



NAVY NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2022



Tamar wows in Palau

HMS Tamar is pictured alongside in Koror, Palau, as she became the first British warship in nearly 100 years to visit the remote island as part of the international Pacific Partnership 22 deployment

(see centre pages)

Picture: LPhot Lee Blease

Inside: ■ HMS Lancaster, HMS Spey, HMS Hurworth, and HMS Scott

ISSN 0028-1670 09
9 770028 167191
Off-sale date: SEPTEMBER 30, 2022
£3.50

NAVY WELCOMES TRIALS SHIP



THE Royal Navy unveiled a unique testbed ship to support trials of the latest tech and autonomous systems.

The 42m, 270-tonne vessel arrived in Portsmouth and is named after former Royal Navy sailor and Nobel Prize winner Patrick Blackett.

It will be used by the navy's experimentation and innovation experts NavyX who have been driving innovation across the service and testing new technology, kit and concepts, passing them quickly to the frontline.

And procuring the Damen 4008 Fast Crew Supply ship has been an example of this with the boat purchased, adapted for Royal Navy use and delivered within 12 months.

Thanks to the addition of the XV – Experimental Vessel – Patrick Blackett, NavyX will be able to carry out more trials at sea to enhance the Fleet's operations and ensure the UK stays at the leading edge of naval warfare.

XV Patrick Blackett will enable NavyX to experiment without the need to place demand on other navy ships, many of which are deployed permanently away from UK waters.

She will also offer the chance to work closer

with industry and academia partners.

Rear Admiral James Parkin, Director Develop RN, said: "It is really exciting to have the XV Patrick Blackett in Portsmouth, the navy's first experimental vessel for many decades.

"We bought her off the shelf but we have adapted her to make her flexible and adaptable to do the innovation and experimentation that the navy needs in order to be more lethal, more available and more ready around the world in years."

He added: "This is a really important project. Patrick Blackett represents the first time in many years we have taken a risk and we have taken a risk to make sure what we are doing in the future has been tested before we take them to sea."

Damen Shipyards, in the Netherlands, won the contract for the test ship which can reach speeds of 20 knots and has been modified to support NavyX operations.

The ship, with a crew of five Royal Navy personnel, will have a "plug and play" element to support the navy's new PODS (Persistently Operationally Deployed Systems) concept which means it can be adapted to the specific trials or experiments it's carrying out

including testing drones and autonomous vessels and AI decision-making.

It will also have container secure points on the work deck so a range of payloads can be embarked, offering flexibility and a modern approach to testing.

In the future, XV Patrick Blackett will take part in Royal Navy and NATO exercises, with the possibility of it being upgraded with autonomous technology.

Colonel Tom Ryall, Head of NavyX, said: "The arrival of this vessel is a pivotal moment for NavyX's ability to deliver output for the Royal Navy.

"She will give us greater flexibility to experiment with novel military capabilities, and accelerate new technology, kit and concepts to the frontline."

NavyX chose to name the ship XV Patrick Blackett to honour the British physicist who won a Nobel Prize for Physics in 1948.

He served in the Royal Navy in the First World War and made a major contribution in the Second World War advising on military strategy and developing operational research – being named the Admiralty's first director of Operational Research.

Main picture: XV Patrick Blackett sails into Portsmouth; left to right: The ship's company salute during a welcoming ceremony held at Portsmouth Naval Base; the ship in build in the Netherlands; the Blue Ensign is raised during the welcoming ceremony.

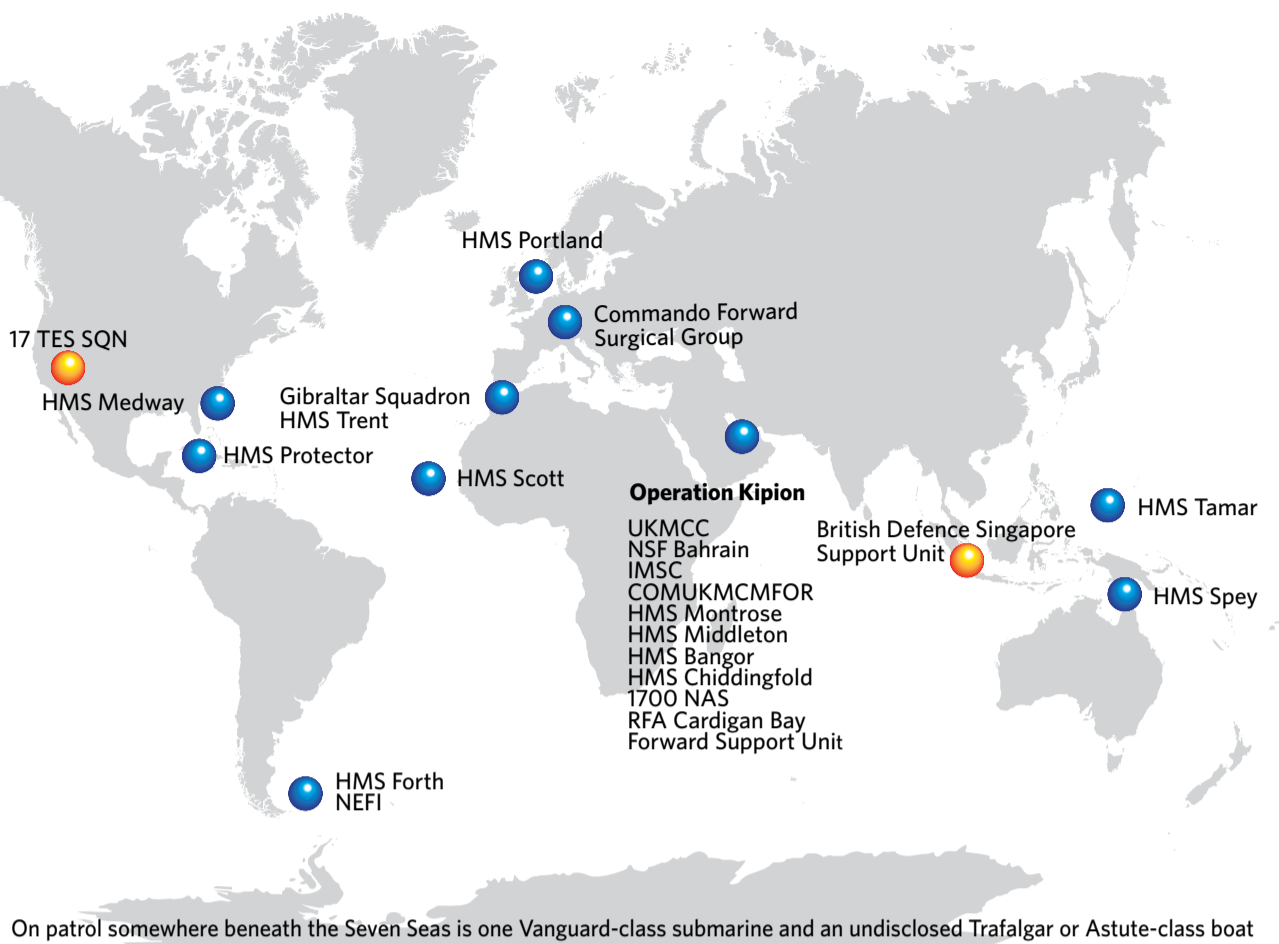
Pictures: LPhoto Chris Sellars; PPhoto Jay Allen; Damen Shipyards



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Westminster
HMS Richmond
HMS Kent
HMS Dauntless
HMS Duncan
HMS Tyne
HMS Mersey
HMS Severn
XV Patrick Blackett

Project Wilton
RFA Tidesurge
RFA Mounts Bay
RFA Argus
814 NAS
815 NAS
824 NAS
825 NAS



GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

HMS TAMAR and her sister **Spey** take centre stage this month with the former (see pages 1, 20-21) becoming the first British warship to visit the tiny country of Palau in nearly 100 years. The offshore patrol vessel was operating on the US-led international goodwill mission Pacific Partnership 22.

Meanwhile **HMS Spey** made a pitstop in Darwin, Australia, for a crew swap and to take on supplies (see page 19). She used the visit to work with the Royal Australian Navy and share training and experiences.

The Royal Navy has unveiled a unique testbed ship to support trials of the latest tech and autonomous systems (see pages 2-3). **XV Patrick Blackett** will be used by the navy's experimentation and innovation experts NavyX who have been driving innovation across the service and testing new technology, kit and concepts, passing them quickly to the frontline.

HMS Lancaster is heading to the Gulf (see page 5), where she will become the second Royal Navy warship to operate from Bahrain on a long-term mission. She will join sister Type 23 frigate **HMS Montrose**, which has been stationed in the Middle East since early 2019.

HMS Hurworth is 'NATO ready' as she joins Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (see page 13) following intensive training around the UK.

HMS Portland tracked the movements of two Russian submarines as they sailed into the North Sea (see page 7).

Type 23 frigate **HMS Kent** has undertaken a full six-week Basic Operational Sea Training package (see pages 14-15) to prepare her ship's company for her upcoming deployment as the Royal Navy's high-readiness frigate.

Medics from **Commando Forward Surgical Group** joined experts from 12 other nations for training in dealing with the aftermath of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) attacks with NATO allies in the Czech Republic (see page 9).

Survey ship **HMS Magpie** has carried out extensive analysis of the River Tyne (see page 6) as she continues her epic deployment around the UK.

Navy air engineers cut through red tape and embraced tech to improve the availability of front-line helicopters for the Royal Marines by one third (see page 17). For a month a team at **845 Naval Air Squadron** ditched old school paper and form-filling practices to see whether going digital could make them better, faster, more effective engineers.

A **Royal Navy Training Team** deployed to the Kenyan Naval College in Mombasa to share the Royal Navy's expertise and experience in areas of sea sense, safety and security (see page 6).

There are 140 men and women ready to lead the navies of tomorrow after passing out of **Britannia Royal Naval College** – spiritual home of the Royal Navy's Officer Corps (see page 27).

Fleet Flagship **HMS Queen Elizabeth** hosted 200 Falklands veterans – and the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall – as the **South Atlantic Medal Association** marked the 40th anniversary of the conflict (see page 35).

The celebrated head of the Royal Navy's **Submarine Service** has retired after nearly 40 years of devoted service (see page 23). **Commodore Jim Perks** handed over command to Commodore Paul Dunn in a ceremony at the home of the Silent Service at Clyde Naval Base in Scotland.

Medics who provided vital welfare and care during last year's Carrier Strike Group 20 deployment and a leading hand from **HMS Tamar** who paved the way for medical support on patrol ship operations were among those honoured at the **Healthcare and Medical awards** (see page 28).

The family of **RFA Capt Rob Anders** finally collected the OBE awarded more than two years ago (see page 23). Covid postponed the original investiture, then Capt Anders was struck down by a fatal brain tumour shortly before Christmas 2020.

Royal Navy anglers have opened their fishing club to pensioners to tackle loneliness in old age (see page 11). Up to half a dozen men can be found fishing at Birds Quarry in Somerton, Somerset, thanks to personnel from the nearby **Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton** who were concerned about people being stuck on their own in lockdown.

The men and women of **814 Naval Air Squadron** – aka The Flying Tigers – took advantage of an operational 'paws' to visit their namesakes at Paignton Zoo to promote World Tiger Day (see page 16).

Finally, and keeping with the cat theme, an eight-week-old kitten was saved by engineer Adam Hughes from **RNAS Culdrose** (see page 13). He dismantled a VW Golf on the base to rescue the injured animal, named Fergie by Cats Protection.

Proteus helps decide aircraft future

THE Royal Navy is moving a step closer to operating crewless helicopters.

The Ministry of Defence has awarded a £60 million contract to Leonardo to design and develop a cutting-edge uncrewed helicopter.

The three-tonne demonstrator – less than a third of the weight of a Merlin helicopter – could provide an innovative alternative to existing aircraft for tracking adversary submarines.

Trials will test the capability of the aircraft to drop "sonobuoys" – small tube-shaped buoys which track and communicate submarine activity – enabling the aircraft to alert a crewed helicopter and call for support if a submarine is located.

Cost-effective to run, the platform will also reduce exposure of Royal Navy crews to potential threats.

Project Proteus will support up to 100 highly-skilled engineering jobs at Leonardo's Yeovil site.

Leonardo – the firm behind the Wildcat and Merlins which are the mainstay of Fleet Air Arm operations – will test the demonstrator on lengthy

and demanding anti-submarine warfare patrols – currently performed by Merlin Mk2 helicopters (pictured dipping its sonar on a sub hunt) – but other potential uses will also be investigated, including evacuating casualties.

Turning to drone helicopters, would mean crews wouldn't need to swap due to fatigue, fuel costs could be reduced, while the crewed aircraft could be used for other critical tasks.

Proteus – named after a mythological Greek god of the sea – is due to take its first flight in 2025 and, once airborne, will generate evidence helping decision-making when it comes to future investment in the RN and Fleet Air Arm.

The Royal Navy's Director Develop, Rear Admiral James Parkin, said: "Proving the benefits of larger uncrewed aircraft, rotary and fixed wing, will be key to understanding whether such aircraft can effectively contribute to future Royal Navy capabilities, particularly for anti-submarine warfare."

Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin, said: "The global threat is changing, and it is crucial we remain

at the forefront of defence innovation. Exploring cutting-edge, new defence capabilities through programmes with key British manufacturers, will help to ensure our Armed Forces are equipped to deal with the latest threats."

If successful, the new aircraft would provide a platform capable of delivering improved surveillance and intelligence, enabling crewed Royal Navy helicopters to re-deploy on alternative missions if required and bolstering UK defence capability.

Capable of carrying a large payload, combined with the ability to operate in harsh environmental conditions, the aircraft could also demonstrate its utility across a range of requirements.

Beyond anti-submarine warfare, the project will address other potential uses including ship to ship resupply and casualty evacuation.

The four-year contract will deliver a demonstrator as part of the existing UK Defence Rotary Strategy, setting out plans to improve and upgrade the readiness of UK Defence's key helicopter capabilities.

From the Red Rose to the Red Sea

NOT only is this an usual view of Her Majesty's Ship Lancaster – captured through a ragged embrasure in Gosport's historic defences by LPhoto Chris Sellars – but one of the last of the veteran frigate in home waters until 2025... or beyond.

The 'Queen's Frigate' – launched by Her Majesty in 1990 and named after her as the Duke of Lancaster – will become the second of the Royal Navy's 'forward deployed' frigates, operating out of Bahrain on a three-year security mission.

From there, she will work with Allies and regional partners, providing security to UK and international shipping, and preventing the proliferation of arms and drugs smuggling which directly impacts the security of the Middle East and Europe.

Before Lancaster reaches her new operational theatre, she has extensive duties to perform in European and Mediterranean waters with NATO, as well as helping to push the boundaries of naval technology and robot craft.

She's due to conduct patrols with two NATO task forces: firstly, Standing Group 1 whose flotilla of mostly frigates and destroyers sails the waters of northern Europe on security missions.

And, later on her journey to the Gulf, Lancaster will take her place in the force's Mediterranean counterpart, Standing Group 2, which conducts the same mission from the Pillars of Hercules to the Red Sea.

The work with the alliance's two task groups bookend Lancaster's involvement in NATO's most important tech trials/exercises of the year: REPMUS (deep breath: Robotic Experimentation and Prototyping augmented by Maritime Unmanned Systems) and Dynamic Messenger, both staged off the coast of Portugal this month.

More than 40 crewless systems are due to be tested at REPMUS – NATO's largest autonomous war games – with craft above, on and below the waves all being assessed alongside regular warships such as HMS Lancaster.

The aim of the two exercises is to see how the uncrewed systems can operate safely and effectively with other NATO assets, and how collectively the participants from several allied nations can exploit the tech and harness the information autonomous systems gather.

"I am really looking forward to my first deployment and seeing the world," said Engineering Technician Ciaran Doherty, responsible for maintaining Lancaster's communications and computer systems.

He and his shipmates trained extensively for their new mission, not least a six-week assessment package in March and April off Plymouth courtesy of FOST.

Commanding Officer Commander Tom Johnson added: "I am immensely proud of everything my ship's company have achieved to prepare for this deployment.

"Although our thoughts always turn to our loved ones at home when we depart the UK, we are very much looking forward to working alongside our international partners as part of a NATO Task Group over the coming months."

After a stint with NATO Standing Group 2, Lancaster will pass through the Suez Canal, Red Sea and Gulf of Oman for the 'main course'.

She'll take her place on the jetty at the Naval Support Facility in Bahrain alongside other Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships operating in the Middle East.

Sending Lancaster to Bahrain underscores the decision taken four years ago to revolutionise the way the RN operates in the Middle East.

Once in Bahrain, the 200-strong crew – including a Royal Marines boarding team and Wildcat helicopter flight – will trade places like-for-like with a second crew in the UK every four months.

This 'forward deploying' spares ships the month-long voyage to and from the Middle East, allowing more time to be spent on patrol, with maintenance carried out in the Gulf rather than back in the UK.



THE ALL SEEING PIE'S BIG BRITISH SURVEY

HMS MAGPIE TAKES ON THE RIVER TYNE...

A ROYAL Navy survey ship has carried out extensive analysis of the River Tyne to help keep shipping flowing freely as she continues an epic deployment around the UK.

Diminutive inshore survey vessel HMS Magpie – named after the only warship to be commanded by the late Duke of Edinburgh – is now off the east coast of Scotland after completing three months of survey work around the Port of Tyne, ensuring seafaring charts used by mariners are accurate.

Using her array of sensors and sonars, the 18-metre long, 37-tonne vessel scanned the ever-changing seabed, which morphs and shifts as large quantities of sediment moves with the tides, shifting the underwater landscape and changing previously safe approaches to ports.

Magpie is on hand to analyse the seabed, gaining an understanding of objects and hazards, to ensure naval and commercial shipping is able to flow freely in and out of ports crucial to UK security and prosperity.

"The River Tyne is a large, busy and complex body of water with depths subject to regular change due to silting and tidal action," said Magpie's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Hywel Morgan.

"Magpie's work is key to maintaining a sound understanding of these waters and ensuring safe access to the upper reaches of the river by naval ships.

"We leave the River Tyne with a renewed understanding of its maritime environment and continue on the next leg of our 2022 deployment."

Magpie's small crew of nine built strong bonds with the Royal Navy Reservists based locally at HMS Calliope in Gateshead and,



NO FOG ON THE TYNE: HMS Magpie completes a three-month survey of the River Tyne during eight months of operations around the UK

in exchanged for a berth and office space, were able to offer training and sea time to Calliope's sailors along the Tyne.

University staff and students connect to the University Royal Navy Unit Northumbria also benefitted from sailing time with Magpie.

The Devonport-based ship – which will return home in late October after eight months of operations – has spent the last month in Aberdeen carrying out similar work,

including surveying the new South Harbour, the largest marine infrastructure project underway in the UK and a big development for trade around the North Sea.

Magpie operates an EM2040 multi-beam Echo Sounder, which transmits a fan-shaped ping of high-frequency sound waves which then sends back underwater imaging.

"This data is gathered at such a high density that along with depth we are also able to visualise any object on the seabed," said Lt Cdr Morgan.

The ship also operate a towed Sidescan Sonar which helps in mapping wrecks and other objects in deeper waters.

"We also collect a range of other geospatial data, including the nature of the seabed and water temperature, salinity and turbidity to better our understanding of these environments," added Lt Cdr Morgan.

The ship has now headed further north to the stunning Caledonian Canal, including sailing Loch Ness.

KENYA DO IT? THEY CERTAINLY CAN WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM THE RN

THE Kenyan Navy is better equipped to train its sailors in critical life-saving skills after a Royal Navy mission to Mombasa.

A training team of two British sailors – Lieutenant Graeme Nolan and Chief Petty Officer Gordon McDonald – were deployed to the Kenyan Naval College in Mtongwe Naval Base to share the Royal Navy's invaluable expertise and considerable experience in areas of sea sense, safety and security.

The pair worked with Kenyan instructors who will give safety, firefighting and damage control training to their compatriots, helping them reach internationally recognised standards.

Lt Nolan, from HMS Sultan in Gosport, Hampshire, said: "Recent Royal Navy operations and the ongoing war in Ukraine have further demonstrated the need for modern Armed Forces to develop the thinking and problem-solving skills of their people at all ranks.

"The skills instilled in the Kenyan instructors will be vital to the development of Kenyan sailors' capabilities to meet their command's intent providing effective safety and security at sea."

Commander of the Kenyan Naval Training College, Colonel Aden Mohamed, added: "Members of the Royal Navy always deliver training of the highest standard and I am encouraging my own teaching staff to commit to the same level of professionalism in their training delivery."

The deployment was part of an ongoing UK project which included providing a small firefighting and damage control unit.

Lt Nolan is an Engineering Training Manager at Sultan, while CPO McDonald is a Marine Engineer Submariner currently working as a Firefighting Instructor at Faslane in Scotland.

The efforts of the pair will help the Kenyan Navy delivered aspirations to achieve International

Maritime Organisation standards of Watchkeeping and Certification in basic sea safety.

While in Kenya, the British sailors also visited Mji Wa Salama Children's Home and gave kids toys, books, stationery and clothes donated by the Naval Children's Charity, Toynbee School and the Federation of Bursledon Schools.

They both also saw wildlife at Tsavo East National Park during downtime between delivering training to the Kenyan instructors.

Commander Karen Cahill, at the British Peace Support Team (Africa) based in Nairobi added: "The students were delighted with the training and commented on how they will use their new knowledge in instructional techniques (including collaboration and group problem solving) to improve their overall delivery in all of their classes going forward."



WATCHING EVERY MOVE



A ROYAL Navy warship has tracked the movements of two Russian submarines as they sailed into the North Sea.

British submarine hunter HMS Portland was on watch as cruise missile submarine Severodvinsk and Akula-class attack submarine Vepr made their underwater journey south along the Norwegian coast from the Arctic.

The Type 23 frigate shadowed the submarines as they surfaced separately in the North Sea, north west of Bergen, Norway, before NATO and Baltic forces took over duties as they continued to St Petersburg for Russian Navy Day celebrations.

Portland and her specialist Merlin helicopter

– both equipped with cutting-edge sonars, sensors and torpedoes for submarine-hunting operations – reported on the movements of the Russian Northern Fleet vessels.

One of the RAF's new long-range maritime patrol aircraft, the P8 Poseidon, also worked closely with HMS Portland to hunt and track the submarines.

This operation comes soon after HMS Portland took part in NATO's premiere submarine-hunting exercise. This large scale joint exercise proved to be the ideal prelude for this type of live operation.

HMS Portland's Commanding Officer, Commander Tim Leeder, said: "Our success on operations marks the culmination of many

months of specialist training and exercises. Critically, the cohesiveness of Royal Navy, RAF and our allies capabilities ensures that we are capable of conducting and sustaining these types of anti-submarine operations in the North Atlantic.

"It is testament to my sailors' dedication and professionalism, alongside that of our allies, that we are able to conduct this strategically crucial role."

Portland headed for Oslo following her time on operations. Cdr Leeder laid a wreath at the Orlogsgasten monument, honouring those who served with the Norwegian Navy through both world wars from 1914 to 1945.

The ship then sailed south from Oslo to

Gothenburg in Sweden, where Portland became the eighth Royal Navy ship this year to visited or exercises with the Swedish.

The frigate hosted Sweden's Defence Minister, Peter Hultqvist, on board alongside British ambassador to Sweden, Judith Gough.

Sailors visited the Commonwealth War Graves at Kviberg Cemetery to lay wreaths in memory of the fallen. Kviberg is home to 68 graves from World War One and 46 from World War Two, with most of the casualties from the Battle of Jutland in 1916.

The majority of those from WW2 are graves of airmen who failed to return from bombing raids. Portland has since returned to operations.

Your pension choices can make a big difference to your financial future.

Join us. Job done.



Making the right pension choices at each stage of your career can impact significantly on your future financial security. Even choosing the best time to leave can make a substantial difference to your pension. Deciding whether to buy pension top-ups, opting for commutation, resettlement grants, early departure payments – all have a bearing on what you'll receive.

And now even greater complexity has been added as a consequence of the so-called McCloud Remedy. This affects all those serving on or before 31st March 2012 and on or after 1st April 2015 (including service leavers). You will have to choose between the benefits of your legacy scheme and AFPS15 for the remedy period. This decision will need to be made from October 2023 onwards.

To be sure you make the most of your options, join the Forces Pension Society and access the individual guidance provided by our expert team of Forces Pensions Consultants.

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 Sector Pensions.

We are funded 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.



Scan to join

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)

PREPARED FOR THE WORST

MEDICS DEAL WITH THE AFTERMATH OF CHEMICAL AND NUCLEAR ATTACKS

ROYAL Navy medics have trained in dealing with the aftermath of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) attacks with NATO allies in the Czech Republic.

Medical experts from 13 nations gathered in Tisá, close to the German border, to work together on treatments, decontamination and dealing with casualties in the wake of a CBRN attack.

Across four days, personnel shared knowledge and dealt with mock casualties at the site of an old chemical and biological testing ground, while the Royal Navy and Royal Marines combined medical team laid on a demonstration of the techniques and procedures the UK employs.

Commando Forward Surgical Group of North Devon-based Commando Logistic Regiment deploy wherever Royal Marines do, no matter how extreme the environment. Their responsibility is to treat casualties in the field and, as a result, must be highly efficient at setting up medical treatment facilities at a moment's notice.

During the exercises in the Czech Republic, they were at the forefront of the joint casualty decontamination area, which must be set up rapidly to deal with people exposed to a CBRN attack, decontaminating them, and giving them basic medical treatment before passing them onto the next level of medical care.

"Scenarios like this are needed to keep us grounded and prepared to efficiently treat and care for real-time CBRN casualties we may expect during operations," said Medical Assistant Jack Franklin.

"As the casualty decontamination area medical team is very small, everyone must be able to take a step back, think and assess the situation.

"This was crucial for the triage medic at the front of the facility who decides, based on protocol who receives treatment first. In real-time this will be a very difficult job.

"In battle, it's realistic to consider that not everyone is going to survive. Prioritising a casualty with a better chance of survival, over a casualty with serious injuries is key to prevent quickly consuming our limited time and resources that can prevent us treating other multiple casualties for injuries that we can expect to survive."

Members of the Royal Marines Band Service operated alongside the surgical group in the contamination area, together giving patients basic medical treatment and assessing their injuries.

The Bands are known for wowing crowds up and down the country with their musical ability, but are also fully trained military personnel, usually providing medical support.

At any given time, one of the Bands is also held at short notice to support Royal Navy medical branches on board Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship RFA Argus. Here they receive additional training and undertake a variety of medical support roles.

In the Czech Republic, the medics and Band Service formed a formidable team, assembling the casualty decontamination area in the fastest time recorded for ten years – an impressive 12 minutes 45 seconds.

The testing live exercises came after a phase of theory, practicals and medical simulation, which is all part of a programme of essential training that keeps the alliance's medical teams prepared in case the worse were to happen.

Mock injuries (known as moulage) were applied to



CZECH MATES: NATO allies work together on CBRN exercises, dealing with a range of casualties in testing scenarios

actors who played the role of casualties to bring a further sense of reality to the training.

"From a Royal Marine's perspective, it was a great insight into how the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Band Service work together during an exercise like this and witnessing/observing the medical treatment itself," said Marine George Blake, of Commando Logistic Regiment.

"With no previous experience as a team medic or experience with CBRN casualties, I can now happily say in confidence if anything were to unfortunately happen and the Royal Marines were called to assist again, we would know what to do without any issues.

"It was a great experience and very educational as the majority of us were able to get hands on with the casualties as

they came through.

"I was in the cutting team so we had to be careful with any tourniquets on limbs, shrapnel sticking out etc. It wasn't always as easy as just cutting a straight line through the clothes, we had work in sync together and be able to work around the medics without getting into each other's way and with no time wasted."

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



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.

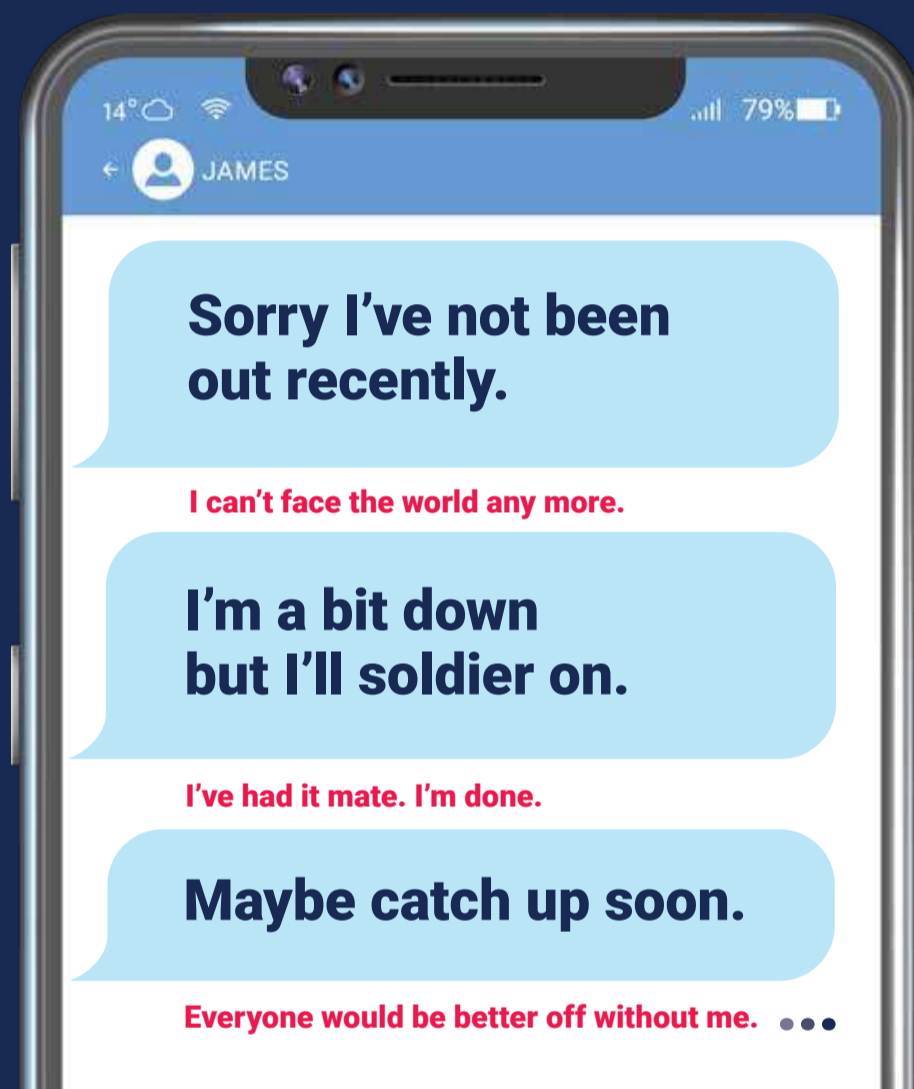
See our web site where you can order securely on-line

www.worcedmedals.com

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

READ between the LINES

1 in 3 veterans have felt suicidal in their lifetime.*



Could you read between the lines?

**We're on a mission to create
suicide-safer communities for veterans.**

Take our free 30-minute suicide awareness training.

Visit helpforheroes.org.uk



**HELP for
HEROES**



Royal set for epic cycle ride

A ROYAL Marine is cycling 300 miles in three days to raise funds for two charities.

WO2 Gavin Tuach, of Commando Logistics Regiment, aims to boost the coffers of veterans' charity Haig Housing Trust and community interest group Hidden Warriors CIC.

Haig Housing provide affordable accommodation for veterans while Hidden Warriors support veterans' partners and children.

Gavin, who is based at RMB Chivenor, is joining the Ride to the Gate cycle, which starts at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on September 12 and ends at the Menin Gate in Belgium two days later.

Joining Gavin will be Royal Navy veterans, Lee Cox, Lee Windeatt, Ian Jacques and Army veteran Brain Macalpine.

As well as being a fundraiser the event also helps to keep the act of Remembrance alive.

Each bike will carry a poppy wreath to be placed at the Menin Gate.

This event organised by Gavin is the fifth in five years that has involved over 30 members of the Armed Forces/ veterans and raised over £100k for numerous charities.

"This year's event is especially special as the team will be involved in the official Last Post Ceremony that is held every evening at the Menin Gate that remembers those that gave all and have known graves from the Great War," said Gavin.

To support and for further information please visit the fundraising page: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ridetothegate>



CASTING A SPELL ON LONELINESS

ROYAL Navy anglers have opened their fishing club to pensioners to tackle loneliness in old age.

Up to half a dozen men can be found fishing at Birds Quarry in Somerton, Somerset, thanks to personnel from the nearby Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton, who were concerned about people being stuck on their own in lockdown.

That's resulted in a link up with charity Age UK and regular fishing sessions at the beauty spot where serving personnel can offer angling advice, chat with pensioners or simply relive old times... on the off-chance they might catch tench, roach or carp.

This 'fishing therapy' is the brainchild of Petty Officer Adam Chamberlain, by day an air engineer technician with 847 Naval Air Squadron based at Yeovilton.

It's his job to maintain state-of-the-art Wildcat helicopters which support Royal Marines on the battlefield – from Arctic ice and snow to jungle and desert.

During lockdown, Adam noticed that some of his friends were struggling on their own with mental health issues due to the lack of interaction.

"I'm a very sociable person, I enjoy interaction. And I noticed that during lockdown, I had friends who were going down," Adam said. "It really bothered me – the thought of them being lonely on their own."

He decided to pop in on friends – a simple chat and cup of tea – before deploying with his squadron.

When he returned, Adam decided to expand on his original idea.

To unwind the father-of-three loves fishing, running HMS Heron's Angling Club which is responsible for the lake at Somerton.

He fell upon fishing as a therapy for loneliness, particularly among older generations, and asked Age UK if it was interested.

The charity's Somerset manageress Becky Bostock organises physical activity sessions across the county – but almost all were either aimed at, or attracted, women.

"So this is a great opportunity to attract older men," she said. "And as soon as I heard fishing, I thought of my dad – he was a keen fisherman a long time ago."

Enter Becky's dad Steve Chinnock who, like Adam and his colleagues, tutors the older generation of fishermen drawn to Birds Quarry by flyers, leaflets and word of mouth.



PO Adam Chamberlain joins one of the pensioners at Birds Quarry in Somerton

"A lot of them have not had a lot to do in Covid – they've been on their own," Steve said. "For £3 per session, they get out of the house and even if they struggle, even if they don't catch anything, they enjoy themselves. They wouldn't come back if they didn't."

"The lake is just a wonderful place – full of nature, the birds and everything here. It's so peaceful, it's beautiful."

As well as fishing novices, the initiative has encouraged those who downed rods years ago to return to the sport, including one 80-year-old who used to fish in the Thames.

"He finds it very peaceful here; he thinks it's lovely," Steve said. "And he's just quite happy to sit. He's just quite happy to sit and fish."

Although fishing might be seen as a solitary pastime, the group have been given five positions or pegs close together so they can chat among themselves, or else with one of the volunteers.

"For a non-fishing person, it's quite hard to understand how you would get social interaction," Adam says.

"But I'm a fisherman, I'm a family man, I've got three children, I deploy away. I know how good this is for me to be here for a few hours, when you've listened to it now. There's

nothing as beautiful. And it does wonders for the brain – for the mind, this is time to think and you know."

Adam is now determined to improve facilities on site for all users, from erecting fencing and lighting to keep otters at bay and encourage night fishing, to installing a toilet, laying the foundations for a clubhouse and putting up memorials to past members ("they're all veterans – they've served").

Running for just a couple of months, Becky is delighted by the impact of the initiative.

"They get to meet other chaps who have similar interests, so it's reducing social isolation," she said.

"There's a little bit of physical activity. And it's an absolutely beautiful setting as well. So just being immersed in nature, being outside in the sun is just so good for mental wellbeing."

Adam added: "I think the biggest part of this for me is eventually, I'm going to be old and decrepit, and sit in a chair. And I don't want to be lonely."

"And I'm a big believer in karma and things like that. And I believe that if I'm giving something now, that in years to come, I'll get that back."

Report and pictures: Peter Wooldridge

RN chef pipped to final

A ROYAL Navy chef has narrowly missed out reaching the final of the National Chef of the Year contest.

Leading Hand Mattie Tew, 40, progressed to the semi-finals after creating a three-course menu that impressed the judging panel, led by Michelin-starred chef Kenny Atkinson.

Mattie, a member of the Royal Navy Culinary Arts Team, then lost out as the 40 semi-finalists were whittled down to ten – and they will compete in a cook-off at Le Cordon Bleu culinary school in London on September 19.

Mattie, who joined the RN in 1999 and is based at HMS Sultan in Gosport, said: "It has been a great experience to have been selected with some of the best chefs within the UK."

"I will certainly know what to expect for next year so that I can prepare more and polish my final dishes with the support of the RN this time."

Mattie's menu comprised:
Cod Wars: Line Caught Cornish Cod Loin in a Beurre Noisette, Laver seaweed Crisp, Soused Cockles in Limoncello with Picked Samphire, Dill Caviar, Caper & Dill Salsa with a Smoked Cod Sauce;

Hampton Estate Venison: Ash Burnt Loin Venison rolled in Walnut & Nettle, Venison Rib in Bone Marrow Crumb, Haunch of Venison Cassoulet with Broad Beans, Baby Heritage Carrot in Carrot butter, Asparagus Tips, Buttered Kale, Pickled Walnut Ketchup, Blackberries, Blackberry Jus, finished with Garlic Chives.

Golden Celebration: White Chocolate & Strawberry Delice with a Strawberry Feuilletine Base & Golden Chocolate Cloak, Eldible Golden Sand, White Strawberries, Strawberry Gel, Champagne Foam, Crème fraiche & Basil Sorbet, Micro Basil



RFA mark year of supporting warships around the world

WHAT has the RFA ever done for us? Well to highlight its achievements over the past 12 months, the Royal Navy's crucial support arm – which provides fuel, supplies, a floating hospital facility, aviation training and support for amphibious and minehunting operations – celebrated 'Livery Day' in Southampton.

RFA Mounts Bay, which has spent the spring and summer supporting ceremonial events (the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on the Thames) and Royal Marines training (Norway and the Netherlands), berthed in the Solent city.

For much of the late 20th Century, Southampton Water and Marchwood

military port were the spiritual home of the service, although today its ships gravitate more towards Falmouth and Portland when alongside in UK waters.

Livery Day aims to highlight the work and above all successes of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary over the past 12 months, drawing attention to a Service indispensable to the day-to-day operations of the Royal Navy, yet largely unknown by the general public.

It's not been held since 2019 due to the pandemic – throughout which the RFA itself continued to operate globally.

This year's event was hosted by RFA Head of Service, Commodore David Eagles and attended by Admiral Sir Jonathon and Lady Sarah Band (Sponsor of RFA Mounts Bay) and invited representatives from the Honourable Company of Master Mariners and

Worshipful Companies of Carmen, Cooks, Fuellers and RFA affiliated organisations, including representatives from Greenwich Hospital.

They were treated to guided tours of the 'Mighty Mounts', which carries the military firepower and kit needed to support Royal Marines, with bunk space for more than 350 commandos.

After chatting with the 80-strong RFA crew over lunch, guests joined Cdre Eagles who said: "I would like to express my gratitude to Admiral and Lady Sarah Band, all of the Livery Companies and Affiliates for attending and for the support that they continue to provide to the RFA."

As for our opening question... well here's just some of what the RFA has been up to these past 12 months:

It has provided fuel for British and

allied warships undergoing training with the Royal Navy off Plymouth; flown the flag for the UK at Dutch Navy Days while supporting commando/landing craft training in the Netherlands; helped train future Merlin and Wildcat aircrew and engineers to operate at sea courtesy of RFA Argus; provided round-the-clock support for minehunter operations in the Gulf (RFAs Lyme and Cardigan Bay); worked with its US counterpart to see how they can help each other more effectively, including making use of commercial tankers; supported Queen's Platinum Jubilee events; ventured into the Arctic in support of patrols of the High North by RN vessels; paid tribute to its forebears who served in the Falklands 40 years ago; provided the UK's only seagoing Primary Casualty Reception Facility (Argus again).

And then there was the carrier strike group, where two RFAs – Fort Victoria (fuel/dry, stores/ammo) and Tidespring (largely fuel) – provided the Queen Elizabeth task group most of the things they needed 'on the go'.

Fort Victoria transferred just short of 900 loads of ammunition, provisions, spare parts, medical supplies, mail and F35/Merlin spares weighing more than 350 tonnes to other vessels in the group.

And during 44 replenishments she delivered nearly 9,000 cubic metres of fuel into the tanks of six warships.

As for Tidespring, she pumped nearly 58 million litres of fuel into warship fuel tanks and provided over 14 million litres of aviation fuel for F35 and helicopter operations by the task group, plus enough fresh water to fill over 2,100 baths.



THERE THEN, HERE NOW

In 1982, SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity helped support all those who were part of the Falklands Taskforce. Those incredible members of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force and their families affected by the conflict received practical, emotional or financial support they deserved. And we still provide it today.

Whether you needed help then or do so now, reach out to Forcesline for free and confidential help that lasts - **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.

40
FALKLANDS
1982 - 2022



HURWORTH READY FOR NATO

WEEKS of intensive training has seen HMS Hurworth prove her readiness to support NATO on minehunting operations around Europe.

The ship's company took her around the UK to prepare for the deployment, undergoing tests on their equipment, gunnery drills and emergency scenarios.

The minehunter has joined NATO Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 and will support on historic ordnance clearance and other minehunting exercises.



But to ensure she was ready, Hurworth's Crew 3 were put through their paces starting with a visit from the Fleet Operational Sea Training (FOST) team before a difficult transit north through the Pentland Firth. They had to battle bad weather, high sea states and strong tides, finally getting to Lamlash Harbour on the Isle of Arran.

Within the harbour, they tested their remotely-piloted underwater vessel Seafox which is used to locate mines while the Officers of the Watch practised manoeuvring the ship.

Hurworth then headed to HMNB Clyde for two weeks of assessments to ensure she can deploy with NATO. During the fortnight, they tested navigating without GPS and with defects to the bridge, fire-fighting, damage control and live firing of weaponry.

The ship also completed a winching exercise with the Coastguard and practised against attacks from fast boats with P2000 HMS Raider acting as the enemy.

Next they turned to the diving aspect of their operations. They deployed Seafox and autonomous underwater vehicle Remus while divers embarked on Hurworth



carried out mine laying and recovery drills and diving in emergencies.

With their preparation complete, the minehunter headed through the Irish Sea, past Land's End and into Portsmouth where she raised the NATO flag.

Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Simon Reeves said: "The ship's company have had a busy period at sea preparing HMS Hurworth for NATO and contingent tasking, undertaking complex navigation serials, internal damage control and tailored warfare scenarios.

"I am very proud of my team who have displayed grit and determination to ensure Hurworth is ready to deploy once again on operations overseas, protecting



our nation's interests and upholding the reputation of the Royal Navy.

"They have shown commitment and drive needed to continue to deliver our operations.

"We stand united with NATO delivering security and prosperity to our area of operations, by ensuring trade routes remain open and removing historical ordnance from the ocean seabed."

Lieutenant Joe Hobday, navigator on Hurworth, added: "The crew are very proud to be flying the flag for NATO as part of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1. As we conduct our operation we will be providing security and reassurance to our partner nations."



Helicopter engineer dismantles car to save injured kitten

A STRAY kitten fell on her paws when she ran across the road at Culdrose in front of a cat-loving engineer who dismantled a car to save her.

Adam Hughes was heading home after a day's work at the Royal Navy's helicopter base near Helston when he saw what he believed was a piece of cardboard on the airfield inner perimeter road.

Only when it moved did he realise it was a small, injured kitten dragging her back leg behind her as she ran.

"I was going home to comfort my family because we had lost our own cat Orlando to renal failure the day before," says Adam, who works as an engineer for Leonardo, the firm behind the air base's

"He had been a much-loved part of the family and really helped my daughter's mental health during lockdown. There was no way I was going to leave a potentially injured kitten behind."

He got out of his car to pick her up, but she limped quickly away and escaped under a parked Volkswagen Golf on the opposite side of the road.

As Adam approached, along with two junior aircrew who had spotted the kitten's attempts to run and stopped to help, the small grey-brown tabby jumped onto the exhaust pipe and into the car's engine chamber. Despite the trio searching under the car and wheel arches with their phone torches, the tiny feline was nowhere to be seen.

The car's owner was in a nearby hangar and, with the help of tools from a passing lorry driver who spotted the commotion, Adam was given permission to dismantle the Golf.

The kitten was eventually discovered inside a tiny hole between the wheel arch and liner, pictured top.

"Luckily it was an older car so we could peel the liner back and when we did one of the aircrew was able to reach in to get hold of the kitten's tail and unharmed back leg. Very gently, but with much squealing from the kitten, we were able to get her out," the engineer said.

The tiny creature was safely delivered to Cats Protection's Cornwall Adoption Centre near Truro. The vets had to amputate the broken leg but otherwise, the kitten – named Fergie by staff, in a nod to Culdrose and the *Budgie the Little Helicopter* books written by the Duchess of York.

"Little Fergie is now with an experienced fosterer and learning how to walk on a tripod, or three-legged, cat and how to play with fishing rod toys, ping-pong balls and toy mice," said the adoption centre's Samantha Lawton.

Fergie will be neutered, vaccinated and microchipped while in care then once she is fully healed and ready for homing her details will be posted on the centre's website.

The kitten's surgery and after-care have cost over £700 so far and anyone wishing to help contribute towards her care may visit: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/cats-protection-cornwall-actergiesappeal

Any funds raised above the target will be put towards the care of other cats and kittens at the centre.



Surgeon-Commander Morris and Lieutenant Beardall Jacklin in Iraq

Sailors complete landlocked mission

ONE minute you sailing the Seven Seas on Britain's biggest warship, surrounded by 1,000 sailors and aviators...

...The next you're one of two Royal Navy personnel in the middle of the desert supporting the struggle against Daesh fundamentalists and the nearest open water is 300 miles away.

Lt Beardall Jacklin and Surgeon Commander Morris spent four months on an international base in Erbil, an ancient city in northern Iraq. The pair were two of a handful of sailors and marines deployed as part of Operation Shader, the UK's military contribution to the destruction of Daesh which has been running since 2014.

Home to 1½ million people – mostly Kurds – Erbil lies around 200 miles north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad.

UK forces committed to Shader are mainly provided by the Army and RAF, although during last year's Carrier Strike Group 21 deployment, F-35 stealth fighters struck

at Daesh from HMS Queen Elizabeth as she headed through the Mediterranean bound for the Indo-Pacific.

And although media coverage of Shader has largely focused on such military actions against Daesh forces, the mission has a broader remit to provide training and equipment to local forces ensuring that they are better able to maintain security.

Surg Cdr Morris served as the operation's senior medical officer, providing advice and guidance to UK forces deployed across the Middle East but also led the UK Role 1 medical facility in Erbil – providing first aid, immediate lifesaving measures, and triage – as well as delivering routine medical care.

The job involved close collaboration with many coalition partners including US, Finnish, Dutch and German medical teams, sharing knowledge, kit and, occasionally, some very good cakes.

Fellow sailor Lt Beardall Jacklin arrived in Erbil fresh

from serving aboard HMS Prince of Wales. He was focused on supporting non-government organisations such as the International Organisation for Migration and Save the Children in their work with displaced people, in particular monitoring efforts to repatriate over 30,000 Iraqis from tented camps in north-east Syria.

"It's been different from my previous roles and enlightening," he said. "Engaging with ambassadors and charities, supporting them in dealing with thousands of vulnerable people certainly wasn't advertised in the careers office!"

Volunteers for their respective posts, both officers have had to get to grips with working as part of an 80-nation global coalition and the continuous 40oC+ heat!

"Arid, hot, dusty...perfect conditions for the Royal Navy! It was great to be back on ops in a multi-national environment," said Surg Cdr Morris.



KENT'S

What does it take to turn 180 or so men and women, all individually skilled in their jobs, into a collective fighting team, even greater than the sum of their parts?

For the past 80 years, in various guises and under various names, the Royal Navy has prepared ships and ship's company for the rigours of naval action through Operational Sea Training: several weeks of assessment from the building blocks of seafaring... to full-on 21st Century battle at sea.

Delivered by the team at Fleet Operational Sea Training, its undergone (and continues to undergo) some fairly substantial changes in the past few years, with the emphasis increasingly on shorter, bespoke training packages and assessment depending on a ship's mission such as submarine hunting, board and search patrols, task group duties – delivered wherever the ship needs it or can accommodate the FOST team. But there is still a place for the good old 'full English' in the South Coast Exercise Areas: the six-week, non-stop, heart-pumping, intensive assessment.

So pick up your knife and fork and join HMS Kent as she sails to the contested waters between Ginger and Brownia to enforce an exclusion zone as tensions grows.

Monday

6

JUNE

Week 1

OST kicked off at 5am with a large number of Fleet Operational Sea Training (FOST) Staff embarked for a very thorough set of 'rounds' throughout the forenoon to fully inspect the material state of the ship as Kent sailed from Plymouth.

The 'X-Men' also took the opportunity to meticulously check the ship's efforts in securing for sea and the high standards of cleanliness required by RN warships – which would be continually assessed throughout the six weeks.

Weapon systems were tested and radars aligned against a Falcon jet in addition to the hull-mounted S2050 sonar, using a 'tri plane tracking target'.

The rest of the week saw the ship alongside in Plymouth, where a full range of further assessments took place: find the homemade bomb/intruders on board, building up to fires, floods, and an engine room fire.

The warfare department hit the simulators of the Maritime Composite Training System (MCTS) to build up individual and collective skills ready for real aircraft and submarines.

The week culminated with an exercise to practise response to a Total Electrical Failure and Maritime Pollution incident (MARPOL or in simple English, fuel/oil spill).

And seamen specialists made use of the RAS rig at HMS Raleigh to prepare themselves for the real thing.

Monday

13

JUNE

Week 2

Back to sea and a surface exercise before the first of many staple elements of OST: machinery breakdown drills followed by an Air Defence Exercise in the afternoon which saw the whole ship close up to 'Action Stations' for the first time. The first full day at sea ended with a run out for the towed array, Sonar 2087.

Wednesday tested fire crews and medics with a simulated helicopter crash on deck, dealing with both casualties and inquisitive journalists.

Thursday brought FOST's signature training event: Thursday War: a multi-threat environment of aircraft, missiles and submarines... with the war becoming more intense the deeper into OST a ship gets.



Kent's boarding team head off on an interception

Monday

20

JUNE

Week 3

An eventful week for the ship's company. After successfully tackling a main machinery space fire at sea, the ship's company had their first exposure at OST to 'battle damage' following an air attack.

The simulated battle damage took away vital weapons and systems which required repair by the Weapons and Marine Engineering teams before they could be restored to allow the warfare team to continue to fight the external battle.

As well as an 'intermediate' fire, sailors had to deal with a StingRay torpedo incident, all the while hunting a live Dutch Walrus-class submarine.

Barely giving the crew time to rest, Kent was at action stations at 6.30am the next day to face all-out attack. Two simulated missile hits caused multiple fires, flooding and equipment losses, as well as a swarm attack by Fast Inshore Attack Craft (FIAC) attack and an 'emergency breakaway' during a live replenishment due to the impending threat of an enemy submarine.

Falling into State 2 – 50 per cent crewing at all times split into 12 hour watches) after the Thursday War, the ship was ready to being an entire weekend of sustained submarine hunting.

A two-day game of cat and mouse followed, with the ship successfully locating and tracking the boat.

Monday

27

JUNE

Week 4

The week began with a bang - a collision simulated submerged container on the deck, flooding and inflicting numerous casualties.

Some compartments were 'lost', due to shoring of bulkheads to prevent the water from spreading.

From there the regular tempo of OST continued. On Tuesday night SURFEX and helicopter defence on Tuesday with ever-increasing damage. Despite fires and floods forcing the loss of the main Artisan radar, the ship maintained State 1 (action) posture between missile attacks.

Returning alongside to take on support duties, the frigate's protection force were attacked, suffering multiple casualties in the process. In the situation, the frigate returned to sea to search for a submarine, then endure the rigours of a search (escort) before being joined by members of the Fire and Rescue Services to prepare for relief in the fictitious 'Sandwich Bay' area, a lot like Bull Point in Plymouth Harbour.

Ravaged by 'storm surge Jude', in the aftermath of multiple casualties, damaged buildings and devastation caused by 'storm surge Jude', the party began to get a grip of the storm. The ship crashed on site and as many hands were needed with the incident. By early afternoon, the ship was handed over to local support agencies for further effort.

Take on a challenge and transform lives

Join Blind Veterans UK for the London Marathon, Great North Run or London to Brighton Cycle. Already have a place in a challenge event? Let us know and we will support you to raise vital funds to enable blind veterans to regain independence, dignity and purpose.

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)

FULL ENGLISH



Plain sailing

HOW about some heavy metal thunder to add some steel to your day?

Sailors from HMS Kent rumbled over the British Army's principal playground as they got their hands on the No.1 fighting vehicle in the military's arsenal.

The Portsmouth-based frigate is affiliated with the Royal Tank Regiment, daddy of every armoured unit in the world's armies, going back all the way to the birth of the vehicle back in 1916.

A team from the ship made the short trip to Tidworth on Salisbury Plain to spend a day with the tankers and their Challenger 2 main battle tank.

(Time for the *Top Trumps* bit.)

At 75 tonnes the tank is lighter than Kent (4,500t), faster (37mph to 28+ knots), has a bigger gun (120mm/4.7in to 4.5in) but with a shorter range (around two miles to the 4.5's 17+ miles). You only need a crew of four in a Challenger (compared with 180 to 200 men and women on a Type 23) but you'll need to fill up the fuel tank after just 160 miles off road... whereas Kent can get as far as Sri Lanka.

Enough of the preamble.

Hosted by the regiment's Lt Siebenaller and 2Lt Gibbs, the visitors were treated to a display of impressive silverware in the Mess dating back to the days of

the Somme, before the sailors' hosts ran through the similarities and differences of day-to-day life in a tank regiment/warship.

Next was a tour of the training and simulator facilities used to train tank loading and gunner crews with fascinating briefs on the weapon systems and ammunition found in Challenger 2 tanks. The Kent team were also shown around Challenger Armoured Repair and Recovery Vehicle – a beast of a machine used by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers to recover stricken Challenger 2 tanks.

After the static, the action as the sailors rode out on to Salisbury Plain for an experience they would never forget in three tanks. The amazing experience demonstrated the power and versatility of the vehicles over cross-country conditions.

The rides also put into perspective the reality of life in a tank and the constant teamwork required from all four crew to be effective in the field.

"It was a fascinating visit which highlighted the similarities – and differences – of training, equipment support, operations and day-to-day life between our respective organisations culminating in an unforgettable tank ride experience," said Commander Jez Brettell, Kent's Commanding Officer.



Monday

4

JULY

Week 5

The fifth week of OST started, like the fourth, with a collision/grounding exercise – an intense workout demanding a 100 per cent rapid response ignited many incidents and called for rapid initial reactions as well as efficient use of people and resources to keep Kent floating, moving and fighting.

Next up: board and search, launching sea boats to first stop, then search, a suspicious vessel, with a dessert of air attacks, culminating in a simulated double hit.

Taking a short break from warfighting, Wednesday saw the ship demonstrate Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) abilities, responding to mayday calls from vessels in distress.

As day follows night, and war follow peace, straight into another 'Thursday War' and weighing anchor early to head through a simulated mine swept channel, despite deploying countermeasures, firing missile defence systems and utilising evasive maneuvers, Kent was hit.

Director of RN Personnel and Training, Rear Admiral Jude Terry was aboard to view the response by Kent and speak to the ship's company about their OST experience.

And having started with a bang, the week ended with one. And a few more with a live gunnery exercise.

The 30mm hammered away at a 'killer tomato' floating target, while the 4.5in main was flashed up to bring down lead and steel for a calibration shoot.

Assessed was not merely the skill/marksmanship of the gunners... but the material state and reliability of the weapons when using live rounds.

Monday

11

JULY

Week 6

This is it. More of the same, only even more intense. Another Tuesday air defence exercise, the most complex battle damage serial yet, and the Thursday War 'Final Inspection' which is the culmination of everything the ship's company had learned over the previous five and a half weeks.

Kent passed the final serials with flying colours and after a debrief, 'Pompey Revs' [maximum speed for home] was ordered with the ship sailing back to Portsmouth after a job well done and ready to undertake operations.

"I'm very proud of my ship's company who have met the high standards set by FOST with enthusiasm and determination to do well throughout," said Commanding Officer Commander Jez Brettell.

"Ultimately the excellent quality of training we have undertaken will best prepare us to deal with the real world challenges we may face in our upcoming deployments."



Royal Marines board a 'suspicious' tug

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: navcyrn-rtagmultiuser@mod.gov.uk





CHF's farmers' day is top of the crops

BAGGY green is the new black as three youngsters try out Fleet Air Arm flying suits as the Commando Helicopter Force opens its doors to a select group of the public for Landowners' Day.

The ability to use fields, moorland, hills, copses (landing in tight spaces) to train in and above is crucial to ensuring Naval aviators can operate pretty much anywhere.

It's especially pertinent to the Wildcat AH1s and Merlin Mk4s which spend more time over land than sea supporting Royal Marines as part of the Commando Helicopter Force.

So as a 'thank you', every summer landowners from around Yeovilton and its satellite airfield at Merryfield, a dozen miles away near Ilminster, are invited to bring their families in to see behind the scenes at the air base.

Due to the pandemic it's the first time since 2019 that CHF has been able to invite folk in and thank them in person for their ongoing support.

"Without the landowners' generous agreement and considerable understanding CHF's flying crews would not have ready access to a wide variety of terrain, topography and moor, field and forest to develop and hone their operational flying skills," said Colonel Mark Johnson, who's just taken over command of the force (see opposite).

"The landowners ask for nothing and get nothing for allowing flying training to take place over their land. Landowners' Day is a way in which CHF can partially repay such unselfishness."

Guests get to clamber over much of CHF's kit, equipment, see the engineering behind the cutting-edge helicopters, try on some of the flying kit and, of course, chat to the hundreds of men and women who make the force tick.

The highlight of the day is a short flight in one of the Force's Commando Merlin Mk4 helicopters – normally packed with marines going into action – which flew guests up to Glastonbury Tor and back.

Organised and run by CHF's Mobile Air Operations Team, the event is supported by all of CHF: chefs, aircraft handlers, engineers, marines and aircrewmembers. Picture: Jason Bryant

Tigers support claws cause during op paws

TIGERS seen in zoo.

Yes, yes, yes... and shell found on beach...

But these tigers can walk, talk, even fly...

Fliers from Culdrose took advantage of an operational 'paws' to visit their namesakes at Paignton Zoo, promoting World Tiger Day.

The men and women of 814 Naval Air Squadron – aka The Flying Tigers – are proud of their nickname, from striped fuselages and tiger faces on some of their Merlin Mk2 helicopters (and older personnel/veterans may remember the distinctive tiger livery of the squadron's earlier Sea Kings) to regularly attending the 'Tiger meet', a gathering of military fliers from the world over whose squadrons have tiger titles.

They're also aware of their responsibility to the environment and have established ties with Paignton zoo in Devon, home to two Sumatran tigers, Carrie and Padme... a rare breed (there are estimated to be fewer than 400 in the wild worldwide).

World Tiger Day is an annual event which aims to raise awareness of the plight of tigers in their natural habitat, as well as encouraging charities and governments around the world to increase funding to conservation programmes and environmental projects.

"Coming to Paignton Zoo is an amazing opportunity to see these incredible creatures up close, and to see first-hand some of the conservation work that is being undertaken to help safeguard the future of the tigers that we take so much of our squadron identity from," said Lieutenant Dom Raeyen, one of 814's pilots.

Due to the unit's links with the zoo, the aviators were invited to observe meal time (sort of 'the Tigers who came to the Tigers for tea...') which takes place outside regular opening hours.

As part of the feed, keepers stuffed raw meat into a wooden deer covered in fur to prompt the tiger's natural instinct to hunt. Activities such as this are known as enrichment which aims to provide stimulation for captive animals and encourage their natural behaviour.

"We are a conservation charity and we act to help halt species decline, so we welcome any opportunities to raise awareness of our animals and help us in our mission," said Steve Nash, the zoo's head of Campaigns and Programmes.

"Tigers are beautiful creatures and unless we take action their future is under threat."

As for their flying namesakes, they operate submarine-hunting Merlin helicopters from Culdrose, from a forward operating base at HMS Gannet in Ayrshire and the decks of Type 23 frigates and Tide-class RFA tankers keeping an eye on hostile submarines.

They currently claim the sharpest claws in the Fleet Air Arm, holding the Breitling Trophy for the best overall performance during a Naval Flying Standards assessment.



ENTERTAIN
INFORM
CONNECT
CHAMPION

bfbs

...the UK armed forces, their families and veterans, wherever they are in the world.



Boosting wellbeing and morale

– BFBS TV, Radio, Cinemas and Live Events bring the best of UK TV, premier sport, movies, popular music and entertainment to military communities everywhere



Going the extra mile

– BFBS Academy: communications, digital and media training

– BFBS Creative: trusted award-winning creative campaign expertise

– BFBS Welfare Fund and Sports Grants: giving back to the military community



Brilliant military storytelling

– Multi-platform home of the best military stories, news and sport



Scan to find out more about BFBS services or visit bfbs.com



Goodbye Del Hello Mark

Colonel Del Stafford walked rather than ran the gauntlet as he left the wings of the Royal Marines behind after two-and-a-half years.

Commando Helicopter Force personnel – military and civilian – applauded the Royal Marine out of the headquarters for the final time.

He was also treated to an obligatory helicopter-themed green/brown coloured cake before handing over the reins to fellow green beret, Colonel Mark Johnson (pictured below).

He has served across the Force in different guises over the years and previously flew Sea King and Lynx on 845, 846 and 847 Naval Air Squadrons. He returns to Somerset fresh from a senior posting at Whitehall, while Colonel Stafford moves on to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in London.



HELICOPTER ENGINEERS EMBRACE TECH WITH DRAMATIC IMPACT

Virtual tech Real results

NAVY air engineers cut through red tape and embraced tech to improve the availability of front-line helicopters for the Royal Marines by one third.

For a month a team at 845 Naval Air Squadron, whose Merlin helicopters carry Royal Marines and their kit into action from the Arctic to the jungle or desert, ditched old school paper and form-filling practices to see whether going digital – including harnessing Virtual and Augmented Reality – could make them better, faster, more effective engineers.

It did. The four-week dry run led to getting twice as much use out of the helicopters, while increasing their availability by 30 per cent.

The team behind 845 Squadron's B Flight – three Merlin Mk4 helicopters, maintained by a team of around 50 engineers and technicians – transformed into X Flight (X for eXperimentation).

Engineers drew upon their years of maintaining and servicing cutting-edge helicopters cut through red tape and harness apps, digital accounting, plus virtual and augmented reality.

Using fully-digital recording tools and web-based technical

documentation cut supervisors' administration time in half – a lesson which could be shared by everyone involved in military aviation engineering.

The team tried out an automatic toolbox which digitised the tool accounting process – a crucial and, currently, burdensome task) which reduced the workload by up to 75 per cent.

As well as challenging engineering process, X Flight trialled modern engineering aids which are routinely available on a mobile phone, but have not to date made major inroads into the aviation maintenance world.

Junior technicians trained on – and then exploited – Augmented Reality to enhance the servicing and maintenance experience (pictured centre and bottom right), and tested satellite communication solutions to improve links with the squadron when they need engineering support out in the field.

And although Virtual Reality (VR) and the use of 3D models is routinely available for flying training, it hadn't been introduced into the engineering world yet.

845's parent unit, Commando

Helicopter Force, set up a VR hub using an existing, under-used 3D model to practise training away from a live Merlin and assess the engineers' performance.

Both proved fruitful so CHF is now looking at establishing a more permanent VR engineering facility – and the Force is looking at using Augmented Reality on this autumn's amphibious and carrier strike group deployment.

"X Flight was a real success," said Commander Daniel Weil, Commander Air Engineering for the Commando Helicopter Force. "It demonstrated how workforce-led experimentation can challenge the norm and improve outputs.

"The outcomes of the technicians' efforts speak for themselves with a 30 per cent increase in operational serviceability and a doubling of aircraft utilisation when compared to current practice."

The lessons and results of the X-Flight are now being studied in greater detail by the team at Yeovilton to see what can become regular working practices in CHF, and potentially across the Fleet Air Arm, RAF and Army Air Corps.



Your Exclusive Official Royal Navy Calendar

12 AMAZING IMAGES OF THE FLEET The 2023 Royal Navy/Navy News Calendar

Order Now!

Our official calendar for 2023 celebrates the awesome Global Guardians of our Royal Navy featuring images that show its role sailing the world's seas protecting and helping in areas in much need of aid and assistance.

There are 3 ways to purchase your copy –

- **Online** – click on onlinecalendarshop.com/navynews and go through the simple order procedure to secure your copy. **Navy News readers please quote code (GLOBALGUARDIANS23)** when ordering online. Don't forget to have your credit card details handy when you go online.
- **By post** – send a cheque or postal order to **Onlinecalendarshop.com Ltd, 2 Ringway Business Park, Richard Street, Birmingham B7 4AA.** Please make your cheque payable to **Onlinecalendarshop.com Ltd**
- **By phone** – call **0121 333 1553** to place your order direct with one of our friendly customer service operators. Don't forget to have your credit card details handy when you call. Please allow 28 days from order for delivery.

ROYAL NAVY 2023 GLOBAL GUARDIANS
Official Calendar

ONLY £10
inc p&p (UK)
(or overseas + p&p)
CODE
**GLOBALGUARDIANS
23**

AMAZING FREE SHIPS OF THE FLEET POSTER



Onlinecalendarshop.com Ltd,
2 Ringway Business Park,
Richard Street,
Birmingham B7 4AA



MILITARY RANGE FOR 2023

Amazing official military calendars with powerful emotive images. See opposite and choose one of our 3 easy ways to place your order **Only £10.00** inc p&p (UK). **Please don't forget to include your discount code when ordering.**

This official calendar makes the ideal Christmas gift, order now to beat the Christmas rush whilst stocks last.

NEVER MISS A THING

Newcon Optik, a world leader in the design and manufacture of image-intensified night vision, thermal imaging systems, laser rangefinders and other professional-grade tactical optics.

Working closely with customers and partners we not only offer off-the-shelf solutions, but also provide custom design expertise when required. Regardless of the project size, Newcon Optik consistently produces technologically-advanced products that fill the needs of our military, law enforcement and search & rescue professional users around the globe.

For more information and full product range, please email info@levelpeaks.com



SPOTTER LRF PRO

Spotting Scope with built-in LRF



LRM 3500M

Laser Rangefinder Monocular



TVC 60

Thermal Clip-On Attachment



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

GOLD AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.



SPEY GOES DOWN UNDER

HMS Spey has said goodbye to Australia after making a pitstop in Darwin for a crew swap and to take on supplies and fuel for the next leg of her Pacific patrol.

She also used her time in the Northern Territory to work with the Royal Australian Navy and share training and experiences of being an overseas patrol vessel deployed from the UK for up to five years.

Alongside her sister ship HMS Tamar (see pages 20-21), Spey is the Royal Navy's permanent presence in the Indo-Pacific region and lessons learned from her maiden deployment were shared with the crews of HMAS Arafura and HMAS Wollongong.

The Australian patrol ships carry out tasks similar to that of Spey and Arafura's commanding officer and several Royal Australian Navy officers spent time on

the British ship.

Lieutenant Gareth Senior, Marine Engineer Officer on HMS Spey said: "It was good to have our Royal Australian Counterparts on board and give them the opportunity to explore our ship and department.

"It gave them an opportunity to see what their future offshore patrol vessels will be like and also share experiences of operating in the South Pacific region."

HMAS Wollongong accompanied Spey out of Darwin and they took the chance to train their sailors in a number of exercises including Officer-of-the-Watch manoeuvres.

The close-quarters sailing teaches sailors how to navigate safely among other ships.

ET(ME) Jean-Pierre Fernandes spent

time on HMAS Wollongong and found it to be a good learning experience.

"We were well received and welcomed," he said.

"It gave me a different insight into how other navies operate ships of similar class and what their priorities are.

"It was good to get a comparison with the smaller vessels in the Royal Australian Navy."

HMS Spey's Commanding Officer Commander Mike Proudman said the ship's time in Darwin had been useful for both his sailors and their Australian counterparts.

"The Australian officers that we hosted were part of their new patrol vessel programme," he said.

"This is a valuable way to improve efficiency and pre-empt challenges and is a great demonstration of the deepening

relationship between the UK and Australia.

"We will spend more time in and around Australia over the coming years, so increasing cooperation and sharing experience with one of our closest allies makes complete sense."

He praised the way HMS Spey and Wollongong trained together, adding: "The manoeuvres were professional and competent and allowed both ships to train personnel on close quarters manoeuvring.

"It's important to train basic maritime skills, for both ships companies, as it gives the basic grounding to enable us to operate safely in this challenging environment and for us to be able to build further, more complex warfare capability."



THERE'S a strong possibility you won't recognise the skyline HMS Tamar is leaving behind here.

And that's because the Royal Navy has been an infrequent visitor both to the port and the country.

The skyline belongs to Manila, capital of the Philippines.

Manila has welcomed Royal Navy vessels in the past decade (the city served as a supply hub for HMS Daring and Illustrious when they helped islands in the Philippines chain recover from Typhoon Haiyan... one of the most powerful storms on record).

Some 500 miles east of the Philippines there's the Republic of Palau.

If you've not heard of it, that's not too surprising. It's the fourth smallest country on the planet (pop. 18,000, spread across 500 islands).

And if you've probably not heard of Palau, its inhabitants probably haven't heard of the Royal Navy.

Not since May 1925 have the people of the Republic of Palau seen the White Ensign, when minesweeper HMS Bluebell called in on the archipelago.

Nearly a century later HMS Tamar arrived in Malakal Harbour off the capital Koror as part of a US-led peace/goodwill mission, accompanied by the 1,000-bed hospital ship USNS Mercy.

The latter is flagship of Pacific Partnership 22, a two-month deployment to remote communities around the Indo-Pacific, supported by the US allies, delivering medical aid and assistance, supporting community projects, assisting with infrastructure and taking part in sporting and community activities.

A Royal Navy officer (Captain Charles Maynard) is the deputy commander of the mission from the USNS Mercy, as well as RN medical officer Lieutenant Lesley Hailey, part of the international team on the hospital ship.

And for a few weeks Tamar – on a five-year mission with her sister HMS Spey as part of the UK's 'tilt' back to the Indo-Pacific – joined Pacific Partnership.

During the six-day visit to Palau, Tamar hosted its President, Surangel Whipps Jr and numerous senior government officials to show what the ship and her men and women are capable of, before throwing open the gangway to locals.

There were discussions on how the nations involved in Pacific Partnership – Australia, Japan, the UK and the USA

– could provide assistance, specifically related to humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and medical exchanges.

And with the Mercy 'in town', her medical teams worked with the hosts in sharing guidance and expertise on a wealth of health and wellbeing issues: paediatric, maternity, neonatal, intensive and critical care, mental health for military veterans, and physical therapy.

Meanwhile, Tamar's sailors had the chance to explore islands few Britons have visited, including UNESCO World Heritage sites across the archipelago, and learn about the efforts the people of Palau are taking towards conservation.

"It's been a privilege to bring the first Royal Navy warship into Palau for almost 100 years," said Lieutenant Commander Matt Millyard, HMS Tamar's Executive Officer.

"We learned a great deal from each other and with Tamar now an enduring presence here I look forward to continuing to build our partnerships in the Indo-Asia Pacific region."

It's now a year since Tamar and Spey departed Portsmouth, swapping one third of their crew every few weeks and conducting maintenance and taking on supplies in the numerous ports they call at during their Indo-Pacific odyssey.

Pretty much everyone on Tamar agrees that mission has opened up opportunities and given them access to places beyond the budget or reach of the wealthiest or most adventurous travellers.

"The best part is the places we have gone," says weapons engineer LET Alexander Twidell.

"Visiting world heritage sites and countries with beautiful landscape such as Palau and the Ngardmau waterfall. Places I would never get the chance to see.

"The worst part is the hardest part of the job, being away from home for milestone events and family."

And it is a long way from home.

Take Palau.

7,615 miles from Tamar's home base.

Or three flights. Travelling time of at least 42 hours... at worst well over 60. Cost. £1,500+ minimum.

And even with emails, mobile phones and satellite comms, you've got to factor in the time zones.

Singapore (the westernmost port of call so far) is seven hours ahead of the UK. Darwin in Australia nine

and a half. Hawaii was 11 hours behind, Pitcairn Island nine.

And with lean crewing – 40 or so ship's company – there's a lot to do to maintain a 2,000-tonne warship on operations.

But with the pain, there's gain.

"Being able to see and experience the sea life which I would not be able to see back in the UK and having the opportunity to explore local cultures and meet people very different to myself," said Seaman Specialist Jacob Somodi-Spence.

Comms specialist LET Molly Lawton enthused: "Curaçao was the first port call. It was so amazing to go to such a beautiful place, especially as I had never been to a place like that ever before," enthused

"Singapore was also amazing as I never thought I would get the chance to go. The Navy has brought me to some other amazing places I would have never been able to visit on my own."

There have been solemn but memorable moments too.

"Our visit to Hawaii and being there to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Pearl Harbour attack was something I never thought I would do," said weapons engineer Petty Officer Harry Puddefoot.

"Interacting with the US Navy is always fun and interesting to see how we each do our jobs."

But above all, it's the trailblazing nature of the mission which makes it truly special.

"Being the first RN ship to visit Palau in a long time was unique," said weapons engineer Petty Officer Guy Crosswell.

"It is great to be part of the ship while she is doing things and going the places the UK and the Royal Navy have not done in a while."

Pictures: LPhot Lee Blease, HMS Tamar



PACIFIC PALS





Are you a digitally focused technician in the Armed Forces?

Are you involved in the design, development, and installation of ICT solutions?

If so, you could be eligible for the Information and Communications Technology Technician (ICTTech) Professional Registration.

In an increased information and data driven society, the ICTTech is more important than ever. Achieving Professional registration demonstrates an ICTTech's proven knowledge, understanding and competence, and could be the next step in your professional development.

Some of the benefits of ICTTech include:

- Achieve an internationally recognised qualification
- Be recognised by colleagues, clients, and employers for your expertise and hard work
- Gain greater influence in your branch of the MOD
- Access to life-long learning

Through collaboration the Armed Forces, a proud affiliate of our Partnership Community and the IET have developed a streamlined application route to ICTTech, the Defence Engineering Registration Scheme (DERS). View your individual service eligibility criteria here:

theiet.org/ders

Also, as an Armed forces member, you can claim all of your Professional Registration fees back!



"The IET professional registration recognises the high level of technical experience within the Corps"

WO1 (Bde SSM) C Lord
Incorporated Engineer



"Joining the IET and becoming an ICTTech allowed me to have my knowledge, skills and experience certified and shows commitment to continuous professional development"

Cpl Basson ICTTech

To learn more about ICTTech and if it is right for you, join one of our membership and professional registration webinars:

theiet.org/webinarHB



Phillipa Anders with children Nell and Will attended the investiture

No more Perks for submariners

Family collect OBE for late RFA captain

THE celebrated head of the Royal Navy's Submarine Service retired after nearly 40 years of devoted service.

Commodore Jim Perks handed over command to Commodore Paul Dunn in a ceremony at the home of the Silent Service at HMNB Clyde in Scotland.

It marked the end of a 38-year naval career, which saw Cdre Perks climb the ranks from junior rating to the Officer Corps before going onto command the Submarine Flotilla in 2016 and eventually becoming head of the service in January 2020.

Cdre Perks toured Clyde Naval Base with his wife Louise, visiting Valiant and Finger jetties where he has overseen countless submarine operations, before departing on Faslane Patrol Boat HMS Raider, transporting him down the Gare Loch for the final time.

Cdre Perks said: "Having been promoted to the Officer Corps in 1988, the nature of our business and the camaraderie of the Silent Service was a real attraction and I saw the Submarine Service as a perfect home for me – and I was right.

"It has been an absolute honour to serve my final six years as Commander Submarine Flotilla. I am, as ever, humbled by the fortitude, resilience and dedication of our fantastic people, and of course, their families.

"Having joined Raleigh at 17 and now retiring after 38 years as Head of the Submarine Service, I can reflect that the Royal Navy has offered me fantastic opportunities throughout my career. I would do it again if I could – I am truly made in the Royal Navy."

Taking over from Cdre Perks is Cdre Dunn who himself has a wealth of submarine experience stretching back to 1989 when he joined the Royal Navy aged just 18 and volunteered for service on submarines.

During his career Commodore Dunn has served with HMS Courageous, HMS Sovereign, HMS Turbulent, HMS Superb, and HMS Vengeance (Port) and has commanded HMS Vigilant.

He has also spent time on shore as Assistant Staff Officer Operations at Clyde, with Fleet Operational Sea (Submarines), with the Maritime Warfare Centre as head of underwater warfare pillar, and with the operations team of the Naval Staff within the MOD.

He also served in Bahrain as Staff Operations Officer with the UK Maritime Component's Headquarters and in the US as UK Liaison Officer to US Strategic Command.

His most recent post was as Head of Nuclear Planning in the Director General Nuclear Organisation.



Clockwise from top of page, Cdre Perks bids farewell to personnel at HMNB Clyde; Cdre Perks approaches HMS Raider; Cdre Perks hands over to Cdre Dunn; Cdre Perks inspects a leaving gift, a display cube featuring photographs and crests of boats that he commanded in his career. Pictures: LPhot Bill Spurr



STANDING proudly outside the Palace to collect the medal which disease and illness never allowed its true recipient to receive are the family of RFA Captain Rob Anders.

More than two years after he was awarded the OBE – and nearly three since the deeds which earned the senior Royal Fleet Auxiliary officer formal recognition – the Anders family were finally able to attend Buckingham Palace for the investiture.

Sadly, Capt Rob, pictured right, himself was not; the father-of-two died suddenly from a brain tumour just before Christmas 2020.

With more than 30 years' service to his name in the RFA – the vital support arm of the Royal Navy which assists and carries out operations around the globe – Capt Anders was a popular figure, commanding a string of ships between 2015 and his untimely death.

In September 2019, Capt Anders was Commanding Officer of RFA Mounts Bay, the first ship to arrive on the scene of devastation in the Bahamas after Hurricane Dorian had battered islands with winds of up to 185mph, causing the worst natural disaster in the area in living memory.

In the days which followed, more than 6,000 people were helped by the ship's team – RFA, Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Engineers and Royal Logistics Corps and Fleet Air Arm – in some of the worst hit areas of Great Abaco Island and surrounding region.

Six months later that led to the OBE being announced in the first Operational Honours



of 2020... but by then the country was in Covid lockdown, investitures were put on hold so the Anders were denied their proud family day out... until now.

His widow Phillipa and teenage children Nell, 17, and Will, 16, were joined by Rob's parents after the Duke of Cambridge presented Capt Anders' decoration.

"We were incredibly honoured to be able to pick Rob's OBE up for him. The day was full of emotion and pride and we couldn't have been treated more kindly and generously," said Mrs Anders.

"Because of the situation, it was agreed that all three of us should go up to accept the OBE, giving us all the chance to talk with Prince William.

"He told us about his time onboard RFA Mounts Bay and asked Nell and Will to look after their mum!

"After the investiture, we met up with Rob's mum and dad for a celebratory lunch."

Commodore Perks' Naval Career

- Joining the Royal Navy in 1984 as a Writer – an administrative Rating in the navy – Commodore Perks served with HMS Hermione and HMS Jupiter stationed in the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq War.
- In 1988 he was promoted to the Officer Corps and joined Britannia Royal Naval College where he was assigned to HMS Intrepid and HMS Alacrity for initial sea training.
- It was shortly afterwards that he volunteered for service in submarines, completing his training onboard Trafalgar-class attack submarine HMS Tireless before navigating HMS Spartan.
- In 1995 Commodore Perks completed the Submarine Advanced Warfare Course and re-joined Spartan as the Operations Officer. It was just one year later that he was made an instructor on the Submarine Advanced Warfare Course.
- His next challenge was the Submarine Command Course (SMCC) – known as "Perisher" because of the high drop-out rate – the gateway to commanding a Royal Navy submarine. Commodore Perks passed the SMCC in 1999 and joined HMS Talent as the boat's Executive Officer.
- After a period with Fleet Operations in Northwood as Submarine Special Operations Officer he was promoted to Commander and given command of HMS Sceptre. He spent three years with the vessel and was awarded an OBE in recognition of his service.
- It was in 2008 that Commodore Perks was appointed the role of "Teacher" of the Perisher course, responsible for training and assessing future submarine commanders.

Registered charity number: Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund 180162

Naval Children's Charity

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

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

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

NEED A CAR NOW?



Save money

Our customers have saved over £166 million since 2001.



Part exchange welcome

All vehicles are accepted.



Nationwide delivery

Your new car can be delivered direct to your door.

We have several models of new cars in stock and available for quick delivery!
Contact Forces Cars Direct today for more details.



Call: 01522 814 010 Or visit: www.forcescarsdirect.com

Images for illustration only. Prices and details correct at time of print. Prices for standard model only and do not include any optional extras, please ask for additional options and for your bespoke quote. Discounts vary between makes and models. Delivery costs and restrictions may apply. Shorter delivery times relates to Nissan Qashqai, specification and availability subject to change, delivery times for other cars vary. Forces Cars Direct Limited T/A Cars Direct, Forces Leasing and Motor Source, is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FRN:672273). We act as a credit broker not a lender. We can introduce you to a limited number of lenders who may be able to offer you finance facilities for your purchase. We will only introduce you to these lenders. We may receive a commission payment from the finance or hire provider if you decide to enter into an agreement with them. The nature of this commission is as follows: we receive a fixed fee per finance agreement entered into and we receive a volume bonus if the number of sales we achieve reaches a specific target. You can request for us to disclose the amount of any commission received. The commission received does not affect the amount you will pay under your finance agreement. You may be able to obtain finance for your purchase from other lenders and you are encouraged to seek alternative quotations. If you would like to know how we handle complaints, please ask for a copy of our complaints handling process. You can also find information about referring a complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) at financial-ombudsman.org.uk

SURVEY ship HMS Scott is on course to smash her record scanning the oceans after just the first four weeks of an epic 15-month deployment.

The unique Plymouth-based ship – the fifth largest vessel to fly the White Ensign – has hoovered up data covering an area roughly the size of Portugal... or roughly a quarter of the ocean covered during her previous record-breaking patrol.

Scott specialises in deep ocean survey work – reaching parts other vessels cannot – with the emphasis currently on updating data, charts and the general understanding of the mid-Atlantic to assist Royal Navy and NATO operations.

And if surveying an area the size of Portugal in a month sounds (and is) impressive... it's literally a drop in the (Atlantic) Ocean... a mere 20th of one per cent of the world's second largest body of water... Or Scott would have to scan another 1,150-plus Portugals to finish the job.

Her crew aren't that ambitious – but they do intend to break the record 400,000-plus kilometres of Atlantic covered during the 2021-22 survey season.

The ship underwent a £7.5 million revamp in Falmouth to prepare her for her mission, before she sailed in early July. She's due to return to the UK in the autumn of 2023, although her crew rotate regularly to sustain the long-term operation.

Alongside the surveying success of the first patrol, the ship's company were kept busy training to deal with emergencies such as fires and floods on board, culminating in a demanding week of ship-



led damage control exercises at the end of the patrol, ranging from minor to major incidents involving multiple fires, floods and casualties.

'As my first time deploying there was definitely a steep learning curve during the intensive training on this patrol, learning not only my day-to-day role but also my role within emergencies,' said hydrographic officer Sub Lieutenant Anna Hinsley.

'Although challenging, I really enjoyed the experience and feel it has set me up well for the next leg of deployment where I can continue to build my confidence in these roles.'

After four productive weeks at sea, the ship sailed into Santa Cruz, Tenerife, to swap crew.

Scott was the first Royal Navy vessel in more than five years to visit the holiday island, receiving a warm welcome from both Spanish naval and local authorities.

Commanding Officer Commander Tom Harrison called in on the regional naval base commander, Capitan de Fragata D. Pablo Doderio Martinez, to thank the NATO allies for their hospitality.

And the ship hosted 30 dignitaries for a capability demonstration/tour of Scott and a briefing from Cdr Harrison, followed by a buffet lunch onboard.

Scott's football team were put through their paces in a friendly match against Club Deportivo Tenerife U21s (a semi-professional side) and came out second best unsurprisingly.

The ship also received £4,000 from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and Rebalancing Lives for teambuilding activities, including a day at Siam Park, Europe's largest water park, for all aboard and while the engineering and logistics teams enjoyed trips to a go-karting track.

'Everyone had a great time – it gave the department a chance to bond



outside work and let off some steam,' Leading Engineering Technician Benjamin Stevenson said of the karting.

'We are very grateful to the RNRMC, the Rebalancing Lives Fund and the ship's welfare fund for their contributions, meaning that the day could be enjoyed with no expense to the ship's company.'

Commander Harrison added: 'It's been a very positive start to the deployment. My crew have really hit the ground running and are working diligently to overcome the many challenges of operating a ship at reach. If we can continue in the same manner, this will be another record-breaking effort.'



Children thriving in new garden

After months of planning and extensive landscaping, a new garden and playground has officially opened at the YMCA Nursery at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth.

Thanks to a significant grant from the RNRMC, with additional funding from the Annington Trust, an unsuitable and uninspiring outdoor space has been transformed into an engaging garden for babies and toddlers from service families to enjoy.

Quality outdoor learning environments offer positive places for children to play and learn and support emotional well-being through natural spaces. Prior to renovation, the nursery's garden areas had fallen into a state of disrepair and were no longer meeting the emotional, learning or play needs of the children.

The grass area had worn bare, creating mud pools when wet, and the tarmac playground area was unsafe with the surface lifting in multiple places.

Following a complete overhaul of the space, the garden is now an interactive and welcoming environment. Features such as climbing net, a tunnel, and a wooden watch tower with fireman pole give children the chance to play and blow off steam, while carefully considered sheltered spaces offer the opportunity for story reading, art and other quiet activities, allowing children at the nursery to spend more time in the outdoors than ever before.

'The garden is truly amazing,' said Nursery Manager, Shannon Shuttleworth. 'The children now choose to be in the garden for most of the day. Most activities throughout the day now take place in the garden. We have also noticed how the children are more engaged with their learning and their vocabulary development reflects this.'

HMS Excellent's Commanding Officer, Commander Simon Turnbull, said: 'It has been a real team effort to create this beautiful new garden for our great nursery. I have always enjoyed hearing the children's voices chattering with excitement around the nursery, and I am sure all the youngsters in future years will love exploring their new play area.'



Scott is smashing it

Sailors help injured German mountaineer in Bavarian Alps

ROYAL Navy police turned medics when they helped a German climber with a broken thigh in the Bavarian Alps.

The three-strong team were on a day's mountaineering from the Royal Navy's unique Navy Outdoor Centre Germany (NOCG), around 70 miles southwest of Munich, when they encountered an injured mountaineer on the upper slopes of the Iseler, a peak which rises more than 6,000 feet close to the Austrian border.

With the casualty exposed more than 5,200ft above sea level and suffering from a suspected broken femur (thigh bone), the police did not hesitate to jump to their aid.

'I can't even begin to imagine the pain that person would have gone through on that mountain,' said Lieutenant Scott Cantillion of the Royal Navy Police.

'We just did what hopefully any other person would do ensuring their safety until the mountain rescue team could arrive.'

The police are enjoying a week's adventurous training delivered by the small, specialist team based at NOCG in the Alpine resort of Bad Hindelang.

It traces its history back nearly two decades. In its current form, it occupies a former four-star hotel and is used year-round as a hub for a mix of Alpine and sporting activities: hiking, climbing, klettersteiging, kayaking in the Alpine streams and more.

The centre runs courses and activities all year round and is available to families at New Year and Easter; the rest of the time it focuses on team/character building for Naval Service personnel through its adventurous training opportunities.

See next month's edition for stunning imagery from the Alps and a feature on the activities on the centre. In the meantime, you can book AT courses at www.nocg.co.uk



Duo pause epic ride

TWO Royal Navy officers have paused their epic cycle ride across the USA due to extreme heat.

Commander Pascal Patterson and Lieutenant Commander Dan Waskett were planning a 5,000-km (3,100 miles) ride from San Diego in California to Jacksonville, Florida, an adventure they call Stars and Spokes.

As well as raising money the two riders were keen to show how interconnected physical and mental fitness are – underscored by Covid restrictions these past couple of years.

For details on when they hope to resume their adventure, follow them on Instagram [@starsandspokes](https://www.instagram.com/starsandspokes.com) or via www.starsandspokes.com.

And you can top up their fundraising pot via www.justgiving.com/starsandspokes.



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 Telephone:
07773 155321

**SUBSCRIBE
NOW**

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





Rear Admiral Jude Terry talks to the new Officer Cadets who passed out at Britannia Royal Naval College



Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell talks to Officer Cadets during their passing-out parade



DARTMOUTH SHINES FOR ROYAL NAVY'S NEW LEADERS

THERE are 140 men and women ready to lead the navies of tomorrow after passing out of Britannia Royal Naval College – spiritual home of the Royal Navy's Officer Corps.

Families and friends were in Dartmouth to witness the formal end of training on a magnificent day of pomp, ceremony and sunshine in Devon.

Of the 140 personnel on parade were 81 Officer Cadets who had completed the intensive 29-week course which turns them from civilians into junior naval officers as they are tested in a variety of scenarios: in the classroom, on Dartmoor, the River Dart and at sea on board an operational warship.

They were joined by 13 International students as well as 16 new officers for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary service – which operates ships supporting the Royal Navy's warships around the globe – plus 30 former ratings selected for promotion to the Officer Corps. All the groups have completed their own bespoke training courses.

Taking the salute was Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell along with Rear Admiral Jude Terry, Director People and Training and Naval Secretary. They were hosted by the Commanding Officer of BRNC, Captain Sarah Oakley.

"Today marks a significant milestone in the lives of all the Officer Cadets on parade today," said Captain Oakley.

"It marks the culmination of their successful journey at Dartmouth through Britannia Royal Naval College and also the start of the next phase of their careers in the Royal Navy

"Everyone has stories to tell, memories to share about their experiences during training which will shape their futures.

"Passing out is a great achievement and a proud moment for all those involved who have given 100 per cent to meet the

stringent standards.

"I wish to thank their families and friends who have encouraged and supported them, and my staff who have worked hard to ensure the cadets reach their goals and realise their potential."

Two of those who passed out were Officer Cadets Kimberley Sharpe from Shropshire and Paddy McGrath from Birmingham. They are both looking forward to the next phase of their training in the Royal Navy.

"The most enjoyable parts of training are also the most arduous," said 22-year-old Paddy.

"During some of the exercises away from the college we got very cold and wet, but we got through these times together and I was the proudest person today as we march up the steps and in through the college doors at the end.

"I'm looking to qualify as a weapons engineer and very keen to get into the Fleet and begin my work as an officer.

"I think what excites me most is the chance to work alongside a variety of people from countless different backgrounds."

And 28-year-old Kimberley has joined the Royal Navy as a Nursing Officer. She has also enjoyed her time at BRNC.

"Training at Dartmouth has many physical, emotional and mental challenges, but it's the moments we're all together that has got us through it all," she said.

"I've cherished the comradeship and leadership, which have made my journey both rewarding and memorable.

Kimberley continued: "Certainly, my proudest moment was during the final assessment exercise when I put my nursing skills and knowledge to good use and oversaw all the exercise casualties.

"The injured were treated in real time and it was satisfying to be recognised for my role during the exercise, it was a highlight of my training."



Pictures: LPhot Eddie Damulira



A probationary LET at work aboard HMS Bulwark

Engineering a great way of working

A TEAM of 23 engineers from the RNR Engineering Branch (RNREB) joined their Regular counterparts from the Devonport section of the Fleet Support Unit Maritime Task Group to prove they could operate together to regenerate ships.

Over half of the branch is dedicated to FSU activity as FSU Maritime Reserves, formed to deploy, alongside regular FSU teams, to remote locations and provide engineering support to front-line units.

The premise of Exercise Auxilium Venture was the same... but for ships here in the UK.

Containers on a wharf close to HMS Bulwark became the team's base for the week-long exercise, focusing on Bulwark (currently in extended readiness), amphibious flagship Albion and frigate HMS Northumberland.

As the FSU can be required to deploy at short notice, a key aim was to gain experience quickly and effectively, establishing a remote base and exercise the command-and-control structure.

Work-packages submitted by the ships were assessed by three RNR Warrant Officers, before teams were formed to carry

out the maintenance – mostly marine-engineering focused – based on experience and ability. Weapon engineers donned their overalls and got stuck into the Cat A and low-level maintenance.

Tasks completed over the week included: changing centre-fed hose reels and seals on the Sea Ceptor missile system on Northumberland; freeing rod gearing and refurbishing high-pressure sea water valves on Bukwark; and taking oil samples and upper-deck greasing routines in HMS Albion.

The reservists also have their own 3D printing machines which are used to support ships struggling to source obscure parts through the stores system.

The machines can be programmed to manufacture components out of a variety of polymer materials and the team have become skilled in 'dimensioning' components, creating them in modelling software and then finding the optimal manufacturing process to ensure a usable product is produced. During the exercise the team produced switchboard and fuse panel securing bolts and hinges which the ship had

struggled to obtain.

"The RNR teams completed many important maintenance items during their week," said Lieutenant Commander Stephen Jones, Bulwark's Senior Engineer. "These maintenance items hadn't reached the urgent stage, but they are important, and the teams have completed a large section of these tasks with professionalism and care. The 3D printer added real value by printing components that are not readily available or have unrealistic supply times, these quite simple parts are most welcome."

"The RNREB is designed to work alongside our Regular counterparts in the Forward Support Units, and exercises such as this really highlight where RNR engineers can best support Royal Navy ships," said Commander Sarah Royston, Head of the RNREB.

The majority of the RNREB are ex-Regular engineers who have transferred to the reserves via Project Firefly but in the past two years a wider access route to the branch has been created with the introduction of Direct Entry Technicians, which allows

personnel to use their civilian engineering qualifications to map against the naval engineering training pipeline for equivalence.

Four Probationary LETs joined the exercise to progress task books and gain experience of warship maintenance, bringing with them a wealth of engineering experience from their civilian careers with backgrounds in rail, electrical power distribution, nuclear waste processing and submarine building.

"It's great to meet up with like-minded people and learn from their ways of working and how they approach maintenance and defect rectification," said Probationary LET Chris Raeburn. "Carrying out fault finding, defect rectification and bringing a system back into service provides a significant element of job satisfaction for engineers.

"A highlight for me has been working on a Sea Ceptor launcher, changing silo seals. This is a new system for me which I hadn't had the opportunity to see before. The maintainer was genuinely grateful for the support we provided and help with this task."



Cane and able... WO1s Mick Turnbull, Carl Steedman and Ian Wilson
Picture: PO(Phot) Dan Shepherd

'...A privilege to serve you...'

Last month we announced the departure of the three Command Warrant Officers for pastures new.

As they leave office, the trio offer their insights into the past three years at the top – highs, lows, and some of the challenges facing their successors.

LOOKING back at the past two and a half years, the outgoing Senior Leadership Team Warrant Officers could not have predicted the challenge or the opportunities that would be ahead of them.

The splitting of the Warrant Officer Naval Service role into three positions – Warrant Officer to the Royal Navy (WORN) itself, Second Sea Lord's Warrant Officer (2SLWO) and Fleet Commander's Warrant Officer (FCWO) – as well as absorbing the responsibilities of the Fighting Arm Command Warrant Officers, was the goal.

That's only part of the story, for overlaid was first the initialisation and pace of the RN's Transformation programme, the impending Integrated Review, and the subsequent impact of a global pandemic.

The three WO1s – Carl Steedman (WORN), Ian Wilson (2SLWO) and Mick Turnbull (FCWO) – regarded improving leadership, communications and rewards and recognition as their main objectives initially, a firm foundation for maintaining output while looking at what could improve the 'lived experience'.

The impact of Covid and consequences of remote working served as both hindrance and opportunity.

Rapidly setting up senior WO1 networks, with the aim of encouraging empowerment and move beyond 'siloed' thinking and communicating was a huge success and proved that looking for an 80 per cent solution with testing and adjusting, would and did have quantifiable results.

They took inspiration from these accomplishments and promoted the 'One Navy' objectives, focussing on the operational delivery, teamwork and the broader 'Royal Navy Family'.

"The connections we fostered with Civil Service colleagues, contractors, charities, veterans, cadets, and support organisations laid the foundations for networking and achieving significant successes, especially with reward and recognition.

"This does not mean that it has been plain sailing," said WO1 Turnbull. "We acknowledge that there have been significant joint/personnel challenges with the lack of/poor state of accommodation, mental health challenges and wellbeing of our workforce, lack of modern effective IT on the front line, the effects of augmentation and trawling, the length of Op Relentless patrols, the lack of runs ashore to name a few."

With no immediate fix to any of these issues, they have ensured that the Senior Leadership Team and wider defence are fully aware of how our people, both Serving and Civil Servants are stepping up, taking on these challenges, providing ideas and still performing at the highest levels to ensure all operational commitments are met.

"This does not mean that this activity will – or should – be normalised, and there are definite strategies evolving which will get after these points," said WO1 Steedman. "The strength of the whole Royal Navy, every Sailor, Royal Marine, Officer, regular or reservist, RFA seafarer, civil servant, contractor, and the support organisations as a 'Whole Force', has been phenomenal."

WO1 Wilson added: "If there is a community which deserves a 'BZ' during our tenure, it is the WO1 cadre, their support, guidance and advice has been instrumental in our delivery. The whole force 'buy in', irrespective of Fighting Arm, set the tone for what could be achieved."

This was especially true when the Senior Command Warrant Officer group was formed with the Corps RSM and DE&S Command Warrant Officer.

The group were empowered to sit on panels, make executive decisions and brief courses and personnel, forming that bridge between the commissioned and non-commissioned ranks and rates.

"It has been a real privilege for the three of us to be your first Senior Leadership Team Warrant Officers, thank you," the trio say.

"People are at the heart of what we do, and the Royal Navy's heart is made of oak".

Red letter day for RN medics

MEDICS who provided vital welfare and care during last year's carrier group deployment and paved the way for patrol ship operations around the world were among those honoured at the RN's Healthcare and Medical awards.

Following a symposium at RNAS Yeovilton, medals and trophies were presented to individuals and teams whose efforts went above and beyond what might be expected of them to maintain – or generally improve medical provision at sea or on establishments across the Service.

Leading Medical Assistant Rhiann Dilmore received the Medical Director General (Navy) Award from Surgeon Commodore Fleur Marshall for her outstanding efforts aboard HMS Tamar.

Rhiann was one of the patrol ship's first crew, bringing the ship – and her sick bay – to life through trials, training and finally deployment to the Indo-Pacific.

Shipmates used words such as "exceptional", "phenomenal" and "exemplary" to describe her performance on the River-class vessel. She not only helped ensure Tamar became the quickest-generated ship since World War Two, but changed the way first aid is delivered in an emergency – changes which have since been introduced throughout the five-ship class of patrol vessels.

She also stepped in to help sister ship HMS Medway when they were short of a Medic, helped reorganise its sick bay along Tamar's lines... while making sure everything on Tamar was up to scratch.

And just for good measure, her citation named her not just as an outstanding RN Medic – but the "number one able seaman across 148 in the Offshore Patrol Squadron".

The Medical Director General (Navy) Award says Rhiann – now serving at RNAS Yeovilton, "a real privilege".

She continued: "It reflects the work that has gone into generating a new class of ship and was an exciting opportunity to put my own stamp on her medical capability.

"It goes without saying that this wasn't a solo effort and I am grateful to all who helped me deliver her medical department to the Fleet.

"This was the most challenging and turbulent experience of my naval career to date, but one that has given me the confidence and competence to undertake any role that comes my way. Mahalo! [Hawaiian for thank you]."

Petty Officer (Naval Nurse) Karen Scott, serving at Royal Centre for Defence Medicine



Rhiann Dilmore gives casualty training to Officer Cadets on Tamar in Hawaii
Picture: Lt Cdr Shaun Roster

(Operational) in Birmingham, was awarded the Ruth Carter prize for her "notable and long-lasting contribution to nursing and patient care".

She came to the fore during the evacuation of Afghanistan in August 2021 (Operation Pitting).

With hundreds of children among those being flown out of Kabul, the rapid evacuation underlined the need for military nurses to be trained in paediatric care.

PO Scott drew up a package to provide that training. So good is the five-day course she put together that it is being used across the MOD, replacing the existing instructions drawn up during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, with critical care, ward and operating theatre staff all among those benefiting.

"The award came as a great shock – I'm very humbled considering the calibre of nurses I work with," Karen said. "The award reflects the team effort in achieving all we have with the paediatric course – I couldn't have achieved all we have done without the combined efforts of all involved."

Medical Services Officer Lieutenant Commander Lindsay Robinson was presented with the Reed Sword for her work to create a logistical hub for Maritime Deployed Hospital Group in Devonport to be used when the facilities are not needed.

Building M066 in the base is now 'owned' by the hospital group, allowing it to safely and easily store the kit and caboodle of a Role 2 Afloat or the Maritime Role 3 Deployed Hospital Capability modules to be stored when a ship is in refit, or needed for other duties.

There were other award winners who couldn't make it to the evening.

A regular face in HMS Nelson in Portsmouth, Surgeon Commander Alan Bowie received the Alan Hirst Memorial Prize for his work at its medical

centre for nearly four years, not least dealing with a pandemic while ensuring Portsmouth-based ships and their sailors remained operational.

He was central to preparing crews for last year's Carrier Strike Group mission (Operation Fortis), was deployed operationally at short notice to sea and abroad on several occasions, never shirking his duty, leading and inspiring by example, despite the personal and family impact that this may have had.

And continuing the Fortis theme, the eight-strong Carrier Strike Group 'forward mental health team' earned the Kennedy Award for innovation.

The eight provided mental health support, guidance and help throughout the deployment, focusing on promotion, prevention, detection and treatment.

In all, 82 patients were assessed by the team, with 63 found to be requiring treatment. Of those requiring treatment, some 229 sessions were delivered with almost half of patients completing their treatment during the deployment, which meant they didn't have to be sent back to the UK, thus affecting the operational capability of the deployment.

Another Fortis recipient is Petty Officer (Medical Assistant) Andrew Addison of HMS Defender, one of the carrier's guardians, winner of the Sick Berth Petty Officers' Efficiency Medal.

Described as "an extremely capable practice manager and a devoted clinician" who struck "an excellent balance of teacher, manager and clinician", PO Addison stepped up in the absence of a medical officer, and his foresight meant that his destroyer was the only ship on the deployment to not require the resupply of PPE or lateral flow tests despite two substantial Covid outbreaks.

Childcare scheme expanded across UK

WRAPAROUND childcare to be rolled out across the UK after successful trial runs.

WAC aims to provide current and future Service parents with greater flexibility and childcare support, mitigating some – but not all – of the difficulties which can sometimes be caused by mobility and deployment when trying to find appropriate childcare.

From the start of the autumn term (so about now), funding for WAC – known as 'Out of School care' in Wales and 'School Aged Childcare' in Scotland – will be available to all eligible Service families with children aged four to 11 years, who are in school or being home schooled in the UK.

If eligible, Personnel can claim up to 20 hours per week of funding for each child that is attending before and after-school care during term time.

WAC was piloted around Plymouth, at RAF High Wycombe, RAF Halton, Catterick Garrison, Lincolnshire and Woolwich, and has benefited more than 1,800 children to date.

Having followed the progress of the trial in the Plymouth area, Rear Admiral Jude Terry, Director of People and Training, said she hoped the widespread extension of the initiative would "be a great additional support" for naval families.

"I recognise that childcare can be a financial and organisational challenge for you and that it can also have a significant impact on the ability of your partners to pursue fulfilling careers and employment opportunities. This is a positive step forward in improving the work-life balance for mums and dads and is essential in enabling us to better support the needs of a modern and diverse Royal Navy."

If you haven't done so already, there are important steps you can take now.

Every child you want to claim WAC funding for must be recorded on JPA and must have a Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) account.

If your child(ren) is/are not recorded on JPA and/or you do not have a TFC account, Service families should take the following steps now:

- record your child(ren) on JPA.
- read information about TFC accounts by visiting Tax-Free Childcare on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).
- check if your family will financially benefit from having a TFC account or a salary sacrifice childcare voucher scheme, including the Armed Forces Childcare Voucher Scheme (AFCVS (Sodexo vouchers)). You cannot have both at the same time. To make an informed decision about which scheme suits your family best, use the childcare calculator on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Be aware: if you choose to leave the AFCVS, you cannot re-join it.

If you choose to claim WAC funding, you can create a TFC account for your child(ren) on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

More announcements, resources and information sessions will be shared to help Service families check if their family is eligible and provide information on how to sign up for the WAC scheme.

Bullying line change

THERE'S a new number to call if you're the victim – or aware of instances – of bullying, harassment and discrimination in your military or civilian career in the Royal Navy.

The confidential, independent helpline is now available on 0800 014 2381 (in the UK) or 0044 330 008 5942 (overseas)

The line provides emotional support, guidance, and practical advice with trained advisers available 24/7, 365 days a year.

It was established in the wake of the Wigston Review on Inappropriate Behaviour (published in July 2019).

The advisers are available between 9am and 7pm during the week.

Outside these hours, counsellors are on hand to support and listen and arrange a call back with a specialist adviser at a pre-agreed time.

Push start

TO WIDEN awareness and access to ice sports across the RN, grassroots open days have been arranged for personnel on the skeleton push start.

The unique facility at the University of Bath allows athletes to practise this technique – one of the most important aspects of any skeleton bob race, which can be taught and developed off ice.

These events will also allow management to identify potential new team members for the 2023 ICE Championships.

See [RNTM 10-032/22](https://www.rntm.org.uk) for details.

Team Fisher take charge of sub sims

RESPONSIBILITY for two key nuclear submarine trainers has been handed over to the Team Fisher consortium.

Fisher – a group of defence, science and tech firms who are taking over large parts of RN training to make it more efficient – now provides engineering and maintenance support of the Vanguard-class Nuclear Ship Control Trainer and the Role Performance Trainer.

The duo, both located at Faslane, play a critical role in equipping naval personnel with the skills and experience they need to work on and support submarines.

FASNUSCOT is a full motion simulator, which provides high-intensity training in realistic scenarios for personnel to practise standard and emergency operating procedures from the basics of submarine handling to dealing with complex emergencies such as fires, flooding and loss of power. The simulator will be in service for the life span of the V-boats – until 2037.

The RPT provides compulsory refresher training and accreditation for specialist communication information and sonar roles, using customised computer-based training solutions.

Nominate the best logistic efforts

THE Chief of Defence Logistics and Support (CDLS) is looking for nominations for a commendation which will recognise individuals and teams who have made an exceptional contribution to the Defence Support Function and its strategic objectives.

Eligible for consideration are military, civilians or contractors – either as individuals or teams, – regardless of their rank, grade, trade or branch.

Citations will require endorsement through the chain of command, with completed forms sent to the Navy Defence Delivery Support Team NLT by September 30

For further information read [RNTM 09-016/22](mailto:RNTM.09-016/22).

For seagoing, operational units and shore establishments the citation should be raised by the line manager or head of department, endorsed higher up the chain of command.

For HQ the countersigning officer is, as a minimum OF5/B Band Head of Team.

Confidential crimeline introduced

A CONFIDENTIAL crimeline – freephone 0800 085 0658 or military 93835 4278 – means sailors and Royal Marines, or Service families, can report any illegal activity in confidence, anonymously.

It's the duty of all personnel to report suspicious or criminal activity among shipmates/unit or squadron colleagues from fraud to drug misuse or theft.

The hotline has been established for anyone who feels they cannot report the activity through the regular chain of command.



(l-r) Captains Suzi Nielsen (Raleigh), Sarah Oakley (BRNC), Catherine Jordan (Collingwood) and Jo Deakin (Sultan)

Pictures: Keith Woodland, HMS Collingwood

'...A responsibility to inspire and support...'

FOUR senior officers have spoken of their pride at being able to inspire recruits and trainees who are at the start of their military careers.

Captains Suzi Nielsen, Catherine Jordan, Sarah Oakley, and Jo Deakin are marking their time in command of the navy's four training establishments by ensuring all personnel, regardless of their background, are prepared for life in the Senior Service.

In a historic moment for the Royal Navy, this is the first time HMS Raleigh, Britannia Royal Naval College, HMS Sultan, and HMS Collingwood have all been commanded by women simultaneously.

And although this landmark moment is an achievement for the captains, they see it as being the norm for the navy's future.

Captain Jordan, commanding officer of HMS Collingwood, in Fareham, said: "The good thing about us all being in this position now, is that there's a high probability it will happen again."

"It's a beautiful coincidence in that it's a moment in time but not the moment in time," added Captain Deakin, commanding officer of Gosport's HMS Sultan.

"It's a nice thing to recognise but there's so much more to celebrate in terms of opportunity and what's going on for recruits going through training now."

The captains said when they joined in the 1990s and early 2000s they never saw themselves being in these positions, not

because of their gender but because they were unsure what the future held.

And reflecting on their careers, they said they were encouraged to always achieve what they could.

Captain Jordan added: "When I was going through flying training with the Fleet Air Arm there weren't many women at that stage but there was never a thought a woman couldn't be where I am today."

Captain Deakin, with her background in engineering, says her appointment as commander of the marine and air engineering school, was an exciting moment.

"I am proud to be a senior engineer in this position," she said.

"I am very passionate about my profession and what that means for people joining. The Royal Navy provides great STEM opportunities for the nation and that's as much something to celebrate as much as any gender perspective."

And with more female recruits joining Raleigh and BRNC, the captains see the future of the Royal Navy being more diverse.

Captain Oakley, Captain of BRNC, said: "When I had the new entrants stood in front of me on the parade ground at Dartmouth at the beginning of May, we had approximately 25 per cent women in that cohort which is fantastic."

"When we joined, it was probably about 10 per cent and changing the dynamics from 10 to 25 per cent actually joining up is a really positive story."

She added that the focus was on retaining those individuals and ensuring they have the support they need through training – regardless of their gender.

"Support is really important and even if we continue to build on this positive momentum of recruiting lots more females, we're still going to be in the minority to an extent," Captain Nielsen, commanding officer of HMS Raleigh in Torpoint, said.

"So the work is how to empower those females? How do we make them feel more comfortable? How can they deliver in those situations that might feel a bit new?"

"It's about how can we better prepare them for the rigours that come with that responsibility and I think that's where we are continuing to do a lot more."

She added: "But it's not just about being female. We had a lot of fantastic male role models as well."

"We are those people now and with that comes a responsibility to inspire and to support and to make sure that whatever our experiences are are cascaded down so it becomes the norm."

Reflecting on if women should be encouraged to join the Royal Navy, Captain Oakley said they should and it's a career she would suggest to her nieces.

"The navy has given me such amazing opportunities and if others could have even half the opportunities, I would be delighted for them," she said.



Big plug for Sultan's engineers

ENGINEERS at HMS Sultan crafted a unique memento to celebrate the 185th birthday of their branch.

Trainee engineers and instructors at the Gosport establishment produced an anniversary tampion – a large 'plug' used to prevent the elements seeping into the barrels of warship guns – to demonstrate both their skill... and some of the technological advances across the branch's lifespan.

Royal Navy engineers can actually trace their history back at least 210 years to 1812 when the first steam propulsion was introduced to the Fleet.

The engines on those early steam vessels were maintained by civilians employed on an ad hoc basis.

By 1837, with 27 steam vessels in the Fleet, it was clear that more formal management arrangements were needed.

On July 19 1837 an Order in Council was issued placing engineers on a permanent footing, "with such rank and pay as appears to be fitting for persons charged with the performance of such important and responsible duties".

Fast forward 185 years and today's engineers perform tasks and duties with machinery and systems their predecessors could never have imagined: strike fighters invisible to radar, engines pushing aircraft at speeds faster than sound, and splitting the atom to power nuclear submarines.

The commemorative tampion was produced with the help of computer-aided design and a 3D printer (which have only come to the fore in the past 40 years) and fits into the barrel of a miniature cannon which will go on display to visitors to demonstrate the range of the skills taught at Sultan.

"We are hugely proud of HMS Sultan's engineering heritage," said Commanding Officer Captain Jo Deakin.

"Although we continue to evolve our cutting-edge technology and state-of-the-art training, it is vitally important that we recognise the value of the lessons of our past, as we develop the workforce of our future."

Weapons engineers up the road at HMS Collingwood in Fareham celebrated not with a tampion but cake, carved up by Commander Keith Taylor, in charge of the Weapon Engineering Training Group, Probationary Leading Engineering Technician (PLET) Alex Wainwright and Engineering Technician (ET) Joseph Stadius.

PLET Wainwright said: "I've been in the Royal Navy for two years now and I was drawn to the engineering branch, mainly so I could travel the world and fix things!"

ET Stadius, with two and a half years' service, added: "Being an engineer is a fantastic experience and you get the chance to work on world-class equipment."



Jamie takes engineering title

IF YOU want to find the Navy's No.1 engineer where would you go?

The flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth perhaps? Or maybe a nuclear-powered submarine, a machine more complex than the Space Shuttle.

Try one of the smallest units in the Fleet... and some of the smallest craft to fly the White Ensign.

Chief Petty Officer (ETME) Jamie Dougal heads the engineering team of the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron who maintain brand new patrol craft HMS Cutlass and Dagger, plus four Pacific 24 ribs.

As Squadron Marine Engineer Officer Jamie has been instrumental in leading the transition from the P2000s Dasher and Pursuer to their replacements.

While mechanical trials were taking place with the new vessels, Jamie and his team had to maintain them, plus the squadron's existing boats so they were always at immediate notice for sea for tasking, ensuring the squadron's output was not reduced during the transition.

Jamie and his fellow engineers were also required to create and develop new Standing Operating Procedures for machinery/steering breakdowns and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Damage Control incidents afloat and alongside, all of which have since been endorsed by Fleet Operational Sea Training.

When not maintaining the small squadron flotilla in their workshops and pontoons near The Tower, the team also provide the marine engineering officers for both Dagger and Cutlass when out on patrol in the Rock's territorial waters.

All of which – and much more – ensured Jamie, who'd previously helped bring patrol ship HMS Forth (now on duty around the Falklands) into service, was named Royal Navy Engineer of the Year.

He flew to London to collect his award from Master Audrey Cannon at a ceremony at the Guildhall, London, attended by his family.

"It's an absolute honour to be recognised for this highly prestigious award. I would like to thank my dedicated and highly-trained team of engineers at the RN Gibraltar Squadron for their hard-work in achieving the challenges of bringing the new Cutlass-class patrol vessels into service," he said.

Chance encounter



A BUS tour of a Canadian town took former sailor Tommy Murray down memory lane – and a chance encounter with a family he last met nearly 50 years ago.

The ex-HMS Ajax crewman returned to the Canadian town which proudly bears the ship's name – and by accident found the local family who royally hosted the then teenager in the autumn of 1976... still in the same home... and still with the Ajax cap he left behind.

Ajax, near Toronto, takes its name from the WW2 cruiser HMS Ajax – a tribute to the RN's victory at the River Plate in 1939 when British pluck, skill, seamanship and a little subterfuge crippled the Graf Spee and led to the German pocket battleship being scuttled off Montevideo.

The town's streets carry the names of men who served in the three cruisers involved in the battle – Exeter and Achilles, plus Ajax, as well as crew of the more recent Ajax, the Leander-class frigate which served from the mid-1960s through to the mid-80s.

In the autumn of 1976, she famously visited her namesake town on the north shore of Lake Ontario when as well as opening their gangway to locals, locals invited sailors to enjoy Canadian hospitality.

Among them, the Wilsons: mum and dad John and Jill, plus children Debbie, Robert, Steven. They took 19-year-



Tommy Murray is reunited with his host Jill Wilson... and his cap... 46 years after he last visited Ajax

old Merseysider Tommy Murray under their wing.

The sailor vividly remembers the house: a shotgun over the fire place and a huge television set were two 'firsts', while the hospitality made Ajax his "best run ashore so far". Mrs Mason wrote a letter to Tommy's mother about her son – a



letter Tommy's mother still has to this day, and correspondence lasted for a while.

Forty-six years later, Tommy – now 65 and with his wife Ann – revisited Ajax with the HMS Ajax & River Plate Veterans Association. Among other surprises, he was presented with his

street sign by the Mayor in the council chambers, which left him stunned.

"Never in a million years did I expect a young kid from Kirkby, Liverpool, to have a street named after him," he said.

But that wasn't the biggest surprise. As the veterans toured Ajax in a minibus, it pulled into Clements Street and past the house where Tommy stayed in 1976.

Tour organiser Malcolm Collis approached a couple sitting on their veranda and after apologising for disturbing them, asked how long they had lived there and whether they recalled hosting a young sailor from HMS Ajax when the ship visited 46 years ago?

Mrs Wilson immediately said "Yes, it was Tommy Murray." Malcolm pointed to Tommy and an emotional reunion took place as Jill and Tommy embraced with loving hugs – neither could believe what was happening.

Tears flowed as Jill asked Tommy if he wanted his uniform cap back – he did, exchanging it for his HMS Ajax baseball cap.

This emotional and unlikely reunion was a very moving event for the other Association members on the trip as well.

Jill and her daughter Debbie subsequently attended a reception at the Canadian Legion after a service at which the crew members staged a march past.

Email addresses – not available in the '70s – were exchanged with promises to maintain contact.

Many Harry returns

PETTY Officer Callum McCrindle helped a Scottish-based D-Day veteran celebrate his 102nd birthday.

It was thanks to Harry Gamper and his contemporaries that the Germans were largely held at bay in the summer of 1944, kept away from the vast armada which landed hundreds of thousands of troops in Nazi-occupied France – paving the way for liberation.

On D-Day Harry spent three hours on patrol over the Seine Bay and Cherbourg area keeping a lookout for German submarines and E-boats which might sortie to interfere with the invasion fleet massed off the Normandy beaches.

An enormous ring of steel was thrown around the Operation Neptune force, beneath, on and above the waves.

Harry piloted a twin-engine Vickers Warwick anti-submarine, reconnaissance and search and rescue aircraft with four or five aircrew from 276 Squadron.

He flew seven sorties in June 1944 alone in support of Operation Neptune, and continued to support the advance into France and Western Europe once allied forces broke out of their Normandy beachhead.

Callum, who serves at HM Naval Base Clyde, was joined by his wife Shelby and Ritchie Conaghan from Girvan and District Great War Project at Harry's care home, delivering cards and gifts and spending quality time with a remarkable character.

"My time in the RAF left me with lasting memories, memories which shaped my life and ones that I am incredibly proud of," Harry said.

The former pilot joined the RAF in 1941 aged 21 and spent five years in the air force before returning to civvy street in 1946 becoming a technical illustrator for specialist and industry publications.

Today he enjoys a quiet retirement at Malin Court care home in Maidens, south of Ayr, where he soaks up the fresh coastal air, enjoys the view and the finer things in life: music, the arts, good food and a glass of wine... "all in moderation".

And he likes to tell both care home staff and visitors of his family connections: his Swiss uncle Hans Max Gamper-Haessig helped found two European football clubs: FC Zürich and then the legendary FC Barcelona in 1899 after placing an ad in the local paper.

Callum is a friend of the D-Day veteran through his wife Shelby, who was an activities coordinator at Harry's care home, and presented him with a rare Victory Coin on behalf of Legion Scotland, Poppy Scotland and the Scottish Government last year.

The coin commemorates the 75th anniversary of the end of World War 2. Just 250 were produced to honour veterans for their heroic contribution to victory and shaping the post-war world.

"Harry truly is an amazing man – there really are not many left of his era and standing," said Callum.

"We have also applied for a Legion d'Honneur on his behalf from the French Government – this is currently being pushed by Legion Scotland and Veterans department at Scottish Government."

From flight to record deck

ONE of the voices of the iconic naval anthem Sailing has died aged 85.

Chief Petty Officer Geoffrey Schofield was aboard HMS Ark Royal and, with shipmates, added his voice to Rod Stewart's theme tune to the hugely-popular documentary series *Sailor*.

Originally a miner from Lancashire, Geoffrey joined the Royal Navy in 1957, serving as an aircraft handler during the golden era of the big carriers.

His final draft was to the *Buccaneers* of 809 Naval Air Squadron. Having reached the top of his profession as a handler, Geoffrey (pictured right on *Ark's* deck in front of a *Buccaneer*) spent more than four years as the squadron's regulator, overseeing discipline and administration – a task he performed "cheerfully and effectively".

He left the Royal Navy in February 1979 – two months after the squadron (due to be re-formed this decade as an F-35 formation) disbanded and one day before *Ark Royal IV* was decommissioned.



Cardiff's rich tapestry of Falklands conflict

THIS is the unique tapestry decorating the home Leading Seaman (Sonar) Paul 'Bagsy' Baker – a memento of the deeds of HMS Cardiff in 1982... and a weekend remembering those achievements 40 years on.

Veterans and loved ones converged on the Welsh capital for three days, culminating in an act of remembrance at the Welsh National Falklands Memorial.

Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan Morfudd Meredith and Cardiff's Lord Mayor Graham Hinchey were guests of honour at a formal dinner, with the ship's bell and 'war ensign' loaned by the city.

And there was a raffle draw to win Hannah Wisdom's textile artwork

Designed in co-operation with the Type 42's air warfare officer in 82, Andrew Welch, it consists of a chart of the islands overlaid with the ship (the thick black band midships distinguished RN 42s from two Argentine ones). Cardiff is flying the Blue Ensign, as well as the White, in recognition of the contribution of the MN to the war's success – following a tradition set by WW1 cruiser HMS Cardiff's

when she led the surrender of the German Fleet and flew the Blue Ensign for the same reason. Kelp, sea lions, elephant seals, sheep and penguins give 'local' colour and the little patrol vessel over to the left is HMS Tiger Bay, requisitioned at the war's end.

The raffle for the artwork raised £989.33 for Huntington's Disease

Association (one of the 1982 veterans suffers from te condition).

Cardiff was in Mombasa when the Falklands were invaded and wasn't needed initially until being ordered back to Gibraltar to prepare for the voyage south.

She arrived in theatre on the day her sister Coventry was sunk – and was initially sent in to replace her, before being ordered on to the gunline to provide support for ground forces with her 4.5in gun.

Back on air defence duties in San Carlos Water, the ship dealt with a couple of raids, scared off one Canberra and shot down another on the 14th – the last air engagement of the war.

At the war's end she escorted P&O liner Canberra into Stanley to embark prisoners of war.





Dougie Barlow (right) with his best friend Rob Hoole flank former First Sea Lord Admiral Lord West at a reunion

No longer unknown

'Beau of Vernon' a sore loss

FEW sailors can say today that they served in three battleships and three cruisers.

Sadly, that number is one fewer with the passing of Lt Cdr Douglas 'Dougie' Barlow who's died aged 93.

Dougie started his career in the Navy's largest ships... and left 42 years later forever associated with some of its smallest as a stalwart of HMS Vernon and the mine warfare community.

In his first three years in the RN, he was assigned to HM Ships Anson, King George V and Duke of York, adding cruisers Liverpool, Sheffield and Newfoundland (the latter during the Suez Crisis) to his tally.

And then, selected for promotion to officer, much of his subsequent career was dominated by Ton-class vessels at home and abroad as well as sharing his vast knowledge/experience of seamanship to sailors across the Service and around the world.

His final four years in the RN in the mid-80s were spent encouraging a new generation to appreciate the sea as staff officer to the Sea Cadets.

Above all, Dougie was known as the 'Beau of Vernon' (beau for boatswain, from his time running to former mine warfare establishment's busy waterfront. He famously intervened when a launch from the Royal Yacht for the Queen Mother got into a spot of bother berthing at Vernon. A cool head and hand, and a few barked orders and all was back to normal.

Another legacy was weekly Harlequin disco nights in the wardrobe... subsequently copied by Nelson, 'Jago's' at Drake and the hangar disco at Daedalus.

In retirement he enjoyed sailing around the South Coast in his yachts (both named 'Dougout').

"In his day, Dougie and his booming voice were familiar to everyone, from royalty and admirals to the lowliest of sailors," said his friend of nearly 50 years Rob Hoole.

"Dougie said that when he died, he wanted to be buried with full military honours on a Sunday to muck up everyone's weekend and have his coffin carried by six commanders because he had carried at least six commanders throughout his career."

THE graves of two sailor-soldiers have been rededicated with full honours – 104 years after they were killed on the Western Front.

Lieutenant Alfred Owen Cookson and Sub Lieutenant John Francis St Clair Barton were just 24 and 22 respectively when they were killed serving with the unique Royal Naval Division in France in the closing months of the Great War.

For over a century, the two junior officers were buried as unknown soldiers.

But thanks to the research of the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre – also known as the 'MOD War Detectives' – the bodies were formally identified, allowing headstones to each man to be installed at Commonwealth War Graves Cemeteries, and their last resting places rededicated with full honours.

The 63rd (Royal Navy) Division was formed on the outbreak of the war when the Admiralty found it had more men than ships and decided to form them into a fighting force for action on land.

The division served with distinction – Winston Churchill regarded it as one of the finest units in the entire Army – throughout the war: at Antwerp, in Gallipoli, on the Somme, Arras, Passchendaele and the titanic battles of 1918.

Though the sailors were issued the same kit and served under the command of the British Army, they maintained Royal Navy ranks and terminology in the trenches, and fought in battalions named after naval heroes.

Sub Lieutenant John Francis St. Clair Barton of the Hood Battalion from Beckenham in Kent was the son of a surgeon and airship pioneer.

He served in the ranks of the Honourable Artillery Company before gaining a commission in June 1917 and was posted to the RND in November 1917.

Four months later his battalion relieved the Hawkes in the frontline at Ribecourt on the eve of the German spring offensive.

The Hoods were subjected to heavy bombardment from the enemy's artillery, including gas shells. On his fourth day in the line, March 13 1918, Sub Lt Barton was killed on patrol having just turned 22. He was buried in the British Cemetery on the edge of the village alongside 294 comrades.

Seven months later the tide of war had turned; the German



Commander Nicola Cripps presents the flag to Elizabeth Cooper, niece-in-law of Lt Cookson and (below) the only known photograph – from a contemporary newspaper – of Sub Lt St Clair Barton

offensives were first halted, then a succession of Allied blows began to drive the Germans back towards their border.

Alfred Cookson from Barnsley in Yorkshire was at the forefront of the advance to victory with his Hawke Battalion.

A veteran of three years' fighting with the Royal Naval Division, he saw action in the Dardanelles and Western Front and had twice been wounded in action.

He died from his wounds during an attack on the village of Niergnies, on the outskirts of Cambrai, on October 8 1918 – just five weeks before the armistice.

Lt Cookson was subsequently laid to rest in Proville British Cemetery in the grave of an 'unknown captain'.

Over a century later, his niece-in-law Elizabeth Cooper was present as the Very Reverend David Conroy, Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet, dedicated the new headstone, supported by members of the Royal Navy.

"We feel honoured and privileged to be included in the celebration of the life of Alfred Owen Cookson," Mrs Cooper said.

Nicola Nash, one of the team responsible for formerly identifying the two officers'



graves, said it was "a privilege to see their names on their headstones and pay our respects to them.

"These two brave young men served throughout the Great War fighting in almost all the major battles on the Western Front.

"It is tragic that they both lost their lives so close to the Armistice."

The Very Rev Conroy added: "We will remember them' is the phrase widely heard at our November ceremonies. Today, on behalf of the nation, it was a real honour to enact that promise."



Farewell Frank

SAND from the Normandy beach where he put troops ashore on D-Day was placed on the coffin in the last act of Frank Baugh's remarkable life.

The former landing craft signaller was laid to rest in his native Yorkshire, severing another living link with our greatest generation and the dwindling band of brothers who experienced the hell of June 6 1944.

There were seven Standard Bearers in attendance with Able Seaman Elliott Holt from HMS Collingwood – Frank's alma mater – leading the coffin party, carrying the White Ensign from Sword Beach into Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Doncaster.

Frank's friend, Warrant Officer 1 Baz Firth from the RN Leadership Academy, read a tribute from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key as well as the eulogy.

"I am immensely saddened that in Frank's passing we have lost the last sailor to see the White Ensign flown by the Beachmaster on Sword Beach, a remarkable link to our Royal Navy amphibious heritage," the First Sea Lord said.

"The men and women of today's Royal Navy treasure the bonds they have with those who served in World War 2 and Frank's remarkable longevity was testament to a life well-lived serving his country."

Frank Baugh worked in the coal industry before joining the Royal Navy in June 1942. He was trained at HMS Collingwood and after exams was assigned to the Combined Operations Division and Landing Craft (Infantry).

He was sent to America to collect LCI(L)380 and sail it back to the UK ahead of the Normandy landings. At 150 feet long and 25 feet across and with a flat bottom, it bobbed around the Atlantic like a cork in a bucket.

On D-Day that same vessel carried 200 men of II Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry from Newhaven to Sword Beach at Ouistreham, landing on Queen Red Sector at 7.25am. As it approached the beach, it received a direct hit which set fire to the No 2 troop space and also holed the craft on the water line.

While badly injured soldiers remained on the craft, their comrades stormed ashore via LCI(L)380's side ramps. Under heavy machine gun fire they landed in about four feet of rough water. If they fell down and went un-der, the weight of equipment they were carrying made it impossible for them to get up without help.

To overcome this the craft's skipper sent Frank to take a message to the officer at the bow of the craft, instructing him to put two ropes across to the shore that the soldiers could use to help them stand and get safely ashore. Frank said that he did so and, made the journey to the bow and back to the bridge "faster than Usain Bolt!"

Frank spoke of his abiding memories of D-Day being the thunderous noise and even more so the sight of the bodies of young men rolling in the surf, lads whom he had been speaking with only minutes before. He considered himself lucky, many were not.

After about four hours stranded on the beach, its crew were able to undertake temporary repairs and get the vessel floated off the beach, limping back to Newhaven where the craft was hoisted out of the water for re-pairs.

Patched up overnight, LCI(L)380 was Normandy-bound again on June 7 with a fresh batch of soldiers em-barked – a shuttle run repeated throughout the campaign.

An active member of Sheffield's Normandy Veterans group, Frank made a number of return visits to Nor-mandy in later life, including delivering a speech at Bayeux Military Cemetery on the 75th Anniversary of D-Day in front of The Prince of Wales, the Duchess of Cornwall, Prime Minister Theresa May and many other dignitaries.

And he was there last October to see the newly-completed British Normandy Memorial at Ver sur Mer; the 98-year-old was appointed as an ambassador for the monument and raised more than £20,000 towards its completion.

Baz said the visit was among the most moving episodes in Frank's long life.

"Frank said that although he had seen many photos and videos of the memorial, the reality of its sheer beauty and scale simply took his breath away," he said. "He said that we had done the boys proud, and we know that he had done them proud too."

Post-war, Frank returned to the Coal Board and eventually became the Director of Purchasing and Stores.

He married his wartime sweetheart, Pat, in 1947 and they had a long and happy 65 years together. He leaves behind two daughters, six grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Raise the Bronington!

THAT'S the rallying cry of the team connected with the veteran minesweeper – best known as 'Prince Charles' warship' – after a survey says she can be saved.

A dive survey was carried out by marine specialists earlier this summer and found, despite appearances, with some minor remedial work on the hull to make her watertight again, the ship is in a satisfactory condition to be refloated.

And that is now the next objective of the voluntary preservation trust formed to save the ship.

They are hoping to raise £100,000 – not just to refloat/stabilise the ship, but also to transport her safely to a shipyard so the act of restoration can begin.

Ideally, they want to see Bronington as a working ship again, but if that proves too challenging/expensive, the trust will settle for

turning the minesweeper into a museum ship either in the water or dry dock in a suitable location, assuming a role she fulfilled in the '90s and early '00s.

Bronington is one of around 120 wooden-hulled Ton-class minesweepers built in the 1950s, serving for nearly 35 years until she was paid off in 1988.

The ship is partially submerged in a dock basin on Merseyside having sunk at her moorings six years ago.

Mike McBride of the Bronington Preservation Trust said there had been widespread interest in efforts to save/restore the ship, from international media coverage, to offers of help and support from a string of salvage and marine/seafaring firms to veterans' organisations.

Not least among supporters, the Prince of Wales himself – Bronington's Commanding

Officer for ten months in 1976 – who told the trust's volunteers he found it "truly humbling to learn of the efforts you are going to in order to recover this historical naval vessel".

The goal for the trust now is to receive charitable status which will allow it to apply for grants and other funding, while simultaneously raising cash for the salvage operation (so far people have donated more than £9,000 via www.gofundme.com/f/help-restore-hms-bronington).

Cammell Laird has agreed to take Bronington into their dry dock for restoration under their apprenticeship scheme in stages if the funding can be found.

And should the project eventually be abandoned, any money donated will go to Forces charities.



Model citizens are rewarded

A SEA cadet and two volunteers from Milford Haven Unit have been honoured with a Citizen's Award for the valuable work they have done for the Milford Haven community.

POC Alfie Anderson was one of only two young people rewarded with a Youth Citizen's Award for his outstanding contribution to the community by the Milford Haven Town Council.

Alfie joined the Milford Haven Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets in April 2017 at the age of 12.

Since then he has earned his qualifications in powerboating, rowing, sailing, seamanship, catering and first aid.

"I am very proud to have been awarded a Youth Citizen's Award from Milford Haven Town Council for services to the community," Alfie said.

"However, this would not have been possible for me to achieve had it not been for my experiences with Sea Cadets, which have provided me with the opportunity and the platform to succeed.

"I am proudest of all to be a cadet representative and would encourage anyone to join the Sea Cadets and make the most of the fantastic opportunities available."

Two volunteers from Milford Haven Sea Cadets and Royal Marine Cadets were also presented with the Citizen's Award by the Mayor of Milford Haven, Cllr Kathy Gray at the awards ceremony held at the Council Chamber

of the Milford Haven Town Council.

Sub Lieutenant Aled Davies has been a member of Milford Haven Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets for over 15 years.

During his long and successful time as a volunteer, he has gained qualifications in rope work, as a rigging instructor, rowing instructor and coach as well as a RYA powerboat instructor, navigation instructor, drill and ceremonial instructor.

Sub Lieutenant Lloyd Jones was instrumental in helping Milford Haven Unit to switch communications, activities and qualifications online after Covid-19 broke out.

He has experience in a diverse range of roles within Sea Cadets, ranging from petty officer and civilian instructor to trustee at the unit. He was recognised for all his hard work over the last ten years.

Lieutenant (SCC) William Elliott RNR, Commanding Officer Milford Haven Unit said: "The awards are an outstanding way for the community to recognise the voluntary efforts of those deserving of such an award.

"I am delighted that this year two Sea Cadet Officers, SLt Davies and SLt Jones have been rewarded as well as a youth award for POC Alfie.

"They are all very deserving of the awards for the time, commitment and effort they've put into the Sea Cadets, particularly Milford Haven Unit."

Children enjoy time on water

SEA CADETS gave thousands of young people from hard-to-reach areas the chance to take part in water-based adventures over the summer.

Sea Cadets' On The Water programme saw more than 1,200 children across three locations – London, Birmingham and Merseyside – try out sailing, kayaking, canoeing and much more.

"The aim of our On The Water project is a simple yet important one," says On The Water Coordinator, Ryan Bentley, "we want to give young people who wouldn't normally have access to water-based activities a chance to try something new, have fun, build their confidence and make new friends."

"We have also built relationships with local authorities and groups which support young people with disabilities and additional needs, young people in care, disadvantaged pupils in schools, children from low income households and many other groups helping young people who really need this project to boost their mental well-being and self-confidence."

Groups taking part in On The Water 2022 include UK Islamic Mission (UKIM), which runs numerous education, relief and welfare projects for over 5,000 children and the Young Carers Project run by Tower Hamlets Youth Service, which provides opportunities for young carers to take a break from their daily responsibilities, interact with others and enjoy a fun day out.

Qualified instructors deliver all sessions on a wide range of water sports and participation is free of charge.



The young participants can also earn qualifications by taking part, such as the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Stage 1 qualification, canoeing and paddling awards.

The young people who took part in On The Water last year gave the programme a big thumbs up.

"It was brilliant – I'd never been on a boat or open water before," said one young person.

"The whole experience was amazing. I particularly loved sailing!" said another, while

a third added: "It taught me how to be more confident in the water."

Parents have been equally enthusiastic about the programme. One mother wrote to Sea Cadets to say: "My son has never done anything like this before and he enjoyed it so much."

Another parent said: "My child's confidence has noticeably improved...it has brought out a side of him we haven't seen before and it is a joy to see."

In memory of Captain Tom

KEIGHLEY Sea Cadets, junior cadets and royal marines cadets have been helping with the upkeep of Captain Sir Tom Moore's grave at Morton Cemetery in Keighley, West Yorkshire.

They have been tending his grave by removing dead leaves from the plot, wiping down the memorial stone and laying fresh flowers.

Captain Sir Tom, who died in February last year, captured the nation's hearts when he walked laps of his garden and raised over £32m for NHS Charities Together.

"While at the memorial dedication, the family of Captain Sir Tom Moore asked Keighley Sea Cadets and Royal Marine Cadets to help them in maintaining the memorial. I thought this would be an excellent way of helping the Moore family and giving the cadets a link to his legacy. The cadets were happy to take on the task and while at the memorial talked about what he did and what they could do in the future like him," said PO (SCC) Terry Joyce, Commanding Officer of Keighley Sea Cadets and Marine Cadets. "Working within the community is part of Sea Cadets' values and experience, giving them a chance to develop their self-confidence and respect for others."

"Captain Sir Tom Moore was an inspiration during Covid lockdowns and cleaning the memorial is the least we can do," said Able Cadet Howarth, one of the cadets who took part in caring for Captain Sir Tom Moore's grave.



She's so proud of Barnsley

THE youngest ever chairperson of Barnsley Sea Cadets has been nominated for a Proud of Barnsley award for her fundraising efforts.

Maddison Brown, 26, took over the role of chairperson for Barnsley Unit in 2020 when their headquarters was in need of major renovations. Thanks to Maddison's efforts, the unit has received around £70,000 in funds so far.

"I took over as chair when the building was in tatters. There was no money and only three volunteers," explains Maddison. "I stepped in and put every hour under the sun into it. For six months I was getting up at six every morning and applying to different businesses for funding. From this we managed to get the roof of the building repaired and completely renovate our classrooms and toilets."

Maddison was a sea cadet as a teenager.

"I couldn't ever put a price on the memories and friends that I made but also the skills I gained and the help I received in building up my confidence really helped me later on in life when I was applying for jobs and university," she said.

"I joined back as an adult volunteer at 18 and supported with fundraising small amounts and helped with teaching. I wanted to make Barnsley Sea Cadets a place for every child in Barnsley to get the same experience and opportunities I did regardless of income, background, gender etc. I feel better knowing that the kids have a warm, well lit, and friendly place to come to twice a week instead of possibly getting into gangs or anti-social activities."

Maddison and her partner have also recently begun fostering guide dogs.



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





Kingston raise an oarsome amount

STAFF from the charity Royal Star & Garter and volunteers took to the Thames to raise funds in the Kingston Rotary Dragon Boat Challenge. Staff from the charity's care homes and admin team were joined by a dozen Sea Cadets from the TS Kingston Steadfast group. They all took part in races at Canbury Gardens.

The team of paddlers, who had never set foot in a dragon boat before, excelled, winning the first of their three races and finishing second in the other two.

They also helped raise £1,200 for the charity, which has homes in Surbiton, Solihull and High Wycombe. More than half the amount came from Minuteman Press in Hampton Hill.

Lauren Baker, Senior Community Fundraiser at Royal Star & Garter, said: "We'd like to thank everyone who made this a really fun and memorable day. That includes the Sea Cadet volunteers from TS Kingston Steadfast, who were amazing, and everyone who gave money and helped us raise so much."

To fundraise for Royal Star & Garter, go to <https://starandgarter.org/how-you-can-help/events/>

Battle to save unit's building

SCARBOROUGH Sea Cadets Unit have been working hard to raise money to undertake major repairs to their headquarters on East Sandgate, located in the old town.

The building, which dates back to 1839, is in desperate need of work including steelwork to be added to one of the main structural walls to help ease the bowing and roof supports as well as rendering, plastering, bathroom repairs, toilet repairs and decorating.

Bob Smith, Chair of Scarborough Unit, said: "The work needed to secure and repair the building is very costly, it is estimated to be in excess of £50,000, therefore, we are reaching out in a hope to raise funding or grants.

"Once the repair work is completed, it will ensure that current and future cadets and other community groups can meet in a safe environment. It will also ensure that we maintain our long-standing Scarborough Sea Cadets legacy of over 100 years within the borough well into the 21st Century and hopefully beyond."

The unit raised £1,000 during the national Armed Forces Day in June and an additional £2,000 through a mud run challenge in which parents, supporters and instructors took part.

Scarborough Sea Cadets have been based at current location since 1989. The unit aspires to develop the building into a centre of excellence for children and young people who are part of Sea Cadets as well as for other local community groups to use the facilities.

OC Cailyn, 14, added: "We need to keep the unit as it produces a good atmosphere when we are all together. As the daylight



disappears and we leave the boating side of things, it will be good to get back into the unit to continue our training and have that group working feeling again."

MC Jessica, 13, said: "The unit is a good place to go to be with lots of people you can trust. It is a place you can make new friends and gather together."

JC Billy, 14, said: "It would be very disappointing if we were to lose the unit. It is a place to learn new things and make new friends. We need to keep the unit."

Lt Cdr (SCC) John Webster RNR, 67, Commanding Officer of the Unit, said:

"It would be devastating to lose the unit. Scarborough Sea Cadets has produced some really fine people who have gone on into the services or have made a great start to their working lives. We currently have around 103 cadets who are involved in activities such as DofE, CVQ, power boating, sailing and lots of other team-building activities. The unit is a safe hub for many of our cadets and we are involved in supporting the community. Staff, cadets, parents and friends are united in their efforts to preserve our unit building."

To contribute visit <https://localgiving.org/charity/scarborough-sea-cadet-corps/>



Medals haul for Burnham

BURNHAM-ON-SEA and Highbridge Sea Cadets have celebrated success at a regional sailing regatta.

Cadets from Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge's Sea Cadet Unit represented Somerset & Dorset District in the South West Area Sailing and Windsurfing Regatta held at Port Talbot.

The six Burnham cadets competed in different boats against the best sailors from across the south-west of England and Wales in a variety of classes.

Ordinary Cadet Katie won silver medal in the Junior Topper class. Able Cadets Louie and Oliver earned bronze in the Open Quest class, while the younger team of Cadets First Class Oliver and James both sailed away with silver in the Junior Quest category.

Star of the day was Burnham Unit's Cadet First Class Towan who won a resounding gold in the up to 5.5m Windsurf racing. Stamping his authority on the windsurf event from the off he won a clean sweep across all four of the races. Towan is also a member of the Axbridge Animals Team 15 group run by Bristol Corinthians Yacht Club based at Cheddar Reservoir.

Somerset & Dorset District is now the proud holder of the Overall Windsurfing trophy after a Portland Unit cadet won the up to 4.5m class, and the runners-up in the Overall Sailing event.

Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Sea Cadets' Commanding Officer, Lt (SCC) Dom Gregory RNR, said: "Our unit hasn't been competitive in this event for at least the last 15 years, so to see these enthusiastic young people absolutely smash it on their first go shows just what they can achieve when they believe in themselves, are supported by great instructors and coaches as well as the fantastic range of resources."



Community love a duck derby

THE much-anticipated duck race was held on the River Thames in Maidenhead, a tradition dating back more than 40 years.

The Maidenhead Lions Duck Derby fundraiser saw Maidenhead Sea Cadets release the 3,000 rubber ducks downstream, with cash prizes on offer for holders of tickets for the first three ducks which crossed the finish line, with those caught up in banks recovered by the cadets.

Ray Mill Island at Boulter's Lock was a hub of activity as crowds browsed stalls and enjoyed games alongside the river. Activities included face painting, music and balloon modelling.

The town's MP Theresa May was spotted at the event and even rode on the Lions' popular fun train. The Royal Borough Mayor, Cllr Christine Bateson was also present.

Jo Manisier, member of the Duck Derby committee and Maidenhead Lions Club, said: "It was fabulous to be back running the Duck Derby in the summer and be a part of an event which was so well supported by the local community, with everyone having a good time and enjoying themselves. The Duck Derby committee is delighted that the event was so popular and enjoyed by so many people."

Newlyweds celebrate in nautical fashion

A YOUNG couple who met on Sea Cadets training weekends and offshore voyages celebrated their wedding – which included a nautical-themed surprise.

Alex and Emma, both aged 20, were having their wedding photographs taken at the Moorings Hotel, next to the Caledonian Canal at Banavie, when the Sea Cadets training vessel, TS John Jerwood, was spotted making its way along the canal.

The newly-weds were welcomed aboard for a brief cruise down the series of locks that make up the famous Neptune's Staircase.

"It certainly made a very special day even more special," said the new Mrs Hunter, who works at Inverneis House in Fort William.

"It was one of our guests, who is also in the Sea Cadets, who



spotted the vessel coming along the canal and ran down and asked if we could come aboard.

"We got to go down the locks for a little bit and have some

more photographs taken which have made for some amazing memories of our big day. Both of us have been on the TS John Jerwood as cadets."

Alex and Emma have both been part of Sea Cadets since the age of ten and have known each other since they were 12 years old.

Alex was formerly a member of the Thurso detachment but they are now both volunteering for the Sea Cadets' Lochaber Unit.

"We are part of the same District and we have both been volunteering since we turned 18. We also both recently got our rank of PO (SCC)."

Emma added: "We plan on encouraging our children to be part of Sea Cadets as we have both experienced how the organisation helps young people with life skills. Sea Cadets has done a lot for us and we would recommend it to anyone, no matter what their ability or background."

Picture: Anthony MacMillan Photography



Maidstone cadets loved the tender

OUR school has an Extended Learning Week and so we can go out of school to travel from Kent to the Isle of Cumbrae in Scotland to spend time on a Clyde Fleet Tender, writes PO Tom, from Maidstone Grammar School Combined Cadet Force.

The first night was mostly spent unpacking and getting a lay of the island as well as walking to the local town of Millport to look around.

Most notably the time was spent doing a PLT trying to get the whole squad to stand on one small rock and watching some seals. We also saw a very old pair of Leading Lights, which would guide ships into the harbour.

The second day was the initial day of action. After breakfast, we met Pony and his crew of the SD Oronsay and we began working on our watches.

Lt P divided us into three watches and we all had an hour at a time up in the wheelhouse helping the ship, navigating, being look out and the Officer of the Watch.

Everyone else began working through a yachting booklet as this contained valuable knowledge about boating and navigation.

As the PO and squad IC, I took the opportunity to begin showing people chart work in an active setting, as being on an actual moving ship for once allowed us to triangulate our position as well as plan routes and then actually travel down them.

Then after arriving at Bute to look at the castle and to try some In Bru we navigated our way back to the island. After our meal we searched Cumbrae for fun areas to do some rock pooling along the beach and began to traverse our way around the island.

The day after involved much of the same but with a stop off at the Troon RNLI station and a look around one of the active lifeboat services and seeing how they operate (it is much more impressive to see for yourself so I will not spoil it!).

The evening was then most enjoyable as we took another drive around the island but this time with the goal of crab fishing, which was highly successfully – although we did leave the Lieutenant behind a couple times, when he got out of the minibus to look at things!

On our last day on the ship, the crew took the opportunity to give us some much more practical lessons such as fire duties, first aid medical situations and man overboard drills – things we would never get the opportunity to learn otherwise.

We also got to see a school of dolphins playing off our bow and then they raced us out to sea. Finally, we said goodbye to the crew of the Oronsay and the skipper, Pony.

Our last evening was spent down on the beach enjoying our time on the shoreline: doing drill knee deep in the water and having our section splash, which made our section really gel together. Then, after a good night's sleep we began our journey back home.



All hands on deck

CADETS from Wellacre Technology Academy's CCF RN Section travelled to the Waterside Lodge in Southport to take to the water and learn to sail, accompanied by SSI (SSM) Mr Ward.

The CCF RN's Scheme of Work syllabus aims to enhance the skills of cadets through a range of activities.

Afloat training provides essential sailing skills, so Wellacre students visited the Watersports Club to learn how to sail a small boat, called a dinghy.

The day began with an introduction to the dinghy and the essential controls followed by basic instructions including steering by handling the sail and the foils (centreboard), and side-to-side balance. Wellacre cadets then took to the water in pairs to put all their learning into practice, and great fun was had by all!

Mr Ward, School Staff Instructor, said: "Everyone had a fantastic day completing the afloat training, and made the most of the opportunity and experience. The cadets' confidence improved throughout the day and they showed exceptional teamwork and communication skills."

Wellacre Cadet J, Year 8, added: "This was brilliant and I really enjoyed the day. It was great to be learning new skills and being involved in teamwork."

Outstanding effort to all cadets who took part: Archie and Adam (Year 11), Charlie, Daniel, Luca, Max and Ethan (Year 10), Nathan (Year 9) and Eshan, Jud, Thomas, Mohammad and Brodie (Year 9)

Mrs Sharrock, Principal, said: "It is really pleasing to see the cadets getting the opportunity to engage in such fantastic off-site adventures. Thank you to Mr Ward for organising the training."

COAST TO COAST RIDE WAS TOUGH BUT WE'D ALL DO IT AGAIN



A GROUP from the RN Section of Bedford Modern School Combined Cadet Force, left school bright and early to embark upon a five-day, 130-mile cycle ride from one coast of Britain to the other, writes Leading Hand Zak.

We set off from Workington on the west coast of Cumbria, blessed by bright weather and that afternoon snaked our way over some beautiful scenery into Keswick, the heart of the Lake District.

Up went our tents and we woke up the next morning to a stunning sunrise surrounded by mountains in every direction.

The issue was, of course, we had to cycle again, a task not made easier by our rear ends, still stinging from yesterday's ride.

JC Edward summed it up the best when mounting his bike saying "I'm not sure I can sit down anymore."

However onwards we pressed to the tune of "are we nearly there yet?" until the town of Penrith at the other end of the Lake District, where we were delighted to find not just a bunk house but a warm cooked meal too, and so another night of playing cards and relaxing passed.

Day three was tough. Our journey towards the Pennines began with what teachers called a "hill" but what felt like K2. Even Sub Lt B, our trip leader who was described as "part human-part mountain goat" by a student had to walk this bit. Finally, on the top of Hartside, nearly 2,000ft above sea level, the minibus came equipped with food and we headed back down the other side.

We made use (finally) of quite a few large downhill gathering speed and enjoying the view through hills littered with old lead mines and quaint villages where we stopped for refreshments. We pulled into a fantastic campsite that afternoon, and once tents were put up, we used our free time clambering on the rocky trail nearby, discovering the entrances to abandoned mines and getting kit even damper from building a dam in the campsite's small river.

In the evening we managed to start a campfire despite the rain and enjoyed stories plus the remaining marshmallows that hadn't been eaten prematurely, as we warmed up.

We awoke on Day Four to some slightly-less-pleasant weather, but nevertheless, we were ready for another day of cycling, and what a fantastic day it was.

We first had to climb up the moors, stopping off to escape the rain and bombard a small café. Soon we got to our highest point on the whole journey. There was just endless heather, barren desolate countryside for miles and we learned and developed our skills cycling not just off-road but on very rough terrain.

We all agreed this was the best bit of our trip, also where we got the muddiest, with small rock jumps, puddles and bogs everywhere. We were cycling down a thin track filled with obstacles, most of us fell over here but it was by far and away the coolest cycle track most of us had been on.

However, that afternoon brought a deluge – anyone would have thought we'd swum from coast to coast. We raced against the storm clouds to our campsite,

our spirits held together as a group by our collective tone-deaf singing, belting out family favourites to keep us ploughing on.

At last, we settled in for another night at a new camp site. Warmed by a good meal and long showers, exhausted from a great day we settled snug into our thankfully-dry sleeping bags.

On our final day we woke up early and split into two groups, so that kit could be sorted on the other end of our journey. We cycled through tree-lined paths, over bridges traversing gorges and then through the centre of Newcastle and past an actual Navy Warship HMS Tyne, until we came over the final hill and saw the sea, flanked by a castle and an ice cream van. Here we dipped our front wheels into the sea and had completed our journey.

Along with my fellow cadets, I would – without question – suggest to anyone regardless of cycling ability that this trip is a must-do.

As a group I know we were all surprised to see how far we could all go and what we could all achieve. The experience has also built our teamwork and leadership skills as we looked after and helped each other every bit of the way.

Our falls, scrapes, aches and pains were taken in good faith and met with a relentless attitude to keep on going. We all came a long way, not just in miles but also as people. What a great trip.

The sense of achievement we all felt when we completed the journey was amazing, and so I would like to thank all who helped to make it possible.

Basic training done

RECRUITS from Gosport Division Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet Corps and HMS Sultan Royal Naval Volunteer Cadet Corps 'passed out' for duty as Royal Marines Cadets and Royal Naval Cadets following five months of basic training, where the recruits learnt a variety of things including Drill, Corps History, Map Reading, Uniform Care & Maintenance and Badges of Rank.

During a ceremony attended by families and friends, the new cadets were inspected by the Head of Marine Engineering at HMS Sultan.

Following the presentation of Pass Out certificates and two awards for excellence, the cadets put on a brief drill display before marching past the Inspecting Officer and officially becoming Volunteer Cadet Corps (VCC) Cadets.

Afterwards, cadets, visitors and adult volunteers enjoyed coffee and biscuits whilst formal and informal photographs were taken.

The ceremony also saw the departure of WO1 Mark Branson RN who is moving on after many years as Commanding Officer of both Units. His cadets and staff were able to give him a rapturous send off on his last day.

The VCC are always looking for more cadets and more adult volunteers to join this historic organisation, so visit www.volunteercadetcrops.org to find out more about how we can provide opportunities for young people to develop into responsible, dependable and useful members of society, employing the traditions and practices of the Naval Service as the basis for their activities.

Pictures: Top, Cadet Charlie receives his certificate from WO2 (VCC) Ian Sweet; Bottom, Cadet James receives his certificate.



Inspired by Rowing Marine

THE Royal Marines Combined Cadet Force cadets at Rugby School were so inspired by the story of Lee Spencer, the Rowing Marine, that they decided to give it a go as well, writes Ben.

Lee was a serving RM for 24 years. He lost his right leg whilst helping at the scene of a motorway accident. Whilst assisting, he was struck by an engine block when another car crashed into the scene.

In a mission to redefine perception, challenge stigma, drive change and ensure everyone has an opportunity to lead a life with dignity, Lee committed to undertake a Triathlon of Great Britain in July.

We swam the channel – in the school pool. 1,400 lengths between 21 cadets, all done in an hour. I fear it may not be as easy in the cold, wavy sea.

We climbed the height of the three peaks up one of our local hills. And the whole troop yomped out around the local countryside and knocked out a half marathon each, for a total distance of 858km.

Some of the cadets stayed behind in the gym and have added another 130km between the rowers and the Wattbikes so far.

We're a little bit short of the distance so far, but we've had so much benefit for the kids. We constantly hit them with Courage, Determination, Selflessness, Cheerfulness and Lee's example has really reinforced that for them today.

We haven't had any dripping, no one dropped out and they've told everyone they met what it was all about.

Our cadets have impressed us and they seem super-inspired by Lee's example.





'...This generation possesses the same attributes...'

"THE Falklands is always there. Not every day, but sometimes it strikes you and the memories come back. It certainly had an impact on me."

The words of Martyn Merckel, in 1982 a cook in HMS Yarmouth, in 2022 one of 200 proud guests of the Royal Navy aboard the nation's flagship for a unique celebration of the men and women who delivered victory in the South Atlantic four decades ago.

There had been 25 major commemorations of the conflict's 40th anniversary across the land (and in the islands themselves), largely formal military affairs, acts of remembrance, parades.

distinctive SAMA82 tie of red, green, light and dark blue stripes.

And there were scores of present-day sailors – drawn from both Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, like the Royal Guard which greeted Their Royal Highness on the jetty – to listen to the experiences of 1982.

The Falklands, unlike the World Wars, is still well within living memory; indeed there is a smattering of veterans still serving and many of the lessons still relevant.

Posters around the flagship (and the rest of the Fleet) underscore the lessons of the campaign to today's sailors, such as 20-year-old Lewis Merckel.

"There are so many lessons from the Falklands, even down to the clothes we

was frequently in the thick of the fight. "They called us the Crazy Y because our skipper put us forward for everything.

"And as a ship, we rose to every challenge. Never broke down once, achieved everything asked of her."

Yarmouth had the grim task of helping victims of both HMS Sheffield and Ardent when they fell victim to Exocet and bomb strikes respectively.

Horrific though both those experiences were, it was the return to the islands 12 months later with the Falklands guardship which really struck home for the former chef.

"I've seen the Falklands at war, in the aftermath of war and in peace. 1983 was by far the worst: everything was still destroyed, minefields everywhere, and

The 'garden party' on the carrier came on the back of an anniversary for the destroyer's crew in her namesake city (see page 30) and what struck the destroyer's former air warfare officer was the release the 40th anniversary provided for many former shipmates.

"So many of the sailors were able to share their experiences," he said. "They had worried about events, mistakes, minor things for 40 years. We could tell them that it didn't matter and put their minds at rest."

Cardiff went on to take the surrender of Argentine forces in West Falkland – a ship of 280 sailors taking upwards of 1,000 soldiers prisoner. The destroyer's Lynx helicopter returned to the ship with a huge net slung beneath it, filled with

over the weekend, to prepare for the event, spending 15 hours at a time in the galley.

With one eye on joining the RN Culinary Arts team in the future, he enjoyed the experience.

"I love functions – I am always up for something like this. I've only been on board a matter of weeks, but I am properly enjoying it," he said. "I don't ever want to see another French meringue though."

Sadly the Royal guests never had time to sample any of the culinary delights the naval chefs had prepared – they departed after a good hour of mingling, chatting, laughter and tears.

Before departing SAMA82's Honorary President Commodore Jamie



The mood organisers wished to evoke as veterans and their families gathered in HMS Queen Elizabeth's hangar was a Buckingham Palace garden party.

For which, of course, you need Royal hosts. Enter the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall. The VIPs did not stop there: Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and two of the nation's three most senior naval officers (Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Andrew Burns and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell) on the aircraft carrier.

All gave up an afternoon to mingle with the men and women of the South Atlantic Medal Association – the principal group representing the men and women of 1982, many wearing the

wear, but especially our training when it comes to damage control and fire-fighting," the 20-year-old said. "I have tried to understand the Falklands story, to read the books, and because of dad's involvement, I'm definitely interested in it."

His dad had turned down invites to every other Falklands event, except this one.

The relaxed nature of proceedings, the setting and the chance to see his 20-year-old son Lewis, a weapons engineering technician aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth, made it an offer he couldn't refuse.

HMS Yarmouth is not one of the 'signature names' from 1982 yet she

mud, endless mud," Mr Merckel added.

Conscious of the impact of war, the now-60-year-old, who lives near Kendal, Cumbria, has opened his home to the families of Ukrainian soldiers fighting the Russian invasion.

"Being nice to people affected by war is one of the greatest lessons of 1982," he said.

HMS Cardiff is another of 1982's 'forgotten' ships. Not required initially, she arrived in theatre the day her sister HMS Coventry was sunk. She ended the war having thwarted several Argentine air attacks, pounded enemy defences ashore and downed the last aircraft of the conflict (a Canberra before it could carry out its bombing mission).

Argentine helmets as souvenirs.

He and other guests were invited to tour the carrier – something the veterans did with gusto – as queues snaked around the hangar, as well as enjoy the food chefs and caterers of both carriers had spent days preparing for them.

Barely a month into his front-line career as a qualified Royal Navy chef, 17-year-old Able Seaman Jamie Brook from Halifax found himself charged with overseeing providing desserts for 500 people: lemon and carrot cake, scones ("cream first, then jam") and trickiest of all, more than 400 French meringues ("you don't bake them as long, so they are gooey").

He worked five days solidly, including

Miller – who survived the sinking of destroyer HMS Coventry – thanked the Royal couple for attending "a very significant, unique occasion" and for today's Service personnel "making us feel so welcome and happy".

He continued: "For veterans and families – your support is as important to us today as it was 40 years ago – we can look back with pride and look forward with our heads held high.

"The Falklands campaign saw the best possible courage and determination of Great Britain and the quality of our people. Looking around the nation's flagship today, this generation possesses those same attributes."

Pictures: LPhot Belinda Alker



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



World Taekwondo



Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu



READY FOR COMBAT

MARTIAL ARTS CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE BACK

MARTIAL arts enthusiasts competed in the Inter-Services Championships at HMS Nelson in Portsmouth – the first since 2019.

Martial Arts Enthusiast from all three Services competed in the various disciplines, including Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ), World Taekwondo (WT), International Taekwondo Federation (ITF), and Kendo.

The Army karate team was unable to compete, so a different championship will be held for that discipline later this year.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu is a combat sport and martial art that focuses on grappling and ground fighting. This year 52 Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu participants competed, 17 each from the Royal Air Force and Navy and 18 from the British Army.

The Royal Navy team won with 19 gold, 11 silver and four bronze, while the RAF took home 12 gold, 17 silver and seven bronze and the British Army team won nine gold, nine silver and nine bronze.

Among the 17 Royal Navy Brazilian Jiu Jitsu competitors were AB Emily Astbury, who is currently on her Physical Training Instructor course, ET (ME) Rhys Gray from HMS Defender and ET (ME) Harrison from HMS Queen Elizabeth.

AB Astbury took home three gold medals while ET (ME) Gray took two golds and ET (ME) Harrison one gold for the Royal Navy Brazilian Jiu Jitsu team.

Kendo is the art of Japanese fencing, meaning “the way of the sword”. It is practised all over the world and its popularity in Japan is akin to that of football in the UK.

Fighters have a limited number of targets (the head, the wrists, the sides of torso and the throat) to strike, while also having to stamp and shout at the same time in order to score a point.

This year’s Inter-Services Martial Arts Championship saw the Royal Navy team take gold in the Kendo Kata event, silver in the team event and silver in the individual events, losing to the Army team captain in extra time.

With steady practice the Royal Navy Kendo team are hoping to enter fighters into the UK Armed Forces team later in the year and return to the Inter-Services event next year with a stronger, more experienced team.

AB Nolan said: “I use Kendo as a way of channelling stress, as personally I’ve found it hard to find a better way to wind down after a hard week than to hit people with a sword and shout for an hour.”

The RNRMMAA will be holding a grassroots training camp at HMS Temeraire next month, when they are hoping to run a “zero-to-hero” event which all ranks of

any standard are welcome to attend.

International Taekwondo Federation (ITF) and World Taekwondo (WT) Taekwondo are quite similar and both have their roots in Korean Martial Arts, although WT is more of a sport, and ITF is more of a traditional self-defence.

In the WT Taekwondo championship the British Army took home ten gold and eight silver while the Royal Navy took home one gold and one silver.

This year’s WT Taekwondo ranks were; Warrant Officer Dave Hewett, Leading Hand La Roche, AB Chris Lee, and Corporal Rob Bevan representing the Royal Navy. Receptively, LET La Roche and AB Lee took home a gold and silver.

In the ITF Taekwondo; the RAF took home five gold and four silver, the British Army took home six gold and six silver while the Royal Navy won two golds.

Representing the Royal Navy this year were; Warrant Officer Dave Hewett, Corporal Rob Bevan, Above Water Warfare Specialist Robin Shepherd, and Catering Services Tom Pedley.

AWW Shepherd from HMS Raleigh and CS Pedley from HMS Defender each took gold in their categories.

AWW Shepherd recently completed basic training and is currently at Raleigh completing his trade training. He was not able to attend the training week but travelled especially for the day to compete in the championships.

In the individual ITF Taekwondo Tul category, CS Pedley’s opponents were all higher-grade belt than he was, but he was still able to win the gold medal.

CS Pedley said: “I was fortunate enough to compete in the Northwest Championships back in April which was hosted by my local ITF Taekwondo club, but the standard that is brought at the Inter Services, especially in sparring, is much higher. Fortunately, pandemic or not, I was still able to practise my patterns (Tuls) and I think that showed.”

Whether it is a novice level competing for the first time or an advance level preparing for another championship all are welcome, across all the disciplines a level of physical and mental fitness is beneficial of an active and healthy lifestyle.

ITF Taekwondo



Kendo



Report and pictures: LPhot Unaisi Luke

Gamers in raptures at Chatham contest

MEMBERS of the Royal Navy Video Gaming and Esports Association (RNVGEA) took part in the Medway Gaming and Creative Festival – Rapture 22 – at the historic dockyard in Chatham, Kent.

The 600-strong association used the event to showcase what they have to offer, as well as inform the public what Esports in the Armed Forces mean.

People of all ages were in attendance to explore and play their way through decades of interactive gaming, from World of Warships to League of Legends, Overwatch, Rocket League and more.

The Navy was particularly popular this

year, engaging with new players of all ages. Offering coaching to first-time players, engaging with visitors who were able to use the Vertical Take Off and Landing simulator, as well as the virtual reality one-to-one air-to-air combat simulator.

The team also offered visitors the chance to sail around Portsmouth Harbour in the Pacific 24 simulator.

Teams from the Royal Marines and British Army also took part, with the latter winning Valorant.

All the action was streamed on the Royal Navy Esports Twitch channel.

AB James Kernick, who on top of his

day-to-day role, got everything planned, organised, set-up, transported and continually running through the weekend.

Alongside everything gaming, the team were also proud to represent the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

Chair of the RNVGEA Cdr Gordon Jones said: “I very much have my proud dad hat on right now, I couldn’t be happier.

“Rapture is one of the most popular events for gamers in the UK, getting the chance to go and do what our members enjoy whilst letting the public know that being in the military and being into gaming aren’t mutually exclusive is a fantastic opportunity.”





True Heroes hit the track

Corporal Charlie White reflects on a busy time for True Heroes Racing at the World Superbike contest at Donington Park.

True Heroes Racing are a motorbike team, run by serving Royal Navy W01 Phil Spencer, who race at British Superbikes paddock.

He set this up to Keep British Forces Rehab on track, and to give injured personnel a sense of direction and focus.

It was the World Superbike round at Donington Park Circuit for the three Ducati Tri Options riders. The riders were:

Chris Ganley (A one armed Army Veteran);

Sgt Leon Wilton (A member from the Army Road Race Team);

Cpl Charlie White (A member from the Royal Navy Royal Marines Road Race Team), pictured top and right.

"It's great to be able to strengthen our links with the RNRMRRT this year and offer the opportunity for one of their riders to compete at a National level with True Heroes Racing," said W01 Spencer.

"Having Charlie racing with us on one of our Ducati V2 Panigales also means we can increase the number of opportunities we are able to offer to our beneficiaries of the Wounded, Injured and Sick UK Service personnel and Veteran communities.

"To watch Charlie's riding develop and progress as he is brought on competing at the highest level within the UK against top quality riders has been great."

Usually, the three riders compete at British Superbike rounds but this time their class got the opportunity to race at World Superbikes within their class.

This was a great opportunity for the riders and the team to race at one of the UK's biggest motorsport



events of the year.

The weekend was off to a great start for the whole team, with all three riders qualifying for the event and being a first for Chris Ganley as he is the first single armed amputee to qualify and race at national level.

For those that are interested in motorbike racing watching Chris ride is spectacular. No one quite understands how he does it (neither does he) especially when he reaches lean angles bigger than Marc Marquez.

After qualifying Friday afternoon, the team had time to relax and make sure the bikes were running right before the two races of the weekend on Saturday and Sunday.

As it was the World superbike race weekend it was a great opportunity for the team to see some of the top riders in the world and share the same paddock as them.

This is an opportunity not every team can say and was amazing to see how they operate.

Saturday's race started off well for the team with all three riders finishing and having battles throughout and all getting personal bests.

Sunday's race started off even better with Leon moving up 12 places in three laps and Charlie moving up five places, and with Chris having some tight battles with other riders.

Unfortunately, Leon had a coming together at the Melbourne loop and spun out of the race. Charlie and Chris both finished and gained places from their starting positions.

If you are interested in joining the rnrmtt as a racer or pitcrew find us on facebook or email rnrmtt@hotmail.com

Pictures: Ian Hopgood



Disappointing weekend for Al

WITH a wet start to testing on the Friday and not being on a bike for a year, I was keen to get stuck into free practice at Donington Park, writes POA(AH) 'Al' Curtis from HMS Forth.

My first session helped me build confidence in the wet, whereas the second session saw me lose the rear and end up in the gravel trap, ending my ride for the day.

CPOAET Adam Myhill showed great teamwork and selflessness in repairing my ruined R6, utilising his battle damage repair experience because of the damage sustained to get me back out on the track.

With repairs completed in time, qualifying went

well. Race one was a packed grid and I made up some places and regained my experience on the track. Race two went better as I remembered how to do a race start and ended up knocking three seconds off my lap time to put me just outside of the top ten.

Sunday's military race proved a tough challenge but a much better start I managed to pick my way through the pack and finished 13th with some close battles and paint being traded against much newer machinery.

I went into the last race throwing caution to the wind and after a great start and making up ten places, on the last lap I sent my bike into the gravel upside down again.

Ian's champ again after 29 years

AN exciting final round saw Leading Hand Ian Ashenden take the 2022 Royal Navy Golf Championship title in style – 29 years after he made history at the competition.

Ian was a Leading Writer in 1993 when he became the first junior rate to win the championships in the officer-dominated association.

Ian left the Service in 1995 and eventually turned professional early in the 2000s. However, after winning a few PGA tournaments and being a teaching-pro in the Far East, he returned to the UK and rejoined the Royal Navy in 2018.

This year marked the centenary of the championships, which took place at Enville Golf Club, Stourbridge.

The association's five regions entered teams of 14 players to compete to become either the overall regional golf champions; the team matchplay or strokeplay champions, as well as competing to become either the individual male or female champion or – for those with higher handicaps, the individual Stableford champions.

The matchplay event, played over four days, saw an exciting finish with both Western and Eastern on the same points going into the final round.

With the Western team slightly ahead on games, they just needed to beat the RMs to win overall...

only for the marines to thwart them by just one game. This played into the Eastern team's hands, but they still needed to beat a strong FAA team by five games to win overall – and they did it 7-2.

The Team Strokeplay is an amalgamation of scores over three rounds from the best six of the eight nominated players. Western Region were the strongest team



with every player recording quality scores over the three rounds, beating their nearest rivals by 49 shots.

In the individual events, after three rounds, the top players went on to play in their respective finals with 2021 champion, LH

Ryan Moore, at the top of the leaderboard, closely followed by PO Alex Lewis and LH Ashenden third, four shots behind the leader.

AB Alex Forrest was 30 shots ahead of the second-placed woman and her win was almost a foregone conclusion going into the final round.

In the Stableford event, Cpl Andy Westwood led in the final

round, six points ahead of his nearest contender, C/Sgt Mike Harding.

With AB Forrest in sixth place overall, it was decided to keep her in the main field while Lt Cdr Lauren Hulston, Ladies champion for the past ten years played alongside Cpl Sophie Perriam for second place.

As the three finals came to a head, AB Forrest stretched her lead to win by 41 shots whilst Cpl Perriam came second, pushing Lt Cdr Hulston into third place.

Cpl Westwood recorded a steady round of 35 points to keep him top of the Stableford leaderboard and earn him the title of individual Stableford champion.

For more information or to get involved in RN Golf, contact debra.vout355@mod.gov.uk

Top: Commodore Rich Harris hands LH Ian Ashenden his trophy; Inset, Ian with the trophy in 1993. Carrier contest, see page 38



Left, AB2 Rhys Melia (left) beats Lt William Hill to the point in the Epee final with a balletic lunge. Right: AB Melia is presented with the Epee trophy by Capt Mark Anderson



Navy fencers get to the point

ROYAL Navy Fencing is re-gaining strength after disruptions due to Covid with fencers taking part in the Inter-Services championships this month.

This year's Royal Navy men's fencing championships were held at HMS Flying Fox and saw 14 RN fencers compete in fast and furious fighting across all three weapons: sabre, epee and foil.

The ladies' championship will follow at HMS Temeraire this month.

The mens' results were dominated by AB2 Rhys Melia, 32, who is new to the Navy, but a former British international fencer.

He said: "Getting back into fencing at the RN Champs has been a great way to meet new people from around the Service. Everyone was really friendly and couldn't do enough to help."

Melia delivered a devastating performance across all three weapons, winning gold in each of the individual

competitions. He has been nominated as the Royal Navy's Champion at Arms for the Inter-Services, where he will face off with the Army and RAF champions alongside other Navy representatives.

Association chairman, Lt Cdr Rubin Nash, said: "Our membership has fallen over the last two years, which makes it more challenging to schedule tournaments.

"We're determined to grow our numbers by giving Navy people a chance to try this sport and get involved. We are running grassroots events at Collingwood and Northwood to kick-start that growth, with more to follow."

Association secretary, Lt William Hill, added: "Growing fencing in the Navy is our committee's priority. It's a great sport for the adrenaline rush, the fitness, and the camaraderie.

"We're on the lookout for new members who want to have a go. It's free to join the association and equipment and coaching is provided."

Carriers compete for inaugural trophy



GOLFERS from the Royal Navy's aircraft carriers went head to head to win the new Twin Island Cup.

The team from HMS Queen Elizabeth took home the cup, a 1950s' Special Boat Service glass golf trophy, which will be competed for on an annual basis.

The flagship team held a three-match qualifier before taking on their opponents from HMS Prince of Wales at Hayling Island Golf Club.

After bacon butties for breakfast, the players teed off – and some soon regretted wearing shorts as they battled the gorse bushes in the rough.

Both teams met on the first tee for the obligatory team photos, as all hit into the intimidating par 3 first hole.

Before long six groups were away, enjoying the gentle on-shore breeze, as the next four-and-a-half-hours ended with three consecutive victories for HMS Queen Elizabeth, meaning the players from HMS Prince of Wales could only draw at best.

The fourth group delivered a great win for HMS Prince of Wales on the final putt before the fifth group tied, delivering an overall victory for the fleet flagship.

Both sets of players then enjoyed ham, egg and chips at the 19th hole, as well as some social refreshments.

HMS Prince of Wales will take charge of organising next year's contest.



Marines put the Chiefs to the test



PREMIERSHIP rugby players from Exeter Chiefs have experienced gruelling Royal Marines Commando training as part of their preparations for the new season.

Chiefs stars were put through their paces at Commando Training Centre in Lympstone, taking on assault courses and endurance tests as well as intensive swimming and gym sessions.

It was just a flavour of what recruits go through during their 32-week journey to become fully-fledged Royal Marines Commandos and earn their coveted green beret.

Chiefs head of strength and conditioning, Mark Twiggs, a former Royal Marine physical training instructor, was delighted with the effort, commitment and performance put in by the entire squad.

"We wanted to test the boys in a different environment and it's been a while since we've come down to CTC and worked with the marines on something like this," he said.

"What we've seen from the guys, both individually and collectively, was outstanding and it's sure to set the foundations for what we believe will be a very strong pre-season programme.

"At the same time, I wish to thank Capt Pete Taylor, Sgt Al Gasson, together with Chief of Staff, Lt Col Tom Evans-Jones and all the PTIs at the Commando Training Centre for their support throughout the two days.

"Everyone knows the link between ourselves and the Royal Marines is very strong, but this has merely helped to galvanise that bond even further."

For Chiefs players it was an opportunity to gain an insight into what it takes to become a commando while completing gruelling pre-season training before the season gets underway in September.

Building on the already strong links between the club and the Royal Marines, the squad reported for duty on Monday for the start of two-days intense training, all of which was aimed at not only testing their physical capabilities, but also their mental capabilities, both individually and collectively.

Day one started with work within the gym and swimming pool, but was then followed by tackling the notorious Bottom Field – a series of Commando tests (Assault Course, 200 metre Carry, plus Rope Regain) all of which are aimed to test the body to its very limit.

There was to be no let-up on Day Two for the Chiefs squad, who again following an early morning gym session at the club were then dispatched to Woodbury Common to undergo the Marines Endurance course.

An initial two-mile, cross-country course through rugged terrain and water obstacles, the squad were then put into teams to run the four miles back to Lympstone with a laden stretcher.

A brief respite, which included a leadership talk from Major Matt Gray, was then followed by another swim session and onto the last of the training tasks, the strength-sapping Mud Run in the nearby Exe Estuary.

With energy at a premium at this stage, the Chiefs had to dig deep in a series of tasks that included crawling, pushing and carrying through the thick mud.



WALL SHIELDS OF ROYAL NAVY SHIPS

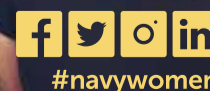


Hand painted on wooden base 6" x 7"
£65.60 including UK postage and packing
 REDUCED PRICES given for orders of 3 or more
 SPECIAL PRICES given for 10, 25, 50 and 100
 CRESTED TIES TO YOUR OWN SPECIAL DESIGN
 (minimum 50)

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

The Commemorative Veteran Star Medal

AWARD, in support of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, is proud to have struck the commemorative Veteran Star Medal to recognise veterans' service within any British and Commonwealth Forces.

Apply today and receive a FREE Veteran Star Lapel Badge worth £6.95.



Eligibility
Available to veterans who have served at home or abroad in any of our British and Commonwealth Forces during any period to the present day with a minimum of two years service. Next of kin may also apply. This important issue can be worn with pride, not alongside gallantry decorations, but separately and distinctly. The miniature medal and all other items are available without restriction.

SPECIAL OFFER

Personalised Medal Presentation Set

Featuring an engraved full-size and a miniature Veteran Star Medal and matching Ribbon Bar elegantly displayed in an attractive case which will be personalised with your service details as engraved on the medal.

Save £25.50 on the individual prices.



AWARD
PROUD TO SERVE

Proud supporters of
Veteran Groups and
Charities for over 35 years.

We are proudly associated with SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity. Registered as a charity in England and Wales (210760) in Scotland (SCO38056).

The Medal

Obverse: The obverse of the medal comprises the flag of Great Britain surrounded by the words "For Crown and Country". The distinctive star formation has been inspired by the First and Second World War Stars and the highly polished, nickel-plated medal is struck in the United Kingdom to the exacting standards for which AWARD has become internationally renowned.

Reverse: The reverse of the star has a sandblasted finish, perfect for naming with the service details of the recipient.

Ribbon: The broad central stripes of the ribbon represent the Navy, Army and Air Force framed between red, white and blue stripes representing Great Britain and The Commonwealth, making this a truly patriotic ribbon.

Medal Engraving: Your service number, rank, name & initials and service or regiment can be professionally engraved on the reverse of the medal.

Individually Engraved Clasps: Specially engraved clasps (max 20 characters) designed to match the finish of the medal highlight the details of your service.



Code	Description	Price
VSBM	Full-size Medal	£54.50
ENGB	Medal Reverse Engraving	£12.50
NIEC	Nickel Clasps (cost per clasp)	£9.00
VSMM	Miniature Medal	£17.50
VSRB	Ribbon Bar	£6.00
FMPB	Personalised Medal Presentation Case	£14.50
CMPSVS	Medal Presentation Set (SAVE £25.50)	£79.50



SCAN ME

www.awardmedals.com

Apply for the medal or send for a catalogue and details of our medal services:
AWARD (Dept NN23), PO Box 300, Shrewsbury SY5 6WP, UK
Tel: 01952 510053 Email: info@awardmedals.com