



NAVY NEWS

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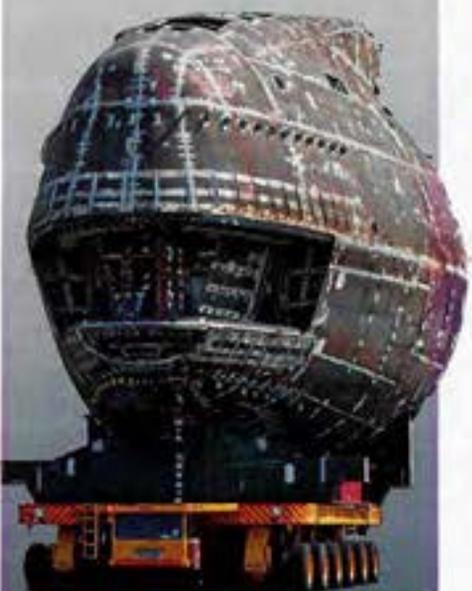


Close...

...but not close enough:
Navy v Army –
back page



● Harrier tale: Not quite the view from the cockpit, but for a pilot's perspective on the fabled jump jet see our report from HMS Illustrious and 800 Naval Air Squadron on pages 14 and 15



HMS Ambush
hits the road
– page 8



Navy doubles up
on tropical island
– centre pages

Win tickets to
Navy Days in
Plymouth and
Culdrose Air Day
in Cornwall – see
competitions on
pages 12 and 42

DIVERS CLEAR MERSEY BOMB

A WARTIME bomb which brought rush-hour chaos to the heart of Merseyside was safely destroyed by Royal Navy divers in a text-book operation.

The 500kg German World War 2 blockbuster – a penetration bomb intended to destroy fortified structures and submarine pens in the Liverpool docks – was discovered on the bed of the Mersey by HMS Atherstone during a routine survey of the waterway.

Divers from the Northern Diving Group (NDG), working by touch because sediment in the water caused zero visibility, confirmed that it was a wartime bomb, and was lying just 80 metres from the Twelve Quays ferry terminal in Birkenhead.

A 300-metre exclusion zone was imposed, and after meetings with police officers and other agencies, including the Coastguard, plans were laid for the

disposal of the monster bomb.

The exclusion zone stranded two incoming Irish Sea ferries, and at various times halted Mersey ferries and Merseyrail trains, and caused the closure of the Wallasey Tunnel, which lay beneath the bomb.

At slack water, when the tide was at its weakest, a Royal Navy diver went down and attached a flotation bag to the bomb, which was raised to three metres below the river surface.

It was then towed slowly behind a rigid-hulled inflatable boat (RIB) to an interim resting place, allowing traffic on roads, rail and by sea to resume.

Escorted by HMS Atherstone, sister Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessel HMS Middleton and Sandown-class minehunter HMS Walney, the RIB took the bomb out past the North Bar Light into a pre-determined spot around seven miles out into Liverpool Bay.

There it was placed on the sea bed and a Navy diver from the NDG, based at Clyde Naval Base in Scotland, attached plastic explosives.

Once everyone was clear, the bomb was detonated – almost exactly 24 hours after it was first spotted.

A Royal Navy spokesman said the device – possibly dropped during



● Royal Navy divers tow the bomb, suspended three metres below the yellow lifting bag, out of the River Mersey to be detonated in Liverpool Bay

Picture: LA/Photo Dan Hooper

Luftwaffe attacks in 1940 and 1941 – was far too dangerous to leave in place.

The disposal operation had to be methodical, as Cdr Chris Davies, in charge of the RN operation, said: "If the bomb had exploded where it was found, it could have led to injury and loss of life and significant damage."

Superintendent Jon Ward, of Merseyside Police, said: "The operation did cause some disruption, but we had to ensure the safety of the public."

"It's a very good job the Royal Navy

were here to find it."

The RN is responsible for ordnance disposal found below the high water mark around the UK.

Members of the Southern Diving Unit successfully destroyed a shell dragged up in the nets of a fishing boat off the Isles of Scilly.

The shell was lowered to the sea bed and detonated – and the RN divers praised the skipper of the Molly B for his presence of mind in carrying the shell to a safe spot.

Victims of 847 Naval Air Squadron Lynx crash in Basra are flown back to the UK – see page 3



● Lt Cdr Darren Chapman



● Marine Paul Collins

Endurance returns with clearer picture

NO, NOT a clearer picture of her returning home – although PO(Phot) 'Scoobie' Dua has done the usual fine job with the photograph on the right.

The clearer picture ice patrol ship HMS Endurance is providing is of the mysterious depths which surround the fragile continent of Antarctica.

Before the Red Plum left Portsmouth for the far south in October she was fitted with a multi-beam echo sounder, cutting edge technology which enabled the ship to produce three-dimensional images of the sea bed around parts of the coast which had never been surveyed before.

As well as making a significant contribution to safe navigation, the images will be shared with the geologists of the British Antarctic Survey to help in studies of the underwater environment of a region which has a crucial impact on global climate patterns.

In addition, her specially-modified Lynx helicopters carried out sorties at 8,000ft, using high-definition cameras to map areas of South Georgia.

"The new equipment has produced exciting material and has surpassed our high expectations of its capability," said the ship's Commanding Officer, Capt Nick Lambert.

And in yet another first, the ship hosted an inspection team of ten experts from the UK, Norway, Argentina, the US and Australia, who checked how well guidelines



● HMS Endurance returns to Portsmouth from her Antarctic and South Atlantic deployment

Picture: PO(Phot) 'Scoobie' Dua (FRPUE)

implemented by the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators are working.

The guidelines were established to ensure the increasing numbers of cruise ships and visitors do not have a damaging effect on the unique flora and fauna of the icy continent.

Continuing the long-standing co-operation between BBC film crews and Endurance, a team engaged in the *Planet Earth* project joined the Red Plum to make use of her helicopters' new cameras, capturing stunning views of the

peerless scenery and the animal life which inhabits it, including the hump-back whale.

The ship received warm welcomes at many scientific bases in the region, including those of Korea, China, the Czech Republic, Russia, Chile, the USA and Argentina.

An especially strong rapport was established between ship and the people of the world's most southerly city, Ushuaia in Argentina.

The ice breaker was required to call in at the Argentinian naval dockyard of Puerto Belgrano for

rudder repairs before she sailed north, but although the deployment was slightly curtailed, favourable weather and her new equipment meant she still achieved 95 per cent of her planned survey work.

The ship called in at Plymouth on the way home to pick up families of the ship's company, including Capt Lambert's daughter, for the final leg of the deployment.

Her next journey south – she leaves again in the autumn – will be an unprecedented nine months long, allowing her five valuable months in Antarctic waters.

Lynx crash fatalities back in UK

THE BODIES of five British Service personnel, including two from the Naval service, killed by a helicopter crash in Iraq on May 6 have arrived back on British soil.

A ceremony at RAF Brize Norton on May 18 marked the repatriation of the four men and one woman killed when a Lynx from 847 Naval Air Squadron crashed in Basra, Southern Iraq.

The five were: Lt Cdr Darren Chapman RN, Marine Paul Collins RM, and Capt David Dobson AAC – all of 847 Naval Air Squadron; and Wing Cdr John Coxen RAF and Flt Lt Sarah-Jayne Mulvihill RAF.

The ceremony was attended by Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram, the Duchess of Gloucester, and Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, among other senior military officers.

All five killed were part of the Joint Helicopter Command (JHC). The Deputy Commander JHC, Cde Tony Johnstone-Burt, described them all as "exceptional individuals who have left a lasting legacy with all those fortunate enough to have known them."

Lt Cdr Darren Chapman was the Commanding Officer of 847 Naval Air Squadron – a well-known and greatly-liked figure throughout the commando helicopter community.

Having risen through the ranks, Lt Cdr Chapman had taken command of 847 NAS in December 2005. The majority of his flying experience had been spent in the Sea King Mk4 Commando helicopter, and he had previously served as the Senior Pilot of 845 Naval Air Squadron.

Capt David Dobson, although Army Air Corps, was a pilot with 847 Squadron. He joined the Naval unit as a Flight Commander in March, after having spent two years serving in Northern Ireland.

Marine Paul Collins had been with 847 Squadron since September 2005, flying out to Iraq as an Air Door Gunner in March.

Prior to joining the Commando Helicopter Force, Marine Collins had served as a Team Radio Operator with M Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, at Bickleigh Barracks in Plymouth.

Based in RNAS Yeovilton, 847 Squadron forms part of the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF), and has been on station at Basra since the start of this year.

Deployed with 40 personnel and four Army-owned Lynx AH7 helicopters, the unit has been providing armed security, surveillance

and command and control support to British and other forces.

Colonel John McCardle RM, Commanding Officer CHF, said:

"Darren Chapman was a consummate professional and was highly regarded by all of his squadron, and also within the broader helicopter community.

"A larger than life character, he had a tremendous ability to make people laugh, and could communicate easily with those in his charge, regardless of rank.

"Extremely well respected, David Dobson approached all his duties with tremendous levels of enthusiasm, displaying a positive attitude and ready cheerfulness.

"Paul Collins was the epitome of what the Royal Marines represent. A fit, intelligent young man he was totally professional in every thing he did and enjoyed life to the full."

Bulwark unsheathes her Dagger



● First one ashore gets an ice cream... Alpha Company, 40 Commando, storms ashore in the United Arab Emirates

Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan, HMS Bulwark

MOST people have a rest when they take a break from their day job.

Not the Royal Marines of HMS Bulwark.

Or the ship's company for that matter.

Having completed her first tour of duty in the northern Gulf on maritime security operations – a new role for the amphibious flagship – Bulwark sailed south to get back down to her traditional role: assault from the sea.

The ship's inherent commando unit, 4 Assault

Squadron, was joined by Alpha Company, 40 Commando, and a company of marines from the United Arab Emirates for Exercise Sea Dagger.

The marines honed their skills in live-firing exercises in the desert, bolstered by two Lynx helicopters which had just joined Bulwark.

The UAE threw three landing ships into the fray to make up a sizeable task force, led by Bulwark from her impressive command suite, culminating in a night-time

landing and cliff assault.

The exercise over, Bulwark has returned to the northern Gulf where two independent boat groups, operating from the ship's landing craft, are casting a security net up to 200 miles long around Iraq's oil platforms and the broader open sea.

This will be the second and final spell off Iraq on this deployment; Bulwark is due to return to Devonport next month after nearly seven months away.



● Capt David Dobson AAC

It's a hard job (part 1)

... BUT someone's got to do it. That 'someone' is HMS Northumberland which has deployed to the Bahamas and North America fresh from a gruelling spell of Operational Sea Training off Plymouth.

The Type 23 frigate was the second of her class to receive the world-beating Sonar 2087, designed to track down the quietest of submarines.

To try out the new kit, Northumberland has sailed to the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Centre (AUTC) in the Bahamas.

Alongside Merlin helicopters and British and US attack submarines, the trials will see torpedo firings – although the weapons will be stripped of their warheads.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for Northumberland – and the wider RN community – to hone its capability to detect, locate and attack submarines," said Northumberland's CO Cdr Tom Guy.

"They still present a real threat to our ships throughout the world."

The deployment will allow some visits to ports in the USA – sailors are hoping for New York, not surprisingly – including some 'defence industry days' to promote the best of British manufacturing and technology.

Falklands 25th remembered

EVENTS in the South Atlantic and at home will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the liberation of the Falklands next year.

Whitehall is putting its weight behind memorial events, centred around Liberation Day – June 14. That will be marked by services in Stanley and at the Falkland Islands' Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne College in Berkshire.

Three days later a solemn drumhead service and march past by veterans of the 1982 campaign will take place at Horse Guards in the heart of London.

Planning for commemorations is at an early stage, but Veterans Minister Don Touhig said the events would include not just former military personnel involved in Operation Corporate, but also the civilians who supported them – such as dockyard workers and merchant seamen.

Further details about the events, including how to get involved and apply for tickets, will be published in due course.



● The Rio thing: HMS Liverpool leaves Rio de Janeiro, where the destroyer conducted a mid-deployment self-maintenance period
Picture: Lt Chris Grey, HMS Liverpool Flight Observer

Liverpool calls in at isolated communities

HMS LIVERPOOL has continued to welcome visitors during her South Atlantic deployment – this time in the form of a number of VIPs.

Last month we reported how the Type 42 destroyer had hosted a party of soldiers from the King's Own Scottish Borderers during Exercise Purple Strike, and had also given Officer Cadets from Dartmouth a taste of life at sea in an

operational warship.

The latest visitors were Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram, the Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir Mike Jackson and the Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands Cdre Ian Moncrieff.

The ship recently completed a mid-deployment self-maintenance period in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, but was soon back on patrol around the Falklands, including a visit to Port Stanley.

The ship also calls at more isolated

communities, such as North Arm Settlement, home to some 30 people and 40,000 sheep.

Exchanges of personnel between the Armed Forces also continue, allowing a broader understanding of the way each other operates.

The destroyer's Fighter Controllers, or 'Freddies', have been loaned to the RAF Control and Reporting Centre Griffin, while an RAF Freddie has joined the ship.

Liverpool left Portsmouth in January and is not due home until next month.

42 help form a Bastion

ROYAL Marines of 42 Commando have safely returned from Afghanistan after protecting a fledgling Allied base in the troubled Helmand province.

Juliet Company was dispatched to the country on Operation Herick 4, serving as the security force for engineers, troops and locals building Camp Bastion.

The base – in an area of Afghanistan that locals apparently dub 'the desert of death' – will be the hub of UK and Allied operations to stabilise the southern part of the country.

Before the major deployment of British troops, however, the

base and airstrip had to be set up – and given problems with insurgents in Helmand the commandos were sent as a covering force.

Maj Steve Lee, Juliet Company's CO, said there had been instances of local workers supporting Allied forces being harassed by insurgents in the past and the terrorists were known to possess explosives, mortars and possibly anti-air missiles.

The marines' nine weeks in the



capital of Helmand, Lashkar Gah, mercifully passed off without incident; the enemy forces did not attack Bastion or the commandos safeguarding it.

The Royals also passed on their experience to the Afghan National Army, based in a neighbouring camp.

Random security checks were carried out on people using roads close to the base, something Maj Lee said locals accepted – and something his men conducted in true

commando fashion.

"I always knew the Royal Marines were professional and highly disciplined and that they would do anything I asked of them," he added. "They did exactly that and did us proud."

42's Commanding Officer Lt Col Matt Holmes said Helmand had been "hot, busy and challenging" but that his men had shown their trademark initiative and had bonded well with locals.

Defence of Bastion now rests with 16 Air Assault Brigade; at the peak of UK operations in Helmand, more than 3,000 British troops will be deployed to the camp.

Crane gang rescues downed bird

AN unscheduled landing for a Lynx of 702 Naval Air Squadron on a visit to Shropshire posed a challenge for aircraft recovery experts.

The Mk8 aircraft from Yeovilton was visiting the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering at Cosford when its crew decided to put the helicopter down immediately.

They plumped for a field and landed safely... which is where the drama begins.

After a team from Cosford was called to safeguard the aircraft and 702 personnel readied the downed bird for recovery, salvage experts from the Mobile Aircraft Support Unit (MASU) based at Fleetlands in Gosport headed north to ferry the Lynx home.

Not an easy task, for the good old British weather ensured that between the Lynx's forced landing and the low-loader and crane arriving in Shropshire, the farmer's field had turned into a morass and the aircraft itself had started to sink.

To add to the fun, the helicopter was 'parked' 100 yards inside the field... a third of a mile down an extremely narrow tree-lined country lane.

"Getting the crane and low-loader down proved tricky to say the least," explained MASU's Lt Colin Russell. "It was compared to 'blind parallel parking'."

Once down the lane, the crane then had to lift the Lynx in hops across the field, over a hedge and on to the low-loader.

Despite warning the farmer that he might lose some of his trees, the recovery team, led by LAET 'Baz' Ayling successfully managed to get the Lynx on to the back of the truck without the need to cry 'timberrrrr'.

The helicopter is now back at Yeovilton where it's being checked over by 702 NAS' engineers.

New spell for Merlin?

MORE than £3m is being spent by the Navy on giving the Merlin helicopter a fresh role in the future.

The aircraft is currently the RN's number one anti-submarine helicopter, and also operates in a general-purpose role.

With the super-carriers on the horizon, Whitehall wants to see whether Merlin can also be used as a Maritime Airborne Surveillance and Control aircraft.

That mission is currently carried out by the 'bagger' Sea Kings of 849 NAS, the latest variant of which entered service in 2002 and provided invaluable assistance to UK forces in the campaign in Iraq.

Defence giant Lockheed Martin will work with Thales and Agusta Westland to see whether in a decade's time this is a role the Merlin can fulfil.

Change ahead for SAR units

A SINGLE organisation is expected to take over Search and Rescue missions around the UK, Whitehall has announced.

Search and Rescue services are currently carried out by the Fleet Air Arm, RAF and Coastguard from 12 bases in the British Isles.

But with many helicopters aging, the Government believes investment is needed to sustain the SAR force into the 21st Century – and it is looking to private finance to inject the cash.

Despite the goal of a single agency being responsible for Search and Rescue operations, the Government says it expects the new combined force will maintain a sizable proportion of military aircrew, working alongside civilian counterparts.

Robot bug to SWAT mine menace

THIS rather evil-looking bug could be the next generation of minehunter.

Revealed for the first time to public eyes is Talisman, an undersea robot being developed by BAE Systems with the RN in mind, writes Richard Scott.

The prototype Talisman has been developed to show what future unmanned submarines could offer to difficult missions.

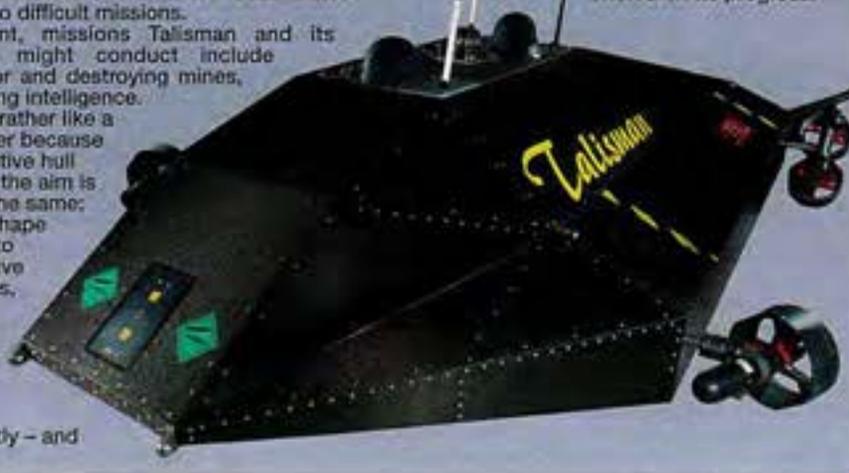
At present, missions Talisman and its successors might conduct include searching for and destroying mines, plus gathering intelligence.

If it looks rather like a stealth fighter because of its distinctive hull shape, then the aim is essentially the same: Talisman's shape is intended to 'scatter' active sonar returns, making it difficult to detect.

It is designed to navigate independently – and

accurately – receiving extra 'fixes' via GPS satellite data when it surfaces.

Talisman conducted its first trials in secret last year since when MOD and RN personnel have been briefed on its progress.



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A LOOK at some of the RN and RM stories making the news this past month...

The death of Flt Lt Mulvihill looks like being the event that brings acceptance of the fact that women serving on warships, in combat aircraft or carrying SABO rifles face the same dangers as their male counterparts. They knowingly sign up for this and know what their responsibilities are, especially to their colleagues in uniform. They also know that this provokes ancient concerns about the role of women and that many of those who object are uncomfortable about dealing with the fact that it is a woman who is being paid to protect and defend, and arguments about their safety shade easily into disapproval of what they are doing, but these days, it is not going to stop them doing the job.

- Kate Adie, writing in the Daily Telegraph

In their coverage of the five people killed in the helicopter crash in Basra, it was the face of Flt Lt Sarah-Jayne Mulvihill, the first Servicewoman killed in action abroad since World War 2, who dominated the front pages.

A shortfall in the number of troop transport helicopters has led to defence chiefs proposing to bring former Royal Navy anti-submarine Sea Kings out of storage for use in Iraq and Afghanistan. The move has prompted a military engineer working on the helicopter programme to condemn the cost-cutting measure that would 'severely endanger the lives of my colleagues'

- Daily Telegraph

The MOD said no decision had been taken on sending Sea Kings to Afghanistan.

Only tall, polite and attractive people may apply to join the Chinese Navy this year, reports the official Xinhua news agency. Looks matter, a spokesman for the service explained, because ships often take part in joint military exercises with other countries these days, sometimes abroad.

- The Times

The ship in which Captain James Cook claimed Australia for the British crown is resting at the bottom of an American harbour, archaeologists said. "The Endeavour ended her days as part of the British war effort against rebellious American colonists in Newport, Rhode Island.

- Daily Telegraph

And finally...

THE judge who decided author Dan Brown didn't steal ideas in the international bestseller The Da Vinci Code hid a secret code inside his 71-page ruling.

Naval buff Mr Justice Peter Smith used a code regularly featured in the novel to hide the phrase: 'Jackie Fisher, who are you? Dreadnought' in his legal ruling.

The judge has been an admirer of the admiral for over a decade and decided it would be 'fun' to include a hidden message in the document - although he never expected anyone to spot it.

- Portsmouth News

Severn seize and no Mersey

FISHERY protection ship HMS Severn found herself involved in the second dramatic boarding of the year as a Belgian trawler tried to outfox her.

The Blue Angel swerved dangerously as a boarding party approached her in Severn's RIB.

Her crew then tossed down an unusable rotten ladder for the sailors to clamber up when the fishing vessel finally stopped her evasive manoeuvres.

All the while, the trawlermen tossed fishing gear into the English Channel to evade inspection by Severn's boarding team and experts from the Marine Fisheries Agency (MFA).

Severn featured on the front page of our April issue after her crew received compensation for being covered in sewage and for providing an unsafe ladder - which a sailor fell off.

In the latest incident, thankfully, no sailors attempted to climb the Blue Angel's rotten rope-ladder.

Skipper Hendrick de Vries finally gave up the fruitless attempt to outwit the 1,700-ton Severn.

The warship shepherded his Ostend-based boat into Shoreham where it was impounded.

De Vries' efforts to avoid the authorities earned him and the boat's Dutch owners a fine of £4,500 from magistrates in Brighton - not to mention the loss of an estimated £20,000 of fishing gear which was dumped over the side, plus court costs of £2,400.

"It was a very foolish thing to do," said Angus Radford, district inspector of the MFA.

"Skippers are usually very cooperative."

As Severn bagged the Blue Angel, her sister ship HMS Mersey came across the French trawler Cap 2000 about 50 miles south of Selsey Bill.



● No angel... Belgian trawler Blue Angel finally obeys the law as she is ushered into Shoreham by HMS Severn

Mersey's sailors spent two days sorting through crates of fish aboard the Cap 2000.

They found that skipper Ludovic Le Bon and his shipmates had under-reported his haul of fish aboard by about a third and illegally stored cod in crates next to other fish.

The boat, from Normandy's principal fishing centre of Port-en-Bessin, was escorted into Portsmouth where the city's magistrates fined Le Bon £6,000; he was also ordered to pay £1,500 court costs.

...while Ledbury arrives just in time

A BOARDING team from HMS Ledbury broke off from fishery protection duties to save a yacht from sinking in the Thames estuary.

The 56ft catamaran Brigand sent out an SOS when she lost one of her engines and began shipping water heavily.

When the Hunt-class minehunter arrived on the scene, Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Rob Wilson feared the yacht was not long for this world.

"The lifeboat was an hour away and I honestly

didn't think the boat had an hour left in it - it was a nasty old sea," he explained.

A boarding team led by Executive Officer Lt Joe Price struggled to get aboard in difficult conditions.

Once they did, they found the source of the flooding and patched it up with wedges long enough for the Margate lifeboat to arrive.

The lifeboat crew pumped out Brigand which then limped under her own steam into Ramsgate.



● Snow business... Wave Ruler tanks up Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Barry in a blizzard during Neptune Warrior

It's a hard job (part 2)

FLEET tanker RFA Wave Ruler has gratefully left cold European waters behind to take up station in the Caribbean.

She takes over as duty tanker - and much more besides - in the West Indies from her sister Wave Knight.

Ruler has spent most of 2006 in either rough or icy waters, first assisting RN and US ships in Scottish waters on Exercise Neptune Warrior (the new name for the old Joint Maritime Course).

The tanker found herself battered by blizzards and struggling in sub-zero temperatures in the Hebrides... but they were positively mild compared with the fjords of northern Norway where Wave Ruler joined the fleet on its winter war game, Cold Response.

The weather was warmer on her return to UK waters, but no less forgiving to mariners when she anchored off Scarborough for an affiliated visit.

Bravely local dignitaries clambered into a transfer boat for a reception aboard the ship - and were safely returned to land afterwards.

Three hectic weeks were spent in Devonport storing up for 17 months in the Caribbean and changing the crew before sailing west. (Crew will rotate during the deployment, so only the ship herself will be away from home for a year and a half.)

The auxiliary deployed to the Caribbean in 2004 and 2005 where she played a pivotal role in relief operations in Grenada and the Cayman Islands in the wake of Hurricane Ivan alongside frigate HMS Richmond.

She has deployed to the Caribbean this year with the same goal in mind: humanitarian aid, as well as topping-up RN vessels deployed to the West Indies with fuel and other supplies.

A key role will also be the constant war on drug traffickers; Wave Ruler deploys with a Fleet Air Arm Merlin and crew.

Twelve months ago she helped snare five tonnes of cocaine in three drug seizures and her sister has continued those successes.



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Opinion

Stripped down to the core

THE NEWS that HMS Victory has made it on to the list of official icons of England will no doubt be welcomed by the Admiralty and those in Royal Navy corporate communications.

Although there may be those who question why the venerable old warship only made it into the second tranche, behind such choices as the Spitfire (first blood to the Crabs, then), red London buses and the perhaps less-obvious SS Empire Windrush (the steamship which brought almost 500 immigrants from Jamaica and Trinidad to England in 1948 to help in the reconstruction of post-war Britain).

Those joining Victory second time around include the Blackpool Tower, the mini-skirt, cricket, Big Ben and the Notting Hill Carnival.

While it may be somewhat disappointing that, in the aftermath of the Royal Navy's annus mirabilis, Nelson's flagship did not manage to imprint itself on the nation's conscience with sufficient impact to make the first selection, it is in good company – the Flag of St George (which some might argue is THE icon of England) is also among the second string.

The exercise by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, in the guise of Culture Online, is an interesting one, codifying the way that we see ourselves and how the essence of England is perceived overseas, which no doubt helps the marketers to press the right buttons when it comes to attracting tourists.

It is also worth pondering how the Senior Service fares in this area, and what encapsulates the spirit of the RN.

The PR teams are constantly seeking to raise the profile of the Royal Navy in the public eye, and to refine an image which is both simple (guardian of our shores and international seaways for centuries) and yet difficult to crystallise.

Victory, of course, would have to be a Royal Navy icon, as would the national hero who met his death on her blood-soaked deck in October 1805, Admiral Lord Nelson.

But what else should take its place in the highest echelons of Royal Navy veneration?

The tot, even though it was abandoned back in August 1970?

Round caps, perhaps, and maybe even the bell-bottoms of old?

And what about other ships – the mighty Hood? Or Dreadnought?

Musical entries might include *Hearts of Oak* or *A Life On the Ocean Wave*.

But there must be more – what floats your boat as far as the Andrew is concerned?

Let's not lose the pilots too

A HARRIER that can land on the flight deck by itself – whatever next?

It could be bad news for pilots if the boffins at Boscombe Down's Fast Jet Test Squadron take their research to its logical conclusion, for the next generation after the JSF will surely be the unmanned fighter.

It's sometimes easy, dazzled by the glare of technology, to lose sight of the men who fly machines. But take a look at Lt Tim Flatman's account on page 15 of flying the GR7 from HMS Illustrious. What makes it so memorable isn't so much the technical wizardry as the human skill.

Long live the Harrier, whatever type it is, says Lt Flatman.

And long live the pilots, says Navy News.

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

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Diana's legacy lingers on

JUNE 19 will bring back memories to those who served in HMS Diana 50 years ago.

It marks the anniversary when the 220 crew were ordered to steam their ship through the largest nuclear fallout yet devised.

They had already steamed through a smaller fallout on 16 May. This bomb was to be a larger device with a yield of 60 kt. It was to be the largest bomb used in any of the 14 A-bomb tests in the UK Atmospheric Testing Programme.

The flash was sighted at a distance of 97 miles and the explosion, when it came, was a double crack heard in Australia 200 miles away.

Those on board were accommodated in two pressurised citadels. The ship was steered from below on courses radioed from HMS Narvik to take Diana through maximum fallout.

To achieve this, the ship was manned in one boiler room and one engine room. On completion, some ten hours later, it was dark when the crew was allowed on deck to scrub contaminated areas.

The pre-wetting system was shut off and normality returned. Personnel had existed for 13 hours in cramped conditions and had suffered humidity and excessive sweating. The ban on smoking was an added burden. No Wrens were on board.

What the Chiefs of Staff wanted to know was what effect the nuclear explosions, both physiologically and psychologically, had on the men who were ordered to carry out this experience, a unique task for a peacetime commission.

In a nutshell, how much radioactivity could a ship withstand and remain operational? Morale was high and we were still alive.

The ship's company and I were surprised that there was no signal from either the Chiefs of Staff or our C-in-C in the Mediterranean, "Well done Diana!" They must have been occupied by the Suez crisis.

Diana should now have returned to her squadron at Malta. However, we were ordered to remain at Aden and the Suez Canal became closed. This



● HMS Diana – still a source of controversy 50 years on

precluded the medical examination which we should have had at the RN Hospital at Bighi.

After all it was just half of what the Chiefs of Staff wanted to know.

It meant that half of the value of the trials was lost. The crew felt aggrieved. Surely this deficiency could have been overcome by flying a small team of doctors from Malta to Aden?

By the time we were sent home round the Cape to reach Devonport, in February 1957, the whole episode had been dismissed.

When Diana paid off in August 1957 such was the corporate spirit of the ship's company that many kept together when they were drafted to new ships, or in the case of the hostility ratings, released from the Service.

This they did by letter or telephone or a number of local reunions, which eventually became an annual event.

It did reveal some with medical problems, such as two who had sons born with spina bifida, some had cancers, another developed a rare blood disorder put down to radiation and some officers died long before their normal span of life.

Had the medical service been able to carry out the intended

examination it might have been a help to those who had to seek help from outside service sources.

There is a Nuclear Christmas Island Society which has got nowhere and the MOD attitude is – 'if you have a case, provide the evidence' – which the simple sailor cannot do.

Now, 50 years later, we have arranged a final farewell dinner at Plymouth, where I hope those who have lost touch can contact their colleagues.

– Capt J R Gower,
Aldeburgh, Suffolk

The MOD told Navy News:

"The participation of HMS Diana was meticulously planned and the health and safety of her crew was of the utmost importance."

"Special Health Physics regulations were issued and the radiation dose limits laid down for the operation bear comparison with those in force in the nuclear industry today."

"Film badges were issued to personnel, none of which indicated readings above 200 micro-Sieverts."

"This equates to less than a week's background radiation and would have no detectable effect on health."

"There is no evidence of excess illness or mortality among nuclear test veterans as a group which could be linked to their participation in the tests or to exposure to radiation as a result."

"Furthermore, there is no scientific or medical evidence that any ill-health suffered by the children or grandchildren of Nuclear Test Veterans can be attributed to participation in the test programme."

"The Government recognise and are grateful to all the Servicemen who participated in the nuclear testing programme."

"Their contribution ensured that the UK was equipped with an appropriate nuclear deterrent during the Cold War which, thankfully, was never used."

A full version of the statement is on our website. Details of the Plymouth dinner are on page 31.



LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information.

Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

Given the impressive volume of letters, we cannot publish all your correspondence in Navy News.

However, we do try to publish many of your letters on our website www.navynews.co.uk

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

Please try to keep your submissions as brief as possible – our space is limited.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



● HMS Somerset, Navy News, May, page 41

Somerset flies the flags

COULD you please tell me what the flags were that HMS Somerset was flying on her outer yardarms as she entered London?

– Bob Ratcliffe

Cdr David Burns, CO of HMS Somerset, told us: "On the starboard side the flag is the standard of the Duke of Somerset and on the port side the standard of Somerset County Council."

Thrilled to meet hero

READING a book on local history I found an article about William Williams VC, who had served in the Meyric built by William Thomas in Amlwch.

I remember meeting and having a long talk with Mr Williams on Holyhead railway station platform when I was a 16-year-old Boy Seaman in 1956, he was on his way to a VC and GC meeting in London.

He was such a nice man to talk to, it made my day and my Mam was thrilled to bits that he had taken the time to talk to me.

I teach Welsh part-time in the school he attended as a child, Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch, in his day it was Amlwch County Primary School, where there is a tablet to his memory on the wall.

– David John Williams,
Penysarn, Anglesey

At Mr Williams' suggestion, we are running William Williams as this month's Hero of the Royal Navy. His story appears on page 12 – Ed

Cat calling

I WOULD like to call all ex-Cat-class sailors – cats that bear the name of our proud old ships are in need of help.

The Cat Survival Trust, based in Welwyn, looks after a large number of wild cats, many of which are surplus or unwanted zoo or circus cats and impounded big cats from unlicensed private ownership.

So come on shipmates! Why not sponsor a Puma, Leopard, Lynx or Jaguar? A £10 annual donation would make all the difference and it would be nice to think ex-Cat-class sailors are helping such a worthy cause.

Please send your donations to The Cat Survival Trust, The Centre, Codicote Rd, Welwyn, Herts AL6 9TU.

They have a website on-line at www.cat-survivaltrust.org and if you're in the area, you can pay them a visit and see the cats you have chosen to support.

– George Saunders (former AB Seaman, HMS Puma 1961-63)



Dog watches

THIS is a copy of a photograph recently sent to us at the Torpoint Archives. The sender knows that the rating in the picture is her grandfather, William Hurrell, born about 1850.

We noted that in the May issue of Navy News there was an article on dog training by the MOD.

Could any of your readers throw further light on the background of this photograph, taken 1870-1890?

– E R Pellow,

Torpoint Archives, Council Offices, 3 Buller Rd, Torpoint, Cornwall PL11 2LD



JACK

BY TUGS

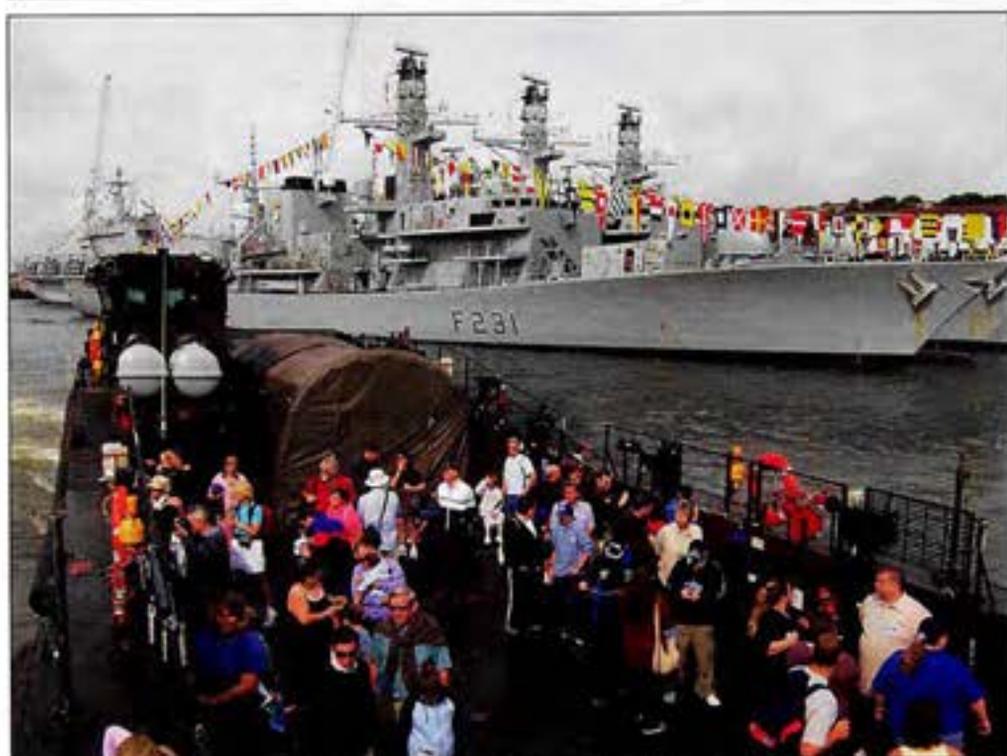
I'VE JUST BEEN ON THE UPPER DECK
- AN' SAW A DEAD PARROT FLOAT BY..



DIED OF BIRD FLU
PERHAPS?



MORE LIKELY
PASSIVE SMOKIN'
FROM WHAT
I HEAR



● Crowds head out to HMS Albion on one of her landing craft, at Navy Days 2004 in Plymouth, passing HMS Argyll on the way

No dampener on Navy Days

I AM told that there will be no registered charities attending the Plymouth Navy Days in August, because the organisers are charging £1,000 for them to erect their marquee.

Also they are not allowed to raffle anything or sell anything to raise funds.

Navy Days in the old days was run by the Navy and every ship in port helped to give the visitors a good day out.

All the monies taken from the gate covered expenses and the remainder went to Naval charities.

Allan Mercer, Secretary
HMS Glasgow Association, Widnes

Captain David Larmour, Director Navy Days 2006 told Navy News: "Charities with a Naval connection are given free sites at Navy Days 06."

"Examples of charities who have taken up this offer so far are KGFS, Royal British Legion, RFA Association and NPFS. Other charities are given a 50 per cent reduction which means that a small stand would cost in the region of £150."

Navy Days takes place in Plymouth on August 26-28 this year.

To find out more visit the website on-line at www.royalnavy.mod.uk or to buy tickets call the hotline on 0870 800 8118.

Family thanks to standard bearers

I HAVE been thinking about the comments of my Paddock Wood friend S/M Fry (Comment, April) and the attendance of Royal Naval Association standard bearers at funerals.

I was a branch standard bearer for 16 years, and with a branch membership of upwards of 400, funerals became sadly a matter of routine.

After the first five that I attended I got a bit disillusioned, but the sixth changed my thinking.

It was organised by the local RM Association, and I was most

impressed that the Royal Marines had sent a bugler from Portsmouth to play the ceremonial calls.

I realised that the Royal Marines were in a similar situation to Army Regiments, small and united, and tended to look after their own, as Ships' Associations do, of course.

My first funerals were for war-time conscripts and post-war National Servicemen, they had not asked to join the Royal Navy, but thank God they had, and a great job they did.

Most had joined the RNA and had all been treated as important

members of the RN, whatever their Service roles.

Of the many funerals I attended, well over a hundred, I was only ignored once.

Normally I would be overwhelmingly thanked. Many families insisted I accept a gift or money, once £200.

It all went into branch funds of course, and I never took any expenses for my travels.

As I said, I considered it a duty.

- Thomas G Branden,
Gravesend, Kent

Saggy sickbed

I WAS interested in the Torbay article (April, page 8) about transfer by helicopter, and thought you would like to know how we did it in 1948.

I would not like to have been the patient we transferred across to the Maidstone. This was, I believe, during our summer exercise.

I can't remember what DO6 was - the Myngs? The submarine was the Alaric.

- Don Ross, SBA (D) 1947-49,
Barton-on-Humber, North Lincolnshire

Our reference book *Warships of World War II* gives DO6 as HMS Keith - Ed



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Squadron spreads its wings

PLANS have been laid to move a Royal Navy flying training squadron from Plymouth Airport to RN air station Yeovilton.

A study into the recruitment and retention of RN aircrew has resulted in a rationalisation of flying hours at 727 Naval Air Squadron, and the introduction of a new Air Experience Flying Course.

This course is designed to introduce the Fleet Air Arm to prospective candidates, and includes a short introductory flight in the squadron's five Grob trainer aircraft.

As a result, it was decided to relocate the squadron to Yeovilton in Somerset, where students can get a better introduction to the ethos and culture of the Fleet Air Arm, as well as an insight into the workings of an operational airfield and its various squadrons and aircraft.

While grading remains the squadron's primary task, other courses include the training of air engineers and air experience flights for students from around the UK.

Reservists back home

A GROUP of 20 Royal Marines Reservists have returned home to the UK following a three-month deployment to Umm Qasr where they helped protect coalition personnel involved in training members of the new Iraqi Navy.

The group was the third consecutive 20-strong troop from the RMR to provide force protection to the Coalition Military Advisory Training Team over the past nine months.

This allowed regular Royal Marines to carry out other roles, such as training with new equipment, although Regulars have now taken over the Force Protection role.

The Reservists came from all five UK units - Bristol, London, Merseyside, Scotland and Tyne.

Col Jos McCabe RM, Deputy Commander of the Maritime Reserve, said: "Over the past three years nearly 100 Royal Marines Reservists have deployed on operations in Iraq, serving alongside and in support of their regular counterparts in 3 Commando Brigade to provide a secure environment in which the new Iraqi Navy can train."

"This is all against a backdrop total of nearly 8,000 man days being provided to the Royal Navy by the Maritime Reserve, accounting for around 30 per cent of the additional manpower required for Naval Service exercises."

■ **Integration of Reservists - page 28**



● 'Anyone got 40p for the parking meter?': The fore end of HMS Ambush makes its way slowly between the New Assembly Shop and the Devonshire Dock Hall at BAE Systems' Barrow-in-Furness shipyard

Ambush takes to the road in Barrow

ONE of the Royal Navy's newest submarines is on the move - at least, part of it.

The massive nose section of HMS Ambush made the short trip down the road from the New Assembly Shop to the Devonshire Dock Hall at BAE Systems' yard in Barrow-in-Furness.

Weighing 235 tonnes and

equivalent in height to a four-storey house, the steel fore end of the second Astute-class submarine was carried a quarter of a mile along the road on a 48-wheel Scheurerle transporter.

The vehicle moves at a comparatively lively 2mph, and the journey took around half an hour to complete on public roads between the two facilities.

The nose assembly joined seven other sections of HMS Ambush which are already being fitted out in the massive Devonshire Dock

Hall, the largest facility of its kind in Europe.

Also in the Dock Hall, which covers an area of 25,000m², is the first of class, HMS Astute, which is due to be launched in the summer of 2007 and handed over to the Royal Navy the following year.

Since a revised programme for the construction of the Astute class submarines was agreed with the Ministry of Defence, BAE Systems Submarines in Barrow has met or exceeded every

production milestone.

The first milestone for 2006 - bringing on line the switchboards which deliver electrical power to the submarine's complex operational systems - was achieved last month some 18 days ahead of schedule.

Barrow-in-Furness has been responsible for the building of more than half the boats over more than a century of the Submarine Service, starting with the Holland boats at the turn of the last century.

NATO NCOs look to the future

SENIOR enlisted leaders from 16 NATO nations and one Partnership for Peace country gathered at the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation HQ in the United States to discuss the future of the NCO in NATO.

WO Vic Parsons, Command Warrant Officer for Second Sea Lord, travelled to Virginia to represent the Royal Navy.

NATO's transformation from regional defence alliance to global force promoting stability has meant changes from the highest levels to the most junior.

The first two days of the International Senior NCO Leadership Symposium consisted of briefings from NATO branch heads, giving an overview of the transformation process.

The delegates then broke into syndicates to discuss the progress that had been made since the last such symposium three years ago, and according to WO Parsons, that work provides an excellent place to start from when modernising the NATO NCO.

"The work of the past three years provides us with a very positive foundation for what we are doing here," he said.

"We feel that it is important to have standards for the most junior NCOs as well as the senior NCOs."

"This process has allowed us the chance to contribute positively to the creation of these standards."

"Now that we have had an input, we must see how we can implement the standards with our nations and get the nations' inputs as well."

Many countries are undergoing their own transformations, having recognised the need for change in the new Alliance and the growing challenges facing the old ways of operating.

WO Parsons felt that this symposium forms an important step in the modernisation process of the Alliance, and it was now time to pass the findings on to the various militaries - and to continue to meet and work together.

Click to help

JUST a reminder - you can help us make a great website even better!

The *Navy News Online* survey is still live, and anyone visiting our website www.navynews.co.uk can fill in the quick and simple survey, and be in with a chance of winning a £50 prize or a year's free subscription to *Navy News*.

We are looking for your opinions and thoughts on the current website - not the paper - and how you think it could be improved.

Just click on the survey option when you visit the site, and hopefully our restyled website will be launched later this year.

In safe hands

DEVONPORT Naval Base Commander Cdre Simon Lister has picked up a top safety award for the performance of his establishment.

The base won the Sir George Earle Trophy, presented by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, for the most outstanding performance in health and safety by a company or organisation.

The judges noted the personal commitment of senior managers, and positive contributions from trade unions and the workforce.

Is your kit covered?

ROYAL Navy kit does not come cheap - and we are not talking about new aircraft carriers.

A full set of uniform for junior rates will cost hundreds of pounds to replace if it went missing - as happened to one sailor whose kit was in the back of a car which was stolen.

And there is no obligation on the MOD to replace it, so if the kit is not insured a sailor could end up with a hefty bill.

The same goes for equipment which is signed for on loan - the person who signs for it takes on the responsibility for its safe return.

CPO Lynne Joyce, in charge of clothing and accounts at the HMS Nelson store, has seen enough hard-luck stories to prompt her to warn all Naval personnel - get your stuff insured before you have to fork out.

Anniversary of liberation is marked in Channel Islands

TWO Royal Navy warships were due to visit the Channel Islands to mark their liberation from German occupation in World War 2 as *Navy News* went to press.

Survey ship HMS Roebuck, based at Devonport, was head-

ing for Jersey, while Portsmouth-based mine countermeasures vessel HMS Quorn was earmarked for the Guernsey event.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Roebuck, Lt Cdr Graham Minpriff, said: "I am very delighted to have the opportunity to visit Jersey, particularly for this important local celebration."

"The ship's company are pleased to have the opportunity to represent the Royal Navy at this prestigious event."

The visit, he added, would provide some light relief for the ship's company between two busy operational deployments, one in the Mediterranean and one to the east Atlantic, which will include a major NATO exercise.

The ship's football team was scheduled to play a charity football match in aid of the Jersey Hospice, while on the formal side, a ceremonial guard provided by

the ship was due to march through St Helier to Liberation Square as part of the Liberation Day Parade.

Over on Guernsey a squad of sailors from HMS Quorn will march through the centre of St Peter Port with war veterans, cadet forces and other uniformed organisations.

The warmer weather should make a welcome change from the ship's recent seven-week cold-weather deployment to northern Norway for exercises.

The Hunt-class vessel's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Mark Taylor, said: "As we pay tribute to those before us whose brave service and sacrifice restored freedom to this area of the British Isles, we are reminded of the importance of our ongoing commitment to safeguard the peace and prosperity which we all enjoy today."



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RN & RM Children's Fund

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Portsmouth

PO2 8RN

Telephone: 023 9263 9534

Fax: 023 9267 7574

Email: rnchildren@btconnect.com

Out of the ordinary days out

THERE is still time to bag your place at two extraordinary Naval events in the next two months.

The Beating Retreat of the Massed Bands of the Royal Marines takes place at Horse Guards Parade in central London on June 14 and 15 - tickets from Ticketmaster on 0870 4000 689.

And the skies will be alive on July 8 for RNAS Yeovilton Air Day. This year's theme is 'Flying with a difference', highlighting the wide variety of missions flown by today's Royal Navy. Tickets are available from the website at www.yeoviltonairday.co.uk or by telephoning 0870 800 4747.

Back up for men in black

A DEDICATED support force has been formed to back up the work of Britain's 'men in black'.

The Special Forces Support Group (SMSG) will take over the duties of units until now supplied on an *ad hoc* basis to assist the Special Boat Service and Special Air Service on operations.

The new unit, which is based at St Athan, near Cardiff, is drawn from the ranks of the Royal Marines, Parachute and RAF Regiments.

Their tasks will be wide-ranging, including providing fire support, carrying out diversionary attacks, providing training, or force protection duties.

Members of the new force maintain the identity of their parent forces, but wear a dedicated 'flash' insignia to acknowledge their membership of the SMSG.

Beyond the training the support group personnel have received upon joining the military, the troops have had specialist instruction to take on their new role.

● SPAG parachutists jump from a Hercules C130 over the Solent



Splash down

Submariners took to the skies when members of the Submarine Parachute Assistance Group (SPAG) parachuted into the Solent from a low-flying RAF Hercules.

The nineteen, based at the Submarine Escape Training Tank in Gosport, dropped in waves of three and four, along with two inflatable boats and two life rafts.

Team leader Lt Cdr Andy Mills said: "Few associate the Submarine Service with parachuting into the sea, but our role, which we take very seriously, requires us to be able to provide a rapid reaction force that would be dropped into the vicinity of a maritime incident."

"We would be able to provide immediate communications between a stricken vessel and the secondary support organisations, specialist advice and medical services, to help the crew and escapees and survivors on the surface."

During operations, a team of ten are drawn from a larger group of SPAG-trained personnel.

Pole proves magnetic for Naval explorers

THE ARCTIC must be getting jam-packed with the Senior Service, as various teams knock shoulders in the polar region.

The intrepid Royal Navy and Royal Marine Polar Quest Team reached their goal of the North Pole in early May, after trekking for 29 days over 340 miles of frozen wilderness.

Team leader Capt Sean Chapple RM praised his weary cohorts, saying: "The expedition was a 100 per cent success, despite the rest of the six man team being new to polar exploration."

LD John Carroll commented: "I enjoyed every minute and just appreciated the opportunity to be out there."

"Never did I doubt we would achieve it, and I'd go back now if I could."

A few days earlier Royal Marine Tim Tottenham raced to the Magnetic North Pole as part of the Sony Polar Challenge 2006.

Tim was part of Team ATP, beating six other teams to reach their goal, and the three men crossed the finish-line some 15 hours ahead of their closest rivals.

In the process of their 12-day trek, Team ATP raised £10,400 for the Laura Crane Trust, which researches treatment for cancer in teenagers and young adults.

Another patch of dark blue could be found on the ice in early May when expedition Arctic Mountaineer, featuring six sailors and one Royal Marine, set off for three weeks in the Arctic wilderness of Greenland.

Deputy leader Lt Cdr Guy Buckingham said: "This will be a fantastic experience, particularly for the four junior members of the team, to explore an area that has never been touched before."

 towergate wilsons

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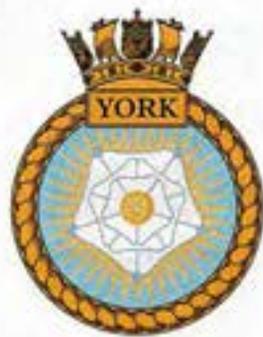
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City visit is perfect send-off for York

BEFORE sailing for a seven-month NATO deployment to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, HMS York paid a final call for 2006 on friends and supporters in her namesake city.

Commanding Officer Cdr Tim Cryar led a team of 40 from the destroyer, including the ship's aircrew and their Lynx helicopter, to make sure that while they were out of sight, the close relationship with their 'home town' would never be far from their minds.

A busy programme saw sailors sent to the four corners of the city and surrounding areas, and it culminated in a reception for representatives of all the ship's affiliated organisations in the city's medieval Merchant Adventurers Hall.

One of York's longest-standing affiliates, the Company of Merchant Adventurers, was preparing to celebrate 650 years since their inception, and although York's anniversary was a modest 21 years, the Company was happy to share the party.

The ship's Lynx was a big draw as the Navy visited Applefields School, the ship's charity.

Applefields is a school for 11 to 19-year-olds with special educational needs, and a group of 20 sailors spent a day with the youngsters, explaining their work and about life on a destroyer.

The smiles became even wider when PO Tim Cordery unveiled a birthday cake to mark the ship's 21st anniversary - then led them all out on to the playing fields to watch the Lynx arrive.

For 90 minutes, around 150 students got the chance to clamber on it, and there were plenty of *Top Gun*-style picture opportunities.

And *Top Gun* was also on the minds of three petty officers, 'Jack' Nicholson, 'Stan' Mellor and 'Baz' Woodley, who took to the skies over Yorkshire in Tucano trainers from RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

There was also community work, painting play area equipment and gardening, and the ship's rugby sevens team, which beat RAF and Army sides on the way to a Plate victory, were delighted to be presented with their trophy by actress Patsy Kensit.



FRIGATE HMS St Albans is back where she began her active life... in the waters of the northern Arabian Gulf.

The youngest of Britain's Duke-class warships has taken up station off Iraq, replacing her sister Montrose (see page 2) on guard duties around the two oil terminals which supply fuel to the world's tankers.

The Saint, as she's nicknamed, had enjoyed a relatively leisurely deployment before reaching Iraqi waters with visits around the Mediterranean, Black Sea, Lebanon and Israel on a goodwill tour before she headed through the Suez Canal to her theatre of operations.

With the 'fun' bit over (there was, of course, a lot of work for crew and exercises to perform with foreign navies), the 'business end' of St Albans' six-month deployment is now in full swing.

Although the threat to the oil

terminals is ever present, on a day-to-day basis the greatest challenge for the ship's company is perhaps coping with the plethora of dhows fishing in the waters.

Each vessel vies with the next to find the best fishing ground - and hence bring home the best catch. That inevitably leads to problems.

One dhow hailed the frigate when two of its crew fell ill; St Albans' medics found one sailor with a barbed fishing hook embedded in his hand and diagnosed a case of kidney stones

in the second. The heart of operations in the northern Gulf, directed by Allied naval force CTF-58, are the two oil terminals, Al Basra and Khawr Al Amaya - known as ABOT and KAAOT by the forces protecting them.

That means building up a complete picture of people using northern Gulf waters and clamping down on illegal activities

such as smuggling and insurgency.

"We are in no doubt that this remains a potentially dangerous part of the world," said Cdr Steve Dainton, St Albans' Commanding Officer.

"My sailors have worked extremely hard over the past six months to ensure that we are fully prepared for this deployment." As part of those 'full

preparations', before arriving in the northern Gulf, sailors chatted with counterparts from HMS Montrose and then assault ship HMS Bulwark, taking a break from Gulf duties in Bahrain, to pick up tips on what to expect on patrols around the terminals - and how to deal with any issues.

(Bulwark also walloped St Albans on the rugby field, but the frigate triumphed on the netball court, not bad considering the assault ship has three times the number of sailors and Royal Marines.)



Pictures: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow, FRPU Tipner

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Seahawk down... A US Seahawk helicopter arrives on St Albans' flight deck bringing supplies



Battleship graze

DIVERS have heard all the jokes about wild animals on Horsea Island...

Enter Primrose, Bracken and Wilma, three Highland cattle, who have made the home of the Defence Diving School in Portsmouth Harbour a little wilder.

The animals were provided to the island in a bid to restore a beauty spot – and site of important scientific interest – to its natural glory.

South of the school's deepwater building lies a chalk grassland meadow which is home to a small heath butterfly colony as well as other important local insects and invertebrates.

Unfortunately, the meadow has been slowly swallowed by scrub vegetation, hence the

need to check its progress.

Rather than send in the strimmers and mowers, the Hampshire Grazing Project offered Ian Mackfall, the Maritime Warfare School's environment manager, the three cattle to manage the meadow naturally (scrub is apparently top grub).

Security guards at the diving school's gate acted as 'herdsmen' during the animals' stay on Horsea – and checked on the animals daily to ensure they were fit (and also hadn't wandered off) during a three-week trial.

The environmentalists will study the results of the trial run (or rather 'mow') and, if successful, the beasts will be back on a more permanent basis in the autumn.

● Cattle do nicely... Cdr Chris Lade, CO of the Defence Diving School, welcomes Wilma, Bracken and Primrose to their new home on Horsea Island

Tubes help you sail more easily



● Train gang... Westminster's sailors unveil the mural celebrating links between their ship and the Tube station

Picture: PO(Phot) Mark Hipkin, DPRE/J Whitehall

THE five-year association between HMS Westminster and its namesake Tube station has been cemented with a new mural unveiled celebrating the links.

Members of the ship's company, led by CO Cdr Andrew Betton, headed to the ticket hall of the underground station – one of the most impressive subway stops in the world – to reveal the 10ft-wide montage to the public for the first time.

Around a million people use the station daily – the movers and shakers of Whitehall and Westminster, plus tourists and visitors to the capital – while just 180 men and women 'use' HMS Westminster every day.

The frigate marks her affiliation with the station

with two trademark Underground roundels aboard – and has hosted staff from Westminster station.

"The Underground sign on our main concourse is probably passed by most crew members several times a day at sea – so it's a good memento of home," said Cdr Betton.

If you think there's little similarity between the station and ship beyond the name, think again.

The fire safety systems which monitor for smoke and flames are remarkably similar.

As for the ship, she is gearing up for a Far East deployment, her first since a major refit which saw her as the first of the Duke class to receive the new Sonar 2087 – designed to hunt diesel submarines – among other upgrades.

A ferry good show by volunteers

THE Princess Royal was serenaded by Devonport Royal Naval Volunteer Band in a rather unusual setting – one of two high-profile performances by the musicians this spring.

The musicians were invited to perform at the dedication of the new Torpoint ferry and set up on the car deck of chain ferry Lynher II as it clanked across the Hamoaze; it's the latest arrival on the river, part of a £17m investment in the vital link between Devon and Cornwall.

Aside from Princess Anne, an audience of 300 schoolchildren and ferry staff were entertained by the volunteer band, one of nine in the RN.

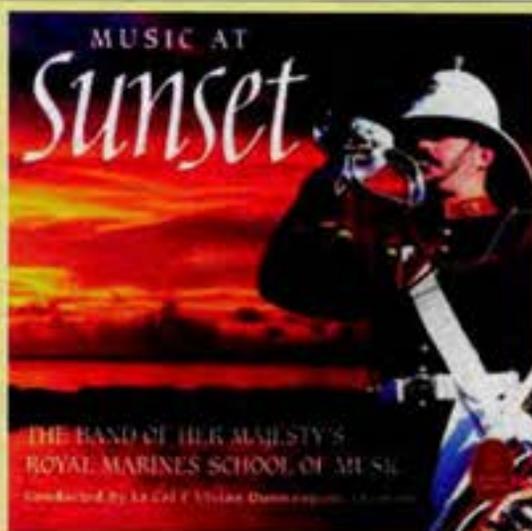
A much larger crowd awaited the musicians (bolstered by people from HMS Heron and Seahawk) two days later at Home Park for Plymouth Argyle's final match of the season.

Sixteen thousand football fans – from Plymouth and visitors Ipswich Town – were treated to a performance by the band, which is now, understandably, "on a high" according to volunteer band instructor Bd C/Sgt Martyn Hancock.

The highlight of this year for the 35-strong band should hopefully be a performance at the Menin Gate in Ypres for Armistice commemorations in November, when the volunteers intend to team up with Devon Fire and Rescue's ceremonial unit.

The band is looking for fresh talent. If you're in the Plymouth area and have musical leanings, contact Bd C/Sgt Hancock on 01752 555311 or hancockm@a.dlii.mod.uk

● (Right) The Princess Royal chats with Bd C/Sgt Hancock aboard the new Torpoint ferry



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Hurworth proves her worth



● An unusual perspective on HMS Hurworth

THIS year sees a transformation for Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessel HMS Hurworth.

After spending the past four years with the Fishery Protection Squadron, Hurworth is now undergoing a transformation back into the world of mine warfare.

Once her current period of operational sea training in Faslane is complete, the MCMV will be deploying to the Mediterranean for sonar warm weather trials off Crete, route surveying work in various ports, exercises with a NATO group and working with the Turkish navy.

The Hunt's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Jason Horne, said: "It is quite unusual for a MCMV to deploy on her own for four months, rather than as part of a Task Group."

"However we shall be working with various other units during our time in the Mediterranean and aim to make a big impression for a small ship."

Despite her years with the 'cod squad', Hurworth has not let her mine warfare skills slip.

She assisted in clearing the way for the Trafalgar 200 International Fleet Review in June last year, using her sonar to detect any objects that might have interfered with the hundreds of naval warships anchoring in the Solent – and in the process she found and detonated a World War 2 torpedo.

Just about to reach her majority of 21 years, Hurworth has had two major distinguishing events in her Service lifetime.

In March 1987, she was in Ostend as part of her NATO duties, when a call came in that a



Battle Honours

Atlantic	1941
Sirte	1942
Mediterranean	1942
Malta Convoys	1942
Libya	1942
Sicily	1943
Aegean	1943
Kuwait	1991

serious incident had occurred and the ship's divers would be needed. However over the weekend almost half the ship's company were ashore enjoying their time off.

One diver was still on board, and another two from the diving team were tracked down and airlifted to the accident – the capsizing of the Herald of Free Enterprise off Zeebrugge.

The only way in to the stricken ship was by smashing windows, then being lowered into the body of the ship by ropes.

For five hours the divers laboured in the pitch black and icy cold of the flooded hull of the ferry.

The ship herself was called out to support the rescue operations, but with a significant part of her crew still ashore, she sailed with a Dutch navigator and several ratings to arrive at the scene to embark casualties.

Later, once the immediate crisis was dealt with, Hurworth returned to Ostend to pick up her missing crew members before heading back to the wreck to provide logistical support to the operations.

A few years later Hurworth proved her mettle once again when tasked with mine countermeasures work in the Northern Persian Gulf in support of Kuwait.

Arriving off the Kuwaiti coast,

Hurworth found nine live mines and in February 1991 was narrowly missed when an Iraqi Silksworm missile passed 300 metres from the ship.

The present HMS Hurworth is the second Naval ship to bear the name.

The first was a Type II Hunt-class destroyer of 1,050 tons with an armament of six four-inch AA guns.

Launched in April 1941, she commissioned in September and joined the 5th Destroyer Flotilla and the Mediterranean Fleet in Alexandria.

In the spring of 1942 she saw continuous employment on the 'Tobruk Run' escorting convoys and carrying personnel and stores. During this time she shared in the destruction of submarine U568.

As part of the disastrous Commando raid on Tobruk in August, Hurworth rescued the survivors of HMS Zulu.

Later that same year, HMS Hurworth was one of the close escort which brought the convoy that marked the end of the siege of Malta. For the next seven months she was engaged on Malta escort duties.

Her final days were spent in the Mediterranean, patrolling the Greek islands of Leros and Kos against enemy shipping.

Facts and Figures

Class: Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessel
 Pennant Number: M33
 Builder: Vosper Thornycroft, Woolston
 Launched: September 25 1941
 Commissioned: July 19 1942
 Length: 60 metres
 Beam: 10 metres
 Draught: 3.4 metres
 Speed: 14 knots
 Range: 1,500nm at 12 knots
 Displacement: 750 tonnes
 Complement: 45
 Propulsion: Two Ruston-Proctor Deltic Diesel (two shafts, one Delta Diesel for auxiliary engine (bow thruster), three Potts Royce generators)
 Radar: Type 1007 navigational radar
 Sonar: 2193 minehunting sonar, 2058 RCMOV (submersible tracking sonar)
 Armament: One 30mm BMAFIC gun (650 rounds per minute), two 7.62mm General Purpose Machine Guns, capability to carry two 20mm BMAFIC guns
 Countermeasures: RCMOS (Remote Control Mine Disposal System) Mk1 with two PAP 104 Mk5 remotely controlled submarines

Shortly before midnight on October 22 1943, she and the Greek-manned Adrias – formerly HMS Border – ran into a newly-laid minefield.

Adrias had her bows blown off but managed to beach herself in Turkish waters.

But Hurworth was blown in two, both parts sinking in less than 15 minutes. Six officers and 127 ratings, about half of the ship's company, lost their lives on that dark night.

The present HMS Hurworth maintains close links with her namesake town of Hurworth on Tees, and each year when possible members of the ship's company journey to County Durham to mark Remembrance Sunday.

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.26

Seaman William Williams VC

Crippled by a torpedo the tramp steamer lay still, and while the panicked captain and crew ran for the lifeboats the dark form of the German U-boat warily circled its victim.

Men, dazed and terrified, pushed and struggled to gain a seat in the relative security of the two little boats and dinghy, abandoning the Pargust to its impending fate.

But amidst the death and loss of World War 1, stories were not always so straightforward.

The Pargust was a mystery ship – a 'Q-ship'.

The harmless tramp steamer had been built up, fortified and armed – a 4in gun, four 12-pounders, two torpedo tubes and depth-charge rails, all concealed from enemy eyes by fake walls, lumber, canvas and a dummy boat.

But the shock from the torpedo on June 7 1917 threatened to expose the British trap.

The weights restraining the starboard gun ports had been blown free in the explosion – there was nothing to stop the covers from dropping free and revealing the gun and its hidden crew to clear enemy sight.

Nothing that is, except Seaman William Williams RNR (pictured) – a man of Anglesey, 26 years old, already awarded the DSM – who shouldered the weight of the starboard gun port, bearing the burden of survival in his taut muscles.

For the next half hour, Williams safeguarded his hidden shipmates, while UC29 continued to cautiously circle, and Pargust's captain Cdr Gordon Campbell waited for his moment to strike.

Eventually the U-boat stopped, berating by semaphore the faux 'panic party' who in a supposed attempt to return to the Pargust had led the submarine to an exposed spot, just 50 yards off the side of the disguised warship.

Campbell, from his vantage point on the upper deck, ordered his gun crews to open fire. And Seaman Williams' Herculean labour was ended.

With swift efficiency, in just four minutes

the U-boat was dispatched. As her bow sank beneath the water, a lone figure was seen clinging desperately to the hull.

Campbell's 'panic party' in their lifeboat rescued just two survivors from the German submarine.

The bravery of Campbell's men, to act as bait and lure in a trap that risked them dear, merited recognition from the Admiralty but the courage and discipline of all won equal respect.

And so, setting a new precedent, the King approved the first elected Victoria Crosses to a ship's crew.

One was to go to an officer, the other to a rate, each man to be chosen by their counterparts.

Ballot papers were handed out, and each rate selected his man, each officer marked his own.

The officers chose their leader, Campbell himself – a man already decorated with

the award and which would have made him the only Naval officer to receive a bar to that singular commendation.

But Campbell declined, later writing: "I, of course, could not agree to this as I already felt that the Victoria Cross I wore was on behalf of my crew and through no special act of my own."

Seaman William Williams and Lt Ronald Stuart DSO, Pargust's second-in-command, were chosen by their companions to receive this remarkable award.

And the service certificates of each of Pargust's crew recorded their participation in this first VC ballot.

Williams stuck with Campbell, and months later won a bar to his DSM for action on another 'Q-ship', the Dunraven.

In six months, Williams' bravery on the 'Q-ships' Farnborough, Pargust and Dunraven was to win him a VC, DSM and Bar.

After three years of 'Q-ship' service, Williams left the Service scant days short of the Armistice. He returned to his home in Wales, and known as 'Will VC' to many on Anglesey, this most highly decorated seaman of World War 1 wore his honours with pride and discretion.



Picture: Kenneth Williams Collection



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● Angle of attack... A frantic moment in the School of Fighter Control at RNAS Yeovilton

Freddie goes Frenchie

IF YOU are a fan of RN codenames you'll love this one.

We've already had Brilliant Mariner this year. Aquila is well under way. Steadfast Jaguar is yet to come, as is Corporate Marlin.

At the home of Naval aviation, they've just completed the wonderfully-monikered Opaque Widger.

Quite why the Royal Navy School of Fighter Control at RNAS Yeovilton chose the codename for an exercise with the French Fleet Air Arm is perhaps a mystery - but it certainly raised a few eyebrows.

As perhaps did the appearance of French Rafale (pictured, right) and Super Etendard jets in the skies of western and south-western England.

French involvement in Opaque Widger is regular - but this year there was the added incentive of helping a Gallic flier qualify as a patrol leader, allowing him to lead large formations of various aircraft types into battle.

To earn that qualification, however, demanded more aircraft: enter four American F15Cs from Lakenheath, plus a French E2C Hawkeye - airborne early-warning and surveillance aircraft - to give a truly multinational flavour to the exercise... and provide a stern test both for the budding patrol leader and the trainee Freddies.

The French forces would play the bad guys - directed on to their targets by the Freddies after the Hawkeyes had handed over to them - with the Americans standing in their way.

The first potential victims of the incoming French jets were RN, RFA and German warships in a task

force off Plymouth; they were undergoing a test of their own as part of the weekly air defence exercise run by the nice chaps at the Flag Officer Sea Training.

The second part of the exercise switched to the Bristol Channel and Dartmoor.

As well as liaison with the French and American participants, close co-operation with FOST and the civil and military air traffic controllers at the UK's principal centre in Swanwick, near Fareham, was vital to ensure Widger ended successfully - and safely.

Certainly the French were impressed as they told Lt Ryan Dermody that they achieved all their goals - including qualifying the patrol leader:

"The high quality of the control provided by the Royal Navy was particularly appreciated."

It's not all 'one-way traffic' as the Freddies have recently visited the French Carrier Air Group in Landivisiau to foster closer relations between the two naval air wings.

Already a relatively regular feature of RN life is an exchange programme which sees French fighter controllers serving with HM warships and vice versa.

"With French fighters being only a short hop away from Yeovilton - and using similar operating procedures - it makes sense to operate with each other to make use of our differing capabilities," said Lt Dermody.

"This level of cooperation is, therefore, likely to increase."



Can you handle the Widger board?

THE RN School of Fighter Control is responsible for the training of fighter controllers - also known as Freddies - in their 'black art'; it also allows front-line controllers to brush up on this demanding skill.

Towards the end of the training at Yeovilton, instructors oversee a multinational exercise designed to introduce students to large-scale air operations: Opaque Widger.

Widger gives students the chance to control 'real' combat aircraft and comes as a welcome change from using Hawks from RNAS Culdrose - the mainstay of most Freddie training.

Fighter Controllers are a sub-specialisation of the warfare branch; it is open to junior officers who have completed their JWO courses or their first complement appointment.

Details from the school on 93510 5647.

● Two Rafale's escort a Hawkeye AWACs aircraft during Opaque Widger



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● Lie back and think of Autoland... the unique Harrier sets down on the flight deck automatically

By sea, by Autoland

HARRIER veterans will probably smile in disbelief.

Press a button and the aircraft will land by itself.

But boffins and test pilots have successfully developed – and tested – an ‘automatic landing’ system for the jump jet to set down on the flight deck of a Royal Navy aircraft carrier.

The trials are another step down the long and complicated road towards the Harrier’s successor, the F35 Joint Strike Fighter.

While the Harrier’s ‘hover, slide and drop’ manoeuvre on to the deck of a carrier is an impressive sight, it’s also extremely challenging.

With one eye on the future, an ‘autoland’ system is being planned and a two-seater variant of the Harrier was adapted by the Fast Jet Test Squadron at Boscombe Down, engineers from QinetiQ and the team working on the Joint Strike Fighter.

The aim is to allow the JSF to operate in conditions which a manually-landed Harrier presently cannot fly in.

The T4 trainer – in a fitting red, white and blue livery – was heavily modified to become a VAAC (Vectored-thrust Aircraft Advanced flight Control) aircraft.

The front cockpit will be instantly recognisable to any jump jet pilot; but the rear seat has some revolutionary features never before seen in the Harrier.

Instead of the conventional controls, an ‘evaluator station’ equipped with two inceptors (a form of side stick controller sitting on each side of the cockpit) have been installed. Through these inceptors, the rear seat pilot feeds control inputs through an experimental fly-by-wire and control-law system to the aircraft’s control surfaces to manoeuvre the aircraft in flight.

The rear cockpit is at the heart of development work on the JSF, due to enter service with the Fleet Air Arm and RAF early next decade.

The ‘autoland’ wizardry uses advanced GPS satellite technology as a stream of vital information passes between ship and aircraft, such as speed, pitch and roll of the flat-top.

Software inside the special Harrier brings the aircraft from normal flight to the hover mode, then slips it across over the flight deck and sets it down – all without pilot input.

As a safety measure, the system is not entirely automatic; if the pilot isn’t happy he or she can take over manual control and land normally.

This is the first time a fast jet has landed using autopilot on an aircraft carrier in any of the world’s navies and proved to be one of the last acts in HMS Invincible’s active life.

Test pilots took off – and safely landed – the VAAC Harrier on 101 occasions over an eight-day series of trials.

More recent jump jet trials have focused on the aircraft’s weight, with the heaviest Harrier launched from *Illustrious* on her current deployment (the fuel aboard weighed almost as much as an empty GR7 jet).

The aim, of course, was not to get into the Guinness Book of Records, but to improve the striking power of the aircraft so that carrier-borne Harriers pack as much punch as their land-based counterparts.



● Shimmering skies... The distorted shapes of two Harriers as seen through the haze over *Illustrious*

GR8 days with the GR7

THE king is dead, long live the king.

Just a month after the Sea Harrier bowed out of the Fleet Air Arm, the fliers of 800 Naval Air Squadron returned to active service on board HMS *Illustrious*, taking up the challenge of her new role as strike carrier on the Aquila06 deployment.

The squadron – motto *nunquam non paratus*, never unprepared – stood up this spring after two years on the sidelines. Its sister squadron, 801, will re-form this autumn.

800 has spent the past two years converting to the bomber variant of the jump jet which forms the backbone of Joint Force Harrier.

The force comprises two FAA and two RAF squadrons, with the two air forces very much retaining their identities under the JFH banner.

And so the carrier group is now focused on practising its new role of projecting power ashore with its bomber aircraft.

HMS *Illustrious* heads a four-strong force; destroyer HMS *Gloucester* and French frigate FS

Surcouf serve as her escorts, while RFA *Fort Victoria* is acting as a ‘one-stop’ supply and support ship.

There is more to Exercise *Aquila06* than ‘just’ the Harrier and enhancing its strike role.

The deployment has a strong anti-terror role, demonstrated as destroyer HMS *Gloucester* shepherded *Illustrious* through the Straits of Gibraltar.

Barely had the task force entered the Mediterranean when it began tracking three ‘go-fast’ boats racing across the sea from north Africa bound for Spain – and thought to be smuggling either drugs or contraband.

The task force chased one of the speedboats into Spanish waters, where it was promptly dealt with by the authorities, while its two sisters turned about and made a run for home.

And upholding the RN’s global ‘force for good’ mission, the task group sent *Surcouf* to the aid of an Iranian dhow which sent out an SOS.

A medical team from the French warship found a crew member suffering from appendicitis and stabilised his condition to allow the boat to safely return to Iran.

More dramatic was the aid offered to a crew member of tanker RFA *Brambleleaf*, on station in the Indian Ocean.

Brambleleaf reported that a sailor had suffered a heart attack and *Lusty*, 150 miles away, sent up a Merlin of 814 NAS to recover the stricken crew member in a difficult operation.

The patient was ferried back to the carrier, stabilised by the team in the flagship’s impressive medical centre, then flown to Salalah in Oman for specialist cardiac care.

The Commanding Officer of HMS *Illustrious*, Cdre Bob Cooling, commented after both these rescues: “We all know that the sea can be an unforgiving environment, and we were only doing for these seafarers what other seafarers would do for us.”

On a lighter note, destroyer HMS *Gloucester*’s journey was broken up by a ten day stop in Dubai, allowing the ship’s company a chance to enjoy some of the unusual opportunities presented by the arid environment – such as dune buggy safaris and desert running.

Sporting fixtures also featured during their brief respite, although the home sides managed to snatch victory in rugby and cricket, while the footballers won one match each.

Pictures by PO(Phot) ‘Stevo’ Russell-Stevenson and SAC Rob Travis, HMS *Illustrious*



● Hello, hello, it’s good to be back... (Left) The return of distinctive badge of 800 NAS to the flight deck of HMS *Illustrious* – but this time painted on the fuselage of a GR7 Harrier



● Hue and fly... The distinctive outline of a GR7 Harrier parked on Illustrious' flight deck as the sun rises over the Indian Ocean

AS I WRITE this, sitting on board HMS Illustrious as she sits off the coast of Oman, I consider myself well placed to be writing an article about the differences between the FA2 and the GR7.

I feel hugely privileged as a Royal Naval pilot in that I have at first hand seen the end of one chapter in the history of the Fleet Air Arm, and the beginning of a completely new one.

I can vividly recall the day we were all told the Sea Harrier was to be phased out, and we were all to convert to the GR7, and remember not treating the news very favourably, to say the least.

All of the operators to a man were fiercely proud of FA2. It was a fighter with a proven track record, and thanks to the Blue Vixen radar and AMRAAM, an undisputed top-of-the-line capability.

You could walk into a room full of air-defence pilots of any nation, and be able to feel you had something significant to bring to the party.

The GR7 was always going to have a lot to live up to in the eyes of us convertees. This does, however, have a happy ending I am pleased to say.

So what about the physical differences between the two?

Although the FA2 was a relatively recent version of the Sea Harrier, the basic airframe was pretty much the same as the one that liberated the skies over Port Stanley 24 years ago.

Looking into the cockpit for the first time on 899 NAS (the Sea Harrier training squadron), it was all

The view from the cockpit

A pilot's perspective by Lt Tim Flatman, 800 Naval Air Squadron

a bit daunting. It all rather looked like the designers of the layout had just thrown switches and gauges in, and decided to fix them in where they landed. The reality was that as various modifications had been added over the years, the engineers put new systems wherever they could find appropriate space to do so.

The result was largely a bit of a mess, and in the grand scheme of things, pretty dated.

By comparison, the GR7 was designed by pilots, for pilots. The USA, having liked the British built Harrier, took the old design and produced the Harrier II. The GR7 is a direct descendant of the American Harrier.

As a result, sitting in the cockpit is like being sat in your armchair at home compared to the Sea Harrier.

The all-round visibility is vastly improved as the canopy is much bigger and bubble-shaped. Also, the cockpit was designed to be used with night-vision goggles so all the lighting is well integrated and means the aircraft is a joy to night-fly.

The Sea Harrier cockpit lighting, on the other hand, although perfectly functional, was just that.

Functional. It consisted of a random collection of seemingly differently rated lamps that merely served to create 'mood lighting'.

There is a rather clever Mission Computer in the GR7 that ties in all the different inputs from an array of sensors.

Among them are a Forward Looking Infra-Red (again, very useful at night), and a Dual Mode Tracker, basically a slewable TV with six times magnification incorporating a laser energy sensor for use with weaponneering.

The Electronic Counter Measures system is state-of-the-art, providing pilots with an ability to jam enemy fire-control radars.

There is also the option to bolt on a TIALD (Thermal Imaging And Laser Designation) pod, which is used to lazare ground targets for

the purposes of dropping Laser Guided Bombs.

One of the most significant modifications in recent years has been a larger, more powerful engine. This allows the 'bring-back' of valuable weapons that might otherwise have to be jettisoned into the sea, to enable the jet to land back on deck.

In terms of actually flying the aircraft, the main immediately noticeable difference is how stable the GR7 is in the hover compared to the Sea Harrier. Once the aircraft is trimmed out, you can pretty much (should you be so inclined) let go of the controls, and the jet will stay where it is.

Do that in the Sea Harrier and you'd be half way across Yeovilton before you knew it!

All things considered, including how twitchy the Sea Harrier was compared to the GR7 and how difficult it could be to fly embarked ops at night, I guess the purists would argue that the Sea Harrier was more of a 'pilot's aircraft' than the GR7.

There is certainly no arguing that the Sea Harrier was certainly more unforgiving of any handling misdemeanours.

The physical differences are insignificant in the grand scheme of things however, as pilots will always strive to master whatever type they happen to be flying at the time, and both versions of the Harrier are, and were, a real pleasure to fly in their own ways.

The real difference arises in how we operate each one.

On any average day at Yeovilton, we would probably launch four jets to practise some in-house '2v2', having two of the jets simulating 'red-air' with the remaining two doing their best to try and shoot them down.

A more involved sortie would see us operating with the Air Force as part of combined exercise, and we would have been tasked with sanitising the exercise airspace to allow the 'Mud-movers' freedom to attack their assigned targets on the ground.

In fact it was during these exercises that I was

thankful not to be part of the strike package, as it always looked like a complete nightmare to be running around at low level without a radar, trying not to bump into any of the other 20-odd jets, also running around at low-level with their heads on fire.

Little did I suspect at the time that I would soon be down there in the weeds with them!

In broad terms, the mindset we had to get our heads around was that as a Sea Harrier pilot, we spent our lives running towards the air threat, whereas in the GR7 community we tend (whenever possible) to run away from it.

Obviously the horns still come out occasionally, and I know many a convertee who has heard the immortal words "...you're not a fighter pilot any more!" in a

debrief.

That aside, the role is very exciting, and I've done some of the most rewarding flying of my career while flying the GR7.

Specifically in Afghanistan where there is direct contact with the ground forces you are there to protect, it is most satisfying to know that your presence really does make a difference.

It is pretty difficult keeping on top of all aspects of your game on the GR7, as the array of employable weapons and sensors is so much bigger than for the Sea Harrier - there is always rust to be knocked off something, flying-wise.

As far as being embarked goes, it's really much the same. Getting out and back is the same as always, although if anything it's easier in the GR7 due to the updated nav aids on board the ship.

It is, however, more difficult getting involved in big exercises, as ship-to-shore comms are currently no substitute for a face-to-face brief with the other players, and air-to-ground operations by their very nature require more intricate planning than air-to-air.

To summarise, whenever I get asked the question "Which aircraft is the best?", I have to honestly say that it is an impossible one to answer.

Both of them are world-class in their own disciplines.

Both types had their own, quite separate, challenges.

I will always look back on my Sea Harrier time with great pride, as it will always have been my first front-line tour, and hence featured such events as first ever deck landing, first overseas deployment, etc.

The GR7, however, saw my first operational time, which is ultimately what we military pilots aspire to.

That will not provide much of an answer for many people, I realise, but hopefully provides an insight into some of the changes we've faced.

Long live the Harrier, whatever type it is!

● Someone's obviously under the impression that the photographer wasn't there for the Harrier



Take me to your leaders

FOR 101 years Britannia Royal Naval College has been the spiritual birthplace of the Senior Service's officers.

But as the imposing college begins its second century, it is finding its role is expanding and increasingly geared towards the front line – especially in teaching the art of leadership.

Some sailors are born leaders, others need to master the skill.

Hence the need for the Junior Officers' Leadership Course, which has just settled in Dartmouth, to hone skills taught in the fledgling stages of an officer's career. (We'll be visiting the course later this year – Ed.)

Warrant officers are also being catered for with a dedicated staff course.

Much like HMS Raleigh (see right), Dartmouth is finding its facilities used by non-BRNC personnel.

A dozen RFA and RN bridge teams have used the advanced bridge simulator in the past 12 months to practise their pilotage and navigational skills, something HM Ships Cornwall and Northumberland have also done – but on the Dart itself using BRNC's picket boats.

HMS Argyll's weapon engineering department bonded courtesy of the 16 Command Tasks set by the college and the demanding low ropes course – something the London Irish rugby union side has also benefited from.

"As Britannia enters its second century, it has an expanded role and is opening its doors to the



whole Navy," said the college's Commanding Officer Cdre Tim Harris.

The Dartmouth team is keen to see HMS Cromer, the former Sandown-class mine countermeasures vessel now serving as a training ship, increasingly used for leadership instruction, fire-fighting or damage control parties.

Even Dartmouth's academics have been drafted in as part of the growing 'front-line ethos'.

Senior ratings and wardroom members of HMS Ocean received briefings from Dartmouth's historians and experts before conducting air operations in the hallowed fjords around Narvik

earlier this year – scene of fierce RN-Kriegsmarine action in World War 2.

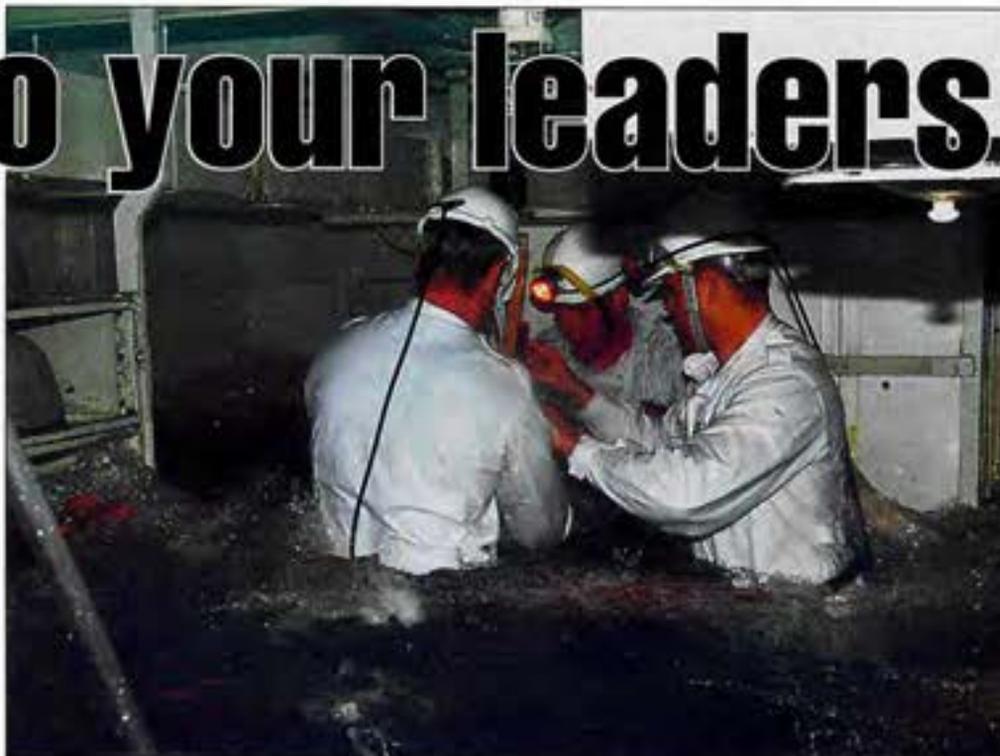
The Ocean team will be back at the college shortly for another briefing before the helicopter carrier departs on deployment.

Foreign parts demand more than just knowledge of local history or the environment, invariably they call for a bit of local lingo.

Ships deploying to France, Germany, Russia or Spain – or working with the forces of these countries – are being given specialist language training before they deploy, as are personnel on exchange programmes, such as Royal Marines serving in the Congo.

The linguists have also provided easy-to-use language cards for use by bridge teams, operations room personnel and especially boarding parties.

See 2006 DIN 06-060 or contact Maj Guy Balmer RM on 01803 677055 for more info.



● They DRUI though, don't they? Businesses are increasingly keen to send potential managers into the mock-up of a flooded compartment to learn the art of teamwork

NAVAL bases are for training sailors, right?

Right. But the team at HMS Raleigh believe bases can do so much more than that.

The new CO of the Torpoint establishment is keen to squeeze the maximum potential out of the huge base by allowing non-sailors to use its facilities.

Police forces, fire-fighters, other members of the Armed Forces, business leaders – all are tapping into Raleigh when sailors do not need parts of the establishment.

Devon and Cornwall police have used Raleigh's classrooms for specialist counseling training, Saudis and Emirates learn English on the base, and firefighters from Canada, Bangladesh, Guyana and Kuwait have all made use of the base's

fire school.

For non-military and public service organisations, Raleigh's DRUI – the Damage Repair Instructional Unit – is proving the biggest draw for potential external customers.

The DRUI was built to teach sailors the art of tackling a flooded compartment – and saving a ship in the process – but it has found another use in civvy street.

"I could sell the DRUI every day to businesses for team building," said Jane French of Flagship, the training organisation which attracts business to Raleigh.

The DRUI has also been used by maritime fire-fighters who may be faced with dealing with a holed or flooding ship as well as dowsing the flames.

"We need to maximise the use of any spare capacity at Raleigh," said Raleigh's CO Cdre John Keegan. "When areas of the base are not in use by us, we must look at ways of using them – and generating income.

Ensuring the RN – and the

taxpayer – get the most out of Raleigh is important, but first and foremost remains the training of RN personnel, be they rookies enjoying their first taste of Senior Service life or boarding parties brushing up on their skills at the Naval Military Training School.

Like his predecessor at the helm of Raleigh, Cdre Keegan is eager to stress that the base is so much more than 'simply' the home of basic entry training.

That basic entry training nevertheless remains one of Raleigh's raisons d'être and changes to the regime over the past two years are reaping rewards.

"We've pushed the wastage rate – people dropping out of basic training – down to just nine per cent," said Cdre Keegan. "That's much better than most other professions."

He continued: "Being in command of Raleigh makes me smile every morning. It's a great base and its smooth running is thanks to my dedicated team."



The future is Fly Navy

REMEMBER this logo because it will become increasingly commonplace in years to come.

The inaugural Fly Navy heritage conference hosted by the Fleet Air Museum in Yeovilton heard that a major effort was needed to remind the British people about naval air power – especially with two super-carriers imminent.

The Fly Navy slogan is a throwback to the days of the great carriers, but in true 'Past glories, future horizons' fashion it has been given a 21st-Century makeover.

Naval air power is three years shy of its centenary and FAA veterans joined serving personnel at the conference to discuss the past, present and future of this crucial wing of the Senior Service.

Reinvigorating naval aviation and especially public interest in it is crucial, said Rear Admiral Terry Loughran, chairman of Fly Navy Heritage.

"With the new carriers and aircraft approaching their final decision points, never has the need to present the case for naval aviation to the British public been more important," the admiral said.

Upbeat, he added: "The future is bright: the future is Fly Navy." Regular use of the popular Fly Navy logo is one step along that road, another is the 'air power from the sea' display taking shape at the FAA museum. It already houses a model of HMS Queen Elizabeth and should soon be joined by mock-ups of the Joint Strike Fighter and the carrier's helicopters.

More details on the initiative are available from Rear Admiral Loughran via the FAA Museum or info@fleetairarm.com

AS THE RN Historic Flight gets into the swing of the 2006 display season – when its vintage aircraft will be witnessed by an estimated three million people – it has been given a boost. Car giant Mitsubishi has loaned the Yeovilton-based heritage fliers an L200 pick-up truck to ferry the ground crew and their kit between shows.

Another 'new' sight this year should be a Fairey Swordfish, back in the air after a two-year overhaul for the legendary torpedo bomber and its wings in particular.



● A Sea King of 771 NAS hovers over a BRNC picket boat during leadership training at Dartmouth

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'Naval 8' celebrates 90th anniversary

AN RAF squadron which traces its heritage back to a Royal Navy unit celebrates its 90th anniversary this month.

208 Squadron RAF is also known as Naval 8, as it first appeared in 1916 as No 8 Squadron Royal Naval Air Service.

Equipped with Sopwith Scout and Strutter aircraft, No 8 Squadron patrolled the Western Front, supporting operations during the Somme and Ypres campaigns in a range of roles, including interception and close air support.

On April 1 1918 the squadron became part of the new RAF, remaining on the Western Front.

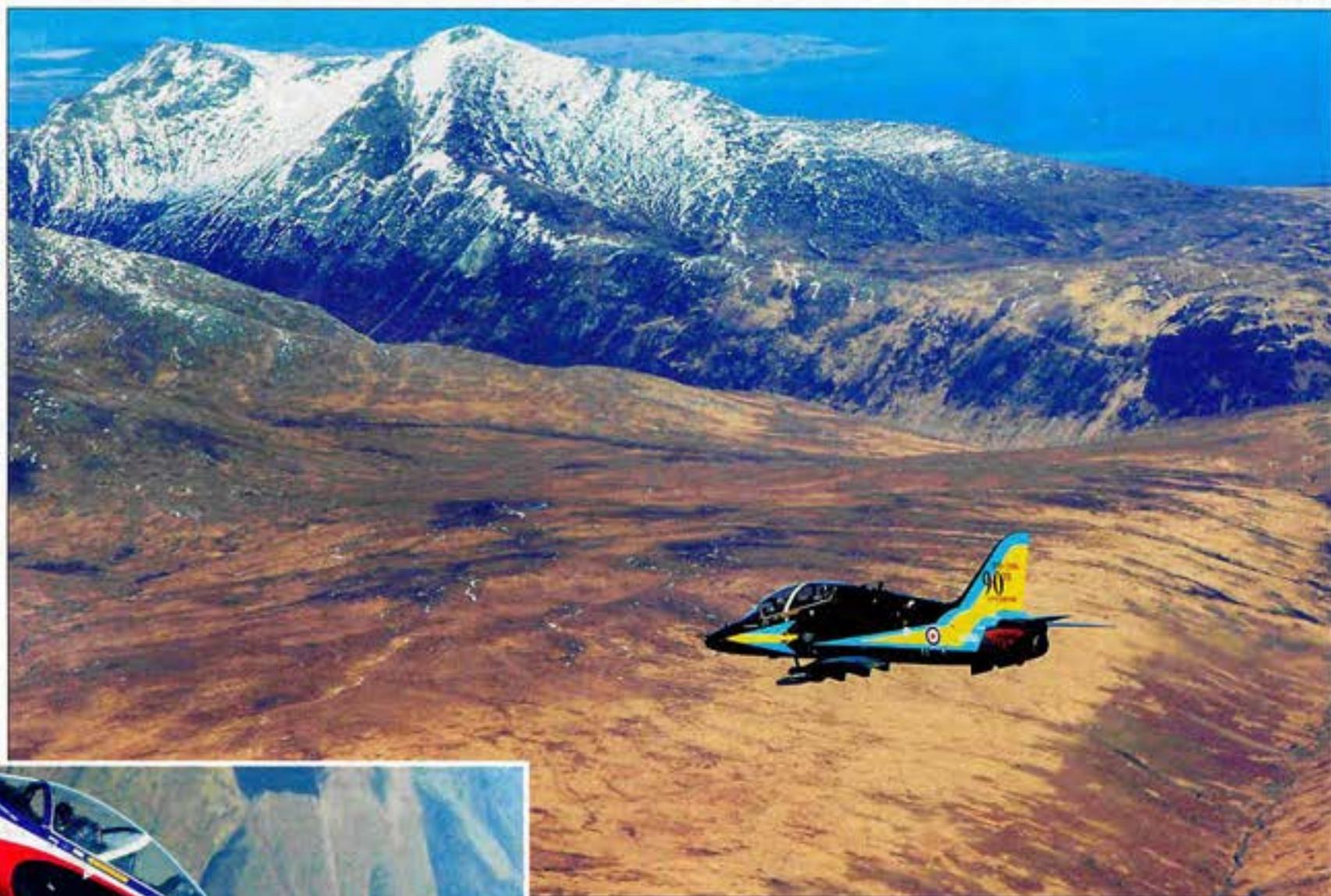
But it was over the following half-century that Naval 8 gained its identity.

Years were spent in Egypt, and the squadron's blue and yellow colours represent Egyptian skies and sands, while the eye of Horus is displayed on squadron jets.

In the 60s the squadron deployed to Kuwait to counter threats from Iraq - and 30 years later it returned with Buccaneers to provide laser-designation capability for Tornados in the 1991 Gulf War.

208 Squadron now operates Hawk T Mk 1 aircraft for advanced flying training - including a number of Fleet Air Arm pilots who will fly Harriers and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

Anniversary celebrations will include a 'Super Graduation' on June 2, with a flypast of RAF and 208 Squadron Hawks.



● Celebrating with new paint jobs: Hawk XX205 sports the 208 Squadron colours (above) while XX195, the RAF Valley 2006 Hawk Display aircraft (left), piloted by flying instructor Flt Lt Martin Pert, is painted red, white and blue to celebrate the 85th anniversary of 4 Flying Training School at RAF Valley



New seaboat has wider role to play

THE ROYAL Navy's humble seaboat has finally made it as a weapon system in its own right.

The seaboat had already made a huge leap forward when the old motor whaler was replaced by the Pacific 22 Rigid-hulled Inflatable Boat (RIB).

The former chugged along at a stately eight knots, while the latter could exceed 20 knots.

But the role was virtually the same, including the recovery of someone who has gone overboard, passenger transfers and use as a crash boat for ditched helicopters.

The design of the RIB, along with its limited communications capabilities, meant the possibility of using it for boardings were extremely limited.

In the run-up to Op Telic, the need to put more pressure on Saddam's regime through more effective enforcement of UN sanctions saw the introduction of the Pacific 22 (22ft long) Mk 2.

Powered by a waterjet, it was faster and more reliable than its predecessor, and could take the Xeres navigation and secure



● Cracking RIB: a prototype Pacific 24 seaboat in action

communications fit, linking RIBs with mother ships and allowing co-ordinated boardings beyond line of sight.

It also allowed the fitting of a machine gun for force protection, though as it was mounted behind the cox'n it was far from ideal.

Now VT Halmatic has won a competitive tendering process to provide the next seaboat - the Pacific 24, which was procured at a similar cost to the 22.

Capable of almost 40 knots with an endurance of seven hours,

the new boat can accommodate a six-strong boarding party for'ard, and the seats can be removed to provide either a machine-gun post or a cargo floor capable of taking a palletted load of up to a tonne making it a weapon system in the Navy's eyes.

Ten of the 24ft boats have been ordered so far, all Xeres-fitted, and all Type 23s, Type 45s and aircraft carriers are expected to deploy with the new Pacifics on board.

■ See next month's paper for a feature on the new boat



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Victory gains iconic status

THE FLAGSHIP of the Royal Navy has now gained iconic status in a national vote conducted by a Government department.

HMS Victory is one of 21 items that made the *Icons - a Portrait of England* hall of fame which identifies factors which make up the English national identity.

The project was launched in January by Culture Online, part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the first wave of 12 icons included Stonehenge, Punch and Judy, the FA Cup, the Routemaster double-decker bus, SS Empire Windrush and the Spitfire.

Among the second wave of 21 icons is Big Ben, the flag of St George, the mini-skirt, *Pride and Prejudice*, Brick Lane, cricket, the Blackpool Tower and the pub.

Around 5,000 nominations have been made and some 300,000 people have voted on potential icons from Wallace and Gromit and Dr Who to fox-hunting.

According to the *Icons - A Portrait of England* website, the idea behind the project is that "it can help us all to explore, enjoy and celebrate our cultural

Back on board

THE refit of HMS Richmond has passed a major milestone with the move back on board of the ship's company.

The Type 23 frigate is on an 18-month programme with Fleet Support Ltd (FSL) which should culminate in ship acceptance in September.

The presence of the 170 officers and ratings - including the new Commanding Officer Cdr Piers Hurrell - will be invaluable in helping to set to work the various ship systems that have been upgraded during the refit.

treasures more and will encourage visits to museums and galleries. But it is also proving an unusual and exciting entrée for potential tourists eager to find out what makes England tick."

The Commanding Officer of HMS Victory, Lt Cdr John Scivier, said: "I am delighted that HMS Victory has been chosen as an Icon of England and that she will appear on the *Icons* website.

"It is particularly pleasing as the ship has been nominated and voted for by the general public, which is testament to the standing that the ship has amongst the community.

"In my mind the ship is iconic in two ways.

"Firstly and more obviously because of the Battle of Trafalgar and Admiral Lord Nelson. Much was made of these associations last year and their importance cannot be overstated.

"Secondly, though, the ship is almost 250 years old and has survived the rigours of 19th Century maritime warfare, ramblings and even an attempt by the Luftwaffe to destroy her.

"She has survived all of this and remains a prime example of this country's innovation, spirit and fortitude.

"With modern icons such as the Notting Hill Carnival and the Eden Project included in this list, it is very satisfying to know that this symbol of our maritime heritage is still held in such high esteem."

The Icons coalition includes a wide range of cultural, sporting and heritage bodies, including the National Trust, the Football Association, English Heritage and the Muslim Council for Great Britain.

See website www.ICONS.org.uk for more details.

■ Comment - page 6

● Members of the 5th Battalion, South African Infantry, on their way to victory in the Ladysmith Swartkop Challenge



Contest honours Naval Brigade exploits

A LONG-RANGE Naval gun dating back more than a century has added a touch more authenticity to a sport which sprang from the exploits of the Senior Service in South Africa during the Boer Wars.

The 12pdr, which bears the date 1898 on its breech, was used in the fourth running of the Ladysmith Swartkop Challenge - an activity which rivals the Field Gun competition at the brutal end of extreme sports.

The event derives from the feats of the Naval Brigades in South Africa at the end of the 19th Century, and the Field Gun competition which excited audiences at the Royal Tournament for decades.

It now forms the heart of the Ladysmith Siege Weekend, which includes displays of period military activity by British and Boer re-enactment groups, and a variety of other displays, activities and commemorations.

This year the Swartkop Challenge took place at a new venue - Wagon Hill - but it still proved a gruelling test for the two teams, from 5th Battalion South African Infantry (SAI) and the Natal Carbineers.

The basis of the challenge is to haul the 1,250kg gun on its wooden carriage 120m up a hill with a slope of around 40 degrees - a vertical height of around 120ft.

The SAI - a 20-strong team of weightlifters - went first, using block and tackles to haul the gun to the halfway mark before securing it to a fixed strongpoint and then repeating the exercise for the second (steepest) part of the hill.

Sheer power is not enough; the team had to have agility to scamper up a steep hill, and the gun needed to be guided around the worst of the rocky obstacles on the slope.

Among those bellowing advice from the sidelines was a team from the Portsmouth Field Gun Association, which inaugurated

the competition in 2003.

The run ended when the gun was brought to a level patch of ground and rotated so that it could be fired towards the town, satisfying historical precedents - and setting a time of just over 34 minutes.

Once the gun had been rattled down to the foot of the hill again by tractor, the Carbineers made their run, and although they were well up with the time in the first part of the climb, their lack of weight began to tell, and after a desperate struggle to the top they pulled the lanyard to record a time of just over 53 minutes.

Every man who sweated up the hill received a medallion and a T-shirt, presented by Cdr Peter Lancaster RN, the Naval and Air Advisor at the British High Commission in Pretoria.

The SAI team also took a perpetual trophy of a Naval field gun back to their mess.



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Lancaster breathes easier

HEADS must have been spinning on HMS Lancaster between contending cries of "Don't quit!" and "I quit!"

The quitters were enjoying the strength of their nicotine-free voices, challenged by LMA Gavin Lumsden.

Originally 19 members of the ship's company took up the challenge, but notable survivors were Chef 'Taff' Venn, Chef '10 per day Del' Houghton, and 20-a-day LOM 'Simmo' Simms.

In their case, sheer willpower overcame their addictive and expensive habit, although sadly most of the others finally said 'No tar' to the challenge - but their weakness cost them a hefty fine, netting £60 for charity coffers.

On the other side, berated against quitting were those muscle men who had taken on LPT Richie Way's challenge to 'lift the ship'.

A full day of weightlifting saw the muscle men of Lancaster lift a whopping total of 4,000 tonnes, grunting their way to £195 in return for the pain lined up for the next day.



● CO Cdr James Morley takes the strain from LPT Richie Way ably assisted by (L to R) WO Dave Swann, Lt Cdr Nick Carter and OM 'Scouse' Reeves

Along with other efforts, Lancaster has drummed up over £600 already this year for its chosen charity CancerCare (North

Lancashire and South Lakeland) that provides support, therapy and practical help for patients and families.

Faslane promises Variety

THIS year's flagship charity for the Faslane Fair on June 17 is the children's charity, Variety Club.

This year organisers hope to top previous years both in terms of charity money and the event itself.

The star attraction will be HMS Albion, the 18,500 tonne amphibious assault ship, with the warship's landing craft ferrying people on board for tours.

As the lead charity, the Variety Club will benefit from 70 per cent of the total funds raised; these funds come from donations at the gate for

programmes and raffle tickets.

The money will be used by the Variety Club to fund projects to improve children's lives in the Helensburgh, Lomond and Dunbartonshire area.

Other local charities will also gain from the event with the remaining 30 per cent of funds split among the Children's Hospice Association Scotland, Yorkhill Children's Foundation and the Pilgrimage Trust.

Last year the Fair raised £22,000 for its lead charity Macmillan Cancer Relief's Lomond and Clyde Gairns Scheme, plus thousands going to several smaller charities.

Barbarians cash in at defeat

THE 2005 Remembrance Rugby Match between the Combined Services team and the Barbarians (where the military lost out 45-6) did offer one glimpse of sunshine for the Forces.

As a result of the match, the Combined Service Rugby Union made a donation of £5,000 to the Royal British Legion. The money was raised through a proportion of proceeds taken at the gate and a collection at Dalton Barracks.

This year marks the 85th anniversary of the Royal British Legion; find out more at www.britishlegion.org.uk on-line.

Brush strokes by Naval folks



HARD-WORKING school-painter (and for that matter schoolchild) Matthew Murray allowed sailors from HMS Collingwood to watch him at work at Sarisbury Infant School.

After carefully assessing their abilities, Matthew eventually allowed the sailors to pick up a brush themselves to help brighten up his school.

With the (other) children on their Easter holidays, this was the ideal time for the school to get much-needed work done, both inside and out.

The sailors from the Fareham training establishment spent two days at the school, under the careful eye of Matthew.

Having learnt from the master, Matthew's team of willing helpers painted exterior fencing.

Once they had proven themselves to his exacting standards, Matthew let them loose with their paintbrushes on the inside of the school hall, and then allowed them to dig over flower beds.

Headteacher Sandy Keefe said: "The lads have made a tremendous difference to the school environment for the children."

"They have been a great team - very enthusiastic."

"We would like to extend a big thank you to them on behalf of the children, teachers and parents."

Matthew reserved comment...

● Matthew Murray aged five allowed sailors from HMS Collingwood to help him paint Sarisbury Infant School (and himself from the look of it...)



THE AIR Traffic Control Tower at Basra Air Station in southern Iraq proved too much of a temptation to the daring men and women stationed there.

Some 40 soldiers, sailors and airmen took the plunge to raise £645 for the Speyside Trust's Badaguish Centre near Aviemore in the Scottish Highlands.

One of the jumpers was not quite as daunted as his fellow compatriots.

Royal Marine Jack Dewhurst, who serves with the Commando Logistics Regiment, said: "I must admit my training did help - it's not as if I haven't done this sort of thing a few times before."

Army Capt Kady Chatman wasn't quite so relaxed about the experience - she said: "Climbing over the safety barrier was unnerving but once I got down it was a great sense of achievement and the view from the top was great."

The Badaguish Centre is a small registered Scottish charity which provides outdoor and activity holidays and respite care for people with special needs from all over Scotland and the UK.

Visitors to the centre enjoy a range of activities including canoeing, rock scrambling, abseiling (even with their wheel-chairs), and also biking.

Money for bold rope

Picture: Cpl John Hawkes RAF



● Observer students from 750 Naval Air Squadron at RNAS Culdrose help out on the Shelter Box project

Observers take action

'SHELTER Boxes', packed with the basic needs for human survival, are winging their way to the people of the Sudan as the result of work by Royal Navy Observers training at 750 Squadron in Culdrose in Cornwall.

The Shelter Box project, set up by former Naval Search and Rescue diver Tom Henderson, is based close to the Culdrose establishment.

The students helped to pack 220 green heavy-duty plastic crates with essential equipment to allow displaced families to survive at times of natural disaster.

Course officer Amy Dobson said: "Working at Shelter Box we quickly learnt that when homes and communities are decimated, the three most important things needed to survive are shelter, clean water and the means to cook."

"Providing somewhere to live helps to rekindle the spirit - which keeps families and communities together, enabling them to focus on the rebuilding of their lives."

She added: "If we have helped just one family to rebuild their lives, then all of the hard work was well worth it."

During their seven-month training on the Basic Observer Course, students are encouraged to get involved with a community project.

The course unanimously chose Shelter Box, aware of the number of natural disasters around the world recently and the devastating impact on the people caught up in them.

To date, some 25,000 shelter boxes have been sent to provide shelter, warmth and comfort to millions of people displaced by disaster and destruction across the globe.

Pirate seizes Westminster

WHEN frigate HMS Westminster held a Families Day, a pirate took over the warship and extorted money from his captive victims.

Fortunately it was all in a good cause - the Type 23's Executive Officer Lt Cdr Richard Taylor donned his buccaneer guise to collect £500 for the Rowans Hospice at Purbrook.

Strong winds and swelling seas did not stop crew and guests putting their hands in their pockets to help the hospice.

The day featured a display by the ship's Merlin helicopter, a flypast from three Tornado jet aircraft, and on a junior level children's entertainment provided by Buzzy the Clown.

Lt Cdr Rob Cogan, the ship's Logistics Officer, said: "It was a great day at sea for the crew and their families, unfortunately there is one person from the ship's company who couldn't join us, and is being looked after by the Rowans Hospice."

"It was decided that the money we raised should go to this worthy cause to assist the fantastic work they are doing."

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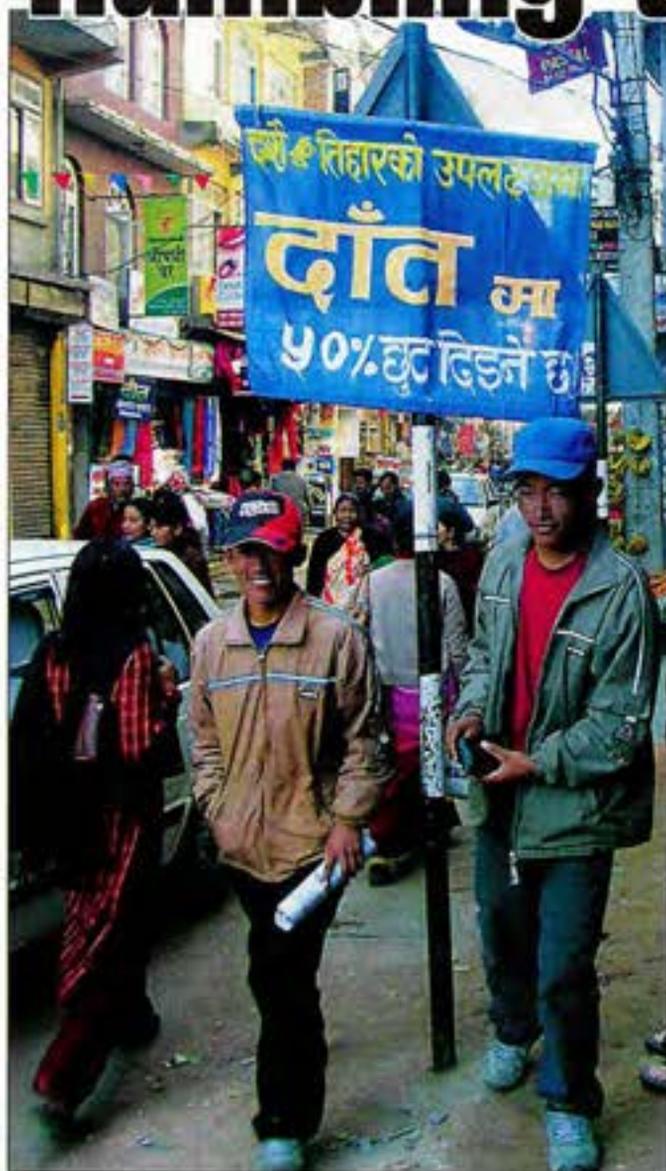
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Humbling times in the Himalayas



● They Kathmandu, don't they... A bustling street scene in Nepal's capital

PICTURE the scene.

It is Christmas Eve, pitch dark and you are trying to get to sleep, lying in a sleeping bag on a wooden board and straw mat combination that makes a pusser's mattress seem like the epitome of luxury.

You are in a small hut made from buffalo dung, mud, branches and grass.

You are staying with a family which has given up half of its tiny home for you. All ten of them are crowded together on the ground in the adjacent 'room'.

The mist drifts in through holes cut into the walls and, somewhere beyond, the Himalayas beckon.

Crickets are chirping and there is a strange rustling coming from the straw roof some two feet above your face.

Something plops on to your chest and starts moving slowly across the surface of the sleeping bag. Something else is similarly navigating its way up the bag from your feet.

On goes your head torch and the mice which have parachuted off the roof seeking food and warmth – namely your body – scatter. You draw the sleeping bag strings closer around your neck and switch off the light (batteries are a scarce commodity). You are in Nepal.

Lt Cdr Fi Shepherd and Maj Richard Rearden returned to Nepal with family members plus more than half a ton of aid donated by personnel from Second Sea Lord's Headquarters.

The party made for the Friendship Clinic in the lowland village of Meghauri, situated in the Chitwan area of Nepal, and a long-time beneficiary of RN generosity.

"The district is in a pretty remote area – about 8km from the north Indian border," said Maj Rearden.

Two members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Everest Expedition 2003 returned to Nepal, the 5th poorest country in the world – bearing more than half a ton of aid donated by personnel from Second Sea Lord's Headquarters in Portsmouth. Lt Cdr Fi Shepherd (HMS Liverpool) reports.

"The people are from the lowest caste and, correspondingly, have no personal possessions or income.

"The whole region has no running water, sanitation or communications, a dirt road and a few ancient Indian bicycles."

Electricity is a hit-and-miss affair, so inhabitants generally stay indoors after nightfall.

The dangers of darkness are exacerbated by tigers, elephants and rhinos roaming across the land.

"The local people survive by subsistence farming and fishing," Maj Rearden explained.

"They have nothing and yet are amongst the happiest people I have ever met."

The return to Nepal was sparked by the impressions the people and the land left on the sailors and commandos who took part in the 2003 Everest expedition.

"This is a poor country where life is much harder than anything we ever experience in the developed West," Lt Cdr Shepherd said.

"And yet the people are always smiling, always putting themselves out to help each other, always giving."

"They have nothing and yet will give you the shirt off their backs if it helps you in some way. They seek nothing in return; it is simply how they are."

"I wanted to come back to Nepal again and repay this kindness."

The 2003 expedition prompted the adventurers to ask for donations for the Friendship Clinic: children's clothes, toys, basic English books, medical supplies and unwanted stationery.

"Kids run around in rags and play with sticks and leaves," explained Lt Cdr Shepherd.

"Education is difficult because there are no tools (books, pens, etc) to learn with."

The clinic itself is also basic by British standards – likened by the two officers to a sickbay rather than a clinic as we know it.

Yet Nepalese people trekked more than 30 miles, normally on foot, to receive treatment.

"One chap had cut off the top of his finger and the attending nurse was busy applying neat antiseptic to the area as blood dripped into a bucket held between his legs," said Lt Cdr Shepherd.

"In another room a mother watched as a doctor examined her



● Queen Bee... Lt Cdr Fi Shepherd helps out at a Nepalese apiary

crying baby."

In nine years, more than 50,000 Nepalese have been treated by the clinic's seven staff. Indeed, such is its success, it is more than 'just a clinic'.

Now it is home to a kindergarten, school and scout troop.

Fresh water wells are also being sunk and sanitation units provided across the region – all thanks to the education and training emanating from the clinic.

"We jumped on some rickety bicycles and cycled to the kindergarten where we were greeted by the children," Maj Rearden recalled.

"The teachers were beside themselves with emotion."

"Until that moment each child had one exercise book and one pencil and were taught using pictures of the alphabet and animals drawn on the stonewashed walls of the building. It was that simple."

From there the group moved to one of the sanitation projects and watched circular iron casts being filled with concrete.

Clinic manager Singh Kumar explained that the resulting rings would be joined together and dug into the ground to form cess-pits for toilets.

Further down the road, the party found a young Nepalese girl filling earthenware jars with water at a freshwater pump.

Mr Kumar explained that before the pumps were sunk, people ablated, washed in, and collected water for drinking from the river.

"Since the well and toilet project started we are seeing far

fewer cases of typhoid and other diseases. The money you have raised means we can dig three more wells," Mr Kumar added.

Perhaps the most satisfying moment came when the team – armed with a massive bag of clothes strapped on to the back of a bicycle – headed down a dirt track into the jungle and towards the poorest region of all.

"A collection of ramshackle mud huts came into view and we headed for the first," said Lt Cdr Shepherd.

"Most of the parents were working in the fields or fishing in the river so Singh called for the children to come out and we rummaged in our big bag, stripped them of their rags and dressed them in new clothes before moving onto the next hut."

As the party moved through the village, pied-piper-esque, a trail of children followed it.

"Children jumped around with wide smiles, showing off their new garments to each other," recalled Lt Cdr Shepherd.

Mr Kumar added: "Some of these children have never had new clothes before. The parents give you their thanks and think it is a festival day."

A youngster in bright yellow shorts and a red t-shirt came up to the visitors with a crayon drawing of a tiger and his family.

Mr Kumar translated: "He wants you to have this picture because he has nothing else to give you."

Lt Cdr Shepherd added: "It was a very humbling moment for us all."



● A polite greeting from a Nepalese girl as her friend pumps water from a primitive well



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:
Tel: 01980 618244 Mil: 94344 8244
Fax: 01980 618245 Mil: 94344 8245
email: enquiries.ceas@gtnet.gov.uk



Eastern eye for Michael

NOW that's something you don't see every day... (Above) RN and RNR officers don traditional Sikh headgear to help their friend Lt Michael Spencer celebrate his marriage.

The junior officer, serving with HMS President, tied the knot in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral – last resting place of Nelson – with his Sikh bride Reena Jui.

A week later, a traditional Sikh ceremony, the *asad karaj* – literally a 'satisfaction ceremony'

– was held in the capital to bless the couple.

During the *barat* – the arrival of the bridegroom (he's the one wearing the impressive veil) – Lt Spencer was escorted into a Sikh temple by his RN colleagues, all suited in Number Ones and blue turbans brought over specially from India for the occasion.

An end to ribbing for Kieran and Cameron

IT'S nice to have the last laugh on your classmates.

Long the butt of jokes from youngsters at Lochgilphead Primary School about their dad being away so much, Kieran and Cameron Wragg left other pupils speechless when a Lynx dropped in to deliver a personal message.

Dad Chris, a CPO in HMS Liverpool as the ship's carpenter, is currently in the South Atlantic with the destroyer – his second six-month stint away from home in the past two years.

So when mum Alison, a former wren, heard HMS Argyll was visiting nearby Loch Fyne with her crew touring local schools, she passed word on to hubby.

He asked the frigate's crew to drop a letter and photo off to his children during their tour.

Argyll's Lynx pilot Lt Cdr Al Haig thought he could do one better. He decided to make a detour during a routine training mission, land the Lynx in Lochgilphead and present the message in person.

The boys' faces lit up when Al strode out of the aircraft carrying two goody bags, plus dad's letter and photo, of course.

"The boys were absolutely stunned as the pilot ran towards them," said Alison.

"Their dad has been away since January and won't be back till the summer, so this is a nice wee reminder that he misses them and thinks about them all the time while he's away."

And it may well have shut up those sniping classmates as well...

There's no place like Stone

HMS Collingwood's Lts Matt Dodds and Colin Darkins and CPO Ray Grey headed to the Midlands to help the people of Stafford celebrate 800 years of history at a tea party.

The borough was granted its Royal Charter in 1206 by King John. More recently it has been affiliated with HMS St Vincent, the former training establishment in Gosport (Earl St Vincent hailed from Stone – just north of Stafford – and is buried there).

When St Vincent closed in the late 60s, the affiliation with Stone and its RFA was continued by nearby HMS Collingwood – hence the sailors' attendance at the party.



● Where's the fire? Mercifully, not here... HMS Campbeltown's CO Capt Adrian Bell (he's the one sitting next to the fire bell) departs his ship in a 1934 Merryweather fire engine courtesy of Devonport's naval base fire museum. Capt Bell has handed over the reins of the Type 22 frigate to Capt Rupert Wallace, who has previously driven HMS Sutherland. As for the ship herself, she's undergoing a period of maintenance before beginning training

Picture: LA/Photo Emily Chambers, FRPU West

The hours flew by...

SOME of the most experienced fliers in the Fleet Air Arm have been celebrating clocking up milestones in the skies...

... and some of the newest men and women to earn their wings have received their 'flying badges' from a well-known former RN aviator.

We'll begin with HMS Westminster's Lt Andy Naylor who has completed 3,000 hours aloft.

He passed the milestone in Westminster's aptly-named Merlin 'Big Ben', carrying a former CO of the frigate as guest of honour.

Capt Jerry Stanford is now CO of Culdrose... home of the Merlin.

The achievements of Lt Naylor, about to depart with the ship on a tour-of-duty to the Far East, are matched by a hugely-experienced flight team on the 'capital ship'.

Between them Westminster's aircrew have been in the skies for

10,000 hours – more than 416 days in all.

Another Merlin flier, Cdr Nick Dunn, has smashed through the 5,000-hour barrier.

The CO of 814 NAS – the Flying Tigers – is currently deployed with his squadron on HMS Illustrious' Aquila06 deployment to the Middle East.

Before leaving with the task force, Cdr Mike Blowers (Culdrose's Commander Air) handed over a celebratory cake to his experienced colleague.

For the past eight years, Cdr Dunn has been instrumental in introducing the Merlin to front-line service; more than 1,000 of his flight hours have been amassed in the newest helicopter in the Fleet Air Arm's inventory.

Lt Naylor and Cdr Dunn are mere rookies, however, compared with Andy Vane and his 7,000 hours (291 whole days) aloft.

After 27 years in the RN in Wessexes, Wasps and Sea Kings, Andy has continued flying, today

in the Jetstream from RNAS Yeovilton, educating observers/navigators and ferrying VIPs around Europe.

He's also airborne in his spare time; as a CPO(ACMN) in the RNR he helps to train commandos as aircrewmembers for the 'Jungle' Sea King squadrons.

And at the opposite end of the experience spectrum... four pilots,

three observers and three aircrewmembers received their flying badges from the Duke of York.

Prince Andrew was guest of honour at RNAS Culdrose, presenting the badges – effectively marking the end of intensive training for the students – in the same hangar that he received his wings from his father, the Duke of Edinburgh, 25 years earlier.



● Have you ever noticed how young COs look these days? Six-year-old Harry Bryant enjoys his visit to illustrious' bridge with S/Lt Dawn Chatterley

Sun son gets Lusty

HAVING a dad who works for the biggest paper in the land has its upside.

Like getting you aboard the nation's flagship, Navy-mad Harry Bryant was made-up when a visit to HMS Illustrious was arranged.

The six-year-old, so dad Phil – a sports journalist with *The Sun* – tells us, is obsessed with the RN and its carriers in particular.

S/Lt Dawn Chatterley and Lt Darren Minty gave the youngster a top-to-tail tour of Lusty from the bridge to the engine room.

"He is now a mine of information and is gleefully telling everyone where the captain sits on the bridge, how to change an engine at sea and the best way to trick an enemy submarine into thinking you're a destroyer rather than a carrier," said dad.

The six-year-old trooped off the carrier with a framed picture of the ship, a commemorative book signed by Lusty's CO Capt Bob Cooling and a copy of *Navy News* (of course – Ed).



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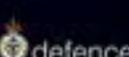
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● Tropical breach (left): One of two naval guns on Diego Garcia to counter a possible

● Atoll do nicely (above): The island of Diego Garcia is home to a US air base. The runway is long enough to be designated a Space Shuttle diversion airfield.

● What can you see from your office window? Cdr Dan Howard seems happy with his lot as Commander British Forces on Diego Garcia.



Small ship

THE SMALL ship ethos is a powerful factor in the smooth running of Royal Navy units.

That ethos embraces such ideas as team spirit and a dual-hat approach, whereby a sailor has at least two roles to fulfil.

A small ship ethos works just as well in other areas of Naval life – as is demonstrated in the case of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), better known in military circles by the name of its main settlement of Diego Garcia.

The tiny horseshoe-shaped island, just 44 square kilometres in area, most of it barely two metres above sea level, is home to around 4,000 people, of which just 40 are the British military contingent.

But as the island, along with the rest of the Chagos Archipelago and the odd outlying island scattered across 54,400 square kilometres of the Indian Ocean, fall within the jurisdiction of the UK, the Brits effectively run the place.

The remaining inhabitants are split between the US military, which has built a strategically-important air base and Naval support yard on Diego Garcia, and civilian contractors supporting facilities on the base, mainly Mauritians and Filipinos.

Which gives rise to the odd situation of British military personnel – many of them sailors and Royals – also assuming crucial civilian government roles.

The Commander British Forces, Cdr Dan Howard, is also the British Government representative, and as such is both junior and senior to the top American officer at the US base.

"We are tasked by the Chief of Joint

Operations at the Permanent Headquarters to 'conduct joint military and civil operations in order to demonstrate sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory and support UK strategic objectives in the region', the British forces on Diego Garcia fulfil a unique role in a unique environment," said Cdr Howard.

"British Forces BIOT is essentially divided into four departments: HQ, Royal Marine Detachment, Customs and Immigration, and the BIOT Police, known as Royal Overseas Peace Officers or ROPOs.

"Having both a military and civil role, British Forces BIOT are responsible both to Permanent Joint HQ and the Queen's Commissioner for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

"As a consequence, many personnel are double-hatted.

"As Commander British Forces and British Representative, my appointment reflects the uniqueness of Service life within BIOT. Daily life is varied, never dull, and full of challenges.

"I may find myself responding militarily to an unidentified vessel approaching territory

● Shore hands (left): Sgt Wayne Grounsell RM and L/Cpl Simon Watton RM help Chagossian Marie Rita Isou ashore at Peros Banhos

● Foreign customs (right): CPO Andy Adams, sometime Senior Customs and Immigration Officer on Diego Garcia

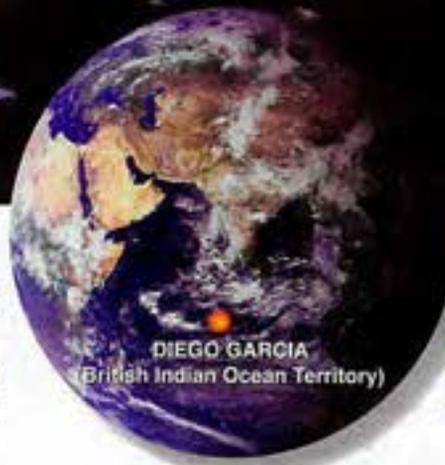
Picture: LA/Photo: Terry Boughton

Picture: Lt Cdr Simon Dalziel RNR

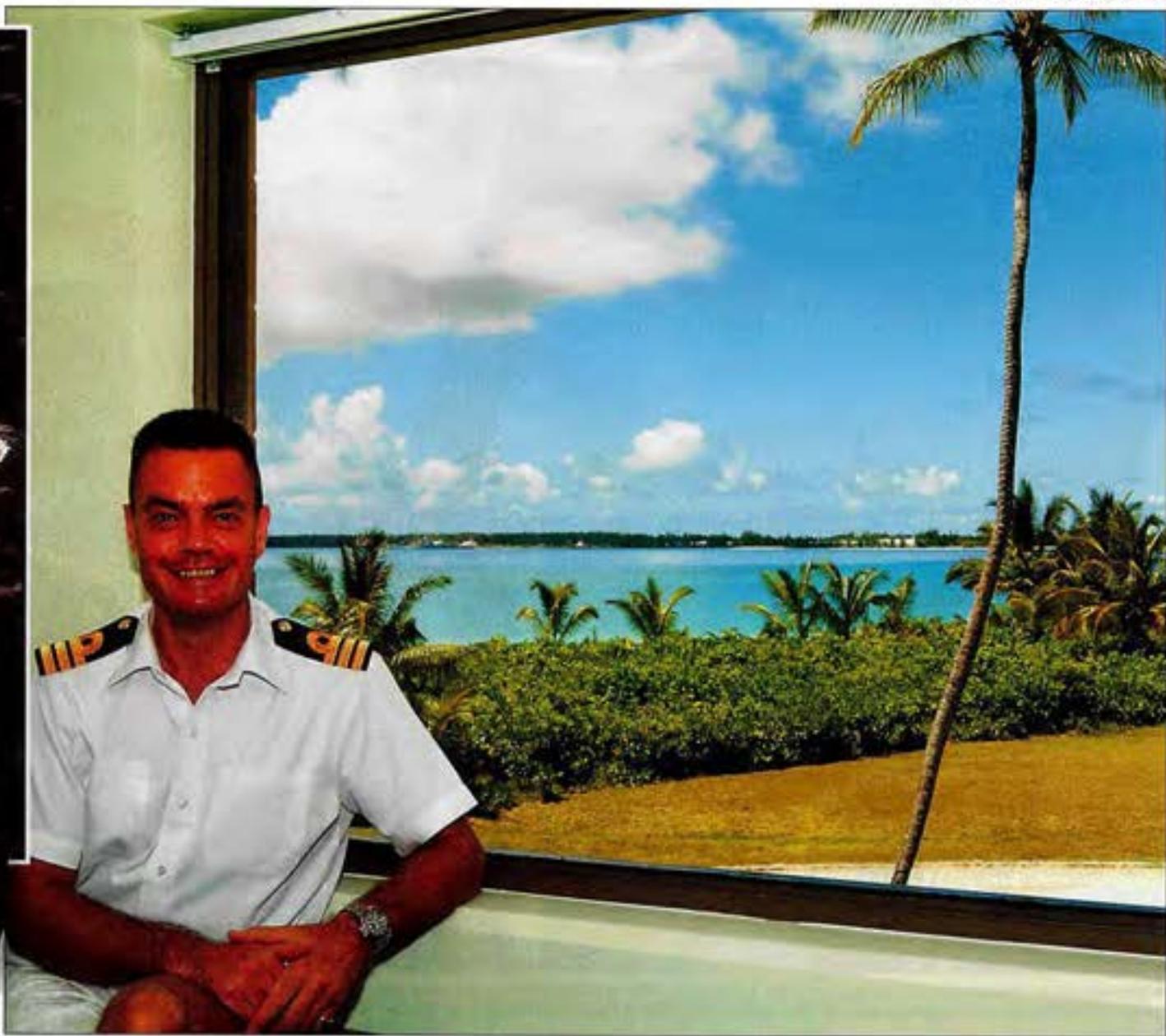




guns installed at Cannon...
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window? (right): Cdr Dan...
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Picture: Lt Cdr Simon Dalziel RNR



DIEGO GARCIA
(British Indian Ocean Territory)



Ship ethos in a big ocean

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waters in the early hours of the morning, and later that afternoon sit as Magistrate hearing cases in the BIOT civil court.

"Add to this an outstanding array of sporting and recreational opportunities, and you have a rewarding job in an exotic location."

You could add to that a stunning view from the office window, but we will let that pass.

Other RN personnel with a 'second job' include CPO Andy Adams, who is also Senior Customs and Immigration Officer, and MAA Graham Haynes, also Head of Police, while many of the Leading Hands and Corporal hold positions in the BIOT Police Force.

There is the odd drawback – access, for example, is exclusively via a US military flight from Singapore, operated four times a week by the USAF Air Mobility Command (AMC), dubbed Always Missing Connections by those who have fallen foul of its occasional vagaries.

There are plenty of positives – all ranks and rates have single beddit accommodation, and the sports facilities are top-notch; the central lagoon offers a huge variety of watersports in a tropical climate, while the array of marine wildlife is exceptional and in many cases unique.

The white sand beaches and swaying palms do not lull the Brits into slack habits, as first-time visitor Lt Cdr Simon Dalziel RNR can vouch: "Whilst the atmosphere in Diego Garcia is more relaxed than other UK military bases, it is clear that everyone is there to do a job which they get on with in the usual UK military professional manner."

But all is not peace and tranquility in this tropical paradise – hence the presence of Lt Cdr Dalziel.

Because although the Chagos Islands were uninhabited when first discovered in the 16th century, they built up a small population over the subsequent 400 years – standing as they did astride the valuable spice trade routes – during which time they were ruled by the French, then the British.

But there are no longer 'locals' on Diego Garcia or the other islands, because under arrangements put in place in the 1960s some 1,200 Chagossians were 'relocated' to Mauritius and the Seychelles to allow the development of military facilities – a move which has caused friction for almost 40 years as the islanders were prevented from returning to their homes.

But following extensive planning by the British and Mauritian Governments

and leaders of the Chagossian communities, a party of just over 100 Chagossians were permitted to visit the archipelago earlier this year, a humanitarian visit in which the RN played a major part.

The 107 visitors were ferried from Mauritius on board the ferry freighter MV Mauritius Trochetia – the cost was borne by the UK and Mauritius – and first made landfall on a small jetty on Boddam, one of the Salomon Islands.

A service was conducted in the long-abandoned church, now missing its roof, after which the Chagossians, some of them elderly, wandered through the jungle pathways to the cemetery, where they attended to the graves of relatives, and to abandoned coconut plantations.

Another service was held on completion of the task, and the islanders departed after dedicating a new memorial placed by the jetty to commemorate the visit.

A similar pattern was followed on the second day, when the Chagossians landed on Ile de Coin in Peros Banhos, and the visit ended on Diego Garcia itself on the final day.

As there was no suitable landing place at Ile de Coin the Chagossians disembarked from the Mauritius Trochetia straight on to the beach, and again the focus of their day was a church service and tidying up the graveyard.

Leading Chagossian Olivier Bancoult, who

staged a modest protest at the continuing banishment of his people, told the BBC: "It was very emotional for all the Chagossians who were on board the ship. It has been so many years since we left our motherland."

"We paid tribute to our parents and relatives who are buried there. It was an unforgettable moment."

Lt Cdr Dalziel concurred: "I felt part of an historical occasion, with this the first visit for 40 years," said the media operations specialist.

"It was fascinating talking to those who had left the islands some 40 years previously of their memories."

"There were some very emotional moments as the islanders landed once more on the islands and where many had relatives buried in the graveyards."

BIOT Administrator Tony Humphries ran the visit on behalf of the Foreign Office, and expressed his thanks to the Brits.

"The visit could not have taken place without the professional assistance of the British Forces," he said.

"The logistical arrangements, particularly for the visits to the two outer islands, were excellent, demonstrating exactly the flexibility and friendly approach we needed."

"I cannot praise Cdr Dan Howard and his team highly enough."



● Ship to shore (above): The MV Mauritius Trochetia approaches the jetty at Diego Garcia

Picture: Lt Cdr Simon Dalziel RNR

● Making a point (right): Olivier Bancoult makes his modest protest during the Chagossians' visit

Picture: Lt Cdr Simon Dalziel RNR





Remember the Fighting G... SA Nathan Smit and Gloucester's Commanding Officer Cdr Mike Paterson salute as a wreath is laid over the wartime cruiser's wreck and (above right) German aerial photographs of Gloucester under attack from dive bombers on May 22 1941 - and eventually rolling over and sinking

Picture: LA(Phot) Luis Holden, FRPU Tipton



'The sky was black with planes'

THE Mediterranean waves lapping the shore near Marsa Matruh, a drab Egyptian desert fort on the coastal road between Alexandria and Benghazi, carried a disfigured corpse.

Still distinguishable because of his distinctive monkey jacket and signals stuffed in his pocket was Capt Henry Aubrey Rowley.

One month before, Rowley had led his anti-air cruiser, all guns blazing, into the thick of the struggle for the Aegean island of Crete.

As German paratroopers dropped from the skies or landed by Ju52 transporters, Greek fishing boats - caiques - left the island of Melos bound for north Cretan coast.

The caiques, crammed with more than 2,300 *gebirgsjäger* - German mountain troops - struggled across the Aegean at a pitiful six knots.

After dusk that Wednesday 65 years ago, the Royal Navy pounced.

By dawn on Thursday May 22 1941, the convoy had been scattered.

As the Mediterranean Fleet scoured the sea lanes between

the Peloponnese mainland and Crete, a second force of caiques appeared.

But so too did the Luftwaffe.

The sky, Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham later reported to his masters, was "black with planes".

Battleships Warspite and Valiant were mauled, the destroyer HMS Greyhound exploded in a ball of flame.

And then anti-aircraft cruiser HMS Gloucester entered the fray. Her battle would last barely two hours. She would go down long before the sun set on May 22 1941; she would go down in history as The Fighting G.

Sixty-five years later, the present upholder of the name - fittingly an air defence destroyer - lolled and lurched over the spot her predecessor had turned turtle.

"We all feel an affinity with those fallen Gloucestermen, our forebears, whose selfless bravery we honour today," said the destroyer's Commanding Officer Cdr Mike Paterson.

Joined by SA Nathan Smit, the youngest member of Gloucester's company, the CO cast a wreath over the cruiser's wreck.

Also laying wreaths over his



shipmates' last resting place was former Gloucesterman James Pratt, not from the flight deck of the destroyer, but from a ferry crossing between Crete and the island of Kythera.

Mr Pratt was among a party of Crete veterans returning to the island for the 65th anniversary - perhaps for the final time.

In 1941 and subsequently the inhabitants of Kythera felt an affinity for the ship's company.

Numerous survivors were washed up - and promptly taken prisoner by the Germans - on the island, but locals, including three boys, somehow managed to sneak food through to the sailors past the jackbooted guards.

Mr Pratt, who today appropriately lives near Gloucester, not only survived the cruiser's loss in 1941, but also battleship HMS Barham, torpedoed towards the year's end; his 17-year-old brother Ted was not so fortunate, going down with the super-dreadnought.

The sailor's third ship, HMS Virago, was damaged but survived the war. In all, the Gloucesterman lost 1,600 comrades during the 1939-45 conflagration.

'The British take hit after hit'

NO battle demonstrated the impotency of a fleet in the face of unchallenged air power than the Royal Navy's duel with the Luftwaffe in the waters off Crete in May 1941.

By the time the battle ended at the beginning of June, the Royal Navy had lost nearly 2,000 men, not to mention three cruisers and half a dozen destroyers. A further nine ships were crippled and would be out of action for between three and 17 months.

For all the bruising the Senior Service suffered off Crete, the Germans were impressed by its bravery.

Ju88 bomber pilot Gerd Stamp, who attacked Warspite and Valiant, recalled that the duo "put up a tremendous fire barrage".

General der Flieger (General of Fliers) Wolfram von Richthofen, Commanding Officer of Fliegerkorps VIII (Air Corps VIII) - the Luftwaffe's dive-bombing specialists - was rather more bloodthirsty.

He recorded in his diary at the end of May 22:

The British take hit after hit. Ships sink and burn. They are struck down, burn and sink. Some limp along with a list, others with a trail of oil, to get out of this hell. I have the secure feeling of a grand and decisive success.

Few things were more terrifying in the war at sea than the sight of Ju87 dive-bombers - Stukas in common parlance - peeling off and hurtling down, their 'Trumpets of Jericho' (horns which screeched as the aircraft plummeted) wailing all the way (pictured above right).

"I saw the pilot as he pulled his stick to drop his bombs," AB Arthur Stevens in HMS Gloucester recalled. "I actually saw this 500-pounder with two incendiary bombs attached to it whirling down."

Nine out of ten Gloucestermen would not survive the inferno of Crete.

An officer in HMS Orion, which survived the mauling she received off Crete, reported that the fight with the Luftwaffe had strained man and machine to their limits.

"The nerves of well-disciplined, intelligent and courageous officers and men can give way because the strain of the fight has been too great for them," he warned.

After two days of battle, Mediterranean Fleet Commander-in-Chief Admiral Andrew Cunningham - 'ABC' to friends - was ready to concede defeat.

The graveyard of Crete was growing by the hour: Gloucester, Greyhound, Fiji, Kashmir, Kelly

all gone, Warspite and Valiant damaged.

The losses, Cunningham reasoned, were too great to justify committing his ships to seas where the skies were ruled by the enemy.

Winston Churchill overruled him. The Prime Minister declared that the loss of half the Mediterranean Fleet would be a price worth paying for holding on to Crete.

Against his will, 'ABC' ordered his

men to 'stick it out'.

"The Army is just holding its own," he signalled his Fleet. "We must not let them down."

"At whatever cost to ourselves, we must keep the enemy from using the sea."

The Army did not hold its own for a week of battle, the soldiers began pulling out - and the Navy carried out a Mediterranean Dunkirk.

Four hundred and fifty troops thought they had found salvation aboard HMS Hereward, only for the destroyer to be sunk as she made a break for Alexandria.

Several thousand troops were rescued by the RN before the last ships weighed anchor in the small hours of June 1. They left behind 6,500 Commonwealth soldiers who raised the white flag at 9am on the first day of June.

For the Royal Navy, the 12-day battle of Crete was a salutary lesson. "We have been badly battered," a bitter Cunningham wrote to First Sea Lord Dudley Pound.

"I would not mind if we had inflicted corresponding damage on the enemy, but I fear we have achieved little beyond preventing a seaborne landing in Crete and the evacuation of some of the Army there."

"I suppose we shall learn our lesson in time that the Army and Navy can't make up for the lack of air forces."

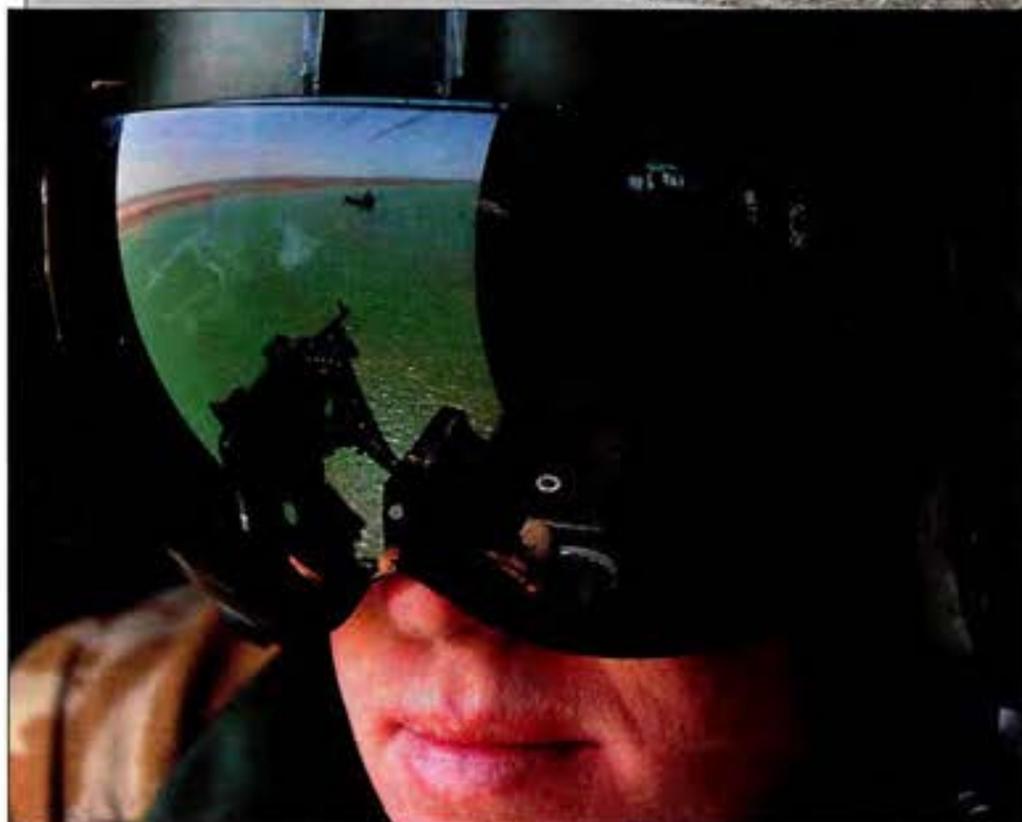


The legendary Fighting G, pictured pre-war

● That Monday morning feeling... An airman trudges out to his Sea King ahead of another sortie over the sands of south-eastern Iraq



Sand by me



● Time for reflection... (Above) A ship in the northern Gulf is mirrored in the visor of Cpl Richie 'Goodie' Goodwill's helmet

THREE of the four squadrons which comprise the Commando Helicopter Force are deployed to Iraq. LA(Phot) Wheelie A'Barrow from RNAS Yeovilton provides this photo essay from Basra airbase.

SPRINGTIME in Iraq doesn't hold quite the same allure as it does in Paris.

It is, however, somewhat cooler than it is in the height of summer - and therefore all the more bearable.

All you have to watch out for are the flash storms which regularly bring flooding to the region.

The Sea Kings Mk4 of 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons - the Junglies - and the Lynx AH7 of 847 are deployed to Basra International Airport in southern Iraq, the hub of aerial operations by British units in the troubled country.

845 and 846 are the workhorses of the Joint Helicopter Force in Iraq, providing an immediate response team (IRT) to respond in a flash to incidents - typically medical emergencies and road accidents - as well as ferrying troops around the Basra region.

The Lynxes of 847 provide 'top cover' to ground forces both at Basra and further north in Al Amarah.

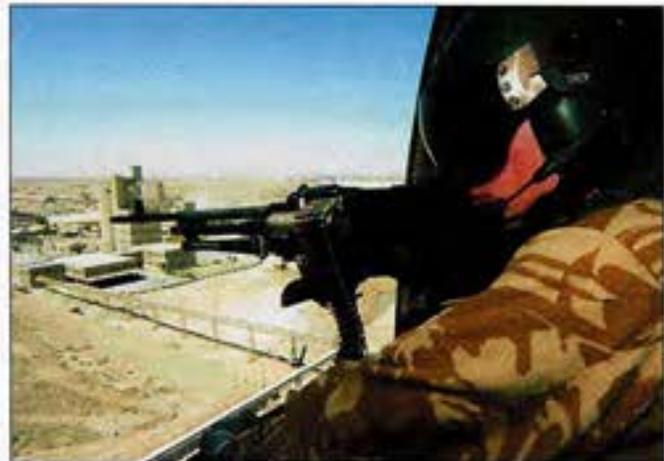
All three commando air squadrons provide 24-hour cover - the IRT must be airborne within 30 minutes, although invariably they're up in ten.

Much of the work is routine - if anything in Iraq can be considered that.

The Sea Kings in particular conduct regular checks of the perimeter of Basra airbase - it is a huge, sprawling site surrounded by a tall wire fence and littered still with the detritus of the 2003 campaign, notably burned-out Iraqi tanks.

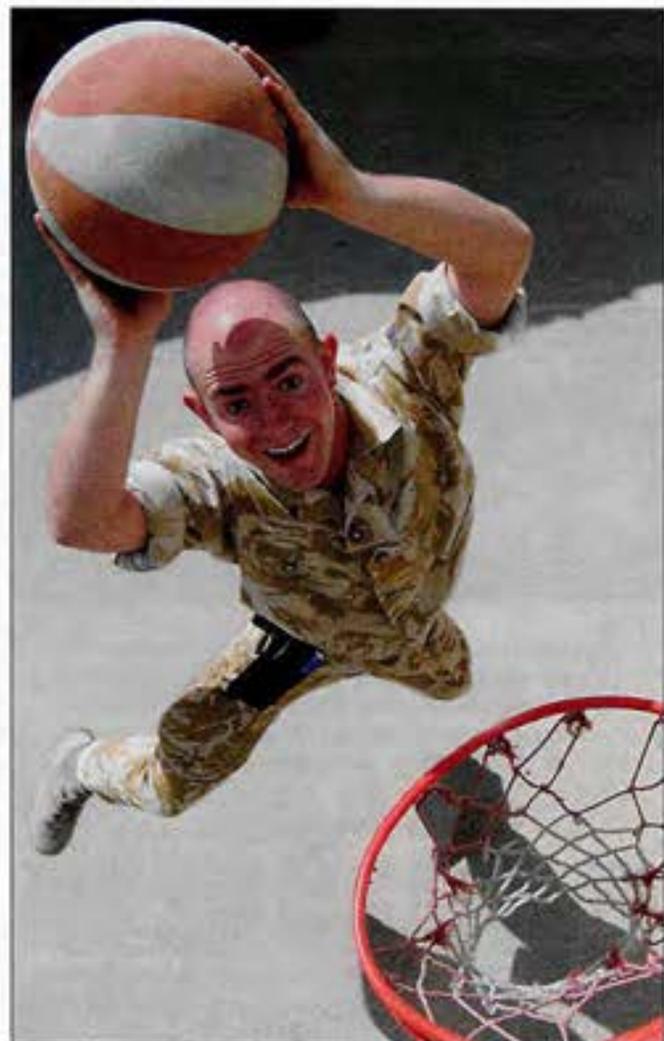
They also drop off soldiers to conduct 'vehicle check points' - random inspections of the people using the roads around Basra.

Further afield, the squadrons ferry troops to Umm Qasr, home to the RN and RM personnel training the Iraqi Navy, and support amphibious assault ship HMS Bulwark on station in the northern Gulf, serving as the centre for operations to safeguard the country's oil terminals.



● Hello Umm... (Above) 'Goodie' Goodwill stands guard as his Sea King approaches the port of Umm Qasr

● Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Cooperman... (Below) Aircraft handler NA(AH) Cooper perfects his slam dunk on the basketball court during a break in operations



● Desert Storm... (Left) Cpl 'Chicks' Hicks and Lt 'Gilly' Gilmore walk away from their Sea King Mk4 as clouds gather over Basra airbase



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Wetherby mourns loss of shipmate

AN ESTEEMED member of Wetherby branch, A/Ty Sgt Bob Kettlewell RM, who died aged 84, will be missed by fellow shipmates.

Bob joined the Royals at Chatham in 1939, aged 17, and served in HMS Calcutta.

He was awarded the DSM when he was 19, for naval operations off Norway, possibly the youngest and shortest-serving member of the Corps to be so honoured.

Having survived the sinking of the Calcutta in June 1941, he was sent to the Med, and while operating landing craft, on May 13 1944, was awarded the Bar to his DSM.

His medals, which he bequeathed to the Royal Marines Museum, were due to be presented by colleagues last month.

Golden day

CONGRATULATIONS to S/M Reg Reeve and his wife, Edie, of Battersea branch, who have celebrated their Golden Wedding.

Reg, a World War 2 veteran, served in HMS Royal Sovereign and a number of other ships, while his wife served in HMS Victory.

The party was attended by their children Nicole Burgum and Michele Pinnington.

Japan branch marks death of ex-president

MEMBERS of the Japan branch gathered for an informal memorial service to mark the recent death of Capt Jim Boyd RN, former UK Defence Attaché to Japan and the President of the branch from 1999 to 2003.

The service was organised by the current Defence Attaché and President of the Japan branch, Capt Simon Chelton, and the Defence Section team, and was held in the grounds of the British Embassy in leafy Chiyoda-ku, close to the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

Attendees included many of his friends and colleagues, among them Sir Graham Fry, the British Ambassador to Japan, and Rear Admirals Kuramoto and Kawano from the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force.

Jim was a good friend of many in Japan, reports Peter Button, chairman of the branch, and this was reflected in the turn-out of

colleagues from the Embassy and the many friends he had made in the Diplomatic Corps, the defence industry and from the expatriate and Japanese communities.

The service was led by Keith Taylor, retiring Lay Chaplain, Mission to Seafarers, near to a standard rose bush that had only recently been planted, in memory of Jim's beloved wife Jenny, who passed away in 2004.

As one of the mourners reflected: "Jenny mentioned once that for all their married life, Jim, a submariner, had spent extended periods away from home."

"Busy though the life of a Defence Attaché proved, it was only with his posting to Japan that she got to spend extended quality time with him."

"It was for this reason that they both held fond memories of their time here."

Indeed, they both embraced their new life in Japan from the outset, Peter recalls.

"I met Jim and Jenny the first

week he took over the Defence Attaché's job," he said.

"They jumped at an invitation to come sailing with my father and some Japanese friends that weekend - raring to get out and see Japan and make as many new friends as possible."

"They were a very popular couple, with boundless energy

and enthusiasm for all things Japanese."

After the service, guests were invited for light refreshments back at the Defence Attaché's residence.

A toast was drunk to the memory of Jim, in finest malt whisky - Jim, a proud Scot, would have liked that small touch.



● Shipmates from No 3 Area tour the sights of the Isle of Wight

Veteran set to turn 110

JUTLAND veteran Henry Allingham, who turns 110 on June 6, has been awarded the Freedom of Eastbourne, in East Sussex, where he has lived happily for the past 40 years.

Wearing the Legion d'Honneur medal, France's highest military award - which he received in Eastbourne in 2003 - he was, despite a recent illness, in good spirits at the ceremony.

Presented with a scroll and a bottle of malt whisky by the Mayor, Cllr Graham Marsden, Mr Allingham said that it was the whisky, the cigarettes and the "wild, wild women" which had been the key to his longevity.

Mr Allingham joined the Royal Naval Air Service as an Air Mechanic Second Class in September 1915, and served in the armed trawler HMT Kingfisher at the Battle of Jutland in 1916.

He transferred to the newly-formed Royal Air Force in 1918 and remained in service until he was discharged the following year.

Memories of Florrie sought

THE FLORENCE Institute for Boys, which opened in Liverpool in 1889, is in the process of being restored, and a Museum of South End Life is included in the development plans.

As the 'Florrie' played a major role in the lives of many lads who joined the Royal and Merchant Navies, any photographs or memories of the 'old days' are required for the Institute's publication *Florrie News*, and for the museum.

Recollections of serving and retired seamen with memories or photographs of their training ships, among them HMS Indefatigable - which was moored in the Mersey - would be especially welcomed by Sheila Fellows, Florence Institute Trust Ltd, c/o Tuxtey Town Hall, 15 High Park Street, Liverpool L8 8DX.

Membership maintained

AT THE Kingston-upon-Thames branch AGM, branch president, Cdre Roger Parker RN (ret) expressed satisfaction that membership, including seven currently serving, had been maintained at 117, despite three deaths.

Reviewing events of the past year, he praised members for their support of various parades, including HMS Richmond's freedom of the borough, the Drumhead Ceremony at Southsea, the bi-annual RNA Parade in Whitehall and Remembrance ceremonies in Kingston in November.

He thanked them for their support of RN charities, the Royal British Legion Youth Band, and for providing a bursary to enable a local Sea Cadet to take part in a voyage in TS Royalist.

Naval Quirks

IN THE CONFUSED NIGHT ACTIONS AFTER THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND, THE BRITISH DESTROYERS "BROKE" AND "SPARROWHAWK" COLLIDED.



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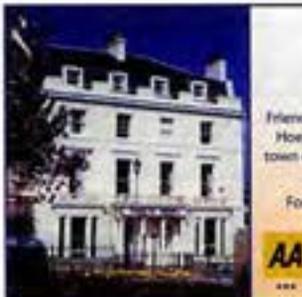
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The Naval Heritage Club of Portsmouth

Home Club has a new name

A LANDMARK for sailors going ashore in Portsmouth has a new name.

The Royal Sailors Home Club - founded as the Sailors Home in 1851 - is now known as the Royal Maritime Club in recognition of its seafaring tradition and location.

The change was made by the Trustees in order to reflect the changing face of the Royal Navy, including its size and the age of current membership.

Because of the increase in the amount of tri-Service activity in the Portsmouth area, discussions had been held with the Charity commission over the

possibility of opening up membership of the club to the Army and RAF.

The Commission pointed out that by restricting membership to the Naval Service in the past, rather than to all those engaged in seafaring by reason of their occupation, they may not have been operating within the objects of the trust.

The Trustees are confident that the facility, in Queen Street, will continue to be known as the Home Club, and that refurbishment to the entrance and some modernisation of Horatio's Restaurant will help attract new business.

Hundreds flock to Captains reunion

MORE than 300 shipmates and dependants gathered in Warwick for the annual reunion of the Captain Class Frigate Association - including members from Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Also attending the three-day event at the Hilton Hotel was First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, ten Wrens from HMS Caroline, who supported the class in Belfast 60 years ago, and a lively contingent from the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association of the USA - they shared the same class of ship during the war.

The weekend started with a dinner and dance, and the business side of things - the Annual General Meeting - was held on the Saturday afternoon.

Admiral Band, the Guest of Honour, arrived late afternoon and met many of the members, as well as visiting the museum of the

association, which includes a Roll of Honour, accounts of battles with U-boats, photographs and newspaper cuttings.

On the final day members travelled to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire, where they held a service and visited the Captain Class Plinth.

The memorial records the names of all the ships in the class, those lost, and the memory of the Wrens who ensured the ships were supported and ready to go to sea.

Admiral Band wrote to the committee following his visit, observing: "No wonder the ships... had the war record they did - I wouldn't have wished to be on the other side."



Cheque from Cyprus will aid Scouts

WHEN two Beaver Scouts, aged seven, visited the Cyprus branch, accompanied by Brian Nicolls, the chairman of the 57th Episkopi Sea Scout Group, they were warmly welcomed by branch president the Rt Hon Edward du Cann.

The scouts were also presented with a £100 cheque to help towards the restoration of a dinghy which has been given to the group.

A similar donation was made by the Cyprus branch last year, which on that occasion was put towards the refurbishment of the group's headquarters.

● Beaver Scouts from the 57th Episkopi Sea Scout Group receive a cheque from the Rt Hon Edward du Cann, president of Cyprus branch

Farewell to S/M Bert

MEMBERS of the Southern Ontario branch are mourning the loss of founder member S/M Bert Worthington, survivor of HMS Exeter, torpedoed in the China Sea, who as a prisoner of war ended up working as a slave in a Japanese coal mine.

It was 42 years later, and by chance, that he was reunited with two other Exeter survivors.

The three met up in the parking lot of HMCS York whilst waiting for the door of the mess to open.

Considering they had served in the same mess of Exeter, the same branch and the same coal mine in Japan, they had been unaware that they were living in Canada within 50km of each other.

Bert was the last of the three to cross the bar.

Uxbridge help Tug

THANKS to S/M 'Slinger' Woods, president of the Uxbridge branch, and the committee, who set up a fund to pay for a power chair for S/M 'Tug' Wilson.

Tug is now enjoying a new lease of life, having relied on an old NHS manual wheelchair for the past nine years.

This upgrade in mobility is like exchanging a tank for a Ferrari, according to Tug.

At a recent shindig, hosted by S/M Woods and Shep Woolley, for the presentation of the power chair, Tug thanked all who had contributed - including members of the HMS Ganges Association and shipmates from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA and Spain.

French sailor fought for RN

A SURVIVOR of HMS Edinburgh, former PO Alan Devoud, is one of those remarkable World War 2 veterans - a French sailor who spent most of his time in the Royal Navy.

According to S/M David Boggis, Public Relations Manager of the France Nord branch - where M. Devoud is a frequent visitor - the Frenchman was born in London of a French father and

English mother, and attended a prep school in Ramsgate, in Kent.

At the outbreak of war the family was living in Paris, when M. Devoud received his call-up papers from the French authorities.

He went on to serve in the destroyer Cyclone and was involved in evacuating the troops from Dunkirk in May 1940.

After several runs across the Channel, the Cyclone was hit by a torpedo which blew off her bows. Sailing stern-first, she arrived in Dover, where she underwent temporary repairs before sailing for Brest, still making way stern first.

M. Devoud said: "We were in Brest about a fortnight when the Germans came."

"The whole port was evacuated. Most of the ships went down to Casablanca but as repairs to the Cyclone were not completed, the crew was put aboard a coaster and ended up in Plymouth."

A lucky escape for M. Devoud - the French fleet, at Mers-el-Kebir, could have tipped the balance in favour of the Axis powers if it fell in with Petain's Vichy pro-Nazi government, so a British naval force attacked, sinking several warships and killing more than 1,000 French sailors.

The only reason M. Devoud's freighter had not followed the French fleet was because it was short of fuel, so made the shorter run to the UK.

It was there that he volunteered for the Royal Navy, and in due course was appointed to serve in HMS Edinburgh, the sister ship of HMS Belfast which is now permanently berthed near the Tower of London.

The Edinburgh, a 13,000-ton cruiser, was assigned to Arctic

Convoy duties, supplying weaponry and equipment to Russia to keep the advancing German armies at bay on the Eastern Front.

To pay for British weaponry, the Edinburgh took on nine tons of Russian gold at Murmansk in 1942, but she had barely left port when she was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat.

The survivors landed on Russia's remote Kola peninsula, where they almost starved.

It took four months to get them back to Britain in the destroyer Mahon, which had almost no stores on board.

Recalling how hungry they were when they were landed at Scrabster and taken to Wick Town Hall for a roast beef and Yorkshire pudding dinner, M. Devoud said: "You couldn't hear a sound, except for the cutlery."

Unfit for immediate sea service, the Edinburgh survivors were sent to Halifax, Nova Scotia to be 'fattened up', where they helped assign crews for the landing craft and ships being built and prepared for the Normandy landings.

In the aftermath of the June landings, M. Devoud was posted to Oustreham, near Caen, where he came under artillery attack from the Germans.

As the war ended he went on to serve at Allied HQ in Paris, then Brussels, and finally as a member of the occupation force in Minden in north Germany.

His love of the sea did not desert him after the war - in fact, it directed him to a career in shipping, first with an agency in Paris, then in Rouen and later St Malo, where he has lived ever since.

It was in Rouen that he met and married his wife, Francoise, and they have three sons, one daughter and nine grandchildren.



● The statue of Matthew Flinders is unveiled in Donington

Statue honours man who put Australia on the map

AS THE first man to circumnavigate and chart Australia, Matthew Flinders is held in the highest esteem Down Under, with statues commemorating him and buildings and streets bearing his name.

If his achievements have gone unnoticed in Donington, north of Spalding, where he was born, this neglect has been recently made good by the unveiling of a commemorative statue in his honour by two of his descendants.

The ceremony, organised by Lincolnshire Development - part of the County Council - was attended by Capt Paul Folkes RAN, of the Australian High Commission, John Hayes MP, members of the Spalding branch, including chairman S/M Keith Crawford, and branch standard bearer S/M Roger Wilkinson, members of the Merchant Navy Association, civic dignitaries and representatives of local schools.

Flinders fixed the 'unknown southern land' - terra australis incognita - on charts between 1801 and 1803 in HMS Investigator, and was the first to suggest the use of the name Australia.

He should have returned in triumph to England, but was incarcerated in Mauritius by the French for nearly seven years, where he worked on his journals and charts for the book *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, which was published on July 18 1814 - the day before Flinders died.

Welshman is remembered

SURVIVORS and relatives of victims who died in the sinking of HMS Welshman met up for a memorial service at the St George's Centre, Chatham Barracks.

HMS Welshman was torpedoed and sunk off Tobruk on February 1 1943 - the ship had already made a number of deliveries of stores to Malta.

Ten survivors and around 100 supporters attended, as did the Isle of Sheppey RNA standard, and the Prayer of Remembrance was read by S/M Jack Cornwall, one of the survivors.

Jack also told those gathered of his trip to Malta last September, one of a number of veterans there at the invitation of the Maltese government to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War 2.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our April edition was HMS Tartar, and the winner of our £50 prize was J. Alliker of Haslemere, Surrey.

This month's ship, pictured here in 1961, was launched at Govan in the latter part of World War 2 but completed just weeks after the conflict ended.

Although intended to be part of a Pacific force, she was used as a gunnery and training ship, and was sent for scrapping in the latter part of the 60s.

Can you name her? The correct answer could win you £50.

We have removed her pennant number from the picture (you wouldn't want it to be too easy, would you?)

Incidentally, for those of you who were wondering, the submarine X1, which featured in the March competition, was pictured in Portsmouth.

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 July 13. 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 August edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 136

Name

Address

My answer



● Members of the Nore Command Royal Naval Physical Training Branch Association attend the most recent branch annual luncheon. These veteran Clubs served at the former Command at the mouth of the River Medway in Kent - a crucial naval stronghold for centuries, but which closed for good at the end of March 1961



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The Trust (www.peterlemarchanttrust.co.uk), which provides holidays on canal boats for disabled people, is looking for a full-time skipper for our trip-boat "Serenade" (65' x 10'6"), based at Loughborough. You need to be experienced at boat-handling (a Boatmaster's Licence is an advantage), have a good knowledge of diesel engines, gas and electric installations, and general maintenance. The position will become available in January 2007. Whilst your passengers will have their own carers, it is essential that you are empathetic with disabled and seriously-ill people.

For further details and full job description, please apply no later than 15th August 2006 to the General Manager, Charles Grace, 16 West Park Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DA, or email: c.grace@blueyonder.co.uk.



New unit supports front-line comms

A NEW unit has been formed to provide communications systems support to front-line RN units around the world.

The Fleet Communications Information Systems Support Unit (FCISSU) formally began business on April 3 following the reorganisations of the Single Top Level Budget Merger, which saw the amalgamation of the Second Sea Lord's department and Fleet.

The new unit is responsible to Fleet HQ for delivering communications information support (CIS) to the front line.

The demand for IT has never been greater – most family homes have at least one computer and the take-up of broadband internet access is accelerating – and people want to be able to talk to and see live video of friends and relations around the world.

Transpose this to the military world, and every man and woman, whether in their office in the UK, at sea or in a tent in the desert, will want access to their files on the tri-Service Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system and they want to email home with letters and photographs.

Every Commanding Officer will want to see a live 3D intelligence picture, and the amount of signals and emails that go around doubles every three years – that is the demand for CIS.

The FCISSU is the RN's response to keeping this working on ships and in Royal Marines units that are away from the UK.

It is a deployable Front Line Support Unit responding to tasking from UK HQs.

Unit members will go out around the world to install equipment and systems and then train people on its use and maintenance.

The launch event was well-attended by VIPs, team members, stakeholders and Fleet staff officers.

Capt Adams introduced the event and Chief of Staff (Warfare) Admiral Snelson made an address of 'well done' for achievements so far and encouragement for the future.

First Officer David Palin RFA, the unit's first Commanding Officer, gave a presentation outlining the unit's origins and what they would be aiming to achieve in the future.

There will be approximately 50 people in the unit – RN, RM, RFA, civil servants and contractors, drawn from units and organisations around the UK.

They will be based in Devonport at Stonehouse Barracks and in Portsmouth at Fleet HQ. Small cells will be in Faslane and Arbroath.

The tasking will be through the Support Unit's planning desk (023 9262 5484), from HQs and Organisations: 3 Cdo Bde and Maritime Battle Staff (MBS).

Fleet HQ will task for ships requiring upgrades and additional equipment fits.

There will be a large presence in the RM deployment later this year to the Middle East and a permanent presence at MCC Bahrain.

Afloat support will be with the MBS, wherever and whenever they deploy.

For the time being support will also continue to legacy systems and equipment fitted in small and remote RN and RM locations around the UK.

Reservists integration is top of the agenda



● Northern Reservists march through Glasgow to celebrate the centenary of the Royal Naval Reserve and its predecessors

NAVAL Reservists are ready, able and willing to play their part in the Royal Navy – now it is up to their regular colleagues to make best use of them, says the second in command of the new Maritime Reserve.

Col Jos McCabe, Deputy Commander Maritime Reserves, is a Royal Marine, and is conscious of the fact that Corps reservists are far more closely integrated with their Regular counterparts than the RNR with the Royal Navy.

The main reason is simple – RM Reservists replicate 95 per cent of the skills found in the Corps, and they are Commando trained to the same high standards.

With one or two exceptions – chiefly Air Branch and medical – RN Reservists provide 'bolt-on' niche skills which are not found professionally in the Senior Service, skills such as linguistics, defence intelligence and media operations.

That has meant, in the past, that RM Reservists can slot easily into place with a Commando brigade, while RN Reservists tend to be called up for specific roles outside the normal remit of a sailor.

But Col McCabe wants to see the RNR as closely integrated as the RMR, and for the Royal

Navy to recognise the valuable role already played by part-time sailors.

"RMR and RNR are serving alongside regulars in Iraq, and in Afghanistan, and we have about 100 of each currently having volunteered for service in Afghanistan, should they be required," said Col McCabe.

"Nearly 30 per cent of the RMR have been mobilised since the beginning of Operation Telic (in Iraq), and about ten per cent of RNR strength.

"We have also had Reservists serving in the past in Bosnia, Sierra Leone, and Kosovo."

The new Maritime Reserve Command, COMMARRES, which was created in January, was a logical step in bringing the Reserves closer to the Regulars.

There is now a common HQ for Reserve units, and they come under the wing of a Flag Officer Reserves, a role which is assumed by Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland (FOSNNI), who is a senior member of the Fleet organisation and who already has a strong UK-wide presence through the Naval Regional Officers (NROs).

Col McCabe said that that gives the Reserves a high-level representative, which will be vital as the process of closer integration is pursued.

There is also, for the first time, a Reservist at the head of the organisation – Commander Maritime Reserves, Commodore Elliott Reynolds.

The focus of the new Command is a familiar refrain – to recruit, train and retain enough people to generate a capable and motivated fighting force for the Fleet and other 'employers'.

Recruitment is as much of a headache as it is anywhere else in the Armed Forces, with numbers below the RNR's optimum strength of just under 3,000 and the RMR's of about 1,000.

The problem is being addressed with the help of the Directorate of Naval Recruiting.

Reservists are particularly valuable during exercises, when something like 30 per cent of the total augmentation bill for the RN is provided by Reservists – many exercises and much RN training could not happen without Reservist input, the beneficial spin-off being the opportunity for Reservists to slot into operational roles and keep their skills current.

"The big message is that we are being used, and we want to build on that use," said Col McCabe.

"There is an optimism in the Reservist community, but it needs to be harnessed.

"There is a change from the Cold War, when people were only expecting to be called up if World War 3 broke out – now people want to go out and be part of real operations."

A Reservists Integration Project is looking at the role of all Reservists – including the Royal Fleet Reserve, those who have recently left the RN and who have a Reservist obligation.

"That will, I think, develop a very viable, vibrant and usable Reserve in the future," said Col McCabe.

RN scoops awards for Two-Six

THE ROYAL Navy has picked up three prestigious awards for a communications DVD and a recruitment video.

The internal communications DVD *Two-Six*, produced by CTN Communications, won gold (regular communications category) and silver (industry award for effective communications) at the International Visual Communications Association awards in London.

And there was a bronze for the Directorate of Naval Recruiting's video *Are You Up For It?*

The coveted awards were presented at the annual 'Oscar' Night ceremony held at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London.

Capt Brian Warren, head of Royal Navy Public Relations, was delighted with the awards.

"These awards recognise the critical importance and high standard of Royal Navy internal communications," said Capt Warren.

"We are absolutely delighted with *Two-Six* and the excellent work undertaken by CTN. It has been a challenging project but the results have been impressive."

Top marks for Square

RESIDENTS of the Royal Navy housing complex at Churchill Square in Helensburgh, close to Clyde Naval Base, may find their 'village' in line for an award from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors following an MOD redevelopment initiative.

Nominated for the Institute's Community Benefit and Regeneration Awards, the scheme has focused on the heart of the Navy housing in the Square which houses the Drumfark Club, Families Centre, NAAFI/Spa shop and the Service Police offices.

Formerly this square was dominated by a grey car park, but the initiative to make the heart of Churchill more appealing to people has focused on landscaping it and putting in a children's play area – planting has been planned to provide as much all-year-round colour as possible.

The scheme, which cost almost £1m funded by the Defence Logistics Organisation, has been put forward as one of the Scottish entries for UK regional heats, with the winners going on to a shortlist for the overall award.

Sixth Two-Six

THE SIXTH edition of the *Two-Six* DVD series was set to be released at the end of last month.

The latest version of the internal communications tool includes a look at HMS Bulwark and Commander Task Force 58 in the Gulf and 'Leadership and the Dark Blue Line – Have You Got It?'

For details of the DVD contact Lt Cdr 'Aj' Ajala on 9621 85984.



● Branch transfer questionnaires are studied during the Branch Transfer and Selection process

Decisions made on transfers

PHASE one of the NBPCP BD Branch Transfer and Selection process is now complete.

This has been a most successful process, with a total of 98 per cent of Leading Hands and 88 per cent of Able Rates achieving their first preference; no one was given their third preference, and the possibility to swap within the process has continued.

In the region of 3,100 personnel submitted a Branch Transfer Questionnaire (BTQ) for this phase; all were seen by the Transfer and Selection Board and a great deal of effort was taken to ensure that within the Navy's requirement, as many people as possible achieved their preference.

Each individual questionnaire once completed was despatched by the ship/establishment or individual and received by the Branch Development Team. The data was logged and analysed (with the assistance of QinetiQ data handlers) before going before the board.

This enabled branch structures to remain bal-

anced to aid future promotion and sustainability. The Board consisted of branch managers and subject matter experts, who looked at every questionnaire and the comments within.

Several days were spent reading and re-reading the questionnaires to make sure that a fair decision was made on each questionnaire – uppermost in their minds was the preference of the individual.

On completion of the Board a signal was issued detailing the transfers and selections that were made. All personnel eligible for this BTQ should by now know where their future lies and whether they need transition training for their new branch or specialisation.

All BTQs are now archived and will be held for a minimum of three years to enable an audit trail and access for Freedom of Information.

A second BTQ phase starts after summer leave and will capture those personnel that were not on the trained strength in time to complete BTQ Phase 1.



Get on board

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

To feature in *Two-Six* contact Lt Cdr Dave Joyce at Fleet Media Ops on 93832 5376 or Lt Cdr 'Aj' Ajala at DPR(N) on 9621 85984.

The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

New LANTERN will put NAMET into the shade

A NEW teaching and testing programme has been designed to provide Royal Navy personnel with the basic academic skills to progress and succeed in the Senior Service.

The Naval Mathematics and English Test (NAMET) has been the Royal Navy's in-house method of testing the mathematics and English ability of personnel who do not hold GCSE qualifications or equivalents in these subjects, for the last 40 years.

Whilst NAMET has served

Training Education Accreditation Matters

its purpose well since the 1960s it has come under close scrutiny by Government inspectorates and Ministry of Defence work streams.

Recent Government White Papers have highlighted the national problem of poor basic skills in literacy and numeracy in the adult population.

To address this, the Government has set targets to improve skills by ensuring better accessibility for adults to the basic skills courses and assessments.

In support of this, and as a key government department, the MOD has endorsed the Armed Forces Basic Skills Policy (AFBSPol), which was effective from April 1 this year.

When combined with the Royal Navy's Streamlined Promotion arrangements, the continuance of NAMET - which is not recognised on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) - is untenable.

NAMET is therefore to be replaced with a modern, more meaningful and progressive

approach to literacy and numeracy, which will be called 'Literacy and Numeracy Testing and Education in the Royal Navy' or LANTERN.

LANTERN will incorporate the requirements laid down in the AFBSPol and will also cater for the identified need of specific literacy and numeracy skills for promotion, branch transfer and Specialist Qualification (SQ) requirements.

Work is currently being conducted in this area and the complete LANTERN package will be in force by this September.

LANTERN and the AFBSPol are both based on nationally-recognised education and testing requirements, resulting in qualifications for the individual which sit within the NQF.

The aim of the implementation of both of these projects is to better educate and qualify personnel with the underpinning academic skills needed in the modern Royal Navy.

Basic skills national qualifications available through LANTERN will be Level 1 and Level 2 in literacy and numeracy. These qualifications will be free to the individual learner.

From April 1 New Entry personnel who do not hold a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification in these subjects, or accepted proxy qualification (for example, GCSE in Mathematics and English

Language at grade D-E - Level 1 - or grade A*-C - Level 2) will have to achieve Level 1 within three years of joining or on reaching Leading Hand/Corporal, and Level 2 within eight years or on reaching Petty Officer/Sergeant, whichever is earlier.

NAMET scores already achieved by personnel will remain extant throughout their career and they will continue to be able to use and improve upon their score for the purpose of promotion, branch transfer and SQ selection until the full LANTERN syllabus is in force.

They will also have the opportunity to conduct the basic skills national tests in literacy and numeracy to achieve the nationally-recognised certificated Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications.

Opportunities to achieve the relative level of qualification will be made available through accredited training where possible, such as the Apprenticeship Scheme and Advanced Apprenticeship.

To support personnel achieving basic skills national qualifications, basic skills tutors have been employed within the Base Port Learning Centres, the Phase 1 training establishments at HMS Raleigh and CTCRM Lympstone, the Phase 2 training establishments at MWS Collingwood and DCEME - HMS Sultan, RNAS Culdrose and RNAS Yeovilton.

Personnel will also have the opportunity to conduct basic skills courses and assessments on-line via LearnDirect - available through the network of Royal Navy Learning Centres and the Waterfront Learning Centres.

Personnel serving in Fleet and RM Units will receive support from EROs, FEDOs and UEOs.

In summary, LANTERN has been designed to provide a modern, relevant and nationally-recognised programme of teaching and testing that will be coherent with that delivered via the formal training pipelines.

It will also provide civilian and nationally-recognised qualifications that naturally lead to GCSE achievement and beyond by using traditional classroom methods of tuition and on-line learning.

In essence, LANTERN will provide individuals with the necessary underpinning academic basic skills required for the modern Royal Navy.

Further detailed information about LANTERN as the replacement for NAMET will be available in Defence Instruction Notices (DINs). The points of contact for further information are:

Cdr Jerry Townshend RN (Fleet-NTE-EL3R SO1), tel 93832 5818;

Lt Cdr Fiona Fawcett RN (Fleet-NTE-EL3 SO2), tel 93832 5690.

Are you looking for a new challenge?

LOOKING for a new challenge? Then look no further.

Consider the opportunities offered in the sideways entry branches - many vacancies exist at AB/LH level.

They are:-

■ **Aircrew:** As a Commando Aircrewman in the Sea King Mk 4 at Yeovilton, operating with the Commando Helicopter Force, or as an Anti-Submarine Aircrewman, operating in the Merlin helicopter at Culdrose and at sea. Both offer unique opportunities with the added bonus of flying pay.

■ **Aircraft Controller:** This also offers exciting prospects; as the AC of a small ship's flight you are a key member of the fighting team, later as a senior rating you could volunteer to complete the Joint Air Traffic Control Course at RAF Shawbury, a much-sought-after qualification.

■ **Photographer:** - Not just photography! Their remit includes the

Drafty's Corner

area of intelligence gathering with the Image Analyst qualification.

■ **RN Policeman:** There is lots going on in the Regulating Branch, not least of all the establishment of the Tri-Service Police College at Southwick. Service Policemen are becoming much more aligned to their civilian counterparts.

■ **PTI:** If you are sports-mad you may wish to consider the PT branch. They are not only 'Clubs' these days; opportunities exist for LPTs and POPTs to become a Remedial Instructor, working for the doctor helping personnel with sports injuries.

■ **Diver:** This branch is expanding and opportunities now exist for personnel to transfer into a career that is demanding, challenging and very rewarding. If you

are physically fit and medically P2 and this sounds like your cup of tea, check out the rules for transfer in BR 1066.

How do you apply? Full details are set out in BR 1066 - speak to your DO/RCMA.

■ **Non-Squadded Sea Billets, Local Foreign Service and Shore Billets:** A signal is issued on a monthly basis calling for volunteers to fill non-squadded billets.

This is sent up to eight months ahead of joining date, stating the Unit, PQ number, rate, qualifications required, task and start date.

Currently the signal has produced insufficient nominees/volunteers. There are a number of interesting and varied jobs available; you are strongly encouraged to read the monthly signal.

Rank/Rate	Name	Title	Duties	Tel no
Cdr	M. Doolan	SO1RCM(X)	WO1 GS Appointer	26530
CPOWTR	S. Searle	RCM(X)4	Office Manager CT's	26559
E2	D. Urry	RCM(X)A1	SO1(X) Assistant, Administration	26344
Lt Cdr	D.P. Green	SO2RCM(X)1	WO1 SM Appointer Career Manager	22614
POWTR	T. Bale	RCM(X)21	Senior Rates D, MW, UW	26523
WTR1	L. Fadden	RCM(X)43	LOM/OM(MW), LOM/OM(UW) D, OM(CSM)/(SSM), (TSM)	20781
PO(SSM)	G. Gibson	RCM(X)32	Senior Rates/LH CSM, SSM, TSM, COXN	20748
Lt Cdr	W. Kerr	SO2RCM(X)3	Career Manager	22938
PO(AWT)	H. Broadhurst	RCM(X)22	Senior Rates AWT, AWW, WA	26536
PO(C)	B. Wain	RCM(X)31	Senior Rates Comms, EW, SEA	20782
LWTR	R. Bevan	RCM(X)12	LOM(AWT)/(AWW), OM(W)	20960
LOM(C)	D. Spink	RCM(X)42	LOM/OM(C), LOM(EW), LS(SEA)	20961
Lt Cdr	J.W. Beavis	SO2RCM(X)5	WO1 FAA GS Appointer Career Manager	26530
POWTR	D. Millington	RCM(X)51	Senior Rates AC, ACMN, CDO, PHOT, AH	20783
POWTR	J. Humphreys	RCM(X)52	LREG, RPO, MAA, PT, SR CPO/PO(METOC)	20765
WTR1	S. LaBorde	RCM(X)53	LA/NA(AH), LA(METOC), LOM(SR), OM(HM)	26573
			Fax Line	23163

Changes in the Warfare Ratings Career Managers office - there has been quite a turnaround of manpower in the office; see table above for current situation



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Deaths

Recruit Daniel J Metcalfe RM, CTCRM. As the result of injuries sustained from a fall whilst on a climbing holiday in the Lake District, April 19.

Lt Cdr Darren Chapman, Commanding officer 847 Naval Air Squadron. Worked his way up through the ranks from Able Seaman. Had taken command of 847NAS in December last year, previously served as a staff officer within the Joint Helicopter Command. Recently qualified on the Lynx Mk7, he had extensive experience as a helicopter pilot, and was a Qualified Helicopter Instructor and Helicopter Warfare Instructor. Majority of flying experience with Sea King Mk4 Commando helicopter, and had served with the Commando Helicopter Force Squadrons and on exchange with the US Marine Corps. Extensive operational experience, serving as a Sea King pilot in the First Gulf War in 1991, on Balkan operations in the mid-1990s, and returned to Iraq for Operation Telic in 2003. Also served as Senior Pilot of 845 Naval Air Squadron in 2001. Col John McCordie RM, CO of CHF, said: "Darren was a consummate professional and was highly regarded by all of his squadron and also within the broader helicopter community. A larger than life character, he had a tremendous ability to make people laugh and could communicate easily with those in charge, regardless of rank." As the result of a crash of a Lynx helicopter in Basra City on May 6, Aged 40.

Marine Paul M Collins RM. Served as an Air Door Gunner with 847 Naval Air Squadron, based at RNAS Yeovilton. Joined the Royal Marines in June 2003, won his green beret in February 2004, joining M Company of 42 Commando Royal Marines, based at Bickleigh Barracks in Plymouth, as a Team Radio Operator. A popular member of the company, with a large circle of friends and noted for his support of others. He joined 847 in September 2005, soon qualifying as an Air Door Gunner, and deployed to Norway earlier this year before taking up his role in Iraq in March. Col John McCordie RM, CO of CHF, said: "Paul was the epitome of what the Royal Marines represent. A fit, intelligent young man he was totally professional, in everything he did, and he enjoyed life to the full. He was an extremely popular member of both his squadron and throughout the Commando Helicopter Force." As the result of a crash of a Lynx helicopter in Basra City on May 6, Aged 21.

LtCdr Michael S Pitt-Redsell, HMS Westminster. Ships and establishments included Raleigh, Amazon, Seahawk, Fearless, Dolphin, Quorn, Dryad, Hurworth, Marlborough, Excellent, Nelson and British Forces British Indian Ocean Territory, May 7.

Rear Admiral Bob Timbrell. Served as a cadet in the training ship Conway on the Mersey aged 15 then midshipman RN in the monitor Erebus and cruiser Vindictive; served in the battleships Barham and Warspite and Hood in the Mediterranean and North Atlantic. Aged 20 given command of Lord Astor's motor yacht Lionheart with a crew of six Newfoundland woodmen for Durkirk evacuation; he was given command

of a flotilla of Scottish trawlers for his next trip, run down in rough seas by a freighter whilst in the destroyer Margate he was rescued with a handful of survivors; for the rest of the war he specialised in anti-submarine warfare duties on convoy, serving in the RCN ships Annapolis, Ottawa, Du'Appelle and Micmac. Mentioned in dispatches for his part in the destruction of U-521 in the Bay of Biscay on August 18 1944 and of U-984 two days later, April 11, Aged 85.

Captain Hugh Lee, Awarded DSC for his part in sinking of U27 on September 20 1939; HMS Jarvis in the Mediterranean for last convoy from Malta to Alexandria then supported the battle fleet at Bardia, Tobruk and Capuzzo; became Flag Lieutenant on staff of Admiral Cunningham in his flagship Warspite that was severely damaged and staff transferred to the battleship Queen Elizabeth, specialised as signals officer before being appointed to Combined Operations; collected a landing ship (tank) and eight Sherman tanks for transatlantic convoys from America and subsequently served in the infantry landing ship Royal Ulsterman at the invasion of Sicily. Took the surrender of a force of Italian explosive motor boats in the port of Torre Annunziata. Appointed Flag Lieutenant and staff signaller to Admiral Harcourt at Taranto serving in the cruiser Mauritius later transferring to the cruisers Orion and Ajax and taking part in bombardments supporting the landings at Anzio and in the South of France, in 1947 he commanded the naval wireless station at Kranji, Singapore during the Malayan emergency then a tour at sea in the carrier Illustrious. Had two years as Director Naval Signals to the Indian Navy from 1954. Promoted to captain then naval attaché at The Hague and two years in Paris working in the operations division at NATO HQ. Commodore of the RN Barracks at Portsmouth and Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Navy News from 1966-68, March 31, Aged 89.

Lt Cdr Arthur John Phillips, Served 1945-83 in HMS Drake, Eagle, St Angelo, Malta and Pembroke amongst others, April 15, Aged 77.

Commodore Ian Malcolm Burnside RAN. Joined RAN in 1939 aged 13 as a Cadet Midshipman; promoted to A/Sub Lt 1944. Posted to UK for S/Lt courses and loan service in the RN, commissioned as S/Lt and served in the Mediterranean and as Navigating Officer of HMS Liddesdale WW2; returned to Australia 1945 in HMS Benwick, HMS Dryad (LR) 1953; Navigating Officer HMS Duchess (Suez) 1956; RN College at Greenwich. Returned to Australia 1958. Promoted Commodore 1977. Retired as Director General of Defence Force Recruiting 1979, February 20, Aged 80.

Jack Evans, Past Southern Ontario branch RNA Master-at-Arms and also a member of the 'Up Spirits Show' before resigning from RNA some time ago, March 26.

Brian Herbert, Served Vidal 1955 as Signaller, Member of Survey Ships Association, December, Aged 70.

Sydney Bateham, PO Steward, HMS Loch Fada Association. Also served in

minesweeper Bridport, March 22, Aged 91. John Rowe, AB, Ex-HMS Opportune Association and 17th Destroyer Flotilla, February 19.

W Mitchell, AB, HMS Opportune Association and 17th Destroyer Flotilla, April 12. Jeff Spall, CNX (Skipper) RNKS, Long serving member of Clacton and Harwich Units; Master Mariner & Trinity House Pilot; Mayor of Harwich 1978 and 1980, March, Aged 72.

Ken Still, Member and past Treasurer HMS Wizard and HMS Cadiz Association, Served in Cadiz, King George V, Crispin, Victorious, Wakeful and Cayton.

Gerry Phillips, AB, Served 1952-54 in HMS Consort Association, April 14. Desmond Townley-Jones, CPO, Coxswain of HMS Cornus 1951-54. Served Ganges, Dragon, Resolution, Vindictive, Vigilant, Battisaxe, Implacable, Cornus, Cicopatra, Welcome and Dunkirk, January 17, Aged 84.

Harold Brooks, Seaman, Served 1944-46, Member of Duke of York Association, April 18.

Evan John Davies, Torpedoman, Served 1944-46, Member of HMS Duke of York Association, November 2005.

Lauri Scott, CPO Steward, Served 1953-75. Ships included HMS Bulwark; member of Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association, March 26, Aged 70.

Tom Constable, AB, HMS Cheviot 1945, Member of HMS Cheviot Association, April 30.

Keith Jones, WO, Served 1956-97. Ganges and ships Invincible, Juno, Baccante, Minerva, Antrim, Abdell and Tyne, May 7, Aged 55.

Peter J Hillman, Seaman RP, Served HMS Dainty 1956-58. Founder, President and Secretary HMS Dainty Association. His work and dedication made association extremely successful but unable to attend May reunion after organising it, April 6, Aged 70.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
E T 'Tom' Rees, Chief ERA, Life member of the Submariners Association, Essex branch, Served 1941-52 in HM Submarines Safari, Unison, Unbroken, Unsparring, Sirdar and Trespasser, Aged 85.

G. 'Gordon' Briggs, Sto.Mech, Hull branch; served 1947-53 in Sanguine, Saga, Telemachus, Tactician and Alderney, Aged 77.

R F 'Roy' Harding, Tel, London branch; Served 1944-45 in Sleuth, Aged 80.

A. 'Arthur' Meakin, AB, HSD, North Staffs branch, Served 1941-46 in Trident, Sportsman and Spiteful, Aged 89.

J A 'Jim' Sheldon, AB(MD) Sussex branch, Served 1941-45 in P511 and Saracen, Aged 84.

A G 'Bert' Smith DSM, L/Sto, Norfolk branch, Served 1940-45 in Trident, Tribune and Tiptoe, Aged 86.

M 'Mike' Sturges, CRS, Teeside branch; Served in Alderney, Taciturn, Sleuth, Sea Devil, Alanc, Artful, Trump, Tabant, Revenge and Churchill.

C 'Charles' Warspie, L/Sea, GL2, Beds

and Herts branch, Served 1940-50 in Trident and Trespasser, Aged 87.

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION
Donald Henry, LAM, Served 1944-48, Daedalus branch, February.

Lt Cdr Peter Meadway, Served 1939-58, President Ford branch, March.

Alec Timpson, LA(SE), Served 1940-54, Greater Manchester branch, March 9.

Jackson Lees, PO (Pilot), Served 1942-46, Greater Manchester branch, March 13.

Ernest Fenwick, AN(A), Served 1943-46, Essex branch, March 27.

LST & Landed Craft Association
J C Opperman, Served LCTs 829, 7058 and 7103, January 1.

Mrs B V May, Served HMS Tormentor, January 6.

C R Bull, Served LCMs HMS Hamilar and Westcote, April 3.

W L McCormick, Served LCT 7100 and BYMS 2021, April 13.

E S G Hewitt, Served LCTs 168, 171 and LCT(P) 171, April 15.

ALGERIANS ASSOCIATION
Denis Reynolds, EM2, Served Stormcloud, January 9, Aged 77.

Ronald Hamlet, L/Tel, Served Cockatrice, January 16, Aged 79.

Michael Timm, PO/Wht, Served Coquette and Waive, March 12, Aged 77.

Jack Quainance, ERA, Served Espiegle, March 30, Aged 81.

Harold Brooks, AB, Served Courier, April 18, Aged 80.

Malcolm Fishwick, PO/RM, Served Mystic, April 26, Aged 79.

Tom Naylor, PO/Wht, Served Aries, April 30, Aged 88.

Jack Lamb, Sto 1, Served Moon, May 9, Aged 75.

HMS Ganges Association
Frank Albert Perkins, Joined 1923, Ken Newson, PO Diver, Cdr Pat Ellison, Ken Humphreys, PO, Gary Owen, PO Tel, Douglas Smith, RPO, Lt Cdr Ray Russell, Cdr John Lightowers, Bill Smallbone, LTO, Brian Cave, LRO(T), Captain John Lawson, Gunnery Officer, Henry Brown, Tel, Russell Rudd, RPS, Sam Smallwood, SBA, Sam Snelling, CPO (TAS), Derek Clark, LAM(AE), Norman Chiverton, RS, Bob Wise, L/Sea.

Association of RN Officers
Capt M F Andrew, Served Pegasus, Norfolk, President, Harrier, Neptune, Dryad and Victory.
Lt Cdr J L Flaxman, Served Freebooter,

Antic and Messina.
Lt Cdr F D Franks, Served Warspite, Havock, Queen Elizabeth, Redoubt, Valiant, Cockade, Whitesand Bay, True Love, Roma, Amethyst, Empire Fowey and Bigbury Bay.

Lt Cdr P H Fryer, Served Phucky, Bellerophon, Orion and Loch Inch.

Cdr J A Harper DSC, Served Kent, Leith, Calcutta, Perth, Formidabile, Anson, Loch Quich and Dryad.

Cdr R E Hodson, Served Revenge, Sultan and Neptune.

Cdr W J L Holt, Served Tiptoe, Warspite, President, Dolphin, Cochrane and President.

Capt E H Lee DSC, Served Sussex, Fortune, Warspite, Hamicat, Orion, Terror, Blue Jacket, Flocks, Mercury and Victory.

Lt WR Omandy, Served Daedalus, Centaur, Excellent, Fulmar and Eagle.

Cdr E Quance, Served Black Swan, Enard Bay, Watchful, Vanguard, Barbican, Tamar and Drake.

Sub Lt F B Sorrell RNVR, Served Lucifer, Lt Cdr R J Swinbank, Served Eagle, Albion, Caesar, Caledonia, Gurkha, St Angelo, Pembroke, Sultan, Neptune and Wamora.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Jack Quantance, CPO, Harwich & District, Served 1945-51 in HMS Ajax, Espiegle and Franklin; Secretary of HMS Ajax association, Ltcon leaving the RN he served as an Engineer Officer within Trinity House and the Merchant Navy, March 30, Aged 81.

Thomas Brandon, Birkenhead full member, March.

Jack Pickles, Stoker, Southern Ontario, Served 1943-45 mostly in Coastal Force; member of the Southern Ontario branch 'Up Spirits Show' and a very good singer he played the ukulele giving a very good impression of George Formby, April 4, Aged 80.

Bert Worthington, Southern Ontario, Served 1940-46; survivor of the sinking of HMS Exeter and spent remainder of war as a Japanese POW, April 10, Aged 83.

Brian Sanders, Chatham, Staff member of Chatham Historic Dockyard and member of HMS Cavalier Association, April 2.

Albert 'Joe' Barnes, AB, Life member Thurrock, Served 1943-46, Dunkirk in Tug SUN X9 1940 aged 14 and later carried the Dunkirk Standard, also HM Rescue Tugs on D-Day towing Mulberry Harbour items, April 11, Aged 80.

Ralph French Jellicoe Thomas, Life and founder member of Aberystwyth, Served WW2 mainly minesweepers based in Lowestoft, January 30, Aged 90.

P G G 'Nobby' Clark, Secretary of the Bulawayo, Zimbabwe branch and the last serving member, Ex-HMS Myngs and also a member of the HMS Bulawayo Association, Royal British Legion and the MOTHs, April 11.

John Norman Willis, Nuneaton, March 26, Aged 85.

Pat Coe, President Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon, March.

Jim Garner, Chairman Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon, March.

Mrs Pat Ticehurst, Associate member, Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon.

Sid Elliott, Wigton and district, Served 1941-45 in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, also East Coast convoys, March 26.

Richard 'Dick' Joll, CPO Stones, Saltash, Ships included Albatross, Fal, Patroller, Comet, Cockade, Wamora, Ranpara, Autonia and Vigilant, March 13, Aged 84.

William 'Bill' Goodrick, AB, Thurrock, Served 1942-46 in Leamington, Kimberly, Royal Harold and TRV 7, April 26.

Ivy Lydia Cushion, Beccles, April 18.

Euphemia 'Dbe' Shawe, Beccles, April 30.

Bert Ireland, Stoker, South Liverpool branch, Served throughout WW2 on board HMS Faulknor in Atlantic, Arctic and Mediterranean, April 25, Aged 85.

Sports lottery

April 15: £5,000 - Capt R G Anderson, SHAPE; £1,500 - Lt Cdr G J Birse, HMS Ilustrious; £500 - POSA S Mitchellmore, HMS Argyl.

April 22: £5,000 - Sub Lt R S Hall, HMS Tyne; £1,500 - WOPT I S Binks, HMS Drake; £500 - WEA M W Lewis, HMS Collingwood; April 29: £5,000 - AET2 M C Purcell, RNAS Yeovilton; £1,500 - PO(MW) G A Burnidge, HMS Collingwood; £500 - OM(CSM2) D Northcote, HMS Vigilant (Port).

May 6: £5,000 - LOM A L Jones, HMS Argyl; £1,500 - Lt Cdr R F Turner, HMS Raleigh; £500 - ALMEM G N Paton, HMS York.

Swap drafts

POSA Dum, Draft, RAF Cottesmore, current, Contact: 01572 812241. Would like to swap for: any 2nd line Portsmouth or Yeovilton draft.

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THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the June headlines of past decades...



• HMS Endeavour's Wasp helicopter, XS 527, flies through the South Atlantic skies

40 years ago

A Wessex helicopter of 848 Naval Air Squadron flew into the jungles of Indonesia to rescue a wounded soldier - but it took three days to complete the rescue. The clearing on the mountainside was both too small and too steep. One of the aircrew was then suspended by a strap with a stretcher and flown beneath the aircraft for seven miles to the site. Here a second casualty was found with head injuries, and with difficulty he was winched out. The Wessex returned with explosives to clear the jungle. On the third day the entire Army patrol, plus their injured man, were airlifted to safety.

30 years ago

The Wasp helicopter of HMS Bacchante also faced a dangerous task when it went to the rescue of a Spanish climber whose leg had been broken by a falling rock when climbing the sheer north face of the Rock of Gibraltar. After 24 hours trapped 900ft up the rockface, the guardship's helicopter was asked to help. The rescue took three hours and at times the rotor blades were within inches of the cliff. The location of the climber ruled out a 'hi-line' transfer, and eventually a team of rescue climbers dragged the man out to a ledge where he could be recovered by winch transfer.

20 years ago

The Wasp helicopters of HMS Endeavour bade goodbye to their Antarctic ship after ten years of service. Under the modernisation of the Fleet Air Arm, the Lynx helicopter took up the role of providing rotor craft support in the South Atlantic. Both Endeavour's Wasps had been involved in the missile attack in South Georgia on the Argentine submarine Santa Fe during the Falklands conflict. Indeed, one of the two Westland Wasps - XS 527 - can still be found at the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton as part of its *Unforgotten Falklands* exhibition.

NOTICEBOARD

Reunions

Where are you now?

Aden Veterans Association: Attempting to contact members of all services and associated civilian organisations, ie Forces Broadcasting, Civil Works establishments, who served at any time in Aden including Womens Services and all family members. There are many who may not know of the association's existence and may well be pleased to renew lost acquaintances or to make new ones. Reunion this year is September 22-25 and all welcome. Contact Brian Evans at taf73@fmail.net or tel: 01523 874141.

HMS Athlone: Seeking contact with Pat Hindley. He and Paul Metters served in HMS Athlone 1970-72 out in the Far East. They were in contact quite some time until just after Paul moved out to Spain in 2003 when for some unknown reason emails got returned. Pat is living in Capetown, South Africa, and left the Navy in 1987. Please get in touch as the 'George Mafu' would like to know how you are doing. Contact Paul (George) Metters at pam12113@yahoo.co.uk or write to Calle La Fabrica 5, Venta Santa Barbara, Loja, Granada, 18200, Spain.

HMS Ashanti: Were you on HMS Ashanti (117), 1969-72 - if so please contact Brian Hoyle at brian.hoyle@btworld.com or write to 64 Sunny Bank Walk, Merfield, West Yorkshire, WF14 0NH with a view to holding a reunion.

Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association: Did you serve in any of the light fleet carriers? The association is open to anyone who served at any time on these ships. Magazine three times a year plus AGM/Social, sea-days and anniversary commemorations. Last year saw the Association in Malta and a special 200th Anniversary Trafalgar Night Dinner in Portsmouth. Next year's reunion is in Hartlepool. £3 per annum membership. Contact Leigh Easton at ngsa@btccol.co.uk or go to <http://www.bulwarkassoc.plus.com> or write to Glenroyd, Haydon Place, Cambusbarrow, Strirling, FK7 9JX.

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: is a flourishing organisation over 20 years old who are on the lookout for new members to add to the 274 we already have. If you served on the cruiser or frigate and would like to join please write to: contact Warwick Franklin at warwickfranklin@btinternet.com or tel: 01752 366811 or write to 127 K2 Hill Crescent, Plymouth, PL5 1EL.

HMS Collingwood: David Harper, ex electronic branch, is seeking anyone who served with him. He joined Collingwood 1958 then onto Osprey, Bulwark, Duncan, Head, Vernon squadron minesweepers followed by Malta squadron and finally Plover. Contact David Harper at dsharper@btccol.net.uk or write to 18 Byfield Street, Mango Hill, Queensland 4509, Australia.

HMS Cornwall: The niece of Basil Morrish is seeking information about him. Basil was a Coder in the Cornwall who was killed in action in 1942. She would also like to contact the HMS Cornwall Association 1939-42. If there are any survivors from that ship she would like to speak to you. Contact Pauline Noonan (nee Morrish), Dunsandel Brookside Road, RD 2, Leaston, Canterbury, New Zealand.

George Grouch: George who was an enthusiastic amateur photographer, always taking pictures of the ship's company and sporting events. He is said to have been instrumental in persuading the Admiralty to create the Photographers Branch. The daughter of his good friend Lt-at-Arms F A E Lane is a member of a group studying Photographic History and would like to hear from anyone who can help. Contact Finesse Simpson at primchast@holymystic.freeserve.co.uk or write to 44 Boraston Drive, Burford, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire, WR15 8AG.

HMS Finesse: Fred Jenkins is seeking anyone who knew him from his time in Finesse originally TRVO Tercero. He is also trying to trace the Log Book of Finesse. If you can help, contact Fred at 40 Heol Carnau, Caerua, Ely, Cardiff, CF5 5NE or tel: 029 2031 2364.

HMS Fingard: Dave 'Harry' Legg would like to contact the following of Series 29 who joined HMS Fingard in 1957: Joe Blissett; Mick Warner; Mick Easton; Ben Kelly; Rob Davis and Dave Large. Contact Harry at leggdawen@btinternet.com or tel: 023 92230259 or write to 163 Milton Rd, Waterlooville, Hants, PO8 8SF.

Fort le Traite: William Dixon was in the Merchant Navy during WW2 and would like to hear from anyone who served off Normandy from D-5 anchored off awaiting discharge. His ship was the Fort le Traite. Contact William at 117 Norfolk Road, Blackpool, FY2 8ES or tel: 01253 353901.

HMS Ganges: Looking for Ginge 'David' Geere, we joined up at Ganges in October 1975, then followed each other to Daedalus, Heron, RAF Honington and Ark Royal. Contact D Lawton at spunkdunk41@aol.com or tel: 01945 773786 or write to The Globe Inn, Upwell, Norfolk, PE14 9EW.

HMS Glamorgan, Hong Kong 1971: Trying to locate a pair of stokers, Kerry Grant Bruce and Alan Harrison. It has been a long time since we saw each other. Contact Steve Purchase at Steve.Purchase@sky.com or tel: 0131 4474495 or write to 2/1 Balcarres Street, Edinburgh, EH10 5JH.

HMS Hawock 1937-40: Seeking oppo AB/PO 'Gibby' Howe last seen at Ananda AA Range 1945. 'Jesse' Owen PO AA1 would like to make contact if anyone knows whereabouts. Please contact Jesse on 01933 400661 or 03 Kinway, Wellingborough, NN8 3TJ or email his son at richard@gleed-owen.freeserve.co.uk.

HMS Heron 1983-84: Seeking 2nd Officer Isabel Fernon at A/C HMS Heron and when Doreen Withers of Commando Squadron, HMS Heron and later transferred to Gibraltar. Contact Bhisham Kumar Nimal at euro_bk@yahoo.co.in or write to B-301 Som Apartments, Sector 6 Plot No 24, Dwarka, New Delhi, 110075, India.

HMS Lamerton, L88, Hunt Class Destroyer 1940-46: Seeking anyone who served at this time with Fred Martin (he was a Jack Dusty). Contact his son, Tony Martin on 01273 459024 or write to 41 Broomfield Road, Henfield, West Sussex, BN9 5UD.

HMS Levern: Seeking colleagues who served with LEM Sid 'Dobbe' Reynolds in HMS Levern (M1161), 1955-57. Contact Sid at sidjareynolds@btworld.com or tel: 023 8041 1300 or write to 38 Hoe Lane, North Baddesley, Southampton, SO52 9AH.

HMS Llandaff: Looking for Andy and Sue 'Soldier' Kelly. Andy served in Llandaff 1973-75, was a Gas Rate and went on to become a PO. He was still serving in the late 1980s believed to be living in the Plymouth area. Contact Stinger Wood at Kevin.wood@btworld.com or tel: 500 8581 5693 or Frenchie Gasson at frenchie.landaff@btworld.com, tel: 023 9264 5388.

Mahratta when it sank in 1944. He would like to know if there is any more survivors out there or any photos of them, he would be grateful to hear from you. Please contact him at michelle_bowman13@hotmail.com.

National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association: has spread worldwide with branches and affiliations in United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Fiji, Singapore and USA. The total number of members in the UK is in excess of 4,000. A branch of the NMBVA has been formed in Belfast, the Ireland Branch NMBVA. The branch meets at Queens University Officer Training Corps Mess on Malone Road Belfast. The branch is in its fledgling state and would welcome new members. Please contact secretary George Fleming on 02890 664623.

HMS Narvik, 1952-59: Seeking John Ainslie, John Avery, Sam Barnes, Mr Balfour, Henry Cannel, Mr Cawthorne, Taffy Cloke, Dixie Dean, Doc Doyle, Arthur Evans, K R Forster, B Geoghan, CPO George Graham, David Grant, George Harbison, 'Dutch' Holland and Mr Imrie, all 1958-59. Contact Rod Jenkins, 33 Paston Rdings, Paston, Peterborough, Cambs, PE4 7UR or tel: 01733 751019.

HMS Nelson: John Davies is trying to find his aunt Elizabeth Mary Milton Petheram, born 1932 in Barnet. Elizabeth was in Nelson in 1958. John's father was Derek Charles Petheram who was in the RAF until 1946 when he left the UK. John was adopted at four months old and would like to know more of his father. Contact John by e-mail at john.davies@btccol.co.uk or write to The Lodge, 42 Euclid Avenue, Grapenhall, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 2PS.

HMS Pembroke: Do you remember Cook Bert Vallance, who served in Pembroke 1954-65, Seahawk 1965, Bulwark 1965-66 and Concor 1968-69. His wife Helen has no photographs of her late husband during his time in the Navy. If you can help by providing any information or photographs of him, please contact May Piggott on 01292 284051 or write to her at SSAFA, c/o Ayrshire Yeomanry, Yeomanry House, Chalmers Road, Ayr, KA7 2JD.

HMS Punjab: Sixty-four years ago on May 1, the Tribal Class destroyer Punjab was rammed and sunk by the battleship King George V while units of the Fleet were covering convoy PG15 to Russia. By some miracle, since the encounter took place in Arctic waters, some 201 members of the crew of 250 were picked up. Everyone of those survivors is likely to be well into his 80's - I will be 85 in June, if any of them read the Navy News I would like to hear from them. Contact Ken Tipper at ktipper@btccol.com or write to 597 N.E. 45th Terrace, Ocala, Florida, 34470, USA.

HMS Pursuer: Would like to contact some old shipmates from Pursuer, around 2000-01, having read that she has been replaced by Ranger. If you were on board at this time especially CPO MEA Tim Kingston (MEO), Forbes Pearson (The Boss), Graham OOI, Pete (Navy Yeat), contact Brian Lord at brian@tme.ac or write to Tamco Middle East, PO Box 17085, Jebel Ali Free Zone, Dubai, U.A.E.

HMS Raleigh: Richard Crowe, formerly Houghton, is hoping to make contact with anyone from Nelson 41, HMS Raleigh who joined October 7 1985. He would particularly like to make contact with anyone who later moved to Mercury as RO2's. In particular, Joe Slery with whom he lost contact then met up at Mercury again several years later. Joe had relocated into the regulating branch. Many good memories of living in married quarters at Lovelean. Contact Richard at crower@btinternet.com or tel: 01922 712033 or write to 126 Victoria Avenue, Blonwick, Walsall, W65 3EH.

Li James Ramsay: Looking for Li James Ramsay, he would be in his late seventies or early eighties. Cannot remember the name of the ship, but sailed to our port of Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1974-76? Contact Sgt Michele Eldershaw, Canadian Forces Air, at meldershaw@coogeco.ca or write to 11 Sandpiper Lane, Belleville, Ontario, Canada, K8N 4Z3.

HMS Victory: Seeking an old mate, Joseph Langley, married with two children. Was residing in Edinburgh. Last time we saw each other was when we left HMS Victory mid 1958 after de-mob. Served together in HMS Soberton, the command of the eminent Lt Cdr Jack Stoker, who went on to become the Admiral of the Fleet. Joe will be in his 80s now and Jeff would love to hear from him. Contact Jeff 'Tunge' at jeff@rogers40@yahoo.co.uk, tel: 0113 255 6557 or write to 7 Ross Grove, Leeds, West Yorkshire.

Wrens: Samantha Brierley - Leading Wren Writer and Angela Bevan (AWTR), Hannah has been thinking about you, where are you now? If you want to get in touch, contact Hannah Lee, 254 Kimberworth Park Road, Kimberworth Park, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S61 3JS or tel: 07738 066256.

HM Ships Gravelines, St Kitts and Campedown: Any former crew member interested in forming a reunion, please contact F J Talbot, 46 Quarry Rock Gardens, Bath, BA2 6EF or telephone 01225 489189.

LPM Frank Northcott FAA: His widow is looking for friends - particularly Jim Pettit of Romford - of her late husband who served 1951-58 in Ilustrous, Indomitable, Centaur, 811 NAS, Daedalus, Gamecock, Nuthatch, Curlew, Fulmar, Heron and Sea Eagle. Contact 01869 244482.

Appointments

Cdr M I Newland to HMS St Albans as CO on September 21.

Cdr R G Coeling to be promoted Rear Admiral and to be Deputy Commander Striking Force NATO on August 29.

Cdr A M Hussain to be promoted Rear Admiral and to be Director General Logistics (Fleet) and Navy Board Member for Logistics on September 5. This appointment carries with it membership of the Admiralty Board of the Defence Council.

Capt T P Fraser to HMS Ilustrous as CO on July 25.

Lt Cdr S R Drysdale to HMS Spartan as CO on March 28.

Lt Cdr C A Godwin to 771 Squadron as CO on July 26.

Capt M P Mansergh to HMS Ark Royal as CO on July 11.

Lt Cdr G Dale-Smith to HMS Athlone as CO on July 21.

Lt Cdr R J Morris to HMS Southampton as CO on October 14.

Lt Cdr J Whitlam to LN MTU UKSAT(C) as CO MTU on July 6.

June 2006

HMS Glorious, Ardent and Acasta: in memory of these ships and the loss of 1,531 men on June 8, 1941, a memorial service will take place at St Nicholas Church, HMS Drake, Devonport, Plymouth on June 11. More details from Vincent Marcroft at viny@47022@btinternet.com or tel: 0161 6547538.

July 2006

HMS Londonderry 1981-1984 Stokehold Association: The 14th annual reunion will be held on July 1 in Gibraltar. Details from Peter Hill on 07971 498607 or Peter Ritchie on 01647 24271.

HMS Victorious 1941-45 Association: Mini reunion at the RMA Club, 18 Commercial Road, Gloucester on July 8 at 11.30. Please contact Frank Short on 01981 540585 if you will be attending.

Commando Helicopter Force: Reunion notice for all 'Jungle' officers past and present. The Commando Helicopter Force is holding its annual Jungle Cocktail Party at Sherborne Castle, 19.00 to 21.00 on Friday, July 14. After 21.00, music provided. Bring your own picnic. Invitations are limited to officers who have served in the CHF with their spouses or partners. Double ticket £45. Contact Capt M Bradford, tel: 1935 456949.

August 2006

HMS Sparrow Association: Reunion at the Royal Spicers Home Club, Portsmouth, August 29-31. All commissions welcome. Contact Geoff Middleton on 01562 700689.

September 2006

HMS Duke of York Association: Reunion and AGM at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry, September 1-3. Contact Mr R Draper on 01928 725175.

HMS Ark Royal Communications Branch (1973-77): 5th Reunion takes place in Portsmouth on September 15-16. All speakers/buntings/gillies from that period are welcome. More details from John Blackman at john@medigital.uk.com or tel: 01273 302147 or write to Prison Craft, 1 Salsford Drive, Brighton, Sussex, BN2 6SD.

RNVA Stonehouse: Reunion September 22-23. Contact Sirbad Edwards at badart17@btccol.com, tel: 01752 790295 or write to 136 Austin Crescent, Plymouth, PL6 5QS.

HMS Formidable Association: Reunion at the Thelie Hotel, East Midlands Airport, Donington, September 22-25. This looks like the last reunion, so make it a good one. Details from Roy Collis, 82 St Dunstan's Hill, Cheam, Surrey, SM1 2UD or Ron Tovey on 023 9258 0539.

Ask Jack

AA1 Gold Badge (anti aircraft 1st class): wanted or how to obtain such, by ex PO AA1 Jess Owen, aged 90, who regrettably gave his away in 1945. Jess Owen can be contacted on 01933 400661 or 93 Kinway, Wellingborough, NN8 3TJ or email his son at richard@gleed-owen.freeserve.co.uk.

HMS Albion and HMS Hermes: Looking for the Commission books at Albion's last cruise as a fixed wing carrier, which was decommissioned in 1960 and the same for Hermes which was decommissioned in 1970. Please contact Arthur Bice (ex LAMO) at a.bice@btinternet.com or tel: 07947 258599 or write to 4 St Peters Avenue, Gorseston, Norfolk, NR9 1ZF.

HMT Carisbrooke, Trawler Minesweeper: Seeking the whereabouts of a memento of the trawler. It is a Royal Blue Chenille tablecloth with a gold embroidered oval centerpiece containing the date, 1940, the White Ensign and other embroidered decorations. The tablecloth was gifted to Minshant, Ayrshire, Women's Rural Institute (WRI) after the war. Any information please to Hector McAndrew, 12 Hawthorn Gardens, Prestwick, Ayrshire, KA9 2BB.

HMS Collingwood: Henry Bullock had a photograph of him and his training colleagues taken in November 1942 on the Main Top of HMS Collingwood. All of his colleagues and PO Underwood were given copies, but Henry has lost his over the years. Can anyone provide a copy for him. Contact his grandson, David Bullock at davidbullock@btccol.com or write to 46 Lough Lane, Portlaoise, West Yorkshire, WF8 4AR or tel: 01977 793485, mob: 07811 106073.

HMS Eskimo: Trying to find out what happened to the brother of Joyce Parkin, Derek, who was serving in HMS Eskimo from 1969 to 71, when he went missing at sea, presumed drowned. It happened in the Indian Ocean but the body was never found. She hopes that some of his friends could contact her and her sister, One friend was Jim 'Taxi' Carr, who lived in Glasgow. Contact Joyce Corvior, 28 Merrivale Road, Allerton, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD15 7SL.

HMS Hotspur: Looking for information and ship's company photograph. Contact Mr R Cowper, 25 Highfield Road, Wellingborough, Northants, NN9 5UD.

HMS Invermoriston: Mr Emmerson will lay a wreath on the grave of Midshipman Driscoll who was killed in the Borneo conflict on March 29, 1965, not by the enemy or accident. Does anyone know of any other Naval personnel who were killed in the conflict? Contact Mr B Emmerson on 01526 344762 or write to 20 Castleview, Tattershall, Lincs, LN4 4JD.

KGV Class Battleships: Trying to find a copy of the Dressing Line diagram used before December 1948. The diagram shows the order of flags to be used on the line when dressing overall. They were contained in a fold-out in the Fleet Signal Book used by RN ships of the time. If you can help contact Bruce Conatible at hemasperth@yahoo.com.au or write to 46 Brantwood Street, Sans Souci, NSW, 2218, Australia.

HMS Raleigh: Ian joined the Royal Navy in January 1977 (leaving in December 1981) and is writing about his experiences of those years with a view to hopefully publishing in the near future. Unfortunately, the memories he has of his time at HMS Raleigh are proving most difficult to remember. He is hoping that readers will to help jog his memory by sending their own experiences of Raleigh! He is interested in the general aspects of basic training - the 'excursions', the parade ground, the exercises, the food etc... Contact Ian Booth at ianbooth@btccol.com or write to Fernandez de la Rios, Madrid 28015, Spain.

RNR/RNVS: Trying to obtain the service history of Lt Geoffrey Oliver Sparks who served in the RNR/RNVS up to and including WW2. Any information to Lt Cdr Jim Sayer RN at james.sayer@btccol.com or RTSA-SQ2, Fleet HQ, MP2-3, Leach Building, Whale Island, Portsmouth, Hants, PO2 8BY.

HMS Satus: Frank would like to make a 1/150 scale model of HMS Satus as built in 1986. He is looking for details of the hangar, such as benches, lockers, racks and what other equipment would be in there together with paintwork, ie colours of deck, benches, bulkheads etc. Also looking for a photograph of HMS Stevenson about 1950-55, or the following details - did she have bridge wings at that time or modified, 40mm Bolos in front of bridge, what were her deck colours? Any information to Frank Beer, 24-30 King Road, Glenngery, Victoria, 3854, Australia.

Preserve your career in the Reserves

THE Naval Career Management (Reserves) (NCM(RES)) organisation is responsible for all Reservist officers, ratings and other ranks of the RNR, RMR and RFR.

Located in Victory Building, Portsmouth Naval Base, it works as an integral part of the Directorate of Naval Career Management (DNCM) organisation.

This means that the routine career management of Naval Service personnel is carried out by a single organisation - be they Regular Service or Reservist.

The organisation is responsible for the promotion and career management of all Reservist personnel.

The introduction of the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) project in October 2006 will play a significant role in the integration and alignment of Reservist personnel procedures with that of their contemporaries in the active service.

Over the next few years it is intended to establish a much closer professional relationship between Regular personnel and their Reservist colleagues.

The recent amalgamation of the CinCFleet and the Second Sea Lord departments will, in particular, emphasise the importance of attaching to the development of this essential relationship.

Recent changes in the NCM(RES) organisation include:

- transfer of responsibility from the former DNRes organisation to NCM(RES) for all RNR/RMR promotions;
- drafting of rating and other rank Reservists (FTRS and mobilisation) transferred from DNCM (former GND) specialist drafting sections to NCM(RES) organisation, in line with the existing procedure for Reservist officers;
- combining of pensioner and RFR(NC) Reserve administration into the one desk;
- cessation of annual postal reporting for pension and non-pensioner recall Reservists.

NCM(RES) is responsible for

issuing the mobilisation and call out orders for all Reservist personnel for operations in areas such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

For anyone out there who is unaware, the FTRS or Full Time Reserve Service scheme enables members of the RFR and the RNR or RMR to volunteer to fill gapped service billets.

It involves drawing up a legal commitment (contract) between the MOD and the Reservist to fill a specific gapped billet for an agreed period of time.

In order to find out about the FTRS scheme if you are in the RNR or RMR, your unit will have all the details.

But if you are active service or an ex-Regular Reserve, advice or a comprehensive information pack is available by contacting 023 9272 7432 (for officers), 023 9254 7565 (for Marines), or for ratings 023 9272 7372 (A-K) or 023 9272 7374 (L-Z).

Other organisations such as Establishment Release Offices and Regional Drafting Career Advisor offices will also be able to advise.

For other information on the NCM(RES) organisation, the SO2 Lt Cdr Nigel Parry can be reached on 023 9272 3454.

Look back at 100 years of shipbuilding

FOR shipbuilding enthusiasts, the Royal Naval Museum is hosting a day looking at a century of naval construction in Portsmouth, ending in 2006.

Experts will contrast the methods used to build Dreadnought and the almost-finished patrol ship HMS Clyde which will be launched by VT Shipbuilding this summer - the first entire warship built in the yard in nearly four decades.

Entry to the Saturday June 3 study day is £10. Details from Julian Thomas on 023 9272 7567.

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to: Membership Secretary, ARNO, 78 Portchester Terrace, LONDON W3 3TP

Hello and goodbye as ship moves settle down

CLYDE Naval Base might be in a state of flux, but the man responsible for the Faslane Flotilla is happy with the way things are evolving.

Capt Steve Ramm, Captain FASLOT, has V-boats, S-boats and Sandown minehunters on his roster, and is shortly to relinquish the final Hunt-class ship, completing the switch which sees Sandowns in Scotland and Hunts in Hampshire.

"The Sandowns are still changing over, and the change is going incredibly smoothly," said Capt Ramm.

"Very few people have been messed about by the change, and matching people to billets is going very well.

"The changeover should be complete by this month or July when the last of the Hunts - HMS Brocklesby - goes south and the last of the Sandowns - HMS Walney - comes north.

"I still have three S-boats, and all are going to sea in the next six months.

"They are the oldest running SSNs in the world but the engineering standards are no less than with the T, V or A-classes."

Capt Ramm said the Flotilla is delivering what is required of it, and the Flotilla is not only as capable as ever, but fulfil a wider remit than before.

"But the biggest challenge we have got is manpower - maintaining the quality of experienced and motivated manpower.

"We can no longer assume we are going to get people in for life, and I think the changes at Faslane are fantastic, including the Single Living Accommodation and the setting up of the waterfront office."

Astute is catalyst for changes on the Clyde

ONE WORD looms large in the minds of those at the helm of Clyde Naval Base - and that word is Astute.

The first of the new A-boats is still in build at Barrow-in-Furness (see May's edition) but the tempo in Scotland is speeding up as the base gears up to support the new breed of hunter-killers.

And first in the firing line is Capt Pete Merriman, the Clyde Astute Programme Director.

"The key to it is we have to be ready to accept her; if we are not ready to be able to accept her she will not be able to go into her reactor testing regime," said Capt Merriman.

His target is to ensure the base itself is ready for Astute by March next year, long before the submarine is ready to sail north to her new home.

She will pitch up initially at the northern end of the base, with the Vanguard-class missile boats.

But by the time her first sister reaches the Clyde, they should have their own purpose-built jetty - for various reasons the existing SSN jetty, which served the remaining Swiftsure-class submarines, is not a viable option.

"The reason we are building a new one is that the current SSN jetty would cost too much to upgrade to modern standards - and it is difficult to upgrade in any case while operating as a submarine base," said Capt Merriman.

"To go for a new one gives us the option to upgrade and operate submarines at the same time."

The jetty was never intended to

be ready for Astute herself, as the design of the submarine had to be settled before the jetty and its facilities could be determined.

It will be a floating jetty, a large concrete block that floats between four massive concrete piles driven into the floor of the loch, so there will no longer be a big difference between the boats and the jetty deck.

Hydraulic lifts can cope with most of the traffic over the jetty - stores, parts and so on - so no large cranes are needed, and the jetty will meet the standards expected of civilian nuclear facilities, all at a cost of around £150 million.

Capt Merriman does not head up a big team; instead he has created a "virtual organisation" across all departments in the drive towards welcoming Astute.

"What I'm doing is linking into other people in the base to draw together all the work they are doing in the programme," he said.

"Looking at control of work, training, documentation; and I want them all to report to me to let me know they've done it.

"My role is the gluing together of all the strands of the programme.

"I can bang the table and get resources because we cannot afford to miss the Astute readiness date.

"Once the berthing project is delivered and through its commissioning period my role disappears and it becomes normal business."

Work on the floating jetty itself has just begun with pouring of concrete at Inchgreen, just along the Clyde; it will be a couple of years before the installation - one of the biggest construction projects in Scotland in recent years - can be nudged into position in Faslane.

Although the new jetty will not be commissioned for several years, evidence of the imminent arrival of the new class of submarine has been seen in demolition work to clear the way for the pontoon.



Demolition work under way on the redundant Nine Berth at Clyde Naval Base, site of the new jetty for the Astute-class boats

Naval Base Commander Cdre Carolyn Stait knocked the first lump out of Nine Berth last November, ceremonially marking the operation to remove the facility.

The redundant jetty was taken apart using floating cranes and other demolition equipment, ending around 70 years of service as

a military wharf, complete with railway, and more recently as a breakers yard.

The floating concrete pontoon, which will weigh in at around 40,000 tonnes, will be installed in an operation which will mirror that used to create the Explosives Handling Jetty at nearby Coullport.

Partners learn from each other

THE CLOSE working relationship between the military and civilians on the Clyde has paid dividends for both, according to Naval Base Commander Cdre Carolyn Stait.

The Commodore was Executive Officer at the Scottish naval base from 1997-98, but is delighted by recent major developments.

"One of the biggest elements new to me is that now we have a partner, and understanding the commercial interface has been fascinating," she said.

"I would say there's no doubt in my mind that the base functions much better as a partner organisation with Babcock Naval Services (BNS) than ever before.

"What the company has done is to bring in different disciplines that we have learned a lot from, and in turn they have learned, I think, from the way the MOD and Royal Navy does its business."

BNS provide engineering support and hotel services.

"Clyde Naval Base, in its broadest context - Clyde, Coullport, Caledonia and the other stations - has got so much to offer the Navy in terms of operational support, but also it's got so much to offer in terms of support for people.

"It's a fantastic place to live and to work - we are at the cutting edge of technology and the cutting edge of Naval support."

Cdre Stait pointed out that "operationally, since April 1969, there has not been a single day that the nation's nuclear deterrent has not been deployed by a boat from this naval base.

"That's a fantastic achievement which speaks volumes for the expertise of RN and MOD engineering and support staff."

There is also the responsibility of being the only shore posting north of Watford for people who wish to live in the North.

"For individuals and for families there's a quality of life you get here that quite surpasses anything you get elsewhere," she said.

"If you want culture then Glasgow is only 45 minutes away, and Edinburgh, another fantastic, vibrant city, is an hour and a half away by car.

"And for those who like an outdoor life it is unsurpassed here - life just needs to be grasped."

Three Services back Caledonia's Fair

ALL three Regular and Reserve Armed Services, and their cadet forces, will be playing their part to ensure the HMS Caledonia Summer Fair is a success.

The fair, on Sunday July 2, should attract more than 5,000 people, and will raise funds for local Scottish charities - the Sick Kids Friends Foundation and the Jennifer Brown Research Fund - and for Sea Cadets.

Among those scheduled to appear are the Royal Marines Band Scotland, the Scottish

Territorial Army Pipes and Drums, the Army's Golden Lions free-fall parachute display team and the Blue Arrows motorcycle display team.

HMS Gannet's search and rescue Sea King is due to be on show, alongside armoured vehicles and aircraft simulators.

An RAF Tornado fly-past is also planned, and it is hoped there will be a visiting warship.

On the ground, displays will include Naval field gun runs, birds of prey and police dogs.

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Team Neptune's players hold the key

THE CAPTAIN of HMS Neptune is a man who has been grappling with something of a paradox over the past few months.

Capt Martin Atherton is the man who heads up the Naval establishment within HM Naval Base Clyde - but in the 21st Century military world, where business and Armed Forces work closely together, things are not as simple as that.

Keeping up Naval ethos, identity and standards in a multicultural working environment is the challenge.

The solution has been the concept of "One Base, One Team", but Capt Atherton breaks that out into one base, one team - many players.

"The strength of the base's corporate identity depends not on trying to make the various players - military, civil service, commercial - all dance to the same tune, but in getting each of them to bring their

different strengths and cultures to the team," said Capt Atherton.

"Neptune has a vital role to play as a focus for the military element, the barracks for Clyde Naval Base, housing not just ship's company but also the many lodgers from FPGRM, the Faslane Flotilla and others."

Capt Atherton's mind is also turned towards the arrival of HMS Astute, and he is seeing a fundamental shift in the way Neptune and the base are doing their business.

"The base's emphasis was on business process - sort out the process and the outputs will take care of themselves.

"But with such a big imperative as Astute coming down the track, we need to put at least as much emphasis on output delivery."

A recent external review confirmed this:

"It told us what instinctively we already knew to be true and helped us cut our cloth and make our case," he added.

Part of Capt Atherton's initiative is about building a more coherent workforce, whatever uniform they might wear.

"Within One Base, One Team, for those who belong to HMS Neptune, I want them to have a strong, cohesive group identity.

"I want to see a sense of pride breeding a sense of community, so that every player knows what they bring to the team, and why it is the stronger for their contribution.

"That is the vision I have for the Neptune team within the wider base.

"Strengthen individual groups and you make a stronger team, and the team members are the better for it."

On the trail of the lonesome pine marten



The pine marten, one of the UK's rarest mammals. Picture: Scottish Natural Heritage

ONE OF the UK's rarest mammals has been spotted on MOD land close to RNAD Coullport, near Clyde Naval Base.

The pine marten is on the list of British endangered species and, according to Loch Lomond Ranger Service, was thought not to exist in that area outside of a colony at Inversnaid.

But a recent sighting on the Coullport road suggests otherwise.

"We weren't aware of pine martens in this area," said Sergeant John Simpson, HMNB Clyde's wildlife officer, "but they do seem to have been making their way south.

"A base employee and her husband on their way into work watched the animal closely as it made its way along the roadside before darting off into the bushes.

"The pine martens are obviously a really welcome addition to our current 'stable' of

wildlife, which does include a number of other rare animals, including red squirrels.

"We are very lucky here, as animals, birds or flora on MOD land do enjoy protection, with restricted access meaning that they get little disturbance as they go about their daily life.

"You'd be amazed just how many different species we do have around this area.

"The pine marten is very rare, and it is great to think that it is around on our land."

Pine martens are the size of the average domestic cat and have bushy tails. They are chocolate brown in colour, with a bib of white on the throat.

They are known to be curious and, in some areas of the Highlands of Scotland, where they inhabit areas close to houses, they are known to accept food from people's gardens.

In general, though, they do not court attention and it is rare to spot them in the wild.

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Give Martin a call on 01962 842266 or by e-mail on martinladd@pitman-winchester.co.uk for no-obligation guidance.

In general, to find out more about the Enhanced Learning Credits (ELC) Scheme, take a look at the website at www.enhancedlearningcredits.co.uk.

Following the article in March Navy News, Martin has already received calls from Navy News readers including messages from members of HMS Illustrious seeking training.

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EXCELLENCE IN PEOPLE

Easter campers put to the test

TAKING a break from their Easter camping expedition at Garelochhead, 11 lucky Northern Area Marine Cadets visited Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines (FPGRM) at Clyde Naval Base, where they enjoyed a rare opportunity to spend time training alongside operational Royal Marines.

After a brief welcome and a chance to learn more about the Fleet Protection Group's role on the base, the cadets were shown weapons used by personnel and taken through the basics of close quarters battle (CQB) procedures, where teamwork and precision are key to the success of this specialist tactical skill.

Thinking they had the chance to relax and chat with the Marines, the cadets – aged 14 to 18 – were suddenly called to action and given a chance to test their recently-acquired skills in a real-time CQB scenario, with realistic 'enemies' provided by the Royal Marines.

Cpl Liam Ramshaw, who co-ordinated the simulated scenario, said: "All of the cadets put the skills that they had been shown to good use, and demonstrated the professionalism and enthusiasm expected of Royal Marines in that kind of high-pressure situation."

Hailing from Scotland, Northern Ireland and North-East England, the cadets also enjoyed a tour of the base, including the imposing Ship Lift, used to raise nuclear submarines and other vessels out of the water for maintenance.

Trip organiser Lt John Meikle RMR said: "The cadets had a great time visiting FPGRM and getting a chance to see what Marines do on a day-to-day basis."

FPGRM is responsible for a wide range of tasks worldwide with the Royal Navy, including providing military support for the protection of the strategic nuclear deterrent – the Vanguard-class submarines, armed with Trident nuclear missiles – at Clyde Naval Base and the RN Armaments Depot at nearby Coulport.

As well as the Trident boats, Clyde is also home to the Swiftsure-class hunter-killer submarines, and will welcome the first of the Astute class before the end of the decade.

Sandown-class single-role minichasers are now also based on the Clyde.

Southern cadets know the drill

COLD and windy weather – never pleasant, but particularly keenly felt on Whale Island in the upper reaches of Portsmouth Harbour – did not detract from some impressive performances at the Southern Area Sea Cadets Drill and Piping competition.

Held at HMS Excellent by permission of the Commanding Officer, Cdr Steve Layland, the piping competition was held in Fisher Hall, and the Colour Parties had the protection of the Drill Shed, while the Drill Squads and Guards had to endure the conditions on the famous and windswept Parade Ground.

Representative teams from all over the Southern Area gave a sterling display, despite the weather, watched by Guest of Honour Vice Admiral Tim McClement, Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet, who presented the trophies to the winners.

The results were:
Piping Team: 1, East Kent (166.67); 2, West Kent (166); 3, Sussex (145)

Piping Individual: 1, West Kent; 2, East Kent; 3, East Kent
Colour Party Best Dressed: 1, Central (18.8); 2, West Kent (18.5); 3, Surrey (18.1)

Colour Party: 1, West Kent (80.5); 2, Central (75.25); 3, Surrey (74.1)

Armed Guard Best Dressed: 1, West Kent (17.7); 2, Wessex (16.7); 3, Surrey (16.5)

Best Guard Commander: 1, Surrey (41); 2, West Kent (39.25); 3, Berks (37)

CADETS from Bournemouth formed part of a team representing Wessex District in the Southern Area drill competition, which involved more than 300 cadets from across the Southern Area.

The five Bournemouth cadets took part in the Colour Party event, competing against six other teams for the right to represent the Area in the National competition, hosted by HMS Raleigh in Torpoint.

The cadets' uniforms were inspected before they formally paraded their unit colours.

During their 11 minutes in the spotlight they performed over 100 separate movements under the command of Colour Party Commander L/Cdt Ellement.

The CO of the Bournemouth unit, Paul Budden, said: "This is the first year that Bournemouth has entered a team in the Colour Party competition."

"This team won their District event at their first try and achieved a creditable performance against more experienced teams at Area level. "I am extraordinarily proud of each and every cadet."

Armed Guard: 1, Surrey (81.5); 2, West Kent (77.2); 3, Wessex (70.7)

Unarmed Best Dressed: 1, Central (19); 2, Surrey (16.5); 3, West Kent and Wessex (16.2)

Unarmed Squad Commander: 1, East Kent (43.25); 2, Central (43); 3, Sussex (42.75)

Unarmed Squad: 1, Surrey (86.5); 2, East Kent (84.7); 3, Berks (83.6)



● Lt Cdr (SCC) Victoria Marson RNR (centre) with L/Cdt Ruby Hurst and POC Bryn Hawkins (both of the High Wycombe unit) at the unveiling of a Blue Plaque at Sir John Mills' house in Denham, Buckinghamshire. The cadets piped the side during the unveiling ceremony, which was carried out by Sir Cliff Richard. Among the other celebrities attending was Tom O'Connor.

Picture: David Long (Harlequin Photography Ltd)

Racing at the reservoir

CADETS from the St Albans unit had a busy weekend on the water when they took part in training and a competition in London.

On the first day the unit entered a team in the national Rater Cup, and three entries in the national Topper Trophy, while on Sunday was a sail-training day.

The venue for the whole weekend was the Welsh Harp Reservoir, near Wembley.

With more than 20 boats on the water, a good knowledge of racing rules and rights of way was essential, and light, gusty winds of variable direction didn't help.

The Rater Cup was sailed in 18ft gaff-rigged Admiralty Sailing Craft, and the St Albans team of

three girls was probably a little too genteel at the starts – the relatively large boats take some sailing, and the St Albans team never reached their full potential, finishing in the back third of the fleet.

Of the three entrants in the Topper Trophy, it was Tom Oakley who managed to claw his way on to the podium, finishing with a bronze medal.

The competitors managed to relax a little on the Sunday, where they were joined by a couple of novices.

Team-building and basic sailing skills, as well as some more advanced sailing techniques, meant the cadets learned some useful tips as well as getting thoroughly soaked during capsizing drills – something which Sea Cadets seem to enjoy!

Getting better all the time...

PORTSMOUTH Sea Cadet unit TS Alamein has been awarded the McBeath Trophy, marking it out as the unit which has done most to improve itself over the year.

The trophy was donated Rear Admiral J.H. McBeath, honorary Commodore of the Sea Cadet Corps from 1958-75, whose son Rowlie – the Chief Defence Systems Engineer of Westland Helicopters – presented the prize to PO Cadet Blagdon and PO Cadet Clegg, representing their colleagues.

Mr McBeath also inspected the Guard of Honour and gave a brief talk on the career of his father, who was brought up in the United States and joined the RN in 1919 at the age of 16.

Most of his sea time was spent in destroyers, and he got his first command in 1940, just in time for Dunkirk, during which his ship, HMS Venomous, made five round trips and was credited with carrying more than 4,500 men.

He also served in the Atlantic

and on Russian convoys, as well as the Mediterranean, and was never hit by the Germans – although he did ram and sink a U-boat.

In 1950 he became the New Zealand Chief of Naval Staff and First Naval Member.

Second pennant for Abingdon unit

TS Marlborough (Abingdon Sea Cadets) have received their second pennant in successive years from the Southern Area.

Their year was rounded off by the annual prizegiving, and among the recipients were AC Best (Cook/Steward Award), AC Gilligan (Seamanship Award), LC S. Mills (Best Senior Cadet), AC C. Mills (Best Dressed Cadet and Musicians Award), AC Hargreaves (Best Junior Cadet and Britannia Shield for Boating), OC Harvey (Most Improved Cadet), POC C. Preece (Communications Award), AC D. Preece (Engineering Award) and OC Duvall (CO's Award).

Water skills honed for the season

NORTHAMPTON and Wellingborough Sea Cadets spent time over the Easter holidays honing their skills on the water at the local Boating Station based in Thrapston.

A total of 23 cadets undertook training in powerboating, rowing, sailing and windsurfing, and as well as gaining valuable experience on the water they also gained Royal Yachting Association qualifications.

Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Chris Read RNR said:

"The week was a great start to the boating season as it prepares the cadets for all of the fun activities on the water that the Sea Cadets enjoy throughout the summer, as well as experiencing the on-the-water training the cadets also learn to live together on board the boat station and learn valuable life skills."

The unit is looking forward to the various boating competitions during the 2006 season and hopes to retain the awards achieved last year for the high standards set by members of the unit in boat-work training, both at the boating



● Northampton and Wellingborough Sea Cadets take to the water

station and on the River Nene.

Earlier members of the unit led the parade to commemorate the wartime loss of HMS Laforey, Northampton's affiliated ship.

HMS Laforey was the last ship to be sunk in the Mediterranean, destroyed by a U-boat with the loss of all but 65 of her ship's company of 250.

The cadets trained throughout the weekend to parade the Unit Colour and formed the Band and Guard for the event.

The parade, consisting of more than 100 Sea Cadets, was inspected by Admiral Sir John

Brigstocke, a former Second Sea Lord/Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command.

Sir John commented on the outstanding appearance and standard of the parade, which was attended by two former crew members of the Laforey, Lt Cdr Leftridge and PO Neville Jones, who were pleased to see the sacrifice made by their old ship is still honoured today.

Neville Jones presented a brass telescope to the most promising future cadet, Cadet Martin Ilme of Kingthorpe, during the parade – this award will now be made

annually.

Following the parade the unit was presented with the Thomas Gray Memorial Trophy; Northampton and Wellingborough was judged runner-up in the competition to find the best Sea cadet unit in the country, a prize which attracted more than 400 entries.

Only a few units have ever entered the competition for two consecutive years, and it is unprecedented for a unit to retain the top positions in the UK for two years.

The trophy was presented by Vice Admiral Sir Tom Blackburn, who said he was delighted to give the prize to such a vibrant and enthusiastic unit.

There were also presentations of long service certificates to Richard Jones (for 52 years) and to Alan Hughes, Vice President of the Northamptonshire RN and RM Association (for 22 years).

Lt Read said it was an honour to acknowledge the input of local organisations to the charity, because without such support the organisation would be unable to offer such a wide range of activities to youngsters.

Jacqui is London's chosen one

JACQUI Stannard beat off competition from hundreds of other nominees to receive the honour of being selected as London Area Lord Lieutenant's Sea Cadet for Greater London.

Her nomination had to pass three rounds of scrutiny – first her selection by her Commanding Officer, which was then endorsed by the Essex District Officer and finally approved by the London Area Officer, Lt Col A Milne RM.

Jacqui, a Leading Cadet of the Hornchurch and Upminster unit, attended an awards ceremony at Putney Bridge Territorial Army Centre, where she received her certificate and badges alongside her Army and RAF counterparts.

Also in attendance were Jacqui's parents and her Commanding Officer, Lt (SCC) Michael Chitcock RNR, who said: "We have already had a phenomenal year as we were successful in our quest to become the best Sea Cadet unit out of the whole of the UK."

"This award further endorses the unit's standing and is a testament to the hard work that all connected to the unit have put in – several over many years."

Money bags

SUTTON Coldfield Sea Cadets unit held a fund-raising bag-packing event at the Asda supermarket in Minworth – and bagged £1,500 in six hours for charity.

Of that, £750 will go to the Hearing Dogs for the Deaf charity – only a fraction of the £5,000 it costs to select and train young dogs before they can be matched to deaf and hard-of-hearing recipients.



● (Horn)pipe work: Exeter Sea Cadets demonstrate the art of Naval dancing

Best of friends learn to dance the hornpipe

HORATIO himself would have approved when the crew from Exeter Sea Cadet unit gave a hornpipe lesson to a group of landlubbers taking part in a TV challenge.

In the time-honoured rig of Nelson's navy, the cadets put the young contestants through their paces for the cameras on Exeter's historic quayside, scene of such 'age of sail' dramas as *The Onedin Line*.

And when the dance was over, Commanding Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Derek Hall RNR passed them out as fully-fledged before-the-mast hornpipers.

It was all part of CBBC's *Best of Friends* programme, in which pupils from Exeter's Ladysmith Primary School were challenged to learn a new skill.

And when 11-year-olds Max, Jordi and Harvey turned up with *Best of Friends* presenter Fran they were given their task for the day – learn the hornpipe.

GPO Alison Styles put them through their paces, and pretty soon they were learning the intricate steps of the traditional naval dance and getting their sea legs sorted, TS Exeter style.

Said Lt Cdr Hall: "It was good fun, and they certainly enjoyed the challenge. The hornpipe is a really good way to keep fit, on land or at sea."

The *Hornpipe Heroes* episode of *Best of Friends* will be broadcast in the autumn.

Penzance wins for record sixth time

PENZANCE Sea Cadets have won the national Unarmed Drill competition for a record sixth time.

The competition was tough, with Sea Cadets competing from all corners of the UK.

Penzance unit came away with Best Dressed Squad and Best Unarmed Drill Display, and POC Jessica Davy-Thomas won Best Unarmed Squad Commander – something of which she is very proud.

Lt (SCC) Stella Trehair RNR was particularly proud of her team: "This will be my last year as Commanding Officer of TS Grenville and it has made it even more special for my Drill Team to win the competition yet again."

The drill squad was AC Abigail Morris, OC Emma James, OC Ben Henderson, AC Damien Fellows, Cadet Sarah Davy-Thomas, AC Ashley Thomas, AC Amy Nankervis, LC Michael Palmer, AC Dean Carruthers, POC Jessica Davy-Thomas, AC Matt Gilmour, AC Will Dallimore and LC Simon James.

Penzance Sea Cadets say they may be the last unit on mainland Britain – but they are the first when it comes to drill.



● From left: Lt Cdr (SCC) Stephen Freedman RNR, Cdr Cedric Loughran RNR, Lt (SCC) Sidney Taylor and POC Christopher Pagett with their certificates

Dedication is rewarded

THERE was a strong Naval element at the annual Lord Lieutenant's Reserve Forces and Cadets presentations for Merseyside.

Not only was RN HQ Merseyside chosen as the venue, but Reserve Forces and Cadets Association Vice Chairman Cdr Cedric Loughran also deputised at the last moment to make the presentations.

Three of the main recipients were shining examples of the best of Sea Cadet spirit.

As well as teaching biology at the Merchant Taylors' School in Crosby, Stephen Freedman (48) also dons the dark blue uniform of a lieutenant commander to lead the school's Combined Cadet Force Naval Section.

His citation for a Lord Lieutenant's Certificate highlighted the fact that Stephen has filled this demanding role with great distinction, and is also second in command of the school's cadet force.

For many years he has run the CCF RN Camp at HMS Bristol at Whale Island, founded the annual Cadet Forces Regatta, staffed a yacht crewed by cadets sailing from Scotland to Norway, and runs the Bridge Trainer for the RN Cadet Camp at Dartmouth each summer.

A second certificate went to 79-year-old Sea Cadet Corps Lt Sidney Taylor, from Kirby, described as an "unsung hero".

Recognising his exceptional service and dedication

over 50 years, the citation said: "He has always gone that extra mile, and demonstrates a remarkable level of commitment."

"Although now officially retired, he continues to teach at TS Corunna as an unpaid volunteer."

"He was a key part of the team that enabled the unit to gain a burgee, the Corps' highest efficiency award following the annual inspection in 2004."

"One of his specialities is teaching the art of drumming on the side drum and bass drum. The band is still going strong and played for the Duke of York when he visited in 2004."

Finally, PO Cadet Christopher Pagett (17), of Wallasey Sea Cadets, has been appointed Lord Lieutenant's Cadet in the County of Merseyside.

Christopher has been a cadet at TS Revenge since the age of 12, and has been chosen to represent Merseyside and the UK at an international exchange to South Korea in August.

Christopher attends Mosslands School, where he is studying towards four A-levels.

Christopher was described in his citation as "one of the most energetic and motivated cadets ever seen in the North West Area – not only taking part as an active member of the unit band, but also representing TS Revenge at football, swimming and canoeing."

"He is a first-class ambassador for the Sea Cadet Corps."



● Able Cadet George Whitfield, of Southwark Sea Cadet unit TS Cossack, has sent Navy News plans for the modification of HMS Belfast which could bring the wartime cruiser a new lease of life. George has added sonar, gun turrets have been replaced by a new Vickers Mk 8 4.5in gun and the anti-ship Harpoon missile system. There is also a flight deck built on the ship's stern to accommodate a Merlin or Lynx helicopter. George said: "Of course, living in Bermuda, I would miss having a distinguished warship on my doorstep. However, sacrifices have to be made on occasion... – the occasion being a flip to the Surface Fleet."

Window of opportunity for ladder display team

CELEBRATIONS to mark the 250th anniversary of the Marine Society will include a major event in London later this year.

As part of the event, the Tameside Sea Cadets Window Ladder team has been asked to perform on HMS Ocean – but the team has been hampered by the lack of their own, paid-for portable equipment to mount the frame for outside events.

Up until now they have had to raise the money to borrow the equipment for each occasion – but that could all be about to change.

Thanks to funds raised locally, and a 50 per cent grant contribution of £3,200 from the Sports Club Development Fund of Tameside, the unit is now in a position to buy the equipment.

And it could not have come at a better time, as their performance in Trafalgar Square led to more invitations, including the next Lowestoft Air Show.

Being a unique display, the team at Tameside is keen to show their skills to as many people as possible to help raise the profile of both the unit and the Corps.

"The cadets involved relish the challenge and continue to train hard every week," said Commanding Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Graham Broadbent.

Speaking about the latest success, the unit's Training Officer Mr John Mottram said: "We seem to be quite lucky at the moment, although it is not all luck."

"A lot of time and effort goes into preparing our applications for support and grants and we get lots of help and support from the people within the local organisations awarding the grants."

"It won't stop us fundraising locally and getting all the benefits a charity can claim for, but what it does do is help us achieve our goals quicker and one thing we have proven is that having a plan of action to raise funds has been key to our success."

The unit's imaginative approach to fundraising has yielded other benefits in recent weeks.

A £7,000 award from the Community Foundation of Greater Manchester, Local Network Fund, was earmarked to help upgrade the unit's Topper sailing boat fleet – and two new Laser Picos and a Laser Vago have been delivered to the cadets.

And as if that wasn't enough, a further cheque for £500 then arrived, a filip from the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester.

Fundraising will continue apace – there are always new projects to pursue, including the replacement of ageing canoe equipment and the purchase of a new minibus.

How Ark Royal entered folklore

Blue stories from the Province

WE LAMENTED last month the relative dearth of memoirs by Royal Marines.

So, in true waiting-for-a-bus fashion, Robin Blue's *A Job With A Difference* (Stamford House, £7.99 ISBN 1-904985-416) popped through the Navy News letterbox.

Robin, who describes himself very modestly as a "nobody, an ordinary man experiencing events", served Corps and country over four decades (he joined in 1959 and left at the beginning of the '80s).

Signing up as he did in the late '50s, the author found the world of the commando eye-opening... not least because they received sex education (among other instruction, of course).

"Always wear your cycle clips if you want to ride the neighbourhood bicycle," the course doctor advised.

Robin's career spanned a turbulent time in international and world history.

Straight from training the young marine found himself in Aden tackling a growing insurgency movement.

The war was bitter. Outnumbered on one patrol by dissident tribesmen, Robin and his comrades left a surprise for the insurgents: tins of Heinz soup crammed not with tomatoey goodness but grenades. The trick worked. The insurgents' fondness for Heinz was their downfall.

A decade later, the commandos would find such subterfuge used against them in Northern Ireland. It is the Royals' role in the Province which forms the bulk of this memoir.

Rather than demonise the terrorists, the author humanises them. Two lads who (thankfully) bungled an attempt to blow up a supermarket are described for example as "naïve young fools, exploited terribly by the godfathers in the Republican movement."

On other occasions, the Royal was frustrated by his powerlessness. A commando patrol arrived too late to prevent a crowd beating three policemen. "As I approached I witnessed one of the assailants kick a policeman in the top of his skull," writes Robin.

"The force of the kick split his skull and his brains fell out on to the pavement. He died instantly."

One sneering troublemaker, fittingly dubbed 'Laughing Boy' by the marines received his comeuppance at the hands of the author.

After one brush with Laughing Boy, Robin very publicly stuffed a brown envelope in the lad's jacket and thanked him for his help. Laughing Boy was subsequently beaten up, but never hassled the Royals again.

"At times," says Robin, "it is better to use the enemy to do your dirty work for you."

Such details – and many others – give the reader as good an account of life for the ordinary trooper during the Troubles as you are likely to find.

It is a reminder of just how tense, dangerous, bitter and murderous the situation in Northern Ireland was before the Peace Agreement.

A few photographs would have been nice, that's a minor quibble. Robin Blue has a good story to tell... and he tells it well.

So we'll leave the final word to him.

"The Royal Marines are still Britain's sheet anchor – and are the best armed service in the world."

THE names of few ships resonate more than that of HMS Ark Royal.

That it does is attributable largely – though, of course, not solely – to the deeds of Ark Royal III, the wartime carrier and scourge of the Kriegsmarine.

But as Mike Rossiter explains in *Ark Royal* (Bantam, £20 ISBN 0593 055519), the Ark, as she would forever be known, was famous long before she clashed with Germany in the autumn of 1939.

That she was a star was perhaps something of a surprise – not least to the RN.

Workers at Cammell Laird in Birkenhead who built her certainly weren't impressed.

As Ark took shape on the Wirral slipway, nearby so too did HMS Prince of Wales, second of the new breed of battleships.

The Prince, recalled shipwright Leonard Sweeney, "was a real fighting ship. You could picture it hurling itself about in rough weather."

"In retrospect, we were all banking on the wrong ship because the Ark Royal was going to be the master."

Naval aviation advocates did their utmost to champion Ark from the outset – hence her regular appearances in the media. So regular, in fact, that she became branded the *Daily Mirror* ship. (Nothing changes: today's carriers are lumbered with the nickname Death Star because they draw all the media to them.)

Fame, as any celebrity will tell you, has its drawbacks and when war engulfed Europe in September 1939, Ark Royal became a prime target for the Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine.

Before the month was out, the Germans were convinced the flat-top had been sunk after an attack by a Heinkel bomber.

Goebbels' propaganda machine



● Last Act... Ark Royal lists heavily to port after being torpedoed in November 1941

bleated: "Where is the Ark Royal?" It merely added to the *Daily Mirror* ship's status.

What is remarkable in her short active life is Ark's varied career. Pretty much every major action fought by the RN between 1939 and 1941 saw the carrier involved, directly or indirectly: the River Plate, Norway, the attack on the French Fleet at Oran, the Bismarck chase, the Malta Convoys.

So perhaps we should not mourn her passing in November 1941 too much because she had done as much as any vessel to help win the war against Fascism.

And as Ark slipped beneath the Mediterranean, cinemagoers in Britain trotted to see *Ships With Wings*, a wartime flag-flier (and, to be honest, not one of the better ones).

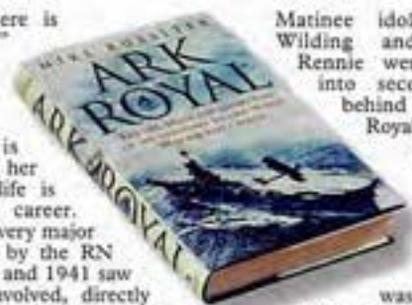
Matinee idols Michael Wilding and Michael Rennie were bumped into second billing behind HMS Ark Royal.

Crew hated it – Ark veteran Ron Skinner told the author it was the worst film he had ever seen.

Churchill hated it and was reluctant to pass it. But First Sea Lord Dudley Pound had his way... and *Ships With Wings* proved a box-office hit.

The reason: the British public identified with Ark Royal.

Mike Rossiter wrote his book alongside an excellent BBC documentary aired earlier this year which charted the search for Ark's wreck – deep-sea explorers successfully found her – and so the story is brought up to date



A league of extraordinary gentlemen

THERE aren't too many people who have been immortalised by a TV journalist's commentary.

England footballer Geoff Hurst, perhaps? David 'Moggie' Morgan is another but you probably won't know his name.

On May 1 1982 Fit Lt Morgan lifted off in a Sea Harrier from the deck of HMS Hermes, bombed the airfield at Port Stanley in the Falklands, and returned to the carrier. So too did all his comrades, prompting the legendary remark by the Beeb's Brian Hanrahan: "I counted them all out and I counted them all back."

David Morgan provides a vivid account of the raid – and much more besides – in the excellent *Hostile Skies* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.99 ISBN 0-297-84645-0).

There aren't too many first-hand accounts of the Falklands air war, not least because there weren't too many airmen involved, certainly not fast jet pilots.

To the uninitiated, it may come as a surprise that 'crabs' made up a sizeable proportion of the jump jet pilots with the Falklands task force.

The author was in the thick of the fight from the first day to the last; there were triumphs, such as the raid on Stanley airfield, and there were tragedies, such as the loss of landing craft Foxtrot 4 on June 8 1982.

Morgan watched impotently as Argentine Skyhawks strafed and bombed the assault boat before the Harriers could move in. The author provides a vivid description of the fate of one of the enemy jets as he launched a Sidewinder missile at it:

The missile started to guide towards the Skyhawk's jet pipe. What had been a vibrant flying machine was completely obliterated as the missile tore it apart. The pilot had no chance of survival and within a further two seconds the ocean had swallowed all trace of him and his aeroplane as if they had never been.

Morgan's memoirs are remarkably candid.



● Smoke me a kipper, I'll be back for breakfast... A bearded David Morgan (the result of a competition aboard HMS Hermes) poses alongside his Sea Harrier

Not merely does he include letters home, but also letters to his former mistress, his 'little mouse'.

"When I was young I used to be scared at the thought of dying," he wrote in late April 1982. "It holds no great horror for me now."

Such notes capture the spirit of the fighter pilot perfectly. Of day-to-day combat: "Life here is far from boring." Of the raid on Port Stanley: "We wellied it a treat." Of the Falklands: "Bleak and godforsaken. As bare as a baboon's bum." Of grappling with the enemy: "I feel no remorse. After all, you cannot hurt anyone who does not wish to be hurt."

with an emotional return to her resting place for former crew.

Ship histories have a tendency to be dry, technologically-driven affairs interested more in the ship than the men who sailed her.

Not so with Rossiter. It is the men of Ark Royal who made the ship great and their memories of her brief but illustrious career which bring her back to life.

This is a magical book, befitting the Ark and her crew.

And like the name of the ship, there are themes which resonate in today's RN.

Pilot Val Bailey found most of the Senior Service opposed to the fledgling Fleet Air Arm when he joined Ark Royal.

Carriers were, officers told him, "a waste of money – always a bloody nuisance".

Such banter between the fish-heads and the WAFUs will continue long after Ark Royal V – current upholder of the name – has passed into history.

Rewind four decades and such sentiments could easily have been shared by Battle of Britain pilots. Such historical echoes can be found on almost every page.

The pilots thought of themselves as immortal – until the first loss, Lt Nick Taylor. "Our squadron to a man were talking only of avenging Nick and were more determined to do whatever it took to triumph in this conflict," recalls Morgan.

The few championed by Winston Churchill in 1940 were considerably 'fewer' in 1982. As David Morgan describes here the debt we owe them is no less great.

And we should also remember that wars do not end with the white flag being raised.

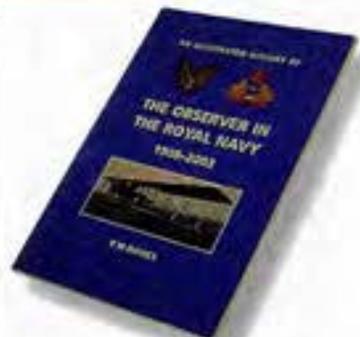
By the conflict's end, Morgan had notched up five 'kills', earning a well-publicised Distinguished Service Cross for his actions in the Falklands.

Less well publicised, however, is his struggle to deal with the strains of battle which shattered his private life and led to him retiring from the Forces on the eve of the first Gulf War with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder – an illness suffered by many South Atlantic veterans.

For Morgan, these memoirs are a way of shedding past ghosts and honouring "a band of extraordinary men".

And Morgan's pictures of life aboard Hermes capture these extraordinary men.

"There are better general accounts of the conflict written by more eminent writers," he concludes honourably. There may be, but there are few more honest.



Pilot-light account of aviation

ANY sailor will probably grimace at tales of derring-do in the skies. WAFUs showing off again...

Even within the Fleet Air Arm, there's a certain perceived hierarchy with pilots at the top of the tree.

Keith Davies acknowledges the debt we owe to FAA pilots. But as a former observer – he flew from 1951 to 59 – he feels the pilot's right-hand man (or woman) deserves credit.

Credit he gives them in *An Illustrated History of the Observer in the Royal Navy 1908-2003* (Serendipity, £9.95 ISBN 1-84394-1546).

The observer's role is much more than simply 'observing': radio operator, bomb aimer, navigator, gunner – these duties and many more have been performed by RN observers in the past century.

Wherever the Fleet Air Arm has gone, the observer has played a full part in everything the Naval air wing has achieved of merit: Taranto, the Bismarck chase, the struggle against the U-boat, Korea, the long haul of the Cold War.

The author features herein, too. In September 1958 his Skyraider was sent up to locate the crippled French tanker Ferdinand Gilibert after she collided with a Liberian tanker in the Gulf of Oman (the story made front-page news in Navy News of the day). Both vessels were saved from sinking by the RN.

The author brings the observer's tale up to date with a helpful overview of current training. (Given the relatively small size of the FAA today, there are more than 300 qualified observers in its ranks.)

This is an excellent, if brief, run-through the history of observers. There are plenty of facts and figures, personal reminiscences and log entries.

None is more eyebrow-raising than the diary of Great War observer Stanley Bartlett.

Take October 24 1916, for example:

"The pilot decided to land on the sea, but looking below was surprised to see fields and villages."

"After flying east for ten miles, saw what was thought to be water. We pancaked from this height and found the port float badly smashed."

"The pilot steered for land and after 45 minutes tried to run ashore but got stuck in the mud and had to wait for the tide to come in to take the plane to the beach."

Ah, happy days...

Global conflicts on canvas

IMAGES of war in countries as diverse as Ethiopia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq are being showcased at the Royal Marines Museum in Eastney, Portsmouth.

The museum is exhibiting more than 40 paintings by Hampshire artist Gordon Rushmer – including several works commissioned by the RMM – which capture a decade of war and peacekeeping 'from Bosnia to Baghdad'.

The exhibition runs until the end of September.

From boys to seamen

TWO hundred and fifty years ago, on the evening of June 25 1756, as what would be called the Seven Years War began, 22 interested gentlemen met at a tavern in Cornhill, London, to try to do something to ameliorate the manning problem in the Royal Navy.

The main source of Naval personnel at this time was the general stock of seamen which manned all Britain's ships, both mercantile and military, writes Dr Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

This meant that the Royal Navy could only be manned at the expense of the merchant ships, upon which Britain's wider strategic health depended.

The merchants and ship owners who met at the Kings Arms were concerned that the press gang would be all-too-effective in taking their best seamen; indeed the main reason this form of recruitment had been retained by Parliament was to stop the recruitment of merchant seamen being too efficient.

The aim of the concerned gentlemen was to try to obtain a more general recruitment system that would exploit more widely the resources of the nation.

The result was the Marine Society and its story is told by experienced author Richard Woodman in a commemorative volume *Of Daring Temper: A History of the Marine Society* (The Marine Society, £20 ISBN 0 9525292 2 X).

The society which was founded that evening was designed to obtain both 'landmen' and, more importantly, 'stout and well made' boys from the streets of London to swell the ranks of the ships' companies of Britain's warships.

The enterprise was a very 18th-Century combination of philanthropy and self-interest but was nonetheless successful for that.

The key to the Marine Society's activities was to take both men and poor boys and clothe them before sending them "to the ports where His Majesty's ships lie, with all proper encouragement."

Clean clothes were crucial in an age when typhus-infested clothing was the major source of sickness and death.

Within a year the Society had delivered over 4,000 men and almost 3,000 boys, figures that doubled the following year.

In all, the Marine Society provided five per cent of the RN's personnel intake during the war.

After the war's victorious end the Society continued its search



● Not all of choice character when they join... A guard on the Marine Society's training ship Warspite in 1911

The Grove Review

for boys "of daring temper whose genius leads them to try their fortunes at sea."

The emphasis shifted to providing boys for a career in merchant shipping but the recurrence of war saw the Society reverting to its original role.

In 1786 it acquired its first training ship. Together with its successor the two hulks in the Thames produced 14,485 boys and 24,379 men for the Navy between then and 1815 (the maximum annual strength of the fleet in this period was 145,000 men).

Not surprisingly, given the importance of this source of personnel, the Admiralty kept the Society supplied with training hulks.

The emphasis in their recruitment, however, inevitably shifted again to the mercantile marine, while the ships provided a longer introductory course to boy entrants.

In 1862 the Marine Society received the frigate Warspite as its latest vessel, a name that was to remain for another two generations of training ship.

The challenge facing the ships' staff was illustrated by both wood-



en Warspites being destroyed by the boys ("not of choice character when they join") setting fire to them.

Nevertheless the numbers of able young entrants sent to sea by the Society remained significant. Between 1862 and 1918 some 3,698 boys were sent to the Royal Navy and 9,928 into mercantile service.

After World War 1 a new, less flammable, Warspite was provided in the shape of the former cruiser Hermione. After six months boys were discharged to begin Naval training while those destined for what was now called the Merchant Navy remained for a 12 to 15-month apprenticeship. As shipping expanded after the worst years of inter-war depression demand for Warspite boys exceeded supply.

World War 2 ended the original recruiting and training role of the Marine Society but the organisation found more varied roles.

Post-war it provided bursaries for young men wishing to pursue a

naval career. In 1971 it helped set up the Nautical Institute, the professional body of mercantile officers.

In 1976 it absorbed the Seafarers Educational Service with its extended ships' library facilities.

Three years later a new headquarters was inaugurated in Lambeth - it is clearly visible on the right from trains leaving Waterloo.

From 1986 the Society ran a couple of sea training vessels but the last of these ceased to operate in 2004. That year marked the merger of the Society with the Sea Cadets Association, begun by the old Dreadnought era Navy League, which had been operating from the Society's headquarters since 1987.

The new 'Marine Society and Sea Cadets' continued to operate the training ships Royalist and John Jerwood.

Richard Woodman's is a handsome book that explains the sometimes complex history of the Marine Society, its personnel and associate bodies, and its developing context with admirable clarity. It is an interesting account worthy of attention by all with an interest in the subject of Britain and the sea.

■ The book is only available from the Society on 020 7654 7008.

Once more unto the beaches

THE word 'definitive' should be used sparingly when applied to works of history.

It is a fitting adjective for Hugh Sebag-Montefiore's magnificent *Dunkirk: To The Last Man* (Penguin, £25 ISBN 0-670-91082-1), a tour de force not merely of the legendary evacuation, but of the disastrous 1940 campaign in the West.

The Navy figures prominently, and not solely at Dunkirk itself.

Indeed, the evacuation of Dunkirk only came about because the other principal Allied ports - Boulogne and Calais - were in German hands by the dying days of May 1940.

Boulogne fell first, but not before HM Ships Keith and Vimy had run the gauntlet to rescue British troops.

The commanding officers of both vessels were killed in the action.

On Vimy, Don Harris jumped to help the mortally-wounded Lt Cdr Colin Donald.

"A bullet had inflicted a frightful wound to his forehead, nose and eyes. He was choking in his own blood.

"As I rose to my feet, more shots swept the bridge and the sub-lieutenant fell directly in front of me. He must have been dead before he hit the deck."

Calais came next as the Germans tightened the noose around the ever-shrinking pocket of Allied troops, leaving Dunkirk as the only route of escape.

When the evacuation began, few men at the coal face realised the scale of the task facing them - until they sighted Dunkirk.

In HMS Jaguar, stoker Arnold Saunders looked out upon "a beautiful stretch of sand with what looked like shrubs on the beach". The 'shrubs' started moving, forming lines. "It was then that we realised what our job was to be," recalled Saunders.

The author is not a fan of myth and legend, the 'miracle of Dunkirk', the 'little ships'.

He praises the RN for its courage during the evacuation, but also - rightly - gives the men who held the perimeter of the Allied pocket belated recognition.

The author also paints a florid picture of the hell of Dunkirk, aided by a rich tapestry of memoirs and recollections from survivors of all sides.

Maj Rupert Colvin of the Grenadier Guards thought he had found salvation aboard the

tug St Abbs - until the Luftwaffe struck.

"Everyone made a rush for the side," he recalled. "I took a deep breath, said a short prayer and thought this was the one end I least desired."

For many of the soldiers packed aboard St Abbs, this was the second time that day they had been shipwrecked. "Men were dying every moment from cramp and their cries were pathetic," remembered the major, who survived by clinging to another wrecked steamer.

The Germans jackbooted into Dunkirk on the morning of June 4, by which time more than 300,000 Allied troops had been safely carried to England - but at a terrible cost to the Royal Navy's escort forces.

The port, a German Army staff officer observed, "is a complete mess". The North Sea waves lapping the beach tinged the sand with oil from the sunken ships. "There are tens of thousands of cars, tanks, ammunition cases, guns and items of clothing."

The story ends not on the dunes of Dunkirk, however, rather in the waters off St Nazaire and the controversial loss of the troopship *Lancastria*.

The tragedy far outstrips the sinking of the Titanic as Britain's worst maritime disaster. And while death for the great liner's passengers came in a couple of minutes

played by burning oil, men who survived the initial sinking were "fried like sausages in a frying pan".

Sebag-Montefiore has already produced a lively - and thorough - account of the struggle to crack the German Enigma code.

Dunkirk stands in a different league. The research is exhaustive: survivors interviewed, archives tapped in Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland.

For all the research and footnotes - they run to nearly 100 pages - this is military history at its best.

Sebag-Montefiore offers a sweeping panorama of the Battle of France, from the men at the top to the foot soldiers and able seamen.

For nearly four decades, Alistair Horne's magisterial *To Lose a Battle* has set the benchmark for all historians of the 1940 campaign.

Dunkirk: To The Last Man doesn't quite surpass it - it ends rather abruptly and lacks a conclusion - nor will it be the final word on the evacuation, but it will take some beating.

A charge to certain death

SUICIDAL charges generally enter folklore in military history.

The Light Brigade, Pickett's Charge, Cradock at Coronel, the assault on Goose Green.

Precisely why the unequal struggle between HMS Jervis Bay and the German pocket battleship Admiral Scheer does not belong to these ranks is a mystery.

For as Gerald Duskin and Ralph Segman demonstrate in *If the Gods are Good* (Creey, £10.95 ISBN 0-859791-07-6) the sacrifice of the armed merchant cruiser on November 5 1940 is one of the bravest acts in naval history.

It also spared convoy HX84 from utter destruction.

Jervis Bay was nearly 20 years old when she was converted from a merchantman into a convoy escort; her main armament, seven 6in guns, dated from the days of Queen Victoria.

Yet Capt Edward Fegen did not hesitate when the pocket battleship - with firepower far greater than the Jervis Bay - was sighted in the late afternoon.

Admiral Scheer opened fire from 18,000 yards as the escort charged towards her and struck Jervis Bay with her third salvo.

The authors paint a vivid



picture of the carnage wrought on the British warship.

Fegen - who would be awarded the VC for his actions - was among the early victims.

His left arm was nearly torn off at the shoulder. It stayed attached by virtue of his holding it in place with his right arm."

Scheer's captain, *Kapitan zur See Theodor Krancke* - an ardent Nazi who would later lead the German Navy's defence against the Normandy landings - thought Fegen possessed the Nelson touch.

"He must be a commander with such authority over his men that they're prepared to follow him to certain death in a hopeless fight," Krancke observed.

Certain death, yes. Three out of four Jervis Bay men died. Hopeless fight, never.

She saved most, though not all, of the convoy from destruction with her gallant ride; the ships scattered and used the vast Atlantic and long November night as their getaway.

The story of the Jervis Bay was instantly seized upon by Allied propagandists.

George VI immediately recommended Capt Fegen for the VC - "He knew he was going to certain death," the king wrote admiringly.

The Scheer evaded all efforts to catch her as she raided maritime trade in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

She returned to Germany on April 1 1941. Thereafter her career was an anti-climax.

Bombed in Kiel in the war's dying days, she turned turtle. The dock was filled in with rubble and a car park erected on the site.

The story of the Jervis Bay has been told before, but never better and certainly not as comprehensively.

If the Gods are Good is the result of a 12-year trawl through the archives, yet for all the research this is a lively read.

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Windsurfing festival looms

SURF'S up this month for the RN Sailing Association's windsurfing fraternity with their annual festival in Daymer Bay, Cornwall.

The June 10-11 meet is aimed at level three sailors and above as the waters are reasonably challenging (alternatively, you can just enjoy the beach at Polzeath).

Much of the RNSEA-owned kit will be available for use throughout the weekend (conditions allowing), but third party insurance will be required and you will have to pay to park on the sand.

Beyond events in the water, there will be a barbecue at the campsite on June 10. Details from Lt Paul Morris on 93781 7359 or survo@culdrose.mod.uk or Nic Dodd on 01752 557540.

Trenchant's going Dutch

A 16-strong team from HMS Trenchant will be yomping through Holland next month on the (in)famous Nijmegen Four Days' March.

Dating back to 1909, the event was introduced to improve the marching efficiency of Dutch infantry, who were expected to cover 100 miles in full kit.

The Trenchant team, led by Lt Ian Shropshall – the boat's correspondence officer, head for Nijmegen after victory as the best land-sponsored (!) team in a 50-mile march organised by RAF Cosford.

The only way to enter the Nijmegen event was through the Harrier, despite that, Naval traditions will be upheld by stopping daily for Colours.



California screamin'

HIGH above Perris Valley in California members of the RN and RM Sports Parachute Association begin forming up on a practice jump.

A 32-strong team of jumpers, including the solitary female in the form of S/Lt Lindsey Ashwood, headed west for Exercise USA Prefall.

Perris Valley offers one of the biggest drop zones in the world for skydivers, as well as first-class coaching and some of the top jumpers on the planet.

The freefallers took advantage,

getting in an impressive 1,300 jumps.

Joining the more seasoned jumpers were eight new joiners to the RNRMSPA. Having never thrown themselves out of a perfectly serviceable aircraft before, all successfully completed the accelerated freefall programme, to become fully-fledged skydivers.

The quickest way to start skydiving, AFF involves a series of eight jumps, under the watchful eye and tight grasp of highly trained instructors. These are consolidated by a further ten solo jumps, resulting in the FAI "A" Licence.

As the new guys were finding their wings, the experienced

jumpers undertook an intensive coaching package, provided the highly-regarded 'Perris Fury' – Perris Valley's resident four-way formation team and contenders for upcoming world titles.

Skills were further honed by sessions in the Perris wind-tunnel – an awesome way in which to emulate the experience of freefall, without the hassle of boarding an aircraft and having to depend on the weather.

The coaching received was top class and it has set the squad up well for a hectic season ahead.

The teams are now training hard at their home drop zone of Netheravon to take part in the Military Championships at RAPA in Germany next month, followed later in July by the British Armed Forces Championships.

The culmination of all the hard work will be the British National Skydiving Championships in

August where the RN hopes to field teams in the senior, intermediate and junior categories.

All of this comes on top of a packed schedule for those jumpers who are also part of the RN Raiders Parachute Display team, with demo jumps planned right across the country this summer.

"The benefits of these expeditions are enormous for all concerned," said expedition leader 'Sharky' Ward, chief cook at CTCRM.

"The novices were all very enthusiastic and enjoyed this life-changing experience whilst the experienced skydivers all vastly increased their personal freefall and canopy-handling skills. Most also achieved their formation skydive instructors qualification."

Generous funding from the RN&RM Sports Lottery helped the skydivers' trip to California. More info on the RNRMSPA at rnrmspa.pushpin.co.uk

RNFA round-up

Continued from back page opportunity to meet Sir Bobby Charlton and the rising Man Utd star Giuseppe Rossi must be close to the top, along with the kind invitation of the coaching team at FC Dallas to train with the first team.

The RN involvement in the Dallas Cup over the last couple of years would support the former argument as our youngsters continue to benefit from the experience, and compete with the best.

Trials for the 2007 RN Youth Squad will begin early next season – players eligible for the Dallas Cup XXVIII should have a date of birth later than August 1 1987.

Recommendations of suitable RN/RM players to John Gordon235@mod.uk

AS WE reported last month, Sgt Steve Marr RM, the RN Women's first team coach, has had to relinquish his role as he concentrates on taking up his commission.

The RNFA is now inviting suitably-qualified coaches to apply for the post. Applicants must hold the UEFA B Level 2 qualification as a minimum and should contact the RNFA office for further details (telephone 023 9272 2671 or 023 9272 25871)

And finally... The RNFA dinner will be held at the Queen's Hotel, Southsea, on Thursday 22 June at 7.30pm. Anyone with past or present links with the RNFA is invited, cost £25 per head.

Complete and return the application form which can be found at www.royalnavyfa.com or contact the RNFA office.

Sail liaison

REPRESENTATIVES of the Clyde Yacht Clubs Association have met up with Clyde Queen's Harbourmaster Cdr Julian Ferguson to promote good relations with the Royal Navy.

Among the issues discussed were liaison over racing and regattas, exercise areas and the local Boatwatch security scheme.

Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose

AIR DAY

Wednesday 12th July 2006

Far MORE than just an AIR SHOW!

Come early and enjoy the many exhibits and attractions on the ground before the afternoons thrilling flying displays.

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- Don't miss the flight of the Harrier, Merlins and Black Seahawks.
- Welcome the Royal Jordanian Falcons and many historic aircraft.

Enter our competition now and you could be one of the lucky winners.

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Simply answer the question below, complete the form and post it to: RNAS Culdrose Competition, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, Hants PO1 3HH. Or email enquiries@navynews.co.uk. Closing date Thursday 28th June 2006

What County is RNAS Culdrose in?

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Entries must reach Navy News office by 12 noon on June 28 2006. Five entries will be drawn at 15.00 on that day. Each lucky winner will be notified by phone/email and will receive a pair of adult tickets by post. There is no alternative prize. The decision of the judges is final. Employees and their relatives of Navy News are not eligible to enter this competition.



2-6, heave... The Raleigh team practise for the gig championships in calmer waters

Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh

Raleigh gig in Scilly waters

THE first appearance by HMS Raleigh's oarsmen at the World Gig Championships in the Scilly Isles proved to be an eye-opener as they faced the challenge of open water.

Scores of teams from across the globe headed to the islands off Cornwall, including squads from the Torpoint establishment and BRNC Dartmouth.

The championships, running since 1990, pit identical 32ft boats made of Cornish elm against each other in Scillian waters.

The Raleigh boat – Jupiter – was entered with the team in high spirits.

Last year, the Torpointers were the fastest Service side in

the Trafalgar Great River Race down the Thames, averaging eight knots.

That race was over 22 miles; the various heats and stages in the gig contest were no longer than two miles on courses in the Atlantic off St Mary's.

The Raleigh team practised on the Tamar and inlets around the establishment, but found that training in the confined and calm waters of Cornwall and Devon didn't fully prepare them for the open sea.

The seven-strong team nevertheless won one heat, taking them to 72nd place overall (ahead of BRNC).

Team captain Dave King, an

instructor at the Jupiter Point Sea Sense Training Centre, said: "The championships overall were a fantastic spectacle and we all had a great time."

"We all suffered with a few aches and pains, but were really pleased with the fantastic response we had from the other crews – including a few tips on how we can improve for next time and even offers of help with some off-shore training."

As for gig racing, it dates from the days when gigs ferried pilots out to ships offshore to guide them in.

The first boat to reach the waiting merchantman got the job – and the money.

Early season promise

ANY early season nerves from RN representative cricketers were quickly cast aside during the first two matches of the season, where cricket of very good quality was abundant.

The first match, a traditional two day declaration match against Incogniti at Portsmouth, was played in brilliant sunshine on a wicket that looked firm and true.

Batting first, the RN scored 239-7 declared in 54 overs, Mne A Rodzoch (RM Disp Team) scoring an excellent 91, Lt J Batley RN (702 NAS) a well crafted 79 and Mne C Smith (FPGRM) a faultless 30.

The overall score gave the RN bowlers something to work with and Cdr C Slocombe (845 NAS) (3-30) and OM J Brogan (COMDEVFLOT) (3-55) were the pick of the bowlers, restricting the opposition to 179-8 declared, some 60 runs behind.

In the second innings Batley and Smith took the bowling apart scoring 100 not out and 46 respectively, enabling skipper Lt Cdr P Snelling RN (Northwood) to declare at 188-2, setting a target of 249 to win. The Incogniti batsmen were never allowed to get going and as a result, 'put the shutters up' finishing at 150-6 and managing to draw the game.

An encouraging performance by the RN with many good aspects and all the more exciting were the significant contributions made by U25 team players.

The next match against the Free Foresters again saw a reasonably strong RN side turn out and after losing the toss, Lt T Burt RN (Raleigh) was invited to bat. A solid start by Navy batsmen POPT M Toogood (Fort Blockhouse) (40) and Smith (37) who in turn accompanied Rodzoch during his innings of 76, further developed by Burt (37 not out) enabled the RN to declare at 242-6.

After lunch, AEA K Adams (Sultan) and Lt J Parker (Abbey Wood) laid down some very hostile fire, Parker finishing with 3-19 (8 overs) and U25's coach CPO B Regan (Nelson) chipped in with 3-25 (7). Brogan again picked up a couple of wickets with his off spin and eventually the Foresters were dismissed for 162, 80 runs short of their target.

Overall another encouraging performance, boding well for the future and it is now hoped that players availability and fitness will be trouble free for the remainder of the season.

Pain in Spain for cyclists

THE riders of the RN and RM Cycling Association headed for Majorca for an inspirational - and unusual - training camp to prepare them for the 2006 season.

Eighteen cyclists joined training camp organiser and former MOD civil servant Andy Cook on the Spanish island for a challenging six days, funded by the RN&RM Sports Lottery.

The cyclists were expected to complete rides in excess of 50 miles daily, irrespective of the terrain or conditions, to improve their stamina levels. To add to the 'fun', when not riding seminars offering nutritional and training advice were provided by professional athletes.

Also attending the Majorca camp was former England footballer Geoff Thomas, now an inspirational figure to millions as a fund-raising cyclist.

Geoff was diagnosed with leukaemia three years ago and since then has raised thousands of pounds for research into the disease; his next challenge is to cycle across the USA with a four-man team in ten days.

"2005 was a very successful year for the RN squad and membership is increasing rapidly," said WO1 Andy Hunstone.

"With a strong base to work from, we hope to capitalise on the excellent results of last season in open and, more importantly, Inter-Service events."

More details at www.navycycling.org.uk

Stingray's top JABA jabber

RISING star of the RN boxing world Gareth 'Stingray' Smith has collected his first title at the age of just 17.

Stingray, an MEM in HMS Argyll, battled his way through four bouts to reach the final of the Junior Amateur Boxing Association national finals in the 52kg category.

In Barnsley's Metro Dome the teenager - current RN flyweight champ - became the first Senior Servicemen to lift a JABA title.

Aside from regular training sessions in Nelson gym under the tutelage of RN boxing coach PO(PT) 'Q' Shillingford, Stingray was afforded time off by the Argyll team to hone his boxing skills.

"Gareth has fought the best boxers at his weight and age in the country - the JABA title is a very tough one to win, so he's put a lot of training in to compete at this level," said Q.

Another of Q's protégés, Lt Lucy Abel is gunning for a place in the GB squad at the Beijing games in 2008.

The junior officer and reigning England featherweight champ, currently in Basra, is training ferociously for the Olympics, as well as next month's European ABAs.

The boxer has a punishing daily regime - a six-mile run before she starts work at Basra air base, a maximum daily intake of 1,200 calories (the normal figure is 2,000) and regular sessions in



● Stand by for action... JABA champion MEM 'Stingray' Smith

the gym, including a bout with Capt Jim McGovern, who has represented the green berets at middleweight.

"From the first bell it was less 'rumble in the jungle' and more 'defeat in the desert,'" said the

Royal who expected to dispatch the female officer inside the first round and failed.

"It's probably the only way I'll ever be able to boast in the mess that I've gone the whole distance with an Olympic champion."

Cornish pasting for golfers

NAVY golf got off to a later start than usual with the annual tussle against Cornwall played at Tehidy Park, Camborne.

This was closely followed by the trek up the M1 to take on the Leeds and District team at Howley Hall Golf Club, while the ladies started with the first of three planned proficiency days.

Tehidy Park, a tricky, compact course, was in fine fettle, particularly considering the weather.

A group of 14 made the trip west, with no fewer than five making their full debuts for the representative team - Lt Cdr Mark Selway (OCLC London), CWEA Shaun Matthews (CFM Devonport), LS(SM) Connor Macleod (HMS Vigilant), AEM Jamie Lown (845 Sqn) and SA Jack Hawkins (HMS Turbulent).

The newcomers enjoyed mixed fortunes, the pick being Lown, who hung on in his singles encounter to fight off both his opponent and his nerves for a final-green win.

All appreciated that they will have to work hard on their games in this high standard of golf.

Having warmed up with a crushing defeat in the friendly the previous day, Navy Vice Chairman Cdr Neil Hinch and team captain Lt Guy Norris (771 Sqn) were hopeful of some good results.

A number of the morning foursomes matches were closely-fought affairs, but the only point of six morning foursomes came from the pairing of current Navy champion LNN Scott Gilbert (MDHU Portsmouth) and partner CMEA Lee McCathie (Neptune).

Gilbert would have been disappointed with his halved singles match in the afternoon, having been three up on his plus-two handicap opponent at the turn.

Norris led from the front as usual with a gutsy win, and the win from Lown was backed up by halved matches from Mne Chris Thomas (45 Cdo RM) and CWEA Steve King (HMS Manchester).

The overall loss by 4½ matches to 16½ was naturally disappointing but the management took

away some positive points and were encouraged by the spirit and effort from all the players.

Two weeks later the team travelled to Leeds for the annual match with the Leeds and District Union team, the strongest of the ten Yorkshire Unions, having won all before them last season.

Although the hosts ran out winners by 9 points to 6, this represented an excellent overall team performance with some outstanding play from individuals.

A solid showing in the morning foursomes saw the teams level on 2½ points each at lunch.

Navy golf welcomed back Sgt Freddie Lomas (RM Band Portsmouth), who had missed the best part of two seasons through professional courses.

Partnered by LPT Mike Setterfield they produced a resounding win and this was followed by success from the pairing of McCathie and CRS Alan Yull (Capt MCTA Portsmouth).

Lown and Sgt Ned Kelly (RMR London) delivered a hard-fought half point in the final match.

The picture looked rosy in the afternoon singles when the Navy were triumphant in three of the top four matches, with wins from Lomas, McCathie and Setterfield, all of whose opponents were scratch handicap golfers.

Unfortunately the middle and latter order could not find the same fortune, so despite some close encounters, the hosts' strength in depth was the telling factor.

Howley Hall Golf Club, currently the permanent home for the fixture, provided the team with superb hospitality.

The ladies got under way with the first of their proficiency days at Chichester Golf Centre.

The event attracted ten ladies from which the Secretary will hope to bring people into the setup.

Another open-to-all day was due to be held at Faslane as Navy News went to press, with Plymouth hosting one on June 15.

Further details from the RN Womens Sports Officer at HMS Temeraire, 9380 25767 or 23958.



● Not left to their own Devices... Racers Lt Matt Twizelton and Lt Cdr Charlie Atkinson (kneeling) with their canoe and support team before setting off

Another Westminster row

THERE are easier ways of getting from Wiltshire to the capital and, to be honest, quicker ones.

But sport is sport, and you can't keep RN and RM personnel away from a sporting challenge.

There was considerable Senior Service involvement in the canoeists' marathon - the Devizes to Westminster race.

The race, established since the late 1940s, is the longest non-stop canoe event in the world, taking competitors from the heart of Wiltshire to Westminster Bridge in London via 125 miles of canals and waterways, negotiating 77 locks in the process.

Rather than 'ride' the locks, competitors clamber out of the water, haul out their kayak and carry it to the other side of the lock and continue the race.

The best RN/RM pairing was

commandos Simon Heard and Andrew Mansergh with a time of 21hrs 19mins 58secs in 14th place.

Not too far behind were Lt Cdr Charlie Atkinson and Lt Matt Twizelton of the RN Kayak Association, the second fastest mixed pair (and 25th overall), who arrived in the capital after 22hrs 58mins 40secs under way, backed up by a six-strong support team.

The winners, a duo from Hereford, crossed the finish line in 18hrs 15mins.

RN results
14 - Simon Heard and Andrew Mansergh (RM) 21:19:58; 21 - Henry Dowling and Tim Haylor (RMR London) 22:39:45; 25 - Charlie Atkinson and Matt Twizelton (RNKA) 22:58:40; 30 - Dave Ethel and Tom Tarnowski (RM) 23:42:23; 57 - Simon Holbrook (BRNC) and Tim Sage (Independent) 27:47:25; 71 - David Hook and Matthew Skuse (RNKA) 31:55:16; Retired - James Prewer and Chris Harding (RMR London)

Rookies and oldies carve out victory

THE Royal Marines opened the rugby league season with a hard-fought victory over London side St Mary's College.

With 11 first time regulars unavailable, it was time to call upon players on the fringes of the sport plus a re-call for some old hands.

The first period was an example of men against boys as the students crumbled in the face of a bigger and stronger RM side; the 'muscle and grunt' nature of the match suited the green berets against the slicker college side.

The students stepped up a gear after the break, with a more fluid, expansive game. The commandos tired visibly, particularly in the warm, humid conditions, and RM discipline began to slip - especially when half-back Cpl 'Jacko' Jackson suffered a knee injury.

Steadied by head coach Cpl Ritchie Guy, Jim Wolcott and Gareth Davies, the scratch side (it had only come together for the first time on the morning of the game) held on for a 38-22 victory.

 **NAVY NEWS**

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● A Navy player attempts to spoil possession by the Army's LCpl Daryl Slade-Jones of REME

Picture: Graeme Main, Soldier magazine

Navy defence fails to stem red tide

An enthusiastic crowd of 43,000 turned up at Twickenham to witness a fantastic day of inter-service rugby.

Widely touted as underdogs, the Navy immediately registered their intent with a thundering passage of play, only to lose the ball in a handling error.

The Army were quick to take advantage and put a probing kick deep into Navy territory. A combination of the weather and enthusiasm gifted a penalty to the Army, which was converted to give an early lead.

Notwithstanding this unwelcome start, as the game settled down it became obvious that any optimism that might have graced the Army camp following their protracted training period in South Africa and comprehensive defeat of the RAF was not warranted.

The Navy organisation in defence was unrivalled, and complemented by outstanding tackling. The back three of Will Pilkington, Rhodri Dicks and Matt Parker disrupted the Army tirelessly and Jamie Caruana and Calum Mcrae were indomitable in their enthusiasm for the 'blitz' defence.

The Army found their ambition thwarted and this frustration boiled over and led to a yellow card after 20 minutes, with three points still the only register on the scoreboard.

Unfortunately the Navy were unable to capitalise on the advantage, and indeed conceded a penalty that allowed the Army to increase their lead to six points.

Although the conditions were not conducive to free-flowing rugby, Rob Lloyd and Greg Barden combined on two occasions to make breaks, although good Army covering prevented the Navy from making anything more

of the possession, and indeed astute Army kicking from hand relieved pressure and recovered territory.

Towards the end of the first half the Army gained a territorial advantage and spent ten minutes camped inside the RN 22, with the crowd holding their breath as it looked increasingly as if the Dark Blue line would be breached.

It was not to be, with heroic tackling from Carl Saunders and Marsh Cormack and inspired work in the loose from Colin Milkins and Simon Burns denying the Army their score.

The half drew to a close with a last-gasp Army penalty for Navy offside which left the scoreboard at 9-0 and the game still in the balance.

The second half started with grim resolve showing on the faces of the Army team, and the hint that anything was possible in the demeanour of the Navy.

An unfortunate incident early on led to the award of a yellow card to the Navy for slowing the game, but this time it was the Army who were unable to make anything of the advantage.



One Hundred Years Of Navy Rugby!

Andy Quick came into his own, harrying his opposite number and making some inspired sniping runs from the base of the scrum which combined with the assured boot and safe hands of Dave Pascoe to sustain pressure on the Army and disrupt their attempts to get into anything that approximated to a game plan.

With the Navy back up to full strength the blue machine started to rumble forward inexorably, but the Army were in no hurry to surrender their winning streak and contested every inch of turf.

They were content to try to relieve pressure by kicking possession away and the majority of the second half was spent between the halfway line and the Army ten-metre line, with neither side able to take any decisive advantage. The Navy gained a penalty which Pascoe converted and it appeared as if the finely-balanced game might tip to the Dark Blue.

Chuck Berry came on to win his first well deserved cap bolstering the centres with a fresh pair of legs, as the clock wound down the Navy refused to panic and finally took advantage of a tiring

Army pack when Gaz Evans made a break that saw him galloping down the middle of the park, blood up and glory in sight.

The move was cruelly thwarted when the player supporting Evans, the electric Rob Lloyd, was brought down by the Army fly half in an incident the referee adjudged to be accidental, leaving Evans isolated and ultimately tackled.

The half ticked away to leave the score board reflecting an Army victory 9-3, the crowd in emotional tatters and the Army pleased to have got their fifth championships on the trot.

Army head coach Andy Hickling said: "The Navy have taken on board a lot of new ideas in the last year or so.

"They were very well prepared and stopped us playing in the channels we wanted to. They weren't just interested in damage limitation, though, and both sides came to have a go, even though the conditions didn't help.

"It nearly paid off for them but we were superb and that's what earned us our fifth win in a row."

Navy chairman of selectors Mike Connolly said: "The conditions let us down a little bit because we wanted a dry day and to play some expansive football.

"It took us a long time to get going and the penalty count we gave away was high - and if you do that against the Army you're making life difficult for yourselves.

"But what's promising is that we've got a really young bunch of lads who've come a long way this season.

"Next year they'll want to come back and have a win to enjoy!"

As the players returned to their ships and units, all eyes are now looking to the Sevens competition in the Cayman Islands this month and then the Senior Tour to South Africa to the Commonwealth Cup tournament against the navies of New Zealand, Australia and South Africa in the autumn.

Early promise...

THE VETS and the Womens fixtures were on side-by-side pitches at Kneller Hall before lunch, the Combined Services U21s took on the English Universities as the curtain raiser on the hallowed turf, and the main event kicked off at 1500.

In spite of the steadily deteriorating conditions, there were plenty of reasons for optimism going into the game.

Although the women eventually succumbed to Army pressure they scored first, the Vets showed outstanding determination to pip their counterparts to the post, and the CS beat the England Universities.

The expectant crowd felt something in the air - but sadly the promise of the earlier matches was not to be fulfilled...



Youth players grapple with world's best

RN YOUTH footballers came away from the world-class Dallas Cup with reputable results behind them.

The event is regarded as the most prestigious contest for young players, and the 2006 competition saw the largest number of entrants in its 27-year history, including youth sides from Manchester United and Real Madrid, writes Cdr Martin Doolan, RN Youth Football.

The RN Youth team has been taking part in the cup since its inception, and the 2006 squad had prepared well for the competition, particularly since the turn of the year with comfortable victories against London and the AFA in the Home Counties League, and not forgetting the retention of the Inter-Services Youth Cup against the Army at Portsmouth (one of our sides had to beat the old enemy!).

We headed across the Atlantic in buoyant mood, aided by a valuable coaching session with Martin Hunter (England U19), witnessed by none other than Sir Clive Woodward.

After orientation and a light pool-based training session in Dallas, we played our first friendly game against a local side, resulting in a 4-0 victory - things were looking good.

The tour is not all football, and a major part of the experience is the social elements enjoyed by both players and host families alike, with several poolside BBQs to aid relaxation, not to mention the local sights and attractions.

Facilities in Dallas would make most UK clubs envious; there's a purpose-built 20,000-seater stadium for the big matches, plus 16 outside pitches for qualifying group games. On each pitch the grass was like silk carpet, with spray systems, benches, toilets and floodlighting - all built in eight months.

The competition began with a tough tie against a local team and we came off second best, suffering a 2-0 defeat, and went into the opening ceremony slightly disappointed and hugely dehydrated.

Despite the lengthy preparations, the pace of the game and the harsh climate had its effect on the team - imagine playing mid-afternoon in August in this country against players faster and fitter than you are in one of the biggest football occasions of your life and you can probably guess what is going through the mind of a 17-year-old sailor.

The second game against a strong team from Virginia resulted in a 5-0 defeat and effectively the end of our chances in the contest.

It is to the enormous credit of the team that they bounced back in the final game to beat a team from Philadelphia 3-0 (ranked 25th in the US). After the tournament, the team played one more game against a German Pro side TSG Woersdorf and pulled off a resounding 6-1 victory, with a rising star of RN football, Jamie Thirkle, bagging four.

The squad returned to the UK to re-join their respective units after two weeks together, all the better for their experience both as players and as young adults.

It would be difficult to pick out a particular highlight from the tour although the

Continued on page 42

All change, please, all change - how to load a torpedo

Plus Reports from our ships in the Indian Ocean and on the range in the Bahamas and Souvenir Fleet Air Arm supplement

