

# NAVY NEWS

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TURN and burn... HMS Chatham manoeuvres at speed away from the Al Basrah Oil Terminal. The Type 22 frigate bagged six tonnes of drugs – part of a 23-tonne haul of narcotics seized by the RN in the Gulf region this year. See page 13 for details.

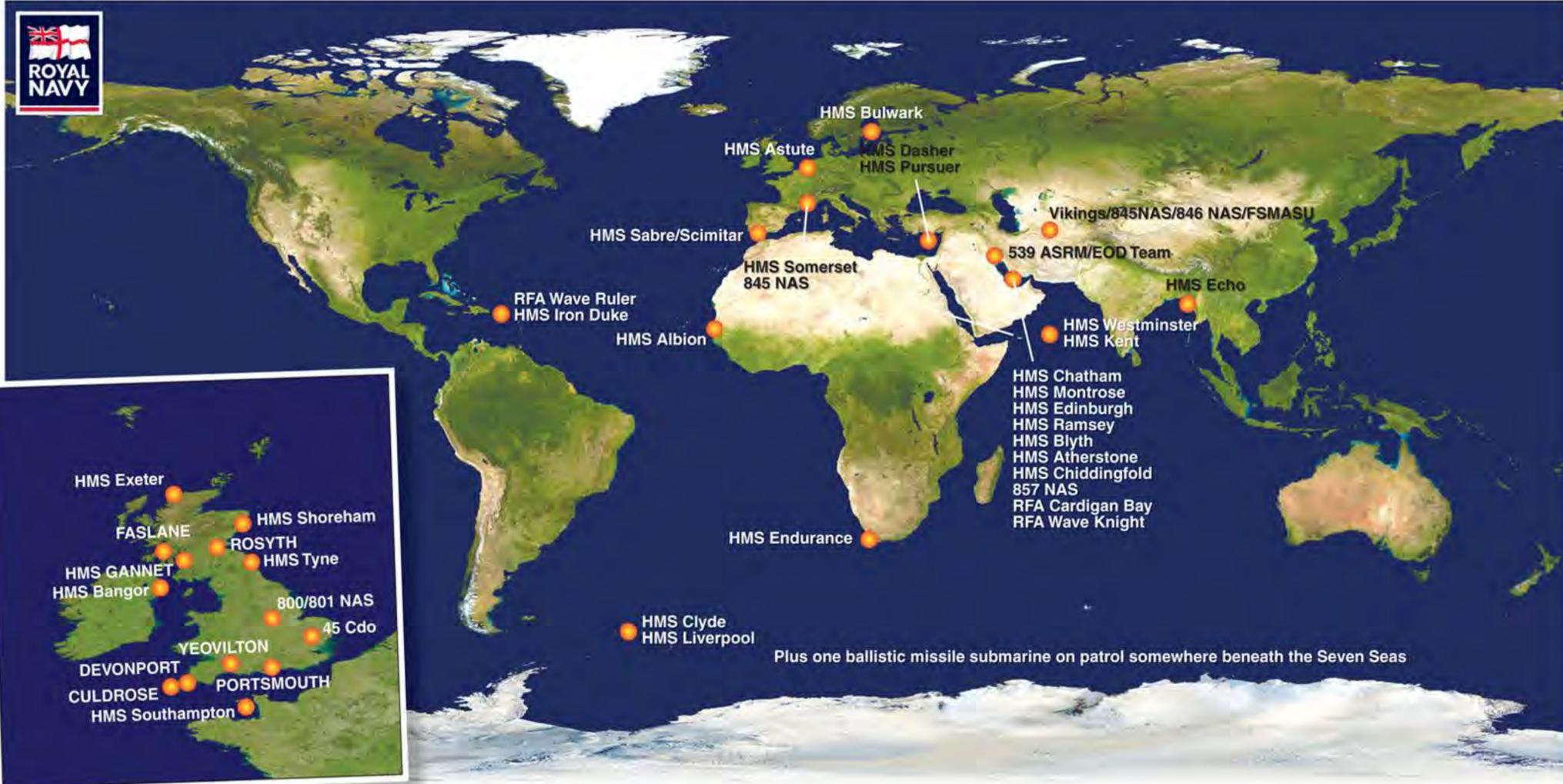
Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Winter, FRPU West



# HIGHWAY PATROL

**GRAPPLING WITH THE DRUG RUNNERS – EAST AND WEST**

# GLOBAL REACH



## Fleet Focus

STABBINGS and knife crime might be dominating the news agenda at present, but it's another blight on our society which has dominated the efforts of the Royal Navy this past month: drugs trafficking.

At opposite ends (ish) of the globe, British sailors and marines have seized narcotics.

**HMS Iron Duke** bagged £40m of cocaine (and headlines the world over thanks to the presence of a certain royal personage aboard) in the Caribbean (see page 5).

Meanwhile in the Gulf and Indian Ocean, a news blackout on RN drug-busting operations has been lifted to reveal that HM Ships **Chatham**, **Montrose** and **Edinburgh**, plus **RFA Argus**, have accounted for 70 per cent of the drugs seized by Allied forces this year along the 'hashish highway' (see page 13).

Heading home (belatedly) from the Indian Ocean is **HMS Westminster** whose deployment was extended by a month thanks to the cyclone which struck Burma. Neither the frigate, nor destroyer **Edinburgh** which relieved her, were called upon to offer assistance in the end (see opposite).

Further up the Bay of Bengal, survey ship **HMS Echo** paid a rare visit to Bangladesh when she worked with the country's navy in the approaches to Chittagong, the principal port (see page 11).

Britain's two principal assault ships, **HMS Albion** and **Bulwark**, have both been conducting manoeuvres in foreign waters. **Albion** has been in West Africa (see pages 22-23), **Bulwark** in the Baltic exercising with Russian marines (see page 6).

Meanwhile in home waters, **RFA Lyme Bay** has been earning her spurs as an amphibious ship during exercises off the Devon and Cornish coasts, working alongside **1 Assault Group RM** (see pages 14-16).

The Royal Marines of **45 Commando** will soon be heading to Helmand once more with **3 Commando Brigade**. They prepared for Afghanistan by holding off a 'Taliban' onslaught at a mock-up base in Norfolk (see page 8).

Also about to deploy to Afghanistan are the fliers of **845 NAS** (some are already in the theatre); crews and Sea Kings headed to Gap in southern France to practise high-altitude operations (see page 11).

**HMS Endurance's** sailors are enjoying the unique sights of South Africa as the ice ship undergoes a mini-overhaul before heading up the continent's west coast for some rare survey work away from Antarctica (see page 30).

On the opposite side of the Atlantic, **HMS Liverpool** and **HMS Clyde** visited South Georgia to conduct a disaster relief exercise with the handful of locals (see page 5).

**HMS Hurworth** has completed her attachment to a NATO mine warfare group with **HMS Roebuck** and returned to Portsmouth (see page 11).

Also in Portsmouth, military and political leaders signed the deal which will see two new aircraft carriers join the Fleet next decade (see page 9).

After nearly four years out of the water, strategic missile boat **HMS Victorious** put to sea, bringing the curtain down on her major refit in Devonport (see page 17).

As **Victorious** left Devonport, so hunter-killer **HMS Talent** returned, fresh from a wide-ranging deployment which encompassed the Arctic Circle and the Bahamas (see page 4).

And although she's not ready for sea just yet, new Fleet submarine **HMS Astute** has been practising the tricky manoeuvre of leaving Barrow – courtesy of a computer simulator in Holland (see page 4).

**HMS Exeter** was also in Barrow, taking part in the town's maritime festival before heading around the top of Scotland, via a gunnery/bombing exercise at Cape Wrath (see right).

And finally... Last month we commented that the weather in Blighty wasn't that great. Hmmm. Anyone attending **Yeovilton Air Day** (see page 10) will tell you it still isn't that great. Fingers crossed for next month then...

● Top bombing... Garvie Island receives a pounding from the Naval Strike Wing – as observed by HMS Exeter



THREE decades after champagne trickled down her bow, HMS Exeter sailed past her birthplace to celebrate her 30th birthday.

The veteran destroyer – Britain's oldest surface ship and last survivor of Falklands task force – headed up the Tyne for a weekend in Newcastle, the latest stop on her UK 'summer tour'.

Her birthplace, the Swan Hunter yard Wallsend, is little more than a shell these days, sadly. It no longer builds ships a failing to finish RFA Lyme Bay and most of the heavy machinery, including its iconic cranes, are being shipped to a yard in south-west India.

Despite Swan's demise, the Tyne has lost none of its appetite for the RN with nearly 100 movers and shakers crossing the gangway for a VIP reception.

They were followed by schoolchildren and cadets who were given a tour of the destroyer, now in the final year of her illustrious career (she pays off next year to coincide with HMS Daring joining the Fleet).

Exeter reached the Tyne 'the long way round' sailing not via the Strait of Dover but via Cape Wrath and the northern coast of Scotland.

Her 'summer tour' has been a mix of public visits and training exercises, beginning with Barrow's Festival of the Sea.

Exeter was to have been joined by mine counter-measures vessel HMS Walney, but she was needed by FOST for training.

Which meant that Exeter got all the attention RN-wise; an estimated 14,000 people filed aboard her

over the two days of the event.

Away from festivities, the ship's company took part in a solemn drumhead ceremony ashore, with the crew of HMS Astute – the new attack submarine being built at BAE's yard in Barrow – lining some of the town's streets as Exeter's sailors paraded past.

It would probably be too much to call Barrow a picture postcard... unlike Exeter's next port of call, the colourful Tobermory (or Balamory) you're under five), a brief halt as the destroyer moved through the isles and inlets of western Scotland, past Eilean Donan castle (the archetypal Highlands fortress), past the Kyle of Lochalsh, beneath the Skye road bridge then on to the north-western tip of the Scottish mainland.

There the sailors were joined by 148 Battery Royal Artillery to offer their gunnery expertise during a naval gunfire support exercise on the Cape Wrath ranges. One hundred high-explosive shells left the barrel of Exeter's 4.5in main gun and came crashing down ashore.

It wasn't only Exeter giving the Sutherland landscape a pounding. Harriers of 800 NAS unleashed their bombs against nearby Garvie Island in preparation for their re-deployment to Afghanistan later this year. Just for good measure they 'swung by' Exeter and conducted simulated attacks against the destroyer.

There was a respite from war in the natural harbour of Scapa Flow, where the ship anchored for a night to hold a barbecue for her ship's company, before making first for Leith, then finally on to Newcastle.

## Proud to serve but dejected

TWO out of three sailors believe morale in the Senior Service is low – or worse – according to an official study of Forces morale and attitudes.

Spirit is higher in the Royal Marines, however, but four out of ten commandos still believe morale is low or very low.

On the plus side, 19 in every 20 Royal Marines are proud to serve their country; two out of three sailors say likewise.

But 37 per cent of naval officers, almost half of all ratings and one in three green berets say they regularly consider handing in their notice.

And more than half of all sailors and two out of five Royal Marines say financial incentives – bonuses and 'golden handcuffs' – would not influence their decision to stay in or leave the Service.

These figures – and countless more – are revealed in the latest Continuous Attitude Survey conducted by the MOD last summer and published in July.

Nearly 8,000 survey forms – featuring almost 250 questions – were given to sailors.

Half of the 1,500 officers who received them responded, almost half the senior rates filled in their forms, but fewer than one in four junior ratings gave their opinions.

Of more than 4,000 Royal Marines who received the surveys, only a quarter responded.

Over half the commandos believe they should be paid better; one in three sailors is also unhappy with their levels of pay.

Nine out of ten sailors believe the RN lives up to its recent watchword – The team works – and more than half are willing to put themselves out for the good of the Service. Three quarters of Royal Marines are also prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of the Corps.

But two in every five sailors would not recommend joining the Forces to friends or family; over half of all green berets, however, said they would recommend Service life.

Half of the Senior Service – FAA, Submarine Service and Surface Fleet and the Royal Marines – say their work does leave them with a sense of achievement.





# Keep on running



**L**ONG before you read these words, the men and women of HMS Westminister should have been enjoying well-deserved summer leave.

Instead, they're probably only just heading off on their hols. Global events added an extra month to the Portsmouth's frigate's Orion 08 deployment, which began with the ship escorting HMS Illustrious east of Suez and ended with an unscheduled trip to international waters off Burma.

Westminster was ordered across the Bay of Bengal at short notice to contribute to Operation Songster, Britain's response to the humanitarian crisis in Burma in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis.

For a brief while a substantial international task force mustered in international waters, including the impressive American helicopter assault ship USS Wasp (twice the size of HMS Ocean...) and her task group plus some French warships.

Westminster was eventually relieved of her Songster duties by her Orion 08 companion HMS Edinburgh. As it was neither ship was called upon to offer assistance in Burma.

Extending deployments invariably has a habit of hitting morale – both of sailors and their loved ones back home.

So aside from a busy operational tempo Jack and Jill need to let their hair down.

Enter Westminster's clubz, LPT 'Dizzi' Dawson, fun and fitness co-ordinator with a variety of circuit training (*that doesn't sound like fun – Ed*) and flightdeck sports including volleyball, quick cricket and the ever-popular dodgeball (*that's more like it – Ed*). All the mess decks were keen to earn 'top dog' bragging rights... and 2J mess are shouting the loudest after winning the majority of the competitions.

None of these sporting activities was as challenging – or as well attended, for that matter – as the Mike Till memorial relay.

Back in March 1982 the men of HMS Sheffield staged the first 100x1-mile relay at sea; keen runner and computer technician CPO Mike Till posted the fourth fastest time on the day. The 35-year-old died two months later when Shiny Sheff was hit by an Exocet off the Falklands.

In his memory, 100 of Westminster's sailors – more than half the ship's company – ran in Mike's honour as the frigate moved through the Gulf of Aden (fittingly as the inaugural race in 1982 was held nearby).

Each mess deck provided ten runners. And each runner had to carry a baton for one mile (seven laps of the upper deck) continuously, no stopping, and no breaks between athletes.

The chiefs' mess were first up, with CPO Si Hanson setting the benchmark with a time of 5m 45s; the wardroom quickly followed with the Flight Commander Lt 'Holly' Holroyd setting a new best time of 5m 34s.

With mess pride at stake, the best time continued to be bettered, with AB Bradley (5m 33s), LLogs Herbert (5m 32s) and ET Elston (5m 31s) all putting in impressive times – and all this despite rather choppy sea conditions.

ET Bond, the penultimate runner, produced a scorching time of 5m 29s to take the fastest time prize.

And if that wasn't enough running, there was the 'Golden Mile handicap' stakes with the top ten fastest runners from the relay going head-to-head, spurred on by 100 cheering shipmates.

'Holly' knocked more than 20 seconds off his original time – and was looking unbeatable until AB Bradley proved to be one second faster. Shipmates say he's open to invitations from the RN Athletics Club...

After all that exertion it's only right that you relax on a summer's day. And what finer way than gathering on the village green for some traditional fare?

Yes, step up for the Westminster village fête (there's not a lot of green on the frigate so the grey flight deck had to deputise...).

Each mess was responsible for a stall – and each mess entered fully into the spirit of festivities. The POs' mess spent an afternoon in the galley baking cakes, while shipmates knuckled down to crazy golf, human skittles and a Heath Robinson-esque 'test your strength machine' (complete with top-hatted Victorian engineers).

No village fête would, of course, be complete without morris dancers... so enter the wardroom's extremely professional amateur morris dancing team to entertain the crowd (sady, or fortunately – depending on your perspective – we don't have any video footage...).

Fête accomplished (*groan – Ed*), the 'capital ship' began the long journey west.

"We're now heading home with a sense of a job well done and pride in all that we have achieved," said CO Cdr Ken Houlberg.

● Main picture... Westminster's Merlin approaches the frigate under fiery skies; remaining images (clockwise from top left)... Breakaway movement – Westminster parts company with USS Wasp; a sailor tests one of the ship's Miniguns; fête attraction – the engineers show off their trial of strength; and scream if you wanna go faster – Westminster's sea boat bounces through the Bay of Bengal

pictures: po bob sharples, 829 nas/hms westminster



## A bridge (simulator) not too far

THE crew of new hunter-killer boat HMS Astute have been to sea in the Netherlands... minus their submarine.

Astute is in the final stages of fitting out at BAE Systems' yard in Barrow.

Once the engineers and fitters have done their work, she'll leave the site which has been her home for a decade and head into open water for the first time later this year.

And that's rather more demanding than it seems at face value. It's a tight squeeze to get out of the dock and locks at Barrow, then the boat must negotiate the narrow Walney Channel before emerging into the Irish Sea.

The last thing you want is a rather embarrassing bump as you're leaving on your maiden voyage, so practice makes perfect... hence the reason for the visit to Holland.

The Maritime Research Institute Netherlands is one of the world's leading centres of seafaring research (and, bizarrely, is slap bang in the middle of the Netherlands, near Arnhem, rather than on the coast), with state-of-the-art bridge simulators.

And there the docks, locks and channels at Barrow were recreated on 3D computers to test the control room team.

Whilst navigator Lt Justin Cloney grappled with the challenging exit from Barrow and manoeuvring the 8,000-ton nuclear submarine, in a separate simulator nearby the control room team was plotting fixes and monitoring Astute's progress.

As with much of Astute, that control room is a departure from Silent Service tradition: the helmsman doesn't use a standard control column, but instead directs all control surfaces by moving a single joystick. Using the simulator gave helmsman POLogs(CS) Dave Pitt the chance to master this strange new art.

And finally in a third simulator, four tugs were added to the fray so that navigator, control team, pilot and tug captains could practise the tricky exit from Barrow's dock and lock system.

Back in Barrow, Astute hosted not one but two of the world's most senior naval officers.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band was joined by his American counterpart, Admiral Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations, for a tour of the boat and a chat with the ship's company, including CPO Jon Murray and WO (Coxn) John Hendren who received a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and clasp to the same respectively.

## Superb sails home on the surface

ATTACK submarine HMS Superb is back in the UK after striking an underwater mount in the Red Sea.

The veteran hunter-killer boat damaged her sonar and ballast tanks when she struck the pinnacle, although no crew were hurt.

After initial inspections in Aqaba, Superb sailed for Souda Bay in Crete for temporary repairs to allow her to sail to the UK under her own steam.

That she did, sailing into Devonport (rather than her home of Faslane) at the end of June. She came the entire way from Crete on the surface.

A Board of Inquiry is looking into the causes of the accident while a detailed assessment of the damage caused is being made before Whitehall determines her future.

The 32-year-old Swiftsure-class boat was due to decommission next year.

# Britain's got Talent (back)

LAST month we lamented that there was a British submarine prowling the waters of the Bahamas with HMS Richmond... but that we couldn't tell you which one.

Well, now we can: it was those nice chaps aboard HMS Talent. And the test range at AUTEC was only the tip of the, er, palm tree.

Actually, we can say it was the tip of the iceberg because the boat's deployment began in January with a trip to the Norwegian fjords for Armatura Borealis.

Talent was charged with sneaking about the narrow waters keeping tabs on the 'Mazonians', a rather nasty bunch determined to ride roughshod over UN resolutions and stomp around in northern Norway.

The submariners fed details of Mazonian movements to the rest of the task force – including Ark Royal, Albion and Bulwark – before 'dispatching' an enemy submarine.

With the enemy threat dealt with, Talent then pretended to be the foe, testing the anti-submarine defences of the Allied force.

Right, that's enough of the cold. The rest of Talent's time has been spent in warmer waters: the Med, Eastern Seaboard of the USA and Bahamas.

We'll start in the Med, where the theme of monitoring shipping continued, this time as part of Operation Active Endeavour, the NATO mission to stop illegal activity on the high seas.

The boat sat beneath the waves of the Middle Sea keeping an eye on suspicious maritime movements, feeding the data she collected to NATO HQ (rather as HMS Somerset did, but less covertly).

Then it was across the Atlantic to Mayport in Florida to prepare for the AUTEC ranges.

The frigate USS Doyle hosted the submariners throughout their ten-day stay in the naval base as the Talenters prepared for eight solid weeks beneath the ocean.

The Americans challenged the deeps to a

game of 'soccer' (or football as we prefer to call it) and ran out 13-10 (!) losers. It didn't stop them throwing a party for their British guests.

No visit to Florida is complete without a trip to Orlando, Disneyworld and all that, as well as the golden sands. Some submariners also squeezed in a visit to Daytona race track.

After the fun, back to business. Talent sailed first for exercises with the US Navy in the Caribbean – coming under US control and receiving praise from our Stateside cousins – including staging simulated attacks on the Arleigh-Burke destroyer USS Mitscher.

Arleigh-Burkes are not common foes for T-boats. Type 23s are. The emphasis was less on trying to attack HMS Richmond than trying to escape her all-seeing 'eyes' (or rather all-listening ears).

The frigate was testing her Sonar 2087 in the AUTEC range; Talent was testing tweaks and the latest upgrades to her ears, Sonar 2076.

There was some time allowed for the deeps to get ashore on Andros Island with its golden sands and given the Bahamas' fine climate, there were barbecues on Talent's casing.

Trials done, the submarine made the short trip to King's Bay in Georgia which is to the US Silent Service what Faslane is to ours (ie lots of bombers, or boomers as the Yanks prefer to call them) for a spot of maintenance and R&R.

Now there aren't too many golf clubs named for ballistic missile systems. Except Trident Lakes. Not only is the course named after a weapon of mass destruction, but the course is quite hazardous... and we're not talking about bunkers.

Nope, it's home to alligators as Lt Mark Alder found out on the sixth during the Engineers vs Dabbers Cup. The junior officer (wisely) conceded the ball rather than risk life and limb.

Having survived the alligator scare, Talent sailed for a final exercise with the Americans.

We've long since been users of US technology in our submarines: nuclear reactors, cruise and nuclear missiles.

So it's about time that some British boffiny (*made-up word* – Ed) headed in the opposite direction.

And perhaps it might. Ten American VIPs joined Talent to see what Sonar 2076 – and the Submarine Command System it feeds into – can do, with a possible view to incorporating the technology into American boats.

To show what the two bits of kit could do, Talent went head-to-head with an American hunter-killer boat, USS Newport News.

Sonar 2076 might one day make it on to American boats. Whether British grub follows it west is a different matter, but the visitors were treated to the "full British experience", ie cheesy hammy eggy and spotted dick.

Head caterer POLogs(CS) 'General' Patton had just £1.81 per man per day to play with to feed 130 submariners.

"Providing three meals a day was a challenge – almost as much of a challenge as finding room to store it all," said 'General'.

He and his team of six chefs, sorry logisticians (catering services (preparation)) managed to provide 471 hot meals (presumably per day) and even 2,640 choc ices (presumably *not* per day) during the 150 days away from Devonport.

Indeed, in the past 12 months, Talent has been one of the Fleet's busiest warships: seven out of every ten days have been spent at sea, clocking up 52,000 miles in the process (and seeing off the odd choc ice).

Talent's CO Cdr David Lightfoot said throughout the boat's varied 2008 deployment his men had remained "dedicated ambassadors overseas" who had also proven a thing or two.

"The challenges of lean manning and ever-increasing technological advances require us to remain one step ahead of our enemies – and everything we have achieved during our five months away has demonstrated this," he continued.

Several men of Talent earned their dolphins in traditional fashion, including Logs(Pers) Tom Brunel who now considers himself "a true submariner". He added: "When I was awarded my dolphins it was the greatest sense of achievement I had. It's not about the £5,000 bounty – although that's great – it's about pushing yourself to the limit."

'General' Patton added: "The runs ashore were the highlight – having the opportunity to swap dits with my American counterparts and see how they do things."

His boss, logistics officer Lt Tim Grimley, is also a recent recipient of his dolphins, having joined Talent from the Fleet Air Arm.

"Being a pusser is only half the job," says Tim. "I also fulfil the role of control room watchkeeper which includes dived navigation and periscope watchkeeping."

"In the short time I've been aboard, I've spotted fast jets taking off while in the cold waters of the Norwegian fjords, monitored suspicious shipping in the warmer Med and been on active ops in the Caribbean. Just another day in the office..."

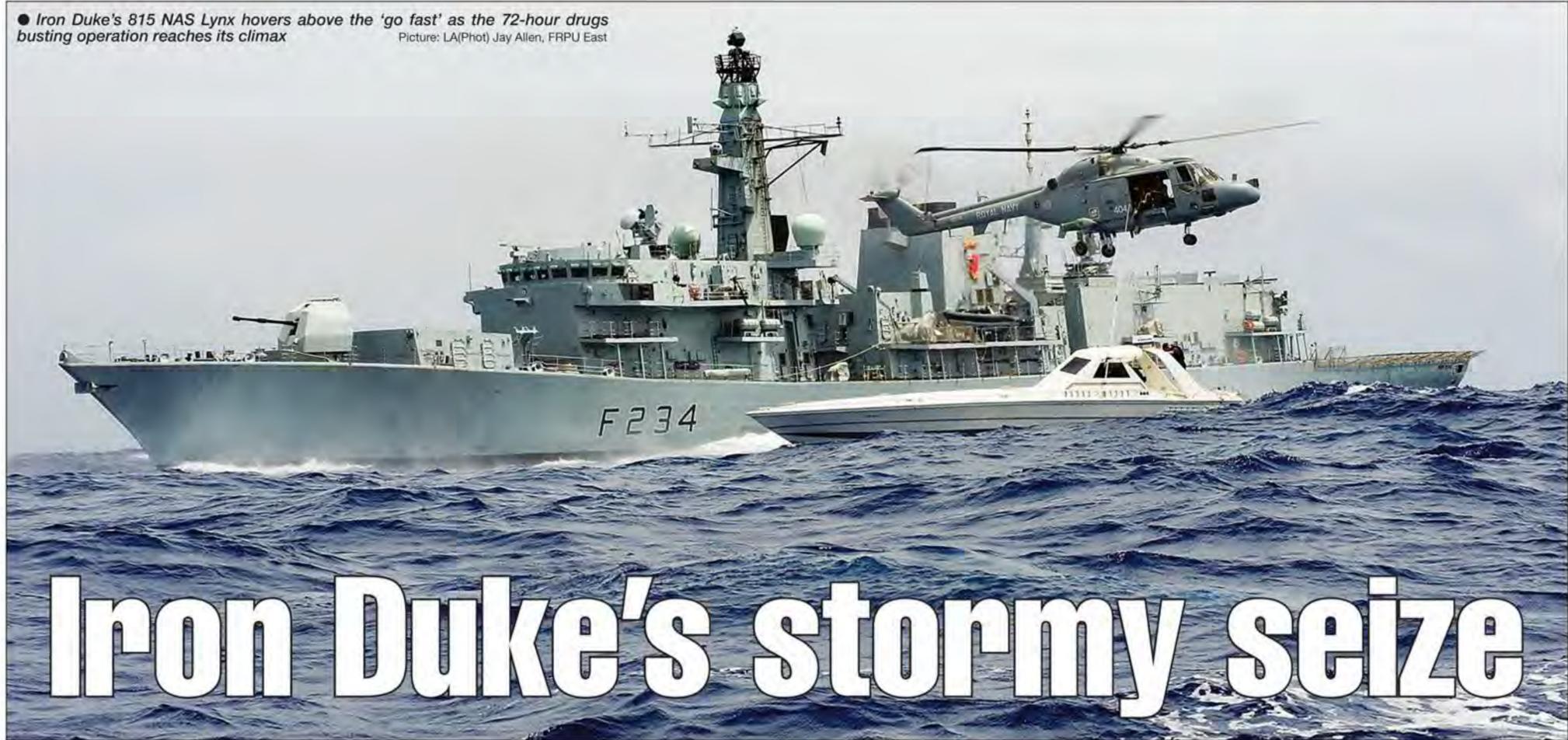
● Talent's crew work on the casing as the boat returns to Plymouth with HMS Cornwall in the background

Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clew, RN Photographer of the Year (again)

● What men of Talent do... (from the top) Hands to bathe in the Bahamas; earning their Dolphins; the Arleigh Burke destroyer USS Mitscher in the sights of Talent's periscope; observing Sea Kings taking off from HMS Ark Royal in Norway



● Iron Duke's 815 NAS Lynx hovers above the 'go fast' as the 72-hour drugs busting operation reaches its climax  
Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, FRPU East



# Iron Duke's stormy seize

THESE are the final moments of a 'go fast' speedboat crammed with cocaine before the waves of the Caribbean closed over it.

Shortly after frigate HMS Iron Duke snared the traffickers – and £40m of their vile cargo – the boat sank several hundred miles north-east of Barbados.

Iron Duke was just four days into the drug-busting phase of her North Atlantic patrol and sent her Lynx up to scour the sea for suspicious activity.

The helicopter found a 50ft

speedboat – or 'go fast' – streaking across the open ocean, far from typical waters for such vessels.

The Lynx immediately ordered the boat to stop, then hovered around it until Iron Duke could catch up and send her boarding party of US Coast Guard across.

The American law enforcers found five people aboard – and 45 bales of cocaine weighing 900kg (just under 2,000lb). They also found a vessel in such a poor state that it was taking on water.

The drugs – and the speedboat's crew – were taken across to Iron Duke to be detained before the craft sank. Although it's the height of summer, the waters – as you

can see above – were pretty choppy and it took several hours to shift all the bales of drugs to the warship. Once tallied by the ship's company, the cocaine was estimated to have a street value of £40m.

Iron Duke's seizure received international media coverage – when larger busts by the RN or RFA often go overlooked. That media coverage (some 400 stories worldwide in the 24 hours after the bust) is largely down to the presence of Prince William (or S/Lt William Wales as he is known



aboard) being on the ship at present. The second in line to the throne is on a two-month attachment to the RN and was in the Lynx during the operation.

But while the media focus on the prince, Iron Duke's CO Cdr Mark Newland prefers to praise all 180-plus members of his ship's

company who are "cock a hoop" at their success which, in total, took 72 hours.

"People will be interested in Prince William but there are 189 other sailors who deserve recognition for taking these drugs out of circulation, including guys of 19 or 20 driving the boats that made the boarding possible," he added.

"This is a fantastic start to our deployment. To have had a direct

impact on the flow of cocaine into Europe just four days after we arrived in theatre shows the benefit the Royal Navy can have in counter-drug operations.

"From the first moment our Lynx discovered the suspect vessel, my sailors, working hand in glove with our US Coast Guard colleagues, turned this opportunity into a certainty and ultimately a successful seizure. I am immensely proud of all their efforts."

## Liverpool and Clyde test cruise control

DESTROYER HMS Liverpool headed for the snow and ice as she delivered soldiers to South Georgia.

A detachment of the Roulement Infantry Company and the Falkland Islands Defence Force squeezed aboard the venerable Type 42 for the trip south.

The RN and local troops regularly exercise in and around the remote islands both to practise their defence (South Georgia was briefly occupied in 1982 before the Argentinians were forced to surrender) and to test the authorities' response to an accident involving a tourist ship.

Of course, to either fight in South Georgia or help stricken tourists, you first have to get to South Georgia, a 'mere' 860 miles from the Falklands.

And you can't just hotfoot it there either. Although Type 42s can make upwards of 30kts – and the Crazy Red Chicken (a nickname Liverpool takes from the colourful Liver bird on the ship's badge) did put on a burst of speed initially – once she came within 200 miles of South Georgia, it was time to take the foot off the gas pedal as the first icebergs were sighted.

From there on, the destroyer weaved in and out of icebergs, some large, some small, with the ship's company closed up and with iceberg lookouts constantly on, er, lookout.

Once within range of the islands, Liverpool's Lynx began offloading the troops – laborious exercise as the carrying capacity the helicopter is rather limited.

With the soldiers safely ashore, the destr made her way down to Grytviken where she dropped anchor.

Here a 'table-top' exercise was held aboard the destroyer to see how the small British Antarctic Survey team – based at King Edward Point – might cope with a major incident before help could reach the island from afar.

"With cruise ships visiting South Georgia in their droves during the summer and winter, there is always the possibility – however small – of hundreds of people requiring assistance in one of the most remote places in the world," said Cdr Craig Wood, Liverpool's Commanding Officer.

Not all the time was spent on exercises.

All the ship's company managed to get ashore to see the sights of Grytviken: the post office (to receive a stamp in their passports), the old whaling station, the island chapel for a church service, and a short service of remembrance at the grave of *Sub Oficial Primero* Felix Artuso, the Argentine officer killed during the island's recapture.

Before heading to South Georgia, the destroyer arrived in the Falklands in time for commemorations to mark the islands' liberation in 1982.

This year's events were rather lower key than the 2007 ceremonies which saw major public displays in both the UK and South Atlantic remembering the 25th anniversary of the conflict.

June 14 remains an emotional day in the islands and is marked by the liberation day parade, with Liverpool's sailors joining personnel based at Mount Pleasant in a march-past of the memorial in Stanley.

Liverpool wasn't the only one of Her Majesty's Ships in South Georgia.

The Falklands' ever-present guardian, HMS Clyde, paid her second visit to the islands.

The last time the River-class patrol vessel made the trip to the snow-capped wildlife paradise, the South Georgia Heritage Trust asked the sailors to adopt them as one of their good causes... which Clyde did.

The trust looks after both South Georgia's wildlife and its environment, plus the island's whaling and exploratory heritage, including the museum.

"Many members of the Naval Service have visited South Georgia over the last 26 years and will have been impressed by the stunning scenery and wildlife on this isolated island," said Lt Andy Scorer.

"We can report that if anything this has improved rather than deteriorated with time."

The 39 Clyde sailors handed over a cheque for £300 to the trust... then got straight back into fundraising once more courtesy of a beard-growing contest and penguin racing.

To provide a balance between the Southern and Northern Hemispheres, the ship also raises money for a charity on the river which bears her name.



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● A landing craft from 4ASRM in HMS Bulwark offloads troops into FRS Kaliningrad

Pictures: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan, HMS Bulwark



● Russian marines disembark from 4ASRM landing craft with HMS Bulwark in the background

# RMs work with RMs

BIG news – HMS Bulwark has been working with an embarked team of RMs.

Yes, we know that she is designed to operate with RMs, but we mean different RMs – Russian Marines.

The amphibious ship has been immersed in the fictional strife of Exercise Baltops 08, where unrest in North West Zealand has resulted in a UN-ordered evacuation of civilians to a place of safety.

Bulwark embarked a combined Russian-UK Marine Landing Force, led by Col Yurig Boishenko of 336 Russian Naval Infantry Brigade, who were pitched into action on a blustery Baltic morning in landing craft.

Within hours the 100 Russian marines had replaced chaos with a safe area for the 65 citizens, played by Danish civilians.

The ‘refugees’

were then processed and fed by Bulwark’s logistics team and whisked away to the safety of the Fleet Amphibious Flagship by 4 Assault Squadron RM – that’s our RMs, not the Russians.

Lt Col Nick Bentham-Green, OC 4ASRM, said: “The Amphibious Task Group’s mandate is to provide safe passage and ensure the safety of all inhabitants, irrespective of their nationality.

“This, with the Royal Marines, Russian Naval Infantry, HMS Bulwark and the Russian amphibious ship RFS Kaliningrad, we have done.”

There was also praise for the guests.

“The Russians picked up on our drills and routines very quickly – they were a pleasure to work with,” said Lt Col Bentham-Green.

Col Boishenko was also effusive over the warmth of the reception his team received.

“We have enjoyed the three days we have spent on board

Bulwark and are very happy with the quality of the training we have received,” he said.

Bulwark also worked closely with Russian frigate RFS Neustrashimy, including manoeuvring, weapon drills, helicopter cross-deck operations and personnel exchanges.

The Baltops exercise takes place every June in the southern Baltic, and this year saw forces from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United States, as well as the UK and Russia.

Capt Jeremy Blunden, CO of Bulwark, is in no doubt about the importance of the exercises.

“Baltops is one of the primary examples in the world today of how we can bring forces together from different nations to tackle a fictitious international crisis,” he said.

“By doing so we develop our ability to operate closely together such that when a real crisis develops we know that we can

quickly form up and do whatever task is required.

“The evacuation of civilians from a crisis zone, such as that exercised this year, could occur at any time – Bulwark was herself involved in the evacuation of civilians from Beirut in 2006.

“What made this year’s exercise special was that we did the evacuation using Russian marines who lived on board and then operated from a British warship.

“I have no doubt that the close working relationship we established with the Russian Marines and with the Russian frigate Neustrashimy has done much to further promote the already warm cooperation between our two navies.

“In a future real-world crisis I would be very happy to operate with Russian ships and their marines.”



● A Helix helicopter from RFS Neustrashimy on the flight deck of HMS Bulwark



● A member of HMS Bulwark’s upper deck weapons crew watches the task group head out to sea





● Quiet flows the Don... HMS Shoreham arrives in Aberdeen at the beginning of her Veterans' Day visit  
Picture: LA(Phot) 'Dougie' Douglas, FRPU Clyde

## Fighting G ready for action

HMS Gloucester's long road from refit is almost over with the destroyer completing front-line training.

The Fighting G earned a 'very satisfactory' score from the people at Flag Officer Sea Training (who judge ships to be 'satisfactory', 'v.sat' or 'good' – providing they pass the two-month trial, testing a ship's company's ability to fight fire, flood, breakdown and finally war).

The destroyer left Rosyth at the end of last year following a £6m overhaul.

Engineers, shipwrights and electrical experts from Babcock fitted the 22-year-old destroyer with improved communications equipment and sensors, ripped out the old boilers, installed environmentally-friendly water production plants and fitted a 'go-faster spoiler' on Gloucester's stern (it's officially called a transom flap) which makes the ship both more stable and more fuel efficient.

On ending FOST, Gloucester sailed for Cardiff to take part in the Welsh capital's Veterans' Day commemorations, with a sizeable proportion of the ship's company taking part in a parade alongside Servicemen and women past and present.

There's still one final act for the Portsmouth-based warship to undergo before she is fully operational: firing her Sea Dart.

She'll shortly head out to the RN test ranges in the Western Approaches to launch two anti-air missiles at drone targets ensuring that the upgrades to the missile system received during the refit have been successful.

# We get around...

IF YOU'VE been near one of Britain's ports or coastal towns this past month, there's a fair chance you will have bumped into one of Her Majesty's warships.

A clutch of vessels have been flying the flag at a mix of maritime festivals, hometown visits and Veterans' Day ceremonies.

And that's where we begin. HMS Shoreham sailed from her home on Scotland's west coast to the Granite City for five days in Aberdeen as veterans' events reached their climax.

Fifteen sailors from the Sandown-class ship joined local ex-Servicemen for a parade by all three Forces through the heart of the city.

And from experience to youth... the mine countermeasures vessel hosted a flurry of young people: Torry Academy, Banff and Buchan College of Further Education, and Sea Cadet units TS Scylla (Aberdeen) and TS Caledonia (Peterhead).

At the other end of the British Isles, destroyer HMS Southampton made the short hop along the Solent to the home of cruise liners.

It's the first time in 18 months that the ship has been back to her namesake city; operational duties kept her in the South Atlantic for much of last year and also forced the ship to pull out of a visit this spring.

So better late than never, then. She spent four days berthed in Southampton Water. The climax of the visit was a parade to exercise her freedom of the famous port, a march which started and ended at the civic offices.

Southampton arrived in Southampton after a busy spring of maintenance and exercises including an engine change (which we featured last month) and a lively period around the Channel Islands (which we didn't).

Jersey and Guernsey are popular haunts for the RN, not only because of their hospitality or pleasant climate but because of the excellent navigational opportunities their shores offer.

Students on the frigate navigation officers' course joined the destroyer for a week's intensive training around the islands with

high-speed manoeuvres in tricky pilotage areas.

Despite the title of the course, those navigators who passed (in this instance all of them) will go on to navigate a frigate or destroyer.

The spell off St Catherine's Point in Jersey was also the Duke of Edinburgh's birthday, marked by hoisting the Union Jack, Mast Head Ensign and Ensign.

Several small crowds gathered on the Jersey coast to watch Southampton steaming past at speed with flags billowing.

It's a good job they weren't foe, because at that range they wouldn't have stood much of a chance against the Saints, top gunners for the second year running. A year ago they picked

up the Grytviken trophy in Grytviken itself (South Georgia) for their expertise in medium-range gunnery.

This year Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks, Chief-of-Staff (Capabilities) had to go no further than the more familiar (and sometimes even warmer) surroundings

of Portsmouth to present both the Grytviken and Beresford trophies for gunnery.

Exactly why the ship bagged the title two years running is probably explained by the gunnery team's motto: a day without gunnery is a day wasted. Another ship going

home was HMS Bangor.

She's tied to the town in Northern Ireland not North Wales and made her way across the Irish Sea for Bangor Sea Festival and the Royal Ulster Yacht Club Regatta.

XO Lt Simon Leightley went missing. Luckily he was found by the RNLI during a 'lost diver' demonstration.

Fished out of the water and ferried ashore, the officer joined fellow divers in explaining the work of the branch to the Bangor public.

Other demonstrations were less for public show than public safety.

Belfast Fire Service has formed a new maritime section. Fifteen

firefighters were ferried out to HMS Bangor by boat to take part in a fire exercise – the first time the maritime section had conducted such a drill.

Ashore, the sailors called in on Bangor Grammar and Clifton Special schools; both are affiliates, the later is one of the mine warfare ship's chosen charities and received £500 from the sailors' latest fundraising activities.

Meanwhile in Weymouth... 'Local boy' Lt Cdr Adam Parnell came home – and he did so in his own warship.

The CO of HMS Grimsby brought her into Weymouth for a three-day visit – and lost no time in hosting pupils of his former school, Budmouth College, to talk about the RN and his Sandown-class ship.

Other schools, colleges and cadet organisations were also invited aboard the 600-tonne warship, as were the townsfolk when Grimsby staged a 'ship open to visitors' day.

The sailors will soon be leaving the ship behind, heading to the Gulf to take over HMS Ramsey or Blyth, while the Gulf sailors will head in the opposite direction to man Grimsby.

HMS Severn could be found in the estuary for which she is named when the fishery protection ship called on her affiliated city.

The 1,700-tonne ship spent four days in Newport in South Wales cementing ties with the community.

Severn has enjoyed the freedom of the port since 2006; her sailors exercised their right to parade through its streets last year and returned last month to march once more.

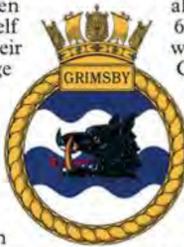
They were joined by the band of 104 Regiment Royal Artillery, the warship's affiliated Army formation.

The ship's football team also faced a run-out against local opposition, the Newport All Stars.

Afloat, the ship hosted local dignitaries and showed them what Severn was capable of.

After a busy stint 'doing fish', Severn's *raison d'être*, the stay in her adopted city was, her CO Lt Cdr Graham Lovatt sad, "the highlight of our programme this year".

Immediately upon leaving South Wales to resume her fishery protection duties, the ship found herself in an ocean-going drama.



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# In FOB we trust



● Men of Yankee Company await the next Taliban assault on their forward operating base and (below) one Royal carries a 'wounded' comrade to safety



pictures: (a) (phot) nick tryon, 45 cdo



● Yankee Company take cover as Taliban mortar their compound

## THINK Norfolk.

Bernard Matthews. Alan Partridge. Tractors. Norwich Union. The Canaries. Nelson, of course. Not Taliban. Not firebase. Not Royal Marines. Not firefight. Not blood-spurting casualties.

But Bodney Camp near Thetford offers all that. And a bit more to boot, as the men of 45 Commando found when they headed to East Anglia for the latest stage of their training for impending deployment to Afghanistan.

Last month we found the Arbroath-based Royals conducting live-firing exercises in the lush, rolling terrain of Dumfriesshire.

Bye-bye, lushness.

Hello, arid dust.

The ranges at Bodney replicate Afghanistan (well, as far as is possible in Norfolk) chiefly courtesy of a replica Forward Operating Base (or FOB) – which looks remarkably like the real thing in Helmand (or, for that matter, American firebases in Vietnam).

FOBs have been part and parcel of the British military's way of doing battle for 150 years. They were born in Afghanistan and the North West Frontier in the days of Empire, stone breastworks or 'sangars' (Persian for barricade apparently).

In fact it's a name which is still used on the ground, but stone and brick have been replaced by plastic wire mesh holding tons of earth, soil and rocks in place.

It's a simple fortification – and relatively effective, as the men of Yankee Company found when the 'Taliban' hordes began bearing down on them.

After an initial skirmish, the entire company came under attack from the insurgents. They were met by all the guns Yankee could lay their hands on from .50 cal rifles.

This was just the beginning of a ferocious three-hour 'battle', whose realism was possibly a surprise to some.

What began, perhaps, a war game soon ended up dropping the 'game' bit.

"The amount of activity really did make it seem as if we were under attack," said 45's cameraman LA (Phot) Nick Tryon.

"The entire company received the order: 'incoming'. At that everyone hit the deck, including me."

The realism of the training was undoubtedly enhanced by the presence of battlefield casualties.

The military regularly uses actors – locals in Plymouth play the part of hurricane victims during disaster exercises at Bull Point, for example.

But rarely are 'actors' used to such effect as here.

People with various disabilities played the role of injured commandos – complete with fake blood.

So realistic were their 'wounds' at times that some Royals thought the casualties were genuine.

"Casualties started coming in fast and furious

testing the evacuation procedures of the sections," said Nick, clicking away furiously with his camera in between taking cover from incoming fire.

"The medics were suddenly very busy, ammunition resupplies were getting low, more casualties were being suffered. At this point the possible reality of the deployment was sinking in."

For many men in 45, the reality of Helmand is all too familiar. When the unit heads to Afghanistan in October, it will be its third tour of duty there since 2001.

Of course, Royal Marines don't just sit there and take it.

They can dish it out as well, fighting their way into a 'Taliban' compound – just as they did for real a little over 12 months ago during their last stint in Afghanistan.

And then the enemy struck back, pouring forward en masse against one side of the FOB. In scenes reminiscent of Zulu, commandos rushed from other walls to bolster their threatened flank, popping up, taking out targets – Taliban – then ducking down for cover.

The fighting abated sufficiently for a senior visitor to call in on the men.

Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope headed up the line to chat with the marines about their looming tour of duty.

After discussing the Commando's mission with Commanding Officer Lt Col Jim Morris, he joined the men of Victor Company... as they assaulted a Taliban stronghold.

For helping them subdue the foe, the Victor men let the admiral get to grips with some of their weaponry and battlefield kit.

Then it was off to X-Ray Company in the forward base, where the Royals treated Admiral Stanhope to a 'banquet' (sometimes known as a 24-hour 'rat pack'), before chatting with him about various issues, including current operations.

Those 'current operations' begin in just two months as the RN becomes the biggest single British presence in Afghanistan once more.

Defence Secretary Des Browne formally announced that 3 Commando Brigade would replace 16 Air Assault Brigade from October.

The headquarters will be accompanied by its fighting arms – 42 and 45 Commandos – plus the guns of 29 Commando Regiment RA, pioneers of 24 Commando Engineer Regiment, and vital support of Commando Logistic Regiment.

Air cover will be provided by the Harriers of the Naval Strike Wing, Sea Kings of 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons, and Lynx of 847 NAS.

By the time the deployment reaches its climax next spring, there will be around 8,000 British personnel in theatre.

● War is 99 per cent boredom... The men take a breather in between Taliban onslaughts



# From dream to reality



**THIS is not a dream. It is not yet reality. But in just six years, this is what Her Majesty's Ship Queen Elizabeth will look like.**

The government finally put an end to months of doubt and uncertainty by signing a £3.9bn deal with industry to provide the nation with two super-carriers.

At a ceremony aboard HMS Ark Royal in Portsmouth, defence minister Baroness Taylor put her signature to a document which commits the country to the largest warships it has ever built.

HMS Queen Elizabeth will be laid down before the year is out, followed by her sister Prince of Wales.

There is now no going back on the project which has been the subject of years of speculation.

The nation's shipyards will have to deliver the duo on time and budget – the first carrier in 2011, the second two years later. If they arrive late on the scene, industry will be penalised.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band said the two 65,000-tonne ships and their arsenal of F35 Joint Strike Fighters, Merlins, Chinooks and other helicopters were vital if the UK was to "remain at the centre of world events".

He continued: "These ships are our insurance policy for our national security, maintaining stability and peace and, if necessary, fighting."

"We face such uncertainty in the future – terrorism, food, fuel and water shortages. "These ships will be able to deliver air power anywhere in the world that we need it."

Baroness Taylor added: "Let there be no doubt about it: these ships are fundamental to our Navy fit for the 21st century."

Some people with and without the Forces have questioned the need for two extremely expensive vessels (and the £3.9bn price tag does not include the cost of the Fleet Air Arm and RAF F35s the ships will operate).

The First Sea Lord said ordering the ships was not about beating the drum for the RN, or even the RAF, but for the country.

"We are a major European power, play a key part of the European Union and are a major leader in this field. All serious maritime nations invest in carriers."

"We need to 'play away' to have an effect in this world." And playing away will be what Admiral Band calls "four acres of sovereign territory – airfields which can move 300-500 miles in a day".

The dimensions of the vessels are now pretty much set in stone: 280 metres (918ft) long, 70m (229ft) wide, 56m (183ft) from keel to masthead, up to 40 aircraft (including a maximum of 36 F35s), a hangar 50m (492ft) long with 20 aircraft slots and enough space for six Chinooks, and a ship's company of 1,450.

The construction of the duo has led to the effective merger of the shipbuilding arms of BAE Systems on the Clyde and Vosper Thornycroft in Portsmouth to create BVT Surface Fleet. But it's not just BAE/VT who will share pieces of the carrier 'pie'.

"The work will span the length and breadth of this country," said Alan Johnston, chief executive of newly-formed BVT.

"There are eight years of work ahead – now the hard work starts. I am confident that we will deliver this iconic programme within time and cost."

That hard work is allocated as follows at present:

- ↓ £1,325m for BVT to build giant sections of the ships in Govan and Portsmouth;
- ↓ £300m for BAE Systems to construct sections of the ships in Barrow
- ↓ £675m for Babcock Marine to provide the bow and to piece the completed ships together at Rosyth
- ↓ £425m to Thales UK to work on design and engineering
- ↓ £275m to BAE Systems to provide mission systems

Work on the superstructure and sections of the flight deck are still up for grabs.

"This is a national project, from the Clyde to the Solent," Baroness Taylor explained.

In all, an estimated 10,000 people will work on the project at its peak, including 3,000 on the Clyde, 1,200 in Pompey, 400 in Barrow, 1,600 in Rosyth and around 400 more at various sites in Surrey and Bristol.

Work has already begun on some of the parts of the vessels, including the huge lifts which will carry jets and helicopters from the hangar to the flight decks, while £35m is being spent adapting Rosyth so the yard can accommodate the ships.



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# The gathering storm



## IT'S interesting just how many people tell us they have 'the best job in the Navy'

Helicopter mechanics. Viking drivers. Search and rescue winchmen.

And the worst job?

Well, possibly being part of the FOD plod – those who ensure the runways and standings are clear of rubbish, or Foreign Object Damage – at Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton around 4.30pm on Saturday July 5 2008.

It was cold. It was wet. It was blowing a hoolie. And the detritus left behind by several thousand spectators was swirling around.

Organisers moved Yeovilton Air Day forward by a couple of months two years ago. Better weather in July, you see.

And for the past couple of years it's worked rather nicely.

We'd like to think that the rather large Fly Navy flag (hoisted above the beer tent...) was fluttering vigorously in recognition of the decision to order two new aircraft carriers.

And perhaps it was.

But the stiff breeze was probably the chief cause.

And someone who designed the day's flying programme evidently had a cheeky sense of humour given the weather. First up, the Typhoon.

The Eurofighter never fails to (a) be very loud (b) impress even if it is (cough, splutter) RAF.

And weaving in and out of the clouds gave it an almost celestial quality – at least to the untrained eye (photographers complained it was a "grey plane against grey clouds").

In fairness, the British weather wasn't all bad. Indeed, for most of air day it was, if not glorious,

then at least passable.

But the wind did, at least, put the kibosh on displays by some eagerly-awaited gems: chiefly the RN Historic Flight's Swordfish which has spent most of the past decade undergoing a refurbishment.

The breeze kept the Royal Jordanian Falcons on the ground too. An American B-52 bomber, sadly, was a no-show (bad weather at another airshow in Lincolnshire prevented its appearance), but a venerable Sea Vixen, Mustang and Sabre all bravely took to the skies.

So too the oldest flying Harrier in the UK, the red, white and blue VAAC (Vectored-thrust Aircraft Advanced flight Control) jump jet. A converted two-seat trainer, the VAAC Harrier can be flown traditionally from the front seat or using computer 'fly-by-wire' technology from the back seat, giving the pilot a taste of what it will be like to fly the Joint Strike Fighter in the future.

**Perhaps bravest of the lot were the commando parachutists of 29 Regiment RA who jumped out of a helicopter several hundred feet above the airfield, trailing huge flags beneath them. Despite the gusts, all landed a stone's throw from the smoke marker on the ground... and some were then promptly carried along the floor by the wind before they gathered up their chutes to a strong round of applause.**

There are some displays which even the British viewer cannot wreck: those in the hangars.

The Army Air Corps' Apache gunship (sadly only a static display) was among the largest draws.

As was another indoor display on a rather small scale. Last year we bumped into Lt Geoff Cooper and his collection of Fleet Air Arm aircraft

in miniature. It's grown by 20 models in the past 12 months (if only it were that simple to add *real* aircraft...).

The HMS Cambria reservist, currently attached to 847 NAS, has turned down a dozen requests to attend air shows in the past year. Yeovilton is the only one he does. "It's the best one and it's my show. The reaction of the public here is fabulous."

Like many exhibitors he was up before dawn to drive down to Yeovilton and set up his stall before the gates opened at 9am. Like many exhibitors he was there long after the public had gone, dismantling that stall.

Air Day traditionally ends with a storm of fire and steel.

And it did in 2008 (half an hour earlier than planned because other displays had been cancelled). But there was a storm of wind and hail to contend with too.

So much wind and hail (actually rain but driven into the faces of spectators by the raging tempest), in fact, that for most of the 40-minute demonstration you could only catch snippets of commentary coming out of the loudspeakers: "... most deadly weapons..." "... highly-motivated..." "... well-trained..." "... very versatile aircraft..." and, intriguingly, "down to their last few boxes of Mars bars..."

Minus (or, more accurately, accompanied by

patchy) commentary, the all-arms commando demonstration became a series of semi-intelligible set pieces: a Land Rover dragging a RIB along a runway until Royal Marines swooped down on it. Hawks racing to and fro over the 'battlefield'. Lots of explosions. Artillery pounding. A BV rumbling around. An 847 NAS Lynx engulfed by the swirl of smoke and mist (pictured above). Commandos releasing smoke canisters. Chaos. Confusion. Noise. Smoke. Rather like the real thing...

With the 'terrorists' defeated, the aircraft of the Commando Helicopter Force all line up along the edge of the runway, turn to face the crowd and bow as the public claps in appreciation.

This year, the wind denied them that. The helicopters had to fly slowly over the runway, the waves of their crew proving increasingly difficult to see in the growing murk and driving rain.

Before they did, many spectators had already streamed for home – a true shame given the effort hundreds of people put into air day.

Perhaps a few years from now, people might be asking: Were you still up for the wall of fire?

If you did witness the explosive last act of air day, hats off to you. You were probably cold and very wet.

As the black smoke from the explosion billowed and rapidly dispersed over the stalls and stands, thousands of people dashed for the sanctuary of their cars.

And then came the FOD plod.



● (Left) All smiles from these commandos as they prepare to jump out of the back of a Chinook during the all-arms display while (above) a gunner of 29 Commando Regiment RA braves the elements and parachutes to the ground trailing the White Ensign



## Six of the best with Busy Bee

SIX years in Manchester... Nope, not a prison sentence but how long the fliers and ground crew of 202 Flight, 815 NAS, have been attached to the Busy Bee.

The Lynx men are the last of the dedicated flights assigned by the Yeovilton-based squadron to a specific ship.

They joined the Type 42 back in May 2002.

And with her return to the UK this spring after a hugely-challenging deployment to the Gulf, so 202's time with the Portsmouth-based destroyer finally came to an end.

You'll be pleased to know that they went out on a high: the helicopter clocked up an impressive 260 hours airborne, many working alongside the Dusty Dogs, the US HS-7 anti-submarine helicopter squadron.

HMS Manchester spent almost six months as the chaperone of the USS Harry S Truman, forming an integral part of the carrier's imposing battle group.

The ship joined HST in the Med and followed her east... and followed her back into the Med once the Gulf deployment was done.

Once out of the Middle East theatre, there was finally a chance for ship and squadron to relax.

202 spent six idyllic days in Rhodes, during which time Flight Commander Lt Cdr 'Spike' Milligan and pilot Lt Marty van Duin were invited to an official reception on the HST.

There was also 'a divisional day' - a chance for the Flight to bond away from the pressures of work.

In 202's case this meant a late breakfast, go-karting and mini golf. S/Lt 'Jill' Dando was crowned kart champion, while the flight commander took the golf prize ahead of CPO 'Mouse' Burrows.

The last act with the US carrier was to escort her through the Strait of Gibraltar (which accounts for 80 per cent of the world's shipping traffic).

The Lynx took to the skies once more, joined by a pair of Seahawks from HST, before the Truman cheered ship for her trusty escorts.

The first landfall in Blighty was not Yeovilton but the Isle of Wight.

The Lynx set down so the crew could enjoy a bacon butty, before flying over the destroyer as she returned to Portsmouth. And then it was on to Somerset and the end of an era in Britain's largest helicopter squadron.



● Somewhere over the rainbow... Lt James Capps checks his chart as one of the 845 NAS Sea Kings makes for Tallard-Gap in unseasonal Southern France weather

# Filling a massif Gap

**THE fliers of 845 Naval Air Squadron have made massif strides in training for front-line action.**

Last year we featured the Lynx of 847 NAS practising high-altitude and mountain operations in southern France.

This summer, three Sea Kings took the place of the Lynx as 845 NAS prepared themselves for the challenges of Afghanistan.

Two of the three helicopters heading to Gap - about 60 miles south of Grenoble - were able to hitch a lift for most of the way courtesy of assault ship HMS Albion, which was sailing for the Med and then on to Africa.

Now we could tell you that they enjoyed a leisurely sail to warmer climes... but we'd be lying.

No, in just one eight-hour period, the Junglies took off 72 times and landed 72 times

As the ship's company practised aircraft handling skills, and then practised their response in the event of a Sea King crash on the flight deck, with the aircrew playing very convincing casualties (aided by a bit of make-up).

By day and night there were various exercises: controlled approaches, approaches in low/bad visibility, vertical replenishment, grappling (recovering items from the sea), and in-flight refuelling.

And as for those warmer climes... when the squadron left



● Touch and go... a Jungly briefly rests a wheel on a French peak

Albion behind they faced foul weather coupled with a French air traffic controllers' strike which made the flight to Gap particularly demanding.

But not as demanding for the solitary Jungly flying in from Yeovilton over central France. For aside from the small matter of (a) French air traffic controllers' strike and (b) bad weather, there was also (c) a little local difficulty.

Despite the best laid plans, the 845 team found that none of the airfields they stopped at on the way down from Yeovilton would accept the squadron's fuel cards. We're told that "a bit of Jungly cunning and some deft negotiating skills" at

each 'pit stop' ensured the aircraft was topped up and could continue southwards.

And so it was that eventually the three Sea Kings Mk4 and 63 personnel converged on Gap-Tallard airfield, home to Aviation Légère de l'Armée de Terre - French Army Light Aviation, the Gallic counterpart of Britain's Army Air Corps.

Their training area, the Massif des Ecrins to the northeast of Gap, is ideal for high-altitude exercises with peaks in excess of 10,000ft, hence 845's visit.

The height of the mountains - coupled with warm temperatures - meant the Sea Kings' engines

and rotors were operating "very near their limits".

Lt William Murray explained: "These environmental issues required meticulous planning and airmanship skills from the crew so we could transit between and land on mountaintops safely.

"With the exception of hot and arid conditions and the ever-present threat of incoming missiles and ground fire, the environment replicated that of Afghanistan, so the crews gained a great deal of benefit from this high-altitude training."

The Junglies are heavily in demand. 845 finally brought the curtain down on five years in Iraq late in 2007 and 846 NAS have already deployed to Afghanistan to support Allied peacekeeping operations.

So it's only fair that there's some play in between the hard work. The Gap region is an adrenalin junkie's pleasuredome, beloved by free-fall parachutists, hikers, walkers, climbers, bikers and whitewater rafters.

Every one of the 63 fliers and ground crew who headed to Gap managed to squeeze in some adventurous training. Some even managed to get to Monaco to watch Lewis Hamilton win the F1 Grand Prix.



## Happy hours for Happy H

THE Happy H - better known as HMS Hurworth - has finally bid farewell to NATO after a winter and spring on international duties.

The Hunt-class warship was attached to NATO's Standing Mine Counter-measures Group 1, a multi-national task group which roves European waters in search of unexploded ordnance from the bloody 20th Century as well as promoting co-operation between Allied navies.

Survey ship HMS Roebuck has served as the flagship of the small force which has comprised ships from Germany, Belgium, Latvia, Poland, France, Denmark and the Netherlands.

The composition of the force has been as varied as its destinations: the waters of Belgium, Scotland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, France and, most recently, Spain have all hosted the group at one time or another.

Hurworth's attachment to the task force reached its climax off the northwest tip of Spain for Exercise Loyal Mariner, the regular major gathering of NATO forces to test their ability to respond to an international crisis.

Unlike many NATO minewarfare deployments, this one didn't spend much time in UK waters, so most of Hurworth's ship's company had been away from Pompey as long as their ship - six months - clocking up more than 11,000 miles in the process.

"The deployment is a benchmark for minehunters," said CO Lt Cdr Andy Woolhead proudly. "Hurworth has successfully completed six months away from her base port without the organic support and without any dedicated maintenance periods.

"The measure of our success must be attributed to the ship's company. Their dedication, ingenuity and persistence has meant that Hurworth has been able to contribute effectively to this important NATO commitment."

Having gone without a thorough maintenance period, Happy H will now receive some TLC over the summer... but only after she was on display during Meet Your Navy, the RN's open days in Portsmouth.

Hurworth's place in the NATO force will be taken by HMS Ledbury which joins the group after summer leave.

# Echoes of empire for Echo

SURVEY ship HMS Echo became the first RN vessel in a dozen years to call in on Bangladesh.

Echo is moving ever eastwards during the opening stages of a five-year deployment to chart various stretches of the seven seas.

Among those waters requiring the expertise of Echo's 48 sailors and the ship's hydrographic wizardry are the approaches to Chittagong, Bangladesh's second city and principal port.

Five Bangladesh Navy hydrographers joined the ship to offer their advice and to study the impressive data Echo's array of sensors can record.

They know these waters, but don't necessarily have access to some of the state-of-the-art kit which the British vessel possesses.

Extensive surveying was carried out using Echo's survey motor launch which roamed around Chittagong's outer anchorages.

Not all the survey work was conducted at sea, however.

Shore teams of RN and Bangladeshi Navy were landed to collect information on the tides and shoreline environment in the Karnaphuli estuary, where at times there were

some interesting choices of transportation (rickshaws!) to move the hydrography kit.

As well as being Bangladesh's principal outlet to the sea, Chittagong is also home to BNS Issa Khan - a cross between Portsmouth, Raleigh and Dartmouth as both main naval base and naval academy for the country.

And it was there that the formal side of the visit began with a reception for Echo's wardroom, complete with authentic Bangladeshi curries.

Given the long-standing links between Britain and Bangladesh, there are quite a few similarities between the two navies from ranks and uniforms to ships (a sizeable number of which are ex-RN, including the former HMS Lynx and Jaguar).

And there are echoes of Britain's presence in Chittagong from the days of empire.

Chittagong War Cemetery is the last resting place of more than 700 Commonwealth servicemen who died in World War 2, as well as the Chittagong Memorial which remembers the sacrifices of more than 6,000 Indian sailors (navy and merchant) who lost their lives in the same conflict.

The Rev Scott Lamb, Echo's chaplain, led a

service of remembrance, while CO Cdr Jeremy Churcher laid a wreath in remembrance.

Elsewhere, several of Echo's ship's company headed to a breaker's yard - admittedly not a typical stop on the tourist trail, but a unique experience all the same. The sailors watched scores of old tankers being stripped down manually on a beach by thousands of local workers.

"Working alongside the Bangladeshi Navy we learned from each other's experiences," said Cdr Churcher.

"We developed a better understanding of the challenging environment in which the Bangladeshi work. With Chittagong so important to Bangladeshi commerce, accurate charts are a key factor.

"Following our successful visit I would welcome the opportunity to return to Bangladeshi waters in the more benign winter months to further develop our friendship."

Bangladeshi sailors challenged their Echo counterparts to various sports (including a 2-2 draw on the football pitch in 35°C heat) before the RN vessel left their waters to continue her Far East odyssey.

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# In the Lymelight

**WE COULD call her one half of 'Lager and Lyme'.**

But whilst that makes a nice catchphrase, it's not strictly true.

For RFA Lyme Bay is actually one quarter of a formidable quartet who are revolutionising the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and amphibious operations.

The latter have been to the fore recently with the new landing support ship – the correct official term is landing ship dock (auxiliary) – exercising with the Royal Marines in the West Country (see pages 14-16).

Exercise South West Leopard was the culmination of Lyme Bay's period with Flag Officer Sea Training in the West Country.

Hot on the heels of the Leopard came Dutch Navy Days in Den Helder... where you'd also find her 'step sister'. (We'll have a report from the show in next month's paper.)

Lyme and her three sisters are based on a Dutch

amphibious ship, Rotterdam (which is slightly smaller and has a longer superstructure).

The function of all the vessels is to move troops and kit from ship to shore.

In the case of the Bays, they form the second wave of an amphibious assault behind HM Ships Albion, Bulwark and Ocean.

Using a combination of landing craft and Mexeflotes (powered barges) via the flooded dock and Chinooks, Sea Kings and Merlins from the sprawling flight deck, in excess of 350 Royal Marines and their kit can be ferried ashore by Lyme. There's space for another 150 troops on a short-term basis for a major operation.

Lyme and her sister Largs Bay were built at the Swan Hunter yard; the other two Bays were constructed at Govan.

It's fair to say that Lyme Bay had a difficult birth. When Swan Hunter failed to finish her on

time and with costs going up, the MOD asked shipwrights in Govan to finish fitting her out.

Which they did. Nine weeks ahead of the revised schedule, Lyme Bay was handed over to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in the summer of 2007.

Since then she's been rather busy.

She's affiliated herself with the county town of Dorset, Dorchester.

And she's won the hearts of a small community thousands of miles away.

Lyme Bay was dispatched on Operation Zest to Tristan da Cunha.

The ship and her mix of RN, RAF and Army engineers and medics faced a race against time to fix the remote island's harbour before the onset of the austral winter.

It is something which was accomplished just in time – the foul weather set in as the last of the emergency repairs were completed.

Not all the time spent on the South Atlantic island was spent toiling on the harbour, however.

One in three Lyme Bayers yomped to the top of Queen Mary's Point, the extinct volcano which dominates the island (and is half as high again as Ben Nevis).

Surprisingly given the historic bay for which she is named – home to fossils and major pre-Normandy invasion exercises – the current Lyme Bay is the first bearer of the name in either the RN or RFA. There has been a smattering of Lymes and one Lyme Regis, however.

● *The tug Powerful helps RFA Lyme Bay into Portsmouth Harbour for the first time*

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Gallagher, FRPU East



**Class:** Bay Class Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary)  
**Pennant number:** L3007  
**Builder:** Swan Hunter, Wallsend/BAE Systems, Govan  
**Laid down:** 2003  
**Launched:** August 27 2005  
**Commissioned:** August 8 2007  
**Displacement:** 16,190 tonnes  
**Length:** 176m (577ft)  
**Beam:** 26.4m (86ft)  
**Draught:** 5.8m (19ft)  
**Speed:** 18kts  
**Complement:** 68 (space for up to 135)  
**Range:** 8,000 miles at 15kt  
**Propulsion:** diesel-electric; 2 x azimuth thrusters aft, 1 x bow thruster  
**Embarked forces:** up to 356 Royal Marines (space for an additional 150 on a temporary basis)  
**Capacity:** 1,200m (3,900ft) of load capacity – up to 36 Challenger II tanks or 150 smaller vehicles; 2 x Mexeflote powered rafts; floodable loading dock for 2 x Landing Craft (Vehicle/Personnel) or 1 x Landing Craft (Utility)  
**Helicopter:** flight deck can accommodate helicopters up to Chinook size

Facts and figures

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## HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.52

### Lt Eric William Kevin Walton, AM

THE frozen continent is the most unforgiving environment on the planet – and one of which the Royal Navy has bitter experience.

Three decades after Capt Scott's ill-fated attempt to be the first man to the South Pole, covetous British eyes fixed upon Antarctica once again.

In the latter stages of WW2 – and with one eye on the post-war world – His Majesty's Government looked to stake a claim to at least parts of Antarctica by establishing permanent bases.

This military operation, Tabarin, morphed into the rather more innocuously-sounding Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (FIDS) in the immediate aftermath of war.

The aim was largely the same... and many of those attached to FIDS were military men.

Engineer Lt Eric William Kevin Walton – known by friends as Kevin – was one such member of FIDS, a keen mountaineer and veteran of some of the decisive naval battles of World War 2.

His skill in the former and the same bravery he displayed in the latter would combine to save the life of Maj John Tonkin on August 24 1946.

The two officers were in a party sledging across the ice when Tonkin tried to cross a poorly-bridged crevasse.

He vanished from sight and plunged 40ft, stopping only when his body became wedged between two sides of the chasm.

His comrades tossed ropes down to him in a bid to haul him out. Tonkin managed to loop them around his forearms, but no further – and all efforts to pull the major out failed.

It was at this point that Walton volunteered to save his comrade. First he was lowered by rope to a wider part of the crevasse, then he worked his way along to Tonkin and began chipping away at the ice.

The space was too confined to use an ice axe; the spike had to be sawn off so Walton could use it as a hand tool.

Five times the sailor was lowered into the crevasse. Most of the time he worked in the darkness, and much of that was spent hanging upside down. It took three hours in all, but Tonkin was freed and finally brought to the surface.

It would be almost two years before Walton was gazetted for the Albert Medal for "persistence most commendable". It was, his citation "solely due to his efforts that Maj Tonkin was finally rescued".

The recipient dismissed his deeds on the ice as an act of bravery; he was the right man in the right place at the right time and did what anyone would have done in the same situation.

The Albert Medal joined an impressive array of medals, notably the DSC for firefighting during the Battle of the Barents Sea in HMS Onslow and a Mention in Dispatches for his role in the destruction of two U-boats with HMS Duncan.

It would not be Kevin Walton's sole award for deeds in the southern hemisphere; six years later he led another crevasse rescue on South Georgia earning him a Silver Commendation for Brave Conduct.

He remains an active member of the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association (surviving Albert Medal winners were allowed to exchange their awards for the GC in 1971), attending a service of commemoration to mark the 150th 'birthday' of the VC at Westminster Abbey in 2006.



# 'The measure of success'



● An American fast patrol boat based on RFA Cardigan Bay races away from the Khawr al Amaya oil terminal during a defence exercise... (Below) Iraqi marines man the guns at the Al Basrah terminal as a tanker fills up

Pictures: LA(Phot) Chris Winter, FRPU West

## SAILORS and Royal Marines east of Suez have bagged more than 20 tonnes of drugs during a crackdown on the 'hashish highway'.

Seventy per cent of narcotics seized by Allied forces in the Gulf and Indian Ocean region this year have been captured by the RN – 23 tonnes in all.

For operational reasons, Allied commanders have kept the publicity 'lid' on similar seizures in the Middle East. Until now.

Three British vessels and their Royal Marine/RN boarding parties – HM Ships Montrose, Edinburgh and Chatham – found drugs stashed aboard boats on the 'hashish highway', stretching across the Indian Ocean from the shores of Pakistan to the Gulf of Aden and the eastern coast of Africa.

The drugs recovered – hashish (cannabis), opiates (heroin), cocaine and amphetamines – have an estimated value of £25m.

The outgoing senior US admiral in the Middle East, Vice Admiral Kevin Cosgriff, said there was a clear link between the drugs trade and the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, with hashish accounting for around half the regional narcotics trade.

Although three RN ships were specifically involved in the successful searches, Cdre Keith Winstanley, the ranking Senior Service officer in the region, said it had taken a collective effort from all British maritime forces to tackle the hashish highway.

"I am delighted by the tremendous efforts of sailors and Royal Marines from Montrose,

Edinburgh, Campbeltown and Chatham, plus RFA Argus and her Sea Kings which can now be recognised," he added.

"News of these significant successes has been kept quiet for operational reasons."

Six tons of drugs fell to HMS Chatham when the Type 22 stopped a dhow in the Gulf.

"We realised something wasn't right when the crew said they had been fishing for five days but there was only a handful of fish in the freezer," explained boarding officer Lt Tom Philips.

"The helicopter crew had also told us that the dhow's crew had been ditching bails out the back as we approached.

"We were working in pretty horrible conditions. When you are crawling through tight compartments in 50-degree heat and surrounded by rats and cockroaches, you have to remain pretty focused.

"We had a job to do and everyone carried out their duties with the utmost professionalism; ultimately, the result was more than worth it."

With much of the RN's focus on protecting the oil platforms, it's easy to forget that there's not an insignificant presence ashore in Iraq: two dozen in Baghdad, 130 in Basra/Umm Qasr and another 170 on ships.

A sizeable number received a visit from the Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Vice Admiral Paul Boissier, who dropped in on the Naval Transition Team (training Iraqi sailors and marines) in Umm Qasr before heading on to Basra to chat with RN/RM personnel based in the southern city.

As well as talking with men and women on the front line, the

admiral also discussed Britain's ongoing peacekeeping mission in Iraq with Maj Gen Barney White-Spunner, in charge of the multinational Allied force in the south of the country.

A few dozen miles to the south, frigate HMS Chatham continues to patrol Iraq's two oil platforms at the tip of the Gulf.

The Devonport-based ship is no longer home to Cdre Duncan Potts and his staff, who have handed over the reins of Combined Task Force 158.

CTF 158 co-ordinates the efforts of Allied warships in the northern Gulf, ensuring no harm comes to the two terminals and that trade flows freely into and out of Iraq's ports.

Command of the task group rotates around the Allies, with Cdre Potts the latest Brit to occupy the hot seat. His time at the helm came to an end in mid-July – four and a half months in which, says the senior officer, substantial progress has been made.

For a start, Kuwait and Iraq "two parties with a fairly toxic recent history" are now talking to each other about co-operation in common waters, such as the Khawr abd Allah which leads to Umm Qasr.

Equally important is the fact that Iraqi sailors and marines are increasingly taking over duties from Allied personnel, notably searching oil tankers, patrolling the platforms and manning the gun emplacements on terminals.

"To me the measure of success is simple: the oil has flowed every day, uninterrupted. Access has been gained to the main ports of Iraq, uninterrupted. And the level of criminality has been kept to a minimum," the commodore said.

"Without a doubt the Royal Navy is a major player in Iraq's territorial waters – but I will not detract from rest of the Coalition in particular the US Navy, a Coast Guard and the constant vigilant work that is done by the patrol boats."

Further south still, four British warships have finished their work on Operation Tecate.

HM Ships Atherston, Chiddingfold, Ramsey and Blenheim joined 18 other Coalition vessels from the US, Kuwait and Iraq sweep and search waters the south of the Isle of Wight for leftover ordnance from the northern Gulf troubled waters.

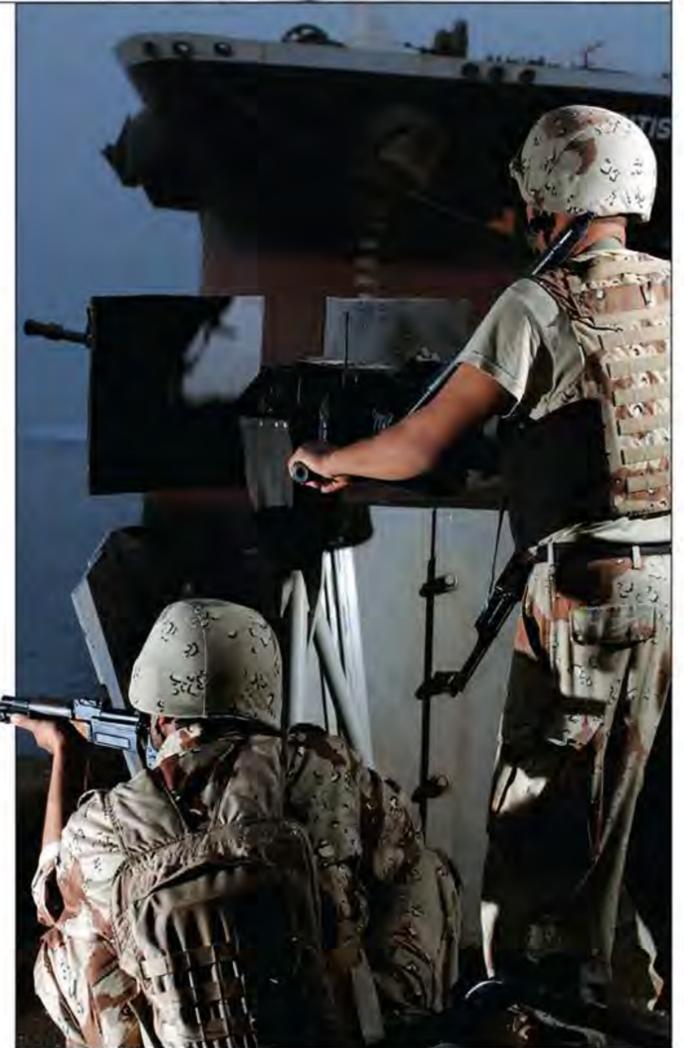
The British quartet spent five weeks ploughing through waters classed as a 'mine danger area' in view of two decades of conflict at the tip of the Gulf.

That demanding period (18 ships moved through the area at a mere 2kts) established that the area is without doubt mine-free and the charts can be reclassified. And it earned the British sailor the Operation Telic medal (30 days in theatre is the qualifying period).

Vice Admiral Boissier visited the mine warfare ships back in base in Bahrain to present sailors with their awards during a whistle-stop tour of the Gulf.

As for the ships, they receive some TLC after their exertions in the demanding environment of the northern Gulf.

"It's a challenge for the engineers to maintain the ship's operational capability in these conditions. Periods like this are vital to keeping ships in a good material state," said WO Tim Summers, Chiddingfold's Marine Engineer Officer.



● CINC in... Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet Vice Admiral Paul Boissier with some of the RN/RM team based in Basra

Picture: LA(Phot) Jannine Hartmann, HQ MND(SE)

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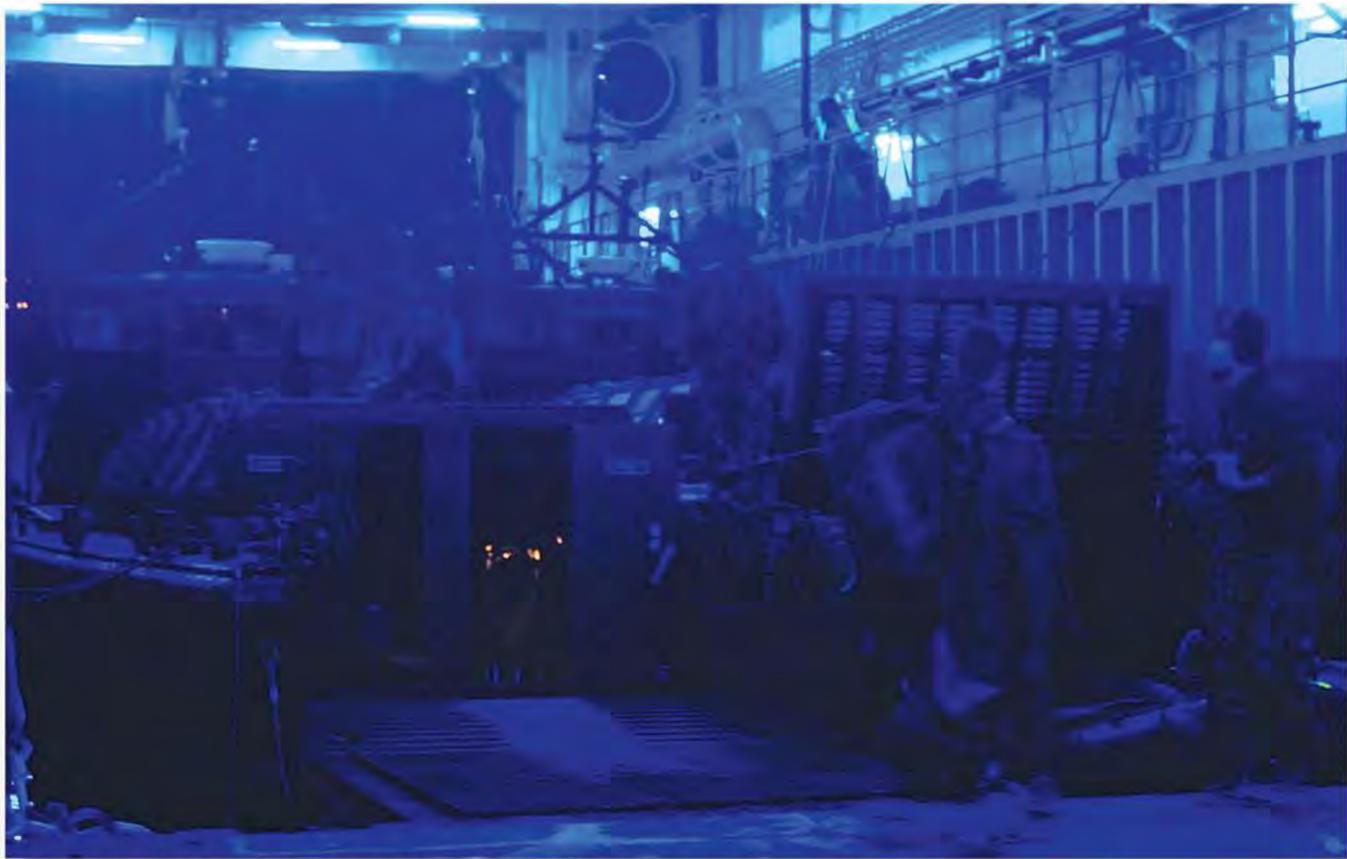
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● Preparations for the dawn raid inside RFA Lyme Bay's dock



● Above: damage control and firefighting under FOST's eyes

# Big cats sh

THE DOCK of the amphibious landing ship is bathed in pale blue light.

A cluster of dark-faced Royal Marines stand waiting for the order to climb on board the two landing craft in the dock.

Outside the lights of the Brownian shore twinkle defiantly at midnight despite the rebel group that rampages among them.

For ten days the terrorists of the Pro-Ginger Front have been seeking to rekindle the conflict between the once-warring Brownia and Ginger.

It's not clear which straw finally broke the camel's back. The flood of refugees that poured on to RFA Lyme Bay. The noxious smoke from the fire started at the Fuel Depot. Rebel leader Al Red Nose's self-proclaimed king-making. Perhaps most serious, the devastating mortar attack on the gin distillery.

But enough is enough, the time has come for the Royal Marines to beard the lion in his den – as dawn breaks, the rebels of Scraesdon Fort will be overcome.

For someone on the outside, the scenarios set up by the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training are rather entertaining.

For the people on the inside, the FOST challenges are no joke, demanding a huge amount from a large ship with a small ship's company of Royal Fleet Auxiliary men and women.

But Capt Kevin Rimell RFA is still smiling, despite a lack of sleep from a punishing routine. He said: "The RFA has always been able to respond to whatever is asked of them. Our strength is our flexibility and with ships like this, it's our versatility."

**Royal Fleet Auxiliary. Royal Marines. Royal Navy. Fleet Air Arm. Royal Logistics Corps. One hoofing big ship embroiled in one hoofing big exercise. Exercise South-West Leopard saw the RFA's newest landing ship, RFA Lyme Bay, caught up in a whirlwind of beach assaults, firefighting, evacuees, flying ops and midnight raids. But as one member of the ship's crew cheerfully said: "If it wasn't challenging, it'd be boring, wouldn't it?"**

"We approach things with a great sense of humour and loads of enthusiasm. And given something to do – an end product as a task – the guys respond very well."

The ship's crew of 68 RFA are bolstered by the landing craft and Royal Marines of 9ASRM (Assault Squadron RM), a landing force of Royal Marines and RN from the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) at Yeovilton, a specialist vessel troop of Royal Logistics Corps personnel from 17 Port and Maritime at Marchwood, flightdeck crew from the Mobile Aviation Support Force (MASF) at Culdrose and a Sea King HAS 6 (CR) from CHF.

Fortunately the people of Brownia (Devon) and Ginger (Cornwall) remain oblivious to the dramas being played out at sea before them. (Well, except for the man in the luxury cruiser who complained about the landing craft going past at 2am...)

As ever, these exercises call upon a huge body of FOST examiners, rolling on and off the ship as the tasks demand.

But it's a small team from FOST that has been heading up the months of planning and preparation that have gone into the amphibious exercise – Lt Col

Russell Paul and Maj Chris Fomes of 1 Assault Group RM (IAGRM) and Lt Cdr Andy Spurdle adding a touch of dark blue to the green elements.

Exercise South-West Leopard was originally conceived for a foreign assault ship, but when that ship had to pull out of the slot, Lt Col Russell Paul knew that this was too good an opportunity to pass up for the RFA ship.

Lt Col Paul has a certain interest in the Bay class; he was integral to the amphibious trials and testing programme that Mounts Bay and Largs Bay went through before being accepted into service.

He knows what these ships are capable of, and what they should be capable of. And during South-West Leopard, RFA Lyme Bay has proven that capability.

There's a recognition by everyone on board – RFA, FOST, augmentees – that Lyme Bay could not do what is demanded of it as an amphibious ship without the extra bodies on board.

The fact is these lean-manned ships do not have the personnel that a ship like Albion and Bulwark can call upon.

Lt Cdr Spurdle explained: "For example, on an LPD there are at least two people for the role that the Chief Officer does on here,

and two people for the role that the Navigator does.

"An LPD is a command platform but it is also a warship – it has a full warfighting team which is an extra 60 people bolted on to it, it's got an integral ASRM, 83 people bolted on, no RLC, its own boat crew..."

"Be under no illusion, this is an amphibious specialist ship," stressed Lt Col Paul. "It is though lean-manned. Its ship's staff need augmentation to provide them with robust 24-hour, seven-days-a-week capability – on the flightdeck, in the dock, on the vehicle deck and container deck."

But in conflict, that is what would happen to a Bay class. These ships will become a melting pot of different creeds and cultures, and getting the mix right is key to success.

"It's not a science," said Lt Col Paul, "merely a question of identifying who you need, where that body's going to go, and what experience and training should have to fill that particular role."

Capt Rimell knows all too well what his ship is capable of: "Everything the LPD can do, these ships can do. But not as much. Ultimately we're limited by manpower."

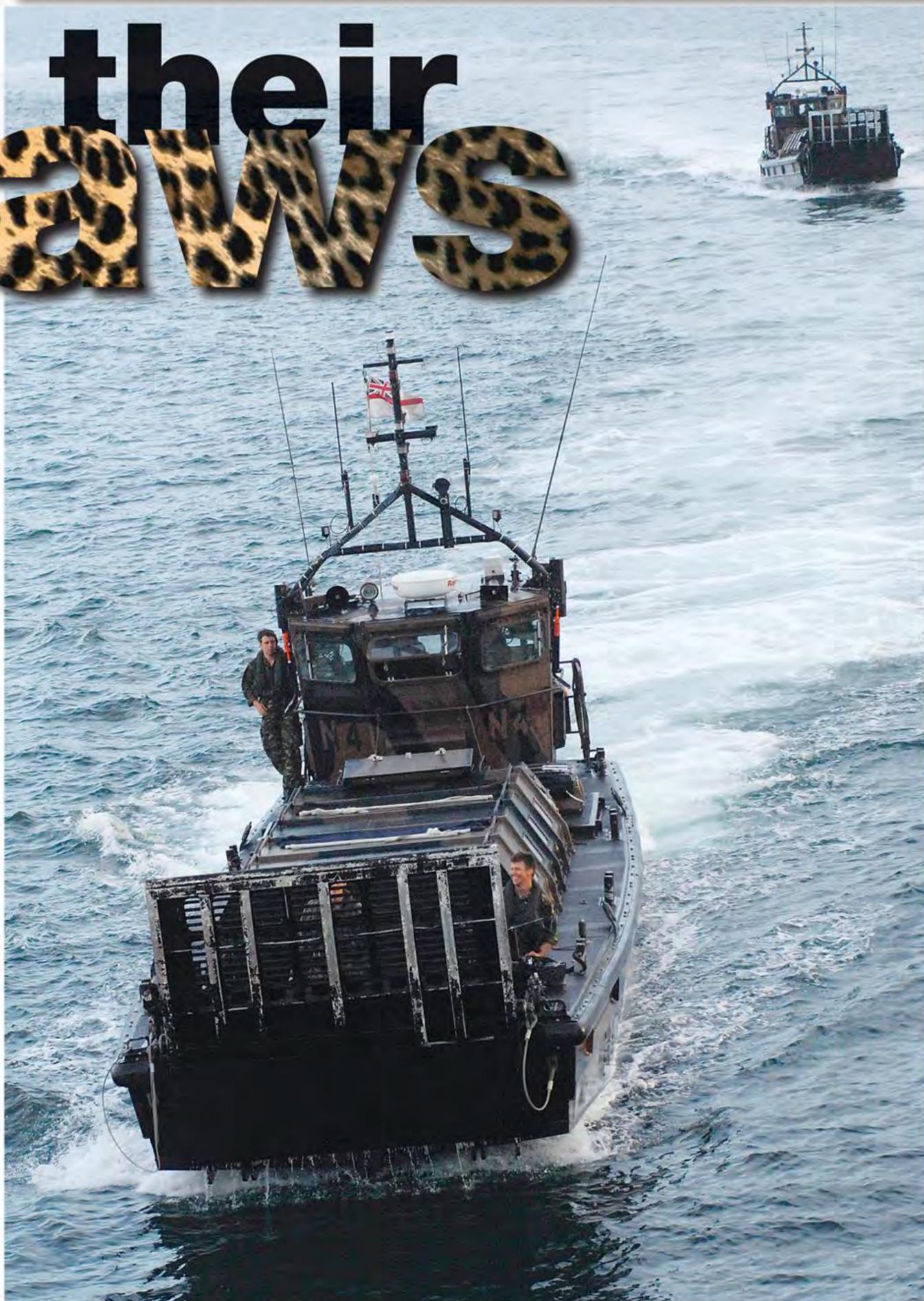
So for the exercise Lt Col Paul has called in the manpower needed from across the military, calling upon expertise from HMS Ocean,



● RFA Lyme Bay at a buoy outside Plymouth



● A CHF Sea King brings the landing force back on board



● The 9ASRM landing craft return to RFA Lyme Bay

# arpen their claws

from the Royal Logistics Corps, from the Fleet Air Arm, and – due to a fortuitous meeting en route to a Chinese take-away – CHF.

But it has taken the reality of piling all these extra bodies on to this ship to highlight some of the fundamental issues, according to Capt Rimell.

He explained: "Simple things have come out of this. Troops coming ashore at all hours of the day want feeding at all hours of the day."

"My ship's company, with all the secondary tasks that they have, do not have enough people to man the galley 24 hours. But if they can bring a couple of chefs, we can man the galley 24 hours."

The other benefit of bringing so many people together is the camaraderie that has built up over the course of the exercise.

Lt Col Paul said: "It's great to see the different cap badges coming in – yes, different cultures, but you employ those cultures, people end up calling each other by first names and working together as a team, and understanding the strengths that come with each of the cap badges."

"For me one of the key lessons this ship will learn and take away with them is how to get all of these different groups working together as a single unit," added Lt Cdr Spurdle.

"One of the rewards of this job is when you see the light go on with the ship's team and the people, and you can see them think 'Yeah, bloody hell, we can do this'."

Capt Rimell describes it as 'pulling strings'. He said: "It was clear when the training started to progress – no matter how different they were when we started – how quickly they all started working together."

"And so people who were slightly standoffish in planning meetings, three or four days into it they're all calling each other by first names."

"I think the crux early on is gaining the crucial understanding and respect that each has a job to do, each is crucial to the overall success of whatever task you're doing and they each have an important role as a member of that team."

It's a point that the ship's Logistic Supply Officer makes. 1/O Kevin Oliver RFA admitted: "For us, out of all the cultures on here, the RFA is the most

relaxed."

He admits that when it came to the planning for the evacuation exercise the experience on board among his team was limited.

"But we did have Ocean's Amphibious Ops Officer, Lt Col Tom Blythe, with us. We were discussing ideas, and did perhaps go slightly off at a tangent, and he said to us 'You've got to be a bit military here. Here's how we would approach it.'"

"The evacuation was very interesting because it was so different. The organisation really came together very well." The supply officer is understandably proud of the high rating that his team's work won in this phase.

He added: "It doesn't matter if it's a steward or a marine that hits the shore. He only got to that beach because we fed him, watered him, laundered him and transported him."

**"We were discussing ideas and did perhaps go slightly off at a tangent, and he said to us 'You've got to be a bit military here!'"**

Even the Army are relishing the FOST experience – surprisingly. 2Lt

Daisy Busher RLC, Vessel Troop Commander within 17 Port and Maritime, said: "We've loved it. We've had so many different opportunities to get involved."

The 23 RLC people have fought fires on board, assaulted beaches, managed evacuations – not their usual day-to-day business.

She said: "It's been really interesting – particularly the links with the Royal Marines. Finding out the subtle differences between the ways that we work."

She laughed: "I love it at sea. I've got pirate blood I think." But she says that feeling is shared by those in her command: "To be on board a ship and doing their job – they love it."

Capt Rimell is clear about how much has been achieved in the short duration of South West Leopard: "I am immensely proud. The enthusiasm, the sense of humour, the professionalism of my ship's company, in particular, but of everybody on here. They've been great, absolutely great."

"In that respect it's been a real pleasure to bring six different groups, who work as individual groups together, to find ten days later they're all working as a team. And very efficiently as a team."

■ Turn over for Cheetah...



● A landing craft lowers its ramp in the light surf

## Surf's up

ON THE sand at my feet there is a ragged drawing of Xs, arrows and a line for the shore.

In front of me, there's a landing craft coxswain dropping his kedge anchor and spurring his engines to achieve that ideal curve and range to shore drawn in the sand.

Two Royal Marines stand next to me on Whitsand Bay, watching with experienced eyes as the landing craft of 9ASRM are put through their paces.

This is FOST training by 1AGRM, putting the landing craft specialists of the Royal Marines to the test, watching as the recently reformed assault squadron proves its skills on the water have not been forgotten.

Maj Chris Fomes, one of the dedicated 1AGRM staff at Devonport, grimaces slightly, then grins as the coxswain and crew drop the ramp amid the raging foam of Whitsand Bay.

The 1AGRM staff within FOST at Devonport is a small team. "Tiny" to quote one of its members. The other one would agree.

But as 1AGRM recently came under the FOST banner, the changes in organisation have brought some rather handy benefit. The amphibious FOSTies can now easily call upon the vast expertise and experience across 1AGRM for training tasks.

Maj Fomes nods at the warrant officer from 11 Amphibious Trials and Training in Instow stood next to him: "He's got over 20 years' experience in landing craft. He knows everything there is to know about this. I let him get on with it."

WO2 'Spud' Bartlett is talking on his headset to the men on the landing craft before us, setting challenges and watching intently as the LCVPs and RIBs poise on the waves.

These are surf drills, and the Marines of 9ASRM have brought their landing craft to the shore as one of the closing challenges of exercise South-West Cheetah.

Overnight they had been tasked with vehicle movements along the dark length of the Devon coast.

Here, now, after a few scant hours of rest they are racing into shore on raiding craft (see pictures below), before plunging into the sea to stand up to their chests in the euphemistically-termed 'bracing' waves ready to jump into the intervening RIB.



● Marines from 9ASRM bring a raiding craft close to the beach at Whitsand Bay to practise recovery amid the Cornish surf

# Watching the wildlife

OF THE 31 men that made up HMS Ocean's assault squadron last summer, only two remain.

9 Assault Squadron Royal Marine have had to regenerate almost from scratch, with a lot of recently-trained LC3s (the initial rank of landing craft specialists).

The Officer Commanding 9ASRM Lt Col Tom Blythe said: "This is not standard business. It doesn't happen very often."

South-West Cheetah was a six-day exercise set up by the 1 Assault Group RM (1AGRM) team at FOST Devonport to prove the squadron's basic operational capability, or as Maj Chris Fomes explained to me in simple terms "that it was safe to operate on the water".

Obviously it was – as the squadron then plunged headfirst into the trials of South-West Leopard on board RFA Lyme Bay (see previous pages).

Although the assault squadron belongs to HMS Ocean, the ship herself has only just emerged from the cocoon of refit.

However the squadron began to reform some months earlier under the aegis of 1AGRM, apart from its two senior officers who remained pegged to the ship as the last months of refit drew to a close.

"This has been a really good way of doing business from a RM perspective," said Lt Col Blythe, whose title within the ship's company of the helicopter carrier is Amphibious Operations Officer.

"It's allowed us almost three months of self-generated training, working as a coherent body, based from RM Poole."

This time was used by the men of 9ASRM to catch up on both their landing craft drills and their essential military skills.

"But most importantly to get the team gelled," he added.

"The CO of 1 Assault Group will be able to deliver to the CO of HMS Ocean an assault squadron with a high level of operational capability."

1 Assault Group RM (1AGRM) not only trains individual Marines as landing craft specialists, but in recent months it has come under Flag Officer Sea Training bringing with it responsibilities for watching over the three ship-borne squadrons as



● Surf drills off Whitsand Bay for the landing craft specialists of 9ASRM

separate units and on board ship.

This means that the small 1AGRM team within FOST – Lt Col Russell Paul and Maj Chris Fomes – are in the fortunate position of being linked in with both the dark blue and lovat elements of sea training, and able to call upon experts on both sides.

For 9ASRM the initial FOST burst came under the heading of 'independent boat group training' – working the squadron up as a unit away from its mother ship.

Exercise South-West Cheetah saw the Royal Marines deploy their landing craft along the south-west coast, taking on a variety of tasks ranging from beach reconnaissance through to troop pick-ups.

Lt Col Blythe said: "It was a really, really valuable exercise. The external assessment element gave it an added edge."

"In terms of what we were being asked to achieve over a short period of time, operating LCVPs and inshore raiding craft in some testing conditions, independently from the ship with no outside support – it was

extremely challenging.

"It was an extremely useful exercise." He grinned: "Especially with a number of mechanical issues that added to the 'challenge'."

Lt Col Russell Paul found that his position within both FOST and 1AGRM meant that he was able to ally the assault squadron's regeneration directly with the RFA's amphibious training within South-West Leopard – with huge benefits to both sides.

He said: "We were able to work up Ocean's landing craft but then continue the collective training in to Lyme Bay."

He points out that there are a number of fundamental similarities between the structures of the two amphibious ships, but it wasn't just the architecture.

"In terms of joint planning there were some real tangible advantages here in having Ocean's Amphibious Ops Officer (Lt Col Blythe) embarked and others from HMS Ocean."

"So it's been a very good training opportunity for those individuals to come on board and do

what they will be doing in their work-up early next year."

A number of the LC3s in the reformed squadron had not operated from a ship before, and the dock of RFA Lyme Bay replicated the routine environment they will come to know so well on board other assault ships.

Lt Col Blythe said: "I appreciate the training value that we've been able to get out of these two exercises. The opportunity to train together as a formed body in a Royal Marine environment."

"I will not get another opportunity to have three months to myself with the assault squadron," he added.

"But now the focus changes. The team is working. Now we join the ship and will make every effort to fully integrate into the whole ship programme."

"The ship is developing from a building site into a functioning warship that can deliver its weapon system – a landing force."

"We're ready to really contribute to the challenges that the ship is going to face in coming months."

# Send her (home) Victorious

THERE is no more complex machine within the confines of God's great Earth than the ballistic missile submarine – as engineers, technicians and shipwrights in Devonport have come to learn these past three and a half years.

Some 2.2 million man hours (or the equivalent of one person working solidly for 251 years) have been devoured by Her Majesty's Ship Victorious as she was readied for the second stage of her career.

The strategic missile boat has been out of action since 2004 as she underwent a £270m refit on the Hamoaze – the second of the bomber force to receive the thorough overhaul at the specialist facility in Devonport.

"We've literally stripped her, overhauled her and put her back together again," said Roger Hardy, Babcock Marine's director of submarines.

"The work we have carried out is the best we have ever done – a fantastic achievement."

In excess of 14,000 items were removed and either refurbished and replaced or simply replaced by teams from Babcock Marine (formerly DML) before Victorious could finally leave Devon last month, assisted by an armada of tugs.

They did so a day later than planned (thanks to the wonderful British summer), but the plus side was that the bomber crew got to see HMS Albion (pictured in the background here) returning from Africa... and the amphibious ship's crew had the rare treat of seeing

a bomber at sea.

At the height of the refit, some 1,000 staff from Babcock were working on Victorious, as well as MOD and RN personnel.

She is now conducting sea trials before returning to her home port of Faslane and beginning work-up to take her place in the line conducting nuclear deterrent patrols once more in 2009. The refit will keep her in service for 15 years.

The next V-boat to receive the makeover treatment in Devonport will be HMS Vigilant.

Picture: LA(Phot) Ray Jones, FRPU West



# Rolls model for Raleigh

IN THE passageway a sailor in full fearnought suit is geared up to grapple a blaze.

Down in the Ship Control Centre, an engineer is supervising the machinery.

And in the radio shack the communications rating is checking the latest signal.

Except that he's forgotten his steaming bats. Oh, and he's made of plastic.

A visit to HMS Brecon these days is a rather eerie experience. It's as if her ship's company filed off her three or four years ago, locked the 'door' and left her.

But that's just what HMS Raleigh wants.

For the former Hunt-class minehunter, which latterly served on patrols in Northern Ireland, has been granted a new lease of life in Cornwall.

She goes to sea no more, but she serves a vital role preparing tomorrow's sailors for life in the Fleet.

Until Brecon's arrival earlier this year, trainees' taste of 'life at sea' was overnighting in a yacht at Jupiter Point, home of the Sea Sense Training Centre.

It was neither ideal nor authentic (it also meant a long trip to the loo up a pontoon if you were caught short in the middle of the night).

"It's like going from a Skoda to a Rolls Royce," enthuses Brecon instructor Steve Bullock, a former petty officer.

"This is something we should have had years ago – there's nothing better than that hands-

on experience. A picture paints a thousand words."

And that's why Brecon is pretty much as she was when she left service.

There's been no rampant cannibalism as you invariably find in mothballed Royal Navy vessels. No, most of the kit is still here – even down to the damage control planks and blocks of wood left in their supports.

As for 'man at C&A' he's here to give you idea of the sort of uniform the sailors will be wearing at sea – and he gives you a good idea of how large (or small) the compartments are.

Basic entry trainees at Raleigh pay several visits to the ship, anchored at Jupiter Point, during the nine-week Phase 1 course to learn the fundamentals of a ship's layout, health and safety, ship's husbandry, ceremonial and, above all, the art of living in a confined space.

Their first taste of the latter comes on a Friday or Saturday night when they spend 24 hours aboard Brecon (being a small ship, she cannot accommodate all 60-70 trainees on a course at once, hence the split over two days).

The trainees file on board from a RIB, collect their bedding and are then directed to their mess (which in a Hunt is in the bow and is compact, but not necessarily bijoux).

They collect their scran from the galley (the meals are actually

cooked ashore, but the rookies queue for their food as their qualified counterparts would do at sea), carry it to the nearby mess deck/dining room (again compact, but not necessarily bijoux) and tuck in.

The rest of the evening is devoured by lectures, ceremonial sunset, then the time is their own.

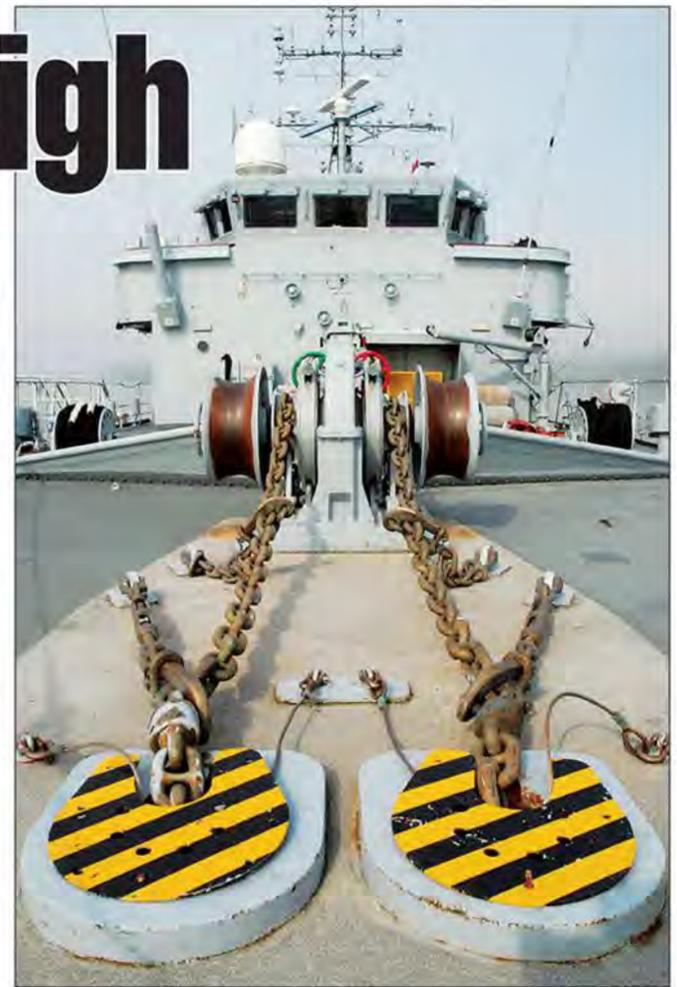
Ish. You see you cannot have the full 'life on board' experience without evening rounds, plus a sentry on duty at the top of the gangway. So every couple of hours, the trainees get a shake and do their bit.

Whilst Brecon isn't quite a serving warship – there are strict instructions in the ship control centre not to turn the engines on, for example – Hunts, 61 course, still serve, and much of what you see in her passageways and compartments can be found in most of the Fleet.

"Everyone you speak to thinks that Brecon is most definitely a step in the right direction," Steve adds.

"She gives the trainees some insight into life at sea – watches, living in a confined space, life in a mess deck. Hopefully it will help the trainees when they join a ship for real. The feedback we've had from them has been nothing but positive."

Where once the submersibles were stored now sits a classroom (complete with large windows) – the team converting her for



● Spruced up and ready for a new career... (Right) HMS Brecon in her new home at Jupiter Point

Picture: Dave Sheffield, HMS Raleigh

# The whirly bird catches the rain

CONTINUING their damp summer season, the Merlin fliers of 824 NAS turned up in Lincolnshire... once again in the rain.

Over two days an estimated 130,000 people watched the two-day Waddington Air Show, the second day of which was particularly dogged by bad weather (or 'marginal' in 824 terminology).

Rain didn't stop the Merlin whirlin' at Southend airshow earlier this summer... and it didn't stop it performing at Waddington either.

Most of the crowd turned out to see the restored RAF Vulcan bomber flying once again (sadly technical difficulties meant it was only airborne on the first day) but that wasn't going to stop the Fleet Air Arm aviators putting on a display in a region which is dominated by the presence of light blue.

As at Southend, the 824 team conducted a series of impressive manoeuvres and winching displays (minus the lifeboat they'd worked with in Essex, of course).

"We were able to gain a lot of positive PR engaging with crowds who were interested in learning about an aircraft they rarely see in these parts," said 824 instructor Lt Nick Bates.



## TOWN CLASS CRUISERS 1942

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**A FORCE FOR GOOD**



● CPO 'Tug' Wilson (right) looks on as his crewmates race Bulwark (below) along the length of the Kiel Canal Pictures: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan

**Kiel-hauling**

IT'S ONE of those mildly barking ideas that only the Royal Navy would take on... man against 20,000 tonnes of assault ship.

CPO David 'Tug' Wilson, a veteran fundraiser on the rowing machine, suggested a man against assault ship challenge as HMS Bulwark headed into the Kiel Canal.

The concept was simple - 100 of the ship's company would each row 1,000 metres at top speed as their ship made the 100km passage through the Schleswig-Holstein peninsula from the Baltic Sea at Kiel to the North Sea at Brunsbutell.

Capt Jeremy Blunden, the Commanding Officer of HMS Bulwark, took on the final challenge of the last 1,000m, cheered on by his ship's company.

At the final tally, the crew beat the ship by a resounding 26.5km.

Once he had caught his breath back, Capt Blunden said: "The ship's company have proven too quick for Bulwark in this instance."

"I'm not sure they would beat the ship through Panama or Suez though."

"It's been a fun and thoroughly enjoyable challenge, and we have also managed to raise some money for the ship's charities."



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 DEATH of a RELATIVE



● WO Kevin Shackell RMR who surprised Emily Nugent with a dream holiday

**A dreamy Marine**

**SCHOOLGIRL** Emily Nugent was sat in her classroom listening to her teacher when she was somewhat surprised to see a Royal Marine walk in...

WO Kevin Shackell of Birmingham's Royal Marine Reserves arrived unannounced to call her forward to present her with tickets for a dream holiday.

The story of Emily, aged 10, and her battle with cancer inspired the reservist to nominate her as the recipient of his fundraising for charity Destination Florida.

Kevin, a reservist for 28 years, and RM friends raised £11,000 by abseiling from the roof of Manchester Town Hall.

He said: "This is a charity I believe passionately in. The look on these youngsters' faces when we get them out to Florida is truly a sight to behold."

"I heard about Emily through her uncle and have got to know the family since. Emily is a real ball of fire and displays all the characteristics that Royal Marines admire of courage and humour in adversity."

Emily - normally a non-stop talker - was initially speechless, but when she'd recovered from the shock, said: "This is a dream come true. I've always wanted to go to America. I cannot wait to go to SeaWorld and Disney."

Her father Martin said: "Words cannot begin to describe what this means to us all. It will really give

her something to look forward to after a pretty challenging year and more."

Her battle with cancer began in February 2007, and the schoolgirl has endured the rigours of nine months of chemotherapy and two months of radiotherapy.

Her mother Sally said: "This is wonderful news. Emily is a remarkable girl and has pulled through this with sheer willpower."

"Even when she was on high doses of radiotherapy she insisted on being dropped off at school again to see her classmates."

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"Even when she was on high doses of radiotherapy she insisted on being dropped off at school again to see her classmates."

**End of service no bar to St Dunstan's**

**THE ROLE** of charity St Dunstan's in helping blind ex-Servicemen and women is often overlooked in post-Service life.

One good example of that is Radio Operator Chris Humphreys, who served from 1967 to 1978 in the Navy's frigates, destroyers and shore bases.

Chris' sight problems worsened in later life and he was registered blind in 2002, however although as a former Serviceman he knew about St Dunstan's, he thought the organisation only catered for the war blinded.

However his local Social Services in Hampshire informed him that St Dunstan's had changed its constitution so that any former Service man or woman can apply, if suffering from significant sight loss.

St Dunstan's has helped Chris with practical guidance courses and the provision of IT equipment so that he can manage his family responsibilities and communication independently.

Chris said: "I cannot praise St Dunstan's enough."

"As someone who lost my sight in later life, I was used to doing my own thing and being independent."

"St Dunstan's dispels the myth that if you're blind you can't do certain things. With the help of their specialist training and rehabilitation programme, you soon realise that you can do many of the things you did before - and more besides."

St Dunstan's offers lifelong support, providing welfare, rehabilitation, training, respite and nursing care for blind and seriously visually impaired ex Service men and women.

**Mike sets out to beat stress by triathlon**

**FORMER** Navy commando Mike Kearney is tackling the Plymouth Triathlon as *Navy News* goes to press to fundraise for Combat Stress.

The medic spent 15 years as a regular then reservist in the Navy, serving with most of the units of 3 Commando Brigade. He said: "I have decided to undertake this challenge as a way of highlighting the work of Combat Stress."

"The charity exists to support serving and ex-servicemen cope with psychological problems that started or were exacerbated by service in the Forces."

"With the current high level operations that are going on in Iraq and Afghanistan, this problem is only set to get worse."

"Combat Stress tries through its residential centres to recreate the service environment so its patients can work through their individual problems with other like-minded people, while still receiving professional care."

If you would like to sponsor Michael, visit [www.justgiving.com/michaelkearney](http://www.justgiving.com/michaelkearney)

**He didn't want to win...**

**A SOMEWHAT** surprised Zach Diment impressed Naval engineers at Sultan Show. Not with his technical know-how but his spatial awareness.

Zach was the first £50 winner at the hoopla stall run by the Royal Naval Engineers Benevolent Society at this year's fundraising show, expertly landing seven out of seven hoops.

Apparently Zach was only aiming to get six of the seven hoops in order to win the MP3 player, but was still quite happy to walk away with the top prize...

**Yomping for Heroes**

**THIS** September the Once a Marine, Always a Marine website are planning a fundraising yomp across Dartmoor to gather money for Help for Heroes.

The event, which will be hosted by former and serving Royal Marines, is open to entry by serving or former personnel from all three Services, and people can even choose how far to walk along the 12-mile route across the southern part of Dartmoor from Bickleigh to Princetown.

Find out more by visiting [www.dartmooryomp.co.uk](http://www.dartmooryomp.co.uk)

**Tour de Forces**

**TWO** members of the Royal Navy were part of a 31-strong team that took part in the gruelling 530km Cyprus Cycle Challenge this year, writes Tracey Phillips in Cyprus.

Lt Cdr Paul Chambers, officer commanding 2 Squadron at the Joint Service Signals Unit, and Lt Adam Gibb, on detachment to the Cyprus Joint Service Adventure Training Centre, took part in the four-day event to raise money for the Dreams Come True charity.

Members from all three Services, plus a contingent of civilians set off on day one of the challenge from the top of Mount Troodos to complete the 161km cycle to the home of the Joint Service Signals Unit at Ayios Nikolaos.

Day two saw the cyclists make their way to RAF Akrotiri, covering a moderately flat 127km with both Lt Adam Gibb and Lt Cdr Chambers finishing in the lead pack at the sprint.

On the third day the challenge moved up a gear with the cyclists taking on the demand of hillier terrain with sharp ascents to climb.

The final day was in a league of its own as the riders had to summon up the energy to take on the 6,501ft climb to the finish at the summit of Mount Troodos.

The Navy contingent broke away early and were part of the lead pack as the experienced riders began the demanding climb.

Lt Gibb was well placed for a podium finish when the effects of exhaustion began to set in, and he left his water-bottle at the side of the road.

Despite the onset of



● Lt Adam Gibb and Lt Cdr Paul Chambers

dehydration Lt Gibb remained with the pack and came in fifth overall, followed only minutes later by Lt Cdr Chambers who finished in seventh place.

The event raised 3,500 Euros (£2,794) for Dreams Come True, the charity that supports seriously-ill children and their families.

## Rain didn't stop play at Caledonia

THE HMS Caledonia Fair, stalwart against the inclement weather, raised an impressive £10,000 for children's charities when over 3,000 people braved the elements to enjoy the day out in Rosyth.

Lady Elgin, Caledonia's ship's sponsor, opened the fair and introduced this year's good causes - CHAS, Sick Children's Hospital Edinburgh and the Sea Cadet Corps.

Caledonia's Commanding Officer, Cdr Peter Adams, said: "This was a fair that had something for everyone, but unfortunately that also included the famous Scottish weather."

"However despite the rain having a knock-on effect on the amount of people who came along, I was thrilled with the money that we raised and impressed with the amount of effort that the stallholders, participants and the Caledonia Fair organisers put into the event."

He particularly highlighted the efforts of Lt Richie Metcalfe, CPO Bernie Gainford, MAA Dave Saunders, LS Tug Wilson and WO Ian Sutcliffe.

He added: "The Sea Cadets were also amongst the highlights of the day and really brightened up the parade ground as they marched around with pride and enthusiasm."

The 2010 event is already being planned, with the usual eclectic mix of music, model ships, dancers, fieldgun and fairgrounds.

Although organisers hope to add a few more Naval touches to the next event with ships and aircraft.

Although there is one attendee they hope will not return. Cdr Adams added: "Next time though we'll be sure to try to book the good weather. Watch this space."

## Bring out your dits

NOW it's well known that there's a wealth of funny stories out there about life in the Senior Service.

And now there's a plan to turn them into charity cash.

Two books have already been produced in the 'Thick' series, about life in the Army and life in the Police Force.

The author, John Patterson, is now hoping to pull together more books including one on life in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

The books sell for £8.99 each, £3 of which goes straight to Help for Heroes, the national charity helping wounded Servicemen and women.

If you can help, please send your stories to [ian@patsyandian.co.uk](mailto:ian@patsyandian.co.uk), or by post to: 3 Pool Road, Hadnall, Shrewsbury, SY4 4BG

Or visit the website at [www.forcesgonemad.co.uk](http://www.forcesgonemad.co.uk)



● The Va Va Victory team, winners once more of the top fundraising title in the Four Peaks Challenge

# Victorious once more

IT MAY come as no surprise to those who know their track record, but Royal Naval Team Va Va Victory once again won top honours in this year's Wooden Spoon Four Peaks Challenge.

The team of four from HMS Victory - John Scivier, Robert Brown, John Webb and Dean Farrell - were one of 60 teams to take on the race to scale Ben Nevis, Helvellyn, Snowdon and Carantouhill in less than 48 hours.

While the team posted a highly respectable time of 13 hours, 37 minutes and 23 seconds of climbing, their prize recognises their attainment of top score in fundraising - netting a remarkable £33,333.33.

This is the second year that the Naval team have won the Funds Trophy, and were delighted to have exceeded the £31,500 they netted last year.

Lt Cdr Scivier said: "The Wooden Spoons Four Peaks Challenge is a really special event because it attracts people of all ages and abilities."

But it wasn't just the squad from Victory who came out tops again.

The Flyers - combining former RN, RM and RAF servicemen - defended their title too, securing once more the Challenge Bowl after pulling the stops out to achieve a total time of 8 hours, 4 minutes and 12 seconds.

Former Marine Terry Hislop said: "We keep in shape, and although we have now left the Services, we are committed to carrying on the Forces' tradition of helping others while rising to a demanding physical challenge."

Organiser Katharine Brindley said: "We were delighted to welcome back familiar faces, but were particularly pleased that so many new teams had heard about the Challenge and signed up to take part."

"The atmosphere is always amazing and despite the rainy, windy conditions, this year was

no exception with a great show of camaraderie between teams and with the marshals."

This year's event has raised almost half a million pounds for disabled and disadvantaged young people and their families.

Find out more about future challenges at [www.spoonchallenges.com](http://www.spoonchallenges.com)



IT'S not just the four peaks which have been tempting Naval folk, a team of Naval officers and civilians from Abbey Wood pulled on their walking boots to take part in the Tenovus Three Peaks Challenge.

With a tight time schedule of just 24 hours, Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis were dismissed in 21 hours 13 minutes - which splits into 9 hours 42 minutes of climbing and the rest driving between the nations' peaks.

This timing did mean that the ascent of their final peak, Ben Nevis, began at 2am, but despite weary legs and lack of sleep, the walkers made it.

Lt Mark Jones said: "The weather on Ben Nevis was awful - wet, very cold and windy. But our spirits were lifted knowing that we were successful in our challenge." (See picture above.)

The walkers have raised almost £3,000 for Tenovus, a charity that looks to limit the damage of cancer through research, education and patient care.

Find out more at [www.tenovus.com](http://www.tenovus.com)



● PO Daz Craig, Lt Cdr Martin Lanni and Lt James Bullock

# From cab to car

THREE members of the UK's busiest search and rescue unit are climbing out of their cabs and into their cars to raise money for two children's hospitals.

Lt Cdr Martin Lanni, Lt James Bullock and PO Daz Craig from HMS Gannet will be driving 10,000km across Europe from Glasgow to St Petersburg.

Their aim is to raise £100,000 for the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Yorkhill and the Number 1 Hospital in St Petersburg.

"Being part of a search and rescue team requires dedication and dogged determination to try to keep on achieving the best outcome," explained Lt Cdr Lanni.

"We routinely fly in extreme conditions and frequently people's health and even lives are at stake - they are depending on us to make the right decisions and to keep trying, no matter how hard the odds."

"Bearing all this in mind, we

decided to make this as difficult as possible for ourselves, so the drive will be completed non-stop in a target time of six days."

The trio have already secured sponsorship from Terberg, Goodrich and Spirit Aerosystems but are looking to swell their coffers with support via their website [www.justgiving.com/gannet](http://www.justgiving.com/gannet)

Lt Bullock admitted: "Various people have sounded a note of caution about our £100,000 target - they seem to think we will never do it."

"We know it's steep, but we can't think of better causes to benefit from such a sum of money and we just hope that people will get behind us to make it happen."

"We're doing our bit, now we just need everyone to dig deep and do theirs."

"When you're thinking about sick kids and trying to make their lives more bearable, surely failure isn't really an option. I guess we'll need to see what happens."

## Seeing red

ALTHOUGH these pages are somewhat devoted to the white and blue ensigns of the RN and RFA, let us not forget the Red Ensign of the merchant fleet.

The Sailors' Society, the charity that supports all seafarers, is running a campaign to ask people to write messages of remembrance for flags that will be placed at Trinity Gardens (last year's event is pictured right).

Last year's successful campaign bore messages from Naval veterans, such as: "To all merchant seaman on North Atlantic convoys in World War 2. Whilst you chugged along at 9 knots, so vulnerable, we, on destroyers, raced around at 20 knots doing our best to protect you."

"With grateful thanks for your bravery."

If you would like to send a message of support for any seafarer, whether still serving or from the past, contact the Sailors' Society for a Red Ensign Flag Pack on 023 8051 5950 or [redensignflags@sailors-society.org](http://redensignflags@sailors-society.org).





**The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund**  
Registered Charity No. 1075015  
PATRON: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

**The RN & RM Children's is a National Charity based in Portsmouth. We care for children of men and women who have served or are serving in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.**

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Applications can be made at any time. Those seeking assistance can contact the office direct for an application form:-

Monique Bateman or Laurene Smith  
RN & RM Children's Fund  
311 Tynford Avenue  
Portsmouth  
PO2 8RN  
Telephone: 023 9263 9534  
Fax: 023 9267 7574  
Email: [rnchildren@btconnect.com](mailto:rnchildren@btconnect.com)

## Military Gladiators ready!

VIEWERS of Sky1 cannot have missed the return of TV show *Gladiators* to their screens, as musclemen and women battle their way through lurid lycra and strangely-padded scenery to win the top prize.

The current series ends with a high-profile battle between military giants with LPT McCoy 'Topsy' Turner standing up for the Senior Service.

The former physical training instructor on HMS Southampton, now training to become a remedial instructor, applied for the main series, but so impressed the judges that he was held back for the Forces special.

Of course, viewers will also know that there has been one presence menacing the contenders throughout the series – Tornado, or Royal Marine commando Dave McIntosh, who once filming finished returned to the Corps to ready himself for the upcoming deployment.

Topsy went head to head with his maritime brethren in the Powerball challenge, a conflict he described as "quite a good game. He's a big strong lad. And they're all raving about him down there."

He admitted: "Some of it's not as easy as it looks on TV. I used to watch it when I was a kid, I grew up with it. I always thought it would be something I'd want to do, but wouldn't get the opportunity."

Topsy was supported by his Southampton shipmates cheering him on in the auditorium, smartly turned out in their No.1 uniforms.

We can't reveal the result, but we're promised a nailbiting finish...

## First female voices heard

FOR the first time in 814 years, ships entering and leaving Portsmouth will be talking to women.

Samantha Clutton and Claire Thompson are the first female Port Control Assistants at the harbour.

Queen's Harbour Master Cdr Stephen Hopper said: "This is a huge landmark in the history of the harbour."

"The ways of methods of ships communicating with the port has changed remarkably over the centuries, but the one constant up until now was that women had never been involved in harbour control communications."

Both women previously served in the Royal Naval as communicators.

## Tales of the Sea at Edinburgh

THERE'LL be some interesting tales being told at this year's Edinburgh Fringe. A former CPO submariner is setting up stall with his comedy show 'Eric's Tales of the Sea – a submariner's yarn'.

Eric – whose surname is not revealed – said: "The show appeals not only to serving and retired sailors, but also members of the public who have an interest in submarines or indeed naval matters – particularly as this show is perhaps the first to be both written and presented by a submariner."

"I think it is fair to say that submariners have been consistently disappointed in the past by films and dramas that have been written by civilians with little or no knowledge of what it is actually like to serve on a submarine."

If you would like to book tickets for the August shows, visit the website [www.edfringe.com](http://www.edfringe.com) or call 0131 226 0000.



● S/Lt William Wales talks to an islander during the exercise on Montserrat

Pictures: LA(Phot) Jay Allen

# 15 minutes of anonymity

PRINCE William strides purposefully up the narrow, windy road, radio pinned to his ear, eyes scanning left and right into the dense tropical forest, writes Jack Doyle of PA in Montserrat.

"Comms – I can't get comms," he complains to no one in particular.

He moves to higher ground, searching for reception and struggling with his receiver, which objects with buzzes and crackles.

Then he spots something at the side of the road which catches his attention. A young boy is seriously injured and needs urgent medical help.

"Doc!" the Prince shouts, "Doc!"

Despite the stifling heat, the medic runs up the hill to help. William steps back, lets him get on with it, and surveys a scene of chaos on which he is valiantly attempting to impose order.

Eight people, mostly young boys, have been thrown from a bus during a category five hurricane which has devastated the Caribbean island of Montserrat.

The Prince leads a small rescue team to the site of the crash – appropriately named Soldier's Ghaut.

The injuries, and the damage, are not real, thankfully, as this is just an exercise – but that does not stop everyone, especially the 26-year-old Prince, tackling it with the utmost seriousness.

In his standard issue number fours – blue trousers and shirt – with a single stripe on his arm and wearing an HMS Iron Duke baseball cap, S/Lt Wales could be any junior officer.

The fact that he is second in line to the throne does not seem to faze his team.

They are certainly responding to his orders, which are delivered clearly and with little fuss.

"We've got three up here," one of his men shouts.

"Can you find out how they are?" comes the quick reply.

There is no sign that the islanders recognise the Prince. But they do recognise his authority and the fact that he is in naval uniform.

The more serious 'casualties' are tackled first and loaded on to local ambulances – trucks painted white – before being sent off to the hospital.

When the Prince's team arrive, they have few resources and once priorities are allocated, William



● S/Lt Wales with his crewmates from HMS Iron Duke involved in the disaster relief exercise on the Caribbean island of Montserrat

has to muck in.

He swings his leg over a roadside barrier, kneels down next to an injured boy and speaks with a wide smile.

The 'victims' are young boys in army fatigues and some are hamming up their pain. This one, however, appears to be taking it extremely seriously and the Prince gives him a few calming words.

The Prince then moves on to the next boy. A spinal board is delivered in error.

He tells the paramedic who made the error: "We don't need it – that guy needs it there. He hasn't got a spinal injury, we are just using the board for movement."

Then he is pulling a tyre from the back of a truck to clear space.

Once the casualties are clear, the Prince moves to speak with the doctor he called up the hill when they arrived.

After their terse exchanges during the 90-minute exercise, the atmosphere is lighter and they share a laugh.

The doctor is 28-year-old Darren Minshall, who said: "These exercises are very important for HMS Iron Duke and for the people of Montserrat as well and we both train independently.

"It enables us when it happens for real to be able to work together as a team and get exactly what we want – which is to look after the population and do the best we can for them."

"And today we just proved that for these eight casualties we had, they had second-to-none treatment simply because we were able to assist the local emergency services and do our best for them."

This exercise saw personnel from Iron Duke land on the island and assist local emergency services directing drills.

Rescuers taking part in the exercise were told they might also have to contend with the "nightmare scenario" of the lava dome inside the island's volcano collapsing and send a wave of lava sweeping over the island.

The Prince was involved in planning the Navy's response and was part of the forward command team, the first wave of Royal Navy personnel on to the island.

From the island's emergency rescue centre, he helped senior officers and local leaders direct the involvement of the 170 personnel on board the frigate, who can provide a range of skills from medical to engineering.



● Cdre Peter Hudson and Cdr Gavin Young in Bahrain

## Fishbourne folk are far afield

THE Commanding Officer of HMS Edinburgh, Cdr Gavin Young, took the opportunity to welcome one of his Fishbourne neighbours on board his Type 42 destroyer in the slightly more exotic locale of Bahrain.

Fellow Fishbournier Cdre Peter Hudson is the man at the head of Coalition Task Force 152, in charge of maritime security in the Gulf.

Cdr Young's ship is now one of the warships under the commodore's command within CTF 152.

HMS Edinburgh sailed in February as part of the Orion deployment before detaching to head off into the Far East. His ship is expected home this month.

He said: "Edinburgh has had a very varied deployment with plenty of fresh challenges for my people; all of which we have overcome with the professionalism and high standards that reinforce the Royal Navy's global reputation."

He added: "It is not often that you get to work for somebody in the same village, and it was a great pleasure to host the commodore onboard."

The commodore and his staff have been in the area since June and are expected to return to the UK in October.

■ See next month's issue for a report on CTF 152.



## No stopping Alanna

IN A rare presentation, Trainee Logs Alanna Johnston has been presented with the Stuart Cup, which recognises exceptional endeavour, at HMS Raleigh.

Alanna (pictured above) initially joined Raleigh in September last year, but after a setback, was transferred into Stonehouse Division for remedial training. Here it was uncovered that she had a stress

fracture to her pelvis, needing many months of physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

The 17-year-old said: "There were times when I felt like giving up with the Navy. To see people passing out of training week after week was really horrible."

But at the end of June Alanna's hard work paid off – her response: "I was absolutely ecstatic."

# Of mouth and men

FISHERY protection ship HMS Tyne returned to the river for which she is named to help locals party.

The River-class ship berthed for four days at Newcastle Quays during the Mouth of the Tyne Festival, the second time the vessel has taken part in the festivities.

The event is a mix of concert, carnival and maritime festival straddling the Tyne estuary – events are split between Tynemouth on the north bank and South Shields on the opposite side.

Sadly operational reasons meant the ship couldn't berth at the mouth of the Tyne; instead, she could be found at the more usual berth for RN ships in Newcastle, Spillers Wharf.

Between taking part in local events and inviting the public aboard, the ship somehow found time to host a reception for local leaders, Sea Cadets and affiliates.

Meanwhile in the Solent... 40 years and one day after Alec Rose brought Lively Lady into Portsmouth following his year-long circumnavigation of the world, his yacht was again shepherded home by the Senior Service.

The 59-year-old greengrocer was greeted by the RN and a quarter of a million people when he brought his yacht home in 1968. His deed earned him a knighthood.

Four decades on and his 36ft ketch is now used to give young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds the chance for adventure, leadership and life skills.

After 27 stops across the globe over a two-year period, the final crew of Lively Lady rendezvoused with Tyne's sister HMS Mersey off Southsea Castle.

Mersey and Sail Training Yacht John Lang escorted the boat for the final few hundred yards of its global journey.

# RM's square force one

THE Band of the Royal Marines will host a day-long 'open' concert showing off their full repertoire in Portsmouth next month.

The band will be holding two performances, one indoor, one outdoor, on August 1.

The music begins at 2pm in Portsmouth's Guildhall with the RM School of Music Orchestra, concert band, big band and the Corps of Drums, performing their rich variety of classical and contemporary tunes.

The day closes with the band moving into Guildhall Square for a Beating Retreat, which is free and runs from 5pm until around 5.30pm. Tickets for the indoor concert are priced £10 (concessions/children £8) and available on 023 9282 4355; and the outdoor performance is free.

# Jack-al of all trades

NAVAL engineers in Devonport are grappling with the Jackal – not the would-be assassin of de Gaulle or Carlos, but the Forces' new battlewagon.

A team of eight weapons and marine engineers is assembling the 4x4 alongside civilian counterparts at Babcock Marine in the dockyard, before the vehicles head off to Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Jackal – the military thankfully ditched the hideous acronym the vehicle was originally known by, MWMIK (Mobility Weapon-Mounted Installation Kit) – is intended to provide additional protection and firepower to troops in Helmand, replacing the existing souped-up WMIL Land Rovers.

Jackal has been described by troops as "a Land Rover on steroids", reaching speeds of up to 80mph and carrying either a .50 calibre gun, grenade launcher or GPMG.

"This work has taken me out of my comfort zone and I am enjoying it a lot," said weapons engineer PO Chris Peet, one of the eight sailors currently assembling Jackals.

"I would normally work on a ship on the same systems such as hydraulics and pneumatics, but I have not worked on these on a vehicle. "It is good experience from a technical point of view and from working alongside civilians – again a new thing for most of us."

PO Jess Owen, normally based at RM Chivenor, will be deploying to Helmand with the Jackals to maintain them in the harsh Afghan environment.

"Before we go out there, we need to work out the trouble-shooting areas to look for a simple fault before we have to open the handbook and delve deeper."

One hundred and thirty Jackals were ordered initially for the Army and Royal Marines; orders for another 72 have now been placed.

The MOD has also bought more than a dozen new Vikings for the Royal Marines to make good losses and wear-and-tear in Afghanistan where the armoured vehicle is in constant demand.

● Meditation's what you need... One of Northumberland's divers pauses to contemplate life in the Blue Hole



# Scuba doobie blue

A TEAM from HMS Northumberland were in blue heaven when they headed to the Red Sea for one of the ultimate diving experiences.

The frigate's sub-aqua enthusiasts wanted to broaden their experiences – and let their hair down after a busy spring of exercises with the Type 23 around the UK.

The divers headed to Dahab in Egypt (just up the coast from Sharm el Sheikh) for the cunningly-titled Exercise Blue Hole.

Ten miles outside Dahab lies the famous (or infamous) Blue Hole, a submarine cave around 130 metres (425ft) deep, which is both beloved by divers – and feared by them (it's earned the less-than-fortunate tags 'world's most dangerous dive site' and even 'divers' cemetery').

Still, that's not going to stop a bunch of matelots.

Fresh from some Perisher training and Joint Warrior exercise in Scotland, the seven

Northumbrians left Devonport behind and headed for the Red Sea.

The team endured the baking Egyptian sun (I'll just get my violin out – Ed), unruly camels, an 'interesting' 4x4 trek and finally a 200-yard hobble in full scuba gear to reach that blue hole (or as the divers describe it "a 130m-deep underwater chimney"). Apparently, very few RN divers have been here before.

"The blue hole gave the team a spectacular and challenging opportunity to consolidate their diving skills at depth both in confined caverns and along sheer reefs dropping hundreds of metres," said Lt Cdr Rob Kitt.

"It was an ambitious – and rewarding – week." This wasn't an expedition purely about fun and sightseeing. Northumberland now has five more nitrox-qualified divers, three more advanced divers and two new open water 'bubbleheads' (scuba divers) thanks to the week in Egypt.

# Outrage at theft from memorial

THIEVES ripped four name plates from one of the most hallowed sites in the Royal Navy.

Restorers working on the Naval Memorial on Plymouth's Hoe were astonished to find a bronze panel, listing the names of city-based sailors and Royal Marines lost in World War 2, had been prised off the imposing monument.

Their astonishment and anger turned to utter disbelief when they returned the next day to find three more plaques to the fallen had been stolen.

The thefts came just hours after former Servicemen and women had gathered on Plymouth's seafront to commemorate Veterans' Day alongside today's Forces and cadet units.

All four plates were subsequently recovered by police. One was handed in to officers having been cut into four parts. The remaining three tablets turned up at a scrapyard in Somerset; its owner alerted police.

The memorial was undergoing an overhaul with the bronze panels being cleaned and restored after years of exposure to the elements.

Thanks to that restoration work by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, which maintains the cenotaph, the vandalism was spotted immediately.

But the theft has left the commission dumbfounded at "a cowardly and selfish act of desecration".

Sadly, the commission says, this is not the first such crime in the UK and metal theft in general has spiralled in the past couple of years with school roofs and drain hole covers among the principal targets.

The scrap value of the 3ft memorial panels was estimated at between £200 and £300. Two of the plates were filled mainly with the names of Royal Marines, the other two panels featured the names of fallen sailors and a handful of Royal Artillerymen.

The commission reckoned it would cost upwards of £10,000 to replace all four plates – but hopes it can now salvage at least some of the tablets recovered and restore them to their rightful place as soon as possible. The dissected plate will have to be replaced, however, and a second is probably beyond repair.

"The financial cost is not really the issue," said the commission's Emily Bird. "The level of disrespect shown by these thieves to not only these brave men but their families and their comrades left behind is appalling. The men on these panels sacrificed all they had for their country and deserve to have a fitting memorial."

"The response of the people of Plymouth – and further afield – was particularly heartwarming."

The Plymouth Memorial (mirrored by similar monuments in Chatham and Portsmouth) lists more than 23,000 dead from both world wars. It bears the names not merely of British nationals but also Australian and South African sailors lost in WW1 and Commonwealth nationals killed in the war at sea a generation later.

Three people have been arrested and questioned over the thefts. Anyone who can help the investigation should contact Devon and Cornwall Police on 08452 777 444.

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- 1 Clockwise from top: Capt Wayne Keble, Commanding Officer of HMS Albion, talks to the chief of Toke village on Toke Beach
- 2 HMS Albion ship's company and embarked Dutch marines disembark stores from the landing craft on Toke beach
- 3 Members of the ship's company with their new friends
- 4 Albion conducts a hands to bathe whilst at anchor off Sierra Leone – and launches sea boats, landing craft and pleasure craft for good measure
- 5 HMS Albion anchored off Sierra Leone at sunset
- 6 Cdr Simon Turnbull (centre) and Albion's chaplain Simon Springett (right) hand out shoeboxes of gifts to schoolchildren in Freetown – the boxes were provided by families of the ship's company and by British schools
- 7 Cdr Christopher Saxby hitches a ride to a landing craft with Hercules, the Beach Armoured Recovery Vehicle (BARV), after going ashore to Toke
- 8 Albion launches dinghies from her well deck off Sierra Leone during a hands to bathe
- 9 The President's Honour Guard awaits the arrival of Ernest Bai Koroma in the well-deck of HMS Albion anchored off Sierra Leone

**Pictures: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper**



# Dependak



**IF ANY warship can claim to represent true global power projection, then it has to be HMS Albion.**

Not because she is a very capable (to say nothing of modern and relevant) vessel, although that is certainly true.

On this particular deployment it has more to do with the ship's navigator.

Because as the amphibious assault ship (or Landing Platform Dock in military parlance) crossed the Equator she was also tracking south along the Prime Meridian.

Which meant that as she crossed the line Albion was simultaneously in the four hemispheres – north, south, east and west – and thereby providing “a graphic illustration of our ability to project Naval power throughout the world,” according to the ship's PRO, Surg Lt Cdr Anthony Dew.

Shortly before crossing the line a whole ship morning standeasy was hosted by the Weapon Engineering Department, which produced trays of fresh pasties for the occasion.

Those troubled by guilt had the chance to work off the calories with the PT sessions mentioned in last month's *Navy News*.

Apart from the early stint (or “Wake Up with Clubz”), the lunch-time “Red Hot Circuits” (“keep fit and top up your tan”) and two more circuits at the end of the day, the gym is busy, and a yoga group tie themselves in knots.

And for those who just want to jog, there is a ‘track’ round the ship's deck; four-and-a-half laps is a mile, but remember that the route is clockwise on even days, anticlockwise on odd.

Even a quiet Sunday yields plenty of opportunities, with church in the morning, an afternoon four-a-side football competition (won by the Marine Engineering Department) and an evening flight deck karaoke.

But the following day saw the ship back to serious

business alongside in Lagos, Nigeria, where training was carried out with the Nigerian Armed Forces, and Albion hosted a formal reception in a hot well deck, with guests whisked there and back by landing craft.

It was at times like this that the ship's marines came into their own – even if they were just temporary visitors.

With Albion's own Royal Marines training elsewhere for their deployment to Afghanistan, the ship ‘picked up’ a boat group of 30-40 Dutch marines in Amsterdam in early May.

**The Dutch – the ‘Black Sheep’** – happily slipped into the ship's working and social routine, and Surg Lt Cdr Dew said that Albion could not have achieved what she did without the Dutch and their landing craft.

Whilst in Lagos Albion also hosted a high-level maritime security seminar, which allowed UK and Nigerian forces to share ideas and skills, and gave the British a chance to show off some of the capability of the amphibious ship.

Those unlucky enough to be left out of the seminar team were able to enjoy sporting and social activities, of which the highlight was a cultural evening, staged by the ship's Nigerian Navy hosts at their HQ.

Often it is quite small things that mark the difference in being away on deployment.

Resetting clocks, for example, is a constant reminder of the fact that the ship is moving through different time zones – four in a month for Albion.

Nigeria was on the same time as the UK, but on sailing the ship lost an hour to synchronise with Sierra Leone local time.

Another Sunday and more activity.

This time it was dubbed “Running Day”, the main feature being the Mike Till 100-mile relay run, which commemorates the senior rate who took part in the 100-mile baton relay on board HMS Sheffield in 1982 and who died trying to save the ship in the Falklands just weeks later.

A trophy is now awarded biannually to the ship with the fastest relay time, and Albion's attempt saw 100 runners complete a mile each on the upper deck.

The baton was picked up, as it were, by the organisers of the ship's church service,





# ole Albion

who took "Running in the Bible" as their theme – quite appropriately, as the service was held on the flight deck, with runners constantly panting past.

Other special events during that week included a photography masterclass, run by the ship's Leading Photographer LA(Phot) Dan Hooper, who took the pictures on these pages.

Albion now has a hornpipe display team, and although the PTI is confident that he can train the performers to a high standard, the word on Two Deck is: "Be afraid. Be very afraid."

The ship's next port of call was not a port at all; she anchored off the idyllic-looking Toke Beach in Sierra Leone to make final preparations for training with the Sierra Leone Armed Forces, and to run civilian-military co-operation projects.

She also had to prepare for a short-notice Presidential visit.

Having visited Sierra Leone in 2006, and worked on projects at Toke Beach, the ship's company were keen to help once more.

On this occasion they concentrated on improving the fabric of two local schools and a temporary medical clinic.

Logs 'Kavs' Kavanagh also taught a large group of children the art of the *Hokey Cokey*.

With everything spick and span, Albion invited the President of Sierra Leone, Ernest

Bai Koroma, to sail along the coast to Freetown and see for himself the increasing destruction of his country's beaches and protected forests by unlicensed loggers, miners and land developers.

In the presence of his cabinet he made two presidential decrees designed to stop such activity, which will be known as the Albion decrees.

Accompanying the President on the assault ship were senior officers from the Sierra Leone Armed Forces, who toured the ship and attended presentations with a focus on maritime security.

More junior warriors took part in practical firefighting and damage-control training, some of which was watched by their president.

Back ashore, shoeboxes filled with toys and educational materials were distributed to children in six Freetown schools, identified by the charity Missions Direct.

One of these schools was in the middle of a building project but needed extra funding to complete the ceiling – and up stepped the ship's barber, Sgt Etienne from the embarked Dutch marines, who raised £500 for the school.

There was just time for Albion to put out a football team to take on the local side, and to deliver English football strips donated by the Football Association, before the ship was on her way back north to the UK via Gibraltar.



## Rum do on Polaris

THE excellent 'bombers' article (May) brought 40-year-old memories flooding back, having served in HMS Resolution (Starboard) as the Chief EA/nuclear watchkeeper on the second Polaris patrol in 1968 and subsequently.

Not a lot seems to have changed, though back then we were allowed only one 40-word familygram a week.

Also each man then had to decide for himself before patrol if he wished to receive bad family news during it – it was made abundantly clear (this being the Cold War) that under no circumstances would the security of the patrol be compromised by surfacing to offload anyone – so presumably a death would be dealt with by discharge through a tube – I never asked.

I can still recall the uneasy feeling on hearing the alarms sound, if not prefixed by the pipe 'for exercise, for exercise' – was this it?

The tot was still in issue then, if you had the afternoon, the unwritten rule was that you had it after your watch.

The flaw in this reasoning is obvious, given the awesome nature of our arsenal, the complexity of systems and thus the need for a clear head 24/7 to launch an instant counter-strike at any hour of day or night. As the article says, it was not talked about.

At least we knew the potential enemies – the lads today must wonder at whom their terrible weapons are targeted, or indeed if any country is selected at all, now that we all love each other!

Good luck to them all.  
– Derek Thorne, Titchfield, Hants

## Thank you

YOU kindly posted an appeal from me last year looking for survivors from HMS Martin, sunk off the coast of Algiers in November 1942.

I must apologise for the delay in thanking you and your readers. The response has been overwhelming – I have received letters and telephone calls from survivors and relatives alike searching for friends and loved ones.

Only recently I received a letter from a survivor, George Dance, and his wife, Joan, both in their 80s. When I listen to the stories one can sense the deep unspoken pain and loss for their comrades and yet there seems to be a great joy and belief in our country.

I am sure our gratitude has been expressed many times and these men and women will not be forgotten. The sad part is we never seem to learn, but maybe war is part of life. As I wrote during my research:

"Our mothers gave us life, our fathers gave us bread, our brave soldiers died for us so we may live instead."

"So how should we repay the ones we love so dear? It would be to live our lives in harmony and cause no-one to fear."

– Henry Watson, Edinburgh



# We can't see the Fleet

COULD I appeal through your columns to anyone who served in the RN's Naval Inland Waterways Fleet and may have information, photos or anecdotes?

I am assisting the National Inland Waterways Museum and the Waterways Trust at Ellesmere Port to find out more about this fleet.

I remember the four narrowboats that were attached to either the Naval Display Team and/or the Naval Careers Service in the 1970s.

I would like to research the history of the boats, who built them and when, how they were operated, where they went, and what was their main purpose?

The information will be kept in the National Waterways Museum Library Archive as a part of the History of the Inland Waterways.

I would be pleased to hear

## Emmaus house

I WORK for Emmaus Hampshire, the homeless charity that works.

In March we started building the first Emmaus Community in Hampshire on the outskirts of Winchester.

An Emmaus Community is a 'live/work' place for previously homeless men and women who really want to rejoin society. Companions, as those who live in Emmaus Communities are called, sign off state benefits and agree to work a 40-hour week within the community.

In return they have a home and a small income and assistance with dealing with any problems they may have. Over 20 per cent of the companions who have lived in the 15 communities already up and running in the UK have been ex-servicemen and women.

We will open our doors for business in spring 2009. We are still fundraising to achieve the £500,000 needed to cover start-up costs, but now that we are in mid-build are increasingly looking for gifts in kind and for groups prepared to stage events and, eventually, to help on site.

Is there a naval ship or establishment currently looking for a new cause to support? If so then why not adopt Emmaus Hampshire?

For more information please see [www.emmaushampshire.org.uk](http://www.emmaushampshire.org.uk) or contact me at [mike.matthews@emmaushampshire.org.uk](mailto:mike.matthews@emmaushampshire.org.uk) tel. 01590 624033

– Mike Matthews Captain RN (ret'd) Brockenhurst, Hampshire

from anyone on my email [talwaldron@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:talwaldron@yahoo.co.uk) or on 07813 806508.

– Terry Waldron

The photo shows (left to right) Cleopatra, London, Renown and Sheffield, after their popular nationwide tour in 1974.

The miniature warships visited 50 cities, towns and villages to publicise the Navy as part of the RN's Canals Touring Exhibition.

The four craft were scaled-down versions of real ships and submarines, with superstructures mounted on traditional narrow boat hulls.

They were 60 feet long, with a beam of seven feet, and were fitted inside with actual equipment used in HM ships, to give some of the flavour of a front line warship.

Cleopatra was based on a Leander-class frigate, London on a County-class guided missile destroyer, Renown on a Polaris submarine (although

she was fitted with a wartime midget submarine periscope) and Sheffield on a Type 42 destroyer.

About 200,000 visitors went to see the jolly little ships on their tour, although our files don't reveal what finally became of them – Ed

# Zeebrugge losses

I ENJOYED the exciting and readable article on the Zeebrugge Raid (April) but there were a couple of omissions which puzzled me.

Firstly, there is no mention of submarine C1, apart from it being mentioned in the plan to ram the mole with C3.

Secondly the two blockships which penetrated the canal considerably further than HMS Thetis (HMS Iphigenia and Intrepid) receive no mention apart from being part of the plan to block the canal.

The trials and tribulations of Thetis are described in detail together with the rest of the Naval force. These two old cruisers and their skeleton crews must have suffered as much if not more than Thetis, and there seem to have been no awards made to their companies.

It is astonishing that the raid was even contemplated. The chances of blocking the canal effectively with blockships must have been seen as very slim.

We lost three cruisers (albeit quite old, but not that old) two submarines, very bad damage to Vindictive, a lot of brave men and a lot of time and training for what? – virtually nothing.

– Arnold Melhuish, Plymouth

...THE supplement was of special

# Making free with signals

I WAS most surprised to see the Fleet disposition on your *Global Reach* page, as you will, I hope, understand when you read this letter.

During the 60s, when I was ship's company at HMS Mercury, I went on loan draft to HMS Excellent, whilst their Yeoman had his annual leave, and ended up in the rattle for having the telex list of ships, connected to the DTN (Teleprinter Network) up on the wall in the MSO.

Apparently this information was useful to the enemy.

I returned from weekend leave to face the first day on my own to find the combination of the safe changed, all the telexes stripped off

the wall and everything that could be construed as RESTRICTED or above gone, even the messages from the teleprinter.

Apparently the officer of the day had checked the MSO on his rounds during the weekend and to his delight saw the telexes on the wall and then went to town on everything else.

The Yeoman and I were put on defaulters, and stopping short of saying "it wasn't me sir, they were there already," I got seven days stoppage of leave.

Rough justice I think, considering the freedom of information nowadays.

– David Dibben, ex-RO2(T) 1962-1974, Hornchurch, Essex

# You don't know Jack

JACK Kettle was a Chatham-based shipwright who finished his time in the Navy as a Warrant Officer. When he was pensioned from the RN he worked at the Dockyard in Chatham where he continued to do the cartoons.

He lived in Gillingham and had two daughters, one of whom I was married to.

– Reg Ling, Middle Green, South Bucks

YOUR article on a very brave man, Jack Mantle (May) was somewhat spoiled by the words "operating his 2pdr pom-pom gun" when it is actually a Quadruple 0.5" machine-gun.

The weapon abounded early in World War 2 ships and was replaced by 20mm guns.

– Andrew 'Tiger' Timpson, ex Chief Ordnance Artificer, Birchington, Kent

# Know a Trafalgar lad?

I AM currently serving at RNAS Culdrose and my wife is too, as a chef.

I have a friendly bet with her that we are the only serving couple in the RN who have a child born on Trafalgar Day.

Do any readers know different? Our son had his first birthday on the 200th anniversary, in 2005.

– Michael Smith, Helston



interest to me since my father was a Chief Motor Mechanic in CMB 35 with Lt E E Hill as skipper, and I believe their function in the air raid was smoke-screening off Blankenberghe.

The photograph (above) which my father cherished, shows a group of Chief Motor Mechanics taken at Dover in 1919, including Lt Dayrell-Reed.

Messrs Thornycroft and Co Ltd published a booklet

describing the history and development of CMBs and the part they played in the Great War.

I have part 2 of this booklet (published after 1919) which also recounts the attack on Kronstadt and other operations in Russian waters, together with a list of the officers and men who were lost at Kronstadt.

– Philip Mottershead, Seaman Radar Branch, 1944-47, Sale, Cheshire

# opinion

DUNDEE this year, Londonderry the next, are there no limits to the reach of the Royal Naval Association and its annual conference?

Actually not, because shipmates have voted to hold their 2010 RNA conference in – France.

"What would Nelson say?" was the first reaction of the Navy News team, followed by the reservations that Oustreham surely would be very expensive, its residents would be a little bemused by the RNA, and it is, above all, abroad.

But the RNA have persuaded us otherwise. For a start there are the historic ties with our WW2 allies.

They will be celebrated with a parade at Pegasus Bridge

and by the shipmates representing the nation at the Garden of Remembrance in Caen.

Then, France will be cheaper than many UK venues, and the conference might attract more delegates than usual, who will take their families along for the five-day visit. The town's Mayor even has an honorary MBE for his support for the British community.

The choice of venue, according to RNA General Secretary Paddy McClurg, will do "a bit for the country, a bit for the Navy, a bit for the entente-cordiale – and a lot for the RNA."

So Navy News is convinced – we're not quite sure about Nelson though.

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

# JACK

BY TUGS



OOOH! LOOK!  
THERE'S A  
SAILOR.



THEY MUST HAVE  
SENT ALL THE  
BEST ONES  
TO THE GULF



# Hood was not a happy ship

Professor Eric Grove's review of my book *The Battlecruiser HMS Hood: An Illustrated Biography, 1916-1941* makes interesting reading. Considerations of space limit me to addressing only the grosser points in his review.

This 'second edition' as Prof Grove calls it is, by publisher diktat, no more than a reprint of the original edition of 2005 with the replacement of an inaccurate photo and the inclusion of a dozen minor textual changes.

Dr Brooks was indeed kind enough to share part of his unpublished work with me in 2004 but his arguments were so explosive that I chose to reserve judgement on the matter until Prof Jon Sumida had had a chance to respond.

I would have taken this course even had I not been within a fortnight of my publisher's submission date. Prof Grove has plainly read the note I inserted to this effect on page 48 of my book; why then does he choose flagrantly to misrepresent me as having taken sides in the debate?

Prof Grove takes indignant exception to four of the 150 Hood veterans whose testimonies I used in researching this book: AB Len Wincott (bored to be aboard in 1926), Boy Seamen Fred and Frank Coombs (subsequent winners of the DSM) and the "member of the Engineering Branch" who as he knows is Vice-Admiral Sir Louis Le Bailly, one of Britain's greatest living sailors.

Now, not even Prof Grove could dispute anything these men chose to record of their personal experiences and impressions - even if they weren't balanced by the countervailing ones he himself illustrates.

Of course, what he resents is that such views should have been aired at all, that the rose-tinted vision of Hood's last years should have been rudely shattered by the overwhelming evidence of her reduced morale and pitiful condition.

As an example of *ex post facto* censorship and rank bad scholarship his comments could hardly be bettered.

Prof Grove's last paragraphs on the cause of Hood's sinking bring us in their turn to the cause of his splenetic outburst.

The issue is another upon which I expressly reserve judgement in my book and I take great pains to steer a middle course on the subject. Not so Prof Grove who decides to use this review as a vehicle for venting his frustration at the failure of a single technically-qualified expert (of any nationality) to support his own musings.

All in all, the tone and content of Prof Grove's review are a fuller statement on his status as "a professional naval historian" than any lines of mine could express.

My final comment to Prof Grove is that, beginning with the introduction, he needs to get the most out of his investment by reading all of its content, particularly if he intends to make further review of it.

- Dr Bruce Taylor, Los Angeles, California

## What's it mean to be Ship fit for a Queen Becky the Beans?

WHEN I was working with the RAF Regiment in Norfolk in July, we were evacuated (casevac'd) by an RN Lynx helicopter.

The pilot was named Becky and the observer was named Jimmy - 'Aussie.' Unfortunately I can only remember their first names.

This lady was the best pilot I have ever flown with. She made that aircraft dance. I do speak from experience - I am ex-Navy.

We nicknamed her 'Becky the Beans' because every time she flew us out she gave it the 'beans'.

I have no way of talking to her, or Jimmy, but would like to pass on my thanks to both pilot and observer for a great couple of days. They were exemplary in their professionalism and character.

I work for a company called Amputees in Action. We do casualty simulation for the Armed Services. Please pass on our appreciation to Becky and Jimmy, we did not get the chance when we were at work.

Just tell them it's from the 'old boy' Steve with pipe and one leg, 'the boy' Jack, young, with one leg, and John, in-betweeny, with one arm.

We had a fantastic time being flown by Jimmy and Becky. She is a great pilot, and the Navy should be seriously proud of her.

- Steve Beerling, ex-MEM and war pensioner, Maidstone  
At the risk of making them blush, we traced Lt Becky Frater and Lt Jimmy 'Aussie' Hawley to 815 Squadron at RNAS Yeovilton. Jimmy is on exchange from the Royal Australian Navy - no prizes for guessing that one.

Still not sure what 'giving it the beans' means, but the passengers seem to have enjoyed it - Ed

REGARDING the naming of the new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, I like to think the name chosen by the powers that be was in memory of that famous old battleship the QE, known as The Flagship of the World, named after the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth I.

Sadly she was sunk in Alexandria in Egypt in World War 2. She was my first ship which I joined in 1935 and I served in her for two years until she went in for a refit after the Coronation Review in 1937.

I write this because no other person has mentioned this and this is probably my last letter to *Navy News* because I am now 92.

- R A Picken, ex-CPO, Basildon, Essex

The latest graphics released by the MOD for the future carriers can be found on the poster in our centre pages this month - Ed

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.

If you submit a photograph that you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permissions for us to publish it.

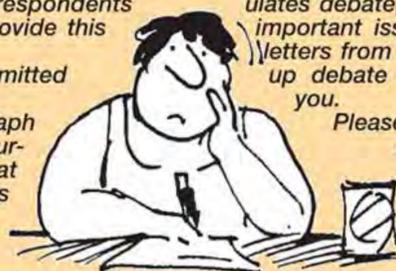
Given the impressive

volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*.

We look for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. We particularly seek letters from serving personnel to open up debate on issues that matter to you.

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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A Naval Charity for ALL service and ex-service personnel of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, QARNNS, and their Reserves

# 'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

## Woking celebrates silver

WOKING branch celebrate their silver jubilee with a dinner and cabaret at the Holiday Inn, Woking.

More than 100 members and guests attended, the guest of honour being the Mayor of Woking, Cllr Bryan Cross, on one of his last official duties before handing over to his successor.

Branch secretary S/M Rod Fraser, the only remaining founder member, said that the branch had collected more than £600,000 for local and Service charities over the 25 years.

The mayor replied that he was proud of the fact that he had on a number of occasions been involved with the RNA during his term of office, and praised the way members became involved in the community.

After dinner and presentations, Shep Woolley entertained members and guests with naval songs and trips down Memory Lane, many involving runs ashore.

## Redruth stall is just the ticket

MEMBERS of Redruth and Camborne branch manned a successful tombola stall during Redruth's Murdoch Day celebrations, in honour of Scottish engineer and inventor William Murdoch, who lived in the town in the late 18th Century.

The following day members, including the branch's two standard bearers, took part in the Civil Parade to Redruth parish church.

Having 'lost' stalwart S/M Bob Saxby, who has moved north, S/M David Russell made his debut, with S/M Dave Kennedy carrying the Royal British Legion standard.

## MBE for David

SHIPMATES throughout the Association have expressed their pleasure at the news that the RNA National Chairman, S/M David White, was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

## Picton Castle still roams the oceans

THERE is nothing quite like the sight of a Royal Navy minesweeper in full sail, the canvas billowing from the yards.

Yes, that's right, a square-rigged Royal Navy minesweeping barque.

Built in 1928 in Yorkshire as the motor fishing trawler Picton Castle, she was brought into the Royal Navy in World War 2 as a minesweeper and armed escort.

She is believed to have served in the North Sea and the Channel, but after returning to civilian service she became a freighter around Scandinavia and the Baltic, then left to rot in a Norwegian fjord until she was spotted by Captain Daniel Moreland in the early 1990s.

She was put back into working order and sailed across the Atlantic, where an extensive refit saw a clipper bow added and three masts,

bearing 12,500 square feet of sail, were added.

The 300-ton barque, now a sail training tall ship, is currently on a 12-month voyage which will see her circle the Atlantic, and the owners are keen that any veterans who might have sailed in her during the war, or their families, know that the old ship has plenty of life left in her yet.

www.picton-castle.com

# Former Sparrows fly back to Namsos

THREE members of the Royal Naval Patrol Service (RNPS) Association Midlands branch joined a group of British veterans who travelled to Norway to pay homage to those who took part in the Norwegian campaign in 1940.

The trio - association secretary John Hodge, Alf Baker and Arthur Young - were among the 13 who were invited by the Mayor of Namsos to commemorate the destruction of the town in April 1940 by German bombers.

The party were met by their hosts in Trondheim, then travelled the 100 miles or so to Namsos, stopping at the Tirpitz memorial on the way.

The following day the party took a boat trip down the Namsenfjord, and on the return journey the boat stopped over the wrecks of the anti-submarine trawlers HMT Aston Villa (badly damaged by German dive bombers on April 30 1940 in Kroken Bay and scuttled three days later) and HMT Gaul (sunk on May 3 1940 by German dive bombers in Kroken Bay).

A short service was held over the wreck of HMT St Goran; five people died in the ship before she was abandoned after being

attacked on April 30.

The wrecks of HMT Rutlandshire and sloop HMS Bittern, in which 20 sailors died, were also acknowledged.

Norway's National Day started with a children's parade, followed by ceremonies at the Norwegian, British, Russian and French memorials.

Later that day Alf Baker, on behalf of the RNPT, was invited to unveil the ship's bells of Aston Villa, Gaul and Rutlandshire, which had been recovered from the fjord.

And the ceremonials were rounded off with a public parade in which some of the British visitors got to ride in a 1904 Cadillac once owned by the King of Norway.

Otterøy was the destination on the group's penultimate day; the island provided shelter for the crew of the stricken Rutlandshire

68 years ago until they could be picked up by the Royal Navy.

Their story was retold by Forbes Wilson, the grandson of the Commanding Officer of the Rutlandshire.

Among the other ships represented on the trip were HMS Mohawk, HMS Afridi, HMTY Lord Astin, as well as an ex-RAF flight sergeant who was shot down during a raid on the Tirpitz in March 1942.

The memorial in Namsos was unveiled in 2000, and names the ships Afridi, Bittern, Maori, Grenade, Arab, Gaul, Aston Villa, Rutlandshire, St Goran and Carlisle, as well as Army units involved in the campaign.

The RNPT was set up in 1939 with an HQ at Lowestoft known as the Sparrows Nest.

From an initial 6,000 fisherman and an eclectic mix of 200 trawlers, drifters and the

like, many of them decades old, 'Harry Tate's Navy' (named after the luddite music hall star) grew to become a force of 66,000 plus men and women and 2,000 ships by 1945.

They could be found from the frozen Arctic to the Pacific, sweeping channels into Allied ports or clearing the way for attacks, including D-Day.

The Norway campaign involved 30 trawlers, of which 14 were lost through air attacks.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Arab, Lt Richard Stannard RNR, won the second Victoria Cross of the war, and a further two DSOs and five DSMs were awarded to the men of Arab and Aston Villa.

Overall, more than 5,000 men of the RNPT died during the war - almost half with no known grave - and 475 ships never returned to port.



## Wizard's brew is tribute to fathers

THE wartime exploits of two Servicemen, one British and one American, have been celebrated in the form of special beers.

A young American soldier, Holger Holm, was released after more than three years in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps, and his secret diary noted that he was picked up by the RN destroyer HMS Wizard, which gave him and his colleagues food and clothes.

On board Wizard was a young Welsh seaman John Medford, whose diary noted that the ship "picked up 250 yanks."

In 2003 a member of the HMS Wizard/HMS Cadiz Association saw details of Holger Holm's war service on the Internet, written by Holm's son Vern, and alerted John Medford's widow Ady, which led to a transatlantic correspondence.

Vern and his wife Bonnie own the Blue Stem Winery in Iowa, and started producing homemade beer kits named after Holger Holm's war exploits.

Vern decided to make a beer kit in honour of HMS Wizard, and the name was a fairly straightforward choice, given the ship's badge (above).

The HMS Wizard Magic Circle Ale kit duly arrived in Bristol, where John Medford's son Graeme and a friend, Simon Bartlett - who happens to own the Bristol Beer factory - brewed, bottled, labelled and delivered 50 bottles.

The beer went down a treat at the Wizard/Cadiz reunion earlier this year, particularly with S/M Ted Purbrick, who recalls seeing the American PoWs arriving on board in 1945.

Ady Medford now wonders if another episode in Wizard's career, the transportation of 158 bars of gold from Australia to the UK, should also be commemorated.



● Rough seas approaching Sydney Harbour - but none of the Area 12 members were particularly bothered, as they were half a world away from Australia. The area held its quarterly meeting in Cork as guests of the Cork and County branch, which enabled some of them to put in some sea time. That was provided by the National Maritime College of Ireland, commissioned in 2003 for the training of mariners across the board. The officer who set up the visit and hosted the meeting was Cdr Mark Mellet, of the Irish Navy, who trained at Dartmouth and served in RN ships

## Painting up for grabs

S/M VIC Taylor has joined the Eastern Cyprus branch - and immediately got stuck in with a fundraising project.

Vic, formerly of Plymouth, presented his new branch with an oil painting of Type 42 destroyer HMS Manchester charging through a choppy sea.

● Vic Taylor hands the painting to Eastern Cyprus branch chairman's wife Jean Hirst

The picture was handed to branch chairman's wife Jean Hirst, one of the group's main fundraisers.

The painting will either be auctioned or entered into the branch Christmas draw, at the request of S/M Vic, with the proceeds going to the branch.

Anyone interested in making a bid to obtain the painting should contact chairman S/M Eric Hirst on 00357 2396 3235.



● Mystery pics - any idea where these locations are?

## Where in the world was Edgar?

PICTURED above is Edgar Chatwin Spedding, standing on some distinctive rock formations.

Bryan Spedding would like to know where they were taken, as they are the only photos he has of his father.

Edgar died in November 1936 following an accident during a football match in Devonport, when he was playing for a team from HMS Tenedos.

The leading signalman was accidentally kicked in the

forehead, and later died of a brain haemorrhage in hospital.

Bryan, who was six months old when his father died, was told by his late mother that the pictures were taken in Gibraltar, but having been there and spoken to local experts they dispute this, and suggested it may have been in South Africa.

If anyone can shed some light on the location, please contact Bryan at [bryanspedding@btinternet.com](mailto:bryanspedding@btinternet.com)

## Naval Quirks

AMERICAN INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT WAS A GREAT HELP TO THE ALLIED WAR EFFORT IN WORLD WAR II..



..AN INCREDIBLE 2,770 "LIBERTY SHIPS" WERE MASS PRODUCED FOR A START..



I think the idea is to produce more "liberty ships" than the Germans have torpedoes!

..BUT WARSHIPS WERE ALSO BEING CHURNED OUT - BY LATE '44, FOR EXAMPLE, THEY WERE LAUNCHING AN AIR-CRAFT CARRIER A WEEK!



He has the toughest job in the U.S. Navy - thinks up names for our new carriers..





## HQ move 'is taking RNA back to sea'

DEPUTY president S/M Adrian Nance told Conference that the Association intends to vacate its current HQ in Chelsea Manor Street by the end of next month.

The lease for the building has been sold back to the owners for £465,009, and there is plenty of work to be done on around 50 years worth of unweeded files found in the cellar, he said.

Although "seriously interested" in one property, in Portsmouth, nothing has been settled, so a temporary lease – for at least a year and possibly longer – has been taken out with the RN for offices close to Semaphore Tower in the Naval Base.

"We are going back to sea," said S/M Nance.

"We've been above the high water mark in Chelsea for a very long time, and we are moving from a stagnant Naval backwater into the tidal reaches of one of the oldest naval bases in the country, where the wash of new blood will come in, giving us the vitality that has been mentioned before, that will keep alive the waters of comradeship that we so much esteem."

## Asbestosis: Send evidence

DELEGATES voted for National Council to continue their efforts to campaign on behalf of victims of asbestosis.

Introducing the motion, S/M John Stewart (Saltash) spoke of the problems of the various diseases caused by asbestosis, and asked if any real progress had been made since the matter was raised in the 2005 Conference.

Seconding the motion, which won approval, S/M Gordon Strudwick (Liskeard) said between 10,000 and 15,000 people would have died of the disease since 2005.

A number of shipmates also took to the podium to state that they were affected by asbestosis.

President S/M John McAnally said it would be helpful for branches and areas to collate firm evidence and information, which could then be used as ammunition by the Association in a bid to raise public awareness.

## Memorandum progresses

A TWO-part motion of urgency saw progress made on the Memorandum of Understanding negotiated between the Association and the Royal Navy sparked by a resolution at last year's Conference.

The MOU accepts that the age profile of the RNA is high and sees the creation of a new form of membership – Serving Members – with serving personnel entitled to enter a branch or club using their Service Identity Card.

They would not be members of a specific club (unless they joined as an individual) and would pay no subscriptions.

Each RN ship or unit will appoint a point of contact to liaise with RNA branch committees and HQ.

The motion, proposed by National Council and seconded by Beccles, asked first that Conference note the MOU, and then that it should be finalised, subject to minor changes in the draft agreed between the National President and Second Sea Lord (a standard "latitude clause"), which will speed up its implementation.

Both parts of the motion were carried unanimously.

**See next month for reports from the National Council**

# RNA 'should be run by ex-RN members'

ANOTHER bid to increase the influence of associate members met with failure during branch motions at Conference.

This time it was the turn of Peterborough, seconded by Newbury, to champion the cause of associate members by proposing that those who have completed at least five years membership of the RNA should be eligible to be designated as accredited branch delegates, with the power to vote at area meetings and National Conference.

Proposing Branch Motion 2, S/M Tom Tubb said "Associates in my eyes pull equal weight, and in return I propose this motion for the third time to Conference in the hope that it is third time lucky."

He said they beavered away in exemplary fashion, they observed RNA objectives and many were family members who support the RNA and RN with pride.

But S/M Doug Pointon (Harrogate and District) disagreed, saying: "I appreciate that associate members do a very good job, but at the end of the day the RNA should be run by ex-Royal Naval members."

S/M Trevor Howard (St Helens) said he was concerned that the day may come when associate members outvoted full members, sat on the National Council and took the role of chairman.

S/M Mike Kieran (Coventry) commented that as a matelot he joined an association run by matelots: "If I wanted to join an association that was joint Service or civilian-orientated, I would have joined the British Legion."

He concluded: "Matelot associations are for matelots to make decisions on, not bus drivers and dustbin lorry drivers."

A two-thirds majority was required to carry the motion, but 55 voted against it, with 47 for.

Motion number 3, introduced by S/M Keith Merrett (Worthing), proposed that a capitation fee of ten per cent of the subscriptions received in HQ by December 31 each year be paid to each area in respect of branches within its area. The current level is five per cent.

S/M Merrett, who was seconded by S/M Mike Broderick of Waterlooville, said the extra cash would be very useful for branch welfare and the like, and could also help support entrants to the standard bearers competition.

But such a move would leave a hole in the Association's finances, according to the National Council, which concerned the Portland delegate, S/M Pete Shoesmith.

National chairman S/M David White outlined an alternative: if half of Gift Aid subscriptions were returned to areas, in time – and if more members signed Gift Aid forms – the amount raised could be greater than the extra five per cent of capitation.

Adding that he was sympathetic to the reasons behind the motion,

## 'Mother of all conferences' is promised

FRANCE Nord branch has promised "the mother of all conferences" when they act as hosts in 2010.

The pledge was made as an alternative proposal, that the conference be staged in the London area, was soundly beaten.

The venue for future conferences does not usually spark debate, but Maldon branch felt the costs of going to Normandy would prove too much for some shipmates.

S/M David Glossop (France Nord) opened the debate by acknowledging the cost factor, but announced that a package would be arranged including ferry crossings, accommodation, a



● One of Dundee's most famous sons, Desperate Dan, looks on as delegates prepare for the 2008 conference in the city's Caird Hall

and if it was defeated the Gift Aid option would be explored, the President called for a vote, and the motion was duly dismissed.

Motions 4 and 5, both proposed by Isle of Sheppey and seconded by Maidstone, concerned the appointment of HQ staff.

The first urged the National Council to advertise to fill vacant positions as widely as possible – S/M Mick Withington (Isle of Sheppey) insisting on "absolute and complete transparency in the selection of staff".

President S/M McAnally said: "Underlying this motion is an undercurrent of feeling about perceptions about what may or may not have happened in the past," and asked Deputy President S/M Adrian Nance to address those feelings.

Although the National Council

supported the motion in principle, and S/M Nance said he did not seek to sway members, he told delegates that in some complex personnel matters the result of such a motion could prove expensive to the RNA.

In any case, he said, where such opportunities arise, the National Council has done exactly what the motion has asked.

Motion 4 was defeated, as was Motion 5, which proposed that decisions on HQ senior staff appointments be taken by elected members of the National Council only.

S/M Chris Dovey, giving the National Council view, said the voting element of the Council was made up of 13 elected members and up to eight ex-officio, and in practice elected members always outnumber ex-officio.

He concluded: "The ex-officio members of the National Council are there because of the qualities they have to offer, for the good service they have given to the RNA in the past, and continue to give, or because of particular merits they have in fulfilling the office they hold."

"The National Council therefore feels this motion is unfair to those members at best, and an insult to them at worst."

Motion 6, proposed by Huddersfield, seconded by Mexborough, urged the RNA "to represent to the appropriate authorities that suitable inscriptions be added to existing war memorials in recognition of subsequent conflicts involving UK Armed Forces."

S/M Graham Horner said memorial day parades often appeared to remember only those who had fallen in the two world wars, not those victims of the 46 conflicts since 1945, and in part that was down to a lack of inscriptions on memorials.

He said he didn't want individual names recorded – of which there are more than 16,000 – but the names of conflicts.

Delegates of several branches expressed their support for the motion, but had reservations – as S/M John Dale (Crowley) pointed out, not all war memorials are owned by local authorities, and many are private – "be prepared for a long, hard battle," he said.

S/M John Gamlin (Chelmsford) was also in a quandary; he could not expect RNA HQ to contact all memorial owners, and felt that the legwork and lobbying should be done by individual branches.

S/M Chris Dovey, for the National Council, said that the RNA supported the motive behind the motion, but believed it to be impractical.

He also pointed out that the National Armed Forces Memorial at the National Arboretum in Alrewas was designed for that purpose.

The motion fell, but president S/M McAnally said the vote did not prevent the RNA from raising the matter for debate through COBSEO, the Confederation of British Service and Ex-Service Organisations.

Motion 7, from West Lothian, seconded by City of Inverness, proposed that the national standard bearers competition be held during the appropriate National Conference weekend, as delegate S/M John Sweeney said it would be the most fitting occasion, providing spectators and plenty of interest.

S/Ms John Stewart (Saltash) and Mick Kieran (Coventry) both objected on the grounds of the extra time needed to stage it, and the clash of duties between acting as delegate and competing as standard bearer.

But other branches, including Crieff and Stonehaven, supported the motion, and with an amendment suggested by National Council – adding the words "where practicable" to the original – the motion was carried.

## Value of unity is extolled

UNITY was the watchword in addresses by one of the VIP guests and the Association president.

Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland (FOSNNI) Rear Admiral Philip Jones, told delegates that the "growing sense of unity between the RN and RNA will be manifested in the way your activity and your engagement with the regular and reserve Navy, along and also our youth and cadets activity, will be channelled through the work of the Naval Regional Commanders around the country and their staffs."

Rear Admiral Jones also spoke of the RNA's need for the re-invigoration of new blood from the RN, while the Navy seeks the experience and heritage of Association members, another link drawing the two groups closer.

President S/M John McAnally pointed out that an organisation as large and scattered as the RNA must rely on volunteer trustees – National Council members.

"You, the membership, choose these individuals to represent your interests," he said.

"They are not delegates who are expected slavishly to follow the instructions of their areas – they are representatives who are tasked by their areas with using their judgement, intelligence and experience for the good of the RNA community in general."

S/M McAnally also reminded delegates and observers that the Association could not sit still.

"They are trustees and not curators," he continued.

"A curator is someone who looks after something valuable with a view to keeping it as it is."

"A trustee, on the other hand, has a moral responsibility for maintaining what is good, and improving or developing that which is capable of a more active or extended life."

"Curators should not take risks; trustees are compelled to take some risks if they are to justify their existence."

S/M McAnally also noted that trustees, as individuals or groups, can be misunderstood, and often take flak for it – "almost a core responsibility of any trustee is to take the blame, and quite often there is quite a lot of it."

There was also a plea for members to bear in mind that the "robust, developed and arcane" Naval sense of humour and still alive in the Association is often beyond the ken of the general public, who by looking at certain websites could misconstrue the processes and values of the organisation.

The other VIP guest, Lord Provost of Dundee John Letford, pointed out that one of his official titles is Admiral of the Tay – though he is no longer able to claim a share of all cargo on the river.

## Rose Bowl is shared

AREA 3 triumphed yet again in the competition for the Sword of Honour by recording the greatest increase in full-time members in the past year.

And it was a similar situation with the Brigg's Dirk for the branch of more than 30 members gaining most full-time members in June to June, with Gosport also repeating last year's triumph.

The best recruiting small branch, under 30 members, was split between Bracknell and Stafford, who will share the Brigg's Rose Bowl.

The Tasker Bowl was resurrected this year, and the winning area – for best Gift Aid recruitment – was Area 4.

The two overseas awards went to Mediterranean destinations.

The Overseas Certificate for large branches was won by Torreveja, in Spain, while the small-branch version was awarded to Eastern Cyprus.

as "an ideal time to get a toehold in Europe."

The National Council view, put by S/M Paul Harries, was that the Maldon motion was a spoiler, and that there had been plenty of time for them to put in a bid for London, adding that clubs willing to volunteer for the task should not be told to "sling their hooks."

S/M Glossop promised France Nord would fulfil delegates' best wish for "a conference that is going to be the mother of all conferences."

S/M Ascott asked: "If this motion is carried, then whose turn will it be next? Spain? Canada?" but delegates were delighted by that prospect, and voted 90-14 in favour of France Nord.



Picture: Sgt Graham Spark

# Nation celebrates Forces veterans

THOUSANDS of people lined the Golden Mile at Blackpool to see the Duchess of Cornwall launch National Veterans Day.

The famous old resort put on a spectacular programme of events over a week, but the main focus was on the day dedicated to veterans of all ages.

Former paratrooper Tony Barlow, now a civilian firefighter, set the tone by abseiling down Blackpool Tower to be presented with his veterans badge.

Another unusual badge ceremony took place at the Blackpool Sea Life Centre, where ex-Royal Navy diver Lyndon Evans recovered his badge from the bottom of the shark tank.

Watched by Veterans Minister Derek Twigg, Lyndon – now a Blackpool hotelier – used the skills he learnt with the Navy to train Sea Life Centre divers when the facility opened a few years ago.

After collecting his badge, closely watched by the odd



white-tipped reef shark, it was presented to him by the minister, along with his certificate.

The Duchess of Cornwall later took a tram to the North Pier, where many of the activities for veterans were based.

Among the old warriors she met was 112-year-old Henry Allingham, the former World War 1 Naval aviator and RAF veteran.

Veterans minister Derek Twigg praised both the event – the third annual celebration – and the response from the people of Blackpool.

Although Blackpool was the centre of attention nationally, hundreds of other events, large and small, were staged around the country as the British public paid tribute to the Armed Forces of yesterday and today.

On the eve of Veterans Day itself, 15 veterans were presented with their badges by Prime Minister Gordon Brown, at a reception at Number 10 Downing Street.

Those attending represented a cross-section of forces, including all three Services, merchant seamen who supported military operations and war widows, and of deployments from the past 70 years, from Normandy to Sierra Leone and from the Falklands to Northern Ireland, Kosovo and Iraq.

Sea Cadets took a leading role in events at Bristol, where the youngsters marched into the arena at the start, along with their khaki and light-blue colleagues, and then performed Ceremonial Sunset at the close.

Also prominent were the local branches of the Royal Naval Association, the Royal Marines Association and the Bristol reserve unit, HMS Flying Fox.

The Fleet also had a major part to play in events around the country.

At Plymouth, Type 22 frigates HM ships Cumberland and Cornwall carried out a 13-gun salute and steam-past of the Hoe in full ceremonial order.

The Historic Dockyard at Chatham was host to a Veterans Day event, which also celebrated the centenary of the Territorial Army.

Organiser Bill Fowler said he was particularly pleased by the age range of those attending –

not just grizzled old veterans with their grandchildren, but young families who, he hoped, will have gone home a little wiser about veterans' issues.

Apart from Veterans Day programmes, there have been other high-profile acts of remembrance in recent weeks, two of them at iconic memorials.

A service was held at the Armed Forces Memorial in Staffordshire to commemorate the 102 UK Servicemen and women killed on duty during 2007.

Nine of them were members of the Royal Navy.

Their names have recently been added to the structure, at the National Memorial Arboretum, and each was read out to the congregation by representatives of their respective Services.

The memorial already bears the names of around 16,000 people who died while on duty since 1948.

Among those attending was the Prince of Wales, who laid a wreath.

The Armed Forces were represented by Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson, the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel).

There was a slightly sparser attendance, but an appropriately rugged setting, for the annual Royal Marines Association parade in Scotland.

Veteran bootnecks from across the country joined together at the Spean Bridge Commando Memorial, near Fort William.

Under a glowering sky, the veterans were joined by 16 members of the Fleet Protection Group RM from Faslane, including Officer in Charge Col Richard Spencer and FPGRM padre Rev David Devenney, who conducted a short service.

Old and young then joined to march past the 17ft bronze sculpture of three commandos in battledress.

● Clockwise from top left: a Dakota on a fly-past of the Armed Forces Memorial in Staffordshire; ex-Royal Navy diver Lyndon Evans collects his veterans badge from the shark tank at Blackpool Sea Life Centre; veterans parade their standards at Blackpool; Royal Marines gather at the Spean Bridge Commando Memorial

Picture: LA(Phot) Del Trotter

Picture: Stuart Bingham



## Showcase for VCs

THE largest single collection of Victoria Crosses in the world will be on permanent display to the public in two years' time.

A £5m gallery is being built at the Imperial War Museum in London to showcase the Ashcroft Victoria Cross Collection.

The Tory peer and businessman owns one in every nine of Britain's highest honour for valour – and now he intends to give these honours a public airing.

To do so he has donated £5m to the IWM to build the new gallery, which will open in the autumn of 2010.

Lord Ashcroft's passion for the VC began back in 1986 when he bought LS James Magennis' medal at auction for £29,000; the submariner earned the cross for crippling the Japanese cruiser Takao in an X-craft.

Since then he has added 151 more Victoria Crosses to his collection, feeding a fascination for the bravest of brave going back six decades.

"My passion for the VC stems from the fact that it can be won by someone regardless of class, colour, religion, creed or rank, provided they exhibit truly exceptional courage in the face of the enemy," said the peer.

Other notable VCs in his collection include the second one issued – to Lt (later Rear Admiral) John Bythesea for intercepting Russian dispatches during the Crimean War – and paratrooper Sgt Ian McKay who was posthumously awarded the decoration in the Falklands war.

The IWM already holds 50 Victoria Crosses and 29 George Crosses.

All will be housed in the new gallery, which will explain how the medals were created and recount the personal stories of the Servicemen honoured.

# Simon says... hello to HMS Endurance

SHE'S used to icebreaking. Now she's groundbreaking.

Mercifully, it's got nothing to do with dodgy navigation. But what happens to HMS Endurance this summer in South Africa could set the trend for future deployments south of the Equator.

The Red Plum completed her spell in Antarctic waters as usual as the austral winter set in.

But instead of hopping along the coast of South America and heading home for Portsmouth, the survey ship turned east, making for South Africa.

It's part of an experiment to keep the ship away from home for upwards of 18 months, spending our summer (the austral winter) in Africa undergoing maintenance and conducting patrols and survey work unique in the Red Plum's career.

Maintenance comes first and the obvious choice was Simon's Town as probably the principal naval base in southern Africa. The setting's not bad too, overlooked by Table Mountain.

If Simon's Town is a strange setting in which to find the Red Plum, then working on an icebreaker isn't an everyday job for Simon's Town's engineers.

A team from South Africa flew to Pompey before the deployment to talk to the RN about its particular requirements... and a team from Endurance did likewise, heading in the opposite direction to chat with Armscor – the Simon's Town counterpart to FSL or Babcock in the UK – earlier this year.

"There was a feeling of déjà vu for all of us in Simon's Town yard – the stone dockyard buildings and general layout are very similar



● Nuisance callers... Endurance shipmates pose with the statue to the legendary sailors' friend, Just Nuisance

Picture: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams, HMS Endurance

to Portsmouth," said Endurance engineer Lt John Ball.

The yard itself was handed over to the South Africans half a century ago, and the RN heritage in Simon's Town has not been forgotten: the crests of HM Ships line the walls of the base's dry dock.

This is new ground for the ship and the RN, but if the plan works out then it could mean future RN deployments to South America/

South Africa being extended thanks to a spell undergoing an overhaul in Simon's Town. It should also cut down the hefty fuel bill run up by ships sailing from Portsmouth/Plymouth to the Falklands and beyond.

As for Endurance, it means not only can she venture up the west African coast, but she can also return to the ice earlier in the season than ever before.

And just as the Antarctic and South Atlantic takes its toll of the ship, so an 18-month deployment can take its toll on men and women – and their families.

All Endurance's sailors are being rotated allowing them to get back to the UK to see loved ones as well as to brush up on any professional courses they need to

carry out their duties.

"A deployment like this has to be taken as a marathon rather than a sprint," explains Commanding Officer Capt Bob Tarrant.

"By rotating my ship's company we are able to sustain the deployment and our operational standards. It's a real case of 'sweating the asset' while preserving the people."

'Preserving the people' is slightly easier when you're berthed in the shadow of Table Mountain, just 25 miles from Cape Town and a stone's throw from South Africa's national parks and winemaking region.

You can follow Endurance's progress this summer via her educational website, [www.visitandlearn.co.uk](http://www.visitandlearn.co.uk)

## 45 force halved

FIRST there were 12. Then eight. Now six.

The Type 45 programme will stop at HMS Duncan, the sixth and now last of the new air defence destroyers, Whitehall has revealed.

Armed Forces Minister Bob Ainsworth told fellow MPs that the unnamed ships seven and eight would not be ordered after all.

Mr Ainsworth did, however, tell Parliament that at the same time as cutting the Type 45 programme, the MOD was bringing forward plans to replace Type 22 and 23 frigates.

Both will be succeeded by a vessel known as the 'future surface combatant', although no in-service dates were given by the minister.

The Type 45 programme is costing the taxpayer in excess of £6bn, more than half of that devoured by the cost of the actual ships, the rest by the PAAMS missile system which the vessels are built around.

The destroyers will replace the aged and more numerous Type 42 fleet (the oldest, HMS Exeter, has been afloat for 30 years).

Mr Ainsworth also told MPs that two of the 42s, Exeter and Southampton, had been sailing without Sea Dart missiles – the ships' principal weapon system – for several months.

Exeter's live Sea Darts were moved into storage in July 2007, the minister said, while Southampton's were taken out at the beginning of this year. Both ships will pay off in 2009.

## By George, it's Rosalie

SUPPORT and supply ship RFA Fort George will receive an £18m overhaul over the next six months – a stone's throw away from another mainstay of the Fleet.

The ship has arrived at Northwestern Shiprepairers and Shipbuilders Limited in Birkenhead – the firm occupies the former Cammell Laird yard – for a 'makeover' inside and out.

The 36,000-ton ship provides a mixture of fuel, food, ammunition and general supplies to RN vessels.

Externally, her hull will be repainted; internally, machinery will receive a thorough overhaul and new communications systems will be installed.

Fort George will return to service in the new year, by which time RFA Fort Rosalie, older but performing roughly the same duties, will also be back at sea.

She too is being revamped in Birkenhead in a £28m deal which will see her accommodation areas, weapon systems, machinery and comms kit enhanced.

Between them the two RFA ships require the attention of around 600 shipwrights, engineers and electricians during their stay on Wirral.

## Clampdown on booze

MOD police officers on the Forth have joined their civilian counterparts in a crackdown on loutish behaviour.

Residents in Rosyth were becoming increasingly concerned by the booze culture of youngsters which was fuelling violence and vandalism to civilian and MOD property.

Police based at HMS Caledonia in Rosyth joined Fife Constabulary officers on a high-profile weekend patrol.

The officers can confiscate alcohol and take the details of those found drinking in public. After that the youngsters stopped are allowed to go on their way – unless they are drunk or have previously offended, in which case they are taken home or to a police station.

The first such patrol saw 37 litres of alcohol (nearly 80 pints) being drunk by youths in public poured down the nearest drain.

One adult was reported for drinking in public and one teenager was reported for breach of the peace.

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## THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

### August 1968

Polaris missile submarine HMS Resolution slipped away from Faslane to begin the Navy's deterrence patrol – the first of more than 300 now conducted by the Silent Service. Defence secretary Denis Healey said the inaugural patrol opened "a new chapter in the Navy's history" as the RN assumed "the awesome responsibility for providing the British contribution to the collective nuclear deterrent of the West."

### August 1978

Fittingly a decade after the first deterrence patrol, it was HMS Resolution which chalked up the milestone of patrol no. 100 by the 'bomber' force – Renown, Repulse and Revenge completed the quartet of strategic missile submarines. And as with that first deployment back in 1968, patrol no. 100 began – and ended – with the same lack of ceremony.

### August 1988

A massive air-sea rescue operation was mounted by the RN and NATO in response to the Piper Alpha oil rig disaster in the North Sea. Fishery protection ship HMS Blackwater was among the first vessels on the scene and began to co-ordinate the relief operation. When Sea King Rescue 177 of 819 NAS at HMS Gannet arrived at the rig, said Lt Paul Shepherd, "was ablaze from top to bottom". 167 people died in the tragedy, including ex-CPO Eric Deverell.

● An artist's cutaway impression of HMS Resolution, Britain's first nuclear deterrent submarine

# NOTICEBOARD

## Where are you now?

**HMS Achilles:** Looking for anyone who served in Achilles 1976-78. Also Rook (Commcentre) 1974-75. Contact Gerry McGuinness at [gerry.mcguinness@hoodsweeney.com.au](mailto:gerry.mcguinness@hoodsweeney.com.au) or write to Hood Sweeney Technology Pty Ltd, 11-16 South Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia, 5000.

**HMS Albion:** A book commemorating Albion's R2 period covering September '06 to December '07 was commissioned by Capt T M Lowe RN. If you served in Albion during this time contact PMO, HMS Albion, BFPO 204 or email: [204-pmo@a.dii.mod.uk](mailto:204-pmo@a.dii.mod.uk) or tel: 01752 654590 for your copy of the book.

**HMS Gannet/819 Squadron:** A limited edition case of single malt whisky has been commissioned by Gannet SAR Flight and bottles are available for ex-serving members of HMS Gannet/RNAS Prestwick. For further details and order forms please contact Lt Olivia Milles at [livmilles@googlemail.com](mailto:livmilles@googlemail.com) or tel: 01292 674353. Order early to avoid disappointment!

**Joan Hall (née Cromie):** Gladys Rita Gale (née Blackwell) grew up with her cousin Joan Cromie who was born March 17, 1923 in London. After her mother died, Joan lived with relatives in Norfolk and the girls lost touch. Gladys would love to be re-united with her cousin or any other member of the family. Joan married Frederick Donald Gordon Hall, who was in the Navy, in March 1944, and

in 1949 he was serving in Portsmouth as a Seaman or Signaller. If you are able to help with any information please contact John Roker (Gladys' brother-in-law) at [unclejr@btinternet.com](mailto:unclejr@btinternet.com) or tel: 01285 810386 or write to Hunters Moon, Kempford, Gloucestershire, GL7 4EQ.

**HMS Intrepid (L11):** Calling old ship mates who served on the Amphibious Landing Dock HMS Intrepid between 1967-99. A website has been launched bringing crew members from all ages of the ship's long history together. Details of upcoming events, campaigns and reunions can be found on the website at <http://www.hmsintrepid.com> or contact: George Heron, 19 Elm Terrace, Tantobie, Co Durham DH9 9QZ, or email: [george@georgeheron.net](mailto:george@georgeheron.net)

**S3 Pom Pom: George Blake** who was 82 in January 2008 would like to hear from anyone who remembers him. His action station was S3 Pom Pom. Contact George Blake, 216-56 Windward Street, St Catherine's, Ontario, L2M 7W6, Canada.

**RNH Stonehouse:** LMA Stephen Omahoney is trying to locate LMA Bill Welch who served together from 1972-87 last place RNH Stonehouse. Please contact Steve at [barbstep@omahoney8971.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:barbstep@omahoney8971.fsnet.co.uk) or tel: 01684 772792 or write to 5 Oak Lane, Bredon, Tewkesbury, Glos, GL20 7LR.

## Reunions

**SEPTEMBER 2008**

**Sea Harrier Reunion and Memorial Dinner, RNAS Yeovilton:** A Sea Harrier reunion and memorial dinner will take place in the Warrant Officers & Senior Rates Mess at RNAS Yeovilton on September 13. Tickets £45 per head for four-course dinner inclusive of wine and port. Further details available from Lewie Lewis or Tom Dawson on 01935 455421 or 01935 702117 respectively.

**Ex US Coast Guard Cutters 1941-46:** The Cutters Association will be holding its annual reunion on September 17 at the Bull Hotel, Westgate, Peterborough at 1230 for 1300. Further details from Mrs Ethna Cooke at Tall Oaks, Birchwood Park Avenue, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7AT, telephone 01322 660369

**HMS Jamaica Association:** Annual reunion from September 26 to 29 at Blackpool, Lancs. Details from the Hon Sec at [boxcar@btinternet.com](mailto:boxcar@btinternet.com) or tel: 01843 582283.

**Survey Ship Association:** Due to unforeseen circumstances the date and venue of our reunion has now changed to October 31 to November 3 but is still in Scarborough. All details from the Secretary, SSA, 8 Grosvenor Court, 74 East Lodge Park, Farington, Portsmouth, PO6 1BY, or email: [secretary@surveyships.org.uk](mailto:secretary@surveyships.org.uk) or tel: 023 9279 1258.

**DEVON COUNTY FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE:** Takes place on November 6 at 1830 in the Great Hall, Exeter University. Tickets for RBL members at £6, non-members £8. Further details from RBL Devon County Office 01392 272211.

**Submarine Renown Association:** Reunion will take place in Leicester from November 21 to 23. Further details from Tony Boyvall at [subrenown@btworld.com](mailto:subrenown@btworld.com) or tel: 0116 291 2195 or 0116 233 6370.

**FEBRUARY 2009**

**HMS Penelope: Reunion & AGM 2009.** To be held in Blackpool. For details of reunion in February and membership, contact the secretary Mike Bee at [mike.bee@ntlworld.com](mailto:mike.bee@ntlworld.com) or write to 1 Oddfellows Street, Mirfield, WF14 9AB.

**SEPTEMBER 2009**

**HMS Churchill:** Reunion takes place on September 26 2009 at the Park Inn Hotel, York, <http://www.york.parkinn.co.uk/> Full details can be found on HMS Churchill's website at <http://hmschurchill.co.uk> Booking forms, menus and seating plans will be on the site when they become available. Contact Andy Broadbelt at [andybroadbelt@hotmail.com](mailto:andybroadbelt@hotmail.com) or David Kent on 0117 918 8381.

**OCTOBER 2008**

**Safely Equipment & Survival Association:** Reunion will be held at Bosworth Hall, Market Bosworth, Warwickshire from October 17 to 19. Please contact Gordon 'Pikie' Parkes at [gordon.parkes@btworld.com](mailto:gordon.parkes@btworld.com) or see <http://www.fasurvivalassociation.co.uk> or tel: 01483 823181.

**HMS Collingwood Association:** Reunion and social weekend at the Balmoral Hotel, Bournemouth, October 17-20. All members and partners welcome. Programme includes coach trip to Weymouth with buffet lunch, gala dinner, live entertainment, remembrance service. For reunion details or membership applications visit our website at [www.hmscollingwoodassociation.co.uk](http://www.hmscollingwoodassociation.co.uk) or contact our secretary, Brian Cox at 8 Colesbourne Road, Benhall, Cheltenham, GL51 6DL.

**HMS Hampshire:** As in the past the reunions of D06 HMS Hampshire have been successful, I have organised a reunion for October 11, it will be held in Birmingham at the Nautical Club in the Savage Bar, from 19:00hrs to 23:00hrs plus, as it is central for most. Any old Hampshire from all commissions are welcome. No disco this year; food will be served if required (platters

of sarnies). For all those interested please contact Ray Crawford as soon as possible to enable confirmation of numbers to the club. Contact Ray at [ray2612@hotmail.com](mailto:ray2612@hotmail.com) or write to 8 The Orchard, Townfield Lane, Barrnton, Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 4LT or tel: 07971 563503 or 0160676648.

**HMS Protector Association:** On September 28 at 1100 hrs, at the Afton Hotel, Eastbourne, HMS Protector Association will be dedicating their new Standard, the service will be conducted by Rev Peter Millam Officiating Chaplain RN 1966-70 (Falkland Islands), this will be in conjunction with their reunion weekend (September 26 to 29) held at the hotel, other Royal Naval standards will be in attendance. Details from Doug Harris at [Dougatspindrift@aol.com](mailto:Dougatspindrift@aol.com) or tel: 01495 718870 or visit <http://www.hmsprotector.org>

**RNR Postal & Courier Branch:** Reunion at the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth, October 24-26. If you would like to attend or require further information about the association contact Nobby Clark at [rex.w.clark@btinternet.com](mailto:rex.w.clark@btinternet.com) or tel: 07713 155575 or write to 12 Bentinck Way, West Lynn, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3LZ.

**LESLIE NORBURN:** Leading Signalman, Served seven years in Ramillies, Vanguard and Theseus; Normandy (D-Day) and minesweepers; ex-Commando in South of France, June 14, Aged 87.

**Lt Robert Peter Williams** known as 'Peter', 'Guns' and 'Bungy', Gunny Officer, Served 1950-76; commissioned SD Officer 1965. Served in Indefatigable, Ulster, Perseus, Cardigan Bay, Daring, Hermes, Tenby, Berwick, Eskimo, Eastbourne and Hecate, also Excellent and K D Malaya. June 20, Aged 76.

**John 'Jan' L Hoare,** Ch. Mech N(EL), Served 1958-82. Submarines including Sealion, Warspite, Resolution, Repulse.

## Ask Jack

**HMS Ark Royal:** The British Military Powerboat Trust are restoring a 25ft Fast Motor Boat (FMB43957) which served with Ark Royal from her commissioning in 1955, well into her career to about 1967. They would like to contact any ship's personnel who can recall this boat or any photos of her or the Ark during this time. Coxswains would be of benefit as we would like to know exactly how she was fitted out. The Motor Boat was originally from the cruiser HMS Diadem and they hope to hold a commissioning day later this year and would welcome any ex-Diadem or Ark Royal personnel who would like to attend. Contact Richard Hellyer on 023 8089 0900 or visit the website at <http://www.bmpt.org.uk>

**HMS Birmingham:** 'Happy' Day wonders whether he is the youngest rating to start WW2 in a war zone (Sino-Japanese War) and finishing the war off the coast of Japan in 1945. He joined Birmingham in February 1939 aged 16. On September 3 that year he was at sea taking Seaforth Highlanders from Shanghai to Hong Kong. Paid off Birmingham 1943, joined Dauntless 1943-44 then Formidable 1944-47. Contact C A Day, 19 Worbarrow Gardens, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset, BH12 3NZ.

**Training hostilities only personnel 1940-41:** My father, the late AB Leonard James Tobin, was posted to HMS Collingwood January 1940, then Pembroke

February 1940 followed by Wildfire August 1940. He made Able Seaman on January 1941. In writing up his story, I would like to know what particular type of training was undertaken by him at each of the above bases. Can anyone out there give me any ideas? Contact James Tobin at [jamesstobin@fsmail.net](mailto:jamesstobin@fsmail.net) or tel: 01295 261045.

**Battle of the River Plate:** Seeking survivors of the Battle of the River Plate. Alex collects autographs and has a book about the battle which he would like to get Veterans to sign. If you can help contact Alex Ford at [kurtcobain2997@hotmail.com](mailto:kurtcobain2997@hotmail.com) or write to 59 Tegwell, Pen-y-Bryn Road, Upper Colwyn Bay, LL29 6AG, Wales.

**Seaman Manuals:** Mr Steele would like to get hold of a couple of 1940 Manuals of Seamanship. If you can help please contact Mr J T Steele, 44 Birchwood Road, Wollaton, Nottingham, NG8 2ET.

**St Vincent:** In 1962 I joined HMS St Vincent in Gosport and remember dhoi-ing our kit using the good old yellow pusser's hard soap. In January 2009 I am in the pantomime *Alladin* playing the part of Widow Twankey and I would like to use pusser's hard as a prop. Does anyone know where I can obtain a bar of that infamous soap? Contact Jonathan Gibson at [gibson25@btinternet.com](mailto:gibson25@btinternet.com) or write to 45 Four Oaks Common Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, B74 4NW.

## Assignments

Lt Cdr G J Finn to 771 NAS as CO on June 27.

Maj J F Roylance to 847 NAS as CO on August 1.

Lt J E G Baker to HMS Smiter as CO on July 7.

**Navy News on tape**

Navy News is available free of charge on tape from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number. No special equipment is needed to play the standard 90-minute cassettes.

## Deaths

WO2 Nigel Cooper. HMS Sultan, May 23.

Lt Lags Brett Richardson. HMS Lancaster, June 7.

Maj John Anthony Kelly RM. CTCRM Band, June 30. Aged 46.

Capt Dominic John Delves Crisp RM. CTCRM, July 2. Aged 27.

Renown, Astute, Courageous and Churchill; also instructor at Sultan, June 14. Aged 66.

Les 'Snowy' Snowden. LS(M). Served 1974-98 later in HMS Edinburgh and Cornwall, June 14. Aged 51.

Walter 'Tim' Riley. Leading Seaman Gunner. Served 1943-55. Training at Bristol and Ganges then Widgeon, Cumberland, Achilles, Barbecue, Gabbard and Glory; also Pembroke and Malabar (Bermuda). Member of Birmingham Nautical Club. June 13. Aged 83.

R G 'Doc' Turner DSM. Served 1939-45 in Somali, Burwell, Grecian and Ashanti; Pedestal/Arctic convoys and Omaha Beach on D-Day; also part of the first Belsen relief team. June 25. Aged 91.

William 'Bill' Jones. CPO. AH. Served 1948-85 in Implacable, Triumph, Warrior, Victorious, Eagle, Intrepid and RFA Engadine; also Royal Arthur, Daedalus, Gamecock, Blackcap, Siskin, Peregrine, Fulmar, Seahawk, Ariel, Goldcrest, Osprey and RAF Shawbury, Leuchars and NAIC Pinner. Aircraft Handlers Association. June 1. Aged 78.

Delmar 'Tweet' Burden. LAAH2. Served 1963-72 in Eagle, Ark Royal and at Ganges, Lossiemouth, Seahawk, Portland and Yeovilton. Aircraft Handlers Association. June 22. Aged 60.

Eric John 'John' Rex. Telegraphist. Served 1943-46 at Royal Arthur, Shrapnel, Scotia, Lanka, Sultan and Terror; Indian Ocean, Kanji radio station Singapore (Japanese surrender). Joined Bristol RN & RM OCA shortly after the end of WW2 and vice-president of the association. June 25. Aged 82.

Lt Cdr Bryan James Samuels. Served 1939-63 at Ganges and in Barham where he was blown off during the first explosion and was rescued by Hotspur (one of 304 survivors); Chatham, Haying Island, HMS Cambridge and HMS Plymouth, July 2. Aged 84.

Terry Bentham. AB. Served in Whirlwind, Mermaid, Vernon, Hornet, MTBs 5009 and 1601, MMS 1807, Sullington, Brigham, Beachampton and Victory, HMS Bruce Association. June 15. Aged 75.

John Stapley RM. Joined 1952 completing Commando course at Lymington he served in Germany, Aden, Cyprus, Egypt, Norway, Malta and Kenya, mainly in 42 Commando; Suez crisis and Northern Ireland and one-time member of SBS. April 18. Aged 72.

John Campbell. Leading Seaman. Caledonia-Majestic Boys Training 1937 and served in Belfast, Nelson, AMC Canton, Shoreham, Vengeance, Liverpool and Comus. Took discharge from RN 1953 and joined RNZN taking passage to New Zealand in HMNZS Black Prince which had been in UK to take part in the Coronation review at Spithead and remained with her passing out as Petty Officer; he changed branches to Coxswain and was Chief Coxswain RNZN to the Queen and Prince Philip on their visit to New Zealand. Retired from RNZN 1965. Caledonia-Majestic Old Boys Association and HMS Comus Association, May 22. Aged 86.

Dennis H Sutton. Leading Signalman. Served 1940-47 in North Atlantic and Russian convoys in numerous ships including Elgin and Premier. RNR 1947-54. Past member of Nuneston RNA. May 15. Aged 87.

John Fairclough. EM1. Served at Collingwood and in Bermuda. RN Engineering Room Association. July 2. Aged 77.

Stanley Pawley. Leading Stoker. Served in Enchantress, Fierce, Diadem and Holm Sound. RN Engineering Room Association. July 4. Aged 83.

Peter Burbidge. EM1. HMS Duke of York Association, on board ship 1948-49. April 14. Aged 79.

Ben James. Seaman. HMS Duke of York Association, on board ship 1941-44. July 2. Aged 92.

Richard Pennell. Leading Signalman. Served in Forth, TVR20, Diamond, Steepholm, Mull of Galloway, and CinC Med Staff. Social secretary of the HMS Bruce Association for the last ten years and active member. July 6. Aged 76.

Submarine service 1939-45. Aged 83.

Albert 'Sharkey' Ward. Joined as a Gunner Artificer in 1940 and after training at Whale Island was drafted to King George V to serve on her major turrets for the first commission. Combined Operations Special Group on Landing Craft LCG3 at D-Day landings then to Far East and demobbed in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Welfare Officer and sick visitor for Wrexham branch and one time chairman of the KGV Association; also member of several ex-Service associations. June 6.

Alfredo Emilio Ruiz. Radar operator. Served from 1942 in Coastal Forces on ML147 at D-Day landings. Nuneaton branch, May 30. Aged 84.

Ivor Webb. Served in Enterprise during WW2. Gloucester branch. June 23. Aged 83.

Lewis Passow. RAF Beaufighter during WW2 in Africa and Burma. Associate member Aquitaine branch. June 3 in Dordogne. Aged 86.

W K 'Bill' Sentence. Sick Bay Attendant. Served 1939-46 in Renown at the surrender of Japan. Long-serving member of Stoke on Trent branch, past chairman and life member. June 22. Aged 87.

John Smith. AB. Bolton branch. Served in Raleigh, Drake, Osprey, Bootle, Goodson and Roberts. July 7.

Henry Davies. Seaman branch. Ipswich branch, also served two terms as Ipswich Mayor. Served 1945-53 in various ships and shore bases, including: Tamar, Hong Kong, and submarines including Opossum. Korean War veteran. May 21. Aged 80.

Phoenicia, Sheba, President and Albion.

**FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION**

S/Lt Ronald Brammall RNRV. Observer. Served 1941-46. Bristol & District branch, April 19.

Derek Deans. CEL(A). Served 1949-72 at Royal Arthur, Ariel, Daedalus, Nuthatch and Seahawk, Falcon, Centaur, Victorious, Ark Royal, Goldcrest and Heron. Daedalus branch and founder member of the Ford (Peregrine) branch. May 29.

Sam Peake. POAF(O). Wartime service with 810 and 847 NAS at De Havilland in Christchurch, Illustrious and Unicorn; also Ocean. Ford (Peregrine) branch. June 6.

**SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION**

C T 'Trevor' Castle. CPO Coxn. Served 1949-69 in Amphion, Tabard, Talent, Seneschal, Tactician, Otter and Olympus. Gosport branch. Aged 79.

G D 'George' Cuddon. L/Tel. Served 1943-51 in Terrapin, Thermopylae, Truncheon, Teredo, U1064, Thule and Through. Dolphin branch. Aged 84.

Capt J A G 'John' Evans. Served in Totem, Turpin, Spirit, Amphion, Tally-Ho, Subtle, Sentinel and Roqual. Scotland NE branch.

R 'Richard' Hipkiss. LRO. Served 1955-58 in 19331102, Tapir, Sanguine and Seneschal. Vectis branch. Aged 74.

J 'Mick' Jones. AB HSD. Served 1941-46 in Una, Unbroken, Sunfish and Tribune. Merseyside branch. Aged 85.

Capt R M 'Max' Kohler. Served 1960-75 in 19350510, Sea Scout, Auriga, Otus and Repulse. Dolphin branch. Aged 73.

J 'John' Malone. AB ASDIC. Served 1942-46 in Trusty, Trump, Statesman and Vigorous. Bury branch. Aged 83.

S 'Sid' Smith. Sto.Mech. Served 1947-50 in Turpin and Seneschal. Hull branch. Aged 79.

R G 'Ray' Stegglies. Tel. Served 1941-49 in H32, P36, P39, Ultimatum, Unison, Uphost, Vulpine, Surf, Unbending, Tudor, Seraph, Artful, Affray, Token and Sentinel. Welsh branch. Aged 85.

M J 'Mike' Walshe. CPO Stoker. Served 1938-44 in L23, Rover, Rainbow, Trooper, Seraph and Clyde. Portsmouth branch. Aged 94.

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Surg Capt M N Naylor RNR

Rear Admiral J W T Walters. Served: London, Condor, St Angelo, Cheviot,

**ALGERINES ASSOCIATION**

Henry Fletcher. Sto/PO. Served in Pincher. June 20. Aged 95.

Lt Cdr Hugh Campbell-Gibson. Served in Orestes. June 22. Aged 83.

Gordon Mayling. LSA(V). Served in Lennox. June 27. Aged 74.

Stan Pawley. Sto/Mec. Served in Fierce. July 4. Aged 83.

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## Kettering is getting better

THE ship's company of TS Pytchley are celebrating official confirmation that they belong to the most improved unit of 2007.

The Kettering unit has been awarded the Indefatigable Cup on the say of MSSC headquarters, along with a cheque.

Col William O'Leary, chairman of the Indefatigable Old Boys Association – which presents the cup annually – handed over the trophy and spent the evening, along with other 'Old Boys', getting a taste of life at TS Pytchley.

They were particularly impressed by an Indefatigable history lesson put on by the juniors.

S/Lt (SCC) Sean Smith RNR, the unit CO, received the cup on behalf of his unit, and said: "We are all proud of the work we have put in and this award is received with a great sense of pride."

The Mayor of Kettering, Cllr Jenny Henson, and Corps Area Officer (E) Cdr Clive Smith also attended the evening, during which Cdr Smith presented the unit band with medals they had won at the area band competition.

Kettering's musicians won the novice class in its first contest for many years, and Drum Major L/Cpl James Dexter was deemed the best on display, winning the title on his competition debut.

## Instructors save man

TWO Sea Cadet instructors saved the life of a man who had fallen into the River Tyne.

Lt (SCC) Paul Patterson RNR, Commanding Officer of Hebburn unit, saw the 38-year-old man fall into the river.

He alerted the safety boat, manned by PPO (SCC) Anthony Navi, and leapt aboard the speeding craft as it approached to collect him.

The two instructors managed to find the man, who was floating downstream, and pull him into their vessel where they provided first aid.

Paramedics were waiting on shore to take the man to hospital as a precaution.

He suffered no injuries, but was kept in to be monitored for shock and hypothermia.



● Director of the Whitehaven Festival Company Iain Irving hands over the Laser Pico sailing boat to Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR, watched by a group of happy Sea Cadets

# Thanks, Whitehaven – have a new dinghy

WHITEHAVEN unit received high praise – and a surprise gift – at a ceremony held in front of a 1,000-strong crowd on the harbourside.

Director and chief executive of the Whitehaven Festival Company Gerard Richardson paid tribute to the town's cadets in a speech.

"There is in this town a youth organisation who are always there when you need them, and they

are with us here this evening," he said.

"We have been working with the sea cadets ever since the first Maritime Festival nearly ten years ago, and they have provided us with everything from Guards of Honour to escorts for VIP guests, often at short notice and in weather ranging from bright sunshine to torrential rain."

Mr Richardson also noted the cadets' involvement in events as

diverse as veterans' evenings, the mayor's parade, village and school fetes and Remembrance Sunday.

"In between all of this, the cadets have been slowly raising money toward a new sailing boat," continued Mr Richardson.

"Well, they can spend that money on something else.

"It is with great pleasure that the directors of the Whitehaven Festival Company present our town's sea cadets with a new Laser Pico in appreciation of all they have done for us, and the town of Whitehaven."

TS Bee's CO, Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR, said the gift was really appreciated and had come as a complete surprise.

## Mersey mission

MARINE cadets from TS Astute (Wallasey) Detachment took a leaf out of their namesake's book by travelling underwater.

But unlike the new attack submarine Astute, the cadets did not have to get wet.

The youngsters signed up for a sponsored walk through one of the Mersey Tunnels.

The 2¼-mile walk was completed in 32 minutes, with cadets carrying 25kg in their rucksacks. Each had to cover their own entry fee and raise at least £25, half going to a children's charity and half to the unit.

The walkers, accompanied by Sgt (SCC) Paul Newey from their unit and Capt (SCC) Alan Smith RMR, 6 Troop Commander, received a certificate and medal.

"We had absolutely no idea at all that we were going to be presented with anything, least of all a new boat," he said.

"It is always nice when someone says 'thank you', but to receive a gift of this nature is really rather overwhelming.

"We have a few events coming up in the next two or three weeks, but after that we will be able to make the most of the boat by getting our cadets out on the water for a bit of serious fun."

Unit chairman Chas Tinkler thanked the donors, and said: "This gift will benefit not only the cadets we have now, but also those who have yet to join Whitehaven Sea Cadets."

## Royalist caught in port blockade

It was not all plain sailing for cadets aboard the TS Royalist on a trip across the Channel.

While visiting the French port of Cherbourg the ship became blocked in by striking French fishermen.

However, amicable negotiations with the local fishermen were successful and Royalist was allowed to leave port at the end of the day – with two big bags of mussels to help compensate for her delayed voyage.

If you are over 18, fancy an adventure – and the possibility of making a feast out of mussels for up to 45 hungry people – opportunities exist throughout the

## Focus on the task in hand

IF you have an eye for a photo that puts the Corps in the frame, you could be in line for a prize.

Whether taken in a warship, aboard TS Royalist, during an overseas exchange, at training, or just down at the unit – whenever you see a great shot, capture it.

If it proves better than the rest, you could be crowned Sea Cadet Photographer of the Year.

In association with the Naval Photograph Club, the Corps are awarding two prizes open to cadets of all ages:

● The Tod Trophy, named after Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Tod, the last Chairman of the Sea Cadet Association, awarded to the best photograph of any cadet activity;

● The Antony Preston Memorial Trophy, named after the naval author and historian, awarded for the best photograph of a ship.

In 2007 a new trophy for adults was introduced:

● The President's Trophy, awarded for the best photograph of any Sea Cadet Corps-related activity taken by an adult volunteer.

Closing date for entries is Wednesday September 3, and more information is available in the 2008 flyer at <http://seacadets.ms-sc.org/Competitions-for-Cadets/Photographic-Challenge>

## Climbers paddle out

TEN CCF cadets from schools across the country learned how to paddle a 42ft Montreal Canadian 'Voyageur' canoe at Exmouth, reports Nigel Huxtable.

The cadets had finished a climbing course with the Royal Marines, and after a week on the RM climbing wall and local crags the cadets appreciated the chance to meet the crew and get a feel for the unusual vessel.

They went out on the River Exe, and despite soggy spraydecks and only having an hour on the water, the word 'awesome' summed up their morning.

The crew of Spirit Dancer are normally composed of British volunteers who help paddle the canoe during one of its legs round the coast of Britain.

The journey started in London on May 1 and will be completed over the next two summers.

Any cadets wishing to meet the canoe and perhaps help it on its journey next year should contact the expedition's website at [www.spiritdancercanoejourneys.ca](http://www.spiritdancercanoejourneys.ca)



● Everything seems to be going well for this competitor at the Eastern Area sailing regatta

## Fair stood the wind for Thrapston

AROUND 60 units from the East of England competed for honours at the area sailing regatta, held at the Area Boat Station at Thrapston in Northamptonshire.

One of the units involved was Northampton and Wellingborough, which entered a number of classes including the Topper, Laser, Bosun and windsurfing classes of sailing dinghies.

"Competition was fierce on the day, and the standard of sailing was very high," said Lt (SCC) Chris Read RNR, the Commanding Officer of TS Laforey and Diamond.

"I am very proud of what

the cadets achieved, which is testimony to the high standards that the cadets from Northampton and Wellingborough achieve on the water.

"The weather was great and the cadets had a great time in perfect sailing conditions."

AC Harry Boyde managed second place in the Toppers, and LC Josh Falconer matched that in the Lasers.

Wellingborough cadets dominated in the windsurfing, with ACs Mathew and Luke Rixon winning.

All go on to the national finals in Northern Ireland next month.

The winning units were:

- Bosun: Nottingham
- Pico: Worksoop
- Topper: Mansfield
- Laser: Hinckley
- Windsurfing: Northampton and Wellingborough

## The Eastern bands strike up

BANDS from all over the Eastern Area converged on the East of England showground for their annual competition.

The competition coincided with the annual East of England Show outside Peterborough.

The weather behaved itself as the bands fought it out to

become the best in the area – although some competitors were still recovering after the rigours of the sailing regatta held the previous day (see left).

The main band results were:

- Contest Class: York
- Novice Class: Kettering
- Best Solo Bugler: Cadet

Richard Bates, **Burton-on-Trent**

● Best Drum Major: L/Cpl Jimmy Dexter, **Kettering**

● Best Solo Drummer: LC Bowyer, **Stevenage**

● Best Dressed Band: **York**

● Philip Thompson Trophy: **York**

# Knocked out but happy...



TEN members of Telford unit TS Wrekin took part in an *It's A Knockout* competition held by Telford and Wrekin Outdoor Recreation Section with a grant from the Youth Opportunity Fund.

A dozen teams entered, the cadets forming two of them.

The competition included football clubs, martial arts and even a team from the Salvation Army youth section.

And although the cadets did not win overall they did take the trophy for the most conscientious team.

The weather was wet for most of the day but everyone seemed to enjoy being covered in foam, soaked by wet sponges, knocked off pedestals at the Human Demolition and generally making fools of themselves.

CI Kevin Hoyles organised the teams, and staff are pretty sure he is already looking forward to next year's competition.



● AC Maria Hoyles and New Entry Laura Clarke emerge after a battering in the skittle race (above) while AC Sarah Fenney flies over an obstacle with head in hand (right). AC Maria Hoyles helps Junior Cadet Charlotte Fenney – the chicken – over an obstacle in the Chicken Run race (far right)

## March honours Boy Cornwell VC

NEWHAM Cornwell cadets organised a march from the grave of John Travers Cornwell VC in Manor Park to their unit at Vicarage Lane in East Ham.

Cornwell, born in 1900 and educated at Manor Park, joined the Royal Navy in 1915 and became a Boy First Class in HMS Chester.

Chester, which had only completed battle training two days earlier, suffered a severe pounding from four enemy light cruisers at Jutland on May 31 1916.

Her open-backed gun shields, which were raised off the deck, meant members of the gun crews were vulnerable – many lost legs to shell splinters.

Cornwell, a sight-setter on the forward 5.5in turret gun, was mortally wounded but remained at his gun, awaiting further orders, while the rest of his gun crew lay dead around him.

When Chester broke away from the battle Cornwell was transferred to hospital in Grimsby, where he died on June 2.

He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in September – the youngest Navy man to receive the award.

The Cornwell cadets resurrected the traditional march of five miles to honour the Boy after whom their unit is named, and their training ship is named Chester in memory of the ship on which he was wounded.

Some 100 cadets made the march, along with CO Dave Standing and District Officer Lt Cdr Sicklemore, both RNR.

The Newham cadets, led by LC Charlotte Miller, were joined by the North East London District Band, and were escorted on the march by the Metropolitan Police.

Taking the salute from the cadets were Lt Cdr Alan Phillips, Lt Cdr Barry Sicklemore, CPO Dave Standing, and Steve Miller and Bryan Collier, chairman and president respectively of Newham unit.

# Cowes quartet on D-Day duty

A TEAM of Isle of Wight cadets travelled across the Channel to Normandy to take part in the annual D-Day commemorations.

The four Cowes cadets – OC Emily Jennings, OC Adam Shores, Marine Cdt Luke Colebrook and OC Nicola Hampton – were accompanied by Lt Eric Goode, Assistant District Officer for the island, and Lt Vicky Goode, CO of the Cowes unit.

They stayed at St Mère Église,

one of the first towns to be liberated by the Allies on June 6 1944, then went on to Bayeux, where they took part in the parade at the British war cemetery and laid a wreath on behalf of Isle of Wight Normandy veterans.

A visit to the Bayeux Tapestry followed, and during their stay they took part in ceremonies at St Mère Église, witnessing a parachute jump by more than 200 participants.

In the evening they attended a banquet with locals, veterans and

a large contingent of American paratroopers.

They also met Maj Gen David Morris, Commanding General, US Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command, who led the parachute drop, and invited the cadets to visit Fort Bragg in America.

The quartet were in great demand for photo calls, and were filmed by Belgian television crews.

The final day took them to Utah Beach, where they visited a museum and the beach itself.

The trip was deemed a great success, so much so that the cadets have been invited to return to take part in the 65th anniversary commemorations next year.

Among those who helped support the visit were the Marine Society Sea Cadets headquarters, the High Sheriff, Cowes Royal British Legion, Col Samuelson, Bembridge Sailing Club, Spithead Masonic Lodge, Central District Sea Cadets and the staff of TS Osborne.

## No let up when Keith took over

CHILTERN unit's new Commanding Officer CPO (SCC) Keith Jones has not taken it easy since he took over from Lt (SCC) Fred Delderfield RNR after the latter completed nine years.

The unit has since won competitions at district level, and gone on to represent the district at area level.

Chiltern has also won a pennant for 2008, a reflection of the standard of staff and cadets.

Meanwhile the unit's standard bearer, OC Emily Jones, paraded the standard with those of the Royal British Legion and Royal Naval Association at both the Chesham and Amersham veterans services.

## ATC group call in at Seahawk

A GROUP of air cadets got involved in the flying programme at HMS Seahawk when they paid a visit to RN air station Culdrose.

824 NAS hosted 24 cadets and staff from 1900 Air Training Corps South West, based at Hayle in Cornwall, strengthening what has already become a well-established local affiliation.

As well as learning about life in the RN, they were briefed on the Merlin force and were allowed to walk round the aircraft.

They were also taken aloft in group familiarisation sorties.



● Cdrs Andy Giles (left) and Charlie Neve at the NATO Maritime HQ in Northwood

## Brief re-encounter

MORE than 30 years after serving together in a Sea Scout group, two RN officers are back in harness – briefly.

Cdrs Andy Giles and Charlie Neve were in the 1st Oulton Broad group, and recalled boating evenings on Lake Lothing and camping weekends at Herringfleet.

Both initially joined as junior ratings at HMS Ganges, and went on to officer training at Dartmouth in 1987, but their careers followed very different paths since.

Andy served in all three Invincible-class carriers, as well as

frigate HMS Lancaster.

Charlie, on the other hand, qualified as a submariner, and having passed the fearsome Perisher course was second-in-command of Trident boat HMS Vigilant, besides serving in Australia, Naples and Gibraltar.

Andy now heads up the Human Resources and Personnel Division at Northwood, while Charlie is UK and NATO Submarine Escape and Rescue Commander – though Andy was due to take up a new post in Portsmouth as *Navy News* went to press.

## Coasting across the UK

A COAST-to-coast ride by cadets and younger staff members at Hebburn and Sunderland unit helped them take another step towards their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award.

Organised by Sgt (SCC) John Wooller and PPO (SCC) Stephen Dupear, the C2C Cycle

Challenge also raised funds for the unit.

The ride took three days, starting at Whitehaven and finishing at Sunderland Marina.

Cadets camped out both nights and catered for themselves, and so popular did it prove that two further C2C rides are planned this year.

# SEA CADETS



● Lt Gavin Redhead

## 'Dedicated' CO's efforts recognised with award

'DEDICATION, hard work knowledge and expertise' earned an outstanding service award for a Blackburn Sea Cadet officer.

Unit CO Lt Gavin Redhead has been given the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for outstanding service.

Gavin (43) commands TS Mohawk, which is about to move to a new building thanks to his drive and enthusiasm.

At a ceremony held in Blackburn, Gavin received his certificate from the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, Colonel the Rt Hon the Lord Shuttleworth.

Gavin's citation, read by Colonel Gerry Wells-Cole, Chief Executive of the North West Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, said that "he has tirelessly pursued the goal of building a new bespoke headquarters for the Sea Cadets over the last three years.

"He has made sure that the Blackburn Sea Cadets will have a new building and a secure future.

"And notwithstanding this additional responsibility, he has made sure that the sea cadets support civic events within the town and youth events throughout the region."

In civilian life, Gavin works as an education department development officer in Blackburn.



● Cadets from the Edmonton unit 'shared' the boat of their sponsors the Worshipful Company of Actuaries at the Royalist Regatta

# Annual sail brings financial benefits

THE annual Royalist Regatta raised thousands of pounds for the Marine Society & Sea Cadets once again this year – and two of the ten crews included sea cadets.

The Worshipful Company of Actuaries shared a boat with cadets from their sponsored unit of Edmonton, and the Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation and John & Celia Bonham Christie Charitable Trust generously enabled a crew of cadets and MSSC staff to enter.

The event took place in perfect sailing conditions in the Solent.

As well as those lucky enough to be crewing, cadets were involved in the participants' black tie dinner on board HMS Warrior 1860.

Portsmouth cadets welcomed VIP guests, including the Earl of Wessex and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns.

Meanwhile the Poole unit band played on deck, and cadets

from Warsash and Chichester performed a club-swinging display and danced the sailors' hornpipe.

At the prizegiving, Gosport cadets were on hand to chat to guests while serving the tea.

The racing this year was particularly competitive, with five crews still in contention at the beginning of the final race.

In the end the Shipwrights' Trophy was retained by Heath

Lambert, a competitor in every one of this event's 12 years.

The Earl of Wessex sailed with PMI Health, newcomers Pitney Bowes were awarded the Bonham's Telescope for the crew most in need thereof, the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers was appropriately deemed the Best Dressed and the Royal Navy was voted the Dishiest Crew.

## Rebels show form at regatta

FOUR cadets from TS Rebel, the Essex-based offshore training group, entered a Sunfast 37 yacht into the prestigious Royalist Regatta, the corporate fundraising event organised by the Marine Society and Sea Cadets and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme (see left).

POC Haydn Clark (Margate unit), LCs Michael Hawkins and Freddie Short (Southend) and AC James Everett (Walton), assisted by Cdr Colin Watkins, Andy Milne, Patrick Balfour and Sam Shrivess, powered their way to seventh position against capable corporate crews.

Much of the first day was spent familiarising themselves with the yacht, while in the evening the youngsters attended a mess dinner aboard HMS Warrior 1860.

Excellent sailing conditions in the Solent allowed the cadets to demonstrate their sailing skills with numerous spinnaker hoists and close-quarter sailing.

Smooth water in the Stokes Bay area, with 25 knots of wind, ensured exciting and challenging sailing conditions.

Months of training on Smokey 2, the Rebel race boat, paid off as the cadets fought their way up the field in a series of four races against sailing giants, including a Royal Navy team.

Possibly the highlight was the third race, during which the cadet boat hounded Prince Edward's boat, with the prince himself at the helm, all the way to the line, where the youngsters just managed to edge in front.

Awarded the Inter Services Cup by the Duke of Wessex, the cadets were particularly keen to thank sponsors Sir Donald Gosling, John Ferris and John Rimmington from the Bernard Sunley Foundation – and promised they would bag first place next year.



● Eastbourne cadets at their open-air 'dormitory' used during the Giant Sleepover in the town's Redoubt Fortress

## Dream location

EASTBOURNE Sea and Marine Cadets slept out under stars at the town's Redoubt Fortress as part of the Giant Sleepover, a national record-breaking attempt for the biggest simultaneous sleepover across multiple venues.

Officer in Charge Lt (SCC) Stephanie Juniper RNR said: "We were keen to find an unusual place to sleep at and the Redoubt was perfect.

"The atmosphere at the fortress made it a really memorable experience for cadets, especially for some of the younger ones who had not been away from home before."

Sponsorship for the cadets, aged between ten and 16, will go towards a new roof for the unit at Fisherman's Green.

Museum curator Fran Stovold said she was pleased to offer the fortress as a venue as it hinted at the Redoubt's past use.

"During the 19th Century, when the barrack rooms were full, additional soldiers would camp in the parade ground just like the cadets did this weekend," she said.

During their stay the 45 cadets were given a tour of the museum, staged a barbecue, and played games, all before lights out at 11pm.

The overnight showers which had been forecast never materialised, and the cadets were up bright and early at 6.30am for breakfast and a PT session before heading back to the unit.

Cllr Margaret Bannister, of Eastbourne Borough Council, said, "This was a wonderful opportunity for the Redoubt to be used as a camp once again."



## Western gunslingers

● Cardiff unit parade their trophy at HMS Collingwood

CARDIFF unit won the Sea Cadet Corps Invitation Trophy at HMS Collingwood for the third year in succession.

TS Cardiff triumphed in the Portsmouth Area Volunteer Cadet Corps field gun competition, and finished third overall in the entire competition, with a team record time of 1m 15s.

The competition requires crews of 19 cadets, boys and girls aged between ten and 18, to race against each other, manhandling and manoeuvring a 7lb field gun and limber, weighing a third of a tonne, over a distance of 170 yards, carrying out drills such as lifting the equipment, changing wheels from gun to limber and vice-versa.

The field gun run is widely acknowledged as being one of the

toughest team sports around.

Welsh cadets were also prominent at the South Wales Boat Show, held at Margam Country Park in West Glamorgan.

Large crowds gathered to watch Swansea unit stage their gun run.

Port Talbot cadets chipped in with their pyramid rifle displays, while members of Neath unit manned the recruitment stand, where photographs of sea cadet unit activities were on display.

District Officer for West Wales Lt Cdr (SCC) W Alan Thomas, who was accompanied by his deputy Lt Cdr (SCC) Mike Hulonce, said: "It was an action-packed weekend for West Wales Sea Cadets – our second year for drawing the crowds and being an exhibitor at the show."



● AC Thomas Sillman and OC James Moyle of Swansea unit at the South Wales Boat Show  
Picture: Jane John

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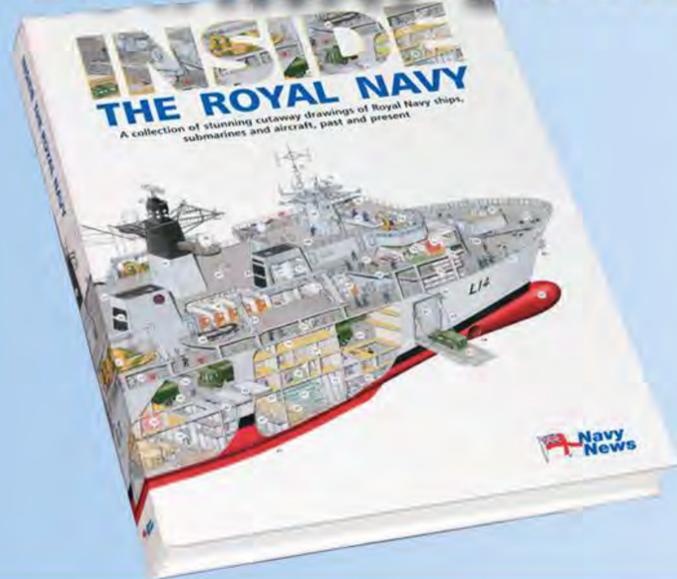
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## Project SLAM hits 10,000

THE MOD's drive to improve living conditions for single Servicemen and women has passed a significant landmark.

Project SLAM last month celebrated the 10,000th bedspace to be built since 2002.

And Vice Admiral Tim Laurence, the Chief Executive of Defence Estates, was there to officially open the special room.

SLAM - Single Living Accommodation Modernisation - is a £1.1 billion scheme designed to deliver new and refurbished single-living accommodation and facilities management.

The 10,000th bedspace was one of 230 en-suite rooms recently built at CTCRM at Lymington.

Cpl Scott Anger said: "It is great having a bit of privacy and being able to relax in the comfort of your own room after a hard day."

"We now have our own bathrooms as well as communal washing machines and dryers; this has had a major impact on our standard of living."

"But we are still basically living together as a team, with a shared kitchen area and living room, so there's no danger of becoming a hermit."

SLAM has delivered new accommodation blocks at 33 sites around the UK, and alongside other projects has produced 26,000 new or upgraded bedspaces since 2003.

## Croydon too!

FOLLOWING our story in February about Congleton offering free leisure facilities to Service personnel, Croydon Council has been in touch to say they already offer free entry to serving military personnel.

## It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr Gregor Birse (Fleet Media Ops), 93832 8809.

# Navy Command succeeds Fleet

FLEET Headquarters is no more.

Following the formation of the single Top Level Budget holder by amalgamating the Commander-in-Chief Fleet and Second Sea Lord's teams, it has been decided that the term 'Fleet HQ' does not adequately describe Leach Building, and could be misleading.

So from the beginning of July, following direction from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, Fleet HQ is to be re-titled the Navy Command Headquarters.

The revised title will reflect a headquarters

that encompasses all elements of Navy Command regardless of geographical location.

Existing Command and Control arrangements within Navy Command are not affected by this change.

Noting that the principal driver behind the name change is to reflect more clearly the single TLB structure, the Navy Command descriptor is to be used alongside the Royal Navy logo on all letterheads and branded material.

Discrete areas within the single Navy Command should be represented in the

address panel; example headers are shown at the Annex. Reference A, (Branding Guidance) will be re-issued to reflect the changes.

Existing printed stationery supplies should be used up and replaced in the normal course.

Electronic letter heads and Powerpoint templates will have been adjusted from July 1, but email and signal addresses will remain unchanged for the time being; any change to email structure will be notified separately should it be deemed necessary and cost effective.



## Silver salver links past and present Nottinghams

THIS month's trophy links generations - of ships and of people.

Trophy P23331 is a 12in diameter nickel silver salver engraved with the crest of the city of Nottingham, depictions of two warships bearing the name, and the badge of the Royal Marines.

One of the ships is a sailing vessel, the other the 2nd-class cruiser which fought at the battles of Heligoland Bight (August 28 1914), Dogger Bank (January 24 1915) and Jutland (May 31 1916) during World War 1.

Following Jutland, on August 19 1916, Nottingham was amongst the screening ships of the Grand Fleet searching for the German High Seas Fleet in the North Sea when she was torpedoed and sunk by U52 off north-east England, in the vicinity of Lindisfarne.

The trophy was originally presented to Mne E A Whyman of the RM Light Infantry by HMS Nottingham's Royal Marines detachment on July 6 when he married Miss A Attwell.

It was subsequently re-presented to the current destroyer HMS Nottingham by Mr and Mrs A R Marriott in September 1985, they being the daughter and son-in-law of Mne Whyman, the original recipient.

# Forces guaranteed fairness - or better

THE Armed Forces have been given a guarantee of fair treatment across the board - and special treatment where merited.

A new cross-Government strategy was due to be published, in the form of the Service Personnel Command Paper (SPCP), as *Navy News* went to press.

And the Paper's remit stretches far beyond the boundaries of the Ministry of Defence, taking in such crucial aspects of life as health, housing and employment.

Building on the achievements over the past ten years or so, the SPCP seeks to recognise the unique demands faced by members of the Armed Forces, and ensure that any sacrifices made do not disadvantage a sailor, soldier or aviator or their families.

"Our essential starting point is one of no disadvantage: those who serve in the Armed Forces should not be unintentionally disadvantaged because of their service," said Cdr Glyn Jones, the RN representative on the SPCP team.

"We make that fairly bold claim on the basis of two points that set us apart from anyone else."

"First is the absolute need to follow orders, including posting orders - there is often no choice as to where we go and when."

"Second, we accept without question the risk of injury or death."

"That underpins the starting point that we took, and everything flows from there."

Gary Lewitt, a senior civil servant on the team, said: "This is the nation's commitment - the principle of fairness for all and unashamedly special treatment where deserved in proper return for sacrifice."

The overarching strategy, initiated by Prime Minister Gordon Brown, meant a monumental effort to draw in disparate Whitehall departments and devolved administrations around the UK.

"The reason it had to be cross-Government is because so many different Government departments and other bodies affect the lives of Service personnel, their families and veterans," said Cdr Jones.

"The MOD on its own cannot make sure they get the right and appropriate treatment."

"This is probably the first strategy for the Service community that has been so wide-ranging since the end of World War 2."

The SPCP will deliver improvements in areas such as health, housing, education, training, benefits, employment and transport.

In housing, for example, the Paper will provide new opportunities as well as guaranteeing fair treatment under existing procedures.

Thus newly-retired personnel with a prescribed length of service will qualify under the Key Worker Living Programme for a fixed

period after leaving the Services.

Education measures would allow leavers to take up A-levels or a degree, free from tuition fees, depending on the stage at which their formal education ended before they joined up.

And in transport, the paper will introduce free bus travel in England for serving personnel or veterans under 60 who have been seriously injured in service.

"That is a good example of where there needs to be a proper return for sacrifice," said Mr Lewitt.

"It is a case of unashamedly special treatment for those who have made a particular sacrifice for us all."

"It is not for every serving person, because that would be much more than fair."

There will be costs involved, but each department or organisation has agreed to foot their own bills, including the MOD when it falls within its own sphere of influence.

"A lot of this is not just about throwing more money at it," said

Cdr Jones.

"It's about making sure the procedures, codes of practice and legislation of other Departments take into account the specific needs of the Service community."

That may, for example, mean special consideration for families who need to find a school place, or priority for a state boarding school, or measures to ensure Special Education Needs Support continues when people are posted.

Although the MOD team was relatively small, they worked with hundreds of contacts in other departments, and with Service-connected organisations, to thrash out the shape of the SPCP.

And the measures in the Paper will go on to form the foundations for an enduring programme of support for the Armed Forces.

Not only will the fair treatment principles be enshrined in future Government thinking, but the main Departments now have senior civil servants who will act as champions for the Service community in their own field.

## Falkland flicks go digital

THE Falkland Islands have become the world's first 'digital only' territory with the introduction of a digital projector at the islands' only cinema.

The Phoenix is managed by SSVCO Forces Cinemas, and now boasts a new Barco 1500 2K projector and Dolby server, allowing Hollywood output to be played in high quality without the risk of sound or image degradation over time.

The new kit is easier to use - useful when there

is a regular change of staff - and can be used to support briefings.

And as digital films are distributed on hard drives, transport is easier and cheaper, and films can be in the South Atlantic within a week or two of UK release dates, compared to the current four to six-week wait.

The equipment can also be upgraded to deliver 3D films.

# Team supports divisions and regiments

HERE they are - the people who make sure that your voice is heard when the top brass mull over matters affecting RN personnel.

The members of the Divisional and Regimental Support Team (DRST) support the Divisional and

assisting in the provision of a two-way information flow on personnel issues to all those serving in the RN and RM, their families and civilian/other Service line managers of RN/RM personnel, and to be a clear tribal focus for all ratings serving in their particular fields of expertise.

They all contribute positively to maximum operational capability by:

- Delivering coherent Internal Communications (IC) messages on personnel policy initiatives;
- Evaluating and measuring the impact of personnel policies/initiatives through feedback from visits to units and establishments;
- Developing inputs to personnel policy formulation.

The Fleet Executive Officer (FXO) supports the Divisional and Regimental systems by conducting personnel liaison visits to units and establishments and by providing management and executive support to Commanding Officers and Executive Officers.

Fleet XO Lt Cdr Dave Knight is also the joint Editor of the NLM Personnel Support Brief (PSB).



● Lt Cdr Knight



● Lt Cdr May-Clingo



● WO Goldie



● WO Rogers



● WO Ronayne



● WO Emmess

He is the lead HQ staff officer for drugs misuse policy and line manager for CWO Surface Ships and Submarines and the CDT.

He has served as a Warfare Officer in a wide range of surface platforms, most recently as the Executive Officer of HMS Portland.

Lt Cdr Knight joined in May this year.

A new face in the team is Lt Cdr Martin May-Clingo, who recently joined as the Fleet Executive Officer (Air) after completing a tour of duty with the UN in Georgia.

With a primary focus on maintaining a 360° communication loop, he visits Fleet units globally undertaking briefings and chairing discussion groups on the latest

personnel policy issues, taking feedback to the Navy Command HQ to inform and influence personnel policy.

He sees the key objective as maintaining, if not enhancing, terms and conditions of service as a major factor in developing the moral component of operational capability and aiding retention.

Additionally, Martin is a key point of contact regarding personnel policy for the Fleet Air Arm and provides executive support to COs and XO.

WO1 Dave Goldie was selected for the post of CWO(SS) and formally assumed the role on May 8 2008. WO Goldie brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the DRST having served for over

32 years.

He joined the Royal Navy as a radar operator in 1975 and served on a number of ships including: Ark Royal, Invincible, Cumberland and Chatham.

During his 12 years as a WO1 he has had a wide and varied selection of postings with his last appointment being the EWO of HMS Illustrious.

He is also the principal source of advice on Surface Flotilla rating personnel issues for Rear Admiral Fleet Surface Ships, other senior officers and Commands.

The CWO (Submarines) is WO1 (Coxn) Dean Rogers, the principal source of advice on submarine rating personnel issues for Rear Admiral Submarines

(RASM), other senior officers and Coxswains as required.

Possessing an extensive knowledge gained as a FAA engineer, training officer and leadership course officer, WO1 Wayne Ronayne brings a wealth of FAA experience to the DRST.

As Command WO (FAA), WO Ronayne is the principal source of advice on FAA rating personnel issues for Rear Admiral

Commands.

WO1 Emmess joined the Royal Marines in 1980 aged 16.

He qualified as an Assault Engineer in 1984 and has spent the majority of his career serving in all three Commando units, at RM Eastney and CTCRM.

He was selected as Command WO RM in 2007 after serving as EWO on board HMS Albion.

Contact numbers - all prefixed by 93832 (Mil) or 02392 62 (BT):

- Lt Cdr Knight - 8699
- Lt Cdr May-Clingo - 8700
- WO1(AWT) Goldie - 8709
- WO1(COXN) Rogers - 8708
- WO1(AEM) Ronayne - 8706
- WO1 Emmess RM - 8707





## Mixed report for DII project

THE MOD project to replace hundreds of different information technology systems with one single, secure computer infrastructure is reaping benefits – but has also suffered “significant” delays, according to a report by the National Audit Office (NAO).

The report notes that “the Department did considerable work to understand the required scope of the Defence Information Infrastructure (DII) programme and to understand and mitigate inherent and anticipated risks.”

However, the programme did not take into account sufficiently the physical environment into which DII would be introduced, and over-optimistic evaluations were made.

On the plus side, the report recognises that DII has delivered a number of important benefits, and that the MOD has largely protected its financial position.

Tim Burr, head of the NAO, said: “It was always going to be a demanding task for the MOD to replace its diverse information technology with a single, high-quality system.”

“The MOD started with a clear vision of what it wanted to achieve and acted to address unknown risks.”

“But the programme has run into difficulties and further concerted action will be needed to increase the rate of roll-out of terminals and to deliver the remaining software.”

DII will eventually incorporate 15,000 terminals at over 2,000 sites, including ships, at a cost of over £6 billion.

Project managers had hoped to have 62,800 terminals in place by July 2007, but by June 2008 just under 35,000 had been delivered.

## Memorial short-listed

THE Armed Forces Memorial, which forms part of the National Memorial Arboretum, near Lichfield in Staffordshire, has been short-listed for a prestigious award by the National Lottery.

The memorial, which received £2.4 million of Lottery money, commemorates the 16,000 Servicemen and women who have been killed on duty or as a result of terrorism since the end of World War 2.

The award recognises the UK’s favourite Lottery-funded projects, in order to celebrate the difference these projects have made to people’s lives.

# Military ward for new-build hospital

A NEW hospital being built in Birmingham will have a dedicated military ward.

The new ward will start taking patients when the hospital, at Edgbaston, opens in 2010.

The ward will be a designated trauma and orthopaedics ward where up to 30 military patients will be cared for in single rooms or four-bedded bays.

As the £545 million hospital will also house the largest single-floor critical care unit in the world, with 100 beds, Forces patients will benefit from proximity to Europe’s leading trauma care provider.

The new ward will be a successor to the current military-managed ward at Selly Oak Hospital.

Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup said: “Service personnel who are injured on operations deserve the very best medical care we can provide.”

“I am confident that the treatment delivered at Selly Oak is already world-class and we will continue to improve on that in this new ward.”

“Importantly, the further development of a military atmosphere within the NHS hospital will ensure that our people are cared for in an environment that is conducive to their recovery and wellbeing.”

“All of this amongst the most modern facilities of their kind in Europe, and all under the continuing care of the joint NHS and military staff of the Birmingham Hospitals.”

As was the case with the old military hospitals, civilian patients will also be admitted to the ward when capacity allows, although the design of the new facility means that, with the exception of major civilian emergencies, military patients can be cared for in single rooms or small wards rooms that are not shared with civvies.

The intention is to provide more nursing staff – a combined team of military and civilian nurses – than would normally be found on an NHS ward, both to support the military ethos and in recognition of the fact that military casualties may have complex needs and may remain in for longer periods.

The current military-managed ward at Selly Oak has been developed over the past couple of years by the MOD and the Birmingham Hospital Trust, and military nursing numbers increased from 12 to 39.



● Marine Peter Dunning, injured in Afghanistan, undergoes physiotherapy at Selly Oak Hospital

Picture: Stuart Bingham, 5 Div

## Partnership programme benefits by degrees

AN ARRANGEMENT between the Royal Navy and the University of Portsmouth offers a new way of gaining a university qualification that benefits employers and employees alike.

The Partnership Programme allows students to design their own study programmes to meet their individual educational and training needs, and involves learning through work-based projects.

This can encompass best-practice improvements, new design work, training for responsibilities, professional research and the like, bringing strategic, commercial and financial gains to the workplace.

This form of study not only enhances career prospects, but also allows students to earn while they learn.

There is also the chance for students to build on existing knowledge, with credits awarded for prior learning.

The university has recently awarded accreditation for all Royal Navy personnel based upon their leadership and management qualifications and experience, with points being awarded depending on the applicant’s track record.

The length of the course will depend on existing educational qualifications and professional experience.

To receive an introductory guide and an application form, contact the Learning at Work Office at the University of Portsmouth (UoP), telephone 023 9284 6261/6260, email [learningatwork@port.ac.uk](mailto:learningatwork@port.ac.uk)

The office is located in Room 0.05 on the ground floor of Anglesea Building, and is part of the Faculty of Technology at the University of Portsmouth.

The office provides the information point for students and deals with all general course administration.

Students enrol in September or February, and applications may be made at any time, though a clear five or six weeks is needed before enrolment to ensure sufficient time to plan studies.

The cost of the Award will depend on the course of study chosen but the Award is to be self-funded by individuals.

# Pontin’s offers free holiday breaks Flagging up a new charity fundraiser

PONTIN’S holiday resorts are giving away 2,500 free breaks to Service personnel and their families worth around £470,000 via [www.forcesdiscounts-mod.co.uk](http://www.forcesdiscounts-mod.co.uk)

The ‘Back in Britain’ campaign, launched last month, has the approval of the MOD.

The four-day family packages being offered to the troops include accommodation plus nearly 60 free activities, including sport, outdoor pursuits, live music and shows every evening, competitions, quizzes and karaoke.

“We want to express our support to the men and women of our magnificent Armed Forces for their bravery and dedication at this most difficult time of demanding operational commitments,” said Graham Parr, Executive Chairman of Pontin’s.

“We acknowledge that many of our Armed Forces have been operating in zones of conflict over



● Pontin’s Bluecoats get into the holiday mood

many months and we hope that our ‘Back in Britain’ campaign will provide a welcome break and much deserved R&R to Service

personnel and their families.”

Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson, Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff for Personnel, said: “This offer of

free holidays is very generous and I am sure that Service personnel will be very appreciative.”

Peter Raith, from [Forcesdiscounts-mod.co.uk](http://Forcesdiscounts-mod.co.uk) (Crest Publications) said: “We would like to thank Pontin’s for going that extra mile and proving such a fantastic offer through [www.forcesdiscounts-mod.co.uk](http://www.forcesdiscounts-mod.co.uk).”

“Crest are constantly striving on behalf of the MOD to attract new discounts and benefits from companies wanting to reward the Forces for the work that they do”.

Pontin’s has seven centres with a capacity of over 18,500 beds. The four-day holiday packages are being offered free to serving Regular and Reserve Royal Navy personnel, as well as Army and Royal Air Force men and women, and their families.

Applicants will be chosen at random from those who log-on and register their interest.

A RETIRED airman has come up with a way of raising money for charity while flying the flag.

Former Sqn Ldr Peter Ellis is offering people to Drive the Flag to raise funds for Help for Heroes.

He is offering adhesive vinyl labels bearing a Union Jack and GB logo, which some are using to demonstrate their patriotism by covering the EU stars and GB logo on their car number plates.

The stickers, according to Sqn Ldr Ellis, are “legal, durable and stylish,” and will raise money for the Service rehabilitation unit at Headley Court through the burgeoning Help for Heroes charity.

“As an ex-patient of Headley Court, I feel they need our help in the current difficult

times,” he said.

“I have had over 30 years experience in running a mail order company, and can assure people of an efficient, ethical service.”

To obtain the stickers, which measure 10cm by 4cm, send a stamped addressed envelope, stating how many pairs of stickers you require, to Peter Ellis (HH), 2 High Bannerdown, Bath BA1 7JY.

“A donation towards costs and Help for Heroes would be most welcome,” he added.





● AB(AWFP)1 James Spark, of Plymouth reserve unit HMS Vivid keeps watch near the brow of HMS Portland last summer

Picture: LA(Phot) Owen King

# Reserves to the fore

AS PART of the Operation Telic 1 force profile in 2003, more than 100 ratings from the Royal Naval Reserve were mobilised and 'surge-trained' to provide force protection teams for ships of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and chartered shipping deployed to the North Arabian Gulf.

As the operation moved into phase two, these numbers were reduced to 50, and through to April 2004 five teams provided mobile protection teams for RFAs and occasionally Royal Navy warships in refit in Singapore and in areas of the world where the threat against a possible USS Cole-style attack was considered high.

USS Cole was damaged by two suicide bombers using a small boat to attack the destroyer while she refuelled in Aden in October 2000. The blast killed 17 sailors and injured another 47.

When security experts assessed that the threat to British military and chartered shipping in the region had reduced, the teams were demobilised and ten volunteers moved to the RN Board and Search teams being deployed to Iraq as part of the security training teams for Iraqi forces.

Two reservists were in the team that was captured and detained by the Iranians in the summer of 2004.

The experience of Telic led to the formation of the RNR General Service Seaman (Reserve) branch, which was refined in 2006 to become solely trained to provide force protection and renamed Above Water Force Protection (AWFP).

With concurrent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq creating stretch in the Royal Marine capability, in September 2007 three teams, consisting of 36 AWFP ratings, were mobilised and embedded with the Force Protection Group Royal Marines (FPGRM) in Faslane.

They were given the primary task of protecting the security of the on-task RFA in the North Arabian Gulf (NAG), with additional tasking as required for

## By Cdr Geoff Bewley RNR, SO1 Force Protection and Mine Warfare

the fleet tanker and ships visiting the theatre.

This initial deployment was very successful and now the commitment has become an enduring one with a rolling roulement of AWFP personnel maintaining a cadre of 36 force protection ratings who work alongside their RM colleagues.

The Commanding Officer of FPGRM has said of the reservist teams embedded with his group that they have become an integral part of his force package, which gives him options and flexibility to meet his tasking, and he is confident that his regular teams could be augmented on a selective basis by RNR ratings to meet a tailored force requirement.

Operating from HM Naval Base Clyde at Faslane, the teams are transported into theatre by air and have provided security to both RFA and Fleet units.

And when the fourth mobilisation of AWFP ratings is called out to begin training next month, that will bring the total number of RNR ratings who have been employed in the force protection role since Telic 1 to more than 225.

As well as routine training with the service rifle and personal protection equipment during pre-deployment training, AWFP ratings are trained to fire the General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) and Mk 44 minigun, with an intensive period of assessment by Flag Officer Sea Training staff culminating in live firing exercises both day and night before being passed as fit for service with the Royals of FPGRM.



● A Royal Navy Hawk makes a mid-air rendezvous with a British Airways Airbus – both aircraft types are flown by members of the Air Branch of the Royal Naval Reserve

Picture: LA(Phot) Billy Bunting

## From hot air to Harriers

THE Air Branch of the RNR is in essence the reserve in support of the Fleet Air Arm, writes Cdr Andy Ormshaw RNR, SO1 RNR Air Branch.

Comprised purely of ex-regular FAA personnel, they perform countless operations on a daily basis in support of the regulars.

Most of the Air Branch reservists are employed in the aviation industry, some with pretty high powered jobs and responsibilities.

In civilian life, for example, Andy is the Air Traffic and Safety Services Manager at Leeds Bradford International Airport.

The wealth of experience available ranging through aircrew, operations, air traffic control and air traffic management, engineering, meteorology, safety management and quality management covers all the technical and operational aspects required to project air power from the sea.

In effect the Branch can service and fly aircraft, provide Met forecasting and airfield operations services, control and handle them



### RNR AIR BRANCH

'Experience in Reserve'

in the air and on the ground, and has photographers to record the whole operation for posterity.

Many Air Branch people are experienced instructors and contribute to the delivery of training in all areas of the FAA.

The sheer width of the Air Branch participation cannot easily be summarised briefly, but to give a flavour of some of their activity, here is a snapshot of the last six weeks or so:

● A team of highly skilled engineers routinely travel to RAF Brize Norton to receive helicopters flown back from operational theatres for repair and maintenance, preparing

and transporting them back to Yeovilton, releasing serving aircraft engineers to serve in theatre;

● Air Branch Lynx aircrew have comprised 50 per cent of the RN team working with Augusta Westlands/BAE Systems developing the Future Lynx helicopter;

● Following a break of three years, the RNR Air Branch have been given clearance to resume flying the Harrier aircraft;

● It is vitally important to the RN to retain the core skills required to fly fast jets at sea, ready for the introduction of the Navy's two big new aircraft carriers in 2012;

● The Branch is providing qualified instructors to train front-line commando helicopter aircrew on 848 NAS, and basic flying training at the Defence Elementary Flying Training Squadron at RAF Barkston Heath;

● One of the 'Navy Hawk' flying display team for this season is an Air Branch commander.

He will be displaying the Hawk on behalf of the RN at air shows

around the country, including Farnborough and the Royal International Air Tattoo;

● An Air Branch Sea King expert is on mobilised service flying the ASaC Sea King Mk7 on operations in the Gulf;

● RNR Air Branch has been providing Hawk pilots for close air support training for Army pre-deployment operating on Salisbury Plain training area;

● The Air Branch flies the 'Fly Navy' hot-air balloon at air shows and festivals around the country.

If you see a huge balloon with Fly Navy on it – it's ours!

The Air Branch has recently undergone a thorough review of how it provides support to the front line.

There have been changes to the way we do our business in order for us to give the Fleet Air Arm the support it requires. What has not and will not change though is the enthusiasm for the task, the commitment to the RN and the wealth of aviation experience we bring to the table.

# The peninsular war

**F**IVE years after the fall of Saddam Hussein, the Royal Navy's role in toppling the dictator seems at best peripheral in the public's minds.

Never mind the fact that the Fleet either ferried or escorted ships ferrying almost all the kit used by Britain's forces into theatre, the public perception is that the RAF flew everyone in and the Army probably did all the fighting.

Except, of course, that it didn't. Not since the Falklands did the Royal Navy play such a key role in an operation, writes *Richard Hargreaves*.

It is the Royal Navy's role – and that of 40 and 42 Commandos in particular – which is the focus of Mike Rossiter's *Target Basra* (Bantam, £17.99 ISBN 978-0593-06058-2).

Rossiter has already provided us with lively popular histories of Ark Royal III and the sinking of the Belgrano.

*Target Basra* is written very much in the same vein, chiefly based on interviews with participants, diaries and official reports.

When I arrived in the Gulf as one of the 'embedded' reporters with the Royal Navy, I was somewhat awestruck by the size of the Fleet – more than 30 warships and auxiliaries – mustered; I was not, naturally, privy to the doubts and fears of the men leading the assault.

Rear Admiral David Snelson, the senior RN commander in theatre, Capt Alan Massey and Adrian Johns on Ark Royal and Ocean respectively, 42 Commando's Cols Buster Howes and 40 Commando's Gordon Messenger – all had their various apprehensions: had everything been planned to the minutest detail; who would come back – and who would not; would men die because of mistakes they had made?

Above all, the greatest fear surrounded the initial assault: not for half a century since Suez had Britain staged a truly 'opposed landing'.

The objective was the Al Faw peninsula – gateway to southern Iraq and Basra, and home to vital oil installations; there was every fear that these would be sabotaged as Saddam had done in Kuwait a dozen years before.

A combined assault from land and sea would ensure Al Faw fell swiftly into Allied hands.

Today we rather take for granted that amphibious warfare is arguably the RN's strongest asset: six major new warships with loading docks and impressive carrying capacity. In early 2003 it was rather more Heath Robinson than Lord Nelson.

Albion was not yet commissioned, Bulwark was still being built. The Bay class were building sites. HMS Fearless and Intrepid were awaiting the breaker's yard. The four Knights of the Round Table were ageing or aged. The only truly amphibious

ship was HMS Ocean (but she had engine troubles). Flagship Ark Royal was hastily turned into a 'second Ocean' carrying commandos and helicopters rather than her trademark Harriers. And the first Viking armoured vehicles were a long way off being delivered to the commandos.

Only part of the assault on Al Faw came from the sea; the rest came from the land, Kuwait to be precise. The men of 42 Commando were far from impressed with facilities. "We had been promised metal-framed bunks, electricity, running water and showers. All there was was a pile of tents," fumed Sgt Dominic Collins. There wasn't even enough food for the men.

Coming from land or sea, the Royals faced significant challenges. The Iranians had tried to take Al Faw during the Iran-Iraq war. They had been slaughtered, pinned in by Saddam's tanks rolling down the road from Basra and a helicopter assault along the coast. The Iraqis had finished off the invader using mustard gas and chemical shells.

The battle for Al Faw did not turn into a bloodbath. It was not a damned near-run thing. But the Royal Marines had been, Gordon Messenger observed succinctly, "f\*\*\*ing lucky".

Not every man was lucky, however. Three commandos were badly burned when they stormed the Ba'ath Party HQ in Al Faw; a grenade ignited a gas cylinder setting the building – and the men alight.

The first day at Al Faw demanded about as much of men as men could take.

Most had not slept for 48 hours, some 72. Helicopter crews were "on the bare bones of their arse", Buster Howes recalled.

One American CH46 carrying marines from 42 ploughed into the desert killing all aboard; two Sea Kings from HMS Ark Royal collided with the same horrific outcome.

And the war, of course, did not end on Day One. In fact, it was difficult to draw any conclusions after just one day of fighting... although US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld did proclaim the Umm Qasr captured (which it wasn't).

It soon would be. As at Al Faw, the Royals expected the Ba'ath Party building to be the focal point of Iraqi resistance.

It was not. In fact, most resistance in Umm Qasr was cursory, save for a few *Fedayeen* – fanatical paramilitary loyal to Saddam – riding around in pick-up trucks.



Men of 42 Commando take up position in a roadside ditch on the Al Faw peninsula having relieved their 40 Commando comrades

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Husbands, 42 Commando

Basra, however, was another matter entirely.

Three divisions – one armoured, one mechanised – guarded the approaches to Basra, although they were neither in the best of morale nor physical condition. They did, however, possess upwards of 150 working tanks. The Royal Marines had none.

They did have US and British air power to call upon (including the tankbusters of 847 NAS), British Challenger II tanks, the guns of 29 Commando Regiment RA, plus their own Milan anti-tank missiles.

When 60 enemy tanks were reported moving on 40 Commando's positions, Gordon Messenger asked for a tally of Milans. The reply – 58 – says Messenger "didn't help to calm my nerves".

As it turned out the combination of Challengers, Allied air power and commando guns proved to be more than a match for Saddam's armour.

The road to Abu-al-Khasib, just outside Basra, was, Maj Justin Holt recalled, a scene of "utter destruction. Plumes of dense black smoke rose in the morning air." The commandos watched a phenomenon WW2 tank commanders would know well: ammunition in burned-out enemy tanks "cooking off" as fires raged, detonating at random.

Strongpoints and objectives in Abu-al-Khasib received James Bond-esque codenames: Oddjob, Moneypenny, Blofeld. It was the scene of some of the most protracted fighting by the Royal Marines in the 2003 campaign.

Anywhere between 300 and 2,000 Iraqi troops were spotted by a spy plane approaching the Royals.

Company commander Maj Matt Pierson called on 40 Commando's Mortar Troop to unleash a 90-second barrage at the enemy, then watched as the shells came down just 150 yards from his position.

The scenes in the aftermath of the barrage were reminiscent of the Falaise pocket.

"We found blood, bits of uniform, weapons, a few injured survivors," he told the author. "The rest must have seen what had happened to their vanguard and gone back. It would have been a horrific lesson for them."

War has a habit of making men laugh for otherwise nonsensical reasons.

As enemy shells crashed into Iraqi earth a few yards away, 2/Lt Rob Jones and his radio operator couldn't help chuckling away: the tension of the build-up to war was relieved in an instant.

Elsewhere, the Brigade Reconnaissance Force jumped into a ditch and scrambled for their gas masks as they marched down a road in the mid-day heat. The cry had not been 'gas!' but 'Gaz!' as one marine tried to get his mate's attention...

Basra – to British forces what Baghdad was to the Americans – fell the first week in April.

From the heat of battle, the Royals found themselves peacekeeping overnight – and almost overwhelmed by the task as locals celebrated the demise of the Saddam regime.

"There were hundreds of thousands of people just going berserk," Buster Howes recalled.

"A bit like a cork coming out of a champagne bottle, they all went berserk and started looting and burning."

Thanks to Rossiter's interviews and access to personal papers there are some fascinating insights into the war behind the scenes:

■ Alan Massey was convinced that ridding the world of Saddam Hussein's regime was the right thing to do "but I also pray that we find all the evidence that we know is there";

■ a bizarre final briefing for UK and US commanders in Qatar at which the opening battle scene from *Gladiator* was aired (the more typical fare on Ark was *Austin Powers* and *Shrek*...);

■ relations between the Royal Marines and the US hovercraft unit carrying some of the commandos into battle deteriorated badly (the Brits felt the Americans were being overly cautious);

■ a staff officer told David Snelson that his first briefing on the invasion plan reminded

him of *A Bridge Too Far* – and Arnhem had not exactly been a success;

■ two commando engineers who giggled to themselves for doubling the amount of explosives used to blow apart the Ba'ath Party headquarters in Al Faw;

■ equally surreal is the fact that life continued almost as normal in some parts of Iraq: people went about their daily business in Al Faw and Umm Qasr, despite the presence of friend and foe.

It is rather strange reading about events you witnessed, albeit on the periphery. My 'war' consisted of plenty of groundhog days in Ark Royal, a few days on Sir Galahad, a rather surreal media event in Umm Qasr and a few moments of fright/disbelief/awe.

The fright came courtesy of some missiles Saddam lobbed at the Fleet and a biological warfare scare on Sir Galahad (actually caused by some burned toast...). The disbelief was provided by the loss of two 'Bagger' Sea Kings. And the awe came on the first night of war, wandering around Ark Royal's hangar watching Royal Marines waiting for the signal to board their helicopters and assault the Al Faw peninsula.

I had little, if any, grasp of the intensity of the fighting, of mortar barrages and tank battles. I saw no visions of hell, no Dante's inferno as the men on the ground saw; the horrors of war are vividly described by the Royal Marines through Rossiter's book.

Iraq remains a deeply unpopular war – and many of the books written in its aftermath focus on just that: the aftermath.

And there are, of course, manifold lessons on how – or how not to – restore peace and order in a war-torn country.

But Mike Rossiter's pacy account is a reminder that the campaign itself was brief, bloody and, above all, a military triumph.

What is more, the RN and above all the green berets played a key role in bringing the Saddam regime crashing down. They have largely been denied their 'place on the podium' – unfairly.

But it's not just the aftermath of war and the civil unrest/terrorist attacks which have overshadowed the Senior Service's role in the drama.

The battle done, company commander Maj Matt Jackson was hoping to unwind with his men on the long seaborne journey home.

It was denied them. Senior Army officers, Jackson was told, forbade them a triumphant homecoming aboard HMS Ocean – the Marines were receiving a little too much publicity.

Glory denied. The commandos deserve better. This book goes a long way towards addressing that slight.



## Study the art of war(ships)

BACK in February we proclaimed Sam Willis' *Fighting Ships 1750-1850* "the largest volume to pop through the *Navy News* letter box".

And it was. Until now. The successor volume, *Fighting Ships 1850-1950*, (Quercus, £25 ISBN 1 85195 187 8) follows in the same vein... and at the size of a coffee table.

Given the era it covered, Willis' first book was devoted to the age of sail and (b) relied exclusively on paintings, sketches and drawings.

Book two moves into the age of iron and steel – and the age of the photographer.

And it's probably fair to say that the photographs don't quite have the same impact as the paintings, not least because many have been seen before – Jellicoe on Iron Duke, Dunning's Sopwith Pup plunging off HMS Furious, the men of HMS Prince of W abandoning ship – although they were not reproduced on quite such a large scale.

But as regular readers of *Navy News* will perhaps know, a big picture used well can have quite a bit of impact – aided in this instance by an outstanding quality of reproduction (there are a few strange choices, such as the reproduction of a wallet card handed out to those present at the surrender of Japan on USS Missouri and a few telegrams).

As with his first volume, Willis accompanies the images

with incisive text and trawls not just the usual archives for his illustrations.

So while there famous paintings such as *Wyllie*, *A B Cull's* magnificent line up of dreadnoughts and *Claus Bergen's* study of the *USS Oregon* (a detail of which appears, left), there are also many lesser-known works.

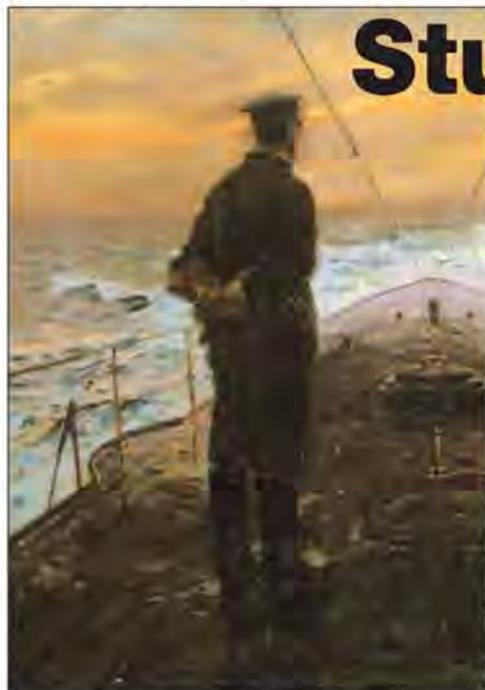
In the aftermath of Jutland, for example, very impressive watercolours of damage to British ships were produced, accurately marking the location of hits from German shells.

There's a colourful (and controversial) depiction of a run-ashore in the mid-20s by Paul *Wyllie* – whose style was remarkably similar to that of *Beryl Cook*.

The arrival of powered flight adds another dimension to the second volume, allowing some of the world's foremost aviation artists, such as the great *Wyllie* and *Faylor*, to muscle in among the *Wyllies* and *Culls*.

*Wyllie* and *Faylor* paint very much in a traditional style; not so the *Nihonga* artists of Japan whose distinctive images are possibly the most striking in the book.

There's a bizarre cartoon realism, a sort of *Hanna-Barbera* with guns, to the work of *Arai Shori* who accompanied the Japanese carrier force to Pearl Harbor and recorded his impressions on canvas. Like the attack itself, it has the power to chill more than six decades later.



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# The Riga extraordinary gentlemen

IN OCTOBER 1917 there took place a major amphibious operation, the taking by the Germans of the islands at the head of the Gulf of Riga.

This was a huge affair with some 25,000 men covered by some 300 ships of various shapes and sizes, including major units of the High Sea Fleet, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Previously it has only been covered as part of general works on the war, chapters in books on amphibious warfare or the odd journal article.

Now, at last, it is the subject of a book in its own right: *Operation Albion: The German Conquest Of The Baltic Islands* by Michael Barrett, published by Indiana University Press in its '20th Century Battles Series' (£15.99, ISBN 978-0-253-3469-9).

The book points out how the Germans saw this operation as a real attempt to knock Russia out of the war, unhinging their defences in the Gulf of Finland and opening the way to Petrograd (St Petersburg).

The Germans planned a battle of annihilation to shake Russian morale and achieve a rapid victory with strategic effect.

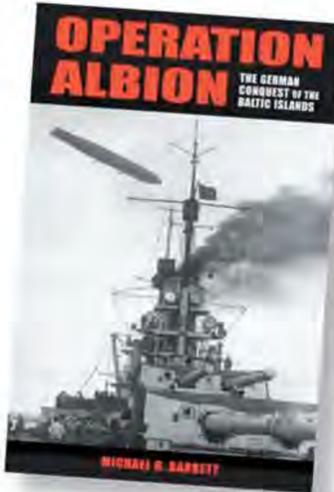
The means were novel, notably the use of bicycle troops landed from the sea to achieve a rapid *Blitzkrieg*-type operation to cut off the enemy retreat.

The book makes clear how effectively the Germans could improvise forces to achieve decisive action, both in terms of the rapid creation of amphibious capabilities and the mobile use of whatever forces were available to accomplish mission success.

This supports the work of recent historians that the successes of 1939-41 were more the application of a more general German way of war than the creation of a fundamentally new *Blitzkrieg* concept.

Barrett is a historian of land warfare and he is much less at home at sea.

He makes serious mistakes in



## The Grove Review

his discussion of the naval forces being used. Although he publishes some wonderful photographs of the clash between the Russian battleship *Slava* in her battle with the German dreadnoughts which disabled her and forced her to be blown up, he does not provide an extended description of this or other naval actions, which is a pity.

He is also too dismissive of the argument that the operation was set up, at least in part, as a way of keeping the High Seas Fleet occupied after the disturbances of the months before.

The author makes a cogent case that there were major strategic objectives at stake but it seems likely that the need to keep the fleet occupied was a factor of some significance.

There is disappointingly little on the composition of the landing flotillas, notably nothing on the use of the interesting ramped 'horse boats' that were in many ways proto-landing craft.

For a work which is claimed



● German Stosstruppen – stormtroops – cross the River Duna at Riga during the 'Baltic blitzkrieg' in the autumn of 1917

by its publisher to be 'definitive', there are other large gaps to be filled on both naval sides.

Particularly disappointing was the lack of much detail on the role and composition of the 'Rosenberg Flotilla' of shallow-draft vessels that provided vital support for the cyclists at the time of their greatest peril as they struggled to cut off the Russian retreat. The author does add some useful detail to existing accounts but leaves out other significant material from them as well.

Barrett is strong on the state of the Russian forces as they effectively fell apart between the

two revolutions in 1917. In many ways it is surprising they fought as well as they did both on land and at sea.

The author is fair in his doubts about "whether Albion shook Russia hard enough to bring about its collapse or posed a threat to Petrograd in the long run."

Yet it is still tempting to see this magnificent joint maritime success as yet another example of the decisive 'leverage of sea power'. No wonder the Bolsheviks moved their capital to Moscow, far from the sea. Maritime windows on the outside world can be easily broken.

A disappointment to British readers is the author's glossing over a Royal Navy contribution to opposing Albion.

The Germans were very conscious of the threat from the British submarines in the Baltic and three of them, little C-class boats, were deployed in the Gulf of Riga against this operation. They had a difficult time but had some success; one was lost. These small boats deserved more attention like much else that happened at sea.

Despite these problems the author has produced a fascinating and, as far as it goes, informative account which sheds much light on

this overly-neglected campaign.

He has consulted a wide range of sources both German and Russian and unearthed new and interesting material. It is the more to be regretted therefore that the balance of the account is so uneven.

There is still room for a comprehensive account of the naval aspects of a landing operation that put the Dardanelles to shame. That said, this book is remarkable value and should be widely read, especially by those whose World War I horizons do not stretch much beyond the North Sea and the Western Front.

# Pioneers and engineers

THERE is just one living link with the pioneering days of naval and military aviation.

Henry Allingham, veteran of Jutland, the Royal Naval Air Service and the RAF, is rightly honoured by today's generations who strive to leave the earth beneath them.

Soon, all our tangible links with the Great War will be gone. But their deeds will at least live on in their own words.

No conflict in history was as chronicled as the 1914-1918 conflagration: documents, newspapers, photographs, films and, in its aftermath, a clutch of memoirs.

There is, however, another Great War, one recorded in letters, in diaries, in typescripts and handwritten scrawl, recordings on long-since defunct cassette players, kept in attics or garages.

Many of these unpublished accounts eventually found their way to museums, and in the past decade or so historians have begun to tap this vast archive of first-hand accounts which are as rich as they are varied.

The latest author to weave a story from the 'bottom up' rather than relying on gods and generals is Joshua Levine who grapples with the knights of the sky, the Great War aviators, in *On A Wing And A Prayer* (Harper Collins, £18.99 ISBN 978-0-007-269457).

The 'aces' of World War 1 would be celebrated, the ordinary aviator would be mourned as a lamb to the slaughter. Truth, as ever, lies somewhere in between.

Typically, though not exclusively, accounts of Britain's Great War in the air focus on the Royal Flying Corps and RAF; the naval contribution to military aviation is often overlooked.

Not so Levine. The emphasis, to be sure, is on the RFC and RAF, but the men, machines and ethos of the RNAS – forerunner of the Fleet Air Arm – also come alive in this excellent popular history.

Men such as Charles Rummey Samson,

arguably the father of naval aviation and certainly its leading light in the opening weeks of the war.

The RNAS had been charged with defending Britain's skies at the outbreak of war – and above all countering the Zeppelin threat.

But rather than wait for the German airships to bomb Blyth, Samson took the fight to the enemy and headed to France.

Samson was not content with grappling with airships; a true innovator (and a bit of a renegade) he created a unit of armoured cars (the armour courtesy of boilers from a shipyard) and began to roam the French countryside.

His aircraft scouted for and 'Sammy', as his mer him, "chased them with his and gun" – a sort of *Blitzkrieg* 25 years before the real thing. Samson and his met collected a fine collection of helmets and lances from German *Uhlans* cavalry, liberated Lille briefly, and held off the Hun at Doua allowing 2,500 French soldiers to escape.

The actions of Samson and his armoured cars are, however, more than a footnote in the Great War in the air.

Rightly, the bulk of Levine's book is devoted to the skies of France and Belgium, but rather than simply focus on the aces, or even merely the fighters, the author also devotes time to bombers and ground crews – the latter have often been sorely neglected in WW1 literature.

If not in as much danger as their flying comrades, engineers and mechanics were nevertheless in the front line – airfields were frequent targets.

The RNAS station at Felixstowe regularly received the attention of German bombers. There were no air raid shelters

as such. When the Hun approached, the men were told to head to the beach and lie on the sand, extending their arms and legs "so that we wouldn't all get blown up together".

The mechanics were almost to a man drawn from Britain's working classes – few from the 'lower echelons' of society were permitted to pilot naval aircraft.

No, the working man was "filtered out" long before he reached the RNAS board which, as selector Donald Bremner readily admitted, looked for horseriders and rowers.

"Social class counted because we were officer pilots." Officers were officers second...

Despite this "bit of snobbishness", take nothing away from the first generation of naval aviators. They were men who sat in open cockpits in fragile machines riddled with an equally and determined foe.

What was sold at altitude was as great as the Hun. William J. 7 Sqn RNAS removed top bombs on a German and he couldn't put them back. The result was frostbite from his elbow to his wrist.

"Frostbite feels as though you had put your hand in a furnace," he recalled. "You just blistered up."

Medical officers knew what they could – or could not – do with frostbite victims; men with broken minds proved more challenging.

One 22-year-old junior officer was sent to Craiglockhart in Edinburgh – where Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon were treated – after lasting just a month at the front. Doctors noted that "any sudden bang makes him jump and he feels sick after it".

Some were discharged, some returned to

light duties, most returned. All were changed by the war.

One anonymous aviator came home on a cross-Channel flight at the end of January 1918. The white cliffs of Dover stirred the soul, but "All is over," he recalled.

"I am untouched or bruise, the mind grasp all this, and arot these, but the many, s were never able to return."

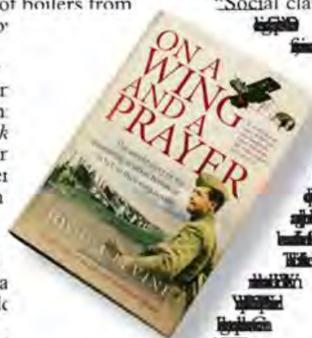
By the time the RNAS was formed the RAF had 67,000 personnel and almost all were reluctant to join the new force and relinquish their cherished naval traditions.

"They were trying to join two disparate services," fumed Thomas Thomson. "It was absolutely terrible – the biggest pot mess I ever came across."

Like the Royal Navy before it, the Royal Air Force would in time become a national institution and the role of the Royal Naval Air Service would be eclipsed.

It and the men who served it deserve to be remembered.

● A Royal Naval Air Service aviator in flying kit  
Picture: Fleet Air Arm Museum



## The ridges of Gokyo Ri

UPTO 65 sailors and Royal Marines will head to the Himalayas next year for a series of challenging climbs and treks aiming to help victims of combat recover from their injuries.

Khumbu Challenge 09, planned for next October and November, will see a mix of veteran mountaineers and inexperienced climbers grappling with a series of Nepalese peaks. But the emphasis of the expedition, says Cpl Steve Perry RM of the Adventure Training Centre at HMS Drake, is to re-introduce Service personnel injured in the line of duty to the military environment and all the support, camaraderie and banter it brings. More importantly, believes Steve, it will "make them aware that they are still part of the family."

A main team of 12-16 experienced climbers will acclimatise in Khumbu by scaling Gokyo Ri, cross Cho La, and ascend Lobuche East, before moving on to the technically-difficult assault on Ama Dablam, a 22,350ft mountain – "a steep pyramid of ice with vertical walls and sharp, exposed ridges."

At the same time, a high altitude development team comprising a similar number of less experienced mountaineers will also trek through Khumbu before ascending Island Peak, Pokalde and Lobuche East.

And finally, two junior teams will form the crux of the expedition, each consisting of 20 trekkers including around half a dozen personnel injured/traumatised by conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq. These teams will trek to Everest base camp then climb 18,200ft Kala Pattar which offers stunning views of Everest.

Details from Steve on 01752 555312 (mil 9375 65312) or perrys@a.dii.mod.uk



● Lt Cdr Adrian Olliver and LET(AE) Mark Needham do battle in the foil at the Inter-Services

## Fencing numbers swelling

AFTER an evening to mark 275 years of RN fencing at Fareham Museum – heralding an exhibition on the sport – sailors picked up their swords for the Senior Service's annual championships. The event showed that the sport is still well and truly alive within the RN.

The weekend saw an influx of new fencers eager to score a few hits off the more experienced entrants in sabre, foil and épée.

Despite being placed first in sabre and second in foil, Lt Keith Bowers was denied Master Swordsman by LAET Mark Needham whose overall score in all three weapons, including third place in sabre and second in épée, was just higher.

Overall winners in foil and épée were Cdr Matt Clark and Lt Will Hale (RM) respectively.

The ladies competition proved to be just as close as Lt Andrea Glendinning, Surg S/Lt Barbara Mair and LMEA Gemma

Wollaston achieved first place each respectively in sabre, foil and épée.

The race for Master Swordsman was won by LMEA Wollaston as she came second in both the sabre and foil.

The ladies turnout was at a high so the ladies foil Inter-Command was contested for the first time in four years with Portsmouth being pipped to the post, 5-4, by Plymouth.

The mixed Inter-Command saw four teams entering, but the Fleet Air Arm came away victors.

Ever keen to encourage beginners and intermediates, the prize for best overall score without a medal, the Andrew Wallis Achievement Award, was won by NN (S) Leanne Parry. Lt Verity Fayne-Bailey also came away with a trophy for best newcomer.

The RN championships also saw four entries in the Inter-Unit six-person team competition and this boded well with at least providing

the numbers for the Inter-Services Fencing Competition which took place at RAF Cosford.

The RN team showed their dominance at the sabre with victories over both other Services.

Unfortunately the foil team only managed to beat the Army and the épée team were unsuccessful, earning a second position overall.

The ladies did not have the same success sadly. In the individuals the results were very much the other way round with S/Lt Barbara Mair winning a raft of medals to take the 'Champion At Arms' title and NN(S) Leanne Parry won bronze in the sabre.

The men had to be satisfied with just a well-fought silver in the épée gained by Lt Ralph Coffey.

The six-person team showed the increase in numbers coming through with BRNC winning the competition and second and third for HMS Sultan and HMS Excellent in the three-person teams.

## Vättern down the hatches

FINDING naval officers near water is not unusual but to find them cycling 300km (186 miles) round the Vättern, the second largest lake in Sweden, perhaps is.

The four Portsmouth-based cyclists – Capt Peter Lambourn, Cdrs Jon Asbridge and Cdr Kris Nicholson and Lt Cdr Jules Lowe – recently took part in the Vätternrundan with some 17,000 other bike riders.

The challenge is simply to complete the ride around the Vättern, which lies 90 miles east of Gothenburg and about 150 miles west of Stockholm. There are no winners: the Swedes call it a motionslopp (fitness race).

The event first took place in 1966 and has since grown to be the largest recreational bike ride in the world in terms of the total distance cycled by all the participants.

Given the number of riders, the start is spread over several hours which meant that the four officers had to set off from Motala on the eastern shore around 1am in dark, damp and cold conditions.

However, by the time they finished back in Motala the following lunchtime, the sun was shining and a couple of beers to celebrate their success were well appreciated.

Meanwhile in Glencoe... Lt Doug Wylie, the area recreation officer at HMNB Clyde, was having a wild time in the '70 Wild Miles' multi-sport event.

The event comprises a 47-mile cycle ride, a ten-mile kayak and rounds off with a 13-mile (uphill) run.

Doug was one of 100 competitors from across the UK and set out with two distinct aims: to cross the finishing line in under six hours and to raise at least £1,000 for charity, namely CLIC Sargent which helps children and young adults suffering from leukaemia and cancer.

The former he achieved with eight minutes and 38 seconds to spare. The latter he's £96 short of (or was as we went to press); you can help him reach his financial goal at [www.justgiving.com/davidakadougwylie](http://www.justgiving.com/davidakadougwylie)

As for the times he posted in the race... cycling – 2h 5m 43s, kayaking – 2h 3m 8s, and run 1h 42m 31s.



# At sevens and nines

IT WAS a glorious summer's day when five RN teams – four male, one female – took to the field for Kiel Week Rugby 7s Schietwetter Cup.

The tournament – literally 'crap weather cup' (!) – has been run annually since the mid-1980s and regularly features teams from all over Europe.

Sixteen sides – from Germany, Lithuania, Scotland and the RN – gathered on the field at Kiel University.

HM Ships Bulwark and Ark Royal both fielded sides, the latter sent a female team on to the Kiel turf; most of the ladies were playing their first competitive game of rugby.

They played four tough matches against opposition sides boasting considerably more experience than our ladies.

Despite this they put in highly-creditable performances, tackling harder and passing sweeter than many of their rivals. Even now there will still be numerous young German females having flashbacks to that weekend.

Never having played beyond the confines of their training complex (know affectionately as 'the hangar'), AB(CIS) Tegwyn Leadbetter emerged as the leading female player in the tournament.

The men's second team, the Ark Royal Valentas, were a nine-man tribute to the Ship's diesel engines claiming that like them "we run all day, will drink anything and have the power to electrify."

Like most engines the team took a little while to warm up, suffering group stage defeats to a strong Kiel side and the Lithuanian national team.

Once up and running however the team put in a sterling performance in their final, notably ET(WE) 'Flipper' Roberts running in four of the team's nine tries. Valenta winger ET(ME) 'Monkey' Bawden also received an award in recognition of the hard work he put in over the course of the weekend.

The unimaginatively-named Ark Royal 1 was the flagship team and played an entertaining brand of passing 7s throughout.

Ark 1 won two of the three group games, including a victory over HMS Bulwark, and were only narrowly defeated by the eventual finalists from 11 GS Sqn in Gütersloh.

The team progressed to the semi finals of

the Plate where they lost out to an extra time golden try from the Lithuanians.

In a genuine team performance, all contributed to a series of fine performances against well-drilled and stubborn opposition.

Now you may have read above about Ark dispatching Bulwark.

Well, the amphibious assault ship also entered two sides in the 7s (cunningly named the first and second teams).

The second team faced a harsh draw, including Ark Royal 1 and Gütersloh, and so were unable to progress beyond the groups.

Bulwark 1, however, steamrollered opposition in the group stage, clocking up 157 points for just five conceded (including a 59-0 drubbing of Hamburg Exiles).

That earned the first team a place in the semis against DRC Schwalbe, full of Fijians... who promptly saw off the sailors' challenge 47-0.

Bulwark bounced back from the trouncing, however, to win a third-place play off 31-10.

The final was an all Army (and almost all Fijian) affair.

As expected it was a bruising, flair-filled and entertaining encounter and was a suitable climax to an excellent day's rugby with the atmosphere only heightened by the appearance of glamorous cheerleaders on the sidelines.

DRC Schwalbe were crowned the winners of the tournament whose standard, organisers said, "was even higher than in previous years".

The Ark team are in action again at present in a tournament in Norfolk, Virginia later this summer, before the 15s start their season next month.

Meanwhile in the sport's other code, eleven teams entered this year's RN Rugby League 9s competition at HMS Collingwood with Heron claiming the cup, writes WOI Keith Humpleby, RNRU press officer.

On a very hard pitch and played in hot, very windy conditions the teams played out some thrilling matches with the speed merchants making the most of the conditions.

In addition to the nine men's teams two women's teams were added to the fixtures and once again the RNRL women triumphed over Army opposition provided by the Medical Services Regt in both their matches.

Winger Sam Halford scored three tries overall and this performance earned her the 'player of the tournament' award.

Following the morning's league stages the

afternoon saw the start of the knockout phase of the competition.

In the Plate competition the first match provided the winner of the ships' competition as Illustrious shaded it over HMS Nottingham by virtue of a conversion.

The Plate final went to CTCRM led by RNRL Veteran Chris Richards who nailed Illustrious with a fine display of attacking rugby to celebrate their return to the competition.

The cup semis saw two matches between four very evenly-matched sides, HMS Sultan defended well against a strong and fast Collingwood team and in the end triumphed, winning by the odd conversion.

The second semi was between two contrasting sides. Nelson fielded a strong side whilst Heron were a lighter team and just had the edge in the speed department highlighted by flying winger Aaron Hansen. He added to his previous tournament scores with another long-range effort to help his team on their way to the final.

That match was a thriller with neither side being able to seize the initiative. As the final whistle approached, Heron were ahead by four points but Sultan were not finished and with the last play of the match went over under the posts.

The conversion attempt was caught by the strong wind and bounced off the upright leaving the scores all square at full time.

For the second time in the day the match went to the golden point.

Almost from the restart Heron went on the offensive and went over for the winning score earning them the RNRL 9s title for 2008.

Despite the heavy operational and training load, the fact that 11 teams made it to the competition featuring well over 120 players was a tribute to the efforts of the team managers and coaches in getting their players to Collingwood.

A massive thanks to POPT Mark Brocklesby who once again put together a great competition and almost single-handed ran the day's events.

One other person deserves a special mention was Army Referee Gareth Ricketts who had flown over from Germany to officiate the match and due to injuries to other nominated officials found himself the sole official referee. To his great credit he did ref most of the matches and was ably supported by Danny Johnson and Scott Partis to give him some much needed downtime.

## 28 short in Twenty20

AFTER last year's defeats by both other Forces, this year's RN side were out for revenge in the Inter-Services Twenty20 cricket festival in Portsmouth.

The first match was an encounter between the RN and RAF and after the first ten overs the Navy were accumulating runs – 89 with Lt Mark Toogood RN (CNR) 32 and Sgt Sean Needham (Cdo Logs RM) 30 at the forefront of the blitz.

A slight wobble in the middle order however, slowed the scoring rate down considerably and only a late flurry by Lt Jon Parker RN (Raleigh) 22 restored respectability at a final total of 151-8.

POAEA Keith Adams (Nelson) struck in the first over claiming ex-CS skipper Flt Lt Tim Adcock for a duck and Adams, Parker and MA Gareth Freeman (Illustrious), held all the other early batsmen in check.

Late wickets were taken by Toogood (2-16), Mne Ash Haw (42 Cdo) and Mne David Upton (Temeraire) sealed their fate at a total of 125 off 18.1 overs and a win for the RN by 26 runs.

That result meant that the RAF had to return to the field and confront a formidable-looking Army side, and, batting first never looked comfortable. All the Army bowlers pitched in and they dismissed their light blue counterparts for a paltry 105.

In return, the Army batsmen never looked in danger and past their target for the loss of only four wickets in just 13 overs, and therefore the last match of the day became a fitting final.

The Army batted first and got off to a flier, Adams conceding 25 runs in his first two overs, but fortunately Parker's hostility at the other end brought him two wickets for three runs in his first two overs.

Freeman replaced Adams and with his accurate left arm swing conceded only 13 runs in his allocated four overs, but Toogood, Haw and Upton proved to be expensive towards the end and the Army managed to post 168-6, Sgt

Steve Hole scoring an impressive 64 not out.

Navy opens Toogood and Upton started well carving out 24 before Upton fell to the consistent quick bowler Wade, in an over that Wade claimed two other Navy scalps, all clean bowled.

Until then, the RN run rate had been on track, but that certainly turned the tide and even a breezy partnership between Lt Andrew Ainsley RN (JSSC) 30 and Lt Tim Burt RN (Argyll) 45 failed to enable the Navy to catch up and after their 20 overs were 28 runs short at 140-8.

The Army therefore retained the Men's Inter Services Twenty20 trophy after a most entertaining day's cricket.

## Sean's got the power

THE RN made a big impact at the annual European powerlifting championships at Castleblaney in Northern Ireland.

After a great performance in the British Nationals with a total lift of 490kg (1,080lb) LPT Sean Cole qualified to represent England – the first time the PTI has lifted at this level in the 67.5kg class.

On this occasion Sean managed to break his military world record with a 160kg squat, 117.5kg bench press and 235kg dead lift – 512.5kg in total and second place overall.

As we were going to press, Sean was in action again, this time in Bradford at the British single lift championships where he was aiming to beat his 250kg dead lift record.

After that he'll be heading to the USA in November representing GB at the world championships.

More details on the sport in the RN/RM are available from Lt Cdr Simon Wynn (96218 5520) or LPT Cole (94229 4723).

Next month



SPORT



**The road to Rouen – Southampton goes French**



**Inside Strait – daily life on the Rock**



**Local Dhabi – protecting the southern Gulf with Montrose**

Plus

**3 Commando Brigade prepares to return to Afghanistan**

And

**Edambusters – Lyme Bay goes to the Netherlands**



# Eighth wonders

THE men's swimming team equalled an RAF record by clinching their eighth straight victory in the Inter-Services.

The event, hosted this year by the Army at Aldershot, is the premier event in the swimming calendar and is always seen as 'the one to win', writes Gary Thomas, Assistant Sports Officer, RNASA.

This year's team, due to duty commitments and a crop of seasoned and successful team members leaving the Service, was the weakest – in depth – fielded for more than ten years.

The RAF, with champagne on ice, had been bolstered by new swimmers with known pedigree at national and international level.

This only seemed to spur on the RN team who were, despite a winning streak of nine wins in the previous ten Inter-Services, tagged definite underdogs.

The youngsters took on a great challenge and performed above expectations with verve and commitment.

Performances in the water were no less than outstanding: Mne Chris Bumby (HQ London) and Diver Chris Collins (SDU Portsmouth) started the ball rolling with a par 7pts in the 800m freestyle.

This was followed by quality performances from our seasoned veterans: CPO Mickey Nolan (HMS Richmond) completely outfoxed the competition in the 200m backstroke; Lt Cdr Kev Walsh (HMS Southampton) produced a superb 100m breaststroke; and Mne Joe Tellett (CTCRM) destroyed the opposition in the 50m and 100m freestyle.

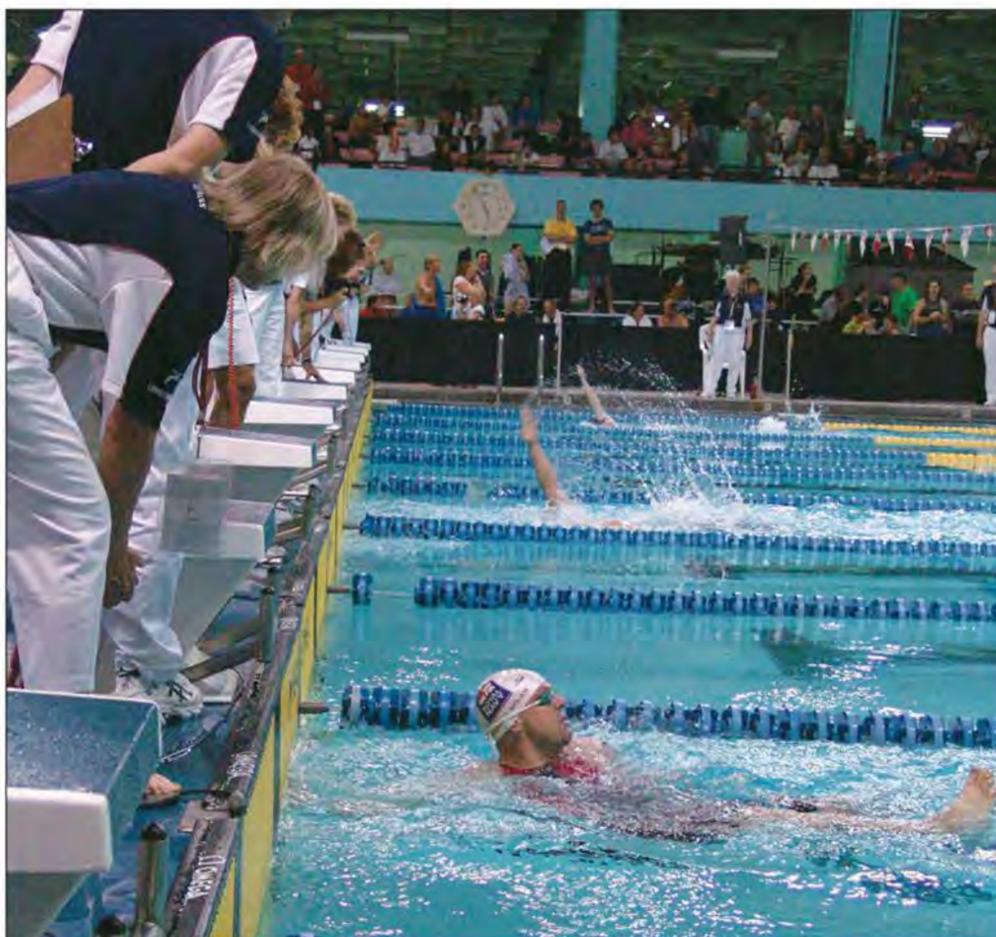
Two new team members – S/Lt Joel Roberts (CFT HMS Albion) and OC Dan Pepper (BRNC) – pitched in with medals in their events.

POET(WE) Ben Rooker epitomised the team spirit when Surg Lt Simon Hornby had to withdraw with an injury. Ben stepped up to the block and gained the team an invaluable point in the 200m breaststroke, an event that he would never usually compete in.

It is worth mentioning that six of the 12 swimmers in the team are serving on ships which have recently returned from four-to-six-month deployments and two are in the training pipeline, so they have had extremely limited training options.

Unfortunately, due to the large number of unavailabilities the ladies were unable to match their results of the previous three years.

However, led by double gold medal winners LMA Mhairi



● CPO Mickey Nolan clinches victory in the 200m backstroke

Muir (DMSTC) in the 400m and 200m freestyle and AB Gemma Howells in the 100m butterfly and 200m individual medley – both new Inter-Service records – the ladies pitched in with as much enthusiasm as the men.

Improved performances came from Lt Sally Goy (Portsmouth), Musn Cailin O'Malley (CLR) and AB Sarah Feltham (HMS Heron).

Notable success for the women came in the diving, where PO Becky Kershy (Devonport) gained silver in the springboard and platform events and debutante AB Grace Clavin (HMS Nottingham) gained a bronze in the springboard.

Hopefully the ladies team will be able to regroup and launch a closer challenge next year.

The water polo team produced a much improved performance over last year. Fielding a much-changed side and including new and younger faces, the team competed in the closest tournament seen in recent years.

Playing the RAF first, the team

had a great start and performed superbly throughout the four quarters.

The game was end to end and there was never more than one goal separating the two sides.

The spirit, will to win and overall commitment of the younger element seemed to rejuvenate the more experienced players, Lt Cdr Steve Etchells (Abbey Wood), Lt Cdr Paul Pitcher and Lt Tony Atkinson (Fleet HQ) gave performances that defied their years.

Mne Andy Kidd (45 Cdo RM) turned in an excellent performance in goal, MA Mark Edmonds (CLR), PO Steve Collins (847 NAS) and L/Cpl John Hudson (Arborfield) produced quality attacking displays.

The game looked set for a draw before luck went against the RN and the RAF scored with just over a minute left to finish 10-9 winners.

The side went on to beat the Army 8-5 but the RAF also managed to beat the soldiers to win the event for the fourth year

in succession.

The tragic loss of RN and Combined Services player Cpl Damian Mulvihill, killed in action in Afghanistan earlier this year, has led to the inception of a new award in his memory.

The Damian Mulvihill Memorial Trophy is to be awarded to the best RN player, as voted by the three Service coaches at the Inter-Services.

The inaugural trophy was awarded to L/Cpl John Hudson for his outstanding contribution over the two games.

Given the generally more stable environment and superior numbers of the RAF and Army, together with the ever-increasing workload personnel in the RN and RM are expected to shoulder, the performance of the swimmers, divers and water polo players is credit to every individual who has to train in their own time and pay to compete in an array of events in order to compete at the standard required by this event.

More details on the sport are available on 9380 25912.

● Don't fence me in... CPO(Logs) 'Pusser' Hill (Plymouth Command) tries to escape the clutches of Naval Air Command's Capt Boshier, S/Lt Tim Lomas, CPO David Beaudro

Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, FRPU East

## RM show fifth sense

PORTSMOUTH hosted this year's closely-fought Inter-Command hockey tournament.

To their credit, Scotland, the RM and Naval Air Command all turned up with full 20-strong men's squads.

Portsmouth and Plymouth despite much hard work, were short of one or two players but no team ever took the field with less than a full team and invariably a couple of subs as well.

In the ladies competition, Air Command/Scotland wished to remain as a unit but could almost have produced two teams from those who turned out.

As in the men's event they were able to lend the occasional player or two to the slightly-less-well-populated Portsmouth and Plymouth teams.

By the end of the first day, Naval Air were ahead of the Royal Marines on goal difference in the men's event and Air/Scotland were ahead on goal difference in the women's event.

It was a lead the ladies held on to throughout the second day of the contest to lift the trophy, while in the men's competition, it all boiled down to a decisive clash between the two top sides: RM and Naval Air Command.

Both had come to win – the Royals were determined to continue their five-year winning streak, Naval Air to wrest the silverware from the Green Machine.

Competition for the third, fourth and fifth place positions had continued apace with Portsmouth edging out Plymouth and Scotland. With the drive and enthusiasm shown by the Scottish clan led by the redoubtable Lt Gareth 'Jesse' James (Neptune) it will not be long before their fortunes improve.

As for the decider, Naval Air clawed their way back to 3-3 after being 3-1 down at one stage.

The result of the competition now hinged upon goal difference – and the Royals' difference was superior.

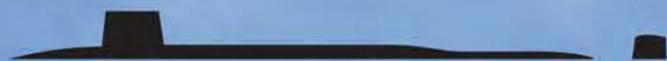


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See page 35 for information on the exciting new opportunities available now.

## Faslane Flotilla

### Vanguard-class ballistic missile submarines



|            |              |                                |
|------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| VANGUARD   | Displacement | 16,000 tonnes                  |
| VICTORIOUS | Length       | 149.5m                         |
| VIGILANT   | Beam         | 12.8m                          |
| VENGEANCE  | Armament     | Trident D5 missiles, torpedoes |

### Astute-class Fleet submarines



|                      |              |  |
|----------------------|--------------|--|
| ASTUTE (building)    | Displacement | 7,800 tonnes                             |
| AMBUSH (building)    | Length       | 97m                                      |
| ARTFUL (building)    | Beam         | 11.2m                                    |
| AUDACIOUS (building) | Armament     | Tomahawk land attack missiles, torpedoes |

### Swiftsure-class Fleet submarines



|         |              |  |
|---------|--------------|--|
| SUPERB  | Displacement | 5,000 tonnes                             |
| SCEPTRE | Length       | 82.9m                                    |
|         | Beam         | 10.1m                                    |
|         | Armament     | Tomahawk land attack missiles, torpedoes |

### Sandown-class MCMVs



|          |      |          |      |              |   |
|----------|------|----------|------|--------------|---|
| WALNEY   | M104 | BANGOR   | M109 | Displacement | 450 tonnes  |
| PENZANCE | M106 | BLYTH    | M111 | Length       | 52.7m   |
| PEMBROKE | M107 | SHOREHAM | M112 | Beam         | 10.5m   |
| GRIMSBY  | M108 | RAMSEY   | M110 | Armament     | 30mm close-range gun, remote control mine disposal system |

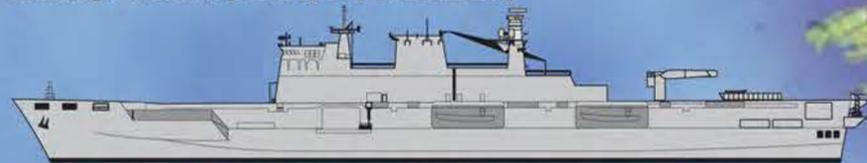
## Devonport Flotilla

### Trafalgar-class Fleet submarines



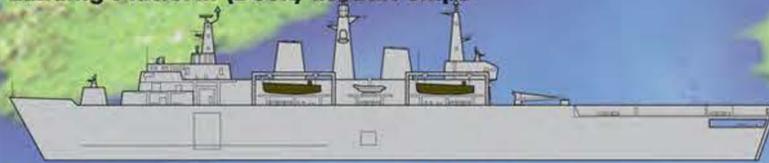
|           |              |  |
|-----------|--------------|--|
| TRAFALGAR | Displacement | 5,000 tonnes                             |
| TURBULENT | Length       | 85.4m                                    |
| TIRELESS  | Beam         | 9.8m                                     |
| TORBAY    | Armament     | Tomahawk land attack missiles, torpedoes |
| TRENCHANT |              |  |
| TALENT    |              |  |
| TRIUMPH   |              |  |

### Landing Platform (Helicopter) assault ship



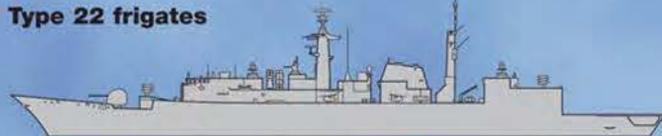
|       |     |              |   |
|-------|-----|--------------|---|
| OCEAN | L12 | Displacement | 20,500 tonnes   |
|       |     | Length       | 203m  |
|       |     | Beam         | 28.5m   |
|       |     | Armament     | Phalanx gun system, close-range guns, assault squadron, embarked military force |

### Landing Platform (Dock) assault ships



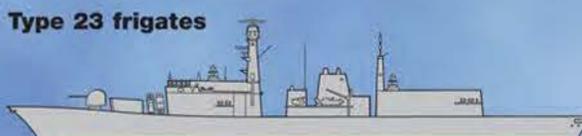
|         |     |              |  |
|---------|-----|--------------|--|
| ALBION  | L14 | Displacement | 19,500 tonnes  |
| BULWARK | L15 | Length       | 176m   |
|         |     | Beam         | 30m  |
|         |     | Armament     | Goalkeeper gun system, close-range guns, assault squadron, embarked military force |

### Type 22 frigates



|             |     |              |   |
|-------------|-----|--------------|---|
| CORNWALL    | F99 | Displacement | 4,600 tonnes  |
| CUMBERLAND  | F85 | Length       | 148m  |
| CAMPBELTOWN | F86 | Beam         | 14.7m   |
| CHATHAM     | F87 | Armament     | 114mm gun, Harpoon missiles, Seawolf missiles, anti-submarine torpedoes, Goalkeeper gun system, close-range guns, Lynx helicopter |

### Type 23 frigates



|                |      |            |     |              |   |
|----------------|------|------------|-----|--------------|---|
| ARGYLL         | F231 | SUTHERLAND | F81 | Displacement | 3,500 tonnes  |
| MONMOUTH       | F235 | SOMERSET   | F82 | Length       | 133m  |
| MONTROSE       | F236 | PORTLAND   | F79 | Beam         | 16.2m   |
| NORTHUMBERLAND | F238 |            |     | Armament     | 114mm gun, Harpoon missiles, anti-submarine torpedoes, Goalkeeper gun system, close-range guns, Seawolf missiles, Lynx or Merlin helicopter |

### Ocean survey ship

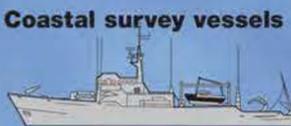


|       |      |              |               |
|-------|------|--------------|---------------|
| SCOTT | H131 | Displacement | 13,500 tonnes |
|       |      | Length       | 131m          |
|       |      | Beam         | 21.5m         |



|            |     |              |              |
|------------|-----|--------------|--------------|
| ECHO       | H87 | Displacement | 3,470 tonnes |
| ENTERPRISE | H88 | Length       | 90m          |
|            |     | Beam         | 16.8m        |

### Coastal survey vessels



|         |      |              |              |
|---------|------|--------------|--------------|
| ROEBUCK | H130 | Displacement | 1,300 tonnes |
|         |      | Length       | 64m          |
|         |      | Beam         | 13m          |



|         |     |              |           |
|---------|-----|--------------|-----------|
| GLEANER | H86 | Displacement | 26 tonnes |
|         |     | Length       | 14.8m     |
|         |     | Beam         | 2.9m      |

# Royal Fleet Auxiliary Flotilla

## Support tankers

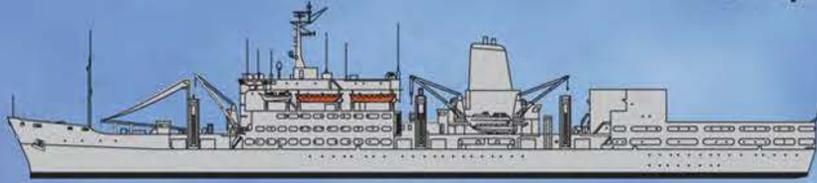


**BAYLEAF** A109 Displacement 40,870 tonnes  
**ORANGELEAF** A110 Length 170.7m  
 Beam 25.9m

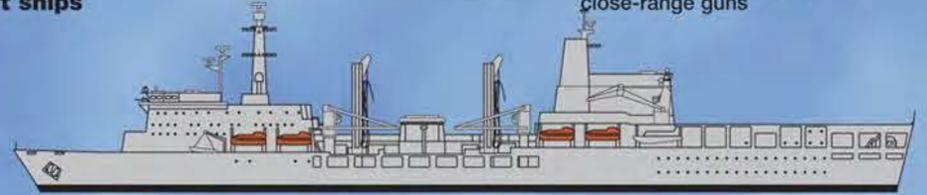


**WAVE KNIGHT** A389 Displacement 31,000 tonnes  
**WAVE RULER** A390 Length 196m  
 Beam 27.8m  
 Armament Phalanx gun systems, 30mm close-range guns

## Fleet replenishment ships

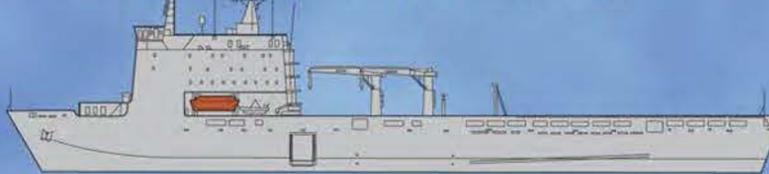


**FORT ROSALIE** A385 Displacement 23,482 tonnes  
**FORT AUSTIN** A386 Length 185m  
 Beam 24m



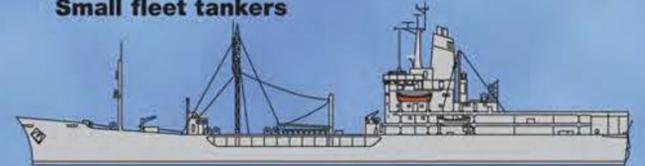
**FORT VICTORIA** A387 Displacement 36,580 tonnes  
**FORT GEORGE** A388 Length 204m  
 Beam 30.3m  
 Armament Phalanx gun systems, 30mm close-range guns

## Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) amphibious ships



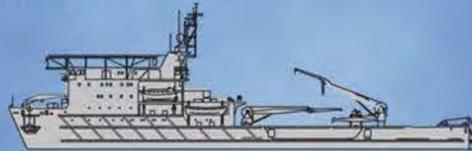
**LARGS BAY** L3006 Displacement 16,160 tonnes  
**LYME BAY** L3007 Length 176m  
**MOUNTS BAY** L3008 Beam 26.4m  
**CARDIGAN BAY** L3009 Armament Close-range guns

## Small fleet tankers

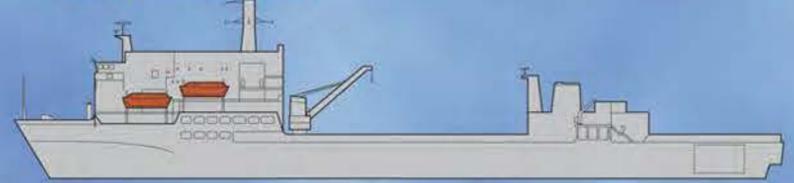


**GOLD ROVER** A271 Displacement 11,522 tonnes  
**BLACK ROVER** A273 Length 140.6m  
 Beam 19.2m

## Forward repair ship



**DILIGENCE** A132 Displacement 10,765 tonnes  
 Length 112m  
 Beam 20.5m



**ARGUS** A135 Displacement 28,080 tonnes  
 Length 175m  
 Beam 30m

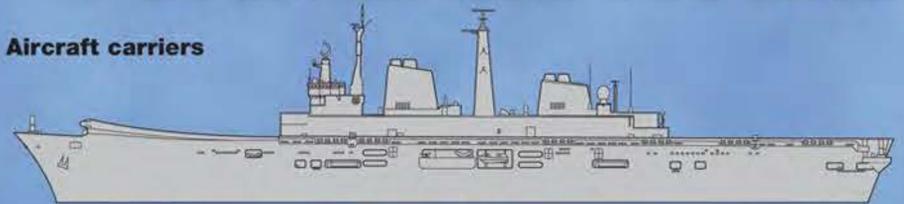
# Portsmouth Flotilla

## Antarctic ice-ship



**ENDURANCE** A171 Displacement 7,500 tonnes  
 Length 91m  
 Beam 17.9m

## Aircraft carriers



**ILLUSTRIOUS** R06 Displacement 20,000 tonnes  
**ARK ROYAL** R07 Length 210m  
 Beam 36m  
 Armament Goalkeeper or Phalanx gun systems, close-range guns, air group

## Patrol Boats



|                        |                       |                     |                     |                        |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| <b>SCIMITAR</b> P284   | <b>EXPRESS</b> P163   | <b>ARCHER</b> P264  | <b>BLAZER</b> P279  | Displacement 40 tonnes |
| <b>SABRE</b> P285      | <b>EXAMPLE</b> P165   | <b>BITER</b> P270   | <b>DASHER</b> P280  | Length 20m             |
| Displacement 26 tonnes | <b>EXPLORER</b> P164  | <b>SMITER</b> P272  | <b>PUNCHER</b> P291 | Beam 5.8m              |
| Length 16m             | <b>EXPLOIT</b> P167   | <b>PURSUER</b> P273 | <b>CHARGER</b> P292 |                        |
| Beam 4.4m              | <b>RANGER</b> P293    | <b>TRACKER</b> P274 |                     |                        |
|                        | <b>TRUMPETER</b> P294 | <b>RAIDER</b> P275  |                     |                        |

## Type 23 frigates



**LANCASTER** F229 Displacement 3,500 tonnes  
**IRON DUKE** F234 Length 133m  
**WESTMINSTER** F237 Beam 16.2m  
**RICHMOND** F239 Armament 114mm gun, Harpoon missiles, anti-submarine torpedoes, Goalkeeper gun system, close-range guns, Seawolf missiles, Lynx or Merlin helicopter  
**KENT** F78  
**ST ALBANS** F83

## Hunt-class MCMVs



|                       |                         |  |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| <b>LEDBURY</b> M30    | <b>CHIDDINGFOLD</b> M37 | Displacement 685 tonnes  |
| <b>CATTISTOCK</b> M31 | <b>ATHERSTONE</b> M38   | Length 57m   |
| <b>BROCKLESBY</b> M33 | <b>HURWORTH</b> M39     | Beam 10m   |
| <b>MIDDLETON</b> M34  | <b>QUORN</b> M41        | Armament 30mm close-range gun, remote control mine disposal system |

## River-class patrol ships



**TYNE** P281 Displacement 1,677 tonnes  
**SEVERN** P282 Length 79.5m  
**MERSEY** P283 Beam 13.6m  
 Armament 20mm close-range gun



**CLYDE** P257 Displacement 1,847 tonnes  
 Length 81.5m  
 Beam 13.6m  
 Armament 30mm close-range gun

## Type 45 destroyers



**DARING** (building) D32 Displacement 7,350 tonnes  
**DAUNTLESS** (building) D33 Length 152.4m  
**DIAMOND** (building) D34 Beam 21.2m  
**DRAGON** (building) D35 Armament Principal Anti Air Missile System, Aster missile, 114m gun, close-range guns, surface-ship torpedo defence system, Lynx or Merlin helicopter  
**DEFENDER** (building) D36  
**DUNCAN** (building) D37

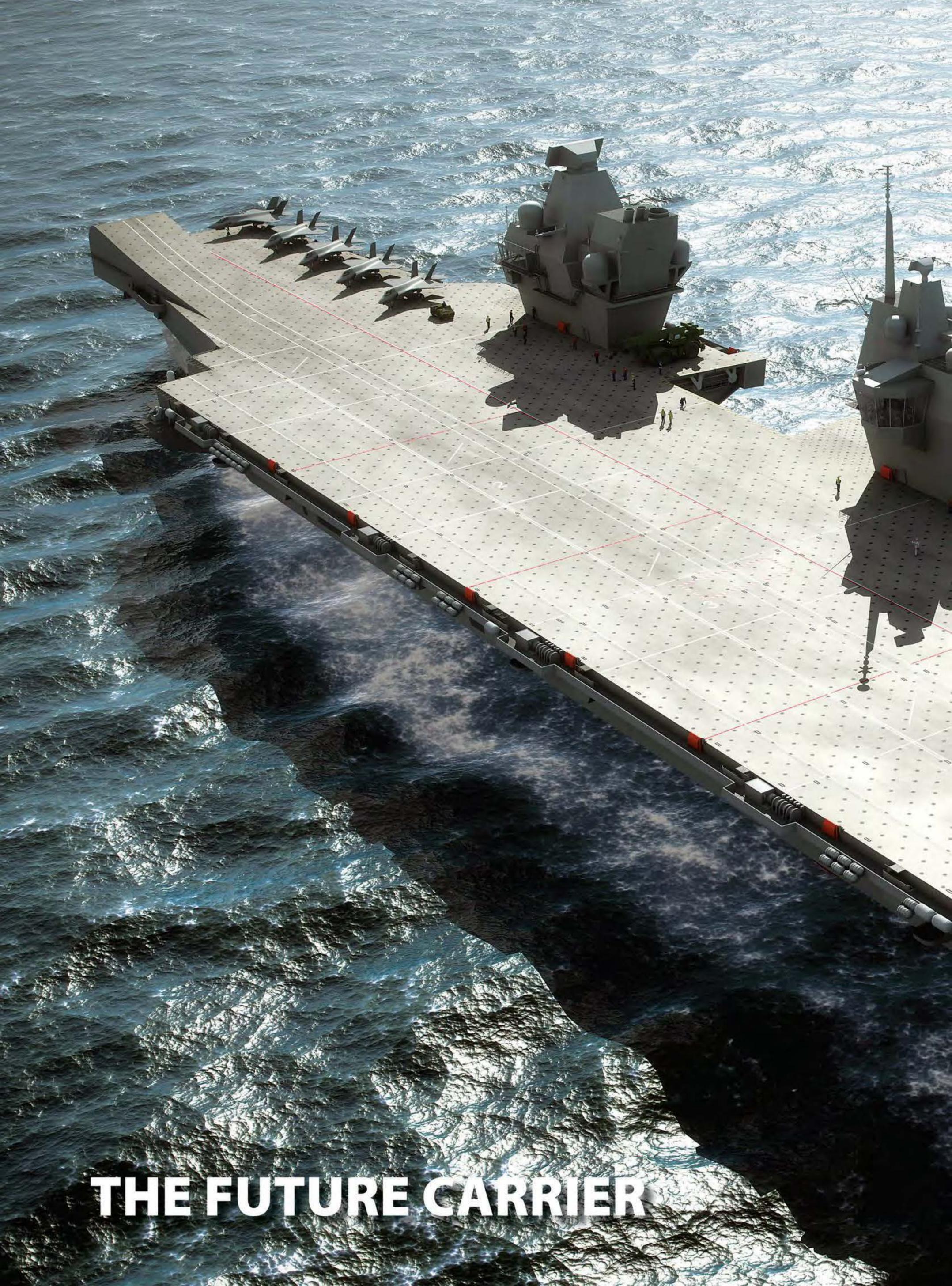
## Type 42 destroyers



**MANCHESTER** D95 Displacement 3,880 tonnes  
**GLOUCESTER** D96 Length 139m  
**EDINBURGH** D97 Beam 15.2m  
**YORK** D98 Armament 114mm gun, Sea Dart, Phalanx gun system, anti-submarine torpedoes, close-range guns, Lynx helicopter



**EXETER** D89 Displacement 3,560 tonnes  
**SOUTHAMPTON** D90 Length 125m  
**NOTTINGHAM** D91 Beam 14.6m  
**LIVERPOOL** D92 Armament 114mm gun, Sea Dart, Phalanx gun system, anti-submarine torpedoes, close-range guns, Lynx helicopter



# THE FUTURE CARRIER

