



NAVY NEWS

APRIL 2022

Nations united

A Royal Marine from Charlie Company, 40 Commando, stands guard in northern Norway during the large-scale international Cold Response 22 exercise, which features around 30,000 personnel from 27 nations
(see pages 2-3)

PICTURE: PO Phot Si Ethell



Inside: ■ HMS SPEY ■ HMS PROTECTOR ■ HMS TRENT ■ RN DIVERS

ISSN 0028-1670 04
9 770028 167191
Off-sale date: APR 30, 2022
£3.50

THE ARCTIC PROTECTORS



ROYAL Navy capital ships have sailed north to join nearly 900 Royal Marines and the Junglies of Commando Helicopter Force for the largest exercises off Norway since the Cold War.

HMS Prince of Wales is currently in the Norwegian Sea surrounded by her protective ring of steel: HMS Northumberland, HMS Defender, RFA Tidesurge, submarine hunting Merlin helicopters from 820 Naval Air Squadron and an Astute-class submarine.

The aircraft carrier is deployed in her role as NATO's command ship, leading the maritime element of the NATO Response Force, which deploys at a moment's notice in the event of a crisis anywhere in the world.

These warships, as part of a vast naval task force, are together testing their ability to defend Norway and Europe's northern flank from a modern adversary in biennial Norwegian-led exercises, known as Cold Response.

HMS Albion meanwhile has been a familiar sight this far north, having deployed to Norway for the last Cold Response in 2020, and is once again in the region playing a key role in amphibious operations with RFA Mounts Bay.

Royal Marines, who have been in the region since January alongside Commando Helicopter Force Merlins and Wildcats, have been honing their Arctic skills in preparation for Cold Response and will be pushing themselves on amphibious raids along the rugged Norwegian coast, deploying ashore from Albion and Mounts Bay.

Against the stunning back-drop of the Norwegian Fjords which are frequently backlit by the Aurora Borealis, HMS Albion's landing craft along with Commando Helicopter Force's Merlin and Wildcat helicopters, have been transferring Royal Marines and equipment ashore.

Cold Response is the "capstone exercise" for HMS Albion after a long winter of training for the Plymouth-based ship, allowing the ship individually – and NATO collectively – to hone their skills in challenging weather and waters.

"The UK has a long history of operating in the Arctic, NATO's northern flank," explained Captain Simon Kelly, HMS Albion's Commanding Officer.

"Integrating our amphibious expertise into a larger maritime task group is at the core of this exercise. It's this integration with NATO partners and the drawing together of our collective capabilities which really sharpens our fighting edge."

This potent UK force is well drilled in Arctic warfare skills and it will be another great test alongside allies and partners, with some 30,000 troops from 27 countries now confirmed to be involved in Cold Response.

Brigadier Rich Cantrill, in charge of the UK's commando forces, said: "The UK is making a strong contribution to one of the largest Cold Response exercises for years."

"NATO as an alliance needs to be ready for anything, ready for all environments. It's essential for us to support Norwegian partners and that's why we train in the Arctic so often."

"Cold Response is an amazing opportunity for key NATO allies and partners to come together in the most challenging environment of the High North, prepare for any eventuality and learn to work together."

"What we'll see is a strong maritime task force and then land exercises. We will see many nations come together from the UK to Norway, the USA, the Netherlands, France, Germany and Italy."

The month-long test by land, sea and air of allied forces will see allied forces, including from NATO partner nations Sweden and Finland, take control of the waters off Norway's coastline in a training scenario designed to enhance the alliance's ability to protect the host nation.

Air operations will commence soon after that before the final phase will see amphibious landings and land operations.

This is when the UK's commandos will come into their own, raiding positions along the coast to pave the way for larger amphibious forces.

Royal Marines from across the Commando Force have been in the Arctic since January perfecting extreme cold weather skills in surviving, moving, and fighting across the frozen landscape.

For the expert Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron, of which the Shore Reconnaissance Team (SRT) is a part, the deployment has allowed them to practise some of their key skills and work with Norwegian counterparts based at Ramsund Naval Base.

Having swum ashore, the SRT turned up the volume with live break contact

drills on the icy beaches and snow-covered coastline of Ramsund which lies around two dozen miles west of Narvik.

The tactics practised allow the commandos to disengage quickly from an enemy and regain their covert posture.

Electronic targets were sprung on the commandos without warning to simulate an overwhelming enemy force and the marines were tasked with breaking contact back to the beach and getting away using their fast inflatable raiding craft.

While Royal Marines raid the coastline as they have done for more than 50 years, HMS Prince of Wales becomes the first of her class to deploy to the Arctic's waters.

Fresh from training alongside UK F-35B Lightning jets, the aircraft carrier sailed north for Cold Response, taking her place at the heart of a task force of 25 ships from 11 nations gathered off the Norwegian coast.

This came shortly after air defence exercises in the North Sea alongside four of the UK's F-35B Lightning jets from 617 Squadron, the Dambusters.

The jets from RAF Marham took part in an air battle, which were orchestrated by two Royal Navy fighter controllers on HMS Prince of Wales in the skies over the east of the UK and in the North Sea.

"It's a really exciting position to be the link between the jets and the ship," said controller Lieutenant Si Clark.

"Although we don't have them currently embarked, being able to control the jets during their training is a really rewarding role on HMS Prince of Wales."

The F-35B jets were pitted against eight 'aggressor' aircraft, allowing them to hone tactics between ship and fighter jets. Typhoon jets were also involved as well as Hawks from 100 Squadron at RAF Leeming.

As Prince of Wales continued her journey north to the Arctic, the RAF's 207 Squadron carried out a flypast with two of their F-35B jets while the aircraft carrier sailed alongside USS Mount Whitney and USS The Sullivans.

Commander Mark Sparrow Royal Navy, Officer Commanding 617 Squadron, said: "Today was a fantastic opportunity to exercise with HMS Prince of Wales testing out our air-maritime integration tactics as well as 5th and 4th Generation integration between Lightning and Typhoon."

"Having spent seven months with HMS Queen Elizabeth on Carrier Strike Group 21, it was great for 617 Squadron to be able to work with HMS Prince of Wales for the first time as she hones her skills as a command ship for NATO. The air defence exercise was a great success proving the interoperability between air and sea."

Prince of Wales is responsible for leading NATO's Maritime High Readiness Force – an international task group formed to deal with major global events – and deploys for the first time in that role to Cold Response.

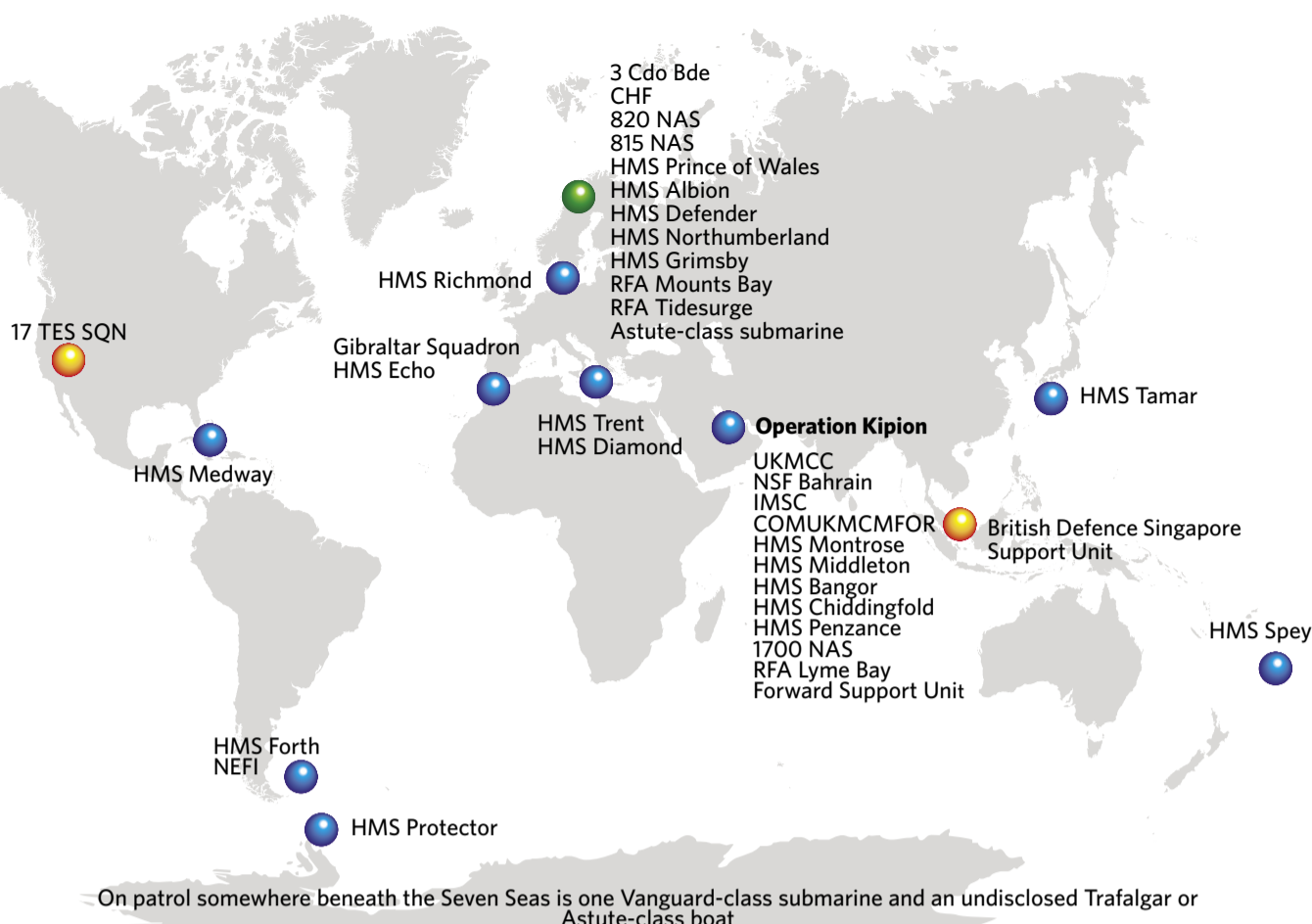
Aboard the carrier are the most senior sea-going staff in the Royal Navy – Commander UK Strike Force, headed by Rear Admiral Mike Utley, who will lead a sizeable task force as part of a galvanized NATO effort for peace and stability in Europe.



Pictures by: PO Phot Si Ethell, PO Phot Des Wade, LPhot Baz Swainsbury, LPhot Ben Corbett

Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Queen Elizabeth	HMS Magpie
HMS Portland	Project Wilton
HMS Argyll	814 NAS
HMS Tyne	815 NAS
HMS Mersey	824 NAS
HMS Ledbury	825 NAS



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



GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

ROYAL Navy capital ships have headed north to join nearly 900 Royal Marines and the Junglies of **Commando Helicopter Force** for the NATO exercise Cold Response (see pages 1, 2 and 3).

NATO's command ship, **HMS Prince of Wales**, accompanied by **HMS Northumberland**, **HMS Defender**, **RFA Tidesurge**, helicopters from **820 NAS**, and an **Astute-class submarine**, are part of a vast naval force testing their ability to defend Norway and Europe's northern flank.

Sailors aboard offshore patrol ship **HMS Spey** have proved a remote Pacific island has been in the 'wrong place' for 85 years (see pages 20-21). Henderson Island is one mile south of the position marked on charts.

Sister ship **HMS Trent** acted as hunter and hunted for NATO's Dynamic Manta exercise in the Mediterranean (see page 19). The two-week workout featured two RAF Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft, while 814 NAS launched regular patrols in their Merlin Mark 2.

HMS Protector found alarming evidence of global warming during a visit to Coronation Island in Antarctica as her mammoth surveying effort for this austral summer season draws to a close (see pages 16-17).

Personnel aboard **HMS Montrose** secured their third drugs bust of the year – a massive 6½ tonnes of hashish, the heaviest haul of drugs seized by allied warships in the Middle East in a decade (see page 5).

The Type 23 frigate also joined minehunters **HMS Chiddingfold** and **Penzance** and command ship **RFA Lyme Bay** for the Omani-led exercise **Khunjar Hadd** (see page 5).

Mine warfare experts and divers on **HMS Chiddingfold** (see page 13) were given one of their most challenging workouts during the huge International Maritime Exercise 2022.

HMS Richmond has carried out patrols and training alongside allies in the Baltic Sea (see page 6). The Type 23 frigate has spent the past few weeks in the region working with navies and personnel from NATO.

Veteran survey ship **HMS Scott** has returned to Plymouth after a record-breaking nine-month stint in the Atlantic (see page 27). The ship has hoovered up information spanning 400,000 square kilometres of ocean – that's larger than Japan, Germany or Norway – the most ever collected in a 12-month period by the ship since she joined the Fleet back in 1997.

Newer, faster, sleeker, bristling with the latest tech – the newest member of the Royal Navy family, **HMS Cutlass** (see page 7) has been formally handed over to the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron after three months of trials.

Fleet Flagship **HMS Queen Elizabeth** left Portsmouth for the first time since her global operational deployment to the Indo-Pacific and back (see page 27), and first port of call was Glen Mallan in Scotland.

Personnel from **17 Test and Evaluation Squadron**, based at Edwards Air Force Base in California, are heading for a busy year, following on from a hectic 2021 as they continue to ensure the F35 Lightning jets strike even harder (see page 9).

Royal Navy pilots have been experiencing life as Super Hornet fliers as part of an exchange programme with the US Navy (see page 9). Lieutenants Rory Cheyne and Rich Woods are currently deployed on **USS Harry S Truman**, a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, and have been flying the FA18 Super Hornet jet.

Royal Navy Divers have rebranded and rebrigaded to form new small, elite mission teams, able to deal with the latest threats, in the biggest shake-up since 1996 (see pages 14-15). Operating under the new banner of the 'Diving & Threat Exploitation Group' (DTXG), the skilled frogmen/bomb disposal experts aim to do more, be more agile, while using the latest tech, in order to keep the Navy's fleet and the public safe, globally.

Families and loved ones gathered to welcome home **HMS Vengeance** (see page 27) as she returned home to HMNB Clyde after her deployment, which included the festive period.

Leaving the RN are the **Hawk** fast jets (see page 11), which have been the mainstay for decades in training RN and NATO ships in air defence. The jets held a farewell flight around the UK ahead of decommissioning **736 NAS**.

HMS Magpie started her 2022 deployment with a visit to her affiliated town of Salcombe (see page 27).

Wartime wren **Heather Johnson** has finally received the medal she was owed for her service when the Royal Navy dropped in on her 100th birthday celebrations (see page 30).

Finally, there are five pages of sport in this month's edition (see pages 34-38), featuring **Royal Navy Rugby League**, **boxing**, **paragliding**, **Olympics** and **Paralympics**, and **indoor rowing**.



HMS Severn passes under the Skye Bridge in Scotland

Severn reaches the Skye

NAVIGATORS of the future were put through their paces around the Western Isles, facing choppy weather and intense training.

HMS Severn is the Royal Navy's dedicated navigational training ship and has been off the coast of Scotland with her latest cohort of navigators.

The specialist navigators course (SPEC N) is designed to train officers in directing task groups through the most challenging of waters at high speed.

To add to the difficulty, they learn to manoeuvre without the use of GPS or a gyro compass.

During their visit to the Outer Hebrides, Severn passed close to sheer cliffs and rocks at speeds above 20 knots while the trainees 'passed' navigational instructions to 'ghost consorts' – imaginary vessels in the task group.

This gave students the chance to practise monitoring the location and presence of other ships as well as

keeping Severn on track.

Once qualified, the students will be assigned to navigating capital ships (such as aircraft carriers and assault ships) or as staff navigator on a flag



officer's staff.

Their skills and knowledge of operating without traditional navigation systems will give the Royal Navy the edge and the ability to dominate adversaries in warfare situations should those systems be damaged or knocked out.

Severn's commanding officer, Commander Phil Harper, is one of the most experienced navigators in the Fleet. Having completed the Spec N course himself and a Chartered Master Mariner, he is well placed to guide the students on their path to success.

He said: "The technical challenges of this course coupled with the stunning scenery of the Hebrides and Western Isles make this the highlight of the ship's calendar.

"Having a ship specialised in delivering navigational training means that the Royal Navy gets a better navigator at the end and also gains a platform for developing techniques and advancing the science of tactical navigation."

Heavy lifting

Frigate's crew land huge haul of drugs



DRUGS worth £6.5m were captured by the Royal Navy as HMS Montrose struck a third blow to traffickers in two months.

The frigate pounced on a suspect dhow in a dawn raid – and five hours later Montrose's sailors and Royal Marines had bagged 6½ tonnes of hashish, the heaviest haul of drugs seized by allied warships in the Middle East in a decade.

It's the third strike of the year in the Gulf of Oman for the Bahrain-based warship – and the ninth she has scored since beginning her extended Middle East mission three years ago, depriving traffickers of an estimated £95m in total.

Despite the sheer scale of the latest success – once again working for the international Combined Task Force 150, which tackles terrorism and criminal activity in the region – the boarding party was undaunted.

"I'm really proud of the team; we conducted this boarding efficiently using the experience we've gained over the past three months," said Lieutenant Joe Martin RM, the Royal Marines boarding officer.

"We learn each time we board a vessel, never resting on our laurels and continually honing our edge."

While the commandos and sailors conducted their thorough search of the suspect vessel, the ship's Wildcat helicopter provided support and protection throughout.

The hashish, also known as cannabis resin, was tallied and tested aboard HMS Montrose, a UK wholesale value of £6.5 million estimated, then the drugs were destroyed.

"Once again, HMS Montrose and her ship's company have proven

their capability in the battle against illegal and illicit activity in the region," said the frigate's delighted Commanding Officer Commander Claire Thompson.

"Six and a half tonnes tonnes is a great achievement and these results only happen because of the collective effort and skill of the incredibly professional, highly-trained and dedicated people that the Royal Navy employs and that I have the privilege to command."



The commander of Montrose's parent task group, CTF 150, Commodore Vaqar

Muhammad of the Pakistani Navy, added: "This seizure of such a huge quantity of narcotics in a single boarding is highly commendable."

"HMS Montrose has always been geared up and proactive in interdicting illegal activities in the CTF-150 Area of Operation, conducting three boarding operations on three consecutive days to finally get this success."

Commodore Adrian Fryer, the senior Royal Navy officer in the Gulf region, said the success underscored the importance of the frigate's long-term presence in the region.

"It is extremely rewarding to see the hard work of our sailors pay off with such a large scale seizure and I know they will be as proud of their work as I am of them," he added.

"Actions like this deprive criminal and terrorist organisations of the funds they need to function and has a positive impact both here in the Middle East region and in the parts of the world, including the UK, that these narcotics would have been eventually sold."



“ Once again, HMS Montrose and her ship's company have proven their capability in the battle against illegal and illicit activity. ”

– Commander Claire Thompson

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow @HMSMontrose and @RoyalNavy on Twitter

Royal Navy ships looking sharp for Omani-led exercise



Ships participating in Exercise Khunjar Hadd seen from the bridge of RFA Lyme Bay
Picture: US DOD Photography

THE dagger was unsheathed once again in the Middle East as Royal Navy warships joined Omani hosts for their largest naval exercise.

Khunjar Hadd – which translates as Sharp Dagger – is a regular fixture on the Middle East naval calendar. The 2022 version of the exercise, planned and led by the Royal Navy of Oman, was the 27th iteration.

Given their permanent presence in the region, the navies of Britain and the USA are frequent participants in Khunjar Hadd, joined this year by France's Marine Nationale to add to the international flavour of the week-long workout.

The exercise offered the chance to practise a wide variety of skills whilst improving the already high levels of smooth cooperation between the four navies.

Sharp Dagger began with a co-ordinated sail and a series of officer of the watch manoeuvres, designed to make the various participants feel comfortable in working in close proximity.

Representing the RN were: frigate HMS Montrose, minehunters HMS Chiddingfold and Penzance and their command ship RFA Lyme Bay (with the Commander UK Mine Counter Measure Force staff embarked).

After a group shot of all the ships involved, the forces split into two task groups for the 'business end' of Khunjar Hadd, depending on the vessels' specific roles.

So, the minehunting force – a mix of experience, variety and future tech including the two British hunters, two American counterparts, an Omani survey ship as well as a joint Omani-US team of divers team and autonomous US minehunting units operating from RFA Lyme Bay – broke away for clearance drills, searching for drill mine shapes which had been laid for them to detect and dispose of.

Co-ordinating such a "hybrid blend" of mid-21st-Century minehunting systems has now become "routine business" for Commander Daniel Morris and his staff on Lyme Bay.

"The exercise offered the opportunity to command and operate conventional crewed surface mine counter-measures systems with un-crewed autonomous systems, all in the same water space," he said.

Meanwhile, HMS Montrose participated in air defence exercises, with fast jets launched from Oman acting as the opposition, and live-firing gunnery drills.

All ships involved in Khunjar Hadd then reconvened for the final act: an air defence exercise where the frigates and corvettes were charged with protecting the minehunters from fast jet attacks.

"Exercise Khunjar Hadd afforded HMS Montrose the opportunity to train and refine fighting tactics in a multi-threat environment whilst reinforcing partnerships and friendships with Oman, France and the United States of America," said the frigate's gunnery officer, Lieutenant Commander Ian McClelland.

"The exercise provided by the Royal Navy of Oman was well executed and was of great benefit to the crew whilst also being thoroughly enjoyable."

Also impressed by Khunjar Hadd was Britain's First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key, who joined Omani corvette RNOV Al-Shamikh for the second day of the exercise.

"During my time in the Sultanate of Oman I was delighted to be able to see Exercise Khunjar Hadd, combining Omani, British, French and American maritime forces, demonstrating our shared commitment to safety and security in the Gulf."

"These invaluable exercises build trust, understanding and comradeship between our Services as we ensure the use of the global commons for all seafarers."

BALTIC BOUND

HMS RICHMOND headed to the Baltic Sea to carry out patrols and training alongside allies.

The Type 23 frigate has spent the past few weeks in the region working with navies and personnel from NATO as well as those from the Joint Expeditionary Force.

Her time in the Baltic gave Richmond's ship's company the chance to conduct exercises and operations with ships from Latvia, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, France, and the USA.

She also worked with a Poseidon P8A submarine-hunting aircraft from the Royal Air Force.

The Joint Expeditionary Force is a UK-led task group which is held at high-readiness to respond to global events.

Regular exercises are carried out to ensure nations are ready to deal with emergencies from warfare to humanitarian missions.

Richmond's short time in the Baltic Sea saw her practise close manoeuvring, sailing with Polish frigate ORP General K Pułaski, air defence exercises with Swedish JAS 39 Gripen fighter jets and patrol the region with Lithuania ships LNS Kursis and Varonis.

She also spent time sailing with Estonian minelayer EML Wambola and trained with the Danish military including frigate HDMS Niels Juel, patrol ship Najaden and F-16 jets.

Richmond's skills and knowledge during the patrols and exercises have impressed her Commanding Officer Commander Chris L'Amie.

"Our short but intense period in the Baltic Sea has seen Richmond integrate with a number of Joint Expeditionary Force nations," he said.

"I have been highly impressed with the adaptability and professionalism of the ship's company."

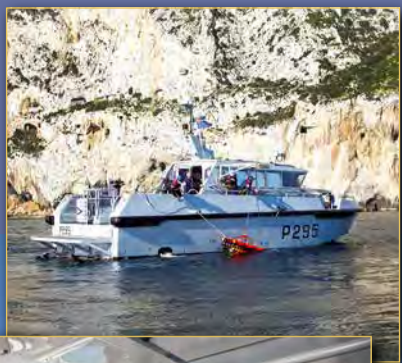
The Plymouth-based warship will now join Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel in the Arctic for Exercise Cold Response.



KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow HMS Richmond and the Royal Navy on Twitter at @HMS_Richmond and @RoyalNavy





NEWER, faster, sleeker, bristling with the latest tech – may we introduce the newest member of the Royal Navy family, HMS Cutlass.

The £5m fast patrol boat has been formally handed over to the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron after three months of trials, ready for being declared fully operational in the spring.

With HMS Dagger – due to arrive on the Rock later this year – Cutlass will be the backbone of the squadron, replacing the two P2000s temporarily assigned to Gibraltar, Dasher and Pursuer.

Cutlass has been in Gibraltar since November, carrying out key sea trials ahead of her formal transfer into RN hands.

With a top speed of 40 knots, the new boats – built by Merseyside-based Marine Specialised Technology – are twice as fast as the P2000s, smaller, nimbler and equipped with the latest optical and infra-red systems, enabling crew to identify and track potential threats at range.

And unlike Dasher and Pursuer – both nearly 35 years old – many of the systems on board are autonomous helping the crew

in her operation, maintenance and response to any unforeseen incidents.

"We are delighted that HMS Cutlass has proven her capability during the manufacturer's trials and she is now ready to begin the Royal Navy safety and readiness checks," said Cutlass' first Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Adam Colman, pictured left.

"She increases the squadron's capability in providing maritime security and demonstrating UK sovereignty of British Gibraltar Territorial Waters."

The Gibraltar Squadron will now carry out a series of trials, exercises and training supported by Fleet Operational Sea Training to generate the vessel and her crew to full operational capability in the spring.

A spokesman for MST said the firm was providing the Navy with two "state-of-the-art craft – and everyone is delighted with the results".

They added: "The transition of Cutlass to the Royal Navy is an extremely proud moment for MST and all of its employees who have worked very hard to ensure this project has been the great success it is."



KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP
Follow @RNGibSqn and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



CUTTING A DASH

In a time of pension transition and complexity, there is one way to avoid confusion.

Join us. Job done.



The implementation of the McCloud Remedy affecting all those serving on or before 31st March 2012 and on or after 1st April 2015 (including service leavers), will give you the choice between your legacy scheme pension entitlement and AFPS15 for the Remedy period.

Additionally, from this April, everyone still serving on AFPS 75 and 05 will be transferred to AFPS 15, involving further calculation complexity.

Good to know then, that our Forces Pensions Consultants are standing by to provide guidance based on each of our Members' individual circumstances.

Independent, not-for-profit

Independence is vital to our work, calling governments to account whenever we spot unfairness or injustice in the system. We also give you a voice where it counts, on the representative bodies for Armed Forces and Public Services Pensions.

We are funded entirely by our Members' subscriptions. Any surplus helps fund our outreach programmes of Roadshows, Webinars and our attendance at CTP Employment Fairs.

Visit: forcespensionsociety.org/join-now/

Annual membership for you and your spouse/partner is just **£42**. You will have exclusive access to our Forces Pensions Consultants, our informative Members' Webinars and you'll receive our bi-annual e-newsletters and magazine, Pennant.

You'll also have access to our wide range of membership benefits from discounts on new cars and white goods, to insurances, including our latest range of Covid-protected travel policies, plus a great deal more.

IT PAYS TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PENSION

Forces Pension Society

68 South Lambeth Road, Vauxhall, London SW8 1RL.

T:020 7820 9988 E: memsec@forpen.co.uk www.forcespensionsociety.org



Atkins & Co.
Chartered Accountants



CASH FOR YOU

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

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

FIXED FEE OF £120 PER YEAR
NO REFUND – NO FEE

- Over 14 years experience
- Family connections with RN and RM
- Bootneck and Matelot friendly
- Qualified accountants covering all areas of accounts, tax returns and Ltd Companies
- Self Assessment tax returns including rental property, child benefit, Pension excess, income over £100k

E: info@atkinsandco.com

W: www.atkinsandco.com

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



Lightning in the desert

UNDER the relentless broiling sun of the Mojave Desert, meet the men and women who have the ability to make Lightning strike even harder.

The lessons learned on the nation's most advanced strike fighter by the team from 17 Test and Evaluation Squadron at legendary Edwards Air Force Base – where Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier – are fed directly to the front line.

Not least, last year's deployment of British and US Marine Corps F-35s side-by-side aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth would have been impossible without the squadron's 'icebreaking'.

Ensuring the British and US Lightnings could 'talk/work together without any hiccups from the moment both embarked on the carrier was key to the success of the mission to the Indo-Pacific – including assessing how the stealth fighters' leading-edge sensor suite and network enabled capabilities (data and information sharing) would work at and over the sea.

That's just one facet of the work carried out by more than 70 Royal Navy and RAF personnel who are usually posted to the California air base for around three years.

As with the other British Lightning squadrons, command alternates between the two Services, with Commander Matthew Fooks-Bale taking over from Wing Commander Adam Curd at the end of last year.

17 TES has worked side-by-side with the Joint Strike Fighter Operational Testing Team since it was formed nine years ago. That US support is vital, providing

everything from tools and parts to handling the vast amounts of sensitive test data the squadron generates.

The California location also gives the F-35s easy access to some of the premier training environments in the western USA, such as Nellis Air Force Base near Las Vegas, home to one of the world's longest running and most comprehensive aerial exercises, Green Flag.

It allows crews to let rip with the full panoply of air-to-ground firepower – cannon, bombs, guided bombs, air-to-surface missiles – as participants show their prowess in supporting troops on the ground.

Joining the F-35s over Vegas were the Mississippi National Guard and 17's equivalent Typhoon unit, 41 TES, as the two British fighters worked out how to fight together in the same skies.

"The chance to work with the National Guard was too good to miss," said Wing Commander Curd. "The training was of great value for everyone, as the Guard was simulating a conventional force-on-force brigade-scale engagement – a very different environment to the counter-insurgency environments I have operated in for many years.

"The ability of UK Lightning and Typhoon to work together is central to UK aspirations, and we were tasked to make sure that the aircraft could 'electronically' talk to each other – without that working well, it is much harder for the force to beat the modern threats that we might need to face."

Back at Edwards, the Brits share facilities with VX-9, the US Navy's F-35C Operational Test Squadron – doing with the 'cats and traps' variant of the jet what the UK squadron has done and continues to do with the short take-off/vertical landing model.

The two test formations joined F/A-18s in the skies to test their collective abilities to neutralise 'enemy' air defences. Such exercises, directed by the US Naval Warfare School, help to ensure that the UK's front-line Lightning squadrons have the sharpest edge possible when operating anywhere in the world.

Edwards is the second largest USAF base in the United States with over 30,000 personnel working there.

"The airfield is always busy and is shared with many US Air Force, US Navy and US Marine Corps units as well as NASA and innumerable other agencies," explained Wing Commander Curd.

"On a normal working day personnel can see all types of aircraft operating including: F-22, F-18, F-16, B-1, B-2, B-52 to name a few.

"At least once a day the buildings shake from the sonic booms high up above the airfield, often caused by the crews of the USAF Test Pilot School, also resident at Edwards AFB. The weather is nearly always 'perfect' for trials."

Basing the Lightning test and evaluation squadron at Edwards opens up opportunities not merely to the pilots and warfare experts to push the boundaries of the stealth fighter, but it gives all personnel one of the best drafts in the Service.

Although the squadron and families are based in the Mojave Desert – daily temperatures can climb over 45°C in summer – the entire US is within striking distance, with some of the best national parks within a day's drive.

"While being on a smaller F-35 squadron in the USA has its challenges, it's easily balanced with the benefits of being in this part of the world," said Air Engineering Technician Will Powell.

"I've had a great opportunity to take part in numerous adventure training and military-led charity events – easily accessible through the dramatic landscapes which California has to offer.

"It's been very educational working alongside our American 'oppos' and observing how they operate from an Engineering perspective. I've been able to travel across the states making memories and new friends along the way."

RAF Corporal Chris 'Ringo' McCartney added: "Serving in a test and evaluation squadron keeps the workload varied and interesting, especially working in the summer heat.

"Being just over an hour away from the many beaches on the West Coast and a couple of hours' drive from the many mountain areas in the state mean that I'm never found wanting when it comes to planning my weekends. It's definitely one of the better postings to get."

He and his comrades are being kept as busy in 2022 as they were in 2021.

"More trials are planned throughout 2022 – along with continuing support to trials at Patuxent River in Maryland, in addition to synthetic tests back in the UK," said Lt Brownlee.

"The squadron will continue its task of keeping the Lightning bolt sharp."



Navy pilots impress on exchange programme



Lieutenant Rory Cheyne flies past USS Harry S Truman

TWO Royal Navy pilots have been experiencing life as Super Hornet fliers as part of an exchange programme with the US Navy.

Lieutenants Rory Cheyne and Rich Woods are currently deployed on USS Harry S Truman, a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, and have been flying the FA18 Super Hornet jets.

The ship is in the Mediterranean, working with NATO allies and giving the two Navy pilots a chance to show their skills at handling the jets – known affectionately in the US Navy as the Rhino.

The pair have spent time based at NAS Oceana Virginia in the United States to take part in the Carrier Strike Long Lead Specialist Skills Programme. They have been State-side for several years learning to fly and fight the Rhino and are now in front line US Navy fleet squadrons.

The programme, established in 2010, sits under an agreement between the

USA and the UK to enhance carrier co-operation and enable the growth of the Lightning Force jets. This includes the F-35 Lightning jets flown by the UK's 617 Squadron, the Dambusters, and by the US Marine Corps' VMF-211 Squadron.

Rory and Rich are part of a cadre of 15 pilots in the USA currently gaining skills and knowledge that will be vital for the long-term growth and sustainability of the UK Lightning Force and UK Carrier Strike.

While in the Mediterranean the USS Harry S Truman took part in multinational NATO exercise Neptune Strike.

The carrier met up with personnel and ships from 18 nations for the two-week exercise which saw Lieutenants Cheyne and Woods fly long-range missions to conduct Close Air Support training with local Joint Terminal Air Controllers

(JTACs).

Lieutenant Woods was also able to demonstrate traditional Fleet Air Arm fighting spirit with an opportunity to conduct Dissimilar Air Combat Training with Greek F-16s.

Meanwhile, Lt Cheyne also had a unique opportunity to showcase the versatility and skills of the Royal Navy to both American and other allies.

When the chance arose to cross-deck aircraft between the USS Harry S Truman and the French aircraft carrier FS Charles de Gaulle, Rory – a Landing Signal Officer entrusted with ensuring the safe recovery of aircraft aboard the American carrier when he isn't himself flying – was chosen to fly to the French ship to oversee the evolution.

In the process he became the first Brit to carry out Landing Signal Officer duties aboard a French aircraft carrier for the US.

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



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

Worcestershire Medal Service Ltd

Specialists in Orders, Decorations and Medals

56 Broad Street, Sidemoor, Bromsgrove, B61 8LL



Medals mounted for wear and display

Miniature and full size replacement medals supplied, all made in the UK to the highest standard.

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

www.worcedmedals.com

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



Talk to us



Sometimes the **smallest actions**
can make the **biggest difference.**

During uncertain times, it may be difficult to ask for help. Forcesline is a free and confidential helpline to support you, no matter the problem. Make that first step for long lasting help - **don't keep quiet, talk to us.**

0800 260 6767

Free and confidential. Open weekdays, 09:00 to 17:30

Or get in touch online at

ssafa.org.uk/forcesline

ssafa | the
Armed Forces
charity

Regulars | Reserves | Veterans | Families

Registered as a charity in England and Wales Number 210760 in Scotland Number SC038056 and in Republic of Ireland Number 20202001. Established 1885.

FAREWELL TO THE HAWKS



ROYAL Navy Hawk T1 jets flew around the country to say farewell as the veteran aircraft are retired from service.

Based out of Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose in Cornwall, the fast jets have been a mainstay for decades in training Royal Navy and NATO ships in air defence.

The BAE Systems Hawks have been used by the RAF for 40 years and the Royal Navy's aircraft date from the 1990s.

They were first based at RNAS Culdrose in 1994 and were incorporated into the re-formed 736 Naval Air Squadron in 2013.

It was announced in the Integrated Review last year that the Hawk T1 was to be retired across defence, with the exception of the Red Arrows, and it was decided 736 Naval Air Squadron would be decommissioned at the end of March 2022.

Three jets took off from RNAS Culdrose and flew around their principal training sites, including HMNB Devonport, RNAS Yeovilton, Bournemouth Airport and then HMNB Portsmouth, before heading up to HMS Gannet at Prestwick in Scotland. The following day, the trio returned home with flypasts of RAF Valley and Pembrey in Wales.



Lieutenant Commander Jason Flintham, commanding officer of 736 Naval Air Squadron, said: "It has to be acknowledged that this is a sad day for everyone involved with the Hawks, but we should not lose sight of the significant contribution these aircraft have made to defence.

"I think it's fair to say that the Hawks jets have been the outstanding workhorse of the military.

"They've been used by 736 Naval Air Squadron to train Royal Navy and NATO frontline assets since 2013. We've used them to train ships' companies against incoming aircraft or to simulate missile attack, as well as training Royal Navy fighter controllers.

"Other roles include training air traffic controllers, airborne surveillance and control crews and aiding radar development. We've also regularly taken part in large multi-national NATO exercises, such as Exercise Joint Warrior off Scotland.

"Of course, it's not just about these superb aircraft. A squadron is comprised of the men and women whose professionalism and dedication makes the squadron a success and deliver its defence aims. We thank everyone who has served over the years including those in industry and the military."

Some of the pilots have already joined the training programmes for the UK's next-generation F35B Lightning jets, which operate from the navy's aircraft carriers.

Many people gathered to watch the farewell flight as it passed around the UK, including on the seafront at Plymouth and around the harbour at Portsmouth. Instructors from the Royal Navy School of fighter Control watched from the airfield at RNAS Yeovilton to bid farewell to the Hawk jets.

Report: Graeme Wilkinson

Pictures: LPhot Will Haigh, LPhot Juliet Ritsma





China Fleet
Country Club

WE WANT YOU TO STAY WITH US

For Only £90.00 per night

(valid until 31st May 2023)

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

Book online - Use Promo Code: RNRM

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

YOU ARE A MEMBER!

All serving RN personnel

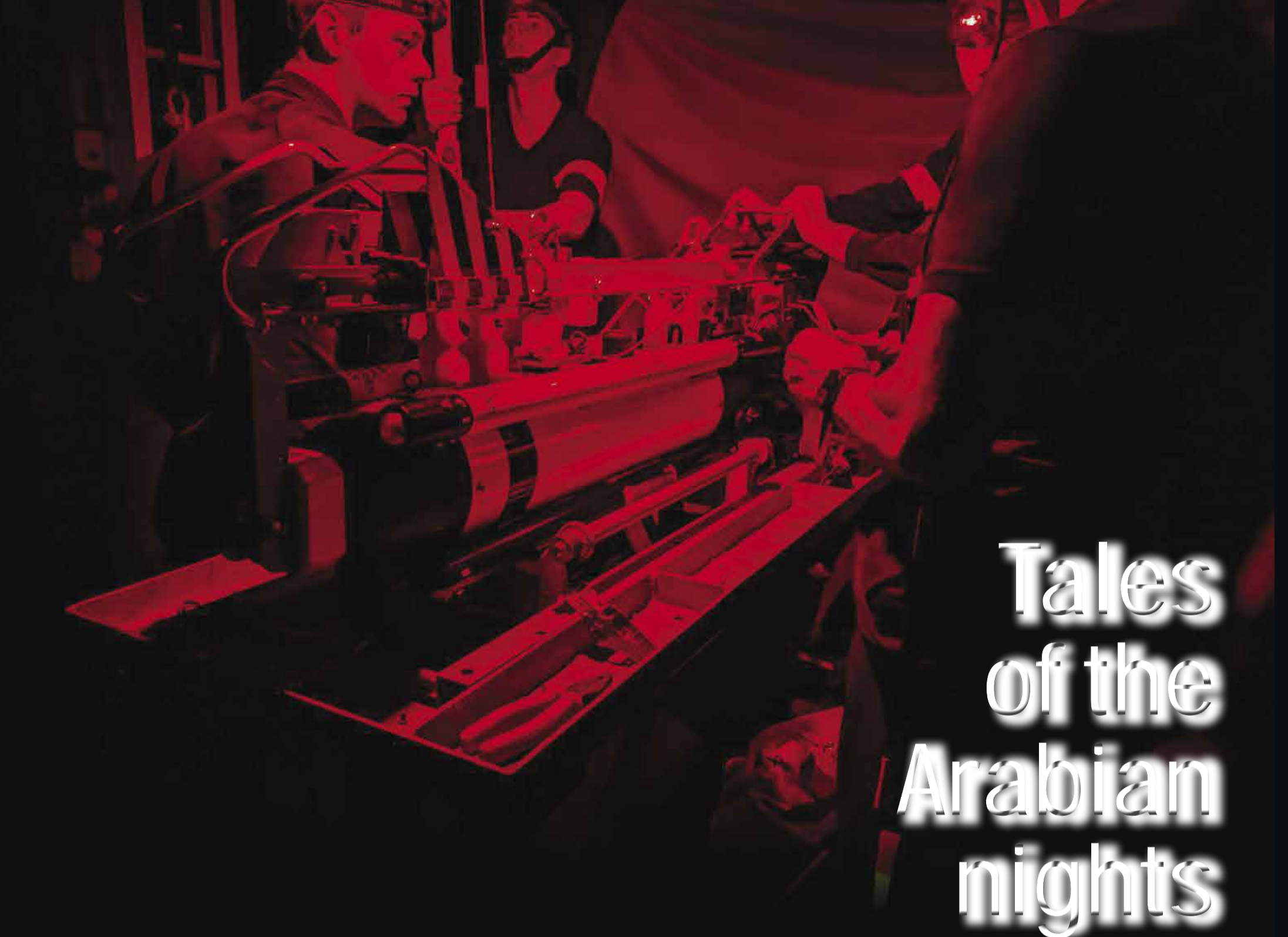
Join online for FREE to receive amazing discounts for you and your family

T&Cs apply to all

Call 01752 848668

www.china-fleet.co.uk





Tales of the Arabian nights

MIDNIGHT in the Middle East and the mine warfare specialists of HMS Chiddingfold prepare Sea Fox for a plunge into the depths to neutralise a suspicious object on the Gulf seabed.

The Bahrain-based warship was singled out as the top minehunter of eight similar vessels from four nations participating in the huge International Maritime Exercise 2022 – involving 30 nations peppered around the Gulf, Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

Chiddingfold found herself working alongside like-minded ships from Japan, Saudi Arabia and the US Navy (with whom she shares a jetty at home in Bahrain).

Chiddingfold's mine warfare and diving departments were occupied 24/7 for the duration of the exercise – made all the more demanding by the fact that half the crew were awake at any one time.

It's also a shamal season in the Gulf which brought inclement weather and rough seas. Once they had passed, mine counter measure operations began in earnest.

After mine warfare specialists marked contacts detected by her sonar for interrogation, it was down to Sea Fox or Chiddingfold's divers to head to depths between 25 and 60 metres to inspect the devices more closely – in this case drill mines – which the frogmen recovered using lifting bags.

"The highlight of the exercise for me was exchanging a drill mine for freshly-baked cookies between us and the Americans", said Chid's Able Seaman Diver Simon Andrews after returning one dummy device to the USS Devastator, a US minehunter which, like Chiddingfold, is based in Bahrain.

Chid moves at just a couple of

knots when on the hunt and a still-fairly-leisurely 12-14kts when cruising – a far cry from some of the stealth speed boats and drones being tested during IMX22, offering a glimpse of the future of naval operations in the Gulf.

More than 60 countries, 50 ships, 80 uncrewed systems – airborne, seaborne and underwater – from ten nations – and 9,000 personnel took part in the combined International Maritime Exercise/Cutlass Express.

Spread over two-and-a-half weeks and a vast area – the Red Sea, Gulf, Horn of Africa and eastern seaboard of Africa – it's one of the largest, longest and most varied exercises ever staged by nations with an interest in the stability and security of the Middle East region.

The goal was to enhance partnerships, and ensure seamless interaction and co-operation between participants of many languages, with different systems and different ways of working.

Leading Combined Task Force North – operating in the Gulf – was the bulk of the RN's presence in the region: minehunter command ship RFA Lyme Bay, with her 'flock' – Chid, Bangor, and Penzance – plus frigate HMS Montrose and vessels from other navies, including Japan, the USA and Gulf nations.

Lyme Bay proved key not just as a hub for the minehunters, but also some of the autonomous/crewless systems being put through their paces.

The RN brought Puma drones, courtesy of 700X Naval Air Squadron, plus a L3Harris MAST-13 robot boat, while the Americans rolled out the wonderfully-named Devil Ray, the MARTAC T-38.

It's capable of speeds in excess of 80 knots, can pull turns at six times the force of gravity (6G) and either gather intelligence or serve

as a launchpad for other unmanned systems.

Not to be outdone, MAST-13 – which has also been given a name, Madfox – is sleek, high-speed and long-range. It was handed over to the Royal Navy 12 months ago to experiment with surveillance/intelligence gathering operations as well as force protection for a ship or task group.

// The vision for the use of uncrewed systems across the theatre is exciting. However, we are aware that delivery will hold its challenges. //

COMMANDER ANTONY CRABB

Completing the surveillance/intelligence picture is Puma, which gives 'eyes in the sky' – especially to ships which previously had none.

Puma weighs in at only seven kilograms and can be operated anywhere in the world from vessels with or without a flight deck. There's no need to rely on larger, more expensive, crewed helicopter and aircraft: a Royal Navy Merlin or Wildcat helicopter, for example, requires at least a ten-strong team to crew and maintain it. Puma needs just three sailors.

700X from Culdrose have tested and operated Pumas extensively in the UK, in the Mediterranean and Arctic. On IMX22 Puma offered those at sea and on the ground a unique

perspective of the exercise as it unfolded.

"We've been working with Puma back at Culdrose, so to bring it out to the Middle East and operate it in the Gulf has been fantastic," said Naval Airman Joe Wright, an aircraft handler by trade who spent two years with the drone unit.

"A lot of hard work has gone into getting us here and seeing it fly on the international stage has been the icing on the cake."

The activities of all the various robot/pilotless/sailorless systems came under the banner of Task Force X, formed especially for the exercise to focus on integrating unmanned systems and artificial intelligence into naval operations.

Its deputy commander was the Royal Navy's Commander Antony Crabb.

He believes IMX22 offered a glimpse of what could become regular sights and activities in Gulf in just five years' time.

"We will see ships embarking uncrewed systems for missions as easily and seamlessly as embarking a helicopter or seaboat today – perhaps in addition to or perhaps instead of those crewed capabilities," he predicted.

"Ships built yesterday may need some modification; ships built tomorrow will be designed around these uncrewed systems.

"In five years, we may also see blended task groups, with uncrewed systems in a virtual tether to a mothership. These systems could provide additional surveillance, logistics, decoys and other capabilities.

"The vision for the use of uncrewed systems across the theatre is exciting. However, we are aware that delivery will hold its challenges."

As well as embracing the white

heat of technology, Lyme Bay also performed her more traditional role of floating headquarters for the Commander United Kingdom Mine Countermeasures Force.

"It has been a privilege to be at the forefront of IMX22," said chief-of-staff Lieutenant Commander Jonny Campbell.

"We've had the opportunity to prove, hone and develop our mine warfare excellence, and embrace our international partners. We've demonstrated our ability to work together, cooperation, broken down language barriers, and emphasised our common commitment to maritime security."

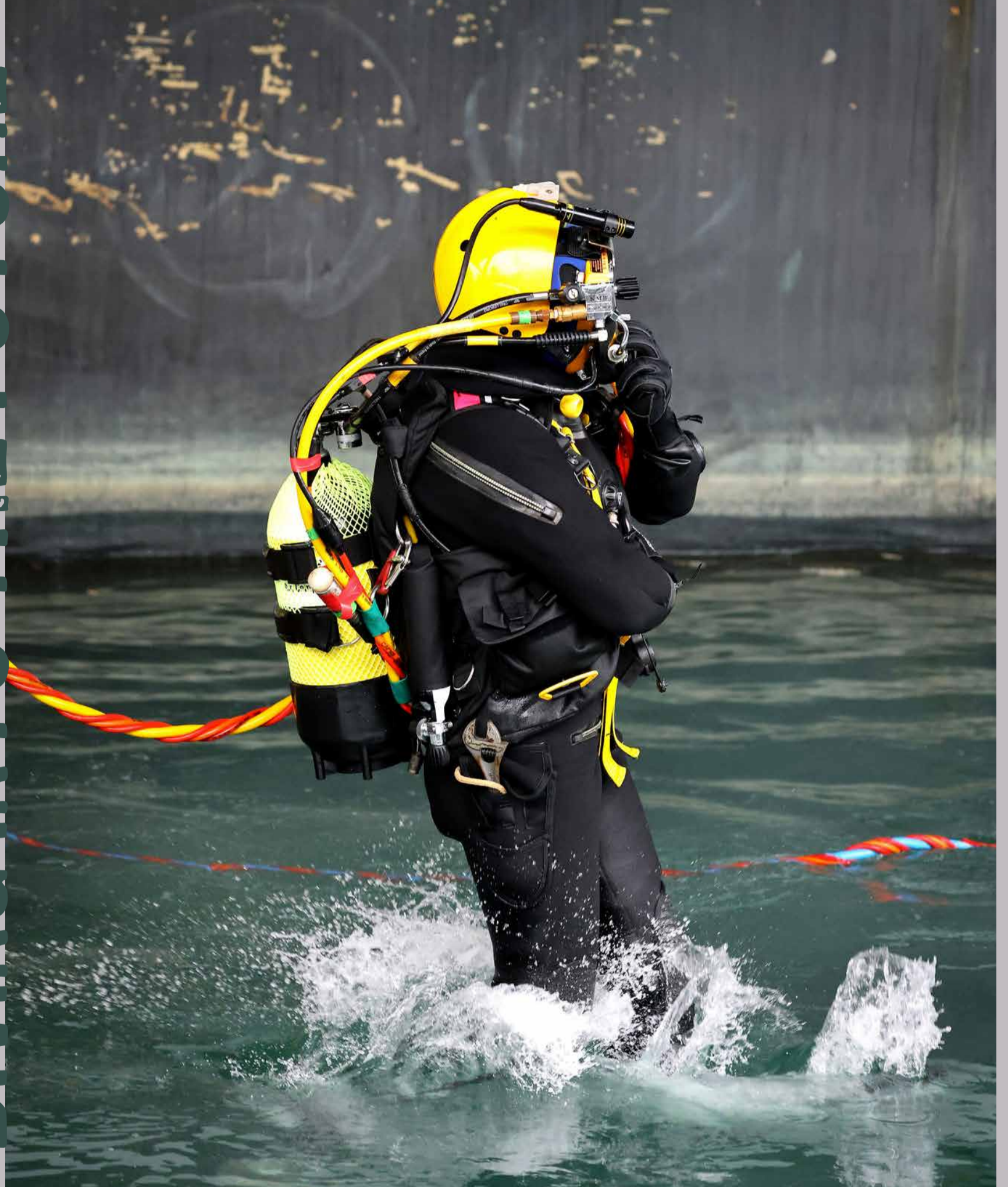
Meanwhile Montrose was conducting key regional engagement, hosting Commodore Al-Zadjali, Head of the Omani Maritime Security Centre.

After meeting with the command team of the Type 23 frigate – which had recently been highly successful in counter-drugs operations in the Gulf of Oman (see page 5) – Commodore Al-Zadjali witnessed a capability demonstration from the embarked Royal Marines boarding team who led those seizures.

The last act of IMX22 was to sail into Bahrain through a 'swept channel' – minehunters leading a column of merchant vessels and other warships through a previously-cleared narrow stretch of ocean, an essential skill required to maintain freedom of navigation when a mine threat is present.

"IMX22 was a fantastic opportunity to develop our ability to work with international allies, particularly the Japanese Maritime Defence Force, whom we worked closely with during this exercise," said Lieutenant Commander Simon Reeves, Chiddingfold's Commanding Officer.

DIVING INTO THE FUTURE



Jubilant June 🎉

From brew ups to quiz nights, runs and walks - use our ideas and resources to get family and friends together to support our blind veterans and celebrate the service of the important people in your life.

For more information

- 📞 0300 111 2233
- ✉ fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk
- 🌐 blindveterans.org.uk/navy



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

Registered charity No. 216227 (England and Wales) and SC039411 (Scotland)



Royal Navy Divers have rebranded and rebrigaded to form new small, elite mission teams, able to deal with the latest threats, in the biggest shake-up since 1996.

Operating under the new banner of the 'Diving & Threat Exploitation Group' (DTXG) – which replaces the long-standing Fleet Diving Squadron – the expert frogmen/bomb disposal experts aim to do more, be more agile, while using the latest tech, in order to keep the Navy's fleet and the public safe, globally.

Based in Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Faslane, Royal Navy Divers can be called to a range of tasks, including explosive disposal of historic ordnance and the rendering safe of improvised explosive devices around the UK, to clearing sea mines in the world's seas and oceans and deterring terrorists across the globe. They are also capable of carrying out emergency underwater maintenance on warships, including the Queen Elizabeth-Class carriers, and delivering discreet special operations.

The recent changes, have enabled these elite diving teams to be able to carry out more missions, while also continuing training with NATO and other allies on global exercises.

Over the next few months, they will deploy to the United States, France, Norway, and Iceland as well as continue their presence in the Middle East alongside partner nations and deployed ships, such as T23 frigate HMS Montrose, minehunters Middleton, Bangor, Chiddingfold and Penzance and RFA support ship Lyme Bay.

Commander Sean Heaton, commanding officer of the

Diving & Threat Exploitation Group, said: "This once-in-a-generation transformation, has enabled the Royal Navy's Clearance Divers to be the most agile, lethal and technically advanced they have ever been.

"Capable of locating, exploiting, and disposing of threats to the Royal Navy and the UK's interests, all while remaining ready to conduct emergency underwater maintenance to our ships and submarines."

For the members of the elite squadrons, it is an exciting time with the changes also embracing use of new technology and opportunities.

Lieutenant Commander Tom Forbes, of Echo Squadron (DTXG's explosive exploitation experts), said: "For my unit this transformation means we can focus our attention on becoming experts in the field of maritime exploitation of conventional and improvised explosive devices and munitions – a capability that doesn't exist anywhere else across UK defence.

"It will give us great flexibility to explore new exercises in countries we haven't worked in before.

"It's a really exciting time for us to develop new skills and evolve the way we contribute to future operations."

Able Seaman (Diver) Ian Sanderson deployed last year with HMS Queen Elizabeth as part of the UK Carrier Strike Group. With the return of a carrier-led Royal Navy and the change of the diving squadron, divers will now have the opportunity to routinely embark on the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.



"This new way of working means we aren't remaining static and we're moving with the times," said AB Sanderson, of Delta Squadron.

"My unit started evolving last year but it's good to see the second phase coming into play now and the new opportunities that come with that.

"We are expanding on what we can currently do, while looking at the future roles we can play within the fleet. With the navy undergoing changes, it's important we remain relevant and this transformation shows we can have significant impact."

Chief Petty Officer Carl Thomas, of Alpha Squadron (DTXG's special operations squadron), added: "This is the biggest and most exciting transformation period for the diving squadron in a generation.

"The Diving & Threat Exploitation Group continues to evolve and move with the times.

"We recognise and embrace modern, innovative technology such as autonomous underwater vehicles and remotely operated vehicles (known as AUVs and ROVs) to deliver operations and enhance training."

WE'RE RECRUITING THE RECRUITERS

Your career in the Royal Navy was not like your school mates'. You never had two days the same, you challenged yourself and solved complex problems on the go. You travelled the world, helped people you didn't know and were proud to be part of the bigger picture. Fancy a chance to be the one who inspires the next generation? Become a Careers Adviser.

- Rewarding second career
- Earn £32,000 to £45,000
- Positions UK wide
- Open to RN Service leavers and those who have left the service in the last three years
- Vacancies at every rate

For further information email: navycnr-rtagmultiuser@mod.gov.uk





HMS Protector nudges cautiously through the ice floes around Detaille Island, a small lump of rock and ice about 80 kilometres northeast of the British while a colony of Adelie penguins linger on its slopes.

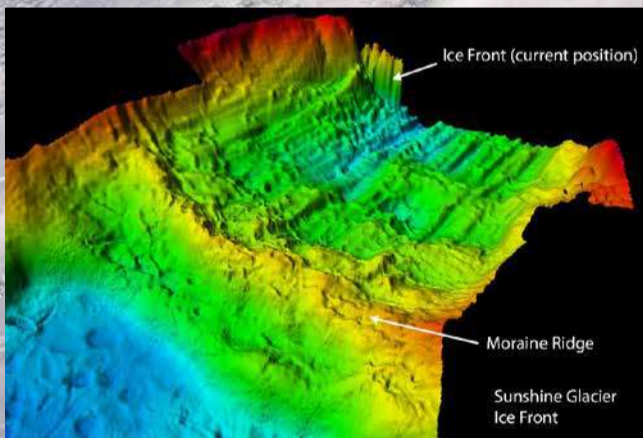
This is about as unspoiled a view as you are likely to enjoy anywhere on the planet, untouched by the hand of human... save for the bright red icebreaker gliding past.

Yet humanity's influence is felt here. The ice around Detaille Island is retreating at a dramatic pace – as it is across the Antarctic Peninsula.

TECTING PARADISE



sensors but able to use them in shallower, tighter waters her mothership cannot access – set about surveying the three-kilometre-wide bay, dwarfed in a primeval world of rocks and seracs, huge towers of ice.



The team on Protector beguile us with stunning images of polar vistas, of affable penguins, of sights few of us will ever experience but are the daily mise-en-scène for the icebreaker and her crew.

But sometimes, amid the paradise of rock, ice and snow, are stark reminders of Nature's fine balance.

Some 1,200 kilometres north of Detaille Island, Protector was asked to update charts around Coronation Island – a forbidding lump of rock and ice 45km long and the largest isle in the South Orkney chain.

They there found alarming evidence of the impact of global warming and the disappearance of polar ice when surveying Iceberg Bay.

It takes its name from the huge chunks of ice which break away from Sunshine Glacier as the moving wall of ice, snow, rock and debris meets the South Atlantic.

It was Protector's first visit to the inhospitable, uninhabited island – with names such as Penguin Point and Despair Rocks –

since 2017 and provided a rare opportunity for the ship and survey motor boat James Caird IV to conduct survey activity in the archipelago's ice filled glacial bays.

"The South Orkney Islands are as remote a collection of islands and about as far away from civilisation as you could imagine," said Lieutenant Michael Wafer.

"Hundreds of metres above, the towering mountains of Coronation Island host a plethora of sub-Antarctic birds, including petrels and albatross nesting in the craggy rocks and shielding themselves from the relentless wind."

Protector and her launch James Caird IV – crammed with hi-tech

show the topography of the seabed and reveal clues about the formation of the bay.

They revealed the terminal moraine (the end of the glacier where it leaves its deposits), pockmarks and icebergs scars on the seafloor hinted at sediments released and disturbed by the glacier as the ice front retreated northwards to its current position.

"A quick check of the chart showed James Caird IV conducting survey lines north of the glacial terminus as plotted in 2001 – but the boat was most definitely still at sea and hadn't yet reached the new position of the ice front," said Lieutenant Wafer.

"The actual position of the ice front and towering seracs (pillars of ice) was almost 700 metres north of the 2001 charted position. It's quite possibly just more demonstrable proof of climate change in action."

The ship's survey work revealed that Sunshine Glacier has shrunk by one seventh in 20 years – an area the size of more than 130 football pitches has melted away.

Dr Robert Larter, marine geophysicist at British Antarctic Survey, who has been involved in similar studies on the glaciers around the Antarctic Peninsula, said Protector's findings mirrored his organisation's findings: 87 per cent of glaciers in the area have retreated over the past 75 or so years.

"Similar rapid retreat is occurring on many glaciers along the Antarctic Peninsula as a result of rapid regional warming – three times the average global rate – during the second half of the 20th Century," he explained.

"Along much of the western side of the peninsula, glacier retreat is also being driven by incursion onto the

continental shelf of warm water from the deep ocean.

"Loss of ice from Antarctica currently accounts for about 10 per cent of global sea-level rise – and the rate of ice loss has been steadily increasing over the past 30 years."

Protector is the Royal Navy's sole icebreaker, dedicated to spending summer in the southern hemisphere in and around the Antarctic peninsula supporting UK and international scientists' understanding of the frozen continent, its unique environment and wildlife, as well as updating existing maritime charts of the waters to the latest standards.

And when the weather rules out work in the Polar regions, Protector shifts her activities to warmer waters; last autumn she worked extensively off St Helena and Ascension Island – two UK Overseas Territories in the mid-Atlantic.

In five months surveying to date since leaving her home port on Plymouth in the summer, Protector has scanned an area of 1,700 square kilometres of ocean – roughly the size of Greater London.

The survey work is part of a much wider mission by Protector in the region, supporting the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK Antarctic Heritage Trust and the British Antarctic Survey.

The icebreaker delivers supplies and personnel to numerous BAS bases and research stations from South Georgia on the fringe of Antarctica to the main research station at Rothera.

She paid her final visit to the latter in the dying days of the austral summer, offloading stores and cargo ahead of the arrival of winter when weather conditions prevent ships getting through.

Visits to Rothera over the past two years have been few, making this Covid-

secure stay even more critical to the year-round work of the station team and scientists there.

Among the items delivered by Protector were tonnes of building materials for construction of the base's new Discovery building to allow BAS to continue their vital research for decades to come and other supplies and kit to support operations from Rothera's runway/airfield.

Just 22 hardy souls – down from the summer complement of 100 – will spend the winter at the station on Adelaide Island, which lies 1,250 kilometres from Cape Horn, 1,800 kilometres from the Falkland Islands and 14,000 kilometres from the UK.

Vernadsky Research Station is another Antarctic scientific base thousands of kilometres (15,000 to be precise) from its Motherland.

Being separated from that motherland has never been harder for the 21 Ukrainian scientists who run the base on a small island off the Antarctic Peninsula.

To show solidarity and deliver supplies to help sustain them over the impending winter, Protector dropped in Vernadsky to check on the team's their welfare.

The landing party from Protector – Captain Michael Wood and ship's doctor, Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Alex Clarke, along with sailors and Royal Marines – delivered fresh food to the scientists, ensured they were in good health, and reassured them of the UK's support for their nation's cause.

"During time spent ashore, the team confirmed the welfare of the 21 scientists who had spent the winter at Vernadsky," said Captain Wood.

"Welcome supplies of fresh food were passed to the station leader. Many of the station staff reported families stranded under attacks in Kharkiv and Kyiv."

The research base is located on Galindez Island off the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula.

It was originally established as BAS's Faraday Station, but was transferred to Ukraine in 1996.



40 YEARS ON, WE ARE BY THEIR SIDE.

2022 marks the 40th anniversary of the liberation of the Falklands Islands. Will you help us to support those who have served their nation, as well as those who still make sacrifices, day in, day out?



**MAKE A
DONATION**



**FUNDRAISE
FOR US**



**CREATE A
TRIBUTE**

**SCAN HERE TO
GET INVOLVED**



or visit
rnrmc.org.uk/falklands-40
Email: fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk



THE 'BUOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN...

WITH the stunning backdrop of a snow-covered Etna in the distance, the Flying Tigers return to base after another sub hunt in the Ionian Sea.

It's a regular sight over Sicily each February.

But this year, the UK's anti-submarine forces took their skills to the next level.

For the first time two RAF Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft from CXX Squadron based at RAF Lossiemouth joined the Royal Navy for NATO's Dynamic Manta, two weeks of cutting-edge tech and training involving seven Allied nations in the vanguard of underwater warfare.

The long-running exercise is one of two NATO runs focusing on anti-submarine warfare; the other is held off Norway or Iceland to test forces in colder Atlantic waters.

The Poseidon MRA1 has concentrated its training and operations in waters around the UK to date.

Detachment commander Squadron Leader Pete Surtees said crews welcomed the variety of the combined training with numerous NATO allies off the coast of Sicily as the exercise tested individual skills and enhanced collective effectiveness.

"The momentum is really building," he said. "We've taken Poseidon Force from securing the seas around the UK to operating overseas in support of a very complex exercise."

"It's providing great training opportunities and moving the capability forwards, we're really back to where we need to be."

The Poseidon is designed to carry out extended surveillance missions at both high and low altitudes.

It's equipped with cutting-edge sensors which uses high-resolution area mapping to find possible threats on or beneath the waves. Poseidon can also drop sonobuoys which sit in the ocean and 'listen' for submarines.

814 Naval Air Squadron from RNAS Culdroe in Cornwall dispatched a Merlin Mk2 helicopter to Maristaeli airbase – next to

Catania's international airport – rather than Sigonella to the west of the city, the usual host for aerial assets participating in the exercise.

Hoping to evade the prying ears of the sonobuoys dropped by the Poseidons and Merlin, as well as the helicopter's dipping sonar were submarines from France, Greece, and Italy.

"Using our powerful dipping sonar, we were able to rapidly move across large distances to locate and track submarines that were attempting to target the task force," said Merlin pilot Lieutenant Dominic Raeyen.

"Working alongside the RAF P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft as well as multiple other military patrol ships and anti-submarine warfare ships, this exercise has represented an invaluable opportunity to understand how different NATO nations operate, and the best training and procedures for joint operations."

The Flying Tigers have worked with CXX Squadron before, but Dynamic Manta

saw the two formidable aircraft combine in a far more complex operating theatre.

"Exercises like this are invaluable for newly qualified aircrew, who are quickly thrown into a busy tactical scenario in an unfamiliar environment and are expected to go out and do what they're trained to do – find submarines," explained Lieutenant Commander Steve 'Hosey' Hayton, a Qualified Observer Instructor.

"Working with other NATO units allows us to understand the nuances of joint operations and to find the best ways of operating in a controlled scenario."

The exercise also posed challenges for the engineering and logistics teams, having to support operations far from their home base in Cornwall.

A young cadre of engineers, led by the detachment Air Engineering Officer and Senior Maintenance Rating, Sub Lieutenant Alex Ward and Chief Petty Officer Peter 'Cheezy' Stilton, had to think on

their feet and quickly come to terms with the new operating environment.

Mount Etna dominates the skyline in eastern Sicily, and when the great volcano erupted just days into the exercise, thorough checks of ash content in the air had to be made to ensure the aircraft and her crew could still operate safely.

"Engineering throws up daily problems to be tackled, but volcanoes erupting was certainly a new challenge for my team!" said Sub Lt Ward.

"Thankfully, we were able to clear the aircraft to get airborne again shortly after the ash dispersed, and we could keep the helicopter ready to go whenever the exercises needed."

The 814 detachment of aircrew and engineers took advantage of a non-flying day to pay their respects to 1,059 Allied personnel – 86 of them sailors or Royal Marines – buried in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery, 40 minutes down the road in Syracuse.

The graveyard mostly contains the graves of personnel killed during Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily in July 1943, which led to the island's liberation from Fascist rule – and the toppling of Mussolini as Italy's leader.

814 NAS' Commanding Officer Commander Chris Wood said his team were profoundly moved by the experience.

"The Fleet Air Arm, and the wider Royal Navy, played an enormous part in the Allied efforts during WWII to restore peace across Europe and the world, which came at such a great human cost," he added.

"It is important that we, as service personnel, recognise and understand the sacrifice that so many people made all those years ago. Visiting the cemetery here in Syracuse was a humbling experience, and I believe that my team here, now more than ever, understand the immense responsibility that they bear in holding the duties required of them in the line of service."

For his squadron, Dynamic Manta is just one commitment its met this spring: Tungsten and Mohawk flights are deployed with Type 23s in the North Atlantic theatre, while the rest of the squadron is supporting operations and training in and around the UK.

"Dynamic Manta showcases how this squadron thrives in the challenging and diverse environments that anti-submarine warfare takes place in," said Lieutenant Commander Ed Holland, 814's Senior Observer and detachment commander.

"I am justifiably proud of the whole team here in Maristaeli, and the squadron as a whole, for continuing to deliver a warfighting edge to frontline operations around the globe."

At sea patrol ship HMS Trent acted as hunter and hunted with a NATO task group.

Trent is a general duties warship, not specifically equipped for anti-submarine warfare unlike a Type 23 frigate but still able to play an important role in Dynamic Manta, as Able Seaman Daniel Watters – an underwater warfare specialist – explained: "I was able to provide Trent with a greater understanding of submarine recognition and suggestions on how a submarine may act."

"There are many benefits Trent can bring to the NATO Task Group, such as acting as a 'lily pad' to refuel helicopters, acting as a decoy ship to confuse a submarine's sonar picture or providing the task group with close-in security against small boat threats, allowing the frigates to continue their hunt for submarines."

Each participating ship had the opportunity to conduct varied anti-submarine operations, while the submarines acted as both hunters and hunted, closely coordinating their efforts with the aircraft and surface vessels.

For Trent, Dynamic Manta was a new experience – and one not usually performed by NATO's Mediterranean task group.

Typically, Maritime Group 2

focuses on maritime security: board and search duties, as well as general seafaring, promoting the alliance and ensuring that, in time of crisis, the participating ships can work together flawlessly.

Trent had been in Souda Bay, Crete, conducting propulsion tests to push her engines (and engineers) to the limit (she achieved in excess of 24kts), gunnery exercises and maritime security operations, checking on passing shipping.

Commanding Officer Commander Tom Knott said Team Trent were "delighted" to take their place alongside their NATO allies.

"Maritime forces are a highly-responsive first line of defence, and as a permanently forward-deployed ship we take pride in our ability to deploy quickly and reach remote locations."

"Through this standing task, we secure freedom of the seas and demonstrate freedom of navigation over 2,000 miles away from the United Kingdom. Sailing as part of the NATO task group is a clear demonstration of our resilience and strength as an alliance."

Her task is to monitor activity in the Eastern Med, operating in accordance with international law and supported by the participating allies and partners. In addition, there are frequent exercises to keep the NATO force at the top of their game.

This is a new experience for some of Trent's 50-plus sailors, such as 19-year-old Marine Engineering Technician Stuart Sharkey.

"Since my basic training, Trent is the first ship I have deployed with. I'm excited to put all my training into action working with our team alongside other international navies from NATO – this is why I joined the Royal Navy."

After her time attached to the NATO force Trent will remain forward deployed to the Mediterranean promoting security and stability alongside our regional partners.



THE ISLAND IN THE WRONG PLACE....

SAILORS from HMS Spey have proved a remote Pacific island has been in the 'wrong place' for 85 years.

Henderson Island in the South Pacific is one mile south of the position marked on charts used by mariners the world over since 1937.

Patrol ship Spey confirmed the error as part of efforts to check and update charts of waters around British Overseas Territories scattered around the globe.

Uninhabited and about the size of Oxford, Henderson is one of four islands in the remote Pitcairn chain. Chile lies 3,600 miles to the east and New Zealand 3,200 miles to the southwest.

The Royal Navy has been using navigational charts supplied by the UK Hydrographic Office, using the latest technology of the day, for more than 225 years.

Over the past 15 years, the majority of the Fleet has used digital charts. Key areas and seas regularly used are well covered by the electronic system which not only ensures pinpoint navigational accuracy, but allows sailors to 'interrogate' key features such as landmarks, buoys and depths, as well as turning specific features on/off as required.

The Pitcairn chain has only had some satellite-based data collection, which had already highlighted the inaccurate positioning on historical charts, so Spey offered to assist with

data gathering.

She is not a dedicated survey vessel, but navigator Lieutenant Michael Royle used radar imagery gathered by Spey's sensors and GPS positioning, overlaying the details on the existing charts of the Pitcairn chain.

"In theory, the image returned by the radar should sit exactly over the charted feature – in this case, Henderson Island," Lieutenant Royle explained.

"I found that wasn't the case – the radar overlay was a mile away from the island, which means that the island was plotted in the incorrect position when the chart was first produced. The notes on the chart say that it was produced in 1937 from aerial photography, which implies that the aircraft which took the photos was slightly off in its navigational calculations."

The work by Spey is part of much wider government programme to update maritime charts of waters around the UK's Overseas Territories and improve navigation using sonar, airborne laser techniques and satellites to better understand, manage and protect the marine estates of these territories.

Henderson Island was last visited by the Royal Navy in late 2018 when HMS Montrose conducted an environmental survey to study the impact of plastics in the oceans.

Pacific currents dump masses of debris on the shoreline of the

British Overseas Territory – an estimated 270 objects every day, with as many as 40 million items of plastic and rubbish scarring Henderson's beaches, earning it the title 'most polluted island in the world'.

As well as some outdated charts, knowledge about the waters around the entire Pitcairn chain is limited, so at all four islands – Ducie and Oeno complete the quartet – HMS Spey launched her sea boat and crew filled tanks with water.

"Scientists in the UK have really scant data about the ocean in this region – its salinity, temperature, water pressure and the like," Lt Royle added. "They are keen to understand climate change in the area."

Spey also delivered Covid vaccines to the people of Pitcairn, who are descendants of the Bounty.

The islands – which are in the middle of the South Pacific and home to only around 50 people – are one of Britain's most isolated Overseas Territories, famous as the last resting place of HMS Bounty and its mutineers.

The ship carried enough Covid jabs to offer a booster to every eligible person on the islands, most of whom are double vaccinated.

The island – home to around 50 souls – is British soil and comes under the tutelage and support of the UK Government, including



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Actual position of Henderson Island overlaid on the existing chart with scale bar, created using data from 1937; HMS Spey anchored off Pitcairn Islands; Leading Hand Jenna Dickinson water sampling off Pitcairn; Surgeon Lieutenant Mills delivers Covid-19 vaccines to the Pitcairn Islands

Pictures by LPhoto Unaisi Luke

health provision.

Surgeon Lieutenant Karolyn John, Spey's dental officer, joined dental nurse Michaela Davies ashore, providing advice on oral care and taking a look at islanders' teeth.

"Some of the islanders have not seen a dentist or undergone any dental care in about four years. As it's a British Overseas Territory, we have a duty to the islands. For me it's a unique opportunity, something I don't think many dentists receive," she said.

"We've had some really, really busy days – sent off in the sea boat first thing in the morning, back late at night to maximize our time with the islanders, providing treatment."

HMS Spey, which is deployed to the Indo-Pacific region for five years as part of Britain's enduring presence in the region, is the first ship to visit since the start of the pandemic and the first Royal Navy vessel to call at the Pitcairn Islands since HMS Montrose on New Year's Eve 2018.

"The island is beautiful – nothing that I have ever seen before, unique terrain and the islands could not be friendlier, really hospitable," said Surg Lt John.

With islanders relying strongly on the tourist trade for income, they hope Spey's arrival will herald a resumption of cruise ships calling in.

Only Pitcairn itself is inhabited, with sailors meeting members of the community, giving tours of the vessel and briefing on its capabilities and mission.

The chain is surrounded by one of the world's largest Marine Protected Areas, established by the UK in 2015, and home to a fantastic array of unique marine life, including pristine coral reefs not seen anywhere else on earth.

The protective zone inhabited by a number of threatened species, including humpback whales, green turtles and seabirds such as the Henderson Petrel. But despite its incredible natural riches, scientific data is limited and rarely captured due to the territory's remoteness.

HMS Spey conducted patrols in the waters around the islands to deter and defend against illegal fishing, in partnership with the UK's satellite monitoring programme run by the Marine Management Organisation.

And she scooped up ocean water to send back to the UK for scientists to study.

The offshore patrol vessel was ideally suited to this task. She is one of the most environmentally friendly ships in the Royal Navy, thanks to a urea filter which reduces nitrogen oxide emissions from diesel generators by 90 per cent.

Alasdair Hamilton, Deputy Governor to the Pitcairn Islands,

said: "Pitcairn's origin as a UK overseas territory is intertwined with our naval history, and we are delighted the Royal Navy has visited our community in Pitcairn again and supported the roll-out of booster shots.

"This not only signals the UK's commitment to the region, but is also an important milestone in Pitcairn beginning to open up to the rest of the world.

"The ship conducted patrols across the islands and the information gathered will be vital in protecting Pitcairn's rich marine biodiversity and supporting global efforts to protect our precious oceans."

HMS Spey is deployed to the Indo-Asia Pacific region, in company with her sister vessel, HMS Tamar. Both warships are at the start of an enduring period of operations in the area which will see them deployed from the Eastern shores of Africa to the West coast of the USA.

The deployment of the two Royal Navy warships follows the deployment of the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, which recently spent several months working alongside the UK's allies and partners in the region.

HMS Spey recently visited Tonga to deliver water and medical supplies after a volcanic eruption and tsunami.



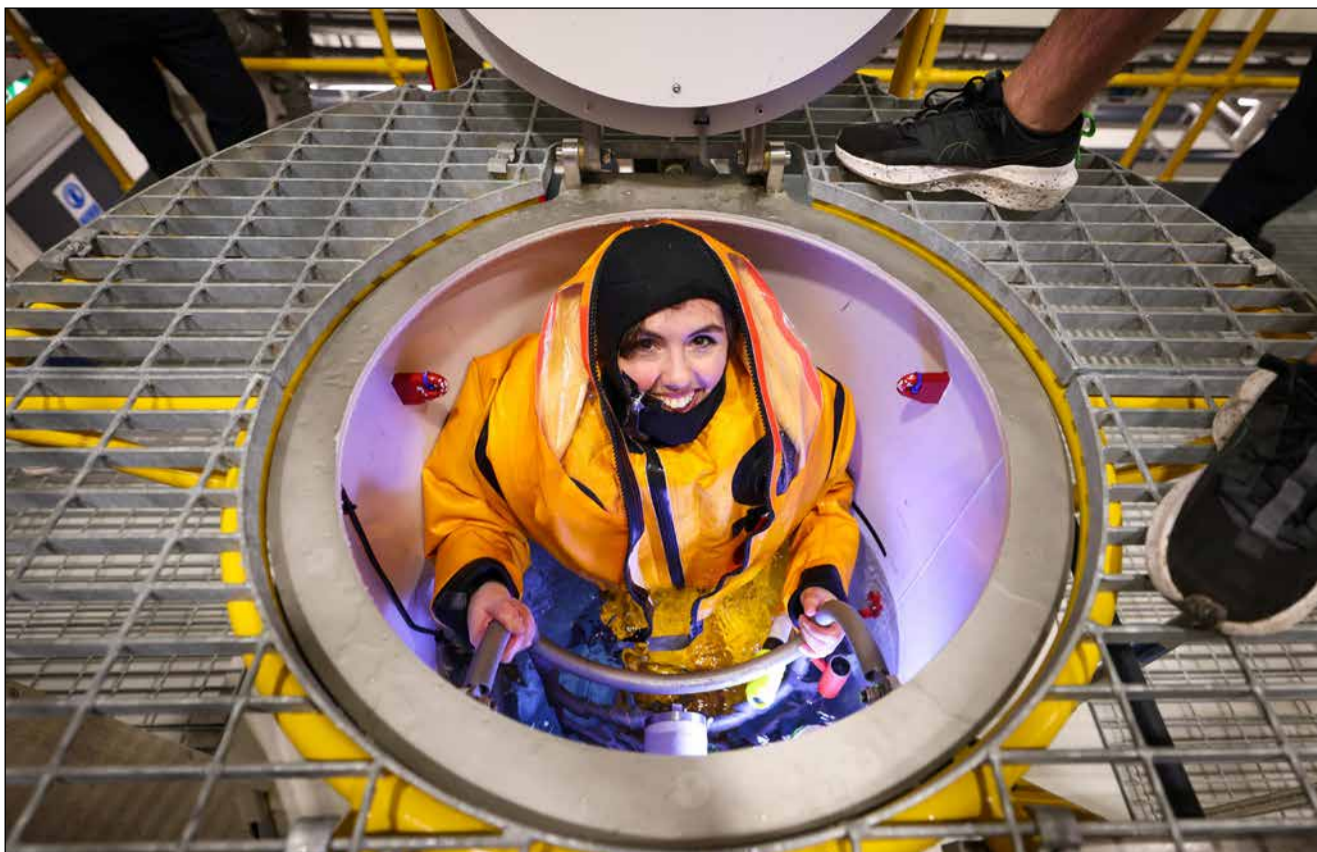
LEVEL PEAKS

TACTICAL eBIKES

QuietKat eBikes for added patrol capability in tough to reach areas, as well as decreasing response times in critical situations. Ride in confidence with premium components, powerful motors, and long range, easily swappable batteries that allow your team to go further faster and bring the equipment they need to complete the mission. With motors up to 1500w, ranges up to 60 miles and an extensive range of additional products, the all-terrain tactical eBikes are both quiet and kind to the environment.

For more info: www.levelpeaks.com





Submarine training centre opens doors

“IT WAS better than the Ninjago ride at Legoland!” That is how six-year-old Rhuairidh McClement described the new state-of-the-art submarine training facility at HM Naval Base Clyde.

Loved-ones were invited into the new training facility when it held its first families day.

The Submarine Escape, Rescue, Abandonment and Survival (SMERAS) Facility opened its doors to the families of staff members allowing them to see first-hand where their loved-ones work and the training they deliver to submariners.

The building was officially opened in June last year by the Commodore-in-Chief of the Submarine Service, Prince William – known as the Earl of Strathearn in Scotland – however due to Covid restrictions at the time families were unable to attend.

Fast-forward eight months and with restrictions waning, 44 people – including 22 children – were invited to an action-packed day and a full demonstration of

what the facility can provide.

One of the highlights was watching staff show how the state-of-the-art realistic simulator can mimic a variety of weather conditions and sea states. Normally it would be students, but for families staff jumped in at the deep end and were put through their paces in the water, demonstrating to loved ones how to abandon a submarine and escape to life rafts – all while wind, rain and even thunder and lightning raged around them.

“It is not an understatement to say that the team’s effort and commitment since moving from Gosport have completely modernised and reinvigorated the approach taken to Submarine Escape Rescue and Abandonment and is looked at enviously by other submarine-operating nations,” explained Warrant Officer 1st Class Patrick Sheekey, head of training.

SMERAS training relocated from SETT in Fort Blockhouse to a purpose-built facility in Faslane in November 2020.

RN career to envy

PIRATES. Surrenders. Bombings. Volcanic eruptions. Middle East conflict. Three jubilees.

In a remarkable career spanning five decades, Chief Petty Officer Robert ‘George’ Envy has faced dangers caused by man and nature and witnessed humanity in its finest and darkest hours.

But after nearly 45 years’ service to his nation, the veteran senior rating is finally returning to the civilian world.

He does so with an extremely rare Gold Valedictory certificate from the First Sea Lord to mark his – and his family’s – dedication since he joined the RN back in May 1977.

That was the same month as HMS Invincible was launched. The country was gearing up for the Queen’s Silver Jubilee... while the Sex Pistols had just released God Save The Queen. James Callaghan was prime minister. And film fans were queuing around the block to see Star Wars.

For radar operator George Envy there was training at HMS Dryad near Portsmouth before being assigned to his first ship, HMS Gurkha in Rosyth, Scotland.

He quickly progressed to leading hand on his second ship HMS Plymouth, where he qualified as a ship’s diver and was an Air Plot Operator during the Falklands Conflict in 1982.

“We were meant to be going to the Caribbean, but the Argentinian’s had a new task for us, and HMS Plymouth sailed to join the task group in the South Atlantic. We were straight into the action and were part of the group that took back South Georgia,” said George.

“The Commander of the Argentinian garrison, Colonel Asdz signed the surrender in our wardroom on HMS Plymouth. We then headed off to join the main task group in ‘Bomb Alley’ at San Carlos Water. My brother Mick was also ‘down south’ and at the end of the conflict I got to meet up with him onboard his ship HMS Active.”

George subsequently became a helicopter controller and joined HMS Andromeda which took him to the Gulf twice in the mid to late eighties and for which he was awarded the Gulf medal.

As a Petty Officer (Aircraft Controller), he served on HMS Illustrious and was awarded an Operational Service Medal for service off the coast of Bosnia, then instructed at the RN School for Aircraft Control. His final sea draft was as an aircraft controller for Flag Officer Sea Training in Devonport.

George left the Regular service in March 2006 and immediately joined the Royal Naval Reserve Air Branch working at the Joint Service Aircraft Tasking Organisation at Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton.

And for the final seven and a half years of his career, he’s been Officer of the Watch at HMS Drake.

In total George has completed 29 Years regular Service and 16 years in Reserves Air Branch, and for this he was awarded the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal and Bar. He’s travelled the world from Belize in the west to the Seychelles in the east.

“I’ve had a brilliant career. On HMS Gurkha we assisted the volcanic eruption on St Vincent in the Caribbean. On HMS Plymouth I went to the Falklands Conflict, on HMS Andromeda we escorted thousands of tons of merchant shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and carried out anti-piracy patrols.

“I’d do it all again, in a heart-beat, I’m Royal Navy through and through – the best shilling I’ve ever received!”

Devonport Naval Base Commander Commodore Peter Coulson presented George with his valedictory on behalf of the First Sea Lord in the Warrant Officer’s and Senior Rate’s mess at HMS Drake where he is currently serving.



Chris aims to conquer

ROYAL Navy officer Lt Chris Rees-Lloyd plans to run 2,022 miles this year to raise the same amount for the Royal British Legion.

He is undertaking the event around Shropshire and Bedfordshire and aims to complete his challenge at the London Marathon in October.

“I need to average over seven miles a day and so far have completed 250 miles,” said Chris.

“The miles will start off low and slow but will gradually increase as I become more comfortable with the distances, and actually running.”

You can support Chris by visiting: www.justgiving.com and search for Chris’ Run The Year Challenge 2022.

Flipping heck, better late than never

DID you hear the one about the Scottish folk who tucked into Christmas dinner on Pancake Day?

True story, thanks to the generosity of ten sailors from Faslane.

They made the short trip from the naval base to nearby Centre 81 to serve festive fare for 60 members of the Garelochhead Station Trust.

The event had been planned for December 21... but Covid restrictions forced its cancellation.

More than two months later, and with pandemic rules easing, the personnel made good on their promises and served up a three-course turkey dinner (plus all the trimmings), then joined in festive tunes to maintain the Christmas mood.

“It is a great pleasure to be able to join the trust team in supporting the community veterans’ belated Christmas lunch,” said Commodore Bob Anstey, Commander of Clyde Naval Base and one of the ten volunteers.

“It was heartening to see that while Covid may have delayed their festive celebrations, it couldn’t beat them.

“We at HMNB Clyde are very proud of our association with the Trust and we look forward to continuing to support them in their hugely



worthwhile endeavours.”

Established in 2019, Garelochhead Station Trust helps ensure that veterans and their families have easy access to services to which they’re entitled in a warm and informal setting.

The group holds a brunch club every fortnight where they can get together, have a bite to eat, chat with old friends and make new ones too.

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

Naval Children’s Charity

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

Naval Childrens Charity,
311 Twyford Avenue, Stamshaw,
Portsmouth, PO2 8RN

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



NAVY NEWS

Subscribe online at royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews

12 copies for the price of 10 (UK Only)

1 year: £35.00 UK

3 years: £95.00 UK

1 year: £43.00 Overseas

3 years: £103.00 Overseas

Or Tel: 07773 155321

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ROYAL NAVY

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Don't miss out...
Get Navy News delivered to
your door – and save money

RNRMC joins forces with Fighting with Pride

DURING LGBT+ History Month, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity announced their partnership with Fighting With Pride.

Having provided a grant of almost £40,000 in 2021, the RNRMC are working with Fighting With Pride to combat historic injustices and to ensure that the Royal Navy community is welcoming for all.

Between the mid 1950s and 1996 members of the UK Armed Forces who were thought to be LGBT+ were arrested, searched and questioned.

Many were dismissed from the service.

Fighting With Pride supports the health and wellbeing of LGBT+ Veterans, service personnel and their families, in particular those most impacted by the ban on LGBT+ personnel serving in the Armed Forces prior to January 2000.

The charity was established in 2021 and the charities first Joint Chief Executives

are Caroline Paige, a former Flight Lieutenant in the RAF and the first openly serving transgender officer in the British Armed Forces, and Craig Jones, a former Royal Navy Lieutenant Commander, who came out as gay on the day of the lifting of the 'gay ban', while still serving.

"As I walked through the gates at Dartmouth, I knew that I was gay," said Craig on a recent episode of *Lockdown* podcast.

"But as I walked through those gates and embarked upon my exciting naval journey, I knew that I would need to hide my true self or lose everything."

After accepting his sexuality and eventually coming out when he could, Craig led challenging work to restore the Armed Forces Covenant for the serving LGBT+ community.

However, Craig realised that while there had been incredible change for serving personnel in the armed forces, nothing had been done to support the LGBT+ veterans who lost so much after being 'Dismissed in Disgrace' and on the 20th anniversary of the lifting of the ban, he brought together ten people members of the Armed Forces LGBT+ community, both veterans and serving personnel, to tell their stories.

The charity Fighting with Pride was launched on the day of publication and aims to support those most affected by the ban.

"As we reached publication, we realised that we were angry, that despite

transformative change in our Armed Forces, nothing had been done to support those most affected by the ban.

"Fighting with Pride was created to support our LGBT+ veterans and to enable change in all organisations that wish to support them," said Craig, *pictured*.

"The RNRMC stepped forward in support of Fighting with Pride at the beginning of our journey, recognising that our new charity is reconnecting some of our most isolated and lonely veterans to the wider Armed Forces family," said Craig.

"Our work with hundreds of veterans organisations is helping LGBT+ veterans to feel welcome and replacing feelings of shame with Pride. With RNRMC's support, FWP is enabling the Armed Forces family to become more diverse and welcoming every day."

The RNRMC grant will contribute towards funding a LGBT+ Veterans Outreach

Support Worker for England and Wales. The Support Worker would act as a friend to LGBT+ veterans and begin the challenging process of welcoming them back into the military family.

This will help re-connect Royal Navy veterans with their military identities, allowing them to feel recognised for their service and take their rightful place among other veterans at events, such as remembrance services.

By re-engaging LGBT+ Royal Navy veterans with their service, the Outreach Support Worker can also open a world of support services to veterans who may have issues around health, housing, wellbeing, financial circumstances or employment.

Mandy Lindley, Director of Relationships and Funding at RNRMC, said: "Seeking justice and support for veterans who were treated so appallingly is absolutely crucial and we are proud to work with Fighting With Pride to achieve this. The RNRMC was one of the first organisations to get involved with Fighting With Pride and we are very pleased to see that we have paved the way for others subsequently.

"We hope that by working together, we can help those who suffered so unfairly feel proud of their service to the nation and can be encouraged to take up the support available for all our beneficiaries.

"We want to ensure that sexuality is not a barrier to being part of the Royal Navy veteran community."



URNU - LEARN TODAY, LEAD TOMORROW

THE University Royal Naval Units (URNU) has transitioned through considerable positive change in the last couple of years and now offers an exciting new professional offer to university students.

During 2021, the URNU grew in its physical locations and reach to students across the UK, with over 700 Officer Cadets in the organisation.

There are now 16 geographical units across the UK, with 2021 seeing the opening of units in Northern Ireland, East Midlands and the Solent. In addition to this, a pioneering new Virtual URNU has been set up, meaning no matter where a student is located in the country they can join and experience the URNU offer and life in the Royal Navy.

The URNU offer now covers four pillars of training, during a three-year training programme; Militarisation, Marinisation, Command Leadership & Management (CLM) and Adventurous Training and Sport and the training programme is now professionally aligned with the RNR training syllabus.

Officer Cadets can also achieve qualifications during their time with the URNU, including a CMI accredited Level 4 qualification in Command Leadership & Management and RYA qualifications Essential Navigation and Day Skipper.

The URNU seeks to develop not only the leadership skills of Officer Cadets but also develop them as people overall whilst making friends for life at the same time. Whether they go on to have a career in the RN or the civilian world, they can be proud to

have been part of the URNU and their development.

The Marinisation training pillar offers many opportunities in the RN, including embarking Officer Cadets on Royal Navy maritime platforms such as Type 45 Destroyers or Type 23 Frigates as well as Easter and summer deployments.

Each unit in the URNU is affiliated to other RN units, whether that be an RN Warship or a Naval Air Squadron, allowing mutually beneficial training between them, including fireside chats with RN personnel and visits to RN establishments, all contributing to the experience of life in the Royal Navy.

As an important part of the offer, Adventurous Training and Sport allows Officer Cadets to develop their leadership skills in challenging conditions, whilst having fun. Recent activities have included skiing, parachuting, mountain biking, paddle sports, sports competitions and many more.

URNU Officer Cadets are also active in charitable fundraising and engagement in their local community. Since 2020, and throughout the COVID lockdowns, the Staff and Officer Cadets of the URNU have raised over £14,000, through a series of fundraisers, including a Lands End to John O' Groats cycle.

Charities supported include, but not limited to; RNRMC, RBL, Teenage Cancer Trust, Seafarers Charity and many local charities. Officer Cadets have also contributed to Food Banks and helped in the local community during the COVID lockdowns, with

medical bursars assisting the NHS in the COVID relief effort.

In addition, the URNU isn't just about Officer Cadets, a big part of the success is due to the Training Officers and Training Senior Rates in the organisation.

Training Officers are vital to the effective delivery of training and hold Reservist status. There is no one typical Training Officer in the URNU, with a range of personnel and experience, from ex-RN personnel to merchant mariners and teachers.

Looking ahead to further growth, with the closing of Defence Sixth Form College Welbeck and Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS), the URNU will support the new Defence STEM Undergraduate Sponsorship Scheme (DSUS) which will help deliver greater numbers of STEM graduates into the military.

The new URNU offers an exciting and professional training experience for Training Officers & Officer Cadets and provides students with something different to their university experience. The URNU gives them a true taste of the Royal Navy whilst developing their leadership skills and providing a social hub, making friends for life.

"To inspire individuals through leadership and maritime training, whilst facilitating a career in the Royal Navy for those who choose".

More information on the URNU can be found at: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/our-organisation/bases-and-stations/training-establishments/university-royal-naval-units

Support continues for RN children

THE Royal Navy and Royal Charity have cemented their close partnership with the Naval Children's Charity for another year, allocating £720,000 in funding for 2022, as part of a three year grant agreement totaling over £2m.

This grant will support Royal Navy families with additional challenges, such as children with special needs, like George.

George has autism and is blind and mute and life can be particularly difficult for him and his family. With support from the RNRMC, the NCC have helped the family over some years with financial support, enabling them to create a safe and stimulating environment for George to thrive in.

He is particularly sensitive to sound, enjoys music and is growing in his confidence with the outside world. The NCC has helped with house adaptations and other support and has also helped the family with an educational support payment.

The ongoing partnership between the RNRMC and the NCC ensures that Royal Navy families receive the support they need, no matter how tough their circumstances may be.

For some families this support can help in a range of areas, as shown in a recent case of a widowed mother with eight children. This family faces many challenges, including some of the children having special needs.

The NCC, with financial support from the RNRMC, has been able to provide educational support, counselling, and therapies, collaborating with other charities to ensure that each child received the help and support they needed. Working in partnership with other Naval charities, they were even able to repair the family's broken boiler, mend the central heating, and provide a new cooker so the family could have a warm and enjoyable Christmas.

Clare Scherer, CEO of the Naval Children's Charity, said: "The Naval Children's Charity has a long history of providing financial and holistic support to the children and young people, through direct grants or our resources and work with the community, whose parents are currently serving or have served in the Royal Navy.

"The relationship with both the RNRMC and Greenwich Hospital goes back for many years and is one of the key collaborations for the work that we do.

"Every penny that is given to us by our funders goes directly to our beneficiaries, ensuring that they receive the help and support they need."

If you would like to find out more about the Naval Children's Charity or would like to access their support, please visit www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk, email caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk or call 023 9263 9534.



OWN A PIECE OF HMS HERMES



WITH THIS

Designed by an RN veteran and raising money in support of the Falklands Veterans Foundation's Liberty Lodge in Port Stanley, each handcrafted model carries material removed from HMS Hermes and sits on a wooden base made by UK veterans.

LIMITED EDITION MODEL

SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE



SUPPORTING
FALKLANDS VETERANS



FOUNDATION



PRE-ORDER AT
WWW.ICARUSORIGINALS.COM



Left, bidding farewell to HMS Medway; Above, HMS Scott in Montserrat and right, gunnery training

Clockwise from far left, HMS Scott's seaboat returns; Personnel play bucketball on the deck alongside in Gibraltar; Firefighting training; wicker-basket tobogganing

GREAT SCOTT BREAKS RECORD ON EPIC DEPLOYMENT

VETERAN survey ship HMS Scott returned to Plymouth after a record-breaking nine-month stint in the Atlantic.

The ship has hoovered up information spanning 400,000 square kilometres of ocean – that's larger than Japan, Germany or Norway – the most ever collected in a 12-month period by the ship since she joined the Fleet back in 1997.

Scott – named after the ill-fated Antarctic explorer – left home in June last year, since when she's clocked up more than 43,000 miles, nearly enough to take her twice around the world... although the ship hasn't strayed beyond the Atlantic.

She's been gathering environmental data from the depths of the North Atlantic, using her unique multi-beam sonar-array to gather information in higher resolution than has ever been obtained in these waters before.

The ship adopted the Navy's widening 'forward deployment' model to extend her stint at sea – conducting maintenance in overseas ports to save her returning to the UK, rotating a portion of her 60-strong crew every few weeks to keep personnel fresh, which proved no mean feat in the midst of the pandemic – and maximise the survey effort.

Keeping a 25-year-old ship running round-the-clock has placed demands on those responsible for maintaining the machinery and sensors.

"Over this deployment the marine engineering department has faced many challenges that we have needed to overcome in order to maintain

power to command. The determination from the engineering team has been nothing short of exemplary," said Leading Engineering Technician Ben Stevenson.

Scott's hydrographic specialists have worked equally diligently to monitor, analyse the data collected and help to understand the nature of the water column.

All of which earned the ship the 2021 Hydrographic and Meteorological and Surface Flotilla Excellence Award and Pennant.

"These achievements are down to the professionalism, teamwork and resilience of my crew," said a proud Commander Tom Harrison, Scott's Commanding Officer.

"They have performed to a very high level and have shown both cheerfulness and a n d

determination in the face of challenges such as Covid-19 restrictions, engineering defects and uncertainty about the ship's future."

During the long periods of survey time at sea, the crew arranged various events and activities to maintain morale: a typical week involved Wednesday afternoon sport, Friday night quiz, a weekend barbecue and all the ship getting together for a cuppa on Sundays. And regular circuit sessions, badminton tournaments, spinning classes and morning yoga workouts maintained the sailors' physical fitness.

"I really enjoyed our wholship Taskmaster competitions, which we filmed and watched together in the Wardroom. Everyone gets involved, from junior ratings to the Commanding Officer, and having a laugh together is important when you are at sea for long periods," said Able Seaman Sam Dewey.

Crew were able to stretch their legs – Covid restrictions allowing – in Madeira, where hiking, mountain-biking and wicker-basket tobogganing were particularly popular in Gibraltar and Barbados.

With the extended mission complete, Scott has a couple of months' maintenance in Falmouth, before returning to survey operations in June.

"With over a million square miles of ocean still to explore, this crew have proven that even at 25 years old, HMS Scott is surveying better now than she has ever done so before," said hydrographics officer Lieutenant Naomi Stevens.



Flagship returns to sea – and Scotland

HMS Queen Elizabeth has sailed from Portsmouth for the first time since her global operational deployment to the Indo-Pacific and back.

The nation's flagship has been alongside since December for essential maintenance following her seven-month mission, but now returns to sea to carry out vital training and exercises to keep her ready for operations.

And her first point of call was Loch Long in Scotland as the carrier berthed at Glen Mallan ammunitioning jetty.

Captain Ian Feasey, Commanding Officer of HMS Queen Elizabeth, said: "It is fantastic for the Fleet Flagship to be back in this spectacular region

to make use of this upgraded facility supporting our role as the United Kingdom's Strike Carrier.



"The ship's drumbeat of visits here over the coming years will punctuate the strong affiliation that we have with Scotland."

During this short stint at sea, training will focus on individual, team and whole ship exercises as well as working with commando-carrying Merlin helicopters from RNAS Yeovilton-based 846 Naval Air Squadron.

The ship will be conducting further exercises and training later in the year as the carrier is kept at very high readiness to deploy anywhere in the world at a moment's notice.



Warm welcome home

THERE was much excitement, tears of joy and laughter when families gathered to welcome home their loved ones onboard Royal Navy Vanguard-Class submarine, HMS Vengeance, as she returned home.

The Vanguard-class vessel and her 140-strong crew were reunited with family, friends and loved-ones at her home port of HM Naval Base Clyde.

For the last couple of years families have not been able to come together to welcome their loved ones home due to covid restrictions.

However now, with the rules relaxed, mums, dads, brothers, sisters, partners, and children headed to Rhu to catch a glimpse of one of the giant ballistic submarines glide past.

The families, who had travelled from all over the UK,

enjoyed rolls of sausage and bacon to keep them warm as they waited and gift bags were handed out to the children to keep them amused.

After waving banners and cheering as the submarine passed by, the welcoming party of over 200 people, headed up to the Naval Base to be reunited with their loved ones.

They were hosted in the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess, where some refreshments and entertainment were laid on for everyone while they waited.

Commodore Jim Perks CBE, Commodore Submarine Service, said: "It was a pleasure to welcome the families onto the Naval Base to welcome home HMS Vengeance after what has been a challenging period at sea, including being away from home over the festive period."



Magpie swoops in

THE picture-postcard Devonshire resort of Salcombe was the first port of call for one of the Royal Navy's smallest vessels – and the town's affiliate – at the start of her 2022 deployment: HMS Magpie.

The ship – named after the only warship to be commanded by the late Duke of Edinburgh – is the RN's sole Inshore Survey Boat, used to map the nation's key harbours and ports with superb accuracy, ensuring seafaring charts used by mariners are spot on.

The 18-metre long, 37-tonne vessel spent much of last year operating around the coast and only returned to Devonport – home of the Navy's surveying and hydrographic flotilla – in November after nine months deployed.

Since then, she has

undertaken a comprehensive refit package followed by sea trials, regeneration and training in order to ensure she is ready for another extensive survey season in 2022.

"Magpie's visit to Salcombe marks the first stop on our 2022 deployment, and a welcome opportunity to strengthen ties with our affiliated town," said Lieutenant Commander Hywel Morgan, HMS Magpie's Commanding Officer.

"This year will see the ship operate further afield and for longer than ever before. Survey operations are planned in the north-east of England and both east and west coasts of Scotland before a return to Devonport in the latter months of this year.

"This is a challenging programme for a small team but one we look forward to meeting."



Golden touch for future support

THE Future Maritime Support Programme has a new tool to oversee contracts: MIDAS, the Management Information and Data for Support.

MIDAS displays key performance indicators and supporting data for crown servants and industry partners, providing all those involved with a project with a clear and objective view of performance across the naval bases and contractual lots.

FMSP is the largest support contract in DE&S and its sister organisation, the Submarine Delivery Agency. Accessible, so accurate management information is fundamental.

The project was delivered by Navy Digital, working in partnership with the FMSP Performance Support Team, various commercial teams, the individual Lots and Naval Bases, as well as suppliers.

All MIDAS data is delivered by the Navy's industrial partners to ensure transparency and accuracy.

The reaction from users – who particularly appreciate a design focused on their needs and requirements – has been positive so far.

“MIDAS has been a great opportunity to start from scratch. The Lot owners were engaged to develop a solution that will allow data to be used to drive the performance of the contract,” said Kay Winstone, In-Service Submarines, Future Maritime Support Programme, Contract Manager.

Although the project was a significant change for the Navy's industrial partners, they too see positive benefits to MIDAS.

“The delivery of MIDAS as an enterprise-wide performance measurement tool will help drive improvement and understanding across all aspects of our business,” said Tim Ward, Marine and Technology, Babcock International Group.

“The project has not been without its challenges; however, the teams have worked in a collaborative and open manner to understand the different points of view.

“It will be good to see MIDAS fully rolled out and being used as part of everyday business in the coming months.”

Nominate now

YOU have until May 16 to put yourself, someone you know or someone under your wing forward for this year's Armed Forces Apprentice and Technician Awards.

As the name suggests the competition recognises passionate apprentices and technicians who stand out from their peers – whether they're starting out on their careers or have been in the Service for some time, sharing their knowledge and inspiring others.

Last year's winner was Chief Petty Officer Adam Finch of 1710 Naval Air Squadron in Portsmouth where he's a repair compliance verification engineer, authorised to carry out airframe repair designer.

“I feel so lucky to be recognised for my engineering skills because I honestly feel like I'm just doing my job, a job that I love and find so rewarding,” said the senior rating. “Winning the award means the world to me and it wouldn't have been achievable without the support of my colleagues at 1710 NAS.”

For details and to submit a nomination, visit: <https://www.theiet.org/impact-society/awards-scholarships/achievement-awards/apprentice-and-technician-awards/>



Ward and peas

SAILORS spent five weeks easing the burden on hard-pressed NHS staff in Greater Manchester.

Four dozen sailors from destroyer HMS Duncan and Portsmouth and Devonport Naval Bases were mobilised as part of Operation Rescript – the military assistance/response to the Covid pandemic.

They focused their efforts in five NHS trusts in Wigan, Bolton, Oldham, Salford, and Stockport – collectively responsible for the health of more than 1.4 million people.

The bulk of the Royal Navy personnel helped out at hospitals in Wigan and Bolton, the rest worked alongside Army colleagues in Oldham, Salford and Stockport.

They arrived on the wards on January 20, but with Covid numbers falling and winter drawing to a close, the assistance was wound down, formally coming to a close at the end of February.

As elsewhere during early stages in the pandemic, the sailors performed basic tasks and duties – freeing up trained medical staff for pure clinical tasks.

Among the sailors assigned to Wigan's Royal Albert Edward Infirmary – the largest in the Warrington, Wigan, and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust – was Able Seaman George Stevens, fresh out of training at HMS Collingwood in Fareham, Hampshire.

He and his colleagues were tasked with numerous jobs around the hospital – jobs which may appear menial such as making beds, serving meals, moving patients around, assisting in the pharmacy (“little bits and pieces allowing nurses to focus on the bigger picture”) – but often also proved extremely rewarding for both the sailors and patients.

“We have been making teas – many different teas – which has been very, very entertaining, seeing all the patients and how happy it can make them,” said George.

“My favourite – or to be more accurate the most meaningful part of this deployment – was working with these patients. Many of them had different issues from dementia to cancer and we were just trying to help them through it, even with the coronavirus pandemic going through.”

AB Luke Clark had dismissed Covid and thought it didn't necessarily merit the media hype.

“When there was the clap for the NHS – it's horrible to admit, but I thought ‘it can't be that bad’. But it is bad,” said the 19-year-old weapons specialist turned temporary hospital porter.

First-hand experience of patients opened Luke's eyes, first on general wards, then helping out in A&E at Salford Royal, with more than 700 beds one of the largest hospitals in



LET Frazer Burns assists in Wigan hospital's pharmacy

the area, serviced by over 6,000 staff.

“It has changed my perspective on Covid. I've never even been a patient in a hospital, it's a big difference.”

Silas Nicholls, Chief Executive of Warrington, Wigan, and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said the month-long assistance from the sailors was much appreciated by his team.

“This support has assisted us to stabilise the current pressures on staffing and to allow our clinicians to focus on the provision of clinical care as we prepare our sites for full restoration of activity,” he added.

“We are extremely thankful for the assistance which further enhances the unwavering efforts of all our colleagues to manage the increased pressures on our services.”

The RN's senior officer in the North West, Commodore Phil Waterhouse, visited the sailors in Wigan to thank them for their efforts and present a plaque to hospital staff.

“For a region which sees little in the way of regular sailors and marines on the patch, it has been a pleasure to host the team and relish in their success with them,” said Commodore Waterhouse.

“Full of endeavour, enthusiasm and empathy they have done ‘their bit’ extraordinarily well; the Royal Navy is very proud of their contribution.”

Pictures: LPhoto Lee Blease



King Alfred CLMing high

JUST wait till they find out about Twister...

For the first time, reservists at HMS King Alfred welcomed leadership trainers from the RN's Leadership Academy's Royal Victoria Squadron to the unit's new home in Semaphore Tower.

WO1 Matthewson delivered a Command Leadership and Management (CLM) session to around 40 reservists at their weekly drill night on Watering Island.

Conducted on the unit's refurbished drill deck, the evening focused on leadership presence and confidence techniques.

Personnel worked in teams to break down barriers, building trust and relationships courtesy of a range of light-hearted activities from singing to visualising themselves as comic strip superheroes.

Members of the class were put on point during the session to sharpen leadership skills by leading a team through a fun team-building task.

“CLM training helps me to be more self-assured and confident to make challenging decisions in my job,” said AB Jess Erdogan, who works for the NHS in finance by day.

“It supports me in how to deal with complex problems and determine the best way to solve these with stakeholders.”

AB Tony Taylor, a senior business analyst, added: “CLM training helps build ethos, teamwork and communication – all skills which support me in my civilian role.”

“The leadership side of CLM allows me to focus on my areas of improvement and provides the opportunity to get involved in hands-on activities in a safe space.”

And from project manager AB Chris Sanders: “This has been an exciting introduction to CLM training for me. I work very closely with stakeholders in my civilian role and CLM methods will help me to encourage and persuade others to do what I want willingly.”



Fire in the hole!

MARINES can once again pull pins and let rip with grenades on Woodbury Common after the dedicated range for the explosive devices was reopened following an extensive revamp.

The range on the Pebblebed Heaths had been in use since the 1950s and was closed in 2015 due to weather damage and erosion.

Work carried out included full excavation of the old range floor, repairs to the perimeter fencing and replacing 500 tonnes of specialist stone, which had to be approved by Natural England to ensure it was ecologically compatible with the surrounding heathland – as well as being able to absorb the impact of explosions from the grenades. Back in use, it will provide

a much-needed facility for military units based in the South West – not just its primary users, recruits from nearby Commando Training Centre RM at Lympstone.

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Samuel, Commanding Officer Support Wing at Lympstone, said restoring the local range spared a lengthy and time-consuming trip to Wiltshire or South Wales to train.

Live grenade training will take place on weekdays between 8am and 7pm – more typically 10am-3pm. Public using the heaths can check the live use times on the GOV.UK website on the ‘Straight Point Ranges and Woodbury Common Grenade Range firing times’ page. Dates will be posted before activity is scheduled to take place.



Big rig roll-out

BEING rolled out now to personnel serving in the Gulf, this is the new daily working rig.

Rig 22 – modelled here by *LWtr Izzy House and AB Orandy Chapman* – will replace PCS as the Royal Navy's No.4 standard working uniform.

Personnel on Operation Kipion duties – operating out of UKNSF Bahrain – are the first recipients, followed by the rest of RN and RFA from April 2023.

Rig 22 is designed to offer greater protection in a fire while also being lighter, more comfortable and practical for sailors.

It comprises:

- flame-resistant shirt and trouser
- base layer
- thermal layer
- outer layer (foul weather jacket)
- belt
- safety boots

Issued initially to nearly 500 sailors operating in hot weather regions, and to 2,000 personnel by mid-year, the new fabric has been tested thoroughly by personnel on front-line operations, while feedback from more than 7,000 personnel has been incorporated into the final design.

It's only the second major change to the Navy's daily working uniform since World War 2.

The current PCS rig was introduced in 2015 to be more durable, practical and safer, as well as giving the Royal Navy a 21st-Century makeover.

It is effectively the same working uniform as worn by soldiers – but

in the Navy's dark blue, which is not always practical, while its flame-resistant coating makes it hot and uncomfortable in warmer conditions.

Its replacement is made from flame-resistant Nomex – also used in the suits of F1 drivers – which allows the body to breathe, as well as being up to the rigours of life at sea.

Three different fabrics were tested extensively by 130 sailors on UK warships in the Gulf at the height of summer – the hottest place the Royal Navy operates at the hottest time of the year on ships which are most affected by the heat (temperatures can reach 55 Celsius). Nomex came out on top.

In addition the new shirt and trousers were tested in the Navy's damage control school in Portsmouth to ensure they did not snag or interfere with existing emergency equipment and rig, such as breathing apparatus and firefighting suits.

"We have carried out thorough research and testing and this is the best uniform that industry can offer to meet our requirements," said Warrant Officer 1st Class Lee Reeves. "This is a major investment in our people."

"The new uniform is more durable, more breathable, will fit more people better, and has lots of good features."

RNTM 01-002/22 (RN DefNet/DC) provides the policy for Rig22 and RNTM 04-004/22 (RN DefNet / DC) provides the detail of the rollout.

A further c.£40m will be invested in modernising uniforms over the next decade.



Tick tick atomic

THE world's first atomic clock of its kind has been fitted to Britain's biggest warship to help ensure pinpoint accuracy wherever she goes.

Aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales received the state-of-the-art piece of quantum technology before sailing for winter exercises in Norway (see pages 2-3).

The technology – about the size of a typical laptop – provides a highly-accurate time signal which will allow the ship's complex combat systems to synchronise should the more traditional GPS signal fail.

Time signals are crucial for warships and having precise information helps the ship's company stay safe while at sea on operations.

But relying on one system such as GPS can cause problems should it break or be unavailable so the introduction of the quantum technology gives a reliable back-up.

The Royal Navy worked closely alongside BP and Teledyne e2v, a Teledyne UK company, to adapt the quantum technology for use on HMS Prince of Wales.

"The Royal Navy, BP and Teledyne have shown that bringing customers, industry and experts together can accelerate sovereign technology for the benefit of the country," said Lieutenant Colonel Scott Wallace from Office of the Chief Technology Officer.

"Putting leading-edge quantum equipment into the front line is a game changer for the UK."

Accelerating the use of an atomic clock comes as the Royal Navy looks to become less reliant on GPS and is the first time this technology has been used on a surface ship.

Achieving a huge reduction in size, the system has the potential to be used by other ships in the Fleet as well as in day sacks carried by the Royal Marines Commando Force.



Students tour ships

SOME of the UK's best and brightest future military brains descended on Portsmouth Naval Base to learn about the potency of the Royal Navy of 2022.

Nearly 300 students from the Joint Staff College at Shrivenham spent two days by the Solent, touring half a dozen ships, getting to grips with RN systems and discussing them with sailors and Royal Marines.

The Maritime Combat Power Visit – known in the past as Staff College Sea Days – is designed to give personnel from all three Services on the demanding Advanced Career Staff Course an insight into the work, equipment, training and collective capability of the RN.

With many of Portsmouth-based warships deployed or preparing to deploy, there was no opportunity for the students to get to sea.

Instead over two days they were shown half a dozen warships representing every aspect of operations conducted by RN vessels based in the city.

From carrier strike (Prince of Wales), to air defence (defender HMS Duncan) and anti-submarine warfare (frigate Richmond) to general patrols in home waters by patrol vessels (HMS Tyne and Mersey) and combatting mines (HMS Hurworth), the visitors from Shrivenham chatted to personnel about their roles and kit.

There were also displays or representation from the Fleet Air Arm, Royal Marines explaining their evolution into the Commando Force, and divers outlining their similar metamorphosis into the Diving and Threat Exploitation Group (previously Fleet Diving Group), all designed to give the students a feel for what sea power brings to the party or in military jargon to better understand the RN's contribution to a joint campaign and to appreciate what effects can be delivered by the maritime component.



Their finest shower

THE Guard of Honour and Colour Party form up in the middle of a very wet Guildhall Square in Portsmouth after a short march from Nelson Gate (pictured by *LPhoto Gareth Smith*).

Personnel from the naval base celebrated the Freedom of the City, exercising their right to do so 'with bayonets fixed and colours flying'.

Despite an association between the city and Navy going back well over 500 years – long before the name Royal was added – the Senior Service has only enjoyed Portsmouth's highest honour since the mid-1960s... and has rarely exercised the privilege.

Hardy residents braved the rain to line the streets and cheer sailors representing Portsmouth ships, HMS Nelson personnel, the Royal Marines School of Music, and reservists from HMS King Alfred.

The Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth led the 150-strong parade as personnel marched from HMS Nelson Gate in Queen's Street to Guildhall Square.

Sub Lieutenant Hannah Jones, 27, carried the silver casket containing the precious Freedom scroll which followed the Colour Party.

Once formed up into platoons in Portsmouth's principal square, the chimes

of the city's bells marked the opening of the Guildhall's bronze doors and the city's dignitaries moved onto the steps, along with the Naval Base Commander, Commodore JJ Bailey and Leader of the Council, Gerald Vernon-Jackson to receive the salute from the Officer of the Guard and inspect the platoons. Commodore Mel Robinson, Commander of the Maritime Reserves inspected the Naval Reservists on the Parade.

Councillor Vernon-Jackson said: "We are a proud and historic maritime city, and the Royal Navy is at our heart. The naval base, where the first dry dock in the world was built in 1495, generates thousands of jobs and gives a significant economic boost to the region."

There are currently 13,000 people employed at Portsmouth Naval Base which contributes an estimated £450 million to Portsmouth economy. There are also 1,200 companies that supply the base, many of them local businesses.

Commodore Bailey said: "A long and rich tradition exists of cooperation and symbiosis between the Royal Navy and the people of Portsmouth; indeed, many of the sailors based in HM Naval Base Portsmouth call the city and surrounding area home."

Get set for M-SET

IF YOU dealt with SSOP in the past, from next year you'll be working with M-SET.

The Maritime Sensor Enhancement Team (M-SET) is the latest manifestation of the changes being introduced under the banner of Project Renown, established by the RN and DE&S to achieve more than 80 per cent ship availability by 2026.

M-SET is the successor to the Sensor Support Optimisation Programme (SSOP) in which Thales, the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), provides support services for major sonar, mast, periscope and electronic warfare equipment for ships and submarines.

It's been designed to improve the Navy's strategic partnership for complex systems.

This will be achieved via more effective contracted services designed to support availability and deliver a global support network for forward operations.

M-SET presents the opportunity to draw upon benefits from across Defence and apply lessons learned over the last ten years. M-SET will run for 15 years from April 1 2023.

Due to the range of equipment supported, M-SET aligns with both the DE&S Ships Support Transformation Model and the Submarine Delivery Agency's Commercial Principles.

By the time M-SET officially

stands up, the team will have had ten years of learning from experience thanks its SSOP predecessor.

M-SET is also enabled by the Cabinet Office Strategic Partnering Programme, Category Management and NESS/RENOW/RESOLUTION governance structures. All give M-SET a solid foundation built on data and experience, clear direction, and robust frameworks to operate within.

It will set key performance/resilience Indicators, targeting availability and reliability;

provide incentives to enhance reliability, speed of repair and delivery of spares to increase availability and reduce contract management and delivery team overheads.

Among the benefits M-SET should offer across the board are increased availability by drawing on Kraken, Foundry and Thales equipment management data for targeted interventions.

It also intends to optimise the support solution for 17 critical Master Equipment across ships and submarines, improve repair times putting more serviceable stock on the shelf, and generally offer better value for money.

Email for further information on M-SET or Project Renown: DESShips-Spt-RENOWComms@mod.gov.uk.

Recharge cars on base

IF YOU own an electric vehicle and work in Portsmouth Naval Base, you can use the charging points around the site.

For a small connection fee and a no-profit charge to cover the cost of the electricity used, your electric vehicle can be charged during regular working hours (8am-4pm) ready for the journey home.

Using a smartphone, a scan of the QR codes on the EV charging points located around the Naval Base will navigate you to an iOS and Android-enabled payment facility, that is maintained by a third-party provider. Once downloaded the App can be used to direct you to an available EV charging bay.

The Naval Base's white fleet of electric vehicles will have sole use of the charging points between 4pm and 8am.

To encourage use of more electric vehicles base-wide, there are plans to add another 200 charging points next year, reaching 1,000 by 2030 to support both the target of net-zero contributor of greenhouse gasses and the city's air quality improvement plan.

WW2 medal present for 100th birthday

A WARTIME Wren finally received the medals she was owed for her service when the Royal Navy dropped in on her 100th birthday.

Heather Johnson from Stockport spent four years in the Women's Royal Naval Service supporting the national war effort, reaching the rank of petty officer and being recognised for her good conduct.

But she never received her final set of medals recognising her time in uniform: the 1939-1945 War Medal and the Defence Medal.

Thanks to the efforts of her family and sailors at HMS Eaglet in Liverpool – home of the Royal Navy in northern England – that was put right as Mrs Johnson celebrated her centenary surrounded by friends and family.

To add to the occasion, Big Heritage, who manage the Western Approaches Museum in Liverpool, provided a WW2 vintage Packard Salon staff car – as used at the time by leaders, including Field Marshal Montgomery and Admiral Sir Max Horton, who directed the fight against the U-boat from the Mersey – to transport Mrs Johnson from her home to the venue in Stockport.

Mrs Johnson, who mostly served in Portsmouth between 1942 and 1946, was one of more than 640,000 women who volunteered to serve in the Armed Forces during the conflict.

The 20-year-old Heather Francke, as she was then, picked the Navy ahead of the Army and RAF, she told her family, because she liked the look of the uniform.

She served as a typist/writer – clerk/secretary/assistant – received glowing reports from her superiors when it came to both her character and ability, and was singled out for a good conduct stripe to add to her uniform in the final months of her naval career.

As a keen sports woman, she saw success on the tennis court winning several tournaments representing the naval base's women's team, and joined in



Lieutenant Commander Ellen Shephard and Warrant Officer Rob Lockyer with Mrs Johnson at her 100th birthday party and (below right) the then leading writer is pictured second row down, far left, with fellow Wrens and staff at Gosport's new naval barracks in 1945

amateur dramatics, performing in wartime pantomimes.

Lieutenant Commander Ellen Shephard and Warrant Officer Rob Lockyer, from the staff of the Naval Regional Command, made the short journey to Greater Manchester to formally present Mrs Johnson with her awards.

"It is really important veterans like Heather receive the recognition they deserve. It was an enormous privilege to present Heather with her medals on such a special day," said Lieutenant Commander Shephard.

When asked why she had not applied for her medals previously, Mrs Johnson modestly said "I didn't think I did much to deserve them, I was just doing my job."



TX-NET helps civvy transition

FORMER naval medic Abbie Pierce hopes RN leavers won't suffer the same struggles she faced in civvy street thanks to a dedicated online network.

She believes TX-Net – which she describes as a "hybrid of LinkedIn and a neighbour app" – would have helped her make the transition to civvy street/life as a veteran much easier.

Network – www.tx-net.co.uk – is designed by and for Service Leavers/veterans/reservists, allowing them to interact, share knowledge, experience and guidance, donate items if they wish, and escape some of the darker elements of mainstream social media channels.

The network has expanded over the past 12 months with members of all three Services, of various ranks and even some personnel living overseas.

The whole system is private and open only to veterans, who tend to self-regulate and there's none of the toxicity often found in social media channels. TX-Net is closely monitored by a human, not an algorithm.

And the network makes a point of linking those with advice/help – 'Havers' – with those who require it – 'Needers'.

"The platform works similarly to neighbourhood forums, but solely for people who have served in the Forces and to help them with business, jobs or life in general," said Abbie.

"The big difference we seek to make in our Connection Support Service, where our connection manager monitors the message board and helps nudge things along by connecting other people who might be able help."

Over 15 years in the RN, Abbie served extensively around the world in two ships, sick bays in five bases and an MOD Hospital Unit.

On leaving the RN in 2019 she planned a new career in leadership coaching, supported by all the associated trappings in today's economy: building a website, blogging, doing podcast interviews, social media and so on.

What she wasn't expecting was the lack of obvious support in the civilian world, networking proved expensive and often turned into "sleazy sales" events which weren't particularly useful and effective, and a fairly toxic world online.

"In some ways, you're conflicted, because you feel compelled to push away from the military bubble and find your feet on your own terms, Abbie explained. "And when you're feeling isolated and vulnerable, it's hard to take the first step towards a new group and unknowns."

"It was quite a lonely existence for a time, until I found my feet and my place in the veterans' community. I only wish this sort of network was available to me back then – it might have prevented a few missteps along the way and got her to where she needed to be much sooner."

In the midst of lockdown she came across an old friend who'd encountered similar issues and suggested setting up a network – Leavers Link Virtual Networking – for Service leavers in the South West, which celebrated its first anniversary last month, and is now seeking to expand by encouraging service leavers across the UK to join in.

That led to joining a new community platform for veterans, TX-Net. Within a month of joining, she was invited to become an executive board member and now manages the communications and marketing.

Abbie's also published two books, helping other Service leavers through their transition and veterans who were looking to shake things up.

■ The first month of TX-Net is complimentary with an annual membership fee of £10. The money is pumped back into the running of the network.



Mighty Hood service is 'real' again

AFTER two virtual events due to the pandemic, the traditional service of remembrance for the 1,400-plus souls lost on HMS Hood resumes in Boldre next month.

The village's St John the Baptist Church was the place of worship for Admiral Lancelot Holland and his family.

Since 1949 it has been the setting for a memorial service for the admiral and shipmates, lost when the battle-cruiser blew up in action with the Bismarck.

Rev Canon Andrew Neaum will host with the Ven Andrew Hillier, Chaplain of the Fleet, as this year's guest preacher at the 11am service on Sunday May 29.

Visitors will include relatives of those who served in/ lost their lives in HMS Hood; members of the HMS Hood Association led by Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks; and HMS Collingwood's Commanding Officer Captain Catherine Jordan.

Wessex crash remembered

FLIERS from 845 Naval Air Squadron paid their respects to two 'Junglies' killed nearly half a century ago when their helicopter plunged into a fjord.

A wreath was cast from a Merlin Mk4 48 years to the day of the tragedy off the snow-covered rocks of Rolla deep inside the Arctic, near the port of Harstad.

Captain John Greig of the Army Air Corps, aged 37, and 28-year-old Leading Engineering Mechanic David 'Taff' Evans were killed during a night test flight.

Their Wessex helicopter – then the mainstay of supporting Royal Marines on the front line – suffered a compressor stall, or it froze in the sub-zero temperatures. In the darkness and struggling to deal with the problem, Capt Greig became disorientated and the aircraft hit the waters of Rolla Fjord.

The Wessex from HMS Hermes was subsequently recovered by specialist deep diving vessel HMS Reclaim, as was Capt Greig's body. LEM Evans' body was never found.

It's a loss which still impacts on the Jungly squadron – a nickname they owe to operations in Malaysia and Borneo in the 1960s – and reminds crews of the dangers of operating in extreme temperatures.

Based at Bardufoss – between Narvik and Tromsø – a detachment of Merlin Mk4s, mid-21st Century successors to the Wessexes – is supporting exercises on the ground by 3 Commando Brigade, alongside Wildcat helicopters of 847.

Picture: PO(Phot) Des Wade, CHF





All that glisters...

THIS is HMS Victory as few people have seen her before. In silver, not wood.

It's one of the treasures brought out of the archives in Portsmouth to showcase the city's silver treasures.

As part of the city's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, historians have trawled the civic collection – assisted by the Royal Navy Trophy Centre, the city's Anglican cathedral and the Goldsmiths' Company Charity – to air some of Portsmouth's most precious objects, many of which have not been on public display before.

The replica Victory – made of copper plated with silver – was presented to the city in 1965 by the then Portsmouth Command to mark the long, proud association between the community and the naval base and its thousands of sailors and Royal Marines, an association cemented by the command receiving the Freedom of the City (marked again recently – see page 29).

Also donated by the Senior Service to the city to celebrate those ties was a silver Spanish fish, presented by Admiral Sir Charles Madden to mark the assembly of the Home Fleet in the Solent in 1964.

Other items on display at the Silver City exhibition include the Bodkin Cup, presented to the city in 1591, two flagons presented in 1683 by the Duchess of Portsmouth, one of Charles II's mistresses, and silver possessions owned by regular Portmuthians

The exhibition opens to the public at the City Museum and Art Gallery in Museum Road from Saturday May 28.

Harvey honours grandfather's shipmates

SAILORS and military personnel in the Falklands saluted the last Royal Navy ship damaged in the 1982 conflict.

A small group from HMS Forth – the patrol ship which serves as the islands' constant guardian – and Mount Pleasant gathered at Hookers Point outside the capital Stanley and the imposing monument of Welsh granite erected to HMS Glamorgan.

It was near this remote site that Argentine forces fired two Exocet missiles at Glamorgan on June 12 1982. One hit, killing 13 men that day while a 14th succumbed to his injuries two months later. She was the last of around 20 British vessels damaged or sunk in the conflict. Two days later, Argentine forces surrendered.

Laying a wreath on behalf of HMS Forth was 21-year-old Able Seaman Harvey Lewis (pictured), whose grandfather Phillip Bowers survived the attack.

During a 30-year career ending as a chief petty officer, Mr Bowers spent three years as a steward aboard Glamorgan. He lost five close shipmates who worked in the destroyer's galley.

Glamorgan had been pounding Argentine defences outside Stanley on Two Sisters hill using her main 4.5in guns, supporting a successful attack by the Royal Marines of 45

Commando.

Bringing her guns in range of the defences also brought her in range of an Exocet launcher rigged by Argentine sailors, who struck as the destroyer completed her bombardment mission.

Skilful evasive manoeuvres by Glamorgan's team helped to minimise the impact of the missile, but it still caused devastation aft as it struck the hangar, destroying the fully-fuelled and armed Wessex helicopter.

The burning fuel poured through a hole in the deck – and into the galley, starting a fire which killed four cooks and a steward.

Valiant efforts by the ship's company brought the fires under control and barely three hours after being hit, Glamorgan was back under control again.

Four decades on AB Lewis, who's experienced his first sustained spell at sea with Forth over the past couple of months, saluted alongside the ship's gunnery officer Lieutenant Owen Long, Bugler Sgt James Buckley and Flying Officer Ian Wallis.

The wreath the ship left read:

*On all the oceans, white caps flow
There are no crosses row on row
But those who sleep beneath the sea
Can rest in peace, your country's free.*



Are you all set for Scarborough?

SCARBOROUGH is the place to be on Saturday June 25 this year as the town hosts national Armed Forces Day events.

The Yorkshire resort was selected for the privilege several years ago... but the pandemic got in the way.

With normal life resuming, the MOD and town have dusted off the plans and all systems are go for the last Saturday in June.

Military personnel from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force will parade along the seafront, with cadets and veterans, while the public will get the chance to show their appreciation for those who have served or continue to do so.

They'll see a variety of military displays, look around military equipment and, most

importantly, meet Armed Forces personnel.

As a coastal town, there's heavy Senior Service involvement, with the Royal Navy Regional Command Northern England leading the planning.

"We aim to provide a spectacular series of events, culminating in Armed Forces Day, which truly showcases the capabilities of the UK Armed Forces," said Commodore Phil Waterhouse, the Naval Regional Commander Northern England and the Isle of Man.

"The Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force are looking forward to supporting Scarborough Borough Council as we all deliver this year's Armed Forces Day national event, particularly given the delays over the last two years due to the pandemic."

Councillor Eric Broadbent, Mayor of the Borough of Scarborough, said the town was "pulling out all the stops to make the 2022 national event truly spectacular".

He continued: "It will be a great honour for us show our appreciation for their outstanding service by welcoming serving personnel, veterans, military charities, special guests and visitors to the town for what promises to be a very special celebration."

scarborougharmedforcesday.co.uk will be the main online source of information about the national event weekend in the town.

One staple in the public events diary, the Royal Navy International Air Day held at RNAS Yeovilton, will not take place this year. It is hoped it will return in 2023.



One standard at rest another dedicated

AFTER 70 years' service and appearance at countless events and ceremonies, the standard of the Portsmouth branch of the Association of Wrens was formally laid up...

... and a fresh one dedicated in its place to continue to serve the extremely active branch – it counts a good 130 members – at Portsmouth's Anglican Cathedral.

The Portsmouth Branch was formed in 1945 for serving and former WRNS to enjoy camaraderie and support from each other, with its standard introduced seven years later – also at Portsmouth Cathedral, with Provost the Very Revd Eric Porter Goff.

So the same House of Worship was the obvious location for the service of Thanksgiving to mark its 'retirement' seven decades later.

The Dean of Portsmouth, the Very Reverend Dr Anthony Cane, led the service, and the intercession was led by Reverend Felicity Heal, who was the first Wren to be ordained in 1992 in Portsmouth Cathedral.

Throughout the standard's long life, it has been carried by just four bearers: Myrtle

Johnson, Jennie Coulthurst, Val Gleave and currently, Gail Foster.

Val, who represented the Branch for the past 25 years before retiring last year, laid up the old standard and Gail led the procession with the new banner, supported by standards from the Cheltenham and Swindon branches of the Association of Wrens, and Portsmouth branches of the Royal Naval Association, Royal Marines Association and Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet Corps.

Also present were the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire Nigel Atkinson, Portsmouth's Lord Mayor Cllr Frank Jonas, Lady Mayoress Joy Maddox, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell, Portsmouth North MP Penny Mordaunt, Captain Alison Towler, President Association of Wrens and the association's National Chairman, Nancy Hill, plus fellow members.

After the service a lunch was served at Portsmouth's Royal Maritime Club, where the branch also meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.15pm, with a coffee morning in the same venue on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 10.30am.

Sealing Victory

BOFFINS are looking for the best paint, glues and fastenings to keep Nelson's flagship weatherproof and watertight for the next half century.

Engineers from the University of Southampton are working with HMS Victory's conservators ahead of the next phase of a £35m revamp of the legendary warship: replacing rotting planks, repairing the structure of the hull and renewing the rigging.

The University's n² Engineering Consultancy has designed a series of tests to assess the long-term performance of a range of paints, caulking and glues (sealants) and metal fastenings being considered for the overhaul.

"Rainwater is probably our biggest enemy in terms of the ship's preservation, so we are undertaking a ten-year programme of work to make sure the critical envelope of the ship is weatherproof," explained Diana Davis, head of conservation at the National Museum of the

Royal Navy.

"We want to know as much as possible about the materials we are using – taking an evidence-based approach to choose the right products. n² is helping us to do that and even if there's no perfect product that will last the full 50 years, their data will enable us to plan our maintenance schedule to keep the ship watertight."

n² director Dr Nicola Symonds said rain, wind and salt all took their toll on the 260-year-old man o'war, as dead the summer heat.

"Much of the planking is painted black, so gets hot in the sun on one side, but not the other – and this temperature difference takes its toll over time," she explained.

Her team has devised numerous tests to recreate the effects of the wear and tear of the environment, using their labs to simulate weathering over decades courtesy of specially-prepared samples.





Cadets go green for the Queen

Dedicated trio rewarded at virtual ceremony

A CADET and two adults from Neath Sea Cadet Corps have been recognised for their dedication and commitment to their local communities and the country by the Lord-Lieutenant of West Glamorgan.

Leading Cadet Harri Oglesby, who is part of the Neath Unit, was appointed to the role of Lord-Lieutenant cadets for 2022 and has received a distinctive badge of his appointment, alongside Cadet Warrant Officer Victoria Symes of No 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets.

Harri has been a cadet since he was ten and has completed the junior training programme, earning the top award of the Commodore's pennant. He is only the second cadet ever within his unit to achieve this award.

Petty Officer Cadet Amelia Willn, also from Neath SCC Unit, was awarded the Lord-Lieutenant's Certificate and Badge for being one of the 2021 representatives during the virtual ceremony. The other representatives were Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major Jessica Nedin of Dyfed and Glamorgan Army Cadet Force and Cadet Warrant Officer Kristian Morgan of No3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets.

Additionally, Lieutenant Neil Jones (RNR) of Neath Sea Cadet Corps was recognised for his outstanding service and devotion to duty and awarded the Lord-Lieutenant's Certificate of Merit.

Lieutenant Jones, from Port Talbot, started his career as a cadet 40 years ago. Through the decades as a volunteer, he has trained hundreds as well as attaining every rank and rate within the organisation.

The other three people recognised with a Certificate of Merit were Captain Steven Gadd of Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia); Mrs Victoria Wilkinson of 157 (Welsh)

Regiment RLC; and Sergeant Byron Thomas of No3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets.

During the awards ceremony, Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of West Glamorgan, Mrs Louise Fleet JP, pictured, praised cadets and the cadet force adult volunteers for their commitment in guiding and enhancing the cadet experience.

"In what has been a challenging year again for everyone, the continuing influence of Covid means that much still remains uncertain and unpredictable but this ceremony reminds us of the constant and reliable presence of the military in our communities and the loyal service given by all," Mrs Fleet said.

"During the past year, once again, the work you have all done to mitigate the impact of Covid has been immense," Mrs Fleet continued, "You have kept the cadets engaged in online activities and carried out all that could be expected of you to prepare for the return to in person activities. Throughout 2021 your loyalty to your units has been outstanding and without you the impact on the young people you support would have been much more severe."

There are nearly 5,000 Cadets in Wales who gain skills and qualifications through working with local communities, charities and taking part in a variety of practical activities. The cadet syllabus is delivered by 1,500 volunteering adult instructors and civilian assistants, who give up their spare time on weeknights and weekends.

The virtual awards event was organised and broadcast by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) for Wales, an organisation that has supported the Armed Forces for over 100 years.

Picture: RFCA for Wales

BALLYMENA Sea Cadets teamed up with C Company, 1st (NI) Battalion Army Cadet Force (ACF) to play their part in a 'green project' for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The cadets gathered on a cold and wintery morning, spades in hand, to plant 250 oak trees on a stretch of selected ground at the Ecos Centre Ballymena – one tree for each Cadet and CFAV within the Company.

They were joined by the Hon Colonel of 1st (NI) Battalion Army Cadet Force, Lord-Lieutenant Mr David McCorkell KstJ, the Mid and East Antrim (MEA) Deputy Mayor Councillor Matthew Armstrong and 1st (NI) Bn Commandant Colonel Adrian Donaldson.

After a few words from the Deputy Mayor and instruction from Marlene Gattineau MEA Parks Team, the cadets, parents and instructors set about planting the young oak trees, whilst Piper Josh Anderson from 1st (NI) Battalion, Band Drums



Pipes played in the background. A ceremonial plaque was also erected.

Ballymena Sea Cadets Commanding Officer, Chief Petty Officer John Taylor said: "We were delighted to be invited to participate in this initiative to recognise the life of service of Her Majesty The Queen, and by being able to plant trees we will be able to make difference to our local community and see the growth over the coming years."

Ballymena Unit's Chairperson,

Ruth Verner said: "Ballymena Sea Cadets, along with the local army cadet detachments, frequently join forces for community initiatives. We are delighted to show the cadet forces working together to create a lasting legacy for Ballymena."

Able Cadet Jonas of Ballymena Sea Cadets said: "It was good to be involved in the tree planting, and to work together with the army cadets to do it. We intend to be back later in the year to help with weeding, and perhaps even

to plant a few more trees."

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of County Antrim Mr David McCorkell KstJ said: "It was a privilege to join C Company, and Ballymena Sea Cadets to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee by taking part in the Queen's Green Canopy.

"I hope that the cadets will nurture these trees and watch them grow as a living testament of long and selfless service of the Queen. It was a great initiative to brave the weather and get these cross-service cadet groups together. I would like to congratulate all involved for organising such a special morning."

The Queen's Green Canopy is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark the Platinum Jubilee in 2022 inviting people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee".

The planting of trees will create a legacy in honour of the Queen, which will benefit future generations.



Living memorial to victims of pandemic

WHEN local Councillor Monique McAdams asked sea cadets at the East Kilbride Unit to help with planting seeds in the orchard at the James Hamilton Heritage Park, they jumped at the chance to get involved in giving something back to the community.

The orchard will be in memory of those who have died during the Covid-19.

Despite being the middle of winter, the entire unit turned out and got digging.

"It was great to see the cadets working together on this project, said Petty Officer Reece Sinclair. "This is what being a cadet is all about, being part of a team, getting out and working for something worthwhile."

Cadet Alex said: "It was a great morning, it was good to be outside with my cadet friends and do something fun."

"It's going to be awesome to see the trees grow up here when we come up in the summer," said AC Stuart.

East Kilbride Sea Cadets have a long standing association with the James Hamilton Heritage Park as they use the loch as a base for their water sports activities during the summer months.

TS Cunningham is the only Sea Cadet Unit in South Lanarkshire. Chairman of East Kilbride Sea Cadets, Jim Harper, said: "With the Sea Cadets celebrating 50 years in East Kilbride what a better way to mark this significant event than to give back their time by planting trees which will hopefully be enjoyed by the residents for another 50 years to come."

Councillor McAdams said: "I am very proud to work with Sea Kilbride Sea Cadets on this project

and they are a great bunch of young people.

"We know nothing will ever take that heartbreak away, but we believe that planting this orchard will be a lasting and fitting tribute and allow time for quiet reflection and for people to mark their respect.

"It is very much a living memorial, and as the trees grow in size and bear fruit in the coming years, they will also highlight the importance of tree planting for the environment and future generations."

The initiative is part of the South Lanarkshire Council's bid to plant over 800 trees across the area to create a living memorial to people who lost their lives in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Funding for the project came through the council's Food Strategy and the tree planting will improve biodiversity. It is also hoped that community groups will be able to make use of fruit crops in the future.



THE ROYAL NAVAL BENEVOLENT TRUST
SERVE A DAY, SUPPORTED FOR LIFE



Our vision is: Sailors and Marines helping Sailors and Marines – now and always.

RNBT provides a helping hand to serving and ex-serving men and women and their families. Help, opportunity and care in times of need.

We don't just help you to weather the storm, we try and help you navigate your way out of it.

If you need help or would like to donate or volunteer contact RNBT.

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

T: 02392 690112 E: rnbt@rnbt.org.uk

www.rnbt.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 206243





Future looks brighter – and a lot greener

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS Sea Cadets, has been given grant funding to install energy-efficient LED lighting in their building by St Helens Borough Council. They are one of 16 organisations dedicated to reducing their carbon emissions to have secured funding from a £120,000 pot made available by the council.

The funding pot, opened in summer 2021, supported bids up to a maximum of £10,000 to businesses with less than 250 employees, and up to £5,000 for community organisations such as charities, voluntary and faith groups.

The funding will allow the Sea Cadets unit to reduce carbon emissions and to reduce its expenses by replace the current lighting to an energy-efficient option across its whole unit.

"We've been in our current building, originally an old church, since 1942," said Janet Shelton, Vice Chair of the Newton-le-Willocks Sea Cadets. "Maintenance is never-ending and we are always looking for grants to improve the building and ways of reducing our bills."

"Receiving this grant has made a huge difference already as we have been able to reduce the number of light fittings needed or changed them to smaller fittings and still get a better lighting. Our cadets and staff noticed straight away how bright it was compared to before. We have also found that we don't need as many strip lights on our main deck. It would have taken us a long time to save for this project without support."

"We hope our cadets can see that just by changing a light bulb it can make a difference. But I also think that our role relating to climate change has to improve and we need to look at further improvements as a long-term effect rather than a quick fix. We are all responsible for doing our bit."

The unit is now looking to apply for other grants the next stage so they can "move away from gas all together", added Ms Shelton.

Megan, a 15-year-old cadet at the unit said: "As one of the values of Sea Cadets is commitment, we as a unit are committed to helping with climate change, we have done this through changing our lighting in the unit to become a greener unit and this is only the start."

"I think it is a great idea to add eco-friendly lights to our unit as it helps the environment," said another cadet, Harry, aged 10.

"The new lighting doesn't just benefit the unit it also benefits the environment. I'm looking forward to what comes next, we have a big old building but it doesn't mean we can't be more 'green'," said Emily, aged 14.

The funding opportunity follows the setting up of a multi-agency Climate Change Commission in response to the council's declaration of a climate emergency and a commitment to achieving zero-carbon status by 2040.

Cllr Andy Bowden, St Helens Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, said: "Climate change is a huge issue which impacts everyone, only recently we have seen our borough heavily impacted by a succession of storms and this kind of impact could be something we have to deal with more regularly if we do not take steps like this and the implementation of our Climate Response Plan, with the support of our Climate Change Commission, to tackle it and its effect so we can all look forward to a greener future."

Funded projects will be completed by the end of March 2022, when the Climate Change Commission will review the success of the projects. For more information about St Helens Borough's journey to net zero emissions visit netzero.sthelens.gov.uk.

Shaping young leaders in the east

LEICESTER Unit hosted the ILM Level 2 Young Leaders Award Course for Eastern Area.

This course, led by CVQO, gave 18 cadets aged between 14 and 19 the opportunity to complete a nationally-recognised qualification, alongside other senior cadets from the area.

The course is designed to support the development of leadership skills and behaviours in young people through a mix of practical and classroom-based learning.

Taught content includes: team development and resilience, problem-solving and planning, how to use feedback in a positive way, setting

SMART objectives and using a SWOT analysis and how to motivate and inspire others.

SLt (SCC) Sam Clayton RNR, Executive Officer TS TIGER Leicester Sea Cadets and ASO Vocational Qualifications for Eastern Area said: "Cadets completed a variety of practical leadership activities, developing their skills as leaders and team members. They completed a workbook to evidence their learning and experiences, which will be assessed in the coming weeks. We are really proud of their efforts."

Feedback from the cadets that took part in

the course was very positive.

"The tasks were really entertaining and it was fun to watch team members try out their different ideas," said Lucy.

Imogen said: "I enjoyed the course because the range of activities was great and I enjoyed having the change to plan and lead my team in completing my own task."

Zoe said: "I enjoyed all the tasks. They helped make me a better leader and the skills I learnt will be really useful. I appreciated the support from the staff – they were enthusiastic and helpful."

Flooding fails to hamper Newport

NEWPORT Sea Cadets Unit is back in action following devastating floods that caused their unit £300,000 worth of damages.

The flooding was caused by torrential rainfall across South East Wales two years ago, just days before Christmas 2020.

On the morning of Christmas Eve, the cadets found 18 inches of flood water had poured inside and ruined their headquarters. To make matters worse, the flooding destroyed refurbishment work that was underway at the unit, after they had secured funding in March 2020.

"I was upset when I saw the damage for myself, our unit was in a horrible state," says AC Kaitlyn Summerhayes, aged 16, who has been a cadet at Newport Unit for nearly six years.

"It was cold, damp and smelly and everything had been destroyed. I thought that I had lost a big part of my life as I couldn't see how the unit would be able to re-open again."

"It took a very long time to get the repairs done," Kaitlyn continued. "I volunteered to help out so we could open up again as soon as possible."

"I learnt how to paint, repair furniture and storage units and put up hooks. It was hard work and a lot of hours, but it was great to see the unit 'come to life' again and I enjoyed the teamwork, we had many laughs on the way. It has made me appreciate the other cadets and volunteers more."

The unit's Treasurer, Ann Bowen, managed to



raise over £120,000 during 2021 to help restore what had been lost, including band equipment and specialisation equipment.

The unit was also supported by local businesses, which provided replacement furniture, while staff from the Intellectual Property Office in Newport also helped repaint the building.

This community support, along with assistance from Newport City Council and the Welsh Government, means the sea cadets have been able to get their unit back and resume normal activities.

"Between the flood damage and Covid-19, it's been a hard and challenging time but all this has made us stronger and more determined as a unit to get things done," says the Officer in Charge of Newport Unit, PPO (SCC) Lisa Summerhayes.

"Through all this, we have learnt that it's not the building that makes the unit but the people in it – we are force to be reckoned with. Each person here, both staff and volunteers, put sweat, blood and tears into rebuilding our unit. We are truly a team and we can overcome anything that is thrown at us."

"It took a long time to get everything back to normal but now our unit is better than ever, it's like a whole new building," added AC Alex Jones, aged 16.

During a recent visit to the group's restored headquarters, Newport East MS John Griffiths praised the unit for "their tireless hard work and efforts".

"Newport Sea Cadets offer great opportunities for those in the community, including offering vocational qualifications and a safe space for children to develop skills and make friends," he said.

"I look forward to seeing the organisation continue its fantastic work as it seeks to expand its provision in the coming months."



We've got all the Burgees

POOLE Sea Cadets have been awarded a Burgee once again, the highest form of recognition that can be awarded to a Sea Cadet Corps unit.

This is the 11th Burgee Award in a row that Poole Sea Cadets have achieved. The Mayor of Poole, Councillor Julie Bagwell presented the award to the unit. Ms Bagwell is also the Patron of Poole Sea Cadets, as well as Admiral of the Port of Poole.

Commanding Officer, SLt (SCC) Reece Oliver RNR, said: "It's great that Poole is recognised again as a high performing Unit with a 2021 Burgee."

"It's our 11th Burgee in a row now, the last three being under my command. It's amazing to think the unit can consistently deliver to such a high level which is simply down to dedication of the volunteers through the years that enable the best cadet experience possible. It's also thanks to the cadets themselves, who so eagerly take the opportunities."

"It places pressure to want to drive and continue to perform at this level but the benefits are clear, not only for our cadets but others in the wider Wessex District. The last year has clearly been challenging but I hope we can continue on this trend."

The award recognises the hard work of volunteers, cadets, and the unit's management team. Sea Cadets units are inspected by the Ministry of Defence annually and are graded from needing improvement, to exceeding the levels expected.

The ministry looks at every sea cadet group each year, assessing them on everything from the quality of cadets' training, qualifications, courses and experiences and how the youngsters perform in training to how well the unit is run in general.

The 'very good' units receive a Pennant award while the units judged to be 'the best' are awarded a Burgee.

Refurbished laptops handed to Harlow cadets

HARLOW Sea Cadets Unit has received a donation of refurbished laptops from eco-conscious tech company, ITVET, as part of its Laptops for Schools scheme.

As well as saving the laptops from going to recycling, the donation will support the cadets with their training activities and help them to earn badges and qualifications.

PPO (SCC) Kelly Aimable from Harlow Sea Cadets

said: "We would like to say a massive thank you to ITVET for donating laptops to our unit. These laptops will be a great help in delivering everything the Sea Cadet Corps has to offer our cadets."

ITVET launched the Laptops for Schools campaign during lockdown when thousands of disadvantaged children didn't have access to IT equipment to continue learning remotely, with over 1,000 laptops donated so far.

CEO of ITVET Ltd, Richard Fountain, said: "We rely on companies that donate their laptops to our Laptops for Schools campaign and we're so grateful for every laptop we receive. The scheme provides digital inclusion to those who don't have reliable access to devices for their learning."

If you are interested in donating your unwanted laptops in working condition, please visit <https://www.itvet.co.uk/laptops-for-schools>.



Winging it in Colombia

Royal Marine returns to paragliding

THE British Winter Open Paragliding Championships were held in Colombia, South America. Royal Marines Colour Sergeant Grant Oseland, *main picture*, reports on how he got on.

One of the reasons I enjoy racing paragliders is because of how little understanding of the sport the general population has.

The normal response I get when asked about paragliding is "Ah, yes paragliding, that's where you jump off a cliff isn't it?"

Well no, not really, it's far more complex than that, most of the time cliffs are not even involved.

Earlier this year saw me travelling to a small town called Roldanillo that sits in the Valle del Cauca, Colombia.

Probably unknown to most people but a very special place for paragliders. It is known as Colombia's flying capital and has hosted a range of international paragliding competitions including the paragliding world cup and is becoming recognised as one of the world's best locations for racing paragliders.

This was the first time I have competed after the worldwide outbreak of Covid and travel restrictions being lifted.

The event was the third British Winter Open and was attended by 140 of the world's top pilots, who were all keen to place highly in order to boost their world rankings.

Having not flown competitively for over two years I was keen to blow some cobwebs away but cautious of pushing

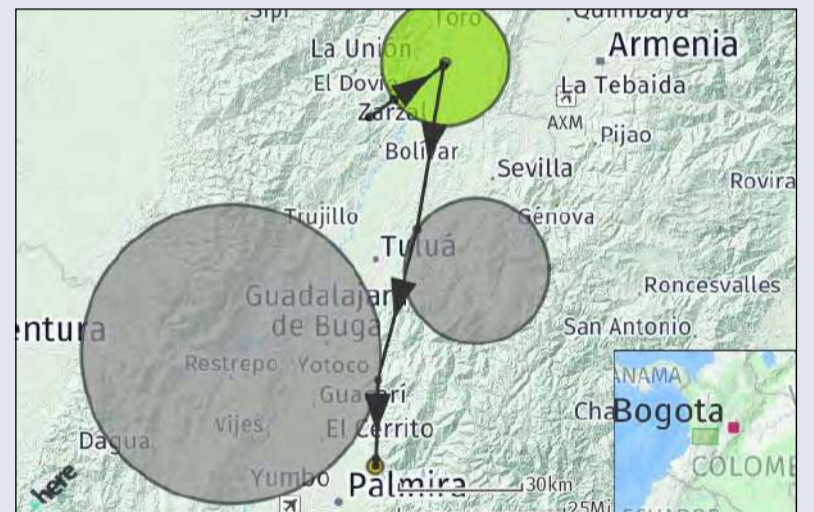
too hard and becoming a victim to lack of currency.

The competition was held over six days with a different task set every day, weather conditions allowing.

The tasks (racecourse) are set by the meet director and the pilots are briefed

each morning on takeoff and try to maximise the day's possibilities with the weather and local topography.

An average task distance will be anything from 50km up to about 150km, but greater distances have been set to maximise the days weather conditions.



Nowadays the task is programmed using specific GPS-based instruments and waypoints that give navigation directions in the air.

The task is a race to a goal that starts in the air, so 140 pilots have to take off and then jostle for their best start position in an invisible GPS marked start cylinder high up in the air.

Normally this is the most uncomfortable or tense part of the race as the paragliders are all wing tip to wing tip trying to occupy the best start position.

As soon as the start is open the race is on and 140 paragliders all apply full speed and head off down the course line.

There are numerous tactics to apply on the task, but most involve trying to dominate the lead gaggle from above and even the slightest hesitation or poor route choice will punish your position harshly.

The race is scored in a rather bizarre and sometimes baffling method that sees not only speed rewarded but also bonus points for pushing out front, so it's possible to win a task despite not crossing the finish line first!

This event had a total of five valid tasks. Each task is scored individually then added up to give the overall results and competition winners.

Over the week of competing, we were awarded some amazing weather conditions with thermal updrafts that averaged 7-8 meters per second, for reference that is nearly 30 kph, but going straight up and routes that took us over

some remote jungle sided mountains with very remote villages nestled in the trees and cruising over them about 3,000 meters (9,900ft) up at times.

I managed to place tenth Brit overall, which I was not expecting due to such a long layoff.

This position will qualify me to compete again at the Paragliding World Cup, if I can juggle the time away from work to compete!

This year is shaping up to be a great season with many international competitions providing the chance to compete at the international level.

This year will also see the first overseas Inter-Service Paragliding Championships taking place in Slovenia in June, enabling the top five Royal Navy and Royal Marines pilots to compete at both a tri-service and International level.

Colombia is not a rich country, but its people were extremely welcoming and friendly, and this was an experience that I will remember for a long time.

It was all made possible by the ongoing support I receive from the Royal Navy Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association and the various equipment loans and sporting grants provided by the Royal Navy Sports Lottery and Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

■ If you are interested in starting paragliding, more information is available at Royalnavy.mod.uk/navyfit. Adventurous training courses are free of charge.

Wild ends an era with Beijing bronze

ROYAL Navy submariner Brett Wild has retired from Paralympics sport after winning a bronze medal at the Beijing games alongside partially sighted skier Millie Knight.

It brings the curtain down on a glittering career as guide to Millie. Together they won two World Championships, four Paralympic medals and 12 World Cup gold medals.

"I've had an incredible experience guiding Millie," said Brett. "None of this would have been possible without the Royal Navy's support and granting me elite athlete status."

"I think it's unbelievable what we've achieved for the past seven years skiing together," added Brett.

"The trust we've built up is unbelievable. I trust Millie with my life. We're best friends on and off the snow."

"We've had two incredible successful Paralympic games with GB. It's a sad day but it's a proud day. It's been amazing. It's been such a great journey."

Millie said: "We've been through the toughest times together, the best times together."

"It's really sad that this was our last race, but I'm proud."

Millie and Brett brought an era to an end by winning the first medal of the Games in China for the GB team, securing bronze in the Women's Downhill Visually Impaired competition.

The pair finished in a time of 1:23.20 at the Yanqing National Alpine Centre.

Millie said: "The feelings haven't really sunk in, there are so many thoughts and emotions going through my head. I feel like I'm on cloud nine and I just genuinely can't believe that this is happening to us."

"Crossing the line with a smile on my face was our number one goal – we genuinely didn't believe we were at the level that would get us a medal. This bronze is something very special."

"Brett's belief and confidence in me has very much inspired me and made me want to do it not just for me, my family friends and sponsors but for Brett."

"This medal ranks above our silver four years ago in PyeongChang – we are every different people and have gone through some tough things and it's changed us."

They headed to Beijing with the 25-strong GB squad for the 2022 games in good form and determined to enjoy the experience – but were cautious about their prospects of success as they looked to put several injuries behind them.

"Millie and I are approaching these games slightly differently to PyeongChang. Our main goal this time is to ski our best and Millie wants to smile crossing the line knowing she gave it her all," said Brett,



MEDALLISTS: Brett Wild and Millie Knight on the podium after winning a silver medal in South Korea in 2018

who is based at the Scottish Institute of Sport in Glasgow.

"Millie has suffered three major concussions since the 2018 games so there is a lot more fear than there was before."

"We've worked with lots of different sport psychologists to overcome these fears. It's been hard but I believe that the hard times only make us stronger as a team."

Brett himself suffered a knee injury which required extensive treatment and rehab, while Millie's concussions saw her out for four months. This meant preparations for the games – which were also interrupted by Covid-19 – didn't properly get underway on the slopes until October.

It meant their season coming into

Beijing didn't go to plan with only one month's training together prior to World Cup races in December.

Despite that, Brett and Millie picked up a bronze medal at their first World Cup of the season in Austria, before being crowned overall Super G Crystal Globe winners after victory in Sweden.

They then topped that by becoming World Champions in the Super Combined race in Lillehammer, Norway, in January.

"We didn't expect much from the races but did exceptionally well given the circumstances," said Brett. "We were delighted to peak at such a great time."

Brett, from Glasgow, has been skiing since he was three years old and began racing when he was just seven, he has also raced for the Navy and Combined services team.

Millie, who was competing in her third Paralympics, and Brett have been skiing together since February 2016. Brett has elite athlete status, meaning he is able to put his military work on hold to pursue his ski guide career.

"It feels amazing to be given this opportunity for a second time," Brett said. "I wouldn't be able to commit to the demanding programme Millie and I endure without the Royal Navy's fantastic support."

"I hope I can make the Royal Navy proud after everything they have given me. I feel privileged to get to represent both the Royal Navy and Great Britain at these Paralympic Games."

Millie added: "Being selected for my third Paralympic Games is an incredible feeling, to be going with Brett as my guide and best friend is special."

Olympics pride for bobsleighter

BOBSLEIGHING Bootneck Taylor Lawrence savoured every moment of his Winter Olympics debut in Beijing.

Lawrence was part of the four-man bobsleigh team which finished sixth and produced the best sliding performance of Team GB's games in the final event of the Olympic fortnight.

The 25-year-old Royal Marine went into the Games in China with medal hopes after a fantastic season that saw them win three four-man medals on the World Cup circuit.

Winning silverware would have put the icing on the cake, but Germany took gold and silver and Canada bronze.

The self-funded crew of Lawrence, paratrooper Greg Cackett, Nick Gleeson and pilot Brad Hall were competing against the sport's powerhouses and come away with their heads held high.

"I'm definitely very proud of the performance," said Hall of his crew's performance.

"We can hold our heads up high and know that our performance was good. We did the best we could and sixth place for a small nation that doesn't have its own ice track or much funding is definitely something to be very proud of."

"I've just enjoyed absolutely every single moment of it," said Taylor.

"Along the years I've learnt to become a better brakeman, team-mate, athlete and just a better person all round."

"Having all these guys supporting me and everyone back home, it has been absolutely unbelievable."

Lawrence put his military career on hold for a shot at sporting triumph at the Olympics and knew he had the Corps at his back during the Games.

"Since I qualified for the games, there's been an influx of support from people who are still serving and those who aren't," he said before departing for Beijing.

"It's been overwhelming. It's been amazing to know those people have been watching and are supporting all the way to race day."

Lawrence played football and rugby with the Royal Marines and while playing the latter was spotted for his bobsleigh potential.

Being 6ft 4in and quick, Lawrence had the right stature to become a bobsleighter and scarcely looked back.

"It is so unique and so different," he said. "You can't describe the feeling of going down the track or what it is like until you actually get into it. It is such a niche sport that not a lot of people do that that is one of the things that drew me towards it."

"Obviously you have got the speed element of it, the danger element of it as well, the fact it is just so different and it is a cool sport to do. That is what drew me in, and what has kept me here now."



A Naval Charity providing personal help and advice for all serving and former members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, 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:
whiteensign.co.uk
0207 407 8658
office@whiteensign.co.uk





Sailor carries games baton

ROYAL Navy sailor Glen Clifton 'crossed Africa' as he carried the Queen's Baton on the latest leg of its relay ahead of this summer's Commonwealth Games.

More than 2,500 miles separate Malawi in eastern Africa from Ghana in the Gulf of Guinea – it's a flight of several hours, a rail or road journey of several days.

Or just a few seconds on foot for Royal Navy senior rating Chief Petty Officer Glen Clifton.

One minute he was in Malawi. The next Ghana.

Admittedly these were the pavilions representing the Commonwealth nations, two of 192 countries represented at Dubai's Expo 2020 (delayed by the pandemic).

The 35-year-old supply chain specialist from Portsmouth, who serves with Naval Party 1023 based in the emirate, was one of 11 people selected to carry the baton for around 500 metres through the grounds of the international exhibition on the latest leg of its epic journey to mark 'UK Day' at the expo.

Army, RN and RAF personnel serving in the region were among those picked to be 'baton bearers' as well as Olympians including gold-medal-winning javelin athlete Tessa Sanderson and the Duke of Cambridge, who ran the 11th and final leg.

"To represent the Royal Navy on a global platform is a real honour for me and my family," said a proud Glen, who handed over the baton to Ed Clancy, a triple gold medal winner in cycling's team pursuit at the Olympics.

"Being part of the relay team on the day that included HRH Prince William during the Queen's Platinum jubilee year is a career highlight for me which will take some beating."

The relay, which began last year, will take all 72 nations and overseas territories in the Commonwealth of nations as it travels 90,000 miles in the hands of more than 7,500 'baton bearers'.

It will spend its final 25 days on UK soil before being delivered to the games in Birmingham for the opening ceremony on July 28.

Heroic performance

Brothers bow out of Challenge Cup after brave display

DESPITE a heroic performance the RN Rugby League team bowed out in the fourth round of the Challenge Cup after an historic run.

Facing championship team Batley Bulldogs – one level below the Super League – the Brothers went down 66-6 to the professional XIII on their home turf.

The Yorkshiremen featured in last season's promotion eliminator – the so called million-pound game – to give an idea of their pedigree.

That puts an otherwise heavy defeat into perspective and RNRL players and coaching staff alike can be mightily proud of this season's achievement in reaching this far in the competition – Rugby League's FA Cup.

RNRL head coach Steve Lockton had his players at Burnaby Road for a couple of days training before moving up to West Yorkshire to prepare.

A very respectable crowd of almost 1,300 included a significant and very vocal RN Barmy Army consisting of families, friends, ex-players and veterans.

With the game under way for only a couple of minutes the home side posted their first score: winger Jonny Campbell launched himself at the try line narrowly avoiding his opposite number, Mike Haldenby, to touch down while still in the air – his 100th try for the club.

Unfortunately for the Brothers this was the story of the game: the RNRL forwards especially stood their ground and competed equally in midfield, but the speed of the Bulldogs' playing the ball and their movement around the ruck, led by scrumhalf Tom Gilmore, was the difference between the two sides.

The Brothers held the Bulldogs to 14 points going into the second quarter of the match, but a further four tries before the break with additional conversions saw the home side well ahead at the break.

Despite playing up the slope in the second half the Brothers gave it a real go with more mighty hits from the pack while the backs were a threat to the Bulldogs with some clever kicking from Darren Bamford and Callum Cone turning the home side's defence.

Finally, the score came for RNRL: another break on the Brothers' left brought them to the half way line and following a quick play the ball RNRL spread the ball



across the field and towards the home goal line. James Teixeira managed to take the ball and broke the Bulldogs' line to touch down.

This score brought the crowd to its feet and the Barmy Army went wild as the score was right in front of them! After starting the move on the opposite side of the field Bamford finished the move with a terrific conversion to give the Brothers their final score of the game at 54-6.

With the game being televised on the BBC the scoring move was there for all to see and was talked home by former GB RL coach and player Brian Noble along with commentator Sharon Shortle.

Another couple of tries saw the Bulldogs home by 66-6 and a place in the fifth round draw with Super League giants such as Wigan, St Helens and Leeds.

"What a journey.... People don't see the sacrifices everyone makes to get in the position we did – our families, loved

ones and children all miss out so we can do what we love and our achievements wouldn't have been possible without their support," said a proud Lockton after the match.

Footage of the match is available on the BBC iPlayer at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/10056412/challenge-cup-batley-bulldogs-v-royal-navy> And you can watch the RN try at <https://www.facebook.com/thechallengecup/videos/1148156369092350>

Brothers on the Day: 1. Sean Houghton 2. Mike Haldenby 3. Gavin Duffy 4. Jack Bartlett 5. Kiniviliame Dakuliga 6. Darren Bamford 7. Callum Cone 8. Jonathan Griffiths (pictured right) 9. James Tilley 10. James Parry 11. James Teixeira 12. Nathan Lee 13. Ben Taylor 14. Matty Gaskell 15. Danny Johnson 16. Brodie Lee-Butler 17. Rhys Joel 18. Louis McKenna.

Pictures: LPhot Lee Blease



Great gig for rowers to start their season

RM Tamar Cornish Pilot Gig Club, based at 47 Cdo Plymouth, have had a strong start in their first race of the year at the Cotehele winter league regatta.

It was the first event that the club was able to take part in since they last competed in the 3 Rivers Race in March 2020.

The race at Cotehele is part of the Tamar Winter League, a series of events usually held in plastic gigs, held locally when the days are darker, weather wetter and the wooden gigs are getting some TLC ahead of the 3 Rivers Race – the first event of the gig rowing season.

Throughout the pandemic team members kept fit during lockdowns, motivating each other by sharing PBs and routines, then back on the water in masks and training for events which were often cancelled.

On the day of the race, gigs were put in the water and rowed to the start line where the teams were set off in heats for a mile long sprint to the finish.

Crews jostled for the best line to avoid sand banks and Ladies B team (Cox – Mark Woodford 47 Cdo, 6 – Fran Hockley JSSADC, 5 – LH Samantha Haddon 30 Cdo, 4 – AB Marvet Hadaway 3 Bde HQ, 3 – AB Natalie Brooks HMS Raleigh, 2 – SLt Emma Lowe HMS Vivid,

1 – Lt Grace Wilkie HMS Artful) had a neck-and-neck finish to claim victory.

Due to some of the Men's B team isolating as a precaution, two of the women stepped up and the team came in sixth place (Cox – Lt Grace Wilkie, 6 – Cdr John Barry HMS Raleigh, 5 – Mr Mark Woodford, 4 – Sgt Dan Langley 47 Cdo, 3 – LH Samantha Haddon, 2 Sgt Mike Thurlow 47 Cdo, 1 SLt Emma Lowe), after a competitive performance, clashing oars in a bid to overtake Ramez.

Ladies A (same crew as Ladies B) finished third in the club's final race.

Teams set for Twickers

TWICKENHAM beckons for both the male and female Royal Navy Rugby Union teams as they take on the Army at the end of the month.

The women's game is being played at the stadium for the first time in a day of top-level Service sport.

The event, on April 30, will start with the men competing for the Babcock Trophy at 2pm, while the women will play at 4.30pm.

The annual match is the largest amateur sporting event in the UK and attracts crowds of more than 80,000.

An annual fixture since 1907, it has only been missed three times, during both world wars and in 2020-21 because of the pandemic. The Army won the championship in 2019.

Personnel wishing to purchase tickets should visit navyrugbyunion.co.uk/tickets. Members of the public wishing to buy tickets should visit eticketing.co.uk/rfu/events

Carrier boxing



Bout 5

Pictures: LPhoto Lee Blease

ROYAL Navy boxers showcased skill and grit during an evening of boxing on board HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The aircraft carrier hosted eight bouts between Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force elite athletes – the first time such an event has been hosted on a navy carrier for more than 20 years.

Of the eight fights, six were won by navy personnel, who were cheered on by a sell-out crowd made up of the ship's company, distinguished guests and senior officers from all three Services, including Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell and former Fleet Commander and commanding officer of HMS Queen Elizabeth Vice-Admiral Jerry Kyd.

Event organiser Lieutenant Commander Graham Blick (an England Boxing referee) praised the night as a resounding success and was grateful to have the chance to officiate the first fight.

He said: "Having established the ship's boxing club in 2016, and watched it grow into the sporting hub of the ship and often a firm favourite on any VIP tour, it had always been my strong desire to stage a boxing show onboard. It was also a fitting tribute to end a fabulous 12 months of activity for HMS Queen Elizabeth. It was a fantastic night, with all boxers and officials showcasing their talents in front of a packed-out audience, in a unique venue."

THE RESULTS

Bout 1

Welterweight: AB Ewan Thomas (RN) vs Pte Fuller (Army)

In round one both men boxed cautiously with AB Thomas gaining the advantage with a higher work rate and volume of cleaner scoring punches.

Round two started with both men exchanging with good accurate scoring blows but it was AB Thomas who edged the round with his more aggressive style and work rate. Round three saw both men again exchanging with good accurate blows but again it was AB Thomas who took the round, this time showing some good offensive/defensive skills. AB Thomas was victorious, winning the contest by a well-deserved unanimous decision.

Bout 2

Light-Middleweight: Cpl Chris Murray (RM) vs Pte Buckley (Army)

Cpl Murray started quickly in round one, outscoring his Army opponent with a higher work rate and more accurate scoring blows. Round two was a much closer affair with Pte Buckley edging the round with cleaner scoring blows and good defensive skills. Round three saw Cpl Murray start quickly out working his Army opponent with a good controlled aggressive posture and using his jab well. Cpl Murray was victorious, winning the contest by a close split decision.

Bout 3

Light Middleweight: Mne Gabriel Knowles (RM) vs SAC Lennon (RAF).

Both men showed great heart and determination throughout the contest and demonstrated good offensive and defensive skills; this was an evenly contested bout throughout. SAC Lennon took the victory by a close split decision verdict.

Bout 4

Middleweight: Mne Billy Watson (RM) vs Pte Logan (Army)

The bout was a very cagey affair throughout the contest, with both men showing very good boxing skills. It was Mne Watson who came out on top landing the more precise eye-catching blows, he eventually won the contest by a close split decision victory.

Bout 5

Middleweight: AB Drew Webb (RN) vs L/Cpl Arthur (Army)

This was hard contested bout from start to finish, with both men showing heart, grit and determination throughout the contest.

It was one round each going into the final round, both boxers engaged and stood their ground in the centre of the ring throwing powerful hooks and upper cuts, but it was AB Webb who came out victorious with a very close, well-deserved split decision verdict.

Bout 6

Super Bantamweight: AET Britney Walker (RN) and SAC Lyall (RAF)

Round one began with Walker boxing well on the back foot, showing great hand speed and reflexes, she dominated her RAF opponent with well executed combinations to both head and body and showing some great defensive skills throughout the contest.

AET Walker showcased herself in delivering an extremely composed performance for such a young individual in front of sell-out crowd onboard the QNLZ. She came out victorious earning a wide margin unanimous points victory.

The manner of the victory earned AET Walker Boxer of the Night Award.

Bout 7

Light Heavy-weight: AB Jason McCormick (RN) and Pte Power (Army)

It was hard contested from the first bell to final bell, with both men boxing aggressively and showcasing their skills throughout. Pte Power won a clear well-deserved unanimous points decision.

Bout 8

Cruiserweight: AB Kohen Williams (RN) and Cpl Small (Army)

Both men started the contest fast and furious, throwing menacing hooks and upper cuts. It was Cpl Small who received a standing eight count from the referee in round one after being caught with a hard one-two combination to the head.

Round two began with the same tempo as the first with both men engaging with powerful combinations. It was in round three where the contest was finally halted by the referee due to a barrage of hard blows to both the head and body of Cpl Small. AB Williams came out victorious with a well-earned win by RSC.



Bout 7



Bout 8



AB Williams wins Bout 8



Bout 6



AET Britney Walker was named Boxer of the Night.

Royal Navy rowers pick up medals from three contests

GLOBAL GOLDS

ELEVEN members of the Royal Navy's Indoor Rowing team competed in high-level indoor rowing championships (IRCs) via three virtual races over a four-week period.

These IRCs were: Canadian (also doubling as world championship qualifier), USA, and the World Rowing Indoor Championships (WRIC). Races comprised 2k and 500m distances for men and women, heavyweight and lightweight within age group categories, predominantly for ten-year ranges up to 50 years of age, and five-year age ranges for those of a more advanced age.

Tough WRIC qualification criteria required submission of verified video evidence of performance in a time trial or race, thus the Canadian IRC provided the optimum method to do this as a WRIC formally sanctioned event. WRIC finals were to comprise a maximum of 15 racers per event, with the top three from each of the five continents to qualify, but with the next best in line to fill any gaps.

The Canadian IRC saw the Royal Navy pick up three golds and one silver. WO1 Mark Branson (HMS Sultan) took gold in the men's lightweight 60-64 2k event in a world-class time of 7min 0.7sec, putting him in fourth place to qualify for the Euro WRIC.

Gold went to WO1 Shaun Gibbs (DES Bristol) in the men's heavyweight 40-49 2k in 6min 14.7sec, giving him fourth place in the Euro WRIC qualifier, and C/Sgt James Wade (3 Cdo) completed the gold haul in the men's heavyweight 30-39 2k in 6min 04.6sec, putting him in top spot for the Euro WRIC qualifiers.

Team Manager Paul Winton (MCTA) claimed a second place in his men's heavyweight 65+ 2k in 7 min 13.3 sec (ultimately good enough for WRIC final) as POET(ME) Emily Fray (Sultan) knocked nine seconds off her 2k personal best to finish fifth in the women's 30-39 age group in 7 min 40.7 sec. Lt Cdr Nick Dodds (HMS Queen Elizabeth) rowed a 2k personal best of 7 min 18.4 sec in the men's heavyweight 40-49 in his debut race.

The US IRC had much higher numbers competing, much higher standards and some slightly different age groups but this did not prevent WO1 Branson winning another 2k gold (Lwt 60+) in 7 min 02.2 sec.

There were three Royal Navy rowers who finished fourth – Brig Matt Jackson (DirDefAc) rowed 6 min 39 sec in the 2k men's heavyweight

50-54 race.

Surg Capt Dan Connor (JHGS) rowed 6 min 57.2 sec in the men's lightweight 50-54 2k.

Completing the trio of fourth placers was CPO Claire Drew (CNR), another consistent high-level performer, as befits her position as a runner up in the 2020/21 RN Sportswoman of the Year Awards, rowing just shy of a lifetime personal best to finish the women's heavyweight 37-43 2k in 7 min 29.7 sec.

Lt Sam Cass (820 NAS) was the fastest RN rower on the day with a 6 min 21.0 sec 2k sixth place in the men's heavyweight 27-32 race.

Paul Winton's disappointment with a 2k of 7 min 18.1 sec was offset by the opportunity to go faster in the WRIC finals.

The World Rowing Indoor Championships (WRIC) finals had six Royal Navy rowers who met the tough entry criteria – with all six delivering strong performances.

LPT Leah Ravuoco (Nelson) set the scene on the opening day with a fifth-place finish in the women's heavyweight 30-39 500m in 1 min 40.9 sec, an excellent achievement in her first season of racing.

The outstanding C/Sgt James Wade became the first ever Royal Navy World Rowing Indoor Champion winning the men's heavyweight 30-39 2k title in 6 min 03.3 sec, a personal best in a very competitive race, where the lead changed hands many times in the final 750m as he won by 0.4 sec over his USA rival.

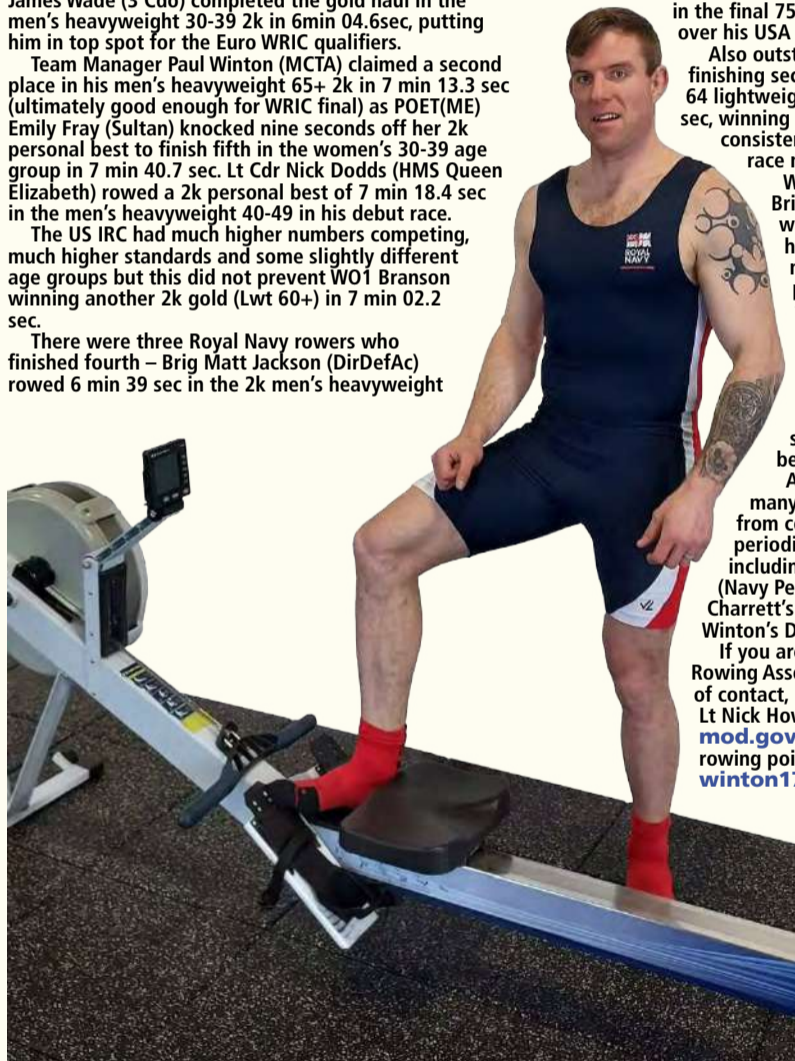
Also outstanding was WO1 Branson, finishing second in the men's 60-64 lightweight 2k in 7 min 02.2 sec, winning silver after a season of consistent world-class times and race medal success.

WO1 Shaun Gibbs (DES Bristol & also RNIRPP) was fourth in the men's heavyweight 40-49 2k in 6 min 14.9 sec, just shy of a personal best. Paul Winton was fifth in the men's heavyweight 65-69 2k in 7 min 14.5 sec with CPO Claire Drew sixth place in the women's heavyweight 40-49 2k in 7 min 29.7 sec, just short of a personal best.

All of the above racers, plus many others, have benefited from commitment to structured, periodised training regimes including within Cdr Jim Thomson's (Navy People) RNIRPP, CPOPT Rich Charrett's SULTAN Massive and Paul Winton's DP Group.

If you are interested in joining RN Rowing Association (RNRA) initial point of contact, indoor and on the water, is Lt Nick Howe nicholas.howe100@mod.gov.uk. Additional indoor rowing point of contact paul.winton177@mod.gov.uk

Report:
Paul Winton



Left, World Champion C/Sgt James Wade



WO1 Mark Branson had a great season of indoor rowing success

Pictures: LPhot Mark Hogan



LPT Leah Ravuoco (HMS Nelson), left, came close to a medal in the 500m race at the WRIC, while CPO Claire Drew (CNR) narrowly missed a personal best as she finished sixth in her 2k category



WALL SHIELDS OF ROYAL NAVY SHIPS



Hand painted on wooden base 6" x 7"

£65.60 including UK postage and packing
REDUCED PRICES given for orders of 3 or more
SPECIAL PRICES given for 10, 25, 50 and 100
CRESTED TIES TO YOUR OWN SPECIAL DESIGN
(minimum 50)

Specialist experience over 100 years

C.H. MUNDAY LTD
Rosemary Cottage, Churt Road, Headley,
Bordon, Hants GU35 8SS
Telephone: 01428 714971
email: enquiries@chmunday.co.uk
www.chmunday.co.uk

Some friendships are meant to last



#navywomen

Scan the QR code and join now!

Join the Association of Wrens and connect with friends old and new

Association of Wrens and Women of the Royal Naval Services
Tel: 02392 725141
Email: office@wrens.org.uk



www.wrens.org.uk

Deaths

Richard Fawcett, LS. Served from 1942 to 1946 in HMS Ganges, Lulworth, 38th Flotilla, C&M Reserve Fleet, Dartmouth. In June 1944, aged 19, he was the coxswain of a tank landing craft conveying Allied Forces to Sword Beach for D-Day. Member of Norwich Branch of RNA.

Michael Griggs, Radio Operator. Served Jan 1954 to July 1961 in HMS Ganges, Superb, Dolphin, Sea Scout, Artemis, Sentinel, Trenchant, Totem, Seneschal, Tabard, Astute, Adamant, Mercury, Vernon, Diamond, and Victory. On leaving the RN he served at GCHQ 1962-93 and was a member of the Ex-Ganges Association. Died January 25, aged 85.

Sub Lt RNVR John A F Beams. Midget Submarines. Died December 31, aged 96.

Sub Lt (A) Derek J Buckley OBE RNVR. 879 NAS. HMS Attacker. Died January 30, aged 96.

Lt Cdr Sir Peter R Buckley KCVO. HMS Wakeful, Daedalus, and Vernon. Died January 31, aged 94.

Cdr Richard A P Cossins. HMS Leopard, President, Mercury, Drake, Rooke, Bulwark. Dryad. RAF Wyton. FOF3. Died February 12, aged 78.

Sub Lt RNVR William W Kennedy. HMS Glasgow. Died December 23, aged 98.

Capt James C Mearns. HMS Intrepid, Achilles, Neptune, Coventry, Bristol, Vernon, Nelson, DGNMT, NATO Rome, C-in-C Fleet, SAC Atlantic. Died February 27, aged 81.

Lt Cdr RNR Thomas J Metcalf RD. London Div RNR. Died February 20, aged 90.

Cdr Michael J Mullane. HMS Excellent, Hubberston. Heron, Seahawk, Albion, Bulwark, Seahawk, Leander, Osprey, Euryalus, Achilles. FOF3. RNSC Greenwich. FONA. Died February 19, aged 77.

Rear Adm Ian H Pirnie CB. HMS Saker, Dolphin,

Repulse, Neptune, Antrim. DNW. AUWE. Nav Sec. CSSE. Ch Polaris Exec. RNEC Manadon. Died January 17, aged 86.

Lt Cdr Robert L Sutton. HMS Dryad, Courier, Lysander. Died February 3, aged 95.

Cdr Derwent G Turnbull. HMS Fulmar, RNEC Manadon. Died December 27, aged 99.

Col RM Timothy J M Wilson. 40 & 42 CDO RM. RM Eastney. HQ Cdo Forces. Drafting and Records RM. MCDEC Quantic. Died February 8, aged 89.

Douglas Charles Barrett, AB (Torpedoman). Served from 1943-46 in HMS Ganges, Malaya and Troubridge, British Pacific Fleet. Died February 27, aged 98.

Brian Hepworth, FAA. Served from 1956 in HMS Ganges, Seahawk, Fulmar, Lossiemouth (Tain Range), and Victorious. Member of Derby branch of RNA and HMS Ganges Association. Died December 14, 2021.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC

Capt Christopher J Phillips. HMS Collingwood, Andromeda, Saker. DGNMT. DNMP. Capt Naval Drafting. Ch Exec Dockyards. Died February 9, aged 91.

Cdr Cecil E Robins OBE. HMS Excellent, Dryad, Undaunted, Osprey, Eagle, Yarmouth, Dolphin. Underwater Weapons Est. Died aged 86.

Cdr Ninian L Stewart OBE. HMS Albion, Eagle, Salisbury, Warrior, Neptune, Osprey, Saker, Centurion. Died February 13, aged 89.

Lt Cdr RNR J V Duckett RD* Severn RNR, Mersey RNR, HMS Sherwood, Paragon. CTCRNR. Died aged 85.

Cdr Nicolas O G Knox. HMS Daedalus, Otter, Courageous, Neptune, Trenchant. FOSM. SM3. Died aged 75.

Lt Cdr John W Beard. HM Royal Yacht Britannia, HMS Heron, Victorious, Terror, Daedalus. HQ 3 Cdo RM. Died January 21, aged 91.

Cdr Peter G Edger OBE. HMS Daedalus, Triumph, Dolphin, Achilles, Warrior, Fearless, Mercury. Died February 2, aged 81.

Capt Richard G Hastilow CBE. HMS Excellent, Nurton, Verulam, Tartar, Dryad, Berwick, Soberton, Alacrity, London, Saker, Manchester, Bristol, Invincible, Nelson. Capt RNPT. Died February 1, aged 76.

Cdr Edward T Thring. HMS Fulmar, Victorious, Drake, Norfolk, Heron, DG Ships. Died February 6, aged 91.

Lt RNVR R J Bird

Submariners' Association

Nick O G Knox, Cdr. Served in HM Submarines Amphion 1966, Repulse 1972, Churchill 1973 to 1975, Otter 1975 to 1977, Courageous 1980 to 1982, and Trenchant 1986 -to 1988. Member of West of Scotland Branch. Died February 10.

Lloyd R Wilkinson, CPO WEA. Served Jul 1972 to Nov 1986 in HM Submarines Resolution 1974 to 1978, Renown 1978 to 1982, and Repulse 1983 to 1986. Member of Scotland Branch. Died February 15.

Tom R Trueman, CPO MEM. Served Aug 1952 to Jan 1973 in HM Submarines Auriga, Amphion, Taciturn, Truncheon, Artemis, Trump, Anchorite, Resolution, and Ocelot. Member of Vectis Branch. Died February 19.

David W Rosson, PO 2nd Coxn. Served Oct 1953 to Jan 1963 in HM Submarines Truncheon, Andrew, Astute, Seneschal, and Tudor. Member of Dolphin Branch. Died February 20.

Reunions

HMS Lowestoft: The 10th HMS Lowestoft Association reunion will take place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, Hants, on April 12/13. All who served in Lowestoft during her RN service (1961-1985) are welcome to attend. Bookings direct with hotel, for further details and a booking form please email: admin@hmslowestoft.uk

HMS Collingwood Association: Our next reunion and AGM will take place at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth from April 29 to May 2. For details contact Peter Lacey 07775941505 or email: placey173@gmail.com or Nina Young Travel Design 07588814126, email: info@nytd.uk.

HMS Nottingham: A reunion for ship's company 2000-02. at RNR Eaglet, Liverpool Docks. Saturday May 7 at 1430 for 1500 start. Full details from Alan.Murrell535@mod.gov.uk. £10 per head.

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association: The 2022 annual reunion takes place at the Red Lea Hotel in Scarborough, from May 13 to 16. Contact Secretary Denis Askham at 07773651213 or email askhamd3@gmail.com

Fulmar Mountaineering Club: A reunion of the RNAS Lossiemouth-based club takes place at The Palace Hotel, Buxton, Derbyshire, from May 13-16. Contact Bud and Lin Abbott on linwhis5@gmail.com

Royal Navy Field Gun: Annual reunion takes place at Tiffanys Hotel, Blackpool, from May 20 to May 23. Please book directly with the hotel at [www](http://www.tiffanys.com).

Ask Jack

HMS Dainty: My father is trying to contact Dave Irwin and 'Crash Carl', with whom he served with aboard HMS Dainty. My dad's name is Reg Grogan.
Lisa Hughes
07834269050

PITTOCK: I have two grandparents who died in action during WW1 and WW2 and cannot obtain photographs of them. One was AB James Arthur Pittock P/SSX5991, who died April 8 1940 on HMS Glowworm. The other was Stoker John Cooper 5685s who died on HMS Vanguard, on July 9 1917. I have tried all records with a nil result so can any of your readers help?

John Pittock
ex Leading Stoker
johnnp46@yahoo.co.uk

tiffanys.com, or call 01253 313414.

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: Our 37th AGM and Reunion takes place on May 20-23 at the Sketchley Grange Hotel, Hinchley The weekend includes the AGM, gala dinner and a visit to the National Arboretum. Contact Honorary Secretary Warwick Franklin on 01752 366611 or warwick_franklin@outlook.com

HMS Fearless: 40th anniversary reunion takes place in Portsmouth from May 28 to 29. Tickets for the gala dinner at the Royal Maritime Club need to be booked in advance and are £60 per head. Book viz: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hms-fearless-82-40th-anniversary-reunion-tickets-189862392527>. On May 29 we muster at Gosport bus station at 9.45am ahead of a service at 11am and a parade via Gosport High Street to a reception at Walpole Park. Details on Fearless Old Boys Facebook page or SAMA82 website.

HMS Aisne Last Commision 1966 to 68: A reunion is planned at the Best Western Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from June 10 to 13. Contact the hotel or NigelJest@hotmail.co.uk

HMS Troubridge: Final Commission Association 1966-69 2022 reunion will be at the North Euston Hotel, The Esplanade, Fleetwood FY7 6BN October 3 to 7, 2022. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@GMail.com or visit <http://HMSTroubridge.com>

HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association: Reunion and annual meeting takes place at the

Union Jack Club in London from October 7 to 9. For details email h.m.s.ajax.rpv@gmail.com

Undaunted/Yarmouth/Eagle Association: Annual Dinner and Dance Reunion 2022 will be held from October 28 to October 31 at the Holiday Inn Hotel, Castle Road, Cardiff, CF10 1XD. For further details contact Alan (Whiskey) Walker on 01268 548041 or email: whiskey666@outlook.com.

Royal Navy Photography Branch: Reunion planned for Friday November 4 to Monday November 7 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. All ex and serving photos, plus partners, welcome to mark the 103rd anniversary of the branch formation. Weekend includes tours of Portsmouth and the naval base, a gala dinner, and an annual meeting. Contact Danny du Feu. ddf.photography@gmail.com; Tel: 07711 083465.

HMS Ganges: A 60th anniversary celebration is planned for 54 Recruitment November 1962 Hawke 291 and 292 classes at Chatham in November. Any old boys who are interested please contact Robin Potter at r.potter60@talktalk.net

HMS St Vincent March 1953- Duncan 21. Trying to contact former class mates of mine and also TS Arethusa 1950/ 53. I also went to the following ships, Loch Ruthven 53/54 Dryad 54/55. HMS Newcastle Far East 55/57, Dryad 57/58. HMS Victorious 58/60. Dryad 61 Left Navy March 61. Leading Seaman RP2. Belong to associations at St Vincent and Victorious. tonyturner36@hotmail.co.uk

Admiralty Civilian Shore Wireless Service: My father Dermot Kirwan worked for the service during WW2 at the wireless stations in Lydd, Cooling Marshes, HMS Flowerdown, Wick, and Jamaica. Does anyone know anything about the Jamaica one?

Michael Kirwan
MichaelKirwan53@gmail.com

HMS Matchless: My step father served on the Matchless and ran the Matchless Association until his death a few years ago. We still have 2 of the association's ties and wondered if you might have any suggestions as to how we might reach any of the veterans still alive (or their relatives) who might treasure one?

Norman.haynes@ntlworld.com

Charity Front Line Naval Chaplain: We are for information about a WW2 'bish', the Rev Martin Martin-Harvey DSC. Records about Martin-Harvey, a temporary RNVR chaplain, are incomplete.

So far researchers have pieced together that he served in the Pedestal convoy to Malta in 1942. Later, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for actions while serving in the cruiser HMS Sirius.

He went ashore on D-Day, having "had the good sense to take off his clothes and carry them on his head while wading ashore, thus ensuring a dry ship-shape condition in which to engage the enemy" – he was possibly serving with the Royal Marines at the time – he is listed at Bickleigh in 1946. After the war he became the chaplain of St Lawrence College, Ramsgate.

Simon Springett
frontlinebish@gmail.com

New £15m barge to support RN ships

A STRANGE green four-legged 'monster' has arrived in Portsmouth Naval Base to keep warships prepared for front-line operations.

The £15m 'jack up barge' – named Typhoon 3000 by base staff – will revolutionise the way the city's extensive flotilla of ships are maintained.

The specialist vessel – made by Dutch company Ravestein – has four moveable legs which extend to the seabed allowing its large working platform to be lifted out of the water, creating a stable platform from which to carry out repairs and lift up machinery.

Crucially, its arrival means that smaller vessels no longer need to go in the naval base's frigate and destroyer docks during maintenance, freeing up valuable areas to carry out repairs and speeding up the complicated process of keeping ships ready

for duty.

"The barge offers the naval base a clear uptick in its capability, to improve our ship availability and deliver covered ship repairs," said Naval Base Commander, Commodore JJ Bailey.

The barge's arrival in Portsmouth from the Netherlands is the culmination of three months' work between the Royal Navy and industry partners. It will also help support engineering work on the base's two flagship aircraft carriers, with its moveable platform able to lift to access points on HMS Prince of Wales and Queen Elizabeth.

This will cancel out the need to turn the ships around while docked in Portsmouth, which is currently done – and is known as 'wind ship' – to gain access to the side of the ship facing away from land.



£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the February edition of *Navy News* (right) was the paddlesteamer Queen Empress, hired as an auxiliary paddle minesweeper in WW1 and then as an auxiliary coastal vessel in WW2.

Alex Haggood, of Bristol, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is an Arethusa-class light cruiser launched in 1935 and sunk in February 1944.

1. What was her name? and 2. Which author dedicated which book to the warship?

Please complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.

We will also accept emailed entries to subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk with



April Mystery Ship in the email header.

Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Entries must be received by May 12.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted.

Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

MYSTERY PICTURE 326

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: news@royalnavymail.mod.uk or editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk
- If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

NAVY NEWS

Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

APR 2022 No. 813: Founded 1954

Editor: Lorraine Proudlock
Email: news@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Editorial

News@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Sam.Bannister@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Graphics

Andrew.Brady150@mod.gov.uk

General enquiries

news@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Business

Business manager: Lisa Taw
bm@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Admin assistants:
Georgina.skingsley@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Mistrala.Harries@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Subscriptions and advertising:
subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk
www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews
Telephone 07773 155321

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
Or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU,
Or email: 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 Walslead 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 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 Ask Jack columns in April's Noticeboard must be received by

APR 12 2022

The Official Emblem Queen's Platinum Jubilee Lapel Badge

The official emblem design for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee is based on an original illustration drawn by Edward Roberts, a 19-year-old student at the University of Leeds. Young creatives were challenged to sum up The Queen's 70-year reign with their artistic skills. Edwards's simple platinum line design reflects The Queen's continuous service and was selected by a judging panel of industry experts. The continuous platinum line reveals a stylised St Edward's Crown, incorporating the number 70, on a round purple background associated with royalty and signifying a royal seal.

AWARD has created a high-quality enamelled lapel badge, 28mm in diameter and produced by the die-striking process with all details in raised metal and highly polished. The badge is fitted with a non-turn, superior jewellery style clutch fixing, comes in a velvet gift pouch and makes a beautiful gift to adorn any lapel, tie or scarf.

Code: QPLB £7.95
Plus P&P



ONLY
£7.95
Plus
P&P

View The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Collection at
www.awardmedals.com/QPJ



How to order

Order Online - www.awardmedals.com/QPJ

Order by Phone - Call us between 9am to 5pm on 01952 510053
Alternatively, please complete the order form enclosing a cheque/postal order or completing the credit card details and send to:
Award Productions Ltd, PO Box 300, Shrewsbury, SY5 6WP, UK

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Address

..... Postcode

Daytime Tel. No.

Email address

I enclose my cheque/postal order for £ made payable to
Award Productions Ltd or please debit my card account no:

Security Code:

Cards accepted:

Signature

If cardholder's name, address and signature are different from the one shown, please include these details.

AWARD
PROUD TO SERVE

Order Form

AWARD Productions Ltd, PO Box 300, Shrewsbury, SY5 6WP, UK
Yes, please send me the following lapel badge(s):

Code	Description	Price	Qty	Total £
QPLB	Queen's Platinum Jubilee Lapel Badge.	£7.95		
Delivery Subject to availability.		Postage/Packing/Insurance		£2.50
Please allow up to 28 days for delivery.				Total £

AWARD Guarantee

The Official Queen's Platinum Jubilee Emblem Lapel Badge is brought to you by Award Productions Ltd, international medallist. You can order with complete confidence knowing that every item is backed by the AWARD guarantee. For full terms and conditions please visit our website:
www.awardmedals.com