



# NAVY NEWS

JANUARY 2022

## Leading the way

FRIGATE HMS Richmond stops in Malta on her way back to the UK. The warship led the way during the Carrier Strike Group deployment and returned home last month with the rest of the task group.

*(see pages 14-15)*

PICTURE:  
LH Oliver Leach



**Inside:** ■ Royal Marines prepare for Arctic ■ HMS Westminster  
■ Map of CSG deployment ■ HMS Portland ■ Homecomings





**BANG. Bang. Bang.**  
 After juddering and zig-zagging violently at speed for a couple of minutes, HMS Portland slows noticeably.  
 "It's the port motor, so we can only do 18 knots – that's all I've got."  
 The damage control report sounds like a soundbite from *Star Trek* – minus Scotty's theatricals and dodgy accent.  
 "997 is out, so I can't see," principal warfare officer Tom Loxton complains.  
 "You still have 50 per cent of your missiles," a voice reminds him amid the flurry of chatter in the operations room.  
 "Splashed by Sea Ceptor," says another. The enemy jet is down – but only after it wounded its prey.  
 Portland only returned to sea in late March – and it was early September before she was formally transferred back to the Fleet – after becoming the latest ship in the class to undergo a major mid-life upgrade, which included installing the Artisan 3D radar and replacing the aged Sea Wolf missile system with the new Sea Ceptor. Due to Covid measures, just one guest was present at the frigate's rededication (the wife of Commanding Officer Commander Tim Leeder).  
 Not only is the speed of the Type 23's regeneration, so too the manner in which it's been done. The ship is testing a new crewing model, built around a 'core crew', with additional sailors joining her for specific missions: submarine hunting, air-defence, maritime security and so on.

# Pioneering Portland m



**BOST.**  
 Six weeks of fire, flood, tension, conflict, disaster off Plymouth.  
 Right?  
 Wrong.  
 It could be two weeks off Plymouth. Or Portsmouth. Or Honolulu.  
 Or maybe one week. Or four.  
 It might focus on submarine hunting. Or gunnery. Or minehunting. Or the fundamentals of taking a warship to sea.  
 In fact, BOST – Basic Operational Sea Training – itself no longer exists, another key change in the (r)evolution sweeping through today's Royal Navy.  
 It's been a mainstay in the life of all warships since WW2, when it was introduced to prepare ships for the fight against the U-boat.  
 Eight decades later and known as Fleet Operational Sea Training, it readies British and allied ships for front-line operations around the globe.  
 In recent months it's undergone some fundamental changes in the ways that training is delivered – changes which will continue into the new year to meet the challenges of operations from Tokyo to Cape Horn and most places in between.  
 As a result, sailors are just as likely to encounter one of the 350 FOST personnel in Hawaii as the Hebrides, or the Caribbean as the Channel.  
 "The sun never sets on FOST training," says Captain Andrew Canale, Captain FOST (Ships), responsible for ensuring surface vessels receive the training they

need.  
 What was FOST North and South is now Submarines and Ships respectively. There remains some surface ship training delivered from Faslane but, as Capt Canale stresses, "we're less focused on where ships are trained, than how they are trained."  
 The traditional training areas remain. There's still an air attack on Tuesday and all-out war in Plymouth Sound every Thursday.  
 But the days of separating small ships (Scotland) and larger ones (Plymouth) are over. The bulk of recent training for the first-generation River-class patrol ships was conducted close to their home port of Portsmouth – sparing them several days' passage to Faslane and environs.  
 And with the increasing deployment of ships around the globe – a dozen warships now operate permanently from overseas bases – the way and where they are trained has had to adapt accordingly.  
 The growing rotation of crews or, in the case of HMS Montrose in Bahrain, entire crew swaps every few months, means sending 20-30 teams of FOST personnel to deliver training, ensuring that the regular changes do not impact on seafaring/safety/operational effectiveness.  
 "Once upon a time, you'd find us in the South Coast Exercise Areas and waters off north-west Scotland. Now the world is our training playground," Capt Canale adds.

"Over the next year, we will train ships and personnel in the four corners of the world – Falklands, Caribbean, Mediterranean, Middle East, Asia, Pacific.  
 "Delivering this global training is also our biggest challenge – we are operating in some relatively unfamiliar parts of the world, so we need to make sure the training is right for those regions and the missions and tasks carried out."  
 As well as the mobile teams roaming the globe, the training provided is now specifically tailored for ships depending on what they need.  
 Those six or so weeks off Plymouth undergoing the full Basic Operational Sea Training package? Gone.  
 Now there's OSST: Operational Sea Safety Training, embracing the basics of seafaring to safely taking a Royal Navy/RFA vessel to sea.  
 And WOST: Warfighting Operational Sea Safety Training, focusing on a ship's specific mission: air defence, submarine hunting, maritime security, minehunting and so on.  
 HMS Portland – which is trialling a new crewing model (above) – became the first recipients of the new package (admittedly delivered back-to-back off Plymouth, making it more like a traditional stint at FOST).  
 The idea is to increase both availability and effectiveness – OSSTed ships can carry limited duties if required while undergoing force generation, and WOST allows for bespoke training to sharpen spears.

"The days of a 'one size fits all' training package are gone. We need to meet the demands of ships – no two ships, no two deployments or operations are the same. That's the training we are now delivering," Captain Canale says.  
 While the command systems and technology have improved markedly, and training is increasingly focused on learning/nurturing/mentoring with numerous activities and assessments taking place concurrently, it remains labour intensive.  
 This month FOST begins next-generation 'synthetic' training aboard HMS Kent with the science/tech experts from Qinetiq.  
 "A simulator is standalone. Now imagine the possibilities with a real command system on a real warship and a scenario you can play out by connecting with other ships, plus throw in other training on board at the same time, such as damage control," Captain Canale explains.  
 "The future will see greater use of synthetics, simulators, automation, digitisation."  
 2022 will also see FOST begin work with the fledgling ship's company of HMS Glasgow (a dozen souls, eventually growing to over 160) to devise the training package for her and all subsequent Type 26 frigates. Type 31s won't be far behind.  
 Captain Canale last served in the organisation a decade ago since when he's been equerry to Her Majesty The Queen and commanded frigate HMS Sutherland.  
 Now three months into his new role at FOST, he says the



The aim is to get the most out of the ships – and the women and men who serve in them.

The ship has had to adapt its routines and how it deals with incidents – particularly firefighting/flooding and recovering casualties.

And the assessors and instructors have had to adapt their training regime – part of broader changes sweeping through Fleet Operational Sea Training to meet the needs of the Fleet of 2022 (see right).

**“It’s been hard work, but throughout my ship’s company have remained cheerful, shown they are up for a challenge. It’s the people who shine. And they have.”**

– COMMANDER TIM LEEDER

When we drop in, Portland is three weeks into her second, ‘worry’ phase of instruction and assessment in the South Coast Exercise Area.

As air defence workouts go, this is, the staff of FOST say, “it doesn’t get much easier. It is a pretty vanilla hit...”

And, to be honest, it doesn’t look much, if any different from air raids played out in the Channel week after week for decades.

The tech has changed – the warfare operators peer at colourful screens which can track far more threats than any of the old green and orange displays once did. Ceptor has replaced Wolf as the Type 23’s main line of air defence and

the 997 Artisan radar gives the frigate long-range eyes which those in the first ships in the class could only dream of 30 years ago.

But otherwise, black Hawks buzz and jink at speed as they make their fast, low passes as they always do on Tuesdays off Plymouth.

The difference lies in how the ship responds, less in the ops room – its team is, of course, being assessed – than the rest of the ship’s company, their damage control abilities with fewer personnel to turn to.

Among them, Leading Medical Assistant Ashleigh Newby from Huddersfield, who’s served for eight years and featured in one of the *Made in the Royal Navy* TV adverts.



Normally she’d be in charge of a ten-strong team of first aiders at action stations, co-ordinating their efforts. With fewer sailors embarked, that’s reduced to eight, but it’s also meant she’s treated ‘casualties’ rather than acting as a boss.

“I like the challenge,” she said. “The training has definitely been different and it’s been incredibly tiring, but I can cope with a hurricane! I’ve really enjoyed getting stuck in, being hands-on. And this is a great ship, a fantastic ship’s company.”

Guiding his men and women on the long road from lifeless hull to operational front-line warship is Commander Tim Leeder, who sings the praises of both the ship’s company and the training they’ve received.

“It’s demanding. There’s not much time off. We were fighting fires at 7am and air attacks all afternoon. That really stretches your concentration.

“For me, it’s the bits in the margins where the training provides real ‘added value’. It’s testing people under stress. Can you refuel the ship in the middle of the night after all that’s gone on in the day?”

Yes Portland can – with all the changes and unfamiliarities.

The Navy’s second most senior officer – Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Andrew Burns – joined the ship off Plymouth for the final day of training when the ship’s company were told they had passed.

“In under eight months we’ve gone from emerging from refit to becoming a fully operational warship – that’s an impressive ‘flash to bang’ for a state-of-the-art frigate,” said Commander Leeder.

“FOST and the South Coast Exercise Area is a phenomenal ‘office’ – the best in the world. It’s testing teamwork, the ability to work under stress or when tired.

“It’s been hard work, but throughout my ship’s company have remained cheerful, shown they are up for a challenge. For all the capability which the ship carries, it’s the people who shine. And they have.”

*Air raid threat is red.*  
The main broadcast bursts into life again.

*On anti-flash, on anti-flash.*  
*Strength two. Two minutes.*  
Here we go again...



# meets FOST in transition

organisation is changing quickly to meet the new demands of the Royal Navy.

“Our training is better now than ten years ago. It’s more intuitive, we are better at mentoring. We spend more time on board, getting to know the team, helping, replaying exercises,” he explained.

“FOST is much more ‘international’ now than it was ten years ago. We are reaching out to our partners and allies – there are 11 nationalities on our staff.”

The Dutch recently celebrated 60 years of sending their ships through Royal Navy operational training. Warships flying the Danish, Norwegian and German ensigns are regulars too.

And the US Navy has decided to send two of its four destroyers based at Rota in Spain through FOST every year.

“These are great endorsements of what we do – and of what the Royal Navy does,” the captain stresses.

Training RN and RFA vessels remains FOST bread and butter. Staff are currently poring over reports and lessons from HMS Queen Elizabeth and her task group to incorporate lessons into training for the next time the ships deploy – collectively or individually.

“You never stop learning, you never stop evolving, improving. If you stand still, you stop being relevant,” Captain Canale adds.

“I think for the size of the organisation – 350 people – and what we deliver to dozens of warships, FOST does an outstanding job.

“We want every ship to succeed. But one thing never changes: our standard. That’s non-negotiable.”





## Faslane's Key role

THERE is no more important mission performed by the UK's Armed Forces than the defence of the mother country.

So it was fitting that the first official duty of the Royal Navy's new leader, Admiral Sir Ben Key, was to meet the men and women at HM Naval Base Clyde behind Operation Relentless – delivering the nation's nuclear deterrence courtesy of the four Vanguard-class submarines based on the Clyde.

The First Sea Lord, who assumed the role of Britain's most senior sailor from Admiral Sir Tony Radakin aboard HMS Victory in November, spent a night and day in Faslane meeting personnel senior and junior, all involved in operations delivered at the base:

- hunter-killer patrols by Astute and Trafalgar-class Fleet submarines, protecting the nuclear deterrent boats, whose 24/7/365 mission is now in its 53rd year;
- Sandown and autonomous minehunters keeping sea lanes open;
- and the Royal Marines of 43 Commando who, with the RN and MOD police, help protect the deterrent when V boats are surfaced, and also protect the missiles themselves at the nearby armament depot at Coulport.

As well as formal presentations from commanders, Admiral Key held a clear lower deck to discuss issues impacting on life, training and operations with a cross-section of Clyde-based personnel (pictured by LPhoto Barry Wheeler).

"Having returned to the Royal Navy after two and a half years as Chief of Joint Operations, I was delighted to be able to visit Faslane and thank the outstanding women and men of the Submarine Service for what they are doing," Admiral Key said.

"Day in and day out – and in challenging circumstances, far from home and with the support of friends and family – they continue to deliver all the tasks asked of them providing a vital role to defend our nation."

Commodore Jim Perks, head of the RN Submarine Service, who hosted Admiral Key, added: "The visit by the First Sea Lord so early in his tenure re-emphasises the importance that the Royal Navy places on the work done on the Clyde and the efforts of our people to deliver defence's number one priority, the Continuous At Sea Deterrence."

## Prince leads the way with front-line IT

HMS Prince of Wales is the first ship in the Fleet to receive the MOD's new front-line operational IT system.

OpNET will replace the existing computer/IT kit aboard Royal Navy vessels and has been specifically designed for use where bandwidth is limited and can be fitted to both surface ships and submarines.

The system has been developed by an in-house team in Defence Digital, who have spent several years working on the next-generation deployed IT.

The team has already delivered interim Blue (Coalition SECRET) solutions for interoperability with the US, NATO and other allies.

Now it is rolling out OpNET Red (for UK SECRET) and Black (for OFFICIAL), with Portsmouth-based HMS Prince of Wales the first ship to go live.

The hardware installation and migration of the carrier's data from legacy systems was completed in November. Three Black and three Red server racks have been fitted, as well as 800 "amulets" and laptops around the ship where users can access the system.

The system was tested comprehensively for three weeks and put through Harbour Acceptance Trials before being signed off ready for front-line duties at the end of November.

"Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers are the fulcrum of future maritime operations – be it planning strike missions for fifth-generation F-35 aircraft or supporting Defence Engagement activity across Government," said Captain Steve Higham, Prince of Wales' Commanding Officer.

"IT infrastructure is critical to our daily business as a flagship. Delivery of OpNET into HMS Prince of Wales will see Britain's biggest warship rightly benefit from the most modern and resilient IT system. Defence can provide and I look forward to exploiting this valuable capability during our forthcoming operational deployments."

Beyond hosting standard applications such as Microsoft Office, SharePoint, JPA, the Maritime Common Operating Picture and Operational Chat, OpNET is more powerful than its predecessor, more reliable, better able to deal with internet outages.

It is designed to fend off the latest cyber threats and is easier to set up and maintain.

And it provides significant upgrades to command and control applications on OpNET Red.

The same OpNET capability will soon be available for land-based users, including the Royal Marines; 3 Commando Brigade is already building the systems which will be fielded early this year.

# Kraken cracks on with data crunching

TOO much data across too many platforms and databases taking too many people too long to manage?

Sounds like a job for the Kraken. Project Kraken aims to streamline the data management process across various databases used by the RN/MOD and industry, allowing continuous access, analysis and collaboration across all data platforms which translates to real time data which can be used to make effective decisions, fast.

It's part of the broader Project Renown, the ambitious programme to increase the availability of ships by one third in just five years.

Kraken is a leading data integration tool which, over the next three to five years, will integrate data from across various databases utilised by the MOD, Royal Navy and

industry. The software used by Kraken contains a range of tools for manipulating and presenting data ranging from simple 'one click' and automated workflows to a full open source code development library for Machine Learning.

What makes it truly powerful is the single integrated strategic data asset that has been built within it. By presenting users who are experts in their domain with clean linked data instead of a mess of spreadsheets and ancient databases, anyone can use the range of analytical and operational tools to more quickly exploit data from those same source systems they already use to drive decision making – regardless of technical ability.

Under the direction of Rear Admiral Jim Higham, Project Renown rolled out Kraken

to teams in DE&S Ships during the autumn.

So far over 500 users have received the Phase 1 'Foundry 101' training introduction and the first teams are moving on to Phase 2, which is focused on applying the tool to specific team and role needs.

As the roll-out progresses the capability will enable rapid data-centric decision making and support the Renown goal to increase availability to 80 per cent by 2026.

If you are keen to get involved early, you can register for your Kraken account at <https://foundry-nsp.palantir.rmil.uk/register>.

More info and training material at the Project Kraken SharePoint site and you can contact the training team WO1 Andrew Davies (Navy Digital-KRAKEN Ops Lead) [Andrew.Davies250@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Davies250@mod.gov.uk) to book a 101 get-started session.



# AT is right up our tree

THE crew of HMS Trent were treated to the unique experience of adventurous training in Ghana when they took a break from operations off West Africa.

A crew changeover in the country meant several days alongside for the patrol ship, allowing a bespoke fitness and AT package laid on from the ship's company spread over ten days.

With a regular crew of fewer than 50 men and women, there's no dedicated physical training instructor aboard – unlike on larger RN warships.

Instead, a dedicated team flew out from the UK to deliver the fitness/AT package, including: hiking (above), scrambling, kayaking and abseiling. The activities were a scenic drive away from the port, so personnel could see the real Ghana and experience some stunning rural locations.

In all 66 'training days' were provided – not just to the sailors, but also to the Royal Marines detachment on board.

For good measure, the visiting PTIs made sure all the ship's company were in date for their fitness tests to ensure the River-class ship remains fit to fight.

"Ghana was a challenging and unique trip

with minimal previous adventurous knowledge of the area," said PO(PT) Gareth Smith.

"The team conducted a variety of activities that really stretched the ship's company – mentally and physically."

Among those enjoying the experience, Petty Officer Steve Martin.

"This AT package was packed with great activities which the whole group enjoyed," he said.

"It took the group out into rural areas of Ghana, giving us an appreciation of the natural environment that was packed with greenery and outrageous views, thanks very much!"

Chef Oliver Monaghan added: "It was good to get off the ship and really push my comfort zone doing AT in such an exceptional place. The scrambling and trail breaking through the Ghanaian overgrowth was amazing. A perfect opportunity to get off the ship and explore a bit further afield into Ghana".

Adventurous training is a 'Category A' Personnel Functional Standards requirement and all personnel are entitled, where operationally possible, to five days per annum.

It can be delivered at home or overseas. For details, contact PO Smith at [gareth.smith425@mod.gov.uk](mailto:gareth.smith425@mod.gov.uk)

## 1710 take engineering efficiency prize

THIS fine trophy proudly occupies the cabinet of 1710 Naval Air Squadron.

The specialist Portsmouth-based unit – composed of both Service personnel and civilians – picked up the Fleet Air Arm award for engineering efficiency.

As well as dealing with all the new obstacles posed by Covid, the squadron continued to innovate to overcome them and to improve the service it provided to military aviation.

The squadron supports global helicopter operations ashore and afloat, lending its expertise in repair and recovery of aircraft, short-notice modifications, analysis of fuels and lubricants and material support.

Commodore of the Fleet Air Arm, Commodore Nick Walker, told squadron personnel: "This is very much an award that reflects the efforts and impressive work you've been able to do over the last year despite Covid and working through all the extra tribulations that has brought to continue to deliver and improve where you can.

"Everywhere I go I receive praise for what 1710 does, for the products that you do, for the innovation you provide, for the services you provide across all the departments.

"It is a great award, you should feel very proud of the fact you've won it. It is a truly collective effort and a great reflection on what 1710 is and what 1710 does."

Commanding Officer Commander Paul Barker said: "We are a squadron full of unique capabilities, but we work much better together, so we should take all of these opportunities that present to us to bring us all together."

## Trainee marines at home in Comacchio

NAMED after one of the Corps' finest hours in WW2, there's a new £10m accommodation block at Lympstone.

Comacchio Building will be home to Royal Marine recruits injured in training and contains 181 beds, as well as supporting facilities, including recreation areas and administrative offices.

It features multifunction communal spaces, equipped with televisions, projectors/screens, and a kitchenette that can be used as a classroom with provision for IT when required

or for individual learning.

For convalescing trainees, there are 21 eight-bed rooms and one ten-bed unit plus three single rooms which can be used for support staff or individual troops.

All sleeping areas include individual storage and has been designed so that they can be allocated to either male or female occupants. There are additional baggage rooms on each floor with lockable individual cages for larger items of kit.

Each floor has a utility room containing a Belfast sink for cleaning larger items, washing machines and dryers, plus dedicated drying rooms with extraction, low radiant heat and dehumidifiers to ensure items of kit can be quickly dried.

A separate caged building for drying larger items of kit and an external boot wash has been constructed next to the new block.

And for creature comforts, there's WiFi and TVs throughout.



After one of the most comprehensive surveys ever conducted among female Royal Navy personnel

# We're listening to you

**JOB satisfaction, pride in their work, good pay, and job security were identified as key retention points for women following a study by the Royal Navy's People GEMS Team.**

More than 400 women – roughly one in every eight female Naval personnel – completed an initial questionnaire, and 70 took part in focus groups for the Women's Retention Study by Lieutenant Meg Wilson and Warrant Officer 1st Class Aidy Wakinshaw on behalf of the Director People and Training.

Common perceived reasons why women leave revolve around family and caring responsibilities.

However, the main reasons submitted on JPA are living in their own homes and seeking fresh challenges, similar to those of their male counterparts who also seek fresh challenges and alternative opportunities.

Retention numbers for women closely match those of men and therefore there is no specific issue relating solely to the retention of women in the RN.

However, thematic analysis of the focus groups and survey identified one overwhelming theme: a desire for increased support throughout the employee lifecycle, and sub themes of childcare and relocation, health care, career management, promotion, uniform, and mindset. It is acknowledged that not all of these are gender specific.

**The Director Personnel and Training has agreed to:**

■ **SERVICE WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN (SWDC)** currently ends on the child's 11th birthday, which could be in the middle of the school year. We've asked to extend eligibility until the change of education stage past a child's 11th birthday. The change will be reflected in the February edition of BR3

■ **TO EASE THE RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE AFTER MATERNITY/ ADOPTION/SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE**, consider extending the period of time of trawl exemption from 12 to 18 months. This work is being considered by Pers Ops.

■ **ON FLEXIBLE WORKING WE HAVE ASKED FOR GUIDANCE TO BE SHARED WITH EMPLOYERS** to include clear encouragement on the use of flexible service and job sharing along with wider awareness of these schemes and the opportunity to move between regular, reserve and civil service employment. This would be a reflection of the willingness to remain in the RN family but have greater stability for periods when it comes to location and deployability. This work will be pursued by April.

■ **INVESTIGATE THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE TIMING OF ALLOCATION TO SERVICE FAMILY ACCOMMODATION (SFA) AND THE APPLICATION FOR EDUCATION/CHILDCARE PLACES.** We have asked the Housing Colonel to raise the issue with the tri-service Housing Policy working group.

■ **PEOPLE GEMS HAVE DEVELOPED A NEW SITE WHERE YOU CAN SUBMIT IDEAS ON HOW TO IMPROVE THE LIVED EXPERIENCE.**

Thank you to those who've already submitted some great suggestions. Find us on the Defence Ideas site under Royal Navy or use the QR code on the People GEMS infographic. Posters with all the details on how to submit your ideas will be making their way out into the Fleet shortly.

■ **ESTABLISH A FOCUSED WORK STRAND TO CLARIFY AND COHERE WOMEN-SPECIFIC HEALTH ISSUES**, to include assisted conception and menopause. Further, to create a Women and Families Policy Lead within the Personnel and Training Directorate new design from April.

**We're looking at the issues which you raised:**

■ **HOW ARE CAREER MANAGERS TRAINED?**

They told us: "In addition to the three-day induction course, weekly digital training and upskilling is undertaken, alongside a programme of mandatory continual organisational learning. A training session in mid-July focussed on maternity, adoption, surrogacy, assisted conception, paternity leave and pay, shared Parental Leave and Pay.

■ **CHILDCARE SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY FOR OUT OF HOURS AND LAST-MINUTE DUTIES**

We were told: Defence recognises that Service parents face additional difficulties when trying to access good quality, affordable childcare and so launched the Wraparound Childcare (WAC) pilot in 2020. The RN trial began in Plymouth in January last year with an update on the programme due imminently.

■ **CLARIFICATION ON ELIGIBILITY FOR REPORTS POST-MATERNITY/CAREER BREAKS**

Promotions provided the following response: "We will adapt existing performance management policy to ensure that an Appraisal Report is completed for individuals returning from any career intermission, while noting the requirement to align its completion with the boarding programme.

"In so doing, it is important for subjects and line managers to understand the challenges associated with the production of a comprehensive AR which covers a shortened reporting period."

An RNTM should be available now to confirm these changes.

## And we're doubling our female intake

ONE in six sailors passing out of the Royal Navy's principal basic training base is a woman – as

the Service pushes to reach one quarter female representation by 2025.

Of 513 civilians undergoing the transformation from civilians to naval personnel – a ten-week course which covers fitness, drill, tradition, looking after their kit, leadership and weapon handling

– in November 88 were female.

The Torpoint establishment has increased its capacity to train female sailors with dedicated accommodation for 120 women going through the civilian-to-sailor conversion at any one time – a figure which can be doubled if necessary.

As part of the Royal Navy's transformation programme to meet the challenges of the mid-21st Century, it is growing by 3,000 sailors over the next three years and, to better reflect

society, is aiming for one in every four new recruits to be female by 2025.

Most Mondays, around 60 civilians arrive at the gates of Raleigh. Typically, five or six are women, but this autumn the figure has consistently been over a dozen.

Among them Able Seaman Robyn Stokell, aged 20, from Wiltshire, who's aiming to become a specialist in hydrography and meteorology, serving in survey ships.

"My Raleigh experience was excellent," she said. "I've had such an amazing time. I was definitely nervous before coming into the Navy, but the nerves were not worth it.

"Everyone was very supportive. The camaraderie between us is

excellent. Everyone's chipped in, everyone's been doing jobs. I would 150 per cent encourage anyone to join the Navy and come to HMS Raleigh."

AB Megan Page, from Suffolk, is also 20 and aiming to specialise in hydrography and meteorology.

"I've absolutely loved my time at Raleigh and I would encourage all women to join, because there are different aspects that you can go into," she said.

"There's something to do for everyone and you are all part of a team. At the end of the day you are there to help each other.

"It's been great having so many women in the class. I came in thinking there may just be four or five, but there were 13 of us passing-out. We all have our strengths and weaknesses and we've just pulled each other along."

Women have been going to sea in the Royal Navy for more than 30 years – though the

opportunities and careers open to today's recruits are much broader now: the autumn intake of female recruits at Raleigh ranges from apprentice engineers to Naval Nurses and undergraduate submariners.

"There is no barrier to opportunities for women within the Royal Navy. Women can serve at sea, beneath the waves and in the air," said Captain Suzi Nielsen, HMS Raleigh's Commanding Officer.

"At HMS Raleigh we are configured to take in more female recruits and we are ready to welcome them.

"All female personnel are treated exactly the same as their male counterparts and are required to reach the same standards."

After passing out all trainees move on to their specialist training – warfare and weapons/sensor engineers at HMS Collingwood in Fareham, for example, engineers at HMS Sultan in Gosport, logistics and administration experts and chefs at the new military college at Worthy Down, while submariners and seamen stay at Raleigh.

Pictures: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh



## Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Albion  
HMS Portland  
HMS Argyll  
HMS Tyne  
HMS Severn  
HMS Mersey  
HMS Magpie  
HMS Explorer

Project Wilton  
RFA Mounts Bay  
814 NAS  
815 NAS  
824 NAS



17 TES SQN

HMS Tamar  
HMS Spey

HMS Medway

HMS Forth  
NEFI

HMS Protector

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

## Carrier Strike Group 21

HMS Queen Elizabeth 42 Commando  
HMS Defender 815 NAS  
HMS Kent 820 NAS  
HMS Richmond 845 NAS  
RFA Fort Victoria 617 Sqn  
RFA Tidespring

Gibraltar Squadron  
HMS Scott

HMS Dragon

HMS Trent

## Operation Kipion

UKMCC  
NSF Bahrain  
IMSC  
COMUKMCMFOR  
HMS Montrose  
HMS Middleton  
HMS Bangor  
HMS Chiddingfold  
HMS Penzance  
1700 NAS  
RFA Lyme Bay  
Forward Support Unit

British Defence Singapore  
Support Unit



## GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

### A NEW year beckons.

And the start of 2022 starts as 2021 finished – with the Royal Navy continuing its global operations and looking ahead to what it aims to achieve over the next 12 months.

One ship busy preparing for a year of activities is **HMS Portland**. The frigate came out of refit last year and has been working hard to ensure she is ready for any missions. From a new crew model, meaning sailors will join the ship for specific missions, to working with new systems, Portland's hectic schedule is set to continue (see pages 2-3).

Not only is Portland going through changes, **FOST** is too. Rebranded Fleet Operational Sea Training, it readies British and allied ships for front-line operations. In recent months it's undergone some fundamental changes in the ways that training is delivered – changes which will continue this year to meet the challenges of operations from Tokyo to Trinidad, the North Cape to Cape Horn and most places in between (also see pages 2-3).

Meanwhile, Royal Marines are once again preparing to head north for their annual Arctic deployment. Marines from **45 Commando** have deployed to the Arctic for the next three months to refresh skills in surviving, moving and fighting across the frozen landscape. Before deploying, they helped vulnerable people in Scotland in the wake of Storm Arwen (see pages 16-17).

The **Fleet Diving Squadron** also headed to colder climes – taking part in NATO's main explosive ordnance disposal exercise in Iceland. The Navy divers completed a range of training, dealing with dozens of devices across a variety of scenarios (see page 27).

Across the world in the heat of the Gulf, **RFA Lyme Bay** and Royal Navy minehunters **HMS Bangor** and **HMS Middleton** worked with the US Navy in keeping crucial sea lanes open. They proved their ability to survey the water and seabed for potential dangers (see page 9).

**HMS Westminster** left the UK for the Atlantic as she spent time keeping an eye out for submarines. The warship guarded the UK's 'back yard' and worked with allies to monitor any potential threats lurking in the depths (see page 11).

Sailors from the **UK Carrier Strike Group** will spend the new year reflecting back on the task group's maiden operational deployment.

Frigate **HMS Richmond** led the way as the ships sailed east to the Pacific Ocean and back. The ship managed to keep submarines at bay, support F-35 fighter jet missions and their resilience ensured morale remained high on board (see pages 14-15).

The distance travelled by **HMS Queen Elizabeth**, **HMS Defender**, **HMS Diamond**, **HMS Kent**, **RFA Tidespring** and **RFA Fort Victoria**, along with countries visited, delegates hosted and eggs consumed – among other impressive statistics – is shown in our pull-out poster in the centre pages.

There were emotional homecomings for the ships and their embarked helicopter squadrons **815 NAS**, **820 NAS** and **845 NAS** just before Christmas (see page 19).

Technology – and the Royal Navy's use and exploitation of it – continues to be a focus for all as we enter 2022.

Already, **700X Naval Air Squadron** – the Navy's drone experts – have expanded their fleet of Puma remotely-controlled aerial systems to 12 and boosted their team numbers. Their home base of Culdrose also hosted a heavy-lift challenge which asked small and medium businesses to show what drones and technology they have that could carry heavy loads (see page 29).

Technology and new systems have also been at the centre of work at **Commando Training Centre Royal Marines**. Pioneering technology, training and treatment is helping to eliminate the risk of potentially fatal heat illness of recruits (see page 28).

In home waters, **HMS Northumberland** has helped push navy aviators of the future to their limits. The Plymouth-based frigate worked with student pilots of **825 Naval Air Squadron** and their Wildcat helicopters to test their abilities to work on the front-line (see page 13).

**P2000 HMS Explorer** worked with Police and the RNLI on the Tyne. They practised working together in a variety of emergencies such as transferring casualties from one boat to another (see page 7).

The head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary **Commodore David Eagles** has set his sights on 2022 and what he wants to see from the service (see opposite).

And finally, **HMS Raleigh** is welcoming an increase of female recruits. Recent data shows one in six sailors passing out of the Royal Navy's principal basic training base is a woman. The rise comes as a study by the Royal Navy's People GEMS Team surveyed women on their time in the navy (see page 5).

# '2021 has been a good year. Let's go again in 2022...'

## AS 'STATE of the union' opening gambits go, many people in defence – indeed in any walk of life – might envy the words of Commodore David Eagles.

"We are in an extremely positive place going into 2022," says the head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the ships which both support and carry out Royal Navy front-line operations from the Caribbean to the Pacific Rim.

He says the service has risen to every challenge asked of it and demand made of it in 2021: disaster relief, counter-narcotics patrol, aviation support, providing fuel, food, stores and ammunition to the ships of the Royal Navy – and its allies – when and where required.

"We've supported a task group on the other side of the world for the first time in a long while – perhaps 25 years. We have ticked many, many boxes. And we have proved all this in the midst of a global pandemic," the Devon-based officer said.

Covid has thrown some major spanners in the works – from disrupting global supply chains to far flung corners of the Asia-Pacific region, to the regular roulement of personnel which is the mainstay of RFA operations.

The service relies on swapping personnel every four months, wherever the ships are in the world. Due to the pandemic, that has frequently meant two weeks in quarantine before joining their vessels... and another two weeks on their return.

For the sake of personnel, the time in isolation is not eating into their leave periods – which means it has placed a significant extra demand on the rest of the RFA's workforce and caused an unanticipated requirement to find 25 per cent extra personnel to ensure the ships perform their missions.

"Our people and their families have delivered so much – against the backdrop of the pandemic. I'd like to acknowledge all that they have done. And by prioritising the welfare of our people alongside delivering on operations above all else has helped to ensure that recruitment and retention remain positive," Commodore Eagles added.

Twelve months ago and after 100 days at the helm, the commodore looked to supporting HMS Queen Elizabeth's carrier strike group to the Pacific Rim and back as the key mission of 2021.

Mission accomplished.

Beyond that:

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



Commodore Eagles thanks RFA Tidespring's crew for their efforts supporting the Carrier Strike Group  
Picture: LPhoto Kyle Heller

in five busts spread across the autumn.

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, as well as supporting their 2022 winter deployment, the latest iteration of Cold Response.

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

And there's always been an RFA tanker on hand to support RN operations and exercises in northern European/Atlantic waters.

These missions – or variations thereon (Prince of Wales rather than Queen Elizabeth will be the carrier most requiring RFA support) – continue into 2022... with a few twists.

Although the traditional image of the RFA is probably a tanker pumping fuel through a black hose into the bowels of a Royal Navy warship, nearly three quarters of solid support transfers involve food, mail, or spare parts, weighing under 100lbs.

The RFA is looking very closely at its US Navy counterpart, Military Sealift Command, to look at the opportunities around using drones to make such deliveries at sea – sparing the need to call upon a multi-million-pound helicopter for the task. (the Royal Marines are

involved in similar experimentation to deliver kit to troops at the front).

Fort Victoria received a £60m upgrade to ensure she can support the Queen Elizabeth-class for the next ten years: money well spent as the carrier's maiden deployment proves.

"The investment has paid off," Cdre Eagles added. "We knew the Tide-class tankers could support the carriers, but Fort Victoria was untested in supporting the Queen Elizabeth class until this deployment and has come through with flying colours meeting all our requirements."

The three Forts will be replaced by three similar vessels, with the first ship supporting front-line operations in 2029/30.

Other ongoing transformations are more subtle: 2021 has seen the first female Commanding Officer of an RFA vessel, and also the first female engineer to be promoted to captain. More will follow in their wake.

A new fitness policy – one outcome of the death of a steward during sea survival training on Horsea Island in 2019 – and the formation of Herald, a support network by and for LGBT+ seafarers should also have a positive impact on day-to-day lives and the operational effectiveness of the RFA.

"These are the reasons why my message is resolutely positive. We have achieved what was asked of us in 2021. We will do so again in 2022."

# Tyne run-out for Explorer

A ROYAL Navy patrol boat joined police and the RNLI in the mouth of the River Tyne to practise valuable casualty rescue skills.

Hull-based HMS Explorer journeyed up the east coast to join the Northumbrian Marine Police and Tynemouth RNLI to increase their ability to work together should all three find themselves responding to an emergency on the water.

P2000-class Inshore Patrol Craft Explorer is one of 16 vessels which make up the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces Squadron, dedicated to training and operations around the UK, as well as offering undergraduates a taste of service life with University Royal Navy Units.

The aim of the combined Navy-police-RNLI workout was to learn how each service recovers casualties from the water and included hauling dummies out of the water and transferring a 'casualty' between vessels safely with the goal of getting them to the nearest medical facility as quickly as possible.

The training built on earlier work by Explorer with Thames River Police when she

acted as a high-speed stolen craft which was rapidly boarded and taken control of by the police.

The training began at the Northumbrian Police Marine Unit and Diving School in Viking Park as participants discussed potential scenarios involving casualties in the water along the Tyne and how best to respond.

Explorer's crew also demonstrated their first aid capabilities including the Neil Robinson stretcher used to transfer immobile casualties between decks on Royal Navy ships.

Scenarios were then put to test on the water with HMS Explorer using Ruth, the rescue dummy, to demonstrate the ship's ability first to recover unconscious people from the water through to transferring a casualty with potential spinal injuries between the ship and the police RHIB Excalibur both while stopped and on the move.

Capable of speeds in excess of 30 knots and of operating in the very shallow waters found on rivers, the police boat can be the quickest and most effective method of recovering a casualty to the nearest emergency medical facility.

Explorer then continued downstream to work with Tynemouth RNLI D-Class inshore lifeboat which operates out of North Shields' Fish Quay.

As both the RNLI and Coastal Forces Squadron operate in the same or similar waters, seamless co-operation between the two could mean the difference between life and death at sea; in the cold North Sea, the speed with which a casualty can be recovered from the water can save lives.

The lifeboat and P2000 practised recovering



unconscious casualties, passing them safely between the two vessels by 'bump transfer' – the two vessels touching as they moved at speeds between 6 and 12 knots.

"While the speed of casualty recovery can be lifesaving, operating at sea safely is paramount," said Lieutenant Mike Duncan, Explorer's Commanding Officer.

"This exercise looked to increase the ability of the Royal Navy, Northumbrian Marine Police and RNLI to work together.

"It was a chance to exchange ideas, refine skills and learn from each other to ensure the greatest chance of collective success in the future."

It brought the curtain down on a busy year

for Explorer which has sailed 5,500 nautical miles in 2021 – including circumnavigating the UK.

She's taken part in the largest naval exercise staged in the UK, Joint Warrior, provided security for the G7 Summit in Cornwall and even chased down submarines as prospective commanders were tested on the demanding Submarine Command Course, known as Perisher.

The Tyneside training also prepared the ship for working with other similar-sized vessels this year: she's earmarked to head to the Baltic with other vessels from her squadron plus the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force for NATO's major exercise in the spring.

**Enhance your pension potential.**

**Join us. Job done.**

*There are times when you need clarity to understand the ins and outs of your pension and take control of your income potential. We provide guidance and support on an individual basis dealing with more than 15,000 enquiries a year, typically receiving responses like this one from a Member in the RN with a question on a Pension Forecast and Pension Sharing Order.*

“

*Thank you very much for the very clear and extremely detailed information and guidance. I wish I had discovered the Forces Pension Society earlier. I am extremely grateful for your time and effort and feel much better prepared to make a balanced and sensible decision on my remaining career.*

”



## Independent, not-for-profit

Independence is vital to our work, calling governments to account whenever we spot injustice or unfairness in the system. And this year we celebrate our 75th Anniversary of supporting the Armed Forces Community.

We are funded entirely by subscriptions from our membership - now more than 62,000 strong and growing. Any surplus helps fund our outreach programmes of free-to-attend Roadshows and Webinars at bases throughout the country and overseas, and our attendance at CTP Employment Fairs.

## Visit: [forcespensionsociety.org/join-now/](https://forcespensionsociety.org/join-now/)

As a Member, you'll have exclusive access to our Forces Pensions Consultants and our informative Webinars – and you'll receive our bi-annual e-newsletters and magazine, Pennant. You'll also have access to our wide range of membership benefits from discounts on new cars and white goods, to insurances (including our new range of covid-protected Travel Insurance policies), low-cost money transfers and a good deal more.

## Forces Pension Society

68 South Lambeth Road, Vauxhall, London SW8 1RL.  
T:020 7820 9988  
E: [memsec@forpen.co.uk](mailto:memsec@forpen.co.uk)  
[www.forcespensionsociety.org](https://www.forcespensionsociety.org)

**IT PAYS TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PENSION**



*Atkins & Co.*  
*Chartered Accountants*



# CASH FOR YOU

Do you drive from home to work?  
Do you own your own car?  
Have you worked in different locations?

You could be entitled to thousands of pounds in TAX REFUNDS. Millions have already been received by your colleagues.

**FIXED FEE OF £120 PER YEAR**  
**NO REFUND – NO FEE**

- Over 14 years experience
- Family connections with RN and RM
- Bootneck and Matelot friendly
- Qualified accountants covering all areas of accounts, tax returns and Ltd Companies
- Self Assessment tax returns including rental property, child benefit, Pension excess, income over £100k

**E: [info@atkinsandco.com](mailto:info@atkinsandco.com)**

**W: [www.atkinsandco.com](http://www.atkinsandco.com)**

Atkins & Co. Chartered Accountants are fully regulated by ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales)



# MINE CONTROL



**B**ritish and American warships linked up for a week-long workout to ensure no-one might close the gateway to the Gulf with mines.

Minehunting forces of both navies sailed from their base in Bahrain 250 or so miles to the southern Gulf and the key sea lanes leading to the Strait of Hormuz.

More than 100 major ships – tankers, natural gas carriers, car transporters and merchant vessels packed with containers of consumer goods – pass through the strait daily.

Any disruption to that regular safe flow of traffic impacts on global trade – and the economy of the UK which as a seafaring nation receives/ships 95 per cent of its goods by water... and relies on oil and natural gas from the Middle East.

To test their ability to survey, clear and keep open the sea lanes on the Gulf side of the strait, the Royal and US Navies staged their latest 'Interop' exercise.

In the mix were RFA Lyme Bay (*main picture*) – home to the Royal Navy's Warfare Battle Staff under Commander Anthony Pimm – and hunters HMS Bangor and Middleton, plus a Wildcat helicopter (*right*) from 815 Naval Air Squadron operating from Lyme Bay's flight deck.

They were joined by USS Devastator – one of the US Navy's Avenger-class minehunters which

shares the Bahrain waterfront with the RN vessels – and the patrol boat USS Thunderbolt.

The Royal Navy warships conducted route survey of the seabed alongside US counterparts, and provided assistance and support to ships involved in Operation Sentinel – the RN-led international security mission dedicated to ensuring the safe passage of merchant vessels through Middle East choke points.

Bangor, Middleton and Devastator completed a number of underwater operations using remotely operated vehicles, sonar equipment and clearance divers to conduct detailed survey of the seabed along critical trade routes in international waters near the Strait of Hormuz.

The warships also undertook rafting operations to resupply and refuel at sea, making use of Lyme Bay, demonstrating their ability to work together to remain at sea for longer periods.

"It has been a great privilege to lead this Coalition Task Group in the delivery of operations looking to safeguard the freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce in the Gulf," said Commander Pimm.

"The professionalism displayed across all ships involved has been impressive and enabled a seamless co-operation between the Royal Navy and United States Navy."

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the Gulf, there has been a change of command for Operation Sentinel.

Commodore Gordon Ruddock, who spent four months at the helm of the task force and oversaw 834 International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC)-flagged vessels passing through Middle East waters, has handed over to Commodore Don Mackinnon. He said despite the ongoing successes, the mission continues unabated.

"Now, more than ever, it is vital we develop new and innovative ways to deliver the mission of deterrence and reassurance," he added.

"This coalition was built on a strong foundation of co-operation and each member of IMSC will remain vigilant." Cdre Mackinnon told the Sentinel staff he relished the coming challenge.

"Whether afloat or ashore, I have always been incredibly fortunate to find myself working alongside the very best people our respective nations have to offer," he said.

Operation Sentinel draws on the military assets and expertise of eight nations to deter state-sponsored threats to the security of seafarers passing through Middle East waters – especially the 'choke points' of the Strait of Hormuz (gateway to the Gulf itself) and the Bab-al-Mandeb at the foot of the Red Sea.



because you're there for us

Our team of lawyers have many years of experience providing specialist legal advice to forces personnel. Our military law experts will not only advise you on issues arising from the line of duty but with your home life as well.

There for you supporting the forces

wilkin chapman llp  
inc. gilbert blades  
solicitors

Contact: 01522 512345 or visit [wilkinchapman.co.uk](http://wilkinchapman.co.uk)  
Out of hours for Military Discipline Matters only, contact Gordon Holt on 07973 667869



By Appointment to  
Her Majesty The Queen  
Medallists  
Worcestershire Medal Service Ltd  
Bromsgrove

Worcestershire Medal Service Ltd

Specialists in Orders, Decorations and Medals  
56 Broad Street, Sidemoor, Bromsgrove, B61 8LL



Medals mounted for wear and display  
Miniature and full size replacement medals supplied, all made in the UK to the highest standard.

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

[www.worcedals.com](http://www.worcedals.com)

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

United  
Kingdom  
Special  
Forces



**Search UKSF on MODnet**  
[SFTC-UKSF-Recruiting@mod.gov.uk](mailto:SFTC-UKSF-Recruiting@mod.gov.uk)

**Reserves:**  
[21SAS-Recruiting@mod.gov.uk](mailto:21SAS-Recruiting@mod.gov.uk)  
[23SAS-Recruiting@mod.gov.uk](mailto:23SAS-Recruiting@mod.gov.uk)  
[SBS-ReserveRecruiting@mod.gov.uk](mailto:SBS-ReserveRecruiting@mod.gov.uk)



# Atlantic adventures

Frigate HMS Westminster spent the autumn in the grey wastes of the Atlantic on the unsung, unseen mission to keep an eye on submarines.

The Portsmouth-based Type 23 has been at sea almost constantly, guarding the UK's 'back yard' and working with our allies to monitor any potential threats lurking in the depths.

Westminster is the nation's very tip of the submarine hunting spear – the first ship naval leaders turn to for anti-submarine operations, due to the combination of the equipment aboard and the experience of the men and women operating them.

As the Royal Navy's TAPS – the Towed-Array Patrol Ship – she's part of a comprehensive protective ring around waters key to the UK's interests, determined to keep the prying eyes of hostile submarines at bay.

The newest addition to that ring is the Poseidon P8 Maritime Patrol Aircraft, now in service with the RAF at Lossiemouth.

Westminster worked extensively with both the RAF P8s and their US equivalent that operate from Keflavik in Iceland.

The patrol aircraft provide long-range surveillance. At closer range, the frigate has relied on her 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.

And tanker RFA Tiderace has been on hand to keep the fuel tanks full, sustaining both the frigate and her helicopter – but also delivering additional food and mail containing sweets and news from home to maintain morale.

Which was needed at times, because the ship was battered by several strong Atlantic storms, forcing crew to hunker down – though they did not halt the hunt.

After a brief pit-stop in her home base of Portsmouth for engineers to assess the work needed when the ship enters refit in 12 months' time, Westminster shifted focus to the waters of northern Scotland and training with the Dutch Navy's HNLMS Van Amstel.

Westminster launched robot devices: EMATTs – Expendable Mobile Acoustic Training Targets – which replicate the noise signature of a submarine and mirror their movements.

With the towed arrays of both ships deployed, the pair with their respective helicopters tracked the remote targets through the night, making a combined Anglo-Dutch hunt much more effective.

"Like most of the Royal Navy, we

relish the opportunity to collaborate with partner nations – in this case HNLMS Van Amstel," said Lieutenant Commander Chris Fox, Westminster's Operations Officer.

"While conditions were challenging, the ability of both units to continue with the exercise shows the operational focus and drive our navies have in common.

"The short exercise period proved our ability to work together in all environments, although the focus was primarily on anti-submarine warfare.

"Westminster holds the highest level of anti-submarine warfare accreditation in the Royal Navy and we all thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to impart some of this experience to Van Amstel. We hope we will encounter again while hunting live submarines in the North Atlantic."

The patrol continued with both ships sailing round Iceland. Westminster's northerly route took her into the Arctic Circle and meant upholding a longstanding seafaring ceremony as sailors among the 199 crew who'd never been so far north before were welcomed into the land of the midnight sun by Queen Neptune (played by the ship's Commanding Officer Commander Louise Ray) aided by various sailors

dressed as narwhals, polar bears, sharks and sea lions.

"Occasions like passing the Equator or Arctic Circle are an important milestone in a mariner's career," said Lieutenant Alex Kubara, one of two Hydrographical and Metrological Officers onboard, who dressed up as a narwhal.

"They provide an opportunity in an otherwise busy operational deployment for some fun and frolics that help the ship's company to gel together as a cohesive unit. Having worked in the Arctic Circle before, I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to support Queen Neptune in welcoming the new members of the team as 'blue noses'."

The ship took advantage of the low Covid rate in Iceland to explore the land of ice and fire, ranging from snorkelling the crystal-clear but freezing-cold waters of the Silfra Rift; through visiting waterfalls, geysers and hot springs; to climbing glaciers and entering ice caves on dormant volcanoes.

Westminster also hosted local dignitaries including Dr Bryony Mathew, the UK's Ambassador to Iceland, Iceland's Director General Defence and Security Bryndis Kjartansdóttir and Foreign Minister Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson, Icelandic Coastguard Chief of Operations

Commodore Ásgrímur Ásgrímsson and US Defence attaché Commander Jason Neal for an informal lunch and ship's tour.

Hamburg provided another (warmer) autumnal port of call with a plum berth at the Überseebrücke (Overseas Jetty) in the shadow of the city's impressive new philharmonic concert hall (*the main image*).

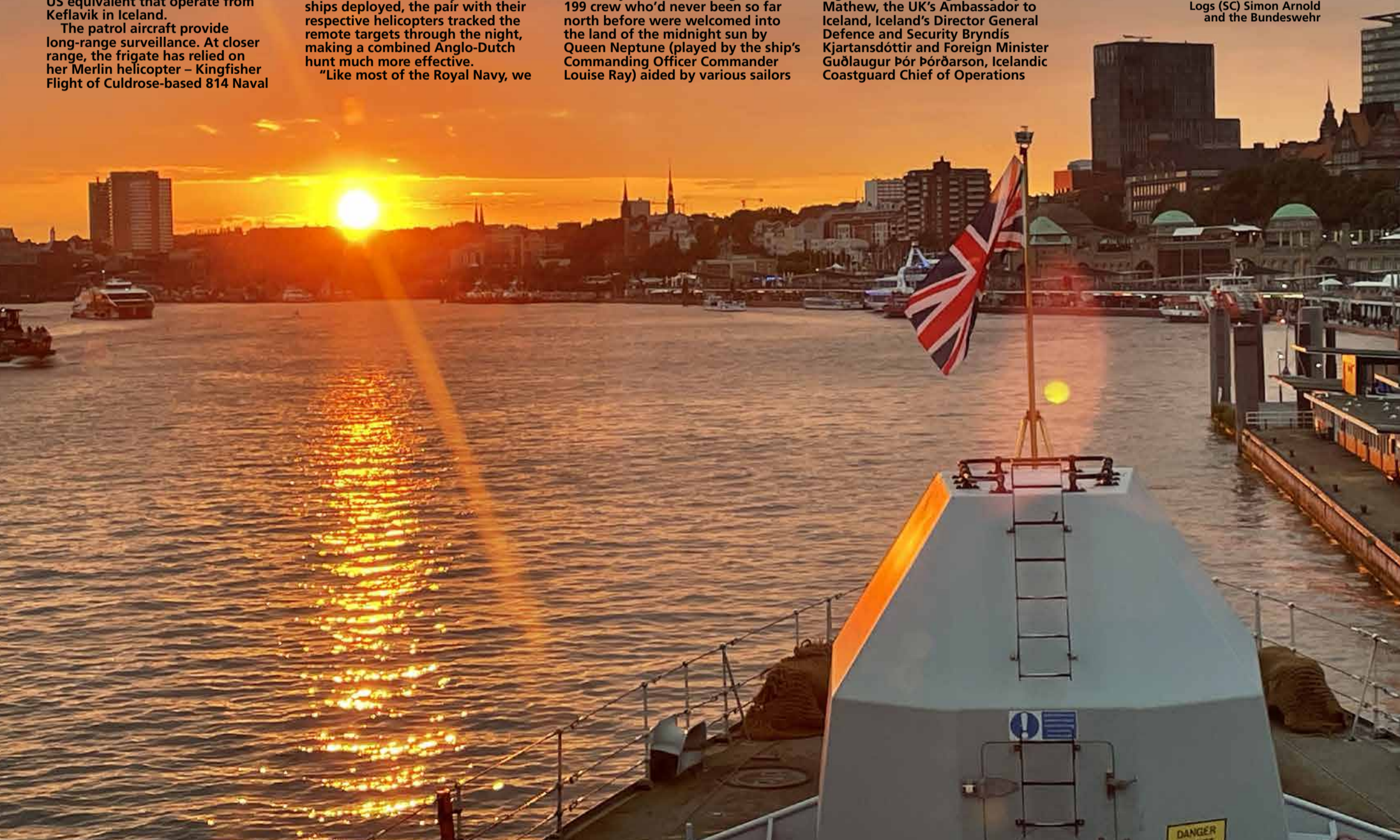
All of this work has largely taken place 'under the radar', but Westminster's Commanding Officer says it's a timely reminder that the Royal Navy is 'multitasking' at home and abroad.

"While the UK pivots towards the Indo-Pacific, HMS Westminster remains tasked with the defence of home waters," Commander Ray said.

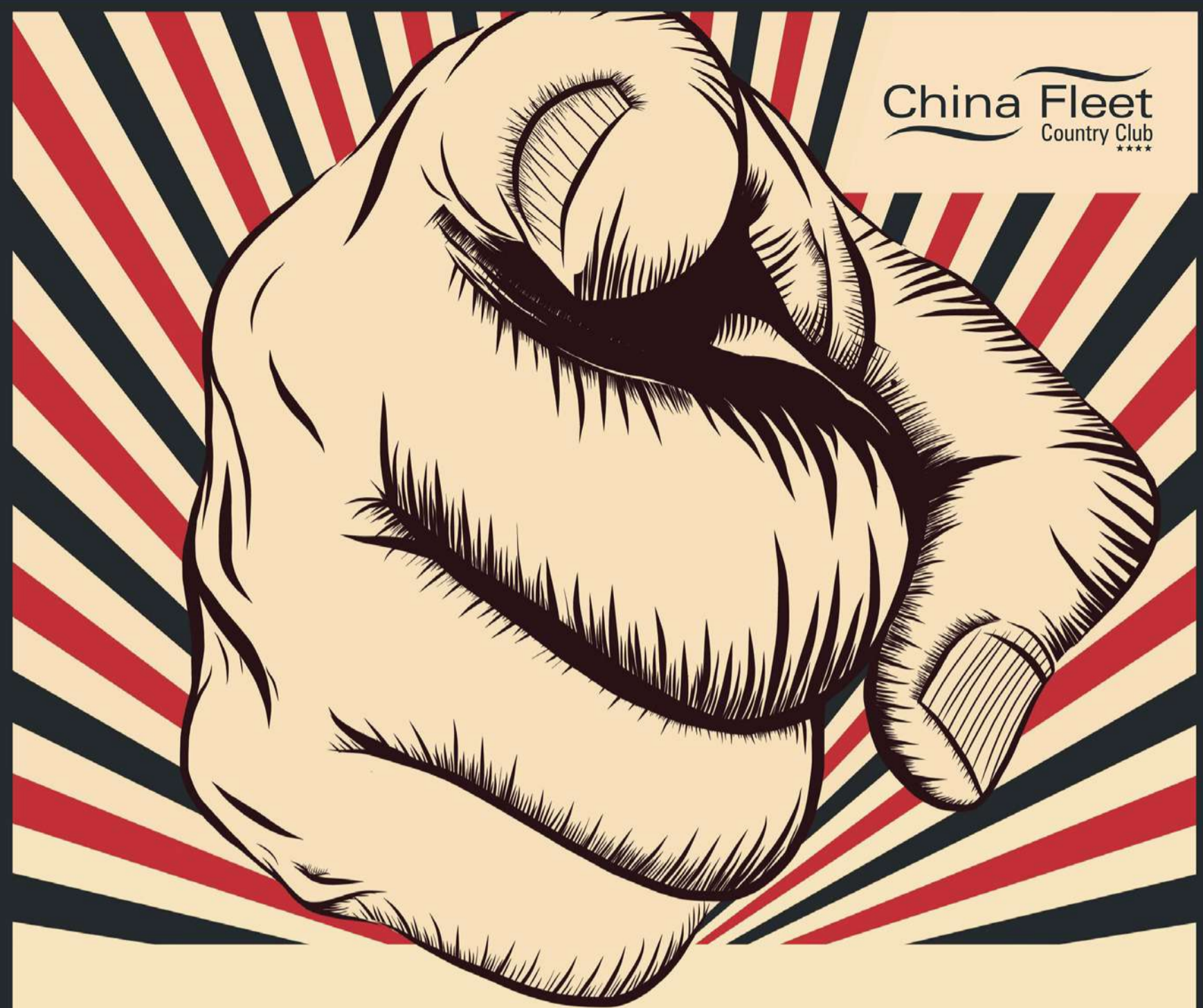
"Being able to rely on our local partner nations to host and help sustain us during this much needed logistics stop is vital to maintaining the freedom of manoeuvre in the North Atlantic.

"I am privileged to be able to bring a small part of the UK with me to host this small event and help demonstrate what we can achieve together."

Pictures: Lt Cdr Rob Kent, Logs (SC) Simon Arnold and the Bundeswehr



China Fleet  
Country Club  
\*\*\*\*



## **WE WANT YOU TO STAY WITH US**

**From just £90.00 per night**

(valid until 31st May 2022)

Sleeps 2 adults and 2 children, includes use of the health club facilities

Book online - Use Promo Code: RNRM

(ID must be produced before stay or on check-in. Available for all serving and ex-serving Royal Navy personnel.)

## **YOU ARE A MEMBER!**

**All serving RN personnel**

Join online for FREE to receive amazing discounts for you and your family

T&Cs apply to all

Call 01752 848668

[www.china-fleet.co.uk](http://www.china-fleet.co.uk)



# EARNING THEIR WINGS

## NORTHUMBERLAND PUTS NAVY FLIERS THROUGH THEIR PACES



### **HMS Northumberland have helped push navy aviators of the future to the limit to prepare them for operations around the world.**

Every pilot who wishes to operate with the Royal Navy must know how to land their aircraft on the deck of a warship in all conditions, day and night.

It's no simple task with the ship pitching and rolling beneath, but it is a rite of passage naval fliers must go through to ensure they are ready for the rigours of front-line missions.

Plymouth-based Type 23 frigate Northumberland has been on operations in waters close to the UK and, during that time, worked with student pilots of 825 Naval Air Squadron and their Wildcat helicopters.

In the crashing waves of the English Channel, Lieutenant Lucas Harrisson is one of those who has been learning to land his helicopter on Northumberland's deck.

"It's like landing a helicopter on one half of a tennis court, if that tennis court was moving at 30 mph and didn't like you. Oh, and it's dark," he said about the training.

Six student pilots were put through their paces to learn how to take off and land in a range of weather conditions by the frigate and squadron's instructors.

The instructors up the ante after the students have mastered landing on a moving ship during the day, as they are then tasked with manoeuvring their aircraft in pitch darkness using Night Vision Goggles.

By time the two weeks of training is completed, the students are flying on their own as part of a two-student crew.

"It's a big step in any naval aviator's career," said Lieutenant Commander John Phillips, in command of the squadron's detachment on board Northumberland.

"They need to learn quickly, in a high-pressure environment. Once trained here, the next time they do this will be on the front line, and it could be to the deck of a warship anywhere in the world."

The squadron from RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset also deployed with student engineers, many of whom were experiencing life at sea for the first time.

The engineers learnt about routines on a warship, how to maintain the helicopter while deployed and manage the flight deck around the clock.

It's about developing their technical knowledge but also enables them to appreciate the stresses and strains of maintaining aircraft on fast-paced operations in often tricky conditions.

"For the young engineers this is the proper life of a Naval Air Engineer; noise, crashing waves, pressure of moving a multi-million pound aircraft into and out of the hangar as a team; it's why they joined up," said Chief Petty Officer Adam Gilder-Stevens.

Commanding Officer of HMS Northumberland, Commander Thom Hobbs, added: "The last few weeks have been a fantastic training opportunity, not only for the junior aircrew, but also for the ship's company who have gained a huge amount of experience in flight operations to best prepare for the ship's upcoming deployment in the New Year."

The trainees will qualify early this year and may even find themselves back on Northumberland during operations.

# RULING THE WAVES



**WELFARE**

## Your WelCome account card...

A **WelCome account card** is assigned to you for your entire military career and can be used to access **telephone** and **Internet** services whilst deployed.

You should receive it after basic training. If you haven't been given it, speak to your admin officer. For more information visit: [www.mywelcome.co.uk](http://www.mywelcome.co.uk)

**Lost your account card?** No worries! Speak to your admin officer who will be able to provide you with your WelCome account number and a password to reset your PIN.

WelCome Customer Contact Centre  
[customer.support@mywelcome.co.uk](mailto:customer.support@mywelcome.co.uk) | [www.mywelcome.co.uk](http://www.mywelcome.co.uk)

**WelCome**  
*Welfare Communications Everywhere*

**R**esilient Richmond. That is how the Commanding Officer of the Devonport-based frigate summed up his ship's company following their epic seven-month deployment to the Pacific Ocean and back.

The Type 23 has been one of several Royal Navy ships which accompanied HMS Queen Elizabeth as part of the UK's Carrier Strike Group on its maiden operational deployment.

For many of the transits, Richmond was at the forefront – leading the way through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, past Indonesia and into the Pacific Ocean. The anti-submarine warfare specialist carried out a number of crucial operations along the way – giving information of potential threats to HMS Queen Elizabeth as her embarked F-35 fighter jets carried out missions; transiting the Taiwan Strait while accompanied and watched by the Chinese Navy and carrying out UN sanctions against North Korea.

The 180-or-so personnel on HMS Richmond have faced programme changes and Covid restrictions but have done so "with the upmost professionalism".

Commander Hugh Botterill, the warship's Commanding Officer, said: "The thing I am most proud of is the extraordinary resilience the ship's company has shown. The ability to take just knock after knock and get on with it and do the job they have been tasked to do quietly and confidently makes me very proud."

"That resilience they have demonstrated is only possible because of the support they have back home. Their friends, families, loved ones and affiliates of the ship have shown immense support."

Although her main role is in countering the threats of submarines, Richmond has been utilised in a number of ways over the past few months. In the eastern Med, as F-35 fighter jets from HMS Queen Elizabeth conducted strike missions against Daesh, she was tasked with providing air defence 'up-threat' – being the ship closest to the potential threat to feed back information the carrier.

"Richmond was doing air protective duties while the F-35s were conducting their missions as part of Op Shader," said Cdr Botterill.

"The F-35s were able to respond because Richmond was reporting on air activity. We are designed to look for submarines and yet were taking part in an air campaign. I am really proud that we were able to step up and achieve."

And when it came to her primary role, Richmond delivered.

Cdr Botterill added: "No submarine, be it friendly or potentially hostile, came within range of the carrier and that's down to us. We have held them all at bay while HMS Queen Elizabeth was moving through the Mediterranean, past Indonesia, the South China Sea and Pacific Ocean."

The ship's ability to adapt its roles was evident throughout the deployment. On one occasion, the ship had to go from being in State 2 operations, a heightened state of readiness where attacks are possible, for three weeks to hosting visitors on board just a day later.

"Within 24 hours of being off State 2, we were hosting high-level defence engagement with my sailors and officers hosting beautifully and really professionally," said the ship's captain. "That is the perfect demonstration of our ability to switch from high-end blue water operations into really high-level Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office requirements."

There were a couple of milestone moments for the ship along the way too. She was the only ship of the seven-strong Carrier Strike Group to conduct a routine transit through the Taiwan Strait and she is the only Type 23 to deploy fitted with the new PGMU propulsion system: the new generation of diesel generators, accompanied by a fully-modernised control and surveillance system, which will power Type 26 frigates.

Away from the pressure and tension of operations, morale and keeping Richmond's ship's company happy and focussed was another key part of their time with the task group. Covid restrictions meant time alongside could see the sailors limited to the ship or the jetty. They spent two weeks in the United States base of Sasebo in Japan but were unable to go any further.

But they got inventive and were the first ship to stage a virtual entertainment show. Food and drink was provided and everyone got to enjoy a range of streamed performances. Other ways included: rolling out fake grass for barbecues on the flight deck; four hands-to-bathe in various seas; a Caribbean-themed night with goat curry; Adventurous Training and – a personal highlight for the Commanding Officer – taking the ship's dinghy out sailing.

He added: "Keeping morale high has been a trilogy of training, maintenance and resetting. Being able to reset ourselves is as important as the other two. It is that relationship between being operationally ready, knowing when to rest and getting morale back up again."

"As part of that, a big thanks needs to be made to the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity. They have done so much for us throughout this deployment and their efforts and support made a real difference."

When the ship's company were allowed ashore, they enjoyed Adventurous Training in Guam, rugby matches in Israel, football matches in Pakistan and the chance to explore Crete, Malta and Gibraltar.

HMS Richmond returned to the UK last month after 222 days, having travelled nearly 50,000 nautical miles - see the centre pages for a map of the deployment.



Pictures: LPhot Ben Corbett; LH Oliver Leach



**FOR the sailors serving on HMS Richmond, it has been a rewarding and challenging seven months away. Here's how some of them summed up the Carrier Strike Group deployment.**

**Lt Joe Cox, 28, from Plymouth.**

"It has been challenging. Coming into the deployment and the build-up, we had an expectation of how it was going to be but because of the restrictions with Covid it has been a different experience."

"We have had to adapt and I think that's something the ship has managed to do well. The Commanding Officer has been quite pragmatic in how he's managed the morale of the ship's company."

"Getting ashore in Guam was memorable. It was the first time in a good couple of months that we were able to get ashore and get off base."

**AB Ruby Taylor, 20, from York.**

"This is my first deployment and it has felt long. But, it being my first warship, I have gained lots of hands-on experience and now have my AB1s. It is nice to have achieved that while on this deployment."

**AB Cameron Shires, 22, from Doncaster.**

"This is my first big deployment although I have previously served on HMS Echo and HMS Sutherland. Having some of the main port visits taken away from us has been hard but the second half of the deployment, seeing India and Pakistan, was great."

"Then during our stop in Israel, we got to play rugby against a side and that was decent. It ended up being a close, high-scoring game with just a few points between us but we managed to get the win. That was a stand-out moment for me."

**ET Chloe Chapman, 23, from Plymouth.**

"I have been in the Royal Navy for two years and joined Richmond in March, just before the start of the deployment."

"It's my first ship and at first, it was a bit of a shock to the system because it's a massive deployment. But I managed to make friends really quickly and it's been the deployment of a lifetime. It definitely threw me in at the deep end. But you have to get used to it in this environment."

"One of the highlights for me was marching with the Pakistan Navy in Pakistan. We were invited to march up to the Mausoleum – that was amazing."

## WE'RE RECRUITING THE RECRUITERS

Your career in the Royal Navy was not like your school mates'. You never had two days the same, you challenged yourself and solved complex problems on the go. You travelled the world, helped people you didn't know and were proud to be part of the bigger picture. Fancy a chance to be the one who inspires the next generation? Become a Careers Adviser.

- Rewarding second career
- Earn £32,000 to £45,000
- Positions UK wide
- Open to RN Service leavers and those who have left the service in the last three years
- Vacancies at every rate

For further information email: [navycnr-rtagmultiuser@mod.gov.uk](mailto:navycnr-rtagmultiuser@mod.gov.uk)



# BACK AT HOME

ROYAL MARINES RETURN FOR ANOTHER  
WINTER IN THE DEEP FREEZE.





**FOR the next three months Royal Marines will return to their second home of Norway to sharpen their skills in surviving, moving and fighting in one of the world's most hostile environments.**

The commandos can trace their roots back to raids along Norway's coastline during World War 2, wreaking havoc in Nazi-occupied territory.

It is an area of the world that remains key to UK security and carrying that commitment are the Royal Marines and more specifically the cold weather warfare specialists of Arbroath-based 45 Commando.

The unit have been limbering up for their winter in the Arctic for the past few months, with a rare deployment to Slovenia and then the more traditional mountain training workout in the Scottish Highlands.

But before a large part of the unit headed to the frozen north, the commandos had local matters to deal with, dealing with freezing conditions on their doorstep.

Yankee Company of 45 Commando were called to Aberdeenshire to visit people in remote areas who had been left without power in freezing conditions after Storm Arwen hit the county.

Working alongside Army counterparts, marines carried out door-to-door visits to check people were well and assist them when required.

"45 Commando were asked by Aberdeenshire Council to support the local community affected by Storm Arwen," explained Lieutenant Colonel Ed Hall, the Commanding Officer of 45 Commando.

"Working in partnership with the civil authorities and the Army, 45 Commando's Yankee Company have been conducting door-to-door checks to identify people who may be vulnerable and require further assistance.

"We have been based in the North East of Scotland for 50-years and, as cold weather specialists, we have been working tirelessly to support the local authority during this challenging period."

The Royal Marines were mainly working in the Lumphanan area, some 25 miles from Aberdeen.

Together with troops from 39 Engineer Regiment and 3 Scots, the Black Watch, 45 Commando carried out visits to more than 4,000 homes to check on conduct welfare checks.

The Officer Commanding Yankee Company, Major David Johnson, said: "We were keen to reach out quickly to those in the affected areas. Conducting door-to-door checks in remote areas allowed us to support our local community and identify ways we could help them recover."

It was a far cry from the mountains of Slovenia, where Yankee Company spent two weeks working with their host's 132nd Mountain Regiment and the US Colorado National Guard's 157th Mountain Regiment, honing their skills.

That was before heading to the Highlands for mountain training. A rigorous mountain warfare training programme saw commandos train day and night and through all weather conditions (mostly rain) under the watchful eye of the Mountain Leader Cadre, the Royal Marines who specialise in mountain and Arctic warfare.

It looked at navigation, how to tackle the terrain, surveillance and reconnaissance, plus tactics and strategy for fighting in the



mountains.

All of this combined means the commandos are now ready for the rigours of the Arctic.

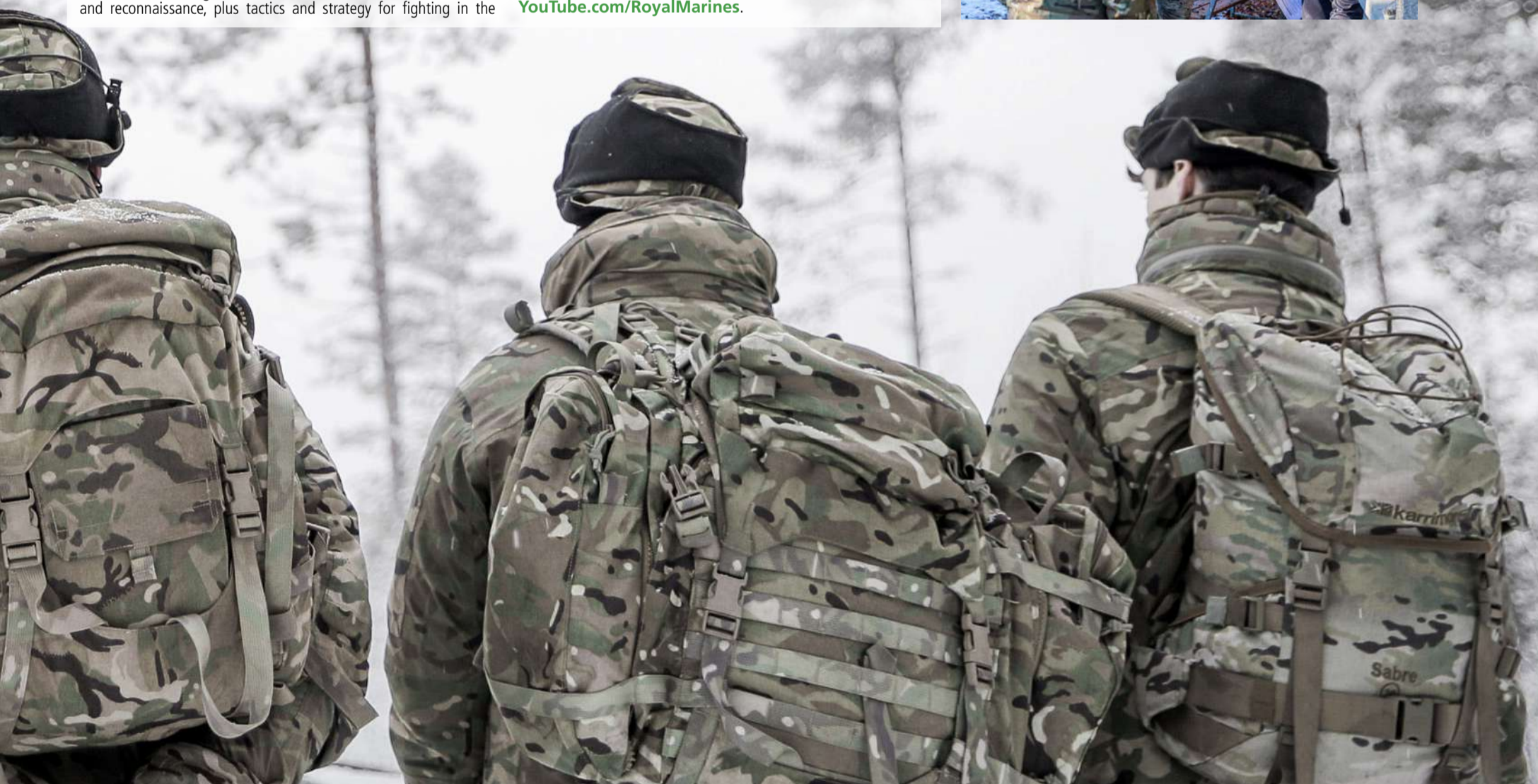
Military mountaineering is slightly different from your normal mountain outing. They deploy by helicopter in the dark hours into the mountains.

They must be prepared to face river crossing across swollen rivers, cliff faces and ridges, all done covertly under the cover of darkness.

The dark winter months are deliberately chosen as the best months to train to ramp up the difficulty.

The harshness of Scotland is perfect to ready for the further extremes of northern Norway. It's harsh training but the benefits are reaped once in Norway.

Watch more on how 45 Commando prepared for the Arctic at [YouTube.com/RoyalMarines](https://www.youtube.com/RoyalMarines).



# Keeping you in the driving seat

Allied to a 5-Star service, Forces Cars Direct offer a specialist new car service for all serving Armed Forces personnel and veterans and are committed to listening to your needs and sourcing the right car for you.



## Save money

Our customers save an average of £4,500.



## Part exchange welcome

All vehicles are accepted.



## Covid-safe nationwide delivery

Your new car can be delivered direct to your door.



### Audi Q3

35 Tfsi Sport 5dr S Tronic

**FCD Price: £28,004.64**

**SAVE: £5,260.36**



### Volkswagen Polo

1.0 TSI 95 Match 5dr DSG

**FCD Price: £16,467.62**

**SAVE: £3,222.38**



### SEAT Leon

1.5 TSI EVO FR 5dr

**FCD Price: £18,927.49**

**SAVE: £5,132.51**



### Skoda Octavia Hatchback

1.5 TSI SE L 5dr

**FCD Price: £20,307.79**

**SAVE: £5,062.20**



### Volvo XC90

B5 (D) Momentum AWD Auto

**FCD Price: £47,455.00**

**SAVE: £7,755.00**

Over £100 million saved for our customers since 2001!



**Call: 01522 814 010 Or visit: [www.forcescarsdirect.com](http://www.forcescarsdirect.com)**

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

# HOME.

Chef Sharisia Clarke and son Christian embrace as HMS Defender returns home to Portsmouth.  
Picture: CPO(Phot) Owen Cooban



**NAVAL families up and down the country have been reunited with their loved ones after the epic UK Carrier Strike Group deployment came to an end.**

Tears were shed, hugs were shared and emotional reunions took place at air stations Culdrose and Yeovilton and at Devonport and Portsmouth naval bases as aircraft and warships came home after seven months on a mission to the Indo-Pacific and back.

Navy fliers from 820 Naval Air Squadron and 1700 Naval Air Squadron returned to Culdrose, while 815 Naval Air Squadron and 845 Naval Air Squadron headed home to Yeovilton.

RFA Tidespring was the first ship back – heading into Portland – before Type 45 destroyers HMS Defender and HMS Diamond were the

first back in Portsmouth, greeted by families on the jetty.

HMS Richmond then returned to Devonport – the only ship from the naval base to deploy on the Carrier Strike Group – to a huge welcome from hundreds of families.

HMS Queen Elizabeth followed, heading into Portsmouth as dusk fell on December 9, before HMS Kent and RFA Fort Victoria completed the set of surface ships, with all ships alongside by December 12.

Silently, an Astute-class submarine also returned to Faslane.

Her Majesty The Queen addressed the returning sailors, thanking them for their service throughout the deployment.

Her Royal Highness said: "On the return of HMS Queen Elizabeth to her base port of Portsmouth, I send my best wishes to the 1200

Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Air Force and United States Navy and Marine Corps personnel on board the ship.

"I was pleased to hear of the important work you have undertaken to build relationships between the United Kingdom and more than twenty nations during your seven-month deployment.

"I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the wider Carrier Strike Group and hope you all have a most enjoyable and restful Christmas with your families."

Visit the dedicated CSG21 website for more images and words from the homecomings: <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/features/carrier-strike>

■ **Reservists complete carrier mission, page 39**



Pictures by: CPO(Phot) Owen Cooban, LPhot Juliet Ritsma, LPhot Rob Oates, PO Phot Dave Jenkins; LPhot Bradley





# UNITED KINGDOM CARRIER STRIKE GROUP

## CSG21 PORT VISITS AND NATIONAL INTERACTION

Where we've been: the ports we visited and the partners and allies we trained with



### Tanker RFA Tidespring

Delivered over 57 million litres of fuel to the Task Group ships - enough to fill 1.1m family cars

14 million litres of aviation fuel

169,000 litres of fresh water - enough to fill 1,700 household baths

Conducted 111 replenishments at sea

Spent 136 days at sea

Sailed 43,136 nautical miles

### On HMS Queen Elizabeth alone

£1,948,731.70 was issued by the ship's office to sailors to spend aboard/ashore

5,500 meals were cooked every day at a cost of £6K-£7K - with 1,400,000 meals served since leaving Portsmouth

The crew have consumed: 22 miles of sausages, 2 million eggs, 200 tonnes of potatoes, 1,200,000 rashers of bacon, 22.7kg of mousse desert and 355,000 pints of milk

To keep fit the Physical Training department has run:

265 circuits, 645 Adventurous Training days, a 5 kilometre park run (12.5 laps of her flight deck), and a mini Olympiad

### CSG 21 in numbers

Nine ships - 7 British, 1 US, 1 Dutch, over 30 aircraft

Deployed for 7 months - 224 days

Visited or interacted with 42 nations and 3 territories. These represent 47 per cent of the global population, and 53 per cent of the UK's global trade

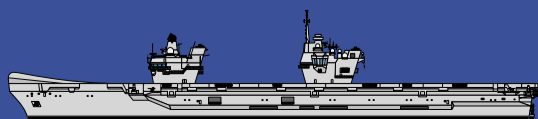
Hosted 66 ministers, 105 ambassadors and over 500 senior military officers

Worked with 17 nations in 18

Collectively sailed 500,000 nautical miles to the Moon and back

Made the news in 199 countries

Since setting sail in May, its jets have landed 40 times around the world, 3,000 deck landings - 1,000 of which were on the deck



HMS Queen Elizabeth



HMS Diamond



HMS Defender

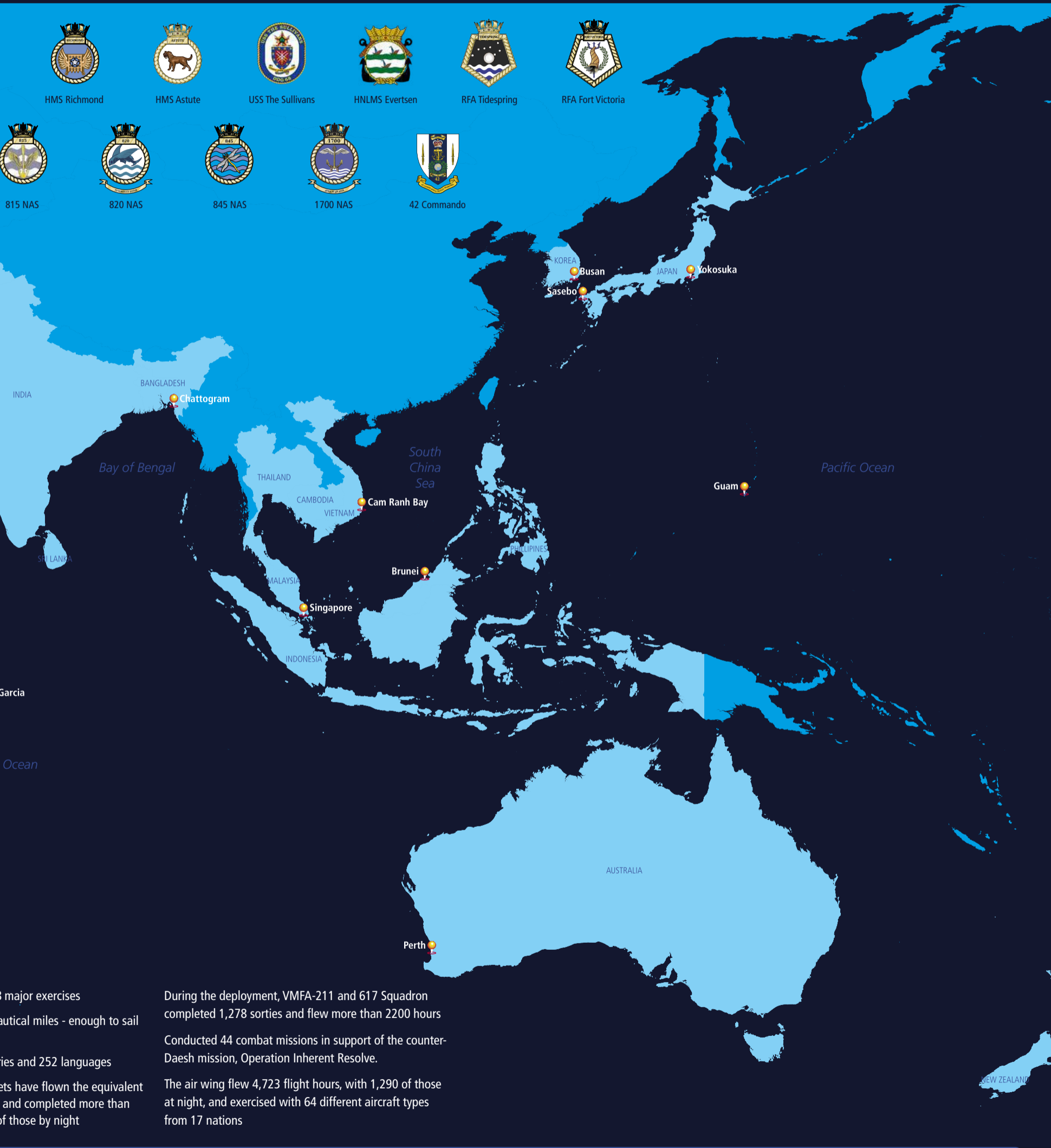
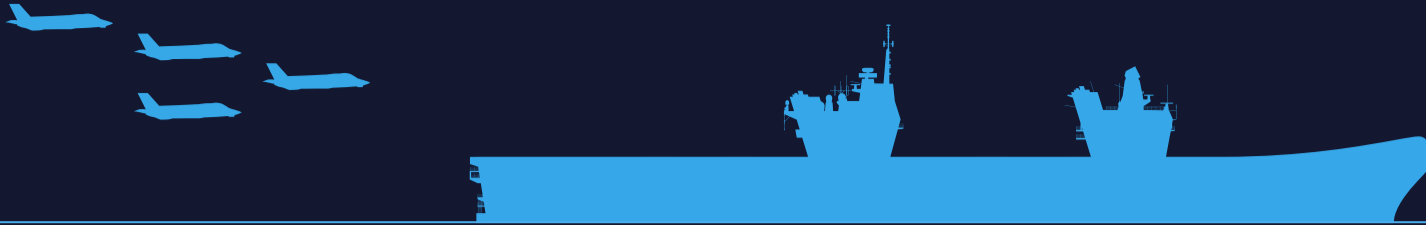


USS The Sullivans



HNLMS Evertsen

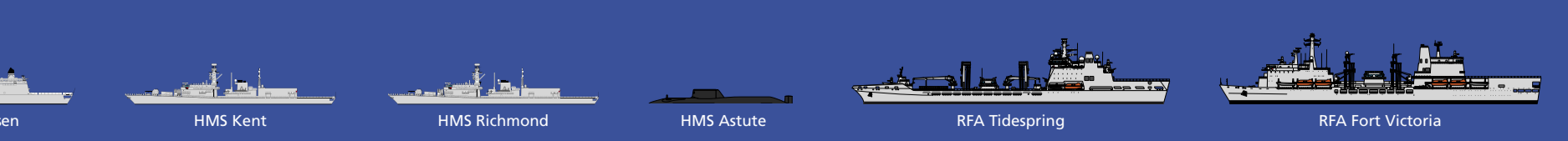
# ONS



-   
 HMS Richmond
-   
 HMS Astute
-   
 USS The Sullivans
-   
 HNLMS Evertsen
-   
 RFA Tidespring
-   
 RFA Fort Victoria
-   
 815 NAS
-   
 820 NAS
-   
 845 NAS
-   
 1700 NAS
-   
 42 Commando

3 major exercises  
 nautical miles - enough to sail  
 ies and 252 languages  
 ets have flown the equivalent  
 and completed more than  
 of those by night

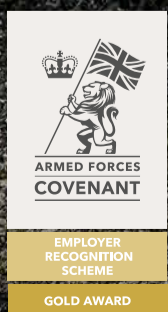
During the deployment, VMFA-211 and 617 Squadron completed 1,278 sorties and flew more than 2200 hours  
 Conducted 44 combat missions in support of the counter-Daesh mission, Operation Inherent Resolve.  
 The air wing flew 4,723 flight hours, with 1,290 of those at night, and exercised with 64 different aircraft types from 17 nations



# FIT FORM FUNCTION

Based on extensive feedback and fit evaluations, we've optimised our soldier systems to increase comfort, mobility and functionality for our female end-users.

For more info: [www.levelpeaks.com](http://www.levelpeaks.com)



# LEVEL PEAKS



## Job centre for bandies

ROYAL Marines Band personnel from Lymington swapped musical for medical instruments when they helped authorities in Scotland deliver jabs.

Musicians from the Commando Training Centre were among military personnel deployed to NHS Scotland to assist with booster vaccinations to step up the fight against Covid over the winter.

Around a dozen military personnel were drafted into the area to bolster NHS staff working flat-out to provide a third, top-up jab of the vaccine to those requiring them across Fife.

Beyond being superlative musicians, all members of the Band Service are Level 2 First Aiders – with many going on to complete Level 3 qualifications.

At any one time, one of the

Royal Marine Bands is at five days' notice to support the Royal Navy medical branches on board Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship RFA Argus which has a first-rate, large-scale medical facility for supporting major operations.

Band personnel deployed on vaccination duties have also undertaken additional training before going out into the field.

"I am happy to be up here as part of a larger group helping where we can," said 24-year-old flautist and saxophonist Lance Corporal Kirsty Haines from Worcester.

"It's nice to have a change of scenery, meet new people and be part of a team that can offer support to NHS Scotland."

Lance Corporal Hannah Rigg from Essex, who plays French Horn, added: "At the beginning of the year I helped the NHS on the Covid wards at Exeter

Nightingale Hospital.

"It's really great that I am able to help support NHS Scotland in a different way by administering Covid vaccinations."

They found themselves helping administer vaccinations in Kingsgate Shopping Centre in Dunfermline, where they were visited by Brigadier Andy Muddiman RM, Naval Regional Commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

"It is a fantastic, multi-agency and community effort – all helping return Scotland to normality," he said.

"Sailors and Marines from all corners of the UK are pleased to support NHS Scotland's COVID vaccination programme. It was impressive to see the professionalism of NHS Staff in Dunfermline working alongside Royal Marines and NHS Fife."

# Forging friendships: Glasgow's sailors reach out to affiliates

JUST weeks after the first sailors joined, Britain's newest warship HMS Glasgow is beginning to make friends for life.

The small number of sailors assigned to the first of eight new City-class/Type 26 anti-submarine warfare frigates have started to forge ties with affiliates which will be bound with the warship for a quarter of a century or more.

Glasgow is currently in build at BAE Systems' shipyard in Govan on the Clyde.

The first of her 161 sailors joined earlier this autumn to work out the ship's routines and to begin putting together the 'operators' manual' to help shipmates operate the many complex systems when they join the vessel.

Another key role is to give Glasgow her heart and soul – the ship will be home to thousands of men and women throughout her lifespan, and she will become an important link to the many thousands more who built the frigate and have an investment in her success.

Among them is RAF 120 Squadron (also known as CXX Squadron), based at Lossiemouth in northern Scotland.

Operating the new Boeing Poseidon MRA1 multi-role maritime patrol aircraft, equipped with sensors and weapons systems for anti-submarine warfare, as well as surveillance and search and rescue missions, the squadron – whose personnel include Royal Navy warfare specialists as well as RAF crew – draws upon an 80-year history of hunting the enemy below, beginning with the fabled Liberator back in 1941.

With a clear anti-submarine warfare bond between the two units, a delegation from 120 paid their first visit to the Type 26, allowing airmen and sailors to brief each other on the roles and capabilities of their respective platforms, followed by Glasgow's sailors showing the RAF personnel around the 8,000-tonne warship.

"Our visit to HMS Glasgow has provided an excellent insight into how the Royal Navy will conduct anti-submarine warfare

in the future and we will look forward to working alongside Type 26 in the maritime domain when HMS Glasgow enters service," said Flight Lieutenant Harry Greensill, a Weapon Systems Officer from 120 Squadron, responsible for managing the sensors and weapons onboard the Poseidon (similar to the role of an Observer in the Fleet Air Arm).

Commander Mark Quinn, HMS Glasgow's Weapon Engineer Officer added: "Poseidon and Type 26 will make a formidable contribution to the Joint Force, not just to multi-domain anti-submarine warfare, but across the spectrum of operations."

"The opportunity to develop our professional relationship with 120 Squadron at this early stage in the build of HMS Glasgow is really welcome."

Other early activities at forging the new ship's identity have included sailors participating in the City of Glasgow's Remembrance Parade.

And the ship has handed over an historic keepsake to a Clyde shipbuilding museum. Back in 1942, the Govan yard – then known as Fairfield's – launched the last King George V-class battleship, HMS Howe.

A commissioning gift of an intricately-carved wooden box and gavel was made by the yard's apprentices.

With Howe scrapped in the late 1950s and the name not resurrected, the gift made its way into storage in the Royal Navy trophy store in Portsmouth.

It agreed to loan the gift to the Fairfield museum – in the highly-ornate original company offices in the shipyard where it was made – and can now be seen by members of the public after being presented by the frigate's Senior Naval Officer Commander Phil Burgess.

*Below: The luminous overcoats of Glasgow's sailors and CXX Squadron personnel add a spot of brightness to a gloomy autumn day on the Clyde, with the frigate taking shape in the background*



## Montrose's Plain talk

IF YOU want to make the winter evenings fly by in the wardroom of HMS Montrose, just reminisce about Salisbury – you'll find you're among friends.

Five of the 20 members of the frigate's wardroom hail from the historic Wiltshire city. Four even went to the same school (Bishop's Wordsworth, plus a solitary ex-Cathedral School pupil).

Which is not bad going because Salisbury (1) is the army's home turf and (2) has a population of just over 40,000.

"Finding a single person who knew the Salisbury area was a surprise in itself, let alone a total of five of us. It really is a small world!" said Lieutenant Jamie Powell-McCrae, the Bahrain-based frigate's deputy logistics officer.

"The four of us who attended Bishop Wordsworth's School have been able to recount great memories whether that is on the rugby pitch or in the classroom. What is clear to all five of us is that it is a privilege to be able to call Salisbury home."

Completing the 'Salisbury Five' are navigating officer Lt Tom Isaac, Officer of the Watch 3 Lt Tom Chatwin, chaplain Fr Charles Miller and trainee warfare officer under training (Slt Toby Thornton).

They and their 180+ shipmates complete Port Crew, one of two entire ship's companies assigned to the frigate to sustain her 24/7/365 maritime security operations in the Gulf and Indian Ocean.



(L-r) Lieutenant Powell-Mcrae, Sub-Lieutenant Thornton, Lieutenant Chatwin, Chaplain Father Miller and Lieutenant Isaac

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

# Return of family fun for 45 Cdo



FAMILIES and friends were once again welcomed to an evening of fun at RM Condor, in Arbroath.

45 Commando invited their loved ones to take part in a range of activities at the airfield – the first time since the beginning of the pandemic.

Visitors enjoyed crazy golf, a barbecue, bonfire and fireworks which were organised by 45 Commando Assault Engineers.

Captain Ian Barnes, whose duty it was to organise the evening's festivities, said: "It was fantastic to once again welcome back the friends and families of 45 Commando. It would seem that a lot of fun was had on the evening, which makes all the planning and organising well worth it."

"It is only through the support of our friends and families that the unit can continue to operate effectively."

"It is vitally important that we acknowledge that, especially after the restrictions of the pandemic."

45 Commando is an amphibious commando unit that forms part of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines. These elite troops conduct a range of operational tasks at home and across the globe.

They are currently conducting mountain training in the Scottish Highlands, ensuring that all personnel are ready to deploy north and into the Arctic Circle (see pages 16-17).



## Got any hose? Not any more...

ROYAL Navy sailors have donated more than 600 metres of old fire hoses to help two animal charities in Cornwall.

The old kit from Culdrose was handed over to Newquay Zoo and the Cornish Seal Sanctuary at Gweek; instead of being thrown into landfill, the rubber hoses can be reused and shredded into hard-wearing material for bedding or toys.

In the seal sanctuary, strips of rubber are attached to floats to hang in the water like seaweed.

Personnel at the School of Flight Deck Operations, which trains all the Navy's aircraft handlers how to safely run the Fleet's flight decks, came up with the rubbery gesture.

Able Rate Emma Tatnell said: "I often think that we sign up to protect the nation, but we also need to protect the environment as well."

"I heard about zoos using old rubber hoses and thought it would be a brilliant way to recycle our old hoses that are no longer usable, rather than see them go into landfill."



"I've seen how they can use them for bedding or making into rubber balls or for climbing. It's also great to help these charities save a little money – which are local to us in Cornwall and must have faced a tough time through the pandemic. They were both delighted at our donations."

## Revamped haven for 40 Cdo families

A GARDEN has been given a new lease of life thanks to a grant of £20,000.

Warrant Officer 2 Martin Ash RM applied for cash from the NAAFI Fund Awards, from the Armed Forces Covenant, and was successful in securing funds to develop the Community Welfare Garden at Quantock House, Taunton.

The existing garden used by 40 Commando families was a little tired and did not match the recent renovations done at Quantock House internally.

So, with a two-fold plan WO2 Ash decided to apply for the money and give the garden a lift.

He wanted to make the area more usable and Covid friendly while also ensuring it remained a safe place for children to play. But he also wanted families to be able to help with the upkeep and maintenance of the grounds – giving them the chance to work together and socialise.

Following a successful bid, Urban and Rural Gardens designed and constructed the garden.

It now includes a planted patio area and composite decking with the original summer house. New raised beds have also been built to grow flowers and vegetables.

An open day saw families come together to celebrate the new facilities and the Corps birthday.

During the party, serving personnel and their children planted spring bulbs and seeds, which they'll be encouraged to look after as they start to grow.

The youngsters were also able to explore the new garden and equipment and draw their own chalk images using interactive flower beds.

WO2 Ash would like to thank the NAAFI Fund and Urban and Rural Gardens for making this garden possible and invite families to their coffee mornings held every Thursday at 10am.

## Fairs promote navy's health priorities

HEALTH and wellbeing fairs have been held aboard HMS Vigilant and carrier HMS Prince of Wales.

The events aimed to raise awareness of alcohol, smoking, weight management and the importance of mental health – the Royal Navy's main health priorities.

Vigilant's medical department, including Surg Lt Burnett, POMA(SM) Easton, LMA(SM) Charlesworth and MA(SM) Adam, worked with the Health and Wellbeing Office at HMS Temeraire and the Mental Health Nursing team within HMNB Clyde to ensure they are prepared and able to deliver health advice while on patrol.

LNN Sutherland provided them with three iPads, preloaded with several apps including Head Space and Yoga Exercises, to help personnel during their Continuous At Sea Deterrent (CASD) patrol when regular signposting is not readily available to them.

Meanwhile, the Health and Wellbeing Team at Portsmouth-based Temeraire were able to provide the medics with information on the Royal Navy's four health priorities. This ensured they could dedicate a day to promoting good health including alcohol education, smoking cessation, dietary advice, exercise regimes, mental health and cancer awareness.

On HMS Prince of Wales, stalls signposted personnel to a range of health teams from the Defence Dental Department to the NHS Sexual Health Team. The carrier's catering department provided examples of healthy meals.

MA Chelsea Hoy, who co-ordinated the event, said: "It had been a good morning, allowing everyone to see the different health and wellbeing priorities in the Royal Navy and how they can find any support should they need it."

Units interested in running a similar event, can contact the Royal Navy Health and Wellbeing Office and their Regional Mental Health nurses who can provide them with resources and the support they need.

## Submariners cycle for lost colleague



THREE submariners got on their bikes and cycled more than 200km in preparation for an epic challenge planned this year.

Lieutenant Commander Darren Lunn, Lieutenant Kyle Baker and Warrant Officer Adam McCrohan are looking to cycle the Tour de France route in the summer.

But to get themselves in top shape for the momentous charity event, they first took part in the Everest Challenge. This saw the trio mount their bikes to a smart trainer and cycle up and down the Alpe



de Zwift nine times – the equivalent of Mount Everest (8,848m).

Eleven hours and 18 minutes, and 205km later, they had completed it.

Their reasons for putting themselves through 11 hours of cycling? HELP – Jim's Story, a sub fund set up under the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) which aims to tackle the stigma of mental health in the Royal Navy.

Their Everest challenge saw them raise £778 towards the charity.

HELP – Jim's Story was set up following the loss of Captain James Simpson who took his own life.

It came as a shock to both his work colleagues in MoD Abbey Wood, Bristol, and the wider submarine community, not least Darren and Kyle with whom he worked.

The fund was set up by his widow Claire and the help of some fellow officers and friends.

This summer, Darren, Kyle and Adam will ride the 2020 Tour de France route, the year of Captain Simpson's

passing, in the same time frame as the pros – 23 days which includes two rest days.

They will be supported by drivers, CPO Iain Hamblin and PO Mark Twitty.

In addition to the Everest Challenge, more warm up events are planned including the North Coast 500 in spring.

Keep up with their progress on Facebook and Instagram at @tourdesubmariner or donate via [justgiving.com/fundraising/tourdesubmariner](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tourdesubmariner).





# FRONT POLAR



TWO sailors from HMS Protector are believed to be the first Royal Navy officers to complete the fabled Northwest Passage in 170 years.

Lieutenants Charlotte Eddy and Alastair Newton joined the US Coast Guard's largest and most advanced icebreaker for the 4,000-mile journey between the Pacific and Atlantic via Canadian waters – a route the Royal Navy unsuccessfully sought to open for decades in the 17 and 1800s.

The pair – who are assigned to the Royal Navy's only icebreaker/polar research ship HMS Protector – joined the US Coast Guard cutter Healy for the two-month voyage from Alaska to Greenland.

The experience will help them guide Protector through the Antarctic ice when the ship begins her austral summer programme of surveying and research later this year.

The Royal Navy tried repeatedly to navigate the Northwest Passage in the 18th and 19th Centuries to spare ships the voyage around Cape Horn at the foot of the Americas.

Legendary explorer Roald Amundsen finally proved it was navigable 115 years ago and global warming means the passage is becoming easier – but for much of the year it remains a perilous journey.

Charlotte and Alastair joined the Healy in Seward, Alaska, from where they headed into the ice on a 4,000-mile journey which took the ship through the Bering Sea, Beaufort Sound, Amundsen Gulf and Melville Sound to Resolute Bay and finally Baffin Bay.

The aim of the exchange was to qualify the two officers as ice pilots for their return to Protector.

Like Protector, Healy's main role is a scientific research ship so while making her historic passage, teams from some of the US' top universities were embarked, carrying out a range of experiments, research and data gathering. These ranged from the measurement of the melting permafrost as a result of ecological changes (mainly krill density) to paleoclimatology and the measurement of water isotopes linked to climate change.

In Resolute Bay the ship was visited by the head of the United States Coast Guard Admiral Karl Schultz and the Canadian Coast Guard Commissioner Mario Pelletier to witness a joint search and rescue exercise.

USCGC Healy and CCGS Amundsen searched for missing people

at sea, using multiple techniques and methods, allowing the crews of both vessels to swap ideas, methods and experiences and build working relationships in the unique Arctic environment.

On completion the Healy continued eastwards towards Baffin Bay – so big it's actually a sea with Baffin Island to the west, Greenland to the east. In doing so, Lieutenants Eddy and Newton are thought to be the first Royal Naval officers to transit the Northwest Passage since Admiral Robert McClure in the 1850s and his expedition to find the Terror and Erebus which vanished in the Northwest Passage a few years before.

In Baffin Bay the ship carried out a vast number of Conductivity, Temperature and Depth dips down to depths of over 2,300 metres (1.4 miles). The information gleaned can provide a more detailed understanding of the water's characteristics through the entire water column, which is crucial for understanding the physics involved. The physics in turn allows biologists to understand why biology is present or not present at different depths and why the chemical makeup of the water changes over depth.

Once all 215 dips had been conducted the ship left the beauty of the Aurora Borealis – visible practically every night – and headed to Halifax for a logistics stop and leg stretch for the ship's company, after eight weeks at sea, before continuing to Boston, Massachusetts, where the Royal Navy officers departed.

"It's very hard to single out one event which was a highlight of this trip," said Alastair.

"Along the way we saw walrus, polar bears, a variety of whales, unfortunately however, they didn't manage to glimpse any narwhals.

"The Northern Lights were amazing, seeing the CCGC Amundsen again – she's a ship I have served in in the past – was awesome, however, playing my own very small part in providing a platform for the scientific research into climate change in the region really must be it – especially when you consider COP26."

It's the second year running Protector's officers have benefited from an exchange aboard a USCG icebreaker.

Last year, two exchange officers sailed with the cutter Polar Star as she pushed her way north through the Bering Sea – an experience which helped guide the British survey ship as she made a record-breaking foray into the Arctic over the summer.



**THIS is a solar eclipse – the only one of 2021, and a marvel of nature witnessed by just a few hundred people... including the crew of HMS Protector.**

The Royal Navy icebreaker was in a prime position to witness the natural blackout as she patrolled the waters off South Georgia – the remote wildlife paradise and last resting place of famed explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton.

Only those closer to the South Pole – Tasmania, South Africa and New Zealand's South Island – could see even a partial eclipse.

For the full effect, however, you had to be even further south – and nearer the Antarctic Peninsula, one of the most sparsely inhabited places on the planet.

After an autumn working in the tropics around St Helena and Ascension Island, Protector is on her way to the frozen continent for her scientific mission supporting polar research and updating seafarers' charts.

The latest leg of her journey has carried her as far as South Georgia – 900 miles from the Falklands and also sovereign British territory.

Sailors had to be up early on Saturday – 4am – to catch the moon passing in front of the sun and blocking its rays. Those who were up were treated to a 96 per cent eclipse for around 100 minutes (compared with HMS Forth being treated to a quarter eclipse back in the Falklands).

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many of us in Protector," said logistics officer Lieutenant Commander Dave Pitt. "We got to witness a fantastic natural occurrence in one of the most beautiful places on earth."

After a few days' work in and around South Georgia, Protector moves on to even-more-distant British Overseas Territory: the inhospitable, uninhabited South Sandwich Islands, about 450 miles southeast of South Georgia.



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

See our impact [impact.rnrmc.org.uk](http://impact.rnrmc.org.uk) T 023 9387 1520 E [theteam@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:theteam@rnrmc.org.uk)



**Talk to us**



Sometimes the **smallest actions**  
can make the **biggest difference.**

**During uncertain times, it may be difficult to ask for help.** Forcesline is a free and confidential helpline to support you, no matter the problem. Make that first step for long lasting help - **don't keep quiet, talk to us.**

**0800 260 6767**

Free and confidential. Open weekdays, 09:00 to 17:30

Or get in touch online at

**[ssafa.org.uk/forcesline](https://ssafa.org.uk/forcesline)**

**ssafa** | the  
**Armed Forces**  
charity

**Regulars, Reserves, Veterans, Families**

Registered as a charity in England and Wales Number 210760 in Scotland Number SC038056 and in Republic of Ireland Number 20202001. Established 1885.

# DIVING IN

THE Royal Navy's bomb disposal experts have been sharing their knowledge and skills during exercises in Iceland.

The Fleet Diving Squadron joined more than 300 personnel from 15 different countries for NATO's main explosive ordnance disposal training of the year.

The series of exercises saw personnel tackling explosives both on land and at sea.

Leading the navy's contingent and heading up the Multi-National Explosive Ordnance Disposal Coordination Cell was Lieutenant Commander Mark Shaw from Faslane-based Northern Diving Group.

He said: "The real value of Northern Challenge comes from exercising with other nations."

"The Royal Navy is world leading in Maritime Improvised Explosive Device Disposal but working alongside partner nations provides an opportunity to collectively assess the evolving threat and develop the most effective and safest way to defeat it."

Over a fortnight the operators dealt with dozens of devices spanning a range of scenarios.

Fleet Diving Squadron also provided support to the maritime directing staff responsible for creating the scenarios and producing the training devices.

During the exercise the nations rotate, taking turns to assess operators and provide feedback. Hosted by the Icelandic Coast Guard, it also added the challenge of dealing with near Arctic weather conditions.

Petty Officer (Diver) Craig Tower, the Fleet Diving Squadron representative to the maritime staff, said: "This exercise allowed us to pass on our knowledge of dealing with Maritime Improvised Explosive Devices while learning from the other nations taking part."

"The number of countries involved allows us to network and learn from one another in a way that is rare."

"I witnessed some good practices and will be using them in the future."

"As a maritime staff member, I also had the opportunity to assist in the progression of some nations that are relatively new to Maritime Improvised Explosive Devices."



## Your Exclusive Official Royal Navy Calendar

12 AMAZING IMAGES OF THE FLEET

The 2022 Royal Navy/Navy News Calendar

STILL ONLY  
**£8.99**  
inc p&p (UK)  
or £14.99 inc p&p (overseas)  
code:  
GLOBALFORCE22

### Order Now!

Our official calendar for 2022 celebrates the awesome Global Force of our Royal Navy featuring images that show its role sailing the world's seas protecting and helping in areas in much need of aid and assistance.

There are **3 ways** to purchase your copy -

- **Online** - click on [onlinecalendarshop.com/navynews](http://onlinecalendarshop.com/navynews) and go through the simple order procedure to secure your copy. Navy News readers please quote code (GLOBALFORCE22) when ordering online. Don't forget to have your credit card details handy when you go online.
- **By post** - send a cheque or postal order to: [Onlinecalendarshop.com Ltd](http://Onlinecalendarshop.com Ltd), 2 Ringway Business Park, Richard Street, Birmingham B7 4AA. Please make your cheque payable to Onlinecalendarshop.com Ltd
- **By phone** - call 0121 333 1553 to place your order direct with one of our friendly customer service operators. Don't forget to have your credit card details handy when you call. Please allow 28 days from order for delivery.



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

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

Cutting-edge science and medicine combine to give commando instructors a

# Licence to chill



**PIONEERING** technology, training and treatment is helping to eliminate the risk of potentially fatal heat illness as recruits strive to become Royal Marines Commandos.

State-of-the-art body monitors recording trainee commandos' physiological data, trained instructors studying that information, and medical teams on hand to treat trainees almost immediately could all-but eliminate the most serious cases of exertional heat illness in those striving to earn the legendary green beret.

Introduced in the spring of this year, the heat illness risk assessment and management system at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines has already saved the life of one individual and prevented a couple of very serious casualties.

It follows more than three years of work and research led by the Royal Navy's scientific experts from the Institute of Naval Medicine (INM) in Gosport and the US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, plus the Royal Marines team at Lympstone, near Exeter, to better understand exertional heat illness, predict it – and intervene where necessary.

The result is a monitor – Open Body Area Network (OBAN) which records key physiological features as a trainee tackles arduous activities such as the 9 mile speed march or the gruelling '30 miler' which epitomises commando training.

Beyond providing the medical officer and instructors with data such as heart rate, the OBAN also records skin temperature and with a unique algorithm devised by INM and the US Military predicts the estimated core temperature and Heat Strain Index. Future generations of the OBAN will incorporate an accelerometer that will record the trainee's running gait and with the use of the 'wobble index' have another metric in which to use to predict the onset of exertional heat illness.

Individuals undertaking activity whose core temperature rises above of 40°C may not necessarily be suffering from exertional heat illness – everybody is different, and some trainees may be attuned to such circumstances; this is where the OBAN's smart algorithm provides invaluable information to allow the medical team to intervene only when necessary.

Other recruits can quickly shift from mild symptoms – dizziness, muscle cramps and exhaustion, to heat stroke causing collapse and loss of consciousness requiring immediate intervention within a few minutes. Early recognition of Exertional Heat Illness is key to allow effective cooling to commence as soon as possible. Untreated, heat stroke can lead to multiple organ failure, permanent disability or in the worst cases loss of life.

The team at Lympstone have two ambulances and a rapid response 4x4 equipped with water, ice and monitoring equipment on standby with medics across Dartmoor during major exercises.

Heat stroke sufferers are rapidly submerged in pods which are filled with ice-cold water, to cool them as quickly as possible while their condition and temperature is constantly monitored, and they are then transported to hospital or the medical centre at the marines' base for further treatment and observation.

The goal – beyond initially saving lives – is to return the trainees to training when they've fully recovered so they can continue their dream of becoming Royal Marines Commandos.

"Royal Marines' training is arduous. It pushes people to their physiological limits, but no-one should die in training from heat illness. We do not want to lose anyone and therefore process and education is paramount," stresses Major Erik Nielsen.

"We know a recruit's physical condition, their training progression, their nutrition and hydration status. Thanks to the data and that knowledge, we can better prevent, intervene and manage the risk of exertional heat illness."

The team at Lympstone are focused on exertional heat illness

**“Royal Marines' training is arduous. It pushes people to their physiological limits, but no-one should die in training from heat illness.”**

– MAJOR ERIK NIELSEN

– caused by the body overheating through strenuous activity, carrying heavy loads and wearing equipment. During the spring and summer months they mitigate the impact of the higher ambient temperature to cool trainees down – such as starting at sunrise or running them through Dartmoor's many streams.

With the OBAN and the data it feeds back to instructors – there's not total coverage yet over Dartmoor to provide continuous live feedback throughout the 30-miler but it should be available in the new year as the tech develops – this next step of increased capability is hailed as a 'game changer' by staff at Lympstone.

More than 200 recruits have benefitted from the system to date. The medical team is certain the life of one trainee has been saved, and a couple more were treated in good time without serious impact on their path to earning the green beret.

"The biggest win for us is not just the wearable technology, though it is exciting and cutting edge," explained Dr Ross Hemingway.

"It's also the training and education around it. It's about having a wider understanding and

knowledge of exertional heat illness across the training centre and wider defence.

"The OBAN is an additional safety measure to flag individuals at greater risk of exertional heat illness so we can provide a robust dynamic risk assessment during high risk arduous trainings serials."

"The medical and training teams at CTCRM have a much greater understanding of the risks, signs and symptoms and management of Exertional Heat Illness. We are much better educated, prepared and trained to deal with heat illnesses than we were five to six years ago."

When heat stroke occurs the goal is to reduce the core body temperature to below 39.5°C within 30 minutes to limit damage to the body's cells.

"Rapid and effective cooling of heat stroke casualties in ice cold water reduces the risk of long-term morbidity and mortality. With the introduction of this capability we have definitely saved one life and prevented long term complications in several others."

The programme at the Commando Training Centre has significant potential across the entire Armed Forces and the team are working with the Defence Safety Authority and other departments and units to share their expertise and findings.

A significant number of cases at the Commando Training Centre are due to known risk factors such as previous heat illness, infections or injuries – which some trainees may try to hide initially.

However, some casualties have no obvious underlying cause for their episode of exertional heat illness. Therefore, research is also being undertaken at CTCRM in conjunction with Liverpool John Moores University and the British Army Recruit Health and Performance Research Teams to better understand novel risk factors in exertional heat illnesses.

"It's not necessarily the guy at the back of the pack on a march you should be worried about, but the person at the front, all charged up, leading on his comrades, utterly motivated to finish," said Major Nielsen.

"He may be hiding a cold, an upset stomach, stress, suffering from lack of sleep or some other illness because he wants to win. These are the ones who suddenly 'heat up' and suffer heat illness with no prior warning."

The MOD launched a new heat illness prevention policy in October 2020, written hand-in-hand with the front line for the front line.

Following that policy has saved at least one life and a suite of new heat illness prevention training modules are now being rolled out via the Defence Learning Environment to individual personnel and commanders.

You can find the policy in JSP 375 volume 1, Chapter 41.

Pictures: LPhoto Robert Oates, FRPU West

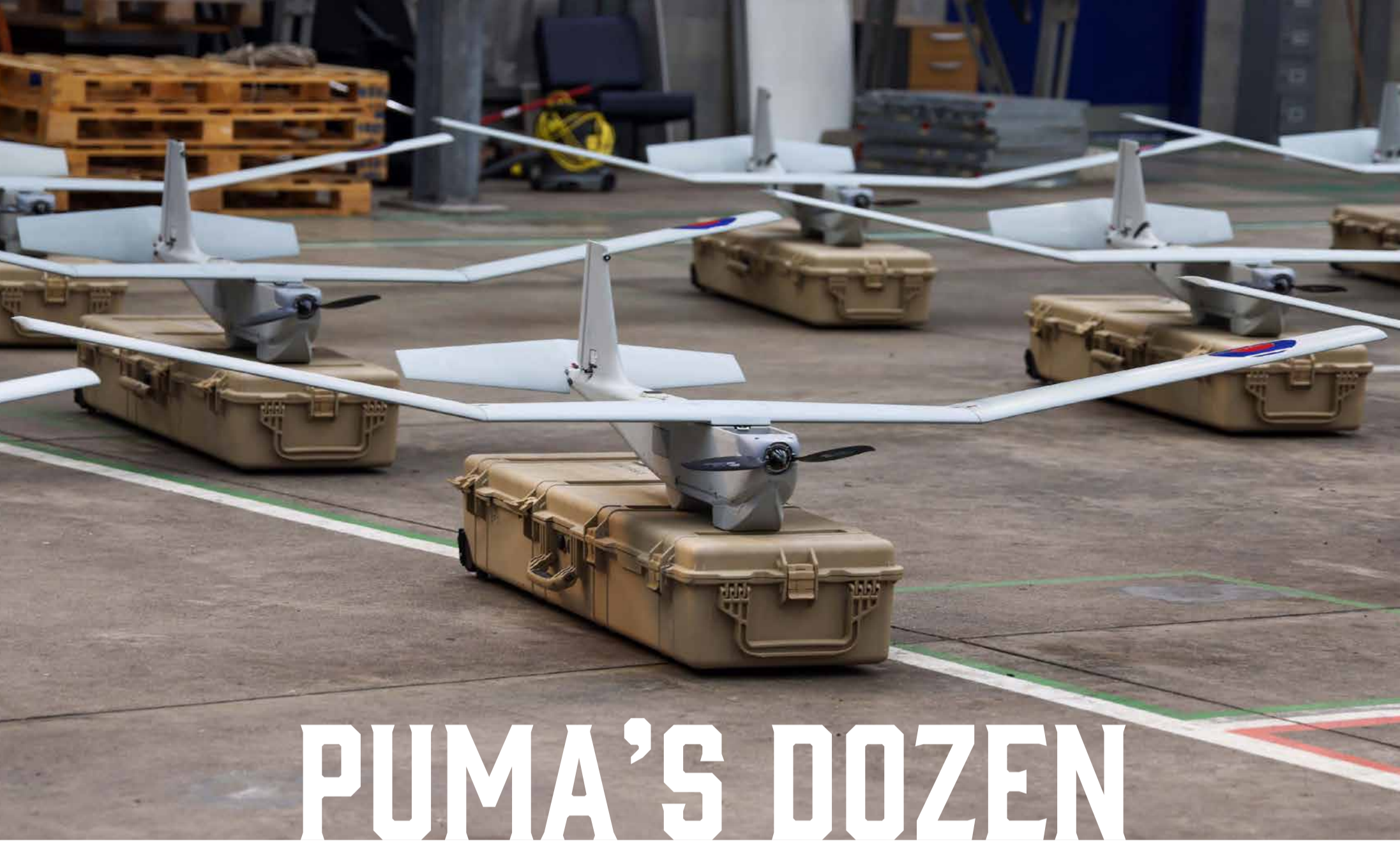


Medics strip a 'casualty' of his uniform



The casualty is put into a sack filled with icy water to cool which (below) is emptied once his body reaches a safe temperature





# PUMA'S DOZEN

## 700X expands fleet of remote-piloted drones

The Fleet Air Arm has expanded its armada of remotely-piloted drones – the far-seeing eyes of navy warships – with new training, personnel and 12 aircraft.

The sailors at 700X Naval Air Squadron recently took delivery of their latest Puma air systems and can now immediately deploy flights as required for defence.

The most recent deployment for the squadron, which is based at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose in Cornwall, was on the offshore patrol vessel HMS Mersey.

Puma flight commander Lieutenant Ashley Loftus said: "We've made a significant move forward in our capabilities in the last 12 months."

"We are now at the stage where we can be deployed at short notice. This is a totally organic and flexible Royal Navy enterprise, using our systems being flown by Royal Navy personnel."

With a range beyond tens miles and an endurance of more than two hours, the Puma can vastly increase the ability of a ship to gather intelligence, for instance on the identity of shipping.

Flying up to 45 miles per hour, the drones combine a high-tech control system with their array of sensors, including a times-fifty optical zoom, to live-stream video back to the ship.

Lieutenant Loftus added: "They may look simple, but the Puma is a

rugged and sophisticated piece of kit. Yes, it's fairly small, but that means we can deploy it from the stern of any ship with the minimum of effort.

"Last year we took part in exercises in the Mediterranean on HMS Albion while this year we've deployed with HMS Tamar and then in the Baltic back onboard Albion again.

"We've also taken part in exercises with the Royal Marines. We've operated the Puma from landing craft while working with the marines in Scotland. We'd fly ahead of the craft, during the middle of the night, using one of the system's thermal cameras to provide real-time intelligence.

"We've just now undertaken a training embarkation in UK waters with HMS Mersey, to train our new flight commanders."

700X Naval Air Squadron conducts its own training programme to prepare personnel for the Puma flights.

The squadron also teaches military personnel from across defence in the use of quadcopters. It also researches and evaluates a wide range of remotely-piloted systems as the sector continues to increase.



## Challenge will see Navy expand use of drones

THE Royal Navy is developing new approaches to acquiring autonomous solutions to support operational activities – such as how to get supplies to the frontline of operations.

Culdrose hosted the inaugural Heavy Lift Challenge, calling on drone manufacturers to showcase crewless technology which could be adapted to carry supplies and cargo to ships and personnel.

The competition was a chance for the navy to test how it can quicken the procurement process and get off-the-shelf, readily-available tech into the hands of sailors and marines sooner.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines have already put a range of drones through their paces, demonstrating ability to lift and deliver payloads in excess of 100kgs, including a drone system used to deliver post in trials by the Royal Mail. The next stage is to see what equipment exists which could carry a heavier load of up to 300kg.

Organised by the Navy's drone experts 700X Naval Air Squadron, Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) and the Office for the Chief of Technology Officer

RN, the competition saw two companies – Malloy Aeronautics and W Autonomous Systems – awarded £300,000 contracts to develop their remotely-piloted air systems (RPAS) to lift beyond 200kg.

One of the drones taking part in the challenge proved its ability to deliver other supplies in trials last year which saw Royal Mail deliver post to the Isles of Scilly.

At Predannack Airfield near Culdrose, they had to carry payloads over 100kg – that's more than two fully-loaded Royal Marines Bergen backpacks – and pass tests for speed, endurance and accuracy of payload delivery.

Lieutenant Commander Martin Howard, the commanding officer of 700X NAS, said: "It has been great to be involved in this exciting project which is pushing the boundaries of technology as well as the method by which Defence procures equipment."

"The heavy lift challenge has showcased Predannack's utility as an RPAS trials location with opportunities for Defence and the commercial sector."

It is hoped the drones could be used to transport cargo autonomously, delivering

vital supplies like ammunition, spare parts and first aid to personnel on the front line. This would lead to lower operating costs as well as protecting personnel by sending uncrewed systems into conflict zones.

Royal Navy Chief Technology Officer, Brigadier Dan Cheesman said: "This challenge is a dynamic collaboration between DE&S, industry and ourselves."

"Our co-creation of a ground-breaking commercial mechanism means we are able to investigate cutting-edge technology at pace and explore solutions for the Future Maritime Aviation Force and the wider Armed Forces. It's exciting times for Defence and the market."

The challenge also gave DE&S the chance to test a new commercial framework of making procurement processes for new equipment quicker.

James Gavin, head of Future Capability Group at DE&S, added: "This project is about exploring emerging technology which could be of future use to the Royal Navy and other front-line commands and new acquisition approaches to ensure any operational advantage can be delivered to our UK Armed Forces at pace."



## List of ship losses goes online

A HUGE database cataloguing every Royal Navy vessel lost – going back to the days of Henry VIII – is now available to the public.

The Royal Navy Loss List is a free online database which lists 5,100 warships and auxiliaries lost in naval service since 1512.

Created by the Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust in 2011, it was originally intended to help legal and conservation experts protect Royal Navy wrecks around the globe.

They realised it would prove of use/ interest to fellow historians and the wider public, and have made it accessible to all.

The database ([thisismast.org/research/royal-navy-loss-list-search.html](https://thisismast.org/research/royal-navy-loss-list-search.html)) is searchable by a ship's name, class, and tonnage. Or you can list the vessels lost in French waters over the past 500 years (760), the number of ships lost on D-Day (416), or how many were sunk by aircraft in the Great War (six).

The database draws on official records and a raft of reference works, plus memoirs and eyewitness accounts where necessary.

Archaeological reports, and diver accounts were used to verify information on the survival of vessel remains.

Even then, says Giles Richardson, MAST's senior archaeologist, the causes of many losses remains a mystery; more than half the ships lost in World War 2 are classified 'unknown – lost in action' due to lack of information.

Many of these are landing craft and other small vessels lost in major operations including Dunkirk, and Operations Torch and Overlord, when official loss reports were only collated centrally months later, and eyewitnesses had long since moved on.

"Delving into contemporary accounts reveals craft officially recorded as 'lost' on the Normandy beaches suffered a wide variety of fates, including storm damage, mechanical breakdown and collision."

The list covers all vessels lost in peace and war – but not RAF, Army, Coastguard and merchant craft upon which RN personnel may have served, nor ships captured by the enemy or those lost in the service of other navies or converted to merchantmen.

Mr Richardson says in compiling the database, it's thrown up some fascinating statistics about the fate of Royal Navy ships down the ages.

Of the 5,100 wrecks listed, more than a quarter – 1,410 – are in the UK's territorial waters and another 156 are within the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone, extending 200 nautical miles from the coast. Until the turn of the 20th Century accidental shipwreck rather than battle were responsible for the vast majority of losses, whereas conflict accounts for three quarters of all RN/RFA ships sunk since 1900.

Mines destroyed one in every four ships sunk in both world wars. And while three in every 100 ships lost in the Great War fell victim to enemy aircraft, a generation later air power accounted for nearly one third of all the Royal Navy's losses. In all, 300 vessels were lost to aircraft and 605 to submarines.

The database has been hailed as a vital resource – both for the casual viewer and the serious historian/marine archaeologist – by the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

"The RN Loss List is a vital tool to begin to understand, research and manage these 5,100 wreck sites before they are lost forever," said Director General Professor Dominic Tweddle.

"This fantastic loss list compiled by MAST represents a huge step forward."

# Dragon marks sinking of Ark

SAILORS from HMS Dragon paused to remember the most famous aircraft carrier in the Royal Navy's history, 80 years after she was lost.

The destroyer's Mediterranean patrol took her over the wreck of HMS Ark Royal which finally succumbed to a torpedo strike about 30 nautical miles east of Europa Point in Gibraltar in November 1941.

Just one sailor was lost – Able Seaman Edward Mitchell – out of a complement of 1,749 sailors.

They struggled for more than 12 hours after the carrier was hit by a torpedo from U-81 to prevent her sinking.

Engineers toiled to maintain steam and shore up the damage – the torpedo blasted a hole 130ft long and 30ft deep in the hull – but when the list reached 27 degrees, Captain Loben Maund reluctantly gave the order to abandon ship.

The evacuation was carried out with first-rate discipline (pictured inset, courtesy of the NMRM) with Maund the last man to leave – sliding down a rope on to a waiting tug to the resounding cheers of his men.

The survivors were returned to Gibraltar where they voted to use the 'canteen fund' (today the welfare fund) rescued from the safe before the ship went down to commission a silver bell weighing some two hundredweights at a cost of £598.

The bell accompanied the successor ships Ark Royals IV (of post-war, Sailor-fame) and V (the Harrier carrier which served from 1985 until 2010) and now resides in the Fleet Air Arm Museum at RNAS Yeovilton.

The wartime Ark Royal (the third Royal Navy ship to bear the name, going back to the days of the Armada) was a constant thorn in Hitler's side for more than two years.

His propaganda machine repeatedly proclaimed the ship sunk. By the time the Germans succeeded, Ark Royal had attained almost mythical status.

She served extensively in the Atlantic, Norway and Mediterranean. Most famously in May 1941, it was Swordfish flown from the Ark which crippled the German battleship Bismarck, bringing her under the heavy guns of the British fleet.

Fate caught up with her as she returned to



Gibraltar after delivering aircraft to under-siege Malta.

With the wreck – broken into two large sections – more than 3,000 feet beneath the stern of the Type 45 destroyer, 190 sailors gathered in the wind and rain to remember the ship and those who served in her.

"When we think of Ark Royal we must remember that we too are men and women of the sea; we are mariners who are trained and committed to our ship and our shipmates," Dragon's Commanding Officer Commander George Storton told his ship's company.

"Courage and determination are values that transcend thousands of years of sea farers. We must all take a moment to stop and think of the times, such as Ark Royal, when men and women no different to ourselves, fought bravely on the ocean in times less peaceful than the present."

He cast a wreath provided by the HMS Ark Royal Association into the Mediterranean in memory of AB Mitchell as Leading Hand "Cherry" Blakeway piped the Still.

With the passing of the members of the wartime crew, a new Association has been formed to embrace the ships' companies of the succeeding Arks, which welcomes all former members to come together and perpetuate the spirit and memories of the three carriers. Those interested in keeping this most famous of all names alive should contact the secretary: [enquiries@hmsarkroyalassociation.org](mailto:enquiries@hmsarkroyalassociation.org)



## 820 honour WW2 Swordfish pilot

AVIATORS from 820 Naval Air Squadron honoured the final wishes of WW2 Swordfish pilot George Gibb – casting his ashes into the waters over which he once flew.

Lieutenant Gibb (pictured right in uniform) from Largs in Scotland is possibly the last pilot to have flown the famous biplane torpedo bomber in action during World War 2.

He passed away earlier last year at the age 98 with his ashes entrusted to 820 Naval Air Squadron, who committed them to the deep in the Mediterranean following a service aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The ceremony was sparked by a friendship struck up between the 'Stringbag' flier and a trainee helicopter pilot following a veterans' breakfast club in 2019, when Mr Gibb got chatting with Sub Lieutenant Alexander 'AJ' Walker.

"It doesn't matter how far apart in time you have served, the Fleet Air Arm is a family and George saw me as 'his oppo'," said AJ (pictured right as a midshipman sharing a drink with the veteran).

"George passed away in January and I wanted to support his wife and children in being able to honour his contributions to the effort in World War 2. I thought it was a fitting memorial to be at sea, on the Fleet Flagship with 820 Naval Air Squadron and other representatives from the ship's company in attendance."

AJ read an excerpt from Mr Gibbs' memoirs – an account of his Swordfish crash into the sea – to add a spot of colour to proceedings.

The service, led by Queen



Elizabeth's chaplain the Rev Ralph Barber, was part of a broader commemoration to mark 820 Naval Air Squadron's role in the Battle of Cape Spartivento in November 1940.

The inconclusive encounter between the British and Italian fleets off the coast of Sardinia lasted barely an hour, inflicted minor damage on the two protagonists, and was regarded as something of a missed opportunity by both sides.

## Plymouth thank-you for outgoing RNA president

MEMBERS of the Plymouth branch of the Royal Naval Association bade farewell to the RNA's President Vice Admiral John McAnally during their dinner dance held at HMS Drake.

The branch's patron and Lord Mayor of Plymouth Colin Beer, handed Adm McAnally a glass decanter and a bottle of Navy-strength Plymouth Gin. Other presentations which took

place were the award of Life Membership to S/M Richard Tipping for his work as Branch Welfare Officer and the award of Life Vice President to S/M John Whiteman for work as Vice Chairman and Branch Photographer. A surprise gift was made to the Plymouth Royal Naval Association at their monthly meeting when former Royal Marine Doug Liggertwood presented the Branch's Chairman S/M Des McCarthy with a cheque for £100 to be used in the Branch's charitable donations.

## LCT award

D-DAY survivor LCT 7074 – which enjoys pride of place as a major exhibit at the D-Day Story Museum in Southsea – has won an award. The landing craft (tank), which put armour ashore in Normandy in 1944, received 'The Martyn Heighton Award for Excellence in Maritime Conservation' title at the National Historic Ships' annual awards ceremony. The ship was raised and restored at a cost of £6m under the direction of the National Museum of the Royal Navy.



### Naval Quirks

THE LARGEST SUPPLY CONVOY OF ALL TIME CROSSED THE NORTH ATLANTIC HOMEWARD BOUND IN 1944..

IT COMPRISED 167 SHIPS WITH OVER A MILLION TONS OF CARGO AND COVERED NEARLY 26 SQUARE MILES OF SEA! – AND IT DIDN'T LOSE ONE SHIP ON PASSAGE!

MAKES YOU WONDER THO' HOW THE U-BOATS COULD MISS A TARGET OCCUPYING SUCH A HUGE AREA...

Should haf gone to Schpecksavers..



The Commodore is thinking of a reunion next year for the convoy's crews – if the Albert Hall is available...



Pictures by Sgt Ben Jenkins



# IN AT THE DEEP END

## SAILORS GET A TASTE OF BOTTOM FIELD AT COMMANDO TRAINING CENTRE

**“I HOPE someone is coming down to present us with our Green Berets after this.”**

Those were the words of Sub Lieutenant Jordan Bates after he and his course mates spent the day being put through their paces at Commando Training Centre in Lympstone.

The sailors on the Training Management Officer Course – those who will eventually be responsible for overseeing training and supporting development of personnel across the Royal Navy – headed for Bottom Field to be put through some aspects of gruelling Royal Marines training by Physical Training Instructor, Colour Sergeant Kristian Foster.

Bottom Field is the name given to an assault course which is designed to condition Royal Marines recruits to battlefield conditions. It's tough and filled with obstacles and it must be completed with all 32lbs of their fighting equipment.

The officers weren't tasked with carrying the full load of equipment, but experienced some of the challenges recruits face.

“Coming down to Bottom Field has been a great experience and we have all really enjoyed being here,” said Jordan.

After a comprehensive tour of units in the west, the students on the course were invited for a spell of ‘R&R’ and enjoyed all the trappings of a spa day: mud baths, ‘pilates’ and the outdoor (unheated) hot tub...

Kristian said: “There are seven Training Managers permanently assigned to the Commando Training Centre, so there is a reasonable chance some of the course will end up working here.

“The idea of today is to give them a small insight into Commando Training, so they can gain a greater understanding of the physical and mental demands that it presents.

“It will be very useful to them to have a degree of

empathy for the recruits and the challenges they face whilst under training and throughout their careers in the Royal Marines.”

Kristian's wife, Sub Lieutenant Aimee Foster, is on the Training Management Officer Course, adding an extra dimension to the day at Commando Training Centre.

“They really threw themselves into this and worked really hard”, Kristian added. “I also really enjoyed the opportunity to watch my wife fall into the tank, it has pretty much been a dream come true for me.”

Aimee said: “It's been a great opportunity for us to come to CTCRM and learn about how the Royal Marines deliver training.

“We have really enjoyed the Bottom Field today, it's a lot harder than I thought it would be and I can't imagine how the recruits manage to do this carrying 32lb of equipment.”

The Bottom Field Battle Physical Training – to give it its full name – forms a major part of Royal Marines recruit training, which comes just before the commando phase during the 32-week programme.

Recruits will carry out the test carrying 21lb of webbing plus an 11lb rifle, making it a 32lb in total.

They must complete one full 30ft rope climb, one lap of the assault course in under five minutes, a 200m fireman's carry in under 90 seconds and one full regain over the tank all whilst wearing full kit.

This section of training is designed to condition recruits to battlefield conditions, where they will be expected to negotiate obstacles in both the urban and rural environments as well as perform casualty evacuation wearing all of their fighting equipment.

The three-month Training Management Officer Course is being undertaken by seven sailors who have recently visited units across the western region, including HMS Drake, Devonport, 47 Commando and Fleet Operational Sea Training.



# Let's hear it for wonderful Harry



## Fraserburgh help out as Storm Arwen hits

SEA Cadets of Fraserburgh Unit stepped up to help community members as Storm Arwen wreaked havoc across Scotland.

Quickly turning their unit into an emergency shelter, they went about serving hot drinks and food to locals whose homes had been damaged and were without electricity or who were stranded due to cancelled transport services.

The local Sea Cadets had just moved into their new premises on Commerce Street in Fraserburgh, a town in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, about 40 miles north of Aberdeen, when the storm struck.

"As soon as the red weather warning was issued, we began preparing to offer support to the community and started posting Facebook messages with offers of support," explains Kevin Rae, of Fraserburgh Unit.

"Then, Police Scotland got in touch about providing shelter for stranded members of the community. We got to work immediately to be able to help."

Both the young cadets and adult volunteers scrambled to get bedrooms set up within their unit for anyone in need, while the main deck was set up with tables and chairs to serve soup and hot drinks.

"We tried to make our unit as welcoming as possible for people who needed support and there was a steady flow of people who came in during the weekend," said the Commanding Officer of the local Sea Cadet Unit, Lieutenant Commander (SCC) Craig Trail RNR.

"We welcomed a single mother and her baby as well as many senior citizens seeking some warmth, sustenance and comfort."

Teenage cadets at the unit also got stuck in to help in any way they could. Petty Officer Andrew, a 17-year-old cadet at Fraserburgh Unit said: "It was great to see the community get together in the hour of need, the older cadets and the volunteers worked round the clock to ensure there was support available where needed."

Another cadet, 15-year-old Able Cadet Lewis said: "I was proud of the fact that within a week of moving into our new headquarters, we were able to support the community this way."

The unit is also planning on assisting with the clean up after the damage caused by the storm, as soon as it's safe to do so.



AN outstanding sea cadet from Scarborough Unit have been awarded one of the highest honours any cadet can achieve – appointment as a Lord-Lieutenant Cadet for their county.

Two adult volunteers at sea cadet units, from Scarborough and Harrogate Units respectively, were also recognised for their contribution to the region's cadet force adult volunteers.

HM Lord-Lieutenant of North Yorkshire Johanna Ropner paid tribute to her new appointees who she personally selected in recognition of their exemplary contribution to their units and wider community.

The cadets were among those honoured at a special ceremony at Worsley Barracks in York which was hosted by the RfCA for Yorkshire and the Humber to enable the Lord-Lieutenant to recognise some of the county's very best volunteers.

Petty Officer Cadet Harry Ridsdale, 16, of Scarborough, who is a pupil of Scarborough Sixth Form College, is at Scarborough Sea Cadets.

Harry said: "There are many aspects of cadets that I love but one that stands head and shoulders above the rest is sailing."

"I love the challenge of being on the water and I'm always learning new things which has only made me want to sail more."

"Being in the sea cadets has not only increased my confidence but I've also made many friends and memories that I will cherish for a lifetime."

The other cadets awarded honours were Cadet Sergeant Rosie Nelson, 17, a pupil at Scarborough Sixth Form College, who is with Malton detachment of the Army Cadet Force and Cadet Flight Sergeant Adam Lill, 18, from Thirsk, who is at 2487 (Easingwold) Squadron of the Central and East Yorkshire Wing of the Air Training Corps. Adam has recently applied to join the RAF.

Four reservists and six cadet volunteers were also awarded for having shown exceptional commitment and dedication throughout their service, two of them being volunteers at Sea Cadets.

Patricia Kinsella of Scarborough, is at Eastern Area Sea Cadets, Scarborough. Since taking up the role of admin officer in 2013 Patricia routinely goes the extra mile for the cadets, hunting high and low for grants and sponsors to help the cadets get the best opportunities; trying to ensure no cadet ever misses out.

As well as volunteering at the Sea Cadets, Patricia volunteers at the local church. All this on top of working at the Rainbow Centre in Scarborough where she helps less fortunate people get through life the best way that they can and supports many people in having a fresh start.

Lt (SCC) Natalie Davies RNR, Commanding Officer of TS Scarborough said: "It was an absolute pleasure



to have nominated our cadet and adult volunteer." Michael Roberts of Harrogate is with Eastern Area Sea Cadets, Harrogate. Michael has been a Sea Cadet volunteer for over 30 years and treasurer since 1995. He has been described as an unsung hero for ensuring budgets were adhered to and has been the driving force behind many fundraising activities.

The other volunteers awarded were Major Rory Romani, of York, is with B Company, York, Yorkshire (North & West) Army Cadet Force; Sergeant Major Instructor Arthur Joy, of Catterick, is with A Company, Catterick, Yorkshire (North & West) Army Cadet Force. Squadron Leader Robert Southwell, of Arkengarthdale, is with Air Cadets Regional Headquarters (North) in Northallerton. Flight Lieutenant Jo Tucker, of Harrogate is Officer Commanding of 110 (City of York) Squadron Air Cadets.

Mrs Ropner said: "It is such a privilege to be able to pay tribute to some of North Yorkshire's exceptional citizens who volunteer their time to support their communities through their commitment to the cadet and reserve forces."

"It is particularly wonderful to welcome my

newly-appointed Lord-Lieutenant Cadets. They are remarkable young people and I am looking forward to getting to know them over the next year.

"I am also delighted to recognise the contribution made by the region's cadet force adult volunteers. They deserve our deepest gratitude for the time they give to help young people gain access to the wide range of opportunities made possible by the cadet movement."

The winning reserves were: Warrant Officer Class 2 Jason Cartwright of Aysgarth is with 205 Battery in Catterick, which is part of 101st (Northumbrian) Regiment Royal Artillery; Warrant Officer Class 2 Claire Norton, of York, is formerly of A Squadron, The Queen's Own Yeomanry (QOY) in York but now serves with 212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital in Sheffield; Warrant Officer Class 2 Garry Smith, of Aysgarth, is with the Army Training Unit North in Strensall, York Officer and Corporal Rhoslyn Shutt, of Malton is with Helmand Company in York, which is part of 4th Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment.

Susan Smith, a civilian from York who works for 4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment was also awarded for her outstanding civilian contribution.

## Sea Cadets legend loses battle with cancer

MICHAEL O'Connor MBE RNR, who was the backbone of Greenock & District Sea Cadet Corps in the west central Lowlands of Scotland has passed away at the age of 81.

The father-of-three had supported generations of cadets as well as seafarers through the decades. He had also helped hundreds of foreign sailors through the Stella Maris charity as a ship visitor and parish contact.

Growing up just yards from the James Watt Dock in Greenock, Michael spent much of his career as a seafarer himself.

"We were encouraged to look after the

wellbeing of seafarers. As an ex-seafarer, I know the feeling of isolation only too well.

"A kind word can go a long way when you're a stranger on a foreign shore, and so can a cheery disposition," Michael, pictured right, once said.

He referred to seafaring as his 'vocation' and rose through the ranks in Sea Cadets.

His commitment was rewarded with an MBE in 1995. He was also awarded the Sea Cadet medal.

Michael lost his battle with prostate cancer and died surrounded by loved ones. His son, Stephen, said: "We're so proud of our dad. The

Sea Cadets was his life and we've got brilliant memories of our own involvement from growing up."

"We know he's helped thousands of people over the years and it is a great loss to not just us, but the wider community. We were lucky to have him."

"My dad had been fighting prostate cancer for a while, but fortunately he was never sick with it. He just kept getting on with things and never complained."

"He passed away at home, which is what he wanted. We can take a small comfort in knowing

he is now at peace."

"It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Lieutenant Commander (SCC) Michael O'Connor MBE, RNR," said the Commanding Officer of the Greenock & District Unit, Lieutenant Commander (SCC) RNR Jim Hearl.

"Michael has served the Greenock & District Sea Cadets over the last 66 years. He has covered most of the roles that the sea cadets have to offer, his last role with us was as our President."

"Michael has been a mentor and inspiration to every cadet that passed through the unit over many decades."



**THE ROYAL NAVAL BENEVOLENT TRUST**

SERVE A DAY, SUPPORTED FOR LIFE



**Our vision is: Sailors and Marines helping Sailors and Marines – now and always.**

RNBT provides a helping hand to serving and ex-serving men and women and their families. Help, opportunity and care in times of need.

We don't just help you to weather the storm, we try and help you navigate your way out of it.

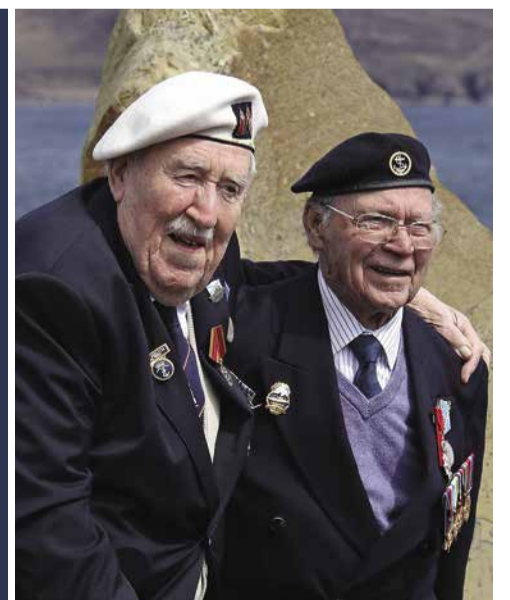
If you need help or would like to donate or volunteer contact RNBT.

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 8RN

T: 02392 690112 E: rnbt@rnbt.org.uk

[www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number 206243







## Priority mooring status at Portrush Harbour

COUNCILLORS responsible for Portrush Harbour in County Antrim, Northern Ireland have decided to bump local sea cadets up the waiting list for moorings.

Environment Committee members gave the thumbs up to Portrush Unit after finding out more about its work and the recent surge in membership at the local Sea Cadets unit.

Currently demand for berths is high, with dozens of boat owners seeking space facing a two- to three-year wait. But when the committee members heard about the positive impact that Sea Cadets have on the young community in Portrush, they were persuaded to give them preferential treatment and boost them up the harbour's waiting list.

"We are dealing with a charity that is unique to Portrush," commented DUP's Mark Fielding. "They are coming out of Covid and have increased their

members. It's essential that the dingies they are training in are located close to where they are needed. If this is a way of sustaining the charity in Portrush, I'd propose we go with it [the request]."

Committee members were shown a letter written by the local Sea Cadets unit OIC, Terry McComb to the Council's Chief Executive. In it, Terry outlined that his unit was currently without a berth and – with fresh recruits, new boats and a team of passionate instructors – how eager they were to get back to instilling young people with the ethos and traditions of the Royal Navy.

"Portrush Sea Cadets opened in 1942 and is one of the oldest Sea Cadets units in Northern Ireland. It has a long history of providing essential services to the local community," said Terry.

"Our group offers activities that steer young people away from anti-social behaviour and equips

them with life skills and qualifications that help them grasp better futures.

"Due to a loss of staff the unit was destined to close this year, however, a new management team was set up in May. The doors reopened in July after two months of hard graft to get the unit into a safe condition for the cadets to parade.

"We have recruited 31 new cadets, including 12 juniors – this being the first junior section that Portrush has ever had – and incorporates the first 9-year-old cadets that Northern Ireland has.

"We sought the assistance of Coleraine and Portrush Yacht Clubs operating out of Portrush Harbour and as we had a lack of boats, we were loaned three RS Feva sailing dinghies which enabled us to sail from Portrush Harbour. Between July and October we have delivered an average of 15 hours of boating per cadet."



## Historic drum repaired on iconic BBC show

BARROW Sea Cadets featured on BBC One when they turned to *The Repair Shop* to have a piece of its maritime history restored.

Jordan Aspin, who is a Trustee of Sea Cadets' Barrow Unit, appealed to the hit show's team for help after discovering the historic bass drum "in a bit of state". It had been sitting at the back of the band room for 60 years or more. The drum was made in 1939, according to a label on the inside of the drum.

"No one knew what to do with it," explains Jordan. "It is a lovely item – but as a drum, it was useless."

Jordan has been part of Sea Cadets for the last 25 years as a drummer. "Sea Cadets' Barrow Unit will soon be 90 years old," Jordan continued, "I thought it would be nice to have part of its history restored so we can take the drum out on Remembrance Sunday and civic parades."

The drum is indeed fundamental for setting the pace of the music and marching – if the drummer speeds up, so does the marching.

"I wanted to give something back because I wouldn't be where I am today without their skills and teachings," said Jordan.

Handing over this exciting piece of the unit's history to *The Repair Shop's* percussion expert, Pete Woods, who skilfully refurbished it by giving it a new skin, as well as a belt for the musicians to strap it on themselves. It also got a fresh coat of paint to return it to its former glory.

Jordan was delighted when he saw the results. "I knew it was going to be good, but I didn't know it was going to be that good," he commented.

Niyall Phillips, First Lieutenant at Barrow Sea Cadets, said: "It was an off-the-cuff application, Jordan never expected they would get back to him and invite him on the show."

"The plan was to get more of the cadets involved in the show but because of Covid-19, only Jordan was able to appear on TV.

"The drum has been returned to us in a brilliant condition, it's surpassed our expectations. We'll definitely be using the drum in future parades. It's great that we were able to give Barrow Sea Cadets some recognition on TV too."

# Superpower call from Virgin boss

A SEA Cadets unit has received an email from founder of the Virgin Group, Sir Richard Branson, encouraging the youth charity to continue supporting cadets who, like him, are dyslexic.

In the message, the business magnate thanks the Altrincham and Sale Royal Marine Cadets in Trafford, Greater Manchester for their support of cadets with dyslexia, describing the condition as a "superpower".

"Dyslexia has been a superpower for me," writes Branson, "It has helped me have a great imagination and to grow Virgin into the business it is today.

"So many of the world's game-changing innovations have come from dyslexics – from the light bulb to the iPhone to the airplane," Branson continued.

"Tell your cadets to dream big, discover their own superpowers and when they are presented with a challenge: to use their dyslexic thinking to find the opportunity."

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that can cause problems with reading, writing and spelling. Branson struggled in school owing to his dyslexia and dropped out at age 16 – but his learning difficulties didn't stop him from achieving great success.

Studies have found that dyslexics use their right brain more and are natural problem-solvers, with the ability of thinking 'outside the box' and a better sense of spatial relationships. They also tend to be more curious, creative and intuitive than average.

Stuart Hurlston, Sergeant and Detachment Commander of Altrincham and Sale Royal Marine Cadets, commented: "It's not easy to put into words the impact Sir Richard's has had. I've definitely noticed even more of a can-do attitude from our cadets with dyslexia after receiving it."

One of the cadets at Altrincham Unit, Sarah\* said: "Having dyslexia really affected my schoolwork and broke my confidence. For a long time, I thought I was 'dumb'. I like to think I'm more sociable and confident now, thanks to Sea Cadets...it's like a family for me.

"Hearing the message from Richard Branson made me think: 'Wow! If he can be so successful, then so can I'," Sarah continued. "It means a lot that he sent this message to us."



Jodi\*, another teenager cadet at Altrincham Unit, said: "I didn't know that Sir Richard was dyslexic. Having dyslexia has affected my schoolwork. I worry about not being able to do some things but his message made me think, 'Yes I can!'"

"Being part of Sea Cadets has helped me be more confident and independent," said Jodi, "My goal is to go to college and study engineering."

"Sadly, I've noticed that young people are suffering more from anxiety and mental health issues than in the past, especially now with Covid-19," said Stuart, who became a sea cadet at the age of 13, going on to become an instructor and later Detachment Commander at Altrincham.

"Through positive outlook and resilience-building

training as well as mental health initiatives, we aim to break down barriers, challenge stigmas and boost young people's self-esteem, so helping our cadets to reach their full potential."

A 2020 national survey conducted by the youth charity revealed that 91% of cadets with dyslexia think that the Sea Cadets training is engaging, and that the adults who train them are good role models.

More than 88 per cent of dyslexic cadets said that they obtain useful qualifications through Sea Cadets, with the majority reporting that being part of the charity has helped them to perform better at school, improve their communication skills and be more resilient.

\*Not their real names



## Unit are kings on the water

MARYPORT and Solway Unit have done extremely well in the North West Area Sea Cadets Regatta, winning nine out of 15 races.

CFC Matthew, OC Abbey, Cdt Jin, CFC Zak and CFC Joe from Maryport and Solway Unit have recently been awarded medals for sailing events as part of the regatta held in Crosby, Merseyside in September 2020. The cadets came home with two silvers, a bronze and a gold. In fact, there were six medals because Cadets Abbey and Jin won a gold in the doubles event of Quest Challenge.

The cadets were trained by Lt Cdr Keith Short, who said: "Throughout most of the year, the cadets could only practice in single boats, and when we were able to sail in double handers, one of the girls, OC Abbey, was an automatic fit for driving the Quest boat, after she had won a national boat competition in 2019. She went in with her crewmate, Cdt Jin, and won five out of five races.

"The Zest class was won by CFC Zak. CFC Joe placed third in the Pico and CFC Matthew was the runner up in the same class.

"We trained regularly for the regatta, and the important thing is getting a good start, being wind aware, knowing the course, and being able to go from one person to the next person, one thing hard to master is the upwind leg, after that, I wouldn't say it is easy."

## Dream comes true for Jacob

JACOB has been dreaming of joining the Royal Navy since he was a child – and at last, the 18-year-old's dream came true when he completed his Phase 1 training at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

The nine-week course saw him and fellow recruits rise at 5am for a day of demanding physical training and class work. It wasn't all plain sailing for Jacob, who had to be backtracked after struggling with a chest infection which left him in hospital for a week. He turned 18 while at HMS Raleigh, tucking into a special birthday cake sent by his mum.

Jacob joined the Sea Cadets at TS Kingfisher in Redditch when he was ten years old, which inspired him to work as hard as he could so that he could join the Royal Navy.

Having passed his Level 3 Public Service award this year, he is now entering his Phase 2 training where he will learn all the skills needed to become a fully qualified sailor in the Royal Navy.

"I'm really looking forward to the next phase in my training and becoming an active part of the Royal Navy family," he said.



# NAVY NEWS

Subscribe online at [royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews](http://royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews)

12 copies for the price of 10 (UK Only)

1 year: **£35.00** UK

3 years: **£95.00** UK

1 year: **£43.00** Overseas

3 years: **£103.00** Overseas

Or Tel: **07773 155321**

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ROYAL NAVY

**SUBSCRIBE NOW**

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

# Full house in tri-service sailing champs

**ROYAL Navy sailors swept the board at the Inter-Services Team Racing Championships, with many of the triumphant team representing the Senior Service for the first time.**

The championships began with the removal of icy covers as the 12-strong RN squad, comprising two teams, took on the RAF and Army, who only had enough sailors for a single team each, which guaranteed the RN the B Cup before the contest started.

All four teams competed in a round-robin format and by the end of the first round, all the teams had at least one loss, with the Navy B team the only side to record a victory.

As the racing continued, a pecking order emerged with the Navy A team winning all their remaining races, while the Army got the better of the RAF.

The Navy B team waited until the final round before their superior fitness allowed them to score a morale-boosting victory against a flagging RAF team.

The points set up a best of three

final between the Navy A side and the Army. Spectators lining the lake peered on at the silhouetted boats as the sun set.

The Navy took all of the prizes on offer.

Inter-Service Trophy winners: Hamish Walker, Fi Cook, Tom George, Lucy Glennie, Natalie Johnston and Tom Bernal.

B Trophy winners: Dan Vincent, Emma Barry, James Shrives, Harry George, Dom Jacobs and Si McGee.

The Royal Navy Sailing Association is a registered charity and channels people, funds and kit to get RN personnel sailing.

RNSA is keen to reach out to anyone in the RN who would like to 'give sailing a go' and have many schemes to help this happen.

To get involved visit <https://members.rnsa.org.uk/OnlineApplicationForm.aspx>.

You can also visit [www.rnsa.org.uk](http://www.rnsa.org.uk) or contact Deborah at [admin@rnsa.org.uk](mailto:admin@rnsa.org.uk).



**A Naval Charity providing personal help and advice for all serving and former members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, their Reserves and Families on;**

**Civilian Employment & Personal Administration**  
Including - resettlement finances, pensions and commutation, legal and family law matters

For further information please contact:  
[whiteensign.co.uk](http://whiteensign.co.uk)  
0207 407 8658  
[office@whiteensign.co.uk](mailto:office@whiteensign.co.uk)



# Awards for carrier sporting efforts



Top Female



CPOPTI Award



Best Team



Supporting AT



Top Official



Supporting Zumba

**SAILORS on flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth celebrated their sporting achievements with the carrier's inaugural Sports Personality of the Year.**

**As she headed back to her home port of Portsmouth, the ship marked the efforts of everyone involved in sports on the ship, from the onboard PTIs and coaches who supported them to those who took part in the variety of activities.**

**Across the seven-month deployment, the ship's company completed 265 circuits; held nine 'grass roots' days; organised a 5k park run; and rowed the Suez.**

**During the course of the awards night, seven titles were given out.**

**Winners included:**

**BEST SUPPORT - CPO Jen Cass**

Any netball event onboard would have not been possible without the help and support of this individual.

She's the first to volunteer to help lift and shift kit (including carrying the posts from the hangar to the flight deck) and will be the last to leave in order to help clear and stow all gear.

**MOST POTENTIAL - Lt Greg Stewart (Judo)**

This individual joined QNLZ Judo Club having never done the sport previously. He regularly attends all the training sessions which has seen him progress from novice to 6th Kyu.

Injuring himself just before Covid restrictions, he has borrowed the coaches' technical books, learning the Japanese terminology and studying traditional and competitive Olympic judo in his spare time.

Now back in training, he is putting his theory in to practice and has exceeded all of the requirements necessary for award of his 5th Kyu (Yellow Belt).

**TOP OFFICIAL/REFEREE - Lt Cdr Howells (Rugby)**

A top rugby official, who blew off the dust bunnies from his whistle, seeing the enjoyment he had from officiating the match in Italy shows the passion of the man when it comes to personal development and the sport he loves. He also supported the rugby during the grassroots day on the flightdeck, being involved and passing on some of his knowledge with drills being conducted.

**BEST TEAM - Cricket**

This team have had an amazing deployment with a 100 per cent winning record, beating teams in their own back yard who are more use to the conditions and pitches set before them.

The team have an amazing will to win, to never give up, a batting order to challenge any bowling unit to come at them, with their own bowling unit a force to be reckoned with. Their togetherness as a team has been immense with plenty of banter thrown in.

**CPOPTI AWARD - L/Cpl Carl Buck Buckingham**

This individual has shown everything, courage, commitment, and the will to get things done.

Wanting to change from Army to Navy he had a lot of challenges set in his way, from having to lose weight, to meeting fitness requirements to improving his academic qualifications, this may have fazed some people but this individual was driven on with the will to succeed.

He has lost the weight, through taking part in everything that goes on, phys, sport, classes and he has also made the mark in the fitness test requirements. A very warm and friendly character who will always stop and chat.

**TOP FEMALE - AB Jessica McLenaghan (Athletics)**

A very talented runner. Before injury she always up running and taking part in events.

In the 5K park-flight deck run she smashed a 20m 27s being top female and eighth overall out of 70 plus entries.

On to the Mike Till relay race where she smashed an even better six-minute mile, again being top female. So relaxed in her running she has so much going for her.

**TOP MALE - Pilot, 617 Squadron (Athletics)**

A quiet individual but not when he is running banging out the miles, this guy can go a long way, he just runs for fun.

He put pressure on the Cypriot Olympic runner at the Paphos 5k clocking 18m 9s, on the Mike Till one-mile race he clocked 5m 16s while dodging people on the flightdeck.

He then decided to do a marathon for charity on the flight deck in Duqm, of all places, in the heat and smashed a 4h 1m time. Then to improve on his 5K whilst at sea, he smashed a 17m 30s.

Special thanks to coaches and supporters:

- Football – LET Heddington; CPO Blaker
- Rugby – Lt Burton; LH Hicks; Rob and V
- Hockey – Lt Cairns
- Netball – PO Gemma Williams; Dento
- Boxing – CPO Harry Hull
- Cricket – CPO Ronnie Corbett; Lt Mitchell; Lt Windsor
- Judo – Lt Mullen
- Volleyball – CPO Simm
- Zumba – MA Lolly Wilson
- Spinning – Sgt Liam Binder; LH Joseph
- Tag Rugby – LH Ellor
- Adventurous Training – Lt Jenna Clark; Lt Taylor Wood; POET Thompson
- Sport/Cricket – Wtr Ivey
- Sport/Judo – Lt Cdr Mullen
- Sport/Boxing – CPO Harry Hull.

## Sultan hosts cross country event for the east



TOP runners from across the eastern region competed in a Cross-Country race at HMS Sultan.

A total of 45 runners from HMS Sultan, HMNB Portsmouth, HMS Collingwood, HMS Excellent, Thunderer Squadron, HMS Duncan and the Royal Marines School of Music competed for a place in the top 10 finishers in their category, and to be part of the team which will compete in the Inter-Regional Cross-Country Competition in HMS Raleigh.

The course took competitors around the technical side of the base and the polo fields, before heading back along a similar route including around the Fort once more and a final sprint to the finish.

The winner in the ladies' race was Lt Holly Watson from HMS Collingwood. She said: "It's so good to be out there."

"I've run for the navy a couple of times, but with restrictions around

Covid we haven't been able to run as much, so it's great to see a lot of new faces out there.

"Running gives me a lot of motivation, it gives me an opportunity to have my own time, be competitive and an opportunity to see what my body can do and to push myself.

"I've been running for around six years and for five with the RN running squad and if we can encourage some of these girls to catch the bug and join up then that would be great."

*Winners:*

Ladies - Lt Watson HMS Collingwood 26:55; Male U23s - OC Carson Thunderer Squadron 28.59; Male Seniors - Mid O'Neil HMS Duncan 28.39; Men's Vets - Lt Col Williams RM Band (Excellent) 31.52.



# Truthfully, it's tough with Ruth Lee



## NORMALLY we celebrate winners in these pages: Gold. Silver. Bronze.

Of the 105 participants in HMS Dragon's Rock Race, above-water warfare specialists Petty Officer Tug Wilson (*yellow T-shirt*) and Leading Seaman 'Cherry' Blakeway were numbers 104 and 105, a good three quarters of an hour behind their fastest shipmates.

But then Tug and Cherry were the only runners each burdened with 40kg of extra weight.

The pair chose to run the legendary race – a rite of passage for pretty much any sailor whose ship visits Gibraltar: a climb of 426 metres from the dockyard to the top of the Rock (2.7 miles/4.4km) – carrying Ruth Lee, the ship's dummy, normally requiring rescuing after falling overboard

or succumbing to fumes during firefighting exercises aboard the destroyer.

The duo are both Royal Navy Commandos, having completed the All Arms Commando Course, and have previously served with the elite 148 Battery whose ranks guide the guns of the fleet.

Though they're used to carrying heavier loads than the dummies, they still found the Rock Race one of the more physically demanding challenges they've undertaken.

"When I got to the top I was absolutely knackered," Tug said. "I'd had so many messages of support from people at home and Gibraltar wishing me good luck, as well as my shipmates telling me how physically demanding this challenge would be – I was pleased we had achieved what we set out to

do, and for a good cause."

His shipmate added: "Every time I turned a corner on the road and saw another uphill section they seemed to be getting steeper and steeper and I thought: surely not."

"But I kept telling myself this was only a little bit of discomfort in comparison to what some veterans have been through and it was all worth it – when we crossed the finish line together we were cheered on by our shipmates. Needless to say we had a well-deserved pint at the bottom."

As well as raising glasses, the pair raised £3,000 for their chosen causes – one third of it donated by their shipmates.

It's the second time Tug has completed the race weighed down by a dummy; last year he finished it on a treadmill (Covid restrictions

prevented the real thing) in 1h 5m 28s.

He was inspired by the memory of his neighbour, ten-year-old Sophie Fairall who succumbed to rhabdomyosarcoma cancer – a rare form of the disease which mostly affects children – after raising more than £6,000 for charity while undergoing chemotherapy.

He chose Alice's Arc, which researches the rare cancer and provides entertainment and support to children undergoing treatment, while in the midst of remembrance period, his running mate plumped for the Royal British Legion.

Tug raised £1,600 for Alice's Arc and Cherry raised £1,400. To donate visit [justgiving.com/fundraising/tom-wilson44](http://justgiving.com/fundraising/tom-wilson44) and [justgiving.com/fundraising/michael-blakeway-gibrook](http://justgiving.com/fundraising/michael-blakeway-gibrook).



# Medal haul for navy rowers

NINETEEN Royal Navy personnel competed remotely in the virtual British Rowing Indoor Championships.

Their efforts yielded six medals and a wide range of seasonal and personal bests, with 11 top-ten placings from 22 races.

There were also three RN winners of UK Armed Forces 2K trophies awarded for men/women, heavyweight (hwt)/lightweight (lwt) and senior/master (<40>) categories.

WO1 Mark Branson (of HMS Sultan) maintained supremacy as the world's number one Men's Lwt 60+, winning the 2k gold in that category in 7m 5.4s, controlling the race from the front.

Surg Cdr Dan Connor (JHGS) was equally committed and controlled to take bronze in the Men's Lwt 50+ with 6m 52.0s.

Completing the trio of Lwt 2k medallists was Sultan instructor Sam Garner with a bronze in the Women's Lwt 50+ in 8m 38.8s.

LPT Leah Ravuoco (of Naval Air Station Cudrose) was making her Royal Navy debut in Women's Hwt 30+ category and after warming up with a 2k personal best of 7m 45.4s (11th) took bronze in the 500m with a time of one min 40.8 secs.

Surg Lt Rachel Aldridge (INM-NHS) committed to three races in the Women's Open Hwt category, in order the 2k, 1min and 500, with the knowledge she would be up against some very good Team GB 'on the water' rowers and also strong Army competition.

Rowing a 2k personal best of 7m 23.9s to finish fifth in a very competitive race, she recovered to take bronze in the 1min race with 330m (equivalent to 1m 30.9s/500m pace) before vanquishing all others to win gold in the 500m in a time of 1m 35.7s.

'Near miss' 2k fourth places were achieved by: Lt Cdr Stu Moss (of HMS Vengeance), Team Manager Paul Winton (MCTA), Sue Berrow (of HMS Sultan) and CPO Dave Layhe (also of Sultan), with CPO Claire Drew (CNR)

not far off in sixth position.

Moss took the UKAF Men's Master's title with his Men's Hwt 50+ in 6m 24.7s and Drew took the Women's Master's title with her Women's Hwt 40+ winning time of 7m 31.2s.

Garner's performance earned her the UKAF Women's Master's Lwt winner. Layhe rowed a superb 2k personal best of 6m 27.0s as he continued to realise training and performance benefits gained within the 'Sultan Massive', under the tutelage of POPT Rich Charrett.

The Royal Navy Indoor Rowing team will be participating in the Scottish, European, CrashB (US Champs) and World Champs (WRIC) this month and in February.

Meanwhile, the remaining five monthly challenges of the global Indoor Rowers League keep all involved 'honest'. New joiners are welcomed at [www.indoorrowers.org](http://www.indoorrowers.org) – with CSgt James Wade (of RM Stonehouse) currently occupying second place.



**£50 PRIZE PUZZLE**



THE mystery ship in the November edition of *Navy News* (right) was the carrier HMS Implacable, which saw service in Norway and the Far East and was decommissioned in 1954.

TJ Hughes, from Birstol, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (*above*) is a patrol boat which was seized by the Royal Navy at Port Stanley on June 14 1982 at the end of the Falklands conflict.

1. What was she renamed by the RN, and 2. Which Royal Navy ship seized her?

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](mailto:subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk) with *January 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 February 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 March edition.

**MYSTERY PICTURE 323**

Name .....

Address .....

My answers: (1) .....

(2) .....

**NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES**

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: [news@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:news@royalnavymail.mod.uk) or [editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

■ If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

**ROYAL NAVY NAVY NEWS**

Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building,  
HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

**JAN 2022 No. 810: Founded 1954**

Editor: Lorraine Proudlock  
Email: [news@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:news@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

**Editorial**

[News@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:News@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

[Sam.Bannister@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:Sam.Bannister@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

[Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

[Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

[Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

**Graphics**

[Andrew.Brady150@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Brady150@mod.gov.uk)

**General enquiries**

[news@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:news@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

**Business**

Business manager: Lisa Taw  
[lm@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:lm@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

Admin assistants:

[Georgina.skingsley@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:Georgina.skingsley@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

[Mistrala.Harries@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:Mistrala.Harries@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

Subscriptions and advertising:

[subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

[www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews)

Telephone 07773 155321

*The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD*

**© Crown copyright**

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated.

To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) Or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU,

Or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Published by Navy News, Navy Command HQ, Portsmouth and printed by Walstead UK.

**Talking Navy News**

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 07770 088388 and leave a message, or email [studio@patn.org.uk](mailto:studio@patn.org.uk) A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in February's Noticeboard must be received by **JAN 12 2022**

**Deaths**

**CMEM(M) Mac McKAY**. Served from 1969 to 1992. Served in HMS Raleigh, Manxman, Lincoln, Apollo, Arrow, Amazon and Ark Royal. Died November 20, aged 68.

**Colin Flood, ME**. HMS Submarines. Died November 11.

**Capt RNR Michael C Banbury RD\***. HMS Wildfire. List 1. RNR. Died November 11, aged 86.

**Cdr RNR Michael R Eden-Smith RD**. Died November 9, aged 81.

**Capt Dennis W Foster**. HMS President, Charybdis, Dryad, Eagle. DNOT. DNOR. Died November 17, aged 97.

**Lt Cdr RNR Peter E Goodacre RD**. London Div RNR. Died November 7, aged 76.

**Cdr Anthony Higham BEM (Civil)**. HMS Lincoln, Excellent, Norfolk, Hardy, Sheffield, Lewiston, Dryad. BRNC Dartmouth. Died November 24, aged 86.

**Vice Adm Sir Edwin J Horlick KBE**. DG Ships, HMD Singapore, HMS Warrior, Chief Naval Eng Officer. Died November 12, aged 96.

**Lt Cdr Peter G A Lewis**. HMS President, Andrew,

Alliance. Died November 24.

**Vice Adm Rory A I McLean CB OBE**. FONA. HMS Belton, Excellent, Gavinton, Blake, Heron, Seahawk, Upton, Gannet, Brazen, Charybdis, Fearless, Invincible. Died September 5, aged 71.

**Lt Cdr John H Miller**. HMS Cochrane, St Angelo, Lochingar, Pembroke. Centurion. Died November 23, aged 89.

**Capt George Oxley**. 801 NAS. HMS Hermes, Llandaff, Heron, Vernon. C-in-C Naval Home Command. DNAW. Died October 29, aged 91.

**Col RM Thomas Seccombe CBE**. 41 and 42 Cdo RM, RCDS, RNC Greenwich, CGRM, Int Mil Staff Brussels, Centurion. Died November 10, aged 87.

**Lt Cdr Gordon B J Wilson MBE**. HMS Osprey, Ark Royal, Fisgard, Daedalus, Heron. DGA(N). DN Recruiting. Died November 17.

**Capt Anthony R Wood**. HMS Ajax, President, Naiad, Sultan. Centurion. NATO. CNSO. JSDC. Died November 3, aged 90.

**Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC**

**Reunions**

**HMS Lowestoft**: The 10th HMS Lowestoft Association reunion will take place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, Hants, on Tuesday/Wednesday April 12/13 2022. 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](mailto: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

**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/SX5991, 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?  
**John Pittock**  
ex Leading Stoker  
[johnp46@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:johnp46@yahoo.co.uk)

**HMS St Vincent March 1953- Duncan 21**. Trying to contact former class mates of mine and also TS Arethusa 1950/ 53. I also went to the following ships, 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.

**Taste of the navy New orchard established**



A GROUP of students from Fareham College visited HMS Collingwood to take a look at Navy life.

The group, all studying for their Uniformed Public Services Course at the College, visited Collingwood to gain a better understanding of the fitness requirements in the Royal Navy.

The course gives students a flavour of life in the Armed Forces and Public Services such as the Police Force.

With many challenges set for them by Leading Physical Trainer (LPT) Mike Payne, including fitness test, swim test and an introduction to circuit training, the students were able to understand the Basic Fitness Tests that new recruits to the military would face.

Danny Thomas, Head of Uniformed Public Services at the college accompanied the group and said: "This is great. We have a long-standing relationship with HMS Collingwood and the PTIs, what LPT Payne has put together today is brilliant, I can't thank him enough.

"This gives the students an insight into fitness requirements in the Services. Most of them have never been to a military establishment before so it's good for them to see how the navy

operates." Jake Webb, 17, one of the students, added: "I want to join the navy, my dad and my uncle are serving, it's always been something I wanted to do. This has been a really good day."

On organising the event LPT Payne said: "It was a pleasure to re-establish the connection between Collingwood and Fareham College following a challenging period during the pandemic.

"Particular highlights for me were the display of courage shown by April Salter during the RN Swim test and Harry Mayberry achieving 12.1 on the Multistage Fitness Test which is an excellent pass mark for his age group."

ALL eyes were to the future as HMS Collingwood's new orchard was officially opened and a time capsule buried.

The idea of an orchard came from the site's Conservation group led by Energy and Environmental Protection Advisor Mark "Cozy" Powell, with a view to commemorating HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Rear-Admiral Paul Beattie was invited by the Base's Commanding Officer Captain Catherine Jordan to officially open the orchard and plant a time capsule beneath a semi-mature Hornbeam, chosen specifically to mark the spot.

Inside the time capsule was information explaining how Collingwood managed to continue its training throughout the COVID pandemic and images from Captain Jordan herself who, uniquely, has followed her husband Commodore Andy Jordan, Deputy Director of Ships, into the post of Collingwood's Commanding Officer.

The 70 trees include apple, pear, cherry and plum.

To create the orchard staff and children from "Woodentots", the onboard nursery, were invited to plant a tree and many named their trees after loved ones, or to



mark an important anniversary although "Twiggy" and "Woody" also appeared on the list!

Cozy said, "It was a magnificent occasion and a privilege to establish a lasting memory for so many individuals.

**F35 winners**

THE following *Navy News* readers have won Airfix F35 models in the competition run in the November edition:

- Mr P Cumiskey, Aberdare
- Mr Trevor Wood, Teignmouth
- Mr Rob Griffin, Hucclecote
- Mr Brian Lambert, Plympton
- Mr Peter Hart, Kingsteignton
- Mr John Makinson, Morecambe

**Lt Cdr RNR C R J Fleming RD RNR**. London, Sussex and Mersey Div RNR. Died in November.

**Lt Cdr James H R Jorgensen MBE**. HMS Vernon, Pembroke, Seahawk, Dolphin, Dryad, Vernon, Endurance, RNWT Mauritius. Died in November.

**Cdr Anthony E Guyatt**. HMS Ganges, Salisbury, Pembroke, Heron, Ariadne, Raleigh, Argonaut. BDS Washington. FOST. Died in November.

**Capt Dennis W Foster**. HMS President, Charybdis, Dryad. DNOT. Died in November.

**Lt Cdr Donald I Stokes**. HMS Seahawk, Cochrane, Lochingar, Neptune, Hermes, Tamar. RNC Manadon. Died November 16, aged 83.

**Submariners' Association**

**Albert E Terry CPO MEM**. Served 1964 to 1985 in HM Submarines Onslaught 1965 to 1966, Amphion 1966 to 1967, Otus 1968 to 1970, Cachalot 1970 to 1974, and Opportune 1977 to 1979 and 1982 to 1984. Member of Essex branch. Died November 25.

**anniversary-reunion-tickets-189862392527**

On May 29 we will 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 available on Fearless Old Boys Facebook page or SAMA82 website.

**HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association:**

Our 37th AGM and Reunion takes place on May 20-23 2022 at the Sketchley Grange Hotel, Hinckley The weekend includes the AGM, 'Up Spirits,' gala dinner and a visit to the National Arboretum. For details contact Honorary Secretary Warwick Franklin on 01752 366611 or [warwickfranklin@outlook.com](mailto:warwickfranklin@outlook.com)

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**  
[frontlinebish@gmail.com](mailto:frontlinebish@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](mailto:Bruce.hobbs@geophys.co.uk)

**HMS Diana and Vigo**: I am researching family history and would like to get in touch with any RN personnel who served with my father CPO Sam Bell on either HMS Diana or Vigo and also from any who took part in the Monte Bello nuclear tests.

**David Bell**  
169 Truro Drive, Plymouth, PL5 4TR, 01752707177  
or email [Fortitude1944@btinternet.com](mailto:Fortitude1944@btinternet.com)

# Strength in reserve

OF THE 3,700 personnel deployed on the Carrier Strike Group's maiden deployment, a small – but not insignificant – number of Reservists have played key roles.

They were mobilised from all three Services for the seven-month mission – with Royal Naval Reservists from a range of specialisations and backgrounds understandably comprising the majority.

Commodore Steve Moorhouse, the task group commander, says: "It is important to recognise the contribution of Reservists from all three services who are supporting CSG21, at sea and from the UK, bringing their specialist skills to bear."

So here RNR personnel share their experiences.



Royal Navy Reserves, from left, Lt Cdr Jo Young, Lt Cdr Elizabeth Church, Lt Joe Livesey, and AB Robert Dyke, aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth

**LIEUTENANT Joe Livesey** from HMS Ferret (Bedford), works for the Treasury in his day job, most recently organising the UK's presidency of G7 Finance Ministers. Operation Fortis has been his first deployment.

"It's been a unique experience serving on HMS Queen Elizabeth for her maiden operational deployment. I've been watchkeeping for the task group, monitoring potential threats facing the ships and feeding information through to the operations room and senior commanders so that they can decide on the next steps.

"I particularly enjoyed working directly with our American counterparts, utilising their knowledge and gaining first-hand operational experience of how other militaries operate in the South and East China Seas."

**Lieutenant Commander Elizabeth Church** from HMS President (London) has been a Reservist for more than 40 years. She has a marketing background, having worked for Prudential. Aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth, she's focussed on the safety and tasking of submarines working with the task group.

"Over the years, my naval service has given me opportunities and challenges I would not have experienced anywhere else, and skills and resilience that have been transferable to my civilian career. Deploying on HMS Queen Elizabeth in the Far East has been an absolute highlight of my reserve career."

**AB Robert Paul 'Dicky' Dyke**, is another long-serving Reservist working in the Submarine Advisory Team, having served in the RN for seven years and deployed to the Falklands in HMS Broadsword.

He first mobilised with the Reserves to the Gulf in 1991, then again to Bahrain in 2013. In his day job he is a traffic officer with the National Highways

Agency covering the M1.

Dicky said: "This time around, mobilised on HMS Queen Elizabeth, I've enjoyed working in a busy environment with a command team. The RNR Communications and Information Systems branch recently became part of the Submarine Operations branch, so I have enjoyed getting up to speed on the numerous requirements for submarine safety and the wider underwater picture.

"I have also enjoyed being back at sea, for what is possibly my last deployment. Being on the flagship, working for the carrier strike group, Operation Fortis has been an experience never to be forgotten."

And lastly, **Lieutenant Commander Jo Young** (HMS President), is a media operations officer responsible for organising media events onboard, capturing images and video for social media, and writing stories about life onboard. She spent six weeks with the British Embassy in Tokyo assisting with a series of port visits in Japan before joining the carrier.

"The RNR has taken me all over the world, but being on HMS Queen Elizabeth for her maiden deployment has been very special, and totally different to my day job as a clinical psychologist, specialising in rehabilitation of children with acquired brain injury.

"It has been an honour to work onboard and I will never forget the exhilaration of standing on the Flight Deck right next to an F-35 taking off.

"This has been the experience of a lifetime, and I have really felt that Reservists are valued onboard as they add a different perspective and dynamic to the team.

"I lead a busy life with two children, but fortunately my husband understands my interest and commitment to the RNR."



**LT CDR Phil Richardson** (RNR Air Branch) "jumped at the chance to deploy", contributing to the planning and execution of carrier operations.

"This was an opportunity of a lifetime for an experienced aviator. Breathing in the familiar Avcat fumes, my role was to liaise directly with the embarked squadrons, their engineers, the planners and the various elements of the task group to ensure that the flying programme was delivered. I also got myself on to

the officers' heads and showers cleaning rota!

"The ability to make decisions, pass clear messages and deliver a plan were essential skills that I will take back to my civilian employer, who has been fully supportive of my mobilisation.

"This has been a really rewarding experience where I felt my contribution – and that of other Reservists – has been truly valued. We have offered 'strength in reserve' and directly contributed to operational capability."



**LIEUTENANT Alexander Dunhill** normally works in the skiing/outdoor industry, but also serves as a Submarine Operations Specialist at HMS Wildfire in Northwood.

"I've fulfilled my ambition when I joined the Royal Naval Reserve: to go to sea on operations. My main role was to ensure the safe and effective operation of UK and allied submarines in support of the carrier strike group."



**SURGEON Commander Michael Wilson** is the Executive Officer of HMS Scotia (Rosyth) – as well as a specialist in emergency general surgery/major trauma injuries.

A member of the RNR Medical Branch for six years, he's been part of the Role 2 Afloat medical team onboard, responsible for providing emergency care to the 3,700 personnel on board the ships in the Carrier Strike Group.

"Being part of a deployed surgical team at sea has been both personally and professionally rewarding. It has been a huge privilege to have the consistency of working with the same team every day, which is obviously a different model to the way I work in the NHS. We understand our different strengths and development areas, but also how we can work together as a team to maximise our efficiency in the context of trauma or a clinically unwell patient.

"The RNR has given me the opportunity to travel – Guam is definitely the furthest I have ever been. Sailing back I have never travelled through so many time zones! The highlight for me was the opportunity to be travel by sea boat from Queen Elizabeth into Palma in Mallorca. It was absolutely exhilarating. In the Med, 820 NAS colleagues also offered me the opportunity to take my first flight in a helicopter."

## WALL SHIELDS OF ROYAL NAVY SHIPS



Hand painted on wooden base 6" x 7"

**£58.60 including UK postage and packing**  
**REDUCED PRICES** given for orders of 3 or more  
**SPECIAL PRICES** given for 10, 25, 50 and 100  
**CRESTED TIES TO YOUR OWN SPECIAL DESIGN**  
 (minimum 50)

Specialist experience over 100 years

**C.H. MUNDAY LTD**

**Rosemary Cottage, Churt Road, Headley,  
 Bordon, Hants GU35 8SS  
 Telephone: 01428 714971  
 email: enquiries@chmunday.co.uk  
 www.chmunday.co.uk**

Reference code: NAVY

**The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society**

Providing the highest standards of residential, nursing, dementia and respite care, including sheltered housing for independent living, for former seafarers and their dependents. Set in a 14 acre estate, our Surrey based care home provides like-minded companionship and support for seafarers and a safe haven for those in old age.

**IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO NEEDS OUR HELP, PLEASE CONTACT US**  
 T- 01737 360 106 E- admin@royalalfred.org.uk [www.royalalfredseafarers.com](http://www.royalalfredseafarers.com)

# Personalised Medal Wallet

The exclusively designed Medal Wallet offers an effective solution for the secure safekeeping of your precious medals while not being worn.

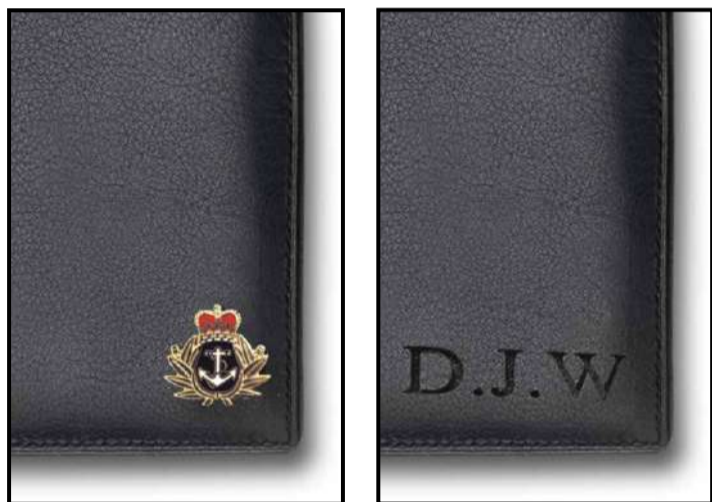
The soft Nappa leather wallet with protective lining stores your swing or court group mounted medals securely attached to the wallet by the medal pin and protects your medals when not in use.

It neatly fits into a blazer or coat pocket.

Your wallet can be personalised with up to four laser engraved initials or with the metal badge of your choice (most military insignia are available).

Please clearly state the badge or initials you require when ordering using **BLOCK CAPITALS**.

**ONLY  
£29.95  
PLUS P&P**



## HOW TO ORDER

**Order Online - [www.awardmedals.com/wallet](http://www.awardmedals.com/wallet)**

**Order by Phone - Call us between 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday on 01952 510053**

Alternatively, please complete the order form enclosing a cheque/postal order or completing the credit card details and send to:

**Award Productions Ltd,  
PO Box 300, Shrewsbury, SY5 6WP, UK**

### AWARD Guarantee

Your Personalised Medal Wallet is brought to you by Award Productions Ltd, international medallist. You can order with complete confidence knowing that every item is backed by the AWARD guarantee.

**AWARD**  
PROUD TO SERVE

For full terms and conditions please visit our website: [www.awardmedals.com](http://www.awardmedals.com)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

Daytime Tel. No. ....

Email address .....

I enclose my cheque/postal order for £ ..... made payable to Award Productions Ltd or please debit my card account no:

Security Code: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	(Switch only) [ ] [ ] [ ]
---	------------------------------

Security Code: Last 3 digits on signature strip

Cards accepted: 	Switch Issue No. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
---------------------	---

Expiry date: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	Valid from: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
---	--

Signature .....

If cardholder's name, address and signature are different from the one shown, please include these details.

## Order Form

AWARD Productions Ltd, PO Box 300, Shrewsbury, SY5 6WP, UK  
Yes, please send me the following belt(s):

Code	Belt	Badge or Initials	Price	Qty	Total £
WLPB	<b>With Badge</b>		£29.95		
WLPW	<b>With Initials</b>		£29.95		
<b>(PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS)</b> Postage/Packing/Insurance					£2.50
<b>Total £</b>					

Delivery Subject to availability.  
Please allow up to 28 days for delivery.

Award Productions Ltd,  
Registered in England No. 2001900, Shrewsbury SY4 4UG

NN 15

Orderline: 01952 510053    Online: [www.awardmedals.com/wallet](http://www.awardmedals.com/wallet)