



NAVY NEWS

OCTOBER 2019

Guardian of the Gulf

HMS Montrose escorts a tanker through the Strait of Hormuz. The Type 23, along with Type 45 destroyer HMS Duncan, have been ensuring the safe passage of UK-flagged merchant ships. (see pages 2-3)

Picture: LPhot Rory Arnold



RFA MOUNTS BAY IN BAHAMAS ■ ROYAL MARINES' INDIANA BATTLE ■ WELCOME MEDWAY



INVIS



IN THE shimmering haze of a late summer's morning no more than an hour out of Dubai, the horizon is filled in a 180-degree arc with oil tankers and cargo ships, neatly spaced, slowly making their way into the heart of the Gulf.

Beyond them, more indistinct, the blurry outline of more tankers and merchantmen in a long row steadily heading east.

The command aim is to reassure British merchant shipping, Commander Will King reminds his 210 men and women one last time over the main broadcast.

Scrawled in red marker pen on one pane of the bridge window: Op Bleep Test. The tally below goes up to 38.

Thirty eight times HMS Montrose has travelled up or down the invisible highway by which ships enter or leave the Gulf, ensuring one of the world's key choke points isn't strangled.

Thirty eight times British-flagged shipping was shepherded by the Type 23 frigate since the beginning of July after Tehran promised retaliation in response to the impounding of its tanker Grace 1 in Gibraltar.

Thirty eight times – individually or in column, convoy if you like – British shipping, over five million tonnes of it across 60 vessels, carrying oil, natural gas, cars, household goods, the lifeblood of every economy, safely made its destination safely.

Each one of those transits has been interfered with in some way by Iranian forces – 114 'interactions' is the official term: anything from being hailed on the radio politely, all the way up to trying to board and hijack a tanker legally going



VISIBLE HIGHWAY VISIBLE SHIELD

about its business in the Strait of Hormuz.

Montrose was on hand to ensure that tanker – British Heritage – was not snatched, her crew not held hostage thanks to Montrose's presence nearby and bold action straight out of Hornblower.

Thirty-year-old Leading Physical Trainer Damon Bell from Carlisle was at the ship's wheel when he was ordered to perform "what was effectively a handbrake turn around the back of a tanker" to put the frigate in harm's way between the aggressors – Thondor-class missile boats: small (30 crew), fast (35kts), toolled up (sea-skimming anti-ship missiles) – and the 150,000-tonne oil carrier.

With every weapon aboard trained on them, the Iranians backed down. The adrenaline was pumping aboard both tanker and warship. It was, says Damon, "a classy move and probably the best thing I've ever done in the Navy".

His Commanding Officer Commander King said "there was no way, come hell or high water, that I would let her be taken. You could hear from the Iranian commander's voice that he didn't like the fact that I had all our weapons trained on his vessels."

But as Montrose was effectively "policing an area twice the size of Wales with a single squad car", Commander King says there was an inevitability that a British ship would eventually be seized as the Iranians continued to probe, intimidate and taunt; radio messages – in English – for example warned Montrose: *Your presence here is a threat*

or *You are putting vessels at risk.*

And then there's one short burst of radio traffic that sent shivers down the spine of the crew: *She is mine now.*

Thus gloated the man in charge of the operation which saw the Stena Impero illegally seized.

Montrose was no more than 45 minutes away, long enough for the tanker to be boarded and diverted into Iranian waters. She's still there – as of mid-September – as are her 23 crew.

Six weeks later, the incident was still raw for most of the frigate's crew. After the elation of saving the British Heritage, the fate of Stena Impero was "soul destroying for everyone on board, gutwrenching," Cdr King says.

Before that weighs too heavily on the minds of Montrose's crew – and Duncan who took over 'bleep test' duties in late August (the nickname comes from the fitness test and running back and forth repeatedly between two points) – there's the collective pride that, together, they escorted 90 vessels/six million tonnes of shipping in the first two months they were required.

They've done so without resorting to force – the only things fired have been flares – in what has been a repetitive yet tense mission in waters as busy as the English Channel – in temperatures by day almost always in the 40s Celsius, in defence watches (six hours on/off) for up to a month at a time.

And while the air temperature might be 40°C... in the hangar or engine room it might reach 60°C in high

summer.

So beyond the usual coughs, sneezes and bugs, the biggest medical problem facing Montrose's doctor Surgeon Lieutenant Kathryn Richardson have been heat-related illnesses – fungal infections, rashes caused by sweat and, yes, trench foot; the maintainers working on the Wildcat in the hangar (which in the summer is basically a heated metal box) sweated so much into their clothes their skin began to suffer.

With the heat ever-present, the solution? Change into dry socks and clothes regularly,



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The threat is there. And as long as it is, Royal Navy warships will be here to protect British shipping.

CDR WILL KING

take salt, shower two, three times a day. A bit of British humour also helps.

With ovens and fryers on the go, it's regularly hit 50°C in the galley where chefs have produced not three but four meals a day – as well as the usual, a midnight snack such as soup and a roll for those on duty overnight – working eight-hour shifts.

"The work is constant – very challenging. We were not prepared for the 29 days at sea, so made it an interesting time. As well as keeping

everyone fed and happy, it's important to remember to look after the welfare of the chefs," said galley manager Leading Chef Kingsley Beaubrun.

"Chefs are the backbone of the navy – I don't think we've put out one bad meal and we've had some great feedback from the guys about what we've produced for them."

One deck down it is considerably cooler in the operations room, staffed around the clock by sailors continuously monitoring colourful, yet extremely cluttered, radar pictures – they look like some 21st Century Jackson Pollock: blue for friendly, green for neutral, yellow for unknown, red for hostile/suspicious.

Hormuz is as busy as the Straits of Dover or Malacca. Now add the political/military dimension.

"There are not many people who have taken part in a deployment this intense, but this is what we train for," said Chief Petty Officer Gordon Baillie, Montrose's operations room manager.

"Everyone has been focused on the job in hand, they care deeply about what is happening and have shown calm professionalism."

Not only are the waters of the lower Gulf extremely busy – the approaches to Dubai, Jebel Ali and Abu Dhabi are simply a blur of contacts – so too the airways with major airline hubs in Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE.

Add one extra aerial contact: Gundog, Montrose's Wildcat from 815 Naval Air Squadron, scrambled to ID a new contact near one of the disputed islands in the region (it turns out to be an Iranian tug).

The helicopter has

been every bit as busy as the rest of Montrose, launched to "extend the eyes of the ship". It's invaluable, according to observer/flight commander Lieutenant Craig Farquharson.

"Given the radar, camera and sensors on board, the technology is so good that we can see pretty much the whole strait when we're airborne," he adds.

"The maintainers have worked absolute miracles. The hangar is incredibly hot and working at night has not been an option because they've been needed during the day."

Despite the heat and demands of the mission, physical trainer Damon has maintained his workout regime for his shipmates (the 11am session is "quite toasty"), organised fitness tests for 5.30am to avoid the punishing daytime temperatures, and made use of air-conditioned facilities in Bahrain on rare occasions alongside.

As for his secondary role as Mr Morale, there have been few opportunities for collective downtime – a spot of adventurous training, a treasure hunt on board (the prize: ice cream). But because the stint in theatre has been (a) relatively short and (b) the tempo non-stop, Damon says his shipmates are "not thredders".

He continues: "Before we came out here, there was endless training and the guys were getting a bit fed up. But then we came here, did a real job, made a difference, there's a meaning to what we're doing, and you realise that the training works."

It's a common theme onboard – and across the RN. Give sailors and marines a mission they can see

is making a difference – disaster relief in the Caribbean or Far East, migrant patrols in the Mediterranean, evacuations in the face of civil unrest – and they'll pull out all the stops.

For Montrose, then Duncan, now Kent and Defender as well, by safely escorting the procession of oil and gas tankers through Hormuz they are helping to keep the home fires burning.

"The impact on the UK – and the world's economy – if these six million tonnes had not got through doesn't need underlining: about one third of the world's natural gas and one sixth of the world's oil pass through Hormuz," Commodore Dean Bassett, UK Maritime Component Commander – the senior Royal Navy officer in the Middle East, stressed.

"Our response is a direct result to the threat from Iran. If Iran sticks to international law and stops its aggressive action, there is no need for warships to be here in force."

With tankers Hellepont Pride and Moonbeam and the container ship Brighton safely ushered into the heart of the Gulf, Duncan swings away to the east for her next 'bleep test' run, Montrose makes for Bahrain and a handover to her port crew who'll resume the Hormuz mission in the second half of September because, as Commander King says, "The threat is there. And as long as it is, Royal Navy warships will be here to protect British shipping."

Report: Richard Hargreaves
Pictures: PO(Phot) Jay Allen and LPhot Rory Arnold

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

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New kit unveiled to keep Naval Service at cutting-edge of technology

No.31 on target for RN

THIS is your first look at the Type 31 frigate which will be on the front line in little more than five years' time.

The Arrowhead 140, by a consortium led by defence firm Babcock, has been selected by Whitehall as the design it wants for the five general purpose frigates to take their place in the Royal Navy's line of battle alongside eight 'souped-up' Type 26 frigates currently under construction.

The first – unnamed – ship will be laid down in just two years' time and launched in 2023, with the entire class completed by 2028, all for an average production cost of £250m per ship.

The five ships could be built in segments around the UK before being assembled at Babcock's yard in Rosyth – repeating the process of the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

The firm, which has teamed up with Thales to design the new vessels, reckons around 2,500 people across the land will be involved in the construction of the ships and the supply chain.

Babcock was one of three consortia bidding for the contract to replace the five general-purpose Type 23s – those not fitted with towed array and the full panoply of submarine-hunting sensors and systems (HM Ships Lancaster, Argyll, Monmouth, Montrose and Iron Duke) – which are reaching the end of their active lives.

BAE on the Clyde is building the eight 26s, successors to the eight Type 23s which are dedicated submarine hunters, as well as capable of performing patrol/security/board and search/humanitarian aid duties.

"It has been a tough competition and we are absolutely delighted that Arrowhead 140 has been recognised as offering the best design, build and delivery solution for the UK's Royal Navy Type 31 frigates," said Archie Bethel, Chief Executive Officer of Babcock.

"It is a modern warship that will meet the maritime threats of today and tomorrow, with British ingenuity and engineering at its core."

Babcock will now begin detailed discussions with the MOD and supply chain before the award of a formal contract expected later this year.

The announcement was made during London International Shipping Week, which happened at the same time as the UK's main defence exhibition.

HMS Argyll helped to showcase two remote-controlled boats which could transform piracy patrols, task group protection and surveillance missions.

The Plymouth-based frigate acted as the mother ship for a series of demonstrations involving hi-tech unmanned boats, which raced around London's Docklands during the Defence Security Equipment International event at the ExCeL Centre.

Unveiled at the week-long security fair were an unmanned Pacific 24 boat, which fed info from its sensors and cameras directly into Argyll's operations room – a first – and the futuristic-looking MAST-13.

As well as the RN, the Pacific 24 is the standard sea boat for the Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Ministry of Defence Police.

Experts from BAE, the RN, Defence and Science Technology Laboratory and autonomous systems suppliers L3Harris, demonstrated how the unmanned Pacific 24 could perform many of the duties carried out by manned boats

– without putting personnel in harm's way.

"The Pacific 24 is well-known to the Royal Navy and has a lot of potential in terms of its payload and deployment as an unmanned system," said Commander Sean Trevethan, programme director for the NavyX initiative which funded BAE Systems to develop the craft.

"Ultimately this will change the way we fight, through integrated command and control, and lead to the development of new tactics, techniques and procedures."

The slightly larger MAST-13 is described as a 'water-borne drone', deployed by a task force to act as its eyes and ears against surface attacks, possibly detecting mines, or being used to sneak up on the foe, silently gathering intelligence.

At DSEI, MAST-13 was used to shield Argyll from attack in a force protection exercise, detecting possible threats and feeding information back to the frigate.

At the previous DSEI, in 2017, the then First Sea Lord Admiral Philip Jones announced the ambition to deliver unmanned capability for mine countermeasures ships.

Two years on and a team of Royal Navy and DE&S personnel, supported by Atlas Elektronik UK, showcased an autonomus unmanned vehicle at HMNB Clyde.

Project Wilton offers a vessel fitted with a towed side scan sonar controlled remotely. The system will continue to grow and will ultimately be able to undertake route survey tasks, detecting, identifying and prosecuting mine threats.

Jared Pocock, Project Wilton Project Manager (DE&S), said: "This demonstration is a testament to the Royal Navy, DE&S and industry partners working collaboratively to deliver cutting-edge capability. This is a key enabler for maintaining the Royal Navy as the world leader in

autonomous mine countermeasures capability and ensuring the safety of our service men and women across the globe."

Royal Navy personnel are stationed at HMNB Clyde conducting initial operations for UK strategic tasks in the north of the country ready to be at operating capability by mid-2020.

The full mission system will eventually comprise three surface vessels, two autonomous and one manned, and multiple autonomous underwater and remotely-operated vehicles.

These will supplement the Royal Navy's current mine-hunting capabilities that are currently provided by the mine countermeasures vessels, the Hunt and Sandown classes.

Contracts to support and maintain hundreds of high-speed rigid inflatable boats (RIBs) and other small boats used to help protect Britain's shores have been awarded to BAE Systems under the Boats in Service Support (BISS) contract.

Four individual contracts valued at up to £112 million form part of the wider MOD BISS agreement.

Over six-and-a-half years, the contracts will help sustain existing skilled jobs as well as create new jobs at BAE Systems' Maritime Services business in Portsmouth Naval Base, increasing the size of the current team by up to 50 per cent.

The contracts awarded to BAE Systems cover the maintenance and support of more than 650 boats ranging in size from five to 18 metres, including those operated from Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels, and by the Ministry of Defence Police, British Army and Royal Marines, amounting to 27 different classes of boat.

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● Left, an artist's impression of the Type 31; Below left, the Pacific 24 and MAST-13 put on a demonstration on the River Thames; below right, an autonomous mine countermeasures vessel is put through its paces on the Clyde

Pictures: LPhot Joe Cater and LPhot Will Haigh



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HOMIE FROM HOMIE

HMS Medway gets warm welcome in Chatham as crowds gather to greet ship



HMS MEDWAY has been officially welcomed into the Royal Navy with a Commissioning Ceremony at Chatham Dockyard.

The Portsmouth-based Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) sailed to the docks in Kent on the River Medway – the waterway she's named after – for the ceremony and is now ready to deploy where the navy needs her most.

The new warship – the second of the five Batch 2 River class OPVs – welcomed guests and the families of the ship's company for the service, while locals lined the banks to watch the ceremony in the autumn sunshine.

It marked the start of five-day visit in Chatham where the ship's company exercised their Freedom of the City with a parade through the streets and invited around 1,500 members of the public on board for tours.

Some of the ship's company even found time in their busy schedule to go to Priestfield Stadium, the home of Gillingham FC.

They were invited onto the pitch to welcome the Gills' players and visitors Ipswich Town, who emerged 1-0 victors, to the field.

At the start of the

commissioning service, Medway's 60 sailors marched from the jetty to fall in alongside – ready for inspection by the ship's sponsor Lady Wendy Fallon.

Reverend Bernard Clarke led the service with an Act of Dedication before the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Collingwood played along to hymns.

As is tradition, the commissioning order for HMS Medway was read out in full – making her the 11th Royal Navy ship to bear the name.

For one sailor serving on the ship, the ceremony taking place in Kent had particular sentiment.

Sub Lieutenant Luke Murphy grew up 30 miles away in Canterbury and was able to celebrate the event with his family.

The gunnery officer said: "It is really good to come here as a local Kent lad and it feels like the ship has a home here as well as its home port of Portsmouth.

"It is special for us as a ship to be commissioned here on the River Medway itself as it is something that rarely happens.

"It is extra special for me as I have been able to mark this moment with my family.

"The community have really welcomed us and it is great to see people coming down to support us and celebrate the connections we have with this area."

Commander Ben Power, the ship's commanding officer, spoke of his pride in not just the ship but the ship's company.

He said: "It is special to be commissioning this ship here on the River Medway, an area that has an incredibly strong connection with the Royal Navy going back to the 16th Century.

"The reception we have received has been overwhelming. It is absolutely superb to be here.

"Today marks the culmination of five years of hard work.

"Getting HMS Medway to this point has taken huge effort and it has been incredibly rewarding to deliver a brand new warship to

the Royal Navy.

"We have a part to play in the very bright future of the Royal Navy. Medway is a very fine ship, she's slick, fast and agile.

"We took her from being a cold metal box floating on the Clyde to a living, breathing warship home to 60 sailors."

Addressing the ship's company, he added: "It is my greatest honour to be your captain and remain part of this wonderful team we have built together. We have a bright future and I hope I will not let you down."

HMS Medway and the new OPVs provide much greater capability, including a flight deck, increased top speed and longer endurance at sea.

The better endurance of Medway and her fellow class ships means they can be deployed overseas as well as in home waters.

They will undertake a variety of roles, including counter-terrorism, anti-smuggling, maritime defence and counter-narcotics as well as securing the UK's borders and protecting UK interests around the globe.

The first steel for HMS Medway was cut by BAE Systems in June 2015 in Glasgow. The ship's company then moved on board in May this year and the ship first sailed in June, joining her sister ship HMS Forth in Portsmouth.

HMS Medway then began sea trials that were completed in just 75 days which according to naval records is the shortest time since World War 2.

Addressing the sailors, Lady Fallon, who named the ship at BAE's Scotstoun yard on the Clyde, said: "I have been following the progress of Medway since 2015 and we've had a number of milestones since then.

"Now on this beautiful day, having completed her recent sea trials, in record time, here we are at another milestone here in historic Chatham.

"After all the hard work over the previous years I'm so pleased that all of you are here and have the opportunity to join together and celebrate this commissioning."

Pictures: LPhot Belinda Alker



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Bonnie Prince

Pictures: LPhotos Alex Ceolin and Pepe Hogan

TWENTY-ONE years after she was first mooted, eight since she was laid down, two after her sister struck out into the world, 18 months after she first floated, HMS Prince of Wales slipped her berth ready to begin sea trials.

On September 23 2019, Britain became the only Western naval power aside from the United States with two aircraft carriers at sea.

While HMS Queen Elizabeth blazes a trail conducting F-35 trials in the USA (see page 11), her younger sister is now on maiden sea trials in the North Sea making her own mark on the world stage.

After a delicate operation to manoeuvre the 65,000-tonne leviathan through the narrow (40cm to spare either side...) lock at Rosyth dockyard, and a couple of days at anchor in the Forth conducting final training, tugs ushered HMS Prince of Wales under the three iconic bridges spanning the river and out into open water.

Beyond the scores of gofers – civilian and ship’s company alike – braving the elements, no one took a battering more

than Falkirk’s Robbie MacIsaac of the Scottish Power Pipe Band.

Alone on the crest of the ski ramp the student in mechanical engineering from Strathclyde University sent the skirl of pipes drifting across the Firth of Forth on an otherwise dreich September Sunday.

And then it was time to get down to business: first deck landing (Dolphin 14/tail number ZH856 or 820 Naval Air Squadron, touched down at 1115 Hours on September 24 with Lt Rob Prior at the controls) then a couple of months of contractor sea trials, overseen by a team of 320 civilian contractors monitoring how the 280-metre-long leviathan performs and making any necessary adjustments, working alongside the 600-strong ship’s company.

Captain Darren Houston, HMS Prince of Wales’ Commanding Officer, said it had taken a monumental effort by sailors, shipwrights, engineers, electricians, scientists and designers to ready the nation’s most advanced warship for her debut at sea.

“I am immensely proud of the professionalism and determination that my ship’s company have shown in preparing themselves and their ship for this historic day.

“Whether through working alongside our industrial partners to support the build and commissioning of key systems or training tirelessly to operate the ship and work as a team, the crew have demonstrated unfaltering dedication and resolve in the face of a multitude of challenges.”

Leading Physical Trainer Carl Stubbs joined HMS Prince of Wales in March 2018 and is delighted to see life buzzing through the ship.

“I am extremely excited to go to sea for the first time having seen the ship come together over the past 18 months from being an empty hull to a state-of-the-art aircraft carrier, complete with a fully-trained crew,” he added.

“We have been busy getting the four gyms stocked with equipment ready to keep our sailors fit during trials and we will be running a full fitness programme for the crew whilst we are at sea.”

Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd, who took HMS Queen Elizabeth to sea for the first time in the summer of 2017, understands the excitement aboard HMS Prince of Wales – and realises what her advent means for the UK and Royal Navy.

“I am delighted to see HMS Prince of Wales at sea – well done the Aircraft Carrier Alliance and her ship’s company,” said Admiral Kyd.

“This is a hugely significant event for them but also for the Royal Navy and wider UK Defence. This means that, today, the Royal Navy has two aircraft carriers at sea – a powerful symbol of our government’s commitment to a strong defence and a global navy.”

Once trials are complete, the ship will make for Portsmouth ready for her commissioning ceremony in the presence of her Lady Sponsor, the Duchess of Cornwall, before the end of the year.



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Wrecks protected

THE final resting places of 571 people who lost their lives at sea around the UK will be protected by the Ministry of Defence.

The wrecks of another 15 ships and submarines – including seven U-boats – will be given additional legal protection by Whitehall as it adds to an already-extensive list of hallowed sites enshrined in UK law.

Among the shipwrecks now covered by the 1986 Protection of Military Remains Act is one of Scotland's worst wartime tragedies.

The yacht *Iolaire* struck rocks close to Stornoway harbour while carrying servicemen back to the Isle of Lewis at the end of the Great War.

Of the 284 men aboard, 201 were lost in the disaster, which occurred in the small hours of New Year's Day 1919 and still casts a shadow over the Isles of Lewis and Harris to this day; the 100th anniversary of the tragedy drew huge crowds of islanders paying their respects alongside the Lord of the Isles – as Prince Charles is known in the Hebrides.

Also afforded added protection are seven German U-boats lost around the UK between 1914 and 1918, mostly to mines, but also U-87, depth-charged, shelled and rammed by patrol vessels HMS P56 and HMS Buttercup on Christmas Day 1917 – just hours after it had torpedoed a liner bound for Liverpool.

The submarine sank 15 miles north of Fishguard, taking all 43 men aboard with it. Its wreck was found two years ago by experts from Bangor University.

The bulk of the new wrecks encompassed by the act are Great War vintage, but two are long-forgotten former French warships lost during the Battle of Britain.

Submarine chasers *Chasseurs* 06 and 07 escaped the fall of France and were taken over by British crews, who took them on patrol in Weymouth Bay on the night of October 11-12 1940.

The craft were pounced on by German motorboats and sunk. While several sailors were taken prisoner by the Germans, some men refused to surrender and chose to go down with their ships.

All the newly-listed wrecks are being designated 'protected places' – the sites can be visited by divers on a 'look but don't touch or enter' basis – with the exception of the remains of HMS B2.

One of Britain's second generation submarines, she was lost with 15 crew when she collided with the German liner SS *Amerika* northeast of Dover in October 1912.

Her wreck site is now a 'controlled site' – the highest level of protection, akin to HMS Royal Oak in Scotland; no diving is allowed with the permission of the MOD.

For a full list of the wrecks covered, see: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/news/2019/september/02/190902-tragic-iolaire-shipwreck-protected.

The wreck of HMS *Montagu* doesn't fall under the act – but will be protected.

The battleship was conducting radio trials in the Bristol Channel when she ran aground off the southwest tip of Lundy in thick fog in May 1906.

No-one was killed but despite extensive efforts, it proved impossible to refloat the Duncan-class battleship and the decision was taken to write her off.

She was stripped of anything the RN needed before being sold for salvage in 1907.

What remains of the battleship, wrecked at Shutter Point, is to be protected by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

At the request of Heritage England, Whitehall has agreed to add the wreck site – plus the 'Montagu steps', cut into the Lundy granite to allow salvage work to be carried out – to the National Heritage List.

That classifies the battleship as an important archaeological site which is to be closely managed.

Although divers can inspect what remains of the wreck, they cannot touch or remove anything from it.



Bang on the Buddon

ROYAL Marines shared their experience of decades of war-winning leadership with Lithuanian troops to bolster the Baltic nation's army.

Green berets of 45 Commando hit the ranges at Barry Buddon – just along the Angus coast from their home at RM Condor in Arbroath – to demonstrate how the Corps nurtures tomorrow's battlefield leaders.

Exercise Condor Command is a five-day test of aspiring junior leaders hoping to make their mark, using their initiative and experience to make decisions under pressure and carry the men under them to victory.

The training included lectures, section and troop attacks, the art of drawing up and issuing, night-time navigation, and living in the field, culminating in a 48-hour test exercise – all played out in front of observers Corporals Dovydas Stonys and Laurynas Kazlauskas from the Lithuanian Army's Griffin Brigade, based in the port city of Klaipeda.

"It was great to have the Lithuanians on board, shadowing the training team," said Sergeant Alex Sorrel, 45 Commando's physical training instructor.

"It's always useful to learn from each other and find out how they operate, and it's been an interesting opportunity to compare how we do things. Hopefully we can take this relationship further and work together again in the future."

Lithuania has an army just 12,500 troops strong – about twice the size of the Royal Marines – assigned to a series of mechanised brigades which are charged with defending their 2.7m fellow citizens spread across an area three times the size of Wales.

The link-up between the Condor men and the Griffin brigade was a direct result of this summer's Baltic Protector deployment by the Royal Navy, which dispatched

a sizeable amphibious task group to the region to work with allied forces in the region.

While in Lithuania, Royal Marines Arctic warfare and logistics specialists provided training to test the mettle of potential future leaders and after this exercise in Angus, the two forces intend to continue sharing knowledge and training opportunities.

"There's a lot of similarities between what you guys do and what we do, but the biggest difference is that we don't have a preparation course such as this," said Corporal Stonys.

"It's useful as it gives the guys confidence giving orders and leadership before going on for further training. The training package is something we would look to take on back in our units in Lithuania."



Atlantic apparition

A GHOST ship?

No crew. No lights. No movement. No records?

In the Bermuda Triangle? Not the stuff of Hollywood or Stephen King (well, actually it is, but...), rather a strange episode in an otherwise remarkably uneventful Atlantic crossing for ice patrol ship HMS Protector.

Some 700 nautical miles east of the island, the survey ship encountered a large, abandoned vessel, dead in the water.

Despite numerous hails on the radio and an attempted wake-up call with Protector's sound signals, no response came from the ship. Upon inspection, the ship had both lifeboats stowed, the engines did not appear to be running and no water was being taken in by the inlets. There was no obvious damage to the vessel and with the pilot ladder deployed Protector assumed that the crew had made their way to safety.

After circling the abandoned ship at close range, Protector was content that no crew were onboard, the ship continued on her way to Bermuda, reporting the position of the modern-day *Mary Celeste* in case other seafarers ran into it.

Investigation by Protector's crew (aka Google search) revealed the identity of – and story behind – the ghost ship.

The Tanzanian-flagged *MV Alta* was sailing from Greece to Haiti 12 months ago, only to run into trouble. With Hurricane Leslie approaching the vessel and her main engine beyond repair, the crew chose to abandon ship... which they did safely and made it ashore...

"A lot of us were intrigued by the ship – several crew referred to the *Mary Celeste*," said Captain Matt Syrett, Protector's Commanding Officer.

"After over a year at sea, the *Alta* remained in remarkable condition."

Musicians recall Deal atrocity 30 years on

ROYAL Marines Musicians returned to Kent on Sunday September 22 – 30 years to the day of one of the darkest moments in their proud history.

Eleven musicians were killed and another 11 injured when a bomb planted by the IRA in the 'Coffee Boat' rest area of the Staff Band at the Royal Marines School of Music, Deal, blew up.

The blast destroyed the building and a neighbouring accommodation block and rocked the quiet, close-knit seaside town leaving a dark pall of smoke hanging over it.

After the initial shock, followed by outrage – the then Commandant General of the Royal Marines Lieutenant General Sir Martin Garrod branded the bombers (who have never been caught) "the scum of the earth", vowing to purge "this foul and dark force of evil" – the bombing forged even closer ties between townsfolk and the Corps.

"As a young 17-year-old trainee musician at the time, I was amongst the first on scene – helping to support the injured and clear rubble to get to buried

casualties," recalled Warrant Officer 1st Class Si Tripp, bandmaster and editor of the official magazine *Blue Band*.

"The Training Band had been on the parade ground at the time, only a few hundred yards away. I still remember it vividly: the shock, disbelief and chaos." WO1 Tripp said the response of Deal residents was "truly heart-warming". As musicians queued at the barracks payphone to reassure loved ones they were safe, locals opened their doors and allowed them to use their phones to call home and gave

the bandsmen reassuring hugs to those shaken by the atrocity.

"The whole unit demonstrated their unbreakable spirit, courage and pride in the local community's support by parading through the town a week after the horrific event; leaving holes in the band for those who lost their lives. The townsfolk came out in force lining the streets in tribute," WO1 Tripp added.

The barracks closed seven years later – the School of Music can now be found in Portsmouth Naval Base – but the Band Service vowed to return to Deal

each year for a summer concert at the memorial bandstand built in memory of the bombing victims (attended by around 12,000 people in 2019), followed by an annual service of remembrance at 8.22 each September 22, the very moment the explosion occurred, in the memorial garden which is close to the former blast site.

The intimate ceremony was attended by the families and friends of those killed, with a brass group of trainees from today's School of Music providing musical accompaniment, and the band's Principal Director of

Music Lieutenant Colonel Jon Ridley reading the roll of honour as a bugler sounded the *Last Post*.

"Thirty years on the disbelief is still as real, those killed are still remembered reverently and the relationship with the town seems stronger than ever," said WO1 Tripp.

As well as commemorations in Kent, all five of the Royal Marines Bands – Portsmouth, Plymouth, Scotland, Lympstone and Collingwood – held services of remembrance in their establishments.

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TESTS TO THE WEST

THEY'VE crossed the Atlantic and are making their presence felt across the pond.

The ships, Royal Marines and aircraft of the UK's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) are now hitting their full stride on Westlant 19, with the UK's F35 jets about to be on the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth for the first time.

The CSG have come together off the east coast of the United States, but have also been on their own missions, elevating their skill set to bring back to the aircraft carrier.

Each of the elements of the CSG brings their own world-class capabilities and, when Queen Elizabeth heads on operations in 2021, all this fine tuning will be worth it.

HMS Northumberland brings cutting-edge submarine hunting abilities and that's exactly what she's been testing in the North Atlantic during Exercise Cutlass Fury.

Royal Marines of Lima Company, 42 Commando, are experts in pilot recovery and, alongside the Commando Merlins of 845 Naval Air Squadron, have trained in rapidly extracting a downed aviator. To begin Westlant, they stretched their legs on Dartmoor in search-and-rescue missions and, after that, during transit of the Atlantic, they fast roped off 845 NAS's Merlins and onto Queen Elizabeth's deck at sunset. The fast roping is the quickest way of getting to someone on the ground without the helicopter landing. It's a vital skill.

For air defence, you'll need a Type 45 destroyer and that's certainly HMS Dragon's domain on Westlant 19.

The Dragons linked up with Queen Elizabeth and RFA Tideforce for the sail across the Atlantic and entry into Halifax, Nova Scotia (the first ever visit for the carrier to Canada) but was soon off to test themselves with the Americans.

The destroyer joined the USS Eisenhower Strike Group to work with the UK's closest ally and ready herself for further tasks alongside Queen Elizabeth later in the deployment.

Of course, it's all thirsty work for a 65,000-tonne warship and her task group, meaning RFA Tideforce's presence is essential to ensure all of this doesn't grind to a halt and run out of fuel.

Tideforce carried out the first 'rapid refuelling' of the carrier as they travelled towards Halifax and continues to be an important presence in the CSG.

Once in Canada, sailors of the UK's biggest warship paid tribute to the 'Forgotten Few' on Battle of Britain Day.

They joined a service of thanksgiving for the deeds and sacrifices of the small band of aviators who helped stave off Nazi invasion in the summer of 1940 (see page 27 for more on this).

Meanwhile, Northumberland was ramping up her activity on Cutlass Fury.

The Type 23 frigate joined NATO allies in testing their ability to deal with threats to security in the North Atlantic on the largest Canadian-led naval war games for decades.

The Devonport-based warship brought her submarine-hunting skills to the task group of 20 ships and 36 aircraft in the waters east of North America.

The multinational force – which was operating in the seas off Nova Scotia – were proving their worth in air defence, defence against attacks from enemy navies, air-to-air combat and, Northumberland's specialism, countering submarines.

Cutlass Fury was about strengthening NATO ties – Canada, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway,

Portugal, USA and the UK were all involved as well as NATO's Standing Naval Maritime Group 1 – and getting Northumberland up to speed ahead of joining Queen Elizabeth.

After sheltering alongside in Halifax as Hurricane Dorian swept north, Northumberland headed out in the North Atlantic to go hunting and protect the Cutlass Fury task group from threats lurking beneath the waves.

The warship – kitted out with towed array sonar to track submarines at range – located subs, planned attacks and charged targets, manoeuvring hard to ensure success using her torpedoes, depth charges and her Merlin MK2 helicopter.

"There is nowhere to hide really from a warship like Northumberland. We will find that submarine," said Northumberland's Weapons Engineering Officer, Lieutenant Commander Markus Adcock.

"It has been hugely exciting learning to operate and fight within this task group. There has been no greater challenge in my career so far and it is a privilege to be updating the rule book as Northumberland partakes in Cutlass Fury and operates as part of the Carrier Strike Group."

MV-22 Ospreys also featured in the early stages of Westlant.

The hulking US Navy warbirds dropped in for night landings; the first time they've carried out such activity on HMS Queen Elizabeth after testing daytime landings last year.





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THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



Lyme light for RFA during London shipping week



PASSING landmarks, RFA Lyme Bay sailed up the River Thames for London International Shipping Week.

The amphibious support ship spent time anchored off Greenwich Pier – sailing under Queen Elizabeth II Bridge, past the O2 Arena and arriving near 19th Century sailing ship Cutty Sark.

For commanding officer Captain Angus Bissell, the vessel's presence in London highlighted the importance of the RFA to the Royal Navy and the wider maritime scene.

"It is amazing to be here in

London," he said.

"It's a great opportunity to be able to represent the RFA, showcasing the contribution we make to seafaring.

"We have a unique capability which our fellow Bay-class ship Mounts Bay has shown in the Bahamas."

Capt Bissell, a former Royal Navy submariner, added: "I haven't sailed the Thames since the 1980s so it is great to do it again and see, despite many changes, that it still welcomes shipping and maritime interests."



During her time in Greenwich, Lyme Bay hosted members of her affiliated companies and organisations.

While on board, the guests got to hear from Commodore RFA Duncan Lamb, head of the RFA, about what the ships have been doing in the past 12 months and were also given a tour of the 16,000-tonne ship.

Capt Bissell said the annual event was a great opportunity for people to learn more about the ship and the Bay-class' versatility.

Later that day, the latest maritime technology was put on display in an event hosted on board by the Department for Transport.

Cdre Lamb said: "It is really important for the RFA to be a part of London International Shipping Week. "With the cadets, apprentices and officers we have on board our ships, we add a significant maritime contribution.

"It is great to be able to highlight the good work the RFA does and its support to the Royal Navy."

Picture: LPhot Rory Arnold



Mersey's man hours in Douglas

DOUGLAS was the destination for the men and women of HMS Mersey as they took a brief break in the Isle of Man from fishery duties.

The ship used the short stop in Douglas for the latest rotation of one third of her crew and to take on stores and fuel as well as the chance to explore the island and fly the flag for the RN.

Crew hosted local police cadets, members of the civil defence force, their counterparts in the Isle of Man fisheries division and a team from a workshop for the disabled.

The ship's visit coincided with the Motorcycle Grand Prix - the island's second most prestigious biking event after the world-famous TT.

Ten members of the ship's company were invited to the official Grand Prix reception at Government House, hosted by Lieutenant Governor Sir Richard Gozney and Lady Gozney, and a handful also acted as marshals for some of the racing the following day.

A group of sailors were also given a guided tour of the Tynwald - the world's oldest parliament which has been serving Isle of Man folk for more than 1,000 years.

"All of us in the Mighty Mersey are very grateful for the incredibly warm welcome we received from the Isle of Man," said Lieutenant Commander Will Edwards-Bannon, the patrol ship's commanding officer.

My Ship's Company and I enjoyed hosting many members of the local community on board as well as taking the opportunity to explore the city and wider island.

"Visiting at the same time as the Motorcycle Grand Prix was a real highlight and, for those members of my ship's company who attended the Lieutenant Governor's reception or acted as marshals for the races themselves, it was truly a 'money-can't-buy' experience."

The Portsmouth-based patrol ship is currently assigned to the 'western area' fishery patrol, enforcing regulations in the Irish and Celtic Seas and the South-Western Approaches.



Hello, goodbye, hello

Sutherland strengthens ties with namesake county

YOU wait a year to visit your affiliated county which is 900 miles from home...
...and then you drop in twice in as many weeks...

Patrols in the North Sea and northern waters allowed HMS Sutherland to make a double appearance in her namesake historic region - although her sailors only set foot on hallowed turf once.

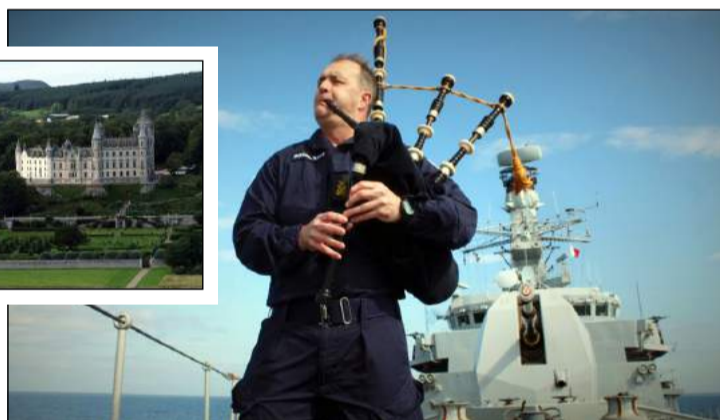
The first 'visit' was a ceremonial sail past of Dunrobin Castle, ancestral home of Lord and Lady Strathnaver, heads of Clan Sutherland as the Plymouth-based frigate headed out from Invergordon.

Petty Officer David 'Fergie' Ferguson stood on the ship's prow, bagpipes in hand, sending the skirl of *Highland Cathedral* drifting across the North Sea, while his shipmates hoisted the county standard - a white flag bearing a golden sun on black crosses - as a mark of respect to the duke who gives his name to the warship.

"I have taken my bagpipes onboard every ship and establishment that I have served in over 20 years with the Royal Navy and this occasion ranks as one of the best bag-piping moments," said David.

A fortnight later and patrol complete, the Fighting Clan returned to Invergordon - in neighbouring Ross-shire and the nearest port to Sutherland able to accommodate the frigate.

A sizeable proportion of Sutherland's 12,000 inhabitants were welcomed onboard for a reception and display of what the ship and crew can do, while



tours were given to potential recruits, Sea Cadets and Sea Scouts and a small contingent from the frigate got stuck into community projects.

"We rarely get the opportunity to visit our beautiful affiliated county of Sutherland and I am so glad that we were able to welcome so many members of the local community onboard, from established friends and affiliates to Sea Cadets and potential recruits for whom this was their first visit to the Fighting Clan. I'm hugely grateful to all those who made us feel so welcome," said Commanding Officer, Commander Tom Weaver.

No welcome was warmer than that

offered in AIness, just down the road from Invergordon, by the Morton family.

They greeted the frigate's marine engineer officer Lieutenant Commander David Morton - allowed the rare chance to visit his folks with his ship in town.

"My parents were delighted to see me back home and I certainly enjoyed some of my mother's home comforts, especially a real Scottish cooked breakfast with square sausage. And to be here in my hometown onboard the Fighting Clan while celebrating my 31st anniversary in the Royal Navy is a proud moment."

The ship's football and rugby teams



had mixed results against very competitive sides from Ross-Sutherland FC (a 6-1 drubbing for the sailors) and RFC (a 35-22 victory).

One group of sailors was treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of Dunrobin Castle and grounds, *pictured inset*. And in Dornoch, a contingent led by Commander Weaver and ship's chaplain Michael Beasley attended a Sunday service in the cathedral, followed by a tour of the local gin distillery which had been producing a dedicated HMS Sutherland gin to celebrate the frigate's visit.

Before resuming patrols there was still time for a party of volunteers to help Legion Scotland spruce up the memorial gardens in Golspie ready for the upcoming period of remembrance. Veterans treated the sailors to tea and stickies as a reward.

"Sutherland is certainly the most desolate if not the most beautiful of all Scottish counties and each and everyone of us onboard the Fighting Clan is proud of our affiliation with the county," said Lieutenant Commander George Blakeman, weapon engineer officer - and also charged with fostering the bond between the ship and her county.

Sutherland is now helping to train international war officers before taking part in the final Joint Warrior war game of 2019.

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow @HMSSutherland and @RoyalNavy on Twitter

Grimsby's crew feted during visit to namesake town

ROYAL Navy minehunter HMS Grimsby visited her namesake town to exercise her Freedom of the Borough.

The ship's company paraded through Grimsby and a service was held at the Town Hall to mark the warship's first visit to North East Lincolnshire since 2015.

HMS Grimsby was also open to the public, giving locals a rare opportunity to learn about the minehunter and her capabilities.

"We were overwhelmed by the many visitors who came to see HMS Grimsby and it shows how positively they hold the Armed Forces," said, HMS Grimsby's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Graeme Hazelwood.

"The name of Grimsby will be carried

far and wide and next year in the Gulf and around the world."

Deputy Mayor of North East Lincolnshire, Councillor David Hasthorpe, added: "We are delighted today to re-affirm our respect and our high regard for the men and women of the Royal Navy for their service to our country."

HMS Grimsby is home-ported at Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde and after a busy period on operations around the UK, made her way to Humberside.

The current crew have been on board since May and, by the end of last month, the Sandown-class minehunter had completed a second circumnavigation of the UK within a four-month period, having clocked several thousand miles in

the process.

She recently made a visit to London and before that supported events in Vlissingen, in the Netherlands, to mark 75 years since the liberation of the country by UK and allied forces in World War Two.

This included providing a guard to open a new memorial and participating in a naval parade of 11 allied ships in the presence of King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands.

After the visit to Grimsby the ship returned to Clyde for a programmed maintenance period and a change of crew before getting ready for a Nato deployment.

Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury



Bay brings relief to storm-hit Bahamas



RFA Mounts Bay anchors off Great Abaco Island in the Bahamas to allow her Mexeflote raft to deliver vital supplies to hurricane-hit communities.

During a ten-day mercy mission, the RFA, the first ship to arrive on the scene in the wake of devastating Hurricane Dorian, armed forces personnel helped more than 6,000 islanders.

As she departed, survey ship HMS Protector – on her way to the frozen wastes of Antarctica – sailed for Nassau to deliver additional aid to Bahamians.

Mounts Bay, which is on stand-by to assist in the Caribbean throughout the hurricane season, arrived at Great Abaco – the main island in a chain in the northern Bahamas – in the wake of the catastrophic Category 5 storm.

Weeks after the hurricane steamrollered the archipelago, the true scale of the damage and death toll was still unfolding.

The amphibious support vessel's personnel – which includes Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Engineers and Royal Logistics Corps – played a vital role in enabling support to reach some of the worst-hit areas.

Mounts Bay distributed all of her stores, which included 3,000 ration packs, nearly 100 tonnes of water, over 900 emergency shelter kits, and 1,000 hygiene kits.

The support ship ensured communities on Great Abaco had access to the most basic needs such as food, water, and shelter in the immediate aftermath of the worst storm the islands have ever seen – thanks in no small part to the ship's Wildcat helicopter, which not only flew reconnaissance flights to assess damage but located isolated communities in outlying islands in urgent need.

Commanding Officer Captain Rob Anders said his team had helped at least 6,000 people spread across three main communities – Foxtown, Marsh Harbour and Cooperstown – while the Wildcat flew four islanders directly to hospital.

There is still a massive amount of clear-up work to do – thousands of Bahamians are calmly awaiting evacuation to escape both the devastation and threat of diseases.

The ship's Wildcat crew was flying over Great Abaco Island to assess the damage when its crew were suddenly requested to evacuate a casualty from Elbow Cay.

The individual was removed from the debris and brought back to RFA Mounts Bay to be treated by the team of Royal Navy medics on board.

They were then provided with emergency medication before being airlifted to the capital, Nassau.

The Wildcat also conducted a casualty evacuation of a woman, her two children and a baby to Nassau. The helicopter crew comprised Flight Commander Lieutenant Lee Holborn, Flight Observer Lieutenant Keith Webb and medical officer Surgeon Lieutenant Rebecca Miles.

Surg Lt Miles said: "The children were in a poorly condition and required immediate medical care. It was hugely rewarding to use my training and skills to provide essential and immediate life-saving care to this family."

On a later flight RFA medical technician Graham Trevaskis was tasked with helping an elderly woman with diabetes. She was also airlifted to Nassau.

Lt Holborn added: "We were ready to provide assistance where necessary and it was rewarding to know you have made significant difference, not

wider island, but to the individual families of those affected."

Mounts Bay delivered shelter kits, ration packs and water, with the Wildcat airlifting relief to outlying, cut off communities in liaison with the Royal Bahamian Defence Force.

The ship brought ashore her heavy plant equipment such as all-terrain quads, dump trucks, and diggers. RFA Mounts Bay's specialist crew and kit made her best placed to open the port and clear the airport runway so more international aid, including relief arriving from the United States, could reach the island.

The ship has been in the Caribbean since June 2016 in preparation for the hurricane season and was re-tasked to sail to the Bahamas in anticipation of Hurricane Dorian, the strongest ever recorded in the region.

RFA Mounts Bay has embarked a dedicated humanitarian and disaster relief team, and carries vital aid and specialist equipment.

As well as the humanitarian and disaster relief team, the ship carries vital aid and also has all-terrain quads, dump trucks, diggers and stores on board.

It also stores aid from the Department for International Development (DFID), including water carriers, hygiene kits with basic items such as soap, and shelter kits.

The Executive Officer (XO) for RFA Mounts Bay, Chief Officer James Wingrove, oversaw the delivery of emergency aid.

Chief Officer Wingrove, from Devon, was involved in the emergency relief efforts in British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Turks and Caicos Islands, and Dominica, after Hurricane Irma two years ago.

"Everyone pulled together and worked through very long days. It was humbling to see just how much people did, with some pushing themselves almost to exhaustion to get aid ashore and help the people who had been affected by the hurricane."

He added: "The most intense period was a four-day stretch where we pretty much emptied the ship of stores and supplies."

Since Hurricane Dorian hit, a liaison officer from the Royal Bahamas Defence Force and a DFID humanitarian expert were on board to help co-ordinate the relief efforts.

Tracking Hurricane Dorian from the south, RFA Mounts Bay's HADR Command Planning Group prepared for the task ahead, assessing the island chain's geographical picture and infrastructure to ensure that maximum initial support could be provided to those affected.

With regular updates from the ship's metrological team, the Command Planning Group

kept a close watch on Dorian's advance, tracking its progress as it developed through the West Indies.

The ship's meteorologist, Lieutenant Naomi Stevens, said: "Dorian produced heavy rainfall and sustained hurricane force winds."

Capt Anders said: "I am pleased to be able to use our people and equipment to send water and food ashore to provide aid to the Bahamian people."

"We hope that our presence in the area in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Dorian will provide some peace of mind and reassurance to all those affected."

Hurricane Dorian brought winds of 185mph (298km/h) – equalling the highest ever recorded at landfall. It battered the Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama, in the north of the archipelago, for two days.

Bahamas PM Hubert Minnis called the storm "one of the greatest national crises in our country's history".

Although Grand Bahama suffered severe damage and floods, the Abaco Islands were hardest hit. Footage taken from the air showed vast swathes of destruction. Homes, roads and businesses were torn apart, and high waters remain.

"There's nothing left in most of Marsh Harbour," said Alicia Cook, who evacuated from the area in the Abaco Islands. "People are starting to panic: pillaging, looting."

Bob Cornea said he and his wife had taken shelter on the second storey of their son's house in Marsh Harbour.

"Water was up to my neck. It stayed like that for two or three hours... My son... he got us out and we got over to safety."

"We've been through all kinds

hurricanes, all kinds of storms: never anything that bad. I mean, it was like we were standing in the middle of the ocean. That's what it looked like. Waves, the water just crashing in over us. Horrifying. Absolutely horrifying."

Mounts Bay's Third Officer (Logistics and Supply) Thomas Colombari, who joined the RFA in February, said: "This is what I joined the RFA for: The purpose of the role and ability to see each element of your work contribute to a common goal."

His main role was ensuring that vital provisions were available to support the HADR team.

A Dutch taskforce moved into the area as Mounts Bay headed to replenish aid stores and fuel in Port Everglades, Florida. HMS Protector, meanwhile, delivered 23 tonnes of Bermudian aid to capital Nassau.

Following her stop in Florida, Mounts Bay was returning to the Caribbean region to continue to be on stand-by, ready to support more than 200,000 British citizens living in overseas territories for the duration of the hurricane season.

The UK

has committed up to £1.5 million towards the immediate humanitarian response.

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Pictures: L'hot Paul Halliwell



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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.

surge in demand

ONE minute you're saluting your namesake in his ancestral home, the next you're taking onboard 70 tonnes of fuel to keep you powering through the North Sea.

Refuelling in the North Sea is HMS Sutherland. Providing the black gold, new tanker RFA Tidesurge, supporting the work of the Royal Navy in home waters.

The 39,000-tonne auxiliary is the third of four Tide-class tankers built to support the UK's new aircraft carriers and their task groups, delivering fuel to power both the warships and the jets and helicopters.

Using all her rigs and probes at maximum capacity, Tidesurge could pump 2,400 tonnes of fuel into the waiting tanks of HMS Queen Elizabeth in just an hour – enough to fill the tanks of 43,000 family cars.



The 70 tonnes shipped across to the Plymouth-based frigate, which has just paid her respects to the Duke of Sutherland, would only suffice to top up about 1,200 cars, but satiated the thirsty warship all the same.

Refuelling – aka a Replenishment At Sea or RAS – is among the most challenging manoeuvres ships perform due to the dynamics of two vessels ploughing along at 12 knots (15mph) just 25 metres apart.

To add to the challenge, this refuelling was conducted silently – without the use of radio, as is done in wartime to avoid giving your location away – solely using visual signalling (flashing light and flags).

Tidesurge's communications experts Petty Officer Gareth Jones and Leading Hand Richie Coldwell, pictured top right, fired up the Aldis signalling projector and flashed Morse code across to their counterparts on HMS Sutherland until the fuel had been successfully transferred and the frigate resumed her home waters patrol.

Tidesurge only entered service back in February, since when she's been heavily engaged supporting Royal Navy operations in the Norwegian and North Seas and Atlantic, some of it inside the Arctic Circle, and much of it with a Merlin helicopter from 814 Naval Air Squadron embarked.

"The facilities and operational support provided to our detachment by the crew of Tidesurge have been exceptional, allowing us to focus on being as effective as possible," said Lieutenant Tom Wallis, in charge of the Merlin team on board.

"The Tide class of fast tankers are perfect platforms for the Merlin to operate from, and my team and I are already looking forward to our next embarkation."

All that support to operations has emptied Tidesurge's tanks and storerooms, so she became the first ship in her class to pass under the Forth bridges to sail to the MOD's depot at Crombie to stock up and allow a crew change.

"We've truly 'surged' into service as a much-updated tanker – but we've proved we are much more than that," said Captain Gerry Patterson RFA, Tidesurge's Commanding Officer.

"Tidesurge has shown that she can react



● 2/O(CIS) Rob Mackie and CR1 Ross Grosvenor on the bridge roof

quickly to operational contingencies and short-notice tasking and, having also been active within the Arctic Circle, we've returned to the UK with a 'blue nose' – an honour bestowed by King Neptune in the North."

Capt Patterson then had the opportunity of taking Tidesurge to his native Greenock.

Capt Patterson and crew members from Tidesurge headed ashore by boat during the visit, visiting the Civic Centre to meet with Provost Martin Brennan and members of Inverclyde Council.

Previously Greenock was affiliated to RFA Gold Rover, which provided service in support of the Royal Navy and NATO allies for more than 40 years.

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow @RFATidesurge, @RFAHeadquarters and @RoyalNavy on Twitter

Proud homecoming for starship CO

IT WAS a proud moment for Commander Cecil Ladislaus as he sailed a ship into his homeland of Gibraltar for the first time as a commanding officer.

HMS Enterprise was in Gibraltar for a routine port stop in between surveying operations in the Mediterranean, but it gave her CO a chance to mark a significant personal milestone.

Although Cdr Ladislaus has visited Gibraltar on other Royal Navy ships, this is the first time he has returned as commanding officer.



He said: "I have been privileged enough to have the opportunity to come to Gibraltar on many occasions with previous ships – HMS Gloucester as a young officer, HMS Turbulent as a watch navigator and later watch leader and HMS Echo as First Lieutenant and again later as Executive Officer.

"But nothing beats coming here for the first time as a captain of a Royal Navy ship.



"Going into any port as a captain is a great experience but to come into Gibraltar, to return home, is a really special moment.

"It means a lot to share this with the ship's company of HMS Enterprise and to make this visit while we continue our important work."

Cdr Ladislaus left the Rock in 1995 to study civil engineering at Nottingham University.

In January 2000 he joined the

Navy and after a career in various different roles he was promoted to commander last summer.

His wife and children visited him while Enterprise was alongside in Gibraltar, with family and friends also getting a tour of the ship.

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Pictures by LCpl James Clarke
Reporting by Lt Simon Williams
Words by Peter Howard

INDIANA HONES

ROYAL Marines entered battle through underground tunnels and fought through an abandoned hospital complex on dense urban operations training in the USA.

Charlie Company of Taunton-based 40 Commando fought alongside the United States Marine Corps (USMC) at the derelict site in Muscatatuck, Indiana.

What was once a secure hospital complex – home to around 3,000 patients and 2,000 staff – has been turned into an extraordinary urban training centre by the US military, and is now a place where the Americans train in warfighting, cyberwarfare and disaster-relief operations.

The zone – which looks like a scene out of a post-apocalyptic film – features submerged villages, derailed trains, Iraqi market thoroughfares, Djibouti shanty towns, plus a mock tailors, schools, banks and a TV shop.

Since the 1,000-acre facility was first abandoned ten years ago, the Americans have amped up the complex's abandoned-feel: adding scrap vehicles, including buses, cars, planes and helicopters, which have been scattered across roads to add obstacles for troops to fight through.

While in Muscatatuck, Charlie Company embedded with a USMC company and, in true commando style, entered combat through underground tunnels while the Americans battled along above on the streets.

The two forces then combined to clear through the hospital to win a close-quarters battle against a realistic enemy peer in the main event of the dense urban operations training deployment.

"The hospital has certainly been one of the most challenging and exciting places we've had to work in," said Marine Alec Pace of Charlie Company.

"It's a massive, great big building. We found out effectively it just got shut down overnight. The employees left and left everything in situ.

"So we've got equipment, we've got beds strewn all over the actual hospital itself. You've got many different levels to have to clear through.

"You've also got a basement with an extensive tunnel network underneath as well."

During their mission in Indiana, the commandos used the American M4 rifle, which brings advantages to close-quarters battle.

Marine Pace added: "It can be used in both arms which is massively helpful. The benefit to that is that we are able to appear around corners without having to fully expose our bodies.

"It's also lighter, so it allows us to keep our aim for much longer periods of time. We haven't experienced any stoppages with the rifle either."

The Royal Marines certainly made an impression on their USMC allies and are continuing to prove their ability to quickly integrate and operate with a variety of global partners.

"I've loved it. I think the way the commandos operate, the individual skills, they're bar none," said Sergeant John Hazel of the USMC.

This urban fighting workout is excellent training for the theatres of war Royal Marines could operate in the future.

At Muscatatuck there was also the addition of training with emerging technologies which provide tactical advantages, fitting into the Royal Marines' continued evolution in to the Future Commando Force.

During the Muscatatuck deployment, 40 Commando worked with remote piloted assets. That includes tracked vehicles fitted for lift or fire support, plus a variety of UAVs used offensively or for surveillance.

"The approach by the USMC experimental teams has been looking at the needs of their marines and then finding existing products to fulfil that need – plus a small amount of retro-fitting if needed," said Lieutenant Simon Williams of 40 Commando.

Now the marines look towards further training with the United States with exercises planned in California later this month on Exercise Green Dagger.



FLYING HIGH

W

ith his hands at the controls and his eyes focused, Air Engineering Technician (AET) James Payne uses all

his concentration to keep his craft on course and at the correct speed.

The 19-year-old makes skilful manoeuvres, and after a short burst of speed, manages to make a safe landing.

Trained to fix Wildcat helicopters, AET Payne has been putting his mechanical abilities to other uses – by building and flying drones.

His passion, along with a handful of others serving in the Royal Navy and Fleet Air Arm, has seen the start-up of the Royal Navy Drone Racing team.

Only launched last year, the team is still in its infancy but has seen its numbers grow. From fixed-wing aircraft to home-made drones of all sizes, the team caters for all ages and abilities; AET Payne knew very little on the subject when he helped establish the team.

And as their hobby for drone sport grows, so does the members' passion for designing, building and flying the machines.

The Royal Navy has an operational drone unit – 700X Naval Air Squadron based at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose, in Cornwall. It's responsible for trialling unmanned aerial vehicles.

And for the RN Drone Racing team, the chance to turn a passion into a potential future career is an attractive prospect.

AET Payne, currently based at RAF Marham working as an engineer on the F-35B Lightning jet, said: "Last year I visited 700X Squadron and was shown around what they do and what they hope to do in the future. Having the drone racing team is great because it means you have people with a passion for drones in the Royal Navy who might consider joining 700X and using those racing skills operationally."

"With the world evolving and more things relying on technology, using drones has a big part to play in the future of aviation and distribution. With the racing teams, the military knows it's getting people, including some young engineers, with skills that can be utilised in the future."

Lieutenant Commander Justin Matthews, the commanding officer of 700X Squadron, agreed.

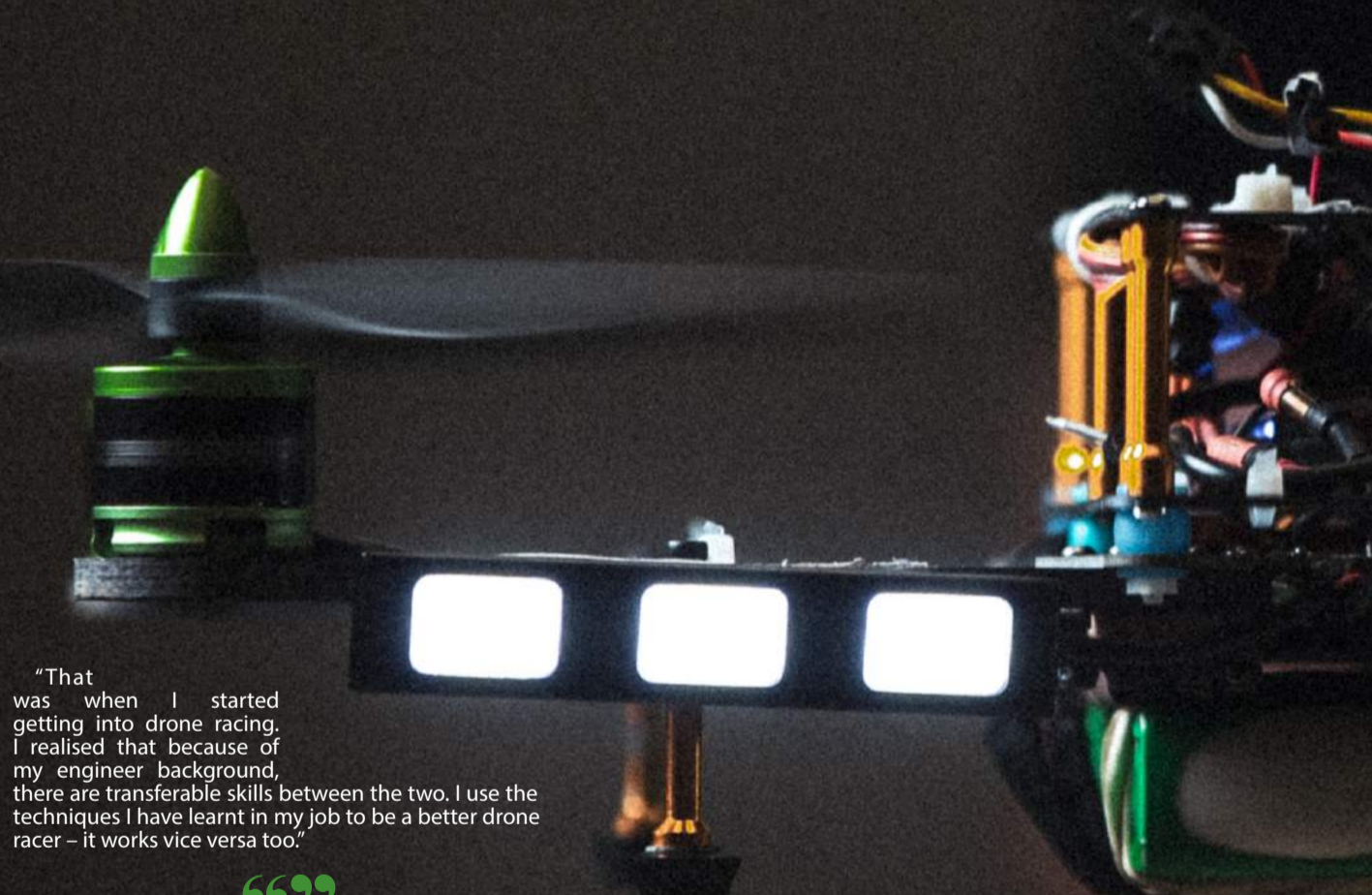
He said: "While drone racing may outwardly be a sport, it can develop and show skills which can be taken into an operational environment."

"The innovative approach is really in keeping with 700X Naval Air Squadron and how we are trying to drive this area forward within the Royal Navy."

AET Payne joined the Royal Navy as a 16-year-old and, after completing his basic training, started training to be an engineer at HMS Sultan in Gosport. He then moved to RNAS Yeovilton, in Somerset, where he maintained Wildcat helicopters – the navy's newest maritime helicopter.

It was there he developed a passion for drones and drone racing.

"My girlfriend brought me a toy drone, I broke it and was interested in fixing it," he added. "I thought to myself, if I can fix a helicopter, I can fix a little drone."



"That was when I started getting into drone racing. I realised that because of my engineer background, there are transferable skills between the two. I use the techniques I have learnt in my job to be a better drone racer – it works vice versa too."

“““

With the racing teams, the military knows it's getting people, including some young engineers, with skills that can be utilised in the future.

- AET James Payne

His time building and flying drones has seen AET Payne grow in confidence, both socially and in his own abilities. He said: "When you get a racing drone, if you don't know how

to fix it you won't be flying very long. The aim is to fly them as fast as they can – that means they break often. We don't have a team of engineers to fix them for us. We have to be able to fix them ourselves.

"To take part in a competition with a drone I built, it is a feeling like no other. Having something you built fly is pretty crazy and mind-blowing. Drone racing is fun regardless but when you have put in the hours to build something, it means a lot more."

The RN Drone Racing team recently had a stand at Royal Navy International Air Day, held at RNAS Yeovilton. They said it was a good promotion for them, with many senior leaders keen to learn more about what they do.

Now, they are looking to boost their numbers and get out to more events and more armed forces races.

AET Nick Prince, a Wildcat engineer on 825 Naval Air Squadron at Yeovilton, said: "It was really good at the air day having people, both in the navy and the public, coming up to us and asking questions. We were helping people get more knowledge not just about the team but about drones in general."

"We are hoping through STEM programmes we can go into schools and give them a better understanding on how drones



work, how to fly them and also our backgrounds and what we do in the navy."

AET Prince also flies fixed-wing aircraft and likes challenging himself to be successful in both.

"I have been flying planes for about ten years and drones for about five," he added.

"Being part of the navy drone racing team means my passion for both has grown and it has shown me what I can achieve. It's also shown how my job as an engineer can boost a hobby I love."

For avionics instructor Leading Hand (LH) Neil MacMillan, he got into the team after using drones as part of his teaching in the classroom, at the Engineering Training School at RNAS Yeovilton. AET Payne asked his advice on building a drone from scratch and they started working together.

LH MacMillan expects to see the team grow as more people learn about them. He said: "Once we get the message out, I think we'll see greater interest and an increase in members."

"People don't necessarily realise their skills are transferable and it is something anyone can do. Unmanned equipment is the future and it is great to see young guys coming through who have an interest."

Meet some of the team...

AET James Payne

James joined the Royal Navy when he was 16-years-old and, after his initial training at HMS Raleigh, started training at HMS Sultan to become an aircraft engineer.

He used to build model railways and helicopters as a child so was keen to find a job that utilised these skills.

Working with the



British Army drone racing team saw him compete in a tournament in Australia against other armed forces. Despite only flying for a year, he finished sixth.

AET Nick Prince

Nick's passion for drones started five years ago when he started looking at cinematic drones and the videos they can

capture.

The 20-year-old was surprised at how quickly he learnt the mechanics of building a drone and wants to spread the message that anyone can do it.



LH Neil MacMillan

Taking drones out of the classroom and into the field is something Neil loves to do.

The Merlin instructor has enjoyed

working with other engineers in a subject he's passionate about.

He said being part of the team and talking about it to senior leaders has improved his self-esteem.



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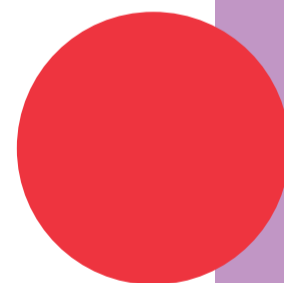
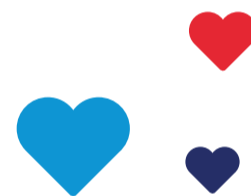
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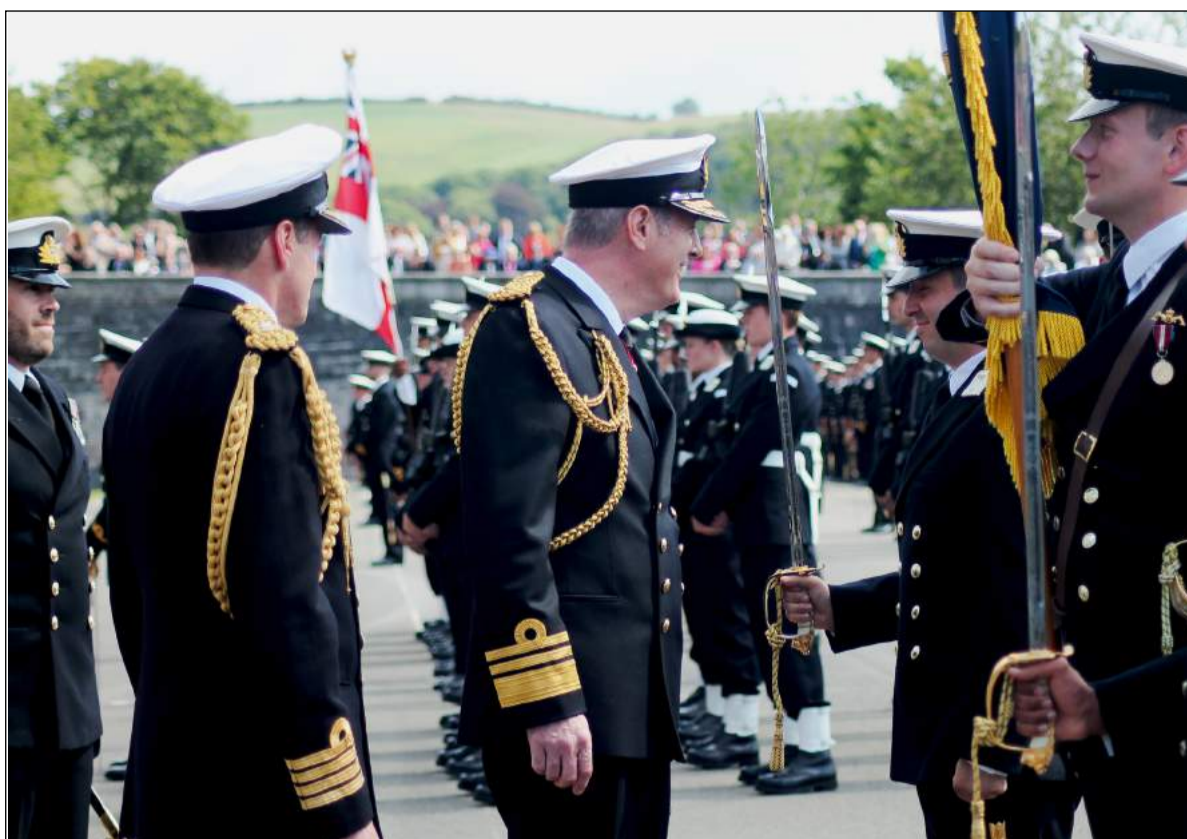
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First BRNC parade for new second

THE Royal Navy's Second Sea Lord took the salute at a passing-out-parade at Britannia Royal Naval College.

Vice Admiral Nick Hine, who was visiting the college for the first time since taking up his new appointment in April, was guest of honour.

Watched by their families and friends, the parade marked the end of training for 89 new Royal Navy officers, including 17 promoted from the ranks. Also taking part in the parade were 27 international cadets from 12 countries

and 11 new officers for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Vice Admiral Hine said: "It is an absolute honour to return to BRNC to mark the beginning of an exciting journey for every one of the officers stood in front of me today.

"The pace of change in the world shows no signs of slowing down and the challenge we all face, but especially those who are commissioning as officers today, is maintaining our global relevance and the ability to fight and win in a digital,

data-heavy world. These are exciting times and I welcome each and every one of them and their families to the Naval Family."

It was also the final parade of Captain Jol Woodard's tenure as BRNC's Commanding Officer. He is being replaced by Captain Roger Readwin.

Capt Woodard said: "My three years in Command of the college has been without doubt the highlight of my career. BRNC is truly a jewel in the crown for the Royal Navy."

Home from home for Kevin

A SENIOR rating came face to face with the president of his former home at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

Leading Hand (Supply Chain) Kevin Joseph, originally from Tobago, was hosting the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force Steel Band Orchestra while they performed at the annual military spectacular.

The sailor, from HMS Prince of Wales, met the President of Trinidad and Tobago, Paula-Mae Weekes, who was guest of honour of the Edinburgh Tattoo Company.

After the show, LH Joseph was invited into the Royal Gallery for the producer's reception where he was presented to President Weekes and the Chief of Defence Staff of Trinidad and Tobago, Air Commodore Darryl Daniel.

He was thanked for looking after the nation's Steel Band. Forming part of the Tattoo's Kaleidoscope theme in 2019. Trinidad and Tobago's Defence Force Steel orchestra were invited to represent the colour yellow to reflect their sunshine-blessed state.

Based in nearby Rosyth Dockyard, where HMS Prince of Wales is preparing to depart for sea trials, LH Joseph enjoyed meeting up with the band members from his homeland.

He said: "I've been lucky to see the tattoo twice now and this has been really

special for me with my home country performing. I have been helping the Steel Orchestra to find places to go and things to do in Edinburgh, showing them where to eat, what to see and how to enjoy the weather, and find souvenirs to take back home.



"It has been wonderful to feel those Trinidad and Tobago vibes here in Scotland and to show the international audience what our country has to offer.

"Steel drumming was born in Trinidad and Tobago and this is the only Defence Force Steel orchestra in the world.

"It is also the first time our president has been invited to visit the tattoo, so it is quite a historic occasion. I'm chuffed and very, very proud to meet President Weekes – you can just see the big smile on my face that I'm absolutely loving it here, the Navy has been really good to me and I'm happy to be serving on the best ship in the Fleet.

"Although we are the second in the class of ship, there's a saying on board you know, that we are second to none."

LH Joseph joined the Navy in January 2014 having arrived in the UK in December 2013 and has served on board HMS Monmouth and HMS Queen Elizabeth prior to joining HMS Prince of Wales.

Seeing double

Reservists cause confusion at Raleigh

IDENTICAL twins Jess and Hannah Holman have been causing confusion at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

The 18-year-old Royal Naval Reservists, who belong to the Gateshead unit, HMS Calliope, were among a group of Reservists, from across the country, who spent two weeks at the Royal Navy training base to complete their initial training.

Having the twins in the class was bewildering for some of the staff and their fellow trainees.

Jess, on the left of the photo, said: "People found it quite a novelty. We were living with some of the regular Royal Navy recruits and those nearing the end of their ten-week course, who were really tired, thought that they were seeing double."

Hannah added: "Sometimes Jess was in a different uniform to me and people were asking how did you get changed so fast?"

The twins, from Tyne and Wear, joined the RNR in August 2018. Members of the RNR conduct most of their induction within their own units and then go to HMS Raleigh for a two-week consolidated course which gives them the experience of living in a service environment.

Hannah said: "The course tested our boundaries. Going in and knowing you're going to be out of our comfort zone for two weeks and thinking, yes, I'm going to do this and smash all the tasks, knowing that it'll be hard and challenging, but also knowing that when you do it you'll be really proud."

One of the highlights for Jess was the variety of people the twins met during their course.

She said: "With the Reserves you have people who work full-time, some have children and others are studying, it's just a massive variety of people and that's really nice. The activities were really good. We spent two nights on Dartmoor, where we did a 22km hike carrying our Bergens, that was so hard."

Jess and Hannah have previous experience of the Naval Service through their family. Their father and grandfather were both in the Royal Marines Reserve and they have a cousin who is a regular in the Royal Navy.

The duo are currently studying for their A Levels. Hannah is hoping to have a career in sports science and is studying physics, biology and PE.

Jess is studying physics, biology and English language.



She said: "I want to go to university and study marine biology. It might help with something in the Navy, but I don't know yet if I want to join full-time, but that's certainly something I can think about when I have a bit more experience."

The twins have identical twin brothers, Johnny and George, 14, who are also thinking of joining the RNR.

Band dazzles at children's concert

THE Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Collingwood had a little bit of help at a concert when children of service personnel joined them.

The Band wanted their latest concert to unite them and their audience in a unique way and to let the children become an integral part of the show.

The musicians encouraged their young audience to clap, dance and sing their way through tunes from *The Incredibles*, *Lion King* and *The Greatest Showman* to mention just a few.

Harry Naughton, the bandmaster's son, sang *Beyond the Sea* and James Walker was helped out in

the percussion section.

Young cadet Michael Horn impressed everyone with his flawless static drum routine, playing with the Band's famous Corps of Drums.

After the concert, the fun moved outside when the audience marched out to *The Bare Necessities* behind the Corps of Drums.

Musician Charlene Walker said: "We like to put these concerts on as a thank you to our families. Quite often we have to work away or work unsociable hours which can put a strain on our families."



Thanks for your support

THE ship's company of HMS Hurworth invited their loved ones to sea to thank them for their support.

Forty-one family members, together with six of the ship's affiliated sea cadets, sailed from Portsmouth for a taste of life at sea.

Once in the Solent, the crew of HMS Hurworth started showing their guests the ropes, with sea boat demonstrations, tours between decks and explanations as to how the ship defends herself if attacked.

There was also the chance to experience steering the ship from the bridge.

The day's hard work was rewarded with ice creams and then an al fresco lunch on the Sweep Deck before

returning to port.

Although an enjoyable day was had by all, this was also an opportunity to explain to the families what the Royal Navy can do for them.

With the crew deploying on operations at the end of the year, representatives from Royal Navy and Royal Marines Welfare and the Chaplaincy were also on board to explain the support available

Hurworth is a Hunt-class mine hunter, currently manned by Crew 5 of the Second Mine Countermeasures Squadron. The crew are conducting pre-deployment training over the autumn, before flying out on operations at the end of the year.





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SENDING A SIGNAL

CONCEPT LPHOT JOE CATER PICTURES LPHOT BEN CORBETT & LPHOT DAN SHEPHERD WORDS SAM BANNISTER

Photography project aims to show LGBT+ acceptance within the Naval Service

MEMBERS of the LGBT+ community serve throughout the Royal Navy and Royal Marines without prejudice.

But the misconception that the armed forces are a hotbed of homophobia still exists within some pockets of the British public. Now a photography project masterminded by a Royal Navy photographer aims to show those outside the armed forces that the Navy welcomes all talent to its ranks – regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Leading Photographer Joe Cater asked LGBT+ sailors and marines to pose with chalkboards bearing one word which summed up their experience of being in the Naval Service.

"I wanted to create something that people would look at and realise the Royal Navy is just one professional outfit and it doesn't matter what your sexual orientation or gender identity is," said LPhot Cater.

"Photographing the Naval Service at Pride in London last year was one of the highlights of my career as a Royal Navy photographer. There were so many photo opportunities with lots of colour and lots of emotion.

"I named the project 'We Are One' because as a straight ally of the LGBT+ community I believe it's good to show others that it doesn't matter what background you come from, what religion you are or what your sexuality is, we all join to be one team."

This year marks almost 20 years since the ban on LGBT+ people serving in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines was lifted.

But the acceptance within the Naval Service isn't always matched by the rest of the UK. More than one in three LGBT+ people in the UK report having suffered abuse because of their sexuality or gender.

Homosexuality remains illegal in 72 countries and is punishable by death in eight nations.

Petty Officer Samantha Kimberley-Hauff, who took part in the photography project, said: "The Navy is the first job I've ever had where I feel like I don't have to worry about being gay."

"Projects like this help us show potential recruits who might otherwise be put off joining the Navy that we value people no matter who they love."



ACCEPTANCE



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She's done it!

COMMANDER Jane Allen, the Victory Walker set off from HMS Victory on October 21 2017, to walk anticlockwise round the coast of mainland UK raising money for two naval charities, the WRNS BT and RNRMC. Despite suffering various setbacks during her time away, she remained focussed on getting back to Portsmouth. In her final update Jane takes the reader from Portland back to her happy return on September 6 when the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Nick Hine, welcomed her when she arrived back at HMS Victory – after 5,495 miles over the past 22 months.

It certainly wasn't all plain sailing from Portland to Portsmouth. Being high season, holidaymakers were out in force at Weymouth, Swanage and Bournemouth – all places I had to walk through.

The volume of traffic made the Support Team's task of collecting me in the Victory Van an interesting one; there were times when it was easier for me to walk inland to meet the van after a day's walk.

Torrential wind-driven rain accompanied me for much of the journey as I tackled the roller-coaster walk along the limestone and chalk cliffs to Dorset's most famous seaward landmark, Durdle Door.

Next I headed out into Lulworth Ranges where I'd planned to visit Tyneham village a little way inland – a place evacuated for military training during WW2 and now deserted – but was beaten by weather which left me looking like a drowned rat – yet again.

Fortunately, the weather was glorious when I visited the RM Memorial Garden high up on Dorset's sweeping cliffs, near St Alban's Head.

I sat quietly on one of the stone benches looking back down the coast towards Portland Bill and beyond, reflecting on the distances I'd walked. Ahead of me lay Studland and Poole Harbour mouth where I'd planned to catch a ferry to Bournemouth. Annoyingly, the chain ferry that crosses 400 yards of water was out of action. Instead I walked a 25-mile detour around the expanses of Wareham and Poole Harbour.

Walking along Bournemouth's promenades and beaches wasn't my idea of fun. I weaved my way past countless ice cream stalls, chip-eaters, and regularly dodged stray footballs, prams, children on scooters and evaded being decapitated by kite strings! It was a relief to walk out onto Hengistbury Point before catching a ferry across Christchurch harbour; shortly afterwards I re-entered my final county of Hampshire.

Pushing along the coast out to Hurst Point, Keyhaven I was soon in Lymington. From there it was a relaxed cross-country walk in the New Forest before I dropped down onto the River Beaulieu's banks at Buckler's Hard. Famed for using trees from Beaulieu

estate to build ships for Nelson's Navy, this village still retains its character.

At Hythe I walked my last pier before crossing a bustling Southampton Water, where vehicle carriers, tankers, ferries, container and cruise ships all ply their trade.

My very last ferry journey was taken across the river Hamble to Warsash aboard the Pink Ferry – so named because of its colour. Thereafter, the leg towards Gosport through Lee-on-the-Solent was straightforward.

Having worked at both the former Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar and lived at HMS Dolphin, my walk along Fort Blockhouse's old seawall proved to be a trip down memory lane.

Across the water, Semaphore Tower, Portsmouth's Naval Base and the stumpy masts of HMS Victory were all so tantalisingly close, but I still had much to do before getting there. Ignoring the Gosport ferry, I had a frantically busy last week ahead of me visiting various naval establishments.

First stop was HMS Sultan where the week's pattern of collecting generous donations, meeting naval personnel and eating cake began.

I walked on to HMS Collingwood, preparing myself for another day of tempting cakes and cheque presentations. Here we received two further substantial cheques and also managed to see how one of my selected charities, the RNRMC, had provided investment around the site. The Woodentots Nursery was one place that had benefitted: the facilities were excellent.

Later that day I set off for my final full day of walking: I headed around Fareham and its creek towards Portchester Castle and onwards to Whale Island.

Arriving back at HMS Excellent felt like 'home from home'. Next morning there followed some extremely serious and enjoyable cake eating by a lot of naval personnel whose munching efforts raised over £500 for the Victory Walk pot. Afterwards I'd a little recovery time before giving a presentation at an evening reception.

Next morning I crossed HMS Excellent's causeway to make my way to Unicorn Gate, where I was joined by some bucket-shaking sailors and greeted by HM Royal Marines Band, Portsmouth, and Naval hierarchy from the Naval Base.

Later the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth joined this supporting group. The band led me through HMS Nelson before heading down towards the HMS Victory Arena where enthusiastic well-wishers and the Second Sea Lord welcomed me home. Invited to step back aboard HMS Victory, it was my chance to stand on Admiral Lord Nelson's flagship and thank him for his inspiration.



THE Victory Walk is raising money for two Naval charities, WRNS BT and RNRMC and you still have time to donate. The appeal will remain open to the end of the year. To donate go to www.virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk17-18. To find out more about Jane's Victory Walk go to www.victorywalk.uk



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Terror has never looked so peaceful

THESE are haunting images of one of the world's most famous 'lost ships' – finally beginning to give up its secrets after 170 years on the seabed.

Experts in Canada have explored most of the wreck of HMS Terror, lost in the Arctic in 1848 as her crew tried to find the Northwest Passage – a route through northern Canada linking the Atlantic and Pacific.

Led by explorer Sir John Franklin, Terror plus HMS Erebus became trapped in pack ice, forcing the crew to abandon them and strike out for safety – but all of the 129 crew perished.

The disappearance of the ships and their men was the start of a 15-year-long search effort which found some relics, human remains and accounts of the partial fate of the expedition.

But the wrecks of Erebus and Terror were only discovered in 2014 and 2016 – the latter was found off King William Island in the suitably-named Terror Bay.

Expert divers from Parks Canada's Underwater Archaeology Team spent one week exploring the remains of the ship, sending a robot submarine down seven times into the wreck to map it in 3D and explore cabins and compartments not seen by human eyes in 171 years.

The team obtained clear images of over 90 per cent of the lower deck of the ship – which includes the living quarters of the crew.

In the officers' cabins, beds and desks are still in place, in addition to shelves with some items on them. Other findings include: shelves with plates and glass bottles in what is believed to have been the pantry and rows of shelves with plates, bowls, and glasses – all intact – forward where ratings would have lived.

Best preserved is the captain's cabin: his desk, map cabinets, boxes of scientific instruments, tripod and thermometers are all intact. Only the captain's sleeping quarters remain out of bounds – behind the only closed door on the deck.

"The condition in which we



● (Above) Plates and other artefacts on shelves next to a mess table aboard HMS Terror and (below) bottles and other artefacts on a shelf in a cabin on the lower deck Pictures: Parks Canada



found Captain Francis Crozier's cabin greatly surpasses our expectations," said Marc-André Bernier, manager of underwater archaeology for Parks Canada. "Not only are the furniture and cabinets in place, drawers are closed and many are buried in silt, encapsulating objects and documents in the best possible conditions for their survival. Each drawer and other enclosed space will be a treasure trove of unprecedented information on the fate of the Franklin expedition."

Ryan Harris, who piloted the remote-controlled submarine through the shipwreck, was stunned by the Marie Celestina nature of the vessel.

"The impression we witnessed when exploring the Terror is of a ship only recently deserted by its

crew, seemingly forgotten by the passage of time – regardless of the fact that it was approximately 170 years ago that she sank unceremoniously to the bottom of the bay where she now rests," he said.

The archaeologists believe there's a good chance of finding documents on board – preserved thanks to the unique environmental conditions.

With a water temperature of 0 Celsius – or lower – no natural light and sediment burying artefacts, Terror has effectively been frozen in time.

The archaeologists will now examine stills and video footage for a better understanding of the ship, her fate and life on board for her ship's company with a view to bringing many of the sailors and their stories to life.



Generations of tributes

IT WAS a great pleasure and honour to be recently invited to join and assist the Scottish War Blind on a one week tour of the World War 1 battlefields, writes Chief Petty Officer Simon Lanzon of HMS Nelson.

My initial thought when asked to come along was something of trepidation: what do I know about the battlefields of WW1? I had a limited knowledge of World War 2 – but this wasn't necessarily backed with facts.

I was in safe hands, however. My father-in-law, Michael Kelbie was in attendance; he was a Gordon Highlander and has a vast historic knowledge base and would keep me on the right track.

He has been a member of the Scottish War Blinded since 2008 having lost his sight in an accident on a range in Germany, which led to his discharge from the Army in 1987.

Twenty-four veterans from all three services, but largely drawn from Scottish regiments, plus my son Joseph, who's serving with the RAF at Waddington joined me for the trip which was awe-inspiring.

We stayed in Ypres, taking daily

guided tours throughout Belgium and France. The trip included visits to the Menin Gate, Flanders Fields, the Somme, Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial, Contalmaison, Authuille, St Symphorien (Mons) and Prowe Point Military Cemeteries.

Learning about the first and last recorded death was, without doubt, both a shocking and sobering moment. Despite the largely vocal and excited crowd of veterans on the trip, we often sat in silence when certain facts were read out to us. For me the most poignant part of the trip was laying the wreath on behalf of the Scottish War Blind at the Menepoort/Menin Gate; the importance of the gate is reflected in the five major battles that occurred around Ypres during the war.

During the first battle, the Allies halted the German Army's advance to the east of the city.

The second marked a second attempt by the Germans to take the city in April 1915.

The third – more commonly referred to as Passchendaele – dragged on for five months in 1917.

And the fourth and fifth battles

raged during 1918. British and Commonwealth soldiers often passed through the Menepoort on their way to the front line with some 300,000 of them killed in the Ypres Salient. Of these, 90,000 soldiers have no known grave, and the names of 54,000 of are displayed on the Menin Gate.

Every night at 8pm a moving ceremony takes place under the gate. The Last Post Ceremony is part of daily life; local people gather at the gate to pay tribute to the courage and self-sacrifice of those who fell in their town. Buglers form, the local volunteer fire brigade stand in line across the eastern entrance facing towards the town while piping the Last Post.

Our day here saw three proud generations of the family standing in line, ready to lay a wreath, ranging from the Army (Gordon Highlanders) to the Royal Navy (Survival Equipment) to the youngest Royal Air Force (Cyber Space and Communication Technician).

We took our time remembering the fallen and our recent loss and saluted with pride – Lest we forget, you will not be forgotten.

Surprise passes into history

THE standard of the 'Royal Yacht' at the Queen's Coronation Review of 1953 hangs proudly in St Ann's Church in Portsmouth after HMS Surprise Association decided to call it a day.

Shipmates agreed at this year's AGM in Eastbourne to disband after keeping the name of the frigate alive for the past 25 years.

Originally built as HMS Gerrans Bay for anti-aircraft duties, she was renamed Surprise before entering service in 1946 chiefly as a 'dispatch vessel' for use by flag officers as their flagship, mostly in the Mediterranean.

Surprise most famous hour came in 1953,

however, when she stood in for the Royal Yacht as the reviewing ship for the Coronation Review at Spithead; Britannia would not be ready until 1954.

More than 65 years later, there were still 11 members of the Coronation ship's company in the final iteration of the association which called it a day on August 18.

Shipmates John 'Postie' Wheatley, Wilf Osborne, Geoff Prentice, Roy Crouch and John 'Jas' Field presented the association flag to the Rev Colin Noyce for safekeeping.

They did so after receiving a letter of gratitude for their loyal service from Buckingham Palace.

Where is HMS Lofoten's bell?

CAN you help a naval family tracking down an artefact with tremendous personal value?

Retired lieutenant commander Richard Cathcart is trying to trace the bell from HMS Lofoten, probably last seen half a century ago.

Lofoten was a late war landing ship tank, converted briefly into a helicopter training vessel in the mid-1960s before RFA Engadine came along.

It was in this guise that Richard Cathcart served in her – and chose with his wife to christen their son Guy aboard.

With family and friends in attendance and a naval chaplain performing the honours while Lofoten was alongside in Portland. In accordance with RN tradition, the bell was subsequently engraved: Guy Edgson Cathcart – 6th. June 1965 – at the time the only name carved on it.

Lofoten was paid off a few years later (although she remained on the RN books until the early 90s when she was towed from Rosyth to be broken up in Bruges).



Mr Cathcart tried to buy the bell when Lofoten was paid off, but was told it was presented to the ship's final commanding officer, Lt Cdr Peter Morton. And there the matter rested for half a century, until the Cathcarts decided the engraved bell would be a wonderful memento for their now grown-

up son. Sadly all naval records relating to the bell and the Morton family have long since vanished, hence an appeal through these pages for help in locating it, or the Mortons.

If you can help, contact Mr Cathcart on richardcathcart@yahoo.co.uk.

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Carrier's crew recall the few

SAILORS from Britain's carrier task group put the 'Forgotten Few' back on the plinth of honour where they belong – 79 years to the day the Battle of Britain reached its climax in the skies of southern England.

Crew of HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Dragon joined a service of thanksgiving for the deeds and sacrifices of the small band of aviators who helped stave off Nazi invasion in the summer of 1940.

September 15 is Battle of Britain Day – when the battle for air supremacy reached its climax and British, Commonwealth and volunteer aviators from around the globe conclusively demonstrated that the aerial forces defending the UK had not been defeated.

While the bravery of the RAF and foreign fliers – notably the Poles and Czech – has been immortalised in books and on film, the role of 56 naval airmen (both Fleet Air Arm and Royal Marines) is largely ignored; seven were killed and two wounded between July 10 and October 31 1940, when the battle officially ended.

All of which has prompted sailors and the RAF contingent with the carrier strike group to pay their respects while visiting Halifax in Canada on the carrier's Westlant 19 deployment.

Canadians comprised the third-largest contingent of non-British airmen to take to the skies in 1940 – a sacrifice often overlooked beyond their native land; men of 12 Wing from Shearwater Air Force Base, near Halifax, were heavily engaged throughout the battle.

HMS Queen Elizabeth's 'Wings', Commander Ed Phillips, led tributes, laying a wreath on behalf of shipmates honouring the Fleet Air Arm and Canadian pilots who gave their lives in the battle.

"The UK was supported by the Commonwealth – by Canada in particular," said Cdr Phillips. "The sacrifice that those brave Canadians made – nearly a quarter of them dying – helped to secure the United Kingdom in 1940, and enabled the build-up of forces that ultimately led to the D-Day invasion in 1944 and the subsequent victory in the Second World War for the allied cause."

Two Fleet Air Arm Squadrons defended northern Scotland during the battle – 804 at Hatston in the Orkneys and 808 in Wick – but two dozen naval and Royal Marine aviators were peppered around the many RAF squadrons keeping the Luftwaffe at bay in the summer of 1940.

Those serving with the RAF



● HMS Queen Elizabeth's 'Wings' Cdr Ed Phillips salutes the Fleet Air Arm and Canadian aviators who gave their all in the Battle of Britain during a commemorative service at Shearwater air base, Halifax
Picture: Aviator Olivia Mainville, 12 Wing Imaging Services



● Relaxing outside their crew room at RAF Fowlmere in Cambridgeshire at the height of the Battle of Britain are (l-r) Pilot Officer Wallace 'Jock' Cunningham, Sub Lt Arthur 'Admiral' Blake and New Zealander Flying Officer Frank Brinsden (holding Rangy the spaniel)
Picture: Imperial War Museum

remained true to their Royal Navy roots; Sub Lieutenant Arthur Blake, who flew Spitfires with 19 Squadron, was nicknamed Admiral by his comrades (he was killed over London in October 1940), while Sub Lieutenant Richard Gardner – who became an ace for shooting down five bombers during the battle and subsequently returned to the Fleet Air Arm – painted Nelson's legendary 'England expects...' signal in miniature flags on the fuselage of his Hurricane.

Possibly the finest of all the Fleet Air Arm fliers involved in the summer of 1940 – and Gardner's comrade – was Sub Lieutenant Richard 'Dickie' Cork.

Cork flew with 'tin-legged' Douglas Bader of *Reach for the Sky* fame in 242 Squadron, alongside numerous Canadians. He had already claimed four enemy aircraft shot down or damaged before he was scrambled on September 15 as the Luftwaffe unleashed a massed assault on

London.

The naval flier downed a Dornier 17 'Flying Pencil' bomber after evading a Messerschmitt 109 fighter over the Thames Estuary, setting the bomber's port engine ablaze, before making a second pass to attack the other side of the German aircraft.

"Large pieces of the enemy machine flew off and his starboard wing burst into flames near the wing tip. He dived straight into the cloud, heading towards a clear patch, so I waited till he came into the open and fired another burst in a head-on attack and the machine dived into the ground," he wrote in a combat report.

Almost immediately he was bounced by two Messerschmitt fighters, turned sharply to get on to the tail of one and used up the last of his ammunition trying to bring it down – in vain.

"No damage was seen on enemy machine, but as I was being attacked from behind by a second fighter I went into a vertical dive down to 2,000 feet and returned to base," he reported. "No damage to my own machine."

In several sorties flown that Sunday in 1940, Cork claimed five German aircraft damaged or destroyed. He later returned to the Fleet Air Arm and continued to be one of its most successful fighter pilots before being killed in a flying accident in Ceylon in 1944.



Farewell to a great friend

THE Royal Navy has lost one of its greatest supporters and benefactors with the passing of honorary Vice Admiral Sir Donald Gosling.

The entrepreneur and businessman (pictured above in 2012 aboard HMS Victory) was munificent in his support of the Royal Navy – generations of sailors and Royal Marines and their families have benefited from his generosity.

Although it is more than 70 years since he left the Senior Service Sir Donald, who died last month aged 90 surrounded by loved ones, never forgot the grounding and opportunities the Royal Navy gave him.

His lifelong love of the RN was born in the final years of peace, standing on Portsmouth's Round Tower, watching battleships, carriers and cruisers sailing in and out of harbour.

He joined the service in 1944 and, after completing training, served in the cruiser HMS Leander on a two-year post-war patrol of the Mediterranean. This left a lasting impression on him, and both his house and his yacht Leander G were named after the warship.

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

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

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

Both personally and through his foundation, he improved the lives of sailors, Royal Marines and their families at sea and on land, from helping with commissioning ceremonies and providing mess deck facilities, to paying for adventurous training opportunities around the world. Most recently, he provided the amenities fund of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Stories abound of Sir Donald's spontaneous acts of kindness and generosity. On a visit to frigate HMS Brave berthed in London in the mid-80s, he pulled out his cheque book and donated £3,000 there and then to the Type 22's welfare fund.

And during the Kosovo crisis in the late-90s, he famously offered his yacht Leander to the crew of submarine HMS Splendid so they could enjoy a proper shower and fresh food after a very lengthy patrol.

That support for the Royal Navy was recognised with a series of honorary ranks from captain through to vice admiral (appointed in 2015), as well as Vice Admiral of the United Kingdom, subordinate to the Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom, the Duke of Edinburgh.

"Sir Donald was a close and warm friend to the Naval Service throughout his life, and there has been a tremendous outpouring of affection, gratitude and collective sorrow from across the Service," said First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin.

"He shared our values; he laughed with us; and his humanity and generosity touched every single one of us. He will be sorely missed."

Sir Donald was also passionate about the RN's history, supporting naval documentary makers, serving as a trustee of the Fleet Air Arm Museum and, in 2012, donating £25m to help preserve HMS Victory for generations to come.

His support of the National Museum of the Royal Navy – a gallery in Portsmouth bears his name – over the past decade has helped with the ongoing transformation of the UK's four principal naval museums, and helped push the historic dockyard alone to the cusp of one million visitors every year.

"We are incredibly grateful for Sir Donald Gosling's support of the National Museum over the years," said Dr Caroline Williams, chairman of the NMRN's board.

"His amazingly generous support of HMS Victory was a game changer for the museum. Adding her to our historic fleet with the sure knowledge of having a legacy to build on allowed us to change direction and transform perceptions of our work. We are about to celebrate our tenth anniversary and it's fair to say that without Sir Donald's assistance, the museum would be in a different place."

Naval Quirks





Duo are top of the class

TWO pupils in receipt of bursaries through the Royal Hospital School's parent charity, Greenwich Hospital, have achieved the very top results in their A Levels, providing them with life-changing opportunities.

Nick Sims, pictured top, who was Deputy Head of School and a talented actor appearing in numerous school productions, was actively involved in all areas of school life.

He studied economics, physics and maths, achieving A*s in all of his subjects.

He goes to Exeter University this year to read Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE).

Dominic Curtis, pictured below, was Head Scholar and leading by example in academic excellence he also achieved three A*s in maths, religious studies and Latin.

"I am truly thankful for the support my teachers, friends and the school community have given me, not only through my exams, but throughout the seven years I spent at RHS," he said. "Everything the school incorporates has helped me achieve things I previously would have laughed at the thought of, be it in academia or co-curricular, and with this I feel confident to move on."

Dominic is heading to Selwyn College, Cambridge, where he will study Classics.

He said "I would like to thank all of my teachers for their hard work over the past two years which has enabled me to achieve these grades. In particular, my teachers and tutor for guiding me through the UCAS process and providing me with invaluable help, especially the mock interviews which certainly helped me in securing a place at Cambridge."

There were 16 pupils in this year's cohort supported by bursaries which provide life-changing opportunities for pupils with charitable need and who might not otherwise be able to afford the sort of education provided by schools like the Royal Hospital School.



Trying us out for size

A SEA Cadet from Oban tries on a diver's helmet during a visit to HMNB Clyde.

Members of TS Pharos, Oban's Sea Cadet group, visited Faslane and spent the day learning a bit about what goes on inside the Naval Base.

Petty Officer Mark Dunion invited the group, consisting of seven sea cadets and their instructor, to the base and enlisted the help of Chief Petty Officer Murray Anderson to arrange a guided tour of some of the facilities on site.

PO Dunion will soon retire from the Royal Navy after 22 years' of service and

he will move to Oban with his fiancée, where he has volunteered as an instructor at TS Pharos.

"I am looking forward to a new chapter in my life and getting involved with TS Pharos will give me a chance to share some of the knowledge and experience I have gained during my time in the Royal Navy," said PO Dunion.

"I was a Sea Cadet myself and it is a great organisation which encourages young people to get involved in many different activities, as well as giving them confidence to achieve things they might not think they are capable of.

"It was a pleasure to host the young

people and I look forward to getting more involved in the future when I leave the Navy."

During the visit the cadets were treated to a demonstration by Northern Diving Group – the Royal Navy's bomb disposal experts, a trip out on the water with Queen's Harbour Master, a guided tour of the sports facilities and finished off the day with a chat with the Head of the Submarine Service, Rear Admiral John Weale.

The cadets from TS Pharos enjoyed the day and showed interest in all they were shown, asking lots of questions along the way, which kept PO Dunion on his toes.

PO Robert Neil, who is an instructor with the unit, said: "It was an absolutely wonderful day, full of exciting technology and an opportunity to experience and view the modern Royal Navy's working life.

"Thank you to everyone involved in organising the visit for the unit."

The Sea Cadets is a national youth charity, working with 14,000 young people between 10 and 18 years old across the UK.

It has 400 units across England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Malta and Bermuda all run by 9,000 volunteers.

Picture: LPhoto Stevie Burke

Hard work pays off for Beccles

BECCLS Sea Cadet Unit have moved into their new headquarters.

The state-of-the-art building, is the result of many years of fundraising.

It boasts many classrooms, a working galley, offices, main deck, a wardroom, outside parade area and shower facilities, toilets and heating.

This is all made extra special as before they had to operate out of a few wooden sheds, with no heating, a portable toilet and an outside parade area.

All that is left to do now is to raise the funds for the climbing wall, which is the unit's next project.

The cadets held an official opening ceremony, attended by around 150 people, including former cadets Lieutenant Commander Graham Hutton and Captain Steve 'Sharkey' Ward, along with staff from the Eastern Area.



Birthday treat for David

THE Assistant District Officer for Leicestershire Sea Cadets received a commissioning scroll at an awards evening.

Lt (SCC) David Derbyshire was presented with the scroll by the Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, Mike Kapur.

The event coincided with Lt Derbyshire's birthday, making it the perfect present for the sea cadet stalwart.



Summer of fun for TS Laforey

NORTHAMPTON Sea Cadets, TS Laforey, have had an extremely busy summer period enjoying the warm and tropical weather with cadets participating in camps across the country, including HMS Bristol in Portsmouth.

The Royal Marines Cadets were in Thetford where Lance Corporal Pavitt, was awarded top cadet from the Eastern Area.

Junior Sea Cadets were at Doncaster, cruises were taken offshore in the square rigged TS Royalist and weekends away at the local boating centre in Thrapston.

Further away Leading Cadet Alex Smith was lucky to be selected for the International Sea Cadet exchange to Hong Kong.

Junior Toby Austin visited the WW1 battlefields and wrote an amazing account of his visit and laid a wreath on behalf of the Sea Cadets in which he wrote a personal message which said: "With greatest respect and gratitude for your sacrifice".

Twelve cadets joined the Sea Cadet offshore training ship TS Jack Petchey to learn afloat skills at sea in the Solent and English Channel.

The Deputy Mayor and the Northamptonshire High Sherriff were hosted at the unit for the annual general meeting and prize giving. The top prize, the HMS Laforey Shipmates award, was presented to 17-year-old Corporal Jessica Davies who is one of the first female Royal Marines Cadets to be rated Corporal.

The trophy was first presented by the survivors of HMS Laforey on the 50th anniversary of the sinking in 1992.

One former winner visited the unit in August. Ex-Laforey Sea Cadet, Petty Officer Chris Ihme, who is now a Logistics Specialist in the Royal Navy, visited the unit to maintain the strong link between former cadets and the service.

This year the award of the President's Cup was made to Petty Officer Sam Green, whose outstanding leadership has really been valued by the unit and her support and guidance to adults and cadets alike.

Unit Chairman, Andrew Jolley, who presented the award, said that every volunteer is very important to the Sea Cadet Unit. The winners recognised were:

- **Best Royal Marines Cadet:** Corporal Antoci, runner up, Lance Corporal Braithwaite
- **Most Improved Cadet:** Ordinary Cadet Hyde, runner up, Able Cadet Thongmata
- **Most Promising Cadet:** Cadet Collar, runner up, Junior Austen
- **Special Achievement Award:** Junior 1st Class

- **Pedigree Cup for Community Participation:** Petty Officer Cadet Cassin, runner up, Able Cadet Shoebridge
- **Bob Burns Trophy for Smartest Cadet:** Lance Corporal Pavitt, runner up, Junior Serebriakova
- **Laforey Shipmates Trophy for Best Cadet:** Corporal Davies, runner up, Leading Cadet Norman
- **Tenacious Shield for Best Junior:** Leading Junior Gilkes, runner up, Junior Humphrey
- **Leadership Award:** Petty Officer Cadet Collins, runner up, Corporal Barrick
- **Ernest Shoebridge Shield for Best Attendance:** Able Cadet Mansfield, runner up, Cadet Careys.

In competition, both the junior girls and open girls' teams competed in the National Rowing Finals at London's Excel Centre.

The junior girls achieved a gold placing while the open girls achieved a third place. This followed winning the Area Regatta in July and competing against the leading units from the county.

This shows what can be achieved against coastal units from the teams based on the River Nene in Northampton. The unit also worked hard in the local RYA Team 15 windsurfing competition, where cadets have been competing in a round of windsurfing events against top windsurfers from sailing clubs across the region.

Closer to home, the unit has participated in a number of local events within the community including Merchant Navy Day where they supported the raising of the Red Ensign at both the Guildhall and County Hall.

During the ceremony Petty Officer Cadet James Cassin used his drumming skills to "beat to quarters", leading the procession of local dignitaries for a service to honour those who have served at sea in the past, serve at sea today and will serve at sea in the future.

The event was part of Seafarers UK successful campaign for local councils to fly the Red Ensign – the British Merchant Navy's official flag – on civic centre flagpoles and in public places.

The Sea Cadets are recruiting now for cadets and adult volunteers and cadets to join and anyone interested in becoming part of the team should contact the unit.

Northampton Sea Cadets meet on Tuesday and Friday evening and Northampton Junior Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets meet on a Wednesday and Friday evening from 7pm to 9.15pm at their headquarters in Nunn Mills Road, Northampton. For details visit northamptonseacadets.org.uk



● From left, PO Cadet James Cassin leads the parade; Sea Cadets in Hong Kong for an exchange visit; Northampton cadets on the TS Jack Petchey



Totally top time on Thames

VISITORS to a boat festival were given the chance to sail on and have tours of two of the Royal Navy's P2000s.

HMS Smiter, pictured top, and HMS Blazer, pictured right, were in London for Totally Thames – an event celebrating arts and culture along the river.

As part of their time in St Katherine's Docks, the boats were open to the public and nearly 1,500 people got to have a look around and learn about what they do.

The three-day event also gave the embarked University Royal Navy Unit (URNU) students the chance to explain their roles on the P2000s.

While HMS Blazer remained alongside for tours, HMS Smiter took visitors up and down the River Thames – passing under Tower Bridge and giving spectacular views of the city.

Blazer Officer Cadet Rob Cooley, on board for the first time, said: "I really enjoyed the chance to talk to people about what we do and I learned a few things about the ship myself."

Lieutenant Lewis Jones, HMS Smiter's commanding officer, added: "The Classic Boat Festival has been a great experience and it has been a pleasure to host a variety of people on board."

HMS Smiter welcomed sea cadets, Royal Naval Reservists from HMS president, potential recruits, Metropolitan Police officers and members of the Friends of St Katherine's Dock on board.

For many, it was their first time on a P2000 – a training ship which provides naval experience and training to Officer Cadets.

Claire Davies, events manager at St Katherine's Dock, said: "I am amazed at the compact living



arrangements but HMS Smiter has a charming character as a small vessel. I have thoroughly enjoyed my experience on board."

Held during September, Totally Thames is an annual event with arts and culture activities taking place on, beneath and along the 42-mile stretch of the River Thames.

The Classic Boat Show was opened by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Collingwood who marched through the marina and played to visitors throughout the day.

Band Director Captain Tom Crane said: "It was a pleasure to open the Classic Boat Festival and to be in the unique location at Marble Quay with a back drop of all the visiting classic boats."

Pictures: LPhoto Joe Cater

New home for RNR in Wales



● The first reservists climb the stairs at the new HMS Cambria, pictured below

Pictures: Adrian White



SENIOR naval officers and invited guests have celebrated a significant milestone at the 'topping-out' ceremony, for the new unit building of the Royal Naval Reserve Wales in Cardiff Bay.

The state-of-the-art building has transformed the former industrial site, barely a mile from the heart of the nation's capital, into a gleaming £11m home for HMS Cambria that will become a focal point for the Royal Navy in Wales.

It will serve as a centre for Maritime Reservists across the region and develop as a hub for naval university cadet training and recruiters.

The building will also include short-term living accommodation to support training, classroom suites, dining halls, an armoury and an external rope training area as well as a parade square.

In addition it will provide a working space for up to 80 personnel, and feature other amenities, such as social and fitness facilities for use by the Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve and University Royal Naval Units.

It replaces the existing Cambria complex at Sully near Barry and is expected to serve the needs of the Royal Navy and Reserve Forces for the next half century – thanks to a long-term lease on the new location at Roath Dock.

The project is being delivered by Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) for Wales, in partnership with port owner and operator Associated British Ports, South Wales (ABP South Wales).

Speaking at the ceremony Commodore Martin Quinn ADC, Commander Maritime Reserves thanked the construction company Morgan Sindall for their work.

"It is an enormous pleasure to be able to represent the Royal Navy today and in particular the Maritime Reserves who will be soon operating from this new Reserve Unit.

"This building is a major investment and represents a big step in relationships with Wales and Cardiff as well as the close affinity that the Maritime Reserves has with the community it serves.

"I'd like to thank Morgan Sindall as the main contractor, ABP for the land lease and RFCA Wales for their efforts in achieving this point in the building of the new HMS Cambria in Cardiff."

Women making history in RFA

TWO members of the RFA have become the first females to receive the RFA Long Service and Good Conduct Medal for 20 years' service.

Chief Officer (LS) Jane Struthers and First Officer (LS) Kelly Taylor received their awards at the RFA's annual awards ceremony at HMS Nelson.

Chief Officer Struthers said: "I am exceptionally proud to be one of only two women to receive a 20-year Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my career with the RFA which has given me many opportunities to broaden my horizons. I look forward to the future and continuing to do a job I love."

A total of 40 awards were handed out at the ceremony across a range of categories, from the Richard Jones Trophy for cadet of the year to long service and good conduct clasps.

RFA Head of Service, Commodore Duncan Lamb, said: "At this, the fifth RFA Annual Awards Ceremony, I never cease to be humbled and amazed by what our marine and systems engineers, chefs, stewards, logisticians, communicators, navigators, seamen and medics achieve; how they maintain operational focus in the most challenging of conditions."

Third Officer (Systems Engineer) David James, received the Richard Jones RFA Cadet of the Year Trophy for his consistently high performance, displaying natural ability, enthusiasm and determination both at college and at sea throughout his training.

Currently appointed to RFA Tiderace, 3/O James said: "I am very proud and honoured to receive this award and after completing my Cadetship I am thoroughly enjoying the challenge



● Chief Officer Jane Struthers receives her medal from Cdre Duncan Lamb at the RFA annual awards event

of serving as a Third Officer Systems Engineer onboard RFA Tiderace."

Commodore RFA Annual Award for Outstanding Achievement, was presented to Second Officer Alex Townsend, for his outstanding work as OC Afloat Support at the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS), at HMS Raleigh.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary Ship of the Year for 2019 was RFA Tidespring.

Collecting the John Coles Memorial Trophy on behalf of the ship, Captain (E) Richard Maddock, said: "I am delighted to receive this trophy which reflects the hard work, application and dedication of the RFA Tidespring team over the past 12 months."

For consistently performing to a high standard throughout her Defence Stewarding Course, the Keith Rice Memorial Trophy for Steward of the Year was awarded to Apprentice Steward Toni

Cupit.

There were six more awards of medals for 20 years RFA service and eight awards of clasps for 30 years' service.

Awards of clasps for 40 years' service given to Captain (X) Peter Selby, Captain (E) Nick Fox and Captain (E) Terry Edwards.

The final presentation was made to the family of SG1A Bernard Gray who passed away earlier this year.

A bespoke presentation case which contained the RFA Flag and RFA Service, Golden Jubilee, Diamond Jubilee and Afghanistan Medals was given to his family.

His widow Susan said: "Whilst we are still very sad at the loss of Bernie, we are pleased with the presentation made by Commodore Lamb on behalf of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. It's a good and fitting reminder and tribute to a career at sea that he enjoyed so much."

Ten years of fab rehab

NEARLY 350 Royal Marines and sailors have been helped by a unique rehabilitation centre in Plymouth during its first ten years.

Set up in September 2009 principally to help commandos permanent scarred by battle recover from their wounds – or re-adjust their lives – Hasler Naval Service Recovery Centre now helps men and women from across the forces with long-term conditions, injuries and illnesses.

Most injured or naval personnel are nursed and supported back to full fitness while still serving with their units, but more serious cases require longer term treatment and care away from their units and ships so they can concentrate solely on rehabilitation.

Originally established as Hasler Company – named after Cockleshell Hero and disability rights campaigner Major 'Blondie' Hasler – the recovery centre has moved on from mostly treating marines to supporting as many Royal Navy sailors and the occasional soldier or airman.

Those recuperating receive expert medical help, physiotherapy, moral support and career guidance to prepare them physically, mentally and professionally as well as possible for resuming their careers or starting a new life in the civilian world.

"Each day starts in the gym, most of the marines have physical injuries which require rehab and individual therapy," explained Captain Mark Woosey, the Royal Marine in charge of the centre.

"We have an amazing team of physiotherapists and exercise/rehabilitation instructors who lead a programme including therapy, acupuncture, hydro therapy, yoga and tai chi."

Afternoons are devoted to what the 20-strong team at



● NSRC Hasler ranks taking part in the relay at the USMC Wounded Warrior Trials

Hasler call a 'rolling recovery programme': activities which can provide a welcome distraction from the hard work of rehab and treatment.

"Getting back to fitness after a major injury or illness can be a long, hard and sometimes dull process," Capt Woosey added.

"They can be of direct help in an individual's transition or recovery – they can even help show exactly what they are capable of, reminding them they can still be the person they may fear has been lost through the injury or illness.

"You only need to see the face of a chronically-ill service person competing in a triathlon, playing sitting volley ball or surfing to realise the great value they have to morale and rehabilitation."

In addition there's the chance to compete with the US Marine Corps in its Wounded Warrior Games trials, historical tours of the commandos' spiritual home around Achnacarry or organise a music festival – all designed to raise morale, improve team spirit, motivate and encourage people.

Although the Hasler team is based in HMS Drake in Plymouth, support is provided to personnel – whose conditions range from combat wounds

through chronic illnesses, mental health issues to terminal cases – at the new Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre at Stanford Hall, near Loughborough, and as far afield as Scotland and the East Coast.

The goal is to help personnel resume their military careers. Where that proves impossible, staff focus on developing a person's skills and preparing them for life outside the military.

One Royal Marine who's benefited from Hasler described the centre as "a game-changer that allows individuals to either return to their profession or make that very difficult transition into the civilian world a little bit easier. It has equipped me with the required tools and contacts to move on."

"The atmosphere is very much a 'Band of Brothers and Sisters'. Though we all have slight differences with our personal conditions, Hasler allows us to help and support each other – vital in everyone's recovery, which not only includes us, but all those who are part of our lives."

Another found the visit to Achnacarry "left me with a sense of pride, honour and a zest to get out of the recovery pathway and back to the job I love".

New health and wellbeing push

PERSONNEL from across Faslane gathered in the base's central hub to mark the launch of the Naval Service People Health and Wellbeing Strategy with a health day.

The strategy is a joint military-civilian initiative across the entire RN/RM aimed at addressing some of the biggest health challenges... which generally mirror those in society as a whole: smoking, alcohol, weight

management and mental fitness.

The goals are ambitious – to create a culture in the RN which embraces tobacco-free environments, reduces alcohol consumption, manages weight and enhances mental fitness.

The result should be fewer injuries, less illness, improved recovery rates and enhanced recruitment and retention.

Visitors to the supermess health day had the opportunity

to visit a variety of stalls and could seek the advice of health professionals on many subjects.

Specialist advisors on mental, sexual and dental health were on hand, as well as medical staff to check blood pressure and cholesterol, plus experts offering information on drugs and alcohol awareness.

More details are available via www.royalnavy.mod.uk/sports.

Comms Shack

I MUST start this article with an apology as there has been a number of 'Open Numbers' since my last submission to this broadcast channel, writes WO1 Daniel Castle.

It's been a busy few months for us all which I hope you are all following our WE Blog. We have seen the introduction of IER training back on our qualifying courses, plus the return of RCP. If that wasn't enough, we have signed up over 45 people to the BCS standard which is available to you all and our LET QCs now have an apprenticeship attached – all this is down to membership of your branch and their continued dedication to get us back on track.

This month you will be pleased to know that 2SL has allocated funding to us to continue the full redesign of our ET, LET and POET QCs – target date of April 2020. If that wasn't enough, we have also released an RNTM that covers all those LETs who have been impacted by the Faraday QCs – are you a hybrid LET(WE) WECIS? If so, take a read.

I have also visited a number of courses passing out from WETG, but also Dauntless and Northumberland teams and it was good to see the

dedication of the CIS personnel onboard, striving to deliver OC to their respective commands.

Our first CPOET(CIS) joined Portsmouth Flotilla, resulting in greater support for Portsmouth ships, with Devonport's CPOET(CIS) joining in January – another move in the right direction.

I want to close this article with one promise and one challenge.

The branch's promise to you all is that we have a full understanding of the issues that are impacting our people and under projects such as Mountbatten we are getting there so standby we are about to increase baud speed!

And the challenge? On Northumberland I saw a W1 group working extremely hard but in the same way we always have. So, with the hybrid ET(WE) CIS you have, look at your group and find ways to maximise your teams. If that means moving away from standard MCO, internal and external comms manning they try new ways of working and let us know your successes and failures, so we can move forward as a team.

Email daniel.castle304@mod.gov.uk or call 93832 8811.



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...

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Mil- 94374 3172

E-mail- Jane.anneda513@mod.gov.uk



RIPping yarns

SEA swap (or swap ship)?

Didn't we try that?
And it didn't work, right?
Yes, yes we did. And no, no it didn't.

We didn't swap like for like (one crew came from a 'stretched' Type 42, the other a 'stumpy').

The first crew supposedly left the ship in a rather poor shape for their successors.

One crew had much better runs ashore than the other.

And so on and so on.

So why should it be any different this time around?

Well...

We're starting with one ship and two crew. They won't just swap once – with little incentive to look after HMS Montrose for their successors – but six, seven, eight times in the two to three years they're assigned to the ship. And the runs ashore, give or take the odd location, are going to be pretty much the same.

Four months on/off seems to be a popular length of time to be deployed/at home, considerably shorter than the six to nine-month deployments typically run to the Gulf region, but not too short that crews are forever handing over and not getting time in on patrol.

The rotation – officially Roulement In Place (RIP) – is not a mirror of the system which works for the four minehunters based in the Gulf – those crews have a ship to go home to in Faslane and Portsmouth, Montrose's do not.

A Type 23 is also considerably larger (five times the crew) and considerably more complex than a minehunter.

The Montrose rotation largely follows the model used to crew ballistic missile submarines for the past half century: a port and starboard crew, one on patrol for four months, the other back in the UK on leave/courses/training.

After leave, the crew return for any necessary career courses before they start regenerating, using simulators and facilities at Raleigh or in Portsmouth, as well as 'borrowing' frigates alongside for training which demands the use of a real warship.

When it comes to deploying, there's a transition period for acclimatisation and a handover at the RN's Bahrain facility followed by training and assessment aboard Montrose herself.



“““

The ability to maintain a ship out here, one which is used to operating in this part of the world, for three years gives us a 100 per cent presence.

CDRE DEAN BASSETT



“““

At sea you can pretty much throw anything you like at us and we'll get it done. It's back home that sailors do not like their lives being messed with. Not being seen off with duties makes a big difference too. We're duty free.

WO1 PAUL FEGAN



“““

I used to work in survey ships so I am used to the idea of a regular spell at sea then a spell back home. That certainly helped to plan your life, and that's always one of the big plusses in the military.

LCH KINGSLEY BEAUBRUN

month deployment coupled with a better-balanced home life.”

Executive Warrant Officer WO1 Paul Fegan believes “the concept will work – the guys know what they are doing back in the UK and can plan their lives.”

“At sea you can pretty much throw anything you like at us and we'll get it done. It's back home that sailors do not like their lives being messed with. Not being seen off with duties makes a big difference too. We're duty free.”

His shipmates are the first to rotate in and out. They've learned some lessons: the arrival and handover was “a little rushed” – that's already been changed. And Montrose's Royal Marines boarding team have been at something of a loose end. They've not done any boardings as the ship was diverted from her original mission.

“Perhaps better use could be made of them – send them ashore for training or performing defence engagement duties. They've been a little frustrated at not being able to do anything,” said WO1 Fegan.

Such lessons are already being fed up the chain, but the forward presence of Type 23s in Bahrain and elsewhere is very much on the First Sea

Lord's agenda; as Admiral Tony Radakin told an audience at the DSEI event in London last month, he is keen to investigate “whether we could deploy more ships, permanently stationed forward in areas where we have significant interests.”

Operating Montrose in the Gulf region for three years would be impossible, says Commodore Dean Bassett, the senior RN officer east of Suez, without the much-improved facilities in Bahrain (see next month's edition for a feature on new establishment).

“We could not carry out the swap without the NSF, its facilities, its accommodation,” he added.

He believes the initiative so far augurs well for the Royal Navy's presence and operations in the Middle East region.

“As we progress, the crews will become acclimatised to what to expect and know the theatre, getting down to operations quickly,” the commodore continued.

“The ability to maintain a ship out here, one which is used to operating in this part of the world, for three years gives us a 100 per cent presence.”

Raleigh or bust

WHEN buses, trains and planes let you down, you can always rely on your shipmates – as rookie Lochlan Shivas found just six weeks into his naval career.

The 19-year-old from Invergordon was due to resume his conversion from civvy to sailor at HMS Raleigh after returning home to Scotland for summer leave to see his family.

Instead, he found his flight cancelled. Cue a 20-hour odyssey to get back home.

Lochlan's airline paid for a taxi to Glasgow, from where he could resume his voyage south by plane...

... except the flight from Glasgow was also canned... and no buses or trains would get him to the Torpoint establishment in time for roll-call on Monday morning.

Thanks to the power of social media, various offers from matelots, ex-matelots and family members were beginning to pop up with offers of lifts from one town or city to the next.

In the end it was the dad of classmate Thomas Roberts (pictured with Lochlan, right) who came through.

Off-duty HGV driver Mark Roberts said he'd drive the young Scotsman to Raleigh – if he could get to Warrington.

Three hours and one train ride later, and the fledgling marine engineer was in Cheshire.

“My biggest worry was getting back-classed because I want to pass out with the class I'm in,”



he said. “I wasn't sure if I missed a day, whether or not that would happen, so there was a bit of a panic.”

“It was really nice of Mr Roberts to pick me up. I'd never met him before. When I got in the car Roberts' mum had made bacon rolls and left a pillow and a blanket in the car for me as well.”

They set off for the 295-mile journey and arrived at HMS Raleigh at 4.30am the next day – 20 hours after Lochlan had left home.

His classmate Thomas was chuffed with his dad's actions. “It was a noble thing for my dad to do and he probably doesn't realise how much it means to so many people,” he said. “Dad did it off his own back. It could have been me and he would have done it for me and he'd do it for anyone else. As a long-distance lorry driver he's used to eating up 400 miles each day in his wagon.”

Harnessing the white heat of technology

A HI-TECH ‘digital laboratory’ developing state-of-the-art apps for the Royal Navy has been opened in Portsmouth's Semaphore Tower.

Project Nelson brings together around five dozen digital experts – drawn from industry and the civil service – to help sailors and Royal Marines deal with day-to-day challenges and problems... and eliminate some of the number-crunching boredom of certain painstaking tasks.

First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin performed the honours as the new facility was formally opened, promising “a digital approach to be even better at what we already do”.

The idea is to gather data and feedback from across the Royal Navy and Royal Marines to determine what software or apps might best serve those on the front line... and develop it.

Already being trialled on the front line, courtesy of HMS Defender's Wildcat, is a system being developed by the specialist helicopter engineers at 1710 Naval Air Squadron, also based in Portsmouth.

The system uses predictive software and live data fed by the helicopter – being used to watch over the Strait of Hormuz, safeguarding Defender and UK shipping entering and leaving the Gulf – to work out when repairs would need to be carried out.

Also in Portsmouth, Admiral Radakin and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Nick Hine oversaw a three-day event intended to harness ideas and practices in industry for the benefit of the RN.

Businesses from across maritime, security and defence sectors were invited to the Action Stations exhibit to brainstorm, suggest new ideas and look at what the navy does well – and how they might help improve it as part of the Action Learning Output event.

RN personnel worked with attendees to see how their solutions could be adapted to the naval service and ways to bring it into practice. It is the first time an event of this kind has been held.

“The reason we are doing something different with this event is because we have to do something different,” Admiral Hine told delegates. “The way we are doing things now isn't working.”

“We will test, learn and adjust. We have to do so at pace to get a better outcome. The world is going so fast that the perspective of us is that by standing still, we are going backwards. We have to catch up. We want to be at the front of end of that.”

“I cannot get there by myself, we have to get there with outside assistance. That is what Action Learning Output is about.”

In line for awards

FIVE Royal Navy personnel and one team have been shortlisted for next month's Women in Defence Awards.

The finalists were selected from more than 470 original nominees from across the three services, plus the Civil Service, intelligence services and defence industry.

More than 70 people, units and organisations are competing for ten awards, chosen by a panel of judges made up of military personnel, people working in defence and industry leaders.

- Inspirational Award for inspiring/positively influencing the choices of colleagues: Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Ruth Guest;
- Outstanding Contribution for someone who has exceeded expectations: Lieutenant Commander Joanna Black;
- Most Collaborative within your organisation or working with another: Chief Petty Officer Janine Potts
- Emerging Talent: Sub Lieutenant Toni Harding;
- Unsung Heroine(s) for those whose efforts have improved the lot of people in defence without seeking recognition: Commander Kay Hallsworth;
- Inclusive Teamwork Award: crew of HMS Artful.

The entire shortlist can be seen at www.womenindefenceuk.com/awards-2019 with the winners announced on November 19.



Pictures: LPhoto Rory Arnold

Deaths

Charles Norman Cox, BEM, Chief Comms Yeoman (Tactical Comms Instructor). Served from 1941-49 in St George, Impulsive, Diadem, Belfast, LSTO, Whitesand Bay, Sultan II Singapore, Tamas Lagos, Mauritius, Phoebe, Newcastle, Liverpool, Wren, Mercury, Victory, Theseus, Vanguard, Indomitable, Perseus, Royal Yacht Britannia, Victorious, Sussex, CinC Med Afloat Staff, Surprise and President. Died August 14.

Michael Desmond Tarrant, BEM. Sea Cadet from age of 14. Served in RN from 1947 to 1983 in Vanguard, Unicorn, Seagull, Bulwark and Ark Royal. Instructor and divisional chief stoker at HMS Raleigh and Fisgard. Former chairman of Torpoint RNA. Died August 16, aged 90.

Capt David J Turner. HMS Gloucester, Raleigh, Sceptre, Joint HQ Northwood, COMFASFLT. Died July 31, aged 44.

Capt RM Christopher G Bellamy. RM Deal. 40 and 42 Cdo RM. Britannia RN Coll. HMS Belfast. RM Plymouth. Died August 22, aged 92.

Capt Peter N Hamilton Jones. HMS Striker, Stalker, Maidstone, Neptune, Dolphin, Nelson. JSSC. Cent Defence Staff. Naval Advisor India. Def Studies Latimer. FO Adty Int Board. Died August 8, aged 91.

Cdr Kenneth G Bowen OBE. HMS Lynx, Ganges, Berry Head, Triumph, Victory RNB, Collingwood, Torquay, Nav Sec, MOD Portsdown. Died August 26, aged 84.

Lt Col RM Robert A Campbell. RM Deal,

NATO, JS StaffColl, 41 Cdr RM, HQ Try Gp RM. Died August 2, aged 91.

Cdr Michael F Nalder. HMS Mercury, Diamond, Duncan, Dundas, Dryad, Saker, Nelson. DN Ops and Trade. Died August.

Peter Sidney Searle, NAM(AE). Served 1952-1962. 848 NAS. Two years in Malaya. Ships included HMS Illustrious, Victorious and Vanguard. Died August 2, aged 84.

Horace Henry (Harry) Dearlove. LAM(A/E). Joined 1942-1945. 846 NAS. Served in HMS Tracker and Trumpeter on Atlantic, Russian and Arctic Convoys. Died August 30, aged 95.

Kenneth Robert Lown, Lt/A RNVR. Served from 1941-46. HMS Malagas, 799 NAS, 829 NAS, HMS Indomitable, 813 NAS, HMS Victorious, HMS Battler, RNAS Inspik, 784 NAS, 1790 Night Fighter Squadron, HMS Vindex, RNAS Schofield in Sydney, HMS Nabthorpe and Nabstock, 1792 NAS, HMS Indefatigable, 1772 NAS. Died August 2.

Charles 'Jock' Turnbull, Cpl RM. HMS Loch Fada, 1958-59. Member of Loch Fada Association. Died August 9, aged 80.

Fred Hogben, PO/QM. Served from 1945 to 1956 in TS Mercury, HMS St Vincent (Hawke 20), Wakeful, Corunna, Jaseur, Pembroke, Brinton, Savage and Victory. Joined RNA in 1955, member of Norwich Branch since 1985 and life member since 2011. Died September 10, aged 88.

Captain David Pentreath, CBE DSO. A Memorial Service will be held at The

Chapel of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich on Friday November 1 2019 at 3pm. David's family look forward to welcoming as many of his many friends, colleagues and those he recruited as are able to join us.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC

Cdre Malcolm C Shirley. RNEC Manadon, HMS Triumph, Rapid, Eastbourne, Jaguar, Broadsword, Coventry, Sultan. HM Royal Yacht Britannia. DG Ships. Service Attache Paris. MOD Bath. SACEUR, 2SL C-in-C Nav Home. Died August 24.

Lt Cdr Thomas W Alsop. HMS Maidstone, Goldcrest, Caledonia. Falmouth, Sheba, Falcon, Drake, Superb. NATO. Died July 10, aged 85.

Lt Cdr Martin F Bright MBE. HMS Drake, Vernon, Armada, Dolphin, Glasgow. Died August 3.

Lt Cdr Henry W Page. Naval Hospital Haslar, Malta. HMS St Angelo. INM Alverstoke. Died August 10, aged 89.

Lt Cdr Stewart Swift. HMS Sultan, Dolphin, Fulmar, Pembroke, Terror, Victory RNB, Nelson, Chief Naval Personnel and Statistics, Hydrographic Dept Bandar Abbas. Died August 27.

Lt Cdr Herbert A A Twiddy DSC. HMS Lewiston, Excellent, Dryad, Terror, Forth, Victory RNB, Wiston, Victorious, Barmond,

Brinkley, Reward. Boom Defence Sheerness. Died July 12, aged 94.

Lt Mark A Tippey. HMS Sultan, Invincible, Collingwood. Died August 1, aged 51.

Capt Peter N Hamilton Jones. HMS Striker, Stalker, Maidstone, Neptune, Dolphin, Nelson. JSSC. Cent Defence Staff. Naval Advisor India. Def Studies Latimer. FO Adty Int Board. Died August 8, aged 91.

Cdr Kenneth G Bowen OBE. HMS Lynx, Ganges, Berry Head, Triumph, Victory RNB, Collingwood, Torquay, Nav Sec, MOD Portsdown. Died August 26, aged 84.

Cdr Michael F Nalder. HMS Mercury, Diamond, Duncan, Dundas, Dryad, Saker, Nelson. DN Ops and Trade. Died August.

Submariners' Association

Dave Palmer LEM. Served May 1959 - Sep 1962 in HM Submarines Auriga and Finwhale. Member of Merseyside Branch. Died August 2, aged 79.

Charlie Greensmith LSea UC. Served Feb 1963 - Aug 1967 in HM Submarines Alaric (63-66), Trump (66), and Taciturn (67). Eastern States Branch. Died August 7, aged 78.

Keith Ashworth CPO Mech1. Served 1959 - 1979 in HM Submarines Explorer, Nanwhal, Amphion, Alderney, Warspite and Courageous. Member of Manchester Branch. Died August 14, aged 81.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the August edition of Navy News (right) was the patrol boat HMS Attacker which was sold to the Lebanon in 1992 and renamed Tablous.

Bob De Rose, of Dunfermline, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship is a Dido-class light cruiser commissioned in September 1940. One of her first duties was evacuating troops from Crete and Greece the following year.

1) What was her name? and 2) when was she scrapped?

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 November 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 December edition.

The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

Reunions

Royal Navy Photographers Association 100th Year Reunion: The Maritime Club, Portsmouth from October 11 to 14. All members wives/partners and photographers past and present are welcome to help celebrate 100 years since the Photographic Branch was formed. As well as the visits & tours, the anniversary dinner will be held in the Nelson Room at the Maritime Club. On the Sunday there will be a '100 years of Photography Exhibition' followed by lunch. For details contact the Social Secretary, Ray Whitehouse at ray@chilston.com or phone 01403 230848.

HMS Glory Association: Reunion at the Aston Court, Midland Road, Derby, takes place on October 18-19.

For details contact Bernie Cohen at b.cohen2@ntlworld.com or call 0780678720.

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

Weapon Mechanics Association: The 2019 annual reunion takes place at the Bear Hotel in Havant, from October 11 to 13. For further details contact Peter Andrews at weaponmechs50@btinternet.com or phone 07411 807552.

HMS Glory Association: Reunion The Survey Ships Association: The 25th reunion takes place at the Mercure Chester North Woodhey House Hotel,

from Friday October 25 to Monday, October 28. For information on membership and reunions 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 details please contact enquiries@iowtours.com.

HMS Superb (Cruiser) Association: The annual reunion and AGM takes place at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent, on October 4 to 6. For details contact Robin Smith at 173 London Road, Rainham, Kent, phone 01634 362379 or email robinsmith173@yahoo.co.uk

yahoo.co.uk

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Association: Reunion takes place at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, from October 18 to 21. 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

HMS Mohawk Association: Reunion takes place at the Kegworth Hotel, Packington Hill, Kegworth, from November 1 to 4. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or email Bob Proud rob.proud@mypostoffice.co.uk

HMS Relentless Association: The 2019 reunion takes place over the weekend of November 22-25 at the Hotel Royale, Bournemouth. All ex-'Rusty R' members 1942-1968 welcome. Contact Secretary@hmsrelentless.co.uk (Tel: 02392 599640), or to book direct with SFEVENTS email hmsrelentlessreunion@sarahfletcherrevents.co.uk (Tel: 01452 813173)

Loch Class Frigates Association: Our annual reunion takes place at the Cardiff North Hotel, Cardiff, on April 17-20 2020. Membership is open to all who served on any of the Loch-class ships or their variants (Bay class, Admirals yachts, survey ships and repair ships. For more details contact honorary secretary Andrew Nunn at Andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk or call 0117 9505835

HMS Ganges Association: Our annual reunion will be held April 17-20 2020 at the Warners Gunton Hall Holiday Village near Lowestoft. Open to all those who served at HMS Ganges, wives & partners also welcome. For booking details contact tony.willders@btinternet.com tel:07787106202 Or Isle of Wight Tours on (01983) 405116.

HMS Broadsword Association: Biannual reunion and AGM takes place at the Best Western Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, on Saturday May 23, 2020. The reunion is open to anyone who has served on Broadsword. For details visit hmsbroadswordassociation.co.uk or contact Bill Skilliter wistheplumber@yahoo.co.uk

1710 Naval Air Squadron 10th Anniversary Dinner: For all serving/ex serving squadron members takes place at the WO, SRs & SNCOs mess in HMS Sultan on Friday June 5 2020. For information please contact Elaine Rogers at Elaine.Rogers683@mod.gov.uk or phone on 02392 722758.

MYSTERY PICTURE 296

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

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Ask Jack

Michael Frampton. My brother-in-law boxed extensively for the navy during his service in the 60s and was awarded his colours. He would love to get a Imperial Services/Combined Services cloth badge to sew on to his sweatshirt. He is now 75 and I would love to obtain one for him.

Joe Joryeff
joryeffj@gmail.com

CPSA Jim Asher. I am trying to contact a former shipmate with whom I served in HMS Cardiff during the Falklands conflict. I served as a CHMEM at the time.

Terry Edson
Sallyann.edson@tiscali.co.uk

ROYAL NAVY NAVY NEWS

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Editor: Lorraine Proudlock
Email: editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Tel: 023 9262 5282 or Mil: 93832 5282

Editorial
News@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Sam.Bannister@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Helen.Boswell@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Graphics
Andy.Brady@royalnavymail.mod.uk

General enquiries:
023 9262 5235
Business
Business manager:
Lisa Taw: 023 9262 5235
bm@navynews.co.uk

Subscriptions:
www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews
subscriptions@navynews.co.uk

Advertising: 023 9262 5235
advertising@navynews.co.uk

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in November's Noticeboard must be received by
OCTOBER 15, 2019



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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ROYAL NAVY

RN adds wow factor

● A Royal Navy Wildcat from the Blackcats display team flies over RFA Lyme Bay during the Bournemouth Air Festival



● Top left, the view from HMS Biter
Picture: CPO Adam 'Alice' Cooper

Left: Visiting sea cadets get a soaking on board RFA Lyme Bay

Right: WO1 Alex Orr with young visitors to the festival



THE Royal Navy brought added wow factor as personnel, ships and aircraft from across the Royal Navy and Royal Marines brought their ability to show what they can do on the land, in the air and at sea at the UK's largest air festival.

The award-winning and internationally recognised four-day Bournemouth Air Festival showcases not only what the armed forces has to offer but also some of the finest display teams on the air show circuit.

As well as the Royal Navy's Wildcat, vintage aircraft, parachutists, aerobatics, night air pyrotechnics and fireworks, noise came courtesy of the Swedish Saab Draken and the ear-splitting RAF Typhoon displays.

Throughout the weekend event, Bournemouth's picture-perfect horizon was enhanced by the impressive silhouettes of the Devonport-based Royal Navy Type 23 frigate, HMS Argyll and the amphibious landing ship RFA Lyme Bay which anchored in the bay. They were supported by two P2000 patrol boats, HMS Charger and Biter, who provided a ready escort to the frigate.

On the land, there was plenty of entertainment along the resort's two-mile beach-front, provided by funfairs, display stalls and three military villages

set up for the weekend.

The Royal Navy village was busy with Viking multi-terrain vehicles and equipment displays and gave the public a chance to chat with members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

"We are delighted to return to the Bournemouth Air Festival every year and to participate in one of the most spectacular events in the coastal summer calendar," said Royal Navy Regional Commander, Wales and Western England, Brigadier Jock Fraser.

"It is a privilege to showcase what the Royal Navy and Royal Marines do around the world and for so many members of the public we serve to find out more about us, how we operate and to get close up to the equipment we use at sea and ashore."

The Bournemouth Air Festival is now in its 12th year and has welcomed well over ten million visitors since 2008 who flock to the area keen to watch the displays, meet the Royal Navy and other armed forces and look around their equipment.

But it is in the air where Bournemouth makes its mark. Jaw-dropping displays from some of the world's premier aerobatic teams who bring their own meaning to the words speed, agility and precision.

Words: Peter Wooldridge
Pictures: LPhoto Joe Cater

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Best, but too late Cry 'hammock' and let slip the logs of war

THE GROVE REVIEW

RAY BURT has established himself as a leading expert on British battleships.

He has published three books on them taking the story from 1889, only two years after the term became an official designation, to the end of the Second World War.

He has now completed this cycle with a volume devoted to HMS Vanguard, the last British battleship, laid down in 1941 and commissioned five years later, just too late for the war.

The book provides a detailed and exceptionally well-illustrated analysis of the ship's design and original appearance.

Vanguard was by far the best battleship ever built for the Royal Navy. She had some of the most impregnable levels of protection of any battleship, impressive speed, exceptional sea keeping and had a radar directed anti-aircraft armament that would have kept off the torpedo bombers that had been the nemesis of ships like Bismarck, Prince of Wales and Yamato.

She also had the speed of a battle cruiser, 30 knots. Just after completion she carried out her gunnery trials firing 24 15-in broadsides, probably the only time in her career she ever did so.

In the absence of an operational Royal Yacht, Vanguard was chosen as an impressive substitute to take the Royal Family on a tour to South Africa.

The ship underwent various modifications to house the Royal party. The author says these did not alter the ship's appearance back aft but this is not the case.

As can be clearly seen in the copious illustrations, a sun lounge was built beneath the after sextuple 40-mm mounting and ahead of the after director control tower. This remained a feature of the ship being kept with possible future Royal Tours in mind and much appreciated by the battleship's midshipmen, as the late Admiral Oswald told me.

It also explains why the single 40mm guns in this part of the ship were removed.

This had effects on Vanguard's military capability. This is not really addressed in the book, although the author does admit that in the immediate aftermath of the war only the forward turret was allowed to fire single gun salvos.

This kind of situation would be one the battleship would face for the rest of its career. 'X' turret was soon put in a 'state of preservation'; I expected the author to give a date, but none was provided. Firing this turret would have devastated the sun lounge.

Even as Home Fleet flagship, which she became at Prime Minister Churchill's insistence (not, as the author says, primarily because of accommodation problems in the carrier Indomitable) Vanguard had become primarily a status symbol.

Her reduced complement meant that her armament was declared to NATO at 90 days' notice.

The Gunnery Division of the Naval Staff thought that 210 days was a more accurate figure for getting Vanguard fully operational. There were not enough personnel on board to man the three potentially operational turrets and their labour intensive magazines.

Usually no 15-in ammunition was carried. There were periodic shoots with the forward turrets to maintain morale and keep up appearances but these were special occasions, one of which is illustrated in the book with no explanation.

The four twin 5.25-in secondary mountings were on immediate notice but only two were actually operational to fire star shell for tactical exercises.

It was thought it would need about 30 days to get the full secondary armament worked up.

Only four of the ten sextuple 40mm mountings were operational and the directors

were stored ashore as was one mounting.

Only a quarter of the 5.25 ammunition spaces were filled (with star shell) and five percent of the 40mm spaces, some of which had been taken over by the Royal accommodation.

Manning Vanguard's armament even only to 85 per cent would have required over 700 extra personnel, men the contemporary RN could not afford. She was also overweight that forced trade-off between ammunition and fuel.

None of this was obvious.

As the First Lord put it "she had a value for prestige purposes that makes it important to retain her if this can be contrived without the sacrifice of even more important things".

In 1954-5 the battleship was given a refit to return her to more or less fully combatant condition.

The royal accommodation was finally removed but modifications to improve habitability still made her overweight, limiting fuel capacity.

At least she should have been carrying her full stock of 15-in shell for the three operational turrets that could be afforded.

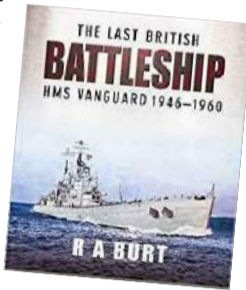
In the event the ship went into reserve, probably partly due to intelligence that the Soviets had abandoned their 12-in gun Stalingrad class battle cruisers.

Sadly, there is little or nothing of this in the book, although almost all of it was in my *Vanguard to Trident* which the author should have used.

He even makes the elementary error of calling Admiral Sir Frederick Parham First Sea Lord.

Despite these significant problems, the book is attractive and useful and complements Burt's earlier volumes.

The Last British Battleship; HMS Vanguard 1946-1960 (ISBN 978 1 5267 5226 0) is published by Seaforth to their usual high standards for a reasonable £35.



DID your relatives fly with the Fleet Air Arm in World War 2? If so, you might be able to help naval aviation's most dedicated historians.

Between them Lee Howard, Mick Burrow and Theo Ballance, along with the late Ray Sturtivant, are responsible for a series of definitive works on naval aircraft/units (*Fleet Air Arm Fixed-Wing Aircraft since 1946*, *Fleet Air Arm Helicopters since 1943* and *The Squadrons and Units of the Fleet Air Arm*).

To mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War 2, the trio hope to update the 'bible': *Fleet Air Arm Aircraft 1939 and 1945*, now a quarter of a century old and fetching upwards of £400 second-hand.

That means charting and updating the history of somewhere in the region of 25,000 airframes – a daunting task made all the harder by the authorities who destroyed much of the official documentation shortly after the war's end.

For the much-improved and updated second edition, the team intended to correct any errors in the original version, cram in extra info and add scores of new photographs.

Aircrew logbooks (pilot, observer and telegraphist/air gunner) could help plug the gaps – as well as add to the Fleet Air Arm story.

Most fliers who survived the war kept hold of their logs; the books of those killed in action eventually ended up in the War Office's document warehouse in Middlesex... until the beginning of the 60s when a clearout prompted some families to claim logs, and hundreds more being pulped including, it is thought, those once belonging to Bismarck chase/Channel Dash hero Lieutenant Commander Eugene Esmonde VC.

Despite the wholesale destruction of hundreds, if not thousands, of logbooks, over the years the FAA historians have pored over more than 2,000 such examples to help their research and are hopeful many more are still out there.

"While, on the face of it, many owners may think their logbooks contain no meaningful information, the devil is in the detail," Lee explained.

"Meticulous analysis can often extract the data needed to piece the histories of the aircraft and squadrons, as well as helping to highlight the sacrifices of those individuals involved."

Although the emphasis for now is on wartime logbooks, the team are also keen to see logs – or copies – from post-war fliers from Suez and Malaya through the Falklands to Afghanistan, as well as long-running SAR duties in the UK to build up the knowledge base for future naval aviation reference books. Personal photos featuring wartime aircraft are also sought to help make this the most comprehensive book on the subject.

The team can be contacted via faa@air-britain.co.uk.

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Collingwood rowers defeat river marathon

HMS Collingwood rowers defeated the arduous Great River Race 2019. In a competitive field of more than 300 boats, they came in around mid-way in the 21.6-mile race, otherwise known as London's River Marathon, which goes from London Docklands to Richmond. Crew Captain Lieutenant Steve Cass was extremely pleased with the result, especially as the mixed crew included some who have only recently learned to row, with work commitments impacting training before the event for many. He said: "It was a tough race in warm conditions, but all persevered brilliantly throughout almost three hours of solid, hard rowing to beat 130 other boats, including 35 more experienced mixed crews. The achievement would not have been possible without the generous support of the Sports Lottery and the club rowers who were unable to race but helped with the preparations." More than well over 300 boats carrying approximately 2,400 competitors raced for 35 trophies at The Great River Race, which has become the biggest and most prestigious event of its kind in Europe. HMS Collingwood Gig Club is always looking for new rowers and trains weekly from the Sailing Centre at HMS Excellent, no previous experience is necessary.

Fiji fall for Brits in Japan finale

ROYAL Navy rugby stars and their UK Armed Forces team-mates failed to win back the International Defence Rugby Competition Trophy. After high winds destroyed the posts at the original venue, they lost the finale 31-17 to Fiji in Japan at the replacement field at Camp Narashino. The UKAF side made it to the grand finale following victory over the French forces side in the last four. They took an early lead through James Dixon's penalty but the power and strength of the Fijians soon shone through and slammed across the line for three first half tries. It was 17-3 at the break and they added another try just after the restart. That was that, though, as UKAF battled back and put on some sustained pressure, getting a try themselves via

Rob Bell. Fiji put their feet down again and grabbed another try before Stu Cross clawed back some pride by scoring the last try of the day. UKAF head coach, Staff Sergeant Lee Soper said: "I got to thank [the UKAF players], coming together in a short space of time they showed tremendous courage and heart. "I feel again we were let down by the officiating, I've got some guys there who've taken some serious knocks from a bit of foul play again. "There's no point in the touch judges being there. "I'm not making excuses for that, [Fiji] were a good side. "The whole way through this tournament it's been poor to be honest, and my lads have taken the full brunt of it."



Swiss challenge

A TEAM of mountaineers from across the three services spent a fortnight in the Alps to prepare them for scaling the world's 12th highest peak. The Saas-Grund in Switzerland proved the training ground for men and women hoping to be selected to make the ascent of Broad Peak next year during an British Services Mountaineering Expedition 2020 (BSME20). The experience levels of those who hit the Alpine slopes ranged from complete novices, who were required to pass their alpine mountain foundation training, aided by a pool of experienced military instructors, to those climbers consolidating their mountaineering skills. The first day focused on glacier drills and crevasse rescue – integral skills which are potentially life-saving when out in the harsh alpine environment; leaders had to ensure that everyone, down to rookies, was competent. For the remainder of the Swiss expedition, climbers organised their own mini expeditions, usually staying in mountain huts for

a couple of nights before returning to the base campsite. Sleeping in the mountain huts helped with the altitude acclimatisation process and individuals could really feel the difference as the days passed. The huts were usually basic, but comfortable. Every evening a four-course meal was served to help fuel the mountaineers for the next day's adventures. Due to the relative inaccessibility of the huts, food and drink is often helicoptered in – making buying even water quite pricey. As the training progressed, the climbers aimed to reach the summit of mountains 4,000 metres high or more, such as the Bishorn and the Allalinhorn – often having crossed glaciers to reach the slopes. The views at the top of the mountains were breath-taking, even more so with the effects of altitude – and the teams were mostly lucky with the weather, allowing vistas of snow-covered peaks for miles around. The other aspect of

alpine training is rocky ridges – a change of scenery from the persistent plods along glacier terrain and allowed the team to practise their climbing skills in a multi-pitch environment. Nineteen climbers left Switzerland with an alpine mountain foundation qualification – which means they are in with a chance of making next year's team which heads to Pakistan to assault Broad Peak, which sits on the Pakistani-Chinese frontier opposite K2 and rises 8,047 metres (26,401ft) above sea level. You can follow the progress of the climbers at: facebook.com/bsme20



Judo big guns fire in United States...

THE Royal Navy Judo Team produced a stunning display and collected a five-medal haul from a fruitful trip to the USA.

Lieutenant Stephen Watson, Lieutenant David Ferguson, Leading Physical Trainer Alex Stocker and Petty Officer Peter Erne all won gold in their respective weight categories at the Nikkei Games at the Walter Pyramid in Long Beach, California.

Lieutenant Chris Mullen completed the silverware collection, grabbing a silver in his class.

LPT Stocker, a PTI at HMS Collingwood and team manager, said: "The Nikkei Games was a class event; it was a great experience to compete here and as the RN team we made a real impact."

The team will now shift attention to the Inter Service Championships, being hosted by the Army at Aldershot on October 10.

Having beaten the Army in 2018, they will look to take their momentum from the USA into this year's competition and retain their title.

It was a once in a lifetime tour of California for 12 of the team, ahead of heading to Nikkei event.

Splitting their time

between San Diego and Long Beach, the team trained at many prestigious Dojos during their 12-day visit.

One such gym was Migoto Dojo, where the team were lucky to train with over 40 other Judoka including ten 6th Dan Black belts.

Another highlight was training with Justin Flores at Studio 540, a world-renowned athlete famous for coaching Ronda Rousey for the 2008 Olympics.

To strengthen sporting relations with San Diego Naval Base ahead of future port visits, the team hosted a Judo Seminar for the base.

A large number of Navy Seals and US Servicemen attended and were taught the basics of the sport.

Lt Ferguson, OOW1 on HMS Richmond and association secretary, led the session.

He said: "San Diego Naval Base have been excellent hosts and it is great to provide something in return. It was a privilege to introduce US military personnel to Judo and I hope they continue with the Sport in the future."

If you are interested in Judo and would like to find out more, please contact Lt Ferguson at HMSRCMD-WAR-OOW1@mod.uk



Mortars take on the Three Peaks

ROYAL Marines from 45 Commando took on the Three Peaks Challenge and, to amp things up a bit, also cycled between each of their ascents.

In the end, the Mortars Troop team smashed through 605 miles of cycling, spending more than 38 hours on the bike, hiking 27 miles and burning more than 40,359 calories.

The challenge saw them raise £16,500 for charity causes, having raised £18,000 last year in a separate event.

The Three Peaks Challenge involves climbing the three highest peaks in England (Scafell Pike), Scotland (Ben Nevis) and Wales (Snowdon).

The challenge started by climbing Snowdon. Over a six-day period, the team cycled up the UK to climb Scafell Pike, followed by Ben Nevis (after a quick detour to the Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge). The challenge finished by cycling an additional 140 miles to Ellon, Aberdeenshire.

Organiser Lance Corporal Daniel Stewart said: "After a successful event last year raising over £18,000, I wanted to continue with the fundraising this year but taking

on a more physical challenge. I spoke with my mates within the Royal Marines and we came up with doing the national Three Peaks Cycle Challenge but with an extra 140 miles across the country finishing at BrewDog DogTap.

"Everyone dug out blind each day and helped pull each other through. We were fortunate enough to have the whole troop (45 Mortar Troop) involved helping out with the admin that needed done, leaving the cyclists to focus on getting through each day. We also had two fundraising teams made up of five Marines, stopping off and setting a stall up at supermarkets along the route. They raised over £1,100 alone from this.

"The main aim of the week was to raise a target of £10,000 for two charities close to heart, Friends of Anchor, North east Scotland haematology and cancer charity and The Royal Marine Charity. We have smashed that target raising over £16,500. The support and sponsorship we have had has been incredible. Thank you all very much. An amazing effort from everyone involved."

To sponsor the team, go to uk.virginmoneygiving.



Navy rugby star heads to cup final

ROYAL Navy rugby star Josh Coupland represented the Armed Forces Rugby League at the 2019 Challenge Cup final.

The marine engineer from HMS Sultan was part of a tri-service team who were wreath bearers, trophy carriers and made up a ceremonial party as Warrington Wolves defeated St Helens 18-4 at Wembley Stadium in the showpiece final.

Josh and fellow servicepeople also assisted The Duke of Sussex – patron of the Rugby Football League – in handing the trophy to the winners.

The matelot, a Leading Engineering Technician, is a big Hull fan and had dreamed of handing them the silverware before they lost to Warrington in the last four of the competition.

Before heading to Wembley, he said: "I honestly can't wait to represent the Royal Navy. I've got friends who have done it before and to walk out in a sport that you

love and to be wearing the Royal Navy uniform means so much to so many people and makes me feel proud of what we do.

"I went to the semi-final already knowing that I had been selected. I was just sat there so nervous, thinking how much it would mean to hand out the medals to members of my own team, but I guess I won't need to worry about the result so much now. I can just relax a little more now and enjoy seeing two great teams going head-to-head.

"I've recently been promoted to Leading Engineering Technician, so it will be nice for all my friends and family to see me show that off. I really can't wait for the big day."

LET Coupland was selected to perform the honour in recognition of his own sporting achievements, having represented both the Royal Navy and UK Armed Forces in both domestic and international military competitions since joining the Royal Navy in 2015.



Sultans of swing take the glory

HMS Sultan took a three-wicket victory over HMNB Portsmouth in the Navy Cup final at Portsmouth and Southsea Cricket Club.

The season finale saw slow progress for Sultan, with tight bowling and fielding from the Portsmouth outfit, and were 19 for 0 off ten overs in the 35-over match.

Two wickets fell quickly and in came ET (ME) Jonathon 'Dicky' Davis and Sultan started to assert themselves.

Dicky's 49 and a superb display from LAET Dan Cockin put Sultan on 198 for seven, giving Portsmouth a tough-test with the bat.

Undeterred, Portsmouth gave their all but couldn't quite settle against good bowling and a solid fielding, including a terrific diving catch at square leg and a deep catch at mid-on.

Despite a strong knock by Sam Tagliaferri, Portsmouth were all bowled out for 115 in the 30th over leaving Sultan with a three-wicket win.

For his strong batting and bowling performance (27 not out and 21 for one off five overs), the man of the match went to LAET Dan Cockin.

The winner's trophy was awarded, by the RNCA Chairman, Rear-Admiral Mike Bath to LET (ME) Thomas Stafford.

KNOCKOUT NIGHT

45 COMMANDO BOXING CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT

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Picture by LPhot Will Haigh



RESULTS: Souter (Hands of Stone) bt Petrie (Declaration); Ledington (43Cdo) bt Adams (Royal Artillery); Johnstone (Y Coy) bt Bullock (Z Coy); Knowles (Y Coy) bt Lobb (Y Coy); Mahmood (Lochee Boy's Club) bt Gaskell (X Coy); Brough (Cmd Coy) bt Threfall (X Coy); Colbert (Y Coy) bt Bunting (Z Coy); Riordon (Y Coy) bt McKee (X Coy); Walker (X Coy) bt Loomes (Cmd Coy); Broughton (Cmd Coy) bt Perry (Cmd Coy). Best boxer Marine Lewis Colbert, Y Coy; Best bout: Walker (X Coy) vs Loomes (Cmd Coy). Most Courageous Boxer: Craig Petrie, Declaration 1320 Boxing Club. 45 Commando Boxing Shield: Y Coy.

MARINE Lewis Colbert is eager for more after winning the Best Boxer Award at 45 Commando's fight night Boxing Championship following a superb debut in the ring.

The commando from Yankee Company produced a stunning display to defeat his opponent from Zulu Company and is now hungry for more boxing action.

His display helped Yankee Company to win the 45 Commando Boxing Shield and bragging rights over the unit's other companies.

"It was a great experience to fight in front of the unit. The atmosphere was electric and the support from the crowd was awesome," he said.

"Having the lads from the company support me really helped during the fight. This was my first time boxing and I'm ecstatic that I came away with the 'Best Boxer Award' and that I came away fully intact!

"The preparation for the fight was especially difficult – I had an intense training period that led up to the fight, including me being very disciplined over the summer.

"The company and the lads have been really supportive though and I've enjoyed the whole experience. I can't wait for the next fight."

The championships were held at RM Condor, in Arbroath, and saw fighters from 45 Commando, 29 Commando, 43 Commando and local boxing clubs Lochee Boys Club, Hands of Stone and Declaration 1320 gather for the ten-bout tournament.

The boxers of RM Condor undertook a gruelling six-week training package to prepare them for the event.

Four weeks of this training took place over summer leave, where the boxers went to their local boxing clubs to prepare for their bouts.

"Preparation for the fight required a huge amount of dedication from each of the boxers – the unit returned from Baltic Protector in July," said Lieutenant Alex Saunders.

"At a time when other members of the unit were relaxing and enjoying their time off, the boxers were training for three sessions a day, five times a week.

"Training consisted of a cardio workout in the morning, followed by a technique session and a sparring session."

He added: "45 Commando would like to express their gratitude to the supervisors, referees, judges, timekeepers, medical and supporting staff that made the

event not only possible but a resounding success.

"The involvement of the local community and local boxing clubs highlights the fantastic relationship that RM Condor has with the community of Angus."

Marine Walker vs Marine Loomes was the Best Bout of the night, winning the award after an absolute thriller during which the former triumphed.

Sergeant Wayne Brooks, 45 Commando's team coach, said: "As soon as the bell sounded, it was clear that the audience were in for a close fight.

"Both men locked horns and from the off, they unleashed a barrage of precise punches. Towards the end of the first round, Mne Loomes landed a heavy right-cross which sent Mne Walker down to the canvas. Unperturbed, Mne Walker got back on his feet and went straight back into the fight.

"Round two saw Mne Walker up the tempo as he threw a bombardment of accurate punches, which gave him the upper hand during the round.

"As the bell echoes through the gym for the final round both men put it all on the line, leaving nothing behind. In a closely-contested match, Mne Walker was declared the winner."



Pictures by LPhoto Ben Corbett

INTER-SERVICES WATERSKI AND WAKEBOARD CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT

BOARD MEETING

THERE was a big haul of personal milestones at the Inter-Services Waterski & Wakeboard Championship for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines squad.

Deployments and exercises meant the naval service team were missing several key members, but, despite finishing behind the Army and RAF in the final standings, they did not disappoint in difficult circumstances. The RN brought a team a third the size of the other services to the Box End Park venue in Bedfordshire, but still managed to compete in all three disciplines (cable wakeboard, boat wakeboard and slalom waterski). "With two of the main medal contenders in the men's team pulling out at short notice, two relative newcomers stepped up to the plate and gave their all for the team,"

said team manager CPO Matt Ellison. "It was also tricky day for the women's squad, with only two of the team of 12 able to compete at the event." PLET Ramsay Forbes and PLET George Westman, both of HMS Sultan, were essentially beginner cable wakeboarders at the beginning of the week, but by the end of the event they had both represented the team behind the boat on both board and skis too – amassing a respectable haul of points towards the overall team score. Despite having only a team of team, the women still made a splash, too. LSET Aaby Aldridge of RNAS Culdrose achieved a fourth place in the Ladies' Cable Competition – the best

result achieved by the RN ladies team to date. Meanwhile, in the Men's Skiing Competition, every RN and RM competitor achieved a personal best. Ski team captain Cpl Elliot Underwood – fresh from competing at the World Waterski Racing Championships for Team GB in France – was best of the bunch, attaining an overall top ten finish – another first for the RN Team. Cpl Underwood also came close to claiming the prize for Men's Best All-Rounder but in the end was just pipped to the post by CPO Ellison – there were only ten points or one place in it. The Best All-Rounder prize is presented to the competitor in both ladies and men's categories who competes in all three disciplines of the event. Due to competing in all three disciplines, they are

not likely to get a lot of rest during the event and aren't likely to challenge for medals in all individual events but are recognised for the considerable points haul that they accumulate towards their overall service score. The Royal Navy Waterski & Wakeboarding Association (RNWWA) will be offering grass-roots courses from April 2020, providing interested personnel the opportunity to give waterskiing and wakeboarding a go. The Royal Navy Championships will take place in June/July 2020 and is open to all servicepeople, regardless of experience. For more information or if you'd like to get involved in this exciting and rewarding sport, please visit the RNWWA Facebook Group or email team manager CPO Ellison at matthew.ellison311@mod.gov.uk