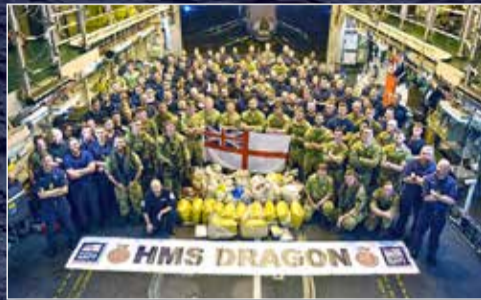




NAVY NEWS

APRIL 2019



Drug runners find there's no escape from the **Mighty Dragons**



A ROYAL Marines boarding team approaches a drug-laden dhow – and secure HMS Dragon's eighth drugs bust in a record-breaking deployment. (See Page 5)

Picture: Leading Engineering Technician Ben Miller-Glentworth



Inside: Protector's patrol; Argyll's rescue; Royals' jungle rumble





No time to reflect

THE serene sight of HMS Protector in the mirror-like icy waters of Antarctica belies the hectic work carried out by her crew.

The final work package (No. 5) of the patrol ship's ice season saw the ship's company achieve the maximum possible.

Sailing from the Falkland Islands, the crew were treated to some turbulent conditions across Drake's Passage, and were glad to find themselves back in the ice after three difficult days.

The ship's first task was to pick up two British Antarctic Survey (BAS) geologists from Cape Melville.

Rowan Whittle and Anne Finke had spent five weeks in the field collecting fossils as part of their research into evolution of Antarctic wildlife and the conclusions that could be drawn about rapid environmental change on indigenous species.

They joined their BAS colleagues, Alex Buton-Johnson and Jude Castelino on board, who have been with the ship since the Falklands.

The ship then headed further south, starting with Deception Island – a perennial favourite for cruise ships due to its unique nature.

The only live volcano which can be sailed into, the caldera of the island is accessed by Neptune's Bellows, a gap in the corona of volcanic rock that makes up the island.

On her way Protector spotted an iceberg the size of Bristol.

The berg, 11 miles long, is so big that it clearly shows up on satellite imagery of the Bransfield Strait, which separates the South Shetland Island chain from the end of the Antarctic Peninsula.

The iceberg is believed to be one given an official name by scientists – A57A. It broke away from the Filchner-Ronne Ice Shelf in the Weddell Sea – some 1,100 miles from where Protector encountered it – more than a decade ago. From observations from other Antarctic travellers and explorers, it looks like it is melting at a rate of about nine per cent of its size at present.

"The large iceberg we sailed past was an astonishing 11 miles by five," said Captain Matt Syrett, Protector's Commanding Officer. "Along its edge large chunks of ice had calved off, leaving the appearance of a cave system."

It was clear to Protector's crew that the huge mass of ice was slowly melting and disintegrating as it was surrounded by growlers – small chunks of ice – and larger 'bergy bits'.

With a total area of around 55 square miles (142 square kilometres), the berg is larger than Bournemouth and Poole.

It's still dwarfed by ten other icebergs which have broken away from the Antarctica region over the past 30 years; the largest lump which snapped off according to modern records was more than twice the size of Norfolk. It sheered away from the Ross Ice Shelf and took more than five years to melt, break up and finally vanish.

Deception Island gave many members of the ship's company the opportunity to walk ashore among the indigenous fur seal population and explore an abandoned whaling station.

Protector's base visit team were hosted by the Spanish station Gabriel de Castilla, where they enjoyed a fabulous lunch.

The base is charged with monitoring seismic activity on the island and studying fur seals.

The ship then sailed to the Melchior Islands to complete Hydrographic Survey Operations which

saw Protector render a full survey of the harbour and both its northern and southern approaches.

Although the Argentinean base was shut for the season, a party was sent ashore to visit the site, which remains in sound condition. In addition to the usual base visit team, Protector's resident artist from the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) walked ashore, getting his first chance to set foot on Antarctic soil.

From Melchior Protector sailed to Port Lockroy in order to assist the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust (UKAHT) to shut down the base for the season, and to enable the Royal Marine detachment to carry out vital cold weather training via an ascent of a nearby peak.

The ship's company had delivered the first group of volunteers to the base during the first work package last year and assisted them in opening the location, which includes the world's southernmost post office.

Port Lockroy is home to the world's largest colony of Gentoo penguins, and while the ship's company abided by the Antarctic rule of remaining at least five metres from wildlife, the curious and playful chicks had other ideas, resulting in some sailors being adopted as surrogate parents and subsequently chased by hungry penguins.

Meanwhile, the Royal Marine detachment and additional ship's personnel made good time in their ascent.

"It was an exceedingly challenging route but equally rewarding and extremely fun," said Lieutenant Jessie Swift, the ship's deputy logistics officer.

"Thankfully the imperturbable leadership and resultant team cohesion meant we achieved the summit in excellent time."

On departing Port Lockroy, the ship completed Hydrographic Survey Operations in the Peltier Channel before visiting the Lemaire Channel, also known as Kodak Canyon by Antarctic tourists.

Protector then called in on the Ukrainian Vernadsky base, where the CO fulfilled an earlier promise and handed over a new dartboard.

The crew were then entranced as a pod of Orcas encircled the ship.

"It's a privilege to operate the ship in this unique environment with so many factors to consider," said Sub Lieutenant Tristan Balcombe, one of the officers of the watch.

After a quick visit to the Escudero Chilean base, Protector sailed to Melville Cove to allow BAS geologists to conduct field research, before moving to the last walk ashore of the season: Elephant Island, the historic stepping-off point for Shackleton's expedition.





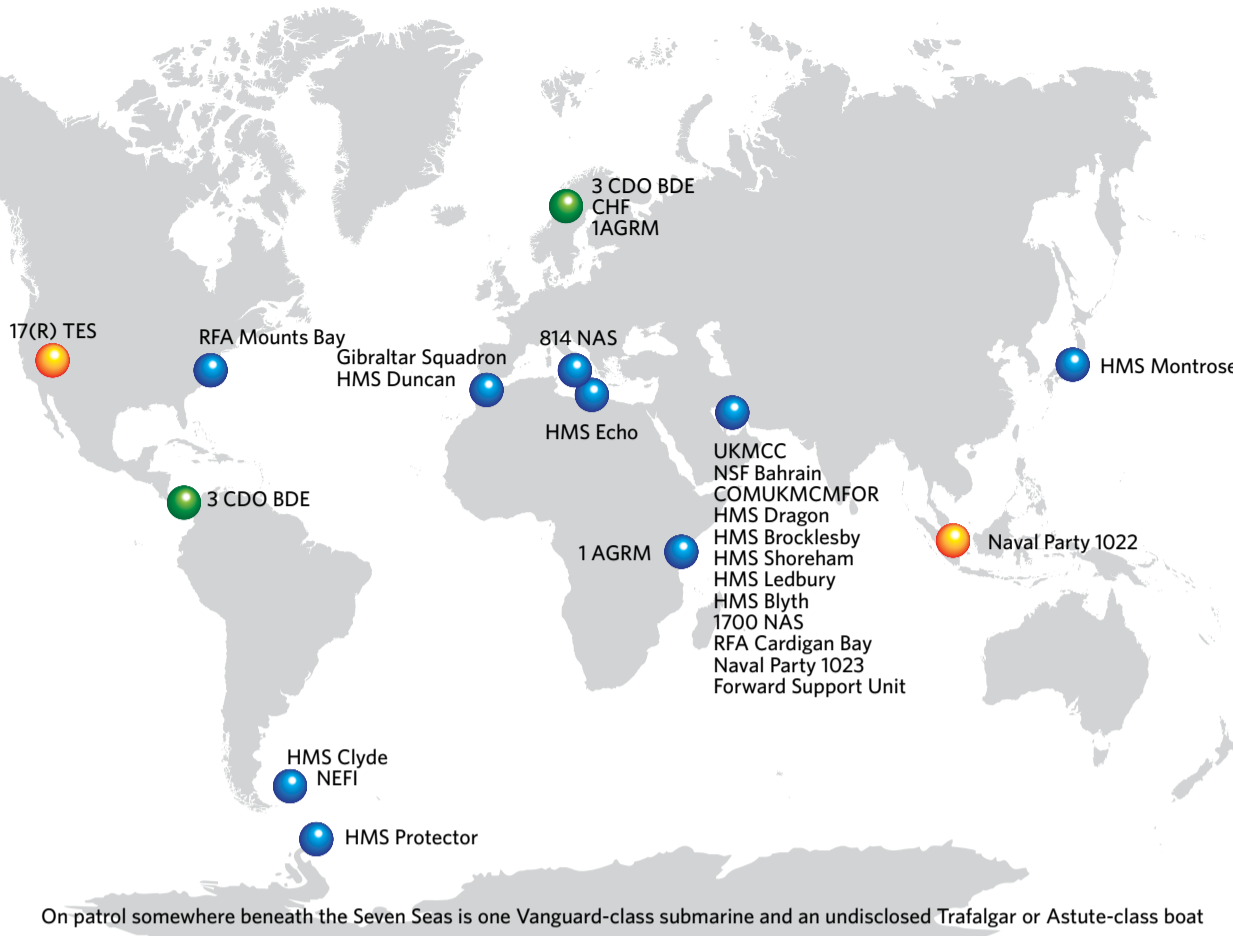
● Top from left, AB Sam Collins sat on the outboard side of the seaboot; the giant iceberg; the remains of a former whaling station at Deception Island; LS(HM) Donna Harrison; Members of HMS Protector's ship's company on Deception Island; a fur seal; Leading Diver Mike Parton in the water at Deception Island; Capt Matt Syrett is welcomed to Gabriel de Castilla by Commander Juan José Pereda; a marker post at the Spanish Gabriel de Castilla station

Pictures: LPhoto Rory Arnold, HMS Protector



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Defender	HMS St Albans
HMS Westminster	HMS Forth
HMS Sutherland	RFA Tiderace
HMS Northumberland	RFA Tideforce
HMS Kent	RFA Tidesurge
HMS Enterprise	814 NAS



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

FLEET FOCUS
Protecting our nation's interests

IT'S the fourth month of the year and it seems appropriate that HM ships beginning with the fourth letter of the alphabet have dominated the news.

So step forward **HMS Defender**, **Dragon** and **Duncan**, who have been at the forefront of operations in home waters and overseas.

We start with **HMS Dragon**, who completed three drugs busts last month, taking her total to eight while on patrols in the Middle East (see page 5). Her latest haul of 2,540kg of hash means she has seized 17,786kg of narcotics over the last seven months, dealing a blow to drugs smugglers.

Sister ship **HMS Defender** was busy in home waters as she shadowed a Russian naval task group along the coast of the UK (see page 7).

The third Type 45 destroyer to make the headlines is **HMS Duncan** as she left Portsmouth for a six-month deployment (see page 6) to the Mediterranean. Some of her time will be spent providing air defence for the French carrier Charles de Gaulle and her task group.

The destroyers are not the only Royal Navy ships who were busy last month. **HMS Protector** and her ship's company were working flat out on the fifth and final work package of the Austral Summer in Antarctica (see pages 2-3).

Type 23 frigate **HMS Argyll** spent eight hours saving every soul aboard the Grande America in the Bay of Biscay after the ship's cargo of containers and cars caught fire (see page 11). Days later the warship was welcomed home to Devonport after nine months away in the Asia-Pacific region.

Her sister **HMS Montrose** remains in the east as she spent six days in Tokyo (see page 13) on the latest leg of her world deployment before heading to the Gulf from where she will operate from for the next three years.

Royal Marines have been blowing hot and cold this month. Alpha Company from **40 Commando**, along with personnel from **24 Commando Royal Engineers**, **29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery** and **30 Commando Information Exploitation Group** deployed to the jungle of Belize (see centre pages) in Central America for Exercise Curry Trail.

Royal Marines' Arctic training in Norway culminated in Exercise Northern Wind (see pages 14-15). This year's winter training package saw Commando Wildcat from **847 NAS** take part in their largest helicopter assault force since Afghanistan. The aircrews trained with **30 Cdo**, while south of Bardufoss, **539 Assault Squadron** carried out beach reconnaissance. Not to be left out, **Mountain Leaders** conducted vertical assault training in the Lyngen Alps.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of **NATO** and we go behind the scenes to find out what life and work is like for Royal Navy personnel based in Belgium (see page 17).

The Royal Navy's premier submarine hunters, **814 NAS**, travelled to Sicily to take part in NATO's No.1 anti-submarine exercise of the year, Dynamic Manta. (see page 16).

RFA Mounts Bay seized cocaine worth £190,000 after drug runners dumped their illegal cargo in the Caribbean (see page 9).

The crew of **HMS Enterprise** paid tribute to those lost onboard HMS Vandal in 1943 (see page 16) as the survey vessel conducted trials off western Scotland.

Bomb disposal experts from Devonport and Portsmouth continued a 60-year mission to clear the Gower Peninsula of unexploded ordnance (see page 9). **Southern Diving Units 1 and 2** disposed of a haul of wartime bombs.

Aviators at **703 NAS** are getting to grips with the Grob 120TP, designated the Prefect - the squadron's 12th aircraft type and by far the most advanced (see page 19).

The third of four new tankers to support Royal Navy task group operations around the globe has been formally welcomed into the naval family (see page 16) as **RFA Tidesurge** was dedicated. New patrol ship **HMS Medway** (see page 13) was also formally handed over to the Royal Navy.

Hectic schedules can include time to renew friendships, and **HMS Kent** and **HMS Sutherland** both called in on their affiliates - Kent visited Dover (see page 16) while personnel from Sutherland drove north for a rare visit to their namesake county (see page 13).

Reflections on recent history

AS THE Chief of Defence Staff would put it, to us falls the challenge of balancing our ability to 'fight tonight' and 'fight tomorrow'.

It is this combination of delivering success on current operations around the globe and preparing the Fleet and Commando Force of the future that provides the central focus for everyone in the Naval Service on a day-to-day basis.

But as we retain our focus on the present and the future, this month also sees some notable anniversaries that give us cause to reflect back on seminal moments in our history, moments that have shaped the service we see today.

On April 4 1949, representatives from the UK joined leaders of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the USA in Washington DC, to sign the North Atlantic Treaty, an act that brought into being the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

The central tenet of the organisation, largely in response to the military threat posed at that time by the Soviet Union, was one of mutual self-defence - an attack on any member state would be viewed as an attack against them all.

Seventy years later, NATO has grown from its original 12 member states to an alliance which now includes 29 nations, including several from the former Soviet Union.

The alliance's role has evolved in the intervening years, and military interventions from the Balkans to Afghanistan have been conducted under NATO's organisational framework; so too has the Royal Navy been hard at work delivering maritime security in the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Baltic as part of, and often at the head of, NATO Maritime Task Groups.

Yet for all this increasingly varied

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

operational activity, the fundamental principle of mutual self-defence has remained at its heart, and for this reason NATO remains the cornerstone of UK Defence strategy seven decades later. Its continued role in support of our national security is undoubtedly something worthy of celebration.

As we mark the 70th anniversary of NATO, we should also remember that at the very top end of the alliance's military capabilities is nuclear deterrence.

As one of the few nations in the world with the ability to field a strategic nuclear deterrent, our submarine-based capability forms a key component of our national contribution to the alliance. So it's perhaps fitting that our strategic deterrent also passes a notable anniversary this month.

On April 1 1969, the submarine **HMS Resolution** sailed from

Faslane to commence a nuclear deterrent patrol. This was not the first time she had done so, in fact she had conducted three prior deterrent patrols in the preceding year.

The difference this time though was that she would remain on patrol until relieved at sea in June by **HMS Repulse**, the responsibility for this most solemn of duties passing from one submarine to the other, undetected and unknown to all save a very few on board the two submarines and a few more at the maritime headquarters in Northwood.

And so, in the dark, cold waters of the Atlantic, began a precedent for Continuous At Sea Deterrence that has since endured, unbroken, for 50 years.

To this day, Continuous At Sea Deterrence remains the ultimate guarantor of our nation's security, and that of our allies too.

And no-one should underestimate the remarkable feat of engineering and logistics it has taken to sustain at least one **Resolution** and then **Vanguard-class** submarine, each more complex than the space shuttle, at sea without interruption - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - for so many years. Nor should we forget the professionalism, dedication and self-sacrifice of the submariners and their families who have underpinned this vital national endeavour.

It is this extraordinary effort of endurance by those submariners, together with those from our whole force, wider defence and our partners from industry, that we will be celebrating at events from **Westminster** to the home of our submarine fleet in **Faslane** over the next few months.

In doing so, we will provide fitting tribute to all those who have played their part in this remarkable operation - **Op Relentless**, which today remains the first priority for defence.



● The **USS Gravely**, flagship of **Standing NATO Maritime Group One**, heading into **Devonport** last month

The ship's company of HMS Dragon formed up on the flight deck with their eighth haul of drugs



Chased by the Dragon



Destroyer enters record books as the scourge of Middle East drug runners

PROWLING the waters of the Arabian Sea, she scans for prey from the skies.

But forget folklore and fairy tales – it's HMS Dragon and her Wildcat helicopter striking fear into the hearts of drug smugglers in the Middle East.

Her ship's company weren't content with just one major drugs bust from their Gulf deployment. Nor would two, five or even seven make do.

They're right to look pleased as punch on their flight deck, *above*, having just sailed into the record books after racking up eight major drug busts in three months.

They now hold the record for both the highest number of successful busts and the total weight of drugs ever seized by a Royal Navy ship in the Middle East.

Since deploying in September last year, HMS Dragon has nabbed 17,786kg of hash, 455kg of heroin, and 9kg of crystal meth, totalling more than £145m from the clutches of criminals.

If you think that's a drop in the ocean of the global drug trade, *think again*.

Police and Border Force officers seized 494kg of heroin and 7,781kg of cannabis resin across the whole of the UK in 2018.

Dragon destroyed the same amount of heroin and more than twice the amount of cannabis in 35 days of tasking, meaning neither the drugs or the funds from their sale would ever impact the streets of Britain.

"That's 18 tonnes of narcotics that will never hit the streets and millions of pounds

that won't reach the pockets of terrorists and criminals who want to do us harm back in the UK," said Commander Michael Carter-Quinn, Dragon's Commanding Officer.

Everyone on board the ship had a role to play in their success on operations these last months, from the Royal Marines of 42 Commando to the embarked flight of 815 Naval Air Squadron.

But it fell to the smallest member of HMS Dragon's boarding team, Engineering Technician Thomas Jones Leah, to bring the eighth and (probably) final drugs bust to an end.

After swooping on the drug-laden dhow in dawn's early light, the boarding teams quickly found sacks of hash hidden beneath fishing nets. But their suspicions told them there was more to be found.

As the only crew member small enough to crawl into the space beneath the boat's fuel tanks, ET Jones Leah fought through slime and dirt to discover dozens more bags of stashed drugs behind a false hatch.

He said: "It was dark and pretty disgusting, full of water and slimy. But to find and remove these drugs is a great achievement for us and makes the hard work worth it."

HMS Dragon and her triumphant team are now making the journey home to Portsmouth.



KEEP UP WITH THE DRAGONS

Watch video of the drug busts by following @HMSDragon on Twitter



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Third new nuclear sub to be Warspite

THE greatest name in the history of the Royal Navy in the 20th Century will be resurrected in the 21st.

The third next-generation nuclear deterrence submarine will be named HMS Warspite, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced, carrying on the tradition of breathing new life into first-generation hunter-killer names.

The boat will take her place in the Fleet in the 2030s, alongside HMS Dreadnought, Valiant and a fourth, as yet unnamed, submarine, each carrying Trident nuclear missiles on deterrence patrols for three months at a time.

She'll be the eighth warship to bear the name, tracing her history back to the final years of Elizabeth I's reign.

Most famously, the sixth Warspite, a Queen Elizabeth-class battleship, earned more battle honours than any other single warship in Royal Navy history. She served through both World Wars, was badly damaged at both Jutland and Crete, mauled the Germans at Narvik, the Italians at Matapan, was hit by a guided bomb off Salerno, and hammered the defenders of Normandy – truly living up to her motto *belli dura despicio* (I despise the hard knocks of war).

Most recently, Warspite No.7, pictured above, was a Cold War warrior: a Fleet/hunter-killer nuclear-powered submarine built to protect the nation's then-new nuclear deterrent, serving between 1967 and 1991.

This year marks the 50th year of Continuous At Sea Deterrence and Mr Williamson revealed the new boat's name while visiting Rolls-Royce in Derby, where Warspite's nuclear reactor will be built. He announced a £235m deal to continue to support the reactors on the RN's current fleet of submarines, work which will sustain around 500 jobs, mostly in Derby, Faslane and Devonport.



Au revoir, Duncan

DESTROYER HMS Duncan is honing her skills protecting an aircraft carrier over the next few months as guardian of France's flagship.

The Type 45 has left her native Portsmouth on a six-month mission to the Mediterranean region, some of which will be spent providing air defence for the Charles de Gaulle and her carrier task group... precisely the role Duncan and her five sisters will perform with HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.



The French carrier, pictured below right, is at the heart of Groupe Aéronaval 19 and its Mission Clemenceau (named after the French premier who guided the country to victory in WW1), with a number of escorts from the navies of France, Denmark, USA, Australia and the UK joining her at various times.

"This is an exciting opportunity to work with the French carrier and there are a number of port visits to enjoy – some of which even I have not managed to visit in my 26-year career," said the destroyer's most senior rating, Executive Warrant officer WO1 Martin 'Soapy' Watson.

After working with the de Gaulle and her 20 Rafale fighters, Duncan will then break away to carry out NATO duties... as she did on her

most recent appearance in the Med – a deployment recorded by a Channel 5 documentary team for the much-praised (and much-watched) *Warship: Life at Sea*.

"The mission with the Charles de Gaulle is an ideal chance to demonstrate the prime role of HMS Duncan as one of the world's most advanced destroyers," said her Commanding Officer Commander Tom Trent. "With HMS Queen Elizabeth almost ready for task group operations, this will be an excellent chance to prove the ability of the Type 45 as a carrier escort."

Able Seaman Bradley Stapleton, aged 19, is embarking on his first deployment.

He said, "There is a sense of both excitement and trepidation for me as this is the first time I have been away on real operations, but I am looking forward to the adventure ahead."

He and his 200 shipmates were waved off by cheering family members on Round Tower, who then retired to the Cockleshell Community Centre in Southsea for a farewell party.

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow @HMSDUNCAN and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



Marines share policing skills with African forces



ROYAL Marines spent a fortnight in Africa teaching local law enforcers how to keep their waters secure.

A group of commandos from 1 Assault Group in Plymouth swapped Devon for South Africa and Tanzania as they shared their expertise in boat work to provide maritime security training.

In Cape Town, the team linked up with the local Law Enforcement Team to move from basic drills all the way up to using several boats to interdict criminals on the water by night and day.

They then flew 2,200 miles to Dar es Salaam, another of Africa's great port cities, to deliver similar training to the Tanzanian Peoples' Defence Force – whose waterborne police craft include some old British fast boats.

"Conducting training in Tanzania was more challenging as there was a language barrier but we soon adapted using various methods of training and the students came on leaps and bounds," said Marine Tim Lombard.

The five days of training were partially interrupted by a surprise visit from Secretary of State for International Development Penny Mordaunt who

was in Tanzania seeing how UK aid is helping the local populace.

The marines gave the MP and accompanying dignitaries a tour of the huge harbour – which Britain has heavily invested in – then, with all but one of the VIPs safely deposited back on dry land, allowed the minister – a former naval reservist – to take the helm for a short spin.

As in Cape Town, the week's instruction in Dar es Salaam built up to a final exercise with the students demonstrating what they learned by intercepting and boarding a suspicious vessel – played by a Tanzanian warship.

In both ports, the hosts introduced the commandos to local customs and sights – from a 'braai' in Cape Town (similar to a barbecue "only better") to visits to Table Mountain and Robben Island) to the white sandy, palm-tree-lined beaches of Dar es Salaam which were, says Tim, "nothing short of paradise".

The fortnight in Africa is the latest Short-Term Training Team provided by the Royal Marines to military and police units around the globe.



HMS Defender carves through the aftermath of Storm Freya, left. Above, escorting the frigate Admiral Gorshkov. Top, Defender in calmer seas.
Pictures: PO(Phot) Arron Hoare

Riders on the storm

NOT even the aftermath of Storm Freya could make this destroyer late for her rendezvous with a Russian task group.

HMS Defender was called upon to keep watch on the frigate Admiral Gorshkov and three

auxiliary ships as they passed close to UK territorial waters.

Portsmouth-based Defender made a brief stop in Newcastle before heading north east of Scotland to meet the Russian task group in time for them to pass the UK coastline.

She faced rough seas along the way, as the remnants of a major storm battered Britain with 80mph winds.

The group comprised of the Gorshkov, tug Nicolay Chiker, supply ship Elbrus and tanker Kama.

Commander Richard Hewitt, the Commanding Officer of HMS Defender, said: "The security of the seas around our coastline remains crucial to our national interests."

After following the Russian ships through to the English

Channel, Defender returned to her programme of training in the run-up to operations later this year.

Amid her busy workup period, the Type 45 plans to visit her birth city of Glasgow for the first time since 2013.

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Ben and Jerry's handover show

IN THE wardroom of Britain's future flagship, Vice Admiral Ben Key hands over responsibility for the day-to-day operations of all ships, submarines and aircraft in the Naval Service – and the men and women who operate and look after them.

HMS Queen Elizabeth in Portsmouth Naval Base was the setting for the formal transfer of power as Fleet Commander from Admiral Key to his successor – and the new carrier's first commanding officer – Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd.

"It is a great honour to take command of the fleet on board HMS Queen Elizabeth, having been privileged enough to lead her through her first sea and flight trials," said the incoming Fleet Commander.

"This aircraft carrier is just one part of a growing fleet that shows our determination to keep Britain safe in an ever more complex and uncertain world."

Admiral Kyd has been in the RN for 33 years, served on

operations in the Gulf, Kosovo, Northern Ireland, the Caribbean, Baltic, Indian Ocean and wider Atlantic and commanded four warships, three of them carriers (Ark Royal, Illustrious and, most recently, HMS Queen Elizabeth), as well as frigate HMS Monmouth.

He takes over from Admiral Key – also a former frigate and carrier commander – who's held the second highest post in the RN since November 2016 and now moves on to Northwood to take charge of Joint Operations.

Before signing over the Fleet to his successor, Admiral Key addressed the 1,000 military and civilian personnel at his headquarters on Whale Island.

He said: "When I reflect on what we have achieved in three years it has been a phenomenal journey."

"We truly are a globally-engaged navy – and there is no other navy of our size in the world that does what the Royal Navy does."

Second lucky strike

JUST days after HMS Dragon bagged two tonnes of hash in the Indian Ocean, RFA Mounts Bay seized £190,000 of cocaine half a world away.

The ship recovered 100kg of the Class A narcotic from hessian sacks in the Caribbean as drug-runners dumped their illegal cargo and fled from authorities.

It's the second time in a month the support ship has recovered drugs ditched in the ocean, tossed overboard by criminals determined not to get caught.

In February, she came across 22kg of marijuana. On this occasion she responded to a tip off from an American patrol aircraft which reported seeing the crew of a boat suspiciously dumping their payload.

Mounts Bay has a Dolphin helicopter from the US Coast Guard's HITRON – Helicopter Interdiction Tactical squadRON – and its counter-narcotics boarding team, the

LEDET (Legal Enforcement DETachment) on board for drugs patrols.

The helicopter was immediately launched and located the jetsam as the ship closed in on the position.

Once on scene, she launched her boat – despite choppy weather – whose crew hauled the still-floating bales out of the water.

Tests confirmed the sacks contained cocaine estimated to be worth around \$250,000 (around £190,000). The drugs were handed over to the US Coast Guard for destruction.

Captain Angus Bissell, RFA Mounts Bay's Commanding Officer, said: "Once again we've demonstrated that UK and US forces working in partnership are committed to – and showing success in – reducing the flow of drugs throughout the wider Caribbean."

Haul of flame

THIS is the potentially-deadly haul of wartime bombs, shells and flares rendered safe by Royal Navy bomb disposal experts.

Divers from Plymouth and Portsmouth hit the ranges of the Gower Peninsula west of Swansea to continue a 60-year mission to clear the Welsh countryside of unexploded ordnance.

Loud bangs and reverberations shook this otherwise peaceful part of the country, with thick plumes of black smoke rising over the sands as the disposal teams blew up the haul.

Ahead of the arrival of the divers – all highly-qualified explosive ordnance disposal experts – teams from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation scour the ranges looking for unexploded munitions, before marking them with pinpoint accuracy using GPS satellites.

Government scientists from DSTL record everything found on site before the divers – drawn from Southern Diving Units 1 (Devonport) and 2 (Portsmouth) – begin the laborious task of rendering the objects safe.

Divers don full protective suits and carry respirators, making the manual task of lifting and shifting the ammunition even more challenging.

Due to many decades of exposure to the cold, salty and wet conditions, most of the internal explosives have been destroyed, while the outer casings are all encrusted in a hard compound built up over the years, caused by the metal's reaction to its surroundings.

This can sometimes make the munitions difficult to identify – but after carefully removing just a small amount of the



compound, a skilled eye can identify the type and age of the explosive device.

All of which makes for excellent training for the divers.

"Gower is a great opportunity for continuation training and practising drills," said Chief Petty Officer Diver Andrew "Tex" Marshall, a regular visitor to the Gower Peninsula.

"The nature of our job is often to react to finding, identifying and subsequently destroying WW2 ordnance found by the public, across the country."

Most of the munitions found are mortar bombs and high-explosive shells. But occasionally the divers come across chemical or smoke shell, such as phosphorous mortar rounds – also known as illuminating mortars – used to light up swathes of the battlefield.

The phosphorous ignites on contact with

oxygen, burning very brightly at a temperature of around 900°C. The best way of neutralising them is to burn out their explosive cores.

Any shrapnel and non-explosive shells are taken away and melted down, while the unexploded ordnance is taken down to a designated part of the beach and detonated safely – resulting in bangs which can be heard several miles away across the water.

"In peacetime skills can fade with a lack of practice, which is why tasks like this on the Gower are so important for the Royal Navy bomb disposal teams," said Lieutenant Commander Sean 'Central' Heaton, in overall charge of the Plymouth and Portsmouth diving units.

"On top of providing extra training, this operation is key to reducing the threat posed by old ordnance which could be hazardous to the general public."

Reference code: FULL

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A night to remember

"YOU see container ships like this every day when you're sailing around the world. What you do not see is one in flames – it was a dreadful sight."

The words of HMS Argyll's weapon engineer officer Lieutenant Commander Dave Tetchner when he and 210 shipmates were confronted with the hypnotically-gruesome sight above.

This is the hybrid ro-ro/container ship ablaze in the small hours of March 11 as a fire in one container spreads rapidly through the 28,000-tonne vessel in heavy seas about 150 miles southwest of Brest.

Grande America's crew have already lost the battle to quell the flames.

The battle to save their lives is still in the balance.

For when HMS Argyll arrived on the scene, all 27 souls aboard the merchant ship – heading from Hamburg to Casablanca – had squeezed aboard a lifeboat ("just like the one in *Captain Phillips*") and taken to the water.

And there it stayed "bobbing about like a cork in a bathtub": for the boat's propulsion was damaged as it hit the waves.

Which is how the frigate found it, drifting away from the Grande America but mostly helpless.

Despite a five to six-metre swell, Argyll succeeded in launching her sea boat which then nudged the lifeboat gradually towards the frigate, finally pressing it against Argyll's hull so the Grande America's crew could be hauled aboard, one by one.

"The conditions were horrendous – the vessels were rolling at 30 degrees which made it extremely hairy getting the sailors safely on board – Royal Marines were on the ropes hauling people up," Lt Cdr Tetchner added.

The frigate had responded to a Mayday and the glow of fire soon guided the way to the stricken vessel as French ships and a maritime patrol aircraft converged on the scene.

The French say Argyll's team did "a tremendous job" in saving the entire crew; no-one suffered life-threatening injuries but some did require hospital treatment once handed over to the French authorities for assistance and, ultimately, repatriation.

All were stunned by their ordeal. "It was pretty awful for them – they'd had to fight a fire in dreadful seas," Lt Cdr Tetchner said.

"Every one of them suffered smoke

inhalation. Then they faced the prospect of abandoning ship and then their lifeboat failed. It was pretty awful all round and they were shocked."

Having saved the crew, Argyll immediately broke away leaving the Grande America to the elements initially – until French salvage and support vessels could reach the last reported position.

They were unable to save the still-burning vessel, which foundered around 12 hours after the rescue, sinking in waters even deeper than those which devoured the Titanic.

She took with her most of the 365 containers she carried – some fell overboard in her death throes – including 45 which held hazardous materials.

Also now resting on the seabed: 2,000 cars stored on the vehicle decks.

And the lost cargo ship left an oil slick more than half a dozen miles long staining the Atlantic 200 miles west of France – although much of it was dispersed by Storm Gareth.

Argyll rode out the same weather system in the relative shelter of Falmouth Bay before edging along the Cornwall coast to Plymouth Sound, ready for her homecoming (see right).

The Grande America drama came at night, in rough seas, nine months into a deployment and just five days from home, so the ship's company response underlined the effectiveness of the RN's constant training regimen.

Lt Cdr Tetchner continued: "You couldn't single any one individual out – the way the whole ship responded was magnificent and demonstrated how good our training is and how every person on board reacted: the sea boat crew and the seamanship specialists, the Royal Marines getting stuck in, the bridge team handling the ship, the communicators co-ordinating things, the doctor, medics and stewards treating people and the chefs cooking up beans on toast in the middle of the night.

"These are the things people join the Navy for – a real life, really worthwhile job, especially when the result is a good one like this.

"It was an exceptional team effort and there's a great feeling on board after a successful result – everyone was saved."

Pictures: Lt Cdr Dave Tetchner, LPhotos Baz Wheeler and Sam Seeley



A day to remember

FAST forward four days and around 900 family and friends cheered Argyll into Plymouth.

Her nine-month mission to Tokyo and back (via Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Diego Garcia, Greece and Malta among others) ended on a fine, cool late winter's morning on the Hamoaze.

While we've trumpeted much of her work during the deployment, some of it has been secret until now, notably safeguarding shipping passing Yemen – in the face of threats of attacks on vessels from rebels, relying on her Sea Ceptor defence system to watch for potential missile attacks.

Six times Argyll ran the gauntlet of the Bab al Mandeb Strait doing exactly what she was designed to do: protect high-value shipping.

Otherwise it's been the usual mix of flying the flag for the UK in far flung corners of the globe, exercises with allied navies, a spot of UN embargo enforcement (fuel imports to North Korea) and exotic runs ashore: shark fishing in Diego Garcia.

The last act of the deployment was to fly off her Wildcat helicopter and its crew/engineers to Yeovilton. 208 Flight 'only' supported the ship for the final five months of her mission, taking over from their colleagues in 206 Flight in November.

Between then and their return, the Wildcat

clocked up nearly 200 hours on sorties before setting back down on the standings in Somerset, where 815 NAS personnel and, more importantly, partners and children were waiting for the returning crew.

"The deployment has been very successful and the tasking has been varied throughout," said observer Lieutenant Lee Colthart.

"The Flight have worked tirelessly to ensure that we were able to provide maximum output at all times over the five months – they should be proud of what they have achieved."

After offloading the Wildcat, Argyll continued her way up the Channel and into Plymouth Sound, mission complete.

"After spending 270 days deployed from the UK across both hemispheres and as far east as Japan, my ship's company will now enjoy some well-deserved leave at home before resuming operations in the summer," said the frigate's Commanding Officer Commander Toby Shaughnessy.

"Many of the ship's company were enjoying their first days at sea in their career – it was a chance to travel the world and experience some of what it has to offer and have a unique Argyll story to tell."



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*There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO₂ figures. The CO₂ figures shown, however, are based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration.

Warriors are united

HUNDREDS of Royal Navy personnel are joining forces with warships, submarines and aircraft from 13 other countries for a two-week exercise.

Warships, Royal Marines and helicopters from the Fleet Air Arm are in and around Scotland for Exercise Joint Warrior.

The navy are working alongside the Army and Royal Air Force as well as tri-service counterparts from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the US.

In total, there are 6,500 personnel at sea, 3,000 operating on land and 800 working from helicopters and aircraft.

Joint Warrior saw NATO allies carry out warfare scenarios to ensure they are ready to face any

threat. The exercise was being controlled from the Maritime Operations Centre at HMNB Clyde with air, surface, sub-surface and security training taking place off the west coast of Scotland.

Air units liaised with maritime and land forces to practise intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), defence and attack from multiple RAF bases in the UK while land activity saw units at Cape Wrath and the bombing range at Tain.

The Royal Marines are conducting amphibious landings at Castlemartin range in Wales.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said: "The UK military is a partner of choice for its major international allies and a resolute force for peace around the world."

Clan-tastic for Sutherland

SAILORS from HMS Sutherland hit the high north as they took the rare opportunity to visit their namesake county.

With the frigate taking a break from patrolling home waters in Faslane, the crew of the Fighting Clan hit the road to visit remote communities and historic naval sites.

First up was Loch Eriboll on Scotland's north coast, where giant stones on the hillside celebrate the remote location's one-time link with the Royal Navy.

The inlet was used as a natural harbour by the Royal Navy in World War 2. To mark the association, sailors painted boulders on white and spelled out their ship's name on the slope.

Having visited the boulders, Executive Officer Lt Cdr Tom Knott and Weapon Engineer Officer Lt Cdr George Blakeman hit the road for the 90-minute drive to the loch at Kylesku.

The waters here were used by wartime midget submarines – X-craft – to practise navigating in confined spaces. Today, the exploits of 12th Submarine Flotilla are recorded on a cairn.

Meanwhile on the east coast, a second group of sailors helped with community projects in the villages of Golspie and Brora.

"Sutherland is a wonderful place to visit – from the rugged beauty of the Ben Hope and Ben Loyal and the beaches near Durness to the towns of Dornoch and Golspie," said Lt Cdr Blakeman.

Medway handed over

NEW patrol ship HMS Medway has been formally handed over to the Royal Navy.

The 2,000-tonne warship was officially accepted from builders BAE Systems and is now firmly in Senior Service hands, less than three months after her first spell at sea.

The second of five next-generation River-class patrol ships Medway is currently having several military systems installed at BAE's Govan yard on the Clyde, after which a hectic remainder of 2019 follows.

She's due back at sea for further trials and training in June, then it's down to her future home of Portsmouth – where older sister HMS Forth is already based – in July.

After that there's front-line training ready for her maiden

deployment overseas at the turn of 2019/20, commissioning on her namesake river in September and the first chance to exercise the Freedom of the Borough which has already been bestowed upon Medway by civic dignitaries.

For now, the crew of about 40 – two thirds the full strength of 58 – are concentrating on readying the ship for the return to sea in three months' time and enjoying the sight of the RN's world famous standard flying following Vessel Acceptance Day.

"This is the culmination of an immense amount of hard work – by the ship's company, by BAE, by the MOD. It's a moment everyone can be proud of and it means we're moving forward," said Lieutenant Commander Ben Power, Medway's first Commanding Officer.



Moshi moshi, Montrose

WITH the upper slopes of Mount Fuji blanketed in snow and an airliner taking off from Japan's busiest airport (Haneda), HMS Montrose edges her way into Tokyo.

After a lengthy passage from Singapore through the South China Sea and Pacific, the British warship enjoyed six days at Harumi Wharf in the shadow of the Rainbow Bridge (it's colourfully illuminated at night).

Crossing the South China Sea allowed Montrose to honour the dead of the Prince of Wales and Repulse, sunk by Japanese air power just days after the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, with a memorial service and wreath laying over the battleship's wreck site.

As well as the service, the journey to Japan – the distance is as great as between the frigate's native Plymouth and New York – was punctuated by training with the American Navy and its supply ship USNS Guadalupe.

Based in Japan, it served as a 'playground' for Montrose's boarding team of sailors and Royal Marines; the latter 'secured' the Guadalupe by clambering aboard, sweeping the decks and making sure the crew posed no threat.

Then the sailors joined them, conducting a bow-to-stern search of the 40,000-tonne vessel for any suspicious cargo.

They found a member of the crew playing the role of a people trafficker and drug smuggler who was interrogated while his small haul of 'drugs' was recovered, allowing Montrose's Royal Navy Police officers to test their legal and evidence-handling skills.

"Carrying out the specialist search role on such a large US Navy Ship was a big step up from what I've done before and practising with our Royal Marines showed me how well we can work as a team," said Engineering Technician (Weapon Engineering) Jake Nicoll who led one of the search teams.

The rest of the work-up with the American tanker was dedicated to practising refuelling under way – a Replenishment at Sea – with the two ships steaming parallel, separated by just 50 metres and lines passing between them to transfer fuel and stores.

Four times Montrose practised manoeuvring

into position from different angles. On the fourth pass, lines were sent across to allow the fuelling rig to pass between the two ships to allow the frigate to top up her tanks and continue on to Tokyo... where a large welcoming party of Japanese sailors and a band greeted the Type 23, fresh from working with the US Navy on maritime security operations in the South China Sea, and Commanding Officer Commander Conor O'Neill thanked his hosts for their hospitality by handing over a mounted crest to the Port Authority.

His ship was hosted by the crew of the destroyer Murasame, who introduced the Brits to Japanese cooking and culture, and offered tips on the 'must-see' sights of their capital.

Before Montrose's sailors could enjoy such sights, she had to open her gangway to the Japanese public... and the British vessel proved to be a big draw, enticing nearly 10,000 people on board for a look around during an open weekend.

Public duties done, it was time to explore Tokyo – and beyond, for some crew grabbed a bullet train and headed into the mountains for a spot of skiing. Others were content with the capital's heady mix of tranquil temples and shrines and the hustle and bustle of one of the world's great metropolises, such as Shibuya Crossing – the busiest junction on the planet (think: a Tokyo version of Times Square).

"Tokyo is definitely a unique place to visit and I found it a complete sensory overload," said Weapon Engineering Technician Simon Hallett.

There was still time to host a Defence and Security Industry Day before departing Tokyo for combined Anglo-US-Japanese exercises.

The event allowed British firms to showcase their wares – including some of the systems installed on the Plymouth-based warship during her recent refit – and discuss opportunities for cooperation with Japanese officials and companies.

And finally, the ship staged a capability demonstration giving an idea of the grit and expertise of a British sailor and the equipment they use. Among attendees was Defence Minister Kenji Harada who led guests in the traditional toast of "Kampai!" (Cheers!) to mark Montrose's visit.

"Our time in Tokyo was enjoyed by all and goes

to further strengthen our relationship with the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force and Japan," said Cdr O'Neill.

"We built on the near-persistent Royal Navy presence in the area and recent visits to Japan, continuing to demonstrate the Royal Navy's commitment to this vital region and our ability to operate seamlessly with our allies."

The Japanese Navy should be well versed in what Type 23 frigates and British sailors can do: Montrose is the third 23 – after Sutherland (last April) and Argyll (over new year) – and fourth RN warship (flagship HMS Albion here last summer) to call on the land of the Rising Sun in the past 12 months.

And like her predecessors, upon sailing from Tokyo there was a combined Anglo-Japanese-American naval exercise, this time focused on anti-submarine warfare.

As she left Tokyo, Montrose passed Japan's flagship Izumo – a 'helicopter destroyer' or in RN parlance 'helicopter carrier' – and exchanged salutes before getting stuck into the submarine hunt (the 'enemy' was played by a Japanese boat).

Some of the Brits experienced life aboard the Japanese vessel, which is powered through the Pacific by the same Rolls-Royce engines as Montrose.

Three warships and a Japanese P8 maritime patrol aircraft tracked down the enemy below.

"This was a great opportunity to hone the skills of the sailors on board and to work with our allies with live assets, demonstrating our capabilities in this field of warfare," said Lieutenant Chris Daly, HMS Montrose's Principal Warfare Officer (Underwater).

Such joint training is intended to generally support peace in the western Pacific Rim and specifically to put pressure on North Korea and Pyongyang's illegal nuclear programme.

Montrose is in the final stages of a mammoth journey to Bahrain where she'll be stationed for up to three years at the RN's new support facility, with crew being replaced every four months to sustain her long-term security/peacekeeping presence.

Pictures: LPhot Joe Cater

Milestone for second carrier

THE first stores have been loaded aboard HMS Prince of Wales as Britain's new carrier takes another small step towards her maiden voyage.

More than 62 tonnes of supplies – bandages, pots, pans, camp beds, pipe clamps, hoses, valves and firefighting equipment – have been moved on to the ship as the flat-top prepares to sail later this year.

A 21-strong team from the aircraft carrier's supply department spent two weeks working around the clock to move the stores on board – a task rather more complicated than it might sound.

The majority of items were provided by the military depot at Crombie, just three miles up the Forth, to a building at Rosyth Royal Dockyard, where HMS Prince of Wales is being completed.

From there, they were unpacked and repacked into cage

storage units – ready for loading on to the Queen Elizabeth-class ship.

Once on pallets, the stores were forklifted to the jetty before being loaded to the aircraft lift where a truck moved them to the hangar. They were then moved to the naval stores lift and taken to the correct deck level storeroom.

The final part of the journey saw the items unpacked and moved to their final storage destinations.

Lieutenant Commander Alex Pelham Burn, Deputy Commander Logistics, said:

"In preparation for sailing for the first time, the supply chain department have been busy loading the first outfit of stores on board HMS Prince of Wales.

"Working 24 hours a day for the past two weeks they have been embarking stores from body armour to ball bearings, firefighting gear to cups and saucers and everything else required to maintain, feed and fight on an aircraft carrier at sea.

"As we approach our sailing date, we will start embarking the victuals needed to sustain us during sea trials until we get into our new home port of Portsmouth later this year."

■ A team from the carrier have been training in HMS Raleigh's replenishment at sea trainer.

Chief Petty Officer Jamie McNeil, HMS Prince of Wales's Bosun, is in charge of the team of sailors, many of whom are relatively new to the Royal Navy.

He said: "This is a great training facility. We've been practising probe refuelling and a little bit of stores RASING."



ARCTIC FIRE

IN THE FREEZE THE ROYAL MARINES FIGHT DAY OR NIGHT



Pictures by LCpl James Clarke

HIGH explosive mortar rounds shoot up into the night's sky from the back of a BV during live firing in the Arctic Circle where Royal Marines are graduating from their cold weather warfare finishing school.

It all started back in January with the survival phases of the training at the hands of the Mountain Leader Cadre.

It moved onto tactical and combat training before the commandos travelled from Norway across the border to Sweden for a huge joint war games.

Most of the UK's transport infrastructure crumbles under the weight of a light dusting of snow. Trains grind to a halt. Motorways clog. Commuters can't get to work.

The Royal Marines don't stop for such minor inconveniences. They go to work in extreme climates. That's what they do best. These winter warriors are the UK's cold weather warfare experts and these last months have provided time for new generations to be introduced to the snow and new kit to be tested.

The Arctic warfighting capability is a high priority, especially with the UK making a ten-year commitment to the region with the intention of sending 1,000 troops annually.

This year's winter trip finished with Exercise Northern Wind. This warfighting exercise was a step into new joint-up work in one of the most sensitive regions in the world.

More than 10,000 troops from Sweden, Finland, Norway, United States and the UK descended on Boden – the home of Sweden's largest army garrison – to test each other in the icy climes.

Finland took 1,500 soldiers and 500 vehicles, including Leopard main battle tanks, west across the border and trained operating as part of a Swedish brigade.

The Norwegian Army, troops from the US Marine Corps' and Royal Marines all banded together to be Sweden and Finland's enemy, becoming a fictitious enemy attacking the northern reaches of the country near the Baltic Sea coast.

Earlier in the winter deployment, the Royal Marines

and relating branches worked on various areas with the Norwegians and the US before nearly 5,000 of them headed east to Sweden.

Commando Wildcat from 847 Naval Air Squadron were involved in their largest helicopter assault force since the conflict in Afghanistan, providing an escort to four Bell 412s of 339 Squadron of the Royal Norwegian Air Force.

The Wildcats used their capability as a battlefield reconnaissance helicopter to clear landing sites, making way for the Norwegians' twin-engine utility warbird to deliver troops to the frontline or extract them.

While supporting the Norwegian aircraft, the Wildcats provided crucial air support, communicating closely with embedded units from the United States Marine Corps.

Alongside the Royal Marines, the Wildcats trained with 30 Commando IX's Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron, while work alongside the Apache of 656 Squadron also proved highly fruitful.

In Gratangen Fjord, south of Bardufoss, 539 Assault Squadron of Plymouth-based 1 Assault Group Royal Marines have been doing beach reconnaissance alongside Norwegian counterparts.

They've also headed out as an entire squadron, living in craft, conducting beach reces and riverine patrols and also running trials to assess how susceptible to thermal image detection they are.

The cold weather enhances the effectiveness of thermal imaging, so these trials will inform future equipment development.

Meanwhile, in the Lyngen Alps, a famous ice climbing area in northern Norway, Mountain Leaders Class 3 conducted vertical assault training on a 10m ice wall.

"In a tactical scenario, the enemy wouldn't expect you to go up that route with a huge ice face in the way," said Marine Dan Pettitt, an ML3 with 40 Commando's Recce Troop.

"You can use that to your advantage and take troops up that. It's definitely a big skill."





Clyde-y hi to new tanker

THE third of four huge new tankers to support Royal Navy task group operations around the globe has been formally welcomed into the naval family.

RFA Tidesurge was dedicated in her affiliated Scottish town of Greenock – where local Sea Cadets renamed their unit in her honour to mark the bond between the 39,000-tonne vessel and townsfolk.

Members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary joined locals, civic dignitaries and Tidesurge's sponsor Lady Joanna Woodcock, whose husband retired as Second Sea Lord last year, in the tanker's hangar for the official ceremony (pictured by LPhot Pepe Hogan).

Sea Cadets – wearing TS Tidesurge caps presented the evening before the ceremony – helped with hosting duties and were rewarded for their efforts with a comprehensive tour of the ship.

Greenock had enjoyed an affiliation with now-retired tanker RFA Gold Rover for more than 40 years until she bowed out of service in 2017.

The ship which now enjoys a bond with the Clyde port is two generations ahead of her forebear, mostly providing fuel for HMS Queen Elizabeth or Prince of Wales and their carrier strike groups of up to half a dozen warships.

Tidesurge can deliver 1,500 cubic metres of fuel every hour – nearly 400,000 gallons, or 1½ million litres... enough to fill the tanks of more than 27,000 family runarounds.

When not hosting VIPs the hangar can take Merlin and Wildcat helicopters while the flight deck is large enough to accommodate a Chinook.

Tidesurge will now take her place alongside her older Tide-class sisters – spring and race – which are sustaining the fleet on a daily basis.

Soon to join the trio will be the youngest ship in the class, RFA Tideforce.

Claws and effect

THE eyes of the tiger proved to be as sharp as ever as the Navy's premier sub-hunters joined NATO's No.1 anti-submarine exercise of the year in Sicily.

The helicopters of 814 Naval Air Squadron – aka the Flying Tigers – were invited to take part in Dynamic Manta, the alliance's annual Mediterranean workout for anti-submarine forces.

Ten nations committed ships, submarines, maritime patrol aircraft and helicopters to the two-week exercise, taking place in the Ionian Sea to the east and south of Catania.

Two Merlins from Culdrose in Cornwall flew across western Europe and touched down at Maristaeli air base in Catania – in the shadow of Mount Etna... and home of the Italian Navy's own Merlin force.

Nine surface ships led the hunt for five boats – including one British attack submarine – as helicopters such as those from 814 dropped sonobuoys and 'dipped' their sonar in the Mediterranean to listen for the tell-tale noises made by their underwater foes.

The chance to 'play' with both nuclear and conventional diesel-powered submarines in waters six degrees warmer and nearly ten times deeper than around the squadron's native Cornwall – all factors which affect the ability of sonar to find boats – made Dynamic Manta an extremely useful training exercise.

"We succeeded in tracking 'hostile' submarines and scored confirmed kills. There was also some friendly cooperation with a boat – not all submariners deserve a torpedo from a Merlin!" said Commander Sarah Birchett, 814's Commanding Officer – known as 'Tiger Boss'.

"Dynamic Manta was a great training opportunity – it allowed my tigers to hone their anti-submarine skills against worthy adversaries."

"Junior aircrew found operating in unfamiliar surroundings with nine other nations was an exciting challenge. They thrived in such an environment and became better aviators – and better submarine hunters – as a result."

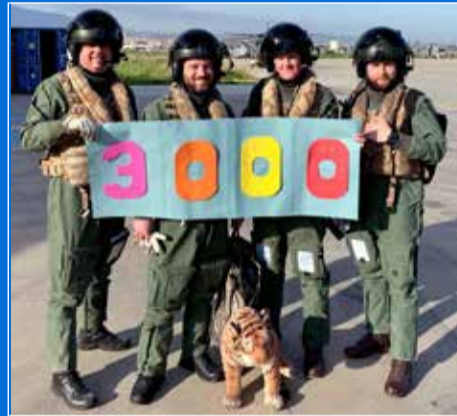
Even though 'only' two Merlins were required for the fortnight-long exercise, 68 men and women – air and ground crew – were needed to support them for the duration of Dynamic Manta... while planning began five months ago.

The tiger team had to sort out everything from permission for military helicopters to fly 1,400 miles through foreign airspace down to speaking to hospitals in Sicily about medical treatment should the Merlins crash while in Catania, or the Brits become struck down by a severe ailment.

"For me, the exercise started in October and only ended once the last personnel and helicopter landed safely back at Culdrose," explained logistics officer Lieutenant Rob Wolstencroft.



• The tiger who came to Espresso... aircrew enjoy an Italian coffee with the squadron mascot and (below) CPO Shaun 'Boogie' Knights (second left) passes a flying milestone



The squadron also had to shift 35 tonnes of equipment, spare parts and tools – including 210 litres of oil and hydraulic fuel to the Italian air base.

It took six containers loaded aboard four lorries to carry the support pack – and four days to make the 1,917-mile road/tunnel/ferry journey from Cornwall to Catania.

And the long journey out to Sicily and daily flying helped both training officer and observer Lieutenant Commander Richard 'Whisky' Walker and aircrewman Chief Petty Officer Shaun 'Boogie' Knights smash the 3,000-hour flying milestones – each man has spent nearly 18 whole weeks in the skies during their extensive careers with the Fleet Air Arm.

Dynamic Manta is one of two large-scale anti-submarine exercises NATO runs; the other, Dynamic Mongoose, tests the ability of those same forces but in the cooler waters of the North and Norwegian Seas. Merlins from Culdrose usually take part in both.



THERE'LL be grey clouds over the white cliffs of Dover...

And 'braving those angry skies' is the county's own warship, paying her first visit to the gateway to the UK/Europe in four years.

Much of that time has been spent in Devonport undergoing a major revamp... followed by sea trials and

training before taking her place back on the frontline with the rest of the Fleet.

2019 opened with FOST for OST (a bit like SMASH for mash but with more water...) including general seamanship and manoeuvres (such as refuelling from new tanker RFA



Tiderace, submarine hunting with a Merlin helicopter from 814 NAS, disaster relief with Kent emergency services all the way up to war fighting.

The four-day stop in the Port of Dover allowed affiliates to see the many changes made since 2015 –

the Portsmouth-based ship proclaims herself to be Britain's most advanced submarine hunter (not to mention other enhancements including the Sea Ceptor missile system which replaces the aged Seawolf and is much better at safeguarding Kent from air attack).

Invited aboard, among others, were

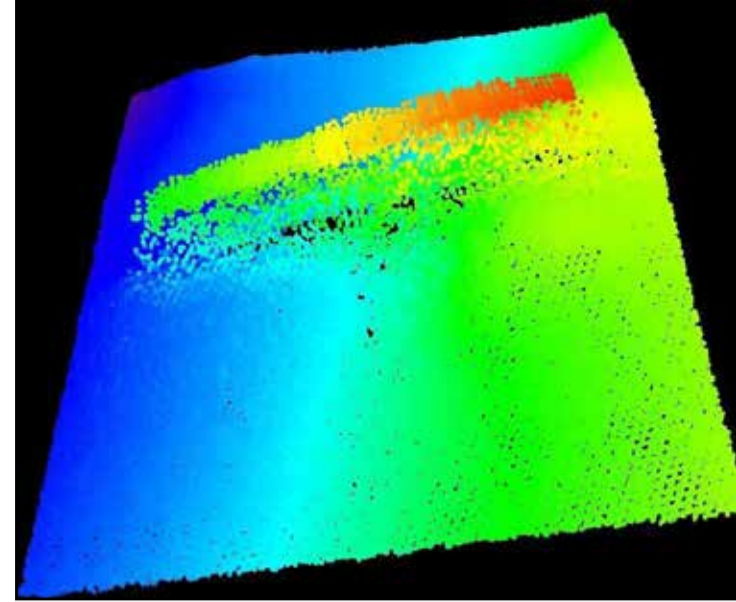
representatives from Canterbury Cathedral, the Association of Men of Kent & Kentish Men and Fair Maids, mayors of some of the Cinque Ports, and county councillors. Kent's Lord Lieutenant Viscount De L'Isle was unable to make it... but eight of his deputies were.

Picture: LPhot Baz Swainsbury



Head Dover heels at county visit

TEXT



Enterprise comes across Vandal and Ghurka

THE rainbow coloured 'bar' in this image give no clue to the tragedy which it disguises.

This is the wreck of wartime submarine HMS Vandal, resting on the seabed off the Isle of Arran as she has done for the past 76 years – as seen through the underwater 'eyes' of HMS Enterprise.

The boat was lost on trials in February 1943 – just four days after she was commissioned – entombing all 37 men aboard.

Vandal's wreck was only discovered by minehunters HMS Hurworth 25 years ago, lying around 300ft down about a mile and a half off the northwestern tip of Arran. No cause of the disaster has been found.

All RN ships pay tribute to their forebears when passing over wreck sites, typically with a service of remembrance and wreath laying.

The hi-tech 3D survey suite aboard Enterprise – typically used to help the UK Hydrographic Office update charts of the Seven Seas for use by fellow mariners – allows the crew of the Devonport-based vessel to 'inspect' wrecks and produce graphics to show the current state of these hallowed sites.

Enterprise is currently conducting trials and survey work off western Scotland. While sheltering from bad weather

she passed close to Vandal's last resting place – prompting her Commanding Officer Commander Cecil Ladislaus to take a look at the sunken submarine.

"As a former submariner, the sight of HMS Vandal was understandably very poignant. She's still intact, sitting on a slope in very muddy waters," he said.

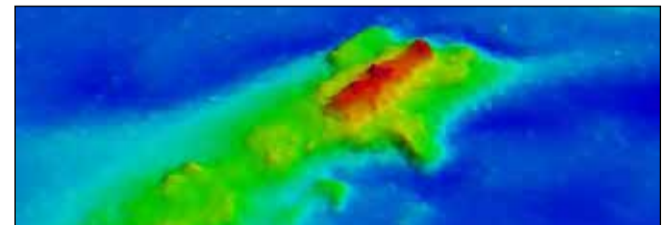
"The images aren't especially obvious, but they are a reminder of those who have served their nation under the seas."

Vandal is the second wreck scanned by Enterprise on recent operations.

At the beginning of February while in the English Channel she passed close to the remains of HMS Ghurka (as the name was spelled until the 1930s), pictured below.

Cdr Ladislaus decided to take a closer look at the WW1 torpedo boat as his hydrographers conducted a training wreck survey of the sunken warship. The result is a rather less obvious cricket-bat-shaped red feature on the seabed.

Ghurka was assigned to the Dover Patrol, preventing U-boats slipping from the North Sea into the Channel and wider Atlantic. She hit a mine off Dungeness in a storm in February 1917 and sank rapidly, taking down all but five of her 79 crew.





These matelots and Royal Marines might be two hours from the sea, but **RICHARD HARGREAVES** still finds that in the heart of Belgium

EVERYTHING'S SHIPSHAPE

MONS.

A name engraved in the battle honours of the British Army. Up there with the River Plate, Narvik, the Channel Dash and Dogger Bank in the annals of the Royal Navy.

The only significant water here is fresh, filling the canals and a disused basin which now serves as an artificial lake for swimming and boating.

The nearest sea is at least 90 minutes' drive away.

So what are a couple of dozen sailors and their families doing here?

They are small but vital naval cogs in the (very) big wheel which runs everything that the world's longest and largest military alliance does on the front line. The focus is very definitely operational – deterrence in the European theatre, Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo, and readiness for whatever else the Alliance may be called to deal with. Our sailors and marines provide the maritime expertise is what is very definitely a joint enterprise.

All are ultimately directed by NATO's grandly-titled Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), an organisation which traces its roots back to NATO's infancy and the coldest days of the Cold War. The first man in charge? One Dwight David Eisenhower. His deputy? A chap called Montgomery.

They set up shop in the outskirts of Paris. A couple of years later, the headquarters shifted to Versailles and, since the late 60s, an old Belgian Army base on the Mons-Brussels road.

While NATO basks in a magnificent new cathedral of glass and steel just 30 minutes up that road on the eastern outskirts of the Belgian capital, SHAPE is a sprawling mix of red brick barracks and workshops plus 1960s utilitarian concrete blocks (think HMS Nelson between 1970 and 2000 – see the picture of the headquarters block now and near completion in the late 60s, below) spread across a sprawling site.

So first impressions are a bit drab. But scratch at the surface...

Single junior rates live in the concrete blocks. "If you've just come

off a ship, then it's like living at the Hilton," says LWtr Kate Bowden, a member of the RN's 1st XI football team. (A Hilton without *en suite* facilities, we must add.) It is cheap though and functional, and the galley – run by RN caterers with no PAYD – has a well-deserved reputation for excellence across the international community. An invite to Friday fish and chips is regarded among NATO colleagues as a real privilege.

Family housing is of a high standard and conveniently close to the base and MOD runs a primary school on base, which Ofsted rates very highly. Some parents chose to send their children to Belgian schools to take advantage of a bilingual upbringing. Secondary school children can travel to Brussels daily to a highly regarded international school, for which pusser picks up the tab. Childcare is also good. Comms senior rating CPO Lee Mitchelmore: "My wife is away serving with the RAF, but with the childcare and schooling here, I don't have to worry about anything. Everything works here. Writer CPO Nicola Window adds: "The school here is amazing and the other facilities are good once you get set up. Because we're a small community, everyone pulls together, particularly when you join, helping you to settle in."

Ultimately, of course, sailors are here to work: SHAPE is a busy working military base, where top-level strategy and plans are developed and implemented once the political-military supremos in Brussels have agreed their collective direction. "If NATO is at the heart of the UK's defence policy, then this is where it happens," says Capt Greg Smith. British personnel make up about ten per cent of NATO's command structure, second only to the Americans. With NATO command structure restructuring and expanding, the UK is looking to increase its presence by more than 100 personnel, a good two dozen of them from the RN – notably at the new North Atlantic headquarters being formed in Norfolk, Virginia.

BELGIUM? DOUZE POINTS

HARMONY TIME	1	2
SCHOOLING	1	2
HEALTH CARE - FOR ENTIRE FAMILY	1	2
CHILD CARE	1	2
PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	1	0
DIFFERENT CULTURES	1	0
CHANCE TO EXPLORE EUROPE	1	0
FRITES ET MAYONNAISE	8	
FINANCIAL INCENTIVE/TAX ADVANTAGES	8	
NO NEED TO SPEAK ANOTHER LINGO	8	
BELGIAN ROADS	0	
BELGIAN TAKE-AWAYS	2	
MONS NIGHTLIFE IN WINTER	0	

Service overseas is not for everyone, but SHAPE offers a good balance between career fulfilment/progression and the 'x factor': family time, financial rewards, and new life experiences.

"People don't think about NATO jobs automatically," says the UK's National Military Representative to SHAPE, Air Commodore Anthony Beasant. "They think about a job in Portsmouth, or High Wycombe, or the MOD, and there are great jobs there. But here you do jobs on a level that you cannot do back in the UK. This is absolutely not a backwater."

For example, Commander Andy Mason is one of the lead force generators; he corrals the forces required for NATO front-line operations such as Afghanistan.

"As a member of the Royal Navy, your maritime skills are valued. As a Briton, your currency here is high. You are likely to be drawn into tasks because of your experience," he says.

Few SHAPE jobs involve deploying which is good for harmony time, with some attractive financial aspects too as part of an 'overseas offer'. Families' accommodation is discounted and there are no council tax charges. There are tax-free privileges on fuel, alcohol and tobacco,

local purchases – and online from some UK retailers. Although the cost of living in Belgium is high, this is offset by the overseas allowance and our people live very comfortably, although a good slice of the allowance is devoured by car repairs (mainly tyres and suspension) as the reputation of Belgium's roads is well deserved.

Now a lot of people may dismiss Belgium as a dull land of *frites et mayonnaise* and not much else. And true, beyond its WW1 links and fine main square Mons is a rather drab post-industrial former mining town.

But then there are the wooded hills of the Ardennes, 90 minutes' drive. Brussels. 40 minutes by train. Bruges. 90 minutes. Amsterdam and Cologne three hours. "You're two hours from five countries here," says Capt Smith. "Holland, Germany, Luxembourg, France and the UK."

Or as Colonel Jon Sear (currently the only Bootneck at SHAPE), puts it "you can quite easily go to Paris for lunch on Saturday, pop to Tesco for tea bags on Sunday and still be raring to go at first parade on Monday."

Even if you stay on the base for most of the time, you'll be exposed to "different people, different languages and different cultures – it's genuinely lovely," the colonel said. "There's some form of international event most weeks in the summer and we stage our own traditional village fete – and there is the whole of Europe's Christmas markets."

And they also make sure that though small, the RN presence is well known, upholding all the traditions the rest of the service does: Trafalgar Night, Pickle Night (pictured above); a lively rugby scene with the Brits at the core; representation at November ceremonies and local events; Commonwealth troops fired their first (August 1914) and last shots (November 1918) of the Great War nearby (there are flags to mark the spots).

Sadly – and inaccurately – there remains a perception among some divisional officers and drafting offices that going overseas is a poor career choice and some are actively

discouraged, like caterer PO Graham Window who's serving at the base with his wife Nicola.

"Drafty told me my career would hit a dead end here," he says. "It's not. It's a lot busier than I imagined it. I'm enjoying it out here – and it is most definitely not a dead end."

It's also a bit of a forgotten posting. "People think of Gib, the Gulf, the USA when they think of a posting overseas," says Capt Smith. "They don't think of Belgium. This a great opportunity."

But, as Cdr Mason puts it "Are you interested in doing something different, something foreign? If the answer is 'yes', then it opens up a whole new world to you."

And if the answer is 'yes' to SHAPE you don't even need to speak the lingo, as Col Sear says "there's no need to be scared off. It's not a barrier to working here – the NATO language is English."

Sailors and Marines work across SHAPE in all staff and support areas, including in the UK's European Joint Support Unit, especially in writer, logistics and catering. Lt Col Rob Prentice, the Unit's CO is responsible for ensuring some 3,500 military personnel and families are looked after: pay, schooling, health care, morale across an area stretching from the North Cape to the Bosphorus, Lisbon to Ankara.

"It's not well known. Everyone knows about jobs in Portsmouth, Plymouth, Salisbury Plain, but not Mons," he says.

"It's different, it's an adventure for you and your family. The financial package is good, the education is good, facilities are outstanding, and you're experiencing a new country, new cultures."

■ If you are interested in a posting to SHAPE, tell Drafty, update your JPA preferences or drop the team in Mons a line via EJSU-SHAPE-NSE-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk or its HIVE support network shapehive@armymail.mod.uk.

KEEP UP WITH NATO

Watch out for more features on NATO to come in its 70th anniversary year #wearenato #nato70





Fine example

P2000 works in harmony with heavy hitters

ONE of the smallest vessels in the Royal Navy fleet joined the big league in the North Sea.

P2000 HMS Example linked up with a Wildcat helicopter and HMS Defender for the Type 45's latest phase of operational sea training.

Example played the role of suspected drug smugglers as she was pursued by the helicopter, from 815 NAS, and Defender's seaboats.

In unseasonably glorious weather, Defender's seaboats chased the boat from the First Patrol Boat Squadron, before embarking a Royal Marines boarding team to search the vessel.

"It's been fantastic to work with our colleagues in Defender and support their preparations for upcoming operations," said

Example's Commanding Officer, Lt Simon Priestley.

"As we are based in the North East – at HMS Calliope in Newcastle – we don't see our bigger sister ships that often, so to have the opportunity to work with them for a couple of days has been extremely valuable to my ship's company.

"Whilst we are a smaller ship, operations such as these truly show the capability and flexibility of the Archer class and how we can support or take the burden away from the rest of the fleet, so that they can concentrate on the front-end war-fighting capability of the Royal Navy."

HMS Example was preparing to work around the UK and Ireland as part of her Easter deployment, culminating in the First Patrol Boat Squadron's Squadex this month.



Stepping back in time in war nerve centre

STUDENTS from Liverpool's University Royal Naval Unit learned how the Battle of the Atlantic was won when they were given a special guided tour of the navy's wartime nerve centre.

The struggle against the U-boat was directed from Western Approaches Command, buried in the bowels of Derby House in Liverpool city centre for most of World War 2.

The operations room of the complex was dominated by a huge map of the Atlantic and especially the 'Western Approaches' – an imaginary box extending from the Orkneys and Land's End out to 30° West.

Here plotters marked the progress of convoys, their escorts, Allied air power and suspected U-boats – all under the watchful eye of the commanding officer, in the second half of the war former submariner Admiral Sir Max Horton.

Today the complex – bomb and gas proof, with a seven-foot-thick roof and walls three feet thick, spread across 100 rooms covering 50,000 square feet in all

– is a museum, reminding people of the sacrifices made by the Royal and Merchant Navies to keep the sea lanes open between 1939 and 1945.

When the tourists had left, curator Emma Stringfellow kept the doors open to show Officer Cadets of Liverpool URNU around and give them an idea of what it was like to work in the bunker – known at the time as the 'citadel' or 'fortress' – in Britain's darkest hours.

"This was a fantastic opportunity for the Officer Cadets to visit a key location from World War 2 – and one that is within walking distance of the unit's home at HMS Eaglet," said LURNNU's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Adam Warland.

"It demonstrated to them how Liverpool became an important strategic position during the war.

"Thanks to Emma and the rest of her team for opening the museum to us after hours and providing us with the rare opportunity of a personal guided tour of the bunker."

Exchange of ideas across the ocean

A DELEGATION from Britannia Royal Naval College attended the annual US Naval Academy (USNA) Leadership Conference in Annapolis, Maryland.

Seven representatives, comprising four officer cadets and three members of staff from the Royal Naval Leadership Academy (RNLA), took part in the conference organised by the USNA Midshipman and titled 'Inside Out Leadership – Know Yourself First'.

The conference aimed to explore how knowing oneself and playing to one's weaknesses and strengths is a crucial skill set for a leader to possess.

The conference comprised an impressive variety of guest lecturers that included the 108th New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace USMC (Ret), Former Commander of the US 3rd Fleet Vice Admiral Nora Tyson, 29th Deputy Secretary of Defence Gordon England and President and CEO of Booz Allen Hamilton Inc Mr Horacio Rozanski.

Throughout the three-day conference panel discussions were conducted by both military and civilian personnel including a former Vietnam Prisoner of War, NASA Astronaut, Deputy Director of the US Fire

Administration, Director of Talent Acquisitions at LinkedIn plus many more.

The discussions generated many interesting topics which included 'How to bring out the best in people', 'Leading beyond self' and 'Leading from within' – all of which were followed by breakout sessions giving the opportunity for the delegates and staff to discuss further leadership ideas and comment on the points raised by the panels.

In addition to the conference the delegation took the opportunity to visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery and the Vietnam, Korean and World War 2 National War Memorials.

An educational visit was also made to the National Holocaust Museum in Washington DC, expanding on military topics covered during the cadets' time at BRNC and generating much discussion on ethical leadership.

Officer Cadet Alex Ward said: "The conference has been inspiring and each cadet has taken something away to apply to their own leadership styles.

"Being able to live alongside the US Navy Midshipmen for a few days was also an experience, showing both similarities and differences from life at BRNC."



Perfect Prefect

THERE is a new sound in the skies over the county of Lincolnshire.

The drum whine of the Lycoming piston engine has now been replaced with the distinctive purr of the Rolls-Royce A250B Jet Turbine.

Welcome to the Grob 120TP, designated the Prefect and operated by 703 Naval Air Squadron.

Having formed in 1942 and with the motto *Experience Teaches*, the Prefect is the squadron's 12th aircraft type and by far the most advanced.

With a digital avionics suite, retractable under carriage and a top speed of 238kts, the aircraft marks a step up in the delivery of elementary flying training within the UK's Military Flying Training System.

The squadron's first Royal Marine Commanding Officer, Major Bruce Atherton, is quick to point out the vast improvements that UKMFTS has to offer, with computer-based training and flight training simulators providing synthetic training to bolster the airborne sorties.

This ensures the trainee pilots are better prepared for the challenge of the Prefect.

A trainee pilot will typically fly 18 hours simulated and 43 hours in the air, operating from RAF Barkston Heath, near Grantham.

They will conduct general handling exercises, instrument flying and low-level navigation sorties.

Trainee pilot Sub Lieutenant Mike Fry relished the challenge of the navigation phase,

"At 180kts ground speed things are happening quickly and in a busy low-level environment you have to be able to react to changing priorities to achieve your turning points, overfly your target on time and get the aircraft safe with enough fuel to get home," he said.

From Lincolnshire, SLt Fry will follow his dream and move to RAF Shawbury in Shropshire to begin his rotary conversion with aspirations to fly the Maritime Attack Wildcat from frigates and destroyers all around the world.

MFTS graduated its first EFT course in September last year and SLt Tommy Brownlee was selected to stay at RAF Cranwell and start the fast-jet lead-in course which will see him eventually at the controls of the Royal Navy's fifth-generation strike fighters, the F-35B.

UKMFTS is a partnership of Ascent Flight Training, who provide qualified flying instructors working alongside military instructors from various operational backgrounds giving the students

a good grounding in Fleet Air Arm ethos.

The Prefect aircraft are provided, serviced and maintained by Affinity thus forming a three-way partnership aiming to produce pilots for the Fleet Air Arm for generations to come.

Words: SLt Emma Reynolds
Pictures: LPhot Sam Seeley



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WELCOME TO



THE JUNGLE



EXTREMES.

The Royal Marines love 'em.

Extreme cold. No problem. They can not merely survive in temperatures of 30 below zero, but fight as well (see pages 14-15).

Extreme heat. Afghanistan. Iraq. Mojave desert. Been there. Done that.

Extreme terrain. Mountains. Again no problem (pages 14 and 15 again...).

Ok what about extreme humidity, heat and terrain rolled into one?

The Corps hasn't fought in a jungle environment since the Borneo emergency of the 1960s and, to a lesser extent, Britain's intervention in the Sierra Leone civil war 20 years ago.

But it keeps its hand in.

Every couple of years, the commandos disappear to the tropical rainforest of Belize in Central America for Exercise Curry Trail (Caribbean-style curries are popular in the country apparently).

In the desert or ice, extremes of temperature alone will kill.

The heat (high 20s/low 30s Celsius) and humidity (never less than 85 per cent) in the jungle are debilitating, but not generally fatal.

There are plenty of things which might finish you off, however.

Alligators. Jaguars (although they don't usually attack humans).

The list of nasties continues.

Bullet ants. Beware their sting.

Pretty much every species of snake that you wouldn't want to encounter. Venomous spiders.

There's no escape in the waterways which carve their way through this primeval landscape: river snakes, crocodiles,

leeches.

Then there's the bush itself – thick undergrowth. There are no roads, no tracks, perhaps the odd trail. At least in the Arctic you can move around the terrain quickly (skimobiles) or in relative comfort (BVs and Vikings).

Scratch that idea in the rainforest. Not even any yomping here.

Hack your way through with machetes – covering just a short distance may take hours.

Exhausting. And disorientating. One bit of shubbery looks like any other. You've seen one tree, you've seen 'em all.

The jungle isn't just an enemy. It can be your friend.

Termites. May eat your house and home, but eat a handful of them and that's 2,000 calories sorted.

There's the anti-malaria plant (not very tasty), or the 'tree of life' (ceiba) which provides water, edible nuts and is a good source of fuel.

So that's the jungle in a nutshell.

Now plonk several hundred green berets in the middle of it: Alpha Company from 40 Commando, based in Taunton; soldiers from 24 Commando Royal Engineers from Chivenor in North Devon; gunners

of 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery and intelligence experts of 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group, both based in Plymouth.

Having learned the survival basics, training progressed to jungle warfare against a determined enemy: tracking, closing and finally 'killing' an adversary – while simultaneously making it as difficult as possible to be tracked and attacked themselves.

The training package also included a thorough and demanding live-fire package on jungle ranges where SA80 rifles, Glock pistols and light machine-guns were all fired; from developing an individual's marksmanship to 30 men infiltrating the jungle to deliberately attack a fortified position, which was promptly demolished by the sappers of 59 Commando Squadron... who helpfully point out that "many problems can be solved with the correct application of high explosives..."

Having only earned his green beret in December after completing more than a year's training to become a Royal Marines officer, 21-year-old Lieutenant Henry Hives found himself leading men from Alpha Company through the dense scrub.

"I really enjoyed the challenges of working in the jungle; you wouldn't get many opportunities outside the Royal Marines to work in a place like this."

Twenty-five-year-old Franco Bent, also from Alpha Company, added: "It has been really beneficial getting to work as a company, improving our skills in a jungle environment."

The present-day reputation of the Royal Marines is built in part on what the commandos of yesteryear – including the late Paddy Ashdown – achieved in the jungles of Borneo half a century ago.

With the Asia-Pacific region taking on renewed importance for the future of the UK, 40 Commando's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Paul Maynard said training in the tropical climate was imperative.

"Exercising in challenging climates such as the sweltering jungle enhances our ability to be able to fight anywhere across the globe," he added.

"It is essential that commandos can operate with partners and allies in the many tropical environments in the Indo-Pacific region.

"We have a long and distinguished history of operating in the jungle and the advanced soldiering skills required to be effective will be equally important as we look to the future."

Before leaving Belize, the commandos did sample a bit of culture by dropping in on the ruins of the Mayan city of Altun-Ha, abandoned 1,000 years ago and rediscovered by archaeologists at the end of the 1960s. It's now one of the country's main tourist draws.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, 30 Cdo IX Gp



Moderator gets a taste of navy life

HMS Prince of Wales, the home of the UK Submarine Service, and Royal Marines from Arbroath's 45 Commando were among Royal Navy units visited by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

The Right Reverend Susan Brown and her team were out and about at naval establishments on both the east and west coast of Scotland.

Rt Rev Brown said: "The trip is a fantastic opportunity to see some of the work being done by the various arms of the Royal Navy, including HMS Prince of Wales, Royal Naval Reserve, Cadets, Glasgow and Strathclyde University Royal Navy Unit, Royal Marines, pool drill, Royal Marines Band and the charity Aggie's."

"It's also been a chance to connect with the Naval community and to see the rich seam of opportunity for so many skills and also for chaplaincy."

"There's been lots of chances to talk with all sorts of young people about life and faith."

"If only I was younger..."

She also called in on HMS Sutherland, where, over a cup of tea and shortbread, talked about life onboard, the varied roles they each fulfil and the ship's recent programme.

During her visit, the Moderator – best known for officiating at the wedding of Madonna and Guy Ritchie in 2000 – was accompanied by Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet, Reverend Professor Scott Shackleton, and staff from Naval Regional Commander Scotland and Northern Ireland's (NRCSNI) office.

Together they spent time with Glasgow and Strathclyde University Royal Naval Unit (URNU) and took to the water with them on board patrol boat, HMS Pursuer, pictured top, for a sail on the River Clyde.

She also visited MOD Caledonia and HMS Scotia in Rosyth where, among other things, she took part in lifeboat drills at the site's swimming pool, learning some survival at sea techniques. She also met members of the Royal Marines Band Scotland at the site.

Glasgow's Royal Naval Reserve unit HMS Dalriada was also included, as was a



tour of BAE Systems' shipyard at Scotstoun to see the construction of Type 26 HMS Glasgow.

Later in the week the team were at the Royal Navy's biggest establishment in Scotland – HM Naval Base Clyde – where they met submariners, Royal Marines from 43 Commando, training staff from Flag Officer Sea Training (North), and conducted a tour of minehunter HMS Grimsby, courtesy of the Faslane-based First Mine Counter Measures Squadron.

While at the site, the Moderator also spent time with naval families and charities, and was present for the awarding of a medal to Naval Chaplain, the Reverend Mark Dalton.

Rev Dalton was given his Long Service & Good Conduct medal by Commodore Donald Doull, Naval Base Commander Clyde, in recognition of 15 years of exemplary naval service.

Captain Chris Smith, Naval Regional Commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland, said: "It has been a real pleasure and privilege to host the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and showcase the breadth of the Naval Service in Scotland."

"We are delighted that the Moderator has given us so much time and shown such interest in our people, their families and the operational activities that takes place in and around Scotland, as well as the wider global operations being conducted by Scottish-based units."

Sultan's CO bows out

COMMANDING officer of HMS Sultan, Captain Peter Towell, bid a fond farewell to the base as he ended his 36-year career in the Royal Navy.

In keeping with tradition, Capt Towell was given a ride around the establishment in Sultan's own Super Sentinel steam lorry as the ship's company lined the route to wish him well.

During his RN career he has served in HMS Ark Royal and worked in the Destroyers' Project Team, where he was involved in the acceptance into service of the first of class, HMS Daring.

In 2012 Capt Towell became the Engineering (General Service) Branch Manager. In that role, he oversaw the genesis and early delivery phase of Project Faraday, for which he was appointed an OBE. He was selected for promotion to Captain in 2013 and assigned to COMPORFLOT as Captain Engineering in March 2014.

Capt Towell has a long-standing association with HMS Sultan. Having served within the establishment on four separate occasions between 1986-2001 he had the privilege of returning to HMS Sultan for a fifth and final time as the Commanding Officer in 2016, also fulfilling the role of Commandant of the Defence College of Technical Training's Defence School of Marine Engineering.



Sailors help to clean up beauty spot

SAILORS mobilised schoolchildren for a regular clean-up of a Cornish beauty spot.

Crew from HMS Richmond, plus sailors from Devonport Naval Base, rallied volunteers to sweep along Tregantle Beach near Torpoint and rid it of the latest rubbish deposited on the once-pristine sands by the ocean.

The beach sits at the western end of Whitsand Bay beneath Tregantle Fort, which is still regularly used by Royal Navy and Royal Marines for live firing.

As a result access to the shore is limited – especially for vehicles – which largely rules out the council collecting rubbish.

Keeping Tregantle clear of rubbish is a labour of love for 35-year-old Chief Petty Officer Craig Brook-Hewitt who organises

regular clean-ups (including another matelot-heavy one last spring when he was serving at nearby HMS Raleigh).

The gunner is now assigned to frigate HMS Richmond, undergoing refit in Devonport, allowing him to still enjoy walking his dog at Tregantle... and organise sweeps with the added musclepower of shipmates.

Tregantle suffers particularly from regular dumps of 'nurdles' – small pellets used in plastic production while eagle-eyed litter-pickers can sometimes find pieces of Lego lost at sea after a cargo spill off Land's End more than 20 years ago.

On top of that there is rubbish and plastics from the local community washed up and, in summer, trash left behind by beachgoers.

"The pattern of the tides here means we get all sorts of plastic washed up on to the sand – last May we managed to clear 45 full bags of rubbish, over two tons of plastic rope, masses of fishing equipment, and even plastic shot-gun cartridges, which floated across the Atlantic from a shooting competition on the cliffs in Canada," Craig explained.

"That's the problem with such a wide and open beach like this, even after our biggest and most effective clean-up, a high tide will mean it's back to where it was before within days."

He can arrange the safe access of cars through the Ministry of Defence firing range which borders the beach, so that the collected litter can be taken away.



Lorraine's lived the RNR dream

A ROYAL Naval Reservist from Lincolnshire has reflected on her illustrious career as she prepares to retire after more than two decades in the service.

Leading Hand Lorraine Richardson has balanced her role in HMS Sherwood with her career as an avionics technician for the last 22 years.

She initially joined in 1997 and since then has been on international deployments, spent months at sea and has taken part in high-profile ceremonial duties.

"I have had so many great experiences that an article is not enough to give more than just a flavour of the fantastic and diverse opportunities I have had with the Royal Naval Reserve. I only wish I'd known about it when I was younger," she said.

During her time in the Reserves Lorraine has taken part in several overseas deployments, including Operation Telic (Iraq War), has sailed on many ships, including HMS Illustrious, has had encounters with royalty, taken part in around the world races and was deployed for the Olympics in 2012.

When asked what her most memorable experience was, she said: "It has to be live firing a minigun at a 'Killer Tomato' target in the middle of the ocean and getting a 'well done' from the bridge for my complete annihilation of the target."

She added: "Deploying to the Gulf during Op Telic was very exciting. When we returned to the UK we travelled up the Suez Canal and during that stretch of the trip I was manning a minigun on the bridge wing."

"Then in order to transport some vehicles, we stopped in Barcelona for Christmas and Gibraltar for new year."

"The whole ten-month deployment was an incredible adventure that is now a priceless



● LH Richardson aboard HMS Glasgow and manning a gun during a Suez transit



memory for me."

She has also been involved in several international competitions and challenges, including being the only sailor to be part of the RAF team in the Nijmegen Three Day Marches, an endurance challenge that takes place in the Netherlands every year.

In 1999 she competed in the Transglobe Yacht Race where she raced from Rio De Janeiro to St Maarten but had to divert to Antigua because of Hurricane Jose.

As well as taking part in operations and competitions Lorraine has also done more than her fair share of ceremonial duties.

She explained: "Being deployed for the Olympics was brilliant, we went to the Tower of London in our uniforms and the Beefeaters

wanted their photos taken with us.

"I also had the chance to go and get my picture taken at Number 10 Downing Street."

"I have had the honour of being involved in the Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Windsor Castle, the Queen's River Pageant and I've been on parade at the Menin Gate twice, including during the centenary year of the First World War armistice."

"The most unusual experience I have had is when Prince Michael of Kent bought me a beer during his visit to HMS Sherwood in 2014."

HMS Sherwood is the East Midlands' only RNR unit, to find out more about joining email NavyMrSherwood@mod.gov.uk or call 0115 9296373.

Happy as Harry



Pictures: LPhot Alex Ceolin

THE Duke of Sussex handed two dozen new Royal Marine Commandos their green berets after they finished a gruelling 30-mile yomp across Dartmoor.

The Captain General Royal Marines called in on 42 Commando at Bickleigh, near Plymouth, then headed out on to the moor where generations of commandos have earned the coveted cap – the reward for 32 weeks of intensive training and dedication.

He met some of the experienced Royal Marines from the Commando Training Centre in Lymstone who've put recruits through nearly eight months of demanding instruction.

That training reaches its climax with the final 'commando test' on Dartmoor: a 30-mile march which starts at the northern tip of the moor and finishes near Plymouth.

Recruits have eight hours to finish – carrying around 40lbs of equipment.

As they finished the '30 miler' Prince Harry saluted the successful recruits, then presented them with their coveted green berets, which symbolically marks the completion of their commando training.

Marine Rowan Birch was one of the exhausted recruits to complete the yomp successfully.

"Completing training has not really sunk in yet – it's all a bit of a blur," he said. "You see and hear about Prince Harry going off on trips – and here he is, which is brilliant. I was a bit star-struck."

Marine James Reynolds, another successful recruit, added: "To have someone as big as Prince Harry here at the end of the 30-miler, it feels special. It's not everyday you get him handing you your green beret."

At 42 Cdo, the Duke learned about the unit's specialists who provide force protection/board and search teams for ships around the globe, amphibious support and expertise, and – in a new role – a dedicated rescue squad to save downed aircrew from behind enemy lines.

The Duke watched a Joint Personnel Recovery demonstration as Royal Marines leapt off a Merlin helicopter and simulated the rescue of an F-35 Lightning pilot from new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth. Afterwards, he chatted with some of 42 Commando's personnel about their work.

"It was good to meet Prince Harry – normally you only see people like him on the telly!" said Marine David Meenagh from 42's Mortar Troop.



"He was really laid back and his military experience definitely makes a difference – the first thing he said when he came up to us was: 'Mortars, I like these guys!'"

"Hopefully we'll be seeing a lot more of him in the future."

Major General Charlie Stickland, Commandant General Royal Marines, said the visit was the latest part of a comprehensive year-long programme to introduce the Duke to the unique world of the Corps.

"42 Commando is his latest 'port of call', a chance to learn about this specialist unit – and for the guys to get a 'sense and smell' of their new Captain General, having taken over from his beloved grandfather," he said.

"For the successful recruits, today is the culmination of many months of blood, sweat and tears. To receive their green berets at Bickleigh Vale from their Captain General is incredibly special. Some were speechless, some were smiling, some were incredibly tired."

Since assuming the role of Captain General Royal Marines from his grandfather the Duke of Edinburgh in December 2017, Prince Harry has visited new recruits at Lymstone and commandos on exercise in Norway.



Rainbow Flag flown at Faslane

THE LGBT Rainbow Flag was raised for the first time at HM Naval Base Clyde to mark Purple Friday.

February was LGBT History month and on the last Friday of the month Purple Friday is celebrated in support of LGBT Youth Scotland.

Representatives from the Royal Navy, Ministry of Defence, Babcock, Ministry of Defence Police and Police Scotland gathered to witness this significant event – with the flag flying from 43 Commando's main mast outside their Faslane Headquarters.

Sub Lieutenant Annabel Sykes, 28, from West Yorkshire, a junior Logistics Officer at the Naval Base, said: "It was a huge honour to represent the RN at the raising of the Pride Flag at HMNB Clyde for the first time."

Purple Friday was first celebrated in Canada in 2010 and is named after the purple stripe on the LGBT rainbow flag.

Room to say thank you

CHIEF executive of SSAFA, Sir Andrew Gregory, has been appointed an ambassador of a unique hospitality charity.

Room to Reward uses donated anticipated unsold rooms to give 'thank you' breaks to outstanding charity volunteers.

Sir Andrew said: "We are thrilled that this partnership provides us with an opportunity to thank those of our volunteers who have contributed so much to the charity and to our clients."

Last year more than 20 of SSAFA's outstanding volunteers from the South West and Wales regions enjoyed a night away, Champagne reception and a three-course dinner, all donated by Clevedon Hall, via Room to Reward.

Visit: roomtoreward.org/ or ssafa.org.uk

Glider contest off to a flying start

STUDENTS ensured a national engineering challenge got off to a flying start during a visit to RNAS Yeovilton.

Pupils from around 30 schools took part in the competition, which involved teams of four designing, building and testing a model glider.

The Flying Start Challenge is sponsored by several aerospace firms within the South West.

The Yeovil Final 2019 was once again hosted by RNAS Yeovilton and sponsored by Leonardo Helicopters.

This year students had the opportunity to hold the final glider challenge in one of the station's hangars belonging to 845 Naval Air Squadron.

As the students entered hangar seven they could get up close and climb into a Merlin Mk4 from 825 NAS and an Army Wildcat with 659 AAC.

Commanding Officer of RNAS Yeovilton, Commodore Nick Tindal welcomed the students to RNAS Yeovilton and it wasn't long before the teams battled it out with their individually designed, developed and built gliders and all different shapes and sizes were soaring through the hangar.

The winners 'JU 90', from Huish Episcopi Academy reached 33 metres and will now go forward to the regional final to be held later in the year at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton.



● HMS Albion's bridge team carries out coastal navigation training in the bridge simulator

Pictures: Craig Keating

Ready to return to the front line

A TEAM from HMS Albion has been training at Britannia Royal Naval College in preparation for taking the 18,500 tonne amphibious assault ship back to sea.

The ship returned from a ten-month deployment last November and is currently alongside at Devonport Naval Base, which gave the bridge team the chance to travel to Dartmouth to make use of BRNC's state-of-the-art bridge simulator.

The simulator is a mock-up of a ship's bridge and allowed HMS Albion's team to practise manoeuvres. It can be configured for any class of Royal Navy ship or submarine and at the click of a button changes can be made to simulate different environmental conditions, such as sea states and winds, and bring into play other vessels, objects or scenarios.

Lieutenant Simon Holden, HMS Albion's second navigator, said: "We've had a big change-over of bridge personnel since we came back from deployment. We wanted to integrate as a bridge team and the way to do that was to come here to use the simulator and practise going to sea and doing our job."

Among the new joiners is Sub Lieutenant Jack Hart, who has recently completed his initial warfare navigation officers' course at HMS Collingwood. He joined HMS Albion at the beginning of this year.

He said: "Being on HMS Albion is classed as my specialist fleet time and it's a chance for me to get my hours in on bridge once we are at sea to qualify as a bridge watchkeeper."

"However, because the ship's in at the moment we can only do bridge work using a simulator, so this is a chance for me to be put through my paces a little bit. It's a really good opportunity for me to get to know the bridge team who I'll be working with when we go to sea. I left BRNC about a year ago, so it's nice to come back."

Windows of the bridge simulator can be configured to represent open sea or harbours and coastlines from around the world. Lt Holden said: "We've been doing some coastal navigation around the Isle of Wight and have been practising coming in and out of Devonport."

"This is a fair representation of a ship's bridge. We have all the same tools as we'd have on board, such as a radar, and we can tailor the shipping situation depending on the



● SLt Jack Hart puts his new skills into practise

experience the bridge team have and build their confidence steadily."

Primarily the simulator is used to teach Officer Cadets navigation, but increasingly it is made available for ship's team looking to hone their skills.

In recent weeks the facility has been used by the Type 23 frigate HMS Kent and HMS Tyne, one of the Royal Navy's offshore patrol vessels.



French visitors strengthen links

SIX cadets from the French Naval Academy have spent over a week at Britannia Royal Naval College undergoing leadership training.

The group from the *Ecole Navale* joined the latest entry of Royal Navy cadets for their week-long basic leadership development exercise.

Starting on Dartmoor, the cadets were taught how to live and operate in the field, before taking part in a ten kilometre navigation exercise across the moors carrying their full kit.

On returning to the college, they were each given the chance to practise their leadership skills during a series of tasks carried out in the grounds.

The tasks were based on real-life scenarios from setting up communications to evacuating casualties and protecting vital equipment dropped from a helicopter. Each cadet was given the chance to lead a challenge assessed by college staff.

Lieutenant Commander Cyril Chabrier, BRNC's French Navy Liaison Officer, said: "The exchange programmes such as the BLD exercise represents a fantastic opportunity for cadets from both sides of the Channel to interact, understand each other and bond together."

"This week enabled them to genuinely work as a team, as every French cadet was fully embedded in a BRNC team, overcoming the language barrier and strengthening the links between our training



establishments. This will undoubtedly become invaluable for both our navies, when they work together in combined operations.

"It has also been a great opportunity to socialise through the week-end with the French cadets being well integrated in the BRNC intake. No doubt the cadets from both BRNC and *Ecole Navale* will keep amazing memories of this week."



Rob makes waves to help veterans

AFTER spending 32 years in the Royal Navy, Rob Thompson decided to use his sailing hobby to help others through a Cornish sailing charity.

Rob is standing on the deck of a yacht wearing a warm wool jumper, safety life jacket and sturdy boots.

"It feels great," he says, squinting as he surveys the calm, winter waters of the River Fal on the south coast of Cornwall.

"I now feel validated as a legitimate sailor, yet aware that I'm at the start of a new ladder with much more to learn."

The story of how Rob, 54, came to hold a yachtmaster qualification to help support the recovery of injured servicemen and women, is somewhat unique.

It began in 2016, when the former Royal Navy helicopter observer, and amateur sailor, was helping to deliver a yacht for a friend. While moored at Falmouth Harbour, he chatted to the skipper of a nearby yacht who told him both his sons had benefited from a training programme at the sailing charity Turn to Starboard, and how the organisation was looking for volunteer sailing instructors.

Keen to find out more, Rob paid a visit to the charity's office at Falmouth Marina to discuss ways he could get involved.

Launched in 2014, Turn to Starboard has provided more than 2,000 sailing opportunities to serving and retired servicemen and women affected by military operations. Participants can choose to just enjoy the known therapeutic effects of the sea, or complete sailing courses to gain Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications and start new careers in the marine industry.

The charity offers five strands of activity – RYA courses, family sailing trips, tall ship sailing, competitive racing and zero to hero training programmes, where participants can train up to RYA Yachtmaster level, regarded as the 'gold standard' in sailing qualifications.

To be able to take responsibility of the charity's yacht and become a volunteer instructor, Rob needed to gain his own Royal Yachting Association Yachtmaster qualification and log at least 50 days and 2,500-nautical miles at sea.

Thankfully, after hearing about his keenness to help others, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity stepped forward and offered to sponsor Rob through the charity's

training programme.

The plan was for Rob to help teach veterans affected by physical and mental injuries to sail and assist those in need on their road to recovery.

Growing up in Wolverhampton – more than 70 miles from the sea – Rob had little chance to sail before joining the Merchant Navy aged just 16 years old. After five years at sea he transferred to join the Royal Navy where he stayed for the next 32 years before retiring in 2016.

As a keen sailor with several long-haul yachting trips under his belt, Rob took the decision to spend his retirement helping others and took part in his first sailing trip with Turn to Starboard, and says he felt honoured to be on board.

"On my first sailing trip I joined a crew with both physical and emotional injuries, something which I had never directly encountered before. After spending 32 years in the Royal Navy I was incredibly fortunate to have an injury-free career before taking retirement.

"The trip was a huge learning process for me to not only help deliver sail training as the skipper's mate, but I learned how to interact with each person on board and understand their individual needs. It was incredibly humbling, and I felt privileged to sail with people who had been in difficult situations and paid such a big price. I genuinely felt honoured to be on board."

The unique blend of people with similar backgrounds and experiences, Rob believes, creates a relaxed and cohesive atmosphere on board where skills learned in the military can be transferred to the boat.

"Whether they realised it or not, everybody had transferable skills to throw into the pot to help make the boat go forward and watching the change in individuals once they saw their achievement was great," he explains.

Over the following year, Rob regularly gave up his time to join crews on several trips and in June last year he was invited to take part in a section of a 3,000-mile sailing endeavour from Croatia to Cornwall, organised by the charity.

The challenging voyage was planned as a way for crew members to gain new skills and valuable miles towards their RYA Yachtmaster qualification.

Rob joined the crew at Porto in northwest Portugal, sailing more than 500 miles across the Atlantic to Cornwall.

"Crossing the Bay of Biscay was magical," said Rob. "We saw moon rises that were simply spectacular and sunsets that were glorious, we saw the Milky Way and 'shot' stars that shone more brilliantly than you'd ever see ashore.

"We listened to music on the midnight watch and saw plankton glowing in the waves and dolphins under the bow. On this run across the bay, among friends, it was tranquility all around, really cool and truly awesome."

After regular weekend sailing sessions on the Carrick Roads – a deep, meandering estuary of the River Fal, Rob was finally ready for his yachtmaster exam and on a blustery autumn day, climbed aboard the charity's Bavaria 32-foot yacht for a week of preparation.

"Surprisingly, the prep week was great fun and enjoyable," said Rob. "Although the weather was pretty rubbish each day, we did manage to practice man-overboard drills and night navigation in preparation for the exam at the end of the week.

"When the big day arrived, I was surprised again to find the exam was good fun too. After spending so much time learning everything about sailing, you want to show the examiner all the knowledge you have and how capable you are, and by the end I still wanted to sail to more places and demonstrate my new skills."

Rob, quite literally, sailed through the exam and was awarded the coveted RYA Yachtmaster qualification, proving his competence as a skipper.

"It felt great to have qualified and my reward is watching others step aboard and become capable crew members within a few days," he says.

"It feels good to provide an opportunity to help others get out on the water and spend time with like-minded individuals. Thanks to the support from Turn to Starboard and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, I can play a small part in helping injured veterans get out on the water and move from a dark place to a good place and maybe even help some find a new career."

To find out more, visit turntostarboard.co.uk.



Victory Walker forced to rest after accident

VICTORY Walker Commander Jane Allen set off from HMS Victory on October 21 2017, to walk anti-clockwise round the coast of mainland UK raising money for two naval charities, the WRNS BT and RNRMC. Her last update reported good progress along the Pembrokeshire coast path. Jane, pictured above, had barely covered the next 100 miles before disaster struck just beyond Pembroke.

Turning my back on St David's Head, I began my ramble along south Pembrokeshire's coastline, soon passing the harbour of Solva. Then, making my way round the vast St Bride's Bay, I knew I was in for a treat walking undulating cliffs, passing sandy coves and long beaches popular with surfers. The night before I headed off towards St Ann's Head lighthouse, we parked above Marloes Sands which I walked by early next morning.

Later, I smiled at sheep grazing on what was once the naval airfield known as HMS Goldcrest, and saw ponies grazing near the remains of HMS Harrier, a shore establishment at Kete. The WWII name 'Harrier' has been preserved by Milford Haven sea cadets who proudly display the name on their cap tallies.

Nearby on Herbrandston's village road sign, I noticed the words 'a doubly thankful village'. It's assessed there are fewer than 20 Doubly Thankful villages in the UK; these are villages where all residents who joined up survived both world wars.

Back on the cliffs, views and surroundings soon altered as I headed towards Milford Haven's deep, sheltered waterway. Described as the UK's largest energy port, Milford is one of those places that has reinvented itself. It was initially developed as a whaling station and naval dockyard, but neither venture prospered. Later, the Admiralty developed its own Royal Dockyard across the water in Pembroke Dock which left Milford to develop as Wales's major fishing port.

In the 1960s energy giants such as Esso and Texaco reinvigorated the town by building huge oil refineries along the shoreline. Later, when oil prices crashed, further diversification took place with some of the redundant refinery sites being 'recycled'. Esso's former refinery is now one of the biggest liquefied natural gas terminals in the world.

I had a fascinating 'energy' walk alongside the busy waterway, before crossing via the Cleddau Bridge into Pembroke Dock and onwards to Pembroke Castle, birthplace of Henry VII.

Setting off down the other side of the Haven's waterway my route took me through fields adjacent to Pembroke's vast Valero oil refinery.

Here, my boot struck a small rock hidden under the grass; in a split second I tripped and



was thrown downhill where I lay screaming with pain. I knew my right arm and shoulder were in serious trouble, and so was I. With no phone signal I realised it was up to me to get back through the fields and summon help from refinery staff, somewhere inside the perimeter fence. Mental grit and adrenaline saw me drag myself slowly back up the hill – it seemed to take forever. Eventually, I attracted someone's attention and refinery staff provided help in that first excruciatingly painful hour.

Later, I was taken to Haverfordwest hospital. After seven hazy and very painful hours and unable to take any more pain, I was admitted to theatre under general anaesthetic. Once there, my severely dislocated and chipped right shoulder was manipulated back into position. It was clear the Victory Walk was 'on hold'.

Having been told my arm must stay immobile for three weeks, we realised that living in the Victory Van wouldn't be practical. We've managed to rent a waterside apartment which ironically looks directly across the waterway towards Valero's refinery and surrounding fields – the very scene of my accident.

I've since had two further X-rays which have confirmed that my damaged right shoulder joint and its chipped bone were successfully married-up and have already started to mesh together. The bruising and swelling have significantly reduced, but healing of the soft tissues will take longer. I hope to start physio soon.

In less painful moments I've managed to get into town and decided to seek solace from someone who'd understand my temporary 'armless' predicament, so a drink in the Lord Nelson Hotel, pictured above, seemed appropriate.

The Victory Walk is raising money for two Naval charities, WRNS BT and RNRMC. To donate go to virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk17-18. To find out more go to victorywalk.uk ■ Just as *Navy News* was going to print Jane was told she could remove her sling and commence physio. It's assessed physio will be required for at least three weeks before she can restart the Victory Walk.



Picture: LPhoto Mark Johnson

Raid remembered

VETERANS groups, VIPs and serving personnel gathered at Falmouth's Prince of Wales Pier to remember more than 600 men who struck a major blow at the Germany Navy.

Seventy-seven years ago, the Cornish port was the point of departure for three destroyers and 16 motor launches bound for St Nazaire in German-occupied France to destroy port facilities.

The attack on St Nazaire – officially Operation Chariot and often called 'the greatest raid of all' by historians – attempted to make the docks unusable by the German Navy, especially major surface vessels such as the battleship Tirpitz.

More than 600 commandos and sailors took part in the attack at the end of March 1942. A quarter were killed, around 200 were wounded and taken prisoner and three in every four motor boats were lost. Just 242 men returned to Falmouth.

Their sacrifice is marked by a waterfront memorial and an annual service of thanksgiving and remembrance, attended this year by the Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall Edward Bolitho and the Mayors of Falmouth, Penryn and Helston, as well as HMS Seahawk's Volunteer Band, and personnel drawn from across the Naval Service headed by RN Regional Commander, Brigadier Jock Fraser RM and members of the public.

The raid, said Brig Fraser (pictured above laying a wreath), enjoyed a "special place" in commando history and it was appreciated in the serving and veteran communities that the flame of Operation Chariot was kept alive.

He continued: "The dedication of the St Nazaire Society and Falmouth Town Council has once again enabled us to reflect together on the courage and commando spirit displayed by the 611 men who undertook the raid and to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

"The service this year was particularly poignant as we prepare to also commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day amphibious landings this summer."

Destroyer HMS Campbeltown rammed the huge gates to the cavernous Normandie dock while commando raiding parties spilled out around the harbour determined to destroy infrastructure.

Long after the fighting subsided, with Campbeltown wedged in the dock gates, a series of delayed-action charges hidden aboard the ship exploded, wrecking the dry dock for the remainder of the war.

Five VCs were among nearly 90 decorations presented to participants and although the attack was deemed a success, it was probably not needed. For unknown to British planners, Hitler had already decided to pull his major surface ships back to the relatively safety of German and Norwegian waters rather than leave them at the mercy of RAF raids in occupied France.

Air day XT see

THE world's only airworthy Westland Wessex HU5 will make a welcome return to Yeovilton this summer, kicking off the air station's annual air day.

Fifty-two years after XT761 rolled off the production line, she's been restored to flying order by Historic Helicopters in Chard.

Westland produced nearly 400 Wessex between the late 1950s and 1970 for half a dozen armed forces around the globe – chiefly the Fleet Air Arm and RAF – with 100 HU5s built as the commando-carrying variant initially (a role later carried out by Sea King and now Merlin Mk4s) before being converted for search-and-rescue duties, hence XT761's distinctive red and blue livery.

Until Historic Helicopters fixed up the vintage helicopter and got it flying again in February, XT761 hadn't flown since the autumn of 1986.

You can follow the helicopter's exploits – and support efforts to keep it flying – via www.facebook.com/pg/NavyWessex/

And you can see her in action on July 13 as she opens more than five hours of displays from international aircraft at Yeovilton by buying your advance tickets here: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/airday.



Picture: Kevin Wills

Help mark Harrier milestone

DID you serve on or with the Harrier/Sea Harrier during the legendary jump jet's 40-year career?

If you did, the folk at Newark Air Museum want to hear from you.

They are holding a 'Harrier Day' on Sunday April 14 to mark the 50th anniversary of the iconic aircraft entering service (firstly with the RAF, a decade later with the Fleet Air Arm).

Fleet Air Arm pilots and maintainers were responsible for both the Sea Harrier in its two variants, and, in the final years of the jet's long career, the RAF GR7/9 versions until the aircraft was retired at the end of 2010.

Event organisers at the museum in Winthorpe, just east of Newark, aim to showcase visiting jump jet cockpits, Harrier-related displays and artefacts with Harrier

and Sea Harrier veterans on hand to talk visitors through what's on show.

In addition, aviation experts and authors, model makers and enthusiasts are expected to turn up.

Veterans interested in attending should contact admin@newarkairmuseum.org.

Entry to the public will cost £9 for adults, £7.50 for pensioners, £4.50 for children and £24 for a family ticket.



● Naval Normandy veterans honoured by France aboard HMS Belfast: (l-r) John Nicholls, Charles Kavanagh, Patrick Reardon and Denis Haley
Picture: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban

Men of Honour

FOUR Royal Navy veterans of D-Day received France's highest honour – 100 days before the 75th anniversary of the invasion.

Denis Haley, Charles Kavanagh, Patrick Reardon and John Nicholls were invited aboard HMS Belfast – also a veteran of the 1944 campaign – to receive the *Legion d'Honneur* from French Ambassador Jean-Pierre Jouyet in recognition for their efforts in liberating his land from the Nazi yoke three quarters of a century ago.

Over the past five years, the French Government has sought veterans who played a role, however small, in the liberation of their sacred soil, presenting more than 6,000 medals with the help of the MOD.

The four former sailors – all in their early 90s – gathered in the ward room of the cruiser, now a floating museum on the Thames next to Tower Bridge, to receive their decorations and recall a day indelibly etched in their memories.

Patrick Reardon served with Combined Ops as a forward observer, directing the bombardment of the German defences.

He was landed on June 6 on Omaha Beach, where US troops were mauled – as depicted in the brutal opening scenes of *Saving Private Ryan*.

Denis Haley was a signalman aboard HMS Southward Ho which towed sections of the Mulberry artificial harbour from Portsmouth to Arromanches, spending a month of Normandy generating smoke to help fend off air attacks.

"I've been back to Normandy a couple of times. It makes me think of the thousands of lads who never came back, young boys, and I'm very humble," he said.

Charles Kavanagh helped put tanks ashore on D-Day while crewing a tank and was later involved in ferrying supplies to American troops at Omaha.

And 93-year-old John Nicholls from Greenwich served aboard HMS Argonaut which bombarded German positions; he also drove landing craft.

The tumult of battle severely damaged his hearing – he's been 65 percent deaf ever since, but he remains haunted by the sight of men who lost so much more.

"I looked at some of those troops as they were going in and thought: I

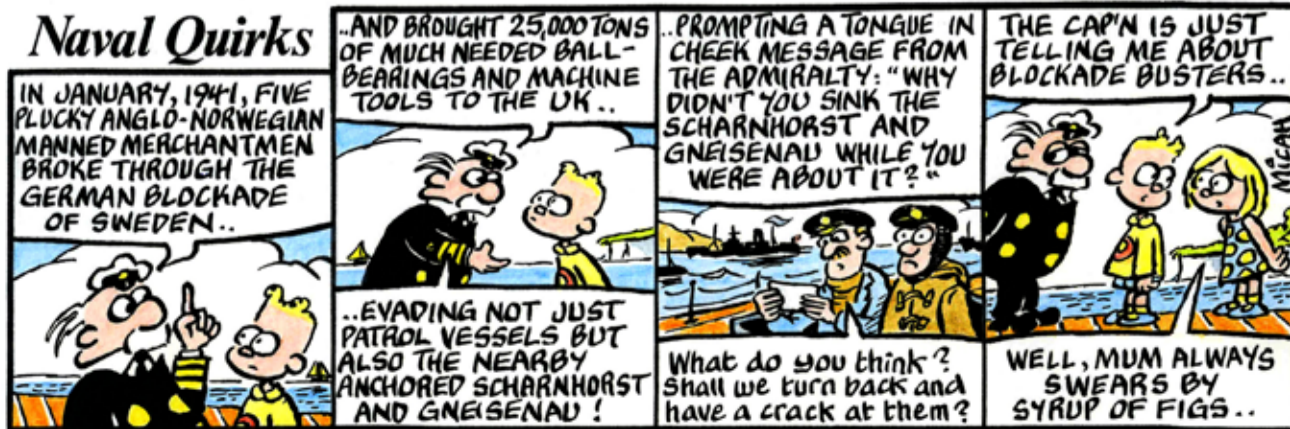
wonder how many of them are going to come back." he recalled.

"I came out of it with just half of my hearing gone, but those poor devils – they lost their lives. I think of them all the time. Not just on Remembrance Day. They're going through my mind all times of the year."

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson joined M Jouyet in thanking the four veterans for their sacrifice and commitment 75 years ago – sacrifice and commitment which will be honoured on both sides of the Channel in June at what is likely to be the last major commemoration of D-Day with veterans present.

"This June we must show our special generation, that we will never forget the debt we owe for the peace and freedom we now enjoy," the minister added.

As it was in 1944, Portsmouth will be the hub on this side of the Channel for a series of commemorative events involving both veterans and serving personnel, while the Royal British Legion has chartered a cruise ship to take D-Day survivors to the beaches one last time to remember their comrades and take centre stage at international events.



Simulation stimulation for Hermes veterans

MEMBERS of HMS Hermes Association received a guided tour of HMS Sultan's new ship control centre training system to see how today's marine engineers monitor the myriad systems which propel a 21st-Century carrier through the water, provide electricity and deal with sewage.

The Gosport establishment is home to the simulator which replicates the platform management systems on HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister Prince of Wales... and was named after Hermes, twice a famous carrier (1919-42 and again 1953-1984, famously leading the Falklands task force in 1982).

The simulator enables students and ships' teams to deal with potential problems thrown up by the real ships but from the safety of the classroom. The facility can mimic machinery breakdowns and system problems which a marine engineer would be likely to encounter onboard. From leading engineering technicians, through to senior engineering officers, training is conducted as if on watch, so all the different positions work together and their reactions to different situations can be analysed.

"We were hugely gratified to learn that the simulator was going to be called the HMS Hermes simulator. For us we all have a great interest in the Navy in general and Hermes in



particular," said Rear Admiral Dick Melly, President of the HMS Hermes Association.

"To see this is a step change for me. I was the marine engineering officer of a Type 42 destroyer, which was a lot of traditional gauges. To come in and see just these screens is a total eye-opener for me, it's quite astonishing."

Both carrier Hermes were powered by steam, so it was fitting

that the association members had the chance to ride in Sultan's famous steam lorry, Super Sentinel, before being treated to lunch in the ward room.

The HMS Hermes Association meets once a year and is open to anyone who has served on, or has an affinity with either carrier; see www.hmshermesassociation.com.

Picture: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper



● Sharon (left) is tied up on a barge in the shadow of HMS Ark Royal in Grand Harbour, circa 1978 and (right), enjoying a drink in the only place open out of season in Malta with fellow veterans Taff Clegg and David Gilchrist

Memories of Malta

ENJOYING the winter sun opposite her former workplace is 'Malta's last Wren' – aka LWtr Sharon Packman – invited back to the island to mark 40 years since British forces left.

Sharon was the final personal assistant to Rear Admiral Sir Nigel Cecil, present when LRO(T) David Gilchrist hauled down the White Ensign at HMS St Angelo on March 31 1979.

After several years of disrepair, the fort has undergone a €14 million revamp to turn it into a tourist attraction and venue for major cultural events, including a museum charting its centuries-long history.

For more than 70 years the fortress was home of the British Mediterranean Fleet and its successors. To add colour to the later years of the RN's presence on the island, the curator of Malta Heritage, Matthew Balzan, invited former matelots back to record their memories – and to give them a unique look around the former HQ.

Sharon was joined by Taff Clegg, the radio operator who sent the final signal from St Angelo, Patrick Raines, who served in Malta between 1967 and 1969, and Clive Bridgeman who was Lord Mountbatten's second coxswain in Malta from 1952 until 1955.

The four found much had changed since

their time on the island, said Sharon. "Our old haunts had not disappeared – they were still there, but were closed because it was 'out of season'. One bar owner told us he did not open, 'because it was raining!' It just meant we had to walk further before 'swinging the lamp' could proceed – and did it swing!"

There is more to Malta than just a good run ashore – the former sailors thoroughly recommend the guided tour of Fort St Angelo, not least as it took them through tunnels and to parts of the ancient fortification they never knew existed. Above all, it brought memories flooding back.

"Malta was my first foreign draft and even though the run-down period was one of mixed emotions, it gave me so many opportunities not readily available at that time – working on the Royal Yacht and HMS London, with the Admiral, wearing trousers as part of my uniform!" Sharon said.

"I have a photo of me on a barge alongside HMS Ark Royal tied up with ropes, but no explanation springs to mind!"

I was extremely honoured to represent the Wrens and shared a memorable visit with naval companions – such amazing characters. I have let Malta Heritage know about my availability for the 50th anniversary."



Medal surprise for Tommy

MORE than 60 years after his young son lost them, sailor Tommy Watson was finally reunited with the medals he earned for his service in World War 2.

Now 94, the former able seaman from Hexham saw service in the Atlantic and Far East theatres of war between 1943 and 1945 – service which was recognised at the war's end with the Atlantic, Burma and Pacific Stars, plus the 1939-45 War Medal.

Tommy joined the RN in 1943 as an 18-year-old, serving in HM Ships Quebec and Nubian, notably on convoy duties.

Efforts by the family to replace the missing decorations – Tommy regularly gave them to his son to play with... until one day they vanished – down the years drew a blank.

Thanks to the intervention of Martin Foster, who co-ordinates activities for residents at Red Brick House care home in Prudhoe, where Tommy now lives, the medals were not only replaced... but presented in style to the nonagenarian.

Sailors from Gateshead Royal Naval Reserve unit joined veterans groups in forming a guard of honour for Tommy as he received the replicas from Calliope's Commanding Officer Cdr Graeme Deighton, watched by his relatives, fellow care home residents, the mayors of Prudhoe and Gateshead and local councillors. And the local TV news cameras.

All of which left the veteran a little stunned, but his family said he was delighted by the turnout and especially the reservists who gave a little of their free time to support the veteran.



The Royal Maritime Club
(Formerly The Royal Sailors' Home Club)



The 155th Annual General Meeting
of the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth,
will be held in the
Trafalgar Ballroom of the club on
Tuesday 21st May 2019 at 1030.

Commanding Officers are requested to encourage maximum
attendance from their ships and establishments.
ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND



Caterham take cup by a mere point

SIX Royal Marines Cadet detachments went into battle at the Royal Marines Commando Training Centre in Lymington, Devon, for the Gibraltar Cup.

The weekend saw 48 cadets compete in a tough obstacle course, as well as six leadership tasks which tested their navigation, teamwork and communication skills.

This year it came down to the wire, with the successful detachment – Caterham – winning by one point.

Chelmsford won the best team leader trophy, while Sgt Liam Harrower, from Caterham, won the McCarroll Trophy for being the best Royal Marines Cadets' Cadet Force Adult Volunteer for 2018.

The Gibraltar Cup is presented by the Commandant General Royal Marines and is named after the Battle Honour of the Royal Marines.

It is awarded annually to the Royal Marines Cadet Detachment (RMCD) which is considered to have attained the highest standard of all round merit in the previous year.

Full results: 1st Caterham (331 points); 2nd Chelmsford (330 points); 3rd Queensferry (286 points); 4th Preston (282 points); 5th Sheffield (267 points); 6th Redditch and Bromsgrove (260 points).



● **Bill Waters and Andrew Scarfe from Castleford Freemasons handing over a cheque for £2,000 to the Officer in Charge of Castleford Sea Cadets, Petty Officer (SCC) Keith Jeffery**

Freemasons dig deep to help Castleford scheme

CASTLEFORD Sea Cadets are in the process of setting up a Marine Detachment which the unit hopes to open later this year.

The TS Unicorn unit quickly realised that it would need financial support above what they could raise through their normal channels, as much of the equipment required would not be provided by the Sea Cadet stores directly.

The Castleford Freemasons had previously supported TS Unicorn by paying for the band at the WW1 Commemoration Parade organised by Castleford Sea Cadets.

Bill Waters of the local lodge said he would agree to approach the Provincial Grand Master for a grant from his charitable fund to help with set up costs.

Bill helped with the wording of the application and also used his experience from the army to develop a list of training equipment and associated costings.

The application was submitted to the Right Worshipful Brother, David S Pratt, Provincial Grand Master for the West Riding of Yorkshire for consideration and he agreed to award TS Unicorn £2000 towards the set up costs of the new detachment.

All at Castleford Sea Cadets would like to thank the Freemasons for their continued support and for all they do to help good causes in the local community.

Cadets now bear name of new RFA tanker

GREENOCK Sea Cadets Unit has changed from RFA Gold Rover to TS Tidesurge.

The third of four huge new tankers to support the Royal Navy was formally welcomed into the naval family.

RFA Tidesurge was dedicated in her affiliated Scottish town of Greenock – where Sea Cadets renamed their unit in her honour to mark the bond between the 39,000-tonne vessel and townsfolk.

The ship's sponsor Lady Joanna Woodcock presented the cadets with their new cap tallies ahead of the service.

The cadets helped with hosting duties and received a tour of the new tanker.

Greenock had enjoyed an affiliation with now-retired tanker RFA Gold Rover for more than 40 years until she bowed out of service in 2017.



Future leaders rise to the top



HMS Collingwood played host to nearly 80 cadets from two Combined Cadet Forces who took advantage of some of the excellent facilities at the base.

The cadets, from St John's School in Leatherhead and Gravesend Grammar School travelled to the Royal Naval Leadership Academy at HMS Collingwood where instructors tested their mettle on the academy's low ropes course.

The course is skillfully designed to teach groups positive communication and the ability to both fit into and lead a successful team.

The cadets split into groups to tackle different obstacles on the course, including the 'spider's web' where they must traverse a series of ropes without touching them, relying on team members to support them as they go.

Another challenge involves swinging across a chasm on a rope which, again, cannot be achieved without working closely as a team.

This was Cadet Izzy Kuhle's first visit to Collingwood and she described her feelings at first seeing the low ropes course.

She said: "We got quite scared when we first saw it, but then we thought 'we're in the Navy now!'"

"We're definitely able to transfer the skills we've learnt here to the classroom when we get back and here you learn more about what the Navy does and its core values."

In contrast, this was Cadet Luke Horner-Long's second visit to Collingwood and he'd experienced the low ropes challenge before.

He said: "The low ropes are about team-building and having fun with your friends. You can work out who's best at each task and who's best to take command of the group."

Instructors are on hand to mentor and supervise the cadets, but they are encouraged to find their way round the Course themselves, teaching and supporting each other and applying the principles of leadership they've been taught.

Pictures: Keith Woodland



Meeting of the superheroes



ONE little boy got to fulfil his dream of meeting a 'superhero' during an event at HMS Sultan to promote Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to future generations.

Six-year-old Bailey Hall got to meet Gravity Industries Founder and chief test pilot Richard Browning as he gave an interactive presentation, followed by a practical flight demonstration of his jet suit to local children and the establishment's air and marine engineering apprentices.

Bailey, who underwent surgery at just six months old to repair a hole in his heart, first became aware of Richard back in January, after seeing footage of him tackling the assault course at the Royal Marines Commando Training Centre in Lympstone with the help of his 1000bhp jet suit.

After seeing the display, Bailey's father Petty Officer Engineering Technician Bruce Hall, from HMNB Devonport, wrote to Richard to share what an impact it had made, and he was invited along with his family to

Sultan to meet him.

Bruce said: "Bailey feels he has a lot in common with the character *Iron Man* due to having a similar scar from his heart operation.

"When he saw the jet pack on the news he got excited, knocked over his cereal and ran to get his *Iron Man* mask and sat watching the news again and again until it was time to go to school.

For Bailey to meet his hero and see him flying is a dream come true."

During the display at HMS Sultan Richard flew around the parade ground and over objects including Lynx and Sea King helicopters.

The event was organised by the Defence School of Marine Engineering's Commander Training, Commander Antony Quinn as part of the establishment's STEM engagement programme with local schools.

He said: "The Gravity Jet Suit inspires everyone who sees it.

"I'm proud that HMS Sultan can work with Gravity to provide technical inspiration to local schoolchildren in such a memorable and noisy way."

Pictures: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper



Are you ready for a real challenge?

ARE you looking for a new challenge?

Then maybe the Royal Navy Volunteer Cadet Corps is the place for you.

The VCC is a uniformed and disciplined cadet organisation sponsored and part-funded by the Ministry of Defence.

The aim is to help boys and girls develop into responsible members of society, using the traditions and practices of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines to achieve this.

Chief Petty Officer Adam Hearn is the Officer Commanding the HMS Collingwood unit.

He said: "Our cadets can choose to be either a Royal Naval Cadet or a Royal Marines Cadet depending on which unit they wish to join.

"We are not part of the Sea Cadet Corps although we share common aims.

"The VCC is headquartered in Portsmouth and has units at HMS Excellent, HMS Collingwood, HMS Sultan, RM Stonehouse, Commando Training Centre, Lympstone and RM Condor, Arbroath."

While there are some differences across the units, generally each one will induct new recruits twice a year.

They will undergo basic training for around four to five months before 'Passing Out' in front of family and friends at a ceremonial parade.

The Inspecting Officer is usually a senior Royal Navy or Royal Marines officer, and cadets are presented with their caps to signify their achievement.

Adam went on to say: "After their Pass Out the new recruits join general duties training or, if their unit has a band, they can join musical training.

"Our training syllabus includes a wide range of fun and challenging activities including marksmanship, campcraft, skill at arms, first aid and navigation.

"We also introduce other activities such as weekend exercises, adventure training,

display teams, inter-unit competitions, ceremonial parades and external visits.

"Cadets progress through the VCC by moving from one training phase to another and, should they pass some basic assessments at the end of each training year, they can attend a Command Course to win promotion."

All of the cadets have the opportunity to rise through the ranks, with the rank of Warrant Officer being achievable for any cadet who shows the right aptitude and effort.

The activities are not just geared towards personal development but are also fun, for example target shooting and swimming sessions, and of course cadets also make lifelong friends.

The VCC is run by adult volunteers, some of whom are serving or former serving personnel. Our volunteers receive no pay whatsoever, as the rewards of what they do are more than any salary.

On the range of activities available, Adam said: "We have recently completed 'Exercise First Waves' where our latest new recruits are put to the test and practice all their newly learnt field craft skills in a testing environment.

"Culmination of the weekend sees them hand in their new recruit epaulettes and be awarded with 'Royal Naval Cadet' signifying the successful completion of their basic training."

Looking ahead to the summer, over 90 RNVCC cadets are off to the Isle of Wight for a week-long camp where a mixture of adventurous training and military exercises will take place, giving cadets a challenge, but also fun and long lasting memories.

The VCC accepts boys and girls from 9 to 16 who can stay in the VCC until aged 18.

Having turned 18 some cadets are invited to remain as adult volunteers. For more information visit volunteercadetcops.org/royalnavalcadets/

Young visitors scout around at BRNC to achieve International Activity Badge



BEAVERS and Cubs from the 1st Dartmouth Scout Group visited Britannia Royal Naval College as they work towards their International Activity Badge.

The group of 17 Beavers and 17 Cubs, plus their leaders, met up with some of the international students undergoing training at the college.

As well as exploring the traditions and culture of the cadets' countries, they also learnt how to write their names in Arabic, tried out different kinds of food, learned a traditional song and dance, and were taught how to say hello and goodbye in a foreign language.

Laura Howell, who is known as Foxglove to the Beavers and Cubs, said: "During the evening at BRNC we covered all the requirements for the badge, bar those about scouting around the world.

"It was a fantastic experience for all of us and we are extremely grateful to the college for putting the

evening on for us."

There are currently nearly 50 international cadets from 15 countries at the college. The students are undergoing a range of training, which includes English language training, degree courses and participating in the initial naval training course for officers alongside cadets destined for a career in the Royal Navy.

Lieutenant Commander Chris Evans, BRNC's Naval Tutor, said: "The cadets were delighted to take the opportunity to talk about their home country; to share their knowledge and experiences, to show how scouting is the same for them at home and to compare local food and delicacies.

"They relished the opportunity to meet 1st Dartmouth Scout group and to engage with the children.

"The visit was educational for both groups."



Doctors dip in with Caribbean taster

NAVY doctors of tomorrow joined RFA Mounts Bay in the Caribbean for an inkling of the job they'll perform when qualified.

Surgeon Sub-Lieutenants Isabel Guy and Jonathan Jackson are four years into their medicine studies at Birmingham and Sheffield universities.

When they complete their courses – and their training as Royal Navy officers – running a sick bay on a destroyer, frigate or auxiliary such as Mounts Bay is likely to be one of their drafts as general duty medical officers.

So a two-week 'taster' was provided aboard the support ship – currently on drug-busting/disaster relief duties – under the tutelage of Mounts Bay's medical officer, Surg Lt Rory Goodenough.

Assisted by RFA medical technicians, on top of general GP care, it's the task of the medical officer to provide 'Role 1' and potentially 'Role 2' care: the first demands delivering immediate first-aid on the battlefield, the second life-saving surgery so a patient can be transferred to a hospital ship or medical facility ashore.

The 'doctor's surgery' opens at 7.45 for any overnight medical cases, followed by a spot of training, a check on medical and humanitarian supplies, some first-aid instruction for the ship's company and support to many of the daily activities and drills: man overboard, engine room fires, helicopter crashes.

For Isabel and Jonathan, as well as the novelty of life at sea among the biggest eye openers were the limitations faced by RN medics at sea: limited resources, limited space and limited number of personnel to draw on for assistance...

...plus the opportunities offered by a life at sea that you wouldn't get in your local general hospital or GPs' surgery: a few days in Curacao or Miami; scuba diving; windsurfing; snorkelling with turtles; cheering on the Miami Heat basketball stars.

"All will remain fantastic memories," said Isabel.

"I've also been lucky enough to see and do some incredible things: from wandering the colourful streets of Curacao and snorkelling with turtles to stargazing in the middle of the Caribbean Sea; it's been utterly surreal and I'm hugely grateful."

And professionally?

"This acquaint has been fantastic," she adds. "It's provided me with an invaluable insight into life as a RN Medical Officer, helping me to feel significantly



more prepared for my time as a deployed.

"I am thoroughly excited to see what my future career holds and cannot wait to get stuck in to more brilliant opportunities offered by the Royal Navy."

Her colleague Jonathan said the fortnight with Mounts Bay had been an "enjoyable and enriching experience".

Surg Lt Rory Goodenough was delighted with the progress the students made while aboard. "The next time they join a ship will probably be as fully-fledged medical officers, so it has been an invaluable chance to teach them the daily routines of a deployed ship."

"In two short weeks Surgeon Sub-Lieutenants Guy and Jackson went from complete greenbacks who didn't know their stem from their stern to old hands who have even started to talk in Jackspeak!"

Scrantastic voyages

WANT the best scran in the Fleet?

Then get a draft to HMS St Albans whose culinary team were named the best of 19 in the frigate/destroyer fraternity over the past 12 months.

With a budget of £3.50 per person for three meals a day and 180 'critics' (aka ship's company) to keep happy, the chefs, stewards and caterers pulled out all the stops – not just for special occasions, but day-in, day-out to maintain both energy and morale.

If you think this has been achieved on a 'jolly boat', think again. The frigate was either at sea or on immediate notice to sail on more than 200 days in the past year, either as Fleet Ready Escort or Duty TAPS – missions which took her into the Arctic Circle, as far south as Gib, as far east as Estonia and as far west as the Western Approaches and which meant long periods in defence watches.

Take February 28 for example: Beef fillet with beef cheek, Jerusalem artichoke crisps, celeriac purée, red cabbage ketchup, pine nuts, pickled red onion ring and gherkins. (Vegetarian and other options were available...) The occasion? A fuelling stop in Campbeltown.

These are the "creative, nutritionally-balanced and original menus" and "real culinary flair" which impressed the RN's top caterers.

And on top of the busy daily routine, they've been expected



• **Typical Thursday fare... including beef fillet with beef cheek, Jerusalem artichoke crisps, celeriac purée, red cabbage ketchup, pine nuts, pickled red onion ring and gherkins**

to provide nibbles and meals for VIPs on high-profile occasions and, due to an ever-changing ship's programme, there was little chance to plan ahead.

Despite the Saint's hectic schedule, the catering department managed to field a strong team for the Forces' annual cookery contest, Exercise Joint Caterer; they came away with three silver medals, three bronzes and a couple of merits.

All of which, says WO1 Paul Jones of Portsmouth Flotilla's Waterfront Logistics Support Group, makes the frigate worthy

winner of the annual Catering Services Prize.

"The galley team on St Albans produced some of the best food, if not the best food, within the Royal Navy, something widely acknowledged perhaps most importantly by their own ship's company," he added.

"Most impressive, however, is that they have demonstrated flair and passion in the preparation of every meal, day-in, day-out, whether turning out high-end food for VIPs, dinner for 200 people or lunch for a 13-man duty watch."

Sous, sous studio...

TEN RN chefs and environmental health officers were treated to a lesson in fine – and safe – dining in one of the increasingly popular methods of cooking. Colin Bussey, the former executive chef at the world-renowned Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland, introduced culinary experts from Faslane and Portsmouth to the art of cooking *sous-vide*.

Developed in French kitchens in the 70s, *sous-vide* (literally "under a vacuum") involves placing food in a plastic pouch or a glass jar and cooking it in a water bath for longer-than-normal cooking times.

The temperature is much lower than usually used for cooking, meaning it must be closely regulated to ensure food safety is not compromised.

Get it right, and you're serving food which is perfectly cooked inside and out yet is still succulent...

Get it wrong, and your diners could suffer rare, but potentially-fatal botulism poisoning...

Though not exactly commonplace across the RN, *sous-vide* is practised, notably by the Retinue Support Pool at Admiralty House supporting dinner parties on HMS Victory, garden and cocktail parties or fine dining functions; the meals often showcase different cooking styles including torching, curing and smoking its menus.

Clifton Food Range, which manufacturers *sous vide* water baths for professional chefs, invited RN chefs to its Weston-Super-Mare HQ to its demonstration kitchen.

The day involved lectures on food safety, cooking demonstrations and a factory tour, as well as animated discussion on how rare is too rare. Some of the dishes trialled included salmon *mi-cuit*, turmeric chicken and *crème anglaise*.

"The day provided a fascinating insight into



sous-vide cooking and will ensure Royal Navy chefs get off to a good start when they introduce *sous-vide* dishes to their menus," said Lieutenant Charlotte Milward, Environmental Health Officer at Faslane (pictured trying her hand at *sous-vide*, above).

New mental health project

ROYAL Marines now have a simpler way of accessing mental health treatment thanks to a new initiative masterminded by a serving commando.

Project Regain is aimed at promoting early detection and help for Royal Marines who could suffer from mental health issues. Evidence collected by the project suggested that

commandos find it hard to ask for support when symptoms of illnesses like post-traumatic stress disorder and depression first present themselves.

Royal Marines have one of the most physically and psychologically demanding jobs on the planet and findings show lack of knowledge about mental health issues makes it more

difficult to recognise a problem developing.

Now Regain has been set up to change this for the better by allowing Royal Marines and related ranks to refer themselves directly to specialists without the need to first go through their unit's medical officer.

For more information ask your unit medical officer.

ASK YOURSELF:

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

If the answer to any is yes then...

APPLY TO BECOME A CAREERS ADVISER.

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

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

Salary starts from £30k with promotion opportunities to rise to £43k.

FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PSTN- 01929 403172

Mil- 94374 3172

E-mail- Jane.anneda513@mod.gov.uk



Where to Look

DfNS
01 Personnel
2019DIN01-020 - Visits to South Africa
2019DIN01-021 - Universal Infant Free School Meals
2019DIN01-022 - Service Police Certificates
2019DIN01-023 - The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (AELTC) Championships - Wimbledon 2019
2019DIN01-027 - Voter Registration for May 2019 local elections
2019DIN01-033 - Extension of Eligibility to Occupy Surplus Service Families Accommodation by Service Leavers from 6 Months to a Maximum Period of 12 Months (UK Only)

03 Defence Policy & Operations
2019DIN03-003 - The Use of Reserves on UK Resilience Operations

04 Defence Equipment & Support to the Defence Estate
2019DIN04-021 - Use of MoD Funded Dinghies and Supporting Powerboats
2019DIN04-025 - Level 2 Mandatory Equipment Inspection (MEI) Frequency for L81A2 Cadet Target Rifle

05 Defence Management, Organisation & Business Practice
2019DIN05-007 - Defence Instructions and Notices (DfNS) – A guide for readers and writer

06 Safety, Health, Environment & Fire
2019DIN06-001 - Guidance on Bringing a Common Law Claim for Compensation Against the Ministry of Defence (MOD)

07 Training & Education
2019DIN07-022 - Exercise CAMBRIAN PATROL 2019 (CP19), 11-20 Oct 19
2019DIN07-025 - Defence Diving School Course content and joining instructions.
2019DIN07-038 - Global (RN) Individual Pre-Deployment Training OS

08 Finance, Accounting & Budgeting
2019DIN08-003 - Claims for Loss of, or Damage to, Personal Property (Regulation Claims)

09 Honours & Awards
2019DIN09-002 - The Professional Engineering Institution Churchill Medal Award 2018/2019

10 Sports & Social Events
2019DIN10-012 - Inter-Services Martial Arts Championships 2019

RNTMs
01 Personnel
RNTM 01-013/19 - Application process for female officers and ratings to join the Royal Marines
RNTM 01-014/19 - 61st International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes
RNTM 01-019/19 - BRd 3(1) Naval Personnel Management – Publication of February 2019 Edition

02 Security & Intelligence
RNTM 02-002/19 - Fleet N2 and Maritime Intelligence Fusion Centre (MIFC) – update

03 Defence Policy & Operations
RNTM 03-004/19 - Engineering (General Service) ratings promotion tables updated 25 Feb

05 Management, organisation and business practice
RNTM 05-005/19 - Royal Navy Ratings and Royal Marines Other Ranks – Branch Transfers Applications and Processing Instructions for the Trained Strength
RNTM 05-006/19 - Royal Naval Aircraft Control Symposium 2019

06 Safety, Health, Environment & Fire
RNTM 06-003/19 - Instructions for Surface Ships to demand Shark GOTCHA system - updated 08 Mar

07 Training & Education
RNTM 07-018/19 - Fleet Operational Shooting Competition (East) 2019 (FOSC(E)19)
RNTM 07-019/19 - Fleet Operational Shooting Competition (West) 2019 (FOSC(W)19)
RNTM 07-022/19 - Marine Engineering (General Service) conference – 21 Mar 19 (update)
RNTM 07-024/19 - WESM (TWS, CIS and SWS) Forum – 28 Aug 19, HMNB Clyde

09 Honours, awards, Royal & ceremonial events
RNTM 09-004/19 - Royal Navy CASD50 Service of Thanksgiving
RNTM 09-005/19 - The Rear Admiral Bateson award for Weapon Engineering Excellence 2019
RNTM 09-006/19 - Reward and recognition within the Royal Navy Engineering Branch
RNTM 09-007/19 - Royal Navy Photographic Competition 2019
RNTM 09-008/19 - Annual Armourers and Brasiers Junior Weapon Engineering Officer prize
RNTM 09-009/19 - The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) Armed Forces Apprentice and Technician of the Year Awards 2019
RNTM 09-010/19 - The Worshipful Company of Officers – Royal Navy Operational Engineering Award (Officers) 2019

10 Sports & Social
RNTM 10-014/19 - Weapon Engineers dinner – 19 Sep 19
RNTM 10-015/19 - Submarine Service Birthday Dinner – Gambit Dinner Devonport - 20 Mar 19
RNTM 10-016/19 - Royal Navy CASD50 Ceremonial Divisions in HMNB Clyde
RNTM 10-017/19 - Inter-services lacrosse competition 2019

RN apprentices make the grade

FROM making fries to ensuring a hi-tech helicopter flies, avionics expert Katherine Jennings has been singled out as the Navy's ultimate apprentice.

The leading hand was one of 17 men and women – all in the early stages of their careers – who are making the most of the apprenticeships offered to them.

They were invited to the hallowed wooden decks of HMS Victory in Portsmouth to receive their awards from Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Tony Radakin during the 12th annual National Apprenticeship Week.

Leading Air Engineering Technician Katherine was named the 'apprenticeship champion' of the past 12 months.

She's an avionics specialist working on the Merlin Mk2s of 824 Naval Air Squadron, which trains air and fellow ground crew in operating and maintaining the world's most advanced submarine-hunting helicopter.

The apprenticeship award goes in an increasingly bulging trophy cabinet: Katherine was named best student in her class at HMS Sultan, the home of naval engineering, and picked up a gold award at last autumn's World Skills competition at Birmingham's NEC.

She used to fix equipment in McDonald's until she saw the RN's recruiting advert suggesting if you can fix a bike, you can fix a helicopter... and promptly signed up.

The leading hand is now four years into her career as a Fleet Air Arm engineer... and doesn't for one minute regret swapping burgers for rotors.

"I really do enjoy my job – it is the best job that I have had. There are different experiences each and every day. The people who I work with also help to make the job enjoyable.

"I feel very proud and happy about receiving this award. I was just doing my job and it is nice to be recognised for it."

She's not the only engineer from Culdrose to leave Nelson's flagship with a trophy, for Survival Equipment Technician Jacob Travers was named the aviation branch's No.1 apprentice.

Jacob joined the Navy as a warfare specialist before deciding to switch careers and become a Survival Equipment Technician, responsible for maintaining the kit which keeps aircrew and passengers safe in the air or in water/on the ground in the event of an emergency landing.

After six months at HMS Sultan, he completed his aeronautical engineering apprenticeship with 736 Naval Air Squadron – Hawk fast-jet trainers – responsible for items such as helmets

"It is a great achievement winning out of the whole Fleet Air Arm – I know it is a strong category with strong contenders," said 29-year-old Jacob from Plymouth.

"Even though we are such a small branch of 170 personnel, I believe – and know – that as Survival Equipment Technicians we are a vital



It's your 2-6 – so contact Sophie Dennis (sophie.dennis100@mod.gov.uk/93832 5500) to include items on these pages.



Other winners at the awards were:

RM Apprentice of the Year: Mne Christopher Silcock
Logistics Branch Apprentice of the Year: Logs(SC) Hayley Emanuel.
Engineering Branch Apprentice of the Year: LET(WE) Jake Lundon
Warfare Branch Apprentice of the Year: LS(W/S) Zoe Nicholson
Advanced Apprenticeship Award: LET(WE) Gavin Maidment
Higher Apprenticeship Award: Sub Lt Gavin Lewis
RFA Apprentice of the Year: Stwd Lucy Davis
Apprenticeship Personal Achievement: ET(WESM) Macauley Wadsworth
Personal Achievement Award: Mne Oliver Wardman

component to the capability of the Fleet Air Arm and pack a big punch.

"And working with great, like-minded colleagues while gaining qualifications makes work life easy."

● (Above) LAET Katherine Jennings and (left) SET Jacob Travers doing the jobs they love

Pictures: PO(Phot) Dave Gallagher



Women's champion Rachel takes the hot seat

HAVE you got time to inspire, help and empower fellow women in the RN?

If so the Naval Servicewomen's Network wants to hear from you as it launches a mentoring scheme to spread expertise and experience to serving women of all ages and ranks.

It's an initiative unveiled by the network to mark International Women's Day. It's using the key diary date to raise awareness of its existence and role, while its new chair is touring pretty much the entire RN estate to talk to female personnel about wide-ranging issues such as inclusion, behaviour and leadership.

The network was formed six years ago and embraces servicewomen in all arms of the Service – RN, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary – in every branch/trade and at every rank "to ensure all Naval Servicewomen's voices are heard".

Sailors such as Rachael Lloyd who represents able seamen

on the network's committee: "I joined the NSN to represent

"ABs make up the largest proportion of Naval Servicewomen and I joined the network to represent them and to provide a voice for the most junior members of the Service.

"I want to dispel myths that leadership and empowerment is just for officers and provide an active role in the recruitment of women, which is a long-standing challenge in the Service."

LWtr Natasha Millington chairs the London Branch and acts as the voice of leading hands and says joining the network has been nothing but positive.

"It has made me more aware of the number of Servicewomen in London alone – and with a greater inclusion in the wider Royal Navy, I feel a sense of belonging," she added.

"I've gained confidence in the knowledge that there's 24/7 support and always someone on hand in the Network if I need it."



Which is music to the ears of Commander Rachel Smallwood who took over from the network's inaugural chair, Commodore Ellie Ablett, at the end of 2018.

"I am passionate about enabling people to achieve their potential, whether as individuals or when working in teams," said Rachel's, who is the MOD's senior staff officer for training and education policy.

"Throughout my tenure as chair, I hope to share this passion, so that the network is an enabler to all Naval Servicewomen to achieve their potential, achieving what they didn't think would be possible."

She's already visited Faslane, Sultan, Collingwood (pictured), Excellent, Culdrose, Yeovilton and Abbey Wood to discuss the network's work, encourage new

members/representatives and gauge what Naval Servicewomen hope the group will deliver for them.

She'll be at Raleigh on April 9, Devonport the next day (am) and in the afternoon BRNC.

As for the mentoring scheme, prospective mentors should log into Defence Gateway and register their interest via the Naval Servicewomen's Mentoring Network site, or contact Cdr Kara.Chadwick753@mod.gov.uk.

Once sufficient mentors have been signed up, the network will begin advertising for women who wish to benefit from the new service to come forward.

And for more info about the network, including where to find your local branch, visit its new-look website at <https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/defnet/Navy/Pages/Naval-Servicewomens-Network.aspx>.

Promotions

THE following personnel are to be promoted to Lieutenant Commander from October 1, 2019.

Warfare, surface and submarine:
Lt H D Adams; A/Lt Cdr B A Anderson; Lt L J R Andrews; Lt C J Barber; Lt F Bond; Lt J T Callender; Lt T S Cheshire; Lt B T Crosswood; A/Lt Cdr E Dalton; Lt C D Daly; Lt J I Dent; Lt K S Diaper; A/Lt Cdr B E Fawcett; Lt G Ferguson-Hunt; A/Lt Cdr C Ferguson; Lt S W R Fields; Lt T W Forster; Lt C J Fox; Lt L C Funnell; Lt H M P Gaskell-Taylor; A/Lt Cdr T D Gildetherp; Lt A K Harris; A/Lt Cdr R H I Hay; Lt J A Herbert; Lt M P Johnson; Lt C E Johnstone-Burt; Lt R P Kantharia; Lt R Kyme; A/Lt Cdr D J Langley; Lt J Lay; Lt C Lea; Lt T S Lindsey; Lt B J Linn; Lt K M Lockley; A/Lt Cdr T Loxton; Lt J M Lupini; Lt A E Mason; A/Lt Cdr M Mayger; Lt H R Morgan; Lt R V Noble; Lt S t J Nolan; Lt D O'Connell; A/Lt Cdr T Orton; Lt D Owen-Hughes; Lt C Poulson; A/Lt Cdr C W Pritchard; Lt E M Raymont; Lt B K Read; Lt A D Revell; Lt G I Richards; Lt T R J Roberts; A/Lt Cdr R C Sawyer; Lt P J Seabrook; A/Lt Cdr M R T Smith; A/Lt Cdr P G Stephens; Lt T R Thickness; A/Lt Cdr M E Thompson; Lt D G Thomson; Lt D G Tolcher; A/Lt Cdr S D Velickovic; Lt P White; Lt S J Williford.

Air: Lt J F Adams; A/Lt Cdr J K Baker; Lt A Campbell; Lt P A Chatfield; Lt S H Collins; Lt A P Craig; A/Lt Cdr R P Crewdson; A/Lt Cdr A C Dean; A/Lt Cdr H M Edwards; Lt O Everett; Lt D P Fleming; Lt C Flynn; Lt M D Green; Lt A C Grey; Lt M L Halford; Lt S Haynes; Lt T P Helliwell; Lt M E Hoar; Lt L J Holborn; Lt C Luke; Lt K M McMorrow; A/Maj R G Moore RM; Capt S D Murray RM; Lt W Murray; Lt A M Prett; Lt C Rebbeck; A/Lt Cdr T M Rixon; Lt S K Ross; A/Lt Cdr M Santrian; Lt S Shaw; A/Lt Cdr B J Smith; A/Lt Cdr C Stellan; Lt T Strickland; A/Lt Cdr D L Williams; Lt P Wray.

Engineering: Lt R Beaumont; Lt T E Blackburn; Lt R E Clegg; Lt M J Davis; Lt L R Elston; Lt H Forster; Lt J A T Goddard; Lt S Greenfield; A/Lt Cdr M B Harris; Lt C D Harwood; Lt R Mackay; Lt H C Martin; Lt J M Rowland; Lt M S Turrey; Lt A J Vance; A/Lt Cdr L Bodkin; Lt A Bolland; Lt B Challans; Lt A C Chenery; Lt E L Gault; A/Lt Cdr D Glover; Lt M J Ivory; Lt J J E Lee; Lt A J Long; Lt J Lovell; Lt R P Manson; A/Lt Cdr S S J Turrell; Lt L J Arnold; Lt M D Black; A/Lt Cdr A J Clark; Lt S Finnigan; A/Lt Cdr M Hunter; Lt M S Jacques; Lt S A Mackay; Lt A R Marsh; Lt C Mehta; Lt S J Moss; Lt E A Murray; Lt J P Smith; Lt R Thomas; Lt P Whiteley; A/Lt Cdr J P Barlow; Lt B H Cator; A/Lt Cdr D J Clark; A/Lt Cdr R A Cleaves; A/Lt Cdr R Duncan; A/Lt Cdr S K Jones; Lt W A Jones; A/Lt Cdr O J Judd; Lt A M Leveridge; Lt F R Mackay; Lt T G Morgan; Lt D Tinsley; A/Lt Cdr N J Wade; A/Lt Cdr J N G Wagstaffe; Lt N Young; Lt M Amor; Lt P R Barlow; Lt R G Gray; A/Lt Cdr T S Lacey; Lt M McDonough; Lt C W B Porteous; Lt S J Ramsay; Lt C A Richardson

ET(ME): Lt S J Balmond; A/Lt Cdr B Bennett; Lt A J Christie; Lt P A Clark; A/Lt Cdr A S Drummond; Lt R J Morrison; Lt B R Parmar; Lt D L Quirk; Lt T Smith; Lt A Warland; Lt C B Wicks

Logistics: Lt C J Barnett; A/Lt Cdr H R Biddlecombe; Lt J R Brehaut; Lt D R Brock; Lt C A Christie; Lt J R Cooke; Lt C E Cooper; Lt B R Crouch; Lt M R Cullen; Lt D M Drew; Lt K P Esbensen; Lt C A Gardiner; Lt A M Gibson; Lt J R Gorst; Lt P J Gow; Lt P B Griffith; Lt A P Meaden; Lt D J Shine; Lt G J Smith; Lt M K Stiles; Lt N A Watts; Lt A J Wheldon

Royal Marines: Capt A M Broughton; Capt A A Bryce; Capt C R Burkin; A/Maj R N Courtier; A/Maj A D Creasey; A/Maj C Flewitt; Capt D E Foster; Capt S P Green; Capt S J Hemming-Mitchell; A/Maj A N Jones; A/Maj B L Jones; Capt C A Lees; A/Maj J A Lindsay; Capt C L Manning; Capt L D Mildener; Capt S Moreton; Capt M J Page; Capt T D Patrick; Capt D J Powell; Capt I D Powell; A/Maj K H Robertson; Capt A J Sadler-Smith; Capt S J Smith; Capt M Snook; Capt L A Stewart; A/Maj M P Triggall; A/Maj S K Ward; Capt A C Webb; Capt C B Wilson

Medical Services: A/Lt Cdr A Grant; Lt N D Hughes; A/Lt Cdr L Robinson; A/Lt Cdr D B Salisbury; Lt M L Stent

QARNNS: Lt L J Boswell; Lt G N Brooking; Lt S Gilbert; Lt L M Sheridan-Browne; Lt E L Vincent; A/Lt Cdr E J Wyatt

RNR: Lt R E Ayrtton; Lt E Harrison; A/Lt Cdr N R Trevethan; Lt E Dunn; Lt M S Driscoll; Lt N R Taylor; Lt C A Benn-Edwards; Lt A Noble; Lt K Williams; Lt R Ghost; Lt A D Pogson; A/Lt Cdr C Darwin; A/Lt Cdr J C Gater; Lt I M Marriot; Lt G D Wadge; Lt J P Wheale; Lt J Young
RMR: Major: A/Maj T J McPhee

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● An F/A-18F Super Hornet of the Air Test and Evaluation Squadron flies over the US Navy's newest carrier, USS Gerald R Ford
Picture: Erik Hildebrandt, US Navy

Ford Focus

THE Seaforth World Naval Review has become a much-looked-forward-to annual event in naval publishing, writes *Prof Eric Grove*.

The 2019 edition (ISBN 978-1-5267-4585-9, 192 pages, hardback £35) is even more of a vintage edition than last year's. As the tenth annual, the editor Conrad Waters and his contributors have provided an historical perspective that makes this edition an important stand-alone volume.

Waters provides his usual regional reviews of North and South America; Asia and the Pacific; the Indian Ocean and Africa; and Europe and Russia. Theodore Hughes-Riley provides a chapter on the Royal Canadian Navy and its problems of modernisation in a still-constrained-financial environment. This is followed by a chapter by Guy Toremans on the Peruvian Navy which is "making great strides" as it finally (and reluctantly) decommissions its old cruiser flagship, Almirante Grau; the name has been transferred to a frigate. A particularly interesting part of this chapter is the coverage of Peru's riverine forces. Finally seasoned author Mrityunjy Mazumdar next writes an analysis of the Singaporean Navy, a remarkable example of the exploitation of limited resources.

The two 'significant ships' chosen for detailed analysis are the two large carriers USS Gerald Ford and HMS Queen Elizabeth, illustrated on the dustjacket.

The first is by Scott Truver, the second by Conrad Waters. Both chapters are excellent and taken together demonstrate the contrasting weaknesses of the American approach of putting too much new equipment into what remains basically an existing hull and the stronger British approach of a new hull form and much established equipment (as well as highly-innovative ammunition handling arrangements) being placed within it. This favourable comparison was made by American admirals I accompanied on a tour of Queen Elizabeth just before her floating out.

The Queen Elizabeth chapter is perhaps the best single survey of the programme available, and the book is worth getting for it alone. My only quibble is that more could have been made about the differences and 3,000 tonnes increase in size of Prince of Wales compared to the prototype and the need to increase manning in both ships. This is the more surprising, given the briefings given to the author in and about the second carrier.

The technological reviews follow. First, David Hobbs gives his annual 'overview of recent developments'. It opens with wonderful – but highly misleading – pictures

GROVE REVIEW

of three American carriers operating together in the Pacific. This was a fluke as one carrier was on its way home from the Gulf, another was on its way out there and Ronald Reagan had made a foray from its forward-deployed base at Yokosuka.

Strangely there is no attempt by this author or the editor to utilise the regular, highly-revealing unclassified records of deployment of American 'flat tops' published by Starfor and the US Naval Institute. Often only a single carrier strike group is deployed and the aim remains only 2½ carriers forward deployed a year (including the carrier alongside at Yokosuka).

David Hobbs points to the reason for this: only 170 F/A-18E/F were flyable at the end of 2017. I also think that Commander Hobbs does not fully appreciate the capabilities of the F-35 and its ability to dispense with electronic and SEAD support. This is in the discussion of a possible American light carrier project which looks a little obsolete now with the sad death of one of its major supporters Senator McCain. In fact the USA is already acquiring useful light carrier capability the combination of F-35B and amphibious assault, more of which more are usually at sea than CVNs.

Norman Friedman then provides a most useful 'overview' of the vital subject of modern naval communications. Again this is another reason for obtaining the book as it could hardly be bettered as an up-to-date short survey.

Finally, Richard Scott provides a timely chapter on autonomous systems. This is a good introduction to developments that will have a major impact on the size and shape of the world's navies. Coverage of the American Sea Hunter programme is most useful and the final illustration is of a Swedish concept of a 'distributed networked force' that "could well represent the future of naval warfare."

This is another important edition of this regular annual. Inevitably it reflects the fact that it went to press in the middle of last year; the Canadian order for 15 Type 26-based frigates thus could not be included. (Rather ironically this design seems to have become an export success given the doubts about its exportability reflected in the Type 31e project).

Such problems are inevitable with an annual publication and have to be accepted. This attractively and well-produced volume should be on the shelves of everyone with a serious interest in contemporary naval forces.



Wings of War

THE Fleet Air Arm entered WW2 with some of the most outmoded and unsuitable aircraft.

Six years later the carrier force which supported the US Navy in its final push against Japan was among the finest fighting forces the Royal Navy has ever sent into action – thanks in no small part to the American aircraft the men flew such as Avengers, Hellcats, Corsairs.

Beyond the realm of aviation and naval historians, the deeds of these men and their planes is largely overlooked (John Winton strove to redress that with his classic *Forgotten Fleet*, but the RN's role in the Far East remains overshadowed by the catastrophes suffered in 1941-42).

Tim Hillier-Graves' **Heaven High, Ocean Deep: Naval Fighter Wing at War** (Casemate, £19.99 ISBN 978-1612-007557) puts faces and gives voices to some of those aviators.

His interest in the men of 5th Fighter Wing, operating from HMS Indomitable, was sparked by tales his father and godfather told him. He set out to tell the wing's story, tracking down the survivors and their accounts of training and, later, combat – a labour of love which has taken a quarter of a century.

All the veterans he tracked down have sadly passed on now, but they come alive in this superb book – both through their own words and an excellent collection of pictures (including a short but impressive section of rare colour imagery of the men at work and play).

This aerial band of brothers formed in 1943 and saw intensive action from the end of 1944 until mid-45, notably the legendary Palembang raids (Operation Meridian) which reduced output from Japanese-occupied refineries on Sumatra by three quarters; then, in May, Indomitable faced the menace of the *kamikazes* during operations in support of the invasion of Okinawa.

Diaries, letters, interviews and post-war accounts bring the men back to life, reveal the strains of aerial combat – especially dealing with the Japanese suicide planes – but also show what a well-honed force the British Pacific Fleet, and especially its airmen were in the spring of 1945. Time and again they shot the enemy out of the skies – but at a terrible cost.

Pilots faced death daily lost friends daily, yet accepted it as Lt Noel Mitchell put it: "Most got away with it, but for others their luck simply ran out."

How to become a civilian again

DISCOVERING potential employees were former service personnel prompted a former Royal Navy officer to write a book about getting a job after military service.

Lieutenant Commander Michael Sykes, who served for 23 years, worked in civilian management, including as a personnel director.

"I considered writing a book some years ago to embody the views I had on how service people could improve their chances of getting a job and last year had the opportunity and a willing publisher," he said.

The result is **Leaving the Armed Forces and Getting a Job** (Austin Macauley, £9.99 ISBN 978-178878-493-1).

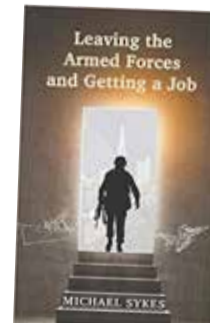
The book covers every aspect of leaving the forces, from self-analysis of attitude,

expectations and finance, job-seeking, CVs, interview preparation and techniques, job offers, negotiating terms, employment contracts, how companies work, company cultures, pensions and setting up a business.

Michael joined the Royal Navy as a junior radio operator, serving in HMS Ark Royal, before joining the Submarine Service. He was commissioned and left the Royal Navy in his mid 30s.

He has spoken at many conferences on management subjects and has had several articles printed in various papers and journals.

"Not only have I held different ranks, and



worked with different services, but I have been an interviewer and recruiter in civilian life, interviewed many service personnel for jobs, started my own business, and am closely in touch with what is happening now in the services," said Michael.

Packed with practical advice and tips, the book takes service leavers through what can be a lengthy process in leaving service and securing employment.

Overall it is a helpful guide to dip into rather than read it all in one go. Used as a working tool, it is great value for money.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the February edition of *Navy News* (right) was minesweeper HMS Blackwater, which was renamed NPA Benevente when sold to Brazil in 1988.

RO Neale-Broughton, of Loughborough, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is a torpedo boat destroyer which saw action at the First Battle of Heligoland Bight and the Battle of Jutland. At the former she was hit by at least three shells.

1. What was her name, and 2. which flotilla did she join after being repaired?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish



a winner.

Entries must be received by May 14. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our June edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 290

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, *Navy News*, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
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- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in May's Noticeboard must be received by

APRIL 14, 2019

Reunions

HMS Collingwood Association. Annual meeting and reunion takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from April 5 to 8. Contact IOW Tours Ltd on 01983 405116.

HMS Phoebe: A reunion will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from May 3 to 6. Further details can be obtained from secretary Dave Newson hmsphoebeassociation@outlook.com or Robert.hobbs1949@sky.com

HMS Tenby Association. Annual meeting and gathering takes place at the Collingwood Hotel, Bournemouth, from May 10 to 13. For more details contact secretary David Macalister at dmac121dm@gmail.com or phone 02392 252590.

HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association. Annual reunion takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel in Southsea over the weekend of May 10-13. Contact association secretary Denis Askham on 01772 322910 or askhamd3@gmail.com

Veteran fieldgunners: Meeting at Tiffans Hotel, Blackpool, from May 17-20. Contact Colin Burley on 01543 572212 or email barbaraburley@hotmail.co.uk

HMS Iveston: A reunion to mark the 28th year since the Mediterranean deployment of January to May 1991, takes place on June 15 in the Portsmouth area. If you served during this time, please contact Shaunmckeever@yahoo.com or telephone 07547 934424.

HMS Manchester: The second reunion will be held in the WO, SR and SNCOs' Mess at HMS Nelson from June 7-9. For details visit: 2ma.org.uk or email stevie27@hotmail.com or iantids@ntlworld.com

HMS Liverpool Association: A reunion will be held on Saturday June 22 at the GI's Association Whale Island Portsmouth, mustering at midday. For further membership information and reunion details contact secretary John Parker at infor@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk or call 02392521222.

TIFF151 Artificers reunion takes place at HMS Sultan's WO&SR Mess on Saturday June 29 from 7pm. Email Sultan2019@tiffs-reunion.org.uk to register your interest and purchase tickets. £20 per person, maximum of two tickets per application.

HMS Ulster. A reunion will be held in Torquay from September 20-23. For details contact Norrie Millen at ulster@candoo.com

HMS Eagle: The Friends of HMS Eagle reunion weekend will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, Portsmouth, from September 27-29. Contact the main organiser, Danny du Feu. Email: ddf.photography@gmail.com or phone 07711 083465.

HMS Troubridge Final Commission Association: Annual reunion takes place at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool from October 4 to 7. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@gmail.com or via hmstroubridge.com

The Survey Ships Association: The 25th reunion takes place at the Mercure Chester North Hotel, Woodhey House Hotel Cheshire, from Friday October 25 to Monday, October 28. For information on membership and reunions please send a SAE to: The Secretary, SSA, 16 Quay Ostend Cliff Park Great Yarmouth Norfolk NR31 6TP. Or phone 07974156996

HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans' Association. The 2019 reunion takes place at the Coniston Hotel in Sittingbourne, from October 4 to 7. For further details please contact enquiries@iowtours.com.

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Association. Reunion takes place at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, from October 18 to 21. For details contact Alan 'Whiskey' Walker on 01268 548041 or email whiskey666@outlook.com.

HMS Lowestoft Association. Reunion takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from October 4 to 7. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact: ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk. Tel: 07778 546861

Ask Jack

Raleigh Division Tiffs: Any of you still around? Contact Dizz Davidson at 5, Lingwood Park, Longthorpe, Peterborough PE3 6RC or phone 01733 333547

Deaths

John Chapman. Served from August 1943 to July 1956 in HMS Victory, Vernon, Fowey, Charity, Messina, Volage and Largo Bay. Member of the RNA. Died June 2018, aged 93.

Michael Clarke CPO WEA. Served from 1956-93 in HMS Collingwood, Ariel, Sanderling, Seahawk, Heron, Ark Royal, Nubian, Phoenix, London, Mercury, and Nelson. Died October 16 2018, aged 78.

David "Chippy" Cook BEM CPO. Served from 1952-1984 in Victoria Barracks, Drake x5, Illustrious, Victory, Tamar, Fisgard x5, Royal Arthur, Blake, Orion, Sheba, Ark Royal, Sultan, Rothersey, Fearless, Ariadne, Neptune, and Euryalus. Died February 28, aged 87.

Keith Jones LS. Served 1972-81 in HMS Ganges, Hardy, Bristol, Sheffield and CINCFLÉET Northwood. Member of Chesham and Amersham RNA. Died February 23, aged 61.

William Prophet Smail. AB. Served in HMS Ajax from December 1943 to September 1944. Died on February 15, aged 93.

Submariners' Association Raymond Clapton CCWEA. Served May 1967 to Aug 1989 in HM Submarines, Resolution, Revenge, and Renown. West of Scotland Branch. Died February 3, aged 79.

John W. Taylor CPO (OPS). Served May 1954 to Sept 1978 in HM Submarines Seascout, Tireless, Alcide, Artful, Churchill, Valiant, Superb and Dreadnought. Barrow In Furness Branch. Died February 4, aged 80.

Paul Cubitt FCPO.Elec. Served 1953 to 1980 in HM Submarines Seadevil, Solent, Excalibur, Tiptoe, Turpin Alcide Cachelot. Gosport Branch. Died February 6, aged 84.

Alan Pillifent COEA Mech. Served Dec 1964 - Jun 1977 in HM Submarines Thermopylae, Resolution, Dreadnought, and Conqueror. Barrow In Furness Branch. Died February 8, aged 73.

Richard Hilton RO.1.(G). Served in HM Submarines Conqueror. Dolphin Branch. Died February 12, aged 70.

David Syborn CMEA (P). Served 1966 to 1979 in HM Submarines Dreadnought, Repulse, and Resolution. Morecambe Bay Branch. Died February 12, aged 79.

John Dalton AB. Served Apr 1942 to Aug 1946 in HM Submarines Una, Unseen, Upstart, and Unrival. Barrow In Furness Branch. Died February 14, aged 94.

Lt Cdr Peter R Appleby. HMS Dolphin, Courageous, Splendid, Capt Naval Operations Combat Gp. Died February 3.

Lt Peter K Arbuthnot. HMS Ocean, 809 and 825 NAS. Died February 9, aged 88.

Lt Cdr Peter T Bracelin. HMS Ark Royal, Fife, Terror, Seahawk, Nelson, Drake, Centurion, Chichester, Heron, Eagle, Loch Killisport. RNWT Mauritius. Died March 3, aged 85.

Lt Cdr Brian G Brothers. HMS Bulwark, Maidstone, Ark Royal, Ganges, Rhyl, Brighton, Warrior, Raleigh, Fisgard, Caledonia, Hartland Point, Albion. Dir Fleet Maintenance. Died February 10, aged 82.

Capt Patrick H R Glennie. HMS Ark Royal, Centurion, Hartland Point, Osprey, Puma, President, Cheviot, Devonshire. BRNC Dartmouth, Dir Fleet Supply Duties, Dir Gen Naval Personal Services, Flag Officer Admiralty Interview Board. Died February 16, aged 93.

Lt Cdr Richard M Griffiths. RNAS Yeovilton, Ayr, Trincomalee, Tambaram, Arbroath. Died January 26, aged 93.

Lt Cdr RNR Sir John M Huntington-Whiteley Bt VRD*. HMS President, London Div RNR.

Capt Jonathan D W Husband OBE. Britannia RN Coll, HMS Victorious, Seahawk, Falcon, Eagle, Osprey, Warrior, Abdiel, C-in-Fleet, RCDS, NATO, 819 NAS. Died February 16.

Lt Cdr Michael Keigley. HMS Osprey, Royal Arthur, Seahawk, Eagle, Centaur. Aircraft Dept Naval. 807, 829, 771, 848 NAS. Died February 22.

Sub Lt Eric J V King RNR. 836, 798, 748 NAS. Died February 22, aged 94.

Capt Charles G Le Mesurier. HMS Dryad, Whitby, Drake, Hampshire, Victory RNB, Centaur, Ganges, Eagle, Loch Killisport, Concord, Orsay. NATO. C-in-C Naval Home Command Reserves, Directorate

of Navigation and Tactical Control. Naval Attache Jakarta. Died January 28.

Cdr Ian C S Lewis. HMS Sultan, Pembroke, Diamond, Duke of York, Surprise, Alania. HMRY Britannia. HM Dockyard Chatham. Died February 7, aged 94.

Lt Samuel W Salway. HMS Eagle. 820, 845, 848 NAS. Died January 19.

Surg Cdr Derek J C Walker. Naval Hosps Haslar, Plymouth, and Chatham. HMS Tiger, Caledonia, President, Ganges, Fisgard, Neptune, Pembroke, Agincourt. Died January 26, aged 92.

Lt G H W Williams RNR. RNAS Ford. Died October 18, aged 86.

Lt Cdr Kevin Williamson. 814, 820 and 826 NAS. HMS Seahawk, Heron, Osprey, Alacrity, Brinton. Died February 3.

Capt RM George N Wheatley. HMS Fearless, Jufair, Royal Prince. RM Portsmouth, Eastney. ITCRM. JSAWC. 45 Cdo RM. ATURM. Died February 2, aged 90.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOCC

Surg Vice Adm Anthony L Revell CB QHS FRCA. Naval Hosps Haslar and Plymouth, HMS Eagle, President, StAngelo, Troubridge, Centurion. MDG, Institute of Naval Medicine. RCDS. C-in-C Fleet. MOD London. Died January 1, aged 83.

Sub Lt RNR H H Richards. BYMS2054, ML282. Died April 25, aged 95.

Cdr David B Dixon. HMS StAngelo, Berry Head, Triumph, Neptune, Eagle, Indomitable, Jaguar, Tyne, Drake, President, Pembroke. Dir Fleet Supply Duties. NATO. Died February 10, aged 91.

Cdr Nelson W Leverett DSM. HMS Excellent, Vernon, President, Relentless, Lanka. HM Dockyds Devonport, Malta and Portsmouth, Weapons Dept (Naval). Died February 8, ged 100.

Lt Cdr RNR J R Woods RD*. HMS Sussex, Sussex Div RNR. Died February 5, aged 78.

Sub Lt Michael A Grinter. HMS Rhyl. RNEC Manadon. Died February 3, aged 79.

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● Pupils from Dauntsey's during a school trip to Madagascar



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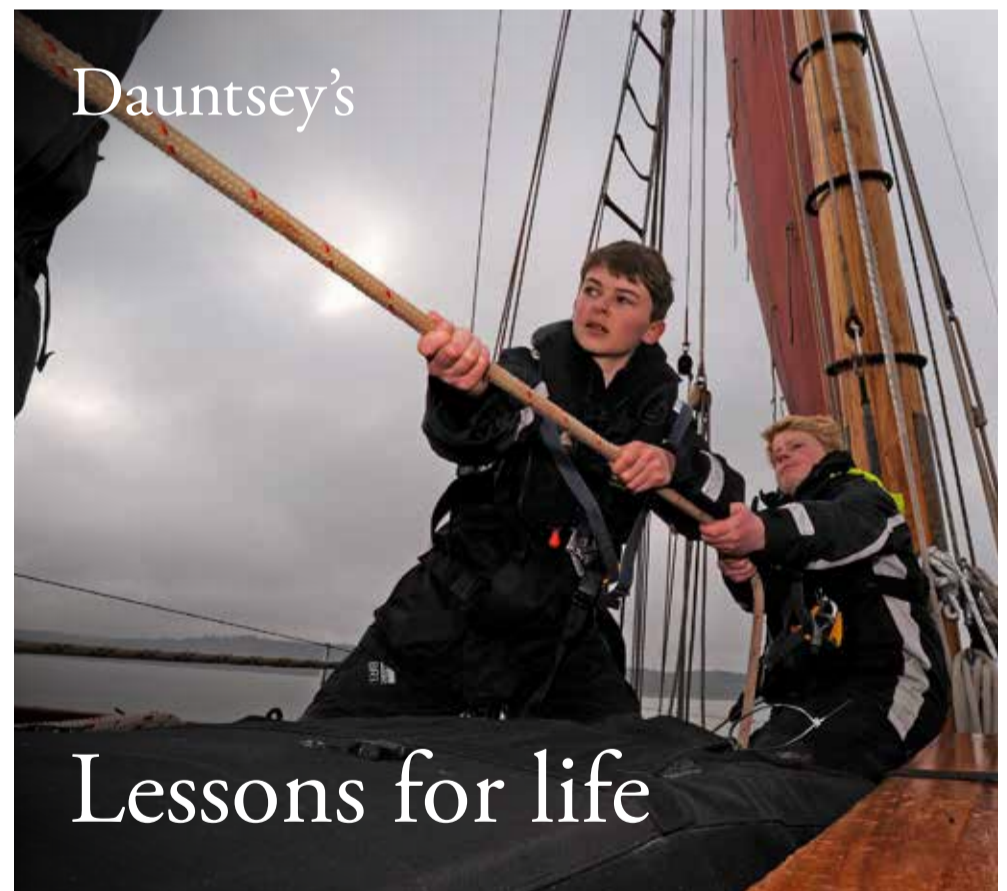
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*Provided by the MOD, dependent on eligibility – available from April 2019.

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text



Sultan wins the battle of bases

FRIENDLY rivalry came to the fore as HMS Sultan and HMS Collingwood battled it out in a sporting compendium of challenges.

Trainees from Victory Squadron, in HMS Collingwood, travelled to HMS Sultan, in Gosport, to take part in the Battle of the Bases.

The competition saw the sailors compete with their Sultan counterparts from the Defence College of Technical Training's Royal Naval Air Engineering and Survival Equipment School (RNAESS) and the Defence School of Marine Engineering (DSMarE) across six team sports.

Football, rowing, rugby 7s, crossfit, bucketball and the establishment's Trim Trail were among the activities.

For many of the trainees involved, it was a first introduction to inter-establishment competition and also an opportunity to try out something new.

Air Engineering Technician Oliver Karowski-Budd, who was part of the Sultan rowing crew, said: "It's really good to have this competition and get people working against each other, as it really gets us to test our limits."

"Obviously, there are no hard feelings between us as we will be working together in the long run, but it's a great introduction to Inter-Establishment sport."

ET WE Mathew Morton, who represented Collingwood in the hockey, said: "It's the first time that I've actually seen Sultan and also the first time I've played hockey. It's been a good laugh and a great team building exercise."

As results started to come in, it was Collingwood who were in the lead with victories in both the trim trail and football, however Sultan's sailors went on to claim success in the rowing, hockey, crossfit and bucketball.

With all the results in it fell to Commander Jules Philo, the Executive Officer HMS Sultan to present the Battle of the Bases plate to the Sultan trainees.

Chance to win superbike

NAVY Wings has teamed up with the Royal Marines Charity and the Royal Navy Winter Sports Association to offer one lucky winner the chance to win a Bahnstormer Custom Edition, BMW R nineT Racer Superbike.

Every ticket purchased supports Navy Wings, the RMA, the Royal Marines Charity and the Royal Navy Winter Sports Association, benefitting the Navy's aviation heritage, Royal Marines families, veterans and cadets and winter sports training for current serving Naval personnel.

The raffle for the racer, pictured right, will be capped at 15,000 tickets, each costing £10. The draw closes at midday



on September 20, with the winner drawn on September 23.

For details visit navywings.org.uk/winasuperbike

Preparation is the key

IF dedication is a key facet in sporting achievement, then the Royal Navy Women's Cricket team have it in droves.

Locked away in a room in Temeraire on a Friday afternoon, the team, manager and coach, got together with Sarah Kenny the CEO, Anne Segall the HR Director, and Hetty Knox a senior consultant, of BMT, the primary sponsor of the Women's Cricket team, to mentally prepare for the forthcoming season.

Led by Capt Sharon Malkin, and facilitated by Hetty, they discussed leadership and team-work, exploring through workshops ways to build themselves into a high performing team defining their purpose, who they are as individuals and their mindset for success.

The afternoon proved hugely beneficial, where they explored what was important to them as individual, what they saw as their blockers and also their strengths.

They have used this workshop to get to better know each other and build themselves as a team.

The Royal Navy Cricket Association has a full and varied programme, including the Inter-Service T20 final at Lords on May 30. Visit: interservicest20.co.uk/

If you are interested in becoming involved in cricket, as a player, umpire, coach or official, or you just want to follow some of the games; further details on the RNCA can be found at the RNCA website: royalnavycricketassociation.com



● From left, Chris Moore, Chris Bryning, John Butler and Rob Harris in South Africa; Chris Moore prepares his glider for a
● Main image: Gliding at 10,000ft over New Tempe, South Africa

Winging it on safari





flight; Rob Harris celebrates at the end of his diamond goal flight

WHILE snow gripped the UK in early February, four members of the RN Gliding and Soaring Association (RNGSA) navy team were able to escape to the summer in the Southern Hemisphere for their winter training camp in New Tempe, South Africa.

Our Soaring Safari hosts provided excellent facilities and outstanding coaching at National Squad standard, plus the all-important consistent, quality-soaring weather – meaning that up 300 km cross country glider flights could be attempted every day.

For those who aren't familiar with gliding it involves being launched by a tow aircraft to a release height, in this case 1,600 feet above the ground, and then to make use of natural environmental thermals to provide the lift to keep you airborne as you don't have an engine!

Once you are able to 'soar' like a bird, you can make progress cross country in a competition where tasks are set round a number of turn points and the pilot who completed the task in the quickest time wins the day.

Lieutenant Rob Harris, the most inexperienced pilot on the trip, has been gliding for many years but has struggled to find the right opportunity to fly cross country in the UK, despite gaining the required gliding qualifications through the three RNGSA gliding clubs.

He said: "Having such reliable soaring conditions and daily feedback from the Soaring Safari coaches, on how to improve, was invaluable."

"From starting the week having never been solo cross country I was, on the very first day, able to achieve the 50km flight required to complete my British Gliding Association 'Silver Badge' which qualifies me to compete in competitions and progress to instructor in the future."

Due to the excellent soaring conditions and coaching all pilots were able to complete at least 300km tasks; Lt Cdr Chris Moore and John Butler both gained their gold distance, Lt Harris his gold distance plus diamond goal badges, as did Lt Cdr Bryning.

Landing in a field is the only option available if not able to stay airborne, however, fortunately, this wasn't required during the week as all pilots made it back to the airfield.

Commenting on his diamond goal flight, Lt Harris said: "You are airborne for over five hours and the task set is takes you over 100km away from the airfield where conditions are variable and not always easy."

"There were times when I did get low and thought about landing in a field or heading home early but I found that, with perseverance and my new skills, the task was still achievable."

"It was a great feeling making it back up to 12,000 feet and with plenty of height to glide home completing 361 km, all with no engine."

A point to note: some very experienced civilians at the site were able to achieve some record-breaking 750km flights during the week with some great advice to make

the most of in the evenings.

The more experienced cross-country pilots on the camp were able to use the opportunity to hone basic skills and practice new techniques to improve their efficiency as competition pilots for the future.

Lt Cdr Butler said: "This was the best training opportunity I have ever had and my 300 km flight was my most exciting flight yet."

"I am really looking forward to taking the skills and confidence built up on the camp back to the UK and this summer's Inter-Service Championships."

Training camp leader, Lt Cdr Chris Bryning, said: "We had a great trip. South Africa is a wonderful country in which to glide and, with tremendous support from Soaring Safaris, we made the most of the superb soaring conditions and coaching, achieving all our goals in preparation for the year's Inter-Service competition."

"Lt Rob Harris did particularly well to achieve his 50 km flight and go on to his diamond goal. I look forward to seeing him do well in the navy squad this August."

The team are grateful for the support of the Sports Lottery, RNGSA and RNAS Culdrose Welfare fund for their grants that made the camp possible.

For more information on gliding opportunities available to all RN personnel, no previous flying experience required, contact Lt Cdr Chris Bryning, secretary RNGSA at sec@rngsa.com.



PO Carl Thomas and AB Kris Treloar compete in the weighted lunges in the first team workout

Navy pair rise to the top on the Rock

BRITISH Forces Gibraltar hosted the first ever Gibraltar Resilience Games, an event that saw military personnel competing to test their physical strength and mental resilience.

Fourteen tri-service athletes participated in various components of fitness, undertaking three individual workouts and team events over the course of the day, with hopes of scoring high enough on each event to be crowned the overall winner.

Leading Hand Josh Brown went to the top of the scoreboard in the first individual event, clean and pressing 105kg, with Lt Lloyd Cardy second with 82.5kg.

LH Brown then trumped his rivals in a four-minute as many reps as possible of five power cleans, five front squats and five shoulder to overhead presses.

The second individual event saw athletes given 20 minutes to complete a 400m run, ten rounds of six dumb bell snatches, eight press ups, ten box jump overs and another 400m run.

Cpl Shane Moreno finished first in 12:15, followed very closely by AB Kris Treloar in 12:25. Pte Connor McGinn managed to scrape through before LPT Ryan Billington blew the whistle with a time of 19:57, and our sole female athlete PO Kelly Gooch completed in 17:24.

The final individual event was three rounds of 250m rowing, 20 overhead squats and 15 sit-ups, all within 12 minutes.

A speedy performance from Maj Nick Kemp saw him complete in 6:09, followed by AB Kris Treloar in 06:11.

With the need to mentally and physically challenge themselves further, ten individual entrants paired up to create five teams to enter the following 2 events, which took place in between the individual workouts.

The first team event saw LH Brown and AB Treloar come out top. The second and final team event consisted of an 18-minute rowing limit where rowers had to burn 20 calories before completing 20 barbell weighted lunges and 20 kettlebell swings. Following a two-minute rest, the final exercise was to row for six minutes.

LH Brown and AB Treloar powered through the first part, finishing in 07:57, whereas Lt Cardy and AB Rob Allison sped through the row, covering a massive distance of 1741metres.

Final results were: Individual male winner, AB Treloar; Individual female winner, PO Gooch; Team winners, LH Brown and AB Treloar.

The day finished with Lt Col Dave King, Commanding Officer Royal Gibraltar Regiment, presenting the winners certificates and prizes, and congratulating all entrants on their sterling efforts.



Managers' skills put to test

HMS Excellent and HMS Collingwood hosted a team of Premier Rugby and Rugby Football Union Development Managers as part of a leadership visit aimed at encouraging young semi-professional sports people to consider a career in the Royal Navy or Royal Marines.

On day one of the two-day challenge, 12 Premiership Rugby Academy managers and their senior colleagues were put through their paces in the Royal Navy's Damage Repair Instruction Unit (DRIU).

The DRIU simulates a ship taking on water at sea after impact; the suspended metal unit fills up with water as those inside practice repairing damaged compartments and blocking holes. All the while, the unit is rocking from side to side in simulation of a ship rolling at sea.

The second day saw the team travel to HMS Collingwood where they participated in a low-ropes leadership and communication challenge.

Participants in the team activities included the RFU Head of International Performance, Dean Ryan, the RFU Head of Regional Academies, Don Barrell, and the Premier Rugby Head of Elite Performance and Player Development, Corin Palmer.



Licence to thrill for Llewellyn

THE first great weather of the year provided an amazing backdrop for some pre-season testing and preparation for the first round at the Brands Hatch Indy rollercoaster, writes Lieutenant Commander Llewellyn Thomas, pictured.

It was a big day for a couple of the newcomers, with Ross and myself having not visited this fantastic track before and loving every second.

Ross spent the day mastering Druids and linking his turns together, with some incredible progression over the course of the day.

My time was spent passing my ACU licence at my first visit to a UK track, and giving me a valuable opportunity to identify some minor mechanical pickups in time to resolve them for the first round.

The ACU licence test was much more progressive than I had thought; we started off in the classroom going over all the flags and rules on track, then had a written test which was mostly common sense.

Needless to say, I got some wrong. After that it was straight out onto the track following the instructors for them to look at our riding one by one, starting off slow.

Once they were happy, we practiced starts off the grid and finished with a mass start which was what I was most worried about. It was great preparation and left me feeling ready for my first race experience next month.

Rhys chosen for deaf rugby side

A KEEN sportsman from HMS Sultan who suffered partial hearing loss, has been given a boost after being selected to represent England Deaf Rugby.

Petty Officer Engineering Technician Marine Engineering Rhys Bingham joined the Royal Navy ten years ago. Before joining, Rhys struggled with tinnitus and, although the condition often goes away, sadly in recent years his hearing has continued to deteriorate.

With the help of hearing aids Rhys could continue in his role within the Royal Navy and despite his disappointment, Rhys has found fresh encouragement on the rugby pitch, making his international debut off the bench for England against Wales in the Broadstreet Cup at Cardiff Arms Park.

Although the game ended in defeat for England, it was a great introduction to International Rugby for Rhys who also plays Hooker for Portsmouth Rugby Football Club.

Rhys said: "I noticed a reduction in my hearing over the past few years, so I took it up with the audiologist and failed a few tests. No one wants to lose their hearing, but every cloud has its silver lining and I've shown that I can still do my job on ship at sea."

To find out more about deaf rugby visit englanddeafrugby.com.

Bob's your uncle



● Colour Sergeant Ash Morris takes on Jenner Corner

SAILORS and marines are masters of the track after winning men's and women's bobsleigh team titles in the German Alps.

It's the first time the Royal Navy has held both Inter-Service titles simultaneously – after a series of nail-biting runs along the 1,244-metre-long track at Eisarena Königssee near Berchtesgaden at the southeasternmost tip of Germany.

Climbing into the cockpit for the final time competitively, Olympic bronze medallist and mainstay of both the RN and British teams for more than a decade Sergeant John Jackson took individual gold by just 14 hundredths of a second.

The RN women weren't quite able to match his individual triumph, but captain Lieutenant Commander Alex Kelley guided her squad to a team victory.

"To come away with the team trophy for the first time ever in RN bobsleigh history is absolutely incredible – I'm very proud of the team," she said.

Those victories helped edge the RAF into the silver position with the Army propping up the league table.

Sergeant Johnson said the 2019 joint wins were the result more than half a dozen years' work behind the scenes, followed by three weeks of intensive training leading up to the Inter-Services – not least because many of the runners were new to the sport.

The 41-year-old was pushed all the way by the rising stars of the sport and had to call on all his experience to take the title – a win he regards as a bonus.

"It's not about the individual – it's about the team who won. They worked hard – and this was the result we came to get. I'm so pleased to have been part of this journey," he said.

Team manager Colour Sergeant Ash Morris added: "We are over the moon to have claimed gold in the male and female events for the first time in Naval history.



● Left, C/Sgt Ash Morris gets in the zone; Top, the RNRM Bobsleigh teams; Above, Mne John Hall in action; Sgt John Jackson celebrates winning the individual title



It's taken a long time to build up the team, but with hard work, we finally did it. It was such a close competition and everyone gave their all."

Ahead of the championships, the RN team bonded with an 'ice dip' – taking a quick swim in the 4°C waters of nearby Königssee (which to Germans is a cross between Loch Ness and Windermere) with a blanket of snow on the mountain slopes and chalet roofs.

As well as the team trophies, individual

awards were handed out to mark the end of the season and reward a mixture of stalwarts and rookies.

Sgt Jackson took the lifetime achievement award while at the other end of the bobsleigh spectrum LWtr Kayleigh Horrell (Devonport) was the coaches' choice for demonstrating natural talent and performing far better than expected.

The 'Players' Player' title for the sleigher who's given the most on and off the track went to AB Tom 'Paddy' Milner.

And for all-round morale, support, camaraderie and inspiration, the 'Spirit of Bobsleigh' award was presented to PO Aimee Foster.

The Eisarena was also the venue for the RN luge championships. Lt Cdr Matt Bone took gold ahead of SLt Andy Graham and Lt Jason Le Hurray in the open category while in the novices' contest, SLt Jamie Pottage was the fastest beating Lt Jason Le Hurray and SLt Graham.

Report: C/Sgt Ashley Morris



Silver for Sollitt at Sandown

RESERVIST Lieutenant Commander Vicki Sollitt celebrates her second place in the annual Grand Military Cup national hunt race.

Her placing was the highest for a Royal Navy competitor since the race began in 1841.

Vicki, of HMS Flying Fox, was among a field of 13 for the event at Sandown, held on International Women's Day.

The mum of two had a mammoth task ahead with the other horses of significantly higher calibre on paper and Vicki's own Spanish Arch – known as Archie – began at 150-1.

Archie proved his mettle, jumping round with ease and travelling through testing ground which sapped the energy from many of the others.

A mistake three fences from the finish provided a heart-stopping moment where Vicki was nearly unseated but the pair recovered, picked the bridle back up and stormed forward.

You can watch the race at thejockeyclub.co.uk/the-racing/racereplays/2019/03/08

Picture: Peter Sollitt



Under 23s are over the moon

THE Royal Navy Under-23s football squad won the Inter-Service Championship for 2019 with victories over both the Army and RAF.

The campaign began with a home tie against the light blues.

The RN got off to the worst-possible start, finding themselves two goals down inside the opening 15 minutes.

The RN side were caught out by a neat RAF move which resulted in their first goal, and then an uncharacteristic defensive error allowed the RAF to double their advantage.

Conceding two early goals did then seem to fire the RN into life and on 16 minutes, a well-worked set-piece and neat finish by NA Lewis Cooper (HMS Queen Elizabeth) saw them reduce the deficit.

What followed was a period of onslaught by the brave and relentless young RN side.

Mne Gino Garside (42 Cdo) and AET Ben Brierly (HMS Heron) both came close to scoring but half-time ended at 2-1.

An equaliser came on 50 minutes, following a neat cross by AET Williams (HMS Heron), allowing AET Brierly to glance home a neat header.

The RAF found themselves in a state of shock quickly after when the RN went ahead 3-2 following NA Cooper's second goal.

The RN's attacking play and period of dominance paid off as they took control of what was turning out to be an entertaining encounter.

The RAF reacted by changing shape and making some substitutions as they looked to find a way back in to the contest. The RN added fresh legs from Mne Parnell (42 Cdo) and AB Pearson (HMS Collingwood).

The RAF side looked for an equaliser as the game entered injury time, but it was not to be and with time running out the RN side managed the game professionally to ensure that they won the first Inter-Service encounter for 2019.

Next up was the Army at Aldershot and the RN got off to a great start with a neat finish from the edge of the box by AET Wright (HMS Heron).

The RN then had to sustain some Army pressure with RN goalkeeper LAET Stuart (RNAS Culdrose) making an excellent save to keep the Army at bay.

It was a first half of few chances, the RN



● The triumphant Royal Navy Under 23s squad celebrate winning the 2019 Inter-Service trophy following victory over the Army, main image and left

defending well yet struggling to find any rhythm in their forward play.

At half time it was advantage to the RN and after a few key messages from the RN coaching staff, they began the first half by dominating their opponents.

Mne Garside and AET Brierly linked up well and a moment of brilliance from the latter saw the RN lead double.

The Army began to make changes as they looked to get back into the game, knowing that if they could force a draw then they would be crowned joint winners.

But the RN were in the driving seat and added AB Pearson and Mne Parnell into midfield.

AET Brierly then scored his second,

working a top-class finish into the opposite top corner of the Army goal.

The Army goalkeeper was rooted to the spot and could do nothing to prevent the RN from adding to their deserved lead.

The RN then looked to protect their clean sheet and defended well to see the game finish 3-0.

Jubilant celebrations followed the final whistle as the RN finished the season as Inter-Service champions.

It proved a fine end to a successful season, which included a training camp in Cyprus and several fixtures around the UK.

The RN Development squad will look to prepare early to defend the honours next year.



Dream time had in California

ROYAL Navy indoor rowers picked up 16 medals at national and international championships.

Ten medals were won at the English Indoor Rowing Championships in Manchester and a further six at the World Indoors in California.

Fifteen RN rowers featured in 19 races in Manchester. WO1 Tiny Nash (HMS Nelson) won the men's 50-plus 2k heavyweight in six minutes and 20.7 seconds, while CPO Claire McClelland (QAHC) won the women's 40-plus heavyweight in a time of seven minutes, 22.9 seconds.

Silver medals over 2k were won by Lt Stu Moss (HMS Sultan), CPO Helen Richardson (HMS Temeraire) and POPT Rich Charrett (HMS Sultan).

Bronze medals were picked up by Lt Col Tom Blythe (Northwood), Emily Loftus (Temeraire), Paul Winton (MCTA) and debutant Sub Lt Toni Harding (HMS Sultan), who won two.

Three weeks later the RN team headed to Long Beach in California for the worlds.

Nearly all RN ergers set 2k season or personal bests, proving the benefits of long-term structured training, resulting in three individual and three team relay medals.

WO Nash repeated his silver medal success last year in the men's heavyweight 50-plus in six minutes and 19.4 seconds.

Lt Moss picked up a silver in the men's heavyweight 43-plus race, while SLT Harding one bronze in the women's open lightweight in a personal-best time of eight minutes and 19.2 seconds.

Just missing out on the medals were fourth-place finishers Lt Cdr Craig Guest (NCHQ), Cdr Dan Connor (QAHC), POPT Charrett, LH Natalie Thorpe (BDSUS) and Emily Loftus.

Fastest RN racer over 2k was Lt Josh Terry (Nelson), who battled hard in the men's heavyweight 27-plus to finish fifth, followed by colleague SLT Sam Cass.

Lt Al Blackford (HMS Nelson) possessed the most 'on the water' experience within the team, demonstrated by his refined, effective and efficient technique as he finished 11th in the men's heavyweight 27-plus in six minutes and 27 seconds.

Highest-place finishes were achieved by LET (ME) Joe Marquis (HMS Queen Elizabeth) and LET (ME) Rob Rowston (HMS Prince of Wales).

Lt Al Blackford (HMS Nelson) concluded the RN individual 2k performances with a six minutes and 46 seconds 21st place in the men's heavyweight 27-plus before acting as a key member of the bronze medal-winning RN2 quad team. Team manager Paul Winton showed willing to race a season's best of seven minutes and 0.3.6 seconds to secure seventh place in his age group.

Coach, Cdr Jim Thomson (NCHQ) finished fourth in the men's heavyweight 42-plus and then partnered LH Thorpe to tenth spot in the mixed pair 2k.



● Lt Stu Moss at the end of his silver-medal winning race



● SLT Toni Harding



● The two men's quad teams



● LH Thorpe and Cdr Thomson take on WO1 Nash and Emily Loftus (out of shot)

WO1 Nash and Emily Loftus finished third in the same race.

WRIC 2019 concluded with the men's quad 4k, where RN1 (Terry/Cass/Moss/Marquis) finished second, with RN2 (Guest/Corby/Blackford/Winton) in third spot.

Next year's worlds will take place in Paris, while the 2019 RN Indoor Rowing Championships has yet to be confirmed but will be late October or early November.

For details email paul.winton177@mod.gov.uk



Female fight club

LEADING Naval Nurse Ruth Fitzpatrick lands a punch for the Senior Service at the Royal Navy's first all-female amateur boxing show.

LNN Fitzpatrick, who lost her bout against experienced Aphrodite Patasalidou, of Gym 01, was one of nine female RN boxers to take part in the show at **HMS Temeraire** in Portsmouth.

Six of the Senior Service women were victorious in their bouts against opponents from local boxing clubs at the event held by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Boxing Association.

The first encounter saw LNN Channice Bond go up against southpaw Jasmine Elkington, who caught the navy woman with a straight backhand down the middle on several occasions. The bout went the distance but it was the visiting fighter who won.

Second up was AB Charlie Denham against HMS Raleigh's AB Amy Bridle. Denham, a southpaw, caught her opponent with a number of lead hook and rear-hand combinations as she notched up a victory for the RN squad.

ET Megan Esser took on Gym 01's Lucy Ward in the third fight of the night. Ward was awarded a number of standing counts before succumbing to an injury in the third round.

AB Steph Armstrong took on experienced opponent Portia Clark in the fourth bout. It was AB Armstrong's fitness and strength that started to become apparent as the fight went on as she recorded a victory.

The fifth bout of the evening was another close contest between two experienced boxers, Lieutenant Becky Carmen and Sharna Hitchens, from Brighton and Hove ABC. Lt Carmen, the taller boxer of the two, did great work when keeping her opponent at range. The closely-fought contest resulted in a split decision in favour of the Navy boxer.

AB Megan Lunn had a tough bout against a seasoned opponent from Golden Ring ABC, Anneto Barreto. Both boxers fought hard throughout but it was the visitor who won.

The penultimate bout was between LPT Andrea Marshall and Katie Rich of Gym 01. LPT Marshall repeatedly caught her opponent with

straight accurate shots as she recorded another win for the RN side.

The final bout of the evening was a senior elite contest between two seasoned female boxers. AB Sophie Colbourne, in her first bout for the RN squad, took on Xian Price of Eastbourne ABC.

As the rounds went on AB Colbourne's class began to show more as she used her range and shot variation to out-box her opponent.

Over at **HMS Collingwood**, fighters bid for the prestigious Eastern Region Development Boxing Championships.

Two of the seven bouts featured female fighters from the RNRMC Boxing Championships, with AB Murray defeating LNN Bond in the female lightweight contest and ET Esser beating AB Denham in the light welterweight contest.

Other results on the night were: LET Cassells beat ET Smith in the male welterweight fight; AB Paige beat AB Herron in the middleweight bout; Sherif Musah, of White Hart Lane ABC, beat Mne Farrell in the senior elite heavyweight contest; AB Sweetman, of HMS Queen Elizabeth,

beat Sub Lt Trutch in the eastern regional final light heavyweight contest; Jamie Tshikeva, of White Hart Lane, beat LPT Kirby to take the senior elite super heavyweight southern area title.

Meanwhile, at **HMS Neptune** in Scotland, RN boxers faced fighters from the Army Scotland in the form of the 3rd Battalion the Rifles.

AB Armstrong won on points against Amy Doberjvic, of Lockheed Martin; Mne Stephenson lost to AB Chapman; Rifleman Dunlop beat AB Henderson; Mne Davidson beat Rifleman Welsh; L/Cpl Koror beat LH Watson and Capt Dale Martin beat Mne Graham Rowley.

The event, at HMS Neptune's WO and SR Mess, raised funds for the RNRMC and Enable Scotland's Helensburgh and District branch.

The next all-female open talent development weekend takes place from May 10-12. Any women interested in giving boxing a go should contact their local PT office or the RNRMC head boxing coach CPOPT Paul Ormston at paul.ormston726@mod.gov.uk

● Below, from left, AB Sophie Colbourne (blue) fought Xian Price of Eastbourne ABC; LNN Channice Bond fought Jasmine Elkington; LPT Andrea Marshall (blue) fought Katie Rich of Gym 01; AB Armstrong and Amy Doberjvic go toe-to-toe at HMS Neptune

Pictures: LPhotos Kyle Heller and Pepe Hogan

