those around him of what can be achieved if you remain determined enough. The donated rugby shirt will be put on display as a reminder to others for many years to come."



IN AT THE DEEP END



● Clockwise, from left, LET Laura Saunders; Mne Chris Harrington; LH Ross Snow; CPO Matt Ellison, Sub Lt Paul Hucklesby and Mne Gregory Finlow during the RN Water-ski and Wakeboarding Championships
Pictures: LH Sam Seeley



LEADING Hand Ross Snow performs an eye-catching jump during the Royal Navy **Water-ski and Wakeboarding Championships.**

Despite many of last year's competitors unable to attend due to operational commitments, the turnout was respectable with lots of new faces and new talent.

Five new Royal Navy water-skiers were introduced to the sport during the contest at Box End Park in Bedfordshire.

With some expert coaching, they were all up and skiing in no time at all.

Following a quick break for lunch, their baptism of fire continued as they competed to become RNRM Water-ski Champion.

The title went to Corporal Elliot Underwood, with Chief Petty Officer Matt Ellison in second and Chief Petty Officer Tony White third. Leading Engineering Technician Laura Saunders took the women's title.

Following the water-ski competition, the wakeboarders took to the water to hone their skills prior to their competition the next day.

The wakeboarders consisted of a split of experienced riders and beginners, many of whom were giving it a go for the first time.

With lots of encouragement from their mates and some expert guidance from the staff at BEP and the more experienced wakeboarders, all riders made a considerable amount of progress.

The wakeboarding competition demonstrated everybody's commitment and desire to progress even further with lots of the beginners attempting tricks for the very first time – some successfully and some not.

In the end, it was two of the association's newest members who took top honours as Marine Chris Harrington and LET Saunders took the respective men's and women's titles.

The event was hugely successful, with lots of development displayed – especially by the beginners.

The team spirit, camaraderie and commitment from all in attendance was unwavering. A special thank you to CPO White, who single-handedly cooked 20 pizzas from scratch, providing everyone with an evening meal on the Thursday night.

The RNRM Water-ski and Wakeboarding Association are keen to attract more personnel to the sport. If you would like to get involved please visit our Facebook group – Royal Navy Waterski & Wakeboard Association or contact matthew.ellison311@mod.gov.uk (Wakeboarding), Elliot.underwood101@mod.gov.uk (Water-skiing) and lucy.ingram696@mod.gov.uk