



NAVY NEWS



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Amphibious force goes into Africa – pages 26-27



Farewell to Tugg, cartoonist and Navy legend – pages 28-29



● Heavenly view: HMS Endurance steams past Paradise Island in Antarctica

ROLLING THUNDER

Endurance heads for party in Rio

FORFEITING the prospect of a guaranteed white Christmas, the sailors of HMS Endurance are heading to warmer climes for their festive break.

The ice patrol ship is still in the first half of her nine-month deployment to the Southern Hemisphere.

And although stunning vistas such as that in the vicinity of Paradise Island (captured above by RN photographer Kelly Whybrow) are captivating, there is plenty of work to be done, and day after day of snowscapes could become a little monotonous...

The attractions of this frozen continent are drawing ever-greater numbers of tourists in cruise ships, and part of Endurance's annual tasking is to survey the chilly waters to update charts, making her a key factor in the safe passage of commercial ships.

Such concerns, and other tasks such as supporting work at the remote research stations of various nations around Antarctica, will be put on the back burner for a few days when the ship makes the passage across the South Atlantic to the party capital of Brazil, where she is scheduled to meet up with friends and families.

For more details of the latest leg of the Red Plum's deployment, see page 13; for more details of ships, squadrons and units which will be also be away from home over Christmas, see our round-up on page 2.

THE first armoured operation mounted by the Royal Marines in 60 years has put the terrorists on the back foot in Afghanistan.

Viking vehicles rolled into the town of Gereshk, where the Taliban had launched frequent raids, to provide cover as Royal Engineers built checkpoints intended to stop the insurgents infiltrating.

The commandos and their armour came under sustained mortar, small arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire; the latter knocked out one of the Vikings – but the mission was successfully completed.

Thirty-three Vikings – which provide much better protection than the Royals' traditional BV tracked vehicles – have deployed to Afghanistan with the Royals' new Armoured Support Squadron.

The operation in Gereshk has been the largest scale action involving

3 Commando Brigade since it took over from the Army in the troubled Helmand province of southern Afghanistan.

In every clash with Taliban forces to date, the insurgents have been driven off – invariably suffering casualties.

Lt Col Andy Price, at 3 Cdo Bde headquarters at Camp Bastion in Lashkar Gah, capital of Helmand, said there had been a marked change in Taliban tactics as the rebels realised pitched battles against elite British forces were futile.

The Marines are running into Taliban forces on average two or three times a day, ranging from mortar fire on the commandos' strongholds to skirmishes with small bands of insurgents.

"In the height of summer British forces were encountering Taliban forces 200-strong – now they are in the tens," said Lt Col Price.

"There are as many contacts with the insurgents now as there were then, but the Taliban have changed tactics.

"They cannot defeat us in open warfare."

More than 3,000 Royal Marines and Royal Navy personnel are deployed in Afghanistan: medics, logisticians, intelligence experts, aircrew, mechanics, pilots and commandos.

Prime Minister Tony Blair paid a flying visit to Camp Bastion, where he praised the British forces in Afghanistan for helping to decide "the fate of world security in the early 21st Century".

He continued: "When you defeat the Taliban, you defeat them not just on behalf of the people of Afghanistan, but the people of Britain and the wider world."

"You're the people doing the difficult work. And you should know not just you're appreciated, but the importance of the work you do is appreciated as well."

The latest reports from 3 Cdo Bde can be found at www.royal-navy.mod.uk/server/show/nav.5811

See pages 14-15 for more from the Royals in Afghanistan.

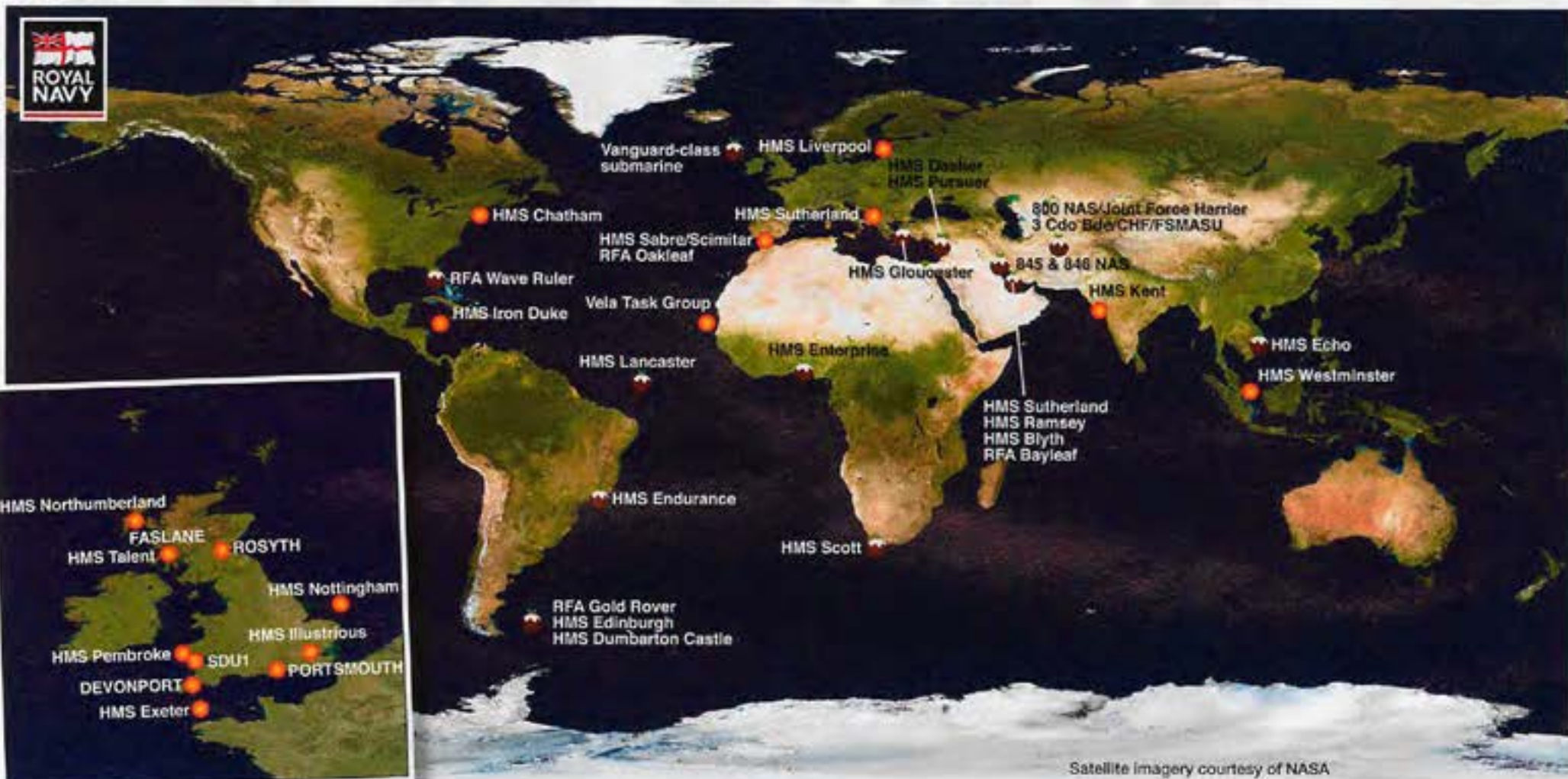
Indian autumn for HMS Kent – page 33



Royal Marines zap into action – back page



GLOBAL REACH



Fleet Focus

'TIS the season to be jolly busy.

A quick glance at the Christmas puddings on the map above denotes (roughly) where you will find the men and women of the Senior Service this yuletide (the orange markers signify ships and units home for the festive period).

As 2006 draws to a close, our thoughts are very much with the 3,000-plus RN and RM personnel deployed in Afghanistan with **3 Cdo Bde** and **800 NAS** (see pages 14 and 15), where fighting with Taliban insurgents is a daily occurrence.

The other noticeable concentration of British Naval power is, not surprisingly, the Arabian Gulf where you will find **HMS Sutherland**, which has relieved **HMS Kent**, plus minehunters **Ramsey** and **Blyth** at the beginning of their three-year tour of duty, and tanker **RFA Bayleaf**.

No sailor or marine has been sent to the Middle East without pre-deployment training. For the sailors that has invariably meant a two-week course with the **RN Mounting Centre**, featured on page 37.

Sutherland arrived on station having visited the Greek island of Corfu to pay respects to the victims of the 1946 Corfu Channel Incident (see page 41). Her predecessor **Kent** handed over Gulf duties in Oman having had an enjoyable visit to Mumbai (see page 33).

Also east of Suez are **HMS Westminster**, which returns to Pompey this month, and survey ship **HMS Echo**. The frigate has most recently been in Japan and Korea, while **Echo** paid an illuminating visit to Vietnam (see page 24).

Echo won't be alone among the Hydrographic Squadron in being away this Christmas. **HMS Scott** will be in African waters bound for the Indian Ocean (see page 38); **HMS Enterprise** will also be in Africa, but around Ghana; and don't shed too many tears for the crew of **HMS Endurance**, who'll be partying in Rio (see page 13).

It won't be quite as warm for **HMS Edinburgh**, which has taken over as South Atlantic patrol ship, or **Dumbarton Castle** (she's just back from a snow-covered South Georgia - see page 9) or **RFA Gold Rover**. All will be in the Falklands over the holiday period.

The varied deployment of **HMS Chatham**, which paid her first visit to the Falklands this year, has come to a close with the frigate clocking up numerous milestones (see opposite).

HMS Gloucester will be in the eastern Mediterranean. She has relieved sister ship **HMS York** on NATO duties.

York will be home for Christmas, as will the **Vela** task force of RN, RM, RFA and FAA ships, units and personnel which has been 'invading' Sierra Leone (see the first of two special reports in the centre pages).

HMS Iron Duke and **Lancaster** swap places on the North Atlantic patrol; the former is home in Portsmouth this month, her sister has just begun a four-month patrol off Africa, the Caribbean and northern South America. Still on anti-drug duties is **RFA Wave Ruler**, which struck another blow against traffickers - as did **HMS Argyll** as she returned from **Vela** (turn to page 4).

Fleet flagship **HMS Illustrious** negotiated the Thames as far as Greenwich where she served as the launch platform for announcing plans to mark victory in the Falklands in 1982 (see page 10).

Her sister **HMS Ark Royal** received a welcome akin to a traditional homecoming when she returned to Portsmouth from refit in Rosyth (see right).

Destroyer **HMS Nottingham** could be found in the North Sea where she took charge of RAF Typhoon fighters - the first time Britain's premier jet has come under RN direction.

HMS Cornwall is back in Devonport after a whistle-stop tour of the Baltic which included visits to Russia, Estonia and Poland (see page 4).

You could also find **HMS Liverpool** in the Baltic; she accompanied the Queen on her official visit to Tallinn (turn to page 8).

In home waters have been **HMS Northumberland** and **Montrose**, both attached to the latest Exercise Neptune Warrior run from HM Naval Base Clyde, working alongside ships and air power from the USA, Denmark and Germany.

And finally... We've had to postpone our feature on robot boats trailed in last month's paper. Fingers crossed, it will be appearing in our next edition.

Ark goes commando

SEVERAL thousand people braved blustery conditions in the Solent to welcome **HMS Ark Royal** home to Portsmouth after more than two years out of action.

The mood was more akin to a traditional homecoming from deployment than a re-emergence from refit, but such is the power of the name **Ark Royal**.

The Sea Cadets of TS **Ark Royal** from the affiliated unit in Reigate, Surrey, provided the music.

And the ship provided the occasion. The flat-top has spent 18 months in Rosyth, the last nine undergoing a £20m overhaul courtesy of Babcock.

Outwardly, with the exception of a third mast for improved communications, the ship is little different from the one towed north.

But it's inside where the real changes have been made. Old compartments have been ripped out and replaced with new accommodation, while other messes have been altered so that the ship can fulfil her new role, commando assault ship, better.

Although refit work has included adapting the ship for 'strike carrier' operations with the GR7 and GR9 variants of the Harrier, **Ark's** chief role initially will be as a commando carrier, ferrying up to 400 Royal Marines into battle by helicopter.

It's a role the ship performed with aplomb during the invasion of Iraq, but the campaign also presented lessons which have now been incorporated into the carrier, such as better comms courtesy of the Bowman system and

magazines better suited to storing land forces' ammunition.

"It would be wrong to call her the 'new' **Ark Royal**, rather 'new look'," said Capt Mike Mansergh, the carrier's Commanding Officer.

"We're not doing something completely different, but we can fulfil more roles more effectively."

"The emphasis is on the commandos. **Illustrious** will serve as the 'Harrier carrier'."

The blustery weather followed **Ark** from the Forth all the way home. At times she was battered by gusts of 45-50kts and waves occasionally crashed against her bridge.

But Nature did not thwart the 20,000-tonne carrier from a full-speed trial as she ploughed through the North Sea. The 21-year-old warship nudged 29kts during the test.

"It's almost as if we've come back from a major deployment given the number of people waiting for us. We're lucky to have a proud, well-known name," said Capt Mansergh.

"We've had a good time in Scotland, but Portsmouth is our home. It's been tough on our families while we've been away."

The ship will be re-dedicated next year, although without an official sponsor present. In memory of the Queen Mother, who launched the vessel and was an avid supporter and follower until her death nearly five years ago, the honour of being **Ark's** sponsor has not been bestowed on anyone else.

Next up for **Ark** is a series of trials, followed by a spell with Flag Officer Sea Training early next year, after which she will be declared operational as a commando carrier. From late summer 2007 she will be NATO's on-call flagship.

Top gunning - once more

THE top guns of **HMS Exeter** fired up their 4.5in main armament yet again as the ship joined a demonstration task force in the Western Approaches.

Seven vessels were committed to Staff College Sea Days - the annual showpiece by the RN to show Staff College personnel what we do day in, day out - HM Ships **Illustrious**, **Exeter**, **Cornwall**, **Quorn**, **Penzance** and **Roebuck**, plus **RFA Fort George**.

One day of the week is devoted to rehearsals - allowing Sea Cadets and affiliated units to hop on board the ships (in **Exeter's** case, **Leeds Sea Cadets** and the **Combined Cadet Force**) and sample RN action.

The rest of the week is devoted to demonstrations for VIPs and students from the Staff College at **Shrivenham**.

The demonstrations began with mine warfare and survey work just beyond Plymouth's breakwater (courtesy of **Quorn**, **Penzance** and **Roebuck**); then **Exeter's** Royal Marines boarding party swooped on 'terrorists' aboard **Fort Victoria**, rapid roping from her **Lynx**.

Merlin helicopters arrived to show how they would attack a submarine (there wasn't really one there), before **Hawk** and **Tornado** jets buzzed the force.

After **Lusty** and **Cornwall** replenished at sea, the frigate joined **Exeter** on the gunline for some NGS (Naval Gunfire Support).

The destroyer's gunnery department collected the **Beresford Cup** for its accuracy and efficiency. Three ranging salvos were fired. Once the spotter ashore was satisfied the ships were hitting their targets, the two vessels rattled off ten shells apiece rapidly.

The last act of the day was to return the guests to shore where the commandos laid on an amphibious assault.

Exeter arrived in Plymouth fresh from a hometown visit to celebrate the Freedom of Devon's county town (a privilege she has enjoyed since January 1983).

As well as being royally hosted by the good folk of **Exeter**, the 200-plus sailors were warmly received by the city's Royal Naval Association who invited them to their HQ... and of course offered their modern-day successors a tot (or two) of **Pusser's** rum.



● Sister act... Side-by-side again in Portsmouth Harbour are **HMS Illustrious** (nearest the camera) and **HMS Ark Royal**; on the far right is frigate **HMS St Albans**

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, FRPU Whale Island

You can count on Chatham

THE odometer on HMS Chatham has passed through the half-million-miles mark as the frigate made her way home from a six-month deployment in the South Atlantic.

The moment came as the ship ploughed through the Caribbean having made her first transit of the Panama Canal.

This has been a deployment of firsts for the Devonport-based warship: her first visit to the Falklands and South America; and her first time in Mexico.

The frigate spent four days in the port of Vera Cruz, a visit which followed exercises with the Mexican destroyer Arm Mina (formerly USS Whipple). Personnel were swapped between the two vessels via helicopter as the warships carried out joint manoeuvres.

Sailors being sailors, Chatham departed the Mexican port considerably heavier than when she entered, weighed down with scores of sombreros, ponchos and hammocks snapped up as souvenirs.

Leaving Vera Cruz, the frigate joined the international drug-busting effort (see page 4), then headed for chillier climes as she sailed up the Eastern Seaboard of the USA for Boston, the final visit of her six-month deployment.

"Passing the half-million miles mark in her 17th year is a notable achievement," said CO Capt James Morse.

"I'm sure she will continue to be a mainstay of the Fleet for the next half million miles."

Another milestone, a sadder one, was the final performance by Jack Of All Trades, the ship's rock band, whose members go their separate ways.

Drummer Lt Paul Irving and bass guitarist OM Jamie Hooke are leaving Chatham, as is the band's driving force, EWO 'Pincher' Martin.

There had to be a farewell concert – and there was, with £1,800 raised for the frigate's affiliated charities.

'Pincher' has performed in ships' bands on and off for two decades; he won't be appearing any more, not as a sailor at any rate as he's leaving the Service.

"I've fantastic memories of the bands over the years – they have always been such good fun."

"The final concert was a brilliant way to go out and was a huge success."

Lancaster's royal treat

DESPITE cancelling some engagements because of back pain, the Queen was in fine health for a visit to HMS Lancaster, wishing the crew well before a four-month tour of duty in African and Caribbean waters.

As Duke of Lancaster, Her Majesty is the ship's sponsor and hence a regular visitor.

In the past the question always was: will she or won't she (meet Sunny the Parrot, the frigate's mascot)? With Sunny in retirement, the spotlight (rightly) fell upon the sailors and their families.

The Queen spent three hours quayside and on the ship, where LCH Simon Geldart had prepared a lunch of salmon and crème-fraiche, followed by lamb cutlets and finished off with a speciality dessert of Lancaster cluster.

A week after the official visit, Lancaster departed Portsmouth for the coast of West Africa on her second deployment of the year (she previously escorted French flagship Charles de Gaulle on a mission to the Middle East).

This four-month tour of duty will take the frigate to the northeast tip of South America then into the Caribbean to accompany RFA Wave Ruler on anti-drug trafficking patrols.



● Clyde-oscope... A wonderful night-time shot of HMS Montrose alongside the ship lift at Faslane as the frigate prepares for Exercise Neptune Warrior. Since completing the war games in Scottish waters, the ship has been in Dundee for a visit to her namesake town, permitting a renewal of ties with affiliated charities, civic organisations and sports club. The frigate is now in Devonport undergoing a routine period of maintenance before beginning a seven-month NATO deployment to the Mediterranean.

Picture: WO1 Ian Arthur, FRPU North

Commandos, first and foremost

Highlands and highlights

THE crew of HMS Gloucester have had an experience many would envy, a seagoing tour of the Highlands with glorious weather and beautiful scenery.

The destroyer left her home in Portsmouth behind to teach Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary navigators the art of guiding a ship through some of the most challenging waters in the British Isles.

Three groups of navigators have been hosted by the Fighting G.

First up were submariners, refining their ability to navigate on the surface and familiarising themselves with the approaches to Plymouth Harbour.

Frigate and destroyer navigators climbed aboard next for a tour of the Channel Islands, and finally senior navigators lined up for appointments to capital ships were hosted in Scotland.

The convoluted lochs and inlets of Scotland's coast, with strong tides and currents, provide the perfect final training area, relatively free from yachts and commercial shipping.

The training in Scotland was blessed by fine weather, permitting some spectacular views and sunsets over the Western Isles and Orkneys, including the former anchorage at Scapa Flow.

The destroyer returned to Portsmouth via, or rather under, the Skye bridge, ahead of a period of maintenance before she heads off on a NATO deployment to the Mediterranean which will keep her away from home over Christmas.

TWO Royal Marines were killed alongside two of their Army comrades when terrorists exploded a bomb next to a patrol boat.

Mine Jason 'Jay' Hylton and Cpl Ben Nowak died as they patrolled the Shatt Al Arab river in the southern city Basra in a Rigid Raider.

The boat was passing a pontoon bridge spanning the river when insurgents detonated a makeshift explosive device.

Three other Service personnel in the raider were seriously wounded by the blast.

The raider, in company with a second British patrol boat, had been heading up river towards the Shatt Al Arab Hotel, one of the British Army bases in Basra, when the tragedy occurred.

The attack came just hours after British Forces in the city had paid their respects to the fallen on Remembrance Sunday.

Both commandos killed by the bomb were described by their superiors as dedicated men with promising careers ahead of them in the Corps.

Cpl Nowak from Liverpool joined the Marines 11 years ago and served around the globe with 40 and 45 Cdo, Fleet Protection



Group, and most recently with 539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines.

Beyond his dedication to the Corps, Cpl Nowak was dedicated to sport and fitness.

A qualified physical training instructor, Cpl Nowak ran fitness sessions for his colleagues, played football to an extremely high standard and was a loyal fan of Premiership side Everton.

One of his final acts before his death was to organise circuit training for his comrades – a session described by Maj Nathan Hale, Second-in-Command 539 ASRM as "memorably tough".



● 'Memorably tough'... (Above) Cpl Ben Nowak and (left) the epitome of the true commando spirit Mine Jason 'Jay' Hylton

Maj Hale continued: "Ben was a warm, outgoing man who epitomised the qualities of a junior commander in the Marines."

"We will best remember him for his constant good humour and his tremendous enthusiasm for physical training – although there may have been moments when we did not entirely appreciate him for it."

"Although he was an accomplished sportsman and physical trainer, he was first and foremost a Royal Marines Commando."

Mine Hylton – known to friends and family as Jay – joined the

Corps in 2003 and qualified as a landing craftsman the following year.

The father of two had served with HMS Bulwark on her lengthy Middle East deployment this year, but immediately volunteered for a return to the region with 539 ASRM.

After just two years as a coxswain, colleagues said he showed experience and skill far beyond most of his peers.

"Jay was a bright and enthusiastic man," said Maj Hale. "Although he joined the Marines older than most recruits, he quickly made his mark within the Service."

"We will remember his infectious smile and the constant cheerfulness which he brought to the squadron."

"He epitomised the true commando spirit and will be missed by his many friends and the wider Royal Marines family."

Two soldiers also died of injuries sustained in the attack: WO2 Lee Hopkins, of the Royal Corps of Signals, and Staff Sgt Sharron Elliott of the Intelligence Corps.

The attack was the worst suffered by British forces in Basra since a Lynx of 847 Naval Air Squadron was shot down.

■ The RN pays its respects across the globe, page 25



Nottingham masters Typhoon

FOR the first time the most potent fighter in Britain's arsenal has come under Navy control.

Destroyer HMS Nottingham successfully guided Eurofighter Typhoons towards incoming enemy jets racing over the North Sea to strike at the Type 42 destroyer.

A couple of whooshes (technical term - Ed) later and simulated missiles were streaking through the North Sea sky to knock the enemy out.

Nottingham was taking part in Exercise Wycombe Warrior (so called because it is run by RAF staff from High Wycombe), a war game intended to test all aspects of air-to-air, and air-to-ground (or air-to-sea in this case) warfare.

A sizeable air force was mustered for the exercise: Hawks, Tornados and Typhoons from Britain, US Air Force F15s, French Mirages and Norwegian F16 Falcons.

The Typhoons were assigned to CAP - combat air patrol - duties, defending Nottingham as she ploughed through the North Sea.

As Lt Leigh Harrison, Nottingham's Fighter Controller 1, stared at the radar screen, blips appeared



120 miles away. Tornado F3s were closing in on the ship - so the Typhoons were ordered to intercept. Lt Harrison guided the two fighters to their targets which were successfully 'shot down'.

After inflight refuelling, the Typhoons took up station again, now bolstered by a pair of French Mirages and two Hawks.

This time a much larger force of inbound jets was determined to harm Nottingham.

In the ensuing aerial mêlée, one Typhoon was 'shot down' but not before the good guys had taken a much heavier toll of the enemy strike force.

"The opportunity to control such a capable aircraft was one not to be missed," said Lt Harrison.

"It's an incredibly agile and powerful aircraft and allowed us to push the fight away from the ship and destroy the enemy before he could attack us."

Cdr Simon Ward, Nottingham's CO, said working alongside the RAF had proved extremely useful for both sides.

"This exercise heralded the next generation of co-operation between the RAF and RN," he added.

● You only get an 'oo' with Typhoon... RAF Eurofighters in Diamond Nine formation

Picture: Mark White

Humble in the jungle

HMS Southampton became the first British warship to visit Liberia in 16 years as her work with the Vela task group (see the centre pages) drew to a close.

The West African nation has been racked by civil war for years, but with the conflict finally over democracy and reconstruction are taking hold.

There was time for just one day's visit to the capital Monrovia during Southampton's deployment, enough time however to hold a press conference, offer guided tours of the destroyer, host an official reception for local dignitaries including Liberia's acting president, and play a football match against an Irish Army UN team.

A more humbling experience was a visit to Freetown in Sierra Leone, where the sailors helped out at the renovation of Lakkah Hospital and repaired a refrigeration unit at a school for blind children.

The ship also delivered toys to the school and sports kit to families of troops in Sierra Leone's armed forces.

"This is the first time I've been to Africa and I was really struck by how friendly and welcoming the people are," said AB James Eyre.

"It was great to be able to work with the locals to achieve something worthwhile during our visit."

The destroyer is now back in the bosom of Portsmouth Naval Base.

Double blow struck against traffickers

DRUG traffickers are out of pocket to the tune of more than £350m thanks to two busts by the RN and RFA.

A combined Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Fleet Air Arm effort helped to snare £300m of cocaine in the Caribbean.

Closer to home, a major operation by HMS Argyll, RFA Fort Austin, a Sea King from 849 NAS, Royal Marines from 40 Cdo and Spanish customs seized 1.3 tonnes of cocaine in a merchantman off the Cape Verde Islands.

The Caribbean bust began as fleet tanker RFA Wave Ruler was on patrol with Task Group 4.4 - a force of Dutch, British, American, Antillean and Belgian ships aiming to thwart the supply of drugs from South America to Caribbean nations, the US and Europe.

When reports of a suspicious motorboat came in, Ruler scrambled her Lynx which promptly found the craft and directed Belgian frigate Westdiep on to the scene.

She launched a boarding party of US Coast Guard officials who

scoured the craft before Wave Ruler arrived on the scene and sent a party across to relieve the searchers.

That search party of US Coast Guard sailors, based on Wave Ruler, recovered five tonnes of the drug from a motorboat while a Lynx of 815 Naval Air Squadron hovered overhead, 100 miles off the Colombian coast.

The drugs were stored aboard the Westdiep and the vessel's crew detained on the Belgian warship.

It's the second massive haul by Ruler in two months. In September she stopped £500m of cocaine from reaching its destination as drug-runners burned their fishing boat to the waterline.

"The intense international co-operation led to this excellent result," said Dutch Cdre Frank Sijtsma, in charge of Task Group 4.4. "With this interception we not only counteracted the illegal drug trade, we endorsed the importance of our presence in the Caribbean."

Ruler has been operating in the Caribbean with frigate HMS Iron Duke, which is due to return home to Portsmouth this month.

Argyll too scored her second bust of the autumn when she pounced on the MV Orca II.

Such was the speed of the boarding operation by a detachment of Royal Marines, acting on information from the UK's Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and Spanish Customs, that the merchant ship's crew had no time to take evasive action or ditch the drugs aboard.

Intelligence suggested the drugs, with an estimated value of nearly £60m, were bound for the streets of Europe.



● The haul of cocaine found aboard Orca II by HMS Argyll's Royal Marines

"I am delighted yet again that we have been able to play our part in the battle to keep drugs off our streets," said Argyll's CO Cdr Will Warrender.

Argyll bagged the MV Ster II off West Africa in early October; she was carrying 1.8 tonnes of cocaine with a street value in excess of £60m.



● HMS Cornwall makes her way carefully down the Kiel Canal

Even Kiel for a busy Cornwall

FRESH from six weeks in the Baltic and Skagerrak, HMS Cornwall was given no time to breathe when she arrived back in Blyth.

First there was a part to play in Staff College Sea Days, the annual demonstration week to show Army and RAF personnel from the Joint Services Staff College exactly what the RN does.

Then there was some 'top-up' training - continuation training, to give it the proper title - from the chaps and chappesses of Flag Officer Sea Training, intended to hone sailors' front-line skills.

The frigate had spent the early autumn working with the navies of Denmark, Sweden, Poland and Germany off the coast of Jutland for DANEX (Danish Exercise).

From there, as we reported last month, she paid a visit to Baltiysk (at one time the German port of Pillau) on a goodwill visit to the home of Russia's Baltic Fleet.

After a stop in Tallinn, Estonia, Cornwall headed back across the Baltic for the Polish port of Gdynia.

The port and the neighbouring city of Gdansk proved to be fine hosts of the 'ice cream frigate' (her pennant number is P99), although there was a sobering visit by crew to the former Stutthof concentration camp outside Gdansk.

The ship was spared the lengthy journey around the Jutland peninsula by taking a short cut through the Kiel Canal between the Baltic and North Seas (it was originally built so the Kaiser's Navy could do just that). This didn't lighten the load on the bridge team, who spent a busy and demanding 12 hours guiding Cornwall safely through the man-made waterway - which is the world's busiest.

The frigate has undergone a brief period of maintenance at home in Devonport and returns to FOST for a full 'workout' early next year before she conducts her first major deployment since a refit earlier this year.

NAVY NEWS

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Boom, bang-a-lang for SDU1

A HUGE boom echoing around Swansea Bay signalled the successful outcome of yet another call-out for the busy chaps of Southern Diving Unit 1.

The team from Devonport were called to Wales when fisherman Phil Wisby snared a huge wartime mine in the nets of his boat Giri Eileen 2.

The 1,800kg mine, 12ft long and 3ft in diameter, was dropped by the Luftwaffe and lay on the seabed for six decades until it became caught by the fishing vessel.

The 'catch' sparked a 24-hour drama before the explosive was safely blown up a good distance from the Welsh port by the SDU1 team led by PO(D) 'Sid' Lawrence.

The mines were intended to blow up as ships sailed over them; a huge air bubble would rise beneath the vessel, breaking its back when it struck the hull.

Fresh from eradicating one threat, the divers were on the road again, this time closer to home in Weymouth where a suspected old torpedo had been found.

The harbour was closed, ferries diverted and part of the town evacuated - but the torpedo thankfully turned out to be no more than the weapon's old motor.

As of mid-November, the Plymouth-based divers had dispatched 22,403 pieces of ordnance to oblivion in 188 separate call-outs.

Chid are the codfathers

NO MORE fish for the men and women of HMS Chiddingfold.

Which is good news for the rest of the ships in the Fishery Protection Squadron as they might have a chance of winning their most prized trophy.

The Portsmouth-based minehunter has spent the past two years on fishery duties – making her eligible for the coveted Soberton Trophy.

Since 1989 the cup has been presented to the Hunt-class ship which is the most effective in its unaccustomed role of enforcing fishery policy.

Last year 'Chid' bagged the trophy after 91 successful boardings, which included collaring ten fishermen flouting the law.

This year she's carried out 60 boardings – impressive considering she spent three months in dock in Portsmouth for repairs – and found 21 trawlermen who had infringed the regulations.

That's even more impressive when you consider the ship was called in to help with the search for the missing yacht Ouzo off the Isle of Wight in the summer.

The ship scoured 90 square miles of seabed with her 2193 Sonar looking for traces of the vessel.

"The award of the trophy for the second consecutive year highlights all the hard work, determination and enthusiasm that my team has put into this vital task," said CO Lt Cdr Andrew Stacey.

"Lucky for the other units 'on fish' in 2007, we'll be in another role so there'll be a chance for someone else to win the trophy."

Her time with the Fishery Protection Squadron done, the ship has now hauled down the fish pennant and entered Rosyth for an overhaul.

Lights, camera, regulation...

NAVY police are donning hi-tech head cameras in the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour.

Regulators in Plymouth have become the first Service police force in the country to follow the example of civilian bobbies in using 'head cams' (officially Cylon Body-Worn Surveillance Systems).

Two of the £1,800 cameras have been bought by the RN Police – the new name for the regulating branch – and are in regular use on patrols in HMS Drake, family housing estates for Service personnel, and in Plymouth city centre at weekends.

Head cameras are used by the Met Police in London and officers in Devon & Cornwall are involved in a six-month pilot scheme.

The cameras are connected to a small hard drive, roughly the size of a notebook, which is attached to the police officer's belt. At the flick of a switch, the camera begins recording audio and visual footage of DVD quality whether it's day or night.

The hard drive can record up to 400 hours of footage – that's more than two weeks' worth – which is 'downloaded' on to computers at the RN Police headquarters in Plymouth.

The aim of the cameras is twofold: firstly, to provide cast-iron evidence in any court proceedings; and, secondly, to deter any ne'er-do-wells from misbehaving – it's a bit foolish to commit a crime if the whole thing is going to be recorded.

"It's the best evidence you can ever have in court – you can't argue with the camera," said Master at Arms Matt Jackson, Plymouth crime reduction officer.

"Of course, we still collect



● Go ahead, make my day... Leading Regulator Amy Carpenter tries out the new police 'head cam'

Picture: LADPhoto Dave Husband

traditional evidence, such as witness statements.

"The cameras don't necessarily make our job easier – there's a lot more paperwork to fill in.

He continued: "But you won't have people challenging your statements because it's there on film. This is policing for the future."

In line with civvy police officers, Royal Navy Police warn people that their actions could be recorded, but generally people are pleased that officers are there on patrol with an extra 'weapon' in their arsenal.

"The reaction we've had

from people so far has been very positive. We're here to help," MAA Jackson added.

"It's better to prevent crime than to apprehend people afterwards.

"People will be wary about being filmed, therefore they won't commit a crime."

Lt Cdr Terry Byrne, the Naval Provost Marshal (Western), said the introduction of the hi-tech kit would take "proactive policing to another level".

The cameras are also being introduced in the Portsmouth area.

The thinning blue line

THE Navy and Royal Marines are short of more than 1,300 people – with critical gaps in certain specialist positions.

An official report – Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces – by the National Audit Office warns that "too many deployments" are a major factor in sailors and commandos leaving the Senior Service early.

As of July 2006, the RN had 35,470 men and women, 1,310 (3.6 per cent) fewer than its planned strength.

But within those 35,470 personnel, the team from the NAO highlighted several "pinch points" which are affecting particular branches.

The Royal Navy is short of three out of ten nuclear watchkeepers and can only fill four out of five posts for warfare specialist leading hands; the Royal Marines also lack nearly ten per cent of their manpower.

The Fleet Air Arm has managed to plug its black hole in the AEM branch by 'borrowing' 164 RAF personnel until the end of next year.

The Audit Office blames a near-freeze on recruiting a dozen or so years ago for some of the Senior Service's current problems.

The 'black hole' – as it has become known – is one of the key reasons for the shortfall in leading hands; the hole, however, is beginning to affect senior ratings.

The audit office predicts shortages of anywhere between one third and one half at petty officer level for up to ten years.

Nearly 1,400 Royals and sailors were asked about Service life as part of the audit office's study.

Most people still join the Senior Service to 'see the world', looking for a sense of adventure and excitement, as well as pay opportunities and the pension

Cost of recruitment and training

Rating	Recruitment	Phase 1 Training
Officer	£7,800	£10,300
Officer	£17,500	£84,000
Rating	Recruitment	Phase 1 Training
Officer	£7,500	£40,400
Officer	£16,000	£164,100

scheme.

And seven out of ten sailors and three quarters of Royal Marines say life in the RN/Corps is as good as or better than they expected it to be.

The biggest bugbears, however, remain the inability to plan life outside the Service and the impact on families of deployments; the tempo of operations, unsurprisingly, causes one in three leavers to hand in their notice.

Once they have left, nine out of ten former sailors and Royals believe they have made the right decision – chiefly because they can spend more time with their loved ones.

The National Audit Office says the three Forces can save millions of pounds by holding on to trained personnel rather than recruiting and training fresh blood to replace them: in a nutshell retention is better value than recruitment.

On a more positive note, the Navy's recruitment is healthy; it has achieved 100 per cent of its target from civvy street in the past year.

The exception is the Corps, where recruiting fell five per cent short.

Some recruitment initiatives have paid dividends: 88 Royals were paid £86,000 for 'introducing a friend' to the Corps; 788 submariners have received £3.9m in 'golden hellos' since April 2003 and 159 matelots and 39 green berets accepted the re-join bounty for returning to the Service.

Sir John Boarn, head of the NAO, said that the MOD was working hard to strike a balance between deployments and time at home.

"Personnel told us that the key reason they were leaving early included the pressures on family life," he added.

"It is vital that – in addition to financial incentives – the MOD maintains its focus on longer-term measures."

Defence Minister Derek Twigg said Whitehall understood the impact frequent tours of duty had upon Service personnel and their families – and had enhanced pay and benefits to those on deployment to lessen that impact.

"Our forces are stretched but not overstretched," the minister said.

"This report shows that just under 60 per cent of our people believe that the period between deployments is about right.

He continued: "Military service is very different to civilian life and brings with it unique challenges and demands particular commitment from personnel and their dependants."

The report can be found free online at www.nao.org.uk/pr/05-06/05061633.htm or from bookshops published by TSO (ISBN 0-10-294356-7) priced £13.50.

Looking after the sailor and marine of the future – interview with the Second Sea Lord, page 19



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Opinion

Lessons from the Falklands

THE Armed Forces who deployed to the Falkland Islands nearly 25 years ago did so in the most difficult of conditions, 8,000 miles away from home, and won a resounding victory for democracy and self-determination.

And yet the MOD is right to make next year's Falklands events a commemoration rather than a celebration, Triumphalism is not the British way, and too many lives were lost to make it a joyful occasion.

Mistakes were made during the conflict and some very hard lessons were learnt which are of enormous benefit today. Significant improvements were made in weapon design and ship defence, including fire-fighting and damage control.

It is also salutary to remember that the war, which greatly enhanced the Government's reputation at home and abroad, was won against the backdrop of very severe cuts to the Navy proposed by the Defence Secretary, John Nott.

The lessons of the Falklands conflict are clear – the Navy must maintain its fighting ability, and it must be given the resources to do it.

Keeping our people

THERE is good news and bad news for the Navy in the National Audit Office's report *Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces*.

The good news is recruitment, with the Navy achieving 95 per cent of its target. The bad news is retention, with many trained sailors and Royal Marines leaving the Service early. The reasons most often given are too many deployments, with their inevitable effects on family life.

The Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Adrian Johns, has outlined some of his innovative ideas for resolving the problem to *Navy News*. One is more selective recruiting, on the basis that if people are in the right jobs, they will stay longer.

Another, more radical, is a flexible career structure, allowing people to move across from full-time Navy to the reserves and back again.

This may seem anathema to older readers, who are used to thinking that a job is for life. The younger generation see their careers differently, and the Navy is right to take account of their changing attitudes.

Farewell to Tugg

JACK, the ever-hopeful but not-too-bright Able Seaman, first appeared on the pages of *Navy News* in 1973.

For the next 33 years his life and times were chronicled by his sympathetic creator, the cartoonist Tugg, and faithfully followed by readers all over the world.

Tugg always maintained that he was not a funny man, and like many artists, he was too observant and thoughtful to be an extrovert. His wit shone through his pen.

Tugg was genuinely modest for a man of such rare talent. He would deliver his cartoons to the *Navy News* offices in person, and while the editorial staff clustered round to admire them, he would ask quietly and without complacency: "Are they OK – will they do?"

In his 70s, Tugg felt less able to spend time with his beloved Navy, but by some process known only to himself he imbibed the many changes in the Service and reflected them in his work, which consequently never seems to date.

So closely associated is Tugg with *Navy News* that it is impossible to contemplate the paper without him – which is why we will continue to run his cartoons under the title 'Classic Jack'.

Luckily, Tugg's output was prolific, and younger readers will not have seen all his old cartoons. For those who have, we feel sure they will agree that 'Jack' is still as funny, clever and perceptive the second time around.

The views expressed in *Navy News* do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Defence

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A date in the princess' diary

I WAS interested in Cdr Honey's letter about the cap badges and buttons in your picture 'The Young Elizabeth, but when?'

However he is wrong about the date. It was not at a Passing-out Parade in July 1950.

It was in fact a separate Royal visit on 24 June 1949. I have the Midsummer Term 1949 edition of the *Britannia Magazine*, which gives a short account of the visit.

Also in answer to Jim Hutchison's letter, the Captain pictured was Capt H W Faulkner (his last term at the college).

— Cdr J F Lake, Waterlooville, Hampshire

...I was a cadet there from 1948 to 1952 and I remember her visit, which was in the summer of 1949.

I can identify the three officers in the picture: Lt the Hon John Edmondson (later the Rev Lord Sandford), Capt H W Faulkner and in the background, Cdr V Wight-Boycott.

— Lt Cdr M H Luke, Petersfield, Hampshire



● Princess Elizabeth at Dartmouth in, our readers agree, 1949

Thanks for the life

I WISH to convey my thanks to the Royal Navy for the wonderful life I have enjoyed.

In 1939 I qualified to be trained as a Naval Aircraft Artificer. My apprenticeship covered education from the theory of flight and sewing Irish linen to wood aircraft, from welding metals to stripping and assembling 2,800 Horsepower aircraft engines.

In 1943 I joined HMS *Victorious*. Aboard the ship I was able to experience the midnight sun in the Arctic Ocean as we protected convoys to Murmansk; to visit the exotic ports of

Alexandria and Tunisia and watch the porpoise playing around the bows as we ploughed through the Mediterranean to Port Said and Cairo.

Completing our service operation with the South East Asia Command and the British Pacific Fleet off Japan HMS *Victorious* sailed for home after an enjoyable R and R period in Sydney.

Arriving in Portsmouth in 1945 ended my world tour courtesy of the Royal Navy.

Back in my home town, Lee-on-Solent, in 1962, a tragic event, when two young boys out fishing on a calm summer day drowned in the Solent, encouraged me to

found the Seafarers' Club, Hill Head, to teach sailing and boating safety with knowledge I received from my naval training.

Now living in Canada, I have been able to look back on my life with satisfaction knowing the Seafarers' Club is still expanding and providing seamanship education to young sailors.

I am happy in the thought that the club is my legacy which I am able to leave because of my rich education provided by the Royal Navy.

— John Harmer, Ontario, Canada

Bombers back with 800 NAS

I HAVE just read the excellent, and most interesting, article covering the deployment of my old squadron (800 NAS) to Kandahar.

It goes without saying that I and all ex-800 personnel wish the current members (and their RM colleagues) a safe tour in Afghanistan.

I was however somewhat puzzled by the sentence 'For the first time 800 Naval Air Squadron... deployed as an out and out bomber squadron.'

Those of us who served on 800 NAS during the 1960s thought that, in the *Buccaneer* S1 and S2, we had probably the best bomber ever to grace the deck of a carrier, or were we mistaken?

"*Nunquam non paratus*"
— M J Sargent, Luton (former REA(A)1, 800 Squadron)



● A *Buccaneer* of 800 NAS

Supersparks sends again...

IT was nice to read a letter from old Supersparks (John Bolton-Perkin - October) and I must agree with him entirely that the operators were more skilled in the art of Morse Code in his era.

I too used to sit for hours listening to groupers from the stift ships (trawlers) during my time in the Falklands War.

In answer to his question, the 'Q' code is still used and the code he forgot for "Give me your message and I will dispose of it" was ZOE.

— Guy Neal, ex-LRO(G) VT Comms, Forest Moor

...THE correct three-letter code for "pass your message and I will dispose of it" was ZOE and not QSP.

QSP means "I will relay to...(name and/or call sign) free of charge," and applied to British-registered merchant ships and RN/Commonwealth navies'

ships, the latter when sending a commercial radio telegram.

The three-letter 'Q' code is international whereas the three-letter 'Z' code was for military use within NATO only.

When I was a member of the RN staff at Portishead Radio, I never used QSP when intercepting a call to another area receiving station. It wasn't necessary.

I did use 'ZOE' when intercepting a call from a warship.

— W L Gray, ex-L/Tel, Abingdon, Oxon

...RN sparkers also used 'Z' codes.

If I recall correctly, ZOE was "Give me your message and I will dispose of it" whilst ZBPT/2 signified some derogatory comment about the quality (or lack of it) on the operator's Morse code.

— B D 'Dodger' Long, Northridge Road, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Emblem seen as symbol of contempt

AFTER a great deal of effort the much sought-after (symbolic) recognition of four years of service, in the most diabolical conditions imaginable, finally happened.

Reaction? Pathetically insignificant!

I doubt very much if Eddie Grenfell is satisfied.

The Arctic Ocean convoys were made for four years, through the most terrible weather conditions, running the gauntlet of the evil U-boat below the surface, the ruthless attacks from the air and the ever-constant threat of the Nazi capital ships lurking in the Norwegian fjords.

The decision to supply the USSR with arms was politically regretted by the Allies, but felt to be necessary to buy time.

The vast quantities of vital war materials supplied to the USSR prevented them being overcome and absorbed by the Nazi war machine.

When the Allies finally achieved victory in 1945 it was only a material thing – the political war never ended.

The recognition of the efforts of the RN and Merchant Navy was denied.

The outcome? Ignore the convoy-men and stick your head in the sand – try to forget it ever happened – do not in any way demonstrate their crucial work.

After 60-odd years to refuse them a sensible award to recognise their endeavours belatedly is contemptible.

I have been officially advised that to wear the emblem upon a Campaign Star would be a 'discourtesy to the Crown'.

(Eddie would be apparently wrong in his interpretation of the determination by the MOD)

The greatest imaginable discourtesy to the convoy veterans is clearly demonstrated by the issue of this 'emblem'.

— Steve Cooper, Public Officer, Arctic Convoys Veterans – South Australia-Incorporated, Huntfield Heights, South Australia

Intrepid men made future

I WAS saddened when I read there are only nine still alive from the dear old HMS *Intrepid* which was sunk by enemy action in 1943.

They will all be in their 80s, and I trust they are well enough to travel to Leros to the dedication of the memorial which has been erected.

Yes, it was all so long ago, and now few will remember the great work this destroyer with others did to bring our war to a close.

I was thrilled to see HMS *Broome* and *Southwold's* names in the *Navy News*. There were 86 Hunt class destroyers, of which 24 were sunk by enemy action and many more put out of commission for months.

The last Hunt to be sunk was HMS *Aldenham*, with the loss of 126, when she struck a mine.

There are less than half a dozen of us still in the land of the living. Nothing is eternal, but we humans think we are here forever!

I am also pleased to see our Sea Cadets get a mention – they are our future if we only show them the way.

— George Drewett, Shepperton, Middlesex

CLASSIC JACK



No act of humanity in Suez conflict

I READ with great interest the account of the Suez campaign (October) I was there, along with thousands of others. Your account is very good and made excellent reading, however I do take issue with the paragraph dealing with the four E boats. My sea station at the time was on the compass platform overlooking the flight deck and next to flying control. I was standing not more than 40 feet away from the captain when the report came over the relay speaker system that four E boats had left harbour and were at sea. The aircraft then airborne were ordered to eliminate them. The report came through that three of the boats had been sunk or disabled, the fourth was on fire and circling to pick up any survivors. The captain withheld permission to sink the fourth boat, a report then came through that it had put out the fires and was heading home. He then gave the order to sink it, which they did. I was disgusted. They were sailors as was I. For the Admiralty to call it an act of humanity was a lie. It didn't happen.

- T M Reeves, Witney, Oxon



• The winning British RN hockey team, with a Canadian helper...

Puck to the future

I WAS most impressed to see in the sports pages (October) that there is now an RN Ice Hockey team of some calibre. But it is not new! I am pretty sure this photo appeared in *Navy News* in May 1976 when a group of exchange officers took on the Air Engineers at HMCS Shearwater in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Amazingly we won - with a lot of help from our 'borrowed' Canadian.


The main difference between us and today's team is that these

chaps know what they are doing! We didn't have much of a clue but had enormous fun finding out. Our goal tender was only chosen because he was the most recent arrival and could just about stand up on skates, but certainly could not have got around the ice to much effect! I would be most grateful if you would pass on my (and I'm sure I speak for the others of our team) best wishes to today's team and we will all watch their results with interest.

- Cdr David Lingard (Retd), Dartmouth, Devon

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication. E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone. Given the impressive volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*.

However, we do try to publish many of your letters on our own website www.navynews.co.uk. We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. Please try to keep your submissions as brief as possible - our space is limited. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



Diana falls to pieces

I READ with interest your feature on Suez. I was captain of HMS Diana and picked up the majority of the survivors. Trained in the UK, they were very well disposed towards my sailors. When I paid off Diana I was sent as naval attaché to all the countries on the west coast of South America, which included Peru. From time to time attachés receive a list of RN ships for sale. During my time I received one such list which included HMS Newfoundland and HMS Ceylon. I sold both to Peru. My own ship Diana and Decoy followed some years later after I had left South America. Recently I wrote to the Peruvian Naval attaché to ask of their fate. Diana has been 'dismantled' and Decoy is soon to be converted into a maritime museum. Better than being sunk, I suppose.

- Captain J R Gower, Aldeburgh, Suffolk



• A 1956 football match with some celebrated names

Soccer stars shone on world stage

I RECENTLY came across this programme amongst others of my souvenir collection and thought it worthy of a mention in *Navy News* - when the RN took on an international soccer XI. I think I'm right in saying that nearly all the Army side were professionals and the Navy amateurs. Duncan Edwards was the outstanding player in the country at that time and was instrumental in achieving an Army win 5-3 after 3 each at half-time.

- Gordon Osborne, Bookham, Surrey

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● The British and Estonian flags fly side-by-side as HMS Liverpool's sailors line the approaches to their ship as the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh arrive in Tallinn's dock

A hum-dinging couple of visits

THE strains of *Heart of Oak* drifted across the bitterly cold port of Tallinn.

Nothing unusual about that from the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines.

Except that they didn't have their instruments and hummed instead.

Fortunately, this was the dress rehearsal, well rehearsal, (uniforms, like the instruments had become separated from the musicians in transit from Britain to the Baltic) for the visit of the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh to the historic Estonian port.

Everything on the day itself ran like clockwork. But it was still bitterly cold.

The Plymouth band provided the musical accompaniment and destroyer HMS Liverpool provided the steely backdrop for the Royal visit, intended to cement the bond between the UK and the Baltic.

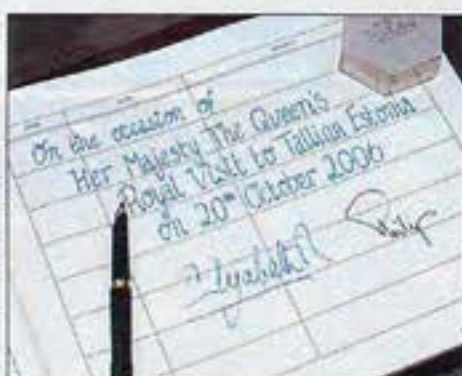
The Royal Navy is lauded in the region, largely due to its role in supporting the Baltic States' struggle for independence at the end of the Great War.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania fought to break away from the Russian yoke – and succeeded, aided by a British task force led by Admiral Sir Walter Cowan.

It was Cowan who was honoured by the Queen and senior Estonian officials aboard Liverpool.

They unveiled the badge for Admiral Cowan, the new name for one of three Sandown-class minehunters bought by Estonia.

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh spent 45 minutes aboard Liverpool, chatting to crew and also Estonian troops.



● The visitors' book on HMS Liverpool, signed by the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh on the flight deck during their visit

Pictures: LADPhoto Kelly Whytown, FRPU Whale Island

A Siberian (not Baltic – it was that cold) wind swirled around Tallinn Bay throughout the visit; the sailors and musicians standing in the open visibly turned blue by the time the Royal couple had climbed back into the warmth of their official Range Rover.

Before departing, the Duke presented Vice Admiral Tarmo Koutis, the head of the Estonian Navy, with a wreath to cast into Tallinn Bay in memory of the 112 Britons killed during the wars of independence.

"The Baltic is incredibly pro-British, as our sailors found accompanying the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh at official functions

throughout their visit," said Lt Cdr Fi Shepherd, Liverpool's logistics officer.

"It's a wonderful part of the world. I think it's probably been the ship's best visit of the year – there was genuine excitement beforehand, despite all the hard work the crew had to put in, painting, cleaning, polishing and re-polishing everything."

From Tallinn, Liverpool headed west, then north, around northern Scotland "through the tail-end of a hurricane" and into her namesake city.

As there are two-score Liverpudlians aboard (led by Commanding Officer Cdr Henry Duffy) this was not surprisingly going to be a popular visit, although the destroyer's berth in Seton was a good trek from the city centre.

"We have a good core of Liverpudlians on board and they must be as proud as me as a Liverpudlian to bring Liverpool into Liverpool," said Cdr Duffy.

The ship agreed to be an ambassador for the port to promote its role in 2008 as European Capital of Culture; already signed up are Scouse luminaries such as Ken Dodd, Liverpool FC captain Steven Gerrard and Yoko Ono (yes we know she's not a Liverpudlian but she was married to one).

Cdr Duffy was invited to the top of the iconic Liver Building to launch the city's poppy appeal, while his crew invited veterans, school children, former prisoners-of-war, Sea Cadets and people with disabilities aboard.

The destroyer has now begun a three-month overhaul in Rosyth before conducting sea trials and training next spring.

She is due to return to the Baltic in the second half of 2007.

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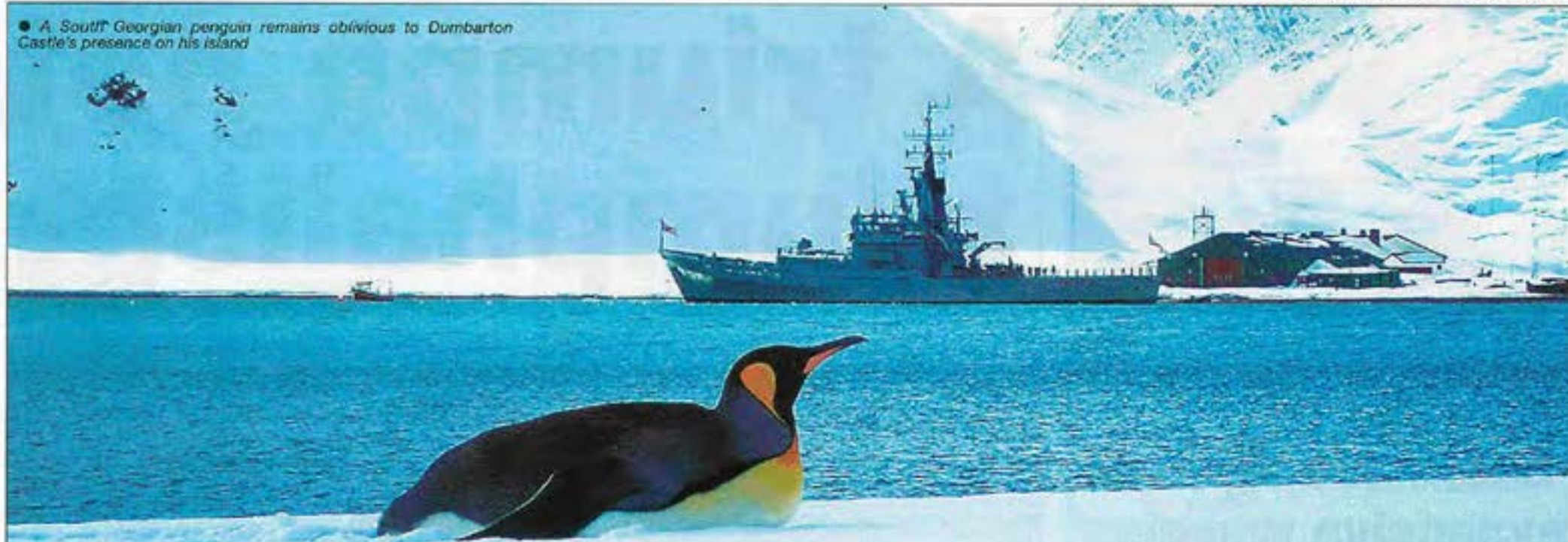
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● Wrapped up to keep the Siberian gusts at bay, the Queen chats to OM(W) Michelle Smythe on HMS Liverpool's flight deck

● A South Georgian penguin remains oblivious to Dumbarton Castle's presence on his island



Snow patrol for DC

YOU can't beat springtime. Flowers bursting into bloom. The birds singing. The two feet of snow to sweep off the upper deck.

Well, we are talking about South Georgia, not renowned for its sparkling springs.

Falklands' guardship HMS Dumbarton Castle left the islands behind to head for the even more remote outpost as part of her duties in the South Atlantic.

'DC' sailed with nine members of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers – the current Army unit deployed to the Falklands – who were holding a training exercise on South Georgia.

Also embarked were three prospective

curators for the museum at Grytviken which charts the island's role as a whaling station and as a 'jump-off' point for Antarctic explorers.

October in the Southern Hemisphere is the equivalent of April north of the equator. So, showers, then? More like blizzards.

DC arrived at King Edward Point in glorious sunshine, delivering stores and mail to the isolated settlement. Within an hour, however, the warship was hidden by a blizzard which reduced visibility to just 50 metres and deposited two feet of snow on the upper decks in ten hours.

That meant four-man watches turning out to



spend 30 minutes shovelling the snow away to ensure the ship remained stable.

The snowstorm also thwarted a pleasant walk along the shore to the abandoned whaling station; instead a ferry was arranged, and some hardy souls inspected the old buildings or paid their respects at the grave of Sir Ernest Shackleton.

The bravest of the bunch doffed No. 4s and jumped into the water – the temperature was a balmy, or perhaps barmy, 0.6°C – for a quick swim. The cold wasn't the only threat as elephant seals aren't too friendly. We've had no reports of extreme (naked) ironing, however (*Phew – Ed*).

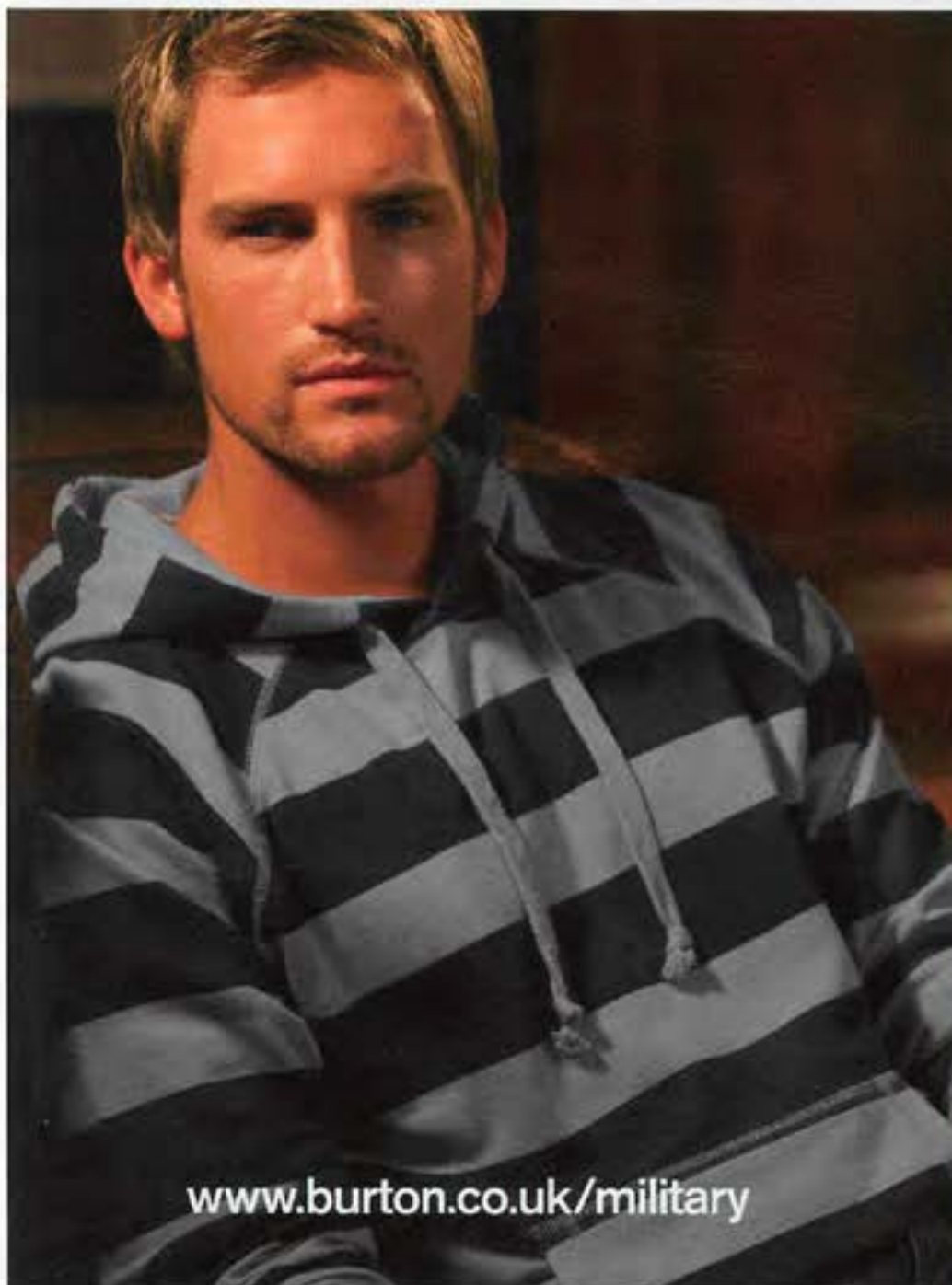
The last act was a patrol of the island, inlets

and fjords to ensure no-one was fishing illegally, before returning to pick up the soldiers and take them back to the Falklands.

On her travels around the Falklands, Dumbarton Castle called at Saunders Island, off the northwest tip of West Falkland.

It was there in 1766 that Cdre John Byron of HMS Dolphin set up the first British military base on the islands – Port Egmont. The base was abandoned within a decade, but left behind were the graves of five sailors and Royal Marines, the ruins of a settlement and a plaque declaring the Falklands to be the "sole right and property" of His Britannic Majesty George III.

At the site of the base, Lts Sarah Davies and Simon Shaw raised the Union Flag once more, recording the occasion in a log kept nearby.



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...ALL THINGS CONSIDERED



● 'Shiny Sheff' burns furiously after being struck by an Argentine Exocet missile on May 4 1982

Sheffield's loss 'an expensive warning'

HMS SHEFFIELD might not have been lost in the Falklands "if the right reactions had been taken" by her crew, according to official papers released into her sinking.

"Shiny Sheff" became the first RN victim of the 1982 conflict when she was struck by an Exocet missile on May 4.

The destroyer burned for two days and finally sank six days later, taking 20 of her crew with her.

Some campaigners and former crew have argued that the ship could – and should – have defended herself better.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, the Board of Inquiry papers into the tragedy have now been released in a heavily edited form.

The board began its investigation in June 1982 in Portsmouth, interviewing former Sheffield crew, plus sailors from sister ships HMS Glasgow and Coventry (the latter was also lost during the campaign) and poring over reports, signals and other documents relating to the fatal day.

It also considered whether there were inherent flaws in the design of the Type 42 class and its weapons systems.

The board's report says that the Operation Corporate task force was dogged by false alarms of incoming enemy air attacks; Sheffield feared attack by submarine more than attack by air, for example.

On May 4, Glasgow picked up the Argentine Super Etendard jets making their run and took evasive action, firing chaff decoys. HMS Invincible also picked up contacts on its radar but dismissed them.

About 15 miles from Glasgow, the aircraft turned and headed towards Sheffield, subsequently firing their missiles at the destroyer – which did not take any action to avoid the onslaught.

One Exocet struck Shiny Sheff between the galley and forward auxiliary machinery room; it did not explode but started a fire which caused acrid black smoke to quickly fill the ship.

The fire main was also knocked out which made tackling the blaze almost impossible.

The smoke, flames and lack of water contributed, says the report, to a lack of cohesion in dealing with the aftermath of the missile attack.

The board praised weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr John Woodhead and PO(MEM) David Briggs for their efforts to save the ship; both men were posthumously honoured.

The report concludes that by the time of the attack, most of the crew were tense, and some were bored and "a little frustrated by the inactivity".

It continues: "If all the right reactions had been taken, very quickly indeed, and if chaff had been fired, it might just have been possible to frustrate this determined and very professional attack."

The board found there were flaws in the Type 42's design. Lack of a jammer and "point defence system" – a close-in weapons system such as the RN has today with Phalanx – plus a lack of realistic simulator training contributed to Sheffield's downfall.

A covering letter from the office of the then Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, states:

"She had been lulled into a false sense of security by the ineffectiveness of previous Argentine air attacks. Her loss was an expensive warning and a foretaste of the real Argentine capability."

The papers can be read at www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/BoardsOfInquiry/LossOfHmsSheffieldBoardOfInquiry.htm

COMMEMORATION not celebration will be the theme of events to mark the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War.

Four days next summer will be dedicated to veterans of the 1982 campaign, their families and the relatives of the 256 men who never returned from the South Atlantic.

Flagship HMS Illustrious, which arrived off the islands at the end of the conflict to relieve her sister Invincible, served as the back drop on the Thames at Greenwich as the MOD revealed its plans to mark the conflict's silver jubilee.

"The Falklands campaign embodied all that the Armed Forces do well, acting to put right a wrong," said First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathan Band, in 1982 flag lieutenant to Sir John Fieldhouse, the hugely popular Commander-in-Chief Fleet. "It was a true team effort."

Despite being the last truly British war – and victory – Veterans Minister Derek Twigg said the anniversary commemorations of the Falklands would in no way be triumphalist.

"The Falklands War was a key moment in our post-World War 2 history," he declared.

"It is one of those occasions when most of us remember where we were when it happened."

Events, co-ordinated with the charity SAMAS2 which represents Falklands veterans, will be held in the islands and in the UK between June 14 – the actual date of liberation in 1982 – and June 17.

Memorial services at the Falklands Chapel in Pangbourne College near Reading, Berkshire, and in Stanley will open the four days of remembrance.



FALKLANDS 25

The events will conclude on Sunday June 17 in London with a "showpiece" ceremony in Horse Guards for 15,000 veterans and their families; there will also be a drumhead ceremony and march down the Mall by present and past Service personnel to Buckingham Palace, where a fly past will be staged.

"The Falklands 'story' is not just something out of our history. For the past 25 years British Servicemen and women have continued to serve in the Falklands. The connection with the islands is personal and current," said Rear Admiral Peter Wilkinson, Director of Commemorations.

After a quarter of a century the number of sailors and marines with first-hand experience of the conflict who are still serving is diminishing rapidly.

Those who are still serving are increasingly looked upon as "special"; like their forefathers, subordinates ask them about "the war".

"If you go for a beer, someone always asks

the question: 'What was it like?'" explained WO Mark Fellow of HMS Illustrious; in 1982 he was an MEM2 stoker in HMS Penelope.

"When you are in a tin box, you don't see the big picture."

"When we got home we got a huge welcome in Plymouth, very emotional, and all I did was my job. I never felt like a hero."

"Next year is important. It is not a celebration, it's a commemoration for those who gave so much."

WO Fellow set foot upon the islands and served there in peacetime, something many of the 29,000 people who served in the task force have never done.

Former HMS Intrepid stoker Derek 'Smokey' Cole runs a charity – the Falklands Veterans Foundation – whose express aim is to return veterans to the islands to help them overcome the trauma of 1982.

"The conclusion from the last pilgrimage was that 97 per cent of veterans got rid of the ghosts that they had to lay to rest," he said.

"There are not many days when I do not think of the Falklands War and the friends I lost. It stirs me up."

Mr Cole hopes to arrange a pilgrimage by 200 veterans to the Falklands next autumn and, on a local level, he hopes the men and women of 1982 will go into schools and tell their stories as the World War 2 generation already does.

"I hope 2007 will bring back memories. It's always nice to be appreciated for what we did – and very humbling. We turned up to do a job and did it to the best of our ability," he added.

More details of events can be found at www.falklands25.com, call 0800 169 2277 or write to the Veterans Agency, Room 6108, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire, FY5 3WP.



● The defining image of the Falklands war... Pete Holgate's legendary photograph of Mne Peter Robinson marching towards Stanley

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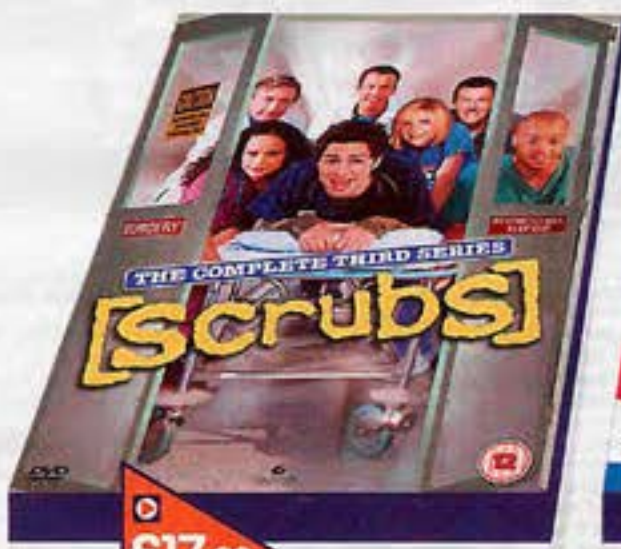
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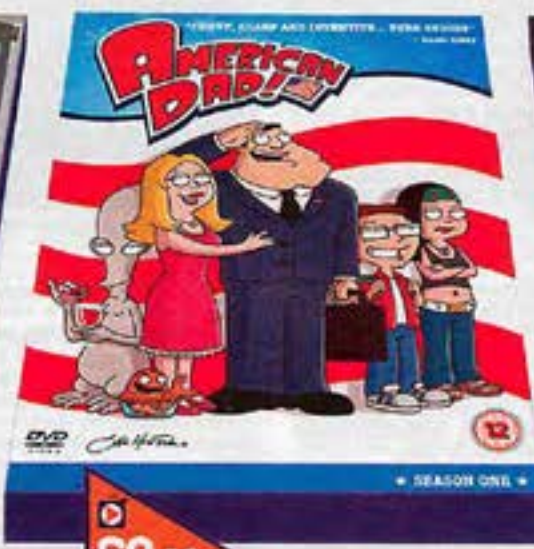
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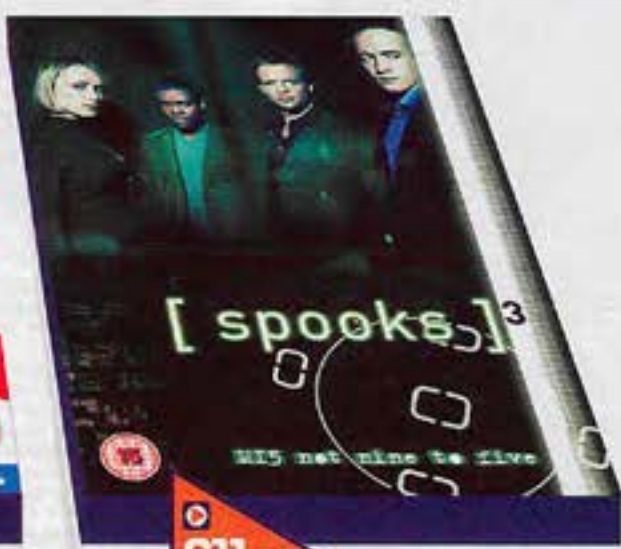
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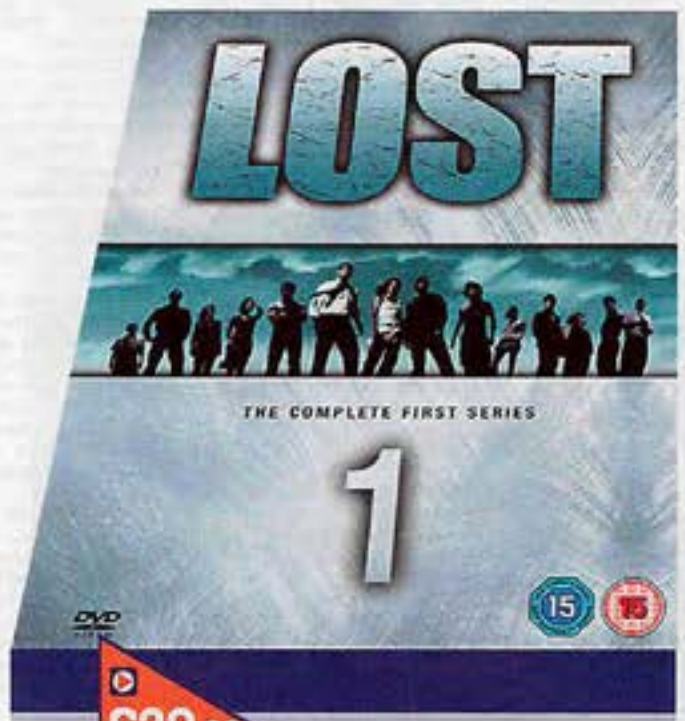


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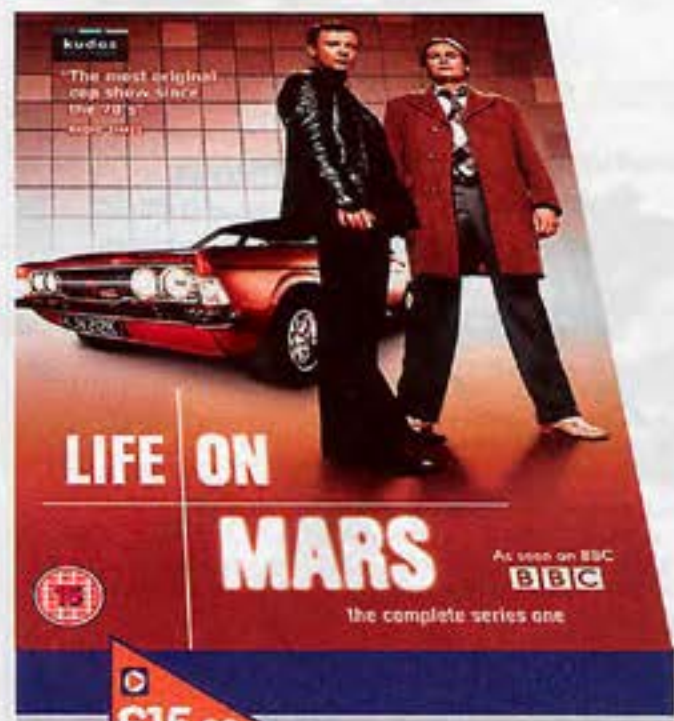


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Frigate has sonar flair

TYPE 23 HMS Northumberland is at the forefront of sonar activity, the proud bearer of the Navy's latest sonars 2087 and 2170.

Her place in the top rank of anti-submarine warfare is assured by the presence of her Merlin helicopter with its sophisticated detection suite.

But it's not just in terms of technology that Northumberland rules the waves.

This Type 23 is the pilot for the branch development strand of the new Personnel Change Programme – out went the Operator Mechanic and in came the specialist.

Despite a few teething troubles as the new system set in, it has proven to be a real success, both for branch identity and operational effectiveness.

After a year of trials, both at home and abroad, the sonars are now awaiting formal acceptance.

Facts and Figures

Class: Type 23 frigate
Pennant Number: F238
Builder: Swan Hunter, Wallsend on the Tyne
Launched: April 4 1992
Commissioned: November 24 1994
Displacement: 4,000 tonnes
Length overall: 133 metres
Length waterline: 123 metres
Beam waterline: 16 metres
Draught: 5.5 metres
Speed: Approx 28 knots
Complement: 191 (17 officers, 57 senior ratings, 117 junior ratings)
Propulsion: CODLAG; two Rolls Royce SM1C gas turbines; four Paxman 12CM diesels; two GEC motors; two shafts
Sensors: Type 1007 high definition surface radar; type 996 surveillance radar; type 1008 navigation radar; SIFF radar; UAT electronic surveillance system; general purpose electro-optical director (GPEOD); ICSB communication system; Sonar 2087 low frequency, long range towed sonar; sonar 2050 bow-mounted, medium frequency, short to medium range sonar; sonar 2170 surface ship torpedo defence system
Armament: GWS 60 (Harpoon) missile system; GWS 26 (SeaWolf) missile system; 4.5inch Mk8 Mod1 medium range gun; close range gunnery system (two 30mm cannons); Magazine Torpedo Launch System (Stingray)
Aviation: Merlin medium lift aircraft capable of carrying anti-submarine Stingray torpedoes and depth charges

Next on the ship's programme is operational sea training, leading up to her seven month deployment next year with NATO's Standing Naval Mediterranean Group.

Northumberland is an established ship name within the Royal Navy, although the exact number of her predecessors is open to debate due to what can be tactfully called the 'administrative fictions' of the 18th Century.

The first HMS Northumberland, a 70-gun 3rd rate warship, was built at Bristol in 1679, and made an impact at the Battle of Barfleur.

She was taken apart, and rebuilt – some would say into a new ship – in 1701 at Chatham. Two years later she, along with 12 other warships, was lost in the Great Storm in the channel.

A totally new Northumberland was built at Deptford in 1705. Her life was uneventful, and she was rebuilt (or taken apart and her timbers used to build a new Northumberland) in 1721 at Woolwich.

Broken up in 1739, the next Northumberland took shape at Woolwich in 1743. But this ship was short-lived (in the Royal Navy at least).

In 1744 as part of the Channel Fleet she was sent to 'investigate a strange sail'. Her captain, Thomas Watson, unwisely ignored recall signals and chose to press his ship into action against three enemy warships, far from his accompanying ships.

Northumberland fought for three hours against the odds, but the inevitable French capture ensued.

Now we are on to our sixth Northumberland (although some would say third), another 70-gun 3rd rate that was built in Plymouth in 1750 but larger in scale than her predecessors.

This warship played a part in the conflicts around Canada, based in Halifax and involved in the capture of Quebec.

In 1776 during the American War of Independence, she was fitted out as a stores ship for service in the West Indies and renamed Leviathan. On her way home to the UK from Jamaica, the Leviathan foundered, but fortunately without loss of life.

The subsequent Northumberland did not start life as a Royal Naval ship, but did bear the name Northumberland.

Watson's Northumberland, when captured by the French, served with their fleet until 1781. The French preserved the name, building another Le Northumberland.

This French warship was one of six captured by the British in 1794 during the Battle of the First of



● A night-time shot of HMS Northumberland visiting Newcastle

June. However this captured ship was too maimed to have any real life in the Royal Navy, and was broken up in 1795.

The next of the Northumberlands served her country well against the French enemy: capturing French ships, blockading Spanish ports, and serving with Nelson in the West Indies.

Her last wartime duty was to carry Napoleon from Plymouth to St Helena in October 1815. She retired as a hulk in Sheerness in 1827.

Another Northumberland took form at Millwall in 1861, an iron-clad of a similar type to HMS Warrior. She served with the Channel Fleet from 1868 to 1890, where she was known for her reliability and sea-keeping.

but also for her terrible slowness under sail. In 1898 she became a depot ship, then changed name to the Acheron in 1904.

There were two more putative Northumberlands: a 10,000-ton cruiser, ordered in 1929 and cancelled a year later; and a River-class frigate for the Royal Canadian Navy which was cancelled in 1943.

Battle Honours

Barfleur.....	1692
Vigo.....	1702
Louisburg.....	1758
Quebec.....	1759
Egypt.....	1801
San Domingo.....	1806
Groix Island.....	1812



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HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.32

Lt Norman Holbrook

THE morning of Sunday December 13 1914 was a fine one on the border between Europe and Asia.

Cornelius van Engert, the American vice-consul at Chanak – Çanakkale – took his boat out for a customary morning row.

It was a cool but not icy December day, a fine day for rowing. Engert was lost in his exercise when the tranquility was rocked by an almighty explosion.

The American looked across the Narrows which separated the Dardanelles from Asiatic Turkey to see the antiquated battleship Mesudiye – sometimes spelled Messoudieh or Messudieh – surrounded by clouds of smoke. Her guns belched a steel hail of destruction, raining down in the Narrows a few hundred yards away.

For a few minutes the Narrows became a swirling maelstrom, but the guns of the old ship were soon silenced; she rolled over, her rent upturned hull sticking out of the shallow water. Of her crew of almost 700, however, fewer than 40 were killed.

The cause of the Mesudiye's downfall was an obsolescent British submarine led by a brave, eager, yet incredibly modest man, Lt Norman Holbrook, the first man to penetrate the Dardanelles in a submersible.

His deed would earn the Silent Service its first Victoria Cross of many.

With Turkey's entry into the war in the autumn of 1914 on the side of the Central Powers, the Allies faced a dilemma: how could the Ottoman Empire be knocked out of the war?

One solution was to strangle her – which meant forcing the Narrows and penetrating the Sea of Marmara.

It was 35 miles from the southernmost tip of the Dardanelles, Cape Helles, to the inland sea.

At their narrowest point the waters were just 1,400 metres wide.

Worse still, there were at least ten minefields to avoid, plus a dozen Turkish coastal forts.

Yet Norman Holbrook believed his obsolescent boat HMS B11 could do it.

Picture: RN Submarine Museum

Holbrook's boat was only two generations removed from Holland I, Britain's first submarine.

Crammed inside her 142ft hull were two officers and 13 men, two torpedo tubes – plus two more 'tin fish' as extra ammunition, and an engine which could propel the boat at up to 12kts on the surface, but just half that submerged.

Before dawn on December 13, B11 slipped away from her depot ship and began her journey up the Dardanelles. Few men expected to return – each had written a farewell letter to post if B11 was lost.

For the next six hours, B11 laboriously made her way up the narrow waters, diving beneath the minefields where necessary.

The men ate a fine continental-style breakfast, washed down with cold tea (in Holbrook's case he ate cold lobster).

Shortly before 10am, Holbrook raised his periscope and found the port of Chanak and, more importantly, the old battleship Mesudiye, in his sights.

He closed to within 1,000 yards of the warship then fired a single torpedo.

Once the battleship was hit, B11 had to run the gauntlet and escape.

In the heat inside the boat, the compass fogged over and was useless. B11 scraped the bottom for a good ten minutes. On several occasions, Holbrook surfaced his boat in the middle of a minefield to orient himself.

In the early afternoon, partly through luck, partly through skill, B11 surfaced clear of Cape Helles, her crew "as sick as dogs" from the battery gasses.

Ten days later, Holbrook was recommended for the Victoria Cross, something he felt rather embarrassed by.

He felt much more honoured by the people of Germanton in Australia, who renamed their town Holbrook in memory of his deed.

It remains a shrine to submariners to this day.



Forget the snow, we're off to Rio

WHILE most of us will be tucking into turkey in soggy Britain this Christmas Day, the men and women of ice-ship HMS Endurance will be celebrating with family and friends in Rio de Janeiro.

But for them, there's no novelty in the prospect of a White Christmas, as snow is something which they see plenty of...

The survey ship set off in October for a nine-month deployment to the globe's frozen south.

The ship's company is bolstered by a few unusual additions for a Naval ship – the British Antarctic Survey Team, British Schools Exploring Society, UK Hydrographic Office and an artist.

So a packed ship, but one well-informed about the ice, the scenery and wildlife.

The route down south saw the Red Plum paying calls at Madeira, Buenos Aires and Mare Harbour, before reaching her post in the Southern Ocean where she will stay on station for five months.

It's already been a busy few weeks for the ice ship in her Antarctic home.

She has called on the various nations' scientific stations about the polar cap, and her support and sustenance was greatly appreciated by the Chinese of the Great Wall of China Station.

The ship's multi beam echo sounder has proved its worth. The state-of-the-art kit generates accurate, colour-coded, three-dimensional seabed pictures – all for conversion into charts for safe navigation.

Endurance's two Lynxes of 212 Flight have been busy airlifting people and supplies into remote locations for survey and research work.

But there's been time for a bit of fun for the busy sailors on board the Navy's Red Plum.

With Children in Need's Pudsey Bear in mind, the ship's football team managed to find the only goal posts in Antarctica.

And despite the ice, they attempted Soccer AM's Crossbar Challenge (for the uninitiated, this involves standing at the halfway line and attempting to hit the goal's crossbar).

Despite ice, snow, a steep decline and diminutive goal posts, LCpl 'Hutch' Hutchinson hit the bar, and the football team hopes to see his efforts televised on the Sky TV programme in the future.

Pudsey has apparently gained by a proliferation of snowmen across the frozen continent, presumably in a sponsored snowman-building competition.

And one chef on board must be feeling slightly colder than before as the waxing of CH 'Damage'

Crichton proved a rich source of charity income for keen fundraising.

There's been time for some serious moments on board the iceship too. On November 12, HMS Endurance conducted one of the Navy's most southerly Remembrance Day services.

The ship's programme is packed with other events. An intrepid group of sea kayakers on board plan to paddle the 120 nautical miles around James Ross Island to fill the coffers of the ship's charities.

In addition a BBC film crew from the Planet Earth team will be joining the ship for another programme in the successful Ice Worlds series.

One of Endurance's Lynxes will be fitted with a high-definition Gyron camera filming the sharp outlines and crisp scenery of the Antarctic for the Beeb's documentary.

But the ship herself and her company remain undaunted by their busy schedule.

"Lots more to come, I hope," said her Commanding Officer, Capt Nick Lambert.

● (Right) It's just as well the ball is blue, or they'd never have a hope of finding it... Football Antarctic style

● (Bottom) The dramatic environment that draws visitors to HMS Endurance



Pictures: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow



 towergate wilsons

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Smoking out the bandit country

THE rotor blades of the 12 ton beast spinning round 225 times each minute kick up huge clouds of sand and dust.

The marines crouch, their heads bowed, their eyes closed, shielding themselves from the sandy maelstrom.

Two commandos bend down, their hands clasped to their ears, as a jet of flame briefly pierces the pitch-black night, hurling an 81mm mortar round through the dark.

An immense cloud of dust drifts across the rather drab town of Now Zad where sandy-coloured huts blend with the desert landscape as a Taliban firing position goes up in smoke.

And on the long, straight, monotonous highway which links Kandahar with Lashkar Gah, a seemingly-endless column of khaki coloured armoured vehicles rumbles along under the ever-watchful eyes of the Harriers of 800 Naval Air Squadron.

Welcome to Helmand.

The first full month of the Royal Marines' deployment to southern Afghanistan has seen the Taliban insurgents engaged - and regularly defeated.

The initial task of 3 Commando Brigade, which with its supporting RN and Fleet Air Arm units comprises 51 per cent of British strength in Afghanistan, was to relieve Army units in the scattered towns of Helmand, permitting the soldiers to return to Blighty.

A series of RIP - Relief In Place - operations allowed the soldiers to fall back and the green berets to step into the front line.

CH47 Chinook helicopters set down on the edge of the northern Helmand town of Now Zad, disgorging Kilo Company 42 Cdo.

The Royals patrolled through the heart of the town before reaching Now Zad police station, home for the last four months to the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

The soldiers had been engaged by the Taliban 150 times in 105 days.

**Pictures by
PO(Phot) Sean
Clee, 3 Cdo Bde
and LA(Phot) Gaz
Faulkner, 42 Cdo**

Their relief by the Royals gave the commandos a taste of things to come.

As the soldiers briefed the green berets about what to expect in the region, a Taliban force was spotted.

From ANP Hill - a defensive position built by the Afghan resistance during the Soviet occupation and which dominates Now Zad area - the combined Army-RM-Afghan police force struck back with general-purpose machine-guns and 50 heavy machine-guns for the next 40 minutes.

Once the Taliban withdrew, the relief of the soldiers continued until darkness.

Then the Royals' 81mm mortars belched into life, hurling star shells over the Now Zad district - turning

night to day, lighting up ANP Hill and the smattering of outposts and sentry positions.

By day, 3 Cdo Bde's sappers 59 Independent Commando Sqn Royal Engineers moved into Mud Hut, a former Taliban stronghold outside Now Zad used to launch rocket and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attacks.

The engineers found a primed RPG ready to fire, plus more than a dozen rockets and anti-personnel mines.

Seventy kilogrammes of plastic explosive turned Mud Hut into mud dust and rubble, and turned the weapons into charred metal, smoke and dust.

The town of Gereshk witnessed some of the fiercest fighting to date, as Whiskey Company 45 Cdo and Juliet Company 42 Cdo moved in to put an end to Taliban activity.

The Afghan National Police in Gereshk had been subjected to repeated attacks by the insurgents,

who had on occasions also penetrated government buildings.

You can't make

THE Royal Marines' mission in Afghanistan does not solely revolve around eradicating the Taliban menace.

One day, the NATO forces will hand over peacekeeping duties to local troops.

That day is not yet upon us, but it is approaching thanks in part to the 'omelette men'.

It's got nothing to do with green berets who have a leaning towards frying beaten eggs in a

pan. It concerns the 206 men of 45 Commando who have formed the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT - hence the 'omelette' soubriquet).

In southern Helmand, the burden of safeguarding their own land falls upon 3/205 Brigade of the Afghan National Army, a formation less than 12 months old.

The burden of training these 2,500 troops in pretty much every aspect of warfare currently falls to the OMLT.

To make the Afghan brigade operational, mentors are needed. The Royals provide the infantry expertise, 29 Cdo Regiment Royal Artillery advise on fire support, the Royal Tank Regiment offers armoured warfare training, for example.

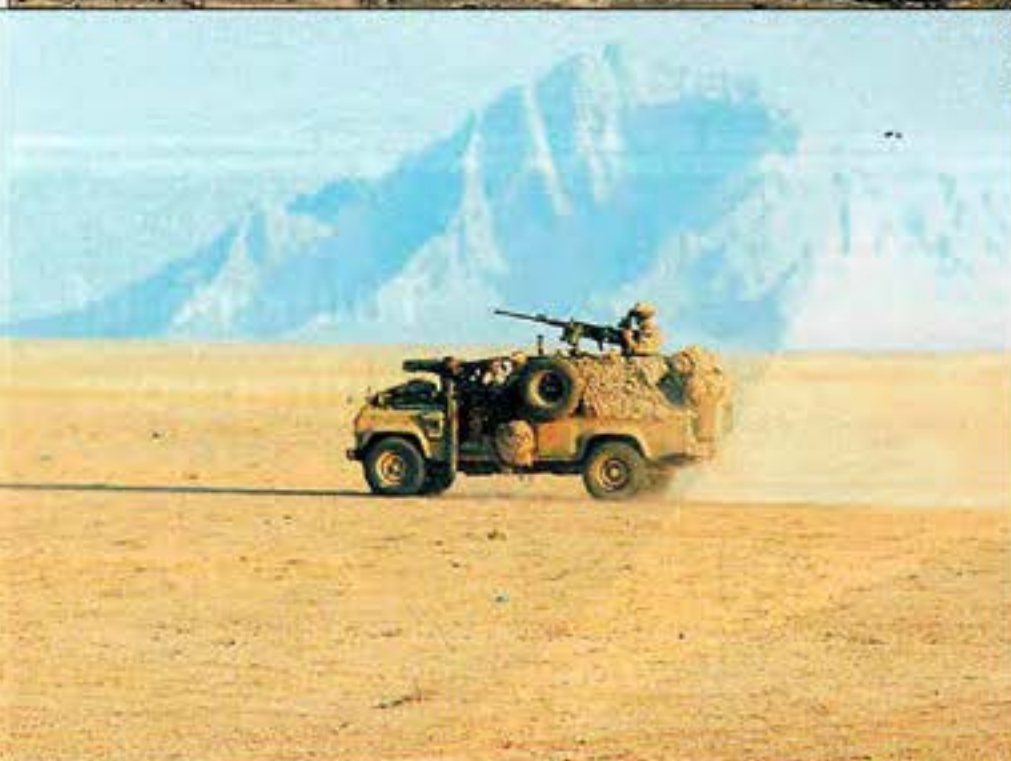
The omelette teams are not confined to base. They accompany the Afghan troops on patrol, suggest tactical manoeuvres and call in air support when needed.

Like the Royals elsewhere in Helmand province, the Afghan

● Highway to Helmand... (Above) Royal Marine Vikings on the move through the steppe from Kandahar to Camp Bastion in Helmand

● I think we're alone now... (Left) A Royal Marine WIMIK Land Rover armed with .50 calibre heavy machine-gun conducts a desert patrol in Helmand

● Taxi rank, Helmand style... (Below) Troops of 42 Cdo, led by CO Lt Col Matt Holmes (nearest the camera) wait for a Chinook to ferry them back to Camp Bastion



● Two members of the Afghan National Police watch as a desert-camouflaged Viking rolls through Gereshk during Operation Slate





● A CH47 Chinook carrying the last members of Kilo Company 42 Cdo sets down outside Now Zad to complete the relief of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

A 500-strong green beret force was sent in to provide cover for 42 Field Squadron Royal Engineers, whose mission it was to build check points on the main routes into Gereshk to prevent the Taliban infiltrating.

The Taliban didn't take too kindly to this, unsurprisingly.

Mortars and rockets were soon lobbed at the engineers and although the fire was scattered initially, shells soon began landing within 50 metres of the troops - who continued to build the checkpoints regardless.

At first the Royals held their fire, fearing responding in kind would harm civilians.

Eventually, however, 81mm mortars were brought to bear to pummel the Taliban mortar positions, while commando snipers picked off the guerrillas.

The battle raged for 14 hours, well into the night, before the engineers could declare the new checkpoints ready for occupation by the local police.

The only Royal Marine loss throughout Operation Slate, as the Gereshk mission was codenamed, was a Viking armoured vehicle.

It survived a number of RPG strikes before a lucky hit rendered it immobile. All the vehicle's crew escaped safely, but the Viking was a write-off - and was blown up by British air power to prevent it falling into the Taliban's hands.

"The Marines fought hard in the face of constant attack," said Whiskey Coy's commander Maj Jim Gray.

"Their bravery and professionalism were exactly what we expect of the Corps.

"The end result allows the

Afghan authorities to protect their own town and will have a lasting impact on the Taliban who seek to bring misery to the people of this ancient country."

The Viking is earning its spurs in Afghanistan - this is the first time the Royals' beefed-up armoured support has deployed to the front line.

For ten hours, a convoy of 33 Vikings rambled along the highway between Kandahar air base - the principal British 'air head' in Afghanistan - and Helmand.

The move - codenamed Operation Zina - was monitored by insurgents, and passed through Kandahar City and Gereshk, hotbeds of Taliban activity.

But with the guardian angels of 800 Naval Air Squadron overhead throughout the transfer, the Vikings arrived safely.

an Army without using an omelette

troops and their mentors are in the thick of the fight: at times, the native soldiers have suffered heavy losses, but the force continues to grow. It is now the equivalent of six battalions strong - three infantry units, and one each of artillery, combat support and logistics battalions.

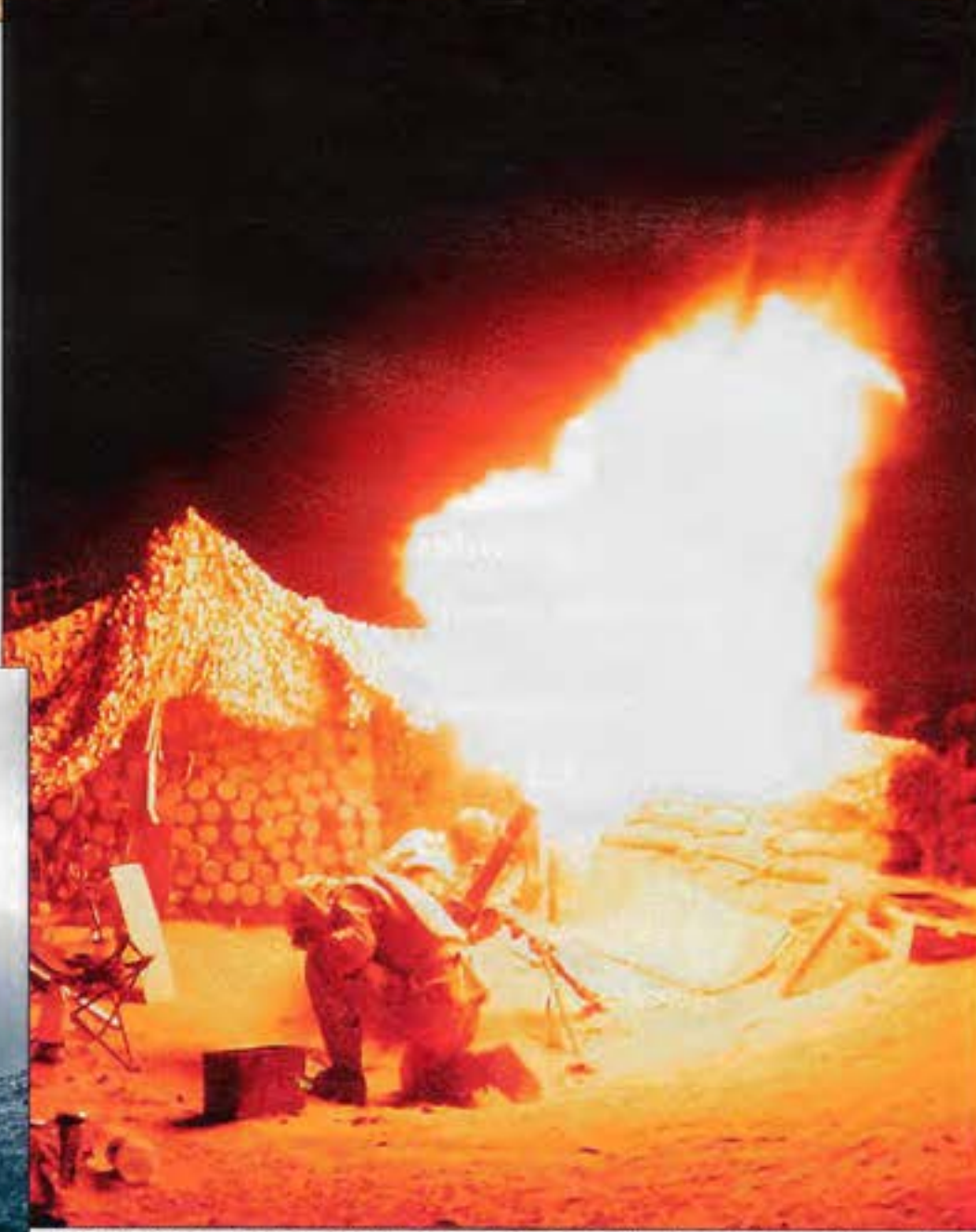
"Whether you're describing how to run a sick bay, advising on mustering procedures for stores and ammunition, or engaged against a capable and battle-hardened enemy, it requires a serious amount of determination, courage and professionalism," explained Lt Col Duncan Dewar, Commanding Officer of 45 Cdo.

"Don't forget that all this is being achieved in a different language through interpreters with an organisation with a completely different culture from our own.

"We are making tangible progress."



● (Right) A Viking provides cover for a digger as engineers build a checkpoint in Gereshk



● Firework night... Royals of 42 Cdo's mortar troop fire an 'illum' round from an 81mm mortar during the relief of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers in Now Zad



● A Royal Marine gets to grips with the new grenade machine gun

Royals add grenade gun to armoury

ROYAL MARINES in Afghanistan will be among the first British troops to get their hands on a new 'grenade machine gun'.

The Heckler & Koch Automatic Lightweight Grenade Launcher can spew out 40mm high-explosive grenades to a distance of two kilometres, either as bursts at a rate of 340 rounds per minute or as single shots.

The potent new weapon will be mounted on specially-adapted Land Rovers to complement the .50-inch Heavy Machine Guns.

The £4.3 million weapon programme, announced by Defence Procurement Minister

Lord Drayson, will provide battlefield commanders in Afghanistan with more than 40 of the new weapons.

Troops will benefit from increased mobile firepower at a longer range over a range of tasks, including airfield security, forward operating base protection, vehicle patrols and humanitarian missions.

Lord Drayson said: "The purchase of this system is good news for our Armed Forces and gives them a potent piece of new equipment that will significantly enhance the firepower available to units on operational duty in Afghanistan."

The grenade gun is dual-purpose; it can be used against light armour or enemy troops, and can be fired while mounted on a vehicle or from a tripod on the ground.

Task Force ships get operational allowance

FURTHER details of the new tax-free Operational Allowance (OA) have been released by the MOD.

The new payment was announced in October in recognition of the dangers faced in specific locations, over and above that compensated for in the X-Factor element of Service pay.

Among the 'Specified Operational Locations' (SOLs) is Iraqi territorial waters in the Northern Arabian Gulf, thereby including Royal Navy warships serving as part of CTF 158.

Ships engaged in CTF 158 operations during the period are HM ships Bulwark, St Albans, Kent, Lancaster and Westminster, and personnel in these units

(whether on operations, stand off or R&R in theatre) are eligible.

Those qualifying here and in the other SOLs so far identified - Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans and "some other discreet locations" - will receive a flat-rate payment of £12.31 for each day they are in the SOL.

The qualifying period for these payments has been backdated to April 1 this year, and work is under way to identify all those people eligible for payment.

Payments will be made as a lump sum on completion of an operational deployment or period of temporary duty.

Those eligible include regular Servicemen and women,

mobilised Reserves and those on Full Time Reserve Service.

The situation with aircrew has not yet been finalised, but the intention is that those aircrew deployed to a forward operating base and flying regular sorties into the SOL will be paid the OA as if they were actually in a SOL.

Those who operate from the UK, and potentially from seagoing units which do not qualify themselves for OA, will also be eligible for payment, but only at the daily rate for the times when they fly into or over the SOL in direct support of operations.

The locations where this allowance is to be paid will be reviewed periodically.



● The new Royal Navy balloon is readied for flight at Yeovilton

Picture: LA/Photo Gaz Armes (RNAS Yeovilton)

Recruiting initiative is hot air

VERTICAL take offs are no big deal to Naval aviators Lt Cdr Rob Schwab and Dave Constant.

Rob was a dab hand at handling the old Sea Harrier, while Dave flew the slightly more sedate Sea King in his operational days.

But now both men are dealing with a different sort of beast in the Royal Navy's new hot-air balloon, which will support Royal Navy recruiting initiatives around the country.

The Royal Navy, Fly Navy balloon made its debut at the Bristol International Balloon Fiesta, although windy conditions meant the aircrew could only launch once.

However, they did manage an

impressive night-glow while firmly tethered to the ground.

They subsequently clocked up 101 miles in just under six hours in a national competition, taking off at Crewkerne and landing in Milton Keynes.

During the flight the pair saw exactly why the Navy has opted for this flying logo - Dave Constant said they flew over a school during play-time and could hear the comments of the astonished pupils as they floated overhead.

Apart from the peace and quiet - quite a change from the screaming jets of the Sea Harrier and the clatter of the Sea King - Dave said the biggest difference was the time factor.

"A Harrier or Sea King is quick to respond - put the power on and they react immediately," he said.

"But with the balloon you do not get any effect at all for a while, which can take a bit of getting used to at first.

One of the first passengers to climb aboard the new Fleet Air Arm asset was Cdr Chris Palmer, the Commanding Officer of RNAS Yeovilton, who thoroughly enjoyed a peaceful and leisurely look at his establishment.

"The Commodore was on an absolute high," said Dave.

"People were running out of their houses to see the balloon, and you could hear them saying 'It's the Navy!'"

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The policemen of the world

ON A bright day in early summer, the splendidly named HM Brig Pantaloon gave chase to a large ship some 100 miles off Lagos, on the west coast of Africa.

At the height of the chase, the wind dropped so Cdr Edmund Wilson hoisted out a cutter and two whale boats and sent them after his quarry with about thirty sailors and Royal Marines on board.

For about half an hour, they endured heavy fire from grape shot and musketry but eventually they caught up. Splitting into two parties, they boarded and captured the ship, which finally surrendered after a desperate hand-to-hand fight in which 11 men were killed or wounded.

That sounds like a classic boat action from the great wars against France. In fact it happened in May 1845 – and Pantaloon's capture was a Brazilian slaving ship *Borboleta*.

Cut now to 2006 and the front page of August's *Navy News*. It carried a picture of MA Gavin Hastings of HMS Gloucester cradling a small child in his arms as he and his shipmates helped in the dramatic relief exercise in Lebanon. Apart from the fact that he was clearly dressed in modern naval working rig, that image could have come from any moment in the Royal Navy's long and distinguished history.

The Victorians liked to call their

IN THE second of his articles looking at constant themes running through the Royal Navy's illustrious history, the Director of the Royal Naval Museum and distinguished naval historian **Dr Colin White** – winner of the coveted Desmond Wetherill Media Award (see page 41) – focuses on its campaign against slavery and people trafficking.

bluejackets, 'The Policemen of the World'.

We call it 'humanitarian aid' nowadays. Look that phrase up in the index of *The Royal Navy Day by Day* and you will find entries that read like a gazetteer of the world – from Anguilla and the Cayman Islands to East Timor via Greece and Iraq. Helping the victims of disaster – be they man-made or natural – has always been an essential part of the work of the Royal Navy since the days of sail.

In 1909, for example, the cruiser HMS *Minerva* was one of the first foreign ships on the scene when a devastating earthquake hit the Sicilian port of Messina. On board were nursing sisters from the newly-established Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service, who were later awarded a silver medal by a grateful King of Italy.

Undoubtedly one of the finest examples of the Navy's commitment to humanitarian aid must be the long fight it has sustained – and is still sustaining – against slavery.

Having renounced the trade in slaves in 1807, Britain committed herself to stamping out the evil – and particularly the vicious trans-Atlantic trade between West

Africa and the Americas. A special squadron was stationed off the West African coast with orders to stop slaving ships. By 1845, when the *Pantaloon* made her dramatic capture, this squadron numbered over 30 ships, with some 3,000 men serving on board.

Most of the squadron's work was at sea. But occasionally, landings were made to try to stamp out the trade at source. One particularly successful raid on Porto Novo on the River Niger in 1861 resulted in the complete destruction of the 'barracoons' in which the slaves were imprisoned to await their transfer to a ship.

A key figure in this attack was Cdr Henry Raby. Five years before, he had been the first man ever to receive a Victoria Cross from the hands of Queen Victoria herself. Apparently, she pinned it straight into his chest – but history records that he did not flinch!

But there were no medals for the men who endured the dangers of the anti-slavery patrols. Danger not just from the violence of the enemy but also because of disease – above all, the dreaded Yellow Fever. One ship alone, HMS *Eden*, lost 110 men out of her ship's company of 160 between May and December 1829.



● HM Brig Arab gives chase to a slave ship in 1856

Picture: Royal Naval Museum

All the same, it is clear that the men of the West Africa Squadron were sustained by a strong sense of moral crusade and they were particularly kind to the slaves they had freed.

One captain remembered seeing some of his sailors carrying women and children around the ship in their arms because their feet had been badly cut running on sharp rocks on the shore. That image of MA Hastings again.

Next year, 2007 – the bicentenary of Britain's abolition of the trade in slaves – will be marked by many events, exhibitions and other activities highlighting this

important milestone on the long road to freedom.

And the Royal Navy's key role in this great story will not be forgotten. As a key part of the national commemorations, the Royal Naval Museum is mounting an exhibition on the work of the West Africa Squadron, *Chasing Freedom*.

And here is one last interesting thought... Pantaloon's boatswain, who was wounded in the gallant attack on *Borboleta*, was called Pasco.

And in the same year, his namesake John Pasco – who as a lieutenant had supervised the

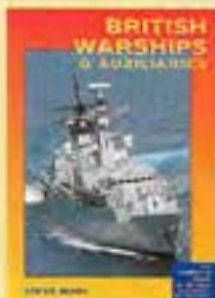
hoisting of Nelson's famous signal 'England Expects' at Trafalgar – was appointed captain of HMS *Victory*, then aloft in Portsmouth Harbour.

Pure coincidence of course – so far as we know, there was no connection between the two men. But that is what happens when you start to follow the golden thread of naval history – you find yourself led down all sorts of fascinating by-ways!

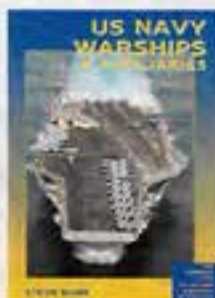
The RN Museum's exhibition opens in late January 2007. For details, and for a programme of related events, see www.royalnavalmuseum.org

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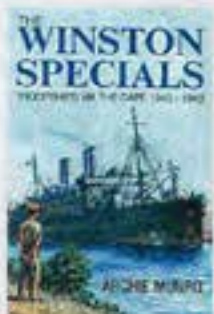
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Cover-up uncovered

Pardon for WW1 officer

OFFICIAL documents finally reveal what most people suspected: that the death of legendary diver Lionel 'Buster' Crabb was indeed covered up.

There is no doubt, according to Admiralty papers opened to the public by the National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), that the commander spied on Soviet warships in Portsmouth Harbour 50 years ago.

Crabb vanished in April 1956 as he inspected the hull of the Soviet cruiser *Ordzhonikidze*, which had brought USSR leader Khrushchev to Britain for talks with then Prime Minister Anthony Eden.

A year later a headless, handless cadaver was found in Chichester Harbour; officially, it was the body of Crabb, although both his ex-wife and fiancée were unable to identify it.

In his day Crabb was a legend, a wartime hero for his diving and mine clearance exploits in the Mediterranean, his expertise had also been called upon when submarines *Truculent* and *Affray* were lost post-war.

In 1955 he had successfully inspected the hull of the Soviet cruiser *Sverdlov* when she visited the UK, and was asked to repeat his clandestine work 12 months later.

What is clear from the papers is that the mission Crabb undertook in April 1956 was not for the RN – it was mortified when it learned what happened.

Rear Admiral John Inglis, the Director of Naval Intelligence, was at pains to point out that Crabb was not conducting an official RN operation when he vanished, otherwise "immediate and extensive rescue operations" would have begun "for humanitarian reasons even if there had been no hope of Cdr Crabb's survival."

What we do know from the papers is that Crabb met a shadowy lieutenant commander – whose name is blanked from the documents, alas

– in a pub the night before the secret mission. Early the next morning the pair used a boat near South Railway Jetty, where Crabb donned his diving gear and struck out into the harbour.

As he set off, the diver seemed "fit and well", the weather was fine and there was sufficient oxygen in his tank for a dive of up to two hours. Crabb was never seen again.

Officially, Crabb died while testing new diving kit off Gosport. But no-one was fooled. His disappearance prompted questions in Parliament; the Soviets were furious – it was another two decades before another official visit by one of their warships.

Officers at HMS Vernon, the RN diving school in Portsmouth Harbour, were ordered "to keep their mouths shut".

The cover-up into his death not merely extended throughout the RN, but also to the coroner conducting Crabb's inquest; he 'agreed' not to examine "any embarrassing naval witness".

As for the last man to see Crabb alive, he gave his evidence to the inquest behind closed doors; he invented a cover story for colleagues to explain his absence from Vernon during the court hearings.

Interestingly, the file on Crabb was kept open into the late 1970s

– the Admiralty dismissed "sensationalist" reports in newspapers suggesting the diver was alive and enjoying life as "1st Lt Lev Korablov of the Red Navy", but it strangely put on file a "conversation" he had (after his death) with a clairvoyant.

According to this talk, the commander was "sucked into a long chamber" as he searched a Russian ship; his body surrounded by chains and then dumped

... "He asked me to assist him entirely unofficially and in a strictly private capacity in connection with a dive... I was told by Commander Crabb that on no account was I was to inform any responsible Naval authority."

... "He asked me to assist him entirely unofficially and in a strictly private capacity in connection with a dive... I was told by Commander Crabb that on no account was I was to inform any responsible Naval authority."

● The statement of an unnamed lieutenant commander, one of the papers now released

about 14 miles off Portsmouth when the Soviet vessel departed. Apparently, in the after-life "he has gained immensely in spirit power..."

The newly-released papers can be found at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/releases/2006/october/crabb.htm?homelink=docs; for those of you who prefer to view the files in person, the reference is ADM1/29240.

THE only sailor 'shot at dawn' in the Great War has been officially pardoned – the most 'headline-grabbing' aspect of the new Armed Forces Act with wide-ranging consequences for the Senior Service.

S/Lt Edwin Dyett is one of more than 300 men whose names – and families – have been dishonoured by execution, Defence Secretary Des Browne said.

Dyett was executed in January 1917, shot for desertion during the Royal Naval Division's assault on the Ancre – the final fighting on the Somme in 1916.

Like many WW1 executions Dyett's death remains hugely contentious. Historians disagree as to whether the junior officer was 'stitched up' by a colleague who held a grudge against him or whether he fled the battlefield leaving his men in the lurch.

Mr Browne told MPs he was not re-writing history by quashing convictions nine decades ago, rather removing a stigma which had saddled their families.

"It is better to acknowledge that injustices were clearly done in some cases – even if we cannot say which – and to acknowledge that all these men were victims of war," he added.

The bulk of the Act revamps military justice across the three Services, creating a single prosecuting authority, and introducing a 'complaints commissioner' who will deal with cases of bullying and unacceptable behaviour.

COs across the Armed Forces will now have identical powers to deal with summary cases (which account for 95 per cent of disciplinary matters).

Many of the details of the Act are still being finalised. All the changes it will entail will be carried out by the end of 2008.

■ See pages 30-31 for details of the Act's effect on the RN



● The legendary Lionel 'Buster' Crabb suits up
Picture: Portsmouth News

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The transformer

THERE is a risk, when defining a military force, of focusing on the machinery to the detriment of the men (and women).

Take the Royal Navy of 2006. The Service is enjoying something of a hardware revolution; the amphibious force has been all but renewed over the past decade, Astute will put the Submarine Service in the forefront of underwater warfare,

there is the promise of two large carriers, the Type 45s, and new fighters and helicopters are in the pipeline – the list is impressive.

But a more subtle revolution is taking place in the personnel area, and although not as eye-catching as the new kit, it will result in a very different way of life for the sailor of the future.

The spade work is being done now, with a raft of new policies and systems – including the Strategic Remuneration Review (SRR) and Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) initiatives – but the process is far from complete.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns says he is aware that people have been coping with radical change for some time and that the number of personnel has been in “gentle decline”.

But he feels it makes sense to go the extra mile and lay a solid foundation for a very different future; such tools as SRR and JPA are vital in that process.

“We are in a period of rapidly increasing change, but we should treat it not as a threat but as an opportunity to go forward,” said Admiral Johns.

At one point he considered that a period of consolidation at Fleet HQ, following the merger between his own department and Fleet, would be needed, but he now believes it right to keep the transformation rolling forward.

He sees the way ahead as “a fairly rapid and dynamic evolution” in which the Navy is “constantly critical of output, and refining those outputs as we go.”

He added: “I think people should welcome change. Although I have talked of gently declining numbers, and people may feel gloomy about a shrinking Navy, the capability is expanding all the time.”

“There is an exciting future for people in the Royal Navy – people from top to bottom will take a much greater responsibility.”

“People in the RN in ten to 15 years time will be feeling more empowered and a part of the process.”

That level of empowerment and responsibility has long existed in parts of the RN – in submarines, for example, where every person is responsible to his crewmates in terms of safety and is expected, without hesitation, to take the appropriate action needed to safeguard the boat and its crew, whether that person is a young steward or a member of the command team.

“That is certainly the case – there is no room for passengers. We will all have really responsible jobs, and a corporate responsibility for making the Navy work,” said Admiral Johns.

“The conundrum for me is of gently declining numbers against a quite significantly inclining capability, and the need to match people against that.”

“We are going to need different people with different expectations for their careers and lives, and for their families.”

“The key is to meet those expectations, and that is where SRR is a very important tool for us.”

“It is tri-Service, run from the centre, and for us it offers this opportunity to bring in flexibility and choice for people.”

“We recognise people need to be mobile and we ought to enable that, but equally we have a moral duty to look after people and their families and help in house purchases and stability.”

He said there would be an increasing dispersion of Naval folk from the traditional base port areas, which raises new problems for administrators.

“We have Royal Navy people working in over 700 units across Defence, so we will move away

Flexibility and empowerment are the watchwords as RN personnel policy undergoes a complete overhaul. Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns tells Mike Gray of his hopes for the future

from clusters of dark blue to much more complex joint areas.

“We will have to be able to manage people and careers – and equally have to ensure that we instil as never before the dark blue Royal Navy ethos.”

“That is why I set so much store by Command, Leadership and Management training and the Dark Blue Line. It will be ever more important in the future as our geographic footprint across the UK will be more widespread.”

The old chestnut about size of the Fleet does not wash with the Navy’s chief personnel officer.

“Size is not the way to gauge it – it is all about capability, about deployability – the ability to deploy our capability,” he said.

“We have a presence all over the place. Some 51 per cent of the boots currently on the ground in Afghanistan are Naval Service boots – and that is a land-locked country.”

So what might the career choices for the sailor of the future look like? There is certainly no room for sentiment, in the eyes of Admiral Johns, and established patterns and processes are all up for reconsideration.

Some of the thinking is dictated by the notorious ‘Black Hole’, the result of a recruitment hiatus some years ago which has created a manpower shortage which is working its way up through the system.

“We could hold our breath and wait for it to go through, but we are approximately 1,800 people short across landing hand, petty officer and even chief petty officer level,” said Admiral Johns.

“On the face of it there is little you can do about it, because you cannot recruit direct to fill the hole – although that may be possible in the future.”

“But although we won’t get rid of it, we are trying to ameliorate it in a number of ways.”

The measures include improving retention, so that people do not leave before reaching the Black Hole, “shaving down the left-hand side” – by faster promotion of the right candidates, and by “denriching” more senior posts to “backfill” the hole from the right.

The idea of direct entry into targeted areas and more imaginative recruitment procedures is under consideration.

“I think we are both bound by pretty rigid rules and regulations on pay and career structure. We put people into big boxes,” said the Admiral.

“I think we have got to move into an area where we are dealing with people as individuals, not categories, and we can offer remuneration packages and career packages that will suit them much more.”

“One thing I have in mind is a much more flexible career structure; perhaps spending some time in the Service, then moving outside and being part-time Navy – a reserve – then back into the Navy.”

“It would be a seamless transition between part and full-time in which people can move across.”

“Perhaps we can bring people in who have particular skills – such as medical, IT or engineering – that are applicable to the Royal Navy, but in this way we do not have to employ them as an AB and bring them up through the system.”

“One way is to de-latch pay from rank – perhaps someone could come in at a low rank but at high pay to reward skills.”

“All this thinking is developing at the moment, but it is certainly something we will have to have in

place in the next five to ten years.”

Another vital strand of the strategy is the integration of reserves – “highly important for us – we are doing a great deal of work with functional employers on how we can use them,” said Admiral Johns.

“We do not want the Reserves to smack of something on the shelf or not quite the real thing – we are talking about one Navy with people who can come in and do a job when we need it.”

One strategy not on Admiral Johns’ radar is the amalgamation of the three Services into a unified defence force.

“Will the Armed Forces go to a single Defence Force? Not in my lifetime, and certainly not during my career,” he said.

“First we are far too big for that as an overall defence force. The only successful defence forces are very small ones.”

“A single defence force fails to bring an ethos.”

“Having said that, to make best use of resources and money we need to share and be joint wherever sharing and being joint makes sense – look at examples like the Joint Helicopter Command and Joint Force Harrier.”

“If two forces are flying the same aircraft it makes sense to make one, and there are many areas of training – Phase 2 and above – where it makes sense.”

“But to have a successful joint platform you have to have reliable single-service pillars.”

“People must contribute from where they came as we are the core guardians of maritime expertise, and that is what we bring to the party.”

“I feel there is no fear that in the future we will move towards a single Defence Force.”

“There are areas where we are doing things on procurement, where joint makes absolute sense, but it is founded on the platform with the three pillars underneath – take one pillar away and the whole thing collapses.”

Joint training is another area of interest, but once again with the proviso that the needs of the individual Services are met.

“The three Services see things in different lights but there is no reason that what suits one Service cannot suit another,” said the Admiral.

“But sailors are different to soldiers and airmen, and one cap does not necessarily fit all.”

“We do need to deal with the Royal Navy differently to the Army and RAF.”

“In terms of recruitment I think we are in competition with just about everybody else.”

“There is a diminishing pool of suitable people, in terms of demographics, education qualifications and so on, from which we all fish, and as far as the Services are concerned there is no doubt we end up in direct competition with each other at times, for example, with aircrew and pilots.”

“I think there’s mileage in combining here – although I am slightly cautious on this – but we need to be much more open-minded; for example, in pilot recruitment, recruiting people to fly and then sharing them out either on an



● Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns

equitable basis or on where they are needed at the time.

“I think we are taking steps to be cleverer and smarter about the way we recruit.”

“We are recruiting 95 per cent of our target across the board – though there are pinch points

– but the question is, are we always recruiting the right people for our job? Probably the answer is not always so.”

“If we can recruit the right people, we are also likely to see them stay longer, so retention is better.”

“I think there is more mileage

in preselection, too – people coming to our website and doing some fairly simple personality and basic psychometric tests.”

“We can then say: All right, we know about you now; click here or ring this number.”

“We will then know more about them when they walk into the Armed Forces Careers Office.”

“People might come in and say ‘I want to be a marine engineer’ but they might not be suited.”

“We want to make sure we get the round pegs in the round holes.”

“We have started to go down that road – we want to be advising people about the branches they should be in, rather than what they would like to do.”

“I also feel in an ideal world we would have just one system for recruiting everybody in the Royal Navy, from officer engineers to baby sailors.”

“By using the first sift, we may not need to spend as much time testing special skills for people who are not going to need them.”

“And in my opinion we need to make the difference between officer selection and rating selection much more seamless.”

“People who have dropped out at the Admiralty Interview Board stage could be invited to go back on to a fast-track petty officer scheme.”

“Within three years they could be a petty officer because they have the potential and ability.”

“That is quite a change for the system and for the individual. Instead of someone drifting away, having failed, they get another chance.”

“There could be a single system that says ‘there is a road here down which you can go all the way to officer selection’ or perhaps fast-track petty officer or whatever.”

“I think that will be much more efficient.”

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START



• Dave Woodley with C/Sgt Laird Webster and Sgt John Bailey
Running for Washington

TWO British Royal Marines from the Commando Training Centre, Lymington, ran this year's US Marine Corps Washington Marathon to raise funds for the Exeter Leukaemia Fund.

The two joined former Royal Marine Dave Woodley who ran last year's event and decided this year that he could do with a bit of company.

Before the event, Dave said: "I hope to beat last year's time of four hours 27 minutes and 19 seconds, and as always the recruits and staff at the centre are sponsoring me by guessing the time in which I complete it."

Expectations run high, with some £1,000 in sponsorship on the cards.

A lifetime away but the beer is calling

ALMOST 25 years ago, three young Royal Marines promised themselves a pint at Port Stanley.

The intervening 75 miles, 15,000 Argentinians and the brutal battleground of Two Sisters Mountain were considered minor hitches in the plan.

Paul Denning, now a colonel heading up the Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines, went down with a bullet in his leg.

John Davies, now a lieutenant colonel in command of the RM Reserves Merseyside, was nearly killed by a shrapnel wound in his neck.

Andy Shaw, who now lives on a boat in Ibiza, made it to the promised Port Stanley.

But now all three are going back to complete that promise and raise thousands of pounds for the RN and RM Children's Fund.

Col Denning said: "Two of us never got to the top of Two Sisters Mountain, never mind all the way to Port Stanley."

"But a promise is a promise. "It seems a lifetime away and a lot has happened. It will be quite an experience to go back again."

Babcock Naval Services are sponsoring the return.

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Magnificent matelots in their flying machine

THE BIRDMAN of Bognor competition is a name to strike fear into the heart of many, and bafflement to more.

WO1 Dougie Holmes led a brave team from the Special Communication Unit Leydene at HMS Collingwood in project Shytalk - building and launching a man-propelled aircraft from a 40ft platform at the end of Bognor Regis pier into the sea below.

Despite losing their initial pilot (discretion won over valour), a substitute, PO Nigel Hogg, was strongarmed into place, with the inaugural RN Birdman of Bognor achieving a creditable 7.4 metres. And his team-mates' admiration.

The team have raised just over £1,000, split between the Naomi House Children's Hospice in Winchester and the Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue Service.

Duke goes sky high

PATHWAYS in the sky were created through the sweat and toil of a work party from HMS Iron Duke on deployment to the Caribbean.

At the request of the Rotary Club of Road Town (Tortola), the team journeyed high, up to the Sage National Park to build elevated footways through the trees.

The majority of the park lies above 1,000ft with a canopy made up of mahogany, tree ferns, bulletwood (manilkara bidentata) trees.

The sailors made an early start and were grateful for the shelter the broad canopy offered against the humidity and heat of the day.

A party from the warship visited St George's Primary School in Tortola to talk about their jobs on board HMS Iron Duke.

The children were raucously appreciative of their naval visitors, Lt Georgina Stanstreet and Lt Andy Dowling, who also wowed them with an impromptu geography lesson.

The children fired diverse questions at the two Naval officers, then took advantage of the opportunity to experience life as an aviator - or at least to try on



• The Rock runners from the RN Clearance Diver Element
Picture: Cpl Alan Marsh RAF

Rugged Divers run ragged on Rock

RUNNING the Gibraltar Rock Run is tough enough, but four members of the RN Clearance Diver Element at Gibraltar ran it six times consecutively - the equivalent height of Mount Everest when totted up.

Each ran 24.8km over a height of 2,215m, raising some £700 for the British Forces Broadcasting Service's scheme in support of Charity Wireless for the Blind.

Organiser Leading Diver Ginge Fullen said: "It was a superb effort by the team and it's fantastic that we could raise so much for such a good cause."

The fastest of the runners Diver 1 John Sharpe said: "We're looking forward to the next event that Ginge has planned for us."

"We don't know when it will be, but for the moment I think I'm going to recover from this one first..."

The other two Divers in the team were: PO Rex Turnbull and D1 John Heightley.

Knock-out sums in Plymouth

KNOCK-OUT blows at Plymouth's Naval Base boxing tournament have resulted in five computers for the RN Pre-schools in the local area.

Lt 'Jack' Daniels, the area recreation officer, said: "It was decided to support a cause that benefited local Service families and in particular the children of those families."

£2,200 was collected to provide IT equipment for pre-schools in Crownhill, Widewell, Egguckland, Plymstock and Torpoint.

Children were also to the fore when Superintendent Fleet Maintenance (Devonport) presented a cheque for £644 to Longcause Community School, a day school for children aged 4-16 with learning difficulties.

The money was garnered through a variety of means, including CPO 'George' Blakeman running the Plymouth half-marathon and the engraving department working tirelessly throughout Navy Days creating name badges in return for a small donation.

It was best foot forward for energetic staff from the Defence Storage and Distribution Agency in Plymouth who raised £363 over a seven-mile Dartmoor trek, with the money split amongst Devon Air Ambulance, the Mustard Tree Macmillan Cancer Support and the Shelterbox Appeal.

Reservists rush ahead

RESERVISTS from President and Wildfire ran to rack up charity windfalls.

Sixteen runners from the London unit HMS President tackled the BUPA Great South Run in Portsmouth to garner more than £5,000 for various charities, including Cancer Research and the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation.

Organiser PO Barney Shaw said: "I'm very proud of our debut performance. We'll be back next year, come rain or shine!"

Six from the Northwood unit took on the Budapest Half Marathon as the 'Chariots of Wildfire', raising money for Leukaemia Research in memory of fellow reservist Lt Gloria Ademokun.

The Chariots plan to take part in a 10km race in Barcelona in the new year for the Anthony Nolan Trust.

Visit their webpage at www.justgiving.com/ademokun to pledge your support.



• Sailors from the Systems Engineering Management Course 052 with children from Titchfield Primary School

Miles of smiles

BIG smiles at Titchfield Primary School when sailors from HMS Collingwood took up their gardening tools and brightened up the school's gardens and playground.

Another team headed to St Edmund's Catholic School in Portsmouth, where they worked on a fence surrounding the

school's chapel. Chaplain Linda Guilding said: "They approached the job with cheerfulness throughout - despite the cold conditions."

Other sailors and civilians from the base presented £600 to the Rowans Hospice in Purbrook, from a Charity Golf Open Day.

news in brief

■ THE PO's mess in HMS Ark Royal organised a quiz night in aid of the Meningitis Trust, sponsored by Focus. The winners will have a beer brewed and named by themselves - and select bottles of the beer Ark Royal 6P will soon be found in the winning mess. The night of general knowledge puzzling raised £1,155.

■ COVERING more than 6,000 nautical miles, Lt Cdr David 'Ollie' Twist led a team of seven from the headquarters of the multi-national force in Basra, southern Iraq, absolutely nowhere.

Using static equipment, the team ran, rowed, cycled and stepped the distance by sea from the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr to Portsmouth Naval Base, netting the impressive total of £2,500 in sponsorship money for the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association.

■ LAST month's Children in Need appeal has spurred the Royal Navy Motor Cycle Club into action once more, striving to beat their 2005 total of £17,500.

The biker crew of eight, led by Lt Jim Aston, covered 1,300 miles over two weeks, with their sponsorship money boosted by collections at the 28 defence establishments they visited en route.

■ AFTER 18 months out of action, HMS Richmond returned to the Fleet in September and promptly renewed her links with her affiliated town of Richmond in North Yorkshire.

The ship berthed in Middlesbrough and as well as civic celebrations, a party from the warship helped to paint a skatepark recently installed by the Richmond YMCA.

■ FRIGATE HMS Cumberland played host to ten youths from the Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership, giving them a look inside the warship and a taste of careers within the Royal Navy.

Commanding Officer Capt Simon Ancona said: "I was delighted to be able to show these youngsters firsthand the opportunities available to them in the Royal Navy, particularly as they were from our base port area."

■ PERSONNEL from SHAPE in Belgium marked breast cancer awareness with a morning of British breakfasts and a pink-themed party, pulling together £1,800 for Cancer Research UK.

■ THE School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (SEME) at Bordon (strangely a Naval organisation) took part in the 'World's Largest Coffee Morning', netting more than £2,400 for nursing charity Macmillan. The event took place at the REME Historic Vehicle Museum and featured countless bacon rolls and more cakes than a Mr Kipling factory.

■ RUNNERS from the Defence Medical Services Training Centre, including Lt Jim Fowler and Lt Clive Smyth from the RN, took on a 12-hour duathlon to raise £1,260 for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

■ RESERVIST Hayley Hughes from HMS Eaglet raised almost £3,000 for Age Concern to walk the Great Wall of China.

Inspired by her grandfather, Hayley said: "When he was alive, my grandad did a huge amount of campaigning for local and national causes."

"He always wanted to go to China but unfortunately never made it. I will be taking a picture of him with me so that he finally gets to fulfil his dream."

■ GULF veteran Allen Parton, a former member of the Royal Navy, and his loyal helping hound Endal have benefited from a new powered wheelchair, courtesy of the kind people at the Royal British Legion.

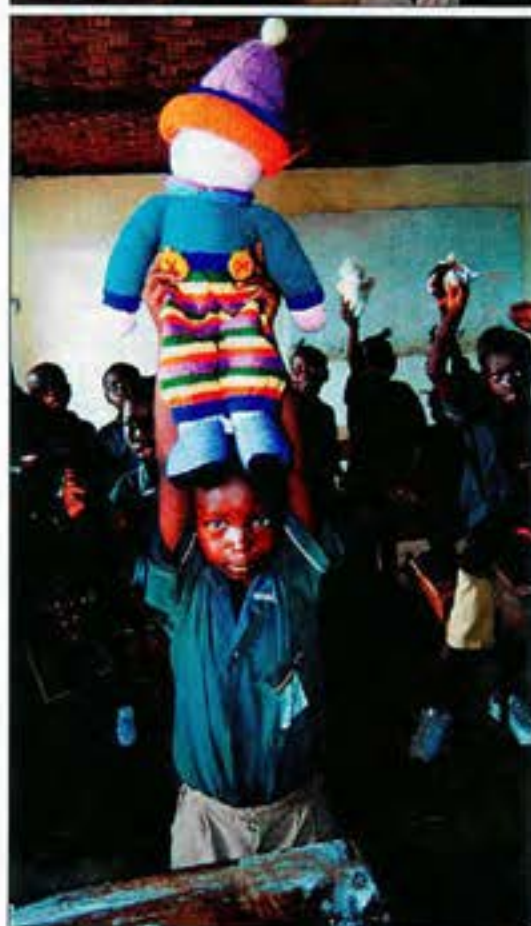
news in brief



● (Left) Lt Cdr Gary Mills of HMS Ocean brightens up a schoolroom in Tokeh village
● (Top) Std Amy Killingbeck of HMS Albion with Tokeh children
● (Right) A child looks out of a school door



Eyes open on Vela



● Gifts for Tokeh schoolchildren brought by ship from the UK

"ALL we did was give it one lick of paint – yet they were so happy. It made us grateful for what we have," said Std Amy Killingbeck of HMS Albion.

A sentiment echoed by the men and women from the many ships and units on the Vela deployment who went ashore in Sierra Leone, one of the poorest countries in the world.

"I walked down the beach and saw all these buildings that had been burnt out in the war," said S/Lt Sara Loewendahl.

"Some days we came back quite subdued – we realised just how much we have."

She added: "It was a massive eye-opener as to how people live. It made people question a lot of things."

"All through it, I've been saying that I wish I could bring my son here to see how fortunate he is," said NA Neil Wilson.

Day after day, teams of men and women from the RN and RFA ships visited sites of hospitals and schools in Sierra Leone.

For many, a one-day stint extended into more with the draw to come back and transform lives in this war-ravaged country.

For some, the work was a revelation. "At first I said 'No, I didn't want to do it'," said Chef Craig 'Ned' Kelly of HMS Albion.

"But the boss played a little guilt trip on me, saying that I'd find it beneficial. And it was. I went back on two more days."

A team of sailors from RFA Diligence and engineers from Naval Party 1600 had a similar experience.

Two days at the Milton Morgai School for the Blind extended into three, with almost half of the ship's company either working at the site or preparing materials back at the ship.

Before the main Vela task group arrived at the West African nation, engineers from 59 (Independent) Commando Squadron Royal Engineers rebuilt three bridges in the Sierra Leonean jungle.

HMS Ocean's Lt Cdr Gary Mills was with one of the teams that worked on rebuilding a school in Tokeh village.

He said: "I've done things like that before around the world, but that was definitely quite a humbling experience."

SGIA David 'Pat' Paterson of RFA Mounts Bay went to the Lakkah hospital, and said: "I shook hands with the lepers with no fingers, and you should have seen the look of astonishment on their faces that someone should do that."

One wall of the hospital now boasts a mural of a Sea King Mk7, due to the labours of 20 Culldrose-based personnel from 849B Flight – much to the amusement of the residents.

3/O Gordon Buchanan of RFA Mounts Bay said: "It was very rewarding, but a real eye-opener. It was quite shocking to see how these people live."

"It makes you appreciate what you have a wee bit more. Painting is fine, but they needed more in terms of facilities and medicine. If I'm ever in this part of the world again, I will go back."

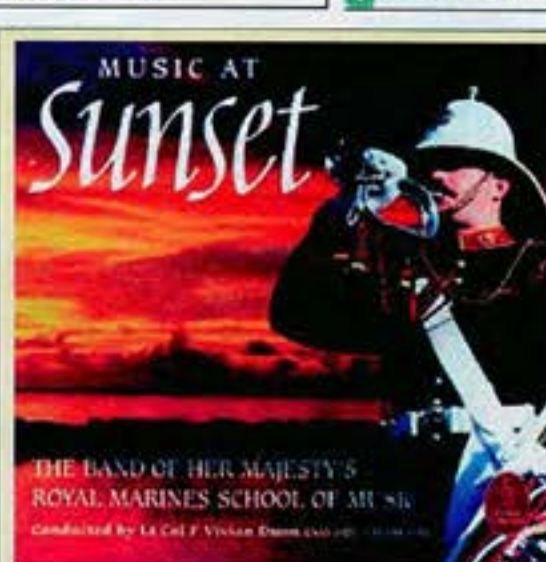
Gifts of stationery, toys and clothes from all the ships were greeted with delight by the children, and for the adults a batch of abandoned boots – the unexpected side-effect of the RFA's transient crewing system.

But nothing was welcomed with quite the rapture of the footballs that arrived in bags from the ships' stores.

March reports show the Naval footballers fared badly against the local teams – although perhaps the heat and humidity could be held to blame...



● NA Neil Wilson of HMS Albion clears rubble from a wall in Tokeh village



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A RESCUE at the limit of physical and mental endurance earned four Culdrose fliers a coveted air-sea rescue award.

In October last year, Rescue 193 of 771 NAS, was scrambled to ferry a Spanish fisherman who had suffered a stroke to hospital.

With fog permitting no more than 500m visibility, a cloud base at 30m and winds gusting at up to 50kts, the Sea King headed for a rendezvous with the Madre Querida 240 miles southwest of Culdrose.

It took two attempts merely to land in the Scilly Isles to refuel – and then the aircraft developed a fault so the aircrew had to return to Culdrose to collect a replacement.

Finally reaching the fishing vessel, they found the boat pitching wildly with its high radio masts posing a particular problem.

It took 25 minutes to lower winchman PO(ACMN) Stuart Worley as the Madre Querida bucked wildly in the rough sea.

The ill crewman was eventually winched up and taken to hospital in Treiiske with the fliers using night vision goggles to guide their way.

Rescue 193 eventually touched down back at Culdrose after a seven-hour operation.

The Shipwrecked Mariners' Society deemed the actions of PO Worley, Lt Cdr Martin Ford (aircraft commander) and pilots Lt Garry Wappner and David-John Gibbs worthy of the Edward and Maissie Lewis Award.

The citation for the quartet praises their "teamwork, determination, exceptional flying skill and courage" as they conducted a rescue operation "on the absolute limits" of meteorological conditions.



● Top Dunk... A Para is hoisted out of the 'sheep dip' on Dartmoor by a senior RM instructor

Picture: PO(Phot) Angie Pearce, CTC RM

A Para-moor affair

THERE'S nothing like a bit of payback.

Having been handed the task of safeguarding southern Afghanistan by the red berets, the commandos

decided to 'thank' the Paras by inviting them to spend the day in Devon with them.

This was, of course, no act of kindness. No, the Royal Marines

were determined to show the Paras life at the sharp end.

Delta Company of 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, left Colchester behind and headed for Dartmoor for the Royal Marines' Endurance Course.

Given the friendly rivalry between the two berets, who vie for the tag of Britain's elite infantry force, the Royals decided the paratroopers should attempt the first test any potential commando would go through.

That meant a two-mile cross-country run and four-mile run back carrying a 25lb pack plus weapon weighing 10lb, scoring at least six hits out of ten on a target, all within 72 minutes.

Oh, did we forget to mention the 'sheep dip' – the six-foot tunnel filled with water which recruits must pass through? (It's reportedly the highlight of the course).

Thankfully, the Paras were up

for it – led by their Coy Sgt Maj WO2 Dean Stokes and CO Maj Mike Shervington who crawled through the water and out to safety.

"It was a cracking day," said Maj Shervington. "We can all gob off (technical term – Ed) about fitness and doing these sort of events, but only when you do them can you appreciate their toughness."

"We can't wait now to get down to Dartmoor again and ask to go on the assault courses."

The visit was organised by WO2 Ed Stout, whose brother Phil is a sergeant in the Paras (he wasn't, unfortunately, able to take part in the exercise).

"My opinion of the Paras hasn't changed following the visit," said Ed. "I've always had the utmost respect for the regiment – and that's an opinion that is echoed throughout the Royal Marines."

FOUR generations of the Bennett family have served Queen and Country in the RN.

Make that five with the passing out of ET(WESM) Karl Bennett at HMS Raleigh.

Dad CPO(MEA) Rick Bennett flew from Callao in Peru, where HMS Chatham was visiting on her return leg of her Southern Hemisphere deployment, to ensure he could witness his son's official welcome into the RN.

Dad leaves the Senior Service next year to set up his own engineering firm; Karl has become the first Bennett to enter the Silent Service.

MEANWHILE... the association of the Haggath family going back to 1953 has come to an end.

Between them brothers Paul and Neil and dad Brian clocked up 69 years' service under the White Ensign with the RN, RNR and RNR.

Dad joined the RNR back in '53 before doing his National Service in the full-time Fleet, which included the Suez campaign. He remained in the RNR after his National Service days, retiring as a lieutenant commander in 1982.

Paul became a part-time sailor in 1981 at HMS Paragon (in Stockton, now closed) leaving 13 years later as an RS when his day job took him overseas.

The last of the Haggaths – for now – to don No.1s is Neil, who retired this autumn as a PO with HMS Sherwood, ending his 28-year in the reserve branch.

IT'S not just Jamie Oliver who teaches youngsters about the art of healthy cooking.

C/Sgt Mike Beaton (CTC RM) has dreamed up the 'Food Fit For Life' initiative to promote healthier lifestyles – and eating – among youngsters.

Mike and his team at Lympstone are visiting schools to show children how to prepare and cook food healthily.

And once the youngsters have scoffed the lot, it's into the yard for some exercise (fortunately, although Mike is one of the country's top ironmen athletes, he doesn't make children follow his example entirely).

Mike says it's vital that people understand the need for a balanced diet and regular exercise as young as possible.

"I believe that exercising regularly and eating healthily benefits everyone – it's certainly part and parcel of my job," he added.

"Food is fun – I know that the children get a thrill out of eating the food they have prepared and cooked."



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● Now here's an unusual ceremony aboard HMS Victory... American Lt Ralph Stevens is formally promoted to Senior Grade aboard Nelson's legendary flagship – a duty typically performed in the US by a commanding officer and one of the officer's children. Lt Stevens, serving at the UK Defence Academy in Shrivenham, asked if he could mark this milestone in his career aboard Victory and her CO Lt Cdr John Scivier and his team duly obliged. The officer's son Brad and his CO Capt Nick Gasson pinned on the new rank badges. "As a sailor stationed in the UK this is a 'must see and do' experience – and it's been one of the highlights of my career," said Lt Stevens.

Picture: LA(Phot) Mike Handy, FRPU Whale Island

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news in brief

A Royal Marine at the Bar

BUT not in the way you might imagine... Major David Hammond (pictured, right, by LA/Photo) Ernz Tucker) has become the first serving RM barrister having been called to the English and Welsh Bar at Middle Temple in London.

The officer has spent three years undergoing legal training and will spend one year putting that training into practice in the chambers of a London criminal law set before resuming Naval duties as a qualified barrister and deployable operational-law lawyer.

It's the latest stage in a remarkable career which began as a seaman officer, serving in

HMS Alacrity; then he switched to the Corps and served as a troop commander with 42 Cdo, and then he qualified as a pilot, flying with 847 NAS. In between there was a raft of staff jobs at Northwood and the RM battle staff.

After an accident on active service which caused a spinal injury, he changed direction again with the backing of the RM and Logistics branch.

His trailblazing efforts mean that suitably-qualified officers with the correct aptitude can take on the highly-demanding - and rapidly-emerging - crucial legal roles in the Senior Service.



THE untiring efforts of HMS Manchester's CPO Mark Sargent have been rewarded with the ship's top prize.

The Type 42 destroyer has just emerged from a refit in Devonport and vital to the success of that overhaul has been the input of the 31-year-old senior rating, who's the Busy Bee's IT administrator and a senior member of the WH department.

CPO Sargent was awarded the Worshipful Company of World Traders' Annual Prize for making the single most important contribution to the ship's life in the past 12 months.

From enmity to amity



● Feud for thought... Best of friends WO2 Graham Smith (left) and CPO(D) Andy Main pose for the camera overlooking Faslane
Picture: LA/Photo) 'Tof' Boughton, FRPU Clyde

THERE'S something indescribable about the joy of receiving a letter or parcel courtesy of BFPO when on deployment.

Those unforgettable words from a loved one, that belated birthday or Christmas present, the latest pictures of the youngsters growing up, that lump of charred wood.

When the burned wood arrived addressed to Andy Main on HMS Ledbury he knew the source could only be his best mate Graham Smith.

The pair grew up together, went to school together, joined the RN together, next year they will leave the Senior Service together and work together once more in the North Sea oil industry.

Not bad for two men who come from villages with a long-standing feud.

Burghead and Hopeman are separated by just two miles of the Moray coastline near Lossiemouth. But they are also separated by a long-standing feud (although no-one today can actually remember

why there's such rivalry between the two settlements).

For most Burgheaders and Hopemen the rivalry ends at school in Lossiemouth where the two villages send their youngsters.

And it was there that Graham, today a WO2(MEM) serving at HM Naval Base Clyde, and CPO(D) Andy, also now based at Faslane, first met three decades ago and forged a lifetime's friendship.

But that doesn't stop that inter-village rivalry flaring up sporadically.

To show their dislike for their neighbours, each year the good folk of Burghead burn wood in a barrel and send the charred remains - or clavies - to the people of Hopeman.

And so it was that the postie delivered a piece of charred wood to HMS Ledbury duly addressed to Andy.

"I just knew it had to have come from Graham," the diver said. "But it was a joke - we're good mates or we wouldn't be going to work in the North Sea together."

ANOTHER sailor honoured was Lt Cdr Stuart Sommerville, currently logistics officer of HMS Northumberland.

For five months last year, the officer was deputy logistics team leader with the RN assistance team supporting the Iraqi Navy and riverine patrol force in Umm Qasr.

He oversaw the acquisition of new boats, sorted out maintenance and spares contracts and assisted logistical support for the RN-led team such that its operations were radically enhanced.

For his efforts he receives the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

ALSO honoured, posthumously, is one of the RN's greatest benefactors.

London trader Herbert Lott donated £25,000 in 1930 to found a trust fund rewarding sailors who strove to improve the efficiency of the RN.

The fund is now more than £2m strong with £55,000 per year handed out to deserving mariners.

Lott himself has been recognised with a memorial stone dedicated at his last resting place, and in St Barbara's Church on Whale Island where a plaque celebrates his generosity.



● Former Chief Stoker Bill Stone celebrates his 106th birthday with his great granddaughter Sophie
Picture: Kingsbridge Gazette

This precious Stone...

SOMEONE we never tire of featuring in these pages is the redoubtable Bill Stone, who has just reached milestone number 106 in his remarkable life.

Bill is regularly - and rightly - championed by the Hood Association for his service on that great ship (he took part in her 'Empire Cruise' around the globe).

But his career was much more varied than 'just' that: he first served in Beatty's former flagship Tiger and, a generation later, as a chief stoker in minesweeper HMS Salamander he made five trips to Dunkirk during the 1940 evacuation.

He was mentioned in dispatches for his role in cruiser HMS Newfoundland when a torpedo damaged her stern during the Sicily landings of 1943.

Returning to his birthplace in Kingsbridge, Devon, for his 106th birthday party, Bill was joined by 30 family and friends, including the latest addition to the Stone clan, seven-month-old great granddaughter Sophie.

She was introduced to Bill's party piece... his rendition of *All the nice girls love a sailor*.

From comical to musical

NOW here's a story we should probably file under 'you couldn't make it up'.

Take one legendary submariner, one comedian with his wellies on the wrong feet, a few tunes, and hey presto, you have *Magennis - The Musical*.

Yes, Irish funnyman Jimmy Cricket - you remember the catchphrase, 'And there's more...' - is planning to turn the leading seaman's life story into musical 'infotainment'.

Jimmy apparently became enthralled by the submariner's story when he picked up James 'Mick' Magennis' biography during breaks from performances on stage in Blackpool.

Magennis was the sole Ulsterman to earn Britain's highest honour during World War 2.

With Lt Ian Fraser in command of midget submarine HMS XE3, Magennis crippled the Japanese cruiser Takao in the Straits of Johor.

That only tells half the story: the cruiser began settling on the midget boat. Magennis managed to squeeze out then had to scrape Takao's bottom free of barnacles so limpet mines would attach - a job made even more difficult by faulty breathing kit.

As XE3 tried to leave, one of the limpet carriers would not jettison, so an exhausted Magennis volunteered to exit the boat and free it - which he did.

Perhaps the saddest part of the Magennis story was the way he was treated by his native Belfast for years after his deed; as a Catholic serving in the RN, he was frequently shunned by both sides of the community and spent most of the rest of his life in Yorkshire.

Twenty years after the submariners' death - and with Belfast finally embracing its son as a hero - Jimmy believes the time is right for a musical tribute.

"It's an incredible journey of heroism, melodrama and emotion - a really touching tale," he told Irish newspaper *Sunday World*.

The result, a mix of songs penned by the comedian and a narrative based on Ulsterman George Fleming's biography *Magennis VC*, is *Let's Hear it for the Wee Man* which Jimmy hopes to see performed in Belfast next year.


The comedian added: "There is heightened interest in this local hero because not only am I trying to get the Opera House to produce

a workshop version of this musical, but rumours abound that Hollywood actor Colin Farrell will play Jim in a bio-pic film."



For Christmas

A BOTTLE OF PUSSEY'S RUM OR THE NELSON SHIP'S DECANTER



This exquisite one liter ceramic ships decanter honours Vice Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson, regarded as the greatest naval officer of all time. This gallant, fearless, naval genius gave his life at Trafalgar where his defeat of the combined navies of France & Spain secured the seas for Great Britain for the next 100 years. The decanter is filled with PUSSEY'S RUM, the original rum of the Royal Navy, and is accompanied by a 12-page booklet describing the significance of each of the decorative panels.

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T45 unit training shapes up

A VERSATILE new training regime has finished a three-month implementation programme which will enable the RN to develop courses for the sailors who will man the new Type 45 destroyers.

The T45 Training Unit (TU), based at the Maritime Warfare School (MWS) at HMS Collingwood, can now use the new Learning Content Management System (LCMS) to produce computer-based software for training on the technology which will be at the heart of HMS Daring and her sisters.

The flexibility of LCMS was needed to cope with training which is very different from that of existing platforms.

Using the OutStart Evolution LCMS, the TU can create lessons using the latest graphics and emulations to ensure T45 crews are effectively trained.

The T45 TU is breaking new ground in this respect as it is the first time that Warfare, Weapon Engineering and Marine Engineering training being developed in a single location for a new Service platform.

The material, once generated, can be tailored to the needs of different groups of students, or further developed for later technology.

SAILORS from HMS Westminster have been going up the wall – but certainly not through boredom.

The wall in question was the Great Wall of China, and despite foul weather was one of the highlights of a deployment which ticks off many must-see sights and sites in Asia.

Having left Singapore after the exertions of Exercise Bersama Padu (as reported in our November edition), the Type 23 frigate set course for Japan, South Korea and China on the latest leg of her Volans06 itinerary.

Westminster was greeted in Tokyo by the Japanese Defence Force Band and sailors from her host ship, JDF Onami.

Formal welcomes were completed the following day, including the British Ambassador Sir Graham Fry.

A party from Westminster, accompanied by Commander UK Maritime Force Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti and Defence Attache Capt Simon Chelton, travelled to nearby Yokohama to pay homage at the Hodogaya Commonwealth Cemetery to those who died during World War 2.

That evening the Onami held a reception for their British guests, with a spectacular spread of food served with Japanese sake – dispensed from a traditional barrel, broken open in style by Cdr David Fields, the CO of Westminster, and his Japanese counterpart.

Having hosted a successful Defence Industry Day, allowing UK companies to show their wares to Japanese military and government visitors, the frigate sailed for Pusan in South Korea with Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla Cdre Andrew Cameron on board.

As well as official duties such as the VIP Sea Day, and the chance for British sailors to sample the



● HMS Westminster hits heavy seas off Japan during her deployment to the Far East

Picture: LAFPhoto Brian Douglas (FRPUB)

night-life of Pusan, there were two football matches staged at the local World Cup stadium, in which a scratch ladies' team put up a spirited fight in losing 2-0, while their male counterparts, again taking on the pride of the Republic of Korea Navy, put on an outstanding display to win 1-0.

Next port of call was Shanghai, involving a lively passage up the Yangtze River

followed by a series of interviews and tours for around 40 journalists and photographers.

Around 40 of the ship's company enjoyed a welcome reception at Wusong Naval Base while the ship was prepared for a series of commercial receptions.

More than 1,400 locals visited Westminster, including groups of orphans and underprivileged children,

while 70 Brits took a strenuous two-day tour to Beijing, taking in the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven – and some shopping for gizbits.

One group to leave the ship permanently were the three members of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, who spent six weeks with the ship to learn about life in a blue suit.

The trio were prominent at official functions, where their impressive uniforms added to the spectacle of events such as Ceremonial Sunset.



Echo sounds out new partner

SURVEY ship HMS Echo has made a five-day goodwill visit to Vietnam during her deployment East of Suez.

The state-of-the-art vessel called in to the port of Ho Chi Minh City to lay the foundations for the first joint-working arrangements of their kind between the hydrographic offices of the two nations.

Echo's Commanding Officer, Cdr Jeremy Churcher, and his ship's company were given a warm welcome by the Vietnam High Command of Military Region No 7, and among his duties the CO took part in a wreath-laying ceremony and a dinner at the Vietnamese Naval Headquarters.

Cdr Churcher also hosted a lunch for officers from the Vietnamese Hydrographic Survey Regiment, where discussions were held with representatives of the UK Hydrographic Office at Taunton, where the development of a future professional relationship was discussed, including training and the sharing of information.

There was also a chance for the ship to host local charity groups, and visit an orphanage, while the ship's football team played local team Friendship House.

Hawk deal

BUDDING fast jet pilots in the Royal Navy will soon be building their skills on one of the world's most advanced training aircraft.

Defence Procurement Minister Lord Drayson has announced that BAE Systems has been awarded a £450 million contract to build 28 Hawk 128 Advanced Jet Trainers which will help develop RN and RAF pilots, with the first plane due for delivery in 2008.



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● 'An inspiration to all'... CPO George Prowse VC

Picture: Gerald James

'A true hero' honoured

ONE hundred and thirty three High Street, Giffach Goch, is a rather unremarkable house in a Welsh village – except that it is now adorned with a blue plaque to honour its greatest inhabitant.

For born there in the summer of 1886 was George Prowse, future chief petty officer and holder of the Victoria Cross.

Nine decades after his death, civic leaders and Welsh RNR unit HMS Cambria succeeded in ensuring Prowse would not be forgotten in his hometown.

Prowse was born in Giffach Goch, near Pontypridd, but his family then moved to Somerset.

He returned to his homeland to work as a miner, then volunteered for the RNRV in 1915.

He fought in Gallipoli and on the Somme, but wrote his name into the pages of history during the advance of the 100 days in 1918.

He captured 23 Germans in a raid on one enemy stronghold, single-handedly attacked an ammunition limber and finally stormed a German machine-gun bunker in September 1918 to earn Britain's highest honour.

He was killed before the month was out, again leading an assault on an enemy stronghold.

A commemorative blue plaque has now been fixed to the front of his birthplace, a tribute Cdr Brian Hayes, Executive Officer of HMS Cambria, said was long overdue.

"The people of Wales have generally forgotten that this hero lived in Giffach Goch," he explained.

"Prowse's name was only added to the war memorial in Swansea as an after-thought.

"He was a true hero – a man of immense courage and bravery, and we hope that this plaque will go some way to articulating the immense gratitude our generation owes to men like him."



And an honour for Ramsay

THE Duke of Kent has dedicated a plaque in memory of the architect of naval victory in World War 2.

Recalled from retirement when war engulfed Europe again, Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay (pictured) oversaw the evacuation of Dunkirk and the rescue of 330,000 British and Allied troops.

His organisational expertise reached its zenith in the invasions of North Africa and Normandy; in the latter he served as the senior Allied naval commander.

He did not live to see final victory in Europe, however; he died in a plane crash in France in January 1945.

The plaque can be found in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral in London, where Admirals Nelson and Beatty are buried.

Echoes past and present

IN THE historic Flanders town of Ypres, haunting dirges echoed around the imposing Menin Gate memorial.

At Greenwich the image of a huge red poppy was emblazoned on the funnel of HMS *Illustrious*.

In Tenerife a wreath was cast off the rocks into the crashing waves of the Atlantic.

In the dusty towns and villages of Helmand province in Afghanistan, Royal Marines lowered their heads in reverence.

And among the palm trees of Baghdad, sailors, soldiers, marines and airmen stood side-by-side as the birds sang, the bugles sounded and the rattle of gun fire and boom of explosions reverberated around the Iraqi capital.

At home and abroad sacrifices past and present have been at the forefront of the minds of sailors and marines and their loved ones as the nation paused to contemplate and remember its fallen.

Perhaps the most moving personal tribute occurred aboard HMS *Illustrious*, moored on the Thames at Greenwich, where Elizabeth Chapman and her children Ben, Chloe and Georgina stood beneath the carrier's funnel.

Lt Cdr Darren Chapman, the Commanding Officer of 847 NAS, was killed when his Lynx helicopter was shot down over Basra in May.

His memory, however, will hopefully help create a permanent memorial to the 16,000 British servicemen and women who have been killed since 1945.

A large red poppy and the words 'We will remember them' were beamed on to the carrier's funnel at nightfall, a simple yet poignant tribute to the fallen.

The projection was aimed at raising awareness of the campaign to erect a national memorial to the fallen of the post-1945 Armed Forces; unlike their Great War and WW2 forebears, the 16,000 dead have no local or national monuments, with a few exceptions such as the Falklands campaign.

Around £5m has already been raised towards the £7m cost of creating the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

"Darren loved the Navy and loved flying," said Mrs Chapman.

"His loss is something we feel deeply every day.

"Knowing that there will be a place where he is remembered not only by us, his family, but by the nation as well is very important for us."

Ceremonies in Baghdad took place in the garden of the British Embassy; the unrest in the city did not cease for the occasion, as bomb explosions on the opposite bank of the Tigris and rifle fire could be heard throughout the service.

For Royal Marines in Afghanistan, the act of remembrance was particularly poignant given the loss of Mne Gary Wright, killed in October by a suicide bomber.

Services were held at the hub of 3 Commando Brigade's operations in Camp Bastion, as well as at the green berets' outposts scattered around the Helmand province: Now Zad, Sangin, Gereshk, Garmisir, Kajaki and Lashkar Gah.

"The high tempo of operations across the world and, in a smaller

● *Red, white and blue...* The ruddy poppy stands out against the blue of a No.4 uniform during HMS *Ocean's* service of remembrance off Africa

Picture: LAG/Photo Ray Jones, HMS *Ocean*

military community, the personal knowledge of somebody killed or seriously injured in conflict re-roots the remembrance of sacrifice in the present for Service people and their families," said the Rev David Wylie, 3 Cdo Bde's chaplain.

At Torpoint, one of the youngest sailors on HMS *Raleigh's* muster, 16-year-old trainee weapons specialist Thomas Earl who joined the RN less than a month before the Remembrance Day ceremonies, laid a wreath on the town's cenotaph to the establishment's wartime dead.

In all, 47 sailors, 25 soldiers and one member of the Royal Air Force Auxiliary are buried in Torpoint's Horson cemetery; most were killed on April 28 1941 when a bomb struck an air raid shelter during a Luftwaffe attack on Plymouth.

And further afield on the east coast, 50 trainee submariners from *Raleigh* joined RNA and RBL comrades in the seaside resort of Bridlington.

Six *Raleigh* sailors could also be found in Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral on Saturday November 11 at the annual service of remembrance organised by the Royal British Legion branch in the French capital.

In Plymouth Rear Admiral Tony Rix, Flag Officer Sea Training, and Devonport Naval Base Commander Cdre Simon Lister led the act of remembrance on The Hoe.

They were accompanied by the Band of HM Royal Marines, 198 sailors, a 12-strong guard, and Portuguese, German and Dutch crew from their respective warships currently undergoing training at FOST.

HMS *Drake's* Volunteer Band were not in their home city for ceremonies, rather in Ypres, for two days of ceremonies on the hallowed soil of Flanders.

The band joined the drummers of the Devon Fire and Rescue Service ceremonial unit and the North Devon Pipe Band to perform at two evening ceremonies in Ypres, as well as the Armistice Day ceremony and parade at the



● MEA Jonathan Li walks among the Allied gravestones at Hodogaya cemetery near Yokohama during HMS *Westminster's* visit to Japan

Picture: LAG/Photo Brian Douglas, FRPU Whale Island

Menin Gate – the memorial to 54,896 Allied soldiers killed in the Ypres salient during the Great War.

Returning from her Vela deployment to West Africa, destroyer HMS *Southampton* stopped in Santa Cruz, Tenerife, to give her sailors a welcome break.

There was at least one formal duty to perform, joining the island's branch of the Royal British Legion at a November 11 service in the Westhaven Bay Hotel in Costa del Silencio at the north-western tip of Tenerife.

Upon completion of the service, the destroyer's CO Cdr Richard Morris and former Royal Marine RSM Rick Sweeney walked to the water's edge to cast wreaths into the Atlantic, watched by members of the ship's company and veterans.

For the men and women of

HMS *Westminster*, there have been not one but two services of remembrance this autumn.

During the frigate's visit to Japan, sailors headed to the beautifully-maintained Hodogaya Commonwealth War Cemetery three miles outside Yokohama and 20 miles from the heart of Tokyo.

British, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and Indian troops and sailors killed at the hands of the Japanese are remembered in the cemetery.

Wreaths were laid by Rear Admiral Neil Morissett, Commander UK Maritime Force, Capt Simon Chelton, the UK Defence Attaché in Japan, and Cdr David Fields, *Westminster's* Commanding Officer.

A couple of weeks later, on Remembrance Day, the frigate found herself roughly 900 nautical miles north-west of Jakarta, where

a service was held and a wreath placed upon the Indian Ocean.

HMS *Endurance* conducted probably the most southerly service led by Capt Nick Lambert, the ice ship's CO, and *Endurance's* church officer Lt Richard Abbott.

The service took place off the South Shetland Islands after a busy day's work for the Red Plum.

It was about as far from Flanders fields as you could picture, yet the lines of John McCrae's immortal poem, read out by Capt Lambert, are no less pertinent now than when the Canadian doctor wrote them 90 years ago:

*To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold
it high.*





I'm a junglie, g



UNINTERRUPTED white sand stretches before the dense dripping green of the jungle, the heat shimmers off the sun-scorched ground and the humid air is alive with whispering insect-wings, the diamond-flecked waves ripple aimlessly over the corrugated size-12 footprint...

The Royal Marines are in Sierra Leone. Twelve ships. Three thousand Royal Marines and sailors. Two continents. Two men at the helm.

The Commander Amphibious Task Group Cdre Philip Jones and the Commander Landing Force Col David Hook have led their Naval juggernaut of RN, RM and RFA over the horizon to Exercise Green Eagle in the West African nation of Sierra Leone.

Exercise Green Eagle is charged with getting the Royal Navy combat ready for the jungle - whether the Royal Marines of 40 Commando or the helicopters of the Commando Helicopter Force, whether the newest ship on the amphibious block RFA Mounts Bay or the stalwart protector in veteran destroyer HMS Southampton.

And the two men leading this Vela deployment have the task of perfecting the dark arts of amphibious warfare.

And dark it can be. These are the men who have to get a maritime force of 12 ships in to the coast at the darkest part of the night, get 600 marines into 12 helicopters and up to 16 landing craft, and launch them so that they hit the shore at the same time, each man knowing where he has to go and what he has to do.

Each force - the maritime and the land - has different needs and different demands.

"You need two commanders that get on, but can agree to fall out with each other," said Col Hook.

The warships of the amphibious task group are neatly balanced by Royal Fleet Auxiliaries; between them they provide a self-sustaining island in the vast Atlantic Ocean.

Col Hook said: "The amphibious task group has a unique capability - it's one of the few forces that from the moment it arrives, it is ready to fight."

"Most other organisations in defence need to be delivered somewhere, they then need time to sort themselves out before they can fight. But our readiness to fight is one of the enduring characteristics of amphibious forces."

Two years in the planning, teams of sailors and marines have been travelling to Sierra Leone, carrying out reccons on how best to conduct training and gain from it.

Cdre Jones said: "It's very important that we don't just bring a task group like this over the horizon and say 'Ho boys, we're here'."

Survey work has been key, with HMS Enterprise taking over from Roebuck's work earlier in the year in preparation for the task group's arrival.

The new survey ship, with her state-of-the-art multi-beam



and side scan survey abilities, has proven a star in the amphibious world, with a team of shallow-water experts from Fleet Diving Unit 2 operating from the ship for the first time.

"We've had absolutely up-to-the-minute surveys of approaches to possible beaches, the depth and surf profiles, and incredibly useful images of what the beaches look like," said Cdre Jones.

Col Hook added: "It's the first time I've seen such a good product for the coxswains delivering the landing craft ashore."

And once on the beach?

"For a lot of the Marines it was their first time in the jungle, and they were having - to use a Royal Marine phrase - a hoooin' time."

The jungle offers a chance for Marines to hone their soldiering skills in an environment where their usual best defence - their eyes - are defeated by the dense vegetation.

But by the end of the weeks of Exercise Green Eagle, the Royals of 40 Commando will be primed and ready to fight in any environment anywhere in the world.

In the big scenario of Green Eagle, the Royal Marines scoured the moisture-saturated jungle, clambering through tangled mangrove swamps, up cluttered volcanic hillsides and along congested bare-formed animal tracks seeking out the rebel training camps of the fictional Logan People's Liberation Front.

40 Commando's L/Cpl Ashley Morris said: "I was in the jungle for 12 days. It was great - so much better than being on a ship."

"The humidity takes so much out of you - it took two weeks to acclimatise. My basic soldiering skills have developed so much."

"You can't see in the jungle. You can't see anyone from ten

metres, you just don't know if you're being watched.

The Royal Marines in the Republic of Sierra Leone. Sergeant Major WO2 A. a great deal. It has been

"The British bring discipline of leadership at a professional level. And the British have never been to West Africa training and map reading."

"When the British came to Sierra Leone, they had the confidence in the British."

"The future is bright. We have a very big potential army in terms of stability."

L/Cpl Alyn Baker said: "The humidity is harsh - we are carrying kit."

"We have been taught the basic traps and aids."

"You've got to be man yourself through it. It's not easy."

"But hygiene is top priority. You're going to get minor cuts and grazes protected in the humidity, become a major infection."

The sickbay on HMS Enterprise is a 20-bed facility - manned with patients, with an increase in the number of patients being treated up.

For this deployment, HMS Enterprise has a 2 facility - manned with patients, with an increase in the number of patients being treated up.

Cdr Anthony Lamb said that they had seen a patient who would not occur on a training ground are obviously local.

"When wearing boots, there is an issue. But the worst blisters are on the beach..."

The Sea Kings and the Royal Marines have been working on the Merlin. Although the Merlin is not a normal role, but what we can use different assets.

"Rather than sticking to what we can do, we can use different assets."

The Merlin has potential for submarine warfare tasks on to targets for maritime operations.





Get me into there

...anyone is there until they are on top...
 ...been working with the men of the...
 ...ose Armed Forces (RSLAF). Training...
 ...ou Bakerr Kamara said: "We've learned...
 ...ery, very useful.
 ...discipline, they bring morale, and the art...
 ...ional and international level.
 ...can't a lot because some of them have...
 ...a - jungle warfare, patrolling, physical...
 ...ome here it gave the people in Sierra...
 ...country's stability.
 ...I'm telling you, because this country...
 ...in terms of resources, but we need the...
 ...c: "This is my first time in the jungle...
 ...it's very hot out there, especially if you...
 ...how to collect water, build shelters, all...
 ...for navigation in the jungle.
 ...entally fit out here. You've got to push...
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 ...es have to be carefully cleaned and...
 ...insect-riddled air - a small scratch can...
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 ...S Ocean has seen a steady stream of...
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 ...a full surgical team of eight and able to...
 ...board.
 ...et, a consultant at Derriford Hospital, ...
 ...so injuries in the medical facility that...
 ...ining run in Dartmoor. The guys on the...
 ...king after themselves.
 ...24 hours a day, foot problems are a real...
 ...er we've seen is from a rugby match on...
 ...Lynx of 845, 846 and 847 Naval Air...
 ...renewed their 'Jungle' nickname.
 ...ins of 820 and the ASaCs of 849 are...
 ...He.
 ...d Air Group of Lynx, Sea King and...
 ...retta, said: "Each of us has our own...
 ...we are looking at now is different ways...
 ...23.
 ...to our traditional role, we've been look...
 ...do."
 ...shed beyond her conventional anti...
 ...ing, directing the Lynxes of 847 NAS...
 ...ine surveillance work and lifting and

shifting troops and landrovers as a utility rotorcraft.
 The amphibious task group has three massive ships at the heart of its operations - HMS Albion, HMS Ocean and the newly-arrived RFA Mounts Bay, which is already winning praise for her unique abilities.
 Cdre Jones said: "She went into the Sierra Leonian river on our first day and using her dynamic positioning system, without the need to anchor, she held her position in the river for two days against some ferociously strong tidal streams and unloaded all the vehicles we wanted using landing craft out of her dock.
 "And that was an enormous statement that she had arrived in the amphibious task group in some style."
 HMS Ocean's commanding officer Capt Chris Snow stressed that the task group did not pivot around any individual amphibious ship.
 He said: "The whole process of getting Royal Marines ashore to do damage to the enemy is a whole task group effort.
 "It's one of the most complicated parts of warfare and not an easy thing to do. But we do it very well in the United Kingdom."
 Assault ship HMS Albion is home to the two commanders' battle staffs, with the massive operations room on board the hub behind the two forces' actions.
 Cdre Jones said: "One of the things they really got right about Albion and Bulwark was learning all of the lessons from Fearless and Intrepid, their amazing predecessors who were very old ladies when they finally went.
 "What we got right more than anything was really good command and control capabilities - because what you've got to do is control all the moving parts.
 "All the really difficult, really demanding, and varying parts of a task group like this have got to be effectively driven to support the commanders' plan."
Cdre Jones, a veteran of the 1982 Falklands Conflict on board assault ship HMS Fearless, said: "All that was wonderful about that deployment - and it was the most eye-opening, jaw-dropping experience for a 21-year-old sub lieutenant - all that was good about that, the people, the esprit de corps, the sense of Royal Marine and Royal Naval teamwork that delivered success down there, is still here.
 "And that's why 25 years on, I'm still in the Navy.
 "Yes, the kit's different. Yes, the capability's greater. Yes, the ability to do it in a more synchronised and joined-up way of command and control is a huge step up.
 "But the quality of the people is absolutely identical.
 "So in many ways it's brilliant to have come right the way round the circle from being a young officer under training in the amphibious task group 25 years ago to being in command of the task group, as we celebrate that anniversary of the Falklands - I couldn't ask for more."
■ Next month: Focus on the ships of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the helicopters of the specialist air group on the Vela deployment



These pages:
 Clockwise from top left:
 ● Marines from 40 Cdo and 6ASRM from HMS Albion land troops and vehicles in Freetown
 ● On jungle training
 ● A Sea King flies over the coast
 ● An 847 Lynx flies over the jungle
 ● A Sea King flies past RFA Wave Knight
 ● A 'Jungle' Lynx on the deck of Ocean, with Wave Knight and Argyl in the background
 ● A RAS between HMS Ocean and RFA Wave Knight
 ● A Sea King comes into land on Albion
 ● A LCVP and RHIB moving ashore
 ● 40 Cdo move ashore
 ● HMS Ocean photographed from an 820 Merlin Inset
 ● Commander Landing Forces Col David Hook and Commander Amphibious Task Group Cdre Philip Jones Column
 ● SASRM on Riverine operations
 ● A Lynx flies over a LCVP
 ● 6ASRM offload on Tokoh beach

Photographs:
 LA(Phot) A J 'Stubbsy' Stubbens,
 LA(Phot) Ray Jones,
 LA(Phot) Dave Gallagher



Farewell to

Tributes paid to RN's legendary cartoonist

THE CARTOONIST who became a legend in the Royal Navy has died following a short illness - and tributes have been paid from across the Service.

Lt Cecil (Tugg - though known to his family as Bill) Willson MBE was born in 1930, and joined the RN in 1947 as a Naval Air Mechanic, writes Lt Cdr Roger Bevan (Retd).

He achieved the rank of Petty Officer before being promoted to Sub Lieutenant (X)(AV) in 1964. Tugg served at Naval Air Stations, but also put in more than his fair share of sea time, all of it in carriers - HM Ships Ocean, Glory, Illustrious, Eagle (twice) and Victorious (twice) - before early retirement in 1971 to pursue a full-time career as a cartoonist, firstly from a studio in his home in Bere Alton and later, as his career developed, in the North East and, subsequently, in Wiltshire.

Tugg developed his particular cartoon style during the mid-1960s in HMS Victorious when he was persuaded to publish the ship's newspaper *Vic News*.

Although initially not a skilled draughtsman, he possessed a unique perspective of naval humour and, whilst it later encapsulated the broader range of human behaviour, his talent was especially slanted to, and appreciated by, the maritime community and was particularly well received by the Royal Navy, North Sea Oil, Merchant Marine organisations and house magazines.

He had a special aptitude for



extracting a pertinent quote from a professional text and converting it to a witty and humorous cartoon that drove home the essence and message of the article.

Modest and unassuming - he always claimed that he was not really a funny person - Tugg often appeared somewhat bewildered by his immense popularity, yet many Service publications owe their avid readership to his influence.

Cockpit and *Navy News* were no exception - his wit and skill in the portrayal of flight safety issues and items of naval interest ensured full readership; indeed, it was often difficult to obtain a copy of the latest *Cockpit* when Tugg was drawing the pictures.

The *Cockpit* calendar was particularly sought after and, from a flight safety perspective, earlier calendars are as fresh, funny and relevant as ever.

Tugg also published cartoons in the *Review of Naval Engineering*, *The Times*, *Daily Mirror*, *News of the World*, *Punch* and regional newspapers.

Tugg was one of a kind; he had a keen eye for Jack humour and the skill to portray it with superb visual impact.

'Brilliant' is an understatement for his influence upon all involved in general naval matters and, particularly, in naval aviation - he drove home the message with panache, fun and excellent draughtsmanship whilst making us laugh because we could see ourselves in his drawings.

He was a unique contributor to aviation and maritime safety.

Survived by his wife Elizabeth and three sons, having now met his oft-portrayed nemesis the Grim Reaper, Tugg can be proud of his immense contribution to flight safety.

Jackspeak author and retired RN medical officer Dr Rick Jolly said: "The sad news that Tugg has recently 'crossed the bar' will have come as a shock to his many thousands of admirers around the world.

"Wherever retired Royal Navy men and women were located, and wherever *Navy News* was read, by Flag Officers and ratings alike, his Jack cartoon strip was usually the first item turned to - and enjoyed with a wry smile as, once again, Tugg hit the button with his sharply-observed, beautifully-drafted and affectionate record of events in the life of the Royal Navy's greatest asset.

"The details of Tugg's career in



'ONE AND A QUARTER LENGTHS - THEN TREAD WATER, CLOTH EARS!!!'



Navy has lost 'a genuine friend'

FIRST Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band said the death of Tugg Willson meant that the Navy has lost "a genuine friend".

"Throughout my 40 years in the Royal Navy, a period dominated by continual change, one of the few constants that I have clung to (as have thousands of others), has been the fact that no matter how complicated, or strategically significant the issue, the cartoons and incisive wit of Tugg have always managed to cut through the chaff and detail and home in on the impact and relevance to the individual sailor and marine," said the Admiral.

"His cartoons have consistently ensured that the human elements of any matter have been brought fully to bear, opening the eyes of all in

the command chain to the impact on people of decisions taken across the Fleet.

"The fact that Tugg's cartoons were as funny to those serving on the front line as they were to those in the support commands, the MOD, the civilians working alongside the Service and our families at home, was a mark of Tugg's skill; a skill honed through his own experiences at sea as an Air Engineering Officer.

"In losing Tugg, the Navy has lost a genuine friend; however, he leaves us with a lasting legacy of his work which, when compiled, charts every major event in the RN's history over the past 40 years.

"His insight, his loyalty to the Service, its men and women, and his unfailing humour, will all be sorely missed."

Cartoon from Jackspeak

TUGG



the Senior Service can be summarised briefly thus: he started life in a blue suit as a 'bombhead' in 1947, 17 years later he was commissioned as Special Duties Officer in the Aviation branch, and seven years after that, at the end of 1971, he retired from the Andrew to concentrate on his second career as a cartoonist.

"In actual fact, Tugg never really retired from the Service that he loved deeply and was hugely proud of.

"All his sea time was in aircraft carriers, so he was familiar with life in both messdeck and wardroom.

"He never forgot the details of that experience, whether it was drawing his tot, or subscribing totally to the 'Find, Fix - and Strike' ethos of the Fleet Air Arm.

"The bombs that he fuzed always detonated correctly, and the ejection seats that he was responsible for never failed the aircrews that relied on them.

"In addition, Tugg found that he possessed a unique talent.

"He was always very modest about this gift, but he could draw cartoons, a really demanding artistic discipline.

"His early work in the ship's newspapers of Glory, Ocean, Victorious and Eagle tackled a traditional mix of news and fantasy.

"The latter subject usually involved images of some long-legged, curvaceous and luscious beauty, with pouting lips and the eyes of a dying gazelle - the epitome of the 'centrefold' who would be waiting for Jack, in her Porsche, at the next run ashore.

"Then, with a very slight adjustment of Tugg's pen, the very same goddess of Jack's dreams quickly became the blowy barfly of his worst nightmares...

"It was soon realised by the maritime aviation boffins that Tugg's sense of humour was a perfect way of getting the flight safety message across to the Fleet.

"He was initially asked to illustrate *Cockpit*, the in-house Fleet Air Arm magazine, but this soon branched out in a number of

other directions, including a full-colour calendar that almost became a unit of Naval currency at its annual appearance.

"Later on, and with some gentle tweaking to reflect a changed location, the same type of safety message translated well for the off-shore platform and tanker activities of the oil industry. These calendars also became collectors' items.

"My own association with Tugg began with the first edition of *Jackpeak* in 1989.

"He cautiously accepted the challenge of a private commission to illustrate this dictionary of RN and RM slang and usage, and in a very short time the monochrome masterpieces were rolling off his drawing board.

"I've chosen two to illustrate this short tribute, but the selection wasn't easy.

"The creation of those sketches was a fascinating process to watch. Something - a word or phrase, or perhaps the report of an event or remark - would catch his eye.

"You next became aware of his mental cogs turning; and a smile would spread across his face as the drawing pen came out.

"As HRH The Prince of Wales affectionately observed, in 1983, Tugg's impromptu but biting-accurate gems often ended up on the table napkins and menu cards that came to hand on wardroom

guest nights!

"Tugg was particularly fond of HRH, whose official call sign in the Fleet Air Arm was Red Dragon.

"Much of his colour work of that period bears the Chinese symbol for a dragon, in red ink, to celebrate that mutual respect and affection.

"Like His Royal Highness, we will all miss this funny, clever and uniquely-talented man.

"Thank goodness Tugg has left a large collection of his work behind for the next generation to access and enjoy.

"I just hope that - very soon - a commercial sponsor will fund a project to gather all the colour artwork together, in permanent tribute to his skills."

FALKLAND

JACK



guest nights!

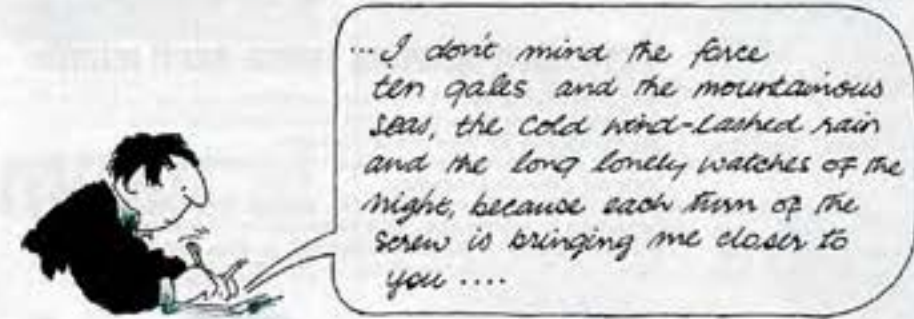
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Regional business is under new management

A NEW approach to delivering Royal Navy UK business in the regions has been endorsed by the Fleet Management Group.

From April, aspects of Naval Home Command business will become the responsibility of four new Naval Regional Headquarters (NRHQs) – Rosyth, Liverpool, Bristol and London.

The reorganisation of regional business is part of the Regional Coherency initiative, which pre-dates the FLEET LEAN streamlining drive but dovetails neatly into the overall transformation.

Regional Coherency is expected to result in personnel reductions, wherever possible through natural wastage and re-appointments rather than redundancy.

Each NRHQ will inherit a range of tasks, including:

- RN recruitment targets; FOSNNI and the Naval Regional Officers (NROs) will command the recruiting field force across the UK but work to targets set by FOTR. There will be a handover period when the new organisation will shadow the old under the guidance of Captain Naval Recruiting, starting next month, with full implementation of the new procedures from April 2007;
- Generating efficiencies through the four NRHQs by co-locating NRO offices with a Reservist unit to share resources, or the creation of a 'virtual HQ';
- Support for 'RN in the Public Eye', with all RNR and RMR units falling under the direction of their respective NRO.

Through the 'Regionalisation of Reservist Training', Regional Coherency will deliver savings as reservists need to travel less to train. Staff at the NRHQs will co-ordinate and facilitate regionally-organised training to aid naval and military development, Naval General Training (including fitness), Command, Leadership and Management training and staff training. They will also co-ordinate branch and specialisation training, including new entries and young officers.

Regional Coherency implementation will deliver a single pan-UK regional communications structure under FOSNNI Director of Corporate Communications to integrate communications resources for impact in the regions.

The Regional Coherency initiative was devised by FOSNNI, who sought a better way of commanding a burgeoning raft of diverse responsibilities – the post took over responsibility for all four NRHQs in 2005 and also became Flag Officer Reserves in January this year.

Current FOSNNI, Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks, said: "There now lies ahead a period of considerable change as we take forward the detail of these recommendations and every one of our people has a crucial part to play."

"Each region now needs to stand up its own Implementation Team with representation from all stakeholders under the guidance of a one-star-led Steering Group. "I would ask everyone involved to engage with their regional team and make a full contribution to the process."



The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

Welcome to era of Senior Self-Service

Media team to the forefront

THE implementation phase of JPA to the Royal Navy is nearing completion – and it has been a real success story.

More than 43,000 passwords have been issued to the RN, and the vast majority of personnel have now completed their initial log-on activities.

Go-Live was October 23, but a huge amount of initial system configuration and data checking was necessary before all Naval personnel could be given access to the new personnel administration system.

The months of meticulous planning and preparation by the Implementation Teams paid off and consequently we were able to start self-service access early.

The very first self-service users to log on were the ship's company of HMS Illustrious, on passage to London.

The Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Adrian Johns, visited the Fleet Flagship at Greenwich to meet the ship's company and to get their views on JPA as they logged on.

Admiral Johns said: "JPA is a significant and progressive move for the armed Forces and its successful implementation to the Navy has required considerable business and cultural change."

"The willing acceptance of this new way of doing business is a clear demonstration of the Navy's professionalism, flexibility and 'can do' ethos, and we should be immensely proud of our achievement."

Illustrious' Executive Warrant Officer, WO1 Dave Goldie, was impressed with the system, saying: "JPA will bring administration in the Navy into the information age."

"I know within seconds when one of our personnel has been assigned and can plan the ship's manpower accordingly."

Self-service user feedback was also highly positive – the look and feel of JPA is very much akin to internet banking – and first



• Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns logs on to JPA aboard HMS Illustrious

impressions are that the system is intuitive and user-friendly.

Several members of the ship's company agreed that the real test of the system would be payday at the end of the month, but all can be assured that great diligence and

effort has gone into ensuring that JPA pay is accurate.

Monthly payslips can be viewed online and will be available about one week before payday.

Any individual who believes that there is an error with their

pay should get in contact with their UPO.

Remember that annual basic pay is now split into 12 equal monthly payments, but overall annual salary remains the same.

From December 1 *iExpenses*, which enables users to make travel claims online, will be available and the turnaround time between making a claim and payment into your bank will be as little as three working days.

The Army is the final Service to implement JPA, and they are scheduled to go live on March 19 next year.

If you have not yet received your JPA log-on details contact your UPO.

Picture: LAMPhoto Alex Cave

Statistics updated twice each month

ACCURATE statistics for Service personnel injured in Iraq and Afghanistan are to be published on a fortnightly basis, Defence Secretary Des Browne has announced.

Until now the figures were published once a month, and until recently a month in arrears.

The October figures show 14 people admitted to military hospitals in Afghanistan, four wounded in action and ten suffering diseases or non-battle injuries. In Iraq, 113 people were admitted, ten of them wounded in action.

From Two-Six to Two-Sex



QUESTION. What do Robbie Williams and Rachel Stevens have in common?

They regularly top the 'sexiest Brits' lists in magazines.

Correct.

They're successful pop stars. Correct.

They stop sailors getting sexual diseases. Correct. You probably didn't know about that last one, but thanks to the award-winning team in HMS Raleigh's sick bay thousands of young sailors do.

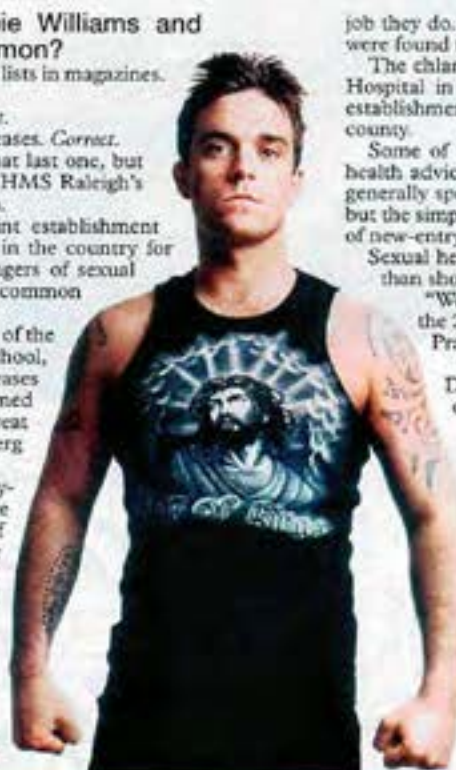
The medical centre at the Torpoint establishment has become one of the premier sites in the country for advising young people about the dangers of sexual diseases – and for finding the most common infection.

A couple of decades ago when some of the oldies at NN were passing through school, the danger of sexually-transmitted diseases was, if you'll excuse the pun, rammed down our throats thanks to the threat of AIDS (remember the giant iceberg adverts?).

Twenty years later, sexually-transmitted infections (as they're now called) are on the rise. Cases of chlamydia have gone up eight per cent in just three years. Instances of syphilis, gonorrhoea and hepatitis are also increasing.

Chlamydia is the biggest concern, not least because most of the time its symptoms are invisible; it destroys your reproductive organs.

The encouraging thing for the Raleigh team is that nine out ten recruits opt for screening. It's a good



job they do. Of the 2,900 sailors tested at Torpoint in the first year, 141 were found to have chlamydia (and are now receiving treatment).

The chlamydia testing is run in conjunction with the Royal Cornwall Hospital in Truro. The tests at Raleigh are on such a scale that the establishment now accounts for one in three people tested in the county.

Some of the more prudish older generations might balk at sexual health advice, some people might snigger (although thankfully there is generally speaking a more grown-up attitude to the subject these days), but the simple fact is that the 19 and 20-year-olds – that's the average age of new-entry sailors – are very sexually active.

Sexual health advice in the 21st Century is much more sophisticated than showing young people how to put a condom on a banana.

"We cannot just stand at the front of a classroom and lecture in the 21st Century," said Surg Lt Cdr Lorraine England, Raleigh's Practice Nursing Officer. "We try to make condoms fun."

There is more to sexual health than simply donning a Durex, however. These days, there also emphasis on a social conscience.

Robbie Williams is brought in (via video, not in person sadly) to outline the 'dark side' of the sex industry.

"Commercial sex has a very dark side," said Surg Lt Cdr Suzanne Porter, Raleigh's Principal Medical Officer. "It invariably involves human trafficking and organised crime, as well as the fact that the risk of infection is greater."

A lot of the sex education, for want of a better word, is about personal responsibility – and not just the person involved in the act.

"We try to encourage sailors not to egg on 16-year-old virgins to lose their virginity on a night out – they're not acting responsibly if they do that," Surg Lt Cdr Porter added.

And Rachel Stevens? The popstar has a sexual health website – www.rachelgetsfruity.co.uk (yes, really) – which is used by the Raleigh medics to inform and advise sailors.

The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you



RN features in new gay guide to the workplace

THE ROYAL Navy features in the Stonewall national gay recruitment guide for the second year running – the only one of the Armed Forces to be involved.

Staring One is a targeted at gay and lesbian job-seekers who wish to work in organisations where their sexual orientation will not affect their career development.

The MOD also features in the guide.

Stonewall's Director of Workplace Programmes, Stephen Frost, said: "Stonewall and the Royal Navy have been working together for nearly two years now.

"This is Stonewall's second lesbian and gay recruitment guide and the second time the Royal Navy has been both in it and advertised in it.

"That's because operational effectiveness requires the best personnel, whatever their sexual orientation – it's a question of fair and efficient recruitment."

Around 20,000 hard copies of the guide are being distributed to student unions, employment agencies and university gay and lesbian societies around the country, and is available online at the website www.stonewall.org.uk/students

Disciplined approach to Forces legislation

ON NOVEMBER 8 a new Armed Forces Act received 'Royal Assent', which in other words means it has received approval from the Queen to become law.

By the end of 2008 it will replace the Naval Discipline Act and the other Service Discipline Acts (the Army Act and the Air Force Act) with a single system of law under which all the armed forces will operate.

The idea is to introduce a more modern service justice system that harmonises the arrangements for discipline across all three Armed Forces.

With more joint operations, joint training and joint defence organisations it makes sense to have one system of law rather than having people from different Services working together but under different rules.

This will ensure greater fairness.

A good many of the changes

under the new Act will affect only specialist staff such as lawyers and the service police, whilst others will impact on the Navy as a whole.

Some of the more important of these are outlined below.

What remains unchanged is the central role of the Commanding Officer, who will continue to sit at the heart of the disciplinary system.

Summary trial, or 'The Table' as we know it, will see some modifications under the new Act.

Under the new tri-Service 'Summary Hearing' process, Royal Navy COs will see some reduction in their powers of punishment, whilst those of Army and RAF COs will increase a little to achieve parity.

This does not mean the Navy is going soft, though – whilst the 'warrant punishment' will disappear into the history books, Royal Navy COs will be able to apply for enhanced powers of punishment (eg detention and disrating) where an offence merits it.

In the future, sailors will have

the right to elect trial by court-martial on any offence which a CO has the power to deal with at his Table.

At the moment, Jack can only opt for court-martial where the offence may result in detention, dismissal or disrating. Like now, the inherently serious offences (eg glassings) will be sent straight to court-martial.

Under the new arrangements, the Naval Prosecuting Authority will join with its Army and RAF counterparts to form a single Service Prosecuting Authority.

The responsibilities of the new prosecuting authority will, however, stay the same as now – to decide whether a trial by court-martial should take place and to conduct the prosecution in most cases.

Under the new Act members of the Armed Forces will keep their statutory right to complain on any matter relating to their service.

Most cases will continue to be dealt with at the lowest possible level, by the CO, but complaints may progress up to the Defence Council.

To help improve the efficiency of the complaints system, the Defence Council will be able to delegate its powers to a new Service Complaints Panel.

Where there is a complaint which involves bullying or certain other types of unacceptable

behaviour, an independent civilian member (not a civil servant) will sit on the Panel.

There will also be an independent Service Complaints Commissioner who will be able to receive allegations and complaints from a Service person or another member of the public, and refer them to the chain of command for action.

When things go wrong, such as a ship running aground, the Navy currently holds a Board of Inquiry (BoI).

Under the new Act the BoI will be replaced by a Service Inquiry.

These Inquiries will have statutory authority and will improve the investigation process of finding out what happened and making sure it does not happen again.

There is still a good deal of work to be done between now and the end of 2008 in developing the detail of the procedures which will need to be in place under the new Act.

The RN's recently-established Armed Forces Bill implementation team, which sits within the Fleet HQ, will keep COs informed on progress and review all existing guidance and regulations.

Training will be given for all those who administer discipline on a day-to-day basis to make sure they know what the changes are and how they affect them.

Over the next two years we will all be required to master a new discipline.

Agency can aid veterans

VETERANS come in all shapes and sizes – and ages.

Even if you spent just one day in the Armed Forces, you are technically a veteran, and can call on a vast network of support and guidance.

The key MOD element in this network is the Veterans Agency, which can be accessed via the helpline (0800 169 2277) or at www.veteransagency.mod.uk

The Agency also administers the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, launched in April last year, which provides a simple and quick means of compensating Service and ex-Service personnel for illness and injury sustained as a result of their service – details and relevant booklets can be obtained via the helpline or website.



It's your 2.6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr Dave Joyce at Fleet Media Ops on 93832 8809 or Lt Cdr 'Aj' Ajala at DPR(N) on 9621 85984.



Clubz' club fits the bill

THE first rule of Fit Club is: You talk about Fit Club. The second rule of Fit Club is: You talk about Fit Club.

With apologies to Brad Pitt, but a new healthy lifestyle initiative has begun at HMS Raleigh to tackle the national problem with obesity.

But rather than throw several dozen people into a gym and encouraging them to exercise en masse – Jane Fonda or Mad Lizzie-style (*you're showing your age* – Ed), the emphasis is very much on one-to-one support.

The 'club' is the idea of POPT Iain Reitze and is driven less by the demands of the RN – where fitness tests are part-and-parcel of Service life – than by the demands of society as a whole.

"This is more than just a problem affecting sailors, it's a national problem which causes the deaths of 9,000 people every year," said Iain. "Fit Club mirrors the Government's initiative on obesity."

Although Fit Club tackles a national issue, it has an impact on the RN; the career of one club member has been hindered because of failing the RN Fitness Test, for example.

To date, three ship's companies have signed up to the initiative: time is specially set aside for them in the gym so they "are not discouraged by the fitties"; Iain also provides advice on healthy living, such as cutting down on alcohol and fatty foods, as well as advising a fitness regime which suits the person.

Iain hopes to see his club members at least once a week, and expects them to exercise on their own initiative at least two or three times weekly.

"I'm not cracking the whip. This is about encouraging and motivating people – a lot is down to personal drive."

● RN facilities such as those at the Victory Stadium (above) and HMS Temeraire give Navy personnel every opportunity to get fit and stay fit

Admin changes will affect RNFT

CHANGES to the administration of the Royal Navy Fitness Test were due to be published as *Navy News* went to press.

Although the physical aspects of the test remain the same, there has been a considerable change to the administrative process.

The key change is that personnel remain 'in date' for the RNFT for one year from the date of the test.

And although the responsibility remains with the individual to be 'in date' and to give their RNFT to their Divisional Officer, the DO also remains fundamentally responsible for ensuring that all those in their Division are 'in date', conducting remedial training or exempt under the rules of the new test, as specified in DIN 169/06.

The RNFT encourages regular exercise and for personnel to adopt a healthy lifestyle ready for operations, and PT staff remain the facilitators of the RNFT and will offer advice to those wishing to develop their fitness or embark on remedial training.

With the RNFT linked to promotion and plenty of training facilities for personnel to use, RN personnel are given every opportunity to stay fit.



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Rumble in the Jungle

I'll begin with a confession.

Two confessions, actually. I thought all aircrewmen with the junglies were Royal Marines; and all jungle aircrewmen did was winch people up or man a ruddy great machine-gun, writes Richard Harrington.

Wrong and wrong again. In fact, incredibly wrong. Okay, so four out of five aircrewmen with the three Sea King formations allocated to the commandos - 845, 846 and 848 Naval Air Squadrons - are indeed green berets.

But they do so, so much more than 'simply' point a gun or winch you off the ground.

I highlight my ignorance because it's probably shared by most of the RN - the fishheads especially, or that's the impression the aircrewmen have.

Which is not good for a very small branch. As of the end of October, there were just 67 qualified aircrewmen flying with the junglies, something this small and close band of brothers wants to address.

There have been no new aircrewmen undergoing training with 848 at Yeovilton for about a year; the next batch won't arrive until the summer.

So the push is on to find fresh blood, among the marines, but especially among the rest of the Fleet.

PO 'Soapy' Warters had spent half a dozen years in communications before he decided to switch careers.

"I joined the branch because I got to know a few of the aircrewmen on Invincible. They introduced me to the 'bright lights' of the aviation world. It looked like a good life," he says.

This is, of course, probably the wrong answer to give your assessors when you roll up for the interview. It is honest, however.

Money is an issue. Flying pay is nice. But it is not the issue. Most people 'go jungle' because they want some excitement.

"If you want to earn a medal then do this job rather than sitting 50 miles off the coast on a ship enjoying a Sunday barbecue," says CPO 'Burny' Byrne, 848's senior aircrewman.

Soapy agrees. He was a pinger, (hunting submarines) but switched to the jungle world - since when he has completed more than 2,000 hours in the air.

That's not surprising. The junglies are in demand. Wherever Royal goes, his helicopter squadrons follow. Norway, Belize, Sierra Leone, Iraq (but not Afghanistan because the climatic/atmospheric conditions don't suit Sea Kings).



● A last-minute check of the tail rotor before a flight and (right) optimism abounds as an aircrewman prepares for the invasion of Iraq

Pictures: LAFPhoto 'Snowy' Winter and GPOPhoto Dave Coombs

"This is ten times more exciting than general service. There's a great buzz in the squadrons. It's not for everyone. Some people don't enjoy a shake at 4am for a flight having spent the night sleeping in a field," says Soapy.

He continues: "We've had everything from sniffer dogs to an oil sheik in the back of a cab."

The dog was lowered into a minefield in Bosnia to help with ordnance disposal; the sheik was a VIP visitor to HMS Ocean.

Sea Kings being Sea Kings, the sheik got covered in oil from a leaking pipe, rather ruining his robes. "The CO of Ocean wasn't chuffed..."

The fishheads who have chosen to go jungle don't regret it - "As a killick gunner I saw my PO cleaning the heads. I didn't fancy that as a career," says Burny - but nor do they regret having spent time in another branch.

"There's very little from my comms job that I brought with me. But I think you need time with the Fleet to understand the Navy, to mature as a matelot."

Perhaps the biggest eye-opener is the responsibility resting on a jungle aircrewman's shoulders.

Navigator, flight planner, winchman, gunner, rapid roper, abseiler, flight safety expert, aerial photographer, the eyes and the ears of the pilot - particularly when the Sea King is flying with just one pilot.

The Sea King's cockpit permits visibility from about 8 o'clock round to 4 o'clock. Outside that, the pilot is blind, relying entirely on the directions of his aircrewman if landing in a tight clearing, for example.

"A lot of responsibility falls on the shoulders of our aircrewmen," says pilot Lt Cdr Key Smith. "You have to have faith in his ability."

Some of that ability is taught, some of it is in-built. Generally speaking you can either read a map or you can't.

In the air, it goes a step further. As navigator an aircrewman must turn 2D into 3D. You have to be able to read contours, to understand the lie of the land, to spot hazards - radio masts, electricity pylons, hills, ridges.

"Relating what you see on a map to the real world is a real skill," explains Lt Cdr Smith. "As a pilot you don't need to know about problems as they're upon you - you need to know about them in advance. It's about anticipation, getting in front of the aircraft."

That is vital in low-level flights at altitudes of under 150ft - "our bread and butter", Lt Cdr Smith points out.

Other navigation requires considerable brain power. You have to fly to HMS Albion. She's 100 miles away steaming east at 10 knots. The windspeed is 15 knots from the south. What course should you set and how long will it take to get there? (Don't worry, we're not asking for an answer.)

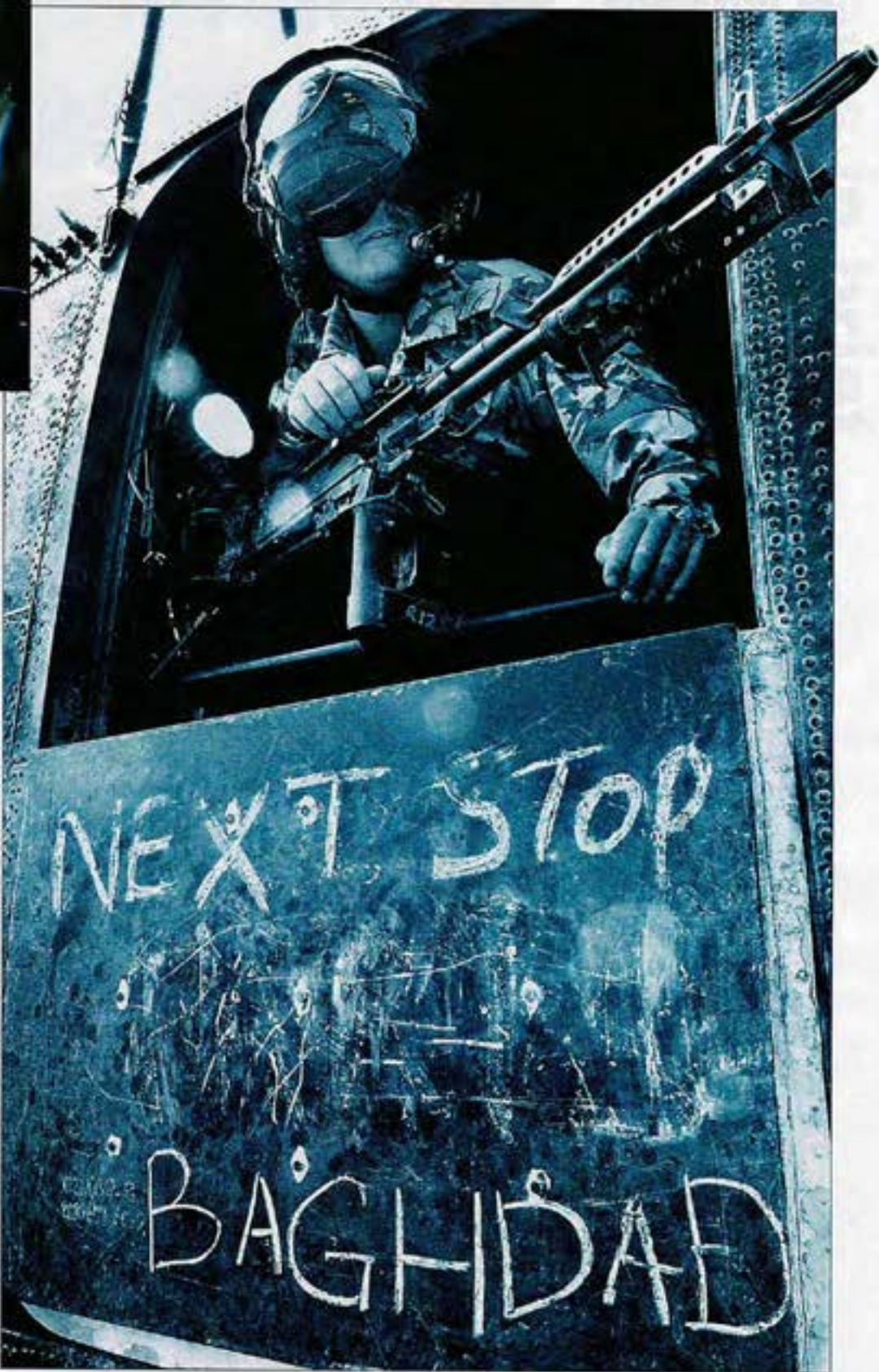
It sounds like a problem set at GCSE or A Level.

"I'd been out of school for seven or eight years and suddenly I found myself having to do complicated multiplication," says Soapy.

Anyway, maths, living in a field, demanding working conditions, and high tempo of operations notwithstanding, if fancy a life with the junglies, bear one thing in mind.

"You have to be on your guard all the time with the banter from the Booties," warns Burny. "There's a good craic. Oh, and we all hate the Crabs..."

● We'll have more features on the aircrewman branch in the New Year.



Winch way now?

THE road to jungle begins with a medical examination, then four weeks of flying grading to understand the very basics of aviation.

Pass that, and 79 weeks of training begin in earnest.

First up, five weeks on diverse subjects such as first aid, survival equipment and combat survival.

Then there's five weeks with 705 NAS chiefly on the ground learning some vital skills. Navigation, dead reckoning, meteorology, and so on.

Then there are 43 weeks with the RAF, five learning the basics of helicopters, 38 on the Air Loadmaster course.

After that, it's time to re-immersion yourself in the world of the RN. First, six weeks with 705 NAS on navigational training.

And then the climax, the Operational Conversion Phase: 20 weeks with 848 NAS in Yeovilton to prepare you for the front line from standard manoeuvres such as guiding a Sea King down into a confined space to demanding major exercises over Exmoor



and Dartmoor as you conduct challenging aerials, trying to avoid being spotted or shot down by the 'enemy'.

And after that you earn your aircrewman badge, get bumped up to leading hand/corporal rate if you haven't already, and begin drawing your flying pay.

Anyway, if you do graduate, you get to spend your down time at the Hoof Inn (hoofing - geddit?), the aircrewmen's rest room.

You could admire the view of the airfield, or the various mobiles (no, not phones) hanging from the ceiling. The inflatable Utterly Butterfly biplane, the battered branch of a tree - a reminder that someone got a bit too close to the edge of a clearing during one training mission...

Just remember not to sit in 'Burny's work lazyboy chair' - that's for the chief.

Oh, and if you accidentally knock the makeshift 'scramble' bell, it's wets all round.

For more information contact WO1(ACMN) Gardiner, 848 NAS, on 93510 6289.

● I can see for miles and miles... An aircrewman of 845 NAS admires the view of Dartmoor from the side door

Pictures: POPhoto 'Brad' Bradbury



So long, Salalah

THERE are several quintessential elements of an English summer.

The sound of willow upon leather followed by a ripple of gentle applause; grandad resting in a striped deckchair with a handkerchief on his head; youngsters devouring a 'Flake 99' - leaving the chocolate till last, of course; and the garden fête complete with bring and buy stall, cream teas and tombola.

HMS Kent missed out on all of these bar one: the garden fête. She doesn't, of course, possess a garden but Jack is good at improvising.

So the frigate's flight deck became host to the event with stalls aplenty, a wheel of fortune, an extreme rowing contest courtesy of the ship's Royal Marines detachment (obviously - Ed), a human fruit machine (we've no idea what that is) and the stocks where (strangely) the opportunity to hurl wet sponges at shipmates proved to be rather popular.

MEM 'Chippy' Raybone and LWEA 'Monkey' Moncur won a dinner date with Kent's CO Cdr Gavin Pritchard... who in turn scooped the booby prize: the chance to crush some gash.

Still the fête did raise £450... The fun day provided welcome relief for the ship which roasted in the Gulf sun as she protected the two oil platforms supplying Iraq's chief export to the world.

Kent spent 60 days in direct support of the KAAOI and ABOT terminals - Khawr al Amaya and Al Basra respectively.

She kept tabs on more than 500 merchant vessels in the area and conducted 47 specific security sweeps of ships actually approaching the two terminals, while Kent's doctor, Surg Lt Rex Mellor, was kept extremely busy providing medical assistance for Allied forces in the area as well as local sailors.

From Iraqi waters, Kent moved to Oman's capital Muscat.

The visit coincided with Ramadan, the month of fasting in the Muslim calendar, which meant routines aboard during daylight were changed until nightfall, when Muscat burst into life once more.

One of the highlights of the visit was a clash on the hockey pitch between the ship's team and the Omani national side.

"For a team of mixed ability



that had not played together before, coupled with a temperature of 35°C at 9.30pm, the scoreline of 0-7 against an international side was definitely one to be pleased with!" said hockey skipper MEM 'Bloomie' Bloomfield.

Trafalgar Night was celebrated in the middle of the Arabian Sea, where the Immortal

Memory was naturally toasted and the highlight of the evening was a chocolate HMS Victory crafted by Kent's chefs.

The trip across the Arabian Sea ended in Mumbai - for most sailors the visit to the gateway to India proved to be the highlight of the six months away from Pompey.

Waiting for the ship in the port were British businesses who used the warship as the platform to promote their wares.

Guest of honour at an official reception for the firms was the Duke of York, who was welcomed aboard by a 12-man Royal Guard. At the end of the evening His Royal Highness was invited to take the salute at the ceremonial sunset.

"It's an honour to be asked to host such an important and influential event," said Cdr Pritchard.

Everyone had been looking forward to the occasion - and they will remember it as one of the highlights of their time in Kent.

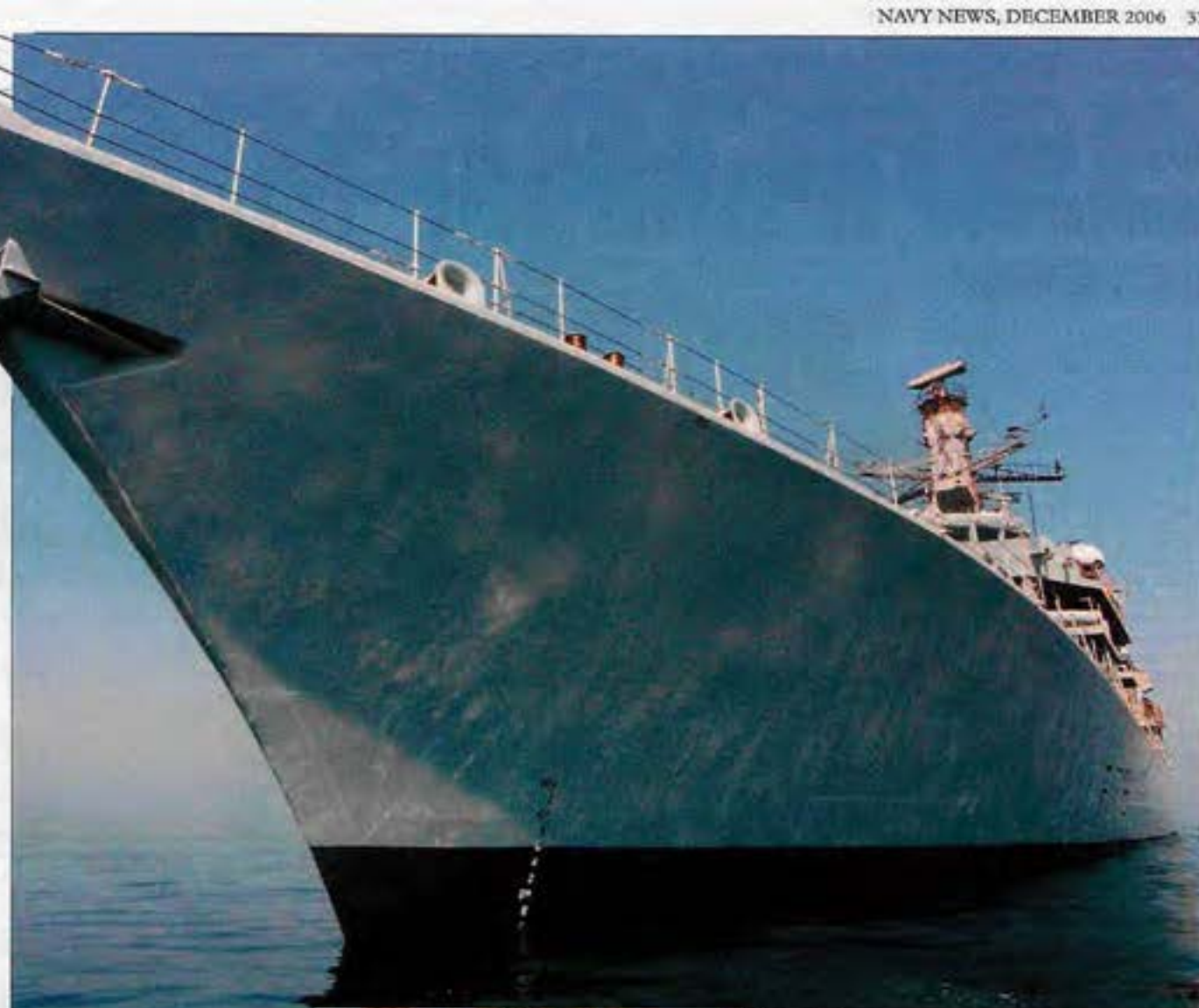
Away from official duties, crew headed unsurprisingly for local eateries, there was the obligatory visit to the Gateway of India monumental arch, sporting buffs made a pilgrimage to the Cricket Club of India (the Indian equivalent of the MCC), and everyone went shopping.

Just as HMS Chatham left Mexico laden with sombreros *et al*, so HMS Kent cast away from Mumbai with lockers crammed with carpets, jewellery, silks and wood carvings.

There was one last stop in the Middle East region before beginning the 3,000-mile journey home.

In the Omani port of Salalah, Kent officially handed over duties as Gulf guardian to her sister HMS Sutherland.

"It was with great fondness and the odd fire hose that we waved them off into the Arabian sunset," said Lt Cdr Mike Thompson, Kent's Marine Engineer Officer.



Pictures: LA(Phot) Chris Wenham, FRPU Whale Island

Pictured clockwise from above

- An unusual bow-on shot of Kent lolling in calm seas in the northern Arabian Gulf
- Mumb-aye... OM(C) Sally Harris - one of Kent's 'PR stars' who featured regularly in radio shows during the deployment - gives a tour of Mumbai by taxi her seal of approval
- Swap ship... Kent and Sutherland side-by-side in Salalah, Oman, as the former hands over Gulf duties to the latter
- Angular velocity... Kent's sea boat conducts drills at speed near the Iraqi oil terminals





'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

KGVA hold anniversary gala dinner

FOLLOWING the AGM of the HMS King George V Association, held in Leicester, members headed to Hinckley to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the first commissioning of the second HMS King George V, with a church parade and service in St Mary's Church, followed by a gala reunion dinner.

The church service was conducted by Canon Brian Davis, and before the march-past, the Mayor of Hinckley and Bosworth, Cllr Mary Sherwin, and the president of the KGVA, S/M Bill Kelly, reviewed the Sea Cadets of the combined Hinckley unit, TS Amazon, and the Northampton unit, TS Laforey.

The gala dinner, enjoyed by all, was attended by the Mayor of Hinckley and Bosworth, and by the Commanding Officer of the Training Ship Amazon, Lt Neil Hartwell, and his partner.

Trafalgar Night – beef and belly dancers...

NELSON'S victory was celebrated in traditional Naval style by branches at home and overseas with dinners, dances, parades and other events.

In Spain, members of *Torre Vieja* branch turned out in formal rig for their celebratory dinner, the ladies in smart long dresses and the men in dinner jackets.

Guests included Graham Knight, head of the *Torre Vieja* Tourist Board, Dna Ma Dolores Sanchez Rocha, Curator of the Sea and Salt Museum, and her assistant, D Rafael Aracil Sala, branch president S/M David Hutton and chairman Robin Hargraves.

If relatively small in numbers,

the Warwick branch, thanks to the efforts of chairman S/M John Coles, held an enjoyable dinner attended by 40 shipmates, wives and guests, including the Mayor of Warwick, Cllr Misan McFarland, and local dignitaries.

For shipmates of Falmouth branch the celebrations extended over a weekend, beginning with a formal dinner at which the guest of honour was Capt Rupert Wallace, CO of HMS Campbelltown.

The guests were welcomed by branch president Cdr Tony Hogg, and the occasion was thoroughly enjoyed by shipmates and guests, including branch chaplain the Rev Stephen Tudgey, and chairman S/M Mike Stevens.

The celebrations continued the following evening when members attended the Trafalgar Ladies Night in the WOs and GPOs Mess, RNAS Culdrose – thanks to CPO Caroline Foley for the hospitality extended.

Members also attended a reception aboard Campbelltown, and there was a good turn-out for the Nelson Memorial parade and service at Madron Church, Penzance.

Members of *Wolverhampton* organised a dinner dance, enjoyed by 115 shipmates and guests.

After a traditional roast beef dinner, they were entertained by a three-piece band and a belly-dance troupe.

Guests included Admiral Sir

Barry Wilson and Naval Attaché Capt Norman Jolin RCN.

The next morning, members joined those of the HMS Newfoundland Association for the dedication of a plaque in St Peter's Church in memory of those lost aboard the city's adopted warship.

Excitement ran high in the US Club when the *Littlehampton* branch staged a Racing Night to celebrate Nelson's victory.

The event was led by Chief Steward S/M Dave Lawrie, while Chief Jockey S/M Tom Harrison, assisted by Trainer S/M Andy Wady, organised the runners.

Following the races and supper, a certificate of appreciation was presented to S/M Joan Harrison by president S/M Phil Brown, for her long and dedicated service as branch welfare and catering officer.

Guest of honour at the *York* branch dinner was Cdr Paul Porter RN, formerly Commanding Officer of HMS York and well-known in the city for his support of local charities – a tradition maintained by the current CO and ship's company.

After dinner and an interesting speech by Cdr Porter, he was presented with an engraved glass and a book depicting the life and war of S/M Bernard Hallas, an ex-Royal and the oldest active member of the branch.

There was a good turn-out for the church service and parade, when the salute was taken on the Mansion House steps by the Lord Mayor, Janet Hopton, accompanied by Cdr Porter, Col D Shallow RM and branch chairman S/M Derek Eggleton.

At the *Bexhill-on-Sea* dinner, enjoyed by 71 shipmates and friends, the Mayor and Mayoress, Cllr Eric Armstrong and his wife Jeanette, were guests of honour.

After an excellent meal, including the traditional roast beef, S/M Les Quilty gave an insight into what life was like aboard the vessels at Trafalgar for the sailors.

The guests were provided with a colourful programme, compiled by S/M Don Newham, which included amusing hints from the 1911 *Handbook of Naval Cookery*.

When the *Cheshunt* branch sent their dispatch they were looking forward to their Trafalgar Mess Deck supper, when members were expected to turn up in 'old nautical dress' with a rum bosun.

Branch padre the Rev Jane Dicker, the daughter of a branch member, was due to conduct the Trafalgar Day service.

Meantime, S/M Peter Triggs has taken over from S/M Mike Adams as branch vice president.

The opening of the *Cheshunt* Community Hospital, to which the branch donated equipment, was attended by S/Ms Ernie Havis and Vernon Elphick.

A warm welcome to Tokyo

AS A port of call, Tokyo has become very popular with RN ships – and part of the attraction is down to the welcome, hospitality and assistance afforded to the visitors by the shipmates of the Japan branch.

During the recent visit of HMS Westminster, a programme of events laid on for visitors included a run ashore at night in the dynamic and electrifying district of Roppongi, and a traditional 'moon viewing' party at Togo shrine.

In addition, S/M Patrick Carroll offered a trip for a party of four in a private plane to the nearby subtropical island of Oshima, overflying Tokyo, Yokohama, the ancient feudal capital of Kamakura and Yokosuka, home of the US Seventh Fleet.

Visibility was excellent, making the journey even more enjoyable.

Changing face of Portsmouth

A PARTY of 29 shipmates and their wives from Harrogate branch, many of them finding it difficult to get about these days, enjoyed a varied five-day visit to Portsmouth, courtesy of the Lottery Awards Scheme.

The party included many wartime veterans who had not been to Portsmouth since the war, and were amazed to see how much the city had changed.

They found Portsmouth Naval Base transformed, with many of the warehouses they remembered now serving as smart, well-designed heritage museums.

They also paid visits to the RM Museum in Eastney, and to the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport, HMS Victory and HMS Warrior 1860, and the D-Day Museum in Southsea, which awakened many poignant memories.

Maltese memories

OLD times were recalled and memories rekindled when a party of veterans from the RN Engine Room Association and their wives made a nostalgic visit to Malta, sponsored by the Lottery Awards Scheme.

The group joined members of the Malta branch for a service and wreath-laying ceremony at Valletta's war memorial, the Siege Bell, overlooking the entrance to the Grand Harbour.

They attended a further service in the naval cemetery in Kulkara, in memory of shipmates from two world wars.

The services were conducted by the Rev Barry Smith, a former flight deck stoker, aboard HMS Eagle.

Naval Quirks



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Medal for Horace

SHIPMATE Horace Grant, serving in the cruiser HMS Glasgow in April 1940, took part in the rescue of King Haakon of Norway, Crown Prince Olav, members of the Norwegian government, and a significant amount of gold bullion, from the advancing Nazis following the German invasion of the country.

For this service, Horace was recently awarded the Norwegian Participation Medal in the Royal Hotel, Ventnor, on the Isle of Wight.

The presentation was made on behalf of King Harald by Cdr Paal Hope of the Royal Norwegian Navy.

The dramatic rescue, which took place as Luftwaffe bombers pounded the town of Molde, saw Glasgow make her way up a fjord and tie up at a jetty beside burning buildings.

The King was ushered through the chaotic streets and on to the Royal Navy ship, which was forced to break away and escape as the bombers returned, tearing away part of the jetty as she went.

Tots are issued to standard bearers

MEMBERS were delighted with the support and turn-out for the rededication of the Plymouth branch standard in St Andrew's Church to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Association.

Following the service, conducted by RN chaplain the Rev Scott Lamb, shipmates displayed 28 standards as they paraded down Royal Parade to music by the Royal Marines Band Plymouth, the salute being taken by the Lord Mayor, Cllr Michael Fletcher, and Cdr Simon Lister, Naval Base Commander and branch president.

The ceremonies over, members and their families and friends adjourned to the St Johnston Club in Devonport for an excellent buffet – with a free tot for all standard bearers.



RNA standard bearers and shipmates march down Royal Parade in Plymouth

www.navynews.co.uk

New booklet celebrates anniversary

THE 50th anniversary of the Submarine Old Comrades Association (SOCA) and Submariners Association (SA) has been marked by the publication of a history of the organisations.

SOCA branches started to appear independently between the wars, but the national body was not formally created until 1956.

The change of name, from SOCA to SA, was agreed in 1999.

The book details the histories of individual branches, created by the branches themselves in a variety of styles.

There are also biographies of key members of the Associations, and background information, much of it provided by Barrie Downer, secretary of Barrow-in-Furness branch, with pictures, extracts from minutes and cuttings.

In order to cover costs, the book is priced at £5 plus postage and packing, and is available to order from Joan Fraser, 13a Bradmore Road, Oxford OX2 6QP, telephone 01865 279552, or email joan.fraser@new.ox.ac.uk

The Submariners Association is open to all qualified submariners, irrespective of status, rank or rate, who have served in a submarine under British command.

For more information go to www.submarinersassociation.co.uk

Local call

FOLKESTONE branch members did not have far to travel to visit HMS Kent earlier this year - the Type 23 frigate visited Dover before her current deployment to the Gulf, and the shipmates took the opportunity to take a look at her.

Heroic Bamse is honoured

AN IMPRESSIVE statue of the wartime Norwegian St Bernard dog Bamse, posthumously awarded the PDSA Gold Medal for saving the lives of at least two sailors, has been unveiled in Montrose by the Duke of York.

As the only World War 2 recipient of the medal - the animal equivalent of the George Cross - Bamse is something of an adopted hero in Scotland.

Only nine of the medals have ever been awarded.

It was shortly after the German invasion of Norway that Bamse arrived in Montrose aboard the Norwegian minesweeper Thorodd - the ship's captain, Cdr Erling Hafto, had taken Bamse with him as a registered crew member.

And in no time at all the dog had won the hearts of people in Montrose and Dundee, where the ship was stationed.

He took his duties seriously, taking up position at Action Stations at the foremost gun tower, wearing his own personal steel helmet, and remained on guard until the All Clear.

He also kept a watchful eye on crew members, particularly on runs ashore, when he took it upon himself to round them up from the pubs and get them back on board before curfew.

To help him, the crew bought Bamse his own bus pass, worn

round his neck, and whenever a bus driver spotted him in the town the bus would stop in case he needed a lift.

Sporting his Royal Norse sailor's cap, Bamse's image appeared on Christmas, Easter and greetings cards, and he became a symbol of hope and freedom for Norwegian forces serving worldwide.

When Bamse died on the dockside at Montrose in July 1944, the whole town closed down for his funeral, and hundreds of school-children and workers lined the streets to pay their respects.

The dog's coffin, draped in the Norwegian flag, was carried by the crew of the Thorodd, and sailors from six Norwegian ships and local dignitaries provided the Guard of Honour.

The unveiling of Bamse's statue, sculpted by Alan Herriot, was attended by members of the RN and Royal Norwegian Navy, and a message was read out from King Harald V.

Others who attended included Vigdis Hafto, daughter of Cdr Hafto, and members of the Montrose Heritage Trust.

Herts of oak

FOR LONG, loyal and dedicated service, S/Ms Jack Neal, a member of the Herts branch for 65 years, and Maurice Stratton, who has clocked up 60 years, were honoured with certificates of appreciation.

S/M Jack's certificate was presented to him in the farmhouse of his daughter Angela by branch vice president S/M Percy Burton, accompanied by four shipmates.

There was a bouquet of flowers for Angela, who laid on some delicious 'eats' and plenty of drink.

S/M Jack, who served in the Navy

from 1939, completing 22 years service, retired as a CPO, serving in HM ships Triumph, Ocean and Sheffield, among others.

S/M Maurice was presented with his certificate by president S/M Bryan Smalley at the monthly meeting, following which members joined the ladies in the bar, where the drinks were on S/M Maurice.

Delicious food was provided by S/M Jo Kerr.

S/M Maurice served in the RN from 1943-46, and took part in the Normandy Landings in destroyer HMS Waldegrave.

Ajax standard blessed

THE HMS Ajax Association standard has been blessed during the church service at the recent reunion in Chatham.

The initial work for the standard was carried out by Len Porte, and Reg Dolby saw it through to the final stages. Bob McMorran was the proud standard bearer at the church service.

There is also a new membership secretary, and the association is keen to increase membership; it would welcome applications from anyone who served in the frigate of that name.

Applications should be made to Malcolm Collis, 11 Edmonds Close, Buckingham, Bucks MK18 1YR, telephone 01280 815064.

Silver dinner

THE 25th anniversary of Bodmin branch was celebrated at a dinner, where the guest of honour was Sir Robin Hicks, former MP for Bodmin, who had attended the commissioning ceremony.

The celebration was attended by shipmates from Plymouth and St Austell, and members of the Aden Veterans Association.

RNXS plea

RNXS units in Guernsey, Jersey, the Isle of Man and the Shetlands are asked to notify M Cocker of those who served and received the RNXS Long Service Medal, as it is intended that a Medal Roll be published when names are available.

Please reply to Mr Cocker at 10 Ellerbeck Road, Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 1DH.



● The France Nord branch Union Flag was dedicated during the annual Trafalgar Day luncheon, held at St Malo, which was attended by 56 shipmates. Guest of honour was RNA National President Vice Admiral John McAnally, pictured above (on right) with branch chairman John Marett and branch chaplain Don Stewart

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our October edition was HMS Laymoor, and the £50 prize for the correct answer goes to Mr G Rowe, of Carshalton in Surrey.

This month's ship was a fast anti-submarine frigate, but was launched at the Birkenhead yard of Cammell Laird in January 1943 as a destroyer.

She was one of a number of ships that underwent a partial conversion in the 1950s, and she ended her days at a breakers yard in Dalmeir in the mid-1960s.

If you can name her, and her type number after conversion at Mountstuart docks in Cardiff,

you could win yourself £50.

We have removed her pennant number from the picture.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is January 12 2007. 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 February edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 142

Name

Address

My answers

Struggle for supremacy

DURING the successful visit of the RN rugby team to Cape Town, where they won the Commonwealth Cup, members of the local branch decided to test their own athletic abilities with a knock-out Uckers competition.

In a close final, S/Ms Sherwood and Davis held off the opposition to take the 'liquid' prize.

The runners-up were heard to complain that, had they been playing on the heaving deck of a destroyer off Iceland in a Force Ten, the result would have been different...

Record crowd

A NOTICE of a reunion for the HMS Vanguard Association which appeared in Navy News had the desired effect, according to the association chairman.

The reunion notched up a record attendance, with shipmates coming from as far afield as Spain and Ireland to swing the lamp, according to S/M Servener.

Island holiday

A WARM welcome awaited members of the Hanworth branch when they visited Cyprus for a late summer holiday.

A BBQ was laid on for the visitors by S/Ms Ian and Janet Brown at their home, and attended by 40 Cyprus shipmates.

During a most enjoyable evening the visitors were formally welcomed by Cyprus branch chairman S/M Nobby Hall, and S/M Alec Clements, vice chairman of Hanworth, replied on behalf of the visitors.



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Past masters, future victors

IN THE gangways and passages of Her Majesty's Ships Gloucester, York, St Albans and Illustrious makeshift beds were set up.

Sailors gave up their bunks, their mess spaces to accommodate the anticipated influx of distraught civilians.

For 48 hours or more many sailors got little or no sleep.

The lights burned brightly atop Portsdown Hill overlooking Portsmouth Harbour in some rather nondescript single-storey brick buildings.

Here too sailors were also working around the clock to help distraught civilians stuck in war-ravaged Lebanon.

But you didn't read about it in the newspapers or see it on the television reports.

But you also didn't read that the task force was struck by missiles – that's because it wasn't, thanks in part to 100 or so men and women 'on the hill': the men and women of the Maritime Warfare Centre.

For a century after Trafalgar it has long been argued that the Royal Navy became complacent with victory; the Great War provided a rude awakening.

It is the MWC's goal, nay duty, to ensure that today's RN never becomes afflicted by complacency.

In essence, it's about drawing the relevant lessons from past and present wars to win the next one.

Of course, we don't always mean 'war'. It's about constantly improving the way the Senior Service – and the Royal Marines and Fleet Air Arm for that matter – do business in great waters.

And how do you do that? By studying the actions – and reactions – of RN units across the globe, sometimes down to the minutest detail.

Each commanding officer returning from a deployment must write up his or her experiences – 'after-action' reports are not new to warfare – as well as carrying out a debriefing.

There's also operational data to pore over, signals, reports of specific incidents and much more – particularly in the case of major trials such as AUTEK, the underwater testing ground for submarine and anti-submarine warfare in the Bahamas.

"There is a huge amount of information coming in – the trick is to find that nugget which makes a difference," explained MWC Director Capt Tom

To be defeated and not submit is victory; to be victorious and rest on one's laurels is defeat.
– Josef Pilsudski

Karsten, who as CO of HM Ships Bicester, Sheffield and Endurance frequently submitted similar reports to those his team now analyses.

And there is a lot to analyse. The RN may have shrunk, but the information on its operations grows.

Take AUTEK, for example. Every ship, submarine and helicopter taking part recorded details of their actions, while the sea itself was littered with recorders; transponders then fed data back to a 'mission control' centre, where it was displayed on huge screens.

Such screens and chats with ship's operations teams will provide instant feedback, but it's in the less-glamorous surroundings of Portsmouth where the real benefits are gained – long after the ships have returned to port and the helicopters have touched down on the tarmac.

"The initial indications from AUTEK is that it was incredibly important work – we learned more about Merlin than we have in a long time. Put very simply: we have to understand the equipment we use," said Capt Karsten.

And that is no mean feat. We're not talking about programming a video recorder to tape EastEnders here. We are talking about state-of-the-art military equipment.

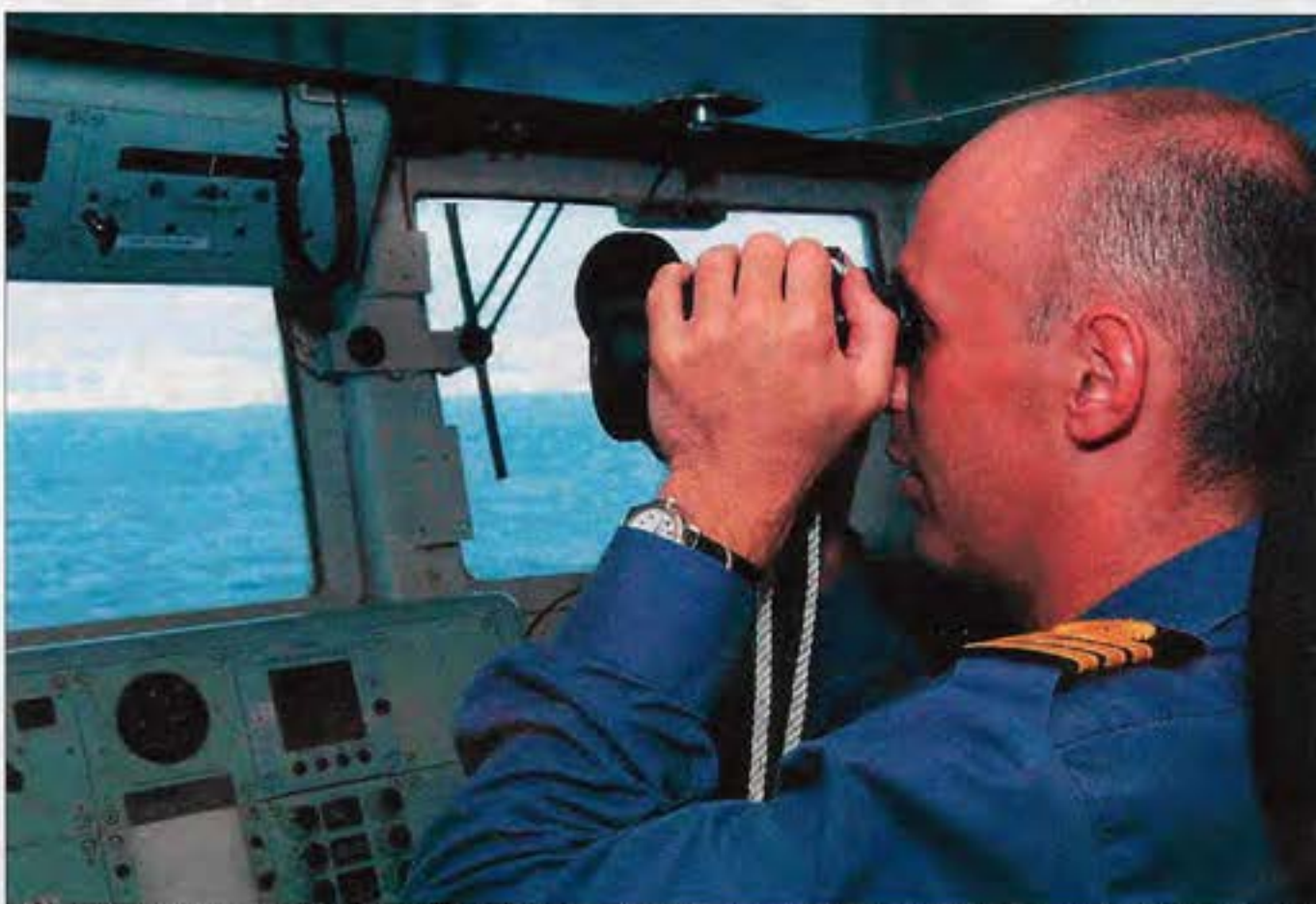
The end result are publications, guidelines, instruction manuals such as "Fleet Operational and Tactical Instructions" – commonly referred to as 'POTIs' – the ingredients for victory, if you like.

There is nothing as prescriptive as Jellicoe's much-maligned and rather rigid Grand Fleet Battle Orders.

But sailors do need to be able to react in an ever-changing world.

Gone are the days of dealing with the Russian bear, the ever-present threat for 40 years.

"Things are a lot less static than they were during the Cold War," said Capt Karsten.



● The ever-vigilant eye... HMS Gloucester's CO Cdr Mike Paterson keeps a sharp lookout as his destroyer approaches Lebanon during Operation Highbrow. The information the Maritime Warfare Centre provided proved essential to the task force's safe passage

Picture: Cpl Nik Howe, British Forces Cyprus

"We've got to be much more dynamic, always learning from experiences, always looking to do things better."

But if you were picturing some think tank with goatee-bearded experts resting their hands on their chins and musing about the philosophies of naval life, you'd be wrong.

Some of the work is long-term; other tasks are almost instantaneous.

Take Operation Highbrow – the evacuation of civilians from the Lebanon – when British warships were ordered to pluck people from the midst of a war zone.

In doing so, they faced the threat of missiles which had already sunk a merchantman and hit an Israeli warship. What were the best tactics

if attacked?

Within very little time the MWC team had refined the answer and sent fully updated instructions on how to deal with such missiles if launched at the task group.

And we're not talking about a quick search of Google or flick through *Jane's*, but a thorough delve through reams of data and information accumulated down the years to provide a potentially life-saving answer.

"Highbrow gave us a fantastic buzz. Within hours we had the first advice out to the ships; within days we had the problem sewn up," said Lt Cdr Paul Bell.

In the long term the goal is to create a huge database – a sort

of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (groan – Ed) – which sailors can tap in to for all the answers to problems.

"We would love to have a Navy 'Google'," said Cdr Martin Ewence. "It's a long way in the future... but it is achievable."

That database draws upon decades of experiences. Some have been consigned to the history books, but there are a few legacies of World War 2 even 60 years later.

"You can trace some of our anti-submarine warfare back to Johnnie Walker – although it's obviously changed substantially. We have a much better equipment and a much better understanding of the environment now," said Capt Karsten.

Part of that better understanding is no doubt attributable to the fact that the team is not desk-bound. It's important to get out and about.

MWC staff ran the AUTEK trials, they joined the Vela task force off Africa, they regularly visit the Gulf.

"Getting out to the ships – 'reachout' – is important – it keeps us up to date and it helps the ships. We can help to lessen the burden for the ship's company – we will roll our sleeves up and get involved," explained Cdr Ewence.

Some of those not desk-bound have more fun than others. The centre owns four jetskis which

are used to test ships' reactions to 'suicide attacks' – normally during Neptune Warrior war games in Scotland, but also in Cyprus to prepare Gulf-bound ships for their mission.

The core business, however, remains studying what goes on at the coalface.

"Front-line feedback is our lifeblood," stressed Lt Cdr Bell.

"We need to be on the minds of those in the front line as much as Fleet Headquarters are. These are the people who see what is happening."

When not working on immediate problems for the Fleet, the MWC experts are working their way (still) through the AUTEK data and, for instance, ways to improve maritime security.

There's also always work to do on amphibious operations, the potential threats from diesel submarine (hopefully now countered by Sonar 2087 reaching front-line units), and the potency of the 'bagger' Sea Kings with their airborne surveillance and control kit is still being tapped.

"There is some head-turning stuff going on here," Cdr Ewence enthused.

"They perhaps don't realise the brainpower involved. We are an engine room which saves people's lives. We do the thinking that those in the front line don't have time for."

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Ooda thought it?

If I were to say to you: "I'd like to get inside your OODA loop," there would be a few possible responses.

1. You'd slap me around the head.
2. You'd cart me off to the funny farm.
3. You'd acknowledge my incisive knowledge of military tactics and strategy.

Fortunately, we're talking about the latter. OODA is what makes all of us tick. It is the ability to observe, orientate, decide and act – particularly important in conflict. If you can do this quicker than your enemy, if you can get inside his OODA 'loop', you have won the battle.

Col John "40-second" Boyd (before you start sniggering, that was how long it took him to dispatch enemy aircraft in a dogfight) realised this.

He wondered why inferior US aircraft were outperforming superior enemy jets over Korea.

The answer was simple: their cockpits gave greater all-round visibility. Because pilots could see the enemy first, they could orientate themselves more quickly, decide what to do – then act.

Boyd's thinking has influenced two generations of jet fighters as well as aerial combat, but it's also influenced the RN.

"If you can get inside the enemy's ooda loop, you can act more quickly. In short, you have the edge," said Capt Karsten.

Delve into the rich tapestry of RN history

HISTORIANS can now search through a treasure trove of RN history from the comfort of their own homes.

Experts at the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth have finished cataloguing 12,000 items in their archives to make it easier for people to find personal accounts which bring the Senior Service's history to life.

Not surprisingly, the RNM has one of the most treasured collections of diaries, letters, and accounts of Royal Navy life in the world.

The catalogue of that collection can be found on the revamped RNM website - www.royalnavalmuseum.org - which was unveiled by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns.

The site doesn't allow people to see the actual manuscripts and diaries, but it does provide a précis of the document.

But the Sea Your History project which launches imminently will give web users the chance to view 15,000 items - photographs, posters, paintings, letters, diaries, voice recordings and ephemera - digitised to create a history of the RN and Royal Marines in the 20th Century.

The RNM archive holds artefacts spanning six centuries; the oldest manuscript is an account of the refit of the 'King's Ships' - including the Mary Rose - from 1514 to the latest addition, the brochure from the naming ceremony of HMS Clyde in September.

"We have nearly 300 diaries, for example, ranging from one kept by a petty officer aboard HMS Fearless in the Falklands to a seaman who was taken by a press gang in 1780," said Matthew Sheldon, Head of Research Collections.

The collection can be searched at www.royalnavalmuseum.org/research.htm

From RN blue to RN green

IN LINE with the Government's push to be more 'green', sailors and civilian personnel in Devonport embraced an energy saving week.

With the emphasis across all three naval bases on savings to ensure more cash is fed to the front line, major energy saving initiatives are already under way.

Portsmouth has slashed its energy budget by more than £1m since the spring by turning off lights and computers when not in use and by switching on the heating later in the year.

In Devonport, energy-saving light bulbs, recycled paper and re-usable heat are already used on a widespread basis.

Electricity for the Fleet Accommodation Centre, where many Devonport-based sailors live, is provided from renewable energy sources.

But across the base, the electricity bill is still huge: Devonport guzzles anywhere between 250 and 415kWh every minute (the average house uses around 9kWh per day) at a cost of more than £26 for every 60 seconds.

Capt Steve Garrett, Captain of the Base, said important savings could be made by making minor changes in people's habits.

"A computer monitor left on standby will cost £27 a year while a TV and video recorder doing the same costs £37," he explained.

"There are straightforward and practical things everyone can get involved in: printing out fewer e-mails, or turning lights and monitors off."

Beyond the financial burden (leaving a monitor and fluorescent light on all year will set the base back £125), the aim is to cut down on carbon dioxide emissions; that same monitor and light emit a metric tonne of CO₂ over 12 months.



Mounting 'ere

FIRST of all, it's got nothing to do with rock climbing or the Alps.

It ends in 'ing' not 'ain'... It's got nothing to do with getting on a horse or putting up a picture either, despite the title - the Royal Navy Mounting Centre. It has everything to do with readying the unready for going into a war zone on the ground.

And so with the roar of cars hurtling down the A3 on their right, sailors find themselves leaping out of the back of Land Rovers on a muddy plain roughly the size of three football pitches as firecrackers explode and SA80 rifles rat-a-tat away.

It's not what most expected when they joined the RN.

It's bread and butter for the Royals, perhaps also for the marines' dedicated helicopter squadrons.

But for medics? Chefs? Logisticians?

"It's not something I expected to do when I joined up," said CH 'Tall' Hicks - a former soldier. He's off to Baghdad to support British forces in the Iraqi capital; some of his duties will include security.

"I volunteered to go into the front line. I think it's something everyone should do - after all we are in the armed forces.

He continued: "The training is first-rate - the staff are fantastic. The briefings are top notch - all in all it's everything you need to

● Heat and dust... Sailors get down on the sand and gravel at Longmoor as a 'Thursday War' reaches its climax

Pictures: FRPLI, White Island

know about the theatre you are going to."

Anyone who is going into an operational theatre - that's Bosnia, Iraq or Afghanistan - for more than five days must undergo the two-week course with the Mounting Centre team.

A week is spent at HMS Nelson dealing with kit, admin, rules of engagement, spotting and dealing with mines, suicide bombers, and so on, the second week is in the field.

Half an hour outside Portsmouth lies Longmoor Camp, where for three days under the expert guidance of commandos and senior ratings, sailors are taught how to conduct themselves in the field, stances to take with their weapons, how to react if their or their comrade's Land Rover is hit.

It is, of course, difficult to simulate Basra on a damp autumnal day in Hampshire. But you can simulate ambushes courtesy of thunderclashes, firecrackers and the crackle of rifle fire from the Royal Marines (the commandos provide the expert infantry training).

Two Land Rovers lurch across the undulating terrain, through the puddles, then bang. One is 'taken out' and slams to a halt.

The sailors turned reluctantly into soldiers clamber out of the back; some leap out, others get out more gingerly, then crouch

on the ground and fire back at the insurgents, before falling back under covering fire to the second 4x4.

With the exception of refresher rifle training just before beginning the course, this is the first time many sailors have picked up their weapons since Dartmouth or Raleigh.

"It doesn't come naturally to some of the lads and lasses," points out PO 'Charlie' Charlton, course manager.

"You struggle with the concept of getting eight matchlots in the back of Land Rover - but once you have thunderclashes going off, they get in quickly enough."

Normally around 48 people a month pass through the centre, but the RN and RM taking over in Afghanistan until next spring, numbers currently are almost double that.

"We get people coming up here complaining: I went through this last year. A year is a long time. Things change, the skills you had then will have faded.

"Let's face it. You're going into a war zone. Why take risks?"

That's not to say that the centre produces front-line infantrymen and women.

"It takes 32 weeks of basic training to produce a Royal Marine. We've got two weeks to train people. What we give them is basic infantry skills and raise their awareness," said OC RNMCLi Cdr Mark Wardle.

As of the end of October 350 people (two thirds of them bound for Afghanistan) had been sent into the three theatres courtesy of his team; if you don't pass the course, you don't go - and that has an impact on operations.

"We are a tad busy," Li Cdr Wardle said succinctly. "Our major effort is not surprisingly focused on Iraq and especially Afghanistan.

"For us, it's a fantastic job - people enjoy working here."

The two-week course reaches its climax with a 'Thursday War' (not on quite the scale of those off Plymouth), where sailors face ambushes, mock-up roadside bombs and minefields.

"It's a lot more fun than the DRU," said MA Andrea Williams

(RNAS Culdrose), who has deployed to Afghanistan.

"It's actually been more enjoyable than we expected - but also a lot of hard work."

Fellow MA Michele Trotter (RM Stonehouse) added: "When we joined we obviously expected to serve in ships, never on land.

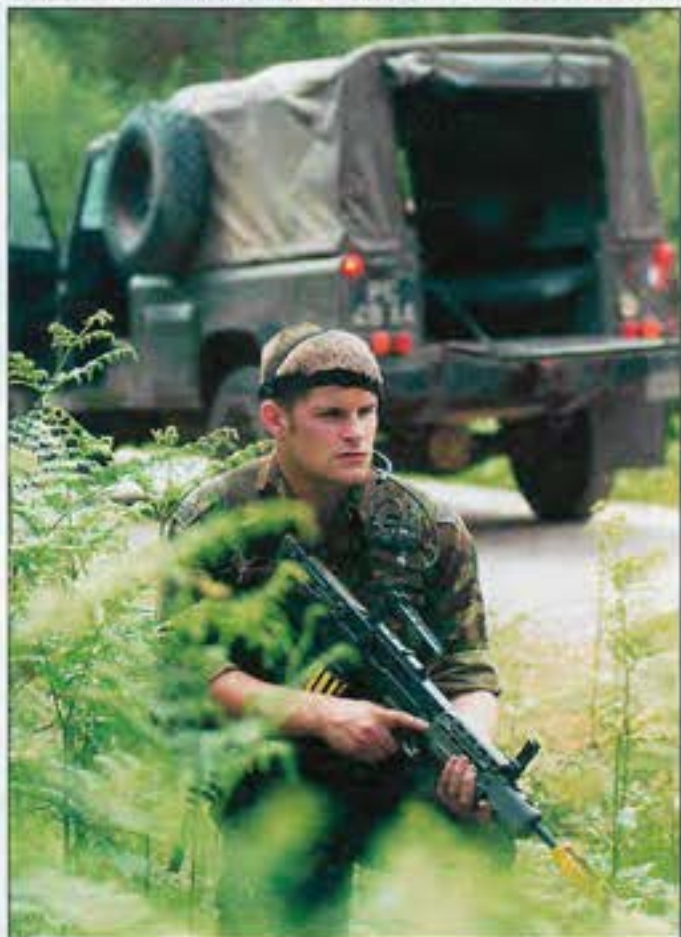
"When we do exercise it's in our sports kit. We're not running around with a pack on our backs with all our kit which weighs an extra stone."

They might moan in the Hampshire mud, but they'll be grateful in the sands of the Middle East.

"The important thing is the feedback we get from the operational theatres," said Li Cdr Wardle. "We know that this course saves lives."

And the "mounting" in the title? Well, the place you prepare troops for the front line is the mounting area. Simple, really.

■ For more information on the centre, particularly if you wish to assist the team as a Land Rover driver or with administration, call 9380 22750.



● A Royal waits in the Hampshire bushes as he prepares an ambush against trainees



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● The men and women of HMS Pembroke receive the freedom of the towns of Pembroke and Pembroke Dock at Pembroke Castle

A tale of two towns

HISTORIC Pembroke Castle provided the magnificent *mise-en-scène* for the men and women of minehunter HMS Pembroke as they received not one but two civic honours in a day.

The good folk of Pembroke and neighbouring Pembroke Dock close to the south-western tip of Wales both decided to bestow the freedom of their respective towns upon the Faslane-based warship.

Sailors formed up in the grounds of the castle for the formal act of granting freedom before marching through both towns, led by the Band of HM Royal Marines.

"It really made me feel I was seeing his-

tory in the making," enthused Rose Blackburn, Lord Mayor of Pembroke as she took the salute from the ship's company.

It is believed to be the first time that a ship has received the Freedom of the City from two towns.

On passage to Pembroke, the ship had tested her 30mm gun – the first time the ship's gunnery officer had let loose with the weapon since joining the vessel (the target was promptly riddled with 30mm rounds, as well as bullets from the GPMGs which joined in the hellish symphony).

Upon leaving Wales, the ship made the short journey to the Western Approaches to team up with HMS Brocksby for the beginning

of Grey Cormorant, the trial phase of this autumn's major amphibious deployment to West Africa.

Having simulated mine clearing off Looe, the ship then switched to Cornwall's northern coastline to clear exercise mines ahead of the Royal Marines' invasion (a task not helped by the air conditioning aboard waving a little white flag, thus pushing temperatures in Pembroke well above 30°C).

Unfortunately, Pembroke didn't head to Sierra Leone like the rest of the task force – she had already been earmarked for some maintenance at home in Scotland, which is where the ship has spent the past six or so weeks before beginning trials.

Scott sets off on longest mission

IN the closing days of 2006, survey ship HMS Scott set out on her longest mission yet – she is not due to return to home waters until mid 2008.

The survey ship, the Navy's largest, spent the earlier part of the year on a five-month deployment to the US and Canada.

Her Commanding Officer Cdr Steve Malcolm said: "After a much needed period of maintenance in the dockyard under the tender care of DML, Scott is now in a good position to continue with operational tasking during the forthcoming protracted deployment around the globe.

"The ship continues to provide optimum availability in order to work at sea throughout the year, providing top-quality surveys."

Scott sailed at the end of November for an initial survey period in the Indian Ocean, but she is expected to work in several regions before her eventual return to the UK.

Tyneside calling local boy

GATESHEAD-born Cdr Tim Peacock took his command, HMS Monmouth, home to Tyneside in November.

The former pupil of Newcastle's Royal Grammar School will show off his 5,000-tonne warship to visitors from his old school's Combined Cadet Force, as well as the RNA and World Ship Society.

Tyneside and the North East remain one of the prime sources of new recruits for the Royal Navy – and renowned as one of the best run-ashore for visiting ships.

The Type 23 is now readying herself for a nine-month deployment to Australia and the Far East early in the New Year.

New men at top of UKHO and UKMCC

TWO men have taken over the helm at the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton and the UK Maritime Component Command in Bahrain.

Rear Admiral Ian Moncrieff, a former CO of HMS Endurance and Commander British Forces South Atlantic in the Falkland Islands, now heads the UK's centre of hydrographic expertise.

In slightly warmer climes than Somerset, Cdre Keith Winstanley has become the fourth commodore to assume the post of UK Maritime Component Commander (UKMCC) Bahrain, taking over from Cdre Simon Williams.

The post has been in place since September 2001 with twin responsibilities, as the Commander of UK maritime forces in the area and as the Deputy Coalition Force Maritime Component Commander (DCFMCC) responsible for all maritime forces within operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

As the UKMCC, Cdre Winstanley will build on strengthening diplomatic relations and interoperability throughout the international waters in the Arabian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and the Red Sea.

Cdre Winstanley has been at sea with 12 different Royal Navy ships, and commanding officer of HMS Upton, destroyers HMS Newcastle and Southampton, and assault ship HMS Albion.



NAVY NEWS

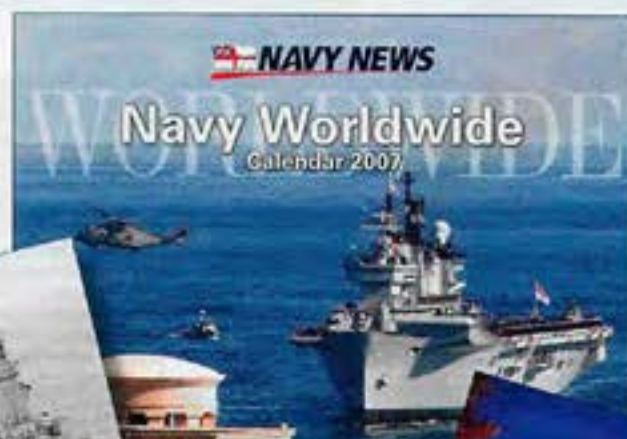
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Production line gets pulses racing

IN THE early 20th Century Henry Ford set up the first car production line and transformed the number of motor cars owned across America and then the world.

In the early 21st Century, the Defence Logistics Organisation set up its first production lines for the maintenance of the military's helicopters.

In just 18 months this has transformed the number of rotorcraft in the hands of the front line.

The lessons of Henry Ford's production line techniques have shaped the car industry for over a century, and now the future of military helicopters.

The Chief of Defence Logistics General Sir Kevin O'Donoghue visited the 'Pulse' facilities – as the production lines are known – in DARA Fleetlands, Gosport and at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall.

The general said: "The true change – a genuine transformation – in the way we repair our helicopters is enormous."

As demands on British military forces have increased so has the need for rotary wing assets on the front line.

And this meant increasing the speed with which helicopters are churned through the maintenance procedure.

So DLO eyes turned to the car industry for lessons in lean, and the 'pulse line' was born.

There are presently six pulse lines in operation for MOD helicopters: Naval focus of activity centres at DARA Fleetlands with three for the Lynx, Sea King and Chinook and a unit based within the home of the Merlin at Culdrose.

Already at this stage in the transformation process there are 35 per cent fewer Lynx aircraft in the Depth repair loop, and the turnaround times for that aircraft's maintenance has reduced significantly and is on course to go down by almost a third.

Capt David Evans, head of the Lynx Integrated Project Team said: "Although still at the early stages with some teething pains still to be cured, if we promise that a Lynx is going to be delivered on a day we will do absolutely everything – 100 per cent – to get it done."

The aircraft move through each stage, or pulse, of the production line, each step with a specific function attached whether stripping, surveying, repair, rectification, functional testing or flight testing.

Recall for maintenance and, in particular, time in maintenance has now become predictable and



● General Sir Kevin O'Donoghue, Chief of Defence Logistics, meets with Cdr Steve Grieve, head of air engineering and operational support at the Merlin Depth Maintenance Facility at RNAS Culdrose

reliable. This allows greater confidence to plan aircraft deployments.

Culdrose has proven that pulse line activity can be carried out in a main support base, and lessons from pulse could be carried further, even into the hangar belly of a helicopter carrier like HMS Ocean.

The mix of military, industry and MOD experts on site dealing with the repairs has created a real hub for action – ideas spark, get heard and happen.

One of these ideas was the so-called 'stubby blade'. The advent of the stubby blade instead of the full blade has made work on the Lynx less unwieldy.

"The fact that all the work is now located in a single area means you can now identify some very quick wins," said Capt Evans.

"Stubby blades are a benefit to the pulse line production which has the potential to be moved out to the front line where they are maintaining the aircraft in cramped conditions."

The blades are carefully engineered to replicate all the weights and forces to ensure that the work done is safe for the aircraft when returned to its full-rotored silhouette.

General O'Donoghue concluded: "The pulse programme is a partnership between front-line commands, MOD and industry. It's a real alliance and very successful."

The general is due to gain a new title in April next year as the first Chief of Defence Materiel with the merger of the Defence Logistics Organisation and the Defence Procurement Agency into one organisation Defence Equipment and Support.

The new MOD organisation will be the lead on military equipment from design and build through in-service support.

● (Left) A Sea King about to have its paint stripped at the start of the pulse line at Fleetlands

● (Bottom) A Navy Merlin on the pulse line at RNAS Culdrose



Pictures: Darren Setter, DLO Photographics and PO(Phot) Ian Richards, RNAS Culdrose



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The long shadow of the Corfu incident



● Desmond Wettern Award winner Dr Colin White in front of HMS Victory

Top award for 'Mr Nelson'

ARGUABLY the world's leading authority on Britain's finest admiral picked up the most coveted award in naval journalism and writing.

Trafalgar 200 director Dr Colin White – described variously as 'Mr Nelson', 'Nelson's representative on earth' and 'the foremost authority on Admiral Nelson' – received the Desmond Wettern Media Award for 2006.

The award – a magnificent ship's decanter – is presented each autumn to the person who has done the most to champion the Royal Navy and all things maritime in the public eye.

As the director of T200, Dr White – who has now returned to the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth following his 'loan period' – was rarely out of the public eye in 2005.

Fourteen people and organisations entered for the prestigious award, including another leading Nelsonian and author Prof Andrew Lambert, *Warships International Fleet Review* and *Warship World* magazines, and *Navy News*.

"Winning this award puts the seal on what was a truly wonderful year for me," said Dr White.

"I hope we can continue to remind Britain of the importance of the sea as we did so spectacularly last year.

"Never in our wildest dreams did we think that 2005 would be as good as it was. We made a real impact, and we have to continue that.

"We cannot match 2005 but we can find ways of reminding people about the importance of the sea."

The most competed-for prize was the Moutbatten Maritime Prize for the finest book of the past 12 months with a nautical theme.

The *Pinnell Smerdon* by Nicolette Jones was deemed the best work out of 33 in the judges' melting pot. As the title suggests, the book charts Samuel Pinnell's campaign struggle to improve safety at sea.

The last trophy presented was a new award inaugurated this year to celebrate documentary films and television programmes.

Nine programmes were in the running for the Crystal Dolphin Trophy, including the BBC series *Shipmates*.

The Beeb documentary *Submarine Rescue* by Andrew Thompson, which charted the dramatic rescue of a Russian midge submarine by a British-led team, took the title.

Countess Mountbatten of Burma, President of the Maritime Foundation, was guest of honour, presenting the awards to the winners with First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band aboard the Silver Sturgeon on the Thames in London.

The awards are named in honour of Desmond Wettern, a Royal Naval Reserve officer, Naval correspondent and long-time friend and advocate of the Senior Service and are organised by his widow Gillian and the Maritime Foundation.

Read Dr White's Golden Thread of Naval History on page 17

VETERANS, dignitaries and today's sailors joined in remembrance of a post-war tragedy which claimed the lives of 44 Senior Servicemen.

The 'Corfu Channel Incident' crippled two British warships as the Royal Navy sought to assert freedom of passage on the high seas in waters between Albania and the Greek island of Corfu.

As they did, HM destroyers *Volage* and *Saumarez* struck mines; the entire bow of *Volage* was blown off, taking eight men to a watery grave as it sheared off.

Exactly 60 years later, survivors of the incident, including long-time patron of the RN Cdre Sir Donald Gosling, gathered in the British cemetery in Corfu Town with the crew of HMS *Sutherland*, former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jock Slater, and Britain's ambassador to Greece Simon Gass to pay their respects to the men lost.

Twelve of the 44 victims of the incident are buried in the cemetery, where a memorial to all those lost also stands.

Following the service of remembrance on the island, the group moved to the frigate and sailed close to the spot where the ships were struck – the exact positions lie today within Albanian territorial waters, but didn't in 1946 – to cast wreaths into the ocean.

Sutherland was accompanied in the ceremony by Sir Donald's yacht *MV Leander* (named after the cruiser he served in as a 17-year-old able seaman during the channel incident).

"It was a real privilege for us to meet so many veterans of this incredible and tragic event," said Cdr Paul Romney, *Sutherland's* CO.

"Their stories had a marked effect on my ship's company; everyone on board was determined to do everything within their power to make these poignant 60th anniversary commemorations memorable for all those here."

The mining of the two ships marked the climax of a dispute between communist Albania and Greece – a close ally of Britain – over the straits between the mainland and the Greek island.



● Sailors from HMS *Sutherland*, veterans and dignitaries pay their respects in the cemetery in Corfu and (above right) the shattered bow of HMS *Volage* after she struck a mine

In the spring of 1946, cruisers HMS *Orion* and *Superb* came under fire from Albanian shore batteries as they steamed through the channel; neither ship was hit, nor did the Senior Service return fire.

HM Government was understandably livid and vowed to uphold mariners' rights to sail through the channel, while the Albanians threatened that no foreign ship would be allowed to use the waters without permission.

To force the issue, a four-strong task force of British ships sailed through the channel on October 22 1946.

HMS *Saumarez* followed HMS *Mauritius*, but was struck by a mine. With the sea around the ship on fire, HMS *Volage* nevertheless closed in to take the destroyer under tow.

As she did, she was rocked by an explosion which blew off her bow. Undeterred, the crippled ship manoeuvred, attached lines to *Saumarez* and hauled her to safety 16 miles back to Corfu, stern-first.

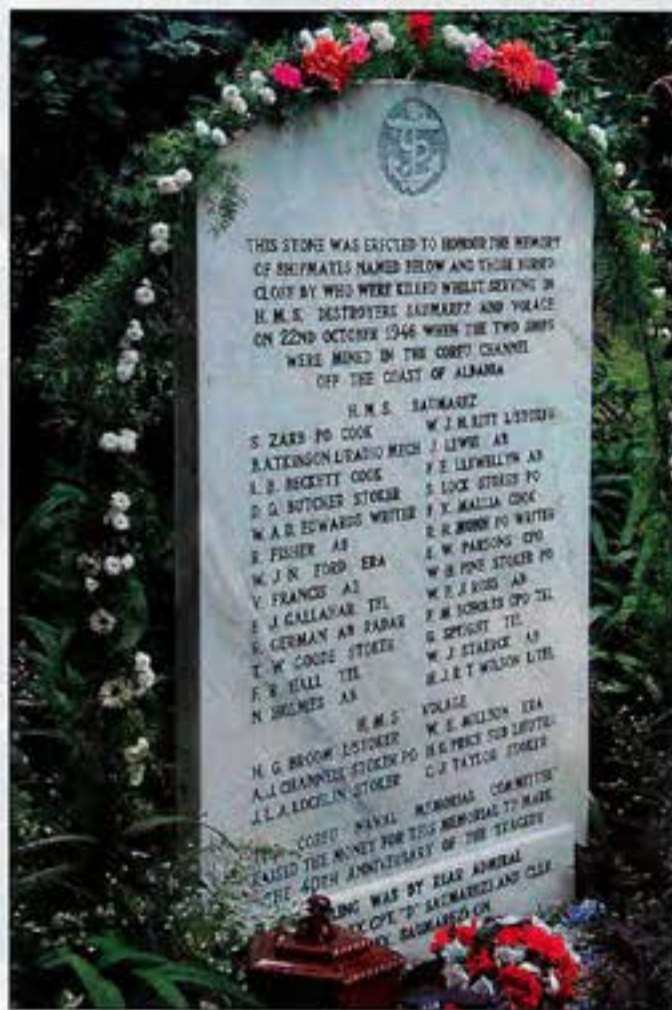
Saumarez was beyond repair,

but *Volage* returned to service having had a new bow fitted. The Albanians were ordered to pay more than £800,000 compensation to Britain for the attack, including £50,000 to the victims' families. They only did so reluctantly years after the event and have never apologised for the incident.

As for *Sutherland*, she has continued east towards the Gulf where she has relieved her sister HMS *Kent*.

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AGE POSITIVE



Service rivalry at boiling point

THE clock is ticking away and the tension in the grandstand is racked up by the commentator. "Three minutes to go."

"Come on, Dave!" calls a spectator, but Dave, unruffled, concentrates on his performance.

Football? Tennis? No, cooking – cooking as a spectator sport, every bit as nervy as a match

(but without the dodgy pies and burgers).

As it happens, both RN teams in the third heat of the Open Cook and Serve – HMS Bulwark (with a little help from HMS Vanguard) and HMS Illustrious – did well, with the former striking gold and the latter taking a bronze.

And there was plenty for the Senior Service to celebrate at the 2006 Combined Services Culinary Challenge at Sandown Park race course, with two Best of Class

in Blue Riband events (Senior Fish and 21 Plates Cold Platter), although it was the RAF who came away with the top prize as best Service across the board.

The Culinary Challenge is a chance for Service caterers to compete at a high level, to pick up new skills, and for contractors to meet with the men and women who put their talents into practice anywhere from establishment galley to front-line units.

For the first time the RN team,

Royal Navy medal and award-winners

Open Duck Dish: CH Gilham (Illustrious), bronze; **Open Sweet:** Mr Stock (Aramark), silver and **Best in Class, Senior Lamb:** POCA Potts (Luxembourg), bronze; **Junior Lamb:** CH Corneah (Ark Royal), bronze; **Senior Fish:** CH Cartwright (Vanguard), bronze and **Best in Class, Novice Chicken Dish:** CH Reynolds (Ark Royal), com; CH MacMahon (Illustrious), com; **Open Ethnic:** CH Rotimi (Vanguard), com; **Junior Steward Skills:** StJ Harvey (Culdrose); StJ Lovell (Bulwark); StJ Cooper (Bulwark), all silver; StJ Allen (BRNC), bronze; **Senior Steward Restaurant Flambe Dish:** StJ Caple (BRNC); Miss Price (Culdrose), both bronze; **Open Steward Skills:** POSid Heron (DMLS), silver; StJ Kavanagh (DMLS), bronze; **Senior Chef of the Year:** CH Wilson (DMLS), bronze; **POCA Hopper (DMLS);** POCA Potts (Luxembourg); LCH Lightfoot (Illustrious), all com; **Junior Chef of the Year:** CH Hambly (Turbulent), com; **Open Cook and Serve:** LCH Hichens (Culdrose); LCH Simpson (Culdrose); Mrs Perring (Culdrose),

all bronze; **ACK Walsh (RFA);** LCK Rousberry (RFA); StJ Barker (RFA), all com; **LStJ Champs (DMLS);** CH Furey (Ark Royal); CH Piper (St Albans); CH Blackburn (BRNC); StJ Caple (BRNC); CH Finnebraasen (BRNC), all bronze; **CH Bestier (Bulwark);** LCH MacDiarmid (Bulwark); StJ Millar (Vanguard), all gold; **CH Furver (Illustrious);** LCH McCullam (Illustrious); StJ Dooley (Illustrious), all bronze; **Open Field Challenge:** L/Cpl Curwood (RM Poole); Mne Davitt (RM Poole); Mne Langer (RM Poole); Mne Bodenhorst (CTCRM); Mne Leach (CTCRM); Sgt Green (CTCRM), all bronze; **LCH Sheppard (RM Stonehouse);** L/Cpl Merrick (RM Stonehouse); WO2 Stockton (RM Stonehouse), all com; **InterServices Baker of the Year:** LCH Adlem (Fort Austin), silver; **Open Vegetarian Dish:** CH Armstrong (Culdrose), silver; **InterServices Butcher of the Year:** LCH Adlem (Fort Austin), silver; **Parade de Chefs:** CH Wilson (DMLS); CH Cartwright (Vanguard); Cpl Bell-Chambers (ISL-CNS); Mne Crew (FPGRM),

all bronze; **Open Centre Piece:** C/Sgt Addison (DMLS), gold; **CPOCS Grayson (Yeovilton);** Mr Mitchell (Yeovilton, SODEXHO), both bronze; **Open Decorative Cake:** POCA Potts (Belgium), silver; **Novice Decorative Cake:** CH Jarvis (Yeovilton), com; **Open Petit Fours:** C/Sgt Atkinson (DMLS), bronze; **21 Plates Cold Platters Display:** CPOCK Childs (RFA); CPOCS Wilson (DMLS); C/Sgt Atkinson (DMLS); Mne Crew (DMLS); Mne Hughes (DMLS); Mne White (DMLS); **POCA Hopper (DMLS),** all gold; **team was Best in Class, Novice Set Show Platter:** Mne Wright (40 Cdo), com; **RN Junior Chef of the Year:** CH Hambly (Turbulent); **RN Senior Chef of the Year:** CH Wilson (DMLS)



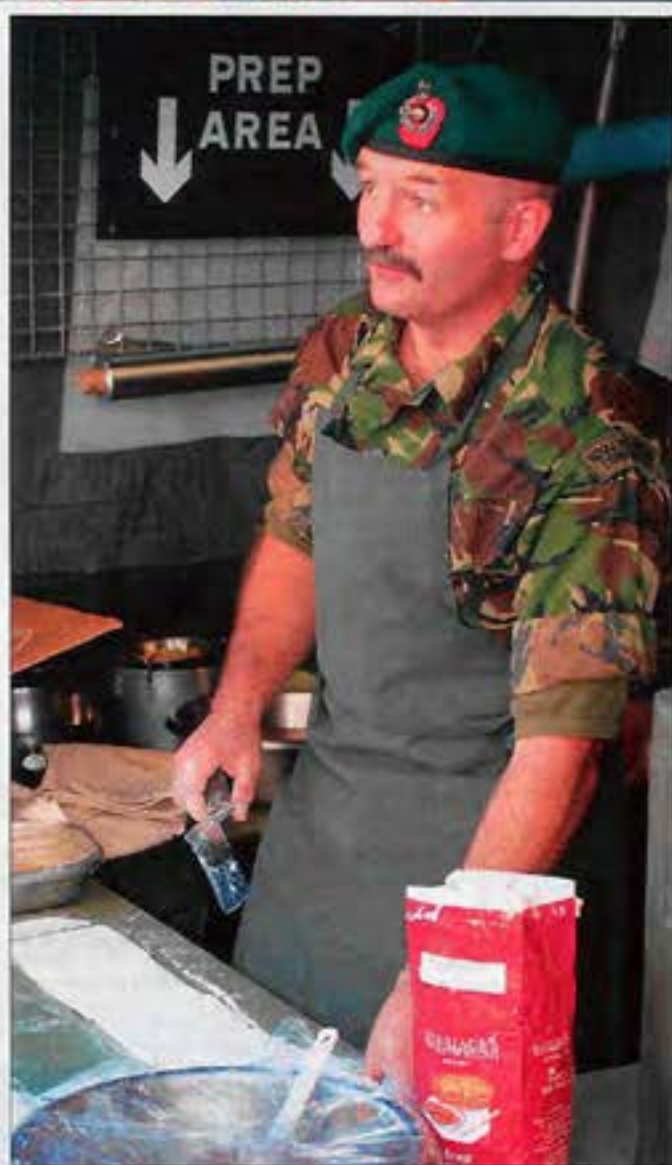
● PO Bill Bailey (left) and WO Nick Battley await their gold-standard scrum at the HMS Bulwark station of the Cook and Serve competition while spectators look on (above); a dragon made of fat from the Centre Piece contest (top left)

Picture: Stephen Forward

led by Lt Cdr Mel McNeill-Brown, included five RFA chefs and stewards, with Franny Childs picking up gold with the Cold Platters team, Alan Adlem taking silver for both butchery and baking, and Matt Rowberry, Paul Walsh and Claire Barker achieving commended in the Cook and Serve.

But there was also a chance for sailors to just soak up the atmosphere and sample the goodies on offer – one lending hand, checking out the stalls, was heard to say she was "going to be sick by the time I have finished here..."

● Never argue with the chef – especially if he's a Royal Marine... WO2 Mike Stockton at work during the Open Field Team Challenge (right)



● On a plate – gold medal winners (from left) POCA Hopper, Mne Crew, CPOCA Wilson, CPOCK Childs (RFA), C/Sgt Atkinson and Mne Wright with Rear Admiral Kimmons (centre)

Historic table is back in use

A TABLE which played a role in the end of World War 2 is being put back to work.

The 15ft table stood in the wardroom of cruiser HMS London, and on it was signed the surrender of the Japanese armed forces at Sabang, on the island of Sumatra, on August 31 1945, signalling the end of the fighting, though the formal surrender was not signed until later in Tokyo Bay.

After the cruiser was decommissioned in 1950 the table went to Flag Officer Sea Training in Plymouth, but this year it was felt that the RN Historic Branch Reading Room would be an appropriate place to extend its working life.

Some 30 members of London's ship's company gathered to see the table, and seven were presented with their Arctic Emblems by Portsmouth Naval Base Commander Cdre David Steel.

Capt Chris Page, Head of the RN Historic Branch, observed that the table reflected the role of his unit – though holding valuable RN archives, the branch is not a museum as it constantly advises the modern Navy on historical perspectives, answering ministerial questions and the like.



● Veterans from the cruiser HMS London reminisce at the RN Historic Branch in Portsmouth by their old wardroom table, now in use in the Reading Room

Picture: LADPhoto Eric Tucker (FRPUE)

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**around
the units**

MARLOW Sea cadets were joined by other units from the district at the Trafalgar Day parade through the town.

TS Apollo celebrated its 50th anniversary this year – and is making great strides after almost closing down 18 months ago.

The unit has won “nearly everything” at district level, and among the highlights were becoming novice band champions for the year, having cadets representing the unit at national swimming, area pulling, drill and piping events, and two cadets were on board HMS Albion when the Queen helped the Corps celebrate its anniversary in the summer.

SOUTHAMPTON cadets hosted a visit by the Mayor of Southampton, Cllr John Slade, to mark the award of the title Sea Cadet Mayor's Cadet to LC Marie Clouder.

Marie, a unit member for five years, was chosen from the 50-strong unit at Bitterne Manor.

The unit Commanding Officer, S/Lt (SCC) Mark Lampert RNR, who nominated Marie, said: “We are all very proud of LC Clouder and I am sure that she will be an excellent ambassador for both the City of Southampton and the Sea Cadet Corps”

LEADING Cadet Emma Rooney, of Northampton unit, has been appointed Northamptonshire Lord Lieutenant's Cadet – the first female to hold the post for more than ten years.

Emma (17) was part of an international Sea Cadet exchange to Russia earlier this year, and more recently was one of six cadets from Northampton and Wellingborough to take part in the Trafalgar Day ceremonies in London.

CADETS from across the London Area took part in the Lord Mayor's Show in the City of London.

Marine Cadets lined the steps of St Paul's Cathedral during the Show, and more than 100 cadets took part in the parade, marching, playing in bands or joining the floats.

CONGRATULATIONS to AC Vikki Lawson on achieving First Class Marine Engineering qualifications in both Mechanical and Electrical categories.

Vikki, of the Torfaen unit, is the only female cadet in the South Wales District to achieve both qualifications – and had to travel to Scotland on both occasions to complete the courses.

After attending college, Vikki has her eyes set on a career in the Senior Service.

THREE Sea Cadet volunteers were rewarded for their selfless actions by gaining RYA Dinghy Instructor qualifications.

TS/Lt Mick Williams (Redcar), S/Lt John Padbury (Barnstaple) and TI Robin Oakley (St Albans) gave up annual holiday from work and braved the Firth of Forth in typical autumn weather to gain their reward at SCTC Caledonia under the guidance of Sea Cadets Afloat RYA Training Officer Lt Tye Shuttleworth.

DEEP in Portsmouth Naval Base there is a khaki enclave.

10 Platoon Hampshire and Isle of Wight Army Cadets meet inside the base, parading twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

The platoon has 15 cadets, aged 12 to 18, half from Naval families.

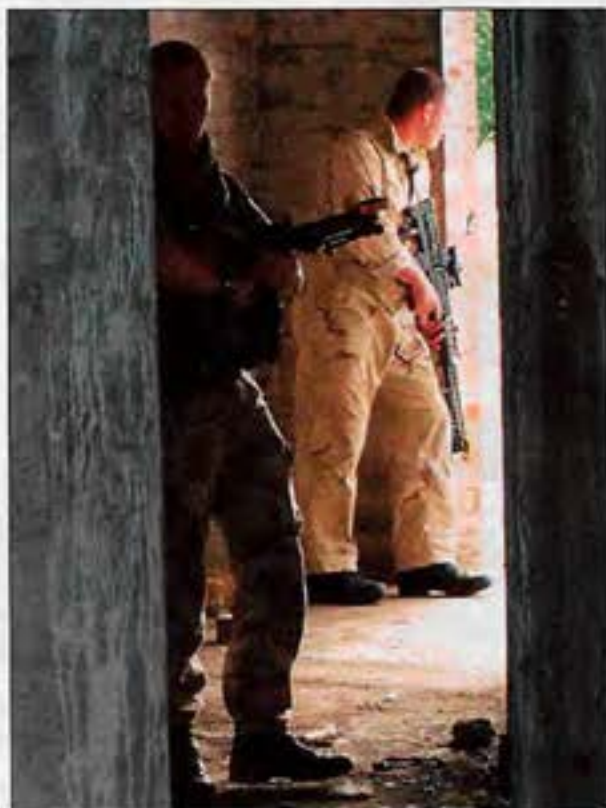
Following difficult times, the unit is now stable and seeking to recruit – but because of the location there is the problem of raising awareness of the unit.

If anyone is interested in seeing what life with the Pongoes has to offer, they should contact Sarah Davies on 07894 824814.

THE CO of Clacton will be leaving her unit in great shape after a successful inspection.

Three years ago there were more instructors than cadets, but the hard work of staff and cadets put Clacton back on its feet, winning praise from Inspecting Officer Lt Col Andy Milne RM, and Lt Mohammed can head north confident of the unit's future – though she will be missed by her ‘troops’.

Youngsters learn about Corps values



AROUND 350 Marine Cadets and staff have been learning about life in the Corps during a packed week at the national MCD camp at Swynnerton in Staffordshire.

The cadets were eager to put themselves through the most physically-demanding of challenges.

A highlight for many was a three-day field exercise, which included training in bivvy-building, basic camouflage and concealment, field cooking, movement with and without a rifle, field hygiene, sentry duties, harbour drills, and an introduction to section battle drills and NATO orders.

For many on the camp it was the first time they had learnt how to keep clean, fed and watered under field conditions.

Weapons training featured prominently, with many cadets being awarded badges for the high standard of their shooting.

In the dismounted close-combat trainer a variety of ambush and battle scenarios were simulated, allowing cadets to be assessed on their newly-acquired skills.

● Specialist combat training for Marine Cadets at Swynnerton

And there was no respite on the obstacle course, where a serving Royal Marines PT Instructor had volunteered to take charge.

The new SRMO, C/Sgt Ash Bourne, invited a team from the Commando Training Centre RM at Lymington to join the camp and take senior cadets and junior staff through an intensive 20-hour training package, designed to teach how the Royals currently operate and thus what is expected of them.

An exhilarating but exhausting week culminated in a visit from the Royal Marines Corps Colonel, the Commodore Sea Cadets and a smattering of Area Officers, some of whom even teamed up with the SRMO to tackle the assault course – and lived to tell the tale (just).

Aussie cadets seek insignia

AN INDEPENDENT Cadet group in Australia is putting together a display of military insignia, and is seeking donations of cap tallies from the Royal Navy and Sea Cadet units from around the UK.

The address is: VCCA HQ (TS Protector), 15 Martin Road, Elizabeth East 5112, South Australia, email vcca01@hotmail.com

Urgent appeal for staff

THE CHRISTCHURCH unit has doubled its complement in the past couple of years – but is now looking to remedy a staffing crisis.

There are around 50 in the unit – they believe it to be one of the largest in the area – but the Officer-in-Charge wants to reduce her commitment, as she also runs the local Rainbows and Guides.

The staffing level of seven has almost been halved, with two going back to seas and a third taking on a different job.

Alex Drummond said: “We are at a critical level and desperately need more staff at all levels.”

“Ideally, candidates would live around the Bournemouth, Christchurch, New Milton area and have a Naval background or at least an understanding.”

“Training can be given and we can undertake the necessary CRB checks etc.”

The unit meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 9pm.

Those interested should contact Alex on 07720 418955 or email christchurch_sea_cadets@hotmail.co.uk

Putting the boot in...

ADOZEN cadets from Hornchurch and Upminster made the journey to BBC Television Centre to appear on *Blue Peter*.

The group, aged 10 to 12, helped launch the show's annual live Christmas appeal, which this year is raising money for orphans in Malawi by collecting footwear – the Shoebiz Appeal.

The theme was carried through by around 175 children who wore different types of footwear, from the cadets' boots to ballet shoes.

The children performed a conga into the studio, which was used at the start of the programme.

CO (SCC) Lt Michael Chittock RNR said not only did the cadets have a whale of a time, but they also met the presenters and came away with Blue Peter badges.

For more details see the website www.shoebizappeal.org.uk

Capital race

SEVERAL Sea Cadet units took part in the Great River Race on the Thames, competing with almost 300 other crews.

The 22-mile course, passing beneath 28 bridges, must be tackled by boats propelled solely by oars, on a course between Richmond and Greenwich.

Among the units taking part were Southwark (who completed the course in a jolly boat in four hours 43 minutes, putting them fifth in the Under 16 Junior class), Hornchurch and Bexley.



● The Junior Sea Cadet programme has been launched – with its own cartoon character (above). Its purpose is to make life easier for anyone running a junior section by providing a framework for their programme, as well as suggesting a wide variety of activities and games suitable for 10 and 11-year-olds. The programme is designed to ensure the juniors enjoy a broad range of activities before becoming a fully-enrolled Cadet at the age of 12.

Whitehaven supports American connection

A RETIRED rear admiral in the US Navy Reserve has accepted an invitation to become the new president of the Whitehaven Sea Cadet unit TS Bee.

Steve Morgan was formally ‘welcomed aboard’ as president at a ceremony attended by the Deputy Mayor of Whitehaven, Cllr Anne Faichney, members of the local Royal Naval Association, parents and other guests.

Before watching a series of displays presented by cadets, Admiral Morgan inspected the Guard and the rest of the ship's company.

Steve said he had been delighted to have been invited to take on the role, and was looking forward to taking an active part in the unit.

“These young people have a commitment and dedication to the Sea Cadet Corps that does them, and everyone involved with the Whitehaven unit, great credit,” said the admiral.

“I have been impressed by what I have seen and am eager to take an active part and get involved in any way I can.”

Steve's career, which spans over 30 years, includes being deck officer of a nuclear submarine deck officer, Deputy Commander of the Naval Inventory Control and Head of the Naval Reserves Logistics Program.

He is currently British Nuclear Group Sellafield's Commercial Director.

TS Bee provided the Guard of Honour when the US Navy was presented with the Freedom of the Port – and officially pardoned for the infamous raid on the town by John Paul Jones in 1778.

The weather was appropriately wet – torrential rain was a factor in Jones' failure to burn the ships in the harbour over 200 years ago.

The cadets also attended the unveiling of a plaque by Capt David Dittmer USN in the grounds of St Nicholas' Church in the town, in memory of Mildred Warner Gale, grandmother of George Washington, who was born in Virginia but travelled back to the North West, where she died in 1701.



● Sea Cadets from the Richmond unit visit their namesake frigate in Portsmouth for her rededication service

Cadets visit 'their' frigate

CADETS from the Richmond unit attended the rededication ceremony of frigate HMS Richmond in Portsmouth.

The unit, which is affiliated to the ship, was there for her launch and regularly visits the ship at sea and in her visits to London.

They assisted with arrangements on the day and met members of the ship's company, including Commanding Officer Cdr Piers Hurrell.

The unit has also been invited to the ship's Affiliates Day in April to witness sea trials.



● LT (SCC) Mark Unwin RNR, the Commanding Officer of Marlow Sea Cadets Unit, receives his Lord Lieutenant's Certificate of Meritorious Achievement from the Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, at a ceremony in Milton Keynes. Mark, who has been involved with the Corps for more than 20 years as a cadet and adult instructor, was awarded the certificate in recognition of the hard work and effort he has devoted to the Marlow unit, and in particular resurrecting it from the brink of closure and turning it into a success

around
the units

THERE was a double celebration at the Maryport and Solway unit when Darren Little and Catherine Short won places at a prestigious youth powerboating showdown.

The pair triumphed in the North West final, held at Liverpool, where competitors had to make their way round a challenging course at speed, undertaking various tasks on the way.

Darren, in the 13-16 group, and Catherine, in the 8-12s, went on to the national Honda RYA Youth RIB Championship final, held at the Southampton Boat Show, along with Scottish cadet Simon Thornton.

And the three acquitted themselves well in the tougher competition on the South Coast, with Darren sixth in his group, and Simon and Catherine seventh and 15th respectively.

THE band of TS Ark Royal, the Reigate unit, played on the jetty in Portsmouth as their namesake aircraft carrier returned from refit in Rosyth.

After their performance cadets and staff were welcomed on board the warship where they were given a tour and a meal.

CADETS from TS Jersey took part in a gruelling sea race – and one of the crew members went home with a trophy in his hands.

The Jersey cadets joined around 50 other boats for the 40th annual Sark to Jersey rowing race, which runs from Dixcart Bay on the south coast of Sark to Bonne Nuit Bay on the north coast of Jersey – a distance of 19 miles.

Although conditions were not favourable, the cadets completed the row in just over three and a half hours, and developed a good crop of blisters to attest to their efforts.

Marine MC2 Joseph Dowie, the coxswain, received the Jersey Rowing Club Award for the youngest competitor in the race.

MAIDENHEAD cadets have won the inaugural Prince Philip Challenge.

Held on the River Thames, fortunately on a warm and sunny afternoon, the event saw the team from TS Iron Duke race to victory over the Royal Borough's other unit, TS Windsor Castle, from Windsor.

Maidenhead had the advantage of a larger turn-out, and although Windsor fought hard to the end the Maidenhead team won both canoe races, the pulling competition and the senior tug-of-war, while Windsor won the junior tug-of-war.

River conditions prevented the raft race from taking place.

BOAT work, fire-fighting and a visit to amphibious assault ship HMS Bulwark were among the highlights of the 30th annual visit to the National Sea Cadet Training Centre at HMS Raleigh by cadets of TS Ajax of the Swansea unit.

A group of 15 cadets, aged 12 to 17, spent a week at the centre undertaking activities designed to give them an introduction to life in the Royal Navy and to build self-confidence.

CO Lt Cdr Bill Davies, who with First Lieutenant Lt Des Burns first brought a group from Ajax to Cornwall in 1976, said: "When we first came to HMS Raleigh we were accommodated in wooden huts.

"Now the accommodation is much more modern and there is a greater selection of things the cadets can do."

Around 6,000 cadets from units across the country visit Raleigh each year on the 19 bespoke courses on offer.

AIR Cadets in the West Country had the opportunity to see a military aircraft close up when a Navy Lynx was flown to Glastonbury.

Lts Tony Hedworthy and Simon Collins of 702 Naval Air Squadron were on route to Yeovilton when they called on the cadets of No 914 (Glastonbury and Street) and No 1182 (Shepton Mallet) Squadrons of the Devon and Somerset Wing of the ATC.

Admiral 'thrilled' to join Trafalgar event

HUNDREDS of Sea Cadets chosen from units across the country gathered in Trafalgar Square to commemorate the 201st anniversary of Nelson's victory over the Franco-Spanish fleet.

The parade of 500 cadets was inspected by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band.

The Admiral, who took up his post in February, said: "Having been able to join the Marine Society and Sea Cadets for their weekend of 250th anniversary celebrations in HMS Albion this summer I was absolutely thrilled when the Sea Cadets invited me to join them at their first Trafalgar Day parade since I took up post.

"I am delighted to be celebrating the greatest moment in our naval history with so many outstanding young people."

In front of 300 invited guests and hundreds more members of the public, the Corps national display teams performed the traditional sailors' hornpipe, followed by a club and cutlass-swinging display.

The national massed bands of the Sea Cadet Corps then led the two platoons of Marine Cadets and six platoons of Sea Cadets



on to the Square, and finally the Guard marched on led by a corps of drums.

After the inspection the Lord

Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Alexander Nicholl, led a wreath-laying ceremony at the foot of Nelson's Column.

Corps Chaplain the Rev Jonathan Cruickshank then conducted a short service, during which 17-year-old Ciaran Conlon, of the Hornchurch and Upminster unit, read the prayer that Nelson wrote in his journal on the eve of Trafalgar.

Being selected for the most important event in the Sea Cadet calendar is a huge honour, and even the worsening weather conditions could not dampen the Cadets' high spirits.

After the parade the First Sea Lord took some time to follow them off the Square and congratulate them all on the very high standard of their appearance and bearing – before everyone repaired to the warm and dry for a very welcome lunch.

● Marine Cadets on parade in Trafalgar Square during the commemorations for the 201st anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar (above), while First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band chats with a Sea Cadet during the ceremonies (left)



Adult volunteers are centre stage

ADULT volunteers from all over the country who form the foundation of the Cadet Forces had their turn in the spotlight at the CVQO Adult Qualification Graduation Ceremony.

The 70 volunteers attended a ceremony where they were presented with either City and Guilds Graduateship in Youth Management and Training (Level 6), equivalent to a British Bachelor's degree, or the Licentiate in Youth Leadership and Training (Level 4) by former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West.

This ceremony, the second of its type, was held at the Millennium Suite at HMS Collingwood, and saw graduates robed in traditional gowns worn over military uniform with either Service caps or mortar boards.

A total of 90 adults achieved a Graduateship or Licentiate through CVQO this year, doubling the numbers of the previous year – and these are just two of the seven vocational awards available through the organisation.

CVQO is a charity responsible for managing vocational qualifications for members of the Sea Cadet Corps, the Combined Cadet Force, the Army Cadet Force and the Air

Training Corps.

The recipients won praise from Admiral West, who spoke of their hard work and determination – the more impressive as these volunteers already give up a significant amount of their spare time in helping run cadet units, and had to dig even deeper to find the time and motivation to study for these qualifications.

Sgt Lee Kidd, of Chatham Marine Cadets, also picked up an award.

Lee, who has now joined the Royal Marines Band Service as a bugler, has been playing the military side drum since the age of 12, and now has a BTEC First Diploma to recognise his high level of skills.

Honour for Tiger

LEADING Cadet Luke-Paul Smith, of Leicester Sea Cadets, has been chosen as one of the Lord Lieutenant's Cadets for Leicestershire.

With TS Tiger celebrating its 70th anniversary next year, Luke-Paul is looking forward to his year 'in office', and got off to a high-profile start by accompanying the Lord Lieutenant, Lady Gretton, to the Festival of Remembrance in Leicester.

Unit is celebrating RYA status

BOURNEMOUTH unit is celebrating after achieving the status of a recognised Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Training Centre.

This prestigious award recognises the quality of training and equipment available to the cadets of TS Phoebe, and means that cadets can be awarded powerboating qualifications as they train at the unit's Iford boat station, instead of having to travel to Portsmouth or Weymouth for assessment.

The new centre can offer awards in RYA Level 1 and 2 powerboat handling, although plans are being developed to offer higher level qualifications in addition to First Aid and VHF radio awards.

The accreditation certificate was presented at the unit's annual Royal Naval Parade, during which Inspecting Officer Ma Andrew Henderson presented a Meritorious Service Medal to Lt Cdr (SCC) John Peskett RNR, former CO of the unit, in recognition of more than 50 years of service to the unit.

Leading cadet Randall was also in the spotlight, receiving an award for completing his Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Dedication wins praise of guest

THOUSANDS of cadets around the country took part in acts of remembrance last month.

Typical of the events was the Festival of Remembrance staged in the Welsh valleys at Rhondda, where members of the local unit carried out official duties.

The Rhondda cadets arrived just after midday for a rehearsal, then broke for lunch, giving them the chance to speak to serving soldiers from the regiments represented and to two Chelsea pensioners who were to join the parade.

Principal guest Baroness Gale praised the commitment and dedication of the cadets, a sentiment echoed by CPO (SCC) Jeremy Williams, who commented: "It goes without saying that as their CO I was very impressed by their dress, behaviour and commitment to turn out on a Sunday afternoon and evening when, as it was Bonfire Night, they could quite easily have found something else to do with their friends."



● One new element of the Trafalgar Day ceremonies in London was the presentation of trophies to the first winners of the new Sea Cadet Photographic Challenge. And it was congratulations to 11-year-old Finuala Cameron, from the Campbelltown unit, who won the Anthony Preston Memorial Trophy for Juniors for two pictures, one of her unit travelling to the Isle of Arran for their annual summer camp and the other of her sister Rona receiving her Class One in Marine Engineering and Electrical Engineering, and to Jessica Hassall (17), of the Camberley unit, who won the Tod Trophy for her picture of TS Royalist passing the Isles of Bayona during this year's Tall Ships Race (above)

Ladies' autumn glow

THE RN ladies' side have provided one of the few highlights of the fledgling football season with a comprehensive victory over Dorset's Christchurch Ladies.

The first half saw all the RN's goals, first from WTR Naomi Marsh, hitting a 25-yard strike straight into the top right-hand corner of the net, and then OM 'Eddy' Edwards, now to the side, controlling a cross on her chest before volleying home. Other goals came from POAC Patty Chatfield and MA 'Doogie' Phillip, both of HMS Illustrious, before a consolation goal for Christchurch in the second half. A combination of ship deployments, injuries, and Navy Cup games, meant that debuts were given to OMs Conning (HMS Nelson), Edwards, Caphill and Lee (HMS Collingwood).

The RN seniors' season began with a drubbing at the hands of Dorchester Town. Although a number of last season's team were missing due to operational commitments, the match proved a useful workout.

The RN went ahead in the 22nd minute through a Sgt Richie Hope header, but the difference in playing levels of the teams soon became evident; Dorchester are three divisions above the Navy, in the Conference South, and knocked in six goals without reply.

Despite the scoreline there were positives to take away, not least good performances from AET Tom Ardley in the centre of defence and LAEM John Delahaye on his return to the squad.

The U21s lost by a solitary goal to a very strong Cambridge University side at Fenner's. With the benefit of a certain degree of stability with many of last year's squad still eligible this season, and under the excellent guidance of WOPT Glen Young, it was the RN who came off the starting blocks as the better team.

Far more chances were created by the RN but efforts from OM Ross McEvoy and WEA Mike O'Neill did not bring just rewards, so although the two teams went in 0-0 at half time it was the Navy who held the initiative.

The second half began as a carbon copy of the first: hard fought and tight but with the Navy still pushing forward in search of victory. As is often the case in these situations one lapse in concentration can prove fatal. And so it was with 15 minutes left on the clock some poor marking from a Cambridge free kick allowed the ball to flash across the face of the goal and it was headed in at the far post. A frantic final few minutes of Navy pressure did not allow our boys to draw level and they were left with a few regrets of missed chances in a game we should have won.

The U18s were overpowered 8-1 by Middlesex Youth. As ever the side were starting with a blank canvas with only two or three players remaining eligible to play from last year's squad.

It was therefore always going to be tough and so it proved. All too often the RN were caught out for pace and tempo and were punished accordingly. However, regardless of the score this was still a sound platform for the coaching staff and players to move on and develop a strong squad throughout the season.

Sussex Youth proved no less fearsome opposition, a fixture made even more difficult as many players were unavailable. The situation was exacerbated with skipper MEM Danny Kerr breaking his ankle in a freak accident the previous week. As a result the U18s took on a very strong Sussex team with a much weakened squad.

There was however no shortage of commitment and effort which reflected a 0-0 scoreline after 30 minutes. Sussex then increased the pressure and scored two quick goals just before half time. In the second half whilst the Navy created several chances only one was taken. Sussex in comparison were ruthless in attack and rattled in a further five goals before the final whistle.

The U18s squad, however, remain confident that they can more than improve from this performance especially if all players can be released from their units for future games.

And finally... hats off to HMS Westminster, whose male side beat the Korean Navy 1-0 in Pusan stadium, while the ladies team lost by the narrow margin of 2-0.



● Jumping Jacks... Dan Thorpton and Sharky Ward pose for the camera before another successful leap

Best summer. Ever.

THE RN & RM Skydiving team has completed its most successful season with a heavy haul of medals from contests at home and abroad.

The team headed for the Rhine brimming with confidence after fantastic summer weather permitted some first-class training and coaching, under C/Sgt Sharky Ward (CTC RM) the team's competitions manager and coach.

Bad Lippspringe in Germany – home of the Rhine Army Parachute Association – offered the ideal warm-up for the European Military and Open competition.

Eight RN and RM jumpers headed to Germany, comprising six mix and match teams.

The weather was extremely hot – in excess of 30°C – and the wind speed was low, excellent for

skydiving.

All categories were entered and the RNRM teams took medals in each

Over six days, the team bagged a haul of 63 medals and six trophies, notably the one for the squad which contributed the most to the competition in the air and on the ground.

Back in Blighty, the Joint Services Parachute Centre at Netheravon – one of the biggest and busiest drop zones in the country – fittingly hosted the Inter-Services contest, the highlight of the sporting calendar.

Last year saw a few noses put out of joint by the RNRM winning the intermediate gold; this year we surpassed even my expectations.

A squad of ten skydivers formed three teams, one for each category.

In all, 35 teams competed in the Wiltshire stakes with the Senior Service jumpers taking junior silver, intermediate gold (for the third consecutive year) and senior silver.

The senior RNRM team made 3,500 jumps, narrowly beaten by the Army team which completed 18,000 jumps.

The Senior Service prize haul came to 32 medals and three trophies with Corps Colours for sport awarded to Maj Kenny Craig, Capt Ross Drinkwater RM and Cpl Rohan Beal.

The outstanding showing at Netheravon permitted the opportunity to compete in the Nationals – and fight for a place in the British squad.

Pitted against the best in the country the RNRM were placed fifth, just four points off of a

bronze medal.

This year has been without a doubt the best for results and many thanks go to the dedication of the squad members for their time and financial commitment, heads of departments and commanding officers for releasing the ranks and also to the Sports Lottery and IPTRM for all their financial assistance.

The new season begins in February with training in the world's biggest skydive wind tunnel near Milton Keynes followed by team training in Florida doing 100 jumps each in 12 days with coaching from the current world champions and plenty of training weekends.

More details on the sport are available from www.skydivenavy.com, or by contacting your unit PFI for a copy of JSP419 and the JSPC Netheravon static-line courses.

Onside with Capt Paul Cunningham, RNFA



● Team manager OM(UW) Key Cave (HMS Lancaster) takes a breather during the Children in Need match against the Solent Devils

Picture: LSA Simpson

The puck stops here

THE RN Destroyers have returned to the ice to take on Service and civilian opposition as they continue to promote ice hockey in the Service.

The RAF Benson and Brize Norton Blue Wings had already been beaten twice this season by the RN before facing up on the ice again in Oxford. Despite fielding a much stronger squad, the Blue Wings were yet again comprehensively dispatched by the Destroyers (7-1).

WEA Tom Wilson (Collingwood) made his debut, contributing significantly to the victory with two goals and two assists.

Next up was a trip to Bracknell to face the RLC Chiefs, the last team to beat the Destroyers back in June when the Army squad came out on top 5-2.

Two new players made their debuts – Mne Dan White (40 Cdo) and CT Kieran Wilson (Chicksands) joining his twin brother Tom on the first line.

The RN starters were slow off the mark again, conceding the first goal after barely a minute had gone by.

But the Navy packmen showed the same character as in their previous match, responding quickly and repeatedly in a 13-1 demolition of the pongos.

The Wilson twins proved too strong for the RLC's defence, netting three goals and three assists each.

Newly-elected captain Dan Withers (Yeovilton) also played a good match, contributing two goals from the blue line.

The game was a good all-round performance but did not provide the opposition the team had hoped for ahead of a charity clash with the Solent Devils, one of the top U19 teams in the South.

Playing the Devils would be the first real challenge for the Destroyers and would be the first opportunity to measure the squad against an established side.

More than 200 people packed into Gosport ice rink

to watch the clash, with the Devils heavy favourites. The civvies went into the match with a slight expectation that it could be an easy affair.

The Destroyers' bench does, however, have quite a lot of experience, including a few previous GB international players, and it was the Destroyers who drew first blood, scoring on the very first shift to take a 1-0 lead, much to the Devils' surprise.

The game would prove to be a very close affair, dominated by both teams' offences, with Devils and Destroyers exchanging goals continuously.

Both the Devils' and Destroyers' goaltenders impressed despite the high scoreline, facing a much higher than normal shot barrage.

The normally reliable Destroyers' defence felt the strain of being reduced to only two regular D-men starting in their usual positions.

The wheels fell off the RN wagon late in the third period when despite the Destroyers maintaining a slim one or two goal lead for most of the match, the Gosport team scored three goals without reply to take the lead for the first time 13-12 with just over two minutes remaining.

The Devils would go on to add another goal seconds from the end to claim a hard-fought 14-12 victory.

Despite the defeat, it was an impressive outing by the Destroyers and it did much to raise the profile of Services hockey, leading to calls for a grudge match early next year. It also raised £455 for Children in Need.

The Destroyers are still recruiting and are especially keen to find an experienced netminder.

More details from www.piczo.com/micohockey or by contacting team manager OM Cave in HMS Lancaster or RN Ice Hockey Chairman Lt Cdr Bernard of FOST (details on the website).

Sean of the dead fast

SEAN Childs became the fastest cyclist in Naval history during the recent Inter-Service Time Trial Championship as he broke the 20-minute barrier for a ten-mile time trial.

The CPO(PT) from HMS Drake averaged nearly 32mph as he crossed the line on 19m 21s – just three seconds slower than the Combined Services record.

The championships were hosted by the RAF and incorporated in the Andover CC's Weyhill Weekender event, which saw Service riders battle with 250 civilian counterparts on the A303.

The RN & RM Cycling Association team were full of confidence, bolstered by both their sheer numbers and having their best riders available.

"They came, they rode hard, they conquered."

Sean's storming ride saw him take his fourth Inter-Service Ten-Mile title by 37 seconds from S/Sgt Martin Smith 19m 58s and Sgt Al Ridler 20m 12s (both Army) in second and third.

Backed up by fourth place CPO(MEA) Aran Stanton (Nelson) in 20m 17s and WO(SA) Garry Drew (Culdrose) fifth in 20m 54 sec, the RN held on to their team title; Garry also took the veterans' title.

Other notable performances came from triathlete Maj Charles Pennington RM in sixth place in 21m 6s and CPO(MA) James Smith (Ocean) who took seventh place with 21m 17s. Both riders broke the 22-minute barrier for the first time.

In the open event Sean finished runner-up to current British Masters Champion Steve Walking (A3CRG) who finished in 19m 17s. The RNRMC had the

satisfaction of taking the open team title to go with their Service titles.

The 25-mile race took place the following day, initially in horrendously foggy conditions.

Not to be outdone by their previous day's efforts, the RN riders had another great day as Sean took his second Inter-Service 25-Mile title in 51m 23s, and bagged another RN record in the process.

Second and third again went to the Army's S/Sgt Smith (52m 51s) and Sgt Ridler (53m 40s).

The Navy lifted the team title thanks to fourth place from Aran and a sixth place from Garry, who also took the veterans' title.

Sean was once again runner-up in the open event, this time to elite time trialist Ben Instone (A3CRG) who stormed round in 50m 33s.

The RNRMC rounded off the weekend by winning the Open 25-Mile team event and in the Open Weekender competition, Sean's aggregate times made him runner-up to Instone in the senior category with Garry finishing runner-up in the veteran category.

In all it was a very impressive result for the Royal Navy, considering many of their riders had been absent on deployments for the majority of the season.

The previous week saw RS Stuart Cox and Bob Richards (both Raleigh) break the Navy 25-Mile Two-Up Team Time Trial record in a time of 1hr 30s during the Plymouth Corinthian CC open event near Buckfastleigh.

This is the first time that either rider has featured in the RNRMC's records.

More details on the sport from Sean on 9375 65306 or childsa@a.dn.mod.uk



● An HMS Collingwood attack is thwarted during the Portsmouth area championships at HMS Nelson. HMS Sultan were crowned victors of the competition; Nelson were placed second with HMS Excellent and Collingwood third and fourth.

LA/Photo: Eriz Tucker, FRPU Whale Island

Encouraging court action

DESPITE the obvious loss of some key squad members to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, all five commands were able to field teams for the RN basketball championships at HMS Drake.

Two days were set aside for Portsmouth, Devonport, Scotland, Naval Air and the Royal Marines to fight for the Inter-Command title – which they did by playing some serious hard ball. *writer: Cdr Rob Knill, chairman RNBA.*

This was the first time in three years that all five commands had been able to muster sides for the event. In all 40 players turned up for the contest, with all getting some good court time.

Portsmouth ran out eventual winners by beating an albeit under-strength Marines side in a very hard fought final 86-69.

There were some very impressive individual performances from every command, notably LMA Matt Berry's (MH Gibraltar) whose return from serious injury is welcome.

AEM Zac Porter (Culdrose), ET's (ME) Bruno and Manley (Bulwark), ET (ME) Mack (Northumberland), Mnes Emerson (40 Cdo) and Farmer and Roberts (FPGRM) also impressed.

All players on show were invited to the next fixtures weekend also held at Drake as *Navy News* went to press.

The championships coincided with an equally impressive turnout for a basketball development day at HMS Raleigh which unearthed 12 potential players for

the future, ranging from basic to National League level.

The sport is once again gaining in momentum in other areas too. Capt Dave Butcher (Bulford) and Maj Charlie Nicholls (Fleet HQ) have set a benchmark for others to follow from a refereeing perspective, although we do need more volunteers for courses which will be funded.

The management and coaching staff of all three Service sides (Senior, U23 and Ladies) has been considerably strengthened by the addition of CPO(MEA) Paddy Kerr (Victorious) and Nigel Cheesman (Clyde Submarine Base).

With an unprecedented seven players nominated for selection by the 2006 Combined Services side, after a poor finish to last season everything is pointing towards success this year at all levels.

Refs thwart hat-trick

RN HOPES were high in the Combined Services squash championships – but those hopes were dashed by indifferent refereeing.

Lt Matt Ellicott (HMS Ark Royal) was available to defend the U25 title he had won in 2004 and 2005.

He cruised through to the semi-final at RAF Halton, where he demolished his Army opponent 9-0, 9-0, 9-0 to reach the final and a re-match with the soldier he beat two years ago.

Despite some very poor and inconsistent refereeing (Army and RAF), Ellicott managed to get to match point in the third game, but the referees seemed to be working to another script and started to increase the penalties against him.

There were some glaring mistakes in some of their decisions and as a result a very determined Army opponent made the most of them and came out the winner after five gruelling games.

In the men's senior event the RN representation was severely weakened by front-line commitments, and LAEM Neil Martin (Sultan) was the highest placed RN player in 9th position having played some very good squash throughout the tournament.

That event was won by an extremely useful young RAF player, who incidentally, Ellicott had beaten in the Under 25 final last year.

In the veterans' event Lt Cdr Robin Young (Fleet HQ) and Cdr Martin Jukes (Shrivenham) came 5th and 6th respectively and Cdr Steve Shaw (Fleet HQ) 8th.

In the ladies' competition the lone RN competitor, Surg Lt Kate Rouse (Drake) played the best squash of her life but was no match for the majority of her opponents; she did well to finish in 7th position.



● Youngsters in the township of Khayelitsha celebrate receiving their new kit and balls from the RNRU squad

How rugby can ease township hardships

AS WELL as retaining the Commonwealth Cup on their recent tour of South Africa, the second key part of the RNRU's visit was to promote the sport among communities.

The squad arrived in Africa laden with balls and strips courtesy of the Kit for Kids Appeal, bolstered by kit from specialist rugby clothing company KooGa.

And so it was that the team visited the sports ground at Khayelitsha accompanied by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band to present more than 500 rugby shirts to youngsters, plus a fair smattering of balls.

Around 300 schoolchildren were taken out of their classes for a coaching session led by RFU Tutor and Director of Community Rugby Cdr Gary Bushell.

"The genuine warmth and appreciation of the children was reward enough but the ability to put something back into the development of the game still

remains one of its key tenets," said Gary.

The touring party was then given an insight into life in the sprawling township and its people who live in the poorest of conditions despite the best efforts of the South African authorities.

New housing is being built with government subsidies, replacing the corrugated iron shacks – although in some areas shacks still dominate the horizon with people living in squalid conditions.

Before the tour of the township, a coaching session had been organised at the High School near the South African Navy dockyard in Simons Town.

The session was on a much smaller scale but the children were no less appreciative and in one of the most picturesque locations imaginable for a rugby pitch, high above False Bay, members of the RNRU and Royal Australian Navy RU ran a combined coaching clinic.

Top revs, not top gear



● Some neat manoeuvring from Sam Hartland and Peter Hopkins during the Smeathorpe Rally

Picture: PO 'Quincy' Holland, SCU Leydore

AFTER an early (ish) start, Mne Sam Hartland (on exchange in Holland) and WO1(AC) Peter Hopkins (on terminal leave) put in a solid performance in the Smeathorpe Rally Stages despite gear trouble.

The two racers represented the RN Automobile Club in the ten-stage event, organised by Exeter

Motor Club, run over a 50-mile course.

Competing in Class A (up to 1400cc) with a Suzuki Swift, the duo had an excellent race until late morning when power was being lost in 4th gear – unless the revs were pushed into the red from 3rd to prevent the power loss.

Despite these difficulties, the

pair (and car) completed all ten stages after more than nine hours on the road. They were placed sixth in their class and 50th overall.

Sam used the meeting to earn his international race licence... something he hopes to put into use alongside Peter in the 2008 Paris-Dakar rally.

Ironman shows his mettle

A BURST tyre and an act of God could not prevent triathlete Sgt C Goodridge (pictured) posting a highly creditable time in the World Ironman Championships held in Hawaii.

The senior NCO serving with 847 NAS/Commando Helicopter Force was selected for the GB squad after finishing 18th in the UK Ironman at Sherborne Castle in Somerset earlier this year.

So it was off to the 50th State to face the world's finest in a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile cycle ride and finally a 26.2-mile run.

Each event had to be completed in order and without any breaks between.

The sergeant crossed the line in 10h 8m 10s, coming 94th in his age category (out of 227 competitors) and 432nd overall (out of 1,689 racers).

He managed this time despite having to stop for a punctured tyre early on in the cycle discipline and after being forced to stop for a time penalty after taking too long to overtake an opponent.

The event took place despite the island being hit by an earthquake earlier in the week.

James dominates board meeting

WITH the finest waves to have graced the contest in its history, the Services' top surfboarders battled it out in shortboard and longboard divisions at the RN and RM Championships.

It was the title holder who retained his grip on the trophy and added another to his name.

NA(METOC) James Bulpett from RNAS Cudrose took advantage of beautiful 2-4ft waves groomed by an offshore wind at Gwithian beach near Hayle in Cornwall by winning both divisions.

Although the turnout was low as a result of operational demands, the desire to win was obvious.

The shortboard contest came first, with perennial favourite and longboard champ CPO Dave Burr looking first-class with a strong back-hand attack.

Making a comeback to shortboarding was dark horse LS Dave Barr-Saunders, who improved with every wave surfed.

With the semis complete the longboard heats began just as the waves improved further and Sgt Freddie Warwick was the clear standout with smooth manoeuvres in the pocket. Barr-Saunders again put in a solid performance and Bulpett quietly slipped his way into the final.

The shortboard final enjoyed some of the best waves of the day with Bulpett getting straight into the scoring on one of the many long lefts reeling through the contest peak.

Burr struggled to locate waves in the heat, but POAEM Simon Parry took it to the rights and Barr-Saunders to the lefts.

It was Bulpett who had the bit between his teeth (he was also a wave magnet) as he posted a good performance to take victory ahead of Barr-Saunders, Parry and Burr in that order.

The longboarders were up next with WO Paul 'Keeno' Keenan and Warwick taking advantage of Bulpett's and Barr-Saunders' tired arms.

All the competitors caught several good waves and the scores were very close. It was Bulpett who snatched victory by the smallest of margins ahead of Warwick, Keenan and Barr-Saunders.

"I felt I surfed to my best in the shortboard so I'm really happy to have retained the title, especially to see a silent Dave Burr as he caught zero waves in the final," said the double champion.

"I'm especially happy, though very surprised to have won the longboard too against some high-quality surfers."

"I was definitely on a fine streak of form and lucky with the waves that came to me. The great conditions unquestionably helped too."



● The Cornish waves engulf champion NA(METOC) Bulpett on his longboard
Picture: PO Bob Sharples, 829 NAS



● WO1 Dave Strudwick (DCSA Portsmouth) races through Portland Harbour during Speed Week
Picture: Dave White

Portland of hope – and glory

WEYMOUTH Speed Week provided the perfect opportunity for windsurfers to hold the Inter-Services Speed Championships.

The task of upholding RN honour around Portland Harbour fell to Lt Paul Morris, Mne Thor Gustafsson and WO1 Dave Strudwick.

It was their mission to post the fastest combined times over a week's windsurfing on a 500m course in the harbour.

Operational commitments meant the RAF were unable to muster a team, but three soldiers turned up so the contest was on.

The best thing about speed week is the lack of rules – there are no restrictions as to who may enter and all types of sailing craft are welcome, making the week's racing unique.

The sailors and soldiers found themselves on the water alongside Bjorn Dunkerbeck (12 times world champion in course racing, slalom and waves and probably the greatest all-round windsurfer) with Olympic 2012 organiser Lord Coe watching events

from the sidelines.

Wind and weather conditions varied through the week. The first two days offered good racing (WO1 Strudwick covered 47 miles in one day's windsurfing alone).

Racing on day three was cut short by lack of wind, before the gusts returned on the fourth day to allow Lt Morris to post his fastest time of 32.39kts (the world record is 48.70 kts and the British 44.03kts) after 31 runs down the course.

By day five, winds up to severe gale force nine and gusts of more than 40kts made accurate speed racing all but impossible except for world-class riders.

Conditions eased on the sixth and seventh days of the competition, so much did wind drop that the final session of the week's competition was cancelled.

The plus side was that Bjorn was available to present the Service trophies.

The Navy team posted the best combined times and hence took the Inter-Service title, although the fastest sailor over the week was the Army's Capt Alan Cross, who clocked a top speed 32.56kts; he was .17kts quicker than the fastest matelot, Lt Morris.

Ladies gel in Caribbean

FOR the first time in seven years, the ladies' hockey team left these shores for an overseas tour.

A 21-strong squad of players and officials headed to Barbados for the 12-day Banks International Festival.

The key goal of the tour was to regenerate the team which has in recent seasons struggled to hold on to existing hockey talent and find fresh blood.

A good mix of players from seasoned hands to relative rookies at RN representative level headed to the tournament, which draws teams from across the globe.

Despite temperatures consistently in excess of 30°C on grass and AstroTurf pitches, the team won four out of five of its pool matches and narrowly lost out in the semi-final.

Off the pitch, the squad enjoyed the 'Bajan party spirit with plenty of social events and sporting activities on offer including scuba diving, kayaking and surfing.

"The festival was an enormous success," said SA Nancy Porter.

"We achieved a great result and most importantly created a team ethos which has gelled players both on and off the pitch."

"There's a lot of potential for the future of RN women's hockey."

Archery oops

RED faces all round on the NN sports desk... and apologies to the Navy's archers as we mis-read your Inter-Service results.

The RN were crowned champions ahead of the RAF; in the associations contest, the crabs beat the RN into second place with the Army in third.

HMS Collingwood hosts the RN championships on January 20, with the 2007 Inter-Services lined up for Lilleshall on February 18.

Referee course

THE RNRU referee society will be holding a three-day entry-level referee award course for budding rugby union officials, beginning Monday January 15 at HMS Temeraire.

Details from CPO Paul Burton 9352 36553.

Scratch victory

A SCRATCH RN volleyball side lifted an Inter-Services title aloft in the sands of Iraq... despite not being invited to the contest initially.

The RAF and Army contingent at British Military Hospital Shaibah, outside Basra, decided to hold a competition on the base.

The small RN force at the hospital obviously weren't too chuffed by this and, calling upon former Navy personnel serving at Shaibah to bolster the numbers, mustered a squad.

The sailors and marines dispatched the RAF with ease, triumphed over the Army B side and then squeezed by Army A to claim victory.

Dominance ends

AFTER a dozen years, the Inter-Services canoe polo trophy has been wrested from the hands of the RN's men's side.

The Navy has held the title since 1994, but an RAF team proved too strong in the pool at HMS Temeraire, narrowly overcoming the Senior Servicemen.

In the knock-out competition, the men's side, led by Lt Matt Twiselton, again lost narrowly – this time to the Army.

The ladies provided the weekend cheer. The team, captained by Lt Cdr Charlie Atkinson, overcame the RAF in the final.

More details on the sport from Lt Cdr Joe Wood on 9380 25623.

Another night of hurt for boxers



● MEM Gareth Smith tries to fend off soldier Spr A Whitfield during his defeat at the Inter-Services
Picture: LA(Phot) Eric Tucker, FRPU Whale Island

THE RN's barren years in the boxing Inter-Services championships continued with defeat to the Army on home soil.

Chris Bewsey's side ran out 8-4 winners on another entertaining evening of amateur action... making it 24 years since the RN last won this showpiece fixture.

Alex Urrutia, Stu O'Conner and Shaun McDonald all scored RN victories in the contested bouts.

They impressed, as did the likes of Jamie Evans, Martin Stead and Antony Richardson for the Army. New RN coach Sgt Graham Alderson RM was pleased with the performance of his men.

"I was proud of each and every one of my boxers," he added.

"They were up against a lot of quality fighters but no one let me – or the Navy – down. It was the Army's night and they showed how strong they are."

"There were a lot of novices in my squad going into an open class competition against top fighters."

"But there were a lot of close contests which could have gone either way."

"Many of the boys boxed better than they ever had before. I couldn't ask for more than that."

In non-Forces bouts, five RN pugilists are potential ABAE semi finalists.

MEM Gareth Smith (Argyll), Mne Travis (45 Cdo RM),

L/Cpl Urrutia (CTCRM), Mne Robinson (1 AGRM) and OM(C) MacDonald (Ark Royal) were all due to compete in the quarter finals of the ABAE in Liverpool as Navy News went to press.

A good evening's boxing against the Western Counties saw the RN squeeze home with a 3-2 victory at Bristol's Jurys Hotel.

Wins from Mnes Tighe and Robinson and Cpl Sheen secured the victory in an evenly-matched contest.

Meanwhile, the RN's top female fighter Lt Lucy Abel (Collingwood) took silver in a multi-national tournament in Finland.

Featherweight Lucy was entered in the open class. Reaching the final she faced last year's European and Swedish champion.

Lucy used all the skills and ring craft she has been taught, but lost out on a points decision.

She did, however, defeat her England rival Christine Shergold from Plymouth in a special flyweight contest during the Navy Cup contest at HMS Collingwood.

The home team lifted the cup yet again, cheered on by 700 spectators.

CH Bell (Richmond) was crowned the best boxer and MEM Finlay (Sultan) was runner-up. The Fleet title went to Richmond, Collingwood took the novice cup and Heron were named intermediate winners.



Sisters-in-war
- Daring and
Dauntless
take shape



**Crumpled
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**The road
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Olympic diary



**Mud on the
tracks** - with
Sea Cadets at
HMS Raleigh

Plus

**With the RFA
and Fleet Air
Arm off Africa**

And

**That was the
year that was**
- a look back
at 2006



● Scream if you wanna go faster... Sgt Richie Lake's Zappat 'Go Commando' leaps out of the surf off the Cornish coast
Picture: Len Whitefield, www.photolounge.co.uk

Leap in the dark blue

Year of years for swimmers

THE year 2006 has ended with one of the most impressive trophy hauls in the long, proud history of RN swimming.

The men won the Inter-Service competition while the ladies came a close second to the Army.

The Navy open water swimming team took the Inter-Service title from the RAF after 25 years of domination and the Navy's swimmers also competed in national and international competitions around the world.

The season started well with the first major competition at Lake Bala in North Wales.

The RN took the title from the RAF after OM Jason Beresford completed the 5km course in just over an hour.

LMA Mhairi Muir competed in her first open water championships and finished second. Mhairi, a triathlete, took the plunge into the cold water without wetsuit and enjoyed every minute.

Lt Sarah Buck competed in both the long and short course events, she finished in first position in the 1500m breaststroke.

The Inter-Service competition took place in Temeraire's pool following a year's intensive training mixed with frequent appearances in contests at local and national level.

The ladies' team in particular had put in many hours of training and hoped 2006 would be the year they finally overcame the Army.

The Army as usual put out a very strong team and although they won, the RN managed to close the gap to just 14 points.

This small points difference reflects the dedication and hard



work displayed by the ladies' team.

"All the swimmers had trained hard and the effort was reflected by the result," said team coach Gary Thomas.

The men's team remained dominant in the pool, beating the Army into second place by 47 points.

The RN has now won the Inter-Service competition for eight of the last nine years.

The Inter-Service event also features water polo and diving; the water polo team came second to the Army but sadly we were unable to field a diving team.

Some of the pool swimmers were selected to compete in the World Masters Championships in Stanford, USA.

There were 25 British Armed Forces competitors, 11 from the RN, up against 7,200 swimmers from over 80 countries, 900 of whom took part in the open water 3km swim.

The RN managed to break 15 Navy Masters records and the team came home with eight medals.

In particular LWEA Ben Rooker finished 3rd in the 50m backstroke and LWTR Stuart Mantle won silver in the 100m backstroke.

Both swimmers are new to the world of masters swimming due to their age, but the future looks good as more of the RN's younger swimmers mature.

The Navy also broke the British medley relay record for the 16-19 year age group.

Younger swimmers also had a fantastic year in the pool.

The Royal Navy team achieved 3rd place in the GB Long Course Championships held in Manchester.

The open water season has also proved to be highly successful, with Lt Buck competing in the Grand Prix series around the UK and the European Cup.

The Grand Prix consists of four swims around the UK, each of 5km, in which points are awarded for finishing places and the totals are added up.

Lt Buck finished 5th out of 24 competitors. She also competed in the European 10km cup which was held in the Royal Albert Docks, London, where she was placed 15th after completing the course in 2½ hours.

Already lined up for next August is a tri-Service cross-Channel relay race in August.

The teams will consist of six swimmers from each service and the teams will race from Dover to Calais in what will hopefully become an annual contest.

Anyone interested in competing for a place on the team should contact Gary at HMS Temeraire on 9380 25912.

The RN swim team train every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in the Portsmouth area. Training plans can be written for those not in Portsmouth.

FLY Navy - Royal Marines style.

This is Zappat racing and this is fun. And perhaps a bit dangerous.

Picture an inflatable boat with a 50HP two-stroke engine racing through (and sometimes above) the surf at up to 50mph and you've pretty much got the sport down to a T.

Hoping to find more speed and adrenalin junkies to raise the sport's profile in the Senior Service is Sgt Richie Lake (by day a platoon weapons instructor at CTC RM).

The 33-year-old hopes Go Commando, one of 40 Zappat boats in the UK, will be joined by another RN craft on the circuit in the 2007 season.

And what's not to love about pulling 3Gs in tight turns and leaping out of the water at heights of up to 20ft?

The sport was born in South Africa two decades and got a foothold in the UK five years ago, since when it has grown in popularity.

"I approached the season with realistic goals - not to finish last and not to embarrass the Royal Marines," said Richie.

"I know I've achieved both: I finished with a credible mid-table ranking and top of Division Two."

It looks dangerous. It is. (It's in the top five most lethal sports in the UK.) The engine gives the Zappat the same power-weight ratio as a Ferrari Testarossa.

Details from Richie on 93785 4003 or e-mail him at zapatgocommando@aol.com.

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