



# NAVY NEWS

JANUARY 2020



## Starship shines

HMS Enterprise docks at Harumi Pier in Tokyo during her high-profile visit to the land of the rising sun. We look at what life on board the starship is like (see pages 18-19)

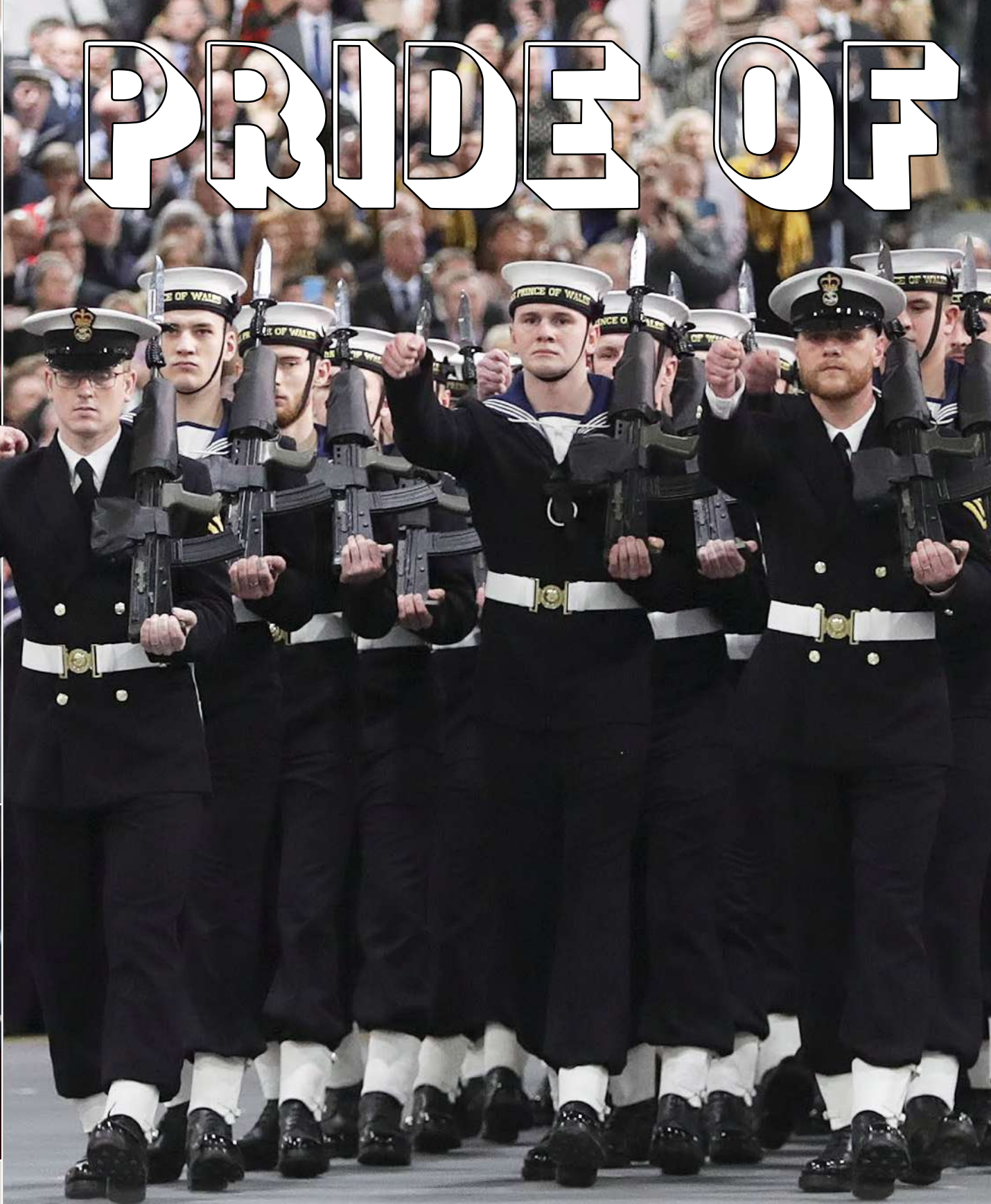
Picture:  
LPhot Alex Ceolin



PRINCE OF WALES COMMISSIONED • HOMECOMINGS • YEAR THE SILENT SERVICE ROARED



# PRIDE OF



**YOUNGER. Longer. Bigger. Faster. Yes.** Better (in the eyes of her ship's company). Wetter. Windier. Certainly.

The rain drenched the red carpet and caused the Sea Cadets and Sea Scouts dutifully forming a royal guard of honour with little protection from the elements to shiver.

The darkening gloom devouring Portsmouth as Storm Brendan whipped up the harbour waters was in sharp contrast to the colour and pomp filling the sprawling hangar.

The workshop for state-of-the-art stealth fighters and helicopters had been transformed into a makeshift amphitheatre, three huge banks of seats for a good 2,000 guests who'd been dutifully filing through the naval base gates since 9am.

On the hangar wall, an array of signalling flags: **HMS PRINCE OF WALES COMMISSIONING.**

In the 'arena', the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Collingwood, a 96-strong Royal Guard, plus Colours Party plus several divisions of sailors, all immaculately presented, drilled for weeks.

Commissioning ceremonies have changed little through the decades, even centuries. Martial music.

An inspection of the massed ranks by the guest of honour, in this case the carrier's Lady Sponsor the Duchess of Cornwall.

The warrant of commission ordering the ship's commanding officer: "you are to proceed forthwith to prepare for service..."

A pertinent biblical passage about the sea or water. The *Naval Hymn*. The *Naval Prayer* and other blessings of goodwill and prosperity.

And, to conclude, the youngest sailor (Chef Seth Day, just 17) and the captain's wife (Liesl Houston) plunge a knife into a magnificent commissioning cake (in the form of a replica carrier and huge ship's crest).

Except that these days a commissioning is a carefully choreographed multimedia affair run as much by directors wearing headphones and microphones as naval chaplains and parade marshals with commanding voices.

Huge TV screens give the audience an unparalleled, intimate view of proceedings.

The click and whirr of cameras in the crowd has given way to the occasional flashing light and a sea of phones capturing the moment, or recording a snapshot in time.

And corralled in a 'pen' at the side of the temporary grandstand, two dozen cameramen, journalists and photographers observed everything for tonight's news and tomorrow's fish and chip papers.

It was a world away from the last time the Fleet had welcomed an HMS Prince of Wales: January 17 1941. A low-key service in the depths of a wartime winter, largely out of the public eye to shield the vessel's advent from the enemy.

That Prince of Wales, a King George V-class battleship, was loved by her crew. "She was a thrilling sight," gushed former Able Seaman gunner Richard Osborne, now 95. Her flame burned brightly but all-too-briefly. Within 11 months she was at the bottom of the South China Sea, a victim, with battle-cruiser HMS Repulse, of overwhelming Japanese air power.

Seventy-eight years to the day, almost to the hour, of that tragedy the Royal Navy chose to welcome the new Prince of Wales into its family.

"I think it's marvellous that the name has been repeated," Mr Osborne said. "I hope you draw on the character of the crew of my ship."

"We are very aware that we have a great legacy to live up to," said Lieutenant Commander Martyn Mayger, the carrier's navigator. "Today is history in the making."

"Who wouldn't enjoy a parade like this on a ship like this?"

Lieutenant Helen Crisp, one of the officers of the watch, said to take part in the ceremony watched by her family and royalty made the commissioning the highlight of her three-and-a-half-year career to date.

"There was a lot of pressure to get it right," she said. "We practised, practised, practised - and it paid off. I think we did well and put on a good show today." The applause thundering around the hangar as the sailors marched off at the end of proceedings was the proof.

Helen continued: "There's a different character and feel to HMS Prince of Wales - she's a bit more relaxed than her sister, a sort of younger sister vibe, but we are still the military force that we need to be."

The 'other ship', dressed overall like other vessels in the naval base to mark the occasion, was berthed next to Prince of Wales on the specially-reconstructed jetty.

Outwardly - apart from the huge crest and R08/R09 on the superstructure - the two carriers are identical.

Prince of Wales is slightly longer, slightly heavier, with minor modifications, incorporating lessons learned building HMS Queen Elizabeth, as well as new tech like the 'Bedford array' - a series of lights which will help guide pilots still carrying live weapons to the correct spot to set down their Lightnings on the flight deck.





# WALES



Report: Richard Hargreaves; Pictures: LPhotos Belinda Alker, Joe Cater and Dan Shepherd

The Harrier couldn't land still carrying active bombs and missiles, it was too heavy. The combination of the Prince of Wales' size, the array and the ability of the F-35 to conduct a slow rolling landing. It will save money, save time and save on the need to restock on supplies.

It has the ship's air engineering officer Commander Simon Brierley very excited. As does the prospect of seeing the cavernous hangar - as long as HMS *Illustrious*, his previous carrier - filled with F-35s and Merlins.



**As we lower the Blue Ensign and raise the White Ensign, this day marks the culmination of over a decade of work.**

CAPTAIN DARREN HOUSTON

"The mood on board is fantastic," he said. "Everyone has been looking forward to the commissioning for a long time. And now everyone really wants to get on with the job of getting her to sea, showing what she can do. There's enthusiasm, a great *esprit de corps*, a great family feeling."

Air Engineering Technician Patrick Gauson was temporarily assigned to HMS *Queen Elizabeth* during his basic training and took part in her commissioning ceremony.

"That blew my mind," the 30-year-

old from Edinburgh said. "It confirmed that I'd made the right decision with my career.

"Here, today, with the rest of the lads, it's been quite incredible. It makes me very proud and is definitely something I'd like to tell my kids about in years to come..

"The whole ship's company are proud of the ship, proud of each other, we're gelling as a team and there's a massive sense of achievement on board. We're starting to give the ship her personality."

As he and his shipmates chatted with reporters or showed off their ship to their families, the Duchess of Cornwall and her husband the Prince of Wales - newly-titled Commodore-in-Chief, Aircraft Carriers, as the royal patron of our two new 65,000-tonne future flagships - spent a good 90 minutes mingling with the ship's company.

The Duchess, who formally named the carrier just over two years ago, hailed an "incredible feat of British engineering...The sheer scale and size of HMS *Prince of Wales* is simply breathtaking - Clarence House would fit on the flight deck 25 times.

"Impressive though she is, she only becomes a warship with a ship's company who breathe life into her. Without them, she is just a steel hull. They represent the very best of the United Kingdom, Britain's Overseas Territories and the Commonwealth."

They will not represent Britain far beyond home waters this year, as the ship continues training as well as undergoing maintenance and receiving capability upgrades in Portsmouth; the first F-35 Lightning jets aren't due to embark until early 2021... about the same time as HMS *Queen Elizabeth* deploys for the first time.

It's a far cry from when 26-year-old Lieutenant Zoe Jones joined the carrier in November 2018 and the ship was "more scaffolding and pipes" than active warship.

She's one of those 600-plus souls who has breathed life into the vessel, all the way through to taking *Prince of Wales* to sea for the first time and parading at the commissioning.

"I didn't think I would feel the pressure, but I did," said the officer of the watch. "When you see the stands full, the band, you realise it's the real thing, not the practice. And you realise you are not aboard *Prince of Wales*, but *HMS Prince of Wales*. You are on a naval ship."

To echo that point, a couple of dozen feet above the young officer, on the flight deck, Leading Seaman Damien Bye and Writer McKenna Shepherd-Ford fought with Storm Brendan - there was an audible patter of rain draining off the deck during quieter moments of the service - to haul down the Blue Ensign and raise the White.

And thus, in the words of the new carrier's sponsor, "a new chapter opens in the ship's history - which stretches back to the 1765... and the beginning of an exciting new era in our long naval history.

"Wherever in the world HMS *Prince of Wales* sails, may she acquit herself with honour and return safely home."



**Training or on patrol around the UK**

- |            |                     |
|------------|---------------------|
| HMS Albion | HMS Hurworth        |
| HMS Medway | RFA Tidesurge       |
| HMS Trent  | 820 NAS             |
| HMS Mersey | HMS Westminster     |
| HMS Tyne   | RFA Tideforce       |
| HMS Magpie | HMS Prince of Wales |



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

**FLEET FOCUS**  
Protecting our nation's interests

**NEW YEAR, new start, new carrier.**  
We begin 2020 with **HMS Prince of Wales** (yes, we ended 2019 with her as well) as she was commissioned into service in the presence of the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall (see pages 2-3).  
The following day the royal couple attended a service of thanksgiving (see page 26) for the life of Royal Navy benefactor **Sir Donald Gosling**.  
The second of the Royal Navy's carriers welcomed her big sister **HMS Queen Elizabeth** as she returned to Portsmouth following her successful Westlant 19 deployment to the USA and Canada (see pages 6-7).  
The strike group's escorts and units, **HMS Dragon, Northumberland, RFA Tideforce, 820, 845, 814, 815 NAS and 42 Commando** also returned to their respective homes (see page 5).  
Flying the flag for the Royal Navy over the festive season was **HMS Enterprise**, (see page 1, 18-19) as the survey ship continued her high-profile Asia-Pacific deployment.  
2019 was the year the Silent Service roared and we look back at how the **Submarine Service** commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Continuous at Sea Deterrent (see page 13).  
Royal Navy sailors, accompanied by Royal Marines Band Scotland, took over guarding Royal palaces for the second time in history (see page 11).  
Budding F-35 Lightning naval pilot Lieutenant Lewis Phillips has become the first trainee fast jet flier to 'go solo' in the UK's new trainer, just a month after it entered service (see page 15).  
Royal Marines from **45 Commando** swapped their Arbroath home for the humid and wet conditions of the Belize jungle for Exercise Curry Trail (see centre pages). The Lead Commando Group were put through their paces in the high humidity and difficult terrain.  
Type 23 **HMS Richmond** (see page 17) has emerged from refit as the nation's most advanced frigate.  
Offshore Patrol Vessel **HMS Tamar** (see page 15) has welcomed the first members of her ship's company.  
Royal Marine experts in combatting piracy and drug smuggling, **Juliet Company, 42 Commando**, took their training to the next level aboard HMS Albion (see page 9) and tested their sharp-shooting skills on Lydd Ranges in Kent (see page 14).  
We take a look at the work facing **Royal Navy Commander Ben Keith** and his staff as they take day-to-day charge of work to keep the peace in the Strait of Hormuz (see pages 16-17), with **HMS Defender, Kent and Montrose**.  
Sailors behind one of the most dramatic rescues in recent years, and a record-breaking drugs haul, were among Servicemen and women recognised by the Queen in the **Operational Honours** (see pages 30-31).  
**Leading Airman Engineer Technician Ben Welsby** has been crowned one of the country's top apprentices at the UK's largest skills event (see page 23). He is based at **RNAS Yeovilton**, where 64 Servicemen and women marked the successful completion of their engineering training (see page 35) at a formal parade.  
Using unmanned oceanographic gliders and profiling floats in anti-submarine warfare operations has seen the Royal Navy **DARE** team honoured at an awards night (see page 15).  
A book by the curator of the **Fleet Air Arm Museum** tells the story of 110 years of naval aviation in 100 iconic objects (see page 34).  
A 36-year chapter in the life of **HMS Raleigh** has ended with the departure of Royal Navy logistics training (see page 17). Before the move, six teams went head to head in the Raleigh kitchens to take part in the annual **Devonport Flotilla Cook and Serve** competition (see page 22).  
A team of RN and RAF survival experts from **RAF Marham** travelled to Norway to join their NATO partner for a training package (see page 15).  
Finally, 2019 was a great year for Royal Navy logistician Sam Matavesi. He played for Fiji in the Rugby World Cup in Japan, then signed for Northampton Saints – and topped it off by winning the Sportsman of the Year Award at the **Naval Service Sports Awards** (see page 39).



# You can help us be even better

**HAPPY** New Year, and welcome to the first View from the Bridge of 2020.  
Over the past year, we have been setting out the details of the navy's exciting transformation programme. This is changing the way we operate, making a good navy even better and helping our people to be the best that they can be.  
We have already told you about many of the changes we are making, from our shift towards being a carrier strike navy again to exploiting technology and innovation better.  
But at the heart of all this are our people: the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, QARNNS, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Reservists, Cadets and Veterans, as well as the civil servants and contractors who work so closely alongside us. Together, we are One Navy.  
We have some amazing people in this organisation, but we do not always give them the opportunities they deserve to shine.  
This year, we are determined that this will be different.  
Empowerment is a vital part of making our

**VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE**  
transformation effective.  
We are going to change the structure of the navy, starting with reorganising Navy Command Headquarters and reducing the number of 2\* posts. We will flatten hierarchies and drive decision making down to the lowest appropriate level.  
For too long, we have had processes which meant that the safe answer was "no." We want the safe answer to be "yes."  
This is not a green light to ignore policy and processes, take unsafe risks or undermine the chain of command, but we do want people to feel able to challenge the status quo, take decisions and seize opportunities when they arise.  
We will encourage people to try new things, to use technology and innovation, and to make things better. This ambition builds on the pan-Defence approach announced by the

Permanent Secretary and CDS last year. But it will only happen if we work together.  
This means that we want to hear more from our people on their views of the navy.  
And so, as part of this, we are changing the format of the View from the Bridge.  
From next month, you will be able to read about the views from other people's bridges, including from our fantastic Royal Navy Networks, our Cadets, our Reservists and the other amazing people who are part of this One Navy.  
We are excited about this change, and looking forward to hearing what people have to say.  
And so, if you are part of the Naval family and have a great idea to contribute, if you think that the view from your bridge is really special and deserves to be shared, please do get in touch via **Navy News**.  
Empowerment is in your hands; it is now over to you to use it. Email your ideas to **editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk** with 'my view' in the message field.





• AET Oliver Dickens is greeted by his nephew; PO Ryan Price, of 814 NAS, is greeted at Culdrose; Lt Jim Carver, 201 Flight Commander with his son

## Cattistock back from NATO task

THE 45 men and women of HMS Cattistock have returned home from a NATO deployment which saw them create quite a bang in the Baltic.

Families were lining the basin wall at HM Naval Base Portsmouth to greet loved ones who had been away for ten weeks on a busy schedule of training, operations and port visits.

The ship was assigned to Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1, mixing a programme of defence and security assurance in the region with the clearance of anti-shiping mines laid during the two world wars.

The NATO deployment was only seven weeks long but created a big impact, along with allies from the Danish, Belgian, German, Latvian, Norwegian and Dutch navies.

In just a two-week spell hunting mines in the Irbe Strait, gateway to the Latvian capital of Riga, HMS Cattistock destroyed six mines laid by Russian and German forces in each world war; the NATO force made 39 mines safe in that stretch.

Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Claire Thompson, *pictured inset*, said: "This may be the second oldest ship in the Fleet, but we've shown again the versatility and value of a minehunter and her crew in working with allies, representing the UK overseas and making life at sea a little safer in the Baltic."

Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury



• LH Martin Hall is reunited with son Freddie

# We're so proud of you

## Carrier Strike Group escort ships and units return home

ESCORT ships and units from the HMS Queen Elizabeth carrier strike group returned to their respective homes after three months in the USA.

First home was 815 Naval Air Squadron's 212 Wildcat Flight to RNAS Yeovilton, followed by HMS Dragon into Portsmouth.

Brittany Macdonald, from Basingstoke, was waiting to welcome home her wife Leading Hand Chloe Macdonald.

The pair got married in August and Brittany was looking forward to spending time together as newlyweds.

The 31-year-old said: "This is my first homecoming and it's been really exciting. It has been hard with Chloe being away, especially so soon after the wedding - I have been counting down the days until her return.

"I am so proud of what she and the ship have been doing."

HMS Dragon's Commanding Officer Commander Giles Palin spoke highly of what his ship's company achieved while in the States.

He said: "It is with immense pride that we return to Portsmouth having made history on our Westlant 19 deployment.

"Not only did we demonstrate the operational readiness of our carrier strike capability - with the magnificent HMS Queen Elizabeth as its heart - but in doing so became the first Type 45 destroyer to act as the air and missile defence commander, clearing the skies out to hundreds of miles for a UK Carrier Strike Group with F-35 Lightning jets in the force."

He added: "None of this would be achievable without the support and dedication of our families in the UK.

"All Dragons can return to their families with their heads held high given all they achieved on Westlant."

Days later HMS Northumberland and RFA Tideforce, returned to warm welcomes in Devonport. The ships' flights made their way to their respective homes at RNAS Culdrose and Yeovilton.

Supporting the Strike Group units throughout were Merlins from 820 NAS based out of RNAS Culdrose, providing anti-submarine protection and search-and-rescue capability, along with personnel from 1700 NAS.

Commando Merlins from 845 NAS acted as the aviation workhorses, transporting stores and equipment, providing SAR cover and also landing Royal Marines from Lima Company, 42 Commando ashore to exercise the recovery of isolated personnel.

Merlin from 814 NAS - aka the flying tigers - and Wildcat from 815 completed the air group.

HMS Northumberland, which deployed ahead of the rest of the strike group, first encountered Hurricane Dorian as she arrived in Halifax. She went on to play a key role in the NATO Exercise Cutlass Fury, which involved 20 ships and 36 aircraft.

Commanding Officer of Northumberland, Cdr Ally Pollard said: "It has been an exciting challenge for my ship's company, some of whom have never been to sea or deployed, and whilst only a short deployment it has nevertheless been demanding."

HMS Northumberland has sailed some 21,896 miles since August 27. This is equivalent to driving from Lands' End to John O'Groats 29 times.

HMS Northumberland's Merlin Mk2, Mohawk Flight, clocked up 130 hours flying including over 55 sorties and numerous periods of high alert.

Feeding 200 sailors three meals a day was a challenge with 20,790 rashers of bacon, 15,840 sausages, 9,900 kg potatoes 190 kg sweetcorn being consumed. Charity has also been a strong focus throughout deployment with Northumberland raising over £2,800.

Deputy Marine Engineering Officer, Lt James Jeffcoate added: "Having served in HMS Monmouth for Westlant 18, it's been fantastic to see the development of UK Carrier Strike.

"Seeing HMS Queen Elizabeth close up whilst HMS Northumberland escorted her has enabled us all to appreciate what an amazing piece of British engineering she really is."

The CO of RFA Tideforce, Captain Terrence Barke, said: "Ground-breaking milestones, first-of-class trials and unwavering professionalism of the ship's company has truly demonstrated the capability of RFA Tideforce and her ability to extend the limits of the RN and our NATO Allies, ensuring their operational effectiveness 24 hours a day 365 days a year."

RNAS Yeovilton also welcomed back 815 NAS's 201 Flight from RFA Tideforce.

"The deployment has been my highlight as a flight commander," said Lt Jim Carver, of 201 Flight.

"I joined the RN as AET in 2005, and never for one minute thought I would become a pilot, let alone a small ship's flight commander.

"It has been a privilege to lead such a well-motivated, enthusiastic and professional group of people in support of the re-generation of UK Carrier Strike."

Sister Act, see pages 6-7.



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

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

For further information please contact:

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

0207 407 8658

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





# Sister act



Picture: Shaun Roster; visit shaunroster.com

## Double delight as carriers 'take over' home port

### TOGETHER at last.

HMS Queen Elizabeth lines up alongside younger sister HMS Prince of Wales in Portsmouth Naval Base for the first time.

The elder of the two returned home to Hampshire after three months in the USA.

Hundreds of people gathered to welcome back their loved ones, and to see the two carriers together.

HMS Queen Elizabeth sailed from the UK in August, along with her escorts HMS Dragon, HMS Northumberland and RFA Tideforce, to conduct Operational Tests with UK F-35B jets from the UK Lightning Force for the very first time.

HMS Queen Elizabeth's first port visit was to Halifax, Nova Scotia, before the Strike Group made their way down the East coast of the USA to Florida.

The carrier embarked three UK jets from 17 Test and Evaluation Squadron (TES) based at Edwards Air Force Base in California, as well as three that crossed the Atlantic from RAF Marham.

The five-week Operational Test phase, headed up by the Air Warfare Centre, was designed to provide 'end-to-end' testing of the jets and the combined Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel that operate and support the squadrons.

The tests included mission briefs, preparation of the jets, including arming them using the ship's Highly Mechanised Weapon Handling System (HMWHS), launching, fighting the mission (including weapons drops) and recovery back to the ship.

The culmination was a four-ship launch, with four UK Lightnings launched from the deck within seconds of each other to fight their mission.

Concurrently F-35Bs from the US Marine Corps flew to and from the ship, exercising their processes ahead of a detachment deploying alongside UK Lightning Force jets on the ship's first operational deployment in 2021.

Commanding Officer of HMS Queen



Pictures: LPhotos Kyle Heller, Ben Corbett and Dan Rosenbaum

Elizabeth, Captain Steve Moorhouse said: "Homecomings are always a special occasion, but to be returning to Portsmouth, with HMS Prince of Wales welcoming us home makes this a particularly special occasion."



"This has been an extremely successful deployment for HMS Queen Elizabeth. Westlant19 has all been about increasing the complexity and tempo of our activity, building the capability of the Strike Group and testing ourselves in a demanding training environment with our close partners from the US Navy and Marine Corps."

"Embarking UK F-35B Lightning for the first time and integrating them within the Carrier Strike Group is a significant milestone and we are well set for an equally demanding 2020 and our first operational deployment in 2021." Commander of the Air Group for

the UK Carrier Strike Group, Captain James Blackmore, added: "The five-week period of Operational Tests with UK F-35Bs from the UK Lightning Force was significant and historic."

"As the last pilot to fly Harrier from the deck of HMS Ark Royal in 2010, it filled me with tremendous pride to see UK fixed-wing aircraft operate once more from a British carrier."

"Our Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel, along with those from the US Marine Corps and US Navy, worked seamlessly together to make sure the tests were a success."

HMS Queen Elizabeth also conducted warm-weather trials on her propulsion systems and expanded the operating envelope of her aircraft in warmer temperatures.

Her final task was to provide a spectacular venue for the second joint

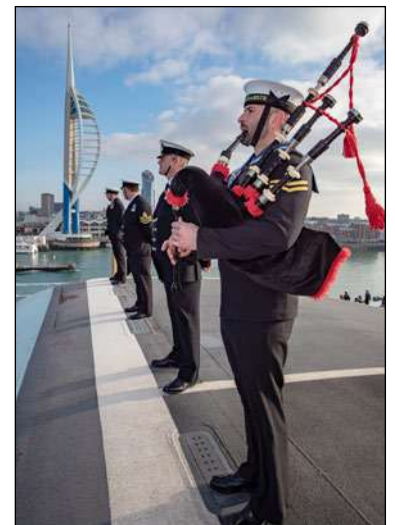
UK-US Atlantic Future Forum and Defence Trade Expo whilst at anchor off Annapolis, see page 30.



All the UK Carrier Strike Group units conducted extensive exercises with surface, subsurface and aviation assets from the US military, including anti-submarine and anti-aircraft war fighting exercises with US Carrier Strike Groups, and aviation training with USMC MV-22 Ospreys, CH-53 Super Stallions and US Coastguard helicopters all landing onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth, further enhancing future joint operating capability.

KEEP UP WITH THE CARRIERS

Follow @HMSQNLZ, @HMSPWLS and @RoyalNavy on Twitter







## It's Your Place in London

Whatever your reason to be in London as a serving enlisted member of HM Armed Forces with an ID card you have exclusive access to the Union Jack Club. It's your base right in the very heart of London with very comfortable rooms and a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. So whenever you're in London it's your place to enjoy.

020 7928 4814  
[www.ujclub.co.uk](http://www.ujclub.co.uk)



Union Jack Club Union Jack Club @unionjackclub

**Dedicated to Outstanding Service**  
for Enlisted Members of HM Armed Forces





*Atkins & Co.*  
*Chartered Accountants*



## CASH FOR YOU

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

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

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

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

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

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

T: 01934 527888

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

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



# Next level 42



ROYAL Marine experts in pirate/drug smuggler take-downs took their training to the next level aboard the nation's flagship.

The men of Juliet Company, 42 Commando, are the UK's specialists in board-and-search operations – they are behind a string of multi-million pound drugs busts in the Middle East over the past 12 months.

The unit, based at Bickleigh just outside Plymouth, is undergoing a transformation as part of the reshaping of the Royal Marines under the Future Commando Force programme, with 42 in general focussing on seagoing operations – and each of its four companies assigned bespoke roles:

- Juliet – board and search;
- Kilo – short term training teams.
- Lima – 'Joint Personnel Recovery', rescuing downed aircrew/British military personnel/civilians in a hostile environment;
- Mike – additional force protection for deployed Royal Navy/Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships.

Three seven-strong teams from Juliet deployed to the Gulf aboard Her Majesty's Ships Montrose, Kent and Defender as part of the effort to safeguard shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and the wider mission of general maritime security (such as intercepting drug-runners whose illegal trade funds international terrorism).

Such missions are generally performed by relative newcomers to boardings – they've undergone an eight-week training course before joining the small teams assigned to frigates and destroyers.

That experience means they are eligible, with the relevant training, to serve with the Fleet Contingency Troop – the men called upon to face down a hostile crew on a ship, known in military parlance as a 'Level 3 boarding' as the RN classifies its operations thus:

- Compliant (crew of the target vessel will welcome you aboard);
- Non-compliant (crew of the target vessel are obstructive and unhelpful, but not openly hostile);
- Opposed (the crew will attempt to block any

boarding attempt; fighting will be involved).

Such classifications can count for little in the real world, however. "You never know what you are going up against on a boarding. Even on a compliant boarding, someone could pull a gun on you half way through," says Major John Middleton, Officer Commanding Juliet Company.

Boardings involving the Fleet Contingency Troop are invariably on a larger scale than those carried out on dhows in the Gulf, so Juliet took advantage of flagship HMS Albion as she conducted training off Plymouth to prepare her for a winter deployment to Norway.

Using two RAF Chinook as their steeds and the cavernous loading dock of Albion – packed with landing craft, vehicles and shipping containers – as their target, more than two dozen commandos 'rapid roped' (abseiling... without a rockface) from the helicopters and made their way into the bowels of the assault ship.

Pretty much everything Juliet Company wear and carry into action is specifically adapted to their mission:

- Lightweight helmet with night vision device
- Additional gloves for fast roping
- FRIS suit (fire retardant immersion suit)
- Tactical floatation system
- Lightweight body armour which both provides protection and is buoyant should a marine end up in the water
- C8 rifle with extendable stock
- Glock pistol

"The equipment is top end, lightweight, capable, adapted to close-quarters battle," explained Major Middleton.

"Over the past three or four years, Juliet Company has developed its equipment and now we've pretty much got the optimum suite."

The few days on Albion gave his men the chance to get back into the routine of living at sea in relatively austere conditions, but above all train, train, train.

"We are the specialists in this environment and what makes us good is that we exercise all the time. Last week we were boarding a Brittany ferry, this week Albion. It's all good practice," Major Middleton added.

**Report and Pictures:**  
WO2 Richard White RM  
■ Range Rovers, see page 14





F I E S T A S T

Ford

TOGETHER WE GO FURTHER



SIERRA. ALPHA. VICTOR. ECHO.

We're proud to offer current and former military personnel savings on selected vehicles.<sup>†</sup>

Search: Ford Military Sales



<sup>†</sup>Selected vehicles only. Eligibility criteria applies. See [ford.co.uk/militarysales](http://ford.co.uk/militarysales) for more information.

Model shown is a Fiesta ST-3 3-Door 1.5 200PS Manual Petrol with optional Full LED Headlamps.  
Fuel economy mpg (l/100km): Combined 40.4 (7.0). \*CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 136g/km.

Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

\*There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures. The CO<sub>2</sub> figures shown, however, are based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration.





# Navy mounts 'outstanding' palace guard

Pictures by Kirsty O'Connor & LPhot Rory Arnold

SAILORS marched back to Buckingham Palace – and the history books – by mounting guarding duties for only the second time in 359 years.

After weeks of rehearsing drills to the highest of standards the 104 officers and ratings started their sentry duties, taking over from the 1st Battalion of the Grenadier Guards.

It is only the second time the Naval Service has ever undertaken the role, with the first being in 2017 to mark the Year of the Navy.

Officer commanding the Royal Navy Guard, Lieutenant Commander Richard Dobson, said: "This is an intense and memorable experience for all of us at the end of several weeks of ceremonial duties training, just eight or nine days of it specifically on palace guarding, and could be regarded as the pinnacle of my professional career which began as a rating in 1990.

"The instructors from the guards could not have been better, for those eight or nine days they really put us through our paces and prepared us thoroughly for our inspection last week enabling us to mount guards today."

Palace duties for the sailors followed November parades at the Cenotaph and Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance.

Only after they were concluded could training, mostly conducted on the HMS Excellent drill square in Portsmouth, focus on guarding.

Pronouncing them ready to take over duties at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, St James Palace and the Tower of London, Brigade Major of the Household Division Lieutenant Colonel Guy Stone said: "The sailors were outstanding and had clearly put a huge amount into their preparation. They were well turned out, confident of all guard change formats and clearly enjoying the experience."

Palace duties also meant the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines were in high demand, with one of the bands providing musical support whenever the Navy mounted or dismounted the guard.

Troops of the Army's Household Division have guarded the sovereign and Royal Palaces since 1660.





# PROJECT FIREFLY

## From Regular To Maritime Reserves



**THE MARITIME RESERVES:** are a force of highly trained civilian volunteers who are readily available to support any of the Royal Navy's worldwide operational commitments.



### Job Opportunities

There are a wide range of specialisations available.

### Commitment

An annual requirement of 24 Reserve Service Days (RSD) achieved through your spare time and some Civilian Employers may also contribute days towards your commitment!

### Benefits Include

- Excellent rates of pay, pension and a generous annual tax-free bounty
- Opportunities for continued professional development and promotion
- A more stable work-life balance with the added benefit of a 2 year harmony period (although attending the required annual training days still applies)
- Remain part of Naval/Corps Family with its special camaraderie

### Who is eligible?

Open to Fully Trained Naval Service Leavers and Ex-Regulars (up to 24 months post TX date). Members with the desired skills from the other Armed Services may also apply



For further information contact the Firefly team at:  
NAVY PCAP-CM WF FF MAILBOX@MOD.GOV.UK

**THE JOURNEY DOES NOT HAVE TO END!**



# Silent Service roars

## IT WAS the year that the Silent Service roared.

2019 marked CASD 50 – 50 years of the Continuous At Sea Deterrent – with people from around the country coming together to mark half-a-century of dedication, sacrifice and commitment.

CASD 50 began in January with a visit by then First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones, to the Home of the UK Submarine Service at HM Naval Base Clyde.

Six Submariners received new silver deterrent patrol pins – awarded after ten patrols – but more importantly First's visit launched CASD 50 commemorations, shining a spotlight on this usually stealthy fighting arm of the Royal Navy.

Operation Relentless as it is known has been the longest sustained military operation ever undertaken by the UK's armed forces. Generations of Submariners, their families, civilian workers and industry partners have dedicated countless hours to keeping our submarine-based deterrent at sea, 24 hours a day, seven days a week for 50 years.

In May this remarkable human endeavour was recognised by a service at Westminster Abbey. Attended by Honorary Head of the Submarine Service, The Duke of Cambridge, the event included testimonials from Submariners, their family members and those who have supported the maintenance of the deterrent.

At HM Naval Base Clyde, which has operated and maintained the deterrent since its inception in 1969, a major CASD 50 event was held in July. It was thought to be the biggest single gathering of Royal Navy Submariners since World War 2 and The Princess Royal attended to mark the occasion.

Chief Petty Officer Karl Davies was one of several people who received an award on the day, being presented with his gold deterrent pin by the Princess, signifying 20 patrols.

"It was the highlight of my career with the Submarine Service," said Chief Davies. "I am fortunate to be supported by my fantastic family and friends, so I felt that receiving my pin from Her Royal Highness on the 50th anniversary of CASD was a testament to them."

"Both my fiancé and my mum travelled from West Wales to be there on the day. It was an incredible honour!"

Visitors were also treated to the usually secret sight of a Vanguard-class submarine completely out of the water, when the base's shiplift facility, *main picture*, opened its doors to reveal one of the 16,000-tonne vessels undergoing routine maintenance.

The year of commemorations concluded in November when the iconic Edinburgh Castle was the venue for a Service of Thanksgiving.

Around 200 people gathered within the Castle's Scottish National War Memorial, among them Miriam Walker who gave a moving account of what it is like to be the wife of a submariner.

Speaking at the event, Miriam said: "I honestly don't know how those of us who stay behind get through it. Not knowing where your loved one is, what they're doing, how they are or when they're



## Shiplift facts and figures

1984: Design started  
 1989: Design completed and construction started  
 1990: Superstructure erected  
 1993: Shiplift commissioned and handed over to HMNB Clyde  
 1994: Operational proving programme started. First docking of SSBN  
 1995: Engineering modifications made to the submarine cradle  
 1996: First docking with the new cradle.  
 2013: 100th docking within the shiplift  
 Dimensions:  
 Length: 186 metres  
 Width: 52 metres  
 Height: 45 metres  
 ■ The shiplift is a covered dock running the length of 22 double-decker buses  
 ■ It is constructed of reinforced concrete supported by piles driven into the bedrock  
 ■ It uses a proven 'syncrolift' lifting system, consisting of a steel platform operated by 96 hoists and associated cables  
 ■ It is capable of raising a giant, 16,000-tonne Vanguard-class submarine clear out of the water so that engineering staff can conduct maintenance to submarines on dry land

even likely to be back is, for most people, incomprehensible.

"I can't emphasise enough how living in a community where deployment and separation is part and parcel helps. Being surrounded by others who have a natural empathy is immensely supportive."

Miriam also spoke of that magical moment when the boat returns home from deployment.

"It's exactly the same feeling I had as a little girl on Christmas Eve," she said. "Knowing he's back but still not home is excruciating but the minute he walks through the door it's like meeting him on that blind date all over again."

During the Edinburgh event several charities were also in attendance with Erskine Veterans, Military Vs Cancer and Helensburgh Sea Cadets as the nominated beneficiaries of money raised throughout the year at the CASD 50 events and through the sale of merchandise each receiving £10,000.  
 Report: Gavin Carr



● The Princess Royal presents CPO Karl Davies with his gold deterrent pin at HMNB Clyde



● A Vanguard-class boat returns from her patrol



● Six submariners received new silver deterrent patrol pins as the CASD 50 commemorations began



● Submariners gathered at Clyde in July to mark CASD 50



● Above, submariners attending the service at Westminster Abbey; Above right, the year of commemorations ended with a service of thanksgiving at Edinburgh Castle; Right, three charitable organisations received £10,000 each from fundraising throughout 2019







# RANGE ROVERS

**R**OYAL Marines boarding operations specialists have been testing their expert marksmanship to ensure they are ready for combat in the tight and difficult environment of a ship.

The marines from Juliet Company of Plymouth-based 42 Commando are the Green Berets at the forefront of the boarding missions specialism.

They are called upon to carry out such tasks – which includes counter piracy and counter narcotics – but also play a role in training allies in their expert area, called maritime interdiction operations (MIOPS).

The commandos are embarked on Royal Navy warships in small elite teams – very much in keeping with how the Royal Marines want to continue to work as they evolve into the Future Commando Force, which puts their amphibious commando skills at the forefront of their work.

This latest training makes sure the marines are up to scratch, ready to carry

out operations and maintain their expertise in combat in the often cramped surroundings of ships or smaller craft.

The ranges element of the training package took place during the day and under the cover of darkness, testing elements of J Company using their Glock pistol and the C8 rifle – weapons used by the commandos because of their advantage in close-quarters combat.

This all took place at Lydd Ranges in Kent and was the perfect chance to lay down some lead.

“The live fire training needs to be done in all conditions, day and night,” said Major John Middleton, Officer Commanding of J Company.

“Royal Marines boarding operators are also trained to a high enough level to instruct Close Quarter Marksmanship and Close Quarter Battle Techniques to partner forces overseas.”

The Maritime Operations specialists 42 Commando are deployed from their

Bickleigh Barracks home all over the world right now.

Lima Company have been on Westlant 19 and have tested themselves in rescuing downed pilots as part of the HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier Strike Group.

They fought their way through a replica developing world village, developing the tactics they would use to locate, if necessary liberate and finally escort or carry injured or trapped personnel back to either of Britain’s two new aircraft carriers.

“It’s great to be back in Quantico to further our skills – the training facilities and terrain here provide a great environment for doing just that,” said Warrant Officer 2nd Class Neil Smith.

It marks a busy time for the Royal Marines as they build up to the Winter Deployment in the Arctic. A 40 Commando Battle Group have been in the California desert while 45 Commando have been Exercise Curry Trail in the jungles of Belize.







## Tamar welcomes first 'fab four'

OFFSHORE Patrol Vessel HMS Tamar has welcomed the first members of her ship's company.

Four Royal Navy personnel joined teams from BAE, DE&S and MCTA for contractor sea trials in the Firth of Clyde.

Lt Kevin 'Mac' McAllister, the ship's senior naval officer, along with POET(ME) 'Swift' Swift, Lt Rich Brennan and CPOET(ME) Andrew 'Tugg' Wilson, joined the warship at BAE's Scotstoun yard.

Tamar is the fourth Batch 2 River Class OPV to be built in Scotstoun, Glasgow, and has the accolade of being the greenest vessel the Royal Navy has ever had.

The ship has achieved the Environmental Protection Agency's Tier 3 status, an updated set of fuel and vehicle standards aimed at cutting

pollution.

The vessel has been fitted with the Urea system which cleans up the emissions from the ship's engines and generators.

Tamar was put through her paces during trials with the power and propulsion systems, radars, Combat Management System and ASCG 30mm cannon all successfully achieving the required standards.

Commanding Officer (designate) Lt Cdr Michael Hutchinson, who joined the crew during trials, said: "I am very impressed with the material state of Tamar, and I am extremely keen to get her into service and onto operations."

Following the trials, Tamar returned to Scotstoun to continue with her generation and preparations to hand over to the Royal Navy in 2020.



## Award for those who DARE

USING unmanned oceanographic gliders and profiling floats in anti-submarine warfare operations has seen a Royal Navy team honoured at an awards night.

Project HECLA, funded by the Navy's Discovery, Assessment and Rapid Exploitation (DARE) team, will see ships use near real-time oceanographic data in anti-submarine exercises.

The intention is for near real-time data mapping of the ocean environment to be fed via satellite to ashore units for processing and analysis, then to front line units to give an enhanced understanding of the underwater battle space.

Lt Cdr Matthew Cox, from Portsmouth-based DARE, said: "By improving our understanding of the environment, we can make better decisions in anti-submarine warfare operations."

"The gliders and profiling floats are versatile as they could be shipborne or put on the back of a fast-boat."

"It is about benefitting live operations and that's something we hope to start trialling next year."

Project HECLA has the potential to change the way the Royal Navy conducts anti-submarine warfare, closing the gap to machine speed warfare and accelerating detection or deterrence of opposition assets.

The difference it could make to operations impressed the judges at the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) Innovation Awards. It won the Armed Forces category at a ceremony in London.

More than 350 entries from 25 nations were submitted for the awards.

Lt Cdr Cox added: "It is really good to see the Royal Navy reaching a height where it's getting internationally recognised. These are industry-level awards and it is great to be among the winners."

Runner-up of the Armed Forces category went to Royal Marine Colour Sergeant John McDonald, of 47 Commando, who researched modern solutions to surveying a beach before an amphibious assault. He repurposed an off-the-shelf product using side-scan sonar technology to support beach reconnaissance.



# Naval airman's historic flight

BUDDING F-35 Lightning naval pilot Lieutenant Lewis Phillips became the first trainee fast jet flier to 'go solo' in the UK's new trainer – just a month after it entered service.

The junior officer took to Anglesey skies in the Texan T1 on his own – one important milestone on the road to sitting in the cockpit of an F-35 waiting to launch from HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Lewis had already learned the fundamentals of flight with the Fleet Air Arm at Barkston Heath airfield in Lincolnshire – all pilots, be they fast jet or helicopter, plus observers must pass elementary training.

From there trainees disperse: Wildcat and Merlin pilots to RAF Shawbury, observers to 750 NAS and potential fast jet fliers to RAF Valley in Anglesey, since October under 72 Squadron equipped with the Texan.

The Texan T1 has replaced the (very similar looking) Tucano which has served fast jet pilots well for the past 30 years.

With the increasing computerisation of all military aircraft – Royal Navy Wildcats and Merlins both have fully digitised cockpits – and especially the F-35 Lightning, the first fifth-generation fighter to operate from Royal Navy carrier flight decks, the Tucano was seen as obsolescent.

Its replacement has a fully digitised (aka 'glass') cockpit, reaches top speeds of more than 360mph and can climb as high as 31,000ft.

All of which means students must get used to wearing G-suits to counter the effects of gravity on the strains and stresses of flight, an immersion suit in case the Texan has to ditch, wearing

an oxygen mask rather than breathing normally.

"It certainly wasn't lost on me that I was the first UK student to fly the RAF's newest aircraft solo although this naturally culminated in some nerves before the flight," said Lewis.

"But when you kit up and crew in, your mind switches to the task at hand and the sortie was an incredibly enjoyable and rewarding one."

Trainees spend hours in the simulator – 'synthetic training' – to prepare for each flight, ensuring that valuable time in the skies isn't spent learning checks, allowing students to concentrate on developing their airmanship skills.

"My first time at RAF Valley and the Isle of Anglesey was day one of starting the Texan course," said Lewis who is training with a mix of Royal Navy and air force aviators.

"We were incredibly well received on the station and we have made an effort to explore the



local area when the weather has allowed!"

Going solo is far from the end of training with 72 Sqn – there are tests and assessments almost daily building up to aerobatics and 'max performance manoeuvres', pushing machine and pilot to the limit.

After successfully completing basic flying training with 72, pilots receive their wings, then progress to jets, first the Hawk T2, also taught at Valley, then the F-35 for naval aviators, F-35s and Typhoons for RAF fliers.



## Survival team deliver key training to NATO partner

A TEAM of survival specialists answered a call from Norway to help with training for F-35 pilots.

The team of Royal Navy and RAF personnel from RAF Marham in Norfolk travelled to Orland Air Base in Norway to join their NATO partner for a training package.

The Norwegian Air Force called on the UK after visiting the Lightning Force at Marham for training aircrew on how to survive if their aircraft was downed.

Marham's Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape team, which comprised PO Matthew Williams, Cpl Richard Fuller, AB Brendan Baldwin, SAC Allan Wighton and SAC Susan Whyte, trained 24 pilots during their time at the base north of Trondheim.

The training consisted of a simulated brief on parachuting from the F-35, moving on to a dry training brief. This included elements of the equipment used to save their lives if they were to

eject from the aircraft.

The team also discussed rescue methods and how to use the equipment provided to survive.

Following the briefings, the pilots were despatched into a swimming pool and had to use their life rafts in various simulated scenarios to replicate what could happen at sea.

"The Norwegian Air Force were extremely impressed with the training delivered," said PO Williams. "They commented saying this is the best survival training they had ever had and that the training we provided would be the difference between life and death."

"This was an extremely satisfying detachment to help an F-35 and NATO partner out."

"This shows the strength and adaptability of the F-35 SERE training team, and the ability of the RN and RAF to work successfully to deliver training for the F-35 aircraft."

## Italian job for 750 NAS

TRAINEE Fleet Air Arm observer Sub Lieutenant Sam Burton poses for a quick snap in the cockpit of his King Air Avenger.

Except below the junior officer is not over Cornwall or the Western Approaches but the Alps as the fliers of 750 NAS briefly broke the chains keeping them in UK skies.

It fell to Sam and fellow students with the Culdrose-based squadron to guide the twin-prop aircraft from the Lizard Peninsula to Pisa in Italy and back – a round-trip of well over 1,700 miles.

Fleet Air Arm observers act as both weapons specialists and navigators in Wildcat and Merlin helicopters. They learn the fundamentals of their trade both on the ground and in the air with 750, tasks such as locating, identifying and plotting targets or directing a search-and-rescue mission.

The nature of the Royal Navy's training and front-line operations around the globe means that the observers will frequently be flying through foreign airspace and making use of foreign airports and airbases.

That's not only a key navigational test, but such flights also need diplomatic clearance and the helicopters might need logistical support (refuelling, transport, accommodation).

So as the 16-week observer course reaches its climax, students are tasked to plan – and execute – continental navigation training, which typically takes them to somewhere in the western Mediterranean rim, sometimes to Malta, on this occasion Tuscany... including a quick sightseeing flyby over Florence, 50 miles east of Pisa.

"The continental phase of Basic Flying Training was a great learning experience giving us an opportunity to plan an international flight," said Sub Lieutenant Scott Wilson. "It required a lot of planning but we learned a lot and the end result was well worth it."

If successful, they will then move on to 824 NAS in Culdrose to learn how to operate the systems on a Merlin Mk2, or to 825 and 847 Squadrons at Yeovilton to do the same with Wildcats.





# COMMON



## Now head of the Culdrose family

PROUDLY standing in front of a Gannet – the eyes in the sky of a previous generation of aircraft carriers – on the standings at RNAS Culdrose is naval mechanic Timothy Finn.

And nearly half a century later, pictured right, proudly standing in front of the Royal Navy's standard in the photo studio at RNAS Culdrose is his son Stuart, new commanding officer of the Cornish air station.

He took the reins of the home of the maritime Merlin/RN Hawk jets/observer training/School of Flight Deck Operations from Captain Anthony Rimington just before Christmas.

The new CO has Seahawk written through him like a stick of rock; as well as growing up in the area while his father was stationed here, both Capt Finn's uncle and brother have served at the Cornish base, while his daughter was born on one of numerous previous appointments there: the veteran Merlin Mk1/Mk2 aviator has flown with 750, 820 and 824 NAS, as well as the Flying Tigers of 814 NAS which he commanded on his most recent tour of duty on the Lizard peninsula.

His Merlin duties have taken him to the Middle East, Gulf and the Far East, as well as the Mediterranean, where 814 and HMS Albion led the UK response to the North African migrant crisis in 2015. "It is also poignant for



me to return to Culdrose as commanding officer because it is a place where I have strong family connections," Capt Finn said.

"It was here that my daughter was born and my father, uncle and brother have all served at RNAS Culdrose too. So I am coming home in more than one sense.

"There is no doubt that the Culdrose team is making a huge difference to naval operations – from protecting the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent to defending HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, keeping UK waters safe or training future aviators back at the station.

"During the next few years we will also see a rapid growth of our expertise in unmanned and autonomous air systems. These are hugely exciting times."

### OPERATIONAL headquarters.

Conjures up images of underground bunkers. Retinal scans. Fingerprint readers. Long sterile corridors. A conference room with a huge table. And, naturally, a map of the world.

So when we're directed to a couple of beige tents in a courtyard surrounded by sandy-coloured shipping containers down a side street behind the US Fifth Fleet's headquarters, it's a little disappointing.

Step inside, however, and Tardis-like a modern operations centre unfolds before our eyes: an air-conditioned space filled with tables, computer displays, two dozen staff and, at the far end, a couple of giant screens depicting all that is happening in the waters.

In front of them stands Commander Ben Keith, the Royal Navy officer selected to run Operation Sentinel on a day-to-day basis.

Six months ago none of this existed. But then tensions in the region increased. Iranian revolutionary forces attempted to seize the tanker British Heritage – only to be driven off at gunpoint by HMS Montrose. A few days later the Stena Impero was taken, her crew held captive for more than two months until they and their ship were released.

Those actions prompted a concerted British response



Not six months after tensions in the Strait of Hormuz reached their highest level in years, there's a new guy in town to keep the peace. His name is, er, IMSC. RICHARD HARGREAVES reports from Bahrain.

initially – four major surface ships ushering UK vessels through Hormuz.

But these are international waters. The 2,000 ships in them fly a myriad of national flags. The goods or fuels they carry are bound for a myriad of lands.

Security in the Strait of Hormuz is an international problem, demanding an international solution: the International Maritime Security Construct, to be precise, formally opened in early November in Bahrain.

Committed to it, initially, are the UK, USA, Australia, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Albania.

They provide the ships and personnel to run Operation Sentinel, offering protection to millions (14.7 to be precise by mid-November) of tonnes of merchant shipping.

Their movements – and others – are plotted on the large display screens at the 'business end' of the tent complex, each one peppered with hundreds of colourful markers denoting a vessel of 300 tonnes or more. Today, there are more than 1,800

ships on the board. The figure is typically around the 2,200 mark... and we're not counting vessels under 300 tonnes which are not obliged to transmit their details. That discounts hundreds, if not thousands, of dhows, plus tugs and other small craft at work in the Gulf.

A long-standing international task group, CTF 152, takes charge of security at sea in the central Gulf; it's the mission of the new organisation to watch over vessels passing through its narrow gateway at Hormuz – depending on the speed of the ship, a passage which typically lasts 12 to 18 hours.

Larger ships – cruisers, frigates and destroyers, such as HMS Defender and Montrose – act as 'sentinels' on both sides of the strait.

And a number of smaller fast patrol boats act as 'sentries' operating across the southern Gulf providing additional protection on other key sea lanes, while maritime patrol aircraft such as Australian P8 Poseidons, gather intelligence from on high.



Commander Keith, who was in charge of HMS Diamond in operations off Syria in 2018, likens the new operation to a police mission.

"If you have a large house filled with valuable items, you want police outside protecting it. We are the bobbies on the beat, the deterrence," he adds.

"We cannot protect everything – a determined burglar will always break into a house.

But we know that if there is a warship is nearby it definitely acts as a deterrent."

At the sharp end of the IMSC on the day it was inaugurated were Her Majesty's Ships Defender and Kent, while Montrose was taking her first sustained break after more than 50 days on patrol with just 13 hours of leave. On top of that, three quarters of the time at sea has been spent in defence watches.

"There are peaks and troughs of activities," says

“ We are the b... beat, the d... COMMANDE



The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust  
Supporting The RNBT Family

Men and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines serve their country, often at times of danger. Established in 1922, the RNBT helps non-commissioned Sailors, Marines and their families (The RNBT Family) throughout their lives.

Your donation will help us to help them.

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, PORTSMOUTH, Hampshire, PO2 8RN

T: 02392 690112 F: 02392 660852 E: rnbt@rnbt.org.uk www.rnbt.org.uk





# SENTINEL



Montrose's principal officer Lieutenant Commander Matt Bray. "On a transit, there is a buzz, you can feel it in the ops room, particularly when there's interaction with the Iranians."

"Our job is to latch on to that one single thing which is a bit different, which stands out."

Lieutenant Max Cosby, 31-year-old observer and flight commander, said the first Wildcat sortie over the strait was "mind-blowing" as his helicopter's cutting-edge sensors picked up a good 200 contacts on the waters below.

"After a few missions you begin to understand what is happening, what are oil platforms, where there are warships, where there are small craft," he added.

"Wildcat gives us a massive understanding of what is going on around us. And after four months in theatre, the Strait of Hormuz is well understood."

Under the

On a typical day in the Gulf – spanning waters from Basra to the end of the Gulf of Oman – there are

around **2,200** ships of 300 tonnes or more at sea of which **1 in 20** ships is British-flagged

and **2** of these British tankers or container ships are passing through the Strait of Hormuz

unless they are delayed, which costs owners an estimated **£230,000** per day

frigate's Port crew, who take it in turns with their Starboard counterparts to operate

Montrose for four months at a time in the Gulf as part of the initiative to base the ship in Bahrain until 2022, well over 1.5 million tonnes of merchant vessels have received protection.

"It demands 215 people working to a common goal and making sure we are always ready," says Commander Ollie Hucker, Montrose's Commanding Officer.

Marine engineer Petty Officer Heidi Tait adds: "The mission we have been carrying out, the need to respond, we've had to be on our 'A game' throughout. It's been quite demanding."

The same can be said for life in the Sentinel ops room. HMS King Alfred reservist Lieutenant Sam Yee is one of the 'battle watch' team who

monitor activity across the Gulf region, but the Strait of Hormuz especially, 24 hours a day.

Between 60 and 70 large merchant ships enter or leave the strait daily, while UK-registered ships flying the Red Ensign pass through perhaps twice a day.

The 35-year-old was the first person to speak to the master of the Stena Impero when the tanker was released.

"I reassured him he was safe now – and he sounded extremely relieved. Since then there have been occasions when we've been able to hear the concern in the voices of merchant crews over the radio. We are here to provide them with that reassurance," Lt Yee added.

With the other IMSC staff it's his task to choreograph the many moving parts so that warships are available,

or nearby, to provide cover for merchant vessels passing through pinch points and hot spots.

Merchant masters send their thanks over the radio when they part company with the sentinels; in due course the owners of their vessels will pass on their gratitude.

"This is a job which makes a difference in the wider world – it's certainly the most rewarding job I have done during my nine years as a reservist," Lt Yee adds.

If more nations join the coalition, the pledge from the Sentinel staff is that they will endeavour to provide protection for that nation's merchant ships.

The senior American officer in the Middle East, Vice Admiral James Malloy, stresses the operation is "purely defensive in nature" – to stop "state-sponsored malign activity" from disrupting or seizing shipping and one part of the "shield from the Red Sea to the Gulf" which the various naval forces and operations run from Bahrain provide.

"Over the past few months we have been reminded that freedom of navigation has a price. That price is vigilance. We have a responsibility and role to play," he added.



## New year, new home, new-look Type 23

GEARING up for an imminent return to sea are the crew of HMS Richmond, emerging from refit as the nation's most advanced frigate.

Long-based in Portsmouth, the ship has switched homes for Plymouth – where all the dedicated submarine-hunting Type 23s are being concentrated.

While in the hands of the engineers at Babcock, Richmond has undergone many of the same upgrades as the remainder of the frigate flotilla has received over the past few years, notably replacing the aged Sea Wolf air defence missile system with the new Sea Ceptor.

Where Richmond stands out, however, is as test bed for her successors in the Type 26/ City class of frigates; she's the first vessel to receive the PGMU propulsion system – a new generation of diesel generators, accompanied by a fully-modernised control and surveillance system, making it

easier to control and monitor the engines.

Richmond's marine engineers have been putting the new system through its paces, with an extensive series of trials that will ensure the frigate sails with the highest levels of confidence and operational capability when she begins her sea trials.

Other crew members have been training extensively during the refit: regular fire and flood drills; warfare specialists fought simulated battles in the ops room simulator and chefs got stuck into Devonport's 'cook and serve' contest, earning a bronze medal for their efforts.

Sailors have also had time to enjoy adventurous training opportunities.

"It's one of the perks of being in the Navy," said Able Seaman Callum Board-Lynch. "I was fortunate to get on a summer package to the Navy Outdoor Centre in Germany – and what a week it was!"

## A dignified end and a Worthy beginning

A 36-year chapter in the life of HMS Raleigh has ended with the departure of Royal Navy logistics training.

In two months' time all members of the logistics branch – supply chain, caterers, writers – will learn their respective trades (or return for refresher/promotion courses) at a new tri-Service £331m purpose-built complex at Worthy Down near Winchester.

VIP guests and former heads of what eventually became known as the Defence Maritime Logistics School were invited back to Torpoint to formally mark the end of an era in south-east Cornwall.

Guest of honour was Rear Admiral Andy Kyte, Chief Naval Logistics Officer, who also acted as the VIP inspecting officer for the weekly passing-out-parade of new recruits. Staff and students from the DMLS joined the successful trainees on the parade ground.

Commander Suzi Nielsen (pictured below by Dave Sherfield with Brigadier Mike Caldicott chatting to senior rate instructors), the school's final commandant, said it had served as the alma mater for two generations of sailors.

"While we leave with some sadness, the prospect of training alongside our Army and RAF colleagues in significantly-improved facilities is very exciting," she added.

"It will allow us to share best practice on a tri-Service basis, while still maintaining our Naval ethos."

The move to the new site is being staggered over five months to minimise disruption to staff and students. The first RN writers are already being taught at Worthy Down, while the final trainees from Raleigh won't leave until March when the last chefs' course ends.

At the new Hampshire complex, the RN contingent will form Kestrel Division to uphold Senior Service ethos, daily routines and the unique nature of naval life... while training side-by-side with soldiers and airmen.



obbies on the deterrence.

R BEN KEITH



### Your WelCome account card...

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

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

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

# WELFARE

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

**WelCome**  
Welfare Communications Everywhere



# Gunner? Surveyor? Guard? Sailors have them all covered

**With a ship's company of around 60, it is not unusual for sailors on HMS Enterprise to have a handful of roles. These could range from being a quartermaster on the bridge to standing guard during important visits. But this variety is what keeps life on the survey ship, currently deployed to the Asia Pacific region, interesting, enjoyable and a little challenging.**

**T**heir job titles may read chef, hydrographics surveyor or engineering technician but in reality, for the men and women on board HMS Enterprise, their roles are as varied as the many port visits they have made so far this deployment.

One day, they could be steering the ship's fast-boat during a man-overboard exercise, the next collecting data of the sea bed.

It is no easy task ensuring the ship's company are prepared and trained for any eventuality but Commanding Officer Captain Cecil Ladislaus knows he can rely on them to act when needed.

This was certainly true when the Plymouth-based ship had a substantial change of programme from survey operations in the Mediterranean to survey and engagement work in the Far East.

With numerous port visits hosting important guests and a Remembrance ceremony with the Singapore navy, it is not just operations the crew have to be well trained for.

CO Ladislaus said: "We have been able to ensure the Royal Navy has a presence on the world stage with this deployment.

"It has taken me 18 years to get back to this part of the world and for many of the sailors, they have not been to these countries before. But they handled the change as professionals and they have really stepped up.

"On smaller ships, you get more opportunities and I think this deployment has shown that. We have people who's roles can change on a daily basis and they are expected to perform to a high standard no matter what they are doing."

At the end of one of her training serials, Enterprise conducted a routine investigation of the remains of WW2 ships HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse, before concluding with a memorial service.

A total of 764 died when the battleship and battle-cruisers were sunk on December 10 1941.

Sub Lieutenant Jennifer Walton read a short summary of the events of 1941 before Cdr Ladislaus addressed his ship's company.

"It is right and proper that we take some time to think about what it was like for them as they were attacked from the air – over two hours or so – before their ships were sunk," he said.

"If we put this into the context of the 45-minute battle damage exercise serials which we experience at work up during the Thursday war, this is quite a significant amount of time in this heat, watching, hearing, smelling, and sensing the fight to survive."

In memory of the fallen, a weighted White Ensign was lowered



into the water over the remains of the vessels and the *Naval Prayer* recited by all on board.

Time sailing from the Mediterranean to the Far East, via the Suez Canal, and then between Singapore and Japan has given the crew plenty of time to train in their different roles.

As pictured below, chefs can be asked to leave the galley during meal prep to help in a man-overboard situation while hydrographic surveyors could be tasked with manning the guns if the ship needs to protect herself.

But all on board are happy to step up, especially for a deployment many in the navy won't have experienced.

Cdr Ladislaus added: "For the younger sailors, it's the dream deployment. It is what you join up for. And for the people who have been before, it is still a bonus because they have that experience."

Enterprise headed back to Japan after her stop in Singapore and was remaining in the Far East for the new year.







## Able Seaman Jack Horner

HIS first few months at sea have been memorable for Able Seaman Jack Horner.

HMS Enterprise is his first ship and the hydrographic surveyor has enjoyed the challenges that come with life at sea.

As well as his day job collecting and analysing data from the ocean, the 20-year-old also has a few other key roles on board.

These vary depending on what operational tasks or exercises HMS Enterprise has to conduct but training ensures he is up to scratch with all aspects of his responsibilities.

But his main focus is on surveys, using the ship's single beam echo sounder and the multi-beam.

AB Horner, from Milton Keynes, said: "There's different types of survey that we do and this deployment has shown the diversity in what we can do.

"There's environmental data and imagery of the seabed - that side of it I do enjoy. A lot of what I have had to do has been on the bridge, monitoring the systems and maintaining logs.

"The hydrographic side of what I have to do

is really busy. We take temperature readings from the water and there's places where the ship works as a weather signal.

"It helps keep people's knowledge sharp and the data we collect is useful not only to us but other ships that could visit the same waters.

"We have to make a note of what we find, if there are any changes or anything unexpected. Sometimes we do go to places that have never been surveyed and there are risks with that."

Being a survey ship, HMS Enterprise works closely with the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton. Data collected can be uploaded to charts and then used for maritime safety or to learn more about the environment.

AB Horner said: "Survey ships are something that people are surprised are in the Royal Navy. When they think navy they think of frigates and destroyers. Hydrography is a niche branch, we do get to spend a lot of time at sea."

At the start of her time at sea, HMS Enterprise went to Norway to work with NATO on mine countermeasures.

"The NATO exercises in Norway were really good. That was for ten days and the ship got to the Arctic Circle," AB Horner added.

"We then did some sur-

vey work around Scotland and then four weeks off the coast of Dover. We were doing a couple of surveys - mostly of the seabed."

But when he's able to be pulled away from his survey work, AB Horner spends time on the guns, the sea boat and as part of the guard for visitors hosted on board.

Weekly training means he knows what is expected of him for these different jobs.

He said: "It has been good keeping busy and getting the experiences as we go. We have been able to build on our skills through training and the ship is really good at peer-to-peer training as well.

"I always like getting out on the sea boat. That is by far my favourite thing.

"I also like the gunnery side of it. I enjoy the exercises we do on the guns to ensure we can be safe and know how to fix any problems. Shooting 200 rounds at a target is always exciting."

Having a crew of around 60 is something AB Horner likes about HMS Enterprise.

"You get to know everyone, it being a small ship," he explained.

"We have a good company on board and although there's less manpower so we do have to do more, by doing this, you get to know everyone."



**ON SMALLER SHIPS, YOU GET MORE OPPORTUNITIES AND I THINK THIS DEPLOYMENT HAS SHOWN THAT.**

**- CAPTAIN CECIL LADISLAUS**

## Petty Officer Mary O'Hagan

IN HER 16 years as a Royal Navy sailor, Petty Officer (Sea) Mary O'Hagan has served on a number of ships.

These include all four Off-shore Patrol Vessels as part of the Fisheries Protection Squadron, aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious and now HMS Enterprise.

The County Durham sailor, (pictured left in the camouflage) is the "Buffer" on board the survey ship as well as the PO for Above Water Warfare. This means she has overseen everything from training for gunnery exercises to practising guard parade for VVIP visits.

She has enjoyed their recent visits to Singapore and Tokyo - even though the latter came with the pressure of getting Enterprise ready to host The Prince of Wales.

Ensuring the guard are at their best and live up to the high standards set by the Royal Navy is one of her roles on the ship.

PO O'Hagan spent hours training the ship's

company, running drills on the deck and making sure Enterprise was in top condition.

And when the visit was over, she was impressed with how the ship's company did.

"It went really well," she said.

"The ceremonial guard looked great, the ship looked great so the visit was a success.

"It was the first time 50 per cent of the crew have met a member of the Royal family so I am really happy for them."

"It was tough making sure Enterprise looked in shipshape seeing as we battled a typhoon the week before. But we accepted the challenge and got it done."

Royal visits aside, PO O'Hagan was able to carry on with other aspects of her job on Enterprise - a ship she's been on for two-and-a-half years.

This includes helping the gunners on board be ready should they be called upon.

She oversees the gunnery exercises, giving tips to the sailors and making sure they can operate the guns safely and with precision.

These took place on transit to the Asia Pacific region.

Even with 16 years in the Royal Navy, the Far East is not somewhere she's been

before.

PO O'Hagan said: "This deployment has been really good and I have never been to this part of the world before so it is very exciting.

"My dad was in the navy and visited the Far East so it is nice to visit the places that he saw in the 1960s.

"Our change in programme meant there's been quite a bit of variety.

"We also didn't have long to be ready for the change. It was all quite short-notice.

"We had the ceremonial guard part of it for all the visits and then we attended a Remembrance ceremony in Singapore which we had to prepare for.

"When you see their memorial and how they look after it, you want to do your best to show your respect.

"This is the first deployment that I have done these sort of things as the buffer and although it is busy, it is rewarding."

Nearer to home, PO O'Hagan helped get HMS Enterprise ready when she made a rare visit to London early in 2019.

"Our time in London was a great success," she added.

"We got lots of positive reaction from the public and it was good PR."

## Leading Chef Catherine Taylor

FOR years, Leading Chef Catherine Taylor was used to preparing and cooking hundreds of meals a day.

Her time on HMS Albion, Bulwark and Ocean with its 350 plus ship's company could not be more different to her current ship - HMS Enterprise and its crew of around 60.

But 12 years in the Royal Navy means she is prepared for anything, including super typhoons.

The 30-year-old, from Plymouth, said: "The typhoon we followed recently was rough. I had one pot cooking, one behind it so we had to make sure they weren't sliding around so times like that can be challenging.

"The heat we experienced in Singapore didn't make things easy either. We could feel the heat increasing as we got nearer. It was more the humidity. I think the highest it got in the galley is 42C."

It is not just the high winds and high sea states LCH Taylor has had to get used to. She has also had to adapt to cooking for a lot less

people.

"The most we cook for on board HMS Enterprise is 80 but on average it's about 60 people. This is the smallest ship I have served on and it is a massive change.

"People think it's easier cooking for fewer people but I have spent 12 years cooking for hundreds of people. I have been able to know the portion sizes for that many people - it has been difficult adjusting."

But travelling to the Far East, a place she's never visited before, has made this one of LCH Taylor's most memorable deployments.

She added: "Going to new places I have never been before has definitely been a highlight. It's not very often you can say you have been to Japan and we have got a good few trips coming up over the next few weeks too.

"It has been interesting seeing the different cuisines and occasionally when in different places we do get something that's out of the box to serve on the ship as well as the normal food we need.

"Being a chef in the Royal Navy gives new opportunities. I am getting paid to come to some great places like Japan and show off what the Royal Navy is about."





# WELCOME TO THE



It's raining, it's pouring, the Royals have got their brollies up.

It wasn't just continually raining in the Belize jungle on Exercise Curry Trail, it was also, as is standard for the Central American jungle, humid. Real humid. It's often at 100 per cent during the rainy season.

What it creates is this sweat-box/soggy smash up that is a considerable portion of the challenge when going into battle in one of the world's most extreme climates. Not to mention cutting through the dense jungle and thick mud on the ground.

It's a bit different from their Arbroath home in Scotland, but this was another trial for 45 Commando in their role as Lead Commando Group, a mantle they took from 40 Commando back last summer.

Now they're getting ready to step off to the deep freezer of the Arctic, but first came the jungle and an environment they must master and be ready for combat in.

Being Lead Commando Group puts these marines at high readiness to deploy anywhere in the world, no matter how extreme the climate may be... hence why they must be ready for the jungle, desert and Arctic.

But before the freezing north, came Belize for Zulu Company

and learning how to fight in the extreme humidity and difficult terrain of the jungle.

"It was a great experience, I was surprised how dense the jungle was in the area we were working and how difficult this made it to operate," said Marine Will Thomas.

"It is rainy season here which made the ground underfoot very muddy during the field firing."

The exercise is designed to teach all exercising troops to survive, move and fight in a jungle environment, operating from small four-man teams all the way up to a 30-man troop formations.

On arrival in Belize, all troops conducted an acclimatisation package at Price Barracks, the main base of the Belize Defence Force and the home of British Army Training Support Unit Belize (BATSUB), located just outside Belize City.

They then stepped off into the jungle, carrying out the exercises in several training areas.

The Spanish Creek area, a small zone about 50km north of Prince Barracks, saw Zulu undergo river crossing training, before heading to Guacamallo Bridge, where the commandos built base camps and all blank and live firing as well as engineer training was carried out.

The exercising troops and training teams then deployed to jungle base camps to conduct a 14-day basic and intermediate skills packages.

This included individual skills to survive, navigate and fight in the jungle, before moving on to eight-man section and 30-man troop level tactics, culminating in a seven-day live firing serial moving from individual to troop level.

The result of this training is that Zulu Company are now trained in jungle warfare, meaning 45 Commando can now call upon these specialists if needed in their role as Lead Commando Group.

During the live firing package ranks from 45 Commando's Assault Engineers also conducted a jungle demolitions package, practicing creating clearings for helicopter abseil insertions and extractions as well as emergency Helicopter Landing Sites (HLS).

This deployment also gave the marines a chance to experiment with the Future Commando Force concept, as the Green Berets press on with the way they will operate in combat in the coming years.

That puts the specialist commando tactics at the forefront of their work, adding new kit and cutting-edge tech into the mix.



# RF







• **AB Danielle Burton and LH Maria Richards took part in the cookery competition**

## Knives out as chefs do battle in the kitchen

TWO sailors from Plymouth were among those competing in a Royal Navy *Master Chef*-style competition held at HMS Raleigh.

Six teams went head to head in the kitchen to take part in the annual Devonport Flotilla Cook and Serve competition, sponsored by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and using the facilities at the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS).

Leading Hand (Catering Services) Maria Richards, from Keyham, was part of HMS Richmond's team, while Able Rate Danielle Burton, also from Plymouth, competed with a team known as the Devonport Catering Services Shore Establishment Team (CSSET).

LSC Richards' team were awarded a bronze medal for their efforts. The 32-year-old originally joined the Royal Navy in 2008 as a Steward but has recently completed a bespoke course to become one of the first Catering Services ratings capable of providing both front-of-house and rear-of-house services.

She said: "The guy who I was cooking with was coaching me; he was superb. It's quite tough in that environment, but I really enjoyed it. I'm hoping in the future I'll take part in many more competitions."

AB Burton's team also received bronze medals. The 22-year-old has been in the Royal Navy for four years and has so far served on three warships and ashore at 3 Commando Brigade Headquarters at Stonehouse Barracks.

She said: "The competition went well for us. We produced a Cornish mackerel starter and then did a Thai beef dish, followed by a chocolate orange bon bon-type dessert. I've always wanted to be involved in fine-dining cooking."

Each team consisted of a chef, a commis chef and a front-of-house waiter.

The challenge was to cook and serve a three-course meal for two diners in just 75 minutes, while also impressing a panel of judges.

HMS Raleigh and HMS Montrose tied for

the top prize with HMS Raleigh also receiving best-in-class for their front-of-house service and HMS Montrose receiving best-in-class for food creation.

Event organiser, Chief Petty Officer Eddie Luscombe, said: "Members of the Catering Services branch play a key role, not only in sustaining our people, but promoting UK influence and delivering Defence Engagement hospitality all over the world."

"This competition aims to encourage our Flotilla's highly professional team to showcase their core culinary skills, while nurturing pride in their professional achievement, building their team spirit, imagination and innovation."

"From this we hope to generate a greater interest in the Inter Flotilla Cook and Serve competition and the Tri-Service event, known as 'Exercise Joint Caterer', when we will take on the Army and RAF later this year."

Teams were required to produce a fish starter and a main course of beef. The dessert had to include flambé skills to be demonstrated at the table side.

The head judge for the competition was Chief Petty Officer Si Geldart, the Captain of the Naval Services Culinary Arts Team (NSCAT).

He said: "We were looking for cohesion between the front-of-house and the chef team and how well they worked together."

"When it came to the food, we were looking for taste, texture, seasoning and how it looked on the plate. The standard was very good across both front and back-of-house."

"There were some talented young chefs, particularly the two young guys straight from training who were representing HMS Raleigh. To see them compete at this level against some people who have competed before and take a gold medal; that was phenomenal."

"This is a stepping stone and as the NSCAT Captain, I'm looking to pick up on their talent and bring them on for future competitions."

## Sweet and savoury treat for charity

A CAKE sale at HMS Collingwood raised £560 for the Parkinson's Society.

There was something for everyone with treats both sweet and savoury, including haggis, neeps and tatties sausage rolls, cheese straws, caramel slices and lemon ghosts.

Sarah Porter won the savoury category and Tanya Macdonald triumphed in the sweet section with her "It's Halloween and nearly Christmas but

still dreaming of Summer" cake.

The Showstopper category was won by Simon Rollins who has only recently left the Royal Navy to join the Babcock team at HMS Collingwood.

He said: "This has been a great way to integrate myself into my new team here and, as I roped my daughter Maisie in to help with the cake, it became a great way to enjoy some father/daughter time too."



### The Naval Children's Charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents serve or have served in the Naval Service

We help children with a wide range of needs and at times of a family crisis. Applications can be made at any time either directly by contacting the office or visiting our website and downloading an application form, or through RNRM Welfare, SSAFA.

Our book, *Zoe and the Time Rabbit*, to help younger children understand the long separations that can be a part of Naval Service, is free – just email: [book@rnmchildrensfund.org.uk](mailto:book@rnmchildrensfund.org.uk) with your name and address and we can send you a copy.



311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN t: 023 9263 9534 e: [caseworkers@rnmchildrensfund.org.uk](mailto:caseworkers@rnmchildrensfund.org.uk)  
[www.rnmchildrensfund.org.uk](http://www.rnmchildrensfund.org.uk) Registered charity number 160182 Patron: HRH The Duke of York, KG

# Everest helped my recovery

**FORMER Royal Marine Joe Winch celebrates climbing Everest just two years after suffering severe Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Here Joe reflects on his epic achievement.**

Climbing Mount Everest is a remarkable achievement for anyone. But, climbing Mount Everest as part of my recovery from acute Complex-Post Traumatic Stress Disorder – when only two years prior the PTSD had destroyed everything about me and my world – that's not just remarkable, its practically impossible.

But this was a remarkable opportunity for me and my recovery, so I committed to the expedition – understanding well that the journey would be incredibly difficult.

We were all experienced mountaineers, who had climbed in the Alps repeatedly, and as a team we had successfully summited Denali together in the summer of 2018 – enduring temperatures well below -20° Celsius and one of the worst storms on the mountain in over a decade.

Furthermore, we were all Royal Marines Commandos – meaning that not only had we passed one of the toughest military courses in the UK, but also, to have passed this course, we had all had to demonstrate the utmost courage, determination, selflessness, and cheerfulness.

We began climbing in relatively mild conditions under a near full moon, moving from 5,400 meters across the Khumbu Glacier, ascending the ice fall, and then traversing the length of the Western Cwm – surely one of the natural wonders of the world.

Located at 6,400 metres, teetering on the edge of the glacier and perilously close to a row of huge overhanging seracs that were guarding the lower slopes of Everest, Camp Two is not a restful place. Yet, so far at least, the weather had been kind and we had made good progress.

We rested for a day and set off for Camp Three. Although another pleasant day with little wind, the climb from Camp Two to Three leads straight up the Lhotse Face – a 1,500-metre wall of steep sheer blue ice.

But here we were at least rewarded with the most spectacular views of the Western Cwm, Nuptse, Everest, and the Himalaya far below.

As we climbed the route ahead became increasingly clear – up the rest of the face to the South Col, beyond to the Balcony, and finally to the north summit of Everest.

We left the South Col at 19:00 as the sun set, the wind picked up, and the temperature plummeted; the risk of the weather deteriorating further and leaving us dangerously exposed at the forefront of my mind.

When we reached the Balcony at 8,400 metres it was bitterly cold, but the wind had eased, and with a full moon overhead the views across the Himalayas, even in the middle of night, were spectacular.

On the way to the south summit though I started to have serious problems with my oxygen flow, my feet became painfully cold, and the wind – which had started to relent – increased dramatically driving down the temperature.

Despite being at an altitude of well over 8,700 metres in strong wind and temperatures as low as -20° Celsius, we covered the last few metres to the summit and at 04:50 we finally turned and embraced on the top of the world. Being on the summit of Everest was a most incredible feeling, full of emotion, relief, and pride.

I must emphasise that neither Everest nor my wider recovery has "cured" my PTSD – I still struggle tremendously. But in many ways my journey has done something far better than just curing me – it has helped me create a new life, a life which is far happier, brighter, and less chaotic.

I am no victim, in many ways – I am still standing proudly on the top of the world, and I always will be – wherever I am, whatever I am doing, because that's who I am, Joe Winch, proud husband, father, mountaineering team member, Royal Marines Commando, and Everest summiteer.





# World Skills crown for RN engineer

A ROYAL Navy engineer from Manchester has been crowned one of the country's top apprentices after winning a gold medal at the UK's largest skills, apprenticeship and careers event.

Leading Airman Engineer Technician Ben Welsby, 28, was awarded the prestigious prize in Mechanical Engineering in the field of Aeronautics.

A panel of expert judges voted him top of his category after he completed a series of demanding challenges at the World Skills UK event in Birmingham.

Ben, who is currently serving at RNAS Yeovilton with 825 NAS, beat the best apprentices from around the country to win the prize.

"Achieving this is something I am very proud of," said Ben. "I take pride in my work and the experiences I have gained in the competition can follow me into my future as an aircraft engineer."

Joining the Royal Navy in 2015, Ben has been studying mechanical engineering for the last four years with the Royal Navy. His job at RNAS Yeovilton sees him work alongside some of the best aeronautical engineers in the world, maintaining and servicing aircraft at the site.

The former St Mary's Catholic High School pupil, who still lives in Manchester, will this month be joining his new squadron – 847 NAS – as a supervisor, putting what he has learned during training into full effect.

He continued: "I am excited to see what the future holds for my career as an aircraft engineer and where it might take me, but all I can do at the moment is gather the experience needed to maintain the right standards within my job."

World Skills UK, at the NEC Birmingham, attracted some 80,000 young people seeking a vocational pathway to work.

One of the highlights of the three-day event was the National Finals of World Skills UK's Competitions. More than 500 apprentices and students competed in over 70 different disciplines to establish who were the best in the country. Winners will be considered for the UK squad for the World Skills Shanghai in 2021 where students from around the globe will compete.

Cdre Andy Cree, Assistant Chief of Staff Training for the Royal Navy, said: "The Royal Navy's involvement in important national and international events such as World Skills provides a benchmark to shape the training and careers on offer in a highly capable and technologically advanced Service."

During the World Skills event in Birmingham the Royal Navy team hosted tens of thousands of young visitors. The navy's display included Virtual Reality simulators replicating life on board a submarine, a Royal Marine physical fitness challenge, a Lynx helicopter, members of the Royal Marines Band, a culinary demonstration and plenty of information on apprenticeships. Personnel were also available throughout to provide expert advice to young visitors and parents alike.

There were also several talks with naval personnel – including LET Emily Rose from the Submarine Service, PO Jimmy Clements from HMS Diamond, and Marine Lewis Mottashed from the Royal Marines Commando Recruitment Team.

Report: Gavin Carr



● LAET Ben Welsby picked up a gold medal at World Skills

Pictures: LPhot Ben Corbett



## Crafty move for Susan

HAVING spent more than two decades as an air traffic controller in the Royal Navy, Susan Bonnar from Lee-on-the-Solent in Hampshire has taken the leap turning her 15-year-long crafting hobby into a new business.

Susan has launched The British Craft House – a website that only sells unique British crafts helping to support hundreds of local, regional and national small, hand-made, creative crafting businesses around the country.

"The British Craft House business idea was born on a marathon preparation run back in February," she said. "I've always been passionate about bringing together the crafting community, which essentially is small businesses so often working in isolation. After nearly six years of helping people online through social media, I got the idea for a new site that was different and could support businesses in a much better way than what's already out there. Within five months I've launched a completely new business in total contrast to my navy career."

Susan, who is originally from Plymouth and spent more than 22 years in the navy, started making her own cards in 2005. She was at home with her small children while her husband, also a navy officer, was at sea, often on long deployments and she wanted to create something she could post him every day.

"I never considered crafting could be my full-time job, but card and album sales took off in shops and online and by the time I had my third baby I decided to leave the Navy."

Her dedication and drive have twice won her national accolades like 'Small Business Sunday' from entrepreneur and Southampton Solent University Chancellor Theo Paphitis. Find out more about Susan's new business at [thebritishcrafthouse.co.uk](http://thebritishcrafthouse.co.uk)



## Sailor carving out second career as author

THE Bee Gees bagged one of their first hits with the improbably-titled *New York Mining Disaster 1941*.

Filmmaker Irwin Allen made a career out of sinking ships (*The Poseidon Adventure*), blazing skyscrapers (*The Towering Inferno*) and, er, killer bees (*The Swarm*).

And when not sorting out communications systems aboard Portsmouth-based frigate HMS Westminster, Leading Seaman Richard Jones, pictured right, is carving a small niche for himself as an author bringing long-forgotten disasters and tragedies back into the public eye.

The 39-year-old is passionate about giving victims and survivors a voice – it can be a cathartic experience for them – and making sure that tragedies which make the headlines do not disappear into oblivion when the journalists move on.

"I've always been interested in disasters, but what happens after the initial story has passed?" says Richard. "Everyone knows about Hillsborough, Lockerbie, the Herald of Free Enterprise, but what about the Lockington rail crash, the European Gateway which sank off Felixstowe in 1982, the Moorgate tube disaster?"

In researching such tragedies the communications rating has also campaigned vigorously for memorials to be erected – there's one in London's Finsbury Square to the 43 victims of the Moorgate disaster in 1975 (the worst peacetime accident on the tube),



and at Lockington in East Yorkshire where a train and van collided on a crossing, killing nine people.

"I was 23, I had been gathering information and material since I was 11 and thought to myself: 'What can I do with all this?' I decided to pick a subject, research it to death, and see what came of it," says Richard, who's spent 19 years in the Royal Navy.

"Official reports, inquests, local newspaper reports, interviews with survivors or eyewitnesses where possible – the amount of information out there is amazing, but it's not just a case of googling it. The writing itself is fun. It just a matter of piecing it all together..."

The result – after ten years' work – was an account of the great storm of 1871 which wrought havoc in the North Sea and especially the author's hometown of Bridlington.

Since then his canon has grown to nine books – seven non-fiction and two ventures into novel writing, the most recent of which, *Austen Secret*, has just been published (think *National Treasure* with a Georgian twist).

It was written while serving in Westminster during her Baltic deployment earlier this year.

"I was fascinated by her life, but everything has been written about her already so I decided to invent something – but even though it's fiction, the story has to be based on as much fact as possible,"

he says.

He's now returned to non-fiction, juggling three books simultaneously. Next up is the tale of the Pacific Glory, the tanker which exploded off the Isle of Wight in 1970, an anthology of 'forgotten' disasters such as the disappearance of the cement carrier Flag Theofano which vanished in a storm in the Solent in 1990, and, finally, the most famous disaster of them all, the Titanic and her links with the author's home town.



## Aviators inspire future aircrews

SIX personnel from Commando Helicopter Force returned to their former university at Loughborough to inspire the next generation of aircrew.

Numerous engagement activities were undertaken by the officers and crewman of 845, 846 and 847 Naval Air Squadrons, Naval Flying Standards Flight and Flight Test involving students of the Aeronautical & Automotive Engineering Department, Typhoon Squadron, East Midlands University Air Squadron and Welbeck Sixth Form Defence College.

Lt Ollie Trowman, CHF Maintenance Test Pilot who led the visit, said: "This has been a unique opportunity to bring together ex-Loughborough alumni and showcase the careers and opportunities available within Defence, Royal Navy, Joint Helicopter Command, Fleet Air Arm and of course the Commando Helicopter Force."

"It has been great to see and hear the students reaction, some of whom have never seen a helicopter up close, and fielding numerous questions and debates on what our jobs entail and how we fly and fix our aircraft."





## Sailors bring cheer to hospital patients

NEARLY 100 sailors from RNAS Yeovilton gave staff and patients at their local hospital some surprise cheer and respite by spending the day with them.

Air Engineering and Survival Equipment Technician trainees made the short trip from the air station to Yeovil District Hospital for a day of volunteering.

Staff assigned the trainees to various wards and departments at the hospital, which admits around 35,000 people every year, and the sailors spread around orthopaedics and oncology wards, worked with the dementia team, helped out in A&E and generally bring some relief and a little cheer into the lives of people recuperating or awaiting treatment.

Among the tasks performed by the volunteers – some of whom had been born in the hospital – were serving lunches and afternoon tea and bed making (including attempting the famous ‘hospital corners’), while a small group could be found in the foyer raising money for the hospital with a relay row.

Air Engineering Technician Daniel Barton joined the dementia team, drawing on his

experience from a dementia charity that his mum founded.

He said: “I had a great day – it’s been all about creating a positive social environment where we could just chill out, have lunch and play some games. I hope they enjoyed it as much as I did.”

For organiser Chief Petty Officer Nicholas Haines, spending time helping out at the hospital was a chance to “give something back to the community and in some small way return the fantastic support that the women and men of the hospital have given us and will continue to give us in our hour of need.”

He continued: “Personnel from Yeovilton quite often require the help of the hospital. My family has used it many times and have always been treated with compassion and respect.”

“Where our young people came into their own however was taking the time to engage with the on, have someone help you with a crossword or simply make a cup of tea brings a welcome distraction.”

## Students go back to school

BIRMINGHAM URNU students and their Commanding Officer spent two days working in the grounds of a school as part of their charity work.

Maintenance was carried out at St John Fisher RC Primary School in Kings Norton.

CO Lt Cdr Chris Andrews was ‘hugely impressed’ by the volunteering nature of the students who gave up free time between lectures.

The main task during their time at the school was the regeneration of a children’s vegetable garden that had become overgrown.

By moving three tonnes of earth by hand 200 yards from the delivery sacks to the gardening beds as well as weeding, the school plans to use the site for the planting and nurturing of vegetables by children who live in the city who may never have seen crops in a field. In addition to the gardening work, the team also aided in the dismantling and removal of playground equipment that was no longer safe to use.



# Raft of activities for URNU new joiners



NEW entry students from three University Royal Naval Units were treated to the delights of a cold and wet weekend at Piers Cellars at Cawsand Bay, Cornwall.

Despite the conditions, students from Bristol, Southampton and Devon kept morale high with a variety of activities taking place, including three hours of orienteering, two dry Practical Leadership Tasks (PLTs) and one raft-building exercise, which left some of the students not so dry.

These activities were all aimed at giving the new students an introduction to leadership and teamwork, with one commenting that running a PLT was something they had never done before but found it extremely worthwhile.

Upon completion of a challenging but fun weekend the students were treated with a campfire, where they gathered as a group and toasted marshmallows.

While the weekend as a whole gave a lot of the students their first taste of leadership, it also gave them the opportunity to meet other likeminded peers from around the country. Sharing such experiences helps to form strong bonds and camaraderie between all URNUs.

There are 15 URNUs located across the UK offering opportunities to 750 undergraduates from the country’s leading universities.

# Steve heads off into the sunset

## THE unit Warrant Officer from HMS Forward has hung up his hat after over 30 years in the Royal Navy and Royal Naval Reserve.

After joining in 1977, a young 17-year-old Steve Bland started his training to become a Marine Engineering Artificer at HMS Fisgard. After completing his apprenticeship, he served on a number of ships, including HMS Achilles, RFA Diligence and HMS Diomed. He also served on HMS Bristol during the Falklands War, and it was this service for which he was awarded the South Atlantic Medal in 1982. He was also awarded the General Service Medal in 1988 for his service in the Gulf.

After serving 13 years in the Regular Royal Navy, and at the rank of Charge Chief Petty Officer, Steve decided to leave in search of pastures new, joining West Midlands Police service where he became a dog handler.

But it wasn’t until 2001 when Steve decided to rekindle his love for the Royal Navy, becoming a Reservist at HMS Forward. Starting as a New Entry instructor at the Birmingham-based unit, Steve went on to become the Initial Naval Training Divisional Officer in 2008, and then the INT Warrant Officer for the Royal Naval Reserve in 2011. In 2014, WO Bland was appointed as unit Warrant Officer for HMS Forward, the role he has remained in until his retirement.

For many of the most recent recruits at HMS Forward, WO Bland will be their first memory of the Reserves. Whether it’s at a recruitment stand in a shopping centre or the monthly Unit open evenings, WO Bland can be found passing on his enthusiasm to the younger generations.

He is recognised as the font of all knowledge at HMS Forward; if there’s something that WO Bland doesn’t know about the RNR, it’s not worth knowing. And while he’s always a stickler for the rules – reinforced by 20 years in the West Midlands Police – WO Bland is always eager to help with whatever problem, query or moan that comes his way.

His drive and commitment to HMS



● A young Steve Bland and, right, proudly wearing his medals; Below, during his career in the West Midlands Police

Forward has not gone unnoticed; as well as the medals awarded during his Regular service, Steve was selected to represent the Royal Naval Reserve at the Royal British Legion’s Festival of Remembrance in the presence of the Queen at the Royal Albert Hall in 2018.

In July 2019 he was presented the Lord Lieutenant’s Certificate at the HMS Forward Ceremonial Divisions to recognise his contribution to the Service. In September of the same year he had the privilege of parading the Scroll round the streets of Wolverhampton during the Freedom of the City celebrations, which he proclaimed to be a real highlight of his career.

Having bought a villa in Portugal a number of years ago, WO Bland now plans to permanently move abroad where he can relax, garden and drink wine with his wife.



# Aviators swoop in to clean up beaches in Cornwall

TRAINEE flight crew from RNAS Culdrose have cleared rubbish from beaches in west Cornwall, including Swanpool and Gyllyngvase beaches at Falmouth and Poldhu Cove, Church Cove, Loe Bar and Porthleven beach.

Taking part were Lieutenants William Vinnell, Sam Cass, Matthew Johnson and Charles Skeet from 824 Naval Air Squadron, the Merlin helicopter training unit.

Lieutenant Vinnell said: “We conducted beach cleaning around the Culdrose local area. We believe that this is an important community project at the moment due to the increasing amount of plastic pollution and it is particularly important for Culdrose, as a key employer and pillar of the community, to be involved in this issue.”

“Our first day was spent in Falmouth on Gylly and Swanpool beaches. We were surprised by the amount of litter we were able to collect on a relatively small stretch of

beach, filling almost three bin liners between us.

“The majority of the litter collected seemed to be food wrappers rather than litter washing up, which indicates that the problem is certainly with the public’s education on the impact that they are having by carelessly leaving their litter on the beach. This day was particularly important as we were able to bring along family members to help.”

“The other beaches throughout the week had varying amounts of litter, however we were always able to find significant amounts of plastic. We finished the week back at Gylly and Swanpool to see whether we’d made an impact. We were pleasantly surprised by how clean the beach was, proving that we had made a difference, hardly able to fill a small bag with litter. This highlights that incentives such as the two-minute beach clean do make a difference and by improving public interest and education, we can make our beaches cleaner and safer.”







## Minehunter crew to walk Western Front

A TEAM from the Royal Navy (MCM2 Crew 4) will be walking across the length of Western Front in April next year.

The challenge is to set off from Pffterhouse in the French Alps and walk the 680 miles over the course of 30 days, finally arriving in Nieuwpoort in Belgium.

The idea came about after a team member was researching his family history and learned of a family member who fought and was captured at the Battle of Loos in 1915, which lead to the discovery of the Western Front Way charity (thewesternfrontway.com).

This organisation was established after Sir Anthony Sheldon discovered a long-lost letter, sent by a young 2nd Lieutenant, Alexander Douglass Gillespie from the Argyll and Southern Highlanders.

In this letter, he reflected on the horrid realities of war and suggested the possibility a sacred road (a via sacra) which would span the length of the

Western Front and give walkers the opportunity to reflect on the atrocities of the times.

Unfortunately Gillespie was killed shortly after writing his letter, and it was lost for a century but on discovery of his letter in 2015, the Western Front Way was created, and they have worked to map a route, for all to explore, and make the via sacra a reality.

The team will be the first team to walk the full length of the route, covering just under 690 miles over the course of 30 days.

The aim is to raise as much as possible for Winston's Wish, who help children with bereavement, Pancreatic Cancer UK and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

To sponsor the team visit <https://www.sponsorme.co.uk/stephenrichardson/western-front-600-royal-navy-mcm2-crew4.aspx>

Follow the team at: [https://instagram.com/westernfront\\_600?igshid=mwo4wjfbxygt](https://instagram.com/westernfront_600?igshid=mwo4wjfbxygt)

# Support for entire family

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity visited Haslar Marina in Gosport, where a 1940's wooden yacht provides local navy children with a unique experience on the water.

The Boleh Trust was founded in 2015 to offer inspirational sailing experiences to those facing challenge in their lives.

This includes young people who may face periods of separation from a parent serving in the Royal Navy or Royal Marines.

For the last two years the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity has provided over £20,000 in grants to the Boleh Trust, enabling hundreds of children from Portsmouth's Naval families to learn basic sailing and teamworking skills in a historic vessel.

Four junior school children

from Portsmouth had the opportunity to sail in Boleh on the day of the RNRMC visit, and despite heavy rain the experience was enjoyed by all, particularly the chance to steer the vessel and work as a team raising sails.

Henry Middleton, Boleh Trust Chairman, explained the value of working with the RNRMC to provide sailing experiences for naval children: "Sailing on Boleh with her unusual junk rig inspires young people."

"They learn new skills in sailing the boat, they learn how to work together, and above all, they have an adventure."

"Boleh means 'Can Do' in Malay and our message is all about encouraging young people to adopt a 'Can Do' approach to life - anything is possible!"



## Battlefield perspective

MANY Wounded, Injured and Sick (WIS) personnel can feel disengaged from the service through being signed off on shore for long periods of time, resulting in serious detrimental effects on wellbeing.

The RNRMC have recently helped fund the Normandy Venture 2019, organised by PSG Recovery for WIS personnel of all ranks/rates. The aim was to promote team cohesion, comradeship and reignite a sense of belonging.

This trip took 12 divisional members, accompanied by four staff, on a team building and inspiring tour of the Normandy battlefields, primarily taking in the key sights of the invasion, before the battle moved inland.

One of the attendees said: "I'd just like to thank all involved in organising, supervising and providing the trip to Normandy. Being with other Wounded, Injured and Sick personnel puts perspective on my individual situation, that I am not alone in what I am dealing with and that there are others in just as serious a situation."

"It helped me quite a bit and I feel all the richer for the experience. I am very grateful for the opportunity you provided."

## Join our beach trek

YOU can support your charity and your fitness by taking part in the RNRMC's Normandy Beaches Trek in September.

Discover the sites and scenery of the D-Day landings on this unforgettable five-day trip along the beautiful Normandy coastline, to commemorate 75 years since Victory in Europe.

With a dedicated historian joining us for the whole trip, you'll be fully immersed in the surroundings of the Normandy beaches which played a vital part of the WW2 Allied invasion of Normandy.

The challenge will set off from HMS Excellent in Portsmouth, home to Navy Command HQ, and conclude four days later at the magnificent Pegasus Bridge and the village of Ranville,

which was the first village to be liberated in France in 1944.

The route takes us along the majestic coastline of Omaha, Juno and Sword beaches, taking in sites of significant military action including Point du Hoc and the Mulberry Harbour of Arromanches. We pay our respects to the Allies at the Normandy American Cemetery and Juno Beach Memorial.

You'll cover just under 50 miles over the four days, which involves full days of trekking over a varied terrain of dunes, grass or tarmac. Our route finishes north of Caen via the iconic Pegasus Bridge and Ranville War Cemetery where we will lay a wreath, a poignant end to an unforgettable journey.

For more information and to secure your place visit: [www.rnrmc.org.uk/trek](http://www.rnrmc.org.uk/trek)



## Fabulous effort by Miss G

SOUTHSEA businessman Andrew Pearce transformed into his alter ego - drag act 'Fabulous Miss G' to host a World War 2-themed variety evening at The Royal Maritime Club, to raise funds for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Champion charity fundraiser Andrew, who runs the Creatiques Bridal Boutique in Albert Road, said: "The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity was the obvious choice to support."

"Not only does the charity support serving sailors, marines and their families but also veterans who have served their country and to whom we all owe so much."

The Royal Maritime Club was turned into a wartime dance hall with red, white and blue bunting whilst guests got into the spirit of the evening's proceedings by wearing 1940's themed fancy dress.

Upon arrival guests were welcomed to the evening's

festivities by a Sir Winston Churchill lookalike and dined on bangers and mash followed by Union Jack cupcakes supplied by Sweet Cakes in Palmerston Road.

Alongside Miss G, the evening featured performances from Portsmouth vocalist Jodie Vinall, Andrew Talbot-New and Cantando Female Voice Community Choir, interspersed with readings from the diary of a WWII Portsmouth resident.

A rousing sing-along was enjoyed by all, followed by the choir singing "In the Navy" then a disco to finish off the evening.

Hilary Hesbrook, Regional Fundraiser for The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, said: "What a brilliant evening - a huge thank you to Miss G and everyone who gave up their time to be involved in running the show."

The event raised £3,000 for the RNRMC.





## Stepping up for NATO exercise

ROYAL Navy personnel join colleagues from NATO aboard the USS Mount Whitney for Exercise Trident Jupiter.

STRIKFORNATO, which includes 14 sailors and Royal Marines, left their base in Oeiras, Lisbon, to embark the Blue Ridge-class amphibious command ship for the exercise.

Trident Jupiter was NATO's most ambitious Computer Assisted Command Post Exercise (CACPX) since the Cold War, designed to test the alliance's ability to carry out its core role of collective defence against a peer competitor.

For STRIKFORNATO it was an opportunity to be certified by SHAPE to lead a NATO Expanded Task Force (NETF), making it the first HQ capable of doing so.

The exercise scenario featured a fictitious enemy invading five NATO nations and testing the full spectrum of the alliance's capabilities. NATO marked its 70th anniversary in 2019. "Over two weeks, the staff of STRIKFORNATO

demonstrated their ability to plan dynamic warfare operations," said Royal Navy Rear Admiral Guy Robinson, Deputy Commander, STRIKFORNATO.

"Our ability to work through a highly-challenging scenario shows the interoperability and strength of our NATO Alliance to protect and defend."

STRIKFORNATO is a Memorandum of Understanding organisation drawing on contributions from 12 NATO nations, whose primary purpose is to integrate high-end US assets (such as carriers, SSNs and amphibious formations) into NATO command and control structures.

For this reason they are always led by a 3\* US Commander, currently Vice Admiral Lisa Franchetti, who is also (Commander US 6th Fleet based in Naples, Italy.

Report: Lt Kieran Tamayo



## Taking the sting out of diving

DEFUSING deadly mines is challenging enough.

But Portsmouth-based Royal Navy divers faced extra threats posed by Jaws, venomous snakes and poisonous octopuses when they flew half way around the world to train in Australia.

Eighteen experts from Fleet Diving Unit 2 – the UK's specialists in finding and neutralising mines and bombs in the shallowest waters – joined counterparts from Canada, New Zealand and the USA at Garden Island in western Australia.

Divers at HMAS Stirling invited their allies to a three-week test of the latest equipment and techniques in the waters around the island which lies just off the west coast near Perth.

The theme of Exercise Dugong 19 was to clear a safe route for an amphibious task group to reach shore using a mix of remote-controlled and autonomous underwater vehicles as well as the divers themselves.

In addition to the mines, the Australian environment presented some unique challenges for the visiting diving

units: he waters around Garden Island are home to venomous tiger snakes and great white sharks... aka Jaws.

And on top of that, the shape of the mines laid in the water by the exercise organisers attracted the attention of the local blue-ringed octopus population. Their venom paralyses then kills. Every diver received a brief from their hosts on how to remain safe.

"The very shallow water community is a small yet specialist group, so it is important to conduct exercises to strengthen the bonds between participating nations," said FDU2's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Keith Mabbott.

"These divers could be working together in the future on operations, so it is important that they understand how to operate together effectively and efficiently.

"Dugong 19 provided a chance to maintain and develop our wartime diving skills in a challenging environment, alongside the people we would be operating with."



● Royal Navy personnel attended the service

Abbey Pictures: Jonathan Brady/PA

# Royals at service for RN benefactor



● Above, the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall are welcomed to Westminster Abbey; Right, Prince Michael of Kent and Vice Admiral Timothy Laurence arrive at the abbey; Below left, Admiral Sir George Zambellas represented the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh; the White Ensign flew over the abbey during the service



ROYAL Navy personnel past and present attended a Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of one of its greatest benefactors, Sir Donald Gosling, at Westminster Abbey.

The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall joined other members of the Royal Family, including the Duke of Cambridge, the Earl and Countess of Wessex, Prince Michael of Kent and Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence, for the service, which was conducted by the Dean of Westminster, the Very Reverend David Hoyle.

Former First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir George Zambellas, represented the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh.

The congregation also included Dame Shirley Bassey, former newsreader Angela Rippon, Sir Bruce Forsyth's widow Lady Forsyth-Johnson, and Riverdance creator Michael Flatley.

Sir Donald, who held the title of honorary Vice Admiral, died in September, aged 90.

"We recall his enduring love of the Royal Navy, and his loyalty to the bonds of commitment that unite it and the traditions that sustain it," said the Dean.

The White Ensign was then presented to the Dean by Sergeant Jay McGhie RM, Chief Petty Officer Glyn Kemsley-Harper, Petty Officer Gary Wright and Leading Hands Christopher Redman and Nathan Edwards.

First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin read a prayer before veteran comedian Jimmy Tarbuck delivered a tribute. He was followed by the Countess of Wessex, who read from Isaiah 55: 6-13.

Readings were also given by Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce and prayers were delivered by Chaplain of the Fleet, the Venerable Martyn Gough. A tribute was delivered by Warrant Officer Naval Service Nick Sharland.

As the service concluded, the Band of HM Royal Marines Collingwood, played a series of Henry Wood's medleys, *Fantasia on British Sea Songs*.

Sir Donald joined the Royal Navy in 1944 and, after completing training, served in



● Donald Gosling during his Royal Navy career; below, Sir Donald pictured aboard HMS Victory in 2012



the cruiser HMS Leander on a two-year post-war patrol of the Mediterranean. This left a lasting impression on him, and both his house and his yacht Leander G were named after the warship.

Upon leaving the RN in the late 1940s, he teamed up with fellow ex-serviceman Ronald Hobson, buying a bomb site in London and turning it into a car park.

Over the next 50 years, the venture grew into National Car Parks, business operating more than 650 sites and was worth £800m when the two friends sold it in 1998.

By then, Sir Donald – he was knighted in 1976 – had been a long-time advocate, supporter and benefactor of the Royal Navy, including four years as chairman of the White Ensign Association. At the end of the service, a collection was made for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and the White Ensign Association.



# WW2 destroyer hero honoured

**WITH the Norwegian flag on the wall, Colonel John Olsen kneels to present his countrymen's gratitude to one of the most remarkable characters in modern Royal Navy history.**

At the age of 105, John Manners is believed to be the only World War 2 destroyer captain still with us – and is also the oldest living first-class cricketer.

And 75 years ago next spring, the then-30-year-old naval officer brought HMS Viceroy into Trondheim to help liberate the city after five years under the Nazi yoke.

Under Operation Conan – the Royal Navy's codename for the liberation of Norway – he helped oversee the surrender of thousands of German military personnel who, despite the scale of their nation's defeat, "tended to be a bit arrogant", and hosted Crown Prince Olaf, Norway's heir to the throne, as well as helped to get the city and port back on their feet.

With key anniversaries of Norway's occupation and liberation looming, Oslo has been recognising Britons who took part in either operation, presenting them with diplomas of thanks – in the same way France is honouring its liberators of 1944 and 1945 with the *Legion d'Honneur*.

Col Olsen said Viceroy's commanding officer had shown "tremendous courage and determination" in 1945. "He put his life in danger to defend our values: democracy, liberty and the rule of law. We shall never forget his contribution to our freedom."

Before and after the war, John Manners was both cricketer and naval officer. His performance with the bat for the RN earned him a call-up for the Hampshire county side and he knocked out more than 200 runs in four appearances in the mid-30s before service to his nation took precedence.

The majority of his seagoing career was spent in torpedo boats and destroyers in the Mediterranean, Far East and, when war came, the North Sea especially, firstly in HMS Eglinton escorting convoys along the East Coast of England.

As the war progressed, Lt Cdr Manners was given command of two destroyers – Eskimo for six months and then, for the final 18 months of war and first weeks of peace, veteran V&W class destroyer HMS Viceroy, built for service in the Great War, revamped for the campaign against the U-boat in the second global conflict.



● Col Olsen presents a frail, but still sharp, John Manners with the thanks of his fellow countrymen while (below left) the former first-class cricketer in action for the RN at Lords in 1951 and (below right) hosting Crown Prince Olaf – King Olav 5 between 1957 and 1991 - in Trondheim in 1945



In the dying weeks of war in Europe, Viceroy sank U-1274 in the North Sea – an action which earned her commanding officer the DSC. Within a month he was dispatched to Trondheim.

"I was overwhelmed with the kindness of the Norwegian people," he recalled as Col Olsen presented the diploma at his care home in Newbury. "They were



so welcoming to us, and it is an honour to be recognised for what we did while we were there."

After Trondheim, Lt Cdr Manners remained in the RN for a dozen or years post-war – and resumed his cricketing career in 1948, playing for five more years and ending his first-class career with four centuries under his belt and a batting average of 31 from

his 21 appearances.

Beyond his sporting and naval achievements, Lt Cdr Manners is an accomplished author and chronicler/photographer of rural crafts and life.

You can read more about Lt Cdr Manners and Viceroy at: [vandydestroyerassociation.org.uk/HMS\\_Viceroy/index.html#Manners](http://vandydestroyerassociation.org.uk/HMS_Viceroy/index.html#Manners)

## Blue moon for Jupiter with Charles' backing

FORMER comms officer becomes patron of ship's association.

Not uncommon. And not normally news in these pages. But when said comms officer is the heir to the throne...

A long-time supporter of HMS Jupiter, Prince Charles has agreed to become the official patron of the Leander-class frigate's association to mark its 15th anniversary.

A then Lieutenant Wales (pictured right as Jupiter returned to Plymouth) spent most of 1974 aboard the ship on a Pacific/Caribbean deployment which took in Singapore, New Zealand, Tonga, Western Samoa, Honolulu, San Francisco, Acapulco and Bermuda. Upon leaving Jupiter, the prince went on to train as a helicopter pilot, ultimately joining 845 NAS aboard HMS Hermes.

After an eventful career – West Indies Guard Ship, through the second Cod War to operations east of Suez in the 1980s including supporting the evacuation of Britons from Yemen in 1986 and Armilla Patrol in the Gulf, and an unfortunate encounter with London Bridge on a visit to the capital (damaging both ship and bridge...) – the frigate paid off in 1992.

It took another dozen years before the Jupiter Association was formed, since when several reunions have been held across the land (most recently, the 15th annual get-together was hosted by the National Memorial Arboretum in Litchfield).

Ken Williams, association secretary, said Prince Charles had followed the Jupiter story long after leaving the ship and continued to take interest in its association, regularly sending former shipmates his best wishes.

"We are very privileged for this as very few new patronages are taken on by the Prince of



Wales each year – we must of course use this accolade wisely and to further the good name of the association," he added.

The former 'Jups' are now eyeing up their 2020 reunion (planned for Plymouth) with another goal in mind: displaying the original ship's bell.

It was thought it went to Middlesbrough Council when the frigate decommissioned; Jupiter enjoyed close ties with the Teesside town for nearly 20 years.

But on closer inspection, it was discovered the bell was actually a replacement; association members had hoped to find the inner wall filled with the names of children christened aboard the frigate during her 23-year career... but instead found it blank.

After considerable research, the bell has been traced to the family of Captain Will Hacking and son, who lives in London; the Hackings snapped it up as a memento in 1991. The goal of the association is to have both bells on display at next year's reunion.

More details are available from [www.hmsjupiter.co.uk](http://www.hmsjupiter.co.uk).

## Clyde's boost for Erskine veterans

SAILORS and Babcock staff from Faslane handed over a year's worth of fundraising donations to Erskine veterans.

Warrant Officer 1st Class Mark McLoughlin, president of the Warrant Officers/Senior Rates' mess, present veterans and staff with £1,850.

And just for good measure, Babcock retail services manager Graham McLaughlin gave the charity £1,577.78 – the tally of all the spare change donated by customers.

Erskine is Scotland's principal provider of care for veterans and their spouses, running four homes nationwide offering nursing, residential, respite and dementia care.

In addition, there are 44

cottages for veterans and their families and five assisted living apartments at the Erskine Estate at Bishopston, with building work underway on 24 single living apartments.

The charity also assists younger veterans who need help beginning the next chapter of their lives, offering social, recreation and training facilities at its activity centre.

"Being able to give something back to the charity makes us feel particularly proud," said WO1 McLoughlin.

"We are very pleased with our decision to support Erskine as our mess charity for 2019 and are always impressed during our visits with the fantastic support they provide every day."

## Tribute to heroes

SAILORS from RNAS Culdrose paid tribute to the heroes of 1944 with a four-day cycling/battlefield tour of the Normandy landing grounds.

Warrant Officer Scott 'Barney' Barnett from the Helston base's air engineering department led a 17-strong group of service personnel and civilian contractors around the five D-Day beaches (from west to east Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword)

Explaining the history along the way was Culdrose's Base Warrant Officer Mark Nicholas.

"I'd never been to the Normandy beaches before

although we've all seen the movies – we watched the opening scene from *Saving Private Ryan* to prepare for our trip – but it's not until you go there and see the beaches and the German trenches that it makes you think.

"We visited the US, British and German cemeteries. The US and the British ones each had around 9,000 graves but the German one had 21,000 headstones. We also found Royal Navy graves marking the death of unknown sailors.

"To end our trip, we also watched *The Longest Day* which showed the all the places we'd visited."







## Musicians serve up lesson for students

MEMBERS of the Royal Marines School of Music (RMSoM) spent a rewarding weekend with Brentwood Imperial Youth Band (BIYB), showcasing the career options offered in the band service.

Led by Assistant Director of Music Training, Captain Phil Trudgeon RM, bugle/drum instructors from RMSoM delivered engaging workshops. The Royal Marines then hosted a question-and-answer session after lunch.

Among the RM musicians visiting were two former members of the Bentwood Band: Recently promoted Band Lance-Corporal Chris Turrell, currently serving in RM Band Portsmouth (Royal Band) and Musn Cowley, who is currently in training studying flute and sax at RMSoM.

Music was played by Stevie Wonder to 90s pop, as well as music from *The Lion King*, with all enjoying the fun environment.

Musn Cowley said: "It was very exciting to return to the band that had motivated me to join the Royal Marines and show them how much the Royal Marines had done for me."

She added: "Capt Trudgeon encouraged the youngsters to relax and enjoy themselves, he had whole sections of the band swinging from side to side or standing up and sitting down in sequence to the music. Everyone had a great time."

Brentwood Imperial Youth Band were one of the participating Bands in the inaugural Victory Youth Tattoo held in HMNB Portsmouth during May, so have now established a firm link with RMSoM.



# Action man first for VCC top post



FORMER Royal Marine Ant Middleton has become the first new Chief Cadet for the Volunteer Cadet Corps.

The Portsmouth-born television presenter attended an investiture at HMS Excellent, attended by cadet force volunteers.

The Chief Cadet is an honorary role to provide a senior ambassador and inspirational leadership to the Volunteer Cadet Corps.

The Chief Cadet is public facing to ensure that the VCC maximises public awareness and helps to enhance cadet development through the promotion of the ethos, values and standards of the Cadet Forces.

During the investment ceremony, Hon Captain Ant said: "What a privilege and honour to be appointed Chief Cadet in the VCC. I absolutely thrive on mentoring our future generation."

His new role will see him visit each VCC Unit and support the VCC at major events, such as Cautley Cup, field gun events and the VCC birthday parade.

Lieutenant Louis Colpitts RMVCC, Staff Officer VCC, said: "It is absolutely fantastic to have Ant Middleton on board with our incredible organisation."

"His wealth of experience and dits would not only engage our cadets but inspire them and new cadets to give it all they can and #MeetTheChallenge. We all look forward to working close with him during his time as our Chief Cadet."

Ant, who joined the Army in 1997 at the age of 16, enlisted in the Royal Marines in 2005. He passed out of his commando course in January 2006, winning the coveted King's Badge. He joined 40 Commando and served in Afghanistan.

He is now best known as the chief instructor on the Channel 4 show *SAS: Who Dares Wins*.

For more details about the VCC, visit [volunteercadets.org](http://volunteercadets.org) or email [hq@volunteercadets.org](mailto:hq@volunteercadets.org)



## New commission reward for committed volunteers

VOLUNTEER officers have received an historic new commission for cadet force volunteers.

The new commission, for volunteers in the Sea Cadets, Army Cadet Force, RAF Air Cadets and the Combined Cadet Force, was approved by the Queen and is the first royal commission created for 155 years.

The commission recognises the immense contribution made by volunteer staff as leaders of national uniformed youth organisations sponsored by the Ministry of Defence.

Bedfordshire District Sea Cadets were presented with their new commissions by the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Mrs Helen Nellis.

"It was a pleasure to see the joy on the faces of the newly-commissioned officers," she said.

The officers' receiving their commissions were from Bedford, Biggleswade, Dunstable, Flitwick & Ampthill and Luton Units and the Eastern Area Sea Cadet Canoe Centre based in Bedfordshire District.



• Matthew Clark and Josh Bowles have fun during their visit to HMS Sultan

Picture: PO (Phot) Nicola Harper

## Teenagers are hands-on at Sultan

A GROUP of youngsters from the Military Mentors' Training Academy visited HMS Sultan to learn about engineering in the Royal Navy.

Twenty-one 16-19 year olds were given a morning of hands-on activities within the Defence College of Technical Training's Defence School of Marine Engineering and the Royal Naval Air Engineering & Survival Equipment School.

The visit enabled the students to learn about the mechanics of helicopters and diesel engines. In addition, the group were given an active demonstration of the six-legged Mantis Hexapod which is maintained as part of a Sultan engineers club.

Based at Bridgemary School, Gosport, the Military Mentors' Academy run a college

course for students who aspire towards a career in the Services. Offering a Level 1 or Level 2 Diploma for entry into the uniformed services and qualifications in first aid and martial arts, the Academy also teaches students about core military values, the selection process and helps prepare them for the first phase of military training.

Military Mentors Senior Instructor Dave Scott said: "As part of their studies, the students are on a look at life program to see what careers are on offer and what roles are available to explore and this ties in really well. We have a few who are interested in a career in the military, so this may be another option for them to consider."

Student Ashleigh Wilkinson said: "I've been to Navy Open Days before, but today

has been a real eye opener into seeing what it's really like. Watching the engineers working really hard, you can see that they are doing something that they really enjoy."

Fellow student Alfie Stoddard said: "The visit to Sultan has been really worthwhile."

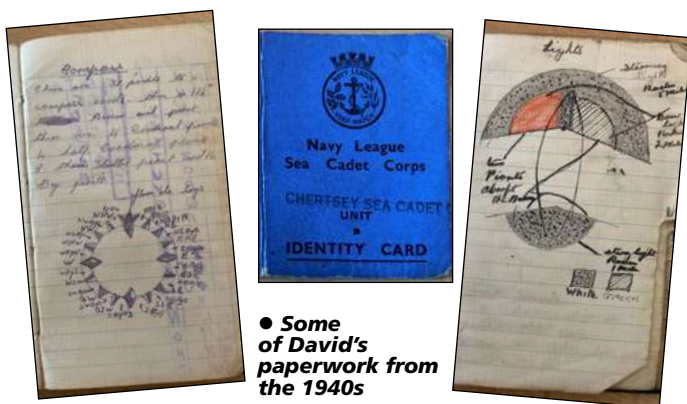
Although I already know the Base well as a cadet here, today has given me a different insight into some of the things that go on here and a better understanding of how things work."

Sultan STEM Ambassador, Warrant Officer Alexander 'Midge' Ure said: "I've visited the students to brief them on various different aspects of life within the Royal Navy and today's visit gives the students an ideal opportunity to experience some of our training first hand."





# Once a cadet, always a cadet



● Some of David's paperwork from the 1940s

A TRIP down Memory Lane was a complete surprise for former Sea Cadet David Field.

Twenty cadets from Woking hosted David as he marked his 90th birthday – and reminisced about his time as a cadet. Woking born and bred, David was a cadet during World War 2. He joined Chertsey Unit, which covered Woking.

David recalled cycling to Chertsey every Wednesday and Sunday for training and still has his original identity card, notebooks and some photographs, which include detailed hand-written notes showing flags, semaphore, lights and compass work.

One of the key roles for Sea Cadet units during WW2 was to train signallers for the Royal Navy.

David didn't go on to join the Senior Service, opting to join the Royal Signals for his National Service and after the war, moving to a career on the railways.

The party at TS Dianthus was arranged at the request of David's four daughters.

Cadets surprised David with a rousing rendition of *Happy Birthday* and presented him with a sailor's cap bearing the tally of his old unit, TS Dianthus.

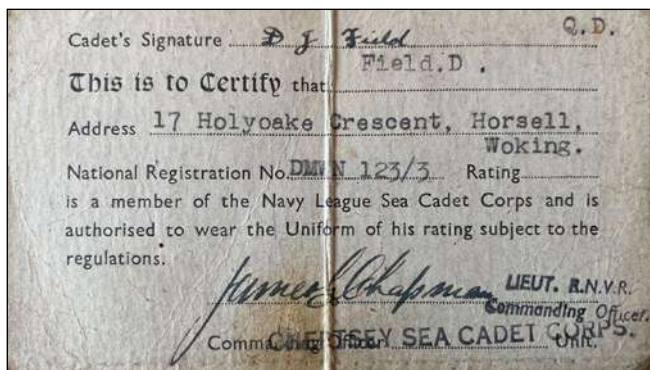
David promptly replaced his party hat with the cap and raised three cheers for the sea cadets.

Sprightly David danced all night and told everyone he had a whale of a time.

One of David's treasure possessions is a photograph of him with five of his peers. They are all wearing naval uniform, complete with belts, gaiters and bayonets.

David is circled second from the right in the back row.

Do you know who the others are and what became of them? If you can help, please email Gary Murany at [veterancadets@dianthusrading.com](mailto:veterancadets@dianthusrading.com)



## Choir honoured to sing at service

THE Royal Senior School Choir was once again proud to sing at the Annual National Service for Seafarers at St Paul's Cathedral.

The service was attended by a 1,000-strong congregation with seafaring connections, including the Admiralty Board, The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, The Honourable Company of Master Mariners and The Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

The Royal School is one of only five schools in the UK to be invited to participate in this special service.

After a picnic lunch in the Cathedral garden, The Royal School was joined by the four other schools that form the massed choir and rehearsed a series of anthems and hymns that they had been preparing throughout the past year.

The sermon was given by The Reverend Oliver Ross, Vicar of Malmesbury and Upper Avon, and the Naval Prayer was led by The Venerable Martyn Gough RN, Chaplain of the Fleet, a Governor of The Royal School.

Upper Sixth student Aniela said: "The opportunity to sing at St. Paul's, during such a special and prestigious service, was a huge privilege for us as a choir and the beautiful music combined with the celebration of all seafarers through the readings, prayers and sermon made me proud to be a part of a school with such a rich history and links to the Royal Navy."



## Shoppers dig deep

WHITEHAVEN Sea Cadets received a boost to their funds from collection boxes placed in McColl's stores in Seacliffe, Distington and Mirehouse, whose customers donated a total of £103.68.

The Sea Cadets were also nominated for an award from the company's Community Fund which resulted in a cheque for an additional £224.16 being presented.

Whitehaven unit's Commanding Officer, Petty Officer (SCC) Stuart McCourt said that the whole unit were delighted and very grateful for the donations.

"We rely on the support of our local community and this is a tremendous boost for us. We are grateful to the great McColl's customers at Seacliffe, Distington and Mirehouse, and for the donation from their Community Fund.

"Our special thanks must also go to Lynne Thompson, Seacliffe store manager, and Kerry Patience, McColl's area manager for their support."



# Carrier hosts celebration of friendship

WITH the future of naval aviation behind them and aboard Britain's future flagship, the best and brightest of the UK and USA's military brains celebrated the special bond between the two nations.

Anchored in Chesapeake Bay – off the spiritual home of the US Navy in Annapolis – aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth hosted the second Atlantic Future Forum, championing defence, industrial and technological ties linking the United Kingdom and United States.

The event – the second, and also the second hosted by the Portsmouth-based warship – drew 350 attendees, nearly double that of the inaugural forum, held in New York in 2018.

It also saw London and Washington sign of the Annapolis Accord, pledging to “harness the power of the fourth industrial revolution for good: combining human ingenuity and technological mastery to defend the values we share and to enhance our collective prosperity and security.”

The 2019 iteration of the forum, which

was set up to celebrate – and build upon – the unique space, defence, security and technology relationship between Britain and the US, took place over two days.

The first was largely devoted to allowing trade and industry to show off cutting-edge systems and equipment, but also saw the heads of the Royal and US Navies and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force – respectively Admirals Tony Radakin, Michael M Gilday and Hiroshi Yamamura – put pen to a joint statement, reaffirming their intention to work closely together.

And the second day – under the banner of The Future We Choose – focused on subjects as diverse as autonomous technology, artificial intelligence and machine learning not just in the defence realm but also finance and health care, and space.

First Sea Lord Admiral Radakin gave the opening address, Cabinet Secretary and UK National Security Adviser Sir Mark Sedwill, closed proceedings, while his US counterpart Robert O'Brian was among the guest speakers.

“The forum brought together in one unusual place, at one time, representatives of government from both our nations, our militaries, our business leaders, our tech entrepreneurs and innovators and some of the brightest minds to consider, debate and agree on the Future We Choose,” said Honorary Commodore Stephen Watson, Director of the Atlantic Future Forum.

“HMS Queen Elizabeth represents the very best of UK industry and technology so it is particularly relevant that we should have hosted these exciting events on board,” said Captain Steve Moorhouse, the carrier's Commanding Officer.

“The UK-US relationship continues to go from strength to strength – as demonstrated by the support we have received from the US Navy, Marines and Air Force throughout our journey to bring our new carriers and jets in to service.

“It is events like these which help to reinforce, develop and bring new relevance to this vital relationship as we prepare together for any future threats we face.”



# ‘IN THE FINEST TRADITIONS

## ‘...A fantastic experience, one of the best

SAILORS behind one of the most dramatic rescues in recent years and a record-breaking drugs haul are among servicemen and women recognised by the Queen.

Four RN personnel have been singled out in the latest Operational Honours awarded to those in the services whose bravery, dedication and effort goes above and beyond what would normally be expected.

Leading Seaman David Groves (pictured) and Able Seaman Alex Harvey spent at least four hours in towering seas as they struggled to rescue every man aboard stricken car/container ship Grande America when HMS Argyll dashed to its aid in March.

The frigate – on her way home to Plymouth after nine months away in the Asia-Pacific region – responded to a mayday from the 28,000-tonne merchant ship about 150 miles southwest of Brest.

Despite a swell of six to seven metres – at the absolute limit of safe boat operations – the two sailors volunteered to enter the water in their eight-metre-long craft and attempt to save the Grande America's crew.

“One minute you could see a ship on fire, the next it was hidden by a wall of water. And the closer we got, the more engulfed we were in the smoke,” said 29-year-old David, from Taunton in

HUNDREDS, perhaps thousands of Iraqis can save their comrades on the field of battle thanks to the efforts of Leading Medical Assistant Gemma Brown.

The navy medic spent six months in Iraq as part of a Tri-Service team teaching the country's soldiers the basics of first aid and, more importantly, teaching Iraqi instructors how to pass on those life-saving skills to their troops.

Her dedication to that job – part of the much broader effort to defeat ISIS forces and support security efforts in the Middle East – earned the leading hand

the Queen's Commendation for Voluntary Service in the latest batch of Operational Honours announced by Whitehall.

Gemma (pictured right with one of her successful students) worked hand-in-hand with Army combat technicians and RAF medics providing varying levels of training and education from basic three-day courses to as many as 400 soldiers at a time, to more detailed first-aid instruction lasting four weeks.

Another key element of the six-month stint at Camp Taji, on the left bank of the Tigris 20 miles north of Baghdad, was training Iraqi

instructors – “teach the teachers” – to build a core of first-aid expertise in the Iraqi Army's training regiment... using interpreters who had to translate her Scottish lilt into accurate, understandable instructions and guidance for the students.

The leading hand feared that some Iraqi soldiers might not respond to “a small, blonde, blue-eyed female medic but after a couple of days, they came out of their shells.

“The level of knowledge varied wildly. Some soldiers had no first-aid training at all, others had a

good understanding, mainly based on their first-hand experience of treating comrades.”

The 37-year-old from Dunfermline, who is married to fellow sailor Craig – currently deployed with the RN's Bahrain-based minehunters, Gemma's next assignment is working at HMS Collingwood's medical centre.

Just returned from helping to run RFA Cardigan Bay's Role 2 sick bay working with the RN's Bahrain-based minehunters, Gemma's next assignment is working at HMS Collingwood's medical centre. Surprised by her award, she feels the time she spent at Camp Taji was

Somerset.

Alex added: “It was rough – very rough and as we got near to the ship, it turned out to be a lot worse than we'd imagined it.”

When the pair reached the merchant ship they faced a lengthy wait as the crew struggled to launch the lifeboat – the Grande America's high side and rough weather ruled out climbing down the ladder and into Argyll's boat.

When the lifeboat eventually launched, it hit the water with such force that it left the vessel impossible to manoeuvre.

Nevertheless, David managed to bring his boat nose-to-nose with the lifeboat.

With Alex on the bow judging the right moment as the two craft moved up and down, four of the merchant crew jumped from a small hatch into Argyll's boat.

“When the first guy jumped I had to grab him to prevent him going overboard. I thought to my-self: This is a bit hairy,” said the 25-year-old from Hull.

Next the pair tried towing the lifeboat, but the line parted in the heavy sea. Finally they decided on

nudging the boat towards the frigate “like a bumper car, or pinball” said David.

It took an interminable amount of time to ‘bump’ the lifeboat the half mile to HMS Argyll – and then they had to pin it against the frigate's side (pictured, far right) so the Grande America's crew could climb the scrambling net if they had the strength – or be hauled up in a hoist.

“They were cold, tired, suffering from

the effects of fire, smoke, shock and they'd been bobbing around in the sea for a couple of hours – they were exhausted,” added David, now serving at HMS Raleigh in Torpoint.

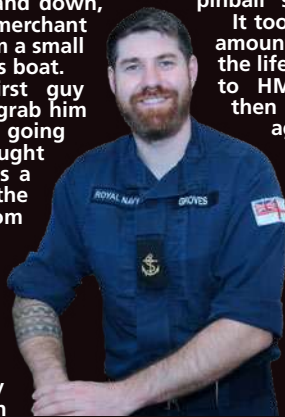
He receives the Queen's Gallantry Medal for his actions on the night of March 10-11; Alex, who has joined new patrol ship HMS Trent in Glasgow as her boat's coxswain, will be presented with the Queen's Commendation for Bravery.

“We could have called the rescue off given the conditions – but why would we when there are lives at stake,” said Alex, who's been in the Royal Navy for five years.

“It was absolutely a worthwhile experience, something to be proud of and a good way to finish our deployment, but I never thought an award would come out of it. It's a bit surreal.”

David, who's due to tie the knot with his fiancée Leanne Barratt in September, has previous experience of rescues – a sunken fishing boat in the Channel and saving migrants in the Mediterranean while serving aboard HMS Enterprise.

“It is always good to be recognised for the work you do, but at the end of the day this is what we're trained for. That all kicked in on the night,” he added.



## ASK YOURSELF:

- Were you made in the Royal Navy?
- Do you want to give others the opportunity to make it in the Royal Navy?
- Are you seeking a rewarding Second Career?

If the answer to any is yes then...

### APPLY TO BECOME A CAREERS ADVISER

Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WO's, Senior Rates and SNCO Service Leavers and former Service (those that left Service under 3 years), to work in Armed Forces Careers Offices which are listed on the map.

Positions are nationwide, employed on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £30k with promotion opportunities to rise to £43k. FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PS1N 01929 403172 | Mil 94374 3172 | E-mail [navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.gov.uk](mailto:navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.gov.uk)





# Reward for scheme to help mums to be

A GROUNDBREAKING scheme to help servicewomen cope while on maternity leave earned the Royal Navy officer behind it an inspirational award.

Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Ruth Guest was singled out for her 'Project Rebalance' pilot initiative at the fourth Women in Defence Awards.

The Portsmouth-based naval doctor was concerned that there were stark differences between the support civilian and military personnel receive after giving birth – and began a pilot study into the issue.

The mother-of-two felt from personal experience that there was a gap between the health care services of the MOD and the NHS – a gap servicewomen on maternity leave might fall into.

She feared servicewomen may be at increased risk of perinatal mental health issues (pregnancy and the year after delivery), due to a host of factors related to life in the forces. Should any woman fall into this gap, the likelihood of seeking and obtaining help would be small.

More than 200 personnel responded to her

survey – confirming her fears and revealing that for many servicewomen, there were barriers to them seeking support, they often felt isolated, and were unaware of some of the services available to them.

All of which prompted Surg Lt Cdr Guest, currently working in a civilian doctors' practice, to produce the 'maternity passport' – a simple leaflet to help servicewomen on maternity leave

- spot the signs and symptoms of perinatal mental health issues in themselves, friends and family;
- increase awareness of resources available;
- increase awareness of entitlement to NHS assessments/treatment;
- give extra information to NHS healthcare providers to help them care for military personnel.

The 'passport' has been made available at medical centres at HMS Nelson and Northwood military headquarters northwest of London, with Lt Cdr Guest currently analysing the results.

But her efforts so far were deemed sufficiently worthy to take the Inspirational

Award – one of ten titles contested at the annual WiD event, held in London's Guildhall.

"At the moment it's still a bit surreal! It has been a surprise – and an honour – and I'm hoping it shows people that service improvement is open to all," Lt Cdr Guest said.

"If you have an idea of a way things can be done better, or can see a need within the service, your voice is important, and you can make a difference.

"The only limits you have are those you accept from others or you place on yourself. This is the time to push boundaries, to ask why and to challenge old ways of thinking.

"It is important not only to ride the momentum of change but to maintain it for those coming after us."

More than 470 nominations were received from across the defence community – including the armed forces, MOD Civil Service, GCHQ, MI5, and defence industry.

For the full list of winners, see: [www.womenindefenceuk.com/awards-2019](http://www.womenindefenceuk.com/awards-2019)

# Regain your mental fitness this winter

THE winter months can take their toll on anyone's mental health, so there is never a bad time to remind serving Royal Marines that there's a simple way to access treatment.

The initiative – Project Regain – masterminded by a serving commando, is aimed at promoting early detection and help for Royal Marines who could suffer from mental health issues.

Evidence collected by the project suggested that commandos find it hard to ask for support when symptoms of illnesses like post-traumatic stress disorder and depression first present themselves.

Royal Marines have one of the most physically and psychologically demanding jobs on the planet and findings show lack of knowledge about mental health issues makes it more difficult to recognise a problem developing.

Regain was set up to change this for the better by allowing Royal Marines and related ranks to refer themselves directly to specialists without the need to first go through their unit's medical officer.

All they need to do is pick up a phone and call the Department of Community Mental Health at Colchester and from there they will be put straight through to a nurse who will arrange an appointment locally.

Find out more at: [royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/features/project-regain](http://royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/features/project-regain).

# OF THE NAVAL SERVICE...

## jobs I've done...

reward enough.

"It was a fantastic experience, one of the best jobs I've done," Gemma added. "It allowed me to develop my personal teaching techniques and it really changed my view of the Iraqi people – they were absolutely lovely.

"I would have loved to have seen Iraq – and meet more of its people. We were often invited by students to dine with their families, which would have been a lovely experience, but it was against regulations."



entire police force of the UK in one year.

Cdr Carter Quinn said: "It was a complete surprise to be told about this honour and not something I was expecting at all. I told my family and my mum burst into tears, they were all absolutely over the moon for me.

"This honour is real recognition, for my wife especially, of all the support my family gave me during that deployment and all the months it took to prepare for it.

"HMS Dragon deployed from the UK as ready as we could be for the mission ahead, and we were on the front foot throughout. That is the reason we had such a successful time at sea on operations.

"I was so proud of all of the 'Dragons' on board, who pulled together and worked exceptionally hard.

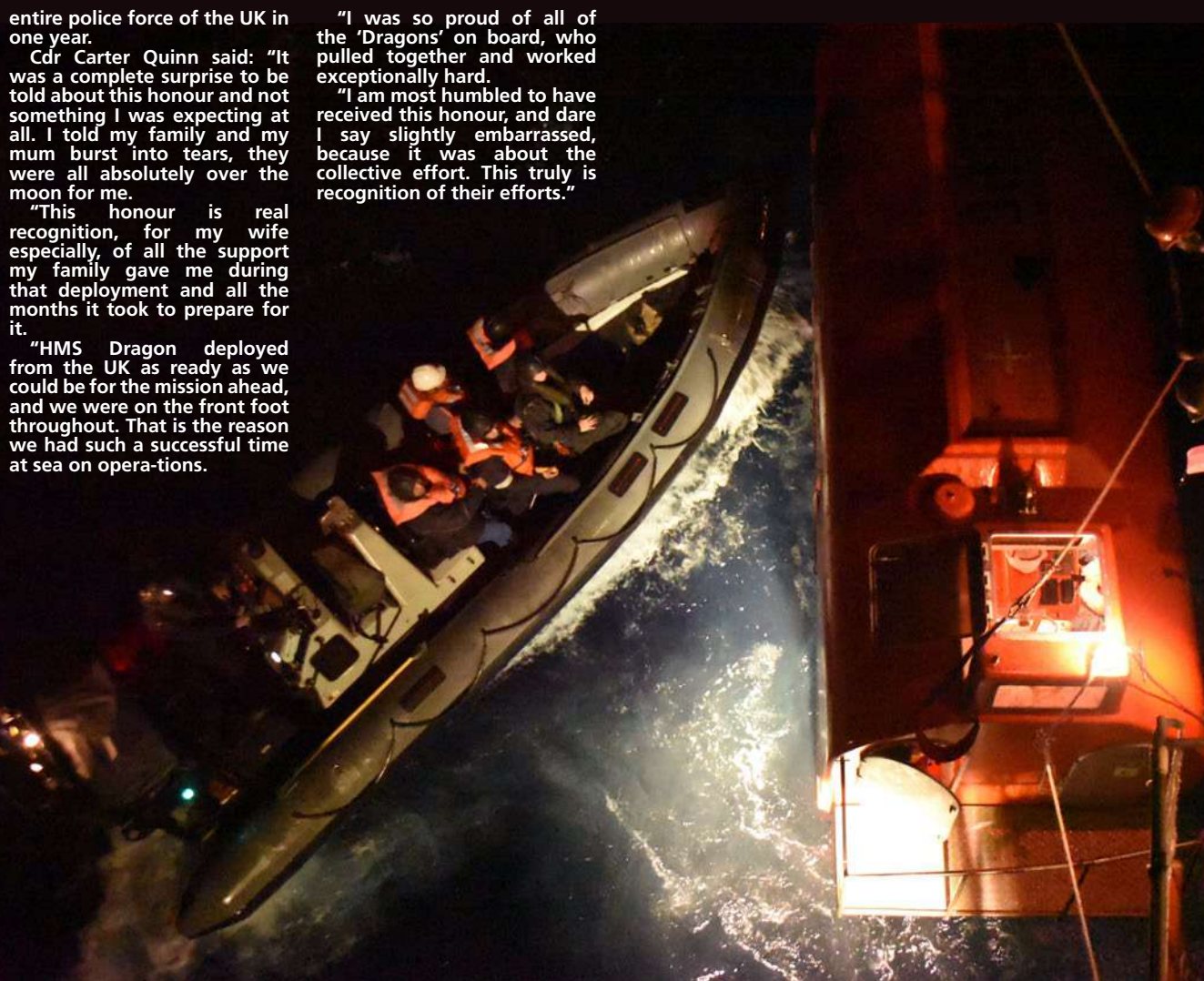
"I am most humbled to have received this honour, and dare I say slightly embarrassed, because it was about the collective effort. This truly is recognition of their efforts."

"We saw the crew the next day and they were really grateful for what we'd done for them. That was as much recognition as we'd expected."

Commander Michael Carter Quinn (pictured), aged 42, from South Devon, is awarded an OBE for his time as the Commanding Officer of HMS Dragon. His ship sailed into the record books earlier this year when her crew of sailors and Royal Marines made eight

successful raids on drug smugglers in the Middle East.

During her time working with global counter-terrorism organisation Combined Task Force 150, Dragon made her astounding eight seizures, amounting to more drugs captured in seven months than by the





**PEMBROKE HOUSE**  
The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust's Care Home

[www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk)



Providing a home from home for older members of the **Royal Naval family**

Located close to the historic Chatham Dockyard, we provide 24 hour nursing and residential care in our exceptional building that features good sized, well furnished rooms, en-suite facilities, comfortable communal areas and landscaped gardens.

**We believe personal enrichment shouldn't stop when you move in with us, so we don't just provide quality of care, we ensure quality of life.**



11 Oxford Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 4BS  
Call **01634 852431** or email [enquiries@pembrokehouse-rnbt.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@pembrokehouse-rnbt.org.uk)

[f](#) [t](#)



## £50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the November edition of *Navy News* (right) was the Landing Ship Tank HMS Anzio, which served in the 1940s before being scrapped in Spain.

David Nairne, of Portsmouth, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship is the first of the Bird class patrol vessels, designed for patrol and fishery protection tasks in coastal and inshore territorial waters.

1) What was her name?  
2) How many were in her ship's company?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.



Entries must be received by February 14. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our March edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

### MYSTERY PICTURE 299

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: [editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk). If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

# NAVY NEWS

Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building,  
HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

**JAN 2020 No. 786: Founded 1954**

Editor: Lorraine Proudlock  
Email: [editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk)  
Tel: 023 9262 5282 or Mil: 93832 5282

### Editorial

[News@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:News@royalnavymail.mod.uk)  
Sam.Bannister@royalnavymail.mod.uk  
Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk  
Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk  
Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk  
Helen.Boswell@royalnavymail.mod.uk

**Graphics**  
Andy.Brady@royalnavymail.mod.uk

### General enquiries:

023 9262 5235  
**Business**  
Business manager:  
Lisa Taw: 023 9262 5235  
[bm@navynews.co.uk](mailto:bm@navynews.co.uk)

### Subscriptions:

[www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews)  
[subscriptions@navynews.co.uk](mailto:subscriptions@navynews.co.uk)

Advertising: 023 9262 5235  
[advertising@navynews.co.uk](mailto:advertising@navynews.co.uk)

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

### © Crown copyright

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) Or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, Or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk). Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned. Published by Navy News, Navy Command HQ, Portsmouth and printed by Walstead UK.

### Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 07770 088388 and leave a message, or email [studio@patn.org.uk](mailto:studio@patn.org.uk). A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in February's Noticeboard must be received by

**JANUARY 16, 2020**

## Deaths

**Cdr Simon J D Ryan QVRM RD VR RNR.** Served in HMS Palatine, Salford and Eaglet (CO and OIC RNHQ Northern England 2005-2008). First RNR officer to serve in Afghanistan 2002. Died November 14, aged 63.  
**PO Pete Hayward.** CM941357. Served from 1954 to 1967 in HMS Wizard, Defender, Salisbury, Mounts Bay, Swiftsure and Maidstone. Died November 21.

**Kenneth Purchase.** Former Warrant Officer SBA. Served HMS Eskimo, HMS Ganges, HMS Drake, HMNB Devonport. Also a member of the RNA Ely Camps. Died November 30, aged 79.

**Col RM Anthony S Harris.** CGRM. NATO. RM Eastney. NFPS. HMS President, Bermuda, Renown. Officer Sch RM. HQ 3 Cdo. 45 Cdo. Died November 18, aged 97.

**Cdr Brian C Park.** Nav Sec. Cdr UK Maritime Forces. Defence Coll Deepcut. 3 Cdo RM. HMS Raleigh, Cumberland, Gloucester. Died November 23, aged 50.

**Cdr RNR Simon J D Ryan RD.** HMS Eaglet, Salford, Palatine. Died November 14, aged 63.

**Maj RM John R Sturgis MC.** 40, 41, 42 and 45 Cdo. 3 Cdo Bde RM. JSAWC. ITC RM, HQ RMFVR, RM Eastney. Died September 24, aged 99.

**Lt Cdr John T Crowley.** HMS Vanguard, St Angelo, Contest, Royal Arthur, LCT440. 806 NAS. Died

October 27, aged 95.  
**Lt Cdr Iain G Denholm.** HMS Boxer, Dryad, Avenger, Cambridge, Nottingham. Exch Canada, RAF Bentley Priory, FOST, DLO Bristol, Cdre Amph Task Group. Died November 4, aged 60.

**Lt Cdr Robert J H Griffiths.** HMS Euryalus, Mercury, London, Highburton, Tiger. RNC Greenwich. Died November 8, aged 82.

**Sub Lt RNRV Adam Charnaud.** 1834 NAS. Died November 7, aged 84.

**Lt Cdr RNR Robin A Guinness.** 804 1831 NAS. Died October 17, aged 94.

**James (Jim) Tonge, Ch. REA (Air).** Served from 1949-63. Joined HMS Fisgard as an Artificer Apprentice (Series 7). Member of The Fisgard Association and The Magnificent 7. Died November 23, aged 86.

**Raymond (Ray) Hicks, Lt Cdr. MBE (MIL) RN.** Served from 1944 to 1980 in HMS Eagle, Indomitable, Implacable, Ark Royal and in the Admiralty. Fleet Air Arm. Died November 15, aged 91.

### Submariners' Association

**Mick Tierney CPO WEM(O).** Served July 1960 – June 1981 in HM Submarines Seraph, Sea Scout, Oracle, Alliance, Anchorite, Walrus, Otter, Grampus, Finwhale. Member of Gosport Branch. Died November 2, aged 78.

**Andrew Hutchinson AB.** Served

1943 – 1946 in HM Submarines Cyclops Jun 1944 – Aug 1944; Sportsman Aug 1944 – 46. Member of Northern Ireland Branch. Died November 13, aged 93.

**Malcolm Carr A/LM(E).** Served 1960 – 1968 in HM Submarines Sealion, Andrew, Totem, and Repulse. Member of Sunderland Branch. Died November 21, aged 78.

**Robert Harrison PO ME.** Served Nov 1962 – May 1970 in HM Submarines Anchorite (63-65), Resolution (66-68), Valiant (68-70). Member of North East Branch. Died November 22, aged 76.

**Don Church AB UW3.** Served Oct 1952 – Apr 1959 in HM Submarines Sea Devil (53), Teredo (54), Trenchant (54-55), Trespasser, (55-58), Seraph (58). Member of Colchester Branch. Died November 23, aged 85.

### Association of Naval Officers

**Capt Charles A B Nixon-Eckersall.** HMS Artemis, Neptune, Alliance, Naiad, Euryalus, Ambush, Searcher, Alliance, Dolphin, Neptune, Courageous, Valiant, Boxer. RANS Onslow. DN Plans. RCDS. C-in-C Channel. NATO. Died November 11, aged 81.

**Col RM Francis C E Bye OBE.** 3, 40, 45 and 46 Cdo RM. CGRM. JSAWC. RM Office, RM Plymouth, Signal School. Cdo Sch RM. Dir Naval Warfare. ITCRM. Died November 11.

## Reunions

**HMS Cheviot:** Reunion in Torquay for three nights, starting March 5 2020. For details contact Victor Denham at [vic742008@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:vic742008@hotmail.co.uk) or phone 0794995503.

**HMS Hermes 4th Commission Cooks 1968 – 1970:** Our annual get together will be held in the Royal Maritime Club Portsmouth the weekend of March 14 2020. For more details contact [scouseenright@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:scouseenright@hotmail.co.uk) or on 07884040041.

**Loch Class Frigates Association:** Our annual reunion takes place at the Cardiff North Hotel, Cardiff, on April 17-20 2020. Membership is open to all who served on any of the Loch-class ships or their variants (Bay calcs, Admirals yachts, survey ships and repair ships). For more details contact honorary secretary Andrew Nunn at [Andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:Andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk) or call 0117 9505835

**HMS Ganges Association:** Our annual reunion will be held April 17-20 2020 at the Warners Gunton Hall Holiday Village near Lowestoft. Open to all those who served at HMS Ganges, wives & partners also welcome. For booking details contact [tony.willders@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.willders@btinternet.com) tel:07787106202 Or Isle of Wight Tours on (01983) 405116.

**HMS Cadiz, Saintes and Wizard:** A shared reunion takes place from Friday May 8 to Monday May 11 2020 at the Novotel Hotel in Nottingham. All three ships'

associations will hold their own annual meetings and share all other activities. For details contact Isle of Wight Tours Ltd at 3 New Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9IN. Tel 01252 405116, fax 01983 405504, email [enquiries@iowtours.com](mailto:enquiries@iowtours.com) or contact HMS Saintes Secretary [Fred.Terry1@ntlworld.com](mailto:Fred.Terry1@ntlworld.com), or call 01252 625974.

**HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association.** Reunion at Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford, from May 8 – 11. NMA visit on Sunday. All welcome, Contact Denis Askham at [askhamd3@gmail.com](mailto:askhamd3@gmail.com) or call 07773651213.

**HMS Broadsword Association:** Biannual reunion and AGM takes place at the Best Western Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, on Saturday May 23, 2020. The reunion is open to anyone who has served on Broadsword. For details visit [hmsbroadswordassociation.co.uk](http://hmsbroadswordassociation.co.uk) or contact Bill Skilliter [wistheplumber@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wistheplumber@yahoo.co.uk)

**1710 Naval Air Squadron tenth Anniversary Dinner:** For all serving/ex serving squadron members takes place at the WO, SRs & SNCOs mess in HMS Sultan on Friday June 5 2020. For information please contact Elaine Rogers at [Elaine.Rogers683@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Elaine.Rogers683@mod.gov.uk) or phone on 02392 722758.

**HMS Isis. D-87 'That which Remains' 1936 to 1944.** My father was an Army Officer attached to HMS Isis as BLO and was a survivor of her sinking on July 20 1944. I am seeking contact

with former crew, survivors, families and or descendants. My hope is to join for acts of remembrance in coming years. Please contact: Angus Beaton 07966166981 or [angusbeaton@me.com](mailto:angusbeaton@me.com)

**BRNC Entry Sept 1980** 40th anniversary reunion dinner, BRNC Dartmouth, Saturday October 31 2020. Details from Cdr N J 'Nobby' Hall, [neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk](mailto:neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk).

**RMBS 1/70 and 2/70 Squad.** 2020 will be the 50th anniversary for those joining the RMBS in 1970. A joint reunion of 1/70 and 2/70 squads is being planned for the last weekend in August 2020, in Deal. For further details and to get on the mailing list contact Nick Buckley on [nickbuckley55@aol.com](mailto:nickbuckley55@aol.com).

If you were not in either squad but know someone who was, please do pass this calling note on.

### HMS Lincoln 68/69 Commission:

Our reunion takes place the Riverside Hotel, Branston, Burton-on-Trent from June 12-14 2020. Any other Lincoln shipmates from following commissions are welcome to join us. Contact Mike Sutcliffe for details on 01282 618 751. HMS Aisne Last Commission 1966 - 1968: A reunion will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from May 1-4. Contact IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or Nigel Jest on 07531546185 or [nigeljest@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nigeljest@hotmail.co.uk)

## Ask Jack

**HMS ESKIMO:** I am trying to obtain a copy of HMS Eskimo's Commissioning Book 1963-64. I served in her and have mislaid my copy. I wondered if any more copies were available to buy.

**Mr MS Pearce**  
01908 788548

**Ian Robertson:** I am trying to trace a former colleague. We both joined the Royal Marines together on May 6 1975 at Deal, Kent, as part of 211 Troop. We are planning our first 211 Kings Squad reunion in May 2020. I know Ian was from Cheltenham and would be aged 60.

**David Martin**  
[david.martin.689@gmail.com](mailto:david.martin.689@gmail.com)

**Christopher Wheatley:** I am trying to trace the sergeant, who served in the Royal Marines in the late 1960s to the 1980s. He served with Sgt Peter Leonard Riley, who retired in May 1988. Peter, who died in August 2018, was bestman at Christopher's wedding. The last address I had is in Bristol. I think he had two children, who we would like to get in touch with.

**Colin Riley**  
63 Elsa Road, Welling,  
Kent DA16 1JZ

**C/Sgt Keith Pittock RM.** Keith was the DI for the Royal Marines Band Service New Entry Squad 2/70. There is a 50th reunion planned for August 2020 and we would dearly love to invite him. Anyone who knows his whereabouts is requested to pass on the following details please and ask Keith to make contact with Nick Buckley on [nickbuckley55@aol.com](mailto:nickbuckley55@aol.com) or 07786 341084.

**CPO John Terrett.** We are trying to trace my sister's brother-in-law. He served in HMS Ark Royal in either the 1970s, 80s or 90s. He was born in Middlesbrough and had a brother, Norman, and mother Milly.

**Alison and Nigel Bryden**  
[Invermill@talk21.com](mailto:Invermill@talk21.com)

**Michael Frampton.** My brother-in-law boxed extensively for the navy during his service in the 60s and was awarded his colours. He would love to get a Imperial Services/Combined Services cloth badge to sew on to his sweatshirt. He is now 75 and I would love to obtain one for him.

**Joe Joryeff**  
[joryeffj@gmail.com](mailto:joryeffj@gmail.com)

**CPSA Jim Asher.** I am trying to contact a former shipmate with whom I served in HMS Cardiff during the Falklands conflict. I served as a CHMEM at the time.

**Terry Edson**  
[Sallyann.edson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:Sallyann.edson@tiscali.co.uk)

**HMS DOLPHIN:** I played in the 1966 Royal Navy Cup Final for HMS Dolphin at Brickfields in Plymouth against 41 Com. Royal Marines. I have lost my photo of the Dolphin team. Can anyone help with a replacement copy?

**Rod Armstrong**  
(known as 'Mick')  
[j.r.armstrong1947@gmail.com](mailto:j.r.armstrong1947@gmail.com)



# NAVY NEWS

Don't miss out...

Subscribe online at [royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews](http://royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews)

12 copies for the price of 10



OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ROYAL NAVY





# Supporting the Royal Navy

With over thirty years of naval industry experience, from designing the Queen Elizabeth Class carrier, to helping to sustain the Royal Navy's in-service nuclear submarines, we solve the problems of today and shape the ideas of tomorrow.

## Get in touch



+44 (0)1225 473600



[defence-security.das@bmtglobal.com](mailto:defence-security.das@bmtglobal.com)



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





# An object lesson in Fleet Air Arm history

LIKE the clock on the mantelpiece in one of Titanic's luxurious first-class ante-rooms, the pocket watch of a photographer at Hiroshima, the wall clock in one of the corridors leading to Reactor No.4 at Chernobyl, this century-old watch is frozen in time, fixed at the moment of catastrophe.

It belonged to one Squadron Commander Edwin Dunning, killed just five days after carving his name into Royal Navy and naval aviation history.

The 25-year-old became the first man to land an aircraft on a ship at sea... and then the first man killed trying to land an aircraft on a ship at sea; his Sopwith Pup was caught by a gust and toppled over the side of HMS Furious. Dunning was knocked unconscious and drowned in his cockpit as the waters of Scapa Flow engulfed his fighter. The time was 3.45pm on August 7, 1917.

Edwin Dunning's body was recovered and the aviator buried with full military honours in the churchyard of his home village in Essex.

His watch eventually ended up with what is today the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton, one of 30,000 artefacts, joining two million files and records and several hundred thousand photographs charting the highs and lows of naval aviation from 1908 to the present day.

Now pick 100 of those items to tell that story.

That was the challenge museum curator David Morris faced when asked to encapsulate the story of British naval aviation by publishers Amberley for **The Fleet Air Arm and Royal Naval Air Service in 100 Objects** (£14.99 ISBN 978-1-4456-8902-9).

'Objects' is a fairly loose term, for it incorporates photographs, individuals, actions as well as tangible items.

"It is certainly not 'just a book of aircraft'," says David, who has sought to fill the 98 pages with a mix of "not-

so-obvious objects and 'I didn't know that'-type stuff" as well as "firsts and defining moments and a good spread of lighter subject matter, such as lucky mascots/superstition, ship's cats, badgers, pigeons – a very broad spread of material indeed.

You want Wrens riding ice cream vendors' bicycles in a field at Yeovilton? Not a problem (pictured centre right).

The bikes were used to train Fighter Direction Control Officers. "It was pure inspiration," says the author, "a typically-British solution to a vital need that would see combat air traffic control taught at almost zero cost and without putting aircraft or naval airmen at risk.

Or what about a cat resting in its specially-sized hammock? The imaginatively-named Puss was mascot of post-war carrier HMS Eagle. In true RN pet style, the cat (pictured top right) had its own ID card, virtualising card and rum ration coupons... which he apparently shared with the ship's crew.

Aside from helping matelots snaffle a little extra rum, Puss was a fearsome mouser aboard the carrier... something which no doubt Fifi the elephant would have appreciated.

When tractors and trucks weren't available to shunt aircraft around, Fifi was called upon to do the heavy duties at Puttalam airfield in Sri Lanka.

Some objects have become staples of operating aircraft at sea: the arrestor hook, fitted to aircraft to catch a wire on a carrier's deck and bring the machine to a halt.

Or the illuminated wands which guide a helicopter or aircraft down safely in low visibility (bottom right).

Other objects have faded into history.

Like Rocket-assisted Take-Off Gear, a sort of precursor of the catapult, using disposable rockets to give an extra boost to aircraft to get them off a flight deck.

A rubber flight deck anyone? Could aircraft land on a ship without the need for undercarriage?

Yes they could... but they were a bugger to manoeuvre once landed because of the lack of wheels.

The man who proved you could put a wheelless aircraft safely down on a rubber deck was one Capt Eric 'Winkle' Brown, himself one of the 100 'objects' picked out by the author.

Capt Brown retired with a string of flying records under his belt (most aircraft types flown, most deck landings, take-offs, first jet landing on a carrier and so on).

Many of the late naval ace/test pilot's mementos from an unparalleled career found their way to the museum, among them a pair of flying goggles... worn not by the man himself but aviatrix Hanna Reitsch, one of Hitler's favourites, interrogated by Brown at the end of WW2.

Eric Brown is, of course, not the sole remarkable naval flier within these pages; all four RNAS/Fleet Air Arm VC winners feature.

And then there's object No.100, last but not definitely not least, a bust of WW1 aircraft fitter and engineer Henry Allingham (inset).

Born before the Wright Brothers achieved powered flight, Henry lived to the age of 113, dying in 2009, the last Royal Navy veteran of the Great War.

He is, says David, "possibly unique – he had the potential to have seen every object in the book."

"The bronze bust of Henry – on display at the Fleet Air Arm Museum – simply has to be my personal number one favourite object in the book."



## CLASSIFIED

**WALL SHIELDS OF ROYAL NAVY SHIPS**  
Hand painted on wooden base 6" x 7"  
**£58.60 including UK postage and packing**  
REDUCED PRICES given for orders of 3 or more  
SPECIAL PRICES given for 10, 25, 50 and 100  
CRESTED TIES TO YOUR OWN SPECIAL DESIGN  
(minimum 50)  
Specialist experience over 100 years  
C.H. MUNDAY LTD  
Rosemary Cottage, Churl Road, Headley,  
Bordon, Hants GU35 8SS  
Telephone: 01428 714971  
email: enquiries@chmunday.co.uk  
www.chmunday.co.uk

**Worcestershire Medal Service**  
01527 835375  
Full Size and Miniature Medals supplied and mounted for wear or display.  
From the Boer War to current operations we keep one of the most comprehensive stocks of Medals and Ribbon in the UK  
Contact us for prices, help and advice or a free brochure.

56 Broad Street, Sidemoor, Bromsgrove, B61 8LL  
www.worcmedals.com wms@worcmedals.com

**Navy News notice to readers**  
The publishers of Navy News cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of any advertisement or for any losses suffered by their readers as a result.  
Readers are strongly recommended to make their own enquiries and seek appropriate commercial, legal and financial advice before sending any money or entering into any legally-binding agreement.

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

wilkin chapman llp  
inc. gilbert blades  
solicitors

Contact: **01522 512345** or visit **wilkinchapman.co.uk**  
Out of hours for Military Discipline Matters only, contact Gordon Holt on **07973 667869**

To advertise in **Navy News** please contact Lisa on:  
**023 9262 5235** or email **bm@navynews.co.uk**



## Awards for the best new air engineers

SIXTY-FOUR servicemen and women marked the successful completion of their training at a formal parade in the presence of their families at RNAS Yeovilton.

The next generation of Royal Navy Air Engineering Technicians are joining the trained strength of the Fleet Air Arm, having qualified to support and maintain frontline capability with Wildcat and Merlin helicopters.

Cdr Ben Perkins-Brown, Commanding Officer of the Air Engineering Department at RNAS Yeovilton, said: "We are here to recognise and celebrate your achievements as you become part of a team deployed in the UK and around the world having met the highest standards in military aviation engineering."

Guest of honour was Cdre Tom Manson, a former Commander Air Engineering at RNAS Yeovilton.

The Commodore presented Qualified to Maintain certificates to the Air Engineering Technician ratings having completed their Phase 2B training.

Four individuals were recognised for their outstanding achievements and qualities.

The SAFRAN Academic Trophy to the CHF Merlin trainee who has achieved the best all-round academic results in Phase 2B Training, was won by AET Elis Herridge.

The AgustaWestland Trophy for the Wildcat trainee who has achieved the best all-round academic results in Phase 2B Training, was presented to AET Jack Teichman.

The Wildcat Maritime Force Trophy for the student demonstrating the strongest commitment to the Royal Naval ethos during Phase 2B training was presented to AET Stephen Cane.

The Commando Helicopter Force Trophy for the CHF trainee who demonstrated the strongest commitment to Royal Naval ethos during Phase 2B training went to AET Benjamin Angus.

● From left, AET Teichman, AET Angus, AET Herridge and AET Cane with their awards



# Varied bunch tell their tales

## THE GROVE REVIEW

**MARK JESSOP and Pen and Sword of Barnsley have produced a fascinating and original book *The Royal Navy in the Napoleonic Age; Senior Service 1800-1815* (ISBN 978 1 52672 037 5).**

This is not a considered history of this important period but more a commentary based on contemporary and later 19th Century sources. Nothing in the extensive bibliography is more recent than 1895!

The author uses the literary device of inventing fictional characters and interweaving them with real events and people. In this way Jessop hopes to 'represent the men and women swept up in the tide of history, often unknown and unnamed'.

They are a varied bunch. We have a Danish pilot assisting in Hyde Parker's and Nelson's attack on Copenhagen; a German merchant settles in Plymouth; a 'canting crew' recruiting ex-sailors to work in the Plymouth dockyard; a nurse retired from Stonehouse hospital; three junior petty officers meeting, shortly after Trafalgar, the sisters of an old shipmate; a rather second-rate poet seeking inspiration at Plymouth for a Trafalgar ode; a black West Indian Lieutenant RN on boring blockade duty; a rather tedious abolitionist; a chaplain and two more survivors (all doomed) of a ship wrecked on the Australian coast; an invalid injured at sea

living in Torpoint but still interested in naval matters; a Yorkshire-born American sailor captured with the USS Wasp; two builders of the Plymouth breakwater; a diarist with an interest in naval technology; a naval widow in Plymouth; a Madras-born sailor captured when HMS Penguin was taken by USS Hornet, an RN captain with a serious interest in naval tactics; a boatman who took people to see the captured Bonaparte on board HMS Bellerophon off Plymouth; and a judge with an interest in naval matters looking back from the 1830s.

The approach makes for an entertaining book but it has its drawbacks.

Sometimes it is hard to separate fact from fiction. Perhaps more seriously, the author's use of somewhat biased American 19th Century sources gives a very distorted impression of the War of 1812.

There is nothing about America's aggressive ambitions to conquer Canada and a rather modern pro-American view of the successful punitive operations against the American coast that helped coerce a reasonable status quo ante peace.

One doubts that the real people who the author is representing would have felt quite so worried about operations against their American 'brothers' (!) as a 20th Century writer.

There are other problems. The author

implies that impressment was used after 1815. It was indeed kept on the statute book for a while as a wartime measure of conscription but it was unnecessary to man the peacetime navy.

Jessop underestimates the Admiralty's interest in steam propulsion and repeats, apparently uncritically, the legend of Nelson's 'blind eye' incident at Copenhagen, although he does make the important point that Hyde Parker was in fact giving Nelson a good excuse to withdraw with honour, if necessary.

The author spends much space on Trafalgar but he does admit the invasion threat had disappeared eastwards when the battle occurred.

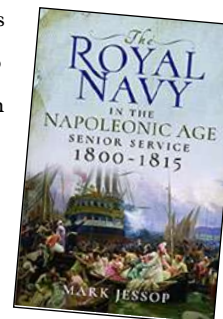
The book leaves out a great deal – Duckworth at San Domingo and the Dardanelles, Gambier and Cochrane at Basque Roads.

Neither is there any mention of Sydney Smith, the naval hero who replaced Nelson in contemporary popular acclaim.

Nevertheless it must be admitted that Mark Jessop succeeds to a great extent, in his aim of 'giving as flavour of the language and opinions of dozens of politicians, naval officers and ordinary people swept up in the tumultuous storm of the first years of the nineteenth century'.

The book is an entertaining and absorbing read and goods value at £19.99.

Most readers will learn something from it but please though do not use it as a reliable historical source!



# Your Exclusive Official Royal Navy Calendar

**12 AMAZING IMAGES OF THE FLEET**  
The 2020 Royal Navy/Navy News Calendar

STILL ONLY  
**£8.99**  
inc p&p (UK)  
or £12.99 inc p&p  
(overseas)  
**GLOBALMISSION 20**

## Order Now!

Our official calendar for 2020 celebrates the awesome Global Missions of our Royal Navy featuring images that show its role sailing the world's seas protecting and helping in areas in much need of aid and assistance.

There are **3 ways** to purchase your copy –

- **Online** – click on [onlinecalendarshop.com/navynews](http://onlinecalendarshop.com/navynews) and go through the simple order procedure to secure your copy. Navy News readers please quote code (GLOBALMISSION20) when ordering online. Don't forget to have your credit card details handy when you go online.
- **By post** – send a cheque or postal order to **Onlinecalendarshop.com Ltd, 2 Ringway Business Park, Richard Street, Birmingham B7 4AA.** Please make your cheque payable to **Onlinecalendarshop.com Ltd**
- **By phone** – call **0121 333 1553** to place your order direct with one of our friendly customer service operators. Don't forget to have your credit card details handy when you call. Please allow 28 days from order for delivery.



**AMAZING FREE SHIPS OF THE FLEET POSTER**



**Onlinecalendarshop.com Ltd,**  
2 Ringway Business Park, Richard Street,  
Birmingham B7 4AA

**This official calendar makes the ideal Christmas gift, order now to beat the Christmas rush whilst stocks last.**





## Jo flies the flag for RN showjumping

ROYAL Navy showjumper Commander Jo Bollen was in the spotlight at the Horse and Hounds Annual Awards.

Cdr Bollen, who represents the Royal Navy Dressage, Showjumping and Eventing Team, was shortlisted for the Amateur Rider of the Year award.

She was largely recognised for all her sterling work that she carries out within the RNRM Equestrian Association and the UKAF Equestrian Association, without which many events would have stalled or been cancelled over the past couple of years.

The logistics officer was in very good and esteemed company and, although her name and picture appeared on the big screen, she was not successful in securing the trophy.

Despite this it was a fabulous

evening with many people delighted that the Royal Navy was represented and more surprised that the Senior Service have an equestrian team.

Cdr Bollen said: "I'd like to express my immense gratitude to everyone who had a hand in nominating me/supporting me and voting for me; to be shortlisted as a nominee in the Horse and Hound (H&H) 2019 Amateur Rider of the Year category was a complete honour.

"To be recognised in the same vein as many other hugely worthy nominees was very humbling and we all experienced a wonderful evening at the awards dinner.

"It was also a valuable opportunity to be able to promote what the UKAFEA do with the great and good of the equestrian industry."



## Keith in driving seat

ROYAL Navy Reservist WO1 Keith 'Shiner' Wright poses with his raffle prize.

The bike enthusiast was the lucky winner of the custom edition BMW R Nine T racing superbike in the raffle which raised funds for Navy Wings, the Royal Marines Charity and the Royal Navy Winter Sports Association.

"After a really challenging 2018 when I was diagnosed, and then successfully treated for throat cancer, with the help and support of my family, friends and shipmates, my wife and I have been fundraising for the Throat Cancer Foundation, which is a charity promoting the vaccination program that targets this terrible but treatable illness and bring it to the public's attention," said Keith. "I am once again able to enjoy the thrills of motorcycling, and with my fantastic new BMW R nine T racer being the icing on the cake."

Keith, who serves with HMS President, has represented a variety of ships, establishments and the RNR in rugby for a number of years and participated in the Royal Navy skiing championships over many seasons.

"My naval career and passion for motorcycles have gone hand in hand, from a Junior Marine Engineering Mechanic with a Honda SS50 in 1979, to the National Warrant Officer for RNR Seamanship with a BMW R 1200 in 2019," added Keith.

"Having always supported military and motorcycle charities over the years, I had no hesitation in purchasing some tickets to assist with the great work that I have seen first-hand from each charity."



# On top of the world – in Oz

### ROYAL Navy footballers triumphed Down Under in the Carnival Cup.

The RN men, women and veterans teams took on sides from the Royal Australian Navy, Air Force and Army in a week-long tournament in Sydney.

The squads had four days to acclimatise to the 30°C heat and the ten-hour time difference, during which they held training and enjoyed some touristy visits to the Blue Mountains, the Sydney Cricket Ground and iconic harbour bridge.

The first match saw the RN take on the Australian Army sides. The veterans, managed by Hughie Doyle, dominated their match but had to settle for a 1-1 draw.

The RN woman, managed by CPOPT Sam Covey were on course for a 3-2 victory but suffered heartbreak in injury time when the home team equalised.

Last up were the men, managed by WO1 Marty Wallace, benefiting from an evening kick off and cooler conditions, they started very well and finished 3-0 victors.

Day two of the contest was against the Royal Australian Navy. The men were up first and won 1-0, the women also triumphed, 2-1, while the veterans had to settle for a 1-1 draw.

The RN sides enjoyed a day's rest as the host nation's army and air force sides did battle. The army women won their match by five goals, meaning the RN women would need to win their final game by a large margin. The RN veterans were given a lifeline when the RAAF vets drew their match with the army.

The final day of competition dawned with all three RN teams aiming to win their games.

The Senior men went first and started poorly – going down 1-0 – before turning it around in the second half to emerge 4-1 victors. Man of the match was AB David Parker, of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The Vets were second game on; throwing caution to the wind they played with an attacking line-up knowing that they needed to win and win convincingly.

Crucially for them, CPO Phil Archbold, suspended for the second game due to two bookings in the first match returned to the line up and started up front.

The vets had a disastrous start, conceding a goal after two minutes. But they hit back and won 6-2, with five of the goals scored by man-of-the-match CPO Phil Archbold.

The team were elated – they got the win they needed win, had remained unbeaten and were still in with a chance of winning the competition, which would probably come down to goal difference.

Last up were the women, who saved their



• Clockwise, from above; POPT Nat Bavister; POPT Tom Munday; The three managers with the trophies; the RN Women gather for a team talk



best until last, demolishing the opposition to win 9-0, with captain POPT Nat Bavister one of the stand-out players.

While the RN men celebrated, the women and veterans had to wait until the outcome of the final day's games, with the Royal Australian Army needing to win their games by five goals or more, to take the overall honours.

The Australian Navy veterans managed to hold the army to a 1-1 draw, handing the honours to the Royal Navy Veterans.

Finally, the Australian Navy women took on their army counterparts, but again the game ended in a 1-1, meaning the RN Women could celebrate.

The following day, CEO Steve Johnson, made a very poignant speech in congratulating the players and staff on their achievement, dedication and conduct as

players and serving members of the RN.

He finished by saying that the day was one of his proudest moments in football, high praise from a man that has represented the RN over 200 times as senior player, won numerous Inter Services and represented the Combined Services on a number of occasions.

RNFA want to thank the organising committee for the tour, the RNRM Sports Lottery, Albert Fernandes, the storekeeper at HMS Nelson's gym and kitman, and all the commanding officers and line managers who allowed their staff to attend the tour.

If you want to keep in touch with RN Football news and events, follow Twitter: @navyfootball1; Facebook: @RoyalNavyFA or visit [Royalnavyfa.com](http://Royalnavyfa.com)

Report: Lt Jack Lemmon





## Deona delivers for UKAF

ROYAL Navy martial arts expert Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Deona Chan helped the UK Armed Forces Taekwondo team to victory in the British championships.

She was one of six to compete in Manchester and won her match to become the British Champion in the Veteran Female -57kg category – the second time she has taken the title.

In the Senior -74 kg Advanced programme, DMR Trematick (Army) won his first round and went into his semi-final match. He was leading 9-7 at round one but unfortunately he sustained an injury which meant he could not continue the match and went to hospital for treatment. He won a bronze medal.

A very experienced fighter, Sgt Guba (Army) who is under the BAE System Sports Scholarship Program, competed at the Veterans Male +80kg Advanced division advanced into his semi-final fight.

Despite knocking out his opponent, he lost the match by disqualification due to the kick not being sanctioned by the referees. He was

awarded a bronze medal.

Sgt Njuguna (Army) in the Senior Male -87kg Novice division fought hard and achieved a bronze medal at his semi-final fight.

Both Capt Deshaies-Martin and Pte Bladek (Army) worked through their rounds and got into the finals of their respective categories.

Capt Deshaies-Martin won silver in the Senior Male +87kg category.

Pte Bladek, an Army Sponsored Athlete under the Talented Athlete Sponsorship Scheme (TASS), also won silver in the Senior Female -49kg category.

Despite only having a small team of six fighters the UKAF Taekwondo team came back with six medals and came 33 of 88 clubs in the UK.

This has been the Most Successful UKAF Taekwondo team to date.

Anyone who wishes to join the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Martial Arts Association or the UKAF Taekwondo team selection process please contact WO Al Curtin RM on [Alan.Curtin438@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Alan.Curtin438@mod.gov.uk)

## Royal leads way up mountain

BRITISH Forces personnel stationed near Naples in Italy have been organising the annual Mount Vesuvius run for more than 30 years.

AF South may have given way to NATO's Joint Force Command Naples, and the headquarters may have moved from Bagnoli to Lago Patria, but the volcano hasn't moved and the British commitment to this annual run hasn't either. In fact, 2019's run was expanded in length and scale.

For the first time the event started at the ruins of Ercolano (Herculaneum), Pompeii's smaller counterpart, adding a further 2km to the traditional 10km route, and was opened to local running clubs.

This was made possible through close co-ordination with the Mayor of Ercolano, and the willing assistance of the National Police, Carabinieri and Bersaglieri, a unit of the Italian infantry. The latter are the Italian Running Regiment, whose brass marching band started the event at the double while playing their instruments was a sight to behold.

Herculaneum is one of the few ancient cities to be preserved more or less intact, with no later additions or modifications. Unlike Pompeii, the pyroclastic material that covered Herculaneum carbonized, preserving wood in objects such as roofs, beds and doors as well as other organic-based materials such as food.

Although most of the residents had evacuated the city in advance of the eruption, the first well-preserved skeletons of some 400 men, women and children who perished near the seawall were discovered in 1980 and can still be seen today.

The route this year was not only longer, it was steeper too. Rising 963 metres over 12 km, it averaged an eight per cent climb, with some sections even more challenging; a gruelling route that would test the most elite of runners from across the community did just that. The best local amateurs attended, with the winner setting a time of just



over one hour and three minutes despite the humid weather conditions.

RM Sgt, Pete 'racing snake' Buttler was the first Naval Service finisher, but with some of the participating Italian runners having already qualified for the athletics national championships, winning was unlikely.

But it's the taking part that counts and to reach the end of the race, 200 metres from Vesuvius's crater, is to be rewarded not only with a great sense of achievement but also with the most astonishing views over the beautiful Bay of Naples and Naples city.

The Mount Vesuvius Race brings the whole community together and is supported by the local British Forces School.

"The annual Mount Vesuvius race reminds us all of the value of relationships with our Neapolitan hosts, which are strong and thriving, and those with the people in our own British community, tri-service and civilians, who make it all such great fun and a supportive place to be and to serve."

If you are interested in serving in JFC Naples, speak to your career manager or branch advisor.

# Delighted to end up on podium

THE final round of 2019 was held at Oulton Park in Cheshire on a cold and wet Saturday for a one-day race meeting but with double points up for grabs, writes Chief Petty Officer Stuart Goodson.

Qualifying was on a damp track so lap times were a bit slower than in the dry. Despite this I managed to qualify mid pack in 16th place for my Golden Era Superbike (GE SBK) races and 12th for the Inter-Services Military Race.

Going into the final round of the golden era, I was holding third place in the championship with only a 19-point lead over the fourth-place contender.

With double points up for grabs, it would be very easy to throw it all away if I made a mistake, so for the first time ever since I have raced, I actually felt a bit of pressure to do well.

Race one was declared a wet race with lots of heavy downpours, so it was a case of steady away and remaining smooth through the corners.

Fortunately I made it to the end and overtook a few riders and finished fourth in class and 12th overall.

My championship rival finished ninth in class so that gave me a bit more of a points buffer going in to race two.

The rain had finally stopped for race two but the track was still wet but starting to dry out.

I got off to a good start and made up a few places into turn one which I managed to hold on to for the remainder of the race.

I finished fifth in class this time and again 12th overall, but my main rival suffered a did-not-finish and therefore, scored zero points, meaning that I secured my third place in the GE SBK championship.

I was over the moon as I have been trying to hold on to this position for most of the season.

Starting from 12th on the grid on a damp but drying track the warm up lap for the Inter-Services Military Race caught out a few riders into turn one causing them to crash out and miss the start of the race.

With a slightly diminished grid the actual race got underway, but my start wasn't great, and I got overtaken into the first turn by a couple of other riders.

I then had to dig in and try and gain back my places.

Once I got into my stride and knew I had adequate heat in my tyres, I started to push on and to my surprise started to reel in the bikes in front of me one by one.

First of all gaining back the two places I lost off the start, then managed to catch up with the next group of riders.

The race leader from the Army had cleared off by the last few remaining laps on his 1000cc Superbike, so I concentrated on the group of three riders battling for second place.

I eventually caught them and managed to get past the first two riders placing me third on the



## Ross keeps up his crash reputation

THE final round of the season at Oulton Park saw six riders for the RNRMRRT brave the elements, with a forecast of rain all weekend set to hamper the racing, writes Marine Ross Obey.

I was lucky enough to have a skilled welder from the RNRMR Car Racing Team on hand to fix my two broken engine mounts, meaning I was able to get the engine back in my Honda CB500 ready for practising on the Friday.

Having never ridden at Oulton Park before, I spent the first few sessions getting to grips with the track layout, before worrying about going fast. Things started slotting into place by the afternoon and I was feeling pretty confident about Saturday's racing. It was still wet for Saturday morning qualifying which went in my favour, resulting in starting fifth on the grid.

After struggling with race starts earlier in the season my luck had turned; between the lights going out and turn one I'd managed to get to the front of the pack.

But as all good things must come to an end, I ran too wide into turn one running onto the curb, onto the grass, back to the curb and then back onto the track.

Unfortunately by the time I made it back to the track I had parted ways with my bike, sliding down the track hoping the 15 riders behind me had enough time to react.

The beauty of the CB500 is

that crashes are always cheap, so after a new set of bars and a lever I was ready for race two.

My second race of the day was followed by my final race, the Inter-Services Military Race.

This meant going out with double the fuel and having to decide between dry or wet tyres.

Having been wet all day and still puddles on the track, the majority of CB500 riders opted for full wet tyres, but the warm up lap proved us wrong. A strong breeze led to a dry line on 90 per cent of the track, leaving us looking for damp patches.

To make things worse, a couple of exhaust header nuts managed to rattle free, causing cylinder one to blow quite badly. Fortunately the tyres held out and exhaust stayed on (for now) and I managed to finish fifth.

Straight from the chequered flag onto the military grid, by this point the headers were blowing badly and tyres starting to wear from the dry track.

Being on a CB500 on a grid of 600s and 1000 sports bikes means I'm never likely to win points, but the racing is fun.

Out breaking the bigger bikes and holding corner speed around the outside is the only way to keep up in this race, but eventually my headers fell off completely, the exhaust only held on by the end can mount.

All in all it was a great weekend of racing for all, keeping up my reputation of crashing at almost every round.

Let's see what 2020 has in store.

last lap.

With only a few corners to go I caught the second-placed Army rider but couldn't quite pass him, crossing the finish line almost side by side but he the advantage.

This was probably the best I have ever ridden in these mixed conditions and, unbeknown to me at the time, I posted the fastest lap of the race.

It was an amazing feeling to finish the season's final race on the podium in third place after

finishing third in the GE SBK championship and fifth overall in the Inter-Services Military Championship.

I had a very consistent and injury free season gaining a few points here and there but with only three did not finishes, two of which were only minor slow speed crashes during the penultimate round at Cadwell Park, the other a mechanical fault with the bike during the first round at Brands Hatch.



# Living the dream

## Joining RN has helped Gareth's rugby career flourish

**THERE is an image of what life in the Royal Navy might be like, but few would think it's a place where a career in rugby would flourish.**

For Gareth Rees, from the Armed Forces Careers Office in Swansea, joining the navy has given him the opportunity to play rugby all over the world and in stadiums that have been graced by the greatest players of all time.

Scrum half Rees joined in June 2015, deciding he wanted more from life after having enough of working as a manual labourer building fibreglass structures in his native South Wales.

Since then the 27-year-old has played at a sold-out Twickenham and recently played for the UK Armed Forces side at the International Defence Rugby Competition in Japan.

He currently plays in the Welsh Premier League with Carmarthen Quins after his navy performances won him a semi-professional contract at the high-flying outfit.

He has also played for Swansea in the Welsh top flight and is viewed as one of the best scrum halves across all three services.

"I wanted a career that I would enjoy and have the chance to travel the world. I looked into it and knew the Royal Navy was my preferred option after looking at the Armed Forces," he said.

His experiences and the opportunities that have presented themselves since joining the Royal Navy is something he is keen to explain and use as inspiration for potential recruits during his work at the careers office in Swansea.

"I use my story to relate to students, to let them know their hopes and dreams are not over if they don't get the grades they wished for or the sporting career they wanted and that there is a career path for anyone if they want it with a chance to play sport at any level," he said.

Joining the navy has led to some of the most phenomenal opportunities for Rees, playing rugby all over the globe and also serving with HMS Cattistock while assigned to the mine-countermeasures squadron in Portsmouth.

For Able Seaman Rees it's

always been about playing rugby – having attended Coleg Sir Gar in Wales, an educational establishment famous for producing rugby stars, including Wales international Josh Adams.

"We have produced a glut of age grade internationals but also ever more increasing is the number of senior Welsh internationals," boasts the college's website.

The sailor's Royal Navy rugby career started to take off almost immediately after joining up. In fact it was during his training at HMS Raleigh and, within the year he'd won silverware and played in some of the most prestigious matches in services sport.

"I got asked to play in a beach tournament in Weymouth for the base and that's where my sporting career kicked off," he said.

"Since then I have represented the Royal Navy Under-23s, winning three inter services championships which then got me into the senior team.

"Having been selected for the camp and gaining experience I was lucky enough to be selected to play against the French Navy, RAF then the Army in Twickenham.

"This was a dream come true. I was still in my first year of service and already achieved the incredible experience of a sell-out Twickenham.

"I have only served for four years and I have gained 12 Royal Navy senior caps. I felt very honoured and humbled to be selected to play for the (UKAF) United Kingdom Armed Forces against Bath, Saracens and Bristol gaining three caps."

Rees also won the Royal Navy Under-23s player of the year during his time playing in the age group team before getting the call up for the seniors.

The navy has given Rees the opportunity to play the sport he loves and he now believes he is playing at his full potential after coming back from the International Defence Rugby Competition in Japan, where Rees and the UK Armed Forces side fell in a 37-17 defeat to Fiji.

"What an incredible experience and a trip I will never forget with a great bunch of guys," he said.



## Double delight for sailor Sam

**ROYAL Navy sailor Sam Matavesi has two reasons to celebrate.**

He has signed for Northampton Saints rugby union side and days later picked up the Sportsman of the Year award at the Naval Service Sports Awards.

AB Matavesi, who plays for Fiji, has left the Championship outfit Cornish Pirates. He played in all four of Fiji's pool games at the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan.

The hooker, who can also play at number eight, impressed for Pirates since signing in 2017 from Redruth, earning a recall to the Flying Fijians' side after a five-year international hiatus.

This will be his first taste of the Gallagher Premiership, but he enjoyed a loan spell in France last season with Toulouse – who went on to claim the top14 title.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for me to compete at the top level of English rugby," said Sam, who is based at RNAS Culdrose.

The brother of Newcastle Falcons duo Josh and Joel, he balances his rugby commitments with a career as a logistician in the Royal Navy.

He has not only played in the annual Babcock Trophy match against the Army at Twickenham, but has also represented the UK Armed Forces side and was awarded the Cossack Sword in 2018.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for me

to compete at the top level of English rugby and I can't wait to pull on a black, green and gold jersey for the first time," he said.

"Northampton Saints is a club steeped in history and the team is playing a fantastic brand of rugby at the moment – plus having a few fellow Fijians here at Franklin's Gardens is a nice bonus!"

"I can't wait to get started."

The winners of the Naval Service 2019 awards were announced at a glitzy ceremony at Lord's in London.

Taking the trophy for Sportswoman of the Year was Lieutenant Commander Lauren Hulston, a warfare officer with the Merlin Helicopter Force, for her success in golf.

Lauren and Sam were presented with their trophies by sports champion Sue Campbell, now Baroness Campbell of Loughborough.

Team of the Year was Offshore Sailing, while Chief Petty Officer Scott Jackson was named Official of the Year for his football refereeing.

Boxer, Able Seaman Writer Sophie Coleburn was named Young Sportsperson of the Year.

Special awards went to Lieutenant Commander BJ Smith, for cricket, Mr BJ Petty for hockey and Colour Sergeant John Jackson for bobsleigh.

Pictures: Courtesy of Naval Service Sports Board



## Service women to play at Twickenham

**THE services' rugby centrepiece between the British Army and Royal Navy will this year include the women's match at Twickenham Stadium.**

The annual showdown match reaches its 100th anniversary at the grand venue this year and, as part of that, the women's game also comes to the home of England rugby.

The women's match has been hosted at various locations – in 2019 it was held at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth – but now it's found a pretty spectacular new 82,000-seater home.

Royal Navy player Susan Badger said: "Every day in my naval role I work with sailors who are recovering from injury, and I know that having a goal is essential to the success of that process."

"It is the same for me with rugby and for all of the Royal Navy squad. So many have worked so hard to grow the women's game in the Royal Navy for over twenty years and now finally to have the opportunity to play at Twickenham is just fantastic."

Susan's thoughts are echoed by the Army's Sarah Mimmagh. Both women are pictured above.

"Playing international rugby is amazingly special, but to be able to represent my service at Twickenham Stadium as well really is a unique and humbling opportunity. Wearing the Army red has always filled me with immense pride. It is going to be a great day," she said.

For the Army Women, the goal will be to regain the Inter-Service title (currently held by the Royal Air Force).

For the Royal Navy Women they know that they asked some difficult questions of the Army team last year without quite getting the victory they wanted.

The women's match will take place at 4.30pm after the men's game at 2pm. The date of the match is Saturday May 2.

Visit [armynavymatch.org.uk](http://armynavymatch.org.uk) for more. Picture: Alligin Photography

## Your chance to give gliding a go

**THE ANNUAL Royal Navy Gliding & Soaring Association Development Week** was held at Upavon, Wiltshire, courtesy of the Army Gliding Club (Wyvern).

Thirty people, 16 serving, from different branches stretching from nuclear engineers to helicopter pilots, plus retired and civilian instructors and ground support staff joined together to enjoy a week of good weather. In total 261 winch launches were achieved over five days. Gusty conditions and a strong

crosswind on the last day sadly frustrated many of the early solos, but notable successes included flights by Sub Lt Ed Hillman, who passed his bronze theory exam and completed the one and two-hour soaring flights, plus the cross-country navigation and field landing checks. He also completed the longest flight of the week with a two-and-a-half-hour trip over the Vale of Pewsey.

Cdr Rob Dowdell also achieved his glider pilots' licence. And Lt Cdr Simon White went solo again after 35 years of relying on an engine to keep him in the air.

SLT Hillman said: "Both for flying and personal development the week exceeded all of my expectations and I was grateful for the financial support from the Sports Lottery and AT funding."

AET Chris Aveline said: "Thank you to the RINGSA and the Wyvern for organising this week-long masterclass."

The course was also visited on the last day by the new President of the RINGSA, Rear Admiral Matt Briers, an ex-Junglie pilot.

If you would like to give gliding a go the next expedition will be held at Talgarth in March 2020.

In the meantime the three navy clubs fly regularly at their home bases very weekend, weather permitting. For details visit [ringa.com](http://ringa.com) or via the NAVYfit website.



# Postcards from America

## Sporting fun aboard Royal Navy carrier

ENSURING it wasn't all work for personnel aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth for her four-month Westlant19 deployment were PTIs CPOPT Daz 'the Hatchet' Hoare and LPT James Thacker. The duo created a wide-ranging sports programme during the carrier's time off the USA and Canada.

First up was **indoor hockey** as a ship's team took on a team from HMCS Toronto during their visit to Halifax in Nova Scotia.

Ice hockey is Canada's national sport and, despite it being an indoor match, the hosts romped into a 5-0 lead after just 15 minutes. Half-time saw the score 5-1 as PONN Fay Latter scored for the visitors. The second half saw the hosts run riot, taking the score to 10-1. The final ten minutes saw the carrier team recover ground to make the final score 10-4.

Next on the sporting fixture list was a **rugby** match between teams from HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Dragon at HMCS Scotia, the headquarters of the Royal Canadian Navy's Atlantic fleet.

The destroyer's team were four short because of work commitments so the carrier lent them players and, referee CPO Les Bugby got the encounter underway.

NA(AH) Osian Frobisher was the stand-out player for the carrier team, as they took the game 42-14.

The final event was the **maritime race weekend** at Fisherman's Cove, Nova Scotia, involving 5k, 10k and half-marathon events.

Some 55 members of HMS Queen Elizabeth's ship's company took part. "It was a totally amazing experience where friends were made for life and a memory from the deployment no one will ever forget," said CPOPT Hoare.

The carrier then sailed south to Florida, where the ship's **football** team had their first run-out of the deployment.

The match against the USS Iwo Jima saw the carrier field a makeshift team, with the host nation triumphing 2-1.

The ship's **golf** society got out for plenty of golf, visiting some outstanding golf courses. The ship's annual golf open was held in Mayport and was heavily contested between many golfers. Overall winner was CPO George Carroll; 0-19 Handicap winner was LET ME Connor Eade, and 20-28 Handicap winner was CPO Christopher Schofield.

The second **rugby** fixture saw QNLZ play local side Jags. QNLZ kept their 100 per cent undefeated record in America alive with a hard-fought 12-5 victory over JAX Rugby on a hot and humid Thursday night in Florida. The evening saw 36 men taking the field for the future flagship. PO(MA) Alice Kightley brought 12 women from the ship to take part in a joint training session with Jax Rugby's female side. For many of them, it was their first time playing the sport and all said they would play it again.

While all the sport was ongoing, other members took part in some adventurous training with **kayaking** and **biking** just north of Mayport in Amelia Islands, another stunning venue, which will live with people for the rest of their lives.

**Football** was up next and this time a warfare team got out to play against local Bank of America Employees and associates. The game took place at Losco Park, home of 'Florida elite academy' and the carrier team won 1-0, thanks to a goal by AB David Parker.

Another early morning start awaited some of the ship's runners taking part in the USA Navy's Birthday **5k** event. PLET Scott Reagan took third place with a great time of 18.55.

Later that day clubz was out again taking the ship's **cricket** team to the Florida and Georgia border for their first ever international cricket match.

Camden County CC play in a league with around ten other teams all the way down to. Queen Elizabeth batted first and really struggled to score any runs in the early stages losing wickets very cheaply, LS Williams and LDR Elliot put a good partnership on, but when Williams was out for 15, Elliot was losing everyone who came in, with wickets falling at a fast rate.

Elliot still managed to reach his half century and a true captain's performance was not out for 57 and helped the QNLZ reach 114 in their 20 overs. Camden took the honours as they reached their target with five overs to spare.

The ship then left for five solid weeks at sea. Towards the back end of that time, 11 members of the ship's company decided to take part in the HMS Oardacious 50k **rowing** challenge. AB Ryan Whatmore went above and beyond, completing the 50k solo in an amazing time of 3:51.

Next onto Norfolk, where 17 personnel went out in force to do the Richmond **full and half marathons**. The courses were both fast and relatively flat with excellent times achieved. PO Tom Reffold and PO Matt Bucket both completed the full marathon, Tom with a time of 3 hours 30 and Matt 3 hours 46.

Notable times in the half marathon included PO Matt Roper 1:29, AB Georgie Savage coming in under the two hours, as did Lt Cdr Ian Guild.

The **football** team visited the USA Naval Officers Academy at Annapolis to take on the US Midshipmen and triumphed 1-0, thanks to a goal from ETME Jake Jory.

The ship's **sailing** crew also got a slice of the action, with 12 personnel racing against the US academy.

QNLZ was challenged to three-boat team racing in the 26 foot keelboats; due to the timing of the event not many midshipmen were available so the American team consisted mainly of USNA staff, were proved victorious.

As the carrier returned to Norfolk, the ship's own Forest Gump, CPO Iain McDougall completed the Norfolk Harbour **Half Marathon** in under two hours.

On top of all the sport played, the ship conducted **bucketball**, **five-a-side football** and **touch rugby** on the flight deck.

**Circuits** were conducted three times per day with **spinning** by POPT Kelly Gooch three times a day.

The **boxing** team went from strength to strength, training six times a week, gearing up for some potential bouts on the HMS Sultan dinner show and bouts against civilian clubs next month.







# Wrecks and reefs

NAVAL diving exponents Petty Officer Barrie 'Baz' Chambers and Lieutenant Nick Spurgeon give the OK signal during an expedition to Malaysia and Brunei.

The duo were among a team from across the Senior Service to take part in the first trip to either country organised by the Royal Navy-Royal Marines Sub-Aqua Association.

Clubz Chambers, based at HMS Neptune, and submariner Lt Spurgeon joined their diving colleagues to pay their respects to 339 prisoners killed when their Japanese slave ship was lost off Borneo 75 years ago.

"Brunei provided impressive wreck diving and Malaysia excellent reef diving," said Lieutenant Commander Jez Spring, based at Britannia Royal Navy College in Dartmouth.

The RNR officer spent more than a year organising the trip with Royal Marines Colour Sergeant Richie Hall from Northwood headquarters.

Divers spent a week in each country, exploring the unique underwater habitats, but it was the waters of Brunei – explored far less by tourists and frogmen than Malaysia's – which proved to be the most eye-catching, helped by the fact that more experienced members of the team were able to dive deeper for longer, courtesy of the more advanced kit made available to them.

Brunei's corals and underwater habitats are largely undisturbed, whilst the seabed is littered with World War 2 wrecks, now home to rich marine life.

The Brits were able to explore those down to about 35 metres (115ft), including the most haunting of them all, a former Dutch steamer seized by the Japanese

Known as the 'Australian wreck', the SS De Klerk was renamed Imaji Maru by the occupiers and pressed into service as a transporter/cargo vessel.

She was lost in the entrance to Brunei Bay in September 1944 as she sailed for Manila – possibly the victim of an attack by Australian aircraft (hence the wreck's name)... although more likely a Japanese mine.

Of the 1,200 souls aboard, more than 330 died – most of them prisoners of war, chained up in the hold; they were being moved to the Philippines for use as slave labour.

"The entire experience was excellent and whilst all the dive sites were unique, the 'Australian wreck' was my personal highlight," said Royal Marine Corporal Jason Phillips.

"The dive conditions of poor visibility made it a haunting experience that emphasised the sombre nature of the wreck.

"The trip had some challenging diving and it was great to gain new experiences whilst improving my own skills as a diver."

In all, the divers spent more than 128

hours below the waves during 210 dives at 16 locations (eight in each country).

"The expedition provided a fantastic opportunity for a wide range of ranks and rates from different units to interact and develop their diving skills," he added.

"We conducted a wide range of challenging diving, the team picked up an array of new skills and gained a lot of new qualifications."

The team also had time to explore the cultural sites of Brunei, including the Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque – considered to be one of the most beautiful in the Asia Pacific region with a main dome covered in pure gold – and explored the mangrove forests by boat, stepping ashore to get up close with the jungle wildlife.

The final day was helping to give something back by a sweep of the sands for rubbish.

"Plastic in the sea and beaches was rife," said Jez. "After a half-

day of sweeping the team collected numerous bags – made of biodegradable material – filled with rubbish and made a small contribution to keeping the seas clean."

The divers also retrieved plastic from the seas during their dives and when 'decompressing' on the surface.

To get involved with the association email

[RNRMSAA@gmail.com](mailto:RNRMSAA@gmail.com)

Report: Lt Cdr Jez Spring

Pictures: Lt Alex Saunders

