



NAVY NEWS

FEBRUARY 2022

South Georgia's wildlife was out in force to greet HMS Protector as the ice patrol ship called in for some vital survey work in the British Overseas Territory.

(see pages 19-21)

PICTURE: LPhot Belinda Alker

Navy seals



Inside: ■ Milestone for Montrose ■ RN at heart of NATO

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CHILLING EFFECT

IT WILL be the most potent gathering of NATO forces in the Arctic since the Cold War as allied navies, air forces and ground troops protect Norway from 'attack' as part of large-scale war games.

First Royal Marines and the Commando Helicopter Force will appear on the ice and by the end – in March and April – there will be Royal Navy ships, including an aircraft carrier, alongside thousands of NATO allies demonstrating the alliance's ability to protect Norway and the northern flank.

In the two-year cycle of Arctic training, all the icy roads lead to one thing: Exercise Cold Response, the large-scale exercise run by Norway across their precious lands and oceans and in the skies above them to demonstrate their ability to stop an adversary and act as a deterrent to those who may dare try invade.

It's key security business for the UK too, with Norway a close NATO ally, the high north being a constant source of focus as Arctic sea lanes open up and the region's waterways leading directly to the approaches to the UK itself.

Royal Marines have been carrying the mantle as the UK's cold weather warfare specialists for generations, with training taking place for more than 50 years in the region to ensure the UK has an elite band of troops skilled in fighting, moving and surviving across the Arctic terrain.

The same goes for those responsible for flying the green berets into action, the Commando Helicopter Force. They begin their Exercise Clockwork once more, which has trained aviators in Arctic flying operations since 1969, meaning they can protect the skies over the fjords and mountains but also deliver marines to the front-line rapidly and safely while keeping their aircraft properly working in temperatures below -35c.

These UK elements are well-versed in what it takes to operate in the Arctic and lead the way for UK defence in that regard, with close working bonds with Norwegians and a base set up at Bardufoss Air Station in northern Norway, which is the main launch pad for operations and training.

What makes this year's deployment different is Exercise Cold Response in March and April, which will feature around 35,000 troops spread across land, sea and air operations.

The exercise will feature the activation of the NATO Response Force, which the Royal Navy are currently leading the maritime element of, with HMS Prince of Wales acting as NATO command ship during the year-long stretch in charge of the force which is at constant high-readiness to

deal with global events.

It means that when the NATO Response Force is activated as part of Cold Response, it will send Prince of Wales into the Arctic, crossing the line into the Arctic Circle and earning her blue nose – a first for the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

Around the aircraft carrier will be a host of escorts, namely a frigate and a destroyer – a ring of steel providing protection from threats above, beneath and across the waves.

But for the first time in any prominent sense, Commando Forces will be operating from the Arctic coastline with a Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier at their backs.

The commandos will operate from amphibious ships, namely HMS Albion, but will have the support of Prince of Wales as they forge inland on landings on the sides of fjords, as they refine their ability to operate in the Norwegian ice.

Allies and partners will add to the potent force – the most powerful since the Cold War to gather in the region – with US's 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force expected to be deployed alongside the USS Harry S. Truman carrier strike group.

It will gather up forces from far and wide across NATO, forging them together into an Arctic fighting force and proving that the protection of Norway is of paramount importance.

Lieutenant Commander Claude-Louis Gerbault is a French Navy sailor who has been working with the Royal Navy for more than a year-and-a-half as a planner with UK Commander Strike Force.

They are the most senior sea-going staff in the Royal Navy, headed by Rear Admiral Mike Utley – who is in charge of the NATO Response Force, which is ready to deploy in support of NATO exercises and operations throughout the



A Bootneck hauls himself out onto the ice during the infamous ice-breaking drills in northern Norway at the start of the winter deployment 2022

Picture by PO Phot Si Ethell

year (more on that on page 11).

Lt Cdr Gerbault's role in the staff is to understand situations as they unfold and prepare orders for the ships in the task force.

He will deploy with HMS Prince of Wales to Cold Response as the NATO Response Force is activated.

"What we do depends on the situation," he said. "We are on duty and will be ready to tackle things if situations get worse."

"We've got a big NATO exercise in the vicinity of Norway and are deploying with a big force which includes many NATO navies."

"We will simulate the protection of the NATO country from adversary aggression."

"We will deal with directly an Article Five situation. That means we will begin with a high-intensity situation."

But before the big effort on Cold Response, new generations of Arctic fliers and commandos are being put through their paces on the Cold Weather Warfare Course at the hands of the Mountain Leader Cadre, the Royal Marines' specialists in Arctic and mountain combat.

That includes the iconic ice-breaking drill, which tests reactions to cold shock by being plunged into icy water and dragging yourself out again.

There is good reason for the training, as tactical advantage may dictate that commandos cross areas of ice but it's a risk and if you are plunged into the icy water, knowing how to get out again saves lives.

It's just one part of the intensive Cold Weather Warfare Course, which will take every participant on a journey across one of the world's harshest environments and shape them into a winter warrior who knows how to survive, move and fight in the Arctic's wilds.

FANCY A DIP? A Royal Marine takes the plunge during ice-breaking drills in the Arctic // Picture by PO Phot Si Ethell



EXERCISE COLD RESPONSE 2022

28 NATIONS

NATO ALLIES AND PARTNERS WORKING TOGETHER DURING NORWEGIAN-LED EXERCISES.



35,000 TROOPS

13,000 SAILORS ABOARD SHIPS IN ARCTIC SEAS OFF NORWAY'S COAST

8,000 AVIATORS INCLUDING FROM THE COMMANDO HELICOPTER FORCE

14,000 LAND FORCES WITH UK COMMANDO FORCES A KEY PART OF THAT

2 AIRCRAFT CARRIERS WITH HMS PRINCE OF WALES AND THE USS HARRY S. TRUMAN SET TO DEPLOY ON COLD RESPONSE 2022

UK COMMANDO FORCE

COMMANDO HELICOPTER FORCE

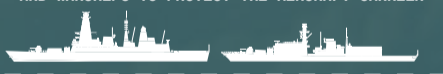
MERLIN MK4 HELICOPTERS FROM 845 NAVAL AIR SQUADRON

WILDCAT HELICOPTERS FROM 847 NAVAL AIR SQUADRON

APACHE HELICOPTERS FROM THE ARMY'S 656 SQUADRON

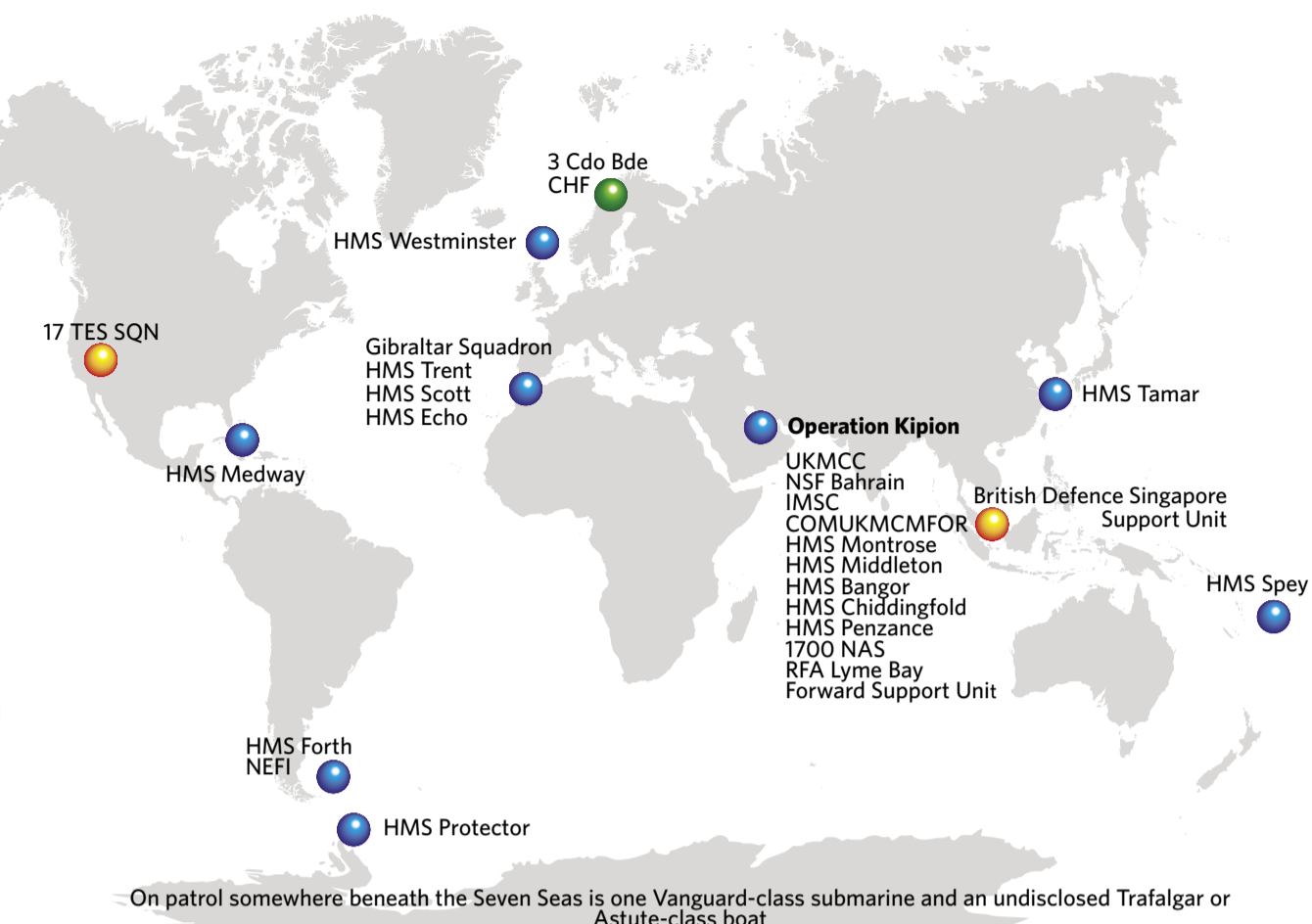
AMPHIBIOUS SHIPS TO LAND COMMANDO FORCE ON LAND

AND WARSHIPS TO PROTECT THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Prince of Wales	HMS Explorer
HMS Albion	HMS Sabre
HMS Portland	HMS Scimitar
HMS Argyll	Project Wilton
HMS Tyne	RFA Mounts Bay
HMS Severn	814 NAS
HMS Mersey	815 NAS
HMS Ledbury	824 NAS
HMS Magpie	



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



GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

THE Royal Navy's Antarctic research ship takes centre stage this month as she completes her first stint of the year around the frozen continent (see pages 1, 19, and 20-21). HMS Protector started her first work period around the South Sandwich Islands, supporting research into the penguin population.

Royal Marines and Commando Helicopter Force are leading the way for the largest gathering of NATO forces in the Arctic Circle since the Cold War (see pages 2-3). Exercise Cold Response will also see Royal Navy warships, including HMS Prince of Wales, put through their paces off Norway. The aircraft carrier is serving as NATO Command Ship for the next 12 months (see page 11) as she leads the alliance's Maritime High Readiness Force.

Royal Navy frigate HMS Westminster is back in Portsmouth after five months on a critical patrol safeguarding UK waters and keeping a close eye on submarines on operations as far north as the Arctic Circle (see opposite page).

HMS Montrose has seized more than one tonne of drugs in the first Royal Navy drugs bust of the year (see page 6). The seizure came as the Type 23 frigate marked 1,000 days in the Gulf.

Offshore patrol ship HMS Tamar joined the international effort to enforce UN sanctions on North Korea (see page 15). The operation was the first conducted by Tamar after arriving with sister ship HMS Spey to the Asia-Pacific region.

Engineers at RNAS Culdrose who maintain Royal Navy helicopters have saved £12m with a simple fix on the state-of-the-art Merlin (see page 7). By replacing just one part – not an entire complex piece of machinery – they will save time and money across more than 50 front-line helicopters, vital to Royal Navy operations around the globe.

The Navy's crucial support arm is looking at using drones to deliver mail drops and other supplies to ships in the middle of the ocean (see page 13). The Royal Fleet Auxiliary – whose ships and sailors have supported Royal Navy operations since 1905 with fuel, food, spare parts, ammunition and other supplies – is looking into the possibility of crewless aircraft performing some of the more routine, lighter duties.

A new crewless minehunter is being tested by the Royal Navy as part of the growing drive towards autonomous systems (see page 13). Designed to detect the latest mine threats – and reduce the risk to the lives of those searching for them – the system is the fruit of the joint Anglo-French Maritime Mine Counter Measures programme.

The third and final jetty refurbishment to support the Royal Navy's aircraft carriers has been handed over to its operators (see page 14). The Northern Ammunition Jetty at Glen Mallan on the shores of Loch Long in Scotland was refurbished by VoklerStevin under a contract awarded by Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

Half a century after he passed out of Britannia Royal Naval College, the Prince of Wales returned to salute a new generation of RN leaders (see page 27). The college has now replaced its flotilla of 'picket' boats with new jet-powered vessels (see page 27).

One hundred years after the world's most famous warship entered her current home, work has begun on preserving HMS Victory for the next 50 years (see page 17).

The outstanding response by sailors and Royal Marines to Covid – both medical teams and those whose front-line operations were affected by the pandemic – was recognised in the New Year's Honours (see page 9). Of the 22 personnel singled out for decorations, ten were honoured for the way they have dealt with the coronavirus and its impact on everyday life inside and outside the Service.

Sailors and Royal Marines musicians are jabbing Britons by the hundreds (see page 23) as they support the national effort to get people boosted with their Covid vaccines.

Serving RN Captain Chris O'Flaherty has produced a biography of Derek 'Jake' Wright, one of the most highly-decorated naval reservists of WW2 (see page 30). The author hopes today's generation of leaders and commanders can learn from Wright's example and help ongoing efforts to preserve the memory of men who crewed the 'Spitfires of the sea,' Motor Torpedo Boats.

The Royal Naval Birdwatching Society is marking its 75th anniversary (see page 16) as one of the world's oldest ornithological societies.

Finally, Royal Navy and Royal Marines boxers took the top honours as a number of trophies were handed out at the annual Royal Navy Sports Awards (see page 37).

Training team's express delivery



THE Royal Navy International Training Team joined armed forces personnel from 12 other nations for a maritime training exercise in the Seychelles.

Exercise Cutlass Express involved the training of maritime agencies in the region in board-and-search and seizure techniques and operating small craft.

Run by US Naval Forces Africa, the exercise in the Horn of Africa, was designed to improve regional co-operation, maritime domain awareness, information sharing between maritime operation centres, maritime interdiction, adherence to laws to disrupt illicit activity, and strengthen safety and security in East African waters.

The RN team worked with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to deliver a two-week package to enable participants to safely and effectively insert boarding teams onto vessels to conduct searches.

The Royal Navy team, which consisted of one Royal Marine Warrant Officer Second Class, and three Chief Petty Officers, led the instruction and training of 40 personnel, assisted by four members of the US Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit and two UNODC staff.

Classroom and practical training culminated in a successful boarding operation.

As well as the UK and USA, the exercise involved personnel from Comoros, Djibouti, Georgia, India, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, and Tanzania.

Lieutenant Commander Howard Clark, from the training team, said: "The team get huge satisfaction from making a difference, imparting their vast knowledge and experience to enhance capability and capacity as well as forging new relations, both professionally and personally."

The RN team is the Royal Navy's only training team dedicated to delivering maritime training overseas to international maritime agencies.

Since it was formed in 2014, the team have deployed to more than 30 countries, training more than 3,100 personnel.

Anyone interested in becoming an international maritime instructor can search on www.findforcesjob.mod.gov.uk

WESTMINSTER COMPLETES SUB-HUNTING OPERATION



A Royal Navy frigate returned to Portsmouth after five months on a critical patrol safeguarding UK waters and keeping a close eye on submarines on operations as far north as the Arctic Circle.

Sailors of HMS Westminster spent the festive period away from their loved ones on patrol after being at sea almost constantly since deploying last summer to guard the UK's 'back yard' and work with allies to monitor any potential threats lurking beneath the waves.

Westminster has been at the tip of the nation's submarine hunting spear as the Royal Navy's TAPS – the Towed-Array Patrol Ship – that is part of a comprehensive protective ring around waters key to UK interests, determined to keep the prying eyes of hostile submarines at bay.

The Type 23 frigate has patrolled vast areas of the Atlantic using her state-of-the-art weapons and sensors to track submarine movements but also escort ships through waters closer to UK shores.

Families gathered at Round Tower to welcome sailors home from their mission, waving them in as they entered Portsmouth Harbour.

Commanding Officer, Commander Louise Ray, said: "It is occasions like these that remind all of my team that we would struggle to do what we do without the support of our families and friends.

"Waving to all of those who were on the hot walls and Round Tower today is really important and I thank them, and all of our friends and family who could not make the journey, for the support they show us each and every day when we are deployed."

Westminster spent 121 days of their 151-day deployment at sea, sailing 24,000 nautical miles and stopping in Hamburg in Germany, Trondheim in Norway and Reykjavik in Iceland along the way.

Their operations were diverse, from May Day calls for missing paddle boarders in the Irish Sea to monitoring surfaced Russian submarines as they transited through the Strait of Dover.

The frigate had on board a Merlin helicopter – Kingfisher Flight of Culdrose-based 814 Naval Air Squadron, which uses both sonobuoy listening devices dropped into the ocean and sonar lowered as the helicopter hovers to pinpoint a submarine's presence.

Westminster spent Christmas alongside in Lerwick in the Shetland Islands, which included a bracing open water swim for some hardy sailors.

After New Year's anchored off St Ives, the frigate completed exercises off the South Coast before heading for home.

Plymouth-based HMS Northumberland will now take up the mantle as Towed-Array Patrol Ship, with Westminster undergoing a short period of planned maintenance and her sailors getting some well-earned leave.



HOME: HMS Westminster returns after five months on a mission as far north as the Arctic Circle
Pictures by: LPhot Kevin Walton

ANOTHER HAUL OF FAME ENTRY



ROYAL Marines of 42 Commando race in a Pacific 24 through the Gulf of Oman to a suspect dhow.

Aboard, they'll find – relatively quickly for the crew have been caught unawares – more than one tonne of illegal narcotics as the Royal Navy makes its first bust of the year.

In taking more than £15m of drugs off the market – money which would end up in the pockets of criminal organisations or terrorists had it not been captured (and subsequently destroyed) – the commandos' parent ship, HMS Montrose, once again underlined her utility, and the difference stationing a major RN asset east of Suez

Seized over 7½ tonnes of illegal narcotics (1,397kg heroin, 587kg meth, 5,824kg hash), denying funding to criminal/terrorist organisations

long-term.

The drugs success came barely a week after the frigate passed a milestone: 1,000 days operating out of the hub of the Navy's east-of-Suez mission, Bahrain.

January 5 2022 was the landmark day as Montrose passed the millennial milestone.

Day No.1 in Bahrain was April 11 2019 as the RN began its experiment with 'forward basing/presence/deployment'.

The goal: to spare ships the lengthy transits to and

from home ports in the UK, giving them more time on operations... and more stable, predictable lives for the sailors and Royal Marines aboard.

Operationally, Montrose has split her time safeguarding shipping through choke points such as Hormuz and the Bab-al-Mandeb Strait, joining regional and international allies on exercise, and joining one of the international coalition task forces dedicated to maritime security within

Sailed 163,000 Nautical miles – equal to more than 7.5 time around the globe

and without the Gulf. Under the latter, Montrose has scored seven drugs busts – depriving the gangs behind the illegal operations of more than £70m.

Bust No.7 was characterised by swiftness and surprise.

The frigate was patrolling for a New Zealand-led task force in the Gulf of Oman when she encountered a suspect vessel.

The Royal Marines were aboard so quickly that the crew had no time to hide their illegal cargo in a secret compartment – though the boarding team still searched every inch of the boat to make sure all drugs were recovered: it took them ten hours.

Lieutenant Joe Martin, who led the Royal Marines boarding team, said

the commandos trained extensively for the success. "This has been an incredibly rewarding day for me and my team. It's great to take drugs like this off the streets and we're ready to go again."

Lieutenant Commander Ellis Pearson, Montrose's Weapon Engineer Officer, added: "The timing of our operation was excellent. As soon as the team got onboard the vessel they could see the drugs. Later it turned out that although the master of the vessel had a hiding place ready for the drugs they hadn't had time to conceal them at that point."

"The team still did a thorough search of the vessel and worked really hard to ensure we had located all of the illegal narcotics onboard." When finished, the drugs tallied 663kg heroin, 87kg methamphetamine and 291kg hashish and marijuana – 1.04 tonnes of illegal narcotics with an estimated wholesale

Accompanied 112 vessels through the Strait of Hormuz

value of just over £15m.

"A seizure of this size will deal a huge blow to the criminal or terrorist gangs using these illegal narcotics to fund their activity," said Montrose's Commanding Officer Commander Claire Thompson. "Disrupting the terrorist organisations, criminals and their funding lines is key to keeping to UK,

and rest of the world, safe.

"Today we have disrupted the unlawful use of the sea. This not only supports our coalition partners, but also supports stability in this part of the world."

Combined Task Force 150 commander Captain Brendon Clark RNZN said Montrose's team had demonstrated "perseverance, dedication and professionalism".

Received 6,750 bags of mail

It's also provided an early talking point for Starboard Crew, who took charge of the frigate just before Christmas.

Replacing the entire crew – including the RM detachment and Wildcat helicopter flight (though not the hardware) – takes place every four months, followed by the same period at home, allowing leave, courses and training before returning to Bahrain.

Firm dates, plus the lack of duties – the crew back in the UK are not assigned to a specific ship – have led to more stable lives, which makes serving in Montrose (and other ships operated in the same or similar way) popular.

"It allows me and my family a high degree of certainty of when I'll be away," said Lieutenant Commander Pearson.

"Normally your programme is driven by the tasking of the ship, which can change at very short notice, but with two crews we are de-latched from that when back in the UK."

The two crews share the holiday periods, so that no sailor spends consecutive festive seasons away from home.

The current Starboard Crew took over the frigate just before Christmas – and will be home for Easter.

Petty Officer Darren Finch is on his fifth stint on Montrose, having been part of the Starboard Crew from the beginning.

Served over 28,000 portions of fish and chips for Friday lunches

"Within reason I accurately know when and where I will be over 12 months in advance which I have not experienced in any other draft."

"This gives me the ability to plan key events in my life without the fear of potentially having to move or cancel them at short notice."

Chief Petty Officer Harry Mowbray added: "It works for me! I'm going to transfer onto the next Forward Deployed Ship after HMS Montrose returns home later in 2022."

And it works for the RN – there are at least ten ships now rotating crews partially or *in toto* to support long-term operations around the

globe, from all five vessels of the Overseas Patrol Squadron, to survey ships such as Protector and Scott.

"HMS Montrose has had many successes whilst in the region, including narcotics seizures and maintaining free and safe passage for shipping around three of the busiest trade chokepoints in the world. Montrose and her crews should be proud of what they have achieved," said Commodore Ed Ahlgren, for the past year of Montrose's time in theatre Commander UK Maritime Component Command (until he stood down last month, see page 15).

Commander Thompson,

Consumed over 300,000 sausages, which laid end-to-end would be 31 times taller than Big Ben's clock tower

Commanding Officer of Starboard Crew who are in charge of the ship until spring, added: "I am immensely proud of what both crews have achieved during the past three years.

"Our enduring presence in this region has shown the commitment the UK has to ensure the stability and security of the Gulf region along with our allies.

"This couldn't be achieved without the commitment of our personnel and their support from their families back home."



ENGINEERS who maintain Royal Navy helicopters have saved £12m with a simple fix on the state-of-the-art Merlin.

By replacing just one part – not an entire complex piece of machinery – they will save time and money across more than 50 front-line helicopters, vital to Royal Navy operations around the globe.

One variant of the Merlin is the mainstay of submarine-hunting and airborne early-warning operations, operating from the decks all major Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships, especially Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers.

The other is crucial to supporting Royal Marines in the field, transporting commandos, equipment and casualties on the battlefield.

According to the original maintenance guidance

for the helicopters, written more than 20 years ago, the Merlins' nose landing gear should be replaced when the aircraft undergoes maintenance after 3,500 hours in the skies.

The experienced team at RNAS Culdrose, home of the submarine-hunting and airborne surveillance model of the Merlin, the Mk2, questioned the need to replace the entire section: an expensive and demanding job.

Each front set costs £230,000 in parts alone – but the engineers reckoned only one single pinion actually needed swapping.

Chief Petty Officer Jamie Medlen of the station's Air Engineering Department praised contractors Chris Lewis-Brown and Jim Bartholomew who insisted the old undercarriage parts were still perfectly fit for use.

"They knew there was something wrong and that removing the nose landing gear was a

mistake," Jamie explained. "It turns out there is just a single part in the nose landing gear, a pinion in the steering system, which needs to be replaced after 3,500 flying hours. That pinion is routinely replaced anyway."

Both Chris and Jim are former Royal Navy engineers with 45 years' experience between them and now work for the company Morson at RNAS Culdrose.

Jamie added: "Every single major component on the Merlin gets tracked. That's more than 800 components."

"After every flight, you get extensive servicing which is all part of a schedule of maintenance. That includes a list of any parts that need replacing once it's reached a certain amount of flying hours and landings. It's all in there and it was all agreed when the Merlins first came into service.

"Somewhere along the line, years ago, someone included the entire nose landing gear for replacement, when it should just have been the pinion. For all those years it's never

been a problem because none of the aircraft had reached the required hours until now.

"We are basically removing the gear three-times too early. Apart from the cost, it's a big job too and not one you'd do if you didn't need to."

Across 55 aircraft in the Mk2/Mk4 fleets, that's a saving of more than £12.5m in parts alone.

The engineers' ingenuity, expertise and common sense has been singled out by Captain Stuart Finn, Culdrose's Commanding Officer.

"This is a first-rate example of how diligence, exceptional expertise and common sense have made a direct positive impact. They are to be commended for their innovative thinking," he said.

"This ethos of empowerment, of taking responsibility and constructively challenging norms, is a cornerstone of what makes the Royal Navy global, modern and ready."

Meanwhile Chief Petty Officer Medlen has led the process within the Royal Navy and is working with industry to have the Merlins' maintenance procedures rewritten.



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Naval stalwarts, tech innovators, and personnel who rose to the unique challenges posed by Covid are celebrating **(Post) Christmas decorations**

THE outstanding response by sailors and Royal Marines to Covid – both medical teams and those whose front-line operations were affected by the pandemic – was recognised in the New Year's Honours.

Of the 22 personnel singled out for decorations, ten are honoured for the way they have dealt with the coronavirus and its impact on everyday life inside and outside the Service.

Chief Petty Officer Naval Nurses Kelly Brechany and Carrie Smith are made Ordinary Associates (2nd Class) of the Royal Red Cross (ARRC) for their work at two of the largest hospitals in southern England.

At Portsmouth's Queen Alexandra Hospital, Kelly worked tirelessly and selflessly to ensure all NHS staff were trained in the use of PPE – constantly updating the training and procedures as the virus evolved and reducing the risks facing patients and staff alike.

Carrie is described as a "lynchpin" in the emergency department at University Hospitals Plymouth, delivering "exemplary care and inspirational leadership at the height of the pandemic".

Medical Assistant Petty Officer Jessica Metcalfe (pictured inset) – currently serving in the Health Physics Group at HM Naval Base Clyde – is made an MBE, not least for stepping in to serve at sea on three occasions to cover fellow



medics who were supporting the Covid effort ashore.

Jessica said: "I was absolutely gobsmacked when I got told. I never saw it coming. It was such a heart-warming feeling to be recognised."

"What you think is just doing your job, for someone else to think it's more than that – I have not really got to grips with that thought."

While at sea she arranged for personnel to get mental health training, offered to give advice if they were struggling and ensured morale on board was kept high.

"Being the inaugural Royal and can be very challenging," she said. "Especially during Covid people were struggling. We didn't

KNIGHT COMMANDER OF THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (KBE)
Vice Admiral Christopher Gardner

COMPANION OF THE MOST HONOURABLE ORDER OF THE BATH (CB)
Rear Admiral Hugh Beard

COMMANDER OF THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (CBE)
Capt Mark Anderson
Brig Dan Cheesman RM MBE
Surg Cdre Stuart Collett

OFFICER OF THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (OBE)
Col Rich Morris RM MBE
Cdr Kate Muir
Colonel Simon Rogers
Surg Cdr Lisa Stevens
Cdr Mark Walker

MEMBER OF THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (MBE)
L/Cpl Alex Cassabois RM
Lt Carlo Contaldi RMR
CPO(NN) C N Green
LLOGS (Wtr) R A Harrington
WO1 R M Henderson RM MVO
Lt Cdr Ed Higgins
WO1st Class J McWilliams RMR
PO(MA) J Metcalfe
Lt Cdr Gordon Smith RNR
CPO(Logs(CS)) R Thompson

ORDINARY ASSOCIATE SECOND CLASS ROYAL RED CROSS (ARRC)
CPO(NN) Kelly Brechany QARNNS
CPO(NN) Carrie Stuart QARNNS

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDALS

WO1(AET) D T Ashurst
WO1(ET(WE)) A Brown
WO1 C R Brown
WO1(ET(WESM)) A H Buckley
WO1 P G Cooney
WO1(AET) A Driver
WO1(ETWE(CIS)) J P Edgar
CPO(ACMN) D A Griffith
Band C/Sgt K Harvey
WO1(ET(WE)) S P Lynch
Lt J Maaskant
WO1 (Logs(SC)) C D Morait
WO1(ET(ME)) S P Mugford
WO2 S J Nicholson
CPO(ET(MESM)) D H P O'Neill
WO1(AET) S C Proctor
WO2 M I Ramsey
WO1(AET) P W Ronaldson
WO1 WS(AWW) J T Starkey
WO1 S C Tripp
WO1(AET) S M Walling
CPO(AET) R Webb



have that down time so for me it was very important to ensure the crew had the support they needed."

Away from honours related to Covid, the Royal Navy's inaugural Chief Technical Officer Brigadier Dan Cheesman RM is made a CBE for transforming the way the Service has embraced the white heat of technology and innovation in an age of exponential changes.

"Being the inaugural Royal Navy Chief Technical Officer has been one of the greatest privileges and challenges of my career," said

the brigadier (pictured right).

"My fantastic team and I have helped drive tech change across our £8bn, global, no-fail, always-on organisation that delivers operational success for the nation, day after day, in the most extreme of environments."

"I am most proud of our efforts in bringing digital and uncrowded systems technologies into the hands of the warfighter at unprecedented pace, and in the Royal Navy's transformation to becoming more modern, more agile – Defence really can be faster, cheaper and better."

HMS Raleigh's former Principal Medical Officer and her team crucially kept training going through the pandemic. She is recognised for a job which was

Challenging, demanding, rewarding



EFFORTS to keep Covid in check and reduce the number of recruits dropping out at the Royal Navy's principal training establishment earn Surgeon Commander Lisa Stevens an OBE.

She's been singled out for a double-pronged effort to both ensure training at HMS Raleigh continued almost as normal through the pandemic – and at the same time came up with solutions to prevent recruits being discharged at the very beginning of their careers due to fitness and injury concerns.

As Principal Medical Officer, it was her job to look after the health of all recruits, trainees and Raleigh's staff, and to provide medical advice to the base's commanding officer – which became particularly pertinent from March 2020 when the country went into

lockdown. With the Navy requiring a constant supply of fresh recruits to maintain its operations, training continued at Raleigh – with up to 66 civilians turning up at the gates most Mondays throughout the pandemic ready to begin their ten-week conversion to sailors.

"Dealing with Covid, particularly in the Phase 1 environment, was the most interesting and the best job I have done in the Royal Navy – but also the most challenging: keeping the base running, but ensuring everyone was safe at the same time," she said.

Had everyone who came into contact with a Covid positive case been put into isolation, training would have ground to a halt.

Instead, the solution the Medical Officer and her team came up with was to isolate each class of 60 or so recruits in individual blocks around the base using Lateral Flow testing regularly within their initial two weeks to identify early any

asymptomatic cases. Those testing positive or symptomatic were isolated separately in a block close to the Medical Centre to ensure ongoing medical support while the remaining recruits could continue training with a risk-assessed Covid-secure training package while in contact isolation.

As well as demonstrating "courage, resilience and decisive actions" in the words of her citation, the 42-year-old – now serving as principal medical officer at HMS Drake – also supported the NHS Urgent Care services in Devon working as an out-of-hours GP.

In addition to helping to keep the pandemic in check, Surg Cdr Stevens is also singled out for her efforts to reduce the number of recruits dismissed due to fitness and injuries.

Previously, one in 20 raw recruits left the Navy in the first week of training due to ongoing injury or being over the BMI limits for entry to the RN. Thanks to remedial and

rehab packages introduced by Surg Cdr Stevens and her team, the fitness and weight loss programme has "an 80 per cent success rate" she says proudly; just one in 100 recruits is sent home now in that first week.

With the Navy looking to grow by 3,000 sailors over the next couple of years – not to mention the time and effort expended to get someone through the gates of Raleigh in the first place – her initiative and drive, drawing upon 21 years' experience in the Navy, has resulted in "lasting and strategically-significant results" for the Service, says her citation.

"An OBE is an amazing surprise and I feel truly honoured," she said. "I was helped by two great commanding officers whose support really ensured success. And the 30 staff in the sick bay at Raleigh are a tight-knit team who work together superbly and who go above and beyond. So this award is for all of them – it truly was a team effort."

Delivering vaccines, see page 23

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THE APPLIANCE OF THE ALLIANCE

WITH her forward island sporting an oversized NATO logo, HMS Prince of Wales hosts a colourful array of attachés and representatives from across the alliance – ready for her mission throughout 2022: command vessel of its premier naval force.

Britain's biggest warship will be the ship sent by NATO's leaders to command its Response Force, drawn from navies across Europe plus the USA, should the international partnership be called on to deal with major global events.

The most senior sea-going staff in the Royal Navy – Commander UK Strike Force, headed by Rear Admiral Mike Utley – takes charge of the force, with the Prince of Wales serving as their floating home and command centre when required.

They'll be activated this month ready to prepare for the largest NATO exercise in the Arctic in 30 years, Cold Response 22 (also see pages 2-3).

At the end of spring they'll be in the Baltic and there are large-scale exercises in the Med in the autumn, focusing on amphibious operations.

And – providing the NRF isn't activated – there's the small matter of Prince of Wales crossing the Pond to undertake strike fighter training with F-35s off the Eastern Seaboard.

With the NATO flag already hauled down by the previous nation to command the Response Force (France), the UK took responsibility officially on New Year's Day.

Ten days later there was the formal act of transferring command and the raising of the alliance's standard during a 30-minute ceremony – shifted to the carrier's aft hangar rather than the flight deck due to thick fog in Portsmouth.

Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Andrew Burns inspected some of the ship's company and Royal Marines Band before Captain Steve Higham, Prince of Wales' Commanding Officer, addressed those present.

He reminded his ship's company that as the carrier began her active career of 50 years or more, she did so at "an uncertain time in an uncertain world."

He continued: "I know that everyone here is committed to doing their best for the Navy, nation and NATO. And we do so with a sense of pride, passion and purpose."

Both the ship and the staff of Commander UK Strike Force underwent thorough training and preparations for the complex challenge of directing a large, multinational naval force.

"Our battle staff have been preparing for this responsibility over

the last 12 months by exercising and developing the capabilities required, which culminated in NATO Dynamic Mariner exercise in September 2021," Admiral Utley said.

"This exercise demonstrated to our NATO Allies that the UK's Carrier Strike capability will strengthen NATO countries' long-term ability to work side-by-side and our commitment to each other."

His team is drawn from the best and the brightest not just in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, or even the UK Armed Forces, but across NATO's military, among them Lieutenant Commander Mike Schelcher of the US Navy.

It's his job to provide the vital link between NATO, the staff, the ship and his own parent Navy, drawing upon his experience of operations around the globe.

"The UK and US navies work very closely together, we share a lot of ambition – in intelligence and operationally," he explained.

"We exchange information and personnel and we recognise the US Navy way of doing things isn't the only way and me being here provides a perspective on how the US does things and meanwhile I'm garnering

information on how our NATO allies do things and how they interact."

Unusually, HMS Prince of Wales will be dwarfed for part of Cold Response with the presence of USS Harry S Truman, one of the US Navy's 100,000-tonne flattops. What the UK carrier lacks in size, she makes up for in fifth-generation technology.

"These Queen Elizabeth-class are fantastic ships," said Lt Cdr Schelcher.

"A carrier itself is a huge 'force multiplier'. Its capabilities are limitless: you can deliver food, aid, transport, provide hospital services after a disaster all the way up to strike aircraft and helicopters conducting raids or high-end warfare. The capability of these ships is awesome – they have to be respected."

And flying the NATO flag, she has the backing of 30 nations behind her. Watching it hoisted was Sub Lieutenant Dylan Shaw-Pritchard, a year to the day that he walked through the gates of Dartmouth for the first time.

An eventful 12 months have seen him pass out of BRNC, before being assigned to HMS Prince of Wales for the past couple of months.

"There is a buzz all around the ship

after the Christmas break. It doesn't matter who you talk to – there's something good going on, a really positive feel," said the 22-year-old Devonian who hopes to become a submarine warfare officer.

Barely had the NATO standard been raised than Prince of Wales was off the jetty and out to sea, conducting a few weeks at sea to shake off the cobwebs after several months alongside.

The training raises the curtain on what will be a relentless 2022 for the carrier.

"This year, as the NATO Command Ship, we will spend over 200 days at sea operating globally with our allies. We are ready to lead UK carrier operations for NATO over the next 12 months," said Captain Higham.

Admiral Utley added: "NATO is the cornerstone of the UK defence and our commitment to the alliance is absolute and it is a privilege to be the UK Maritime Component Commander moving into our vital role this year."

"The Royal Navy is global, modern, ready and well placed to support NATO in all its endeavours."

As the year moves on, the staff will also help train and ready the Turkish Navy who will assume command of the NRF from the UK in 2023.



Pictures: LPhoto Kevin Walton



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CUTTING-EDGE AUTONOMOUS MINEHUNTER ARRIVES FOR EXTENSIVE TESTING...

A new crewless minehunter is being tested by the Royal Navy as part of the growing drive towards autonomous systems.

Designed to detect the latest mine threats – and reduce the risk to the lives of those searching for them – the system is the fruit of the joint Anglo-French Maritime Mine Counter Measures programme.

Demonstrators have been delivered to both the Royal and French Navies, the UK model handed over in Plymouth by Thales UK, OCCAR and Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement arm.

The system comprises an uncrewed surface vessel, towed sonar and a portable operation centre, and is now undergoing rigorous capability development trials.

"It is exciting to see the first delivery to the Royal Navy from the Maritime Mine Counter Measures," said Commodore Steve Prest, the Royal Navy's Deputy Director Acquisition.

"The future of mine warfare is here: the Royal

Navy's minehunting capability programme is real; it's happening; it's delivering. We have a lot to learn about this transformational approach to mine warfare, but there is much, much more to come."

Users of the demonstrator will be able to detect and neutralise mines from miles away, ensuring they can keep vital sea lanes open, with much-reduced risk to ships and the lives of sailors.

The Royal Navy already has three autonomous minehunting systems operating out of Faslane

under the banner of Project Wilton, Harrier, Hebe and Hazard.

The aim ultimately is to replace crewed Sandown and Hunt-class ships with autonomous systems, keeping the sailor out of the minefield as much as possible.

The demonstrator will undergo operational evaluation alongside other systems being delivered by the UK-France partnership through a £184m investment agreed by Whitehall in 2020, which is supporting around 215 jobs in the UK.



...WHILE RFA LOOK AT DELIVERIES BY DRONES



THE Navy's crucial support arm is looking at using drones to deliver mail drops and other supplies to ships in the middle of the ocean.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) – whose ships and sailors have supported Royal Navy operations since 1905 with fuel, food, spare parts, ammunition and other supplies – is looking into the possibility of crewless aircraft performing some of the more routine, lighter duties.

The classic image of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is of a tanker sailing parallel with a warship and either pumping fuel into its tanks via a hose, or transferring supplies in crates and on pallets on a jackstay line slung between the two vessels. But helicopters are also used extensively to move loads around the fleet, typically in large nets carried beneath the aircraft.

During the recent Carrier Strike Group deployment supporting HMS Queen Elizabeth's mission to the Pacific and back, supply ship RFA Fort Victoria shipped nearly 900 loads to the carrier and other ships in the task group, encompassing food and drink, general stores, spare parts, medical supplies, mail

and parts for F-35 stealth fighters and Merlin and Wildcat helicopters – over 354 tonnes of supplies in all – while tanker RFA Tidespring carried out 67 'vertical replenishments' as they are known.

While some loads are too heavy for current small-scale drones to transport, seven out of ten resupply missions involve the transfer of loads up to 100lbs/45kg, so the head of the RFA, Commodore David Eagles, wants to see if the work is 'dronable'.

Using drones would save time, money and sailors, and free up helicopters for other duties.

The US Navy's Naval Air Systems Command is experimenting with unmanned aircraft moving relatively lightweight supplies – up to 25lbs/11kg – between ships, but over distances which could be greater than 200 miles.

Trials over the summer successfully proved this concept by delivering a small



cargo for repairs between a warship and an auxiliary of the Military Sealift Command – the US Navy's equivalent of the RFA.

Royal Marines have tested re-supply by drone both on the battlefield and on the beachhead, using autonomous systems, from Malloy Aeronautics Ltd, to ferry up to 150lbs/68kg supplies; including ammunition, blood and Bergen backpacks to troops on the line from either ships off shore or bases to the rear.

"The RFA is looking very closely at the Military Sealift Command and the opportunities around using drones to make deliveries at sea," said Commodore Eagles.

The RFA Commodore regularly confers with his counterpart in the MSC, Rear Admiral Michael Wettlaufer, which conducted the summer trials; and he has asked his liaison team to follow their progress and share some lessons of the Royal Navy's own trials with similar systems.

The RFA ended 2021 on something of a high after rising to all the challenges made of it during the year

– notably sustaining the carrier group half-way around the world in the middle of a pandemic which impacted moving supplies and personnel.

Its ships delivered more than 65 million litres of fuel to vessels from six nations, as well as 16 million litres of aviation fuel, thousands of litres of fresh water and other goods.

Tanker RFA Wave Knight delivered aid to volcano hit St Vincent, supported US-led relief efforts off Haiti in the wake of the summer's devastating earthquake and, in conjunction with the US Coast Guard, has seized 2½ tonnes of cocaine in five busts spread across the autumn.

Amphibious ship RFA Mounts Bay is assigned to the Royal Marines' new Arctic-focused Littoral Response Group (North) and will also serve as the testbed for ongoing autonomous trials by the commandos.

And RFA Lyme Bay replaced her sister Cardigan Bay in the Gulf as the command ship for UK (and, when required, allied) minehunters, continuing a mission going back nearly 15 years.

Commodore Eagles added: "Our people and their families have delivered so much. We are in an extremely positive place going into 2022."

Follow the RFA

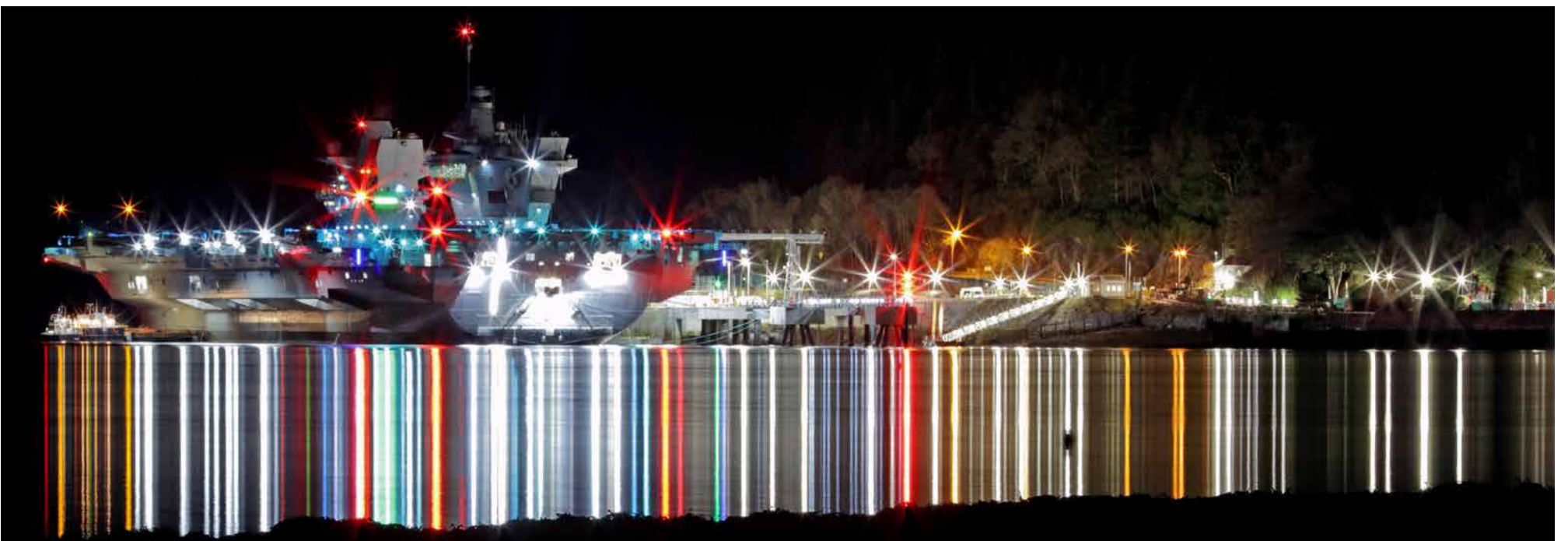
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Main picture: The US Navy is using drones to deliver supplies to its ships

Top right: RFA Tidespring conducts a double RAS with frigates HMS Lancaster and Westminster in the Baltic

Above: A Merlin helicopter ferries supplies from RFA Tidespring during the Carrier Strike Group 21 deployment





Final piece in jetty jigsaw

THE third and final jetty refurbishment to support the Royal Navy's aircraft carriers has been handed over to its operators.

The Northern Ammunition Jetty at Glen Mallan on the shores of Loch Long in Scotland was refurbished by VoklerStevin under a £67m contract awarded by Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

Work began on the revamp in 2019 and the jetty will be used to load and unload ammunition for the Royal Navy's surface fleet, from nearby Defence Munitions Glen Douglas.

The jetty, which will be operated by Defence Equipment and Support, was last upgraded in the 1970s and had reached the end of its economic life.

The upgrade work has not only extended the life of the jetty by an estimated 50 years, but has also made the site accessible for the Royal Navy's aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales.

HMS Queen Elizabeth is pictured during her visit part way through the work, in March 2021, in preparation for her first operational deployment.

Craig MacDonald, DIO's project

manager, said: "It's been such a pleasure to work on such a nationally-important and dynamic project."

"The project has faced numerous challenges, but they have been overcome with good teamwork, communication and collaboration. It's great to see this vitally important facility now in full operation."

The previous jetty was demolished and replaced with a new 135m long jetty structure, requiring 127 steel piles to be driven into the loch bed to support a reinforced concrete deck.

The works also included the installation of navigation aids and five mooring dolphins which are connected to the jetty by a pedestrian access bridge.

Two modular fender spacer units have been placed in front of the new fender panels and move with the tide to prevent the overhanging flight decks of HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales from colliding with the jetty.

In addition, the project included the installation of two modern pedestal cranes to load and unload ammunition and the construction of buildings for

offices, power generation and stores. The perimeter fencing and CCTV system have also been upgraded.

Workers used capture blankets to prevent material from entering Loch Long when the old jetty was demolished and all waste was removed by barge to recycling sites on the Clyde.

To avoid the need to lay new electric cables through the water, the new navigation aids are solar powered.

There were concerns about the possible impact of noisy piling works on marine mammals, so two observers used underwater listening devices, along with visual inspections, to make sure no marine mammals were in the area before work began. If any were located, work was stopped to give them time to move away.

The team have been recognised at three construction industry awards for their work. They won 'Best Infrastructure Project' at the Scottish Civil Engineering Awards 2021 and for 'Upgrade and Renewal Project' at the British Construction Industry Awards 2021. They were also finalists in Construction News Awards 2021 for 'Best Large Project over £50 million'.



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THE red ball of the sun merges with the horizon at the end of a day's patrol in the East China Sea – as HMS Tamar conducts her first mission in her new theatre.

The patrol ship joined the international effort to enforce UN sanctions on North Korea, operating in the East China Sea (between China and the Korean peninsula) to prevent fuel or refined petrol being delivered to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea – sanctions imposed by the United Nations to target the country's Weapons of Mass Destruction and ballistic missile programmes.

Despite rough weather through some of the operation, the Portsmouth-based offshore patrol vessel gathered evidence of a ship believed to be in breach of those sanctions, information which will be passed on to the Enforcement Coordination Cell, based in Yokosuka, Japan.

Her work follows up a similar patrol by HMS Richmond in the East China Sea in September, when the frigate broke away from the Carrier Strike Group 21 deployment led by HMS Queen Elizabeth, which also resulted in details of vessels being handed over to the Enforcement Coordination Cell.

"HMS Tamar's enforcement contribution to the United Nations' Security Council Resolution aimed to provide tactical evidence to counter malign proliferation activities," said Commander Teilo Elliot-Smith, the ship's Commanding Officer.

"We did that. It underlines two things for me: the Royal Navy's intent to help stabilise a volatile part of the world and uphold an international agreement; secondly, it proves the utility and potential of HMS Tamar so soon on our arrival in the region.

"I'm proud to be able to demonstrate so clearly our intention to support regional allies and partners in the Indo Asia Pacific, a fact further underlined by HMS Tamar's permanent deployment here."

The operation is the first conducted by Tamar, which has just arrived in the western Pacific Rim with HMS Spey after a 16,000-mile journey from Portsmouth via the Caribbean, California and Hawaii.

From Hawaii, the two vessels have parted company: Tamar making for Busan and then her UN mission, while her younger sister struck southeast, on a 3,500-mile journey to Pitcairn Island, last resting place of the Bounty. Collectively, the sisters are on a five-year mission to the Asia-Pacific in support of the UK interests in the region, as well as supporting our friends and allies.

They mark the first permanent Royal Navy presence in the region since Hong Kong was returned to China a quarter of a century ago.



Red sky at night Tamar's delight



New boss for RN in Bahrain

THERE'S a new face at the helm of Royal Navy operations east of Suez with Commodore Adrian Fryer assuming command.

He's taken over from Commodore Ed Ahlgren, who's directed Operation Kipion for the past 12 months as the UK Maritime Component Commander.

The role – which dates back to the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 – oversees a headquarters staff directing the Royal Navy's efforts from the Suez Canal to the western seaboard of India.

They are responsible for the actions of more than 500 sailors and Royal Marines on a daily basis, from the crew of frigate HMS Montrose to the four Royal Navy minehunters based in Bahrain, plus their mother ship RFA Lyme Bay.

During Cdre Ahlgren's time in post HMS Montrose, which has now spent over 1,000 days in the region, has scored successful drugs busts and safely escorted merchant ships through key maritime chokepoints.

And the minehunters are celebrating 15 years' continuous presence in the Middle East, working alongside partner nations to keep vital shipping lanes open.

"It's been my immense privilege to lead the

UK's Maritime Component Command for the last year," said Commodore Ahlgren.

"In spite of the tough restrictions of Covid, our achievements have been many, and I would like to thank all serving in the UK's Naval Support Facility and the ships' companies for their hard work and support to Operation Kipion."

He was applauded out of the UK Naval Support Facility in Bahrain by personnel – who include soldiers and RAF in support of both the RN and wider Defence's mission in the region – who lined the main road through the base.

Cdre Fryer is no stranger to Bahrain, having previously served in the Middle East as Commander of Coalition Task Force Sentinel, the operational arm of the International Maritime Security Construct, which protects shipping in some of the region's most dangerous and threatened waters.

"Having served in Bahrain before, it is an honour to return as the UK's Maritime Component Commander," Cdre Fryer said.

"I look forward to a successful year working with our partners and allies to maintain maritime security in the region."

Entire naval family can now tap into Headspace app

PERSONNEL across the Royal Navy and Royal Marines will have free access to health app Headspace.

Serving personnel, along with Reservists, members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Royal Navy civil servants and 3,000 families of sailors, will be able to benefit from the mindfulness service.

It comes following work by the Royal

Navy Health and Wellbeing team to partner with Headspace. Now sailors and marines will be able to access the full Headspace library which can help with stress, sleep, meditation and mindfulness.

Rear Admiral Jude Terry, Director People and Training and Naval Secretary, said: "As an employer we talk a lot about

the resilience and wellbeing of our whole workforce and their families. For years we have focused on physical resilience but not paid much attention to mental wellbeing.

"You will have seen that we have improved this over the last 18 months or so and I am delighted to support the next stage in this process.

"Headspace has the potential to improve the mental fitness of the whole Royal Navy family by providing unique tools and resources to reduce stress, build resilience, increase movement and aid better sleep.

"This is one of the many initiatives the Royal Navy is introducing to improve the lived experience of our team; enabling

empowered, individual access to health and wellbeing support services."

The Headspace app offers advice and guidance on mental wellbeing as well as useful tips on sleeping better and different exercises to improve mood. It also has articles to listen to including how to reduce worrying, improve focus and manage anxiety.

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75 YEARS OF BIRDWATCHING

BUT THAT'S NOT ALL THE NAVAL SOCIETY DOES



AT 75-YEARS-OLD, the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society is one of the world's oldest ornithological societies, and one of the longest running societies in the Royal Navy.

Over the decades, its members have continued to not only raise awareness of seabirds that might take refuge on a Royal Navy warship and teach sailors how to care for them but they have also carried out the important work of conservation of rare species.

Since its creation, the society has had global members including serving members of the navy, Merchant Navy and keen civilians.

One of its long-term commitments has been supporting the conservation effort for one of the world's rarest seabirds.

Breeding only on the island of Madeira, Zino's Petrels (*main picture*) have seen their numbers reduce dramatically and now nest in isolated colonies on the summits of the island's highest peaks.

Frank Zino, son of the naturalist who gave his name to the species, and RNBWS member, has worked tirelessly to better understand and conserve the critically-endangered seabird.

For the past five years the society has supplied volunteers and equipment to help Frank save the remaining 100 pairs of the species.

Lieutenant Phil Boak is a member of the RNBWS and currently serves on survey ship HMS Echo.

He has been involved in one of the society's projects closer to home.

"We have also spent time supporting the Curlew Country project," he explains.

"This project, based in the Shropshire Hills and Powys borders, is

designed to reverse the decline of the upland populations of curlew."

The Eurasian Curlew is Britain's largest wading bird, with the UK home to approximately a quarter of the world's population.

However, this population has dropped by around half in recent years.

The Curlew Country project was established in 2015 and members work in close partnership with land managers, volunteers and the wider community to promote the conservation of the species and halt the decline.

Lt Boak added: "Over the last year, members of the RNBWS have helped assist the project by carrying out surveys for curlew nests, and help rearing curlews in order to boost the wild population."

As well as marking their 75th anniversary last year, the members also took part in the National Seabird Survey 2021.

Several RNBWS members formed part of a 12-strong tri-service team, gathering vital data on breeding seabirds in the Shetlands Islands over the month of June. The team spotted a host of wildlife, including fulmars, cormorants, puffins, gulls and skuas.

The Society is aiming to continue its work for many years to come and is always looking for new members.

"The RNBWS is open to anyone with an interest in wildlife and seabirds," said Lt Boak.

"New members are incredibly welcome and essential to help keep the society going for another 75 years!"

If you are interested, visit the Facebook page at [RNBWS-Royal Naval Birdwatching Society](#) or email philip.boak743@mod.uk.



Pictures: (left to right) A group of juvenile Curlew cared for as part of the Curlew Country Project; Members of the RNBWS at the 75th anniversary celebrations; birds that have landed on Royal Navy warships; Lt Phil Boak in a Curlew pen as part of the Curlew Country Project.

RNA to reunite, relive and remember Falklands for anniversary

THE Royal Naval Association has adopted the three Rs – reunite, relive and remember – as they plan to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Falklands conflict.

The association plans a series of events combined with its annual conference over the weekend of June 17-19.

Unlike previous recent RNA AGM/National Conferences, the events of the weekend will not be centred on a single venue. Delegates and attendees should therefore seek their own accommodation in Portsmouth.

The RNRMC is supporting this activity and branches are invited to apply for grants for transport for branch members to be able to attend the F40 weekend.

More details can be found at [Falklands 40 Fund](#) | [The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity \(rnrmc.org.uk\)](#)

[rnrmc.org.uk](#)

The RNA's special interest groups will gather on June 17 to take part in activities in the Portsmouth area, including golf at Southwick Park, cricket at Burnaby Road, motorcycling rally to the New Forest, fishing at Southwick Park, a classic car meeting at RHS Wisley, and for campers and caravanners, meeting at a site in the Portsmouth area.

All the groups, along with other attendees, will meet at Portsmouth Guildhall at 7pm to watch the Band of the Royal Marines Beat Retreat, followed by a drinks reception aboard HMS Warrior.

Events on Saturday June 18 will centre around a marquee in the rear garden of the HMS Nelson wardroom, where a short national annual general meeting will be held in the morning, followed by an RNA Falklands Forum featuring veterans from

the conflict.

Throughout Saturday afternoon wellbeing experts will be on hand to give immediate support and signpost to ongoing initiatives.

If you have any wellbeing concerns ahead of the event, please get in touch with Wellbeing Programme Manager, Lynda Pearson to discuss them in confidence. lynda@royalnavalassoc.com

The RNA Model Makers group will be displaying their crafts in HMS Nelson's Wardroom during the AGM and the Falklands Forum.

If you'd like to join their group and display a model of your own, please express your interest to their Group Leader, Gary Daisley - rna.modelmakers@gmail.com

After a short break, members and guests will be invited back to the marquee at HMS Nelson Wardroom at 1930 for a 80s themed dance and

buffet dinner. With a live band and 80s tunes playing late into the night.

The following day, all those connected to the Royal Navy are invited to march with veterans and the RNA National, Area and Branch standards for a service of remembrance at the Falklands Memorial in the Hot Walls, Old Portsmouth at 11am.

This will be followed by the City of Portsmouth unveiling a new memorial and presenting the RNA, RMA, and Falklands Veterans with Freedom of the City scrolls.

Commemorations will conclude in Portsmouth Cathedral with a short service, the permanent laying up of the RNA Standard, as well as civic refreshments.

For further details, including how to join one of the special interest groups, visit royal-naval-association.co.uk



Victory prepares for next 50 years

ONE hundred years to the day that the world's most famous warship entered her current home, work began on preserving HMS Victory for the next half century.

Exactly a century after Nelson's flagship was moved from the harbour into Dry Dock No.2 in Portsmouth Naval Base to protect her for future generations, today's conservationists started work on the next step in looking after the veteran of Trafalgar.

A 15-year programme of work is planned on the legendary man o'war which will complete her transformation both as a visitor experience and to display how the great ship looked in her heyday more than 200 years ago.

The £35m package involves removing rotting planking from her hull and replacing it with new oak, repairing Victory's structural framework, and finally fully re-rigging the flagship.

It will take at least ten years, perhaps 15, but it will give those who visit Victory the unique experience of seeing beneath the ship's 'skin' and observe the effort it takes to conduct a 'great repair' (today a major refit) of a First-Rate Line-of-Battle ship.

Having been retired from active service as a fighting warship after Trafalgar, Victory spent the remainder of the 19th Century in varied roles – troopship, tender, floating museum in Portsmouth and finally a signal school for sailors. She was sank at least once and was poorly maintained by the Admiralty.

Amid growing concern the ship was at risk and growing public clamour she was towed from her berth in the harbour to the dry dock where she now rests as 1922 began – heralding a six-year 'Save the Victory' campaign to restore the ship and create a museum – now part of the National Museum of the Royal Navy – to celebrate her deeds and her sailors.

She was re-opened to the public by King George V in July 1928, since when she's welcomed more than 30 million visitors.

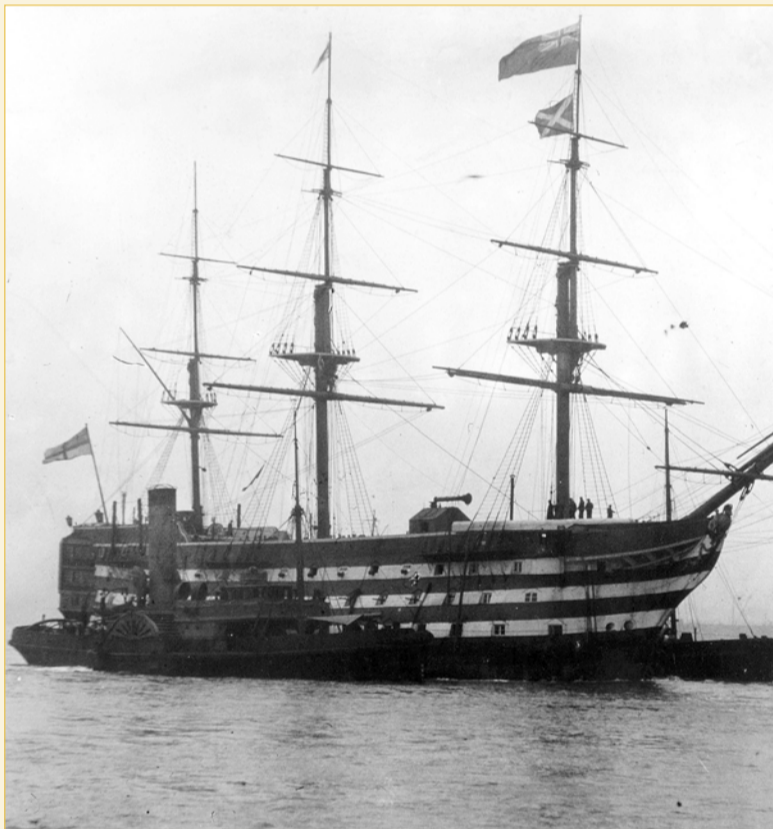
The new phase of the conservation/restoration of Victory is one of three major projects the National Museum is undertaking in 2022.

This summer it will unveil the £1m upgrade to the Aircraft Carrier Experience at the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton.

It will link the heyday of jet aviation with operations involvement and the deployments of today's Queen Elizabeth-class carriers and their F-35 stealth fighters. The revamp will create a new immersive experience blending the latest digital tech with the scale of a carrier flight deck and aircraft from the museum's collection.

And in Hartlepool, from Easter the museum – centred on the 19th Century frigate HMS Trincomalee – hosts the popular Horrible Histories' Pirates exhibition.

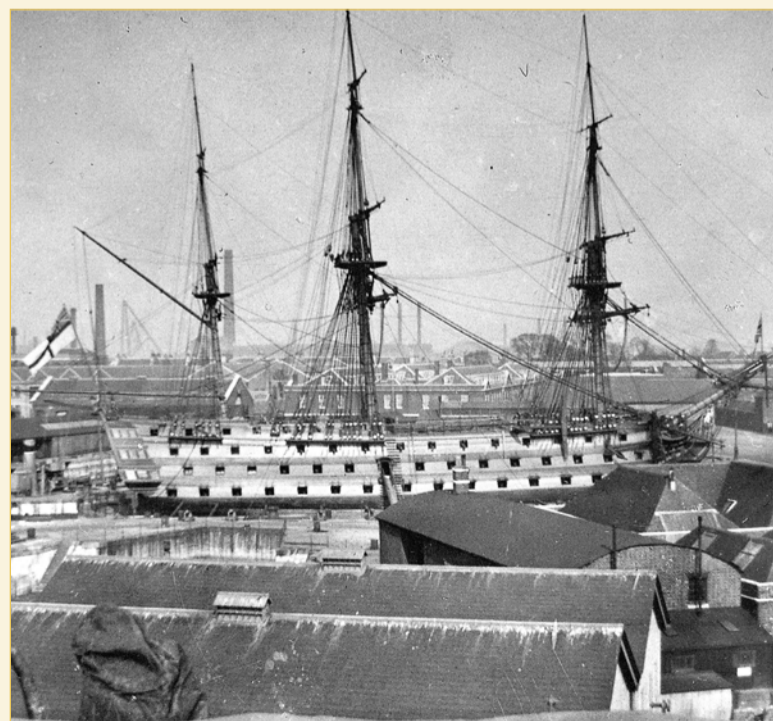
Based on the best-selling series by Terry Deary and illustrator Martin Brown, it takes an irreverent look at pirates, giving youngsters an action-packed, hands-on romp through the mysterious and murky world of pirates across the ages.



Above: HMS Victory being taken in tow by a steam tug in January 1922

Below: The flagship is pictured in dry dock post 1928

Pictures: NMRN



Autonomous asset protection system put through paces

DEFENCE Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) has trialled an autonomous maritime asset protection system (AMAPS) to defend high-value assets whilst alongside in harbour that could also be utilised to protect critical infrastructure.

Working with the Royal Navy, industry partners and the US Naval Undersea Warfare Centre, Dstl conducted research to improve detection, tracking, classification and defeat capabilities against surface and subsurface threats to high-value assets and critical infrastructure, using autonomous systems alongside traditional systems.

Dstl worked collaboratively with an industry consortium comprising of QinetiQ, SeeByte, L3 Harris ASV and Thales, to develop a concept demonstrator based on open architectures and autonomous systems.

This demonstrator was tested in a synthetic environment to ensure the viability of the concept before experimentation during a two-week trial in Portland Harbour in October 2021 using Dstl's containerised system and the Maritime Autonomy Surface Testbed vessel MAST-13.

Different levels of autonomy were assessed that has enabled a

better assessment of the role that maritime autonomous systems can play in protecting vulnerable assets whilst also furthering understanding of the current maturity of the technology.

The trial successfully demonstrated end to end autonomy with the remote operation of a long range acoustic device and firing of a vessel arrestor system with the aim to stop a suspect craft.

Future trials will look to stress the system with the aim to assess robustness whilst completing joint tests with the US that were impacted by COVID.

Dstl Programme Manager, Alasdair Gilchrist, said: "The research showed the benefit of integrating multiple sensors, fixed and on uncrewed vessels (UXVs), into a common tactical picture to aid command decisions.

"We have progressed maritime Artificial Intelligence/machine learning by developing apps that enable multiple UXVs to be command and controlled from a single operator to protect assets.

"We have also developed algorithms to autonomously control and launch non-lethal effectors from USVs to deter aggressors and protect our valuable maritime assets."



Last but not least...

THERE was a dusk homecoming for the stealthiest unit with the Carrier Strike Group deployment.

Hunter-killer submarine HMS Astute returned to Faslane around ten days after the bulk of the British participants assigned to HMS Queen Elizabeth's task group – but still in time for Christmas for her 100 or so crew.

In doing so, the boat conducted the longest deployment yet by her class.

Although principally assigned to the carrier group as part of the protective ring against the prying eyes of any hostile submarines, Astute broke away from the core task group to head Down Under and cement ties with the Royal Australian Navy following the recent AUKUS agreement.

The three-way link-up will see the three allied nations work ever closer together in the Indo-Pacific region, the first step of which is equipping the RAN with a flotilla of nuclear-powered submarines.

"Despite the challenges of deploying during a global pandemic, Astute has demonstrated the flexibility and reach that a submarine can bring," said Commodore Jim Perks, head of the Silent Service.

"Her ship's company can be justifiably proud of what they have achieved."

£40m range upgrade

QINETIQ has completed a £40 million programme of upgrades on the UNESCO World Heritage Site of St Kilda.

As part of MOD Hebrides Range, St Kilda provides essential deep-range tracking during exercises such as US-led NATO training exercises, At Sea Demonstration/Formidable Shield.

The upgrades to the tracking radar and telemetry equipment mean the MOD and its international partners will be able to track assets throughout the depths of the range, receiving data both accurately and quickly.

Trials, Evaluation Services and Targets team leader, Ray Drury, who attended the opening ceremony, said: "This event marks the result of a key MOD Long Term Partnering Agreement (LTPA) investment to provide living accommodation for the staff operating and maintaining the range safety tracking systems here on St Kilda.

"This achievement is a testament to the commitment from our delivery partner QinetiQ, the National Trust for Scotland and all the contractors who have overcome the most extreme environment in the North Atlantic to deliver this environmentally sympathetic facility."

St. Kilda is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a Special Protection Area, a Special Area of Conservation and a Site of Special Scientific Interest as well as supporting the largest seabird colony in the north-east Atlantic.

QinetiQ worked with National Trust for Scotland to ensure any developments undertaken protected and enhanced its unique and delicate ecology.

As part of the drive towards net-zero, waste heat is harnessed from new more efficient electrical generators providing hot water and heating for the accommodation.



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THAT LASTS
A LIFETIME**

Leaving a gift in your will to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity will help us in our mission to offer lifelong support to every sailor, marine and Royal Navy family, today and for generations to come.

We've partnered with leading online will writers, Guardian Angel, to offer you the chance to **write your will for FREE today**. Writing your will online makes life easy. Done in 15 minutes from the comfort of your own home, your will is checked by a team of legal experts and is legally binding when signed with a witness.

Simply visit gawill.uk/RNRMC2022 or scan the QR code

There is no obligation to include a gift to the RNRMC to take part, but we do hope you will consider supporting our work after providing for those closest to you. If you would prefer a face-to-face meeting with a solicitor or over-the-phone support, call the Guardian Angel team today on 0800 773 401. If you are thinking about leaving a gift to the RNRMC in your will and would like more information, please get in touch with Jo Miles on 02393 874677



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ROYAL MARINES
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TO COLDLY GO

Antarctica: the frozen frontier.
These are the voyages of the
icebreaker HMS Protector.
Her five-year mission: to chart
unknown waters, to seek out rare
wildlife and study the environment.
To coldly go where often only
penguins have gone before...

Captain's Log, December 28 2021
Our Zodiac boat returns to Protector in a sudden
snowstorm following a visit to the Argentine
research base of San Martin. Covid restrictions
prevented us going ashore, so we exchanged gifts
and conversed by radio.

Just three days after Christmas and work resumes for the Royal Navy's sole icebreaker/Antarctic survey and research ship, helping scientists to unlock the mysteries of the frozen continent, monitor climate change and assess the current state of the penguin population on some of the most remote islands on the planet.

Continued on page 20



Continued from page 19

Captain's Log, December 9 2021
Although British Territory, their remoteness and lack of human habitation mean the South Sandwich Islands are rarely visited. Without man's interference, the archipelago's penguin populace has thrived.

Using drones for the first time, Protector's sailors joined experts from the UK and USA to study penguin colonies.

The island chain – more than 1,300 miles east of the Falklands and are home to around three million of the flightless birds.

Sailors contended with glacier-covered volcanic mountains, freezing waters, surf and gale-force winds to help scientists from Oxford University's Department of Zoology and Washington DC-based scientific and educational organisation Oceanites, which has spent nearly three decades building up a comprehensive picture of penguin populations in Antarctica.

Oceanites maintains a continent-wide penguin database which everyone in the Antarctic Treaty

system relies upon.

"The opportunity to visit any of the South Sandwich islands to conduct research on penguins – or any other species – is incredibly limited," said Dr Mark Belchier, Director of Fisheries and Environment, Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

"Any additional data that can be collected opportunistically is incredibly valuable in order to determine trends in population sizes for the various species that live there."

Scientists have relied on a combination of direct counting, GPS mapping and interpretation of high-resolution commercial satellite imagery to calculate the size of the colonies.

So the rare live footage and imagery captured by HMS Protector and scientists using drones on Saunders, South Thule and Cook islands is vital for more accurate assessments of the population sizes.

Ahead of the ship's visit, the islands were thought to be home to nearly half of the world's chinstrap penguins (1.3 million breeding pairs),

as well as circa 95,000 breeding pairs of macaroni penguins, and several thousand breeding pairs of gentoo penguins.

Despite being at the northern edge of their breeding area, an unexpectedly large population of Adélie penguins (about 125,000 breeding pairs) also live there.

The populations have fluctuated in recent decades. At first it was thought that resurgent whale and fur seal numbers following bans on whaling and over-fishing were the cause, eating the krill in the ocean upon which many penguins rely.

More recent scientific thinking has shifted to climate change, melting sea ice and rising temperatures, plus local volcanic eruptions, all affecting the shrinking chinstrap populace in particular.

"The more data we get on these islands, the more we are able to disentangle the effects of climate change versus eruptions," explained Dr Tom Hart of the Department of Zoology at Oxford University.

"The whole of the archipelago is a Marine Protected Area, so they are an important contrast to understanding the threats to wildlife

elsewhere in the Southern Ocean."

Ron Naveen, president and founder of Oceanites, said Protector had been provided with a "suite of key penguin breeding sites in Antarctica" for its drones to fly over and capture photographic imagery.

He continued: "Once received, the images will be analysed for nest counts – all of which will add greatly to our ongoing database of Antarctic penguin populations." Oceanites will make results publicly available on www.penguinmap.com.

Captain's log, December 11 2021
Moving on to the southern islands in the South Sandwich chain and a challenging few days surveying waters last checked in the 1930s.

Naval charts of some of the waters around Southern Thule and the Cook Islands have not been updated in nearly a century – without any of the highly-accurate sensors and technology fitted to Protector herself or her small survey boats.

The challenge was made all the greater by unfavourable sea conditions and grounded icebergs, forcing Protector to spend two days

sheltering inside a caldera – the hollowed-out innards of a volcano – waiting for a weather window to put a landing party ashore.

Whilst there the ship surveyed an uncharted portion on the west coast of Cook – the eastern part of the two islands forming the caldera – as her survey motor boat surveyed the east coast of Thule under the lee of glacial cliffs.

Captain's log, December 16 2021
Our 600-mile passage through the Scotia Sea was lively. We are now in the South Orkney Islands on the fringe of Antarctica and clear evidence of the impact of rising temperatures.

Sunshine Glacier on Coronation Island – roughly 750 miles from the Falklands and 350 from the Antarctic Peninsula – has retreated three quarters of a mile over the past 30 years as a result of global warming.

In doing so, it's revealed uncharted waters in what is dubbed 'Iceberg Bay' for Protector to survey while the weather abated sufficiently for the ship to scan the waters off the neighbouring island of Signy and found a dangerous shoal on the



approach to Cummings Cove, having separately proved the presence of a dangerous rock in Borge Bay.

Supporting the work of the British Antarctic Survey, Protector's Commanding Officer Captain Michael Wood led a team landing on Signy to mark the beginning of the 'summer season'; the research station is only occupied in the austral summer. Sailors found no damage had been caused to the base by the harsh weather over the winter, ready for scientists to move in to study penguins, petrels and the island's rich biodiversity.

Protector also called in on Base Y on Horseshoe Island as a post-winter check-up. Built in 1955 and abandoned five years later, it's a time capsule of a bygone era of Antarctic exploration and now serves as one of the world's most remote museums.

Captain's log, December 29 2021
After yesterday's perfect snowstorms, today perfect conditions for sailing through the Lemaire Channel - 'Kodak Alley/Gap' as tourists dub it thanks to the narrow channel and spectacular mountains flanking it.

Coming to the end of her first work period of the season, Protector headed through the Lemaire Channel.

The images may look pristine, the weather near-perfect weather, but the ship found navigating the strait tricky with significant concentrations of ice and icebergs which almost completely blocked the southern entrance.

"We are exploring some of the most remote and inhospitable places in the world. Their astounding natural beauty, seen through your own eyes, is difficult to comprehend," said Lieutenant Mike Wafer, Protector's deputy logistics officer.

Once through, the journey northwards towards the Falklands, her logistical and maintenance hub when operating around Antarctica, took the ship to Deception Island.

Dominated by a flooded caldera of a still-active volcano, it provided more 'Kodak moments' (other camera manufacturers are available) and visits led by Protector's second-in-command Commander Thomas Boeckx to Spanish and Argentine bases brought the curtain down on

the first work period of the Antarctic summer and Protector headed back to the Falklands to restock/resupply before returning to the snow and ice.

Captain's log, January 5 2022.
It is 100 years to the day that the world lost one of its greatest Antarctic explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton. Our visit to South Georgia allowed us to honour his legacy.

Protector's crew held a memorial service at the graveside of the legendary explorer - a Royal Navy reservist - who died after suffering a heart attack aboard his ship Quest at the beginning of an attempt to circumnavigate Antarctica.

Although he never reached the South Pole, Shackleton was highly regarded among his contemporaries as someone who could get his men out of a fix - notably his successful effort to save his colleagues when their ship Endurance was crushed by the ice in 1915.

The explorer famously sailed across 800 miles of ocean in a small boat, then crossed the mountains of South Georgia to raise the alarm at

a whaling station, ultimately leading to rescue of his expedition party.

With Protector's sailors dressed in woollen sweaters in keeping with early 20th Century polar explorers, Commander Boeckx outlined those deeds while Captain Wood laid a wreath on the grave.

The service took place after the ship had delivered Covid vaccines to the team at the British Antarctic Survey and helped the scientists move some timber to a remote location on the island.

Over several days in South Georgia - berthed at the new jetty at King Edward Point, built to accommodate RRS Sir David Attenborough (aka Boaty McBoatface) - Protector used her hi-tech Survey Motor Boat James Caird IV to improve seafaring charts around the quay.

Not only will it benefit the British Antarctic Survey, but also visiting cruise liners on 'eco tours' around the fringe of the frozen continent.

The ship also kept an eye out for illegal fishing activity on her journey from the Falklands; the waters around both islands are conservation areas which need to be protected against over-fishing to safeguard

local wildlife.

"I first came to South Georgia in HMS Gloucester in 2011 and feel privileged that I was able to come back for another visit in Protector," said Hydrographic Officer Lieutenant Max Parsonson.

"This deployment is going to be full of challenges but we're so lucky to be able to visit places like Grytviken. I know my mum and dad are incredibly jealous. I've been lucky enough to survey in some fantastic places over my career but this has got to be one of the most spectacular."

Captain's log, January 7 2022
East Cove Military Port, Falkland Islands
We're back for resupply, a little maintenance and a chance to stretch our legs after completing the first of our three work packages of this season's Operation Austral.
We've exceeded all the objectives we set ourselves - by some measure.
It's been a far-flung, survey-intense and adventure-rich circumnavigation of UK territories in the Scotia Sea.

Pictures: LPhot Belinda Alker, HMS Protector



LEVEL PEAKS

CLOTHING



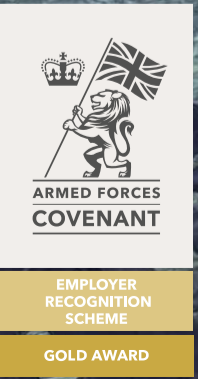
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ELITE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE EQUIPMENT

BREACHING

FIREPOWER

MARITIME



Sailors and musicians support NHS

SAILORS and Royal Marines musicians are jabbing Britons by the hundreds as they support the national effort to get people boosted.

Personnel from across the Armed Forces are continuing to support the NHS by working in vaccination centres helping to jab the public.

At St James' Hospital in Portsmouth, a navy Physical Training Instructor and chef are among sailors who were taught how to give vaccinations before heading to the frontline to administer the booster vaccines.

After spending a couple of days learning how to fill a needle with the vaccine and inject it into someone's arm, the sailors worked alongside their RAF and Army colleagues at the hospital.

Training included spotting bubbles in the liquid, ensuring the correct volume was in the needle and practising pressing the needle into a cushion replicating an arm.

This ensured they were ready and confident to give vaccinations to the general public.

Petty Officer (Catering Services) Rod Morton, normally based at HMS Collingwood in Fareham, was part of the team. He said: "Everyone is coming together and helping each other.

"It's been great to help the NHS and learn a new skill too."

PO Tom Monday is a physical trainer at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth. He said giving vaccinations could not be more different than his day job but the training gave him confidence.

"There was some apprehension before giving the first vaccine but I felt comfortable doing it," he said.

"I wanted to be able to help the NHS any

way I could after their hard work during the pandemic."

The vaccination centre at St James' Hospital is being run by Solent NHS Trust. Stephanie Clark, senior clinical lead for the trust's vaccination programme, added: "It's really great working with the armed forces.

"They supported us last year so it's important to have them back again this year."

Meanwhile, bandsmen and women from the Commando Training Centre have been mobilised to work with Army medics from Tidworth to administer third vaccine jabs to the public across the south west.

The teams received both online and face-to-face training in Bristol to learn how to administer the vaccine safely and effectively before beginning the roll out of booster jabs alongside volunteers and NHS staff at large-scale centres specially set up for the purpose, such as in a shopping mall in Taunton.

Captain Victoria Gordon RAMC, from CTCRM, is heading the team from Lymington – part of 650 military personnel supporting the Covid jab drive across England alone.

"It's a privilege, it's exciting to be part of the national effort," she said.

"I've worked in the NHS before. They do a fantastic job and it's wonderful to be supporting them.

"As part of the military you expect to be part of a mass effort. This is very not-normal for me! The day job is working with young marine recruits – 16 or 17 through to their early 20s and hands-on physio, exercises in the gym.

"We'll be here as long as we're needed. We're here, we're ready. Please make sure you get yourself booked in and get down here for your vaccination."



• (above and bottom right) Sailors from the Royal Navy have been supporting the NHS by administering booster vaccinations at St James Hospital in Portsmouth. (Top right) Royal Marines Musicians have been supporting the NHS in south west.

“They [NHS] do a fantastic job and it's wonderful to be supporting them.”

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
023 9263 9534
caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk

Carrier puts down roots in affiliated city of Bristol

BRITAIN'S biggest warship has affirmed her bond with the people of Bristol after a weekend of events across the city.

A 30-strong team from HMS Prince of Wales – the newest of the UK's two 65,000-tonne aircraft carriers – spent a weekend in the West Country city to strengthen their relationships with Bristol.

The Portsmouth-based warship – declared fully operational in September – is formally affiliated with two of England's great maritime cities: Liverpool and Bristol.

Events across the weekend showcased some of the attractions of Bristol and allowed the sailors from Prince of Wales to enjoy Bristolian hospitality.

That included a visit to Aerospace Bristol, which houses the last of Concorde to fly and charts the history of the local aircraft industry and its connections with the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm during the 20th Century.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Prince of Wales, Captain Steve Higham, was invited to put down firm roots in the city, with a yew tree planting in Temple Gardens, serving as an enduring



Personnel dig a hole for the ship's tree and Capt Higham presents the carrier's White Ensign to Bristol Cathedral



reminder that will grow along with the affiliation and future crew members.

The visit reached its climax with a special ceremony in Bristol Cathedral to mark the close relationship with the city of Bristol.

Captain Higham presented the ship's White Ensign to Bristol so it can be seen

by the city's inhabitants.

"Bristol is a sea-faring city and the affiliation with HMS Prince of Wales is ensuring that our maritime traditions are not all about the magnificent past. This association with the most magnificent ship in the Royal Navy keeps alive Bristol's links with the sea and our

wonderful Royal Navy," said Lord Lieutenant of Bristol, Peaches Golding.

"To have the White Ensign hanging in Bristol Cathedral is a privilege and everyone who sees it will feel the connection to the ship, wherever she may be in the world. The events have helped to cement relations between all members

of the community in Bristol, including the business and civic communities. We hope to find many more opportunities in the future to host Captain Steve Higham and his crew and forge ever closer links."

Captain Steve Higham OBE said, "The flag in the Cathedral is our Ensign. It's the ship's flag and flown at sea very recently as we were declared fully operational, ready at 30 days' notice to deploy.

"Presenting the White Ensign to the Cathedral, marks our affiliation with the City of Bristol and a permanent reminder of our connections to the region.

"Because of the ship's busy programme, it's difficult to get time to spare, but we couldn't miss out on affirming our affiliation. It's important to the team onboard that we have good roots and connections when we are away. This association means an awful lot to us.

"Ships are always affiliated with great towns and cities, it's a tradition that goes back a long time, and a senior committee in Whitehall decide which ship goes to which City. We are incredibly grateful and really proud, as the nation's largest warship that we were given Bristol."



Thanks for your exceptional work

MINISTRY of Defence staff received commendations from the Commander of British Forces Gibraltar in a ceremony which saw workers from both civilian and military posts recognised for their exceptional work.

Commodore Steve Dainton handed out awards to:

CPO David May, pictured below, ably assisted by **PO Daniel Sweeney** and their small team of divers from the Command Diving Element, were invaluable during preparation of Armed Forces Day 21.

Working above and beyond, they assisted in the arduous task of moving essential equipment from various locations around the MoD estate. Without their support, Armed Forces Day would not have been half the success it eventually was.

Since his arrival to the Gibraltar Command Diving Element in December 2018, **Able Seaman Harris-Joce**, pictured top, has consistently made himself available to cover additional duties during exceptionally busy periods that were made remarkably more challenging by a prolonged gapping of workforce.

NATSATC and Engineering received an RAF Safety Centre Team Commendation for their outstanding work during the

COVID-19 pandemic.

Christina Stevenson is a stalwart and shining example in 4 Corners and beyond. She voluntarily assists the Community Support Team by attending two youth club sessions per week and being heavily involved in the summer activities and Halloween half term programmes. She is also a volunteer at the Alwani Foundation Charity shop in Gibraltar.

WO1 Walsh's impact in post has been nothing short of transformational. He has overturned the form book, simultaneously addressing both the Physical Development (PD) programme and the kit and equipment held to the extent that it is unrecognisable to that which preceded it.

Alongside the PD programme, Walsh also took it upon himself to paint the entire gym in his spare time.

Cpl O'Mahoney has demonstrated unparalleled dedication to the delivery of health and wellbeing across the British Forces Gibraltar community.

As well as his commitment to the mental wellbeing committee he stepped forward to organise the inaugural Gibraltar element of the RAF Association Rides welfare charity event.



CREW ensuring the safe operation of jets and helicopters from all the Navy's flight decks now relax in a lounge dedicated to one of the legends of their branch.

In a career spanning five decades, **Warrant Officer Julian 'Doo' Facer** ensured Harriers, Sea Kings, Merlins, Wessex and Lynx lifted off, landed and were safely marshalled on more than half a dozen major warships and auxiliaries.

Originally from Headingly in Leeds, **Doo** joined the RN as an aircraft handler in 1978. Over the next 34 years he served at Culdrose, Yeovilton and Portland air stations, in the Falklands, and aboard assault ship HMS Intrepid, all three Invincible-class Harrier carriers, aviation training ship RFA Argus and helicopter carrier HMS Ocean. He passed away in 2019 aged just 57.

His memory lives on courtesy of **Doo's Lounge** – where his contemporaries and successors take a break from practising and training fellow handlers in the art of safe flight deck operations (courtesy of a mock flight deck and flightless Harriers), firefighting and other possible emergencies.

The revamped rest area – refurbished with money from the Rebalancing Lives Fund, Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and RNAS Culdrose Welfare Fund – was officially opened at the Royal Naval School of Flight Deck



Operations while his family watched from home in Penzance via a live link.

The school's commanding officer Lieutenant Commander Scott Harding said Doo Facer was sadly missed by all.

"His huge character, passion and pride in the Royal Navy and the Aircraft Handlers' Branch have been an inspirational to many – he was a true professional, a loyal oppo and friend, a loving husband and a devoted father.

"Those who served with Doo have named this room in his memory.

"It was done in the knowledge that many will enjoy this space in the presence of good company.

"Doo's Lounge was a project to enhance our people's wellbeing and to show willingness to invest in them.

"To all those who have contributed, they have again made our lives better and we thank them."





Vital support for those in need

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) in partnership with Greenwich Hospital have granted £60,000 in support of veterans who have served in the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines.

This vital fund will allow a range of interventions to prevent homelessness within the Naval community.

The RNRMC exists to support sailors, marines, and their families, such as George*:

His first few months of training didn't go as planned, ending the 21-year-old's career in the Royal Marines. With no family to reach out to and no qualifications, George was at risk of homelessness if he didn't find accommodation before being discharged.

Luckily, George got in touch with Veterans Aid and on the day of his discharge, he moved to their New Belvedere House. With the active support from the Veterans

Aid team, George is preparing to embark on a paid internship with the prospect of a permanent job afterwards when he completes the period of instruction. This is much easier for him knowing that he has a safe and secure roof over his head at VA's New Belvedere House.

Dr Hugh Milroy, CEO of Veterans Aid said: "We are grateful to receive yet another grant from the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines Charity and Greenwich Hospital.

"Veterans Aid has worked throughout the pandemic and this fund will help us to ensure that our vital services are available to ex-servicemen and women when they need them most.

"Working with a caring and supportive partner like the RNRMC takes such a weight from our shoulders. They truly understand the need to provide realistic support to frontline operations such as ours. Their

focused approach is a perfect example of how a large charity can be profoundly effective in these challenging times."

Mandy Lindley, RNRMC's Director of Relationships and Funding said: "2021 has been another difficult year for many in the Royal Navy community, but especially for our vulnerable veterans.

"Thankfully, Veterans Aid have continued to provide first-class support, even during the incredibly challenging conditions of lockdown at the beginning of the year. We are very pleased to continue our partnership with Veterans Aid and know that they will be there, as ever, for veterans in crisis in 2022."

If you would like to find out more about Veterans Aid or how to access their support, please visit veterans-aid.net or call their freephone helpline on 0800 012 6867.

*A pseudonym has been used to protect privacy.

Partnerships are key to helping end isolation

GETTING around is an essential part of life, however for some naval veterans, transportation options are limited and extra support is needed.

Thankfully, the RNRMC works with partner charities to help resolve these issues, but organisations such as the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans and Fares 4 Free often become a lifeline for vulnerable individuals, providing far more than simply travel from A to B.

In 2020, the RNRMC's partnership with the Taxi Charity helped brighten up veterans' days by delivering RNRMC goodie bags to their doorsteps.

The goodie bags were personally distributed by Taxi Charity volunteers, including Taxi Charity chairman Ian Parsons.

This gesture acted as a kind reminder that both charities were thinking of our veterans in difficult times such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Recently, the Taxi Charity took two WW2 Royal Navy Veterans to the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) Benevolent Fund Dinner on board of HMS Victory.

The Taxi Charity picked up the two veterans from their homes in Hornchurch and Guildford and drove them to a Portsmouth hotel where they enjoyed a tot of rum before heading to the historic dockyard, where special security arrangements had been made for the London black cab to pull up alongside Nelson's flagship, HMS Victory.

In Scotland, Fares4Free offer free taxi transportation to Royal Navy veterans thanks in part to RNRMC funding, along with a network of volunteer drivers.

Fares4Free founder, David Gibson, knows how valuable this service is in helping combat loneliness and isolation, and this was recently exemplified by the organisation's work with a Royal Navy veteran who suffers from PTSD and agoraphobia.

"This veteran has been known to Fares4Free for over three years", said David, "Fares4Free took her to a veterans' events and to a peer support

group on a couple of occasions.

"We also took her to visit her parents, over 50 miles away, her father has terminal cancer and her mother at this point had a recent dementia diagnosis. This journey would have been impossible via public transport – her anxiety was off the scale.

"We then spoke to her about Rock 2 Recovery, we explained that there could be a flexible approach to appointment regimes and that it would be possible for them to work by video call with her and if required with her teenage son, who had complicated physical and mental health issues.

"She began appointments during the pandemic and was able to attend face-to-face in a safe environment. This was an hour from home and although very anxious on the first day, results were almost immediate. Fares4Free combined these two-hour long appointments with walks, coffees, lunches etc. We involved Stanley (our coordinators dog) who proved to be the key ingredient!"

The veteran (who wishes to remain anonymous) said: "Life Transforming. What a journey. So much kindness.

"Until I was introduced to Fares4Free I was very anxious before appointments and had become extremely isolated. Then WOW my first cuddle with Stanley (beautiful Boxer dog with a cute face) and immediately I knew that everything was going to be completely safe.

"David Gibson and all the supporting charities accommodate the flexibility needed to facilitate access and interact with these wonderful therapeutic services and most importantly without the guilt associated regarding cancellation of appointments.

"I was dumbfounded to learn the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity have been funding my trips and the Fares4Free part of my recovery journey. I hope they are so proud of your work and please please thank them from the bottom of my heart."



On your bikes for battlefield challenge

JOIN the RNRMC as we take on this epic French battlefield cycle challenge from Portsmouth to Cherbourg.

By signing up to this challenge, you will become part of the 2022 RNRMC Heroes Team as you take on this exciting six-day cycle challenge.

You will cycle from Portsmouth through northern France to Cherbourg, visiting some of the region's most significant World War 2 battle sites, including Pegasus Bridge and the Normandy landing beaches.

You will experience some long days in the saddle, but as you stop to pay your respects at many sites, tired bodies will seem a small price to pay for the sacrifices made by the armed forces during WW2, as well as in more recent years.

The Challenge

- When: Wednesday 14 September 2022 – Monday 19 September 2022
- Where: Portsmouth – Cherbourg
- Registration fee: £150
- Fundraising target: £1,600
- Physical rating: 3 – Entry

level grade perfect for first challenges, although moderate fitness levels are required as the trip includes some challenging distances and uphill cycles.

- Group size: 40 max

Why take part?

- Become part of a special team to complete the epic 230 mile challenge
 - Visit, and pay your respects, at world-famous battle sites
 - Fully supported cycle with experienced leaders and support vehicles there to look after you every step of the way
 - Celebrate reaching the finish line with a victorious team dinner in Cherbourg
 - You'll be doing something amazing for current and former serving personnel and their families when they need it most.
- There are currently estimated to be almost 200 homeless veterans in the UK. It costs £5 to provide a hot meal. By raising £1,600, you could pay for 320 hot meals and help someone take their first steps to getting off the streets.
- Visit www.rnrmc.org.uk for more information and to sign up.

Help for stranded marines

CHINA Fleet Country Club hosted five Royal Marines unable to be with their families over the festive season.

The five, from Commando Logistics Regiment at Chivenor, were all due to spend the holiday in South Africa.

The Royal Marines stayed at China Fleet Countr Club, Saltash, Cornwall, for five nights, using RRR Scheme funded through the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity.

The facilities were closed on Christmas day, but they stayed in their self-catering apartments.



A world in which our sailors, marines, and their families are valued and supported, for life.

See our impact impact.rnrmc.org.uk T 023 9387 1520 E theteam@rnrmc.org.uk

China Fleet
Country Club



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www.china-fleet.co.uk





The new, sleeker training boats line up beside the old picket boats on the River Dart

PICTURES: LPhoto Juliet Ritsma

Picket's change

Vahana vessels arrive at BRNC

NAVAL Leaders of tomorrow have state-of-the-art training boats for the first time in more than half a century.

Several generations of Royal Navy officer cadets – including current First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key – have used a flotilla of eight 'picket' boats to learn the arts of navigation, seamanship and leadership at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

The distinctive blue and white boats which have chugged up and down the Dart since the 1960s (the youngest was delivered in the early '70s) were retired at the end of 2021.

In their place, eight sleek grey, futuristic-looking jet-powered boats, packed with identical or similar tech officers will encounter when they join the front-line fleet.

The new boats are part of the wider programme – Project Vahana – to replace an assortment of craft and workboats across the Fleet with a small flotilla based on a modular design, to standardise maintenance and spare parts and provide more modern and reliable training.

The 15-metre-long boats assigned to the college can reach speeds of 40kts, but are limited to just six on the Dart – although with qualified personnel/instructors they can venture beyond the river and into the Channel if required.

As they are powered by twin jets – like the Navy's Pacific 24 standard sea boat – rather than old picket boats' propellers, they handle completely differently from their predecessors, requiring two weeks'

training and assessment by instructors before cadets are allowed to take them out on the Dart.

When they do, says Warrant Officer 1st Class Dan Powditch, they'll find them "a whole different beast" from their predecessors.

"There's quite a lot of nostalgia for the old boats – understandably given how long they have been around for and how many people have trained in them. We love them – they're the closest thing to driving a warship," said the 38-year-old seaman specialist.

"The Vahana boats are the polar opposite: new, modern – you can drive it using a mouse – more reliable, but we can teach more people, using equipment such as ECDIS electronic charting which they'll find on warships.

"They'll leave Dartmouth more experienced, more capable mariners."

Dan's team at Sandquay on the Dart have spent the autumn getting to grips with the eight new boats, working out how they will be used to teach the fundamentals of seamanship, understanding the wind and tide and basic manoeuvring.

Each boat can train up to 16 cadets at a time – with basic accommodation (bunks, heads, shower, a boiler for brews and microwave to warm meals in). As training reaches its climax, the cadets will live and work on the new craft for up to a week.



The seats in the rear of the boat have tables, electrical power and network capability allowing all cadets to plug in their laptops and share data between the computers, allowing them to develop basic planning and command of a 'task group'.

Lieutenant Commander Patrick Kelly, Head of the Maritime Department at BRNC, said the advent of the new boats would "undoubtedly add significant value to the core maritime and leadership training delivered at the college".

"They provide a modern and contemporary platform on which to conduct core craft handling and navigation training. It is however during leadership training and assessments where the craft will add the most value.

"Moving forward Vahana will support task force style leadership exercises ensuring that Officers Cadets have a task group mindset from the outset of their careers aligning BRNC training with the requirements of the future navy."

...as Prince Charles takes trip down Memory Lane

HALF a century after he passed out of Britannia Royal Naval College, the Prince of Wales returned to salute a new generation of Royal Navy leaders.

Prince Charles was guest of honour at the annual Lord High Admiral's Divisions – the final passing out parade of 2021 at the spiritual home of Royal Navy Officer training in Dartmouth, Devon.

He took the Royal Salute from the parade and was invited to inspect the passing out Divisions – a mix of 202 fresh Royal Navy Officer Cadets and Royal Fleet Auxiliary Officers, plus sailors commissioned from the ranks.

For the Prince of Wales it was a reminder of the beginning of his five-year Royal Navy career.

He passed through the same college doors on September 16 1971 – following in the footsteps of his father, grandfather and both his great-grandfathers.

His time at Dartmouth was followed by service on the guided missile destroyer HMS Norfolk and two frigates, HMS Minerva, and HMS Jupiter, he then qualified as a helicopter pilot flying Wessex Mk5 with 845 Naval Air Squadron from the Commando carrier HMS Hermes. The Prince's final appointment in February 1976 was command of the coastal

minehunter HMS Bronington for his last nine months with the Royal Navy.

Among those passing out in front of the heir to the throne after completing 30 weeks of training were Officer Cadets Alistair Poat, from Somerset and Ruairidh McBean from Inverness.

"Dartmouth has pushed me well out of my comfort zone, coming from an engineering background I hadn't had much experience of leadership responsibility. Training has given me a great chance to learn and hopefully set me up for a successful career in the Royal Navy," said OC Poat, who will be starting his flying training in the new year as an Observer (navigator/weapons and sensor specialist) in the Fleet Air Arm.

"By far the most enjoyable part of training for me was our initial sea time. The early opportunity to get hands on and see what life was actually like in the fleet was amazing. It reaffirmed my reasons for joining, as it's a completely different environment from Dartmouth."

OC McBean added: "After BRNC I'm set to join HMS Richmond – I'm excited to get stuck in and get some more time at sea. After completing my next phase of training I'm looking to specialise as a navigator but, at the moment I look forward to facing the challenges of the future as an officer in the Royal Navy."

Captain Roger Readwin, Captain BRNC, said that all passing-out parades at Dartmouth were special, but Lord High Admiral's Divisions was "probably the most prestigious of the year".

He continued: "To have His Royal Highness Prince Charles here is a really great honour for all who are on parade.

"Those passing out should be immensely proud of their achievements to earn their place on the parade ground.

"Due to the ongoing pandemic, the support from



families and friends has proved to be more important than ever, and I would like to thank them all for their incredible support to their loved ones whilst undergoing training.

"While 2021 has been a difficult year for everyone, I'm incredibly proud of the way that my staff have adapted and embraced new ideas, to protect the inflow of new blood into the Service."

Prince Charles, who holds the rank of Admiral of the Fleet, is also Commodore-in-Chief of Plymouth and Aircraft Carriers. The title of Lord High Admiral was conferred upon Prince Phillip, The Duke of Edinburgh in 2011 by the Queen, to celebrate his 90th birthday. The office of Lord High Admiral is one of the nine Great Officers of State and the title itself dates from the 14th Century.

Pictures: LPhoto Juliet Ritsma



Project Unify ends on a high

THE three-year mission to merge chefs and stewards into a new Catering Services specialisation is over.

The last sailors to undergo the transformation – a class of cross-training stewards – passed out of the training galleys at HMS Raleigh eight days before Christmas, bringing the curtain down on Project Unify.

It's created a new generation of catering ratings who are as confident in the galley as they are performing 'front-of-house' roles.

More than seven out of ten existing chefs and stewards answered the call to complete major cross-training programmes, equipping them with the full breadth of specialist skills they will need in the future.

At the same time, there's a rapidly-growing cadre of brand-new direct entry catering service ratings who are now swelling the ranks.

Although not part of its original aims, the success of Unify has also helped to fill one of the RN's critical workforce shortage areas several years ahead of previous expectations.

That's already led to a tangible reduction in gapping in galleys across the Fleet.

And the whole project has been delivered without a single redundancy – as promised at its outset by then Vice Admiral Radakin during his tenure as Second Sea Lord.

"We said that we would modernise the new specialisation, and we have done exactly that – stripping away many outdated practices and cutting nugatory work wherever we found it," said Rear Admiral Phil Hally, the outgoing Director of People and Transformation.

"There's still more work to be done to improve things further for our people and in particular our catering services ratings, such as addressing the number of those who are not fully deployable – something that continues to cause unwelcome gapping on the front line.

"Nevertheless, Project Unify has delivered exactly what it set out to achieve and has proved to be a hugely-successful aspect of our wider People Transformation programme."

The admiral said the proof of the proverbial pudding had been demonstrated by the work of sailors throughout Operation Fortis, the HMS Queen Elizabeth-led deployment to the Asia-Pacific region.

"The Carrier Strike Group deployment has provided near-daily evidence that our new Catering Services cadre still offer the 'wow factor' when hosting dignitaries at the highest level, delivering the outstanding Defence Engagement hospitality for which our people are justifiably famous around the globe," he added.

Among the sailors who've been 'unified' is LCS Emma Keitch of HMS Scott (pictured preparing sausage rolls for the oven)

“Being given the opportunity to upskill from steward to Catering Services was an opportunity that I feel has and will benefit me personally as well as my ongoing career prospects.

Since completing the initial Unify course, where I gained an NVQ Level 2 in Professional Cookery, I have gone to sea to consolidate what I had learnt and to prepare myself for my Leading Catering Services Qualifying Course (LCSQC).

This was a challenging but rewarding 18 months. Holding the rate of leading hand is a challenge in itself, but having to learn the ropes as an able rating in the galley and catering office as well as the extra requirements needed to proceed on to LCSQC adds that extra pressure.

However, with the correct support it was easily achievable and something of an overwhelming achievement – it's normally achieved over a four-five year period.

Completing my LCSQC, I also gained an NVQ Level 3 in Business and Administration



and Intermediate Food Hygiene qualifications.

The opportunities and employment now available to me are far greater than would have been had I remained as a steward.

I am now a subject matter

expert in both front and back of house disciplines, which means that my career manager can offer me more-inviting roles and more of an opportunity to take them: these can be as varied as acting as house manager

or leading caterer in the Falkland Islands or being part of the retinue support team, delivering a high-end service front-of-house or working behind the scenes preparing and presenting high-quality cuisine.

Being a chef onboard a ship is a challenging job not only due to the long hours on your feet, but also having to please the ship's company three times a day

As a catering services rating you have the privilege to move around areas, such as, looking after the commanding officer or preparing for Defence Engagement events, showcasing your front-of-house skills to royalty and politicians. Taking that time out of the galley environment can take the stress out of the busy galley life and set your sights on a different challenge.

As a catering services rating I feel my job role has more of a purpose and I feel more respected.

With all the additional skills I have learned over the past two years, as well as the knowledge I have passed on to my superiors and peers, the opportunities available to me now set me up for a rewarding and exciting future in the Royal Navy. //

Discover My Benefits

This tool will help you find out what benefits and allowances you should be entitled to as a service member. You'll be able to check your entitlement to various benefits and allowances based on your current rank and service length.



Benefits for all on all things

HAVE you discovered 'Discover My Benefits'?

It's a website which shows you the extensive range of benefits, allowances and support which is available to you and your family because of the unique demands of military life and operations.

A simple search on the website will bring up a raft of useful information about a particular benefit or allowance such as your pay and pensions, reclaiming travel costs, taking extra leave after you've been on operations or even free tickets for sporting events and shopping discounts.

And by answering a few simple questions, you can use DMB to discover and understand the support and benefits which are unique to your current personal circumstances in the Royal Navy as a sailor or marine.

You can also use the 'Change of Circumstances' feature to see the impact that changes in your life – for instance relocating for work or having a child – have on the benefits you are eligible for.

You can find DMB under the 'Pay and Benefits' section of MyNavy. Alternatively, go straight to dmb.mod.gov.uk.



The first... but not the last

A CENTURY-OLD 'glass ceiling' in the Royal Navy has shattered with Jude Terry becoming the first female admiral in its history.

And with the numbers, breadth of talent and experience of women in today's Senior Service, she believes there will be many more women to reach the rank – and go higher.

After nearly 25 years' service around the globe and at home in the UK, the 48-year-old from Jersey takes the helm as Director of People and Training and Naval Secretary.

That makes the rear admiral responsible not only for more than 40,000 regular and reservist sailors and Royal Marines, but also the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – who operate the Navy's crucial support ships – plus civil servants and contractors, all part of the gigantic jigsaw which allows the Royal Navy to operate around the globe 24/7/365.

Women have served in the Royal Navy since the Wrens in World War 1 and have been going to sea since 1990. Today there is no position or branch of the Service not open to women.

She says the fact that she is a woman is irrelevant to her post and rank – simply that "someone has to be first" and she most definitely will not be the last; there are currently four female commodores and 20 female captains (the figures for male colleagues are 86 and 270 respectively).

Passionate about diversity, inclusivity, equality and social mobility, she believes talent, ability and dedication are the only factors determining success: background, education and patronage count for nothing, what you personally bring to the Royal Navy is everything.

"The world has changed in terms of what people want from life and careers, whatever their gender, and the Navy needs to work to modernise our organisation to support this change – a diverse and inclusive workforce is a better place

for all but is also proven to deliver better outcomes," Admiral Terry said.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key says Admiral Terry is "a great example of all the amazing women serving today – and a role model for all who serve and those who follow."

She took the reins of her department from her predecessor Rear Admiral Phil Hally following a ceremony aboard HMS Victory in Portsmouth, continuing and building upon many of the changes he has introduced under the Royal Navy's sweeping Transformation programme to forge a force to rise to the challenges – social, technological, ecological, economic and military – in the world of today and tomorrow.

To do so, Admiral Terry says, requires a Navy which is modern in its makeup, processes and outlook following the maxim: Join well, train well, live well, leave well.

"It is an absolute honour and privilege to assume the post of Director of People and Training and Naval Secretary today," she said.

"Our people and their families are at the heart of our ability to deliver on operations abroad and in the UK. I look forward to leading my team in supporting them, using modern approaches, helping us all to be the best we can be, and building on the work already done by my predecessor.

"When Vice Admiral Hine left as Second Sea Lord, he said: 'You should strive to leave the Service in a better place than you found it'. I'm aiming to build on what we've done already to continue to do that."

Beyond immediate issues impacting today's Navy, Admiral Terry's department is also charged with helping to shape the Royal Navy and its people up to 2040, when there will still be two 65,000-tonne aircraft carriers in service, alongside new Dreadnought-class submarines, three new classes of frigates and a new generation of destroyers.

It's quite a challenge for someone who joined the Navy in 1997 as a 24-year-old graduate and only planned to stay for eight years.

At the time, no female officer had commanded a warship. There were few role models, and fewer still with seagoing experience.

Eight years turned into 25 because, she says, "if you enjoy your job, you keep on doing it. I have been really lucky to have worked with some amazing people throughout my career and been supported by my family and friends and no two days are ever the same which is what I love about my job."

Picture: LPhot Lee Blease



Don't overlook the dangers of cancer

WITH World Cancer Day coming up on February 4, the team at Military vs Cancer – led by Warrant Officer 1 David Bathgate – want to highlight checking for systems of the disease.

The awareness drive has been prompted by the impact the pandemic has had on cancer diagnoses and treatment nationwide.

Fewer people are being referred by their GPs, and fewer people are beginning treatment: every four-week delay in treatment reduces survival by ten per cent.

So here Surgeon Commander Mike Russell – a GP and Principal Medical Officer at Faslane – offers some advice and guidance to Royal Navy personnel.

“Military personnel are normally in good physical condition and busy deployments or assignments can move their focus away from health issues.

Throughout the Covid pandemic, many people have delayed sharing concerns with their medical centre, resulting in some reporting symptoms at a later stage than they would have otherwise done.

Cancer can take many forms, fundamentally it is when a group of cells within the body become dysfunctional and start replicating uncontrollably, taking over and destroying normal-functioning cells.

Some cancers are more aggressive than others, but in most cases, early detection is the most important factor in successful management.

Research is carried out continually to improve detection and treatment, thus many more cancers are curable now than they were in previous decades. Cancer charities play a key role in the funding of this research.

Symptoms of cancer can be varied

and include

- new lumps (painful or painless);
- unexplained weight loss;
- persistent cough (without other cause identified);
- blood in sputum urine, or stools;
- unexplained bruising;
- change in your bowels without explanation;
- persistent increasing headaches;
- unexplained tiredness.

Often patients with early cancer have some of the symptoms above but with a feeling something is ‘just not right’ which they have never felt before.

Some groups will also be at higher risk such as smokers, those with excess alcohol intake, UV or industrial exposure to certain things, dietary factors, or those with a specific family history of certain types of cancer.



Screening such as testicular or breast self-examination, Cervical smears, Bowel and Breast screening are also important to detecting cancer at an early stage before symptoms arise.

If you are concerned that you may have symptoms suggesting the possibility of cancer, you should discuss this with your medical centre.

In many cases your doctor or other health professional will be able to reassure you, but importantly they will arrange investigations where further information is needed about your symptoms.

Military vs Cancer embraces all three Services with the goal of purchasing equipment, goods, services or raising vital funds for organisations on the front line who provide diagnosis, treatment and emotional support to patients and families during the ongoing stages of their cancer journey.

For further information visit: www.militaryvscancer.com.



“I became unwell while on patrol May 2016. I was 30 years old and had always been in good health. I went suddenly from feeling fine to feeling quite unwell, I had muscular aches and fatigue you would associate with a bad cold, and a constant fever that needed regular paracetamol to keep my temperature down.

I spent the next four weeks at sea feeling unwell but able to manage the symptoms with regular paracetamol. When we returned, I had blood tests from the medical centre which showed a very high white blood cell count. I was admitted to hospital for tests. After tests I was diagnosed with a rare form of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

I was started on a course of chemotherapy, after three weeks in hospital I was discharged. From then on I would go to hospital every three weeks for chemotherapy treatment. The type of cancer I had was very aggressive and came on very quickly but was thankfully caught in time. I was given the all-clear in December 2016 and have since been in perfect health.

– POMA David Murray”

Cell, cell, cell as Renown merges ship support

CLASS cells – bringing the decision-making management of various warship types into one team – are the latest initiative under the ambitious project to increase ship availability.

The new cells will be responsible for supporting entire classes so that they are available for deployment when and where they are required, creating a single, empowered and accountable team with full responsibility over management of each class.

It's a linchpin of Project Renown, which is driving to provide the Navy with 80 per cent ship availability by 2026.

The cell teams – which will be directly responsible to Navy Command's Director Force Generation, Rear Admiral Steve Moorhouse – will combine the activities of the Strategic Class Authority, Navy FGen HQ, the Surface Flotilla and industry partners, closely resembling the management practice in commercial shipping.

The Class Manager will be empowered to take full responsibility for support delivery including: control of funding, control of resources, decision-making capability in critical areas and contractual routes for alternative or expedited sourcing.

Functions of the Class Cell team will include:

- Ensuring delivery of the Safety Delivery Duty Holder function;
- Force generation of ships out of upkeep;
- Crew management;
- In-service capability management for the class;
- Engineering availability of the ships, including the Platform Authority function;
- Engineering design management;
- Management and delivery of engineering support to the platforms;
- Spares demand and logistics management for the class of ships.

The roles of individuals in each Class Cell will not alter substantially, rather the aim is to provide clarity, reduce friction, speed up communication, improve decision-making and work as one team, ultimately, increasing ship availability.

And the Class Manager will be given the levers required to take full responsibility for the delivery of support for their class of ships. This includes control of funding, control of resources which directly support platform availability, decision making capability in critical areas and contractual routes for alternative or expedited sourcing.

As a result, the Class Cell hopes to improve the attitudes and feelings of people within the enterprise as there will be a greater availability of spares, fewer funding issues, a reduction of delays and therefore more time at sea.

The first Class Cell – responsible for Offshore Patrol Vessels – has been in place since November last year.

As these ships already achieve high availability, it allows some key elements of the Class Cell model to be tested in a safe environment.

This pilot will establish effective ways-of-working and highlight issues which need resolving before rolling out to other platforms.

Planning a Class Cell for a complex warship class is under way to add to our learning before being rolled out more widely in the surface flotilla.

The aim is to have a robust model developed and in place across all classes by March 2023.

For further information on the Class Cell or Project Renown email: DESShips-Spt-RENOWNComms@mod.gov.uk

Completing the top trio

THE changeover of the three most senior posts in the Royal Navy over the past four months is now complete with Vice Admiral Martin Connell taking over as Second Sea Lord.

He formally took over the role – whose portfolio is vast, embracing the RN's future capabilities, strategy and long-term programme, as well as being the Service's Principal Personnel Officer – from Vice Admiral Nick Hine aboard HMS Victory in Portsmouth.

Vice Admiral Andrew Burns took the helm as Fleet Commander in September, followed by new First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key, who's been the Navy's most senior officer since November.

Admiral Connell said that as a driving force behind the RN's transformation programme, his predecessor had done “an outstanding job” in pushing forward changes and improvements to help the Navy “adapt to meet the requirements of being a cutting-edge, technologically-advanced service”.

Admiral Hine said he had thoroughly enjoyed his service “so much so that I would do it all over again”.

He continued: “I have been all over the world and experiences things that most people dream of. From my time in diesel and nuclear submarines, small ships, frigates and destroyers, my Commands, and to serving well outside my comfort zone in Northern Ireland and Iraq, the people, places and experiences have been second to none.”

Admiral Connell joined the Navy as a Fleet Air Arm Observer and served as flight commander on HMS Coventry and HMS Manchester as well as serving as commanding officer on patrol ship HMS Severn, frigate HMS Chatham and aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious.

Rear Admiral Connell said: “I am honoured to have been selected to be the next Second Sea Lord and take on the baton from Vice Admiral Hine.

“We have seen re-deployment of personnel to better support the front line, innovative crewing models, and more certainty for our sailors, marines and civil servants. He will be a hard act to follow but I am excited and enthused by the challenge he has set.”

First deal in £3bn building maintenance plan begins

DEFENCE firm Mitie has been given a £160m contract to provide key maintenance work, repairs, servicing, and hard facilities management to more than 4,400 MOD buildings across Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The contract – the first under the Future Defence Infrastructure Services initiative – will run for seven years and is intended to provide quicker, improved high volume, lower value works.

It will also mean a shift away from ‘fix-on-fail’, instead focusing on carrying out preventative maintenance and a regular replacement regime.

The start of the first contract is part of a £3bn programme with the second beginning this month in the central/south west regions.

DOs go digital

The Digital Toolkit is now available for all Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel – one of the key outcomes of a review into the divisional system.

As part of People and Training Transformation, the divisional and regimental system has undergone a review for the first time since its inception, with a particular focus on the ‘Live Well’ and ‘Work Well’ elements of life in the Service.

While the divisional/regimental system was found to be effective, it needed modernising and the review team has been working with developers to shift some of the divisional processes into the digital realm.

The result is the Digital Toolkit, consisting of four apps hosted on SCIO which will empower all RN/RM personnel to take ownership of their administrative processes and their own performance.

In addition to the Digital Toolkit, there have been developments to the way in which the Royal Navy approach mentoring, coaching and leadership.

The MentoRNavy scheme has been established which is an inclusive, whole force programme expected to be at full operating capability by September.

It will provide opportunities and support to all who wish to engage

Your digital toolkit apps

■ JPA Data Check – a digital replacement for the paper JPA Personal Information Check, removing the paper processes;

■ DO / TC Dashboard – for executive staff/Divisional Officers to manage the administration and structure of personnel within their unit or division;

■ Reporting Tool – a digital ticketing tool to raise a range of personal issues which can be escalated or resolved through different levels of responsibility within the chain of command;

■ PIER (Performance Improvement Empowerment Record) – A tool designed to encourage individuals to take ownership of managing and recording their performance by logging events, skills and achievements relevant to their appraisal. For the Divisional Officer or Troop Commander, this will give greater oversight of the performance of individuals in their division and will significantly reduce the possibility of seeing repetitive and impersonal reports.

in a mentor/mentee relationship. Pilot schemes are already underway for both conventional and reverse mentoring and a digital platform is being established to support the mentoring pairing process and relationships.

The coaching workforce at the Royal



Navy Leadership Academy has been bolstered to maintain a consistently high quality of instruction, and communities of practice are being established on the Defence Connect platform. The approach to RN leadership has been formalised with new doctrine and a digital centre of excellence portal for leadership will come online in the spring.

App expands for all

CIVIL Servants and RFA personnel can now access the communications features of MyNavy such as notifications and announcements.

The app already receives around 80,000 visits a month from sailors and Royal Marines, allowing them to access a vast range of services and information via either a MODNET machine or personal devices.

To use MyNavy go to www.royalnavy.mod.uk/mynavy and follow the instructions to log on.





Tributes to RN stalwart and friend Charlie

TRIBUTES have been paid to Warrant Officer Charlie Lambert who died towards the end of last year after a short illness.

Originally from York, Charlie joined the Navy at the age of 16 as a junior weapons engineering mechanic (Radio) before later qualifying as a weapons engineering artificer.

With a 42-year career spanning six decades, he served in Leander-class and Type 23 frigates, plus Type 42 destroyers with operations in HMS Iron Duke in support of NATO operations in Kosovo, Richmond during the Second Gulf War in 2003 and Liverpool off Libya in 2011.

Ashore Charlie worked at communications establishments, including Harrogate, Gibraltar and Naples, and as an instructor at HMS Collingwood.

His final draft was to the Navy Safety Centre in Naval HQ in Portsmouth as an assistant to the Fleet Safety, Health and Environmental Officer, Lieutenant Commander Richard Woodbridge, coaching and mentoring officers and ship's companies, sharing his depth of knowledge to promote safety in the workplace.

"Charlie brought considerable breadth of experience and knowledge to my team," said Lt Cdr Woodbridge.

"He was committed to the Royal Navy and its health and safety, seeing clear value in what we did to improve safety across the Fleet.

"I spent many days working closely with Charlie as we travelled together around the UK, easy to get on with he was a good friend with more than enough service, field gun and family stories to ensure the long hours away were entertaining."

Married to Louise – whom he met in the Navy – since 1989 and the father of three children, Charlie was a passionate supporter of and participant in the field gun race. He began in the Brickwoods competition in the 80s... and he was still running with the HMNB Portsmouth team at the competition held in 2019 when they were the joint champions.

He also mentored and trained Royal Hospital School in the junior leaders' competition which came third in the 2018 finals.

An RN Captain is using his biography of a WW2 hero to sustain the memory of Coastal Forces

The Wright stuff

COMING from a career as refined as tea tasting and buying for Brooke Bond, there was little in Derek Wright's background – beyond a passion for yachting – to suggest dash, bravery and a flair for naval action.

But Wright – better known by his naval comrades as Jake – is typical of that greatest generation, rising to the challenge presented by the gravest threat Britain had faced since Napoleon to take the fight continually to the enemy.

Now serving RN officer Captain Chris O'Flaherty hopes today's generation of leaders and commanders can learn from his example – and help ongoing efforts to preserve the memory of men who crewed the 'Spitfires of the sea'.

He brings the life of Wright – who died in 2008 at the age of 92 – to life in a fascinating biography of one of the most highly-decorated naval reservists of World War 2.

Wright, who joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve before the war went on to receive the Distinguished Service Cross on three occasions for his deeds in Coastal Forces, the small, fast craft which protected the coastline and took the fight to the enemy in the Channel and North Sea throughout WW2.

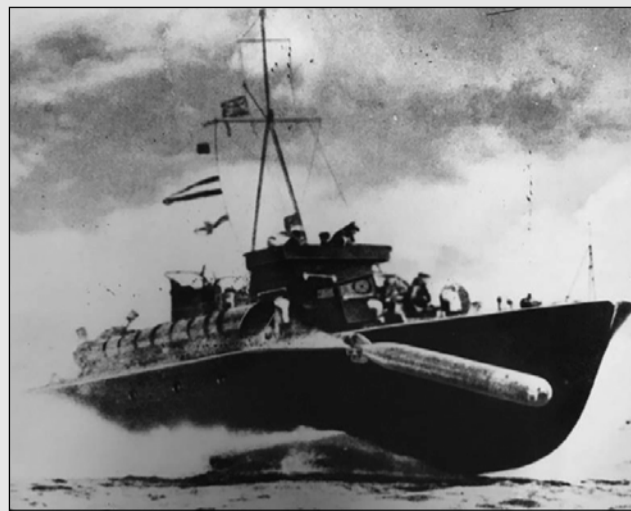
His baptism of fire was Dunkirk – though not in MTBs. Plucked from officer training at HMS King Alfred, he was sent to man one of the small craft which ferried troops to the bigger evacuation ships waiting offshore.

Commissioned in July 1940, he was then assigned to Motor Torpedo Boats. Quickly proving himself to be an outstanding tactician, he was then appointed in command of HMMTB 331 – now on display in the new Coastal Forces Museum in Gosport.

Although he did not see action during MTB 331's brief period of training to attack the German battleship Scharnhorst, in his next command he gallantly manoeuvred MTB 32 into the teeth of an enemy firestorm to deliver a successful



'Jake' Wright with his wife Mary outside Buckingham Palace after receiving his first DSC in December 1941 and (right) MTB 23 launches a torpedo



torpedo attack on a German coastal convoy. For his bravery in keeping his warship in a position to draw further enemy fire whilst an additional attack sank a second vessel, despite being wounded himself, he was awarded his first DSC.

During his service in the Coastal Forces – including periods in command of seven Motor Torpedo and Motor Gun Boats – he was involved in 12 separate actions against the Germans.

As well as six minelaying sorties off defended enemy coasts, these 12 actions included many 'whites of the eyes' attacks using torpedoes and close-range guns.

His favourite tactic was the 'slow stalk' – using primitive radar to track his enemy at just beyond the limit of night-time visibility before closing to unleash his deadly torpedo cargo. He was also influential in improving the design and layout of small warship bridges, improving attack success rates.

By the time he was demobilised in 1946 he'd risen to commander. He successfully translated his wartime combat leadership into his peacetime occupation with Brooke Bond tea; rapid promotions led to him becoming their Director of Global Tea Purchasing. He even helped perfect the perfect cup

of tea, setting the conditions for the first international standard in how to brew an exceptional 'wet'.

Torpedoes, Tea, and Medals (Casemate, ISBN 978-1636-241401 £16.99) published this month is Chris' second biography focusing on a Coastal Forces hero and the third book he has penned.



The first two were written during his tenure as the Royal Navy's Hudson Fellow at St Antony's College, University of Oxford – a fellowship established in 1997 to commemorate Lieutenant Guy Hudson DSC RNVR... and the subject of his first tome, *Crash Start*.

Hudson was another MTB pioneer who developed the tactics and drills for the radar control of the boats in close action. The reservist was left deeply traumatised by his experiences and suffered from undiagnosed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, turning to alcohol to help him cope with his own personal crashes.

Long before the mental health of veterans became the prominent issue it is today, Hudson's second wife who recognised this condition and helped him to recover his legal career, through which he earned enough money to establish the fellowship which is now his legacy.

And, honouring his roots as a minewarfare specialist and clearance diver, his second book *Naval Minewarfare: Politics to Practicalities* is a comprehensive strategic and operational assessment of the history of the 'weapon

that waits'. It was *Naval Review's* 'book of the quarter' in spring 2020 and was also nominated for the Mountbatten Book Award.

The royalties from all three of Chris' works go to naval charities; to the Hudson Fellowship from the first two, to the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust for his newest book, helping to preserve the heritage and memory of MTB heroes.

He also believes that although technologies and vessels have changed substantially, today's generation can learn much about psychology, leadership and tactical development from the men of the MTBs.

"The selfless gallantry of our coastal forces heroes, such as Jake Wright, provides many lessons for our Royal Navy warfighters of today – notwithstanding technological evolution, they will often have to put themselves directly in harm's way.

"Through superb leadership, our highly realistic training, and given our carefully developed tactics that evolve in response to enemy actions, the modern Royal Navy can emulate such past successes and therefore win in future maritime battle."

Featuring a foreword by former Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd, we've teamed up with Casemate to offer a ten per cent discount on *Torpedoes, Tea, and Medals* until the end of March. Enter the code "NavyNews10" at www.Casemate.co.uk when prompted to receive your discounted copy.



MTB 32 returns to Felixstowe following a sortie
Images: Naval Historical Branch and the Wright family



Shiny Sheff monument planned

VETERANS of HMS Sheffield are looking to raise £15,000 in just a couple of months – in time to install a memorial on the 40th anniversary of the loss of the destroyer.

Four decades after the Shiny Sheff was fatally hit by an Argentine missile, the men who served in three Royal Navy ships to bear the steel city's names intend to create a focal point in the UK to meet and pay their respects.

The HMS Sheffield Association – formed nearly 50 years ago to represent sailors of the WW2 cruiser, then the Type 42 and most recently the Type 22 frigate, built to replace the Falklands loss – has already had a scale model of the monument designed.

Artist Peter Naylor has designed a stainless-steel bow of a warship, suitably engraved and set in a cast stainless steel dark, rough sea.

If the association hits its target in time, Mr Noble's maquette will be turned into a full-sized monument to anyone who served in the three ships, which will be erected at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

A cross and memorial cairn already stand to the Shiny Sheff in the Falklands, rising above Sea Lion Island – the closest land to the spot where the destroyer was hit. It's remote, even by Falklands standards, but is regularly maintained by RN personnel based in the South Atlantic.

A monument in the UK would serve as a focal point for reunions, acts of thanksgiving and a chance to respect all those who've served in three generations of Sheffield's to date (and a fourth when the Type 26 frigate joins the fleet in the next decade).

Members hope the bow monument will be dedicated on May 4, 40 years to the day that an Exocet missile fired by an Argentine Super Etendard jet struck the destroyer when she was part of a defensive screen around the ships of the task force sent to liberate the Falklands.

The blast and subsequent fires killed 20 men and fatally damaged the ship. She was abandoned after a five-hour effort by firefighters and damage control teams and eventually sank six days later.

Penny Salt, the widow of Captain Sam Salt, Sheffield's Commanding Officer on the fateful day, has been asked to unveil the monument at the National Memorial Arboretum, anointing it with sea water brought from the South Atlantic.

Any funds left over after the memorial has been installed will be divided equally between the arboretum and The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Donations can be made at: www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/hmssheffieldnationalarboretummemorial

AN ICONIC WW2-era fighter will display in tribute to naval aviators after it was snapped up by the guardians of the Fleet Air Arm's history.

Charity Navy Wings has bought a vintage Supermarine Seafire – the naval version of Britain's most famous aircraft, the Spitfire – so it can appear at air displays as a 'flying memorial' to past air and ground crew.

Seafire Mk XVII SX336 landed at RNAS Yeovilton – where pilots learned to fly the fighters 80 years ago – to join Navy Wings' collection of legendary naval aircraft, including the Swordfish, Sea Fury, Sea Vixen and Sea Hawk.

Purchased with a major donation gifted for the specific purpose of adding a Seafire to the collection, Seafire SX336 is the only airworthy Mk XVII – and one of only very few Seafires still flying in the world.

The aircraft has been meticulously and lovingly restored by her former owner.

"SX336 is a magnificent example of the naval story of the Spitfire," said Navy Wings' CEO Jock Alexander.

"Few people know that the Spitfire went to sea, and we couldn't have wished for a more iconic and evocative British fighter to add to the collection."

Seafires served extensively with the Fleet Air Arm from the second half of World War 2 through to the Korean War a decade later. It particularly distinguished itself grappling with Kamikazes as the British Pacific Fleet helped to defeat Japan in 1944 and 1945.

Seafire SX336 is a Mk XVII model which rolled out of the Westland factory in Yeovil in 1946 and was painted in post-war Royal Navy colours with the

markings of Yeovilton-based 776 Naval Air Squadron.

Powered by a Rolls-Royce Griffon VI engine and possessing greater firepower and speed over the early models, SX336 flew over her birthplace before touching down at Yeovilton.

"The Seafire will not only be an exciting new display aircraft but will also enhance our broader heritage package, enabling the charity to provide different formations of aircraft to air show organisers in the future" said Navy Wings' Chief Operating Officer Frank Hopps.

"Flying aircraft are a unique archive of history and the Seafire gives the collection a real rarity value enabling us to deliver multiple benefits to our outreach and educational programmes."

The gift which enabled Navy Wings to purchase the Seafire also included a spare engine which is critical for the long-term support and sustainability of the veteran aircraft.

Skies of fire again



Cold War tales sought

THE team behind ambitious plans to create a Cold War museum in Plymouth are looking to capture memories of submarine operations.

The intended Cold War Centre – which would be located in Devonport Naval Base with retired hunter-killer submarine HMS Courageous as one of its key exhibits – is planned to both shed light on a conflict largely played out in the shadows and celebrate British science, technology and engineering which helped give the UK the edge over its foes.

Working with students from Plymouth College of Arts, they'll spend the first six months of 2022 recording first-hand accounts of those who fought the unseen, unsung 'war' beneath the waves for nearly 50 years.

Each interview will be conducted by the students and recorded to become part of an historical archive, while guidelines on security issues – and what you can and cannot talk about – will be provided.

As well as ex-submarine crew, the team want to hear from those in headquarters and support functions ashore.

The recordings will take place in the Plymouth area so if you live within reasonable striking distance of the city and wish to take part, contact Ian Whitehouse (ian@fradds.co.uk) with details of location, rate / rank / branch and the submarines in which you served.



Sailors go cap in hand to George

TWO sailors paid a 90-year-old veteran a surprise visit to remind him of his old ship.

Chief Petty Officer George Gordon served in the Royal Navy for 35 years, including a draft to Type 14 Frigate HMS Duncan.

Watching the TV documentary *Warship: Life at Sea*, which followed today's Duncan, he told his daughter Sue that he liked the look of the baseball caps the destroyer's crew were wearing.

Having suffered the loss of his wife and a bout of Covid recently, she thought the RN might be able to cheer him up.

Quicker than you can say "baseball caps to Aberdeen"... Midshipmen Callum O'Neill and Alasdair Ager were knocking on George's door in Kingswells to present not just a specially-embroidered cap, but a tally and

a framed print of the destroyer.

"It was truly a pleasure to meet George and his family and hear some of his incredible stories of his time in the Navy, from having a half tot of rum with Lord Mountbatten, to being present at the last issue of the rum ration and the days of bedding down in hammocks," said Alasdair.

"It was great to see that the connection from serving in the armed forces spans the generations and the lessons passed down from George certainly have their place in today's Navy."

George's daughter said her father was "so proud of the gifts they brought. He's a keen golfer, despite his age and although less physically able these days he will still be wearing the cap in the '19th hole' at his local club."



Queen returns

DUNKIRK veteran Medway Queen is back in Gillingham after six months on the slipway in Ramsgate for work on her hull.

The paddle steamer is credited with bringing home 7,000 troops from the besieged port in May/June 1940, running the gauntlet of German aircraft, artillery and patrol boats on seven occasions.

Eighty years after her finest hour, Medway Queen underwent repairs to her paddle wheels, hull and received new handrails as part of her latest stage of her restoration as a museum ship and reminder of the national effort made in 1940 to evacuate British forces from Dunkirk.

In addition to external work some of the smaller internal compartments which could not be safely painted without breathing equipment were revamped, saloon windows varnished and other jobs which needed specialist equipment or a safer working environment than in Gillingham were carried out.

Extra work meant extra cost and a longer spell in

dockyard hands than originally envisaged, partly offset by a lively fundraising drive to collect donations, sell books, give out information and recruit new members.

Tugs Christine and Nipashore helped the paddleboat home on her 50-mile voyage back to Gillingham Pier (pictured by Paul Babington).

The team hope to reopen the ship to the public on Saturdays later this month between 11am and 4pm with the 'Memories of Dunkirk' exhibition in the lower aft saloon.

"Medway Queen now looks magnificent in her new coats of paint, with the sign writing and lining out complete," said the preservation society's Richard Halton.

"We have to hope that 2022 will suffer fewer interruptions than the last couple of years and that we can really start to build visitor footfall and interest."

More details about the ship, progress with her restoration and when to visit can be found at www.medwayqueen.co.uk.



(L-r) Commodore Phil Waterhouse and his wife Colleen, Captain Ian McNaught, Cindy Glover and her husband Lieutenant Commander John Glover (President), Dana Oliver and her husband Lieutenant Commander Graham Oliver

Sea Urchins mark centenary

ONE hundred members of the Royal Naval Reserve Officers' Club, Liverpool – commonly known as the Sea Urchins – and guests celebrated their 100th annual dinner at HMS Eglet in Liverpool.

Guests of Honour were Commodore Phil Waterhouse, the Naval Regional Commander for Northern England, and Captain Ian McNaught, the Deputy Master of Trinity House.

Before dinner, the guests were treated to Splice the Mainbrace as a celebratory drink then took their places at dinner while a sailor's hornpipe was played.

The Club's President, Lieutenant Commander John Glover Royal Naval Reserve, spoke of the camaraderie of Naval service during World War 1, which was the catalyst for creating the club and how it had grown and lasted for so long.

He said that it was a credit to those who had gone before that the club was still in existence but there were still hills to climb – especially in recruiting new members.

RNBT reach the top

TOKYO 2020 gold medal-winning sailor Eilidh McIntyre joined builders and bosses of the RNBT to mark a milestone in the construction of their new care home.

Eilidh, who's an ambassador for the Royal Naval Association, clambered up the scaffolding off Locksway Road in Portsmouth for the traditional 'topping out' ceremony which effectively

marks the completion of the structure of the complex outwardly... just 12 months after the first turf was dug up.

Due to open this spring, once fitting out and landscaping of the grounds are completed, Admiral Jellicoe House – named after the charity's founder and Grand Fleet commander – will provide residential care needs in a 66-bed home for naval veterans.

Neptune tragedy service

PERSONNEL at Faslane marked the 80th anniversary of the loss of wartime HMS Neptune during a ceremony at the site's memorial to the tragedy.

Just one man survived the loss of the Leander-class light cruiser when she sailed into an Italian minefield off Tripoli on December 19 1941, sinking with the loss of 767 souls.

The name was resurrected a quarter of a century later with the

shore establishment at Faslane, and a monument to the ill-fated forebear.

Chaplain Reverend Mark Noakes led 80th anniversary commemorations, two Royal Navy Sailors from the Unit Personnel Office read the story of survivor, 20-year-old AB Norman Walton, and today's Captain of HMS Neptune, Captain Nick Gibbons, read the words of remembrance.

Naval Quirks

THE SINKING OF TWO GERMAN CRUISERS, BOTH NAMED "KONIGSBERG", 25 YEARS APART, GAVE THE RN TWO "FIRSTS"...

THE FIRST WAS SUNK BY MONITORS IN THE RUFUJI RIVER IN 1915 AND WAS THE FIRST WARSHIP SUNK USING AEROPLANES TO SPOT FOR THE GUNFIRE...

THE SECOND WAS SUNK BY FLEET AIR ARM SKUA DIVE-BOMBERS IN 1940 - THE FIRST MAJOR WARSHIP TO BE SUNK BY AIRCRAFT IN WARTIME.

DISTURBINGLY, HERE IS ANOTHER FIRST - I FOUND THAT QUITE INTERESTING CAP'N...



CBE reward for positive impact

New drums? That's brilliant

TWELVE new drums were handed over to TS Brilliant Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadets at a ceremony at the town's Masonic Centre.

Fundraising for the drums started last February, following the sudden death of the unit's chairman Derek Ireland.

The plan was to replace the existing drums, most of which were 40 years old, in the memory of Derek and other supporters of the unit no longer with us. Inscriptions on the new instruments would ensure those who served the unit would continue to be remembered.

The drums were blessed by the Rev David Houston RNR before being given to cadets by the drums' donors.

Unit chairman Dan Cooper and fundraising lead Claire O'Neill thanked the sponsors, including the Round Table and Tunbridge Wells Rotary Club.

The end of the presentation saw an impressive band display, led by Petty Officer Simon Taylor, the unit's band master.



Top honour for Whitehaven

CADETS and volunteers at Whitehaven Sea Cadet were granted the highest possible award during their annual inspection process for the third year running.

To recognise this, they were presented with a fish tailed flag called a burgee to be displayed within the unit.

The annual unit review looks at every aspect of unit performance and measures the quality of training and wider engagements to make sure the cadets are given the best possible experience.

PO (SCC) Stuart McCourt, Commanding Officer, said: "The cadets and volunteers have shown an enormous amount of resilience and determination, especially with all the extra challenges we had to overcome with Covid restrictions. I am delighted that this been recognised with such a prestigious award."

THE positive impact that the Sea Cadets is having has been recognised through the Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) medal awarded to its Chief Executive, Martin Coles.

Martin is among the leading figures in the maritime charity sector to have been recognised for his services to youth development and seafarers in the Queen's UK New Year Honours List for 2022.

"The past two years have been really challenging for young people, who are the forgotten victims of this pandemic, suffering lost education, numerous restrictions and massive uncertainties," said Martin, who has been at the helm of Marine Society and Sea Cadets since 2010.

Sea Cadets was able to keep on delivering for its 14,000 cadets throughout the pandemic by embracing digital and flexible ways of working through Virtual Sea Cadets, launching a new online cadet portal and introducing a radically different approach to training.

By providing clear guidance, targeted reskilling training for volunteers and continuous communication with cadets,

parents and volunteers, Sea Cadets units achieved an early return to face-to-face activity. This has ensured that cadets were able to get back out on the water and engage in training opportunity in between each lockdown. As a result, during the height of the pandemic in 2020/21, the charity was able to deliver 150,000 boating hours to cadets, while 22,000 qualifications were earned through the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

"All of this has only been possible due to our amazing 9,000 volunteers who make Sea Cadets happen and I am in awe of their passion, commitment and can do attitude," said Martin.

"I may wave the baton every now and then, but the impact delivered for so many young people is the result of this amazing orchestra of volunteers, supporters and employees who are masters of their instruments and already know the right tune!"

Sea Cadets continues to attract children and young people, with a growing waiting list across its 400 units offering nautical adventure and fun, helping them to launch well in life today.



Nicole's work rewarded

NICOLE Geraghty has been awarded an MBE for the volunteering work she does with Wessex District Sea Cadets at a special event held in Windsor Castle.

The 28-year-old volunteer, who joined Sea Cadets when she was 11 years old, received the MBE from Prince Charles for her re-working of the cadets' syllabus as everything moved online during the first lockdown.

"I knew that the young cadets could get bored looking at PowerPoint when they were used to being out and about doing activities," says Nicole, "So I set out to make it as fun and engaging as possible."

"I'm passionate about the soft skills you can learn in the Sea Cadets – like leadership, confidence and communication. One of the best parts for me was working with some of the older cadets who are 15 to 17, to help them design sessions to run for the younger ones. This developed their own skills and confidence."

In a 'normal' year, the cadets would be out on boats and learning how they're constructed. One of the programmes Nicole wrote gave the cadets a similar experience, where instead they made boats out of bread and learnt about their construction. And when the lockdown lifted, they could go out to the boats and understand their construction. And when the cadets couldn't go camping because of lockdown, Nicole arranged a virtual camping night.



Instructor earns unit defibrillator

EXMOUTH Sea Cadets Unit has been given a free defibrillator from local newspaper *Exmouth Journal* after hearing about the heroic efforts of their 19-year-old instructor and former sea cadet, Nikita Thompson.

The teenager made front-page news just before Christmas, after saving the life of her neighbour when he suffered a heart attack outside his home.

Nikita leapt into action, performing CPR and then calling an ambulance. She continued to assist the medics until 66-year-old Barry was taken to hospital.

Barry said: "The doctors and ambulance crew have told me that if it wasn't for the quick and correct CPR done by Nikita, I'd be dead. What she did undoubtedly saved my life and I can't thank her enough."

Nikita, who joined the unit at the age of ten, said: "I was just glad I was able to help, and the fact he survived is just a great feeling."

"I didn't have time to worry and all the great training I received in the Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Detachment just kicked into action."

Commanding Officer Sub Lt Sarah Andrews RNR, said: "First Aid is just one of the many great skills we teach our cadets."

"We are so proud of Nikita and that the skills Nikita has learnt through being part of our unit has made a difference to someone's life."

"The defibrillator is a great addition to our unit. We have training defibrillators available for our cadets to practise on, however this will benefit not only the Sea Cadets but, all of our other groups that use our facilities should the need arise."



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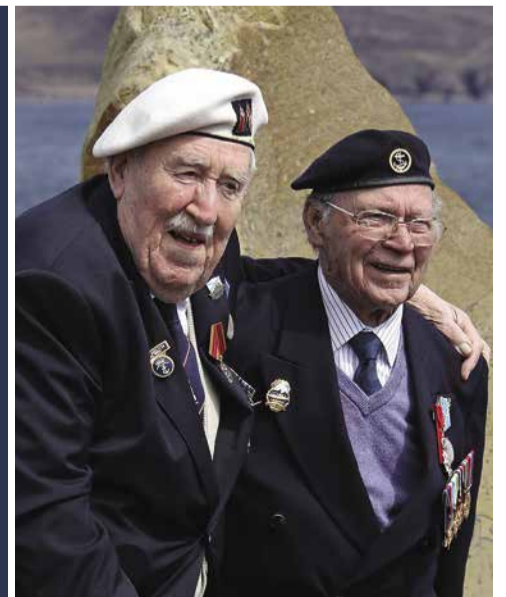
If you need help or would like to donate or volunteer contact RNBT.

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

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

www.rnbt.org.uk

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Port Talbot banked on donations



CADETS at Port Talbot Sea Cadets Unit in the historic county of Glamorgan (Morgannwg) did their bit to help those less fortunate over the festive season.

Answering a plea for help from their local foodbank, they spent the lead-up to Christmas collecting a variety of foodstuffs, ranging from tinned food and boxes of cereal to juices, long-life milk, sweets and Christmas treats.

Chief Petty Officer (SCC) Rhodri Thomas, who is the unit's Commanding Officer, said: "It's really important for us to help the community and it was the cadets idea to organise a food collection for the foodbank.

"The cadets are at the heart of the community and if we can help other organisations then we will. The cadets should feel so proud of themselves for collecting so much food for people in need."

The Port Talbot Sea Cadets Unit is based at Old Harbour House, North Wharf, The Old Docks, and meet on Tuesday and Friday nights.

Community rally to help family

THE public has responded with warmth to an appeal for donations to buy a motorised wheelchair for teenaged Declan, whose four family members are all part of Sea Cadets.

Declan, aged 16, lives in Hertfordshire and was born with cerebral palsy, as well as having scoliosis.

He has used a self-propelling wheelchair most of his life but was told by his physiotherapist that without a powered chair his posture would deteriorate more rapidly.

Declan does not qualify for NHS support for a motorised wheelchair, which would also improve the quality of his life and give him more freedom.

Since his family couldn't afford the huge cost of the powerchair, they set up a GoFundMe page over the new year to ask for help.

Declan's family are all POs and part of Sea Cadets. His mother, Marlene is the Commanding Officer of the Rickmansworth and Watford Sea Cadets Unit as well as a paddlesport and powerboat instructor.

Declan's father Richard is an Armoury Controller for the unit, as well as a seamanship instructor.

His sister, Helena is a drill instructor, paddlesports, sailing and powerboat instructor and his brother, Dominic is a drill and paddlesports instructor.

Helena said: "The response has been overwhelming. Considering the time of year, we raised over £6,000 in just over 24 hours.

"People have been so generous. It has been so heart-warming to know that so many people have been so supportive for a family that they don't necessarily know.

"We would like to send our heartfelt thanks to everyone that had donated or even just



shared the page. We are very humbled by it all."

Marlene, said: "Having a motorised wheelchair means Declan's independence will grow and it will mean he can do things like venture off the paths or get on or off a bus more easily.

"There are so many restrictions when you have a manually-powered chair and he gets tired self-propelling."

Adam Finch, an instructor at the Rickmansworth and Watford Sea Cadets

Unit and a close friend of the family said: "The Rhodes family are the kindest and most selfless people you could ever be blessed to know.

"They spend countless hours giving to young people from the area and they are integral to the success of our unit, the driving force that makes things happen. They wouldn't normally ask for help so it's brilliant to see the community give back."

To make a donation, please visit <https://gofund.me/4e9411b8>

Clydebank Sea Cadets really clean up

CADETS at the Clydebank Sea Cadets Unit did a litter pick along the Forth and Clyde Canal during the Christmas holidays, hauling a record of 12 bags of rubbish in a bid to get their town clean and looking its best again.

The litter pick was organised by Peter Adams, Chairman of Clydebank's Sea Cadets Unit, who said: "The Forth and Clyde Canal is both close to our unit and close to our hearts.

"Therefore, to take a stand against pollution, the Clydebank cadets trekked a mile down one side of the canal and then over a bridge and back a mile along the other side, armed with litter-pickers and protective clothing from West Dunbartonshire Council."

"The Christmas Clean Up litter pick along the canal is an event we started last year and will continue to do annually due to its popularity with the cadets and the positive impact it has on the community," said the Commanding Officer of Clydebank Unit, Sub Lieutenant (SCC) Nadine Daly RNR.



"With music and Christmas cheer, everyone finds it surprisingly fun! This year, we were joined by members of other local organisations so it has also helped to bring the community together and to strengthen links."

Cadet Michael said: "This was my first time taking part in the Christmas Clean Up and it was great fun!"

"We use the canal a lot for Sea Cadets activities, so it's important that we help look after it. There is

always a lot for us to collect; it's a shame really," said Cadet First Class Ellie.

Able Cadet Miriam said: "It is really interesting to see all the types of rubbish that people just leave behind them. I'm glad we can do our bit in helping the canal to be a nicer place for people, animals and the environment."

"Helping others within the community is really important to us at Clydebank Unit. Collecting the litter which is left along

the canal allows us to help not only the community, but the environment too. It has been nice to see the interest we have had in our litter pick. I think it's just going to grow and grow as more people and organisations get involved each year," said Leading Cadet Joanne.

Cadets got stuck into the task to make their community a better place for everyone – and, in fact, they had to be persuaded to stop bagging at the end of the day, when it was time to go home! They were handed a well-deserved cup of hot chicken soup at the end of the clean up, which they drank along the bank of the canal. The local Asda also rewarded their efforts by giving them a selection box of chocolates to enjoy.

The Clydebank Unit were praised by the local community and received many 'likes' and comments on Facebook for their efforts.

The Clydebank Post ran a two-page feature about the litter pick as well. The cadets are aiming to beat their 12-bag record next Christmas.



Braving icy waters for charitable causes

CROWDS gathered on New Year's Eve to watch brave swimmers plunge into the icy waters of Whitehaven harbour in a bid to raise money for charitable causes.

Among the group of intrepid swimmers were two cadets from Whitehaven Unit, who took part in the winter swim to raise funds for their unit through sponsorship, Cadet 1st Class Harrison, New Entry Shaun and their families.

"All of us at the unit are really proud of our two cadets who took part to raise much-needed funds for the unit," said the Commanding Officer of Whitehaven Sea Cadets, PO (SCC) Stuart McCourt.

"The cadets told us the water was freezing at first, but once they got used to it, they really enjoyed the experience and now want to take part in the next event as well. Thank you so much to everyone who so generously supported us."

The swim is held every year and is a popular way for local community members to fundraise for their chosen causes. A bucket collection is also organised for the Whitehaven Coastguard Rescue Team and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) at the event.

Other individuals that took part in the dip raised money for charities such as BEE Unique, a charity for children with autism and Whitehaven Community Trust, a charity that helps vulnerable young people get back into proper housing.

Funding for key kit

RYDE Sea Cadets have been awarded £3,115 by the Isle of Wight Foundation to purchase first aid equipment and a watersports kit for their cadets.

The Sea Cadets unit is one of five of the worthy causes to receive funding from the charitable trust with the aim of tackling social exclusion by providing access to training and qualifications and building stronger communities.

Sub Lt Darren Toogood (SCC) RNR Executive Officer at Ryde Sea Cadets said: "More than 20 young people are involved in Ryde Sea Cadets, an organisation that provides essential life skills such as team work and effective communication."

"The grant from the foundation will allow us to buy a number of kayaks for use during pool-based safety drills and activities. It will also fund a 'Little Annie' resuscitation doll for the cadets to learn and practice CPR as well as the treatment of cuts and breaks to limbs as part of their first aid training."

Each year, local groups are invited to apply for grants of between £3,000 and £16,000 to fund projects that help to tackle social exclusion.

Home-Start Isle of Wight, The Phoenix Project, Ryde Sea Cadets, Havenstreet Community Association and Wessex Cancer Trust received funding worth over £30,000 collectively.

They join the six previously announced organisations to receive grants of up to £16,000 from the charitable trust which is funded by the companies behind Island Roads. To date, the Isle of Wight Foundation has donated more than £600,000 to local projects.

11th Burgee for Poole

POOLE Sea Cadets have been awarded a Burgee once again, the highest form of recognition that can be awarded to a Sea Cadet Corps unit.

Commanding Officer, SLt (SCC) Reece Oliver RNR, said: "It's great that Poole is recognised again as a high performing Unit with a 2021 Burgee.

"It's our eleventh Burgee in a row now, the last three being under my command.

"It's amazing to think the unit can consistently deliver to such a high level which is simply down to dedication of the volunteers through the years that enable the best cadet experience possible. It's also thanks to the cadets themselves, who so eagerly take the opportunities."

"It places pressure to want to drive and continue to perform at this level but the benefits are clear, not only for our cadets but others in the wider Wessex District. The last year has clearly been challenging but I hope we can continue on this trend."

The award recognises the hard work of volunteers, cadets, and the unit's management team. Sea Cadets units are inspected by the Ministry of Defence annually and are graded from needing improvement, to exceeding the levels expected.

The ministry looks at every sea cadet group each year, assessing them on everything from the quality of cadets' training, qualifications, courses and experiences and how the youngsters perform in training to how well the unit is run in general. The 'very good' units receive a Pennant award while the units judged to be 'the best' are awarded a Burgee.



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See ya later, alligator

PERSONNEL from HMS Medway enjoyed adventure training in Jacksonville, Florida, after two Royal Navy AT instructors joined the patrol ship.

All 50 members of the ship's company were offered the chance to unwind and take part in paddle boarding, snorkelling with manatees, mountain biking, or trekking through the national parks to observe the region's diverse wildlife.

Florida's flat environment is a dream for cyclists and the crew made use of a trail in Hana National Park, while other personnel visited Ocala National Park, where they enjoyed paddle boarding and snorkelling in the alligator-infested springs of the park.

Here the clear spring water is a haven for many species of fish but the main spectacle were the docile manatee, or sea cows. Personnel also spotted raccoons, terrapins, bald eagles but lost out on the hope of seeing a black bear.

Medway's Executive Officer Lt Cdr Carla Higgins said: "RNATT has created fantastic opportunities for the ship's company to showcase, develop and learn new skills like hiking, mountain biking, paddle boarding and snorkelling while exploring Florida's nature and surroundings."

"This has been a valuable experience and welcome break for those who were away from their families at Christmas."

Sub Lt Harry Stubbington, the ship's deputy gunner, added: "Mountain biking in Hana Park afforded the opportunity to get off ship during a hectic SMP. The day was challenging and offered technical and non-technical riding along the Florida coastline which put a huge



smile on everyone's faces."

The offshore patrol ship spent the festive season in Florida during a maintenance programme. The ship, part of Atlantic Patrol Task Group North, played a key role for the UK in supporting overseas territories in the Caribbean during the hurricane season, as well as patrolling to intercept any illegal activity.

The AT came after eight members of the ship enjoyed an afternoon's windsurfing in Caracas Bay on the Caribbean island of Curacao.

Further AT opportunities are planned for later in the ship's deployment and will include leadership courses in mountain biking and stand-up paddle boarding.

The Royal Navy Adventurous Training Team is a deployable team of Royal Navy/Royal Marines instructors whose main aim is the front-line delivery of adventurous and challenging activities to aid retention, improve morale and increase operational capability.

For further information, contact CSGT Richie Hall – RNATT W IC and Corps AT Advisor on Richard.Hall396@mod.gov.uk

Pictures: LPhot Finn Hutchins



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Powerlifter carries weight of the world

A ROYAL NAVY powerlifter based at HM Naval Base Clyde has represented Great Britain at the world powerlifting championships in Lithuania.

Petty Officer Catering Services (PO)(CS) Wesley 'Wes' McGuinness competed at the International Powerlifting Federation (IPF) tournament in the bench press discipline.

The 32-year-old submariner from Sunderland finished seventh, achieving a bench press of 167.5kg against some very 'strong' competition.

PO McGuinness started his powerlifting journey in 2011, and within three years had represented England at the 'Four Nations' power lifting championships.

In 2016, PO McGuinness upped the ante (along with the weight) and joined British Powerlifting, the highest level of British power lifting association in the United Kingdom.

He said: "Strength training over the last ten years has been no easy task. I took up powerlifting back in 2011. It was clear to me that if I wanted to reach the top of my sport it will take a lot of patience and consistency."

"The most important thing is to have a vision or a goal of what you want out of your training, whether that be a local competition in ten weeks or a national championship. I really struggle to get motivated if I don't have a target to meet, I can't just go through the motions in the gym."

Oh Muay, a great session

A GROUP of 20 phase 2 naval personnel conducted a grass-roots session of Muay Thai at Fierce Muay Thai in Fareham.

This was a different experience for the competitors who usually attend the session run by Gary Gregory in the SARC at HMS Sultan (usually held in a squash court).

They got to experience a new environment which has been specifically tailored for the needs of Muay Thai athletes of which currently there isn't such a facility for naval personnel to use.

AB Johnson said: "It was a very good session of which we did technical training including clinch and knees with a lot of kicks."

"The instructors were very good and very well equipped for the session, the instruction we usually get is also very good but it was great to be in a new place. I hope to carry on training with the Royal Navy."

RN/RM take honours for first time

A HOTLY-contested Inter-Service Car Racing Championship saw the Royal Navy take the honours for the first time.

Lt Cdr Keith Attwood, of 815 NAS, finished the season with 97 points, well ahead of the Army's Doug Inglis, who finished with 79 points.

Thirty-five drivers competed in eight races on four different circuits last season, with the Royal Navy recording some strong individual performances, particularly from LAET Seb Unwin (JARTS), Lt Cdr Mike Wells (847 NAS), and CPO Gareth Moss.

The final race of the season was the 12-hour Race of Remembrance at Anglesey, where cars are on the track for six hours on two consecutive days.

Five RN and RM drivers were supported by eight pit crew as 54 teams took part, with qualifying putting the RN fourth in class at the

start. LAET Unwin was first out for the RN, followed by L/Cpl Adam Dewis, Lt Cdr Wells and Lt Cdr Attwood.

At the end of day one the RN were third in class but three laps ahead of the lead RAF car and ten laps ahead of the REME vehicle.

Lt Cdr Attwood resumed in the driving seat on day two where a number of incidents resulted in multiple appearances of the safety car.

The RN lost a position but after a pause for a Service of Remembrance, the race was back on with CPO Moss in the driving seat, followed by Lt Cdr Wells and L/Cpl Dewis.

The car held together and the drivers were in tip-top form, pulling the RN back to second place with a commanding lead over their service rivals.

The Senior Service finished second in class and seven laps ahead of the nearest RAF car.

Rehab triathlon returns to Hasler



MORE than 40 personnel took part in the Hasler Rehab Triathlon, held at HMNB Devonport.

Organised and run by the HMS Drake based Royal Naval Recovery Centre (RNRC) Hasler, competitors had been eagerly training for the recovery event, which was the first to be run since the pandemic struck.

"Everyone here has been training pretty hard for today," said the commanding Officer of RNRC Hasler, Major Steve Cox Royal Marines. "It means so much to so many people. It represents a goal in their individual pathways to recovery and competing with others brings so much joy, you only have to look around and see the enthusiasm, dedication and effort, from instructors and competitors alike."

The Rehab Triathlon attracted personnel and teams from 45 Commando based in Scotland, Stonehouse's 30 Commando, The Army's Royal Citadel 29 Commando from Plymouth, HMS Drakes' Personnel Recovery Group and in house RNRC Hasler as well.

Competitors had to swim, cycle and row, in and around the Wyvern Centre Gym.

Picture: LPhot Juliet Ritsma

It's a knockout for RN fencers

RESERVIST and regular fencers met to do battle in one of the world's oldest sports.

Hopefuls from across the Fleet met at HMS Flying Fox in Bristol for the annual Royal Navy Knockout competition.

Home team Bristol URNU and HMS Flying Fox claimed third and fourth spot respectively with a combined team from London URNU and HMS President claiming second spot.

But the winners were the vastly experienced outfit representing Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC), Shrivenham.

The RNKO is an historic inter-unit team contest which took place on the drill deck of Bristol's Royal Naval Reserve Unit, HMS Flying Fox.

Originally established to provide teams for the Royal Tournament, the RNKO continues on as a high profile event in the calendar of the Royal Navy Amateur Fencing Association (RNAFA).

The two top-performing teams (JSCSC and London URNU/President) now go forward to represent the Royal Navy at the Inter-services fencing championships this summer.

Unit Operations Officer for HMS Flying Fox, and coach to BURNU and HMS Flying Fox teams, Major Gareth Knowles said: "I'm delighted we were able to host this high-profile event using the unit's excellent facilities and to welcome nearly 30 fencers representing 15 units from across the Royal Navy."

"This fixture has allowed HMS Flying Fox to build on our grass roots fencing development and has encouraged a significant amount of novice fencers to take their first steps into competitive sport."

"I'm thrilled that Bristol URNU won a very well deserved third place in their very first competitive event."

"Our goals at Flying Fox are to continue to promote fencing and competition within the



Royal Naval Reserve, develop new Reservist talent within the RN fencing team and invest in individuals' development; growing our own athletes and coaches and improving the lived experience for all."

Lt Cdr Sacha Brooks, the RNAFA Women's Team Captain commented: "This competition always gives you a little sense of optimism."

"It allows you to fence really quite competitively because you think 'I actually have a chance here. I'm going to see what I



can come away with'."

With selection complete for the inter-unit teams attending the 2022 inter-services fencing championships, the best will now look to feature in the individual competition at the prestigious Royal Navy Fencing championships.

Training clubs run at JSCSC and HMS Temeraire.

To find out more about Navy fencing email Lt Cdr Rubin Nash at 618pnas@royalnavymail.mod.uk

High turnout for cross-country event

MEMBERS of England's South-West Region's Athletics clubs gathered at RNAS Merryfield for the South West Cross-Country Championships.

More than 1,000 runners took part across nine categories, ranging from senior races to the under-11s.

The event, originally planned for 2021 but cancelled at short notice due to Covid restrictions, saw a bumper attendance this year thanks to the hard work and organisation of the small team of organisers, including members of RNAS Yeovilton's staff.

Lt Cdr Paul D'Arcy, Senior Naval Instructor at RNAS Yeovilton's Wildcat Training Centre and member of England Athletics' South West Council, was the nominated lead for the event ensuring that planning and running at the airfield continued smoothly.

"The chairman of the England Athletics' South West Council asked if I could help organise this

event when the landlord of the intended site removed permission in 2020. Merryfield is an ideal site; there is no interaction with the public, no roads or rivers and in the woodlands there are enough tracks to be able to facilitate long and short loops for the various age groups.

"I was an athlete in my youth and represented Taunton Athletics Club and competed at the county schools' events as a sprint hurdler. I'm hoping for selection for the Commonwealth Games in July and August this year."

"Part of my volunteer status has seen me become a member of the England Athletics Regional Council, with a responsibility to generate sporting opportunities all over the South West of England."

"The turn out for this event has been very welcome. It is a sign of how keen the running community are to be competing at a regional level again. In normal years we would anticipate a turn out of about 700, and this year has surpassed that."

Bragging rights for boxers

ROYAL Marine George Crotty and AB Sophie Colburn were declared sportsman and sportswoman of the year respectively as a number of trophies were handed out by sports broadcaster John Inverdale, whose father was a mainstay of Royal Navy Rugby Union.

Mne Crotty, pictured far right, spent the majority of the last two years representing the GB Boxing Team in the light heavyweight division as they prepared for the 2021 Olympics. He fought in two international tournaments, winning gold in both.

AB Colburn, pictured with John Inverdale, has won 13 out of 15 bouts for both RN Boxing and on the National Elite Boxing scene.

The all-female Royal Navy Equestrian Dressage team won the Team of the Year trophy after a series of Inter-Service and competition victories. The highlight of the team's year saw AB Robyn McFadden and Lt Cdr Suzanne Clark take first and third places respectively in a new tri-service tournament.

Midshipman Theo Dodds was named Young Sportsman of the Year for his contribution to Royal Navy Target Shooting. Competing for both GB and the UKAF, Mid Dodds is now preparing



to represent Great Britain at the 2024 World Championships.

The Official of the Year trophy was won by Lt Chris Mullen for Royal Navy Judo.

Having represented the Royal Navy in the Senior U81kg category at multiple national level competitions, in 2019, Lt Chris Mullen joined the Royal Navy Judo Committee as Judo Safety Officer.

Lt Mullen has since transformed not only the safety framework but perceptions of safety across the players and coaches too. His foresight and initiative throughout COVID-19 stood him out as a remarkable ambassador and committee member.

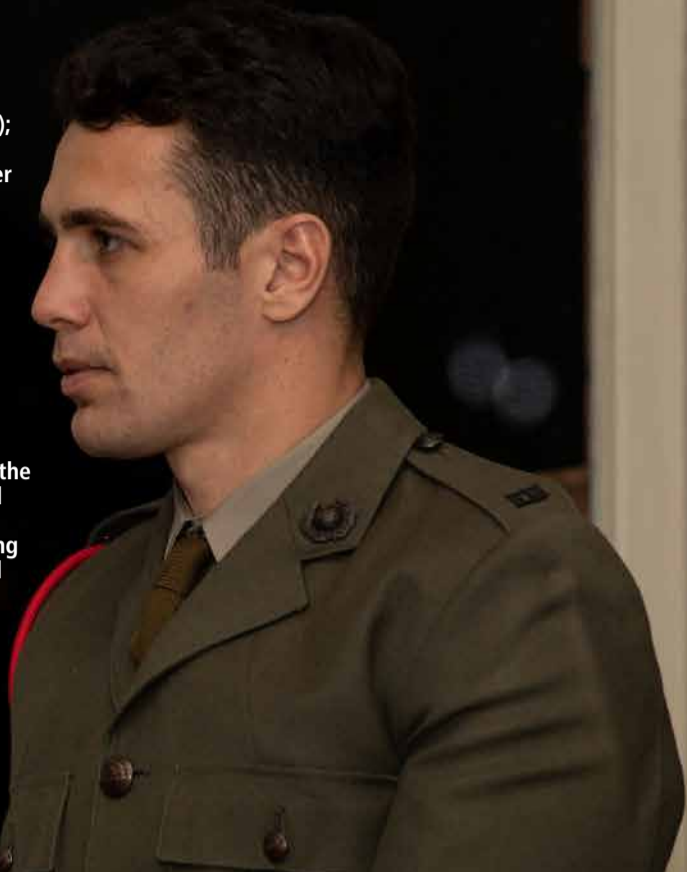
Lifetime Achievement awards were given to nine people, recognising their contribution to Royal Navy sport.

They are:
WO1 George Hillan (rugby); Linda Judd (cricket); Lt Cdr Dave Barrett Rtd (climbing); WO1 Bill Callister (motorsport); Paul Ransley (boxing); Cdr Keith Bowers (fencing); Maj Tommy McPhee RM (boxing); CPO Paul Stainsby (surfing); Lt Cdr Micky Norford (retired) (boxing).

Royal Navy Rugby League won a new team award acknowledging the efforts in fundraising and physical challenges during the pandemic. The team hosted multiple virtual fitness challenges, while fundraising for both the NHS and Royal British Legion.

Lt Cdr Amy Gilmore was also rewarded for her contribution to Royal Navy Triathlon, completing an Ironman race while battling serious illness.

Pictures: Alligin Photography / © Cat Goryn



but plenty for other sports to shout about



Target shooter, Midshipman Theo Dodds was named Young Sportsman of the Year



Members of the Royal Navy Equestrian Dressage Team who won the Team of the Year Trophy



Lt Chris Mullen received his Official of the Year award from sports broadcaster John Inverdale



WO1 George Hillan – rugby



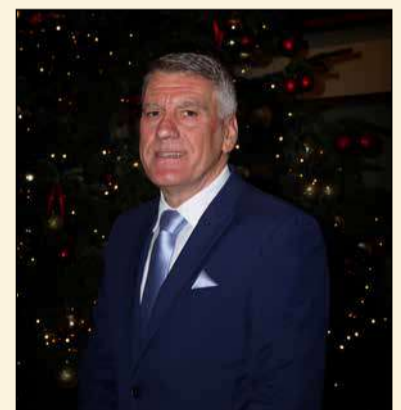
Linda Judd – cricket



Lt Cdr Dave Barrett – climbing



WO1 Bill Callister – motorsport



Paul Ransley – boxing



Cdr Keith Bowers – fencing



Maj Tommy McPhee – boxing



CPO Paul Stainsby – surfing

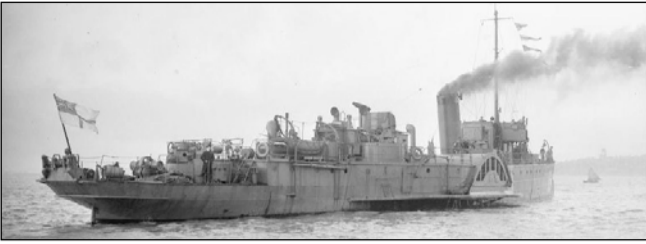


Lt Cdr Micky Norford – boxing



Lt Cdr Amy Gilmore – triathlon

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the December edition of Navy News (right) was the V-Class destroyer HMS Venus, which helped sink the Japanese cruiser Haguro in May 1945.

Mike Hatton, from Kent, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is a paddlesteamer hired as a minesweeper in both WW1 and WW2.

1. What was her name and 2. what secondary role did she take on during WW2?

Please complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.

We will also accept emailed entries to subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk with February 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 March 12.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted.

Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our April edition.

MYSTERY PICTURE 324

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Address
My answers: (1)
(2)

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Ask Jack columns in March's Noticeboard must be received by FEB 10 2022

Deaths

Michael Pearce, CWEM (R). Served from 1962 to 1987 in HMS St Vincent, Collingwood, Owen, Jufair, Pellow, Excellent, Llandaff, Warrior, Mauritius, Birmingham, Cambria, London, Hydra, and Flying Fox. Member of SAMA82 Association and Survey Ships Association. Died September 24, aged 74.

MEM Michael (Mike) Patrick Loker. Joined November 11 1963, left 1969. Served in HMS Ganges as part of 63 Recruitment and then served on HMS Penelope from 1965-55. Died November 3, aged 73.

John Anthony Williams WOSA. Served from 1973 to 1996 in HMS Raleigh, St Angelo, Pembroke, Collingwood, Hydra, Andromeda, Seahawk, and Invincible. Died aged 75.

James 'Nobby' Hall, CPOMEA. Served for 22 years in HMS Brazen, Alacrity, and Iron Duke. Played cornet and euphonium in RN Volunteer Bands. Died November 30.

Brian Green, LME. Served from 1948 to 1955 in HMS Implacable, Glen Dhu, Finisterre, and Vigo. Died August 1, 2021 aged 91.

Laurie McNichol. Wansbeck and District RNA. Died December 2021, aged 90.

Harold 'Buck' Buckley. Stoker. Served in HM Ships Urchin, Finisterre and Vigo. Last chairman of the Royal Naval Engineer Association. Member of HMS Bulwark, Albion, and Centaur Association. Died December 22, aged 79.

Surg Rear Adm Michael P W H Paine QHS. C-in-C Nav Home, C-in-C Fleet, RNH Haslar, RNH Stonehouse, HMS Plymouth, Dolphin, Repulse, Drake, Bulwark, Illustrious. Died December 22.

Capt Richard R W Rumble. FO Sea Training, C-in-C Fleet, HMS Rothesay, Collingwood, Vernon, Undaunted, Centurion, Nelson. Died December 11, aged 91.

Cdr Michael Priestley. HMS Lynx, Cleopatra, Minerva, Achilles, Galatea. Mercury. 736 737 801 800 819 NAS. NATO SHAPE. Died December 2.

Lt Arthur J Middleton. HMS Goldcrest. 803 831 and 738 NAS. Died December 5, aged 81.

John 'Jack' Rushton, Sgt, RM. Served: 1942-1946: 29 Battalion 1942-March 1943, 2nd Field Regiment March 1943-August 1943, Seige Regiment August 1943-November 1943, Armoured Support Group November 1943-July 1944, 3rd Amphibian Support Regiment July 1944-July 1946. Life Member of The Royal Naval Association; Joined Doncaster Branch RNA in 1946 and transferred to Castleford Branch RNA in 1960. He moved to Harrogate in 1972 where he was a founder member of the Harrogate Branch RNA and elected as chairman. During his time at Harrogate he was also No.11 Area Standard Bearer 1978-1982, No.11 Area Parade Marshall 1982-1992. In May 2009 he was awarded Life Vice Presidency of the Harrogate Branch RNA. In recent years Jack visited the Normandy Beaches, in France, during D-Day Commemorations and was awarded the Legion D'Honneur Medal by the French Government. Died January 1, aged 97.

Bob 'Dixie' Dixon, CPO. Served 1959 to 1983 at HMS Raleigh, Pembroke, St Vincent, Victory, Vernon, St Angelo, Sultan, RM Poole and SNOBI Cochrane. Also in HMS Llandaff, Bastion (Jufair), Crofton, Walkerton, Maidstone, Arethusia, Juno, Chichester

and Jersey. Died January 9, aged 78.

Commander Philip Harris OBE. Served from 1967 to 2005. HMS Lewiston, Eagle, Glasserton, Ark Royal, Dryad, Hermes, Norfolk, Cardiff, and Danae. SNFL, FOST, DN Plans. MPhil (Cantab) International Relations. UAE Joint Command and Staff College. Kuwait Joint Command and Staff College. Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra, Ghana. Died January 6.

Reg McGuire WO1. Served from 1964 to 1989 onboard HMS Wizard, HMS Tyne, HMS Torquay, HMS Glamorgan, HMS Achilles, HMS Arethusia, HMS Eurylas, HMS Fife, HMS Galatea, HMS Ajax, and HMS Nottingham, and shore establishments HMS Ganges, HMS Raleigh, HMS Cambridge, HMS Excellent, HMS Nelson, RNAS Portland, HMS Dryad, HMS Fisgard, BRNC, and HMS Heron. Reg joined the RNA in 1996 and subsequently served twice as Norwich Branch Chairman and was made a Life Member in 2014. Died January 12, aged 73.

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association

Frank Edmonstone ME1. HMS Bulwark 63/65. Died July 10, 2020.

Peter Comer. POAF. HMS Centaur & HMS Albion. Died July 2, 2021.

Major Stuart Syrad RM. HMS Bulwark & HMS Albion. Died August 23, 2020.

Joyce Bolton. Associate member. Died August 21, 2021.

Lt Col David Storrie RM. Died October 21, 2021.

Reunions

HMS Mohawk Association. Our next reunion will take place at the Mercure Dolphin Hotel in Southampton from Friday March 25 to 28. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact Bob Proud at rob.proud@mypostoffice.co.uk

HMS Lowestoft: The 10th HMS Lowestoft Association reunion will take place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, Hants, on Tuesday/Wednesday April 12/13. All who served in Lowestoft during her RN service (1961-1985) are welcome to attend (including wives/partners/guests). Why not come along and meet some old oppos and make some new friends. Bookings direct with hotel, for further details and a booking form please email: admin@hmslowestoft.uk

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association: The 2022 annual reunion takes place at the Red Lea Hotel in Scarborough, from May 13 to 16. Contact Secretary Denis Askham at 07773651213 or email askhamd3@gmail.com

HMS Fearless: Our 40th anniversary reunion takes place in Portsmouth from May 28 to 29. Tickets

for the gala dinner at the Royal Maritime Club need to be booked in advance and are £60 per head. Book viz: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hms-fearless-82-40th-anniversary-reunion-tickets-189862392527. On May 29 we muster at Gosport bus station at 9.45am ahead of a service at 11am and a parade via Gosport High Street to a reception at Walpole Park. Details on Fearless Old Boys Facebook page or SAMA82 website.

Fulmar Mountaineering Club: A reunion of the RNAS Lossiemouth-based club takes place at The Palace Hotel, Buxton, Derbyshire, from May 13-16. Contact Bud and Lin Abbott on linwhis5@gmail.com

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: Our 37th AGM and Reunion takes place on May 20-23 at the Sketchley Grange Hotel, Hinckley The weekend includes the AGM, gala dinner and a visit to the National Arboretum. Contact Honorary Secretary Warwick Franklin on 01752 366611 or warwick_franklin@outlook.com

HMS Aisne Last Commission 1966 to 68: A

reunion is planned at the Best Western Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from June 10 to 13. Contact the hotel or NigelJest@hotmail.co.uk

Royal Navy Photography Branch: Reunion planned for Friday November 4 to Monday November 7 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. All ex and serving photos, plus partners, welcome to mark the 103rd anniversary of the branch formation. Weekend includes tours of Portsmouth and the naval base, a gala dinner, and an annual meeting. Contact Danny du Feu. ddf.photography@gmail.com; Tel: 07711 083465.

HMS Ganges: A 60th anniversary celebration is planned for 54 Recruitment November 1962 Hawke 291 and 292 classes at Chatham in November. Any old boys who are interested please contact Robin Potter at r.potter60@talktalk.net

HMS Nottingham: A reunion for ship's company 2000-02. at RNR Eaglet, Liverpool Docks. Saturday May 7 at 1430 for 1500 start. Full details and registration from Alan.Murrell535@mod.gov.uk. Cost £10 per head.

Ask Jack

HMS Dainty: My father is trying to contact Dave Irwin and 'Crash Carl', with whom he served with aboard HMS Dainty. My dad's name is Reg Grogan. Lisa Hughes 07834269050

PITTOCK: I have two grandparents who died in action during WW1 and WW2 and cannot obtain photographs of them. One was AB James Arthur Pittock P/SSX5991, who died April 8 1940 on HMS Glowworm. The other was Stoker John Cooper 5685s who died on HMS Vanguard, on July 9 1917. I have tried all records with a nil result so can any of your readers help?

Loch Ruthven 53/54 Dryad 54/55. HMS Newcastle Far East 55/57, Dryad 57/58. HMS Victorious 58/60. Dryad 61 Left Navy March 61. Leading Seaman RP2. Belong to associations at St Vincent and Victorious. tonyturner36@hotmail.co.uk

HMS Matchless: My step father served on the Matchless and ran the Matchless Association until his death a few years ago. We still have 2 of the association's ties and wondered if you might have any suggestions as to how we might reach any of the veterans still alive (or their relatives) who might treasure one? Norman.haynes@ntlworld.com

The charity Front Line Naval Chaplain: We are for information about a WW2 'bish', the Rev Martin Martin-Harvey DSC. Records about Martin-Harvey, a temporary RNVR chaplain, are incomplete.

So far researchers have pieced together that he served in the famous Pedestal convoy to Malta in 1942, praying with dying men then later committing their bodies to the deep.

Later, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for actions while serving in the cruiser HMS Sirius (possibly when the ship was bombed, suffering 14 killed and many injured, during the bombardment of Kos).

He later went ashore on D-Day, having "had the good sense to take off his clothes and carry them on his head while wading ashore, thus ensuring a dry ship-shape condition in which to engage the enemy" - he was possibly serving with the Royal Marines at the time - he is listed at Bickleigh in 1946. After the war he became the chaplain of St Lawrence College, in Ramsgate.

Simon Springett frontlinetish@gmail.com

G Clarke: While clearing out the loft of a flat in Edinburgh that I am about to sell, I came across a kit record book for a G Clarke - service number D199758 - along with some other minor memorabilia.

If anyone wishes to claim the items please contact me. Dr BA Hobbs. Bruce.hobbs@geophys.co.uk

Fun top of agenda for Sultan women



THE HMS Sultan Branch of the Naval Servicewomen's Network (NSN) met for an afternoon of activities.

A competitive but friendly game of netball was enjoyed by attendees, including some male champions, ahead of a charity cake sale for domestic abuse charities ahead of talks held to promote issues of women's health and wellbeing.

The NSN is a professional network open to serving women of all ages and ranks, and from all arms of the Service, in order "to ensure all Naval Servicewomen's voices are heard".

The event was organised by one of the NSN mentors, Sub Lt Danielle May who said: "The main point was to get the women's network back together

allowing females on base to get to know each other and to know where they can go if they need some support.

"It's been great, everyone has been having some fun and then we've got the cakes and presentations on women's issues and health. No-one is in uniform, so rank and rate aren't important here, we're all females and we all want to look after each other which is the main thing and have fun."

NSN mentors are there to share expertise and experience and are available to talk to female personnel about wide-ranging issues.

For further information within HMS Sultan please speak to Sub Lt Danielle May, Sub Lt Fleur Spencer or Lt Holly Griffiths.

Vivid memories made on Tamar

ENJOYING the deployment of his career is Naval Reservist Mark Bramwell, mobilised to serve aboard HMS Tamar.

The HMS Vivid volunteer has been mobilised for 18 months as a general warfare rating to support Tamar's long-term mission to the Indo-Pacific region.

Together with her sister HMS Spey, the Portsmouth-based Overseas Patrol Ship is reviving the Royal Navy's permanent presence in the Pacific after a quarter of a century, responsible for a vast area from the eastern seaboard of Africa to the west coast of the USA.

The duo visited Hawaii before pushing westwards to their main operating area of the Pacific Rim.



It's the sixth time the Worcestershire native – a traditional shipwright in civilian life – has mobilised on active naval service in 20 years with the Royal Naval Reserve.

Serving in the force protection role, Mark has served aboard half a dozen RFA ships around the world from the Gulf and Indian Ocean to the Caribbean and now, aboard the new patrol ship in the Pacific.

"I have always had an interest in ships and the sea and knew I wanted a career in the maritime environment," he says.

"Joining the Royal Naval Reserves gave me the opportunity to pursue both a civilian and military career side-by-side and has proven to be extremely rewarding travelling the globe whilst serving my country."

His duties aboard Tamar include driving one of her two sea boats, providing protection for the ship both at sea and alongside, serving in first-aid parties, and representing the Navy and nation at ceremonial events.

His unit Commanding Officer in Plymouth Commander Serena Davis said Mark's mobilisation underlined the broad range of skills and experience provided by reservists in support of the Navy's front-line operations, be it at sea or ashore.

"Some people who have signed up for Reserve service as an adjunct to their civilian careers," she continued.

"Others are ex-Regular personnel who have transitioned to civilian career and want to maintain links with their friends and colleagues; all provide valuable knowledge, skills and experience to the Regular Service."



Patrol boat shows off to a host of visitors

SMALL ship HMS Sabre played a big role with a number of visitors all keen to experience some sea time.

The patrol boat provided training, familiarisation, and an introduction to life at sea during a busy eight days in the Solent.

Visitor to the Scimitar-class vessel included new officer cadets from HMS King Alfred and cadets from Portsmouth Grammar School, Ryde School, South East Reserve Forces and Cadet Association award holders and learners from Highbury and Fareham Colleges.

The visits were supported by Portsmouth Armed Forces Careers Office, Southampton Sea Cadets and the Ministry of Defence's Defence Business Services personnel.

All the groups that visited HMS Sabre met at HM Naval Base Portsmouth, where they boarded at 2 Basin with the exception of Ryde School, who were met at the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes on the Isle of Wight.

Most of the visits included an introduction to the patrol vessel, basic navigation, boat handling and man-overboard drills with

most visitors having a chance to take the helm under the watchful eye of the ship's Commanding Officer.

Following the busy visits programme Commanding Officer Chris Cotterill who took command of HMS Sabre in October, said: "My ship's company and I thoroughly enjoyed our time supporting SE RFCA and HMS King Alfred in particular as it allowed us to showcase the impact and capability of HMS Sabre and the Coastal Forces Squadron as a whole.

"It cannot be understated how valuable such Defence and civilian engagement is to both the individual and to the service as a whole, it also provided the additional benefit of allowing business leaders and employers in seeing first-hand what their Royal Navy and Reservists do.

"As a former Reservist myself, I can appreciate the value added to the Initial Naval Training element of HMS King Alfred in further developing their marinerisation through ship handling, navigation or seamanship. We look forward to conducting further training later this year."



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