



NAVY NEWS

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of these bright
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● *Orchestral manoeuvres in the dark... Drum Majors from the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines prepare for the highlight of their calendar, the Mountbatten Festival of Music*
Picture: LA(Phot) Brett Turner, Fleet Photographic Unit

DON'T SMOKE ON THE WATER

SUBMARINES, messes, wardrooms and clubs will become no-smoking zones as the Navy embraces the Government's healthy lifestyle programme.

Over the next few years, smoking will be progressively restricted across the Fleet, as well as in establishments, to protect non-smokers, while sailors and Royal Marines who continue to light up will be encouraged to kick the habit. Smokers already face limitations on

where they can and cannot indulge in a quick smoke at sea and on land in Royal Navy establishments.

The changes from March this year are part of a common smoking policy for all Servicemen and women.

It means a ban on smoking in all defence workplaces with only a few

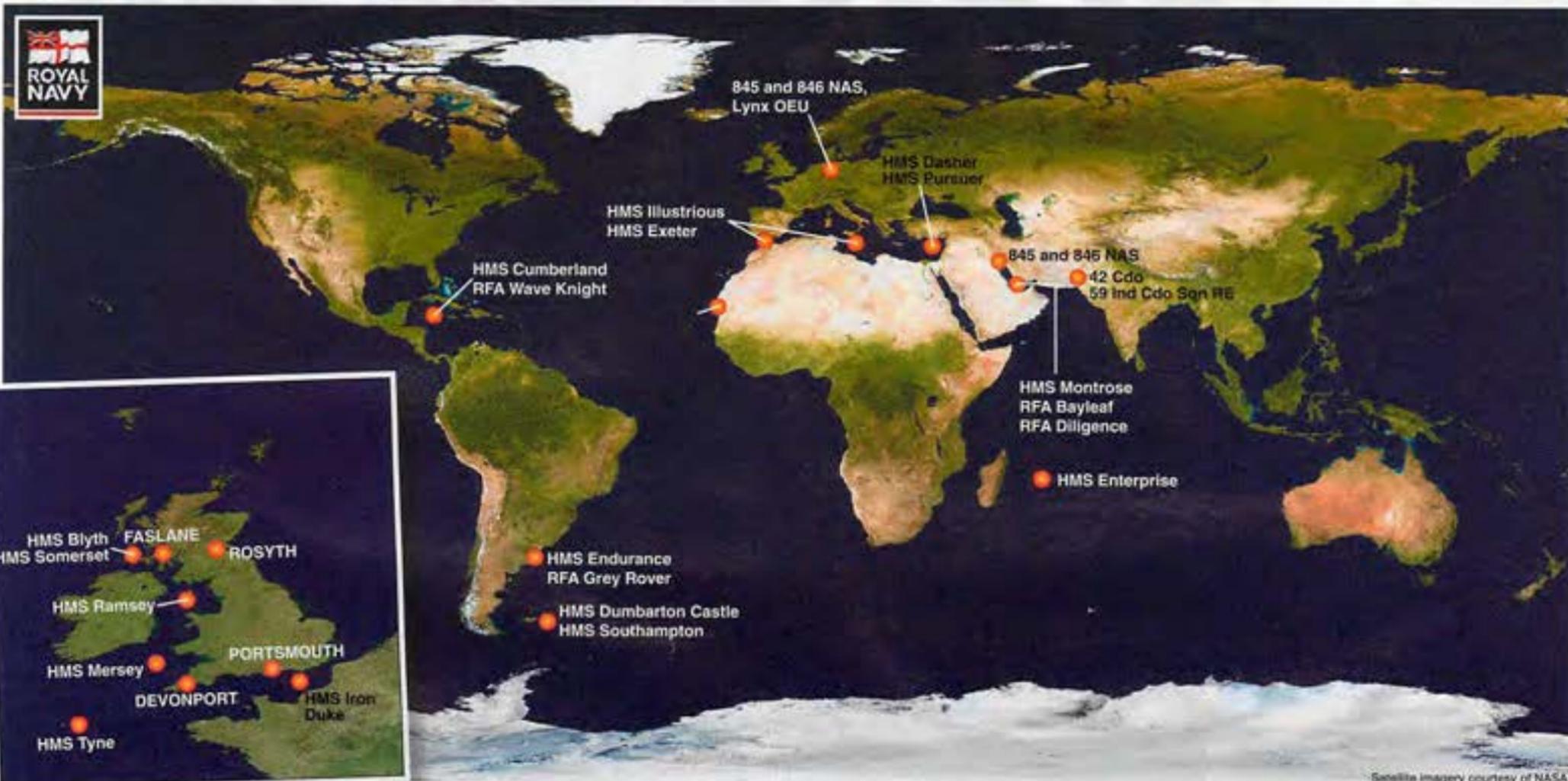
exceptions initially - notably in submarines and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries.

According to MOD health experts, one in five sailors and Royal Marines smokes - in excess of 7,000 men and women - but that also means that around 30,000 do not.

■ Continued on page 2



ILLUSTRIOUS VISITOR CALLS IN ON THE NATION'S FLAGSHIP - PAGE 19



Satellite imagery courtesy of NASA

Fleet Focus

WE'LL begin our monthly panorama of the RN with an apology to the Fleet Air Arm...

We neglected to mention last month in our round-up of units away over the festive season that **845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons** were deployed at Christmas in Basra as the core element of the Joint Helicopter Force (Iraq). Sorry about that.

Fellow Sea King fliers **849 NAS** – they operate the airborne early warning variant of the venerable helicopter – have been to Scotland to exercise alongside RAF fast jets.

And the last front-line Sea Harrier squadron has bowed out with **HMS Illustrious** during the carrier's Mediterranean deployment; **801 NAS** embarked for the final time aboard *Lusty* (the squadron decommissions for good this spring). We'll have reports from 801 and 849 in our February edition.

Amphibious assault ship **HMS Bulwark** departs for a seven-month tour of duty in the Middle East, providing training to foreign navies in the art of anti-piracy, smuggling and terrorism operations; it's the inaugural deployment for the impressive ship, indeed the first time she or her sister *Albion* has embarked upon an operational tour of duty.

Frigate **HMS Sutherland** is carrying out training alongside in Plymouth before undergoing maintenance in the dockyard this month, followed by a spell of trials.

Sister ship **Iron Duke** has been working with HM Customs and Excise on an anti-smuggling exercise. Working with **RFA Fort Austin**, *Iron Duke* embarked customs officers and troops, the frigate practised locating and diverting a suspicious vessel in the Channel to a British port for inspection.

Fresh from an extensive refit, Type 22 frigate **HMS Cornwall** has hosted the Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, during his first visit to Devonport in his new post. The 'ice cream frigate' was due to be formally accepted back into the Fleet as *Navy News* went to press.

Fellow Type 22 frigate **HMS Cumberland** has returned to Devonport fresh from her drug-busting exploits in the Caribbean.

Type 23 frigate **HMS Somerset** has been in the Scottish Exercise Areas on anti-submarine manoeuvres which involved support from an RAF Nimrod, a Dutch Orion maritime patrol aircraft, and a Lynx of 815 NAS.

The war games proved challenging for submariners and skimmers alike as the frigate played games of cat-and-mouse with the deeps, who promptly carried out mock attacks against *Somerset*.

It was all an eye-opener for eight soldiers from the Royal Green Jackets; *Somerset* returned a favour after the squaddies took six members of the ship's company on exercise on Salisbury Plain (*Navy News*, December 05).

Somerset's sister **HMS Grafton** is in the twilight of her career ahead of being sold to Chile.

This month the ship is on show in London and Suffolk. She is the RN's largest presence at the International Boat Show which opens at the ExCel Centre in London's Docklands on January 5 and runs until the fifteenth. After that, there's a farewell visit to Ipswich, the frigate's affiliated town, before a spell at sea to contribute to the training of future navigators and flight crews off the south coast.

The mountain specialists of **42 Commando** Royal Marines head for the Arctic circle towards the end of this month for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines' traditional winter deployment.

Porsangmoen, a very small Norwegian Army outpost nestling in the mountainous northernmost part of the country will serve as the base for the Royals from late-January until mid-March. It promises to be even colder than the bases normal picked for the commandos' winter deployment. On the plus side, Porsangmoen boasts a good gym, cinema and swimming pool.

And finally, on a sad note, **HMS Spartan** bows out this month in Faslane. The venerable Swiftsure-class hunter-killer entered service with the RN in the autumn of 1979 and completed her final tour of duty, which included a visit to Rio, only last month.

New smoking ban

Rededication's what you need

Continued from page one

Vice Admiral Rory McLean, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Health) said the "golden rule" was to "protect the rights of non-smokers not to inhale the 'smoke of others'... and at the same time allow smokers the right to light up "at home".

There is carrot, not merely stick in the Navy's smoking policy with help provided by medical experts to wean people off the weed, as well as health leaflets and general information both about the dangers of smoking and also how to quit, part of what Vice Admiral McLean calls "an impressive anti-smoking plan".

He added: "Every time people go to the medical centre or dentist, they are automatically offered anti-smoking help – clinics, patches, etc.

"What we are trying to do is inculcate a culture which tries to reduce smoking in the Armed Forces."

The policy will also affect messes, wardrooms and clubs, such as those run by NAAFI, where smoking will be outlawed – except in designated smoking rooms.

For sailors and Royal Marines in single living accommodation, it is possible that a complete block could be allocated to smokers if there is sufficient demand and the local Commanding Officer can provide it.

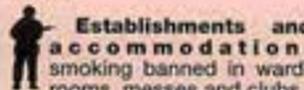
At sea, sailors already face restrictions on where they can smoke, often the quarterdeck, or in specific compartments when weather conditions are bad.

From this March, smoking will only be allowed on the upper deck.

How it affects you



Surface ships: smoking on the upper deck only; smoking between decks banned from March.



Establishments and accommodation: smoking banned in wardrooms, messes and clubs (including NAAFI-run clubs), although self-contained smoking rooms will be permitted.

Local commands will be able to allocate single cabins on bases for smokers; the over-riding principle is ensuring no-one who doesn't want to be exposed to the smoke of others is exposed. Smoking in family quarters will be allowed according to personal choice.

Smokers can still join the Silent Service, but if they do then they will be encouraged – and helped – to stop lighting up.

Given that there are around 2,000 submariners, the Admiralty reckons around 400 deeps will be affected by the new smoking policy.

At present compartments fore and aft in nuclear boats are set aside for smokers, but unlike surface ships where air contaminated by tobacco can be relatively easily vented, in submarines, the atmosphere is simply re-cycled.

Vice Admiral McLean said



Royal Fleet Auxiliaries: smoking will be banned between decks by March next year. It will only be allowed in designated external parts of a ship, subject to operational requirements.



Submarines: in the longer term, smoking to be banned while a boat is underwater, but smoking permitted on deck on patrol; initially, smoking will be permitted in designated compartments, but a programme to help submariners to give up will be promulgated.

it was important to preserve the close 'band of brothers' fraternity within the submarine service, where members of several messes had already voluntarily decided to stop smoking.

"A submarine is a highly-complex piece of kit, and the difference between a submarine and surface ship is that crew do not have the opportunity to go up on deck," he explained.

"We expect to make submarines completely smoke-free, but we will have to wean our submariners off cigarettes to achieve it."

■ Comment, page six

FRESH from being welcomed with open arms back into the Fleet, *HMS Northumberland* was rededicated, ushering in the next phase of her active life.

Rather than a traditional ceremony alongside, the ship opted for Plymouth Sound to hold the service – a sort of Naval 'christening'.

And the gods were kind, for a crisp autumn day greeted the 190 sailors as they awoke on November 17.

Lady Anne Kerr, the Type 23 frigate's sponsor, the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, former COs, dignitaries and affiliates climbed aboard the ship for the ceremony on *Northumberland's* flight deck.

Std Emily Trick, the youngest sailor in the ship's company at a mere 17 and Katie Guy, the wife of *Northumberland's* CO Cdr Tom Guy, sliced through the rededication cake lovingly crafted by Ch Matt Kent.

Before arriving in Plymouth, *Northumberland* had been on the Tyne to take part in T200 events.

The trip down from Tyneside (it took a leisurely three days and nights) saw parents and children of the ship's company hosted aboard to give them a flavour of life in a 21st-Century warship (which loudly proclaims herself to be the Fleet's No.1 best Duke-class frigate).

Young and old witnessed day-to-day life as well as operations by the frigate's Merlin helicopter, man overboard exercises, machine-gun firings and action stations drills. Some guests were so taken with RN life, they volunteered to join crew on standing watches through the night on the bridge and Ship Control Centre.

... and another blow for sailors

HMS Portland smashing into the breakwater at Plymouth?

Her bridge team being breathalysed?

No, it's not a story you may have missed, but it is a sign of things to come as from the beginning of this year, tests will be compulsory for any members of a ship's team involved in a serious incident alongside or in home waters.

Devonport-based Type 23 frigate *HMS Portland* served as the guinea pig with an exercise determined to test the response both of the ship's company and the testing

team to a major incident on a warship.

In this case, it was *Portland* ploughing into Plymouth's breakwater.

Under the new legislation, an approved 'collections officer' from healthcare organisation BUPA must get to a ship within two hours of the initial call to carry out drug and alcohol tests.

While a ship is waiting, an officer must keep an eye on the sailors to be tested to ensure no-one involved in a serious incident drinks, eats or passes urine before samples can be taken by the expert.

In *Portland's* case, the collection officer was at Devonport's gates in 42 minutes... and in a further 13 was breathalysing the sailors 'under suspicion' before taking urine samples from each one.

The sample process on *Portland* took less than three hours and was watched by observers from all three Services.

The aim of the tests is to provide a Board of Inquiry with details of whether drugs or alcohol played any part in a serious incident or accident – much as police carry out tests in the wake of any road accident.

Fleet briefs

Helos have a go at Luft conversion

A FLEET Air Arm Lynx and Sea Kings have spent two weeks in northern Germany helping NATO air defence experts develop battlefield tactics.

845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons each supplied a green jungle, while the Lynx Operational Evaluation Unit at Yeovilton supplied one of its aircraft for Trial Embow 10 at the Meppen range in Germany.

Experts from across NATO, including the Air Warfare Centre at RAF Waddington, the RN's Maritime Warfare Centre at Southwick Park and boffins from the MOD's DSTL defence research labs joined the fliers in helping to develop defences against modern threats on the battlefield over land and sea.

York brings plate home

THE nameplate of battle-cruiser HMS Repulse is back in Britain after a spell in the Far East.

The plate was raised from the wreck of the ship – lost on December 10 1941 in company with HMS Prince of Wales – over a decade ago, and formed the centrepiece of commemorations to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the war.

HMS York took survivors of the two ships to the wreck site for an emotional service of remembrance, and subsequently brought the plate home.

It has been donated to the RN Submarine Museum whose director, Cdr Jeff Tall, was last CO of the Polaris missile boat HMS Repulse and proudly displayed the nameboard on his submarine before her decommissioning in 1996.

Tireless not noiseless

THE passageways and compartments of HMS Tireless once again resound to the dulcet tones of Jackspeak after submarines returned to the boat.

The hunter-killer has been undergoing an overhaul in Devonport – also the Trafalgar-class submarine's home port – courtesy of DML, aided by the ship's company.

Tireless has been in refit since March, with the most obvious enhancement to the boat being an improved weapons system, notably the fitting of Tomahawk cruise missile capability.

The maintenance period ended last month and the boat now returns to open waters for sea trials.

Bang on Tyne

THE gunners of fishery protection ship HMS Tyne are the top shots among the small-ship community having collected the Good Luck Trophy for the best marksmanship in a minor warship.

Which is unusual, not least because as a fishery protection vessel Tyne shouldn't need to fire her weapons in anger.

Nevertheless, her gunnery team, led by gunnery officer Lt Nick Lucas, scored the best results during close-range firings at Operational Sea Training and also during annual weapons training.

"We don't get to do much gunnery in our usual operational environment, so it's testament to the professionalism and skill of our sailors," said Lt Lucas.

The trophy was the icing on the 2005 cake; the ship received the freedom of North Tyneside, played an important role in T200 celebrations there and supported the King of Norway's state visit.



Improving Lynx with the capital

WHEN Lynxes of the Operational Evaluation Unit at RNAS Yeovilton made a rare flight over the capital on a magnificent autumn day, photographer LA Wheelie Barrow grabbed his camera.

Once over the capital, the two 815 Naval Air Squadron helicopters followed the course of the Thames from the heart of Westminster as far as Tower Bridge and HMS Belfast – allowing a bit of time for some sightseeing and navigational training.

The flight afforded some stunning views, not least Lt Dave Lilley and Lt Cdr Mike Sewed on final approach to Yeovilton (main picture) at sunset.

There was also a very unusual bird's-eye view of the London Eye (left) and a studied look from Lt Cdr 'Nobby' Clarke (far left) reflecting on the route back from the capital to the helicopters' Somerset home more than 100 miles away.



From the Balkans to Basrah...

THE STERLING work of 845 Naval Air Squadron over the past 12 months has earned it the coveted Australia Shield.

The Shield, first presented in 1969 by the HMS Commonwealth Trust Fund to the Fleet Air Arm, is awarded annually to the Naval Air Squadron exhibiting the highest degree of operational readiness.

The demands on 845 NAS and their green 'jungle' Sea Kings were heavy in 2004 and 2005.

845 personnel and helicopters continued to support NATO operations in Bosnia – a tactically and topographically challenging 'workplace'.

On completion of this mission, they were quickly re-rolled to form part of the Joint Helicopter Force Iraq.

Here the Squadron faced new challenges, coping with the harsh environment and ever-present threat from insurgents with their arsenal of mortars, rockets, guns and roadside bombs.

With temperatures reaching 50°C at the height of summer, ground and air crews had to use all of their resources to maintain the hectic operational tempo.

This was particularly reflected in the engineering workload.

A combination of abrasive sand, high temperatures and pilots operating their aircraft to their limits meant long hours tackling both unforeseen problems and the continual environmental attrition of aircraft systems.

It was for this taxing

maintenance and repair work that they were awarded the runners up prize in the annual Rolls Royce awards for military aviation engineering excellence.

In addition to contributing to the global presence of UK Forces, 845 has been engaged continually back at home assisting the Army and Marines in their training.

The sterling work of 845 pilot Lt Jez Morse has also been acknowledged.

Lt Morse, who featured in our article on 845 in Iraq last June, was singled out by his CO Cdr Chris Slocumbe for a General Officer Commending Commendation for one night's flying in which he demonstrated "unhesitating air-manship, outstanding courage and flexibility".

His Sea King was scrambled when a Coalition patrol became threatened by insurgents in an isolated part of the Basra region.

Having assessed the situation Lt Morse dropped off troops on several occasions in unsecured sites, aware that a hostile crowd was massing.

To help contain a situation that appeared to be spiralling out of control, the officer returned to drop off reinforcements before leading his Sea King and another helicopter to a partially-secured site within the cordon hastily



● An 845 NAS Sea King waits to pick up troops in the Iraqi desert

created by Allied ground forces.

By the time his aircraft put down for good at Basra, the crew had been flying for nine hours in extremely challenging conditions, with the very real threat of small arms, rocket and missile fire.

Lt Morse is now back in Blighty, but elements of 845 and 846 NAS remained in Iraq over the Christmas period (something we neglected to mention in our Yuletide round-up last month; sorry – Ed) as part of the Joint Helicopter Force (Iraq).

The Fleet Air Arm provides

the largest contingent and its Sea Kings are the workhorses of the helicopter force, conducting troop movements, Eagle vehicle check points, overhead cover, surveillance and VIP transport. They also carry the Incident Response Teams (IRTs) who must be able to respond within 30 minutes to a serious accident or life-threatening incident.

Three Sea Kings are strategically positioned within the Multi-National Division (SE), the main UK area of responsibility in Iraq.

Each of the three IRTs com-

prise the RN helicopter crew, RAF medics, an Army bomb disposal team, Armed Response Force and Service firemen.

In a three-month period at the end of last year the IRT responded to 45 medical call-outs, treating 66 personnel, many of whom owe their lives to the quick response and professionalism of the team.

This month the Royal Navy's commitment increases as the Army Lynx detachment is replaced by Lynxes of 847 NAS, from the Commando Helicopter Force, based at RNAS Yeovilton.



Fleet briefs

Quorn's glad to be back

AFTER a year away from her home port, veteran minehunter HMS Quorn is back where she belongs in Portsmouth.

The Hunt-class ship headed to Rosyth for a refit 12 months ago.

The biggest changes are to her accommodation and recreation areas for her 42 ship's company. Quorn has also been fitted with an updated recompression chamber for her divers.

Following her refit, the ship has been sailing around the UK on trials and work-up since August, notably exercises off Plymouth and two particularly arduous weeks around Campbeltown and the Mull of Kintyre.

Every inch of the seabed was scoured for 'drill mines' which were inspected either by the ship's 'yellow submarine' – a remotely-operated submersible – or Quorn's diving team.

From next month, the ship joins the UK's high-readiness on-call minehunting force, ready to deploy worldwide at short notice.

Hi-tech comms reap dividends

THE sagacity of fitting a hi-tech video communications system to HMS Cumberland reaped PR dividends.

As last month's Navy News reported, the Type 22 frigate achieved a £200m cocaine bust after a dramatic chase through waters off Nicaragua.

Before sailing for her West Indies deployment, the ship received a trial comms system which allowed real-time high-quality video footage to be beamed from the ship to TV studios.

Some RN operations and deeds have suffered in the past from the inability to send pictures and especially moving images instantaneously in this world of 24-hour news channels.

Boffins at EADS Astrium beefed up existing satellite communications in Cumberland to allow live broadcast-quality transmissions from ship to shore.

The result was that Cumberland's CO Capt Simon Ancona found himself conducting a live interview with a reporter in a TV studio back in Blyth while his frigate prowled the Caribbean.

Cyprus takes on front-line role

THE patrol boats of the Cyprus Squadron will have a greater role in readying major RN vessels for front-line deployments in the future.

Senior trainers believe HMS Pursuer and Dasher can give major vessels heading east of Suez that much-needed last-minute cutting edge before entering their theatre of operations.

A mobile team from the Flag Officer Sea Training in Devonport headed to the eastern Med to prepare HMS Montrose for her six-month tour of duty in the Gulf region.

The Type 23 frigate has taken over from HMS Campbeltown as the British warship supporting efforts to bring stability to the region and stamp down on smuggling and terrorist traffic by sea off Iraq.

The last stage of Montrose's training took place in Cypriot waters, courtesy of Pursuer.

The FOST team wanted to see the small Archer-class patrol craft

playing the 'bad guy', hiding illegal items – notably weapons and ammunition – aboard and generally being unco-operative.

Board and search is part and parcel of RN operations east of Suez, with the Senior Service committed to anti-terror sweeps in the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Gulf.

For Montrose's crew, it was a chance to test the Xeres communications system which allows video footage, pictures and documents to be beamed back by a boarding party to the mother ship beyond the horizon.

At 54 tons and less than 70ft long, it may seem a little difficult to use the Archers as mock smugglers.

Not so said Cdr Steve Pearson, head of FOST's Mobile Sea Training. He explained:

"We identified Cyprus and its squadron for pre-deployment training as they not only offer a similar environment, but also the ships are of a similar size to those which may need to be searched in the Gulf."

"Under these realistic condi-



● A boarding party from HMS Montrose scours HMS Pursuer for suspicious items off Cyprus

Picture: Cpl Vince Roberts

tions – and by using all the technology that Montrose has available, it gives the crew the best possible idea of what life will be like when they arrive in the Gulf."

For the small squadron – formed in 2003 to help safeguard shipping in the eastern Mediterranean during the run-up to the Iraq campaign – playing with the 'big boys'

proved to be hugely rewarding.

"We work on force protection every day in Cyprus, but playing the bad guy gets you thinking about the threats out there," said Lt Steve Hart, Pursuer's CO.

"It really sharpens the mind."

It's likely to become a regular feature of life in Cyprus for the squadron – and for ships bound

for the Arabian Gulf.

"I absolutely see the Cyprus squadron incorporating more training in the future," said Cdr Pearson, whose team returns to the island next month.

"We have a regular rotation of frigates going to the Gulf and we're refining and developing this exercise all the time."

'A sort of Portsmouth in the sun...'

CHRISTMAS time. Mistletoe and wine...

Not in the Gulf, where it's very much been 'business as usual' for the UK Maritime Component Commander (UKMCC) Cdre Simon Williams, his staff, and the ships under their direction.

Four ships were 'in theatre' over the festive season, supporting British efforts to stabilise Iraq and keep the peace, led by frigate HMS Montrose, with survey ship HMS Echo and RFAs Bayleaf and Diligence providing much-needed assistance.

In all, more than 400 RN and RFA sailors and Royal Marines were committed to operations in the Gulf region over the festive period.

The British force, whose headquarters are in Bahrain, was set up in 2001 in the wake of the September 11 atrocities.

More than four years later a staff of 18 RN and RM personnel direct the work of British maritime units committed to either Operation Telic, the peacekeeping mission in Iraq, or Enduring Freedom, the campaign against terrorism in the wider Gulf region.

The UKMCC team are based with the local US naval command, making for even closer co-operation between the two allies.

That's particularly important with a major surge in the Royal Navy's presence planned in the region this year; for a start, new assault ship HMS Bulwark will conduct her maiden tour-of-duty in the Gulf and Middle East.

"Our role isn't just about the day-to-day, it is also very much about developing the programmes for the next 12 months so that our ships are fully integrated into the maritime coalition," explained UKMCC operations officer Lt Cdr John Payne.

Logistics officer Lt Gary Manning, who oversees the supply of RN stores and personnel arriving or leaving the theatre with the aid of a small team, added:

"Bahrain is now a major hub for coalition ships operating in theatre, a sort of Portsmouth in the sun."



● Santa's sleigh has turned grey... SA Steve Wells piles mail and stores inside HMS Montrose's Lynx at RAF Muharraq in Bahrain

As well as commanding the RN and RFA ships in theatre, the Bahrain headquarters has also been providing back-up for the other Senior Service commander in theatre, Commodore Bruce Williams, who is in charge of Task Force 58.

The multinational group of ships has the task of protecting Iraq's oil infrastructure – notably the platforms which fill up tankers at the northern extremity of the Gulf – as well as providing broader security in the upper end of the Gulf.

Mersey's dash saves fishermen

A RESCUE team from patrol ship HMS Mersey prevented a fishing boat from sinking in the Irish Sea.

Mersey dashed at top speed to the last reported position of the Gizmonde, 50 miles west of Milford Haven, when she reported she was taking on water badly after her pumps had failed.

Twenty-five minutes after receiving the Mayday call, Mersey was on scene and her CO Lt Cdr Ian Lynn immediately had his sea boat in the water with a rescue party aboard.

Led by CPO 'Bernie' Bolt, the ship's marine engineer officer, the party – MEM 'Billy' Beaumont and Ch Mark Winnel completed the trio – found 3ft of water in the Gizmonde's engine room.

It took the sailors three hours to stem the flow of water and save the fishing vessel. Pumps were provided by Mersey and also by an Irish Coast Guard helicopter, and once patched up, Gizmonde was able to make her way to her home port of Dunmore East in Eire.



"I am very proud of my crew," said Lt Cdr Lynn. "If we hadn't stabilized the flood and pumped out the water, it's fair to say that Gizmonde probably would have sunk."

"The weather conditions were

particularly dangerous. The winds were gusting so strongly that the winchman from the helicopter who had been landed couldn't be recovered, so he had to be brought over to Mersey and winched from our deck."

Man-full employment for Ramsey

THE PEOPLE of Douglas in the Isle of Man certainly knew that HMS Ramsey was visiting.

If they hadn't seen her arriving, it would have been hard to miss OM 'Meatball' Campbell, sitting up in bed, being pushed along the seafront by his shipmates.

It was all in a good cause, though, and over £500 was collected for charity during the push. 'Meatball' was chosen as the bedridden one, not because he was a habitual liar-in, but because he was the youngest member of the ship's company – and also the lightest.

A more formal event took place at the town hall when, at the official reception for the ship, the ensign of the World War 2 destroyer HMS Ramsey, was officially unveiled in its new display area by the island's Lieutenant Governor, Sir Paul Haddacks KCB, and Lt Cdr Martin Mackey, CO of today's Ramsey.

This ensign had previously been placed in St Paul's Church, but was moved to the new permanent position at the request of the local Royal Naval Association. A new ensign was presented to the church by the current HMS Ramsey to replace the historic one.

This was the third official visit that Ramsey had made to the Isle of Man, and Lt Cdr Mackey declared himself delighted with the warm welcome that they had once again received. Contingents from the ship attended a series of events in both Ramsey and Douglas, including Remembrance Day parades in both towns.

Following her Isle of Man visit, Ramsey had a short visit to Cardiff, where over 200 people came on board during a brief ship open-to-visitors.

Some members of the ship's company took the opportunity to attend the Wales-South Africa international rugby game while some of their shipmates got away from it all, running in the Brecon Beacons.



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● One of the shanty towns which has sprung up in Kashmir following the October earthquake

Double hit for Blyth

YOU wait sixty years for an unexploded German mine to come along, and then two arrive in a matter of hours...

Sandown-class minehunter HMS Blyth was carrying out survey work in the approaches to Plymouth when she came across a wartime mine on the seabed off Penlee Point.

As Blyth's sailors prepared to deal with that unexploded ordnance, a second wartime mine was also unearthed.

Blyth had been scouring the seabed with her sonar when the first air-dropped mine, containing around 300kg of explosive, was discovered.

The ship's robot submarine was sent down to investigate, and it was soon clear from images captured by the mini sub that the mine was in too delicate a state to raise and dispose of elsewhere.

Instead, a diver from Southern Diving Unit 1 in Devonport was sent down to place a charge alongside the old mine, which was then detonated from a safe distance, sending a column of water 100ft high shooting into the sky.

As that threat vanished, a second mine was picked up by the sonar.

This time, the robot submarine was able to carry



down a charge, and again the explosive was blown up from a safe distance.

Both mines are thought to have been sown by the Luftwaffe and subsequently covered by the seabed, before weather and currents unearthed them once more.

Blyth arrived off Plymouth having taken part in the final Joint Maritime Course (see pages 24 and 25) where she successfully rafted alongside assault ship HMS Bulwark (with a displacement 20 times greater than Blyth's tiny 450 tons).

In almost ideal conditions in Loch Ewe, having come alongside the 18,000 ton landing ship, Blyth took on fuel, water and supplies... and in return gave Bulwark lots of gash (seems like a fair swap - Ed), proof that an assault ship can serve as a mother vessel for mine countermeasures forces.

The link-up with Bulwark provided plenty of valuable data which will go into the RN's 'data book'... and which may well prove handy on the ship's spring deployment to the Middle East.

Bulwark also played host to Cdr Peter Williams and his staff from the Mine Countermeasures Tasking Authority who used the assault ship's impressive command facilities to demonstrate that an MCM force could be directed from Bulwark or her sister Albion.

● It went boom-bang-a-bang... (inset) one of two wartime mines blown up off Plymouth by HMS Blyth and (main picture) meet big sister... The Sandown-class assault ship ties up alongside HMS Bulwark in a glassy Loch Ewe

AS the snows began to arrive in the mountains of Kashmir, so too did Royal Marines and commando engineers.

Nearly 90 green berets from 42 Commando and 59 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers have been sent to Pakistan to help with the huge earthquake relief effort.

As many as three and a half million people have been affected by last autumn's earthquake; 74,000 people are estimated to have died and another 70,000 were injured.

The commandos, led by Maj Nigel Cribb, have set up base in the town of Bagh, with the goal of constructing homes and shelters in the district which can withstand the Kashmiri winter.

When the green berets arrived in early December, night-time temperatures were already dropping below 0°C, and the team faced a race against time to build shelters, including medical and school facilities, in the mountain villages of Beer Pani and Sudhun Gali.

"You can only begin to imagine the devastation in these remote areas," Maj Cribb explained.

"Local people are resourceful and are working hard to re-construct their homes."

"Our task is to construct community shelters for clinics and schools. We're expecting harsh winter conditions in the weeks to come - but that's why we've been chosen because of our winter training in Norway."

The Royals and sappers have the assistance of BV tracked vehicles, which have proved invaluable on deployments in the Arctic Circle, to move around Kashmir.

The engineers arrived in Pakistan as three Chinooks sent by Whitehall (as featured in last month's paper) were recalled to the UK, their heavy-lift work done.

During their spell in the mountains, the whirlybirds - which were crewed by Fleet Air Arm personnel as well as RAF fliers - helped to evacuate 329 people, including 36 casualties.

Flying for more than 330 hours, the venerable helicopters delivered more than 1,700 tons of aid, including tools, corrugated iron, food, tents, blankets and baby care kit.

'prise for the best deployment

HOW does the Indian Ocean sound as a place to go to work?

Not bad?

Well the crew of the survey ship HMS Enterprise can match that and go one better... the Seychelles.

Having at last reached the area to be surveyed off East Africa, the ship's company of the Devonport-based hydrographic and survey vessel set about recording scientific information including temperature, depth and salinity.

Next it was on to the 114 islands lying north-east of Madagascar that make up the Seychelles.

Sailing into the harbour the ship's company were left in no doubt that reports of the islands' beauty were far from overstated.

Unfortunately for the sailors, their ship was to be in the Seychelles for just five days.

Nevertheless, those five days were long enough for a lunch hosted by the ship's CO Cdr Vaughan Nail, a cocktail party and a mess dinner with dignitaries including the High Commissioner.

The survey vessel's brief stay in the islands attracted attention from local media, while the Seychelles' rich opportunities for scuba diving, fishing, surfing and sightseeing grabbed her crew's attention.

From the islands, Enterprise headed for the Gulf of Aden to continue surveying.

After a week and a half there she met Type 23 frigate HMS Montrose, the current Senior Service vessel committed to peacekeeping operations in the northern Arabian Gulf.

Montrose, also based in Devonport, was a welcome sight after so long away from home without seeing another RN ship.

The following weekend Enterprise paid a one-day visit to Salalah in Oman for a mid-leg break.

As well as the usual deliveries of goods and services, this gave the crew an opportunity to indulge in some bargain hunting at the local shops... while other sailors managed to catch England's defeat to the All Blacks on the telly.

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Opinion

Softly softly smoking policy

MOST smokers, banned from enjoying their favourite weed in the workplace, can at least go home for a private fag at the end of the day.

Most sailors can sneak on to the quarterdeck where at least their nicotine won't irritate their workmates.

Not so the submariner, who probably has the only job in the world where he could be denied even a puff of tobacco for up to three months while his boat is on patrol.

It is a sensible compromise, then, to bring in a softly-softly policy on smoking in submarines. Instead of banning it outright, the Royal Navy will try a more gentle programme of "persuasion" to wean its submariners off tobacco.

Of course, it is only right that colleagues and workmates do not have to breathe in somebody else's smoke.

But the current open season on smokers tends to make their habit seem more of a threat to the public well-being than drug-taking and binge-drinking rolled into one.

As for the harmful effects of smoking on the health of smokers themselves, shouldn't those in the Armed Forces be allowed to make up their own minds when their job requires that they put themselves in harm's way for the benefit of their country?

Keeping in touch with families

THE Naval Families Federation has good cause to pat itself on the back as it celebrates its second birthday. Over the last two years the Navy has made huge strides in the way it communicates with sailors and their families.

Much of the credit for all this must go to the Federation and its chairwoman, Kim Richardson, who makes sure that the Navy keeps welfare issues at the top of its agenda.

Gone are the days when sailors' families were expected to put up with long absences without contact and piecemeal information.

They now expect, quite rightly, to know the latest on everything from deployments and service conditions to pay and accommodation.

A host of measures including RNCOM, the Navy's community website, and the Family Linklines and Linkletters help the wider Naval family keep in touch in a way that would have been technically impossible just a few years ago.

As the Second Sea Lord says in his New Year's message, the Naval Families Federation provides an invaluable service linking families and the Naval Service - all the more effective because it is independent.

A bright future for young sailors

THE Navy is about to lose two of its top men, as the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Alan West, and the Command Warrant Officer, WO1 Eddie Seaborne, retire within weeks of each other.

Between them, they have clocked up 75 years of service during a period in which the Navy has had to adapt to huge changes, professional and social.

So do they hanker for the Navy they joined? Far from it. Admiral West is convinced that standards are higher now than in the 70s. "Ship for ship, the Royal Navy's capability has improved dramatically," he says.

And Eddie Seaborne, whose job as Command Warrant Officer brought him into daily contact with young sailors, told us it was heartwarming to see the quality of young recruits.

It's a great backing for today's Navy from two of the men in the best position to know.

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

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Sea cadets on parade with Royal Marine bandsmen at the Trafalgar Square Parade in October.

Upholding the standard?

CHRIS Bond in your December issue draws attention to the dress disparity of HMS York's ship's company at a ceremony in Singapore, and I must say that this example seems to be fairly typical of standards of dress in the modern Navy.

A glance through the same issue of *Navy News* (or any other for that matter) will reveal numerous similar examples of sloppy dress standards and poor turnout of our sailors on ceremonial duties, for example, slack or poorly fitted webbing belts, untidy cap tally bows, chin stays twisted, and a general lack of style and uniformity all round - these are obvious even to the untrained eye, and sure indicators of a lack of attention to detail. The GIs of old would have had a field day!

Are the sailors inspected before parades I ask myself, and if so, why are these basic things not corrected?

Now I know what the excuses will be - overstretch, not enough time, drill isn't a priority in the technical age and so on - but in my time at Whale Island when it was the Gunnery School I well remember being told 'either do ceremonial properly or don't do it at all', and this adage is a good one because a ship or a Navy is judged by such things.

In sharp contrast, how refreshing it was to see the excellent turnout of the Sea Cadet guard in Trafalgar Square on page 42. Perhaps those responsible for ceremonial in the RN should find out how they do it.

- D A Mathias, Burry Port, S Wales

... SOME months ago you published a photograph showing a ship's company exercising their

right with the freedom of the city, and the Colour/Standard bearer was wearing his carrying strap over his right shoulder.

The November issue of *Navy News* (pages 13 and 14) again shows the Colour/Standard bearers with their carrying straps over the right shoulder, also the PO is holding his pole like the RAF with elbow pointing down. On page 20 of the same issue, it can be seen that the RNA Kent branch are wearing theirs correctly over the left shoulder, which is the traditional Naval method of wearing their carrying strap.

So please, Drill Instructors and personnel in charge of a parade where the Colour/Standards are being paraded, the carrying strap should be worn over the left shoulder. See Drill Manual chapter 7 (para 0701) which clearly states this with a picture.

- Mel Howden, Standard Bearer, Llanrunney, Cardiff

CPO(AWW) Chris Clarke from HMS York's warfare department can respond to some of these remarks by our correspondents:

"One of our readers asked about the different uniforms during the 80th anniversary of VJ Day in Singapore. As I was present at that ceremony I can shed a little light for you.

"The photograph was taken while the ratings were being sized off, we had two platoons of three ranks, both a mixture of RN, RZN and RAN, hence the differences in uniforms. It was a very successful day, all services performed very well."

- Dave Rowland (Armourer 1952-1970) Bideford, Devon

Ocean's narrow squeak

I THINK that HMS Ocean was extremely lucky to have survived the loading the live ammunition on to those Apaches by "aircraft handlers."

The very idea of allowing chockheads anywhere near any sort of ammunition gives me the shivers. What your reporter failed to observe was the actual colour of the surcoats.

He may have thought that that was Red Watch of the Flight Deck party, but had he been paying proper attention,

he would have noticed a distinct variation of colour - to what a black band down the centre.

What was actually happening was that the loading was being carried out by members of the finest Branch in the Fleet Air Arm, namely the Armourers.

As a former wearer, with great pride, of that surcoat, I think that we deserve an apology for the insult you have made.

- Dave Rowland (Armourer 1952-1970) Bideford, Devon

Branch badge madness

HAVING seen the new ET branch badge I must put pen to paper on this craze sweeping through the RN with respect to branch badges.

The ET's badge itself appears to have very little thought put into it, just put together using the cut and paste facility on a home computer.

Whilst I applaud the revamp of the engineering branch as a whole, especially the university recognition in the shape of a Foundation Degree of all members of the branch, with the opportunity of gaining a full Bachelor's Degree for those who want it, I do have issue with the badge itself.

Two branch devices are merged into one grotesque mutation that we are now expected to wear on our arms.

Please also drop these letters beneath the device - WSM, AW, MSM, UW, LSM, MW, BYOB, ASAP (you get the drift). If we must have letters to denote our SQ then ditch the device all together and have name tapes!

Perhaps these badges are purely a cost-saving measure? Then perhaps I could suggest a cost saving - the branch design committee!

- P Lane HMS Sulfan

Arrested development

I REALLY enjoyed the letter 'Tough Times in the Glasshouse' (Sept 05) about the stoker coming down from Scotland and being handcuffed all the way to Pompey.

There was a good reason for his being handcuffed - and I should know because I was the PO(ME) who did the cuffing.

How to get your memory jogged after 44 years! I was on HMS Tiger in dock and was told I would be required to go to Scotland for this MEI stoker.

I was given two stokers from barracks and off we went. I cannot remember his name but the reason I was sent was that the stoker was

from my neck of the woods. I remember the train had a notice stuck to the carriage window: *Reserved for RN Patrol.*

The reason he was handcuffed was that they had heard he was planning a runner.

So he was cuffed all on the way, mostly to myself and on occasions to the luggage rack. I had no intention of losing my rate!

- R Aveling, PO(ME) 1957-1965, Swallownest, Sheffield

Well chaps, if you fancy a reunion after all this time, *Navy News* will provide you with each other's address. No handcuffs this time - Ed

Golden-oldie divers

I WAS most upset to read that the Navy's attitude to Ships' divers was so uneducated (Oct 05). Ships divers were gold dust to the UK in the 60s.

The Navy sent me to HMS Eagle as Clearance Diver 1 after President Sukarno had promised to sink her. By the time she arrived in Singers I had a fully-trained team of 35 ship's divers, ranged from a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons to aircraft handlers. Rank did not come into it when my diving flag was up.

My request for spares was struggling in UK red tape when two ships ahead of us in the Straits were damaged by water-line limpets. Suddenly we were in demand. Were we ready? Shortage of spares left me with two divers without kit. I did a Douglas Bader. I asked the TAS officer to send "Not operational."

A Comet with my spares arrived within 36 hours. We could search the carrier's hull in 35 minutes. We were also sent into Malaya to do battle-area clearance after a punch-up with Indonesian insurgents. We had 40 Gurkhas to cover us as we dived the flooded areas. With an estimated 800 enemy, 40 Gurkhas proved to be enough to allow us to work unhindered.

By the time HMS Eagle arrived in the Far East our port rudder was stripping its sheathing. Fortunately I had locally purchased underwater welding gear in the UK, although this was not considered of any use in modern times! We rebuilt that rudder and it lasted through a 70-day patrol off Rhodesia and back to UK, lasting thousands of miles more than the original dockyard repair. I received a £10 Herbert Lott Fund prize. The Eagle did the patrol instead of docking in Singers and the Captain got his Knighthood.

- M J Brassington CD1 (Retd)

...I REFER to your assertion that ships' divers were formed in the 1960s. I have my Shallow Water Diving Certificate awarded September 1952 following a ten-day course. Most of the training took place in the warm water of Msida Creek, Malta, alongside our depot ship, HMS Forth, and I stayed in qualification by monthly wet dives and sometimes a dry dive in a pressure chamber.

We wore heavy boots and our lack of flippers greatly restricted our movement when on the bottom and when I searched for a drowned Greek soldier at Volos I could barely move and simply stirred up mud, not finding him.

I again had limited movement when straddled one night over the propeller shaft of HMS Maidstone at Gibraltar, guarding against frogmen in an exercise ordered by Mountbatten, then C-in-C, Med. They would have made rings around me.

My only other foray was a successful recovery of our gangplank from the bottom of a Maltese creek, spending some time clumping about looking at the debris.

It was only later that I realised I had been deeper than the 33ft allowable for a pure oxygen set and only after I had left that Navy I read that clearance divers had found about 800 unexploded bombs in the area. Happy days.

- D P Watkins, Oxted, Surrey

Bigbury Bay

I WOULD like to point out some errors in your article about the ship's bell. Admiral Hall was a lieutenant when he took command of the ship and not a lieutenant commander.

The church of St Lawrence and the village of Bigbury do not overlook Bigbury Bay, and it was the Admiral who made it quite clear to me and others where the bell was to go upon his death, and not his family.

Members of the association are keen to set the record straight.

- David Ditcher, Whitfield, Kent

JACK

BY TUGS

... WISHING CHIEFY A HAPPY NEW YEAR MIGHT BE A MISTAKE...



WHEN YOU'VE SEEN AS MANY AS 'IM - YOU DON'T WANNA THINK ABOUT ANOTHER ONE!



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 large volume of letters, we cannot publish all your correspondence in Navy News. However, we do publish many of your letters on our website www.navynews.co.uk

We look 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.



Sad state of HMS Bronington

HAVING recently attended an excellent TON class reunion, during which we visited the Historic Warships in Birkenhead, I was appalled to see the sad state of the Bronington.

The decking is rotting away rapidly, and the cost of repair will be astronomical.

In this year of celebrations for Trafalgar, it is a sad commentary on the powers that be that so little heed is placed on the representative of a class that did so much to maintain our presence throughout the world.

Small they may have been, but the Tons more than paid their way through three decades.

Surely something could be done to preserve the last floating Ton class before she will inevitably be scrapped?

To rub salt into the wound, the whole Historic Warships and their shore-side facilities have to move to make way for property developers who want the area for car parking.

To all who treasure our maritime heritage, this must appear very sad, and to add poignancy to the above, our heir to the throne was once the skipper.

I have no doubt that he grieves just as much to know that it is out of his hands, as also is the situation of the fourth empty plinth in Trafalgar Square, which should be dedicated to the men of the Mercantile marine who gave so much.

- Spike Wheeler, Wokingham

David Wooley, of Wallasey, Wirral, took the picture, and tells us there is no shortage of volunteers, but Bronington really needs money. The contact for contributions is Colin Butt, a manager of the Historic Ships at Birkenhead, at the Warship Trust, Dock Rd, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH41 1DJ, telephone 0151 650 1573 or by email to manager@historicwarship.org

- Ed

Anti-piracy policy

A LOT has been said in the news recently about the piracy of Somalia's coast. One of my friends was caught up in the attack on the cruise liner.

I am curious as to why the Royal Navy (or any other Navy for that matter) doesn't have an anti-piracy force there. Surely in the light of recent events one is required?

- Peter Kerr by email

Heroes of the coastal convoys

JOE Whittaker's letter about the heroes of the Battle of the Atlantic (Dec 05) only touches lightly on the personnel losses of the Merchant Navy.

Had they caved in there would have been no RAF Bomber Command offensive (where would their fuel have come from?) and the UK would have gone hungry. The Royal Navy in those given circumstances might just have been able to operate out of Canadian bases, but without very effective support to the homeland, given the technology at the time.

No D-Day. Probably no North African landings, and, had the Merchant Navy collapsed there would have been no Russian convoys, which would probably have led to a collapse of the Eastern front - with the results being almost unimaginable today.

The Merchant Navy were the real heroes.

- P Herlihy, Ruislip, Middlesex

... THE battle to bring supplies to a beleaguered homeland was not confined to the Atlantic.

Once the convoys had reached the safe havens of Londonderry and Liverpool, the vessels had then to be distributed to the various home ports.

This was achieved by coastal convoys which operated like a bus service around our coast. Possibly the most vulnerable were the North Sea convoys

which operated in the comparatively narrow passage between the UK and the enemy-occupied territory ranging from France to Scandinavia.

These convoys were subject to attacks from E-boats, bombing aircraft and minelayers, both waterborne and aerial.

On a clear moonlit night one could almost guarantee that a mine-laying aircraft would tail the convoy, then lay mines ahead of it.

Minelayers were the successors to U-boats. Some indication of the extent of mine warfare in this zone can be gauged by the mortality rate for sweepers, operating out of Grimsby, which was one in four (but nobody shirked his duty).

The Royal Naval Patrol bore the brunt of this campaign, not only in sweeping mines, but but for manning the escort vessels which accompanied the convoys. Their minor war vessels were as effective as corvettes.

One wonders how many of the 30,000 losses were in the Atlantic, and how many in other areas.

Many of us "Old Sparrows" are of the opinion that there should have been a "Coastal Convoy Star" or at least a bar, but one cannot turn back the clock.

- Hedley Crago, (ex RAPS) Mill Close, Hemel Hempstead

Reactions to BBC's Shipmates

... I MUST congratulate the whole crew of HMS Chatham for their absolutely magnificent efforts following the Tsunami.

It was very moving and I felt so proud to be British when the men and women showed such selfless effort undertaking such mammoth tasks with so much gusto, humour, and most importantly, success!

- Mike Purcell, Cheltenham
Pompey Field Gun team 1985

... I WAS a real field gunner in 1985 and was enraged that the programme didn't mention that the real field gun and the Royal Tournament were disbanded and this was now more of a Health and Safety demo of how not to get hurt. I wonder how many other retired field gunners were cringing at the renamed Brickwood demonstration? God help us if we have to go to war.

- Chris Woodward,
Pompey Field Gun team 1985

... THE young lady PTI looked very smart but I did not feel the fear and respect generated by previous holders of that exalted rank. I admire her keenness and tenacity - especially when she became part of the Royal Naval Field Gun Crew. No doubt it required dedication and fitness to finish the course. But it bears no comparison with the competitions staged in Earls Court.

- Jim Baynes, Surbiton

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Royal patron for Daring

THE Countess of Wessex will perform the honours when the first of the much-heralded Type 45 destroyers is launched on February 1.

Upwards of 6,000 people are expected to watch HMS Daring slide down the slipway of BAE Systems' Scotstoun yard and nestle in the Clyde.

Daring will be launched traditionally, and 900 tonnes of drag chains will prevent the ship careering into buildings on the south bank of the river.

Guests at the launch - aside from the Countess, Defence Secretary John Reid, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West, 1,000 local schoolchildren, plus BAE employees and the public are invited - will witness a display by the Fleet Air Arm plus a mock amphibious assault by the Royal Marines.

The ship has been built jointly by BAE and VT in Portsmouth (who have provided the bow section and main mast), VT ferried its segments up to Scotland to be 'bolted' on to the midships and stern taking shape in a giant shed.

So large is the new destroyer that there will be little more than 1ft clearance between the top of the ship (minus her main mast which will be attached later) and the roof of BAE's shed.

Once launched, the ship will be moved into dry dock to complete fitting out; £20m has been spent by BAE upgrading facilities to allow workers to get to grips with the destroyer.

Daring is due to enter service in 2009, followed in 2010 by ship number two, HMS Dauntless, being built in Portsmouth and BAE's Govan yard, also on the Clyde.



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Employing potential centenarians now are we, chief?

Clyde's scope for change

IF YOU are a ship buff, then it's best to take pictures of HMS Clyde sooner rather than later.

Because once she disappears over the Solent horizon in the summer of 2007, there's a good chance home waters won't see her again for upwards of a quarter of a century.

The patrol ship rapidly taking shape in VT Shipbuilding's huge sheds in Portsmouth is destined for the Falklands, replacing the venerable HMS Dumbarton Castle.

Whereas the Castles (Leeds Castle has already paid off) have taken it in turns to spend three years in the South Atlantic and three years in and around Blighty, their successor will be permanently based down south.

Since being laid down in June as part of a £30m deal with VT - the firm will own and maintain the ship until 2012, while the RN will run her - Clyde has made swift progress.

She will be 'launched' (or rather flooded up in a dry dock) in June and head for sea trials in September.

The RN will get its hands on her towards the year's end, before trials and work-up for her ship's company (a mere 40 officers and ratings) ahead of deploying to the Falklands, 6,808 miles from Pompey as the crow flies, in the summer of next year.

The ship will be the first to bear the proud label 'built in Portsmouth dockyard' since Leander-class frigate HMS Andromeda was launched in 1967;



● An artist's impression of HMS Clyde operating with a Merlin
Picture: VT Shipbuilding

VT is building sections of the new Type 45 destroyers, but Clyde will be the first entire ship built in the naval base since the frigate.

The stretched River-class ship is similar to her older sisters, HM Ships Mersey, Tyne and Severn, but has a flight deck large enough to accommodate a Merlin helicopter, and can carry an embarked force of a dozen troops, who are also provided with a Rigid Raider small assault boat.

Her task will be to safeguard British interests in the South Atlantic, serving as Falkland Islands patrol ship, venturing also to South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

"On a daily basis, we don't provide the people, food or fuel - but we do everything else," explained VT's Richard Labone.

The A-R of shipbuilding...

HMS Clyde is being assembled in sizeable blocks, labeled A-R (there's no I or O to prevent confusion with 1 or 0) in VT's two sheds in Portsmouth.

Section P, for example is the mast, and K the bridge and much of the superstructure.

Once finished, Clyde will be rolled out of a shed and deposited on a barge, then

taken to a dry dock and finally flooded up, which will officially be her 'launch date'.

She is being assembled alongside ships two, three and four of the Type 45 programme: HM Ships Dauntless, Diamond and Dragon, not due to enter service till the end of this decade and the beginning of the next.

"The onus is on us to maintain this ship. If anything breaks on Clyde, we lose money. That's an incentive for us."

The aim is to carry out day-to-day repairs at Mare Harbour or Stanley in the Falklands, and to carry out more substantial work, such as docking down, in ports in either South America or

South Africa.

"In theory, she should never have to come home to Portsmouth for 20 or more years," said Mr Labone.

After 2012, the Navy will consider buying the ship outright, continuing the lease deal or handing her back to the shipbuilders to sell on the world market.

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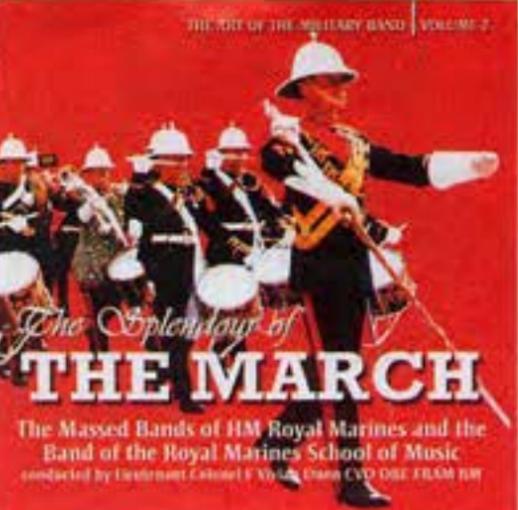
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Illustrious by name illustrious by deed

WHEN the Admiralty was considering names for its future aircraft carriers in the late 1960s, one name loomed large.

Few flat-tops have fought with such distinction in all theatres as the fourth HMS Illustrious, undoubtedly one of the RN's finest fighters of the 1939-1945 conflict.

So the current Illustrious, the fifth ship to bear the name, has had a lot to live up to.

Mercifully, she has not had to endure a global conflagration; she has, however, as her predecessors have done, put sailors and marines in harm's way.

Experiences in the 2001-02 Afghanistan campaign, when the carrier served as a springboard for Royal Marine operations against the Taliban, have helped shape the later years of the carrier's life.

When Lusty, as sailors call her, emerged from a £120m refit 12 months ago, she did so not simply as the most capable of Britain's trio of aircraft carriers, but as much more than a 'mere' carrier.

The lessons of Afghanistan mean the flat-top is far better able to double up as a 'second HMS Ocean' - a helicopter carrier/Royal Marines assault ship, should the need arise.

In the public's eye, it is the glamour of the fast jets which sets an aircraft carrier apart from the rest of the Fleet.

And to Lusty falls the sad but honourable task of hosting the Sea Harrier at sea for the final time (801 Naval Air Squadron pays off in a couple of months).

The venerable jump jets exercised with the carrier throughout the autumn of 2005 and joined the ship for her brief autumn deployment to the Mediterranean, including the state visit to Malta.

The Mediterranean island has figured strongly in the carrier's history, notably Illustrious IV's efforts to protect convoys to Malta six decades ago.

By the time she was called upon to safeguard those convoys, Lusty had already indelibly etched her name in RN and Fleet Air Arm history, launching the attack on Taranto which crippled the Italian Fleet.

Such is the importance of that November 11 1940 evening that Illustrious chooses to celebrate

Taranto, rather than Trafalgar, night each year.

Since the middle of 2005, Illustrious has assumed the role of the nation's flagship, ready to head to a global hotspot at short notice.

As yet, she has not been called upon.

She has, however, remained busy.

The carrier became the first RN vessel to dispense with traditional paper charts entirely, switching to the new WECDIS electronic mapping system instead - a move described as a "milestone" in the history of the Senior Service.

Not content with getting to grips with electronic maps, the ship embarked 1F and 801 Squadrons as it worked up its tailored air group (TAG).

That TAG stayed with the carrier during the final Joint Maritime Course (see pages 24-25) providing the strike from the sea as the world of 'terrorist' Mustapha Leek caved in.

From Scottish waters, Lusty paid a lightning visit to her home of Portsmouth to offload 1F Sqn and prepare for her mini-deployment to the Med, with the visit to Malta clearly being the high point.

The Malta trip was tinged with sadness, though, as the carrier saw what is likely to be the last disembarkation of a Sea Harrier.

After a spell of exercising with her escorting destroyer HMS Exeter, Lusty was allowed to relax before a five-day stand-off at The Rock, and home for Christmas in Pompey.

The new year opens with trials with Merlin helicopters, more TAG work-ups, and finally a deployment east of Suez on Operation Aquila 06.

Four previous RN vessels have carried the name Illustrious, going back to days of the French revolutionary conflicts.

Illustrious I's history was brief but distinguished, doing battle with the French off Toulon in 1793 and Genoa two years later.

In the latter action she played a vital role in capturing two enemy vessels, but in doing so was mauled and subsequently driven ashore while under tow.

Within a decade, a second Illustrious had joined the RN, a 74-gun frigate, which would serve proudly for half a century



before ending her days in Portsmouth as a training vessel.

The third ship, a pre-dreadnought, earned no battle honours; launched in 1896, she was rendered obsolete by the arrival of HMS Dreadnought a decade later and spent the Great War mainly as an ammunition and stores ship.

And so we come to the most illustrious Illustrious, a ship in action from the moment she was commissioned in 1940.

After her starring role at Taranto, she was badly damaged by the Luftwaffe as 1941 opened and was sent to the USA for repairs.

She returned to the Mediterranean once fixed, but as the balance of war there tipped increasingly in the Allies' favour, she was sent east to take on the Japanese empire, something she did across Asia in 1944 and 1945.

The ship's final battle honour was earned in the Okinawa campaign in the spring of 1945 when an Anglo-American force neutralised the last major Japanese outpost before the home islands was due to take place.

Post-war, the carrier served as a training ship until she was placed in reserve in 1954. Three years later she was broken up.

Battle Honours

Genoa.....	1795
Basque Roads.....	1809
Java.....	1811
Taranto.....	1940
Mediterranean.....	1940-41
Malta Convoys.....	1941
Diego Suarez.....	1942
Salerno.....	1943
Sabang.....	1944
Palembang.....	1945
Okinawa.....	1945

Facts and Figures

Class: Invincible-class aircraft carrier
Pennant Number: 106
Builder: Swan Hunter, Wallsend
Launched: December 1 1978
Commissioned: June 20 1982
Length: 608m
Beam: 118m
Draft: 24m
Top speed: 28kts
Range: 7,000 nautical miles at 15kts
Displacement: 22,000 tons
Complement: 615, plus 366 aircrew
Embarked forces: Up to 600 Royal Marines
Engines: 4 x Rolls Royce Olympus gas turbines generating 97,200hp
Weapons systems: 3 x Goalkeeper
Close-in Weapons System: 2 x 20mm
Defence gun: 2 x Seaquest decoys
Strike power: Tailored Air Group consisting of up to 24 aircraft including Sea Harrier FA2, Harrier GR7 or GR9, Merlin, Sea King, Chinook or Apache helicopters

● Grand entrance... HMS Illustrious arrives in Grand Harbour, Malta, ahead of the Commonwealth heads of state conference

Picture: PO(Phot) Nigel Russell-Stovenson

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No 21

Lt Joseph Hindes and Chief Petty Officer ERA Sam Hine, Albert Medal

THE first half century of the Silent Service's proud history is littered with accidents and tragedies born of men learning their trade in a new art of nautical warfare.

In the years immediately after World War 2 there was a new-found optimism in the Royal Navy's submarine arm that if ever a boat was ever lost, its crew would have a greater chance of escaping alive.

Considerable resources were put into rescue operations, which were now put on a formal footing: the codewords Submiss and Subsunk are now etched in the RN consciousness.

In Gosport, the spiritual home of the Silent Service, a 100ft tower would eventually rise up, as home of escape training.

Many of these improvements were thanks to the work of Capt Philip Ruck-Keene and his committee, set up in 1946 to improve the lot of trapped submariners and their chances of safe rescue.

And while many of Ruck-Keene's suggestions were adopted by the Admiralty; others were not, and others still were introduced lethargically.

That lethargy would have fatal consequences for the men of HMS Truculent, whose loss was truly an instance of triumph turning to tragedy.

Truculent had a proud wartime history behind her, having dispatched, inter alia, the German U-boat U309.

Post-war she was in need of a refit, and duly got one at Chatham; she emerged from her overhaul in late 1949.

The boat had been returning up the Thames after a day's trials on January 12 1950 - still



● The irrepressible Chief ERA Sam Hine, AM (left) and (above) the damage to Truculent's bow is obvious as she is salvaged

Picture: RN Submarine Museum

with civilian dockyard workers aboard - when she was struck by the Swedish tanker Davina and began to sink swiftly.

Submariners on the fin were immediately submerged in the icy waters and swept away by the current; five were subsequently rescued by a Dutch steamer after nearly an hour in the Thames.

Inside the stricken Truculent, XO Lt Joseph Hindes decided a quick escape was paramount to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

A redoubtable Chief ERA Sam Hine took charge of the engine room escape, while Hindes personally supervised the remainder of the crew leaving by the aft escape hatch.

Hine in particular proved to be a tonic for morale with his worried shipmates; when the

first submariner ascended to the Thames' surface using the Davis Escape System, the senior rate told his colleagues: "Cheer up, lads. Fry's gone up to get our supper ready."

Hine was the last of the men in the engine room to ascend to the surface; Joseph Hindes was last out of the aft section.

On the surface, the survivors expected to find rescue boats waiting for them. "There was nothing - not another boat in sight," submariner Les Strickland lamented. "The water was exceedingly cold. The tragedy of it all was that so many were lost when it had been an almost flawless escape routine."

Only eight submariners and three dockyard workers survived the Truculent's sinking. More than 50 shipmates were

victims of an escape which - ironically - was too quick: as crew reached the Thames' surface, the alert was only just being raised.

The men succumbed to the cold or were carried away by the tide; for weeks after the accident, the sea gave up its dead. Immersion suits, as recommended by Capt Ruck-Keene, may well have saved many of the initial survivors.

The cheery Sam Hine was not among the survivors; his resilience and spirit earned him a posthumous Albert Medal, also awarded to Lt Hindes, who did survive his ordeal. CPO Hine's medal is held by the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport.

As for Truculent, after some debate the Admiralty salvaged her and broke her up.

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Merlin No 1 in Japan

FOR the first time in years the Royal Navy has conducted training for members of the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF).

Lt Cdr Manabu Shigeta, Toshiaki Kido, Masahiko Nakamura and Lt JG Umeda Takao were taken under the wing of RNAS Culdrose-based 824 Naval Air Squadron where they were guided through the two-month-long intensive flying training course on the RN's Merlin helicopter.

Specially designed to familiarise the Japanese pilots with the wide range and scale of Merlin operations the course comprised a programme of ground school lessons, 35 hours' 'flying' in a simulator and a full flying instructional package in the helicopter for each of the four pilots.

"The Japanese pilots were a pleasure to teach," said Lt Cdr Jonathan Wells, a Merlin instructor and designer of the course. "They were very hard working and quick to learn about the new aircraft and all its technical details."

"It must have been very difficult to learn English and then come here to train in such a short space of time. I certainly couldn't have done it in Japanese."

When the Japanese pilots go back home the training they have received will prepare them for when the JMSDF receive 14 Merlins mainly for mine-countermeasures work. They will work on the test squadron evaluating the aircraft and also train other Japanese aircrew.

Before leaving Culdrose, Lt Cdr Nakamura said: "The Royal Navy crews we have been working with are very professional and experienced and we have received the most excellent training at 824 Squadron."

"Merlin is the number one helicopter."

SPRINGTIME in the South Atlantic has seen HMS Southampton busy in the Falklands area with exercises with Army and RAF units.

Locally-based Tornado F3s have been acting as enemy aircraft in attacks on the ship and regular gunnery shoots exercised support for ground forces ashore. On board, the regular round of damage control and fire-fighting training continued.

Ashore in the Falklands, penguin spotting was a popular leisure activity for the ship's company, as were battlefield tours, while the ship's rugby and football teams took on the other Service sides.

Thousands of miles away from the massive Trafalgar 200 Commemorations in UK, the ship nevertheless celebrated the occasion in her own way. On the night of October 21 members of the ship's company performed in a stage show, including comedy sketches and a rendition of the traditional sailors' hornpipe, and ship's officers and senior ratings each held a special dinner at Mount Pleasant, with the guest of honour at both events being Capt Michael Clapp, who had been Commodore Amphibious Warfare during the Falklands War, responsible for landing operations in San Carlos water.

HMS Antelope, sunk during the 1982 conflict, was remembered when Southampton anchored close by the frigate's wreck in San Carlos Water, when a service of commemoration was held.

Wreaths were laid on the water by two members of the ship's company; POWEM Pat Jennings, who served aboard Antelope in 1982; and OM(W)2 Tash Liddell, whose



● Above: Southampton at anchor off Port Egremont in the Falklands in quiet but cold September seas Right Si/Lt Rob 'Posh Bob' Corcoran with one of the children at the Montevideo Anglican Church Nursery.

father also served aboard at that time.

During a break away from the Falklands in early November Southampton visited Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay. While there sailors from the ship delivered clothes for children at the local Anglican Church Nursery, clothes that had been donated in UK and brought out in the ship.

● Right: POWEM Pat Jennings at the commemorative service for HMS Antelope in San Carlos water



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● 'A talkative but likeable lad'... WO1 Eddie Seaborne outside Navy News' offices (he promises this will be his last appearance in the paper)

'The talent is there - just as it ever was'

BEATLEMANIA had come to an end. The press were already bored with man landing on the moon now it had been done twice. And in Birmingham a 15-year-old lad was kicking his heels.

"I'd left school at 15 with no qualifications and no leaving certificate," Eddie confessed. "I felt bad about myself because I'd achieved nothing."

Thirty-five years down the line, that same lad, now older and wiser is taking off his steaming bats for good. He has achieved something. A hell of a lot.

Indeed with hindsight, it seems Eddie Seaborne was indeed that - born for a life at sea. Or rather forced into it. By his grandma.

"I was a teenage tearaway," he said frankly. "My grandmother said if I didn't join the Navy I'd end up on the rocky road to ruin."

The 'teenage tearaway' opted for the Navy, initially showing few of the attributes which would eventually make him the most senior warrant officer in the RN.

Eddie passed all his entrance exams... but with a below-average mark in every paper - a fact which the previous Second Sea Lord brought up when they attended the HMS Ganges centenary celebrations together last April.

Far from being mortified, Eddie was very proud.

"Here was I, the senior WO in the Royal Navy with four GCSEs, having joined without a qualification to my name. It's an example of what the Navy can do to help and educate people," he declared proudly.

Forced to stand up for himself on the streets of Erdington in Birmingham made the tough regime at Ganges a breeze - almost. "I loved Ganges straight away because it was disciplined and that's what I needed," he said.

"The discipline at Ganges was seen as extremely harsh. Actually it was firm but fair and everyone was treated the same. If you were ill-treated it was because you had done wrong, and you never made the same mistake twice."

Some things, of course, never change. Eddie's first report from HMS Hampshire described the then 16-year-old as "a talkative but likeable lad who likes to see himself as a bit of an old salt".

The old salt was growing up fast. By the age of 21, the gunnery rating was a leading hand, married to his childhood sweetheart, with a daughter to take care of. Plus a mess in HMS Plymouth.

"I always remember when the truth about leadership first hit me. My mess in Plymouth had a few troublemakers in it, and I soon realised as the mess' leading hand I had to take it in hand," he explained.

"I had to go down at stand-easy when all eyes were upon me and read the riot act, but I had good killicks who supported me and I had the credibility."

"That's what it's all about. You can have all the knowledge in the world, but it is no substitute for experience or credibility, and they are the best credentials you have as a leader."

He continued: "The Navy was instilling confidence and discipline into me. I was knuckling down to my education and waking up to facts. Here I was, a married man with a child to support. I wanted a good life for my family and enough money for good runs ashore - and I was getting the taste for promotion."

That taste - or rather hunger - led to promotion to chief within six years, and Eddie was recommended for promotion as a Special Duties officer.

He turned down wardroom life because the lower deck, he believed, "had a more exciting career in store for me".

It was a career which didn't feature women, at least not at sea. And it was all the better for it, thought a WO Seaborne, until he joined HMS Ark Royal for her deployment to Bosnia in 1994.

"I had reservations about wrens at sea but then I'd never served with them at sea," he admits.

"My daughters have always been my reality check. I've always bounced a lot of ideas off them



● Whatever happened to the likely lads? Eddie (back row, far right) cleans up with his HMS Hampshire shipmates

and my wife Marina. They used to say: 'Wake up, Dad, and smell the coffee!' They told me if a woman wanted to go to sea, she should have the chance.

"At the end of that eight-month deployment, I completely agreed with them. We had some really first-rate wrens on board and my perception of wrens really changed."

Eddie's change of heart on women reflects society's changing attitudes, something the Royal Navy has had to adapt to during the senior rating's 35-year service.

"Things have changed a lot over the years - and a good thing too," he stressed.

"Training in the old days was very harsh - and unnecessarily so. I know what I went through and we don't have to put sailors through that now."

"We have got well away from the 'that's how it was in my day' attitude."

"Now our instructors get results by motivating people - and the standards are just as high as they were 30 years ago, if not higher. I visited Raleigh and Lympstone last month and it was heart-warming to see the quality of people we're recruiting and delivering. We're giving the Fleet what the Fleet needs."

He added: "The old and bold complain to me that the modern Navy is too soft - they say young sailors get mobile phones, quilts and duvets. Well what's wrong with that? A mobile phone is currently the best form of communication, and communication with family and friends, particularly when you are away at sea, is everything to a sailor."

Eddie's attitudes about other RN matters have changed too. Always a bigger ship man, he wasn't sure what to expect when drafted to survey ship HMS Herald during the first Gulf War.

"That deployment will always stay with me because it was the first time I had worked with minor warships and it made me appreciate what small ships do," he revealed.

"Their crews are a very close-knit group who get less credit and publicity for what they do than big ships."

Post-Gulf war, Eddie spent eight months with the UN in Cambodia, monitoring the general election.

He set up patrols in the war-torn country to win hearts and minds and spent hours every week teaching English in a small school. As a result numerous young Cambodians speak English with

a Birmingham accent - something which amused the Queen when she read it in Eddie's citation for his MBE.

Most Navy News readers will recognise Eddie as the 'right hand man' of the Second Sea Lord - officially the 'Command Warrant Officer', a new post created by Vice Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent in January 2003 to give ratings a personnel champion.

"This has been the most rewarding post I have had the honour to serve in," said Eddie.

"I was a little apprehensive about what the role would involve, working alongside one of our most senior admirals."

"The Admiral included me in all his briefs and I soon appreciated the bigger picture. He shared his vision with me: to treat people as individuals - and I believe we have done that."

If everyone in the Navy knows of Eddie - and that's not merely because of his appearances in NN - then Eddie knows just about everyone in the RN. Or so it seems.

Need to know the name of the warrant officer on HMS York? Ask Eddie. Have a question about Jackspeak? Ask Eddie. Need someone to pedal on the back of your tandem? Ask Eddie.

Why? Because, as Eddie will tell you, the heart of the RN is not made up of ships and submarines, aircraft and missiles, armoured vehicles and guns, but people.

"When I look back over 35 years I think our people are our most important asset," he said.

"We look after them better and better but we have to keep working on what we've achieved. We must practise what we preach and deliver what we promise."

Eddie will go on preaching, he hopes, now his Senior Service days are over. His goal is to take what he has learned and become a teacher or instructor in further education, guiding youngsters the way instructors at Ganges guided him more than three decades ago (without the buckets of water or bawling out, of course).

He leaves a Royal Navy, he believes, as strong in spirit as it was in the early 70s.

"Even as we speak, the future First Sea Lord is probably at Dartmouth and the future Command Warrant Officer is at Raleigh," he said.

"The talent is there, just as it ever was. But most of all, when I meet the gobby young Eddie Seaborne of today, I know I could point them in the right direction."

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FIRST SEA LORD ADMIRAL SIR ALAN WEST ARE LEAVING A NAVY THEY BELIEVE IS STILL THE WORLD'S BEST

and the brightest

Maintaining the habit of victory

WHEN the liberated Iraqi people set about creating 'the new Navy', they looked for inspiration.

They asked the Royal Navy to help them shape their fledgling maritime forces, a few hundred sailors and marines.

They even wanted to don RN uniforms, so much did they respect the Senior Service.

After two years of tutelage led by Jack, who has not merely provided training but helped create a naval base at Umm Qasr in southern Iraq, the Iraqi Navy has become "a microcosm of the Royal Navy".

It's a story the First Sea Lord likes to tell, for it is proof, if ever it were needed, that sailors the world over still look to the Senior Service as the benchmark.

That benchmark – or reputation – is one pillar of Admiral Sir Alan West's "three Rs" which shape the 21st-Century Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Resilience and relevance complete the trio. You cannot have one without the other two.

After more than three years in office, the admiral believes all three pillars stand considerably higher in the public's eye than when he took over the most senior post in the RN in the autumn of 2002.

Those three years have seen frantic activity by the Senior Service across the globe.

The sands of Iraq, the mountains of Afghanistan, the forests and towns of Sierra Leone, the tsunami-ravaged streets of eastern Sri Lanka, the flood-ravaged streets – much closer to home – of Boscawen, the hurricane-ravaged settlements of Grenada, the drug-trafficker-infested waters of the Caribbean, the piracy-threatened Horn of Africa, and the snow-laden Arctic to name a few 'activities'.

In all these places, and countless more, sailors and Royal Marines have operated since the admiral took charge of the Navy.

If people ask about the relevance of the Royal Navy in the 21st Century, the admiral points to just some of these as evidence.

"Wherever you look what we are doing is relevant: seizing drugs in the Caribbean has a direct impact on the streets of Manchester or London," he adds.

"The reason why Britain continues to be a trading powerhouse is because trade at sea is safeguarded – and for that you need a navy."

The safeguard of the sea has been the Senior Service's mainstay for centuries; it is a role which has taken on increased significance since the atrocities of September 11, 2001.

The RN's support of anti-terror patrols in the eastern Mediterranean, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf has done more than simply stifle terrorists.

"We have got a much better picture of the movement of drugs, arms and also people," Admiral West points out.

"It's clear that our operations in the Mediterranean have had an impact on people smuggling – and in turn it's had an impact on the movement of weapons and terrorists."

Whether or not the British people grasp this is a different matter, however.

Iraq is a case in point. Whatever the arguments about overturning Saddam Hussein's regime, the Royal Navy fulfilled – and continues to fulfil – its mission.

"Our role in Operation Telic was superb. We allowed the door to be kicked open into Iraq – it was a classic operation by the Royal Navy."

The story of Tomahawk cruise missile strikes from RN submarines and Royal Marines helping to secure the Allied flank by seizing the Al Faw peninsula is well known.

Less appreciated is the Royal Navy's role in the build-up to the fighting.

"Ninety-five per cent of all equipment used by our forces in the Gulf came by sea – and we got it through the 'choke points' safely. People assumed it was just going to happen," the admiral says.

Three years down the line, the media remain focused on Iraq, but not necessarily by the RN's continuing role in theatre.

"On a day-to-day basis about 98 per cent of Iraq's oil is going through the two platforms in the northern Gulf," he explains.

"We know terrorists have tried to attack them – so it is down to the Navy to protect them."

Which is where the Iraqi Navy also comes in; eventually, its sailors will take over responsibility for defending these vital assets, using skills they have learned from British sailors and marines.



● 'A real morale booster'... Admiral West chats with sailors in HMS Cumberland during her recent Caribbean deployment

The Royal Navy's current ship assigned to the northern Gulf is HMS Montrose, one of 13 Type 23 frigates – "bloody good ships which compare with anything in the world" – in service with the 2006 Fleet.

Three have left the RN prematurely – HM Ships Marlborough, Norfolk and Grafton (due to pay off imminently); also decommissioned in the past 18 months have been a clutch of minehunters, veteran destroyers and, most recently, Falklands veteran HMS Invincible.

It is what the admiral calls "cutting the cloth". Losing good ships is never easy to bear, but it is tempered at least by the arrival of new ships and the promise of more: assault ships HMS Bulwark and Albion, new RFA landing support ships, in the near future the Type 45 destroyers and Astute-class submarines and, next decade, the future aircraft carriers; Commando 21, meanwhile, has given Royals more firepower, and Viking gives them armoured mobility.

"We have very high quality equipment," Admiral West emphasises.

"Our amphibious forces are probably the best since the 1940s and as strike carriers *Illustrious* and *Ark Royal* are bang up to date. That's a huge tick in the box."

New ships, of course, need new skills. The shake-up of the lower decks – an increased role for leading hands, squad manning and the new branch structure filtering in – is reaping dividends.

"We've done a lot to treat people as individuals, looking after them, looking after their families, helping them to get qualifications," Admiral West adds.

"We needed to do something; we are living in a new world, a more demanding environment which demands different skills."

There are shortcomings, the admiral acknowledges. The 'black hole' caused by the recruitment freeze a decade ago is still causing problems.

(The shortages are currently at leading hand level but will soon affect petty officers; it's likely to

be a decade before the 'hole' vanishes.)

And there are financial constraints which curtailed some RN operations at the tail end of last year – a situation the admiral says was "unsatisfactory", so he fought for extra money which will now put things right.

On the plus side, recruitment and retention are good – the latter has improved dramatically, the former is buoyant although the admiral would like to see more budding commandos and Fleet Air Arm pilots and observers signing up.

People are at the core of the admiral's 'third R': resilience – the ability to adapt, to withstand changes, to bounce back.

It's the part of the job the admiral enjoys best.

"It's a real morale booster for me to visit units, to see men and women who have a deep love for the Royal Navy, people who are committed to their country."

"I am proud of them and I believe they are proud of the Navy."

Certainly the country should be proud of its Navy after the bicentenary of Trafalgar, a year which "caught the nation's imagination".

The admiral continues: "People remembered the sea, remembered how important the Royal Navy was."

Remembering the Navy is important, for as each year passes there are fewer people with direct connections with it.

When the admiral joined in September 1965, the RN was more than 90,000 men strong and possessed more than 80 frigates and destroyers.

When he leaves the Senior Service – days after the launch of the first next-generation destroyer, HMS *Daring* – the RN's escort force will stand at 25 ships, while the Service as a whole is 36,000 men and women strong.

But the numbers game is a dangerous one to play.

"As a young gunnery officer on a frigate in the Far East in the early 70s we won gunnery trophies," Admiral West recalls.

"But we weren't very good. Indeed, there were ships in the



● 'Bloody good ships'... Britain's current Gulf guardian, Type 23 frigate HMS Montrose

Navy which were not very good. There were people who were not properly trained.

"Today, I have no hesitation about sending a ship into harm's way because I know it will fight and win. Ship for ship, the Royal Navy's capability has improved dramatically."

If the RN of three decades ago had its failings, it still possessed an aura of invincibility, the legacy of Nelson. The same ethos persists today.

"We have a habit of victory. The Royal Navy does not lose. When we do something, we do it to the highest standards," Admiral West says proudly.

"In my time as First Sea Lord I have visited 48 countries, and I have no doubt that the Royal Navy is the best navy in the world."

It remains a navy upholding the traditions of its illustrious past but with its eye fixed firmly on the future.

Indeed, on the wall of the First Sea Lord's office atop the MOD's Whitehall headquarters hangs a portrait of ABC – Andrew Browne Cunningham – arguably Britain's finest admiral since Nelson.

On a desk, its nose pointing skywards, stands a model of the Joint Strike Fighter, the much-heralded successor to Harrier.

Past glories, future horizons.



● First command... An official portrait of Lt Alan West, a 25-year-old officer taking charge of patrol vessel HMS *Yarnton* in 1973

'A phantom ship – a huge black hulk'

FELLOW commanding officers may look a little enviously at Cdr David Burns.

After all, HMS Somerset has two ship's companies.

Unfortunately, the CO can't get his hands on one of them.

Because the crew of the 'other' HMS Somerset are all American. And civilians.

That 'other' HMS Somerset is an 18th-Century man o'war, her company, a group of enthusiasts who recreate life aboard that 64-gunner from the age of sail.

More than two centuries ago, the sailing ship was a scourge of American revolutionaries, struggling for independence against the mighty British Empire.

The existence of this second 'ship's company' was discovered by Cdr Burns as he trawled the Internet.

"When I discovered just what an impact HMS Somerset had made in America I thought we ought to conduct a battlefield tour to the US to meet up with our 18th-Century counterparts," he said.

And so, after researching the history of the 18th-Century vessel,

with the help of the Naval Historical Branch, Cdr Burns, with 12 members of his ship's company, accompanied by Admiralty librarian Jenny Wright, set out on a 1700-mile five-day tour of New England in search of their roots.

The first stop was Boston to visit the Charlestown Navy

Yard and the Bunker Hill monument.

The yard was the landing place for American patriot Paul Revere, escaping from Boston in April 1775, under the guns of HMS Somerset, at anchor in the harbour.

The British ship spent most of that year at Boston, and it was the protection of her guns that allowed the British Army to make the final part of its retreat from Lexington and Concord during the War of Independence, prompting Admiral Samuel Graves to declare "it was Somerset alone" that ensured the retreat did not become a rout.

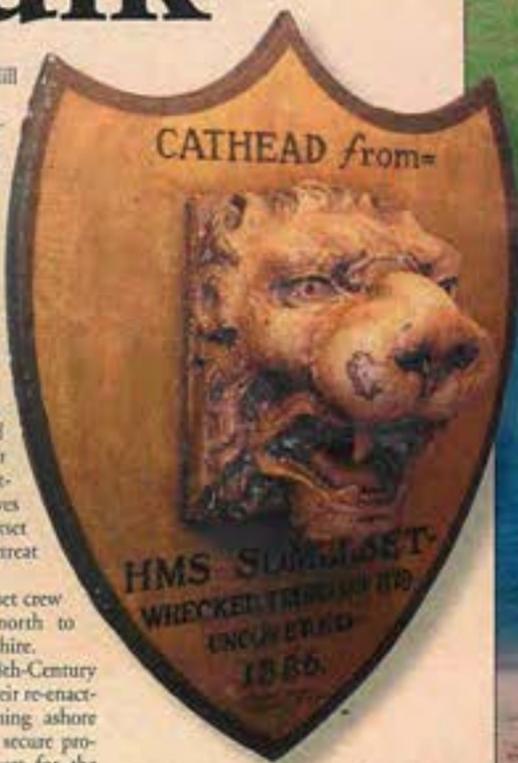
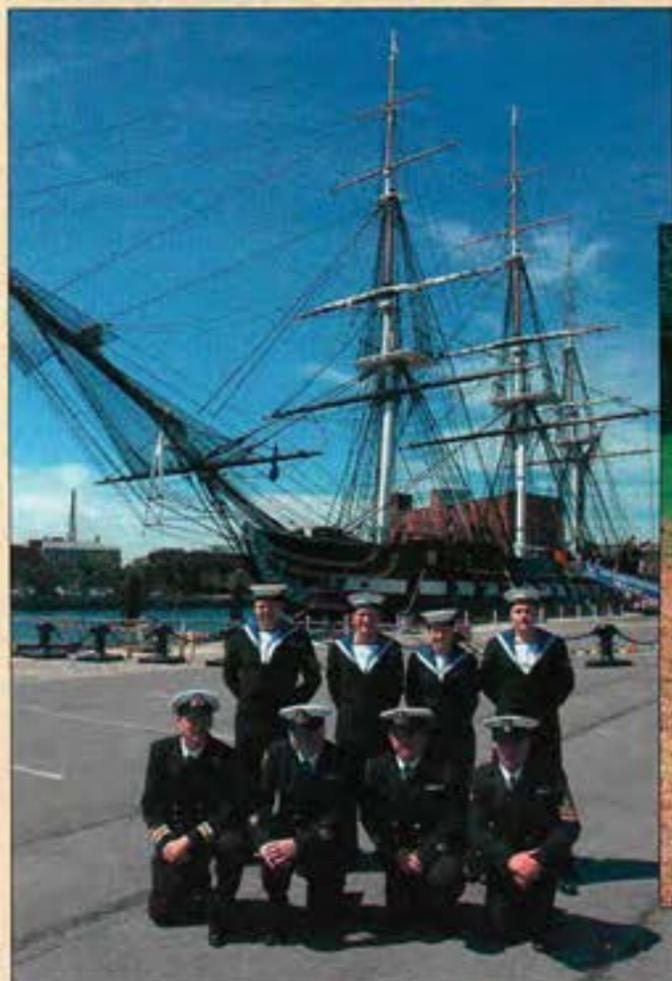
The present-day Somerset crew members then headed north to Charlestown, New Hampshire.

It is here that the 18th-Century Somerset crew carry out their re-enactments, having fun storming ashore from boats to press men, secure provisions and provide support for the Army.

Entering into the spirit of things,

the UK sailors also got dressed up in 18th-Century attire for the weekend, including 'slops' – the canvas over-breeches worn by sailors to protect their clothing. They joined in a demonstration skirmish, had plenty of opportunity to fire replica black powder muskets, sailed on the Connecticut River, and enjoyed a campfire dinner with their hosts.

● Upholders of the constitution... (Below) Sailors from today's HMS Somerset pose in front of the USS Constitution in Boston, a veteran of the War of 1812, and the world's oldest commissioned warship afloat. Launched in 1797, she is three decades younger than HMS Victory, which attracts a similar number of visitors each year



● A cathead recovered from the wreck site of HMS Somerset III near Cape Cod when the sands were washed away 120 years ago; the wreck was last revealed in 1973

WO Terry Carew reflected the enthusiasm of all for the re-enactors.

"Their attention to historical detail is incredible," he declared. "From hand-sewn uniforms to authentic campfire recipes.

"We've been provided with an excellent weekend's 18th-Century entertainment and hospitality. In fact, the food was that good that the RN Cookery School should employ the chef as a 'field cookery instructor!'"

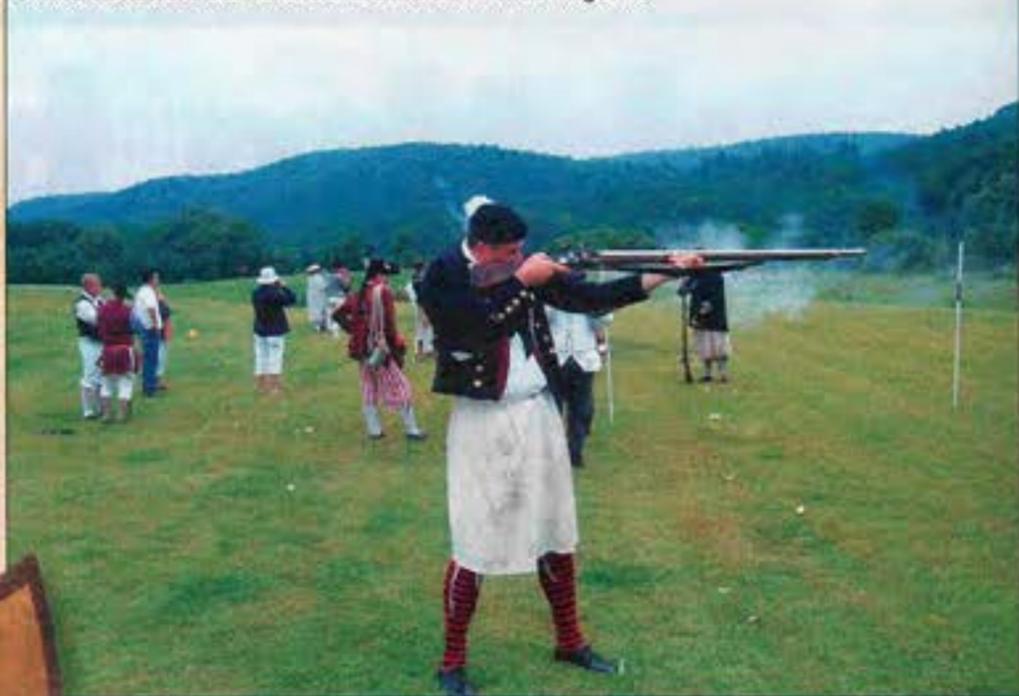
Pete Condrick, 'lieutenant' (pronounced loo-tenant) and commander of the landing party and ship's company of the re-enacted HMS Somerset, was delighted to host today's successors to the man o'war's crew.

"Cdr Burns and members of his crew were intrigued by our group and how we were keeping the spirit of the Somerset alive here in America," he added.



● Two Somersets, two Commanding Officers. 'Lt' Pete Condrick (left), in charge of the re-enactors, with the real CO of Somerset, Cdr David Burns

● HMS Somerset's Cdr David Burns takes aim with a vintage rifle



● Shore thing... American re-enactors pose with Cdr Burns (now in 21st-Century RN attire) on the New England sands



A ship to Revere

HMS Somerset's role in American folklore is immortalised in Henry Longfellow's epic poem *Paul Revere's Ride*

Then he said "Good-night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
While swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

the wrecked ship – some timbers and a hull peg, together with photographs from the last occasion when the wreck, now buried under tons of shifting sands, was uncovered by storms in 1973.

In return, Cdr Burns presented the Cape Cod National Park Visitors Centre with a

ship's badge and certificate that will form part of their exhibit on HMS Somerset, seen by around four million visitors each year.

At the presentation ceremony, George Price, the Park Superintendent fittingly summed up the mood.

"HMS Somerset recently served with the US Navy in the Persian Gulf and her sailors' visit offers a moving lesson in co-operation between old naval foes who now work together as allies."

● An 18th-Century cannon recovered from the wreck of the Somerset, now on display in a New England museum



Six months to survey south polar ice cap

ICEBREAKER HMS Endurance, now better equipped than ever, ushered out the old year and welcomed in the new whilst on her six month deployment in the southern oceans.

Many well-wishers had braved the autumnal weather to bid the ship's company farewell as she sailed out of Portsmouth into the teeth of a seasonal gale.

The affectionately-known Red Plum successfully weathered the notorious Bay of Biscay and after a brief overnight visit to Funchal, Madeira, continued her passage south.

En route to Salvador, the various departments took the opportunity to do some training including an abseil down the bridge screen by the Royal Marine detachment, damage control training by all departments and a fiercely contested tug o' war event.

No clear favourite emerged, but if nothing else, at least it gave a wholesome new meaning to sailors being on the pull.

The eagerly anticipated visit to Salvador did not disappoint with highlights including tours by local schools and universities and a children's party for disadvantaged youngsters arranged to coincide with Children in Need day, and on top of this the opportunity for the ship's company to explore the Bahia region of Brazil.

The passage south enabled the

successful integration of both Mk 3 (Ice) Lynx helicopters within the ship's programme.

These workhorses are key to the success of the ship's many tasks when in the Antarctic theatre. Their role is to drop off scientific teams at isolated sites, get hydrographic surveyors into remote locations and to provide a platform for vertical photography thereby contributing to the accurate charting of coastlines in the region.

The Red Plum's recent visit to the Falklands allowed the engineers to repair the port main engine and fully fuel the bunkers. Early in the new year Endurance will complete her first work period in South Georgia, including the landing of teams from the British Antarctic Survey and from the British School Expeditionary Service.

Using her recently fitted Multi Beam Echo Sounder around the island the crew will undertake significant bathymetric surveys.

The Red Plum is regarded by BAS as vital to environmental research. Her Commanding Officer, Capt Nick Lambert describes the Antarctic as "the massive engine of the world's atmosphere."

A fair description as its ice affects the Gulf Stream, and its winds have an impact on the environment of the whole globe.

Overall the work carried out



Pictures: LA (Phot) Matt 'Beano' Ellison HMS Endurance Photographic Section

by Endurance over the six-month deployment will help scientists study the impact of Antarctica's melting cap.

Results from the BAS and US geological survey have shown that in the past 50 years 87 per cent of the 244 glaciers studied in the British Antarctic Territories – an area the size of Western Europe – have retreated and that average rates of shrinkage have accelerated, with scientists linking the changes to global warming.

Following a logistics period in Mare Harbour over the New Year the ice patrol vessel's next work period is centred in the Erebus and Terror Gulf to the South of the Antarctic Strait, transporting more BAS field camps and conducting further Multi Beam Surveys, including an attempt to locate the 1903 wreck of the Swedish vessel Antarctic, after which the Strait was named.



● (Top) Red Plum setting off on her six month trip to check on ice levels in the Antarctic. (Above) "When you said we were going on the pull I didn't have this in mind." A tug o' war contest on deck

We can't go on meeting like this Ma'am

YOU travel 8,000 miles and as luck would have it, you bump into your neighbour.

As HMS Endurance arrived in the Uruguayan port of Montevideo, she found luxury liner QE2 in harbour.

Home to Endurance is Portsmouth, while the QE2 hails from just up the Solent in Southampton.

The last time the two ships met, Endurance was playing the role of royal yacht during the International Fleet Review on June 28, a spectacle QE2 passengers witnessed from the eastern end of the Solent.

Nearly six months on, Endurance popped into Montevideo for a minor repair ahead of beginning her survey work in Antarctica.

Temperatures in Uruguay are a wonderful 28°C presently, Endurance's sailors tell us with no sign of blizzards.

"Meeting with a prestigious liner such as the QE2 has enhanced what has been an extremely successful and enjoyable visit," said Capt Nick Lambert.

"My team has enjoyed an unexpected opportunity to sample South American culture – but we are looking forward to seeing the snow!"

Making use of the excellent port facilities in Montevideo – the city is, famously, the last resting place of the pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee which scuttled herself here in December 1939.

Problems fixed, Endurance sailed on to Antarctic waters.

● After 8,000 miles sailing Endurance pops into Montevideo and finds herself in good company



Exeter, Lisbon, Casablanca and Paris...

AFTER a hectic long weekend representing the Navy at the Trafalgar bicentenary commemoration in Gibraltar, HMS Exeter sailed away from the Rock first to Lisbon, then on to Casablanca for a three day official visit and finally on to Algiers, fitting in three days of training en route.

THIS included getting a helicopter on board and also firing off a few rounds from their 20mm cannon under the gimlet eye of Capt Paul Lemkes - Ops officer of the Portsmouth Flotilla - who was on board to report back on the trials.

Lisbon proved to be a fairly quiet stop-over, consisting mainly of sporting competition against the local NATO base personnel.

For the ship's company, Casablanca proved to be a more lively and eventful visit. On the sports field the Moroccan Navy rugby team had been rubbing their hands in anticipation. With three international players in their team, they were looking for an easy win.

But the RN clearly weren't impressed with the MN game plan and recorded a 45-7 victory over the locals.

Whilst some of his crew were doing their bit on the pitch, Commanding Officer Cdr Andrew Reed was engaged in a more formal activity - taking part in the Armistice commemorations and hosting Moroccan Navy officers on a tour of the ship.

On the R & R side many of the ship's company visited the Hassan II Mosque. Built in only six years, it is the second largest mosque in the world.

Some 40 sailors heaved a three hour coach trip to Marrakesh lured there by the promise of shopping and for some, snake charming and then back to Casablanca for an almost mandatory visit to Rick's Bar made famous by Humphrey Bogart in the Hollywood epic.

On departure there was an opportunity to exercise with the MN Corvette Mohamed V before Exeter continued on her way back to the Med with an onwards passage to Algiers.

Later she escorted HMS Illustrious into the port of Valletta, Malta, as the carrier was supporting the queen's visit for a Heads of Commonwealth Government conference. (see page 19)

For her part, Exeter had a reunion of a kind to arrange. Eighty

four year old Charles Paris, a surviving member of the ship's company from Exeter's namesake, the famous WW2 cruiser was welcomed aboard by Cdr Reed.

Mr Paris, who joined Exeter in the Far East early in 1941, was presented with framed photos of both the current ship and of the cruiser both underway.

In return Mr Paris presented the Captain with a copy of the book *No Surrender*, a detailed history of the old Exeter from the Battle of the River Plate through to her sinking by the Japanese on March 1 1942 and finally recording what life was like for those who survived only to be incarcerated in the infamous POW camps.

At the time of its sinking Exeter had been part of a combined Dutch, American, Australian and British force during the Battle of the Java Sea. The engagement lasted three days before Exeter ran



● Standing outside the Hassan II mosque, the second largest in the world... some of Exeter's ships company looking like Pompey's defensive wall

out of ammunition and was forced finally to succumb.

Mr Paris was plucked from the sea and held as a POW by the Japanese in Borneo and Bali. When he was released he weighed just five stone and he spent eight months in Australia convalescing before returning home in 1946.

Mr Paris returned to Malta after the war and is currently the President of the Royal Navy Association on the island.

Whilst this may be the first time that the current Exeter has visited Malta, it is not the first time aboard for Mr Paris who has visited the UK for several reunions with his old shipmates.

Cdr Reed said: "On our first visit to Malta HMS Exeter has been hugely honoured and humbled to host Mr Paris and hear

and learn from his experiences of fighting in the last war."

In 2004 Exeter visited 16 countries often supporting British industry by hosting events for companies such as Virgin Atlantic who held an event for their millionaire frequent fliers in Shanghai and Hong Kong. Others included BAE Systems and Westland helicopters.

Under the umbrella of MOD defence sales the ship supported their industry guests in the most appropriate way, be that by simply providing a venue that puts the product in context; or by hosting receptions; or as a focus for the use of specialist equipment. Of course the emphasis is on supporting British industry without ever endorsing what is on the market stall. Sometimes the role is merely helping a company to promote their image... as Marks and Spencers wanted to do in Morocco.

It seems that the Navy's help

works and it is a widely-held belief that RN support helped clinch a £300,000 deal in Japan for Smith Technologies promoting their chemical and biological detection kit. Exeter's crew explained how they managed their own chemical environment and it seems that the contract was signed the next day.

A big grey ship coming to town tends to get people's attention. It certainly did when some of Exeter's crew visited a town in Northern China.

Rear Admiral David Snelson Commander Ops who was sailing with Exeter at the time was invited on to the local television chat show to be interviewed for over an hour by a glamorous TV host by the name of 'Champagne' in front of an audience of 40 million viewers.

Surely a champagne moment for the ship and her crew.



● Exeter performs a pass exercise with the corvette Mohamed V of the Moroccan Navy en route to Algiers

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Playing away from home

RN Nurses give help to Ghana

MANY would say that those lucky enough to work for the Gibraltar Squadron already have a pretty good life. Nice climate, lots of big boys toys to play with, a fair degree of autonomy and a nice part of the world to bounce patrol boats about in.

But of course there's a lot of hard work to be done too, daily patrols, shipping movement through the Med to monitor, not to mention keeping a weather eye out for any smuggling activities, and building up local knowledge of activities in the Bay.

So surely no one would begrudge them the chance to sail outside local waters for once.

After all it is six years since they last got the chance. Well, if you don't count ship exercises.

HMS Sabre deployed to Portugal for a five-day visit to Portimao and Vilamoura with eight personnel on board.

The idea behind the trip was to give the crew a chance to develop their practical knowledge of seamanship skills and navigation.

Deployments like this, perhaps not surprisingly, are great for morale and they undoubtedly build up leadership and command experience too according to Sabre's CO Lt Richard Hutchins.

Setting off before first sparrow cough one early Friday morning the boat was due to arrive in Portimao at 19.00, but fine sailing weather allowed a 17 knot crossing.

Which meant arriving three hours early giving even more time for the crew to talk to the marina users at Portimao who had become quite excited about berthing so close to the Royal Navy.

On the following evening – and having been moved to a VIP berth by the Marina (quite right too – ed) – a drinks reception was held for local dignitaries.

A short passage to Vilamoura on the Sunday was extended to allow a rare opportunity to pipe "Hands to Bathe," and a twenty-minute temperature test of the Atlantic took place.

At Vilamoura, Sabre was positioned directly at the entrance to the busy 1,000-berth marina presenting another excellent chance to promote the Royal Navy during the 24-hour stop over.

A clash of the titans followed in the shape of a hastily convened 'Deployment Sports Challenge' when it was discovered that the town boasted an 18-hole crazy golf course. First prize

and a bottle of Moët and Chandon went to CPO Gary Pritchett for being the craziest golfer with half bottles for second and third craziness going to CPO 'Phil' Philip and LMEM Neil Philipson.

A beautiful evening seemed on the cards for the overnight passage home, but as if in payment for the calm trip out the weather turned nasty. Even the most experienced sailors with 27 years' service in had their sea legs tested by the Gale Force Eight winds and the increasingly heavy seas.

And as always in conditions like this, the pace had to be slowed right down, giving those aboard even longer to reflect on what they'd had for lunch.

At four knots it was a long night. But by sunrise of the fifth day the ship was off Cape Trafalgar and the weather began to ease. Four hours later, HMS Sabre and her crew arrived safely back in Gibraltar, still buoyant from the deployment but eager to start another day in the Bay.

Three crews work the two patrol boats – Scimitar and Sabre – and with the Arctic 24 rigid inflatables that means that the squadron operates for 12 hours a day at sea and at various stages of notice and stand down.

So to make sure that all crews get to benefit from the chance to deploy outside local waters but without disrupting the routine there are plans for the patrol boats to take turns to leave the Bay.

And the next turn went to Scimitar with a trip to Morocco visiting the port of Tangier to participate in the November Remembrance Service at St Andrew's Church. Ten of the ship's company represented the British Forces Gibraltar and Lt Mark Redmayne, CO of Scimitar, laid a wreath on Armistice Day itself during a brief ceremony held by the French Consul.

Poseidon must agree with Gibraltar Squadron's patrol boats venturing into foreign waters as he again arranged a benign transit out just as he had for Sabre.

Hosted particularly well by the Moroccan Navy and the Gendarme, Lt Redmayne said: "It was a highly successful visit and one which is hoped will continue in future – operational commitments allowing!"

And according to Lt Richard Hutchins there is plenty of call on the squadron's time from all sorts of people: "We are often called upon to start the local Yacht Club races, and for stages of international sailing rallies – it's a great way of keeping the Royal Navy in the public eye and it embeds us with the



● "And then when you get the revs up nice and high, drop the throttle and slip it into second."

local community." Which of course is a very useful way of establishing links and keeping on top of what's going on.

"Aurora, – (the erstwhile-christened plague ship) – came into the Marina recently, and, as always, requested that we perform a steam past."

In fact most cruise ships ask for the RN treatment, and the Queen Mary II was no exception – inviting the crew aboard to mingle with the passengers. When you know that around seven and a half million tourists visit the Rock each year, sometimes nearly 7,500 a day, flying the White Ensign is an important part of the job.

Escorting the big warships in and out of Gib and force protection is of course another role the squadron plays.

"We know the waters better than those who only visit from time to time – but just as importantly, because we build up local networks we know more about the people on the water too," said Lt Mark Redmayne.

"So we form a comfort zone for the warships, and we can zip in and have a look at ships coming along and see what other vessels are up to and

avoid any embarrassing situations. "We get to know who is out fishing and where, and because we know the waters we also have a good idea when something is out of place. It's our job to be politely nosy."

And to help this nosy neighborhood watch system work, the squadron has a member of the local regiment aboard to speak Spanish if called upon. And of course it's the Gibraltar Services Police who have legal primacy in the area.

"Gibraltar may seem safe to many, but so did London until the bombs went off," said Lt Hutchins. "It's possible that serving personnel could be targets. They're not locals, we don't live here but there's always RN people around. Which is why having the Gibraltar force is a good idea. It gives us more local knowledge, but even then you have to keep alert."

Just one example of this was when the squadron was escorting an RFA vessel and got a call to investigate a couple of suspicious looking Special Forces kayakers who were getting dangerously close to a Gibraltar Regiment TA exercise.

"We didn't know who they were, but they were dressed in Special Forces kit and definitely looked the part. We asked them for ID but they couldn't produce any."

"In the end they turned out to be a pair of local 17 year olds one of whom was related to a Gibraltar regiment officer who had bought the gear for them. It was an example of expect anything, because anything might happen."

But as far as the Gibraltar Squadron are concerned the approach is always the same: Start polite, then raise the profile.

Trafficking of immigrants as well as contraband between North

Africa and Spain sometimes via Gib is an ongoing problem for the squadron to contend with, and the methods employed by the smugglers are varied. And again, building up local knowledge is a key weapon.

"You get to notice when there's a lobster pot in a place you don't normally get lobster pots or a fishing buoy that wasn't there last time you patrolled" said Lt Redmayne.

It's not unusual for them to be called out to investigate an abandoned boat with wet clothes aboard. But on one occasion they were asked to investigate a small craft with no crew, but which had a huge aerial sticking out of it. It turned out to be a remote controlled boat being steered from Spain and full of contraband.

This kind of work isn't strictly speaking part of the squadron's mandate, but because they spend so much time on the water building up knowledge and experience their help is always gratefully accepted by the local police, who know that the sight of the White Ensign gives comfort to legal shipping and the confidence that keeps trade flowing.

All of which makes Lt Mark Redmayne say: "This is probably the best job in the Navy for a lieutenant."

And not a bad job for a Lt Cdr either if you ask Gib Sqn's CO Mike McGuire who arrived on the Rock in September 2003.

Talking to Lt Cdr McGuire leaves you feeling you've just met a man who has no trouble motivating himself to go to work in the morning.

Although he finished his tour in November last year... it took a posting to Halifax Canada to work at the Canadian Forces Naval Operations School as an Anti Air Warfare instructor to lure him away.

It's a tough life.



● (Top) Big ships need little ships, Sabre and Scimitar in escort mode

● (Above) Just thought we'd come and say hello... mind if we come aboard? A Gib Squadron patrol boat keeping on top of what's going on in the Bay



● "See ya..." After 2 1/2 years as the CO of Gib Sqn Lt Cdr Mike McGuire waves goodbye to the Rock heading off for a new life in Canada. I hope he's not planning to make the whole journey in a RHIB. picture: Neil Rush

MOST of us take the health provision we receive in the UK for granted. Of course it's true that serving personnel are lucky enough to enjoy top treatment, but in comparison to some places in the world even our often complained about NHS health care would be seen as a Rolls Royce service.

And yet we still tend to grumble when we are kept waiting or when we are denied a next day appointment to see the doc. Waiting room queues that test the patient's patience in the UK would in some countries be seen as instant treatment.

How would you feel if you had had to wait for fifteen years to have treatment for a hernia?

It can also come as a surprise to members of our medical profession to see first hand what things are like in deprived parts of the world, both in terms of what patients have to put up with, and the poor conditions that doctors and nurses have to cope with.

And so it was for a team of five Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nurses from the Military District Hospital Unit, (MDHU(D)), Derriford, who, along with NHS medical colleagues, travelled to Ghana to assist in delivering surgical support to the people of Sekondi-Takoradi.

Co-developed by the European Hernia Association and as a part of the MDHU (D)'s host city of Plymouth's efforts to forge stronger ties with the country through the Plymouth-Ghana link, the aim of the trip was to provide 100 hernia operations to patients who could not afford them.

Rotating their efforts around five hospitals, the team soon discovered that facilities were decidedly different to the ones they were used to back home. Some areas offered little more than an operating table and some basic lighting.

So that they could do as much as possible in the time available the teams tended to work in tandem, with one operating in a properly equipped theatre and another in a very small adjacent room with no facilities other than a table.

News that Navy Nurses had come to town soon got round and a parade of patients turned up at the hospitals, many with hernias that they'd had to cope with for as long as 15 years. With a classic turn of phrase exhibiting emergency service humour, one medic remarked that one particular 'presentation' had been, "large enough to carry about in a wheelbarrow."

But the harsh truth was that these people could not afford the treatment they needed and had learned to live with their condition as best as they could – and many had walked for several days to be seen by the visiting medics. Heartbreakingly, some of these were turned away as the team simply didn't have the time to treat everyone.

In all, 136 hernia repairs were undertaken in six days – a third more than their original objective – relieving the burden on the local health system and allowing the patients to return to a full and active lifestyle. On top of this, the team managed to assist in other medical procedures, delivering a baby, helping in emergency surgery on several occasions and running a study day for local medical and nursing staff.

A visit to the jungle canopy and at ground level, a couple of close encounters with local crocodiles rounded off the trip, followed by a reception at the British High Commission.

So successful was the visit deemed to be that it is hoped that it will become an annual event led by the Plymouth-Ghana Link, with MDHU (D) continuing to support the initiative.

For the nurses the experience that the trip gave them provided a taster of what operational conditions are like, and reflected the professionalism and flexibility of Naval Nurses and their ability to respond to patient needs in the most challenging environments.

• Members of the Culdrose Motorcycle Club joined up with the charity riders and, led by Capt Mike Knowles, the air station CO, they took part in a low formation pass of the control tower. Accompanying them is a Sea King of 771 NAS

Picture: LA/Photo Dan Hooper

Bikers' bonanza



EIGHT bikers from the RN Motor Cycle Club set out from Portsmouth to start what is now the Club's traditional annual tour of the South and South West, raising money for Children in Need.

This is the seventeenth such tour, and the aim this year was to bring the total of money they have collected over the period to £200,000.

The bikers' stopover points were 28 defence establishments throughout Hampshire, West Sussex, Middlesex, Bedfordshire, Bucks, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.

While the team may have travelled more than 1,300 miles in the saddle, their organiser, Lt Jim Aston, claimed that they also travelled hundreds of miles on foot collecting money.

"It takes a lot of work to organise, plan and carry out this tour, but we feel this is a very worthwhile charity and we should do everything we can to support it," he said.

"The club has a long history of supporting charity events and the Children in Need Tour has become an important part of our calendar. In fact many people recognise the club simply because of this work."

The Royal Navy Motor Cycle Club celebrated the 25th anniversary of its founding in September last year and now has a total membership of more than 230, drawn from military personnel, MoD civilians, reservists and former members of the Armed Forces.

This year's tour brought in £17,500 – the highest figure recorded in 12 months of biking.

Wet and Wicked

WHEN Pudsey Bear visited the Commando Training Centre at Lymington for the Children in Need appeal the Corporals Club held a "Wet and Wicked" morning.

Cash-raising activities included the sprint finish on the concept 2 rower – fastest over 500m, and Hammer & Nail – how many strikes to hammer a six-inch nail into a log. (More than you think, apparently).

Other attractions, so it is said, included "Marines in Baths". The two baths contained not bubbly water, but baked beans and custard respectively, and in them, respectively, were WO2 Ian Pomeroy and Cpl Daz Joyce.

Total cash raised was £318,86p, passed over to RN Motor Cycle team who had called in on their Children in Need tour.

• Left.... Pudsey in the Corporals' Club, witnessing the bathing in baked beans, performed by WO2 Ian Pomeroy. (But what's that he's reading, - not the Navy News?)



Faslane raises the cash with fair and fete

THE ANNUAL Faslane Fair, held in the summer, raised £22,000 for this year's Flagship charity, the Macmillan Cancer Relief Lomond & Clyde Caners Scheme, and a further £5,000 for other local charities.

Handing over the cheque to the Scheme's West of Scotland fundraising manager, Cdre Carolyn Stait, Commander Naval Base Clyde, expressed her delight that the Fair had raised such a large sum.

"Cdr Bill Jones – Chairman of the Faslane Fair Committee – and his team, as well as many other unsung heroes, put a tremendous amount of hard work into ensuring that the day provided an action packed fun day out, as well as giving an insight into the work that goes on in the Base," she added.

Other local charities benefitting from the Fair included the 4th Helensburgh Scout group, the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust and Enable Dumbarton, each receiving £1000, while

£500 went to Yorkhill Hospital for Sick Children.

More recently, workers at the Base have raised over £4,800 for the Children in Need Appeal by organising a village fete in the base sportsdrome.

Traditional attractions included cakes and goodies stalls, the climbing wall challenge and a cabaret show, with local entertainer Lily Smart performing a few numbers as Cher, Tina Turner and Shania Twain.

Another billed event was the Mini Ironman Competition, though its not clear whether this involved physical feats of strength or the ability to get through a pile of creased-up shirts.

The fund-raising committee were well pleased with the results.

"We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who helped us and supported the day," they added. "Everyone seemed to have a great time and the best thing of all is that we raised loads of money for the children, which was what it was all about."



Digging out and lying in at Raleigh

A TEAM of 12 trainees from Hawke Division, HMS Raleigh, spent three days digging out the ground for a path at a Torpoint school (pictured above).

But their colleagues in Fisgard Division had different ideas about doing "good works", and they had a sponsored lie-in, to raise money for Guide dogs for the Blind.

The diggers set to on the path, originally laid at Carbeil Junior School by Navy recruits two years ago, clearing and extending it, so that the children could use the shady wooded area at lunch and break time.

Head teacher Mike Richards expressed his thanks: "This is one of a number of projects the sailors have supported us with and we are very grateful."

"We've always had close contacts with HMS Raleigh – many of our parents work there and some of our pupils have gone there for training."

The idea for the Fisgard team's lie-in came from their Training Officer, WO Rab Butler, who said:

"During their eight-week Phase One training they're normally out of bed by 5.45 am each day. But, for a donation, we allowed them to stay in bed – for one day – until

Run, cycle and row your boat

WHEN seven engineers from 848 NAS, based at RNAS Yeovilton, set out on the arduous Barmouth to Fort William Three Peaks Yacht Race, they knew they were in for a tough challenge.

What they hadn't anticipated was nine hours of rowing their 11-tonne yacht, when becalmed in the Irish Sea.

The Race is one of the great adventure challenges in British sport, requiring teams to sail 390 miles of difficult coastal waters, cycle 30 miles and run 72 miles, with 14,000ft of ascent to reach the summits of Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis, the highest points in Wales, England and Scotland.

The 848 team came a credible 5th in the race. Skipper Steve Poinson was well pleased.

"The fun, the pain, the camaraderie and the team spirit are things that will be remembered by all of the team for a very long time," he said.

But it was all worth while – a total of £2,334 was raised through their efforts, the money split equally between the Yeovil Hospital Cancer Unit and the Somerset Deaf Children's Society.

9 am. It was a very popular event, and a great way to raise money for this worthwhile cause."

As a result of their "efforts" a cheque for £2,000 was presented to the Regional Co-ordinator of Guide Dogs for the Blind, Pam Gratt.

"We are very grateful for the continued support from Fisgard Division" she said. "This money will be used towards providing guide dogs and mobility and rehabilitation services to meet the needs of blind and partially-sighted people in our region."

Collingwood goes to school

THREE different groups at HMS Collingwood have recently been supporting local schools.

Seven members of the Leading Hands Mine Warfare Course spent two days painting and decorating at the Haven Early Years Centre, Gosport, making good damage sustained during flooding.

Pre-school youngsters at Nicholson Hall, Gosport, were the beneficiaries when 16 members of the Junior Warfare Officers Course spent the day filling up two large skips with foliage and brambles they had cleared from the grounds, and digging out footings for a new Wendy house and toolshed.

The WOs and Senior Rates Mess are supporters of the St Francis Special Needs School at Fareham, and, following a series of fundraising activities, including donations from the weekly meat raffle, they presented the school with a cheque for £214.20.

DURING HMS Manchester's Mediterranean deployment, CPO(CS) 'Arfur' English decided he needed a new hair style, and he could also raise some money for charity.

LREG 'Dusty' Binner obliged with a ten-minute shaving off session, and PO(WTR) Mark Sullivan was on hand with the soothing Nivea.

The ship's company rallied round and the result was almost £500 raised, to be donated to the RNLI.

Afterwards, Arfur said: "I know it's a drastic measure but it was worth it. I only hope that my hair grows again before my fiancée Elle sees it on my return to the UK."

HMS Manchester was in the Med as part of NATO Standing Naval Maritime Group 2, a force of six ships from the Royal Navy plus the navies of the US, Spain, Turkey, Germany, Greece and Italy.

The Group, currently commanded by a Spanish Admiral, is part of NATO's Rapid Reaction Force.



• How's it look? CPO 'Arfur' English with POWTR Mark Sullivan and LREG Dusty Binner, after the deed was done.

Run for your money

EARLIER this year a team of twelve from RNAS Culdrose carried out a sponsored run from John O'Groats to Lands End, completing the gruelling 874-mile route in just seven days.

The result of their efforts was evident when a grand total of £9,434 was presented to the Royal Star and Garter Home, at a ceremony there in Richmond, Surrey.

The run, timed to commemorate the 60th anniversary of D-Day, was led by Lts Gary Ross and Tony Dunn.

"We've been supporting the home for some years, but wanted to do something different to mark this special year" said Tony.

"Most of the residents living at the Richmond home served in World War 2 and we wanted to acknowledge the enormous debt we all owe to that generation."

Among those attending the presentation ceremony was Cdre Jamie Miller, NRO for Wales and the West of England, who congratulated the runners and also told the residents that it was a privilege to meet them.

All the visitors then enjoyed a tour of the home and spent time chatting with residents, who included several RN personnel who took part in the D-Day landings and other wartime campaigns.

• Left... Lt Tony Dunn, WO Ian Woodhead and Lt Gary Ross with Royal Star & Garter resident, John Reed



A Grand entrance by Lusty



If there is a home from home for HMS Illustrious, then it has to be Malta.

Six decades ago, the previous Illustrious was instrumental in ensuring the island did not fall to Axis tyranny.

In 2005, the flagship of the Fleet was asked to head to the Mediterranean island and provide a ceremonial backdrop with her Harriers and Merlins for a gathering of Commonwealth heads of state.

And when there's the added ingredient of a Royal visit, well then you know the outcome should be magical.

And so it proved.

For as Lusty's Commanding Officer Capt Bob Cooling proclaimed, the entry to Grand Harbour alone is "one of the memories that will be cherished for years by us all".

Lusty's ceremonial gun fired a 21-gun salute, an act not of warlike, but peaceful intentions, letting locals know her guns were in fact empty.

The Maltese responded with a 21-gun salute of their own from Valletta's old Saluting Battery.

Thousands of people lined the

Pictures: PO(Phot) Nigel Russell-Stevenson and LA(Phot) Judy Hurst, HMS Illustrious

harbour walls and surrounding vantage points to get a glimpse of the carrier's arrival on a glorious late autumn afternoon.

Having safely arrived in Malta, the next task was to prepare for the visit of the Queen (whose late sister, Princess Margaret, was the ship's sponsor).

The Queen was due to attend a reception in the carrier's hangar with numerous island dignitaries.

Illustrious' close ties with the island not surprisingly go back to her predecessor's vital wartime role.

To ensure those ties persist, and the memory of islanders and sailors who lost their lives in the defence of Malta is upheld, Capt Cooling laid a wreath in the Senglea war cemetery.

After a particularly ferocious pounding from the Luftwaffe as 1941 began, Lusty sought shelter in Malta to effect temporary repairs.

The Luftwaffe persisted with

● A Grand sight... Veterans, visitors and locals watch as Illustrious makes her way into Malta's Grand Harbour

efforts to destroy her, succeeding chiefly in destroying homes in the Three Cities district - home to many dockyard workers.

The bombing failed to deter the shipwrights and the carrier was eventually patched up to sail from Malta.

It was therefore fitting that in 2005 today's ship's company of HMS Illustrious tended the graves of their forebears.

A seven-strong team headed to the naval cemeteries of Capuccini and Mtarfa to pay their respects to 20 members of the fourth Illustrious' company - including 13 RAF crew - plus three dead from the pre-dreadnought Illustrious who died in 1902 and 1903 during the ship's tour of duty in the Mediterranean.

At each cemetery, a prayer was said for the dead by Fr Paul Donovan, one of the carrier's chaplains.

"It was good to see that the cemeteries are very well tended," said Fr Donovan.

"These graves are kept in homage to the brave Servicemen who lie there and are part of Malta's rich history. The ongoing preservation work and restoration is a credit to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission."

Other members of the ship's company, plus a detachment of Grenadier Guards, found themselves involved with community work in Senglea.

The sailors and soldiers joined the deputy mayor of the town, Walter Ahar, in painting school railings and tidying up a sports field and playground.

Mr Ahar thanked the volunteers by inviting them into the council building... once the office of the captain of the naval base, which offered a breathtaking view of Grand Harbour and not least the berth where a battered HMS Illustrious had been in 1941 as locals worked frantically with sailors to repair her.

The day in Senglea ended for



● We are amused... (Above) The Queen has a light-hearted chat with Illustrious sailors during an official reception aboard the carrier

● (Right) PO(C) Bick (r) and MEM Charleston lay a small cross of remembrance on the grave of plumber's mate John Parry, a 20-year-old member of the ship's company of the third Illustrious



● Gimme shelter... Emerging from one of the narrow wartime air raid shelters constructed by Britons and Maltese

the Lusty team with a tour of the air raid shelters carved out of the sandstone by British and Maltese workers six decades ago.

"For many, if not all, the tour was the highlight of the project," said Lt Grant Kelly.

"The guides were local people who had been children during the air raids and gave a very graphic and emotional account of life below ground."

Capt Cooling added: "Everyone on board is extremely proud of the strong links between our fantastic ship and Malta. Entry into Grand Harbour is as special as returning to our base port."

■ Ship of the month, page 10

Naval Quirks

THE ITALIAN FLEET OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR WAS NOTED FOR ITS INACTION...



HM... THE WORDS "POT" AND "KETTLE" COME TO MIND...

NOW THE BRITISH BATTLESHIP, HMS "IRON DUKE", STEAMED NO FEWER THAN 14,184 MILES IN THE WAR...



... BY CONTRAST, THE ITALIAN BATTLESHIP "CESARE" ONLY CLOCKED UP 31 SEA HOURS - UNDER 500 MILES - IN THE WHOLE 3 1/2 YEARS ITALY WAS AT WAR!



GOD! HOW MUCH LONGER IS THIS INTERMINABLE VOYAGE GOING TO LAST CAPITANO? WE MUST HAVE BEEN AT SEA AT LEAST 10 MINUTES ALREADY!!



MICAH

Royal Yacht Britannia is well looked after in Leith

AT THE Guildhall in Portsmouth last month the Association of Royal Yachtsmen held their thirtieth Reunion Dinner.

At the reunion dinner, the Chairman of the Britannia Trusts, Admiral Neil Rankin and

the Managing Director Mr Bob Downie were the main guests.

All were met by the Chairman of the Royal Yachtsmen Association, Cdre A.J.C. Morrow and by the committee members.

Rear Admiral Rankin gave one

of the after dinner speeches and talked about how the Royal Yacht Britannia has been maintained since its arrival in Leith, and what a successful tourist attraction it has become.

He also expressed the wish that

links with the RYA should grow and strengthen.

Under the direction of WO2 Bandmaster D.H. Farrar, music was provided by the orchestra of HM RM Portsmouth.

Discreet dining club

IT MIGHT not be the best known organisation in the world, but having been in existence now for nearly 60 years, the Manchester Naval Officers Association is flourishing.

With a membership of about 200, of whom around 60 are still active, the association holds up to six dinners each year in the Stanleylands Hotel which has been adopted as its official wardroom.

A brief history of the Association has been compiled, concocted from minutes of meetings, receipts, bills and odd bits of paper which have been accumulated by various members over the years and is intended to give some idea of how the Association has developed. Its format is to provide a simple handout for members and guests and includes vignettes such as how Betty the manageress of Sam's Chop House - where the members used to meet - would instruct Admirals and other VIP guests on how to pull a pint behind the bar.

One member who held high office in Government legal circles obviously found refuge in the Association, describing it as "one of the most discreet gentlemen's dining clubs in the country."

Where the money goes

ONE of the rewarding things about supporting naval charities is that one knows where the money is going. And, more often than not, how it will be spent and who is going to benefit.

In a year blighted by so many disasters, from the Asian Tsunami to the Pakistan earthquake, charity, on going global, may have prompted some RNA branches to ask about the use of income for the benefit of other charities.

According to RNA Headquarters, it is the business of branches to whom they donate their monies and the Charity Commission is fairly relaxed about the subject.

If members of a branch wish to help any other charity, they are at liberty to do so, provided they set up a special appeal for the purpose. It is only when the funds of the branch itself are used for this

purpose that problems can arise. Neither is there any objection to branches donating funds to a charity which furthers any or all of the objects of the RNA. For example, the RNBS and the RNBT.

In fact, branches will be reassured to know that neither is there any objection to them donating funds to non-naval organisations which support and help members, such as Help the Aged or a local hospice.

Branch funds should not however be applied for the benefit of a charity which has no connection whatsoever with the Navy or the RNA, such as an animal charity or one for the protection of the environment.

Following the mega-disasters of 2005, not forgetting floods in Guatemala, famines in Africa and hurricanes in the US, those who give to charity found themselves stretched to the limit.

Because appeals to their pockets are so great, naval charities are

expected to show a drop in income in this coming year. In fact, more than ever, it will be up to RNA branches to keep these charities afloat. A list of the most deserving ones can be found in the November Headquarters Circular to branches.

£50 prize puzzle

CONGRATULATIONS to Mr Brian Beer of Southway, Plymouth for correctly identifying November's mystery ship as QinetiQ-run trials ship RV Triton approaching Portsmouth Harbour; he collects £50 for doing so.

Pictured, right, in Gibraltar in late 1914 is the subject of this month's test, star of one of the more bizarre naval episodes of the Great War.

Built and initially operated as a liner, this 18,000-ton vessel was hastily converted to an armed merchant cruiser with the outbreak of war. She chose to disguise herself as a specific German liner.

Meanwhile in Buenos Aires, that same German liner was being converted into an armed merchant cruiser. Her captain disguised his ship too; he selected the 18,000-ton British liner as the hull to replicate.

And as fate would have it, the two ships would meet in battle before the year was out.

Both vessels were badly mauled, the German liner fatally so.

We want to know the name of the ship - and the German armed merchant cruiser she sank.

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 February 14. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted.

Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.



The winner will be announced in our March edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 131

Name

Address

My answers



There were Greenhills far away since 1943

TWINS have a habit of doing things together.

Former RN electrical engineers Sid and Ernie Greenhill (above) are no exception.

Aside from celebrating their 80th birthday on the same day (obviously - Ed) - New Year's Eve 2005 - the Greenhills' lives in and out of the Senior Service have mirrored each other.

Unusually for brothers (military policy was generally to separate siblings), after joining up together in 1943 at Butlins Holiday Camp, Skegness, they trained together at Ganges, learned about torpedoes at Chatham, sailed in the Empress of Scotland across the Atlantic, through the Panama Canal, and on to Australia.

There the Greenhills were employed at Woolloomooloo

naval base in Sydney as electrical specialists until being drafted to cruiser HMS Belfast after the defeat of Japan, witnessing the devastation that the atomic bomb had caused at Nagasaki, before sailing on to China and up the Yangtze River.

They remained in Belfast until she reached Gibraltar, transferring there to HMS Victorious for the passage home to demob at the beginning of 1947.

Post-war, the duo both found vocations as electrical engineers, married sisters and settled near Swindon - not surprisingly close to one another.

As active members of the Belfast Association, the pair returned with cruiser comrades to Australia to see Woolloomooloo six decades on.



Malta welcomes back the brave

FOR most people the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War 2 was commemorated back in the summer, plenty of regional and local events around the country and a superb living museum being erected in St. James's Park to mark veterans awareness week.

However, an important few - 600 veterans of the Battle for Malta, had to wait until the end of September to mark the end of their contribution to the conflict.

Over the course of a whole week, veterans who had fought either on land or on sea supporting the struggle for the islands of Malta, along with their spouses and carers descended on The George Cross island to relive their wartime memories.

Two thirds of those attending were from an RN, RNVF, Wren, Merchant Navy or similar background, and stayed in the same hotel, mainly funded by grants from the National Lottery sponsored Heroes Return scheme. Air Malta, the national airline did their bit by laying on discounted fares on as many as nine flights.

A host of commemorative events and activities including a wreath laying ceremony at Malta's National War memorial with poppies being dropped by a Spitfire, the Red Arrows and a Hurricane of the 'Merlins over Malta' were planned for the veterans who were treated as honoured guests.

A reception hosted by the Maltese President in conjunction with the British High Commissioner

and the Commander of the Armed Forces of Malta was held at Verdala Palace and marked by a fireworks display.

But perhaps the most significant element of the week was the opportunity for the veterans, all of whom have said goodbye to their eightieth birthdays, to revisit the scenes where they fought so gallantly - with naval personnel being ferried around Grand and Marsaxmetts harbours in a Captain Morgan pleasure vessel in a much more relaxed manner than they experienced sixty years ago. There was also the chance for them to visit cemeteries and former shore establishments to pay respects and to remember times past both good and bad.

Those taking part in the week had a varied background. Some had been Swordfish aircrew whilst other had been submarine artificers. Anti-aircraft gunners rubbed shoulders with nurses and medical staff.

And it wasn't just the UK that was being represented as veterans came from as far away as New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the USA. A definite bonus was the attendance of twelve veterans from the US Navy carrier USS Wasp - which used to ferry Spitfires within range of Malta.

Submariners celebrate 75th

2005 was the 75th anniversary of the Portsmouth Branch of the Submariners Association.

It has been a tradition of the Branch to hold an annual dinner for members and their partners in a local hotel. The dinners have always been well attended, but in such an auspicious year - and with some members of the opinion that they may not "avoid the grim reaper" long enough to make it through to the centenary dinner - it was the Association's intention that as many people as possible should attend and make it a truly memorable occasion.

Last year's dinner was held on board HMS Warrior on November 17, and made the hard work that social secretary Ernie Williams and branch Chairman Les Hanks (who has been a member for 50 years) well worthwhile.

"War turns us to stone"

For the first time in 130 years the Royal Navy sent a message by semaphore along the Thames, as a special way of marking last year's Remembrance Sunday.

Starting at the Royal Observatory Greenwich the message was then passed by twenty signallers from the RNCA and the RNCCA through 17 stations ending up at Horse Guards Parade.

Having arrived, the message was written down and transferred onto a wreath, and laid at the Cenotaph by the National Maritime Museum Director Rear Admiral Roy Clare.

It read: 'War turns us to stone, in remembrance we shine and rise to new days.'

Entitled 'Message' the project was the brainchild of British artist Beth Derbyshire and began five years ago with her seeking out veterans signallers capable of carrying out the task, and it was commissioned by the National Maritime Museum as part of its New Visions contemporary art programme.

Beth said of the work: "In an age where communication is reliant on technology, 'Message' brings human interaction to the fore..."

"It is a living memorial uniting older and younger generations in the hope of a brighter future."

War deeds at Warwick

CAPT Hugh Lee, RN, DSC, considers himself lucky to have survived World War 2 and even luckier to have taken part in the hunting down and sinking of the first German submarine (U27) during the war.

When the U-boat surfaced for air and was spotted against the midnight moon, in September 1939, Capt Lee was serving in HMS Fortune as a young lieutenant, an anti submarine control officer.

Recalling that moment as though it happened yesterday, he said, two torpedoes were fired at the Fortune, but as they were the new magnetic pistols they just ended up colliding with each other instead.

After the ship got the order to fire he recalls seeing the U-boat rear up out of the sea and then plunge to the depths. Half of the crew jumped to safety.

Like all such happenings it was not without its moment of humour. As the survivors were being rescued one of the ship's stokers arrived on deck to see what was happening.

Coming on board was a German lieutenant, "a proper little Nazi, with his arm raised in the Hitler salute."

This was too much for the stoker, who pushed him back into the rescue vessel saying, "We don't want any of that in here."

The lieutenant obviously got the message for on coming aboard the Fortune for the second time, he gave a smart Naval salute. It was the first time opposing forces came face to face at sea during WW2.

Capt Lee, who was one of the distinguished guests at the Warwick branch Trafalgar dinner, was Commodore of Portsmouth Naval



● Trafalgar dinner at the Warwick Branch, Vice Chairman Michael Thornton and Chairman Mr John Coles enjoy a tale or two and a SODS opera

Base, with responsibility for Nelson's ship, HMS Victory, before his retirement from the Navy in 1968.

The branch celebratory dinner, enjoyed by 86 shipmates and guests, was attended by the Mayor of Warwick, Cllr R Smith, the Lord Lieutenant Mr Martin Dunne and his wife, Capt D I Rhodes RN, Cdr W Frisken, Kelly and D I Tilley, Col J Haywood, Maj M Gaffney, Wing Cdr T R Holland,

members of the RBL, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, M J Kinson, Town Councillor The Court Leet.

Cadets of TS Bacchante providing the piping party.

Following the traditional toasts and speeches, a most enjoyable "Sods Opera" was presented by S/Ms Caley and Butler, and thoroughly enjoyed.

Around the associations

Brent Parish Church, formerly St Mary's, Willesden, reputed to be one of the oldest in the country (AD 939) was the setting for a sad ceremony, the laying up of the branch standard by S/M Martin Loughlin. To ensure he was not without support the standards of Watford and No 1 Area were in attendance as were a group of Watford shipmates.

What with spiralling inflation and conditions getting worse, S/M P G "Nobby" Clarke says he can neither afford to buy cards nor meet the cost of postage to send Christmas and New Year's greetings to all his friends of HMS Myngs Assn, and those telegraphists, still around, of Course SS36, Cookham Camp. He is very grateful to "Dusty" Miller, chairman of HMS Bulawayo Assn, for sending him regular copies of the News which keep him in touch with the Navy.

The Robert Sandilands School, Newbury, held a special assembly to mark the 200th anniversary of Nelson's famous victory. The children were thrilled to see the standards of the Newbury RNA branch and the Submariners' Assn, escorted by Sea Cadets, paraded into the hall to the accompaniment of Hearts of Oak by courtesy of Phil Manley, principal percussionist of the Royal Yeomanry.

As the children sang the National Anthem, the standards were dipped. The significance of standards was explained to the children by branch chairman S/M Bob McGuinness, who presented the school with a special RNA com-

memorative plaque. A short talk on the Sea Cadet Corps was given by Helen Mannerings.

There was a big turnout for the Torre Vieja branch Remembrance Day service held in the Spanish church of La Sista and attended by the Major and other dignitaries, with the Navy providing a very smart standard-bearer. S/M Pete Ede, RNA HQ Roll member, was very impressed when he paid a visit to the branch before Christmas. He thanks chairman S/M Robert Hargreaves and members for the welcome and hospitality extended. Ex-Wren Valerie Saunders, who was Captain's Writer at RNAS Yeovilton, is the new branch Press Officer and can be contacted on 0034 96 678 2737.

His many friends mourn the loss of S/M Frank Paxton, founder, chairman and president of the Raleigh branch. Frank joined the Navy in 1941 and after training in HMS Raleigh, went on to serve in HMS Ships Tartar, Scourge, Tuscan and Javelin.

Before he retired from the Navy he also served in the old Royal Yacht 'Victoria and Albert' and in HM Ships Stork and Valiant.

Thanks to his drive and initiative the branch was formed in 1986 and whilst he served as chairman, he was awarded Life Membership. In March 2005, he and his wife, Margaret, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary and throughout their life together were a devoted couple.

The branch will celebrate the 20th anniversary of its commissioning in 2006, when Frank will

be remembered by his fellow shipmates at their celebratory dinner.

Almost 100 shipmates, wives and guests enjoyed the Haverhill branch dinner to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar. The occasion was attended by two Mayors, Cllr Stefan Oliver, Mayor of Edmundsbury, and Cllr Tim Marks, the Town Mayor.

Having paraded their standards on nine occasions in a period of three weeks, many at Remembrance services in the Redruth and Cambourne area, S/Ms Bob Saxby and Dave Kennedy had time off to enjoy a Veterans' Night, organised by Redruth RBL followed shortly afterwards by one organised by the Cambourne Conservative Club, which included a social evening with entertainment. They thank their hosts for a very special evening.

Members of the Basildon branch joined those of the RBL, ex-service associations and a big gathering of Sea, Army and Air Cadets, for the town's Remembrance service and parade, followed by wreath-laying in the local memorial garden.

A belated thank you from S/M Alan Robinson, the National Ceremonial officer, to Mary Gibson, of Thames Valley branch of Bomber Command Association, for inviting him to join members aboard the Pride of Bilbao for a service aboard, in the Bay of Biscay, honouring the men of Bomber Command lost there during WW2. It was a real privilege, he says, to take part in the ceremony.

Last time for the RNPS

ON OCTOBER 8 the Royal Naval Patrol Service Association held its final parade and marched through the town of Lowestoft in Suffolk.

During World War 2 HMS Europa, the central depot of the RNPS, was based in Lowestoft and became a Port Division in its own right using the prefix LT on their service numbers. There were 6,000 minesweepers and associated ships in the service with around 66,000 personnel. Of these 600 ships were destroyed with the loss of 14,000 men.

As it was to be the last parade through the town the committee were determined for it to be a memorable occasion, and so they booked the band of HM Royal Marines, Portsmouth, and invited the Chaplain of the Fleet, The Venerable Barry Hammett and the Naval Secretary Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson to attend as guests of honour. Cdr Gary Titmus and Capt Jon Scoles, President and Vice President of the Association joined the official guests.

Having an RN ship alongside completes events like this perfectly, so Cdr David Waters NROEE arranged for the minehunter

HMS Hurworth and Patrol Boat HMS Explorer to visit the port for the weekend. Both ships' companies marched in the parade and Explorer also provided extra assistance for veterans who were wheelchair users.

A town full of people cheered the veterans as the band led the parade through the streets. Thirty standards from ex-service Associations led the veterans who were in turn led by Cdr Titmus and the COs of the visiting ships Lt Andy Mason of Explorer and Lt Cdr Jason Horne of Hurworth.

After the Service of Remembrance, during which the Patrol Service memorial was rededicated by the Chaplain of the Fleet, the parade marched past the guests and the salute was taken by Rear Admiral Ibbotson from the bandstand in the grounds of their former war time base. Following Beat Retreat the parade dismissed and it was time to swing the lamp and for the guests to mingle with the veterans.

As a mark of gratitude for giving their time, both the Rear Admiral and the Chaplain of the Fleet were presented with engraved decanters from the Association.

Association support runs deep

It has been said that whatever the circumstances, and from whichever country they hail, sailors share a common enemy - the sea.

Keeping this notion of help across the waters alive, the International Submariners of Great Britain has a ladies section which helps to support the monetary funds of the Association, raising money to help children of submariners who may need specialised medical treatment or after care following a serious illness.

When the Russian submarine "Kursk" sank with all hands in 2001 the Association helped out. One particular widow of a crew member was deaf and with a young baby. Money was raised to help restore her hearing so that she was able to listen to her child for the very first time.

Ekaterina Bagryanstev, widow of the Kursk's captain presented the association's president with a specially designed medal to mark her gratitude.



Daring's dghaisaman

LATE last autumn HMS Daring Association held a reunion in Malta.

Daring's first commission was in the Mediterranean Fleet from 1952-54 and her base was in Malta. In all that time the ship's dghaisaman (that's a sort of local taxi from ship to shore for those who don't know) was a popular man called John Attard who served the crew well and when he wasn't 'taxing' Jack about ran a dhoebeying firm.

Sometimes the crew hauled his Dghaisa, which had Daring's name painted on its side, aboard and he came along on trips.

During the reunion visit, many of the Association members were wearing their 'Daring' shirts on the waterside near Fort St Angelo. Seeing the crest a young man approached asking when the visitors had been aboard the ship.

It transpired that the young man was John Attard's grandson. John had passed away in 1975 but his grandson had followed in his footsteps and is himself a dghaisaman taking tourists around Grand Harbour.



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'A fulfilling job'

THE REVEREND Mike Harman, leaving the Navy after 26 years, reckons the highlights of his service have been operational deployments in HMS Illustrious and becoming the first Royal Navy chaplain to work as a trainer for Flag Officer Sea Training. Originally ordained in 1974, Mike was a parish priest in Blackpool before he joined up. "I was attracted by the naval lifestyle and the fact that as a chaplain I would be able to share in the life of my 'parishioners' in a way that is very different from that of my civilian colleagues," he said.

Mike has served in a wide variety of appointments including Chaplain of the Sixth Frigate Squadron, the Second Submarine Squadron and to British Forces, Gibraltar.

While in HMS Illustrious he served in the Gulf in 1998 and off Sierra Leone in 2000. His last job has been to provide pastoral care to the RN's newest recruits at HMS Raleigh.

"It's been a wonderful and fulfilling 26 years, made special by the memories of the many people I have met and served with," he said.

"It has been a privilege to share in their lives, often at very special times."

Field trip to Faslane

FIFTY young children had a day away from John Logie Baird School in Helensburgh, visiting HM Naval Base Clyde as part of their project work.

The geography group took to the water in the submarine support vessel Adamant, studying the glacial formation of the west of Scotland, while the remainder studied the social and economic impact that the base had on their local area, and enjoyed an insight into how the base operated.

These school visits have, over the past 12 years, become an annual event and headmaster William Miller is an enthusiastic supporter.

"We really treasure our connections with the base" he said. "The school inspectors have commended these field visits as being of the highest calibre - they are extremely beneficial educationally to the kids."

Admiral Trevor soars at learning

HERIOT-WATT University has conferred an Honorary Degree in engineering on Rear Admiral Trevor Soar, in recognition of his distinguished Service career and, in particular, for his time in command of HMS Invincible.

When he joined the carrier, in December 2002, the ship was alongside at Rosyth nearing completion of a major refit. At that time he took the opportunity to forge strong links with the City of Edinburgh and local industry and was also actively responsible for the promotion of collaborative relationships with the research sector.

Rear Admiral Soar, now Capability Manager (Precision Attack) at MOD, received his Degree from Chancellor, Lord McKay of Clashfern, at a ceremony held at the University in Edinburgh.

Yorkie birdmen take flight

HOMEWARD-bound from their Far East deployment, the ship's company of HMS York decided that they needed get some flying hours in, and rather than use the ship's Lynx helicopter they opted for somewhat less conventional flight - as birdmen (and birdwomen).

Their Birdman Competition was modelled on the famous annual event held at Bognor Regis, with each mess entering their own pilot in a magnificent flying machine. The judging panel (the CO, the XO and WO(X)) awarded points for best-dressed and furthest-flight, and it was no easy task, given the impressive quality of the entries.

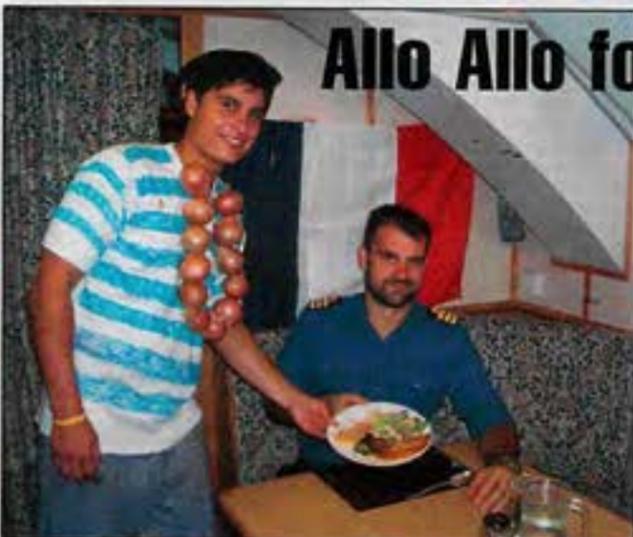
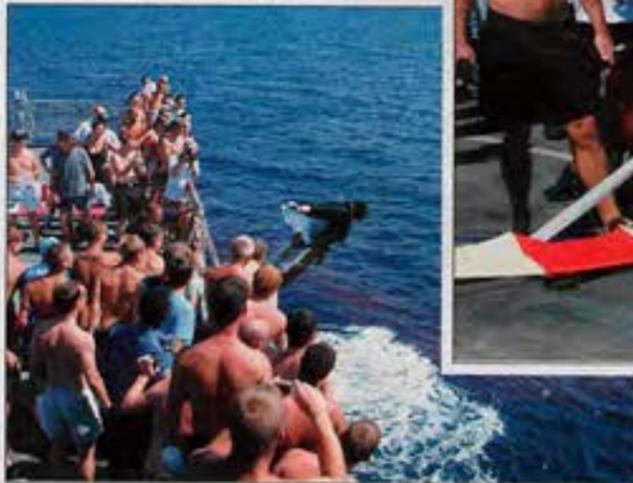
Outstanding outfits ranged from the Liver Bird (LStd 'Tomo' Thompson) to the Lesser Spotted Speckled Penguin (CPO 'Fez' Parker) and the Fruit Bar (CH 'Hoffy' Hofstetter).

In the end, though, a clear winner emerged - 3E/F Messes, represented by OM(W) Emily Parks in her magical flying car *Chiry Chiry Bang Bang*. Runner-up was Baron von Richtshofen, alias La Tim Southall.

No figures are available as to how far the winners actually flew, but after each contestant landed in the sea, they were picked up by the seaboats crew, who didn't need to venture out too far to perform this duty.

● Right... MEM Bowie, the Caped Crusader, spreads his wings

● Above, right... OM(W) Emily Parks revs up prior to taking the plunge



● Suitably attired, Chef Mark Goodsell serves up a plate of frogs' legs to his CO, Cdr Paul Halton



● Princess Alexandra meets LNN Elizabeth Moore (left) and A/CPONN Emma McLocklan at Portsmouth Cathedral. Both nurses are serving with the MOD Hospital Unit, Portsmouth.

Nurses' patron Princess for fifty years

NURSES of Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS) attended their annual Service of Remembrance at Portsmouth Cathedral in the presence of their patron, Princess Alexandra.

It was a particularly special event this year, for it is 50 years since the Princess first became patron of QARNNS.

Following the Service, the Princess was thanked for her continuing support by Captain Lynne Gibbon, Director Naval Nursing Services and Matron-in-Chief QARNNS.

"We are honoured to have had the support of Princess Alexandra for so many years and we look forward to her patronage for many more," she said.

"It added a particular significance to this year's Remembrance Service to have Her Royal Highness with us. It is very important that we continue to remember our colleagues, the work they have done and the work they continue to do."

Allo Allo for Spartan

HAVING just departed from the French island of La Reunion in the Indian Ocean, HMS Spartan's chefs decided to continue the French theme to their cuisine.

So the ship's company found themselves sitting down to starters of frogs' legs.

These were followed by Boeuf Bourguignon, St Pierre, Cassoulet and Gratins Dauphinoise, all served up by the chefs in dodgy French costume and even dodgier French accents.

At the time, HMS Spartan was half way through her five-month patrol, taking her on a complete circumnavigation of the African continent, and also including port visits to Rio de Janeiro and Dubai.

Commenting on the menu, CO Cdr Paul Halton said: "I was a bit taken aback when I saw frogs' legs - this is certainly the first time I've seen them served on a submarine and, for the majority of the crew, it will have been the first time that they'll have tried them."

And the verdict? "A bit like chicken!"



Brave Dave

AIR Engineer David Jackson has been awarded the Chief Constable of Nottingham's Community Award for helping to stop a woman from jumping off a bridge.

The 21-year-old rating climbed over the bridge rail and secured the woman so that she could be pulled to safety.

Dave, who is currently serving at RNAS Yeovilton, was on leave in his hometown when the incident occurred.



Dad, why are you on parade?

IT WAS a big day for 18-year-old Ashley Cahill, for after eight weeks of training at HMS Raleigh he was taking part in his Passing Out parade.

His family, he knew, were watching the parade, but it was a surprise when his Dad, RPO 'Jan' Cahill, marched on to the parade, escorting the inspecting officer.

Jan is currently serving in HMS Bulwark, but prior to that he had been at Raleigh, where he had always carried out this escort duty on parades.

So, just for this special day, he got permission to go back to his old role.

For Ashley, seeing dad on parade was something of a surprise. "I was really shocked when I saw him walk down the steps" he said.

"But at the same time I was happy and proud of myself after eight weeks training which I enjoyed and worked hard at."

"I know my family was very proud of me, especially my dad and granddad who know just what I have been through at HMS Raleigh."

Pussers Rum brings in the dollars

CHAIRMAN of Pusser's Rum Charles Tobias presented a cheque for \$42,442 - £24,279 - to Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns for the Sailors' Fund, fruits of the drink's sales.

Mr Tobias founded the company after the rights to produce and market worldwide the original Navy Rum formula was given to him by the Admiralty. Between 1971 and 1990 he donated around £40,000 each year.

He sold the company in 1990, but 13 years later he bought it back again.

The Sailors' Fund is used for amenities for serving RN ratings and RM other ranks. This year grants have been given for a range of projects including mess lighting, hall refurbishments, sail training yachts and tours for international sports competitors.

Money from the tipples sales is the fund's largest source of income, apart from the original bequest.

Airmen at the Lord Mayor's Show



THE VOLUNTEER Band and the Field Gun Crew from RNAS Yeovilton took part in this year's Lord Mayors Show in London, as guests of the Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors.

Marching through the city streets, the Yeovilton band, led by Band Sergeant David Wright, was augmented by members of other volunteer bands.

The 22-strong field gun crew, marching with their gun and limber, were led by WO Peter Smith and Lt Doug Wylie, the Field Gun Officer.

On the day following the Lord Mayor's Parade, Remembrance Sunday, the field gun crew joined members of the Fleet Air Arm Armourers' Association at Horse Guards Parade to march past the Cenotaph before laying wreaths at the Fleet Air Arm Memorial on the Thames Embankment.

● Musicians from Yeovilton Volunteer Band and other naval air stations, march past as the Lord Mayor of London takes the salute (left) and (above) Fleet Air Arm field gunners march through the city streets with gun and limber



● WO Chris Sheen. (He's the one on the right - Ed)

Swashbuckling job for Chris

THE SENIOR Service once felt submariners were little better than pirates (hence the Jolly Roger flown in defiance by victorious boats).

So it's perhaps apt that former WO Chris Sheen has swapped life as a submarine engineer for that of engineer of a pirate ship.

Not a real one, mind you. Chris's new job is as maintenance engineer at Gulliver's Theme Park in Warrington, carrying out work not only on the pirate ship, but on all the other rides, like the log flume and the Antelope.

Managing the rides entails walking over 15 miles a day, and Chris admits its helping him lose weight. While it's good to be out in the fresh air, after 32 years at sea, mostly working in artificial light, the unusual exposure to the sun is having its effect - Chris reckons his head now resembles a Belisha beacon!

But there are rewards too. Chris explained: "I am relishing this opportunity at Gulliver's and I'm working with a great team."

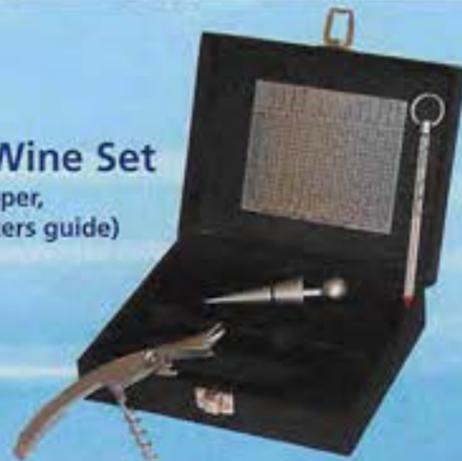
"And I've earned cult status from my young nephew, who's classed me as 'number one uncle' and always wants to visit me at work."

Pictures: LA(Phot) Wheeler, A'Barrow, RNAS Yeovilton



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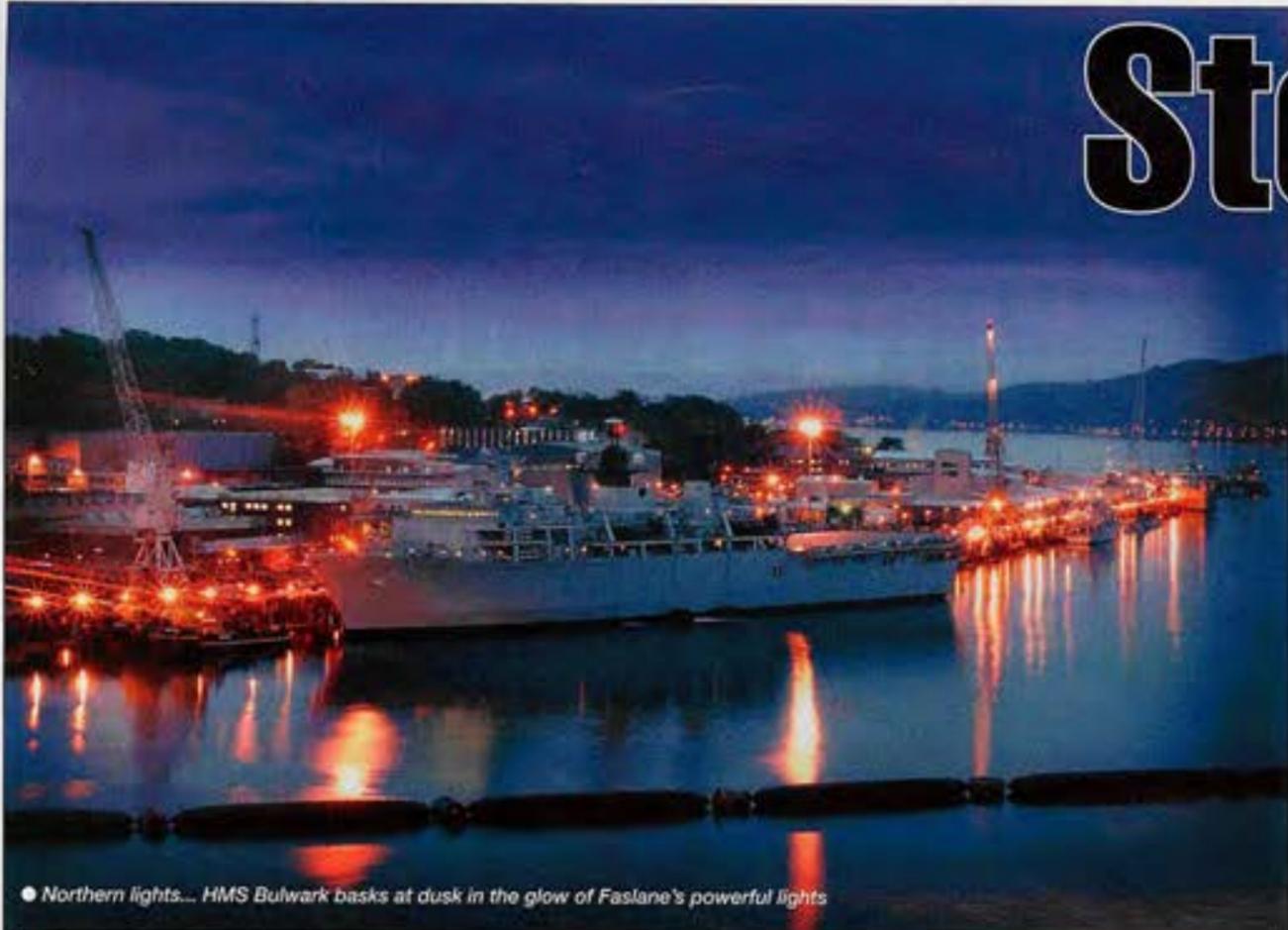


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Storm's a comin'



● Northern lights... HMS Bulwark basks at dusk in the glow of Faslane's powerful lights

THERE are a few things in life which are certain.

Death and taxes, according to Benjamin Franklin.

Chelsea steamrollering Accrington Stanley in the FA Cup.

And you're pretty much assured stormy weather for war games off western Scotland in the winter.

Indeed, the skies were particularly ominous as the forces of ten nations, led by the UK's Amphibious Task Group, mustered for the final Joint Maritime Course after six decades.

Through the years, the JMC has earned a reputation both nationally and internationally for the realistic training it provides to British and Allied forces.

So it was fitting that the curtain came down on the course in spectacular fashion – and with the emphasis very much on the UK's amphibious task group, probably the place to be in the Senior Service at the moment.

The RN's newest assault ship, HMS Bulwark, led the way, fresh from exercises off the Devon coast, to complete trials of her state-of-the-art Bowman communications system.

Joining her, among other assets, were mine countermeasures vessels HMS Blyth and Ramsey, landing ship RFA Sir Bedivere, troops from 45 Commando and 3 Commando Brigade, and helicopter carrier HMS Ocean – which also arrived in Scotland fresh from exercises off Devon.

Traditionally Mustardia and Brownia among other fictitious nations have been at the heart of disputes requiring the intervention of JMC-led forces.

To reflect the 21st-Century threat, this time the troublemaker was Mustapha Leek (*groan – Ed*), leading light in the fictional An-Quaich terrorist movement.

Unfortunately for Mr Leek, the Royal Marines were around to spoil his day – launching beach raids to neutralise his terror camps, but not before mine warfare forces had swept safe channels with the assistance of Norwegian commandos, experts in explosive ordnance disposal.

Other highlights of this final

Pictures: PO(Phot) Tam MacDonald, LA(Phot) 'Gaz' Faulker and Brian Douglas, FRPU(North) Words: Lt Cdr Rolf Kurth

JMC included the hunt for submarines on the prowl for the amphibious task force in both deep water and closer to shore.

Royals led amphibious raids on the islands of Scalpay and Raasay, land and air forces pummeled the ranges at Cape Wrath – over the heads of an amphibious landing force to add to the excitement – and boarding parties were called on to search 'suspicious' vessels sneaking around Scottish inlets and lochs.

Given its lengthy history, JMC has, not surprisingly, evolved considerably since its inception.

To reflect the changing nature of RN operations, which have become increasingly linked with the RAF and Army, in future the course will be known as Neptune Warrior – Neptune, naturally, reflecting the maritime aspect.

The forces have progressively realised, too, that winning the battle on land and sea is only part of the challenge in the 21st Century.

Indeed, 'winning the peace' is every bit as crucial to an operation's success... and much of winning that peace revolves around winning over the media.

The 2003 campaign in Iraq saw more than 100 journalists and cameramen 'embedded' with British Forces, including the RN and Royal Marines, reporting daily, live, as Operation Telic progressed.

It's fair to say there's always been a slightly cautious relationship between the military and the media, so preparing sailors and marines to cope with reporters and, if necessary, live alongside them is part of the JMC package, courtesy of 'simulated press' – trained journalists who play at



● All aboard the 10.15 to kick Mustapha Leek's backside... Commandos embark in a LCVP Mk5 landing craft from HMS Ocean



● Mine will be done... (Above) Sandown-class mine countermeasures vessels HMS Blyth (foreground) and Ramsey provide safe passage for landing ship RFA Sir Bedivere

● Dawn patrol... (Right) Green berets of 45 Commando are silhouetted against the Scottish sky as they move along a ridge shortly before sunrise



Duke finds his ship in a stew

THERE were no Leeks, but plenty of leaks as the Duke and Duchess of Somerset visited their namesake warship.

The couple, plus their son Charles, found the Type 23 frigate caught up in a 'Thursday War', man-made chaos - including fire and flooded compartments - generated by the gremlins of the Flag Officer Sea Training in waters off Plymouth.

Having negotiated an even trickier exit than usual from Plymouth (the enemy had sown a minefield, then decided to throw Hawk jets at Somerset as she wove through it), the frigate was charged with protecting a convoy against attack by air and sea.

Flying throughout the Duke's visit was his standard, hoisted every time he is aboard, and also whenever the ship replenishes at sea.

The Somersets observed the ship's company under great pressure, both in the operations room and around the ship, dealing with problems caused by the wreckers of FOST.

And last, but not least, the Duke and Duchess sampled some fine cuisine. Well, nourishment: a stew, eaten standing up at 'action messing' - used in a war zone to allow all 185 sailors to get a filling meal, while the ship remains fully ready to fight.

"It's always a pleasure to welcome the Duke, whose name and family motto - Faith for Duty - we honour and uphold," said Somerset's CO Cdr David Burns.

"We're proud to be named after a great family which has had links with the RN since Tudor times."

■ Somerset runs into a revolution, page 14
Wreckers' bail, page 43



● Dark Skies (Part One)... Helicopter carrier HMS Ocean with an RAF Chinook and Fleet Air Arm Sea King on her flight deck steams under an ominous sky and (right) Dark Skies (Part Two)... Royal Marine Rigid Raiders on patrol with RFA Fort Austin in the background

being journalists, sometimes making a nuisance of themselves.

"Building a relationship with the media is vital for the military, and forces across the world are beginning to appreciate this - that's reflected in the reception we get and their willingness to learn from us," explained former ITV man Murray Buesst and a 'simulated press' regular.

"In the past two years I've seen scepticism give way to people in the Royal Navy being eager to have the press on board - and that's extremely positive for the

Armed Forces and the public's perception of them."

The military's perception of Joint Maritime Courses is also extremely positive; units national and international are knocking on the door of Cdr Don Chalmers on the maritime planning staff for the exercises.

"Neptune Warrior is one of the UK's 'premier division' training opportunities - that's quickly being recognised by the other Services who are keen to attend," he added.

And so they are. Already lined up for Neptune Warriors this year are the Honourable Artillery Company; electronic warfare specialists from the Royal Signals; French marines; German customs officers; and a good number of fighter squadrons.

All are assured a testing time in and off western Scotland. We can't make any promises about the weather though...

● Stone cold... Troops take up position along a dry-stone wall



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Delta for

MARINES. *Les berets verts. Fanti di marina. Infantes de marina.*

Green berets in 40 Commando had to get used to all when took their counterparts from Spain, Italy and France under their wing.

There was a fair smattering of Dutch and Norwegian to learn as well as maritime forces from more than half a dozen Allied nations converged on the Diombos delta and River Saloum in the west African state of Senegal for Exercise Green Osprey.

The crux of Green Osprey was co-operation between amphibious forces from a clutch of nations – speaking different languages but with a common goal – in combat and peacetime.

Royals also tagged on numerous exercises of their own, making use of Senegal's topography.

The first key operation was to practise evacuating civilians threatened by an uprising or unrest.

Such a scenario has become all-too-real in some African states in recent years.

British forces successfully stepped in when civil war swept through Sierra Leone six years ago.

More recently, French marines helped 1,300 people to safety in the Ivory Coast (see page 29).

Lt Col Dave King, Commanding Officer of 40 Commando based in Taunton, found he had companies of US, Italian and Spanish marines in his charge. Just for good measure, some French-speaking Senegalese troops joined the elite British unit... and in overall charge was a Dutch task group commander.

As 40 Cdo grappled with a mock civilian evacuation, the scouts of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force were prowling around the arid Senegalese landscape, trying out new methods of patrolling both on foot and in vehicles.

Either method of transportation was gruelling as temperatures in the Kaffrine Triangle nudged 40°C – more than 100°F.

Having acclimatised and got used to the Senegalese terrain, the BRF moved on to more demanding manoeuvres, including night-time navigation, reconnaissance almost on top of a target, and drills in case of contact with the enemy.

"The training was extremely worthwhile – and demanding," explained BRF Officer



● Heat and dust... The magical sight of sunrise at the tactical headquarters

Commanding Maj Chris Ordway. "It tested not only our personal skills, but also those of our vehicles and communications in this challenging environment."

Also on the prowl were the boats of 539 Assault Squadron RM.

They found the winding – and labyrinthine – waters of the Diombos River delta ideal for some challenging navigation.

Assault boats, landing craft and inflatable raiders moved down the waterways, pushing aside mangroves, to practise reconnaissance missions and assaults.

It was not easy, as Cpl Davey Elliott, a boat group section commander, explained:

"The close mangroves open up into wide estuaries – so navigation and identifying suitable river channels and route-finding are paramount.

"Some of the tributaries are not on the maps, so we've charted new routes. It's been a really positive experience."

Another positive experience was passing on Royal's skills to local troops.

One hundred and 20 soldiers from Senegal's parachute regiment benefitted from four weeks' instruction – a mixed bag of arms and operations training.

Commandos shared their expertise of counter-insurgency work, notably in Northern Ireland and Iraq, to demonstrate the arts of patrolling, controlling incidents, raids in built-up areas and finally how to cordon off districts and carry out arrests.

They also shared their knowledge of marksmanship and mine awareness – the latter proved particularly useful as some Senegalese troops had encountered the explosive devices in the south of the country.

When it came to shooting the commandos found the locals M16 rifles were generally in a poor state.

With the help of a drop of oil, knowledge of operating in arid conditions – which Royals have had plenty of this decade – and some 'pearls of wisdom', the green berets helped to improve levels of maintenance, before moving on to the art of sharpshooting.

"This has been one way for us to give something back to the Senegalese – a thank-you for allowing us to train in their country," explained Capt Simon Dean, in charge of 40 Cdo's Short-Term Training Team.

"We hope to come back next year, see how they've progressed and possibly develop their training to the next level."

Of course, deploying 600 troops to a country which commandos don't normally exercise in poses challenges.

Fortunately, troops from the Commando Logistics Regiment left Chivenor in north Devon and set up a task group in Senegal to support the front-line green berets.

It was much more than merely ensuring the Royals had the right kit, rations, food and fuel, as Capt Logie – second in command of the task group – explained.

The team had to deal with local

● The unmistakable silhouette of a Sea King passing over the scrub of the Diombos delta

WHEN Allied naval forces headed to the deltas of Senegal in west Africa for Exercise Green Osprey, Royal Marines provided Britain's amphibious 'punch' as Sgt Scott Mills reports. Pictures by PO(Phot) Sean Clee and LA(Phot) Andy Hibberd, 40 Cdo

● It's behind you... (Left) A Senegalese trooper takes aim as a jungle Sea King hovers in a clearing. Royals from 40 Commando spent a fortnight training local soldiers

● Delta good run... (Below) Commandos of 539 Assault Squadron explore the labyrinthine tributaries of Senegal's Diombos delta



● Brave member during the

force



arters of 40 Cdo

health issues, set up a complex communications network and, at times, make use of local resources to ensure Green Osprey kept moving at the right pace.

And this being the 21st Century, Royal expects good comms home. He got them.

The logistics team set up e-mail, e-blucys and even a text message service to keep the troops in Senegal in touch with loved ones for the month-long exercise.

The 'operational' side of Green Osprey closed with an impressive, all-out assault by 40 Commando from ship to shore - but only after recon forces had successfully probed 'enemy' positions.

The finale to the exercise could not have been more different.

Troops from all seven nations partaking in Green Osprey converged on the town of Fatick in central Senegal for a parade.

Not a military parade, mind you, although soldiers and marines did march.

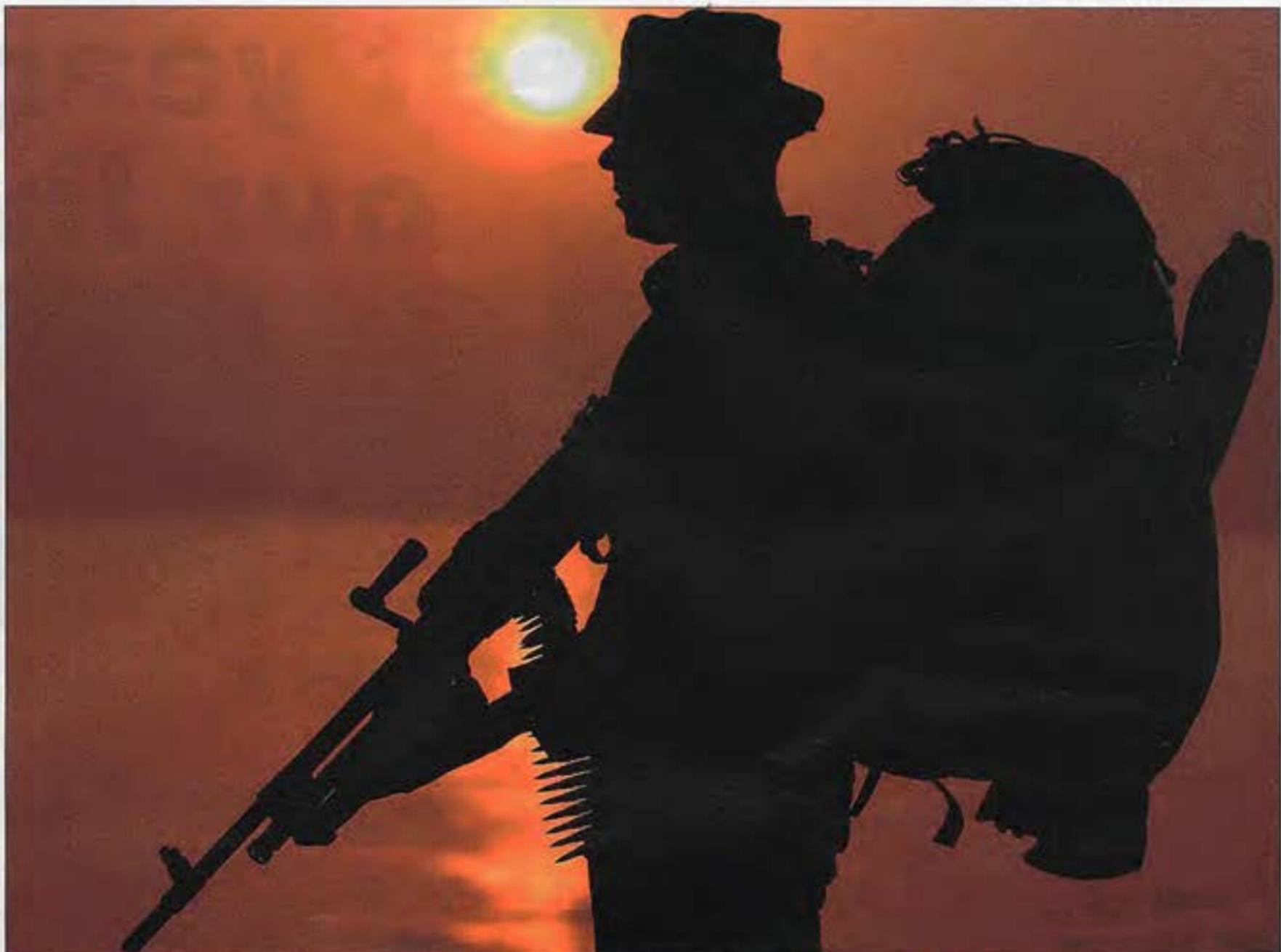
So too did local schoolchildren who formed up and headed this uniquely colourful march-past, watched by thousands of Senegalese, while the country's premier, Micky Sall, awarded troops from the participating nations the *Order National de Lion*.

Col Ian Huntley said the parade provided a magical end to an exercise which had been challenging, demanding, fascinating, and, above all, hugely successful.

"The parade was a spectacularly wonderful mix of military review and civil procession," he added.

"It's been a great honour for us to receive medals on behalf of our men and we're looking forward to working with our Senegalese friends in the future."

two heroes... A pause for two of Bravo Company, 40 Cdo, the final Green Osprey assault



● Dawn on the Diombos... A Royal Marine stands guard as the sun rises over the Senegalese river network

Class act from engineers

THE legacy commandos leave in Senegal goes beyond better-trained local troops and a spirit of international military co-operation.

In the town of Toubakouta in the south-west of the country there is a permanent reminder of the Royal Marines' visit.

It has nothing to do with guns, helicopters or fast patrol craft.

It has everything to do with a brighter future for local youngsters.

For years the children of Toubakouta have squeezed into three classrooms each school day.

Now there is a fourth for the 120 schoolchildren, courtesy of 59 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers - 3 Commando Brigade's specialist engineer unit.

This was much more than simply putting up a new block. The engineers worked on the design, had to acquire building materials locally, then oversee the construction, working alongside French-speaking Senegalese engineers.

"After breaking down the language barrier, we quickly realised what happy and hard-working counterparts we had," explained Lt Simon Graham, in charge of the building project.

"We were impressed with their knowledge and skill - we were exchanging ideas and working practices throughout, so the learning process was definitely two-way."

In just three weeks, the classroom was designed and built - a 'clerk of works' ensured the completed building conformed to British standards.

"We had a great time. It's an experience that won't be forgotten," Lt Graham added.

"We feel a real sense of pride in being able to make a difference. Hopefully we've left a lasting image."

Headmaster Eilmane Faye hopes so too. "Our future generations need assistance to provide the basic standards of education."

"This essential new building will be used every day, both now and in years to come."

3 Cdo Bde's Commanding Officer, Brig John Rose, performed the honours at the opening ceremony, although he perhaps wasn't expecting the locals' response.

To the beat of drums, colourfully-attired dancers celebrated the arrival of the new classroom in style.

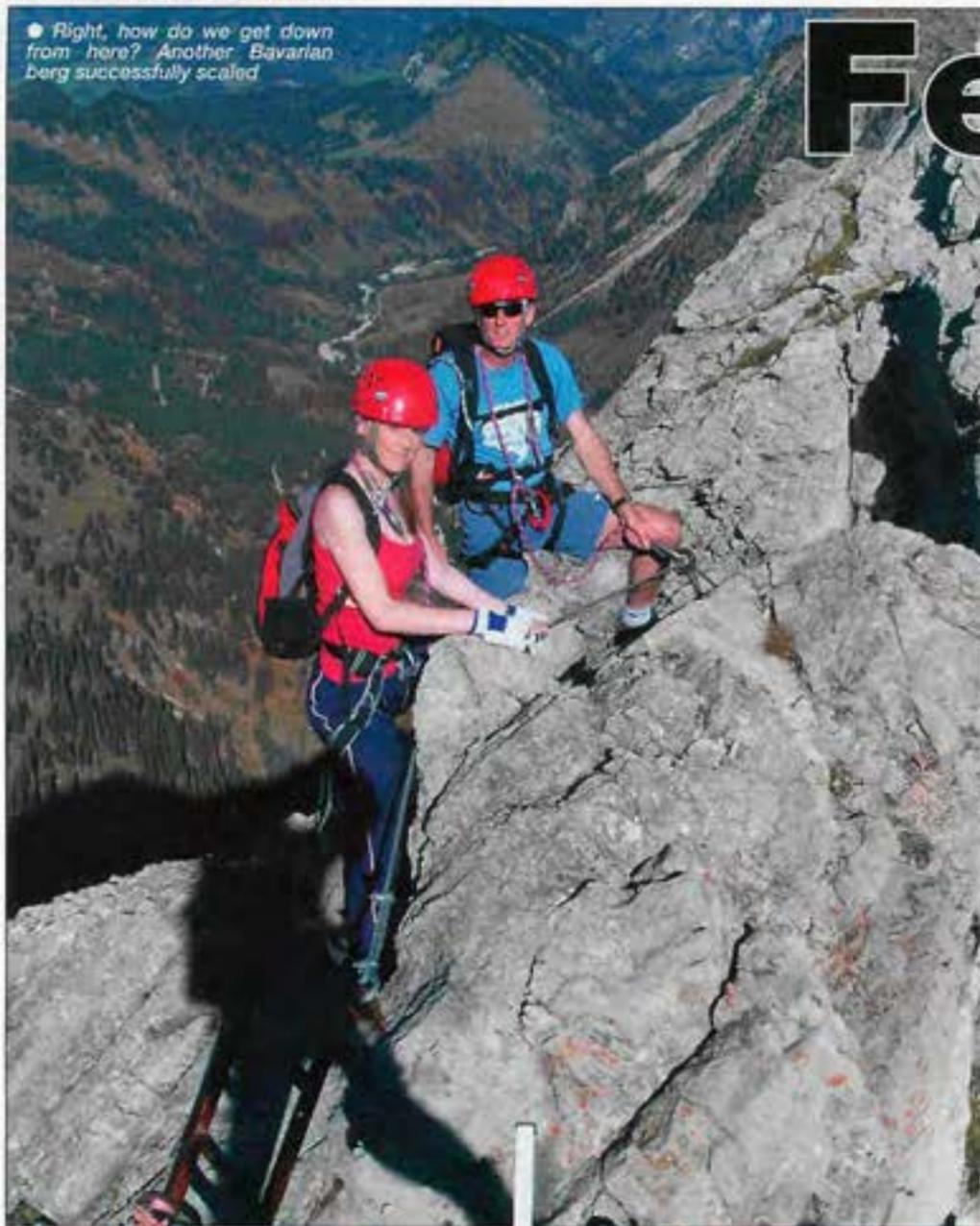


● Bird watching... 3 Commando Brigade Commanding Officer Brig John Rose follows the progress of Green Osprey through binoculars

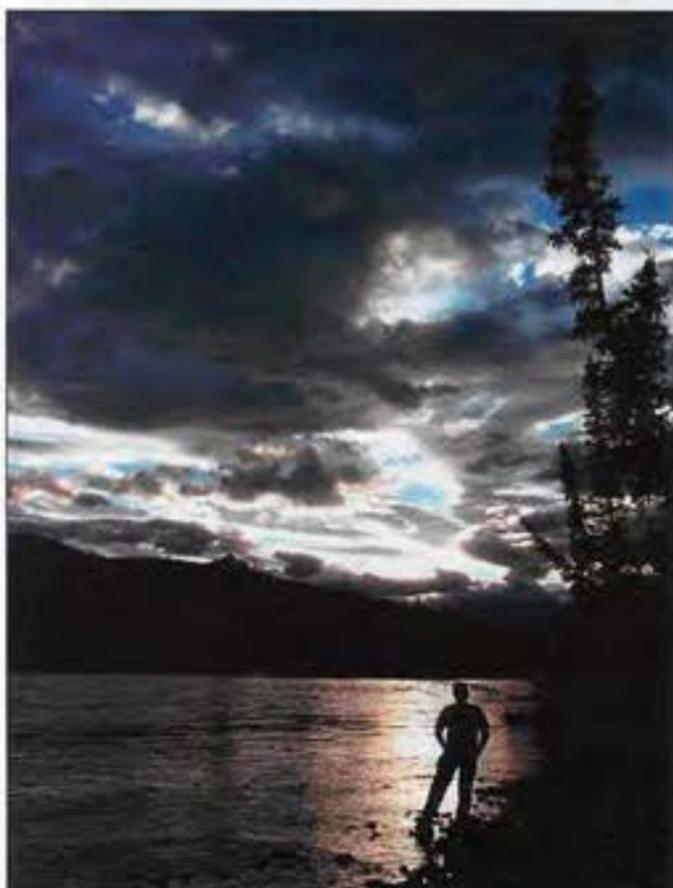


● All smiles... (Above) Celebrating the opening of the new classroom at Toubakouta and (left) a traditional Senegalese dance to thank the commando engineers for their efforts

● Right, how do we get down from here? Another Bavarian berg successfully scaled



● Peak practice... A breather – and some samies – at the top of one of the lesser Bavarian mountains



● Canada not so dry... A brooding sunset over the Nahanni river

Fest year of our lives

IN springtime it was a 'fest'. In the autumn, it proved to be a 'surprise'.

Nearly 170 sailors from across the Fleet headed to the peaks of Bavaria, where earlier this year one in 12 Royal Marines for some action-packed adventurous training.

Then it was Exercise Bavarian Fest; for the sailors, Bavarian Surprise offered an equally-challenging seven days' adventure training to add that bit extra to Service life, and help with some Senior Service bonding.

"The first surprise for many was the minibus drive out and the fact that five pages of the road atlas actually meant 12 hours in the bus from landing in France," said Capt Paul Gellender RM, organiser of the trip.

"For most groups the journey down provided a much-needed map reading refresher with one group spending two hours exploring Calais."

Those who read the maps correctly eventually found themselves at the Haus Schwaben – Swabian House – Hotel in the Allgäu region of southern Germany, which offered stunning vistas of the alps, enough food to feed even the hungriest Jack or Jill and (importantly) sufficient quantities of the local beer on tap.

The domain of Bavarian Surprise provided picturesque mountains rising to over 2,000m (6,600ft in old money), overlooking steep valley floors.

Activities on offer to the sailors included traditional climbing, klettersteig – a form of multi-pitch climbing and scrambling on wires and ladders, mountain biking, kayaking and, for the less-strenuously-minded, sightseeing.

For many this was their first opportunity to participate in adventurous training and all found the activities challenging but rewarding with many participants promising themselves to dust off their bikes and start cycling again.

Mountain biking proved popular with just about everyone. A typical day consisted of readying and getting used to a bike before completing a few laps of the local cycle park – jumps and all – and then a tour around the area. (As the riders discovered, mountain biking involves going uphill as well as down...)

The day was rounded off with a technical descent down the local



● Would you mind getting out of the way... Scaling new heights in Bavaria

mountain, slightly higher than Ben Nevis under the expert guidance of PO(PT)'s 'Dusty' Miller and Lenny Armstrong.

Klettersteig was a new concept to most – as was contact with 'Mad' Si Conroy, the Royal Marine instructor who practised hand stands on top of a 2,000m knife edge on the Nebelhorn, "just to put matelots at ease with their surroundings".

The day started with a 45-minute cable car ride to the top of the Nebelhorn (and finished for one sailor when the doors of the car opened and she passed out).

For those who didn't succumb to vertigo, there followed a truly picturesque climb over a series of knife-edge ridges 2,000m above the valley on either side. In fact, five countries were on view to anyone who took their eyes off the wire and ladders.

Climbing took place on local crags, with everyone exposed to single-pitch climbs and abseiling, while kayaking was concentrated on the local rivers with participants having a choice of boats from kayaks to inflatable 'duckies'.

Most initially opted for duckies – the safer option. After a morning mastering canoeing, everyone moved on to moving water – a very different experience.

Just like fishing, the rapids grew in size and ferocity with many a 'dit' being embellished in the bar later that night.

Sightseeing was available to all and each group was given a variety of options.

Luckily, the first two weeks of the exercise coincided with Munich's legendary beer festival – the Oktoberfest – a natural draw and subsequently many groups headed north in search of the Steiner!

A much more sobering draw was the former concentration camp of Dachau, near Munich, which now serves as an indictment of tyranny and monument to human suffering.

The last surprise for most was the exercise ending all too quickly and with a run ashore in Sonthofen, the nearest big town, they were back in the minibuses and driving back toward the Channel Tunnel and Portsmouth.

"Bavarian Surprise was the first opportunity most sailors had to participate in an adventure training since training," Capt Gellender said. "Initially many sailors assumed that it was going to be some form of military exercise."

"The feedback from all who have participated has been fantastic with the only criticism being the days have gone too quickly."

For those who weren't able to make the autumn Surprise, the exercise makes a welcome return between May 1 and July 30, this time with white water rafting and canyoning included. Contributions of £50 are required and the exercise is open to groups of up to 50 personnel per week (so the minibuses will be replaced with coaches from Calais to Bavaria).

More information from the AT Team on 93832 5577/78/79 or e-mail FLEET PERS-PATSO3.

Yukon and on and on...

SITUATED in the North West Territories of Canada, just east of the Yukon lies the first World Heritage Site.

Created by the Canadian Government in 1978, the Nahanni National Park was the venue for a Joint Service river expedition.

Led by Royal Marine Maj Mark Gittoes (Directorate of Command and Battlespace Management, Whitehall) the team comprised two soldiers and one airman. Their goal was to descend the south Nahanni River from Haywire Lake down to Lindberg Landing on the Liard River, some 300 miles away.

Due to the amount of food and equipment needed for the expedition – the paddlers had to chew their way through 4,500 calories every day of the 18-day trip – 16 and 17ft double canoes were used.

In laden solo boats the trip was certainly ambitious as the river contained three sets of rapids and a set of falls twice the height of Niagara and with water levels

prone to sudden and dramatic change.

Even in the quieter waters there were hazards to deal with, like when – as described in the expedition report – a "very large river barge sailing upstream in the restricted channel" narrowly missed ploughing over the top of the team leader.

To avoid the need to drag and carry the boats any distance, delivery to the put-in at Britnell Creek was by De Havilland Twin Otter floatplane.

Even so, at a later stage a gruelling portage of a mile was called for to reach the lower river.

And it wasn't just the perils on the water that the team had to contend with, brief encounters with grizzly and black bears also had to be braved. Wolves were also out there (one explorer pictured his foot next to a large print thought to have been left by a wolf).

In his report of the expedition, team leader Maj Gittoes records that having safely stored some food, they descended to Rabbitkettle Lake to book in with the National Park warden.

"On return from the warden's cabin a grizzly bear was encoun-



● Canoe dig it? The explorers (left-right) Maj Steve White RLC, WO2 John Oliver Royal Engineers, Fit Lt David Jones-Lofting and team leader Maj Mark Gittoes RM pose in front of a waterfall

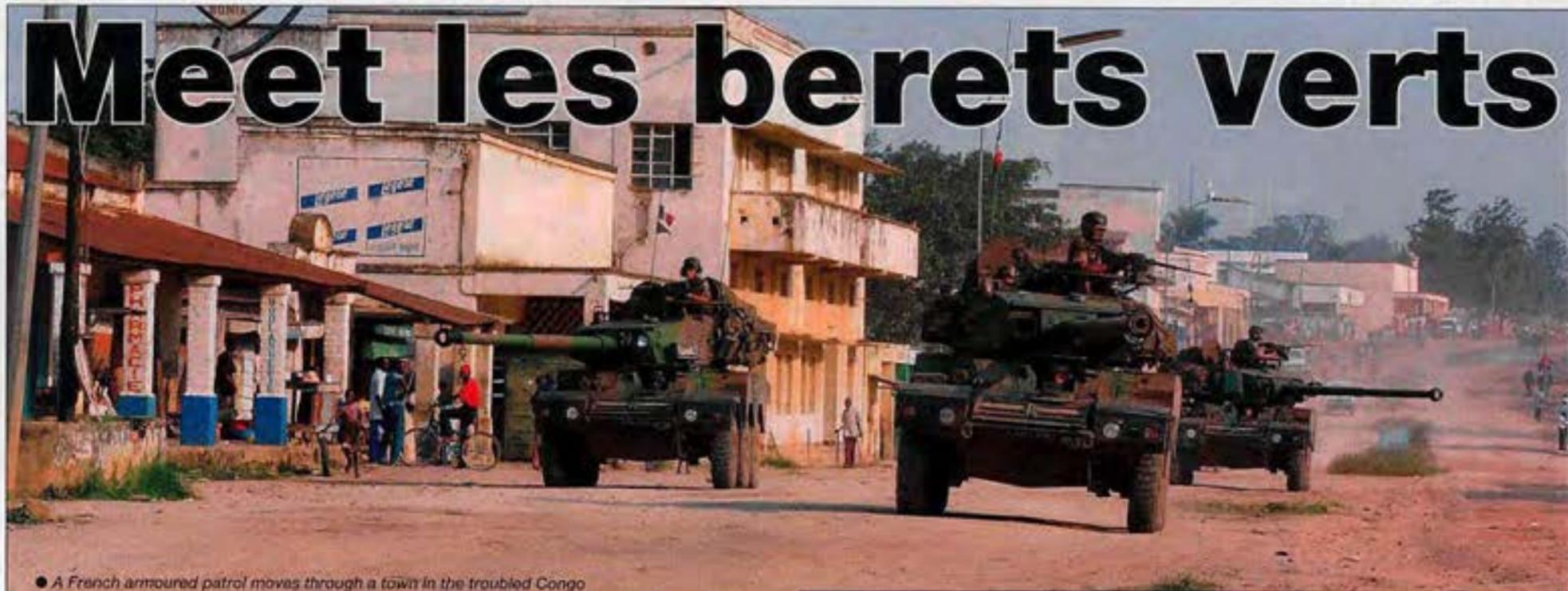
tered on the main track delaying the return to the camp," the Royal says.

"The team was forced to the warden's cabin for more coffee" – certainly a course of action that satisfied two of the expedition's

aims: to enhance leadership skills and to enhance wilderness skills.

Overall the aims of the expedition were fully met, and all members returned home safely, with some of them vowing to one day lead their own expedition.

Meet les berets verts



● A French armoured patrol moves through a town in the troubled Congo

SIX weeks after arriving in France with 9ème Brigade Légère Blindée de Marine – 9BLBMA, or 9th Light Armoured Marine Brigade – and a week after the start of the school term, my promise of domestic bliss hit the earth with a bump.

I took an early morning flight to Skopje in Macedonia with 150 of my Brigade HQ compatriots for a four-month tour of Kosovo in Mitrovica.

This tour was destined to be extremely uneventful but presented an opportunity to get to know the brigade personalities, their doctrine and their style, visit the regiments and to improve my French. I was employed in the brigade ops room at a desk, dealing with flanking and higher formations.

Memorable moments included my first experience of French soldiers singing during the brigade's departure parade in Nantes city centre; linking up with Lt Colonel Ken Allison and the then Capt Nick Foster in theatre to celebrate the Corps' birthday with Pusser's Rum and Kronenbourg 1664; assisting in two medical operations (kidney and gall bladder removal) in the military hospital; and meeting Angelina Jolie... not necessarily in that order!

The French gave shore leave in Mitrovica, and even at the end of the tour, I still found the sight of French soldiers eating and drinking with their weapons leaning against the bar a tad surreal. Christmas was quite an event, with *foie gras* and goose, buckets of champagne and sauternes and a live Johnny Halliday act.

The Kosovo tour was actually five months long. On my return, I discovered that the children were already speaking better French than I was!

Three months later we headed to west Africa and Senegal for a six-week brigade-level work-up *casu* bilateral exercise with the Senegalese army.

France maintains extremely close links and defence agreements (including standing forces) with her former colonies.

I was immediately struck that a Senegalese soldier looks and acts exactly like a French soldier, and by how easily the French and Senegalese forces integrated for the exercise.

Equally impressive was the way that the French marines took to Africa like ducks to water, rather as we would have looked in Norway a decade or so ago.

The exercise took place at Dodji – several hundred kilometres by 'road' from the capital Dakar.

In Africa, I never cease to be amazed by the way that dozens of people can materialise in minutes from an empty, stark landscape when the convoy halts.

Dodji itself is a small town literally in the middle of nowhere. Life is hard for the locals, indeed it is hard to see any life at all in the hard, arid surrounding terrain.

However on market day, thousands of herded animals converge on the town from the emptiness,

MAJOR Chris Cullis promised his family a "voyage of culinary exploration, barrel loads of fine wine and domestic bliss in a beautiful country" when he joined 3 Commando Brigade's French 'twin' for over two years. Instead he found himself in Kosovo, Senegal, peacekeeping in the Congo and the Ivory Coast, on deployment across the Pond... with the Royal Navy, and only at home in Nantes for brief spells. Still, he did get to meet Angelina Jolie...



● Press engagement... Général de Brigade Jean-Paul Thonier (left) and Maj Chris Cullis are buttonholed by the media in the Congo

many dropping dead by the roadside, the survivors sucking the wells dry on arrival.

Dozens of miles from the nearest habitation, tall, graceful and beautiful Peul women appear, their many-coloured silk robes running long in the wind in their wake.

We constructed a battle camp before settling in. I was already acquainted with the excellent French camp bed, the *lit pique*, a brilliant contraption guaranteed to give the owner a good night's bite-free sleep. Rations proved good but heavy and lacking tea and a decent breakfast.

Temperatures reached up to 50°C in the afternoons (an amazing 70°C was recorded in a parked armoured vehicle) and only in the wee hours did it get comfortably cool. Very pragmatically, the HQ took a break between 11.30 and 4.30 daily.

From Senegal it was back home briefly to Nantes – a French air traffic control strike had us sitting on our beryns in Bordeaux for 12 hours. *Vive la France!* – a peacekeeping mission in the Congo beckoned.

The brigade was warned to deploy to the town of Bunia in Ituri, the north-eastern province, to prevent a developing inter-ethnic massacre.

The mission was to stabilise the town of Bunia, which had just been taken from Lendu militias by Hema militia, protect life, control the single airstrip and allow the UN forces in the region to regroup and reinforce.

Bunia was full of Hema militia (some as young as six or seven) who controlled the town at that stage, all toting impressive amounts of hardware and swaggering around like the conquering heroes that they undoubtedly were.

I was armed with my regulation French 9mm pistol and 18 rounds; the colonel was unarmed.

We went to a restaurant in town with the UN media ops civilian and had a slightly surreal lunch of chicken and chips and a nice crisp salad on the side.

The bar was also full of Hema. Feeling a bit exposed, I made some mental notes on a sensible minimum amount of weaponry and equipment which the media team thereafter adhered to.

Our force numbered 1,850 at its peak, including 1,050 in Ituri itself. Bunia was secured in progressive stages, using fixed posts at all entry points and a key interior crossroads, backed by aggressive patrolling. A ban on arms within this *cordon sanitaire* was delivered to the Hema and then enforced.

Long-range patrols were conducted to try to predict the Lendu militia's next move and to deter them from burning the villages and eating the population there.

These patrols, which could include up to 30 vehicles (including light armour), came across some scenes of disturbing, stone-age savagery in villages that these militias had passed through.

After an early, ineffective Lendu attack on the town, and several early, brisk contacts with French patrols, the militias drew back and watched for several weeks before the Hema began to probe for chinks in the armour.

Suddenly it was time to go home. In a gap amongst the C130 Hercules lifts to Entebbe, I watched the ubiquitous Mirage F1 formation fly low and fast over the strip, leaving prostrate Africans and vortices of dust in their wake, before soaring high into the cobalt Ituri sky and away to N'Jemina for the last time.

Later that day I took a flight down to Entebbe and after several days of unwinding, including a memorable visit to the source of the Nile and a mass-viewing of England's defeat of France at

● A C130 transporter on final approach to the sole airstrip used by les berets verts during their Congo deployment



Twickers, I took an Airbus back to France and home.

The highlight of the bilateral exchanges was undoubtedly the deployment of the *recce* squadron for Exercise Aurora.

It struck me how similar, despite some national differences, Royal and the *Marsouin* are – professional, determined, robust and resourceful – and how easily the squadron integrated into the fold.

Next up was a deployment to Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, again in support of a United Nations peacekeeping mission.

There had been a failed popular rebellion in 2002 and subsequent stalemate. UN forces were manning a Zone of Confidence separating the government held zone in the south from the 'rebel' zone in the north.

We seemed set for an uneventful tour; the rebels planned to move towards disarmament following a return to the constitution of 2000 which had been changed by the president to debar the popular opposition leader.

Needless to say, neither happened and after a period of escalating tension the government forces broke the cease-fire and began a bombing campaign followed by a ground offensive against the north.

Government forces bombed the HQ of one of the French marine regiments based in Bouake, killing nine and injuring 38.

The French destroyed the aircraft as they landed and Abidjan erupted into centrally-organised violence against foreigners, especially the French.

The French military base was besieged and control of the crucial airport temporarily lost.

Three French regiments outside of Abidjan were pulled towards the town to restore order and allow evacuation of civilians; the path to Abidjan was not easy and the regi-



● Quick, get the Guinness Book of Records on the phone... Locals cram on to the back of a pick-up truck to move around Bunia in the Congo

ment to which I was attached had to fight its way through a series of government-held roadblocks during their 650km passage.

What ensued in the city is well known: the French quickly re-secured the vital airport in Abidjan and extracted 1,300 evacuees from around the city in the first 48 hours.

Young marines, NCOs and officers conducted themselves with discipline, courage and intelligence during six extremely violent and precarious days, utilising the minimum force at their disposal to achieve their mission.

I was based in Zuenoula, just south of the ZOC, with one of the three Bangladeshi battalions in the regiment's sector.

When French forces pulled into Abidjan, I was not confident that the camp would be secured against the 100-or so extremely militant government-controlled 'Young Patriots' in the town.

When at 5am the rebels attacked the camp, seemingly mistaking it for the town, the Bangladeshi soldiers defended it with gusto, clearly relishing the opportunity of using their weapons and my mind was put to rest. I have a vivid memory of their mortar line banging away, half of the crews still in their pyjamas with their webbing over the top!

By the time we left, relations were approaching 'normal' again. We had spent a superb Christmas Eve with the French regiment and welcomed in the New Year with the Bangladeshi officers, with whom we also commemorated 11 November.

The evident tragedy of the Ivory Coast remains that its big-hearted, friendly, generous people continue to suffer between the grindstones of political intransigence, and the country's once impressive infrastructure and economy sliding into ruin.

As I pack my boxes and prepare to hand over, I reflect on how fortunate I have been.

I have a new language and a bilingual family, have experienced the famous French lifestyle and have made some friends for life.

Thanks to the openness of 9BLBMA in particular and the French Army in general, I have an insight into the army of a major European and world power from *gare* to Corps HQ level and operational experience in a continent I had never before seen.

I have also been privileged to command her troops on operations and on a very long leash too!



● A US sailor salutes as the Stars and Stripes is raised in Plymouth to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday

Picture: LA(Phot) Emily Chambers, FRPU(West)

Flying the flag

THE Star Spangled Banner fluttered proudly in the heart of one of Britain's great Naval cities as an act of friendship between the Royal and US Navies.

British and US sailors, plus the Band of the Royal Marines and officials from the US Embassy in London watched as the Stars and Stripes was hoisted by an honour guard outside Plymouth's Guildhall in the heart of the city to celebrate the American Thanksgiving – perhaps the most celebrated date in the US calendar.

City leaders in Plymouth also presented their Coats of Arms to the US Navy to be conveyed to namesake cities across the Pond.

With Devonport a regular 'stop-off' for US warships since the Great War – and with other less friendly 'ties' between the two nations going back to the War of 1812, when US and British ships clashed off Plymouth, and the American Revolution – Naval Base liaison officer Cdr Charles Crichton said it was important that Plymouth and the RN joined in celebrations.

"Plymouth has great historic links with the United States – from the early days of colonisation, through wars and peace, to the development of trade and business in the present day," he added.

"The RN has been central to the development of Plymouth and in war – both as enemies and friends – there has been a strong association with the US Navy. The Royal Navy's presence during the Thanksgiving is a visible sign of this enduring association between our two navies."

Meanwhile, a few miles along the Devonshire coast, the flags are also fluttering proudly thanks to the erection of a new mast at the spiritual home of the officer corps.

Fr Mark Cassidy, one of Britannia Royal Naval College's chaplains, blessed the replacement mast after signal flags had been raised declaring: 'Repairs complete. No restrictions on visual signalling.' The original wooden mast at Dartmouth had lasted exactly 100 years before it was taken down last year.

● Mast and commander (well sub-lieutenant, actually)... The replacement mast at BRNC is dedicated on a glorious autumn morning



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YOU CANNOT SIMULATE KITCHENS, WARDROOMS AND LIFE AT SEA...

RWE prepared for

SMILE, you're on candid camera.

Except that here, there are no hidden gags. The camera's there to help.

In a mock-up wardroom at HMS Raleigh, trainees attend to the needs of hungry officers – and it's all captured on film to help teach the stewards of tomorrow.

It's all part of what Raleigh's bosses term RWE – Realistic Working Environment – giving trainee stewards, chefs, writers and stores accountants a taste of what they can expect when they go to sea.

In the steward training school, one room has (roughly) been fitted out to replicate a Type 23 frigate's wardroom – minus the slope.

Trainee stewards are expected to run this 'wardroom', providing diners for four weeks with breakfast, dinner and lunch.

Of course, it's much more than simply handing an officer his or her meal on a plate.

There's paperwork to sort out, accounting, cleaning, producing menus, learning about wine – there's not just red and white, there's rose as well – and changing the odd bottle of whiskey.

"Stewarding is probably the most under-rated job in the Navy," said PO 'Ropey' Knott. "The hours are long, and also unsociable, for a start."

"And stewarding is very much a secondary job. Damage control, flight deck officers, fire fighting – these are much more our core jobs today."

He continued: "Stewards are also a 'good ear' – a buffer between the wardroom and ratings."

Writers are also under the eye of CCTV in a mock-up UPO – the Unit Personnel Office – where sailors wander in with queries about pay, accommodation, travel warrants, all the issues that a real office deals with on a daily basis.

Rookie chefs don't have to think about a camera yet (there are plans for CCTV here too, however); they do have to think



● The CO likes his G&T all the way to the top... PO Rob Thompson explains the art of dispensing spirits to a trainee steward

Picture: Alan Tomkinson, HMS Raleigh

about disgruntled – or for that matter delighted – customers who will be tucking into their food during the day.

Trainee chefs spend six of their 21 weeks learning their culinary skills in a 'working galley', providing three meals a day to Raleigh personnel Monday-Friday.

"Realistic working environments are about having confidence," explained instructor PO 'Jan' Davy.

"You could have a 17-year-old in charge of a galley team. And he or she has to know what they're doing and pass on instructions."

"It can be enjoyable and from

our point of view very fulfilling when chefs prove that they can do it."

Jack Dusties get – yes, you've guessed it – a mock-up stores room, where they must find or store parts (an average frigate carries something like 14,000 line items).

Until 18 months or so ago, a less-than-realistic cupboard and a couple of shelves served as a mock-up stores room; now it looks rather more like what you'd find on a frigate or destroyer.

"It's not like stocking things in a warehouse or Tesco supermarket," explained WO1 Martin Hall.

"We explain the art of stores management – you need to be able to find that part immediately, not spend hours rummaging around for it. But there are other things to bear in mind – safety issues and also noise hygiene. You can't have things rattling around if you're in a frigate hunting a submarine."



● A bit of inspiration for Jack Dusties... A cartoon on the wall of the mock-up store room for trainee stores accountants



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THERE'S not a hint of battle-ship grey. There's no rolling in a Force Eight.

But other than that the experiences are the same: the lack of personal space, snoring, smells, long treks to the loo and showers. Oh, and hopefully some camaraderie too.

In small yachts tied up at Jupiter Point, the home of seamanship training, civvies being turned into sailors spend for what is most their first night at sea in pseudo Royal Navy conditions.

Four and six-berth yachts with little personal space and in most cases no shower or toilet facilities are home to Phase One Basic Entry trainees part-way through their training at HMS Raleigh.

Under the supervision of WO1 Sandy Jardine – he says proudly: "CINC Fleet reckons I have the best office in the Navy" overlooking the (today) glassy waters – the sailors get a flavour of mess deck life, albeit briefly, because that life is at the heart of any warship.

"If you get a good mess deck then you get a buzz being at sea. You can see it straight away in activities on board like flight deck games: you can see there's a bond there," said WO1 Jardine.

"This gives them an insight into what they're going to get for real. These guys are pretty raw – we had a couple of helicopters come over and they were making wild guesses like Spitfires and Messerschmitts." (I think the Battle of Britain ended in 1940 – Ed)

"When you talk to the trainees,



● 'CINC Fleet reckons I have the best office in the Navy'... WO1 Sandy Jardine at Jupiter Point

you find you get people from all over the country. You put them in a boat and give them a bit of adventure."

Part of that adventure includes a day on the water, dashing around in RIBs. That's the fun bit (the safety message of life jackets and the like is, of course, stressed, even at this early stage in their RN careers).

Of course yachts are yachts and warships are warships. Ideally, the

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going to sea?



● Bread and butter... (Top) trainee chefs practise the art of baking and (above) former RAF chef turned RN instructor Logan Pemberton discusses his students' performance with logistics school CO Lt Cdr Kevin Bunt

a key to life at sea'



● Compact and bijou... Female trainees prepare for the 'at sea' experience

Jupiter Point team would like an unwanted RN vessel to give rookie sailors a taste of life in the RN.

But yachts are a start, nonetheless – and an eye-opener for many of the Raleigh trainees. The not-quite-so-much-fun bit is that night living and sleeping next to strangers in cramped confines.

And there's a long trek up the boardwalk to the (in)conveniences if you get caught short in the

middle of the night.

What do trainees hope to gain from their night aboard a yacht?

"How to deal with snoring," NNS Laura Fallon responds quick as a flash, adding:

"I didn't expect it to be so cramped." (Best not draft her to a Type 42 destroyer, then – Ed)

"I also want to learn to be more tolerant."

Tolerance is a key to life at sea.

Living on top of upwards of 40 people, with their idiosyncracies and annoyances, day-in day-out, is the crux of life in the RN, as much now as it ever was.

"We have a lot to learn," said OM(C) Joe Lewis, wiping his hand from his nose as he says: *Phew.*

"It's actually quite cosy – and a lot more relaxed than we expected it to be."



● The Earl of Wessex chats to sailors on Raleigh's parade ground, watched by Commanding Officer Cdre David Pond

The RFA and Raleigh – by royal appointment

BESIDES giving trainee sailors a taste of the 'real thing', Raleigh has also hosted the Earl of Wessex.

The earl took the salute as 1,000 sailors – both Raleigh's ship's company and men and women passing through basic, logistics and submarine training – formed up on the Torpoint establishment's huge parade ground.

HRH inspected a royal guard of honour, chatted to some of the 60 sailors who were passing out having completed their eight-week-long phase one training, and new entrants to the Royal Naval Reserve.

During his visit to Raleigh, the Earl also met a class of trainees being put through the rigours of the base's assault course.

The Earl didn't get stuck in on the assault course... unlike WO Eddie Seaborne, who swiftly donned overalls to help new recruits during a teamwork exercise.

The RN's ranking warrant officer visited Raleigh with new Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns, making his first inspection of the establish-

ment since assuming the role of the Navy's top personnel officer.

Meanwhile, Prince Edward has not confined his recent nautical interest to the RN.

He headed to Crombie to join 'one-stop ship' RFA Fort George, where Cdre Bob Thornton, Commodore RFA, promptly declared the Earl to be patron of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Association.

The association boasts 11,000 members, consisting of RFA personnel past and present – the Auxiliary itself is currently 2,300 officers and ratings strong.

The charity has spent the decade since its inception in 1995 keeping old shipmates in touch, offering help, advice, and support to former RFA sailors and their families when needed.

"Receiving royal support for our charity marks another significant event in what has been an important year for the RFA organisation as a whole as we celebrate our centenary," said Capt Rex Cooper, chairman of the RFA Association.

■ Eddie bows out, page 12
RFA centenary tour de force, page 33

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Tales from the Arabian knights

AS 2005 closes and 2006 opens, the men and women of 820 Naval Air Squadron can reflect on a busy and rewarding 15 months which have seen them employ the Merlin in all of its principal roles and in many different environments.

When the squadron was re-established as a Merlin unit in December 2003 it was formed around a 'manoeuvre organisation' which enables it to react quickly and prepare aircraft, people and support equipment to move at short notice.

The manoeuvre organisation was tested in October and November of 2004, when the Squadron detached first to Predannack to practise working in austere conditions and in unfamiliar 'greens', and then to Beja in Portugal, for Exercise Sandfish.

Although hampered by weather, Sandfish proved very successfully that the squadron's support infrastructure could be quickly relocated to unfamiliar sites. It also forged very useful links with 552, a Portuguese Alouette squadron.

On its return from Beja, preparations began for 820's first major embarkation with Merlin, as part of the Marstrike task group.

A herculean effort by the maintainers ensured that all four aircraft were able to fly on to RFA Fort George in Mounts Bay in January.

The passage to the Gulf of Oman was full of variety, from the stomach-testing Bay of Biscay transit to the snow and hailstones that were encountered in the Mediterranean.

The squadron took the opportunity to demonstrate the Merlin's exceptional anti-submarine and anti-

HAVING converted from Sea King to Merlin, the fliers of 820 Naval Air Squadron put to rest a few of the urban myths surrounding an aircraft of 'unparalleled versatility'. Lt Simon Stevenson reports.

surface capabilities, as well as providing force protection and building up a picture of other vessels on the sea close to the task force as it passed the narrows of the Straits of Gibraltar and the Red Sea.

When the task group reached Salalah in Oman for the start of Magic Carpet, 820 disembarked to the Royal Omani Air Force base at Seeb.

Once again, the manoeuvre organisation ensured a seamless transfer, with equipment and personnel travelling over 1,000km across desert in advance of the aircraft.

The five weeks at Seeb gave the squadron

the opportunity to experience operating in severe temperatures and in a very unfamiliar environment, and provided an excellent chance to exercise alongside Omani forces.

There were welcome opportunities to travel off base to visit the beaches of Muscat, and a large number of personnel took the chance to gain diving qualifications in the warm waters.

Upon rejoining Fort George,

820 NAS supported operations off the Horn of Africa before returning to the Mediterranean.

A very welcome stop at Barcelona provided many members of the Squadron with their first chance to enjoy a high-quality run ashore, before the final phase of the deployment began.

Exercise Noble Javelin saw the squadron supporting NATO forces in a simulated non-combatant evacuation opera-

tion, and demonstrated the Merlin's excellent lift capability by carrying troops, 'refugees' and equipment between sites on the Canary Islands.

By the end of Marstrike, the Merlin had not only shown that it was a maritime aviation asset of unparalleled versatility, it had also shown that, perhaps contrary to its reputation, it was an extremely reliable aircraft.

In the three months of the deployment, not a single sortie was lost due to unserviceability, and the consumption of spares was minimal.

The summer was spent raising public awareness of the Fleet Air Arm, with a series of visits in which members of the squadron returned to their secondary schools to talk about careers in the Navy and give potential recruits the chance to fly in the aircraft.

The Trafalgar 200 celebrations presented an opportunity to detach to RAF Benson to operate alongside Royal Air Force Merlin MK3s as three 820 aircraft took part in the flypast over the fleet at anchor in the Solent.

The final challenge of the year was participation in the final Joint Maritime Course in Scotland (see pages 24-25).

With many changes of

● How many fingers am I holding up? An 820 Merlin lifts off from RFA Fort George



● By day, by night... Sunrise, or is it sunset? Operations were conducted at all hours of the day from RFA Fort George



● Yes, I know what you're thinking and you'd be right... This is quite possibly the best job in the world... A bit of sightseeing over the mountains of Oman

personnel since Marstrike, returning to Fort George allowed the squadron to rebuild its level of experience aboard a warship.

The aircraft once again demonstrated its range of abilities and its pre-eminence as a seagoing asset, and was particularly impressive in denying the submarines taking part in the exercise their traditional shelter in shallow waters due to its excellent anti-submarine capability close to shore.

Throughout the year the squadron has continued to raise money towards CLIC, its nominated charity, with the aim of purchasing a bed for high dependency patients in the children's ward at Treliske Hospital.

In one gruelling event PO(ACMN) Bridgette Turner raised £800 by running up one of the steepest hills on the Cornish coast 28 times.

The programme for 2006 will see 820 return to the Horn of Africa for operations in a deployment which will build on all of the experience gained during the past 12 months.

With many new faces, the unit has now largely moved on to its second generation of Merlin personnel, all of whom share the same ethos.

This year's programme will be both challenging and rewarding, and if anyone can do it... 820 can.



Mountbatten Festival looms

THE biggest date in the Royal Marines Band calendar is little more than a month away.

Tickets are now available for the 2006 Mountbatten Festival of Music at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

The three-day music extravaganza has been running since 1973, with the emphasis on both entertainment and fund-raising; numerous charities, veterans' groups and good causes have benefited from the concerts, including the RM Museum and the Royal Academy of Music, to the tune of £2.5m.

The 2006 festival runs from Thursday February 16-Saturday 18, with tickets priced between £8 and £34 depending on position and view.

Last year's event was enjoyed by more than 15,000 people over the three nights.

Tickets can be obtained from the Royal Albert Hall on 0207 859 8212 or on the web at www.royalalberthall.com



Calliope's bang on track

NO jokes about the RN going loco, please.

Because it's bang on track with a new railway engine named after the 'victor of Trafalgar'.

At least that's how Northumbrians like to think of Admiral Sir Cuthbert Collingwood, who has the Collingwood freight locomotive trotting up and down the lines in his honour now.

The engine, operated by English Welsh and Scottish Railways, pulled into Newcastle's impressive central station and halted at Platform 12 for a naming ceremony, attended by dignitaries and local sailors.

Performing the honours of naming the engine was Mrs Collingwood-Cameron, the closest living relative to Admiral Collingwood, ably assisted by

14 officers and ratings from Newcastle's high-profile RNR unit, HMS Calliope, which was celebrating its 100th birthday in 2005.

For train buffs, the Collingwood is a Class 60 EWS freight engine, so you won't see her hauling passengers around the nation's rail network, sadly.

Lt Cdr Andy Collier, Calliope's Executive Officer, said it was important the admiral's name was kept alive.

"Collingwood is hugely significant to the people of the North East and we see ourselves as the self-appointed naval custodians of his memory," he added.

The choice of Collingwood for the engine's name may have been helped by Mark Coyle, EWS' deputy general operations manager... who just happens to be a member of Calliope's ship's company.

● The train arriving at platform 12 is named after a naval legend... Calliope sailors hold the name board of the new locomotive Collingwood in Newcastle's grand central station

Flying the flag for the RFA's centenary

TWO OF the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's major ships celebrated the Service's Centenary with tours of ports around the United Kingdom, publicising the vital role that the RFA plays in supporting British armed forces around the world.



THE CELEBRATIONS truly commenced with the International Fleet Review at the end of June, with nine RFA ships present at Spithead.

On completion of the Review the plan was for RFA Wave Ruler, the newest ship in the RFA Flotilla, to spend July on her UK tour, followed by RFA Argus spending August on tour.

At each port the ships would be open to visitors, and host a myriad of local dignitaries and organisations. The ports to be visited were chosen as those with traditional or historic links with the RFA.

RFA Wave Ruler's involvement with the Fleet Review really started in the week preceding the event. During "RAS Week" the tanker was up and down the north side of the English Channel like a yo-yo, tending to the needs of warships heading towards Spithead.

Customers for their fuel included not only Royal Navy ships, HMS Ocean, Exeter, Southampton, Manchester, Monmouth and Westminster amongst them, but American amphibious assault ship USS Saipan, and three Japanese Defence Force ships, destroyers Kasima, and Yugiri, and training ship Kashima.

Once the review was over, Wave Ruler hastened to Portland for last minute preps for her UK tour.

But the best laid plans are always subject to outside events. Greenwich was to be the first port of Wave Ruler's itinerary, commencing July 7.

That morning, as the ship approached Southend, prior to her passage up the Thames, the first telephone call came through warning of an explosion in the capital. Fleet HQ promptly called a halt to the visit and as news reports on TV and radio came through of several other terrorist bombs, the order to return to Portland was received.

The entire Centenary Tour then seemed in doubt, but finally it was agreed to carry on with the rest of the programme, commencing with Newcastle.

This was a great opener and one of the highlights of the tour. Certainly it was where the biggest visible welcome was with people watching and waving from the flats and houses, the breakwaters and jetties and from their cars.

A large number of RFA personnel come from the North East, many of the RFA ships were built on the Tyne, so perhaps it was no surprise to see a large RFA ensign displayed in welcome from one of the flats.

Also not surprising was that ship open to visitors proved very popular.

Wave Ruler's affiliated town of Scarborough was the next port of call, and a party from the

town, including the Mayor, Derek Bastiman, took passage from Newcastle, along with local Sea Cadets, to experience the RFA at sea.

Obligingly, HMS Invincible turned up for fuel, so they were able to witness the RASing operation.

Soon after arriving off Scarborough, the weather blew up, and in order for the ship's personnel to fulfil their duties at the many events organised in Scarborough's Town Hall and at the town's 'SeaFest', Wave Ruler upped anchor and went alongside at nearby Teesport.

Rosyth was third on the visit list, a short but welcome visit to a port familiar to many.

Then it was on to Glasgow, coinciding with the actual Centenary date of the RFA of August 3.

It was a fitting finale to the tour, as Wave Ruler was built on the Clyde, having been launched at Govan in February 2001, so it was a proud experience for all those who built her.

While Wave Ruler celebrated Centenary Day at Glasgow, Aviation Training Ship RFA Argus, alongside in Portsmouth, was centre-piece for the celebrations there.

The Commemorative church service was held at the dockyard church, St Anne's, followed by lunch on board, with Commodore of the RFA, Bob Thornton, and CINC Fleet, Admiral Jonathon Band in attendance, the day ending with an official reception, where the Band of the Royal Marines ceremonially beat the retreat.

A week later Argus was at Liverpool, hosting visits by local maritime groups, and to an enthusiastic general public when the ship was open to visitors.

Next port of call was Belfast, a very appropriate visit for Argus, as it was here, from 1984 until



● Above... RFAs Fort George, Fort Victoria and Orangeleaf (right hand ships) at the Trafalgar 200 Royal Fleet Review) seen from RFA Wave Ruler.

Photo: Allan Doyle

1988, that the ship was transformed from being a commercial container ship named Contender Bezzant ("taken up from trade" for the Falklands Conflict) into the Aviation Training Ship RFA Argus.

Belfast is still Argus' port of registration and her visit there was an extremely popular one, recording the largest number of visitors of the tour.

Of great interest were not only the aviation facilities, but also the recently re-fitted ship's hospital and medical staff from local hospitals were among the official visitors.

Final destination was Falmouth, in time for the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Argus is a fairly familiar sight here, but this time she was open to visitors, and many, locals and tourists alike, came aboard for a closer look around.

So, after two months of 'Meet the Public' it was time for both RFA ambassador ships to get back to business.

For Argus it was Operational Flying Training, with RAF

Chinooks of 27 Sqn, to be followed by 848 NAS Sea Kings, and then Lynx helicopters of 702 NAS.

Meanwhile Wave Ruler was making preparations for Exercise Green Osprey, off the coast of Senegal, West Africa.

● Right... Taking the salute on board RFA Argus during her visit to Liverpool



● Sunset over RFA Argus at Spithead for the Royal Fleet Review



● No chart table was long enough for the Navigator of RFA Wave Ruler to plan the Thames pilotage on!

Photo: Greg Pedder



● Top her up... (Above) RFA Wave Ruler re-fuels amphibious ship USS Saipan as she heads for the Fleet Review at Portsmouth

● The Centenary Commemorative Church Service, held at St Anne's Church, Portsmouth Naval Base on August 3



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'Fascinated by the legacy of Nelson'

MORE people visited Portsmouth's historic dockyard in 2005 than in any year since the gates were opened to the public.

Nearly 900,000 tourists wandered through Victory Gate to experience HMS Victory, Warrior, Mary Rose, the Royal Naval Museum and Action Stations in the bicentennial year of Trafalgar; on average between 400,000 and 450,000 tourists a year make the pilgrimage to Portsmouth.

The bicentenary also ensured the iconic reminder of that battle, HMS Victory, broke visitor records.

More than a month before the year's end, Nelson's flagship surpassed her earlier highest total - 411,480 visitors in 1992 - with 418,000 people looking around the legendary man o'war.

It's the largest number of visitors in a year since Victory was made a paid attraction in 1984. (Entry was free before then).

Besides the 'Trafalgar 200 effect', the ship and her sailors have been included in the National Curriculum for schoolchildren, who have been studying Nelson, his era and comparisons between the life of a sailor then and now.

The result has been an influx of school parties to the historic dockyard in Portsmouth, where youngsters have buttonholed today's ship's company of Victory about life in the 19th and 21st Centuries.

Overall visitor numbers to the dockyard were 650,000 - including 25,000 people during the Festival of Christmas at the beginning of December - plus 230,000 cramming into the yard during the International Festival of the Sea.

Trafalgar week itself proved to be a major bonus; instead of the usual 15,000 people walking through

the dockyard gates, numbers more than doubled.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns said the visitor figures crowned "a fantastic year for the Royal Navy".

He added: "Victory's visitor numbers are evidence that the public is still fascinated by the heritage of the Royal Navy and the legacy of Nelson."

"Through this year's Trafalgar 200 celebrations, which have had outstanding support from the public, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines have been able to demonstrate how relevant they are to the United Kingdom and its defence."

■ ONE of the doyens of all things Nelsonian takes charge of the Royal Naval Museum this year.

Dr Colin White, Nelson biographer, naval historian and a regular contributor to Navy News, has been appointed the museum's director, taking over from Dr Campbell McMurray.

Dr White joined the museum 30 years ago as a research assistant, rising to become its deputy director before being 'loaned' to the National Maritime Museum to help oversee national celebrations to mark the bicentenary of Trafalgar.

Fittingly, he was lecturing on a 'Nelson cruise' aboard the liner Oriana in the Mediterranean, the last major event of the T200 year, when he received news of his appointment.

"This was a wonderful end to a year that was very special to me," said Dr White.

"Dr McMurray and his team have placed the RN Museum among the top British maritime museums."

"I'm honoured to have been chosen to build on this legacy and I'm looking forward to the exciting and challenging times that lie ahead."

The museum was founded in 1911, but took on its present form in the 1970s.



NOTICEBOARD

Sports lottery

November 19: £5,000 - OM(W)1 C P McCoy (Cornwall); £1,500 - Cdr G B Hutchison (Suffolk); £500 - WO1(AEA) F Parker (Fleet HQ)
November 26: £5,000 - CPO(WEA) R A Ryan (MDC Gib); £1,500 - WO1(AEM) G P Flynn (RAF Wittering); £500 - WEAAPP S J Hillman (Collingwood)
December 3: £5,000 - WO1AWT M J Branson (Collingwood); £1,500 - Lt T A Briant-Evans (Tarefas); £500 - DSA1 L F Lucas (45 Cdo).

Swap drafts

W/ Rob Passaportis, WTR1 (DHU) would swap for any Portsmouth Shore Sea draft. Contact 94649 2878 (M), 01462 752878 (CV). E-mail: DISC DHU CLK 2
W/ Samantha John, drafted to HMS Cumberland (in refit for 9 months) for 1st sea draft would swap for any Plymouth-based ship. Tel 9380 23513. E-mail: cnp upo home section 2
W/1 Marc Hall, serving at MDHU Peterborough would swap for Fastlane, north of England or HMS Nelson. Anyone wishing to swap has to be nearing completion or have completed their first sea draft. Contact on 01733 874979 or MDHUP-DMick-army

Deaths

Andy Chalmers, Lieutenant Commander, joined as Boy Seaman 1st Class in 1936 and commissioned as Sub Lt in 1942. First Lieutenant of HM Submarine Verdun when, off Norway in 1944, she sank U-boat 864 in the only known sinking of one submarine by another when both boats were submerged throughout the engagement. Later revealed that U-864 was bound for Japan and on board was an Me 163 rocket-powered interceptor, 64 tons of mercury, heavy water and some 20 Luftwaffe officers as well as German and Japanese engineers. He later commanded Spur, Truculent, Alderney, Sanguine, Trenchant and Alliance, retiring from the RN in 1970. Aged 84, October 13.
R G Dove, Sub Lieutenant RNVR DSO. With Lt Seaman Frost, one of five human torpedoes (Charoteers) launched from submarine Trooper and Thunderbolt in January 1943 attacking Palermo Harbour. After sinking 8500-ton troop transport they were taken to Canada. Awarded DSO in this action. October 30 in Canada.
Frank Routledge, HMS Orion Association. Served as Seaman 1940-41. October 2.
Ken Clynes, Lieutenant Commander. Served: Excellent, Newcastle, Diligence, Watchful, Trafalgar, Tiger, FO51, Ashanti, Cleopatra, Raleigh, Dryad, Naiad, Cambridge, Kent, Sultan of Oman's Navy (1982-84). Aged 64, November 13.
Ivor Baldwin, Chief Electrician (Aid) HMS Unicorn Association. Served 1940-1962 in Attacker, Hornbill, Ocean, Unicorn, Nonsuch (CEPE), Triumph, Warrior. Aged 83, October 18 in Australia.
William (Bill) Peters, Leading Writer, HMS Unicorn Association. Served: 1941-1946 in Mersey, Unicorn, Braganza, Sultan (Force W) and South African bases: Kongori and Mayina. Aged 90, October 21.
Ronald (Ron) Harper, Leading Air Mechanic (E), HMS Unicorn Association. Served 1943-1946 in Unicorn. Aged 82, October 23 in Australia.
Wally (Scouse) Turner, HMS Consort Association. Served as Yeoman of Signals in Ganges, Skuas, Consort, Unicorn, Illustrious, Eagle. Aged 74, 17 November.
Edward (Ted) Osmon, Electrician. Served 1947-1956 in St Vincent, Superb, Zest, Battelasse, Mauritius, Kenya, Jamaica, Bulwark.
Ken (Blood) Read, Aircraft Handlers' Association. Served 1951-1961. November 28.
Michael Thomas Casey, Leading Air Mechanic (A), Cotswold Fleet Air Arm Association. Served: Royal Arthur, Goding, Daedalus, Fieldfare, Garviel, Hevon, Fulmar, Merlin, 13th CAG, Triumph, Unicorn. November 12.
Alistair S Wells, Chief Electrician (Aid), Angus branch, Fleet Air Arm Association. Served 1947-1974 in Eagle, Ark Royal, Bulwark, RNAS Abbotsinch, Lossiemouth, Condor, RAF Leuchars.
Robert (Bob) Wise, Leading Seaman (Survey Recorder), Survey Ships, Ganges and Victorious Associations. Served 1961-1972 in Echo, Woodlark, Hecate, Egeria. Aged 60, November 16.
Inene Austen, Second Officer WRNS, Ipswich Branch, Association of Wrens. Served in WW II including Germany and staff of CinC Med (Malta), Admiral Lord Mountbatten. Aged 87, October 22.
Colin (Jesse) James, Able Seaman. Served 1972-1978 in Gormogon, Cleopatra, Bulwark. Aged 48, 22 November.
Joyce - Adelaide Cattermole (nee Woodward), QARNNS. Served during World War 2 at RN Hospitals at Haslar and Malta. Aged 82, November 9.
Len White, Chief Petty Officer, HMS Faulkner Association. Served 1933-1950, including Faulkner 1941-43. Aged 91, November 7.
R (Bob) Bailie, Swiftsure Association. Served in HMS Swiftsure 1944-1946. Aged 80.
Alan Charge, Leading Seaman, Bedfordshire & Herts Branch, Submariners Association. Submarine Service from 1954-1960 in Aeneas, Seneschal, Talent, Tally-Ho, Trump. November 7.

The following were members of the LST and Landing Craft Association

A LCOY, Wolverhampton. Served on board LCTs 324, 359, 1364, October 28.
D Percival, East Kilbride. Served on board LCTs 228, LCT 1106, October 26.
R J Spiers, Oxford. Served on board LCO 499, LCT 933, October.
G W Ratt, Dundee. Served on board LST 416, November 7.
A O Wass, Mansfield. Served on board LCA and LCI, November.

Royal Naval Association

Florence Elizabeth Richards, Asst. Secretary, Beccles Branch. Aged 81, November 20.

Ernest (Ernie) Alexander Burton, Dartford Branch. Served 1942-1944 in HMS Bulfinch. Aged 82, November 8.

Trevor J Webb, Congleton Branch. Served 1940-1946 in minesweepers, North Atlantic, Iceland, Murmansk. Aged 83, November 20.

Frank Paxton, Founder, Chairman and President, Rayleigh Branch, Joined RN in 1941. Service included Tartar, Scourge, Tuscan, Javelin, Spork, Valiant and Royal Yacht Victoria & Albert. September.

James (Jimmy) O'Connor, Eason, Westbury Branch. Served as stoker, 1940-1946 in Royal Arthur, Skiddaw and Phloctates (both converted merchantmen) Leonidas, Fortitude. Aged 88.

David Raggatt, Secretary, Salisbury Branch. Served 1944-1959. Joined Royal Marines as Boy Bugler. Served in Frobbeser and 42 Cdo. Aged 76, October.

Doreen Smith, Aldenham Branch. Served in WRNS in WW II. Aged 78, September.

Henry (Harry) Phillips, Aldenham Branch. Served in WW II, including Burma Campaign. Aged 84, September.

Jim Craigie, Crewe Branch, Petty Officer Seaman. Served 1936-1953. Treasurer Crewe Branch RMA for 20 years. Member of HMS Ganges, HMS Vgo and HMS Howe Associations. Aged 83.

Raymond James, Bridgend Branch. Served 1941-1945 in Glenconner, Victory, Trinidad, Drake, Sakar, Egglest, Collingwood, Amrapoora. Aged 83, November 29.

John Hall, Life member and long-serving Standard Bearer, Stoke-on-Trent Branch. Aged 83, November 24.

Sheila Hull, Long-serving member, Borehamwood Branch. October.

Wally Fitzey, Borehamwood Branch. Served in 13 ships from 1939-1952. RFR 1954-57. November 13.

Association of RN Officers

Cdr E W Andrew, Served: Gasgoyne, Kildarton, Barban, Ark Royal, Glassboro, Raleigh, Osprey, Cochrane.

Lt Cdr A L Bleby, Served: Arethusa, Shropshire, Chequers, Vulture, Diana, St Angelo, Belleophon, Dolphin, Drake, Warrior, Seahawk.

Cdr J A Burnett DSC, Served: Eskimo, Wolfhound, Forester, Londonderry, Ura, Collingwood.

Lt J E Campion, Served: Safeguard, Caledonia, Orion, Impregnable.

Capt P Carter, Served: Glory, President, Moll of Killybegs, Zealous, Holspur, Naiad, Sussex, and HM Dockyards Devonport, Gibraltar, Chatham.

Cdr G C Chapman, Served: Ajax, Rocket, Victorious, Deliance, Kent, Osprey, Dolphin, Capt K A Crawley CBE, Served: Terror, Goldcrest, Victory, Phoenix, President, Sea Eagle, Pembroke, Despatch.

Lt K G Jenkins RNVR
Lt Cdr J V Kidd, Served: Undine, Centaur, President, Carriest, Albion, Leander, Dryad.

Lt D V Lindsay, Served: Excellent, Caledonia, Torquay.
Lt Cdr D M Richards RNVR.

Cdr H Selby-Bennett, Served: Ark Royal, Victory, Lagos, Battelasse, Alacrity, Newfoundland, Mercury.

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Appointments

Rear Admiral P L Willocks DSC, Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland and Chief of Staff (Maritime Port Security) to CINCFLEET from April 24.
Lt Col J A McCauley, RM, CO of Commando Helicopter Force in rank of Act Col. December 16.

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Navy News is available free of charge on tape from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number. No special equipment is needed to play the standard 90-minute cassettes.

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Entries for February's Noticeboard must be received by **January 11 2006**

Reunions

February 2006

RM Buglers Branch reunion at WOs, CPOs, SFRs & SNCOs Mess, HMS Nelson on February 11 at 1900. Dress for the evening in Lounge Suit / female equivalent. Up dated information can be found at <http://www.royalnavybuglers.co.uk>

March 2006

HMS Wizard & HMS Cadiz Association: AGM/Reunion at Torquay March 24 to 27. All commissions, ranks and rates most welcome. Contact Tom Fox, Marcheto,

Church Lane, Meriden, Coventry, CV7 7HX or tel: 01676 523296.

Fleet Air Arm Armourers Association Reunion: Royal Court Hotel, Coventry March 31 to April 3. Dancing, Cabaret, Free Tot, Free Ladies Outing to the Wedgwood Centre, Happy Hour all weekend @ £1.50. Three nights for £95. Contact Mick Holdsworth at bombheads@btinternet.com or 01227 832826 or see our website: www.bombhead.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

HMS Illustrious Association: Reunion at Hacketts York House Hotel, Blackpool from March 31 to April 3. Prices as last year. Gala Dinner and entertainment. If

interested, contact Ronnie (Dixie) Dean on 01204 300162.

April 2006

RNKS (East Anglia Group): Reunion will take place in 'The Shipneck' (ex Erricht Block, HMS Ganges), Shotley from 1200 to 1500 on April 2. Further details from Peter Brooke, 7 Penn Close, Capel St Mary, Ipswich, IP9 2UE or tel: 01473 310189.

HMS Grenville 1943/47 Association and 25th Destroyer Flotilla: Reunion in Blackpool from April 4 to 6. Contact J W

Lund on 01243 605057 for information.

HMS Ladybird (Sasebo Japan) Association: Reunion takes place from April 21 to 23 at the Grand Atlantic Hotel, Beach Road, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset. Cost per person for Dinner, Bed and Breakfast £99. Please note the Hotel do not take bookings. Further info from Terry Cooper, 28 Hopgrove Lane South, Maton Rd, York, YO32 9TG, Tel/Fax: 01904 425883 or email: TERRY.COOPER@aol.com

TS Apollo: Celebrates its 50th anniversary and is planning a Mess Dinner at the Unit in Wethered Road, Marlow, Bucks on

April 23. If you were a cadet at the unit anytime in the past 50 years they would love to hear from you. Contact Ms Denise Roberts at Dairoberts23@aol.com or write to White Pillars, Seymour Plain, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 3DA or tel: 01628 487332.

LST & Landing Craft Association: Reunion will be held at Norbeck Castle Hotel, Queens Promenade, Blackpool from April 24 to 28 with a Remembrance Service at St John's Church on 26 at 11.30. Details from Mike Cresswell, 1 Gamrudding, Green Lane, North Duffield, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 5FR. Tel: 01757 268752 or email: mike@gamrudding.freeserve.co.uk

May 2006

HMS Flagard, Series 27 Boy Arts: 50th Reunion. May 7/8 in the Portsmouth area. Contact Cliff Pantrey on 01837 55830 or email: cliffpantrey@susfish.co.uk

September 2006

HMS Suffolk Association: September 17th will be an historic event at Brighton, Public Ceremony. The dedication of the Standard and the reading of the Battle Honours. If you have any connection with HMS Suffolk, contact the Secretary on 01273 302147.

Over to you

HMS Duke of York: Bill Griffin is compiling a book of biographical details of those whose names appear on the war memorial at Newton Ferns. One name is that of Plumber (1st Class) William John Littleton who died aboard on May 13 1943, aged 38. On that day the Duke of York was day-running from Scapa Flow for gunnery exercises, and she returned to harbour at 2030. The next entry in the log is "2040 Plumber WJ Littleton died of Primary Haemorrhage following a lacerated wound of the neck." If his story interests you, contact mah@griffin.wanadoo.co.uk or write to 70 Court Road, Newton Ferns, Plymouth, PL8 1DA.

HMS Forth: CPO Roy Kennedy HMS Forth D.O.A.S. 30th May 1944, Scotland whilst serving aboard HMS Forth, aged 48 (had served previously throughout WW1). Seeking cause of death on that day should anyone recall the event, which occurred in Scotland. Contact Roger Vanhinsbergh, 4 Fen Road, Guyhirn, PE13 4AB or tel: 01945 450529 rogabader@btinternet.com

HMS Hermes: Carol Williams is seeking information on Sid Deller who was on Hermes in 1963. Carol was a friend of Sid's wife, Doreen. They had 2 children, Paul and Susan. They lost touch after Carol emigrated to Canada in 1965. She heard that the Deller's emigrated to Australia in the late 60s. If you can help contact Carol

at carol.ann1945@hotmail.com or write to 1909 Silverhope Road, Hope, BC, Canada, V0X 1L2.

HMS Intrepid: Curious to know more about a 'Fagig' (a form of harpoon), mounted on a polished wooden plinth and was presented to HMS Intrepid by HM Dockyard Portsmouth 'to commemorate a successful combined op. Jan 1974 to Jan 1975'. Mark served in HMS Intrepid from 1984 - 1987 and carries many fond recollections from the period. He would be most interested and grateful if anyone could advise him of the significance of the Fagig in relation to what he assumes was a DED or mini-refit undertaken by Portsmouth Dockyard during the period Jan 74 - Jan 75.

Contact Mark Churchill at mark.churchill@royalnavymuseum.co.uk or tel: 023 9261 9385.

Malta 1941: Seeking information regarding the Chief Officer of a submarine, Billy Anderson, his wife Jessie and 3 children, Patricia, Sylvia and Gloria. They all lived at No. 17, opposite Hasting Gardens, Valletta, Malta. Carmela's mother, Josephine (nee Rickard) used to work and live with them. Josephine, now 80, would like to hear from them or their children. Contact her daughter Carmela Saliba, Le' Fleur, Tng II - Kavallieri Ta' Malta, M'Scala, ZBR12, Malta or email: sallicarm@global.net.mt

ORD John Patrick, Commander RN (in 1957): Seeking any information concern-

ing this man or his kin, please contact Mrs S Varstone at: Lineforce Probate Ltd, 98 Bayswater Road, Headington, Oxford, OX3 9NZ. Tel: 01865 761292 or Fax: 01865 744774 or email: lineforce@btconnect.com

RNR: Trying to trace John Austin McEwan, born 1925, who served in the Royal Navy Reserve as a Sub Lt during latter years of WW2. Any one who knew him, or has information re his whereabouts or descendants (possibly in South Africa) please contact his cousin, Geoffrey E Laws at Geoffrey@geoffreyandanna.worldonline.co.uk or write to 22 Pine Grove, Honiton, Devon, EX14 2HS, Tel: 01404 43240.

HMS Ganges/HMS Shamrock: A series of pictures taken by Edith F Driver are on a website: <http://www.ta0.freesola.com> Can anyone provide any information about them. If so contact Larry Taylor, 21 Hillside Avenue, Sompting, West Sussex, BN15 0LX or email: l.taylor7@btworld.com

Mallinson Sadler Productions are making a series of documentaries about use of anti mine fields off coast of SW England and are looking for officers who served in HMS Plover and HMS Apollo or anyone who can inform about strategy. If you can help please contact John Chambers Tel: 01176731941, Mob 07762849310 email: johnchambers@hotmail.com

Calling old shipmates

HMS Andromeda 1980/84: Would like to hear from any Ops branch serving during this time. Contact 'Robbie' Roberts (Radar) on 01792 540848 or email: a.roberts680@btworld.com

HMS Barfleur: William Rickwood, Harry Randall and Ray Mulaney, son of Ronnie would like to contact old shipmates from HMS Barfleur. Contact William Rickwood, 84 Gainsborough Drive, Gunton Park, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 4NJ.

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: are actively recruiting new members (from the cruiser and frigate). A thriving organisation, with over 270 members. If you are interested in joining, contact Warwick Franklin at warwick.franklin@hotmail.com or write to 127 Kil Hill Crescent, St Budeaux, Plymouth, PL5 1EL or tel: 01752 366611.

HMS Rife, and Excellent, 1968-1971: Seeking Eric (Lock/Father) McLean L/Sea QA2. Eric came from Paisley where his wife ran a chip shop, he was QM on the File and Capt of A Gunhouse. Contact Stuart (Topsy) Turner on 01785 245226 or email stt@o-turner.freeserve.co.uk

HMS Impregnable: The Chatham/Portsmouth/Devonport Divisions of the HMS Impregnable Association welcome all ex boy seamen and crew who served onboard the famous training establishment. For a full factual broadsheet and exciting details - contact the Publicity

Officer on truelmpregnable@aol.com or ring 07932 112023.

HMS Narvik, 1952-59: Seeking Messrs McMillan, Mihalop, Oakley, O'Dell, Peet, Peters, Roberts, Sanderson, Small, Westmore, Willis, Hurlock and Merritt. Contact Rod Jenkins, 33 Paston Ridings, Paston, Peterborough, Cambs, PE4 7UR or tel: 01733 751019.

NATO: Trying to trace a very good friend called Phillip (Shiner) Wright he is POPT recently stationed at a NATO base in Portugal. He tried to contact me at the start of the year but due to email address changes it failed. Adrian is an ex POPT in the Australian Navy and looked after Shiner when he visited

here on Longlook in 1996 and again in 2001 with his wife Tracey for holidays.

Could someone please pass on the email address and name or contact Adrian Hamill at adrianhamill@optusnet.com.au or srltines@bigpond.net.au or write to Secret Harbour Fitness, Shop 6 Oasis Drive, Secret Harbour, Western Australia, 6173.

HMS Plover 1955/57: Arnold Brookes (Horace - Stokers gro.) looking for Ian Lang and Fred Handy. Can contact by email: arnold.brookes@speed-mail.co.uk or by post to: 10 Cedarfield Road Doughtlington Lymm Cheshire WA13 9HN or by telephone to: 01925 752525.

HMS Raleigh: Seeking any National

Servicemen 1947/49 who were at HMS Raleigh, September 1947 in Foretop Division. The PO was 'Jan' Thomas. Also anyone who served with Neville Fish on HMS Wolfe and HMS Sirius. Contact Neville at Oystercott, Ingham Hall Gardens, Parson Drive, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4JY or tel: 01945 700845.

HMS St Angelo: Seeking contact with Jonathan Head, Smudge Smith and Taffy Jones, all served with John at HMS St Angelo on FO2s barge. We had a 45 foot and a 25 foot barge. Does Taffy remember our Sunday's lying off Comino while the Admiral and his wife and daughter went swimming. Remember the dripping sandwiches and diluted lemon barley water? Contact John Morris (L/S), 9 Quex Road, Westgate-on-Sea, Kent, CT8 8AT, tel: 01843 833817 or email: john@johnmorris.wanadoo.co.uk

Submarine P552: Eric Wills is seeking information about Fred Phillips with whom he served. Fred was at Eric's wedding in South Africa. Eric would like to contact Fred or his family. Contact Eric at 13 Whiston Road, Northampton, Northants, NN2 7RR or tel: 01604 711366.

HMS Sultan: Trying to contact all classmates from 123 MQC. Contact Bill Griffin at Bill@anchor01.finet.co.uk or tel: 01726 70025

HMS Triumph: Ex-chief shipwright Christopher R. Arnold is looking for Derek Horner and any apprentices who served with him at HMS Caledonia, Rosyth, Scotland from 1955 - 1957. Also people who served with him in Singapore on HMS Triumph. Please contact Christopher Arnold at olivebranch@telkom.sa.net or write to The Olive Branch, 38 Ranger Road, Fish Hoek, 7975, South Africa.

HMS Vanguard: All former shipmates of HMS Vanguard are invited to attend the next reunion in Liverpool in October. There must be many former shipmates that have not attended a reunion, why not join us then? Contact D R Scrivener, 38 Beach Road, Fleetwood, Lancs, FY7 8PN.

RNAS Yeovilton: Seeking information about Nick Sargent, last heard of as a Lieutenant in 845 Squadron. Contact Paul Marston at paul@pedigree.lans.com or write to 26 Ardan Road, Bulkington, Warwickshire, CV12 9JJ or tel: 07868 744532.

THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the January headlines of past decades....



● Sisters side by side, HMS Hydra (foreground) with sister HMS Hecate in 1976

40 years ago

FRONT page news was the commissioning of HMS Hecate, the second of a new class of three survey/oceanographical ships.

The ceremony was held in Glasgow, unusually, on a Sunday, as the ship's programme was tight, and there was a need for the ship's company to get their Christmas leave in at Devonport before sailing for operations in the Bay of Biscay.

Novel features of the ship included air conditioning, a strengthened hull for ice operations, a propeller fitted athwartships in the bow for position maintenance and she had a Wasp helicopter and a Landrover.

30 years ago

TEN years later and Hecate's sister-ship HMS Hydra was operating in much more agreeable and sunny climes.

She was carrying out survey work in the Seychelles and Amirante Islands.

On board for their visit to the nearby d'Arros Islands were His Imperial Highness Prince Chahram, Crown Prince of Iran, and Princess Niloofer.

They had just purchased the islands and were planning to build an airstrip there.

The ship's helicopter was put to good use during the visit, airlifting the ship's surgeon ashore to treat an 18-month Seychellois boy, suffering from severe burns.

20 years ago

HERALD divers swim the Equator - well, sort of.

The seven divers had rigged up a swimming pool on the upper deck, and as the ship sailed across the Equator they took part in a "marathon" swim in the pool!

HMS Herald was at that time in the Pacific, making her way north from a seven-month deployment in the South Atlantic.

She passed through the Panama Canal, and then on home to Devonport.

It was an especially joyful homecoming for PO Kevin Graves who saw his four-month-old baby son for the first time.

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A NAVY NEWS ADVERTISING FEATURE

Best is Head Boy Extraordinaire

HOW many school children take the salute from a frigate commander, meet the Princess Royal, and read a lesson at the Trafalgar Service at St Paul's - all in the same month? For Royal Hospital School head boy Nicholas Best, it's business as usual.

When 17-year-old Nick Best sits down to Sunday lunch, it is invariably in the company of captains, commanders and admirals.

As head boy of the Royal Hospital School in Suffolk, he is used to meeting distinguished visitors and entertaining them along with the headmaster and senior staff.

Nick would be the first to admit that he has had a particularly busy month. "The things that I've done here, I would never have had the chance to do anywhere else," he says. "At the end of October I represented the School at a reception at the Guildhall at which I met Princess Anne. That was after reading a lesson at the Trafalgar Service in St Paul's Cathedral. My 'A' Level theatre studies came in very useful there!"

The Royal Hospital School has strong links with the Forces. Many pupils are children of service personnel.

Nick's father was in the Royal Marines, and Nick followed his sister and brother to the School at the age of 11. He has been in the school band for four years, and went on tour to Malta in 2003. He plays the drums, and was selected to lead the sunset ceremony performed by the corps of drums at the SeaBritain 2005 Trafalgar Night dinner in the presence of Admiral the Lord Boyce. "The following week-end I was leading the corps of drums again, at the Painted Hall in Greenwich - both fantastic experiences."

With head girl Hayley Gibbins, he formed part of the banner party at the National Service for Seafarers at St Paul's in October, and then in November, took the salute at the RHS's own Remembrance Day service, from Commander Rob Bellfield of HMS Grafton.

"All this happened in just four weeks. I was also interviewed on BBC Radio Suffolk, took part in a photo shoot for the school bus

advertising campaign, welcomed visitors to the open mornings, and managed to squeeze in two hours' busking on London's South Bank with the school's barber shop singers. We earned £30 in one hour!" says Nick proudly. He also slept for 18 hours afterwards!

He thinks that it is good to have the opportunity to push oneself a little bit further. "The range of activities and the choices that we have here teaches us that we have to be self-disciplined, and that we sometimes have to do things that we may not want to do."

"My Dad taught me that to gain respect you must give respect. I want the pupils in the school to feel that they can come up and discuss things with me at any time."

"Hayley and I make sure that we are seen around the school - holding the door open into the dining hall, walking round the boarding houses, making ourselves accessible."

Our chief role, with the prefects, is to help with the running of the school." When he is not entertaining admirals, or chatting to princesses, that is.



● Don't miss the bus says Nick Best and Hayley Gibbins

When 17-year-old Nick Best looks back at his year as head boy at the Royal Hospital School, he will wonder how he had time to fit in any work, let alone sleep.

School offers a ticket to Ryde

RYDE School stands in its own grounds of 17 acres in Ryde, overlooking the Solent; it is easily accessible from the mainland; within fifteen minutes walking distance of the terminals which link Ryde to Portsmouth by hovercraft (10 minutes), or catamaran (15 minutes).

The Isle of Wight provides a safe and secure environment for both day pupils and boarders. It is fully co-educational, offering a high quality of education for boys and girls up to the age of 18. It has a thriving Sixth Form, which provides a wide range of opportunities to develop a pupil's

personal skills and prepare them for university.

Entry into the Senior School is not selective, but we do expect everybody to be able to cope with the broad curriculum. Every bit as much emphasis is placed on supporting the candidate who struggles, as pushing the more able along further and faster.

Ryde School offers a small number of boarding places at its Bembridge Campus, where pupils enjoy a caring, family atmosphere. The arrangements are flexible, so that pupils can remain on the Island for the weekend or go home. Good transport arrangements

provide links between Ryde and Bembridge, enabling boarders to take a full part in school life. This arrangement proves popular with people who live on the nearby mainland, with forces families and a number of overseas boarders. Bursaries are offered for full boarders from service families.

An important part of the school life is the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a very active CCF contingent and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. There are many opportunities at all stages of the school to be involved in cultural activities, Art, Music, Drama and

Public Speaking. For the more active, there are many sporting activities and the school also organises a number of trips abroad to enrich the curriculum.

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Welbeck is fully committed to equal opportunities. *Parents or guardians may be required to make a contribution towards the cost of their child's maintenance. See prospectus for further details.



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Tel 01473 326200 Fax 01473 326213
email: admissions@royalhospitalschool.org
www.royalhospitalschool.org

Saturday 21st January
Entrance Exam
At Holbrook and Portsmouth

Saturday 28th January
(Academic, sport, art, sailing and music)

A firm favourite of the Royal Navy - East Anglia's largest HMC co-educational day and full boarding school for boys and girls aged 11-18, that may offer fee concessions to the children and grandchildren of seafarers.

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Come & see us at
Sixth Form Open Evening on
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or Rossall Reveal Day
Saturday 28th January 2006

Choose Rossall. Choose small class sizes. Choose a safe, caring environment. Choose a stable, uninterrupted co-educational experience with international links. Choose friends. Choose children of all ages from all over the world. Choose to have fun, get involved and take part in clubs, societies, teams and trips where boredom is not an option. Choose CCF. Choose high academic standards with exam results well above the national average. Choose to enter at 7 years old, 11 years old or 16 years old. Choose the International Baccalaureate. Choose A-Levels. Choose academic and social fulfilment. Choose state of the art IT facilities. Choose to see the stars in a dedicated Astronomy and Space Science Centre. Choose to experience the magic inside. Choose to live in newly refurbished boarding house accommodation amongst gothic architecture, set on a 160 acre campus, in an unrivalled setting on the picturesque coastland of the North West of England. Choose to be 20 minutes away from Blackpool airport, and one hour away from both Manchester and Liverpool airport. Choose generous service bursaries and academic scholarships.

Choose your child's future.
Choose Rossall School.

For a prospectus or to visit the school contact the Registrar: Rossall School, Fleetwood, Lancashire FY7 8JW Tel: 01253 774201
Email: Enquiries@rossallcorporation.co.uk
www.rossallschool.org.uk



Rossall

Make IT suite music at West Hill Park

WEST Hill Park School in Titchfield prides itself on keeping up to date with the latest developments in ICT.

The four new class rooms which were added to the school during the Summer were fitted

with the latest interactive whiteboards and the main ICT suite was recently doubled in size.

And it is the new ICT suite which is striking a different note with the children.

This latest expansion to the school will include state of the art Music Technology.

By linking music keyboards and the latest software each computer workstation becomes its own mini recording studio.

Children will play music from the keyboard into the computer where they can add unlimited special effects from a drum beat to a full orchestral sound.

This amazing technology offers almost limitless possibilities to work intuitively and creatively building on the lessons learnt

through the music syllabus.

The budding Beethovens will be able to realise their musical ambitions through the privacy of their own headphones!

This superb new facility will complement the flourishing Music Department at West Hill Park where children learn to play a wide variety of musical instruments for both pleasure and performance.

For further information about the school or to arrange a visit, please contact the Registrar on 01329 842356.

Portsmouth High School has high-tech designs on students

YEAR 9 pupils from Portsmouth High School were put through their paces during the school's annual Technology Challenge Day. The activities tested the girls' skills not only in ICT and Product Design, but also enhanced and developed their teamwork, communication and time-management, all essential employability skills.

Pupils took part in two sessions, one which was run and organised by IBM and saw the girls take part in several ICT challenges and one session which focussed on Design Technology and required the girls to create a prototype of a 'poop a scoop' with the help and support of Product Design students from Southampton Solent University.

Head of Information Technology Jonathan Smith said "During the ICT part of the day the girls learnt about XML, encryption and fluid dynamics, but these were developed in a fun and accessible way, as all were

cunningly disguised in the form of different computer games. The Design Technology aspect of the day was as equally interactive, not only did the girls have to create a prototype of their product; they also had to develop a logo and strapline and prepare a final presentation all in the space of two hours.

"The academic benefits are obvious, but it is the additional skills that the girls develop whilst taking part in these activities, such as delegating tasks, working to a tight deadline and teamwork that are equally important."

Head of Design and Technology, Lucille Scott added: "Days such as these are really important, not only do they allow girls to learn new skills, but they also enable them to discuss ideas with those studying the subjects in Higher Education as well as those working in Industry. It reinforces the message that careers in Technology are interesting and exciting and are open to girls and boys."

West Hill Park Preparatory School

A great start with a great finish

West Hill Park is a co-educational day and boarding preparatory school for children from 2½ to 13 years

Nursery, Pre-Prep and Prep School
(Boarding from 7-13 years.)



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For a Prospectus please contact the School Registrar

Tel: 01329 842356

Web: www.westhillpark.com



West Hill Park School,
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Day & Boarding Preparatory School
Boys & Girls aged 3-13

Rookesbury Park School

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- Wide ranging activities

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www.rookesburypark.co.uk
head@rookesburypark.co.uk
Rookesbury Park School
Wickham, Hampshire, PO17 6HT

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Fax: 01329 835 090



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School

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Portsmouth High School

The premier school for girls on the south coast

 <p>ENTRANCE TESTS Senior School: Entrance Tests take place on Sat 28th January 2006. Junior School: Assessments take place throughout the year.</p> <p>DROP-IN MORNINGS Wed 8th February, Wed 8th March, Fri 28th April, Tue 23rd May. See the school in action from 10 am to 12 noon on a normal working day.</p> <p>☎ 023 9282 6714 ✉ admissions@por.gdst.net 🌐 www.gdst.net/portsmouthhigh</p>	<p>The Nursery 3-4</p> <p>Junior School 4-11</p> <p>Senior School 11-16</p> <p>Sixth Form 16-18</p>
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GdS Day School Trust
Reg Charity
No 306963



● The crowd at Twickenham treated to a tune or two

The Grand Young Duke Of York's Band Marches at Twickenham

THE Duke of York's Royal Military School has a long distinguished history of educating children whose parents are military. Over 21,000 children have been educated at the school which is today tri-Service and committed to full boarding for all its 500 pupils aged 11-18 years. It is a truly international school with children coming from wherever service families are based.

Pupils at the school can be proud of their achievements throughout the last academic year. There was plenty to keep them busy with a trip to the WW1 trenches in France, a ski trip to Piesch, German and French exchanges as well as educational visits to London and Canterbury. The school band was kept very busy after being invited by the Navy to play at Twickenham for the Army vs Navy Rugby match and also being invited to perform at the VE celebrations at Chatham Maritime.

The start of the new academic year has been equally as busy, with German and French exchanges taking place, a visit to the WW1 trenches in France and Belgium and a Netball tour to Grenada. Other tours included the Imperial War and Chatham Maritime Museums as well as local tours.

Pupils can expect a busy time at the school and there are plenty of opportunities for them to excel in a wide range of activities. It has, as you would expect, a strong Combined Cadet Force and there are many adventurous activities with regular expeditions at home and abroad.

A misconception is that the school is preparing pupils to go into the Armed Forces, however, the term military refers to the parents' background. It is a vibrant and exciting school with a unique ethos tailor made for children of service families. More information can be found on the school's website at www.doyrms.mod.uk

King's Bruton and Hazlegrove: places where you thrive

KING'S Bruton and Hazlegrove – its preparatory school for children under 13 – are modern co-educational boarding and day schools with a proud history going back nearly 500 years.

Three hundred and 50 pupils who benefit from a rich combination of academic learning and extra-curricular activity in an idyllic south Somerset setting.

At the centre of this community are the boarding houses, each in the care of a housemaster or housemistress who has overall responsibility for each pupil and who is that pupil's first and last supporter throughout his or her time at King's.

When pupils first arrive, they are welcomed into a genuinely caring community where individuals and individuality are valued.

Pupils have their own tutor, who will keep an eye on academic progress, ensure that any problems are resolved, and offer advice and friendship.

Houseparents, matrons, tutors and senior pupils all work to ensure that each new pupil settles in quickly and successfully.

From the very beginning our pupils lead busy lives, full of work, activities and friends. The modest size of the school is a particular strength; in a

community where everyone is known, unhappiness does not go unnoticed for long.

Day pupils are fully integrated into the life of the boarding houses and it is often hard to dislodge them from King's.

They will frequently stay late into the evenings and come into school at weekends. For them, and for our many boards, the friendships they build at King's become of great value to them, both while they are at school and after they have moved on.

Hazlegrove is a splash of colour in an increasingly grey and conforming world. It is a school that delights in children being children, it encourages individuality and it values determination, perseverance and passion.

We believe that there is an appropriate blend of opportunity and challenge at Hazlegrove.

Children are encouraged to seek high standards in academic, creative, sporting and the many other areas of school life. At the same time, we think of ourselves as a family school and regard the happiness of individual boys and girls, as vitally important to his or her personal progress.

Hazlegrove has a strong sense of community. This is based on traditional, Christian family values, a care and con-

cern for every individual and a belief in childhood.

Most visitors to Hazlegrove comment on the feeling of

well-being, that the children seem very happy and also remark on the friendliness of the staff.

A FIRM FOUNDATION
A CARING ENVIRONMENT
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Co-educational, Boarding and Day, 13 – 18

A broad and challenging curriculum which allows pupils to flourish as individuals.



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ENTRANCE 2006

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HAZLEGROVE

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16th January



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- The school is 100% boarding for 500 pupils aged 11-18, providing precisely the caring, secure and stable environment needed for Service children.

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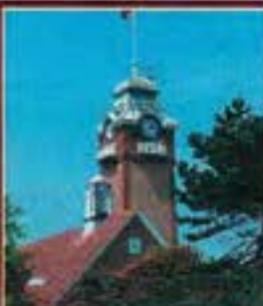
The Headmaster

The Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover, Kent, CT15 5EQ

Tel: 01304 245024 Mil: 94284 5024 Fax: 01304 245019 Mil: 94284 5019

Email: headmaster@doyrms.com

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Wellington School

Wellington, Somerset TA21 8NT
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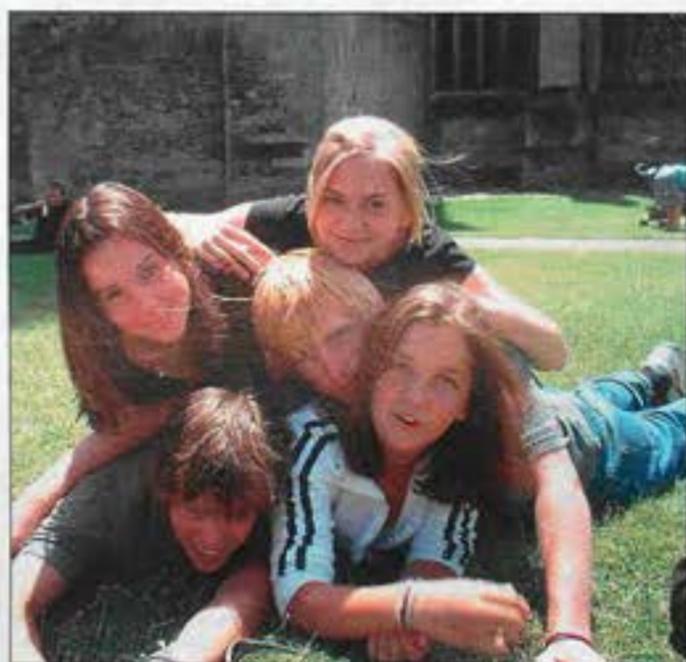
for further details, please contact the Bursar Cdr. R D Coupe OBE RN

01823 668800

admin@wellington-school.org.uk

Reg Charity No 310268 to provide quality education for children

Home from home at Shebbear college



• Life is a bundle of fun for students at Shebbear

SHEBBEAR College is a Christian School that emphasises traditional Christian values. We foster responsibility, tolerance, commitment and respect, both for the individual and for society. We warmly welcome pupils of all faiths and cultures, and seek to educate each pupil to achieve his or her potential encouraging the highest possible standards of attainment and behavior, through a balanced, flexible and challenging syllabus. The College has an excellent record of producing pupils of all abilities for life.

The development of lively, enquiring minds is central to our curriculum and to achieve this the timetable is constructed to meet the needs of the pupils.

Through small classes and the wide range of subjects offered at GCSE and AS/A2 level we provide the opportunity for all pupils to realise their aspirations. The college participates in all major sports for boys and girls and offers, amongst others, outdoor pursuits such as Ten Tors, D of E, sailing, canoeing, horse riding and shooting.

The college is committed to offering its pupils the best possible facilities. In addition to our

excellent sporting provision recent investment in computing means that all rooms, including bedrooms, have intranet and internet access. Our computing suites are at the forefront of technology, classrooms benefit from the introduction of interactive whiteboards and the ability to video conference. New developments include a refurbishment of the science block and the creation of a music recording studio.

The college has two boys and one girls' boarding house that provide a warm and nurturing home from home environment. Every bedroom is equipped with ultra fast internet. Shebbear has a flexible approach to boarding that can accommodate full, weekly and occasional boarders. We are experienced in meeting the needs of service children and welcome visiting at any time.

We are located in the safe North Devon Countryside only ten miles from Dartmoor and the coastline. For further information please contact our registrar Mrs Jacky Rowe 01409 281429, e-mail registrar@shebbearcollege.co.uk or visit www.shebbearcollege.co.uk

Blundell's Reaches New Heights this year

THE eighty leavers from Blundell's this year have achieved record results, once again reflecting our ever increasing academic rigour. To achieve an A/B pass rate of 75 per cent at A2 level (45 per cent A grades) is remarkable, particularly when considering the broadly comprehensive intake at 11+. Twenty students have left this year with straight As or better. At GCSE records were also set with a 96 per cent pass rate at grade A-C (51 per cent at A*/A). However,

we believe that Blundell's is about so much more than just academic success.

*Think where man's glory most begins and ends,
And say my glory was I had such friends.*

- W B Yeats

I always think that we live spiritually by what others have given us in the significant hours of our life. These significant hours do not announce themselves as coming, but arrive unexpected. Nor do they make a great show of themselves: they pass almost unperceived. Often, indeed, their significance comes home to us as we look back, just as the beauty of a landscape or of a piece of music strikes us first in our recollection of it. Much that has become our own in gentleness, modesty, kindness, willingness to forgive, in serenity,

loyalty, resignation under suffering, we owe to people in whom we have seen or experienced these virtues at work, sometimes in a great manner, sometimes in a small. A thought which had become an act sprang into us like a spark, and lighted a new flame within us, and if we could tell them how it came about, they would be amazed to learn what passed over from their life into ours.

- Albert Schweitzer

All headmasters are asked at some stage what makes their school special. The answer lies in part within the two quotations above. W.B. Yeats reminds us that friends are so important and at Blundell's the relationships formed in the community are at the heart of what is a special school. Albert Schweitzer eloquently draws out the relationship between the teacher and the pupil, but also all

those others, often unheard and unsung, who make community life so rewarding. Kindness and excellence are not mutually incompatible concepts. Whilst qualifications are very important, and we work very hard together to ensure strong academic success, we also believe in a sense of wholeness. Manners, kindness, consideration, courtesy and humility are extremely important because they show that all of us here care about those around us. We are, of course, continually introducing our pupils to developments in the educational world and giving them the framework to move forward successfully into the complex world because we see Blundell's as a gateway to a wider perspective both nationally and internationally. In short our role is to provide the pupils with the gift of both "roots and wings".

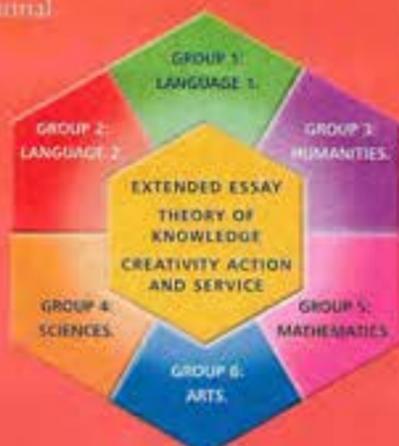


Scholarships and Bursaries

AIM HIGH

THE BENEFIT of a superb independent boarding education is offered to girls and boys aged 11 to 18 by King Edward's School, with some scholarships also available to day pupils. Entry can be at 11, 13 or Sixth Form where students can choose between A level or International Baccalaureate.

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- Strong results KS2, GCSE & A level
- Set in beautiful Devon Countryside
- Newly refurbished boarding facilities
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- Easily Accessible

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"probably Devon's most significant School"

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Full & Weekly Boarding and Day

340 boys - 230 girls



- ask for our new Services Package

- early registrations advisable

Blundell's

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Tel: 01884 252543

www.blundells.org

St John's College brightens up Christmas with shoebox appeal

PUPILS at St John's College Lower School in Southsea have collected well over 100 shoeboxes, decorated with Christmas wrapping paper and full of gifts for desperately poor children in Tanzania and Eastern Montenegro.

The school was once again delighted to support the annual Rotary Shoebox Appeal, organised by the Rotary Club of Portsmouth and Southsea.

"Every year I am overwhelmed by the generosity of our pupils and parents," says Lower School

Headmaster Tony Shrubbsall. "It is so important for our children to understand that they really can make a difference to the lives of these far less fortunate than themselves."

The gifts including toys, games, stationery, books and toiletries should reach those in need in time for Christmas.

St John's College is an independent, co-educational day and boarding school for children aged two to eighteen situated in the heart of Southsea. Founded as a boys' school in 1908, the college now attracts over 700 pupils and students to its nursery, lower and upper school and sixth form.

The college's ethos is inspired by the teachings of St. John Baptist De La Salle, the patron saint of teachers. It provides an academic education within a Christian environment, but welcomes boys and girls of all faiths and beliefs.

The aim of St John's is to assist the transition from childhood to independent and socially responsible adulthood, within a caring Christian context in keeping with the ideals of their Lasallian foundation.



● All the spirit of Christmas crammed into a shoebox by the pupils at St John's College Lower School

High standards are set by the college through its programme of investing in pupils, staff and facilities. An exciting variety of extra-curricular activities are on offer, along with academic and emotional support to ensure students feel secure and stable at the college. Visit their website for further details www.stjohnscollege.co.uk.

BOOK NOW FOR OUR NEXT EDUCATION FEATURE



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Mrs Jacky Rowe, Registrar
Tel: 01409 281429 • Fax: 01409 281784
E-mail: registrar@shebbearcollege.co.uk
Web Site: www.shebbearcollege.co.uk

An international perspective offered at Windermere St Anne's

WINDERMERE St Anne's School has a strong family atmosphere and a reputation for the development of individuals with traditional moral values, and personal attributes such as self-confidence, respect for other cultures, a community spirit and a sense of fair play.

The School, along with its junior department Elleray Preparatory School accepts both boys and girls from two-18 years as day pupils and boarders from eight years.

Parents looking for a high-quality education as well as the opportunity for their child to

develop their own strengths and interests choose WSA.

The School has a strong commitment to internationalism owing to its membership of the Round Square conference; a network of schools across the globe. The common goal of Round Square schools is to develop every student into a whole person through academic, physical, cultural and spiritual experiences.

Pupils are given many opportunities to participate in overseas community projects in Third World countries and Eastern Europe.

An international perspective is implicit in the values taught and demonstrated by the number of

students who take advantage of the exchanges we offer with schools in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, India, Kenya, Canada, USA and Switzerland.

Language exchanges in France, South America, Spain and Germany are also available.

Exceptional pastoral support and a broad extra curricular programme enhance the high academic standards. The school offers a challenging outdoor activity programme, based at its own Watersports Centre on Lake Windermere.

For further information please call 01539 446164 or e-mail admissions@wsaschool.com.

WINDERMERE ST ANNE'S SCHOOL



A unique educational experience

Boarding from age 8
Fees discounted to boarding allowance

For further information contact
Harriet Pethica, Registrar
015394 46164 admissions@wsaschool.com
www.wsaschool.com



The leading co-educational Day and Boarding School in the Lake District

Junior School
3 - 11 years



Senior School
11 - 18 years

Ryde School
with Upper Chine

Prospective parents and their children are warmly invited to our

OPEN MORNING

Saturday, 4 February 2006 from 10.00 am to 12.30 pm



Full details and a prospectus are available from
the Admissions Secretary,
Ryde School, Queen's Road, Ryde,
Isle of Wight, PO33 3BE

Tel: 01983 562229 Fax: 01983 564714 Email: school.office@rydeschool.org.uk
Ryde School is a Registered Charity No 307409



Children's Education Advisory Service

For any enquiries on Children's Education, parents should contact CEAS for help and advice



for FREE advice and support:
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Fax: 01980 618245 Mil: 94344 8245
email: enquiries.ceas@gt.net




St John's College, Portsmouth

Co-educational Independent Day & Boarding School for ages 2-18.

Ideally located in the Naval City of Portsmouth, St John's College provides unique opportunities for service boarders.

- Generous service bursaries available
- Outstanding boarding facilities
- Wide range of clubs & activities
- Excellent academic results

Upper School Entrance Assessment Sat 14th Jan

For further information or to arrange a visit please contact the Headmaster's PA on

Tel: 023 9281 5118

Nursery School 2-4, Lower School 4-11
Upper School 11-16, Sixth Form 16-18

St John's College
Grove Road South, Southsea,
Hampshire PO5 3QW
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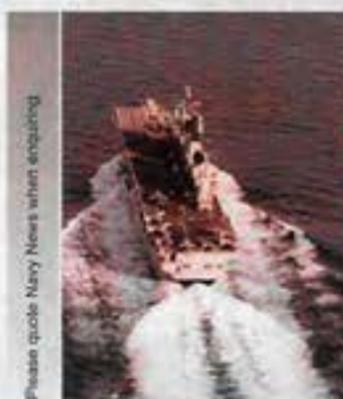
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A touch of FOST

CAPTAIN, sir. Ladies and gentlemen. Good afternoon and thank you for attending the debrief for today's NBCD exercise.

"Unfortunately, things did not go well at all for the ship's damage control and fire-fighting teams.

"You were unable to control smoke around the fire, this resulted in it spreading over three decks and two sections of the ship and ultimately required the evacuation of the operations room during a critical stage of the war fighting.

"The assessment of today's exercise is therefore below standard."

I hate giving a 'below standard' assessment, despite what the ship's company think of FOST staff, but as the lead 'wrecker' I am responsible for ensuring that ships do make the required standard.

So what went wrong today? Was my team in a particularly bad mood following such an early start?

Travelling in only four miles to work, I was up at 5am to meet the boat transfer at 6.40 but I know some of the team come in from Torquay and even as far as Falmouth, goodness knows what time they were up. Today they were all bright and breezy on the boat transfer.

The script, or 'triple' as it is called, had been prepared over the previous two weeks with FOSTies from some five FOST sub departments all contributing to ensuring the exercise would run smoothly and the defects and damage scenarios were safe, realistic and achievable.

When the final briefing was given to the onboard FOST head of department, everyone was fully aware of the scenario and was well briefed and hence subsequently in the right place at the right time to witness the actions of the ship's company.

Our preparation was okay, so this could not have been the reason for such a bad exercise.

It all started as the 'enemy' jets screamed over the ship at 50ft and the ship's gunners were blasting away with their machine guns armed with blank ammunition.

In the latest in our occasional series on the work of the Flag Officer Sea Training's team, Lt Cdr Andrew Curlewis provides the FOSTie's view of a Thursday War

I started the exercise by shouting "Bang, bang, bang" over the main broadcast and set in motion the 'wrecking' of the ship using 18 wreckers and some times up to 20 smoke grenades to simulate serious action damage (larger vessels such as aircraft carriers need 40 wreckers and 45 smokes).

But I had an inclination that things were not going well as soon as I left the bridge.

I could smell the distinctive odour of training smoke - although expected and indeed planned - it was a bad thing, as I was a long way from where the smoke should have been.

Maybe my 'wrecker' had let off too much smoke; once, training with a foreign navy, their instructors let off so much smoke that I could not see my hand in front of my face - realistic, but I could not find the fire-fighters let alone tell whether they had put the fire out or not.

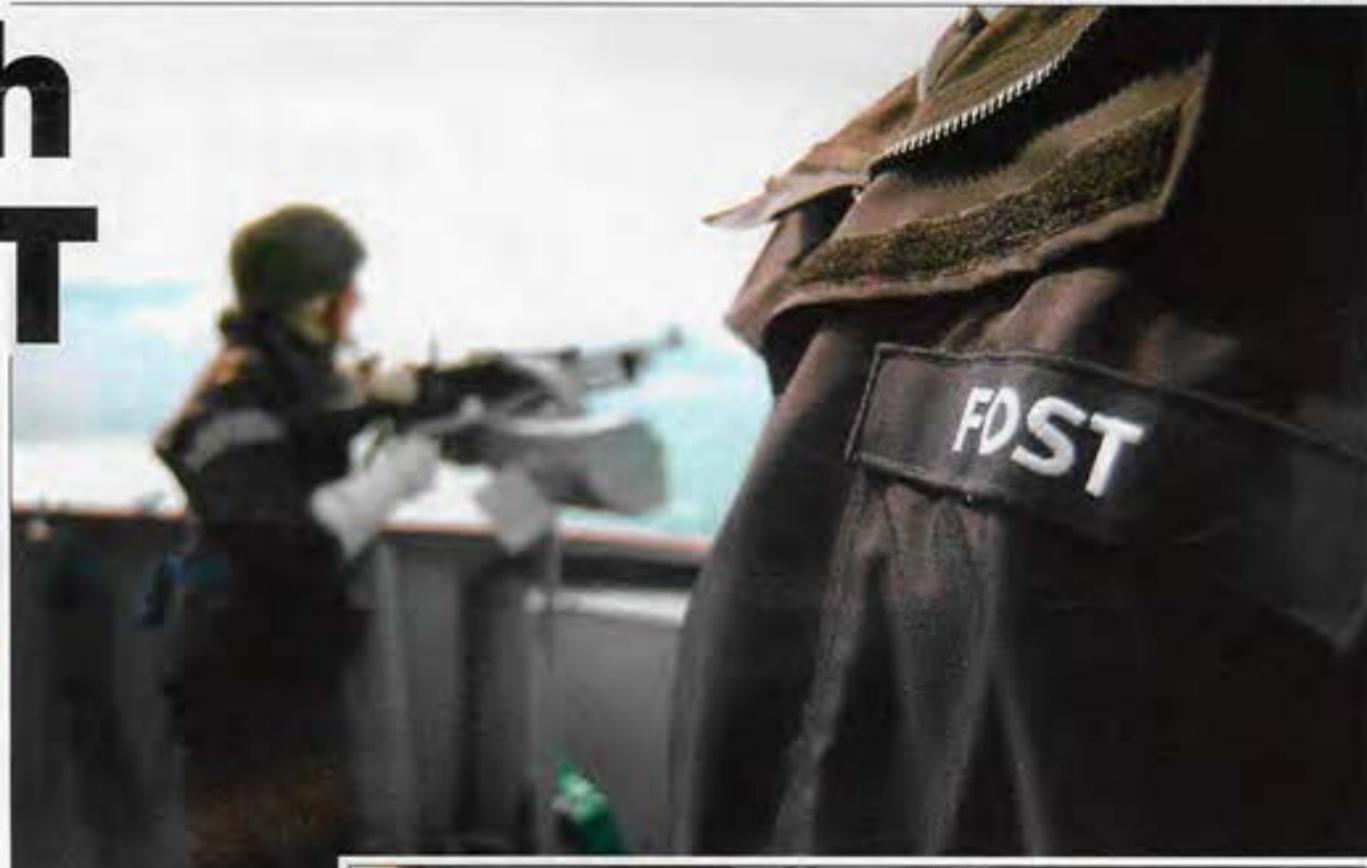
After fighting my way out of the smoke I found HQ1 where the Damage Control Officer (DCO) was in a flap.

He knew there were fires but had no idea where they were. He could even smell the smoke but before he became even more confused I reassured him that this was just residue from my overalls.

The Executive Officer arrived in HQ1 just in time to give the DCO a brief on what was happening before the Marine Engineer Officer demanded a 'command huddle'.

Luckily they pulled it together but couldn't find out why the smoke had spread so widely.

The teams battled for over two and a half hours to recover from the vast damage inflicted - in all four fires, two floods, loss of steering, loss of remote engine control



● I'll be watching you... (Above) A FOSTie oversees a gunner during a Thursday War aboard HMS Manchester (not the ship in the article...)

and multiple machinery damage in both the engine spaces and weapon systems.

On the whole the ship responded very well considering the level of damage we gave them but smoke control is a real killer and is penalised heavily.

We eventually got off the ship at around 4.30pm after it conducted a RAS, saved a VIP from a stricken vessel and fought off four fighter-bomber attacks.

Back in the office, I jostled with the other NBCD officers to ensure our weekly progress reports were staffed correctly through our head of department.

After finally sifting the e-mails and completing the inevitable paperwork it was time to head off home; only 7.30pm a fairly early evening this week!

As I headed out of the office, one of the instructors asked me if we were aware of a defect with one of the ship's air treatment units - it transpires that there was a defect which allowed smoke to unusually spread so widely around the ship.

Ah, this is why it did not go so well for the ship! Well, at least they will have another war next Thursday to try it all again...



● Is it me, or is this bloke causing us problems? Engineers confer in HMS Lancaster's SCC - Ship Control Centre - as FOST Marine Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Mark Preston observes the performance of the frigate (again, not the ship in the article...)

For gash get cash

HOW much would you be prepared to pay for a tanker load of 'fresh' black water (that's sewage to the uninformed) from a frigate?

How does £650 sound?

That's how much the DLO and QinetiQ boffins working on the next generation of integrated waste systems for the Royal Navy pay for a batch to test the efficiency of their technology.

How to get rid of the huge amounts of gash produced by warships has always been an issue.

And with ever tightening environmental legislation, such as the international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships (MARPOL), in future a ship's waste will have to be offloaded at port for land disposal, or be treated onboard to achieve the strict new environmental targets.

Dumping over the side isn't an option. Chuck a drink's can over the side and the chances are that when your great great great (add three more greats) grandchild goes for a paddle, that self same can could go bobbing by.

In anticipation of this the RN is working with the Defence Logistic Organisation and QinetiQ to develop ways of solving the gash problem.

Advanced waste treatment equipment is being tested on HMS Grafton and Illustrious, with Ark Royal due to be kitted out this year, with a view to having the technology ready and Jack-proof for all ships by 2008.

"In the littoral environment, we don't come off task for propulsion systems or for weapons systems, but we do for waste management!" explained, Capt Bob

Rusbridger, the Integrated Project Team leader.

Often commanding officers have to plan their routes to incorporate trips into port to get rid of gash.

And the RN produces a lot of gash. When HMS Ocean, for example, had 1,300 people aboard, they produced 120 bin bags of rubbish every day.

A frigate's ship's company can produce 2½ tons of sewage (sorry, black water) and 32 tons of grey water (water used for showering and general cleaning) a day, and some systems have to cope with 12 tons of that - all finding its way into the holding tanks in two hours. That's a lot of... black water.

Storage of this waste means that the ship has to find a port every four to five days to offload it all.

That's if you can find a port that is prepared to take it. And when you do, offloading can take a Type 23 Frigate four to five hours, and all that time the ship is vulnerable to terrorist threats.

As Lt Cdr Ian Cowper of the waste team explained: "We don't want to find ourselves in the position where we have Type 42s having to escort gash barges into port."

If there's a leak it can result in hefty fines and the chance of the commanding officer being named.

For the last three years Grafton has been testing new ways of coping with waste water.

Grey water can be cleaned up to the standard whereby it can be recycled as washing water for cleaning the deck, aircraft or even for use in the laundries.

Being able to recycle is

significant if you know that frigates offloading grey water in the US can attract a bill for £750,000 for just a three-month period.

Handling solid waste is a labour-intensive, unpleasant business - just ask anyone who has had the delight of offloading NATO pallets, quite literally bursting at the seams with rotting and stinking food that has often been bubbling away for days in hot storage areas.

But thanks to the introduction of new waste-gobbling technology all that is changing.

Pyrolysis is a highly advanced form of waste incineration. Working on just 15 amps the system operates at 1,100°C and in - five hours - can reduce HMS Ocean's 680 kgs of daily waste - metal, paper, food, cardboard, glass, rags - to six pallets of ash without pumping illegal pollutants into the air - a process which used to take six people 22 hours to complete.

Waste systems being tested on HMS Illustrious are capable of reducing the 20 tons of gash produced by 1,300 people down to eight.

Another method being tested to take the 'eeew' out of food storage is microwave treatment.

By zapping the waste in a vacuum - to prevent arcing from any metal forks that Jack may have inadvertently left in the gash - 100 per cent of the water content is removed, reducing the volume needing to be stored and removing the environment that bacteria thrive on. It also means that six buckets of evil paste are reduced to one of handle-able, friable dust. One killick seeing the system in action wanted one on board his ship straight away.

RECRUITMENT

Combined Cadet Force School Staff Instructor (SSI)

We are looking for an enthusiastic, well organised hard working individual with excellent interpersonal skills to provide a supporting role to our Contingent Commander.

The Combined Cadet Force aims to teach our pupils practical skills which are not covered within the school curriculum and is split into three sections, Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. Each section provides specific training for its cadets; this is put into practice during various exercises throughout the year. The contingent runs regular overseas expeditions for outward bound training as well as an annual skiing trip to Bavaria. The successful candidate will assist the Commanding Officer in all aspects of administration, security matters, health & safety practices and routine maintenance of CCF stores and vehicles.

The successful candidate will ideally have served in the regular forces, preferably as a senior NCO or Warrant Officer. Adventure training qualification and experience of working with children would be an advantage.

Salary will be in the region of £19890 - £23460, plus an allowance paid by MOD for time spent on exercise of up to £2000. Some overtime payments are also available.

The School occupies fine buildings near St Paul's Cathedral and overlooking the Thames, opposite the Tate Modern Art Gallery at Bankside and the Globe Theatre.

For an Application form and further details, please email sfd@cls.org.uk

Additional information on the school and contingent can be found at - www.cls.org.uk

Closing date for completed applications is 17th January 2006.

In tests, one out of five sailors expressed no or an outdated preference



ET phone 01752 553740

The DNCM policy hub acts as the centralised co-ordination division for all issues that impact on career management in the widest sense.

Drafty's Corner

Top of the in-tray at the moment is Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) which is due for introduction in the RN in June 2006.

Not only will this change the way pay and allowances are administered, it will also amend the method by which the three Services 'career manage' their people.

Whilst it is too early to say what the exact impact of this business change will be, it is fair to say that an element of disruption may occur in June and July next year.

To minimise the disruption, we are already working on assignments (new speak) up to 12 months hence in order to reduce the workload immediately prior to and after the transition period.

Please be patient and understanding while the career managers, and everybody else, get up to speed on this new system.

Finally in this section, a second plea: when JPA goes live there will be no preferences immediately available to the career managers on the system.

Those held on NMMIS may be available via a separate route. As a result, one of the first things you must do when accessing your individual JPA account is to update your preferences; no preferences means that the career manager can legitimately place you in any job as a IPRE. So self-help is required!

And on the theme of preferences, it is surprising to note that over 7,500 people have either no preference currently recorded or preferences that are over three years old.

We accept that for some, their preferences may not have changed, but judging from the number of individuals the RCMA see who are drafted, in accordance with current

system preferences, to units/areas they no longer want, we do not believe this to be the case. If we don't have valid preferences recorded, we cannot take them into account during the career management process... exploit the system to your advantage!

The RCMA's, in all the main naval locations, remain the face of DNCM to the bulk of the Naval population.

Anyone, including officers, can have an appointment - drop-in or pre-booked - to discuss any matter of career management; from what jobs are coming up in a particular time scale, through future career paths to an 'agony aunt' role.

A major focus of these individual's work is in the retention campaign.

Contacting the RCMA prior to submission of notice, or after a standover from CO's table, will allow a frank and honest discussion to take place.

They may be able to - and have done so on a number of occasions - resolve the underlying issue that is driving an individual away from the Service.

The RCMA's can also provide information as to the potential impact upon an individual's career should they become pregnant; the obligations on both parties should they return to work and how best to de-conflict liability for sea service should child care arrangements require one parent to remain ashore.

Never forget these guys are independent of the chain of command and although working for Drafty, they are not drafters.

They are all senior experienced individuals who, if they don't know the answer immediately, have a wide supporting network of contacts who can provide the answer, however palatable this may be.



Sob stories ... 'you could drown in them'

Pension deadline looming

ALL Offer To Transfer (OTT) pension packs have been handed out to relevant sailors and Royal Marines.

You must return your pack receipt immediately, bear in mind all the factors carefully - and ask your UPO for help if needed - but especially make your decision known and return your election form by **JANUARY 20**. (If you need more time, speak to your UPO).

Feedback from recent ship visits has shown that many sailors have shown no interest in pensions in general (even though anyone who has served more than two years is entitled to one).

Other comments have shown that many sailors believe the new system is a cost-cutting measure. The MOD stresses that the new pension is neither better nor worse than the existing set-up, rather it is different in the benefits it provides and the way these are paid.

And many sailors and marines are unsure about making a pension decision because they are uncertain about future promotions or their length of career.

If you are not sure consider financial, career and family issues (such as looking at how your loved ones would benefit under the different schemes).

If in doubt, ask your UPO.

Continuing to be the Navy's conscience

FINANCIAL issues. Finding a dentist. Home improvements. Better communication. Personal welfare.

No, not some of the subjects an MP might deal with at a weekly surgery, but an idea of the many and varied issues the Naval Families Federation have had to tackle in the past 12 months.

The federation celebrated its second birthday aboard flagship HMS Illustrious with the obligatory cutting of a cake (chairwoman Kim Richardson and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns performed the honours).

The federation was set up in 2003 to give families a voice at the top table about all aspects of RN and RM life.

Two years down the line, Mrs Richardson - herself the wife of a logistics officer - says the majority of her team's time is consumed by communications: ensuring Service families know what is going on regarding pay, conditions, operational welfare packages, deployments, accommodation and much, much more.

Housing continues to be an issue, despite millions being pumped into single accommodation around Senior Service establishments and the MOD's pledge to revamp family homes.

"There are areas of the country where there is quite simply no Service Families Accommodation," said Mrs Richardson.

"This has resulted in families being offered substitute accommodation which is rarely a satisfactory solution and in the Plymouth area, for example, is in very short supply."

Linked with problems of accommodation is the problem of finding a dentist.

With RN and RM families moving on a regular basis, the difficulty of registering with a molar explorer (sorry - Ed) is even more acute; the Federation wants to see a commitment to supporting Service families getting a dentist.

Pay is always an issue, whether it's problems with a monthly wage or misunderstandings with a Unit Personnel Office (UPO in common RN parlance).

Some sailors and marines have raised questions with the Federation about operational welfare cash and how it may be spent.

"Whilst it's widely acknowledged to be a very positive benefit there are some concerns among families that it doesn't meet the needs of everybody - submariners, for example," said Mrs Richardson, who has passed on these concerns to the 'powers that be' to look into.

One particularly positive aspect has been chatting to prospective Commanding and Executive Officers on their courses about welfare issues.

In all, year two for the federation has been varied and challenging - not least because it's run by a team of just four people (the RAF and Army have teams 60-plus-



A slice of Naval life... New Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns helps NFF chairwoman Kim Richardson cut the federation's second birthday cake

Picture: LA(Phot) Mike Handy

strong, Mrs Richardson is quick to point out).

"We continue to be, in Admiral Sir Jonathon Band's words, 'the

Navy's conscience," she added. More details from www.nff.org.uk, www.rncom.mod.uk or 023 9265 4374.

... and new branch lines take shape

THE first step in the huge branch transfer programme has been completed with nine out of ten killicks and nearly eight out of ten able rates getting their first choice of new career.

Four thousand questionnaires were sent out to ratings affected by the shake-up of the branch structure... and each one of the 3,520 completed forms returned was read by the Transfer Board.

The board determined that 3,360 sailors were eligible for transfer to a new branch: 94 per cent of leading hands got their first-choice branch, as did 78 per cent of able rates. Everyone else got their second choice of branch; no-one got their third choice.

Sailors affected by the changes should have been notified by signal by now.

Further transfers will take place, the next batch in May when another 400 questionnaires will be considered.

The final batch of branch moves will take place in the autumn when sailors who joined up in April 2005 will fill in their questionnaires.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns said the transfer process had been "fair to the individual sailor and to the Service."



The reggies are dead... Long live the police

JUST imagine, no more Crusher, Jaunty or Jossman and while we're at it, killick dog.

Oh joy. No-one to bawl at you at turn-to about your 5 o'clock shadow or spot from a hundred yards that your bats need polishing.

Now that we have your attention, it's time to wake up, iron a shirt and polish those shoes, because, in reality, wishes never do come true...

In all honesty, none of us are that interested in discipline or Service Police, unless it directly affects us.

Were you aware that the Naval Discipline Act is going to be replaced by a tri-Service Armed Forces Act, currently going through Parliament as a Bill?

A single discipline Act covering all three services - how radical!

It may have taken some time, but the brave new world that is the Armed Forces Act will provide a harmonised and modern discipline framework for the Services as we increasingly operate in the joint environment.

Mmmmm, all very interesting, but how does this affect you?

Well our current judicial system is fair and transparent, but the new Act will provide consistency in the way we are all treated.

Personnel from all three Services who more and more train and operate together will be subject to the same disciplinary process wherever they serve.

Work is also under way to see whether a large slice of less serious disciplinary matters could be dealt with administratively, thus allowing the RN police to concentrate on more serious issues.

Any new administrative system will be equally fair, but it will enable superior officers at all levels to deal quickly and effectively with



● Regulation's what you need... Jack has a brush with the Jossman as immortalised by Tugg (above) and a sailor faces her punishment at the captain's table in this posed shot (right)

minor transgressions such as short periods of unauthorised absence or leave-breaking.

So what of the Reggies you may (or may not) ask?

Last year the Vice Chief of Defence Staff commissioned a report into the 'Requirements for Service Police'.

His recommendations were published earlier this year and the NBPCP (Navy Board Personnel Change Programme) has taken this on as a project with the intention of dovetailing the changes into the myriad developments that will fall out from the new tri-Service Act.

As hard as you wished, they are still here and here to stay, although in recognition of their changing role the Regulating Branch will be re-titled 'Royal Navy Police' with a corresponding change to their individual rank titles.

Subtle changes to uniform by way of insignia will make them more identifiable as police, particularly in the tri-Service environment.

Don't worry though: they will still be the affable and good-humoured characters that we all know and love!

For those who would like to read further the MOD has published a memorandum on 'the Armed Forces Bill available on the Defence Intranet.

Either visit 2SL website and search for Armed Forces Bill or follow the address: http://Centre.defence.mod.uk/DGCC_News-Portal/stories/0410/DefTSAF-billMemo14100.pdf

Anyone wishing to comment or who has a question should contact the Service Police Review Team 9380 25877 or e-mail 2SL-DNLM-SPRT2



'We can all play a part here'

Part-time sailors adjust to Navy life

RATINGS beginning their RN career arrive at HMS Raleigh to immerse themselves in Senior Service life over an eight-week period.

Reservists also turn up at the Torpoint training establishment... but for them the basic entry course lasts for a mere two weeks.

Then again, by the time reservists arrive at Raleigh's main gate, they have already passed the first phase of a three-part training programme - getting up to the required fitness level, mustering kit, brushing up on RN knowledge and some basic parade ground training.

So they come to Raleigh roughly on a par with regulars in the fourth week of basic training, as Andrew Bland in *Class 43/05* writes.

Day one began early but in a relaxed manner, with an introduction session and the selection of Class Leader and Deputy Class Leader.

We were then issued our kit and were measured for our number one uniform.

The first major physical test was in the gym, with press-ups, sit-ups and a sprint.

We were under pressure to pass these tests immediately, as only three remedial sessions were available to us during the course of the two weeks; thus preparation within our own unit was essential.

We were eased into our first kit muster, having to put out only a selection of kit, including white fronts and number fours, as we built up to our first full kit muster, on Wednesday.

By then we had passed the RN swimming test and also stepped off the high board, in preparation for our sea survival training on the Friday.

This was done at Phoenix on Horsea Island and Thursday's coach trip from Plymouth to

Portsmouth was a welcome chance to catch up on some sleep and take a break from cleaning and ironing.

A night spent on HMS Bristol was another valuable insight into navy life.

The middle weekend saw us camping on Dartmoor with week six recruits from the regular navy.

Two days surviving on ration packs was more than made up for by a trip to the pub after Sunday's ten-mile hike.

We also saw the clocks go back whilst on the moor, and thus had the luxury of an extra hour in our cold, damp sleeping bags.

Week two brought introductions to seamanship, first aid and NBCD, whilst a chance to improve upon the team-building skills developed on Dartmoor was provided by the assault course and the DRIU.

Fitness remained essential, and we were soon back in the gym to do the multi-stage fitness test, although there was also fun to be had with a game of staff-rules rounders.

Personal administration became the main priority, with our evenings spent preparing for Wednesday's final kit muster, knowing the prize of a run ashore awaited those who passed.

We also began to hit the parade ground in earnest, as the passing out parade loomed.

For Class 43/05 this was particularly important as HRH Prince Edward the Earl of Wessex was due a visit to Raleigh, the first Royal visitor for some years.

A 96-man guard, along with the entire ship's company, were present for the Prince's review and our families and friends were able to see us pass out alongside a class of artificers.

■ See page 31 for details of the Earl's Raleigh visit

IN his new year's message to all Sailors and Royal Marines, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns (pictured) writes:

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all following a well-earned break with friends and family and to offer my most sincere thanks for the efforts you have all made in continuing to deliver the 'people element' of operational capability - not an easy task in this present climate of almost constant change.

Last year was an extremely busy one that has laid the groundwork for some significant changes in 2006 - in particular the roll-out of the Joint Personnel Administration and the outcome of the Defence Training Review, which will affect us all.

While I firmly believe that we have developed these and other programmes effectively so far, we will need to remain closely engaged as the implications of ongoing work become clearer, such as the implementation of branch development across the Service, currently being trialled in HMS Northumberland.

The Branch Transfer Questionnaire process is now complete and has been extremely successful as we achieved the branch manning targets we were hoping for.

We must now look forward to realising the benefits at sea and I will need the help and continued efforts of each and every one of you if we are to deliver these exciting personnel-related



developments.

The ongoing Personnel Change Programme will continue to investigate how the men and women of a versatile maritime force can be delivered over the next 15 years so that we have sufficient, capable and motivated people to man a world-class Navy.

From an individual perspective, the key tenets of the 'Dark Blue Line' project should ensure that we develop everyone during their career, with a particular focus on leadership and management issues.

Moreover, if we're to drive out the current manpower shortages within the RN and Royal Marines and, in particular, deal with key 'pinch point' areas, we will need to remain sharply focused on recruiting the right people with the right skills. We can all play a part here in developing links with the wider community and taking advantage of the considerable reputational benefits that the Service has gained as a result of Trafalgar 200 events.

People issues continue to be at the forefront of the Navy Board's agenda and I'm looking forward to ensuring that RN and RM personnel remain the jewel in the Naval crown.

Allied to the broader personnel projects are the more personal changes, such as the Armed Forces Pension Scheme, which will require you to take a close interest in how these initiatives will affect you personally.

The information is out there and I strongly encourage you all to read it.

The deadline for the first of these initiatives is the return of your AFPS Offer to Transfer forms by January 20.

Civil partnerships, greater awareness of equality and diversity, the delivery of modern, exciting facilities such as single living accommodation, and the roll-out of Pay As You Dine, where the choice is with the individual, are just a few examples.

It's important that links to home and the family are also maintained and the development of www.rncom.mod.uk over the last year and the emergence of the Naval Families Federation are major enablers to staying in touch with loved ones.

The Federation is flourishing, having just celebrated its second birthday, and provides an invaluable independent service in its role as a link between families and the Naval Service.

So thank you, welcome back and good luck for the coming year.



Farewell to a Sea Cadet champion

AFTER a distinguished career in the Royal Navy, Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Tod KCB CBE joined the Sea Cadet Association as Chairman in July 1998.

When the SCA merged with the Marine Society in November 2004, to form The Marine Society & Sea Cadets, he became Vice Chairman, a post from which he retired on November 17.

The charity would like to express its immense gratitude to Admiral Tod for the hundreds of hours he has given to the organisation.

He not only chaired the Trustees and visited Sea Cadet Units the length and the breadth of the country, but most importantly, throughout his association with the organisation, has been an indefatigable champion of the Sea Cadet cause whenever and wherever possible.

Both he and Lady Tod (Claire) will be very much missed and we wish them and their family every happiness.



● Above... Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Tod KCB CBE



● Above... The Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Mrs Mary Fagan JP, presents her Badge to PO Cadet Claire Hooke of TS Hornet, Gosport.

Lord Lieutenants' Cadets

TWO CADETS have recently been honoured by their counties, receiving Lord Lieutenants' Cadet of the Year Awards.

POC Claire Hook (17), from the Gosport Unit, was presented with her Award at TS Hornet and POC Bryn Hawkins, from the High Wycombe Unit received his at the TA Centre Centre in Aylesbury.

Claire has been a member of the Gosport Unit since October 2000, and was promoted to PO in September last year.

She has gained specialisation successes in seamanship (first class), cook/steward, communications and first aid, while in boatwork she has achieved pulling coxswain and RYA Start Sailing awards.

She has also been very active on the offshore sailing front on two training cruises on TS Earl of Romney and three on board TS Royalist, gaining offshore power hand and offshore seaman awards.

Claire has also been at the forefront in other SCC sports events including five-a-side football, athletics, and cross-country running.

Her smartness and excellence at drill ensured that she was selected as a member of the SCC Royal Guard at the Trafalgar 200 and IFOS celebrations in Portsmouth.

Claire's future aims are to go to university on completion of her A levels to study law and then train to become a barrister.

Bryn also joined his SCC Unit in 2000 and was rated to PO last year.

He has proved himself to be an excellent all-round cadet and additionally he is a very keen musician, last year taking part in all of the Sea Cadet National Massed Bands engagements.



● Above... PO Cadet Bryn Hawkins, of TS Jaguar, High Wycombe, receives his Lord Lieutenant's Badge from the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, Henry Aubrey-Fletcher.

Sea Cadets go international

THE THEME of the recent International Sea Cadet Corps Association (ISCA) Conference, held at Portsmouth and hosted by the UK Sea Cadet Corps, was "Grappling with Growth".

There were presentations and discussions covering topics such as the recruitment and retention of cadets and adults, personal growth and training and education. Thirty-five delegates, representing 13 of the 18 member nations, attended, the Association itself growing during the conference, with Lithuania and Ghana welcomed as new members.

Conference delegates were able to visit the UK's two training ships, TS Royalist and TS John Jerwood, and a number of them ventured up to the top of Royalist's mast. Volunteers from the Sea Cadet Corps joined the Conference delegates for a reception on board HMS Victory and the grand finale was a magnificent dinner on board HMS Warrior 1860.

Two of the objectives of the ISCA are to promote international and inter-cultural understanding, goodwill and friendship among young people who have an interest in nautical activities, and to promote the exchange of Sea Cadets between member organisations.

Every year almost 60 UK Sea Cadets travel all over the world as part of the international exchange programme. In 2006 there will be exchanges to Australia, Bermuda, Canada, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden and the USA.

And who better to tell more about the experience than Cadets who've been there? Read on...



● On board the Russian training ship Veliky Novgorod

We made our way across the bay by rowing dories in international teams. Although our boat hit shore last, I managed to learn the phrase "ice cold beer" in four languages as we pulled our way across. We spent the day chopping and sawing wood for the bonfire in the evening. We managed to get a barbecue going and spent the evening around the fire playing games and telling ghost stories.

– Anton Gardner, Stratford-upon-Avon Unit, visits the USA

Best day! Five of us got up early and went racing in a 41ft yacht called Tsunami. I love yacht racing and it was great. We then got back and had time to go on the glass bottom boat ride, which was great too. In the night a cockroach crawled over me! Handy hints: go sailing, go on a glass boat tour, spray yourself with bug repellent.

– Verity Taylor from Hereford Unit visits Bermuda

Today we went on a day hike up Mount Washington with the adventure training team. We learned all about bears and how to survive in the wilderness. At the top of Mount Washington was glacier water for us to swim in – very, very cold, but beautiful! To top off a fantastic day we went to the ship's company dance.

– Gemma Louise Heasom from Bolton Unit visits Canada

We had a very interesting day today visiting the Hong Kong Maritime Police. I found the talk interesting, the harbour cruise and temple visit enjoyable and educational, and the speedboat ride amazing. Max speed 60 knots!

– Duncan Gould, Dundee Unit, visits Hong Kong



● Keeping warm in the Ice Hotel in Sweden



● Chief Mate Arkady Varukhin from Russia scales the mainmast of TS Royalist

We arrived on an island with a weird name and took a huge walk to a cathedral. When we got there it was an amazing church with beautiful architecture. Island population – two. We had a disco after and adopted a South Korean dude called Jae Young who we nicknamed "Ping"! I had a dance-off against the Estonians... and won!

– Adam Collins from Tamworth Unit visits Russia

This morning we went to an old Navy base which was a few centuries old but still good. More boating this afternoon – first time on a banana boat and I managed to stay on, which was cool. In the evening it was time for the cultural exchange. We brought "Head, shoulders, knees and toes" to Korea and we had 150-plus doing it, which was a sight to see.

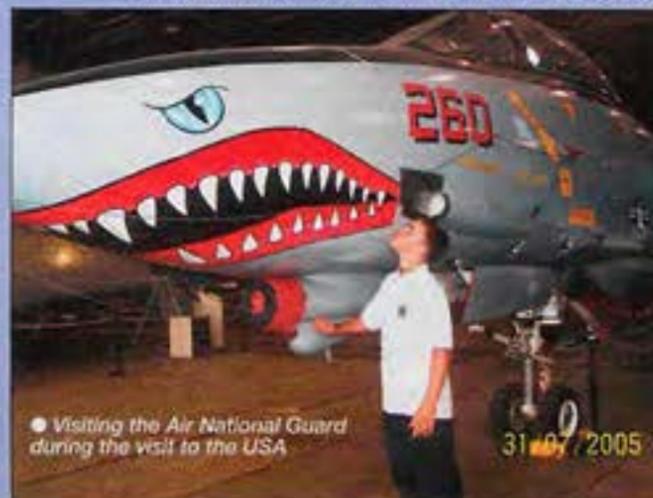
– Nick Sheldon, Bristol Filton Unit, visits South Korea

We went sailing, but there was no wind so we decided to drop anchor and go for a swim instead. In the boat were the UK and Canadian Sea Cadets and Rene, Frank and Chris from the Dutch Sea Cadets. The evening's activity was raft-building... Today we went to Amsterdam and went to Anne Frank's house which was brilliant to explore and we saw the setting of her world-famous book.

– Chris Thompson, Fleetwood Unit, visits the Netherlands

After tidying our barracks at Camp Edwards we travelled to the site of the Air National Guard and had the pleasure of watching three F15 fighter jets take off. Afterwards we toured the airborne arm of the US Coast Guard and then travelled to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy where we got a taster of the courses taken by those interested in the US Merchant Marine.

– Adam Chrimes, Nottingham Unit, visits the USA



● Visiting the Air National Guard during the visit to the USA

31/07/2005

Do you fancy going international?

Cadets wishing to apply to take part in one of this year's Sea Cadet Corps exchange visits need to act fast. Closing date for applications for Australia is January 20 and for all the other countries it is February 24.

You should apply on Exchange Application form SCC T17, which is available from Units and also can be downloaded from: www.sccheadquarters.com

The completed forms must be returned to The Marine Society & Sea Cadets Headquarters.

A most Gallant commissioning

MORE than 80 guests witnessed the official opening of the **Westerham** Sea Cadet Unit, fittingly held on October 21st, on the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

The official launching of TS Gallant was carried out by Mrs Caroline Bailey, whose uncle was killed in action on board HMS Gallant during the Malta Convoys of World War 2.

Naming the ship Gallant, Mrs Bailey said how honoured she was that the name would continue and how proud she was to be launching her.

On completion, cadets proudly received their

new TS Gallant cap tallies from Mrs Bailey, and she presented a framed picture of HMS Gallant and a photo of the wartime ship's company to the Unit.

In attendance at the Commissioning were Southern Area officer, Cdr Gary Bushall and his predecessor, Cdr Binns, along with Lt Cdrs Fuller and Jones RNR and COs and staff from units throughout West Kent.

Cdr Bushall inspected the Guard, made up of cadets from Sheppey and Medway towns and the commissioning service was conducted by Rev P McVeagh, the unit chaplain.



● Westerham cadets pose for their first group photograph after the Commissioning Ceremony

Laforey to the fore

FOR THE second year running the **Northampton and Wellingborough** Unit (TS Laforey) has reached the final six to compete for the prestigious Canada Trophy.

Last year they managed to win the trophy, awarded to the best of the UK Sea Cadet units, and they have their eyes set on keeping it for a second year.

At the annual Eastern Area Conference (the Eastern Area includes all Units from North Yorkshire down to Hertfordshire, including East Anglia) the Northampton Unit was presented with three trophies – the Northumbrian Crutch for the best utilisation of boats, the Angus Pearson Memorial Shield for the best junior Sea Cadet section and the Stephenson Trophy for best overall Sea Cadet Unit in the Eastern Area.

It was this last trophy that gave them their place in the competition for the Canada Trophy.

Cadets at the Unit are particularly proud of their achievements and that, although being located inland, they can successfully compete with units from seafaring and naval towns and cities.

They are all preparing for the final assessments in February and looking forward to a successful 2006.

Fantastic visit for Lochaber

TALKING like Donald Duck was one of the memorable moments for the **Lochaber** cadets who were invited on board HMS Pembroke while the ship was visiting Mallaig.

During their tour of the Sandown-class minehunter they visited the bridge, ops room and the diving department.

It was here that they were given the chance to try out the high tech diving equipment, breathing a helium/oxygen gas mix – hence the Disney voices.

The cadets had the opportunity to quiz the crew members about the ship's technology and their work and life at sea in general.

Two of the newest cadets later gave their impressions of the visit.

"It was fantastic" said Onnagh Redmond, "I would love to go again."

Thomas Kirkland agreed, "I really enjoyed finding out about how the ship's yellow submarine finds and blows up mines," he added.



● LC All Warner tries out one of the diving sets on board HMS Pembroke

The Hornchurch Four



● Above... Happy cup winners. (L-R) Matthew Bailey, Rebecca Copeland, Jacqui Stannard and Emma Butcher

HORNCHURCH Unit proudly accepted four awards at the Essex District Prize Giving Ceremony held on October 8.

In competition with the ten other Units in the District, A/C Rebecca Copeland's award was for waterborne achievement, A/C Emma Butcher was judged as the best ambassador, L/C Matthew Bailey was best leading cadet and L/C Jacqui Stannard was the Cadet of the Year.

Congratulations to all four!

Falklands inspection



ANNUAL inspection is something all Sea Cadet Corps units have to undergo, and the fact that the Unit is based several thousand miles away in the **Falkland Islands** doesn't prevent it happening.

TS Endurance, the aptly-named unit in Stanley (the old HMS Endurance played a key role in the 1982 war), underwent its inspection in November and, despite recent staff changes, it came out with flying colours and it proved to be an enjoyable and very satisfying experience.

The formal Inspection Parade took place at the Falkland Island Defence Force HQ, witnessed by cadets' parents, ex-Service associations and members of the local community.

There followed a series of evolutions by the cadets – setting up an observation post (the wrong way and the right way), rope work etc, and finally a training quiz.

During the inspection a number of presentations were made to the cadets, including good conduct badges, piping badges and boatwork awards.

Cadet of the Year award went to MC2 Marc Courtney, Governor's Cadet 2005/6 was MC LCpl Dion Robertson.

Inspection completed, the Unit is now looking forward

● Above and below... Rugged country where the Falklands cadets undergo inspection



to a bright and more-settled future under their new Officer-in-Charge, Sgt (SCC) Ken Newton and the new Chairman of Management Committee, Lt Cdr J Maskell-Bott.

Hat trick for Swansea

FOR THE third year running the **Swansea** Unit has won the South-West Area Adventure Training Shield – an all-time record.

Team leader of the Swansea adventurers was Jason Davies, the rest of the winning team being Joe Kennedy, Robert John, Stefan Evans, Nigel Morgan and Martin Lyall.

RNVR Youth Sail Training Trust

THE RNVR Youth Sailing Trust has given its 1,000th Bursary Award to the Lincoln Sea Cadet Unit.

The Award was given while the cadets were training on board TS John Jerwood.

Pirates of the London suburbs

SOUTHWARK cadets swapped their uniforms for pirate outfits during the specially-designated "Talk Like a Pirate Day" when money was raised for the Marie Curie Cancer Care.



● Above... Ahoy, me hearties! Southwark cadets in pirate mode



Ten cadets with 75 years service

THE HIGH retention rate, and the fact that cadets are accepted at a younger age means that the **Hendon** Unit have been able to boast of their long-serving members.

Nevertheless, the latest line-up is really exceptional, with six POCs and 4 LCs combined service in the Unit amounting to 75 years.

The voluntary staff are also long serving, with a total of 290 years served between 14 staff members, cadet to adult, with the Commanding Officer and his wife accounting for 85 of these years.

The cadets, pictured above, are: Back row (L-R) PO Ashley Llewellyn, PO Instr Christopher Proud and POs Tom Wyatt, James Kennedy, Robert Welford and James Doris. Front (L-R) LCs Alex Turton, Trevor Wall and Stefano Laorenza.

(OK, that's only nine – Ed, Unable to attend for the picture was the tenth cadet, LC Padraig Fitzpatrick).

Apollo calling

IN APRIL TS Apollo at **Marlow** will be celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Planned celebrations include the holding of a mess dinner at the Unit on April 23, and it is hoped that as many former cadets, officers and supporters will be able to attend.

Those interested are invited to contact Denise Roberts, a member of the parent-supporter committee, for details. Her phone number is 01628 487332

Raising funds for the Corps

WHITEHAVEN Sea Cadets received a cheque for £430 from Vertex, following a charity fun day held by the local company.

"To make it as much fun as possible," explained Vertex's Elizabeth Bell, "we decided to make it fancy dress."

"With our location on the harbour and Whitehaven's maritime history it naturally had to have a nautical theme and we finally settled on pirates."

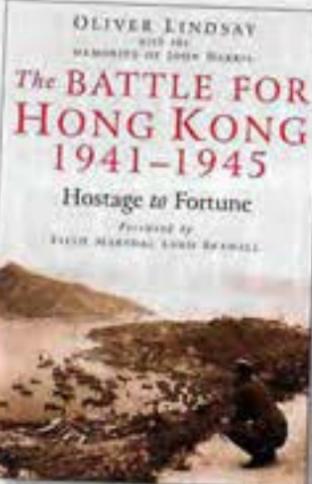
But why the Sea Cadets?

"It had to be a local charity," said Elizabeth, "and the nautical theme made the Sea Cadets the obvious choice. They are a respected youth organisation in the area and we at Vertex are pleased to support them."

Receiving the cheque Whitehaven's SCC chairman, Chas Tinkler, said:

"The amount raised in just one day by a fairly small group is amazing. We really cannot thank them enough."

Down in the West Country, it was the efforts of two RN Warrant Officers that resulted in the **Bristol** Unit receiving over £900, money that was raised by sponsorship for their entry in the Cardiff Half Marathon. WO's Stuart Lishman and Jason Holroyd, who both work at DLO Abbeywood, have been helping out at the Bristol unit, instructing in leadership, drill, power of command, engineering, rope work and general naval knowledge.



Hong Kong's tragedy – and triumph

THE fall of Singapore has often overshadowed the loss of Britain's other great colony in the Far East, Hong Kong, seized at Christmas in 1941.

But as Col Oliver Lindsay, perhaps the foremost authority on the fall and occupation of the colony, points out in his valuable addition to WW2 literature *The Battle for Hong Kong 1941-1945: Hostage to Fortune* (Spellbound, £20), its defenders – and that includes the RN – fought valiantly against overwhelming odds.

Col Lindsay, a former Grenadier Guards officer, walked the battlefield with survivors of the campaign when he was stationed in Hong Kong in the mid-1970s, writes Capt Peter Grindal RN.

Three decades earlier, and as Churchill put it, the colony "fought a good fight. They had won indeed 'the lasting honour'"; the Royal Navy and Hong Kong Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve could take pride in their contribution to the 'good fight'.

The old destroyer *Thracian* was lost and MTBs attacked the invasion force with marked gallantry during the Japanese onslaught of December 1941.

The author draws on Japanese reports, one of which laments that "gunboats were active along the flank of our attacking unit during the offensive, menacing by bombardment and obstructing our action considerably".

After the surrender on Christmas Day, the surviving MTB crews evaded capture and, after many adventures, they reached unoccupied China whence they made their way to England.

Meanwhile, in the PoW camps, Naval officers built and operated a clandestine radio set before its discovery led to their brutal interrogation by the Japanese.

Finally, it was the Navy, of course, which relieved the colony and accepted the surrender of the occupying force.

In this enthralling book, Col Lindsay not only describes with clarity, colour and some new insights a complex episode and the key British personalities involved, but he also argues cogently for recognition of the gallantry of the defenders in a hopeless cause.

THE most important book received over the last month has been *There and Back* (Elliott and Thompson, £18.00), the memoirs of Admiral Sir Jeremy Black, one of the most popular and significant officers of the second half of the 20th Century.

The son of an officer in the Merchant service, Black joined the Navy as a 13-year-old entrant at Eaton Hall in 1946, the Royal Naval College Dartmouth having not yet reopened after the Second World War, writes Dr Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

It did so in the Autumn of that year and Cadet Black moved to the renovated building, completing his initial officer training and education in 1950 with six months in the training cruiser *Devonshire*.

In 1951, after a short period in the aircraft maintenance carrier *Unicorn*, he joined the cruiser *Belfast*, now a well-known fixture in the Pool of London but then flagship of Flag Officer Second-in-Command Far East Fleet, Rear Admiral Scott-Moncrieff.

Mid Black was soon on active service as HMS *Belfast's* 6in guns bombarded the coast of Korea, where war had broken out the previous year.

Acting S/Lt Black stayed off Korea after transfer to the destroyer *Concord*, which was hit by Communist shore batteries while on a train-busting mission.

His reminiscences cover some interesting operations against North Korean fishermen, and a disturbing report of an American atrocity against these hapless prisoners that shocked their British allies.

After the traditional sub lieutenant's course at Greenwich (remembered with a welcome tribute to Professor, as he later became, Bryan Ranft) Black joined HMS *Vanguard*, the Royal Navy's last battleship, in 1954.

He confirms her partially-manned status with only half of her main armament operational and then only on alternate cruises! On the others the secondary battery was activated.

Black was involved in a practice shoot off Cape Wrath with the forward 15in turrets, in which a destroyer was near-missed. He had been safety trainer for 'B' turret but for some reason escaped censure.

With a watchkeeping certificate, Lt Black was briefly involved in the delivery of new inshore minesweepers before a decision to specialise in gunnery led to the position of gunnery officer in *Comus*, again in the Far East.

The Korean War was over but there was an incident with a Taiwanese destroyer harrying a British merchantman.

The later flag officer makes some telling criticisms of the style of leadership of *Comus's* Polish born commanding officer, J.C. Bartosik.

Courses in HMS *Excellent* then alternated with an extended period in the cruiser *Gambia* in the Mediterranean and then a shorter period working up the destroyer

The Grove Review

Diamond. It was then back to the Far East to join the minesweeper *Fiskerton*.

The next three eventful years, 1961-63, were full of highs and lows. Black distinguished himself during the Brunei rebellion winning the MBE as well as being decorated by the Sultan but at the end of his time in the ship he was recalled to Singapore for court martial because of alleged irregularities in the running of the ship.

Prosecuted by Cdr William Staveley and defended by Capt Henry Leach, Black escaped with only a reprimand and returned to Whale Island where he had just joined the instructional staff.

This helped put his career back on track and his next two appointments were as gunnery officer in a carrier, HMS *Victorious*, and staff officer gunnery to Flag Officer First Flotilla.

Selection for commander was followed in 1969 by yet another return to the Far East and another difficult period in Black's career in command of another 'Daring', HMS *Decoy*.

This seems to have been a most unhappy and unruly ship. Black has some frank things to say about its personnel. He restored some discipline to *Decoy* and brought the ship back home via the Beira patrol, taking her to the Mediterranean where he left her in 1970.

A surprisingly satisfying period as Director of Naval Warfare in the Ministry of Defence was followed by periods as Executive Officer of the guided missile destroyer (DLG) *Kent*, another sojourn in the MOD and then as Captain of the DLG *Fife*.

After a course at the Royal College of Defence Studies Black returned to the MOD but in 1982 was appointed to command the new carrier *Invincible*.

This was perhaps the high spot of Black's career as he commanded this crucial asset in the Falklands War. Black's account of the war adds to the literature on the subject. It is particularly interesting to learn that he is convinced that his ship was indeed attacked by an Argentine submarine. Obtaining



● 'One of the most popular and significant officers of the second half of the 20th Century'... Admiral Sir Jeremy Black aboard HMS *Victory*

his flag in 1983 Black replaced his former Task Group Commander Rear Admiral Woodward as Flag Officer First Flotilla.

After a major deployment back to the Far East, Rear Admiral Black was back at the MOD where he became, in 1985, the first new-style ACNS of the Heseltine reorganisation.

After being DCDS (Systems) Admiral Black reached the pinnacle of his career in 1989 as C-in-C Naval Home Command (again replacing Admiral Woodward).

This fascinating progression is told in the engaging and modest manner one would expect of its author.

It is a fascinating read for anyone involved or interested in the post-war navy.

It is the more to be regretted, therefore, that it contains a number of small errors that might have been easily spotted by a professional historian of the era.

The text would also have benefited from tighter editing. One hopes informed readers will not

be put off what is nevertheless a significant work.

One other book received must also be mentioned this month as it is a landmark reference book. The sad death of the late and much lamented David Lyon left it to Rif Winfield to co produce, and, now, take over the sole authorship of, the most authoritative reference book on the sailing navy.

His new book is *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, (Chatham, £50) a slightly misnamed volume that covers the design, construction, careers and fates of the ships of the era of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793 to 1817. 'British Warships of the Age of Nelson' would surely have been a better title for a 2005 book.

The 432-page tome is a comprehensive, detailed and highly informative work that ought to be bought by any serious student of the naval history of this period. Given the thoroughness and depth of coverage the price of £50.00 is not excessive.

A fresh look at Victory

WHAT more is there to say about Nelson's mighty flagship at Trafalgar?

Surprisingly, a great deal, as Iain Ballantyne and Jonathan Eastland discover in *HMS Victory* (Pen & Sword, £19.99).

For most histories of the ship have indeed been that – histories of the timber, of the masts, of the design.

Ballantyne and Eastland, long-standing naval journalists and authors, prefer to tell the story of the ship and her men.

And not merely the *Victory* we all know and love, for the story begins in the days of Elizabeth I; *Victory* earned her first battle honour in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, where exemplary seamanship and gunnery characterised the ship and "the ceaseless boom of *Victory's* guns told how deadly was the fight".

Victory's story is not one of unbroken victories. Consider the fate of the sixth ship to bear the name, in her day "the finest ship in the world".

She was dashed on rocks in the Channel Islands in 1744, taking every single one of her 1,400 sailors and marines down with her. At just seven years old, the loss of *Victory* was regarded as "the worst naval catastrophe".

And so we come to the

seventh and final *Victory*, the *Victory* of Trafalgar and St Vincent.

Drawing upon rare or unpublished sources and a flurry of drawings, paintings and engravings, the authors paint a vivid picture not just of *Victory* but of her age, when life in HM Royal Navy was not as grim as might be expected. "service in the Royal Navy was in many respects no more harsh than at home".

As for Trafalgar, the account here is *Victory's* battle, and hitherto unpublished reports give an idea of the grievous toll on the flagship, as 2nd Lt Lewis Rotely wrote:

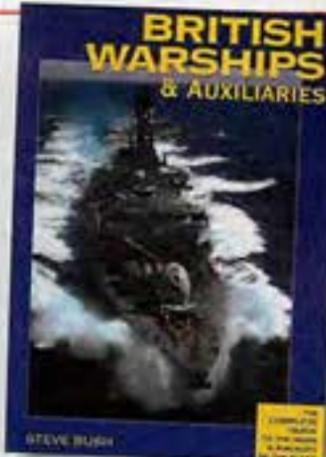
"A man should witness a battle in a three-decker from the middle deck, for it beggars all description. It bewilders the senses of sight and hearing. There was the fire from above, the fire from below, the guns recoiling with violence,

reports louder than thunder, the deck heaving and side straining. I fancied myself in the infernal regions."

Victory fought on after Trafalgar, but not before an extensive overhaul. Her service in the Baltic campaign has often been overlooked, but the recently-found letters of Royal Marines musician John Whick give fresh insights into life – and morale aboard.

Off *Reval* in Russia in 1809, *Victory* waited for the Russians to emerge. "I think they know better than come to face us," the musician wrote home, "altho' Every Cock Crows upon his own Dughill." The cock didn't crow.

Victory's active days ended in late 1812, since when she has served as flagship, training ship and ultimately a living museum. Life for Victorian boys serving in her was harsh, as befitted the times, as the ship's log records: "Wednesday 4 September 1867.



A pocket-full of warships

ALWAYS a little treasure, *British Warships and Auxiliaries* (Maritime Books, £7.99) has gone through a transformation for its 2006-07 handbook on the RN and RFA.

The 98-page pocket guide, compiled by former senior rating Steve Bush, is all the better for being entirely in colour.

The booklet is now in its 25th year and provides a handy (and cheap) solution for those of you who don't want to dip into your pockets to buy *Jane's Fighting Ships* (the downside, of course, is that unlike *Jane's* it only focuses on British maritime assets).

Beyond the usual list of RFA and RN vessels, there's a look at Fleet Air Arm assets, plus the Apache and Chinook helicopters which are now an integral part of maritime operations, and missiles and weapons systems.

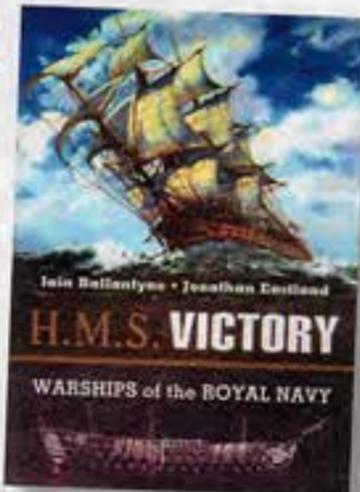
Also given a rare look-in is 792 Naval Air Squadron (*a unit so obscure we went scurrying for our reference books – Ed*) which operates pilotless drones to test the missile systems of Britain's armed forces, including the Type 42's Sea Dart.

In the past the book has never shied from criticism of cuts to the Fleet – and the public indifference to the 21st-Century RN. The 2006-07 edition is no different.

Today's RN has been, says Bush, "cut back to the bone". Still, there is hope.

"As the RN enters the second half of the first decade of the new millennium, it could be on the brink of rising 'phoenix-like' from the ashes," the author points out.

"What should emerge over the next few years is a modern versatile force" – providing, Bush adds, politicians remain committed to the RN, and do not start wielding the financial axe.



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Punished Henry Philips with 18 Cuts of the Birch for using insubordinate and disgusting language."

Today, *Victory* is a symbol of Nelson's Navy, of its finest hour in the days of sail. She continues to inspire: "What really catches your imagination is the fact that she was home to 850 people," Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, who raised his flag in *Victory* until recently, points out.

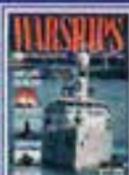
"*Victory* is part of our living history – to a large extent the ship speaks for herself."

Young OM Danielle Howens, who volunteered to be a wreath bearer at the ceremony in *Victory* on the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar, dismissed her draft to the ship initially. *Victory* was "just a wooden ship with very little relevance to my life in today's Navy".

Today she's changed her mind. "I am so proud of the ship. I feel that she will outlive all of us."

And so we must hope. But mariners the world over should heed the epitaph for Admiral Sir John Balchen, lost with all his men in the sixth *Victory*:

Neither the greatest Skill, Judgment or Experience join'd to the most firm unshaken resolution can resist the fury of the winds and waves.



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A war won, a peace lost?

Jutland and the Somme recalled

ON A glorious un-January-like Saturday three years ago, thousands of people lined the seafront of Old Portsmouth and Southsea to watch HMS Ark Royal sail for the Gulf – and potentially war in Iraq.

The day before, the world's media were crammed into the carrier's officers' dining room for a press conference.

Journalists declared where they were from, then posed questions for Ark's CO Capt – now Rear Admiral – Alan Massey.

One voice gave his name, followed by "Al Jazeera Television". There was a murmur throughout the room. *What are they doing here?*

The very same day, Tony Blair's media supremo Alistair Campbell was meeting Al Jazeera bosses, concerned that its broadcasting of messages by Osama bin Laden "would incite killing, either overtly or through encrypted messages".

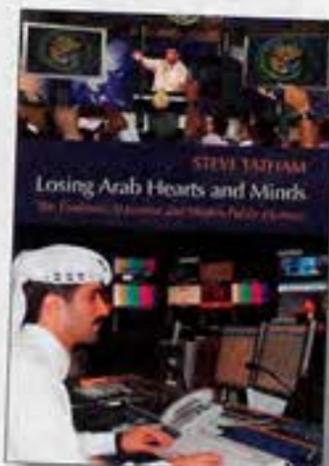
Both examples are symptomatic of the West's misconception and misunderstanding of the Arab media, something Lt Cdr Steve Tatham – a serving RN officer – attempts to explain in *Losing Arab Hearts and Minds* (Hurst & Co, £15).

Tatham, part of the RN's media relations team in the Gulf during the 2003 conflict in Iraq, looks comprehensively into perceptions of the war, the media, Arab attitudes, and shortcomings on both sides.

What the Americans branded Operation Iraqi Freedom and we called Operation Telic set out to rid the world of Saddam Hussein's regime; its result would be, US Secretary of State Colin Powell declared, "a better life" for the Iraqi people.

He continued: "The people of the region will see over time that in the United States they have a nation that comes for no purpose other than to seek peace in the region and help the people of the region achieve a better life."

Sadly as 2006 dawns, that is not how it is perceived. But then how do you convince the Arab world of the justness of your cause when many of your own people are themselves unconvinced?



The author believes that the battle to win over the Arab world was hampered by years of prejudice – not merely the aftermath of September 11.

Where once the 'commie' was the enemy, now it is the 'Arab terrorist' who is enemy number one in Hollywood – and, as Tatham points out, "these often immature and ill-formed ideas of good and evil exist beyond the realm of cinema and appear to exist in US political rhetoric".

There are plenty of other examples; Arab war correspondents 'embedded' with US units... where they encountered hostility from many troops who regarded them as 'the enemy'.

And Al Jazeera – the most high-profile and well-known of all Arabic TV stations – fell foul of the West particularly for airing images of Coalition dead or prisoners of war, a decision Tatham believes was inspired less by anti-West bias in the station than Arab attitudes to war and death in general.

But as Tatham explains, the battle for 'hearts and minds' wasn't lost solely due to Western prejudices and failings.

RFA Sir Galahad's arrival in Umm Qasr, a gesture signalling the re-opening of the port to allow aid to flow into Iraq, was designed specifically with the aim of winning that battle.

Although some Arab reporters witnessed the event, Al Jazeera did not because of a long-running dispute between the station and the Kuwaiti Government "so the story was lost to the wider audience".



● *Hearts and minds: A British soldier cradles an Iraqi child during a patrol of Basra*

Picture: LAI/Photo Wheelie Barrow

There was more to the propaganda campaign in Iraq than using TV and radio stations.

HMS Chatham broadcast nearly 300 hours of music, news and messages aimed at persuading the Iraqis not to resist Coalition forces, broadcasts the frigate's captain believed were instrumental in the surrender of some troops.

Despite its title, this book goes beyond studying the 2003 conflict in Iraq and efforts to woo the Arab world; rather it delves into the 'media war' – squabbles between British newspapers, disagreements between Britain and the US about handling reporters, in short the problems of dealing with the press.

One of the RN media minders, Lt Cdr Mark Hankey, complained: "Western media were very demanding—they often had tantrums. I never saw a tantrum from the Islamic media—they were well-behaved and very courteous and polite."

Demanding, and one might add ignorant, for as the author found out at a press conference with Rear Admiral David Snelson, the RN theatre commander, in the run-up to the war, the British media's "obvious lack of knowledge about both the military in general and the navy in particular caused disquiet".

This is at once an insightful and depressing book, very much a case of 'we won the war, but lost the peace'.

"New ideas are urgently needed," the officer argues.

Of course, historians – and journalists – have a habit of being wise after the event. And with hindsight, perhaps the West was naive to assume that the fall of the Saddam regime would be welcomed with open arms by the Iraqi people and

wider Arab world.

Arab TV stations frequently referred to 'War on Iraq', rather than 'War on Saddam', which was the watchword of the Coalition.

Indeed, says Tatham, "arguably the Arab media could not have reported a war in an Arab country, to which the entire Arab world objected, in anything other than a pro-Arab manner; to do so would have been commercial suicide".

In 1941, the Russian people rallied in defence of Mother Russia when Hitler attacked, whether they despised Stalin's regime or not.

Six decades later, many Iraqis reacted similarly, as one confided in a CBS News reporter: "I may not like Saddam Hussein but I don't like to see foreign invaders in my country."

Denounced, murdered, and finally honoured

BETWEEN 1939 and 1945, the Nazi regime executed 22,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen for just causes – rape and murder – and more questionable reasons – desertion and defeatism.

Among those to fall victim to the Third Reich's summary justice system was Oskar Heinz Kusch, a U-boat commander possessing boyish good looks, a love for the men in his charge, an exemplary service record and a strict code of honour.

He also had the misfortune to be denounced by three junior officers – all rabid Nazis – in U154 and put before a firing squad.

Kusch's sad fate is recounted by fellow U-boat officer Peter Hansen in *Execution for Duty* (Pen & Sword, £19.99).

Nazi tyranny against German citizens and soldiers in the dying months of the war is well documented.

Kusch's fate was hushed up during the war and has not been aired much subsequently.

It is to Hansen's credit that this outstanding officer is belatedly rehabilitated.

The charge against the 25-year-old Kusch: allegedly denouncing Hitler, refusing to accept that there was a "worldwide conspiracy" by "World Jewry interested in the destruction of Germany", making jokes at the expense of the Nazi Party.



● *A man of honour serving a criminal regime... Lieutenant Oskar Kusch*

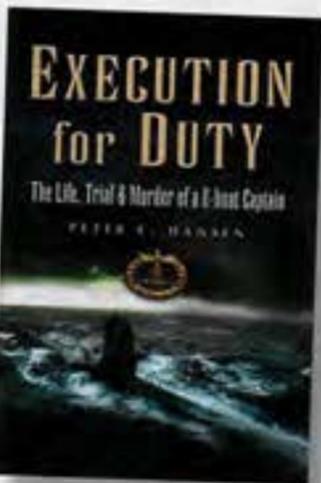
The officer was arrested on January 20 1944 and tried just five days later. Before the day was out he was sentenced to death.

"Life could have been great," Kusch wrote in a final letter to his father, "but a senseless fate has torn it to pieces."

"It is so sad that fate has caused us this end against our wishes. I shall always be with you in spirit."

He was shot five hours later. His family was forbidden to mourn.

Hansen's book is yet more damning evidence that German



sailors were not *mere* sailors, but that the Kriegsmarine fell under the hideous spell of Nazism.

Perhaps as an act of belated justice, two of Kusch's denouncers were killed before the war's end.

Ulrich Abel, the chief architect of Kusch's downfall, was given command of U193 in the spring of 1944. He never returned from his first patrol in charge.

"Good riddance to that bastard Abel," one U-boat officer said acidly. "What a pity another 58 good men had to share his fate."

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Fleet squash the Marines

AT THE Inter Command Squash Championships at HMS Temeraire, Fleet and the Royal Marines were the firm favourites in the men's section, particularly as Plymouth, Scotland and Naval Air Commands were unable to field their strongest teams.

Form prevailed, and these two teams were indeed contesting the first and second spots at the end of day two.

Capt Damien May RM put the Royals ahead, getting the better of Combined Services Under 25 champion, S/Lt Matt Ellicot (HMS Echo), to get them off to a good start.

But the Fleet Team had strength in depth, with OM Richard Rowley (Middleton), Lt James Roue and Lt Cdr Robin Young (CinCFleet), all beating their RM opponents to claim the 2005 title for Fleet.

In the ladies competition the seven players taking part were divided into three teams, with Portsmouth eventually claiming the honours.

Admiral Lord Boyce, President of RNSRA presented cups to the winning captains and medals to all winners and runners up.

The RN Squash Championships will take place at HMS Temeraire on January 27 and 28, and players of all standards are encouraged to attend to play in one or a number of competitions.

Sections include Men's Open, Women's Open, Men's Under 25, Men's Veteran, Men's Vintage and a Doubles competition.

Details from Lt Cdr David Cooke (9380 23741, 02392 723741) or TEMERAIRE (RNSO4).

Hot Doggers take some licking

MORE than 50 surfers travelled from all over UK to compete in the British Longboard Club Championships at Gwithian Beach, Cornwall, hosted for the first time by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Boardriders Club.

Day one of the contest saw a small but clean 1-2ft swell, resulting in a good level of surfing, the Hot Doggers Surf Club from Croyd, along with teams from Scarborough, West Wittering and a Barbarians team, all displaying considerable ability and class.

Day two, and initial fears that the swell had diminished were soon dispelled, with another great day with 2-3ft waves, perfect for surfing.

Final results showed a good result for the Hot Doggers, their A team gaining first place and their C team the second. Barbarians came third.

Prizes were presented at the end of the championships by Cdre Steve Jermy, new President of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Boardriders Club.

Super feat by Royal Chris

MNE Chris Sherrington has been crowned the Super Heavyweight champ after his performance at the British Open Judo Championships last weekend.

These championships are the UK's premier judo event and the only international event held in the land.

In a hard-fought final he destroyed his Russian opponent – an excellent result and testament to his talent, hard work and the coaching expertise of the Judo Academy in Edinburgh.

His progress in the three months he has been there has been considerable and it bodes well for his aspirations for European and World successes this year and clearly establishes his claim to an Olympic squad place.



Well, I count 23... An impressive formation feat by RN and RM jumpers at the CS Skydive Event

Running rings around REME

FRESH from their victory in the Army's Rhine championships, RN and RM skydivers were in action against their soldier foes, this time with the aim of holding on to their Combined Services Skydive golds.

The teams were well prepared having just returned from our Spanish training camp and lots of coaching by "Team America". It was sombrero off and business heads on. We had two junior teams that had a couple of reasonably inexperienced members that did some good work and will bode well for next season, *ivritas C/Sgt Sharky Ward, CTCRM*.

Lt Ross Drinkwater amazed us by dishing out the mid-air beats to his team members, but after watching the video footage it may have just been the usual brain malfunction.

We set a blistering pace on day one which was only beaten on the final day of the competition by the full time line number display/competition teams.

The intermediate team had to maintain Combined Service gold from last year against seventeen teams.

The competition was fierce and on completion of the final round we had tied with the REME for military gold.

It was jump-off time. REME had been quicker at the easier random formations but we were

better than them at the obviously more technical block moves.

After the nail-biting jump-off honours were even again.

The re-draw produced three random formations and REME could taste success.

The gods looked kindly on us; we were unable to jump until the next morning.

This gave us sufficient time to dirt dive the moves on the ground, nail our exit positions and fight an awesome 'mind games' war with the weaker members of the REME team.

As the rest of the competition progressed, it had now become evident that we weren't just jumping for the military gold, but for intermediate open gold as well.

The second jump-off was intense and before we knew it we were landing under canopy and analysing the jump: "Was it enough points? Did I fly my slot? Stuff this let's get a beer."

The judges kept us on tenterhooks and would not release the results until the prizegiving.

The junior teams formed the base for our attack on the elusive accuracy medals.

This event produced some spectacular landings from Sgt Ginge 'Breaks are for the weak' Green.

A top chuck-up goes to PO Steve Hahn for some incredible results with only 32 jumps under his belt.

We then prepared for former Royal Jamie Fowler's tandem skydive. Eighteen years ago Jamie

was a key player in the world-record stacking RM freefall team – a record canopy stack that still stands unbeaten today.

His career was cut short by an accident but his will to go on and unselfish nature has seen him never less than an arm's length from the sport.

Twenty-six of us ground practised, then jumped out of two aircraft simultaneously to form a 24-way with two cameramen.

This was the demo into the prizegiving which would see the RNRM team collect silver, gold military intermediate four-way and the Commandant's Cup as well as the ultimate gold open class intermediate four-way and the Netheravon trophy.

Both golds beat all military and civilian teams such as the Parachute Regiment's Red Devils, RLC Silver Stars and the Royal Engineers who have full time demo and competition line numbers.

Some of the civilian teams are sponsored and have three or four wind tunnel camps aboard each year.

This year we have big plans for world domination, training at canopy relative work, and aim for overall Combined Service champions.

Another addition to Peter's trophy cabinet

SUB Lieutenant Peter Reed, the RN's rowing phenomenon, is back in the headlines with the recent announcement that he has been awarded BBC West's 'Newcomer of the Year Award' for his sporting prowess.

Peter, currently training with the GB squad in Cyprus, also made headlines by saving a man from a burning building in Oxford.

In indoor rowing, the RN has gone from strength to strength in the last two months.

The Indoor Rowing Championships organised by HMS Sultan, saw entries up 300 per cent on last year; S/Lt Reed suitably awarded prizes to the open men's and women's champions.

At the Army Indoor Championships, WOMEA Paul Winton, WO2 Stu Pears RM, CPO Steve Penberthy and Lt Kev Anderson competed, taking podium places in the 40-plus individual race and a third place in the team event.

They were subsequently joined by 11 other RN and RM personnel in the British Indoor Rowing Championships, held at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham.

Admirably, CPO Debs Hallett flew in from Portugal and PO(PT) Neal Edwards from Naples for the event, and both finished their races in 6th place.

All RN rowers finished in the top 20 nationally in their categories, and the fastest RN time of the day was clocked by S/Lt Reed, finishing the men's open 2,000m race in 8th place in a phenomenal time of 5m, 55.4s – which is believed to be the fastest 2km ever clocked by a Royal Navy rower.

Royal Marine Shaun Hickson, of CHF, also finished 5th in the men's 30-34 age group, with a very impressive time of 6m 15.4s, a personal best.

At the European Championships held this year in



Inside with Capt Paul Cunningham, RNFA

CONGRATULATIONS to the following female RN players who were selected to represent the British Combined Services in November:

S/Lt Adele Frith (HMS Ocean)
 PO(AEM(M)) Mariesa Dryhurst (Heron)
 PO(PT) Lisa Farthing (HMS Raleigh)
 LS Julie Hewitt (Northumberland)
 LStd Marie Maskell (Collingwood)
 OM Nat Bavister (Ilustrious)
 OM Becky Charker (Nelson)
 Wtr Naomi Marsh (Nelson)

All played in either the 3-1 defeat to South West Counties at Aldershot or the 1-0 defeat at the hands of the Dutch Combined Services at The Hague.

Despite the scorelines all players had outstanding games, most notably Wtr Naomi Marsh (normally defender) who was placed in goal due to the unavailability of normal Navy keeper LStd Lou Lee – her fearlessness kept the Dutch to 1-0 but she did break three fingers in the process...

The team has little choice when it comes to goalkeepers, so if you are interested in representing the RN, contact PO(ETS) Ann McCaffrey in Devonport (93 75 67596).

Recent results:

RN Seniors vs Army. Drew 1-1. An encouraging performance in the South West Counties competition against our old foes who predictably provided strong and talented opposition.

We had the best of the chances, but the Army keeper put in a strong performance throughout the first half – his defence wasn't breached until the 60th minute when L/Cpl Simon Bochenski unleashed a fierce free kick from outside of the box which avoided the wall and gave the goalie no chance.

The Navy's lead was cancelled out by a slightly dubious penalty which the Army converted in the 75th minute. In truth this was a fair result, as the Army showed the best technical ability and we were a little too quick to give the ball away. But it still leaves us well placed for the rest of the season, as long as we can maintain our form.

RN Women vs Army. Lost 3-0. As highlighted above the Navy goalkeeper was unavailable so LStd Marie Maskell (Collingwood) was nominated to stand in the nets. LS Julie Hewitt was Player of Match – she constantly attacked the Army defence. It seemed strange playing the Army outside of the

Inter-Services competition – but they seemed to want it more and were more aggressive than the RN side.

RN Women vs Plymouth Argyle Ladies. Lost 4-0. Goalkeeper OM Ami Burns (Sultan) and striker OM Jodie Dixon (Collingwood) both impressed on their debuts, and OM Nat Bavister's energy up the wings gave the Argyle defence a hard time. She deserved to be RN Player of the Match. The game was played at Drake and on a wet night the pitch was in poor condition. Our girls did well to contain the score to 1-0 in the first-half but match fitness and regular play helped Plymouth Argyle to overcome the RN defence in the second half.

RN U21s vs Hampshire. Drew 1-1. A good performance in the U21s first South West Counties match of the season, played at Burnaby Road in Portsmouth on a cold and windy night.

The Hampshire team provided strong opposition, but the RN deserved to take the lead on 33 minutes through Naval Airman Steve Young.

However, shortly after this goal our key central defender, AET Ardley, was replaced through injury and the side lost its shape in the second half. A converted Hampshire penalty on 67 minutes provided the equaliser and the end result was felt to be a fair one. In addition to our goalscorer, there were good performances from AEM Roy Emerson and MEM Danny Kerr.

RN U21s vs Army. Lost 3-1. An exciting and open game that could have ended as a 9-9 draw, as there were so many chances at both ends. The Navy youngsters, seven of whom were only 19 which bodes well for the future, had at least five one-on-one chances with the Army goalkeeper, and we have learnt the hard way that we have to convert more of these opportunities. OM Ross McEvoy and MA 'Scouse' Keating provided the most notable performances in a spirited RN side.

The first training day for the RNFA Coaches' Association has been held at HMS Temeraire.

The basis of the day was focused on basic goalkeeping handling skills, aided by former professionals Martin Thomas and Tony Parks, employed by the FA to coach 'keepers of all ages.

And finally... CTCRM and 42 Cdo will fight in one semi-final of the Navy Cup, and HM Ships Heron and Sultan in the other.

Both matches will be played on March 3 with the final lined up for Portsmouth on March 29. The overall winner will go on to represent the RN in the NAAFI Jubilee Cup in May.

Copenhagen, WO Winton and CPO Penberthy competed, finishing 18th and 24th respectively.

Lt Anderson raced in Cardiff at the Welsh National Championships and, although disappointed with his time, managed to creep into third place in the 40-plus age group.

There are three races over four weekends in late January and early February, with the English and Scottish championships taking place on successive weekends ahead of the World Indoor Rowing Championships, in Boston, Massachusetts, on Saturday February 25.

It is intended to take a team of up to eight rowers to this event and progress thus far suggests that it may be the RN's most successful championships to date.

Spa trekkers boldly go

"THE WHOLE exped was successful with no crashes or damage of any significance to report."

Thus reads the summary of the Royal Navy Motorcycle Club's second annual expedition, but it continues "...whilst expert instruction on both circuits proved invaluable and promoted drive/rider confidence and ability."

For the second year running they went to Belgium and Germany, getting track time not only at Nordeschleife, but also at Spa Francorchamps, the famous race track in the Ardennes region.

Eight bikers went on the exped, along with two members of the Culdrose Car Club (and their cars), each getting three sessions at Nordeschleife, plus one day at Spa for the cars and two full days there for the bikes.

Panthers mauled

THE RN's **Rugby League** side started the new season with a comprehensive demolition of Lancashire side Chorley Panthers in the opening round of the GMB Union National Cup. Despite missing several regulars the RN coaches were able to field a very strong mobile side which overwhelmed the opposition 58-6, writes WO1 Keith Humpleby.

Within five minutes the RN were 12 points ahead courtesy of two converted tries from stand-off Dave Roberts. The visitors replied quickly with what turned out to be their only score of the match to bring the scores to 12-6 but after that it was virtually one-way traffic. The next score came via the RM combination of prop Ryan Hepworth who broke the defence to feed Mark Ives to cross for the score.

The RN kept up an almost unrelenting pressure on the Chorley defence and with some fantastic support play scored further tries in the first half through Kev Botwood, 2nd row Gareth Sharpe and finally to round off the half Dave Roberts went over for his hat trick. Roberts maintained his consistency with the boot to leave the halftime score at 34-6.

The score remained unchanged for the first ten minutes of the second half but a three try burst in 12 minutes effectively ended the match. Kev Botwood scored the first after latching on to a superb pass from Matthew Murray to score his second try of the day.

Almost from the kick off Mark Ives gathered the ball and returned the favour to Ryan Hepworth who beat the struggling Chorley defence to keep the score ticking over.

The third try of this flurry of points went to Kev Botwood who stepped the defence to score under the posts to claim his hat trick.

RN Skipper Steve Lockton took over kicking duties and slotted home the first of his two conversions to leave the score at 52-6.

Chorley, to their credit, then had their best attacking spell of the match but were unable to add to their score and in the dying moments of the game Jamie Goss scored a great solo try from 30 metres out.

The try was converted by Steve Lockton to round off a very impressive display by the home side. Particularly pleasing was the support play throughout and along with the superior fitness of the RN side these were the keys to the victory.



● You and Q's Army... Don't mess with the RN boxing team, lead by coach PO(PT) 'Q' Shillingford (second right)

Bridport bruised but the national dream is over

RN BOXERS scored a 5-2 victory when they headed to Dorset to face a Bridport Select team on their home territory at West Bay.

First of the Navy victors was AEA Laity (Sultan), making his boxing debut for the team. Taking on the much more experienced Martin Gill (Blandford ABC), his persistent pressure and accurate punches took him to a unanimous points verdict.

He was followed by Mne Cheung (42 Cdo), fighting P Harris (Bridport).

Cheung came out of his corner with two strong jabs pushing his opponent back and shortly after landed a solid right hook, after which the referee stopped the contest, giving the Navy boxer a quick victory.

Two more marines then had successes, both unanimous points winners. Mne Fergusson (RM Poole), drawn against near neighbour B Smith (Poole) started strongly and with relentless attack to head and body carried on through to victory.

Mne Robinson started more cautiously against A White (Portland) as the two fighters sized each other up, but he established dominance in the second round and continued in like manner taking him to success at the end of the fourth.

MEM McCrohan (Sultan) was the fifth of the Navy victors, after a tough bout against A Ball (Reckleford).

Another boxer making his debut for the Navy, McCrohan initially came under a lot of pressure from his taller opponent but, pushing himself all the way, his heart and determination finally gave him a majority points verdict.

The other two fights in the contest were well-fought by the Navy boxers, Mne Travis (45 Cdo) just losing his bout against Cueler (Golden Ring) on a majority decision, and OM S Cridland giving a good account of himself against B Morrish (Pilgrims), who eventually was awarded a close points win.

All in all a great competition, with which RN assistant coach Wtr Wayne Gardiner and Portsmouth Command coach CPO 'Scouse' Warrington were both delighted.

Less successful, but hugely encouraging nevertheless, were the

performances of six fighters in the quarter and semi finals of the ABA National Championships, held at the Olympia Stadium in Liverpool.

Six RN and RM fighters stepped into the ring, opening in the quarter finals with MEM Al Boyle (HMS Monmouth) who faced GB No.5 Eugene Rawthorne.

After an even first round, Boyle was caught with a rear-hand and the ref stopped the bout shortly afterwards.

Mne Alex Urrutia (40 Cdo) was up against the country's top featherweight, Gary Sykes. A strong left hook to Alex's body ended the marine's night in the second round.

OM Shaun 'Mac Attack' McDonald was drawn against GB No.7 light heavyweight Phil Clarke, and it was only in the fourth round that the sailor kicked up a gear and took the fight on points.

On the plus side, Mne Mick 'The Irish Hammer' O'Connell's skill, speed and determination earned a points decision over Daniel Slaney.

In the semis, held the following day, Mne Steve 'TNT' Tighe kicked off against GB No.1 James Dugdale, who won on points but was taken all the way by the Royal.

Also facing a GB No.1 was 'Mac Attack' in the shape of Tony Jeffries. After a rapid start in which both boxers traded punches, Jeffries landed a straight right cross which signalled the end of the bout.

RN captain O'Connell was up next, against North East champ Nathan Thomson, who took the fight on a fairly contentious points decision.

And finally, enter Mne Sam Scott at superheavyweight who lost out 6-5 on points to London's Derek Chisora.

"All the RN boxers gave 100 per cent," said coach PO(PT) 'Q' Shillingford.

"The standard they were up against was immense, so I am proud of them all. The team has gone from strength to strength over the past five years."



● Royal L/Cpl Merrett hits his Canadian opponent at short range

Keeping Canadians en garde

FIVE Navy fencers played a prominent role in a 14-strong Combined Services at the 36th International Team Fencing Tournament.

The competition took place over two days at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Canada, and attracted 150 military and civilian teams from all over Canada and the USA.

MEM Gemma Wollaston did especially well in the ladies foil event, her accurate work gaining her fifth place and Lt Amanda Hale's aggressiveness and determination eventually gained her eighth place in the ladies sabre event.

When the points from all the events were calculated, the CS team were placed third, behind the Ottawa and the University of Toronto teams.

Team captain, Maj Stuart Brown summed up their achievements:

"The competition was tough, the standard of fencing was high and the spirit of sportsmanship was very much alive. This was the biggest competition many of the team have competed in.

"It was certainly an experience that all five members of the Navy team will not forget, many for the first time competing in a truly international and high quality competition."

Royal Marine L/Cpl Merrett's summing up was more succinct. "That was just great," he said. "Chuffed with the result. But we're all a bit tired now!"

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Jan 11 RN vs Prison Service (Leicester)
Jan 11 RN Women vs Newton Abbot (Wexley)
Jan 17 U21 vs Hampshire (Avery)
Jan 19 RN Women vs Army (Aldershot)
Jan 24 RN Women vs Hampshire (Burnaby Road)
Jan 26 RN vs Sussex (Lancing)
Jan 29 RN U18s vs London FA (Burnaby Road)

RUGBY UNION

Jan 11 RN Veterans vs US Portsmouth (Burnaby Road)
Jan 25 RN Veterans vs Ivybridge (Rectory, Plymouth)
Jan 31 First XV vs Oxford University (Burnaby Road)

HOCKEY

Jan 12 Veterans vs Nordics (Burnaby Road)
Jan 23-24 Men and Women vs Birmingham University (Birmingham)
Jan 29 RN Veterans vs Castaways (Burnaby Road)

SQUASH

Jan 27-28 RN Championships (Temeley)

BADMINTON

Jan 26-27 RN Individual Championships (Drake)

SWIMMING

Jan 28-29 Southern District Long Course (Crystal Palace)

WINTER SPORTS

Jan 7-21 RN Championships (Les Menuires)
Jan 26 Inter-Service Crosses Run (St Moritz)

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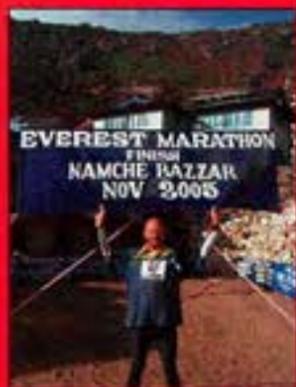
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Last hurrah: Sea Harriers embark on illustrious for the final time



Put on some extra 'layas – Kev runs the Everest marathon

Plus

Honouring our Baltic heroes – a memorial to a forgotten campaign



● Weathering the storm... HMS Collingwood (in black) and 42 Commando fight for the Navy Cup in wretched conditions at Burnaby Road

Picture: LA/Photo Darby Allen

7s dump the French on their 'nees

"THEY weathered the early French fire and pressure before gradually asserting themselves... By the end the victory was never in doubt."

Thus said Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, not, as might be expected, commenting on Trafalgar, but on the Royal Navy Rugby 7s team and their performance at the Dubai 7s when they took the International Overseas trophy, winning 26-16 in the final against the French side, Pyrenees.

Admiral Band, RN Rugby Union President, continued: "This team has grown in stature throughout the tournament and represents what is best about the Royal Navy, our teamwork, ethos and will to win."

Coach Billy May took a 10-strong squad to the United Arab Emirates, pledging that although this was the Senior Service's first appearance in the Overseas Invitational, the RN were not there merely to make up the numbers.

And so it proved. The

magnificent final result was a fitting tribute to the RN 7s' teamwork, fitness and professionalism in what is one of the world's premier sevens tournaments.

Earlier the RN side had defeated CGS Old Boys 28-7 in their semi-final, their opponents being an established 7s side – an indication of the level at which the Navy team were playing.

The Dubai 7s is actually 11 tournaments in one, the premier event being the International Trophy, held by England.

The contest entered, and won by the RN, the Overseas Invitational Trophy, is the third ranked tournament in the whole competition.

Now in its 37th year, the Emirates Airline Dubai Rugby 7s attracts more than 12,000 overseas visitors to watch 2000 players from 150 different teams take part – a great event from small beginnings when, in 1966, a small group of British ex-pats founded the Dubai Exiles Club.

Another RN team was also competing at Dubai, the Naval

Medicals, their third consecutive year in the competition.

They were hoping to build on their good showing in the 2004 event when they eventually went down in the quarter finals, to the French side Pyrenees, who went on to win the tournament, but sadly they found themselves in the end despatched from the plate competition without a win.

They were, however, playing with a depleted team, and, despite the disappointment they remain in good spirit, determined to bounce back and strive for that elusive semi-final place in 2006.

■ CLOSER to home, and in conditions far worse, 42 Commando and HMS Collingwood joined battle at Burnaby Road for the Navy Cup.

The conditions took their toll, particularly of the Collingwood side and it was the superior fitness of the Royals which paid off, courtesy of two late tries in a 23-15 victory.

It's been a great few weeks for 42, who also lifted the Argyll Bowl for the first time in 17 years.

An intensive period of preparation and training paid off with their 30-13 win over 40 Cdo in an exciting final match. The highlight of the match was probably 42's final try when, with two 42 players languishing in the sin bin, they nevertheless launched an attack up the left side of the field, moving the ball through several sets of hands before being checked deep inside 40's 22. Re-cycling quickly, they moved the ball right in a sweeping attack, through several more sets of hands to finally score in the right hand corner.

Karters foiled by counting lapses

THE RAF Endurance go-kart race was keenly contested by an RN team, comprising Lt Ritchie Scott, S/Lt Kevin Westbrook and Duggy Attwell, but in the end first place just eluded them.

The four-hour race was set for the end of driver practice runs, which meant a start time of 4pm, when light was already fading; much of the race was held under floodlights.

The Flying Fishheads – as their RAF counterparts dubbed the RN team – started back in sixth place, out of twelve teams, with Ritchie Scott driving as number one. By the sixth lap Ritchie had moved right up to second place.

But then, disaster. Another kart lost control after breaking and hit the officer's kart on the inside, pushing him off the track and into the tyre barrier.

By the time the Navy kart was dragged back onto the track it was almost in last place.

Over the next hour Ritchie struggled back to fourth position, but by then the first three were long gone and over a lap ahead.

Next in the RN driving seat was Duggy Attwell who took over just as the sun set and the floodlights came on – at least on the track areas that were covered; some were not, leaving dark shadowy areas. As the track cooled down it began to get slippery.

But now Duggy was lapping many of the back markers, getting up into third place.

By the time the third RN driver, Kevin, took over, everyone estimated the Navy kart to be in second place.

Kevin kept up the fast pace, driving for two hours, consistently and competitively, overtaking every other kart at least twice.

But keeping track of positions was not easy, as the electronic transponder timer which would normally provide a lap count was out of action, so the count was being done manually (well, actually by a group of local ladies).

When the race finished – and with official placings still to be announced – the Navy team were convinced they had won.

Alas – the declaration had the winners as RAF Bentley Priory, with the Flying Fishheads in second place and RAF Cosford third. Still, they'd had a good day's racing.

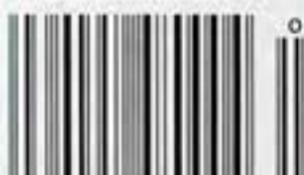


● 7s heaven... The RN (in white) on their way to victory in Dubai over the Pyrenees

ROYAL NAVY RUGBY UNION

THE MAIN NAVY SPORTING EVENT OF 2006 WILL TAKE PLACE AT TWICKENHAM ON SATURDAY 6 MAY 2006 KICK OFF 1500

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR DETAILS



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