



# NAVY NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2020

## Ready for lift off

MALLOY heavy-lift drones line up on the flight deck of HMS Prince of Wales as the Royal Navy hosted the Future Maritime Aviation force, designed to show the Senior Service's intention to harness new technology.

(see pages 2-3)

Picture: LPhot Dan Shepherd



Inside – Royal Navy Transformation



# NAVY TO RAMP UP USE OF DRONES ON FUTURE OPERATIONS

## HMS PRINCE OF WALES AND CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER HOST INDUSTRY DAY TO SHOW HOW NEW TECHNOLOGY CAN BENEFIT SAILORS AND ROYAL MARINES ON THE FRONTLINE

THE Royal Navy has shown its clear intent for the greater use of autonomous and uncrewed technology in future operations.

HMS Prince of Wales provided an impressive setting for the Future Maritime Aviation Force Accelerator Day, bringing together experts from the Royal Navy, Ministry of Defence and industry to meet and discuss the vision for drone operations.

It comes as the navy seeks to develop and invest in the latest technology, bringing new, world-beating equipment to the frontline quicker.

Brigadier Dan Cheesman, Chief Technology Officer for the Royal Navy, co-hosted the event with Commodore Nick Walker, Deputy Director Naval Aviation, and called on attendees to consider how technology and innovation could transform

the way the Royal Navy operates in the skies now and into the future.

The Future Maritime Aviation Force, Brig Cheesman said, was also about seeing how the service could build-on and gain advantage from the pace of technological development already underway in the commercial sector.

"The aim is to transition rapidly from what we have now to whatever we want in the future," he said.

"We live in an exponential world of technological change and if we can integrate the latest tech and get it on operations, it will deliver battle-winning advantage. Specifically, getting that technology onto ships like HMS Prince of Wales would be a game-changer.

"We are working in collaboration with companies like the ones at the event to

understand how they can help us move faster."

Brig Cheesman added it should be the Royal Navy's goal that these new capabilities should be delivered in weeks and months, not years and decades.

The work of the Royal Navy's NELSON digital acceleration lab supports this idea.

They have continued to develop the "plug in and play" MAPLE system that, when integrated onto Royal Navy ships, will simplify the process of accessing and using autonomous and uncrewed technology.

It comes as the pace of external technological change is creating both opportunity and threat. Placing technology forward, into the hands of those on the frontline is increasingly important in maintaining operational advantage.

Within the Royal Navy and across defence real progress has been made: exploring the application of technology at pace through accelerators, prototyping, experimentation programmes and new delivery entities.

Trials earlier this year in Norway saw the MAPLE system used on HMS Albion and

last year on HMS Argyll.

Going forward, all Royal Navy ships will possess open architecture, fully-networked, organic crewless aviation systems.

And next year the Royal Navy has been tasked to further experiment with new technology, new processes, and new ways of thinking to deliver increased lethality, availability, sustainability, mass and reach.

The year has been earmarked the Year of Experimentation (YX21).

First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin announced 2021 as the Year of Experimentation to accelerate new capability across all Royal Navy domains rapidly and support joint and coalition ambitions.

These experimentation events will build upon the lessons from exercises Commando Warrior,

Information Warrior and Unmanned Warrior and HMS Prince of Wales will be at the forefront of a series of trials to test new ideas.

Speaking earlier this year, Adm Radakin said: "In 2021, HMS Prince of Wales will be an experimentation platform, experimenting with drones both underwater and airborne.

"In the next five years drones will be a part of our defence inventory."

This year of experimentation seeks to accelerate significantly the navy's understanding of crewless technology in advanced tactical scenarios, the use of digital technologies and delivery of 'Apps' to the warfighter.

With a range of scalable experimentation and demonstration events throughout the year in the UK, and alongside industry and allies, YX21 is unique and at a scale not seen before.

Cdre Walker supported the importance of the speed of introducing new technology.

Speaking onboard HMS Prince of Wales at the Future Maritime Aviation Force industry day, he said: "When we have drones and other equipment routinely embarked on ships, that's when we really start to understand what they can do and get an idea of what we can achieve.

"We have to do it safely, in the right way and coherently, but I want to see the type of kit on display today on frontline operations within the year."

YX21 presents the Royal Navy and wider defence with opportunities to drive forward the experimentation of innovative, technological solutions intended to build towards the Transformation priorities: Operational Advantage in the North Atlantic, Carrier Strike, Future Commando Force and Forward Presence through enhancing and proving technology and innovation enablers.

It will have a game-changing effect to accelerate the navy's drive towards remotely piloted vehicles and uncrewed capability within the next five years.



THE AIM IS TO TRANSITION RAPIDLY FROM WHAT WE HAVE NOW TO WHATEVER WE WANT IN THE FUTURE.

Brigadier Dan Cheesman



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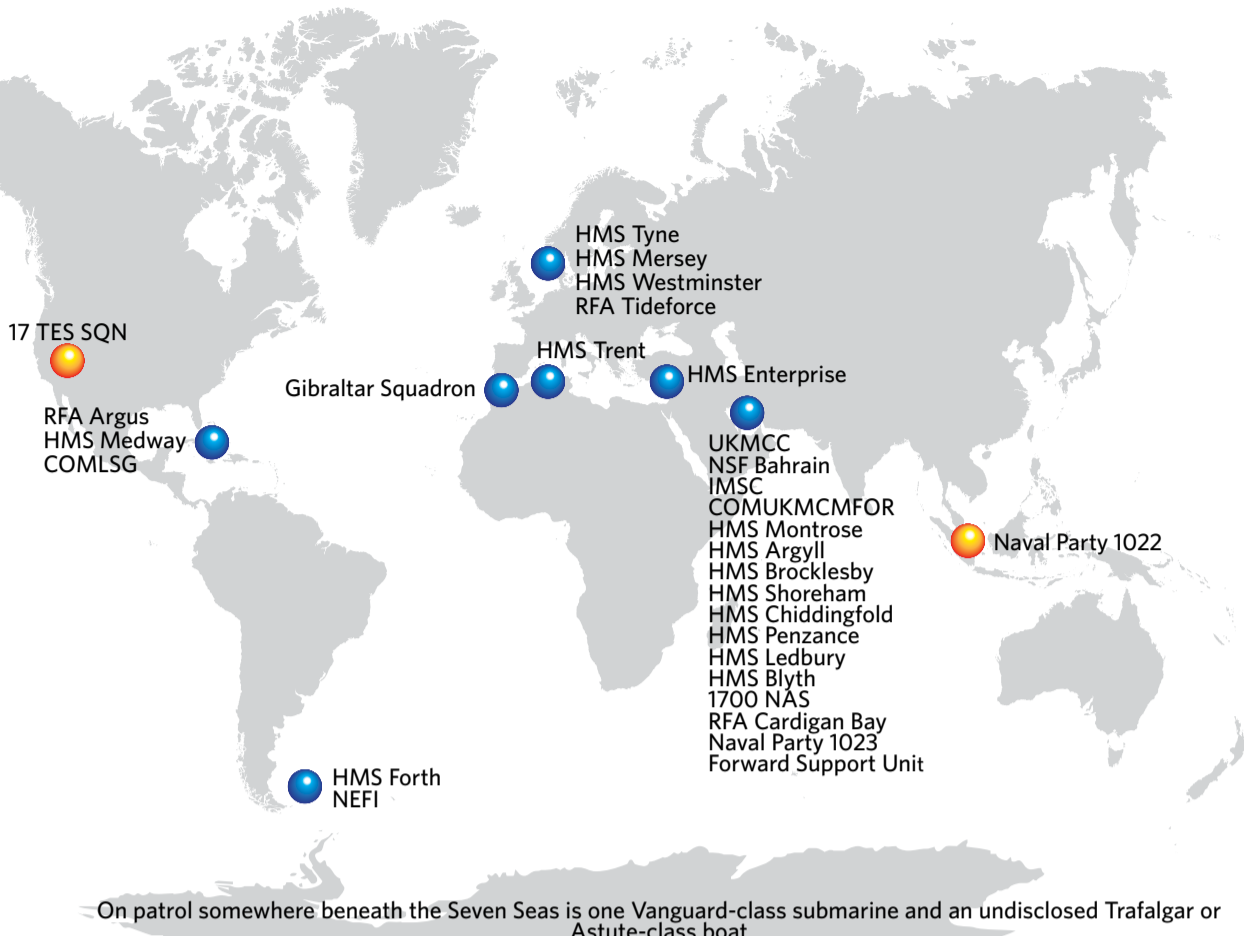
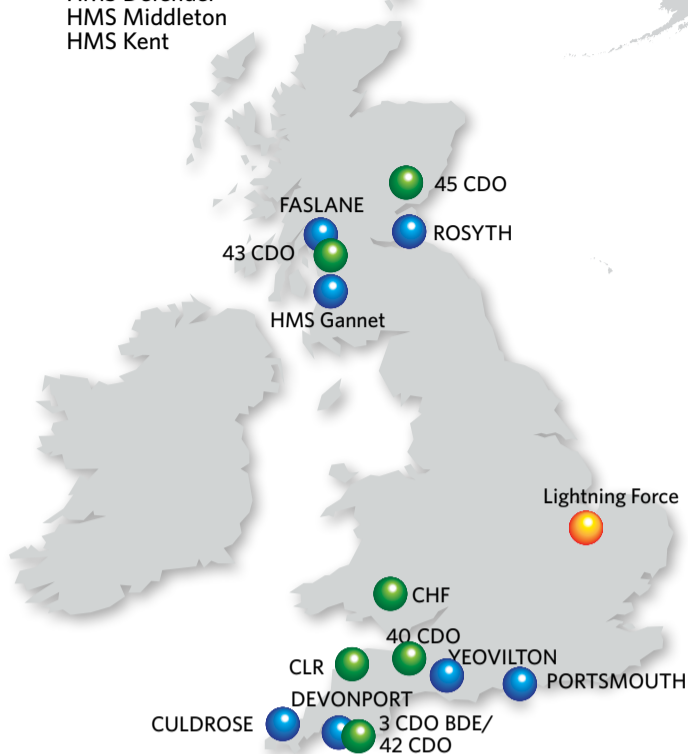


● Main image: Malloy Aeronautics heavy-lift drone on HMS Prince of Wales. Left: Different types of drones were on display as part of an industry day on the aircraft carrier.

Pictures: LPhot Dan Shepherd

**Training or on patrol around the UK**

- HMS Tamar
- HMS Severn
- HMS Magpie
- HMS Lancaster
- HMS Richmond
- HMS Defender
- HMS Middleton
- HMS Kent
- RFA Tidespring
- 814 NAS
- 815 NAS
- 820 NAS
- 824 NAS



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

**GLOBAL NAVY**  
Protecting our nation's interests

SEPTEMBER heralds the start of the new term and the Royal Navy has demonstrated its future intentions for the greater use of autonomous and crewless technology (see pages 1, 2 & 3). HMS Prince of Wales hosted the Future Maritime Aviation Force Accelerator Day to discuss the vision for drone operations on the frontline.

Future warships also feature this month with progress in both the Type 26 and Type 31 programmes (see page 7). Work has begun on the final major section of the first 26, HMS Glasgow, at BAE's Govan works in Scotland, while a comprehensive review of the design of the 31s has also been completed.

All five of the new River-class offshore patrol vessels feature this month, starting with HMS Trent (see centre pages). The third of the class was commissioned in Portsmouth in August and immediately deployed to the Mediterranean to join the NATO-led operation Sea Guardian.

Her younger sister Tamar (see page 22) is awaiting her global mission having gone through what is thought to be the fastest generation of a warship in peacetime.

HMS Forth paid her maiden visit to the capital of the Falkland Islands (see page 16). Despite having arrived in the South Atlantic at the start of the year, a visit to Stanley was delayed by the Covid pandemic.

The last ship of the class, HMS Spey, has welcomed her first crew aboard (see page 16) as construction on the warship draws to a close on the Clyde.

The first of the class, HMS Medway, is currently in the Caribbean with RFA Argus (see page 11) and personnel from the support ship helped clear plastic from a beach in Curacao used as a nesting habitat by turtles.

Royal Navy survey ship HMS Enterprise has arrived in Beirut (see page 6) as part of a wide-ranging package of military support following the devastating explosion at the Lebanese port.

Further east and a busy eight-month deployment in the Gulf is complete for MCM1 Crew 4 aboard HMS Shoreham (see page 9). The final three months on board were jam-packed, from time alongside for crucial maintenance to helping a US Navy warship, which was having issues. Also in Bahrain, the Royal Navy-led Coalition Task Force Sentinel has moved from its tents to a new operations centre (see page 9).

In the Med and HMS Dasher and Pursuer have taken over as the backbone of the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron (see page 13) as the MOD announced a £10m investment in two new fast craft for the waters around the British territory.

Back to the UK and Royal Navy and NATO allies escorted nine Russian warships (see page 5). HMS Mersey and HMS Tyne joined frigate HMS Westminster for the operation in the North Sea.

Patrol vessel Mersey also joined NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force – the first time a ship of the Royal Navy's Overseas Patrol Squadron has worked with a NATO task group (see page 17). Portuguese and Canadian warships in the task group met up with RFA Tideforce for replenishments at sea.

Merlin fliers from 825 NAS have been helping their Wildcat counterparts get their sea legs during training aboard HMS Westminster (see page 15). Merlin aircrew from 814 NAS faced a huge logistical challenge as they packed all their kit up from HMS Kent in order to transfer to HMS Northumberland (see page 14).

Seven P2000s completed their summer odyssey around Scotland and Northern Ireland (see page 13). The deployment of the Coastal Forces Squadron vessels provided the crews with a unique opportunity to practice essential seamanship and navigational skills.

For the first time in the history of the Royal Navy, sailors and officers passed out side-by-side (see page 25) at Britannia Royal Naval College. The ratings normally train at HMS Raleigh but with a surge in interest in joining the Senior Service, an additional course was provided at Dartmouth.

Royal Navy Reservists have been handed the keys to their new purpose-built headquarters HMS Cambria in Cardiff (see page 31).

Instructors and students look back at an interesting few months at the new tri-Service training centre for chefs, writers and logisticians at the Defence College of Logistics, Policing and Administration at Worthy Down in Hampshire (see page 27).

Finally, it's time for Navy News readers to vote for their favourite photograph by a Royal Navy photographer in the People's Choice category of this year's Peregrine Trophy contest (see page 6).

THIS month, we want to celebrate one of the areas of the Royal Navy that is sometimes overlooked, but without which most of our ships would be unable to operate; the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

The RFA was created in 1905 to provide coal to the ships of the Royal Navy, and since then it has been of vital importance in Royal Navy operations.

Everywhere that Royal Navy ships go, the RFA goes too, delivering food, fuel, fresh water, spare parts, ammunition and other supplies.

More than this, the RFA has played a front-line role in conflict, perhaps most famously with the tragic loss of RFA Sir Galahad in the Falklands.

But its roles also include supporting amphibious operations with the Bay-class vessels, acting as humanitarian aid platforms, providing a floating hospital and delivering a platform for aviation training.

The past year has been a particularly successful one for the RFA, the last of the new Tide class ships, RFA Tideforce, pictured, came into service in summer 2019, and deployed with HMS Queen Elizabeth to the US.

Here, the ships proved that they could conduct a Replenishment at Sea (RAS) while

**VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE**

launching and recovering aircraft – something that few other nations will attempt.

Elsewhere on that side of the Atlantic, RFA Mounts Bay was on hand to provide assistance to the Caribbean after the devastation of Hurricane Dorian.

She was the perfect platform to do so, being able to transfer stores ashore from her embarked landing craft and helicopters while remaining safely away from the damaged coast. Commanding Officer Captain Rob Anders RFA said his team had helped at least 6,000 people in the stricken island.

This was not all that Mounts Bay had achieved in the region. Earlier in the year she took centre stage when working with the US Coastguard to seize cocaine with a street value of nearly £40 million – a real demonstration of the versatility and value of these ships.

More recently, RFA Argus deployed at short notice to the Caribbean again as the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

Along with embarked personnel and helicopters from 845, 815 and 1700 NAS, she remains there ready to deliver whatever

assistance the islands require. Argus offers medical facilities, with a 100-bed medical complex on board, as well as being able to deliver in a broader role of humanitarian assistance.

But it isn't all about tropical sunshine and Atlantic breezes.

RFA's Lyme Bay and Argus played a crucial role in last year's Exercise Baltic Protector, the largest amphibious exercise in decades.

With Royal Marines from 3 Commando Brigade embarked, they proved that the UK can operate seamlessly with its most important allies, in some of the harshest conditions.

The RFA is fully integrated with every aspect of Royal Navy Transformation, from supporting ships delivering operational advantage in the North Atlantic, through enabling carrier strike operations, acting as a launchpad for the Future Commando Force and accompanying Royal Navy ships demonstrating forward presence around the world.

They even act as testing grounds for the latest technology and innovation such as drones and underwater autonomous vehicles.

The professionalism, dedication and experience of the RFA is a true force multiplier for the Royal Navy and our allies.



**Hooray for RFA**

# WATCHING EVERY MOVE...

Pictures by LPhot Baz Swainsbury

SHADOW: HMS Mersey keeps an eye on two Russian warships during operations with NATO



## HMS MERSEY, HMS TYNE, HMS WESTMINSTER AND RFA TIDEFORCE JOIN NATO SHADOWING RUSSIAN WARSHIPS

**The Royal Navy and NATO allies have escorted nine Russian Navy warships during heightened levels of activity in the waters close to the UK.**

Offshore Patrol Vessels HMS Mersey and HMS Tyne joined Type 23 frigate HMS Westminster in an operation which saw allied ships monitor every movement of three Steregushchiy-class corvettes, three Ropucha-class landing ships and the same number of missile-armed patrol boats.

Royal Navy warships joined NATO allies from Portugal, Canada, Germany, Norway and Denmark in tracking the Russians through some of the busiest sea lanes in the world.

Russian ships had dispersed after their Navy Day in St Petersburg at the end of July and sailed out from the Baltic Sea and into the North Sea for large-scale exercises.

"We had NATO warships shadowing the Russian task group through some of the busiest traffic lanes in the world," said HMS Mersey's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Will Edwards-Bannon.

"This was made possible by the professional and highly-trained ships' companies of all allied units involved, whose shared NATO tactics and training allow for seamless integration and joint working."

The Royal Navy warships were assigned to the very high readiness Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1), which patrols the waters of northern Europe from the Baltic to the Atlantic.

British ships worked closely with Portuguese frigate NRP Corte-Real – the task group's flagship – and Halifax-class frigate HMCS Toronto of the Royal Canadian Navy, while there were numerous supporting vessels from the German, Norwegian and Danish navies.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker RFA Tideforce kept the task group ticking, carrying out replenishments of supplies and fuel to keep the ships at sea and able to continue on their operations.

Commanding Officer of HMS Westminster, Commander Will Paston, said: "The Royal Navy demonstrated its flexibility in being able to shadow the Russian Navy units."

"While the Russian Navy operated in a safe and professional manner, HMS Westminster combined with NATO-allied units across the North Sea and Baltic Sea to escort them throughout."

HMS Westminster joined NRP Corte-Real in the north, monitoring the missile-armed patrol boats, while under the control of HMCS Toronto, HMS Tyne and Mersey shadowed the corvettes and landing ships as they headed south

towards the English Channel.

"Shadowing missions such as this are increasingly routine for Mersey and her sister ships of the Royal Navy's Overseas Patrol Squadron," added Lt Cdr Edwards-Bannon.

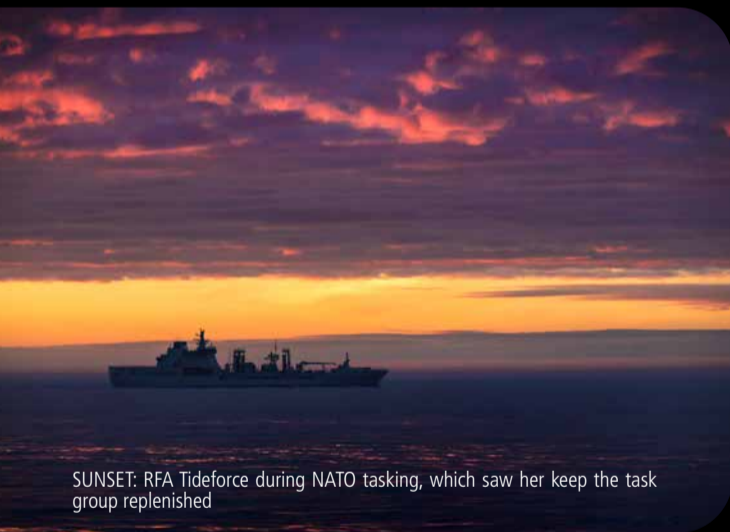
"This was the first time in recent years, however, that we have done so while under the operational command of NATO."

"As such we raised the NATO flag here in Mersey with pride as we worked closely with fellow service personnel from many of the alliance's 30 member countries, both ashore at NATO's Maritime Command HQ in London and afloat in the other allied warships comprising the Standing NATO Maritime Group One."

Lieutenant Commander Richard Skelton, Commanding Officer of HMS Tyne, said: "I am proud to say Tyne seamlessly integrated into SNMG1 and supported NATO in monitoring Russian activity in the North Sea."

"The speed at which the task group formed and become operationally effective was testament to the strength of NATO and I was pleased to be part of it."

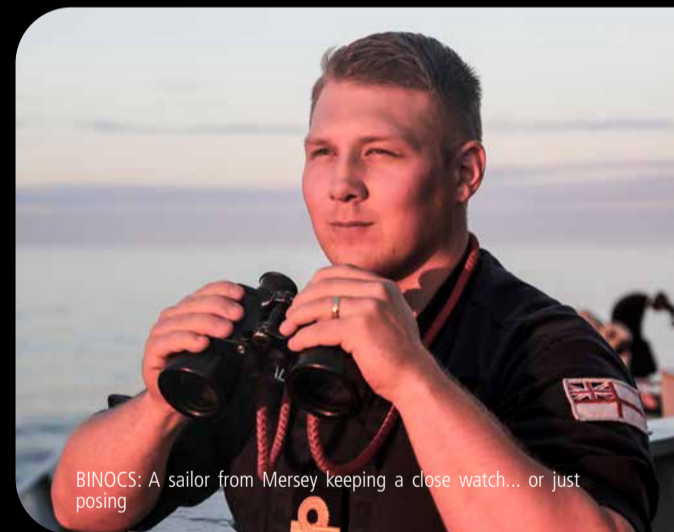
This latest operation comes after Mersey and Tyne tracked destroyer RFS Vice Admiral Kulakov in the North Sea and through the Channel in early August.



SUNSET: RFA Tideforce during NATO tasking, which saw her keep the task group replenished



SEA BOAT: Sailors from HMS Mersey head out on the sea boat during operations. A Russian ship can be seen to the right.



BINOCES: A sailor from Mersey keeping a close watch... or just posing



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# Destination: devastation

**SURVEY** Motor Boat Spitfire makes her way gingerly across the now-calm waters of Beirut harbour and the epicentre of one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history.

The hi-tech launch and her mother ship HMS Enterprise were dispatched to perform survey work in the port and deliver vital stores to the city.

The Royal Navy survey ship had been tasked to support the UK's efforts following the explosion which devastated Lebanon's capital city.

Defence secretary Ben Wallace tasked the ship to help as part of an immediate package of military and civilian support and £5m worth of aid.

Enterprise spent time loading stores from RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus, and taking them across the Mediterranean to Beirut, including 500 canvas cots, 112 tents and five field kitchens.

Loaded up on the vessel's quarterdeck, the supplies will be able to house and feed up to 500 soldiers from the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) who are working on the relief operation.

Also on board Enterprise were three soldiers from the British Army's

Mercian Regiment, ready to help the LAF set up the tents and field kitchens, and seven members of the Royal Marines Force Protection Team from 42 Commando.

Commander Cecil Ladislaus, commanding officer of Enterprise, said: "HMS Enterprise has had a small role to play here supporting our partners in Lebanon in their efforts to rebuild and more importantly, reopen this vital port."

"We are all proud of what we have achieved here working shoulder to shoulder with our Lebanese partners."

With her supplies on board, Enterprise sailed to Beirut and saw the scale and destruction of the blast which happened on August 4.

Once safely alongside, berthed just one basin across from the partially-destroyed grain silos and next to the capsized Orient Queen cruise ship, sailors began to unload the essential



● HMS Enterprise's Commanding Officer Commander Cecil Ladislaus confers with Lebanese Armed Forces in Beirut

equipment from the deck.

Cdr Ladislaus met with the LAF and British Embassy personnel to offer his deepest condolences and discuss how his ship can support getting the port back open.

Less than week after being tasked

to help, Enterprise was able to get on to the job she is designed for: surveying the water and seabed.

The ship was able to perform a full bathymetric survey – measuring the depth of the water and mapping the underwater features of the harbour approaches.

Working closely with her survey motor boat, which was able to go inshore to enhance the overall survey picture, the task was completed within a day. The raw data was processed by the ship and handed over to Beirut.

"Our deployment to Lebanon is part of a wider cross government military and civilian support package," Cdr Ladislaus said.

"Given our strong ties with our fellow hydrographers in Lebanon, we are here to deliver support both ashore, through deployment of a British Army team based in Cyprus, and afloat through survey work which will complement that which has already been

completed by the Lebanese Navy." Enterprise had been in Cyprus for maintenance when the explosion occurred. She has spent many months in the Asia-Pacific region visiting Japan, Vietnam and Singapore.

During her passage back from the east, she paused her transit across the Indian Ocean at Diego Garcia to carry out some survey work.

Following a successful survey operation in the outer islands that make up the wider British Indian Ocean Territory, Enterprise proceeded alongside the largest of the tropical islands in order to embark provisions and fuel, and to conduct a watch rotation of personnel – something that was done safely and successfully during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

An overnight stop in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in June gave the survey vessel the chance to resupply the ship and also for a socially-distanced visit from the local UK Defence Attaché.

Following a successful transit through the Suez Canal, the ship proceeded alongside in Limassol. Arriving slightly earlier than expected to conduct key maintenance work, the visit also allowed the ship's company to conduct a watch rotation and enjoy some much needed R&R on the beaches surrounding Akrotiri.

## Vote for your favourite pic

NAVY NEWS readers have the chance to vote for their favourite photograph in this year's prestigious Peregrine Trophy awards

We have shortlisted six photographs for the Navy News People's Choice Award, sponsored by Greenwich Hospital, which recognises images which have had a major impact on the publication, the official newspaper of the Royal Navy, over the past year.

The Peregrine Trophy's primary purpose is to encourage the production of eye-catching, powerful imagery that can be used in the media to demonstrate the operations and activities of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

To vote for your favourite picture, follow the instructions on the pinned post at [facebook.com/NavyNewsUK/](https://www.facebook.com/NavyNewsUK/)

The competition closes at midnight on September 28.



● Royal Marines from 45 Cdo took part in Exercise Curry Trail in Belize. Picture: LPhot Paul Hall



● A Viking comes ashore from an Landing Craft Utility of 4 Assault Squadron Royal Marines prior to a raid on the island of Saaremaa, Estonia, while deployed on Baltic Protector. Picture: PO (Phot) Si Ethell



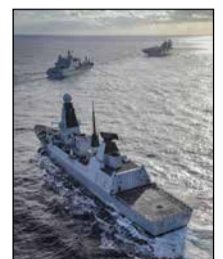
● P2000s line up in the Solent for their annual squadex. Picture: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum



● This atmospheric shot was captured by LPhot Ben Corbett as Royal Navy sailors marked Remembrance Day at the Portsmouth Naval Memorial



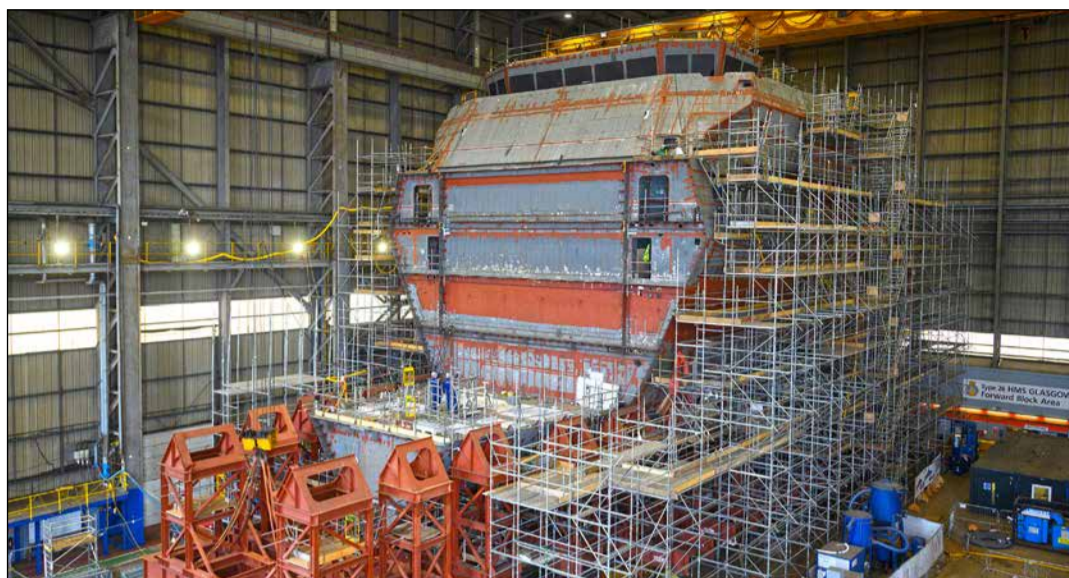
● LPhot Rory Arnold was on hand to capture Merlin helicopters from 845 NAS prepare for the hurricane season as they travelled aboard RFA Argus to the Caribbean



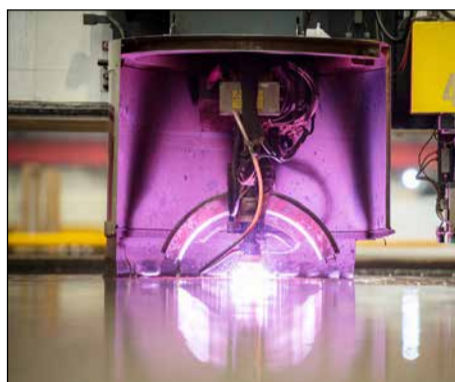
● HMS Queen Elizabeth, RFA Tideforce and HMS Dragon are pictured off USA during the Westlant 19 deployment. Picture: LPhot Kyle Heller

# PROGRESSING NICELY

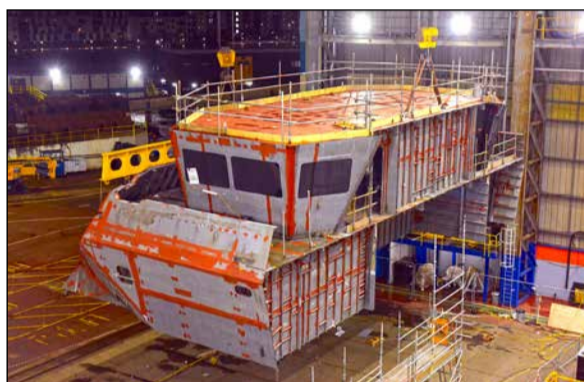
The latest on the Type 26s and 31s as they take next step on their journey to the sea



GLASGOW IS GO: The superstructure of HMS Glasgow, the first of eight Type 26 warships



FLASH: A steel cutter at BAE's Govan works



PROGRESS: The bridge of HMS Glasgow

**A BLINDING flash of light from a steel cutter at BAE's Govan works signals the start of work on the final giant section of Britain's newest frigate.**

Construction has begun on the 57th segment of the 8,000-tonne jigsaw which is HMS Glasgow, the first of eight Type 26 warships.

It's almost two years to the day that work on Glasgow began in the yard on the Clyde, with many of the completed sections pieced together in one of BAE's assembly halls.

Work began on this last section of ship as another £100m of contracts were placed with the vast supply chain needed to build the world's most advanced submarine hunter.

Firms in Glasgow, Hartlepool, Nottingham and Dorset will provide a range of services and assistance with the construction of the class, including painting, cabling and insulation – work all essential to the outfitting of the ships – and the eventual float off when a barge lowers the frigates in the Clyde.

"It's fantastic to see HMS Glasgow taking shape at our facilities here on the Clyde," said Steve Timms, BAE Systems Naval Ships Managing Director. "She is a source of great pride for our workforce who have worked with real energy, commitment and innovation in recent months."

To date more than £1bn has been spent in the Type 26 supply chain, spread around in excess of 100 firms worldwide. The latest £100m investment will support around 250 jobs in the UK, raising the total workforce involved in the future frigate programme over the 4,000 mark.

The eight ships, each named after some of the UK's greatest cities, will replace the eight 'souped up' dedicated anti-submarine Type 23 frigates which will reach the end of their active lives by the mid 2030s.

Armed with the Sea Ceptor missile defence system, a new 5in main gun, a flexible mission bay, Artisan 997 Medium Range Radar, powerful bow and towed array sonars and with a Merlin or Wildcat helicopter embarked, the 26s will shield the Navy's carrier strike groups from hostile submarines.

In addition five Type 31 general purpose frigates are intended to replace the general-duty Type 23s currently in service and also coming towards the end of their long and useful careers.

The Type 31 frigate has reached a key milestone in its development after the completion of a comprehensive review of the ship's design.

What is known as the Whole Ship Preliminary Design Review (WSPDR) was completed, virtually, by 15 experts during ten days of scrutiny, which provided a key indicator of the compliance, maturity and engineering risk in proceeding to the next Detailed Design phase.

This progress comes as Babcock announces the construction of a new assembly hall capable of housing two Type 31s at their Rosyth facility in Scotland.

Graeme Thomson, Babcock Type 31 Programme Director said: "Completing the Whole Ship PDR is a key milestone for the Type 31 programme and signals our move into Detailed Design."

"I'd like to thank all involved, a lot of hard work went into achieving this positive outcome. I look forward to the next stage in this exciting and challenging programme." On the new assembly hall, a Babcock update said: "Babcock's Rosyth facility has seen significant investment in the last decade and is embarking on a new era of digitising facilities and systems to bring advancements and efficiencies into the manufacturing, build and assembly process for the frigates."

This preliminary review was the culmination of a large number of small specific reviews that addressed the maturity of the individual systems that make up the Type 31.

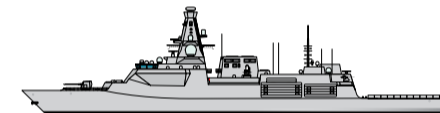
The 15 experts reviewed the design and questioned the engineering team. Although this was a Team 31 milestone event, attendees and contributors also came from the Ministry of Defence.

Babcock's report added: "The independent board were impressed with the rate of progress made since contract award in November 2019, and the level of technical maturity of the design."

"The engineering team in particular, and all contributors to the successful WSPDR, are to be commended for their efforts."



Type 31



Type 26

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# We've shore been busy

A BUSY eight-month deployment in the Gulf is complete for the ship's company of HMS Shoreham.

MCM1 Crew 4 are now back in the UK after handing over the reins of the Sandown-class minehunter to Faslane-based MCM1 Crew 5.

The Crew 4 sailors have been in the Gulf, based out of the Royal Navy's permanent operating base in Bahrain since before Christmas.

The final three months on board were jam-packed, from time alongside for crucial maintenance to helping a US Navy warship, which was having issues.



One of the biggest jobs of their maintenance period was the removal of Shoreham's anchors and cables in preparation for an inspection.

This involved many hours of work down in the hot bow, easing a heavy cable out of its locker.

On completion, as per tradition and to ensure safety, the navigator confirmed the anchors had been reattached correctly.

Sub-Lieutenant Harry Long said: "The junior rates have performed excellently doing hard and exhausting work in temperatures topping 40°C. My part at the end really is the easy bit."

On completion of the maintenance, Crew 4 got their sea legs back, spending periods at sea conducting unit level training.

This included gunnery, honing the skills of the aimers and operators of the ship's main gun – the 30mm. A period of successful firing took place with aimers ensuring they had their eyes on target.

During this same period of training, HMS Shoreham was called upon to assist the US Navy when a warship had fouled her props on discarded fishing nets and could not free them.

Shoreham made a 140-mile round trip to assist. Once on the scene, the ship's divers spent three hours underwater cutting the nets free and allowing the US ship to continue on operations.

"It was a really rewarding task as we got to put our training into practice and make a real difference," said AB(D) Blundell, who spent over an hour underwater.

The minehunter returned to doing her primary tasking; mine survey routines. The ship spent a week doing route survey to ensure sea lanes in the area were free from any hazards or obstructions. This involved numerous launches of its mine disposal system Sea Fox to investigate any suspicious contacts on the seabed.

During their last full month in the Gulf, and while continuing to conduct operations to fulfil the UK's national tasking, focus shifted to ensuring the ship was ready to hand over.

An intense period of cleaning and routine maintenance took place, including everything from polishing the binnacle to clearing out mess drawers.

The effort of the ship's company bore fruit as the inspection was passed with flying colours.

With Crew 5 now taking over Shoreham, Crew 4 has returned home for some much-needed post-operational leave.

They will return to operations later in the year when the crew take over HMS Pembroke.

## New home for Sentinel Task Force

A ROYAL Navy-led force which safeguards merchant shipping in the Middle East has moved into new operational headquarters.

Coalition Task Force Sentinel was established in the autumn of 2019 to provide additional security and reassurance to tankers and cargo vessels at a time of heightened tensions in the region.

The International Maritime Security Construct consists of eight nations – the UK, Australia, Albania, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Lithuania, United Arab Emirates, and USA – all committed to ensuring the safe passage of shipping.

They provide either personnel or military assets – warships, patrol vessels and aircraft – for the Sentinel Task Force, among them Plymouth-based frigate HMS Montrose which is deployed to the Gulf region long-term in a pilot initiative, alongside her sister HMS Argyll on a regular Middle East deployment.

The HQ has operated from two large air-conditioned tents throughout its first nine months, but has now moved into more fitting facilities at the US Naval Base in Bahrain.



The new and improved operations centre will improve the flow of information and allow for greater coordination in tracking merchant shipping as it passes through key waterways in the Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and Gulfs of Oman and Aden.

Montrose has most recently been in the latter, patrolling the 'invisible highway' – the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor, waters off the Arabian Peninsula linking the foot of the Red Sea with the open waters of the Indian Ocean.

Merchantmen are advised to use the corridor – 500 miles long and about 20 wide – which was initially set up in response to the pirate threat in the region in the late 2000s.

While that threat has subsided, ongoing regional conflict and unrest means that shipping remains at risk – Commodore Rob Bellfield, the Briton heading Sentinel, said there had been one attempted attack on a tanker, and one carried out, in the past six months, underlining the need for the "security umbrella" provided by Montrose and other Coalition warships.

"The Gulf of Aden is one of the most strategically important waterways in the Middle East region and it is vitally important that seafarers feel safe operating in the area," he stressed.

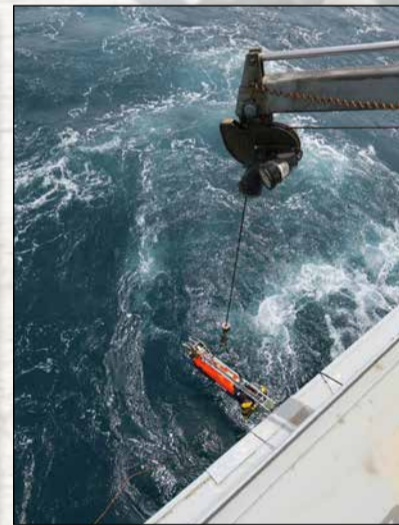
An estimated six million barrels of oil and nearly 3.5 billion cubic feet of liquid natural gas pass through these waters and the Bab-el-Mandeb narrows into the Red Sea each day.

"This coalition fulfils a much-needed role. Its watchwords of 'vigilance, surveillance, and assurance' tell you exactly what CTF Sentinel is about and why the task force plays such a key role in the region," said Vice Admiral Jim Malloy, Commander of the US Fifth Fleet and the senior Coalition naval officer in the Gulf region as the new headquarters were inaugurated.

"They are providing the much-needed collective eyes and ears to some of the world's most congested, contested waters."

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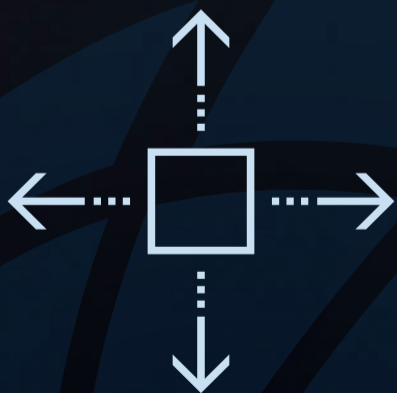


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## SAVING THE TURTLES

**SAILORS, Royal Marines and soldiers from RFA Argus went on a mission to help save the lives of endangered turtles during a maintenance stop while on deployment in the Caribbean.**

Argus is in the region to support British Overseas Territories during hurricane season, but crew from the ship used a brief pause in Curaçao to clear waste plastics strewn across the turtles' beach habitats.

The Dutch island is well known for its population of sea turtles, but an increasing amount of plastics washing up on beaches is risking their survival.

The turtles are known to get trapped in the waste and it makes their nesting sites uninhabitable.

The volunteers from Argus headed for San Pedro on the island's northern shore – an area particularly badly hit with plastic – to clean the beach as part of help for the Curaçao Turtle Sanctuary.

"I was shocked to see all the plastic that had washed up," Lieutenant Annie Sykes Royal Navy, from 845 Naval Air Squadron, said.

"We were all tired at the end of the clean but it was rewarding too. It was good to assist with conservation of the local environment and it made me think about the plastic I use – even the straw in my next drink.

"We did what we could, but I will remember the sad state of that beach forever."

In the hot sun the team conducted a beach clean, aiming to remove as much waste as possible, especially any large nets or items that can trap turtles.

At the same time, the Argus team were shown how to identify and sort any plastic waste that can be recycled.

Andy Moorehouse, a Royal Fleet Auxiliary Cadet, said: "It was hard work at the beach, there was so much plastic but I was glad to get stuck in. It was really interesting to hear how much of the plastic can be sorted and re-used."

Following the beach clean the group of volunteers helped the Turtle Sanctuary fill up containers of fresh sea water. This was ferried to a local vet's where a number of injured or vulnerable turtles are being nursed back to health for release back into the wild.

Air Engineering Technician Danielle Peakman said: "After all the hard work in the morning it was great to then see the turtles. I was so excited."

Cadet Moorehouse added: "I am so pleased to have had a chance to get off ship to do something different that really feels like we are helping."

"To see the turtles was an added bonus but I am glad I could represent the RFA with the other military teams we have on ship."

The Turtle Sanctuary is partnered with a local organisation called Green Phenix, which looks to deal with the plastic problem through education and reducing use. They also sort and recycle collected plastic for use in 3D printing machines.

They offer opportunities for the local community to use large scale 3D printing machines to create new products completely free of charge.

It has helped local businesses and entrepreneurs while having the benefit of creating a need to collect and sort waste plastics.

Most recently Green Phenix were able to produce PPE and COVID facemasks for the island and the wider region.

Follow up work has been taking place with Green Phenix and the Crisis Response Troop of 24 Commando Royal Engineers on Argus.

They helped the project move to a new space that required work to turn it into an education centre, a plastic sorting facility and somewhere to house 3D printing machines.

The work took place alongside regular local volunteers, and though Curaçao has been declared COVID free after a very small number of cases were resolved, care was still taken to adhere to social distancing measures in this joint work.

After the stop in Curaçao, RFA Argus headed back to sea and to continue work with the Royal Navy task group in the region, which is centred around the support ship and HMS Medway.

The two ships tested each other in joint training serials, from high-speed manoeuvres to flying drills.

The ships are at the centre of a Royal Navy task group in the region that is ready to respond if a major hurricane were to hit.

Argus has recently been in Curaçao for maintenance after a demanding few months, while Medway has just completed a counter-narcotics patrol (another of the main responsibilities for the task group).

Now the ships have worked together to put their crews through their paces.

The training began with offshore patrol vessel Medway sailing astern to Argus, before increasing speed to conduct close-up passes of the support ship/helicopter carrier.

Once clear ahead, both ships carried out a series of high-speed and difficult manoeuvres. Moving the ships at speed and within close range of each other requires careful communication between both ships and pushes the navigators, signallers and bridge watch keeping teams to the limit. They have to respond quickly and precisely.

To add further complexity to the training, a Commando Merlin Mk4 helicopter from Yeovilton-based 845 Naval Air Squadron was taking off and landing between both ships.

The Tailored Air Group – made up of three Commando Merlins and a Wildcat of 815 Naval Air Squadron – are embarked on RFA Argus to provide disaster relief but they took the meeting with Medway as an opportunity to practise landing on her flight deck.

Lieutenant Teddy Bradley, operations officer on HMS Medway, said: "Finishing a counter-narcotics patrol with these officer of the watch manoeuvres as a task group was a fantastic opportunity to train our Bridge Team in ship handling and yeomanry, skills they're going to need in a two-carrier navy."

"Add in flying and it demonstrates just how versatile Medway and the Batch 2 OPVs really are and why they are the Royal Navy's choice for forward presence in the Caribbean."

Second Officer Jake Bryan, RFA Argus' navigating officer, added: "With plenty of sea room we had a good opportunity and safe environment to train. This is such a good way to really test our teams."

"The fast communications needed pushed our signallers, and the officer of the watch has to be very aware of safety in all manoeuvres. It is great training that practises ship handling and reacting quickly."

The ships will now continue with their respective tasking.

HMS Medway is sailing south where she will rendezvous with the Dutch ship HMNLS Groningen to carry out more training. Meanwhile RFA Argus is heading north to resume patrols.

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# Fine Example

## Magnificent Seven complete summer tour

HMS Example is pictured off Orkney as she took members of the Orkney Island Council on a tour.

Example was one of seven P2000s from the Coastal Forces Squadron who embarked on a three-week summer tour around Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The deployment provided the crews with a unique opportunity to practice essential seamanship and navigational skills.

Three of the ships, Biter, Charger, and Express, sailed up the west coast of Scotland, while Trumpeter, Archer, Explorer and Example followed the east coast route.

The first port of call for the west coast three was Bangor in Northern Ireland, where they hosted the Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Trevor Cummings, before calling into Port Ellen, Oban, Fort William, Kyle of Lochalsh and Ullapool on route to Stornoway.

Here they were joined by Naval Regional Commander, Captain Chris Smith who met with the Commanding Officers and their crews and engaged with local communities.

In Stornoway, the teams conducted search-and-rescue training with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency Helicopter and crew and attended a special service and wreath laying in remembrance of those lost on January 1, 1919 on HM Y Iolaire.

Continuing their tour of the west coast, Biter, Charger and Express called into Loch Boisdale and Tobermory with return visits to Oban and Northern Ireland, this time to Carrickfergus, before finishing off in Campbeltown, paying a special visit to the outgoing Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute, Mr Patrick Stewart.

Lieutenant Rebecca Anderson, Commanding Officer of HMS Biter and leader of the West Coast Task Group said: "Over this operational training period, we have been privileged to exercise in some of the most beautiful areas of the United Kingdom, enhancing our navigational training package for the Royal Navy Navigators of the future."

"Highlights include HMS Charger's transit of the infamous Gulf of Corryvreckan, a poignant lesson in accurate reading of the sea for our junior navigators and also the search-and-rescue



training all units conducted with the Stornoway Coastguard.

"The hospitality, knowledge and support of the local people has been invaluable and we wholeheartedly thank everyone in Scotland and Northern Ireland who have contributed to the enduring success of this deployment."

Meanwhile, the east coast four started off in Leith followed by Peterhead and in both ports the crews used new technology to give local Sea Cadets virtual tours of the ships.

They also visited Wick before moving on to Orkney where they

were joined by Capt Smith.

During the visit to Kirkwall, Capt Smith hosted the new Lord Lieutenant of Orkney, Elaine Grieve and guests from Kirkwall High School on board HMS Archer and HMS Example.

The four vessels and their crews spent some time in Stronsay, Westray and Stromness before beginning their return voyage down the east coast visiting Wick and Fraserburgh, finishing where they started, in Leith Harbour.

Capt Smith said: "The Royal Navy has conducted some high-value navigational training in

demanding waters and renewed our much valued, and most important links with many coastal communities.

"Throughout the deployment, the ships have been given a very warm reception, whilst also conducting mutually beneficial exercises with the MCA search-and-rescue helicopters, and the RNLI.

"We are very grateful for the hospitality that has been extended to the Royal Navy by all who have said hello, ashore or at sea."



## P2000s take over as £10m spent on boats for Rock

HMS Pursuer and Dasher are the new guardians of the Rock, assuming responsibility for safeguarding its waters.

The P2000 patrol boats took over as the backbone of the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron – as the MOD announced a £10m investment in two new fast craft for the waters around the British territory.

The crews of Dasher and Pursuer have spent the past five weeks learning how to handle, operate and maintain the Archer-class craft, which are far larger and more complex than HMS Sabre and Scimitar which have protected Gib's waters for the past 17 years.

The latter are earmarked for replacement (they spent a decade in Northern Ireland before being transferred to the Med), with the two P2000s plugging the gap until the new boats arrive.

Those will come, Whitehall announced, in the winter/spring of 2021-22 after it placed a £9.9m order with Merseyside-based Marine Specialised Technology.

For that the RN will not merely get two 19-metre boats – capable of speeds up to 40kts and armed with three machine-guns, carrying a crew of six plus up to half a dozen passengers – but four years of support on the Rock as well.

That's for the future. For now, the right of the line is held by Dasher and Pursuer, which previously served Bristol and Glasgow universities, giving students a flavour of life in the Royal Navy, as well as supporting front-line training and operations.

They offer much more than their predecessors: the ability to sail in worse seas, improved quarters (heads, shower, galley, mess) and can range further if required; Sabre and Scimitar rarely left Gib waters and if they did, it was normally to visit Tangier, just 35 miles away across the Strait.

Lieutenant Vyrnwy Rainbird and her team on Pursuer have shown Lt James Young and his crew the ropes on Pursuer, and Lt Cameron Walters did the same for the Gibraltar Squadron CO Lt Cdr Lloyd Cardy and his crew on Dasher.

"The arrival of the two P2000s to the squadron is of great benefit to our personnel and the mission," Lt Cdr Cardy said.

"We are suitably equipped to counter the challenges of the local environmental conditions and the added size of the craft offers an increase to our physical presence on the water.

"We are very proud to welcome the two units to the squadron as an interim replacement until the newly-designed craft arrive."

As for Scimitar and Sabre, no longer operational they are being returned to the UK for the first time since 2003.

### KEEP UP WITH THE SHIPS

Follow @HMSArcher, @HMS\_Biter, @HMSCharger, @HMSEExample, @HMSExplorer, @HMSExpress, @HMSTrumpeter and @RoyalNavy on Twitter

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## Revamp for key jetty at Glenmallan

ONE of the Royal Navy's key ammunition facilities is being revamped to support the Fleet of tomorrow.

Royal Navy warships and Royal Fleet Auxiliary support ships have made regular use of the remote jetty at Glenmallan in Scotland for the past half century.

The site on Loch Long – a couple of miles west of Clyde Naval Base – provides a vital deep-water berth for large ships in the Fleet.

But the quay from where missiles, bombs, shells and depth charges are delivered to waiting ships from the nearby Glen Douglas depot – the largest weapons storage facility in western Europe – has reached the end of its natural life.

So £64m is being spent by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation on replacing it; the new jetty is designed with the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers in mind – and will last throughout their planned 50-year careers.

The same firm behind the special jetties built for the two carriers in Portsmouth, VolkerStevin, is also behind the overhaul which is due to be completed early next year.

It's already installed 97 head piles to support a reinforced concrete deck on the new jetty, with the old jetty material removed by barge down the Clyde to prevent clogging up the few, narrow roads in the area of the ammunition depot.

As well as taking the large 'overhang' of the carriers' flight decks into account with the new jetty, the firm is installing two new cranes, fire-fighting equipment, stores, back-up generators and offices, all surrounded by new fencing and a CCTV system to provide security.

The jetty is fed from a subterranean network of tunnels and magazines at Glen Douglas, carved out of the rock in the 1960s to support NATO operations at the height of the Cold War.

It remains a vital storage depot for munitions and was used extensively by the Royal Navy during operations in Iraq in 2003.

Glenmallan/Glen Douglas has four times the capacity of the similar ammo facility on the Forth at Crombie but even so, it typically took a week to load all the munitions required for operations by the UK's previous generation of carriers.

## Merlin helicopter at centre of move from one frigate to another



# Tonnes of work here

WHAT'S required for HMS Kent's Merlin helicopter to join HMS Northumberland?

A simple flight from Kent's home base in Portsmouth to her sister ship in Devonport, right?

Wrong.

Try three shipping containers, three juggernauts, a crane, 14 men and women, a good deal of elbow grease and a busy weekend.

After four hectic months which has taken the ship and her Merlin flight from 814 Naval Air Squadron at Culdrose to the top of the world (Barents Sea), shores of the Baltic and the Denmark Strait, mostly focused on anti-submarine warfare training, the fliers are shifting ships to work with Northumberland.

So on a fine summer's day in Portsmouth Naval Base, the Flight's personnel – two pilots, one observer/flight commander, one aircrewman, one senior maintenance rating and nine engineers and technicians – and Kent's logisticians set to work packing up everything needed to support the world's most advanced anti-submarine helicopter at sea.

The helicopter itself flew back to base at Culdrose as Kent returned from Iceland earlier this month, leaving the kit behind in Kent's hangar.

"We brought ten tonnes of tools and equipment on to HMS Kent – all the tools we need to maintain the aircraft, as well as role equipment to change what the Merlin can do," explained Chief Petty Officer Kristopher Llewellyn, the Flight's Senior Maintenance Rating.

All had to be carefully logged, stowed safely and finally packed up into three ISO shipping containers, before being lifted by a 20-tonne crane on to trailers hauled by three lorry cabs.

Joining them on the journey: two spare rotor blades, again carefully packed, and one quarter-tonne Rolls-Royce Turbomeca RTM322 turboshaft engine (which also powers the Apache gunship...) should one

of the Merlin's three powerplants need replacing.

And although Merlin is primarily used for submarine hunting, it's used for widespread missions – tracking down pirates/drug smugglers, providing overhead surveillance and cover, casualty evacuation, search and rescue duties, troop carrying.

Some of those missions require different equipment installed... so it's got to be taken along too.

Somehow it all fits into the hangar of a frigate originally designed when the much smaller Lynx (now replaced by the similar-sized Wildcat) was the backbone of frigate/destroyer operations. "The space in the hangar is very small," CPO Llewellyn explains.

"The aircraft can be maintained in its folded position, but it's a lot more challenging and a lot more time consuming. For the bigger tasks, we take it out on to the deck, spread it out and carry out the maintenance there."

Even spread on deck, there's not a vast amount of space to play with, as pilot Lieutenant Phil Fordham knows.

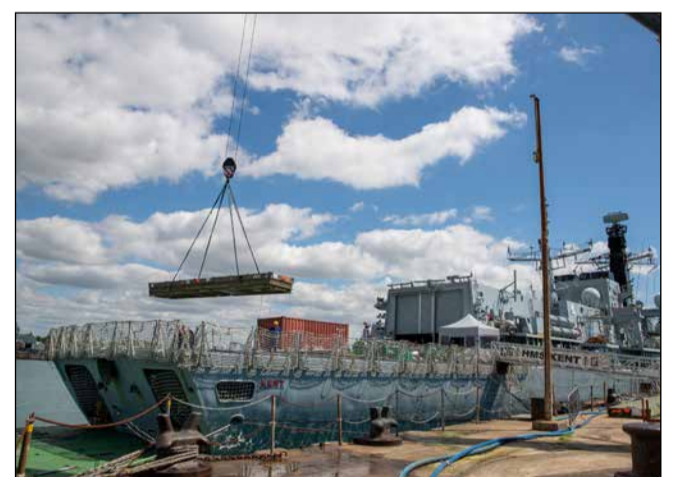
"Landing on a frigate is a huge challenge. It's a very small space – and unlike at Culdrose where there are other airfields available nearby, it can be the only ship around for 200-plus miles.

"We have a great team here – not just the people in the aircraft, but the whole flight deck and the guys on the bridge who make it a safe home to come back to," he explained.

"Landing at night introduces other challenges. There are special lights on the ship – the only dot in the darkness for potentially a couple of hundred miles around.

"We use these lights as reference points to get ourselves back on deck. The size of the Merlin is such that when you're over the deck, you can't actually see it on either side – there are lights which extend out so that we have some reference and ensure we are in the right place."

The good news is that the hangar and flight deck on HMS Northumberland are exactly the same size.



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ther, while squadron helps Wildcat crews find their sea legs

# Learning the ropes



MERLIN fliers are helping their Wildcat counterparts get their sea legs by helping to train them aboard HMS Westminster.

Fresh from submarine hunting in the Denmark Strait on a NATO exercise, the Portsmouth-based warship is helping train the naval aviators of tomorrow from 825 Naval Air Squadron.

825 feeds the front-line Wildcat squadron 815, also based at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset, with fully-trained air and ground crew so they can deploy on operations around the world, typically with Royal Navy destroyers or frigates such as Westminster.

The extensive training for the fliers includes key sea time – such as deck landings by day and night, winching personnel or loads from the flight deck, and refuelling without landing.

Which is where the 'capital ship' came in.

As one of the RN's eight dedicated anti-submarine frigates, she typically carries a Merlin Mk2 helicopter specifically designed for hunting underwater threats,



provided by 814 Naval Air Squadron's Tungsten Flight.

And as one of the RN's high-readiness units, Westminster is on short notice to respond to events in home waters – and due to the pandemic, she's operated a 'closed gangway' since the beginning of May to ensure all 200 souls aboard remain healthy.

That's ruled her sailors out from going ashore in the UK.

"Normally we'd look to disembark and let the Wildcat use the deck with their own team, but we can't stay ready for tasking and leave the ship due to the Covid-19 situation," explained Flight Commander Lieutenant Commander Chris Luke.

So instead of making way for dedicated Wildcat engineers from 825 NAS, the Merlin mechanics and technicians have remained aboard to help maintain the nimble helicopter.

Both come out of the same factory in Yeovil, both have fully digitised cockpits, but engines, sensors and weapons (like the new Martlet missiles due to be introduced on the Wildcat) are different... although many of the workings behind them are common or similar.

"A lot of things are the same, but there are little differences that we've had to learn at very short notice," said Air Engineer Technician Karl Lowles. "It's not something most flights get the chance to do."

Pictures: Lt Adam 'Spider' Webb, Tungsten Flight



## Revamp for RFA quays at Portland

A MAJOR project that has been years in the planning and months in the undertaking, has been completed at Portland Port.

The port's main berths, Outer Coaling Pier (OCP) and the outer arm of Queens Pier (Q Pier), have undergone a dredging programme.

The Port is used by Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels as well as cruise and cargo ships.

The requirement for dredging in Portland Harbour is not a regular occurrence, primarily due to the lack of riverine input, its substantial depth, limited wave action, and the low currents and tidal streams.

The seabed remains relatively unchanged, unlike many other ports where regular dredging campaigns are required to maintain depth.

OCP was initially constructed between 1890 and 1906, it had a pit in the centre for storing coal, with six large travelling cranes to load the coal powered warships. Q Pier was built later, between 1948 and 1954.

When OCP and Q Pier were first built, the draft and size of ships meant a berth depth of nine metres was more than adequate, however with growing demands and the increasing size of some vessels, cruise ships in particular, these depths were becoming an ever-increasing restriction, so the decision was made to increase the depth to 11 metres (below Admiralty Chart Datum), at the berths themselves and in their manoeuvring and approach areas.

The piers were strengthened before specialist dredging companies moved in. Quest Marine, a local company, undertook the initial dredging works on OCP. Herbosch-Kiere, undertook the dredging on the outer arm of Q Pier and completed the dredging at OCP, as this required specialist equipment which they already had.

The material removed during the dredging process was relocated to two locations; one area within the commercial port area, which was part of the port's expansion plan. The other is a licensed area of deeper water within the inner harbour.

Portland Port will be able to accommodate vessels of deeper draft which will increase berth utilisation and aid the expansion of the port and its tenants.

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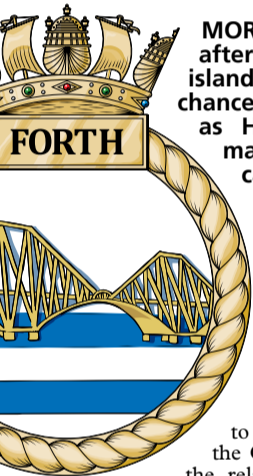
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After six months patrolling the Falklands, the lockdown finally eases for the islands' new naval guardian to pay her first visit to the capital

# It certainly is, Stanley...



**MORE** than six months after she arrived, Falkland islanders finally got a chance to see 'their' ship as HMS Forth paid her maiden visit to the capital Stanley.

Despite having patrolled the South Atlantic Islands since January, inhabitants of the most populous settlement had not had the chance to formally welcome the Royal Navy's new presence in the archipelago. The inaugural welcome to the capital was delayed by the Covid pandemic, but with the relaxing of restrictions and

some additional planning considerations, the visit belatedly took place in the depths of the South Atlantic winter.

While Stanley may be small by worldwide standards with a population of a little over 2,000, it is the bustling epicentre of the Falkland community.

After a quick opportunity for the 40 crew to visit Stanley's gift shops and the local restaurants, the five-day visit began in earnest with Executive Officer Lieutenant Commander Samuel Fields calling on Governor Nigel Phillips at Government House, to formally accept the ship's invitation to the port.

Generating plenty of interest via local media outlets ahead of the visit, it was no surprise to see a queue of people braving the chill of a winter morning to be among the first of the guests welcomed up the gangway.

To reduce the number of people

aboard at any one time, members of the public were shown around in small groups, escorted by the ship's company.

"It was great to be able to show off HMS Forth to the people of Stanley and begin building what we hope will be a close and long-lasting relationship," said Marine Engineer Officer Lieutenant Matthew Head.

In the evening the wardroom hosted Brigadier Nick Sawyer, Commander of British Forces in the South Atlantic Islands, for an evening reception with 21 guests, who were treated to bespoke tours provided by Forth's sailors.

As a part of the formal welcome, the ship's company were invited to Sunday Service at Christ Church Cathedral, an occasion which provided time for reflection as thoughts and prayers turned to family and friends 8,000 miles away in the UK, before raising voices to the

rafters with a rousing rendition of the *Naval Hymn*.

Afterwards, the sailors mingled with the local populace and thanked them for the hospitality that had been shown to the ship over the weekend.

The final full day alongside gave pupils from Stanley's primary and secondary schools their chance to come onboard and explore. The bridge – and the commanding officer's chair and the ship's wheel – proved especially popular.

Forth's final act was a formal invite for the majority of the ship's company to visit Government House, whose previous guests in its 175-year-history include Sir Ernest Shackleton ahead of his ill-fated Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition.

Engineering Technician (Weapon Engineer) Connor Asquith was enjoying his first overseas run ashore with the RN. "It was great," he said. "We were all

made to feel so welcome. I will always remember this weekend with fondness."

His boss, Weapon Engineer Officer Lieutenant Trev Orton, added: "Stanley provided an excellent respite from the regular patrol cycle usually experienced by the ship's company, as well as allowing for the strengthening of ties with the town."

Meanwhile, Forth's Falklands predecessor, HMS Clyde, has been sold to the Bahraini Navy. The ship, which was rented from owners BAE Systems, completed her 12 years around the islands at the end of 2019 to return to Portsmouth for decommissioning/maintenance/sale. She'll now operate from Mina Salman base in Bahrain – next to the RN's Naval Support Facility – as the RBNS Al-Zubara.

Pictures: Sgt Kat Galloway RAF and Capt Chris Locke



# Five knuckle down to work on the Spey



WE'VE had the Fantastic Four and Magnificent Seven. Here's the Fifth's First Five... The first five sailors to join the fifth and final new overseas patrol ships, HMS Spey.

Four officers, plus their Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Ben Evans, have been assigned to the River-class ship as construction draws to a close on the Clyde... and the 2,000-tonne warship prepares for her delivery voyage to her home of Portsmouth.

Her journey from lifeless hull to warship buzzing with life has been hampered somewhat by the Covid crisis (ship No.4 hurried down the Clyde out of BAE Systems' yard as it went into lockdown early in the pandemic).

But since then, the team have adapted working routines and methods to ensure Spey could be completed and sailors begin joining (more of the ship's company arrive this month).

With lessons learned from the first four ships in class: Forth, Medway, Trent and Tamar, some minor tweaks to the layout and environmentally-friendly kit installed, Lt Cdr Evans is determined to show that "the best has been saved for last".

He continued: "It is an exciting challenge bringing HMS Spey out of build and I look forward to being joined by more of my ship's company to

bring the newest ship in Royal Navy into service.

"Even though we are in the midst of a virus pandemic I have been really impressed with how the teams from Defence Equipment and Support and BAE Systems have safely and tirelessly worked to get to this point."

As with Tamar (see pages 20-22), no patrol region has been assigned to Spey once she's operational, but she will continue the Forward Presence programme with long-term missions, stationed thousands of miles from the UK.

She will do so under the direction of Commander David Louis who's taken charge of the RN's newest – and oldest – squadron.

He was handed the reins of the Overseas Patrol Squadron, which was formed this spring, by Commander Simon Pressdee who oversaw its formation as part of the transformation of the Fleet's smaller-ship units.

The squadron embraces all River-class ships – the older Batch 1s which have served in the Fishery Protection Squadron since the early 2000s, and the new Batch 2s.





HMS MERSEY joined the tip of the spear of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force for exercises keeping allies razor sharp for maritime security operations.

It is the first time a ship of the Royal Navy's Overseas Patrol Squadron has worked with a NATO task group and the debut saw Mersey train with warships from Portugal and Canada in the North Sea as part of one of alliance's high-readiness forces.

The Offshore Patrol Ship combined with Vasco da Gama-class frigate NRP Corte-Real and Halifax-class frigate HMCS Toronto for long-range communications exercises, tactical manoeuvring drills and flying training with the task group's helicopters.

Mersey joined the group, known as Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG1), in the Skagerrak – the doorway from the North Sea into the Baltic – and jointly completed the first week of their operational training programme.

Earlier RFA Tideforce met up with the Canadian and Portuguese warships in the narrows between Denmark and the Scandinavian peninsula to support ongoing NATO operations.

The NATO duo stationed astern of the 39,000-tonne Royal Fleet Auxiliary in near-perfect conditions in the Skagerrak to take on their black gold from Tideforce's cavernous tanks.

The tanker called the warships forward and then conducted the replenishment at sea largely by visual signaling such as flags and Morse code by lamp as the sun descended.

Portugal have recently taken command of SNMG1 – NATO's task group's rotate their command on a yearly basis – with Commodore José António Mirones leading from flagship NRP Corte-Real.

HMS Mersey's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Will Edwards-Bannon, said: "The Royal Navy has been at the heart of NATO's maritime training and operations for over 71 years now and so it was a privilege to be able to play our small part in this long-standing partnership by hoisting the NATO flag with pride in HMS Mersey and joining SNMG1 in the North Sea.

"From Commodore Mirones and his multi-national staff, to the Portuguese and Canadian crews of the NRP Corte-Real and HMCS Toronto, we have been made to feel incredibly welcome and were quickly integrated into the task group's intensive training package.

"I am particularly proud of the way that Mersey's small ship's company quickly

adapted to the challenge of NATO task group operations; although a first for us in the Overseas Patrol Squadron, it is an important skill-set for everyone in today's Royal Navy as we increasingly exercise and operate with other nations around the world, from the long-standing NATO missions in the Mediterranean – which our sister-ship HMS Trent will support as part of her forward presence operations – to UK Carrier Strike Group deployments across the globe."

SNMG1, along with SNMG2 – which was led by the Royal Navy in 2017/18 – forms the 'tip of the spear' of the maritime element of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.

As such, it runs a high-tempo training cycle among all its ships to ensure that the task group sustains peak readiness levels for operations.

HMS Mersey's Operations Officer, Lieutenant Domonic Jacobs, added: "Working with our NATO allies has offered a raft of unique training opportunities including serials such as Officer of the Watch manoeuvres and tactical manoeuvres, which have improved the skills of Mersey's bridge team and communications and information department.

"This is the first time I have operated in a task group since completion of my training and it is definitely something that has been enjoyable albeit challenging at times.

"That has made this an exciting time to be one of Mersey's duty ops officers, especially the task of co-ordinating Mersey's contribution by liaising with the multi-national NATO staff in the flagship.

"Mersey's contribution and enthusiasm seems to have been well-received by SNMG1 and I very much hope we get the chance to benefit from working with NATO again in the future."

RFA Tideforce's commanding officer Captain Simon Herbert added: "It was a privilege for RFA Tideforce to be able to support Maritime Group 1.

"Both ships were able to benefit from our state-of-the-art replenishment at sea capabilities and remain on their tasking conducting NATO missions as part of the NATO Maritime Response Force.

"The replenishments clearly highlighted the integrated and flexible capability of the newest of the RFA Tide-class tankers."

**Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury, HMS Mersey**



# Navy ships join tip of NATO spear



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# How to shift your learning operations to cope with travel restrictions

By **Frazer Ross** - Head of Government & Military Training Solutions at Raytheon UK

Regardless of our current circumstances, learning departments are still responsible for ensuring the workforce is prepared for the new skills economy. Against the backdrop of global travel restrictions and pressure on resources, let's explore 3 learning initiatives to tackle these challenges right now:

## 1. Replace face-to-face training with interactive, live learning solutions.

Many training departments will be reaching for conference platforms such as Zoom, Teams, Webex, and Adobe Connect. These are good, but not great. Learners want training to be interactive, engaging and connected; this is where simple conference call tools fall short. Instead, you should be exploring and testing Virtual Classroom Training Solutions that:

- Feature live instructors and trainers who can facilitate interactive discussions with geographically dispersed learners.
- Provide engaging learning experiences with features such as 'breakout rooms', polling and white boards.
- Keep the community of learners connected with persistent classrooms.
- Fully integrates with modern Learning Management Systems.

## 2. Explore new, experiential, micro-learning methods.

Business leaders have clear expectations of their learning and development (L&D) teams, such as impact and outcomes, and a clearly defined return on investment (ROI).

Learners, on the other hand, want learning to be more experiential, engaging, and less conceptual. It is time to shift learning away from the traditional blend and explore the journey to performance. The concept is not new but gaining in popularity since it:

- Delivers an engaging blend of micro-learning, assessments, polls, opportunities to practice and feedback through virtual coaches. It focuses on performance and business outcomes.
- Allows users to access learning assets easily from their mobile devices, share what they have learned and earn rewards with new experiences. It's able to create a tailored blend of social learning, gamification and on-the-job experiences to improve our employees' workdays in their home office.
- Opens opportunities for L&D teams to collect new talent and performance data, 'check the pulse' of the learners and better target learning interventions.
- Facilitates a more active mentoring and coaching environment in the workplace, building a more engaged and better connected workforce.

Starting years ago with Six Sigma programmes, Raytheon UK design and deploy multiple learning journeys for our customers. The results are real, measurable and largely exceed the outcomes of traditional learning programmes. For example, our pilot journey programmes have engaged more learners, and each of them were able to complete 4 times more learning experiences than they would have had with traditional learning programmes, with improved, measurable benefits.



## 3. Reassign some of your L&D resources to rethink your learning strategies.

The success of any learning initiative is about understanding the business challenges we need to address and the benefits we are seeking to achieve. L&D professionals need more than learning data to conduct the right analysis and define the right learning interventions. Also consider:

- Talent data, such as demographics, background, certification levels and any other attributes we can access to profile our learners.
- Performance data, describing the learners' everyday tasks and work quality, and the efficacy of the learning interventions and the benefits they have on the business.

You will need proven tools, templates and processes to help collect talent and performance data. Now is the time to collect new types of data, analyse them, and refocus your learning investment on the most critical business challenges.

How can you shift your learning operations with virtual classroom training solutions and data-driven analyses of your learning strategies? Find out more on <https://www.raytheon.com/uk/capabilities/raytheon-in-the-uk/training-uk>.



## HMS Trent heads to the Med after joining the Fleet...

WAVING goodbye to loved ones on the Round Tower in Portsmouth, HMS Trent left her home port as a newly-commissioned ship.

The Offshore Patrol Vessel had a busy day, not only preparing to head out on her first deployment but also hosting VIPs for a ceremony to officially welcome her to the fleet.

Just hours before sailing, basking in the sunshine at Portsmouth Naval Base, the ship invited her Lady Sponsor Pamela Potts, Vice Admiral Chris Gardner, Rear Admiral Martin Connell and a small number of guests to witness her commissioning.

It marked the start of an important day for Trent, the newest of the Royal Navy's Batch 2 OPVs, which is currently preparing to join NATO on operations in the Mediterranean.

Speaking at the ceremony, HMS Trent's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr James Wallington-Smith, said: "It's my honour and privilege to take HMS Trent from the start of her career in the Royal Navy to her first operational deployment as part of a key NATO mission in the Mediterranean.

"The entire ship's company have worked tirelessly in difficult circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic to prepare HMS Trent for this day.

"As we hold the commissioning ceremony and depart for operations, I could not be prouder of them and everyone within Portsmouth Naval Base and beyond who has helped us reach this point."

Built on the Clyde by BAE Systems and delivered to the Royal Navy in December, Trent hoisted the White Ensign immediately after arriving in Portsmouth and had a hectic few months going through Operational Sea Training and a variety of workouts to prepare her for deployment.

Following her commissioning ceremony, the ship headed south towards the sunshine of the Mediterranean.

During the short transit to her first port stop of Gibraltar, the team not only fired the full suite of weapons on board but also trialed future weapon capabilities for the Maritime Warfare Centre.

Of her current fit, the 30mm automatic small calibre gun is the tip of the Trent spear and the 'gunners' made the most

of the good conditions in the Bay of Biscay to hone their skills and prove their lethality.

Alongside the gunnery, the River-class patrol vessel carried out a full range of emergency training so the ship's company remain at the top of their game, and ready to respond quickly if the worst were to happen.

Everyone got involved for the man overboard training from Officer of the Watch to the seaboard coxswains while machinery breakdown drills and steering gear breakdown drills were also conducted to ensure the crew are capable of responding at a moments notice if something breaks.

Several new members of the Trent family used this time to gain familiarity with their new ship as they work towards endorsement.

Engineering Technician (Marine Engineering) Charlie "Ruby" Murray said: "It's always an exciting challenge getting to learn the systems on a new ship.

"My last ship was HMS Queen Elizabeth so Trent isn't as big but we get a lot more responsibility on here and it's good fun being able to get stuck in and get to grips with it all."

After a few days at sea, Trent went into port in Gibraltar to pick up stores and prepare for her main operation with NATO Op Sea Guardian.

Led by NATO and charged with providing maritime security in the Mediterranean, it is a chance for Trent to show off the capabilities of the new offshore patrol vessels and to work with the UK's allies and partners in the region on common interests.

Lt Cdr Wallington-Smith, said: "The exceptional progress we've made over the last eight months has demonstrated what my ship's company and the ship are capable of, and I couldn't have hoped for a better start to her service career.

"While many of our colleagues across the Armed Forces have been actively assisting with the Government's response to the COVID-19 epidemic through the last four months, we've been no less busy patrolling UK waters and making sure we're able to take HMS Trent into any situation we might face."

For a lot of the ship's company, it will be their first

experience of operations on a deployed Royal Navy vessel.

Engineering Technician Bradley Hammersley, 20, from Coventry, who is one of the ship's junior marine engineers, added: "While the build-up in training has been tough, it has been rewarding to see how we have improved as a ship.

"I couldn't wait for the opportunity to deploy overseas for the first time and experience the opportunities that will be presented."

As with her sister ships, HMS Forth, Medway, Tamar and Spey, only two-thirds of the ship's company will be on board at any time while operational, with a three-watch system employed to give one-third of them time ashore for leave, collective or individual training.

This helps keep the ship available at sea for 320 days a year while allowing time to maintain a more sustainable work-life balance.

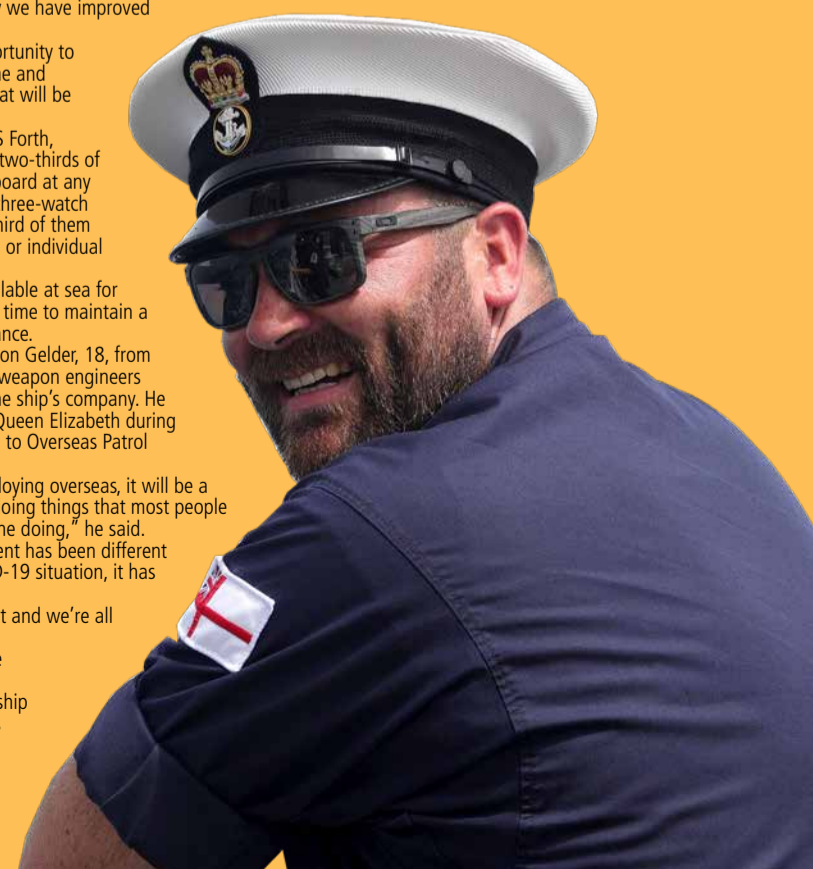
Engineering Technician Robson Gelder, 18, from Newcastle, is one of the junior weapon engineers and the youngest member of the ship's company. He has already deployed on HMS Queen Elizabeth during Westlant 19 before transferring to Overseas Patrol Squadron.

"I'm looking forward to deploying overseas, it will be a great experience and I will be doing things that most people my age group could only imagine doing," he said.

"Preparing for this deployment has been different from the others with the COVID-19 situation, it has been hard.

"But we've managed to do it and we're all excited to the deployment."

HMS Trent will be part of the Royal Navy's forward presence programme which will see the ship permanently deployed overseas similar to HMS Forth and HMS Medway.





# RAVELLS



Turn the page to see what  
Trent's sister ship  
HMS Tamar has been up to



# GETTING TAMAR READY IN RECORD TIME

For the Royal Navy's greenest ship, it is all about preparing for her first global deployment

OFFSHORE patrol vessel HMS Tamar is awaiting her global mission having gone through what is thought to be the fastest generation of a warship in peacetime.

From lifeless hulk at the beginning of 2020 to a vessel ready to deploy around the globe by late July, Tamar has been brought to life against the unparalleled backdrop of a pandemic – and the fact that most of the 61 crew are new to River-class ships. Most have come from frigates and destroyers, even carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The ship spent 13 of the 17 weeks since she sailed from Govan at the end of March – with the yard going into lockdown as the ship headed down the Clyde – at sea.

“People have worked long into the night, at weekends, they have thrown themselves into HMS Tamar – and that comes through time and again,” said Lieutenant

Commander Michael Hutchinson, Commanding Officer.

“It's a great ship. People are up for it. My crew are young, they have fun, work hard, and together we've created a great spirit.”

His crew have treated the past six months as a ‘deployment around the UK, minus runs ashore’, maintaining morale in RN fashion with flight-deck barbecues, quiz nights and the like.

At 60, one of the oldest sailors still at sea, and also one of the few Falklands veterans still serving, Warrant Officer 1 Trevor Ross witnessed the decommissioning of the previous Tamar – the base in Hong Kong which closed in 1997 when the territory was returned to China.

Nearly a quarter of a century later he's proud to be part of a new Tamar story.

“We have lived in a ‘Tamar bubble’ throughout the pandemic. Eighteen-hour days, it's been hard work and very tiring, but the spirit is really is really good, one of the best ships I've been on for morale,” said the marine engineer, who joined the Royal Navy in 1977 and only planned to stay 12 years.

Trev is more than twice the average age of the ship's company – far more sailors are in their 20s, like Able Seaman Mollie Sunshine Stokes (*not a nickname, but her middle name*), who joined Tamar from Britain's biggest warship, HMS Queen Elizabeth.

“We're like a massive family on board Tamar – because everyone has been in the same situation with getting the ship ready and lockdown, it's been easier to get through the past few

months. There's always someone around to pick you back up,” said the 22-year-old seaman specialist from Exeter.

“We have a really good work ethic – we smashed FOST out of the park.”

She's referring to Fleet Operational Sea Training, the last act of turning Tamar into an active warship, staged off the west coast of Scotland – fire/flood/navigational training and manoeuvres in the confined waters of numerous lochs – before switching to the South Coast for specific military training, such as gunnery, practising offensive tactics with her sister HMS Trent against destroyer HMS Defender, and working with the Royal Marines of 47 Commando, who were impressed with Tamar and her facilities.

The ship has a dedicated mess for more than 50 troops/marines/additional personnel – ideal for the constabulary operations for

which the Royal Navy intends to use Tamar: counter-piracy/counter-drug trafficking/maritime security.

The extra mess also makes the ship useful for evacuation operations, while the 16-tonne crane and space for up to five shipping containers will be vital in disaster relief operations, both of which were tested by the FOST assessors.

The class is at the vanguard of the RN's Forward Presence programme, stationing ships around the globe in regions key to UK interests/security.

“You don't need a high-end frigate or destroyer chasing drug-runners or conducting board and search operations. You want a ship like Tamar,” Lt Cdr Hutchinson says.

“We can go places the larger ships cannot get – we don't need tugs to help us – and you can bolt on or remove the kit you need for a mission. And we're particularly suited to the Future Commando Force concept of small, deployable raiding teams.”

“”

**WE HAVE A REALLY GOOD WORK ETHIC – WE SMASHED FOST OUT OF THE PARK.**

- Able Seaman Mollie Stokes



KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow @HMS\_Tamar and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



## GOING GREEN

As a second-generation second-generation River-class ship (aka River class Batch 2.1) HMS Tamar has some improvements/enhancements over her predecessors, chiefly when it comes to the environment.

- The ‘greenest ship in the Navy’ boasts
- a selective catalytic reduction system which reduces nitrogen oxide emissions by 97 per cent; the gas acidifies the oceans and also causes respiratory diseases;
  - special water balance tanks which do not allow creatures and organisms to survive – good because when discharged, traditional tanks can introduce invasive species into unnatural environments (in the same way grey squirrels have edged out red squirrels...).
  - sewage treatment system which produces water from waste which is so clean, stokers can (and do) drink it (many ships still deposit their sewage in international waters beyond the 12-mile limit)



# Fabulous 50

## Dad meets daughter for the first time

MEET Mary Lee, nearly five months old and the newest addition to the Lee – and HMS Shoreham – family.

A normal family snap to be treasured for years to come – dad Michael, mum Naomi, and big brother Edward (coming up two) on the sofa of the family home in Wallsend.

More than four months after Mary entered this world, Michael got to meet his daughter for the first time as the lockdown eased and he was finally able to get back home.

In normal times, the RN makes every effort to get partners home for births, wherever sailors or marines are deployed in the world.

Covid, the shut down of international travel, quarantine rules and protecting the health of ship's companies to ensure they could continue operations.

"It was tough on all of us but I knew I had to crack on and not let the marine engineering department or the ship down," said the leading engineer technician, who remained with the Sandown-class ship in

Bahrain.

World events ensured Shoreham – one of four RN minehunters based long-term in the Middle East to keep sea lanes open and work with our allies and partners in the region – has been heavily in use since Michael and his Crew 4 colleagues took charge of the ship under the regular rotation of crews.

Despite the world going into lockdown in March, the Operation Kipion minehunting force has continued its duties – joint exercises with the US Navy's mine warfare forces, a visit to/training with the Kuwaiti Navy – kept Shoreham's 40-plus sailors busy until their replacements flew out, allowing those tearful reunions.

"It's been hard work on my own but great now we are together as a family again," said Naomi, who's a leading medical assistant.

Lee added: "It is great to be home and meet my wonderful baby girl for the first time."

The rest of his shipmates are now home too – see page 9.

CHIEF Petty Officer and Fleet Air Arm legend Andy Vanes has marked 50 years in the Royal Navy.

Andy, who was born in the West Midlands but grew up in Gloucester, was sweet 16 when he joined the Senior Service in August 1970.

He initially trained as a chef before transferring to the Aircrewman branch in 1977.

After training at Lee-on-the-Solent and basic flying training at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose, Andy was streamed to the Wasp HAS Mk 1 and completed his operational flying training as a Missile Aimer at 703 Naval Air Squadron (NAS) at RNAS Portland.

Appointments to HMS Naiad and HMS Ashanti followed before he qualified as a Wessex HU Mk5 SAR crewman at 772 NAS.

Further appointments to Wasps followed with the training team at 829 NAS and as the ship's flight crewman onboard HMS Euryalus.

In 1982, Andy completed Commando Operational flying training at 707 NAS at RNAS Yeovilton.

The period during and after the Falklands conflict resulted in a number of short notice appointments to 772 'A' Flight onboard HMS Illustrious, 771 search-and-rescue flight at RNAS Culdrose and 845 NAS on Ascension Island.

Eventually he returned to Yeovilton for the Sea King HC Mk4 conversion course and subsequently 846 NAS.

This was followed by an appointment as the Senior Aircrewman based at RNoAF Bardufoss in Norway and 707 NAS.

Andy left the Royal Navy in



1993 and joined the RNR Air Branch the following year.

As a reservist, in 1998 he joined Heron Flight (the Royal Navy's communication flight) as one of the operations team and subsequently flew as a qualified right-hand seat crew member in the Jetstream T3 aircraft until the demise of the unit in 2008.

He joined Agusta Westland in 2010 on contract to teach foreign students based in Vergiate in Italy and returned in 2012 to 848 NAS. After a stint with 845 NAS in their Operations room he joined 825 NAS as their Chief Aircrewman.

He has amassed a total of over 9,200 flying hours, of which over

100 have been achieved in the Swordfish.

He joined the Royal Navy Historic Flight as a volunteer Swordfish crewman in 2012 and is one of the team that regularly occupies either the observer or the Telegraphist Air Gunners (TAG) cockpit in the Swordfish when she is travelling around the country.

Outside aviation he is a very keen chef, other hobbies include photography and live sports.

Andy was awarded the Queens Volunteer Reserves Medal in the 2019 New Year's Honours list. He received the award from Prince William at a Buckingham Palace Investiture.

### REMEMBER 1970?

■ In August that year Elvis Presley's *The Wonder of You* was topping the singles chart



■ The Ford Cortina Mk3 was one of the most popular cars in the UK



■ Milk cost 20p a pint

■ The average UK house price was £4,975

■ John Wayne's latest western *Chisum* hit our cinema screens



## Huge accolade for Tiny

A ROYAL Navy Petty Officer has been presented with a Commandant General Royal Marines' Commendation for his work whilst part of 42 Commando RM at Bickleigh Barracks near Plymouth.

Petty Officer Andrew 'Tiny' Collins picked up his prestigious award from the Commander of Surface Flotilla, Commodore Craig Wood in Devonport, where Tiny is serving aboard the Type 23 frigate HMS Portland.

A CGRM's commendation is not often given to non-Royal Marines and PO Collins' extraordinary dedication to his role in the Unit, as well as his notable efforts in supporting and running additional activities

to the benefit of the personnel in 42 Cdo, have been well commended.

As part of his citation with the commendation, Major General Matt Holmes said: "In a very short space of time Petty Officer Collins has made an extortionary impact in the unit and has delivered above and beyond his own sphere of activity."

"With a gregarious nature, he ably communicates with unit members and outside agencies to achieve outcomes that continue to surprise and impress."

"He is a great ambassador for the Royal Navy and for 42 Cdo RM and thoroughly deserves formal recognition."



## Kent's sailors take to kayaks

SAILORS from HMS Kent swapped the state-of-the-art frigate for kayaks for a four-day challenge to help seriously ill children.

Crew of the Portsmouth-based warship, who've recently been practising their submarine hunting skills off Iceland, paddled 145 miles on the waterways between Bristol and north London, raising money for Demelza Hospice.

The ship has been associated with the charity, which runs hospices in Kent, south-east London and East Sussex for children with terminal illnesses and their families, throughout her 20-year career, with sailors regularly visiting the homes to meet youngsters and hand over the proceeds of fund-raising efforts.

The latest money-spinner was the brainchild of Leading Hand Cyndi Dodd, Leading Physical Trainer Holly Cole and Sub-Lieutenant Joshua Ward. They were joined by six shipmates on the challenge.

They conducted this challenge to not only test themselves but to also raise at least £1,000 for and awareness of Demelza, particularly in the

wake of the pandemic.

Like many charities it has had to furlough staff and suffer from a dramatic hit to normal fundraising efforts.

LPT Cole and Sub Lt Ward undertook the Paddle Sports Leader Course so they could safely take the team down the waterways, while Holly put the kayakers through their paces in strength and endurance training during the frigate's spring-summer deployments to the Arctic, Atlantic and Baltic.

The route the paddlers chose took them along the entire length of the Kennet and Avon Canal, beginning in eastern Bristol on August 7 and ending 87 miles later where it meets the Thames in Reading.

From there they continued 31 miles downstream to Windsor, then moved briefly on foot before resuming kayaking on the Grand Union Canal through Slough, Paddington and finally the Regent's Canal ending up at Camden Lock.

You can still support their efforts by donating at: [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hmskentops](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hmskentops).



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

**Naval Children's Charity**

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

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

[www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk](http://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk)  
023 9263 9534  
[caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk](mailto:caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk)

# What it's like living in our shoes



## Service families raise issues in new report

IN JANUARY 2019, MP Andrew Selous was asked by the then Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson to produce an independent report to capture the diverse needs of Service families.

The focus of this review was on serving personnel, including those preparing to leave the Armed Forces, and their families.

The review team gathered evidence to inform the study in a number of ways, including email consultations, visits to military bases, visits to schools with large numbers of Service children, and meetings with key military personnel and stakeholders.

As part of the research, the RNRMC's CEO Adrian Bell, and Director of Relationships and Funding Mandy Lindley were interviewed.

The RNRMC also facilitated meetings with naval partner charities, the Royal Navy, and families alongside Naval Families Federation (NFF).

The report, *Living in our Shoes* is

available now.

There are a number of key themes of issues raised in it, which are consistent with the charity's own findings in the RNRMC Need Report 2019.

The report also highlights the support offered by charities, and the need for partnership working, featuring some of the RNRMC's partner organisations, including Home-Start, Relate, Kings Active Foundation, The Ripple Pond, as well as the renovation of the Drumfork Community Centre.

Key themes emerged during the review about the challenges experienced by Armed Forces families today which are regarded as detrimental to modern family life and relationships.

These refer to:

- Service Family Accommodation (SFA)
- mobility
- deployment
- the impact of Service life on

military children and young people

- the employment and careers of spouses/partners
- the health and well-being of serving personnel and family members
- the impact of Service life on personal relationships.

Members of the Armed Forces have a great sense of pride in the work they do and the sacrifices they and their families make.

The report outlined more than 100 recommendations in different areas to support Service personnel and their families.

The recommendations are targeted primarily at actions for the Ministry of Defence and the three single Services, but some have implications for other government departments and local authorities in England, the devolved governments of the UK, and a range of organisations in the statutory, private and charitable sectors.

## Helping home to keep Covid at bay

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity have awarded a grant of £10,000 to Erskine to help purchase thermal imaging equipment for Erskine's four Homes and their Activities Centre in response to Covid-19.

There have been no cases of Covid-19 at Erskine for several months.

However, caution must remain for the safety of their veterans and staff as Scotland's lockdown restrictions continue to be lifted.

The thermal-imaging system is calibrated to detect small temperature increases in people entering the buildings.

Erskine can ensure that those with a raised temperature do not enter, reducing the possible risk of Covid-19 transmission.

This is hugely important as Erskine begin to welcome visitors to our homes again and start to re-open the Activities Centre.

The equipment will also have significant long-term benefits for infection control at Erskine as it will help detect any future variants of coronavirus, norovirus or seasonal flu.

The RNRMC have worked closely with Erskine over the past ten years and this is the second grant awarded to the care provider in 2020.

This partnership working helps ensure highest standard of care and support for Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans during this challenging time and beyond.

Erskine's Director of Care, Derek Barron said: "We are extremely grateful to The Royal Navy and Marines Charity for their latest generous donation.

"This £10,000 grant will greatly benefit Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans at Erskine's Homes and our Activities Centre in Bishopton.

"The installation of thermal imaging cameras will enable us to identify any staff and visitors entering our buildings who have a raised temperature, significantly aiding us in our attempts to control Covid-19 and other seasonal viruses.

"This will help Erskine to continue delivering the expert care and support that Scotland's veterans truly deserve, even more so at this challenging time."



Before



## Renovation for Stonehouse Mess

IN recent years loneliness and isolation has become a growing problem in the serving community and combatting this scourge is high on the RNRMC's priorities.

Social spaces, where personnel can gather, relax and spend time together, are vital for group morale.

The charity has always been committed to ensuring that these spaces are maintained to the highest standard, going beyond functionality to make social areas always welcoming and inviting in order to encourage social activity.

The RNRMC has provided funding for a much-needed renovation of the Commando Forces Officers' Mess at RMB Stonehouse in Plymouth

Years of blocked gutters and leaky roofs had caused damp and damage to the internal décor of the Mess.

With those defects rectified and the building once again weathertight it was time to refresh and redecorate the interior of this historically-significant mess, a job that hadn't been done for more than 20 years.

The project included a full redecoration from top to bottom; replacing flaking and discoloured paintwork, peeling wallpaper and tired floors with bright paintwork, fresh and sympathetic wallpaper and stripped, polished floors.

30 Cdo's own AE carpenters built an impressive new oak bar that finishes off the mess with a new lighter feel.

Major Thomas Clow said: "Unfortunately, social distancing restrictions has led to the cancellation of all programmed events until at least September, but we hope to be able to make good use of the re-invigorated mess soon and for many years to come. A huge thank you to all at the RNRMC and their supporters."

The charity also funded a refurbishment of a coffee lounge and junior rates bar at HMS Raleigh.

Known as 'Limers', the recreation space has been transformed into a new Naval-themed area, with booth seating and tables along with new carpet, lighting and heating.

The facility is run by ESS, a division of Compass Group. The company provides catering, cleaning and retail facilities within the Torpoint based training establishment.

Staff and trainees at HMS Raleigh are now able to make use of the improved facility, in restricted numbers, following the gradual lifting of restrictions implemented to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Captain Richard Harris, the Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh, said: "As soon as I arrived in Raleigh, I took the view that the establishment is relatively isolated from the nearest town, and the facilities were tired.

"We are grateful once again for the support of the RNRMC, which has allowed us to give this facility a new lease of life for our staff, trainees, and their families to enjoy when they are able to take some time-out."

Admiral Tony Radakin, the First Sea Lord, cut the ribbon to formally open the facility during a visit to Raleigh.



After





# H.M.S. DARTMOUTH

## Marching into history

FOR the first time in the history of the Royal Navy sailors and officers passed out side-by-side.

The parade ground of Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth – the spiritual home of the officer cadre for the past 115 years – witnessed a unique ceremony as 34 ratings and 130 officers completed their training.

Britain's most senior sailor, First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin, welcomed the ratings – who formed a guard of honour – and officers into the naval family as the guest of honour.

Traditionally, the nine-week transformation from civilian to sailor takes place at HMS Raleigh in Torpoint, but with a surge in interest in joining the Navy, an additional course was provided at Dartmouth.

Among the ratings completing training was 24-year-old Engineering Technician (Weapons Engineering) Sarah-Jayne Stoppel from Northampton, who said: "The course has been good, but some parts have been really challenging, particularly the Initial Military Fitness because it's quite intense.

"Physical exercise in civvy street really doesn't prepare you for two hours of military exercise, but I can feel that my fitness has massively improved. It's been exciting to be part of something significant by training here at Britannia."

Fellow Engineering Technician Lucas Cann from South Wales joined the Royal Navy to travel, gain qualifications and enjoy a better lifestyle. The 18-year-old lost both of his grandfathers while he was in training.

"When I found out my grandads had died I just wanted to leave, but everyone got around me and I'm still here. The staff and the management team of recruits were great. The Navy is really good at handling this type of thing.

"I have made friends for life. I don't have words to describe how good it feels to complete this course.

"There was no pressure from the Royal Navy, but as a group we got together and decided that we had to make an impression being the first to train here."

Of the officers passing out, 98 completed a 29-week initial training programme, while 28 more underwent the transition from ratings. Four nursing officers of the Queen Alexandra Royal Naval Nursing Service, 11 new officers for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service and 28 international cadets from 13 overseas nations also completed their training.

"I'm extremely proud, and grateful to all the people who have been on this journey with me – it's been a long road to get here, with lots of ups and downs, but I feel more confident, capable and stronger than ever. It's also an absolute privilege to be passing out alongside the ratings. I think being part of this historic moment is one of the



best silver linings we could have hoped for," said 23-year-old Midshipman Ellie Johnson from Suffolk.

"It's amazing to think how far we've come in eight months, and there have been so many highlights, but my favourite part was definitely being on destroyer HMS Defender. We learned so much at Dartmouth, but it all seemed to come together finally living on board an operational warship.

"Getting to know the people we will be working with, understanding their motives and difficulties, and beginning to learn what they will one day need from me as a Divisional Officer was the most rewarding part of it all.

"I'm extremely proud, and grateful to all the people who have been on this journey with me – it's been a long road to get here, with lots of ups and downs, but I feel more confident, capable and stronger than ever."

Admiral Radakin told the officers and ratings gathered before him: "This is a historic occasion – and it is historic on two levels. It is of course the first time that we have ever had officers and ratings training together, and passing out together, at Dartmouth. And that is historic in itself.

"But it is also a historic occasion for each and every one of you. You will always remember this day as the real start of your naval career.

"That applies to all of you on parade, officers and ratings, regardless of your specialisation or which country you come from. You have made

a commitment to put yourself in harm's way. To serve your country. And to do so cheerfully, with determination and in the face of whatever challenges may come. You should all be enormously proud of yourselves."

Captain Roger Readwin, the Captain of BRNC, bristled with pride at the sight of officers and ratings passing out together.

"It is magnificent to see them all standing side-by-side, as they will at sea in the years to come. Our people are the life blood of the Royal Navy.

"They have all worked hard to meet the stringent standards and thoroughly deserve their place on this historic parade ground. It is also very special to welcome their families and friends on this momentous day, to thank them all for their incredible support during these uncertain times and introduce them all to the Royal Naval family."

Most of the officers passing-out began their training in January and over the course of the 29 weeks, they have been tested on Dartmoor, on the River Dart and have spent time at sea on board an operational warship.

Both Britannia Royal Naval College and HMS Raleigh have continued to train throughout the pandemic to provide the front-line Fleet with fresh blood. A further class of ratings will begin training at Dartmouth next month.

*New officers for the Reserves, see page 26*

**Report: Nicki Dunwell  
Pictures: PO (Phot) Joel Rouse**





## 2020 vision is with us

THIS month sees the launch of the Royal Navy's *Command Plan 2020* which sets out the First Sea Lord's intent for the Royal Navy.

The plan – available on the Intranet as well as in limited numbers in print – is being produced alongside the Second Sea Lord's vision for the Navy of the future.

*Fulfilling our Potential* brings together plans and activities to deliver a Navy that is global, modern and ready.

We'll have details next month.

## Dauntless Lisa up for UK award

LISA Williams from HMS Dauntless will be carrying the hopes of the RN on her shoulders at this year's BAME Apprenticeship Awards.

The chef is one of ten people competing for the best retail, tourism and hospitality sector apprentice title in the UK – against employees of top London hotels like The Savoy.

The November awards showcase the efforts and skill of apprentices from minority communities who stand out as varied as accounting, law, health and care work, and construction and tourism.

Lisa was put forward having already won in the same category in the RN's apprenticeship awards earlier this year.

Originally from St Vincent and the Grenadines, Lisa wanted to move to the UK to open her own restaurant, serving traditional food from her home islands, so she joined the RN to learn to become a professional chef.

Describing Lisa as a "consummate professional", Sub Lt Liam Rice of the RN's apprenticeship team at HMS Collingwood, said her efforts and ability meant that the Level 2 Hospitality Team Member apprentice regularly performed duties typically carried out by more experienced personnel.

"Throughout her apprenticeship she demonstrated grit and determination to routinely run busy shifts in the ship's galley," he said.

"Lisa's ability to retain information quickly, apply it correctly and build upon it when appropriate makes her a credit to the team. She has quickly become a lynchpin of the ship's catering team, which is impressive for such a junior chef or steward."

## CWO awards

SENIOR Command Warrant Officers' Reward and Recognition awards have gone to the following personnel:

- PO Dinsmore – HMS Montrose – Victory Services Club Break
- PO Broadhead – HMS Ledbury – Union Jack Club Break
- LET Beesley – HMS Sutherland – Union Jack Club Break
- ET Stewart – HMS Montrose (P) – Herbert Lott
- ET Leonard – HMS Montrose (P) – Herbert Lott

# Seamanship trainers given a revamp



LS(Sea) Elliot Johnstone and AB(Sea) Caine Jones monitor proceedings on new souped-up simulators at HMS Collingwood now training the seaman specialists of tomorrow.

The seamanship branch was introduced in 2006 to embrace both the delivery and execution of tactical communications onboard RN vessels, as well as more traditional 'deck' skills.

The former is provided at Collingwood, the latter at the RN School of Seamanship in HMS Raleigh.

Once trainees have mastered the basics, they move on to the 'Fleet Work Trainers' to apply Yeomanry skills in a near-realistic operational environment, providing manoeuvring and tactical advice and execution to the command. They're also used by officers of the watch, navigators and principal warfare officers.

Only when seamanship trainees have passed these core elements of their roles do they head to Torpoint for the other side of their role: seaboard coxswain, replenishment at sea, helmsman, anchoring, berthing, rigging and water safety equipment.

"The new Fleet Work Trainer marks a step change in the training we can offer seaman specialist ratings, bringing it right into the 21st Century," said Commander Dave Knight, Officer Commanding Warfare Support Training Group.

The revamp of the simulator is part of a broader project to overhaul the AB(Sea) training pipeline to provide the front-line Fleet with better-trained sailors faster – and with an industry-standard Level 3 Apprenticeship to their names.

Picture: Keith Woodland

# Welcome to the RNR family

**PASSING** out this month are the latest batch of Royal Naval Reserve Officer Cadets to complete eight weeks of intensive training at Britannia Royal Naval College.

The group of 39 from units across the UK, joined by three RNR chaplains and six full-time chaplains, have undergone the Accelerated Officer Programme, which has successfully delivered more than 120 officers, medics and chaplains to the Royal Naval Reserve over the past six years.

The fast-track course condenses the training pipeline for Reserves officers into one block of eight weeks over the summer. Cadets undertake training in command, leadership, sea survival, seamanship, strategy, naval core training as well as an initial two-week acquaint at sea.

Sub Lieutenant Craig Purvis, a Media Operations Officer who completed the programme in 2016 and went on to join the course's management team in 2018, said: "AOP is a fantastic opportunity to really kick-start your career in the RNR."

"It enables you to progress rapidly through initial officer training, which might otherwise take you up to two years to complete."

"Moreover, you'll build lasting friendships with your peers and grow your professional network, expose you to new experiences, and develop new and existing skills to enhance your civilian career and CV."

Among those undergoing the transformation into RN officers were brother and sister Toby and Pippa Blunden, of HMS



Picture: LPhot Mark Johnson

President in London.

Toby, 18, is a student at the University of Bristol in Politics and International Relations, and hopes to make the grade as a regular Royal Marine after graduating.

He joined the RNR for new experiences and skills which may benefit that career.

His 24-year-old sister is a product manager for supermarket giant Sainsbury's, leading a team of software developers.

She joined the RNR at the end of last year and hopes to join its Media Operations specialisation to spread word of the Senior Service's accomplishments to the



public.

"Having seen first-hand the devastating effects of war on citizens, I wanted to play a role in preventing conflict around the world," she said.

"I admire the global guardian and diplomatic role the Royal Navy plays in preventing conflict by safeguarding national and international interests and supporting other nations in being able to safeguard their own."

Officer Cadet Henry Dewhurst (pictured inset), a final year medical student at Cardiff University, and a member of Wales URNU for three years, transferred to the RNR so he could build on his URNU experience,

and continue his career in the Reserves.

He said: "I joined the RNR for the experiences and opportunities it can offer me as well as the camaraderie and tight-knit community one experiences as part of a ship's company."

Reverend David Young, a parish minister and ministry team leader at Helensburgh Parish Church, had his first exposure to the Royal Navy Chaplaincy in 2004 during his ministry training.

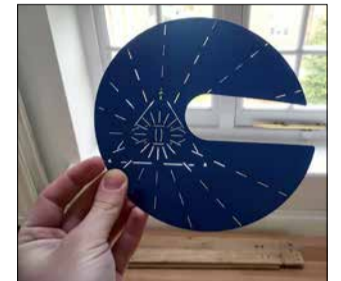
Acknowledging he had been drawn to becoming an RNR Chaplain ever since, he said: "The RNR is an opportunity to minister to a distinct, highly motivated and well-trained community of people. It's a great opportunity for me to put my experience of both parish ministry and university chaplaincy to great use in a military context while at the same time taking me out of my own comfort zones and enabling me to develop skills and learn new ones."

The successful AOP students will pass out on September 3 at HMS Excellent in front of families, VIPs and the head of the Maritime Reserve, Commodore Mel Robinson.

Thereafter, they return to their parent RNR units to prepare for a Final Leadership Exercise back at BRNC followed by the RNR Fleet Board, the final assessment of RNR officer training.

From there, having successfully navigated initial officer training, officers move on to complete the Junior Officer Leadership Course and Divisional Officer Course prior to joining their chosen specialisation.

■ Unique BRNC parade, p25



## Plate plugs gap in nav training

NOT the blueprint for the next-generation Death Star but a handy bit of kit invented by a warfare officer to help train navigators.

This special plate, designed by Lieutenant Tom Bell-Williamson on the staff of FOST North allows more authentic training for experienced navigators on some of the RN's newer vessels – without disrupting bridge operations.

The Raytheon pelorus fitted to River-class patrol ships and Type 45 destroyers – and, potentially, future RN bridges – cannot have its gyro isolated.

That reduces the value of navigational training when instructors want to test trainees when kit begins to go wrong.

Currently the only way to deprive the navigator trainee of the true bearings in a training environment is to remove the azimuth circle. It's time consuming, intrusive during training, and removes the ability to measure relative bearings from the centreline – exposing a shortcoming in training.

Enter Lt Bell-Williamson's widget: a plate to fit between the azimuth circle and compass surface. It obscures the true bearings but leaves the azimuth circle in place, allowing relative bearings to be read as a reversionary mode and providing a solution to the training deficiency.

If the navigator becomes concerned, or a real-world navigation incident arises which requires all navigational aids returned to the bridge team, true bearings can be returned simply by removing the plate rather than the longer process of re-attaching the azimuth circle.

It's earned the junior officer a reward under the RN's Brain Waves initiative (previously known as GEMS).

If you have an invention or idea which you think may save the RN money or improve operational effectiveness, contact WO1 Spike Hughes at spike.hughes700@mod.gov.uk.

## Calling officers who joined without degrees

FUNDING of up to £6,000 is available for all Royal Navy and Royal Marines non-graduate entry officers who have joined since January 1 2003, gained a Foundation Degree during their Phase 2 training and now wish to upgrade to a full Honours degree.

Allowing access for Foundation Degree holders, the 'Route to Honours' (R2H) scheme is the Royal Navy's funded route to achieving an Honours Degree.

Captain Dean Cubitt RM recently started down this path and described his experience to date: "I heard about the R2H Scheme through a colleague who had used it for their degree – I was interested at the time but did not have the capacity in the role I was employed within."

"Once I established a more stable window in my career, I started researching funded degree opportunities, mainly due to my

previous CO's persistent discussions about the superb, untapped potential to utilise funded degree and short course opportunities.

"I contacted the Learning and Development Organisation, explaining my situation and previous experience and awards through education and command courses in the RM, and they suggested I research three different areas, one of which was the Degree in Business Management through the Wessex Business School.

"To prepare, I opted to complete the five-week access course to sharpen my academic writing and research skills ahead of completing the degree, and to give me a flavour of modules I had little experience in."

"Throughout, I had superb mentors who provided verbal and written support. I was also assigned a tutor who was quick to respond and gave thorough and valuable feedback to

set me up for success during the degree."

Whilst a BSc (Hons) in Defence Studies from Plymouth University is a common route to take, Capt Cubitt's experience demonstrates that prior qualifications gained in the Royal Navy can be recognised by other universities and institutions.

This relies on conversations with the admissions office at the institution that you are interested in, something that Learning and Development Advisors in your local hub can assist you with.

During COVID we are operating remote interviews, get in touch via email at [NAVYTRGHQ-LDOOPSHELPDESK@mod.gov.uk](mailto:NAVYTRGHQ-LDOOPSHELPDESK@mod.gov.uk).

For more information on the Route to Honours Scheme, check out Br(d)3 Ch 96 or contact [NAVY TRG HQ-LDO POL ACCRED EFP](mailto:NAVY TRG HQ-LDO POL ACCRED EFP).

# A Worthy successor

**A**RIGHT turn off a pleasant country road in Hampshire and you're almost there. The final mile of road leads you past rows of neat family accommodation on one side and open fields on the other, before the nestled camp of Worthy Down comes into view.

Home to the Defence College of Logistics, Policing and Administration, it is the new tri-Service hub of all logistics training across Defence. Millions of pounds have created this modern, innovative and realistic joint training environment.

Leaving Raleigh after nearly 40 years, the training squadrons of the Writer, Supply Chain and Catering Services specialisations have all moved to the college, alongside the Maritime Command Training Squadron, responsible for all logistical training for Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary Officers.

The majority of the Writer Training Squadron settled into the new Personnel Administration Training Wing just before Christmas.

Having successfully integrated their initial training course, the squadron then supported wider courses from the Maritime Warfare Centre and the Submarine School. Not wanting to rest on their laurels, the instructors took full advantage of the resources and facilities at Worthy Down has to offer, remodelling the 'real working environment' trainer to represent a Type 23 frigate at sea and 'drafting in' their Army and RAF colleagues to assist with training, as well as giving them a taste of life in the Senior Service.

Not far behind, the instructors of the Supply Training Wing finished their final course at Raleigh in February 2020 before making the move to Hampshire.



Last year the curtain came down on the Defence Maritime Logistics School at HMS Raleigh in favour of a combined tri-Service training centre for chefs, writers, and logisticians alongside RAF and Army counterparts at Worthy Down near Winchester.

Instructors and students had just about settled into their new Hampshire home when the Covid pandemic struck.

Lieutenant Commander Brett Simpson, Officer Commanding Food Services Training Squadron (Maritime), looks back on an unprecedented and challenging first few months ensuring the Fleet got the men and women it needed for front-line missions... while keeping the virus in check.



Worthy Down offers a real step up for Supply Chain delivery, as Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel are now training together for the first time in their new 'real working environment' which simulates all the logistical areas of a modern warship, allowing trainees to embark stores via the gangway or flight deck before onward movement through the 'ship', something that all students felt has enhanced their training.

For the Food Services Training Wing, the move from the purpose-built cookery school at Raleigh might seem a little non-sensical... but the move to Worthy Down has undoubtedly aided the surge in RN recruitment, with Catering Services training capacity doubling and the bespoke trainer, featuring a main galley, junior rates' dining room, wardroom and even a CO's cabin, have proved a huge hit with students and a big step up in training.

Although some trainees and instructors were a little apprehensive about moving to Worthy Down, they soon fitted into the new location and also brought their RN ethos and sense of humour with them.

This new facility ensures that all of our catering service ratings are fully trained and prepared to take up their new roles on the front-line in support of operations.

In line with the amalgamation of the Chef and Steward branches (Project Unify) to create the new Catering Services specialisations, the real working environment complex was almost instantly transformed into the 'Front of House Centre of Excellence' - allowing the training team to enhance the abilities of catering service ratings.

Across all the specialisations, it is abundantly clear that the move to Worthy Down has been hugely beneficial. The college has a wealth of modern, spacious classrooms with computers supporting all the different software systems required by logisticians as well as a cutting-edge online

learning environment, and every training building and accommodation block boasts high-quality WiFi to help students with their scheme work.

Supported by brand new facilities and a dedicated training operations team, Worthy Down is truly a Phase 2 and 3 establishment fit for the 21st Century requirements of the Royal Navy.

Having delivered the first POLog(Wtr) and LLog(Wtr) qualifying and two initial training on site, the writers had just settled into their new routine when the Coronavirus pandemic took hold.

Despite training being paused, the team quickly adapted to the new guidelines - instructors worked from home, meetings were held via Zoom and course programmes were amended to allow both remote and on-site training. Support to the Initial Logistics Officers Course (Maritime), Professional Logistics Command Course PLCC and the coxswains' course were delivered from front rooms, gardens and even an improvised pool table-turned-desk!

Similarly, Jack Dusties had just completed the first iterations of their courses when lockdown measures were introduced. Instructors quickly prioritised operational

outputs and made the appropriate changes to deliver courses such as Dangerous Goods under social distancing guidelines. With other training courses recommencing in early June, the challenge switched to ensuring enough classrooms and instructors were available to support teaching at Worthy Down in small groups.

Keen to maintain their output of catering service ratings - currently an 'operational pinch point' in the Fleet - courses were adapted to meet government guidelines, ensuring that training continued throughout the pandemic. Delivering theoretical and practical training under strict social distancing measures, instructors introduced innovative watch systems and made use of the field kitchen facilities to continue courses.

The routines put in place soon became the standard followed by the rest of the college as other training restarted.

From the perspective of the Maritime Command Training Squadron, the Command Training Officers try to keep a number of golden threads running throughout their courses: one being that a good logistics officer must be flexible and thinking about how best to support the command aim.

They did not expect to be doing quite so much contingent planning, but quickly established how best to conduct remote learning

and assessments, with the ILOC(M) 19/02 Class conducting their Specialist Fleet Time Boards by video conferencing and even having their traditionally formal course photo taken on Zoom!

By the time the course which followed them in May began, instructors had switched to remote learning for all but the final three weeks of the first part of the course. When students returned to Worthy Down, they also conducted socially-distanced training, including a mock summary hearing on the cricket field!

"We've found distanced learning to be very effective in lots of ways, although there are still obviously areas where face-to-face training is vital," explained Command Training Officer Lieutenant Philippa Dew.

"On a more social note, the students have organised quiz and games nights over Zoom to build course cohesion, and we have done our best to maintain good duty of care and keep much of the social interaction that is so important in Phase 2 course life."

With training now starting to ramp up once again, all the Royal Navy instructors at Worthy Down are focussing on working through the backlog of suspended courses to ensure that there is no impact on those selected for promotion next year and their associated qualifying courses.

Throughout the lockdown, the adaptive and resilient nature of the Royal Navy has shone through.

Beyond just delivering training, instructors and staff at the Defence College of Logistics, Policing and Administration have striven to provide as much support to their students as possible, conscious of the challenges presented to mental health and physical wellbeing in lockdown.

None of this would have been possible without the limitless compassion, dedication and professionalism of the Kestrel Divisional staff, who have taken on this mantle from Raleigh's Corporate Squadron.

It is clear that the training staff see their students as the Navy's most valuable resource for the future, and coupled with the new facilities at Worthy Down, it is a bright future indeed.





# China Fleet Country Club ★★★★



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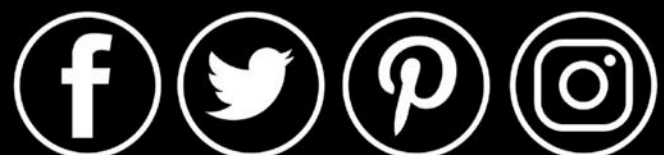
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# Charities unite to give support

YOU could be forgiven for thinking over the past few months that the world has become a scary and difficult place in which to exist. It's true, there have been challenges of all sorts for many individuals and families thanks to the Covid-19 pandemic, but it's good to know that, even in the darkest times, there is a group of naval charities working together to help support and advise those in need.

Castaway House in Portsmouth is home to three naval benevolence charities. They are the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT), the Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust (WRNS BT) and the Naval Children's Charity. These are joined at Castaway House, the hub of naval benevolence work, by Aggies, RFEA The Forces Employment Charity, Help for Heroes and Nautilus Welfare, so, as you can see, there is a strong team at work co-operating to find solutions when times are hard for personnel, ex-personnel and their families.



## The RNBT

Speed is often of the essence when members of the naval family need assistance recently, say the RNBT team.

Chief Executive Rob Bosshardt said: "During the lockdown, we introduced a new Covid 'Urgent and Crisis' response process which aimed to turn around requests pretty much the same day.

"Forty-four people benefitted from this rapid reaction process with money for food and/or rent. I was pleased to see how, even when working remotely, the team pulled together to ensure that essential support was always available to those in who needed it most."

Now that lockdown is easing, some staff are back working safely at Castaway House whilst others remain working remotely at home.

Rob adds: "We make grants available across a wide spectrum of fundamental needs and help with a variety of financial issues.

"We don't just issue the grant either, our team always follows up to make sure the recipient is back on an even keel.

"We anticipate that there may well be a significant impact on jobs thanks to the global crisis, and we are ready to help with the cost of retraining courses to help people swiftly back into the job market."

Since lockdown, the trust has made 393 grants worth £308,074 to both serving and ex-serving naval personnel, widows and families, including to those abroad in 15 countries.

One such recipient was Julie, whose young child has ADHD and is autistic. They found the closing of their school very distressing and, with limited safe space to play in the garden, were confined to the house for long periods of time causing additional behavioural problems.

Julie approached the RNBT and the Naval Children's Charity for help decking the garden which the charities were able to come together to provide.

Another beneficiary was a former Wren who is self-employed and not eligible for government financial assistance.

She had taken a mortgage holiday which ended in June.

Unable to visit her clients as they were shielding, she was without income.

The RNBT, together with the WRNS BT were able to help her with her mortgage payment.

To learn more about the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust visit [www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk)



## WRNS BT

This charity provides financial help and welfare support to anyone, officer or rating, who has served in the WRNS, including those who transferred to the Royal Navy in 1993.

It grants around £300,000 per annum to roughly 200 former Wrens and their families who need its help.

The trust makes regular payments to those who are living on a very low income or who need help with permanent care costs. Beneficiaries range from 45 to 101 years old.

In addition to this, they give a wide variety of one off grants to help with funding for medical aids, such as special chairs, beds or powered vehicles, removal costs, transport costs, home mobility adaptations, funeral expenses, household fuel, goods, rent, clothing food or help with priority debts. They are also able to assist with further education and training costs for members.

In November 2019, the trust was delighted to fund an electric scooter for a former Wren, allowing her to leave the family home independently often with her dog for daily walks in the hilly area where she lives.

She said: "Thanks to you, I can now walk my dog on my own for the first time in five years! Thank you for giving me back my independence. Words are not enough to say how you have made me feel."

She was also able to install a stair lift in her home so that she could go to bed unaided thanks to an award from The Royal British Legion negotiated by the WRNS BT.

She now relishes her new-found freedom and access to fresh air and has told the trust how her outlook on life has been vastly improved.

Other examples of people helped by the WRNS BT are an 88-year-old former Wren living in South Africa on an extremely low income who needed to move into a care home.

She was receiving help from her surviving daughter but ends were not being met. As her late husband had been a Royal Marine, the trust was able to work with the RNBT, the TRMC and the Burma Star Association to secure funds to pay for her care.

She said: "When I joined the WRNS in 1963 and then the AOW in 1974, it never entered my mind that in years to follow I would be in need of help. It just never seems enough to say thank you but thank you for rescuing me."

A 75-year-old former Wren suffered a fall and badly broke her hip. While she was waiting for a Local Authority care package, the WRNS BT provided a grant of £300 for travel costs to allow her disabled son to visit her daily to support her.

She was on a low income so was also given a Regular Charitable Payment as a Weekly Maintenance Grant. It soon became clear that she would be better off living near her son so the trust paid her £540 removal costs and referred her to the Royal Naval Officers' Charity for additional consideration.

They, in turn, awarded her £2,500 to pay for new carpeting and a cooker as well as meeting other annual needs.

She said: "The reduction in my financial worries will now allow me to concentrate on improving my health and the quality of my life. Thank you."

A 46-year-old former Wren and RN rating was helped by the trust together with the RNBT to meet arrears on her rent and other charges which built up during a period when she was unwell and unable to cope.

A 71-year-old former Wren and RN widow received help and support during the last year of her 74-year-old husband's life. During 2013 when she was unable to carry out her part time job, WRNS BT and the RNBT gave her £500 each to help with daily expenses as her husband's illness worsened.

In 2015, the RNBT assisted with £600 to fund car repairs and in 2019, the WRNS BT approved a grant of £346 to meet outstanding veterinary fees, £500 to clear an overdraft and £426 to cover removal costs so that she could move to a bungalow more suited to her needs.

Finally, she was awarded £32 per week by the RNBT as a Regular Charitable Payment. This joint approach by the charities has allowed her to make a fresh start in a housing association bungalow after many difficult years.

A 47-year-old former Wren and RN rating who is permanently disabled and looked after by her 48-year-old husband when he isn't in his full-time employment was granted £609 to buy a manual wheelchair and occupational therapist's report.

They were also helped with a General Amenities Grant of £800 paid in four equal instalments since their income left little or nothing spare for even small one-off payments. The couple have a 15-year-old son who is also disabled and who badly needed a holiday.

The lady said: "Thank you for providing my son with the financial assistance to have a much-needed holiday. He has had a very difficult year with several admissions to hospital. It has given him a boost and made a great difference to his well-being."

A 67-year-old former Wren's 38-year-old son has moved into permanent nursing care after being looked after for many years by his parents. He suffers from severe epilepsy.

The trust was pleased to provide a grant of £2,000 to help fund a one week respite break coupled with constant care support. At the same time, the RNBT bought him a recommended bed, extension kit (he's very tall) and mattress which were not available through the NHS or local authority near him.

Finally, a 65-year-old former Wren and RN widow lost her husband unexpectedly in 2000 aged just 50; they had no children. Towards the end of 2018, she approached the WRNS BT saying that she was existing on just £116 per week, which included her widow's service pension and equity release. It was clear that she needed help until she can claim her state pension in October this year.

Working together with the RNBT and SSAFA, the trust was able to secure a weekly maintenance grant, a one-off grant for food and provide a regular annual general amenities grant to help her live a little more comfortably in the interim.

Go to [www.wrnsbt.org.uk](http://www.wrnsbt.org.uk) or look for WRNSBT on Facebook for more information.



## Naval Children's Charity

This charity offers help to children aged up to 25 of parents or guardians who are serving or ex-serving members of the Royal Navy, including the Reserves and Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

It works closely with other naval charities giving financial support and grants in times of need. A large part of the charity's work is through their Emergency Essential Grants scheme responding quickly and directly to alleviate distress.

The scheme helps those children whose families are struggling financially either thanks to the Covid-19 crisis, unemployment, redundancy, illness, bereavement, injury or disability.

Caseworkers work with families to look at long-term issues, providing support to prevent more serious problems such as debt and relationship issues taking hold. They also work to prevent stress and anxiety assisting funding for therapies, specialist equipment, expenses for hospital visits or separated families.

The charity has produced some books which it sends out free of charge to help families with younger children make sense of their feelings around separation and long absences.

For example, a family helped recently consisted of a mum with four children. Sadly the marriage had broken down and the children struggled emotionally particularly during lockdown. Together with the RNBT and The Royal Marines Charity (TRMC), the Naval Children's Charity worked on providing a package of support, including grants for clothing and school uniform, a laptop to help with remote learning and a grant to help with the children's activities and general needs during the summer. TRMC helped mum with her mortgage while the details of the divorce are settled and the RNBT assisted with household bills.

Another family were struggling with Covid-19 and under extreme stress. Dad is self-employed and was only eligible for limited support from the government and mum was furloughed but unlikely to be able to return to work. Their daughter was diagnosed with bone cancer in May which required mum to be in hospital with her for several days each week 150 miles away. Her younger brother is left at home with dad whilst they struggle with the impact.

We were able to provide a grant to help the family with a Regular Charitable Payment for their travel and costs whilst at the hospital and a television and Nintendo switch to help the daughter occupy herself and communicate with her friends from her hospital bed. Caseworkers are in touch with the family to continue to offer support and help through this difficult time.

Another family were struggling with illness and grief, having lost a baby in pregnancy. They have a young son who has Down's Syndrome. Dad had contracted sepsis in his foot and had several hospital stays to manage the infection. Their garden had become extremely overgrown and unmanageable which meant that there was nowhere for their young son to play. We were able to pay for the garden to be cleared and provided some garden toys so that their son could play in the garden.

To find out more go to [www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk](http://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk) or email [caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk](mailto:caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk) or call 023 92 639534



We're there to help when the going gets rough.



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Supporting The RNBT Family

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# Cambria roars



MARITIME Reservists across Wales are celebrating after the formal handover of their new home in Cardiff Bay.

The £11m state-of-the-art facility is set to serve as the central hub and operating base for three Maritime Reserves Units; HMS Cambria – Wales' Royal Naval Reserve Unit, the Royal Marines Reserve Detachment Cardiff and Wales' University Royal Naval Unit (URNU), which gives students from the city's universities in the city.

There to receive the building – complete with a Welsh dragon – on behalf of the Royal Navy in Wales was Commander Steve Fry, Commanding Officer HMS Cambria, from Colonel Nick Beard, Chief Executive of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Wales, who project-managed the build with builders Morgan-Sindall and landowners, Associated British Ports.

"HMS Cambria is the pride of the Royal Navy in Wales," said Cdr Fry. "We have great plans to grow our reservist numbers by recruiting from across the area. Maritime Reserves come from all walks of life in Wales and now have even more fantastic opportunities to support our regular colleagues.

"With virtual-reality classrooms, new recreation facilities and two brand-new power boats to train on, we can ensure we're ready to support the Royal Navy at sea. This is a great day and an exciting time to be a Maritime Reservist in Wales."

Col Beard said, "As the organisation responsible for the reserve and cadet estates in Wales, we are hugely proud to have delivered this prestigious project on time and on budget for the Royal Navy."

First established in 1947, HMS Cambria was originally based

in Cardiff Docks until moving to Sully in the Vale of Glamorgan in 1980. Work on the new building at the Cardiff Bay site began in January 2019 with the 4,000 square metre steel-framed facility completed on time at the beginning of 2020.

It will serve all Maritime Reservists in Wales and act as a focus for community engagements in the region. The new facility will also provide short-term accommodation for up to 50 people, alongside a modern office environment with up to 80 workspaces, several training and classroom suites, a fitness room and a large multi-purpose dining room.

Outside, there will be a Royal Marines rope training area, car park and an essential parade square.

The project has been delivered through the joint partnership of RFCA for Wales and Associated British Ports, South Wales. Its commission forms part of the Future Reserves 2020 programme to encourage growth and investment in the UK's Reserve Forces.

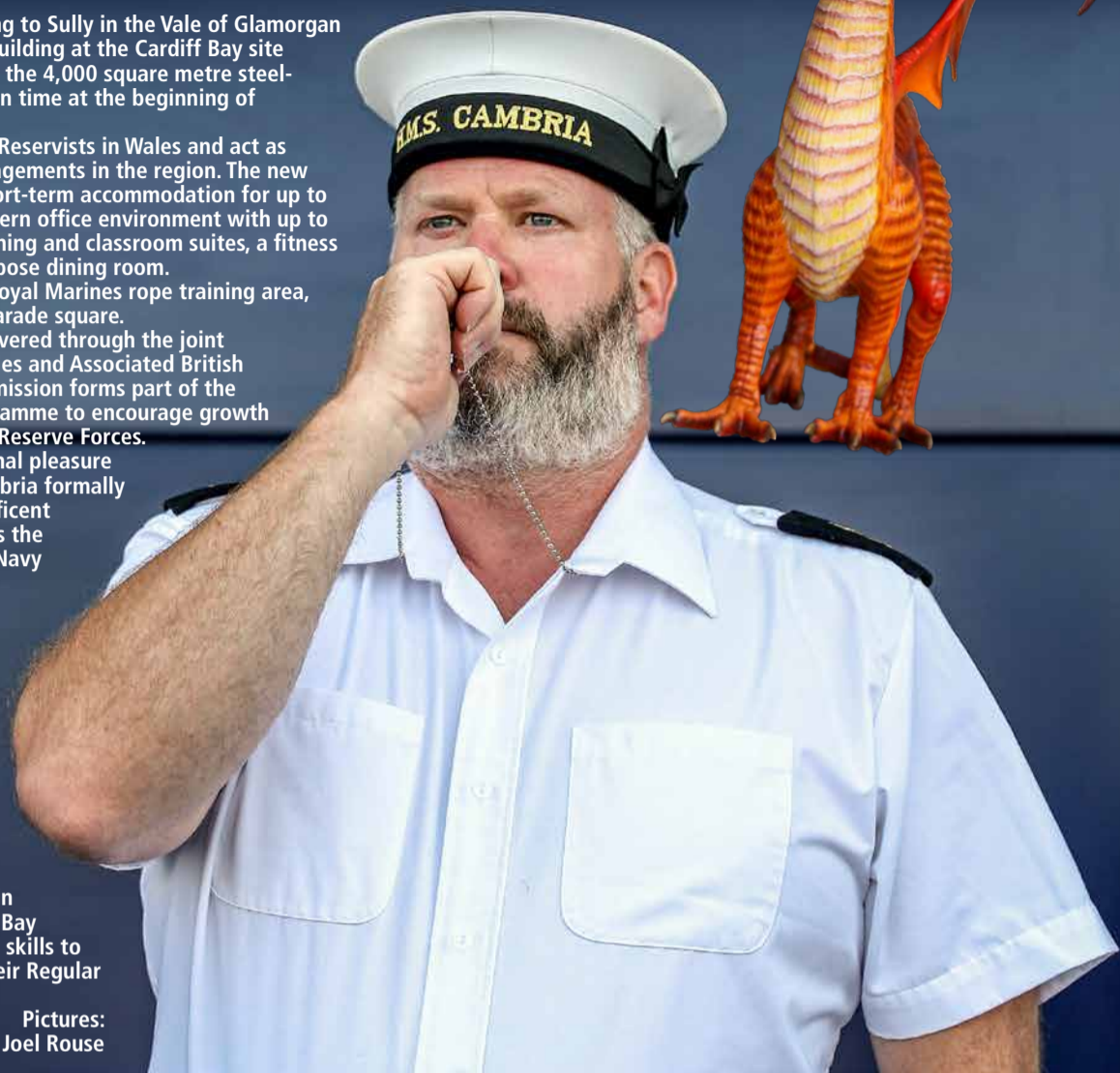
"It is an enormous personal pleasure being here to see HMS Cambria formally take the keys of this magnificent building, which will serve as the beating heart of the Royal Navy in Wales," said Commodore Mel Robinson, Commander Maritime Reserves.

"The Maritime Reserves are transforming to ensure they are fully equipped and ready to support the Royal Navy when required.

"Maritime Reserves from the Royal Naval and Royal Marines Reserves, along with University Royal Naval cadets, will train and operate here in Cardiff Bay guaranteeing they have the skills to be interchangeable with their Regular colleagues."

Pictures:

PO (Phot) Joel Rouse



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# Rubbish job well handled

A FORMER Royal Navy launch has helped to clear plastic debris from underneath the famous cliffs stretching between Eastbourne and Seaford. Members of the Maritime Volunteer Service have transported a large quantity of plastic waste from an inaccessible beach near Beachy Head, East Sussex, to Sovereign Harbour, Eastbourne, for proper disposal. The service responded to a request by Norm Penney, founder of environmental group Beachy Head and Seven Sisters EXTreme PLastic Objects REmoval (BHASSEXPLORE), for help. Over the past few months Mr Penney and a small team of volunteer helpers have worked hard to collect and bag plastic waste washed up under the cliffs. Much of it had weathered and started to break down into small particles, which would have gone back into and polluted the sea – a danger to the future of the planet highlighted recently by Sir David Attenborough. By June, BHASSEXPLORE had collected in excess of 300 bin bags of plastic at one site – but the only way to get it out and to a proper disposal facility was by sea. That was where the MVS, a UK-wide nautical training and community support charity, came in. Sovereign Harbour MVS Unit sent East Sussex 1, a 17-metre former Royal Navy harbour launch, to pick up the waste – polystyrene packing, plastic bottles, fishing nets and lines, ropes and buoys – massed in 35 large builders' bags down the coast to Sovereign Harbour, where waste disposal experts from Eastbourne Borough Council were on hand to deal with the plastics properly.



# All go for Jellicoe

THIS is the new leading-edge care home for naval veterans which will crown a charity's 100th birthday. The 66-bed complex will take shape over the next two years in Portsmouth, flagship project of the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust centennial. Admiral Jellicoe House, earmarked for a site in Locksway Road, Milton (close to the site of St James' Hospital) received the go ahead from Portsmouth City Council. "What better way to mark our hundred years of care than by building such an impressive and important care home for naval veterans," said the RNBT's Chairman of Trustees Nick Fletcher. "It will be the centrepiece of our centenary – delivering residential, nursing and dementia care for naval veterans in the home of the Royal Navy." The complex takes its name from the trust's founder and WW1 leader Admiral Lord Jellicoe, who led the Grand Fleet into battle at Jutland and subsequently served as First Sea Lord. "My grandfather, the Trust's founder and first benefactor, would have been honoured – and touched – that such a worthy cause will carry his name. It will be a legacy to his humanity and his vision," said his delighted grandson and naval historian/author Nick Jellicoe.

# Help for homeless vets

VETERANS' charity Launchpad has received a £50,000 grant to provide safe, secure accommodation and other essential support to homeless veterans in the UK to help them make a successful transition to civilian life. There are around 3,500 former service personnel on the streets with the charity running homes in Newcastle and Liverpool and supporting veterans for two years – or longer, if needed.

# Association marks centenary

THE Association of Naval Officers is celebrating its 100th birthday with a push to raise awareness of its role and work in the RN community. The association ([www.arno.org.uk](http://www.arno.org.uk)) offers camaraderie, connection and, if needed, assistance to the Naval Officer family – both serving and retired. Back in 1920, its aims were to recover pay withheld from officers recalled to service during WW1, and to look after the welfare of members and their dependents. A century later and the 5,000-strong association welcomes all Royal Navy, Royal Marines and QARNNS officers along with their Maritime Reserve counterparts. Officers from the RFA, WRNS, RNVR and SCC can also join. Members benefit from a range of events, online talks and publications, plus access to competitive breakdown cover with the RAC and exclusive discounts via Xexec. Other rewards include online networking, port sponsorship of mess dinners and a true sense of naval community for an annual fee of £25. While centenary events planned for this year have been cancelled due to the pandemic, the association has found new

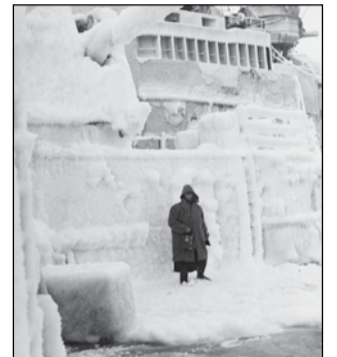
ways to engage with members. Telephone support and online contact and twice-weekly newsletters have all helped to keep members informed, and provided a lifeline for isolated members who were shielding. Launched in the throes of lockdown and cancelled events, ARNO Online Talks has a range of impressive speakers. First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin drew a large audience for the first talk in July. Meanwhile, ARNO Voices is recording members' career highlights and memories from across the decades to add to the archive. Some members joined over 60 years ago and this sense of loyalty to the organisation remains strong. And lockdown has underlined the importance of the work of ARNO's sister organisation, the Royal Navy Officers' Charity (RNOC), which is dedicated to assisting serving and former Naval officers and their families at every stage of their lives and careers, assistance which spans everything from care home fees and mobility aids to education, debt, transition and end-of-life care. Since the beginning of the year, the charity has handed out more than £350K in grants.



# Jumping for veterans

FROM the depths to the heights... About to touch down in Lancashire is submariner Lieutenant Commander Maxine Styles, one of seven jumpers who took to northern skies to help the county's veterans. They stepped out of a plane about 15,000ft above Lancashire with experts from the Black Knights Parachute Centre... and landed safely a few minutes later having banked £5,000 for Broughton House in Salford. The care home for former servicemen and women is in the middle of a major transformation which will turn it into the UK's first 'veterans care village' to provide all the physical, mental and moral support veterans of all ages, abilities and conflicts might need. The 'Leap for Legends' jump south of Lancaster was the latest fund-raiser with five of the seven parachutists serving personnel or veterans. "The last few months have been difficult for many people but, through it all, the staff at Broughton House have worked tirelessly to look after the veterans who call it home," said logistics officer Maxine, who is training to become an RN barrister. "This made me even more determined, once lockdown restrictions were lifted, to take the plunge – quite literally – and do a skydive to raise money.

"I appreciate the sacrifices that servicemen, servicewomen and their families made to enable me to live the life that I do, surrounded by my friends and family. "I wanted to do my bit to help Broughton House continue to provide a home for those who have served, filled with laughter, support and camaraderie in the UK's first veteran care village." Jumping with her was Naval Reservist Yasmin Hassanpour who volunteers at Salford Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club, which offers a drop-in centre for personnel past and present living in the Eccles area every Saturday morning. Their efforts will go into the £15m pot needed to transform Broughton House for the 21st Century with a 64-bedroom care home, up to 30 independent living apartments, a military support hub, memorial park, and landscaped gardens with a bowling green and bandstand. Laura Carr, community and events fundraiser at Broughton House, said: "It's heart-warming to know that we have the continued support of the local community and beyond. "It's a really exciting time to be involved with Broughton House, and we are extremely grateful to our seven brave skydivers."



# Author seeks help from Arctic vets

DID you – or more likely your relatives now given the passage of time – serve in the Arctic Convoys between 1941 and 1945. If so author and historian Hugh Sebag-Montefiore wants to hear your stories and accounts of the four-year effort to sustain the USSR by delivering key aid to its most northerly ports. More than 100 ships were sunk by the Germans, including 16 warships, while the men contended with some of the worst weather conditions imaginable: ice (such as that plaguing HMS Belfast in November 1943, above), fog, plus little chance of survival if they went in the water. Hugh, who's previously been helped by *Navy News* readers in compiling histories of cracking the Enigma code and the Battle of the Somme (sailors fought with the Royal Naval Division in the later stages), has been commissioned by publisher Harper Collins to turn his hand to the Russian convoys. He's interested in first-hand accounts (written, filmed/audio), photographs and assistance from any associations which might have access to rare material on the convoys themselves or life in Soviet ports like Murmansk. Hugh can be contacted at [sebags@hsmontefiore.com](mailto:sebags@hsmontefiore.com) or via [hughsebagmontefiore.com/the\\_author.php](http://hughsebagmontefiore.com/the_author.php).





# The last salute



**TWO Princes of Wales led tributes to those who fought Japanese militarism as the heir to the throne and sailors from his ship took part in national VJ Day commemorations.**

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire was chosen as the venue for the UK-wide act of thanksgiving, 75 years to the day Tokyo finally conceded defeat and agreed to surrender after nearly four years of bitter fighting.

As with the anniversary of Victory in Europe back in May, the Covid pandemic led to plans being scaled back. They began with a 6am performance by pipers around the world, including HMS Belfast (which was due to take part in operations against Japan in 1945 only for Tokyo to surrender), followed by a wreath laying at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. Mid-morning, the focus shifted to the arboretum where the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall were guests of honour, joining veterans, their families and military personnel from units associated with the war against Japan.

Among the former sailors invited was Albert 'Les' Wills, (pictured then and now, centre right) who served aboard carrier HMS Indefatigable as war with Japan ended.

The then 18-year-old served aboard the carrier for two years, endured kamikaze attacks, witnessed the formal surrender of the empire in Tokyo Bay and helped to repatriate Australian prisoners of war before finally returning to the UK in March 1946 when he was finally reunited with his family.

Les remained in the RN for a dozen years after the war before leaving in 1957 to become a firefighter in Birmingham, where he rose to the rank of assistant Chief Fire Officer. In retirement he has kept the memory of his old carrier alive, acting as association chairman.

"I think it is the highest honour to be asked to represent the Royal Navy on the 75th anniversary of the end of World War 2," said Les. "I did this in memory of all those who served their country during those difficult times. We will not forget you."

"I am so pleased to have been able to attend this auspicious occasion when so many cannot. It was a real privilege and a very special day for me."

War in the Far East is generally overshadowed by the conflict against Nazi Germany in Europe and North Africa and the Atlantic.

It nevertheless accounted for 71,000 of the Commonwealth's war dead,

12,000 of them casualties of Japanese prison camps.

By the beginning of 1945, the Royal Navy had massed the greatest force in its history, the British Pacific Fleet (aka The Forgotten Fleet, for its men never felt they received the recognition they deserved), for the final onslaught against the heart of the Japanese empire: four battleships, over 20 carriers, 11 cruisers, 35 destroyers, 31 submarines, more than a dozen frigates and scores of minesweepers, sloops, auxiliaries and escorts.

HMS Prince of Wales was among the war's first victims, sunk on December 10 1941 as she and battle-cruiser HMS Repulse attempted to stop Japanese landings on the Malay peninsula, only to be pounced upon by enemy bombers. Without air cover, the two capital ships succumbed to the aerial assault in under 90 minutes, taking 840 men with them.

Led by Commanding Officer Captain Darren Houston, a detachment from her 21st Century successor paid their respects at the Force Z memorial while at the Arboretum.

Personnel from Faslane used the run-up to VJ Day to thank WW2 veterans for their service, dropping in on them at home and presenting gifts.

Writer Able Seaman Roxanne Castellas visited 96-year-old Margaret Millar in King's Park (pictured second from top), handing over a hamper of goodies from SSAFA and a VJ Day 75 commemorative coin, donated by Legion Scotland, before listening to the former wren's account of her wartime exploits.

Mrs Millar joined up aged 18 in 1942 and spent two years at Bletchley Park decoding German intercepts. One day she was asked to pack a bag and get on a sealed lorry eventually arriving (via Glasgow) in Colombo, Ceylon (modern-day Sri Lanka) where she was responsible for decoding Japanese intercepts.

She recalls VJ Day, noting that as far she and the team in Ceylon were concerned nothing had changed. She remained in Colombo for some time after the war ended to support the repatriation of British prisoners of war and she still has a large album full of pictures of look back on, including a piper leading some of those freed PoWs at the city's Victory Parade.

"I felt really special meeting someone who served in World War 2," said Roxanne. "It was also significant for me to meet another woman who served in the Navy in a different age and since people like her were the forerunners to women joining the armed forces, I am extremely grateful to her for her contribution."

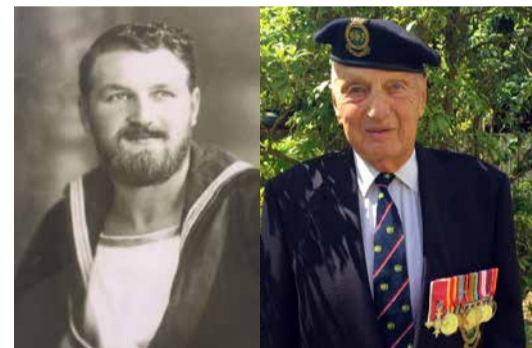
Plymouth-based sailors and Royal Marines joined civic leaders and veterans groups at the city's Minster Church of St Andrews and 100-year-old Jim O'Connor from Saltash, last surviving member of the local Burma Star Veterans' Association, who laid a wreath on behalf of his comrades (pictured top right).

There was similar present-day representation at Paignton's Burma Star Gardens where the service of thanksgiving and remembrance also marked the closing of the local Burma Star Association branch.

And in the capital Naval Regional Commander for the East of England, Commodore David Elford, laid a wreath on the memorial to Lord Mountbatten, who was Supreme Allied Commander in South-East Asia for the final two years of the war in the Pacific (pictured bottom right).

Two VJ Day veterans – Bill Blount and Henry Rice (pictured bottom right) – joined Woking RNA shipmates for a memorial parade.

Pictures: LPhotos Ben Corbett, Mark Johnson and 'Hutch' Hutchins, and Bob Holmes/Woking News and Mail



## Get close up to a grand old lady's bottom...

YOU can now see the world's most famous warship as not even Nelson saw her.

Three years of groundbreaking work by engineers, scientists and historians means visitors can see HMS Victory from below for the first time, after replacing the original cradles the man o'war has rested on for nearly 100 years.

In their place, 134 stainless steel props not only support the 260-year-old warship securely, but provide experts with constant data on the state of the ship – and allow tourists to inspect the 69-metre-long Trafalgar veteran from bow to rudder from below thanks to a specially-created new walkway... a privilege not even Admiral Nelson himself is thought to have enjoyed.

Victory has been preserved in No.2 dry dock (itself 218 years old) since the 1920s; engineers used a series of steel cradles to support the 3,500-tonne vessel.

A century later and as part of an unprecedented 20-year £40m overhaul of the ship, the steel cradles (and tonnes of supporting concrete) have been

gradually replaced by the hi-tech props, which can be adjusted to mimic the pressure of the ocean around Victory's hull just as when she once roamed the seas.

Andrew Baines, project director for the National Museum of the Royal Navy, said replacing the original supports was crucial to the long-term future and preservation of the iconic ship.

"Victory was slowly collapsing on herself. We had to fix the foundations and now we have, we can carry out the rest of the 'keyhole surgery' which she needs to keep her going for the next 250 years," he said.

The bonus of saving the ship using the special props has flooded the dock bottom with light and allowed access like never before; a walkway has been created for visitors to get underneath Victory.

"It's an amazing, breath-taking space to be in," said Matthew Sheldon, the museum's head curator.

"I've been here 26 years and I've never seen Victory like this before. The views of her bow and rudder are fabulous. You can get up close to the

ship like never before."

The cutting-edge technology will feed minute-by-minute data on the strains, stresses and loads the ship is bearing, then the props – mostly 6in in diameter – can be adjusted accordingly.

"It's been a unique endeavour for a unique ship," said Rob Hanway, Victory Programme Manager from BAE Systems which led the complex project.

"There's never been anything quite like this before – a combination of the old and the new. Props have been used on cranes, but never on such a scale.

"Over the past 18 months as we've taken out the old cradle, the sheer daylight flooding into the dock meant you noticed the difference and she looks pretty impressive. It's been an absolute pleasure to work on her."

Victory – and the rest of Portsmouth Historic Dockyard – re-opened to the public last month. Numbers to the site are limited to 250 per hour, and all visitors must book online in advance via [www.historicdockyard.co.uk/tickets-and-offers](http://www.historicdockyard.co.uk/tickets-and-offers)





## Accolade for unit's 'Mr Motivator'

FLEETWOOD Sea Cadets' long-standing former CO has been honoured after being an inspiration to thousands of young people who went on to learn new skills and discipline.

Derek Scrivener, pictured, is to receive a British Citizen Award which recognises individuals who have displayed exceptional endeavour to their local community and who have worked tirelessly and selflessly to make a positive impact on society.

During the 1960s, Fleetwood Sea Cadets band became one of the best in the nation, winning a string of national competitions, and some of its members later went on to form Fleetwood

Old Boys Band, a bugle-led band still going strong today and a mainstay of key events such as Fleetwood Carnival and the town's Remembrance Day parade.

Paul Reynolds, a former member of Fleetwood Sea Cadet, was among a group in the town who nominated Derek.

Paul said: "He was an inspiration to literally thousands of boys and girls who joined Fleetwood Sea Cadets.

"He served as an officer and Commanding Officer of the unit for over 40 years. He was the 'Mr Motivator' of his time."

The medal will be presented to Derek at a ceremony in Fleetwood at a later date.

## Ewan's starring role



CONGRATULATIONS go to Leading Cadet Ewan from Peterhead who's been named to represent Aberdeenshire, by becoming a Lord Lieutenant's Cadet.

Ewan will help Alexander Manson in his role as Her Majesty The Queen's representative in the county and be an ambassador for Sea Cadets.

Leading Cadet Ewan said: "I am delighted and honoured to be the chosen as a Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire's cadet and I am looking forward to the year ahead."

## Cadets keep on running for appeal

TWO cadets from Birmingham have been helping to support Sea Cadets' emergency appeal, by running an extraordinary 10k around their school field.

Kyle and Haider Ali attend Birmingham Stirling Sea Cadets, based at Shard End and are students at the city's Tile Cross Academy.

Kyle, who is a Royal Marines Cadet, said: "I have really missed Sea Cadets during the lockdown, so I wanted to do something positive and raise some funds so that the unit can keep going.

"Sea Cadets has been really influential in my life and I know that it stops other young people from getting into trouble. I have made friends there, it has helped my social skills.

"We are always inspired by the example of our Head of PE, Mr Austin, and would like to say thanks to Mr Marano for supporting this adventure."

You can support Sea Cadets' Emergency Appeal via [sea-cadets.org/emergency-appeal](http://sea-cadets.org/emergency-appeal).



● Last year, the Hon member of the Legislative Assembly of the Falklands, Leona Roberts, centre, visited TS Sheffield and presented the unit with a Falkland Islands flag and plaque

# Marine Bob is never forgotten

SEA CADETS from Training Ship Sheffield held a virtual presentation remembering the Liberation of the Falklands, 38 years ago.

VIP guests at the presentation evening included the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire Andrew Combe, Vice Lord Lieutenant John Holt, Sheffield Lord Mayor Anthony Downing, District Officer Keith Bingham, member of the Legislative Assembly of the Falklands Rodger Spink, and cadets of all ages.

The presentation on Zoom was hosted by one of the cadets' parents and 33 guests were treated to a pre-recorded video presentation made by cadets, with a script they wrote themselves, as part of their module towards their next promotion; to Cadet Sergeant.

The presentation concluded with the new Unit Chaplin, Father Grant Taylor, offering prayers, and a Royal Marine Cadet performing the last post on bugle.

Area Staff Officer for Public Relations and Royal Navy veteran, Christopher Smith, 29, said: "Our unit and city share a history with the Falklands.

"We have staff who are veterans of the Falklands conflict, and our cities namesake; HMS Sheffield, which was tragically sunk protecting the Royal Navy Fleet from air attack, and we continue today still having strong ties to the HMS Sheffield Association.

"In November last year, Sheffield Unit welcomed the Honorable member of the Legislative Assembly of the Falklands; Leona Roberts from Port Stanley.

"She presented us a Falklands Island flag and plaque, cementing relations between the Falklands government, and Sheffield Sea Cadets' Unit - named The Falklands Training Centre.

"Within our unit, stands a memorial, pictured right, to Robert Griffin, a former Sheffield Sea Cadet drum major. Robert, 22, was killed in action on landing craft F4 during an Argentinian air attack."

South Yorkshire's District Officer, Commander Keith Bingham, said: "Royal Marine Griffin (Bob to his friends) was a Sea Cadet with me at TS Sheffield Sea Cadet Unit in the late 1960s / early 1970s.

"He was a lovely carefree lad who was never without a smile on his face. He saw the best in everyone and a very good friend to have.

"Although a few years younger than me we had a lot in common and got on well together. One of our common interests was the unit band. At the time I was the Drum Major and Bob was a bugler. He did show an interest



● Sea Cadet Oliver

in becoming the Drum Major, so I started to instruct him on the drill and commands required etc. He was a quick learner and took over from me when I stepped down from the role due to age in 1974.

"When I married in July 1975 after the church service, we had the surprise of the TS Sheffield band waiting outside the church to lead us to the reception which was not far away.

"Bob was the Drum Major on this occasion. Not too long after this Bob applied for and was accepted into TS Indefatigable training school after which he joined the Royal Marines. Unfortunately, I did not see him again."

Sea Cadet Oliver, 16, said: "I am a cadet Corporal and I have been a member of Sheffield Sea Cadets for six years.

"I first joined as a junior cadet and spent a short time as a Sea Cadet. However, I craved something a little more 'green' so I decided to

become a Royal Marine Cadet.

"Cadets has been a fantastic experience and has instilled in me confidence that will benefit me enormously in life.

"There is nowhere else where I, at such a young age, would have found such an amazing opportunity to develop my leadership skills.

"This is the most rewarding thing about being a cadet, putting a plan in place and working with a great team to achieve a great outcome. I hope to soon achieve the rank of Cadet Sergeant and outside of cadets I wish to pursue a career in the armed forces.

"Our presentation was a fantastic team effort where everyone from the padre to the cadets chipped in.

"It was difficult, however, as we had to create a script that really captured the events of the Falklands conflict. We eventually achieved this with the help of Zoom and started to record the audio, sending it to those who were creating the presentation and who uploaded it to iMovie.

"We are really proud of how it turned out and we hope this demonstrates our commitment to this wonderful new relationship as well as our commitment, as the next generation, to the memory of those who sacrificed their lives in the conflict."

Sheffield's Detachment Commander John Daley, 50, said: "Normally the presentation would be done in person at Sheffield Sea Cadets unit. But since the devastating impact of Covid, all face-to-face training is understandably cancelled.

"All cadet modules have had to go online since the outbreak. Units have been inviting guests from as far away as Canada and Japan.

"I believe presenting is an important life skill, to be able to vocalise yourself will stand you well for any job interview and employment.

"Next for our Corporal cadets, will be peer-to-peer teaching, and VJ Day commemorations."

Sheffield Sea Cadets' Executive Officer Chris Camps added: "Sheffield Sea Cadets has been part of our city since the 1930s, and continues with the challenge of nautical adventure and a Royal Navy ethos.

"This last year, our ship's company has grown to over 100 crew; backed the campaign to name the new Type 26 frigate HMS Sheffield, took part in the national Trafalgar Day Parade, had local councillors join the Unit Committee, and won national awards in media and football."

Sheffield is currently recruiting for adult volunteers. Anyone interested is asked to call in at the unit HQ, the Falklands Training Centre at the top of Rutland Road on Mondays and Thursdays from 7pm to 9pm or look for the unit on social media.



# Back on the water

GUERNSEY Sea Cadets have become the first unit in the British Isles to return to their site and go on parade in person.

Based at the John Ramplin Cadet Centre, the unit made up of both Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets returned to in-person parading activity, beginning with a thank you from Officer-in-Charge Matt Bourgaize.

Following months of virtual enterprises which have left cadets engaged, Guernsey Sea Cadets are hoping to enjoy what's left of the summer – targeting a return to the water for Sea Cadets and a return to the field for Royal Marines Cadets.

Other Sea Cadets units within the Channel Islands as well as on the UK mainland are preparing to return to parade in person but are still working through the rigorous approval process, before returning to parades in person.

Meanwhile, Cadets are slowly returning to the water under the Summer Active programme, which began in early August at Thrapston in Northamptonshire, pictured left.

Ten cadets from Market Harborough were the first and they are being followed by a number of other units.

Plans are well advanced to see Sea Cadets' new Midlands Boating Station in Birmingham activated while the work begins to build a new permanent building.

Portable buildings have been installed to allow boating to take place in a Covid-safe environment.



## Log on to see what is on offer

A NEW interactive portal set up by Marine Society and Sea Cadets to allow cadets to get a clear view on the opportunities ahead of them has achieved excellent results in its first few weeks of operation.

Ten thousand cadets and volunteers jumped on board in the first six weeks of lockdown, with nearly 30,000 registered users now able to access the system when they want.

Cadets are empowered to make sense of learning pathways; with information on 185 different courses offered to cadets.

The information also extends to career advice along with inside information about our world-class training centres and amazing offshore fleet.

Daniel McAllister, Director of Fundraising and Communications at MSSC, said: "The Sea Cadets Portal is in fact the 'Sea Cadets Experience' in every cadet's pocket. It gives each cadet control over their journey through cadet life."

"Today there are over 28,000 people registered who are able to instantly access the system whenever they want."

"Sea Cadets couldn't be happier with what this new system will make possible, with this wealth of knowledge and empowerment, our cadets will reach new heights discovering and realising new ambitions."

## Letters in lockdown

PUPILS at the Royal Hospital School (RHS) in Suffolk have handwritten 800 letters to be sent to elderly alumni of the school to help combat loneliness in lockdown.

The initiative was a joint effort by RHS' Compass Programme and the school's Alumni Association to help build a bridge with elderly alumni during self-isolation.

The school's Compass Programme provides Lower School pupils with citizenship skills and, in this case, to develop curiosity by asking alumni questions whilst keeping alive the disappearing art of the handwritten letter.

The initiative also formed part of the school's remote curriculum which has meant all 750 pupils the world over being able to continue their studies via online teaching.

The hope is that these pen pal friendships continues into the future enabling very different generations to form a connection through a common bond.

## Axbridge go it alone

GOOD luck to all at Axbridge Sea Cadets who have become their own independent unit.

They launched in 2013 and were initially supported by Weston-Super-Mare Sea Cadets.

The new unit will be named TS Goathland after passing its tests.

The name was chosen because in 1942, people around country were asked to collect money for the Navy for a Warships Week campaign.

Axbridge residents alone raised £242,000 – almost enough money to buy a destroyer.

When it was built, the ship was named HMS Goathland, and was almost entirely funded by Axbridge.

The event was attended by Lady Anne Maw, the new Lord-Lieutenant for Somerset, in her first official engagement since taking on the role.





## Adventurers up for mountain challenge

MOUNTAINEERING and mountain biking were on the agenda for the Royal Navy Adventurous Training team. The team spent five days conducting assurance and professional development at the Naval Outdoor Centre (Germany).

Highlight of the week in southern Bavaria was climbing 2,592-metre Hochvogel in one day.

Hochvogel, situated in the Allgau Alps, straddles the German and Austrian border at the summit, with the northern route in Germany and the southern one largely in Austria.

The training package allows the team to be up to speed when delivering these activities to Royal Navy personnel.

Paul Gellender (Maj RM Rtd and SO2 AT) said: "This training package tested the team mentally and physically and allowed us to come together as a team which is vital going forward."

For details of what is available at the centre, see [nocg.co.uk](http://nocg.co.uk)



# Highland Games 'held in Bahrain'



● POET(WE) Johnson with his winning high jump; Argyll's CO Cdr Andrew Ainsley opens the HMS Argyll Highland Games



● Clockwise from left, the opening event, the 1KM run; LPT Bart Thomas, organised the games; Lt Cdr Gary Turner, facing, about to lose in the Maide Leisg strength contest to a member of the RM Boarding Team



KILTS and cabers are not an unusual sight in Scotland in July, when the Highland Games are held in the highlands and islands to honour Scottish roots and traditions.

They are, however, not often seen in the much less familiar and considerably warmer surroundings of Mina Salman port, home of UKMCC and the UK Naval Support Facility in Bahrain.

With the Inveraray Games cancelled this year due to COVID-19, the ship's company of HMS Argyll was ready to step up for their home region, and pay tribute with their own version of the games.

The aim of the day was to raise money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and three of the local Argyll good causes (Richmond's Hope, The Argyll Piping Trust and Mid Argyll Youth Development Services) which would have benefited from the Inveraray games.

Each Mess was tasked with organising one of the nine events with ship's Leading Physical Trainer, LPT Bart Thomas, overseeing the whole event.

Argyll's sailors pulled off some fantastic and imaginative efforts to construct the arena from pallets, broom handles and damage control timber.

The games were opened by the Ship's Commanding Officer, Commander Andrew Ainsley, who read a speech provided by The Duke of Argyll.

A series of specially-adapted traditional Highland Games events were held, testing strength (the heavy events) and speed and agility (the light events), for both individuals and teams.

The keenly contested 4 x 200m relay was won by the Royal Marines Boarding Team, and the closing classic tug-of-war was won by the Petty Officers' Mess.

AB(WS) Glen Frew, pictured top, won the caber-tossing competition, while POET(WE) Craig Johnson won the high jump contest.

Overall, the Royal Marines took the team honours and the captain was able to present specially-engraved quichs donated by Royal Salute whisky to all winners.

Lt Jim Gallagher, who lived in Argyll and Bute as a child, said "it was a great day and a really great chance to support some brilliant Scottish charities and the RNRMC. We're hoping to get up and see some of the work they do when we get home later in the year."

The event proved to be a huge success and has so far raised £7,000 for the RNRMC and the selected good causes.

Further donations can be made via [www.justgiving.com/hms-argyll](http://www.justgiving.com/hms-argyll)

HMS Argyll is now in the final stretch of a seven month Op Kipion deployment in the Gulf.

Report: Lt Cdr Matt O'Farrell, HMS Argyll



# Back in business

## RNRU's Under-23s Training Support Group prepare for action

AS we look to a future where COVID-19 is not totally behind us, but being managed, we need to plan for a time where sport is out there again.

With the traditional Under-23s Rugby Inter-Service Competition due at the end of the year as a pre-cursor to the RN Senior XV season, there is much more planning required than normal.

With the added pressure due to the increased weight of expectation that comes with winning four of the last five IS competitions, the RN U23s squad will need to embrace innovative ways of learning game plans and systems added to the remote monitoring and measuring of individual strength and conditioning programmes whilst balancing day-jobs as professional servicemen.

Tasked with ensuring this multi-faceted and challenging undertaking is a new Training Support Group, led by Lt Owen Salmon, dipping his toes in the waters of Director of Rugby for the first time.

He brings valuable experience as a Navy capped player as well as Fleet Air Arm (FAA), U23s and Senior XV Head Coach.

He said: "I am incredibly excited to be the new ADoR for the RNRU U23s this season, having previously been the head coach of the U23's and the Senior XV,

"I know how important new blood is to the development of Navy Rugby. It is therefore vital we try and get some game time this season but do so in a safe manner and follow the guidance correctly. This will bring its own unique challenges, but we have a very professional and passionate TSG who will ensure things run smoothly".

Owen will be assisted by Team Manager CPO Ollie Dugmore,

returning for his second season with the U23s.

The meticulous planning required from Ollie and his interaction with players and their line managers, sporting facilities owners, accommodation allocators etc will make or break the season whilst also ensuring all risk assessments are correct, present and appropriate and all is carried out in line with RFU guidelines.

Lt Cdr Andy Vance returns to RN U23 TSG but now as head coach as he progresses through his 'coaching pathway'.

He brings experience from his playing days as a RN and UKAF capped rugby union and rugby league player as well as coaching experience with the FAA, RN Mariners, the last two seasons with the RN U23s and within civilian rugby.

His coaching team include LH Nathan 'Pony' Moore as the defence coach who brings much continuity as part of the RN U23 TSG as both manager and coach, now focussing on the latter in addition to his role as RN Presidents coach.

The new additions to the coaching staff are CPO Chris 'Sumo' Thompson (forwards coach) and Lt Dane 'Benjamin' Smallbone (backs coach). Both have vast playing experience as RN-capped union players and UKAF-capped rugby league players.

LPT Sam Davies (strength and conditioning coach) and Capt Rachel Baxter Army (physio) make up the TSG and will be integral in team selections, advising on the players' health and fitness.

This TSG demonstrates an already established regard for 'giving back' within Navy Rugby; a self-sustaining organisation utilising volunteers that

have received the benefits of sport in the Service and are now giving up their time and effort to help develop the youth of RN sport.

Firstly, there is a real need for the TSG to instil an environment for the squad to be as good as it can be, to ensure success – something Andy is very keen to address.

"Despite the U23s success in recent years, this group of players has not won anything yet," said Andy.

"It is not the same group of players that won the IS last season, so they are not trying to retain anything, they are not champions – they are trying to win it for the first time.

"That is the mindset I want to create, that hungry desire to motivate themselves to do whatever it takes to produce the right performances when it matters.

"Not only do we need to deliver improved rugby players, but we also need to deliver better leaders; players can make the right decisions at the key moments and inspire each other – they will not have the coaches with them on the pitch at pressure moments.

"These are also the qualities that we want to enhance in them as we have a secondary role to return these young sailors and marines as better servicemen and inspirations to their peers – a responsibility I value very highly."

The coaching staff will need to work out what works best for their players whether it be via Skype, Zoom or even WhatsApp using clips from previous matches, amongst other sources.

This ethos is mirrored by S&C coach and current Senior XV player, Sam Davies.

"The squad has had to adapt to these unprecedented times in lockdown with

closed gyms and limited kit. However, this has not stopped them carrying out a program consisting of running and bodyweight exercises working solely on max aerobic speed.

"Now the gyms have started to re-open it's the start of a daily program that has two parts – a strength phase finished off with a conditioning phase. The buy-in from the squad has been fantastic and everyone knows the importance of keeping to these programs and prepping themselves as a squad, so we can hit the ground running whenever we get the all clear to start playing again".

The other vitally important piece to the puzzle is RN Rugby's commitment to outreach, recruitment and retention.

Some of the RN players have come from rugby academies and county teams that were attracted to rugby in the Service through games they played against the RN U23s.

Examples are AB Seaman Specialist Jessie Lowe and current Seniors XV squad member AET Jordan Gotte.

Both played for Exeter Chiefs Academy against the RN U23s at Sandy Park in November 2018.

Another example is AET Jerome Rudder, who toured with the Philippines' Rugby 7s team in 2018 – showing what opportunities there are for young driven people within the Service.

The first step is welcoming new and returning players to the RN U23s open invite 'Shakedown Weekend', to be held at Fort Blockhouse this month.

After that it is a matter of waiting for further RFU guidance regarding the recommencement of contact sessions and, finally, matches.

Report: Hugo Mitchell-Heggs and Andy Vance

• The Royal Navy Rugby Union Under-23s Training Support Group are preparing for the new season PICTURE: LPhoto Barry Swainsbury



**£50 PRIZE PUZZLE**



THE mystery ship in the July edition of *Navy News* (right) was the Invincible-class battle-cruiser HMS Inflexible, which inflicted damage on the German battle-cruiser Lützow during the Battle of Jutland. Robert Westlake, from Bristol, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is an Orion-class dreadnought which spent the bulk of her career with the Home and Grand Fleets.

1) What was her name and 2) What was her fate in 1925?

Please complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we will also accept emailed entries to [bm@navynews.co.uk](mailto:bm@navynews.co.uk) with September Mystery Ship in the email header.



Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Entries must be received by October 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 November edition.

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

**MYSTERY PICTURE 307**

Name .....

Address .....

My answers: (1) .....

(2) .....

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- If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
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- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in October's Noticeboard must be received by **SEPT 16, 2020**

**Deaths**

**Gerald Peter Toghil, Fleet Master at Arms.** Last ship was HMS Achilles. Retired from RN in 1977. Member of Bridgwater Branch of the RNA and RNA Regulating Branch. Died July 15 in Taunton, Somerset.

**Kenneth P Armitage – Lieutenant Commander (X)(C).** A Mancunian, Ken joined as an RO in 1962 and served in HMS Centaur, HMS Ursa, Whitehall COMMCCEN, FO2FEF and HMS Lincoln. Promoted to SD Sub-Lieutenant aged 28 in 1972, appointments included HMS Tiger, HMS Sirius, CSST, F7 in HMS Jupiter, SCO/Cdre (AW), FOSNI, HMS Mercury, CNSO and DGSW. He retired 1989. Died April 12, aged 76.

**Capt QARNNS Michael Bowen ARRC.** RN Hospital Haslar, RN Med Staff School, Royal Defence Medical Coll, 25L/CNH, Birmingham ICT Centre. Died July 17.

**Cdr Peter J Bing OBE.** HMS

Goldcrest, Daedalus, Victory, Centurion. DG Aircraft, RM Condor. Died July 17, aged 94.

**Lt Cdr Francis R Brooke.** HMS Royal Arthur. Died June 29, aged 93.

**Lt Cdr Richard B Moore.** Weapons Dept Navy. Died July 15, aged 95.

**Brig RM Mark J D Noble.** HMS Heron, Joint Helo Command HQ, CTCRM, HQ Army Sch Aviation, 3 Cdo Bde Air Squadron, Fleet RM Protection Gpm 45 Cdo RM, 40 Cdo RM, Comacchio Gp RM, RCDS. Died July 22.

**Lt Cdr John R Wimpres.** DNR and Schools Liaison, HMS Collingwood, Neptune, Sultan, Ajax. Died July 25, aged 82.

**Lt Cdr Paul A Waterhouse.** HMS Ark Royal, Saker, Heron, 899 NAS. Died June 24.

**Lt Cdr Peter R Calderley.** HMS Bulwark, Heron, Osprey. RNEC Manadon. Died July 11, aged 75.

**Eric John Chivers L/Sea RP\*.** Served from 1958-68 at HMS Raleigh, Harrier, Shalford, Drake, Loch Insh, Vernon, Daring, Berwick, Scarborough, Vernon and Diamond. Died August 4, aged 78.

**Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC**

**Rear Admiral Christopher D Stanford CB MA.** HMS Puma, Excellent, Huberston, Exmouth, Dryad, Newcastle, Antrim, Brilliant, Fife, Boxer, Coventry. RCDS. Died aged 70.

**Lt Richard StJ Levinge.** HMS Rhyll, Resolution, Splendid. Died aged 64.

**Lt Cdr John T Hudson.** HMS Eagle, Terror, Illustrious. Died aged 100.

**Lt Cdr Geoffrey B Harland.** HMS Bulwark, Narvik, LST3044. Died July 16, aged 89.

**Chaplain RNR Gordon L Warren.** Died aged 75.

**Lt Cdr John R Wimpres.** DNR and

Schools Liaison, HMS Collingwood, Neptune, Sultan, Ajax. Died July 25, aged 82.

**Lt Cdr Peter R Calderley.** HMS Bulwark, Heron, Osprey. RNEC Manadon. Died July 11, aged 75

**Submariners' Association**

**Norman Langdon, CPO Coxn.** Served from 1957 to 1979 in HM Submarines Alaric (57-58), Teredo (58), Andrew (59-60), Anchorite (60-61), Odin (61-64), Trump (64-66), Taciturn (66), Truncheon (67), Finwhale (68-73) and Conqueror (73-79). Member of New Zealand Branch. Died July 10, aged 81.

**Anthony Gisby AB RP3.** Served from 1954 to 1958 in HM Submarines Alliance, Talent, Telemachus, Aurochs and Thorough. Member of North Staffs Branch. Died July 14, aged 87.

**Reunions**

**HMS Phoebe:** Reunion will now take place on October 2-5 2020 at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol. Details from IOW Tours Ltd, 3 New Road, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9JN. Tel 01983 405116, or email [enquiries@iowtours.com](mailto:enquiries@iowtours.com).

**HMS Liverpool Association:** Next year's reunion will be held on June 12. For membership details contact the secretary John Parker at [info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk) or call 02392521222.

**HMS Ocean Association:** Annual Reunion R68 and L12 ship's crew invited along with partners, at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol, from September 18 to 21. Food, gala and entertainment included. Contact IOW Tours on 01983 405116.

**HMS Londonderry.** First Commission July 1960 to October 1962 are having a reunion from July 19 to 22 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. Contact Brian Coward at [briancoward39@btinternet.com](mailto:briancoward39@btinternet.com)

**HMS Carysfort.** A reunion will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea from October 9 to 11 2020 and is open to all who served in the ship throughout her seven commissions (1945 – 1969) and their wives/partners. A one-, two- or three-night package is available or if you reside locally why not join us for the Saturday night gala dinner only. Contact IOW

Tours 3 New Road Lake Sandown Isle of Wight PO36 9JN / 01983 405116 / [enquiries@iowtours.com](mailto:enquiries@iowtours.com).

Further details can be found at [www.hmscarysfort.co.uk](http://www.hmscarysfort.co.uk) or [hmscarysfort@gmail.com](mailto:hmscarysfort@gmail.com)

**RMBS 1/70 and 2/70 Squad.** A joint 50th anniversary reunion of 1/70 and 2/70 squads is planned for August 2021 in Deal. Contact Nick Buckley on [nickbuckley55@aol.com](mailto:nickbuckley55@aol.com)

**HMS Troubridge Final Commission Association 1966-69** Royal Beach Hotel, Portsmouth October 2-5 2020. Contact Bryan Pace at [Romft1@GMail.com](mailto:Romft1@GMail.com) or via [HMSTroubridge.com](http://HMSTroubridge.com).

**HMS Lowestoft Association:** Our tenth reunion will take place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from October 2 to 5. All who served in Lowestoft during her RN service (1961-1986) are welcome, including wives/partners/guests). A 1, 2 or 3 night package is available. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact [ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk](mailto:ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk) Tel: 07778 546861.

**HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association:** Our reunion due to be held on October 2-4 at Weymouth has been cancelled.

**Royal Marines Band Service Annual Reunion:** The RMBS reunion will take place on October 10 at the Warrant Officers, Senior Rates & Senior NCOs Mess,

HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. For further information and tickets contact the Blue Band Office: 023 9254 7563 or email: [sec@royalmarinesbands.co.uk](mailto:sec@royalmarinesbands.co.uk). The annual RMBS Memorial Service will take place at 11am the following day in St Thomas of Canterbury (Portsmouth Cathedral), Old Portsmouth.

**Weapon Mechanicians Association:** The 2020 annual reunion takes place at the Bear Hotel in Havant, on October 10. This will be the association's final reunion. Peter Andrews at [weaponmechs50@btinternet.com](mailto:weaponmechs50@btinternet.com) or phone 07411 807552.

**BRNC Entry Sept 1980** 40th anniversary reunion dinner, BRNC Dartmouth, March 27, 2021. Details from Cdr N J 'Nobby' Hall, [neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk](mailto:neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk)

**HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Associations:** Annual reunion, Hallmark Hotel, Midland Road, Derby, April 23 to April 26 2021. Contact Alan (Whiskey) Walker on 01268 548041 or email [whiskey666@outlook.com](mailto:whiskey666@outlook.com)

**HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association:** Reunion will now take place on May 7-10 2021 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. Contact Secretary Denis Askham at 07773651213 or email [askhamd3@gmail.com](mailto:askhamd3@gmail.com)

**Ask Jack**

**HMS Ganges Association Museum:** We were sent this photograph, right, by the family of former Ganges Boy Signaller Arthur (Pat) Edwards and we are trying to identify where it was taken – the clock tower should be a clue?

Arthur joined Ganges in 1939 and he was later drafted to the frigate HMS Whitaker. The ship was struck by two torpedoes from U-483 on November 1 1944 and tragically Arthur died, aged 21.

If anyone can help with the location in the photo could they please contact Jim Worthing.

[jim.worthing@ntlworld.com](mailto:jim.worthing@ntlworld.com) or phone 01480 431747



**HMS Leander:** I have a frigate dress hat which belonged to D. Kirk. The white-capped hat doesn't sit with my own Service collectibles but I'd like to return it to either to whom it was issued or his family. I was based at the Ordnance Depot Antwerp between January 1984 and April 1986 as the Orderly Room Corporal and I played rugby for the "Bulldogs RUF" as part of British Forces Antwerp.

During 1985 (I believe) we played a friendly game of rugby between the ship and our combined Belgium-



based Army units and myself and Mr Kirk obviously hit it off, exchanging hats at the end of the game.

[Terry\\_sherwood@hotmail.com](mailto:Terry_sherwood@hotmail.com)

**TRNTT Kenya Navy Reunions.** I would like to contact the person in charge of these reunions. Having moved to Spain 20 years ago, I have lost all contact.

**John Dymond, ex-Chief Engineer of KNS Ndovu**  
[Johndymond1936@icloud.com](mailto:Johndymond1936@icloud.com)

**Brian Boulton.** I am trying to trace an old friend who was training to be a diver at HMS Ganges from 1958.

**Pauline Mahon (nee White)**  
01677 988296 / 0791 0275290  
[pauline22@hotmail.com](mailto:pauline22@hotmail.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 CPOMEM at the time.

**Terry Edson**  
[Sallyann.edson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:Sallyann.edson@tiscali.co.uk)

**Anson 35s:** I am trying to contact the Scribes who joined up with me in August 1976 (D161). Our WAFU classmates managed a meet up in 2016 and we want to get the whole class together, if we can, in 2021 on our 45th anniversary. Contact Guy Musgrove on Facebook or email [guy\\_musgrove@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:guy_musgrove@hotmail.co.uk).

**HMS Monmouth.** I am trying to contact Commander Graham Ramsey, who commanded HMS Monmouth in 1993.

**Charles Brown**  
[Charles.brown@forces.gc.ca](mailto:Charles.brown@forces.gc.ca)

**RN renews marine partnership**

THE Royal Navy has shown its commitment to using autonomous and robot systems for underwater survey work.

It comes as the Navy, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) and the National Oceanography Centre have renewed and expanded their Memorandum of Understanding for the underwater environment.

The agreement will see the organisations continue to collaborate in trials and the testing of marine autonomous systems and sensors to collect data, broadening the navy's capabilities in this area.

The first iteration of the memorandum, signed in 2014, focused on the joint development and trials of unmanned underwater vehicles. But as the Royal Navy looks to become more innovative with agile working and new methods of operating, its continued relationship with the world-class academic and research of the National Oceanography Centre will now look more to the North Atlantic.

The agreement will encompass a wider scope for potential collaborative projects and information sharing.



Commodore Mike Knott, from Maritime Capability and Force Development, and Royal Navy sponsor for the Memorandum of Understanding, said: "The Royal Navy is on an exciting journey to modernise and optimise our ability to collect and exploit hydrographic and oceanographic information."

"This enduring memorandum allows the Royal Navy to work closely with the National Oceanography Centre and Defence Science and Technology Laboratories to collaborate in developing our world-leading expertise in marine science."

"Consequently, it will ensure that the

operational decisions we make will be based on the most up-to-date environmental data."

He added: "The advantage of being able to collectively share knowledge and experience informs our trials and experimentation, such as a recent successful three-month Oceanographic Glider deployment off the coast of Scotland, as we seek to innovate and expand our use of Artificial Intelligence and autonomous systems."

Potential projects coming up include further testing of gliders and autonomous surface and underwater vehicles as well as the development of robotics systems and their possible military use.

As the UK's centre of excellence for oceanographic sciences, the core remit of the National Oceanography Centre is to provide national capability and leadership for big ocean science, making its work relevant for both the Royal Navy and DSTL.

DSTL's role in the partnership is to help shape the Royal Navy's direction of travel in terms of future capability, through their own research, but also through enabling a greater level of engagement with other researchers and academics in the field.

# Time for engineers in Royal Navy to shine

THE 2020 Team Portsmouth Engineering Awards have been launched, formally recognising the achievements of the cream of the engineering crop.

The awards celebrate the best engineers within the Royal Navy, DE&S and BAE Systems Maritime Services, who make a difference to Team Portsmouth and the surface flotilla at Portsmouth Naval Base, its satellite sites or in theatre.

Naval Base Commander (Portsmouth), Commodore Jeremy Bailey, said: "They are a great opportunity to formally acknowledge the fantastic and innovative engineering that takes place every day on the base. I strongly encourage nominations from all areas of the Team Portsmouth enterprise."

There are seven categories – including two new for 2020:

- Safety First – for a significant contribution towards maintaining, improving, promoting and implementing safety of processes and environment.
- Innovation and Technology – for the delivery of new technology or innovation.
- Inspiring Engineering – for efforts to inform and inspire the next generation of engineers and engineering technicians.

- Engineering Excellence – celebrating engineers who have made a distinguished contribution in their workplace.
- Quality in Engineering – recognising the greatest contribution to the improvement of quality in their respective area.
- Engineering Support to Infrastructure – this award recognises the problem-solving skills of engineers in ensuring infrastructure capability to support surface ships at Portsmouth Naval Base.
- Trainee Engineer of the Year – this award will be given to an individual who has made a significant contribution to a project, or shown a positive attitude and/or determination in adverse circumstances.

Individuals, and in some categories, teams of up to six engineers, can be nominated by anyone using the nomination form. Forms are available from [maritime.engineering@baesystems.com](mailto:maritime.engineering@baesystems.com). The deadline for entries is October 31.

All entries will be judged by a panel of senior engineering managers from each organisation, with the winners receiving an award and commemorative certificate. An awards ceremony is planned for November.

# Amphibious mastermind

## THE GROVE REVIEW

CASEMATE of Oxford have recently published a book on Admiral Ramsay entitled **Mastermind of Dunkirk and D-Day; The Vision of Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay** (ISBN 978-1-61200-838-7) at a reasonable £25 (cheaper on the internet).

As Lord West points out in his foreword, Ramsay's key contributions in World War Two have tended to be neglected because of his tragic air crash at the beginning of 1945.

Only one biography has previously appeared but I know that for some years the distinguished historian Andrew Gordon has been working on a major biography that should be not far from completion.

I have seen some draft chapters and can attest to its depth and quality. Brian Izzard, a journalist by background, has tried to pre-empt this major publication with a much shorter, and, it must be said, less substantial, work, that I was rather surprised to receive.

The account of Ramsay's early career has at least one serious gap. The book glosses over its subject's time in the cruiser Terrible and battleship Renown, the latter having been converted into a Royal Yacht to take the future King George V and Queen Mary to India.

The ships, resplendent with white hulls and yellow funnels did well showing the flag together in 1905-6. Given Ramsay's (rather surprising) passion for paintwork, as later revealed in the book, he no doubt had a great time keeping the two ships bright and sparkling.

This probably had greater impact on his career than his subsequent time in Dreadnought. He found his time in a 12in turret much less to his taste than painting white hulls.

He specialised in signals, becoming a flag lieutenant to distinguished Admirals, although his pathological lack of tact soon

created problems – that would be long standing and almost wreck his career.

A positive move was enrolment on the newly-created War Staff course but this only exacerbated his relationships with superiors who did not live up to his exacting standards.

He eventually moved on to the destroyer Broke, something of a hero ship under its previous commanding officer Edward Evans but nowhere near Ramsay's exacting standards in ship husbandry.

His complaints did little to enhance his reputation with superiors, especially Admiral Keyes and subsequent collisions and an attack on a British submarine did little to enhance his reputation.

Ramsay was better in making Broke look better to take King George V (whom the author misses as a previous associate) to France. He was made a member of the Royal Victorian Order a sign of his continuing success as a 'Royal Sailor'

Despite reports from his flotilla commander that Ramsay was not considered tactful or a possessor of good judgement he was appointed to HMS New Zealand to become the flag commander of Admiral Jellicoe on his Imperial tour.

Their Lordships probably thought this was a better reflection of his capabilities both at sea and on the polo field.

He next became executive officer of the battleship Benbow in the Mediterranean and then CO of the light cruiser Weymouth on the China Station and Danae in the Mediterranean. His complaints that naval officer training had not progressed from the days of sail was very wide of the mark; no wonder Keyes, the C-in-C, did not forward them to the Admiralty.

After being appointed as instructor on

the War Course at Greenwich, he became Flag Captain on the China Station in the new cruiser Kent. Then it was to instruct at the Imperial Defence College followed by command of the battleship Royal Sovereign.

Making the ship as smart as possible impressed Vice Admiral Backhouse who recommended him for flag rank, which he achieved in May 1935.

Backhouse wanted him to become his Chief of Staff in the Home Fleet. The result was disaster. Backhouse and Ramsay were too much like each other to be an efficient combination and First Sea Lord Chatfield, who knew Ramsay of old, took the C-in-C's part. Ramsay was reduced to the retired list, but given the wartime role of Flag Officer Dover.

This would be the making of him. His organisation of Operation Dynamo, the Dunkirk evacuation was a model of its type and brought out all Ramsay's strengths of organisation and attention to detail.

This was followed by key roles in the North African Landings and the invasion of Sicily.

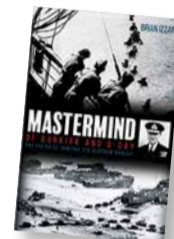
He then became the naval commander for Operation Neptune, the greatest achievement of staff work in maritime warfare, that lunched Operation Overlord.

Going on to open the Scheldt by amphibious action, Ramsay was sadly let down by his Fleet Air Arm pilot who crashed him to his death on January 2 1945.

The book concentrates on these World War 2 actions of which it is effectively a history rather than a real biography.

There should have been more on precisely how Ramsay managed the operations.

Also the author's overly negative references to the Isle of Man Steam Packets' role in Dynamo are both inaccurate and unfair. The account is well and attractively written and a good read. But we await Dr Gordon's more substantial work with interest.



## Welcome to the band

THE latest batch of musicians has passed out from the Royal Marines School of Music.

For some members of Troop 1/17, the passing out parade marked the end of three years of musical training.

Joining them for the ceremony in Portsmouth was Commandant General Royal Marines, Major General Matt Holmes.



## Epic adventure at heart of ex-marine's book

FORMER Royal Marine and Pacific rower Mick Dawson has released his second book based on his epic adventures.

**Never Leave a Man Behind** (Robinson, ISBN 978-1-47214-401-0, £14.99), reveals the true story of two armed forces veterans, one struggling with the effects of PTSD and one blind, who rediscover themselves with the help of a friend in the course of two epic ocean adventures; kayaking around the Falklands and rowing across the Pacific.

In this new book, Brighton-based Mick tells the story of kayaking around the Falkland Islands with friend and fellow Royal Marines veteran Steve Grenham, who was struggling to cope with the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress



Disorder, and the tale of his 2,500-mile voyage across the Pacific in a rowing boat with his friend and former Royal Marine Commando Steve 'Sparky' Sparkes, who was not only a rowing novice, but also blind.

Sparky and Mick succeeded in rowing across the finish line after an epic voyage of over 2,500 miles from Monterey Bay in California to Waikiki, Hawaii.

They'd hoped to break the record for a two-man rowboat and finish in under 55 days, but a hurricane interfered with their plans. They spent a number of days sheltering from Category 5 Hurricane Lane just 150 miles from the finish line.

It took them 82 days, 16 hours and 54 minutes to complete the race, but it was an even greater achievement for that, and Sparky became the first visually-impaired person to row across the Pacific.

The race with Sparky was the second expedition of an organisation Mick had set up a few years earlier, The Cockleshell Endeavour, designed to help Steve Grenham.

"Steve and Sparky were old mates who had both been let down badly by the system put in place to support veterans struggling with physical and mental health issues," Mick said.

"Based on my own seafaring experiences, I felt an ocean adventure could help them, and I was right.

"But even I had no idea how life changing those ocean adventures would become, for all of us."

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