



NAVY NEWS

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Closing in for the kill... A heavily-camouflaged L/Cpl 'Reg' Melia - a sniper with the Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines - moves stealthily through the undergrowth as the commandos conduct training on the ranges near Kirkcudbright in Scotland. Turn to page 12 for more details.

Picture: PO(Phot) Tam McDonald, FRPU Clyde



TAIL TO TEETH

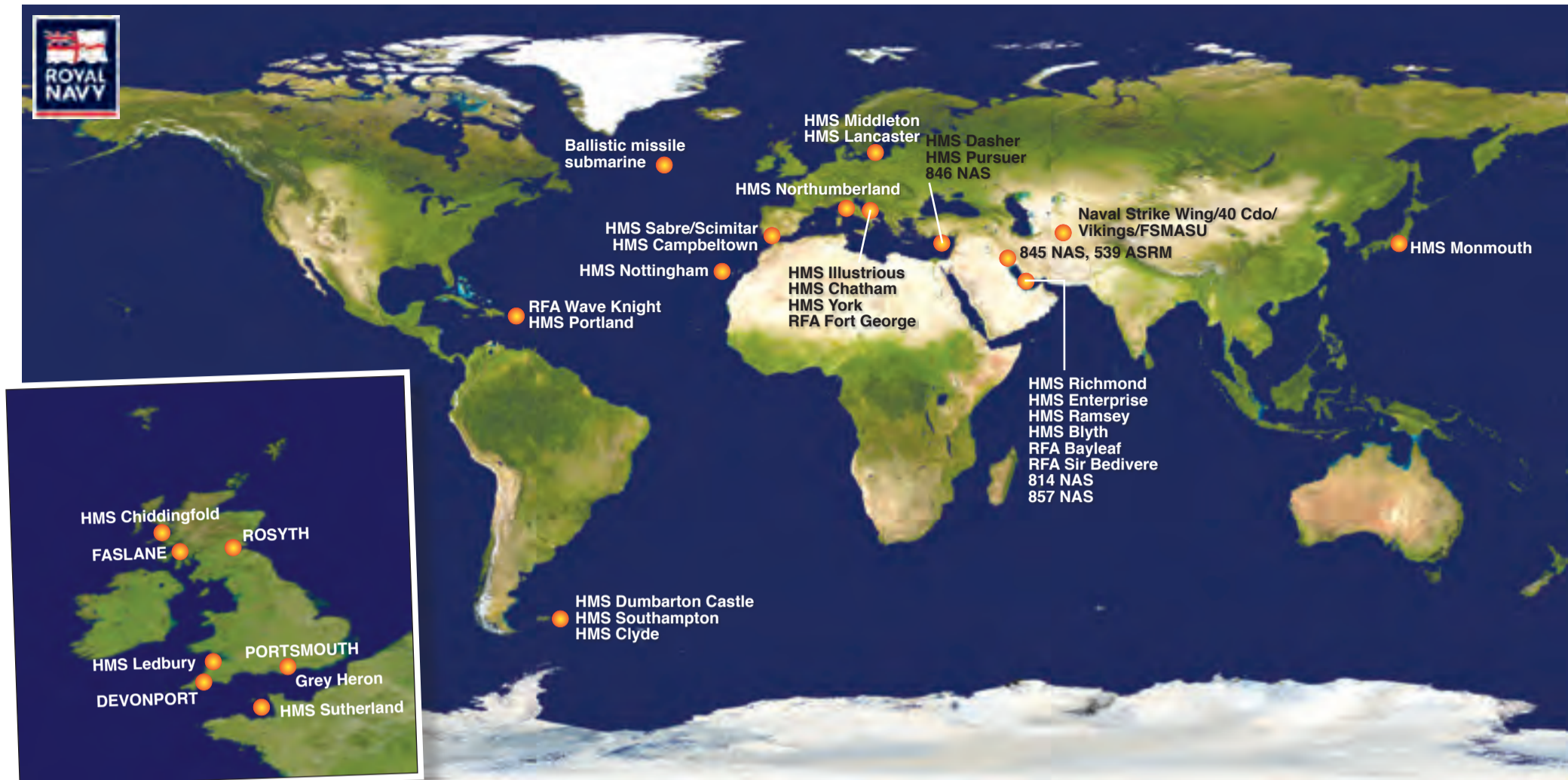
**COMMANDOS PERFECT THE
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THE LAST CASTLE

**FAREWELL FROM THE
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**MONUMENT TO POST-WAR
FORCES DEAD UNVEILED**



Fleet Focus

LET us begin our round-up this month not with the great and mighty, the massed phalanxes, but with a sterling servant who has plied her trade honourably for 25 years.

It's only fair that after a quarter of a century on-and-off safeguarding the Falkland Islands, we trumpet **HMS Dumbarton Castle's** deeds as she left the South Atlantic for good (see the centre pages).

She handed over duties in the South Atlantic to new patrol ship **HMS Clyde**... which bumped into **HMS Southampton** on the way south (see page 4).

Not yet southward bound – but almost – is Antarctic patrol and survey ship **HMS Endurance**. She sails imminently on an 18-month deployment to the Southern Hemisphere – and needed a thorough inspection before she left (see page 9).

Away from cold horizons, the crucible of effort continues to be east of Suez.

Patrols in the northern Gulf have been out of the spotlight in the wake of the Cornwall affair, but **HMS Richmond** has been refocusing efforts around Iraq's oil platforms (see page 15).

The **Naval Strike Wing** and **40 Commando** are settling down to operations in Afghanistan (see page 5); they will soon be joined by the Sea Kings of **846 NAS** which have conducted high-altitude training in Cyprus to prepare them for the dusty, mountainous terrain around Helmand and Kandahar (see page 6).

Talking of things in the air, there's a new airborne warrior aboard **HMS Chatham**... Mighty Mouse. The ship has adopted an 8in (plastic) caped rodent as her mascot (see page 18).

Chatham has been in the Adriatic accompanying **HMS Illustrrious**, **HMS York** and **RFA Fort George** on NATO duties during Exercise Noble Midas, for which Lusty's punch came courtesy of Spanish and Italian jump jets (see page 7).

Just as Johnny Foreigner Harriers can operate from British flat-tops, so British jump jets can fly from Johnny Foreigner carriers. RN fliers have been testing a specially-modified Harrier aboard the **Charles de Gaulle** in the Mediterranean with an eye to the future Joint Strike Fighter (see page 13).

Across the Apennines, **HMS Northumberland** could be found in La Spezia, while her Merlin aviators swapped experiences with their Italian counterparts in their home at Luni air base (see page 4).

In chillier European waters, minehunter **HMS Middleton** has been disposing of the detritus of two world wars in the Baltic off Lithuania (see right), while at the other end of the sea frigate **HMS Lancaster** has been conducting a lightning deployment, spurred on by her very own pint (see page 6).

Across the Atlantic in the Caribbean, tanker **RFA Wave Ruler** and **815 NAS** bagged their fourth combined drug bust in 18 months. It will be their last; Ruler has returned home, but her sister Wave Knight has sailed to the region to support frigate **HMS Portland** (see page 5).

Survey ship **HMS Scott** has completed a year-long deployment charting the sea bed and is about to depart once more any day... on a year-long deployment charting the sea bed (see page 6 and also our Ship of the Month on page 14).

Despite sizeable commitments to NATO and in the Gulf, the RN, RM and RFA managed to muster a substantial force in home waters for **Grey Heron**, an exercise designed to test the art of supporting an invading army once it has been ferried ashore (see pages 16 and 17). Running hand-in-hand with Grey Heron was a test for the RN's medical community, Medical Endeavour, revolving around casualty treatment/aviation training ship **RFA Argus** in the Solent (see page 4).

The Royal Marines are enjoying some very welcome high-profile coverage courtesy of the TV series *Commando*. We have a curtain-raiser to our own series of articles on the **Commando Training Centre** at Lympstone on page 11.

Other commandos have been looking for coverage, preferably green and mucky. Join the **Fleet Protection Group** on sniper training on page 12.

Stimulation and simulation



THE legacy of past wars has dominated recent activities by HMS Middleton.

The Portsmouth-based minehunter is attached to a NATO squadron scouring northern European waters for discarded ordnance from the bloody 20th Century.

The latest series of hunts took the ship to the coast off Klaipeda in Lithuania; as the German fortress of Memel in 1944-45 it was the scene of ferocious fighting.

The Baltic off Memel was heavily mined and Middleton joined 21 ships from 11 nations for Exercise Open Spirit, a concerted month-long search for those decaying explosives.

From the Baltic, the Hunt-class ship made for the North Sea via Rostock (home to "lively

bier kellers" according to the ship's company) and the Kiel Canal, then hugged the coast as far as Zeebrugge, where two weeks of maintenance were planned for Middleton.

While the ship was being worked on, the sailors made the relatively short trip to the battlefields of Ypres.

The pilgrimage reached its climax at the St Julien Dressing Station Cemetery – the final resting place of men of the Royal Naval Division and Royal Marine Light Infantry – where 2nd Mine Counter-measures Squadron chaplain Rev David Roissetter led a short service of remembrance. The commemorations continued in Ypres itself with a pause for reflection at the Menin Gate, which honours

Allied soldiers with no known grave.

Next up for the sailors was a visit to the Belgian Navy's hi-tech mine warfare simulators in Eggermin, Ostend, which, er, simulate mine warfare hunting techniques.

Several nations sat behind the computerised consoles for an exercise intended to hone the skills of NATO mine forces as a group.

From simulated mines, Middleton returned to the real thing as she re-joined the Standing NATO Mine Counter-measures Group 1, this time focusing its efforts in the Channel, again looking for wartime ordnance.

The group will disperse next month when Middleton will sail back to Portsmouth for a Christmas break.

To the Gulf – again

AFTER a lightning visit to the Middle East at the beginning of 2007, HMS Campbelltown ends the year back in the Gulf, this time on a 7½-month deployment.

The Devonport-based Type 22 frigate left home under leaden skies, bound initially for Gibraltar. She will clock up some 12,000 miles before she returns home next May.

There will be a sizeable British presence in the Gulf region over the winter; although HMS Richmond is on the verge of returning home, HMS Argyll takes over from her imminently.

Minehunters Blyth and Ramsey, survey ship HMS Enterprise, Iraqi Navy training ship RFA Sir Bedivere and tanker RFA Bayleaf are already on patrol in theatre.

● A sailor keeps a sharp lookout as HMS Campbelltown leaves Devonport

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU Drake



COLLEGE DAYS



STREAKING vapour trails across the Devonian sky, a Hawk trainer roars towards HMS Westminster during the annual showcase of the RN's panoply of talent.

More than 700 sailors and naval aviators laid on a show of force for the brightest brains in Britain's armed forces to give the Army and RAF an insight into the capability of today's Senior Service.

Staff College Sea Days are the RN's traditional showcase for students at the Royal Military Defence Academy in Shrivenham.

Around 600 personnel left Oxfordshire to spend time aboard flagship HMS Ark Royal, sister frigates Westminster and Sutherland, destroyer HMS Liverpool, and tanker RFA Orangeleaf, as four days of demonstrations were staged in the Plymouth exercise areas.

On the shore, Royal Marines from 42 Commando and 539 and 4 Assault Squadrons and 10 Training Squadron demonstrated amphibious operations, while in the skies Harriers from the Naval Strike Wing, RAF Tornados and RN Hawks roared over the fleet as Lynx and Merlin hunted for submarines.

Besides the academy students, Ark hosted the Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent and Armed Forces Minister Bob Ainsworth. The former knows a thing or 2,000 about what the RN is capable of; the latter is relatively new in post and is rapidly learning.

The 'show' laid on for students and VIPs alike included a sub hunt by a Merlin (which proved unsuccessful, not surprisingly, as there wasn't actually a boat committed to Sea Days), surveillance operations, anti-piracy work, a boarding party searching a blockade runner, and simulated air attacks.

It wasn't all about air power and big ships, however. Some of the Shrivenham students were given a taste of what the smaller vessels in the Fleet can do, courtesy of minehunting operations by HMS Pembroke and HMS Hurworth.

Ark arrived in Plymouth hot on the heels of her participation in Exercise Grey Heron, a key test of logistic support for the Royal Marines and their aerial/afloat 'delivery system' (see pages 16 and 17).

Picture: PO Bob Sharples, HMS Westminster



● (l-r) Smoke belches as HMS Liverpool's 4.5in main gun unleashes a shell; HMS Westminster's Merlin prepares to attack a (dummy) submarine with a (dummy) torpedo; Royal Marines prepare to offload one of the Army's Challenger II tanks on the beach in Plymouth

Pictures: PO Bob Sharples and PO(Phot) Sean Clew, RN Photographer of the Year



The ultimate fighting machine

WOE to the foe who has to face the men and women of HMS Kent because there's probably no more battle-hardened unit in the Fleet.

The Portsmouth-based frigate collected a bevy of trophies for her fighting efficiency during last year's tour of duty in the Gulf.

Kent should be able to defend herself admirably against fast-attack craft, earning the HMS Hibernia Gunnery Award for her aptitude in close-range gunnery.

The ship's team also picked up the Sopwith Pup Trophy (not for shooting down biplanes but for the outstanding contribution made by her ship's flight from 815 NAS last year), the Fleet Anti-Submarine Warfare Trophy and last, but not least, the VT Communications Trophy.

Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks, Chief-of-Staff Capabilities to the Commander-in-Chief Fleet, told Kent's ship's company he could not remember one of HM warships collecting such a haul of trophies in a single year.

Sabre rattling by Bulwark

WHILE her sister was at the hub of an invasion of Hampshire (see pages 16-17), HMS Bulwark practised for war in the waters of Dorset, Devon and Cornwall.

South West Sabre was the climax of training for the assault ship as a team from the Flag Officer Sea Training ticked all the relevant boxes to ensure Bulwark would be fit for operational duties.

Given the size, capability and potential of Bulwark, she receives bespoke training from the FOST team alongside traditional tests of firefighting, damage control and engineering prowess.

Two weeks of amphibious operations, supported by 42 Commando, 59 Independent Commando Squadron RE, the Commando Logistics Regiment and 29 Commando Regiment RA, were arranged for Bulwark, in company with the German frigate FGS Rheinland Pfalz.

Various raids and landings were staged in Plymouth Sound, Mevagissey Bay, Predannack and Lulworth.



Fox goes a huntin'

FORGIVE the rather grainy nature of the image – this is, after all, a mine on the seabed as seen through the eyes of the newest piece of minehunting kit.

HMS Chiddingfold successfully tested SeaFox – the successor to the 'yellow submarines' used by Hunt and Sandown-class warships – for the first time on a major exercise, Neptune Warrior.

SeaFox was dispatched every time the command team picked up a suspicious contact on the ship's sonar.

It beamed live images back to the mother ship. Some 'contacts' turned out to be rocks; others, like this one, proved to be practice mines laid by the war game's organisers... requiring the ship's divers to enter the water and recover them.



● Argus' flight deck crew carry out fire-fighting training ahead of helicopters ferrying the first 'casualties' aboard

Picture: Jannine Hartmann, FRPU Whale Island

MORE than 180 surgeons, dentists and medical experts spent two weeks at sea to ensure the Navy could cope with casualties on a large scale in time of war.

Medical Endeavour sucked in medics from Hampshire, Devon, North Yorkshire and the West Midlands, all of whom converged on RFA Argus to work alongside musicians from the RM Band Service acting as stretcher bearers.

Although she possesses a 100-bed hospital with three state-of-the-art operating theatres and intensive care facilities, Argus is not a hospital ship.

Instead, the aviation training vessel doubles as a 'primary casualty receiving

ship' – effectively a floating accident and emergency department which allows battlefield casualties to receive vital treatment in theatre before being flown to a hospital ashore to recover.

It's a role Argus last performed during the 2003 Iraq campaign when her hospital staff cared not merely for wounded Allied troops, but also injured Iraqis.

"It offers a level of care to deployed personnel on a par with that of the NHS," said Surg Cdr Tom McAuslin, in charge of the facility.

The 'primary casualty receiving facility' draws its staff from the MOD Hospital Units within NHS hospitals at Derriford in

Plymouth, Queen Alexandra in Portsmouth and, on a smaller scale, Friarage Hospital in Northallerton, and the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine in Birmingham.

After a week bonding to ensure the diverse team of medics could work together, the second stage of Medical Endeavour merged with the much larger Grey Heron war games (see pages 16 and 17) in the Solent, for key to any amphibious operation is the ability to treat casualties as quickly as possible.

'Casualties' from the 'invasion' of Brown-down beach in Gosport were rapidly transferred to Argus to see whether the medical team could cope with numerous serious injuries in quick succession.

Something old, something new...

... IN FACT, something borrowed too, as HMS Clyde is on lease to the Senior Service.

Anyway, one of the older warships in Britain's inventory bumped into the new kid on the block when HM Ships Southampton and Clyde (nearest the camera here) met in the middle of the South Atlantic.

The Saint was bound for Uruguay having come from the Falklands; brand-new Clyde was bound for the Falklands having partied in Rio after a Brazilian naval review.

Southampton spent five days alongside in Montevideo, home to the remnants of the Graf Spee, very impressive steaks (according to our assistant editor), and an Anglo-friendly populace.

Uruguay was country number nine on Southampton's deployment (the destroyer has added 17,000 miles to her odometer so far on this deployment) and coincided with a celebration of Anglo-Uruguayan friendship.

Two hundred years ago, the British sent troops to occupy Montevideo, a move which lit the powder keg on two decades of fighting and revolution, ending with Uruguay's independence in 1830.

To mark the bicentennial of that British expedition, sailors from Southampton joined the Ambassador to Uruguay, Hugh Salvesen, and Montevideo's city leader as a memorial was unveiled.

Southampton's sailors also paid their respects in Bucoo British Cemetery, helping the Commonwealth War Graves Commission caretaker to tend



to the graves of our dead from two centuries of conflict in the approaches to Montevideo, especially the victims of the 1939 Battle of the River Plate.

The destroyer then headed for South Georgia with a company from the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment and tanker RFA Gold Rover to test the response of forces based in the Falklands (750 miles away) in the event of a cruise ship running aground in the isolated island.

In this case, a fictitious liner had not merely grounded, but spilled oil into South Georgian waters.

Just to add to the 'fun' a number of tourists managed to get lost in the rugged island wilderness.

On the plus side, the exercise allowed most of Southampton's sailors to get ashore, watch the antics of elephant seals, have passports stamped in the post office, and pause for reflection at Shackleton's grave.

A few hardy souls attempted the RN Fitness Test in the snow and even harder souls lowered kayaks into the water for a paddle around Grytviken.

And there could be no more fitting a location for Southampton's

gunnery officer to collect the Grytviken Trophy for proficiency in naval gunfire support.

Southampton's duties 'down south' are ending.

After being away from Portsmouth since April, she returns to the UK next month, while sister HMS Nottingham heads in the opposite direction to replace her after a final spell of training and maintenance.

Clyde's duties in the South Atlantic are just beginning as she has just taken over from venerable Dumbarton Castle (see centre pages).

Luni welcome for Merlin

THE Merlin fliers of HMS Northumberland were given a possible glimpse of the future when they dropped in on their Italian counterparts.

The helicopter, which is increasingly becoming the backbone of Type 23 operations, is an Anglo-Italian collaboration.

Luni, near to the major naval base of La Spezia, is the spiritual home of the Italian Merlin.

And it would be rude not to call in on Luni while Northumberland prowled the Mediterranean on NATO duties.

1 Gruppo Elicotteri (1st Helicopter Group) operates four different variants of Merlin at Luni, from a rather ugly general purpose model with a radar on its nose, to an eye-in-the-sky variant with a large circular airborne radar mounted under its hull – a possible solution to the Fleet Air Arm's requirements when the 'Bagger' Sea Kings are eventually retired.

After an obligatory espresso, Flight Commander Lt Andy Naylor and observer Lt Jim Lock exchanged pictures with the squadron commander and thanked the Italian naval aviators for their hospitality, "sowing the seeds for a future formal visit by the Merlin force headquarters later in the year".

After the work came the fun. Luni is relatively close to Lake Garda (well, considerably closer than either Culdrose or Devonport at any rate).

The two fliers hit the road for a 3½-hour drive to Italy's largest lake, famed for its beauty... and windsurfing... and pizza (apparently, "the biggest pizza ever encountered").

The duo arrived at the picturesque lakeside village of Torbole to find the wind calmed, so they ordered pizza.

They were about to tuck in when the wind picked up... so it was down with the pizza and up with the boards and wetsuits for an afternoon on the water.

The rest of the day was spent riding the choppy waves... and (narrowly) avoiding the Lady of the Lake ferry.

Thoroughly exhausted by their exertions, Andy and Jim returned their boards and suits and presented a Fly Navy frisbee to the activity centre staff. "To our dismay," says Jim, "we noticed we had been outdone by the signed Apache crew print on the wall."

Back to Wales for Pembroke

A YEAR after being granted the freedom of not one but two towns, HMS Pembroke returned to Pembroke and Pembroke Dock.

In the autumn of 2006, the minehunter's ship's company paraded through the Welsh towns with flags flying, bayonets fixed and drums beating.

All banners, weapons and musical instruments, were left firmly on the Sandown-class warship.

On this occasion Pembroke hosted her affiliates, notably a trio of Sea Cadet units – TS Warrior (Pembroke Dock), TS Skirmisher (Fishguard) and TS Harrier (Milford Haven) – her affiliated Army formation, Welsh Transport Regiment, as well as RNA veterans, local dignitaries and the ship's sponsor Stephanie Gretton.

Tour de Lynx

TWO Lynx from 815 NAS act as 'sentries' for the start of the second stage of the Tour of Britain cycle race.

That wasn't extremely surprising as the 105-mile leg kicked off in Yeovilton, home of the Lynx force.

The 815 aircraft conducted displays in the sky while on the ground their crews explained the role of the helicopter and the FAA to racers, race officials and cycling buffs.



● Oil be back... Wave Ruler tops Portland up for the last time before returning to Devonport after an eventful 18-month spell in the Caribbean

Picture: LA(Phot) Owen King, FRPU Whale Island

Wave Ruler bows out on a high

FLEET Air Arm aircrew bagged 200kg of cocaine in the Caribbean as the Lynx/Wave Ruler sucker punch struck for the final time.

Much of the summer and early autumn for the fleet tanker and her Lynx – 218 Flight from 815 Naval Air Squadron – has been spent chasing hurricanes.

That ended in the darkness off the Dominican Republic in late September.

Intelligence reports suggested a light aircraft carrying narcotics would be in the area, dropping bales into the sea for a speedboat to pick up.

And so it proved. Except that waiting for the small plane was not

a go-fast but a Lynx.

The plane ditched bales of cocaine into the sea and fled the scene.

Teams of US Coast Guard officers were launched in two of Wave Ruler's sea boats.

They hauled eight bales of contraband out of the ocean; subsequent tests revealed it to be cocaine.

Around 200kg (440lb) of the drug, with an estimated street value of £13m, were seized.

This was the fourth – and final – bust by the tanker/815 NAS combination in the past 18 months as she returned home to Devonport in late October.

Of those 18 months away, Wave Ruler spent 407 days at sea and steamed the equivalent of

nearly five times around the globe, visiting 21 ports

“During our travels we have always received a warm, friendly welcome and we've been shown respect throughout the Caribbean for our professionalism and our pride in the RFA,” said Capt George Jarvis, Wave Ruler's Commanding Officer who retired upon his ship's return.

“Work that offers so great a challenge and adventure is rare.”

Ruler's partner in crime-fighting latterly was frigate HMS Portland.

After the drama of hurricane relief, life resumed some form of normality as the Type 23 island-hopped her way around the Caribbean.

And each island visit, aside

from typical Caribbean hospitality, has seen the Portland sailors offer vital front-line training to local law enforcement from fire-fighting techniques to the art of navigation.

In Anguilla – a tiny British Overseas Territory, home to fewer than 15,000 people – Portland's navigator provided help on plotting intercept courses for the Police Marine Unit.

At the island's chief airport, the ship's comms team demonstrated the correct use of mobile and static kit, while the medical team briefed the island's police force on basic first aid.

And on a more personal level, the ship hosted scores of primary school children, while island dignitaries were treated to a cocktail party.

The visit, said PO Tony Morgan, was important “to show the Overseas Territories that we have not forgotten them”. As for the Anguillians, “they are a friendly bunch – and the scenery is fantastic.”

From Anguilla, Portland moved on to Barbados for a belated mid-deployment overhaul (mopping up in Belize after Hurricane Dean slightly upset the carefully-planned ship's programme).

Once again there was some key training on offer, this time aboard the frigate.

Eighteen Bajan fire-fighters joined Portland for a series of exercises to enhance their ability to tackle a blaze or other emergency involving any ship visiting Bridgetown.

Portland returns home to Devonport in time for Christmas; drug-busting duties over the festive season will be conducted by RFA Wave Knight which has taken over from her sister in the Caribbean.

Additional reporting in Anguilla by Penny Legg.

‘A vital mission’

COMMAND of the skies in Kandahar belongs to the Naval Strike Wing whose Harriers are back on patrol over Afghanistan.

Nine months after leaving the country the Rutland-based naval aviators returned to provide crucial aerial support for Allied ground troops.

Barely had the RAF's IV Squadron handed over to Cdr Kev Seymour and his team than the Harriers were airborne and in action.

British troops sent a signal for air support to the strike wing on its very first sortie; the jump jets' intervention was sufficient to cause Taliban forces to withdraw.

The force provides a mix of daily sorties, plus two GR7/GR9 bomber variants of the Harrier on the Kandahar tarmac ready to move by day or night to counter any emergency, supporting British, American, French and Dutch forces who are grappling with insurgents in the region.

Domestic arrangements for the aviators and ground crew are much improved on 12 months ago: the smattering of fast food joints, donut stalls, and coffee shops at Kandahar almost creates a café culture atmosphere.

Almost. For around the air base are concrete blast walls protecting the buildings – serving as a reminder of the ever-present threat posed by rockets and terrorist attacks.

When not engaged in battle, there is much for the pilots to admire in this land.

“From the air, Afghanistan consists of a diverse range of landscapes – lush green river valleys dotted with small towns and settlements to vast mountain ranges such as the Hindu Kush,” explained staff officer Lt Mike Gray.

“When operating in the east of the country, it's not unusual to look out of the cockpit and see mountains towering above the aircraft – fairly impressive when you're cruising at 18,000ft.”

Kandahar itself is “rugged and dusty” and the long watches in stifling conditions demand the utmost from the engineers and technicians – who must ensure three out of every four Harriers are ready for action every day.

There's another RN unit to be found at Kandahar, although as Senior Service formations go, it's probably the smallest.

But as the saying goes, size doesn't matter... it's how you use it that counts.

And the three sailors of the Forward Support (Air) Mobile Aircraft Support Unit – known to all who require their services as MASU – are in constant demand in battlefield Afghanistan.

The team (there's actually five of them, but two are non-matelots...) are responsible for repairing the in-demand helicopter force supporting British operations in Helmand.

With Harriers increasingly being deployed to Kandahar the team have added fixed-wing repairs to their portfolio, following a successful series of small-scale repairs on Hercules.

Most of the work carried out by MASU – Lt Andy Stancliffe, CPOs Al Griffiths and Neil Crocker, plus Sgt Andy Glitheroe from REME and the RAF's Sgt Andy Roberts – takes place at Kandahar air base, but the team does move to Camp Bastion in Helmand when needs demand.

Those needs range from fixing fatigue cracks to patching up damage caused by small arms fire to Chinook, Apache, and Lynx helicopters currently operating in theatre.

“Conditions for carrying out repair work are hardly ideal,” said Lt Stancliffe, the in-theatre repair officer.

“The team has recorded temperatures of up to 54°C (that's 130F – Ed) and the all-pervasive fine dust of Kandahar gets into everything.

“Occasional enemy action has also interrupted progress.”

With the arrival of Sgt Roberts, that single extra body means the team can conduct repairs on two aircraft simultaneously or, if there's a push on, work around the clock for short stretches.

“Needless to say the Joint Helicopter Force and the fixed-wing units in Kandahar are hugely appreciative of the immediate on-site support that the team gives them,” Lt Stancliffe adds.

Also on the ground, 40 Commando have taken over duties in northern Helmand, replacing the 1st Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment.

The green berets are the cutting edge of ‘Battle Group North’, under the command of Britain's 52 Infantry Brigade.

“We've undergone comprehensive training to get to this part,” said Commanding Officer Lt Col Stuart Birrell. “The mission in Helmand is vital to ensuring that Afghan authorities can improve security in the province, allowing more reconstruction and development to take place.”

846 prepare for Afghan role, overleaf



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Plus 4s ready for action

AFTER four years on-and-off in Iraq, the Jungle Sea Kings of 846 Naval Air Squadron have swapped one theatre of war for another.

The Yeovilton-based green giants head for Afghanistan with the Joint Helicopter Force as the number of RN personnel in the country mushrooms over the winter (see page 5).

The Junglies were told back in January, as they conducted Arctic training in northern Norway, that they should prepare for a deployment to Afghanistan.

That meant bespoke training – and bespoke equipment.

For a start, all the Sea Kings needed new rotor blades – including specially-designed tail rotors courtesy of Westlands.

Add defensive aid suites and Display Night Vision Goggles and, hey presto, you have the Sea King Mk 4 Plus.

Operations in a combat environment demanded the defensive improvements.

The replacement rotors permit the Sea King to operate in the challenging Afghan environment at altitudes ordinarily beyond its ability.

While their helicopters were being revamped ahead of the mission to come, the men and women of 846 – motto *Semper Instans*, always threatening – conducted training more typically performed by the commandos they carry into battle.

There was a week of infantry training at the Stanford exercise grounds in Norfolk with the emphasis on weapons usage on a level well above the annual weapons test.

That meant live field firing, close-quarters battle and actions to take should an aircraft make an emergency landing in hostile territory.

To add to the ‘fun’, there was

● A Sea King Mk 4 Plus with newly-fitted special rotor blades kicks up the Cypriot sand

Picture: Patrick Allen, Jane's Information Group



a fighting withdrawal to perform in full kit over several kilometres. That allowed the crews to assess how well their kit was fitting and how much most of their personal fitness levels needed improving.

“The package proved highly enjoyable and extremely valuable, but for a team of matelots, the week of aggressive soldiering was a completely new experience,” said Lt Tom Evans.

“By the end there were a few sore bodies.”

More conventional pre-

deployment work came at RAF Benson, where the 846 fliers chatted with their RAF Chinook counterparts who had recently returned from Afghanistan.

Then it was into the simulator, first at Benson where the desert has been recreated and next at Middle Wallop where the Fleet Air Arm team practised gunnery support with the Royal Artillery.

By mid-summer most of the squadron’s traditional training was complete.

To gear up for Afghanistan,

there was a ‘battle camp’ exercise at RAF Valley in Anglesey with missions amid the North Wales mountains by day and night

The second outing was Exercise Kush Dragon on Salisbury Plain, where the Sea Kings flew alongside Chinooks, Apaches and Lynx in support of ground troops – who have subsequently deployed to Afghanistan.

The last significant act before heading to the Middle East was a fortnight in Cyprus.

Exercise HIDA (High Density

Altitude) was designed to prepare the squadron for hot weather operations in mountainous, dusty terrain, whilst also converting crews to operate the Sea King Mk 4 Plus.

“The detachment was a real eye-opener for all on 846,” said Lt Evans.

“It was the first time that the modified aircraft had been flown in an area with a similar climate and topography to the theatre of operations. The results were hugely encouraging.”

All hail the ale on Lancaster

BEER is going down particularly well aboard the good ship Lancaster... not least because a new brew bears the ship’s name.

Lancaster Best, fittingly produced by Lancaster Brewery, is sold in honour of the Red Rose warship (each bottle features the ship’s crest emblazoned on a battleship grey label).

The brewery had hoped to unveil the tippie when the warship visited Liverpool earlier this year... except a change in the operational programme meant Lancaster didn’t sail up the Mersey after all.

Instead, Lancaster’s mayor Helen Helme launched the beer in the presence of sailors who completed a charity cycle ride from the Solent to her city.

Several (now empty) crates were loaded aboard the Portsmouth-based Type 23 frigate before a whistle-stop autumn tour of Scandinavia and the Baltic.

It was proudly poured by the ship’s company at official receptions during visits to Oslo, Kiel and Gdynia.

Sutherland’s Channel dash

FRIGATE HMS Sutherland took herself to the tricky waters of the Channel Islands to test future navigators.

The Type 23 warship spent several days negotiating the rugged coastline with its challenging tidal conditions as potential navigation officers received instruction.

The ship spent the first part of 2007 in the Gulf. Her autumn programme began with a brief stay on the Dart, where trainee officers from Britannia Royal Naval College joined her to receive a taste of life aboard an operational warship.

Sutherland will spend the rest of the year on training exercises before she enters refit for upgrades to her weaponry.

River deep, mountain high

BY THE time you read these words, the good ship HMS Scott will be ready for another marathon stint at sea... after just returning from a 308-day tour of duty.

The hi-tech survey vessel had five weeks of intensive work... while her sailors had five weeks of intensive training, days after bringing Scott back into Devonport.

The ship clocked up 59,000 miles during her 2006-07 deployment, taking her odometer over the half-million mark – a record for a ship with ten years of service under the White Ensign (that’s almost 4,000 miles every month).

The net was cast particularly wide on this deployment: South Africa, the Seychelles, Jordan, Gibraltar, Bermuda, Halifax, St Johns, and finally Reykjavik.

And in between the port visits, there was the small matter of charting the ocean bed to widen our understanding of what lies beneath.

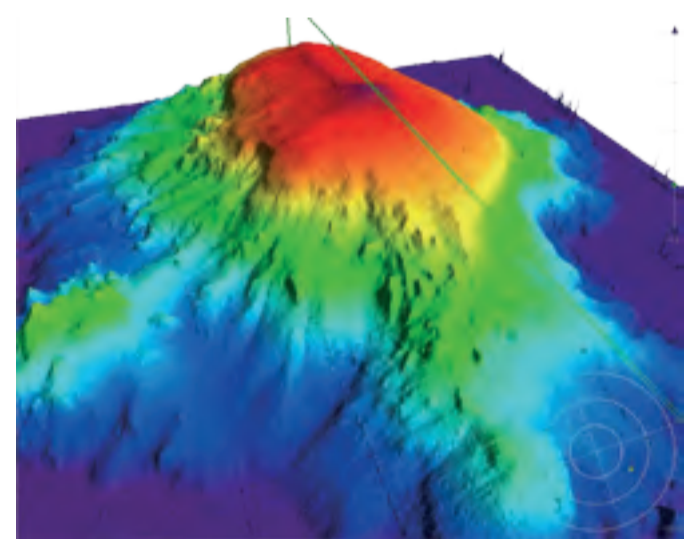
Charts covering some 236,000 square miles of ocean (that’s roughly the size of Texas) have been updated thanks to the multi-beam echo sounder fitted to Scott, shedding light on a world unseen by mankind.

“Returning to Devonport brought with it no rest for a hard-working ship’s company,” said XO Lt Cdr Jim Buck.

“The ship underwent a very focused maintenance period and that, combined with an intensive training package, will see Scott emerge after just five weeks well-prepared for a further 300-day exploration of the deep-ocean seabed.”

Ship of the month, page 12

● Lines to take... One of Scott’s sailors casts a line silhouetted against a fiery sky

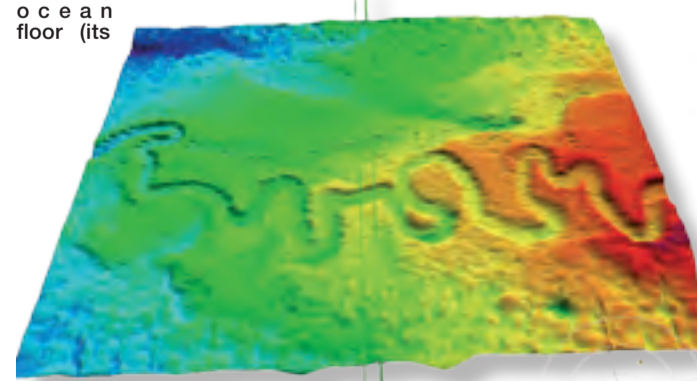


THIS underwater mountain (above) and submarine river (below) are just two of the stunning seabed features captured by Scott and her crew during this deployment.

To give you an idea of scale, the ‘sea mountain’ or ‘submarine island’ rises 6,500ft above the ocean floor (its

summit is still 9,000ft short of the surface) and is about the size of the Isle of Wight.

The ‘river’ meandering through the sea bed is deceptively small; it’s actually a canyon four miles wide and 500ft deeper than the surrounding sea bed – and is three miles below the surface.



● Spanish flew... An AV8 of 9 Escuadrilla prepares to roar down Lusty's flight deck
Pictures: LA(Phot) Darby Allen, HMS Illustrious



THERE'S been a Latin revival aboard Britain's strike flagship.

No, not *-bam, -bas, -bat*. More bang, bang, bang.
Hot on the heels of American AV8 Harriers joining the strike carrier off the Eastern Seaboard of the USA, Spanish and Italian jump jets flew aboard in the Adriatic for a huge NATO exercise.

AV8s from 9 *Escuadrilla Armada Española Arma Aérea*, 9th Squadron Spanish Fleet Air Arm, and 'The Wolves' – *Gruppo Aerei Imbarcati of the Marina Militare Forze Aeree*, Embarked Air Group of the Italian Fleet Air Arm – set down on Lusty's flight deck for Noble Midas, NATO war games off Croatia involving more than 30 vessels.

"Being part of such a large exercise brings out the best in our ships and our people. This is what we do," explained Illustrious' CO Capt Tim Fraser.

"Bringing together Spanish and Italian Harriers, flying from a British carrier, is the perfect example of what NATO can achieve.

"It's all about blending different national capabilities to make the whole more than the sum of the parts."

Like their American predecessors who raved about Illustrious, the Spaniards were impressed by the British carrier – and by the cosmopolitan flavour of the entire exercise.

"It's a great experience," said Spanish pilot Lt Eduardo Lopez.

"Right now, all these countries are working together. You realise you can operate as a joint force."

And it's fair to say that the Brits too quite liked the cosmopolitan flavour of Noble Midas.

"You don't have to look any further than the fact that we had a French fighter controller directing a US Marine Corps pilot in a Spanish Harrier on to a Royal Navy flight deck to see what we can do," said Lt Nick Geneux, Lusty's Education and Development Officer.

For NATO Noble Midas was a chance to test its ability to forge an international strike force at sea and then deploy it on a complex mission. The exercise has been the largest staged in Croatia.

For Illustrious' team Noble Midas was another small stepping stone on the long road to Britain's next-generation carriers.

(Relatively) normal service is resumed this month as British Harriers re-join the carrier in home waters. Not Fleet Air Arm jets (they're in Afghanistan) but the RAF's 1(F) Squadron, before Illustrious returns to the Med for more work with the Spanish.

Of course, there is more to Noble Midas than Lusty and her visiting Harriers.

For a start, there were three other British vessels attached to the exercise: frigate HMS Chatham, destroyer York and floating warehouse RFA Fort George.

After a brief stop in Gib, Chatham's deployment began in earnest in Split where planning for Noble Midas was conducted ashore.

Afloat, around half the crew stayed aboard Chatham at any one time to safeguard the frigate and keep her systems ticking over.

They found time, however, during the four-day stay to stage a fishing contest. A not very

successful one, we might add, as AB 'Seb' Coe claimed the title by hooking in a plastic bottle (the sole 'bite' of the contest). Insult was added to injury when Chatham returned to Split later in the exercise and fish could be seen dancing on the surface next to the frigate... with her crew closed up at action stations and unable to get their rods out.

Other sporting activities proved no more successful.

Chatham's cricketers visited the island of Vis, where locals dismissed the sailors for 102 all out, before clocking up 105 runs in return for the loss of just two wickets.

Perhaps the defeat isn't too galling, however, as the sailors were beaten by a team with a fine English and RN pedigree, the Sir William Hoste Cricket Club.

The eponymous naval captain defeated a superior Franco-Venetian force off the island in 1811, famously hoisting the signal: *Remember Nelson*.

On a more sombre note, the cricketers then gathered outside a cemetery in Vis where men who fell in the liberation of Crete are

buried. New gates were dedicated during a 40-minute ceremony, led by a padre from HMS Illustrious and a bugler.

As for Noble Midas, it began with Chatham in charge of all anti-submarine forces – something she was designed and built to do.

Of course, coping with submarines wasn't the only threat thrown at Chatham as she also had to fend off enemy air raids.

After two weeks at a constant state of readiness, the frigate finally bade farewell to the Adriatic, heading first for Cyprus, then on to Egyptian waters for another exercise, Bright Star. The ship returns to Devonport this month.

Also in Split was destroyer HMS York, whose sailors fancied something rather more rigorous than a spot of leather upon willow.

Two coaches crammed with sailors wound through the Croatian mountains then disgorged the matelots by the side of a river, where eight rafts were waiting for them.

After a relatively easy first stretch of water, the Yorkies climbed out of the rafts and let

their guides navigate a treacherous series of rapids alone (nine people had apparently lost their lives on that stretch).

Then it was back in the boats for more exertions; two crew who opted to paddle down the river in kayaks suffered regular dunkings as their craft capsized regularly.

The waters of the Adriatic proved rather calmer for York; the skies, however, were threatening.

The Type 42 was charged with not merely protecting HMS Illustrious from air attack... but the entire friendly task force of 30 vessels.

This placed especial demands on the destroyer's two fighter controllers, who had to identify every aircraft and helicopter entering the task force's air space, separate friend from foe, and inform the remaining ships.

Of course, York and her Sea Dart missiles alone could not defend such a large group of warships scattered across the Adriatic.

Instead, it was her task to pass on the information – and orders to shoot down foe – to other air defence vessels such as the USS Laboon.



● Golden age... A Sea King is silhouetted against the Adriatic sun at dusk and (left) Spanish ground crew work on their AV8s on Illustrious' flight deck



Farewell to the Far East

THE BLACK Duke has bidden farewell to the Far East and is making her way home – though there is still plenty of work to be done.

The latest stage of her Volans 07 global deployment saw her slip into Hong Kong under a thick blanket of fog.

So it was not until the cloud lifted the following morning that the ship's company got their first glimpse of the spectacular skyline.

The frigate remained at a buoy in Victoria Harbour, one of the busiest stretches of water in the world, but her sailors still got to explore the city and territory which was handed back to China ten years ago.

And despite plenty of building work, old hands who were returning felt that the vibrant spirit of the place was still intact.

The ship welcomed hundreds of visitors, ranging from scouts and naval cadets to members of the Hydrographic Society and ex-Servicemen's associations.

In addition, trainee chefs from the Stanley Sailing School went on board and cooked a Chinese meal for the ship's company – in return they were shown how to cook a traditional roast dinner.

The frigate's CO, Cdr Tim Peacock, laid a wreath at a British war grave, and later presented a medal to Chiu Yiu Nam GC for his conduct in the Falklands War.

Monmouth slipped her buoy in



torrential rain and set course for the South Korean naval base at Pyongtaek.

An advanced party of Korean VIPs was flown out to meet the frigate in Monmouth's Merlin, and toured the ship before she arrived.

British sailors travelled to see the demilitarised zone between the two Koreas, while the ship's football team took on the Korean forces (see page 47).

Following exercises with the South Korean navy the Black Duke headed south and took a short-cut across the Inland Sea of Japan to the Pacific coast.

The bridge team said the 15 miles of constrained pilotage between the main Japanese island of Honshu and the smaller Kyushu was "like driving the frigate through the centre of a city."

The next port of call was the American base at Yokosuka.

The more adventurous made the hour-long train journey to Tokyo, but it was soon time to concentrate on Pacific Shield 07.

Monmouth was the UK's contribution in the annual multinational Proliferation Security Initiative, hosted by the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force – one of the key elements of the frigate's deployment.

Seven countries took part in the sea phase, the other five being the US, France, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, while 20 countries sent observers.

Monmouth took centre stage in the boarding demonstration at sea – as the only country to insert boarding teams by helicopter rapid roping there was a great deal of interest from the national press as well as the other navies.

Monmouth's boarding team did a sterling job, deploying two teams simultaneously by helicopter and sea boat on to a 50,000-ton US transport ship, then disembarking both teams by boat, all in just 20 minutes.

On the final afternoon the ships were open to the public, and the Black Duke welcomed more than 2,000 eager visitors.

The final task was to top up with fuel and stores in preparation for one of the longest open ocean passages of the deployment – destination Hawaii.

See next month for a report on the Black Duke in Honolulu



● Hong Kong by day (above), with the ship at buoy in Victoria Harbour, and by night (top right) looking astern from the main mast of the frigate

Picture: LA(Phot) Brian Douglas (FRPU(N))

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Your heart sinks...

Now let's try that again.

You are about to start a Weapon Engineering course at HMS Collingwood, and you are invited to come and pick up a fully-working Sony PlayStation Portable (PSP) – your pre-course preparation.

Sound better?

Well, thanks to Lts Ian Stubbs and Alex Smith, that is the way pre-course preparation is going – and they expect good results.

The secret is that these PSPs are loaded with bespoke software which contains all the elements that the sailors will need to learn and brush up on before they head to Fareham.

By putting it on to a familiar and fun medium, they hope that the tasks will be attempted and completed with relish rather than reluctance.

"At the moment they get a thick document to read through, and it is sometimes a bit intimidating," said Lt Stubbs, of the WE Principles

Group at Collingwood.

"We thought about looking at how we can remedy this and make them more excited about coming on course rather than intimidated.

"If they can learn before they get there, there will be more interaction on course.

"It is beneficial to both the lecturer and to the class."

In the middle of last month the first 16 of 30 or so PSPs were handed out – on a strict loan basis for a month – to each killick who was a member of a PO(ET) course.

"The idea is to trial the technology to see if it improves their pre-course learning," said Lt Stubbs.

"It is a Gucci piece of kit, and for this generation of sailors, who are used to games consoles, it will encourage them to learn and to enjoy the process."

Lt Smith added: "We found when we put it down in front of people they would look at it, pick it up and want to play with it.

"They would not do that with a bundle of papers."

Lt Stubbs said: "We have

created a maths course on there, using a piece of software.

"But it is a full PSP – if they want to use it to play with for fun, that is fine.

"It means they will be using it – so long as they do the maths. It means they can sit in a corner, or on their bunk, and do the work."

The initiative comes as a result of feedback from trainees at Collingwood.

"We chatted to previous courses that have come through and asked why the existing system doesn't work," said Lt Stubbs.

"We hadn't considered that they were overwhelmed by this great wadge of paper."

If the maths course proves a success, other subjects may follow – the software is easily tailored to what they want to deliver.

"It is possible to use it as a revision aid for other things on board, from changing a fuse to changing a bit of a black box," said Lt Stubbs.

"We hope to provide a whole database of these resources."

The idea has been tried in schools already, and the results there were such that the two officers are confident it will have a beneficial effect on RN trainees.

Words and deeds

IN Britain's colleges and schools, 'English as a second language' courses are ballooning.

Tokyo. Warsaw. Barcelona. Kuala Lumpur. Hong Kong. Beijing. Moscow. All are high on the lists of 'in places' to teach the tongue of Shakespeare and Wordsworth to eager foreigners.

Probably not on that list is Umm Qasr, Iraq's principal deep-water port whose nightlife and sights struggle to compete with the great cities of the world.

But here, in a classroom, you will find Lt Athos Ritsperis. Sometimes.

After 18 months studying Arabic at the Defence School of Languages in Beaconsfield, the junior naval officer is now an official interpreter for the Naval Transition Team, the educators and mentors of Iraq's Navy and Marines.

"Although they were very keen, the English language ability of the marines was very basic," said Lt Ritsperis.

Not merely did the officer help to

bridge the language gap, he devised the course to teach the Iraqi naval infantry a set of standard English phrases to use while conducting board and search operations. And having devised the course, he promptly delivered it.

Most of Lt Ritsperis' time is spent not in the classroom, however, but on the water, either with Iraqi patrol boats or the patrolling Allied warships.

Not all the interpretation and translation is focused on the front line. 'Hearts and minds' work is vital too.

The officer spent a fortnight with an Australian battle group based at Tallil, between Basra and Karbala, close to the ancient city of Ur – reputedly the birthplace of Abraham, and toured surrounding villages with his Antipodean comrades-in-arms.

"Part of the military interpreter's role is to act as a cultural adviser to ensure that no offence is caused to the Iraqi hosts during official receptions."

Medals replaced

FIVE medals stolen from a World War 2 hero have been replaced by Veterans Minister Derek Twigg.

Mr Twigg presented Harry Francis (82), county chairman of the Gloucester Royal British Legion, with replacements for his missing 1939-45 War medal, 1939-45 Defence Medal, 1939-45 Star, Burma Star and Italy Star.

Harry joined the RN at the age of 16 in 1941 and served in the Special Boat Service attached to 40 Commando of the Royal Marines.

He took part in Operation Husky, the amphibious invasion of Sicily, and later fought in Burma.

The medals were stolen last year.

Not forgotten

CHANNEL 4 are planning to broadcast a documentary next month on the war in the Pacific.

A number of British Pacific Fleet veterans have been interviewed for the 90-minute documentary entitled *The Day of the Kamikaze*.

Details of the date of broadcast are not yet finalised, but it is expected to air around the end of this year.

SITTING in an empty arena on a glorious autumn day by the Solent, this eco-warrior prepares for her next battle with the elements.

HMS Endurance makes regular appearances in the pages of *Navy News*, but you won't often see her like this.

The Red Plum entered No.9 dry dock in her home base of Portsmouth for final pre-deployment checks and maintenance work on her brightly-coloured hull.

And it's only out of the water that you notice two of the features which make

her unique in the RN.

First, there's the 'ice knife', reinforced steel on her bow which allows her to slice her way through two metres (6ft) of solid ice.

Punching your way through ice is, of course, not natural... and generally not good for a ship (take the Titanic, for example).

Ice can not merely pierce a hull, it can also wreak havoc with the propeller.

A large chunk striking Endurance's propeller as she sails through pack ice could cripple the ship - hence the protective casing which surrounds it.

The Red Plum has been through a 'mini refit' since returning from the Antarctic in June.

That should prepare her for an 18-month deployment to the Southern Hemisphere - the longest she has mounted in her 15-year career - which begins this month.

"I was initially shocked that it would take about 40,000 chocolate bars to keep the ship afloat," said logistics officer Lt Cdr Johanna Christian.

"My shipmates assured me that they were essential medical supplies.

"There's no local supplier of fresh food on the ice, so we have to take it all with us. I just hope that penguin and seal don't make it on to the menu."

Endurance won't spend the entirety in the Antarctic environs, however.

Once the austral winter starts setting in next March-April, Endurance will head for Africa where she'll undergo maintenance, rotate crew and generally fly the flag for Britain before returning to polar waters for the 2008-09 season.

During the first work period around the ice, the ship will carry the son of Dr Reginald James, the physicist accompanying Shackleton's abortive 1914-16 expedition.

Also joining the icebreaker will be BBC teams from the World Service, their nature department and, hopefully, *Blue Peter*.

"Eighteen months away is a marathon, not a sprint," said CO Capt Bob Tarrant.

"We've been training hard to ensure that we can maintain the highest standards in the remote corners in which only Endurance can operate."

Picture: Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner, HMS Endurance

Dry ice

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● Sculptor Ian Rank-Broadley's group in the new Armed Forces Memorial

Picture: Graeme Main (Soldier magazine)



● Former sailor Keith Walker paid tribute to his brother Peter and their friend Edward Sheppard; the two men died in an explosion in on board submarine HMS Rorqual in 1966

Picture: Graeme Main (Soldier magazine)

Making the invisible visible

SUBTLETY is not always part of the fabric of a great monument.

But Robert Browning's idea of "less is more" is of hugely poignant significance in the new Armed Forces Memorial at the National Arboretum, which has been dedicated in the presence of the Queen.

For here in the heart of Britain, it is what is not on view that is perhaps just as significant as what is, a theme outlined by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, in his address to those gathered in Staffordshire.

Dr Williams spoke of the ease with which people screen out that which makes them uncomfortable, and do not think of the invisible work done by others to protect our own comfortable lives – including the work of our Armed Forces.

He said we needed visible memorials because "if we are not to be dishonest, shallow and unreal, we need to make the invisible visible once in a while.

"And that is what today is about – naming all those who have been ready to risk everything for the good of our national community, and indeed the good of our world.

"Some of them have died in heroic circumstances, some in tragedy and conflict, some in routine duties – but all of them as parts of a single great and generous enterprise."

More than 15,500 names on the Portland stone panels, organised in date order and with no ranks shown, represent men and women

killed while on duty or by terrorist action since World War 2.

That roll of honour includes reservists and members of the RFA and Merchant Navy who died in support of the Forces.

But the remaining blank space – room for roughly the same number again – also speaks volumes, and ensures that this memorial is very much part of the present and future as it is of the past.

There are already around 100 further names to be added, those who have died in the past few months.

The moving service of dedication featured contributions from those affected by loss, including a letter to "Daddy in Heaven", read by nine-year-old Georgina Chapman.

"Daddy" was Lt Cdr Darren Chapman, CO of 847 Naval Air Squadron, who died in Iraq in May last year when his Lynx helicopter was shot down.

A lesson was read by the Duke of Edinburgh, who later joined the Queen, the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall in seeking out the name of the Queen's

cousin Lord Louis Mountbatten, killed by an IRA bomb in 1979.

As the royal party met representatives of families of the dead and key figures in the creation of the memorial, the Band of the RAF, Winchester choristers and All Angels maintained the mood of dignified contemplation.

Looking on were the heads of the three Services, including First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band and his wife, and Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

Architect Liam O'Connor's design beat 44 others, and draws inspiration from ancient Britain, Greece and Rome.

The memorial stands on a 20ft mound echoing British burial mounds, and a path spirals up to the memorial itself.

That consists of two straight walls within a circular enclosure, at one side of which is an obelisk.

One set of bronze figures by sculptor Ian Rank-Broadley shows a wounded Serviceman raised aloft on a stretcher by comrades, watched by a mother and child

and an older couple, representing the loss and grief of loved ones.

In a second group a figure points through a doorway to another world as a warrior lies dying, and a letter-carver prepares to record his death for posterity.

The alignment of the memorial is such that at 11am on November 11 every year, the sun's rays will pass through the gap in the doorway and illuminate the centre of the memorial.

Vice Admiral Sir John Dunt, chairman of the memorial trustees, said the memorial will be "a fitting tribute to the memory of all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice."

More than £6 million has so far been raised for the memorial, but more is needed to complete and maintain it – see the website at www.forcesmemorial.org.uk

The RNA had seven Standards on display, borne by the National Standard Bearer and six shipmates from No 8 Area, and the Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire's Cadet, Cdt Sián Colloby, of the Tamworth unit, was also on official duty.

Comment – page 26

Arboretum has dark-blue roots

ALTHOUGH the Armed Forces Memorial is independent of Government and any other organisations, it is an integral part of the 150-acre National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas.

Now part of the Royal British Legion group, the arboretum was founded by Naval officer Cdr David Childs, who was

inspired by the Arlington Cemetery and National Arboretum in Washington DC.

The project was supported by Gp Capt Leonard Cheshire, and the project was officially launched in 1994.

The reclaimed gravel quarry was given by Redland (now Lafarge) Aggregates on a

999-year lease, and the first plantings took place in 1997.

At the head of the Arboretum itself is another former Naval officer, chief executive Charlie Bagot Jewitt, whose family hails from the area.

See next month for an in-depth look at the National Memorial Arboretum

Nation acknowledges each sacrifice

KEITH Walker and his wife Margaret had made the short trip from Brierly Hill to pay tribute to Keith's brother Peter and their mutual friend Edward Sheppard.

The pair died in an explosion on board HMS Rorqual as the submarine passed Mozambique en route to Singapore in August 1966.

"We had seen him off at Snow Hill Station, and I was going on the Beira patrol [the blockade of oil shipments to Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe] so I said I would see him in Singapore," said Keith.

"We never met up. He was 22, I was 24. "This is the first time we have really been able to have somewhere to come to pay our respects.

"We had a service in the local church at the time, but it is not the same. It has taken 41

years to have somewhere to come.

"I think this is magnificent. The design and concept is marvellous – you cannot walk in here without getting a lump in your throat."

Margaret added: "The architect has achieved what he set out to do – it is spot on."

The couple intend to bring Keith's 92-year-old mother Ivy to the memorial when the crowds have subsided.

Also there for the sake of his brother was Walter Morse; William Howell Morse was 24 when he died off Gibraltar, the first fatality suffered by the fourth HMS Ark Royal

Lt Morse's Sea Hawk of 800 NAS ditched on take-off on October 14 1955; a seabat was quickly on the scene but Lt Morse's body and the wreck of his aircraft were never recovered.

"This is the first acknowledgement we have

of his death," said Walter, from Tenby in South Wales, who attended with his wife Sheila.

"I feel the nation has acknowledged him, and all the other people as well.

"It is right that we remember people who died in conflict, but this was training, and he was on duty – that was his work."

Former WO Barrie Knight was at Alrewas to remember shipmates who didn't make it back – in particular, four from Borneo, four from Aden and six from the Falklands.

"I think this is excellent – I am absolutely delighted," said Barrie, who served with 40, 41, 42, 43 and 45 Cdos over the course of 38 years, and was Regimental Sergeant Major on board HMS Fearless in the Falklands.

"I am not sentimental, but this is one occasion when I am chuffed to bits."

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A Bootie-full mind

Royal Marine Commandos – it's a state of mind states the new recruiting slogan, and it's a state of mind that hits you as soon as you pass through the tall gates of the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone.

It is, in fact, a surprisingly small site for the status and stature of the men who pass through it.

Unlike their sailor brethren in the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines bring officers and other ranks together to Lympstone where only Royal Marines train Royal Marines to fight as Royal Marines.

But Lympstone is not just about turning a civvy into someone capable and confident to fight in the front line. It is the home of the command and specialist training wings – where Commandos come back to become leaders, snipers, Viking drivers or whatever their tough career demands.

And everything that recruits and young officers see and do is imbued with the can-do attitude of the Royal Marines ethos, reinforced all the time by the many seasoned campaigners who are called back to Lympstone throughout their service career.

"The home of the Royal Marines is here," said Capt Mark Latham RM, "Lympstone doesn't go anywhere, and you constantly come back here all the time."

It's almost as if an injection of 'Commando DNA' boosts the Royal Marines each time they walk through the gates of Lympstone.

Anyone who has seen the recent ITV series knows that the training at Lympstone is tough, but it is only by physically standing on the site that the collective impact of the Commando psyche hits home – that newly lauded 'state of mind'.

"What makes a Royal Marine Commando," says Capt Latham, "is not just the training, but the way a man acts – the courage, the cheerfulness, the determination

ITV1s *Commando* TV series has brought to the public eye the tale of recruits surviving (and in some cases failing) the gruelling trials of the Commando course, but there's more to Lympstone than new recruits...

and the unselfishness – all those qualities which set a man in the Marines aside from all the other Forces."

Training is not just focused on the assault courses and buildings at Lympstone, but spreads out to its associated Straightpoint Range and Woodbury Common Training Area and beyond across the southwest.

"We are the only base to supply four meals a day as a matter of course because our training is so physically demanding," commented Capt Latham.

There are three training wings at the Devon base – the Commando Training Wing which turns a recruit into a frontline Royal, the Command Wing where potential officers face up to the realities of command and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) sharpen their skills, and the Specialist Wing which is divided into four companies: infantry support; signal and clerks; mountain leader

and ISTAR (information, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance); and armoured support.

"There are no civilian instructors on any course that is military orientated," stressed Capt Latham.

"Royal Marine Commandos are infantrymen first, and specialists second. There is no man within the Royal Marines who could not go straight into battle if the need demanded."

Being a Royal Marine, being a Commando, being at Lympstone are all inextricably bound together.

"The Corps prides itself on being one big family, and it is just growing and growing," concluded Capt Latham.

■ **More on training at Lympstone next month**

● **Royal Marine recruits from CTCRM Lympstone training in camouflage on Woodbury Common**

Pictures: LA(Phot) Burn



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With you all the way.

● *Four for good... A quartet of Royal Marine snipers on patrol during exercises around Kirkcudbright*

Pictures: PO(Phot) Tam MacDonald and LA(Phot) Nick Tryon, FRPU Clyde



Look who's stalking



IN THE long wild grass of the Kirkcudbright training range, the foliage shifts imperceptibly as six men edge through the undergrowth.

Clad in ghillie suits – the traditional dress of the Scottish gamekeepers – the Royal Marine snipers are on a ‘stalk’ in the isolation of the Kirkcudbright range.

A ‘stalk’ is, in the words of maritime sniper Sgt Benny Bentham of Fleet Protection Group RM, “sneaking up on someone and shooting them”. So that clears that up then.

Snipers are specialists, a breed apart from their Marine brethren, and while the snipers number three score, there are only eight qualified maritime snipers within the whole brigade.

A posting up to the Scottish territories of the Clyde is not a prospect that fills the RM snipers with glee, but rather than a cold career contemplating the exterior of nuclear submarines in the Faslane base, snipers with FPGRM’s Fleet Standby Rifle Troop can get themselves into the Maritime Sniper Team.

And once four weeks of training is complete, they could well find themselves basking in the Caribbean sunshine, hanging out the door of a racing helicopter and sighting down the barrel at the engine of a drug-trafficking motorboat dashing through the blue waters below.

“Once the pilot loses sight, it’s the lad hanging out the door that matters – he’s the one trying to get the shot,” said Sgt Bentham.

“That speedboat is trying to get away, so it’s all down to him then.”

The four-week course runs from the Clyde to Yeovilton as the Marines get to grips with the maritime sniper’s weapon of choice, the AW50 – a re-engineered version of the L96 or standard sniper rifle in the British military.

It’s the next three weeks with the Fleet Air Arm down in Yeovilton that hones the art of positioning and targeting from the weaving platform of a Naval helicopter.

The work with the Lynxes of 815 NAS is brought to completion with a final exercise over the waters off Lulworth Cove near Weymouth.

The newly-fledged maritime snipers cheerfully blow the

engines off a simulated speedboat – some rather battered surfboards with barrels nailed to the back at the long end of a tow-rope to a distant boat.

Maritime snipers can currently be found working with 815 Naval Air Squadron aboard tanker RFA Wave Ruler disrupting the drug-traffickers in the Caribbean.

It seems that the prospect is proving appealing to the snipers on the Scottish guard duty – Sgt Bentham laughs: “We’ve got volunteers knocking the door down.”

“As snipers up here they don’t get to do their job, so that’s why we try to do the training course up at Kirkcudbright range.”

“That was conventional sniper training – normal shooting, long-range shooting, a bullet penetration demo with different calibre rifles. And they did a stalk.”



● *Strike it wookie... (below and left) the commandos ‘stalk’ through the undergrowth and woods of the Kirkcudbright range*



Chart to plot aircraft crash sites

ARCHAEOLOGY experts have begun drawing an ambitious map of the waters around England – charting the spot where aircraft fell from the sky.

English Heritage has charged the team at Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury with the mammoth task of studying the sites of crashed or ditched aircraft and helicopters, be they friend or foe.

Recreational divers and, increasingly, dredging firms plucking aggregates from the sea bed are stumbling across fuselages, engine parts and other debris from lost planes.

The team has given advice to dredging firms on how to spot aircraft parts amid the tons of gravel and silt they haul from the sea bed – allowing the archaeologists to accurately plot the place where the aircraft went down.

If dredgers do uncover a wreck site, all dredging stops; the aircraft are automatically safeguarded under the 1986 Protection of Military Remains Act, so an exclusion zone is declared around the spot while investigations continue.

Already charted by the archaeologists is the place where S/Lt J F Yeates' Supermarine Attacker plunged into the Channel off Worthing shortly after taking off from the air station at Ford in July 1956.

Five decades later, the dredger Arco Dart hauled wreckage from the plane (Yeates' successfully ejected and was unharmed) out of the water with sand and gravel. Checks with the RAF and FAA Museum eventually traced the parts to the early jet fighter, serial number WP275.

The Salisbury-based 'time team' has also recently identified parts of a Junkers Ju88 bomber and possibly an American P51 Mustang fighter or B25 Mitchell bomber.

Indeed, records show that 935 aircraft were lost off the Sussex coast alone between 1939 and 1945.

"Many families today are still touched by the issue," said Euan McNeill of Wessex Archaeology. "It represents a challenge – ethical and logistical – for the marine aggregate industry and heritage professionals."

His team is asking anyone with records or knowledge of a crash site at sea to get in touch via blogs.wessexarch.co.uk/aircraftcrashesitesatsea/ or 01722 326867 to help the archaeologists draw up an initial study.

Map makers stay put

THE people who compile the charts which guide the ships of Her Majesty's Navy around the globe will be staying put in Taunton.

Whitehall has ruled out a possible move by the UK Hydrographic Office from Somerset to Devon after an eight-month review of the office's future.

The hydrographic office began moving to Taunton during World War 2 and moved there in toto in the 1960s.

Its key aim is to provide the RN and British merchant seamen with the most accurate charts of the world's oceans and sea lanes available. It's now responsible for supplying seven out of ten of the world's mariners with maps.

Whitehall has been looking at providing the UKHO with buildings and facilities better suited to its 21st Century needs – and considered moving the organisation to Exeter to sit alongside the Met Office.

Junior Defence Minister Derek Twigg said that option had now been ruled out and the hydrographic office and its 1,000 staff would be staying in Taunton one way or another.

The MOD is now looking into either redeveloping the UKHO's existing Admiralty Way site, or moving to a new building in the centre of Taunton.

Finding a new roll for the Harrier

SOME people might think that the Navy's future carrier programme is already on a 'go slow' - so far it's been a decade in the making.

But going slow could be the key to the success of our new flat-tops thanks to trials by a team from ATEC, operating from France's flagship carrier Charles de Gaulle.

Before you all reach for your acronym lists, ATEC is the Aircraft Test and Evaluation Centre, a partnership of military personnel, in this case from Fast Jet Test Squadron at Boscombe Down, and civilian scientists from defence firm QinetiQ.

Extra work is being done between now and the commissioning of HM Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales in 2014 and 2016 to enhance the capability of the F35B Joint Strike Fighter – the jet which will provide the two ships' punch.

Trials have already been conducted using the VAAC, an experimental two-seat Harrier operated by the Boscombe Down experts, to see what can be squeezed out of JSF when it eventually appears on the scene.

This special Harrier has a rear cockpit with a similar control layout to the JSF; the experimental flying controls in the rear cockpit of the aircraft have been tuned to match the same responses predicted from JSF in the hover. Basically, this means that the evaluation pilot feels like he is flying a future JSF.

The front cockpit has standard Harrier controls so that the safety pilot monitoring the flight can take control if something goes wrong.

Britain's carriers have already been used to test systems on the JSF programme, notably when an 'Autoland' system was used to allow the VAAC Harrier to land on HMS Invincible without input from the pilot when she was under way in 2005.

For the latest series of trials held, the ATEC team headed to the Med and to the de Gaulle (at 40,000 tonnes she's about two-thirds the size of the RN's future carriers, but possesses a sufficiently long deck) to test the 'Shipborne Rolling Vertical Landings' (SRVL, sorry, another acronym) concept.

Existing Harriers land on Illustrious and Ark Royal by hovering alongside the carriers then 'translating' sideways before dropping gently on to the flight deck.

The idea of SRVL is to touch down at about 30mph relative to the ship, with wind down the deck; a JSF would then use wheel brakes to stop without the need for arrestor wires (the JSF F35B does not have an arrestor hook).

As Harrier brakes are not designed for this kind of



● HUD for heights... A cockpit-eye view of the approach to the Charles de Gaulle from the VAAC Harrier and (right) a sizeable number of French sailors watch as the specially-adapted jump jet prepares to land on France's flagship

Pictures: Lt Chris Götke

punishment, the VAAC Harrier on the trial doing a SRVL would then carry out an airshow bounce (hop) on deck and then stop in the air before vertically landing on deck. You could call it hopscotch, RN-style.

What slow landings give you is that your aircraft can return to a carrier with more fuel and a heavier payload than would be possible recovering using the old hover-alongside technique.

The principle of the SRVL is that the aircraft is mainly using its jet engine to stay airborne ('jetborne') but uses some lift from the wing and aircraft body to increase the landing weight of the JSF, increasing the 'bring-back' capability for fuel and stores.

This should offer similar payload benefits to a US Navy Super Hornet, which is brought to a screeching halt by wires on American flat-tops.

"The UK future carriers' big decks allow us to explore different ways of recovering the JSF with a view to increasing the potential 'bring back' of the aircraft compared to the traditional vertical landings which Harriers conduct," said Lt Chris Götke RN, the VAAC Harrier Project Pilot.

"This was the first series of embarked piloted SRVL trials to broaden our understanding of the concept."

With the trials on Charles de Gaulle completed, the team has returned to Boscombe Down to conduct further tests; they will also make use of QinetiQ's Harrier simulators at Bedford.



Clock ticking for Whimbrel

A £2m campaign has been formally launched to bring the last surviving Royal Navy warship from the Battle of the Atlantic back to Britain as a museum.

HMS Whimbrel was one of the mainstays of the struggle against the U-boat; she is one of 29 Black Swan-class sloops which was built to safeguard the nation's lifelines in World War 2 and served with Johnnie Walker's legendary anti-submarine pack.

When she was no longer needed by the RN in 1949 she was sold to the Egyptians, who used her until 2002, latterly as a training ship.

Whimbrel (or ENS Tariq as she is now) is relatively intact; she has changed surprisingly little since her days under the White Ensign.

The HMS Whimbrel Project intends to bring the ship back from Egypt and preserve her on the Mersey as a living memorial to the men on the Atlantic runs; their battle was directed from the Western Approaches headquarters in Liverpool.

The Egyptians want to sell the ship by June 2008, so the appeal faces a tight deadline to buy the sloop outright – then bring her home.

"The Battle of the Atlantic had enormous significance for the survival of this country – and the overall Allied success," said campaign chairman Vice Admiral Mike Gretton.

"The battle deserves to be commemorated properly, particularly in tribute to the 100,000 men who died in it."

Details of the appeal can be found at www.hmswhimbrel.org or by calling 0845 1270780.



● Shimmer and VAAC... The unique Harrier readies for take-off on Charles de Gaulle's huge flight deck

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Beam me down, Scotty



AFTER almost an entire year away from home, ocean survey ship HMS Scott arrived back in Devonport in late September.

During her 308 days away, she surveyed 236,000 square miles of the ocean floor and covered nearly 60,000 miles. In fact in her ten-year life, she has notched up a total of half a million nautical miles.

Scott's ten-month journey has taken her from South Africa to the Seychelles, Jordan to Bermuda, and Nova Scotia to Reykjavik, and now back home in Devonport she's in the full swing of extended maintenance as she readies herself to return to the deep ocean once more.

Despite her impressive size of 13,500 tonnes and length of 131 metres (a similar length to a Type 23 frigate but almost four times the displacement), Scott operates with a tiny crew of just 44 people on board.

Due to her long and enduring operational tasking, she runs a three watch system, with a full complement of 66 people, but only two of the three watches on board for survey operations at any time.

Her size is determined by the multi-beam sounding system that she houses in two large arrays along and across her hull.

This Sonar Array Sounding System (SASS IV) can collect depth information of a strip of seabed several kilometres wide.

Scott can survey 150km² of ocean floor every hour, swallowing up the world's seabeds in swift progress.

It comes as no surprise that

the Survey department is at the heart of this ship, churning its way through the compendious navigational and swathe bathymetric data that the ship collects during her sweeping journeys.

As the ship passes overhead a three-dimensional picture of the seabed is drawn for the Hydrographic and Meteorological specialists within.

Once checked this data is then passed back to the Hydrographic Office back in Taunton.

Successful operation of the surveying sensors requires taut control of the draught and trim of the ship, which is achieved by pumping water ballast through 23 connected tanks.

The ship's retractable bow thruster handles slow-speed manoeuvres and precise station-keeping.

The present HMS Scott is the third Royal Navy ship to bear the name – although there was also a trawler Scott hired as a minelayer in 1915, however her career was cut short by a mine in the same year.

The first was a 1,800-ton destroyer built in World War 1 by Cammell Laird.

She was commissioned in January 1918, but lost eight months later when she was torpedoed, probably by the submarine UC17, in the North Sea off the Danish coast.

The first surveying Scott was a Halcyon-class survey ship which was used during World War 2 in tasks ranging from mine barrage and escorts, to the survey work which dominated her career.

Built in 1938, the 830-ton survey ship flourished until finally arriving in Troon to be broken up in 1965.



Zeebrugge 1918
Norway 1941
Normandy 1944

Class: Lloyds Register Atlantic Reefer class
Pennant number: H131
Builder: Appledore, North Devon
Motto: To strive, to seek, to find... and not to yield
Launched: October 13 1996
Commissioned: June 30 1997
Displacement: 13,500 tonnes
Length: 132 metres
Beam: 21.6 metres
Draught: 9.1 metres
Speed: 18 knots
Range: Up to 25,000nm for 90 days endurance
Complement: 66 in total, but sail with 44 – two out of three watches
Propulsion: Two Krupp MaK 9M32 9-cylinder diesel engines (5,400 BHp each)
Armament: Five 7.62mm guns, two Mk 44 Mini Gun

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SBA George Beeching, AM

IN Germany the *Volksempfänger* – the cheap radios produced at the behest of Dr Goebbels – were still ringing with the words of Adolf Hitler.

Stalingrad, the German leader assured his listeners on the 19th anniversary of his botched coup in Munich, would soon fall. He chided Roosevelt "the chief gangster". And with typical hubris he brushed aside the Allied threat.

"It matters not where the front is. Germany will always fend off the blows."

And as Hitler spoke, the Allied navies were creating a new front as an invasion force mustered off the coast of French North Africa.

The sloop HMS Ibis was among the smaller ships assigned to Operation Torch. Laid down barely three weeks into the conflict, the bulk of Ibis' 14-month active life had been spent escorting convoys on the West Africa run.

That day she was charged with safely shepherding convoy KMF1 towards Algeria, depositing troops on Apples, Beer and Charlie beaches.

Adolf Hitler could be glib about such landings. His naval leaders could not. They realised the enemy had struck "the decisive blow. The focal point of the conduct of the war now lies in the Mediterranean."

The Allies, too, realised that – and did everything they could to safeguard the invasion force, surrounding it with a bodyguard of frigates, destroyers and sloops.

And so HMS Ibis could still be found off

Algiers mid-morning on Tuesday November 10 as waves of Italian torpedo bombers attempted to destroy the invasion fleet.

At least three enemy bombers succumbed to the wall of fire belched by Ibis' anti-aircraft guns, but one of the attackers succeeded in dropping a torpedo.

At two minutes past ten, Ibis was rocked by an explosion amidships, stunning Sick Berth Attendant George Beeching as he scurried between decks.

Ibis immediately listed 15° to starboard. The emergency lights began to fail. The mess decks filled with fuel oil.

And all the while, Beeching helped his wounded comrades as best he could. Lifesaving was his talent; before the war he volunteered with St John Ambulance in his native Wallasey.

He provided morphine to a shipmate with terrible burns to his hands and face. As he did so, Ibis began to heel over.

Beeching ushered his stricken shipmate on to the upper deck, gave him a life belt and helped him into the water, before jumping in himself.

Of the 180 men on HMS Ibis, 102 were eventually picked up after dark by HMS Scylla. George Beeching was not among them.

The 23-year-old was gazetted for the Albert Medal in gold for saving life at sea the following April.

His family later loaned his medal to the Museum of the Order of St John in London, from where it was sadly stolen in 1992.





Terminal effects

SO HERE we are again.

Another day, another patrol around the murky, teeming waters of the northern Arabian Gulf.

You won't, of course, read about it in the papers. Or see it on your TV screens.

But we're here. Day in, day out, ensuring the terrorists, fundamentalists and insurgents do not hinder the flow of oil from Iraq to the rest of the world.

After the Cornwall incident at Easter, operations in the Gulf have rather slipped off the media 'radar'.

But they continue. Ceaselessly.

It has fallen to Portsmouth-based frigate HMS Richmond to enact the lessons learned in the wake of that illegal seizure of 15 sailors and Royal Marines.

And be in no doubt. Fleet Street might be paying little attention to operations in the northern Gulf, but the Iranians are still here.

"When you realise you are

one and a half miles away from the Iranians and they come speeding down at 45kts in speed boats, armed to the teeth with AK47s and RPGs, it can get interesting," says navigator Lt Craig Blackburn with typical British understatement.

And the 'endgame' of the Allied forces also remains the same: to ensure that oil flows freely from the two terminals which sit about ten miles off Iraq and pump that black gold into waiting tankers.

We've been doing this now for more than four years (Richmond herself took over guardianship in the summer) alongside the US and Australian Navies, US Coast Guard and Iraqi sailors and marines.

Working with the latter is "occasionally frustrating, sometimes rewarding," says CPO(MEM) Andrew Murray, a Royal Navy damage control expert attached to the international team overseeing the Iraqis.

"When I first came out here, they only had one fast aluminium boat running. Now there are ten. Bringing their engineering on has been rewarding," he adds.

"They don't have our technical proficiency. But they are very willing to learn and enthusiastic to take on board the techniques we've shown them."

The work of the mentors from the Naval Transition Team (NaTT) has been championed in these pages over the past few months.

Richmond has seen the fruits of those labours, as the Iraqi marines have joined the frigate's RN-RM boarding parties on operations around the platforms, while their Iraqi navy comrades buzz around in their patrol craft.

A 2,000-metre (6,500ft) exclusion zone is drawn around the two platforms (the Khawr

al Amaya and Al Basrah); any vessel which encroaches is investigated.

And many do, although their intentions are invariably benign.

"Life would be simple if the platforms were in the middle of the ocean," explains Lt Cdr Gavin Edward, Richmond's weapons engineer officer.

"Unfortunately, they're right in the centre of one of the busiest and most lucrative fishing grounds in the Gulf - as well as a location favoured by maritime traders. Often there'll be upwards of 50 vessels from small skiffs to large wooden dhows within a three-mile radius.

"It's often hard for the fishermen - most are trying to earn an honest wage. They generally use the platforms as navigational references, so they

can be forgiven for trying to cut corners to save a little on fuel."

In a bid to stop such corner cutting, or at least to explain why the platforms are among the most heavily-guarded maritime sites in the world, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines conduct patrols in small craft around the platforms hoping to spread the word and foster good relations with local sailors.

Nothing, however, can be left to chance.

"Our challenge is to remain in a ready state to deal with any number of situations," says Richmond's CO Cdr Piers Hurrell.

The upper deck weapons are manned constantly and checked by a dedicated team of weapons engineers with a certain amount of pride.

"It's got the 'macho factor'," ET(WE) Tyron Clarke says of the minigun he looks after. It can spurt out 3,000 rounds a minute at incoming seaborne targets.

"When it comes to close

protection, there's no weapon which measures up to it."

And talking of weapons, ashore the Iraqis took delivery of 1,000 small arms and guns in their new armoury at Umm Qasr.

Before handing over the weapons, their RN mentors had to be satisfied that security measures, storage facilities and accounting procedures were all safely in place.

Then there was a three-day rush to move the weapons in ahead of Ramadan by CPO(LOGS) Darren 'Nora' Batty and his Iraqi counterpart.

Any day now they'll be tucking in to a Thanksgiving dinner (there's a sizeable US contingent with the transition team).

And any day now, Richmond will set course for home; her time in the Gulf is nearly up. Her sister HMS Argyll slipped out of Devonport last month bound for the Middle East to take over from her this month.



Supply and



● Grey wolves... RFA Largs Bay, HMS Ark Royal and HMS Albion poised to strike in the Solent and (above) a Landing Craft Utility ferries a truck and kit towards Browdown camp

Pictures: PO(Phot) Andy White, HMS Ark Royal, and LA(Phot) Dan Hooper, HMS Albion

"DO NOT underestimate how powerful this amphibious force is," says 3 Commando Brigade's straight-talking Commanding Officer, Brig David Capewell.

"I've been in this game 27 years and we're seeing something of an amphibious renaissance."

Renaissance is an apt adjective for Grey Heron; it's about learning – or in many cases re-learning the art of amphibious warfare.

3 Cdo Bde has spent probably more time on land than at sea these past half-dozen years; the same certainly goes for its combat support arm, the Commando Logistic Regiment.

And all that time ashore means the expertise of striking from the sea can fade; amphibious warfare is most definitely not like riding a bike.

"It's a very complicated jigsaw," says Capt Tim Lowe, CO of HMS Albion from where Grey Heron is being run.

"I've done a lot of amphibious operations – Albion alone has been involved in eight exercises in the past year. But it is something you need to practise, you need to keep doing it because it's a skill which is perishable."

So here we are, then, in the Solent on a blustery September day.

The pebble beach at Browdown camp, an old army establishment on the seafront between Gosport and Lee-on-the-Solent which reeks of the era of National Service, is marked with flags.

A short metal road has been laid over the pebbles to help vehicles ashore, and if any get stuck there's the BEAST – Beach-Equipped Armoured Support (Tracked) – recovery vehicle to assist.

Mexeflote rafts chug through the choppy waters of Stokes Bay, stacked with ammunition crates, while waves crash over the bows of landing craft bearing men and materiel (and sometimes wet journalists...).

It's all done at a fairly gentle pace because, as Brig Capewell puts it: "This is a dangerous business if you don't get it right. You have to learn to walk before you can run."

It's a good few years since Browdown was used on this scale by the RN and RM; amphibious exercises in UK waters typically take place off the north Devon coast or in the lochs of north-west Scotland.

"For us, there's a positive spin-off because the public get to see us doing our business," says Lt Cdr Rupert Irons, on the staff of the Commander Amphibious Task Group.

Mention 'landing craft' and 'amphibious warfare' to Joe Public and immediately they picture *Saving Private Ryan* and *Omaha Beach*.

We don't do 'opposed landings' any more; it's much better (and less bloody) to put troops ashore where the enemy is absent.

That's not the only concept of amphibious warfare which has changed in the past six decades.

No longer do we secure a beachhead, build up our supplies and then breakout.

No, these days we go ashore and look to thrust inland as quickly as possible. That means only what is needed to sustain the troops should be ferried ashore; not too much, not too little. You might say the ethos of support is 'just enough, just in time'.

And that's the crux of Grey Heron. Fighting is something Royal is (a) good at and (b) rather accustomed to.

MORE than 2,000 sailors and Royal Marines mustered in the Solent for one of the biggest amphibious exercises in UK waters in recent years. Grey Heron was intended to test the Senior Service's ability to push men and materiel ashore – and sustain their operations as they thrust inland.



● A truck carrying crates of equipment rolls off an LCU and on to a metallic road laid by the green berets at Browdown



Call in the Navy seals

IN GOOD *Blue Peter* tradition... don't try this at home.

Even with the landing craft with the shallowest draught in the business and the finest coxswain in the world, getting a vehicle from ship to shore is almost certainly going to mean driving through the sea.

There's a simple formula to bear in mind.

Sea + engine-working parts = disaster.

Fortunately, the Royals don't drive ordinary vehicles – theirs are specially-adapted waterproof versions. Send a bog-standard Army 4x4 into the oggin and you'll wreck it.

Then again, send a waterproof RM Land Rover into the oggin and you'll wreck it. It's got to be *watertight*, not simply waterproof.

It takes (by the book) three men 90 minutes to prep a vehicle for a dip in the ocean, checking seals, plugging holes, making sure that everything which should be watertight is watertight.

The drivers don wet suits – the cab itself is not watertight; the sea should come up to the driver's neck – and no higher. If it's any deeper, you simply swim out of the unzipped canvas roof.

You don't drive flat out when you're in the water. Pick a low gear and crawl along gently – the water should be no more than a steady ripple over the bonnet, otherwise the waves will crash over the windscreen and into the cab.

For the sake of the engine, once ready for wading ashore, a vehicle shouldn't be run for more than 15 minutes; it should spend no more than six immersed, and again no more than 15 minutes out of the sea before being taken to the DVP ('drowned vehicle park') to have all the various plugs and waterproof seals removed. Even then it can't go more than about 25 miles before it needs a thorough check of its axles to ensure everything's in order.

What does need fine tuning, however, is the art of support from the sea, not least because it's not something we've done on a large scale for a few years now.

Support from the sea falls upon the shoulders of the Commando Logistic Regiment, men who "have no boats," their Commanding Officer Col Will Taylor says, but who do have "the faint whiff of diesel about them" (not especially faint on Largs Bay, admittedly...).

This is the first time the regiment has worked at sea in this strength for perhaps a decade – and it's a year since any of the regiment has left dry land behind.

The regiment comprises 670 men and 350 vehicles from Land Rover size up to 15-ton trucks. It's only now, with the

advent of the four new Bay-class ships, that Britain has the vessels to effectively carry the bulk of the regiment.

The CLR doesn't feature in these pages very often. In fact, it doesn't feature in many pages very often. Journalists like reporting war. Bombs. Machine-guns. Bayonets fixed. Grenades. All make great pictures and great articles.

Logistics, on the other hand, as Col Taylor readily admits, is "not sexy. It involves people with dirty fingernails who smell of diesel."

Ignore logistics at your peril. Rommel did, and look where it got him.



demand

● An RAF Chinook is guided on to Ark Royal's flight deck at dusk and (below) landing craft are loaded in the assault ship's dock



Where once an army marched on its stomach, today it prefers if possible to move on wheels (you still, of course, have to keep those stomachs happy).

On an average day's exercising, the CLR will guzzle 40,000 litres of fuel (including AVCAT for the jungle Sea Kings).

During Afghanistan, that figure mushroomed to 100,000 litres. And for the assault on the Al Faw peninsula in Iraq four years ago, fuel consumption nudged the quarter-million-litre mark (that's enough to fill the tanks of more than 4,500 Ford Focus).

Grey Heron is rather less demanding on the nation's fuel reserves. But it is demanding on the men. It's a vital exercise, if complicated and, at times,

perplexing.

Take loading vehicles into Largs Bay's cavernous hold, for example. For Grey Heron, 105 vehicles were loaded aboard.

But this is not a car ferry, where it doesn't matter whether Mr Bloggs and his caravan gets off at the other end before the Eddie Stobart truck.

Here, the front-line troops want the right kit at the right time; if you're low on ammo, the field kitchen trundling over the battlefield probably isn't a lot of use.

So, the operations officers plan the battle and let the logistics experts know what vehicles and equipment they'll need – and when. And all that feeds down to the Cpl Robert Burn and his

team on the vehicle deck, who have to piece the jigsaw together.

Perhaps key to the success of these green-bereted logisticians is the fact that they're Royals first, logisticians second.

"In the Royal Marines you shift around – from the front-line units to the rear areas, so you get to know everything," Cpl Burn explained.

"Everybody has their role to play. When the lads are up front, there's always someone in the back supplying them."

And then there's the small act of transferring the vehicles ashore, courtesy of LCUs (Landing Craft, Utility), LCVPs (Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel – despite their name

they can carry less than the LCUs), and Mexeflotes (powered rafts whose activities are limited by the sea state).

This isn't a case of driving your car on to a ferry.

Invariably the Royals reverse their vehicles on to the craft, tricky if you're at the wheel of a car. Now imagine the landing craft riding up and down with the swell. Picture the vehicle deck at night, dully lit by red or blue light, and a commando with a couple of light sticks as your guide and you have some idea of how tricky this can be.

This is a slow business, even in wartime. Even with all the aerial support, mexeflotes and landing craft you can shake a stick at, unloading all the kit and vehicles from a Bay-class

ship will probably take a good 48 hours. Throw breakdowns, bad weather, the enemy and other imponderables into the equation and you have an idea of the task.

With the emphasis on logistics rather than 'war fighting', Grey Heron is an exercise with more tail than teeth.

For every front-line marine of 45 Commando put ashore, there were three personnel behind him, or rather behind and above him if you allow for the Commando Helicopter Force. (Ideally you want three-four supporting troops for every combat soldier.)

"Unlike the rest of the brigade, we're slow and cumbersome," says Col Taylor. "Compared with the Army we are light and flexible."



Regiment... Commando Helicopter Force... UK Landing Force Command Support Group... 45 CDO... 539, 4 and 6 Assault Squadrons RM... 846 and 847 NAS... 27 Squadron, RAF... 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, RLC...

Plane academy

WHAT'S several thousand feet above the Cornish countryside and the bedrock of the future Fleet Air Arm?

Why foundations, of course. For in the skies above the West Country naval aviators of tomorrow are earning their wings... and a foundation degree to boot, courtesy of the new FAA Military Aviation Academy.

The new course – the Military Aviation Studies Foundation Degree, which is validated by the Open University – is aimed at students leaving college or sixth form with their A-Levels.

The students spend three terms at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth for flying grading and training, before joining the academy at either Culdrose or Yeovilton.

There they learn about aircraft systems, meteorology and oceanography, navigation, radar, sonar, radio communications, and the art of naval aviation in the classroom, in the simulator, and in the air, courtesy of the Fleet Air Arm's training aircraft and helicopters.

"The flying and the opportunities for travel are great," said Sam Yarker, a trainee observer with 750 NAS at Culdrose. "Picking up a foundation degree along the way is an extra bonus."

"The training is demanding but I am flying in hi-tech aircraft all over the world, seeing fantastic sights and gaining tremendous experience."

The RN is competing with big business and the land's top universities to reel in the brightest brains – but the fact that tuition fees are paid and students earn up to £25,000 a year and are guaranteed a career in naval aviation if they graduate has proved a draw.

"When deciding upon my career, the subject of top-up fees was a big consideration," said Caroline Oakes, also training as an observer with 750 NAS.

"The opportunity to be paid while working towards a degree was too good to miss."



● Rescue PO 'Jay' O'Donnell makes for the Napoli's life raft and (middle and right) the cargo ship's crew look relieved once safely aboard the Sea King

So others may live

THE most demanding – and high-profile – rescue of the year by Fleet Air Arm fliers earned them one of the country's top life-saving awards.

The crews of Rescue 193 and Rescue 194, two of 771 NAS' Sea Kings based at Culdrose, battled ferocious winds and treacherous seas to pluck all 26 sailors of the merchantman MSC Napoli from their lifeboats in the Channel on January 18.

"Windstorm" Kyrill – basically a wintry hurricane – caused Napoli's hull to crack; water gushed in, the engines failed and her crew abandoned ship fearing the cargo vessel would founder, a good 40 miles from the Lizard.

Rescue 193 was immediately scrambled to rescue Napoli's crew; her crew realised she alone could not complete the mission and 30 minutes later Rescue 194 took to the leaden sky.

The two Sea Kings found both the lifeboat and the Napoli rocking terribly in mountainous seas with gusts in excess of 50kts buffeting

aircraft and stricken sailors alike.

To lift all 26 crewman to safety, it was decided to lower rescue diver PO James 'Jay' O'Donnell into the water to climb aboard the lifeboat.

He fought against successive troughs to eventually get into the boat, where he found 26 worried sailors, most suffering from seasickness and some suffering from hypothermia.

Over the next 50 minutes, Rescue 194 picked up 13 men then departed for Culdrose leaving her sister to complete the mission.

The rescue of the remaining 13 was going relatively smoothly until a wave caused the lifeboat to spin wildly – in turn causing the highline and winch to tangle with kit on the roof of the boat.

Alertness by 194's winch operator LACMN Justin Radford and the skill of the pilots Lt Kevin Drodge and Capt Damien May RM managed to un-snag the lines, allowing the rescue to proceed although as it became lighter with fewer sailors on board its movements became more erratic

and unpredictable.

All 26 Napoli crew were saved and PO O'Donnell was safely recovered. The sailors were given warm drinks, food and blankets back at Culdrose.

As for their ship, she was towed towards Portland before being beached in Lyme Bay; her breaking up (and subsequently widespread looting of her cargo from the shore) made international headlines.

Nine months down the line, the 771 fliers were invited to the Fishmongers' Hall in London, where Admiral Sir Peter Abbott, president of the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society, presented them with the Edward and Maisie Lewis Award for the outstanding air-sea rescue of 2007.

■ NOT to be outdone on the rescue front, RFA Fort George and a Merlin of 700 NAS rushed to the aid of a ferry passenger in the Adriatic.

The Riviera del Conero flashed a distress signal as she ploughed through the sea bound

for the Italian port of Ancona when a passenger suffered severe respiratory problems.

Fort George's medical technician initially dashed across in a sea boat.

His quick diagnosis was that the passenger needed urgent medical attention, so the Merlin operating from Fort George was hurriedly scrambled.

The helicopter crew placed the patient in a stretcher, carried him to the top deck of the ferry and winched him on to the Merlin.

He was then flown to Split airport, but when an ambulance failed to arrive to collect him and the passenger's condition worsened, the Merlin took off again and five minutes later touched down at the hospital's landing site.

Surgeons performed an emergency operation on the man, who had a hole in his left lung (as diagnosed by the RFA medic). He is now recovering; it's highly unlikely he would have survived the ferry journey had it not been for the RN/RFA intervention.

● Deceptive perspective... 8in tall Mighty Mouse prepares to join HMS Chatham



Of mouse and men

IS IT a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's quite obviously a plastic mouse wearing a tight yellow suit and red cape.

Introducing Mighty Mouse, the official mascot of Her Majesty's Ship Chatham, who'll be accompanying the frigate and her fine ship's company on all their escapades.

A mouse has long been a symbol of the ship (he's painted on the foc's'le and you'll also find him on officer's cummerbunds).

Now he's taken on a more tangible form, courtesy of an 8in (well, he's a mouse, after all) figure who goes wherever the Devonport frigate – motto Up and At 'em – goes.

The RN hasn't had 'real' mascots for three decades when rabies regulations put the kibosh on cats, dogs, rabbits, bears and other creatures (HMS Lancaster did, however, have Sunny the Parrot, but she's now retired).

But sailors being sailors, they can get around the small inconvenience of Admiralty regulations: a number of ships have taken Flat Stanley (the squashed youngster) to sea, and HMS Newcastle got miles of publicity out of Salty the Bear, a cuddly toy who was the mascot of a Whitley Bay school and sailed the world, telling children of his adventures.

That's something Mighty Mouse is keen to do too; as yet he's not affiliated with any particular school, but he does have his own web page (part of

Chatham's site at www.royal-navy.mod.uk/server/show/nav.1580) to recount his deeds around the globe.

So far those have included racing to the top of the Rock (apparently he flew while his shipmates ran...) and regularly accompanying Chatham's weapons engineer officer Lt Cdr Chris Smith who can never be seen without his jumper, even when it's warm.

There is, of course, a serious side to these vermin-related shenanigans – to bring the actions of the Royal Navy to as wide an audience as possible.

As for Chatham herself, she's currently in the Mediterranean and Adriatic alongside HMS Illustrious and HMS York on Exercise Noble Midas, an international exercise off the coast of Croatia.



Up and atom

THE eerie wail of sirens across Devonport signalled the beginning of a major exercise to deal with a potential nuclear accident.

All three of Britain's naval bases regularly stage variations of Exercise Short Sermon to test not merely the response of the Royal Navy, but also the emergency services, government bodies and local councils, in the event of a radiation leak from one of Britain's nuclear submarines.

In all, 28 different agencies and organisations were sucked into Short Sermon – making it the largest such exercise yet organised by Devonport.

Naval base staff were ushered into emergency shelters, while officials simulated handing out potassium iodate tablets to homes, businesses, schools and other premises within a two-kilometre (2,200-yard) radius of the base (sailors dropped letters rather than the actual tablets through letter boxes).

"The Royal Navy has an exemplary nuclear safety record – there's never been an accident involving one of our nuclear-powered submarines which has caused any release of radioactive materials into the environment or posed any risk to public safety," said Naval Base Commander Cdre Simon Lister, himself a former nuclear submarine engineer.

"Nevertheless, the MOD, DML and Plymouth City Council have developed detailed plans to ensure a swift, effective response to such an accident in Plymouth."

One hundred miles to the east, one of Devonport's nuclear boats put in to Portland to test the port's 'Z-berth'.

Various bases, docks and ports around the UK have designated Z-berths which can accommodate visits by hunter-killer or strategic missile submarines (they are not to be used, however, to carry out repairs on the boats).

It's been 16 years since any submarine called at Portland. It fell to fleet submarine HMS Tireless to test the newly-designated Z-berth and soak up seven days of Dorsetshire hospitality.

The submarine's crew also spread the word about the Silent Service and RN, hosting more than 100 school children, students, business people and civic dignitaries from Portland and Weymouth during their stay (but not all at the same time given the rather cramped confines of the boat...).

Tireless has spent the early autumn hosting five potential submarine commanders on the infamous Submarine Command Course (better known as the Perisher) – widely regarded as the world's most challenging test of a future boat commander.

Revision time at Dartmouth

THE definitive history of the naval officer corps' spiritual home is now 'more definitive'.

The official historians of Britannia Royal Naval College, Drs Jane Harrold and Richard Porter, have updated and enhanced the critically-acclaimed original volume to take into account the 100th anniversary celebrations at the Dartmouth landmark and other recent events, including then prime minister Tony Blair's visit – the first, amazingly, by a serving PM in BRNC's illustrious life.

The first edition of the book, produced by Dartmouth firm Richard Webb, earned the Sir Robert Craven Trophy for outstanding contribution to naval research but every copy has now been sold.

The revised volume, which includes a new preface by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathan Band and a postscript by BRNC's present Commodore, Cdre Martin Alabaster, was unveiled at last month's passing in/passing out parade.

The book, *Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth: An Illustrated History* is priced £25, ISBN 978-0953636174.

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Lights out for the Lion



FALKLANDS veteran assault ship HMS Fearless will go the way of her sister and end her days in a breaker's yard.

Despite ambitious plans to turn the 'Mighty Lion' into a floating hotel/ hostel and a museum to the 1982 conflict in which she played a pivotal role, the only serious proposition was, sadly, the scrapyards.

Whitehall announced earlier this year that Intrepid would be broken up (or 'recycled' in modern parlance) by British firm Leavesley International.

Now the Disposal Services Authority has agreed that Belgian firm Van Heyghen Recycling can pull apart Fearless.

The government laid down that as much of the ship should be recycled as possible before



it chose the Belgian company to carry out the work; it also demanded that the firm meet European and international requirements regarding the safe treatment of waste.

Both ships are currently awaiting their fate in Portsmouth Harbour where they've been moored for several years.

Fearless served the RN from 1965 until 2002; her last act was involvement in the war against the Taliban. Interpid entered service in 1967 and spent the final decade of her life laid up in Portsmouth before she was eventually decommissioned.

● Fearless by night in Kiel in the early 70s

The Big Bang theory

FORGET *A Brief History of Time* and Stephen Hawking. The 'Big Bang' began in Bristol.

Ok, so it wasn't quite an epoch-making event.

It was, however, intended to hone the skills of a sizeable number of RN and RM reservists.

Exercise Bardic Wave is one of four 'Big Bang' weekends organised by the Reserve regions to bond part-time sailors and green berets in specialist areas pretty much across the entire spectrum of Senior Service activities.

Bardic Wave drew upon the volunteers of HMS Cambria (South Wales), Flying Fox (Bristol) and Vivid (Plymouth), plus RMR Bristol.

Full-time service involvement came courtesy of fishery patrol ship HMS Severn and URNU P2000 boat HMS Express, which scoured the open waters of the Bristol Channel in search of the MV Pride Of Bristol (a former RNXS vessel), playing the role of the enemy.

Once the foe had been found, RMR raiders raced in from Penarth Beach, four miles away, and their RNR force protection boarding parties stormed on board.

A Merlin from 824 NAS at Culdrose flew a number of 'casualties' into a fully-equipped and staffed field hospital, run

by reservist Surg Lt Rosy Humphreys.

Also ashore at HMS Cambria were the RNR's shipping experts. Sailors who specialise in NCAGS – Naval Co-operation and Guidance for Shipping – monitor movement on the high seas and liaise between military and civilian authorities to ensure safe passage on the oceans.

They brought their interrogation kit along to Cambria – a transponder which 'asked questions' of every merchant vessel in the Bristol Channel.

That's because every merchantman over 300 tons is fitted with an AIS transponder, an Automatic Identification System – a sort of id card for ships.

The system allows ships to pass information on position, speed, course and other details to each other – and to the relevant authorities.

Using specialist software, the NCAGS reservists could track the movement of all ships in the channel, plotted in real time on an electronic chart.

Cdre Stephen Thorne, Commodore Maritime Reserves, said the South West regional reservists had "set the standard" with their 'Big Bang' weekend, laying down "the blueprint for future major regional training exercises."

Although the key aim of Bardic Wave was to improve the

operational effectiveness of the 130 RNR and RMR personnel involved – both forces are becoming increasingly called upon to conduct front-line duties with the RN's heavy commitments worldwide – there was also a strong recruiting element to the exercise.

A large group of potential recruits spent the day aboard HMS Severn; others flew in the Merlin; others still grappled with an SA80 and took part in a damage control exercise.

"Being able to offer a 'shop window' at sea whilst interacting with air and surface units has been much more powerful than discussing it at a recruiting stand," said Lt Chris Parry, who was embarked in the Pride of Bristol with ten possible recruits.

Hot on the heels of the Bristol/ Welsh 'big bang' came the turn of Scotland, Northern Ireland and the North East.

Reservists from HMS Caroline (Belfast), Calliope (Gateshead), Dalriada (Greenock/Glasgow) and Scotia (Rosyth) converged on HM Naval Base Clyde for three days of combined training.

The focus of the Faslane 'Big Bang' was slightly different with force protection, time on the ranges and time on the Flag Officer Sea Training's state-of-the-art bridge simulator, Pathfinder, at the heart of the exercise.



● HMS Heron's Guard of Honour leads platoons of air station personnel through the heart of Yeovil

Picture: LA(Phot) Ian McClure, RNAS Yeovilton

Aye freedom

TWO key Royal Naval establishments celebrated long-standing links with the community by parading through the streets.

The men and women of HMS Heron have enjoyed 45 years of the freedom of nearby Yeovil, an anniversary they marked with a midweek ceremony.

Heron's ship's company mustered in a town centre car park, where the Mayor of Yeovil Cllr Tony Lock and RNAS Yeovilton Commanding Officer Cdre Chris Palmer inspected the platoons and the mayor's chaplain the Rev James Dudley-Smith led a brief service of thanksgiving.

Then the naval aviators set off through the town; it fell to CPO Graham 'Bobby' Shafto, who lives in Yeovil, to carry the freedom casket through the streets, accompanied by a Guard of Honour, Colour Party and four platoons.

Cllr Lock told the Heron sailors that the bond between town and air station was stronger now than it had been when Yeovil bestowed its highest honour on their forebears in 1962.

"The air station has helped to bring prosperity to the town," he added.

Further west, Torpoint's finest were dressed in their Sunday best as HMS Raleigh marked ten years of freedom of the Cornish town.

Establishment first marched through Torpoint's steep streets on September 20 1997.

Bandmaster that day was Gavin Martin. Bandmaster ten years on was WO1 Gavin Martin who has spent more than a quarter of a century entertaining the public with martial music in the Band of HM Royal Marines.

That first parade in 1997 was, he says, "a great day". So too was the 2007 event.

"There is something special about performing in your home town," he added.

Another hometown boy on parade was ET David Miller who left the Army after five years... and enrolled at Raleigh as a budding engineer.

"I've taken part in parades with the Army, but I've never marched through my home town before," he said.

"It was a proud occasion. I was marching with my head held high."

Torpoint Mayor Cllr John Crago and Raleigh's Commanding Officer Cdre John Keegan took the salute from about 150 sailors, comprising officers and senior rates of Raleigh's ship's company and submariners and logistics ratings training at the base.



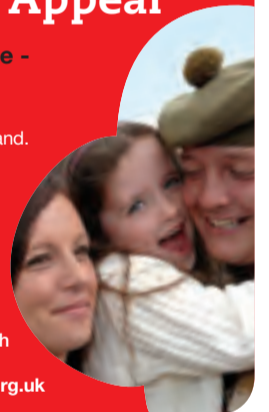
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Ace's VC on display

ONE of the most treasured pieces of Fleet Air Arm history can be seen for the first time by the public.

Lt Cdr Eugene Esmonde led a 'charge' by six Swordfish against the might of the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen as they ran for the safety of German ports during the 'Channel Dash' in February 1942.

The Kriegsmarine trio successfully reached home waters, while all six torpedo bombers were blasted out of the sky; of their 18 crew just five survived.

Their bravery earned praise from friend and foe alike; the German admiral leading the dash was amazed by the "very plucky flying" of Esmonde and his comrades, while the RAF station commander at Manston said the eighteen were "beyond any normal praise".

Esmonde, who had been involved in an equally spirited attack on the Bismack nine months earlier, was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery – one of just four earned by the Fleet Air Arm/Royal Naval Air Service.

For the past six decades, the decoration has been proudly held by his family; now it has been loaned to the Imperial War Museum in London.

It can be seen alongside the VC awarded to his great uncle, Capt Thomas Esmonde, earned before Sevastopol nearly a century earlier.



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Liverpool for the win

"AND THE players are making their way on to the pitch at Anfield..." – many matelots have dreamed it, but HMS Liverpool's football team got to live it during a visit to the home of Liverpool Football Club.

The destroyer's Commanding Officer, Cdr Henry Duffy, a Liverpudlian himself and an ardent football fan, said: "As a lifelong fan of Liverpool Football Club it was a real treat to visit Anfield – the scene of many happy memories for me personally."

During the visit the sailors enjoyed a guided tour of the grounds, including dressing-rooms, interview booths, VIP function rooms, museum, dug-out and the famous 'Kop' stand, before heading out on to the legendary pitch through the players' tunnel, touching the famous 'This is Anfield' sign as they went.

A true highlight was the opportunity for the proud sailors to lift the European Cup (pictured above)

that has been won by the football team five times and now has permanent residence within Anfield's walls.

The club's finance director Les Wheatley presented the warship's team with an away football strip for use.

"To take HMS Liverpool's football team to visit the ground," said Cdr Duffy, "made the day very special, and given the personal dedication, teamwork, training and professional excellence which both organisations display on a daily basis it is entirely appropriate that we don the same kit as our namesake club."

"I too hope my sailors can emulate in some small way the outstanding achievements of the 'Mighty Reds'."

This was one of the last events for Cdr Duffy as CO of the Type 42 destroyer, which is now under the command of Cdr Craig Wood.

Painting history

KELLY Rossiter (right) from Mayfield School in Portsmouth with fellow pupils visited the Royal Naval Museum to see their artistic efforts on display.

The students had been taking part in an art workshop project where they learnt about wartime propaganda, then designed their own poster for the modern Navy.

Commanding Officer of HMS Victory Lt Cdr John Scivier and WO Kevin 'Snowy' Winter presented the pupils with T-shirts featuring their own designs.



Picture: LA(Phot) Jannine Hartmann

Underwater author Cornish gold

AS a boyish bookworm, Michael Rosen loved *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. Years later, Michael, now a well-known poet, author, and Children's Laureate, accepted an invitation to open the new exhibition at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum.

"It was curiosity which brought me here," he told *Navy News*. "I loved Jules Verne as a boy and I've always been fascinated in underwater exploration and all things under the sea."

The new exhibition, *Fantastic Voyages*, explores the role of submarines in popular culture,

and was designed with the help of young visitors.

The items on show are all mentioned in *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and there is even a narwhal's tusk and a galley to cook in.

At the exhibition's opening Michael met pupils from Newbridge Junior School in Portsmouth and Leesland Junior School in Gosport, and enthralled them with accounts of his early life and his family.

So will his next children's book feature a submarine? "It's quite possible," he said.

FRIGATE HMS Cornwall has earned a gold medal – well, a miniature Cornwall has at least.

David Brown competed against an international field of model-makers to win a gold medal and the HV Evans trophy for research, workmanship and presentation at the Model Engineer Exhibition with his 1/96 scale model of the type 22 frigate.

He said: "I could not have done this without the invaluable help of the RN and DML, and in particular Lt Cdr Paul Gilham and CPOWEA David Bent, plus ex-Devonport dockyard shipwright David Scoble."

Dark Hawk flying

Family and friends on board HMS Illustrious enjoyed an aerial display from the Navy's Hawks, Hurricane and Spitfire during a day at sea. As well as the flying displays, the families were entertained by displays, tours and face-painting for the children.



From green to Blanc

ROYAL Marine Chef Cpl Jeremy Hooper and his wife Jane beat off all their rivals to win BBC2's *The Restaurant*.

The competition came down to a taut cook-off which saw the Royal Marine competing with his rivals to impress the toughest judge of all – Raymond Blanc's mother.

The couple took over a restaurant in Raymond Blanc's hometown of Besançon and set up a fine dining experience for the master chef, his family and friends.

On the BBC TV show Jeremy said: "To get a round of applause off Raymond and his friends made Jane cry and it was very emotional."

"I just want to give Raymond a big hug and say thank you very much for what you've done for us."

When he announced the winners, Raymond Blanc praised the couple's commitment and high standards in the restaurant.

Jeremy's Commanding Officer at the Commando Logistics Regiment Col Will Taylor joined the audience on the BBC3 follow-up programme *You're Fried!* after the announcement.

In true Naval style, Col Taylor carried a message from the First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band – "Bravo Zulu".

Jeremy is now taking a 12-month career break to follow up on the prize he won on the show – setting up a restaurant in Oxfordshire in partnership with the French master chef.

He originally joined the Marines in 1996 as a driver, and served in Iraq as the theatre heated up in 2002 and 2003.

It was only three years ago



● Jane Hooper, Raymond Blanc, and Royal Marine Cpl Jeremy Hooper celebrate after the couple won the BBC2 competition *The Restaurant*

that he transferred into the chef's branch and learned his cookery skills at HMS Raleigh's Catering School.

Last year in Afghanistan Jeremy was among the Marine chefs who met Gordon Ramsay during his whirlwind visit to Camp Bastion for Christmas lunch.

He says that this change of profession was in preparation for life outside the service.

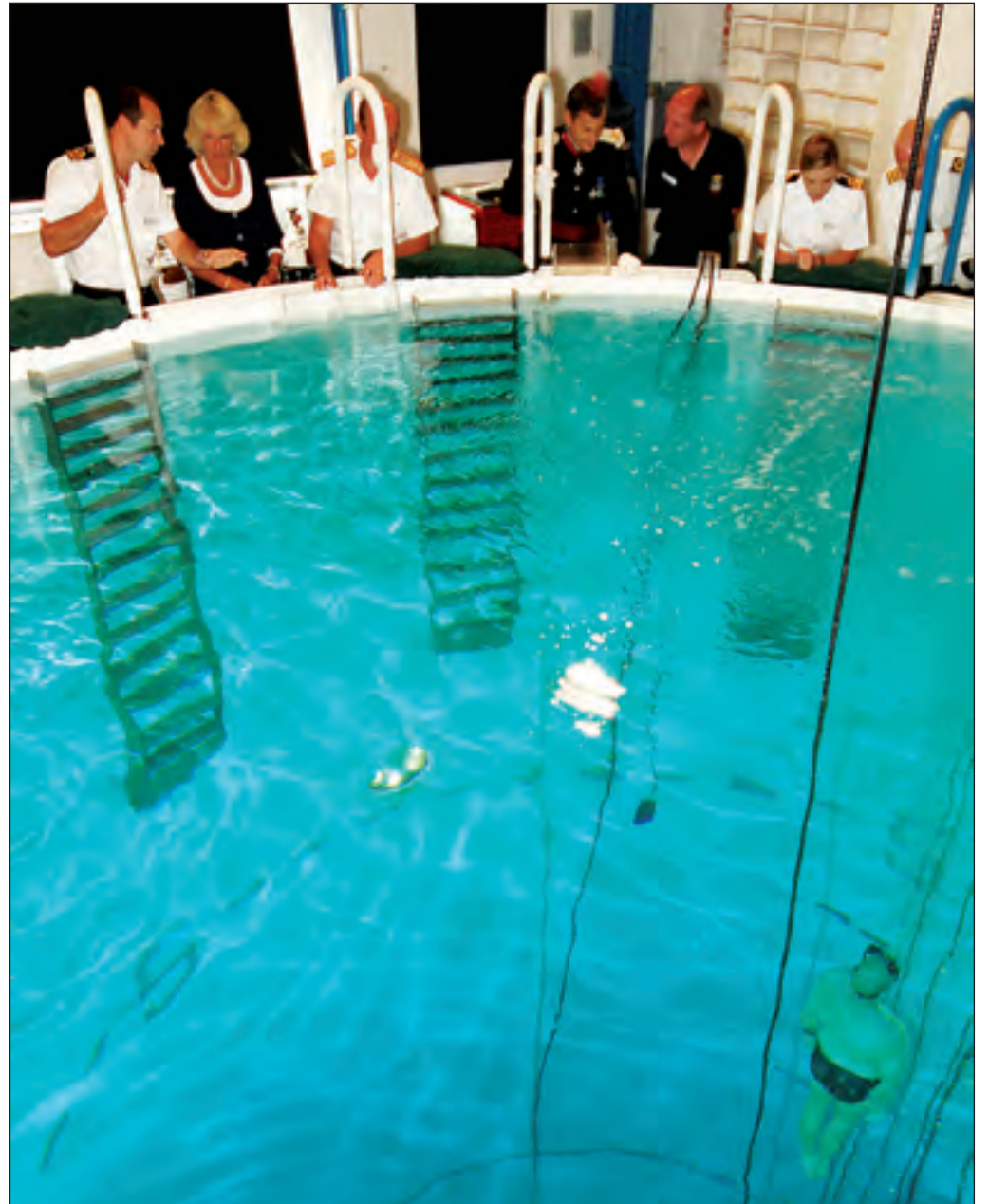
But despite his time in the world's conflict zones he admits that the BBC TV programme was one of his most demanding challenges.

"My career in the Royal Marines has prepared me for a number of stressful situations," he said, "but

competing at this level week in week out with very little time to prepare was the most stressful thing we have ever undertaken."

The couple set out to offer a restaurant which was modern, classy and meticulous, where diners would leave with memories of excellent food and service.

While this Marine may have swapped his green beret for a chef's hat, he paid tribute to the training and experiences that he had gained in his Service career.



● Lt Cdr Rob Mannion explains submarine escape training to the Duchess of Cornwall at the Submarine Escape Training Tank at Fort Blockhouse as they watch an instructor rise to the surface

Blue blood

PUTTING the Royal into Royal Navy, the Duchess of Cornwall and Prince Michael of Kent have paid visits to the Navy in the north and south.

The Duchess, who is Commodore-in-Chief of Naval Medical Services, visited the Submarine Escape Training Tank (SETT) at Fort Blockhouse in Gosport, where she was shown a demonstration of escape training.

Meanwhile the Honorary Rear Admiral Royal Naval Reserve – or Prince Michael of Kent – headed up to Scotland to see Neptune Warrior in action.

The Prince spent a night on board Type 23 HMS Montrose off the north-west coast of Scotland.

The Prince, himself a

qualified helicopter pilot, saw the poor weather at first hand when Montrose's Lynx brought him safely in to land with wind speeds of up to 30 knots across the deck.

The royal visitor met with some of the crew on board the warship, and watched a night-time replenishment at sea between Montrose and the USNS Laramie.

Commanding Officer Cdr Andy Hobgen said: "It was an honour to host a member of the Royal Family at sea."

"Unfortunately the weather wasn't kind, but it gave Prince Michael a good insight into how effectively the ship operates on a range of tasks, even in the worst of conditions."



● Private Katie Williams completes the assault course

Picture: Nicki Dunwell

Mud transfusion

MEDICAL students from all three Services 'enjoyed' training at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

A group of around 50 trainee nurses, operating practitioners and radiographers from the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine hauled themselves through mud and over barriers in a range of physical activities including the assault course.

They also fought to save their ship in Raleigh's purpose-built simulator that rocks from side to side and fills with water.

Col Philip Harrison, director of training at the RCDM, said: "This military training is fundamental to military healthcare professionals in preparing them for the rigours of their first appointment."

"Without exception, these young people of whatever Service can expect to be deployed or involved in operational commitments during their first tour."

"It is military training such as this which puts the clinical component into context."

Organiser Lt Paddy Beegan of

HMS Raleigh said: "This is the first time the RCDM has trained at Raleigh."

"The aim was to put together a dynamic and challenging command and leadership package, which would give the students the opportunity to exercise and work within military ethos."

Submarine streets

AUSTRALIAN Naval Base HMAS Penguin hosted veteran J K Moore who spent some years in the 1950s and 60s on loan to the Australian and New Zealand navies.

He found a warm welcome from Naval veterans, saying: "We truly have not been forgotten. I was shown photos of different boats and crews, and around the base."

"The Australians have named many of the streets within the base after our submarines – Telemachus, Tabard, Trump and Taciturn among others."



Rocket men

TWO workers, Mitch Hamilton and Gordon Walker (pictured above), from the Nuclear Repair Section in Clyde Naval Base showed off their specialist knowledge during International Rocket Week up in Scotland.

Although we can neither confirm or deny that the base has any connection with such matters, these men have some knowledge of rockets as they are members of the Scottish Aeronautics and Rocketry Association.

"We were both involved with the base's robot wars team," explained Mitch. "And then Gordon got involved with making a couple of small rockets with his wee boy. We all went to an event and got hooked from there."

Attention!

- looking for companionship?
- searching for that special someone?
- or just good friends?



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JR career management will now be 'one-stop'

WATERFRONT Manning Offices (WMOs) are to assume a 'one-stop' role for junior rates' career management.

This change offers clear benefits for junior rates and their employers; most junior ratings will now be career-managed by their WMO with some minor exceptions – for example, Naval Nurses, Physical Trainers and RN Police will remain under DN(Pers) career management.

For those personnel in non-squadded billets, their positions will be allocated to a WMO – most likely, but not always, the nearest.

In areas such as Northwood, the positions will be divided among the WMOs who career-manage the required specialisation.

This will allow a fairer allocation of positions around the UK as well as LFS.

The WMO will assign junior ratings, grant acting higher rate, initiate security checks, terminate employment and provide career advice.

The current RCMA will become part of the WMO and will continue to be an on-site contact for career advice to all service personnel.

Details can be viewed on the RN Intranet at <http://royalnavy.defence.mod.uk/cincfleet/index.htm?http://royalnavy.defence.mod.uk/persdivhb/jpa/spoke/spokeindex.htm>

DN(Pers) will continue to career-manage all senior ratings and Royal Marines as well as providing coordination, direction and guidance, including career management policy, arbitration, substantive promotions and granting extensions of service.

42 Cdo win media accolade

THE Desmond Wetherill Fleet Award for 2007 has been given to 42 Commando Royal Marines, described by one of the judges as "an absolutely outstanding entry" by a very small PR team.

In second place was aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious, which won the *Navy News* Award for maximising publicity within the RN's own newspaper.

The winner of the Destroyer/Frigate category was HMS Monmouth, currently on her way to the United States on her Volans 07 global deployment.

Sister Type 23 frigate HMS Kent received a commendation in the same division for the media coverage of her Gulf deployment last year.

The Small Ships category was taken by Sandown-class minehunter HMS Penzance, chiefly for her ship's company's efforts in the Gulf.

Finally, the prize for the best use of the Web was taken by HMS Somerset, whose Commanding Officer's 'Captain's Blog' has proved popular.



JPA appraisals are drawing ever closer

THE dates for the Naval Service to adopt JPA Appraisal are drawing ever closer.

Trials are under way, and the new reporting system will be introduced progressively throughout the Naval Service from March 2008.

However, we at the newly-established JPA Appraisal Team based in Jago Road in Portsmouth are aware that many of you will not know exactly what the changes mean, or what is required of each of you to make the system work.

This article will outline the basics and answer key questions; space prevents us giving you all the answers, but we'll tell you where to look or who to call.

What is JPA Appraisal and why do we need it?

It is the new reporting system which encompasses the current Officers' Joint Appraisal Report (OJAR) and a new Servicemen's and Servicewomen's Joint Appraisal Report (SJAR).

With increasing numbers of personnel working in Joint environments, a harmonised approach has become essential.

Having harmonised officers' reporting in 2001, the next step was to do the same for ratings/other ranks.

What's new about JPA Appraisal?

Your appraisal will be completed online wherever possible, which is new to all.

The biggest change will be the

new SJAR, which will replace RORRS and, for the first time, standardise the format and content of reports for non-commissioned personnel across the Forces.

OJAR, on the other hand, has been in use for years and other than minor format changes, only the method of compilation will alter.

Will JPA Appraisal be better than the previous system?

SJAR will be a significant improvement on RORRS in that it will allow you to play a far more active role in the through-year appraisal process.

Job objectives, career aspirations and future assignment preferences will be pulled across from other areas of JPA to appear on the SJAR, and there will also be an opportunity to remark upon

the First Reporting Officer's comments when the report is electronically 'released' to you as the subject of the appraisal.

Is the transition going to be straightforward?

As with any significant change, there are likely to be some initial teething troubles.

However, we have looked at a range of scenarios to ensure that the new system is capable of meeting the needs of all users.

Everybody will need to have a thorough understanding of all the requirements to make the system work effectively, including you – your personal information on JPA must be accurate and up to date.

Because the Appraisal report information will be auto-populated by drawing on data held elsewhere on JPA, the OJAR/SJAR details will be wrong if this data is incorrect.

What support is available to me as a subject or as someone involved in the appraisal process at any other level?

There is a great deal of information and help available, much of it from these sources:

JPA Appraisal is a tri-Service booklet providing an overview of the new system, which is being distributed to every individual in the Service from this month.

DIN 2007DIN01-058, *Introduction of JPA Appraisal within the Naval Service*, is available on the Defence Intranet and contains an overview of the policy and arrangements for introduction;

RNTM 188/07 aims to assist personnel and unit admin staff to prepare for JPA Appraisal, and provides detailed information on the implementation process;

JSP 757 (Version 3) is available online, with in-depth regulations and guidance on JPA Appraisal.

E-learning packages are available within the JPA website. Everybody should complete the sections of training relevant to them.

It will take just five minutes to complete for those who have a role only as subject of an OJAR/SJAR, and will be time well spent.

RN/RM JPA Helpdesk is available if you can't find what you need to know through any of the media above or your Unit Appraisal Administrator.

Contact the JPA Appraisal Team Helpdesk on PNB (9380) 27465.

The introduction of JPA Appraisal will inevitably present a challenge, and we fully appreciate there will be an initial additional workload for all concerned.

However, we are confident that the introduction of JPA Appraisal will prove a major step forward.

It will provide honest and constructive feedback to enable individual improvement and development while empowering the individual to be more involved in an appraisal process now harmonised across the Forces.

Changes to compensation scheme are proposed

PROPOSED changes to multiple injury rules of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme could mean larger pay-outs to seriously-injured personnel.

For those who sustain severe multiple injuries in a single incident, the current scheme pays on a reducing scale for the three most severe injuries only.

Following a review, and subject to the outcome of a consultation, it is proposed that the most seriously injured personnel will in future receive 100 per cent of the tariff value

Shipping liaison is vital role for RNR

FOLLOWING on from World Maritime Day in September, Lt Paul Ladislaus of Gateshead RNR unit HMS Calliope explains the role his specialisation, the Maritime Trade Operations (MTO) branch, plays in today's RN.

The RNR's MTO branch consists of officers and ratings who undergo specialist training to fulfil two vital roles for the RN and other Allied navies.

The first is Naval Co-operation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS), the provision of NATO military co-operation, guidance, advice and assistance to merchant shipping, to enhance their safety and to support military operations.

Many military ops directly or indirectly involve or affect merchant shipping, so it is important to avoid situations where either would adversely affect the other.

The NCAGS branch enhances and facilitates the relationship between naval forces and merchant shipping, normally by using a series of tools, such as information-gathering, briefing merchant ship masters and building up a picture of merchant shipping operations.

Depending on the situation, NCAGS teams can be deployed ashore in shipping co-operation points, normally located in major ports, or afloat on a command platform with a battleship.

The second facet is AWNIS, or Allied Worldwide Navigation Information System.

The AWNIS branch provides a complete navigational information service for military commands and civil shipping in an area of crisis.

AWNIS involves using the assets of military and civilian organisations that have maritime safety, navigational and routing responsibilities in peacetime, such as the Worldwide Navigational Warnings sent out on NAVTEX units, and combining them into a coherent organisation for use by Allied military commanders in crisis and conflict.

A recent example of this was the deployment of AWNIS teams to the Middle East during Op Telic to provide information to merchant shipping on issues such as mine clearance operations.

The MTO branch is vital when you consider that most UK trade – some 94 per cent – comes in by sea, so great importance is placed on keeping the oceans open for trade, traditionally a key RN role.

The ten officers and ratings who make up HMS Calliope's MTO undergo in-unit training, as well as regional training at HMS Scotia alongside other units.

They also attend specialist courses at the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood.

MTO personnel have recently deployed on NATO exercises to the USA, France and Poland.



● A church service on board HMS Ocean earlier this year

Picture: LA(Phot) Ray Jones

Chaplains 'more valued than ever'

NAVAL chaplains are valued by RN/RM personnel more than ever before, according to research commissioned as part of the Naval Chaplaincy Review, which began last year and draws to a close with its presentation to the Navy Board.

The QinetiQ research revealed that chaplaincy is held in high regard, and that chaplains are viewed as a precious asset, able to deploy alongside people at sea and ashore.

Of particular value is the traditional "ranklessness" of Naval chaplains, who traditionally share the rank of the person they are talking to, chaplains' ability to offer a confidential listening ear, and their commitment to all personnel, regardless of their gender, faith or ethnicity.

The Second Sea Lord has

endorsed the review, which makes some changes in the way that chaplaincy will be delivered in the Fleet and Brigade in future.

At present some 40 per cent of the 63 RN chaplains are in operational billets (at sea, with air squadrons or with RM units), but the current (and future) operational tempo demands that more chaplains should be made available to serve alongside Naval service personnel deployed on operations.

The review proposes that more than 50 per cent of chaplains will serve in operational billets in future, and will return to sea or the Corps more frequently.

The RN is currently short of chaplains and is actively recruiting priests and ministers of the major UK churches.

Prospective chaplains should

ideally be under 39, but could potentially join as late as 49.

Other growth areas in chaplaincy are the 'resurrection' of the RNR Chaplains branch, disbanded in the 1980s, with chaplains capable of serving with their Reserve units and deploying in support of the Fleet if needed, and the increasing contribution of the five Civilian Chaplains to the Military, helping to meet the spiritual needs of the major world faiths – Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim – in all three Services.

The Ven John Green, Chaplain of the Fleet, said: "As the Naval Service continues to work hard on operations worldwide, I am delighted to be able to offer more chaplains to stand with them, and give the best possible spiritual and pastoral support to our people."

● And it's goodnight from them... Dumbarton Castle basks in the glow of her searchlights in a becalmed Mare Harbour and (right) a sepia-tone sunrise over South Georgia
Pictures: LA(Phot) Chris Winter, FRPU Whale Island, and S/Lt D White, HMS Dumbarton Castle



Last goodbye for last Castle



IT IS, so the old Naval adage, goes 'not over till the Bootie Band plays.'

And there's time yet before the strains of *Sunset* drift across Portsmouth Naval Base and the White Ensign is hauled down for good on the flagstaff of HMS Dumbarton Castle for the patrol ship to bask in glory in the autumn of her life, wending her way back from the South Atlantic via the Americas.

For the past quarter of a century the ship's name has been bound inextricably with a remote outpost of empire unknown to most Britons when Dumbarton Castle was laid down in Aberdeen as the 1980s dawned.

She was built to safeguard the North Sea oil platforms which have been at the heart of Britain's economy since the latter half of the 20th Century.

But the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.

Actions 9,000 miles from those rigs in the small hours of Friday, April 2 1982 would determine the fate of HMS Dumbarton Castle and all who sailed in her for the next 25 years.

Few Britons had heard of the Falkland Islands in 1982. Fewer still could point to them on the map.

But in June of 1982, just three months after commissioning, Her Majesty's Ship Dumbarton Castle could be found prowling the South Atlantic carrying mail, cargo and troops. And by then, everyone knew where the Falklands were.

Her then Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr N D Wood, provided a rather concise account of what must have been 'lively' weeks in the new ship's life:

"On Thursday April 22, Dumbarton Castle was ordered to store for war and prepare for deployment.

"On arrival at Ascension her tasks included amongst others retaining Argentinean Prisoner of War Lt Cdr Astiz (known as 'Captain Death' in *The Sun* newspaper for previous war crimes) on board for 12 days under Royal Marine guard.

"On June 7 loaded with 40 tons of cargo on the flight deck, a further 50 tons internally and 110 service passengers Dumbarton Castle sailed for the Task Group and the Falkland Islands.

"The first six days passage took the ship due south from Ascension - the presence of an Army master baker significantly enhanced the galley productions."

Since the end of the conflict, in partnership with her sister ship HMS Leeds Castle, one of the two Castle-class Offshore Patrol Vessel has maintained a permanent presence in the South Atlantic supporting not just the Falklands but also South Georgia and the Sandwich Islands.

When not on active duty in the Southern Hemisphere they have returned to the UK for refits and to complete a variety of roles.

These have included everything from support of activities during the Cold



War to fishery patrol along the coastline, however, they have sailed home they have sailed home they have sailed home

Following the brief respite to fishery patrol sail again in 1982 Cdr Martin Pour

He recalls: "I joined two weeks from Rosyth, just and rushed refit sea training - we way."

Once at Ascension with the port engine fortunately HMS take the limping her up to 15 knots

"At this point on the port shaft the port engine, to continue to their own power.

"For the first engine was controlled Officer on a sound direct to an engine the pitch control jammed appropriately

"Those first adventure in not trying to show the Vessel could do what had relieved had

"We did the with Green Row first done in the since that seemed steer DC.

"By the end of machinery were at sea with running and one

"Our victualing inadequate for the Falklands, and with the red, with baked staple diet."

Fortunately a 1 to the rescue and to the patrol ship

On another sheltered from 6 the disgruntled perfectly-understand they would rather

A lack of time meant that the Island was a distant steward was summoned confessed that he receiving diving p

Std Campbell the bows of the the pontoon with clamber up the tr





● The last salute... A hearty wave from the ship's company as DC leaves Mare Harbour for good



After 25 years, Dumbarton Castle – the last Castle guardship of the South Atlantic – has left the ice and the Atlantic swell. Her final commanding officer, Lt Cdr Ian Lynn, flicks back through the pages of her globe-crossing history.

protection around the... once the sister is due... sailed south again.

the conflict DC returned... the UK aiding with... protection prior to setting... 186, this time with Lt... and in command.

I was very lucky to be... unity to take DC to the... first deployment as a... etime.

weeks before she sailed... st completing a hectic...; so no work up, no... would do that on the

ssion Island, a problem... ine was discovered. But... Ambuscade agreed to... ship in tow and work... ts.

the wind-milling effect... t was enough to start... and so we were able... Falklands under our

two months the port... olled by the Navigating... nd-powered telephone... eer manually operating... ol, and a 6-inch nail... ately in the fuel rack.

months were a great... w surroundings, and... at an Offshore Patrol... what the frigate that we... previously done.

ship's first ever RAS... ver, and probably the... RN under auto pilot... d to be the only way to

of March quite a lot... s not working and we... only one main engine... generator.

ing allowance was totally... the cost of food in the... ve were soon badly in... ed beans and chips the

Falkland Islander came... d provided three lambs... to boost their menu.

occasion as the ship... 0-knot blasts of wind... crew put forward the... andable opinion that... r be down the pub.

gs or berthing party... free pontoon on the... ant hope, but the CO's... moned and reluctantly... was indeed a diver and... ay.

agreed to jump from... ship, swim 70 feet to... n heaving line in teeth... actor-tyre fenders, and

pull headropes across to the pontoon.

The ship's company did indeed make it to the pub that night... and Std Campbell was compensated with some warming drinks.

DC adapted extremely well to the tough conditions down south, effectively deterring foreign nations from repeating previous mistakes.

Capable of achieving a large variety of tasks, there was never such a thing as a standard patrol.

The ship was used to transport and insert troops, conduct search and rescue operations, provide a sea-based helicopter landing pad, visit remote areas of the South Atlantic islands including South Georgia and the Sandwich Islands.

She conducted government diplomacy not just to the majority of South American countries but also to some in southern Africa.

In addition DC could stop and inspect foreign vessels in the economic zone and provide up-threat air radar coverage to give early warning of hostile elements.

The ship regularly visited the settlements dotted around the islands and when some of the crew visited, it could be the first time the locals had contact outside their immediate community, other than on a radio, for up to three months.

And so the cycle back and forth to the UK continued, fishery protection up north, Falkland Islands protection down south, until her return to European waters in 2002.

The trips to South Georgia were not always straight forward as her commanding officer in 1992, then Lt Cdr Evans, explained after a routine re-supply visit to Grytviken in September as a large storm bore down on the ship.

"There were plenty of 'berg bits' and growlers floating around and so our progress had to be judicious; these pieces of ice did not show up on radar and a good lookout was imperative.

"It was becoming clear that the storm was probably making better progress than we were. Having been on the bridge since about 0930, I decided at 0200 or so the following morning to head for my pit.

"A little while later, I was awoken from a deep slumber by an almighty crashing and grinding sound that seemed to make the ship shudder.

"I was convinced that we had hit an iceberg and rushed to the bridge, where I arrived to find all was peace and tranquillity, although the swell and sea state had increased.

"I asked the Officer of the Watch what had happened, what had we hit – but he replied quizzically that he had

felt nothing.

"Unconvinced, I ordered a reduction in speed and a check of the ship for flood damage.

"I think the bridge team must have thought I was deranged because they were blissfully unaware of anything and I began to wonder if I had dreamt it all.

"At about this time, the Chief of the Boat also arrived on the bridge and asked the same questions as I had done.

"Rounds of the ship revealed nothing untoward, but that sense of wrongness would not leave me or the charge chief.

"I also sensed a change in the ship's motion and we decided to check the upper deck, first by turning on the flight deck lights.

"All was revealed at that instant because we could then see that one of the iso-containers [on the flightdeck] had been shunted by the sea so that it was hanging precariously over the side, all but one of its chain lashings cast asunder."

The other container had also moved across the flight deck, but had not quite lost all its lashings. The CO quickly realised that a wave must have side-swiped the ship and washed over the flight deck, waking both officer and charge chief.

"It was obvious that we could not leave things as they were because had the container moved further, it could have tumbled awkwardly into the sea, made a hole in the ship's side and written off one of the screws.

"We had to content ourselves with just re-securing the containers where they were. We set course again but had to move with great caution for fear of further damage or endangering the ship.

"I composed a signal to CBFFI [Commander British Forces Falkland Islands] to apprise them of our predicament, but it was just one of those nights when the ionosphere conspired against us and we were unable to clear HF [high frequency] traffic.

"With the weather deteriorating and nobody else for company for hundreds of miles the South Atlantic seemed awfully empty, save for DC.

"During the time the ship was on her own I had time to think and reflect on what a great ship DC was and how marvelously she had performed in the South Atlantic even then. I believe the ship herself is worthy of the title 'heroic'."

In 2002 and 2003, things for DC took on a new slant.

Rather than carrying out patrols around the UK she headed to the Baltic to carry out Exercise Strong Resolve with various navies from the area with visits to Poland and Germany.

After returning to Portsmouth for leave and a short maintenance period, she then took up duties in Mine Countermeasures Force North, carrying out exercises all over Europe.

However following this respite from fishery protection, DC began her final tour of duty in the Falkland Islands on October 2 2004.

At 22 years old she approached the task as well then as she had at the beginning.

At the request of the Governor, the ship's company laid the name of the ship in stone opposite Port Stanley alongside the other guardships.

The ship also took part in the various events marking the 25th anniversary of the Liberation of the Falkland Islands in June 2007, and as one of the two remaining veterans, played centre-stage at the events at San Carlos and Stanley.

In preparing for her long voyage home, she RASed fuel from RFA Gold Rover, an evolution resurrected five months earlier which had not been recorded onboard since 1993.

The rest of her program was fitted around exercises and a number of high profile visits including Princess Anne.

As her CO I must say that it has been a huge honour being the final captain of this historic vessel. Her utility and capability are a credit to those who built her and operate her.

A delay of the arrival of our successor, HMS Clyde, meant volunteers were asked to extend. I needed 50 per cent; I got 100 per cent, everyone eligible stayed for the extra four months – what a fantastic bunch of individuals.

The long logistics chain and age of the vessel has kept all branches fully employed by presenting the odd challenge.

The visit to South Georgia in the middle of winter and watching killer whales hunt down fur seals at approximately 25kts is also high on the highlights list, as obviously is the favourite sport in these parts, penguin watching.

By the time you read this, DC will be writing the final chapter in her extraordinary career on her passage home.

Her duties in the Falklands are done. They will not be forgotten.



● A truly stunning panorama of South Georgia and (above) RFA Gold Rover tops up DC for the final time as her replacement HMS Clyde steams into view



Permanent patrol

THE front page of *Navy News* (October) has the facts wrong when it says "Vengeance ...recently completed the 300th deterrent patrol carried out by the Silent Service since round-the-clock missions by Polaris, and now Trident, boats began in 1969." It should read 1968.

Please see the monument stone to the Polaris Boats unveiled at the decommissioning of HMS Repulse at the Naval Base Clyde on August 28 1996.

I was present to see HMS Resolution depart on her first patrol in June 1968 as one of the Squadron Officers on SM10.

— Lt Cdr Vic Smith, Burr ridge, Southampton

HMS Resolution did her first patrol in 1968, but round-the-clock patrols didn't begin until 1969 — Ed

Skilled set

AS AN RAF reservist, I have just completed my detachment — in Basra — where I have been working alongside Royal Navy personnel, namely Communications Technicians (CTs).

Despite some 25 years of military service, I confess to being ignorant of most RN matters, but particularly of the fine work undertaken by CTs.

These people are a tribute to the RN, yet I wonder if many non-CTs realise the range of their skills?

Not only do they operate state-of-the-art technology, but they also speak many languages and, furthermore, are truly interoperable, working at ease alongside Army and RAF colleagues.

The professionalism, standards and capabilities are an inspiration to all.

I hope that your excellent paper will convey my thanks to those CTs with whom I have had the privilege of serving and salute the CT community at large.

— Flt Lt Alan Corbett, Chicksands

Illustrious return to sea

I HAVE been fortunate this year to have spent a week at sea on-board HMS Illustrious as a guest of my son, Leading Airman Dave 'Brooky' Brookman and more recently on a day trip out of Portsmouth for a Families' Day.

I would through *Navy News* like to thank Capt Fraser and his officers and crew for the wonderful hospitality provided by the ship's company.

As an ex-matelot myself it was a chance for me to experience life at sea again and have a beer and a laugh with my son's shipmates.

It was pleasing to be able to meet so many fine young men and women and be shown around this excellent well-run ship while operational at sea.

The nation can be proud of them and the Royal Navy.

— Paul Brookman, former Communications Branch, Worle, Weston Super Mare

See page 20 for a photo from that Families Day.

opinion

"SPOT on" was the description used time and again by guests at the dedication ceremony of the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire — and by the media, who gave the project wide coverage and universal praise.

The aim was to create a memorial to those lost since 1948 who may have no other stone to their name — and to create something impressive without being ostentatious, solemn without being over-formal.

It was a tall order for the designers, but to his great credit architect Liam O'Connor appears to have achieved the right balance.

The Arboretum is liberally scattered with monuments and memorials, evoking echoes of far-flung battlefields and military heroics.

The Memorial itself is a masterpiece of symbolism, a poignant recognition of the sacrifice made by each of the 16,000 whose

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

Brave Sir Bedivere



AS A former Royal Marines Colour Sergeant, I read with interest the article "First and Last Knight" (*Ships of the Royal Navy no. 622, Sept*) about Sir Bedivere.

At the time she was hit by a bomb in the Falklands campaign, I was stationed on the tank deck having control of the ship's air defence, two Bofors and four General Purpose Machine Guns.

The bomb did hit the port yardarm as stated, but also went through the A frame of the forward crane, cutting the cable and allowing the hook to hit the deck alongside the port Bofor.

It then hit the fo'c'sle, thence into the sea.

I do not recall any explosion, although another bomb did miss the ship to starboard, again, with no explosion.

— Jan York, Hooe, Plymouth



A vision of the future

WITH regard to the article "Project Fisher" (September) during my latter years in the RN, I served in Fleet Management Services, my boss Cdre Alan Tremelling and I piloted crew changes with fishery protection in the early 90s.

My project at the Royal Military College Shrivenham was to computerise a watch and station bill for ship type X, a blueprint adaptable to any ship type.

Military software was not up to today's technology, but with the help of college computer buffs a working model was produced, which at the flick of a switch gave command and control a real-time onscreen overview of the whole ship watch and station bill, married to manpower.

With basic input it showed up gaps, personnel out-of-ship on courses, leave, sick, etc. I eventually progressed the programme to a Cruising/Action Stations sequence which made for the ultimate command and control computer game with "what ifs?" playable.

However, all efforts to get it off the ground fell on deaf ears. With today's information technology I am sure a version could be produced and perhaps Cdre Ian Corder may be able to adapt it to a flexible manning tool.

— George 'Jimmy' Green, former WO (Manpower) FAST 90-94

A more ancient mariner

IN his letter "Calling the Home Fleet" (May) Shipmate Eddie Simpson laid claim to the fact that he was the oldest member in Fleetwood and possibly in the country to have been in the Home Fleet in Scapa Flow in 1939.

It may be so in Fleetwood, but as to the rest of the country, sorry Eddie, that honour is held by S/M Bernard Hallas still serving as the publicity officer for the York RN association in his ninetieth year.

S/M Bernard joined the Royal

Marines in 1935 and served on board the Resolution in the Home Fleet during the Spanish Civil War, operating on contraband control in 1936-37, after which he transferred to HMS Royal Sovereign, again in the Home Fleet in 1938.

When war was declared, as a higher gunnery rating he was posted to HMS Warspite and it was goodbye to Scapa, welcome to the sunshine.

S/M Bernard is a full member of York RN and RM Associations, an associate member of Yorkshire



First blood donor?

CAN any readers shed light on this photo of my dad, Josiah Morgan? The family story is that he was the first British serviceman to give blood after Pearl Harbour.

He served in HMS Furious which did call in at Philadelphia where the picture was taken.

My dad has been dead for more than 22 years but was a blood donor for most of his life — a tradition which my daughter and I have carried on.

— Mary Morgan, Stoke

Sideways on X factor jinx

I READ with interest Reg Gale's letter (September) about the angled flight deck.

In 1950-52 I was the Deck Landing Control Officer (BATS) aboard HMS Indomitable. During this time we carried out trials with approaches at an angle to the deck, with the wind at approximately 15 degrees on the port bow.

The Squadrons we had aboard at the time were 813 Firebrands, 801 Sea Hornets, 826 Fireflies, 860 Seahawks, and a Dutch Navy Squadron. At this time the squadrons made up a song to the tune of *I'll be Loving You Always*.

The words of the chorus were:

*I'll be landing on sideways,
Not from up above,
Not from down below,
But sideways...*

— Lt Cdr Ron Crayton (Ret'd)

THE letter "Crunch time coming for shipmates" (October) referred to the old 'official number' system and the basis for the prefixes.

The 'X' component indicated that the individual was only entitled to the reduced October 1925 pay rates.

Inertia ensured that it remained long after these were superseded.

In 1925, at a time of severe financial crises, the Anderson Committee was set up to review (ie reduce) the pay of the Services.

As a result reduced pay rates were introduced for personnel entering the RN from October 1925.

The financial crisis worsened in the ensuing years and in 1931 it was announced that pay rates for all personnel were to be reduced — leading to the Invergordon Mutiny.

— Stanley King, Southsea

...I WAS originally a London division rating who joined early in 1939, was mobilised August 29 and had the number LX3886.

If memory serves me correctly, other RNVR Divisions, eg Tyne and Mersey, had numbers prefixed TDX and MDX respectively.

— Lt Cdr Robert Read (Ret'd) Liverpool, New York, USA

...I joined the Royal Navy as a boy seaman in 1930.

In the late 1920s the government decided to reduce naval payments across the board.

There were moans across the Navy and they relented — pay did not become less for J ratings, but all new entrants would get the pay cut and receive the prefix JX, hence the JIXA name.

As an example, a J rating AB was getting four shillings a day, JX ratings when qualified were paid three shillings a day.

— T Ormes, former Chief Petty Officer, Teg Down, Winchester

Rum goings on in Quorn

READING the October issue of *Navy News* online, I was interested in the article on HMS Quorn receiving an award for its fishery protection achievements.

I served in the World War 2 Quorn for 14 months in 1942-43. In those days we escorted convoys around the coast, patrolled the Channel, and on one occasion were part of a force that sank the Komet, an armed German merchantman.

Even though the rum issue was discontinued in 1970, surely the saddest event in the history of the Royal Navy, it was nice to know that the crew did partake of a tot of Pusser's Rum, giving the ship's modern-day crew a taste of what we used to enjoy every day at 1100 hours.

Our rum was so potent that I found it very difficult as a telegraphist to remain alert during the afternoon watch with a pair of earphones on my head.

Between ships, in barracks, the watered-down tot was a poor substitute for the real thing.

— Ken Tipper, Ocala, Florida, USA

Gallant November action

AS November is coming along, each and every year my thoughts turn to that never-to-be-forgotten day of November 1, 1944.

Force T suffered a calamitous 80 per cent loss attacking the German guns at Walcheren Islands, which blocked the use of the Scheldt River leading to Antwerp, vital for the Army to use as a base to build up supplies for the attack on Germany, to shorten the war.

I was a 20-year-old senior telegraphist on Landing Craft Flak (LCF 38) which led the assault of the LCFs and LCGs 4.5 guns.

Our biggest weapons were pom poms, totally useless against the 6-inch concrete gun emplacements to draw the German fire away from the commandos going in.

Many years later we learned the truth that it was thought well-nigh impossible to succeed — but we did.

It is described in war records as one of the most gallant actions by the RN and RM in the battle to shorten the war in Europe.

As there are still a few of us awaiting the crash draft to the 'big dockyard' I thought it would be nice to print our tale, as most of today's Navy have never been told of events which saved our country in World War 2.

My great-grandson by the way is now serving in HMS Endurance.

— Lt Cdr Alf Neil, (ret'd)(SCC) RNR, Ex Scottish Region Executive Officer, Bute Wynd, Kirkcaldy

CLASSIC JACK

BY TUES



Tributes to a faithful shipmate

IN 1991 I started a campaign to have a memorial to Just Nuisance placed in a naval establishment in this country, to recognise what he had done for the morale of visiting matelots to the Cape Town area during the Second World War.

Contact was made with various South African newspapers seeking support and the response was overwhelming, with many personal stories concerning this great shipmate.

On September 22 1993 at HMS Centurion a plaque was unveiled by Cdre Charles Cranford with the Rev Arthur Farquarson-Roberts (ex-Royal Marines).

Also in attendance were two admirals along with other ex-naval personnel who had taken an interest in the campaign.

As the plaque was unveiled at Centurion a service was held and a wreath laid at the Just Nuisance memorial at Simonstown, South Africa, with various dignitaries in attendance.

The first RN ship to visit South Africa at the end of apartheid was HMS Norfolk; Capt Perowne sent



me photos of his ship's company on parade at the Just Nuisance statue in Simonstown.

- Tom Bryant, East Preston, West Sussex

...I was interested in Mrs Umbreville's letter about Just Nuisance (October) and her delight with the book *Just Nuisance AB*.

Having been associated with Just Nuisance on his occasional visits to Simonstown Hospital, and frequently boarding trains with him to and from Simonstown station, I too managed to purchase the book about this beautiful dog and great character.

The photograph (above) is one I took at Simonstown Hospital in August 1942. I believe the nurse on the left, Lantha Bacon, is the same nurse who was shown in your picture (October) at Just Nuisance's bedside in 1943.

During my service in the RN I worked alongside Iantha and Nurse Barbara Clark (second from left) at Simonstown RN Hospital.

- Jack Quin, Newton, Powys

Wrens past and present

I ENJOYED reading the contribution of the QARNNS (Falklands 25) the website interviews of RN women, and the tribute made by the York branch of the Association of Wrens and RN veterans to the "twenty-two lost Wrens" of SS Aguila, who were en route to Gibraltar in 1941.

Two items may be of interest to your readers; according to the memoirs of the Director WRNS, the complement of servicewomen going to Gibraltar was 12 Cypher Officers, ten W/T Chief Wrens and one Naval Nursing Sister, under the command of the WRNS officer.

Secondly, the Association of Wrens, a charitable organisation, was formed in 1920 by a group of ex-Wrens who felt that both the friendships they had made and the spirit of the service should be kept alive.

Now, many years later that same ideal is still upheld by over 7,000 women, some of whom are

currently serving with the Royal Navy.

- Celia Saywell, vice chairman, Association of Wrens, Hatherley St, London

...LORD Hamilton is talking like a typical politician when he makes the observation (October) about the effect of having females at sea: "I am sure that we have strengthened the Navy as a result too, because I think it has raised the quality of our people who now serve in the Navy whether they're male or female."

I remain neutral on this subject, but I object to the inference that we, who did our two-and-a-half-year commissions without female assistance, were of a lesser quality than today's personnel who often seem to be dripping about being away more than three months at a time.

Mixed crews have yet to be tested in the firing line.

- P Relf, Gravesend, Kent

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

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

Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

Given the impressive volume of

letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

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.



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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Tribute paid to crash victims

THE reception afforded by the city of Melbourne had been outstanding, and the departing Royal Navy carrier group had one final event for their hosts.

As the ships sailed for Sydney on Sunday July 20 1947, Fleet Air Arm aircraft took off for a farewell display.

But as the planes formed up, it all went horribly wrong.

Two Fairey Firefly FR1s of 812

NAS collided at 800ft, and the wreckage plunged into Port Phillip Bay with the bodies of four aviators – Lt Cdr Nathaniel Hearle, Lt Ken Sellars, Lt Raymond Walker and CPO Bill Lovatt.

Only Lt Cdr Hearle's body was recovered, and he was buried at sea the following day.

But that was not the end of the death toll for that black Sunday.

A Seafire of 804 NAS crash-landed on returning to HMS Theseus, and its arrester hook smashed the skull of Aircraft

Handler OS Tony Timmons (19), who was killed on the spot.

And another aircraft which crash-landed on the flight deck of HMS Glory, sailing in company with Theseus, injured Air Mechanic Terry Sadler (19) so badly that he died soon after.

Six deaths in one day, which left their mark on Bill Grice, who in 1947 was serving as an Air Mechanic (Engines) with 812 NAS, part of the 14th Carrier Air Group on its deployment to the Far East and Australasia, and witnessed the tragedies first-hand.

Some 50 years later Bill wrote a book on his Naval career, and started to contact old shipmates, using whatever media he could, including the internet.

Then in January 2004 Bill received an email from a Paul Roadknight in Australia, saying he and his fellow diver Steve Boneham had found the wrecks of two aircraft which he believed to be the ill-fated fighter-reconnaissance Fireflies, and asking Bill for any more details.

The divers took video footage and examined the wrecks, while Bill filled in the gaps in their knowledge.

And as there were presumed to be human remains still in the wreckage, a memorial service was organised, supported by the Royal Australian Navy.

Bill had celebrated his 20th birthday in Sydney, eight days

after the accidents, and it seemed right to him to celebrate his 80th in Australia, so the memorial service was organised for the 60th anniversary of the incidents.

None of the victims was married, so there were no immediate descendants to contact – at 32, Nat Hearle was the oldest, but had spent most of the war as a PoW.

But an article in his home-town paper somehow got to Australia, where a second cousin, Wendy Stace, was delighted to hear of the service, and promptly rounded up all the Hearles she could find.

Bill, accompanied by his granddaughter, joined the party on a cold, drizzly and thoroughly miserable day on the Challenger, which took them out into the bay.

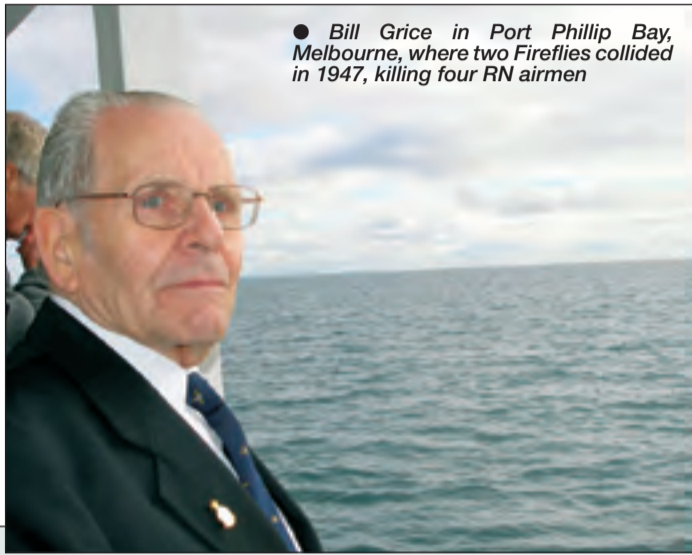
Wreaths were laid on the water above the wreckage, and a plaque was taken down by the divers.

At 2.05pm, the exact time of the accident, the clouds parted and in the wintry sunshine two aircraft, led by a Spitfire, roared over the site, the wartime fighter performing a victory roll to add to the emotion.

The event was televised on Australian TV.

Bill is still looking for relatives or friends of the victims – contact him at 01924 892246, at wgrice@blueyonder.co.uk or through the website www.hmstheus.co.uk

● A bugler from HMAS Cerberus during the memorial ceremony in Port Phillip Bay (right) and (below) the tranquil scene on the day of the service



● Bill Grice in Port Phillip Bay, Melbourne, where two Fireflies collided in 1947, killing four RN airmen



● A lone Spitfire salutes the six victims (above) while the calm waters of Port Phillip Bay are lit by a ray of sunshine as the ceremony takes place (right)



● Reading branch celebrated its 70th anniversary with a rededication of their standard at a Drumhead Service, at which 28 standards were in attendance, including the National Standard of the RNA and the National Submariners Standard. Shipmates came from branches as far apart as Falmouth and Coventry, and from all parts of Area 6 with their standards. The Naval Volunteers Band led the parade. The events were organised by branch secretary S/M Daphne Wyatt

Shipmates march to Cenotaph

THE Association's Biennial March to the Cenotaph in London saw some 51 standards being paraded alongside about 200 marchers.

The parade was led by the Band of HM Royal Marines, Plymouth, while the Act of Remembrance was led by the Chaplain of the Fleet and Hon Chaplain of the RNA, Archdeacon The Venerable John Green QHC.

Association National President Vice Admiral John McAnally took the salute, and the parade commander was National Ceremonial Officer S/M Alan Robinson.

The event attracted considerable public support from spectators.



Crane agents

A GROUP of veterans from HMS Crane have visited a pioneering wildlife sanctuary to cement a link with their old ship's namesakes.

Nine former shipmates travelled to the Slimbridge site of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) in Gloucestershire to meet students of the Crane School.

They took with them a ship's badge as a passing-out gift to 'students' learning to survive after hatching out in the summer.

Having passed the first stage of training, the birds are now in 'secondary school' to learn about predators. Staff who have been wearing crane costumes to avoid dangerous familiarity, can discard the false beaks and other regalia while undertaking noisy tasks which the cranes dislike.

It is all part of the Great Crane Project, a partnership between Pensthorpe Conservation Trust, the RSPB and the WWT, which aims to re-establish a breeding population of cranes in Britain.

Roy Lidgett, who served in the modified Black Swan-class sloop from 1957-59, said: "When we heard about WWT's plans to reintroduce cranes to the UK we were keen to get involved."

"WWT and their partners need to raise funds for rearing facilities – adopting a crane is just one of the ways ordinary people like us can help."

"It is important that organisations like the HMS Crane Association support a charity which is helping save habitats around the world for future generations."

"Sir Peter Scott, the founder of WWT, served in the Navy during World War 2, and was responsible for our camouflage."

Leamington plan for anniversary

ROYAL Leamington Spa branch will celebrate its 60th anniversary at a dinner dance next February.

Plans are well in hand to make it a special occasion, and Association General Secretary S/M Paddy McClurg has accepted an invitation to be principal guest.

It is hoped that other events will be staged throughout the special year.

Last year the branch received a Lottery grant of £10,000 to re-establish a galley to replace one destroyed by the floods of 1977.

Members gave their time and skills to assist in the project, which is now complete.

In addition, what was a large storage room has been renovated and refurbished, so that the facilities offered for ship reunions and other community users have been considerably upgraded.

Contact S/M Maurice Williams on 01926 881391 or email leamingtonrna@btconnect.com for details.

Naval Quirks





Picture: Derek Cooknell Photography

Mayor is fan of RN

THE current Mayor of Warwick is an ex-Crab – but he has a soft spot for the Royal Navy.

Cllr Martyn Ashford (above) joined the RAF in 1974 and trained as a propulsion fitter – though early in his career he spent two years on exchange with 809 NAS.

He later served at Malta with Vulcan bombers, in Germany with Buccaneers and at RAF Cottesmore with Tornados.

His final posting was at RAF Chivenor with 22 Air Sea Rescue.

Martyn became Mayor of Warwick Town Council in 2007 – and the Warwick branch is very proud, as Martyn is an associate member of the branch.

The branch also boasts Mace Bearers to the Mayor – both S/M Derek Fletcher, branch secretary, and his assistant have that responsibility.

Silver lunch

SHIPMATES and friends of the Falmouth branch celebrated the 25th anniversary of the recommissioning of the branch with a lunch in the town.

S/M Richard Hart, chairman of Area 4, spoke of the significant events of 25 years ago, in particular the Falklands War, while branch chairman S/M Mick Stevens observed 1982 also saw the raising of the Mary Rose – disproving the submariners' theory that it is only submarines that go to the bottom and come back up again.

Corps reputation 'in safe hands'

A VETERAN Royal Marine has spent a weekend watching the latest generation Green Berets go through their paces – and is happy that the reputation of the Corps is in safe hands.

Ninety-year-old S/M Bernard Hallas was at Lymstone with the RMA, where he saw a rehearsal of the King's Squad passing out parade.

"My first impression was that it was not up to standard, and in theory this was probably true," said Bernard, a member of York branch.

"I was not impressed. I then realised that pre-war Royal Marines were a different kind of animal."

S/M Bernard recalled the months spent pounding the parade ground getting the drill right, and how a complete King's Squad, in HMS Warspite in Seattle during 1942, swept to victory over the US Marine Corps in a drill display.

"Having said that, drill does not win wars, and whereas we spent months pounding the square, today's King's Squads only spend days,

and their forte is out in the field, and because of this they are now so much better than anything we could produce," said Bernard.

"They are now proving to all those that matter, and in particular to us old 'uns, that they are the best in the world."

"Recent events have proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that today's youngsters wearing the Globe and Laurel are the ultimate fighting machine and we are convinced that they will never tarnish our history, and we are more than a little proud of them."

War sites on itinerary

RAYLEIGH and Basildon branches paid their respects to war victims thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Fund.

Rayleigh used the £8,400 to travel to France and Belgium, with Basildon members filling spare places.

The party visited the memorial and beaches at Dunkirk/Malo les Baines on the way to Lille.

One day saw an excursion to sites and towns of the Somme battlefields, including Thiepval, Longueval and Beaumont Hamel.

The following afternoon was spent at Ypres, with the highlight being attendance at the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate in the evening.

As well as Belgian fire brigade personnel, who play the Last Post and Reveille every day of the year, there was also a contribution by a police band from Yorkshire.

The next day allowed a leisurely visit to Bruges and Ostend, then it was back to the battlefield tour.

The party had time to visit Vimy Ridge, where the Canadians won a costly victory over German defenders in April 1917 during the Battle of Arras, and then the RNA contingent climbed back aboard the bus to catch the ferry home.

Welfare in the spotlight

AN RNA welfare seminar at HMS Nelson was attended by some 32 delegates from areas and branches.

Among the topics covered were: The range of benefits available to the mature citizen.

Points to watch for when assessing completed standard application forms (the A Form) for almonisation (in use in various forms by the RBL, SSAFA and RNBT);

Relative poverty and the ex-RN community;

The various aids and appliances available to the disabled sector of the community;

How the RNA was involved in helping our Servicemen in Afghanistan and Iraq, and how assistance could be offered to returned wounded, injured and ill Servicemen in Selly Oak MDHU.

Orkney connection is re-established

JUST over 50 years after the White Ensign was lowered at Lyness for the last time, a new link between Orkney and the Royal Navy has been forged.

March 29 1957 was a typical Orcadian early spring day – a bitter gusting wind and heavy clouds – as a small contingent of RN personnel and crowds of islanders listened to the bugle call of *Sunset* as an era came to an end.

But the relationship between Scapa Flow and the Senior Service, forged over years of triumph and tragedy, has been maintained over the intervening decades.

Partnerships between sailors and local women, and old salts heading north for retirement, have helped, as have the presence of the Sea Cadet Corps.

But the formal connection between the Navy and Orkney ended on that grey March afternoon.

But now a new link has been forged with the commissioning of the Orkney branch of the RNA.

The two-day programme began

with a commissioning ceremony at the Royal British Legion Club, followed by a buffet supper and dance attended by around 120 people.

On the Sunday, members of the new branch marched from the RBL Club to St Magnus Cathedral, with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph on the way.

Marching with them was a pipe band and standards of various ex-Service organisations, and on arrival at Kirkwall's ancient cathedral a dedication service was held, at which branch honorary chaplain Rev David Dawson preached a well-received sermon.

The celebrations attracted a number of senior officers from the Association.

These included RNA president S/M John McAnally and chairman S/M David White, Scottish Area president S/M David Cowan and chairman S/M David Berisford.

The Lord Lieutenant of Orkney, Dr Tony Trickett, was also present.

The new branch itself, led by chairman S/M David Hughes, has started up with 16 members.

The Orkneys lie eight miles north of the Scottish mainland, and at the centre of the archipelago lies the sheltered anchorage of Scapa Flow, used by the RN as a safe haven in both world wars.



Standards are paraded at the commissioning of Orkney branch

Picture: Ken Amer, Orkney Photographic

Newcastles in the picture

A MEMBER of the HMS Newcastle Association was given the task of creating a painting of the two ships which the group represents.

The association has never had a standard to hang in their church – St George's in Portsea – during reunion services, so G Knapp created the painting of the wartime cruiser and Type 42 destroyer to display.

The picture was presented to Rev Karina Green at St George's by association secretary David Park, treasurer Brian Ainsworth, Gary Roe and Paul Temperley.

In praise of the tot

THE demise of the Royal Navy rum ration was commemorated by Plymouth branch in the WO&SR Mess of HMS Drake, where members over 20 were treated to a free tot of Pusser's Rum.

Branch secretary S/M Arthur Gutteridge gave a brief history of the events leading up to Tot Black Day.

A rum raffle raised £140 towards branch charitable donations.

Warm welcome

SHIPMATES in southern Spain would like to remind ex-pats and visitors that the Torrevejia branch on the Costa Blanca meets on the first Wednesday of the month at El Paraiso bar and restaurant in the Avda Las Alondras, Becisa, Los Angeles, Torrevejia.

For more information contact Rod Millington on 966764292 or see www.torrevejia.info

Welsh memorial is consecrated in Cardiff

THE Welsh National Falklands Memorial has been consecrated at a drumhead service in Cardiff.

The concept, three-years of fund-raising and most of the building was done by veterans of the South Atlantic Medal Association (SAMA) Wales/Cymru.

The memorial consists of a five-ton granite rock transported 8,500 miles from Mt Harriet in the Falklands, which sits on a Portland stone plinth with granite facings.

The rock was found by Welsh Guards veteran Andy 'Curly' Jones at the base of the mountain, where the Guards secured the 'start-line' for an attack by 42 Cdo RM, when he made a return visit to the South Atlantic in 2005 – though he admits the rock was a little larger than he had been looking for.

The 7ft boulder was brought to the UK by UK service personnel, and after being shifted from

Glamorgan veterans remember

THE HMS Glamorgan Falklands Association have held a memorial service in Portsmouth Cathedral.

The Portsmouth-based County-class guided missile destroyer was one of the first ships to join the Falklands campaign.

She was attacked three times by Argentine aircraft, but it was a shore-launched Exocet missile, on June 12, which caused most damage, killing 14 of her sailors.

The HMS Glamorgan Falklands Association meets every five years



Southampton to South Wales by Royal Logistics Corps territorials, it 'rested' near Brecon until the 6ft plinth was completed.

At a ceremony marking the laying of the foundation, David Pickering, chairman of the Welsh Rugby Union, placed an engraved brick, and his presence was a symbolic act from a rugby nation as "a final touch-down for the boys who will never see again their nation playing the wide and open game."

The memorial commemorates the 258 members of the Task Force and three Falkland Islanders who died – all major battles and ship

losses had dead and injured men from Wales.

"Many members of the Welsh public have contributed to the National Memorial," said Andy Jones.

"Emotions within Wales have run high during this special 25th commemorative year.

"Wales, more than any other home nation, suffered a disproportionate percentage of casualties during the conflict."

Portland ships' flights reunite

AVIATORS from the Falklands Conflict staged a reunion at Weymouth Golf Club to mark the 25th anniversary of the campaign.

The reunion was for members of ship's flights based at Portland who operated helicopters from frigates and destroyers.

A welcome address was given by Dave McCaughey, formerly of HMS Yarmouth, in which shipmates killed in action or who have died since were remembered.

A total of 75 people attended, representing Lynx, Wasps and Wessex 3s of the following ships: Ambuscade, Antelope, Antrim, Ardent, Argonaut, Arrow, Brilliant, Broadsword, Cardiff, Coventry, Endurance, Exeter, Glasgow, Hecla, Hydra, Hermes, Invincible, Sheffield, Plymouth, Yarmouth, RMS Contender Bezant and RMS St Helena.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our September edition (right) was RFA Lyness, later known as USNS Sirius, and was correctly identified by Mr D Dobbie, of Fife, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's ship (above), another RFA, was launched in October 1959 at Scotstoun.

Although this particular tanker apparently shares a class name with later, bigger 'sisters', she was a one-off, and served with the others in the Falklands campaign. Can you name her?

The right answer could win you £50.

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 December 7. 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 January edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 153

Name

Address

My answer

Get wise on DCI

SET IN 660 acres in the heart of the Bedfordshire countryside, it would be difficult to identify a more striking defence site or one that is further from the sea than the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre (DISC) at Chicksands.

Nevertheless, a number of Royal Navy and Royal Marines serve within the DISC, many employed by the Defence College of Intelligence (DCI), responsible for delivering defence intelligence training in security, language, intelligence,

Military intelligence is not something which appears in the pages of *Navy News* very often. **Capt Paul Burrell RN**, Director of the Defence College of Intelligence, hopes to shed some light into this murky world – and above all the men and women who train the people who control the countless tentacles of information.

photography and geospatial disciplines.

The centrepiece of the site is the remarkable 12th-Century priory which is, given its age, unsurprisingly haunted.

Legend has it that Rosata, a nun, fell pregnant to one of the canons. For her transgression she was walled up alive in the cloister after witnessing the execution by disembowelling of the canon who was responsible for her situation. She reputedly continues to walk the priory on the 17th of each month.

All of which has very little to do with defence intelligence, but we thought you'd like the gruesome tale.

Anyway, Chicksands' military life only began when the Air Ministry snapped up the site in 1936 and developed it into as a code intercept station supporting the signal intelligence programme carried out at Bletchley Park.

After WW2, the site was used by the US Air Force as a Signals Intelligence (or SIGINT) centre until September 1995 when

it was returned to the MOD.

Today, the establishment is home to the Defence College of Intelligence under Capt Paul Burrell RN, although the college is split across the country.

The Defence School of Intelligence can be found in Chicksands itself; the Defence School of Languages at Beaconsfield; the Defence School of Photography (DSOP) at Cosford, near Wolverhampton, and the Royal School of Military Survey (RSMS) at Hermitage, near Newbury.

Almost 5,000 people pass through the various college 'campuses' each year, tutored by some 470 staff, 38 of them RN or RM.

At the core of the college, and led by a Royal Navy commander, is the Training Policy and Management Department which ensures both defence-wide and single Service training policies are implemented across the organisation.

Having undergone a recent and fundamental reorganisation, the Defence School of Intelligence now comprises six departments, responsible for specialist trade training

including Communications Technicians, Royal Marines, the Royal Signals, Intelligence Corps and RAF Intelligence branch personnel.

The newly-created ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) training department is at the forefront of training Service personnel for current operations.

The Tactical Intelligence (Counter Insurgency) Branch provides intelligence training designed to prepare a battlegroup, battalion, brigade or division's intelligence cell for operational duties in Afghanistan and Iraq while the Tactical Intelligence (Conventional) Branch delivers training to non-intelligence specialists.

The branch also supports the annual two-week International Intelligence Director's Course, which draws together senior officers from 26 nations for a series of intelligence-related seminars and discussions.

The Analysis Training Branch does just that; it teaches personnel a wide range of analytical techniques and delivers IT training in support of analysts' work.

The Air Intelligence Training Department provides initial specialist training for RAF intelligence officers and intelligence trades, although a number of RN officers have attended this training as an element of professional development before working in naval intelligence.

Maintaining its wartime roots, the SIGINT training department at Chicksands site provides signal collection, analysis, reporting, exploitation and

applied language training across the three Armed Forces.

Recognising the importance of physical and documentary security as a fundamental element of the counter-intelligence trade, Unit Security Officer courses for the RN and Army and the IT security investigator and advisor courses are delivered by the Security Training Department, which is led by a Royal Marines major.

Despite all the wizardry of the 21st Century world, a significant proportion of intelligence continues to be gathered through human sources.

The Human Intelligence training department delivers a range of courses covering: security and intelligence training for attachés and their staffs; overt and covert agent handling techniques; debriefing; tactical questioning; interrogation and surveillance techniques.

Finally, with Chicksands being the home of the Intelligence Corps, the Templer training department provides military and professional training for the Intelligence Corps' soldiers and officers, with the fundamental aim of engendering and nurturing Intelligence Corps' spirit and ethos.

Moving on to the Defence School of Languages, headed by an RN commander, it teaches around 400 people across the spectrum of operationally related-languages.

Graduates of the Defence School of Photography are responsible for the images which fill *Navy News*. The photographers trained at Cosford are trained not merely in the art of still photography for PR purposes, but also combat

camera work, accident and investigative training for all three services.

With a history on the Hermitage site dating back to 1949 and having been granted its Royal status in 1996, the Royal School of Military Survey provides geospatial training to MSc level for Royal Engineer Officers and foreign students through the Army Survey Course and to a Foundation Degree level for soldiers of the Royal Engineer Geo-Technician trade.

To exploit the growing links between imagery intelligence and geo-spatial intelligence, the RSMS has recently taken control of the Imagery Intelligence training department at Chicksands and the imagery analysts it trains.

Visitors, both national and international, to the Defence College of Intelligence are frequent and the organisation enjoys links with local Sea Cadet and school CCF units.

While training necessarily dominates activities, both staff and trainees make good use of the wide range of sporting and other activities that are on offer through the extensive facilities on all four sites and have achieved success in a variety of unit level single and inter-service competitions.

It's fair to say that while many miles from the sea and without a warship in sight, the Defence College of Intelligence is a busy and thriving unit delivering operationally-focused training. The RN and RM personnel serving within the organisation are making an active and valued contribution to the training of intelligence in its broadest sense.



● The business end of RN intelligence... A Royal Marines boarding party climbs aboard a tanker in the northern Arabian Gulf – an operation based on intelligence gathered... and an operation to gather intelligence





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Supa-culdrose-pasta-licious

IT'S a pasta bonanza for the runners from RNAS Culdrose who are readying themselves to tackle a round-the-clock run from Penzance to London.

The ten have been challenged by 13-year-old Rosie Howis to run the historic route taken by Lt Lapenotiere and his 19 changes of steed when he raced over 266 miles to deliver the news of victory at the Battle of Trafalgar and Nelson's death.

Each runner will be covering 33 miles over 48 hours – and have been told by the RN's expert Physical Trainers to stock up on a high carbohydrate and low fat diet.

The Culdrose team reckon that they are the first runners to attempt to beat this time, and are

even adding to the challenge by starting out in Penzance rather than Falmouth.

As they run, each man or woman will be carrying a baton from Rosie and a plea to those that they meet on the road to donate money to her charity.

Rosie (pictured above surrounded by some of her running crew), who suffers from Ewing Sarcoma – a rare form of bone cancer, tasked the runners to run on her behalf to raise money for the Children's Ward at Treliiske Hospital where she is undergoing extensive chemotherapy treatment.

If you want to pledge your support to Rosie and her runners, contact the organiser CPO Matt Weetch on 01326 552815 or email cuscpo@culdrose.mod.uk

Busking in the glory

FROM musical zero to hero, Lt Mark Warrick of HMS Collingwood set himself the challenge of learning the acoustic guitar in a single year, writing his own songs, then performing them as a busker to London's public by the Millennium Wheel for Cancer Research UK.

Mark decided to rope in a couple of mates on his musical journey, Lt Chris Gare, who knew slightly more about the guitar than Mark, and Lt Rob Butler of Fleet HQ – a lifelong classical guitarist.

The Busking Cancer Originals from the RN were joined by several other bands on the day to wow the crowds on London's South Bank.

After three hours, their combined efforts had raised £1,376 for the cancer charity.

Find out about the annual event on www.buskingcancer.co.uk.



● Lt Mark Warrick and Lt Chris Gare are clearly impressed by their new-found musical abilities

Cycling trials and medical assessment

FIVE cyclists from MCTA (Maritime Commissioning, Trials and Assessment) set off to cycle the 948 miles from John O'Groats to Land's End – although only four made it to their Cornish destination...

While Lt Ade Richardson, Lt Tim Fry, Lt Mark Edwins and CPO Marty Sutherland arrived at Land's End on their bikes, CPO Del Murray had his trip cut short with a trip to a Merseyside A&E unit for a broken ankle.

On the plus side, his bike did make it down to Cornwall to have its photo taken by the famous Land's End sign.

The cyclists took 13 days to complete their long southward route – slightly longer than the usual route as they deviated via the Naval Bases at the Clyde and Devonport.

The cyclists, through a combination of collecting buckets along their path and sponsorship, have already raised £2,500, although their goal is a full £5,000 for their nominated charity, FORT (Friends of Oncology and Radiotherapy).

Appropriately enough for the Portsmouth-based organisation, this is also the nominated charity of the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, who met the cyclists to wish them well on their long-distance



● The MCTA cyclists in Glasgow on their long journey south from John O'Groats to Land's End

journey.

"FORT is the nominated charity for MCTA," explained Ade, "because a member of our organisation lost his wife to cancer."

The ride proved challenging, with none of the cyclists pledging to take on a similar long haul again.

The Naval men stayed at various hostels and campsites along their route, and one unusual resting place when the hostel let them down...

"In Carlisle, we stayed in a Fire

Picture: Colin Mearns, *The Glasgow Herald*

Station," said Ade. "I got on to the blower and spoke to Red Watch, who were very receptive. They just said 'yes, absolutely'."

"We saw them go out on a couple of calls. So it wasn't the most peaceful of nights."

He added: "In terms of riding, everyone thinks that Scotland is worse than Cornwall, but it isn't. "Scotland tends to undulate. In Cornwall, they've got some big old cliffs."

To find out more visit the team's website on the internet at www.mctacharitycycle.blogspot.com.

news in brief

■ VISITORS to the Chaplaincy in HMS Nelson were invited to enjoy a cup of coffee at the World's Biggest Coffee Morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Research.

A steady flow of supporters enjoyed a cuppa and a sticky bun to raise over £242 for the national charity's big fundraiser.

■ A TEAM of 12 from frigate HMS St Albans are pedalling some 50 miles from Dunfermline to St Albans to raise money for the Royal British Legion and the ship's affiliated Heathlands School for deaf children in the city.

Pledge your support to CPO Steve Thompson on HMS St Albans, BFPO 399.

■ SSAFA Forces Help have launched a new appeal, Helping Heroes and their Families.

The money will go into two new homes near the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at Selly Oak and the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court which will offer visiting families a place to stay while servicemen and women undergo treatment.

Find out more at www.ssafa.org.uk.

■ DURING a disaster relief exercise with the FOST team in Devonport the captain of Dutch ship HNLMS Van Nes was so impressed by the equipment provided by Cornwall-based charity Shelterbox that he asked to take some of their boxes on board his ship.

Just weeks later the boxes, packed with the basics for survival, were called into service on the battered coast of Nicaragua during the recent hurricane season.

■ VETERANS charity Erskine House is launching an appeal to raise money to expand their Erskine Edinburgh Home for ex-Service men and women.

In the past year the charity has cared for more than 1,200 former Service personnel, ranging in age from 22 to 100 years old.

Find out more www.erskine.org.uk.

■ FORMER Naval man Nigel Smith joined nine others from the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association (BLESMA) for a nine-day trip across the English Channel.

This trip, which set off from the Joint Services Adventurous Sail Training Centre in Gosport, also brought two American counterparts from the Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project.

Find out more about the national charity at www.blesma.org.

■ CHARITY Combat Stress held a charity drinks night drawing together figures from sport, media and the military to show people serving in the front line that they do have the support of people back home in the UK.

Each year the charity takes some 700 veterans under its wing.

Find out more online at www.combatstress.org.uk.

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Music maestros

SPARKLING brass instruments heralded the presentation of over £2,000 to the Mary Rose School in Southsea.

Col Chris Davis, the Principal Director of Music for the RM School of Music in Portsmouth, visited the school with musicians from the Band Service.

The children who have special needs sang to their guests and the Marine bandsmen replied with a trumpet fanfare, much to their delight.

The money will go to support the school in its future development.

The money was raised from audiences at a series of concerts around the country.

● Pupil Michael Powell admires the fanfare trumpet

Picture: LA(Phot) Jannine Hartmann





● Mne Dwain Ross at the top of the Streilhorn in Switzerland during training for the Himalayas attempt

To hell and Black

SIX green berets and two sailors will aim for the most difficult peaks on the planet as Britain celebrates 50 years of military mountaineering.

Sir Edmund Hillary baulked at the prospect of climbing Makalu – an 8,462m (27,762ft) Himalayan peak not scaled until 1970.

In the 37 years since, fewer than 250 people have reached the top of Makalu (more mountaineers climb Everest every year).

To mark the half-century of British Services Mountaineering, the three Armed Forces plan a two-pronged assault on Makalu.

Royal Marines C/Sgt Frankie Fredericks and L/Cpl Darren Swift will attempt to reach the top of Makalu (known as the Black Mountain) by the notorious south ridge; only two teams in the mountain's history have reached the top that way.

If they successfully scale Makalu, the Royals and their Army and RAF comrades will then continue to descend the mountain by the north ridge (only slightly less treacherous).

Their way down should be made easier by the efforts of Lt Tom Boeckx and Capt 'Mollie' MacPherson RM, who are attacking Makalu using the northern ridge – and will leave their camps for the south ridge team to use when they descend.

If grappling Makalu wasn't enough for this 50th anniversary mission, there are two separate climbs/exercises running at the same time.

A junior team, including Mnes George Allen and Dwain Ross, each less than a year out of training, will carry out three weeks of high-altitude training, including hopefully taking on Mera Peak, the highest trekking peak in the Himalayas.

Meanwhile, veteran of these parts Surg Capt Andy Hughes will lead what is believed to be the first British attempt on another hugely challenging mountain, the 6,793m (22,286ft) Pethangtse.

All the climbs will be attempted without using breathing apparatus.

It takes 11 days just to get to the base camp at 4,800m

(15,748ft – roughly the height of Mt Blanc) after a 150km (93 mile) trek through the rugged, forested terrain and mountain steppe; at the limit of helicopter operating conditions, it means porters and climbers have to carry their kit to the camp.

Oh, and to cap it all, there's the small matter of thousands of pounds to raise for children in Nepal.

Still, never let it be said that British servicemen run away from a challenge.

The expedition is three years in the planning already, with Royal Marine Reservist Al Hinkes as the tri-Service team's spiritual and physical mentor.

Al is the only Brit to scale all 14 mountains in the 'death zone' (peaks in excess of 8,000m) – including Makalu.

He's left the team under no illusions about the difficulties they face.

"Makalu is one of the most formidable mountains in the world," he warns.

"Its remoteness, technical difficulty, the length of the route and the unpredictable weather will make this one of the toughest propositions yet faced by a joint-Services mountaineering team."

A British military team was forced to abandon the last attempt on Makalu back in 2004 when bad weather set in.

Four years later (the summit attempt is earmarked for March), they are convinced their training has been as thorough as it can be for a renewed assault.

The team has just returned from training at Zermatt, where expedition leader Sqn Ldr David Tait selected the climbers for the respective missions and where some of the junior climbers got their first experience of mountains in excess of 4,000m.

Follow preparations for the expedition at www.myspace.com/makalu-2008

● The team pose atop Cantilever Rock in North Wales



Peak practice

COMMANDOS headed to the mountains and ridges of Scotland to prepare for one of the most gruelling combat environments on the planet.

The Royal Marines of 42 Commando are spending three weeks climbing, marching and conducting exercises alongside elite Indian airborne troops in the Himalayas.

And to ready themselves for Himalayan Warrior in the Ladakh region of the daunting range, the Bickleigh-based green berets of Mike Company hit the Highlands.

The Highlands cannot compete with the Himalayas for height, of course. But many of the basics of mountain warfare and climbing can be practised around the Scottish peaks. And as it was the height of the summer, temperatures and weather conditions were pretty similar too...

The Royals used the village of Kinlochleven as their base (home to the largest indoor ice wall in Europe... and the odd hostelry), casting their net around five of the most challenging peaks in the area.

The week's training began 'gently' with the Ballachulish Horseshoe, intended to prepare the green berets for marching at pace through the mountains.

As 'gentle' marches go, it began with a 1,000-metre (3,280ft) climb to the first check point... after a few 'vent stops' (or 'rests' in common parlance) for the exhausted Royals – with the exception of the 'duty fit bloke'.

The commandos successfully negotiated the Horseshoe, although it proved a painful experience for one green beret in his "Gucci new walking boots" which he didn't break in sufficiently before the hike.

"The relief of blood was a nightly occurrence as he heated up a needle with a lighter to

stab through his toenails to allow the blood to drain under them," said Mne Moone.

Having conquered the Horseshoe, then the Mamores ridge, the Royals grappled with Three Sisters (a three-peaked mountain with each peak to be scaled).

"The constant drizzle and gusting winds gave us a better look forward to what winter mountain training was going to be like," said Mne Moone as the wind was funneled through the valleys and the rain lashed the mountain tops, reducing visibility to little more than 150ft.

You cannot head to this part of the world without tackling Ben Nevis (aka Big Ben, apparently, according to the Royals).

It was, says Mne Moone, "the one everyone wanted to do". The one everyone wanted to do apart, that is, from Mother Nature, who promptly threw the very worst weather of the entire training package at the commandos.

So, instead of beautiful vistas, there was just fog and low cloud to admire. The best view of the day was the sight of the four-tonne trucks arriving to take the green berets back to camp.

'Leave the best till last' is a wise and ancient adage. Substitute 'worst' for 'best' and you have the climax of the exercise: the Aonach Eagach Ridge – "a huge ridgeline with sheer drops either side, renowned for its gusting winds," says Mne Moone.

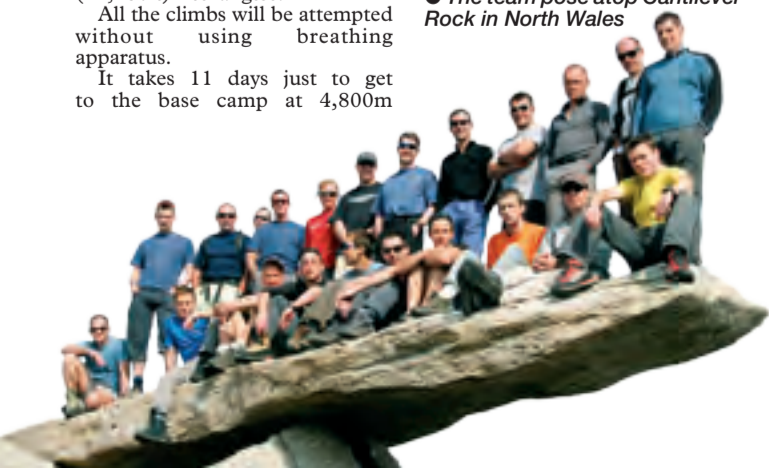
The mountain leaders rallied the troops with a cheery pep talk about exposure, hypothermia, freezing temperatures, gale force winds which invariably all led to climbers falling, slipping and generally injuring themselves.

Such doom-laden forebodings were, however, not realised. "As we climbed the steep, rugged initial ridge, the clouds parted and the sun came out for the first time in over a week, so we were able to

appreciate the beauty of the countryside," Mne Moone added.

And with Aonach Eagach mastered (followed by a trip down the pub), the Royals were ready to conquer the Himalayas.

● At one with their environment... (Below) the camouflaged green berets of 42 Cdo blend in with a craggy Highlands peak during training for Himalayan Warrior and (above) the commandos push their Bergens across a Highlands stream



● Holm sweet Holm... Ledbury's sea boat carries Bristol's mayor Royston Griffey with a marker stone to the island of Steep Holm



Pebble dash for Ledbury

FILE this one under: obscure English customs.

HMS Ledbury revived a 700-year-old tradition when she visited Bristol by helping the city protect its domain.

'Beating the bounds' is a ritual which apparently dates back two millennia.

Civic or church leaders would mark the extent of their town or parish by 'beating the bounds' – walking around the perimeter of the district with a group of boys carrying green boughs to thrash the marker stones.

The aim was to keep evil spirits away – and trumpet the size of a parish or town's domain.

Bristol has been beating the bounds since 1373 – extending its domain over the land to the sea in the 18th Century.

And that explains why HMS Ledbury became involved on a visit to the city.

Lord Mayor Cllr Royston Griffey climbed aboard the Hunt-class warship to reaffirm his city's status (there had been no 'beating the bounds' in Bristol since 1901 and the mayor, a local historian, decided it was time to renew the tradition).

Ledbury left Avonmouth Dock bound first for Denny Island, a small rocky outcrop in the Bristol Channel, to leave a marker stone (actually little more than a large grey pebble).

More stones were left on two other islands in the channel – Flat Holm (strictly speaking it's in Glamorgan) and Steep Holm – before Ledbury and the flotilla of small boats following her returned to Bristol.

Away from upholding long-standing customs, Ledbury has been, er, upholding long-standing customs.

About the first time that Bristolians were beating the bounds, the navy's fishery ships took up their duties around these isles.

Ledbury, of course, wasn't among them then, but in recent months the minehunter has been attached to the Fishery Protection Squadron, devoting her time to the Irish Sea and Western Approaches.

The ship and her crew took a break from 'doing fish' with a weekend break in the French port of St Nazaire.

Some sailors headed to Nantes to watch England triumph over Samoa in the group stage of the Rugby World Cup.

Others paid homage to the men of 1942 who crippled the dry dock in the famous raid on the port, or toured the port's submarine museum – housed in the imposing pens built by the Germans to protect their boats from British air attacks.



● Engineers watch as a dummy Spearfish torpedo shoots into Astute's basin

Picture: BAE Systems

Top of the plops

A PLOP is a sign of success.

And ten times in a row, dummy torpedoes and cruise missiles plopped out on to the surface of the basin at Barrow-in-Furness as HMS Astute fired her main arsenal for the first time.

It's another 15 months before the boat joins the Fleet, but as many tests and trials are being conducted now, while fitting out continues at BAE's yard, to spare time at sea.

And that meant seeing that launching the boat's principal weaponry from her six bow tubes would work.

High pressure water forces either the Spearfish torpedo or the Tomahawk cruise missile with its 1,000-mile range out of the tubes – and that was a system which could be tested safely in the confines of the Barrow basin.

The one-tonne dummy weapons emerged on the surface a short distance from the boat, while engineers checked both the dummies and the tubes to ensure that the weapons had left the tubes safely.

More extensive weapon trials are lined up for the hunter-killer when she goes to sea next year, ahead of live firings.

Other weapons tests proved rather more painful. Fifteen members of the boat's warfare department hit the paintball range for a (messy) teambuilding day, roughly split along officer/rating lines.

The day ended with a Quentin Tarantino-esque shoot-out as the two opposing sides lined up and fired off 60 rounds apiece at their foes.

Back aboard the submarine, a rather more conventional manner of bonding was staged as Astute spliced the mainbrace.

The Duchess of Cornwall, the ship's sponsor, launched Astute at Barrow-in-Furness in June and promptly gave the legendary order in a message to the boat's CO Cdr Mike Walliker, in reward for a job well done by his team.



All 120 of the hunter-killer submarine's ship's company, plus around 80 guests, toasted the Queen, downed a tot... followed by a dram of *The Famous HMS Astute* whisky (personalised bottles of Famous Grouse were provided for the submariners by the Scottish distillers).

Recent feverish activity on the boat, which is rather hidden at present behind a maze of scaffolding and wires, has seen engineers from Thales fit the eyes of the boat in the form of two 'optronic' masts.

The next-generation periscopes, fitted with hi-resolution colour TV and thermal imaging cameras; the images picked up are beamed into Astute's command centre. There submariners can study live 'feeds' or record the images to work on later.

The masts and the software which drives them have been ten years in the making and mean that there's no periscope and mounting taking up a sizeable chunk of the boat's control room.

■ **ANOTHER** first in the land of the deeps has been achieved by HMS Torbay which has ditched traditional charts.

WECDIS, the RN's electronic map and navigation system, has been fitted to 40 surface vessels from minehunters to carriers and auxiliaries, and there are half a dozen systems installed in land establishments for training purposes.

Squeezing it inside the tight confines of a Trafalgar-class submarine was a challenge... but one met admirably by the team from Lockheed Martin who have developed the snazzy piece of kit.

Torbay now joins a handful of submarines in the navies of the world with digital navigation – although her control room team have to receive thorough WECDIS training before they can take the hunter-killer to sea without paper charts.

A further ten boats will receive the system in due course.

From Fit 4C to fit for sea

LAST month we proclaimed HMS Cumberland 'fit 4C' thanks to a communications and computer system upgrade.

Now the Type 22 frigate is fit for sea after an extensive refit in her home port – two weeks ahead of schedule.

Teams from Devonport support organisation DML have been swarming over the warhorse since the beginning of the year.

Work on the Mighty Sausage was finished earlier than planned thanks, in part, to speeding up the blast programme on Cumberland's hull, finished in a third of the usual time.

The ship's entire hull, superstructure and decks exposed to the elements received a thorough blast, a new water production plant has been fitted, living spaces have received a very welcome revamp, there's a new torpedo defence system and, in all, 1,800 items of equipment have been given a makeover.

After trials, the frigate is due to be handed back to

the Fleet early in the new year.

Another old friend emerging from TLC at the hands of DML is veteran hunter-killer HMS Trafalgar.

She's been out of action for the past 11 months undergoing her Revalidation and Assisted Maintenance Period (commonly known in 'deep world' as RAMP), where DML have managed to shave a considerable sum off the cost of previous similar projects.

The workload on a RAMP has ballooned in the past three or four years (it's roughly increased fourfold).

In Trafalgar's case, she devoured 230,000 man hours since beginning her overhaul in October 2006.

Experts fitted a new communications and computer system (CCSM), overhauled Trafalgar's coolers, and generally tweaked and revamped the boat – work which will take the Devonport-based submarine to the end of her career in late 2009.



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Illustrious plays host to St John's

CAPT Tim Fraser welcomed guests on board the Fleet flagship HMS Illustrious for a fundraising cocktail party to help send local students on an overseas sports tour in their school's centenary year.

Pupils from St John's College in Southsea gained in excess of £3,000 for a planned netball and rugby tour to Australia and Hong Kong in 2008.

Capt Fraser, whose son is head boy at St John's, was only too pleased to welcome guests, including local world champion swimmer Katie Sexton, to the cocktail party where a celebrity auction took place to raise the much-needed funds.

Headmaster Nigel Thorne could not have been more pleased

with the fundraising evening and said: "This was the first of many high-profile events marking our centenary year.

"To hold such an event on board HMS Illustrious was very prestigious and some of the lots auctioned, such as Katie Sexton's offer to race one of our guests, were very generous and particularly well received."

● **Capt Tim Fraser with guests, including headmaster Nigel Thorne, on board Illustrious**



Hockey is top at West Hill Park

OVER recent years, West Hill Park has established a firm reputation as a school which develops keen and talented hockey players.

This year is no exception. Three of the senior pupils have gained a place in the Hampshire Under 13 Girls' Hockey Squad.

In final trials Georgia Davis, Saskia Lade and Suzy Peters (pictured above) won against strong competition to gain a place in the county squad for 2007-08.

All three children play for Havant Hockey Club as well as for the school, thus continuing West Hill Park's determination to encourage enthusiastic players in any particular sport to join a club.

By so doing they can gain further experience and competition.

Peter Coote, director of hockey at West Hill Park and also chairman of Hampshire Hockey Association Schools and Youth Committee, said: "The girls' success is excellent.

"It forms one important part of West Hill's 'sport for all' policy.

"This aims to ensure that every pupil enjoys sport and achieves the highest standard of which he or she is capable."

West Hill Park's open morning on November 17 is an ideal time to see the many facilities that ensure such a high standard in all sports.

The school's 'sport for all' policy means that children of all abilities take part.

With the continued sporting success of children such as Georgia, Saskia and Suzy those less able feel encouraged to strive to fulfil their own potential.



Open Day Saturday 17th November 10:00am - 12:30pm

West Hill Park is an independent day and boarding school for girls and boys from 2½ to 13 years old. We pride ourselves on our academic results, our friendly environment and our excellent facilities.

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You can apply online at www.noc.soton.ac.uk/nocs/vacancies.php or alternatively contact Sarah Buckley, Human Resources, NOCS, European Way, Southampton SO14 3ZH (Telephone +44 023 8059 6291 or e-mail: sxb@noc.soton.ac.uk) for an application pack.

The closing date for completed application forms is 30 November 2007.

Please quote reference number NOCS / 2207 on all correspondence.

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HMS York repays unit's hospitality

THE sailors of HMS York had such a good time at the York unit that they repaid the favour by inviting five cadets and a member of staff to join the ship's company.

The destroyer sailed from Newcastle to Hull, giving an opportunity for the visitors to see how the Royal Navy maintains its high standards.

After a guided tour of the ship the new recruits were given overalls and rags and put to work, helping to clean up the ship in preparation for a visit by dignitaries the next day!

The cadets were then split into smaller groups to visit various departments, seeing how the stores are organised, putting in a stint in the galley, taking a look at the operations room – where they were shown how to identify and track targets for the ship's weapons

– and spending some time on the bridge.

They watched the ship's machine gun in action, and got the chance to fire SA80 rifles at floating targets off the stern.

The Lord Mayor of York, Cllr Irene Waudby, was the VIP at York's latest quarterly passing out parade, when three new cadets – Steph Spaven, Sam Wadsworth and Reece Macleod – were enrolled into the unit by Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Caroline Meek.

This was then followed by presentations of badges and trophies.

The two top awards went to Cdt Jessica Meek, who won the unit's best quarterly cadet trophy, and OC Sarah Greaves, who collected the Captain of HMS York's Most Improved Cadet award.

High fives at Leicester

LEICESTER unit managed an impressive performance against rival teams from their district, beating five-times winners Northampton on the way to winning a five-a-side football competition.

The female team, aged between 12 and 16, notched up their success in a nailbiting final at Bramcote Barracks in Warwickshire.

That put them through to the area finals next month, where they will compete with more than 60 other units.

Northampton's global reach

NORTHAMPTON leading cadets Brendan May and Kerry Mason and PO Emma Rooney were selected from 400 units to attend international exchanges in Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden.

During their stays they lived for two weeks alongside their counterpart cadets, making new friends and seeing different ways of training.

Emma said: "It was an honour to be selected for the International Exchange and it was a great experience travelling to Canada and taking part in their training and courses."

Six members of the unit cruised off the Essex coast in sail training yachts TS Leopold Muller, TS City Liveryman and TS Vigilant.



● Cadets on the foredeck of TS John Jerwood

Training ships go on tour

CADETS from the South West formed the ship's company for TS John Jerwood as the training ship completed the final three legs of her UK circumnavigation.

Members of the Penzance, Avonmouth, Bristol Adventure and Torfaen units started at Holyhead, calling at Milford Haven, Penzance, Falmouth, Salcombe and Poole before arriving at Gosport.

The party was led by Lt Cdr Martin Henwood, ASO Offshore South West, and Lt Cdr Sonia Lawes, CO of Bristol Adventure.

Despite a mean wind strength failing to drop below Force 5 all week, the cadets were well catered for by CI Cath from Cardiff unit, and no seasickness was reported,

though clothing was reported to be "tight on arrival".

Another training ship, TS Royalist, has also been raising the profile of the Corps.

The brig called into Bristol, and her berth was adjacent to the International Balloon Festival site, with up to 150 hot air balloons rising beside the ship each day in perfect conditions.

Cadets carried out Ceremonial Sunset and Manning of the Yards, while a District massed band provided music.

There was even a surprise 'reunion' – the Bristol Channel Pilot, Capt John Freeguard MN, revealed that he had sailed on board the Royalist as a cadet with the Avonmouth unit.

A GROUP of Royal Marines cadets pushed themselves to the limit when they followed the path of the Cockleshell Heroes from World War 2.

After a pep talk, the RM Volunteer Cadet Corps Portsmouth Division team set out for Dover, their boats stowed on a trailer provided by Bramber Trailers.

A rapid ferry crossing to Calais with Sea France, who gave the travellers a special rate, was followed by a long haul through the night to Royan and the Gironde Estuary.

The first call was the memorial

to the wartime raiders at St Georges-de-Didonne, and their first view of the estuary, around seven miles wide at the coast.

On the other side of the estuary the party was met by their French contact, Francois Boisnier, and other local officials, including Madame Baudra, the mayor of the district, who in 1942 advised Maj 'Blondie' Hasler, leader of the Operation Frankton raid on Bordeaux, as to where to hide, and later returned with food.

Accommodation was provided by the French, and early the following morning the boats and kit were unloaded and the paddle upstream to Bordeaux began.

Following the west bank, close enough to be out of the main channel but far enough out so that paddle splashes could not be heard from the bank, just as in 1942, the paddlers aimed for Pointe Aux Oiseaux, where the British commandos met Madame Baudra and other locals.

Once ashore, and safe from the vicious tidal stream, the cadets set up camp and relaxed.

The following day was not as planned, as wet, wild weather kept them off the river, so they regrouped and waited for better weather, taking the opportunity to visit the memorial plaques close to where Sgt Wallace and Mne Ewart came ashore and were captured.

The surf was still high the following day, but the crews braved the waves which crashed not just over the kayakers but over the occupants as well, and headed into the rolling swell.

They paddled 14 miles to the harbour of St Christoly-Medoc, where they rested before crossing six miles to the east bank, battling four-foot waves and landing at the same point as Hasler.

Wednesday dawned calm and bright, and the river was smooth

LC Ruth Rollings said: "The whole team put 110 per cent into the practice and the games.

"We all enjoyed ourselves and are all very proud of what we have achieved.

"We are hoping to carry our enthusiasm through to the area competition and intend to make ourselves and the unit proud once again."



In the wake of heroes



● RMVCC Portsmouth cadets on their way to Bordeaux

as a mirror.

They made good progress upstream, though there was still a fierce current to contend with.

Their final day on the river took them to Bordeaux, having been passed by a freighter heading for the same dock that Cpl Laver and Mne Mills had attacked in 1942.

Tying up at the site of Hasler's and Sparks' attack, the RMVCC party paid their respects at yet another memorial erected by the French to the British warriors.

After paddling round to the basins which housed the German submarine pens, the cadets came ashore to be met by members of the French Navy and the deputy mayor of Blanquefort.

The town was used in 1942 by the German Navy, and on the

wall of their bunker is a plaque and bullet scars marking the spot where Sgt Wallace and Mne Ewart were executed.

Here, after a commemoration ceremony, C/Sgt Ray Cooper presented Frankton Medals to his crews.

The expedition officially ended at Ruffec and lunch at the Torque Blanche bar, where Hasler and Sparks met the French Resistance and started their trip home.

Among the other sponsors were Prijon, whose kayaks stood the test, and Dave Evans at Memory-Map who helped their navigation.

For a full report on the expedition and the history of the 1942 raid, see www.cockleshell-cadets.com

Gateshead accept the Challenge

GATESHEAD cadets took up the St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge by rowing a boat 13 miles from the mouth of the Tyne past Newcastle and Gateshead to Scotswood Bridge.

The challenge took six hours, with the crews changing every 25 minutes.

Accompanying them were two Cheverton Champ power boats and a 32ft cruiser which carried reserve crews and members of St Dunstan's.

The latter felt it was only fair to lend a hand, and took turns in pulling the boat with the cadets.

The St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge is not predominantly a fund-raising exercise, although any such benefits are naturally welcomed.

It is primarily designed to test cadets physically and mentally, and also helps raise funds for the charity, which supports Servicemen and women who have seriously damaged eyesight or are blind.

Last year's winners, 2513 (Romney Marsh) Sqn ATC, pushed and pulled a railway carriage along the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch railway.

Nevis makes debut

LOCHABER cadets were joined by the Provost of Lochaber, Cllr Allan Henderson, and his wife Sandra who named the unit's new powerboat at the Outward Bound Centre on Locheil.

Following tradition, they were assisted by the youngest cadet in the unit, ten-year-old Junior Cadet Matthew Cattanaach.

The unit, based in Fort William, was recently awarded a grant of £8,320 from the Awards for All lottery scheme for the purchase of the fast motor boat, named Nevis, which will enable cadets to carry out a variety of waterborne skills.

The lottery award was the last piece in a jigsaw of funding packages from organisations which include £1,500 from HBOS, £2,868 from the Scottish Communities Foundation and money raised by the unit itself.

Unit chairman John Fotheringham said: "We were really delighted to receive this substantial grant, which marks a major stepping stone for our unit.

"It has taken a great deal of time and effort to put this funding package together, and I'd like to pay particular tribute to the work put in by our treasurer, Bob Lee."

The boat, a 5.7m Humber RIB powered by a 40hp

outboard engine, will be used to train the cadets in seamanship, navigation, teamworking and boat handling skills while also acting as a safety boat for sailing activities.

"We understand that this is the biggest grant ever awarded to the unit and we would like to say a huge 'thank-you' to everyone who has been involved in making this project a success."

Unit CO Derrick Warner said: "It means that we'll be able to offer a whole new set of training opportunities to both our cadets and instructors.

"So often today we hear about the negative side of young people and their behaviour, but here, in our unit we, have a team of fantastic cadets, all of whom we can be proud of.

"Getting young people out on the water and giving them new skills such as teamworking and taking responsibility for themselves and others, in a fun way, is what we're all about."

The unit is looking for adults to help behind the scenes and as instructors.

"You don't need to be ex-Navy or even a skilled sailor," said Derrick. "You just need to be keen to work with young people and have a couple of hours to spare each week."



James returns to school

REIGATE unit bandmaster James Horner (pictured above) has been accepted to join the elite Band of the Royal Marines and will travel to Portsmouth to enter the RM School of Music.

The PO will have musical training for 18 months to two years before joining the band itself.

James joined the unit when he was 12, having been dragged along as a 'nipper' as his father was the CO, and had himself joined the Corps at 12.

He first started playing the drums and the bugle at the unit, where he picked up the skills from more senior cadets and the bandmaster, and learned the musical pieces by playing the letters A to G written on a piece of paper or from memory rather than reading the music.

He became so skilled that he became the National Bugler Champion in 1998, though he has never had a music lesson until a year ago.

Royalist day out

TEN members of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets Scottish Branch – the Sea Cadet Association of Scotland – enjoyed a day at sea in TS Royalist.

They sailed from Largs, and apart from an early shower, the weather was sunny and calm.

By chance they met another tall ship, Tenacious, giving both ships a chance for a photo-shoot.

Cadets who had only joined the Royalist the previous day showed what can be achieved in such a brief period of time, demonstrating the value of the training to the visiting party.

A donation was made by the branch to offshore funds.

65th anniversary marked – to the day

BARNSELY unit celebrated its 65th anniversary exactly 65 years to the day after it opened its door for the first time.

More than 50 ex-cadets joined the celebrations, and were treated to three displays by the current contingent – a guard display, a fire-fighting display and a "slightly different" display of drill by the juniors.

Some senior cadets also laid on a static display in one of the classrooms, showing the activities that cadets undertake today.

Seaside rendezvous

WELWYN and Hatfield unit headed to Dorset for a week, where they linked up with Bridport unit, who lent the Home Counties cadets their boats for the duration.

Sailing and pulling on the River Brid, and heading out to sea in a power boat were among the highlights of the week – as was some time soaking up the sun on Weymouth beach, after which a visit was made to the Weymouth SCC Training Centre.

The Hertfordshire cadets were particularly pleased to be invited to parade with the local contingent on Tuesday and Thursday nights.

CPO(SCC) Terry Wilmott, Officer-in-Charge of Welwyn and Hatfield, said he hoped his team would be able to return the favour by hosting a camp in their unit.

Whitehaven rating helps recover yacht

WHITEHAVEN unit was called into action when a catamaran started to sink off the town's harbour.

PO(SCC) Jamie Mitchell took the call from the local Coastguard, who requested the use of a Sea Cadet boat

to help recover the sinking vessel.

"The Coastguard know that we are here and ready to give assistance if we can," said Jamie.

"Although the crew had already been taken off there was obviously a need to safely recover the boat and ensure it did not create a

hazard to others."

Jamie (21), who acts as the unit's Boats Officer, went down to the harbour and used one of the TS Bee powered boats to ferry part of the Workington lifeboat crew out to the sinking catamaran.

"Because there was no danger to life the RNLI would not launch

their boat, but were able to provide a crew," said Whitehaven's Commanding Officer S/Lt (SCC) Keith Crowe RNR.

"We were more than happy to provide the means of getting them to and from the boat.

"Jamie was able to put two members of the lifeboat crew on board, secure the catamaran and then tow it into the outer harbour, where it was beached."

The 40ft vessel first got into trouble the previous night off Sellafeld, and both the St Bees and Workington lifeboats responded to distress calls, taking off the crew who later returned to their boat.

They encountered further difficulties in the early hours of the following morning, and had to be taken off the boat again.

Sky is the limit at Inskip

CADETS from the Hull and York units enjoyed an action-packed week-long training camp at the Sea Cadet Training Centre at Inskip near Preston.

The 25 cadets, accompanied by seven staff, were split into two teams, and were up against it from the start – the first day saw 'rock-hugging', otherwise known as rock-climbing and abseiling.

In the following days the cadets tried 'Cowboys and Indians' – archery and shooting – and a fire-fighting course, which involved water, mud, cheering and not a little sliding around on the grass.

There was also orienteering on the fells, and the highlight of the week was the flying, when cadets could opt for scenic or the more adventurous roller-coaster ride.

Most had no need for the sick bags, although one individual, who had gone for 'the full works', started to look the wrong colour when back on terra firma.

The final day brought the usual housekeeping chores – and a visit to the Camelot theme park.

Gun pull raises funds

A DOZEN members of the Scarborough unit took part in a sponsored gun and trailer pull to raise money for their activities.

The cadets, ranging in age from 11 to 17, pulled the equipment from Scarborough lifeboat house to Ravenscar, a distance of 13 miles in six hours.

The gun and trailer were a smaller version of the Naval field gun and limber, weighing in the region of 150lbs.

On completion, the cadets camped overnight before being picked up the next morning.

New HQ is a step closer

HUDDERSFIELD'S thriving unit, which moved out its old base last year, has taken another significant step in what has become an arduous uphill slog.

Since 1981, the 40-strong unit had been housed in two ex-Army huts built in the 1940s at Snow Island, beside the River Colne.

A wooden building, to be built for the unit on the same site at a cost of £220,000, has been agreed, and cadets started fundraising.

They have currently found around half the total cost.

Planning permission was passed in April 2007, but a number of obstacles began to present themselves for the developers.

Now one of these hurdles, a flood defence plan, has been completed and will allow the developer to submit new plans.

"The Reserve Forces and Cadet Association for Yorkshire and Humberside have been exceptionally generous in the amount of support they have lent us during this difficult period," said Commanding Officer Lt Phil Jones.



● LCs Laura Hartwell and Adam Parry of Hinckley unit participate in a sponsored 24-hour sailing race in aid of injured Service personnel from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. The event, which raised over £2,000, was staged at Bosworth Water Park in Leicestershire. Hinckley entered its Bosun dinghy, and also provided its ASC, crewed by cadets and staff, to get the injured Service personnel afloat

What's all this then?

STEVENAGE cadets have been given a tour of the Hertfordshire Police Contact Centre in Welwyn Garden.

Sgt Linda Cullen-Moir took the cadets and staff through the control room, explaining how calls are dealt with.

The visitors also saw a video showing the work of the county force.

Their trip ended with them having a close look at a police car and its equipment.



● From left: St Dunstan's School CCF cadets Alex Rush, Dominic Cottrell and Ella Richards with some of the rubbish which they recovered from a lake in Kent

Folkestone cadet takes centre stage

FOLKESTONE cadet Louise Orfila has sung with the Central Band of the Royal British Legion.

Following her performance in *We Will Rock You* earlier this year Louise was invited to sing with the band under the direction of Capt David Cole RM (Rtd).

The band played a piece written by Louise, as part of her school studies, and arranged by Capt Cole in remembrance of Great War victims.

Capt Cole said: "Louise has a very professional attitude and is a great role model for the youth of today."

"She has a wonderful singing voice and is very talented to have produced such a moving piece. She has a great future ahead of her and we look forward to working with her again."

The band are recording a new album for the remembrance services, and Capt Cole has invited Louise to include her song.

Louise is recording an album of her own, due for release later in the year.



● Louise Orfila singing with the Central Band of the RBL

Lake is scoured

THREE Naval cadets from St Dunstan's College joined a group of scuba divers to clean up one of the Leybourne Lakes near Maidstone in Kent.

The trio – Ella Richards, Alex Rush and Dominic Cottrell – recently passed their Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) Open Water Scuba Diving qualification.

So they put their skills to the test as part of a PADI initiative called Project Aware, encouraging divers to be ecologically friendly and help protect the environment in which they dive.

Accompanied by Gemma Barlow, a teacher at St Dunstan's and head of the RN section of the school's Combined Cadet Force,

they plunged into a lake which had never been dived before.

Along with 19 other frogmen, the three dived to seven metres in water of five metre visibility, and pulled several items to the surface, including a wide-screen TV, traffic cones and car tyres.

They also found a football, which led to an impromptu underwater kickabout.

A number of oil drums on the lake bed were left in situ when it was found that shoals of fish had moved in to use them as shelter.

The students plan to return to the lake to monitor water quality, and to check on its suitability as a habitat for freshwater mussels – colonies were found in the lake during the clean-up dive.

Sisters paddle into finals

OCs Julia and Emma Oakton of Rotherham unit proved themselves among the elite in the SCC kayaking competition.

They started this year's campaign at the district regatta at Doncaster where they, along with their Rotherham teammates, won the overall kayaking trophy.

That put them through to the area competition at Nottingham, where they took part in the junior girls doubles kayaking event and the relay team.

Once again the Rotherham team came up trumps, winning both events.

As a result, Julia and Emma were selected for the Eastern Area team to compete in the national finals in London.

Against stiff opposition Julia and Emma came fourth in the doubles event – an impressive achievement at their first national competition, especially from an inland unit.

Julia was also selected for the relay team, where the Eastern Area team took the silver medal.

Five cadets from Rotherham took to the hills to get in shape for the Area Expedition Training (ET) competition.

The cadets took in the sites of Wentworth House, the Mausoleum and two prominent follies, Hooper Stand and Keppels Column.

Two of the group were completing their qualifying Duke of Edinburgh assessment.

Fine weather brought out the midges, but the cadets completed the expedition in time, undertaking six hours of planned activity daily.

Leaders train for Top Cadets

LEADERS of all the districts in the Eastern Area, including four representatives of the Yorkshire Districts, attended an afternoon's training at Newark unit.

The district officers of South Yorkshire and Humberside and West Yorkshire and the assistant district officers of North East Yorkshire and West Yorkshire attended the training session, organised by Cdr S Watt (RN), Deputy Area Officer, to begin the process of standardising the advancement of the Sea Cadets Top Cadets.

The training session enabled all the districts to communicate their own procedures for qualifying Leading and PO Cadets and agree best practice measures.



● Finchley cadets with Prof Richard Himsworth, Prime Warden of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, at the back of their new minibus

Finchley take delivery of first new minibus

FINCHLEY unit has been inaugurated into the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths – and the link has already brought a smile to the faces of the cadets.

The inauguration took place at a banquet in Goldsmiths' Hall in London, attended by cadets, the chairman and Commanding Officer of Finchley as well as members of the Goldsmith Company.

Following the inauguration of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths presented Finchley with a new 17-seat Transit minibus.

The bus was handed over by the Prime Warden of the Company, Prof Richard Himsworth, when he visited the unit's headquarters at Long Lane.

The professor was greeted by an honour guard, and the unit then proceeded to Colours.

Cadets put on two demonstrations for their VIP guest.

First was the 'knotting relay' tug of war, in which two teams of younger cadets competed in their seamanship skills of tying knots, followed by a tug of war to compare their physical strength and the strength of their knots.

This was followed by bomb disposal, in which two teams of senior cadets used voice

procedures to relay instructions on how to disarm a bomb.

Fortunately both bombs were dismantled safely, to the relief of all the parents who attended.

After Prof Himsworth presented the minibus to the unit – the first in their 65-year existence – he awarded cadets their recently-gained RYA qualifications.

Trainees take the plunge

A TOUGH end to a tough process – but the final reward was worth the effort.

Seven cadets and a member of staff are the latest group to complete the SCC Naval Acquaint course at Horsea Island in Portsmouth.

The course, first organised at the end of the 1980s and now run by Lt (SCC) Bayley RNR, HQ Staff Officer Diving, gives cadets a taste of life as a Royal Navy diver, using full masks and communicating by using rope signals.

Each diver has a tender who assists him or her dress, and they dive with lifeline attached to allow communication.

While underwater they do jackstay searches and assemble pipes and flanges, and in addition they have to do an endurance swim of one mile, a night dive and several other exercises.

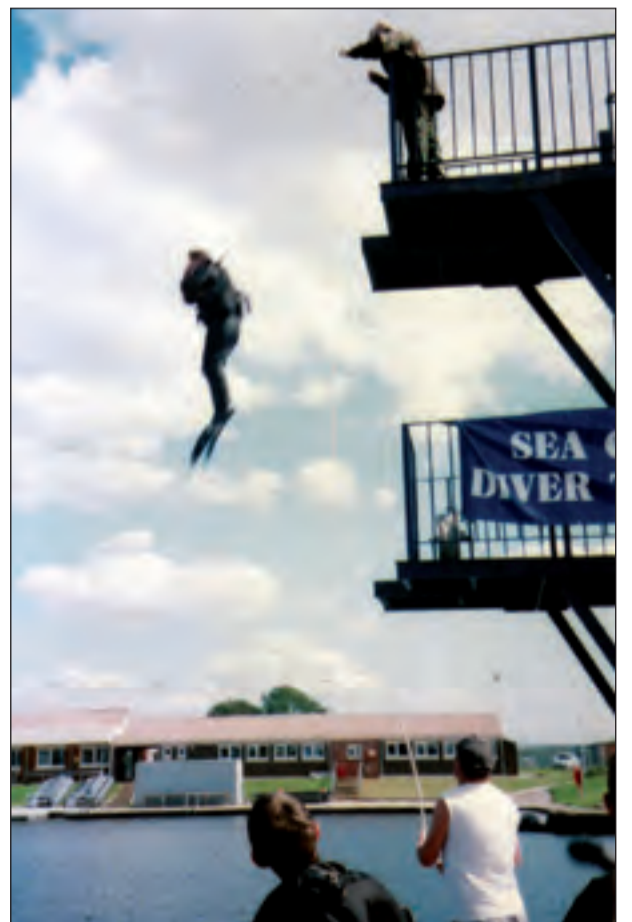
One of the main attractions is the board exercise – jumping from a height of ten metres, equivalent to the deck of a ship.

It looks a long way down, but most rush back for a second go.

To be eligible for the Acquaint course, candidates have to pass a BSAC Ocean Diver and Sports Diver course, be a member of the British Sub Aqua Club, and have an in-date certificate of fitness to dive.

On passing the Acquaint course staff are awarded a coveted diving helmet badge, while cadets get the badge and eight points.

Each recipient of the diver's helmet is entitled to wear it on their number one uniform. Any Corps divers who would like to be considered for the CC RN Acquaint should contact CPO Davies on 0151 252 9438.



● A cadet on the Acquaint course jumps from the ten-metre board into Horsea Lake in Portsmouth Harbour

Norwich welcomes new ship

CADETS from across the Anglia region joined the ship's company of TS Lord Nelson to celebrate the commissioning of the Norwich unit's HQ ship.

The new TS Lord Nelson, the sixth to bear the name since the unit formed in 1912, is the former Swedish minelayer HSwMS Vale, decommissioned in 1995.

The unit bought her for around £30,000 in 2003, and have spent a further £93,000 on refurbishing her to serve as their headquarters for many years to come.

Norwich, Cambridge, Lowestoft, Beccles, Great Yarmouth, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich units were all represented at the ceremonies, while Biggleswade and Stevenage cadets made up a band.

They paraded through the streets of Norwich to the new ship at Riverside, accompanied by shipmates from the Norwich branch of the RNA.

Guest of Honour was Cdre James Patrick, and the ship and ship's company were blessed by the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham James, and ship's chaplain, Rev James Mustard.

Carrier hosts big day at sea

A GROUP of 30 from the Walton-on-the-Naze unit have spent a day at sea in HMS Illustrious.

The 25 cadets and five staff stayed overnight in HMS Bristol, Whale Island, before joining colleagues from all over the UK who joined the carrier before she sailed at 9am.

A special day of displays and activities was laid on by the ship's company in various parts of the carrier, and once she was past the Isle of Wight there was a fly-past.

Because of the relationship that the Walton cadets have with the ship, a special plaque was made by the unit's Commanding Officer, S/Lt Gary Dodd, and presented to the CO of Illustrious, Capt Tim Fraser, to mark the 25th year since the ship was commissioned.



● Maidenhead (on left) and Windsor challenge for the lead in the boat pulling competition staged on the River Thames

Windsor take Thames trophy

WINDSOR cadets made good use of home advantage to take the Prince Philip Challenge Trophy from local rivals Maidenhead.

The challengers gained an early lead in the pulling boat race on the Thames, and although Maidenhead then held station they could not make up the ground and Windsor won by two lengths.

The canoe relay saw Windsor take the lead on the first leg, but Maidenhead had put themselves in front by the second change.

But the reigning champions' canoe hit problems on

the final leg, and with Windsor hitting their stride the home team went into the final leg with a massive lead and swept to victory.

The obstacle course was staged ashore, and with neither side giving any quarter the contest was declared a draw, giving Windsor a 2-0 winning margin.

The Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, Philip Wroughton, presented the trophy to TS Windsor Castle, while their rivals from TS Iron Duke went home to plot revenge on their stretch of water next year.

Forging a reputation

The Grove Review

TIM Clayton co-authored a very well received book about Trafalgar in 2004 and this has encouraged him to extend his focus back into the 18th Century to the Seven Years War and the successes around the 'wonderful year' of 1759 immortalised in the song *Heart of Oak*.

Clayton's aim in the new work, *Tars: The Men Who Made Britain Rule The Waves* (Hodder & Stoughton, £20 ISBN 978 0 340 89802 4), is again to examine the events from the point of view of the participants, both officers and ordinary sailors, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

The thread Clayton follows in this new book starts with Captain Arthur Gardner, HMS Monmouth and its ship's company. In February 1758 Monmouth pursued and took the more powerful French Foudroyant. Gardner was killed in this engagement that caused no less than 25 per cent casualties in the British ship.

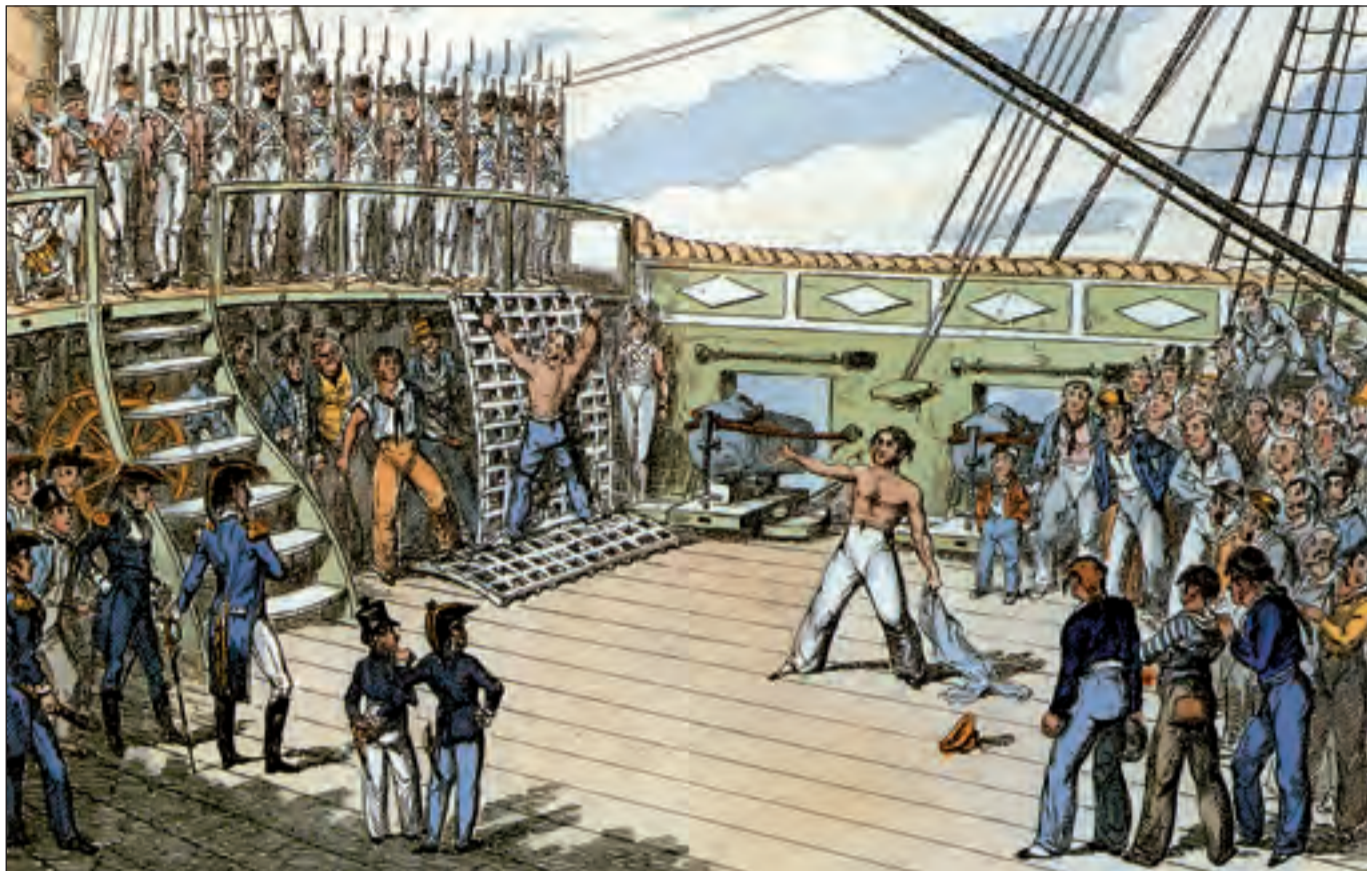
Gardner was replaced by Captain Augustus Hervey. It is interesting that Hervey received such preference, despite his association with the unfortunate, just executed Admiral Byng. Hervey made his views on the untimely death of the unfortunate admiral clear.

In 1757 he wrote: "I can never wipe it off my spirits, it gives me gloominess to everything relating to the profession I am in, and is such a check on all sallies of joy."

The following year his feelings were still strong: "I have almost every minute of this day being reflecting, that this very day last year was that Horrid, cruel & unjust execution which deprived me of the most Agreeable as well as useful friend that I, or any other Body, could ask." The strain of self interest would have sounded more natural in the 18th Century than it does today.

Hervey and Monmouth played a leading role in Hawke's blockade of Brest although they missed the Battle of Quiberon Bay, having been "greatly shattered" by the exertions of being deployed for so long off a shore that was hostile in more ways than one.

Hervey eventually obtained a larger command, HMS Dragon,



● 'Hands to witness punishment'... A contemporary sketch – and one of the abiding images of Jack Tars – of a sailor being flogged for disobedience
Picture: Royal Naval Museum

and the book follows him and his 'loyal followers' there.

Dragon was involved in the successful attacks on Belle Isle, Martinique and Havana before sailing home to decommission in December 1762.

Clayton discusses the careers of Hervey and his shipmates with fascinating detail. His account of the paying off of the ship and its ship's company is typical. The author explains how the prize money due to the men was distributed.

The prize agent would appear at a particular tavern at set times for three years after which any unpaid monies were presented to Greenwich hospital to act as part of a general pension fund. Such pay-outs were often 'rowdy occasions' with inevitable cases of impersonation and attempted fraud.

The whole story is told in a highly accessible and exceptionally well-researched form. The author has imaginatively and fruitfully used a wide range of sources to obtain maximum value from the material therein.

His grasp of the detail of life on board a mid-18th Century warship is remarkable.

Not least of the points he makes is the strength of the personal relationships of officers and their subordinates.

Clayton's ability to trace the careers of those who served in both ships of the line gives a remarkable insight into the internal dynamics of the Royal Navy that won the Seven Years War.

The clear message of the book is what a successful organisation that Navy was. In the mid-18th Century, although modern continuous service was still a century away, the prevalence of war meant that sailors could make a real career from the Royal Navy with much lucrative active service.

The author rightly makes the point that, as a result, the Royal Navy gained vast operational experience, logistical systems were honed to a high degree of practical efficiency, and constant practice

made the ship's crews good at what they did.

This created a national capability that other powers could not match. Previously 'Britannia rules the Waves' had been an aspiration – Clayton calls it a 'myth' – contained by disease, the perils of the ocean and logistical weakness. During the Seven Years War these problems were sufficiently overcome to make global naval supremacy a reality. It was all down to the 'tars' of all ranks.

This is a book with a wide appeal. The truly remarkable womanising antics of Hervey are the stuff of novels. No wonder Casanova is said to have compared notes with this "amusing, urbane and cynical" officer on a visit to London in 1764.

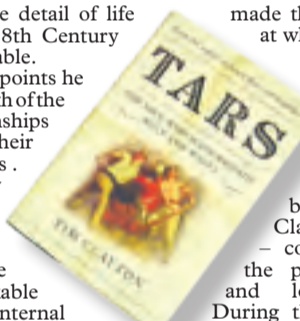
Hervey's later life was blighted by illness that seems to have had more to do with operations in the West Indies than with his multifarious amorous adventures

– that must have been hard work in themselves. Whatever the reason, he was unable to take up his duties in the next war when France exploited the American colonists and a much improved navy to obtain limited revenge for their previous defeats.

One important point to emerge from the book is how the patronage only to be expected in 18th Century society co-existed with a career remarkably open to the talents.

Sailors whose skills had become valued by their officers were promoted to midshipmen, able to pass their lieutenant's examination and assume command on their own account. Connections were naturally a great help but this was far from being a closed, aristocratic system.

The overwhelming strength of Clayton's excellent and worthwhile book is his deep understanding of the human dimension of naval power. His new work fully lives up to the standard of its predecessor. It is beautifully illustrated in colour and excellent value; no naval library should be without it.



Spy. Conspirator. Admiral

IN THE small hours of Saturday August 26 1939 a rag-tag group of armed civilians struggled through the heavily-forested terrain at the western end of the Beskid mountains, one of the many lesser chains in the Carpathians.

Before dawn the men pounced on the station in the village of Mosty, commandeered a train for Polish steelworkers and attempted to ride it through the



Jablunka Pass, the lowest point in the Beskids and the point where railway engineers had driven a 300-yard tunnel through the mountain to carry the main Vienna-Warsaw railway line.

The Poles were waiting for them; they had torn up the track and then peppered the train with fire as it trundled towards them. The irregulars fled, using Polish railwaymen as human shields, eventually escaping over the mountains.

The skirmish at the Jablunka Pass came six days before war engulfed Europe for the second time in a generation. And it was characteristic of the actions of one Wilhelm Canaris (pictured left), Hitler's chief spy, who organised acts of sabotage, fanned the flames of revolt, sought to make Germany a great power – and at the same time plotted against the Nazi regime.

No German admiral has been the subject of the picklocks of biographers more than Wilhelm Canaris. Not Raeder. Not Dönitz. Not Scheer. Not Hipper. Not Tirpitz.

Now journalist and author Michael Mueller tackles the enigmatic figure in Canaris: *The Life and Death of Hitler's Spymaster* (Chatham, £25 ISBN 978-186176-3075), making use of many of the private papers and documents not available



to previous biographers.

Canaris' fame – or perhaps infamy – revolves not around his prowess as a sailor but his leadership of Germany's shadowy intelligence and espionage organisation, the *Abwehr* (literally 'defence').

For nine years, Canaris was in charge of the *Abwehr* which, despite its name, was concerned with offensive action and intelligence gathering – it was a sort of cross between Britain's MI6 and the SOE.

His career, however, began rather more typically. He escaped annihilation with the rest of Graf von Spee's squadron at the Falklands. He commanded a U-boat in the Mediterranean and, between the wars, the aged battleship *Schlesien*.

Such acts are overshadowed by his leadership of the *Abwehr* and, particularly outside Germany, his anti-Nazi activities.

Mueller shows that Canaris was never as anti-Nazi as fellow conspirators sometimes painted him. Heydrich, the brutal head of the SS security service and one of the chief architects of the Holocaust, was a protégé of the admiral, often a confidant, and sometimes a friend.

Indeed, like many of his contemporaries in the military, Canaris went along with the Nazis as long as it suited his personal and

professional ambitions.

The admiral, says the author, "prepared the way for Hitler from Tibet to Northern Ireland, yet managed to be the voice of 'the other Germany' as he did so."

Mueller paints a comprehensive picture of the shadowy activity of German espionage throughout the 1930s and early 40s. The tentacles of the *Abwehr* reached across Europe and beyond.

And because of that the admiral knew better than most men in the Third Reich of the fate of the Jews. His staff warned that a "nightmare of violence" ruled as the Jewish populace of eastern Europe was systematically eradicated. The admiral protested, only to be struck down by Hitler. "You want to be soft?" he snarled to Canaris. "I have to do it."

In the end, Wilhelm Canaris' scheming and plotting were his undoing. He was dismissed from the *Abwehr* in 1944 and although he had little, if any, knowledge of the failed plot on Hitler's life, he was arrested in the wake of the July putsch because, as one conspirator said, he was "the spiritual founder of the resistance movement".

Canaris' days ended in Flossenbürg concentration camp in Bavaria a month before Germany surrendered. A guard was more than happy to see him hanged. "He was no officer, he was a traitor," he rasped.

Wilhelm Canaris was an officer. He was no traitor. But he was no hero either.



The Odessa file

DESPITE what many of us might think, the mutiny on the *Bounty* is not the definitive naval insurrection.

It is a good yarn, but it did not change the world.

The uprising on the Russian battleship *Potemkin* did indeed seek to change the world – or at least seek a better life, a fairer life for the tsar's sailors.

Neal Bascomb admirably turned the story of skyscraper construction in New York into a pacy read and now turns his attention to the *Potemkin* in the excellent *Red Mutiny* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20 ISBN 978-0297846482).

All that was rotten, all that was wrong with the cretinous – and brutal – regime of Nicholas II seemed to be encompassed within the steel walls of the 12,500-ton leviathan.

The captain was brutal. His deputy was sadistic. The men who served them were beaten regularly. Money meant for the ship was siphoned off into the captain's private account; he bought three fine houses in Sevastopol with the proceeds.

The crew of the *Potemkin* seethed. And in the summer of 1905, Russia seethed too, as the people grew angry at their treatment – and at the increasingly long list of casualties in the Russo-Japanese war.

By June 1905, the Black Sea port of Odessa was in uproar. There were strikes and demonstrations against the tsar.

And offshore, at dawn on the fourteenth day of the month, meat infested with maggots was carried aboard the *Potemkin*.

The men refused to eat it. They refused to eat it under threat of punishment. They refused to eat it under threat of death. They mutinied. The red flag of revolution was hoisted.

For the next ten days, to many Russians the *Potemkin* was a beacon; her crew tried to persuade the rest of the Black Sea Fleet to mutiny (largely, they failed).

But the mutiny of the *Potemkin* fanned the strikes and unrest in Odessa. Bascomb paints a brilliant – and black – picture of the uprising in the port.

Fearing Cossacks were sent to quell the unrest. Their bloody acts of suppression reached their climax on the *Richelieu* steps – a scene immortalised on celluloid by Eisenstein (and later 'borrowed' in *The Untouchables*).

Nicholas II dispatched two squadrons of battleships to intercept and destroy the *Potemkin*. Instead, she sailed through the lines; their fellow sailors refused to fire on the mutineers.

The uprising drew widespread international coverage as the world's press followed *Potemkin*'s movements.

In the end tyranny won. The strikes and uprising in Odessa were ended. The *Potemkin* eventually fled to Romania where she and her crew were interned.

Some of the mutineers returned to Russia, forcibly or voluntarily. All were punished, the ringleaders with death, their comrades sent to prison or forced labour camps.

The *Potemkin* herself returned to the tsar's navy, renamed *Panteleimon* – 'All Merciful', something Nicholas II was not.

Though it failed, the mutiny sowed the seeds of revolution. The Bolsheviks – wrongly – held up the men of the *Potemkin* as their own heroes.

They were not. They sought freedom and a better life. They did not spout Bolshevik rhetoric on the fore-castle of the *Potemkin*.

And, in the cruellest twist of all, at least some of the mutineers who survived the 1905 uprising fell victim to Stalin's terrible purges in the 1930s.



Top grades from A to Q

ENGLISH. Maths. Chemistry. French. Geography. History. Boxing.

Boxing? Not a typical qualification for your average school-leaver... until now, thanks to the efforts of the Navy's outgoing (in both senses of the word) 'Mr Boxing' (pictured above).

A stalwart of the sport in the Senior Service for the past two decades, first in the ring, then outside it, PO(PT) 'Q' Shillingford has finally hung up his No. 1s to concentrate, er, on boxing in civvy street.

He has ambitious targets for the sport – to offer a GCSE in boxing, to swell the number of qualified boxing tutors and, above all, to raise the sport's profile so it sits happily alongside football, cricket and rugby.

Key to getting boxing into Britain's top three sports (it's currently ranked 14th) is to encourage youngsters to pick up gloves from the age of five (this is, of course, a non-contact sport at this stage).

But to encourage youngsters, you need teachers.

"If you look at swimming, you have a teacher to show you how to swim and a coach to bring you on. In boxing there was no teacher, just a coach," says 'Q'.

Working with children and staff at Paulsgrove Primary School in Portsmouth, he devised a course to develop tutors, then a boxing awards system to teach youngsters to box, from the absolute basics to stepping into the ring for a contest one day.

From small acorns, the scheme has mushroomed; it's now endorsed by the Amateur Boxing Association of England and by Amir Khan, Britain's IBF light welterweight champion.

There is a glossy series of record books to follow a youngster's progress (books which all happen to feature recruitment adverts for the RN/RM), certificates to reward achievements and a DVD presented by the sailor/boxer to show potential tutors how to bring his beloved sport to the masses.

More than a dozen schools in the Portsmouth area alone are involved with the boxing awards and across the UK there are now 700 qualified boxing tutors. The senior rate is confident by the end of next year that figure will have grown by 8,000.

As for the boxing GCSE, accredited by ASDAN (Alternative Skills Development Accreditation Network) it would see youngsters rewarded for their ability and knowledge of the sport, as well as related skills: organising a tournament, overseeing the refurbishment of a gym, completing a course in first aid or coaching.

And all of this, says 'Q', stems from his involvement in the sport with the RN down the years.

"I've used all my coaching, all the experienced gained as a professional trainer in the RN and directed into these courses," he adds.

"I can't thank enough everyone who's supported Navy boxing and I'm really going to miss the loyalty, the camaraderie that you find in the RN."

Somehow, we don't think we've seen the last of 'Q' in these pages.

You can learn more about the courses at www.abae.org.uk



ANOTHER month, another breathtaking (or bonkers) picture from the world of Zapcat racing as Go Commando II driven by Maj Aldeiy Alderson and Lt Orlando Rogers leaps above the surf at Watergate Bay in Newquay (pictured by PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RN Photographer of the Year).

This will be the last image for some time in Navy News as the season is now over for the three RM Zapcat teams (Go Commando I, II and III) and, in true Bruce Forsyth fashion, didn't they do well...

They did. Sgt Richie Lake and his

trailblazing Go Commando I claimed ninth position in the national championships in his second year of competitive racing; novices Aldeiy and Orlando were seven places behind them, and the Holt brothers, C/Sgt Mark and Cpl Paul, in Go Commando III were just in the bottom half of the table in 22nd place.

The last weekend of the contest saw eight-to-ten foot waves rolling ashore. Combined with the Cornish rain, it made for an exhilarating finale to the season.

Go Commando II claimed the Division 2

top spot in the final round of racing, and took fourth place in the rookie championships.

"There's nothing like Zapcat racing in the surf," Orlando assures us. "It's the ultimate combination of skill, speed, courage and adrenaline."

"When I'm not getting an adrenaline rush in the RM, Zapcat is just as good – if not better."

Go Commando II built up quite a reputation in their inaugural season... chiefly for their performance above the surf doing vertical 'wheelies'.

Podium finish for cyclists

NAVY cyclists rode into history this autumn claiming a top-three finish in national team rankings.

The team clocked up victory upon victory, shattered RN records and personal best times. For good measure, they beat the rival Services in a new competition.

Winning ways began with the RN 100-mile championships incorporated into the Western Time Trial Association event held near Cirencester on a wet and windy morning, writes CPO(PT) Sean Childs (HMS Drake).

The weather didn't dampen the spirits of the Navy riders though and it was Childs (Drake) who continued his winning ways by taking both the open and RN honours in a new Navy record of 3h 49m 58s.

Riding their first 100-mile race, Lt Steve Kelly (Collingwood) and PO(D) Keith Satchwell continued their close rivalry with sterling performances to finish 11th and 13th (second and third in the RN championships) with 4h 10m 51s and 4h 11m 40s respectively. The RNRMCA also won the open team event.

One lucky rider to escape a serious injury was CPO(MEA) Aran Stanton (Nelson) who parted company with his bike at 30mph during the early stages of the race, resulting in some nasty leg and shoulder cuts and abrasions.

He remounted and tried in vain to continue, but the pain was too much.

One week later 19 Navy riders descended upon Buckfastleigh for the mid-Devon CC 25-mile Time Trial, which incorporated both the South West district and RN championships.

Again it was another good day for the senior service when Childs won the open, South West and RN titles in 52m 26s.

Kelly finished 9th overall and runner-up in the RN champs with 55m 13s and WO(SA) Garry Drew (Chatham) made a brief reappearance racing during a busy ship's programme to claim 17th and 3rd RN rider in 57m 18s.

Other riders to finish below the hour mark were Lt Cdr Lee Sanderson (MOD Abbeywood) 58m 9s, Satchwell 58m 15s and PO(AEM) Scott Markham (Culdrose) 59m 41s.

The Welsh 12-hour championship held near Abergavenny was another success for the team.

Having won the team title in 2005 the RN were determined to claim back their crown.

The individual championship had been held by a Navy rider since 2004, with Childs winning in 2004 and 2005 and Drew taking the title in 2006.

This year was to be no different when Childs reclaimed the individual championship for a third time, thus keeping the trophy in RN hands for a fourth consecutive year with a distance of just over 269 miles.

They also reclaimed the team title, assisted with some great performances from C/Sgt Stuart Edwards (42 Cdo) in fifth with 255 miles and Satchwell in 6th. Bob Richards (a former CPO and affiliated member) also won his veteran age category.

Stanton became only the second RN rider to break the 20-minute barrier for a ten-mile time trial during the Andover Wheelers CC Open event, with a stunning 19m 51s, 30mph-plus ride.

The Inter-Service Championships, hosted by the Army near Poole, saw a very strong and large Navy team complete a victorious double in both the ten and 25-mile championships for a third consecutive year.

During the ten miler, the Navy nearly made it a one, two, three, with Childs taking the honours in 20m 40s from CPO(MA) James Smith (RCDM Birmingham) the runner-up in 21m 23s and Stanton in fourth in 21m 39s, just one second off third place.

The ladies race also saw a first for the RN when LMA Mhairi Muir became the first lady to win an Inter-Service cycling championship in 27m 26s.

The results were just as good the following morning in the 25, when Childs again won with a new RN record of 50m 46s, completing the double (also for the third consecutive year), this time from a very determined Stanton in runner-up spot with a personal best of 51m 22s, with Smith 7th in 54m 20s. Muir completed the ladies double by winning in 1h 7m and 30s.

The first year of the Combined Services 'best all-rounder' ranking series proved to be a tremendous success.

Based on a rider's average speed for their fastest ten, 25 and 50-mile events during the year, it saw Stanton take victory, albeit a

Windsurfers' triumph

Continued from page 48
start line and back around again and down to finish on Prickly Pear Island.

For windsurfers on the upper side of ten stones it wasn't much fun, apart from about ten minutes when the wind picked up enough to enjoy it.

CPO Walker, however, excelled in these conditions and finished fourth overall and third in class.

Next came the Anegada 13-mile race – further than any of the RN team had windsurfed in a straight line before.

The first part of the race suffered lots of 'holes' with the wind dropping which was very frustrating, but the second part was great.

The last stretch towards the beach was the best – flat water and bearing away going faster and faster.

Adrian Wallis made a great recovery from an unusually bad start to finish 18th; by sailing a different course to everyone else he stayed in the constant winds.

Lt Morris took third place and CPO Walker was seventh.

Thursday saw a race around Necker Island - Sir Richard Branson's personal paradise, one which you can rent for a mere \$48,000 a night for 20 guests (a bargain when you consider drinks are included).

Again there were some good results with Lt Morris second in his class, CPO Walker seventh and WO1 Strudwick a couple of feet behind running up the beach.

Richard Branson was even there waiting to greet the team as it arrived.

There was a brief interlude of a pirate party where (almost) everyone dressed as Blackbeard and Co and downed the odd glass of wine.

It seemed like a good idea at the time, but the next morning came the 27-miler, one of the longest windsurfing races around.

There was a severe attrition rate; fewer than half the racers finished (although six of the 11 RN team crossed the finish line). The week's fun ended with two races around two small islands and prizegiving.

There were five trophies for the Brits to carry home. CPO Walker came third overall and second in his class and Lt Morris was fourth overall, third in his class.

With more consistent winds there would have been a very real chance of an overall victory.

Squash title up for grabs

THE RN squash championships will take place at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth on December 7-8.

Players of all abilities are encouraged to attend and enter in one or a number of categories, which are: men's open, ladies open, men's U25s, men's veterans (over 40), men's vintage (over 50) and doubles.

All players will be given a free squash playing shirt on arrival at the Championships.

More information from unit PTIs or Lt Cdr David Cooke RN (Secretary RNSRA) on 02392 723742 or 9380 23742, e-mail Intranet@temeraire.rns04.mod.uk, Internet rns04@a.dii.mod.uk.

'bout time for a new gym

RN and RM Sports Lottery cash has helped fund a tip-top new boxing gym at HMS Raleigh.

What was once a static weight training area in the Torpoint establishment's main gym is now dedicated to the art of pugilism.

As well as a boxing ring, facilities provided for fighters included a separate conditioning area with heavy punch bag and other bespoke boxing kit.

Raleigh has a 16-strong boxing squad coached by LPT 'Arnie' Arnold.

This year's AGM will take place at the Nuffield Bar (RNAS Yeovilton) on November 29 at 5.30pm.
Details from CPO Childs at childss@a.dii.mod.uk or www.navycycling.org.uk

Unicorn clips Pegasus

THE success of the BRNC sailing teams at this year's 163rd Dartmouth Regatta maintained the RN's standing at this prestigious event, writes S/Lt S Hogg, Britannia Royal Naval College.

The college brought two crews to the event: STC Unicorn under Lt Bannister, Head of Navigation at BRNC (useful considering the close proximity of vessels at the event); and STC Pegasus commanded by Lt Cdr Marshall, an experienced regular and old Cunningham senior officer at the college.

As most of the crews had never sailed together before, it was crucial to get out on the water and get in as many tacks, jibes and spinnaker hoists as possible before the racing started in earnest.

Following more than an hour of little progress, a clever move by Pegasus allowed her to find some wind on the extremities of the course and after a few tacks Unicorn were in hot pursuit.

Indeed, the latter boat pipped her rival on the final mark after being behind for the whole race, setting the stage for some very healthy rivalry between the two RN crews.

The first day of racing in Start Bay began with both crews battling hard to the windward mark with two crew in the cockpit, and the rest on the rail to balance the boat.

Pegasus made good way coming

ahead of Unicorn before the first mark.

After a good downwind leg, a shift in wind required the windward mark be relayed. There was some frantic mark spotting – and the race was back on, ending with a strong finish from Pegasus.

Unfortunately several yachts failed to round the right mark and the race results had to be wiped from the scoring – a real blow for Pegasus.

Day two saw a slight drop in wind speed and more success for the Pegasus team who again got ahead of Unicorn on the first leg and managed to hold that position throughout the race.

The third day opened with Unicorn's crew adjusting her rigging. The difference was evident and Unicorn beat Pegasus to the first mark. She stayed ahead throughout the race with the crew working really hard, getting the hoists and drops of the sails perfect every time. Unicorn was back on the block and with all to play for.

Sunday was the final day of racing and the crews pulled out all the stops.

An excellent start gave Unicorn the advantage and although Pegasus made some ground back on the downwind legs the result was Unicorn 8th, Pegasus 15th.

Back at the clubhouse the final results were announced: RN STC Pegasus 15th and RN STC Unicorn 12th out of 36.



● Korea progress... AB(LOGS) Kenny Curle evades a challenge from a South Korean sailor during HMS Monmouth's 3-2 win

Jamie's NAC of scoring

THE football season is now in full swing for all our RN/RM teams and the squads are about to play their first matches at their various levels.

If you are keen to know more about Navy football, I recommend our website at www.royalnavyfa.com which contains current news and shows the fixtures for the coming season.

While it is, of course, an honour to represent our Service, I know that all the players and officials really appreciate some touchline presence and your support is always welcome at any of our matches.

The traditional season opener is the Inter-Commands which was held at Victory Stadium in Portsmouth.

The opening rounds were extremely competitive, but the Naval Air Command and Portsmouth emerged as the strongest two teams and progressed to the final.

It got off to a cracking start, with man of the match AET Jamie Thirkle (Culdrose) scoring for NAC after just seven minutes, only for Pompey to level four minutes later through PO(MEA) 'Sweeney' Todd (HMS Nottingham).

Generally both teams were producing good football and the goalkeepers (AEM Roy Emerson

and WEA Steve Sheakey) showed real skill in keeping the score down. They are both products of the development squads which is really promising for the future.

Strong defending from the Wafus, especially in the form of LAET John Delahay and AET Tom Ardley (Heron), kept Portsmouth out and ultimately proved decisive, with Thirkle adding another quality goal before half time.

The second half was equally well-fought, but it was no surprise when AET Williams made it 3-1 to the airmen shortly before the end, for a deserved win.

Half-way around the world, HMS Monmouth maintained a 125-year tradition when she visited South Korea.

The Senior Service introduced the beautiful game to the country back in 1882 – and each time a British warship visits, there's the obligatory football match.

The Black Duke's clash with the South Korean Armed Forces coincided with the military's national day, so there was a decent home crowd watching in the stadium at Pyongtaek.

They were to be disappointed. After a closely-fought match, the Brits triumphed 3-2 to lift the 1882 Cup, which now sits in Monmouth's trophy cupboard.



● Super Nova... LOGS Tracey Cotton in her Vauxhall Nova (No.4) fights off a challenge from arch rival Emma Kitchen's Mini
Picture: PO 'Dutchy' Holland, Phoenix NBCD School

WHOEVER said cotton was soft and fluffy?

Tracey Cotton is most definitely not. In fact, she's a bit of a demon on the stock car race track.

The logistician based at Whitehall is the sole female racer in the RN Automobile Club – and can be found challenging male and female drivers on the dirt tracks of the UK.

She took her Vauxhall Nova to Rockingham in Northamptonshire for the South Eastern Grass Track Organisation's ladies championship.

After a day re-wiring the car thanks to an electrical fault, Tracey clambered into her car for two heats on the first day of racing – ending neck-and-neck on points with her nearest rival, Emma Kitchen from Croydon.

The second day on the track would decide the title. After an initial lead on the first heat, the sailor was bashed from behind by Kitchen, who promptly took the lead.

The second and final heat was almost a carbon copy; Tracey took the lead only for her arch rival to once more clatter the Nova from behind and send it wide, allowing Kitchen to take an unassailable lead.

The Croydon driver promptly lifted the title, but Tracey was awarded a trophy for her second place.

By the time the penultimate round of the championships arrived at Horndean, Tracey sat

in ninth place overall (thanks, not least, to her missing numerous meets this season as a result of RN duties).

With her Nova playing up, the racer rolled out her trusted Mini instead.

Perhaps we were a bit premature calling it 'trusted', as Tracey found in the opening heat.

"I had a cracking start from the outside and was straight in front of the two cars which started on my inside before the first bend," she says.

"I started to reel in the cars of the drivers that started in front of me but the car suddenly started 'running sick'.

"One minute it was flying and the next it would splutter but then it would be away again."

Tracey pulled the car off the track for some on-the-spot repairs with the help of her brother and dad.

It turned out that someone had tossed a couple of cigarette butts into the fuel tank blocking the fuel line.

Fortunately, Team Cotton carried a spare petrol tank and the offending tank was replaced in time for Tracey to return to the track.

A top-ten finish in the next heat would guarantee a place in the double points final – and again Tracey got off to a flying start, holding on to fourth place by the mid-point of the race.

"The next thing I knew there was an almighty bang behind me and the red flags instantly came out," says Tracey.

"I came to a stop and had a look behind me and there was just a mass of cars all over the track with one being very badly buried in the fence nose first."

A Vauxhall Nova had suffered a blow-out, causing an almighty pile-up.

An ambulance and a recovery vehicle later and the heat resumed.

The sailor spied a gap between the two cars ahead of her, squeezed through it and raced into second place – a position she held to the end.

That ensured she would start from the third row in the 30-lap final on a track which had a good grip and was very fast after the numerous heats.

Once again, Tracey began brightly. By lap four she was in the runners-up spot – and pulling away from the pack to create a half-lap lead by the final lap.

"We came round the final bend for the chequered flag. I just accelerated out and knew if I could keep a tight line it would be close," she adds.

It was only when the trophy presentation was made in the centre of the track that she realised just how close: she had pipped the race leader on the line to claim first place.

To the Royals the spoils

TWO days of friendly, fair, sometimes fierce but always fun hockey were played out in glorious sunshine at Burnaby Road's Astro turf pitches.

Around 100 male and female RN personnel of all ranks, including teams from United Services Hockey Club, Portsmouth, took part in the first Navy-wide Inter Specialisation Hockey 7s competition, writes Lt Cdr Alan Walker, secretary RNHA.

Twenty-three specialisations across the seven branches of the Service were represented in 100 matches dedicated to grass roots hockey for the honour of representing their specialisation or trade.

We have long known there were wonderful teams 'lost' in those arms of the Service, it was so good to see them take the field.

The teams, wearing new strips in bright colours commemorating the 30 years of partnership between RN hockey and sponsors Mercian, added a shine to the occasion.

Inter-part sport would appear to be the route to help players to 'get back into' their sports.

In the specialisation tournament final positions were: 1 – Royal Marines; 2 – Aircrew; 3 – Warfare.

And in the branch tournament, the Royals again claimed victory ahead of the aircrew/submarines and engineers.

Rolling back the clock was the



● Veterans' day... An England LX player fires the ball in, watched by his RN Over 55s opponent

order of the veterans day as the RN Over 55s took on and beat the representative England LX (Over 60s) side.

The LX organisation run by Tom Darlington, father of Capt Mark Darlington who's chairman of RN Hockey, released three of their members – former RN hockey stalwarts Lt Cdr Chris Jones (65), MAA Pat McAuley (65) and Lt Cdr Barry Sewell (64) to represent the Navy Team. Add in Cdr Berry Reeves, CPOSA

Stewart Neville-Rutherford, CPOWEA Eric Sutcliffe, Capt Nick Batho, CPO David Lewis (72), CPO Roger Coleman and the Navy had the makings of a fine team.

They were joined by Capt Ian Jarvis, Lt Cdr Brian Sweeney, and there were late call-ups for mere youngsters Lt Col Rory Copinger-Symes, Cdr Ian Bisson, and CPOAEM Gareth Rees.

A small raucous crowd made as much noise as Pompey football

club's famous supporters and a brilliant day was had by all.

Early in the second half Nick Batho sniffed out a typical poacher's effort for 1-0 to the Navy, then hit one like a rocket to give the RN a 2-0 lead.

LX missed several chances or had them saved by stout defensive work from Sweeney, Sutcliffe and Sewell. Was Barry ever as good as this when in uniform? Well he kept this lot out, so no wonder he's a member of LX.

These guys are 'evergreens': 60-year-old Neville-Rutherford, a bandana shielding the now bald pate from the splendid sunshine, sniffed out another by getting on the end of 72-year-old David Lewis' cross to make the score 3-0.

In the last minutes of the game Batho cracked in another long-range top-circle effort through a host of legs for 4-0.

Earlier in the day in the over-35s veterans' match, the ex-Serving Team beat the Currently Serving Team in the Past vs Present annual president's match.

Despite sterling efforts from the Serving Team in which Bisson and Copinger-Symes excelled, the ex-Serving team beat the Serving Team 4-1 with a hat trick from Jon Smith and a typical Alan Cunningham opportunistic effort. Copinger-Symes replied for the RN.



Onside with Capt Paul Cunningham, RNFA

Next month



Hawaii 235 – Monmouth visits the 50th State



Name that 'toon – an artist's unique take on life on Illustrious



Bye bye, Basra – 845 NAS bid farewell to the desert



Falklands echoes – unseen pictures of the run-up to war



A dash of Chile

THE Navy's greatest sporting event was resurrected for a one-off clash as a Chilean sailors went head-to-head with a Portsmouth crew in a field gun showdown.

Crew from Chilean ship *Almirante Cochrane* – the former HMS *Norfolk* which is currently in Portsmouth Harbour – took on a team from the Portsmouth Flotilla at HMS *Excellent*... which proved a challenge as both sides were novices at this gruelling sport.

Fortunately, there were two field gun veterans on hand to whip the teams into shape. WO1 Ian Binks from HMS *Temeraire* coached the Brits, while the Chileans (pictured above in red dashing side-by-side with the Pompey team) were spurred on by WO1 Don Shaw (Fleet HQ).

"The *Almirante Cochrane* crew really rose to the challenge and tackled the event with passion and a smile on their faces. I am sure they will never forget this challenge," said Don.

After four days of training, the two sides hit the track, cheered by a sizeable crowd from Fleet Headquarters plus the remainder of the Chilean ship's company.

Two runs were held, with honours shared between the two nations – although overall the Brits were considerably faster (nearly 40 seconds).

"This meant a lot to my guys, especially as they were able to recover after losing the first run," said Capt Julio Leiva, *Cochrane's* Commanding Officer.

The aim of the event – similar to the junior leaders competition held in May – was to encourage first-timers to take part in future field gun races as well as bolstering morale and team spirit.

Picture: LA(Phot) Luis Holden, FRPU Whale Island

Virgin on greatness

NAVAL windsurfers seized back the Inter-Services trophy over a Hampshire weekend – thanks in part to practising around the Virgin Islands.

The rather less exotic waters of Hayling Island were the venue for the two-day contest, write Cdr Adrian Wallis and WO1 Dave Strudwick.

The championships opened with a disappointingly gentle breeze, insufficient for official racing so a short 'fun race' was held in the glorious sunshine to make sure that at least everyone got wet.

Sqn Ldr Simon Kent struck the first blow for the RAF by crossing the line first closely followed by CPO Johnny Walker.

Was this to be a portent of things to come?

No. Sunday dawned bright and, importantly, windy with gusts of over 20kts at times and a large sea swell running.

This permitted two races to be held before lunch and two after with plenty of high-speed action for the spectators.

The RN team set their stall out in the first race, claiming five of the first seven places – a trend that was maintained throughout the day.

Despite the best efforts of the other two services the RN Team took the team trophy by a considerable points margin.

The last time the RN team won the title was in 2004 and this year's performance was undoubtedly enhanced by new race equipment, recently bought with help from the Sports Lottery, Nuffield Trust and the RNSA.

On the individual front, Lt Paul Morris was exceptional, winning all four races to take the Inter-Services individual title whilst CPO Walker finished second and



● HIHO silver shining... CPO 'Johnny' Walker races against a local during the Highland Spring HIHO race in the Virgin Islands

Picture: Sandie Allen

Capt Allan Cross (Army) third. The competition also serves as the venue for the RN individual championships, with Paul Morris and Johnny Walker claiming the top prizes.

There was a close fight for third place between WO1 Dave Strudwick, Cdr Adrian Wallis and Cdr Gerry Northwood. In the end Dave won out from Adrian by a single point with Gerry not far off the pace.

As a warm-up for the Inter-Services, the team competed for the first time in the Highland Spring HIHO windsurfing event – six days of racing around the British Virgin Islands.

The idea for the team's involvement came in 2005 when the RNSA Rear Commodore (Windsurfing), Cdr Northwood was in the area as CO of HMS *Liverpool*; he was invited to enter one of the races and the ship was used as the start boat.

That led to the event organiser inviting the Navy out to race. Two years later, an 11-strong team flew to the Caribbean – among the luckiest RN windsurfers ever as they enjoyed some of the most spectacular races imaginable.

Where else do you get the chance to race for 13 miles in a straight line to an island you can't even see until you're about

two miles away as the highest point is a palm tree, or a 27-mile downwind race where only half the fleet finish?

The week started off with getting the team's boards rigged, checked and adorned with the RNSA and Sail Navy stickers on every sail.

Light winds on the first two days of the event looked to have scuppered competition, until the marshall on the second day had different ideas and set the teams off on a long course, starting off with an upwind leg inside a reef then going a mile or so out to sea and back before downwind to the

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See page 37 for information on the exciting new opportunities available now.