



# NAVY NEWS

FEBRUARY 2021

## Rivers in full flow

**OFFSHORE** patrol ship  
HMS Tamar began  
2021 pushing the  
boundaries of what  
the five-strong class of  
ships can do, following  
her commissioning in  
Portsmouth  
*(see pages 14-15)*

**PICTURE:**  
LPhot Alex Ceolin



**Inside: Royal Marines hone Future Commando Force tactics**

9 770028 167184 02  
Off-sale date: Feb 28, 2021  
**£3.20**



# HIDDEN IN THE... MOUNTAINS

## THE ROYALS GET TACTICAL IN THE MOJAVE DESERT

Pictures by: LCpl Colton Brownlee USMC

**S**MALL teams of Royal Marines were unleashed on the Mojave Desert in California on exercises with the US Marine Corps that helped shape commando tactics of the future.

Marines from 40 Commando's Charlie Company were formed into teams of 12 commandos and were tasked to work 'deep in the battle space' to wreak havoc on opposing USMC forces.

This was part of the unscripted warfighting exercise for which Charlie Company were acting as unconventional enemy forces, tasked and equipped to disrupt their adversary at every turn.

The commando teams operated around Hidalgo City, a huge town otherwise known as Range 220 that was purpose-built for desert urban training exercises and is one of the largest such facilities in the world.

There, they blended into their environment and created chaos, destroying advancing enemy armoured vehicles, mortar lines, command posts and aircraft using a range of weaponry and Future Commando Force tactics to great effect.

Alongside US Army Special Forces the commandos held Hidalgo City – near Twentynine Palms in California – until their enemy had exhausted all options and combat power.

Warrant Officer (Class Two) Nige Quarman, Charlie Company's Sergeant Major, said: "Working independently at reach provided a host of challenges, not only for the deployed teams but for the headquarters element.

"The operations room for a Company Group has become a beast – now

more reflecting a unit formation. With disaggregated teams on the ground, the amount of information that is processed from various sources should not be underestimated."

The commando teams – named Teal 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35 – were mobilised after a period of battle preparation, which saw everything not matching the desert palette painted tans and browns, from fuel cans to camouflage nets.

WO2 Quarman, said: "Intelligence gathered from unmanned air systems pilots suggested that they can pick out dark shadows with ease – the black silhouette of a weapon for example. The time spent on camouflage was to pay dividends later."

Teal 31 and 32 were dispatched first into Hidalgo, with the former spotting a patrol of light armoured vehicles from their observation post and destroying two of them with their anti-tank weapon, the Javelin missile launcher.

The team soon turned their attentions to a mortar line and command post, destroying both with observers – who collect data on the exercise – giving a 75 percent kill ratio.

A staggered deployment saw three further mobility teams move to establish observation posts and explosive ambush sites.

The desert battle ramped up as the USMC punched forward into Hidalgo, enveloping the observation posts on the surrounding higher ground.

This saw Lieutenant Harry 'The Surgeon' Manson and Sergeant Ellis Alamo's teams burrow deeper, remaining undetected and continuing to inflict damage by calling in fire support to hit the enemy's flanks.

Teal 33 caused havoc of their own, 'shooting down' two AH-1V Cobra

gunships with the Javelin, before ambushing enemy armour in which three light armoured vehicles, two Humvees and four trucks were 'destroyed' along with dozens of mock casualties.

After further ambushes and a night surrounded by enemy forces, all teams set up for the defence of Hidalgo.

"The exercise was a very successful run out for a company group developing small team concepts and skill sets," added WO2 Quarman.

"Overall a great deal was learnt as best practice for Future Commando Force teams."

This main exercises followed intensive training 7,000ft up in the mountains at the Mountain Training Warfare Centre at Pickel Meadow.

There, the marines headed on long range reconnaissance patrols to assess the practicalities of communications and logistics for small teams spread out across a wide area, building on exercises in Wales earlier in the year.

As is standard practice, Teal 33 and 34 used mules to travel deep into the mountains with their Javelin and machine gun kits, as well as supplies for survival.

The teams embedded a Fire Support Element from 29 Commando Royal Artillery to establish observation posts around enemy targets.

During this phase the commandos developed their reconnaissance skills and co-ordination of fire support, before switching their attentions to Twentynine Palms and the exercises with the USMC.

Drivers from 40 Commando meanwhile worked with the USMC's Combat Logistics Battalion 7 and trained in driving Humvees on road and off road to receive their USMC driving licence.





The course also involved the Humvee roll-over simulator, which meant the marines are trained to react in case the vehicle flips but also meant lunch was pretty hard to keep down, especially for Sergeant Mal Ray, who had the pleasure of 16 rolls during his session in the simulator.

The drivers also trained in seven-tonne trucks, driving for hours at night with only night-vision goggles to navigate with.

Sgt Ray, said: "We were ready for the large-scale exercise ahead and had shared a laugh or two with our brothers in arms. Once all vehicles were cleaned out and re-fuelled, we thanked our guides from for all their hard work and hours invested in training us to such a high standard."

Matelots were also present in California with medics working closely with US Navy colleagues who had setup a Battalion Aid Station.

There, they worked closely and learned from one another.

For Able Rate George Alger – deployed as the quartermaster's department representative in Charlie Company – it was about providing logistical support to the 12-man teams deployed deep in the mountains.

George drove into the wilderness, delivering fuel, water and rations to keep the marines sustained during the battlefield exercises.

Medical Assistant Harper provided medical cover during exercises but also took part in survival training and provided sentry when required.

He often moved under the cover of darkness, using only night vision goggles to light the way.

Harper later joined Charlie Company's assault engineers during their close-quarters battle training. He would receive the 'wounded' and evacuate them for treatment and heading back into the fight.



**KEEPING WATCH:** Commandos keep watch on the enemy from their desert observation post

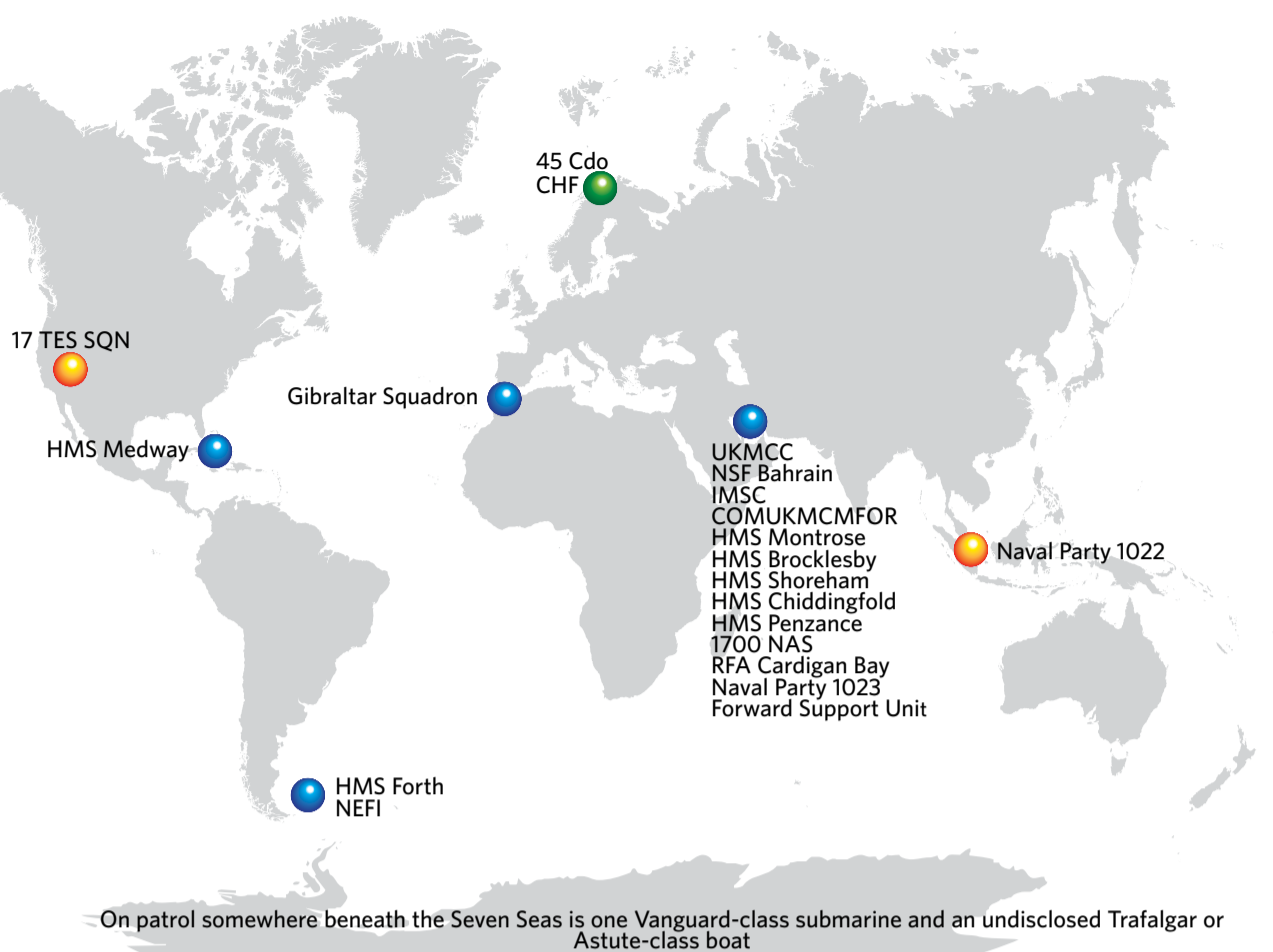
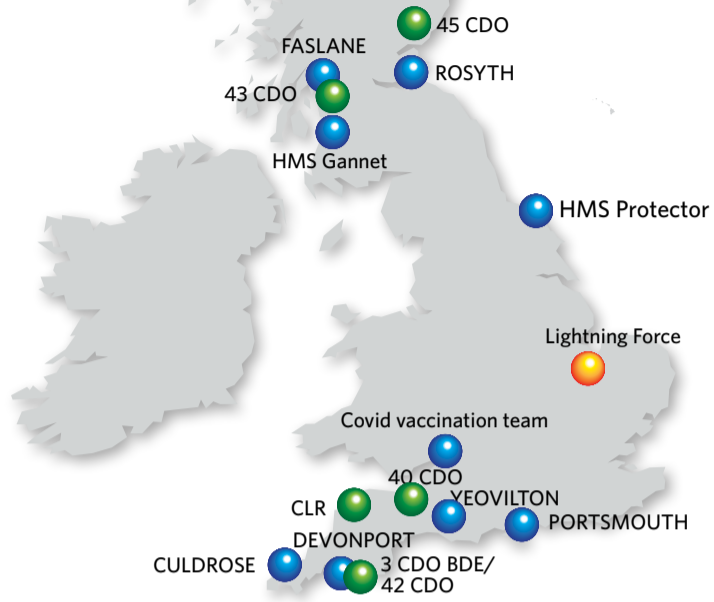


**MULE MARCH:** Commandos use mules to transport kit across the training areas



**Training or on patrol around the UK**

- HMS Northumberland
- HMS Severn
- HMS Mersey
- HMS Tyne
- HMS Defender
- HMS Diamond
- HMS Kent
- HMS Scott
- HMS Tamar
- HMS Trent
- HMS Spey
- Project Wilton
- RFA Fort Victoria
- 814 NAS
- 815 NAS
- 820 NAS
- 824 NAS
- 617 Sqn



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

**GLOBAL NAVY**  
Protecting our nation's interests

THE Royal Navy's new offshore patrol vessels are centre stage this month, led by **HMS Tamar** as she was officially welcomed into the Fleet (see pages 14-15) before she set off for training with Merlin Mk2s from 814 NAS and Puma drones from 700X off the south west coastline (see front page).

Tamar's younger sister and the final Batch 2 River-class patrol vessel **HMS Spey** was formally handed over to the Royal Navy (see page 14) during a ceremony in Portsmouth.

Fellow OPV **HMS Medway** has marked a year on patrol in the Caribbean (see page 16), and is currently in Mayport, Florida, undergoing winter maintenance before resuming her work providing support, assistance and reassurance for Britain's overseas territories in the region.

Patrol ship **HMS Mersey** has hit the ground running at the start of 2021 with intensive operations and training around the UK (see page 7).

The Royal Navy's ice patrol ship is back at sea after a £14m ten-month revamp to enhance her ability to work in Antarctica (see page 5). **HMS Protector** left Teesside after the biggest and longest overhaul during her ten-year career under the White Ensign.

The Royal Navy is joining forces with the United States Navy to embrace and accelerate ideas and technology (see page 17) under the **London Tech Bridge** initiative.

Royal Marines continue to evolve as part of Future Commando Force modernisation. Green Berets from **45 Commando** tested their ability to outfox radar, using all-terrain vehicles to move mortars around Salisbury Plain (see pages 20-21).

Meanwhile, small teams of Royal Marines from **40 Commando** were unleashed on the Mojave Desert in California for exercises with the US Marine Corps (see pages 2-3).

Strike fighters flying from Royal Navy aircraft carriers will be armed with the next-generation of lethal missiles following a £550m deal (see page 6). **SPEAR3** will become the principal strike weapon of the F-35 Lightning jets operating from the decks of **HMS Queen Elizabeth** and **Prince of Wales**.

The Royal Navy has welcomed the fifth of its 21st Century hunter-killer submarines, **HMS Anson** (see page 9). The latest Astute-class boat was unveiled in the Devonshire Dock Hall in Barrow.

Royal Navy medics were mobilised to deliver thousands of vaccine jabs to people in the south west (see page 6) as part of the national effort to end the Covid-19 pandemic. During the last year reservists have also been mobilised to support the national effort (see page 33).

A new crew has taken charge of **HMS Chiddingfold** in the Gulf (see page 19). Crew 1 from Portsmouth's 2nd Mine Countermeasures Squadron will be on the Hunt-class ship for four months.

Engineers from **815 NAS** worked around the clock (see page 6) to fit the first new fifth-generation sensors to the front-line Wildcat fleet operating in the busy skies of the Gulf.

**HMS Somerset** has left the shed after her major refit (see page 13), the latest Royal Navy frigate to undergo an overhaul in Plymouth.

Sister ship **HMS Lancaster** completed her duties for 2020 (see page 13) after emerging from refit in 2019. Last year saw her sail deep into the Arctic Circle and firing her new Sea Ceptor air-defence missile off Scotland.

New recruits have begun their Royal Navy training at **HMS Collingwood** (see page 27), as the base meets a surge in demand to join the Royal Navy.

Nearly two dozen personnel were recognised for their work in the **New Year Honours List** (see page 25), including Chief Petty Officer Naval Nurse Andrew Cooper and bomb disposal expert Lieutenant Commander Sean 'Central' Heaton.

Three crew of veteran hunter-killer **HMS Talent** have been decorated for their tireless efforts supporting the boat on front-line operations (see page 29).

Nearly £20,000 has been handed out in the first year of a push by the Royal Navy's most senior ratings to reward sailors and Royal Marines (see page 26).

Wreaths were laid at memorials around the UK to honour the men who sailed in the **Arctic Convoys** during World War 2 (see page 30).

The Princess Royal saluted a new generation of naval leaders (see page 22) as they completed training at **Britannia Royal Naval College**.

Royal Marine Jack Duer, of 43Cdo, has won the first winner of the **Royal Marine of the Year Award** (see page 23).

And finally, the Royal Navy has bid farewell to **W02 Allan 'Perry' Mason** after a staggering 52½ years in service, 40 of them in the Submarine Service (see page 11).

# Shades of green for the Royal Navy

SOMETIMES it feels as if all the headlines in the last year have been about COVID-19, and we are conscious that much of the View from the Bridge has been about this for the past year.

The pandemic has been a stark reminder of how significant global issues can cross borders and affect the entire world.

This month, we wanted to look at another global issue: climate change.

This year, the UK will host the United Nations Climate Change Conference – known as COP26. This will mark the first global stocktake since the 2015 Paris Agreement, signed by 194 countries.

In 2019, the UK became the first major economy in the world to set itself a legally-binding target to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

As we plan for a post-COVID future, Defence has a key role to play in the cross-government effort to build back better.

Defence has reduced its carbon emissions by 42 percent since 2010, exceeding the Greening Government commitment of a 40 percent cut. However, there is still further to go.

Last year, the government published its Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, including some significant measures around the maritime sector.

The plan sets out to make the UK the home of green ships. £20 million is being invested into the Clean Maritime Demonstration Programme to develop clean maritime technology.

And we are already seeing hydrogen ferry

## VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

trials in Orkney and a hydrogen refuelling port being built in Teesside.

Within the Royal Navy, we are playing our part in this. Increased exploitation of synthetic training will decrease our reliance on live at-sea training, cutting our carbon emissions.

And with our warships forward deployed around the globe, we will reduce the carbon footprint incurred in transiting to and from the UK every time we deploy.

Perhaps the biggest example is that of **HMS Tamar**, the Royal Navy's greenest ever warship, pictured leaving **Portsmouth**.

She is the first ship to be fitted with catalytic converters, which can reduce the ship's nitrogen-based emissions up to 90 percent.

Her engines also rely on a suite of sensors to help them run at their most efficient – saving money and reducing the time between refuelling, as well as benefiting the environment.

In the future, we expect more and more ships to be equipped with this sort of

technology.

Climate change matters, not just because of our responsibility to protect the planet, but because of its international security implications.

Floods, droughts, catastrophic storms and heatwaves are becoming more frequent. Rising sea-levels threaten entire countries and the homes of 300 million people.

Rising global temperatures could increase competition for food and clean drinking water.

And retreating polar ice caps are opening up new sea routes in the High North, which other nations may seek to exploit.

We must be prepared to counter these new threats and safeguard our ability to protect, project and promote the UK's interests.

COVID-19 has shown us what a global shock can mean, disrupting our way of life and damaging the international economy. By acting now, we can help to ensure that climate change does not have the same damaging global effects.

To maintain our freedom to operate in a changed world, address its security threats and to play our part in the UK's sustainable recovery, we are committed to building a Greener Navy.

Welcome to **Spey**, page 14  
**Tamar's busy start**, pages 14-15  
**Medway's Caribbean odyssey**, page 16







# ICED TEES A173

**The Royal Navy's ice patrol ship is back at sea after a £14m ten-month revamp to enhance her ability to work in Antarctica.**

HMS Protector left Teesside after the biggest and longest overhaul during her ten-year career under the White Ensign.

The work carried out by UK Docks and the ship's company since last March will mean the ship – unique in the Royal Navy's Fleet – is better at breaking ice, can carry more equipment and supplies to support British and international scientists researching the frozen continent, and has improved facilities for the crew.

The ship spent five months out of the water and was originally due to emerge from refit in the autumn, before heading south to update maritime charts of Antarctic waters using her hi-tech suite of sensors, as well as conducting scientific research alongside civilian experts.

The revamp proved to be more comprehensive and demanding than

originally anticipated – particularly as it's been carried out entirely during the pandemic – which means the ship sailed three months later than planned.

It's swallowed up 220,000 hours of work ... enough to keep one person busy (non-stop) for 25 years... while the price tag is about a quarter of the figure the RN paid for the ship.

It's been time and money well spent, for Protector, which finally departed Teesside in mid-January, is a ship far better suited to serving on the edge of the frozen wasteland of the Antarctic.

In 21 years in the Royal Navy, the Plymouth-based survey vessel's 1st Lieutenant, Lieutenant Commander Robin Nash, said the work carried out on Protector had been "the most complex, demanding, and hopefully transformative project I have been a part of".

The pandemic – and the rules and

limitations it prompted – "added layers of complication that could not possibly have been anticipated" from working routines and habits, to enforced medical protection for everyone involved plus "a level of ingenuity and pragmatism from the ship's company that has been truly humbling."

Engineering Technician Craig Armstrong, aged 25, from Brixham, added: "I've been impressed by the scale, technical nature and improvements to the engineering systems and I'm looking forward to working with them and enhancing our skills."

As well as the usual refit work overhauling engines, generators, and re-covering the distinctive red/white hull with specialist paint by hand, the propeller shaft was removed for inspection in Denmark before reinstallation (the re-attached propeller and rudder are pictured right ahead of the dry dock flood-up).



The revamp has also created better cargo space, a new quarter deck structure with a naval stores complex, workshop to maintain the upgraded small boats and launches Protector carries, and there's a new gym packed with £50,000 of the latest fitness gear for the sailors and Royal Marines.

The extra weight improves the ship's trim which makes her better able to break ice when she needs to.

"The past ten months on Teesside have transformed HMS Protector into a Polar-class vessel, ready for operations in the ice," said Commanding Officer Captain Michael Wood.

"The ship has undergone wholesale modernisation, exceptional amounts of structural rework, and significant capability enhancement as part of this mid-life update, and all in challenging circumstances for our industry partners."

"And while we were unable to deploy to Antarctica this season, we will return stronger at the end of 2021."



**A Naval Charity providing personal help and advice for all serving and former members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, their Reserves and Families on;**

**Civilian Employment & Personal Administration**  
Including - resettlement finances, pensions and commutation, legal and family law matters

For further information please contact:

[www.whiteensign.co.uk](http://www.whiteensign.co.uk)

0207 407 8658

[office@whiteensign.co.uk](mailto:office@whiteensign.co.uk)





# SPEAR will soon be here

FEAR the Spear – SPEAR3 to be precise, the next-generation missile which will become the principal air-to-ground of the F-35 from the middle of this decade.

Whitehall has placed a £550m contract with defence firm MBDA to equip HMS Queen Elizabeth's and HMS Prince of Wales' stealth fighters over the next seven years.

Designed to knock out warships, tanks and armoured vehicles, missile launchers, bunkers, radar posts and air-defence batteries, the new missile can be fired at such long range – more than 140 kilometres (nearly 90 miles) – it should keep the Navy and RAF pilots out of harm's way from enemy ground defences.

Weighing under 90kg and just 1.8 metres long, SPEAR3 – Select Precision Effects At Range missile No.3 – is powered at high subsonic speeds by a turbojet engine, can operate across land and sea, day or night, and strike at moving and stationary targets.

The new weapon (depicted being launched from an F-35 internal bay in a graphic provided by MBDA) has been developed over the past decade. Its delivery to the Lightning Force based at RAF Marham will support 700 jobs in the UK – 190 of them highly-skilled technology jobs in system design, guidance control and navigation and software engineering – at sites around the country including Bristol, Stevenage, and Bolton.

Testing, simulation and trials will include controlled firings from a Typhoon aircraft before the missile is delivered to Marham and the Portsmouth-based carriers for front-line operations.

While SPEAR3 isn't ready yet, HMS Queen Elizabeth is dotting the 'i's on preparations for her maiden deployment in a few weeks' time.

US Marine Corps F-35 Lightning jets will join their Fleet Air Arm and RAF counterparts – identical save for

the markings – on the carrier's flight deck, as they did during exercises off Scotland last autumn.

Also partaking in those exercises was Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS The Sullivans, which will join the ring of steel around the carrier when she deploys, acting as both a shield (defence against air and submarine attack) and spear (among other firepower, Tomahawk cruise missiles).

The American commitment to Carrier Strike Group 21 – the full composition of the force will be announced later this year – was confirmed in a US-UK joint declaration signed by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and US Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher C. Miller.

Another 'i' dotted was the declaration of Initial Operating Capability – on schedule – meaning all elements of the group, the ships and submarines, jets, helicopters, systems, sensors, weapon systems – and above all the ability to mesh them all together to make them a potent global naval force – can deploy.

That covers everything from qualified pilots and ground crews being held at short notice for carrier-based operations, to sailors being trained to safely handle weapons and maintain all equipment.

The final validation – which marked the end of a road which began with the decision to build the carriers back in the late 1990s – came last autumn with those NATO/Joint Warrior exercises off Scotland.

There is still much more to be learned from task-group operations – much of which will come when HMS Queen Elizabeth deploys for the first time later this year. The group is due to be declared fully operationally capable by the end of 2023.



## The truck stops here

THE sharp rise in Covid cases and the worrying appearance of a new strain of the virus prompted the French to close the border with the UK just before Christmas – leading to a build-up of freight in Kent and the Pas de Calais.

The military was mobilised for Operation Rose (support to haulier testing at Manston and Dover). And while much of the work to test drivers/clear the haulage backlog was carried out by the Army, RN personnel were also committed.

RNR Lieutenant Amy Blake, from Joint Military Command, South East, has been liaising with the region's local authorities through the pandemic – but the demands for her time and expertise as a media operations specialist went through the roof over the festive period.

Christmas Eve found her at the former air base at Manston – turned into a lorry park – dealing with a "media frenzy".

She continued: "It was like nothing I'd seen before. I felt proud to be a part of delivering the message of reassurance that our Armed Forces were working hard to get things running smoothly again.

"I see myself very much as a vessel to 'story tell' the amazing work our Armed Forces personnel do in support of the nation, and to do it in a way that the people find relatable. We are all doing what can be an extraordinary job; but we also all have loved ones and lives outside of work we care about, just like anyone else."

The 25-year-old from HMS King Alfred says challenges such as organising interviews by senior officers (or appearing on the news, such as above) kept her on her toes – and got the message across of the support the military is providing.

"The biggest challenge was the unexpected, where you are on the spot in a situation you've never dealt with before, but you just have to deliver, and fast," she added. "It's really developed my ability to think on my feet in a calm and decisive manner."

■ Rewarding roles, page 33

# Navy helps job centres



ROYAL Navy medics were mobilised to deliver thousands of vaccine jabs to people in the South West as part of the national effort to end the pandemic.

A six-strong team was trained to vaccinate NHS and key workers and over-80-year-olds in the Bristol area initially, working side-by-side with health service colleagues at a mass immunisation centre.

The centre at Ashton Gate, home of Bristol City football club, was one of seven large-scale hubs established to deliver the vaccine in major concentrations of population.

The team of nurses, medical assistants and GPs was drawn from ships, establishments and RN medics working in NHS hospitals.

Lieutenant Lauren Hodges is the senior nursing officer aboard carrier HMS Prince of Wales, ensuring that her shipmates have all the correct jabs, vaccines and precautions for wherever in the world they are sent.

"This is probably my proudest moment – being part of a national effort to hopefully get ahead of Covid and get the country back to some form of normality," said Lauren, whose ship is affiliated with Bristol.

"The set up here is fantastic – really well organised, especially given the size of the operation and the speed with which it has been set up."

Leading Seaman Nicole Ellis (pictured by LPhoto Robert Oates delivering an injection) is normally an operating theatre nurse at Portsmouth's Queen Alexandra Hospital. She added: "It's a great feeling to be part of a national effort and part of history.

We've helped deliver the vaccine to all these people – and they're very happy to receive it. They feel that they can move on a bit with their lives."

The team underwent training alongside NHS personnel, met Prime Minister Boris Johnson when he visited the facility before it opened, and then began delivering vaccines when the centre opened its doors the next morning – jabbing roughly 800 people a day.

After immunising the priority cases, they were due to extend the programme move on to delivering jabs to people over 70, then the over 65s. Once their work was done in Bristol, the team was due to vaccinate people in the Taunton area.

Surgeon Lieutenant Ryan Dodd works in the sickbay at engineering training establishment HMS Sultan in Gosport and was at sea for most of 2020. He found it frustrating he could not help his civilian friends and counterparts tackling the virus in Britain's hospitals.

"I cannot stress how happy I am to be helping – although I was doing my duty with the Navy, it was hard to watch from the sidelines as friends and former colleagues were working hard through the pandemic," he said.

"It's great to be here, helping the NHS, supporting where we can, delivering vaccinations to those most in need as safely and efficiently as we can."

In addition to Bristol and Taunton, around 30 Royal Marines musicians from the Collingwood band were mobilised to deliver jabs in Exeter and RN personnel were volunteering to help NHS personnel at a vaccination centre established in the China Fleet Country Club in Saltash.

## 815's engineers fit new Gulf kit in a jiffy

FLEET Air Arm helicopter engineers worked around the clock to fit the first new fifth-generation sensors to the front-line Wildcat fleet.

The team from 815 Naval Air Squadron – which provides frigates and destroyers with Wildcat helicopters, air and ground crew – faced a race against time to install the latest Identification Friend or Foe system (typically shortened to IFF) so the aircraft could operate safely in congested Gulf skies.

IFF dates back to the earliest days of radar and the Battle of Britain and was designed to prevent the RAF accidentally intercepting its own units rather than Luftwaffe formations.

Since then it's evolved considerably – IFF is into its fifth generation, but the basic principal remains the same as it was 80 years ago: an encrypted signal is sent to an aircraft's IFF system, which responds with a positive indication that the aircraft is a 'friend'.

Today IFF remains vital, especially when operating with other NATO countries where automated defence systems are used.

The latest iteration of the system, Mode 5, was needed to allow Montrose's and Argyll's Wildcats cooperate safely alongside US forces in the Gulf.

The engineering team at Yeovilton had hoped it would involve a quick software upgrade for the helicopters.

"No such luck I'm afraid – it required an entirely new IFF system integrating with the current mission systems on the Wildcat," said senior maintenance rating Chief Petty Officer Jay Partington. "Not something that was going to happen overnight."

Indeed the job was so challenging it meant

carrying out the work in Somerset and flying the enhanced Wildcats to the Gulf in an RAF C-17 transporter, replacing Argyll and Montrose's original helicopters.

The engineers had just three weeks to install the new kit and prepare the Wildcats for their 3,500-mile journey to the Middle East – a challenge compounded by Covid... which meant the engineers accompanying the helicopters had to isolate in the UK... and then in the Gulf on arrival.

It took an 'all hands on deck' response from the squadron to ready the upgraded helicopters in time – including CO Commander Scott Simpson climbing into the cockpit for a weekend test flight; the aircraft were delivered to RAF Brize Norton with minutes to spare.

And at the other end, the Wildcats were prepared to join the frigates. Except the engineers on the ground couldn't interact with the engineers who flew out with the helicopters. They also had to wear full PPE in punishing Gulf temperatures.

"Working in the heat presented its own challenges," said Jay. "Everything took that little longer and you had to put that bit more effort in. Everyone worked tirelessly to have the Mode 5 aircraft ready to embark when their ships sailed."

And so four weeks after the task came in and following successful test flights, the upgraded 'Mode 5' Wildcats joined their ships ready for crucial security patrols watching over the sea lanes of the Gulf, Indian Ocean and Red Sea "with a handful of hours to spare," says Jay, who's delighted by the joint effort.

He added: "The 'can-do safely' attitude and determination by everyone involved at every level meant that there was no gap in operational output."

■ The new year began at a hectic pace for the RN's Gulf-based minehunting force – who were allowed a little downtime over the holiday season.

Following a successful maintenance period, HMS Penzance put to sea on Christmas Eve as maritime traffic in the Middle East (and elsewhere) continued pretty much as normal.

After the spell alongside, the Sandown-class ship needed a bit of a shakedown to test sonar/machinery and for the clearance divers to get some time in beneath the waves, followed by renewed patrols after a quick pit-stop in Bahrain.

Her sister Shoreham enjoyed December 25 alongside – just, having berthed at the UK Naval Support Facility on Christmas Eve fresh from patrol. Her ship's company had both Christmas and Boxing Days off – marked by Secret Santa and mulled wine on the upper deck and dinner with Service and civilian personnel stationed in Bahrain in the support facility – but were back aboard for New Year's Eve.

2021 opened with Shoreham sailing with Hunt-class HMS Chiddingfold heading north to conduct joint training with the Kuwaiti Navy and US Coast Guard, before the RN's senior commander in the Middle East joined all four UK minehunters stationed in Bahrain (HMS Brocklesby completes the quartet) for combined manoeuvres in the central Gulf.



# MERSEY'S BEAT



**P**ATROL ship HMS Mersey hit the ground running in the first fortnight of 2021 with intensive operations and training around the UK.

Damage-control exercises, casualty-handling drills, and mechanical-breakdown training – all while the Portsmouth-based Offshore Patrol Vessel patrolled her beat around the British Isles – has seen the ship's company work hard and be ready for any eventuality.

Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Will Edwards-Bannon, said the new year had begun as the old one ended – with his ship in demand, and his men and women rising to the challenge.

"I couldn't be prouder of Mersey's fantastic ship's company," he said. "Having successfully achieved a remarkable range of tasking over 2020, this diverse team – comprised of regular and reserve members of the RN from all across the

Commonwealth and UK – have hit the ground running once again in 2021.

"Adapting quickly to the evolving challenge of operating amidst a global pandemic, the team's 'can do, safely' attitude and discipline have helped keep both ourselves and our families safe while maintaining Mersey's on-task, ready to protect our nation's interests."

Mersey has also trained with a team of Royal Marines from 42 Commando and 47 Commando, who kept themselves razor sharp for operations in board and search, counter-piracy/smuggling/terrorism around the globe with drills while the ship sailed off the south coast of the UK.

The ship has worked closely with her fellow ships of the Overseas Patrol Squadron since departing on her mission on New Year's Eve after a period of maintenance before Christmas.

Five of the Royal Navy's next generation of Warfare Officers have also been

aboard, spending time learning their trade as Second Officer of the Watch on the busy ship's bridge.

There, they were able to experience what it takes to lead the Bridge Team while also ensuring that Mersey was in the right place at the right time for her operational commitments.

One of the trainees, Sub Lieutenant Emma Morley, said: "I have really liked the variety offered by my short time in the RN so far.

"I have already had the chance to serve on operations in the Middle East and am now enjoying the opportunity to experience a different class of ship operating in UK home waters. I look forward to joining the Fleet as a warfare officer later this year and seeing where the RN takes me next."

The young officers also got stuck into learning how to use a sextant – for those unfamiliar with this, this is a device for measuring distances between objects and especially for taking altitudes in navigation and surveying and is something Lord Admiral Nelson would have been familiar with. Something he would have been entirely unfamiliar with is the electronic charting system aboard Mersey that the officers used to check Mersey's positioning as part of their busy training programme.

Of course, it wasn't all bridge work for the young officers and they mucked in with everything from bringing supplies on board while alongside and fighting floods and fires during training as members of the Standing Sea Emergency Party – a group dedicated to reacting to emergencies on board. With continual patrols and training, Mersey's chefs have been keeping the ship's company running with a varied menu. Not an easy job with the ship rolling in wintry seas.

As is usual, the chefs are also first aiders on board and have been active during training serials to make sure they're ready to react to any medical emergencies on Mersey.

■ HMS Mersey's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Will Edwards-Bannon

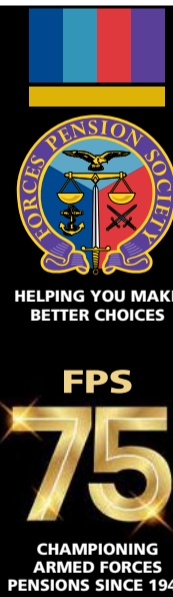
Pictures by LPhoto Rory Arnold

## New Year Resolution: plan to get the most from your pension.

## Join us. Job done.



To get the full benefit of the pension choices you can make, the sooner you begin planning, the better the final result. First you need to understand the many options available to you. Armed Forces Pensions are complex and you may be on more than one scheme. Our Pension Advisory Team is here to help you through the pension maze and tailor our guidance to your individual needs.



### Independent, not-for-profit

Independence is vital to our work, calling governments to account whenever we spot injustice or unfairness in the system and this year we celebrate our 75th Anniversary of supporting the Armed Forces Community. We are funded entirely by subscriptions from our membership - now c. 60,000 strong. Any surplus helps fund our outreach programmes of free-to-attend Roadshows at bases throughout the country and overseas, and our attendance at CTP Employment Fairs.

### Visit: [forcespensionsociety.org/join-now/](https://forcespensionsociety.org/join-now/)

Annual membership for you and your spouse/partner is just **£41**. As a Member, you will have exclusive access to our Pension Advisory Team and our informative Webinars – and you'll receive our bi-annual e-newsletters and magazine, Pennant. You will also have access to our wide range of membership benefits from discounts on new cars and white goods to insurances, low-cost money transfers and a good deal more.

**IT PAYS TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PENSION**

**Forces Pension Society**, 68 South Lambeth Rd, Vauxhall, London, SW8 1RL T: 020 7820 9988 E: [memsec@forpen.co.uk](mailto:memsec@forpen.co.uk) [www.forcespensionsociety.org](http://www.forcespensionsociety.org)





*Atkins & Co.*  
*Chartered Accountants*



## CASH FOR YOU

Do you drive from home to work?  
Do you own your own car?  
Have you worked in different locations?

You could be entitled to thousands of pounds in TAX REFUNDS. Millions have already been received by your colleagues.

- Over 10 years experience
- Family connections with RN and RM, so you know you are in safe hands
- Bootneck and Matelot friendly
- We'll square the admin away!
- Specialist areas:- Maritime security, Overseas and UK security sector, Diving, Pilots and Rental Property

**GET YOUR TAX REFUND NOW!  
CONTACT US TODAY**

**FIXED FEE OF £100 PER YEAR  
NO REFUND – NO FEE**

**E: [info@atkinsandco.com](mailto:info@atkinsandco.com)**

**T: 01934 527888**

**W: [www.atkinsandco.com](http://www.atkinsandco.com)**

Atkins & Co. Chartered Accountants are fully regulated by ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales)



# HUNTER OF THE DEEP

WITH spotlights, dry ice, and a space-age ambience, the Royal Navy welcomed the fifth of its 21st Century hunter-killer submarines: the mighty HMS Anson.

Nine years in the making (and still at least another one to go), the latest Astute-class boat was unveiled in the Devonshire Dock Hall – the UK's gigantic submarine construction complex in Barrow.

Guest of honour was the boat's sponsor Julie Weale, whose husband Rear Admiral John was head of the Silent Service until earlier in 2019 and present at the ceremony, she joked, as her bag carrier.

She described the £1.4bn piece of naval hardware, as "an engineering marvel" and "a sleek hunter of the deep".

Mrs Weale continued: "The work that BAE, Rolls Royce, other defence industries and the Ministry of Defence have done together to build such a beautiful, complex hunter of the deep is both amazing and impressive.

"She will look even better when her face mask has been removed.

"You have designed and built a submarine that with her crew will become the best of her class, the quickest to the front line and best in the world."



And then to the immortal words: "It is with immense pride, passion and pleasure that I name this submarine Anson. God bless her and all who sail with her," Mrs Weale pushed a lever and a bottle of cider was smashed against the underside of Anson's bow, christening the 97-metre-long man o'war.

The pandemic severely limited numbers present to a small number of guests, including the 100-strong crew who will eventually take the Fleet submarine to sea, joining Astute, Ambush, Artful and Audacious.

The boat was blessed by the Navy's 'top bish', Chaplain of the Fleet The Venerable Martyn Gough.

Anson's first Commanding Officer, Commander David 'Bing' Crosby, said it was now time for the ship's company, the broader Naval family, BAE, and Mrs Weale "to bring HMS Anson to life."

"It will require all of us

to work together to achieve this goal, but we are ready for the challenge – and we are determined to succeed."

Anson will enter the water later this year – there's a basin next to the Devonshire Hall not only large enough to accommodate her, but also to allow a practice dive which almost allows the boat to completely submerge.

Her punch is delivered by Tomahawk cruise missiles and the newly-upgraded Spearfish torpedoes being introduced to the Fleet

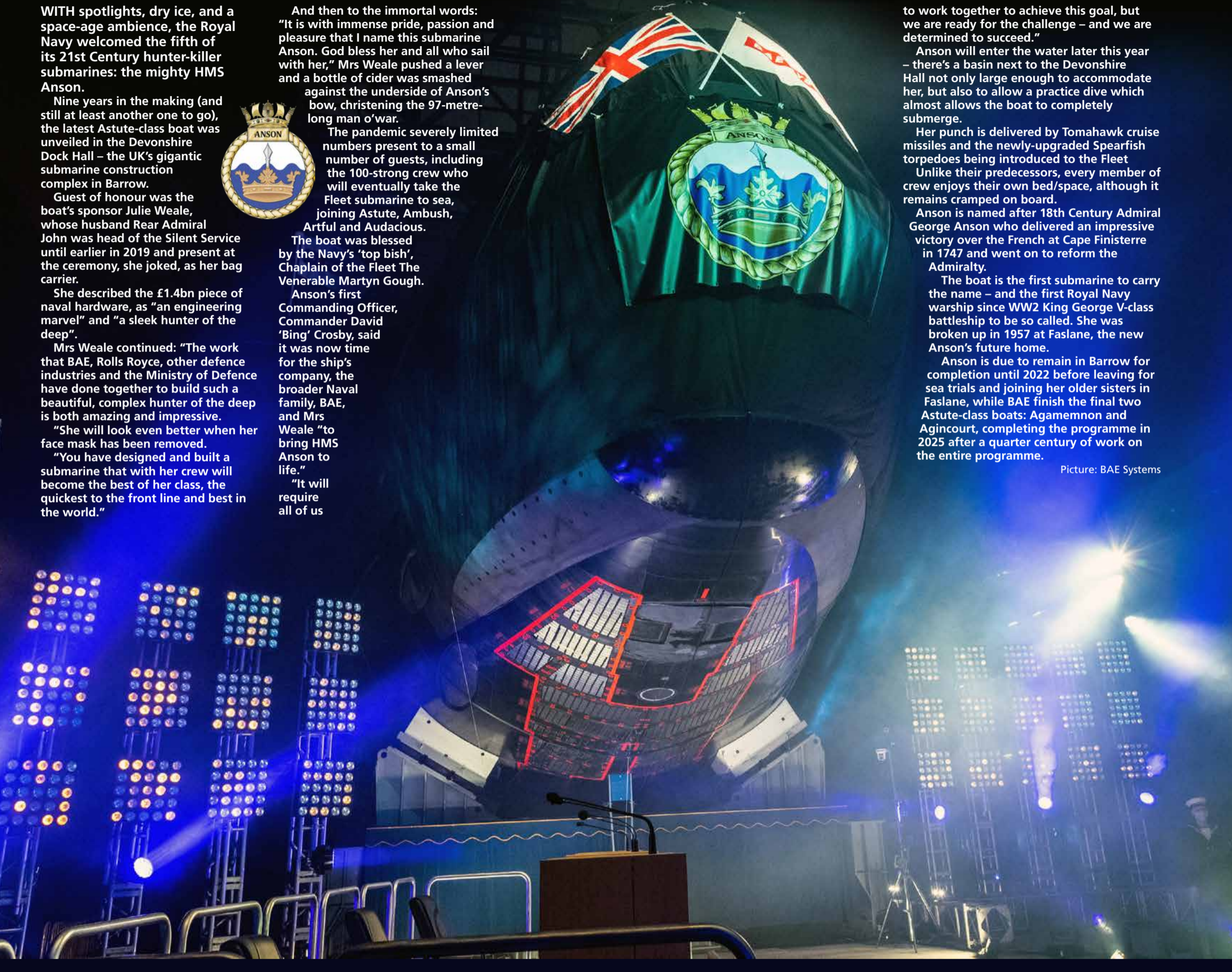
Unlike their predecessors, every member of crew enjoys their own bed/space, although it remains cramped on board.

Anson is named after 18th Century Admiral George Anson who delivered an impressive victory over the French at Cape Finisterre in 1747 and went on to reform the Admiralty.

The boat is the first submarine to carry the name – and the first Royal Navy warship since WW2 King George V-class battleship to be so called. She was broken up in 1957 at Faslane, the new Anson's future home.

Anson is due to remain in Barrow for completion until 2022 before leaving for sea trials and joining her older sisters in Faslane, while BAE finish the final two Astute-class boats: Agamemnon and Agincourt, completing the programme in 2025 after a quarter century of work on the entire programme.

Picture: BAE Systems



because you're there for us

Our team of lawyers have many years of experience providing specialist legal advice to forces personnel. Our military law experts will not only advise you on issues arising from the line of duty but with your home life as well.

There for you supporting the forces

wilkin chapman llp  
inc. gilbert blades  
solicitors

Contact: 01522 512345 or visit [wilkinchapman.co.uk](http://wilkinchapman.co.uk)  
Out of hours for Military Discipline Matters only, contact Gordon Holt on 07973 667869



By Appointment to  
Her Majesty The Queen  
Medallists  
Worcestershire Medal Service Ltd  
Bromsgrove

Worcestershire Medal Service Ltd

Specialists in Orders, Decorations and Medals  
56 Broad Street, Sidemoor, Bromsgrove, B61 8LL



Medals mounted for wear and display  
Miniature and full size replacement medals supplied, all made in the UK to the highest standard.

See our web site where you can order securely on-line

[www.worcedmedals.com](http://www.worcedmedals.com)

or call 01527 835375 and our team will be pleased to help you.



**DURING THESE  
UNCERTAIN TIMES,  
WE ARE STILL  
HERE AND READY  
TO HELP**

**The world around you may be changing but we haven't. Forcesline is still open and here to support you. Health, family, loneliness, debt or addiction problems - don't keep quiet, talk to us.**

Forcesline, a free, independent helpline, outside the chain of command for the Armed Forces and their families.

**0800 731 4880**

Open weekdays, 09:00 to 17:30

Or get in touch online at

**[ssafa.org.uk/forcesline](https://ssafa.org.uk/forcesline)**





# Perry's corker of a career



A ROYAL Navy Warrant Officer is set to retire from the service after a career that is thought to be one of the longest in modern times.

Warrant Officer 2 Allan Mason, affectionately known as 'Perry' to colleagues, has notched-up a staggering 52-and-a-half years in regular service, 40 of them on board or in support of the Submarine Service.

On February 12 the Marine Engineer will finally hang-up his overalls for good, but before then there was a poignant farewell to a major part of his life – submarines.

Perry, who served with submarines HMS Valiant, Sceptre, Sovereign, Splendid and Torbay during his lengthy career, stepped-off a submarine alongside HM Naval Base Clyde for the final time in December.

"What I will miss the most is the everyday challenge and the people," said Perry. "It has been a genuine privilege to serve on submarines and to work with a tight-knit team who are focussed on the same goals – getting boats to sea."

Joining the Royal Navy in 1968 aged just 15-and-a-half, Perry began his career as a Junior Marine Engineer Mechanic (Stoker). His first draft was to the World War Two era ship HMS Ulster – a U-Class destroyer converted to a Type 15 frigate. This was followed by service on HMS Leopard, a Type 14 frigate, and HMS Llandaff.

"HMS Ulster was used as a navigation training ship then so there were some great opportunities to sail all around the UK coast," recalled Perry.

"As a Junior Stoker I had to do external and internal boiler cleans and make sure that tubes were cleaned. The ship used a fuel oil that was like treacle so it was a pretty dirty job."

"In those days everyone lined-up on deck on payday and we were all paid in cash. I spent 18-months on HMS Ulster and during that time 'Black Tot Day' happened – the last time that the daily tot of rum was issued to sailors. I wasn't old enough to have the tot at the time but I remember there were a few grieving crew members."

Perry later spent time at HMS Sultan, where he was awarded the Institute of Nuclear Engineers' HMS Sultan Prize, and then joined HMS Dolphin in 1981 where he undertook his initial submarine training. This was followed by nuclear training and assignment to the Third Submarine Squadron and HMS Valiant.

After further training and time at sea, Perry eventually qualified as a Category A2 Nuclear Watchkeeper or Chief of Watch, before serving time on board various Swiftsure-class submarines

and with HMS Torbay.

He has also spent a considerable amount of time at HM Naval Base Clyde, the Home of the UK Submarine Service.

The engineer is a familiar sight, usually to be found in overalls down a Reactor Compartment, in a bilge, or heading to his next job within the Naval Base.

As well as plaudits from his colleagues at Faslane, Perry also received a specially recorded message by the head of the Royal Navy, First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin, who thanked both Perry and his family for their service.

Perry was also quick to thank his wife and daughter for their support over his career.

During his distinguished career he has been awarded the Iraq Medal, the Operational Service Medal for Operation Veritas, Golden and Diamond Jubilee medals, the Meritorious Service Medal, his Long Service and Good Conduct badge with three clasps, and has become a member of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Although records begin to get sketchy past a certain point, it is thought that WO Mason's career is one of the longest in modern times. Both Lord Mountbatten and Admiral Keyes served some 52 years, while Admiral Fisher, who was recalled from retirement, served for 59 years. It is also believed that some Royal Navy Ratings kept on active service during the world wars also approached Perry's length of service.

"If anyone is thinking of joining the Submarine Service then I would say to them to go for it," said Perry. "You will never work anywhere else quite like it. Every day will be a challenge and the people you work with will be first-class."

"A submarine is an amazing, unique, vessel and the only comparison would be to the space shuttle."

"I have been very lucky to have had the travel opportunities which I've had, first in General Service where I got to travel all over the world, and then in the Submarine Service where I got to do it again, except this time underwater!"



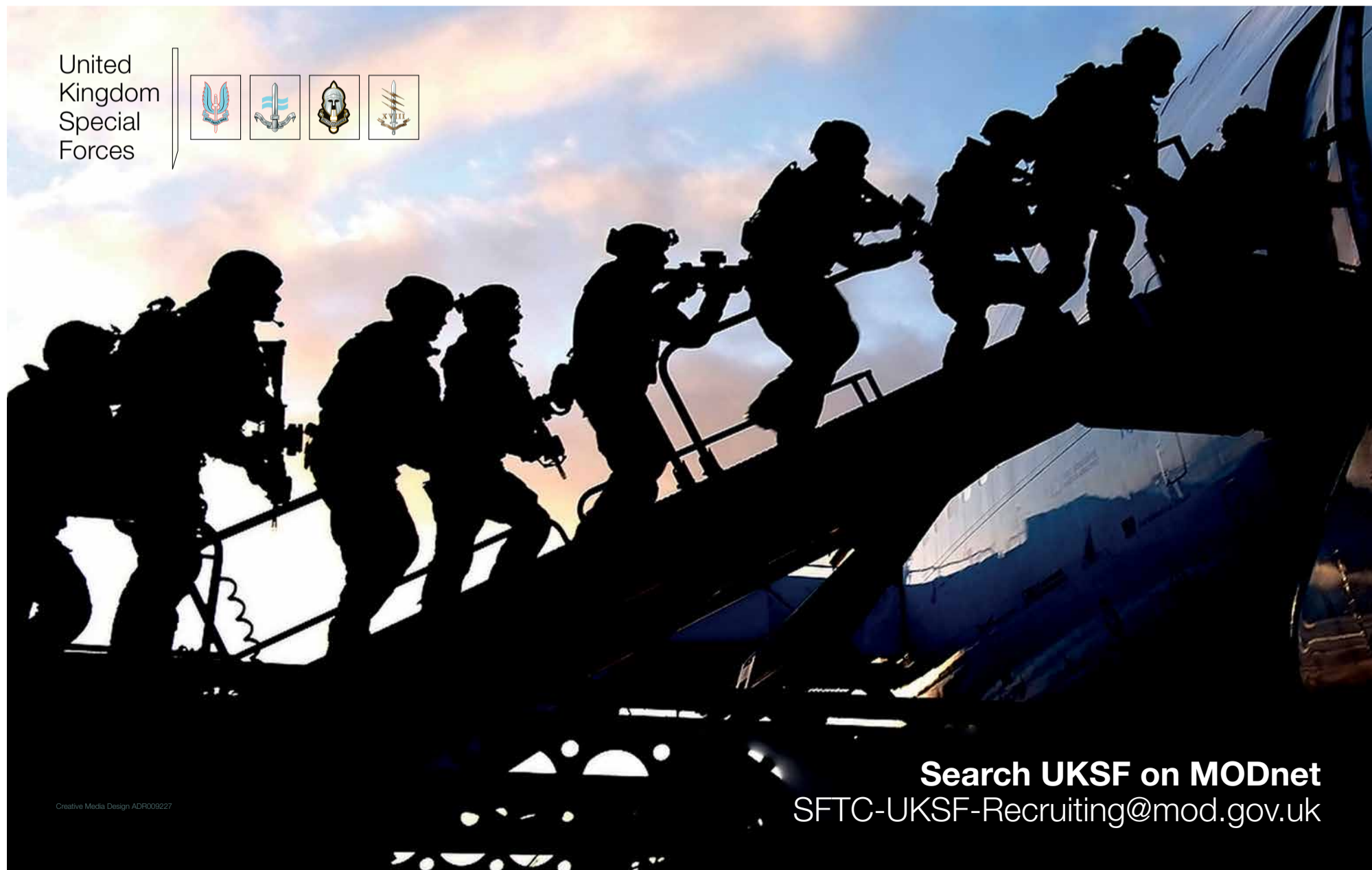
## 1968 was the year that:

- Crew of Apollo 8 became the first men to fly around the Moon.
- President Kennedy's brother Robert and Martin Luther King were assassinated.
- Richard Nixon was elected US President for the first time.
- The average UK house price was £3,900.
- The Austin Morris 1100 was the

- nation's favourite car.
- A pint of milk cost 10d (4p).
- *Dad's Army* was the hit new comedy series of the year... ... and *2001, Carry On Up The Khyber, Oliver and Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* were putting bums on cinema seats.
- Despite being released in 1965, the *Sound of Music* soundtrack

- was the biggest selling album.
- The Fleet Air Arm received its first Phantoms, which would be the mainstay of carrier operations for the next decade.
- And the Submarine Service conducted its first nuclear deterrent patrol, with round-the-clock missions by Trident-missile-armed boats starting in 1969.

United Kingdom Special Forces



Search UKSF on MODnet  
SFTC-UKSF-Recruiting@mod.gov.uk

Creative Media Design ADR003227



# WELCOME

home with a Barclays mortgage

We're proud to support the Forces Help to Buy scheme, which lets you apply for an interest-free loan of up to half your salary (£25,000 maximum) to put towards your deposit, and estate agent and solicitor fees.

Get in touch to see how we could help you find the right mortgage. Contact us 24/7, except on UK public holidays, from anywhere in the world.

Search Barclays Forces Help to Buy

Make money work for you



All mortgages are subject to application, financial circumstances and borrowing history. T&Cs apply.

Barclays Bank UK PLC. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority, and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority (Financial Services Register No 759676). Registered in England. Registered no 9740322. Registered Office 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP. August 2020.



# Montrose uses new Oman base

HMS Montrose has become the first Royal Navy warship to be overhauled in a new port in the Middle East.



The harbour at Duqm in Oman has been carved out of sand and stone over the past decade and is now both an important commercial port in the region – and a useful staging post for RN and RFA vessels operating in the Middle East.

Over the past decade Duqm, which sits on the Gulf of Oman about 270 miles south of Muscat, has been turned into a major port, thanks to massive infrastructure investment – and, in part, to the Royal Navy which surveyed the approaches to the man-made harbour.

Britain also signed a deal with Oman to develop facilities at Duqm to support RN operations in the region, including carrier deployments (the new port has the second largest dry dock in the Middle East), developing a joint logistics support base.

Naval vessels have been making use of Duqm for the past five years – the port was the hub for the major Saif Sareea amphibious exercise with the Omanis in 2018.

Now, the Royal Navy has made use of Duqm Naval Dockyard – the joint venture between the Oman Drydock Company and defence firm Babcock, who conduct maintenance and refits on British warships in the UK, especially frigates like Montrose.

Montrose has been based in the Gulf for nearly two years as part of the Royal Navy's Forward Presence programme to station warships in key regions around the world.

All maintenance has been conducted in the Middle East to sustain the frigate's operations – notably supporting Operation Sentinel keeping merchant shipping flowing safely in and out of the Gulf.

A four-week fleet time support programme was provided for the Bahrain-based vessel in Duqm. The team faced 250 critical tasks in that period including air weapons handling systems, fire systems and ventilation. Work was also carried out in the hangar, flight deck and on the bridge, as well as mess decks.

The work was finished on Boxing Day - after officers had served up Christmas dinner to the rest of Port Crew in true RN fashion.

Montrose sailed after successfully completing her in-theatre training with FOST to re-accredit the crew for ops following the latest switchover of ship's company.

Immediately after, the frigate was tasked with escorting UK-flagged shipping through regional choke points and into the Red Sea before heading back to the Gulf.

New Year was spent at sea supporting the RN headquarters in Bahrain, and since then she has been undertaking international Operation Sentinel activity in the Strait of Hormuz.

She's spent most of 2021 so far in Defence Watches - which places demands on the 200-strong crew.

Following a quick logistics stop in Bahrain and some pre-exercise meetings, she's now back at sea with Britain's Gulf-based minehunting force.

OUT of the shed as her major refit nears an end is HMS Somerset – the latest Royal Navy frigate to undergo the vital overhaul in Plymouth.

The warship has been moved from Devonport's landmark Frigate Support Centre into the neighbouring basin... as her sister HMS Sutherland prepares to take her place in the covered dry dock.

Five Type 23s are currently in various stages of the LIFEX refit/revamp, a massive joint undertaking by the Royal Navy and defence firm Babcock to add an extra decade's life to the workhorses of the Fleet.

Beginning with HMS Montrose back in 2014, the programme is reaching its climax, helping to allow the 23s to serve until their successors (Type 26 and Type 31 frigates) enter service.

Although some changes and improvements – such as replacing the Sea Wolf air defence missile system with Sea Ceptor, engine, software and sensor upgrades – are pretty much identical across the flotilla, other work, including strengthening the hull, improvements to living spaces and general maintenance, depends on the state and age of the ship.

The class traces its history back to the late 1970s, was designed in the early 1980s (taking into account lessons of the Falklands conflict), with the oldest frigate still in Royal Navy service, HMS Argyll, 30 years old in May 2021 and the youngest, HMS St Albans, 18 – the original lifespan planned for the 23s.

The latter is in the shed, roughly one third of the way through her life extension, with her older sister HMS Iron Duke.

"The capability sustainment for the Type 23s is putting a lot more modern technology on to the platforms," said Commander Jim Ellis from the Surface Flotilla's Devonport Refit Support Programme.

"It's upgrading their equipment and the fabric of the ship as well. It's improving their life span, so basically putting the teeth and the legs back into the Type 23s, to bridge the gap until the Type 26 enters service from 2025 onwards."

Work in the frigate shed has continued throughout the pandemic, but Babcock has found new ways of operating inside the cramped confines of a frigate while keeping staff safe.

"COVID has been a challenge," explained Will Erith, managing director warships at Babcock who have some 1,100 people working on the programme.

"But we put mitigations in place. Safety is our number one priority and it has been a team effort. We are really proud of what we have achieved in 2020."

HMS Lancaster was returned to the Fleet at the end of 2019 (and is now fully operational), followed shortly afterwards by HMS Richmond. HMS Portland has been handed back to the Royal Navy ready for trials by Easter – her first time at sea since 2017 – and Somerset will continue fitting out in No.2 Basin before being returned to the RN in 2021.

Picture: LPhoto Phil Bloor



● Lancaster rides the autumn storms on her way to the Arctic in late 2020

## Ready to rise to any challenge

FOURTEEN months have passed since HMS Lancaster emerged from her LIFEX and is now "right up there with the rest of the Navy" as 2021 opens.

The ship, which completed her duties for 2020 by returning to Portsmouth in mid-December, was brought back to life by a new ship's company and new commanding officer after four years out of action.

The year began with Lancaster conducting sea trials, testing kit and training the ship's company – 30 per cent of whom had never been to sea before and three out of five were in their first job at a new rank.

It ended with the Queen's frigate – named after Her Majesty in her role as Duke of Lancaster – sailing deep inside the Arctic Circle alongside the Norwegian Navy and then kept a close eye on the actions of the Russian Fleet close to UK territorial waters.

Training reached its climax in October with the ship passing Operational Sea Training – the Royal Navy assessment which ensures ships are ready to deploy – and firing her new Sea Ceptor air defence missile on a range off the north-west coast of Scotland.

Lancaster's Commanding Officer Commander Will Blackett says throughout 2020 he's endeavoured to show to the rest of the Fleet that the frigate might be 30 years old on paper (she was launched in 1990), but "she's actually full of very young people, full of enthusiasm in their first operational warship, and the stuff we're doing is right up there with the rest of the Navy."

"The last eight weeks of 2020

tested this ship. As commanding officer, my confidence in her was always high but it has absolutely skyrocketed by her journey to the Arctic, through some of the biggest seas I have ever seen.

"We were in sustained 60-knot winds, occasionally ten-metre waves, and this ship just cut through it beautifully. The Type 23 was designed for operations in the High North and we're returning to operations more frequently in that part of the world. HMS Lancaster performed incredibly well there."

Both training and operations have been carried out against the backdrop of the pandemic, which has placed restrictions on the crew at work and at home.

To protect the ship's company, the 185-strong crew isolated and then underwent three Covid tests to ensure that no one on board had the virus.

Once this bubble had been created no one entered or left the ship, not even when she visited Faslane or Bodø in Norway. It ensured the crew were protected throughout – ensuring their mission could continue.

So Commander Blackett, who took charge of the ship in December 2019, was delighted when he could release his sailors to finally re-join family members.

"Having achieved so much this year it's fantastic to be able to send the ship's company on leave to relax and spend time with their loved ones and families."

"All of the team have delivered on everything that has been asked of them in 2020 and they are a credit to HMS Lancaster and the Royal Navy."

## New boss for Rock stars

THERE'S A Young face in charge of one of the RN's busiest units: the Gibraltar Squadron.

Lieutenant Commander James Young (pictured right) has taken charge of the squadron... after 18 months serving in it as CO of HMS Scimitar and, when she returned to the UK, her replacement HMS Pursuer.

He's now in charge of the squadron, based in the naval base and on the waters in and around the Rock daily, after Lieutenant Commander Lloyd Cardy handed over the reins to study as a principal warfare officer at HMS Collingwood.

Comprising Pursuer, her sister Dasher and three 24 RIBs, operated and maintain by just 27 sailors – the squadron protects the integrity of the Rock's territorial waters 24/7/365, working alongside the police, and also provides protection for visiting Royal Navy and allied vessels.

"The Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron is a fantastic organisation of people who selflessly contribute to a challenging mission in an operational environment," said Lt Cdr Cardy.



"I am genuinely saddened to be leaving Gibraltar as it has been such an amazing home for the past few years."

As well as maintaining the demanding tempo of operations around the British Overseas Territory, it will be Lt Cdr Young's task to introduce the first of two new long-term replacements for Sabre and Scimitar (Pursuer and Dasher are only 'on loan' to the squadron), due to be delivered later this year.

# 5 x 23 = Success



# Welcome to



## Rivers all delivered

9 O'CLOCK on a winter's morning in Her Majesty's Naval Base Portsmouth and Colours.

Nothing new there, save perhaps the face masks which have become a part of pandemic life.

Except this is the first Colours ever held aboard HMS Spey as the patrol ship formally joined the Royal Navy after being officially handed over by her builders. So still was it on this January morn, that the Royal Navy's standard barely moved once hoisted.

After three months' worth of finishing touches by BAE engineers and shipwrights in Portsmouth Naval Base, following a journey down to Hampshire from the Clyde where she was built by the defence firm's Scottish colleagues, Spey was deemed 'complete' and was accepted into the RN's ownership.

Her first Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Ben Evans, said: "It is such a privilege to lead Spey's complement through the coming trials and training programme and bring her to operational status."

"In spite of the considerable disruption caused by the pandemic, the Royal Navy has received the fifth and final offshore patrol vessel and our job now is to prepare

ourselves and Spey for whatever operations we are assigned."

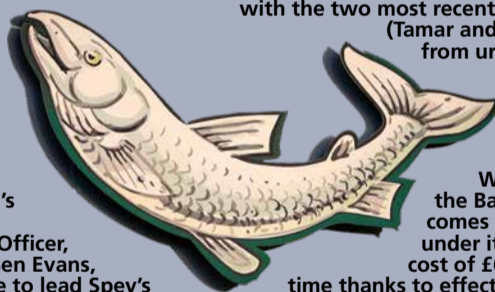
With the Blue Ensign replaced by the White and the mixed civilian-RN ship's company replaced by 45 Senior Servicemen and women, Lt Cdr Evans can set about a series of safety and readiness checks, followed by training culminating in Operational Sea Training and then Spey can take her place in the front-line Fleet like her sisters HMS Tamar and Trent did last year.

Spey's handover brings the second-generation River-class programme to a close. It's delivered five warships inside six years, with the two most recently constructed (Tamar and Spey) benefitting from urea filters which reduce their nitrogen oxide exhaust emissions by 90 per cent.

With Spey's handover the Batch 2 programme comes to an end, £44m under its original approved cost of £690m and on

time thanks to effective collaboration between the MOD and industry. At its peak, it sustained about 1,400 jobs within BAE Systems, including more than 200 apprentices, and delivered a supply chain spend of almost £240m to more than 150 suppliers across the UK and Europe.

Picture: LPhot Ben Corbett



THE Royal Navy welcomed HMS Tamar into the bosom Fleet, as the fourth new River-class patrol ship was commissioned in Portsmouth.

Twelve months to the day that ten sailors mustered in a dry dock in Glasgow and began Tamar's transformation from lifeless hull to warship, the 2,000-tonne vessel joined the Naval family as a fully-fledged member of the Overseas Patrol Squadron.

Fleet Commander Vice-Admiral Jerry Kyd witnessed the short ceremony in Portsmouth with Tamar's Sponsor, Lady Brigitte Peach, as Guest of Honour.

She addressed the 45-strong ship's company alongside their Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Michael Hutchinson.

Tamar is the fourth of five Batch 2 River Class OPVs to join the Fleet, having arrived in Portsmouth from BAE Systems' shipyards on the Clyde at the end of March 2020.

"Today's commissioning ceremony is the culmination of a huge amount of work by a crew which has worked tirelessly throughout the Covid pandemic and all those who have supported us here in Portsmouth and beyond, and it is my privilege to be Tamar's first Commanding Officer."

"We've transformed Tamar and her ship's company into an effective force since moving on board and we're eager to take her into active operations

wherever we are sent."

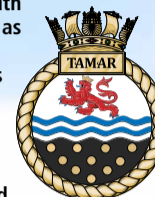
Lady Peach told the assembled sailors: "From the moment you, the ship's company, came on board she has impressed everyone who has seen her. I have been hugely impressed by the hard-working and incredibly welcoming crew. As you take your place in the Fleet, I wish you well."

She was accompanied by her husband, Air Chief Marshall Sir Stuart Peach, Chairman of NATO's Military Committee and most senior officer within the alliance, having previously served as the UK's Chief of Defence Staff. Representatives from Devon, Cornwall and Truro, Tamar's affiliated city, were also invited.

The commissioning cake was provided by the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity and, in true naval tradition, was cut by the captain's wife Gillian and Tamar's youngest sailor, Engineering Technician Niall Tinnion, who joined the marine engineering department in May.

ET Tinnion, 19, from Newcastle, said: "It's my first ship, life on board is hard but good fun."

Since Tamar's ship's company took custody of her they have completed Operational Sea Training, hosted visitors and new technology demonstrations on a visit to London, hoisted their White Ensign during one of several visits to Devonport at the mouth of the River Tamar, and worked extensively with Royal Marines on boarding tactics.



### Your WelCome account card...

A **WelCome account card** is assigned to you for your entire military career and can be used to access **telephone** and **Internet** services whilst deployed.

You should receive it after basic training. If you haven't been given it, speak to your admin officer. For more information visit: [www.mywelcome.co.uk](http://www.mywelcome.co.uk)

**Lost your account card?** No worries! Speak to your admin officer who will be able to provide you with your WelCome account number and a password to reset your PIN.

## WELFARE

WelCome Customer Contact Centre  
customer.support@mywelcome.co.uk | [www.mywelcome.co.uk](http://www.mywelcome.co.uk)

**WelCome**  
Welfare Communications Everywhere



# to the RN family

Days after the ceremony, the ship began pushing the boundaries of what the five-strong class can do.

Chief among experiments is harnessing air power. Although the new River-class ships have no hangar, they have a large flight deck to host most military helicopters wherever they might operate in the world.

Having worked with the Fleet Air Arm's smaller Wildcat helicopters last year, Tamar opened 2021 welcoming a submarine-hunting Merlin Mk2 helicopter aboard for the first time.

The Flying Tigers of 814 Naval Air Squadron from Culdrose – the home of all three Merlin Mk2 squadrons – provided the helicopter for the training as Tamar patrolled the south west coastline.

Culdrose has also provided a team of drone specialists to see how they – and their small pilotless aircraft – might be used on front-line operations.

Two Flights (one Puma, three maintainers/operators each) from 700X Naval Air Squadron – the Royal Navy's only drone unit – are aboard Tamar.

Though small, Puma can reach speeds over 50mph, keeping pace with many fast craft – such as boats or jet skis threatening a task group, or speedboats used by drug runners – or monitor Royal Marines engaged in a board and search operation, feeding Tamar's operations room with real-time moving images of operations – allowing commanders to make

quick and accurate decisions.

That capability is particularly pertinent right now as the ship is resuming training with 42 and 47 Commandos (respectively the Royal Marines' board and search and amphibious operations/small boat specialists) as they hone counter-piracy/terrorism/smuggling skills – missions they are likely to carry out when Tamar deploys.

"These ships are the 'Swiss Army knife' of Defence and you will see from what Tamar achieved in 2020 and how she is being operated that they are a fantastic addition to the Royal Navy," said Lt Cdr Hutchinson.

"The ship's company is a comparatively young team – average age 27 – and a quarter of them are female. They really are the path finders for the modern and transformed Royal Navy."

He continued: "This first Merlin landing was the latest demonstration of the increasing capability of the ship and the first

interaction with Culdrose's Merlins."

As with her sisters, Tamar has a mess deck for 50 embarked marines or other personnel, in addition to accommodating about 50 crew on board at any time.

The total ship's company stands at around 75, allowing personnel to rotate for leave or training courses and the ship to maintain about 300 days at sea annually.

**Pictures: LPhotos Will Haigh and Alex Ceolin**



**KEEP UP WITH THE SHIPS**

Follow @HMS\_Tamar, @HMS\_Spey and @RoyalNavy on Twitter

## WE'RE RECRUITING THE RECRUITERS

A career in the Royal Navy was a career like no other. A job where no two days were the same, where you challenged yourself and solved problems on the go. Plus, you got to travel the world, all while helping those in need. Now, you have the chance to become the person that gives a whole new generation the chances you've had. Become a Careers Adviser.

- Starting salary £32,000
- Opportunity to rise to £45,000
- Positions nationwide as full time reserve service
- Open to RN Service leavers and those who've left the service in the last three years
- Positions for WOs, Senior Rates, SNCOs, LHs and CPLs

For information: PSTN 01929 403172 | Mil 94374 3172 | Email: [navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.gov.uk](mailto:navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.gov.uk)





# We've 'been busy



MONDAY January 20 2020.

You probably don't remember it. 'Blue Monday' as the media dub it – the most depressing day of the year (the joy of Christmas has passed and it's still a good week till the next payday).

Perhaps not on the red half of Merseyside where champions-elect Liverpool had just beaten arch rivals Manchester United.

The tabloids – and some of the heavyweights – were far more interested in 'Megxit', the decision of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex to quit royal duties.

Some newspapers were excited about a possible new vaccine... for cervical cancer.

And ITV News reported from the Chinese city of Wuhan on a worrying, unnamed virus which seemed to be spreading out of control.

The departure of a 2,000-tonne warship on a drab, gunmetal day in Portsmouth certainly didn't register on the national news agenda.

But in her own small way, HMS Medway was making a little bit of Royal Navy history as she headed out into the Atlantic.

Not the first ship in her class, nevertheless the patrol vessel was the trailblazer for the Navy's Forward Presence programme, stationing warships overseas for several years at a time.

Her older sister HMS Forth may have been first out of the door – but she replaced HMS Clyde on patrol in the Falklands.

Medway was doing something new in the 21st Century Royal Navy: using regional ports and British or allied nations' bases for resupply and maintenance and regular crew changes to maintain a permanent UK presence where the Navy hadn't had one for decades.

The mission for Medway: to reassure, support and safeguard Britain's North Atlantic/Caribbean territories, to champion – and protect – the mother country's interests across the Americas.

The ship has sailed just short of 50,000 miles – the equivalent of twice around the globe – since leaving Portsmouth, spending 184 of her first 366 days away (2020 was a leap year...) at sea.

Much of her first year was spent getting to know the many islands and their civilian/emergency services, facilities and the lay of the land should Medway be called on to provide assistance in the event of a hurricane or volcanic eruption.

And similarly, island communities have learned what Medway can offer in an emergency – communications, planning, skilled engineers and equipment, food, fresh water, trained medics, and the general 'can-do' attitude of sailors –

culminating in two large-scale disaster-relief exercises.

Chief Petty Officer Luke Travell is the longest serving member of the crew – he was the first person to join Medway while she was still being built on the Clyde back in 2017.

"When I first set eyes on Medway she was still having equipment fitted and set to work," said Luke, who's the ship's Deputy Weapon Engineer Officer, responsible for weapons systems and sensors.

"Assisting with the build process up to taking Medway on her first deployment has been a challenge and an honour. Now she is fully functioning and a key asset to Overseas Territories."

Another key mission is to support the international fight against illegal drug running from South to North America – and from there to the wider world.

**Assisting with the build process up to taking Medway on her first deployment has been a challenge and an honour. Now she is fully functioning and a key asset to Overseas Territories.**

**- CPO LUKE TRAVELL**

Medway has worked both independently and in tandem with support ship RFA Argus, which spent eight months in the Caribbean last year before returning home just before Christmas.

Throughout, the ship had a US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment boarding team embarked – the new generation River-class ships have a dedicated mess to accommodate up to 50 military personnel precisely for such constabulary duties.

A dozen vessels were stopped, four boarded and two seized and subsequently sunk, with Medway seizing 650kg of cocaine on one occasion and forcing drug runners to ditch an estimated half tonne of the illegal narcotic on another.

The busts were, says Luke, the highlight of the ship's deployment to date, earning Medway international media coverage – and delivering a blow to traffickers.

"During the interdiction I was manning the Electrical Optical Display (Infra Red camera) so I watched the whole event

unfold and ensured it was all recorded for future evidence."

And the patrol ship has frequently worked side-by-side with other navies operating in the region, from the US Navy and Coast Guard, French and Dutch, to those of Brazil (pictured below in company with NPa Macau) and Jamaica and the maritime police in the Turks and Caicos and British Virgin Islands.

The global pandemic has denied the ship's company the full Caribbean experience and chance to explore as much of the islands as they'd like under normal circumstances, but Medway has still called in at: Gibraltar, Jacksonville and Fort Lauderdale in Florida, Guantanamo Bay, Curacao, Martinique, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Grand Cayman, Puerto Rico and Jamaica.

"The past year has provided amazing experiences to see and work in areas of the world I never expected to travel to, and meet and work with people from many different nations," said gunnery officer Lieutenant Solomon Jacka.

Underwater warfare specialist Able Seaman Cavan Robinson has enjoyed the chance to spread his wings beyond normally staring at sonar displays in an operations room.

"Working onboard outside my core branch has been a great opportunity, getting involved in sea boat launches and gunnery which I wouldn't normally be as involved with has been very enjoyable," he said.

The ship's hard work and achievements were recognised with Medway being named the best/most effective patrol ship in the Fleet in 2020.

"This has been an extraordinary deployment for Medway, with the challenges of being a forward deployed unit further compounded by the ongoing pandemic," said Lieutenant Commander Jim Blythe, the ship's Commanding Officer.

"However, my ship's company has remained focused and delivered an excellent output, with many first of class successes being achieved this year, including the first deck landings by Merlin and Wildcat helicopters, and conducting exercises with our partners in the region.

"It was fitting recognition for my ship's company to be awarded the efficiency pennant, and every member of my crew should be proud of their achievement."

Since Medway sailed last January HMS Trent has conducted patrols in the Mediterranean, HMS Tamar is now ready for operations and the last ship in the class, HMS Spey, is preparing for front-line duties, while the lead vessel, HMS Forth, is already in the Falklands.

Keep up with the ship on Twitter @HMS\_Medway





# Tech it out

## UK and USA to work together to share ideas and technology to enhance navies

THE Royal Navy and United States Navy have begun a unique joint enterprise to embrace and accelerate ideas and technology as part of a new chapter in the historic relationship.

The London Tech Bridge was launched recently and will see the nations work closely together to create new opportunities and build a network of partnerships between the defence sector, academia and the tech industry.

The Tech Bridge's initial focus in London will be crewless and autonomous technology, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and space.

It will be the central hub for sharing ideas and technology from both sides of the Atlantic, where they can be developed quickly and brought to the frontline using a network created with academia and businesses.

The London Tech Bridge – named after the command platform on ships – will allow greater collaboration between the Royal Navy and US Navy and will act as a command post where innovation can be steered effectively.

The idea is already well established in America with the US Naval Agility Office (NavalX) having 15 locations it currently uses as Tech Bridges. One of the latest ones in London is its first overseas and was announced at the Atlantic Future Forum, held on board HMS Queen Elizabeth at Portsmouth Naval Base.

Second Sea Lord Vice-Admiral Nick Hine was joined by US Assistant Secretary of the Navy James Geurts to launch the partnership in a virtual event.

Vice-Admiral Hine said: "The London Tech bridge will form a significant upgrade to the US/UK maritime partnership and will enhance the Royal Navy's already significant investments in technology and innovation.

"Collaborative problem solving will allow us to advance from

operating alongside our partners in an interoperable manner, to truly working with them in an interchangeable manner."

Commander Alex Bingham, Royal Navy Co-Director, added: "Leveraging partnerships in industry and academia in novel ways, the London Tech Bridge will generate opportunities for dual-use solutions that can be rapidly scaled and marketed.

"This effort will equally enhance innovation and collaboration in the private and public sectors in addition to facilitating development and fielding of new capability. We are extremely excited to start building connections."

Secretary Geurts said they hope the London Tech Bridge will attract diverse ideas.

"The Tech Bridge name denotes technology, but there's a

huge human element to this," he said.

"One of the competitive advantages of a democratic society is its ability to bring people together in a collaboration, not coercive fashion. In fact, the more and diverse ideas, the better.

"We do not need you to be an expert in the US or Royal Navy. The kind of folks I'm hoping to excite, attract, and leverage are those with the curiosity to explore, the humility to learn, and the the boldness to act.

"There are certainly technology priority areas we have, but don't make that a limiter in bringing ideas to us."

As reported in last month's *Navy News*, the Royal Navy has already trialled a range of autonomous and crewless technology from boats to drones. They will be put through their paces in a series of rigorous tests again this year.

“ ”

**We are extremely excited to start building connections.**

Commander Alex Bingham



China Fleet  
Country Club  
\*\*\*\*



## **WE WANT YOU TO STAY WITH US**

**From just £85.00 per night**

(valid until 31st May 2021)

Sleeps 2 adults and 2 children, includes use of the health club facilities

Book online - Use Promo Code: RNRM

(ID must be produced before stay or on check-in. Available for all serving and ex-serving Royal Navy personnel.)

## **YOU ARE A MEMBER!**

**All serving RN personnel**

Join online for FREE to receive amazing discount for you and your family

T&Cs apply to all

Call 01752 848668

[www.china-fleet.co.uk](http://www.china-fleet.co.uk)







# IGHTING ACES TAKE OVER MMS CHIDDINGFOLD

f HMS Chiddingfold in the Gulf through the end of 2020 and into

s 2nd Mine Countermeasures re in the Middle East where they sailed the minehunter from

er months of pre-deployment ship for four months.

er months of pre-deployment to follow Covid restrictions, of crew since the ship arrived in

uth last year to relieve sister ship

erating out of the UK's Gulf base y sailed the minehunter from z Canal and into the Gulf. ghting Aces, have now taken d and ready for training and

harlie Ellis is a junior keeps Chiddingfold linked up

to the Maritime Component Commander and allied partners during operations.

He said: "I like working with the US sailors – there's only a few Royal Navy ships out here, but we work really hard to pull our weight and do our bit."

"With Covid, we can't get about as much as usual and there aren't really any runs-ashore but the naval support facility in Bahrain is great and the deployment is a good opportunity to save money - I'm trying to buy my first house!"

"Although, it is the first time away from family for this long, which is tricky. The new dual-crew model is a great opportunity as we know exactly when we'll be home and away."

Sub Lieutenant James Bell acts as Second Officer of the Watch, learning the ropes and preparing to qualify to take charge of the ship from her bridge. He added: "Being in the Gulf is a good opportunity to train and is something totally different to the normal day-to-day."

"It's great to be finally deployed and it's good experience

towards qualifying as an Officer of the Watch."

While in the Gulf, HMS Chiddingfold works with a number of allied partners to keep essential routes and sea lanes open for business.

For the next couple of years, the sailors on board will rotate with their sister crew – spending four months deployed and four months at home where they will enjoy leave and conduct training.

This means MCM2 Crew 1 will spend 12 months on the frontline in the Gulf, protecting UK interests and being able to react 24/7, 365 days of the year.

MCM2 Crew 1's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Chris Sharp, has taken the crew through their pre-deployment training and into theatre.

He said: "I'm incredibly proud of my ship's company for pulling together during the tough pre-deployment training, generating a real team ethos and demonstrating what Crew 1 is capable of achieving."

"This deployment will undoubtedly be both professionally and personally challenging for every single person on board, including me. But I believe in what we're doing here, and I'm really proud of everyone for persevering through Covid to ensure we have all deployed safely and at the height of operational capability."

He continued: "It's a really exciting time to be in the mine warfare community at the moment with high-tech autonomy being woven into front-line operations in concert with trusty Hunt-class ships."





# LIGHT IT UP

## Royal Marines roll out new six-wheeler vehicles on mortar tests

**Royal Marines tested their ability to outfox radar using new all-terrain vehicles to move mortars around Salisbury Plain.**

The commandos rolled out CanAm 6x6 vehicles to move mortars and their crews rapidly around the battlefield, avoiding detection and bring down a hail of fire and fury on enemy positions.

Mortars have been a staple of warfare for centuries and they still remain a highly-dynamic weapon, which can quickly bring fire support to advancing troops on the front line.

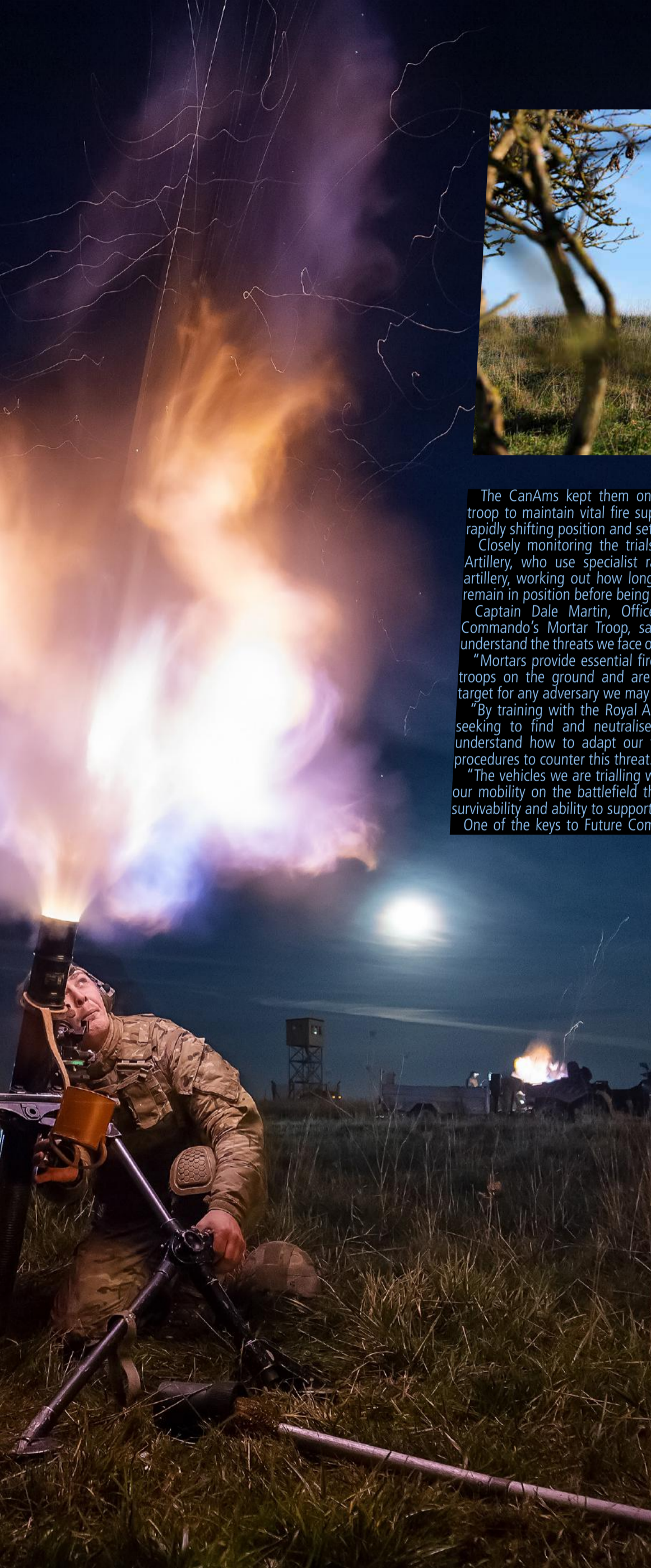
But they can be vulnerable to increasingly powerful enemy radars which can track them down, prompting a counter-barrage to destroy them if they are too static.

As Royal Marines continue to evolve as part of the Future Commando Force modernisation, everything from kit, clothing, weapons and tactics is coming under the microscope.

As part of that, 45 Commando's Mortar Troop are scrutinising their primary weapon's vulnerabilities to powerful Mortar Locating Radar and how they can avoid being discovered.







**OFF ROADERS:** Royal Marines use the new CanAm six-wheelers to move mortar lines around the battlefield, right and below.

The CanAms kept them on the move, allowing the troop to maintain vital fire support to comrades before rapidly shifting position and setting up again.

Closely monitoring the trials were 53 Battery Royal Artillery, who use specialist radar to pinpoint enemy artillery, working out how long they the mortars could remain in position before being detected and destroyed.

Captain Dale Martin, Officer Commanding of 45 Commando's Mortar Troop, said: "It is vital that we understand the threats we face on the modern battlefield.

"Mortars provide essential fire support to commando troops on the ground and are therefore a high-value target for any adversary we may face.

"By training with the Royal Artillery who are actively seeking to find and neutralise us we can begin to understand how to adapt our tactics, techniques and procedures to counter this threat.

"The vehicles we are trialling will allow us to increase our mobility on the battlefield therefore increasing our survivability and ability to support friendly forces."

One of the keys to Future Commando Force is being

agile and lightweight, raiding enemy positions quickly, and destroying high-value targets before moving onto new objectives.

The commandos tested the CanAm for its utility transporting their mortar lines, taking advantage of the vehicle's ability to cross rough terrain quickly.

The marines also used the training to compare the CanAm – which looks like a beefed-up quadbike with six wheels – to mortars which are mounted on the commandos' Viking armoured vehicles from Viking Mortar Section of Armoured Support Group.

They looked at how tactics and techniques differ between the two and how the mortar capability is altered depending on which of the two very different vehicles is used.

Throughout, the commandos used Remotely Piloted Air Systems – in other words a drone – for reconnaissance and target acquisition.

Their Royal Artillery 'enemy' also used the drones to find the mortars, giving the commandos an understanding on how better to stay hidden from aerial reconnaissance.





# A Royal welcome

THE Princess Royal saluted a new generation of naval leaders as they completed training at Britannia Royal Naval College.

She was guest of honour at the annual Lord High Admiral's Divisions, the final passing out of parade of 2020 at the spiritual home of the Royal Navy's Officer Corps.

The Princess was invited to inspect the passing out classes, which for the first time included ten newly-promoted Lieutenants who had successfully completed the inaugural three-week Warrant Officers' Commissioning Programme.

The new scheme offers the Royal Navy's most senior non-commissioned officers the chance to continue their careers as officers, recognising – and using – their considerable skills and experience.

Among those completing the course were Lieutenants Wayne Thomas from Cornwall and Garry Parkes from Fareham.

Lt Thomas joined the Royal Navy in 1995 and lives near Truro.

"I feel extremely privileged to attend the Warrant Officer Commissioning Programme and to be one of the first Warrant Officer 1s to be promoted directly to Lieutenant," the 48-year-old said.

Originally from Rotherham, 54-year-old Lt Parkes joined the Royal Navy in 1983 and has since gained a Master's Degree through a partnership between the Service and the University of Portsmouth.

"I've been in the Royal Navy for 37 years and I was coming towards the end of my time as a non-commissioned officer when this initiative presented itself," he said.

"It'll give me another six years of service and means that we can bring our experience gathered throughout the Royal Navy to the Officer Cadre."

The ten warrant officers on the course counted 322 years of experience in the Royal Navy under their collective belts.

"We feel that the Officer Cadre has much to offer to us and we can reciprocate. I think that can only be of benefit to the Royal Navy," Lt Parkes added.

"When I reflect upon my journey to date, it is without doubt the Royal Navy that has made me who I am today, and my professional and personal qualities are attributable to its teachings."

This summer his wife Catherine will be following in his footsteps as she undergoes the transition from warrant officer to lieutenant.

The Guard of Honour comprised 41 Ratings of Whittall Division, who had completed their own nine-week training course. Ratings training normally takes place at HMS Raleigh but with a surge of interest in a career in the Royal Navy, BRNC has been used to provide two extra new entry courses this year.

The parade also included 18 Senior Upper Yardmen promoted from the ranks, 24 new officers for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service, 23 new entry Medical Officers and six Officer Cadets. Each group had completed their own bespoke training programme.

"All passing out parades are special, but Lord High Admiral's Division is probably the most prestigious of the year and to have Her Royal Highness here was a great honour for all who took part," said Captain Roger Readwin,



Captain BRNC.

"Those passing out should be proud of their achievements to earn their place on the parade ground. Due to the ongoing pandemic, families and friends were unable to attend the parade which was a desperate shame, but I would like to thank them all for their incredible support to their love ones whilst undergoing training."

Capt Readwin continued: "Despite the pandemic, BRNC has continued to provide essential training to maintain the Royal Navy's operational capability, fulfil our operational outputs and national security responsibilities."

"While 2020 has been a difficult year for everyone, I'm incredibly proud of the way that my staff have adapted and embraced new ideas, such as ratings training, to protect the in-flow of new blood into the Service."

Princess Anne, who holds the rank of Admiral, is Chief Commandant of Women in the Royal Navy and is Lady Sponsor of flagship HMS Albion, was representing her father the Duke of Edinburgh and Lord High Admiral, a title conferred on him by the Queen for his 90th birthday in 2011. The title itself dates back to the 14th Century.



## Praise for new recruits

A WEEK of gruelling physical challenges ended in triumph for a group of reservists who completed their training to become fully-fledged Royal Marine Commandos.

Successful trainees who finished the 30-mile slog around Dartmoor swapped their woollen 'cap comforters' for the coveted green beret.

As well as the commando's legendary headwear, the reservists were also congratulated by the Commodore-in-Chief Maritime Reserves, Prince Michael of Kent.

In a message read out to them at the end of their final Commando test by Commodore Mel Robinson – Commander of the Maritime Reserve – Prince Michael said: "I write to congratulate the Class of 2020, as you close in on your final target and demonstrate that you are ready to wear the coveted Green Beret, a worthy symbol of a Royal Marines Commando. You should be incredibly proud."

The reservists from across the UK joined full-time Royal Marine recruits from 297 Troop plus Army reservists from 131 Squadron Royal Engineers on the final commando test, made even tougher by the harsh Dartmoor weather and flooded conditions.

The 30-miler is the culmination of a week-long set of challenges: a six-mile endurance course across Woodbury Common, a timed nine-mile speed march and the infamous 'Tarzan' course, wearing full fighting order and carrying rifles, around the Commando Training Centre at Lymington, near Exeter.

"It's been two years of hard physical training for me, it's one of the hardest, if not the hardest thing I've ever done," said Marine Dan Budge, from Bournemouth, one of the newly-qualified commandos.

"It was definitely a moral boosting moment when the rain stopped, and now with a green beret on my head I couldn't be more proud."

## New aircrew handed their wings

TWO helicopter pilots, two observers and four aircrewmen were officially given their 'wings' at a special parade at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose.

A small, socially-distanced ceremony was held in the hangar of 824 Naval Air Squadron, the station's Merlin Mk2 helicopter training squadron.

It was significant moment for the new aircrew, who have each spent between three and five years in training to reach this milestone.

The successful candidates were Lieutenants Matthew Ford, Samuel Cass, Emma Turner, and Luke Tupholme and Petty Officers Oliver Brown, Nathan Allen, Aaron Adams, and Lewis Boyd.

They will now go on to serve in the Royal Navy's front-line helicopter squadrons, many operating from the UK's new aircraft carriers.

The commanding officer of 824 NAS, Commander James Taylor said: "I'd like to congratulate all of our students on successfully completing their training and receiving their wings."



This is the biggest milestone in their careers; the day that you are awarded your wings is a day that every naval aviator will always remember.

"For our graduates this is the culmination of three to five years in training. That's an impressive period of sustained effort for them but it also required a lot of support from friends and families along the way so I'd like to take the opportunity to thank them. "Our graduates now join the

Royal Navy's finest frontline naval air squadrons at a really exciting time to be in the Royal Navy. I know they are all desperate to get embarked and do their jobs at sea, on the frontline. I know that they will absolutely love it and wish them every success."

Guest of honour at the parade was the commanding officer of RNAS Culdrose, Captain Stuart Finn.

Picture: LPhoto Alex Ceolin

## Darren is top of his class

TWENTY submariner trainees at HM Naval Base Clyde passed-out from the first phase of their Submarine Qualifying Course.

The class of 20 students – being trained for service on board Astute-class submarines – reached the culmination of their ten-week "dry phase", the classroom part of the course conducted on dry land at Clyde's Fleet Operational Sea Training (North).

Throughout 2020, 12 SMQ classes were delivered at FOST (N) – eight Vanguard and four Astute class – totalling 240 students who have completed this intense and demanding training before moving on to the "wet phase" of SMQ onboard a Royal Navy submarine.

This last class of 2020 graduated with Captain FOST (N), Captain Ian Breckenridge presenting each student with their certificates in the HMS Neptune Supermess.

The best student award was presented to Able Rating (Warfare Specialist) (Sonar Submarines) Darren Matthews, pictured above right, for delivering the



best overall performance during the course.

The "dry phase" of the course comprises ten weeks of intensive academic and practical training to ensure they are safe, familiar with submarine systems, drills and routines and can manage their own future training in order to complete the "wet phase" and qualify as a Royal Navy Submariner.

Prospective submariners join FOST (North) at HM Naval

Base Clyde for the dry phase of their training. After successfully completing a final exam, oral board and walk-rounds of a nuclear submarine, they pass-out, eventually joining a nuclear submarine.

It is there the "wet phase" begins. Students complete their SMQ training on board a submarine and it is only then that they are entitled to wear the coveted "dolphins" badge – the mark of a qualified submariner.





# Albion crew fundraise to help poorly children

SAILORS on Britain's flagship HMS Albion returned home ready to hand over more than £9,000 to charity – raised on their autumn deployment.

The Plymouth-based assault ship roamed the Med from September to December, carrying out trials, experiments and exercises which will help shape the Navy and Royal Marines of tomorrow.

The pandemic limited opportunities to get ashore, so in true Royal Navy fashion, the 400-plus sailors and commandos on board Albion made their own entertainment – much of it also helping charities.

Claire House in the ship's affiliated city of Chester is Albion's favoured good cause.

It allows seriously and terminally-ill children to live life to the full, helping to bring back a sense of normality to family life.

A raffle, horse-racing night, darts tournament, barbecue and karaoke night collectively brought in £5,200.

"Being deployed during a global pandemic, with all the Covid restrictions we experienced, really gave us a fresh perspective and reinforced our determination to do what we could to help seriously and terminally-ill children, and their families, who benefit from their time with Claire House," said Albion's chaplain the Rev Matthew Godfrey.

Steward Michelle Walters crocheted

poppies for her shipmates, raising more than £800 for the Royal British Legion by selling them aboard, while another £377 was collected for the Poppy Appeal Gibraltar.

Another raffle brought in £2,050 for NHS Charities Together, while moustache growing for 'Movember' will help Prostate Cancer UK to the tune of £600.

The fundraising was completed during the LRG(X) deployment, which focussed on testing experimentation concepts for future military operations and supporting regional security and stability across the Mediterranean, North Africa and Black Sea Regions.

# Jack takes first new RM award

A ROYAL Marine who embodies what it means to be an elite Commando has made history by becoming the first ever winner of the Royal Marine of the Year Award.

The award has been set up to recognise the exceptional work of one Royal Marine in particular who has shone in the past year and has most personified what it means to be a commando. It is sponsored by the Hon Cdr Keith Knowles.

Marine Jack Duer of 43 Commando's O Squadron was selected by Commandant General Royal Marines, Major General Matt Holmes, and other seniors within the Corps as the Royal Marine who most stood out after 'his dedicated professionalism amid some tough personal circumstances'.

Maj Gen Holmes said: "What impressed us at the board was Marine Duer's humility and undeflected devotion to duty through personal adversity."

The very modest West Londoner, who now lives in Hampshire when he is not on duty protecting the UK's nuclear deterrent at Clyde Naval Base in Scotland, couldn't believe he was picked out for the award.

It has been a tough year for Jack but he has stayed highly focused on his operational duties despite a close family bereavement.

"It hasn't sunk in still. It feels good. Personally, I'd say there's loads of lads out there that are better than me," he said, after 43 Commando's Commanding Officer, Colonel Andrew Muddiman, handed him the award as he prepared for duty at Clyde.

"It's still a shock. I wasn't expecting it. It's a good accomplishment and some of the lads have been saying 'well done' and 'congratulations' and all that.

"I just try to help the lads out and be part of the team. I'd say the lads have got me to where I am more than anything.

"I just crack on, keep my head down and do what I'm told to do."

Jack has been in the Royal Marines for two-and-a-half years and hopes soon to go to 40 Commando and join a

Reconnaissance Troop and has ambitions of being a Mountain Leader, the elite cadre of green berets who are experts in long range reconnaissance, and arctic and mountain warfare.

Jack said: "Being a Royal Marine made me who I am today. It bettered me in all aspects. I'd recommend it.

"I didn't have much going for me, I didn't do much at school. At least now I've accomplished something. It's been so worth it.

"I don't believe I'm anything special but some people have put my name forward and think that I've done well. In my mind, I just crack on and do my job. "You've got to be determined in this role, no matter what you do.

"Determination and courage, cheerfulness in the face of adversity. You just make the best of the situation.

"You've got to be determined in this role, no matter what you do."

Determination, courage, cheerfulness in the face of adversity, and unselfishness has helped Jack stand out and win this award.

The Commando Ethos is a big part of commando training and gives Royal Marines a mindset which equips them to be the first to understand, the first to adapt and respond, and the first to overcome.



# Dad ensures great day is a real family affair

ABLE SEAMAN Henrietta Goodrum has graduated from her Leading Rates' Leadership Course at HMS Collingwood, Fareham.

The momentous occasion in her life was made even more special when the VIP for the event arrived, it was her father Commander Simon Goodrum.

Asking RNLA if he could visit his daughter on her last day of the course, Simon was delighted to be given the opportunity to present her certificate, made even more momentous as he will be leaving the Navy this year after 40 years of service.

Henrietta was delighted that her father, who is currently serving as the Commanding Officer of the Defence School of Healthcare Training Tri-Service Phase 2 and 3 Medics' Training Unit, took time out to attend this special event, a milestone in his daughter's Naval career.

She said "I was very surprised to see my dad walk through the classroom door when we were having a chat with the OIC. I went bright red with embarrassment.

"Even though it was very embarrassing, it was a lovely surprise to see my dad and was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for him to present me with my certificate."

Henrietta, 25, who lives in Southsea with her sister, grew up in Locks Heath, and also has two brothers.

In addition to dad, one of her brothers, Sam, is also serving in the RN.

Joining the RN in 2015, she cites the highlights of her career so far as taking part in the November Ceremonies at the Cenotaph and Royal Albert Hall.

She has also been a member of the HM Naval Base Portsmouth Field Gun Team, winning an award for best newcomer.

Selected for promotion to leading and in 2020 and having now completed the course, she is due to join the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) organisation, in NATO Headquarters, Belgium.

When asked about having the honour to present his daughter with her certificate, Simon said, "It was a very proud moment for me especially as I am coming to the end of my career.

"I was very impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of the students and the professionalism of the staff.

"It was great to see that the quality of the RN Leadership training has continued to develop and improve."

# PTIs leading by example



PHYSICAL Training Instructors at HMS Collingwood completed a mammoth challenge in aid of the Trussell Trust, a food bank charity based around the UK.

The 12 PTIs each conducted a marathon of either running, skiing or rowing, in and around the gymnasium complex, raising money for the trust, which supplies emergency food boxes throughout the UK.

The event was organised by Leading Physical Trainer Lauren McCarthy, pictured left, who said "With UK poverty being at its highest and the many job losses due to Covid, it is down to us as a community to pull together and help one another, as no-one should go hungry this winter."

The PTIs taking part were; CPOPT Adam Buffery, POPTs Will Ballanger, Craig Bryant, Ian Cole, and Alfie Hitchcock, and LPTs Dean Fentum, Joel Kirby, Gary Gibbs, Matthew Jones, Michael Payne, Lauren McCarthy, Jack Smith and Jacob Caddy. The event raised £1,000.

Registered charity number: Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund 1160182

## Naval Children's Charity

Supporting children whose parents serve or have served in the Naval Service.

Naval Children's Charity  
311 Twyford Avenue, Stamshaw,  
Portsmouth, PO2 8RN

www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk  
023 9263 9534  
caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk



# Phil's on the pull to raise key funds

A ROYAL Marines Musician based at HMS Raleigh is in training for a marathon with a difference.

Band Lance Corporal Phil Powell is aiming to pull his car, a VW Up, around the parade ground at the training base in Torpoint, for 26 miles.

The 21-year-old is raising money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

He started training in November with the aim of completing the challenge this year.

Each figure of eight or lap of the parade ground is 0.16 of a mile, which means that LCpl Powell will need to complete 164 laps to finish his challenge.

He said: "The first training session went well, although it was really wet."

"The car itself weighs approximately 700 kilogrammes, but I'd just filled up with fuel, which I hadn't considered."

"I'm aiming for at least three pulls a week; one will be a distance-based pull and then several hour-long sessions throughout the week."

"On these I'll be attempting to up the weight of the vehicles. I've tried pushing a VW transporter van, which was a tough 45 minutes. I'll also be doing some body weight workouts with the aim of putting on muscle mass, which I think will help me on the day."

Originally from Wirral, LCpl Powell's challenge was inspired by

the adventurer, Ross Edgely.

The musician said: "I've recently been reading about Ross's bizarre challenges in his book and I thought: I want to try that, to see what I can do and raise money for charity. The Royal Navy and Royal Marines charity encompasses military personnel past and present and their families. I think it's a good charity. Where I am in my life at the moment is thanks to the military."

LCpl Powell was interested in a musical career from the age of 13 and chose a career with the Royal Marines Band Service to be active. He started his basic training in 2017 and became a member of the Plymouth Band in 2019. LCpl Powell plays the cymbals and bass drum on parade and the bassoon with the concert orchestra.

During the country's first lockdown LCpl Powell became a qualified personal trainer. He said: "I took several courses during lockdown. Being active is something I really enjoy and if I can help people to become fitter, it's great for me and them. I'm really thankful to the team at Raleigh, the Band and those who live-in at the base for all the support they have given me so far with this challenge."

Anyone wishing to show their support for LCpl Powell can do so online at [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/philip-powell3](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/philip-powell3)



# Vital for veterans

## Financial boost to provide practical support

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and its partner funder, Greenwich Hospital, have awarded a £60,000 grant to Veterans Aid (VA).

After a challenging year, the boost will be crucial in helping ensure the immediate and practical support of veterans facing homelessness or in crisis.

The RNRMC works to support all Royal Navy sailors, marines, and their families.

Their funding has enabled VA to provide life-changing interventions to numerous individuals, such as Connor.

His life spiralled after he was medically discharged from the Royal Marines, but with support and time, he has been able to work through his problems.

He's now living independently and working in a job he loves. What is more, he and his partner have recently welcomed a new baby into the world.

Connor had underlying mental health and addiction issues when he went into the Royal Marines, but he couldn't see it himself.

The training gave him the routine and discipline he was looking for – and it was all he had ever wanted to do. However, he was then medically discharged.

"I planned to retrain and go back. But when I got knocked back my life spiralled out of control."

"On top of that, at 25-years old, my pancreas packed in. I had Type 1 diabetes."

Connor's mental and physical health deteriorated. He spent time in a hospital but had nowhere to go on his release.

The only plan he could think of was "to get a tent and just wander the country."

When he was put in contact with



VA, the team quickly found him a place in a detox facility.

He was also seen by a psychiatrist and finally prescribed the correct medication for his underlying mental health condition.

This 'massive life raft' was the beginning of Connor's journey to sustainable independence.

Connor went on to stay at VA's residential facility, New Belvedere

House.

There, everything is geared towards independence. Connor was supported to address his issues and explore new training opportunities.

"Nothing is done for you, and it is your responsibility. There are always people there for you if you need them and there are massive opportunities to turn your life around, to become whoever you want to be."

"I set my mind on what I wanted to do and I chased after it. The team advised me on the steps to take and I managed to get a job in lockdown. I've been in that job now for four months."

"It is easy to wake up in the morning because I love it."

"I would not have been able to have any of these [job] opportunities if I were the same person."

"It was all the help I was lucky enough to receive that means I can maintain what I now have."

"I can say 100 percent I am not the man that walked into VA. And that is all because of time, patience and care from them."

Mandy Lindley, RNRMC's Director of Relationships and Funding said: "The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is pleased to continue its partnership with Veterans Aid, helping to provide vital support to the most vulnerable Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans."

"Now more than ever, it is vital that veterans are kept safe. We hope that this grant allows Veterans Aid to continue looking after our joint beneficiaries who are in crisis and help them to rebuild their lives."

Dr Hugh Milroy, CEO of Veterans Aid said: "Thanks to The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, and its partner funder Greenwich Hospital, Veterans Aid can offer life-changing support to individuals like Connor."

"Throughout the pandemic, we have worked constantly to keep safe those veterans threatened with homelessness, and support those already in our care."

"This funding means everything to us because it allows us to continue our vital work."

■ A pseudonym has been used to protect the client's privacy.



## Lockdown podcast returns

IN a prophetic twist of fate, series two of Company of Makers' 'Lockdown' podcast launched at the end of December 2020, just as many found themselves soon to be under lockdown once again entering the new year.

Back for another round of thought-provoking, inspiring and emotive conversations, 'Lockdown' explores the issues of the moment with people who have served in the Armed Forces and the organisations helping those in need within the military community.

The podcast has been developed by Company of Makers in partnership with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Following an appearance on series one last spring, the second series began by catching up with Adrian Bell, CEO of the RNRMC.

This was followed by a Christmas special with Royal Marine Veteran, Invictus Games medallist and *Strictly Come Dancing* contestant, JJ Chalmers, pictured above.

Look out for new episodes over the coming weeks, featuring guests from within the Royal Navy family as well as those who are supporting the RN community throughout these challenging times.

'Lockdown' is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other leading podcast platforms.



A world in which our sailors, marines, and their families are valued and supported, for life.

See our impact [impact.rnrmc.org.uk](http://impact.rnrmc.org.uk) T 023 9387 1520 E [theteam@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:theteam@rnrmc.org.uk)



# A good end to 2020

**NEARLY two dozen personnel were recognised for standing out from the rest of the Service in what was a challenging year for all.**

Chief Petty Officer Naval Nurse Andrew Cooper (pictured) tested hundreds of sailors on HMS Queen Elizabeth to ensure the carrier could continue her training and was on the pandemic front line, working in an NHS hospital emergency department.

Those combined efforts are recognised with the 36-year-old being made an Associate of the Royal Red Cross.

Andrew, from Eastbourne in Sussex, has played a pivotal role in the fight against coronavirus, first during his time on HMS Queen Elizabeth last April. With the aircraft carrier due to deploy for Fleet Operational Sea Training, he had to come up with a system to test all 800 of her sailors – a feat he repeated in September ahead of F-35 Lightning jets trials.

On his work on the carrier, his citation said: “It was largely due to CPONN Cooper’s experience, dedication and hard work that the ship had been able to go to sea safely with the confidence they could deal with all eventualities.”

Andrew, from Eastbourne in Sussex, has played a pivotal role in the fight against coronavirus, first during his time on HMS Queen Elizabeth last April. With the aircraft carrier due to deploy for Fleet Operational Sea Training, he had to come up with a system to test all 800 of her sailors – a feat he repeated in September ahead of F-35 Lightning jets trials.

Using his military background, he helped set up additional resuscitation rooms at short notice and gave extra training to junior staff in assisted intubation and the use of non-invasive ventilation – medical care often required for coronavirus patients.

He also helped colleagues on working in full personal protective equipment (PPE) and led the re-design of the hospital’s emergency department.

The senior rating said: “It is quite unique that I was able to use my skills both on a carrier like Queen Elizabeth and on the frontline of the NHS. But I couldn’t have done it by myself. None of it would have happened if it wasn’t for the whole team.”

Andrew joined the Royal Navy as an aircraft handler in 2004. He trained to be a nurse from 2008 and has served in hospitals around the UK as well as on HMS Queen Elizabeth during her Westlant 19 deployment.

Rear Admiral Andy Kyte has also been involved in the nation’s response to the pandemic at the highest levels, supporting other government departments as well as helping to ensure the armed forces continued their regular missions throughout the Covid crisis. He is made a Companion of the Order of the Bath.

One of the Navy’s longest serving and most senior officers is knighted for his “outstanding contribution representing the Royal Navy and the UK’s defence”. Now Commander of Joint Operations at Northwood, Vice Admiral Ben Key commanded HMS



Iron Duke and Lancaster, carrier HMS Illustrious and was Fleet Commander from 2016-19.

And marine engineer Lieutenant Commander Beth Griffiths has played a key role in the ten-year project to overhaul and extend the front-line lives of the Navy’s frigate flotilla. Her efforts earn her the MBE.

The full list of Royal Navy recipients:

**Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB)**  
Vice Admiral Ben Key, Chief of Joint Operations

**Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB)**  
Major General Gwyn Jenkins, Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff  
Rear Admiral Andy Kyte, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Support Operations)

**Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)**  
Commodore Donald Doull, Naval Base Commander Clyde  
Commodore Martyn Williams, Head of Naval Ship Support, Defence Equipment and Support  
Commodore Craig Wood, Commodore Surface Flotilla

**Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)**  
Commander Marcus Jacques, RN Liaison Officer to the United States Coast Guard  
Commander Darren Mason, CO HMS Vengeance (Port)  
Colonel Jaimie Norman RM  
Commodore Rob Wood, Commodore Naval Legal Service

**Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)**  
Lieutenant Commander James Betchley, COMOPS Northwood  
Lieutenant Commander Royal Naval Reserve (Sea Cadet Corps) D Collins, District Officer, Merseyside District Sea Cadets  
Lieutenant Jenny Dyson QARNNS, Nursing Officer, Joint Hospital Group (South East)  
Lieutenant Commander Beth Griffiths, HMS Richmond  
Lieutenant Commander Sean Heaton, Commanding Officer, Southern Diving Group  
Major Patrick Hill, Staff Officer Information Activity, 30 Commando Brigade Information Exploitation Group  
Warrant Officer 1 (RSM) David Mason RM, Corps Regimental Sergeant Major  
Warrant Officer 1 Engineering Technician (Marine Engineering) S J Smith, Marine Engineer Officer HMS Severn  
Chief Petty Officer Medical Assistant Philip Towers  
Warrant Officer 1 Logistician (Supply Chain) G R White, HMS Prince of Wales

**Associate of the Royal Red Cross (ARRC)**  
Petty Officer Naval Nurse Andrew Cooper QARNNS, Emergency Medical Nurse, Joint Hospital Group South  
Lieutenant Zoe Haggerty QARNNS, HMS Queen Elizabeth  
Lieutenant Commander Louise Moxworthy, HMS Raleigh



One of the Navy’s most experienced bomb disposal experts receives an MBE for his inspirational leadership and significant operational achievements. Under Lieutenant Commander Sean ‘Central’ Heaton’s leadership, specialist divers from Portsmouth and Plymouth-based bomb disposal units rendered safe or disposed of nearly 16,000 items of conventional ordnance (sea mines, torpedoes, hand grenades, mortars and bombs dropped by aircraft), as well as successfully dealing with 97 present-day Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

Among the most high-profile tasks during his 2½-year spell in charge of the Southern Diving Group was a 500lb Luftwaffe bomb found in February 2018 on the bottom of London’s King George V Docks – next to London City Airport.

Its discovery led to the cancellation of all flights to and from the airport, evacuation of more than 100 homes and closure of the Channel Tunnel and other public services; the disruption (or worse) would have been far greater but for him and his team’s actions, while working side-by-side with numerous civilian authorities and agencies over the three-day operation.

His expertise was called upon again when the Thai Government requested help from the UK, after a cluster of seven WW2 1000lb bombs were found after nearly 80 years sat on the bottom of the Mae Klong River in Ratchaburi province.

He acted as UK Defence’s lead advisor on the operation, drawing praise from his hosts and leading to long-term business opportunities, for UK companies to sell specialist diving/bomb disposal equipment to the East Asian nation.

In the final months of his tenure commanding Portsmouth-based Southern Diving Group, he selflessly answered the unprecedented call to simultaneously assume responsibility of an additional Diving Group – extra responsibility which, according to his citation, “didn’t faze him and ensured all his teams maintained the highest standards.”

In addition to all this, Lieutenant Commander Heaton ensured that the personnel of Southern Diving Group were recognised for their bravery, commitment and professionalism, which subsequently led to five members of the Diving Group being singled out for national honours and awards.

“He relentlessly delivered very-high-tempo operations, above and beyond that expected of his rank and his peers, with an admirable dedication to his people,” says his citation. “His devotion, commitment and professional ability has been extraordinary, and he most strongly deserves official recognition.”

Originally from Wigan and with more than 30 years’ service in the Royal Navy under his belt, Lieutenant Commander Heaton said he was honoured to have been singled out.

He added: “This decoration is as much a recognition of the brave, dedicated and immensely professional men and women that were under my command during my time in Southern Diving Group.”

## ‘RNAS Bull Point’ opens for operations

HELICOPTER operations have returned to Devonport Naval Base after a ten-year gap thanks to a new landing pad.

The old helipad at Weston Mill made way for the revamp of the area for RM Tamar and the centre of amphibious excellence.

Since then regular helicopter flights have been diverted to a small facility across the Tamar at HMS Raleigh.

The pad is principally used by personnel from Fleet Operational Sea Training, flown to and from ships undergoing training and assessment off the coast of Plymouth – which has meant a journey of about an hour from

Devonport to Torpoint, rather than five to ten minutes to FOST headquarters in HMS Drake.

The result at Bull Point – beyond the mock village used for disaster relief training – is a new multi-million pound, Helicopter Operating Facility.

The facility features a meteorological observation station and can refuel visiting helicopters. As well as Dauphins of the Fleet Helicopter Support Unit, based at Newquay, the new pad can host Merlins and Wildcats.

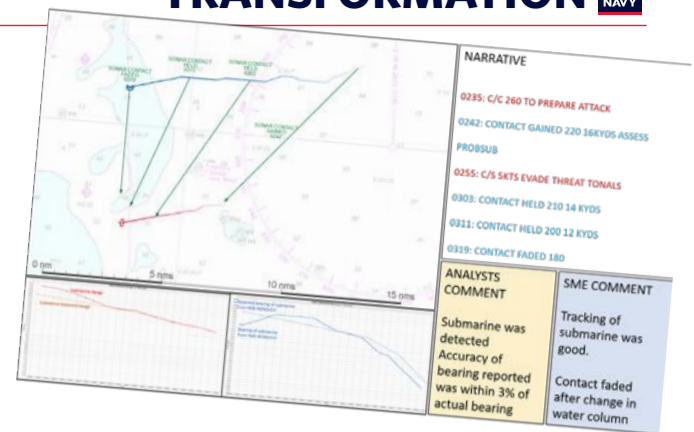
“The purpose is to transfer FOST personnel from shore to sea to carry out

operational training of ships,” explained Lieutenant Commander Simon Smith, air traffic officer.

“For the past ten years that has been happening from HMS Raleigh, which is a good hour’s transit away.

“This will now be a ten-minute drive in the base and then straight out to sea, making for a much more efficient process.”

The site chosen proved a challenge – chiefly to prevent oil and waste water entering the Tamar and its conservation area; ‘interceptors’ have been installed to capture any effluent.



## Warfighting tactics the name of the game for TACREC

THE Maritime Warfare Centre (MWC) provides direct support to the front line as the tactical release authority for the Royal Navy – initiating, researching, developing, writing and publishing some of the world’s best maritime warfighting tactics.

This is achieved with a team of about 100 people: a mix of military personnel, civilian operational analysts largely split across warfare areas and a team of support staff.

Established in September 2019, the tactical reconstruction (TACREC) team was set up to build a reconstruction capability within MWC with a defined process which collates large

quantities of relevant geo-spatial data, command narrative and open-source material to create graphical representations of operations and exercises and carry out post-event analysis.

The TACREC team is made up of data scientists, mathematicians and analysts from intelligence, engineering, business and operational backgrounds.

This is the first area within MWC that is ‘all civilian’ with the aim of focusing entirely on the scientific rigour of analysing big data and providing a picture, that is without bias or prejudice.

While the ability to replay operational and training events is at the core of tactical development, the key to the tactical reconstruction output provided at MWC is that it is more than a ‘gods eye view’.

With access to Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) across the MWC, the TACREC team are able to combine their reconstruction with critical analysis from the SMEs to review the decision making of participants to identify best practice and areas of improvement for current and future RN tactics.

As the TACREC capability continues to grow, we are developing new techniques and ways of analysing events utilising a variety of methods. The ultimate aim is to create a hub and spoke model whereby units and crew can conduct their own analysis using techniques developed by the TACREC team.

The majority of reconstruction work provided by the TACREC team is ‘in-stride’ enabling the MWC to deliver key observations and pass back invaluable training assessments during exercises to enable units and crews to learn, assimilate and develop the RNs battle-winning tactics.

To deliver analysis at this pace, the TACREC team carry

out ‘Fast OA’ – a stepwise feedback-based process of analysis with binary indicators that are measurable and assessable. The team use this as a mnemonic for the processes involved:

- Formulate: a plan to answer the questions through customer engagement and prepare for analysis by establishing data pipelines;

- Acquire: the relevant data, in the correct formats, within specified timelines collated into a database for easy access and audit;

- Storyboard: the reconstruction of the events with geospatial and narrative inputs;

- Tactical analysis: by SMEs from within MWC, observing the tactics used, comparing them with doctrine as well identifying any new threat capabilities;
- Output: a product that is disseminated to the customer and participating units;
- Assess

outputs: by the customers and participating units to feedback into the formulate stage.

In under 18 months of operation, the TACREC team have supported and are working with some key naval stakeholders, to exploit this capability for operational advantage. They include

- Fleet Operational Sea Training (FOST)

- The Carrier Strike Group (CSG) through support to the Joint Strike Training and Assurance Group (JSTAG)

- NATO’s Dynamic MongOOSE

- Joint Warrior identifying and developing tactics, as well as understanding threats for air, surface and submarine assets.

The TACREC team’s focus is to support the front line – equipping crews and units, with the information they require, to deliver at their very best.

Being presented with all of the information reconstructed in one view allows the crew/unit to see their interactions within context, which they can then review and assess for themselves.

Whilst the TACREC team work on large-scale exercises and serialised programmes, there is also scope to provide reconstructions of real-world interactions of deployed ships.

This is of use both to provide feedback to that crew, but also to be used to inform future deployments of the types of experiences that might occur in those particular environments.

The only requirements are good record keeping and a willingness to transfer records from ship/base to MWC. If you would like to get ‘reconstructed’, get in touch at [NAVYMWCTACRECMailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:NAVYMWCTACRECMailbox@mod.gov.uk).



## New firm takes over training

ONE firm will take over more than two dozen naval training contracts from April 1.

For the next 12 years, new firm Fisher Training will be responsible for delivering a wide range of 21st Century instruction and training across the Royal Navy.

After three years' work under the banner of Project Selborne some 26 legacy contracts were merged into a single one.

Fisher – which is overseen by international defence firms Raytheon and Elbit, IT giant Fujitsu and business services company Capita – was selected ahead of other bidders to become the Navy's new 'strategic training partner'.

Rear Admiral Phil Hally, Director People and Training, said working side-by-side with Fisher would transform training, both for the trainers and trainees. The former will benefit from more flexible training, better fitted around people's work and home lives.

And those being instructed will notice that training is more personal, modular, exploiting the latest synthetic systems (simulators and computers) to make it more relevant and rewarding – and deliver/return men and women to front-line units more quickly, helped in part by new ideas brought in by the Fisher team.

The admiral said the transition period from old to new ways of working would demand everyone involved pulling together in the coming weeks "to build a new, collaborative partnership between the Royal Navy and industry".

Under the new training programme, the University of Lincoln will act as the 'academic partner', focusing on providing the Service with better qualified and more motivated and experienced personnel.

From April, the university will support initial officer training from April and deliver courses covering as wide a range of subjects as maritime-related studies, social work and accrediting modules in music.

It builds on work-based distanced learning programmes which the university has run for several years, with curricula designed to fit around the busy schedule of military personnel.

See [Galaxy 19-2020](#) for further details.

## WE want to party for 75th

WEAPON Engineers are marking their branch's 75th anniversary this year.

To get WE75 started, a series of articles will feature in the newly-revived *Greenie* magazine and anniversary merchandise will be available from [www.militarypartyplanners.co.uk](http://www.militarypartyplanners.co.uk).

The three main objectives of WE75 are to celebrate the men who served in the branch since 1946; enhance branch ethos and belonging; and raise already excellent standards of training and performance.

If you're a WE and want to contribute – an article for the magazine, perhaps a short video for social media – contact PO(CIS) Aaron Mortimer [aaron.mortimer511@mod.gov.uk](mailto:aaron.mortimer511@mod.gov.uk) or LET(CIS)SM Alexander Hardisty [alexander.hardisty329@mod.gov.uk](mailto:alexander.hardisty329@mod.gov.uk).

# A rewarding first year

NEARLY £20,000 has been handed out and free family breaks given to Naval families in the first year of a push by the Service's most senior ratings to reward sailors and Royal Marines.

At the beginning of last year, the triumvirate of the Senior Command Warrant Officers – WO1s Carl Steedman, Mick Turnbull and Ian Wilson (Warrant Officer of the RN, Fleet Commander's Warrant Officer and Second Sea Lord's Warrant Officer respectively) – resolved to improve reward and recognition across the Service.

Twelve months on and reinvigorated long-running initiatives and new schemes are beginning to make a difference.

The biggest push has been to breathe fresh life into the Herbert Lott Award Scheme. Nearly a century old now, and supported by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, it remains relevant today, recognising individuals or teams for efficiency, innovation and invention.

Thanks to the efforts of the warrant officers and the charity, applications for deployed units have been fast-tracked to ensure personnel rightfully receive recognition while on operations, over the past 12 months 195 personnel have been recognised with awards totalling £14,000.

The team will continue to help deployed personnel receive a Herbert Lott, but they also intend to raise awareness of the initiative back in the UK in units and establishments. Further details can be found on the Reward and Recognition portal, via the intranet A-Z or the Helm (Divisional and Executive).

Two new awards were launched last year: the Long Service Recognition Award (LSRA) acknowledges exceptional individuals who serve for 40 years or more. To date 13 regular and reservist personnel have been recognised with awards totalling £2,970. Full details, including the application form are in [RNTM 09-012/20](#).

The other new initiative is the Longer Separation Allowance 5,000 Days Award (known as the LSA5K) which not only recognises the Service person, but also recognises the support families provide to those who have accrued more than 5,000 days LSA. Last year, three personnel/families were recognised with vouchers totalling £1,500. Full details, including the application



LEADING Seaman John Gibson became the second Devonport-based sailor – and one of only three RN personnel to date – to receive the new LSA5K Award.

In 32 years' service in the hydrographic flotilla, the leading hand has spent 14 years and five months at sea – 5,275 days in all.

His first ship as a trainee was on loan to the RN's smallest vessel HMS Gleaner, ahead of his first proper draft on the much larger survey ship, HMS Hecla.

The survey recorder ends his sea-going days on HMS Magpie, turning full circle from the smallest ship in the Fleet at the beginning of his career... to the current smallest vessel in the Fleet.

Commander Surface Flotilla, Commodore Tim Neild (left), visited Magpie to present the Longer Separation Allowance 5000 Days' recognition award

"Leading Seaman Gibson has been a key member of the team bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Inshore Survey Vessel," said Lieutenant Commander Mark White, Magpie's Commanding Officer. "The LSA5K Award is a fitting recognition to his exceptional career at sea and on operations."

form, can be found in [RNTM 09-014/20](#).

Both schemes were validated by members of the Quality of Life Panel and consequently have been funded by the RNRMC, demonstrating incredible support from a key part of the wider Service family.

The impact of Covid has been keenly felt across the country with the reduction of hospitality services; the RN continues to enjoy the full support of the Union Jack, Victory Services and China Fleet Country Clubs in offering reward and respite breaks for personnel and their families. Nine were presented to worthy Navy families in 2020 and the three Command Warrant Officers are in talks with other leisure organisations such as Park Dean Resorts to provide further rewards around the UK. An RNTM will be published shortly; it will detail how personnel can be recommended for one of these breaks.

And on the 'whole force' front, hand-in-hand with the Civilian Workforce Team, the Civil Service Reward and Award Scheme's intranet page has been updated.

The site details schemes which recognise RN civil servants for their valuable contribution to the Service, including a 'thank-you' award; this is to recognise a single instance, well-performed task or exercise. Anyone, uniformed or civilian, irrespective of rank or rate, can nominate an individual or team for an award by submitting a [HR 2382 Form](#), which you can find on the website.

"There have been substantial achievements in the promotion of various reward and recognition packages, but to coin WORN's well-used phrase: Better never stops!" said WO1 Turnbull.

"With this in mind, we will use 2020 as the foundation to build on future successes in 2021 as we go faster."

# Engineers should apply here

AS AN Institution of Engineering and Technology Partner, the Royal Navy supports personnel in both membership and professional registration to guide their professional development and career goals.

Lieutenant Commander Ben Shirley (pictured) from HMS Collingwood shares his knowledge of professional registration and how it can benefit those serving.

With the streamlined Defence Engineer Registration Scheme route, he was able to receive tailored support throughout the entire application.

"The process was supported by the team at MWS Collingwood – they gave me advice and validated my application. They also provided the Underpinning Knowledge and Understanding statement for my education capability."

"They also gave me help with the Development Action Plan, in terms of format and expectation, and provided

the UK&U statement for my education capability. I also had a professional registration advisor (who I kept in touch with from a previous application) and both aligned with their advice, which was good!"

Having been registered IEng since 2011, Ben was familiar with the registration process and was able to take advantage of the help the Royal Navy offers.

"The team at Collingwood had a single-point-of-contact email which allowed me to put questions in and get advice back fairly quickly. There were a few different people advising, which meant that advice was readily available. I've even submitted my name to join the team as a special registration advisor."

The Royal Navy offers a variety of free courses to aid the development of personnel and help them progress in their careers. With constant opportunities for

education, Ben believes that this can make a difference in career paths.

"At various stages in my career I've been able to spend time conducting periods of education to prepare me for future assignments. It's made me the person I am today."

If you're in a similar position, Ben has a wealth of advice for kick starting your professional registration journey: "Start early and think of it as a continuous journey rather than a 'get to a certain point yourself and then apply' task. I started as soon as I could and have stayed with the IET throughout my career."

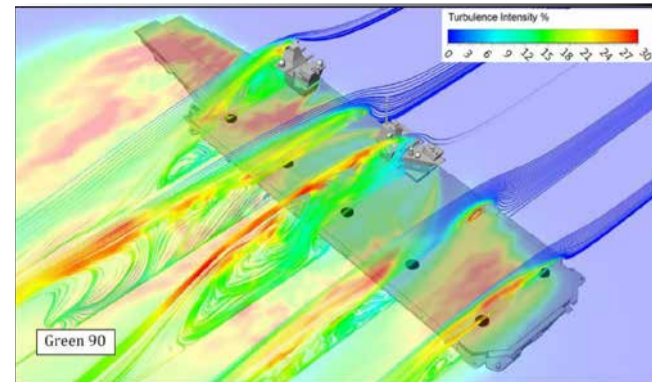
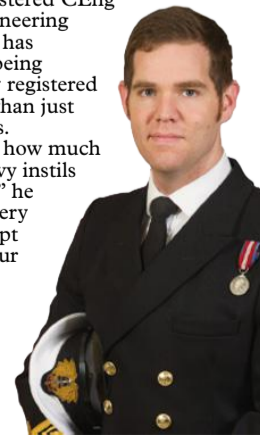
"As I developed, I applied for the next level of registration as and when I got there."

"Having been an IEng for a considerable time, that internationally-recognised professional status demonstrates to industry partners your capabilities and professional

standing from the moment they start communicating with you."

Now a registered CEng with the Engineering Council, Ben has learned that being professionally registered means more than just post nominals.

"I realised how much the Royal Navy instils a team ethos," he adds. "It's a very foreign concept to think of your achievements individually in the Navy, because everything we achieve is a team effort."



## Bright sparks hit the mark

BOARD games which give sub-hunters the edge over the enemy below and a sensor which assists flying from the Royal Navy's carriers have won international awards.

Designed, tested and introduced by Royal Navy employees, both projects were singled out by IdeasUK, which recognises innovation and ideas which have improved a company or organisation – in Britain and beyond.

Games for Tactical Training, developed by former Lieutenant Commander Ed Oates based at Culdrose, uses card and board games to help Merlin aircrew on the Applied Warfare Course improve their submarine-hunting skills.

Ed, who is an instructor at Culdrose after serving as an Observer in Sea King and Merlin helicopters, hit upon adapting well-known games as a quick, cheap and effective way to train students.

Family favourite Battleships morphed into a submarine-hunt game, the Asian strategy game Go turned into another helicopter search, nicknamed Pingers, while a card game based on Snap has taught NATO codewords. In addition, there are now computer games, specially-coded to run on MOD web browsers.

Introduced in 2019, the games have uncovered forgotten parts of the Royal Navy's heritage, updating them for a modern age, and have potential to be adapted in other areas of training sailors.

The team have found students have engaged more strongly with games – and remember the skills learned and the thought processes used.

Collectively, the various games earned Mr Oates and

his team the Continuous Improvement award, while Commander Kevin Miller collects the Value for Money award for his 'Wind Speed and Direction Sensor Optimisation' for the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

Despite five sensors being provided to HMS Queen Elizabeth to accurately measure wind speed and direction – crucial for the safe operation of helicopters and F-35 jets on her flight deck – none was cleared to support the safe conduct of aviation aboard when the carrier began her sea trials in 2017.

A temporary solution was installed, which drastically reduced the operating limits of the deck, so a special team was formed to oversee the design, construction, testing and installation of a permanent sensor – all inside 12 months.

The team not only succeeded, but produced a device which is one of the best of its kind in the world, producing results like the 3D model pictured, and has also been fitted to HMS Prince of Wales, giving both carriers more freedom to operate their air power to the limit.

Both winning ideas emerged from the Navy's Brainwave initiative, which encourages 'bottom up' ideas from across the Service.

"We are proud that this year the Royal Navy had two successful category winners. Both their hard work and dedication to improvement has helped make a real difference to the Navy and will have a lasting impact," said Robert Annis, Brainwave's 'ideas manager'.

To learn more about Brainwave and submit an idea – no matter how big or how small – use the tab at the bottom of the DefNet site.



After a gap of 50 years, HMS Collingwood is turning civilians into sailors once again as recruits are

# Back – for the future



**FOR the first time in more than 50 years civilians have begun their Royal Navy careers at HMS Collingwood.**

Over ten weeks 22 men and women will complete their initial training at the Fareham establishment – the first of 500 civilians to be turned into sailors at Collingwood in 2021.

The base is meeting a surge in demand to join the Fleet due to Covid and plans to grow the Navy by 3,000 sailors by 2024 – 1,000 extra personnel each year.

Collingwood follows Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, which trained 100 new junior ratings last year.

The two bases are providing training alongside HMS Raleigh, the home of initial training for nearly 50 years. It receives around 60 raw recruits every week and is also increasing its throughput to meet the additional numbers.

Eighty one years to the week since Collingwood opened its gates for the first time to meet the demands of World War 2, a new generation of recruits received their uniforms ready to begin their Navy careers.

The civvy-to-sailor course teaches recruits how to look after their kit, parade ground drill (pictured above by LPhot Will Haigh), teamwork, Royal Navy ethos and history, general seamanship and survival skills – testing each one mentally and physically, before the successful candidates pass out and move on to specialist training such as engineers, divers, aircrew, warfare experts and gunners.

Browndown Camp in Gosport and Salisbury Plain will be used for outdoor activities, leadership challenges and assessment, while trainees will experience the basics of seafaring and seamanship at HMS Excellent and aboard Portsmouth-based patrol vessels.

Many of the 500 sailors who begin their careers at Collingwood with Shannon Squadron will continue their professional training at the base, home to the weapon engineering and warfare branches. It already prepares around 3,000 officers and ratings for front-line ships and units every year.



With Collingwood's facilities already heavily in use Lieutenant Commander Jon Pollard, who's in charge of the civilian-to-sailor training at the base, said it had taken a "monumental effort" to accommodate an influx of an extra 500 men and women a year.

"The project has required infrastructure investment, particularly new classrooms, to ensure the correct training environment is in place for the recruits," he added.

"As far as is practicable the recruits will receive the same training and lived experience as they do at Raleigh, accepting that given the available infrastructure and geographical location there will inevitably be some subtle differences."

Trainee communications recruit Scott Collins, aged 21, from Paisley in Scotland, said: "So far the experience has been great – and challenging, especially keeping kit up to standard. The level of training we are required to do is very high."

Megan Lydamore is training to become an air engineer, working on F-35 stealth fighters or Merlin and Wildcat helicopters.

"It's been really tough," said the 19-year-old from Nottingham. "Physical training has been extremely hard, but I am looking forward to the outdoor exercises on Salisbury Plain."

The ten-week course is based on the tried and tested programme developed by HMS Raleigh, delivered by instructors with experience of the course, as well as Collingwood's experts in specialist fields such as physical training, seamanship and navigation.

"In partnership with HMS Raleigh, Britannia Royal Naval College and Navy People and Training, we have designed, resourced and started to deliver a third stream of initial training as part of the Navy's Transformation Programme," said Collingwood's Commanding Officer, Captain Catherine Jordan.

"Most of those starting their Naval career here will continue with professional training at Collingwood to prepare them for the front line and will keep returning to the establishment throughout their long and successful careers as we help each one of them reach their full potential."

## The tech driving the RN's Covid response

**NAVIGATING and mitigating the impact of Covid-19 has required adopting of a more data-driven approach to personnel decisions.**

Navy Command HQ uses Palantir's Foundry Platform which works hand-in-hand with the MyNavy app and SCIO databases, to help the Service's leaders decide how and where to allocate personnel to tasks and to protect the committed force.

Personnel around the world, from bases and establishments to those on the front line abroad, use a simplified process to keep the Royal Navy informed about their status and make necessary changes.

A sailor — let's call her Anne — can update the MyNavy App to inform her chain of command with relevant Covid information, such as whether she is in a high-risk population, is showing symptoms, has tested positive, or has special skills that might be helpful in contributing to the Royal Navy's MACA support to the pandemic.

The data she enters in the app is distributed securely across various systems, including into the Navy's data analytics system, Palantir Foundry.

Foundry links the Covid status with other information about Anne, such as her deployability status, current and planned assignments, and known skillsets.

This gives Personnel Operations teams and other decision-makers who are authorised to see the information a more complete picture of Anne.

Once this picture is in place, specific teams can draw upon it to help Anne:

- if she reports that she is hospitalised, the medical and Covid Ops Cells are alerted so they can support her through her illness;
- if she declares she is in a high-risk population, her career manager can take this into account when looking at her next assignment, and place Anne in a role that allows her to shield or otherwise reduce her exposure risk;
- if she has volunteered relevant skills, she can be contacted to perform Covid-related tasks and help the Royal Navy's support to the government.

If Anne doesn't have access to the MyNavy App or hasn't chosen to do



● A sailor collects a Covid test at a mobile test centre established in Easteleigh, Hampshire, last summer  
Picture: LPhot Belinda Alker

an update, career managers can look at information from other databases already integrated to the system — Move and Track, the Medical database, Operational Deficiency logs — to try to establish whether she is at her Place of Duty or is otherwise affected by Covid, and what support she might need.

No one can see information on Anne that they shouldn't: only her career manager has access to her full profile. Personnel Operations don't have access to her career notes, and Naval leadership can only view information in the aggregate, to make decisions about large groups of people rather than individuals. Foundry protects people's privacy while still enabling everyone to use data effectively in the course of their work.

With thousands of Royal Navy personnel serving around the world, it has been vital to understand the effects of Covid on the Service and its operations. By merging various data sources into a single, secure and trusted environment, the Recognised People Picture provides a trusted, interactive view of personnel availability, how the virus is affecting operations, and the resulting implications for branch, fleet and unit readiness.

So, when the First Sea Lord wants to see the overall status of the Navy and available strength, each individual update through the MyNavy App will feed into an aggregated view with all other sailors and personnel — keeping

personal information private, but showing him organisation-wide trends. This gives him an overview of the current state of readiness, and allows the Navy's leadership to allocate personnel to support the pandemic response within the Royal Navy and beyond.

This process has allowed the Personnel and Training (P&T) organisation to establish 200 temporary units, tasks, and positions to support the Covid response: from drivers for semi-refrigerated trucks to engineers conducting maintenance tasks to Royal Navy medics supporting the government's broader pandemic response, ensuring resilience to operations.

Looking ahead, the development of a strength modelling process in Foundry will allow better understanding of the pandemic's long-term impact on future force readiness.

Strategic planners can model a variety of scenarios quickly and independently, so that they can make sure there are enough training courses and promotion opportunities for example, to help the Royal Navy continue to adapt to changing circumstances.



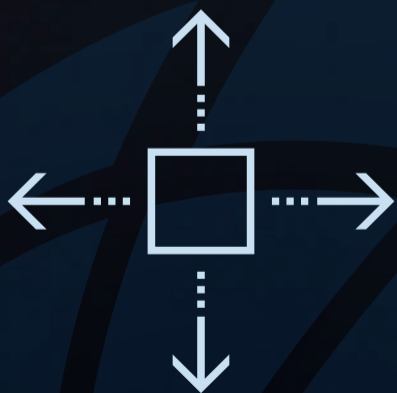


# Independent technical expertise and consultancy

BMT remains a trusted partner to help overcome the complex engineering and programme challenges faced when delivering, and supporting, the world-class equipment used by the Royal Navy.

With over thirty years of defence maritime experience and a wealth of professional engineering, asset management and programme management expertise, we are proud to play our part in ensuring that naval assets remain safe, capable and available.

With a long-term commitment to R&D and innovation, we solve the problems of today and shape the ideas of tomorrow.



[www.bmt.org](http://www.bmt.org)

Find out more about BMT's  
design, acquisition and  
support expertise





# Not just a job for Barney and Bob

**TWO Culdrose warrant officers have been singled out for their exceptional contribution and service.**

Warrant Officer 1st Class Scott 'Barney' Barnett has been commended by First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin for his part in producing more than 35,500 face masks in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic.

The 46-year-old Merlin engineer, who lives in Mullion, was inspired to start producing visors last spring, setting up a group of fellow 3D-printing enthusiasts in Cornwall to begin producing visors at home.

"It's nice to get that recognition. It was something I really enjoyed doing. I remember thinking at the start that if I could make 100 masks, that would be amazing," Barney said.

Meanwhile WO1 Bob Holborn, aged 57 and from near Redruth, receives a meritorious service medal for his 40 years' service.

He left what was then known as Redruth Comprehensive School at the age of 17 to become an aircraft handler... and is now the most senior warrant officer in the branch, overseeing the training of a new generation of men and women for a new generation of carriers at the School of Flight Deck Operations.

His long service has seen him serve with all three Harrier carriers (Invincible, Illustrious, and Ark Royal), helicopter carrier HMS Ocean, and most recently HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Between deployments and periods at the training school, Bob has served as an instructor with new recruits at HMS Raleigh and in Culdrose's fire station.

He said: "I've spent a lot of my career away from home. Perhaps the most interesting was on Queen Elizabeth, bringing a new ship out of build.

"As aircraft handlers, we always work as part of a team, either as a watch or a group, and there's a lot of camaraderie that comes with that. We push that ethos of discipline and professionalism because you want to be the best."

He said one of the most poignant parts of the job was seeing how former recruits he had mentored during his time as a divisional officer at HMS Raleigh have now progressed in their careers.

Many have since thanked him for his words of encouragement during their demanding training.

"That's what makes this job really important to me, knowing that you've helped people who might otherwise have left the service," he added.

"I leave the service in June after 40 years and I've had a brilliant time. It's been great."



## Be ye men of Talent

THREE crew of veteran hunter-killer HMS Talent have been decorated for their tireless efforts supporting the boat on front-line operations.

The Faslane-based submarine has been heavily in demand in 2020 – and her crew have risen to the demands made of them.

For the next 12 months Lieutenant Garreth Hughes can admire the Rear Admiral Sir David Allen Sword, presented to him as the No.1 logistics officer across the Fleet when it comes to driving front-line operations.

To earn the Sword, presented in memory of a popular and influential logistics officer who served the Royal Navy for 42 years until 1991, Garreth met the challenge of sustaining the Trafalgar-class boat throughout a record-breaking deployment during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic with aplomb.

He did so not only maintaining Talent's cutting edge, but improved the 'lived experience' of his shipmates at the same time.

Communications expert Petty Officer Daniel Megson receives the Royal Navy Operational Engineering Award for ratings.

Over the past 12 months Daniel proved himself to be an outstanding engineer in general, but especially when Talent was hosting future skippers attempting the Submarine Command Course (better known as Perisher).

He came up with the idea – and then the repair

– to a key system aboard Talent which would have had a serious impact on Perisher and its students had it not been fixed.

Fellow weapon engineer Petty Officer Kieron Hart has the Worshipful Company of Armourers and Brasiers Armoury Prize on his mantelpiece for his performance on the Petty Officer Engineering Technician Qualifying Course (presented above by Talent's CO Commander Paul Jamieson).

The sonar expert excelled academically on the course, achieving the best results during examinations. Not content with his own success, Kieron took it upon himself to help the rest of the class where they struggled, including taking over teaching during one module when the instructor fell ill.

All of which meant the senior rating was praised by both his peers and staff for his attitude and effort... and led to the award from the historic livery company, which recognises military personnel who excel in technical and engineering disciplines.

"The award winners are part of the recent trend of excellence for which HMS Talent has become known," said the T-boat's proud Commanding Officer.

"The submarine and her ship's company have won a wealth of awards in recent years set against a backdrop of high-tempo operations and extended periods deployed."



# NAVY NEWS

The Royal Navy continues to protect the nation's interests.  
Get Navy News delivered to your door.



Subscribe online at [royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews](http://royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews)

12 copies for the price of 10

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ROYAL NAVY





## Medics' push to save Dr's cabinet

HOPEFULLY by the time you read this, people up and down the land will have dipped into their pockets to save a wonderful piece of naval/medical history for future generations.

RN medics faced an end-of-January deadline to find the £16,000 needed to acquire the medicine cabinet used by Sir William Beatty – HMS Victory's surgeon at Trafalgar and the man who tended to Nelson when he was mortally wounded.

It emerged for sale just before Christmas from Hampshire antiques dealer Charles Wallrock (pictured above with the small chest). Hailing from a naval family, he agreed to put the sale on hold for a month to give a crowdfunding drive by today's Royal Navy medics time to raise the sum.

They are keen to see the chest in a museum rather than out of sight in a private collector's home, convinced it will serve as a fitting tribute not only to Beatty and his colleagues who worked tirelessly in grim conditions at Trafalgar, and also recognise the recent efforts by Senior Service doctors, surgeons, nurses, medical assistants and officers who've been involved in the national struggle against Covid.

The goal was to donate the chest to the Haslar Heritage Group which is developing a museum/visitor centre at the former hospital site in Gosport (or if the group can't find space for it, the chest will go back 'home' to HMS Victory).

Dated 1803, just two years before Trafalgar, the portable cabinet stands just over ten inches high and opens to reveal drawers and shelves, with two original glass jars remaining. It would have contained a variety of tinctures from laudanum to cures for venereal disease.

Beatty was appointed to Victory in December 1804. He treated scores of casualties on October 21 1805, but was unable to save his admiral.

"The case is portable with a handle on top so Beatty was able to carry it around. On it is written his details: William Beatty, warranted surgeon. RN. 1803," Mr Wallrock explained.

"Beatty was with Nelson from when he was brought down below decks after being shot to when he died. He wrote a detailed account of what happened and insisted that Nelson's final words were 'thank God I have done my duty'."

Mr Wallrock continued: "This cabinet would have been full of tinctures, potions and medicines that were required as a matter of routine on a man o' war such as Victory.

"It is a fascinating glimpse into the past, not only of naval history but medical history."



## Arctic heroes 'still live in our hearts'

WREATHS were laid at memorials around the UK to honour the men who sailed in the Arctic Convoys to Russia.

Royal Navy and Russian military representatives have taken part in 75th anniversary commemorations of the end of a bitter four-year struggle to deliver vital aid to the Soviet Union and defeat Nazism.

The global pandemic scuppered plans for a major commemoration of the end of the convoys, which ran from 1941 to 1945.

Instead a 'virtual commemoration' took place, when veterans joined senior political and diplomatic figures from Britain and Russia for an online discussion to underline the importance of the convoys – and to thank the dwindling number of men who endured what Churchill called 'the worst journey in the world'.

That event sparked the idea of low-key physical commemorations at some of the key monuments to the convoys.

Commander James Buck, Harbour Master in Orkney, saluted the fallen commemorated by the monument on Hoy; adjacent Scapa Flow was home to many of the warships which escorted the convoys.

Liverpool was a key staging post for Atlantic and Arctic Convoys. The Royal Navy's Deputy Regional Commander Lieutenant Colonel Guy Balmer Royal Marines joined the Rector of Liverpool Canon Dr Crispin Pailing for a service at the Arctic Campaign memorial in the Parish Church of Our Lady and St Nicholas.

And on HMS Belfast Rear Admiral Iain Lower, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Policy), and Russian Defence Attaché Colonel Maxim Elovik met on the quarterdeck for a 15-minute service of thanksgiving.

Since 2014, the Russian Federation has presented around 3,500 Ushakov Medals to Arctic Convoy veterans, honouring their "contribution to our common victory over Fascism", Col Elovik said.

And it will resume presenting them to those eligible once the pandemic passes to ensure "that each award finds its hero".

"Today we not only celebrate the shared history and joint achievements of Russia and the United Kingdom in World War 2, but also

the true brotherhood in arms of our people, a bright example of which were the Arctic Convoys.

"The Allied seamen showed true heroism in their long and perilous sea passages, constantly attacked by enemy forces in the appalling weather conditions of the Arctic. The memory of these and other heroic examples of joint combat and mutual support continues to live in our hearts."

Col Elovik placed a wreath on behalf of his nation alongside Admiral Lower's beneath Belfast's battle honours board.

"It was an absolute honour to have the opportunity to properly commemorate the service of all the courageous mariners who served in the Arctic convoys; on and under the sea, as well as in the air," said Admiral Lower.

"In doing so, I am glad we could also celebrate our shared history of solidarity with Russia and its people.

"Having the ceremony on HMS Belfast is particularly poignant too as it has so many deep connections with this shared past."

The wartime cruiser serves as a living memorial to the 3,000-plus sailors – Royal Navy and merchant seamen – who sacrificed their lives delivering more than four million tonnes of supplies: tanks, fighters, trucks, fuel, ammunition and food.

Around 1,400 merchant ships made the perilous journey to ports in northern Russia during 78 convoys. Some 85 vessels were sunk – as were 16 Royal Navy warships escorting them in the face of attacks from German ships, U-boats and aircraft.

Despite these losses and the grim weather conditions which meant sailors had little chance of survival if they went in the water.

HMS Belfast spent 18 months on Arctic Convoy duties between Christmas 1942 through to the spring of 1944, participating in the last battleship duel of World War 2 in Europe, the sinking of the Scharnhorst off the North Cape on Boxing Day 1943.

A belated 75th anniversary event on the shores of Loch Ewe in north-west Scotland, where many convoys mustered before sailing, is planned for May.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Dave Jenkins



## Legion veterans reburied with full honours

IN INCESSANT driving rain, sailors, soldiers, airmen and Royal Marines helped rededicate the grave of Liverpool veterans.

The ashes of several generations of service personnel scattered in a garden at the former Royal British Legion Club in Speke were reinterred with full honours.

The original site is earmarked for redevelopment following the closure of the club and its subsequent demolition – but not before a fitting home could be found for the ashes scattered by Service families in the memorial garden.

That new home came in the form of Speke's All Saints Church.

Royal Navy Sub Lieutenant Liam Humphries has been involved with remembrance parades in Speke since the age of ten, and took over organising them after the local British Legion disbanded in 2015.

He also volunteered to act as the go-between for families dealing with the housing company planning to develop the site to ensure their voices were heard – and collectively agreed that the memorial garden should be moved.

Four military pallbearers carried a casket of ashes of 119 veterans, escorted by sailors from HMS Eaglet, Royal Marines of RMR Merseyside, plus reservist soldiers and RAF personnel.

They were joined by senior representatives from the Royal Navy's Regional HQ in the Northwest, RAF Woodvale and 156 Royal Logistic Corps, plus the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Merseyside, Lord Mayor, local MP Maria Eagle and local councillors.

"Although it's sad to see the garden go having been part of my life for so long, the plans that the families, housing developers and I created are fitting," said Sub Lieutenant Humphries.

Among those who are remembered at the old garden is Royal Marine Corporal Ben Nowak of 45 Commando, killed in 2006 when a bomb exploded as his Rigid Raider passed under a bridge over the Shatt-al-Arab in Iraq.

He was laid to rest at All Saints, alongside other Service personnel, including Marine Bob Binks and Sub Lt Humphries' great grandfather Able Seaman Francis Green.

The ashes have been buried next to the war memorial in the church grounds.

Picture: Steve Dock



## Falklands first for Forth

SAILORS from HMS Forth took part in the Falkland Islands' annual Battle Day for the first time.

Ever since the Royal Navy defeated a German force off the islands in 1914, December 8 has been marked as a national holiday – and a day of commemoration remembering the 29 Commonwealth casualties and 1,871 German sailors killed.

Focal point for the anniversary is the waterfront monument erected to the men of 1914 on a headland in Stanley near Government House, residence of governor Nigel Phillips.

He joined Commodore Jonathan Lett, the Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands, the Falkland Islands Defence Force, and members of Forth's ship's company for a service and wreathlaying on the cenotaph.

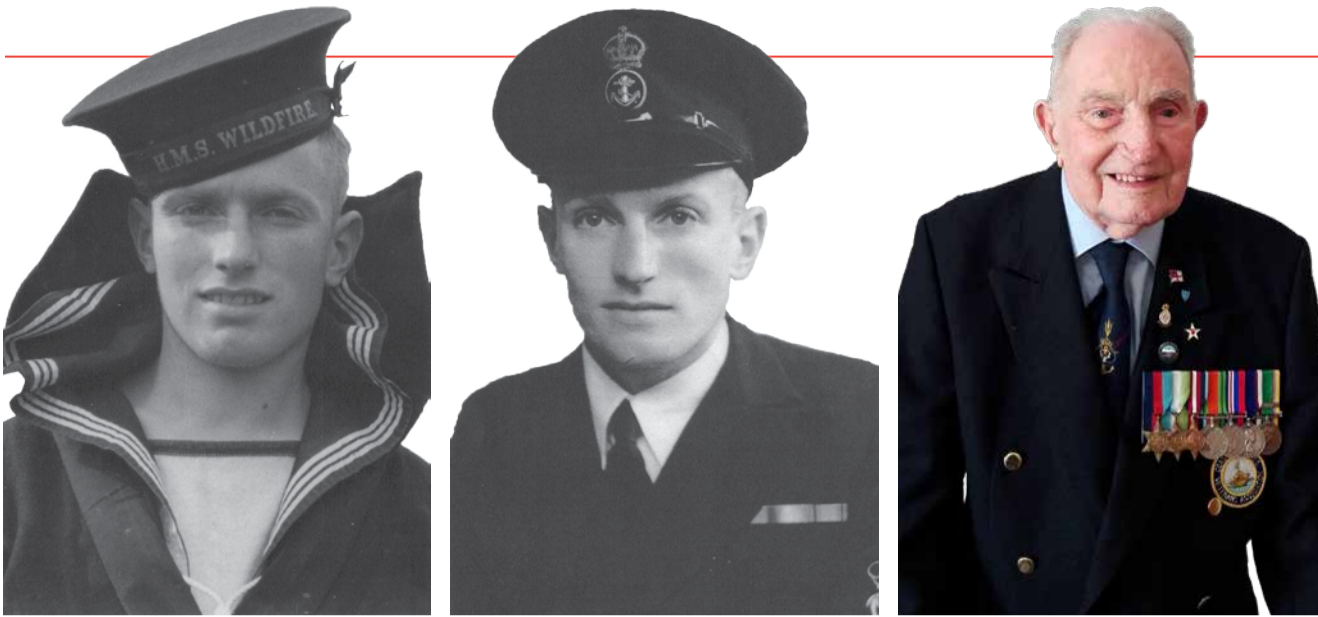
"The Battle of the Falkland Islands was one of the decisive naval engagements of World War 1," Commodore Lett said.

"As I reflect on the events of 106 years ago, I am struck by the quality of the sailors who fought so valiantly in the battle, many of whom were reservists called up at short notice."

The battle put an end to the exploits of Admiral Graf von Spee's East Asia Squadron, which had evaded the Royal Navy until then.

It took eight hours for an overwhelming British force to sink four German cruisers, including the flagship, the admiral and his two sons. No Royal Navy vessels were lost, but one of Spee's ships, the cruiser SMS Dresden, escaped and took four months to hunt down.





• Chief Petty Officer Herbert Thompson from Plymouth (right) and Leading Seaman Anthony Coles from Hitchin (left) share a beer with canteen manager Arthur Sinclair aboard HMS Loch Ruthven off Portland in February 1962

# A remarkable century

**CELEBRATING his 100th birthday on the 12th day of this month is Bill 'Gene' Harlow who joins a small band of centenarian readers of our publication.**

He has one glass eye and has lost 95 per cent of the sight in the other due to glaucoma, and requires bilateral hearing aids, so it'll fall to his family to read this story out to him – and describe the pictures.

Bill joined the RN in 1938 as a 17-year-old boy, trained with HMS Wildfire at Sheerness and aboard cruiser Dunedin then was posted to HMS Penelope in the

Med pre-WW2 on the 'Spanish patrol' while civil war raged on the Iberian Peninsula.

When war broke out in Europe, Penelope was recalled to the Home Fleet and then dispatched to Norway to forestall the German invasion. The cruiser ran into an uncharted rock on the approaches to Narvik and was towed to remote Skjelfjord in the Lofoten Islands, which became an unofficial naval base where temporary repairs were effected on damaged Allied ships.

Locals helped Bill and his shipmates patch up Penelope sufficiently to make the return journey Britain. Before leaving, the 19-year-old sailor was granted an hour's shore leave – enough time for a snowball fight with Norwegian youngsters, one of whom received a tin of captured German chocolates from Bill; the moment was captured for eternity on Bill's box Brownie and remains a treasured photograph to this day.

"Penelope has always been his favourite ship," said his son Ian. "He developed a very strong

bond with the ship and with the crew, it was family, and that bond is just as strong today as it was then.

"If we bring Penelope into a conversation his face lights up and the history flows; about the people, and the events, and the activities that took place on and around the ship whilst stationed in Malta and his time in the Med."

Bill left Penelope in October while she was undergoing repairs on the Clyde and spent the remainder of WW2 in coastal forces: four years delivering training at HMS St Christopher, Fort William, then in the closing months of the conflict as a motor launch instructor at HMS Benbow in Trinidad.

De-mobbed in 1946, the petty officer then signed up for three consecutive tours of duty with the Royal Fleet Reserve, serving at HMS Victory, Osprey and Excellent, before finally retiring from the RN in 1957.

Between 1961 and 67 Bill was an instructor with the Sea Cadets, serving at TS Orion on

the Trent in Nottingham.

He left the unit as XO to emigrate to Adelaide in Australia, continuing his Sea Cadet career as instructor, XO and CO of TS Adelaide (two of his cadets went on to serve as admirals in the RAN...), plus Deputy Staff Training Officer for South Australia. He finally retired in 1983, but maintained contact with the cadets.

In 2010, at the age of 89, Bill was invited back to Lofoten for 70th anniversary commemorations of the 'naval base' at Skjelfjord, making a 37-hour seven-flight journey to attend the unveiling of a memorial and meet the (now-75-year-old) Norwegian he'd given chocolates to in 1940. The first encounter served to spark interest in the sea from the youngster, who subsequently made a career in the merchant navy.

Sadly, Bill will not be able to share the milestone with his wife Edith. Exactly two years younger than her husband, she passed away last month aged 97 after 80 years together.



## Recognise Reg?

DO you recognise this sailor: Reginald 'Reg' Davies?

If you do, his relatives would either like to track him down – or learn what happened to him.

He was born in Canada and moved to North Wales when he was about five years old and served with HMS Ark Royal, Albion and Eagle in the 40s and 50s among other vessels.

Lisa Dickinson was in touch with her great uncle until the early 1990s, but hasn't heard from Reg since.

Anyone who can help should email her on [l\\_hjdickinson@icloud.com](mailto:l_hjdickinson@icloud.com).

## Ton class veterans mourn loss of irreplaceable John

THE Ton Class Association will never be the same with the passing of its founder and former chairman John Soanes.

After a period as vice chairman, John, who died on December 30 after a long illness, guided fellow Ton-class veterans for 23 years (April 1995-April 2018).

He was Coxswain of HMS Penston 1964-66, nominally in Hong Kong, but mainly on patrols off Borneo during the Confrontation.

He'd joined the RN in 1953, specialising in Underwater Weapons, rising to PO(UW1) after serving in HM Ships Implacable, Cygnet, Savage, Ursa, Rothesay, and finally Penston. In addition to courses at Vernon, John was ship's company and served two periods as an instructor at Ganges.

In 1967 he left the RN after



14 years for a second career with Essex Police – where his accomplishments were equally impressive. Serving in Harlow, Saffron Walden, Southend-on-Sea and Chelmsford, he became an Acting Detective Superintendent and Head of

Special Branch, a role which brought him into contact with many VIPs visiting the county.

He married Ann – both come from Beccles in Suffolk and were at school together – in 1955 and leaves two daughters and two grandchildren.

His tenure as TCA Chairman was distinguished by courtesy and diplomacy. He presided over the considerable expansion of membership, progression into publications and adoption of email to speed up admin, and possessed a remarkable range of contacts of all ranks throughout the Navy and beyond.

Torbay RNA, of which John was also chairman, paraded their standard and provided a guard of honour at his funeral in Torquay last month, attended by Commander Rory Jackson and Derek Potter on behalf of the TCA.



## Living the dream Serving the Queen In the canteen

THE 100-years-plus history of the NAAFI has been captured in a new book.

Sue Lowe, secretary of the (deep breath) Naval Canteen Service Expeditionary Forces Institutes (NCSEFI) Association, has covered all areas of the service, collecting more than 500 stories and over 350 images for the 700-page tome.

"Looking into over 100 years of history was not going to be easy. The recent years would be mostly reliant on personal testimony," she explained.

"For the earlier years, the hunt was on to find archives, the remains of the museum and as much factual information as possible. It was not about rewriting history but telling it as it was written."

The result is an anthology of first-hand accounts from NAAFI personnel in war and peace, among them the harrowing story of the loss of the Lancastria in June 1940 – the worst maritime disaster in British history.

But there are triumphs too. Tommy Brown, serving on HMS Petard, details the recover of confidential books from U-559 which played a key role in wartime codebreaking at Bletchley Park.

John McNamara of HMS Amethyst was assigned to the sick bay during the 'Yangtse incident'; he narrowly escaped death after shrapnel ripped through the compartment killing his patient and several others.

Canteen manager O F Mahoney who fell into Japanese hands was being held prisoner at Fukuoka 2, Nagasaki, and witnessed the explosion and saw the mushroom cloud which changed the world.

And John Leake, another canteen manager, manned the guns on HMS Ardent and shot down an attacking plane in the Falklands.

The book also documents how NAAFI adjusted to meet the needs of service personnel around the world with new clubs post-WW2 to the recent drawdown in Germany.

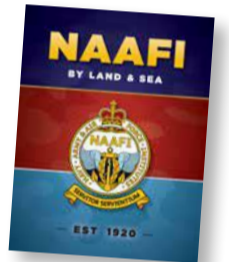
NAAFI was established by the British Government in 1920 when the Expeditionary Force Canteens (EFC) and the Navy and Army Canteen Board (NACB) were combined to run the recreational establishments needed by the Armed Forces, and to sell goods to servicemen and their families.

At its peak in WW2, it had 110,000 employees and nearly 10,000 trading outlets around the globe.

Today NAAFI operates in far fewer locations but is present in Germany, Gibraltar, Brunei, Falklands and on board HM Ships, providing convenience and a 'taste of home' to servicemen and women and their families overseas

To buy the book go to: [www.ebay.co.uk/itm/184539451484?sPageName=STRK:MESELX:IT&trksid=p3984.m1555.i2649](http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/184539451484?sPageName=STRK:MESELX:IT&trksid=p3984.m1555.i2649)

Proceeds of sales go to the NCSEFI Association, which this year marks its 75th anniversary.



## 1982 plaque progress

MEMORIALS are planned for nearly a dozen bases, establishments and ports which supported the effort to liberate the Falklands in 1982.

Plaques and shields are lined up to be put up next year – the 40th anniversary of the conflict in the South Atlantic.

It follows the inaugural plaque installed in Portsmouth Naval Base last autumn, recognising the efforts of workers to ready 39 ships for the task force sent south.

That was unveiled with full civic honours last year following a campaign by Falklands veteran Andrew Cave, who served in flagship HMS Hermes in 1982.

He felt the men and women behind the scenes who worked flat out to prepare the task force – with no forewarning and against the backdrop of likely job losses following the 1981 Defence Review – should be recognised, just as personnel on Operation Corporate were honoured with medals and monuments.

Plaques are now lined up to be sited in 2022 in Gibraltar, Devonport, Portland, Chatham, Southampton, Hull, and Clyde, as well as in Rosyth at an unspecified date; RNAS Culdrose and Yeovilton are interested in participating and Ascension Island is also hopeful.



# Honouring tragic Peter

STAFF at Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadets have researched the tragic story of a young cadet who was killed during World War 2.

Lt Cdr John Vanns, Derek Ireland and Peter Blackwell have managed to piece together the story of Peter Edward Fry, *pictured right*, and are applying to take ownership of his grave in order to maintain it and pay their annual respects.

Lt Cdr Vanns takes up the story.

Peter was a pupil at St Georges School, a private School in Calverley Park Gardens and a member of the Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadet Unit, TS Brilliant.

He lived at 42 Connaught Way, Tunbridge Wells. (His inquest said Connaught Gardens)

At the age of 15-and-a-half he attended the annual Sea Cadet Camp at Poole, Dorset during the week commencing Monday May 24, 1943

On Thursday May 27 Peter was tragically shot while talking to a sentry, whose rifle discharged, killing Peter and injuring Peter Bareham, a cadet from Wealdstone.

At the inquest held in Poole on Monday May 31, the sentry who shot Peter, Able Seaman Joshua Woodworth, was both 'slack and negligent' according to the coroner. The round passed through Peter's chest and then hit Cadet Peter Bareham, standing behind Peter, in his left arm.

His mother Dorothy and father Walter donated a trophy in his memory to the unit in August 1943. The Peter Fry Cup was presented for the first time to a Cadet Sharvill, at the Sea Cadet Sports Day at the Neville Cricket Ground.

Peter was born on January 22 1928 and was 15-and-a-half years old when he was tragically killed.



In the 1911 census 19-year-old Walter Charles Fry was an apprentice to a chemist and living with his father, Emill George Edward Fry (born 1860) and mother, Emily Abegail Fry (born 1868) at 3B Plumstead Road, Woolwich.

There is evidence to suggest that Walter Charles Fry enlisted in the 15th Field Company, Royal Engineer on November 5 1914 as Sapper 21314 Fry, Walter Charles.

At the time of Peter's death, Walter, then married to Dorothy (born 1899) and living at 42 Connaught Way (Gardens?) (next door [Number 44] to where Chief of Defence Staff Nick Carter was to live years later), ran

a chemist shop on Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, it is still there as a chemist. Peter had an older brother, Norman, nine years his senior. He had an uncle, Cyril Harold Fry, born 1906 and an Aunt, Evelina Alice Fry born 1889

Peter was buried at Tunbridge Wells Cemetery on June 2 1943 in B16 plot 604.

*The Kent and Sussex Courier* carried the following report on June 4, 1934.

## SEA CADET SHOT TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOY KILLED AT POOLE

By the tragic death of Sea Cadet Peter Edward Fry, the 15½ years old son of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Fry, of 42, Connaught-Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, the Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadets have lost one of their most popular members and one who was keen to join the Senior Service.

Cadet Fry was attending a camp at Poole and was shot by a sentry, whom the coroner said had been slack and negligent. Peter was a scholar St. George's School. The Inquest was held at Poole by the Poole Borough Coroner (Mr. J. W. Miller).

Mr. C. O. Trevanion appeared on behalf of the Navy League. The father said the boy had been in the Sea Cadets, four years and had previously attended a holiday camp.

Lieut. S. Miles, Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells, said the lad had been in his Company. He was of more than average intelligence and understood naval discipline.

The rifle—an old type Lee Enfield—and the orders to sentries were produced in court.

Sea Cadet Wood, of 22, Claremont Road, Tunbridge Wells, said that on May 22 he came to the district for a week's holiday camp. At 2 o'clock on Friday he was walking towards the main entrance with others on their way to their billets, and Fry was walking just ahead of him. Witness saw Fry fall on

his back. He was attended by a sick bay attendant and afterwards removed in an ambulance.

Sea Cadet Kenneth Hopper. Dudley-Gardens, Kingsbury, said he was walking about ten yards behind Fry. He heard a shot and felt a sting in the right arm. Witness' friend (Peter Bareham) was holding his left arm.

Leading Stoker James McCord said he was in the vicinity with another man when he heard a shot and saw a cadet fall. He ran to the spot and saw the sentry already kneeling beside the boy. Another cadet passed witness holding his arm.

Strangers would be challenged by the sentry, but he never heard the Sea Cadets challenged. Fry said nothing to witness when he went to him, only took his hand.

Able Seaman Sidney Fell gave evidence of taking the sentry to the guardroom and to taking charge of the rifle which was leaning against the sentry box. He found an empty case in the breech and the cut-off was open.

There were nine live rounds in the magazine. It was customary on relieving a sentry to hand over the loaded rifle to the relieving man. Witness said the custom was to examine the rifle to see if a cartridge had got in the breech and afterwards release the trigger and see the cut-off was closed.

CPO. Arthur Samson said if the proper procedure had been followed in handing over the rifle the accident could not have happened. Orders in this connection were posted in the shelter.

Lieut.-Surgeon K. B. Scott said that Cadet Fry had a wound in the chest and Cadet Bareham a bullet wound in the arm.

A.B. Clifford Stanley Tory said that on Friday at 1 o'clock he took over duty at the main gate. He examined the rifle and found ten rounds in the magazine, cut-off closed, barrel clear and safety catch on. He handed it over to Seaman Woodworth in that condition.

Able Seaman Joshua Woodworth said he

relieved Tory on sentry duty at 1.20 and took the rifle over from him but did not examine it. The Sea Cadets marched in and were dismissed, and he saw Fry coming towards him. Witness was standing at the "at ease" position but came up to the "on guard" position and said to Fry "Where do you think you are going?" then the rifle went off. He knew Fry but it was unusual for cadets to come out so soon. He could not remember seeing other cadets behind him. Fry was in a "jolly mood."

Questioned as to the position of his right-hand witness demonstrated with the rifle, placing his hand by the trigger. He remarked that he brought his hand up quick.

The coroner asked whether the remark "Where do you think you are going," might not be taken in jocular manner.

Witness: Not with the rifle brought up. Continuing he could say how the rifle became loaded.

Witness (replying to Mr. Trevanion): This cadet came out more or less on his own and I could not say if he had permission. I did not see any other Cadets.

Witness admitted that he had been careless in handling the rifle and had been slack in not examining it on coming on guard. Returning a verdict of "Accidental Death," and expressing sympathy with the parents, the Coroner said felt this case extremely as quite recently he had an inquest on a man under almost identical circumstances. He could only repeat what had already said, if orders obviously made for the safety of everyone were carried out, he would not have had to conduct an inquest on this terribly sad fatality. There had not been criminal negligence, but there had been slackness and negligence on the part of the sentry who took over the rifle. It had been a most unfortunate lapse. Evidently everything had been done by those in authority to ensure safety. On behalf of the Navy League sympathy was expressed to the parents by Mr. Trevanion.





**ROYAL  
HOSPITAL  
SCHOOL**

# BUILD COURAGE AND COMMITMENT

Experience an education underpinned by 300 years of heritage, embracing values and standards designed to establish the skills to pursue purposeful lives.

MOD CEA eligible Services Families receive discounted fees.  
RN and RM personnel, retired and serving, can apply for means-tested bursaries.

COME AND SEE FOR YOURSELF

WWW.ROYALHOSPITALSCHOOL.ORG

Suffolk, IP9 2RX









## Poppy has blossomed with cadets

POPPY Martin, 18, from Southampton has achieved almost every conceivable accolade as a Sea Cadet having joined Southampton Sea Cadets in 2015 aged 13.

In 2020 Poppy was made a First Sea Lord Cadet at an investiture on board HMS Victory, one of only six such cadets in the country.

As part of that role Poppy represented cadets at a range of high-level conferences and meetings.

While gaining a plethora of qualifications including First Aid, Catering and Seamanship she has also attained several boating qualifications including coxswain, power boating and kayaking.

With a passion for Drill she quickly rose to the highest cadet rate of Petty Officer Cadet.

She was also made Mayor's Cadet for Southampton in 2018 and in 2019 the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Hampshire attending events with the Lord Lieutenant before Covid restrictions.

Poppy joined the Southampton unit in Vespasian Road, Southampton, aged 13 while at Upper Shirley High School.

Poppy said she wanted to join cadets earlier as her mum was a cadet and since making the decision her Sea Cadet career had gone from strength to strength.

Poppy now attends Itchen College and is undertaking a BTec in Uniformed Public Services with a view to following a career in the Police or Nursing.

"The best bit of cadets is its one big family," said Poppy. "I have met so many new people, made many friends and done things I could not have dreamed of."

Although Poppy turned 18 in December and is no longer a cadet she is training and converting to a staff member at the Southampton unit.

Lt Lindsay Bassett RNR Commanding Officer at Southampton Sea Cadets added: "We are very proud of Poppy and delighted that she is staying on and transferring to staff."

"We are also keen to recruit new staff and anyone wanting to help out directly with cadets or behind the scenes would be very welcome."

"While marine-based skills would be an asset we are keen to recruit people with commitment and enthusiasm so for those wanting to get involved in the community this would be ideal."

To find out more about Sea Cadets visit <https://www.sea-cadets.org/southampton>

## Squadron helps school

ROYAL Navy and RAF personnel from 617 Squadron at RAF Marham raised money for local schools.

The squadron, which flies F-35B Lightning strike fighters from HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, raised £1,000.

The money went to the Nar Valley Federation of Churches Academies to buy uniform hoodies.

Commander Mark Sparrow, Officer Commanding 617, said: "I am extremely proud of the fundraising efforts and the support they have shown to the local community."

Executive headteacher Anne Neary said: "We are incredibly grateful to the squadron for their support and are absolutely delighted to begin this link which will enhance the children's learning experiences."

The squadron will continue to support the schools this year.

# Rewarding roles

## Reservists deploy at home and around world



"I HAD to tell (my son) that I was working on a plan to ensure that Santa Claus could visit all the children in the world without catching the virus or passing it to other households. He didn't question my long hours after that."

Lt Cdr Ruth Fleming, who usually works in population data science at Swansea University, volunteered for Operation Rescript.

Having discussed this with her employer, who fully supported her bid to mobilise, she was disappointed not to be used in the first roulement. However, when the email to activate her finally arrived, on a Friday afternoon in the middle of June, it still came as a bit of a surprise.

A few phone-calls later, her mobilisation was confirmed as an Operations Officer, based in the Joint Military Command Wales, in Brecon Barracks, located in a market town in the Brecon Beacons.

Crucially for Ruth and her family, this location meant that she would be able to commute to her duties, something which allowed her to balance work and home.

As an HQ Operations Officer in a watch-keeping role, Ruth was required to be knowledgeable about all aspects of the Operation within Wales.

"It was impressive to see the Force Protection being undertaken within the Barracks; mobile washbasins were at the entrance to every building and there was plenty of hand-sanitiser on every desk."

"The operations room has a watch-keeping facility and shared resources for video-conferencing, so all attendees had to ensure strict Force Protection measures were maintained. These measures also meant that the number of people within the operations room was kept low at all times."

Although she joined the HQ when

military personnel were manning Mobile Testing Units throughout Wales, she says that the most interesting time for her involved the community Testing of Merthyr Tydfil. She witnessed the MACA process to deploy RAF personnel into testing facilities within the community.

The entire operation was locally led, with the military in support.

"In the Royal Navy we are used to deploying as individual augmentees, or as a unit, but to witness individual augmentees mobilise into a unit and deploy was impressive."

"The daily workload ensured knowledge of where personnel were located and monitoring the system to ensure that all in the Command chain knew how many tests were taken, by the hour and at which location."

"The final part of each day was ensuring that the daily summary was forwarded to SJC and the first part of the following day was ensuring that the testers had themselves tested negative for COVID-19 before they were deployed back to Merthyr Tydfil."

Lt Cdr Fleming says it was the most rewarding time of her career as she was supporting her local community in a direct and indirect way.

She added: "Often as a Service person it can be hard to explain to your children what you are doing."

"My eldest has a good knowledge of the 'virus' so, when we had a particularly busy period just prior to Christmas, I had to tell him that I was working on a plan to ensure that Santa Claus could visit all the children in the world without catching the virus or passing it to other households."

"He didn't question my long hours after that! Nor did he question if his presents would still arrive when our Christmas plans had to change at short notice due to the changes in the ability to travel just prior to the festive season."

THE Maritime Reserve has always been ready to serve in support of wider Royal Navy operations.

Reservists continue to step forward to offer their often unique skills to benefit current deployments at home and around the world.

Lieutenant Charlotte Kertrestel, 30, a Reservist from Birmingham, recently returned from her first deployment with the Royal Navy in the Middle East.

The six-month tour, based in the Royal Navy's Maritime Component Command (UKMCC) headquarters in Bahrain, was her first experience of full-time military life.

"As soon as I qualified in my specialty, I wanted to mobilise overseas to gain more experience of working in the military," said Charlotte. "Working alongside regular personnel from the Royal Navy was a great opportunity, and I've learned so much in such a short space of time."

Charlotte was deployed as a media officer for both UKMCC and the Combined Maritime Forces, a 33-nation maritime partnership.

"The role allowed me to meet people from a range of nations, which was a definite highlight of the deployment. I regularly experienced true Middle Eastern hospitality from the regionally-led task forces, and learned a lot from seeing how other navies, the US Navy in particular, operated." During her mobilisation, Charlotte co-ordinated the media coverage for three large drugs seizures, one of which involved HMS Montrose conducting the Middle East's

largest-ever methamphetamine seizure.

"Being part of such a successful and historic operation which has a direct connection to the security of people back home was massively rewarding, and brought home the importance of the Royal Navy's presence in the Middle East."

"A highlight of the tour was having the chance to visit the many vessels that the Royal Navy has permanently deployed in Bahrain."

"Being a Reservist, and being from Birmingham, you don't get many opportunities to get on board ships, so doing a tour of RFA Cardigan Bay and welcoming a United States Navy Vice Admiral onboard HMS Shoreham, were both memorable experiences."

Deploying during the Covid-19 pandemic, Charlotte was required to conduct a 14-day quarantine period on arrival in Bahrain.

"Mobilising in the midst of a global pandemic certainly made my tour different from those who have deployed here before!"

"Like everyone across the world, we had certain restrictions in place but the ability to provide the same operational output compared to normal times was a real testament to the Royal Navy's ability to keep our people and ships safe."

"Aside from the obvious challenges posed by Covid-19, the biggest difficulty for me was probably the heat," said Charlotte, who joined the RNR in 2016.

"I joined the RNR because I wanted to do something a bit different to my normal 9-5 day job. I wanted to make some new friends, get fit, and learn new skills."

"In reality, my five years in the Reserves have already exceeded everything I hoped to get out of it."

"I have friends from Reserve Units all over the country, and now, thanks to my tour in Bahrain, I have friends all over the world."



"WHEN you are deployed on UK soil in support of the UK government and UK people, it really brings a sense of pride that our efforts are supporting something far greater than ourselves."

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit the UK, Reservist Lt Cdr Sam Hearn, a civilian Coaching and Leadership instructor, volunteered to mobilise to help wherever required.

As an experienced Media Operations Specialist in the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR), he was deployed to the Strategic Joint Command Headquarters (SJC(UK) HQ) in Aldershot to work on "Op Rescript", supporting the Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) in the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

His role was focussed on managing day to day media operations activities and coordinating the multi-service media collection and response.

He said: "We created a highly-motivated media team with considerable experience from the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force, as well as embedded team members from the Defence Directorate for Communications (DDC) working alongside us."

"I can say that working with this team during some frenetic, chaotic and often

extremely tiring times, has been the most memorable and rewarding deployment of my career to date. It's all very well deploying to sunnier climes, but when you are deployed on UK soil in support of the UK government and UK people, it really brings a sense of pride that our efforts were supporting something far greater than ourselves."

Sam added: "My involvement with SJC over the past few years has opened my eyes to internal workings of my industry on UK soil and provided me with a greater understanding of how to communicate with audiences to achieve the most desired effect."

"The experience has also provided me with a wonderful network of friends and colleagues across the four Services (Military and Civil Service)."

Sam recently received a commendation for his contribution to SJC Media Operations activities.





# Invested in Training

We are looking forward to working with the Royal Navy to help transform its training and learning solutions. Our expertise and extensive experience will help provide them with tailored, digitally enabled, agile training that is fit for the future.





# THE REELING ROYAL

**ROYAL Marine Adam Fadli is a keen angler who has not let a busy year of deployments with 47 Commando stop him from fishing whenever possible.**

As part of 539 Raiding Squadron Royal Marines (RSRM), Adam, otherwise known as "Fadders", bounced between back-to-back deployments in 2020, from the frozen fjords of Norway on straight to the sun-soaked sand of the Caribbean for a busy deployment with RFA Argus.

Fadders made sure he packed a rod and some lures with his kit wherever he was sent and this forward-thinking was rewarded by reeling in some very different catches to what he is used to in the UK.

As a member of the Royal Navy Royal Marines Angling Association (RNRMAA), Fadders has represented the Navy and UK Armed Forces teams, so

time deployed could have been frustrating.

However, by taking opportunities when he could Fadders has successfully continued to hone his angling skills alongside his work with 539.

This work has been crucially important, with 539 leading on reconnaissance and raiding exercises in Norway, and then in the Caribbean the team used their expertise with small boats to assist in Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) work in the hurricane season and to enable counter-narcotics boarding operations. The resulting drugs busts while based on RFA Argus totalled over £377m with 4723kg of cocaine and 28kg of amphetamines seized.

Despite so much professional success on deployment, when asked for his highlights, Marine Fadli is back to talking about fishing.

He said: "I went fishing whenever I could. I would


sometimes use handlines if the ship was moving slowly enough, but when the ship was stopped in Curaçao and I could use rods I managed to catch my first Tarpon. It was mid-size at about 70lbs, but everyone wants a Tarpon.

"In the Cayman Islands and in the Turks and Caicos Islands when we were practicing HADR exercises, I managed to free dive to get a lobster and catch some Snapper and Amberjack. I have also caught Nassau Grouper. I came to an arrangement with the chefs so we cooked these in the galley in a white wine and butter sauce."

Fadli plans to continue his fishing, and with 539 RSRM deployed in the UK and abroad throughout 2021 he will need to remain flexible. For anyone looking to get involved in fishing in the Royal Navy, Fadli recommends contacting the RNRMAA.

■ The 539 Raiding Squadron team from RFA Argus, including Adam Fadli, second right.



  
**PEMBROKE  
HOUSE**

The Royal Naval  
Benevolent Trust's  
**Care Home**

[www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk)



Providing a home from  
home for older members of the  
**Royal Naval family**

Located close to the historic Chatham Dockyard, we provide 24 hour nursing and residential care in our exceptional building that features good sized, well furnished rooms, en-suite facilities, comfortable communal areas and landscaped gardens.

**We believe personal enrichment shouldn't stop when you move in with us, so we don't just provide quality of care, we ensure quality of life.**



11 Oxford Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 4BS  
Call **01634 852431** or email  
[enquiries@pembrokehouse-rnbt.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@pembrokehouse-rnbt.org.uk)





# George packs a punch ready for Tokyo games

FOR many 2020 was a year to forget, but for Marine George Crotty it was one to remember.

He spent the year representing the Great Britain Boxing Squad, in the Light Heavyweight Division as they prepare for the 2021 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The highlights of Crotty's year came when he fought in two international tournaments, against the world's best fighters, and won gold medals in both.

The tournaments in Hungary and France serve as preparation for the World Championships later this year.

In both Crotty boxed cleverly to beat opponents from Sweden, France and the USA to stake his claim as one of the most respected Light Heavyweights in the world.

"To put on a GB vest and compete on an international stage is a real honour, and I'm so grateful to the Royal Marines and Royal Navy for the opportunity," said Mne Crotty.

"It was a bizarre year, but it allowed me to really knuckle down and focus on becoming an Olympian. GB has some this drives me to work harder and do the Corps proud."

Buoyed by his success on the international stage Crotty is now focusing on 2021, and the all-

important World Championships in Serbia.

Success in these competitions will see Mne Crotty elevated within the world rankings, but it won't be easy with the level of competition being much higher.

Just before Christmas Crotty flew to California for a training camp, in preparation for competitions in the spring and summer.

"Spending time in California sounds fun, but it will be gruelling with very little down time. I have to take this opportunity because it's a key area of prep before the Olympic qualifiers, and I know how tough it's going to be to get selected." Said Crotty.

Chairman of the Royal Navy Boxing Association, Brigadier Mike Tanner, said: "George is a true ambassador for the Royal Marines and the wider UK Armed forces."

"I'm so proud of how his Commando values shine through, that only enhances the mood of the squad. Time away on elite sports drafts is very tough, it's certainly not time off! The training is brutal, and you spend long periods away from your family. I'm delighted that George has had a successful year, 2021 is going to be tough for him, but I have every confidence in his success."



# Carry on(line) rowing, team

ROYAL Navy Indoor Rowing has made the most of opportunities to continue to train and race through Covid-19 compliance constraints, increasingly using remote on-line technology to develop fitness and performance.

The global Indoor Rowers League (IRL) has seen nearly 50 RN ergers sign up for eight monthly challenges running from September through to April.

Many RN ergers are in lofty positions within IRL 'overall', age and weight categories, notably: men heavyweight - C/Sgt James Wade (30Cdo), Lt Cdr Stu Moss (HMS Vanguard), Lt Col Tom Blythe (Def Ac), men lightweight - WO Mark Branson (Sultan) and women heavyweight - CPOs Claire Drew (CNR) and Helen Richardson (Temeraire).

The five RN teams (eight best scores to count from ten per team), feature highly with RN Nebula JT (Cdr Jim Thomson's RNIRPP group) in second place, closely followed by RN DP NavyFit (eclectic mix) and POPT Chazz Charrett's 'RN Sultan Massive'.

The Royal Navy Indoor Rowing Championships were conducted as a Covid-19 compliant 'open' event over five days in November, with 49 competitors rowing remote 2,000m and 500m races.

Whilst there were some world-class age group performances, there were also significant achievements by others new to this demanding sport, with many setting seasonal and personal bests. Trophies were awarded to fastest men and women, heavyweight and lightweight, masters (over 40) and seniors.

Fastest RN Woman over 2k was CPO Claire Drew (CNR) with 7mins 36.3secs in the woman's heavyweight 40+ to take the masters 2k trophy. Fastest Senior Woman was AET Zoe Morris (RNAS Culdrose) in 8mins 07.4secs, her first racing event. Sam Young (Sultan) took the women's lightweight masters 2k trophy in a time of 8mins 38.8secs.

Seasoned performers POPT Chazz Charrett (Sultan) and Surg Cdr Dan Connor (SOJTF) were the high-performing 2k lightweight men, with the former taking the senior trophy in a time of 6mins 51.7secs and the latter rowing 6mins 58.4secs to win the masters.

Some stunning performances were

set in the men's heavyweight 2k, including Lt Cdr Moss in the men's heavyweight 50+, setting a lifetime personal best of 6mins 14.8secs as the fastest in the masters' category, potentially a World Championship's age group medal winning time. Fastest Men's Senior was C/Sgt Wade in the heavyweight 30+, with 6mins 05.9secs time, the fastest ever set at an RN Champs.

500m erg sprints present a slightly different physiological challenge as time appears to extend exponentially, beyond the realm of possibility, in the last 150m. Sgt Danny Graham (RAF Linton-on-Ouse) was the fastest in men's 500m heavyweight in 1min 19.8secs, with Cdr Jim Thomson (Navy PCAP) close behind in 1min 21.0secs.

Fastest lightweights in the masters/Seniors respectively were Surg Cdr Connor (SOJTF), 1min 32.8secs and POPT Charrett (Sultan) in 1min 35.7secs. Fastest woman over 500m was Sgt Stacey Denyer (RAF, JSU Northwood) in 1min 41.8secs, with CPO Claire Drew (CNR) closest with 1min 43.2secs.

POPT Charrett was the deserved recipient of the annual Doug Wylie Memorial Award for 'Courage and Commitment', in recognition of his outstanding efforts to develop the Sultan Massive, a diverse and inclusive group of ergers. Consequently, 12 members competed in RNIRC 2020, winning 17 medals with eight setting personal bests and WO Mark Branson setting a world-class age group time of 7mins 06.3secs as he won the men's lightweight 60+ category.

All six RN Indoor Rowers competing in the late November 'open' Scottish and Irish Indoor Rowing Championships achieved top three medal winning positions. These were virtual covid compliant events, conducted in real time over the internet.

Within the Scottish event CPO Drew won the women's heavyweight 40+ 2,000m in a lifetime personal best of 7mins 29.3secs, a world-class time for her age group. Lt Cdr Moss won the men's heavyweight 50+ 2k in 6mins 17.3secs, with Lt Col Blythe taking silver in 6mins 23.8secs.

Fastest of all RN 2k racers was Lt Cdr Adrian Long (Sultan) who took silver in the men's heavyweight 2k 30+ in 6mins 06.1secs, an impressive seven seconds faster than his January 2020 Euro Champs Silver medal

performance and another world-class time.

Cdr Thomson took silver in the men's heavyweight 500m in a time of 1min 20.9secs.

RN Team Manager Paul Winton (MCTA) was third in the men's heavyweight 60+ 2k.

Meanwhile in the men's heavyweight 40+ at the Irish event, Major Alex Pickett (CNR, now 43 Cdo), took silver in the 500m (1min 26.0secs) and bronze in the 2,000m (6mins 34.6 secs)

A total of 21 RN Indoor Rowers, amongst 56 UKAF personnel, competed in the Covid-compliant British Rowing Indoor Championships (BRIC) online. This event doubled up as the European Continental Qualifier for the virtual World Championships this month, thus attracting an array of strong European talent, plus incorporating UKAF 2k seniors and masters' awards.

Outstanding performances saw RN racers win three individual Euro/BRIC medals and four UKAF Inter-service titles in 2k races.

Lt Cdr Moss won silver in the men's heavyweight 50+ 2k (6mins 17.9secs), matched by C/Sgt Wade in the men's heavyweight 30+ 2k (6mins.04.7sec). Moss and Wade took their respective UKAF masters and seniors titles.

UKAF Women's senior over-40 title was won by CPO Richardson in the heavyweight 2k (7 mins 50.2 secs) with Sam Young the fastest masters lightweight (8mins 45.7secs).

Many others rowed season's and personal bests. CPO Mark Gains (Sultan) celebrated a personal best 7mins 28.3secs as he went sub 7.30 for the first time.

Lt Cdr Mike Hawkins (JSU Northwood) was the fastest of four RN individual 500m 'sprinters' in a time of 1min 23.6secs.

Moss qualifies automatically from this BRIC European Continental Qualifier for the virtual World Champs this month.

Other RN racers, including: Wade, Long, Blythe and WO Mark Branson (Sultan), who was fifth BRIC finisher in the men's lightweight 60+ in a personal best of 7mins 05.7 secs may also qualify for the WRIC Finals via a separate open qualification route, as might CPO Drew.

Anyone interested in joining the team should contact [paul.winton177@mod.gov.uk](mailto:paul.winton177@mod.gov.uk)



● Top, Lt Cdr Jim Thompson; above left, POPT Chazz Charret with the Doug Wylie Memorial Award; above right, Lt Oilly Irvine; below, WO Mark Branson





# Ryan overcomes first-year nerves



● Lt Ryan Hughes pictured right, holding off PO Curtis

ROYAL Navy and Royal Marines Road Race Team rider **Lieutenant Ryan Hughes** provides a round-up of the 2020 season – his first with the group.

I wanted to get into racing back in 2016 after visiting the RNRMRRT stand at the Manchester Motorcycle Show. I was told how easy it was to join and start racing but at the time I believed that I was unable due to my work circumstances, serving onboard an MCMV in Faslane.

I felt I would be away too much and would not be able to commit to the team. As I have now found out, I was wrong, and I definitely could have joined when I first enquired.

I could have started as a member of the pit-crew without the need purchase and prepare a race bike knowing I couldn't make every race weekend. That way I could start to support the team, learn the sport and build my technical knowledge.

Likewise, there was nothing really stopping me joining as a rider. As it happened, I waited until February 2020, at the end of my sea-going assignments before I finally took the plunge. The process was very simple:

Step 1: Email the team manager at [RNRMRRT@hotmail.com](mailto:RNRMRRT@hotmail.com) expressing an interest in joining the team as a rider. After this you are added to the team 'Spond App' group, where you can ask questions and the team would give valuable advice on the process to start racing, how to set up your bike etc. You then join the RNRM Motorsport Association (MSA) at a cost of £20 a year (you get a free T-Shirt).

Step 2: Buy a bike eligible for entry into your chosen class. I chose the Thundersport GB Golden-Era Supersport Championship, one of the cheaper classes, bought an 1999 Yamaha R6 for £1,500 and prepped it for racing.

The team also has a team bike which can be hired out to newcomers to the

**SURGEON Lt Cdr Llewellyn Thomas** gives his thoughts on his second season with the RNRMRRT.

My second season has brought about my graduation to Clubman and the loss of my orange safety bib, which means I can show off my new team leathers to full effect.

Since I first started racing last year the experiences at tracks around the UK have really developed me as a rider, and it's great to be a part of such a supportive team.

Before I turned up to Brands last year for my first race weekend I'd only done about three trackdays, and although the standard was higher than I expected riding with faster people only makes you faster!

The team have been great in showing me where to go, which paperwork needs to be done and the best places to put all the loose bolts I keep finding. Actually starting racing was surprisingly easy, with an easy one day test for a license and a couple of modifications to my old R1. On the odd occasion since I started I've found the opportunity to test out the safety kit from our very generous supporters and sponsors, and haven't found it wanting yet.

sport. It is a Honda Cb 500 and can be hired for individual race weekends or a whole season for a very reasonable cost.

Step 3: Complete the ACU Road Racing license application form (available through Thundersport GB with a handy video guide) and get an eye test (You can still race if you wear spectacles/contact lenses as long as you can meet the standard with corrected vision).

Step 4: Attend an ACU Compulsory Training Course and Basic Rider Assessment (CTC/BRA). This consists of a couple of hours in a classroom learning all the rules and regulations including a simple multiple-choice exam, followed by a few sessions on circuit where an instructor will assess your ability to follow basic racing lines, maintain a decent pace and follow the flags.

Step 5: Join Thundersport GB with a premier membership. This gives you discount on your race entries. Once you have all the correct riding gear, tools, spare parts etc, you are now all set to start racing. The season runs from March to October with eight rounds at some of the UK's best racing circuits, including those on the British Superbikes calendar. Before my first race weekend my track riding experience consisted of four 4 track days (one of which was back in 2014) and my BRA. I didn't get my knee down until my final track day, only two weeks before (some never do).

The track sessions finish with a few race starts to get you used to the

This season's been difficult with infection control measures being observed, but the fact that meetings have progressed have shown how much everyone loves the sport and how dedicated people are to racing. It's been a great chance to achieve some normality with the fact that the meetings run about once a month, and something to look forward to in the context of a busy work schedule.

The year started with Donington Park and then Oulton Park – I hadn't been to either of these tracks before and with a new bike it was a pretty steep learning curve (excuses, excuses!).

I felt a lot more comfortable at Cadwell Park though, after a tumble at the Nurburgring forced me to miss visiting the duck pond at Mallory. I was still pretty close to the bottom of the grid, which is quite a competitive field at 600cc; but the main event for me is the Triservice military event.

The chance to race around the iconic tracks of the UK against your mates is not something which is quickly forgotten. It's been a fantastic journey up to this stage and I'm looking forward to taking it through to the 2021 season.

So, take it from me, you do not need to be a track day master before you start racing.

Most weekends follow the same format (with a couple of exceptions):

Arrive on the Thursday evening to set up the paddock with the team awnings, set up your area, conduct final preps on your bike and get a good night's sleep. Most of the team sleep in the back of their vans but you could take a tent or stay in a nearby hotel.

Rise early on the Friday for a track walk before a full or half day of testing. This is essentially ran like a track day and is our currency and competency check prior to being allowed to race. Finish the day with final tweaks to your bike and get a good night's sleep.

Rise early on the Saturday for another track walk. Track walks form an important part of the safety management plan and better inform the riders of the track condition before going out for qualifying.

Your qualifying result will be used for your two class races that day. End the day much the same as the previous two nights.

Sunday is a similar set up with a track walk and warm-up session before the racing starts. After a further two class races, the weekend finishes with the main event, the GB Racing British Military Inter-Services Championship race. This is what we are here for. The thrill of racing other servicemen and women, with fierce rivalry and the banter in parc ferme after the race is awesome. After this, we disassemble the paddock and head off home.

Motorcycle racing is a very expensive hobby, and the great thing about racing as part of the RNRMRRT, aside from the camaraderie, is the financial and insurance benefits. Due to the 'on-duty' status associated with representative sport means we are entitled to MT and are fully covered throughout the weekend. Motorcycle racing is one of the most dangerous sports you can do, so the piece of mind that the 'on-duty' status gives you is a real nerve settler.

In addition to the service benefits, we are also lucky enough to have a number of high-profile sponsors such as GB Racing, Silkolene, Forcefield Body Armour, Hel Performance and Held Motorcycle clothing to name but a few. This helps reduce the overall cost to the individual and ensures both rider and machine are well protected. You can also get your own sponsorship if you wish.

Despite my first season of racing being disrupted somewhat by COVID-19, I managed to attend all four race weekends, competed in 17 races, had one crash, several excursions onto the grass, and made huge improvements in my riding that not only made me faster on the track but made me safer on the road. Bring on next season!

The team are always looking for more riders and pit-crew, so get in touch if you are interested, it's easier to get started than you think.



£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the December edition of *Navy News* (right) was the heavy cruiser HMS Hawkins, which was based in Shanghai, China from 1920 to 1928.

Geoff Hewitt, of Preston, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (*above*) is a C-class light cruiser launched in December 1918.

1. What was her name and 2. What was the name of the German merchant ship she captured off Iceland?

Please complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we will also accept emailed entries to [bm@navynews.co.uk](mailto:bm@navynews.co.uk) with February Mystery Ship in the email header.



Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Entries must be received by March 16. 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 April edition.

The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 312

Name .....

Address .....

My answers: (1) .....

(2) .....

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: [news@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:news@royalnavymail.mod.uk) or [editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk)
- If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

ROYAL NAVY NAVY NEWS

Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

FEB 2021 No. 799: Founded 1954

Editor: Lorraine Proudlock  
Email: [editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

Editorial

[News@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:News@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

[Sam.Bannister@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:Sam.Bannister@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

[Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

[Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

[Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

Graphics

[dtp@navynews.co.uk](mailto:dtp@navynews.co.uk)

General enquiries:

[news@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:news@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

Business

Business manager: Lisa Tav  
Admin assistants: Georgina Skingsley and Mistrala Harries  
[bm@navynews.co.uk](mailto:bm@navynews.co.uk)

Subscriptions:  
[www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews)  
[subscriptions@navynews.co.uk](mailto:subscriptions@navynews.co.uk)

Advertising:  
[advertising@navynews.co.uk](mailto:advertising@navynews.co.uk)

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

© Crown copyright

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated.  
To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)  
Or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU,  
Or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)  
Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.  
Published by Navy News, Navy Command HQ, Portsmouth and printed by Walstead UK.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 07770 088388 and leave a message, or email [studio@patn.org.uk](mailto:studio@patn.org.uk) A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in March's Noticeboard must be received by

FEB 16, 2021

Deaths

**PAC Neate, Cdr.** Cadet entry in 1944. Served on HMS Nelson in Sabang, HMS Chieftain in the Med, HMS Hornet on MTBs and MGBs in the Channel, HMS Pincher in the North Sea, HMS Trafalgar, CO of HMS Gavinton and Vernon Minesweeping Squadron, STASO to FOFMed in Malta, HMS Lion, HMS Black, MOD - DOR SOO CINCASAS Capetown, MOD - DNOT, Exec HMS Tamara and COSSEC. Died November 3, aged 93.

**Thomas Rainford, LS.** Survivor of the Atlantic and Russian Convoys, D-Day landings, and the relocation of several landing craft to the USA. Died November 28, aged 95.

**Raymond Board (Ginger).** Served 1939-1970s. Joined as a Boy Seaman in 1939 at HMS Impregnable (Devonport), transferred to the Isle of Man due to bombing in Plymouth and joined HMS Kenya in 1940. Actions included Vågsoy raid (Norway, aka Operation Archery), hunt for Bismarck, Operation Pedestal during which Kenya rammed a U-boat on the return journey and Russian Convoys PQ11 and PQ15. After the war became a Leading Patrolman (later called Leading Regulator and now Service Police). Retiring from RNAS Yeovilton in the early 1970s. Lived all his life in Seaton, Devon, and in later years was a member of the HMS Kenya Association - and the final member of the wartime ship's company - attending many reunions in Derby. Died December 23, aged 96.

**Brian James Dolling, CPO Writer.** Served from 1954 to 1978 with time on HMS Crane, HMS Blackpool and HMS Antrim. He was also stationed in Malta, 1966 and Naples, 1976. Died December 27, aged 83.

**Brian (Charlie) Madden, WO (CY).** A Ganges boy, joined in 1956 served in a variety of ships principally on the Far East Stations, but is probably best known as a Divisional Officer and Chief Instructor at HMS Mercury. As WO (CY) to Admiral Woodward during the Falklands conflict he was awarded the MSM and later distinguished himself as the Training Staff Officer at Sea Cadet Headquarters in London and appointed an MBE. He was a keen sportsman and spent many happy hours watching cricket at Lords. Brian or 'Charlie' as

he was known to his many colleagues in the RN, after a fall at home, died in QA Hospital Portsmouth on January 2, aged 80.

**Malcolm Legg, Cdr.** Served from 1969 to 2001. Did basic flying training at HMS Fulmar (now RAF Lossiemouth), and served at HMS Osprey, 824 Squadron Sea Kings embarked in HMS Ark Royal, two years in Whirlwind Mk 9s embarked in the Ice Patrol ship HMS Endurance, Assistant Operations Officer in HMS Hermes, Flight Commander in HMS Glasgow, Flight Commander & Squadron Aviator Officer to Captain F4 in HMS Avenger, Senior Observer and XO of 702 Lynx Training Squadron, Operations Officer in HMS Ark Royal and his last flying appointment was as the Commanding Officer of 829 Squadron at RNAS Portland. Directing Staff of the Royal Air Force Staff College, Bracknell. Directing Staff at the Canadian Armed Forces Command and Staff College in Toronto. Directing Staff at the Maritime Warfare Centre in Portsmouth. Heading up Doctrine, Wargaming & Operational Logistics. Received Queen's commendation for Value Service in the Air. Died December 21, aged 69. A service remembering him will be held in mid-2021. For details contact Geoff Legg on 07803 852 499.

**Ted Cockrill, LWtr.** Served from 1845 to 1948 in HMS Royal Arthur, HMS Duke, HMS Demetrius, HMS Drake, and HMS Implacable. Joined RN in 1996, member of Norwich Branch. Died January 4, aged 93.

**Thomas H Crawford, MAA.** Served in HMS Mounts Bay, Sea Eagle, Centaur, Jufair, Raleigh, Drake, Terror, Tiger, Cambridge, and Brighton. Died December 4, aged 82.

**Alan Wombell, CCY.** Served from 1952 to 1985 in HMS Ganges, Saintes, Mercury, Hartland Point, Flying Fox, Terror, Undaunted, Hermes, Intrepid, Centurion, Excellent, and Nelson. Was treasurer and membership secretary of HMS Saintes Association. Died December 17, aged 83.

**Lt Cdr Peter Railton-Woodcock.** Served in Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy. Joined RN in 1946 aged 15 years five months as an artificer apprentice. Left in Sept 1980. Aircraft engineer, accident investigator

and diving officer, serving in many shore based Fleet Air Arm establishments and at sea. Postings to HMS Caledonia, Condor (twice), Gannet, Sanderling, Fulmar, Gamecock, Falcon (Malta), Thunderer, Goldcrest, Ganges, Albion (at sea), Seahawk, Victory, and Daedalus. Emigrated to Australia in 1980 and joined RAN, serving in Nowra, Canberra, and Sydney, retiring in 1990. Died in Melbourne in late 2020. Leaves widow Berry, a former Wren, son Karl and daughter Kym, also a former Wren.

**Nigel 'Bluey' Howchin CPOMEA(SM).** Served from March 1976 to July 1989. General Service in HMS Antelope and Battleaxe, Collingwood, and Sultan. Served in HM Submarines Swiftsure (1984-1986) and Splendid (1987-1989). Died December 7, aged 68.

**George Cook, PO.** Served from February 1949 to February 1971 in HMS Amethyst, Drake, Jupiter, Ocean, Eagle, Raleigh, Bulwark, Adamant, Fife, Royal Arthur, and Minerva. Died January 2, aged 90.

**John (General) Grant. Ex POCK.** Served on Hermes, Ark Royal, Bulwark, Charybdis. Died December 12.

**Cdr Bryan H Wood.** Joined RN on September 6, 1957, as air artificer apprentice, S31 entry, Grenville Division at HMS Fisgard. Served for 37 years as air engineer at HMS Fisgard, Daedalus, Condor, Victorious, Lossiemouth, Dartmouth, Manadon, Osprey, Bulwark, Greenwich, Whitehall, RNAS Culdrose, and Yeovilton. Manager of RN Historic Flight before retiring in 2005. Awarded GSM and Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal. Member of Fisgard Association, Historic Flight, and Fleet Air Arm Association. Died January 11, aged 79.

**John Cady, REM 1** Served from 1955 to 1956 in HMS Collingwood and Vigo.

The following shipmates were all members of **Stourbridge and District Branch of the RNA.**

**Joyce Wright.** Wife of the branch president and associate member. Died September 28, aged 89.

**Reginald Malpass.** Associate member. Died November 10.

**Alan Beasley, L/Sea.** HMS Ganges boy, ships included HMS Venus. Died December 6, aged 84.

**Frederick Thompson.** Fleet Air Arm.

World War 2 and Arctic Convoy veteran. Died December 10, aged 97.

**John Barrington (Barry) Billingham, Seaman Gunner.** Died December 13, aged 89.

**Lt Cdr Evelyn R S Faulkner.** HMS Seahawk, Fulmar, Heron, Hermes, and Goldcrest. Died November 22, aged 78.

**Lt RNVR Graham McI Patrick CVO.** Died November 20, aged 99.

**Cdr John P J Roberts-West.** HMS Excellent, Ajax, Ashanti, Dryad, and Sultan. VCDS P&L. Died November 29.

**Cdr Jeremy D Smerdon.** HMS Victorious, Fulmar, FONAC, Cdr BF Cyprus, DOAE, DGNMT, DGA(N), RNC Greenwich. Died December 18.

**Capt Alan E Sturgeon.** HMS Hermes, Seahawk, President, Bulwark, Caledonia, and Sultan. FONAC. RNEC Manadon. Died December 16, aged 87.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNO

**Capt RM Francis V Allen.** RMB Stonehouse, 3, 40, and 42 Cdo RM. CTRM. HMS Centurion, 3 Cdo Bde Air Sqn. Died December 30, aged 75.

**Capt RM Michael G Gambier.** CGRM. RM Eastney, 40 Cdo RM. Died December 3, aged 86.

**Lt William Clelland.** RNC Greenwich. HMS Spartan, Defiance. Capt SM2. Died December 5, aged 86.

**Cdr Patrick B Grotrian.** HMS Lion, Excellent, Cavalier, Peregrine, Ark Royal. Weapons Dept (Naval). Died December 15, aged 93.

Submariners' Association

**Alan White, WO MEA(P).** Served 1965 to 1988 in HM Submarines Otter (66-67), Warspite (69-71), Sovereign (71-75), and Trafalgar (79). Member of Scottish Branch. Died December 18, aged 77.

**Doug Cliff, Ck.** Served Mar 1967 to Jun 1970 in HM Submarines Otus. Member of Nottingham Branch. Died December 20, aged 74.

**Robert Hunt, CC EL.** Served Jun 1955 to 31 Oct 1975 in HM Submarines Tabard, Shrimo, Tapir, Taciturn, Resolution(S), and Renown(S). Member of Basingstoke Branch. Died December 21, aged 86.

Ask Jack

**HMS Raleigh - Drake 25's - 21st June 1977:** Looking to contact fellow shipmates of the infamous class of Drake 25's and planning to have a reunion, after the dreadful COVID-19 epidemic. Already in contact with a number of classmates. Any members out there, that wishes to connect, please contact me directly. Some of us are pictured right returning from the first Gulf war.

David Cannon  
[dcannon8bells@outlook.com](mailto:dcannon8bells@outlook.com)

**HMS Arethusa:** I would like to contact three men from the ship who were onboard in 1988 and that summer took part in the Netherlands Navy Days at Den Helder. My parents met the three in a restaurant and spent a nice evening aboard their small yacht, Sovereign. The following day my parents were welcomed aboard the Arethusa. My mother died recently and I would like to surprise my father by trying to contact the three and, hopefully, they could speak to my father online. My father still has a picture of the Arethusa and my parents often spoke of that summer.

Nicoline van der Vijver  
[nvdvijver@gmail.com](mailto:nvdvijver@gmail.com)  
or my father  
[wim.souverein@gmail.com](mailto:wim.souverein@gmail.com)

**HMS Ganges Class 283, January 2 1961:** It is 60 years since we first met in January 2021. I am in touch with a number of members and we are thinking of possibly meeting up in the Birmingham area. If there are any members who are interested in a class reunion, please contact me.

Alan Barry  
[Barryaj@virginmedia.com](mailto:Barryaj@virginmedia.com)

**THE Mountbattens:** The author of the biography of Earl Mountbatten of Burma and his wife Edwina would like to talk to anyone who has information

Reunions

**738 Kings Squad, Royal Marines.** Our reunion will take place from August 12 to 14 2021. I have contacted 18 members so far but are after details of the following: Andrewartha; Bateman; Cheney; Comper; Denver; Ellis; Graham; Lambert; Merry; McFarling; Plant; Saunders.

Roger 'Taff' Sheppard  
01656 670224  
[shp9409@gmail.com](mailto:shp9409@gmail.com)

**HMS Liverpool Association:** Our reunion will be held on June 12. For membership details contact the secretary John Parker at [info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk) or call 02392 521222.

**RMBS 1/70 and 2/70 Squad.** A joint 50th anniversary reunion of 1/70 and 2/70 squads is planned for August



about them.  
Dr Andrew Lownie at [lownie@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:lownie@globalnet.co.uk) or telephone 0207 222 7574

**Portsmouth barges:** In 1972 I was a Leading Marine Engineer (Stoker) looking after the Commander in Chief's two barges at Admiralty House, Portsmouth. On a later visit for Navy Days there was no sign of them. Does anyone know what happened to them? One was a 45 footer and the other a 35 footer (old money) the engines were 2 Foden in the 45 and 2 Perkins in the 35, pictured top right.

John Pittock  
[Johnhp46@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Johnhp46@yahoo.co.uk)

**Gerald Smith and James Murphy:** I am trying to find out details about my grandfather who may have used two names, Gerald Horace Patrick Smith and James Michael Murphy. Gerald was born on August 4 1901 and died in February 1949. He served in the Royal Navy and when he died the doctor who certified his death said he was at least 20 years older than he claimed. Gerald, who was from Ireland, also



said he had saved the life of a man called Fred Key while in service and they remained friends until he died. James was born May 5 1878 in Ireland but I cannot find a record of his death. I would appreciate any help in this search.

Kay Smith  
[Smith\\_kay@sky.com](mailto:Smith_kay@sky.com) or 07887 872009.

**HMS Valiant.** My father Peter Berry served in the boat in the 1970s and 80s and I would like to have a copy of the original 'Skimmer Killer' drawing by Harry McGroarty, which features a shark jumping out of the water about to punch a frigate.

Juliet Berry  
[goolie40@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:goolie40@hotmail.co.uk)

**Anson 35s:** I am trying to contact the Scribes who joined up with me in August 1976 (D161). Our WAFU classmates managed a meet up in 2016 and we want to get the whole class together, if we can, in 2021 on our 45th anniversary. Contact Guy Musgrove on Facebook or email [guy\\_musgrove@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:guy_musgrove@hotmail.co.uk)

June 2021 (announced in December's *Navy News*) is now cancelled due to the company organising the event ceasing trading. No further reunions are planned.  
**HMS Belfast Association:** Our 2021 reunion and annual meeting will now take place on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 28-30 2021 at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol. The hotel is offering a package for two nights, which includes the reunion dinner to be held on the Saturday evening. The package will cost £168pp. For Sunday night the cost is £65pp for dinner and bed and breakfast. Bookings should be made direct to the hotel on 01454 201090 - mention HMSBA Reunion. A £20/head deposit is required with the balance payable a fortnight before the event



# HOSTILE WATERS

PLUCKING 330,000 British and French troops from the jaws of Hitler's armies in the late spring of 1940 has gone down in history.

But over the winter and early spring of 1945, the much smaller German Navy effected an ever greater evacuation than Dunkirk – one largely unknown in the West.

Perhaps as many as 2½ million people were transported from Germany's eastern provinces as the Red Army steamrollered westwards towards Berlin.

The cost was fearful. Tens of thousands of fleeing civilians died in the sub-zero trek through Germany's eastern provinces to ports, victims of cold, hunger and Russian attacks.

And while the transports shipped most refugees safely west, when vessels assigned to Operation Hannibal were attacked by Soviet submarines, the results were horrific.

Indeed, the first ship assigned to the operation, liner Wilhelm Gustloff, was torpedoed on its only journey, sunk off the Pomerania coast on January 30 – while Nazis celebrated the 12th anniversary of Hitler's rise to power.

The Gustloff went down in 75 minutes. She has gone down in history as 'Germany's Titanic'. Anywhere between 5,000 and 9,000 people died – there was no accurate record of souls on board.

Her tragic fate forms the first half of *Sea of Death* (History Press, £20, ISBN 978-07509-95078) by Swedish Titanic enthusiast/historian/collector Claes-Göran Wetterholm.

He came across the tragedy half a century ago and began to research the liner's sinking, interviewing some of the 1,250 survivors. Their accounts spare the reader no horror. Not only does the Gustloff's death toll dwarf the Titanic's, but the scenes played out as she died make the British liner's demise seem almost peaceful.

And the torpedoing of Gustloff is just one of many horrors visited upon both German civilians and victims of the Nazi regime in the final months of WW2 in Baltic waters, as recounted by the Swedish author.

Ten days later, the same Soviet submarine, S-13, dispatched the General von Steuben, again overcrowded, again off the coast of Pomerania. The death toll: 3,000-4,500 souls. With no hope of escape, wounded soldiers in the sick bay shot themselves with their pistols rather than suffer death by drowning or hypothermia.

The steamer Neuwerk was accidentally torpedoed by a German boat and sank with nearly 1,000 souls. The Red Air Force bombed and sank the Moltkefels. 'Only' 500 people were killed.

And in mid-April, with most of Germany's East overrun, the Goya was torpedoed making for Kiel from Gdynia. Just 72 people were rescued; 6,000-7,000 perished.

Yet still the Sea of Death was not satiated. In the final days of the war, the SS began evacuating concentration camps so that no prisoner should fall into Allied hands alive.

Thousands would die on what became known as 'death marches', but several thousand prisoners from camps in northern Germany, chiefly Neuengamme on the outskirts of Hamburg, and Stutthof, near Danzig (today Gdansk), were put on ships.

With Hitler already dead, three vessels – two liners Cap Arcona and Deutschesland, and an old freighter, Thielbek – waited in Lübeck Bay, their holds crammed with prisoners from more than 30 nations.

The destination of the ships has never been determined, but the Allies intercepted radio traffic which suggested the trio were carrying SS personnel, perhaps even its leaders, to Norway to continue the fight.

On May 3 1945, RAF Typhoon fighter-bombers armed with rockets and bombs attacked. All three ships were hit. The SS guards fled and were rescued. The prisoners were left to their fate.

Cap Arcona burned like a tinderbox. At least 5,000 people died, most of them the former concentration camp inmates.

Surviving crew and prisoners like Heinrich Mehrling paint scenes out of Dante's inferno.

"On the deck above us, all our comrades burned," he recalled. "After a while, the fire had no nutrition anymore. A silence of death lay upon us. As soon as we could, we tried to look up and we were offered a terrible image: more than two hundred, charred people burnt beyond recognition fused into a lump from which a horrible stench streamed."

Such chilling accounts pepper almost every page of *Sea of Death*. Few have appeared in English before and many are drawn from the author's archive/interviews with survivors.

They make for a gripping yet horrific read, and it means the victims of these final terrible months of World War 2 are far more than just anonymous statistics.

● *Civilians flee through the burning streets of Danzig (today Gdansk in Poland) as the Red Army bombards the city.*



# Before Britannia ruled the waves

ROYAL YACHTS command a great deal of affection, particularly with those closely involved in them, and one man's passion has resulted in a book about HMY Victoria and Albert III.

In 1896 Queen Victoria wrote to Prime Minister Lord Rosebery, complaining about the state of HMY Victoria and Albert II, a paddle yacht, which three years later, resulted in the naming of the new HMY Victoria and Albert III.

Now Mike Keulemans has penned *Never to Sail in Her: Victoria and Albert III, Queen Victoria's Last Yacht* (£45, Chaffcutter Books, ISBN 978-0-9560596-5-9).

With a foreword from the Duke of Edinburgh, who once stayed aboard the yacht in Portsmouth during World War 2, the 240-page tome reveals the importance of such a vessel to Queen Victoria and her large family.

The new yacht had an ignominious start. When the time came to float her out of dry dock at Pembroke, disaster struck and the vessel began to list badly, ending up with her starboard side leaning against the dock wall. Eventually she was righted and towed to moorings in Milford Haven.

A post-mortem revealed the yacht had been floated with practically no coal in her bunkers, water in only three of her boilers and in many ways still incomplete.

As soon as corrective measures had been taken, the yacht began her journey to Portsmouth, where work was undertaken to

bring her up to the standard of seaworthiness and comfort required for the Monarch.

Many involved in the project thought further alterations to the vessel would be necessary, which resulted in Queen Victoria rejecting the yacht in 1900.

Much correspondence about the vessel was sent but work continued and she was finally commissioned in Portsmouth in July 1901. She had cost £512,034.

Queen Victoria died at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight in January of that year. She had seen her new yacht only once from the windows of Osborne and had long since declared that she would never set foot aboard her.

Victoria and Albert III served four sovereigns before ending her active career in Portsmouth in 1939. Within four days of the start of WW2, the

yacht was towed out of Portsmouth Dockyard to Fareham Creek.

In 1942 the yacht was used as overflow accommodation for officers and ratings at HMS Excellent. When she was removed from her berth at Whale Island in 1949, literally hundreds and hundreds of beer cans, tins of herrings in tomato sauce, Pusser's beans, and steak and kidney pudding cans, were revealed under her hull.

Packed with detail, including the initial plans of the yacht, the book will be of great interest to many historians.

Picture: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich



## WALL SHIELDS OF ROYAL NAVY SHIPS



Hand painted on wooden base 6" x 7"

**£58.60 including UK postage and packing**  
 REDUCED PRICES given for orders of 3 or more  
 SPECIAL PRICES given for 10, 25, 50 and 100  
 CRESTED TIES TO YOUR OWN SPECIAL DESIGN  
 (minimum 50)

Specialist experience over 100 years

**C.H. MUNDAY LTD**  
 Rosemary Cottage, Churt Road, Headley,  
 Bordon, Hants GU35 8SS  
 Telephone: 01428 714971  
 email: enquiries@chmunday.co.uk  
 www.chmunday.co.uk



Reference code: NAVY



### The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society

Providing the highest standards of residential, nursing, dementia and respite care, including sheltered housing for independent living, for former seafarers and their dependents. Set in a 14 acre estate, our Surrey based care home provides like-minded companionship and support for seafarers and a safe haven for those in old age.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO NEEDS OUR HELP, PLEASE CONTACT US  
 T- 01737 360 106 E- admin@royalalfred.org.uk www.royalalfredseafarers.com



