



NAVY NEWS

JULY 2019



Surf's up

ROYAL Marines from 30 Commando's Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron ride the waves off the Danish coast as part of the multinational Baltic Protector deployment (see pages 2-3)

Picture: PO(Phot) Si Ethell

INSIDE: D-DAY 75

COMMANDO WARRIOR TWO

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PURPLE REIGN

- JUNE 2019, BALTIC SEA, OPERATION BALTIC PROTECTOR -

Pictures: LPhot Paul Hall and PO(Phot) Si Ethel





IN the early hours of the morning, the first glimmers of daylight reveal this atmospheric backdrop for the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) to begin flexing its muscles for the first time.

Off the west coast of Denmark, the MK4 Merlins of 845 Naval Air Squadron of the Commando Helicopter Force power up on the flight deck of HMS Albion ahead of action.

Soon, 540 Royal Marines of 45 Commando will load up on the helicopters and landing craft to go on high-octane raids alongside their Dutch counterparts.

There, in the scrubland around the towns of Esbjerg and Varde, Royal and Dutch marines wage the 'second battle of Jutland' against their mock enemy, the Danes, practising helicopter raids, dealing with vehicle ambushes, urban combat, parachute drops and live firing of artillery pieces and

mortars.

This was the final act of the Danex or Danish Exercise phase of Operation Baltic Protector which meshed together different amphibious, naval, ground and air forces in the western Baltic and eastern North Sea so they can work as one, seamlessly.

The wild nature of the terrain and scale of the training area around Esbjerg allowed the participants to carry out Combined Arms Live-Fire exercises with rifles, machine-guns and missiles, plus break entries into buildings for urban combat.

Spearheaded by X-Ray and Yankee Companies, 45 Commando, this force are put ashore where abandoned wartime Atlantic bunkers and rugged terrain make for an excellent training environment.

At sea, British and international ships massed together for the first time as the JEF.

Nine vessels – five of them British –

linked up to show their strength and ability to work together as two months of Baltic Protector got underway.

The operation is designed to demonstrate the resolve of the UK, its allies and nations in the region to defend the sea and countries which border it.

With the Royal Navy's Amphibious Task Group at its heart (flagship HMS Albion, support ship RFA Lyme Bay, helicopter support vessel RFA Argus, frigate HMS Kent and military ferry MV Hurst Point), the opening phases of the deployment were focused on meshing the force both at sea and on land.

Joining the Brits at sea are Denmark's command ship HDMS Absalon, Dutch amphibious ship HNLMS Johann de Witt and Norwegian missile boats HNoMS Steil and Glimt.

"One of the deployment's main objectives is to develop our ability to do this quickly and effectively during a crisis," said Brigadier Matt Jackson, leading the Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade.

"Our

navies are used to working together and have a shared history of military operations – I'm very conscious that we are marking the 75th anniversary of D-Day, and it is also precisely 100 years since the Royal Navy played a decisive role in Baltic independence.

"Today, our amphibious forces remain at the heart of UK's – and NATO's – ability to respond to crises within Europe and around the world.

"From a UK perspective, we pride ourselves on being ready to operate anywhere, and deploying to the Baltic Sea will allow us to learn from nations that live and operate there every day – this really is their backyard."

This purple-washed scene isn't the only spectacular backdrop of Baltic Protector – 30 Commando IX's stunning sunset parachute over Denmark, pictured above, certainly competes with it.

Leaping from just 800 feet, the men of the elite Pre-Landing Force, 30 Cdo, landed outside Varde in western Jutland.

After a 90-minute flight in a C130 Hercules from RAF Brize Norton, the Plymouth-based commandos jumped over their dropzone using special low-level parachutes, landing on their target with pinpoint accuracy at twilight.

Now, the Royal Navy group head on the US-led Baltops, see page 6.



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Queen Elizabeth
HMS Sutherland
HMS St Albans
HMS Forth
HMS Medway

HMS Magpie
RFA Tideforce
RFA Tidesurge
820 NAS



On patrol somewhere beneath the Seven Seas is one Vanguard-class submarine and an undisclosed Trafalgar or Astute-class boat

FLEET FOCUS
Protecting our nation's interests

WE begin this month with no apologies for looking back for once, not forwards.

The 75th anniversary of D-Day and the liberation of Normandy was an event of international significance – as befits the greatest military operation of all time. Veterans were, rightly, fêted wherever they went, while Portsmouth, as HQ and springboard for the invasion, was the focal point for commemorations in the UK attended by world leaders, 300 Normandy veterans and a sizeable RN presence in the skies (Merlins, Wildcats, Hawks) and on the Solent (HM Ships **St Albans**, **Northumberland**, **Defender**, **Enterprise**, **Tyne**, **Cattistock**, **Middleton**, **Example**, **Trumpeter**, **Biter**, **Explorer**, **Puncher** and **Pursuer** and **RFA Fort Victoria**).

Reservists from **HMS Eaglet** were among those paying their respects in northern France, while **RNAS Yeovilton's** Base Warrant Officer Baz Firth accompanied half a dozen veterans on their return to Normandy and the **Royal Maritime Club** in Portsmouth hosted a get together for British and US veterans.

We have extensive coverage of commemorations spread across pages 13-16 and 27.

In a month when we celebrate the achievements and bravery of the men and women of 1944, it's fitting that the key effort by the Naval Service right now is the **Baltic Protector** amphibious deployment, led by flagship **HMS Albion** and involving (among others) **HMS Kent**, **RFA Lyme Bay**, **3 Commando Brigade**, **45 Commando**, **30 Commando IX Group**, **845** and **847 Naval Air Squadrons**. It's completed the first stage of the deployment in Denmark (see pages 2-3) and is presently (late June) locked into the US Navy-led **Baltops** exercise (see page 6).

Back to the future now (sorry) and survey ship **HMS Enterprise** (see opposite) has been testing wave glider technology by launching the unmanned devices between the Faroe Islands and Outer Hebrides to sample the water column.

Royal Marines are also embracing the latest technology as they forge the **Future Commando Force**, ready for the battlefield of the mid-21st Century. Salisbury Plain was the setting for **Commando Warrior 2** testing surveillance kit for an ambush operation (see pages 18-19), while **40 Commando** are about to get their hands on **Lattice**, a combination of drones, sensors and AI which will find, track and warn them about threats on the battlefield (see opposite).

It's not all about tech in the Corps. You still need stealth, skill and brawn... as **539 ASRM** and **Juliet Company 42 Commando** demonstrated by boarding a ferry... by a rope... from the stern... while moving at 25kts... near the Eddystone Rock (see page 7).

HMS Duncan continues her NATO mission in the eastern Mediterranean (see pages 20-21), **HMS Westminster** continues hers in the Baltic (see page 17), while **HMS Cattistock** has finished her stint with the alliance (see page 17).

There's a flurry of activity in the small ship world as new patrol vessel **HMS Forth** is declared ready for action... while her sister **HMS Medway** is now in Portsmouth... and the third ship in the new batch of the River class, **HMS Trent**, has completed her maiden sea trials. Don't write off the first generation Rivers, however; **HMS Clyde** (who'll be replaced by Forth later in the year) made the 1,500-mile round trip to South Georgia (see page 11).

As one of the workhorses of the Fleet, **HMS Northumberland** has been busy in home waters from visiting Liverpool (see page 17) to smashing a drone from the skies with her Sea Ceptor system (see page 6).

And finally... there's a new man at the very top of the naval 'tree' this month with **Admiral Sir Philip Jones** standing down as First Sea Lord (see page 30) and **Admiral Tony Radakin** stepping into the role. He presents his vision of the future Naval Service (see right).

Together we can change for better

VIEW BRIDGE from the BRIDGE

THIS month's column is a personal message from the new First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin.

I'm delighted to be starting as First Sea Lord and wanted to set out my view of where we are and where we're heading. My starting point is that I absolutely believe that ours is a world-class navy, full of brilliant people doing great things.

We're busy on operations all around the world and, thanks to sustained and major investment by the government and the nation, we're growing as a navy for the first time in 70 years.

That means new aircraft carriers, new submarines, new offshore patrol vessels, new support shipping, and two new frigate programmes.

Those are just the highlights – all in all, between 2015 and 2025, we are growing in physical tonnage terms by nearly 30 per cent.

That's a great place to be, but I also think we need to do even more to respond to a changing world where there is more competition, greater risk of state-on-state conflict, a technological revolution happening, and our forthcoming departure from the EU drives a greater need to play our part for Global Britain.

So, we're going to invest even more in the North Atlantic to maintain the freedom of manoeuvre for the nuclear deterrent; we will continue to become a proper Carrier Task Group Navy; and we will develop a Future Commando Force with more of our Royal Marines operating from sea, always ready to respond – whether that means for humanitarian assistance or war fighting.

At the same time we're going to establish greater forward presence for our ships, potentially basing more of them abroad – whether that's the Caribbean, the Middle East or Far East – and we're going to use technology and innovation in a much bigger way than we have

been to drive everything that we do.

We can do all this – we have the people and the ideas; the ethos and the opportunity.

Money is not the excuse, we just need to get better at spending it and less focused on counting it.

Crucially though, I want us to be more challenging about the way that we've been doing things.

Be prepared to do things differently at every level.

Be ready to make and take tough decisions, including about what we might have to give up or change or do more quickly.

I want us to use that approach to do better with some of the basics: improve our accommodation; get more people into the navy, and more of those in the navy to stay

so that we can sort out gapping.

Improve platform availability and, if necessary, change the way we crew lots of our ships to create more balance, certainty and stability.

We have a great navy and the opportunity to become an even better navy, ready to respond to today's changing world and do our part for the rest of Defence.

I want improved conditions for all our people – military, civilian, regular, and reservists. I want more warfighting capability. And I want less stifling process. We can do this and we can do this quickly – and I look forward to leading the service for the next three years as we do it together.

● **New First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin**



Starship plays glide and seek

HMS Enterprise tested unmanned underwater gliders to explore the murky depths of the North Atlantic.

The survey ship used a Slocum Glider (named after Joshua Slocum, the first man to single-handedly sail around the world) to study areas of interest in the seas north of Scotland.

The glider can be programmed to patrol for weeks at a time and automatically surfaces to transmit data while downloading new instructions for missions ahead.

Enterprise deployed the glider between the Outer Hebrides and the Faroe Islands and, during its ten-day outing, it studied the waters around the Wyville Thomson Ridge, a rocky plateau on the sea floor.

Throughout its submerged sorties, the glider was controlled remotely – through its online piloting technology – from nearly 700 hundred miles away by a team at the National Oceanographic Centre in Southampton.

The glider complemented Enterprise's work while she conducted military data gathering tasks.

The idea is to use the data gathered by the glider and compare it to that collected by Enterprise herself.

Eventually the aim will be to deploy several gliders at once to enhance the work Enterprise and fellow survey vessel, HMS Echo, do.



The gliders can bring in initial dumps of information before the Royal Navy's survey specialists can hone in on specific areas of interest to dig deeper.

A big advantage of the glider is that it is able to collect data in difficult conditions at range and over a long period of time.

"This will inform future use, in particular, our ability to gather, process and disseminate data to inform operations," said Lieutenant Mark Jones, HMS Enterprise's Logistics Officer, about the recent trials.

"This has both a scientific and operational context and will help inform tactical and operational decision making.

"While the data collected is yet to be reviewed and compared, the effectiveness of the glider and its ability to conduct remote

survey operations was proven. "The rationale behind the glider is to deploy a number of them simultaneously, to build up a comprehensive data picture of the water column.

"Working collaboratively with shore-based teams at the National Oceanographic Centre and Defence Science and Technology Laboratory has been hugely beneficial as we share knowledge and build experience for the future."

During her six-month operation, the Echo-class ship used a range of surveying equipment, including the glider, to Hoover up data which helps in understanding the state of the seas around the UK and beyond.

Hydrographic and oceanographic information was collected by sonar devices, including single and multi-beam echo sounders, and towed array sensors.

Wildcat's recce of Caribbean hurricane hotspots

NEARLY two years after British military personnel helped rebuild it, this is the British Virgin Islands capital of Tortola – as seen from RFA Mounts Bay's Wildcat helicopter.

The aircrew of 211 Flight dropped in on Road Town, Tortola, part of a fact-finding mission to prepare themselves and their ship for the hurricane season which is now upon the Caribbean.

The British Virgin Islands – and other British territories in the region – were badly hit by a series of storms in the autumn of 2017 which prompted a massive relief effort by the UK's armed forces, spearheaded by Mounts Bay.

Two years on, she's ready for the 2019 storm season with a specialist team of marines, soldiers and engineers embarked with the relevant equipment and vehicles to deliver immediate assistance and patch up vital supplies such as communications, water and power.

Also aboard is a Wildcat helicopter from 815 Naval Air Squadron which can be used to move personnel and material around, as well as carry out reconnaissance to find the areas and settlements most in need of aid in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

211 Flight visited the Turks and Caicos and British Virgin Islands scouting possible landing sites and, on Tortola, meeting the leaders of the islands' disaster management team to discuss possible plans of action with the officer in charge of Mounts Bay's emergency troops and the ship's medical officer.

Afterwards the Wildcat carried out a tour of Tortola with the local experts on board to identify the more vulnerable parts of the Island where help would be most needed.

"The ability of the Wildcat to carry equipment and also land in very small areas was key in the effort after Hurricane Irma in 2017," said Lieutenant Mark Finnie, the Wildcat's Observer (in charge of navigation, sensors and weapons systems).

"The opportunity to work with the disaster relief team ahead of the hurricane season allowed us to identify key infrastructure pinch points and gave us an idea where we would be able to drop off stores and equipment, should the need arise.

"It was important for us to continue the excellent relationship we have with the disaster management team and the British Virgin Islands as a whole."

Mounts Bay's Commanding Officer Captain Jeremy Macanley RFA added: "Visits to the UK's overseas territories, however brief, allow Mounts Bay to be better prepared to deliver help in the event of a disaster – my aircrew's familiarity with the topography will permit a more focussed response should we be called to assist"



AI helicopters put to the test

ROYAL Marines will test miniature helicopters 'with brains' to give them the edge on the battlefield as they embrace artificial intelligence.

The commandos are the first troops outside the US military to test the Lattice system – a combination of small drone Ghost helicopters, 'sentry towers' and cutting-edge AI software which can detect, classify and track any car, person, drone or other threat.

Next month the marines of 40 Commando from Norton Manor, near Taunton, will test the system on exercise in the USA – the latest tech trial by the green berets as they look to adapt to the mid-21st Century battlefield, using the latest computer, drone, satellite and communications systems.

So far the marines have already

run two Commando Warrior exercises (see pages 18-19) to test new pieces of equipment, from supporting beach landings with unmanned vehicles to storming villages on Salisbury Plain with the aid of live visual intelligence fed to hand-held tablets.

The deal with US defence/technology firm Anduril will see Lattice tested in the heat of the California desert, the snows of the Arctic as well as during amphibious and urban warfare exercises.

"What makes the system special is the horsepower of the artificial intelligence and how this will change how we fight," explained Major Ross Drinkwater, part of the team driving the Future Commando Force concept at Navy Headquarters in Portsmouth.

"You can launch a Ghost and

tell it to find vehicles, or enemy forces in a particular area, or to follow an enemy column or convoy. It will – and it will record what happens or report back to you, depending on what you want.

"This is right at the cutting edge of technology. Only a handful of units in the US military are trialing it and the Royal Marines are the first outside the USA."

Colonel Dan Cheeseman, the Royal Navy's Chief Technology Officer, said: "The artificial intelligence and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems are game-changing technologies for the Royal Marines Future Commando Force. These technologies are directly informing how the Royal Marines are transforming themselves."



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Missile firing highlight for Boogie Knights

HMS Northumberland used her multi-million pound Sea Ceptor missile system to down drones in a unique test off the northwest coast of Scotland.

The Type 23 frigate was testing her powerful weapons system on the ranges around the Outer Hebrides in Installation Test Firing exercises.

The Plymouth-based ship's missile system – fitted to all the Royal Navy's Type 23s – can defend an area of 500 square miles and in this latest drill the ship's company was tasked with taking down high-speed, sea skimming drones fired from one of the nearby islands.

It offered the chance for the Royal Navy's latest missile system, and its team of operators and maintainers, to prove their worth.

"It's something we drill over and over again, but the feeling of taking a live target with a missile is something completely unique, especially given the short timeframe in which you have to react from identifying and classifying the target to engaging it," said weapons specialist, Chief Petty Officer Mark Lynch.

"In my role on board I get to operate a wide variety of weapons, but firing a Sea Ceptor doesn't come around all that often."

Sat in the missile director's chair for the serial, CPO Lynch had previously missed out on the live firing on HMS Montrose, but this time he found himself at the helm operating the system.

CPO Lynch's quick reactions allowed Northumberland to successfully engage the sea skimming threat as it came in to range, splashing the target while it was still at arm's length.

Northumberland joins a steadily growing group of Type 23 frigates to successfully conduct the Installation Test Firing (ITF) for the system.

The ship has recently had a busy period regenerating from upkeep, and three extremely busy periods as the National Tasking unit.

It meant the cancellation of the previous two firing opportunities, but following completion of the unit's recent tasking escorting the Russian Udaloy class guided missile destroyer, Severomorsk, it was third time lucky.

During a calm and sunny day on the ranges, Northumberland found herself putting in to practise the firing preparations and drills honed during the months spent on Operational Sea Training.

Behind the Weapon Engineering team delivering the missile was CPO Andrew "Boogie" Knights whose role it is to maintain the Sea Ceptor operating system and the magazine of Common Anti-Air Modular Missile (CAMM).

"Before joining Northumberland I was part of the Sea Ceptor acceptance team working at AbbeyWood. In this role I was heavily involved in the acceptance of the missile system in to the Navy," said CPO Knights.

"To have now completed a successful firing on my own system is as exciting as it is rewarding; this is a definite career highlight."

Liverpool visit, see page 17

Shiny Scimitar back in water

PATROL boat HMS Scimitar is back on the water after a month of maintenance.

Freshly painted and with a full service of her main machinery, the 24-tonne Lifespan Patrol vessel was returned to the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron by local contractor Bolaños following her Annual Survey and Repair Period.

The maintenance package, which required the ship to be craned out of the water, included an emptying and cleaning of all of her tanks, extensive deep cleaning and a full internal and external survey to ensure that the ship remains safe to go to sea.

The most obvious change was the stripping back of the underside paint and receiving a new coat of red anti-fouling paint.

Scimitar's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Kyle Walkley said: "Like all warships they need lots of care and attention to keep them ready for operations at all times, so this annual period of deep maintenance is essential to keep them both ticking over."

While Scimitar was in maintenance, her sister ship HMS Sabre and the three squadron PAC 24 RHIBs have ensured there was no drop in the operational tempo.



Thar be dragons

RN ships join minesweeping exercise

THE Royal Navy joined forces with huge US helicopters in the Gulf for a minesweeping exercise.

The UK's command ship for mine warfare in the Middle East, RFA Cardigan Bay, linked up with the mighty Sea Dragons from the US Navy's Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15 (aka 'The Blackhawks') to clear a path through a stretch of water sown with dummy devices.

The Royal Navy relies solely on minehunting vessels – Sandown-class ships for hunting mines in deep waters, Hunts for shallower seas – plus clearance divers to find, identify and neutralise underwater explosive devices.

The Americans operate minehunters and use dive teams too, but also use MH-53 Sea Dragon helicopters as part of their panoply of mine warfare equipment.

The Sea Dragons – 100ft long, 33 tonnes fully loaded, or one-and-a-half times the length of a Merlin and twice as heavy – are used to haul a minesweeping sled through the water.

The sled was floated out of the dock, towed into position then attached to the helicopter by cable, ready to be hauled through the water, sweeping the sea for magnetically-sensitive mines.

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Proving her versatility, Cardigan Bay also served as the launchpad for US Navy autonomous boats sent off to rapidly scan patches of the Gulf with their high-tech sonars. Mine warfare specialists on board the ship reviewed the data fed back, then assigned other units to locate and destroy any suspicious objects.

And three Royal Navy ships – HMS Ledbury, Blyth and Shoreham – were also involved in the workout, bringing more

traditional skills to the minehunting 'party'.

The combined training is the latest joint workout for the US/Royal Navy's substantial mine hunting presence in the Gulf – the UK alone operates two Sandowns and Hunts each in the region (the latter are equipped with mine sweeping gear, but it's not been used in a couple of decades) – used to hone the skills of the sailors and foster collaboration between the two forces.

"Modern mine hunting does not solely consist of one ship, one crew or one method. Ensuring maritime security and the free flow of commerce requires a full spectrum of tools, experience and capabilities," explained Commander Simon Cox, in charge of Britain's mine warfare forces in the Gulf.

"There is no other vessel that offers the flexibility to deploy and support the full spectrum of mine hunting systems like RFA Cardigan Bay – from operating with several of the world's largest helicopters and deploying autonomous mine hunting boats to putting mine clearance divers in the water and re-supplying ships at the same time, this ship can do it all."

He added: "Regular training with our coalition forces ensures we are always ready to respond and keep maritime trade flowing. It is always a genuine pleasure to work with the US Navy and we look forward to welcoming them back again soon."

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow @RFACardiganBay, @RFAHeadquarters and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



Battle staff lead 18-nation workout

THE Royal Navy's maritime battle staff have deployed to command a major international exercise involving 18 nations.

This year's BALTOPS deployment will see almost 9,000 sailors embarked in 60 ships with a significant contribution from UK forces.

Rear Admiral Andrew Burns, the commander of the UK Maritime Battle Staff, takes up a rare appointment as the second in command of the US Second Fleet, overseeing the operation from the USS Mount Whitney.

He said: "This is a real accolade for the Royal Navy and the UK Maritime Battle Staff, as US forces do not routinely allow themselves to come under foreign command, even temporarily.

"This speaks volumes for the strength

of trust between the UK and US navies. My staff will be involved at every level of the US Second Fleet's activity, from staff planners, amphibious experts and intelligence specialists to the UK Forward Logistics Site, providing the support to the task force as it moves through the Baltic.

"BALTOPS forms part of an extensive programme of exercises and operations for the Maritime Battle-staff in 2019. The battle staff is maintaining its position at the heart of the Royal Navy's warfighting output in 2019."

The themes for BALTOPS this year are partnerships with our allies and partners, presence to uphold freedom of navigation and the law of the sea and professionalism in the way we operate as mariners.

From the UK, there is a substantial

commitment ranging from the battle staff in USS Mount Whitney, the COMATG/3 Commando Brigade task group where HMS Albion currently leads the Baltic Protector deployment, which also includes HMS Kent, RFA Argus and RFA Lyme Bay. HMS Cattistock will support in her role with NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1, HMS Westminster supports Standing NATO Maritime Group 1, and seven P2000s will also participate.

"This is an impressive expression of the UK's commitment to the Baltic Sea region and our international partnerships," RADM Burns added.

After BALTOPS the team will support Exercise Sea Breeze in Ukraine and Exercise Griffin Strike alongside the French.



Pictures: LPhot Mark Johnson

BOARD

ROYAL Marines stormed a passenger ferry packed with holidaymakers as they rehearsed boarding drills in the Channel.

Using high-speed boats and their specialist climbing equipment, commandos deftly clambered aboard Brittany Ferries' Armorique, ten miles off the south coast.

The green berets of 539 Assault Squadron and 42 Commando swooped on the Plymouth-bound ship as she came over the horizon on her journey from Roscoff in north-western France.

In rough seas, the commandos sped behind the 29,469-tonne Armorique, as passengers crowded the upper decks to watch.

They saw 16 specialist troops from 42 Commando – the Royal Marines' Maritime Operations Unit, based at Bickleigh Barracks on the northern edge of Plymouth – make their daring ascent of the nine-deck ferry in notoriously difficult conditions.

With coxswains from 539 Assault Squadron piloting three fast craft, the marines made the audacious climb by cable ladder to the upper decks of the ferry, all while cutting through the water at around 25mph.

"The Royal Marines are one of only a few forces in the UK trained to conduct this sort of operation, so it is vital we do this training regularly, under the most arduous conditions possible," said Captain Jack Denniss of 539 Assault Squadron.

"42 Commando's J Company is unique in that it is trained to conduct 'level three' boarding operations, which is to say that your access to a target vessel is opposed; through either manoeuvre, obstacles, force, or all of the above.

"During this sort of boarding, the point of

greatest vulnerability can often be the embarkation. In fact, achieving access to a fast-moving vessel is in some cases more dangerous than the enemy protecting it.

"Success in such an endeavour requires rigorous training, courage and importantly, an expert coxswain who can stand up to the conditions."

539 Assault Squadron are the 'punch' of 1 Assault Group – based at Royal Marines Tamar in Devonport Naval Base in Plymouth.

As the Royal Marines' specialists in amphibious raids, riverine operations and maritime interdiction, the landing craftsman of 539 stand ready to ensure that J Company can reach their target and achieve their task.

Maintaining a constant state of readiness means that commandos of both units train regularly on vessels of every size, type, speed and in any sea-state.

The Royal Marines currently use the Pacific 24 sea boat, a multi-purpose craft carried by all UK warships which can reach speeds of up to 40 knots (around 46mph).

On this exercise, they deployed with two Pacific 24s.

GAMES

It pays to understand your pension



These are just a couple of recent comments from our Members



"That is a brilliant summary and is a massive help to my PVR decision point. Thank you for all your support and time" (Cdr, RN)

"Many thanks for a comprehensive and detailed breakdown of my potential pension plans. Joining the FPS is one of my best career decisions to date" (Sgt, RAF)

Since your pension is such a significant element of your Armed Forces package, it's essential to ensure you gain maximum benefit from it.

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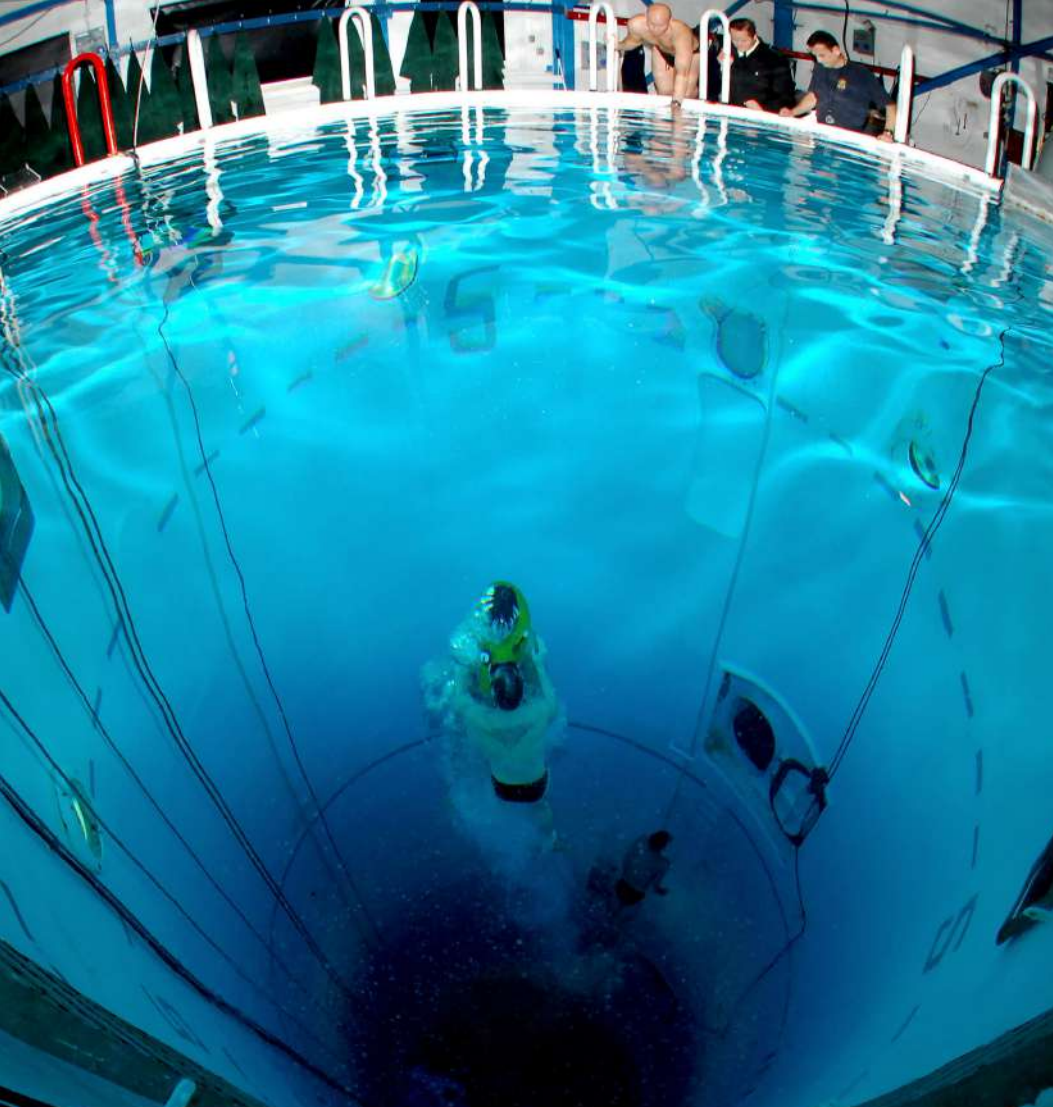
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THE ASCENT OF MANY

SUBMARINERS bade farewell to a Gosport landmark as they prepare to move escape training to Scotland.

The Submarine Escape Training Tank – or SETT – has dominated the Solent skyline for nearly 70 years – and been used well over 150,000 times as crews from British and allied silent services practised saving their lives should they ever be stranded on a sunken boat.

At least three Britons owe their lives to what they learned SETT, escaping flooded HMS Artemis when she sank in Haslar Creek in 1971. But with the entire submarine flotilla being concentrated in Scotland and rescue techniques changing, a new £35m complex is being built at Faslane to teach the crew of today and tomorrow how to act in the unlikely event of ‘subunk’.

Which means the closure of the complex in Gosport – not just the tower, but classrooms and sea survival facilities.

More than 100 ‘swim boys’ and other former staff, including four veterans who made the pilgrimage from Australia for a final look around the Grade 2 listed building, joined current staff at Fort Blockhouse to celebrate the SETT’s achievements since the first man ascended from the deep in July 1954. “It is a very great honour to be the final head of training in this historic establishment. The absolute professionalism of this team has had an enduring impact upon the operational capability of the Royal Navy Submarine Service – and many other maritime forces – for 65 years,” said Lt Cdr Gareth Griffiths, the SETT’s final Officer in Charge.

“Relocating and maintaining that legacy is a challenge, but it will enhance our present solution and deliver a new generation of trained submariners into front-line service.”

The SETT owes its existence to the loss of HMS Thetis on trials on the eve of WW2 when 99 men died in relatively shallow waters.

The war – when the Submarine Service lost 79 boats – gave added impetus to investigating methods of escape, resulting in a report by experienced submariner Captain Philip Ruck-Keene in 1946... although it took one more tragedy, when HMS Truculent sank in the Thames Estuary in 1950, to finally implement his recommendations.



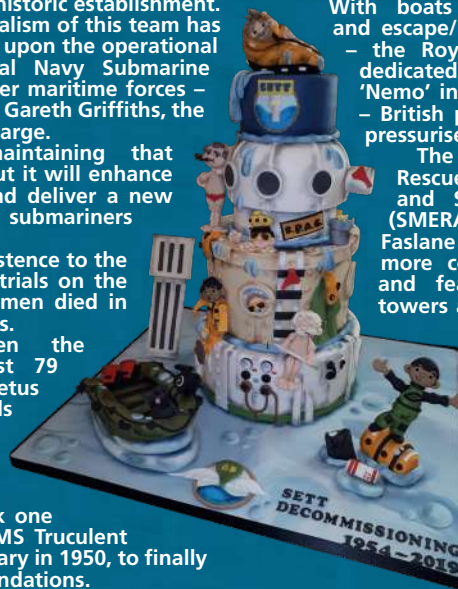
The result is a tower containing a column of water 100ft high through which submariners ascend in an immersion suit, exhaling on the way to the surface to account for changes in pressure. There’s no breathing apparatus required and, in theory, submariners should be able to escape from depths up to 300ft.

At the peak of its usage in the 1960s, 6,000 men ascended the column of water every year – mostly Britons, but also Australians, Turks, Israelis, Italians and Americans.

Many of those countries adopted the UK model for pressurised submarine escape training from depth, in specially-designed escape suits.

With boats operating ever deeper and escape/rescue methods changing – the Royal Navy would use the dedicated rescue submarine ‘Nemo’ in the event of an accident – British personnel haven’t done a pressurised ascent since 2012.

The new Submarine Escape, Rescue and Abandonment and Survival Training Facility (SMERAS TF), due to open at Faslane this autumn will be far more comprehensive than SETT and feature four new escape towers and the ability to practice abandoning a submarine on the surface (from a mock-up of the casing) in a realistic ‘environmental pool (which recreates storms and heavy seas but in the safety of indoors in the same way the new dunker trainer does for aircrew escaping ditched helicopters at Yeovilton).



Joining an elite band

STANDING in front of boards listing some of the greatest submariners of the past are three men about to join the illustrious list having completed the Navy’s toughest test of leadership.

Lieutenant Commanders Thornton, Burton and Coy USN in the centre, flanked by Captain Breckenridge (Captain FOST(North)), Cdr Jenkins (aka ‘Teacher’) and HMS Ambush’s CO, the deeps posed for LPhot Pepe Hogan having earned the right to take charge of a nuclear-powered submarine.

After 24 weeks of intensive training and assessment, the trio demonstrated they possess the particular skills, intelligence, coolness under pressure and the ability to lead a team of 100-plus highly-skilled men and women, successfully completing the brutal Submarine Command Course... aka The Perisher (either a bastardisation of ‘periscope’, or named after the ‘perishing’ failure rate among candidates).

In this case, 50 per cent of prospective submarine commanders who arrived at Faslane to begin their assessment under Cdr Jenkins failed to make the grade.

All six students were put through their paces in the classroom, on simulators and at sea in some of the most challenging environments imaginable, culminating in four weeks aboard hunter-killer/attack submarine HMS Ambush because nothing compensates for real-world scenarios in a £1bn nuclear-powered boat.

“Perisher is part of the fabric of the Submarine Service,” said Cdr Jenkins. “For over 100 years it has been the ultimate test for those officers in pursuit of submarine command. I am proud to be a Perisher myself and delighted that the three have passed the course and will join the exclusive club.”

“I am overwhelmed! Passing this course is just the most brilliant feeling!” said Lt Cdr Burton.

“It was six months of visits, meetings, fireside chats, tactical and safety training, and finally proving ourselves with a month at sea. It is a course that brings the participants together and where individuals discover hidden depths.”

Lt Cdr Thornton added: “The everlasting pressure, the sense of responsibility – but that is what makes it all worthwhile.”

The course traces its roots back to 1917 and beyond Britons, students from the US, Royal Australian and the Royal Canadian Navies have attempted to earn their spurs. Fewer than 1,200 officers have passed the gruelling course – roughly two out of three candidates.

Astute en route to charity success

FOUR submariners swapped their woolly-pulleys for gym gear as they cycled nearly 300 miles for charity.

Petty Officer Andy Alderson, Lieutenant Will McLeman, Chief Petty Officer ‘Tab’ Hunter and Petty Officer Medical Assistant Stu Dodd got on their bikes to raise money for Claire House Children’s Hospice.

The group serve on HMS Astute and cycled from the submarine’s base at Faslane to the hospice in Wirral, which helps seriously-ill children with life-threatening and life-limiting conditions.

They set off on June 5 and cycled through Abington, Penrith and Preston before arriving at Claire House on Saturday – 290 miles away from their starting point.

Inspiration for the charity event came from PO Alderson and Lt McLeman who ran the Stirling Marathon last year for the hospice, which is the unit’s affiliated charity.

PO Alderson said: “We decided we would like to do something again this year and thought ‘let’s cycle for them’.

“This is the first time any of us have done anything like this although we are all keen cyclists. We all undertook some form of training but with busy schedules, and only returning from sea in April, we knew we would rely heavily on our humility to get us through.

“We expected it to be a tough challenge but the reward at the end of it is knowing we put ourselves through pain to raise funds for Claire House and the great work it does.”

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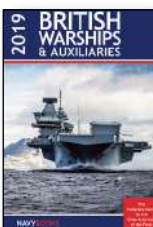


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Small ships, big ambitions

IT'S been a month of milestones in the small ship world as the second-generation patrol ships begin to make their mark.

Since the last edition of *Navy News* popped through your letterbox:

- HMS Forth has completed Operational Sea Training, making her ready to deploy;
- HMS Medway has made her debut in Portsmouth under the White Ensign after successful trials in Scotland;
- and HMS Trent clocked up her first fortnight at sea, returning to the Clyde having achieved everything demanded of her during maiden trials in the Firth of Clyde.

As the Commanding Officer of Forth – the first of the five new Rivers – Commander Bob Laverty puts it: “The era of the Fighting Batch 2s is coming.”

Yes, they’ve given themselves a nickname too. No, they’ve not done any fighting yet... unless you count the fire and fury unleashed by Cdr Laverty’s vessel as their training came to an end.

As the first of class, Forth naturally became the first Batch 2 River to undergo the rigmarole of Operational Sea Training – the final hurdle the Portsmouth-based patrol vessel had to overcome before being declared fit to deploy.

No RN warship is sent into the line of fire without passing OST, a bespoke training and assessment package whose length and scope depends on the size of a ship, its ship’s company and its mission.

For all small ships (survey/patrol and smaller) it’s delivered by Flag Officer Sea Training North based at Faslane.

And for Forth it was three weeks of intensive, ever-more-challenging scenarios played out off the west coast of Scotland.

Instructors test the ability of a ship and her sailors/Royal Marines to deal with every eventuality on board: fires, engine breakdowns, running aground, missile and bomb damage, fighting off enemy aircraft, refuelling on the go and providing humanitarian aid after a natural disaster.

The assessment culminated in a powerful display of gunfire laid down by Forth against ‘enemy’ forces on the ranges of western Scotland.

“It was great fun getting hands-on with the equipment and taking part in the damage control incidents,” said 22-year-old trainee



officer Sub Lieutenant Solomon Jacka. “It’s definitely given me the confidence to be able to deal with most incidents I might come across on board.”

For 23-year-old Engineering Technician (Marine Engineering) Alanna Hamilton this was her first taste of Operational Sea Training.

“It’s been a steep learning curve but a great training experience and means the ship is one step closer to the deployment we’ve all been working towards,” she said.

The training moves up through the gears over the course of the assessment, becoming most intense and challenging during the final week, culminating in an impressive display of gunfire laid down by Forth against ‘enemy’ forces.

“It was great to conduct a firing on this scale and for a smaller ship it’s impressive how much fire power we have available,” said weapons engineer Engineering Technician Jamie Philpot, aged 23.

As a new ship with a small crew and large compartments, both the crew and the trainers had to adapt to different ways of working.

“We have overcome many challenges,” explained deputy marine engineering officer Lieutenant Matt Head, 32. “We’ve developed new procedures that exploit our state of the art technology.”

“It has been a long journey to get here but it is rewarding to know that we have helped set the standard across the whole class.”

Lieutenant Matthew McGinlay, Forth’s First Lieutenant and one of the longest serving crew members, added: “Operational Sea Training is always a difficult test which has been made slightly more challenging by the fact we are the first of this class of ship to complete it.”

“The training we’ve received is second to none and has put us in a strong position to deploy and conduct operations anywhere in the world.”

Forth briefly met up with HMS Trent (pictured, top with Forth on the left) as the latter was being put through her paces between Arran, Bute and Great Cumbrae – the first time two ships in the class have been at sea together.

Due to be handed over to the Navy later this

year, Trent’s trials allowed her to test her main engineering systems and sensors – engines, water production, sewage and waste collection, electricity generation, radar and the like – and allows shipwrights to make tweaks and fix any problems once the ship returned to BAE’s yard at Scotstoun.

Future members of the ship’s company were asked to join Trent for the trials to get used to her systems and capabilities ready to operate and maintain it themselves once she formally joins the Fleet later this year – a big step closer thanks to the success of the maiden spell at sea.

“Being invited on board for sea trials was a really useful experience,” said Petty Officer Chris Allison, who’ll be Trent’s propulsion maintainer once the ship is handed over to the Royal Navy.

“The technicians and engineers from BAE Systems and the various equipment manufacturers who conducted the trials were really welcoming and keen to share their knowledge with us.”

“This made it a really worthwhile trip and puts us in a great position to carry on with our own training and preparations.”

As Trent headed back up the Clyde to continue fitting out, HMS Medway headed in the opposite direction, her construction and trials complete, ready to make her Pompey debut (pictured inset by LPhot Barry Swainsbury).

“It was a real privilege to bring Medway into her new home port for the very first time,” said her Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Ben Power. “The day represented the culmination of years of hard work by members of the ship’s company and I am proud of each and every one of them.”

While Forth’s future is predetermined – she’s due to sail south at the end of the year to replace HMS Clyde as the Royal Navy’s permanent presence in the Falkland Islands – Medway’s tasking, once trials and training are completed by the end of 2019, has yet to be decided.

The Batch 2s are bigger, faster, more heavily armed, and capable of carrying 50 troops.

It means in addition to fishery protection duties, as performed by the three original Rivers – HMS Tyne, Mersey and Severn – they are expected to deploy overseas more often, operating out of distant ports to patrol the waters of the Mediterranean, Far East and Caribbean, acting as a reassuring presence and upholder of international laws and security.



A last look at South Georgia?

DON'T write off the old guard just yet.

No, the first generation Rivers have plenty of life – and utility – left in them.

Like HMS Clyde, current South Atlantic patrol ship.

She was treated to the icy blast of winter when she paid one of her last visits to the rocky paradise of South Georgia.

Clyde took a ten-day 1,500-mile round trip to the sparsely-populated island chain, once a major whaling station, today a nature haven, a land of rock and ice accessible visited by polar tourists on cruise ships and studied by boffins from the British Antarctic Survey.

HMS Clyde provides a permanent Royal Navy presence in the Falklands, spending most of her time visiting the distant communities spread around the islands and conducting training with RAF and Army units stationed on the remote Overseas Territory.

As well as acting as a deterrent against aggression, Clyde works with British civilian authorities and scientists to help preserve the unique



● Viewed from the hills towering over Grytviken, HMS Clyde appears little more than a greyish blur while berthed at King Edward Point... and is dwarfed by a visiting cruise ship

environment of South Georgia, from transporting personnel and supplies to the BAS outposts to supplying the glaciers, clearing plastics from the beaches and enforcing fishing regulations to preserve the balance of toothfish, icefish and krill which inhabit the island’s waters.

After keeping a wide berth from

the numerous icebergs infesting the waters between the Falklands and South Georgia, HMS Clyde linked up with Pharos SG, the fishery protection ship used to enforce legislation and deter illegal activity – although not usually with the Falklands’ governor, Nigel Phillips, aboard... as he was on this occasion.

While he and Pharos went on their way, Clyde sailed up Drygalski fjord to the namesake glacier, which served as the backdrop for medal presentations to Chief Petty Officer ‘Darby’ Allen (Long Service Good Conduct) and Able Seaman Courtney McKeown (General Service Medal) by Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Hugh Harris.

After inspecting the former whaling stations at Leith and Stromness, Clyde berthed in the ‘capital’ Grytviken, giving crew time ashore to visit sites such as the museum, post office and Ernest Shackleton’s grave, take a dip in the water (a balmy 4°C) followed by a spell in the sauna, and take on the BAS scientists on the island’s sole football pitch.

In a game of two halves (one half of the pitch is swamp, the other rock and gravel), the sailors came back from 3-0 to draw 3-3. After a barbecue (outside temperature just 2°C) with the scientists, the ship conducted man overboard drills in

the relatively-sheltered waters of Cumberland Bay then headed back to the Falklands.

Aboard Clyde throughout the trip to South Georgia was Army officer Captain Callum Napier, on the staff of British Forces South Atlantic Islands. He returned to his office awestruck by most of what he’d seen.

“The first iceberg – it was three miles away – must have been massive,” he said. “As spectacular a sight as it was, it also presented a very real reminder of a danger that the ship would have to deal with.”

“We also enjoyed some pretty awesome views of the South Georgia coastline, with Albatross gliding overhead and pods of seals chasing Clyde along.”

“It was a privilege to have been invited to accompany HMS Clyde on one of her patrols and to see her crew in action. Among the many lessons and experiences I have taken away, I think if I had to pick one it would be: everything is definitely harder at sea.”



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Forever on the beaches

A STRIKING statue of three British servicemen fighting their way up Gold Beach in Normandy was unveiled on the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

Once complete, the memorial, near the town of Ver-sur-Mer, will list the names of all 22,442 members of the British armed forces who died in the campaign in northern France over the summer of 1944.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who joined British PM Theresa May for the unveiling of the statue, said it was intolerable that there had been no such memorial in Normandy before now.

"This is where young men, many of whom had never set foot on French soil, landed at dawn under German fire, risking their lives while fighting their way up the beach, which was littered with obstacles and mines," he said.

"Nothing will break them. Nothing can ever break ties that have been bound in bloodshed and shared values."

The largest seaborne invasion in history, the Allied Operation Overlord changed the course of WW2.

Hundreds of veterans attended services on the beaches and at the French national ceremony at Bayeux Cathedral.

75
D-DAY

Our boys, who we had been talking to minutes earlier, were cut down by machine guns. They were floating, face down in the water and we couldn't get to them. We couldn't help them. That's my most abiding memory and I can't forget it.

RN Signaller Frank Baugh, 95, who landed on Sword Beach

The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall led the commemorations at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery at Bayeux.

The services in France came a day after Portsmouth was the centre of the UK National Commemorative Event.

Led by the Queen, world leaders from 15 nations joined around 600 veterans, along with members of the armed forces for an emotional service.

"A sea of uniforms, an ocean of men."

The vivid description of Southsea Common on June 5 1944 was among the opening words of actor Celia Imrie as she narrated the National Commemorative Event.

The weather was appropriately D Day-esque. Cool, breezy, overcast. The waters were choppy as in June 1944.

Continued on pages 14-15



...strong air forces began landing other troops on the beaches

"THE EYES OF THE WORLD ARE UPON YOU" - DWIGHT



Continued from page 13

As ceremonies began, ships left for the bay of the Seine – this time ferries carrying passengers more quickly and in considerable more comfort than they did 75 years ago.

A huge crowd gathered outside of the security compound and watched the proceedings on big screens.

The centre of their focus was the veterans attending the moving service – and it was those men who really stole the show.

There were tears in a few eyes when a group of ten veterans, each escorted by a member of today's armed forces, took to the main stage, their appearance prompting everyone, including the Queen, to rise to their feet.

There were concerned glances as the frail veterans, some with walking sticks, stood for several minutes but they remained determined to play their part.

That determination had been evident earlier at the gates to the inner compound where wheelchairs and golf buggies were ignored by veterans, despite pleas from their relatives.

"No. I'm all right, I'm going to walk," one veteran said to his exasperated daughter as they made the journey into the main arena.

The hour-long service featured recorded interviews by British veteran AB Bert Edwards, Canadian Rob Roberts and US paratrooper Eugene Deibler.

Canadian president Justin Trudeau was the first of the world leaders to deliver a reading.

He recited the Victoria Cross citation of Lt Col Cecil Merritt, the first Canadian to be awarded the medal for gallantry.

US President Donald Trump read the Roosevelt prayer, which the Supreme Allied Commander broadcast to the USA on June 5 1944.

French president Emmanuel Macron read a letter from an executed leader of the French Resistance, while French actress Antonia Desplat read an extract from the diary of Parisian Violette Leduc as she and her mother fled the french capital.

All were heartbreaking.

None more so than when PM Theresa May read a letter from Captain Norman Skinner to his wife Gladys. He wrote it on June 3 and the letter was found in his pocket after he was killed on D-Day.

The general public gathered in a huge

'fanzone' next to the VIP arena and main stage. While a large security fence obscured the view of proceedings, giant screens conveyed the commemorative show to the thousands who flocked to the common.

They brought deck chairs, picnics, Union Flags.

The mood was more of a concert in the park, air show or family picnic. Indeed the enduring memory of D Day 75 will be not of tears and sadness, but smiles and joy.

Everywhere the veterans went they were lauded, applauded, cheered.

And they brought everyone to their feet



Nobody can cure you of the screams of the wounded and it breaks my heart because they were all my mates.

Royal Marine Trevor Stacey, who landed on Juno Beach with 47 Cdo

and thunderous applause rippling through the crowd when ten men stepped forward on the main stage.

None more so than 99-year-old Portsmouth veteran John Jenkins who received the biggest spontaneous round of applause.

"You never forget your comrades. You are all in it together. And we must never forget," said Mr Jenkins, *pictured top right with French President Macron.*

Baritone Sir Willard White sang *Le Chant des Partisans*, a favourite with the French Resistance, while Sheridan Smith sang Vera Lynn classics *When The Lights Go On Again* and *We'll Meet Again* – but before finishing the latter, the flypast had begun.

A Spitfire and Hurricane were first up, followed by a Wildcat and three Merlin helicopters.

Next to fly over Southsea were two C130 Hercules, a Sentinel, a Voyager, four Hawks from 736 NAS at RNAS Culdrose, two Typhoons and, the ones they were all waiting for, nine Red Arrows.

Out in the fanzone, veteran Robert 'Bob' Barnett said: "It's been a fantastic occasion, unbelievable.

"D-Day, what we went through, and especially those who never came back, should never be forgotten."

He was a Bofors gunner on HMS Redpool, one of the many ships screening the invasion force from air and submarine attack.

"When we saw all the ships in the Solent we knew that something big was going to happen," he recalled.

In a matter of hours Redpool was approaching the shores of Normandy.

"We saw the coast of France as dawn began to break and shortly afterwards landing craft sailed past us. You could see the faces of the soldiers. We gave them the thumbs up. That's all we could do for them at that point."

At about the same time near Falmouth Wren Christine Lamb was anxiously waiting for the first news from the beaches; her team had drawn accurate sketches of the French coastline to help bridge teams fix their positions in the run into shore.

"It was terribly exciting when we heard on the radio that we were landing in France. We were giving France back to the French. How marvellous a thought that was."

Similar thoughts crossed the mind of fellow Wren officer Patricia Davies, in a listening station in Dover.

"There was a real sense of relief. I have very vivid memories of standing on the cliffs of Dover, looking across at coast of occupied France.

"The other thing which struck me was that all we had done to deceive the Germans had worked. It was magical."

The enemy had expected the invasion in the Pas de Calais...opposite Dover.

Although proceedings were live on TV, Portsmouth resident Mayra Hedderly and her family wanted to attend in person.

"We wanted to be involved in the spectacle, to share the emotions. In the run up, there was a lot of talk about security fences, about people being excluded.

"It's been quite the opposite, very inclusive. People of all ages and all nationalities are here, and everyone has been very respectful."

Allan and Marjorie Dawes from Amesbury were drawn to Southsea because, said Mr Dawes: "This is our last chance to show our gratitude for the wartime generation, to thank them for what they did for us, for the free world.

"The event has been wonderful. Just the right tone. Not a celebration or a party, but not too solemn either. And when the



HT D EISENHOWER, ALLIED SUPREME COMMANDER



veterans appeared on stage and everyone got up to clap, it sent a shiver down my spine. So moving."

Back on the main stage and actor David Haig performed an extract from his play *Pressure*, which tells the story of Eisenhower's meteorologist Group Captain James Stagg, who persuaded him to delay D-Day because of a predicted storm.

The very personal accounts of those involved in the build up and execution of D-Day added to the sense of drama and left spectators deep in thought. The crowd heard about Royal Navy electrician RG Watts, who wrote a vivid account of men being seasick

I could hear the gunfire in the background. There was an awful realisation that men were dying and being maimed and I was sending them messages to go on, go forward.

Wren radio operator Marie Scott, 92.

in his landing craft.

Jonathan Bailey, dressed in 1940s military costume, read the account from Watts as he left for Normandy. Bailey was joined on stage by seven others to represent men in a landing craft.

Also attending were German Chancellor Angela Merkel, as well as leaders from Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Poland and Slovakia.

The Queen made an emotional tribute as she quoted a broadcast by her father, King George VI, at the time of the operation in World War Two.

The Queen said the veterans of D-Day demonstrated "more than courage and endurance", showing "unconquerable resolve."

"The fate of the world depended on their success," she said. "Many of them would never return, and the heroism, courage and sacrifice of those who lost their lives will

never be forgotten."

She thanked them "with humility and pleasure, on behalf of the entire country, indeed the whole free world".

After the main service, veterans met some of the world leaders.

Royal Navy veteran Raymond Harry Simmonds, 97, who served in one of the LST 63 landing craft, said: "Today has been an excellent experience, fantastic."

Around 300 of the veterans later departed Portsmouth for Normandy aboard the MV Boudicca.

Royal Navy stoker Richard Wood, 95, who served in the destroyer HMS Jervin, said: "It's been good to speak to other veterans and hear their stories."

"This may well be the last time I make this journey."

The Boudicca was escorted out of Portsmouth Harbour by a flotilla of Royal Navy ships – HMS Defender, Northumberland, Enterprise, Tyne, Cattistock, Middleton, Example, Trumpeter, Biter, Explorer, Puncher, Pursuer and RFA Fort Victoria.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Northumberland, Captain Ally Pollard, said: "It is a huge privilege for the ship's company to be a part of this commemorative event."

"For the sailors on board it is a time to reflect on the challenges and requirements placed on our forebears and to honour the sacrifices they made."

"I have been involved in both the 60th and 70th anniversary of D-Day on different ships so it is brilliant to be a part of this one – it is a huge privilege."

In France for the anniversary of D-Day, the veterans attended the Royal British Legion's Service of Remembrance at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery, which was also attended by The Prince of Wales and the Prime Minister.

The event included a tri-service Guard of Honour supported by a military band; a procession of Royal British Legion Standards; a short parade of veterans; a religious service; and the laying of wreaths at the Cross.

Bayeux was the first town liberated by the allied forces after D-Day.

Royal Marines veteran John Haggerty, who was among the crowd at Southsea, said: "I'm very proud of Portsmouth as a city. It's absolutely vital we keep these memories alive and talk about those who made the ultimate sacrifice."

Mike Boyle, 52, from Portsmouth, said: "The event here was fantastic and it is important to mark the 75th anniversary of D-Day. It was a remarkable sacrifice."

"I've brought my children up to respect this and I'm speechless at how moving today was."

Lisa Watts, 47, from Portsmouth, said: "It has been an emotional day and it is so good

A soldier had a photo of his wife and children and I wanted him to be sent home to his family. But I had to sew him up for burial at sea.

Petty Officer Alfred Fuzzard, 97, who was in a landing craft on D-Day

to remember those who made this incredible sacrifice. They are heroes."

Chris Hider, 47, from Reading, added: "My grandad landed the day after D-Day and it's important to remember him and his regiment today."

"The collective effort to make this operation work was incredible and really quite moving."

Sue Chapman, from Southampton, said: "It's really important to remember D-Day. I hope it's something we don't ever forget, especially our children's generation. We have to remember we wouldn't be where we are today without them."

Her son Matthew, 14, added: "I thought it was very emotional seeing the Spitfires going overhead and the formations of aircraft and everyone gathered together makes you feel very patriotic."

"My generation need to remember as much as any other."

Modern skills on show, Page 16



D-Day 75 Pictures: PO (Phot) Owen Cooban, LPhotos Paul Halliwell, Joe Cater, Ben Shread, Dan Rosenbaum, Rory Arnold and Louise George
Words: Lorraine Proudlock, Richard Hargreaves, Peter Howard and Elisha Quade



Modern skills on show

Veterans impressed by technology available to today's marines

ROYAL Marines showed off their modern amphibious warfare skills to veterans who were in action on D-Day 75 years ago in an emotional meeting at Poole Harbour in Dorset.

In 1944, thousands of landing craft spilled allied troops onto the beaches of Normandy to start hammering down the steel casing of Fortress Europe in the largest ever amphibious operation in history.

Now the veterans who crashed ashore that day have rubbed shoulders with the modern-day amphibious specialists to mark D-Day's 75th anniversary.

Coxswains of 1 Assault Group's 539 Assault Squadron and troops from Charlie Company of Taunton-based 40 Commando showed off the kit they use in modern amphibious warfare, before sharing stories with the veterans.

"They're our forefathers and we look up to them. They laid the foundations of what we are today and especially in the D-Day landings," said Marine Chris Takacs, of Charlie Company, 40 Commando.

"D-Day has that legacy and we still use some of the tactics and we implement the lessons learnt.

"Obviously modern warfare has evolved, but we still pride ourselves on the amphibious capability and what they did on D-Day.

"It's been great to chat to the veterans and they've been eager to compare what they had to what we have now."

539 Assault Squadron brought three of their high-speed Offshore Raiding Craft (ORC) to Poole with them and dozens of veterans headed out on the water with the green berets to experience the powerful boats now used in seaborne assaults.

Len Perry, 95, who was on destroyer HMS Beagle during D-Day, was gifted the chance to briefly pilot one of the ORCs in the waters around the harbour.

"This is great," he said. "I didn't ever think I'd get the chance to do something like this again."

Some 255 veterans were on a week-long commemoration tour to mark 75 years since D-Day and, before heading to Portsmouth and France for further events, the Royal British Legion ship, MV Boudicca, visited Poole.

Royal Marines veteran Robert William Yaxley, 95, was in the Sword Beach assault on D-Day and was pleased to see plenty of green berets greeting him and his comrades at the harbour.

"I feel so lucky to be here today," he said. "It's seems a long while ago now since we landed on Sword Beach.

I was very lucky, I landed on D-Day and went all the way through to Germany without a scratch.'

RM veteran Robert William Yaxley, 95.

"It's very important to mark this occasion and it's great to see so many green berets here to greet us."

"It is a great privilege to be present today in Poole Harbour to meet an extraordinary group of people embarked on MV Boudicca," said Brigadier Graeme 'Jock' Fraser.

"These D-Day veterans are at the very centre of a series of events, which will mark a pivotal phase of World War Two, when 75 years ago they took part in Operation Neptune, the largest amphibious operation in history."

Poole was a significant embarkation point on D-Day, making it a very fitting place for the veterans to meet the green berets.

Many landing crafts, gun boats and the decking for Mulberry Harbours were built in Poole and thousands of American troops bound for Omaha beach left from the Dorset town.



Tribute to pathfinders who paved the way for success in Europe



The Duke of Gloucester paid tributes on Hayling Island to 200 commandos who paved the way for D-Day success.

The small island just along the coast from Portsmouth was home to an elite, and largely unsung, unit of frogmen and canoeists who carried out vital reconnaissance and intelligence gathering from the shores of occupied France.

The Duke joined veterans groups and serving sailors, soldiers and Royal Marines, including Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Nick Hine, at the monument to the Combined Operations Pilotage Parties, erected just a few years ago to finally recognise the small, clandestine unit.

They used the island's sailing club as their base and, given the nature of the secret operations they performed, nearly half the personnel received medals for their bravery.

And on D-Day itself, members of the COPP sailed with midget

submarines and acted as guides directing shipping and landing craft in to the beaches.

As well as acting as home of the COPP, Hayling played a role in preparing the Mulberry Harbours for supporting D-Day and for training landing craft.

And barely a month before the Normandy landings, Hayling Bay was the venue for a D-Day rehearsal involving 200 ships and an 'invasion' by the troops of 50th Infantry Division – a rehearsal watched by Churchill and Eisenhower.

A choir from the island's two primary schools and Hayling College students performed a song written especially for the 75th anniversary of D-Day, re-enactors brought the era back to life, while wreaths were laid by Timothy Knatchbull – whose grandfather Lord Mountbatten was in charge of Combined Operations – Hampshire's Lord Lieutenant Nigel Atkinson and serving personnel.



Veterans mark D-Day, pages 27-28; HMS Eaglet in Normandy, page 33



● HMS Westminster, second from top, in formation with the task group in the Baltic

Fjord focus for ships on NATO duty

TWO Royal Navy warships have been working with NATO in the Baltic.

HMS Westminster is approaching the half-way point of a six-month mission to keep the region secure with NATO, while HMS Cattistock has been on duty with a task force.

Westminster is spending the bulk of the spring and summer as part of a task group charged with keeping the waters safe and being ready at the drop of a hat to respond to any major incident.

She is part of a seven-strong NATO force led by flagship American destroyer USS Gravelly with Spanish frigate EPS Almirante Juan de Borbón, Turkish frigate TCG Gokova and her sister ship ORP General Kazimierz Pulaski, Denmark's support/command/amphibious ship HDMS Absalon, and German tanker FGS Rhön keeping the fuel tanks of all topped up.

Group 1 is one of four task forces directed from NATO's naval headquarters in Northwood, northwest London, where the Royal Navy's Vice Admiral Keith Blount took over from Vice Admiral Sir Clive Johnstone last month.

The group's mission is to ensure the safety of all mariners and freedom of navigation in northern European waters – Baltic, North Sea, North Atlantic – demonstrate NATO's collective resolve and generally fly the flag for the alliance, celebrating its 70th anniversary this year.

In two months, Westminster was pitchforked into 16 air defence exercises, 15 anti-submarine workouts and seven replenishments at sea.

The Portsmouth-based frigate joined the force in time for the first Joint Warrior exercise of 2019, involving more than 40 warships, 60 aircraft and over a dozen allied nations in north-west Scotland.

Since then, the group has focused the bulk of its time in the Baltic, linking up with that sea's numerous native navies.

So there have been exercises with the Polish and Finnish fleets, and visits to the major ports in the region – Gdynia in Poland, Latvia's capital Riga, Lithuania's main port Klaipeda, Tallinn in Estonia and, across the Gulf of Finland, Helsinki in Finland.

"This deployment has already achieved a number of key milestones," said Westminster's Commanding Officer, Commander Will Paston.

"It has been really rewarding working and operating in a NATO task group, collectively improving our understanding while at the same time

demonstrating our commitment to the security in the Baltic region."

His Operations Officer Lieutenant Commander Si Reeves added: "This has been invaluable training, bringing the task force together, as well as demonstrating our skills and integration within the Baltic.

"I've been really impressed with how quickly all the ships have begun to work together and we're really displaying the value of a NATO task group now."

One of the key elements of any NATO task group is to 'cross pollinate', dispersing sailors from different ships among the force so they experience life, routines and equipment on foreign warships, the idea being everyone better understands each other and works together seamlessly.

In Westminster's case, her sailors have spent time with the Germans, Poles and Americans to date.

Westminster will remain with the NATO group until late summer, continuing exercises in the Baltic and North Atlantic designed to further hone the alliance's abilities to react to a wide range of potential threats.

Meanwhile HMS Cattistock spent a short time with Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One (SNMCMG1).

The minehunter, manned by MCM2 Crew 5, joined SNMCMG1 in March. She then had only a precious few weeks to integrate with the multi-national force, comprising of Danish, German and Norwegian ships, before being put through their paces at Exercise Joint Warrior.

Petty Officer (Mine Warfare) Chris Otway said: "Getting used to working with the other NATO nations was actually really straight forward. Most of our techniques and procedures deliberately match theirs but, as you might expect, there were a few minor differences which needed ironing out."

The highlight of the trip for most was navigation training in and around the Norwegian fjords, followed by a port visit to Bergen.

Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Chris Easterbrook, said: "This was a hugely rewarding time for my ship's company. Not only did they gain valuable experience in working as part of an international task group, but they also benefitted from training opportunities not possible in our normal exercise areas. The fjords, in particular, provide great navigation training, as well as being spectacularly beautiful."



Lots of love for Liverpool

HMS Northumberland sailed into Liverpool for a four-day logistics stop after shadowing a Russian naval vessel through the English Channel.

The Plymouth-based Type 23 arrived at Liverpool's cruise liner berth with her ship's company lining the upper deck in full ceremonial uniforms.

The ship and her crew – including three Liverpool natives – were alongside to take on supplies and enjoy a brief respite from the operations she has been conducting.

Shortly before her arrival Northumberland was activated to sail and meet the Severnorsk, a Russian Udaloy-class guided missile destroyer.

The Russian ship crossed through the English Channel on the way back to her home port after operations in the Mediterranean.

Commander Ally Pollard, HMS Northumberland's

Commanding Officer, said their Liverpool stop came midway through a 'particularly intense' period of work for Northumberland.

While in Liverpool, the ship's company toured the city, welcomed community organisations on board, and worked with reservists from the Royal Naval Reserve unit HMS Eaglet in Sefton Street.

For those who are from the area, it was also a chance to see family and friends before returning to sea.

Chief Petty Officer Mark Lynch, from Litherland, is a former pupil of nearby St Wilfrid's High School.

Mark said: "After serving in the Royal Navy for 20 years this is the first time I have been to my home city in a ship."

"I will always remember seeing HMS Liverpool coming into dock when I was a young boy, and my family taking me on board to look around."

"On that day I never

thought I would be arriving into Liverpool as a serving member on a warship."

Also serving on board HMS Northumberland is Chief Petty Officer Sarah Roberts.

Sarah is a weapons engineering specialist who joined the Navy 17 years ago.

She said: "This is the third ship I have served on which has brought me home to Liverpool."

"I love my city and, although I have now settled in Plymouth, having the opportunity to show my friends and family back home in Liverpool what I do for a living will be incredible."

Equally as proud to be coming home is former West Derby Comprehensive School student, Petty Officer Graham Finley. Graham, a marine engineer with 19 years service, is originally from Tuebrook.

He said: "For the first time since joining the Royal Navy I am getting the opportunity to be involved in a moment that will be a part of me forever. Liverpool is the city that gave me the grit to succeed."



Picture: Jason Roberts



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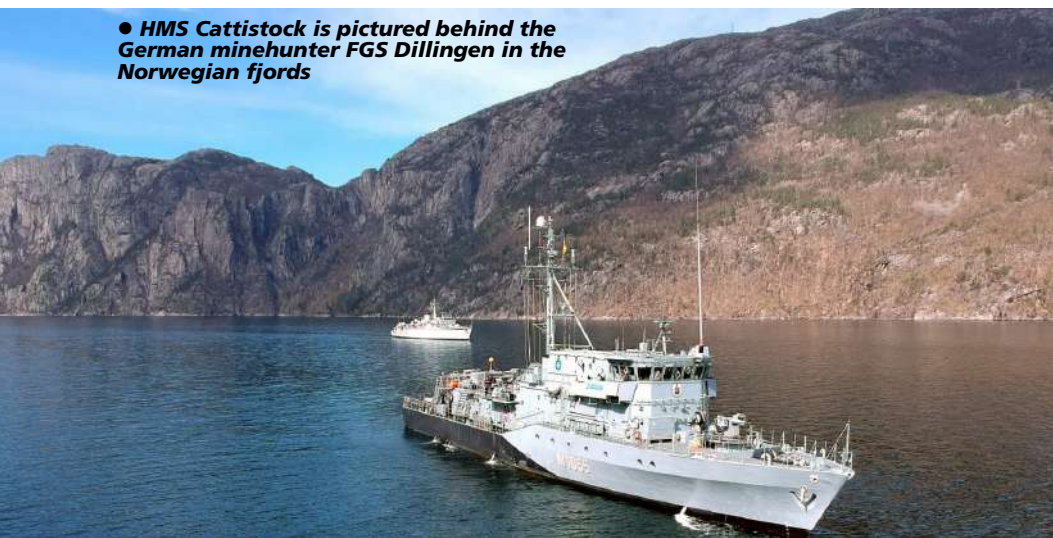
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● HMS Cattistock is pictured behind the German minehunter FGS Dillingen in the Norwegian fjords



51:155-1:809



Pictures by LCpl James Clarke



IN THE SHADOWS

ROYAL Marines have been experimenting with adding new technology alongside old school commando tactics. Working in the shadows, the marines are preparing for the future with inspiration from the past.

It was World War Two when the commandos were formed to go on smash-and-grab raids to disrupt and destroy German infrastructure, gather intelligence or carry out reconnaissance.

These commando forefathers did their bidding in the shadows, the element of surprise key to the success of their missions.

More recently, Royal Marines have been involved in more conventional fighting than their forebears but are on a constant mission to evolve and as part of that are going back to their commando roots while adding new kit to the equation.

As they look ahead to becoming the Future Commando Force, Royals from Taunton-based 40 Commando have been playing with new bits of tech but using them in the style of raids their ancestors in WW2 went on.

During a two-week mission on the exercise areas on Salisbury Plain, the Bootnecks worked on stealthy tactics on urban and rural assaults.

This is part of Commando Warrior Two, which is the second iteration of a series of exercises this year which focus on the evolution of the Royal Marines and the kit they use.

On Salisbury Plain, the marines used dismounted situational awareness pads; a ruggedised tablet designed to give troops on the ground access to footage from a combination of unmanned aerial vehicles feeds and GPS overlays.

They also used specialist radios, which enhance commandos' ability to communicate during battle, before each phase of the exercise was scrutinised for its successes and failures.

"Commando Warrior Two is the second phase of an exercise series where we are looking at Future Commando Force as a concept," said Major Jack Anrude, Officer Commanding, Bravo Company, 40 Commando.

"We're going back to our origins as a commando and the operations

they conducted. Right at the epicentre of the commando ethos is commando mind set – we're first to understand, we're the first to adapt and the first to overcome. Looking at the current operating environment and looking to the future we've identified ways where we can increase and enhance the way we do business.

"Commando Warrior Two wasn't primarily focused on integrating new bits of equipment. However, we did introduce the dismounted situational awareness pad.

"We also included the Single Purpose Radio which allows us to have more effective communication across the battlefield.

"Following the successes of Commando Warrior One and Two we are now fine tuning how we best use that equipment, looking at introducing unmanned aerial systems, mobility assets and cutting-edge communication technology to make sure we are the most efficient on the battlefield."

On Commando Warrior Two, 40 Commando's fighting companies battled against each other, force-on-force. Troops experimented with new technology and how teams of marines are structured.

Traditional commando objectives were set and they were tasked to fight through villages held by a seemingly superior force and clear 'enemy' bridges before blowing them up.

The marines were matched by an equal opposing enemy force and, with a team playing local civilians in the urban areas, it added a level of realism to reflect the future situations the commandos could find themselves in.

Each objective was repeated, allowing for the effectiveness of each of the experiments to be measured – both in terms of technology and team structure.

Following each objective, the assessors were able to analyse the effectiveness of their experiments with detailed after-action reviews.

Commando Warrior Three will take lessons from One and Two and weave in more new technology.



TYPE 45 destroyer HMS Duncan showed how she can be relied upon to help with humanitarian crises during an exercise in the Mediterranean.

The warship joined ships and aircraft from six other nations for Exercise Argonaut – an annual Cypriot workout focusing on search and rescue and humanitarian aid.

Duncan's Wildcat helicopter from 815 Naval Air Squadron joined units from Cyprus, America, Greece, Germany, France and Israel for the first phase, a scenario based on an airliner which had crashed into the sea.

The coalition of ships and their air units were sent around 30 miles offshore to offer help where possible.

202 Flight from the Royal Navy ship flew to the scene and winched dummy "casualties" from the decks of US ship USNS Yuma and Cypriot patrol ship OPV Ioannides – which had picked them up from the water – and took them back to Duncan for treatment.

The exercise gave pilot Lieutenant Jonny Hamlyn, flight observer Lieutenant Tom Horne and winchman AET Rhys Kennedy the chance to practice search and rescue in a live-action setting.

AET Kennedy said: "We have spent some time practising winching while on deployment and had a few days at RAF Akrotiri doing search-and-rescue training.

"It was good to be able to use these skills in an almost real-life situation, while at sea with other ships and helicopters.

"It was more realistic than any training we have done so far while away. It shows the Wildcat's diversity in what it can do."

The second phase of the exercise saw 120 of Duncan's ship's company act as evacuees from a war-torn country. They were all given different background stories and were processed by the customs team in Larnaca Port.

While some of the sailors carried UK, Canadian and USA passports, others had more complex backgrounds, such as families from crisis countries or those without any identification.

A range of Cypriot officials as well as customs control from different countries were involved to practise the difficult processing routine.

The second phase of the exercise saw casualties from a stricken ship rescued by the Cypriot navy, with medical teams ready to help once it was alongside in the port.

Air Warfare Officer Lieutenant Commander Michael Hutchinson said: "Exercise Argonaut is one of the biggest exercises of the year for the Cypriots and it was great that HMS Duncan was able to offer support.

"Humanitarian aid is an important function for the ship and shows we can be relied upon to act when needed. The exercise covered many scenarios and

ensured we are ready should a situation arise in the future."

Argonaut featured 21 naval search-and-rescue units and seven air units, including the Cypriot 460 SAR Squadron and the host nation's patrol vessels Ioannides, Alasia, Georgiou, Tsomakis and Ammochostos.

Cyprus Police used their helicopters and fast patrol boat Thiseas, while the country's forestry department provided fixed-wing aircraft.

"The need for the exercise was created after the crisis in Lebanon in 2006, when Cyprus was used as an intermediary stop for the evacuation of 120,000 civilians," said vice-admiral Giorgos Oikonomou of the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre. "Since then Argonaut takes place every year to test the readiness of the involved authorities."

The six-month Duncan deployment has been particularly busy for 202 Flight.

Since leaving Portsmouth, the Yeovilton-based squadron have worked with French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, alongside anti-submarine warfare helicopters in Italian exercise Mare Aperto and trained at RAF Akrotiri.

"When working with the Charles de Gaulle, we were tasked with doing surface searches as there was a Russian ship shadowing us the entire time," said Lt Horne. "It was our job to see where the ship was, what it was doing and then feed that information back. We were used quite a lot by the Charles de Gaulle and did more than double our requirement of flying hours for the month.

At Alan Smith is on his first deployment and has enjoyed the variety of work the team have been involved in.

He said: "So far it has been really good, I have loved it. In the couple months we have been away I have seen so much and visited six to seven countries.

"We have been kept busy with all the

different things we've had to do."

And some of the Wildcat's tasks have been at short notice.

Leading Hand Joe Simpson said: "When we have a casualty evacuation, it is all last minute. For one of them, the team were having some down time before night flying and we got the call we had to take someone off the ship. We managed to get ready and get the helicopter ready to go in 25 minutes.

"It is important we can react that quickly when needed."

Duncan's catering team have also been on top of their game, providing three meals a day for the 250-strong ship's company as well as fine dining for two members of the Royal family (see page 24) and the British High Commissioner.

Currently, the team has two chefs from New Zealand on board and former Royal Navy chefs who have joined HMS Duncan through Project Jules Verne – a scheme that allows ex-chefs to pick up where they left off.

AB AJ Mansell, 27, who had

been a chef for ten years before making the move from civilian to armed forces, said: "This is my first time on deployment and I have enjoyed adapting to this work environment.

"Having to cook during emergency drills or action stations is a fun challenge and keeps the weeks away interesting.

"I loved being a chef outside the navy and it was rewarding but it ended up being the same every day. I wanted to try something new so thought to join the navy, see the world and learn new culinary skills."

**Report: Elisha Quade
aboard HMS Duncan**



INTERNATIONAL RESCUE



ATIONAL



Pictures: AB Chris Sellers and Matthew Montgomery



Royal chefs dish out advice on warship

NO chicken in a basket here... Cooks from Sweden's royal household shared their expertise with the 'Chefs from JEF' when HMS Westminster spent a few days in Stockholm.

Two members of the king's culinary team left the royal palace and were given a tour of the Portsmouth-based frigate... an event which naturally took in the galley, where the ship's caterers were preparing for 'fish Friday' - cod and chips.

Royal chefs Eva Skarin and Carolin Maaninka decided to spice up that traditional menu with salmon teriyaki, and offered some filleting and food preparation tips to their RN counterparts Lawrence Griffin and Christopher Hooper-Callcut.

"It was great training to all of us being able to share our experiences and learn new culinary skills," said Christopher.

"We hope to continue to improve our understanding through exchanges like the one we had with the chefs from the

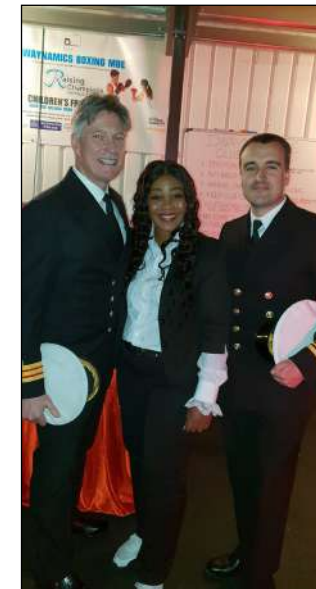
Swedish Royal Palace."

Westminster is attached to NATO's Standing Group 1 which is patrolling the waters of northern Europe on peacekeeping/security duties coinciding with the Royal Navy's amphibious task group in the Baltic Sea Region who are there as part of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF).

The JEF is a UK-led group of nine like-minded nations who are able to respond to all manner of international events and crises, which Sweden joined in 2018.

Standing NATO Maritime Group One's visit to Stockholm saw the NATO group's senior officers call in on the Royal Palace, meet students from the Swedish Defence University, and host Swedish military personnel and VIPs aboard Westminster, ESPS Almirante Juan de Borbon and group flagship, USS Gravelly.

And sailors were able to take a break from operations and enjoy some time ashore, including joining city sightseeing tours.



Supporting those fighting crime

MEMBERS of the Royal Naval Reserve attended the Lambeth Boxing Awards and the VIP launch of the Nelson Mandela Official Exhibition in London.

Lieutenant Commander Simeon Low and Surgeon Commander Mike Bowen are pictured with Pastor Lorraine Jones, the founder of Dwaynatics boxing group.

Pastor Jones lost her son Dwayne Simpson to knife crime four years ago and vowed to ensure other families did not have to suffer the same loss.

The group is designed to steer at-risk youth away from gang-culture, knife crime and gun violence, and encourage them to see that there is a future.

"Knife crime strikes fear in the mind of any parent and tragically every month we are reminded why Lorraine's cause is important to us all.

"She has a growing army of supporters and the ear of many key ministers. Hopefully she will soon have a growing navy of supporters," said Surg Cdr Bowen.

The Mandela exhibition, held at the Leake Street Gallery, charts the life of the statesman and gave members of the RNR the chance to send a positive message about life chances.

"Trying to prevent our youth falling into a life of violent crime is a priority," added Surg Cdr Bowen.

"Joining the Royal Navy or Royal Marines is sadly an option many do not consider, hopefully we can change this."

New home will support families

ARMED forces charity SSAFA has officially opened its new home at Norton House, Stanford Hall in Loughborough.

The house, which was officially opened by Lady Carter, vice president of SSAFA, provides free, safe and supportive accommodation to families whose loved ones are receiving treatment for injuries at the nearby Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre.

Norton House also provides a haven for those being treated, to allow them a break from the hospital environment, as well as having peace of mind knowing their families are in a safe and supportive environment.

The name of the new family accommodation reflects the Norton House legacy set up by SSAFA in 2008 in response to a campaign led by Major Peter Norton's family, after he was injured whilst serving in Iraq.

Sir Andrew Gregory, CEO at SSAFA, said: "Ensuring that military personnel, veterans and their families are given the help that they deserve as they undergo the challenging rehabilitation process is a key part of SSAFA's remit.

"Norton House, Stanford Hall represents a new era of vital support, with emotional welfare remaining at the heart of the service. We hope that news of this official opening spreads and reaches those who may be in need of our assistance."

THE Annington Trust renewed their commitment to provide funding for SSAFA's Short Breaks for a further three years.

The funding - amounting to £6,600 per annum - will allow SSAFA to provide 20 places for families needing respite and fun.

SSAFA's Short Breaks are a fun-filled adventure open exclusively to military families with children who have additional needs and disabilities - and siblings are welcome too.

The next Family Break runs from October 21 to 25 at the Calvert Trust in Exmoor, with 50 spaces available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Helen Liddell, Chair of the Annington Trust said: "The Trustees are very keen on projects that help service youngsters build self-confidence and we are only too aware of the benefits these types of experiences can have on young people."

For more information visit www.ssafa.org.uk and follow the charity on Twitter: @SSAFA.

Historic tie for field gun trophy

THE prestigious Brickwoods Trophy was awarded to two field gun teams - the first time the competition has resulted in a tie.

HMNB Portsmouth and REME shared the honours at the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Field Gun Contest at HMS Collingwood.

The contest was the highlight for thousands of visitors at the Fareham base's annual open day.

Crews from across the UK, Naples, Gibraltar and Cyprus pulled out all the stops for the contest.

Lieutenant Commander Jason Steele, No 1 Trainer for the HM Naval Base Portsmouth crew, said: "The last thing I expected was this, I've been doing field gun for 30 years and I've never known it before.

"The penalties meant our final times were the same. It's about running fast and running clean, we ran clean, unfortunately REME didn't, I



think over all it's a fair result."

Staff Sergeant Louie Munton, No 1 Trainer for REME, said: "Last year I thought we were unfortunate, we had a new crew this year and we got in the main final. I was so happy, and look at us now, sharing the trophy, it's

unbelievable."

With other attractions, including a free fun fair, live bands, high ropes challenge, and the opportunity to witness the HMS Queen Elizabeth entering Portsmouth harbour in the warship simulator, plus much

more, the show was a great success.

HMS Collingwood's CO, Commander Mark Walker said: "Our open day was a superb day and we generated significant funds for local and service charities."

Behind-the-scenes tour for defence attachès

HMS Collingwood threw its doors open to 31 foreign defence attachès, giving them the chance to view training at the Fareham establishment.

The visit was part of the MoD Foreign Liaison Staff annual visits programme and followed on from previous visits made to BRNC Dartmouth and HMS Raleigh.

At Collingwood, the visitors were shown the instruction available to sailors once they had reached phases two or three of their training.

After a welcome by Commanding Officer Captain Rob Vitali, the day began with a visit to Mercury Building where the guests were given an overview of the training offered to officers and ratings in the warfare support specialisation.

From there, they visited Endeavour Building to experience training on the establishment's state-of-the-art bridge simulator which gives navigation officers the skills they need to navigate various types of craft in different

challenging conditions.

They then moved to Marlborough Building where the emphasis was on weapons engineering training, with a demonstration of the 4.5 Mark 8 Gun, the Automated Small Calibre Gun, pictured right and the Phalanx trainer which gives trainees a taste of the radar-guided weapon currently fitted to the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

The visit concluded with a farewell address by Capt Vitali thanking the guests for their interest in HMS Collingwood's Maritime Warfare School.

Captain Wolter Sillevs Smitt, the Netherlands Defence and Naval Attachè, replied: "We have all had a very good impression of the excellent facilities you have here. They are all highly organised and we noticed the students here are well taken care of and seem to feel at home. Thank you to you and all your staff who made our visit so interesting and enjoyable."



Anglesey's aces

Submariners honoured at Thetis memorial

THE people of Anglesey chose the anniversary of one of the Submarine Service's darkest hours to grant it their highest honour.

Hundreds of submariners paraded through the streets of the port of Holyhead as the Freedom of the County of Anglesey was conferred on the Royal Navy's underwater warriors.

They were joined by men and women committed to hunting them down: the crew of frigate HMS St Albans, taking a break from recent anti-submarine activities by putting into Holyhead for the weekend.

The Freedom Scroll was presented to the Casket Party led by Warrant Officer Stirling Way, who carried the scroll through the town to the applause of Holyheaders.

Behind him, carrying the Colour, was 50-year-old Petty Officer Tony Madden who hails from Anglesey.

"I'm quite proud to be here for this event and be in the parade," he said. "It gives my local friends an insight into what I do. I've been away from my home town for a long time and it shows them a bit of my Navy life."

The head of the Silent Service, Rear Admiral John Weale, thanked Cllr Margaret Murley Roberts, vice chairwoman of Anglesey Council, for granting the civic honour.

"This is a special day for the Submarine Service, he said. "This is not something that happens often to us.

"As submariners, we don't get out much. Looking at them assembled here today I thank them for all they have done – and do – in the Submarine Service.

"Standing on parade reminds me of why we do our job: to defend and protect the UK's interests and to defend us all from those who wish to harm us and our way of life."

The parade was followed by a solemn ceremony remembering the gravest disaster in the 118-year history of the Silent Service: the loss of HMS Thetis, on the eve of World War 2.

Ninety-nine men died – not just crew, but dockyard workers, Admiralty inspectors and numerous guests – when the boat sank in Liverpool Bay during trials due to a faulty torpedo tube; only four men survived, the rest died from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Thetis was salvaged and brought to Holyhead; 44 of the crew were buried in the port's Maeshyfyrd Cemetery.

In a moving ceremony, wreaths were laid by local dignitaries and the Armed Forces and a special floral tribute was laid on behalf of 100-year-old Mary Beard – widow of crewman James Arthur Morgans and the last direct living link with the tragedy. She was unable to attend in person, but had visited Holyhead two years ago, and sent a message of gratitude.

It was the Thetis connection



Pictures: LPhotos Alex Ceolin and Mark Johnson

which prompted islanders to grant submariners Freedom eight decades later.

"What unfolded in that submarine was astounding," Admiral Weale said. "Re-invigorated and re-named she went on to serve in World War 2. It is a tribute to her that we are all back here again today 80 years on remembering HMS Thetis."

St Albans, which brought Welsh Guards with her to attend events ashore, opened her gangway to the public.

"Although we are clearly not a submarine, it is not possible to bring a submarine to Holyhead, I hope that St Albans is the next best thing," said the Saint's Commanding Officer Commander John Cromie.

Raleigh helps churchgoers

HMS Raleigh has welcomed the people from the nearby village of Sheviok into the congregation for Sunday Service as the village church undergoes repairs.

The training base in Torpoint has three churches covering the main denominations and trainee sailors take time out of their programme every week to attend. The Sheviok group were invited into the Church of England service conducted by Royal Navy Chaplain, the Reverend Andrew Corness.

Rev Corness said: "It gave them an opportunity to be part of a service that is very different from what they are used to."

Recruits at HMS Raleigh see the church service

as one of the highlights of the week.

Among the visitors was Jenny Bushrod, a former member of the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS). Addressing the trainees, she said: "Exactly 40 years ago I was one of you – not here in Torpoint – but at the landlocked HMS Dauntless in Reading.

"I was about to enter the last week of my basic training as a Wren, culminating in the passing out parade, so life was a blur of polish, pressing and parades.

"I had passed the point when the unfamiliar customs and even stranger language had become a natural part of my daily routine, elements of which are still with me today."



Good conduct badges for recruit

WE know training at HMS Raleigh can be long and arduous, but surely not dragged out to earn two good conduct badges...

Receiving two stripes from the Torpoint establishment's CO Capt Rich Harris is recruit Adam Britton, who spent a dozen years in the Army before switching to the Senior Service.

On the eve of passing out of basic training with his shipmates in Nelson 36 class, the 30-year-old from Kent was recognised for his previous service to Queen and country, including completing three tours of duty in Afghanistan.

As a soldier, Adam spent most of his career working missile systems and drones – exactly the technology the RN is embracing presently.

He swapped khaki for dark blue looking to make a fresh start and do something different as an Above Water Tactical rating working with radars.

"I was looking for something different and the navy has provided it – it's a challenge, but worthwhile," he said.

Civic accolade for voluntary work

LEADING Engineering Technician (Weapons Engineering) Daniel Harrison, 21, from Newcastle was awarded the Mayor's Award at the mayor-making ceremony in Fareham.

Daniel, who is currently studying on the LET WE Promotion course at HMS Collingwood ahead of his deployment to HMS Kent later in the year, received his award for volunteering at a local nursing home for the elderly.

He said: "I saw a television programme which highlighted how older people can suffer from loneliness and I wanted to do something to help." He approached the staff of Tudor Lodge Nursing Home, near HMS Collingwood, who were delighted to welcome him. Since then he has visited the residents whenever his studies allow, helping out at events or just sitting with the residents, many of whom are ex-military and sharing stories of their experiences.

On Valentine's Day, he served a celebration dinner to the residents in uniform, giving each of the ladies a single red rose.

Tudor Lodge's Activities Co-ordinator Jannette Broxton said: "Dan is a credit to the Royal Navy. He regularly volunteers here and has shown tremendous input and commitment. I cannot thank him enough for all the help he gives us, he is truly loved by the residents and they all look forward to his visits."

Daniel joined the RN in 2016 after being employed at Washington Metalworks and has served on HMS Somerset and HMS Montrose visiting Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark.

Daniel, who also enjoys rock climbing, mountaineering, gym, skiing, DIY, gardening and home renovation, said: "I am thrilled to be chosen for the award which is completely unexpected."



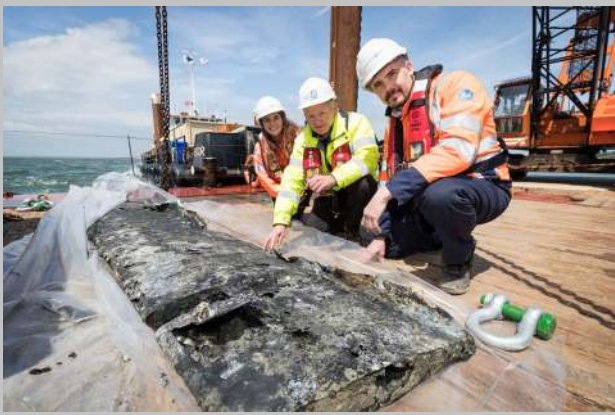


The only charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents serve, or have served, in the Naval Service.

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

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

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



● Emma Devlin (National Grid's IFA2 project), David Morris (Curator at The National Museum of the Royal Navy) and Jake Stevens (National Grid's IFA2 project)

Torpedo bomber recovered after 75 years in sea

A WORLD War 2 Fleet Air Arm bomber torpedo has been found largely intact in the Solent – 75 years after its pilot was forced to ditch.

Workers laying a new power cable across the Channel discovered the Fairey Barracuda, lost on a training flight in September 1943, and are now carefully recovering the bomber in sections.

Despite more than 2,600 Barracudas rolling off the production lines – mostly for service with the Fleet Air Arm – there are none today.

The wreck was uncovered by engineers working for the National Grid who are laying a 150-mile-long cable from Fareham to Normandy; they surveyed a 180-metre-wide stretch of seabed.

"If we had chosen a slightly different route, there is a good chance the plane would never have been found," said David Lutchford of the National Grid.

"Over the course of the project we've inspected over 1,000 targets of interest, many of which were found to be unexploded ordnance, not unusual given the history of this location.

However, to have found a 1943 Fairey Barracuda torpedo bomber is incredible and such a key piece of British history.

"It's not every day you get the chance to play a role in an operation like this and it is very lucky to have found the plane in such a small search area."

The wreck was discovered last year; they waited until fair weather this summer to begin the three-week recovery operation with experts from Wessex

Archaeology, clearing clay and silt so sections can be lifted.

The aircraft is believed to be BV739 of 810 Naval Air Squadron which lost power shortly after taking off from HMS Daedalus in Lee-on-the-Solent.

Pilot – Canadian Sub Lieutenant Douglas Williams – survived the ditching... and came through WW2 as well.

Barracudas saw extensive action in the second half of WW2 as carrier-based dive and torpedo bombers, taking part in attacks against Hitler's flagship Tirpitz in Norway and later with the British Pacific Fleet as the war closed in on Japan.

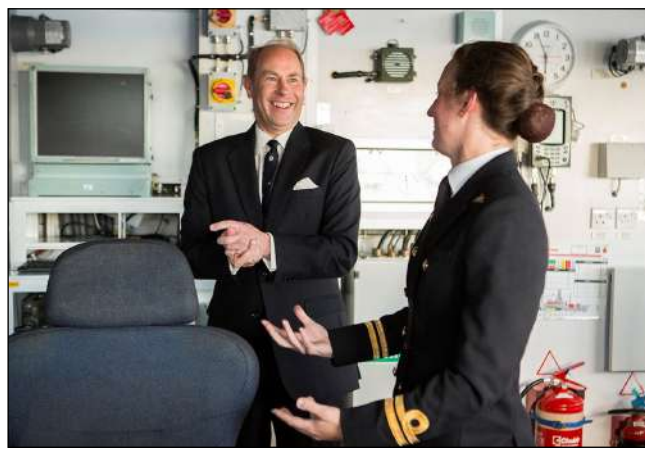
For several years, enthusiasts have been hoping to build a full-size replica – a project given added impetus by the recovery of BV739; the parts raised from the seabed will be taken to the Fleet Air Arm museum in Yeovilton.

"This is an incredible find and a wonderful piece of British history," said museum curator David Morris, who's been working on the project for several years and visited four other crash sites to retrieve parts.

"There are very few blueprints of the Barracuda plane design available so this wreckage will be studied to enable us to see how the plane segments fitted together and how we can use some of the parts we currently have.

"This find is a huge step forward for our project and we can't wait to get it back to the museum and share our findings with the public."

Pictures: Stuart Martin



Royals at double for HMS Duncan

HMS Duncan took a break from working with NATO allies in the Mediterranean to host two members of the Royal family.

The Royal Navy warship is part of a task group carrying out security operations at sea and recently spent time with the Italian navy for Exercise Mare Aperto.

Two recent port visits in Croatia and Greece saw her welcome the Earl of Wessex and the Duke of Kent respectively.

The two VIP guests were given tours of the Type 45 destroyer and its Wildcat helicopter, from Yeovilton-based 815 Naval Air Squadron.

Before continuing her operations in the Mediterranean, Duncan sailed into Corfu where she welcomed the Duke of Kent.

While alongside, the Portsmouth-based ship also replenished essential stores before playing host to the Duke, who is President of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Lieutenant Jonathan Hamlyn, pilot of Duncan's Wildcat, led a guard of honour for the visit. He said: "A second Royal visit in the same week – I am honoured to have been able to act as the guard in these visits.

"It is also important that we maintain our



ability for defence engagement but when it is a UK Royal visiting, it is very special."

The Duke was shown a simulated air defence scenario in the Ops Room, explained by Air Warfare Officer Lieutenant Commander Michael Hutchinson before being shown the Wildcat by Flight Observer Lieutenant Tom Horne.

A few days before, Duncan welcomed the Earl of Wessex, Honorary Commodore-in-Chief of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, while alongside in Split, Croatia.

The ship also hosted British Ambassador Andrew Dalglish, the Croatian state secretary Zdravko Jakop and Croatian chief

of defence General Mirko Sundov.

The guests were given a tour of the ship and the Wildcat and heard about Duncan's role in NATO security operations including with French and US aircraft carriers.

Lt Cdr Hutchinson, who is responsible for leading the Ops Room team in managing the complicated air battle picture, said: "The ship has been operating with various Carrier Strike Groups throughout the deployment; a fully swept team performing to a high level.

"It was a privilege to be able to showcase this to HRH and explain exactly what the Ops Room, the ship's nerve centre, provides on a daily basis."

Ex-Bootneck builds himself a new career

A FORMER Royal Marine who says his life started to fall apart after a serious injury ended his military career has bounced back in style as a full-time property entrepreneur.

Declan Archer, from Hythe, dislocated his shoulder four years ago while playing rugby for the marines. He underwent two complex operations but was soon forced to accept that he could not continue in active service.

Office work was never a permanent option for the former pupil of The Harvey Grammar School in Folkestone and he took the decision to seek a new life in civvy street.

"Leaving was a shock to the system as I'd been in the marines for ten years and joined when I left school at 18," said the 28-year-old.

"I'd travelled the world, serving in places like Norway and Afghanistan. I'd also been on diving expeditions and taken part in the security operation at the 2012 London Olympics. My whole life had been in the military."

Two life events made Declan's transition all the more difficult. While planning his new life he lost his father, Richard, to prostate cancer and invested in a house that turned out to be unfit to live in.

"I had reached a real low point in my life. Losing my dad was unbearable and I had foolishly bought a re-possession property in Liverpool without having a survey. It proved to be a real bag of spanners.

"The idea was to live there with my girlfriend after I had left the military base in Devon. But I found out the house had damp issues, terrible dry rot on the stairs and a major leak in the roof. I had blown all my savings on it, maxed out three credit cards trying to do it up and still couldn't live in it."

Declan returned home to Kent at the beginning of 2018 after his brother called to say his father was seriously ill. Sadly, he lost his dad ten days later.

Property had initially got Declan into a mess, but barely a year later it would be earning him a passive income of £40,000 a year.



● Declan Archer during his RM career, left, and during a recent skiing holiday

He says his 'lightbulb moment' came when he saw a YouTube video featuring young multi-millionaire Samuel Leeds. The self-made property entrepreneur from the West Midlands left school at 16 and could have retired at 21 after a succession of shrewd investments.

Declan devoured Samuel's book, *Buy Low Rent High*, and attended his Property Investors' free crash course.

"I was desperate to educate myself and the first strategy I learnt was to buy, refurbish and refinance. I already had that property in Liverpool and had been trying to put my stamp on it, but I'd massively underestimated the refurbishment cost and ran out of money.

"After reading Samuel's book, I rang my mortgage broker and asked if I could refinance the property. I bought it for £92,000, put down a £11,000 deposit and had spent £16,000 on it. I asked for a new valuation which turned out to be £135,000. That meant I could refinance the property and pull out £28,000 out of the money I put in.

"At first I thought the house would be perfect as a multi-occupancy let for young professionals and students. But I learnt on the course that you can sometimes make a

lot more from renting out for short-term city breaks through sites like Airbnb."

The central position of the house made this option worth trying, especially as the Grand National was coming up. Declan decided to give it a go and the results were spectacular.

"I frantically went round finding bits of furniture to get it ready on time and took pictures of the property. Over the Grand National weekend alone I made £900!"

Buoyed by his instant success, Declan was ready to invest again, this time using money gained from the refinance, plus some funds his father had left him.

He bought a second property, which needed modernising, for a knock down price of £39,000 and it was exempt from stamp duty.

"I spent around £15,000 doing it up. I then got the valuer to look at the new kitchen and bathroom, and showed him pictures of what it was like before. The new valuation came back at £70,000.

"I let it out for £600 a month to an organisation specialising in assisted living for young adults. My dad would like that – he would think I have used his money very well."

Report Philip Shanahan

Keyna believe it! We're on a mountain

A GROUP of enthusiastic junior officers from HMS Sultan climbed Mount Kenya for some adventurous training named Exercise Stokers Ascension.

After months of meticulous planning and preparation, 14 trainees from the Systems Engineering & Management Course (Marine Engineering) spent six days climbing the second highest mountain in Africa to raise money for the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity.

The trek also provided an ideal opportunity for members of the RN Medical Branch to carry out research into ways of identifying high altitude illness.

Surviving on ration packs and battling with swings in temperature of up to 30°C and changes in oxygen levels in the atmosphere, the team made the climb at both day and night, stopping at check points Moses Camp (3330m), Liki North Hut (3993m) and Shipton's Camp (4200m) along the way, before



reaching Point Lenana (4,985 m).

The expedition was led by Sub Lieutenant Alex Cummings, a fully qualified and experienced mountain leader. He said: "Mount Kenya is arguably the toughest mountain on the continent and the route is so diverse and interesting crossing a safari park, which is

home to leopards, elephants and buffalo, with a steep climb to almost 5,000m.

"It took a lot of planning for the climb to take place and we couldn't have done this without the support and guidance of our physical training instructors and the adventurous training team at Temeraire who were always keen to help and share their wealth of

knowledge.

"It was surreal when we finally got to stand on the summit together and take in the achievement."

Team member Sub Lt Cameron Dalley said: "I had never been to Africa before, so to climb there proved to be an incredible experience.

"Apart from encountering the effects of walking at high altitudes, the views were amazing throughout, with nights also spent around a campfire under the stars, and rapid sunrises due to being situated on the Equator.

"It was great to climb nearly 5,000 meters and to help raise money for RNRMC at the same time too."

If you would like to donate towards the team's fundraiser for the RNRMC please visit: uk.virginmoneygiving.com and search for Stokers Ascension.

Picture: Sub Lt Cameron Dalley



Fin joins walkers for Cumbria trek

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

The event challenges participants to cover the 40 miles between Keswick and Barrow in just one day and some 16 staff from the Naval Base took part to raise funds for several charities.

The total raised by the Clyde team so far this year is £3,300.

Those taking part included Royal Navy personnel, Royal Marines, Lockheed Martin, Babcock, MOD Guard Service, AWE, Armed Forces Veterans and Forces Families.

Together they left their hotel in Barrow at 3:45am to make their way to the start line at Keswick.

Eleven keen walkers completed the 40-mile expedition from Keswick to Barrow (K2B) with a further five people and one Labrador called Fin completing the slightly shorter, but equally daunting 21 miles from Coniston to Barrow (C2B). Just like her human team mates, Fin was also presented with a medal and celebratory pie at the finishing line.

Taking part for the first time this year was Sub-Lieutenant Annie Sykes, Royal Navy, who said: "I joined the HM Naval Base Clyde Keswick to Barrow Team after seeing the challenge advertised and thought this would be a great way of meeting like-minded people from different organisations in the base to raise money for well deserving causes. The team spirit and determination of everyone involved was truly inspiring."

The Keswick to Barrow Walk began in 1966 following a statement by the then US President John F. Kennedy that "every American should be capable of walking 50 miles a day".

At that time HMS Resolution was under construction at the Barrow shipyard and several Americans were involved in the project. Shipyard workers and the crew of HMS Resolution were challenged by their colleagues to form a team to walk from Keswick to Barrow with the first event held on April 1, 1967.

This year the charities benefiting from the Clyde team's efforts included: Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity, Erskine, Beatson Cancer Care, Alkaptonuria Society and Vale of Leven Autism & Asperger's Forum. The funds will be presented to the charities at an awards night in Barrow later in the year.

There is still time to donate. Visit the events page at: <https://keswick2barrow.co.uk/donate/107654?cid2=107654>

Adam hogs limelight with marathons bid



RUNNING a marathon is a hard slog. For many people, crossing the finishing line after 26.2 miles takes dedicated training and iron determination.

Wanting to push himself a little further, HMS Cattistock's ET (ME) Adam Hogge from MCM2 Crew 5 ran 117 miles, nearly 4.5 back-to-back marathons, to raise money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

This event, known as the Devon Coast To Coast Ultra Marathon, sees participants run from the south of Devon, across Dartmoor, to the north coast of the county. Adam ran this distance non-stop in 34 hours 11 mins, finishing 26th overall.

When he returned to his ship, Adam said: "I really hit the wall at about 90 miles. What made it worse is that I realised I still had the equivalent of a marathon still to go."

If you would like to support Adam's fundraising effort for the RNRMC, details of how to donate can be found through Facebook by searching for 'Adam Hogge Devon coast to coast'.



Pilgrim makes great progress

COMMANDER Jane Allen, the Victory Walker set off from HMS Victory on 21 October 2017, to walk anticlockwise round the coast of mainland UK raising money for two naval charities, the WRNS BT and RNRMC. Her last update reported she'd just returned to walking, following ten weeks off after suffering a major injury. In this update you will see Jane has made good progress.

Since my last update written in Swansea, I quickly passed along the remaining Welsh coast path. In all, I walked 722 miles around Wales and finally crossed back into England via the old Severn Bridge on a very hot Saturday. I recognised that this was to be my last major river and bridge crossing of the entire walk.

Before reaching that iconic road bridge I saw the industrial heartland that brought wealth to Wales: Port Talbot steelworks and the former coal exporting towns of Barry, Penarth, Cardiff and Newport.

After their tough and industrial beginnings, these coal towns have been rejuvenated, with smart waterside accommodation and thriving new businesses.

Even Barry Island, once famed for its Butlins Holiday Camp, now showcases a smart new housing development. The Pleasure Park still exists, but after looking at some of the rides I decided I wanted to keep my packed lunch inside me!

The Welsh RNR unit, HMS Cambria, kindly hosted us for a couple of days. Later when walking through Cardiff's docks, I passed a building site which will become the new HMS Cambria. Nearby, moored in Cardiff's Marina I met Major Mark Ashley-Miller, an Army officer sailing clockwise around the UK. Ordinarily, the Royal Navy is recognised for being waterborne, while the Army is land based. This seemed an amusing reversal of roles for these two services!

Finally, back in England, I headed down the Severn, stopping to meet Connie Gregory, a lively 95-year-old WW2 Wren who still drives; she insisted on jumping into the Victory Van's driving seat.

Nearby I made a brief visit to HMS Flying Fox, the Bristol RNR unit I'd joined back in 1980. It was good to be back and to meet up with staff from the Naval Regional Headquarters too. Thereafter, the Bristol Channel coastline provided me with the delights of its many seaside resorts, including Weston-Super-Mare – complete with donkey rides and its refurbished Grand Pier.

Negotiating rivers around the Somerset Levels proved interesting and time consuming. The longest of the rivers, the Parrett, demanded I walk 23 miles up to Bridgwater, and back down the opposite riverbank.

Compare this with a mere 22 metres across the river mouth consisting of deep and dangerous life-threatening mud. It wasn't a risk worth taking. Instead, I gritted my teeth and fought through



chest-high vegetation while enjoying almost two days of extremely muddy views.

Keen to start the 630-mile route of the South West Coast Path, I followed an undulating coastline to Minehead, passing Hinkley Point's vast building site, where Hinkley 'C' Power Station is under construction. Ups and downs continued, through Watchet and Blue Anchor Bay, while inland the beautiful Quantock Hills kept me company for part of my journey to Minehead.

Starting England's longest waymarked National Trail at Minehead was a significant moment. Not only will the SW Coast Path take me around Land's End and along the south coast into Dorset, it's almost the last waymarked route I'll walk before heading back into Portsmouth.

All the while, my fitness levels have improved,

although there are days when my shoulder still gives me pain. Twice daily physio exercises continue, which I've had to do on floors of campsite laundrettes, toilets or dishwashing areas. Whilst stretched out on the floor, groaning with exertion, I've had to fend off well-meaning rescuers and explain that the Victory Walker is alive and kicking!

In short, I'm 'adapting and overcoming' in the best Naval tradition and am definitely back on the road. Portsmouth now seems achievable and I now need as much help as possible with reaching my fundraising target.

The Victory Walk is raising money for two Naval charities, WRNS BT and RNRMC. To donate go to Virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk17-18. To find out more about Jane's Victory Walk go to victorywalk.uk



• Left, Jane at the start of the South West Coast Path; above, Jane with HMS Cambria staff Lt Cdr Brian Hayes and CISgt Gaz Reid; below, with Connie Gregory



Help maquette become reality



THIS is the half-life-size model of a monument which will rise out of the water in Portsmouth next spring in tribute to all those who hunt down mines.

Artist Mark Richards has produced this stunning maquette of the Vernon Mine Warfare and Diving statue, due to be installed next year at the branch's spiritual home – today part of the sprawling Gunwharf Quays shopping/leisure/housing complex.

The monument is a celebration of the mine warfare and diving communities past, present and future and is being paid for entirely by donation, through a massive fund-raising drive by veterans of mine warfare and diving operations.

The finished artwork will

feature a one-and-a-quarter scale British Mk17 moored mine and two divers wearing equally iconic Clearance Diving Breathing Apparatus.

Mr Richards, who has previously sculpted explorer Ernest Shackleton and naval officer/cartographer Matthew Flinders, the man who gave Australia its name, spent some months researching the project before being selected by the monument committee.

He inspected practice mines at HMS Collingwood, studied equipment and suits at the Diving Museum in Gosport, and chatted with present-day experts at the Defence Diving School on Horsea Island.

He even waded through Pool B, the central basin in Gunwharf Quays' Canalside, to confirm the depth of the water and to ensure the scale and dimensions of the finished statue are spot on.

All of which has given him a deeper understanding and appreciation of what mine warfare experts, clearance divers and bomb disposal experts have done down the decades... and continue to do.

"The general public have little or no idea of what these teams of calm, sensitive servicemen and women do," he said.

"Despite the high level of training, skill and equipment, their lives are at very real risk once a day; and people are killed in the course of this work.

"I felt a desire to say a big 'thank you' to these men and women, on behalf of us all."

Upwards of eight million people will see his finished artwork once installed; the site was chosen as it was once at the heart of HMS Vernon, for many

decades the RN's home of mine warfare and diving.

Raising the thousands of pounds to pay for the monument has involved the usual – mess dinners, tin rattling, sponsored cycle rides, raffles – and the not-so-usual: a swim around Portsea Island, the full length of Windermere, Blackpool and Slapton Sands and the River Dart, plus canoe marathons in Horsea Lake and on the River Thames.

The latest cash-generator? A three-volume history of mine warfare through the two world wars.

Former minehunter CO and diving/mine warfare historian Rob Hoole has penned three books with his US counterpart David Bruhn, covering the Allies attempts to deal with the mine threat in the Great War (*Home Waters*), then two volumes dealing with WW2 and the Allies on the offensive.

Nightraiders outlines British and Allied forces to halt Japanese aggression in the Far East – not always successfully – by sowing minefields in vital stretches of water, such as the approaches to Hong Kong and Singapore harbours.

The final book in the trilogy, *Enemy Waters*, outlines similar efforts in the European Theatre of Operations as the Royal, Royal Canadian and US Navies took the fight to the Germans and Italians by mining Axis waters.

Each book sells for £30 (or all three for the discounted price of £75) via www.vernon-monument.org.uk/shop

The trilogy has so far bolstered the Vernon monument fund by more than £1,500.



Shipmates turn out for Sam

ATLANTIC convoy veteran Samuel 'Sam' Freeman is joined by friends, family and fellow ex-matlot John Wood as the former sailor marked his 100th birthday in style.

Staff at the home where Sam now resides in Broomfield, near Chelmsford in Essex, wanted a nautical presence in some form at the celebration... and turned to the village Royal British Legion.

John is the sole sailor in the local legion – he left the Service in 1977 as a Fleet Chief Marine Engineering Artificer (Propulsion).

Having undergone a recent throat operation, Sam wasn't able to converse too much with those helping celebrating his milestone birthday, and also struggled eating – chefs produced a special soft sponge cake with Maltesers to melt in the mouth.

And best of all, aside from a signed card from the Queen... a 100th birthday present: a copy of *Navy News*, which care home staff and fellow residents have been reading to Sam.

Originally from Islington in London, Sam joined the RN before WW2 and was on special reserve when war came in 1939.

He served in the converted liner HMS Wolfe in the early stages of the war; it was pressed into service as an armed merchant cruiser protecting convoys in 1940 and '41 before being turned into a submarine depot ship.

He also served in Flower-class corvette HMS Vetch, one of the mainstay vessels in the fight against the U-boat, and later, in minesweeper HMS Boston.



Irish sacrifice remembered

IRISH shipmates remembered sacrifices made by sailors in both world wars at ceremonies on both sides of the border.

No.12 Area (Ireland) and the Northern Ireland Branch of the Royal Marines Association joined forces to pay tribute to the officers and men of the Royal Naval Division, a hastily-formed group of reservists without ships thrust into battle ashore in the opening months of World War 1.

Over the course of the subsequent four years the division – which retained RN ranks and terminology, but fought under the Army's control – served in Gallipoli, on the Somme, at Passchendaele and during the great retreat and 100 Days to Victory in 1918, becoming regarded as an elite unit by the war's end.

It was disbanded in April 1919, occasion for a centenary act of commemoration.

The venue was the Irish National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge in Dublin designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens – the man behind the Cenotaph in Whitehall and the RN Division Memorial in London's Horse Guards.

One in six Irishmen who were called to arms between 1914 and 1918 died, more than 49,000 men in all. Buglers Si Booth and Sam Beal from the Royal Marines Band Scotland marched at the head of a parade consisting of detachments from the RNA, Irish Naval Association, Royal Marines Association, Royal Irish Regiment Association and Royal British Legion Northern Ireland and Republic Of Ireland District Officer, each detachment led by their Senior Standard.

VIPs and veterans were welcomed by s/m Robert Buchanan, Chairman No.12 Area before Cdr Rob Milligan, the Senior Naval Officer Northern Ireland, gave an informative speech about the service and sacrifice of the Royal Naval Division and the Rev David McBeth honorary chaplain of the RNA's Londonderry Branch led the parade in prayers.

The buglers sounded the Last Post, standards dipped and silence was observed until Reveille.

Wreaths were then laid on behalf of governments (Col Darren Doherty, UK Defence Attaché in Dublin), navies (Cdr Milligan for the RN, Capt Fitzgerald for the Irish Navy), and half a dozen veterans' organisations.

North of the border, Londonderry Branch dedicated a weekend to remembering the city's role in the Battle of the Atlantic, as well as the sacrifices made by thousands of sailors to keep the sea lanes open between 1939 and 1945.

The city's RBL Club was the venue for a commemorative dinner, attended by shipmates from Belfast, East Antrim, Beccles branches as well as the Submariners Association NI branch.

Barely 12 hours later and shipmates mustered at the club once again, this time for a parade to nearby All Saints Church for the annual service of commemoration and act of remembrance.

Led by the Churchill Band, 11 standards, RNA shipmates, other veterans associations, the Londonderry unit of the Combined Cadet Force, (Naval Section) and a detachment of sea cadets from TS Duke of York, Portrush, marched the short distance and joined a packed congregation for a service led by the rector, Rev McBeth.

After paying their respects in the house of worship, the post-service parade formed up and marched off, with the salute taken by the Lord Lieutenant of Londonderry Dr Angela Garvey before those marching returned to the RBL Club once more for light refreshment and a presentation to Londonderry branch stalwart s/m Eddie Lavery who has recently stood down after more than 20 years' service as its treasurer.



Gate expectations

THE people of Ypres have never forgotten the sacrifices made a generation before Fred Lee, Gregory Melikian and Christine Gillam were needed, as **RNA Worthing Branch** found on a two-day pilgrimage to Flanders.

The Menin Gate is a memorial to the fallen of the Ypres Salient between 1914 and 1918 whose bodies were never identified. For more than 90 years it has been the scene of a nightly ceremony by locals, who perform the *Last Post* in tribute to Commonwealth soldiers killed to prevent Europe falling under the German jackboot.

Although shipmates did not know it in advance, their visit to the memorial coincided with British Army New Entry Recruits also paying their respects.

Having completed their initial training, and while awaiting appointment to their specific trade training units, the rookie troops spend a few days in France and Belgium studying the history of WW1.

In the course of the visit, the recruits took a shine to the smartly turned-out Worthing veterans, keenly chatting and introducing themselves.

Following the meeting and chats, the veterans were all invited by the colonel in charge – via their WO1 – to join them for their big photo shoot, which was taken in front of the Menin Gate (above).

Shipmates toured the nearby Passchendaele battlefield, where sailors and Royal Marines of the RN Division fought alongside soldiers in the bitter autumn of 1917, and paid their respects at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries which pepper Flanders.

The battlefield tour was the latest in an ongoing programme of visiting sites of naval and general military history, including various sites under the banner of the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

Having already visited the submarine museum in Gosport and Fort Nelson on Portsdown Hill, next up is the firepower museum Explosion and next year there'll be a three-day visit to the Normandy beaches.

Never forget - we haven't

"DO I remember 75 years ago?" former leading stoker Fred Lee asks rhetorically. "There's no way you can ever forget."

"I lost mates and I still feel their loss. I've never forgotten them. At nearly 93, I am very happy to be alive."

The veteran was one of more than 50 former servicemen and civilians who were part of the D-Day effort in June 1944, tiny cogs in an enormous, unstoppable military wheel which helped to deliver victory over Nazi tyranny, and thanked for their efforts at the Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth.

Civic and naval leaders joined the veterans – half British, half American – as the men and women of 1944 reminisced and enjoyed 40s-style entertainment, the curtain raiser to a week of events on both sides of the Channel.

Seventy-five years since General Eisenhower's Great Crusade, the millions of June 1944 have been reduced to a few thousand, some infirm, some spritely, all in their 90s or older, all proud of their part and delighted that the world still remembers their sacrifice.

In the bowels of River-class frigate Fred Lee (pictured below) was on watch between 4am and 8am on June 6. His watch over, he went up on deck and found HMS Nith about a mile off what was Gold Beach.

"All I could see in the sea was dead soldiers. All I could hear was the whistling of shells from the big guns going in."

After serving as the headquarters ship of 231st Infantry Brigade, Nith became part of the protective shield around the invasion force once the soldiers were ashore. More than June 6, it is the night of June 23-24 that sticks in Mr Lee's memory.

Rather than take up his usual sentry duty on the starboard side, he was ordered to stand watch on frigate's port side. A remote-controlled Junkers bomber packed with explosives – basically a flying bomb – was directed by the Germans at the Nith.

"We heard the rattle of guns and a huge bang and saw sparks – we learned later this was hot shrapnel – going along the side of the ship. And someone said repeatedly: 'I shot him down, I shot him down.'"

The bomber smashed into Nith's starboard side killing nine men, fatally wounding a tenth. The ship listed heavily, but did not sink. She was eventually towed back to the Isle of Wight for repairs, allowing some of the ship's company leave.



Fred Lee went to home in Richmond, Surrey. A few days later, the town came under air attack and the Luftwaffe dropped three land mines close to his home. "I had the feeling the Germans were after me," he says.

They never got him. Nor did the Japanese; the repaired Nith spent 13 months in the Far East before being demobbed.

"Today I have friends in France, in Normandy, in Holland and I go back to Normandy when I can. When I am there, I feel that I am in a country I helped liberate."

Christine Gillam (pictured above right) worked in the telephone exchange in Portsmouth Naval Base – the hub for calls for many establishments around the city.

Her husband served in the Royal Marines – but never talked about his war service, even to his family.

"Working up to D-Day was extremely busy. On the day itself, we didn't know what was going on – but we knew something was happening because the board was very busy, most of the lights were alive," said the 99-year-old.

She and her colleagues connected calls to 8,000 extensions

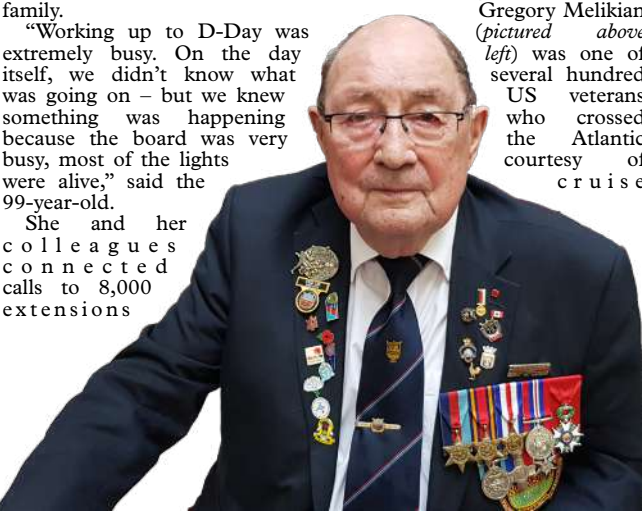


through the exchange. "Occasionally we would take calls from sailors who were unable to take it any more. We kept them on the line until we could get some help to them."

"If you worked a night shift, you wondered what sort damage you might find afterwards. Despite that, the mood in Portsmouth was very good – there was a real community spirit. People helped one another, they didn't moan and groan about being short of food or clothes. Regardless of what else was going on, you went to work and got on with it."

"These days we don't talk about the war much – there are not many of our generation left who remember it and shared the same experiences, but coming here, listening to the music, meeting people from the same era, it brings it all back."

Gregory Melikian (pictured above left) was one of several hundred US veterans who crossed the Atlantic courtesy of cruise



liner Queen Mary 2 and the Greatest Generation Foundation which helps veterans return to the battlefields to pay their respects to comrades.

He came across the Atlantic in 1942 as an 18-year-old in the original Queen Mary – converted into a troopship during the war – and served as a high-speed radio operator on the staff of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, transmitting and receiving orders and reports on behalf of General Eisenhower and his staff based at Southwick House just north of Portsmouth.

"Eisenhower was someone who was always smart, pleasant, kind, but also tough. I can picture him now with one arm around his deputy, RAF Air Marshal Arthur Tedder. They were like brothers."

"More than once I heard him say that Bernard Montgomery was his favourite general. Not Patton. Not Bradley. Even though they had their disagreements, Montgomery was the one he worked with best."

"I've met some great guys so far – some British radio operators like me, but they served in submarines, smashing guys with great stories from the Baltic to the Pacific."

But none with a better story than Mr Melikian, now 95. In the small hours of May 7 1945 he was on duty at SHAEF's HQ, now on French soil on the first floor of a red-brick school building in the city of Reim when a delegation of senior German officers signed the surrender.

"There were three radio operators – a 36-year-old from Texas, a 27-year-old from South Carolina, and me, a 20-year-old from Arizona," says Mr Melikian, believed to be the last living witness of the historic event.

"Eisenhower wanted me to announce the surrender. I was the youngest, I would remember it until the end of my life and I would be able to tell people about it the longest."

And he does. The fateful signal he sent that Monday morning read:

A representative of the German High Command signed the unconditional surrender of all German land, sea and air forces in Europe to the Allied Expeditionary Force, and simultaneously to the Soviet High Command at 0141 Hours, Central European Time, 7 May 1945, under which all forces will cease active operations at 0001B Hours, 9 May.

The war in Europe was over.



A D-Day to remember

ORDINARILY regular readers of this page might chastise WO1 Baz Firth for the state of this Ensign.

Tatty, weather worn, faded. But this is the one of the most treasured standards in Royal Navy history: the White Ensign flown by the beachmaster of Sword Beach on June 6 1944.

Seventy-five years after the Normandy landings BAZ, base warrant officer at RNAS Yeovilton, crossed the Channel with five men who fought to liberate France in 1944, plus the widow of a sixth.

Baz is a trustee of the Spirit of Normandy Trust which supports veterans, keeps their memory alive through educating today's generation, and looks after some of the most important D-Day memorials on both sides of the Channel.

On the eve of D-Day he joined 400 veterans, military personnel and guests in Colleville-Montgomery for a ceremony and parade, with the 47-year-old leading the standard bearers.

"This is the greatest honour I have had had across 29 years of service. It was honestly so humbling to be among so many veterans who were on Sword Beach 75 years ago, a huge honour to be involved. I am proud to say that the tears flowed as the piper played and again as Normandy veteran Len Hobbs read aloud the exaltation."

Wreaths were laid before the parade marched off with the pipes and drums in full swing through streets lined with spectators applauding. At the end of the march 95-year-old Frank Baugh and Baz continued on to Sword Beach; Frank is believed to be the only person still alive who saw that Ensign flying 75 years ago.

On D-Day itself the group attended commemorations at Bayeux military cemetery for one of the principal memorial services, attended by Prince Charles, the Duchess of Cornwall, and Prime Minister Theresa May among other dignitaries.

Baz was accompanied by his 11-year-old son James; they laid wreaths for Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton and Birchfield Primary School.

June 7 saw the group head to Utah Beach so that former Landing Craft Tank driver, 95-year-old Wally Beall, could lay a wreath on behalf of the men he helped put ashore.

"It was horrific to land the first



crew to see them taken down by machine-gun fire only to return and pick up the next crew to drop off, all of whom did not know what they were about to face."

The final day in Normandy was focused on the airborne landings around Pegasus Bridge. Among those taking part in the assault was one Private Elwyn Davies... great uncle of Baz's wife Caitlin; he was killed ten days later aged just 19 and is buried in Ranville Cemetery.

The few days in Normandy proved to be inspirational for the Firth family and the veterans alike.

"We walked around the cemetery and found the grave of a 16-year-old. I still can't fathom that the young boy was only five years older than my son," Baz said.

"As we were going back to the ferry, one of the veterans, Bob Conway, said to me: 'I don't want to go home, it's been a wonderful week, can we just stay?'"

"I found myself in tears as I looked at Bob and his wife Gwen (pictured above in front of the iconic paratrooper in Sainte-Mère-Eglise) through the rear-view mirror as they both sang *Unforgettable* to each other, holding hands."

"Bob said: 'I love you' and Gwen replied: 'I love you too, darling'. Probably one of the sweetest couples I have ever met."

Naval Quirks

DOES THE BOOK MENTION THAT BECAUSE OF THE BAD WEATHER THE GERMANS WERE NOT EXPECTING AN INVASION ON 6th JUNE, 1944.

CONSEQUENTLY, THEIR NAVY HAD ONLY 12 E-BOATS AND 4 TORPEDO-BOATS LOCAL ENOUGH TO REACH THE SCENE ON D-DAY ITSELF..

THE E-BOATS WERE DRIVEN OFF SO THAT LEFT 4 TBs AGAINST THE ALLIED ARMADA OF 7000 VESSELS INCLUDING 1200 WARSHIPS!



Wait for me, mein Kapitän! – If we don't keep together we've no chance..





Sheppey take delivery of ship simulator

A CHANCE conversation in a Ship Simulator Observation suite led to the installation of the first ship simulator for the Sea Cadets Corps being installed at the Sheppey Unit, Barton's Point, Sheerness.

While working as consultant pilot for HR Wallingford (HRW), a call came through to Sheppey Unit Management member Captain John Gurton regarding the planned new build for Sheppey Sea Cadets.

HR Wallingford Ships Division Manager, Dr Mark McBride, asked what it was all about then said: "Would you like a simulator to put in it? We have some spare equipment."

That was enough to get the Sheppey UMC team moving to raise money to purchase the special computers and HD TV screens.

A lot of hard work ensued to prepare, paint and insulate a classroom so that installation of the system could take place by Dr James Clarke of HRW.

HRW supplied some extra hardware and the sophisticated software gratis under their licence.

Training took place under tutorship of Dan Bruce of HRW and various electronics were honed to perfection, ready for the official opening.

Marine Society and Sea Cadets CEO Martin Coles accepted the simulator for the Sheppey Unit from Mark McBride with an audience of unit members and benefactors.

The simulator has seven ships to navigate, a selection of tugs, four ports plus the open sea and over 20 types of target ships.

Scenarios can now be set up and saved for individual and general use. The cadets are able to practice helmsmanship, navigation, ship manoeuvring, rule of the road and general officer of the watch disciplines at the unit.

This is a fantastic bit of kit of the highest commercial standard, normally used by HRW for international studies of port designs.

For the cadets it will be especially useful for extra training combined with the MSSC's offshore fleet and as an insight to working real ships and may even encourage them to take on a nautical career.

The simulator will be available for all cadets in the UK upon request.



Tidy way of helping keep community clean



CASTLEFORD Sea Cadets has a long history of helping in the community.

They have cleaned up local parks, supported Race for Life and other charitable events and even tidied up the entrance to a local care home to make it a more welcoming place for residents and visitors. They even repainted their gates.

So when the unit heard that a nearby wildlife area had a litter problem and the paths had become overgrown, they were more than happy to help.

"It is an objective of TS Unicorn to make sure that people with disabilities have the opportunity to enjoy everything that our town has to offer," said CO Petty Officer (SCC) Keith Jeffery.

"It is one of the reasons why our unit is working towards being a 'dementia friendly' organisation and why we have become involved with other local charities

and organisations that support this objective.

"When we heard that the Smawthorne Swamp & Nature Walk's paths had become overgrown we knew that we had to do something about it.

"TS Unicorn, as with a lot of other Sea Cadet units, is blessed with having volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds.

"We have skilled workers from the construction and landscape gardening industries who made short work of the overgrown paths and cleared the way for people of all abilities to enjoy being closer to nature.

Cadets and staff armed with litter grabbers, safety gloves and plenty of refuse sacks scoured the area looking for any rubbish they could find. In all they managed to fill ten large sacks.



Cadets' tribute to fallen of WW1

ROYAL Marines Volunteer Cadets place wreaths at the Menin Gate following a battlefield tour in Belgium.

They were among 34 cadets from the Portsmouth Division of the corps, based at HMS Excellent.

They visited Ypres to conduct a tour of the World War One battlefields and were accompanied by Charles Haskell from the WW1 Remembrance Centre in Portsmouth who acted as their tour guide.

During the tour they visited Passchendale Museum and trench system, Essex Farm cemetery, Lijssenthoel Cemetery, Langemark German Cemetery and the Tyne Cot Memorial.

One particularly emotional and poignant moment took place at the Tyne Cot memorial where one cadet found the name of his great-great grandfather and took the opportunity to lay a cross to pay his respects.

The unit's commanding officer, WO1 Oli Seebohm said: "The highlight of the trip was being given the honour of providing a Colour Party and laying a wreath at the very moving daily remembrance service at the Menin Gate."

The VCC is open to boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 17 who can join as a Royal Naval Cadet or Royal Marines Cadet, and is sponsored by the Royal Navy as part of the Navy Cadets organisation.

To find out more go to volunteercadetcorps.org





Bond of friendship

Sea Scouts re-affirm partnership with the Royal Navy

MORE than 200 Sea Scouts from across Britain descended on the Navy's headquarters in Portsmouth to re-affirm a centenary long partnership.

Thanks to their service in World War 1 – when hundreds of Sea Scouts performed essential duties as coastal lookouts and messengers – a grateful Royal Navy formally recognised the movement and agreed to allow youngsters to make use of its facilities and equipment.

One century later and today's Royal Navy cemented that 100-year partnership with a fresh commitment to continue supporting the Sea Scouts, signing a memorandum of agreement, coinciding with a week-long annual camp.

"The connection with the Royal Navy is really important because it allows our young people access to some wonderful facilities and lets them see what it is like with the Navy," said Tim Kidd, UK Chief Scout Commissioner.

"It's important we give Scouts a whole a range of skills for life, not just technical skills of rowing or sailing, but also relationship skills – meeting people, working together as a team – and this environment allows that to grow."

Formed in 1909 as a branch of the Scout Association, Sea Scouts place particular emphasis on boating and water-based activities such as sailing, canoeing, motor-boating and navigation.

Today there are 105 Royal Navy-recognised Sea Scout units, with around 5,000 Sea Scouts and 1,200 adult volunteers.

They enjoy the use of MOD land for camps, ship visits, accommodation and the use of boats and equipment, and in return they support major annual events.



Pictures: LPhotos Dan Rosenbaum and Joe Cater

"I've been in the Sea Scouts for two years and this is my first annual camp. It's great fun and I love the kayaking," said 12-year-old Lilly from Abingdon attending the camp on Whale Island.

Ben, also 12 but from Bournemouth, added: "My favourite activity is the RIBs –

powering around Portsmouth Harbour is brilliant.

"I'm hoping to become an Explorer Scout when I'm 14 and come back here as an instructor, teaching all the young Sea Scouts about the boats and the sea."

Lieutenant Commander Jack Parnell, from the Flag Officer Sea

Training's Cadet and Youth team based in Devonport, said the bond with the Sea Scouts was both strong and vital.

"The annual camp here at Naval Command Headquarters shows the importance of this close relationship is and why the Royal Navy cherish the Sea Scouts," he added.



Adam aiming for Mars

A FORMER Whitehaven Sea Cadet has been accepted on a programme which will help pave the way for the manned exploration of Mars.

Adam Crellin, 25, is currently studying medicine at Oxford University and has already been involved with work on the effects of space travel on the human body.

After passing an extensive selection process which took place over several months last year, Adam is now part of a multinational OeWF (Austrian Space Forum) team of eight 'analog astronauts' and will be specially trained to carry out technical tests and Mars simulations, lasting up to a month, in preparation for human exploration of the red planet.

"I have always been interested in medicine and space exploration and this is very much something of a dream come true for me," said Adam.

"I do feel that my teenage years as a cadet formed a large part of how I've got to where I am.

"My advice would be to join the cadets and take all the opportunities they offer, and also to find whatever part of a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subject you enjoy, throw yourself into it and enjoy being a geek in your subject."

Chairman of Whitehaven Sea Cadets, David Abbott said that he was extremely proud of Adam's achievement.

"It's great to think that in some small way we have contributed to Adam's success and we look forward to following his progress."

Awards for top cadets

EASTERN Area Officer Commander Richard De La Mare made the 200-mile round trip from Sleaford in Lincolnshire to attend the annual inspection of Keighley Royal Marine and Sea Cadets.

Parents were invited to join their children at TS Dolphin's Maritime House headquarters in Waddington Street to watch various demonstration and evolutions, including Colours, before Cdr De La Mare handed out awards to the outstanding cadets at the West Yorkshire unit from the past 12 months.

Cdr De La Mare congratulated the cadets on their smart turnout and successful year as well as thanking staff, without whom none of the work could have been achieved.

The evening closed with a buffet served on the main deck.

Fantastic plastic sweep at Excellent

PLASTICS don't just ruin paradise. They ruin port cities as well.

Two dozen volunteers from HMS Excellent hit the shoreline of Whale Island on the back of World Ocean's Day to do their bit for the environment.

The mostly man-made island – home to the Royal Navy's headquarters, the Phoenix Damage Control School, accommodation blocks, reservist unit HMS King Alfred, and retired destroyer HMS Bristol among others – has around one and half miles of shoreline, plagued by regular deposits of rubbish washed into Portsmouth Harbour.

Volunteers braved the pouring rain to carry out a beach clean around the perimeter fence and beaches.

"Beach clearances are a critically-important part of life these days with plastic being the primary source of pollution from bottle tops to straws to ring pulls," said Ian Mackfall, HMS Excellent's environmental manager.

"It is necessary to keep our beaches clean if we hope to keep our oceans clean."

In just an hour he and his team of volunteers filled 30 sacks with rubbish, flotsam and jetsam from the shoreline.

It's your 2-6 - so contact Sophie Dennis (sophie.dennis100@mod.gov.uk/93832 5500) to include items on these pages.

1SL's farewell to Devonport

OUTGOING First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones paid his final visit to Devonport shortly before handing over the role to his successor.

He saw the latest developments in amphibious warfare before visiting HMS Argyll to thank sailors for their efforts during the frigate's nine-month deployment to the Far East which ended successfully earlier this year.

Beginning with 1 Assault Group Royal Marines and a ride in a heavy duty Landing Craft Utility, Admiral Jones was shown around RM Tamar, the home of the Corps' amphibious ops and the bulk of its landing, assault and raiding craft.

Commanding Officer Colonel Chris Haw and his team briefed the Sea Lord on the equipment used by the Royal Marines and sailors under his charge and IAGRM's increasing use of the latest technology; it is running a series of Commando Warrior exercises to evaluate and exploit new equipment and tech to enhance amphibious warfare.

Berthed a short distance from RM Tamar is Type 23 HMS Argyll whose Far East deployment ended in dramatic style: rescuing the crew of merchant ship MV Grande America off the Brest peninsula when fire ravaged the vessel.

For saving/treating the 27 sailors aboard the ship, Argyll's medical team received the George Beeching Prize for compassion (named after a 20-year-old Sick Bay Attendant from HMS Ibis who saved shipmates at the cost of his own life in 1942).

"I am proud that the medical team on HMS Argyll have been recognised for the care



given to those rescued from the Grande America," said Surgeon Lieutenant Nathaniel Roocroft, Argyll's doctor and leader of her medical staff.

"The preparation and training for such events paid off when it counted, and the team worked well together in challenging circumstances. It is rewarding to know that we helped to make a difference on the night."

Certificates were also presented to Leading Logistician (Chef) Brad Dewing, Leading Logistician (Steward) Amyott Msulira, Leading Logistician (Steward) Davonne Bethal and Steward Alex Hay.

Admiral Jones also met other members of HMS Argyll's ship's company, including those directly involved with the rescue and discussed the successes of the Far East deployment, demonstrating the UK's commitment to the Asia-Pacific region.

■ View from the Bridge, page 4

Dates with the Queen

AN AIRCRAFT engineer who's been instrumental in introducing the Navy's new F-35 stealth fighter into service, an "inspirational" physical training instructor and the first captain of HMS Queen Elizabeth have been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Twenty-two men and women from across the Royal Navy and Royal Marines have dates at Buckingham Palace to recognise their long-standing and energetic service, from front-line operations to helping military families through fundraising and community activities.

Chief Petty Officer Air Engineering Technician (Avionics) Mike Eland (pictured right) is one of the world's leading experts on the F-35 and has been made an MBE for his role in returning fixed-wing fast jets to Royal Navy carriers.

CPO Eland, 41, who is originally from Scarborough, has been recognised for his efforts to introduce the Royal Navy's first stealth fighter into service in co-operation with the US Marine Corps at their base in Beaufort, South Carolina.

"It's an amazing feeling. Like anyone, I don't do my job for recognition and this is completely unexpected. I have loved my job in the United States and this is a fantastic way to end ten and a half years here before returning to the UK," he said.

"The team put a lot of effort in and this news really hasn't sunk in yet."

Also made an MBE is Warrant Officer 1st Class (Physical Trainer) Natasha Pulley, from Camborne in Cornwall.

Currently based at HMS Drake, the 49-year-old has been heavily involved in a wide variety of charity work involving children, the homeless and the elderly.

WO1 Pulley, who has been in the Royal Navy for 32 years mostly based in the South West, was also the first female ever to train a field gun team and one of the first two women to run in the event.

Described as an inspirational leader, instructor and role model, WO1 Pulley (pictured below right) was said to have "enriched the lives of service personnel, their families and the wider community in the West Country".

"I am incredibly humbled to receive this recognition. Honestly, I am shocked and feel overwhelmed. I just do my job and try and put people first," Natasha said.

"I try and make a difference in the community and break down barriers."

And Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd – who was the first Commanding Officer of



Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (CB)

Rear Admiral Jon Pentreath
Major General Charlie Stickland RM

Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE)

Commodore Paul Burke
Major General Matt Holmes RM
Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd

Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE)

Commodore Steve Allen
Commander Richard Bone
Captain Chris Connolly

Commander Steve Drysdale
Commander Martin Freeman
Lieutenant Colonel Bear Grylls (Honorary)

Commodore Rupert Hollins
Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE)

Commander Adam Clarke
Chief Petty Officer (Air Engineer Technician) Thomas Eland
Air Engineering Technician Matthew Gallimore

Captain Ian McDougall RM
Warrant Officer 1st Class (Physical Trainer) Natasha Pulley
Lieutenant Commander James Reynolds

Commander Kevin Robertson
Lieutenant Commander Martin Shakespeare
Lieutenant Commander Dan Snow (Honorary)

Chief Petty Officer (Engineer Technician) Helena Ward
Warrant Officer 2nd Class Andrew Watson RM

Queen's Voluntary Reserve Medal (QVRM)

Lieutenant Commander David Cooper

HMS Queen Elizabeth – receives the CBE for his tenure in charge of Britain's biggest warship.

His time in command saw a string of successes from the ship's maiden sea trials and first entry into Portsmouth, through to the first ever deck landing operations with the UK's new F-35 Lightning fighters.

"It was a great privilege to command HMS Queen Elizabeth from the day she left the builder's

yard in Scotland to her first F-35 trials off the United States coast, laying the foundations for her operational life ahead," he said.

"Bringing her into service as the first of our two new aircraft carriers, as part of our growing fleet, was a truly national endeavour. We should reflect warmly on the extraordinary efforts made across our country and the navy to deliver these magnificent ships across her ship's company, civilian staff, contractors and many others.

"On a personal note, it was an honour to command HMS Queen Elizabeth and lead such a brilliant ship's company through a unique, challenging and at times emotional journey.

"We did it together and this award is very much reflective of our combined efforts – I am deeply grateful to them all."

Two honorary naval officers – adventurer/TV presenter Bear Grylls, a Lt Col in the Royal Marines – receives the OBE, while author, naval historian and TV presenter Lt Cdr Dan Snow has been made an MBE.



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 WOs, 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.

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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

Gerald is an absolute jewel

A RESERVIST from HMS Eaglet has received a commendation for his work at the Navy's Middle East HQ.

Comms expert LET Gerald Jenkins was singled out by Commodore Steve Dainton, UK Maritime Component Commander, as his team's 'sailor of the month'.

It's Gerald's job to monitor IT and comms systems as a watchkeeper at the UKMCC's Bahrain hub, ensuring there is a constant flow of information, data, emails and other communications traffic between the headquarters and RN, RM and FAA units operating east of Suez.

Cdre Dainton says the leading hand is "considered to be one of the nicest individuals

in the HQ, always willing to go out of his way to help others, often doing things without being asked.

"Ever diligent and professional in his role, LET Jenkins is heartfelt, honest and engaging, equally ready with a welcome cup of tea or specialist advice."

The leading hand is often seen in the office on days off ensuring extra jobs are completed to the highest standard... and he even tours the building looking for minor defects to fix.

And for good measure, he's an unofficial photographer of official UKMCC business such as recording the VIP guests visiting headquarters and helps run the cinema at the RN's new accommodation complex in Bahrain.

Experts share mental health skills in Philippines providing

Pacific TRiM

ROYAL Navy experts in mental health support shared their experiences with Filipino troops who've been embroiled in bitter fighting with terrorists.

A specialist training team flew half way around the world to explain how sailors and Royal Marines help each other to cope with the psychological stresses of combat, particularly after the horrors of Iraq and Afghanistan where they frequently saw comrades killed or maimed by booby traps and roadside bombs.

The Royal Navy embraces Trauma Risk Management – typically known as TRiM – to help those who've been exposed to traumatic incidents and events; it educates someone's peers to spot the early signs of potentially far more serious psychological issues and offer support.

Thanks to the RN TRiM team's visit to the Philippines, it's now being introduced across that country's armed forces.

Manila asked the UK for help with a growing number of troops traumatised by an ongoing brutal fight against insurgents in the south of the island chain.

The Philippine Army and security forces spent five months wrestling for control of the city of Marawi with Islamic fundamentalists.

The five month battle left the centre of Marawi in ruins – nine out of ten buildings were destroyed or severely damaged, 200,000 inhabitants fled their homes and authorities faced a £1bn bill to restore the city.

The ferocious fighting also left its mark on around 5,000 troops – their psychological health has been sorely affected, while comrades are also suffering from the effects of the continuing



struggle against ISIS, Islamic separatists and Communist nationalist rebels.

The Brits spent a fortnight in the Philippines, beginning with explaining the benefits of TRiM and how it works to senior Filipino political and military leaders, including the head of the military's medical services, Lieutenant General Bautista.

Then the team moved around the island of Mindanao to work with the units of 6th Infantry Division who've been involved in recent counter-insurgency operations, including running 'training the trainer' courses so Filipino personnel could pass on that new-found knowledge to their comrades.

Instructors WO1 Paul 'Reg' Prentice and WO1 Tony Welch RM identified and trained individuals from more than half a dozen Filipino regiments and divisions.

"The area of peer-delivered mental health support is a



completely new concept to the Philippines' armed forces and will take time to fully embed across the whole force," said WO1 Prentice.

"The high-level engagement and enthusiasm to adopt this programme cannot be underestimated; policies, training and presentations were all

translated for ease of delivery."

On top of the two-week package the TRiM team delivered while in the Philippines, they remain in contact with their new friends in the Pacific, sharing the latest information, education and advice with the aim of returning to the country later in the year to see the progress made.



Pirate busters' Korea change

MAKING a traditional Korean 'love/heart' symbol in the shadow of a waterfall are the men and women who will direct the international fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean from next month.

Two Royal Navy officers – Captain Andrew Rose and Lieutenant Commander Francesca Woodman – joined their South Korean allies on the island of Jeju to prepare for taking charge of one of the three key international naval task forces safeguarding the waters of the Middle East.

From June 20, South Korea will take command of Combined Task Force 151, responsible for policing an area eight times the size of the North Sea.

The task group concentrates its efforts on counter-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa, the response of the Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces to modern-day brigands and high-seas robbers from Somalia attacking merchant ships and taking crews hostage.

Since it was formed a decade ago, the group has helped to largely eradicate the scourge of pirates – who strike in 'action groups' of a 'mother ship' and small powered skiffs crammed with boarding ladders, grappling ropes and weapons (including rocket propelled grenades).

It's been so successful there were just three attacks last year (all failures) and none to date in 2019 – but failure to patrol the waters between Yemen and Somali (dubbed 'Pirate Alley' at the height of the crisis) would almost inevitably lead to a fresh wave of hijackings.

Hence CTF151 continues to operate, directed by a different command team from one of the 30-plus CMF nations every few months. It's typically a multinational affair, hence the presence of two Brits on the Korean staff.

They made the long trip out to Jeju to meet Rear Admiral Yu Byeong Ju and his team and discuss the challenges of the coming mission, as well as sample a little Korean culture.

Captain Rose, who will take on the Deputy Commander role for CTF 151, said: "The opportunity to meet the command team was invaluable and our visit to Korea reinforces the Royal Navy's partnership with the Korean Navy.

"When we meet again in Bahrain, we will have already developed a joint understanding of our counter-piracy mission and friendships have been forged."

Lieutenant Commander Woodman, who will act as the task group's spokeswoman/public affairs officer, added: "This is an amazing opportunity to work with a multinational task force and in particular I am looking forward to the experience of sailing onboard the ROKS Gang Gam-Chan in the Gulf for two months – and trying to learn some Korean!"

Where to Look

Personnel
2019DIN01-081: Force Preparation for Deploying and High Readiness Reserve Personnel
2019DIN01-079: Medical Preparation for Reservists Deploying Overseas
2019DIN01-072: Regular and Reserve COs and all Reserve personnel interested in a Reserve Commission
Security and Intelligence
2019DIN02-005: Volunteers for Specialist HUMINT Duties – Agent Handler (Op SAMSON)
2019DIN02-006: Volunteers for Specialist HUMINT Duties – Interrogation (Op METIS)
Defence Policy and Operations
2019DIN03-011: The United Kingdom Naval Support Facility in Bahrain. (UKNSF)
Safety, Health, Environment, Fire
2019DIN06-015: Release of JSP 317 - v6.3 - Defence Fuels Policy,

Organisation and Safety Regulations
2019DIN06-013: Appointment of Legal Services Suppliers for Litigated Compensation Claims in England and Wales
Training and Education
2019DIN07-072: Publishing of JSP 822 V3.2
2019DIN07-062: Royal Navy Submarine School Accreditation Programme
Honours, Awards, Royal and Ceremonial events
2019DIN09-007: The Oliver Sword 2019
RNTMs
RNTM 01-040/19: Royal Navy Photographic Specialisation process for Sideways Entry to the branch
RNTM 01-039/19: RN Intelligence Officer selection
RNTM 01-035/19: Full Time Reserve Service – Navy Command TLB

Cdo welfare hub takes shape

WORK has begun on a £2.4m welfare hub for Royal Marines and their families to help them overcome the physical and mental strains of military life and combat.

Five years in the planning, when it opens at the beginning of next year, the support hub at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone is intended to help around 1,500 marines and their families every year.

On tap in the hub will be a wide range of welfare support and workshops to help marines switch back to civvy street when their careers end, while the facilities and rooms will be open for use by cadet groups, families and for social activities.

Although at present the Corps is not involved in front-line combat, for most of the past two decades it has been heavily engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan – and not just the fighting units, but logisticians, engineers, musicians (in their secondary, medical role).

Even in peace, like now, marines are heavily in demand, protecting the nuclear deterrent, supporting D-Day commemorations or deployed with the amphibious task group on the Baltic Protector deployment.

With demands for treatment to combat mental health issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and pressures on Forces families increasing, the RM community decided a hub was needed, building on similar welfare services provided for other parts of the military.

Although located in the commandos' spiritual home, the facility will be open for use by



the entire Corps – and families – with an estimated 50,000 serving personnel expected to take advantage of its services and facilities over the centre's anticipated 30-year lifespan.

The centre – built on the site of a former sports pitch just outside the main base – is being funded entirely by the Royal Marines Association – The Royal Marines Charity which has so far raised £1.9m towards its target.

Helping to break ground and get construction under way, the charity chief executive Jonathan Ball said the new centre would act as a "one-stop shop that epitomises what the charity is about: comradeship,

compassion, collaboration and commemoration. We haven't had anywhere we can focus on all these things until now.

"The Commando Training Centre is at the heart of the Royal Marines Corps; the journey of every Royal Marine starts at Lympstone and they will all return here throughout their careers."

Royal Marines veteran Mark Ormrod, from Plymouth, lost both legs and his right arm to an IED in Afghanistan on Christmas Eve 2007.

Since then he has become an inspirational figure, motivational speaker, Invictus Games athlete and, most importantly, husband

and father.

"The fact that the hub is located outside of camp is hugely significant," he said.

"Anyone struggling mentally may find it hard to step inside the boundary, but this will be somewhere people can come and start to feel more at ease.

"Families can come under a lot of strain, particularly during deployments and months-long exercises, so having a place they can go is a big deal. We're one big family and the hub is integral to that."

Donations to the hub project can be made at: www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/theroyalmarinescharity/appeal

Deaths

Cedric 'Ced' Hollands, AB. Served from 1939 to 1954. Served in HMS Warspite and Kempenfelt in the Med, Burma, Sumatra and Pacific. Took part in D-Day before service in the Far East. Assisted in the re-occupation of Hong Kong and Kowloon. After leaving the RN he worked at Ashford Railway Works, then did car repairs and worked at a plastics factory, retiring at the age of 82. Poster boy for the Blind Veterans' Association's 2015 advertising campaign. In 2016 received the *Legion d'Honneur*. Member of RNA Ashford (Kent) Branch. Died May 24, aged 94.

Robert (Bob) Gee. Served in HMS Ajax from March to November 1946 in the Med. Died May 4, aged 93.

Victor William Atherton, PO. Joined in November 1955, left in September 1962. Served in HMS Collingwood, Bulwark, Victory, Dryad, Lincoln, Royal Arthur, Jaguar and Shavington. Joined South African Navy Reserve. Member of Natal Branch of RNA and HMS Ganges Association. Died on April 27, aged 79.

Ernest 'Trevor' Mills. Wireman. Served in landing craft WW2. Veteran of Operation Husky. Lost left arm, part of a leg and other life-changing injuries in mortar attack. Left for dead, winked at medics to demonstrate he was still alive. Treated at Royal Navy Hospital at Barrow Gurney, Somerset, and Queen Mary's Hospital in Roehampton. Later worked as spray drying engineer around world. Died Hanley, May 19, aged 95.

Adm Sir Peter G M Herbert KCB OBE. Vice Chief of Defence Staff, FOSM, DGNMT, FOCAS, Des Chief Poloris Exec. HMS Valiant, Neptune, Dolphin, Blake. Died May 3, aged 90.

Capt Ebenezer T Denholm OBE. HMS Seahawk, Osprey, Albion, Heron, Drake, DGA(N). Died May 18, aged 89.

Cdr Ronald W Colclough OBE. HMS Fisgard, Blake, Warrior. HM Dockyard Chatham. Died April 26.

Cdr Miles D Joel. HMS Wakeful, Victorious, Saker, Fearless. DG Ships. DNAP. Def Attache Nassau. Jungle Warfare Wing Latimer. NLO Southampton. Died May 17.

Cdr RNR John E Payn RD*. HMS Cambrai. South Wales Div RNR. Died May 3.

Cdr Gerald Roose MBE. HMS Osprey, Saker, Fisgard, Heron. DNFC. RNAW Perth. DGA(N), RNSC. Died May 5, aged 87.

Maj RM Kenneth C Morriss MBE. Dir Naval Recruiting and Naval Career Service. Died May 18, aged 98.

Gerard Fisher. D-Day veteran and pathfinder who went ashore on June 5 1944 to clear mines. Received the *Legion d'Honneur* in 2016. Member of City of Glasgow RNA. Died aged 93.

Michael John Sargeant. Fleet Chief TASI. Served from 1951-1974 in HMS Indefatigable, Palliser, Bastion, Ausonia, Gurkha, Grafton, Ark Royal, Hermes, Rooke, Raleigh, Drake, Vernon, Royal Arther, Victory and Osprey. Died May 13, aged 85.

Submariners' Association

Jack Winstanley Sto Mech. Served 1947 to 1952 in HM Submarines Truncheon, Talent, Sanguine, Astute and Alaric. Nottingham Branch. Died May 12, aged 90.

Peter Herbert KCB, OBE

Admiral. Served 1949 to 1983 in HM Submarines Aurochs, Artemis, Truncheon, Tabard,

Scythian, Porpoise and Valiant. Dolphin Branch. Died May 17, aged 90.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNO

Rear Adl John Burgess CB LVO. HM Royal Yacht Britannia. HMS Victorious, Saker, Drake, Defiance, Sultan. Port Adm Rosyth. Controller of the Navy. DG Ships. Died April 30, aged 93.

Capt Ebenezer T Denholm. HMS Seahawk, Osprey, Albion, Heron, Drake. DG Aircraft. Died May 18, aged 89.

Capt Neil A D Grant CBE. HMS Heron, Glamorgan, Osprey, Phoebe, Puma, Tiger, Centurion. Capt Naval Drafting. MOD DNMP, DNSC. Died May 8., aged 82.

Cdr Ronald W Colclough OBE. HM Dockyard Chatham, HMS Fisgard, Blake, Warrior. Died April 26, aged 93.

Cdr Gerald Roose MBE. HMS Osprey, Saker, Fisgard, Heron. RN Staff Coll, DGA(N), RNAW Perth. Died May 5, aged 87.

Lt Cdr Kimberlain Brindley. HMS Glasserton, Excellent, Dido, Dundas, Kedleston, Gurkha, Dryad, Phoebe, Bristol, FOF3. FO Surface Flot. Capt Naval Op Com Systems Gp, DRA Fareham. Died April 5, aged 69.

Lt Cdr Walter J Mayers MBE. HMS London, Dryad, President, ASWE, Capt Naval Op Con Systems Gp. Died May 4, aged 93.

Lt Cdr Bernard Sewell. HMS Excellent, Lynx, Terror, Centurion. Died May 19, aged 96.

Capt RM Frederick C Darwall. HQ 3 Cdo RM, 41 Cdo RM, RM Eastney, RM Plymouth. Died May 2, aged 89.

Reunions

HMS Ark Royal Association. Our reunion dinner takes place at the Union Jack Club in London on September 7. For information email enquiries@hmsarkroyalassociation.org or visit hmsarkroyalassociation.org

HMS Ulster. A reunion will be held in Torquay from September 20 to 23. For details contact Norrie Millen at ulster@candoo.com

HMS Eagle: The Friends of HMS Eagle reunion weekend will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, Portsmouth, from September 27 to 29. Contact the main organiser, Danny du Feu. Email: ddf.photography@gmail.com or phone 07711 083465.

HMS Troubridge Final Commission Association: Annual reunion takes place at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool from October 4 to 7. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@gmail.com or via hmstroubridge.com

Weapon Mechanics Association: The 2019 annual reunion takes place at the Bear Hotel in Havant, from October 11 to 13. For further details contact Peter Andrews at weaponmechs50@btinternet.com or phone 07411 807552

The Survey Ships Association: The 25th reunion takes place at the Mercure Chester North Hotel. Woodhey House Hotel Cheshire, from Friday October 25 to Monday, October 28. For information on membership and reunions please send a SAE to: The Secretary, SSA, 16 Quay Ostend Cliff Park Great Yarmouth Norfolk NR31 6TP. Or phone 07974156996

HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans' Association. The 2019 reunion takes place at the Coniston Hotel in Sittingbourne, from October 4 to 7. For further details please contact enquiries@iowtours.com.

HMS Superb (Cruiser) Association. The annual reunion and AGM takes place at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent, on October 4 to 6. For details contact Robin Smith at 173 London Road, Rainham, Kent, phone 01634 362379 or email robinsmith173@yahoo.co.uk

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Association. Reunion takes place at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, from October 18 to 21. For details contact Alan 'Whiskey' Walker on 01268 548041 or email whiskey666@outlook.com.

HMS Lowestoft Association. Reunion takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from October 4 to 7. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact: ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk. Tel: 07778 546861

HMS Mohawk Association. Reunion takes place at the Kegworth Hotel, Packington Hill, Kegworth, from November 1 to 4. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or email Bob Proud rob.proud@mypostoffice.co.uk

HMS Relentless Association: The 2019 reunion takes place over the weekend of November 22-25 at the Hotel Royale, Bournemouth. All ex-'Rusty R' members 1942-1968 welcome. For details contact the Association Secretary at Secretary@hmsrelentless.co.uk (Tel: 02392 599640), or to book direct with SFEVENTS email hmsrelentlessreunion@sarahfletcherevents.co.uk (Tel: 01452 813173)

HMS Broadsword Association: Biannual reunion and AGM takes place at the Best Western Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, on Saturday May 23, 2020. The reunion is open to anyone who has served on Broadsword. For more information go to hmsbroadswordassociation.co.uk or contact Bill Skilliter wistheplumber@yahoo.co.uk

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery boat in the May edition of Navy News (right) was the Amphion-class submarine HMS Ambush, which served with 10 Submarine Flotilla in Singapore.

George Mortimore, from Ryde on the Isle of Wight, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is a Ham-class minesweeper, which was launched by Ardrossan Dockyard on April 29, 1957. She was sold for scrapping in 1966

1) What was her name? and 2) which squadron did she serve with in the Far East?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish



a winner.

Entries must be received by August 14. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our September edition.

The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 293

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in August's Noticeboard must be received by **JULY 15, 2019**

Breathe in...

MEMBERS of Oxford and Cambridge URNUs joined forces for a weekend of adventurous training in the Peak District.

Arriving late on Friday night for some 'indoor camping', Saturday morning was spent abseiling off of an old Railway Viaduct in the village of Miller's Dale.

With slightly damp weather in the afternoon, the students moved over to Black Rocks Country Park for some rock skills training involving climbing, bouldering and scrambling.

This proved to be great fun, with the group working their way up what was effectively a giant, natural obstacle course.

The author confesses to having got stuck in the narrow passages at least twice.

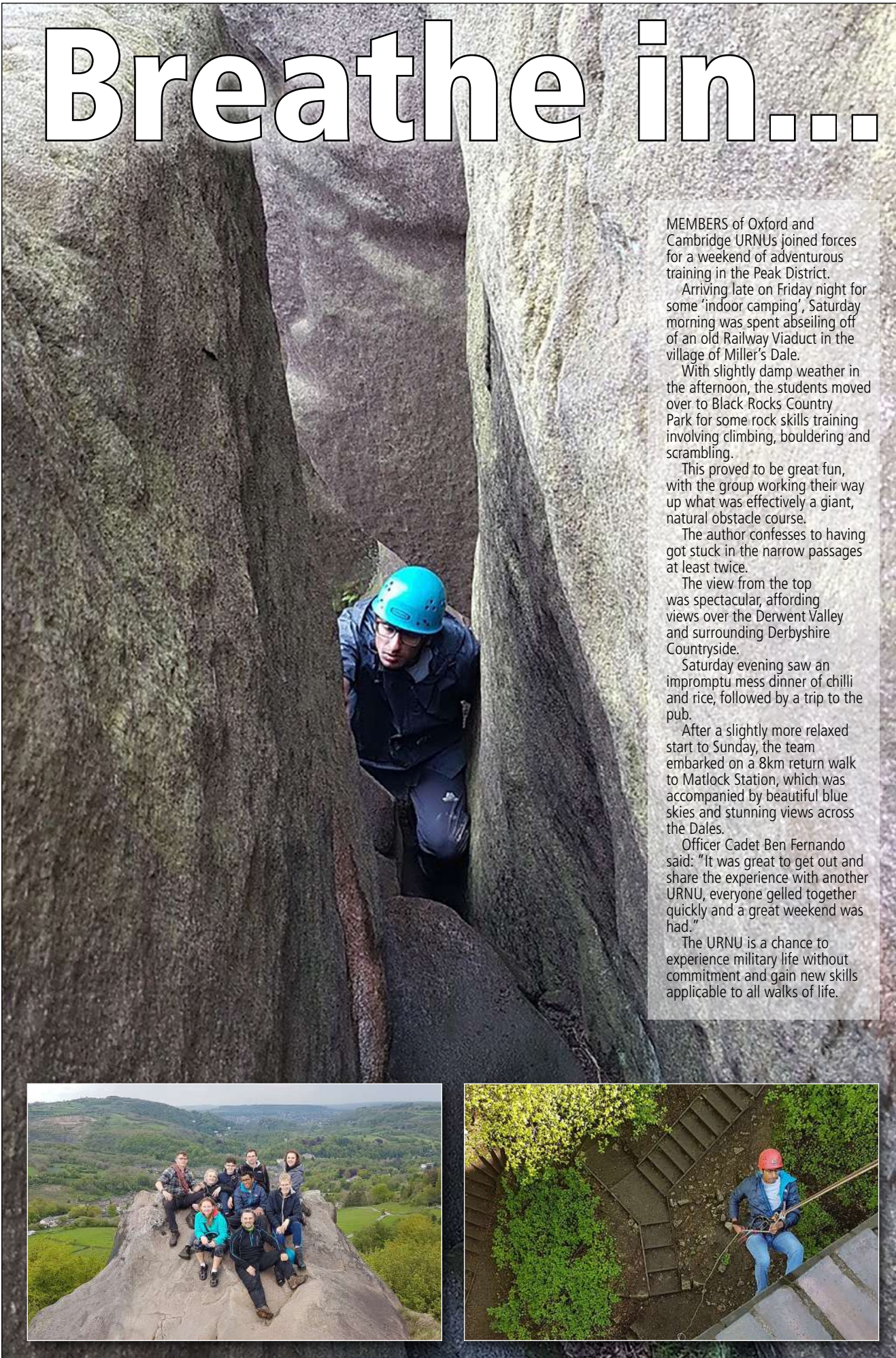
The view from the top was spectacular, affording views over the Derwent Valley and surrounding Derbyshire Countryside.

Saturday evening saw an impromptu mess dinner of chilli and rice, followed by a trip to the pub.

After a slightly more relaxed start to Sunday, the team embarked on a 8km return walk to Matlock Station, which was accompanied by beautiful blue skies and stunning views across the Dales.

Officer Cadet Ben Fernando said: "It was great to get out and share the experience with another URNU, everyone gelled together quickly and a great weekend was had."

The URNU is a chance to experience military life without commitment and gain new skills applicable to all walks of life.



Memories flood back for D-Day veterans

ROYAL Naval Reservists from Liverpool-based HMS Eaglet met D-Day veterans during a visit to Normandy to mark the 75th anniversary of the invasion.

Matthew Toner, 94, from West Kirkby, served in Landing Ship Tank 410 and recalled the frantic nature and noise of June 6 1944.

Prior to serving, Matthew, pictured above, who joined the Royal Navy in 1941, earned his spurs in the Battle of the Atlantic.

He remembers fondly his time in Baltimore, US as he took LST 410 out of build. The highlight of which was having two dances with the war time sweet heart Betty Grable.

He also supported landings in North Africa, Salerno, Anzio and Reggio before Normandy and afterwards transferred to Pacific supporting landings in Burma and Malaya before ending the war in Singapore.

Coder Don Hitchcock, pictured in Bayeux Cemetery, was onboard HMS Narborough for D-Day.

While patrolling 1,200 miles out in North Atlantic in the days and weeks before D-Day he had the job of coding the weather reports seen as vital to Overlord HQ at Southwick House, Hampshire.

Later on HMS Narborough was assigned patrol and escort duties on the western approaches to Omaha Beach where the main risks were mines released by enemy forces.

After the war Don went on to obtain a degree at Cambridge university before settling into a teaching career.

An active veteran, he was chairman of the now disbanded Captain Class Frigate Association.

Members of the RNR also met veteran John O'Shaughnessy, 95, who joined the Royal Navy in 1942.

He trained as a seaman



gunner torpedoman and joined one of the most active destroyers, HMS Virago.

In addition to escorting the perilous Arctic convoys during 1943-44, Virago participated with other British destroyers in the Battle of North Cape on December 26 1943, where John's torpedoes helped sink the badly beaten German battleship Scharnhorst, following a fierce fight between the Germans and the battleship Duke of York.

On January 30, 1944, while escorting Convoy JW 56B to Murmansk, Virago rescued 78 men from the stricken HMS Hardy, whose stern had been blown off by an acoustic torpedo (resulting in 35 casualties).

During the invasion of Normandy, she fired on German positions behind Lion-sur-Mer on Sword Beach, and later gave cover fire for troops advancing inland.

After Normandy his war continued in Burma onboard LST 373, demobbed in 1946 John settled in Southend.

Married with two daughters, this year is the first time he has returned to France and worn his medals.

Cadets' deep dive into wonder of oceans

FOUR Officer Cadets from Oxford University Royal Navy Unit took part in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History's 'Oceans and Islands' late-night opening.

The event involved discussions with several hundred members of the public over the evening about life in the URNU, navigation at sea and the history of science and exploration within the Royal Navy.

The cadets had a chance to show off their passage-planning skills through mock-navigation demonstrations.

Excellent feedback was received from participants and visitors alike, and the URNU hope that similar opportunities

for public engagement present themselves in the future.

Midshipman Ben Fernando said: "It was great to be able to show so many people some of the skills I have learnt in my time at the URNU, and to show them in the Natural History museum in Oxford was an amazing experience."

The Commanding Officer CPO Gary Maskell said: "My team had a chance to show off some of their skills to a wider audience, an opportunity that rarely comes around and one that we grasped."

"The attendees all enjoyed themselves and some even had hands on experience with the charts."



● From left, LH Paul Lee, WO Mark Edwards, Lt Cdr Roy Miller, Normandy veteran John O'Shaughnessy, LH Marty 'Tiny' Smyth, AB Michelle Peacock, CPO Gary Johnston and AB Shynash Sidharthan

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Village pays respects to HMS Hood for 70th time

WORSHIPPERS in the small New Forest village of Boldre remembered 1,415 sailors lost in the Royal Navy's greatest tragedy of World War 2: the sinking of HMS Hood.

For the 70th year running the quintessential English church of St John's the Baptist hosted a service of remembrance to the battle-cruiser loss with veterans – led by 101-year-old former crewman Alec Kellaway – joining families and serving personnel to remember an event which sent shockwaves through the navy and nation at the time.

The Mighty Hood was the symbol of the Royal Navy between the wars, the biggest battle-cruiser ever built – possessing the punch of a battleship, but the speed of a cruiser thanks to lighter armour.

In mid-May 1941 she and brand-new battleship HMS Prince of Wales were dispatched to intercept Hitler's flagship Bismarck, making its maiden voyage with cruiser Prinz Eugen, hoping to strike at convoys in the Atlantic.

They met shortly after 5.30am on May 24 in the middle of the Denmark Strait. With his fifth salvo Bismarck – the captain determined a ship so powerful should be male, not female – hit Hood at a range of more than nine miles. The shell penetrated the ship's armour and exploded in an aft magazine.

The resulting explosion – or explosions – ripped the ship apart. She had been in battle little no more than 25 minutes.

She sank in seconds, taking all but three of her crew – signalman Ted Briggs, anti-aircraft gunner Bob Tilburn and 17-year-old Midshipman William Dundas – with her. It remains the biggest single loss of life in the Royal Navy's history.

Those 1,415 souls are honoured in an illustrated book of remembrance in Boldre church, where there is a comprehensive memorial area devoted to the battle-cruiser and her men, including a stained glass window, benches, a painting of the Hood plus a model of her and her adversary, and the original moulding of the plaque laid on the wreck when it was discovered in 2001.

The reason why? Boldre was the home of Vice Admiral Lancelot Holland, the senior officer lost when the Hood sank; he worshipped with his family in St John's, and his widow Phyllis established a memorial in the church after the war.

Hood was the first Royal Navy warship constructed with a purpose-built chapel, said the Rev Martin Evans, the RN chaplain leading the memorial service.



"I think about the chapel as a part of this tragic story. For a war grave to include a chapel brings a very special dimension into play and serves to underline that God was with these men."

Mr Kellaway, who served in her before the battle with Bismarck, was among a packed congregation who saw the memorial book carried into the church ceremonially.

They heard local MP the Rt Hon Julian Lewis read a lesson, Hood Association President. Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks read the act of remembrance (his uncle, AB Eric Wilcocks was among the 1,415 dead) and Russell Hay and Titch Blachford, grandson and great neice of Hood's Captain Ralph Kerr laid a wreath. The Naval Prayer was read by Cdr Tony Pearce.

A collection was taken for Seafarers UK, Mission to Seafarers and Boldre Church Trust.

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Learn how we pay debt of honour to our war dead

YOU can now learn more about the work to preserve the memory of the nation's war dead thanks to a new visitor centre on the Western Front.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission Experience, formally opened by the Princess Royal at the end of last month, aims to give the thousands of people who visit its 23,000 military cemeteries and sites around the globe an insight into its work, especially identifying unknown casualties of conflict since 1914.

Britain and her Empire/Commonwealth has lost 1.7m men and women under arms since the beginning of WW1.

The bulk of the casualties were exhumed or recovered and buried in official cemeteries shortly

after the end of the two wars.

But the former battlefields – and especially the Western Front – continue to give up their secrets each year.

Around 40 bodies are recovered annually, each one demanding thorough investigation by the commission's exhumation officers, who recover and record every detail and item that might reveal the skeleton's identity.

Whether or not they succeed in putting a name to the fallen, the bodies are reinterred with full military honours in an official cemetery.

The number of bodies discovered has increased as towns and cities expand into what were battlefields – revealing individual or multiple remains.

Even so, it will still take more than 4,300 years to find all of the missing.

Recovery and reburial is just one aspect of the new centre whose location is on the edge of Arras.

Visitors to the centre will also be able to tour workshops and observe craftsmen at work from repairing sections of existing memorials to restoring and replacing the commission's iconic headstones.

The centre is located on the heart of the former Western Front – the address for your SatNav is 5-7 Rue Angele Richard, 62217 Beaurains – just ten miles from the former Royal Naval Division battlefield at Gavrelle from 1917, and three from the monument to Britain's WW1 aviators (including the Royal Naval Air Service).

The centre also spreads its wings beyond the Western Front to shed light on the commission's work across Africa, Asia, Australasia, Eastern Europe and the Americas, showing how its employees maintain sites in diverse environments, and the ground-breaking work managing the impact of climate change.

"For more than 100 years, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has worked to care for our war dead. I am delighted that we can now share with the public the skills, dedication and craftsmanship of our fantastic team," said the commission's director Victoria Wallace.

For more information, see www.cwgc.org/visit-us/visitor-centres/cwgc-experience.

Birth of the Fleet Air Arm

DAVID Hobbs is the leading historian of British naval aviation. His output recently has been prolific and he now adds to this with his latest book, *The Dawn of Carrier Strike and the World of Lieutenant W P Lucy*.

It examines the vexed subject of the Fleet Air Arm in the inter-war period and how this affected the aircraft carrier capability that the Royal Navy was able to deploy in the opening months of World War 2, writes Prof Eric Grove.

The fundamental problem was, of course, the creation of the Royal Air Force on April 1 1918 from the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service. The author points out the significant fact that the 55,000 men – usually quoted as the strength of the latter – is an underestimate, given the RN, RNR and RNVR personnel working in supporting roles. He explains why most RNAS personnel (whose officers, it must be remembered, had been previously listed as 'Royal Flying Corps' in the Navy List) had little alternative but to transfer to the new service.

The book clearly explains the development of naval aviation in the early RAF period. The author explains that the main problem with the system was that it took time to train pilots in carrier operations but that they were then transferred to other Air Force posts. The lack of observers with sufficient specialised expertise was an even more serious problem and the Royal Navy formed its own observer branch in 1921. These officers were borne on ships, not with squadrons, and it is hard not to agree with Commander Hobbs that this was "undoubtedly a bad idea and limited the extent to which multi-seat aircraft could work up together to a high standard." As the author also



●RAF Fg Off Berkeley and his passenger, legendary aviation photographer Charles E Brown, in an Osprey Mk1 fighter/spotter plane fly past HMS Eagle in the mid-30s

Picture: IWM HU 63336

THE GROVE REVIEW

correctly points out the seniority of observers in the FAA (the first Naval pilots did not begin training until 1924) created an "imbalance which was to have a significant effect on the Fleet Air Arm as it evolved in the decade ahead in that potentially disproportionate value was placed on the need for naval aircraft to have observers as well as pilots, even in fighters."

The book then gives a good account of the Balfour Subcommittee and the Trenchard-Keyes agreement that set up the 'Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Air Force' in 1924, under dual control. The book then follows the career of William Lucy who joined the 24th Naval Pilots Course in 1932. He joined the newly-reorganised squadron structure which, as Commander Hobbs explains, was allowed

by developments in technology that altered operating in carriers. It also must be said that this allowed RN Fleet Air Arm pilots to be advanced in their RAF rank to Squadron Leader.

Lucy provides a very good case study of inter-war career development and Fleet Air Arm operations. The book examines the ships and aircraft that played a part in the initial part of his career before moving on to 'Doctrine, Operations and Exercises' and the growing status of observers who had developed reconnaissance to a 'fine art' by 1934. The author then turns to a comparative account of US developments which gave the US Navy a significant lead over the RN that it never lost.

The next chapter analyses the decision to reallocate the Fleet Air Arm to full RN control, a great achievement of the

contemporary First Sea Lord, the great Lord Chatfield. The book then moves on to examine the situation of 'The Air Branch of the Royal Navy' and its aircraft in 1939. I agree with the author that the Skua dive bomber/fighter has been somewhat underrated but his description of the related Roc turret fighter is not entirely accurate. The Roc did indeed carry bombs in action in operations in support of the Dunkirk evacuation and other operations on the French coast; one even shot down a Ju-88. Rather strangely, Matthew White's excellent work on the Skua and Roc which describes these actions does not appear in the bibliography, one of the very few oversights in an otherwise well-researched volume.

The book then covers the operations of naval aviation in the early part of the war before extended and detailed discussion of the Norwegian campaign in which Skuas, commanded by Lucy, sank the German light cruiser Königsberg, the first major warship sunk in action by aircraft. He then covers the actions of what he calls the 'strike carriers' HMS Furious, Ark Royal and Glorious. Sadly Lucy, by then an 'ace', was killed in action flying from Ark Royal engaging German Heinkel bombers.

Commander Hobbs makes the point well that, despite the limitations of its aircraft, the Fleet Air Arm provided a pioneering example of 'carrier strike' in action, taking on a powerful land-based air force, something for which the Swordfish, Sea Gladiators, Skuas and Rocs had never been intended. *The Dawn of Carrier Strike and the World of Lieutenant W P Lucy* (ISBN 978 1 4738 7992 8) is published by Seaforth of Barnsley to their usual high and well-illustrated standard for a reasonable £35. It is a significant contribution to the historiography of naval aviation.



Prince sees Queen

PRINCE Michael of Kent visited one of the largest vessels left from the Dunkirk evacuation when he toured the Medway Queen undergoing restoration in Gillingham.

Accompanied by the Viscount De L'Isle, Kent's Lord Lieutenant, and Admiral Lord West, President of the Medway Queen Preservation Society, the prince was given a comprehensive tour of the 95-year-old paddle steamer which played a key role in late May/early June 1940.

Prince Michael is honorary admiral of the Dunkirk Little Ships Association, which represents nearly 200 vessels including the former pleasure steamer.

When war came in 1939, she was taken over and turned into a minesweeper, HMS Medway Queen.

Then, as the Germans threatened to overrun the Continent she was sent to northern France to help the operation to bring trapped British (and later French) troops across the Channel.

She is credited with saving more than 7,000 men from the French port, making seven runs to Dunkirk and back.

Medway Queen resumed her pre-war career after 1945, until

she retired in the 1960s, then spent nearly a decade as a floating night club on the Isle of Wight.

Thereafter several chequered years passed. Attempts to restore her came and went until the current preservation team came on the scene in the mid-1980s.

Today the ship is back on the eponymous river, the hull has been rebuilt and volunteers are restoring compartments and saloons with the goal of getting the ship running again by the summer of 2024, in time for the 100th anniversary of her maiden voyage.

Enthusiasts explained the work they have done – and still need to do – to bring the ship back to working order and presented the royal guest with a souvenir folder containing the story of Medway Queen and the planned future of the restoration project.

The immediate goal is to raise around £20,000 to tow Medway Queen to Ramsgate next spring for 80th anniversary commemorations of Dunkirk.

If you want to have a look around the ship, she's open every Saturday between 11am and 4pm at Gillingham Pier in Pier Approach Road, Gillingham. See www.medwayqueen.co.uk for details and how to support the restoration.

No longer our forgotten friends

THIS magnificent statue commemorates horses killed delivering victory in World War 1.

Unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, 'Free Spirit', designed by Georgie Welch, remembers the eight million horses, mules and donkeys which were killed between 1914 and 1918.

Tracy Francis, from the Free Spirit Memorial Appeal, said they wanted to highlight the "huge difference" horses make "in all walks of life".

The group raised more than £100,000 since the project began in 2014.

Veterinary hospitals treated over 2,500,000 horses with around 2,000,000 cured and cleared to return to duty.

The Royal Naval Division used horses extensively in Gallipoli and later on the Western Front; a typical battalion of 1,000 men relied on about 90 horses and mules.

The animals were used to carry supplies, guns and casualties to and from the front line, as well as cavalry horses.

Ms Francis, who runs Gartmore Riding School in Hammerwich, 15 minutes' drive from the arboretum, said it was "absolutely amazing" to see the completed statue and she was filled with "a sense of pride".

"I hope that people will come here, take time, and they'll be able to reflect," she said.

She was inspired to fundraise for the statue when she realised there was nothing at the arboretum for horses.

"The horse hasn't changed – it's still a true friend," she said. "It's courageous, it's very trusting and you can see it's beautiful."

Military historian Graham Winton, who attended the statue's unveiling, said it was a "fitting tribute".

"Animals served in the war and they didn't have a choice," he said. "We tend to forget they existed."



Tattoo exhibition inspires new body art

MEET Tattoo Jack, a colourful legacy from an exhibition at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

The full-sized painted torso, which features 35 designs, was created by artist Gary Coole and is being shown around Portsmouth and beyond as part of an outreach programme, including sessions with Alzheimer's and dementia veterans groups.

Some of the tattoos featured on the 95cm-high torso were submitted by the public, some by serving or veteran personnel following a public appeal by the museum to learn more about the tradition of tattoos. Others were based on research collected during last year's Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed.

"We wanted something as a legacy that embodied the results of our tattoo research with the navy and public that could still inspire a reaction when we are working with community groups," said

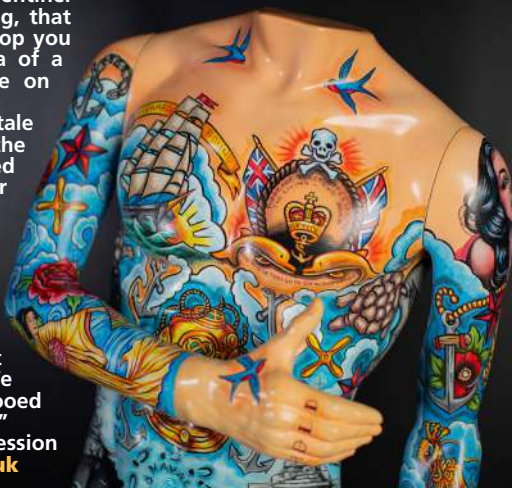
NMRN community producer Jo Valentine.

"We wanted something striking, that was personal to us and would stop you in your tracks. We had the idea of a painted torso which could come on tour around the area.

"Every tattoo on the torso has a tale to tell; we gave Gary examples of the tattoos the public had submitted and also ones that reflected our Royal Navy tattoo research. This includes the submariners' badges, remembrance tattoos, blood groups and Royal Marines' Globe and Laurel tattoos.

"Also included on the torso are two very special tattoos from our collection – a George Burchett flash and a rare Tom Riley flash. We have also commissioned two tattooed feet featuring a pig and a rooster."

To find out more, or to book a session contact community@nmrn.org.uk





Getting Scilly for one of the best gigs

A TEAM of 14 officers and cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) were among the thousands of competitors who took part in the 30th Annual World Pilot Gig Championships on the Isles of Scilly.

The annual event saw the BRNC crew compete in the college pilot gig, named Baccante.

Arriving on the Friday the team pitched their tents to set up the pre-positioned gig ready to race on Saturday. Although bright and clear the weather was blustery and cold and the sea conditions promised for exciting racing for the largely novice squad.

The World Championships take place over four races. The first from St Agnes back to St Marys and the remaining heats and final on a shorter sprint from Nut Rock to St Marys.

Having been seeded into groups of 12 in the St Agnes race the groups then race two heats and a final with the top and bottom two crews in each group switching places each time.

Sea conditions on the Saturday were choppy and unfamiliar territory for the crew. In the St Agnes race the largest ever collection of boat, 160 in all, formed up over a two-mile start line with almost a 1,000 competitors ready to go.

Caught at the back of the pack in rough seas the BRNC crew had a slow but steady race,

placing in the bottom group. Sea conditions grew more challenging over the day and the first Nut Rock race did not see BRNC improve their position.

Sunday's heat was more suited to the crew with calmer seas that allowed BRNC to put the power down and as a consequence Baccante won the heat and moved up into the next group for the final.

The crew were buoyant and raring to go as the starting flags went up for the final race. Pulling hard from the off Baccante moved quickly through the back markers and was steadily closing down on the leaders as she passed through the finish line in sixth place.

While they may not have ended up on the podium the BRNC team gave a good account of themselves and it was a weary team that eventually returned to the college at midnight on Monday.

Lieutenant Commander John Barry, team captain, said: "I am really proud of the team's efforts, we were competitive in challenging conditions which caused a number of teams to turn back and even won a heat. We all had a great time and set a benchmark to improve on next year."

In addition to Baccante, BRNC crew filled spaces in the London Cornish team and the Brixham ladies team, both of whom achieved creditable results.

Royal Marines take spoils at the home of golf

GOLFERS from 40 Commando took the honours at the home of the sport, St Andrews.

The bootnecks were among 104 personnel from ships, submarines, air squadrons and bases across the fleet competing for the Royal Navy Cup.

Teams of four played 36 holes on the new and jubilee courses, with the best three scores from each round counting towards a collective score. An individual competition was played alongside this with prizes awarded to the players with the top three individual stableford scores accrued over the two rounds.

For the first time in recent memory 50 percent of the field were junior rates and there were some strong performances, with four players coming in with over 40 points on the first 18 holes.

The afternoon did not bring such high scores with increasing winds and rain seeing those high scores drop quite considerably.

At the half way point 40 Cdo and FOST(S) were almost neck-and-neck for the title, but 40 Cdo pressed on to maintain the lead in the second round, beating FOST(S) by a clear 14 shots, while HMS Triumph moved up the leader board after

the second round to come third, just one shot behind FOST(S).

In the individual event, three players came in with a combined score of 75 points, and on count back it was Lt Andy Cobbold (RNAS Yeovilton) who took the individual event from CPO Philip Kilpatrick (HMS Kent) and PO Stephen Bell (HMS Anson) in second and third place respectively.

Captain Craig Mearns, who is based at Faslane and is the chair of the Royal Navy Golf Association said: "I am delighted that we managed to bring the Navy Cup north to St Andrews. It has been an outstanding success and we are indebted to the St Andrews Links Trust for their support in making this event happen."

He continued: "The courses were in excellent condition and our people were looked after magnificently. I want to encourage more of our people to take up golf and develop their skills and I hope that holding the Navy Cup at such a prestigious venue will help to achieve that."

"For those that already play, most of whom have never played at St Andrews, this has been a memorable experience."



Having a ball in Barbados



ROYAL Navy netballers enjoyed a tough training session in the Caribbean.

Members of the RN Netball Association used their visit to Barbados to prepare for the upcoming season.

The association aims to hold an overseas trip every three years, allowing players to not just experience a new culture, but as a reward for their dedication to the sport.

The games in Barbados were extremely competitive and feisty, and were a true display of the Caribbean style of netball.

The players also had some well-deserved down time with excursions organised through a travel company, these included a catamaran trip and a safari tour.

However, the pinnacle of the tour was visiting two primary schools on the island.

"It was the most humbling and fulfilling experience getting an opportunity to meet these children and the staff," said tour manager, Petty Officer Medical Assistant Sam Usher.

"We introduced fun netball related activities and friendly matches, the school visits were hosted via the Barbados netball federation.

"It was the best thing I've done in 15 years in the RN, it was so much fun, couldn't have gone any better."

The squad played Caribbean teams, swam with turtles and spent time with schoolchildren.

Veterans smash indoor rowing record



A GROUP of elite rowers set a new world record after completing a challenge at HMS Sultan.

Fifteen 50-something men rowed 100km in 4 hours 40 minutes and 1.9 seconds to smash the previous Concept2 Indoor Rowing World Record for a large team aged 50-59 set by 14 rowers from France in 2015, by over 34 minutes.

The team, named FIT@50, consisted of four military men with one from HMS Sultan and 11 civilians, including former German shot putter Dirk Moller and ex-GB javelin thrower Mark Roberson.

With a time of 5 hours 14 minutes and 03.1 seconds to beat, the team set

themselves a target of completing stages of 60 reps each with five-minute rests.

Team member and event organiser, Corporal Robert Jones said: "This is a colossal achievement. I feel privileged to have led the team off and given the chance to also cross the finish line."

"Our thanks go to HMS Sultan for hosting the event. Also a big thanks goes to the three 'strapers' who held our feet down so we could change rower quickly and Lance Corporals Rana and Rai who cooked an awesome Gurka curry."

The event also raised hundreds of pounds for ovarian cancer after team captain, David Scott lost his mother to the disease.

Flying start to bid to be king of track

RIDERS have begun competing for this year's Royal Navy and Royal Marines Championship, with round one at Cadwell Park.

Corporal Charlie White tops the leaderboard with a total of 103 points following four races at the Lincolnshire track. He is followed by fellow marines Ross Obey and Danny Marston, both on 70 points.

"I got a flying start on race one, moving up five places on the first lap and latching on to some faster riders," said Cpl White, who then qualified on pole for race two.

He finished 12th in race three and 14th in race four.

Mne Marston said: "This weekend was my first race for the team in five years, and its evident the team has changed and evolved over them years into what it is now.

"It's good to see the equipment available and sponsors onboard to help the lads out in a very expensive sport."

Mne Marston won the first race, was third overall and won his class in the second and third races, beating his personal best time in race three. A faulty tyre forced him to retire from the final race of the weekend.

"Not the perfect weekend as one more win would have made it four out of four, but lots of positives and something to work on for the next round of the championship."

Mne Jonathan Atkinson, pictured, finished seventh in the championship after the weekend.

"After a few alterations the previous evening I believed the bike was lacking power so I came in early in race one, therefore this penalised myself with a poor grid positions.

"I wasn't disheartened about this as I changed the bike to the original state and set myself the challenge of

gaining on all those in front. Race one was a drastic fail with less power than in qualifying.

"I wasn't going to make the second race of the day so I started to strip the bike down. I checked the basics on the way, but all I wanted to do was take the rocket cover off the engine and see what had failed. In my mind I was thinking I'd dropped a valve but there would be a lot of noise if this happened

"With the cover it was blatantly obvious the camshaft had snapped 1/4 off.

"I was back ready for Monday's final two races. An eight-minute practice session allowed me to test the bike before the race and I was happy I was back on track.

"Later that day in the races I gained a few extra places, was consistent with my times and had some great battles for those places."

Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Llewellyn Thomas, who finished joint eighth in the championship table, said: "It was a fantastically enjoyable weekend and Cadwell may be my favourite circuit now; being the only man in class was a real advantage when it came to



winning, but the podium did get a bit lonely after the third race.

"The main win for me was that I didn't come off – perhaps I'm not trying hard enough."

The second round of the contest takes place at the end of August.

■ Round two of the 2019 Inter-Service Karting Championships will be held at Three Sisters Race Track in Wigan.

The Royal Navy Karting Team entered 14 drivers over five karts, the team's biggest number of drivers to date.

The grid was a t

capacity with 46 karts from all three services along with a few civilian teams meaning it was looking to be a very busy and interesting race.

In kart 45, SLt Jean-Luke Laister, of 750 NAS, was able to put in a near-perfect lap right in the dying moments of a damp qualifying session to get the team its first pole position in several years.

POAET Craig Beesley in Kart 46 was able to qualify tenth overall and first in the Heavyweight Category.

Kart 47 qualified 23rd with LAET Sam Cresswell; Kart 48 was 25th (3rd Novice) with Mne Sam Woods and Kart 49 came 32nd (7th Novice) with AB Josh Wilson.

An accident in the pits required an air ambulance to land, which meant the race was abandoned.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact karting@rnrmsa.co.uk, or visit rnrmsa.co.uk/karting-team/.



Dartmouth deliver for Royal Navy

OFFICER Cadet Greg Rhodes is pictured competing in the cross-country event for Britannia Royal Navy College.

The Dartmouth college won two of the four events at this year's Inter-Collegiate games held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

BRNC's team of 47, made up of Officer Cadets, members of the University Royal Naval Units (URNU) and staff, competed against their counterparts from the Army and the RAF, in four events; basketball, swimming, cross-country and super teams.

Following the opening ceremony, it was the Army that came out on top in the first event; the cross country. The RAF took second and the Royal Navy finished in third place. OC Rhodes finished the 5.5k course in a respectable 11th place, competing against some experienced athletes, one of whom will represent GB in the Commonwealth Games.

The first basketball match between the Army and the RAF saw the Army become the convincing winners by a margin of over 20 points. In the second match the Royal Navy took on the RAF, in a closely-fought match with the Royal Navy winning by just one basket.

With all to play for in the final fixture the Royal Navy and the Army team were evenly matched for all four quarters.

The Royal Navy just managed to stay ahead on points from start to finish, pushing the Army into second place and the RAF third.

The Royal Navy were the overall winners of the swimming competition, which included individual races as well as team relays.

Standout BRNC performances came from Officer Cadet Rudland-Potter who won all his races and Officer Cadet Newton who won her races after having competed earlier in the cross-country event.

The Army came second and the RAF third.

For the super-teams competition, the teams were pitted against each other in three separate disciplines which took place throughout the day.

It comprised Olympic lifting, a 20-minute time capped workout and a fully functional workout as the finale in front of a large tri-service crowd. The Army came out on top with the RAF second and the Navy third, giving the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst the overall victory.

BRNC finished in second place, an improvement on last year's games, with RAF Cranwell in third place.



Stunning view from paragliding marine

COLOUR Sergeant Grant Oseland RM had the honour of competing in the Paragliding World Cup in the stunning scenery of the Alpine resort of Cour de Savoie, Chamousset, France.

In his first World Cup competition, he was under immense pressure as he was competing against the world's best paragliding pilots.

Grant did the Royal Navy and United Kingdom armed forces proud by coming 88th out of 128 pilots.

The art of world-class paragliding is complicated and intense but it can be compared to three-dimensional yacht racing using a GPS to pass through virtual waypoints located among the mountains.

Grant was taking part in the British Open in Spain as Navy News went to press.

Paragliding Courses are available through the JSAT Scheme.

Information available on the Defence Gateway or from RNHPA Chairman Cdr Jenny Buck jennifer.buck116@mod.gov.uk





● **Slt Josh Morris, backed up by Surg Cdr Harry Rourke, rides off against Kate Garnett of Cambridge University**

In great form ahead of Rundle Cup match

THE Royal Navy Polo Association's two teams have enjoyed a very successful season so far, with the highlight fixture still to come.

The RNPA has players from across the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Naval Reserves and is enjoying a period of increased interest from officers and sailors of all branches, including university cadets.

The next major fixture for the team is the annual match against the Army, playing for the Hackett Rundle Cup, on Saturday July 13.

The match, watched by nearly 5,000 supporters of all ages, is part of a whole day of family-friendly polo at the ground in Tidworth, just over an hour from the Portsmouth area.

The Royal Navy enclosure is free to all members of the Naval Service and their entourage and it provides an excellent place to set up a picnic and enjoy the day.

More information on the day, including pricing for tickets to the overall event, can be found at www.tidworthpoloclub.com/the-rundle-cup-2019/

Early season tournaments have seen victories for the development squad, known as the Royal Navy Blue Jackets, against civilian teams from across the south of the UK and against teams from across the British Army.

A very enjoyable away match against Cambridge University ended in a rare defeat for the Blue Jackets but the post-match dinner at one of the colleges more than

made up for it.

The Blue Jackets squad takes new players and builds up their skill levels, whilst playing regular fixtures, with the aim of getting them to first team standard.

The first team, all products of the development scheme, fought a highly contested match against the RAF for the Duke of Cup, sponsored by CAE, in front of several thousand supporters at Tedworth Park Polo Club.

The Royal Navy team ended up beating the RAF 6½ goals to 4 (half goals are a result of the handicap system) and the players were delighted to retain the impressive silverware for another year running.

Lt Max Cosby, a Wildcat Flight Commander on 815 NAS said: "It's great to continue our winning streak and great to play as part of such a cohesive team."

"We're very lucky that the RN gives us the opportunity to compete in such an addictive sport."

"This time last year I was at sea in HMS Sutherland in the South China Sea and next year I'll be away again, so I'm making the most of being around for the season."

For those with even a passing curiosity about polo, the RNPA frequently organises taster sessions and beginner courses, for all ranks and riding abilities (no previous experience is required).

For more information follow Royal Navy Polo on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or get in touch via royalnavypolo@gmail.com

Daedalus Druids prepare for marathon game of golf

A GROUP of enthusiastic sailors from HMS Sultan prepared to take on The Macmillan Longest Day Golf Challenge for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The team of four air engineers, nicknamed 'The Daedalus Druids' were aiming to complete 72 holes across four rounds of golf at Southwick Park Golf Course as *Navy News* went to press, and have already been fundraising through a charity cake bake, raising an impressive £157.51 in the process.

Team captain Petty Officer Thomas "Frenchie" Leclerc said: "Every member of the team has been indirectly affected by cancer and Macmillan Cancer Support is a great charity who continue to help thousands of people in their darkest hour of need."

"Holding a cake sale has been relatively straightforward in comparison to subjecting ourselves to the arduous challenge of a marathon 72 holes of golf."

"There's a big difference in the experience levels of our team from complete novice through to those who have completed competitive competitions."

"There will be lots of walking, hopefully more sun than rain and plenty of decent putting with very little frustration... either way, let's hope we can raise as much money as possible and have some fun in the process!"

The team have set themselves a fundraising target of £2,000. To show your support visit: <https://longestdaygolf.macmillan.org.uk/Team/thedaedalusdruids>



● **Cpl Alvin Pollard, centre, celebrates the dismissal of an RAF batsman**

Agony in quest for T20 glory

THE Royal Navy came home empty-handed from the Inter-Services T20 tournament at Lord's after losing both their games – but that doesn't tell the full story of an exhilarating day's cricket in North London.

The Army won the first game of the day, beating the defending champions, the RAF, by four wickets.

The Royal Navy side then entered the fray in the second game of the day against the RAF.

The RAF won the toss and elected to bat and they scored 136 for 6 off their 20 overs.

Msn Turrell was the pick of the Navy bowlers. He bowled with metronomical accuracy and earned himself figures of 1-16. Mne Jordan Huffman (1-15) proved equally as accurate.

The navy were in confident mood at the start of their run-chase. They were 115-5 in the 15th over, after a quick-fire 25 from opener Lt Cdr Parker – but then LET Dixon fell to Fg Off Patel for 20, leaving the game in the balance.

Wickets then fell at regular intervals, including the key wicket of skipper Cpl Alvin Pollard, who was out LBW to Sgt Watson for 32.

The game went down to the final over, with the navy knowing that they needed seven runs to win off the last two balls.

Unfortunately Turrell was bowled by SAC Shorthouse on the penultimate ball of the final over, meaning the navy went down by six runs.

The stage was then set for the third and final game of the day; the Army versus the Royal Navy.

The Army knew a win would mean that they would regain the trophy.

The navy knew that a win would see the trophy be given to the team with the highest net run-rate.



● **RN wicket-keeper Lt Leo Buscombe watches on as an RAF batsman is cleaned bowled**

Army skipper Boynton won the toss and decided to bat.

His side collapsed to 29-5 in the fifth over.

Boynton then proved why he was one of the most respected players on display.

The left-handed stroke-player dragged his side to a respectable 136 for 8, scoring 52 from 42 balls.

It proved to be the highest score of the day. He was well supported by A/WO2 Hill (28 not out), and the pair put on 50 for the eighth wicket.

It was another tidy bowling display from the Navy, with Turrell again at his economical best with 0-17.

Four navy bowlers picked up two wickets apiece.

Navy openers Parker and Lt Leo Buscombe then strode out to the middle in confident mood.

The pair put on 38 for the opening stand before Parker

went for a big hit and was bowled by Hill for 16.

More bad news for the navy followed two balls later when Buscombe departed.

The Army then ripped the heart of the navy middle order, taking four wickets for ten runs.

Mne Radford then struck some hefty blows, but he was out for 21, and his departure saw the navy's slim chances fade.

The Army sealed the victory when Woolnough was given out LBW to Schofield for ten, and the Royal Navy were bundled out for 115, as the Army sealed the win and the tournament.

The pick of the Army bowlers was their skipper Boynton, who claimed 4-20.

Army captain Jay Boynton was named as man of the tournament. It was a superb day for the Yorkshireman who scored 74 runs in the day and had combined bowling figures of

4-41 off his eight overs.

The navy side can take lots of positives from the day despite two defeats.

Several players made excellent contributions with bat and ball and they got themselves into some match winning positions but unfortunately they couldn't convert them into victories.

At the end of the day's play, Royal Navy skipper Pollard spoke very highly of his team's efforts.

He said: "I'm very proud of our team. We performed to the best of our ability."

"Although we didn't get over the line, we can definitely build on today at the upcoming Inter-Services 50-over tournament at the end of July."

"Our team is growing and we will take a lot of confidence from today's efforts."

Report: SAC James Michael Bairstow, 606 Sqn RAF Benson

Dark blues fly high over the Red Sea

A TEAM of 15 kite surfers from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines enjoyed great flying conditions in Egypt.

The Red Sea resort of Abu Soma was the destination for the annual overseas trip organised by the RNRM Kitesurfing Association.

This year's trip included eight newcomers to the sport.

During their training they learnt everything; from the very basics of flying a kite, to riding the board on the Red Sea.

From day one, the students were on an uphill battle with minimal wind in the region, but with much persistence they all managed to gain the basic skills of flying a kite and learning to body drag through the water.

This is an essential skill for any kite surfer especially those who are

new to the sport.

Fortunately, the sea temperature in Egypt is a little more forgiving than the UK.

By the second lesson the trainees were learning how to stand up on the board.

For sure, this came more naturally to some than others.

Accidental superman air time was laughed about by all, as the conditions of the wind considerably increased.

For most kite surfers, airtime is the biggest thrill in order to complete tricks on the water.

Three members of the RNRMKA made up the top 12 on the African Kite Big Air Leader board.

By the end of the week, all were riding the board and enjoying the freedom that is kitesurfing.

AET Alice Woodman of 845 NAS said: "I thoroughly enjoyed my

experience, and I would like to thank all of those involved for organising this.

"I am looking forward to continuing my kite surfing experience upon return to the UK."

For one individual this was the last time they were going to have the chance to lead an overseas visit with the RNRMKA as they are handing over the chairman role to Surg Capt Andy Nelstrop.

Therefore, a huge appreciation and thank you is given to Cdr Henry Merewether for all of the hard work and time he has given to the club over the past ten years as chairman.

If you are interested in joining the team then please visit the RNRMKA Facebook page.

Report:
SLt Jeremy Fitch, 617 Sqn



Head over heels for thrills



TRAINEE pilot Emma Reynolds gets an unusual view of the countryside. The Sub Lieutenant, from 703 NAS at Barkston Heath, Lincolnshire, was photographed by fellow skydiver Lieutenant Commander Dave Lee, who is based in Portsmouth.

Both are members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sports Parachuting Team, which has a record number of members entering the British National Parachute Championships. Hoping for success which will propel them to qualifying for next year's world championships, are SLt Reynolds and Midshipman Laura Sidhom, both of whom were awarded bursaries from the Royal Aero Club Trust.

SLt Reynolds and Lt Cdr Lee form RN Kraken, the freefly team name. Regarded as the hardest discipline, freeflying is essentially summed up as flying your body in all orientations, instead of the traditional, most stable and safe 'belly down' orientation.

Because of the way the fliers move, their speeds can reach heights of roughly 200 miles per hour; meaning making any mistake can be critical and needs to be dealt with fast. The team are training hard to compete in the Nationals next month, with an aim to qualify for the world championship next year, and continue to develop as a team in the future.

Lt Cdr Lee, who has over 1,000 jumps, has gained many medals at the annual inter-service competition over the past decade, and S/Lt Reynolds (nearly 800 jumps) has gained a gold, two silvers and a bronze medals in the last five years at national competitions, as well as numerous more at local and inter-service level.

Lt Cdr Lee said: "Representing the Naval Service in my sport is something I've always wanted to do, ever since I started skydiving nearly 17 years ago."

S/Lt Reynolds added: "This discipline is so much harder than others I have previously competed in, giving me much more of a challenge."

"There is just something about whizzing around the sky, knowing that you are in total control, but still flying your body to the limit of its physical and mental capabilities, which is incredibly appealing and one of the reasons why I keep skydiving."

The association also has a canopy formation team, consisting of AB Brooke Rawson and Mid Sidhom.

AB Rawson, who has roughly 230 jumps to her name and last year won a gold medal at the National Championships, said: "I just love the adrenaline and the competitive side. I love how we go against all the rules we are ever taught whilst under canopy; it's just awesome."

Mid Sidhom, who has been skydiving for nearly six years, added: "I really enjoy canopy formation as it requires a more technical knowledge and a more careful jump plan."

SLt Callum Fitzsimons, a member of the four-person formation skydiving team, is relatively new to the sport, with a mere 91 jumps to his name.

He began the sport 'to have fun' and won a gold in a rookie competition earlier this year.

