



NAVY NEWS

JUNE 2023

DOUBLE DUTY

The ship's company of Type 23 frigate HMS Northumberland line the deck to conduct three cheers to mark the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III

See pages 16-17.

The warship took part in the NATO premier anti-submarine exercise Dynamic Mongoose in the waters between Norway, the Faroe Islands and Iceland

See page 11.

Picture: RNPOTY LPhot Finn Stainer-Hutchins



Inside: ■ Royal Marines in Sudan ■ HMS Lancaster drugs bust

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SO WHERE'S the most magical place you visited during your Service?

Iceland and its primeval beauty?

The icy wastes of the Antarctic with its stunning vistas and wildlife?

The majestic fjords of Norway, stunning in all seasons?

The buzz of the Big Apple? Pearl Harbor, redolent with naval history?

A Singapore Sling in Raffles Hotel?

Venice? St Petersburg? The sensory overload of Tokyo?

All fabulous locations redolent with memories.

But occasionally serving presents opportunities and adventures money (generally) cannot buy.

Like watching an active volcano as lava froths and bubbles lighting up the Pacific night on an island where one of the native tribes worships the King as a god and customs and costumes haven't changed for centuries.

You don't get that on a package holiday.

Or any holiday for that matter.

The island is Tanna. The volcano, Mount Yasur, a 1,184ft peak which has been erupting almost continuously for 800 years, earning it the nickname 'Lighthouse of the Pacific'.

Tanna is one of more than 80 isles which make up the Republic of Vanuata and one of the most fascinating places on the planet.

It's the size of Tyne and Wear but home to fewer than 30,000 people who live a staunchly-traditional lifestyle compared with many other islands in Vanuatu: with naked torsos, men wear nambas (penis sheaths) – and often nothing else – women grass skirts.

The south of the island is home to the Prince Philip Movement, a religious sect which believes in the divinity of the late Duke of Edinburgh... and, since his death two years ago, his son, King Charles.

Tanna islanders treated Spey's ship's company to a traditional welcome which included singing and dancing, and the presentation of traditional accessories such as woven bags and grass skirts and the drinking of kava (made from the roots of the kava plant and offered during ceremonial occasions) – scenes probably not of place in the golden age of exploration in the late 19th Century.

The greeting was actually a 'thank-you' to the sailors for their help in the wake of twin cyclones Judy and Kevin which barreled through Vanuatu

about six weeks before Spey arrived.

The international community – Australia especially – provided widespread initial aid to restore basic services and assist islanders at the end of February and beginning of March.

Locals were still rebuilding their lives in mid-April when Spey arrived with additional aid, especially large-capacity tanks to store and provide clean water to inhabitants.

As well as delivering aid, the ship took British High Commissioner Nicolette Brent and Vanuatu's Foreign Minister Jotham Napat to Tanna.

"The people of the island of Tanna have a very special affection for the UK, which is connected to our Royal Family," Ms Brent explained. "Sailing into Tanna with Foreign Minister Napat, who is from the island, really reinforced that connection and the full tribal welcome was a fitting recognition of the close bond."

The south of the island is home to the Prince Philip Movement, a religious sect which believes in the divinity of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. It is believed to have started in the 1950s and, according to the Yakel and Yaohnanen tribes, it is said the son of a mountain spirit travelled overseas to a distant land to marry a powerful woman. On seeing the respect afforded to Queen Elizabeth II by colonial officials, the group concluded that the son from the legend must be Prince Philip. Following the Duke's death, the movement said it would transfer its veneration to his eldest offspring, Prince/ King Charles, as the son of their god.

The UK's association with Vanuatu dates back to 1774 and the voyages of Captain James Cook in HMS Resolution, when he was attracted to the glow of Mount Yasur.

Spey was the first Royal Navy vessel to visit the islands since they gained independence from joint UK-French rule in 1980 – although she did sail through the territorial waters earlier in her patrol.

The High Commissioner said the timing of Spey's visit to the islands "could not have been better".

She continued: "HMS Spey provided a visible platform to reinforce our messaging that we are committed to our partnership with Vanuatu – especially in areas such as disaster response and recovery, climate change and defence and security."

Mr Napat said the Royal Navy's visit was "an important symbol of Vanuatu/UK partnership as our Government leads the national recovery effort. We hope that this visit is just the start of a regular programme of visits by our British friends."

For many of Spey's crew, Vanuatu and Tanna especially has been the highlight of the patrol ship's Indo-Pacific odyssey to date.

"You see things like this on the TV or in a film and as much as you know they're real, you never really expect to have the opportunity to see one in real life, never mind getting to reach the crater," said Petty Officer Hannah Chenery of climbing Mount Yasur.

"Being able to have these experiences is one of the main reasons I joined the Navy – definitely one more item ticked off the bucket list."

In the town of Lenakel, locals joined the sailors for a football match comprising mixed teams.

"Seeing the local lads wearing HMS Spey's football strip was a really proud moment for us," said Engineering Technician Ben

Cheetham.

"They're so happy we're here and we are too – football, or any sport, brings people together and that's exactly what's happened here. We're leaving with a new set of friends and hopefully we can come back for a rematch soon."

Spey's Commanding Officer Commander Michael Proudman presented Tanna's chiefs with a White Ensign as a thank you for their warm and enthusiastic welcome.

"To receive such a welcome was a huge honour for us and an unforgettable experience. I know I speak for all of Team Spey in thanking our hosts for the incredible welcome ceremony – we could not be more humbled and grateful for allowing us to visit your beautiful country, and for embracing us so warmly with your culture and traditions," he said.

For those of you unfamiliar with the geography of the southwestern Pacific, Vanuatu is one of a series of island chains which lie at a roughly 45-degree angle, roughly parallel to the northeastern coast of Queensland, Australia.

Over the past few weeks, this patch of Oceania and the archipelagos among it

have become Spey's patrol area, beginning with the Commonwealth nation of the Solomons, some 900 islands to the east of Papua New Guinea, the most famous of which is Guadalcanal, scene of some of the most protracted and bitter fighting of WW2 in the Pacific.

Eight decades later – and much like many Pacific Island nations – the Solomons are victims of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

The economic impact of this activity is estimated to be in excess of \$300m US (£240m), with the Indo-Pacific region home to 50 per cent of global GDP, the fastest growing regional economy in the world.

In addition, it threatens the bio-diversity and environment around this Pacific paradise.

So Cdr Proudman and his team made use of their time in the capital Honiara to call on the control room of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's to learn how the Royal Navy, and specifically the capability of patrol vessels – Spey's sister HMS Tamar is also operating in the Indo-

Pacific region – can support regional maritime security efforts.

"We came here to listen and to learn. Solomon Islands is an important regional partner for the Royal Navy and the United Kingdom – our visit here is testament to that, and of our commitment to the region and its priorities."

Sailors attended a Divine Mercy Sunday Mass at the Holy Cross Cathedral in Honiara at the invitation of Archbishop Cardone, joining some 3,000 church-goers expected to celebrate one of the most important days in the Christian calendar. The service included performances from traditional Solomon Islands dancers and music and left sailors with some of the most colourful memories of Spey's deployment.

"We were delighted to receive such a warm and generous welcome and the



HMS SPEY, I PRESUME...

opportunity to participate in the Divine Mercy Sunday Mass. Full of joy and vibrancy, the experience was uplifting for members of HMS Spey who attended," said Royal Navy Chaplain Mick Uffindell, chaplain to the Patrol, Underwater Exploration and Diving Squadron currently deployed with Spey.

Many of the island-hopping visits Spey or her older sister HMS Tamar have conducted in their two years in the Pacific have focused on the potential of trouble in paradise – some form of natural disaster such as the cyclones which struck Vanuatu (thankfully not as



brutally as they might) or policing to stop illegal fishing. But what if the that trouble is ramped up a few notches? What if there's something like a Krakatoa causing not just massive damage and devastation but wider regional instability requiring not merely international aid, but international peacekeeping or even conflict resolution.

Such was Spey's next mission in the French overseas territory New Caledonia, the focal point of Croix du Sud.

Staged every two years, it's France's major Pacific exercise, drawing in 19 nations, 3,000 sailors, soldiers and aviators led this year by the assault ship FS Dixmude, flagship of the French Navy's 2023 circumnavigation, Operation Jeanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc).

More than 100 UK personnel took part in the exercise – including an infantry platoon from 1 Battalion Royal Gurkha Regiment – while New Caledonia became the fictional island of Lamparos, devastated by a tsunami and in urgent need of humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

Among those coming to her aid, Fiji, USA, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, with HMS Spey representing the Royal Navy on the latest phase of her five-year mission to the Indo-Pacific.

"The numerous training opportunities, including boarding, helicopter winching, beach reconnaissance, towing and assistance exercises enabled training in the multinational domain and allowed all participants a better understanding of each other's strengths and, through personnel exchanges, gain an insight into facilities and capabilities of different

nations," said Royal Marine Major Martyn Heenan who is on exchange with the French Navy as an amphibious operations planner.

Spey's gunnery teams were able to sharpen their skills during live firing and force protection exercises, whilst the aviation and medical teams practiced winching from the flight deck.

For officers of the watch the exercise provided an opportunity to work closely with their international counterparts during a series of advanced manoeuvring, surface warfare exercises, including simulated attacks on HMS Spey by "enemy forces" in small fast attack craft, as well whole-ship training during firefighting and search and rescue exercises.

For the duration of Southern Cross, a team from the United States Coast Guard was embarked in HMS Spey, providing their expertise during a series of boarding training exercises with Royal Navy and Marine Nationale sailors. The team were on hand to assist French sailors as they boarded Spey and sprang into action searching the ship for 'criminals' and

'illegal cargo' hidden by their British colleagues.

The team, from the Maritime Safety and Security Team Honolulu, Hawaii, said "the involvement between all countries involved in Croix du Sud has been remarkable – 19 nations coming together in one place is a really great achievement and has provided some excellent training opportunities. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with every country involved in the exercise and we are extremely thankful to have had the opportunity to ride on board HMS Spey".

Commander Mike Proudman, HMS Spey's Commanding Officer, said his sailors had enjoyed – and benefited from – the intense two-week workout.

"Working side-by-side with our close allies and partners, we've strengthened our ability to operate at the heart of an international task group," he added.

"Whether providing maritime security or delivering humanitarian aid and disaster relief, my ship's company has worked incredibly hard throughout the exercise and has demonstrated the very best of the Royal Navy on the international stage."

Next stop Devonport. Home?

No, Auckland, New Zealand, and yet another tick off the bucket list.

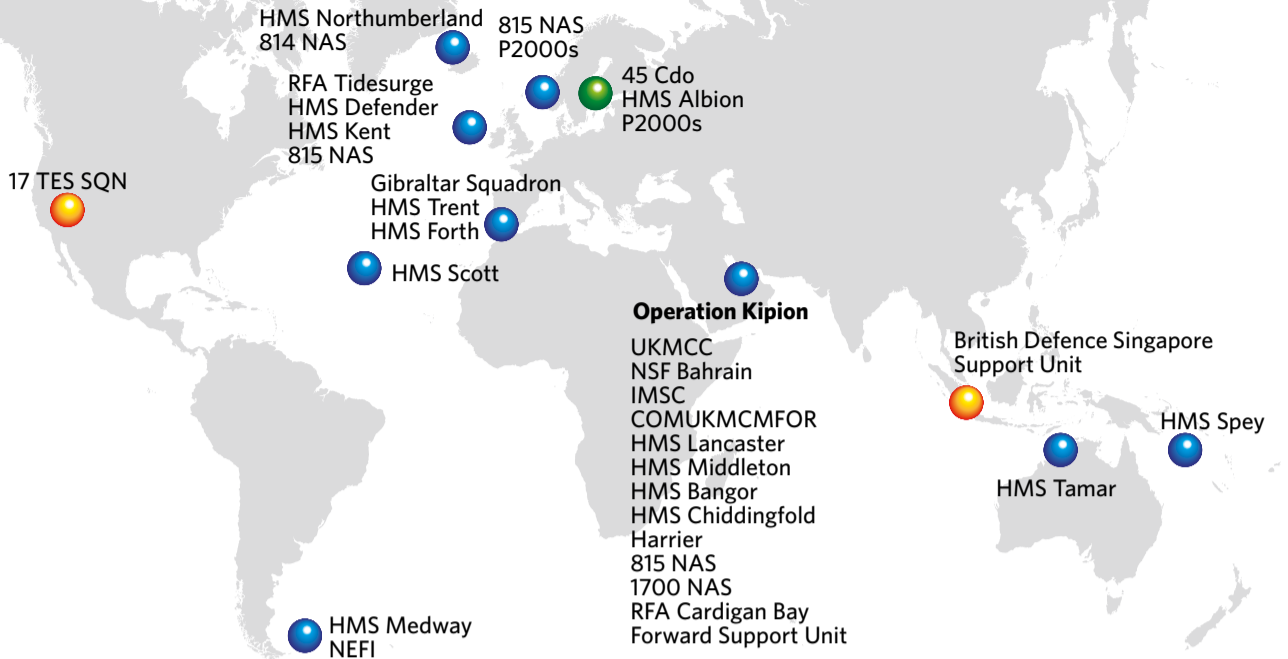
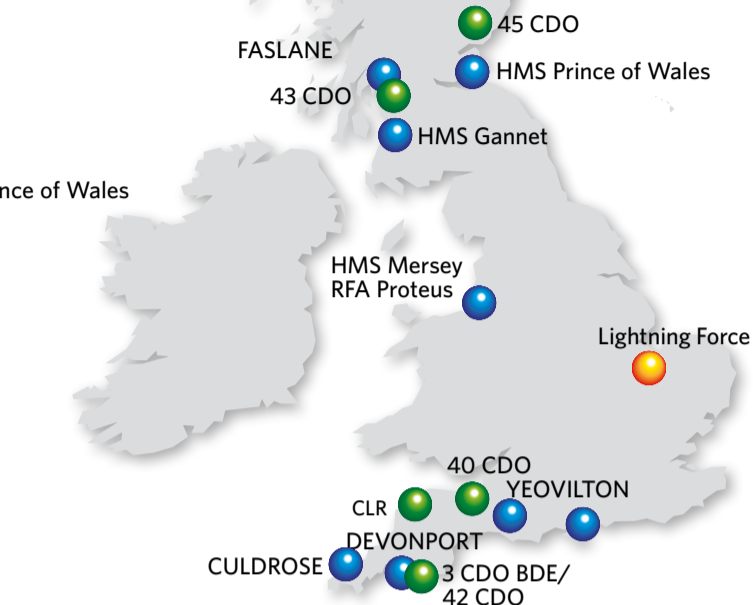


Pictures: LPhoto Chris Sellars, HMS Spey



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Richmond 814 NAS
 HMS Hurworth 815 NAS
 HMS Tyne 824 NAS
 HMS Iron Duke 825 NAS
 HMS Severn RFA Tiderace
 HMS Portland RFA Fort Victoria
 HMS Dauntless
 Coastal Forces Squadron
 XV Patrick Blackett
 Project Wilton



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



GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

ROYAL Navy frigate **HMS Northumberland** takes centre stage this month (see pages 1 and 11) as the Type 23 frigate took part in NATO's premier exercise Dynamic Mongoose in the waters between Norway, the Faroe Islands and Iceland.

During her deployment, the ship's company of the Type 23 frigate paid tribute to mark the accession of King Charles III by lining the decks for a three cheers. Hundreds of Royal Navy personnel were on duty in London for the coronation (see pages 16-17).

Wildcat helicopters from **815 NAS** honed their skills with their newest weapon systems for **Exercise Tamber Shield** in the waters around Bergen in Norway (see centre pages).

Also off Norway were four ships from the Coastal Forces Squadron – **HMS Archer, Puncher, Pursuer and Smiter** – as they made history by operating in the Arctic Circle for the first time (see page 19).

On duty in much hotter climes were Royal Marines from **Bravo Company, 40 Commando**, as they played a crucial role in supporting the UK Government's efforts to evacuate British nationals from Sudan (see pages 14-15). Royal Navy photographer **PO Arron Hoare** writes about his experiences during the deployment.

Also supporting the evacuation was **HMS Lancaster** (see page 5), as she arrived in Port Sudan to assist British citizens and those from partner nations. Days later the Type 23 frigate seized 3.2 tonnes of hashish (see page 5) as she resumed her regular security patrol of the Arabian Sea.

Patrol ship **HMS Spey** joined a French-led multinational exercise in the Southern Pacific (see pages 2-3) where she worked with some 19 nations.

A Royal Navy amphibious task force led by **HMS Albion** arrived in Stockholm after defending Sweden's complex coastline from a mock invasion (see page 13). The amphibious flagship led the Littoral Response Group into the Baltic Sea for Exercise Aurora.

The first Kenyan Marines are ready for operations after completing world-class training laid on by the UK's Royal Marines (see page 9). A ten-strong specialist training team from Taunton-based **40 Commando** put the KMCU through 12 weeks of intensive training, like that faced by recruits at the Commando Training Centre in Devon.

HMS Dauntless is ready for operations after completing a rigorous test of her upgrades (see page 6). Nine intensive months of maintenance, trials and training came to a successful conclusion with the Portsmouth-based warship passing all demanding trials, tests and finally a gruelling assessment of her crew and all weapons and systems – clearing the Type 45 destroyer for operations.

Also back is **HMS Iron Duke** (see page 6) after more than 1.7 million hours of labour were poured into her by shipwrights, engineers, technicians and experts – both civilian and Royal Navy. The Type 23 frigate has begun sea trials to test all the changes and improvements carried out since she last sailed under her own power in 2017.

The name of the new Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance has been revealed – **RFA Proteus** – as senior NATO leaders visited Faslane to see the UK's nuclear deterrence force (see page 6).

Commando fliers took to Devon's skies to provide vital support to one of the biggest youth events in the UK (see page 34). The Merlins of **845 Naval Air Squadron** once again were the jacks-of-all-trade over Dartmoor as some 2,400 teenagers took on the gruelling Ten Tors challenge.

Finally, tributes have been paid to the Navy's former most senior chaplain, the **Venerable Martyn Gough**, who has died at the age of 57 (see page 28). Martyn served the Navy and nation for nearly a quarter of a century, latterly as the Service's most senior Anglican, and as Chaplain of the Fleet.

MORE STRIKE POWER REQUIRED

THE UK's Armed Forces – led by the Royal Navy – must invest in Artificial Intelligence, drones and technology to face down the threats they will encounter in the future.

In a wide-ranging speech at his annual Seapower Conference at Lancaster House in London, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key announced more striking power for future warships and continuing investment in drones and autonomous systems.

The head of the Royal Navy told the conference – a two-day gathering of naval leaders, politicians, analysts, strategists, academics, shipbuilders and defence/technology industry leaders from around the world – the nation had to rise to the challenge, especially that posed by Russian submarines as “coming second” was not “a desirable option”.

He explained: “As we watch the increasing deployment by Russia of their most modern submarines, some of the very quietest in the world, you would expect me to be investing in the cutting-edge technology anti-submarine capabilities that allow us to detect, find and if necessary defeat them.”

Over the past 12 months the UK has invested heavily in the underwater battlespace with the advent of new hunter-killer submarine HMS Anson and the acquisition of two new ships to protect undersea cables/infrastructure (RFA Proteus) and deal with the future mine threat (RFA Stirling Castle).

And Admiral Key praised the nation's defence industry for responding to a “call to arms” to support today's Navy – and build tomorrow's: 16 ships and six submarines are currently on the order books or under construction.

But with today's naval battlefield extending “from seabed to space” and “breath-taking” advances in data and Artificial Intelligence, the Royal Navy had to be “deliberately ambitious” with its goals for exploiting AI.

The First Sea Lord continued: “It is causing us to reimagine warfare, creating dynamic new benchmarks for accuracy, efficiency and lethality.”

“The goal is enhanced lethality and survivability through the deployment of AI-enabled capabilities.”

As for more conventional crewless tech, the Royal Navy is pressing ahead with pilotless helicopters and quadcopters and increased use of jet-powered Banshee drones.

Admiral Key wants to go further – with longer range, longer endurance drones capable of both gathering intelligence and striking at targets.

Another vital element of increasing the striking power of the Fleet is the Mark 41 missile silo. The launcher is being fitted to all eight Type 26 frigates, allowing the new warships to potentially use a variety of current and future anti-air, anti-surface, ballistic missile defence and strike missiles, including the RN's Future Offensive Surface Weapon.

The launchers will also now be fitted to five Type 31 frigates – under construction on the Forth.

As for the current Fleet, with the HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales' carrier strike groups



at its heart, and with other additions to the Fleet, plus innovation, training, the expertise and commitment of personnel mean the Royal Navy is a ‘Premier League’ force in the mid-21st Century.

“As a result of investment over the last two decades we now operate two fifth-generation aircraft carriers, nuclear powered ballistic and attack submarines a range of aircraft, escorts and support ships to allow us to deploy globally, as well as fielding an elite amphibious fighting force.”

“There are very few navies in the world which can do this and so I am delighted that we remain in that first tier.”

And he underlined the need to champion – and recognise – the vital role the sea, the trade which flows on it and data and pipelines which flow beneath it, plays in the security and prosperity of the UK.

“We must make our voice heard and increase the recognition once again about the vital importance of the sea for our island nation and the global community,” Admiral Key concluded.

“This is what a seapower state does, what I believe the United Kingdom is and should be and must be into the future and I look forward to the part that we will play in continuing to drive it forward.”

The admiral's full speech can be read at: royalnavy.mod.uk

The First Sea Lord's Seapower Conference was part of the broader London Seapower Series, several events celebrating the maritime world, bringing together those with an interest in it to consider the challenges and opportunities of our age, and

celebrating some of our closest relationships.

From the Royal Navy's standpoint, aside from the conference:

It marked the 50th anniversary of the ongoing agreement between the Royal and Royal Dutch Navies and Royal Marines-Netherlands Marines Corps to train, exercise and deploy alongside each other with a conference at HMS President, near Tower Bridge.

Its first dedicated technology experimentation and trials ship, XV Patrick Blackett, is berthed at HMS President with her crew, scientists and technological experts demonstrating some of the equipment they are assessing, including cutting-edge navigational system which will serve the Navy whenever it cannot access satellites.

Senior Royal Navy officers took part in the Centre for Grand Strategy's Future Maritime Leaders' Laboratory at King's College London.

They were involved in an interactive seminar-like session to debate three subjects – naval engagement and national diplomacy; deterrence at sea in the age of competition; and the impact of innovation on navies – with around 60 next-generation maritime leaders.

And the Royal Navy also celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Polaris Sales Agreement, one of the United Kingdom's most significant inter-governmental agreements with the United States which remains fundamental to this day to the UK's ability to deliver the Continuous At Sea Deterrence, carried out by the Royal Navy's four Vanguard-class submarines.

Picture: LPhot Belinda Alker



BALES OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

THIS is why we maintain a major warship permanently 'somewheres east of Suez'.

Versatile. Agile. Mobile. **Versatile.** Three different missions in a fortnight.

Agile. Slipping seamlessly from one operation to the next, each one requiring entirely different.

Mobile. Each task was hundreds of miles apart on opposite sides of the Arabian Peninsula, a distance covered in a matter of hours.

The most pressing act was to evacuate British citizens – and other entitled civilians – from Sudan as civil war swept through the country, the capital Khartoum and environs especially.

While Royal Marines worked with the Army, RAF and civilian authorities to fly people to the safety of Cyprus from an air strip just outside Khartoum (see pages 14-15), HMS Lancaster was alerted on patrol in the Arabian Sea to make a beeline for Port Sudan – the country's principal gateway to the oceans.

No Royal Navy vessel has visited Port Sudan in 40 years – ships generally continue straight through the Red Sea and into the Mediterranean/Indian Ocean depending on their direction, with the occasional visit to Jordan, Egypt or Djibouti.

As a result, says Commander Tom Johnson, Lancaster's Commanding Officer, "our knowledge of this port and pictures of the jetty were really stale".

To fill in four decades of missing information, the RAF were called in, with a Reaper drone committed over the harbour as part of wider

support from pilotless craft over Sudan, providing real-time imagery of evacuation areas.

Reapers were used to highlight potentially-dangerous areas to those on the ground and assisted the identification of buildings which could be suitable for temporary shelter, medical facilities or locations to process passengers.

The information gathered by the drones was fed to the frigate as well as military and Government teams in Port Sudan.

Hundreds of people arrived in Port Sudan by road, with the security of their journey bolstered by members of 3 Parachute Regiment and 42 Commando Royal Marines, who disembarked from HMS Lancaster.

The Coral Hotel became a processing hub as personnel from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office and UK Border Force dealt with evacuees, many of whom had endured a 17-hour journey from Khartoum in a convoy.

Mohammed Kadouk, born in Cardiff and a graduate of Aberdeen University, made the 460-mile journey to Port Sudan with his wife and three-week-old daughter.

"Once I got here [Coral Hotel reception centre] it has been really good. My priority is my family, I need to get them somewhere safe, get them settled and then get back to work," he said.

From the hotel, eligible people were transported to the port where they were supported for safe onward travel to Jeddah.

The crew of HMS Lancaster were on hand to provide meals, welfare – nappies and baby food – and general support, in particular 314 people

who were due to be evacuated on the USNS Brunswick and had eaten little, or nothing, since fleeing the Sudanese capital.

With just four hours' notice Lancaster's galley team found themselves preparing an extra 300 meals: chilli pasta, mac and cheese and lamb biryani.

They could not have done so without

- (a) a well-stocked larder
- (b) the commitment of the ship's company
- (c) the Reaper intelligence.

High-definition imagery from the drones was used to assess the best moorings, as well as routes in and out of port for the naval vessels.

"For me as the captain to have that knowledge provided by Reaper, and imagery of the surrounding area allowed us to plan our force protection," Cdr Johnson explained.

"It also helped us to understand the route between where my ship is and the Coral Hotel where all the affected persons were being kept, which was really important."

Having spent around a week in Sudan, Lancaster returned to her pre-evacuation patrol... and struck lucky almost immediately as she encountered a suspect dhow – and pounced at dusk.

The result? 3.2 tonnes of hash seized, £2.5m which won't be funding criminal activities somewhere.

Operating as part of the international Combined Task Force 150 which is dedicated to anti-smuggling and anti-terrorist activities in the region, came across the suspicious craft at last light.

Lancaster's Royal Marines detachment promptly boarded the vessel and immediately discovered a large quantity of packages on deck.

The commandos were soon joined by a team of sailors who carried out an in-depth search in which nearly 200 packages were discovered, each containing around 11kg of cannabis resin, commonly known as hashish.

"From first discovering the ship, then on through the night until the early hours, Lancaster ship's company worked tirelessly and with little rest to ensure that three tonnes and £2.5m worth of cannabis resin will not reach the streets," said Warrant Officer Gaz Head, HMS Lancaster's Executive Warrant Officer.

"Everyone involved, be it the Royal Marine or Royal Navy boarding team, the boat crews, the drugs embarkation team, operators in the operations room, engineers in the ship control centre and on the bridge, or simply those picking up the slack elsewhere in the ship and keeping the internal mechanism moving, should be justly proud of this significant seizure and the effort given that made it possible."

It's the first drugs bust by the ship since she arrived in the Middle East in the autumn, taking the place of her sister ship, HMS Montrose, which scored five successes totalling nearly £50m last year. "I am exceptionally proud of my team for their efforts last night which resulted in over 3 tons of narcotics being seized," said Cdr Johnson.

"This success is shared with our international partners in CTF 150 who provided essential support to the operation"

The Royal Navy is leading CTF

150 and Lancaster's seizure is the latest success for the multinational security mission, which more than three dozen navies contribute to, providing ships to police in excess of two million square miles of ocean.

Commanded by the Royal Navy's Captain James Byron from Bahrain, CTF 150 has seized around £40m of illegal narcotics under his leadership.

"Working with HMS Lancaster was quite special, bringing together the UK Component Commander, a UK warship, and the UK command of CTF 150," Captain Byron said.

"This operation shows the flexibility and professionalism of HMS Lancaster brilliantly; one day supporting the evacuation from Sudan, and the next countering illicit drugs smuggling."

For those who might use the waters east of Suez for criminal means, the sight of a Royal Navy – or coalition – warship either causes them to abandon their cargos and flee... or finish on the receiving end of a boarding.

For merchant ships, the warships are a reassuring presence, guarantee of a safe passage.

Fast forward a few days from the hash seizure and Lancaster was sailing in company with the UK-registered tanker Stena Impero, which knows the dangers of these waters all too well; four years ago, she was seized and held in Iran for a couple of months before being released.

No such trouble for the 50,000-tonne ship on this occasion: a safe passage with Lancaster as her shepherd.

All in a month's work for the Royal Navy's Gulf guardian.



BACK IN THE GAME



HMS DAUNTLESS is ready for operations after completing a rigorous test of her upgrades.

Nine intensive months of maintenance, trials and training came to a successful conclusion with the Portsmouth-based warship passing all demanding trials, tests and finally a gruelling assessment of her crew and all weapons and systems – clearing the Type 45 destroyer for operations.

Her regeneration – which included three months of trials around the UK to test her enhanced engines last summer – means she is now ready to be deployed on global operations later this year.

“I am immensely proud of what the ship’s company have achieved, to be able to take a ship with a new and unproven propulsion plant and turn her in to a credible air defence destroyer ready for global operations in a period of just nine months is an enormous achievement,” said Commander Ben Power, Commanding Officer of HMS Dauntless.

Dauntless completed that training off the South Coast in only four months.

Weapons systems fired during training began with general purpose and heavy machine guns, through to the 30mm cannons, ramping up to the main 4.5 inch main gun and Phalanx radar-controlled gun, which is capable of spitting out four-and-a-half thousand rounds per minute at incoming aircraft, missiles or fast-attack boats.



Testing also included tracking targets with a very low radar cross section, designed to replicate a small incoming missile – a crucial part of the air defence destroyer’s capability.

Both Dauntless’ multi-function radar (the spinning ‘spiky egg’ atop the main mast) and Long Range Radar (the large black slab on the rear mast) proved they were more than capable of tracking such a target, whether it was flying at altitude like a fighter-bomber or across the waves like a sea-skimming missile.

This phase was followed by the ship’s company being put through their paces during five weeks of tests, ensuring they were ready to perform at the highest level on the front line.

This took place under the exacting glare of the



Fleet Operational Standards and Training teams at Devonport Naval Base – responsible for readying ships and their crews for the rigours of front-line duties.

The training increased in complexity throughout, with other vessels and helicopters added to equation as the ship defeated threats simulated by aircraft and boats in a range of environments, including in the air, on the surface and even underwater.

The Type 45 also showed it was able to perform well in a disaster relief and crises response role.

Dauntless carried out a ‘rescue’ from a stricken merchant vessel and provided engineering support following an incident at sea, before an evacuation operation in which the ship brought people escaping conflict to safety – providing food, water and medical care.

The centrepiece of the training was the disaster relief exercise, deploying sailors ashore to a village and providing the humanitarian aid needed following a natural disaster, including providing fresh food and water, extinguishing fires and repairing critical infrastructure such as communications networks, electricity supply and water supply.

“Having joined at the beginning of the year, I have focused on the delivery of the Operational Sea Training to the ship’s company,” said Executive Officer Lieutenant Commander Aaron Revell. “This five-week package has given the crew the opportunity to show we have incredible people ready and able to operate HMS Dauntless.”



Return of Iron age

FOR the first time in more than five years, HMS Iron Duke – one of the greatest names in British military and Royal Navy history – is back at sea as the nation’s most advanced frigate.

After more than 1.7 million hours of labour were poured into her by shipwrights, engineers, technicians and experts – both civilian and Royal Navy – the Type 23 frigate has begun sea trials to test all the changes and improvements carried out since she last sailed under her own power in 2017.

Crew moved back onboard last November, since when they’ve been working with the team at Babcock to add the finishing touches to the massive revamp.

Following years of planning and a collaborative endeavor from skilled engineers, technicians and shipwrights, the warship left Plymouth as the latest ship to complete her upkeep.

Iron Duke – known affectionately as the Iron Duck – has undergone a more complex overhaul than any other Type 23 frigate to date going through the life extension (LIFEX) programme in Devonport, not least structural work to the hull almost twice that of any previous refit in the class.

The work will enable the mainstays of the Fleet, designed in the 1970s and early 80s and originally intended to serve for 20 years, to remain at the forefront of naval operations until their successors, the Type 26s and 31s frigates begin to enter service later this decade.

Upgrades to key electronic equipment, including communications, navigation and weapon systems were carried out to counter the latest threats, diesel generators and other key ancillary systems have been updated.

As well as machinery, IT systems onboard have also been overhauled, as have the living spaces, so they can meet the needs and expectations of mid-21st Century sailors.

It’s the first time at sea for many of the Ship’s Company as well as many who are new in rank and keen to take ownership of their new positions at sea.

“Joining the ship gives me a unique chance to

experience first-hand what it’s like to bring a ship out of refit,” said Seaman Specialist Ollie Walker. “It hasn’t been an easy road but now it feels extremely rewarding.”

Marine Engineer Kieran Bond added: “Familiarisation with the machinery prior to going to sea has given me an advantage, I have gained an appreciation of what it takes to deliver a ship to sea. Being involved with the trials has been a huge benefit.”

Commander Charles Wheen, HMS Iron Duke’s Commanding Officer hailed a “hugely exciting and important moment” in the history of the Portsmouth-based frigate, named after the Duke of Wellington and modern-day successor to the nation’s flagship at the greatest clash of battleships at Jutland in 1916.

“HMS Iron Duke is back at sea and ready to start an intensive trials and training programme. She is in great shape following the refit, with some exciting new capabilities, and our challenge now is to sharpen those capabilities and to restore the ship to front-line operations in the shortest time possible.

“Bringing a ship out of refit is no picnic and it puts considerable pressure and relentless demands on a ship’s company. Achieving ‘Ready for Sea’ is testament to the months of hard work the team have put in and I am incredibly proud of their efforts. Now the fun work starts.”

Gary Simpson, Managing Director of Babcock’s Marine Support business added “Our team has shown relentless commitment and passion to get the job done and to deliver significant enhancements to the ship for the people who work selflessly to keep our country safe every day.

“We look forward to continuing to support HMS Iron Duke’s success in future operations and to stand alongside our Royal Navy partner as we support the Type 23 life extensions of her fellow Duke-class ships.”

HMS Iron Duke now faces a challenging period as both the ship and her crew undergo rigorous trials and testing to prepare for the future demands of Royal Navy operations both at home and around the globe.



RFA looks to Greek god Proteus

MEET the Old Man of the Sea – and the new guardian of the underwater infrastructure of the UK and her allies.

The name of the new Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance was revealed – RFA Proteus – when senior NATO leaders visited Faslane to visit the UK’s nuclear deterrence force.

Proteus – in Greek Mythology, the god of rivers and bodies of water, son of Poseidon and often referred to as the ‘old man of the sea’ – is currently with Cammell Laird in Birkenhead completing her military conversion.

The ship, which began life as oil rig support vessel Topaz Tangaroo, will be crewed by around two dozen RFA sailors, plus 60 or so Royal Navy specialists operating autonomous systems and over underwater surveillance kit; 99 per cent of the world’s data travels along undersea cables.

Monitoring/protecting those cables is an entirely new



mission both for the RFA and Royal Navy – unlike the nuclear deterrent which the Submarine Service has been operating continuously since 1969... and will continue to do so into the 2060s at least with Britain committed to the next-generation of Dreadnought boats.

Defence Minister Baroness Goldie hosted members of the North Atlantic Council and NATO Military Committee on a tour of Faslane, including the rare opportunity to look around a V-boat.

Since 1962, the UK has declared its nuclear deterrent to the defence of NATO, meaning that all NATO allies benefit from its protection under collective defence.

NATO’s 2022 Strategic Concept reaffirmed that the UK’s independent nuclear deterrent contributes significantly to the overall security of NATO. Operating every minute of every day, the nuclear deterrent protects the UK and our Allies from the most extreme threats.



HMS Mersey joined the Eurovision party in Liverpool to underscore Britain's support for Ukraine.

The patrol ship berthed a stone's throw from the 'Eurovision village' with sailors taking part in events ashore and onboard. They were joined by the Royal Marines Corps of Drums who added military precision, pomp and ceremony to proceedings with a number of short performances onboard Mersey.

Beyond the musical celebration, the event was an opportunity for the UK's military – and Eurovision fans in general – to show their support for, and solidarity

with, Ukraine under the overarching theme of 'United by Music'.

The ship's chefs cooked traditional fare. And nightly HMS Mersey was bathed in Ukrainian national colours – yellow and blue – courtesy of spotlights.

And the ship hosted a 'Power Up' networking event aimed at Ukrainians living in or evacuated to Northern England to gain employment, joining forces with the Power Collective CIC and Northern Power Women, led by Honorary Captain Simone Roche.

A second 'Power Up' hosted Liverpool John Moores STEM students and URNU

cadets to build confidence and raise aspiration whilst championing diversity, inclusion and social mobility.

"It is great to be back in our spiritual home away from Portsmouth and back on the River Mersey," said the ship's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander James Mitchell.

A few weeks prior to Eurovision, HMS Mersey personnel paraded through Sefton for the first time.

The Portsmouth-based warship cemented a 20-year friendship with the people of Sefton by accepting the Freedom of the Borough as they visited Merseyside

for the first time since lockdown.

Fresh from a six-week stint in the Baltic working with regional navies to assist and support security and build up the UK's ability to operate seamlessly with our allies and partners, including the Estonian Navy, the River-class vessel berthed at Liverpool's Cruise Liner jetty for their five-day stay.

Sailors were invited to join Sefton councillors for a formal ceremony in Bootle Town Hall, when the Freedom Scroll – which allows HMS Mersey's sailors to march through the streets of the borough with bayonets fixed, Colours flying and

led by a military band – was presented.

And three days later they were back, marching in a circle (well square route) around the heart of the borough – including past the wartime home of legendary U-boat killer Captain 'Johnnie' Walker in Stanley Road.

It was in part due to Walker's exploits and links with the district – his ships operated from Gladstone Docks and the town hall possesses memorabilia connected with Walker and his men – that civic leaders decided to bestow their highest honour on the 21st-Century patrol ship.



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KENYA DO IT?



THE first Kenyan Marines are ready for operations after completing world-class training laid on by the UK's Royal Marines.

The newly-created Kenyan Marine Commando Unit will be an elite fighting force with the ability to conduct specialised amphibious operations to weaken and disrupt threats in the region, and take the fight to al-Shabaab.

A ten-strong specialist training team from Taunton-based 40 Commando put the KMCU – whose motto is 'Quell the Storm' – through 12 weeks of intensive training, like that faced by recruits at the Commando Training Centre in Devon.

Royal Marines designed a 500m assault course at Mtongwe Navy Base in Mombasa and shared their vast knowledge and experience, passing on valuable skills.

The training is not just about combat ability and physical prowess, though, the Kenyans have also been taught about the commando mind-set, values, ethos and language, which

makes Royal Marines distinct from other forces.

Captain Toby Robinson, in charge of the 40 Commando training team in Kenya, said: "It's been a fantastic experience working alongside our Kenyan partners and a privilege to be involved in this historical moment, with the establishment of their Marine Force."

"I was most impressed with their motivation while on course, which made them a pleasure to teach."

"Looking forward, the marines will soon be applying their new skills, providing security and stability along the Kenyan coastline and potentially wider Indian Ocean."

"After taking the first course through, I feel a close partnership with the Kenyan Marines and will be tracking their progress in the coming years."

The 26 marines officially completed their basic training last month and will go onto counter terrorist threats and protect Kenya's peace and prosperity.

This first cohort have kick-started a self-sustaining training cycle, whereby the Kenyan Navy will eventually be able to train their own Marine Commandos.

Training ended with a final exercise that saw the marines carry out reconnaissance on an 'enemy target' after an amphibious landing, feeding information to commanders for an attack.

Their success during this mission proved they are now ready for front-line operations.

The United States have provided the Kenyan Marine Commando Unit with equipment, while the UK has been responsible for training them to the highest standards.

The creation of this capability is a significant milestone that underscores the strong and historic defence relationship between Kenya and the UK.

It demonstrates the UK's commitment to supporting Kenya as an anchor of regional stability.

One of the new Kenyan Marines, a senior private named Peter, said: "The experience has been good. I never expected to interact with the UK military. It has challenged me, made me grow and makes me part of an elite force."

Another, Nelson, said: "I'm looking forward to being part of the most elite force in Kenya. I'm very happy. It takes a lot to be a part of this. You have to be determined, willing to sacrifice and persevere because it's not easy."

Talking about working with the Royal Marines, he added: "Those guys are the best I've ever met and their training is about the basics, growing you to become the best you can be."

Another, Eric, added: "It's changed my mind-set, my physical fitness. We've learnt so much and we've also learnt some language, including saying 'hoofing' when something is excellent. We used to say route march but now we say 'yomping'. I've loved being on the course."



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Royal Navy aircrew prepare to lash down a Royal Navy Merlin on HMS Northumberland.
Pictures by RN Phot of the Year, LPhot Finn Stainer-Hutchins



HUNTERS ASSEMBLE

ROYAL Navy and NATO warships are better prepared than ever to hunt underwater threats in the North Atlantic after the alliance's premier anti-submarine warfare exercise.

Submarine hunter HMS Northumberland used her advanced sonar and specialist Merlin helicopter from 814 Naval Air Squadron during training designed to strengthen allies' ability to track and destroy threats lurking beneath the surface.

Northumberland can hunt the most modern submarines at considerable distances and locate them beyond the range at which a hostile submarine might launch an attack on allied task groups.

The waters between Norway, the Faroe Islands and Iceland were the setting for Dynamic Mongoose, the alliance's largest test of its anti-submarine forces in the North Atlantic.

Fifteen surface ships from ten NATO nations spent 11 days facing down three 'enemy' submarines. A Royal Navy submarine was among the trio of allied subs playing the adversary, while seven maritime patrol aircraft provided further aerial support.

"Geographically, the North Atlantic and adjacent waters are areas in which we routinely train, but also undertake live operations," said Northumberland's most experienced submarine hunter, Chief Petty Officer (Underwater Warfare) Chris Griffiths.

"To be able to bring this experience and knowledge to the table to support our NATO allies is beneficial to all, as we learn valuable lessons through working with our allied counterparts."

Iceland was the main host for the exercise, with Canada, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the United States and the UK taking part.

Dynamic Mongoose was invaluable training for Northumberland and her helicopter, which was operating over the Norwegian Sea for the first time this year: water conditions such as salinity and temperature play a key role in the ability to find or locate 'the enemy below'.

Skills and experience will be employed on front-line operations and future exercises,



CLOCKWISE: HMS Northumberland during Dynamic Mongoose; sailors spell out CIIIR for the King's coronation on Northumberland's flight deck; RFA Tideforce replenishes ORP General Tadeusz Kosciuszko

having given younger sailors their first exposure to working with NATO and wider allies.

"It's great to be working alongside our NATO allies as part of the alliance's premier anti-submarine warfare exercise," said HMS Northumberland's Commanding Officer, Commander Will Edwards-Bannon.

"Hunting submarines is a team sport and Dynamic Mongoose is an invaluable opportunity to not only train as an individual unit, but also share expertise across the alliance – developing our collective defence across the underwater battlespace."

Keeping the allied task group supplied and

ready for action was Royal Navy tanker, RFA Tideforce – she completed an impressive nine replenishments during the exercises, including for the first time on a Polish frigate, ORP General Tadeusz Kosciuszko.

Tideforce's flight deck was also home to a submarine hunting Merlin helicopter from 814 Naval Air Squadron throughout, which completed numerous sorties in support of the exercises.

RFA Tideforce's Commanding Officer, Captain Chris Clarke said: "Participating in a large NATO exercise has been a welcome addition to Tideforce's busy schedule."

"Operating in the North Atlantic both for ship, and any embarked squadron, is always a tough environment; you need to expose yourself to its challenges if you are to be sure of your capabilities when necessary."

HMS Northumberland marked the Coronation of King Charles III while at sea, with crew watching proceedings beamed live on to televisions in their messes.

The sailors also formed a 'C III R' on the flight deck and conducted a 'cheer ship' – when sailors line the deck as a mark of respect – before heading to Iceland's capital Reykjavik where the ship was dressed all over.



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DEFENDING SWEDEN

A ROYAL Navy amphibious task force defended Sweden's complex coastline from a mock invasion.

Amphibious flagship, HMS Albion, led the Littoral Response Group (North) (LRG) into the Baltic Sea for Exercise Aurora – the largest Swedish national defence exercise in more than quarter of a century.

Royal Marines made quite the impression during three amphibious landings on the Nordic nation's complex coastline, with Swedish prime minister Ulf Kristersson stating that he'd like the commandos in the country 'next year and every year'.

In all, the LRG worked with hosts' armed forces and those from Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia and Lithuania, with Albion also home to a number of US Marines throughout.

Marines from 45 Commando stormed the beaches of Gotland – a strategically important island in the middle of the Baltic – and on the Stockholm archipelago, a complex network of 30,000 islands in the approaches to Sweden's capital.

In front of the Swedish premier, defence minister Paul Jonsson and military figureheads, Royal Marines crashed ashore on the island of Korso, on the eastern edge of the archipelago, showing allies' ability to stop an enemy invasion.

The politicians and military contingent also visited Albion at sea, as bonds between the UK and Sweden deepen, while there is a blossoming partnership with the 4th Marine Battalion based in Gothenburg.

Commanding Officer, Captain Marcus Hember, said: "Aurora has been a great proving ground in demonstrating the flexibility of amphibious ships like HMS Albion, enabling fast and lethal strikes by our embedded Royal Marines in 45 Commando whilst seamlessly supported by the ship and its crew.

"We've demonstrated our ability to exercise with our regional partners adding significant capability and shown we can 'turn up when needed'."

There was also a night-time raid on an airfield in Oskarshamn, in Southern Sweden.

Commandos launched from Albion, landing at midnight and linking up with the 35th Swedish Regiment, before causing havoc to the 'enemy' airfield.

Major Lee Stewart, in command of X-Ray Company of 45 Commando, said: "The scenario here in the Baltic is that an adversary has begun an invasion of Sweden. "The UK, US and other partner nations have been called upon to help defend Sweden and defeat the enemy."

He added: "Aurora is one of the best exercises we've taken part in for some time."

At sea, the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces Squadron swarmed around the LRG, developing tactics to support landing

operations. There were also a range of maritime warfighting exercises. Three of the Royal Navy's fast patrol boats pushed the boundaries of endurance while working with Albion and NATO and Joint Expeditionary Force allies.

The Baltic mission comes off the back of a busy time in Norway, where the P2000 patrol boats – some of the smallest vessels in the Royal Navy from the Portsmouth-based Coastal Forces Squadron – operated in the Arctic Circle for the first time in their 35-year career.

They followed that up by working with Wildcat helicopters and Norwegian missile craft in the confined waters around Bergen to test two new air-to-surface missile systems.

Now, three of the boats – HMS Charger, HMS Explorer and HMS Trumpeter – attached on to Exercise Aurora, Sweden's largest national defence exercise for more than 25 years.

The three ships worked with amphibious flagship HMS Albion, and her Royal Marines landing craft, and ships from Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to see how they could refuel and resupply at sea – without the need to come into port.

It ultimately increases the boats' time on operations – where they are needed most – and proved successful as the trio worked NATO and Joint Expeditionary Force allies on amphibious activity, maritime security and task group operations.

They supported reconnaissance teams, carried out intelligence-gathering operations and completed sustainment and replenishment work.

Lieutenant John Patterson, Commanding HMS Charger, said: "Whilst it is always great to deepen our ability to work with allies and demonstrate NATO resolve in an increasingly contested operating area, Exercise Aurora was also hugely beneficial from a Coastal Forces Squadron perspective.

"It afforded the opportunity to innovate and experiment, as the squadron looks for new ways to work with different units and sustain ourselves at sea.

"This included refuelling via landing craft under way, conducting personnel and stores transfers with Albion and looking for new methods of refuelling with HMS Albion also.

"Everyone on the squadron hopes that such cooperation paves the way for future development, as the CFS looks to near future, with more P2000s taking part in the forthcoming Baltops 23 exercise, but also to opportunities, exercises and operations further forward."

The boats operate with a core ship's company of just five sailors and spend the bulk of their time in home waters, patrolling and safeguarding the UK coastline and helping to train crews of larger warships such as in the art of fending off fast-attack craft.



UP AND AT IT: HMS Charger, HMS Explorer and HMS Trumpeter operating with HMS Ablion in the Baltic Sea



LURKING: HMS Albion sits off Sweden's coastline as Royal Marines land ashore



COMETH THE HOUR

COMETH THE COMMANDOS

INTENSE fighting broke out in Sudan in mid-April between the army and a powerful paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces.

At the heart of the continuing violence is a power struggle.

As the situation deteriorated in the country, nations started to close down embassies and evacuate staff.

The UK were no different.

On April 23, Defence Secretary announced the UK had carried out a military operation alongside allies to evacuate British Embassy staff and their dependents from capital Khartoum.

The operation involved 1,200 personnel from the Royal Marines, 16 Air Assault Brigade and the RAF.

But that wasn't it.

In Cyprus, a force led by 40 Commando were awaiting – eagerly – the order to deploy into Sudan to rescue more than 2,000 British nationals caught in the violence.

Among them were the Combat Camera Team (CCT) of 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group. Sergeant Matt Sidwell, PO Phot Arron Hoare and LPhot Mark Johnson were primed to head to Sudan, ready to capture the evacuation on camera.

By 26 April, the images from the CCT were splashed across the front pages of national newspapers with the evacuation in full swing at Wadi Seidna airport just outside Khartoum.

Commandos, Army and RAF worked relentlessly together in the extreme heat to fly evacuees on flights back to Cyprus for onward travel back the UK.

We join PO Phot Hoare as events in Sudan unfolded...

Eighteen. That's the number of hours between given the order to deploy and landing in Cyprus. The Combat Camera Team, just like everyone else in the military is used to fastballs but this was incredibly quick.

Our three-man team deployed from our base, 30 Commando in Plymouth, along with the rest of the Rapid Extraction Task Force. Primarily Royal Marines from 40 Commando and under their command, eventually the force would comprise units of every description from the UK's Armed Forces. Each unit bringing different skills that would be required.

Cyprus will be our base for the next few days. We prepare and hope that we're needed. Shall we go, shall we

not, it's always the worst bit. The lads from 40 Commando are itching to go, the word that they will not be required is spreading and they're desperate to be called in to action. After days of stop starts, early calls, packing and final preps, the call is made and we're given the green light.

I'm on the first flight, we'll be the first to land in Sudan. We land in Wadi Seidna Airforce Base, Sudan, in what the RAF refer to as a tactical landing, this means we get on the ground as quickly as possible, let's just say it's not the softest of landings.

Fully kitted with body armour, weapons and day sacks to survive for the next 48-72hrs without replenishment. I'm carrying 40kg of weight most of the guys are carrying a lot more, primarily water and ammo. The Hercules C130 transport plane comes to a halt and the rear door opens,

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immediately the heat floods in and hits you. The heat will be our biggest enemy over the next six days, with temperatures reaching 46°C.

Over the next several hours the force secures the area and then starts to build a base of operations, whilst creating the layout for the evacuation. Five hours after landing and we have our first incident, the medical team spring in to action and help a man unconscious and not breathing correctly. A handful of Royal Marines instantly form a perimeter so the team can carry out emergency treatment in safety. This is one of the worst things you can photograph, it just doesn't feel right, and I had to remind myself that it's these images that best highlight how desperate the situation on the ground is, I do my best to hide his face in the imagery. I don't think this guy would have survived if our medics hadn't been there, thankfully they were.

I photograph and video the first eight hours and then I'm on a flight back to Cyprus to send out the first images and video, I can't do this from Sudan. When I return less than 12 hours later (four hour flights each way), the amount of work

put in by everyone is clear, the area is organised, more so its calm, the ground is understood and controlled. We're not only looking after our own citizens, we're running security along with the Sudanese for the entire airfield, we have more feet on the ground than everyone else combined, and our help will be vital for the extraction of civilians from many other countries.

Over the course of the next few days the number of evacuees increases along with the flights to get them out. The work is non-stop, rotation of manpower is vital but even when you get a break, the heat makes rest difficult. Also, we've packed lightly, some have roll-mats but many are sleeping directly on the floor, this isn't bad planning, this is travelling light and acknowledging conditions are going to be tough, people get no more than a few hours' sleep a night. No one complains, this is not an exaggeration or military line, the troops just get on with it, whatever the task. More than that, most of them do it with a cheerfulness – yeah I know that line – but it's true, they just want to help people.

SOME MOMENTS THAT STAND OUT.

A Royal Marine running at full pelt to get medical assistance for a collapsed civilian, the best comedy comment coming from his oppo 'he never runs', this exemplifies how everything to help these people is done with maximum effort and a humour that reflects the calmness of thought.

A young soldier looking after an infant who had no one else, the baby would cry as soon as someone else tried to pick her up, so the soldier travelled back to the UK with her. A soldier from the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment entertaining queues of evacuees in the heat, this small act showed we were in control and helped to calm the crowds. One lady had six young children, a group of Royal Marines from Bravo Company, just wouldn't accept that this family couldn't be helped, assisted by the chaplain, their perseverance paid off and instantly they'd changed the lives of these kids forever.

More and more desperate people arrive at the airport, and at times their situation is hard to deal with, especially

if children are involved. Everywhere you look there is a member of the force handing out water, guiding a family, holding a baby, entertaining a child, or providing security.

I think Lieutenant Colonel Oliver Denning, 40 Commando's Commanding Officer and ground commander at Wadi Seidna Airfield, summed it up best: "It's been a privilege to serve with every single individual who is stood here right now. That is what has made it for me. It's been people serving other people humbly and with compassion. I've never operated in such an integrated organisation. Cap badges just haven't come into this. It's been about our task force and our intent and our mission of what we needed to do. Every single individual here has contributed to that humbly."

As I sit typing this on the plane home, most of us seem to have returned to normal, all the heightened energy and feelings have been replaced with normality, but the people of the Rapid Extraction Task Force shouldn't forget they pulled off something pretty spectacular.

2222, that's the number of lives changed.

ROYAL MARINES COMPLETE EVACUATION OF 2,222 PEOPLE AS SUDAN IS PLUNGED INTO VIOLENCE



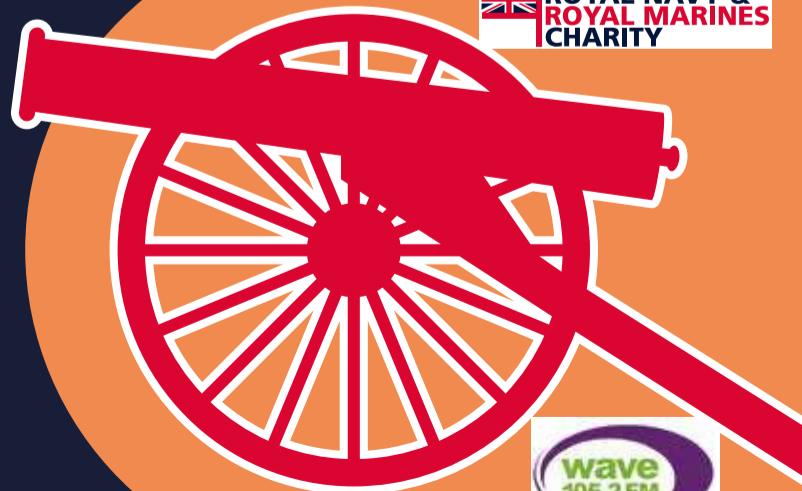
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PRIDE AND PAGE DANNERY



HUNDREDS of sailors from all branches of the Royal Navy proudly marched through and lined the streets of London for His Majesty the King's coronation.

Men and women of all ranks and branches from the Senior Service, including the Royal Marines, Fleet Air Arm, Submarine Service, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Royal Navy Reserve were in the capital last weekend.

Nearly 900 personnel took part in the momentous occasion which saw King Charles III and Queen Camilla crowned.

After weeks of practise and training, the sailors donned their ceremonial uniforms and were part of 7,000 members of the Armed Forces who were in London for the coronation.

It was a day to remember for all personnel who travelled to London with them accompanying their Majesties from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey and back in two separate processions.

Speaking ahead of the big day, Able Seaman Atupele Mkulichi, from Malawi, said: "This is a monumental occasion, one I am very, very proud to be playing a part in. It's a privilege to be involved. I feel I am not just representing the Navy, but the Commonwealth as well."

Twenty-year-old Able Seaman Sam Stoward from Royal Tunbridge Wells, added: "There's not been a Coronation for 70 years so to be able to take part is immense. To take part in something this big, in front of the whole world is such an honour. I hope we can make it a really special Coronation."

The Royal Navy's involvement came in the Coronation Procession after the service at Westminster Abbey – the largest military ceremonial operation of its kind for a generation.

Royal Navy Merlin and Wildcats joined fellow aviators from the Royal Air Force and Army Air Corps in the traditional flypast down The Mall and over Buckingham Palace.

Meanwhile, ships and units deployed around the UK and the world also marked the occasion with on board 'street parties' and gun salutes.

HMS Triumph is currently deployed on operations. Each mess on the submarine held a cream tea party and sang the national anthem. They also held a Very British Quiz.

Sailors on HMS Northumberland gathered to watch the coronation service while at sea while personnel on RFA Cardigan Bay, currently in the Middle East, and sailors on HMS Forth, in Gibraltar, also celebrated.

For the Navy, the parade was a chance to honour and celebrate 'one of its own': the then Prince of Wales served between 1971 and 1976, rising to command minesweeper HMS Bronington before returning to Royal duties.

Lieutenant Tom Bridges, who trains marine engineers at HMS Sultan in Gosport, was second-in-command of the Guard of Honour.

"His Majesty the King is head of our Armed Forces. He is the boss. But he is also one of us – he is a sailor, he is a Royal Navy officer and I know that the Royal Navy did him proud," he said.

• See pages 30-31 for stories of veterans who served with King Charles.



Pictures Main picture: Sailors and Royal Marines on parade down The Mall; above anti-clockwise: A 21-gun salute at HMNB Devonport; Sailors on Type 23 frigate HMS Northumberland watch the Coronation Service; Personnel wait at Fareham train station on their way to London; Wildcat and Merlin helicopters fly to London for the fly past; HMS Spey dresses ship; 21-gun salute at HMNB Portsmouth; Sailors on HMS Diamond watch the occasion in their mess; Royal Marines Band march through the capital; Submariners on HMS Triumph watch the service while deployed on operations.



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Arctic adventure



FOUR of the Royal Navy's smallest ships made history by operating in the Arctic Circle for the first time in their 35-year careers.

His Majesty's Ships Archer, Puncher, Pursuer and Smiter – all belonging to the Coastal Forces Squadron – battled the freezing conditions of northern Norway during exercises alongside NATO allies.

They sailed from Portsmouth to Harstad – 150 miles inside the Arctic Circle – to take part in Exercise Joint Viking, training for Norway and its allies to defend its frontiers and NATO's northern flank in the face of a modern threat.

The boats operate with a core ship's company of just five sailors and spend the bulk of their time in home waters, patrolling and safeguarding the UK coastline and helping to train crews of larger warships such as in the art of fending off fast attack craft.

But this spring four of the squadron travelled along the coasts of Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark to reach the stunning fjords of Norway.

Their arrival marked a milestone for the Coastal Forces Squadron, whose headquarters are in Portsmouth, and demonstrated the flexibility and robustness of the 20-metre-long Archer-class small ship and their crews.

"This deployment marks a watershed moment for the Coastal Forces Squadron, not only have we breached the Arctic for the first time we have integrated seamlessly with the Norwegian Coastal Rangers to deliver operational effect where needed," said the squadron's Commanding Officer Commander Richard Skelton.

"This a clear declaration of intent to support our allies and partners in non-traditional means. Not to mention it was the sort of adventure you join the RN for."

During Exercise Joint Viking, the four P2000s integrated with the Norwegian Coastal Forces (KJK) to conduct joint operations. This included the insertion of small teams from both the KJK and the Royal Marines ashore via Zodiac boats, in a blizzard and at night.

They then had to return covertly at a later time to collect the teams after their mission was complete, embarking them and their Zodiac for the return trip.

HMS Puncher and Smiter also set another first by being the first Squadron units to conduct a personnel transfer with a Norwegian submarine, HNoMS Ured, while underway, embarking one of their submariners to return them to port.

Lieutenant Beth Humby, Commanding Officer of Smiter, said: "The ship's company have responded brilliantly to the flexible nature of our tasking, from tactical insertion of combat teams to submarine escorts in some extreme weather. Integration with the Norwegian Coastal Rangers has been invaluable in allowing us to develop our own tactics and procedures."

While in Norway, the boats supported the wider Joint Viking task group which gave them the chance to sail with amphibious flagship HMS Albion and HNoMS Ured, led by HNoMS Skjold while a pair of F-35 stealth fighters flew overhead.

HMS Pursuer then supported the KJK with an amphibious boarding demonstration with the Crown Prince of Norway HRH Magnus Haakon present on a Norwegian CB90 fast combat boat.

Moving back to more traditional Coastal Forces Squadron tasking, the ships were asked to carry out force protection for the amphibious task group as well as being used to defend a strategic area from a hostile submarine.

See next page for the P2000s working with Wildcats



Pictures: LPhoto Bill Spurr



Clear blue skies, snow-capped mountains and the sun beating down onto glistening waters on a balmy April afternoon; you'd be easily forgiven for thinking you were anywhere other than the so-called 'rainiest city in Europe'.

But in this picturesque set up, you only need to lift your eyes slightly above the hazy horizon to catch a glimpse of the Royal and Norwegian Navies hard at work at Haakonsvern Naval Base and the surrounding air and sea space, just south west of Bergen.

The only thing breaking the serenity is the growl of one of four Wildcat helicopters from 815 Naval Air Squadron, based at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset.

That, and one of the two fast Royal Navy P2000 patrol vessels quietly loitering away from the predatory gaze of the Wildcat, in the depths of a fjord.

And the fjords are exactly what have drawn the 90-odd air and ground Royal Navy personnel to Norway – for Exercise Tamber Shield.

Here, the RN are testing out the playground of the fjords of Bergen, under the Joint Expeditionary Force, the partnership of northern European nations, including the UK and Norway, committed to regional security.

As anti-surface warfare specialists, it's 815 NAS that have been deployed to Haakonsvern to battle the nimble fast patrol boats of both the UK and Norwegian navies.

That's why Lieutenant Commander Sammy Haynes, Senior Observer for 815 and Detachment Commander, believes they're the right team for the job.

"We are the only naval asset with a missile capable of destroying fast-patrol boats, that's why we're doing our training here."

Referring to the potent new Martlet and heavier, longer-range Sea Venom missiles that the Wildcats cradle, the exercise aims to test and refine tactics in an unfamiliar and challenging arena.

While it's not the first time in Norway for many of 815, their bread and butter is usually served with a sprinkling (read: abundance) of snow, seeing them combat the challenges of cold weather warfare. In Bergen, the aim of the game is quite different.

There's no denying that finding ships hidden in fjords is a challenging skill.

For Lieutenant Commander Ross Gallagher, Vengeance Section Commander of 815 NAS, this exercise has been one to put the squadron through their paces.

"There's a lot to be said for flying around in bad weather and becoming comfortable in that environment but nothing beats sunshine and blue skies. From an achieving training aims perspective, it's better because you have to think less about the weather.

"I've been quite fortunate in that this is the third time I've been up here in the last year or so – it's nice to see the different nuances of operating in the Arctic Circle versus operating further south and how things differ slightly.

"Certainly, there's much more of a focus here on us being deeper into the fjords structure, operating in the narrower waterways rather than more blue water coastal operations.

"It's nice to test our skillsets and abilities outside of the sort of running that we would normally do."

Just one look out of a window on the base will show you there's mountains as far as the eye can see, the team here have had to learn how RN technology performs differently and the challenges that come with that. It's where the Norwegian Navy come to the rescue.

"They've taught us a huge amount," says Lt Cdr Haynes. "We don't really have any fjords in the UK, maybe in the top end of Scotland but not really like you find round here so that's probably been the main learnings from them, how we go about trying to find them in very, very difficult terrain."

So, why Bergen specifically? Well aside from the unexpectedly glorious weather, views and world-class facilities, the fjords lend themselves to a grand old game of hide and seek – solid practice for real-life warfighting scenarios.

Bergen's rugged coastline and the 180-mile operating radius, offers more than just Scandi postcard sights and instead, the myriad of waterways and inlets present a strong challenge of finding not only the P2000s – HMS Archer and Pursuer (pictured) – but the Norwegian's prized Skjold-class patrol boats, the corvettes.

It's a game of cat and mouse.

We've spent the past couple of days on the prow in the air, familiarising ourselves with the depths of

the fjords and building up to today's sortie.

Now, a pairing of two of the four helicopters is to demonstrate how we find our 'red (enemy) forces', played by the P2000s, and put what they've learnt to the test.

Vengeance – this is Scandal. The juddering of take-off rattles through us but before we know it, we're soaring and on the hunt.

Working in a pair, and with the added pressure of Commander Wildcat Maritime Force onboard, it's time to track down the 'baddies' on the boats.

Gliding through golden hour, it would be easy to forget that you're not just on a sunset cruise until the scratching of the radio signal kicks in and a quick look at the screen shows a far from grainy image of exactly what we've been looking for.

Four miles away and blissfully unaware, a P2000 is in sight and about to lose the battle.

We've got you. Stealthy and effortless, you could almost miss it, but the teamwork at play here between the two aircraft has enabled them to beat the 'rabbit warrens' of the fjords and successfully secure the target.

Job done.

For Lt Cdr Haynes, working in pairs offers a real advantage, despite its challenges.

"Two aircraft give you more than double the use of one because one of those aircraft has so much more capacity in order to drive it. You can send yourself down rabbit warrens when you're just on your own if you don't have that other aircraft giving you the overview," he said.

"It's great to have a mutual support, someone to watch your back, literally, to make sure they're not coming up behind you as well. It's more complicated but it's definitely more rewarding."

The exercise has seen the squadron clock up over 200 flying hours (that's eight whole days airborne) and develop an invaluable and intimate knowledge of the Norwegian's backyard.

But it's clear that the team have learnt more from their Nordic comrades than just anti-surface warfare tactics.

Seamless integration and effective communication were the aim – but how do you achieve that?

Lieutenant Commander Anthony 'Johno' Johnson spoke of the socialisation between the navies including a sporting event held for team bonding –

and a bit of healthy competition.

"It was a bit of an Olympiad!" he said.

It seems putting our pilots and sailors through their paces out in the air and on the water didn't stop on the simulated battlefield for the Norwegian Corvette Squadron – they won every event.

"They took it very seriously. The Viking mentality really shone through, and I actually really learnt a lot from the sporting event," said Lt Cdr Johnson.

The buzz on the base is evident, and not just from the purr of the Wildcats. The crew from 815 are excited to be here, especially 21-year-old Air Engineering Technician Louis Hanner, from Wirral, who thought the opportunity was "too good to be true".

"I think it's an amazing opportunity. If you think about it, not many people would ever get the chance to even fly in a helicopter, never mind working on it."

This year sees the 150th anniversary of the Norwegian fast-patrol boat force. Celebrating this feat, Exercise Tamber Shield holds value in its naming alone.

The namesake of the exercise, Norwegian Rear Admiral Ragnvald Tamber – fondly referred to as the 'Nelson of fast-patrol boats' and awarded a British Distinguished Service Cross for his achievements – means it seems especially appropriate that the two weeks has seen real success between the fast-patrol boats, just as Tamber himself did.

With Skjold – meaning 'shield' – reflecting the class of Norway's Corvette fast-patrol boats, Tamber Shield was born.

"This is not something that's been done in years and years so it's nice for a lot of the more junior people, who haven't seen much of the world yet or seen much of how other navies operate, just to see something a bit different from how we do things," said Lt Cdr Gallagher.

"There's always something to learn from how somebody else does something and how we can influence some of the things they do here to make us better, or to share some of the knowledge we have about operating aircraft to collectively try and make us all better."

And maybe, if Norway's new sunshine coast continues to flatten its usual reputation of wet weather, it won't be the last time it welcomes members of the squadron – even if just for a holiday.



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The Princess Royal inspects the class of Cunningham 22/32 at their passing-out parade at HMS Raleigh

Pictures: LPhot Unaisi Luke

Double duty for Anne at Raleigh

TWENTY-FIVE sailors were formally welcomed into the Naval family by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal as she took the salute at HMS Raleigh.

Princess Anne was Guest of Honour at the latest Passing Out parade for the newest sailors joining the Fleet – the class of Cunningham 22/32: weapons and marine engineers, warfare specialists, police officers, and a qualified dental nurse.

It's the first time in six years that The Princess Royal has visited the Torpoint establishment where, among other activities, civilians are turned into sailors before embarking on their professional training.

She met Service, civilian and contractor staff who help deliver and support world-class training, as well as talking to a selection of recruits at various stages of their Royal Navy journey.

Having overcome challenges, both physically and mentally, the recruits spoke about improving individually and collectively, and recognising the importance of teamwork - describing the experience as both rewarding and enjoyable.

"I see The Princess Royal as a role model and an example on how I, as a female in the Royal Navy, can reach the highest ranks," said Recruit Brodrick from Bristol, in the fourth week of her training.

Recruit Whewell, originally from Warrington and in the Rehabilitation Division said: "It made me proud to put on the uniform and fully affirmed my identity in the Royal Navy."

Princess Anne subsequently took the salute and presented the training prizes and service awards as the families of those passing out looked on.

"It was a real privilege to be on parade in front of The Princess Royal, and it's hugely rewarding to see these men and women evolve into effective members of the Royal Navy," said Guard Officer Chief Petty Officer Al Lowe.

"All the training staff wish them luck as they start the next phase of specialist training."

Captain Jane Roe, HMS Raleigh's Commanding Officer, added: "All Passing Out parades are special, but to have The Princess Royal here was a great honour for all who took part. Standing on the parade ground on completion of training is a proud occasion for recruits, instructors and the families and friends watching in the stands.



Clockwise from above, Long Service award recipients at HMS Raleigh; the Princess talks to training staff members; the Princess in conversation with some of the trainees



"I wish Cunningham 22/32 every success as they embark on the exciting career ahead of them."

As well as welcoming a new generation of sailors to the Royal Navy, Princess Anne also recognised six senior ratings for – collectively – nearly 200 years' service.

The sailors, all living in the South West and serving on the training staff at the New Entry Training establishment in Torpoint, Cornwall, have had their outstanding service marked with awards of Clasps to their Long Service and Good Conduct medal and Valedictory Certificates.

Petty Officers Matthew Hocking and Stuart Donaldson both received the first clasp to their Long Service and Good Conduct medals having both clocked up a quarter of a century serving their nation.

And Warrant Officers First Class Ian Bailey and Justin Newbury were presented with second clasps after completing more than 35 years' service.

"It was an absolute privilege for all of us to receive our awards from The Princess Royal, and an honour to meet her personally and talk to her as she congratulated us on our service," said Ian.

The Princess Royal also presented two Golden Valedictory Certificates on behalf of the King and the Admiralty Board – signed by the First Sea Lord – to Chief Petty Officer Robert Woolley (37 years in the RN) and Petty Officer Steven Allington (42 years' service); the latter also received the Long Service Recognition Award, given to the small proportion of personnel who have served for 40 years or more.



Families 'ambushed' into tour of submarine

ROYAL Navy submariners welcomed their loved ones to their workplace when HMS Ambush held a families' day at HM Naval Base Clyde.

The Astute-class vessel – one of five currently in service with the Royal Navy and base-ported at HMNB Clyde – opened her hatches and welcomed over 120 family members onboard for a guided tour.

Commander Chris Bate, Commanding Officer of HMS Ambush, said: "HMS Ambush is one of the most sophisticated and advanced submarines in the world, however it cannot operate without a team of highly skilled personnel."

"Hosting our families onboard provides a unique opportunity for the crew to illustrate to loved ones life onboard a submarine, giving them a better understanding of the professionalism required and why, we, as submariners feel such a sense of pride."

"It is also a chance to say thank you to our families, whose support is vital in maintaining the morale of personnel onboard."

This is the first time in a few years that it has been possible to bring families on to the Naval Base and give them some insight into how their loved ones spend their time at work.

As well as been shown where the submariners eat, sleep and live while they are deployed, they were also shown some of the sophisticated equipment onboard including sonar and optronics systems in the control room. The crew members tried to take their families through 'a day in the life' of a submariner and wannabe



submariners could even try a submarine escape suit for size during the tour.

Chief Petty Officer Gregory was delighted to be able to show his family round the submarine.

He said: "This is a great opportunity to show my family where we work, giving an insight into what we do and a small way of saying thank you for the support they provide to us whilst we are deployed"

The Astute-class submarines are the largest, most advanced, and most powerful attack submarines ever operated by the Royal Navy and they travel all over the globe, taking part in training serials with our allies and keeping all of us safe. Just recently, HMS Audacious returned to HMNB Clyde from a record-breaking patrol.

HMS Ambush was launched on January 5, 2011 and arrived at her homeport of HM Naval Base Clyde for the first time in September 2012. All seven of the Astute class boats will eventually be based on the Clyde.



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Two sailors and Royal Marine celebrate their centenaries in style



Stan Thomas was visited by sailors from HMS Forward to mark his birthday; George Notley is flanked by Dave Kersley and Dave Saxby for his 100th



Tom recounts days of being led by Fleming

THREE Royal Marines travelled to Toronto in Canada to help one of their own mark his centenary.

Marine Tom Boneham, a former member of 30 Assault Unit, deployed to Algeria during World War 2 to prepare for the invasion of Sicily – led by Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond.

30 Assault Unit were tasked with stealing enemy intelligence, and this was their mission during the invasion of Italy.

Tom remembered he "could see the smoke coming from the top of Mount Vesuvius".

He was champing at the bit to deploy however, at the last minute, a shoulder injury stopped him from going.

Major Ric Cole, WO2 Mathew Dewsnap and Marine Walker were the surprise guests at a party to mark Tom's 100th.

"With his friends Christine, Jacob and family member Simon, we sat and talked for hours sharing stories, asking questions and listening to Tom's history of the time of the formation of the modern Commandos," said Mne Walker.

Tom shared stories of his beloved dog that he smuggled onto the ship in his personal kit bag, his time in Algiers and of being both shot and stabbed.

Much to his surprise, it was not a Nazi sniper who had shot him but a fellow soldier, whilst cleaning his weapon.

During the discussions there was a mention of Hitler's infamous Commando Order. The order offered no commandos the benefit of surrendering to save their own life or that of their oppos. Tom believes this was a mistake by Hitler, as when he received the news of this in Algiers it only made him and his Commando brethren even more keen to go and take it to the enemy.

Maj Cole presented Tom with some gifts, including a Yomper, a Globe & Laurel, a Beret, a letter from the Commandant General RM and the original style of commando flashes that he had worn.

Maj Cole read a speech to commemorate Tom's service and congratulate him.

Mne Walker presented Tom with a birthday cake – and Tom thanked everyone and recited a poem by William Shakespeare.

Afterwards, a moment of silence before Tom turned and asked 'do you happen to have a bayonet? With knuckle dusters attached!'

The request was met with laughter and the phrase 'Once a Marine, Always a Marine' sprang to mind.

MILESTONES MARKED

MANY happy returns to two men who served their nation in its darkest hour and marked their 100th birthdays in nautical style.

Sailors from Birmingham's Reservist unit HMS Forward joined a family celebration marking the milestone for former gunner Stanley Albert Thomas in Solihull.

And in Salisbury, Arctic and Atlantic Convoy veteran – and oldest member of the town's Royal Naval Association branch – George Notley was surrounded by friends and fellow former sailors to mark his big day.

Dressed in No.1s, Forward's Able Seamen Laura Stewart-Hammond and Dillon Cavil added a little present-day Royal Navy recognition to Stanley's celebration in the West Midlands.

Stan was one of three brothers who served their nation between 1939 and 1945. Two went into the Navy, a third with the Army in North Africa. All survived the conflict, although eight decades on, Stan is the last of the trio still with us.

He served as an able seaman gunner – first with destroyer HMS Ilex for more than two years, then a draft in excess of four years to HMS Guardian, a netlaying vessel which supported operations in the Mediterranean.

Stan's son-in-law Mark Forty said the centenary found a letter he received from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key thanking the gunner for his World War 2



George with his letter from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key; Stanley gets a kiss from AB Laura Stewart-Hammond



service to be "most touching" and was full of praise for Laura and Dillon, who gave up time from their weekend to join the veteran's party.

"The expression on his face said it all when they appeared around the corner to people singing happy

birthday, holding the cake!" said Mr Forty.

"In true naval tradition, he noticed how well their boots were shining and how smart they looked."

George Notley's naval career spanned a tumultuous 33 years from joining as a boy in 1936 to leaving at the height of the Cold War and moon landings in 1969.

His wartime service thrust him into the most hazardous of duties on convoy duties in the Arctic and Atlantic.

He would also have seen action in the Pacific, but the war with Japan was effectively over by the time his ship arrived in Singapore in 1945; instead he helped return prisoners of war back to the UK.

He's also one of the last survivors of Operation Pedestal, the crucial convoy in the summer of 1942 which demonstrated the resolve of the Allies to sustain Malta.

The convoy suffered heavy losses – George witnessed the loss of carrier HMS Eagle – but reached its destination and delivered its supplies.

Like Stanley, George received a card from the King and Queen, as well as a cake and a bottle of rum.

"George is the life and soul of the Salisbury RNA and it was an absolute honour to celebrate this incredible milestone with him," said Dave Kerley, secretary of the RNA's Salisbury branch.

"Wishing you a very happy birthday George!"



Tribute at last for Leeds Castle

THEIR patrol of the Falklands may be brief but crew of HMS Medway will leave behind a legacy visible not merely to islanders... but also from space.

Crew of the patrol ship – which is filling in for her sister HMS Forth while she completes a refit in Gibraltar – joined teams from the island's garrison and the local populace to add 'Leeds Castle' to the list of warships closely associated with the South Atlantic British territory.

It's a long-standing tradition in the Falklands' capital Stanley to spell out the names of those ships on the hillside opposite the town – Peninsula Camber – using giant boulders painted white.

- Celebrated are His/Her Majesty's Ships
- Barracouta – which patrolled the islands in the early 19th Century keeping fishermen in check
- Beagle – the vessel which famously carried Charles Darwin on a circumnavigation in the 1830s.
- Protector – not the current survey vessel, but the Arctic patrol ship from the 50s and 60s
- Endurance – Protector's successor from the late 60s through to 1991 and then her namesake (1992-2008)
- Dumbarton Castle – Leeds Castle's sister which was associated with the Falklands from the 1990s
- Clyde – Falklands guardship from 2007 until HMS Forth arrived on the scene a couple of years ago.

Somehow, until now, Leeds Castle's was overlooked,

despite enjoying an association just as long and fruitful with the Falklands as Dumbarton Castle.

Nearly two decades after she left the islands for the last time, the omission was put right as part of 'Big Help Out' events/the volunteering drive connected with the King's Coronation.

"The effort to paint rocks on a hillside may seem like a small thing, but it meant a great deal to the sailors of both HMS Leeds Castle and HMS Medway. It was a reminder of the bonds which exist between those who serve in the military, and the lengths that they will go to honour and respect each other," said Lieutenant Callum Whyte, Medway's Logistics Officer.

Even with a sizeable number of fit, young and strong sailors and soldiers to move the boulders around it took a few hours to spell out Leeds Castle and paint them white (the Commander of British Forces in the South Atlantic, Commodore Jonathan Lett, was among those with brush in hand).

Despite the harsh Falklands climate, the paint job withstands the elements remarkable well and the stones are large and bright enough to be visible from a height of 7,000ft and can be seen on Google Earth (minus Leeds Castle until the satellite imagery is updated) at 51°40'58"S, 57°51'32"W.

As for Leeds Castle, she's still at sea, flying the Bangladeshi flag as missile corvette Dhaleshwari.

Life begins anew for Middleton

BEGINNING life as a forty-something is minehunter HMS Middleton, one of a handful of warships to reach the milestone while on active service.

Crew took a brief break from exercising with the Hunt-class ship in the Gulf to invite friends and international comrades to join them to celebrate the warship's longevity.

Most warships have a lifespan of 25-30 years, but thanks to their fibre-glass hulls, minehunters can last much longer – as long as the kit aboard is maintained to the highest standard, refitted, and replaced to move with the times... which it is.

Middleton is the first Hunt-class ship to be fitted with Oceanographic Reconnaissance Combat Architecture (ORCA), allowing the ship to classify underwater contacts from a greater distance than was previously possible. Coupled with her 2193 Sonar, SeaFox Mine Disposal System, and highly-trained mine clearance divers, she remains at the leading edge of mine warfare.

Currently home to 40-plus men and women of Crew 4 from 2nd Mine Counter-measures Squadron – the ship's company rotates every few months with counterparts based in Portsmouth to sustain the long-standing mission in the Gulf – they determined the milestone was, rightly, worth celebrating.

Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Gemma Britton and her team invited personnel from the Naval Support Facility in Bahrain – vital to ensuring the ship receives the supplies, maintenance and general support required to sustain her mission in the Middle East – plus comrades from the US Navy to join them aboard as a thank-you for their continuing help, guidance and commitment.

They enjoyed a spot of British afternoon tea with, naturally, a very large birthday cake... which evidently didn't fill stomachs entirely as it was followed by a whole-ship barbecue for the minehunter's crew to enjoy in the Gulf heat,



sharing stories and memories of their time onboard.

And what stories and memories: since entering the Clyde from the slipway at the Yarrow yard in Scotstoun (now operated by BAE), the ship has sailed more than 430,000 nautical miles – the equivalent of twenty times around the equator – during 75,000 hours at sea (that's 446 weeks, or 8½ years).

She has hosted His Majesty the King (before he was monarch); taken part in Fleet Reviews; given tours to sporting stars such as Sir Lewis Hamilton (who likes to move faster than Middleton's leisurely 17 knots); and, in 1995, had the privilege of leading the First and Second Mine Counter-measures and the Fishery Protection Squadrons out of Rosyth when the Naval Base on the Forth closed.

"As HMS Middleton's fortieth Commanding Officer, celebrating 40 years since the ship was launched, I am delighted that we have been able to recognise all of the ship's achievements and those of the people who have served in her," said Lieutenant Commander Britton.

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Packed programme during visit to Gibraltar

TWENTY FIVE officer cadets and staff from Birmingham, Wales, Bristol and Devon University Royal Navy Units (URNU) visited Gibraltar for a week-long programme.

The cadets, who are all university students, participate in a placement at the URNU for approximately three years where they are given the opportunity to gain Royal Navy insights such as navigation and leadership skills.

During the visit, the cadets were involved in helping clean, paint and conduct laborious tasks at O'Hara's and Princess Anne's Battery, alongside the Gibraltar Heritage Trust.

That evening, they attended an event with the Gibraltar Heritage Trust and Commander British Forces Gibraltar, Commodore Tom Guy.

The cadets also attempted the challenging Mediterranean

Steps, toured St Michaels Cave, Great North Road tunnels, Great Siege Tunnels, Alameda Botanical Gardens, the Trafalgar Cemetery and HMS Trent.

During their time in the Trafalgar Cemetery, the cadets discussed and learned about the history of the Battle of Trafalgar and Gibraltar's part in bringing Admiral Lord Nelson ashore.

That afternoon, the units visited His Majesty's Naval Base, for a question and answer session with Cdre Guy where they were given an update on the Royal Navy's role in Gibraltar.

Coxswain of the URNU, Warrant Officer Class 1 Grover said: "It's not often you get this kind of access to a 1 Star officer, so the cadets relished it. Especially twice in one week."



Cadets attend peace forum in Sicily

OFFICER Cadets from URNU East Scotland, Belfast and Glasgow attended the International Forum for Peace, Security and Prosperity in Piazza Armerina, Sicily.

The annual event is hosted by the Italian Army and predominantly run by the Canadian Military and includes representation from more than 23 international academic institutions and military academies, including the USA and Ukraine.

Their mission is to develop leadership skills and understanding of the Royal Navy's approach to Defence Engagement for selected Cadets and become the largest student peace forum in the world. This gave the URNU an opportunity to enhance relationships with Partner Nations' officer training academies.

The event comprised of a comprehensive and interactive programme incorporating academic study sessions, debating panels and presentations based around Eight Pillars of Peace.

The cadets seized the opportunities to present on stage in front of high-profile audiences of over 100. Among the VIPs were the Generals of the Italian Army and Canadian Defence Academy, Admiral of the Danish Defence Academy, and senior representation from the United Nations.

Officer Cadet Patrick Wither, a second-year international relations student at the University of Edinburgh, said: "The IFPSP was an interesting experience, and not like one I have ever had the opportunity to be part of."

"Meeting cadets from around the world provided a diverse group of perspectives on how to achieve peace and facilitated a fantastic environment to forge personal links across nations."

"Further, the forum's focus on disinformation allowed cutting edge discussion of its impact on global security, from military and academic leaders whose perspectives we might not have otherwise heard. I think there was real value in attending the Forum, and it has provided me with a new lens with which to look through while furthering my civilian and military education."

The students also took part in a 5k Walk for Peace, charting a route that was used by the Canadian Army 80 years ago in the Allied liberation of Sicily from the Germans, as well as a battlefield tour.

They attended an event at the Piazza Armerina Cathedral where local chefs joined ranks with tenors to provide a memorable evening of alfresco dining.

A visit to the Villa Romana del Casale, a large and elaborate Roman palace and a UNESCO World Heritage Site of great importance was also organised. One of the final events was a large military parade supported by musicians and buglers, in the main square at Piazza Armerina, attended by VIPs including the Mayor of Sicily.

Officer Cadet Greta Harris, a third year Civil Engineering student at University of Glasgow, said: "The invitation to experience the camaraderie and insights of our peers and current leaders from across the world at this forum was excellent."

"My fellow Officer Cadets and I have been inspired by the enthusiasm and friendly attitude of the range of people we met, who we will hopefully work with again in our future careers in the military."

Duncan delivers for Manchester

URNU Manchester seized the opportunity for one Officer Cadet and Training Officer to experience life at sea on an 11-day deployment from Portsmouth to Norway aboard HMS Duncan, the unit's affiliated ship and one of the most advanced warships in the world.

The trip began with a tour and an opportunity to socialise with the officers aboard before setting off.

Once underway, introductions were made to the WE department along with the chance to see the weapons up close and firing into the ammunitions bay.

Later, they visited the Ops room where the team explained their responsibilities and gave a run down on where certain people sit, before taking part in a man overboard exercise where they helped to signal to the victim and watch the sea boat and swimmer deploy.

Commenting on the experience, OC Burns, pictured, said: "It was unreal being so close and involved with such incredible weaponry as well as talking to the WE's that operate it. I learnt that in a Carrier Strike Group, it is the Fighter Controller (Freddie) on the destroyer who controls the jets and tells them what they need to do; rather than the aircraft controller



on the aircraft carrier, which was fascinating to me.

"The highlight of the deployment was being on the sea boat, seeing the ship from the water was such a thrilling yet threatening view."

"We also conducted a quickdraw which consisted of us being the enemy and the ship responding to our threat, seeing the ship having the guns trained on us was definitely a scary moment."

The evenings took a slower pace with the chance to socialise over dinner and watch movies. Once they reached Norway, they headed to the bridge for 'specials' and learnt how a warship enters port with the aid of a pilot before utilising some leave to explore the area with friends made aboard.

After leave, they were shown around the logistics department, who explained what they do, how they operate and their involvement in law.

Over the next couple of days, time was spent in the medical department as well as in the galley where they helped to prepare the food.

Before reaching the UK, they had one last task which involved a shoot.

OC Burns got lucky with the Freddie who was on comms with the aircraft towing the ariel target and got to see both the Phalanx and the 30mm being shot.

Despite a brief spell of seasickness over the rough North Sea, the trip was a success!

"I learned so much about the capabilities of the ship, how the departments operate as well as becoming familiar with Jack speak!"

"I made incredible memories, got to see breathtaking views, and meet a plethora of kind-hearted people. Thank you, HMS Duncan."

Liverpool riders coast to raise funds

A TEAM of cyclists from URNU Liverpool set off on a 215-mile coast to coast journey in aid of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

The group planned to cycle the Trans Pennine Trail from Southport to Hornsea in only three days, hoping to cover around 75 miles per day, while raising funds and awareness for this worthy cause.

On day one, the group got the chance to take in the sights of Southport, Sefton, Warrington, Dunham Massey, the River Mersey and Didsbury in South Manchester. They covered 100km in an overall time of eight hours.

A gruelling nine hours were spent in the saddle on day two with the team covering 98km and climbing just over 1000m of elevation over the Pennines into North Yorkshire.

Despite the immense physical challenge, the views and the experience were said to be made every minute on the bike worth it.

Another 99km were covered on day three, proving particularly mentally challenging due to the British weather.

The day started in the rain and didn't stop until the team reached the support vehicle.

Soaked by the sideways rain, the team were grateful for the shelter. The highlight of the day was the river Humber and the mighty Humber Bridge that crosses her.

The morning of day four saw the team complete the challenge with a quick 40km to reach Hornsea, where they could finally say they had cycled coast to coast for the RNRMC!

The final sprint of URNU Liverpool's TPT saw them cover another 55km and reach the Eastern terminus seamark in a speedy four hours. A comparatively short ride compared to the three days previously saw them take in the sights of Hull and Hornsea.

The Trans Pennine Trail is not to be underestimated. The team not only cycled 350km in an overall time of 28hrs, but raised awareness and £340 for the RNRMC, beating their target of £250. This is a fantastic achievement for all riders and support staff, who were all well deserving of a rest and a chauffeured drive back to Liverpool.

Registered charity number: Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund 190182



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



'An enormous character and committed man of God'

TRIBUTES have been paid to the Navy's former most senior chaplain, the Reverend Martyn Gough, who has died at the age of 57.

Martyn served the Navy and nation for nearly a quarter of a century, latterly as the Service's most senior Anglican, and as Chaplain of the Fleet.

It crowned a naval career which began in 1998 and saw extensive service at home and aboard, from the front line with troops in Afghanistan to the day-to-day work of the Fleet in frigates, survey vessels and carriers.

Originally from South Wales, Martyn was educated at the University of Wales, Cardiff, and St Stephen's House, Oxford.

After ordination in the Diocese of Llandaff, he served in parishes in South Wales before being appointed at the same time to a position in the European Union in Northern Italy and as Chaplain of Milan and Genoa.

He joined the Royal Navy in 1998 and spent much of his early ministry working in Devonport, deploying with the base's Type 22 frigate flotilla. He was also 'bish' – as chaplains are affectionately known across the Royal Navy – aboard aircraft carrier HMS *Invincible* and served as Chaplain to the Hydrographic Squadron.

Ashore, posts included Amport House (the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre), RNAS Culdrose, Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth and HMS *Drake* in Plymouth.

In 2013-14 he was appointed as the Forces' senior chaplain in Afghanistan before returning to the UK first as Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet and, from August 2018, Chaplain of the Fleet and Archdeacon for the Royal Navy. That same year he was also appointed a Queen's Honorary Chaplain.

"Martyn was an enormous character," said his successor as Chaplain of the Fleet, the Ven Andrew Hillier.

"A proud Welshman, he was wonderfully affable individual with a great sense of fun. As a priest, he was an enormously faithful and committed man. As a chaplain, he loved nothing better than to be surrounded by sailors and was truly a friend and advisor to all on board.

"The entire Naval Chaplaincy Service grieves his death, as we pray for Amanda and the children in their grief."

The Rev Scott Brown, the convener of the Church of Scotland's Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces, and Chaplain of the Fleet between 2010 and 2011, added: "Martyn was a faithful priest, pastor and friend.

"He was always supportive of the Church of Scotland and we will miss his support, wisdom and friendship. We remember Amanda, his wife, and their children in our prayers."

Away from the RN, the father-of-two enjoyed art, literature, skiing and especially renovating his home in Wiltshire's Chalk Valley with his wife Amanda.

Although he left the Navy in 2021, he continued to champion the Services as National Chaplain to the Royal British Legion, officiating at that year's Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall.



Fight, said Fred

THERE are five Freddie's in the operations room of HMS *Defender* here (the displays are blurred in LPhoto Matt Bradley's image for security reasons)... yet not one of them called Fred.

They are current or former Fighter Controllers – 'Freddie's' to use the NATO callsign – which means when it comes to choreographing the 400knt plus aerial ballet which is combat in the skies, the Type 45 is probably second to none.

All 45s have at least two Fighter Controllers, whose task is to control friendly fixed wing assets (typically an F-35B or Typhoon) to deliver an effect required by command. This could be from engaging hostile aircraft to weaponising a Paveway IV on a hostile bunker.

For involvement in last month's NATO exercise, *Formidable Shield* – three weeks of anti-air warfare training in the North Atlantic contending with hostile aircraft, missile and ballistic missile threats – *Defender* found herself controlling four French Rafale in one of the opening serials, tasked with keeping a pair of 'hostile' aircraft (French Rafale) from engaging the force and striking key offshore facilities.

Language isn't an issue in such actions – English is the international language of the skies – rather the ability provide command and control effectively and timely to the fighters to ensure mission success. This can only be achieved through using the Type 45 radars and tactical data links to as to give Rafales the best 'picture' possible – all of this is to be achieved in seconds so as to keep up with the pace of fighter aerial combat speeds and missile timelines.

"Pitting fast air against fast air requires total concentration from the fighter controllers," explained Lieutenant Commander Simon Scamp, *Defender's* Air Warfare Officer.

"Although *Defender's* team had not recently worked with the French Rafales, being able to conduct a complex sortie like this at fairly short notice demonstrates how our ability to work with NATO partners is pretty plug-and-play."

Although Fighter Controllers 1 and 2 did the 'heavy lifting' for the sortie, they were overseen by Lieutenant Commanders

Stephenson, Scamp, and Norris, all of whom were once Fighter Controllers themselves.

"Conducting this kind of sortie at sea with five officers who are all fighter controllers or legacy fighter controllers is quite unique," said Lt Cdr Scamp.

Those pursuing a career in fighter control will find themselves drafted to a Type 45 or carrier due to their role in air warfare so it is not uncommon to have individuals with a shared unique specialisation.

There are up to 32 Fighter Controllers across the RN. All have completed the AIR373 Course at Yeovilton – the home of the Royal Navy School of Fighter Control – where over three months they learn the basic principles of aircraft control in a benign environment, with both simulated and live control of DA20 Falcons.

Having mastered the basics of control, the rookie Freddie's move on to tactical control, providing a tactical service where they will conduct 'loose control' serials. During these serials, students will provide a tactical picture to the pilots so that the best tactics can be used to neutralise the threat.

Then it's on to Collingwood and WAR153, three months of training focusing on combat missions, learning about the importance of tactical data links and how they can be utilised to aid awareness, understanding the radars on Type 45s and Queen Elizabeth-class carriers. And there are visits to front-line Typhoon and F15E squadrons to discuss the employment of air assets and chat with pilots as to how fighter controllers are able to provide vital tactical input during sorties.

It all builds up to a fortnight-long simulated exercise where students control aerial assets in an ops room environment – the first time they have had to work as part of a larger team to deliver an effect.

Beginning benignly, the assessment ramps up in complexity, with knowledge of rules of engagement tested and committing friendly air power against adversaries who outmatch their own side.

Gaming back to full health

RECUPERATING sailors and marines answered the call of duty to join an Esports event in Plymouth, taking on commando gunners.

As part of the Royal Navy's ongoing drive to assist recovery from an illness, mental health condition or injury, a *Call of Duty* contest for fans of the massively-popular first-person shooter pitted sailors from across the Service against gunners from 29 Commando Regiment, based at Plymouth's Royal Citadel.

Able Seaman 'Was' Hollis from the Personnel Support Group in HMNB Devonport devised the contest, assisted by Dean Linstead from *Belong Arena* in Plymouth city centre, where the competition took place.

"The Esports week was unique and benefitted everyone who, due to injuries, have been unable to perform many physical tasks," said Was.

"I could see that the event improved everyone's mental wellbeing and was also a huge boost to our morale. Throughout the week there was some great teamwork as well as a competitive edge for all. Everyone wanted to win, and everyone put the work in.

"It required bags of attention from each individual and progress was persistent each day. Many became better at in-game strategies and left the week with a sense of pride acknowledging their efforts and progress."

Was, who is also medically downgraded, continued: "In a sense it helped distract me from my own thoughts for a while, and kept me focused on an objective rather than sitting in my cabin, it encouraged me to socialise, work with



others and help build the confidence to lead the team."

Commander Gordon Jones, Chair of the Royal Navy Video Gaming and Esports Association, visited the event and gave it his full endorsement.

"Having recently been assigned to recovery myself, I've found that my contacts in Esports have significantly helped my mental health, especially being able to speak to people who share a common interest.

"The games themselves were exciting

and it's been good seeing the way the teams took the opportunities given to them to improve their skills and communicate during the run up to the event."

As for the contest itself, there were three days of intense online training building up to a dramatic finale with a best of seven 'fight out', which was broadcast on the live-streaming service Twitch.

Viewers will have seen an RN triumph; the sailors, Army team leader Sergeant Ryan Donahue conceded, were "on fire".

Glasgow go on Poseidon adventure

SAILORS from Britain's next-generation sub hunter clambered aboard one of the RAF's maritime patrol aircraft they'll be working alongside in a few years.

The P8 Poseidon is a key element in the air-sea-underwater protective shield thrown around the UK by the Armed Forces to monitor the actions of potentially hostile submarines and surface ships.

At the end of this decade it will be operating hand-in-hand with the RN's new Type 26 frigates, led by HMS *Glasgow*.

The ship has enjoyed an affiliation with CXX Squadron, based at RAF Lossiemouth, since the first sailors joined the frigate in the autumn of 2021.

Proven technology – Poseidon is a military version of Boeing's 737-800 airliner in service with several other nations including the USA, India and Australia – the fuselage its packed with sensors, systems and kit, including torpedoes (in time of war), Sonobuoy listening devices (dropped in the ocean in the path of a suspected submarine to help locate and track it) and high-resolution area mapping to pinpoint contacts of interest on and below the waves.

Since entering RAF service in 2020, Poseidon has been building up its capabilities working with Royal Navy assets in home waters and beyond – even extending to the Gulf of Finland where one of the long-range patrol aircraft scouted for HMS *Mersey* earlier this year.

The airmen have been to see the frigate – currently fitting out at BAE's yard in Scotstoun on the north bank of the Clyde.

And now four of the warship's crew, led by Senior Naval Officer Commander Philip Burgess, made the reciprocal trip up to the Moray Firth, allowing RAF aircrew and Royal Navy engineers to build the vital organisational relationship.

A full day of activity showcased how the RAF operate their new Maritime Patrol Aircraft, starting with a Capability Brief, then a tour of the advanced simulators and operating centre, concluding in a detailed demonstration of the aircraft's systems.

"It was great to have the crew from HMS *Glasgow* up to visit us at RAF Lossiemouth," said 26-year-old Flight Lieutenant Reid.

"They got to see the Poseidon aircraft up close, and that really helped visualise how we'll work together in the future."

Lieutenant William Hill, *Glasgow's* deputy weapon engineer officer, said both his ship and the RAF squadron had a lot in common – and not merely the act of safeguarding the seas.

"We bonded over the challenges of integrating a new military asset into service – both CXX Squadron and HMS *Glasgow* share interesting parallels, starting units from humble origins as small teams," he explained.

"Although both organisations are capable of carrying out an array of maritime tasks, they share a primary purpose: to hunt and deny hostile submarine activity."

CXX Squadron has now achieved its Initial Capability Milestone, well on the way to building the full contingent of crews. HMS *Glasgow* will join them when the ship enters operational service later this decade.

Once back in the ship's namesake city, the sailors welcomed members of the Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society – a faith-based organisation working to meet the needs of the Scottish Shia Muslim community and the breadth of society in general across the cultural, social, political, and religious spectra.

The guests received briefings from BAE and crew on the Type 26 programme before being treated to a guided tour of the 8,000-tonne warship.

Among the hosts was Chief Petty Officer James Oakley, one of the ship's senior logisticians, who said: "The Royal Navy champions diversity and inclusion, and the opportunity to engage with these community leaders will provide greater understanding across some of Scotland's ethnic minority communities of the shipbuilding opportunities available here in *Glasgow*, and the career opportunities within the Royal Navy, especially those opportunities afforded by the ships being built here on the Clyde."



Thank you, Nigel

FORTY-two years' service in two distinctly different naval careers were recognised with a gold valedictory certificate for Warrant Officer 1 Nigel Kane.

Brigadier Andy Muddiman, Naval Regional Commander Scotland and Northern Ireland presented Nigel with the document – signed by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key – plus a long-service gift courtesy of the RNRMC in recognition of his commitment to the RN.

Nigel has effectively enjoyed two careers in uniform: the first as a weapons engineer in conventional and nuclear-armed submarines, the second encouraging and helping hundreds of young men and women realise their dreams by joining the RN, working in Naval Careers.

Nigel himself joined the Royal Navy in July 1980 as a weapon engineering mechanic and volunteered for submarines after completing his training at Collingwood.

After a spell on O boats, he moved on to the 'bomber' force: HMS Renown and Repulse and, finally, then brand-new HMS Vengeance as the Submarine Command System Maintainer. His last position prior to being selected to join the Naval Careers Service was as a periscope artificer in submarine support in Clyde Naval Base (2000-02).

Since then he's worked extensive in Northern Ireland especially, introducing an outreach programme in schools and colleges delivering leadership and STEM-related training, RN career presentations and interview skills techniques.

As a result, Nigel's knowledge of recruiting in Northern Ireland was second to none, and he built and maintained working relationships with many secondary schools/colleges which reaped rewards alongside outreach work by the small team, in terms of the numbers of applicants and subsequent recruits.

And for the final six months of his 42-year service Nigel served as recruiting manager role for Scotland, managing the area through a period of transformation.

Daniel shows peak support for the King

WHILE much of the UK were plonked in front of the telly on Coronation Day admiring the historic pomp, Leading Engineering Technician Daniel Kokocinski was braving the elements to scale England's highest peak.

The 25-year-old weapon engineer from HMS Collingwood took it upon himself to climb to the top of Scafell Pike (3,210ft) in the Lake District in beret and foulie (among other items of clothing) with a Coronation flag in tow.

"It was a proud moment for me to reach the top with the flag of his majesty, from what I saw, I was the only one with a flag," said Daniel.

"When I got to the peak, so many people were asking for photos, I was unable to get down for a good 30 minutes. I'm proud to serve my king and show my support in a unique way, God save the King!"

And certainly the low cloud and mizzle on Scafell will set him up for his next draft: Faslane and a Sandown-class minehunter operating out of the Clyde...



No mere flag

THESE are the King's Colours, bearing his Royal Cypher and touched by his own hand – now with the Royal Navy for safekeeping. Ahead of the Coronation, King Charles presented all three Services with new Colours – the most sacred standard in the military.

A 56-strong Naval Guard of Honour, comprising three officers, one warrant officer and 52 ranks and rates, accompanied by musicians, including the Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines Portsmouth, attended the 45-minute ceremony.

The King's Colours replace the flag His Majesty's late mother presented to the Senior Service two decades ago. It features the sovereign's monogram featuring the initials of their name and title, rex (king), alongside a representation of the crown.

The old Colours were marched off before the new standards were blessed by the Bishop of the Forces, Hugh Nelson, in the presence of First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key and Chaplain of the Fleet The Reverend Andrew Hillier, the respective heads and senior chaplains of the Army and RAF, and Chief of Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin.

The King then presented the new Colours, before returning to the dais to address those on parade, followed by a final Royal Salute. "It was an honour to be presented with new Colours today by The King in a ceremony that reflected the deeply personal nature of His Majesty's life-long relationship with all three Services," said Admiral Key.

"The Royal Navy is particularly proud of His Majesty's time spent in the service in the 1970s that included flying helicopters with 845 Naval Air Squadron and commanding the minesweeper HMS Bronington."

Submariner Petty Officer Christopher Dungey, who teaches cooking and culinary skills at the logistics school at Worthy Down near Winchester, said the experience had been both "amazing" and "a bit surreal".

He continued: "The people on parade just made history. The training has been hard, it's been ten years since I picked up a rifle, but it was great to be able to represent the whole Naval Service in the Guard – the Submarine Service, Surface Fleet and Fleet Air Arm are all here and have come together."

Able Seaman Marina Whitethread Garcia, serving at HMS Drake in Plymouth, added: "Not many people can say they have been to a private ceremony in the King's back garden. I've not even been in the Royal Navy for a year and only just passed out of basic training. Being there was really impressive and such a great opportunity."

"As a female in the Royal Navy I feel really privileged to have taken part. The Army and RAF didn't have any females represented in the Guard, only in their Bands. We were the only Service to have females in the Guard."

The Colours are far more than a regular flag or standard to any military unit, rather a symbol of the pride, history and honour of a formation. Historically on the battlefield, they become a rallying point for those fighting – to allow them to fall into enemy hands was regarded as the ultimate shame and dishonour.

Today, Colours serve an almost exclusively ceremonial role. In the Royal Navy they are normally held securely in a naval establishment and are paraded for major ceremonial occasions requiring a Royal Guard and Colours Party, such as the Coronation.

The Colours comprise a double folded silk White Ensign with a hand-embroidered crown and new Royal Cypher. It took 400 hours to produce by Essex firm Wydean Weaving.

Measuring 44in by 36in (111cm x 91cm) with a gold and blue silk cord and gold tassels, the Colours are carried on a staff of ash which is 7ft (213cm) tall.

The flag itself was procured by the Royal Navy's Head of Clothing Georgina Bridges, who oversaw the entire design and production process which began last October and concluded today at the Palace.

"It's been quite an overwhelming experience, but definitely a career highlight, being part of such an historic moment this way," she said.

"I feel an immense pride in being able to contribute to such a significant occasion, helping bring to life the new King's Colours for the Royal Navy. It's hard to put into words how I feel about it – proud doesn't really cover it."

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Jenkins

Carrier harbour training enhanced

ENHANCED training, using the latest in simulator technology will ensure Britain's biggest warships continue to enter and leave their home base safely.

BMT has been awarded a contract to deliver training to Admiralty Pilots and tug masters responsible for assisting HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales in and out of Portsmouth Naval Base.

The firm has been selected by the MOD to deliver the highest levels of safety, operational efficiency, readiness, and an advanced five-bridge training simulator offering customised navigation training.

Given the size and displacement of the two carriers, the harbour and facilities have been adapted to accommodate them, from dredging a channel for the ships to pass safely down, to the installation of navigational lights and markers.

A super-strength tug, SD Tempest, was also acquired to help other auxiliary craft manoeuvre the 65,000-tonne leviathans safely in and out of the naval base.

Tug masters and Admiralty Pilots underwent extensive training ahead of HMS Queen Elizabeth's debut in Portsmouth in August 2017, training which has continued, alongside real-world moves involving the flagship and, since November 2019, her sister.

Under the new multi-year agreement, the company's five, fully networked ship and tug bridge simulator suite will be used to the full by pilotage and tugs teams to practise challenging manoeuvring and berthing strategies, complex tow-outs and manoeuvring.

"This project offers an important training capability, which will be vital to developing and sustaining the skills of Admiralty Pilots and Serco tug masters in handling the nation's flagships, the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers. The King's Harbour Master's team and the Admiralty Pilots look forward to working with BMT on delivering this essential training over the next few years," said Nick Randall at King's Harbour Master Portsmouth.

Dr Phil Thompson, Maritime Products Director at BMT, added: "In addition to this award, the Admiralty Pilots will be put through their paces this month during a stint of 'high-octane training in Port', and through the most challenging of waters at high speed, at our newly-launched and expanded south-east training facility in Fareham."

Name top engineers

YOU have until June 23 to put an engineer you know forward for the prestigious Churchill Medal Award.

Presented to an individual or a small team working in Defence for "achievement in engineering and technical advancement in support of the development and use of capability to support military operations/readiness" the award spans the period April 1 2022 to March 31 2023.

Managers or COs of qualifying individuals should submit a citation of no more than 1,000 words, plus one diagram and one photograph.

Full details can be found in 2023DIN09-003 The Professional Engineering Institutions Churchill Medal Award 2022.

Completed nominations should be sent to churchillmedal@theiet.org.



'Human minesweeper' John Payne and his wife Jill visiting the Diving Museum in Brockhurst with today's generation of clearance divers

Farewell to the last 'P' man

ANOTHER living link with the WW2 generation has been broken with the passing of former diver John Payne – who helped pave the way for the Allied advance to victory in 1944 and 1945.

At 98, John Payne is believed to have been the last surviving member of what were known as P Parties or, colloquially, 'human minesweepers' – specialist teams of mine/bomb disposal experts who cleared Europe's ports of explosives, reopening harbours first to military, then civilian traffic.

John and his colleagues spent 600 days diving in cold, muddy, murky waters, dealing with some of the most complex and thorough demolition jobs in history.

Collectively, they searched more than 20 million square feet of harbour and port facilities, and dealt with hundreds of mines, charges, bombs and booby traps, and one V1 rocket. They would become one of the most highly decorated units of the war.

Originally from Oxfordshire, John settled in Lancing, West Sussex, as a child. He volunteered for the Navy aged 18 in 1943 and determined "to do something active" put his name forward for diving rather than remain at Portsmouth barracks.

Having undergone training in and around London, Portsmouth and Cumbria, John's party – roughly 35 men strong led by an officer, with a senior rating, a couple of leading hands, and 30 able ratings, including young, fit divers – was assigned to the US sector of the invasion front in Normandy and arrived in northern France about a fortnight after D-Day.

It was sent to Cherbourg – the first major port to fall into Allied hands... but also left in ruins by the Germans.

Not only did the Nazis do a thorough demolition job of the port facilities but conditions were grim: mud due to lack of dredging during the war, strong currents. The men frequently carried out two dives a day and were so exhausted by the experience and lack of sustenance – they normally lived on sandwiches – that they could collapse through fatigue.

Alternating with spells around the UK on mine clearance work, John's P Party continued to tirelessly open up ports to maritime traffic: Rouen on the Seine – "You could hardly tell it was a dock as it was blown to pieces so badly." Then Dunkirk. And as winter 1944 set in, the Belgian port of Antwerp – under bombardment for it was, famously, the objective of Hitler's Ardennes offensive ('the Battle of the Bulge').

The river was littered with floating mines – more than John had ever seen – and, in spite of the cold, work continued. Many divers covered their hands in goose fat and had fires ready as soon as they climbed out of



the water, but the cold never bothered John.

And again the enemy had done a thorough sabotage job: "The Germans had tied a mine to every crane along the quay as well as in the water so when it exploded the crane fell in."

Once the Allies crossed the Rhine in March 1945, German resistance in the West largely collapsed and John's Party soon found itself in the city of Bremen – "the most mines of all the ports and our biggest haul".

At the war's end, John volunteered for Far East service, continuing to do there what he had done in North West Europe, but the clearance team was not needed there, so instead he left the Navy in 1946.

"They did offer me that I could stay in but I couldn't. I was too damn tired," he recalled more than half a century later.

"They were no real options to dive outside even though I thought I might like to dive again. I enjoyed my diving, although I had a lot of responsibility. It seems an odd thing to say but it was a great time and great lads and thinking back I miss them dearly. They were a good crowd."

Upon leaving the Navy, John returned to Lancing and after a brief spell working on the railways, became a postman. He also volunteered as a Sea Cadets instructor – through which he was encouraged to apply for medals to which he was entitled for his wartime service.

Among them, the Naval General Service medal with the 'Bomb & Mine Clearance 1945-53' clasp, awarded for six months' consecutive service in the disposal of bombs and mines after September 3 1945 in almost any part of the world. Only 145 were issued, nine of them posthumously, and 60 were presented to Royal Australian Navy personnel for work in the Solomon Islands and New Guinean waters.

John Payne died at a nursing home for veterans in Worthing after a short illness. Many of his papers, photographs and memories have been left with the Diving Museum in Brockhurst, which he visited just a couple of years ago.

Born in a palace... Made in the Navy

A FINE leader filled with humanity, humour and a keen sense of duty.

That's the verdict of sailors who served with the King during his five action-packed years in the Royal Navy.

In the run up to the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, those who served with the then (Sub) Lieutenant Wales shared their memories – and their hopes for him as our monarch.

The King served in the Royal Navy between 1971 and 1976 rising from rookie sub-lieutenant fresh out of Britannia to command of a minesweeper.

In between he tried his hand at submarine escape, qualified as a helicopter pilot, took on some of the Royal Marines' commando training and earned his spurs as a ship handler.

Prince Charles' first ship upon completing his training at Dartmouth was guided-missile destroyer HMS Norfolk, the very embodiment of the 'white heat of technology' of Britain in the mid-to-late 1960s.

Before Charles joined the destroyer, crew were asked not to take photos of him while onboard – somewhat easier in the early 70s when there wasn't the omnipresence of pocket cameras.

With the world's media in town to watch the young prince's departure in HMS Norfolk from Gibraltar, junior artificer Bob Brown dropped a hammer down a pipe – necessitating a three-day delay and a welder being flown out from the UK to retrieve the tool and patch things up.

Bob's blushes were spared by a shipmate and a Heath Robinson contraption (a fishing line and a gang of hooks) to haul in the errant hammer and Norfolk sailed on time.

Once at sea, it was Sub Lieutenant Wales' task to learn about life aboard and understand the roles of sailors in Norfolk's many departments.

That included, says junior artificer Bob Brown, "a fascinating lecture on boiler water testing during which Prince Charles kept us in stitches with a string of jokes."

Then Leading Writer Roger May remembers spending "three days with him in the ship's office teaching him my role in the administrative side of running the office. He used to spend quite a bit of time in the office with us socially as well."

Leading Writer Roger May reintroduced Charles to the complex admin side of running a 6,000-tonne cutting-edge warship and upwards of 500 sailors, such as sorting out pay, travel arrangements, local currencies when visiting foreign ports.

Ports like Toulon on the French Mediterranean coast where memories of the prince's Aston Martin understandably stand out – he gave more than



Prince Charles brings HMS Bronington alongside, watched by his second-in-command Lieutenant (later Rear Admiral) Roy Clare and Viscount Mountbatten

one shipmate a lift around the sprawling naval base.

During their visit, the wardroom decided to hold a barbecue on a beach outside the city.

The barbecue kit was stored about the ship's duty Land Rover with Roger at the wheel... following the young prince in his Aston Martin – he knew the location of the beach party, the 27-year-old from Liskeard did not.

"When we got to the dual carriageway outside the he was off like a rocket and I lost sight of him," Roger recalls.

"He must have realised that he had lost me and the next thing was that I saw him going in the opposite direction on the other side of the carriageway."

To prevent losing contact with the prince a second time, Roger did a U-turn, crossing the central reservation and tucking the Land Rover in behind him.

The police must have seen the manoeuvre because when the vehicles reached the end of the dual carriageway back in Toulon, the Land Rover was pulled over.

"The prince and his private detective saw this, came over and somehow sorted things out," Roger, now 78, recalls.

"He was also instrumental in rescuing me from, I suspect, a potential fine. To this day I have no idea if the police knew who it was that they were dealing with."

It wasn't unusual for sailors to try to take advantage of their Royal shipmate's connections: some officers tried to press Charles for racing tips via his mum, particularly in the weeks leading up to Royal Ascot.

Other were impressed by Prince Charles' seafaring abilities. Former clearance diver Petty Officer John Friar served in seven ships, five of them small Ton-

class minesweepers, including HMS Bronington which the future monarch commanded for most of 1976.

Lieutenant Wales was "without doubt, the best ship handler by far. Believe me, if he had been rubbish, I would say so."

"He was not a good sailor in that he got very seasick, but then again, so did Nelson."

"Sometimes we went alongside after a rough trip, got tidied up and went ashore. He, on the other hand, had to get into full dress uniform and do his 'Prince Charles bit'."

Bronington's second-in-command – and therefore Prince Charles' right-hand man – was Lieutenant Roy Clare, the future captain of HMS Invincible and rear admiral, who describes Lieutenant Wales as "a model of leadership".

He continues: "He was apt to go around the ship, talk to people, hear their stories, share moments with them – as a good commanding officer should."

"He was a good leader, really good at understanding that it's not about 'top down and telling', but listening, helping people to be the strongest they can."

John Friar believes the future monarch's time in the Navy broadened his horizons and "gave him a view of the other side of life which he had never seen close-up."

"He was very approachable and had time for his crew. He seemed fascinated at times with the crew as I suppose it was the first time he had been confined as he was on a small vessel in close contact with some 'shady characters'! It certainly wasn't a

chosen crew and we had our fair share of misbehaving."

Sometimes, being the heir to the throne could pull strings.

"One evening we were steaming up the Forth to go into Rosyth," John remembers.

"We sent a signal requesting the berth location and a berthing party and received a signal back, saying: Negative, proceed to Kirkcaldy Bay, anchor and enter dockyard am, tomorrow."

The Prince of Wales "was not happy" and signalled to the dockyard that he was sailing in as planned.

"It was the only time in my naval career that I saw the head rope heaving line pulled in by a Captain and the stern rope pulled in by a Commander – not many junior lieutenants got that," John added.

In the years since, John has joined Bronington shipmates at reunions, including one hosted by the then Duke and Duchess of Cornwall at Clarence House about a decade ago.

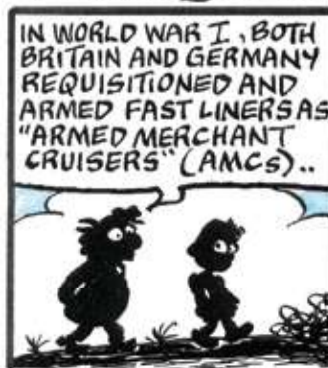
Afterwards, the former sailors decamped to a nearby hostelry to continue reliving good times... and were joined by their former skipper, who cancelled his next engagement... much to the consternation of his staff.

"Was their pride at serving with Prince Charles?" says John. "It was unbelievable! I got to meet all the Royal Family, sat and had a drink with Lord Mountbatten and listened to his sea stories. It doesn't get better than that. Memories to last a lifetime."

"He seems to be going from strength to strength and be a monarch for everyone. So I will raise a glass to him and the Queen on Coronation Day."

You can watch interviews with some of the king's former shipmates at www.youtube.com/user/RoyalNavyOfficial

Naval Quirks





Remarkable Capt Rawe

The passing of Captain James Rawe at the age of 97 will be felt in the USA, France and Nigeria as well as his native UK.

As a teenage midshipman James Rawe safely navigated a Landing Craft Tank, delivering the HQ battalion of the US 12th Infantry Regiment on to Utah Beach in the first wave on D-Day.

Unlike the landings at nearby Omaha Beach, the invasion of Utah ran remarkably smoothly.

A qualified commando he also served with Combined Operations before being sent to the Far East as a specialist hydrographer to conduct extensive survey work around the coasts of Malaya, Borneo, and Hong Kong, as well as the South China and Java Seas.

That led to an invitation to help "start a Royal Navy type survey service and possibly a Nigerian Navy".

The result was that a then Lieutenant James Rawe became the first person, Nigerian or British, to sign up for the Nigerian Naval Force established in 1956 (it became the Royal Nigerian Navy in 1958 and, upon independence in 1963, simply the Nigerian Navy).

The early part of his new career was spent surveying Nigeria's coastline in command first of HMNNS Pathfinder and later HMNNS Penelope.

As a founding father of the country's navy, he was involved in recruitment drives, sat on several courts martial and boards of inquiry and supported VIP visits such as Queen Elizabeth II and Lord Mountbatten, the Chief of the Defence Staff.

In the mid-60s, while serving as Commanding Officer of Apapa Naval Base, Capt Rawe was caught up in coups and unrest which engulfed the country and the military especially.

A man filled with a strong sense of duty, he dismissed suggestions to leave the country, arguing that he was in Nigeria at the request of the Queen and did not wish to besmirch Britain's good name, nor leave the fledgling Navy without a senior staff officer.

The turmoil eventually boiled over into the eastern region of Biafra breaking away.

James Rawe's survey work and his wartime experience with combined operations led to his involvement in amphibious landings in 1967 and 1968, landings which were paved the way for the eventual capitulation of Biafra.

Captain Rawe retired from the Nigerian Navy the following year and became a senior probation officer in Oxfordshire.

Capt Rawe was decorated widely during his naval service – at least half a dozen medals from the Nigerians alone – and received the Legion d'honneur from the French Government in 2016 for his role in D-Day and the liberation from Nazi tyranny.

He is survived by his widow Irene, four sons, nine grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

With thanks to Adeyinka Makinde.

Caroline is open again

WELCOMING visitors again for the first time in three years is the UK's floating memorial to the men of WW1, HMS Caroline.

The Princess Royal formally reopened the cruiser in Belfast, allowing the public to see how sailors lived in the Great War and fought the German Fleet at Jutland on May 31-June 1 1916 still afloat.

The ship has served as a museum in Belfast - where she spent the bulk of her RN career as a base for reservists - since 2016, but closed in lockdown... and did not reopen when the pandemic ended.

With the long-term future of the ship assured thanks to Northern Ireland's Department for the Economy and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and a Covid overhaul of some displays, Caroline is open 10am-5pm daily.

Crash site visit helps re-build

AVIATION historians and archaeologists returned to the site of a wartime tragedy to help bring a legendary naval bomber back to life.

A team from the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton headed to Derry in Northern Ireland to add the 'human touch' to their efforts to rebuild a Fairey Barracuda - and thank the local community for their assistance.

For several years a team have been painstakingly recreating the torpedo/dive bomber which served extensively with the Fleet Air Arm in World War 2.

It was never an aircraft of beauty and wasn't especially good as a torpedo bomber, but the navy's greatest pilot, Captain Eric Brown, praised its dive-bombing abilities and hailed it as the "easiest aeroplane to land on an aircraft carrier". It also played a key role in the closing stages of the Battle of the Atlantic providing anti-submarine protection to convoys.

Despite more than 2,600 Barracudas rolling off the production lines - aside from the FAA, it also served with the French, Dutch and Canadians from the second half of the war through to the mid-1950s - none survives.

For the past decade and more a team at the FAA Museum has been recreating/rebuilding a Barracuda in tribute to the wartime aviators.

They are using the original plans as well as the remains of five crashed Barracudas to recreate a pristine version of the bomber, with what was salvage from Northern Ireland at the heart of the project.

Aircraft DP872 was part of a formation of three Barracudas which took off from RNAS Maydown just outside Derry for what should have been a routine flight to another naval air base, East Haven, near Arbroath on Scotland's East Coast on August 29 1944.

The ill-fated aircraft got no further than the eastern shore of Enagh Lough, which splits Derry in two, where it spun out of control and plunged into a bog known as The Moss.

All three crew - aged between 19 and 21 - were killed, but the Barracuda sank before their bodies could be recovered.

And there they and most of the aircraft remained undisturbed for more than a quarter of a century, until a combined Army-Navy excavation of the wreck site in 1971; the wreckage was given to the Fleet Air Arm with the nose section subsequently going on display in Yeovilton, before the decision was taken to rebuild an entire bomber.

With the permission of the families, the bodies of the crew were exhumed



A local Sea Cadet and Standard Bearer bow in reverence at the graves of the three Barracuda crew and (below) a formation of Barracudas in flight in late WW2



and subsequently buried with full military honours at St Canice's Church in Eglinton.

Five decades later, the church was the setting for both a memorial service honouring the three aircrew, and a push from the FAA Museum to gather memories and photographs both of the dig in 71 and also the crash itself (there are still eyewitnesses who remember the tragedy vividly), while Diana Davis, Head of Conservation, and Dave Morris, Principal Conservator, explained the work achieved so far.

Having been involved with the project for many years, Dave was delighted both to meet a couple of eyewitnesses of the crash (now in their 90s), local historians and above all visit the wreck site (which is plagued by "smelly mud and millions of peat bog midges").

"I've known the story and the project of the Barracuda since I joined the museum, but to actually be here - I've had a big thought process of what was it like, where was it, what did it actually look like and today I can do that," said Dave, who returned to Yeovilton hopeful the trip will spawn "some good future potential results".

Renewed interest in the fate of DP872 was sparked by students from Foyle College - just half a mile from the crash site - who have been working the local historians to scour the crash site and environs one last time in the hope of recovering any final parts/wreckage perhaps missed by their predecessor.

"It's tragic to find out their ages," said student Alex Bradley. "In a couple of years that could have been anyone in our year group."

WW2 survivors honoured

TWO remarkable sailors who endured 50 days in a liferaft have been honoured in their hometowns thanks to Petty Officer Richard Jones.

Seaman Colin Armitage from Hull and Kenneth Cooke, the ship's carpenter from nearby Bridlington, were not the only survivors when their steamer, SS Lulworth Hill, was sunk by an Italian submarine in the South Atlantic at the end of March 1943.

Fourteen men - roughly one third of the crew - scrambled into a life raft when the merchant vessel was torpedoed, 600 miles northeast of St Helena and 800 miles off the coast of Angola.

One by one the survivors succumbed either to wounds or starvation and exhaustion, until just Armitage and Cooke remained, living on the most meagre of rations, while sharks circled the raft in anticipation.

They were eventually picked up in early May by the crew of destroyer HMS Rapid as it escorted a convoy off Sierra Leone; the raft had drifted more than 1,500 miles in the intervening seven weeks.

Kenneth kept a diary written on a piece of sailcloth which would eventually turn into a memoir of the tragedy. The



cloth eventually went on display at the Imperial War Museum while Kenneth, who became a gamekeeper in his native Yorkshire post-war, was featured on popular TV show This Is Your Life.

His fellow survivor was not so fortunate. The ordeal in the raft wrecked Colin Armitage's health and he died aged just 28 in 1950, leaving a young widow with three children.

Both men were awarded the George Medal and Lloyds Medal for Bravery. As the years passed, their celebrity and the

fame of the act of the survival gradually faded.

But when weapons engineer Petty Officer Richard Jones, serving with Portsmouth Forward Support Unit, stumbled across Kenneth's story while researching World War 2 in his hometown of Bridlington, he decided to bring his and Colin's deeds back into the public eye.

The senior rating has made it his mission to champion and honour forgotten or overlooked disasters, from writing a slew of books, to seeing memorials erected, including one in Bridlington to a former pleasure cruiser lost in action.

"I was working on a book about Bridlington during the war and came across the story of Ken," says Richard.

"When I found out Colin was from Hull it soon became apparent that I was able to put a blue plaque up for each person to honour them in their home towns."

He was joined by Kenneth's family, Bridlington RNA and Submariners Association for the unveiling of a plaque by the town's harbour, and by Colin's family for the dedication of the waterfront memorial in Hull.



Rum time in Chard

YOU can almost taste the anticipation... S/M Mike Kirkland lines up the tots for fellow members of Chard RNA as the branch's rum tub is christened.

Bearing the inscription 'The King, God bless him' - words last seen in the reign of George VI more than 70 years ago - the cask was inaugurated in the presence of 18 shipmates and two guests at Chard's Cricket Club.

The evening, which also saw a successful quiz session, went well with a few humorous moments although it was tinged with sadness at the announcement that one of their long serving members, Colin Middleton, had crossed the Bar. RIP Shipmate - time to stand down - your duty is done.

As for the tub, it was crafted by shipmates Mike and Brian Kirkland with the former Kirkland acting as 'rum bosun' for the inaugural issuing of Nelson's blood.



Haunting sound of Ukraine in Torrevieja

THE sound of traditional Ukraine folk songs mesmerised members of the RNA's Torrevieja Branch.

More than 60 shipmates and guests were entertained by Andriy Golovnyuk Volosovych, Fedir Vasenko, Kateryna Panasenko and Yelyzaveta Bilokon, who were conducted by Andriy's mother.

The outstanding performances - a mixture of traditional Ukrainian folk songs along with modern tunes - received a standing ovation.

The performance was organised by s/m Polina Uchaieva, who also gave a very heartfelt and emotional introduction on behalf of the Torrevieja MusiKhome Head of School, Taras Khomyak, as a way of thanking the branch for their ongoing support.

Several certificates marking milestones were presented - not least new awards recognising ten, 15 or 20 years of branch membership (Torrevieja was first commissioned on October 2 1990).

S/Ms Joe Billet and Rose Lyon each received a silver award certificate (15 years) from chairman S/M Tony Jenkins who also welcomed four new associate members: Dave Parle, Brenda Maw, Anna Verberge and Rita Poissonnier.

The branch meets at 5pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Lakeview Bar and Restaurant, Calle Toledo 16, Ciudad Quesada, 03170, Alicante.

Bold five-year plan



Exploring Normandy for WW2 history tour

SCOUTS, Explorer Scouts and leaders from the 1st Watchet Sea Scout Group undertook a five-day cycling expedition along the D-Day beaches in Normandy France, from the Cherbourg peninsula along the coast to Ouistreham and inland towards Caen.

The group started with a tour of the landings museum on the beach, learning about the beach assault by the Americans and how the German army had prepared their defences.

Following this visit the group cycled inland to Sainte Mère Église, where on June 6 1944 American paratroopers were tasked to capture the strategic road and crossroads. Here they visited the memorial museum commemorating the event and work of the American paratroopers from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions.



Day three saw the scouts drop their tents and proceed along the maritime cycle way, along the estuary leading towards the town of Carantan. Having negotiated the marshland cycle paths the scouts proceeded on past Carantan and headed to the coastal village of Grand Camp Maisey, and the site of a lesser known battle of the D-Day Campaign at the Maisey battery.

Day four saw the scouts pack their tents again and move again along the coast towards Omaha Beach, where so many

American soldiers were killed as they battled to exit the beach on D-Day. Visiting the beach and nearby memorials and defences still in place, the scouts cycled inland to the American Cemetery at Colleville Sur Mer. This being the largest cemetery in Normandy with over 9,000 graves of American Servicemen.

Day five was a rest day from cycling and the scouts had a small lie in, before making their way inland by minibus to the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery at Douvres La Delivrande where they paid their respects to a Watchet man who died during the Normandy invasion.

Royal Marine Arthur Thomas Webber from Wouldham Road, Watchet, died in action on August 17 1944, two months after D-Day. He was a gunner with the Royal Marines on board Landing Craft Flak no.1. This landing craft was modified and fitted out with anti-aircraft (flak) guns and machine-guns and was used in defence of the landing troops.

On June 6 1944 LCF 1 was assigned to the landing of the Canadian Divisions at Juno Beach at Courseulles Sur Mer. Having completed this task LCF 1 spent the next two months patrolling the eastern flank of the landings at Ouistreham. Together with other anti-aircraft and surface ships, LCF 1 lined up each night off of Sword Beach, stretching out for six miles into the Channel to form what became known as "The Trout Line".

The aim of this line of ships and landing craft was to defend the supply vessel and beaches from night attacks from German torpedo boats and "human torpedoes" (one-man mini-sub) based at Le Havre as well as air attacks from the German Air Force.

On the morning of August 17 at 5.30am an attack began. LCF 1 was at anchor when an hour into the attack she was hit by a torpedo and blew up. All 70 members of the Royal Navy crew and Royal Marine gunners were killed.

Royal Marine Arthur Thomas Webber was laid to rest at the British War Cemetery at Douvres. Also buried in the same cemetery are members of the Somerset Light Infantry, as well as other regiments.

A poppy wreath was laid by the troop at the headstone of Marine Webber's grave on behalf of the Watchet Branch of the Royal British Legion and a short memorial service was held.

Anyone interested in learning more can contact scouts@watchetseascoutgroup.org.uk

MARINE Society & Sea Cadets (MSSC) unveiled its ambitious strategy for Sea Cadets and seafarers at the House of Lords.

The launch was well attended by Members of the House of Lords, Members of Parliament, youth sector leaders and senior Royal Navy officers.

The event was hosted by MSSC Vice President, Lord Mountevans.

The charity's 2023-2028 strategy is focused on making its services 'future ready' to maximise opportunities for its young people and seafarers, enabling them to grow, thrive and reach their full potential in today's rapidly changing world.

One of MSSC's top priorities over the next five years is to focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) by removing all barriers to accessibility.

It was the young cadets themselves who decided to prioritise EDI.

Speaking at the House of Lords, Royal Marines cadet Nadirah, 15, said: "The number one strategic priority for cadets is to ensure units and activities are accessible.

"Sea Cadets is for all young people, and we need to make sure our units contain every kind of young person – especially from groups which are currently under represented."

Nadirah added that by removing all barriers, Sea Cadets will be able to support even more young people aged ten to 18, from all backgrounds and circumstances.

"No young person should have to miss out on experiences that have improved our lives so much," she said.

The charity's new strategy will also concentrate on growing to meet the long waiting lists of young



people to join Sea Cadets, leveraging the DCMS Youth Investment Fund to make this happen by engaging more volunteers to help delivery.

Other key areas include growing and broadening the maritime curriculum on offer to seafarers and maritime professionals from apprenticeships to supporting those wishing to come ashore, modernising cadet training to further reflect today's Royal Navy and driving the youth voice at all levels, ensuring that every cadet has a say in their Sea Cadets experience.

"Research has shown that Sea Cadets has a significant positive impact on young people within just six months – at which point they have a sense of improved well-being, feel confident about their post-18 destinations, and are motivated to contribute to their communities," said MSSC's Chief Executive Officer Martin Coles.

"We cannot stop the world from changing, but we can ensure through our 2028 strategy that our young people and seafarers are future-ready."



GOOD DRILLS, TORPOINT

TORPOINT Sea Cadets won gold at the National Drill Competition held at HMS Raleigh, fending off competitors from across the country to become the best Continuity Drill Team in the UK.

Cadets from Torpoint Unit won the national trophy for their choreographed rifle drill display to music.

The team had been practising for four months on evenings and weekends to memorise and perfect their routine of over 200 orders which had to be conducted in accordance with Royal Navy ceremonial regulations.

The eight Torpoint cadets had previously won the county and regional finals before taking on the

national competition.

They successfully managed to beat teams from hundreds of other Sea Cadet units across the country to win the national trophy.

The cup was presented to the team by former First Sea Lord (head of the Royal Navy) Admiral Sir Philip Jones.

Able Cadet Katie Baker from Looe said: "I still can't believe that we've won. It makes the many hours of training and uniform preparation worth it."

Able Cadet Ella Wills from Torpoint added: "The competition this year was tough.

"We've previously come very close to winning but didn't quite clinch it, so I'm absolutely delighted



Admiral Sir Philip Jones presents the National Continuity Drill trophy to Able Cadet Issy Sutton

with our achievement this year."

The team's trainer and Commanding Officer of Torpoint Sea Cadets, Lieutenant Rhys Tanner Royal Navy stated: "These young people have shown values of self-discipline, commitment and relentless hard work over many months and hundreds of training hours.

"They are entirely deserving of their national trophy and are a credit to the local area."

Torpoint Sea Cadets are currently recruiting ten to 17 year-olds.

Contact TSRamehead@gmail.com for more information.



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Surreal feeling to represent unit at Coronation

AC Sara Yasin, 17, from Southampton Unit says it felt "surreal" to be selected to represent her unit at the Coronation of King Charles III.

Sara had the honour of marching from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey as a standard bearer as part of the military procession in the UK's first coronation since 1953.

She was handpicked from thousands of other young people across the country to be part of this momentous occasion.

The teenager is proud to be breaking stereotypes and to be able to represent the Asian community. "I don't think I have met or know of any other Muslim hijab-wearing Sea Cadet," said Sara.

"I am quite speechless to be chosen, and this is something that I would have never even thought I'd be a part of. It is a tremendous honour to take part in such a historic event.

"I'm so proud to represent my unit, Sea Cadets, and my community. Hopefully, if people from my community see me on TV, they will want to get involved and be part of this field in the future. Everything up until now feels surreal."

Sara and her fellow cadets saluted as the King and other members of the Royal Family passed in their carriages before marching across the bridge past the London Eye.

"It was fantastic to be stood there right as the King went past," explains Sara. "Most people there were older and part of the military, so to be able to actually be part of the parade and not just watching or sat at home, at 17 years old is crazy. I will remember that for the rest of my life. To be a part of that history."

When her father, Saqib Yasin, first received the email inviting his daughter to take part in the Coronation, initially he thought it might be spam.

He broke the news to his daughter after picking her up from a volunteering weekend in Nottingham.

"I went to pick her up the next day and told her



and we just couldn't believe it," said Saqib, "It's one of the most incredible feelings. Everyone's been so incredibly proud of her achievement and what she's done."

Southampton Unit's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant (SCC) Lindsay Bassett RNR, said: "We are so incredibly proud of AC Sara being selected to carry the standard for Sea Cadets, she has worked hard showing great determination alongside her

team mates to win the national colour party in 2022 which led to being selected. AC Sara is a positive role model for all cadets."

Last year, Sara took part in the UK-wide Drill and Piping Competition and led her team to win district, area, and nationals at HMS Raleigh in Plymouth. She joined Southampton Sea Cadets just before the first Covid-19 lockdown. Sara was inspired to join Sea Cadets as her grandfather was in the Royal Navy.

World record set at The Big Help Out

IT WAS a spectacular sight to witness as hundreds of sea cadets convened on the grassy lawns outside the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich to play 'Call the Hands' on the boatswain's call, thereby launching The Big Help Out volunteering campaign.

Hundreds more sea cadets from across the nation synchronised their efforts, playing the same tune on their own boatswain's call at precisely 4.30pm as part of a national challenge.

The youth charity, Sea Cadets, triumphantly set a new Guinness World Record today for "the world's largest ships whistle lesson" with approximately 400 cadets, volunteers, and members of the public participating in the harmonious piping event.

A boatswain's call is traditionally used on naval vessels.

Historically, the boatswain's call facilitated commands that were difficult to hear amidst the tumultuous sounds of the sea and inclement weather.

It also serves ceremonial purposes, such



as welcoming esteemed guests aboard, honouring a seafarer's retirement from active duty, and other significant events.

The Big Help Out was an integral component of His Majesty The King's Coronation celebrations and had the endorsement of the Royal Family.

Commencing on May 8, a myriad of volunteering opportunities for members of the public to participate in took place, all aimed at making a tangible difference in their local communities.

"Sea Cadets is honoured to play a pivotal role in The Big Help Out, and we offer a diverse array of volunteering roles across our 400 units nationwide," declares Captain Neil Downing, Captain Sea Cadets.

"We wholeheartedly encourage everyone to participate and discover first-hand the gratification derived from assisting young individuals in developing their skills, bolstering their confidence, and reaching their full potential through nautical adventure and fun."

With a vast range of opportunities, from boating experiences, open days, and beach clean-ups to football coaching, gardening, refurbishing Sea Cadets units or providing assistance in IT, marketing, photography, and social media, there are volunteering prospects for people of all ages and skillsets.

To explore Sea Cadets activities and events, download the convenient Big Help Out app at www.thebighelpout.com. Visit www.sea-cadets.org to find your nearest Sea Cadets unit. The Big Help Out will continue throughout the summer season.



Flotilla tribute to the new King and Queen

VOLUNTEERS from Market Harborough Sea Cadets led more than 25 cadets down the Grand Union Canal as part of the nationwide The Big Help Out to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

The flotilla of stand-up paddle boards, kayaks and even a 'mega' stand-up paddle board travelled the six miles from Harborough's Union Wharf basin – the original boating venue for Market Harborough Unit in the 1960s – to Foxton Locks, the site of the longest and steepest staircase flight of locks in Britain. Parents walked the distance along the canal towpath to cheer their children on.

Undeterred by frequent rain showers and grey skies, the cadets celebrated their arrival at Foxton Locks with homemade, Coronation-themed cakes, ahead of the start of their outdoor activity programme that will run from now until October.

PPO (SCC) Anna Harbidge, the new Officer in Charge of the unit, said: "The Coronation of King Charles III was a wonderful opportunity to bring our unit together, get out in the local community and to include parents, grandparents and siblings of all our cadets. With cadets of all ranks aged nine to 17, kitted out in their red, white and blue, it was a fantastic start to our boating season. Market Harborough may be nowhere near the sea but we always grab any opportunity to get our cadets on the water!"

JC Max, nine, said: "It was my first time doing paddlesports and I loved every minute of it. Six miles on kayaks and paddleboards was very hard work but so is



Special Call piped by cadets at Sandringham

AS part of the 'Big Help Out' campaign, Sea Cadets from Norfolk and Suffolk gathered to celebrate King Charles III's Coronation and pipe the 'Special Call' at Sandringham.

The cadets aged from ten to 18 travelled from King's Lynn, Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Beccles, Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Wells-Next-Sea dressed smartly in their Number 1 uniforms and piped the Special Call using a Boatswain's Call followed by the verbal order of "Heave Ho, Heave Ho, Lash up and stow, all Hands turn out" calling the nation out to volunteer.

The Boatswain's call, which dates back to the time of the Crusades, is used to pass orders and is taught to the cadets as part of the 'Sea Cadet Experience' along with rowing, sailing, powerboating and paddlesport.

The cadets also gave King Charles 'Three Cheers' echoing the same gesture given by the armed forces at the Coronation.

The event followed a tour of Sandringham House where cadets got to view the residence of the Royal Family.

Lieutenant Commander Mark Janner-Burgess said "It was a huge privilege to take part in this excellent event. The staff from the Sandringham Estate made us feel very welcome and I thank them for kindly allowing the Sea Cadets to pipe outside the King's home in Norfolk.

"The cadets performed the pipe brilliantly and they are a credit to the young people of Norfolk and Suffolk."

Aberdeen flies the flag

ABERDEEN Sea Cadets (TS Scylla) took part in a flag raising ceremony to mark the Coronation weekend at the Port of Aberdeen.

The unit, joined with the Port of Aberdeen in conducting a flag-raising ceremony to commemorate the start of the King's coronation weekend.

Members of the unit joined Port of Aberdeen's CEO, Cdre Bob Sanguinetti RN and senior members of the board as a service was conducted to mark the occasion.

The event saw Aberdeen Unit's Cadet Helen "Piping the Still" to bring the parade to attention before Cadet Tyler hoisted the Union Flag. "It was great to be part of such a great event, I really feel privileged to be able to play my part in the coronation celebrations," said Tyler.

Lieutenant (SCC) Peter Ritchie RNR, the unit's Commanding Officer, said: "It's been a great honour to join up with the Port of Aberdeen to create our own event at this historic time. I'm proud of our cadets, who performed brilliantly today."

Once the Union Flag was raised, in keeping with Scottish tradition, local piper Liam Lloyd gave an excellent rendition of *Amor Terrae Nostrae*, a special composition for the Coronation by Stuart Liddell before the parade ended and the event came to a close.

Aberdeen Unit has been involved in a series of Coronation-related events in their community and held a barbecue at their unit in Pocra Quay, Footdee, where more than 60 guests came together to watch the event.



Flotilla tribute to the new King and Queen

being the King Of England!"

JC Archie, nine, said: "I loved being on the water for the first time and being with my friends. The chaos at the end where we all got to jump in was one of the funniest parts of the day."

LJC Daniel, 11, said: "This was an important event to celebrate the Coronation of the King which gave us the chance to come together with family and friends and enjoy being on the water, kayaking.

"Even though I fell in five times I still really enjoyed it. The next day I was awarded the Commodore's Broad Pennant Award, which is something I am proud of and I will remember as part of the Coronation celebrations."

AC Joey, 16, said: "The river trip was a really good experience for all the cadets involved, I know I enjoyed it a lot and a lot of the younger or newer cadets enjoyed it too, so I hope it helped build their confidence and better their time at cadets. Overall, really good fun and well worth the sore arms."

AC Lillie, 16, said: "It was an amazing day and I was really honoured to be able to help out and instruct, whilst taking part in celebrating the King's Coronation."

Wendy, one of the cadet's mums said: "It was a great experience for all the cadets who took part.

"The event involved children of all skill levels, all ranks and those who had never been on the water before. The fun and laughter could be heard from miles away!"



RN captain goes back to school for parade

TWENTY-SIX years ago Captain Conor O'Neill was a CCF RN cadet when the CCF was inspected by the late Lord Boyce, who was then Second Sea Lord.

Captain O'Neill RN returned to his old school, King's College School in Wimbledon, to act as the Reviewing Officer at the CCF Contingent's Biennial Inspection.

Captain O'Neill inspected a tri-Service Honour Guard before meeting the school Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, the Head – Dr Anne Cotton – and parents of the cadets.

He was then guided through a working inspection which allowed him to see the range of activities that are used to challenge the cadets.



Captain O'Neill, himself a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award holder, enjoyed comparing experiences with the current batch of DofE candidates. He was also impressed with the modern offer of Cadet Field Gun training, which provided a spectacle for the visitors and was supported by CPO Sam McG and CPO Bomber M, CCF Area Instructors from CCF RN/RM HQ.

As a schoolboy Captain O'Neill devised a naval wargame for

Lord Boyce with task groups in separate rooms, and the current senior cadets reproduced it for him with a modern twist – out went the metal ship models, to be replaced by 3D printed versions.

The final event was an Inter-Section simulated Gun Run: "Physically demanding, executed with panache and grit, and resulting in a Navy win!"

Captain O'Neill found this generation of cadets to be bright and enthusiastic. They expressed the challenges they had faced and the personal gains they had made from overcoming them eloquently.

The Contingent Commander, Commander CCF Bob Mitchell, who taught Captain O'Neill when he was 12, said: "It was a great pleasure for all of us to welcome Captain O'Neill back as our Reviewing Officer."

"As an Old Boy of the school, he has always been tremendously supportive of our CCF, returning to speak to cadets and to encourage them on some of our major occasions. They loved talking to him at the inspection, and he obviously enjoyed being taken down memory lane."

At the final parade, Cadet CPO CCF Greg S invited Captain O'Neill to address the Contingent and guests.

Captain O'Neill spoke about the obvious changes to the cadet world, but also those things that remain constant, and from the RN Core Values he drew attention to the commitment of the staff, and not least the near 40 years that his old chemistry teacher has spent in a Royal Navy uniform!



Tom the life-saver

CCF RN Cadet, Tom M writes: "I was visiting Wasdale Lake's Water Sunday with my parents. I was solo paddleboarding fully equipped with wetsuit, gloves, booties and wearing a buoyancy aid. I got into paddleboarding through the CCF RN Section's sailing/kayak/paddleboarding AT event at Killington Lake, which gave me the confidence to pursue it further."

I had been out on the water for about an hour when I noticed a group of young people shouting to me and pointing towards a young lady on a pink inflatable on the other side of the lake approximately 500m away from her entry point, probably due to the wind direction.

I assessed the situation along with the conditions and decided to make my way towards the young lady, as I realised that she was clearly in some distress. My parents also noticed this commotion and what I was planning but were unable to help or have real communication with me but they watched it all unfold using their binoculars.

When I arrived alongside her, I realised that she was under the influence of alcohol which made her distress worse. She was shivering with the cold and wet as she was dressed inappropriately for being out on the water at that time of year, with just shorts and a T-shirt and bare feet.

I decided to attach the inflatable to my board via the ankle attachment d-ring and, keeping low on my knees, paddled slowly. My plan was to tow the young lady to safety. At one point during the tow, I got into the water as the wind had increased, so I decided to swim the remainder of the way, towing the board, the inflatable and the casualty. Back on dry land, I was congratulated and thanked by the members of the casualty's group. I was quite tired by the end of this but happy that I had brought her back safely."

Tom's RN Section Head (Lt Jason A) and CCF RN Area Instructor (CPO Iain S) said: "Tom's prompt and selfless, carefully assessed actions saved her life that day, she wouldn't have lasted five minutes if she happened to enter the water, due to cold water shock and hyperthermia, a real risk as the inflatable had seriously deflated during the rescue."



COMMANDO MERLINS SUPPORT TEN TORS

COMMANDO fliers took to Devon's skies to provide vital support to one of the biggest youth events in the UK.

The Merlins of 845 Naval Air Squadron once again were the jacks-of-all-trade over Dartmoor as some 2,400 teenagers took on the gruelling Ten Tors challenge.

Organised by the Army's Headquarters South West from Okehampton Camp, with support from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force as well as civilian emergency services and volunteers, the event consists of two challenges, the Ten Tors Challenge and the Jubilee Challenge.

The main yomp around Dartmoor tests the navigational, organisational and self-sufficiency skills of young people, formed in 400 teams of six.

They navigate routes of 35, 45 or 55 miles (depending on age) over the northern half of Dartmoor, visiting ten nominated tors checkpoints in under two days.

Teams must carry all that they need to complete their route and stay out overnight safely.

Completing Ten Tors is not easy with the terrain, distances and often weather – the rain fell once again this year – all conspiring against the young challengers.

The Jubilee Challenge is run closer to the camp and is designed for young people aged between 14 and 21 with a range of challenging conditions who complete one of several routes suited to their abilities.

The Commando Helicopter Force has leant its support – and aircraft – to the Ten Tors for many years: it serves a useful 'in the field' exercise, testing the ability of the Mobile Air Operations Team to establish makeshift landing/refuelling sites in bleak, otherwise inaccessible locations, and for ground crews to



live and work in austere conditions.

This year two Commando Merlins and their crews were required. Being able to swiftly fly over terrain impassable by vehicles or which would take considerable time on foot, the helicopters provide logistic lift capability for the organisers as well as manoeuvrability for the ground marshals.

However, it is their capability to provide the event's medical teams rapid access to any injured participants, and subsequent airlift to regional hospitals that makes the Merlin's so important and invaluable to the event.

For the aircrew – pilots and aircrewmembers – Ten Tors allows them to practise and refine key flying skills such as navigation and advanced

landings in an often inclement and challenging environment.

"My first year supporting Ten Tors has proved a rewarding and enjoyable experience both in the air and on the ground," said Merlin pilot Lieutenant Paddy Richardson.

"It is hard not to be caught up in the energy of such a prestigious event and excellent to continue the long tradition of support 845 Naval Air Squadron gives to the event."

"The squadron is immensely proud to support Ten Tors – aircrew and engineers alike enjoy the weekend. We look forward to continuing the tradition of supporting the event in years to come."

Pictures: Bob Sharples

Coronation was a day to remember



Cadet flag bearers line up in Parliament Square for the coronation

A NUMBER of Combined Cadet Force cadets attended the coronation of HM King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major WO1 Henry Parr, 17, from Portsmouth Division Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet Corps was selected to represent the Volunteer Cadet Corps and carry the banner of Portsmouth RMVCC.

"Since being selected, I prepared for my duties by making sure my uniform fitted perfectly, practicing banner drill, and spending many hours polishing shoes and belt buckles."

Lieutenant Colonel (VCC) Chris Spratt, Commander VCC, said: "It is fitting that a cadet from Portsmouth RMVCC was selected, as the unit is the oldest Royal Marines Cadets unit having formed in 1901 in Eastney."

The cadets were among some of the first to arrive at Buckingham Palace gates to witness King Charles III's entrance onto the balcony at Buckingham Palace and to watch the fly past from all three Services.

Lt Ruth C, Contingent Commander La Retraite RC Girls' School, said: "It was wonderful to be invited to participate in such a historic event. We were invited to meet all the troops at Wellington Barracks. We then moved to Admiralty Arch where we had an ideal viewing platform for the procession. A day to remember."

The Combined Cadet Force also had a band of 35 cadets from all three Services (Duke of York's Royal Military School CCF, Kent) who marched and played within the parade supporting the King in his coronation and entertaining the crowds.

These cadets marched from Horse Guards Parade to Parliament Square leading the banners of the six MOD-sponsored Cadet Forces and the Royal British Legion.

TRIATHLETES SET FOR STELLAR SEASON

TWENTY-FIVE athletes from the Royal Navy Triathlon Association headed to the Spanish island of Mallorca for their annual warm weather training camp.

The purpose of the camp is to prepare the triathletes, both established and up-and-coming, for this season's Inter-Service competition – in particular the Inter-Service Olympic distance race.

A triathlon specific hotel, access to some of Europe's best cycling roads, and delightful weather provided the perfect setting for the Navy's top triathletes to swim, bike, and run over the course of the ten-day camp.

A new-look training program devised by head coach Lt Cdr Adam Hughes, and delivered by a growing team of Navy triathlon coaches, put an added emphasis on the swim and run disciplines with more specific training compared to previous years.

The most experienced athletes took on a total of up to 35 hours training over the course of the training camp, giving their fitness the boost required to compete strongly against Army and RAF counterparts once the season gets started in earnest.

A typical day on camp with the Navy Triathlon

team looked like:

0630: Alarm goes off, just about time to get a coffee down

0700: At the pool for a one-hour swim set led by experienced swim coaches

0830: Time to hit the all-important breakfast buffet

1000: Ready to go out on the bikes – with two to six hours in the saddle on the menu

1500: Hitting up the pasta party to fuel up again for the afternoon session

1600: Getting a group run session in, such as 6x1km reps around an industrial estate!

1730: Straight to the spa for some well-earned sauna and jacuzzi time

1830: Team meeting to debrief the day and brief for tomorrow's training

1900: Back to the buffet to see how much food you can get down!

During the training camp the athletes also had an opportunity to compete against each other and test their race craft with a sprint distance triathlon consisting of a 400m pool swim, 20km ride and 3km run.

Two-time Inter-Service champion, Marine Sam Wordley, once again impressed, taking the win over the fast-finishing fellow Marine

Sebastian 'Tegs' Tegelaar.

Women's team captain and Ironman World Championship finisher, Lt Cdr Jessie Swift, proved she can excel over the short distance too, storming to first place in the women's race.

With the main training camp done for another year, the RN's top triathletes are back at work fitting their training in alongside their work – but the hard work done in Mallorca will no doubt set them up for a stellar season in 2023.

Association President Commodore Kris Nicholson gave the camp the 1* seal of approval: "The Warm Weather Training Camp is the gold standard of triathlon training, and a fantastic opportunity for our members to stretch themselves, learn from each other and be their best triathlete."

"As ever, I strongly encourage all personnel to make the most of the excellent sporting activities available through the service."

Royal Navy Triathlon are always on the lookout for other serving triathletes to join their ranks.

If you've been inspired and want to get involved, do get in touch via the Navyfit portal.



On the water for the toughest gig in town

CREWS from Culdrose, Royal Marines Tamar, HMS Raleigh and veterans hit the challenging waters of the Isles of Scilly for the toughest gig in town.

More than 400 teams from around the globe converged on small Cornish island chain for the 32nd iteration of the world championships, which traces its history back to the days when rowing boats raced out to waiting ships either to deliver pilots to guide the vessels safely into harbour... or take off cargo. The first team or boat to reach the craft got the job.

Only the skill and strength of participants determines victory: the boats, or gigs, are based on an historic Cornish design: 32ft long, 4ft 10in wide, made of Cornish narrow leaf elm and crewed by six people plus a coxswain.

Fog prevented some people reaching the event... and curtailed some of the racing, but when the gigs got under way there was some spectacular action – and some impressive results from the RN participants.

RM Tamar's womens' crew topped their group, while RNAS Culdrose's men were the top Armed Forces-affiliated crew.

"It's been such a fantastic first experience at the World Pilot Gig Championships," said Leading Air Engineering Technician Sian Phillips, No.3 in RNAS Culdrose Gig Club's Ladies crew.

"Getting onto the water, the competition and the general party atmosphere I've never seen anything like it!"

Veterans rowed on behalf of the Royal Marines Association Gig Club, Help 4 Heroes and EPIC GIGability.



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Navy surfers rule to win top trophy



THE Royal Navy Royal Marines Surfing Team have been crowned overall winners at the Inter-Service Surfing Championships.

The annual competition pits the best surfers from the Navy and Marines against their RAF and Army counterparts in shortboard (the 'open'), longboard, bodyboard and women's divisions.

In a break from tradition, the competition was moved last-minute from the usual venue of Penhale Point to Watergate Bay in Cornwall.

Despite some high-quality surfing from the RAF and Army competitors in conditions that were tricky at times, the Navy team did exceptionally well, ending up with representation in the finals of all four disciplines.

Particularly strong was their display of skill and ability in the open, with three of the four finalists being RN.

LAET Matt Gough surfed in the open, longboard and bodyboard disciplines, making it to the finals in all except Bodyboard, eventually taking fourth in the Longboard and third in the Open.

In the women's, PO Holly Bloomfield took third, and AB Leni Milne second.

The only Navy surfer in the Bodyboard final was Lt Ryan Woodridge, who took the win. In the open—the showcase event— Lt Dave Emery took

fourth, LAET Matt Gough third, and it was won in convincing style by AB Jake Sage.

With the first heat in the water just after 0800, it had been a long day of surfing, with the competition wrapping up just before 1800 just as the high tide was threatening to engulf the spectating and judging area.

A tense wait then followed as the organisers made the calculations to determine which of the three services had won overall, with teams accruing points not just for final results but for wave scores and placements during initial rounds as well.

This is the first win for the Senior Service team in recent memory and vindicates the efforts of the RNRMSA Surfing Association to provide quality training opportunities throughout the year for all its members.

The Inter-Service Championships is just one of many events and trips that RNRMSA members can take part in, with beginner weekends, intermediate training sessions, and surf camps/tours taking place regularly both in the UK and abroad.

To find out more and to become a member visit www.surfnavy.com or search for the Surf Navy group on Facebook.

Report: Lt Cdr Mike Curd RN, RNRMSA Surfing Association Chairman



Clockwise from top of page: AB Jake Sage surfing in the Inter-Service Championships; LAET Matt Gough; Some of the team with the Inter-Service Surfing Trophy; AB Sage prepares to enter the water



Portugal training camp pays dividends



PRIOR to the Inter-Service competition, 14 members of the RNRMSA Surfing Association were chosen to enhance their skills at Peniche in Portugal.

The group consisted of a mixture of RN/RM male and female surfers riding longboard, shortboard and bodyboards, all with unique styles and strengths.

Several early-morning surfs were had, followed by continuing sessions throughout the day. When the surf was truly pumping, some even managed four sessions in a day!

Advanced members travelled along the coast, south and north of Peniche to surf the Supertubes, known for its heavy, fast and deep barrels breaking dangerously close to the beach – a real challenge that the surfers rose to with full commitment and confidence.

Consolacao, south of Supertubes and known for its awesome right-handers and long, "rippable" walls was another area surfed and provided bigger and heavier swells.

Ribeira d'Ilas and Areia Branca offered a more consistent, mellow right-hand point break over reef and cobblestones and was an area that proved popular for many of the surfers as the deeper water break produced a more accessible option for various paddle strength and abilities.

Praia do Baleal held a reef break known as Lagide – a no-brainer for the longboarders of the group, with its A-frame breaking over a reef with both options of left and right to choose from.

The team also ventured to the world-famous spot Nazare, known for big wave surfing where waves as high as 80ft+ have been surfed!

Here they soaked up the history in the 'Big Wave Tour' museum, and enjoyed the incredible atmosphere as surfers and spectators alike watched the massive waves in awe.

Report: AB Jess King

CHAMPIONS OF TWICKENHAM FOR FIRST TIME IN 13 YEARS



THE Royal Navy won the 2023 Men's Inter-Services competition, as they recorded a historic victory over the Army at Twickenham.

More than 50,000 fans watched, on as the Navy beat their old military rival for the first time since 2010, with the final score-line reading 39-22 to the Navy.

They Navy have their hands on the converted Babcock Trophy, for the first time since 2016. Captain Jarrard Hayler lifted the trophy high at the home of English rugby, as the sailors prevailed in the battle between the Armed Forces.

Royal Navy Captain Jarrard Hayler, who scored the win-sealing try, said: "It's absolutely incredible. I think it's not just about scoring for me, it's obviously getting that win, which was great."

"And all I can say is I couldn't have done it without every single player in that squad, including those lads who been left back behind, or are injured, or everyone who's been there has actually dug deep and worked hard for us to get this win."

"I think for me, winning the Inter-services in 2016 was a bittersweet one. Obviously, it's a win, but when you speak to people it's like, 'yeah, but you drew' (against the Army). So this one is there's defined lines, we've definitely won the inter-services this year, and we've beaten the army at Twickenham. So that's an accolade that we can take on and live well with."

The 2023 Army v Navy Men's match kicked off, with an excitable buzz of services rugby fans, friends and families. The Navy started the fixture off fastest, and had points on the board after just three minutes at Twickenham Stadium. Fly Half Jordan Gott fired the first shot of the afternoon's action, as the Navy took an early lead.

The sailors started the match with an adventurous vigour, and kept the Army pinned back for the opening quarter of an hour. The Navy were not afraid to run the ball out from their own half, and welcomed the Army's challenge at the contact zone. Gott doubled the Navy's lead after 12 minutes, with a second well struck penalty.

The Army responded after 15 minutes, with centre Vereimi Qorowale leading from the front. The Newcastle Falcons star carried hard, and sent a one-handed offload over the top of the Navy defenders, in an impressive piece of a skill. This Army attack was cut short, as an illegal Navy interception brought play back for a penalty. Owain Davies slotted the effort, narrowing the gap to three points at 3-6.

A third pinpoint effort from the boot of Jordan Gott, sent the Navy into a 9-3 lead. However the Army soon found the first two tries of the match, as winger Cameron McDonald grabbed back-to-back scores, and the Army stretched in-front. McDonald's first try came after 24 minutes, as he intercepted the wayward looping pass of Navy centre Setareki Raumakita, and showcased great pace to break away from the defenders.

McDonald followed this up with his brace three minutes later, which came from a well worked Army rolling maul. The set-piece resembled a Sherman Tank powering downfield, as the Army then worked the ball well to the backs. Owain Davies sold a dummy on the first line runner, with McDonald taking the following line, yet was slowed down slightly by an ankle tap. He regathered his footing, and the winger was able to break away through the gap, in for

his second try of the match.

Davies converted for a 15-9 lead, but a resilient Gott kept the Navy in the match. The Fly Half levelled up the score to 15-15 with two more well taken penalties. The Navy then had the final say of the first 40 minutes, as Raumakita crossed over for the sailors first try, and took a late lead into the break.

Navy winger Jerome Rudder executed a neat offload to Gott, who straightened up and exploded away downfield, cutting through the Army defence. He has support on his left and right, as he took on the last defender. He passed to Raumakita, who topped off the try with a diving splash over the line. Gott's conversion sent the players off for halftime.

The Navy took this momentum into the second half, and were over to extend their lead just four minutes after the re-start. A loose ball in the Army 22 spelt disaster for the men in red, with Navy prop Ben Watson crashing up the line. Watson was stopped inches short of scoring, and scrum half Dan Rutter sniped in to score from the back of the ruck.

The resilient Army responded just four minutes later, as this back-and-forth fixture took another swing in momentum. Cameron McDonald completed his hat-trick for the Army, as the roof erupted at Twickenham Stadium. Davies sent a miss-pass wide, and found Captain Stu Cross out on the wing. The flanker popped the ball in-field to McDonald, who put on the afterburners to seal his hat-trick. Davies conversion narrowed the deficit to 22-29, as the atmosphere reached a fever-pitch.

The Navy continued to show their strength and the set-piece, and forced a penalty out of the Army at scrum-time. Jordan Gott followed this up with his sixth successful shot at goal, and took the Navy to a ten-point lead. The men in blue continued this pressure, and had one hand on their first Babcock Trophy since 2015.

On the hour mark, number eight Ratu Vakalutukali made an immense break into the back-field and looked set for the try-line.

The determined Army defenders managed a late tap tackle on the back-rower, but the Taunton Titan kept the ball alive with an offload to his captain.

Jarrard Hayler was in support, and the flanker dove across the whitewash and sent the Navy fans into a frenzy. Gott's conversion pulled the Navy further in front to 22-39, and secured the memorable victory.

Royal Navy Head Coach Dave Pascoe is a veteran of the Army v Navy match, and holds the record for Senior Navy caps.

"Amazing to win. So fortunately, for me, I was involved, I was the captain playing in 2010. So I had the opportunity to lift that trophy. And it's taken 13 years to gain victory over them. Again, previous to that played in 2001, and unknown to me, we haven't won for ten years previous to that, and that was like my first game. I'm hoping that it's not another 13 years until the next victory."

Olivia Critchley-Peddle scored the history-making try that the Royal Navy Women had hoped for, marking the first ever try scored at Twickenham by a Navy Women's rugby player.

The Army Women were crowned champions of the 2023 Inter-Services competition. Bethan Dainton shone with four tries for the Army, and Sale Sharks star Courtney Pursglove ran in a hat-trick and kicked an unobtainable deficit against the Navy for a 67-5 final score.

The Army Masters were victorious in their match against RN Mariners, which ended 38-6.



And they're off...first round of championship

THE first round of the British superbike championship was held at the Silverstone national circuit, writes **Corporal Charlie White RM**. After last year where I raced in the Ducati tri option cup, the series came to abrupt end and this fortunately opened up a fantastic opportunity for the True Heroes race team to step up to British super sport championship using the same bike (Ducati V2) with a few modifications.

British super sport has an array of talented riders, some of who have won Isle of Man TT races and World Championship level races.

Silverstone was a tough weekend, with no pre-season testing on the new bike and work commitments, meant I missed free practice one and made it back from USA with one hour to spare to get admin done and get out for free practice two. This was not ideal when attempting to keep up with some of the riders. After free practice two was found myself on a similar pace to last year with no testing and no sleep.

Qualifying the next day was going to be hard going, with 46 riders competing only the top 40 would qualify. Fortunately, myself and my army teammate Leon qualified in 39th and 40th place.

Race one was a sprint race of 18 laps of the short Silverstone circuit. Myself and Leon made good starts and moved up the grid. I finished in 29th place but unfortunately Leon had a coming together with another rider who made a mistake.

Race two was a normal race of 25 laps on the final day of racing on Sunday where I came 30th.

A massive thank you to the Royal Navy Royal Marines Road Race Team who support me to race and True Heroes race team who make everything happen at the British superbike rounds.

If you are serving and are interested in any form of motorsport please contact nrmrrt@hotmail.co.uk or find the team on social media.

If you are interested in getting involved with True Heroes Racing please email phil.spencer@trueheroesracing.co.uk or find the team on social media.



Angling for key victory

THE Royal Navy game angling team, a mixture of Ranks and Rates from all parts of the Surface, Submarine, Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Marines gave their RAF and Army counterparts a good run for their money in the postponed 2022 Inter Services Fly Fishing competition at Rutland Water.

The event, held at the Midlands venue, renowned as fly fishing's equivalent of Wembley stadium, saw the RN's best team performance for a decade.

In cold, wet and at times very windy conditions 8 of 11 RN anglers caught their full bag limit of 12 trout. Unfortunately, this wasn't enough to claim the title as the RAF prevailed in taking the trophy in a close competition.

Leading from the front was RN Angling Association President, Cdre Stu Capes who caught his full quota of rainbow trout in just over an hour and returned the RN's best individual bag weight.

Cdre Capes said: "It's been a fantastic few days and the team is really developing together. It is great to see the organisation growing in strength, and I'd particularly like to thank the COs of HMS Hurworth and HMS Trent for releasing key members of the squad to fish our most important competition of the year."

If you are serving in the RN and are interested in trying fly-fishing, check out RNTM 10-015-23 or contact Cdr Neil Loughrey MBE, the RNAA Game Secretary.

You little belter

Navy fighter Sophie wins National Amateur Champion title



SAILOR Sophie Colebourn was crowned champion against the Great British number one at the National Amateur Boxing Championships.

In a packed arena in the Vertu Motors, Newcastle, the highest level of National Amateur Boxing was on show, with the Royal Navy represented by AB(Wtr) Colebourn who delivered an astonishing performance.

Sophie faced a taller, awkward southpaw boxer and Sophie's boxing IQ was evident throughout, as she continuously applied relentless pressure to get on the inside of her Great British number one opponent.

Once there, Sophie delivered multiple eye-catching shots to the body and head and ultimately this high pace pressure comfortably saw her win the first round.

Her drive throughout the bout continued into the second round, where her tactics continued to pay off as she landed decisive hard shots which resulted in two standing eight counts against her opponent.

Demonstrably delivering the grit and determination required until the final bell, Sophie remained focused and maintained pressure throughout.

Sophie won by a four-zero split decision and was crowned the National Amateur Champion (NAC) 66kg Champion 2023, which has seen her join a small but illustrious list of Royal Navy and Royal Marine individuals who have achieved this title.

"It feels absolutely fantastic, I've trained so hard for this season, let alone this night," she said. "I want my name out there, I have been around since I was 12/13 years old, I have had the experience and my name is back up there where it belongs. I just keep pushing and pushing and breaking down boundaries."

Last time Sophie competed she did not quite make it to the final, contributing to that extra drive to win this time.

Sophie said: "I was in my first senior final when I was eighteen and then I joined the Navy and I have not been in a final since I fought Chantelle Cameron many years ago. To get here and to win, I have made a statement."

"There is a lot of people in my journey, the lads that have been with me today, the staff back in the Navy that are always on my shoulder, other clubs who I have sparred and trained with. I owe a lot to so many people, my civilian club and Sid who has been there since I was 11, and the Navy especially."

Royal Navy Boxing Team Coach, Sub Lt David Hull said: "The Royal Navy Boxing Association is extremely proud of Sophie's achievements; an exceptional boxer who is an inspiration to her peers and who deservedly now goes forward to represent England in the Tri-Nations Championships and has been selected for Great British assessment."

Fridge magnet for marathon runner

A ROYAL Marine from RNAS Cudrose smashed the Guinness World Record for running a marathon with a fridge on his back.

He beat the previous world record by 57 minutes – completing the London Marathon in 4 hours, 52 minutes and 10 seconds.

It comes just weeks after Corporal Sam Hammond scooped his first world record for running a half-marathon in Brighton with his trusty 23kg fridge.

The 30-year-old weapons instructor, who lives in Redruth, Cornwall, has now raised more than £4,700 for armed forces' charity SSAFA.

He said: "The build-up in the last few weeks, with all that self-induced pressure, was the worst. You question your training. I just wanted to get there and get it done."

"I'd say it was discipline rather than motivation that got me through. It got me through all the training in the pouring rain and it got me to the end of the course on the day."

"The majority of the first half was all a blur. The admiration and drive from all the other runners was amazing though. I must have fist-bumped and high-fived at least a thousand people who were all runners. At the side, despite it pouring with rain, the crowds were six or seven people deep in places."



He said the worst came at mile-21 when he hit 'the wall' – that critical moment which tested his strength to continue. Switching to walking the inclines, he pushed on despite his exhaustion, cramps and sores on his back and shoulders.

"I knew it would take everything I had but I put my head down and dug deep," he said. "I could feel, to my knowledge, that my body was wanting to shut down but when I saw the sign for 600 metres to go, I knew then I could do it. At no point did I think about ditching the fridge, just about walking the rest of the route."

By coincidence, Corporal Hammond had just been requested to complete his mandatory Armed Forces annual fitness test. He passed.

And the very next day after the marathon, he was back in work at RNAS Cudrose, on an induction course for his next draft with Royal Navy drone experts 700X Naval Air Squadron.

Donations to Corporal Hammond's chosen charity SSAFA can be made via his Instagram page [man_vs_fridge](https://www.instagram.com/man_vs_fridge) or by searching 'man vs fridge' and following the link to the Enthuse website.

The link to his fundraising page is <https://2023tcsclondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/man-vs-fridge>

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Deaths

Lowe, Joan, MBE. Vice chair and social secretary for City of Glasgow RNA and committee member for the WRNS Association in Glasgow. Died April 28.

Thompson, Philip, Lieutenant. Joined aged 15 in September 1949 as an artificer apprentice at HMS Fisgard. Passed out 1953. Served in HMS Duchess, Loch Killisport, Newcastle, Puma, Lion, Chawton, Scarborough, Dido as DMEO, Endurance as MEO, and the Machinery Trials Unit. Retired June 1979. Died May 1, aged 88.

Ken Tomkinson, Tel (S). Served in Vindex, Slinger, Armada, Glory, Monab 8 BPF. Member of Redruth RNA. Died April 13, aged 96.

Sheila Hartley, WO1(RS). Served at HMS Mercury and instructed at Northwood, Vernon, Fort Southwick, Dolphin, Faslane, NATO COMCEN Northwood, Mauritius, and Falkland Islands. Awarded Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Died May 4.

Lt Cdr Jack Colbeck. 804, 835, 714, 1831, 787, 700X, 728 NAS. Died March 31, aged 99.

Lt Cdr Leslie G Mordecai. 892 NAS. HMS Triumph, Hermes, Centaur. RNAIU. Died March 18.

Capt William H H McLeod OBE. HMS Lowestoft, President, Caledonia, Matapan, Cochrane, Ark Royal, AIB Sultan, Capt Port Rosyth, Capt Port Devonport. Died April 7, aged 91.

Capt Peter J E Cheshire. HMS Protector, Hydra, Drake, Beagle, Fox, Hecla, Hydrographer Dept, RCDS. Died April 5, aged 88.

Cdr Christopher P Ayres. HMS Mercury, Kirkliston, Minerva, Arrow, Boxer, Seahawk, Cornwall, Montrose, PJHQ Northwood, JSSC, BMM Kuwait. Died April 6, aged 65.

Cdr Allan L Tarver GM. HMS Ark Royal, Goldcrest, Heron, Ark Royal. MOD PE. Died March 23, aged 84.

Hon Cdr RNR Edward J Billington CBE RD*. Mersey Div RNR. Died April 30, aged 88.

3/O WRNS Stephanie Pigott. Died March 12, aged 102.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC

Lt Cdr Norman R Brookhouse. HMS Albion, Drake, Beachampton, Vernon, Phoebe, Lochinvar. Died April 21, aged 87.

Capt David E Symonds. HMS Fulmar, Heron, Nelson, Saker, Illustrious. JSDC. RNAY Fleetlands. RNEC Manadon. Died April 19, aged 78.

Lt Dennis L Alderson. DN Recruiting Outposts. Died April 12, aged 92.

Lt Stuart D Hunter. HMS Eagle, St Angelo, Excellent, Vernon, Heron, Illustrious, Neptune. RNR Tyne. Died April 7, aged 85.

Cdr Michael S Morgan. HMS Agincourt, Grenville, Cochrane, Bulwark, Neptune, Rooke, Drake. FOST. DFSD. Died April 1, aged 85.

Ask Jack

HMS Lord Austin: I am seeking family or friends of the sailors who served on the trawler which was sunk in the Seine Bay on June 24, 1944. Seven of the crew were lost and the remainder were rescued by US Coast Guard Rescue Flotilla One cutter USCG 56. My cousin Jess Alton Gipson was a crew member of USCG 56 that rescued the Lord Austin survivors. I am in contact with the daughter of the Commander and the son of one of the crew of USCG 56 and we are wanting to share information with any of the survivors' families about their rescue. We have the names of the seven crew

members who were lost but none of the names of the survivors. If anyone has information regarding the survivors, they can contact me by email at sggipson@msn.com. Gary Gibson

HMS Plym: I would like to trace the River-class frigate's unofficial timber crest. She left Devonport reserve in 1951/2 and deployed on Operation Hurricane in the Monte Bello Islands of Western Australia, where she was destroyed in the UK's first nuclear weapon test.

The ship was stripped beforehand and I have

discovered an auction house sold a badge said to be from the frigate (K271) in 2007 but I believe it to be unofficial, something confirmed to me by Chatham Dockyard Historical Society.

Geoff Robinson
7 Mountfield, Borough Green,
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8HX

David McIntyre. I am trying to find details about my birth father, who joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and lived in Southsea. He died in 1976. Priscilla Breakspear. Priscillabreakspear0@gmail.com

Reunions

564 Artificer Apprentice entry: Our 55th reunion will be held in Warwick for those who joined at HMS Fisgard on September 9 1968. For details of the reunion held over the weekend of September 8 to 10 please call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact Clive Adshead at clive.adshead@virginmedia.com

HMS Troubridge: Final Commission Association 1966-69 2023 reunion will be at the North Euston Hotel, The Esplanade, Fleetwood FY7 6BN, September 25 to 29. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@GMail.com

SERIES 49, HMS Fisgard: A reunion to mark the 60th anniversary of those artificers who joined on September 9 and 10, 1963, is planned for September this year. Venue to be decided. Anyone interested to contact: alan.browne44@gmail.com or the Fisgard Association and Old Caledonia Artificer Apprentices Association.

Loch Class Frigates Association: Our final

annual reunion takes place at the Royal Maritime Hotel and Club from October 6 to 8. Contact Andrew Nunn at andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk, phone 0117 9505835 or visit www.lochclassfrigates.com

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Association: The 2023 Reunion Dinner & Dance is confirmed at the Bournemouth Carlton Hotel, East Overcliff Drive, Bournemouth BH1 3DN from Friday October 20 to Monday October 23 2023. Contact Whiskey Walker on 01268 58041 or email: whiskey666@outlook.com or andyjmancini@gmail.com for further details.

Royal Navy Photographic Branch: Our reunion takes place at The Liner Hotel, Liverpool from Friday September 29 to Monday October 2. All former and serving photos plus wives/partners and guests are very welcome to help celebrate 104 years since the branch was formed. Meet and greet on Friday evening. Saturday, visits and tours around Liverpool City & Royal Docks. Saturday

evening consists of a Nautical Extravaganza experience, gala dinner & traditional 'Up Spirits' enactment, followed by dancing & entertainment. For further details please contact Danny du Feu. Email: ddf.photography@gmail.com; Tel: 07711 083465.

HMS Lowestoft Association: Our 2023 reunion will take place at the Alexandra House Hotel, Swindon SN4 0QJ from September 29 to October 1. All who served in Lowestoft during her RN service (1961-1985) are welcome to attend (including wives/partners/guests). Book direct with SF Events on 01452 813173, for further details and a booking form please email: admin@hmslowestoft.uk

HMS Ark Royal: A reunion is planned at the Wallasey branch of the RNA from Friday November 17 to Sunday November 19. For details please contact Gordon Weir at gordyweir@gmail.com or John Williams at jjwill085@gmail.com

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the April edition of *Navy News* (right) was the dreadnought battleship HMS Agincourt, which was nicknamed the gin palace.

Mr R Smith of Rushden, Northampton wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is a Beachy Head-class repair ship which entered service for the RN in 1945 and served until 1953.

1. What was she called? and
2. What was her former name?

Please complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.

We will also accept emailed entries to



subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk with **June Mystery Ship** in the header.

Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Entries must be received by July 12. 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 August edition.

MYSTERY PICTURE 340

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 or 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.



CPO Andy Leonard and PO Stu Dodd presented a cheque at HMS Sultan to David Bathgate and Wayne Dawson for the charity Military V Cancer

Submariners get on their bikes for charity ride

A PAIR of enthusiastic submariners took to their bicycles to support and raise awareness of the charity 'Military vs Cancer'.

Chief Petty Officer Andy Leonard (Institute of Naval Medicine) and Petty Officer Stuart Dodd (HMS Sultan) undertook a 210-mile cycle ride from HMS Raleigh to the Submarine Museum in Gosport, with fellow submariner and support driver, WO2 Alexander (Midge) Ure (HMS Sultan).

Stopping at military sites, including RNAS Yeovilton and HMS Sultan along the way, the pair's endeavours raised a total of £1,129 for the charity, with Military vs Cancer Chairman, David Bathgate and Events and Fundraising Manager Wayne Dawson presented with a cheque at HMS Sultan.

Royal Navy Warrant Officer David Bathgate formed Military vs Cancer after he lost several close members of his family, including his brother, to cancer. The charity aims to provide relief to persons in need by reason of ill-health due to the effects of cancer throughout the British Isles.

Andy said: "Dave is a Submariner brother who I have served with many times and I will never forget the day he didn't sail due to the impact of cancer on his family. Dave works relentlessly to support the fight against this awful disease. He has helped friends of ours that are submariners, supporting them along their journey - whatever the outcome.

"I made a promise to do something once I had the opportunity to do so and Stuart jumped at the opportunity to join me on this adventure.

"The ride was four days full-on riding, including well over 13,000 feet of climbing through Dartmoor, and hills in Devon and Dorset (to name a few).

"We have all lost people to cancer and having an empathetic understanding team who know what you are going through is priceless."



STEM team inspires at festival of science

RNAS Yeovilton's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) team provided hands on STEM experience to visitors at the Somerscience Festival in Castle Cary.

The team of six, led by RNAS Yeovilton's Engineering Training Officer, Lt Mordue, provided a full day of interactive STEM activities to visitors of the Somerscience Festival.

Lt Mordue said: "There is a national shortage of engineering roles and we encourage the youth of today to train in a STEM-related job. We do this by inspiring and encouraging both boys and girls by displaying and interacting with the STEM equipment we have."

Children's coding skills were explored with the interactive Sphero and RV robots, while snap-on circuits allowed children to build radios and flying saucers. A Gas Turbine Generator tested both children and adults alike to design a turbine in the most efficient way.

On the day, the RNAS Yeovilton STEM team which ranges from able ratings to officers encouraged and participated in all activities inspiring future generations. They hope to inspire more children at their next major event this year at the Royal Bath and West Show this month.

ROYAL NAVY NAVY NEWS

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Editor: Lorraine Proudlock
Email: news@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Editorial	Business
News@royalnavymail.mod.uk	Business manager: Lisa Taw
Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk	bm@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk	Mistrala Harries
Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk	subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Reprographics	www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews
Andrew.Brady150@mod.gov.uk	Telephone 07773 155321
General enquiries	
news@royalnavymail.mod.uk	

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Ask Jack columns in next month's Noticeboard must be received by

JUNE 13 2023

