

NAVY NEWS

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ON BAY WATCH

A Mk8 Lynx of 815 Naval Air Squadron flies past RFA Largs Bay off Cornwall, bringing the curtain down on a seven-month drug-busting patrol in the Caribbean which saw the combination of helicopter and landing ship snare 575kg of cocaine. See page 5 for details.

Picture: LA(Phot) Steve Johncock, FRPU West



GLOBAL REACH



Fleet Focus

IT'S high summer which means air shows, naval displays and other public events... and the accompanying foul British weather.

But rain, apparently, isn't unique to the UK... as the fliers of **HMS Westminister** found when preparing for a sortie in the Bay of Bengal (see page 10).

Luckily it wasn't quite as wet (but almost) in Southend, where **829 NAS'** Merlin cousins of **824 NAS** were among the few aircraft to put on a show for the public at the resort's airshow (see page 12).

Thankfully the weather didn't scupper an air and water show further up Thames as the first copies of the new Bond book *Devil May Care* were delivered by sailors and marines to **HMS Exeter** (see page 11).

Also very much in the public eye has been flagship **HMS Ark Royal**. A visit to Liverpool saw bumper crowds tour the ship, while a sizeable number of her sailors headed to Leeds to parade through the carrier's affiliated city (see page 7).

Three crucial support ships have returned to the UK after lengthy (even very lengthy) deployments. **RFA Fort Austin** supported **HMS Illustrious'** task group during the Orion 08 exercises east of Suez (see page 4). Our cover star **Largs Bay** has been in the Caribbean for the past seven months (see page 5). And tanker **RFA Bayleaf** has been away from Blighty for seven years supporting Allied operations in the Gulf (see page 4).

Bayleaf's place in the Gulf has been taken by **RFA Wave Knight** which is presently topping up HM Ships **Chatham**, **Edinburgh** and **Montrose** *inter alia* (see pages 14-15 for a round-up of operations in the region).

Finally home from the Gulf after a demanding deployment alongside USS Harry S Truman is destroyer **HMS Manchester** (see page 5).

Heading east is frigate **HMS Kent** which will eventually reach China on a Far East deployment. She met up with sister Iron Duke in Gib for a Rock Race. Iron Duck is heading in the opposite direction, Caribbean-bound, with a certain **S/Lt Wales** joining the ship for a five-week insight into life on an operational warship (see page 6).

HMS Richmond has left the Americas behind, but not before visiting first New York, then Quebec. Her sailors sent us a few 'postcards' back to show us the fun they've been having (see page 8).

Survey ship **HMS Roebuck** continues to direct a NATO minehunting task (which counts **HMS Hurworth** among its number), disposing of wartime ordnance in the Baltic (see page 5).

45 Commando geared up for their impending deployment with 3 Cdo Bde to Helmand with live-fire exercises in southern Scotland (see page 21).

And talking of live firing, two missiles which will defend the RN against today's and tomorrow's aerial threat have passed major milestones.

Aster is the fist of PAAMS, the Principal Anti-Air Missile System, on the Type 45 destroyer; it was fired for the first time in the Med from trials barge Longbow (see right).

Meanwhile in Scotland... frigate **HMS Sutherland** has received enhanced **Seawolf** trackers which will allow the Type 22 and 23 fleet to deal with 21st Century sea-skimming missiles (see page 9).

Also on the equipment front, vital lessons for the future of the Silent Service have been learned from last year's **Tireless** tragedy (see opposite), while investigators are still poring over data from **HMS Superb's** encounter with an underwater pinnacle (see opposite again).

Hopefully ensuring submarine accidents have a more fortunate outcome in future is the task of the new rescue vessel **NSRS** (nicknamed Nemo), which made its public debut on NATO exercises off Norway, Bold Monarch (see pages 24-5).

Aster la vista, Navy

A BIG piece in the future destroyer programme has slotted into place with the first firing of its missile system.

An Aster missile raced out of its silo and destroyed a target more than 20 miles away.

French and Italian versions of the missile have already been successfully fired.

But the Royal Navy's variant of the Principal Anti-Air Missile System is driven by a different radar, Sampson (hidden inside the spinning 'egg' on top of a Type 45 destroyer's main mast).

To marry missile and radar, a trials barge, Longbow, was fitted with a Type 45 mast, Sampson and missile silos. It headed to the Mediterranean and the French test site near the Ile du Levant, off Toulon.

And it was near there that a Mirach target – a rocket drone powered through the sky at 450mph – flew six miles high until it was intercepted by an Aster 30 missile, fired from one of Longbow's vertical silos (pictured, right).

Experts from MBDA, the defence firm behind Aster, collected reams of data from the test firing and say the interceptor performed exactly as anticipated.

"The first firing was a tense moment, and the culmination of much innovation and development which made the direct hit all the more exciting," said Dave Twitchin, MOD Director of Destroyers.

"This is just the first in a series of trials to come, but it is a significant milestone along the way. All the teams that have worked closely together are rightly proud of the work they've done."

More test firings will be conducted later this year before final trials in 2009.

The combination of Aster missile and Sampson radar is intended to give HMS Daring and her sisters the edge over enemy air attack. PAAMS is capable of tracking hundreds of potential targets at any one time and, in theory, can destroy a cricket-ball-sized target travelling at three times the speed of sound.

Picture: MBDA



RFA finds life in MARS

THE next generation of ships to top up the Fleet could be built anywhere in the world – but not Britain – as Whitehall begins a global competition.

The Rover and Leaf-class tankers, which are the mainstay of global RN operations, are between 24 and 34 years old – hence the need for replacements as part of the MARS (Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability) programme.

The MOD has singled out four shipbuilders/defence firms from whom they want to see design proposals for the replacement tankers.

Fincantieri in Italy, Hyundai (South Korea), Navantia (Spain) and a consortium of BAE Systems/BMT DSL and DSME (South Korea) are bidding for the multi-million-pound contract.

Whichever firm wins the eventual order, it will build the vessels outside the UK as British shipbuilders have their hands full constructing the Type 45 destroyers and new aircraft carriers until the middle of the next decade.

Meanwhile, a 'brains trust' of the best naval architects and engineers in the UK has been formed to design the RN's ships of the future.

The Naval Design Partnership, based in Bristol, pools talent from shipbuilding firms such as BAE, VT, BMT and Babcock, plus major defence firms such as Thales and QinetiQ.

The partnership initially will be up to 25-people strong, led by an MOD chief engineer, and will work first of all on the replacement for the Type 23 frigate.

The so-called Future Surface Combatant has been mooted for the past decade, but it will be the team's aim to begin to turn the ship into reality.

The designers will come up with detailed specifications for the vessel – due to enter service around the middle of the next decade – such that it receives initial approval from Whitehall before the end of the year.

If the £2m pilot partnership project delivers the goods as expected, its brief may be extended to look at the MARS project.



● HMS Vanguard leaves Gareloch on the Clyde for training. The V-boat is one of four nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines which form Britain's nuclear deterrent

Picture: LA(Phot) Iggy Roberts, (FRPU Clyde)



Torbay leads the way

HMS TORBAY has become the first Royal Navy submarine cleared to navigate digitally using the WECDIS system.

Some 50 ships have been fitted with the equipment (Warship Electronic Chart Display and Information System), but Torbay is the pioneer for the Submarine Flotilla following tests conducted by the Maritime Commissioning Trials and Assessment organisation and Flag Officer Sea Training (Submarines).

Felix Klausner, of Lockheed Martin, said: "The submarine variant of WECDIS has been designed to ensure accurate dived navigation, improved safety and enhanced situational awareness and polar navigation for operations under the Arctic Circle."

WECDIS works with new and existing equipment on board, and can provide automatic alarms and detailed information about areas of particular interest.

Superb puts in at Souda Bay

ATTACK submarine HMS Superb, which was damaged when she struck an underwater pinnacle in the Red Sea in May, has been undergoing repairs in Crete.

The S-boat had an initial inspection in Aqaba, Jordan, to ensure her safe passage through the Suez Canal.

As *Navy News* went to press she had been at the NATO facility in Souda Bay for further assessment and essential repairs.

The collision, which is under investigation, damaged ballast tanks and her sonar system, but had no effect on the nuclear propulsion system.

There were no casualties.



● HMS Tireless operating in the Arctic Circle during ICEX 07

Picture: PO(Phot) Terry Seward

Contamination blamed for Tireless explosion

OIL contamination of a chemical oxygen generator is thought to have caused an explosion which led to the death of two submariners on board HMS Tireless last year.

Poor storage, stowage and handling over a lengthy period of time was deemed the most likely reason for the contamination – but the President of the Board of Inquiry praised the professionalism of the submarine's crew in dealing with the incident itself.

The nuclear boat was on an under-ice exercise with an American submarine in the Arctic in March last year when a routine operation to maintain oxygen levels on board went wrong.

When operating in very cold waters, the boat's own electrolysis system is less efficient, and to counter this SCOGs (Self Contained Oxygen Generators), introduced in 2003, are normally used.

Each SCOG is a steel canister containing a chemical block sealed against contamination. A charge is placed in the cap and fired to trigger a reaction, producing oxygen.

Warnings are printed on the canisters, and operating procedures warn of the dangers of contamination, particularly by hydrocarbons.

Exhaustive forensic tests carried out by NASA – who became involved as they embrace similar technology in their space programme – revealed that the most likely cause of the explosion was liquid oil contamination, with cracking of the sodium chlorate block thought to be contributory factor.

Two men – LOM Paul McCann and OM Anthony Huntrod – died from injuries received when the SCOG they activated in Tireless' forward escape compartment burst apart, slamming a door in the deck shut and buckling it.

A third man was injured, and the Board praised his actions in using his bare hands to douse the flames caused by the SCOG and trying to help his stricken shipmates. He has been presented with a bravery award.

The crew could not open the hatch for 44 minutes, though gaps around the hatch allowed smoke to pass through the boat.

Tireless was under the ice north of Alaska at the time of the incident, on March 20 local time, and could not surface immediately, but the Board found that emergency procedures were carried out to a high standard, despite confusion – many people reported that the explosion had happened close to them, the smoke set off fire alarms, and the force of the

blast had depressed flood alarm buttons in the affected compartment.

It took 45 minutes to find a polynya – a hole in the ice – into which Tireless could surface and vent the smoke.

It also allowed the boat to land the dead and injured sailors – and there was praise for the staff of a nearby American ice camp, particularly the helicopter pilot, whose operating procedures precluded night-flying but who flew a casualty evacuation mission.

Board President Capt Jake Moores noted that the submarine had not been endangered by the explosion, which did not affect the nuclear system.

The actions of the command team was lauded; despite flood alarms, the absence of rising pressure and the stability of the boat suggested to them that there was no flooding, so they kept a watertight bulkhead open which made damage control and firefighting more effective.

The crew and medical team also reacted in a professional manner.

Capt Moores said: "The submarine crew handled the incident very, very well indeed."

"The damage control and firefighting effort was superb. This is a testament to the training and professionalism of all submariners."

The Board could not prove how cracking and contamination of the faulty SCOG occurred, but it is thought most likely to have been in the storage, handling and stowage of the device – hundreds are taken on board submarines and removed again after such exercises, and the flawed SCOG could have been stored and destroyed repeatedly.

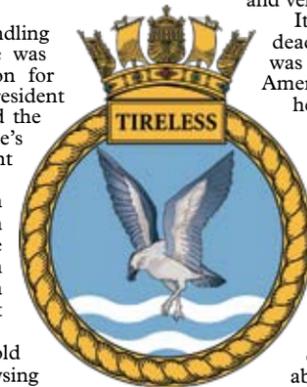
It is also understood that Tireless' SCOGs were delivered to the jetty and left uncovered two weeks before she sailed.

The cracking of the block allowed the oil to seep throughout the chemical, and allowed a much larger contact surface when the reaction went wrong; a further factor was that the SCOG is contained in a restrictive metal container, and the rising pressure caused an even fiercer reaction.

The board was confident that the use of SCOGs, if properly manufactured, stored, handled and deployed, was not a risk.

But among the 35 recommendations, all accepted by Commander-in-Chief Fleet, are a suggestion to alter the design in the light of the accident, and to improve the logistics chain handling it, including better quality control, education and training.

Other agencies are investigating aspects of the supply chain for SCOGs; Boards of Inquiry make recommendations following a consideration of evidence, but do not apportion blame.





Royals mourn the loss of 'a top bloke'

A TALEBAN mine claimed the life of a 22-year-old Royal Marine when his Viking armoured vehicle rolled over it.

Colleagues described Mne Dale Gostick (pictured above in a Viking) as "a huge character" in every sense of the word – a first-rate commando, a first-rate comrade and a first-rate person.

The 22-year-old from Oxford was serving with 3 Troop, Armoured Support Company RM, and returning from a patrol near the Sangin crossing of the Helmand River when his Viking struck the mine.

Medics on the scene provided instant first aid but there was nothing they could do to save the commando, who had been serving in Afghanistan since December.

After initially serving in 42 Commando upon completion of his basic training, Dale volunteered as a Viking operator and deployed with 3 Commando Brigade in 2006-07 before returning to the theatre for his second tour of duty late last year.

"Dale was a bright, brave and popular lad. He was always at the front of the queue when helping out the other blokes and he enjoyed life with his friends," said Capt Daniel Caldwell RM, Officer Commanding 1 Troop. "The words that keep being mentioned describing him are: gentle, strong, understanding with a sharp wit. Having someone like that around makes everyone better."

Friends knew Dale as 'master chief general of the universe' – reflecting his larger-than-life outlook on life.

"If I was ever down or annoyed about something, I knew that going to Dale would be the thing to do," said L/Cpl Dan Andrew.

"Dale was a top bloke – everyone got on with him and everyone will miss him."

■ **FAMILIES** of Service personnel killed on active duty or as a result of terrorist acts will receive an award to honour the sacrifices. A memorial scroll and some form of emblem which loved ones can wear will be produced by Whitehall, following recommendations from all three Service heads.

"It is a sad but unavoidable reality that some of our brave Service personnel pay the ultimate sacrifice in the name of their country," said Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup.

"That is why my fellow Chiefs of Staff and I believe the time is right to recommend a new award for the families of those who die on operations in recognition of their loss.

"We will now be giving careful thought to how we can do this in a fitting way."

A form of memorial scroll was issued on behalf of the monarch during both World Wars and the Korean conflict; emblems are new to the UK, but Service personnel in Canada and New Zealand are honoured in such a way.

An MOD team is now working on the form the scroll and emblem will take before the awards are issued.

The team will also decide how far back the award, which will be retrospective, will go.

Its findings will be published before the end of the year.



● 'If they add another deck we can play human tic-tac-toe'... Two of RFA Fort Austin's crew take a breather during a replenishment of HMS Westminster

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East

Austin translation

WHAT'S in a name?

Well, a good 3,000 miles for a start.

More astute *Navy News* readers may have noticed a 'deliberate' faux pas in our recent coverage of the Orion 08 deployment, in which we placed Fort Victoria firmly at the heart of the task group.

Except that she's been parked alongside in Basin No.3 in Pompey for a good few months now... unlike Fort *Austin*. (*You're an idiot - Ed.*) So apologies to her ship's company who have been at the hub of Orion 08.

And to prove it, her assistant logistics supply officer 3/O David Adkins tells us what she's been doing east of Suez:

Bahrain provided an unscheduled port visit in early April which, by sheer luck, coincided with the F1 grand prix being in town. Many of the ships' company took advantage of this and headed to the Sakhr circuit for a day out none will ever forget.

Another opportunity not to be missed was resupplying the mine warfare vessels of the Aintree task group, based in Bahrain, with ammo to replenish reducing stocks.

Leaving Bahrain, and rejoining the task group, Fort Austin headed east for the shores of India and the

beginning of the anti-submarine warfare exercise, Konkan.

The journey east was uneventful, although a marked change in climatic conditions was noticed by everyone: 35°C (95°F) and 80 per cent humidity adds an additional challenge to the working day.

Anchoring off the port of Mormugao provided a few days to explore Goa.

This was the first time in India for many – some headed straight for the beaches with others exploring the markets of Anjuna. Not too many people can boast of a day trip to India.

Hosting a multi-national cocktail party during the stay in Goa, INS Mysore represented the might of the Indian Navy. Influenced by former Soviet ship design, the Indian Navy is the region's major naval power.

Numerous opportunities existed throughout the deployment for personnel to 'x-pol' – essentially the exchange of personnel between vessels, allowing each to experience the ways of the other.

HMS Trafalgar provided the first, with Austin's CO Capt Dale Worthington joining his counterparts for lunch under the Indian Ocean and then 3/O(LS)

Adkins and John Dalton from the STO(N) department 'winning' the chance to spend the night onboard.

Lt. Cdr Nilesh Khokle spent a week onboard Fort Austin experiencing just about everything that makes a ship of the RFA 'tick', while 2/O(LS) Hill, the deputy logistics supply officer and PTO Andy Waugh joined supply ship INS Aditya to allow them to make numerous comparisons.

Another x-pol was offered by the USS Cole, badly damaged in a terrorist attack in Yemen in 2000. On their return from the ship, everyone spoke of just how moving the memorial to those killed in that attack was.

HMS Illustrious provided the last chance of the deployment for personnel to transfer – the lucky ones from Fort Austin being the two first-trip deck cadets, Joe Davies and Dean Southall.

The INS Mysore made a reappearance later in the exercise conducting a replenishment at sea serial, representing the growing relationship between the two navies.

The primary responsibility for supplying the variety of demands placed on Fort Austin lay with the 22 people that make up the

STO(N) department.

Preparing and transferring the loads with the ship's company and in some 40 days during Orion 08, nearly 100 tonnes of ammunition were transferred, together with almost 120 tonnes of fresh and frozen food. Other everyday essentials included 1,600kg of laundry powder and 11,800 toilet rolls.

In total 604 loads were transferred to and from 14 ships – 77 of those by helicopter using a technique known as Vertrep, vertical replenishment.

Perhaps the most unusual of these replenishment serials was the transfer of stores to HMS Trafalgar – the first time many onboard had encountered a RAS with a submarine.

15,056 miles and 59 days later Fort Austin and her crew were once more in the Mediterranean Sea.

After the highs of the Indian Ocean, a temperature of 20°C (69°F) seemed positively chilly. Homeward-bound and with many of the crew anticipating their leave with some relish, a brief stop was made in the Sicilian city of Palermo.

Then it was on to Glen Mallen ammunition depot in Scotland, some re-storing, a change of almost one third of the ship's company and some more training before a spell of TLC.



Super seven from Bayleaf

A COUPLE of months ago we mused about the five-year trip of HMS Echo.

Well, quite frankly, as far as RFA Bayleaf is concerned, five years is little more than a brief jaunt.

When the tanker arrived in the Gulf, Saddam Hussein was still in charge in Baghdad, Gordon Brown was living in No.11, Pompey were dreaming of the Premiership, and HMS Daring was a few pieces of seemingly shapeless steel.

Well that was 2001. Seven years down the line, the floating fuel depot arrived in Portland.

Bayleaf has been the mainstay of RN operations in the Gulf. But not only the Senior Service have made use of her. In fact vessels from 16 different nations have topped up their fuel tanks in 767 replenishments at sea.

Although most of the time has been spent in the Gulf (including 84 visits to either Dubai or nearby Jebel Ali), the tanker has passed through the Strait of Hormuz 126 times and clocked up 330,000 miles at sea.

"We've supported warships over a large area of the Gulf region, made many new friends and made Bayleaf a welcoming pit stop for all," said CO Capt Kim Watts, who spent three of those seven years on the tanker and brought her home.

"The ship's company have worked hard, often in the challenging Arabian heat, to allow coalition warships to remain on their vital tasking."

Home waters are where the ship will stay for the foreseeable future, providing fuel and training for ships passing through OST.

Bayleaf's role in the Middle East is being filled by the much larger and more modern RFA Wave Knight which, on top of the 14,000 tonnes of fuel in her tanks, also carries supplies, aviation fuel, ammo, and fresh water for any Allied warships which need them.

"Bayleaf had become very much a stalwart in this region," said her CO Capt Rob Dorey. "We offer considerable extra capacity – coupled with quite a turn of speed."

The ship honed her skills with the Orion 08 task force before parting company from them to relieve Bayleaf.

■ **Gulf round-up, pages 14-15**

Pilot jumps to safety

RESIDENTS praised the skill of a naval aviator for steering his crippled Harrier away from their village.

The GR7 jet came down just a few hundred feet from the edge of the village of Ashwell in Rutland; its pilot ejected seconds before the Harrier smashed into farmland and erupted in a fireball.

Eyewitnesses described flashes and flames coming from the back of the jet before it plunged towards the ground. They also watched its pilot drift down to the ground by parachute.

He was taken by air ambulance to the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham for treatment to injuries which were described as 'non-life-threatening'. No-one on the ground was hurt.

The pilot from the Naval Strike Wing, based at nearby RAF Cottesmore, was practising with fellow FAA fliers for a return to Afghanistan later this year in support of peacekeeping efforts.

A Board of Inquiry is looking into the causes of the crash.

Albion goes Dutch in Africa

ASSAULT ship HMS Albion paid a rare visit to Ibiza as she headed to West Africa for summer exercises with the Dutch.

The Balearics are, of course, hugely popular among Brits but RN visits are rather more infrequent.

So Albion's sailors made the most of their brief visit. After an official reception and press conference aboard the landing ship, most ship's company headed ashore to sample the famous Ibiza nightlife.

For the more mature crew members, however, there were some sedate activities. Several senior rates chartered a yacht, while Albion's cricket team played their opening match of the deployment (and came second).

The fun done, it was time for business. On leaving Ibiza, Albion made for Gib to conduct amphibious exercises, notably the art of getting ashore and pushing off stuck

landing craft courtesy of the ship's beach recovery vehicle, Hercules.

The mess decks of the Devonport-based warship resound to an unfamiliar tongue as Netherlands marines are on board, part of a long-standing agreement between the marine corps of the two nations.

They have been getting used to life aboard a British warship, including joining the ship's company in the Fleet rowing competition (and helping Albion to a particularly impressive overall time we're told).

They're also getting used to the keep fit dynamic aboard Albion, which begins with 'Wake up with Clubz' – a pre-breakfast workout led by the PTI, then 'red hot circuits' in the midday sun, followed by afternoon circuits and laps of the flight deck.

After all that exercise, you need to cool off, and thankfully there was a pool aboard... although King Neptune was in charge of it.

As Albion crossed the equator, so those who'd never passed the imaginary line before faced a dunking. Unfortunately, Neptune's log was rather out of date, and despite having 'crossed the line' a good few times, CO Capt Wayne Keble was the first to get soaked.

Thankfully, he dried out to guide his ship into Lagos for work with the Nigerian Navy, beginning with sea survival and maintenance training.

The ship also hosted an official reception and ceremonial sunset for guests in a sweltering well deck, with guests transported to and from Albion in her landing craft.

As well as delivering training, Albion is also delivering 350 shoeboxes to Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

They are filled not with their usual content, but aid donated by children in the UK for their counterparts in Africa.

Warships pay respects to Barrabas

NOT one but two Royal Navy warships welcomed a lone yachtsman home from a record-breaking global challenge.

Two and a half years ago, Adrian Flanagan left the Hamble determined to circumnavigate the world vertically – via Arctic and Antarctic waters – in his 40ft-steel-hull yacht Barrabas.

On a fine spring day in 2008, he returned to the Solent in Barrabas, shepherded home by university training boat HMS Trumpeter and a flotilla of small boats.

CPO Chris Bamber handed the intrepid yachtsman a bacon sandwich and cup of tea before they sailed together to Hamble and the final destination of a 31,000-mile odyssey.

That odyssey began on October 28 2005 and took Adrian on the first single-handed, vertical circumnavigation westwards via Cape Horn and the Russian Arctic.

“In this day and age there are very few firsts in the yachting world, and to pull this off is excellent,” said Lt Will King, Trumpeter’s CO, a keen yachtsman himself.

“I can’t begin to imagine all the hardships he must have gone through to achieve this. To cap it all, he is a thoroughly nice bloke; I am definitely going to be buying his book.”

Trumpeter was the second RN vessel Adrian had bumped into a week. The meeting with the P2000 was planned. The encounter with fishery protection ship HMS Mersey was a pleasant surprise.

Ship and yacht met off the east coast while Mersey was carrying out fishery duties in the North Sea.

S/Lt Chris Stevens, the ship’s gunnery officer, climbed into the sea boat to welcome Adrian back to UK waters.

The junior officer handed over a donation from the River-class ship’s company to the two charities the sailor has been supporting: Oxford Children’s Hospital and Save the Children.

The yachtsman was also presented with a bottle of port to celebrate with when he finally returned to Hamble.

“As a fellow seafarer I have the utmost respect for what he has achieved, particularly as it is all for charity,” said Mersey’s Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Alan Wilson.

The lone yachtsman was equally chuffed with bumping into Mersey.

“This was a wonderful surprise and a generous and hugely appreciated gesture by the Royal Navy. It made my day,” he enthused.

“I shall raise a toast to you and the ship’s company of HMS Mersey when I am alongside at the Royal Southern Yacht Club.”

Brief encounter over, Mersey resumed her fish patrol.

CATS eyes

WAILING banshees will help protect Royal Marines and the Fleet from air attack in the future.

Whitehall has signed at £360m deal over the next two decades to provide combined aerial target training or CATS for all three Services.

Two targets will be used first under the CATS initiative, the Banshee drone and a pop-up helicopter target.

The small Banshee robot aircraft (it has a wingspan of less than 10ft and flies for up to an hour at a time at sub-sonic speeds) will be used to train Royal Marines in live-firing exercises. If not destroyed, the drone can be recovered and reused.

It will also be used to test Sea Dart and, in due course, PAAMS missiles on the RN’s destroyer fleet.

As part of the CATS scheme, more aerial targets will be devised in the coming years to train the Forces to deal with aerial threats.

What lies beneath

THE Baltic is almost pondlike, the familiar outline of HMS Roebuck reflected in its calm waters.

Ah, but what lies beneath is danger.

For ten days the survey ship (pictured below) which is the command vessel of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (SNMCMG1) directed Allied warships in a sweep of Lithuanian waters.

For the past 13 years, ships have been disposing of the leftovers of ordnance from two European conflagrations – discarded bombs, unexploded mines and the like.

Considerable progress has been made since the first efforts to clear the Baltic back in 1995 and the mine warfare teams are aided by BOP/BOM (not a 1960s jive but Baltic Ordnance Pilot/Baltic Ordnance Map), comprehensive charts and documents which mark all known minefields in the region based on input from all nations who laid them during the 20th Century.

Linking up with a French task force, and a dedicated Baltic squadron, the force systematically moved through Lithuanian waters.

Roebuck is in charge of an assortment of ever-changing minehunting vessels from across the NATO world, including the Happy H – you might know her better as HMS Hurworth.

The combination of perfect weather/sea conditions and rather Gucci mine warfare kit worked wonders in the Baltic.

The Hurworth sonar and dive teams found the usual detritus of war (torpedoes, bombs and mines) and the not so usual (a tree, a baked bean tin, a bread crate and a train wheel).

“The question on most of our minds was: what happened to the train?” mused Hurworth Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Andy Woolhead. “Perhaps it hit the tree.”

In all, a dozen unexploded items became a dozen exploded items as the three groups of ships moved through the sea, before they headed in Klaipeda for a break.

There it was time to bid farewell to FGS Herten and Latvia’s Imanta; the latter needed an icebreaker to help her out of her home port of Liepaja but returned home in glorious sunshine.

She’s only the second Latvian

ship to join the mine warfare group and proved to be a popular addition.

Almost as popular, indeed, as the visit to Klaipeda. (Hurworth’s ship’s company assure us they were not tempted by the low-priced beer or scran, however.)

From Lithuania, the force headed west for the Bay of Gdansk and a week working with another newcomer to SNMCMG1, the Polish Navy.

In two years time the Poles will take command of the group (leadership rotates around the participating nations) so here was a chance to share experiences.

Then it was past Hel (the narrow spit which arches into the Bay of Gdansk), along the Pomeranian coast, through the Kiel Canal, a brief pitstop in Hamburg, and on to the Bay of Biscay for Roebuck and Hurworth for Exercise Loyal Mariner, a major annual war game with NATO’s Response Force which involves far more than the mine warfare group.

Indeed, some 40 Allied warships from carriers and assault ships to destroyers and frigates were mustering off Ferrol in north-west Spain as *Navy News* went to press to test the ability of NATO’s maritime force to respond to a possible international crisis.



... and super seven from Largs too

IN GOOD *Sesame Street* fashion, the RFA seemed to have been sponsored by the number seven.

Bayleaf spent seven years away (see opposite). For landing support ship RFA Largs Bay, the number seven was followed by ‘months’ rather than ‘years’.

She has spent the winter and spring in the Caribbean dividing her time between putting the boot into drug runners and helping the region’s defence forces train.

We’ll begin with the drugs: 575kg (1,267lb) of cocaine was seized on a Venezuelan fishing boat by the Largs-815 NAS Lynx combination.

Five weeks of the deployment were spent in Willemstad on the island of Curacao in the Dutch East Indies – and the close relationships forged with locals prompted an invite to the Netherlands’ Navy Days in Den Helder this month.

Some encounters in Willemstad were a little too close, however.

The container ship MV Rickman was trying to leave the container berth in strong winds... and bashed Largs.

Although the RFA wasn’t in any great danger, all hands were brought to emergency stations to carry out damage repairs and check every compartment for watertight integrity.

Fortunately, after temporary repairs (and an independent survey by the local Lloyds agent), the ship was passed ‘safe’ and headed to sea the next day.

Much of the ship’s time was spent working with the defence forces of the Caribbean, offering her unique facilities and sharing the expertise of her ship’s company to the military of Jamaica, Barbados and Martinique among others.

All of this is, if not a far cry, then quite a bit different from what Largs was designed to do: supporting amphibious landings.

You’ll be able to see what Largs Bay is capable of at Meet Your Navy later this month (see page 11 for more details).

Before that the ship hosts the Earl of Wessex when he presents the RFA with the Queen’s Colour in Portsmouth on July 18 in recognition of the auxiliary fleet’s constant support for the RN and the nation over more than a century.

Lynx flight honoured

815 Naval Air Squadron’s 214 Flight earned a trophy in memory of fallen comrades thanks to their dedication in three distinctly different operations.

The Osprey Trophy was inaugurated last year to remember HMS Portland’s Flight which crashed into the Channel in December 2004 during a search and rescue mission.

It is awarded annually to the squadron Flight which best captures the 815 NAS spirit and ethos.

And in 2007 that was achieved by 214 who found themselves in Northern Ireland (Operation Banner), then the Falklands (during the sea swap trial) and finally in the Caribbean aboard RFA Wave Knight.

The latter operation saw the Lynx team receive international recognition for their deeds in the Dominican Republic which was ravaged by tropical storm Noel. Noel caused floods, landslides and the loss of hundreds of lives in some of the poorest and remotest communities.

214 provided humanitarian relief as part of a wider international effort, flying 33 hours in under three days, delivering essential supplies of water, food, clothing and hygiene kits in the process.

Flight Commander Lt Matt ‘Taz’ Tazwell received the trophy from Rear Admiral Simon Charlier, Chief-of-Staff (Aviation) in a ceremony at RNAS Yeovilton.

‘A positive lasting impression’

BACK in the bosom of Portsmouth Naval Base, the men and women of HMS Manchester can relax... finally.

Of her 198 days away from home, the venerable destroyer spent more than 150 in the Gulf escorting USS Harry S Truman, one of America’s super-carriers.

The Americans work their carriers hard... which mean their escorts work hard too. Four out of five days in the Gulf were spent at sea defending the Truman against possible attack by air or sea, placing enormous demands on man (and woman) and machine.

Indeed, there aren’t too many ships which have faced greater demands these past 12 months.

HMS Monmouth clocked up 40,000 miles during her world tour, 11,000 more than HMS Campbeltown which has recently

returned home from the Gulf.

As for Manchester, by the time she came alongside in Pompey, her odometer read 42,500 nautical miles steamed since casting off last November – truly a testament to her marine engineering department.

It takes more than blood, toil, tears and sweat to keep the Busy Bee’s engines running of course. Try nine million litres (two million gallons) of dieso supplied during 29 (count ‘em) replenishments at sea; the nuclear-powered Truman doesn’t need to refuel – and expects her escorts to maintain pace with her.

Sailors need fuel too. Just for good measure the chefs, sorry

logisticians (catering services (preparation)) rustled up 151,000 meals for their shipmates.

Not all Manchester’s Gulf experience was devoted to the Truman. Just for good measure she spent a spell safeguarding Iraq’s two oil platforms.

The lasting impression of the 2007-08 deployment, however, will be the long stints working alongside the Americans – and if the Brits were impressed by what 100,000 tons of the U S of A could do, then the Yanks were rather impressed by what a 1980s British destroyer and her resilient crew could achieve.

“The Strike Group went out of their way to welcome Manchester,”

said the Busy Bee’s CO Cdr David Dominy.

“The positive lasting impression left with the Americans is ultimately down to my ship’s company. Their determination to make the deployment a success is testament to their dedication, determination, innovation, resilience and pride.

“It’s been my honour and an absolute pleasure to command them.”

The road paved by Manchester should make it easier for RN ships to slot into American task groups in the future.

Once the Type 42 finally parted company with the American carrier, there was a belated chance for the Brits to let their hair down first in Rhodes, then in Barcelona (there was some defence diplomacy thrown in during both visits – it’s not all fun, you know).





All change, please, for Southampton

A LARGE crowd gathered on the jetty next to HMS Southampton to capture one of the more impressive sights in naval engineering: an engine change.

A Rolls-Royce Tyne engine to be precise, lifted out of the bowels of the Saint during a spell of maintenance for the Type 42 in Portsmouth Naval Base.

The Tyne – a maritime version of a jet which powered airliners and military aircraft – is one of two which powers the Saint at cruising speed (the destroyer uses the less-economical RR Olympus engines for higher speeds – they generate more than four times as much shaft horse power as the Tynes).

As it's not an everyday occurrence, a sizeable number of ship's company and naval base staff watched the old engine being hauled out of the ship via the intakes which normally feed air to the gas turbines.

Now with her new Tyne installed, Southampton is gearing up for a series of training exercises around the UK.

And although she's an old lady, at least Southampton's wardroom have mastered the art of looking ten years younger.

Sadly, they've not found the Holy Grail or mastered the secret of eternal youth.

Nope, the average age of officers has fallen from 35 to 25 thanks to an influx of seven young officers who're spending four months with the Saint for their Common Fleet Time.

Common Fleet Time is intended to give trainee officers the full RN experience – it's the same for logistics, warfare or engineer officers.

And that means getting involved in every aspect of wardroom life, from watchkeeping and rounds to creating the weekly menu and, crucially, providing 4 o'clockers (afternoon tea and stickies for the ship's company).

On leaving Southampton, the seven rookie officers face a Fleet Board exam and, if successful, move on to specialist training.

Kent's bucket floweth over

LONG before thoughts of royalty entered the minds of HMS Iron Duke's ship's company (see above right), there was the more pressing matter of Type 23 pride.

The Ducks challenged HMS Kent to the Rock Race when the two frigates arrived in Gib at the beginning of their respective deployments.

And the men of Kent won the scramble to the top of the 1,300ft peak, Mid Cator posting the quickest time of the runners in under 24 minutes.

Sport continued back on board Kent, with a memorial contest in honour of MEM Chris Devling.

Chris died following a fall in Rome during a run ashore two years ago, but his name lives on in the form of the Devling Cup which fosters inter-mess camaraderie.

The honour of lifting the cup went to the 42-man mess who triumphed at bucket ball – a cross between netball and rugby (supposedly) minus the contact element.

While Iron Duke is heading west to the Caribbean, Kent will sail as far east as China during her six-month deployment to Asia.

She is now ploughing through the Med conducting maritime security patrols keeping tabs on movements by other ships on the high seas.

"Since February this year my entire crew has undergone specialist training and we are now ready for anything, anywhere in the world – be it boardings, disaster relief or fighting terrorism," said Kent's CO Cdr Simon Hopper.

A prince and a duke

THE complement of Her Majesty's Ship Iron Duke will soon be 185 souls plus one with Prince William joining the frigate on drug-busting duties.

The future monarch is spending two months attached to the Senior Service – including five weeks with the Portsmouth-based frigate.

Whitehall could have picked few better vessels to introduce the prince – who will hold the rank of sub-lieutenant – to the Royal Navy.

The Type 23 left Portsmouth late last month bound for the Caribbean having received plaudits from naval trainers.

Iron Duke received the rare distinction of an 'excellent' mark from Flag Officer Sea Training, the Devonport-based organisation which prepares all RN vessels for the rigours of front-line action.

Iron Duke's Commanding Officer Cdr Mark Newland said the eight-week stint at FOST, the final act of preparation for deployment following his frigate's emerging from refit last September, had demanded a "huge effort" from his team – a huge effort which was more than worthwhile.

"I am proud that we were assessed as being amongst the best British warships to have completed FOST over the past two years," he added.

"Everyone is excited about the coming deployment – many younger members of the ship's company have never deployed before and are looking forward to the experience.

"There is a little sadness as the ship leaves

those we care about for such a long period of time, but that is offset by the knowledge that the ship's company is trained, ready and capable of doing all that is asked of us."

Some of the training which Cdr Newland's sailors have gone through is currently being undertaken by S/Lt Wales including sea safety/survival and fire-fighting.

The prince has also received a whistle-stop introduction to the Senior Service, its history and ethos and some basic seamanship training.

As with his brother's tour of duty in Afghanistan with the Army, there was something of a media frenzy surrounding the announcement of S/Lt Wales' impending attachment to Iron Duke.

The Royal watchers at the *Daily Mail* offer this (not entirely accurate) insight into the life of a junior officer:

He will be woken at 6.30am and be at breakfast by 7.15am, where he will have a choice of a full English or cereal and fresh fruit.

The Navy advises crew to make breakfast a 'hearty' meal to provide energy for their busy regime.

Lunch is typically a choice of cottage pie, roast chicken, vegetarian lasagne or a salad, while the supper menu will be soup followed by a 'meat and veg' dish, a pudding or, sometimes, a filling Welsh rarebit.

When not tucking into 'Welsh rarebit' (not something any of the *Navy News* team has eaten in more than 30 years' experience of working with the RN), senior officers say the Royal will play a full role aboard the frigate for the duration of his attachment.

"If we treated him like some super-VIP and tailored a programme for him and walked around on eggshells, then it would be difficult," Rear Admiral Bob Cooling, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff, told Royal correspondents.

"He is going to come in just like any other young officer and do all the things young officers get involved in.

"We don't have passengers out in warships for obvious reasons and he will need to be able to pull his weight in an emergency!"

First stop for the prince was not the mangroves and golden shores of the Caribbean but the lush, rolling terrain of Devonshire and Britannia Royal Naval College, which his father attended nearly four decades ago – and his grandfather 70 years ago.

Having already passed out of Sandhurst as a trained Army officer, S/Lt Wales didn't have to go through all the rigmaroles of new-entry officer training.

But there are some nautical duties no sailors can escape, not even heirs to the throne... such as releasing the anchor chain with a rather large hammer.

Except said chain refused to budge, which, in fine RN tradition, meant the Royal had to buy a crate of beer for fellow cadets (*he can probably afford it – Ed*).

As for Iron Duke, she's away from Portsmouth until the end of the year with the bulk of her time devoted to suffocating the drug trade.

To that end a team from the US Coast Guard will also join the frigate to conduct the counter-narcotics mission.

In addition, the ship will be available for disaster relief operations should natural disaster strike during the hurricane season.

● Iron Duke leaves Portsmouth bound for her date with a prince

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson, FRPU East



THIS is the moment the Navy's jet of the future took to the sky for the first time.

The jump jet version of the Joint Strike Fighter, the successor to the Harrier, made its maiden voyage in the skies of Texas.

Versions and prototypes of the Joint Strike Fighter – officially designated the F35 – have been airborne for several years.

But Britain has ordered a short take off/ vertical

landing (STOVL) model of the supersonic fighter-bomber, rather than the conventional jets already flying.

Neither the short take-off nor vertical landing ability were tested, however, when former Harrier pilot Graham Tomlinson climbed into the cockpit at Lockheed Martin's Fort Worth works and took the F35B out for a 'spin'.

He was airborne for 46 minutes, climbing to 15,000ft and

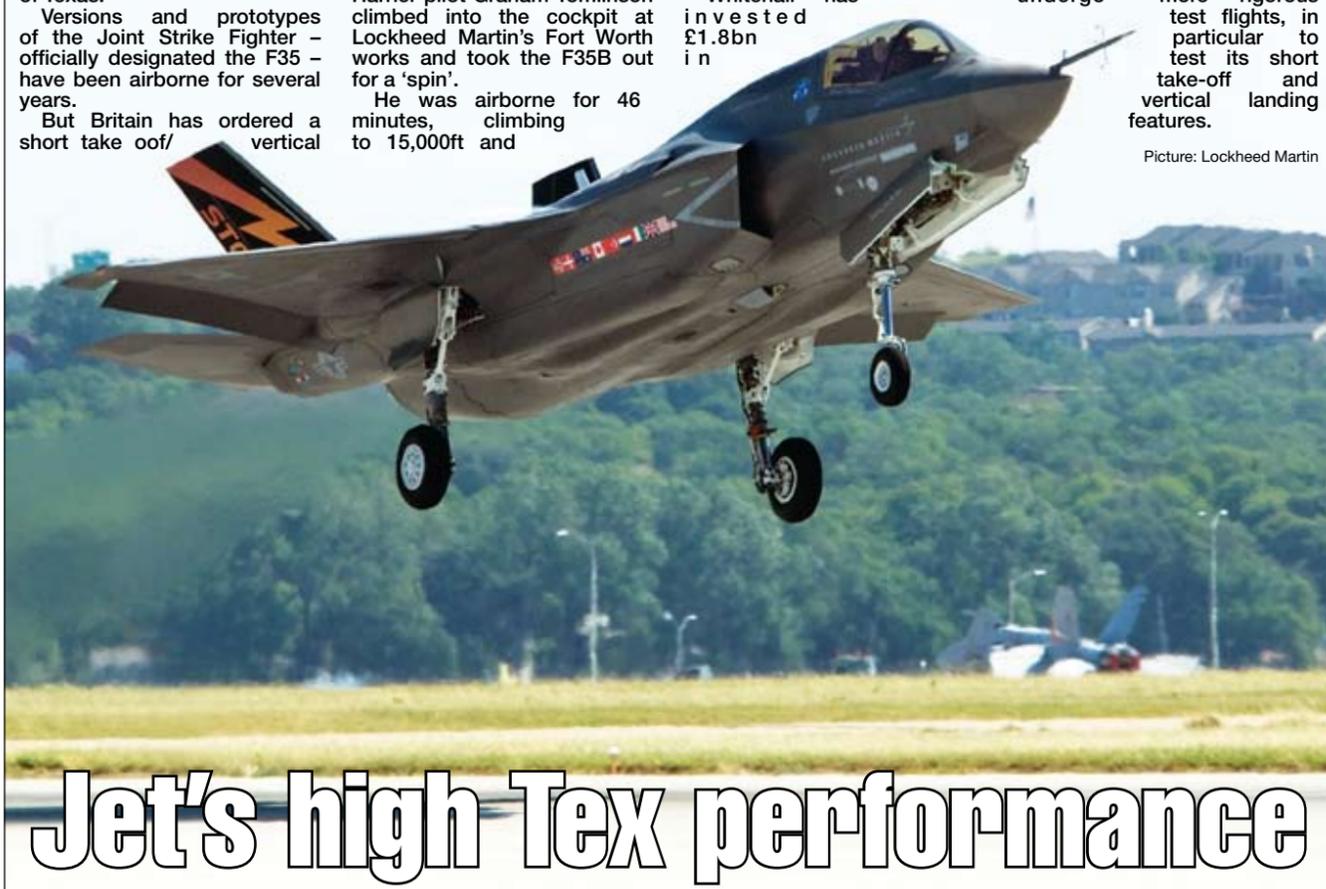
conducting various systems and handling checks; he took off and landed in the conventional manner – something the JSF can do as well as those rapid launches and pin-point landings.

Whitehall has invested £1.8bn in

the JSF which will be the punch of future carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales and will be flown by Fleet Air Arm and RAF pilots.

Having overcome its initial hurdle, the F35B will now undergo more rigorous test flights, in particular to test its short take-off and vertical landing features.

Picture: Lockheed Martin



Jet's high Tex performance

Return of the Saint

YOU'VE not read about HMS St Albans for a long time because she's been in refit north of the border.

But not any more. The Type 23 frigate has been out of action for the past 12 months as shipwrights, technicians and electronics experts at Babcock in Rosyth beavered around her.

The £10m package of improvements to the Portsmouth-based include:

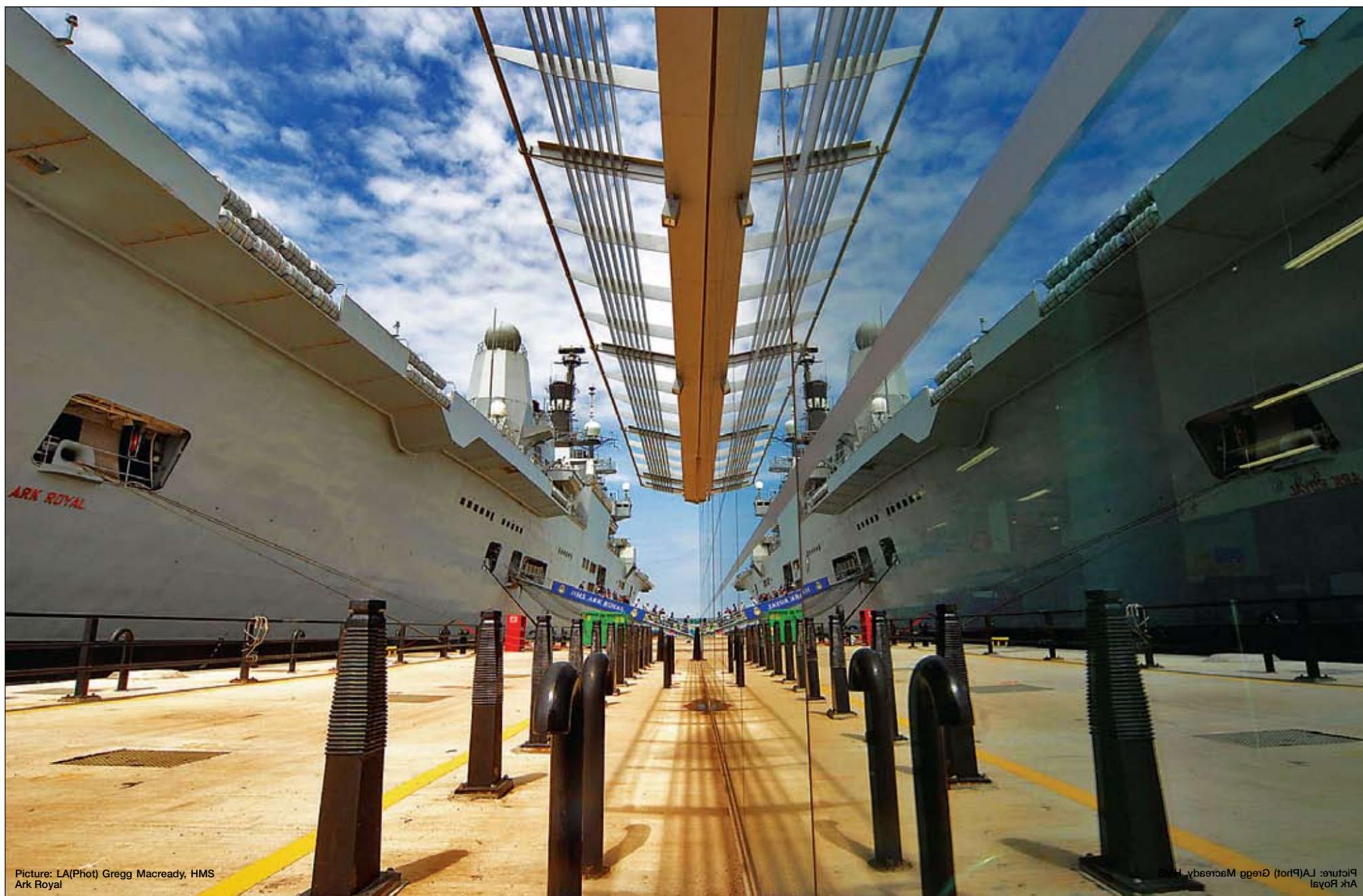
- Sonar 2087, the world's best submarine-hunting kit;
- hangar and flight deck adapted for Merlin helicopter
- new 30mm automatic gun enhanced communications.

With all these additions and enhancements made, St Albans put to sea for the first time at the beginning of June for six weeks of sea trials.

Not quite, but almost, ready for sea is HMS Ocean which has emerged from dry dock after six months.

The sluices in the dock in Devonport were opened 13 days ahead of schedule and by the time you read this, the ship's company should be filing aboard ahead of taking the helicopter carrier to sea next month.

Ocean has received some £30m of TLC and improvements at the hands of Babcock Marine, including an overhaul of her machinery, accommodation and galley, plus better facilities for hosting Apache gunships.



Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready, HMS Ark Royal

Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready, HMS Ark Royal

Mirror on the Mersey

IF ONLY it was this easy to double the number of Ark Royals in this world.

Sadly, the 'Ark' on the right is a mirror image of the legendary carrier, reflected in the stunning glass façade of Liverpool's cruise liner terminal.

Amazingly given the ship's career going back a quarter of a century, this was first visit she had paid to the great port on the Mersey.

And so there was quite a turnout from locals when the carrier opened her gangway to visitors. In fact, when the queue grew too long (a waiting time of around two hours), the ship's company decided to admit no more to spare the curious onlookers being baked by the June sun as they queued.

Still, in excess of 5,000 people did get to look around Ark for free during the six hours she was open to the public. They were invited to make donations to charity... which they did with aplomb: more than £2,000 was given to naval charities.

"We've just been overwhelmed by the interest that the people of Liverpool have shown in the ship and we thank them for all their support and encouragement," said Lt Paul Meacher.

Such support and encouragement wasn't too surprising for LA James Jones. "There are few better sights than coming into the port of Liverpool and seeing that skyline," the Liverpoolian enthused.

The day after the open event, almost half the ship's company could be found across the Pennines in Leeds to celebrate the freedom of the city, something they've not done in nearly five years.

The Yorkshire city has been bound with the Ark for nearly 70 years, raising funds to help pay for a replacement for Ark Royal III. Ark Royal IV, which served from the 50s until the late 70s, was arguably the epitome of the post-war Navy, thanks in part to her appearance in *Sailor*.

Today's Ark has maintained the Leeds link, and so it was that the sailors marched through the city centre of a fine summer Sunday.

"I've done freedom marches in other cities but this, our ship and our city, is something special," said WO2 Mark Fisher, who hails from Leeds.

Ark's CO Capt Mike Mansergh added: "The friendship and bonds that we have developed with the city of Leeds and her people are extremely important to all of us on Ark Royal – the freedom parade was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the weekend." Lauded in Liverpool. Lauded in Leeds. Surely it

doesn't get much better than this...

... except that there was a large crowd waiting for Ark at Douglas Head on the Isle of Man to catch a fleeting glimpse of the flagship.

It's been a decade since a carrier was last in Isle of Man waters, hence the turnout.

Sadly for onlookers, Ark didn't do a great deal more than disgorge some VIP passengers before heading off into the Irish Sea again to conduct helicopter training.

The ship carried a smattering of Man dignitaries, including the lieutenant government, president and chief minister from Liverpool.

You didn't have to see Ark in the 'flesh' to see her sailors. Two dozen of them could be found on the hallowed turf of Wembley on May 17, unfurling three gigantic banners of Pompey players – who would soon grace that same turf during the FA Cup Final.

The oversized 'posters' – of Kanu (who subsequently scored the winning goal), Glen Johnson and 'keeper David James – were on display as part of the pre-match ceremony.

Typically it's soldiers who perform the honours, but given Portsmouth's naval heritage, sailors were a far more obvious choice, and Ark was chosen.

Despite being affiliated to Leeds, the ship has been striking up a strong relationship with Pompey.

Just before the season's end, the Premiership side chose to launch their new strip on the flight deck of the carrier (and not-so-eagle-eyed Portsmouthians might have noticed a giant replica of it being hauled across Solent skies).

"The people of Portsmouth who were at the game were full of praise for the RN personnel who took part," said WO2 Nathan Lawton, one of the lucky banner carriers.

"We all had a genuine feeling of pride that we were representing the RN and Portsmouth on this world stage."

And perhaps they played a small role in Pompey's triumph.

Back in 1939 – the club's last appearance in the cup final – Ark Royal III pulled out all the stops for Pompey.

The ship was due to sail for the Med with war clouds gathering, but a sizeable number of its sailors were at the final. Ark waited at Portland with a special train laid on from London so the celebrating sailors could re-join her.

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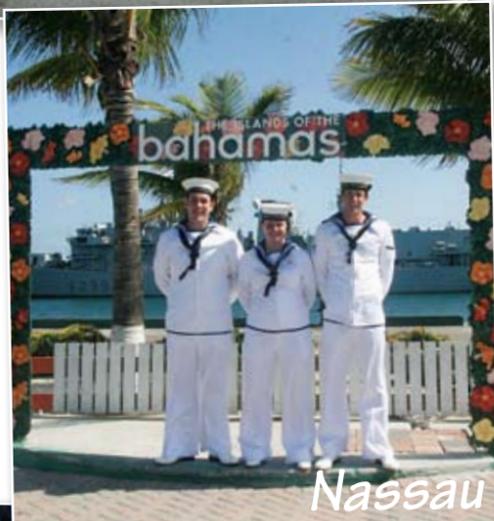
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Miami



Nassau



Times Square



Empire State Building



Blighty



● And if you look to your right you can see HMS Richmond... The frigate glides across the Andros Channel - as seen from the cockpit of her Merlin

Having a (thunder) ball

SUBMARINERS are used to Type 23s bearing down on them.

Just not American 'deeps'. But several hundred American deeps experienced what their British comrades have been subjected to for the past 15 years during Exercise Spartacus around Andros in the Bahamas.

HMS Richmond was invited to join Spartacus - a five-day exercise with three Los-Angeles class hunter-killer boats, United States Ships Scranton, Albuquerque and Philadelphia.

The American trio needed a warship to pit their wits against as they hosted potential submarine COs and XO for the Submarine Command Course, the US version of Perisher, around AUTEK, the underwater test ranges in the Bahamas.

The Bahamas are renowned for being (a) peaceful and (b) relaxed.

None of which was in evidence over four days in May when six wars raged (fortunately, peace in each case was declared after ten hours).

Ten hours is a long time in war (just ask the Japanese at Midway), long enough for the hunter-killers to mount half a dozen attack runs against Richmond in that historic game of cat and mouse between submarine and ship.

The three American boats had 32 torpedoes to fire at the frigate (all dummies, set to run beneath the ship, but that didn't take much pressure off the bridge and ops room teams).

And Richmond was not going to let the mice play unimpeded. Her Merlin had four exercise torpedoes of her own to fire at the US submarines, and there was the small matter of her Sonar 2087 from which there was nowhere for the Yanks to hide.

The Merlin Flight managed to disembark to Andros Island and AUTEK HQ (unlike many of their shipmates).

Andros is renowned for its swimming and fishing. There was little chance for the fliers to partake in either as the punishing schedule demanded the Merlin was either in the air... or being readied to be in the air.

Indeed, the aircrew clocked up 50 hours' flying in 15 days (rather than the two months it normally takes them)... and the engineers clocked up many more on top of that, but at least working ashore gave them far roomier access to the helicopter than the much more cramped confines of a Type 23.

"We gained enormous amounts of valuable data and passed it back to the experts controlling the trials," said Lt

● The Manhattan skyline (and Staten Island ferry terminal) as seen from HMS Richmond berthed in Brooklyn



Aidan Riley, the flight observer.

"Overall, they assessed that the Merlin had been a great success."

All good things must come to an end: the fliers had to return to mother as Spartacus reached its climax.

"The Americans proved to be testing opponents - but they all had great difficulty escaping the combined attentions of Richmond and her Merlin," enthused Richmond's CO Cdr Mark Southorn.

"Taking part in the American Submarine Command Course was a fantastic opportunity to hone the ship's anti-submarine warfare skills - we hope that this will become a regular occurrence for our frigates."

Once the American 'Perishers' and their boats departed, Richmond remained at AUTEK for another ten days to conduct further trials of her Sonar 2087, this time with a British boat as her foe (unlike the American boats, we can't tell you which one for security reasons).

During the sonar exercises, at least half the crew were able to get ashore to Andros at one time or another to enjoy local hospitality... and locals enjoyed Richmond hospitality, with 25 islanders being invited on to the frigate for a day.

Not all the time in the Bahamas was spent at Andros; Richmond was berthed in Nassau for three days to fit and test some kit.

While that was being done, 15 golfers hit the Cable Beach Club (where virtually every hole has some form of water feature), weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Steve Spiller posted the best score with an impressive 72.

For others being in the water was more important than out of it. Twenty sailors headed off on a diving expedition which took them to the wreck of the Tears of Allah (as seen in the Bond film *Never Say Never Again*) and a mock-up Vulcan bomber (as used in the slightly different version of the same Bond story, *Thunderball*).

From the Bahamas, it was along the Eastern Seaboard to the Hudson River and the unforgettable Manhattan skyline.

The frigate was invited to take part in Fleet Week, the annual gathering of US naval might in New York.

Actually, Richmond was berthed opposite Manhattan Island in Brooklyn - still close enough to the Big Apple for her sailors to play a full role in events.

They took part in official lunches, ceremonies on Staten Island and the assault ship USS Kearsarge, plus commemorations for US Memorial Day.

New York is renowned for its hospitality to visiting sailors - a reputation it thoroughly lived up to.

"The ship's company went ashore in uniform every day and the response from the local population to personnel was nothing but positive and welcoming," said Lt Cdr Steve Spiller, Richmond's weapon engineer officer.

"Our sailors were stopped in the street to be thanked for their service by members of the public or even asked if they could have their photographs taken."

Such is the difference between Britain and the US that not only did the Richmond sailors enjoy free entry to many attractions in New York, but

they were given priority in queues. One group left the city behind and headed to Orange County Choppers (motorcycles, not helicopters) in, er, Orange County, New York, to meet some of the US' most famous bikers.

The garage and showroom produces unique bikes and the OCC have earned a worldwide reputation thanks to the TV show *American Chopper*... which is how the Richmond team came to visit.

The sailors were given a comprehensive tour of the site and had a chat/photo with the OCC's founding father (and star of the TV documentary), Paul Teutal.

For those who like their oil to be olive rather than Castrol, there was a taste of the high life.

The WOs' and Chiefs' Mess held their mess dinner in the restaurant *Gordon Ramsey at The London*... which is actually a couple of blocks from Central Park.

Twenty-four senior rates attended the private function, sitting down to seared tuna, fillet of beef in a red wine jus, and a trio of desserts, all washed down with 'a little' wine.

The cost of the dinner is a closely-guarded secret... but the bill for water alone was £170, so it probably wasn't cheap.

From one great city to another. Leaving New York, Richmond made for Quebec, a city where her forebears haven't always been welcomed.

Indeed, in 1759 a previous Richmond was at the forefront of Britain's (successful) attempt to seize the city from the French.

All that was forgotten, however, as Quebec celebrated its 400th birthday.

Richmond faced an 11-hour passage down the St Lawrence to reach the famous city, where she took part in a sail past with vessels from the Canadian, French, US and Irish Navies and a 21-gun salute in front of Canada's Governor General, Michaëlle Jean.

Visits to New York aren't too frequent; visits to Quebec by the RN are far fewer, so a chance to explore the city from the imposing citadel on the shoreline to the panoply of museums and art galleries (most of which, like Quebec, have a strong French influence).

Quebec was the last port of call on the frigate's summer deployment.

It was now time to return home via the St Lawrence and the Atlantic.

And being summer, the Atlantic was in a foul mood. The ship steamed into the teeth of a Force 11 gale (that's one below hurricane) and had to heave to for 24 hours to ride it out.

Wolf rocks



● Seawolf bursts out of a vertical launcher on a Type 23 frigate

MOST things from the 1970s are worth forgetting about.

The Bay City Rollers. The three-day week. Flares. Strikes. Rampant unemployment. Rampant inflation. The winter of discontent.

And yet the decade produced much to be proud of, lest we forget. The Pompidou Centre. The Hollywood blockbuster. *The Morecambe & Wise Christmas Show*. The Sea Harrier – and the carriers to take them into battle.

And Seawolf, the short-range anti-air missile which defended Type 22 – and later Type 23 – frigates from the enemy aerial threat.

The missile was expected to cope with the anti-ship missiles of the day – Exocet being the most (in)famous, capable of a maximum velocity just below the speed of sound.

Fast forward three decades and, as Capt Brian Archibald, head of the Short-Range Air Defence Integrated Project Team, explains, “Today we are concerned with anti-ship missiles travelling at up to Mach 3. They also fly lower – and they are highly manoeuvrable which makes them very difficult threats to deal with.

“The threat has evolved significantly. So we have to keep pace with the changing threat.”

The missile itself has already been given an overhaul – improved Seawolfs have already been delivered to front-line RN ships.

But the crux of the revamp for this battle-proven weapon comes with improving its ‘eyes’ and ‘brain’, the tracker system.

Each Type 22 and Type 23 has two Seawolf trackers – the radar system plus the computer systems which seek out and track the targets, buried in the heart of the ship.

Rather than re-inventing the wheel, experts at BAE Systems strip down each existing tracker system when it’s removed from a frigate in refit, rip out the innards and install the new kit in its place. Four out of five components inside ‘super Seawolf’, if you like, are new.

It takes about four months to refurbish and replace each pair of trackers. First the existing tracker has to be cleaned – after several years’ exposure to the elements what was once silver has turned a sort of turquoise-silver.

And so in a huge silver box in Portsmouth, built specially for the cleaning process, a couple of people wearing what can only be described as space suits, use a high pressure hose to strip down most of the tracker parts.

And there are a lot of parts to strip. There are 13 pairs of trackers for the 23 fleet, four for the 22s and two sets of trial trackers.

One test tracker can be found at the Fraser range in Eastney, looking out over the Solent.

Outwardly it looks the same – the only really noticeable difference is the addition of an electro-optical camera (more about that in a minute).

Inside a metal cabin beneath the tracker, BAE’s boffins have been carrying out their tests to ensure that the claims made of SWMLU – SeaWolf Medium-Life Upgrade, pronounced ‘swim loo’ – are justified.

And the claims are pretty impressive. “If a tracker was placed in the centre of London, it should be able to detect a cricket-ball-sized target travelling at Mach 3 over the M25,” explained BAE’s Steve Hall.

“It should engage the target somewhere over the North Circular. The whole engagement lasts less than 20 seconds.”

Seawolf doesn’t even wait for the missile to come within range. It launches before the target is within the weapon’s range, estimating that missile and target will collide at the maximum range – the aim being to minimise damage to the ship should there be any shrapnel.

Although the revamped missile and tracker effectively double Seawolf’s existing range, take nothing away from the operator: this remains a job which demands split-second judgments.

He is or she is assisted by leaps in technology with the Seawolf console which is now a full-colour, touch-screen affair.

Alongside these touch-button controls sits a B&W video feed direct from the electro-optical camera on the tracker. It’s rather good.

Our target for today is a twin-engined light aircraft chugging slowly (200kts) over Solent skies.

The electro-optical follows it out to a good 17,000 yards (9½ miles), at which point the aircraft is reduced to a white blob, a ghostly image rather like a UFO flitting across the sky.

It grows as it comes closer. Within range (that bit’s classified) the green lights flash on the Seawolf display.

The system locks on.

Engage. One missile leaves the launcher, quickly followed by a second to make sure. A few seconds later, the system confirms the ‘kill’. From acquiring its target to destroying it has taken barely 14 seconds.

This bit is all simulated. There are no missiles at Fraser. There are missiles aboard HMS Sutherland, however, and she’s just received her SWMLU system. Some time next year she will test it.

Capt Archibald has no doubt the improved system will work – and impress.

“We believe Seawolf is the best anti-ship missile in the world,” he said emphatically.

New Saab 9-3 Saloon range: Urban – from 16.7 (16.9) to 39.2 (7.2), Extra-urban – from 39.2 (7.2) to 64.2 (4.4), Combined – from 26.2 (10.8) to 52.3 (5.4). CO2 Emissions from 147 to 259g/km. New Saab 9-3 Convertible range: Urban – from 16.3 (17.3) to 36.7 (7.7), Extra-urban – from 36.7 (7.7) to 60.1 (4.7), Combined – from 25.4 (11.1) to 48.7 (5.8). CO2 Emissions from 154 to 266g/km. Model shown is Saloon Aero 1.9TTiD OTR £26,470 with optional ALU73 18" 10 spoke alloy wheels at £800. Military discounts are available to all serving members of UK Armed Forces, retired service personnel, MOD civilian personnel and HM Forces Reservists. The offer is also extended to the spouse/partner of the eligible applicant. No other marketing programmes apply. * New 9-3 Convertible Aero 1.9TTiD (180PS) auto.

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Westy's wet wet wet



THOSE Far East deployments.

Hong Kong. Shanghai. Singapore. The runs ashore. The different cultures. The cheap electronic gadgets. Cameras. Micro computers. Micro bursts.

Micro bursts? Not something you'd pick up from Comet or Currys, but a violent – and thankfully short-lived – rain storm which engulfed HMS Westminster.

The Type 23 frigate had been taking part in the Orion 08 deployment, the task group led by HMS Illustrious in the Indian Ocean.

She broke away from the task force to work with the Indian and French Navies in the Indian Ocean initially.

Then she was asked to wait in international waters off Burma and possibly offer assistance in the wake of Cyclone Nargis which brought death and destruction to that land.

And it was as Westminster sailed across the Bay of Bengal that her fliers were given a taste of the region's violent and unpredictable weather.

The aircrew clambered into the helicopter, the rotors were turning, the flight deck team were preparing to remove the strips binding helicopter to ship.

And then blam, a micro burst – a severe and very sudden mini storm.

How mini? Well, ten minutes before this picture was taken the wind was about 10kts, the sea

state was 2 and there was good visibility for ten nautical miles.

And then the micro burst struck. The wind veered 120° and was gusting up to 40kts. The sea had grown worse by a couple of grades (and the height of the waves increased fivefold), visibility dropped to less than half a mile. And there was rain.

How much rain? Well, anywhere between 16 and 50mm (2in) in an hour (the technical term, so the meteorologists on Westminster tell us, is 'very heavy').

(Beginning of Michael Fish bit.)

The cloud systems which are responsible for these micro bursts regularly reach up to 45,000ft (that's 10,000ft higher than your average airliner's cruising altitude).

These systems or 'super cells' store a lot of moisture and energy... which can be dumped on any unsuspecting flier.

"They can cause horrendous conditions for flying with many very real dangers such as lightning, down draughts that can drop you thousands of feet with no chance of recovery, turbulence, changing wind directions and extremely poor visibility," said pilot Lt 'Stevo' Stevenson of 829 NAS.

(End of Michael Fish bit.)

As for the ship, she remained on standby off Burma, continuing training and working closely with our allies, including RASing with the amphibious assault ship USS Essex, before she was relieved by HMS Edinburgh.

● Okay, I'm changing the call sign to Westminster... The microburst engulfs the ship as her Merlin prepares for launch

Picture: PO Bob Sharples, 829 NAS

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Sultan's date with destiny

QUARTER to five on Saturday June 7 2008, a moment which will go down in history.

Not quite as much, perhaps, as 7.48am on Sunday December 7 1941, 6.30am on Tuesday June 6 1944 or even 5.30pm on Saturday July 30 1966.

But 4.45pm on June 7 was the only time and date which mattered to the engineers of HMS Sultan. By then they would know whether they had lifted the Brickwoods Field Gun Trophy.

Twenty-one crews converged on the Marlborough Quadrangle at HMS Collingwood, drawn from all three Services (principally RN) and all four corners of the British Isles, plus Gib and Naples.

The Gosport engineering establishment fielded A and B sides in the contest; the latter were determined to grab a trophy of

their own, the Roaring Meg, for the best B team in the contest.

As for the A side (pictured above), they opened competition day in good form and were in third place with the final five runs left in rising temperatures and a growing atmosphere.

After a run of 1m 21.18s, the A runners booked their place in the grand final. As they waited for the climax of three months' preparation, they cheered on the B crew who faced Gib in the Plate 2 final.

The contest was too close to call; Gibraltar conducted a brilliant second firing and pushed Sultan all the way to the line.

Neither crews nor spectators were able to tell who had won; it was left to the six timekeepers to determine the victors – Sultan by .12 of a second.

That triumph set the A side up for the final against Heron and Portsmouth Naval Base.

All three teams were cheered, clapped and baggiped on to the track for the main event which was as dramatic as it was raucous.

Heron and Pompey were fastest out of the box, while Sultan were in the lead in the first action; a swift first firing ensured the Gosport crew kept their noses in front.

The second firing, final 'button up' and run home were but a blur as Pompey and Sultan charged for the line.

The engineers were across first and now waited anxiously for the judges' decision. The run was clean: no penalties.

And so at 4.45pm on Saturday June 7 2008, the Brickwoods Trophy was in HMS Sultan's hands.

Happiness is a warm gun... and curlers

WHAT do hairdressers, sailors and marines have in common?

Well, apparently, they're very happy in their work. Indeed, only beauty therapists are more content with their jobs according to the 'happiness index' compiled by City & Guilds.

The organisation, which has been awarding work-related qualifications for more than 130 years, has been conducting surveys of worker satisfaction for the past five years.

The 2008 snapshot of Britain's 29 million employed looked at 20 professions, asking a random

sample of workers about job satisfaction, whether they felt valued, whether they regarded their work as worthwhile, the level of training provided, the possibilities of progress and promotion.

All their answers were analysed by Prof Cary Cooper, Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health at the University of Lancaster. The result is the 'happiness index'.

So if beauticians, hairdressers and Service personnel are at the top of the tree, who's at the bottom? Well, call centre workers are 16th, while joint 17th are computer experts, nurses, bankers and builders.

From virtual to real

INTERNET users may have already visited the Royal Naval Museum's website 'exhibition' celebrating the deeds of the 20th-Century RN.

For the non-computer literate – and for those who like to pass their time not staring at a screen – the virtual 'exhibition' has become something tangible with the creation of a major new display at the museum in Portsmouth's historic dockyard.

Like its web-based cousin, Sea Your History is a showcase of the actions of men and women in all branches of the Senior Service from the age of pre-dreadnoughts to Harrier carriers and stealth frigates.

And like the internet exhibition, the real thing is based on the experiences of those who were there through diaries, letters, recollections, and official documents drawn from private sources as well as the four Royal Navy museums.

These personal experiences and anecdotes are accompanied by uniforms, kit, medals, certificates, menus, cartoons, photographs – all the typical mementos and souvenirs of a career in the RN or Royal Marines.

To put an even greater human face, or rather voice, on the exhibition, visitors can listen to veterans recounting their experiences.

"The exhibition and the website are just two steps in an exciting journey," explained Dr Colin White, RN Museum director.

"Over the next three years we will be developing plans for a completely new wing dedicated to the story of the 20th Century RN and the men and women who served in it."

If you cannot get to Portsmouth to see the exhibition, the internet version continues to run at www.seayourhistory.org.uk.

Meanwhile, across the water in Gosport, Prince William visited the RN Submarine Museum to highlight fundraising efforts to conserve HMS Alliance.

The elements have taken their toll of the post-war boat, which has been on display at the museum for almost three decades.

An extensive restoration programme began last October and is expected to run for two years, with Prince William agreeing to become the appeal's patron.

During his visit to the museum, the prince – Commodore-in-Chief Submarines – paid his respects at the memorial to the 5,300 submariners lost in the Silent Service from 1904 to the present day.



● Model Tuuli Shipster delivers the first copies of the new Bond book, guarded by Royals and sailors
Picture: PO(Phot) Flo Foord

HMS Exeter's a Faulks for good

A SPEEDBOAT. A leggy blonde. A couple of helicopter gunships. A bevy of Bentleys. And a naval officer with three gold rings on his sleeve.

Yes, Bond is back and today's sailors and marines were on hand to launch the latest saga in the long-running saga of Britain's most famous secret agent.

The first seven (007 – geddit?) copies of the new Bond book *Devil May Care* were delivered under RM and RN escort initially to HMS Exeter, moored in the Pool of London, then on to a bookstore in Piccadilly.

Commandos and sailors in a Pacific RIB ferried the books – and model Tuuli Shipster (yes, that is her real name, although it could have been concocted by Fleming) carrying them in a specially-commissioned indestructible case – along the Thames to Exeter, with two 702 NAS Lynx from the Black Cats display team standing guard overhead.

She presented the book to Exeter's CO Cdr Paul Brown, author Sebastian Faulks and the family of Ian Fleming, before the

Bentleys whisked the copies off to Piccadilly for sale to the public.

The event marked the centennial of the birth of Bond's creator, who penned a dozen novels and nine short stories featuring the naval commander/spy.

To commemorate the occasion, the Fleming family commissioned Mr Faulks – author of numerous bestsellers including *Charlotte Gray* and the WW1 novel *Birdsong* – to write a new Bond novel imitating his creator's style.

For those familiar only with the big-screen Bond, his literary counterpart is similar in many ways. He lives the good life, grapples with Johnny Foreigner villains and enjoys plenty of action (between the sheets and otherwise), but is also a much darker character, and more vulnerable.

Mr Faulks says these ingredients can be found in *Devil May Care* – such as the glamorous Bond girl with the exotic name, Scarlett Papava, and the disfigured villain in the shape Dr Julius Gornor who has a monkey's paw for a hand (and being a dastardly type he also cheats at sport, the cad).

The result, believes the author is "an affectionate homage to a playful character who has brought

enormous pleasure" to readers and moviegoers for half a century.

As for Exeter (the spy served on the previous Exeter during his naval career), she was paying a visit to the capital – and paying her dues to the Constable of the Tower, handing over a barrel of rum to the governor of the Tower of London in a ceremony dating back to the Middle Ages.

History actually dictates that 'two roundlets of wyne' should be presented to the Tower as a toll – but that subsequently became a barrel of the RN's favourite tippie.

The ancient ceremony ended a good 300 years ago – the sheer volume of traffic on the Thames meant that there was no time for such elaborate festivities.

But in recent times, the dues have been resurrected with full British pomp and ceremony.

And so it was that sailors from HMS Exeter marched up to the west gate of the Tower, led by the Band of HM Royal Marines. The Yeoman Gaoler (the second most senior Beefeater) challenged their entry, before the sailors and musicians marched around to Tower Green to pay their dues.

■ *Devil May Care* is published by Penguin, priced £18.99

MINEHUNTER HMS Ledbury is set for NATO duties in the Med after completing rigorous training in Scottish waters.

The last act before being ready to take her place in (the snappily-titled) Standing NATO Mine Counter-measures Group 1 was a spell of trials set by the Flag Officer Sea Training off war-torn Brownia and Mustardia (more commonly known as Arran and Kintyre).

Although mine warfare is at the hub of the specialist training provided by FOST, Ledbury must go through the standard menu as well: fire, flood, suicide bombers, attacks by jets and helicopter

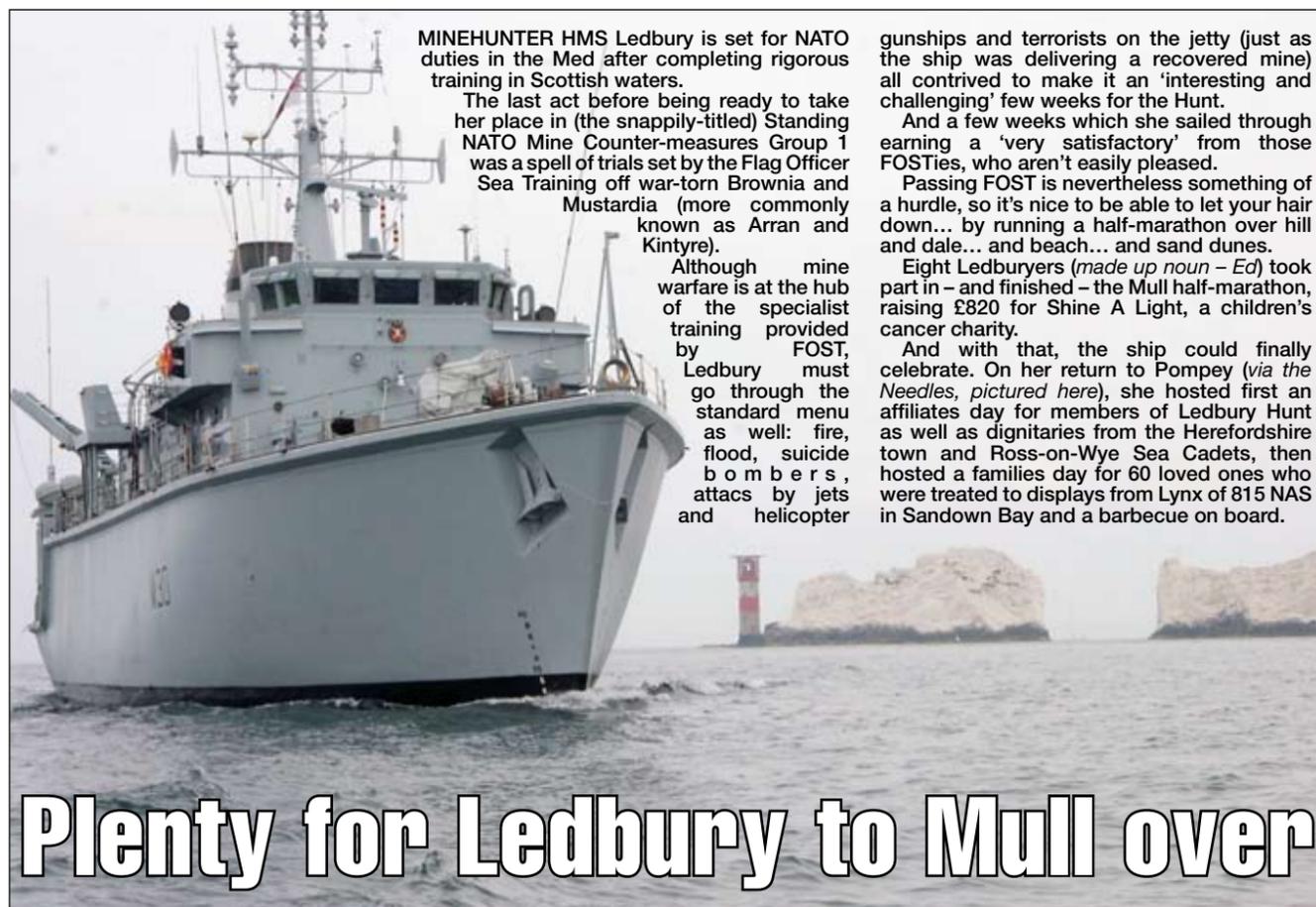
gunships and terrorists on the jetty (just as the ship was delivering a recovered mine) all contrived to make it an 'interesting and challenging' few weeks for the Hunt.

And a few weeks which she sailed through earning a 'very satisfactory' from those FOSTies, who aren't easily pleased.

Passing FOST is nevertheless something of a hurdle, so it's nice to be able to let your hair down... by running a half-marathon over hill and dale... and beach... and sand dunes.

Eight Ledburys (*made up noun - Ed*) took part in – and finished – the Mull half-marathon, raising £820 for Shine A Light, a children's cancer charity.

And with that, the ship could finally celebrate. On her return to Pompey (*via the Needles, pictured here*), she hosted first an affiliates day for members of Ledbury Hunt as well as dignitaries from the Herefordshire town and Ross-on-Wye Sea Cadets, then hosted a families day for 60 loved ones who were treated to displays from Lynx of 815 NAS in Sandown Bay and a barbecue on board.



Plenty for Ledbury to Mull over

Meet, greet and zip past the Fleet

IF YOU were not one of the 200,000 people who watched Pompey parade the FA Cup around the city after their historic triumph, there's a chance to see the legendary trophy again this month.

The Premiership side are allowing the cup out of their cabinet and putting it on display in the naval base throughout the three days of the Meet Your Navy festival (July 25-27).

It will be the centrepiece of the club's youth academy display where potential stars of the future will be chatting to visitors and posing for pictures with the trophy.

The cup, magnificent though it is, isn't especially large... unlike one replica Pompey shirt which will be flown over the naval base during the festival.

Portsmouth Harbour natives might remember seeing the strip – 180ft x 120ft – just before the cup final when it was flown over the city.

For non-football fans, there are a few ships to see: confirmed at the event are strike carrier HMS Illustrious, destroyer Gloucester, frigates Campbeltown, Argyll, Westminster and Richmond, minehunter Hurworth and survey vessel Enterprise.

Foreign visitors lined up range from Japanese training ship Kashima and her escorts Asagiri and Umigiri, a Danish frigate and Brazil's sail training ship Cisne Branco.

Not all the attractions at the three-day event will be sedentary.

Marie Curie Cancer Care will be running a zip wire across part of the base, allowing you to slide across basins and dry docks from a height of 14 metres (46ft), coming safely to earth next to HMS Victory.

The only proviso is that you must pay a registration fee of £15 and raise at least £100 for the charity to take part in the slide. More details can be found at www.mariecurie.org.uk/events/adrenaline/zipwire/zip_wire_portsmouth_naval_base.htm.

Tickets for Meet Your Navy are available from tourist information centres in the city, via www.meetyournavy.co.uk or on 0871 230 5582.

And talking of maritime festivals, we have not one but two offers for readers looking to attend the Southampton Boat Show this September 12-21.

The show marks its 40th birthday in 2008 and is hoping 135,000 people will help it celebrate. See www.southamptonboatshow.com for more details about what's in store.

Our readers can enjoy a £3 discount off the standard ticket price of £15 by calling the hotline on 0844 209 0333 and quoting 'Navy News'.

The offer excludes the press and preview day on September 12. Two children aged 15 and under will be admitted free for every adult ticket purchased. Service personnel will also enjoy a £3 discount if they bring their ID cards with them.

If paying isn't your thing, we have five pairs of tickets to give away. Just tell us the name of the legendary liner which left Southampton in 1912 and sank on her maiden voyage after colliding with an iceberg.

E-mail your answer to marketing@navynews.co.uk or write to Southampton Boat Show Competition, Marketing Manager, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Entries must reach us by mid-day on August 18 2008. Usual Navy News competition rules apply.



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PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC DOCKYARD

Airs and aces

WHAT do you get if you mix 1,500 litres of fuel, two tonnes of dust and five tonnes of peat?

Why a rousing finale to Yeovilton Air Day, which takes place at the Somerset air station on July 5.

As ever the famous set-piece commando assault – featuring all aspects of naval aviation plus Royal Marines blowing things up – closes the display, bringing the curtain down on five hours of flying displays from the RAF's Eurofighter to the RN's vintage Swordfish and Sea Fury.

The Sea Fury is making its first appearance in the skies under the ownership of the RN Historic Flight, based at Yeovilton; it's not been seen flying in the UK for 18 years.

Making a re-appearance will be Swordfish LS326, on display for the first time in nearly a decade following an extensive renovation programme at Yeovilton.

Meanwhile, further west, Culdrose hosts its air day on Wednesday July 30, with many of the aircraft seen at Yeovilton also pirouetting through Cornish skies.

Besides the full panoply of Fleet Air Arm airpower past and present, there will be a mix of displays in the air and on the ground, including Messerschmitt Bf108s (forerunners of the legendary Bf109), a Sopwith Pup and Triplane (the latter were flown with distinction by naval aviators over the Western Front), the Army's Blue Eagles helicopter display team, a Boeing 767 airliner and the Royal Jordanian Falcons.

Yeovilton tickets (£20 for adults and OAPs, £7 for children) are available on 08445 781 781 or from www.ticketzone.co.uk. Discounts are available if you buy in advance.

Culdrose ticket prices range from £5 for children to £30 for families (two adults, two children) and again substantial discounts are available by calling 08705 321 321 or the Ticketzone site above before July 16.

For your eyes only



SWEEPING across the Lizard peninsula on a fine spring afternoon, this is a Merlin display only a privileged few were fortunate enough to witness...

... and an even fewer 'privileged few' have earned the right to fly this £40m aircraft on active duties having earned their 'spurs' after two years of intensive training.

Ten trainee aircrew became ten qualified aircrew as they collected their wings from business leader Sir Stuart Rose – the man who famously turned around the fortunes of Marks and Spencer – at RNAS Culdrose.

Before the fliers and their families mustered in one of the air station's hangars, they were treated first to a private air show from Culdrose-based aircraft, then the stirring sounds of the Band of HM Royal Marines Plymouth.

And then the 'wings parade' reached its climax as pilots, observers and aircrew were formally presented with their flying badges or wings, with Sir Stuart telling the recipients that leadership and team work with everyone pulling in the same direction were keys to success.

The wings badges allow the ten successful aircrew to leave 824 Naval Air Squadron – the Merlin training formation – and move on to the front-line units, 814, 820, and 829 NAS (for the record the ten are: Lts Karen Snel, James Taylor, Matthew Blake, Dan Waskett, Ryan McGivern, Alan Darlington, Andrew Bird, Alex Kelley, Fit Sgt Dave Miles and Wtr Gavin Furlong).

If you weren't privileged enough to catch the wings parade display, perhaps you were one of the 200,000 or so people who saw 824 perform above the Thames estuary.

As we reported last month, the 824 chaps and chapesses practised for Southend air show by conducting winching drills with a lifeboat from Falmouth (something normally performed by 824's Sea King 'cousins' from 771 NAS).

Practice makes perfect and so it was that an 824 cab performed with a RNLI boat on both days of the curtain-raiser to the display season.

Indeed, the weather in Southend favoured lifeboat crews more than airmen – most displays were cancelled, including the RAF Red Arrows; conditions, in FAA parlance, were described as 'marginal'.

Nevertheless, an estimated 200,000 people braved the inclement Essex weather over the two days of the show.

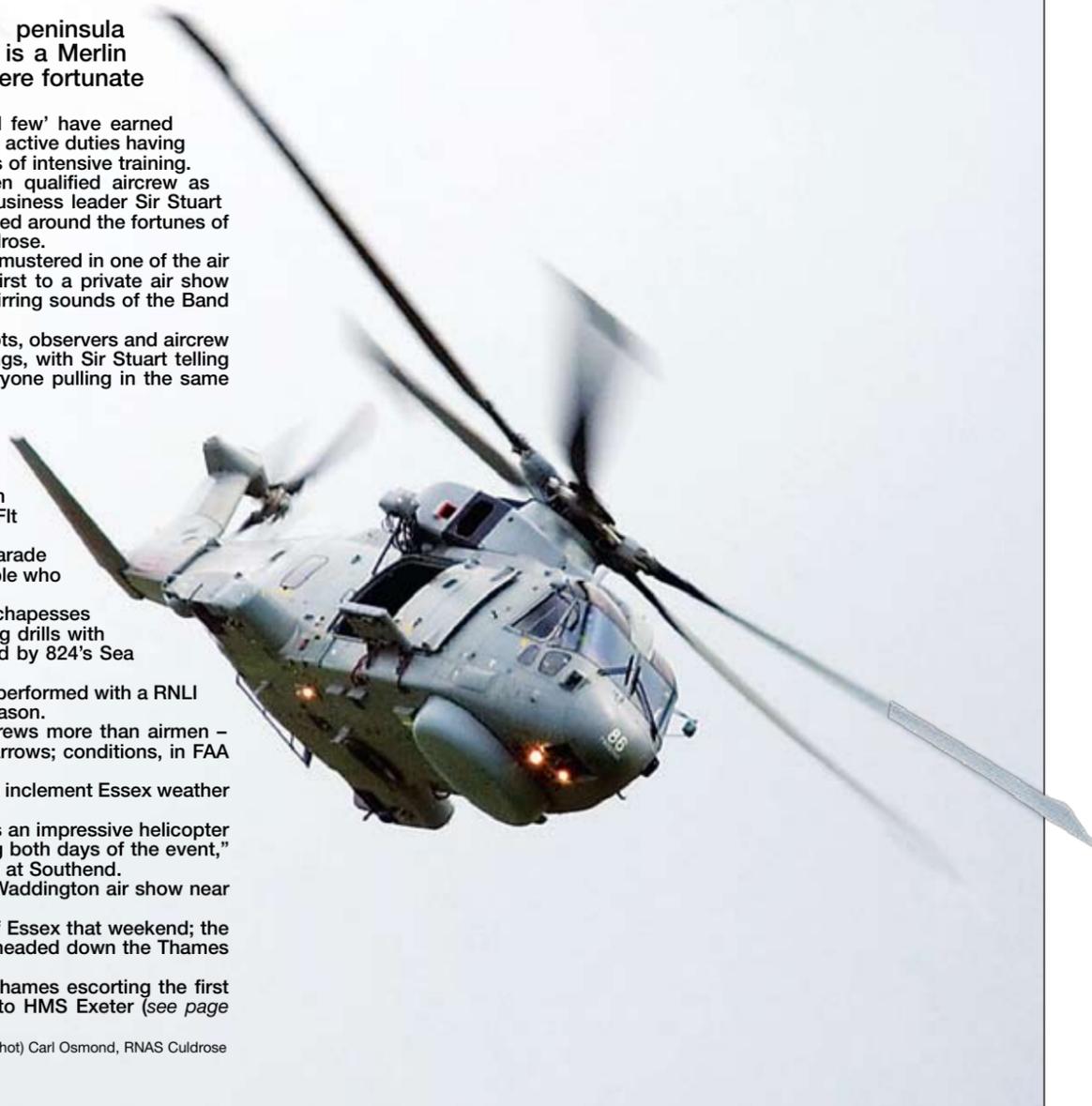
"Hopefully the public will now remember the Merlin as an impressive helicopter – and one of the only aircraft to actually go flying during both days of the event," said 824 NAS instructor Lt Nick Bates who was airborne at Southend.

You can see the Merlins 'strutting their stuff' at RAF Waddington air show near Lincoln on July 5-6.

824 were not the only naval helicopters in the skies of Essex that weekend; the Black Cats, the Lynx display team from Yeovilton, also headed down the Thames estuary to Southend.

On their way back to Somerset, they jinked up the Thames escorting the first copies of the new James Bond novel *Devil May Care* to HMS Exeter (see page 11).

Picture: LA(Phot) Carl Osmond, RNAS Culdrose



The News

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SERVING THE HOME OF THE ROYAL NAVY
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Warrior evolves

FOR Neptune, read Joint.

And where it says JMOTS, make that JTEPS.

That makes more sense now, doesn't it?

Not convinced?

Okay, let's break it down a little more.

Neptune, as in Neptune Warrior, is now Joint Warrior (we will ignore the old and bold who harp on about JMCs).

As for JMOTS, the Joint Maritime Operational Training Staff, some people felt the title didn't really give the full picture.

So in comes the Joint Tactical Exercise Planning Staff to stage the biannual Exercise Joint Warrior – and the two-week Spring '08 version shows why the new titles are more appropriate.

"It has been fascinating to see the exercise develop over the past 18 months into what I believe to be the largest exercise in Europe," said Capt Paddy McAlpine, Director JTEPS.

"The recent Joint Warrior included participants from the UK and 17 foreign nations, including multiple Forward Air Controllers (FACs), three companies of infantry, 32 maritime units (surface and sub-surface) and 60 aircraft, flying at a daily rate of approximately 80 to 100 sorties a day.

"However, despite our product's joint nature, it became apparent that our name was giving a false impression of our output, focus and capabilities.

"Therefore, to better reflect the evolving tri-Service nature of our business we have been renamed as JTEPS; like Ronseal, we now 'do what it says on the tin'."

Joint Maritime Courses (JMCs) in their latter days ran out of Clyde Naval Base and tended to concentrate ships off the west and north coasts of Scotland.

But in its new guise – JW2008-1 – the whole of the UK and vast offshore areas were used as battlespaces, including live ranges and Managed Danger Areas.

This meant close liaison with other groups such as QinetiQ, for range provision, London and Scottish Air Traffic Control Centres and Control and Reporting Centres at Boulmer and Scampton.

The exercise scenario involved three sovereign nations, disputed territory and a state-sponsored terrorist movement.

Such exercises begin with the integration of the forces through training serials, but over the two weeks the scenario moves into a period of heightened tension until open hostilities break out.

Among the highlights were various close air support exercises, using fast jets often firing live

Pictures by LLogs (CS) Stu Hill FRPU (N)

weapons, and 'Large Force Element' missions, where fixed and mobile targets (including inflatable Scud decoys and electronic warfare emitters simulating surface-to-air threats) were deployed at RAF Spadeadam.

Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPAs) scoured the seas, taking part in anti-submarine and anti-surface attacks as well as gathering intelligence.

There were also 'joint fires' with naval gunfire support, mortars and fast jets practising in Scotland and Wales.

Mine countermeasures vessels had their own dedicated element, laying and clearing minefields in protection of themselves and their task groups.

The presence of submarines allowed the deeps to engage in some useful boat vs boat and boat vs ship warfare, while the submarine hunters in their turn could attempt to track the 'enemy'.

Using air and land assets, a non-combatant evacuation operation (whisking civvies away from a danger zone) was carried out, and media experts were on hand to help participants get to grips with the demands of journalists.

Other nations involved included Germany, France, Turkey, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Poland and the United States.

Capt McAlpine said: "JTEPS plans and executes high-quality joint tactical training with maximum tactical interaction.

"Our plans are flexible and tailored to meet the participants' requirements wherever possible.

"I am sure that the high-fidelity joint tactical training environment provided by JTEPS in Exercise Joint Warrior offers participants rigorous preparation for operational tasks in theatres worldwide."

The new overseas dimension to JTEPS was demonstrated by Exercise Magic Carpet in Oman earlier this year, planned and controlled by a bespoke exercise control team (EXCON) directed from JTEPS at Northwood HQ.

The team consisted of one RN person and six from the RAF, augmented by a further nine UK personnel and 30 from the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO).

Organisers had to start by liaising with all participants, including the Americans, to determine what training requirements were expected from the exercise.

This led to JTEPS generating a flurry of intelligence information, including a general scenario, a map of the road to conflict, personality profiles for the main players and target information and imagery.

The exercise was controlled from a "semi-austere" (ie hot and sandy) base in Oman which was created at a disused RAFO hospital complex.

Here a simulated operational-level HQ produced the torrent of paperwork required to carry out a three-wave/75 aircraft per day multinational flying programme.

The RAF, flying Tornados, a Boeing E-3D Sentry and two VC10s, benefited from training in a number of areas, such as firing live weapons, air interdiction, electronic warfare and air-to-air refuelling.

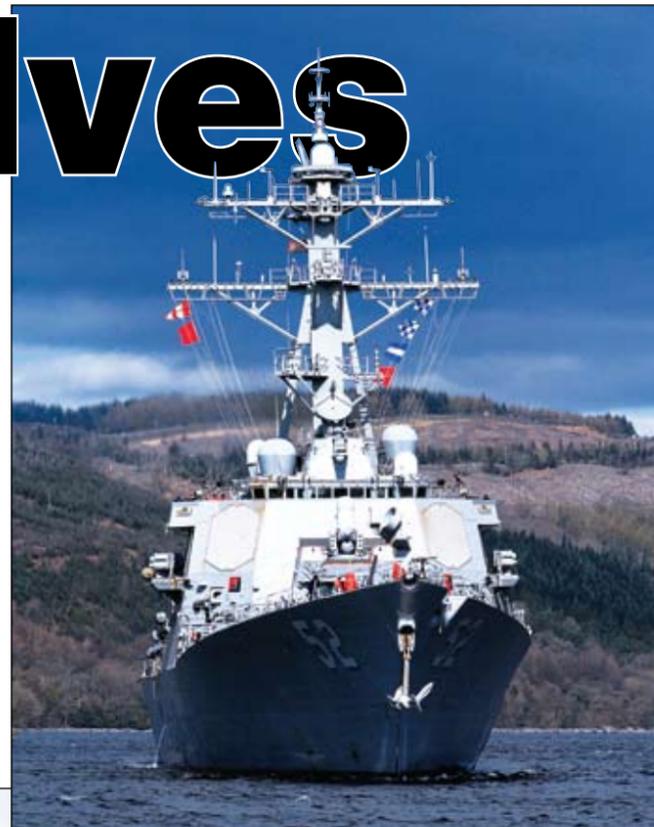
Also involved were two UK tactical air control (TAC) parties, made up of nine tri-Service personnel from 148 Bty RM Poole, which occupied a forward operating base and manned observation posts overlooking targets.

Wng Cdr Martin Tinworth, RAF EXCON Air Director, said: "Exercise Magic Carpet was an extremely successful event across the board, with the Royal Air Force of Oman being excellent hosts.

"The extensive work carried out within EXCON produced realistic tactical level training for the variety of UK and allied front-line force elements and the battlestaff within EXCON.

"Unquestionably, all tri-Service and multinational staff have benefited from the experience."

● USS Barry approaches Clyde Naval Base (right) while HMS Bulwark transits Loch Long to Glen Mallen (below)



● USS Donald Cook and USS Anzio alongside at Faslane for Joint Warrior (above). Below are the same ships alongside USS Barry, with Belgian minehunter BNS Primula going about, guarded by a Defence Police patrol.



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Tanker, conference cen



AS IF there were not enough tankers in the region already, HMS Chatham has joined in on the act.

The current flagship of Combined Task Force 158 (CTF 158) is at the head of a flotilla of Allied warships keeping a protective watch on the Iraqi Al Basrah and Khawr Al Amaya offshore oil terminals.

The ships are supported by a number of auxiliaries, such as the RFA's Wave Knight, and there are a number of ports in the region which could top up a ship.

But at a meeting between all the ships' captains of CTF 158, Chatham's Commanding Officer Cdr Martin Connell offered to refuel the American Coast Guard cutter Monomoy, thereby avoiding a lengthy break from patrol duties to refuel elsewhere.

Accordingly, the Monomoy secured alongside the Devonport-based Type 22 frigate and fuel was transferred, the size of the American ship meaning Chatham – which took over from sister ship HMS Campbelltown earlier this year – hardly noticed the difference.

The time the two vessels spent together also allowed the respective ship's companies to exchange banter and 'gizzets' (gifts).

Of the unusual RAS Cdr Connell said: "We are always looking for innovative ways for the Coalition to conduct our business in the Northern Arabian Gulf."

"This was a very

● (Top) Royal Marines from HMS Campbelltown on boarding operations in the Gulf. (Left) AB Stevenson on Above Water Force Protection duties on board RFA Cardigan Bay; the landing ship's main task is to train Iraqi Navy and Marines personnel

Pictures: LA(Phot) Chris Winter

straightforward replenishment operation and it made a pleasant change for us to be the delivery ship on this occasion."

Chatham – home of rodent-of-letters and super-mascot Mighty Mouse – also acted as a floating conference centre for a meeting between the heads of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti navies and the Kuwaiti Coast Guard.

The high-profile event – the first since 1991 – was designed to introduce a series of maritime protocols to improve co-operation and co-ordination between the two countries, and to improve safety and security for mariners in the region.

To mark the occasion Cdre Duncan Potts, in command of CTF 158, said: "The Iraqi and Kuwaiti Navy have been trying to meet like this for some time; in this case CTF 158 made it happen."

"I think warm relationships were established and we were also able to start to put in place some confidence-building measures for the Kuwaiti Navy, Coast Guard and the Iraqi Navy to use in their congested water."

"All this must be good for regional security and stability between two neighbours."

Mighty Mouse and his shipmates have also welcomed hundreds of unscheduled visitors in the past few weeks.

The ships and oil platforms make an ideal pit stop for birds migrating north from Asia and Africa.

And apart from the scientific interest – more than 70 species have been recorded – there is a chance to see some breeds a lot closer than normal as exhausted birds have flopped on to sailors' head, hands and feet for a rest

during their arduous journey.

From an *ersatz* tanker to the real thing as one of the Britain's two Wave-class ships took over from the veteran RFA Bayleaf.

RFA Wave Knight, making her debut east of Suez, is the current Arabian Gulf Ready Tanker, offering 14,000 tonnes of fuel to coalition ships.

But she is more service station than fuel pump, as she can also provide aviation fuel, fresh water and dry stores when required, and although she is a vital element in the Royal navy presence in the region, she is also there to help when required, be it British, Australian, New Zealand or any other Allied ship which comes calling.

Wave Knight's Commanding Officer, Capt Rob Dorey RFA, said that their predecessor, the tanker Bayleaf, had become a familiar sight in the region during her seven-year stint.

But Wave Knight, being a much newer ship, could offer a greater capacity, a larger flight deck, more varied stores and much-improved performance in terms of sheer horsepower.

Speaking of their operations prior to arriving in the Gulf, Capt Dorey added: "It has been a fantastic period really; one of the big benefits of operating with a task group is that our basic skills have been finely honed."

Wave Knight's ship's company include all of the necessary skills to perform her task as a tanker, as well as an array of other personnel who allow her to operate as an independent unit.

This includes chefs, administrators, engineers and deck officers to guide the ship safely wherever she is required.

Because of her young age, design and improved reliability



tre – and frigate



over older ships, Wave Knight is able to stay on station for longer.

With her current schedule it means that up to a quarter of her ship's company can change over at each port visit, making the best use of the ship and guaranteeing harmony time to her personnel.

Type 42 destroyer HMS Edinburgh has only recently arrived in the Middle East from Singapore, where the ship underwent maintenance and her sailors ventured ashore.

But after a few days seeing the sights or enjoying time with their families, some of whom had flown out to the Far East, the 'Fortress of the Sea' was back plying her trade in Exercise Bersama Shield, the annual Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) exercise designed to test forces from the UK, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand in the event of a threat to Singapore or Malaysia.

Bersama Shield was a particular challenge for Edinburgh's fighter controllers, who logged some 40 hours of control each, handling a wide variety of aircraft from F-16s to former Soviet Mig 29 Fulcrums.

With the two-week exercise over, Edinburgh made a pit stop in Singapore for fuel before heading to Port Klang in Malaysia, where she received the bell of HMS Prince of Wales, sunk by Japanese aircraft in 1941.

The bell was recovered in 2002 and has a permanent home at the Merseyside Maritime Museum, but has been on tour in Malaysia since last year as part of the country's 50th anniversary of independence.

On her way back to the UK

● (Right): Seaman Faith Dixon controls the RAS crane on board RFA Wave Knight for the first time. The ship being refuelled was HMS Montrose – the picture below shows the same RAS from another angle

Pictures: LA(Phot) Owen King

Edinburgh joined the coalition patrol forces in the Middle East region, and she is due back in Portsmouth towards the end of this month.

Frigate HMS Montrose is part of the Coalition Maritime Force, originally CTF 150 in the Gulf of Aden and more recently with CTF 152 in the Central Arabian Gulf.

The Gulf of Aden is a crucial area of responsibility; as well as millions of tons of cargo, around half the world's oil and natural gas supplies cross the seas here.

Daily searches by the ship's helicopter, Rattler, and sea boats were carried out.

There has still been a chance to enjoy some relaxation during port visits and maintenance periods, with sailors sampling the delights of Fujairah, Salalah, Oman and Bahrain.

● (Top): Royal Marines from HMS Chatham set off to carry out a tanker sweep in the deep water anchorages near Al Basrah oil terminal. (Right): A boarding party from HMS Campbeltown board a fishing dhow in the Northern Gulf

Pictures: LA(Phot) Chris Winter





The all-seeing eyes



● A Bagger Sea King Mk7 ASaC flies over the Dhofar mountains of Oman during Exercise Magic Carpet with HMS Invincible

Picture: PO(Phot) Mick Storey

THREE into one won't go, as any maths teacher will tell you.

But one into three does. Three times to be precise.

In the dying days of 2006, the Navy's solitary airborne surveillance and control (ASaC) squadron, 849 NAS, was dissected to create three distinct units.

Thus were born 854 NAS (from 849's A Flight) and 857 NAS (from B Flight).

All three squadrons, based at RNAS Culdrose near Helston, provide the 'eye in the sky' of the Royal Navy.

The trio's Sea King Mk7s are equipped with the Searchwater 2000 radar, a state of the art long-range radar carried in an inflatable sack or bag (which gives the squadrons their Bagger nicknames).

Although it looks a rather cumbersome piece of kit from the outside, inside the bag is a veritable box of tricks capable of remarkably-accurate detection of surface and air targets.

Also fitted to the Sea Kings is electronic equipment capable of passively detecting enemy ships and aircraft by listening for their radar emissions.

Although the aircraft for all three Bagger units are the same, the roles of the

formations are not.

As the longest standing of the trio, 849 – motto *primus video*, I see first – is the parent unit.

It trains student observers and aircrew converting from other helicopter types, and offers refresher training on the Mk7 for aircrew going to the front line.

Bagger observers face two distinct phases of their Sea King training, the Aircraft Conversion Phase and the Operational Conversion Phase.

During aircraft conversion, students learn the basics of the Sea King and its systems, including radar handling, helicopter navigation, and grapple with secondary roles, such as winching.

Once that is complete, they move on to operational conversion to learn to 'fight the aircraft': anti-air and surface warfare, fighter control, surveillance and close air support.

Fighter control is an important part of the training as observers are required to control a multitude of fighter, strike and rotary wing aircraft such as Typhoons, Tornado F3s, Harrier GR7s and Apache gunships.

The Searchwater radar greatly enhances the detection ranges of inbound air raids – giving surface units more time to react and combat the attack.

Once enemy aircraft are detected the observers in the ASaC helicopters can direct friendly fighters to intercept the attack or report the target for a ship-fired missile engagement.

Additionally, by using radar the observers can also achieve long-range detection of hostile ships and fast attack craft... then guide friendly aircraft or surface-to-surface missiles on to the target using over-the-horizon techniques.

The squadrons can also support operations in a strike role (working with friendly ground attack aircraft) or in littoral manoeuvre (providing assistance to amphibious forces ashore) during hostilities.

All these functions – and more – are performed by the two front-line units, 854 and 857.

This past year has seen 854 – motto *audentes fortuna juvat*, fortune helps the daring – deployed from as far west as the Caribbean to as far East as the Arabian Gulf.

Aboard HMS Ocean in the Caribbean, 854 worked side-by-side with Merlins of 700 NAS in the war against drug-runners.

The baggers were instrumental in the seizure of two drugs hauls with a combined street value of \$120 million.

The ability to track vessels moving across the ocean is

key to another primary role for the front-line ASaCs: maritime security operations.

854 has spent six months on Operation Calash with RFA Argus east of Suez, monitoring drug smuggling, human trafficking and pirate activities as part of an international task force.

The 854 team were replaced in April by their sister squadron 857 – motto *animus opibusque parati*, prepared in minds and resources – who flew out to the Middle East after a hectic 2007.

Last year began on Calash duties, principally off the Horn of Africa, with RFA Fort Austin serving as 857's floating base.

The helicopters then joined HMS Illustrious for a spring deployment to the USA alongside the US Marine Corps and US Navy fast jets.

There was no let-up for the 857 fliers back in Blighly.

They headed to RAF Leuchars for an exercise co-ordinating and controlling various UK military aircraft, directing them on to ground targets.

All three squadrons trace their heritage back to the later stages of WW2.

All saw action in the Far East in the final battles against Japan, but 849 and 854 also provided aerial support for the Normandy invasion.

And all three units were disbanded within months of the war's end.

Seven years later, 849 were back, however, in an early-warning role, first in Skyraiders, subsequently in Gannets.

The squadron bowed out when HMS Ark Royal IV did three decades ago, but the Falklands conflict reaffirmed the need for airborne early warning, so 849 returned in 1984, this time in Sea Kings with their distinctive bags.



Normandy1944
Palembang.....1945
Okinawa1945
Japan1945



Normandy1944
Palembang.....1945
Okinawa1945



Palembang.....1945
Okinawa1945
East Indies1945

Aircraft: Sea King Mk 7
Airborne Surveillance and Control
Engines: two Rolls-Royce Gnome H1400 gas turbines
Length: 72ft 8in
Height: 16ft 10in
Rotor span: 62ft
Weight: 21,400lbs
Speed: 90kts
Range: 450 nautical miles
Endurance: four hours
Rate of climb: 1,500ft per minute
Crew: one pilot, two observers

Battle Honours

Facts and figures

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.51

Lt Cdr Richard James Rodney Scott, AM

IN Versailles the ink had barely dried on the weighty volumes of the treaty which brought the curtain down on war with Germany.

Salvagers and divers swarmed around the hulks of the once mighty High Seas Fleet, now engulfed by the waters of Scapa Flow.

Communists and revolutionaries clashed with steel-helmeted veterans of the trenches in the streets of Germany.

And further east, the Bolsheviks fought bitter battles with Tsarists and counter-revolutionaries as civil war ravaged the newly-titled Soviet Union.

The war of the Bolsheviks spread to the shores of the Baltic where the Red Army was determined to impose its authority on the people of Estonia who had thrown off the Russian yoke.

To halt the Red tide and fan the flames of freedom, Britain had dispatched a substantial fleet to the Baltic.

The world little noted, nor long remembered what happened in the Baltic, but it should never forget what British sailors achieved there.

Sailors like the men of HMS Myrtle, a 1,250-ton Arabis-class sloop sent to sweep Bolshevik minefields – a growing danger in the summer of 1919.

On July 15, Myrtle and her sister Gentian were sent into the treacherous waters of the Björko Sound in the eastern Gulf of Finland.

This narrow stretch of water had already claimed aircraft carrier HMS Vindictive as their victim. The ship had run aground at high speed and only been refloated, severely damaged, after 2,000 tons of equipment, including her aircraft, had been removed.

There was to be no such good fortune for the Gentian and Myrtle. Four mines were identified by 1st Fleet Minesweeping Flotilla and the two sloops were sent in to deal with them.

As the crews endeavoured to neutralize the weapons, both ships were mined.

The blast killed all but one man in Myrtle's engine room, wounded countless more, and crippled the ship.

On the bridge Lt Cdr Richard Scott ordered the wounded to be transferred to another ship.

Barely had the difficult manoeuvre been completed when the bow sheered away and disappeared beneath the waves.

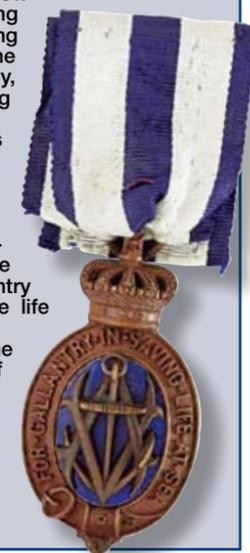
There was now no choice but to abandon ship. Scott was the last man off – but there was talk among his shipmates of a comrade possibly left behind.

And so Richard Scott returned to the blazing hulk of the Myrtle, drifting uncontrollably through the minefield, rolling violently, to look for his missing comrade.

He scoured what was left of his ship but in vain; the man was never found.

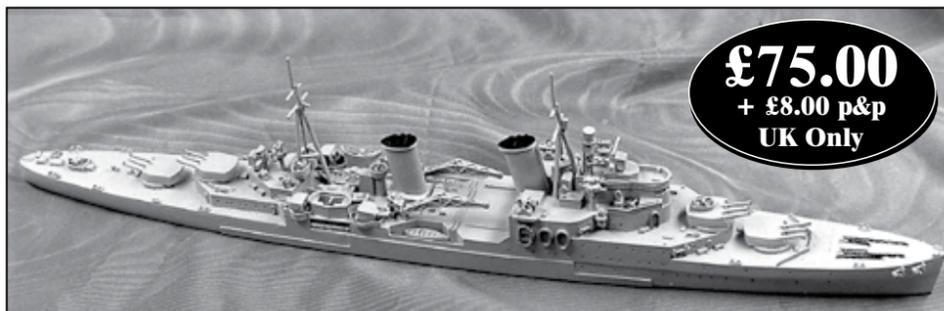
His bravery that fateful Tuesday earned the 32-year-old from Bath the Albert Medal "for gallantry in endeavouring to save life at sea".

It was a decoration he cherished. Nearly half a century later, and a year before his death at the age of 80, the then Rear Admiral Scott was a founder member of the Albert Medal Association.



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● An Offshore Raiding Craft and LCVP operating in Poole harbour

Picture: LA(Phot) Lee Durant

What's a Royal without marine?

HANDS up, everyone who has seen *Saving Private Ryan*?

You'll know if you have. You don't forget the opening sequence where Tom Hanks and his fellow Rangers charge ashore from landing craft headlong into a hail of fire from German guns.

You don't forget the thousands of men pouring onto land from the hundreds of landing craft off the French shore.

Of course, fighting has changed somewhat since the days of World War 2.

No one is going to pretend that a beach landing on such a scale against such an embedded opponent is likely to happen again.

Thankfully.

But beach landings, river attacks, amphibious operations are still very much part of the day-to-day business of the Royal Marine. And key to their defining expertise as amphibious infantry.

Admittedly their recent theatres of operation haven't involved a great deal of amphibious work, particularly amid the landlocked dust and mountains of Afghanistan.

But there's still plenty of water out in the world and a need for experts in both boat-handling and infantry-fighting.

Delivering the punch of the Royal Marines from ship to shore takes two main forms – the helicopters of the Commando Helicopter Force and the boats of the assault squadrons.

And ensuring that the coxswains and landing craft specialists of the Royal Marines stay sharp falls to 1 Assault Group Royal Marines.

It is here that the core skills of the Marines' surface manoeuvre by boat are fiercely nurtured.

Recent changes have brought 1AGRM under the FOST banner, so the unit now brings a Marine through his individual specialisation and watches over his performance within a group as part of the shipborne assault squadrons.

Commanding Officer of 1AGRM Col George Foster said: "I think it's a good change. What

Boat-handling and soldiering on the water, it's what puts the marine into Royal Marine. And it falls to 1 Assault Group Royal Marines to train these skills within the elite fighting force. Helen Craven finds out more...



● Learning the basics of beach assault with 10(LC)TrgSqn

it gives is a coherence throughout the capability, training the individual throughout their career. This has got to be better for them."

1AGRM is currently located across three sites in the southwest: 10 Landing Craft Training Squadron (10(LC)TrgSqn) in Poole, 11 Amphibious Trials and Training (11AT&T) at Instow, and within FOST at Devonport.

Later this year, 1AGRM will move its headquarters to Plymouth, moving closer to the large amphibious ships, 539 ASRM and their brethren at FOST.

And once the facilities are in place, the landing craft and instructors of 10(LC)TrgSqn will join them in Plymouth.

The allegiance with FOST has also meant that the Royal Marines' infantry expertise will be fed into the Royal Navy boat coxswains and board and search teams, with initial courses intended to start by

the end of the year.

"It creates a single footprint where all the synergies of generating people and resources – training and deploying them – all come together in Plymouth," said Col Foster.

The assault squadrons within the large amphibious ships of Devonport are all parented by 1AGRM, which is responsible for the maintenance of standards and practices of those ASRMs.

It's not just the men of the ASRMs of Bulwark, Albion and Ocean that are watched over by the instructors of 1AGRM, but 539 ASRM within 3 Commando Brigade, as well as landing craft detachments at Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines, British Indian Ocean territories and 2 Raiding Troop Royal Marine Reserves.

At 10(LC)TrgSqn in Poole survival on the water is taught to recruits, young officers and those Marines who have signed up for

the Landing Craft SQ (specialist qualification).

Capt Luke Davies RM of Boat Troop said: "This is the centre of gravity for landing craft in the Royal Marine world."

Within the troop there are 38 boats of all types, from the rigid inflatable boats up through the slender Landing Craft (Vehicle and Personnel) to the weighty Landing Craft (Utility) and training units include a Raiding Instruction Team, a LCVP section and a LCU section.

He said: "When someone comes into the landing crafting SQ, they've come from infantry skills, they come out from that background and have got to learn everything about waterways.

"It's a steep learning curve after running around doing the dark green stuff with a rifle.

"The two hardest parts for them are navigation and the rule of the road.

"It is complicated. They need to learn it word for word. Same as a navigator on a Type 42 or Albion."

This is apparent when you see inside the classrooms where burly men sit, poring over charts and marking navigation routes with pencil lines.

It's a far cry from the handheld GPS that most boaters on the water employ. But it's essential.

And why choose this SQ? "It was the Falklands for me. When I was growing up I saw 90 blokes going in on a Mk 9 LCU," said Sgt Maj 'Higgy' Higgins.

Another temptation for the choice of landing craft specialisation is the opportunities that come with it.

Not just globally but professionally, with a number of senior major and colonel posts on offer within the ship drafts and battle staffs of the amphibious task force.

Although Col Foster himself does admit: "When I did my course in 1984 I was a pressed man. I was told to do it.

"But I have never regretted it for a moment."



● 10(LC)TrgSqn instructor Cpl Nick Hawkins runs young officers through a capsizing drill (and below)

Bottoms up

Poole Harbour. Normally it's associated with weekend yachtsmen and pleasure boaters. But not in one corner where the tramp-tramp of heavy bootfalls is heard.

These men have been up since three this morning. They've done a 12-mile speed-march carrying 70lb packs. They've watched the dawn sun rise on the beach before clambering aboard boats to be carried to an unknown shore. They're being yelled at. And they're still grinning.

They are, of course, Royal Marines.

And here in Poole they are under the control of 1 Assault Group Royal Marines – the experts in small boat operations for amphibious operations.

The 60-or-so men stood in front of me in the bright sunshine are all young officers under training at Lympstone. They've been brought to Poole to start their induction into the defining distinction of a Royal Marine from an Army soldier – attack from the water.

We all know the lines – Royal Marines are elite commando soldiers, experts in amphibious warfare, the punch delivered from ship to shore.

Well, these men are being brought up to speed fast in the basics of amphibious and riverine ops.

It is the instructors of 10 Landing Craft Training Squadron who are hammering the drills of survival into the aspiring officers before them.

Day in, day out, rain or shine, they watch a stream of recruits and young officers jump into the dark waters and struggle through the vital boat drills that will save their lives.

This morning they are teaching capsizing drills. In turn, each young officer jumps into the dark waters, then pulls himself into the MIB (medium inflatable boat) loosely moored on the waters.

Each man shouts his number, grabs the rope, then stands on the inflated tube, pulling the boat back and over all their heads.

Once their mouths are clear of the Poole waters, they shout their numbers again, then pull themselves back on top of the upturned boat, burdened by their water-logged wet kit.

Then grab the rope and stand upright once more, and flip the boat back to its more usual direction.

Well, that's the plan anyway.

One group struggles to tip the boat, despite repeated attempts, much to their instructors' mounting disdain.

I've been through this drill myself before. Admittedly in the Caribbean, wearing only light clothes, and without having done a 12-mile run. And it still took us a few attempts.

My attempts at sympathy are dismissed. "The two men on the outside can tip this boat over on their own, if they just do it right," I'm told.

And so, in the end, they do.

The boat flips, one young man clinging limpet-like to the tube, his instructor landing on his feet in the boat next to him with the experienced poise of a surfer.

And their reward for this labour? Jump back in the water, swim to shore, run back onto the jetty, grab their guns, run back to the Hard, then hurry up and wait to see what challenge will be fired at them next on their long journey to that all-important green beret.



Pictures: LA(Phot) Alex Cave



● LS 'Smudge' Smith hands out some goalkeeping tips
Pictures: LA(Phot) Pete Smith

Westminster kits out orphans

DURING their ship's recent visit to the Indian city of Chennai (formerly known as Madras), the footballers of HMS Westminster took advantage of a perfect opportunity to help out the local community.

The ship's football team visited the Balagurukulam Orphanage on the outskirts of Chennai to help out for the afternoon and deliver brand new England football kits – provided by the RNFA – to every child, along with footballs, snacks and school equipment.

AB(Sea) Simon Hurst said: "It really hit home how lucky we are to have what we have in the UK."

"It shows that you shouldn't take life for granted."

Lt Glenn Gorman added: "The children were eager to get into their new kits and show off their skills."



"The lads all enjoyed the day, with most saying it was the highlight of the deployment so far. We're just happy to have helped."

Racking up charity at Raleigh

COLLECTIONS. Dressing up. Swimming. Painting. Running. Bus-pulling. All of these are fairly good examples of diverse fundraising within the Royal Navy.

But it's added up to a hectic period of charity labour for the men and women of HMS Raleigh.

In reverse order, let's turn to the annual event of bus-pulling on Plymouth Hoe.

Dave the Shed's Bus Pull – Dave being a local Plymouth strongman whose nickname is 'The Shed' for reasons undivulged – pulled together various competing teams to haul a 9.2-ton double-decker bus 100 metres along the Hoe to raise money for Children's Hospice South West. Two teams of 10 trainees from Raleigh's Pellew Division gave up their precious free time to train themselves up for their day on the pull.

Instructor PO Shane Wortley said: "The programme allows each trainee to have five hours leave at the end of week eight."

"This is the only time the trainees are allowed to leave HMS Raleigh and enjoy some downtime of their choice without the staff."

"We are very proud that this group have chosen to forgo their leave to take part in this event and raise money for this cause."

PTIs at the base laid on extra classes to make sure that the trainees were ready for the big challenge.

The Raleigh trainees went head to head with another naval team from BRNC Dartmouth – and the Raleigh sailors came out ahead.

Now to running, where a group of seven Service and civilian personnel from Raleigh plunged into the Plymouth half-marathon, collecting sponsorship for Vitalise Churchtown Centre, the residential activity centre for adults and children with physical, sensory and learning disabilities.

And so to painting, where a team of submariners under training at Raleigh picked up their paintbrushes to decorate a local school with an underwater scene.

Marine life abounds around a yellow submarine on the new mural at St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School in Whiteleigh.

The less artistically-minded submariners were put to work repainting 400m of corridor and ceiling during the school's redecoration project, all of which was part of the submariners' leadership and management training.

Teacher Victoria Smith said: "The sea is our topic for next term and the underwater scene is brilliant. The children love it."

"They didn't know it was happening so when they walked in on their first day back their eyes lit up."

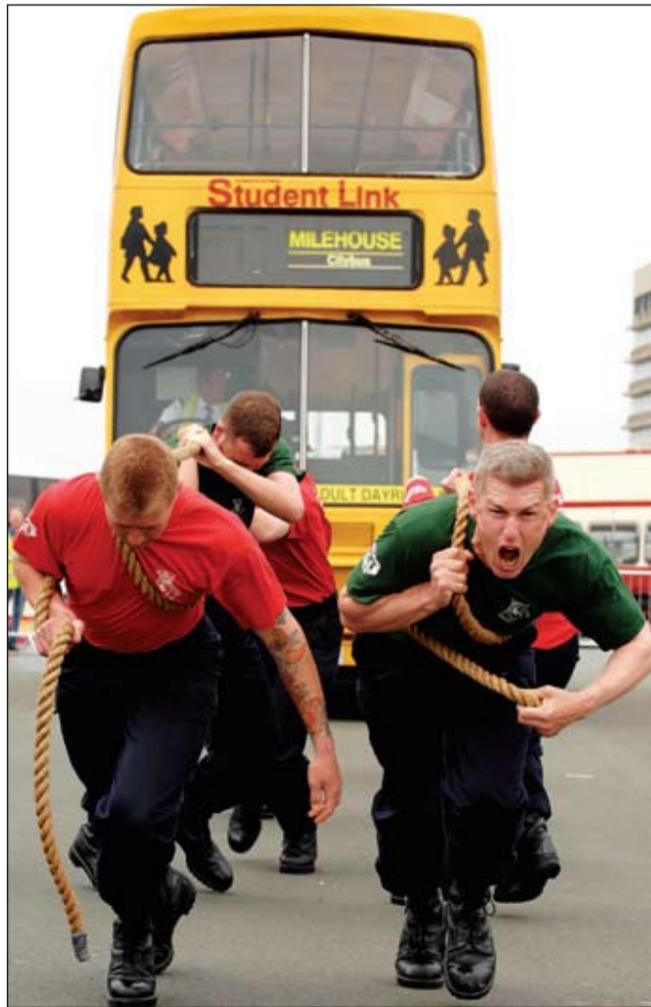
Training officer Lt Paddy Beegan said: "Our trainees got a lot out of it, and so did the people at the school."

"It was great to be invited back to meet the children – and their smiley faces made it all worthwhile."

Rather than the depiction it was the reality when Raleigh staff took to the pool to raise money for the World Swim for Malaria.

Some 55 swimmers stripped off to take the plunge and raise in excess of £1,200 for the charity that buys mosquito nets to help prevent malaria in Africa.

Organiser PO Julie Wilsmore said: "I love raising money for good causes and I was inspired



● The Raleigh team at this year's Dave the Shed's Charity Bus Pull on Plymouth Hoe
Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Sterratt



● Bananaman and friends from the Defence Maritime Logistics School fund raise for Help for Heroes
Picture: Dave Sheffield

to organise this event by Judy Grinham who won a gold medal for swimming at the Olympics in 1958.

"She is a keen supporter of this charity. I swam for two hours and it was great to see such a cross section of people taking part."

"Everyone was really pleased with the final amount raised."

And so to dressing-up. Considering the proliferation of fancy dress at so many events, there are times when it seems it might be more lucrative to raise money by not dressing up...

But at HMS Raleigh young officers took inspiration from their nominated charity Help for Heroes to become super-heroes for the day.

Dressed as Zorro, Bananamam, Princess Leia and more, the nine officers tackled a sponsored run on the assault course, tin-rattling

around the base, duty rounds and a coffee morning to garner funds of over £800 for wounded Service personnel.

The fundraising took place during the final week of the officers' eight-month initial logistics officer course within the Defence Maritime Logistics School.

Lt Vivienne Joynes said: "I was dreading the assault course but it was really good fun."

"Everybody has dug deep in their pockets and was really good about giving us money."

And finally to collections – St Paul's Church at HMS Raleigh collected almost £1,000 over three months for ShelterBox, the charity that provides emergency aid for victims of natural disaster.

The money will fund two ShelterBoxes, containing a ten-person tent and other equipment to help a family survive.

Somerset's better world

A MISSION for the homeless was the unusual destination for a group of sailors from HMS Somerset during her recent visit to Palermo in Sicily.

The sailors picked up pickaxes and pneumatic drills to work on the Brother Biagio *Missione di Speranza e Carità* (Mission of Hope and Charity), that gives shelter to up to 800 refugees and homeless people.

The British sailors were joined by their NATO allies from the American and German ships as they dug trenches and cleared drainage channels under the baking Sicilian sun.

Brother Biagio said: "Thank you for your contribution – this is very important. You have all come from different ships of many nations, but working together you have been building a better world."

Puppy love from York

DURING her time in refit in Portsmouth, HMS York's ship's company have made sure that any spare time they have is put to good use.

Ten crew headed over to the RSPCA animal shelter in Stubbington to put their skills into practice repairing and renewing the site.

Led by CPO Clint Wheeler, the team weatherproofed the animal housing units and repainted the runs and playground at the Stubbington Ark.

They also put their Naval ingenuity to the test, figuring out how to resolve a problem caused when a lorry collided with an entire hay store.

Lt Charlie Golden said: "Despite all the hard work, time was found for a behind-the-scenes tour."

"There were frequent visits to the puppy unit, originally by the female crew but eventually more burly forms were also seen scratching ears other than their own..."

Hilly hike for Sultan

TWO teams from HMS Sultan headed north to take part in this year's Keswick to Barrow Charity Challenge.

Team organiser WO Jim Gibbon said: "We could not have wished for a better day as the forecast was hot and sunny with no wind."

"It was perfect conditions for a 40-mile run/yomp/stroll/hobble through the beautiful Lake District countryside – but only if you are a camel or a madman."

Despite its name the Fast Neutrons team was beaten by the Delayed Neutrons of Sultan, who completed the event in just over seven hours, netting the title for the 'Fastest MOD team' and the 'Fastest team from outside Cumbria'.

Jim added: "As always the runners come away vowing 'Never again.' But true to form, they're already asking about next year's challenge..."

Generous sponsors were thanked by the Sultan teams – overall this year's Keswick to Barrow challenge is expected to raise over £200,000 for the various charities chosen by the enthusiastic walkers.

Find out more at www.keswick2barrow.co.uk.

Play at BRNC

MEMBERS of the Warrant Officers, Senior Rates and SNCO's Mess at Britannia Royal Naval College paid a visit to their affiliated school to hand over the proceeds of their dedicated fundraising.

The donation of £800 will go towards the cost of building a new specialist playground at Mayfield School in Torquay, a school for children with severe and profound learning difficulties.

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A heroic endeavour

Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan

THE beaches of Dunkirk were evacuated once more this summer, but this crowd were rather more saddle-sore than battle-weary.

Over 300 people – both military and non-military – had taken to their bicycles to raise money for injured Servicemen and women.

The Help for Heroes Big Battlefield Bike Ride (sponsored by Halfords) began with a bang at Portsmouth Naval Base, with the cyclists' departure heralded by a Red Arrow flypast and a Royal Marines Band Beat Retreat.

The charity ride led the cyclists through a 350-mile journey, visiting the battle sites of World Wars 1 and 2 over the course of five days.

Landing craft from HMS Bulwark met the fundraising cyclists at Dunkirk to bring them on board the assault ship for the trip back to Blyth.

During their voyage across the channel, the Help for Heroes cyclists joined with the sailors and marines of HMS Bulwark for a memorial service conducted by the amphibious ship's chaplain.

Rev Tim Wilkinson RN said: "Dunkirk is an icon

of a community standing together when it really mattered.

"Today our forces are involved in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. These operations are a matter of life and limb and death.

"Help for Heroes have been willing, in true Dunkirk fashion, to push the boat out and play their part, however undemanded or unexpected of them."

Help for Heroes was founded by Bryn and Emma Parry, who came up with the notion of the battlefield bike ride six months earlier.

Among the riders were a team of wounded Servicemen and staff from Headley Court, the rehabilitation centre that is the focus of the fundraising effort.

Sailors on board the assault ship spent the Channel crossing talking to the men and women on board, including octogenarians, war veterans, generals, peers and even a woman more familiar on the *Sun's* Page Three.

Among the riders was AB Craig Dryden, who lost part of his leg as the result of an infected insect-bite in Gibraltar, who said: "I was in rehab in Headley

Court for over a year. The facilities are good – but they could do with even better ones.

"I didn't even know Headley Court existed until I got injured, but now I want to make sure more people know about it."

Cyclist Cpl Rory Mackenzie of the Royal Army Medical Corps, who lost his leg in a roadside bomb attack in Basra, commented: "I did this for all the Service men and women still out there in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The support we've experienced makes me feel like something's tipped in the way the public feel about our Servicemen and women abroad.

"It's a great feeling.

Once Bulwark arrived in Dover, the assault ship began a full amphibious offload, flooding her dock to send her landing craft – four LC(Utility) and two LC(Vehicle and Personnel) – ashore with their offensive force... of cyclists.

Bulwark's Commanding Officer Capt Jeremy Blunden said: "All of us in HMS Bulwark are delighted to have supported the Big Battlefield Bike Ride, and Help for Heroes.

"The fact that Help for Heroes is aimed at helping all sailors, soldiers and airmen injured whilst in the service of their country is hugely humbling for us.

"The cyclists have included several Servicemen from Headley Court who are learning to deal with terrible injuries and prosthetic limbs – their participation in the Big Battlefield Bike Ride has been an inspiration to all of us."

Once back in the UK, the cyclists gathered numbers for a final mass ride down Whitehall to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph.

The event raised over £1million, and has helped boost the Help for Heroes fundraising total to over £6,848,000.

Fundraising continues apace with the momentum continuing into nationwide events, including a challenge rugby union match at Twickenham featuring international rugby stars planned for September (see page 42).

To find out more about this match and other events in your local area, visit the website at www.helpforheroes.org.uk or call 0845 673 1760.

■ See also Sea Cadets on page 33



Debby returns to the road

FORMER Radio Operator Debby Tonge was one of six disabled people to receive keys to their new cars from the Queen on the 30th anniversary of Motability, the UK's leading car scheme for disabled people.

The event particularly highlighted Motability's work with people connected with the Armed Forces and Emergency Services, as other recipients included Capt Peter Norton, who was awarded the George Cross for bravery when heading up an Army bomb disposal unit.

Debby, who left the Navy in 1997, injured her lower back in a car accident. During her career she served in HMS Coventry, Invincible and Glasgow.

The Motability Scheme is available to anyone who is receiving the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement.

To find out more telephone 0845 456 4566 or visit www.motability.co.uk.

● Former Radio Operator Debby Tonge receives the keys to her new car from Motability's Chief Patron the Queen outside the Royal Hospital, Chelsea



The good ship Penhale

THE Senior Rates mess at HMS Collingwood has donated £1,500 to Penhale School in Portsmouth.

The school caters for children between the ages of three and seven, and has a specialist unit for children with hearing disabilities.

PO Simon 'Nobby' Hall visited the school which used the money for a wooden ship in the school's playground.

The Tactical Command Support Team in the Fareham base have been awarded the RNLI charity shield for the third year running.

The team's sophisticated software simulates the firing of missiles, and as a spot of light relief in hectic training schedules, trainees are sometimes allowed to let loose, but only with a voluntary contribution to the RNLI.

This year has garnered more than £400 for the lifeboat charity which as fellow mariners is close to the base's heart.

● PO Simon 'Nobby' Hall sets sail with children from Penhale School in Portsmouth

'On eternal patrol...'

THIS is the White Ensign flying once more aboard HMS Exeter.

Not on her flagstaff – and not on the Type 42 destroyer.

No, this is the Royal Navy's standard attached to the port torpedo tube of the heavy cruiser Exeter, 200ft beneath the Java Sea between Java and Borneo.

Not since the first day of March 1942 has the ensign been 'raised' on the veteran of the River Plate.

But fixing the flag to the wreck was the first act

for divers who found her after more than six decades below.

Vidar Skoglie and his team spent years scouring the waters of the Java Sea in search of Exeter – all their searches frustratingly drew a blank, including one in the autumn of 2006 when the divers' efforts were invigorated by fresh material from the Japanese viewpoint.

They returned to the waters once more in February 2007 and this time found the hull of Exeter roughly 90 miles off Bawean Island – a good 60 miles from her estimated position in 1942.

Before announcing the find to the RN – and subsequently the world – the team wanted high-resolution photographs of the wreck.

That the dive team did in April

when the images confirmed not only that the wreck was indeed the wartime Exeter – but that stories of her crew's valiant efforts to thwart the Japanese were very much authentic.

"Exeter slumbers peacefully on her starboard side with her ever-protective soul mate Encounter still 'on eternal patrol' nearby," said Mr Skoglie.

Exeter was part of an ill-fated ABDA – American, British, Dutch and Australian – force attempting to halt the Rising Sun's march of conquest in the Far East.

The force was mauled and scattered in the Java Sea on February 27 1942. Exeter was struck by an 8in shell to her boiler room and put into Surabaya in Indonesia for emergency repairs.

Barely a day later she put to sea once more, determined to make for Ceylon via the Sunda Strait.

Before dawn the following day, however, the ship and her escorting destroyers, HMS Encounter and USS Pope, were sighted by a far superior – and faster – Japanese force.

The unequal battle began late morning – four heavy cruisers and accompanying destroyers against Exeter's battered force – and despite efforts by the destroyers to shield Exeter's

escape under a smokescreen, the cruiser was crippled by an 8in shell crashing into her boiler room.

It was the decisive blow. The ship lost all power and was at the mercy of the Japanese guns – which showed her none.

Her captain, Oliver Gordon, ordered his men to scuttle the ship then take to the life rafts; 650 of them did, but 54 men perished. Exploration by Mr Skoglie's team confirmed that the cruiser had gone down fighting – and that she sank as much from her crew's scuttling efforts as from the Japanese guns.

The survivors were picked up by the Japanese – as were 149 crew of the Encounter, also sunk. The Pope escaped in a rain squall only to perish at the hands of Japanese bombers later that same day.

Of Exeter's survivors, almost one in four would subsequently die in Japanese POW camps.

Six decades later, they are suitably honoured – the wreck site has been classified as an official war grave.

Details of Exeter's precise location and that of Encounter's nearby – Mr Skoglie's team found her as well – were presented to HMS Edinburgh's CO Cdr Gavin Young when his ship visited Singapore this spring.

Aboard Exeter's modern-day successor, the Portsmouth-based destroyer, news of the wreck's discovery evoked poignant memories.

"This is very much a reminder of the sacrifices made by our predecessors," said Exeter's CO Cdr Paul Brown.

"Although this battle took place 68 years ago, we should remember that this news will undoubtedly have an effect on survivors and the families of

the ships' companies."

Locating Exeter took unbelievable patience and dedication, as did another miraculous find half a world away.

HMS Ontario went down during a storm on the lake of the same name in 1780, taking more than 120 men – a mainly Canadian crew, British redcoats and several American prisoners of war – with her.

And apart from a handful of bodies washed up the following year, that was pretty much the last anyone heard of the 80ft sloop until divers Jim Kennard and Dan Scoville began to search for Ontario in earnest.

Mr Kennard first started to look for Ontario in the early 70s but abandoned the search after failing to find anything.

He resumed his quest after teaming up with fellow diver Mr Scoville and for the past three years they have scoured some 200 square miles of lake bed.

Sonar finally picked up HMS Ontario this spring and stunning video imagery confirmed it was the 22-gun sloop – to the astonishment of its finders.

"It's the Holy Grail of Great Lake wrecks – there's nothing more significant," enthused Mr Kennard.

Significant and also remarkably intact: Ontario sits at a 45° angle 500ft below the lake, her two 70ft masts still upright, many of her cannons still in place, two windows are even intact.

The exact location of the wreck has not been revealed by the pair of divers – except to the Admiralty as Ontario remains British property and an official war grave.

Ontario never fired her guns in her anger during her brief life – she was only launched in May of 1780.

With thanks to Kevin Denlay.

Remembering Capt Leach

DID you serve with Capt John Leach, first – and last – CO of HMS Prince of Wales, the ill-fated WW2 battleship?

American attorney Matthew Wills is compiling a biography of the popular officer, father of the future First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Henry Leach, in conjunction with one of Sir Henry's former officers, Lt Cdr Douglas Hadler.

Capt Leach served the RN for more than 30 years, losing his life when Prince of Wales was sunk by the Japanese in December 1941.

Earlier in his career he served at Jutland in HMS Erin and spent time in HM Ships Renown, Cumberland and Royal Oak, the latter as her XO in the early 1930s.

Mr Wills and Lt Cdr Hadler are looking for anecdotal stories of Capt Leach which shed light on his character and personality, based on personal reminiscences, diaries, letters and the like.

If any of his former shipmates or their families can help, Lt Cdr Hadler can be contacted at 8 Fulmer Drive, Gerards Cross, SL9 7HJ or douglas.hadler@btinternet.com

Gloucester's veteran role

DESTROYER HMS Gloucester spent six days in the Welsh capital to mark Veterans' Day commemorations.

The Type 42 berthed at Britannia Quay, while her ship's company were dispatched to various events in Cardiff, including a parade by former Servicemen at the city's castle.

There were also numerous stands dotted around the fortress and environs highlighting the role of today's Armed Forces.

WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF THE DECISION TO SEND WOMEN TO SEA IN 1990?
I'm conducting research into people's perceptions for my MA. Please email me, Hannah at: wrrns2008@googlemail.com if you'd like to participate.

Hit me with your laser beam

IN DAYS of yore, youngsters could be entertained with games of Twister, Buckaroo, KerPlunk, Connect Four and the like.

And then came games with batteries. Remote-controlled cars. Operation. Battleships. And, best of all, Tin Can Alley – a toy rifle which fired a light beam at tin cans to knock them off a wall.

Technology has moved on a bit. Ok, a lot.

The toy rifle has been replaced by an SA80 powered by air pressure.

The tin cans are gone. A huge TV screen stands in its place.

Oh, and it's not a game. It's a deadly-serious £1m marksmanship and ship defence trainer.

This is the Dismounted Close Combat Trainer at the lead Naval Military Training School in HMS Raleigh.

Here comes every basic entry trainee at the Torpoint establishment to practise and perfect marksmanship with the military's standard-issue rifle.

No trainee will pass-out of Raleigh without being able to land a minimum of 33 rounds out of 55 on a target at 100 metres (328ft).

The trainer simulates the rifle range, right down to the kick-back each time a bullet leaves the barrel.

What's missing is the smell and the noise – and that latter point makes it far easier for instructors, like CPO Chris Mallinder, to use their expertise to pass on advice and guidance to people who've invariably never picked up a weapon before.

And what the simulator lacks in noise and smells, it makes up for with feedback. Sensors record a raft of information from the amount of squeeze on the trigger to butt pressure (*no sniggering at the back please – Ed*).

After your five well-aimed (or, in my case, haphazardly-scattered) rounds, the computer shows you on the screen where they landed.

So rather than instructors 'guesstimating' your marksmanship failings, he or she knows pretty much instantly what is amiss.

And on the range, rounds cost money; the only real limitation in the computer trainer is time.

"You are not wasting live



● CPO Chris Mallinder passes on his rifle skills to trainees on the computerised trainer at Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh

rounds and you're giving constant feedback to the trainees," says Chris.

"In the past six to eight months we've seen big improvements in shooting."

He adds a caveat for today's Wii and X-Box generation, though.

"Holding a rifle is not the same as picking up a joystick and aiming some crosshairs on a video screen."

No, on the trainer, X most definitely does not mark the spot. "There are people who are naturally good shots, but given time and training you can train even the worst shooters."

Marksmanship is important, of course, but rarely, in life, is the foe a large cut-out target standing still 100 metres away.

Where the computer trainer comes into its own is in a 'live action' simulation.

Numerous scenarios have been filmed or created on computer simulation – intruder on board, gangway duty, convoy run – and each run is different.

Take the 'intruder on board' programme, for example, filmed

on a Type 23. A team of SA80-armed matelotes begin clearing 2 Deck, on the lookout for a suspicious character.

On one run-through, an engineer appears from a compartment begging his shipmates not to shoot and protesting his innocence; on another run-through he is the intruder. Sometimes the intruder shoots, sometimes he downs his weapon.

You see, this is not a video game. You don't kill everything which moves. You follow strict rules of engagement and, if you have to shoot, you shoot to kill.

"It's important that you are not trigger happy. You must know your rules of engagement, you must know when to draw your baton, and when to use your rifle," Chris explains.

As with the rifle range simulation, the computer records where your gun is aimed at all times – and, if you fire shots, where they landed.

Marksmanship is important but more important is speed – coupled with aiming. Speed and accuracy are the watchwords.

The newspaper van trundles past HMS Nonesuch in Devonport. The driver gives a friendly beep to the guys on guard at the top of the gangway, and then disappears from view.

Thirty seconds later he's back, the side door is open and he's firing rounds at your ship.

At most, you have four seconds to react and return fire. Now imagine that on a wet Sunday in Plymouth when you're duty on the portable cabin on the Flight Deck. Chris adds:

"The reaction time with a suicide bomber is estimated to be three seconds. That's three seconds to make a decision: Am I going to shoot or not?"

Such are the pressures on young men and women in the front line, which is why the DCCT is crucial to their training.

Computers are all well and good, but there remains no substitute for the real thing. (Tin Can Alley is no longer made, but Twister and Connect Four live on...)

"There's nothing like the

adrenaline of handling a live weapon and there's nothing better for training than live rounds," says Chris.

Next to the trainer is the Cossack building, which replicates a merchant ship and is used by RN and RM teams to practise boarding and searching – a mainstay of RN operations around the globe these days.

Unfortunately, there is no equivalent facility for Ship Protection Force (SPF) teams.

"We would like to use Cossack for SPF training but it is heavily used for Board and Search Training. A possible alternative would be the newly arrived HMS Brecon, but she is also fully utilised for seamanship training," says Lt Cdr Ian Kempell, the Training Group Officer at NMT.

"We are hoping to fill the current training gap with a bespoke 'Compartment Clearance Facility' – a purpose-designed building which would enable Ship's SPF teams to use blank rounds as they practise compartment-by-compartment clearance in a realistic environment."

Bush warriors



THE snows of northern Norway are all but a distant memory.

And soon so too will be the lush rolling terrain of Dumfriesshire for the Royal Marines of 45 Commando as the Arbroath-based green berets swap Europe for the sand and dust of Helmand.

After three months in the Arctic, the commandos got to grips with combat in more familiar surroundings, one more step down the road back to Afghanistan which they will take with 3 Commando Brigade this autumn.



The ranges at Dundrennan, near Kirkcudbright, offer a 4,700-acre 'playground' for Britain's Armed Forces by the Solway Firth.

Once used to prepare Britons for the liberation of Europe, this spring it has served as the training ground for 45 from the absolute basics of combat to troop attacks and live firing.

The images might suggest a lush landscape in the bloom of spring (which it was), but they do not reveal the undulating nature of Dundrennan (which it is, although it's not, of course, as unforgiving as northern Norway).

The RM Condor men began their exercises with basic skills and drills at section level, then moved up to troop level, culminating in three-hour-long attacks on 'enemy' positions – once they had successfully negotiated roads, fences and other obstacles on the range and steered their way around minefields which limited their front of attack.

War inevitably means casualties and the 'battle of Dundrennan' was no exception. The Royals used some of the latest techniques of 'casualty extraction' (moving the wounded from the front line to first aid post or field hospital) based on the latest experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq to ferry their 'fallen' from the battlefield.

To new techniques were added new firepower. All the Royals had the chance to grapple with the GMG – grenade machine-gun which, as its name suggests, spews out 40mm grenades at an astonishing rate (up to 340 per minute). Coupled with the .50 heavy machine-gun in action in Dumfriesshire it made for a pretty impressive demonstration of raw power.

Unlike the real thing, war at Dundrennan ended no later than 9pm. Like the real thing, the days were long, the fighting energy-sapping (especially in the spring heat) and the satisfaction of 'the battle done' was immense.

"We truly went 'back to basics' in terms of section, troop drills and skills in this training package," said unit training officer Capt Ben Richardson.

"There was also the opportunity for everyone to get their hands on the new support weapons.

"It was a hard, but rewarding week."

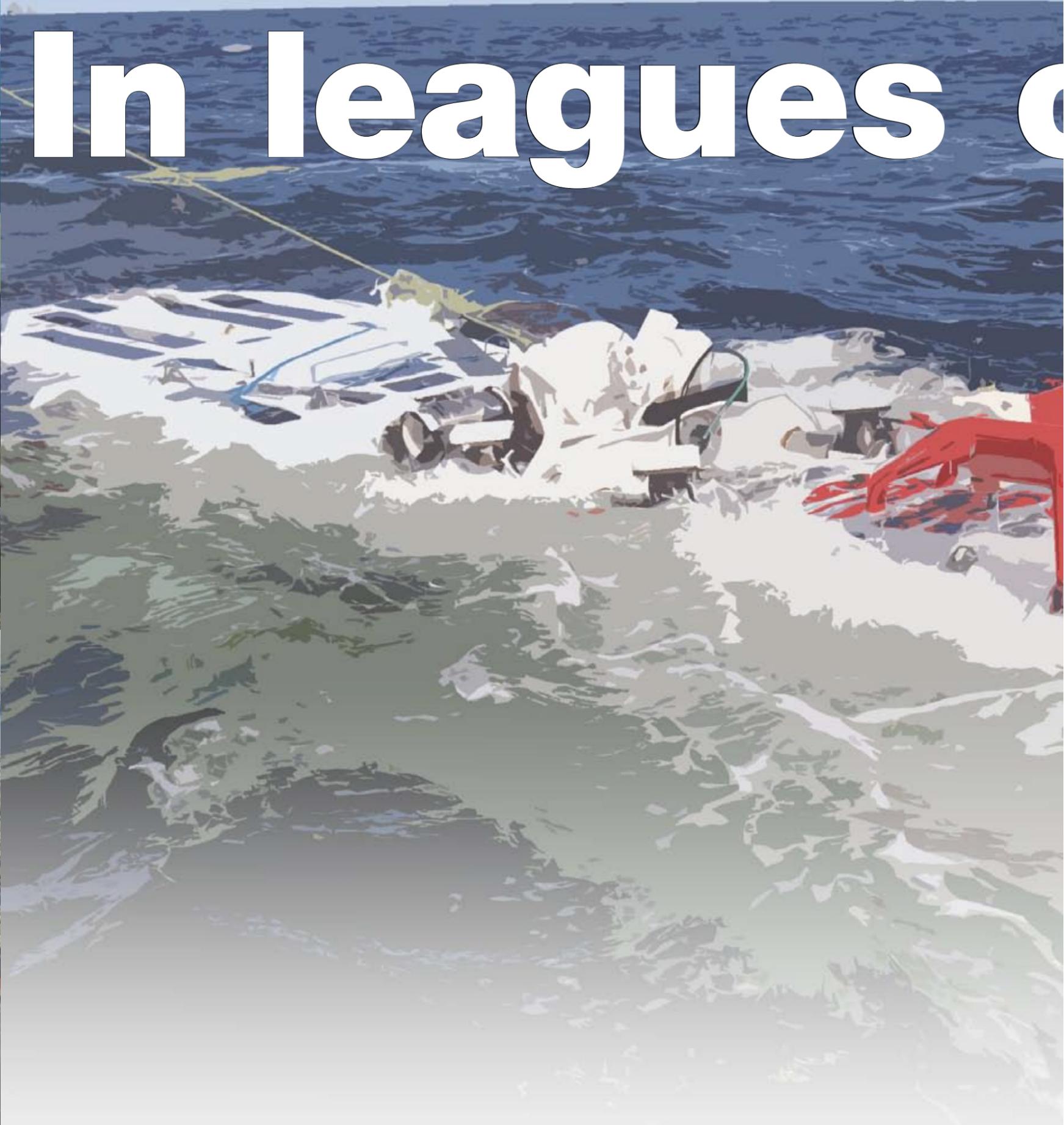
Pictures: LA(Phot) Nick Tryon, 45 Cdo

● X Men... X Company, 45 Commando, move across the Dundrennan range during a live-fire exercise and (above) heavily-camouflaged commandos of V Company await battle





In leagues



SUBMARINE accidents don't happen often but when they do there's a particular horror about them.

Who could forget the failed rescue attempts on the Russian submarine Kursk in 2000, or the collective relief five years later when the Russian submersible Priz was successfully cut free from its snags and brought to the surface?

It's the race against time that makes the rescue attempts so nail-biting – when a submarine is in distress, there is generally only a 72-hour window.

"Submarine rescue transcends national boundaries," confirmed Rear Admiral David Cooke, Commander Operations. "Any life-threatening incident affecting a submarine concerns the entire international submarine community."

Global co-operation is the key to success for submarine rescue.

Most boats are already designed with a rescue seat on their hatches which complies with NATO specifications, so that submarine rescue vehicles can 'mate' with almost any type of submarine in the world, opening the hatch and taking the submariners to safety with transfer under pressure equipment.

But submarine and deep-water rescue is so specialised and requires such expensive equipment that only a few nations can design and operate it.

Over the years different countries have developed various types of rescue systems and equipment, from remotely-operated vehicles to atmospheric diving suits.

Then there are all the support systems of air supply/ventilation systems and divers; debris removal and emergency life support store re-supply.

All these have to be transported to the site of a submarine in trouble, a logistical challenge which requires a huge international effort and pooled resources.

"Interoperability is the key," explained Capt David Dittmer, the US submarine officer in tactical command of the exercise.

He explained: "Submarine rescue is so technologically complex that there are only certain numbers of people expert in it, and while some of the components may be different because we've got our own industries and our own standards, if we can work together and develop those relationships we will take a huge leap forward in our capability.

He added: "I think it's the submarine community which is the pulse – everyone would do anything they can to help a stricken boat."

Exercise Bold Monarch, which took place off the southern coast of Norway last month, was the latest and largest in a series of NATO-led submarine escape exercises.

Its aim was to bring together rescue systems from all over the world and collaborate in a series of scenarios involving distressed

submarines and 'casualties' with complex problems needing specialist medical aid.

For the two weeks of the exercise, three submarines, one each from the Netherlands, Norway and Poland, were 'bottomed' off the coast of Kristiansand at depths between 80 and 140 metres.

While they played the part of a sunken submarine with up to 80 casualties in various needs of medical treatment, the submarine escape and rescue assets practised their coordinated rescue and medical skills.

Although it was NATO-led, Bold Monarch's scope went far beyond NATO's member nations. It was the first of its kind in which Russia took a full part – she sent her rescue vessel, the RFS Titov, carrying the Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle AS-34, and conducted her first 'mating' with a NATO submarine.

NATO-Russia cooperation in submarine rescue was first discussed in 1996 under the Partnership for Peace programme and developed following the signing of an agreement in 2003, and in June 2005, Russia took part in a previous NATO submarine search-and-rescue exercise, Sorbet Royale off Taranto, Italy.

It was the experience and relationships developed during that exercise which contributed to the success of the mini-submarine rescue in August 2005 off the

coast of the Russian Kamchatka peninsula, when AS-28 Priz was cut free from the cables snagging her by the British-based Scorpio Remotely-Operated Vehicle (ROV).

Thanks to the database run by ISMERLO, the International Submarine Escape and Rescue Liaison Office based in Norfolk, Virginia, the UK team had full access to the specifications of the stricken Priz, and knew what equipment would be needed.

The organisation, a sort of International Rescue for submariners, was set up to ensure that at least one of the world's rescue systems would be available at a moment's notice.

"There are such a limited number of people who really know submarine rescue and submarine rescue mobilisation," said Bill Orr, ISMERLO coordinator and a retired US diving officer. "We look at the availability of rescue assets out there, provide notice for urgent requirements for rescue, and post that information on our website."

He explained: "The nation that lost the submarine, as well as nations that can offer assistance, can see that information and identify the best possible assets to respond."

In total 14 countries – Canada, France, Greece, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States – sent personnel and rescue equipment to Exercise Bold Monarch.

Observers were sent from Argentina, Australia, China, India, Pakistan, Singapore,

"I think it's the submarine community which is the pulse – everyone would do anything they can to help a stricken boat."

of their own



South Africa, South Korea and Spain.

Among the assets of interest to the international community was the Royal Navy's SPAG (Submarine Parachute Assistance Group). The SPAG's role is to be the first response to a rescue – the team parachutes in with inflatable boats, life rafts, medical and communications equipment and rations.

Once in the water, the team's role is to establish communications with the submarine, assist the crew in deciding the best form of rescue, and relay the information back to the HQ.

Italy has its own SPAG which regularly exercises with the RN's and in Bold Monarch the two teams practised a 'hot insertion' taking off from RAF Lyneham with ten specialist divers and crates of medical equipment.

"We also practised a parachute jump for the first time with the Russians, the Ukrainians and the Greeks, all of whom are looking to develop their SPAG capabilities," said Lt Andy Sharp, Officer Commanding SPAG.

He added: "The exercise was an ideal opportunity for us to hone our skills, and it also gave me the opportunity to talk to the Chinese and Singaporeans, who are both interested in developing SPAGs."

International interest also focused on another new piece of kit – the NSRS (NATO Submarine Rescue System) jointly owned by the UK, France and Norway, which has now nearly completed its trials and should be fully accepted into service later this year.

The NSRS, built in the UK under a contract with Rolls-Royce, will replace the existing LR5 rescue submersible and Scorpio ROV – the system which rescued the *Priz* in 2005.

The system comprises an ROV, an unmanned craft which will locate the submarine and prepare it for rescue, and a three-man Submarine Rescue Vehicle, affectionately (but unofficially) called *Nemo* – after Jules Verne's captain, not the Disney fish, as chief pilot Tom Heron explained.

The rescue vehicle will be flown out, together with a portable launch and recovery system, and fitted on to a suitable ship at a port near the incident. At the submarine location the 30-tonne SRV will dive up to 610 metres (2,000ft) below the sea to mate with the submarine's escape hatch and transfer up to 150 survivors to safety, in groups of up to 15 at a time.

Although based in Faslane, the NSRS will be on standby to assist any nation's submarine anywhere in the world.

"This system offers big advances in technology," said Project Team Leader Cdr Dickie Burston. "She's brand-new, complex, and will need some refinements, but the transfer under pressure system is superb and the naval divers and doctors were very impressed with it."

He added: "We've finished 95 per cent of

her tests and if needed, she could be used now. But formal acceptance takes some time and paperwork, and we expect her to be accepted in the late summer."

Tom Heron said: "When her predecessor LR5 was new the older subs were like *Tiger Moths* and she was the *Concorde*. LR5 is now the *Tiger Moth* and she is the *Concorde*."

He added: "I feel very safe in this boat – she's very tough and strongly-built. They've given us all the tools we need to do the job, so we feel confident that if we had to go and do a real rescue we've got the right equipment."

"When we practised on this exercise, the delighted look on the men's faces as we transferred them told me there are a lot of happy submariners out there. From the surface to locking on the submarine took us 17 minutes. It's a comfort thing for submariners to know we have this system."

The new US Submarine Rescue and Diving Recompression System (SRDRS), which uses a Remotely Operated Rescue Vehicle (RORV) with a tethered power and control umbilical, was also on final proving trials.

The two new systems complement each other, both will be capable of worldwide deployment and together with other national systems that are generally confined to domestic littoral waters, could provide a

global capability potentially available to all submarine operating nations.

If Bold Monarch demonstrated the importance of international co-operation, the next step will be to build multi-national rescue forces.

"We want broader participation, more submarines and more rescue systems that can operate and play this game and prove it all works," confirmed Capt Dittmer.

"When we look at where we are today in the field of submarine rescue, we haven't just come miles, we've made a couple of circuits round the earth."

"The effort made by every nation here proves it. It's been a wholly co-operative international event, and it gives us all great respect for the nations we've worked with."

He continued: "There is a happy community of submariners out there knowing we can get them out in an emergency. I never needed it in 25 years in the Navy and I didn't want to, but it's the confidence it's there if you need it."

"It's like the roadside assistance – when you're driving your car around you don't ever want to see those guys, but you need to know they'll be there if you need them."

● Main picture: the NATO Submarine Rescue System is lowered into the water; and columns: the submarine parachute assistance group (SPAG) in training and the NSRS lowered into the water from HNoMS Harstad

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins



King Neptune's on my back

I WAS in the RAF in 1969-70 serving at RAF Changi when an offer of a lift to Hong Kong aboard HMS Forth was offered.

Four colleagues and I were interested and were accepted for available places.

During the voyage I saw the stoker with 'The Hunt' tattoo but was not impressed as the tattoo looked stretched on his tall frame. I thought at the time it would look better on me as I was just 5ft 5in tall but with a similar broad frame.

In Hong Kong I made friends with a number of Yanks who were on R&R from Vietnam. They invited me to a party where everything was free (my kind of party...).

After drinking many 'tigers' I found myself sitting at the bar alone and soon became bored.

I ended up at Pinkies Tattoo Studio with the intention of having 'The Hunt' tattooed on my back, but changed my mind and chose a tattoo depicting Neptune protecting a sailing ship from a sea monster.

This I was told looks very good.

— **Jack Bowen**, former RN/RAF/RN, Clenchwaton, King's Lynn, Norfolk

...WHEN I was serving in HMS Forth in the Far East (1969-71), we had a guy with the Hunt tattoo on his back.

He was an AB ('Big Jock' Purdy) who was, as his name implies, a big lad with a broad back.

I couldn't imagine the tattoo on a smaller guy, as there was so much detail in it. It was a beautiful tattoo, and was the only fox and hounds I saw in my nine years' service.

— **Doc Holliday**, former AB QA2, Hartlepool

Mersey Flowers

CAPT Sainsbury asked (*Letters*, May) whether a remembrance service is still given for the Flowers of the Mersey.

As a member of the Wallasey Branch RNA, I can tell you that every year, on the nearest Sunday to April 23, we commemorate the anniversary of the actions of Zeebrugge and Walcheren.

The service is conducted by the Rev L R Singleton, Chaplain to RMA Northern Region and our local Merseyside chaplain, John

William. He often conducts the service and knows us all on first name terms.

This year being 90 we were all invited to the Wallasey Town Hall, with additional members from the south of England.

All are welcomed to our branch by our secretary, Shipmate Alf Nelson, and all shipmates of the company are given a tot of rum with a free buffet.

— **Thomas Cockram**, Leasowe, Wirral

Life without limits for reservists

READING 'Reviewing the Reservists' Role', and *Opinion* (June), I had difficulty in recognising the RNR (and RNVR) as referred to as the 'Club' or 'separate force' in which I served for 38 years from 1949 to 1988; also the remark that not since World War 2 has it been in such demand.

There is no doubt that the RN needs to find the means to fill gaps and the RNR is a cheap way of achieving this.

From a Cold War perspective, when the RNR had both officers and ratings trained in practically every role to be filled on mobilisation, the present claims seem somewhat over-egged.

The RNR did not just train in its own minesweeping squadron but regularly in integrated squadrons in RN and NATO exercises when individual ships were wholly RNR-manned and the operational command often fell to RNR officers of due seniority. It helped clear several WW2 minefields.

There was a huge NATO commitment to provide whole crews for over 40 Ton-class minesweepers and latterly minehunters.

Personnel in those dangerous days, for example during the Cuban crisis, served in many roles, in Naval control of shipping, maritime HQs, as interpreters, in medical services, in every engineering, weapons, and communications branch, even in the MOD itself. They flew aircraft and some were qualified submariners, others clearance divers, and so on.

Both the RN staff officers and permanent staffs became complete converts to the fact that the RNR could achieve practically anything, given the right encouragement. In present times there appears to be a shortfall in thinking at MOD.

The aims for the RNR seem too limited and vastly underestimate what devoted volunteers can do from a huge pool of untapped expertise within the nation.

In my day in three RNR divisions we had people who designed and built warships and a lot of what went into them; worked for radar and sonar manufacturers, worked in nuclear power stations, and many other industries. Many were merchant service, also patrol service fishermen.

There are really no limits when the question 'who manned the bulk of the Navy in the World Wars?' is asked.

The present generation has forgotten.

Cdr A R Macnaughton, RNR ...I HAVE served as the RN XO at HMS Sherwood, the RNR unit based in Nottingham, from



● **Reservist AB Simeon Hawkins from HMS Sherwood on an operational tour on board HMS Blyth in the Northern Arabian Gulf**

July 2005 and have seen at first hand the significant changes and the distinguished contributions referred to in Cdr Payton's letter (*June*).

I agree with much of what he wrote, not least that there is much still to do and whilst I cannot foresee what the review might conclude I am confident that the case for the Maritime Reserves is being well articulated within the Fleet HQ against a backdrop of wider difficult decisions.

However I fundamentally disagree with his statement that the RNR unit poses the greatest obstacle to further RNR integration with the RN.

I do not consider that closing units will help in the further integration of the RNR into the RN, quite the opposite, it will leave the reservist more isolated and vulnerable and less able to function effectively when called on to do so.

I have recently been involved in the staffing of a policy paper under the direction of Captain Regions that developed the template for the new regional structure for the RNR, aligned with that of the Naval Regional Commanders.

This paper reviewed and endorsed a range of recent policy papers and very clearly stated that "the RNR unit remains critical to delivery of a versatile maritime reservist with appropriate 'generalist' skills who is comfortable and

able to function in a military/naval environment at the appropriate level".

I believe Cdre Thorne (CMR) has made it very clear that the role of the unit is to support the reservist to reach their full potential, in return the unit requires the reservist to fully assist the Command in creating a dynamic organisation whose key function is to conduct initial training which encompasses engagement with local AFCOs and extends to responsibility for the full range of 'day to day' recruiting and RNIPE activity.

These Command responsibilities complement and aid the role of the SO1s who act as Subject Matter Experts for each specialisation and are charged with delivering the agreed OC output for their area.

They have made significant advances in moving their specialisations closer to the operational requirements of the RN.

The Unit Commanding Officers and the Specialist SO1s work together in a symbiotic relationship, which also includes the Naval Regional Commanders, CMR HQ and the newly formed Regional Teams.

Each has an important role to play and to lose any part of this organisation will seriously weaken the whole.

Lt Cdr Martin Clegg
Eastern England Regional SO2
(Sherwood) Nottingham

Unhappy Killicks

I READ with great interest the letter from Leading Seaman Gferer (*May*). First of all, top marks to your paper for printing something that a lot of people wouldn't think you would (it confirmed to me that you indeed do not shirk issues).

Secondly, I must, on the whole, concur with LS Gferer and his observations on the new Seaman Specialist Branch.

I've no doubt that the *Navy News* will have quite a few letters arrive, probably from the hierarchy of his branch over at Fleet HQ, painting a wonderful picture of this new branch structure and how happy everyone is with it etc...

But I too have had first hand experience of a lot of the new 'improved' Killick Spec's grievances.

My last job (until (very recently) leaving the RN) as an ISSC instructor at Phoenix gave me an awful lot of contact with these killicks.

On the whole, those I conversed with were not a happy bunch (to put it mildly), and I'm talking a huge percentage here, probably nearer to 100 per cent if I'm being honest.

The general consensus was that they would put their notice in tomorrow if it were financially viable.

Most appeared to be well past their 12 years time-in and would therefore lose out on their full pension, something which no doubt applies to LS Gferer.

Personally, some of my best memories and happiest times in my 24 years in the RN was as a Killick Spec onboard the *Geordie Gunboat*, working for PO (Sea) Ben Casey.

I'd hate to think what it would have been like if it had entailed me being so unhappy with my job and being forced to retrain in something I was neither consulted on nor suitable for.

It really is a huge shame to see what's becoming of the branch I loved and the people in it who once made it so special.

— **Colin Clarkson**
(recently ex) PO Seaman
(now a merchant seaman)
Southport, Merseyside

Helping Handy

I AM part of a small group which is trying to save an ex-RN gunboat, built in 1883, from being broken up.

The *Demon* (formerly HMS Handy and HMS Excellent) is currently in Pounds scrapyard, Portsmouth.

The site has been sold for redevelopment and any remaining vessels are due to be broken up very soon.

Time is running out for this Victorian Navy and World War 1 veteran – would any readers be interested in helping?

Please contact me on 01235 510029, or email savethehandy@hotmail.com

— **Rob Buckel**, Didcot

opinion

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines are the forgotten heroes of the UK's major operations abroad, an opinion poll by a leading maritime charity has shown.

Three-quarters of people questioned believed they have not been recognised for their role in Iraq and Afghanistan, while a similar percentage felt they did not receive enough support on their return.

Although the RN and Royals have at times made up 52 per cent of serving personnel in Afghanistan over the past year (as *Navy News* has often reported) the general public still think the Army makes up the vast proportion of troops in Ops Telic and Herrick.

Indeed, nearly half the public questioned did not realise the Marines were part of the Royal Navy – although at least they think

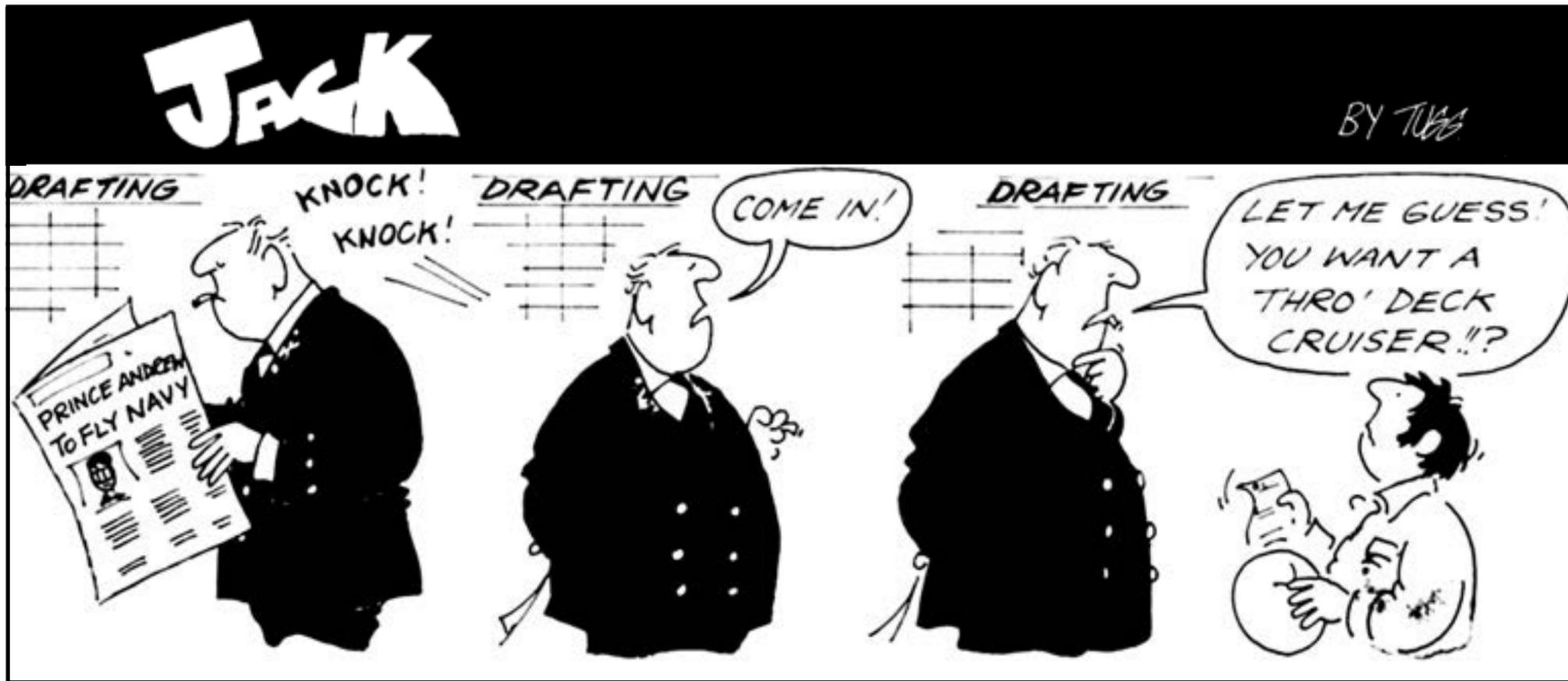
they're part of the Army and not the RAF.

Seafarers UK commissioned the poll as part of its '2 Million Reasons' fundraising campaign, which aims to raise £2 million to help the forgotten naval heroes who often face enormous hardships when returning home from deployment.

But money is only part of the answer – the charity is urging the public to pledge their support by signing up online at www.seafarers-uk.org to back the men and women who risk their lives in operations abroad.

The charity hopes to get 10,000 pledges by December. Seafarers UK won't approach people who sign up for donations – the charity simply wants your name as a public record of support for the members of the British military serving overseas.

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



Enigma heroes were unsung

I WISH to reply to the letter headlined 'Enigma Heroes were honoured' (June).

The letter from the Naval Honours and Awards office points out that Grazier, Fasson and Brown were honoured by the Admiralty shortly after the incident in which they rescued codebooks from U559; two of the men posthumously received the George Cross and the other the George Medal.

On the basis of this the writer goes on to question points made in a *Navy News* article about the recent campaign to "honour" the men - that they were described as "unsung heroes"; that there was mention of a drive to get them "international recognition"; that it was stated there was a "wrong that needed to be righted"; and that the article alluded to the men being denied "proper recognition".

The writer says the article implied the Admiralty had taken no notice of their bravery.

This interpretation is incorrect and as the person who led the campaign to bring the men to wider public attention, I feel I ought to address these points.

Firstly, there was no criticism whatsoever intended of the Admiralty for not recognising the men, and throughout the campaign it has been made clear that they did receive medals.

However, the term 'unsung' is wholly justified for many other reasons, not least of which is the fact that the enormous significance of the men's actions needed to be kept secret for decades - not even the men's families could be told of the immense importance of their actions.

In that sense the men were undeniably 'unsung heroes.' Even when the truth emerged in the mid-1970s, no huge fuss was made of them.

Robert Harris, the author of *Enigma*, told me: "Without these three men there may never have been a D-Day in June 1944."

I also have a letter from Tony Blair in which he says they made "a contribution to the winning of the war that few individuals could match."

Now contrast that with the fact that in 1998, Colin Grazier's home town newspaper, the *Tamworth Herald*, could hardly find anybody in the town who recognised his name - let alone what he died for.



That is what was meant by the term unsung - it had nothing to do with a lack of medals.

I believe the above points also clarify why I referred to a "serious wrong to be righted." The men were also "wronged" by the film *U571*, which falsely suggested Americans were responsible for retrieving the most valuable Enigma treasures from U-boats.

The mention of a 'drive to win the men international recognition' refers to the widespread results of the campaign. It led to the men's heroism being told in newspapers as far away as America, Canada and Australia.

Finally, I would like to justify the phrase 'honouring the men'.

Of course the medals were an honour, but so too are the amazing developments that have happened since the true significance of their actions have become known.

Roads have now been named after them, a hotel bears Grazier's name, the men are remembered in an annual ceremony, beers have been named after them,

and a fabulous sculpture has been erected in their honour in Tamworth town centre (pictured above with author).

I was disappointed that the letter was more concerned with trying to argue that the men had been sufficiently recognised, rather than on how much their actions merited the long overdue public tributes to them.

I can only see positives in all this and I am extremely proud about what has been achieved on the men's behalf.

I also believe the Royal Navy can take enormous pride in what these men achieved.

Since the end of the war, they have not been celebrated in a way befitting the significance of their actions.

I will always view this campaign as the most worthy of causes and remain grateful to the hundreds of people who supported it.

- Phil Shanahan, deputy editor of the *Tamworth Herald* and author of *The Real Enigma Heroes*

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.

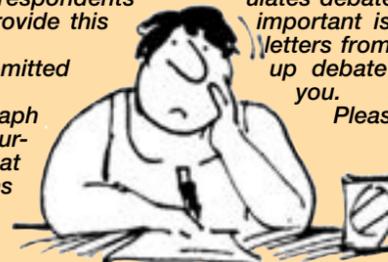
Given the impressive

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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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Collingwood Battalion is honoured in Dorset

AN ARMED guard and wreath bearers, together with First Lieutenant Lt Cdr Martyn Peak and Rev James Francis, represented HMS Collingwood at the annual memorial service at the Collingwood Corner Naval Division Memorial, Blandford Camp.

Wreaths were laid on behalf of HMS Collingwood, the Blandford Garrison, the RNA and the trustees of the Collingwood Memorial.

At the outbreak of World War 1 the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, directed that those members of the Royal Navy who could not be used at sea should be formed into a land-fighting division to operate alongside the Army.

The RN Division consisted of battalions named after famous British admirals, and the Second Collingwood Battalion was initially trained at Blandford Camp, near Pimperne in Dorset, and was later almost wiped out in Gallipoli.

A memorial was placed near the entrance to the camp.

School visit

A PARTY from the Association of Wrens has visited the Defence Helicopter Flying School at RAF Shawbury to see how trainees pick up aviation skills.

The group watched 705 Naval Air Squadron activities and were shown the Horsa glider project.

While on station the party met the Commandant of the DHFS, Capt Martin Westwood RN, and 705 NAS senior pilot Lt Sly Vorley.

Bourne grateful

BOURNE branch are now the proud owners of a crucifix, thanks to an appeal in *Navy News* last winter.

The members of Bourne had several replies from both branches and individuals who either had one available or were willing to make one.

In the end, one was obtained from Harlow branch, but members were keen to thank everyone who contacted them on the issue.



● The newly-commissioned HMS Solebay acts as guardship for yacht racing at Ryde Canoe Lake

Pictures: Mike Crowe

Secret new Solebay

MEMBERS of the HMS Solebay Association were sent on a secret mission during their weekend reunion on the Isle of Wight.

They left their base at the Shanklin Hotel, and were transported to Ryde on the orders of association chairman Malcolm Clarke and Shirley Winn, managing director of weekend organisers IOW Tours.

Their destination was the Canoe Lake in Ryde, where the veterans were treated to the sight of a magnificent 4ft scale radio-controlled model of their old ship.

In true Royal Naval style, to mark the debut of the Battle-class destroyer, a commissioning cake adorned with the ship's crest was cut by the 'CO's wife', Sue (wife of Malcolm) and the 'youngest member of the crew' Jock Brodie, a junior cook on the last commission in 1960, and now sporting a magnificent beard.

The launch was held in co-operation with the Ryde Model Yacht club to ensure radio frequencies did not clash; the club, formed in 1874, uses the lake every Sunday morning for racing Marbleheads, named after a prominent yachting town on Long Island Sound.



● Former junior cook Jock Brodie (left) and HMS Solebay Association chairman Malcolm Clarke with the model of their old ship during the Isle of Wight reunion

And it seemed only proper for the newly-commissioned greyhound of the sea to lend her services as guardship for the racing yachts.

Members reckoned the last time a sister-ship of Solebay acted as guardship for a Cowes Week yacht

race was HMS Vigo in 1958.

It was the first time the association has held their reunion on the Isle of Wight, and they enjoyed a tour of local beauty spots on the Saturday.

A magnificent buffet lunch was laid on for the visitors by the

Cowes Royal British Legion.

Any past members of the crew of HMS Solebay who would like to join the Association at their next reunion, to be held in Scarborough, should contact Malcolm Clarke at 164 Southmead Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS10 5DR.

'Other' heroes recalled

DON'T forget the other Enigma heroes, said a former Royal Navy sailor.

Mr Hodgins said he does not in any way wish to take away the credit for the bravery of the three men of HMS Petard who recovered vital secret codes from the U-559 in October 1942.

Two of the men, Lt Tony Fasson and AB Colin Grazier, died in the process, but historians have said their actions shortened the war by many months.

Mr Hodgins refers to the earlier capture of codes and an Enigma machine itself from U110 by HM ships Bulldog, Broadway and Aubretia in May 1941.

The Germans, fearing that they were to be rammed, escaped from their boat, but a boarding party, led by S/Lt David Balme, recovered the vital equipment and information.

The booty enabled code-breakers at Bletchley Park to start to untangle the fearsome Enigma.

In 2001 a memorial stone and plaque were unveiled at Horsforth, which in 1941 was a village just outside Leeds and which adopted Aubretia.

Inside the village museum is a model of the corvette and an account of the capture of U110.

At the unveiling, a parade of more than 300 ex-sailors, including seven from Aubretia and one from Bulldog, marked the occasion.

■ **Unsung heroes?** See letters on page 25

DVD given to museum

SHIPMATES Francis Brown and Peter O'Malley, of the City of Glasgow branch, were invited to Edinburgh Castle to present a copy of the DVD *Mayday Tugs* to the National Museum Scotland.

Librarian Sarah Dallman was very grateful to receive a copy of the DVD because of its connection to World War 2.

Peter enlisted in 1942 and served in the tugs Dexterous, Bustler, Growler and Jaunty. He also served in Atlantic and Mediterranean convoys, took part in the invasion of North Africa, Sicily and Normandy, and saw action in the Far East.

Zeebrugge group look to 90th

AN ex-Services group which traces its roots back to the Zeebrugge raid has recently celebrated its 89th annual dinner and dance.

The Bristol Royal Navy and Royal Marines Old Comrades' Association was

founded in 1919 following the raid on Belgium, which took place on St George's Day in 1918.

The founder was H H Turner RM, who actually took part in the raid, and would be very proud to think that his group

was still going strong after 90 years.

Recognised by the Admiralty in 1927, the association claims it is arguably the oldest of its kind in the country, older even than the Royal British Legion.

"We still commemorate the Zeebrugge epic with our annual dinner, held on the Saturday nearest St George's Day," said association secretary S/M Ken Fry.

"We are also custodians of a White Ensign flown during the battle which is on display in a cabinet aboard HMS Flying Fox in Bristol."

Sea Cadets from TS Endurance and TS Endeavour paraded the Colours with the association's own standard bearer S/M Tony Rice.



● A touch of yesterday's Navy served up at the HMS Glory Association reunion at the Savoy Hotel in Bournemouth, when chairman S/M Les Reynolds (centre) and his oppo S/M Arthur Norman (right) distributed tots from a rum tub specially made by Arthur. Enjoying his tot is vice chairman Bernard Skam

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SVR supports single en-suite room independent living accommodation within a safe, supportive, community environment for ex-Service men and women of all ages who find themselves homeless or in times of need. Full board is provided and a laundry service is available.

Throughout 2007 Rosendael has undergone a major programme of renovation. This project is now completed and rooms are once again available.

SVR Scottish Veterans' Residences

For further information contact: - 01382 477078 or visit SVR on www.svronline.org

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Naval Quirks

IN 1903, THE BATTLESHIPS "CONSTITUTION" AND "LIBERTAD" BUILDING IN THE UK FOR CHILE, WERE ACQUIRED BY THE RN..

..THEY WERE RE-NAMED "SWIFTSURE" AND "TRIUMPH" BUT THEY WERE KNOWN TO THEIR CREWS AS "OCCUPADO" AND "VACANTE" ..

..AS THE LABELS ON THE TOILET DOORS REMAINED IN THEIR ORIGINAL SPANISH!

VACANTE

SPANISH PHRASE BOOK

I'M SORRY CAP'N, I WASN'T LISTENING - MY MIND MUST HAVE BEEN PRE-OCCUPADOED..

MICAH

BAC group prepare for 30th year

WITH their 30th anniversary falling next year, the HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association is going from strength to strength.

The celebratory AGM/reunion weekend will be held at Sand Bay Holiday Village, Kewstoke, Weston-super-Mare from May 29-31.

The association maintains close ties with the five training ships that bear the relevant names – there are three TS Bulwarks and one piece of TS Albion and TS Centaur – and sponsors a sea cadet for one week each year aboard the sail training ship TS Royalist.

To date cadets from TS Bulwark (Buxton) and TS Centaur (Dudley) have benefited from the sponsorship, and next year will be the turn of TS Albion (Sandwell).

The association will rededicate a tree and new plinth at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas on September 27.

Association secretary Denis Askham said: "We have in excess of 600 current members and a committee that looks to the future and doesn't rest on its laurels.

"Here's to the next 29 years!"

Veteran visits the Błyskawica

A FORMER wartime destroyer sailor has had a long-held wish fulfilled by visiting an heroic Polish warship in her home country.

Neville Halifax served in Hunt-class ship HMS Southdown from 1943, and only discovered years later that the Polish ship ORP Błyskawica was built at the same yard, J Samuel White at Cowes, in the mid-1930s.

Błyskawica had served in several actions with British Hunts, including Southdown, but she is perhaps most fondly remembered on the Isle of Wight for her steadfast defence of Cowes and East Cowes against German bombers.

The towns, on either bank of the River Medina, came under fierce attack in early May 1942 from more than 150 enemy aircraft.

The Polish Grom-class destroyer, one of the fastest and most heavily-armed ships of its type in her day, was in Cowes for an emergency refit, and lay out in the harbour during the raids, using her anti-aircraft guns to keep the bombers at bay.

It is said that her guns grew so hot during the barrage that they had to be doused with water, and extra ammunition was rushed over from Portsmouth.

But her fire, and a smoke-screen she laid down to shroud the towns, forced the Luftwaffe pilots to take evasive action and helped thwart the bomb-aimers.

Although there was significant damage, including damage to the shipyard, it was widely recognised that her efforts saved the town from a battering.

Neville, who retired as a lieutenant commander, visited the ship in Gdynia along with fellow islander Nigel Plumly, whose father helped build the Polish ships and RN Hunts.

"I was very well received and piped on board and, following an intensive tour of the ship, attended an excellent luncheon in the wardroom," said Neville.

"I returned from Poland with greetings from the officers and crew of the ORP Błyskawica to all the residents of Cowes East and West, and indeed to the whole Isle of Wight."

Neville, who will be 83 this month and who is life president of the local Sea Cadet unit, is a member of the Friends of the ORP Błyskawica Society, which keeps the memory of the ship's contribution to the town fresh in Islanders' minds, not least through an annual ceremony of remembrance.



● First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band with the two rugby teams involved in the Pussers Rum Challenge match

Veterans gather for Moortown gala

THE Royal Navy's top officer travelled to Leeds for the Veterans Day Gala at Moortown Rugby Union Football Club.

Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, Lady Sarah Band and Capt Mike Mansergh, CO of HMS Ark Royal, were VIP guests at the event, which at first appeared to be threatened by the torrential downpours.

But the rain abated early in the afternoon, allowing Admiral Band to inspect the parade and present Veterans Badges to past members of the three Armed Forces.

The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment played throughout the Veterans Parade.

Ten crew members from HMS Ark Royal joined the veterans from the RNA, the Royal British Legion, Fleet Air Arm Association, National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association and other ex-Service organisations on the parade with their standards.

Following the parade there was a rugby match between the British Army Veterans and the Yorkshire

Legends, made up of a few past international players, Rotherham, Leeds Tykes/ Carnegie, and county club players.

The Legends won the Pussers Rum Challenge 22-10, having soaked up Army pressure before hitting them on the break to build an unassailable lead.

The event was organised by three of Moortown's club members, Debbie Sowrey, Barbara Robinson and Paul Walker, a member of Headingley Leeds No1 branch, who served on the previous Ark Royal.

Sea Service

MAIDSTONE branch is holding its annual Sea Service on Sunday July 20, celebrating 20 years of the event and the 60th anniversary of the branch's commissioning.

In addition, the branch will be laying up its standard.

Details of this event are available from secretary S/M John Cooper on 01622 675895.

Standards rededicated

SELSEY branch is joining Selsey Lifeboat in rededicating standards on Sunday July 27 in an open-air service on the Selsey Lifeboat Green, starting at 6.30pm.

Branches are invited to send standards with up to three shipmates.

The muster will be at East Beach car park (free parking) at 5.45pm to march less than half a mile.

On completion there will be a reception at the Selsey Club.

Branches wishing to participate should provide details of the name of their standard bearer, numbers attending and a contact number to secretary Brian Hall at Lauriston, 39 Hillfield Rd, Selsey, PO20 0LB, email brianhall@selseypc.net or call 01243 604273 by July 10 for further information.



● York and District branch has been celebrating its 30th anniversary, and at their May meeting shipmates honoured three men with life membership. Pictured above are secretary S/M Mike Farrington, PRO S/M Bernard Hallas and S/M Derek Eggleton, recently retired chairman, with president Cdr Paul Porter, the former CO of HMS York, who presented the certificates. Pictured right is S/M Bernard – "the oldest active official in the country" – with Commandant General RM Maj Gen Garry Robison following the Graspan Parade in London, an event which owed much to the hard work of Don Denby, his committee and the London branch of the RMR



£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our May edition (right) was HMS Crane. She was correctly identified by Mr M Oldham of Exmouth, in Devon, who wins £50.

This month's ship was launched on Tyneside in 1963 and had the nickname the Black Pig.

Can you name her – and the British cartoon pirate who commanded a ship named the Black Pig? We have removed her pennant number from the picture.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving correct answers will



go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is August 15. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

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

Torre Vieja call in at Cartagena

MORE than 30 members of the Torre Vieja branch visited the Cartagena Naval Museum.

Members were impressed both by the exhibits on display at the museum and by the translations provided by former branch chairman S/M Robin Hargrave.

The branch crest was presented to the museum by current chairman S/M Rod Millington.

The group then headed to a local restaurant for lunch, the venue having been the subject of a reconnaissance mission by social secretary S/M Gerry England.

Ulster reunion

THE 50th anniversary and final reunion of the HMS Ulster 1958-60 commission takes place on October 24-27 in Torquay.

The event will be staged at the Kistor Hotel.

Full details are available from Reg Ralph, 20 Penhale Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 7JX, telephone 01323 725978, or email rejoice@milnet.co.uk

Matchless day

SHIPMATES from the first and second commissions of HMS Matchless and other M-class destroyers of the flotilla are welcome to attend the 22nd annual reunion of the HMS Matchless Association 1942-46, to be held on September 20 at the Union Jack Club.

Contact J. Horton, 10 Finch Court, Coles Close, Ongar, Essex CM5 0AY, tel 01277 366617.



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How to join

Write to RNA HQ
82 Chelsea Manor Street
London SW3 5QJ
Tel: 020 7352 6764
Fax: 020 7352 7385
www.royal-naval-association.co.uk



MYSTERY PICTURE 161

Name

Address

My answers



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Southend reflect over past 70 years

MEMBERS of the Southend-on-Sea branch celebrated the 70th anniversary of the founding of their branch at the beginning of last month.

The branch started out with just three shipmates, but now claims to be one of the largest in the country, with more than 400 members.

It has its own headquarters and club in Prittlewell.

A service of thanksgiving was held at St Mary's Church, Prittlewell, on the day of the anniversary.

The branch standard was rededicated, and the service was conducted by the newly-appointed branch chaplain, Rev Shaun Conlon.

The mayor of Southend, together with branch patron Sir Teddy Taylor, attended, along with around 100 shipmates and their wives and partners.

A buffet lunch was provided at headquarters after the service.

Busy in Bristol

THREE branches from the south-west were set for a busy weekend as *Navy News* went to press.

Bristol, South Bristol and South Gloucestershire branches were manning stalls at the City of Bristol Veterans Day event, which was scheduled to include a presentation of badges, bands and displays by Sea Cadets, with the latter performing Ceremonial Sunset at the close of proceedings.



Setting the standard

THE tables were turned at this year's National Standard Bearers competition, when the previous runner-up triumphed over the man who beat him.

S/M Bob Colburn, of Inverness branch, took the honours, pushing Mick Kieran of Coventry branch into second spot.

The biannual competition was hosted by Chatham branch in the Royal Engineers gymnasium at Brompton Barracks in Gillingham.

Nine competitors took part, which meant that most areas were represented.

Association president Vice Admiral John McAnally attended the weekend, including the evening event when the silverware was handed out to the winners.

The weekend was rounded off with a small parade on Sunday to the Chatham Naval Memorial, led by the National Standard and including area and branch standards.

● (Left) National Standard Bearer competition winner S/M Colburn (on right) with runner-up S/M Mick Kieran. S/M Colburn later led the Sunday parade (right)

Picture: Alan Peckett



A tot for the Yacht

MORE than 20 former Royal Yachtsmen – or Yotties – stepped back on board Britannia for a special reunion at Leith.

Special guest was Dixie Dean, who served the last rum issue on Britannia the day the ration ended on July 31 1970 – and visitors on board were treated to a re-enactment of the daily rum tot ceremony.

The men were also able to recount first-hand experiences of what life was like for the 240 members of the ship's company when Britannia was in service.

The Royal Yacht served Queen and country for over 40 years, and this year celebrates ten years as a five-star visitor experience, and one of the UK's most prestigious

corporate event venues.

Since she opened to the public on October 19 1998, Britannia has welcomed more than 2.7 million visitors, and was recently awarded the highest-ever grading for a visitor attraction by VisitScotland, the Scottish Tourist Board.

Britannia is owned by a self-funding charitable trust, which preserves and maintains the ship.

Chief Executive Bob Downie, who has been with the ship since she arrived on the Forth in May 1998 to be converted to a tourist attraction, said: "It was a great honour for us to welcome back the Yotties to Britannia.

"This ship holds a very special place in their hearts and it was an incredible opportunity for our visitors to hear their stories first-hand."



● Former Yotties toast the Royal Yacht with a tot of rum



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Trophy honours Nellie

A NEW trophy has been created to remember the legacy of a staunch supporter of the Royal Navy.

Nellie Wilson joined HMS Royal Arthur, then based at a former holiday camp in Skegness, in 1941, and never forgot the comradeship of her colleagues during the war.

She joined the HMS Royal Arthur Association from its foundation in 1988 and enjoyed many reunions in Skegness and Corsham.

Nellie died in 2006 after a long illness, and maintained her reputation for being generous to the Naval Service and the RNLI; legacies were left to the Royal Arthur Association, the HMS Formidable Association and to the Skegness branch of the RNA.

When the Royal Arthur Association decommissioned in 2006 it was agreed that Nellie should be remembered, so it was proposed that a trophy be commissioned which would be awarded to a student on a course at the Royal Naval Leadership Academy (RNLA) at HMS Collingwood – the association having firm links with that group.

It was agreed that the trophy should be given to a student of special merit who would be nominated by staff.

The trophy was handed to Lt Cdr Karl Santrian, CO of the RNLA, by Rick Squibb, chairman of the Royal Arthur Association, and the following day it was presented to LNN Whitley for her outstanding leadership during the Assessed Command Exercise.

THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the July headlines of past decades...



● HMS Leopard

40 years ago

Warships normally top up with water when reaching port – but the roles were reversed in the case of HMS Leopard, which was visiting Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic in 1968. The city was suffering a severe drought, so Leopard supplied several tons of fresh water daily.

30 years ago

A record number of ships – 17 in all – were open to the public at Chatham Navy Days. Almost 60,000 people flocked to the dockyard to see the hardware on display, representing four NATO nations. Longest queues were for a peek inside the submarine HMS Sealion.

20 years ago

As more than 2,000 sailors headed for Australia in the Outback '88 task group the man heading the deployment praised the "young RN ambassadors" Rear Admiral Peter Woodhead, in HMS Ark Royal, said the sailors would help dispel the 'football hooligan' image of British youth. "They all know that they are representing the Royal Navy and their country. They're all very proud of that," he said.

Deaths

Marine Dale Gostick RM. 3 Troop Armoured Support Company, Royal Marines. Killed in action at the Sangin crossing of the Helmand River, Afghanistan when the Viking he was driving struck a suspected mine. Known by his friends as 'Master Chief General of the Universe', he had a relaxed and humorous approach to life. He joined the Royal Marines in late 2004; after training he joined Lima Company of 42 Commando RM, and completed the Viking Operators Course in 2006. Deployed to Afghanistan on Op Herrick 5 with 3 Cdo Bde. Maj Jez Stemp, OC of ASC, described him as: "A confident and outgoing Marine, he seemed to thrive on the challenges which life presented him and took great pride in his ability both as a rifleman and as a Viking Operator. His experience and courage as a Viking operator in Afghanistan was a comfort to those around him, and his advice was often sought by both peers and commanders. A physically strong man with a great sense of humour, he was everything you would expect a Marine to be." May 25. Aged 22.

Rear Admiral John Walters. Naval barrister. Joined the Navy at Eaton Hall, Cheshire, where he scored the highest marks in his entrance exams. Roles included junior officer in King George V at the end of the war; secretary to Capt Charles Addis in HMS London during the Yangtze Incident; secretary to the Naval Secretary, then Chief of Fleet Support; Captain Naval Drafting and Director Naval Administration Planning; Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel and Logistics) during the Falklands War. During this period he took over from John Nott to persuade Margaret Thatcher that cruise-liner QE2 needed to be taken up from trade to transport 5th Infantry Brigade. As a barrister he was involved in several high-profile cases, including being judge advocate for the mutiny of the sailors in the minesweeper Iveston in 1971 – the last mutiny courts martial in the RN. As Chief Naval Judge Advocate he was also responsible for bringing WRNS under the Naval Discipline Act, and pressed for RN barristers to be trained to provide guidance on operations on the laws of war and of the sea. May 7. Aged 82.

Lt Cdr Stanley Brilliant DSC. Wartime aviator. Joined the RN aged 18 in 1940, commissioned into FAA and trained as a pilot. Awarded the DSC for courage, skill and devotion to duty after his role in protecting North Russian convoys, particularly convoy JW58 to Murmansk in 1944, where in his Swordfish aircraft, he spotted U288 stalking the 48-ship convoy. With another Avenger from Activity and a Wildcat from Tracker, they sank the enemy submarine. All but one ice-damaged ship made it safely to Murmansk. At the end of the war, Brilliant was serving in the Far East, and led a flypast in Sri Lanka on VJ Day. Former chairman of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (AJEX). Aged 87. March 24.

Jim Newsham. Served 1950-62 in Diana, 1954-56 as Branch Writer. Also served in Ceret, Illustrious, St Angelo and Lochinvar. HMS Diana Association. April 7.

Doug 'Wiggy' Wigfield. PO Phot, but joined at St Vincent as an EM. Served 1964-88 at RNAS Culdrose, Osprey, Hermes, and Jupiter. Changed to photographic branch in 1975, then served at Daedalus FPU and Hydra, NATO forces at NavSouth Italy, RAF Cosford (JSOP) and finally RNAS Culdrose. April 5. Aged 59.

Patrick 'Pat' Langley. POM(M). Served 1949-61 in Superb, Alauina, Minerva, Manxman, Cheviot, Shavington, Wotton and 104 Inshore Flotilla. May 16. Aged 76.

Charles Richard 'Junkie' Craddock. CPO. Served 1949-72. Ganges boys, Pembroke, Kenya, Mauritius, Mars, Dryad, Hornet (FPBs), Gay Bowman, Gambia, Teazer (Drake X), Belfast, Royal Arthur, Defender, Terror and Ganges as Seamanship Instructor. HMS Ganges Association. May 27. Aged 76.

Kenneth John Thompson. Petty Officer. One of 12 survivors of HMS Boadicea's sinking in June 1944. May 29.

James Kenneth Langran. TO Telegraphist. Trained in Royal Arthur, Skegness and Ayr. Served in Isle of Guernsey and Cardiff, towing gunnery targets. Served in Holly in Lagos, Nigeria, and returned in Kelt. Active member of RN Patrol Service. May 22.

Tom Dearden. CPO PTI. Joined RN in 1948 and served for 45 years, the last 25 years on the staff of SNOA. Ships included Jamaica, Protector, Urania, Bulwark and Forth. Elected RN Man of the Year in 1980.

Lt Cdr (SC) Reginald 'Reggie' Watts RNR. Northern Area, ASO Shooting. Joined as a cadet in 1959 and promoted through the ranks until his retirement in 1998. May 23. Aged 61.

David Miller Skin. Chief Petty Officer. Served in the RN for over 50 years. May 27. Aged 91.

Jim Cave. AB. Algerines Association, served in Friendship. May 5. Aged 84.

Arthur Pegg. AB. Algerines Association, served in Persia. May 30. Aged 82.

Stuart Brian 'Robbie' Robertson. POGI. Served in Ganges, Sheffield (cruiser), Excellent, Tamar (HMML 1328), Grenville, Dunkirk, London and Juno. May 25. Aged 73.

John Morwood. Royal Marine. Served 14 years in the Corps, and a survivor of the sinking of HMS Cornwall. Also served in HMS Sheffield. May 30.

Ron 'Smudger' Smith. Submariner 3rd LTO. Served 1943-46 in Dolphin and Amphion. Aged 82.

W H 'Bill' Jones. CPO (AH1 ATC). Served 1947-85. Ships included Triumph, Warrior, Victorious, Intrepid and air stations Lee, Ford, Lossie, Brawdy, Portland and Culdrose. Aircraft Handlers Association. Aged 77. June 1.

Angus Macpherson. Leading Seaman. HMS Opportune Association, served in ship during the first commission 1942-45. Mentioned in Dispatches for Scharnhorst Battle 1943. May 29.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Leonard E Wells. PO Supply. Served in Southampton (survivor), Resource, Ajax, Marlborough, Baldur II, Golden Hind, Rame Head, Derby Hamlet, Ausonia and Cambrian. Stroud RNA and RBL. May 10. Aged 88.

Chris North. Isle of Wight branch, associate member and wife of the branch secretary. Known to many when on the staff of the Portsmouth Royal Sailors Home Club in the 1960s. April 27. Aged 63.

John Horton. EMI. Served 1951-58 in Pembroke, Franklin, Contest, Ark Royal, and Collingwood. Former West Malling branch treasurer. May 6. Aged 74.

Wally Fraser. Founder member of South Liverpool RNA and treasurer for many years. Served on landing craft at D-Day. May 17. Aged 82.

Nigel Brown. Aquitaine RNA, associate member. Ex Cavalry Lt who transferred to REME when asked to buy a horse. May 20 in Villeneuve, France. Aged 76.

George Stollery DSM* Ipswich RNA. Joined at Ganges in 1936, left Navy in 1947. Chief Yeoman. Ships included Warspite, Ocean and submarines. April 1.

Stanley John Dennis Selwood. Petty Officer. Kingston-upon-Thames RNA. Served in RN 1938-52 and 1957-65. Ships included Victory, Royal Oak, Kashmir, Excellent, St Christopher (MA/SB68), Beaver, Minos, Attack, Hornet, Midge, Daedalus, St Vincent, Dryad, Trafalgar, Golden Hind, St Angelo (Wigtown Bay), Mull of Kintyre, Mull of Galloway, Concor, Victorious, Bellerophon, Pembroke, Eastbourne. May 25. Aged 88.

Sid Tarrant. PO. Market Harbouring RNA. Arethusa Boy 1933-34. Served 1935-49 in Ganges, battleship Queen Elizabeth, Wild Goose in the Persian Gulf. Instructor at Ganges 1948-49. Aged 88.

Chris Speake. PO Cook. Bromsgrove RNA. Served 1940-47. Served in Phoebe and Orwell. April. Aged 86.

Lt Eric Davies RNR. Bromsgrove RNA, and previously Bexhill on Sea RNA. Served in landing craft. May 29. Aged 89.

Dorothy 'Mary' Joy. WREN Communications. Bromsgrove RNA. May 30. Aged 82.

Malcolm Kinkaid. Beccles RNA. Served in Ganges, Striker, on Whale Island and in many other small ships. Aged 64. May 20.

John Gant. Borehamwood RNA. Joined the RN at Collingwood in 1942. Served in Dinosaur, then as part of the Naval Party with SE Asia Command, and was seconded to SS Matiana. He completed his service in 1946 in Bollolo.

HMS NEWFOUNDLAND ASSOCIATION
Ronald Robinson. AB on board 1944-46. Also served in Cattistock. February 5. Aged 83.

Norman Pidcock. LSign on board 1945-46. Also served in Iron Duke, Enterprise, Prins Albert, Euryalus and Tarantula. February 12.

Stephen Lisle. AB on board 1955-56. Also served in Raleigh, Victory, Resolution, Orion, Sultan, Victorious, Undaunted, President, Ariel, St Angelo, Collingwood, Antelope, Vernon, Rothesay and Haslar (MAA).

Bernard Balding. Sgt RM. Served on board 1953-55. Also served in Phoebe and 42 Commando RM. April 3.

Danny Cracknell. LME on board 1956-58. Also served in Maidstone, Tyne, Sultan and Victorious (1959-65). April 18.

Peter Daly. EA4 on board 1945-46. Also served in Victory, Vernon, Collingwood, Nile and Anson. May 10.

Robert Hoyle. Stoker on board 1942-43. Also served in Ajax, Capetown, and Terpsichore. May 26.

Terence Needle. LTO on board 1958-59. Also served in Diana, Apollo, Camperdown, Lincoln and Mercury. May 29.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
E W P 'Peter' Adams. PO 2nd Coxn. Served in submarines 1941-45 in H32, Surfout, Unbeaten, Talisman, Tribune, Horn, Turbulent, Unseen and Unison. New Zealand branch. Aged 91.

N L 'Norman' Calvert. Stoker 1. Served in submarines 1945 in Satyr. New Zealand branch. Aged 82.

R W 'Bob' Goundry. AB. Radar. Served in submarines 1943-46 in Unruffled. Hull branch. Aged 83.

R J 'Bluey' Hale. AB. UC2. Served in submarines 1953-60 in Andrew, Aurochs and Trident. Medway Towns branch. Aged 72.

Cdr B 'Brian' Hall. Served in submarines 1954-76 in Artful (1954-56), Explorer (1956-58) and Narwhal (1958-60). Dolphin branch. Aged 78.

J R 'John' McCrow. ERA. Served in submarines WW2 in X-Craft. Scotland NE branch. Aged 88.

D 'Wally' Patch. FCO. RE. Served in submarines 1950-74 in Tiptoe, Thermopylae, Sanguine, Sentinel, Walrus, Trump, and Astute. Exeter branch. Aged 79.

W J W 'Wally' Smith. CPO Coxn. Served in submarines 1939-63 in Sturgeon, Proteus, H33, Spark, U1171, Turpin, Trespasser, Thule, Telemachus and Rorqual. East Kent Branch. Aged 89.

LST AND LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
A H Pembroke. Served on board LST 5. February 3.

J A C Morley. Served with LCI(L) Flotilla 263. April 30.

J H Snowdon. Served on board LST 198. May 22.

W Bradley. Served on board LST 160 and LST 364. May 31.

G C H Shrimpton. Served on board LCI(L) 263 and LCT 677. May 31.

D A Futter. Served on board LCT 318 and LCT 324. June 1.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS
Cdr K R B Cadogan-Rawlinson. Served: Scotsman, Forth, Aeneas, President, Orpheus, Maidstone, Dolphin, Renown, Saker and Blake.

Lt J A L Carter RNRV. Served: Nuthatch, 2/O D E D Child WRNS.

Cdr M A Cummin. Served: Revenge, Renown, Repulse, Neptune and HM Naval Base Faslane.

Lt Cdr W A N Ellis. Served: Collingwood, Switsure, Figsard, Woodbridge Haven and Vernon.

Capt R D Franks DSO DSC. Served: Wren, Searcher, Gipsy, Scimitar, Obdurate, Vigo, President, Meon, Ganges and Bulwark.

Capt E A W Gibbs. Served: Rodney, Shoreham, Lucia, Cumberland, Ganges, Newcastle, Drake, Ricassoli, Highflyer, Sheba and Mvita.

Cdr B Hall. Served: Explorer, Dolphin, Narwhal, Leander, Blake and Nelson.

Capt E J Hogg RM.
Lt Cdr F G Jennings VRD RNRV. Served: Iron Duke, Royal Oak, Repulse, Valiant, Irwell, Chinkara and Eaglet.

Cdr J A Leitch. Served: Rochester, Campbellton, Cygnet, Lapwing, Dryad, Vernon and Nigella.

Rear Admiral D P Mansfield. Served: Queen Elizabeth, Warspite, Mauritius, Daedalus, Kenya and Nuthatch.

Lt Cdr D O'Brien RD* RNR
Lt F P R Rumney RNRV. Served: Bedouin, Resolution, Chitral and Lothian.

Lt Cdr L L Smith. Served: Norfolk, Childers, Creole, Lofoten, Messina and Miner.

Matron R Stone RRC QARNNS.
Lt H M Ulyett. Served: Anchorite and Terror.

Lt Cdr H Wardle. Served: Griffin, Defiance, Inconstant, Vernon, Reclaim, Excellent, Mediator and Tamar.

Lt Cdr J A Wingate DSC. Served: Nelson, Sussex, Carysfort and submarines Eflin, United, P512 and French Ship Caretana

Chief Officer J Yates WRNS.

Reunions

Harcourt Place (Married Quarters) Hong Kong. Seeking anyone who lived here from 1981 to 1984 with a view to a reunion. Contact Rob Price at leandrop@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 01597 810927.

JULY 2008
HMS Daring 1966-1968 Association (fifth & final commission): The eighth reunion will be held at the Tom Mogg Inn, Chilton Polden, near Bridgwater, Somerset commencing at 1700 on July 12. All ship's company welcome. For further details contact John 'Ossie' Austin at hmsdaring_d05@yahoo.co.uk or on the website at: <http://www.axfordsabode.org.uk/daridet.htm> or tel: 01983 291673.

Falmouth RNA, Sea Sunday: For more than 20 years, Sea Sunday has been held on the third Sunday in July. This year the event takes place on July 20 with the parade to assemble on the Moor, Falmouth at 1020 and sets off at 1040, led by the Volunteer Band, HMS Seahawk (RNAS Culdrose) and Standards. For more details contact Ron Burdekin at rfalmouth@msn.com or tel: 01326 221851.

Tooting & Balham SCC Centenary: TS Constant will be celebrating the centenary of the formation of the unit as the All Saints Boys Naval Brigade, Wandsworth in May 1908. The 'Do' will take place on July 25-26 and they would like to hear from any ex-cadets, staff or committee. Contact Ray Desmond at tootingbalham@aol.com or tel: 020 8287 0810.

AUGUST 2008
Royal Marines, 701 Squad, Deal August 1958: Any members of the squad interested in a reunion to celebrate 50 years? Ten squad members already in contact. Also any Aden veterans, are you interested in a tri-service informal get-together? Twelve already in contact. Contact Denis Sparrow at densparrow@talktalk.net or tel: 01453 763552.

HMS Kite: On August 23 at 10.30 at the HMS Kite Memorial in Brintree Public Gardens, a service of dedication will be held. A plinth and crafted plaque bearing the names and ranks of all 217 men who lost their lives on Kite on August 21, 1944 will be unveiled. This plaque is complementary to the existing memorial. Would all those who wish to attend please contact Ray Holden at raysnavy@aol.com or write to 5 Oakdene, Stourport on Severn, Worcs DY13 9NF; tel: 01299 825391. Medals may be worn.

HMS Jersey (1986-1989): Reunion on August 30 in Dunfermline. Contact Paul 'George' Nolan for details at paulnolan228@hotmail.com or tel: 07834 157399.

SEPTEMBER 2008
HMS Duke of York Association: Reunion and AGM at the Westminster Hotel, Chester from September 5 to 7. Contact the secretary, R Draper, Rose Cottage, 103 Orchard Park, Elton, Chester, CH2 4NQ or tel: 01928 725175.

HMS Comus: Portsmouth Reunion September 12-14. Friday evening at the Maritime Club at 1900, Saturday AGM in the Maritime Club Library at 1145 with the buffet dinner and dance at HMS Nelson, Victory Club, 1900 'til late. Tickets £14.00, guests £16.00. More information from Bryan V Cox on 01903 232720.

HMS Diana: AGM and reunion will take place at the Edgbaston Palace Hotel Birmingham, September 12-14. Also anyone wishing to visit the National Arboretum can arrive on the 11th with the visit to be made on the 12th am. Contact to be made prior with RE Bolter 0121 783 7486 or J Fisher (secretary). Calling all members old and new, we have a wonderful friendly association made up from members of all commissions, come along, join us and meet some of your old oppos. We hold two reunions per year March at Blackpool and September in Birmingham. Visit our website you might see yourself or some of your oppos <http://www.hmsdiana.co.uk> or contact John Fisher at johnjackie.fisher@virgin.net or tel: 01530 242850.

HMS Glory 1943-56: Reunion at the Savoy Hotel, Bournemouth, September 26-29. More details from Tom Stallard at margaretstallard@yahoo.co.uk, tel: 01303 256457 or write to 18 Sandwich Close, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 3QG.

747 Squad (1960) Royal Marines: Reunion on September 27 at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth. Am already in contact with 16 former members and if there are any members/squad instructors/officers who are interested in attending, please contact Harry Briggs at hbriggs747_rm@hotmail.com or tel: 020 8859 0846.

HMS Invincible Communications

Association 82: Reunion for all those who served on HMS Invincible during the Falklands War in 1982 in the Communications Dept to be held in Portsmouth on September 27, meeting in the Invincible Pub 1400. Details from Tim Jenkins on 01905 357753 or see the website at <http://www.freewebs.com/hica82>

OCTOBER 2008
RNH Stonehouse: Reunion in October. For more details contact Sinbad Edwards at basin178edwar@aol.com or tel: 01752 790296 or write to 138 Austin Crescent, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 5QS.

TS Mercury Old Boys' Association: welcomes all old boys, former staff and honorary members to their annual reunion and AGM on October 11 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. Further details from Mike Ball at MBal10983@aol.com or tel: 023 9263 7477

HMS Jupiter Association: Reunion and AGM, October 18 in Middlesborough, everyone who has served on Jupiter is welcome to join us for the weekend in our adopted town. Full details from Ged Smith at hmsjupiter@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 01642 312725.

HMS Diamond Association: Annual reunion is at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent from October 24 to 27. For all information on the reunion or on joining the association please contact Ray Shipley at shipleyraymond@yahoo.co.uk, tel: 01634 267084 or write to 20 Winchester Way, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 8DD

HMS Cheviot Association: Reunion at Portsmouth on October 25. For more details contact Vic Denham on 0794 995 5003.

HMS Suffolk Association: The association will be sponsoring the second of the Trafalgar commemorations and reunion on October 26. There will be an open air parade of the Standards on the forecourt of Brighton Pier, followed by a champagne reception and lunch at the Old Ship Hotel, Brighton. More information from John Blackman on 01273 302147.

HMS Mohawk: Reunion for the World War 2 destroyer and the post-war frigate, all commissions, all branches, all ranks and rates. This will be at the Britannia Hotel Coventry from October 31 to November 2. Contact Joe Artis at joeartis@hmsmohawk.org.uk or tel: 01483 824418.

FEBRUARY 2009
RN Shipmates: Second annual reunion and social weekend from February 6 to 9. A repeat of this year's most successful reunion and booking fast already. No association? Another reunion and social weekend has been designed for those ex shipmates who don't have their own reunion to attend, whether due to reduced numbers and the association has been wound up, or because nobody has started one for your ship. February 6-9 2009 at Mill Rytte Holiday Village on Hayling Island, well known for Naval reunions. Coach trip Saturday followed by an 'Up Spirits' and gala dinner, remembrance service on Sunday, another 'Up Spirits'; then coach trip or Sod's opera. Further details from Mike Crowe, RN Shipmates, 7 Heath Road, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8PG or mike.crowe1@btinternet.com Want to start an association? Start it here!

MARCH 2009
HMS Duke of York Association: Mini-reunion at the Stretton Hotel, Blackpool from March 27 to 29. Contact the secretary, R Draper, Rose Cottage, 103 Orchard Park, Elton, Chester, CH2 4NQ or tel: 01928 725175.

MAY 2009
HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association: 30th anniversary of the original association in 2009. Reunion weekend is booked for Sand Bay Holiday Village, Weston-super-Mare from May 29 to 31. All enquiries to Denis Askham at dnsaskhm@aol.com or write to Bryden, Boyndie, Banff, Aberdeenshire, AB45 2LD, or tel: 01261 861742.

NOVEMBER 2009
SCU Leydene, R(S)S) branch, CT specialisation reunion: A reunion is being planned for anyone who has either served as an R(S) or is currently serving as a CT in the RN/RM. The reunion is to be held at the Bunn Leisure Ocean View bar, Selsey, Sussex early in November 2009. All personnel who have served at the SCU at any time are also cordially invited to join us. Contact Eddie Clamp at edward.clamp@btinternet.com or see the website at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Squirrelshack/> or tel: 01243 605832.

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk

Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk

Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veteransagency.mod.uk

Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600

RN and RM Service records: 023 9262 8672

Falklands 25: 0800 169 2277 (Veterans Agency), www.falklands25.com

Royal Naval Association: 020 7352 6764, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk

British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishtelephone.org.uk

RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk

Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk

SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafoa.org.uk

Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org

Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com

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■ Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.

■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

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■ Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Where are you now?

HMS Arethusa: Trying to locate an old friend, Brian Appleby, he was a Radar Plotter on HMS Arethusa in 1980. He possibly became a PO Wtr. Brian comes from Doncaster. Also trying to find out if there is a Radar Plotters Association? Contact Steve 'Johnny' Mathis at Chaos26765@aol.com or tel: 07940 211301.

Thanks to HMS Gannet

EIGHTEEN months after an horrific fall in the Scottish mountains, Michael Tunney returned to HMS Gannet to thank the men who plucked him to safety.

Back in November 2006, the former Metropolitan police officer and his teenaged son, also called Michael, were on the slopes of Beinn Achaladair near the Bridge of Orchy – roughly half-way between Fort William and Dumbarton.

The father and son team were hoping to climb all 284 Munros – 284 peaks above 3,000ft named after the man who first catalogued them in the 19th Century, Sir Hugh Munro – for a good cause.

But Mr Tunney lost his footing on the ice and fell 200ft, breaking his neck, arm and hip, plus puncturing a lung.

His son struggled down the mountain to help him, but he too fell and was badly bruised, breaking several bones in his hand.

The teenager did, however, manage to reach his father and call 999.

Enter the Oban Mountain Rescue Team and Rescue 177 from HMS Gannet to save the day.

“From that day until now, I’ve encountered professionals and volunteers at the top of their games, but the skill and professionalism of the crew of Rescue 177 stands on its own,” said Mr Tunney as he and his son visited Gannet in Prestwick.

“I’m under no illusion that the aircrew played a pivotal role in saving my life that night.”

The write fliers

YOUNGSTERS from Ilchester School have the ‘write stuff’ (groan – Ed) thanks to fliers at nearby RNAS Yeovilton.

The Lynx men and women of 815 NAS teamed up with youngsters and teachers in a bid to improve boys’ literary skills – a national goal of the government.

Over 12 weeks, a range of activities and visits were arranged, from tours of the Lynx hangar, studying the fliers’ uniforms, watching the helicopters flying and sitting in the pilot’s seat.

Suitably imbued in all things Fleet Air Arm and Lynx, the boys returned to their classes and sat down to various writing tasks from producing captions to more detailed accounts of what they had witnessed.

The course reached its climax with a presentation to 815’s CO Cdr Alun Jones of a colourful helicopter collage created by the school, while the children showed off their work to proud parents.

On the back of the success of the ‘Flying High’ initiative, the plan is to run it again in 2009, this time with slightly older boys in Year 4 (eight and nine-year-olds).



● No greater sacrifice... Ocean’s PO(AC) Al Shore and PO ‘Sweeney’ Todd pay their respects at Bayeux Cemetery
LA(Phot)BernieHenesy,HMSOcean

To fallen heroes

THE hallowed shores of the Baie de la Seine beckoned for the sailors of HMS Ocean as they paid homage to the men of 1944 during command, leadership and management training.

The tour of the beaches began not in France, but at Southwick House where Eisenhower and his staff planned the ‘crusade in Europe’.

Naval historian Prof Steve Prince, the sailors’ guide throughout their Normandy visit, outlined the immense planning and preparation behind Operation Overlord.

First stop in France – as it was on Tuesday June 6 1944 – was the bridge spanning the Caen Canal at Benouville, subsequently renamed Pegasus Bridge in honour of the cap badge of the 6th Airborne Division.

Next to the bridge is the first building in France liberated: the Café Gondree.

Madame Gondree was eight when her parents’ café was freed; she is still on hand to explain with pride to passers-by and visitors her memories of that turbulent time and display the memorabilia she has gathered over a typically strong French coffee.

To the west, along the Calvados coast, lie Juno Beach, Gold Beach and eventually Longues-sur-Mer, home to the only surviving gun battery from the invasion days.

A short distance inland is Bayeux and, on the edge of the historic town, the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery.

And it was there that Ocean’s XO Cdr David Salisbury and the youngest member of the party Logs(Pers) Steph Collins laid wreaths and paused to remember the sacrifices of six decades ago.

The final two stops were equally poignant.

“When walking along the immense stretch of sand which was known as Omaha Beach, we were all immediately struck by the sheer scale of task that American troops faced when they landed there and indeed the troops of other nations throughout Normandy,” said LA(Phot) Bernie Henesy.

Other reminders of sacrifices can be found at St Mère Eglise at the foot of the Cotentin peninsula.

Hanging from the village church steeple is an effigy of US paratrooper John Steele, whose parachute became snagged on it on June 6; he watched the battle below him unfold, unable to intervene.

“The trip was educational as much as enjoyable,” said Lt Cdr Graeme Stringer. “Although a snapshot in terms of time of one of the most important actions of WW2, the litmus test was the comments and questions by the younger members of the group: ‘Can you possibly imagine what it must have been like?’”

Meanwhile, in the Baltic, HMS Bulwark halted exercises with the Swedes to remember her fallen.

Twenty-six years ago 4 Assault Squadron RM – today Bulwark’s dedicated commando unit – were the amphibious punch of HMS Fearless.

The men of Foxtrot 4, one of the squadron’s landing craft, epitomised the spirit of the

liberators of the Falklands.

C/Sgt Brian Johnston and his team of sailors and marines plucked more than 100 men from the blazing hulk of HMS Antelope on May 24 1982, despite the risk of an unexploded Argentine bomb inside the frigate going off.

Foxtrot 4’s luck ran out a fortnight later, however, when she was pounced on by Argentine aircraft. Six men were killed, including C/Sgt Johnston, who was posthumously awarded the Queen’s Gallantry Medal for his deeds in the South Atlantic.

In honour of the commando and his comrades, subsequent Foxtrot 4s have been renamed Foxtrot Juliet (J for Johnston).

And each June 8, 4 ASRM pause to pay tribute, wherever they are – in this case the Baltic, where Bulwark is exercising with Swedish marines and fast attack craft.

Off Stockholm, Bulwark’s stern gate was lowered and a service led by the ship’s chaplain Rev Tim Wilkinson, before a wreath was cast into the ocean.

“They undertook a similar role, working from an amphibious ship with their landing craft, just as we do today,” said Maj Jim Dennis, 4 ASRM’s OiC.

“The heroism, bravery and sense of duty shown by the crew of Foxtrot 4 in the Falklands is something that is worthy of remembering as well as inspiring today’s landing craft crews.

“It is something that makes all Royal Marine and Royal Naval personnel proud to serve in 4 Assault Squadron Royal Marines and HMS Bulwark.”



JUST in case you were wondering where this chap was from... The RM Commando Display Team headed to the Caldecotte Project in Milton Keynes to give youngsters an idea of what the RN’s elite amphibious infantry get up to.

And that’s quite a lot: zipping around in RIBs, assault courses, paint balling (well, you can’t have real bullets whizzing around on a display), climbing, abseiling and the like.

Luckily the Caldecotte Project is the home of Milton Keynes’ Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme centre – which means that most of these activities could be recreated for young people to enjoy (or endure), including time out on the water.

As for the display team, the 25 commandos are out and about all year round promoting the Corps at public events such as Meet Your Navy, or else organising events such as the visit to Milton Keynes aimed at school/college leavers eyeing up life as a green beret.

Picture: LA(Phot) Owen King, FRPU East

No escaping big sis...

JOINING your first ship can be a daunting affair – unless you have a friendly face to guide you.

So when ETWE Charlotte Richards stepped off the brow and on to HMS Portland she was greeted by her older sister Mickaela, also an ETWE on the Devonport-based frigate.

Mickaela joined the RN two years ago... and her sister followed her through Raleigh 14 months later.

Older sister will help younger sister through weapon engineering challenges such as

her task book as well as helping her adjust to Type 23 life.

In fact, the pair share the same mess with bunks one above the other.

“It’s great to see both my girls doing so well in the Senior Service – and a weight off my mind to know that they’re serving together,” said proud mum Deborah Clatworthy.

Just to confuse the bosun when he’s making a pipe, there’s another ET Richards aboard – luckily this one’s an ME to make things slightly easier.

Ding dong, it’s a gong

MEETING the Queen is always a privilege.

And being made an MBE is an unforgettable moment in your life.

So the family of CPOAET David Belcher were obviously indescribably proud when the senior rating headed to Buckingham Palace.

But just to make the day that extra bit special, sat next to the Yeovilton-based air engineering technician was one Leslie Phillips, onetime star of the *Navy Lark* and mainstay of British comedy films in the 50s and 60s.

He was at the Palace to receive an OBE for his services to acting.

As for CPO Belcher, his honour was recognition for “constantly exceeding expectations” as an expert in Gazelle and Lynx avionics with 847 NAS both at Yeovilton and on tours of duty in Iraq.



Lordy, don't fancy Jaws much

WHAT better way to relax after the strains and stresses than with a spot of diving surrounded by God’s creatures?

The dive team of minehunter HMS Cattistock took a break from Basic Operational Sea Training and headed for Chester, a city not necessarily renowned for its marine life.

But it is home to the Blue Planet Aquarium. And some sharks. Lots of sharks. Europe’s largest collection of sharks (about 30 of them).

And amongst them, you could find the Cattistock divers, thanks to Lt Greg Powell and AB(D) Bruce Robinson who decided that swimming with sharks (anything from small nurses to 10ft sand tigers) and staring at “hundreds of razor-sharp teeth” would be a fun way to unwind.

The sharks behaved themselves, we’re told, and the team came back with all fingers and toes.

The aquarium’s marine biologists were especially interested to see how the sharks would react to the divers’ kit, the Clearance Divers Breathing Apparatus (CDBA).

The acoustically-quiet and magnetically-clean equipment is a re-breather set (no air bubbles are produced) and had never been used previously at the aquarium.

Permission was granted by the Superintendent of Diving to allow the divers to use the CBDA, typically worn when the men are scouring the seabed for mines...

... which is something they will shortly be doing as Cattistock’s ship’s company are about to deploy to the Gulf as part of the roulement of mine warfare teams manning Chiddingfold and Atherstone in the Middle East.

Bulwark visits Belfast

AMPHIBIOUS assault ship HMS Bulwark paid her first visit to Belfast for a well-earned break – and cadets from across Northern Ireland were given the chance to explore the vessel.

The visit, to the port where shipbuilders Harland and Wolff constructed her famous predecessor, came at the end of an intensive period of training for Bulwark.

Cadets were given tours of the ship, and a chance to participate in an event with Royal Marines.

Newtownards unit, which goes by the name of TS Bulwark, also made a presentation of an engraved silver plate to the ship marking its visit to the Port of Belfast.

And when she sailed for Liverpool, Bulwark took with her 40 cadets who took part in a three-day exercise.

All cadets were given the opportunity to perform practical seamanship skills and see theory demonstrations with the ship's crew.

Among the cadets was a group from TS Bulwark, who thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of the ship.

One cadet commented: "The chance to spend a few days at sea with the best Navy in the world is fantastic. The future's bright, my future is the Royal Navy."

Leamington unit gets new home

LEAMINGTON unit has a new home – and its new 'landlord' could not be more appropriate.

For some time now, faced with a decreasing membership, the management committee of the unit have found it increasingly difficult to meet the financial costs of maintaining their premises, which are leased from Warwick District Council.

Now an agreement has been reached between the unit and the local branch of the Royal Naval Association.

A proposal that the cadets should hold their parades and training evenings at the RNA Club was put to the Association membership, who were unanimous in agreeing to the arrangement.

The situation will be reviewed jointly at the end of this year.

It is hoped that, relieved of financial pressures, the promotional efforts of the unit's management can now be concentrated on increasing membership by attracting new recruits from the surrounding areas.



● The national massed band of the Sea Cadet Corps performs at Twickenham before the Army-Navy rugby match. Around 100 cadets drawn from units around the country helped the 50,000-plus crowd warm up for the match by presenting a 30-minute programme. It was the first time in the history of the Corps that such a band has been invited to play at the fixture, and the parent organisation, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, was the nominated charity of the day, giving the Corps a high-profile location for an information and recruiting stand close to the famous stadium, and for cadets and staff to pass collecting buckets around before the game. Match sponsors Babcock also made a donation to the charity, which is being used to invest in music notation software to train the national band

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson

High wind in the High Peak

HIGH winds and rough water are not just a problem on the high seas.

They can be pretty tough in the high peaks as well, such as parts of Derbyshire.

Tameside cadets found that to their regret when they set out to practise their sailing skills on the water near Glossop, as the wind made sailing impossible.

They did, however, spend time on the water canoeing, there was a chance to undertake community work at the sailing club, and the Delta powerboat was used for some wet and windy trips around the Torside Reservoir.

Over the same period the unit hosted a party of 70 French students and staff from the town of Armentiere – the third year of this arrangement.

Tameside cadets have also been out fundraising for unit coffers.

A baker's dozen turned up at the Ladysmith Shopping Centre in Ashton-under-Lyne after the centre manager, Lyn Williams, contacted the unit as she felt they could benefit from the exposure as well as the cash.

Cadets helped sell Cheshire hanging baskets as well as collecting, and made around £650.

George sorts it all out



● A ropework display during the Southwark unit open evening

GEORGE Whitfield is an active Sea Cadet with the Southwark unit, based in Surrey Square in south London.

When the 15-year-old is not involved in sailing, canoeing, pulling, powerboating, bugling, drumming, undertaking Duke of Edinburgh Awards activities or doing ceremonial events – and plenty more besides – George still finds time to promote his hobby within the local community.

All things considered, George identified a problem – a shortage of volunteers to organise activities.

But he didn't stop there. He decided to do something about it himself.

On his own initiative, George applied for funding from the Youth Opportunity Fund to finance a volunteer recruitment advertisement in the local press.

This involved submitting an application form, followed by an interview and workshops.

None of this put George off,

and after his application had succeeded the next stage was to design the advert and arrange for its publication.

But that was not all.

George then applied himself to developing his initiative a stage further by planning an open evening to be held during 'Volunteers Week', an annual celebration of England's 22 million volunteers and the work they do.

To fund the open evening

New logo motive

THE 150th anniversary of the formation of the cadet movement will be celebrated in 2010 and a competition has been organised to design an official logo for all Cadet150 activities.

The winning designer could win him or herself a prize and £1,500 for his or her unit.

The closing date is September 30 this year, and the competition is open to all cadets who are members of

George applied for a Youth in Action Small Grant – and once more his application was successful.

The Youth in Action scheme, supported by T-Mobile, enables youngsters to run their own youth-led projects through grants of up to £500.

The money can be used to run any type of event or activity which will raise the profile of the initiative in local areas and helps recruit new volunteers.

the organisation on that date.

The design, by individuals or teams of up to four, should be on one side of A4 paper or card. It does not have to be finished to professional standards, but must contain sufficient ideas to make it instantly recognisable, and can be developed for different media.

For further details go to <http://seacadets.ms-sc.org/Competitions-for-Cadets>

Cadets end up with canal boat

CADETS from the Northampton and Wellingborough unit were given the boat when they supported a narrowboat rally.

More than 50 boats attended the rally, organised by the Northampton branch of the Inland Waterways

Association, and cadets were given the task of running the boat-handling games.

This involved the filling up of a jug of water and then carrying it through an obstacle course involving forward and backward movements

by the boats.

The cadets were invited to take part in their short (but definitely narrow) 16ft Viking Slow Motor Boat (pictured below), and not surprisingly completed it in a fraction of the time taken by the

cumbersome narrowboats.

For this LC Catherine Goldfinch and AC Harry Boyde were presented with the Golden Boot (pictured right with PO Chris Dean, chief instructor for powerboating), although both cadets and their CO, Lt (SCC) Chris Read RNR acknowledged that their victory was very fortunate.

"It is very kind of the Inland Waterways Festival Committee to award the cadets for their boat-handling," said Lt Read.

"However, we feel the Viking, at a quarter of the length of a normal narrowboat, does not really compare.

"We hope that the cadets will be just as successful in the Sea Cadet Powerboat handling competition later this year!"

The unit presented the IWA with a crest and cap tallies, and hopes the event will help forge a strong relationship with the narrowboat community, who describe themselves as a "linear village."

Unit members took fourth place in the National Final of the Drill and Ceremonial championships, with Guard Commander Jack Mitchell achieving third place.





● Junior cadets from the Horsham unit had a seamanship lesson with a difference when staff took them to Southwater Country Park to launch the model boat *Ocean Glory* (see right) that they been building as part of their Waterborne badge. The cadets had been helped by members of the Southwater Dabblers Model Boat Club



Whitehaven unit at heart of royal visit

WHITEHAVEN cadets were bursting with pride when they met the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh during a royal visit to the North-West last month.

An estimated 10,000 people filled the harbour area to greet the royal couple, who were visiting as part of the celebrations commemorating the 300th anniversary of the town and harbour of Whitehaven.

And in the middle of it all were a 50-strong contingent of cadets and staff from TS Bee, who had been invited to provide a Guard of Honour for the VIP guests.

Whitehaven's Commanding Officer, Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR – who had also been asked to act as parade commander – said that it was a huge honour, but it also presented some fairly unique challenges.

“Although we had plenty of advance notice, the information had to be strictly limited to a very few members of our staff and management committee,” said Peter.

“Planning for something like this when you don't have an exact programme and timings is difficult enough.

“Not being allowed to tell



● Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas (left) escorts the Queen as she inspects members of the Whitehaven unit during her visit to Cumbria for the town and harbour's 300th anniversary celebrations. In the background is Rear Admiral Steve Morgan USN, TS Bee's president

Picture courtesy the Whitehaven News

anyone about it until a week or so before the event makes the job almost impossible.

“But we managed, even coping with various small changes which were being made right up until the evening before.”

The Queen arrived in Whitehaven at 10am and went directly to tour the Beacon, a recently-refurbished art gallery and museum complex located right on the harbourside.

Accompanied by Prince Phillip, she then met the Whitehaven unit's president, Rear Admiral Steve Morgan USN, before inspecting a Colour Party made up of one British and four American sailors from the Joint Military Force based in Cornwall.

Escorted by Rear Admiral Morgan and Lt Lucas, the Queen then inspected the cadets, pausing to speak with most of the cadets as well as several members of staff.

Although the original plan was for the Queen to inspect only the front two ranks of cadets, she took the decision to also inspect the rear rank and even called back some of her staff who had started to move on to the next section of the visit.

“It really took everyone by surprise, especially me,” added Peter Lucas.

“I really thought that these events were planned to the smallest detail.

“But Her Majesty had clearly decided that she wished to meet all the cadets, which made them

feel very special.”

While the Queen was touring the Beacon, one of the royal equerries approached Lt Lucas and asked if two female cadets could be made available to come forward to him at his signal.

Choosing AC Emily Lucas (14) and Marine Cadet Viki Hamilton (17), the equery told them that they were to follow closely behind the Queen and carry the flowers given to her by well-wishers.

Afterwards, Emily and Viki said it had been a huge honour.

“Most of the dozens of flowers were given to us by people in the crowd, but several times the Queen herself gave us flowers which she had received.

“It made us really proud.”

An astute change of name

WALLASEY unit has changed its name from TS Revenge to TS Astute, reflecting a new affiliation.

TS Revenge was so-named through an affiliation with HMS Revenge in 1968, but there was no replacement when Revenge was decommissioned in 1993.

But last year the union was affiliated to Astute, and on January 1 HQ gave the unit permission to switch to TS Astute.

And the icing on the cake is that the

Duchess of Cornwall, who launched Astute in June 2007, has agreed to become the unit's new patron.

The unit celebrates its 70th birthday this year as Wallasey Sea Cadets, 1st Mersey Unit.

There has already been plenty to celebrate, with the Junior Boys winning a national five-a-side tournament and the Armed Guard winning the area contest for the sixth year in a row, going on to third place in the nationals.

'Inspiring' cadet starts civic duty

A “CONFIDENT and inspiring” leading cadet has taken up his role as the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester's Cadet for 2008-09.

LC Andrew Koropisz, of the Stockport unit, was presented with his certificate of appointment and badge of office by Col Warren Smith, who is in his first year as Lord Lieutenant.

The presentation took place at the University Barracks in Manchester.

The three Service-linked youth movements – the Sea Cadet Corps, the Army Cadet Force and the Air Training Corps – take it in rotation to provide the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet, whose duties involve assisting at Service-related functions throughout the year.

Andrew (17) was described in the citation as “a confident and inspiring young man, with a 100 per cent record for every parade.”

He is currently studying for A-levels at Cheadle and Marple College.

Unit to mark centenary

TS CONSTANT will later this month celebrate the centenary of the formation of the unit as the All Saints Boys Naval Brigade Wandsworth in May 1908.

The unit moved to its present location in Mellison Road in 1948, and is now known as the Tooting and Balham Sea Cadets.

Celebrations will take place on Saturday July 26 at a club close to the unit, and TS Constant would like to hear from any former cadets, staff and committee members – emails to tootingbalham@aol.com as soon as possible, please or see the MSSC website.



● Matt Sumner (left) collects the precious family papers from Capt Jonathan Fry in London

Old score is settled after papers found

THE Corps' exhibition in the Houses of Parliament in March helped restore an historical document to one family long associated with the organisation.

During the week a member of staff, Matt Sumner, approached the cadets on duty and told them that his late grandfather, Peter Sumner, had been the Corps' long-standing Director of Music, and had composed the music *Ready Aye Ready*, which the SCC band performed at the

Royal Tournament in 1996.

Since Peter's death, the family had been trying to track down the score, without success.

By chance, a recent clear-out at MSSC HQ had unearthed a file on the Royal Tournament, and tucked away inside was the musical score, together with several of Peter's hand-written letters.

Matt was able to visit the headquarters, where Capt Jonathan Fry presented him with his grandfather's papers.



● Sea Cadets and Marine cadets from the Exmouth unit are pictured with the 30mm machine gun on board minehunter HMS Middleton in Plymouth. The visiting party was hosted by PO Mick Brady, the uncle of one of the cadets. The group explored the bridge, operations room and sweeping deck, and saw the new Seafox mine disposal system, while a look at the onboard decompression chamber gave them the opportunity to try out some breathing apparatus. Cadets were treated to goodies and drinks in the wardroom, and they also had some good 'gizzits' to take home. Although not their official affiliated ship, the cadets are looking forward to keeping in contact with Middleton

Warsash seen at Warrior

CADETS from the fledgling Warsash unit, based at the Warsash Maritime Academy, gave their first public performance in the form of a traditional club-swinging and hornpipe display.

And amongst those watching the display were the Earl of Wessex and Royal Navy VIPs at an annual fund-raising event on board HMS Warrior 1860 in Portsmouth.

The event raises money for the Maritime Society and Sea Cadets and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

Warsash unit were helped by two National Display team members from the area, LC Amanda Irwin from Chichester unit and AC Bridie Hawkin from Newhaven and Seaford

● Warsash unit cadets go through a club-swinging routine on board HMS Warrior 1860 in Portsmouth Harbour



Buxton retain shooting trophy

BUXTON unit cadets have had plenty of opportunity to brush up their seamanship and military skills over the past couple of months.

In April the unit won the North West Area small-bore shooting competition for the second year running, thereby retaining the Chetwyn Cup.

One member of the unit, LC Anthony Hargreaves, achieved the highest individual score and was presented with the Peter Gravestock Trophy.

The following month a group of 26 cadets and four staff spent a weekend at Hollingworth Lake.

Eight of the cadets achieved Stage 1 sailing qualifications and all had a good time, despite 'difficult' sailing conditions.

That same weekend the Commanding Officer of the unit, his deputy and two committee members attended a reception on board assault ship HMS Bulwark, hosted by her CO Capt Jeremy Blunden.

The following Monday 11 of the older cadets and two staff, together with personnel from the Rhyl and Stoke units, had a taste of life at sea in a Royal Navy warship.

As Bulwark sailed from Liverpool and down the Mersey in the afternoon the cadets lined the ship.

They arrived in Devonport on the Wednesday after a range of activities which included operations in the engine room and the bridge, steering the ship, learning to pipe from a qualified instructor, doing PT, watching a man overboard drill and a firefighting exercise and experiencing the test-firing of the main armament.

The cadets won praise from the ship's company for their disciplined contribution to the activities.

Meanwhile fundraising at the unit continues apace, with William Vitoulkas making a particular impact by raising £30.

As Navy News went to press the unit was due to be holding its annual general meeting.

Thanks to Sainsbury's

SAINSBURY'S store in Kingswood, Bristol, has been supporting the fundraising efforts of the Bristol Knowle unit for many years.

As a sign of the unit's appreciation, Junior Cadet Ryan Williams, Cdt Kate Williams and unit Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Wendy Houlden presented the manager of the store, Julian Collier, with a Certificate of Appreciation signed by the Captain of the Corps, which is now hung in a prominent location in the shop.

Mary Tilley, a unit assistant, works at the store and is classed as a 'Local Hero' by Sainsbury's for the work she does with the unit.

John Jerwood to the rescue

A GROUP of cadets from land-locked Sutton Coldfield were given a rare opportunity to show their boat-handling skills in a crisis on the high seas.

Well, maybe not the high seas, but far enough out from Plymouth to make a rescue a little challenging.

The group were on board the powered training vessel TS John Jerwood when she sailed from Plymouth into worsening weather.

There had been a warning of gales, so the master of the training vessel planned to make a dash for Dartmouth and the shelter of Dart Estuary, keeping close to the Devon shore.

At around 10am, not long after the cadet's trip had started, Brixham Coastguard received a distress call from a small Shetland 18 fishing boat which had experienced engine problems.

There were three men reported to be on board the little semi-open boat, and they had no VHF radio, no waterproofs and no lifejackets.

The only way the men could raise the alarm was using a mobile phone.

When the Coastguard put out a call for help, the John Jerwood was around five miles away, and her crew and cadets rose to the challenge.

They sped over to the boat,



● Cadets from Sutton Coldfield unit on board the powered training vessel TS John Jerwood

secured a tow rope and started a slow tow back to the safety of the Mayflower Marina in Plymouth.

The tow, in a strong and rising wind, took more than an hour, and when the training vessel went alongside Coastguard officials were waiting on the pontoon.

Both Brixham and Plymouth Coastguards praised the efforts of

the cadets, particularly as it was the group's first day at sea.

They and the rescued trio commented that all had displayed a high standard of seamanship and teamwork, and were a great credit to the Corps.

After lunch, the John Jerwood set course for Dartmouth once again, arriving safely just after 5.30pm.



● The Bristol Adventure cadets on board HMS Bulwark

Bristol help with ferry crossing

A PARTY of 13 cadets and two staff from the Bristol Adventure unit were on hand to cheer on a million-pound charity cycle ride as they headed across the Channel.

The group joined assault ship HMS Bulwark in Devonport just before she sailed for Dunkirk.

She picked up around 300 cyclists who were undertaking a Help for Heroes charity bike ride which took them along the north coast of France, visiting D-Day landing beaches along the way.

Bulwark's cadets were given plenty to do during their brief visit, thanks to Liaison Officer Lt Will Burgoyne, who arranged seamanship and drill practice, visits to the operations room and bridge, and a session of physical training on the flight deck.

When Bulwark reached Dunkirk Harbour she launched her four large landing craft from the well deck and they ran ashore to pick

up the cyclists.

With the cadets lining the stern the landing craft returned to the ship to cheers and applause.

They were welcomed aboard by the CO, who presented them with a cheque from the ship's company.

Cadets showed visitors to cabins and the heads before everyone assembled on the flight deck for a commemoration service to mark the 68th anniversary of the Dunkirk Evacuation in 1940.

The best was yet to come.

Cadets and staff boarded one of Bulwark's smaller landing craft and were lowered down the side of the ship and into the sea for the final journey to Dover beach, where the ramps were lowered and everyone clambered ashore.

As the riders headed on to London, the cadets boarded a minibus back to Bristol.

Million-pound ride, page 19



It may be DAfT but it's useful

HIGHLAND District units gathered at Inverness for a DAfT weekend - that's DAfT as in District Afloat Training rather than being a boat short of a flotilla.

Seven units sent 41 cadets and 86 qualifications were achieved, 60 of them being waterborne in paddle sports, pulling, powerboating and sailing.

With space at a premium, some cadets camped outside, finishing their campcraft and expedition qualifications after snow had put the kibosh on Easter Camp.

The weather was kinder this time, with sun-block being the order of the day, and the weekend marked a big step up for AC Sutherland, who gained the qualification she needed to step up to Leading Cadet.

● Highland dancing - possibly - (left) and waterborne sports (right) at Inverness



Rating engineers victory



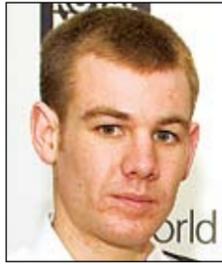
● LAEA Ben Slaney chats with Capt David Elford, Deputy Commandant of DCAE Cosford

A NAVAL rating has taken the title Young Technician of the Year in a competition against the best of the Services' young engineers.

LAET 'Nobby' Styles, of 848 Naval Air Squadron, and three Fleet Air Arm colleagues competed against 16 of the Army and RAF's finest tyros at the inaugural event hosted by Number 1 School of Technical Training at RAF Cosford.

The three-day competition was designed to test the skills and knowledge of entrants in all aspects of aeronautical engineering, both as individuals and as part of a team.

Part of the WorldSkills UK portfolio of 70 vocational skills contests, top performers in certain categories get the chance to enter an international WorldSkills event, which next year takes place in Canada.



● LAET 'Nobby' Styles

The FAA four – Styles, LAEA 'Daisy' Adams (702 NAS), LAEA Ben Slaney (849 NAS) and AET Stu Wright (20(R) NSW) – have just finished their respective Artificer or Technician career courses and are studying for their Supervisors boards.

The competition was divided into a number of stances covering avionics and mechanical skills.

The first three were mechanical, and required competitors to boroscope (inspect using a magnifying device) an aero-engine, noting any damage, and then carry out a blend to a compressor blade at a bench.

As none of the RN entrants had carried out any blade blending – this is carried out by a supervisor when required – there was some hasty blending instruction taught before the competition got under way.

Other tasks included designing, building and testing a hydraulic system.

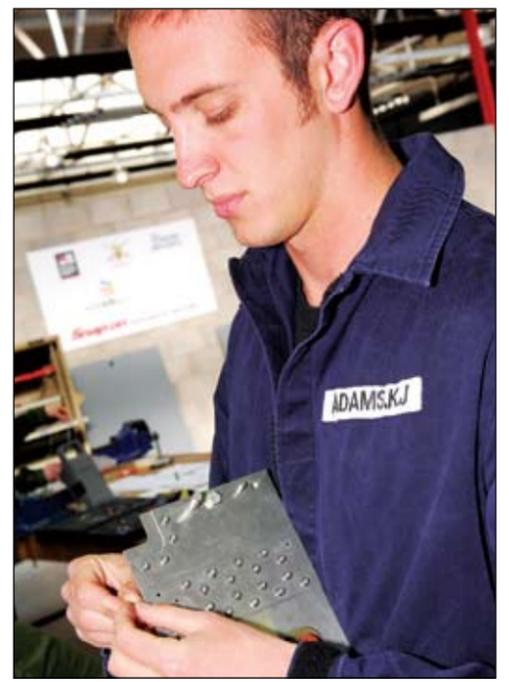
In avionics, faults had to be diagnosed on a circuit board, and at a joint stance pairs of competitors had to take the lead on a project as and when a task fell within their field of expertise.

There was also a final, testing quiz covering everything from health and safety to theory of flight.

Before each task a group of mentors – in the RN case, Lt Ian King (Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering Gosport), WO2 Martin Gosling (702 NAS), WO2 Glen Marlow (849 NAS) and CPO Stu Bartlett (DCAE Gosport) – were allowed to prepare their technicians, then had to stand back and simply observe.

It was not all hard work – the evenings allowed everyone to socialise and reflect on the day.

Nobby Styles' rewards for winning the event were a Snap-On toolkit etched with the Royal Navy logo, a trophy crafted out of Snap-



● LAEA 'Daisy' Adams during the competition

On tools and a £250 cheque.

As the holding unit of LAET Styles, DCAE Gosport was also awarded a Snap-On tools helicopter.

It is hoped that DCAE Gosport – based at HMS Sultan – will host the event next year.

Among the VIPs attending were Rear Admiral Ian Tibbitt, Director General Safety and Engineering, Defence Equipment and Support, and Capt David Elford, DCAE Director Support.

Rear Admiral Tibbitt said: "Continuous advances in aeronautical engineering are requiring the Services to evolve their training and skills.

"This new competition of excellence shows how the Armed Forces are rising to meet this challenge, as well as promoting individual and team skills.

"It was wonderful to see the three Services come together under one roof to participate in this inaugural competition.

"It gave all competitors the opportunity to showcase their talents and skills and enable others to see what they can do.

"I was highly impressed by the high standard of performance overall and, of course, particularly pleased to see an RN winner."

Dan completes tropical cycle

A ROYAL Navy trainee proved his mettle on a tough adventurous training exercise in Brazil.

AB Logs Dan Darwin was one of only three Phase 2 trainees – one from each of the Services – who managed to complete the arduous 850-mile cycle ride from the Paraguayan border to Ubatuba, a town on the Brazilian coast which lies on the Tropic of Capricorn – hence the name Exercise Capricorn Blade.

There was a tough selection process, followed by an even tougher five-week training programme, before the final team of 13, including staff, flew out to Rio.

The Brazilian police provided an escort throughout and proved invaluable, stopping traffic at junctions and slip roads and

controlling traffic around the cyclists.

Weather conditions ranged from 33° and 90 per cent humidity – "like cycling in a sauna," said Dan – to torrential rain and gusty crosswinds.

The terrain didn't help, with a relentless series of hills to tackle, often in blazing sunshine.

The longest leg, on the penultimate day, saw the cyclists cover 78 miles, but spirits remained high with just a 30-mile run down to the Atlantic on the final day to come, at the end of which they ran into the sea, and were subsequently interviewed by the local media.

Six people, including the three staff, managed the entire trip, which Dan described as "an unforgettable experience".



● The Capricorn Blade cyclists struggle through a tropical downpour in Brazil

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Academic initiative is aimed at skills gaps

EVERYONE in acquisition can now benefit from a range of specific training and education, to be delivered by the Defence Academy as part of the Defence Acquisition Change Programme (DACP).

The Defence College of Management and Technology (DCMT), part of the Defence Academy, spearheads education and training in support of the Defence Industrial Strategy, and is at the forefront of a programme to upskill the acquisition sector, working in partnership with Cranfield University and Logica.

It is aimed at addressing gaps in project delivery skills across the wider acquisition community.

The initiative went live in April, and includes a range of approaches such as e-learning and workshops.

The focus is on training at awareness/practitioner levels for staff in key roles, according to priorities identified by the Department – the areas being:

Through Life Capability Management (TLCM);
Project and Programme Management (PPM);
Commercial, Integrated Logistic Support (ILS);
Defence Acquisition Management Programme (DAMEP).

Providing opportunities for staff to gain both a professional qualification and supporting them in developing skills is a key aim and contributes to the Professional Skills for Government agenda.

One of the benefits of the new system – building on the success of the Commercial Awareness and Practitioner Programme – is that it makes awareness and practitioner training available to far more people, wherever based, without draining travel budgets.

This flexibility is particularly important as demand increases, especially at awareness level, for training across the PPM/Commercial/ILS/TLCM disciplines, where the capacity of the training deliverers would simply not have been sufficient.

The flexible approach also allows individuals to study at their own pace.

The e-learning component is always available for refresher study and, once someone has completed this, an automated notification will be sent to them when any topic they have studied has been significantly updated.

The innovative way that much of the training is delivered should also make it easier for industry to participate in this programme.

As the demands on people's time increases, so does the need for the flexibility in the way that the training is delivered, while providing enhanced opportunities for staff to gain professional qualifications and formal accreditation contributing to the Professional Skills for Government agenda.

It will further enhance the content of the second edition of the Guide to Acquisition Training and Education (GATE), due out last month, which sets out the 300 main acquisition courses available.

GATE is at www.defac.ac.uk/dcmt and more information can be found at the same site or at www.dlearning.org.uk



● Royal Marines of 42 Commando clear Taliban hideouts in Helmand province in Afghanistan

Picture: PO(PHOT) Sean Clew, RN Photographer of the Year 2007, 2008

Fighting spirit infuses DVD

FIGHTING Spirit – not the first DVD with this theme, but one which bears a look if you are in the Naval Service.

Because fighting spirit is the main focus of the latest 2-6 DVD, out this month, supported by the Summer '08 Personnel Support Brief (PSB).

The feature looks at what it means to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, how it is engendered and how it is nurtured.

The film looks at aspects of training and operations where this spirit is invaluable, and what it means to sailors.

A group of modern matelots watched a screening of *The Cruel Sea* to compare the wartime spirit with today.

And a new initiative, under which wartime veterans are invited to talk to young personnel, was also highlighted.

The PSB also covers topics such as Project Fisher, the Armed Forces Act 2006 – Summary Discipline, the increase to the commitment bonus, affordable housing, JPA

appraisals and naval charities.

The PSB and the 2-6 DVD are a joint package to support your Divisional Meetings and will be obtainable from mid-July; copies will be available from your Divisional Officer or EWO.

You can view this DVD and archived copies via the RN Community website (www.rncom.mod.uk) and the PSB is available online now at www.rncom.mod.uk or www.nff.org.uk

or www.nff.org.uk, and also via the RN Intranet at the Fleet Internal Communication Hub at <http://royalnavy.defence.mod.uk/fleetcc/IC%20hub.htm>.

If you have a message that you would like to send to the RN or would like to feature in the 2-6 DVD 'Your Shout' section, contact Lt Cdr Gregor Birse at Gregor.birse922@mod.uk or



02392 589504.
Meet the Divisional and Regimental Support Team next month

Astute blocks arrive

SHE may be the epitome of advanced maritime technology, but HMS Astute will be relying on almost four dozen large blocks of wood for her safety when she arrives on the Clyde.

The new attack submarine will be put on to the Faslane shiplift soon after she arrives at the base, and the wood – in the form of carefully-crafted 'cappers' – will ensure Astute is safely supported on the lift.

Blocks of Douglas fir are used because the wood can withstand high load pressures, and the £150,000 investment is seen as a vital part of the preparations for Astute's arrival.

Also taking shape a little further up the Clyde is the floating Valiant Jetty, which will support the Astute-class boats.

The jetty is under construction at Inchgreen in Greenock, and will cost £150 million.

When completed later this year it will be towed from Greenock to the Gareloch to be put in place.

Astute will be the first of four boats to be based on the Clyde, her sisters being Ambush, Artful and Audacious.



● HMS Exeter in action during an anti-air exercise
Picture: LA (PHOT) Luis Holden

Admiral goes back to school

THE Chief of the Naval Staff of Pakistan was on familiar territory when he visited RNAS Culdrose.

For Admiral Muhammed Afzal Tahir did his Observer and Helicopter Warfare Instructor courses at the Cornish air station in the 1970s.

Culdrose regularly conducts training for Pakistani air engineer officers, and has in the past carried out aircrew training courses in the Sea King simulator.

The admiral was briefed on the role and capability of Culdrose by Capt Philip Thickness, CO of the base, and toured some of the training facilities, including 750 NAS, home of observer training.



● Young sailors and new recruits now get the chance to listen to the experiences of war veterans



Trophy is tribute to Amethyst

THIS plain silver trophy (above), number 9155 in the register, is linked to one of the Royal Navy's most outstanding tales of skill and bravery.

The cup was presented by the Hong Kong Police to HMS Amethyst in August 1949 to commemorate the frigate's escape from Communist forces on the Yangtze River.

On April 20 1949, as civil war raged in China, Amethyst was steaming upriver to relieve destroyer HMS Consort as Nanking guardship.

Near Rose Island Amethyst was ambushed by Communist 75mm and 105mm guns, damaging the ship and immediately killing 17 of her crew.

A further 25 were seriously injured, including her CO Lt Cdr Bernard Skinner, who died shortly after.

Some were taken off and evacuated to Shanghai, while those who could swim ashore were urged to escape.

The ship later pulled further away from the artillery, grounding on the south bank of the Yangtze.

There Amethyst remained under the command of Lt Cdr John Kerans while diplomatic attempts were made to extricate her.

When it became clear she was being used by the Communists as a political pawn, secret preparations were made to move.

On the night of July 30 the frigate made her break for freedom, negotiating the shoals, narrows and dangerous fortifications in the dark along her 100-mile course downstream.

Her story featured in books and on the silver screen in an episode which is now known as the Yangtze Incident.

Take a look at MOD finances

WOULD gaining a better understanding of the MOD's financial planning and control systems aid your decision-making?

The next Defence Strategic Resource Management Programme (DSRMP) five-day residential course, for military officers and MOD civilians at one-star level and above, could be the answer.

Using MOD and private sector speakers, the course aims to:

Explore resource management within the context of Defence from both an MOD and HM Treasury perspective;

Prepare participants to operate effectively in a resource accounting environment;

Give participants the opportunity to exchange experiences with their senior military and civil service colleagues.

The course will be held at the Defence academy at Shrivenham from July 28 until August 1; places are limited and will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

If you would like to book a place, contact Wing Cdr Paul O'Shea on 01793 785175 (96161 5175) or email poshea.dcmtda.mod.uk

Healthy attendance

BEER goggles – contrary to popular belief, they may not improve your perception of the opposite sex, but they may give you a different outlook on drinking.

The goggles, which simulate alcohol-befuddled vision, were part of a Healthy Lifestyle event staged at the Sail Loft gym in Portsmouth Naval Base by POPT Leona Cruickshank, who is the RN Fitness Test PTI at HMS Nelson.

The suggestion that Leona should take on such a challenge came from WOPT Ian Binks, and Leona devised a two-day event to showcase the range of help and facilities available to Service men and women as well as civilians.

The two four-hour sessions attracted around 300 people more than the Sail Loft would normally expect for midday training sessions.

Sainsbury's brought a range of healthy food, and other backers included RN dentists, Portsmouth City Council, Bedford Scientific Ltd, local schools and St Mary's Hospital, Portsmouth, with subject matter covering healthy eating, exercise, alcohol and drug abuse, and sexually-transmitted diseases.

"People have enjoyed this – it has been a success, and we will do it again," said Leona, HMS Nelson's RN Fitness Test PO.



Contractor Andrea Gofton and event organiser POPT Leona Cruickshank test the 'beer goggles' (above); demonstration classes involved spinning and other energetic activities (left), while Sainsbury's provided snacks, food and drink (below) Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Cave



Free entry deal for historic ship

HMS VICTORY and the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth are offering free admission to the ship and museum for the immediate families of serving RN, RM, RNR and RMR personnel.

The concession is valid until September 30, when the ship is in its free-flow visitor season, which does not include guided tours.

Serving personnel already have complimentary admission, but the offer is now extended to spouses, live-in partners and their children.

The concession is only valid for HMS Victory, the Trafalgar Sail and the RN Museum, but does not cover any of the other attractions or joint tickets for the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Concessions do not apply to closed dockyard events such as the Festival of Christmas.

Personnel wishing to take advantage of this offer should produce Naval ID, families ID or any phot ID, such as driving licence or passport, at the entrance

point to each attraction.

Unless in possession of a Service-supplied families ID card, entitled families or partners must be accompanied by the serving member.

There is no requirement to obtain tickets at the Victory Gate visitor reception centre.

Live-in partners will be required to provide proof of co-habitation.

The concession is a continuation of the successful 2007 initiative and will continue to be reviewed annually.

Fitness test contract

FITNESS First has been awarded an exclusive three-year contract worth more than £400,000 to undertake Pre-Joining Fitness Tests (PJFTs) for all potential candidates for the Royal Navy and RAF.

Fitness First clubs situated near Armed Forces Career Offices will be administering the

Homeless figures down

THE Ministry of Defence has welcomed the publication of research into homelessness amongst the ex-Service community which shows that progress has been made.

The York University study, entitled *The Experiences of Homeless Ex Service Personnel in London*, found that the percentage

of veterans in London's homeless population has dropped from 22 per cent in 1997 to six per cent ten years later.

Among the key findings were:

■ Homeless veterans have better access to emergency accommodation and resettlement resources than other single homeless people;

■ Fewer than one in six of those surveyed cited problems adjusting to civilian life as the cause of their difficulties;

■ Only a small minority of homeless veterans reported vulnerabilities unique to Service life, such as combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The study, which interviewed 59 ex-Service people, follows an interim report published in June 2006, and makes a number of recommendations.

■ www.york.ac.uk/chp

Field is wide open for job hunters

A WIDE-ranging Employment Fair aimed at Service-leavers and ex-Service personnel is being staged at Ascot racecourse in September.

The event, organised by the Portsmouth Regional Resettlement Centre, along with Aldershot and Uxbridge, will be the biggest organised by the Career Transition Partnership (CTP).

It is scheduled to feature up to 120 companies from various industry sectors who are seeking to recruit staff for positions in Southern England and beyond.

The fair is open to all those leaving the Services, and also any ex-Service personnel who may find it useful.

Ascot will open its doors on Wednesday September 24 at 11am, and the fair continues until 4pm.

CTP provide resettlement services for around 15,000 Service leavers each year, and as well as the employment fairs, held at venues around the country, the organisation also arranges workshops, an online jobs database and regular career presentations.

For more details see website www.ctp.org.uk or for information and booking of places contact Mike Wilson, 023 9272 5605 (93802 5605), email mwilson@ctp.org.uk or Grace Tyrrell, 023 9272 4595 (9380 24595), email gtyrrell@ctp.org.uk

Transport will be provided from HMS Nelson in Portsmouth, though places are limited.

To book a coach seat, contact Grace Tyrrell as above.

Are you up to taking the plunge?

COULD you be a Royal Navy Clearance Diver?

Do you want a job that involves mine clearance as part of a clearance diving element on a front-line minehunter or Fleet Diving Unit, underwater force protection and underwater engineering?

Do you have high standards of determination, professionalism, stamina, intelligence, honesty, discipline and pride?

The Royal Navy is looking for individuals with the necessary qualities to join the Clearance Diving Branch.

Military diving is exciting and extremely demanding; diving tasks are undertaken worldwide on operational tours conducting Mine Countermeasures (MCM) work and underwater engineering repairing the Fleet.

Interested personnel must be professional, physically fit and well motivated.

If you have what it takes, contact your Armed Forces Careers Office.

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.



The road to the Grand Fleet

THE Victorian Navy has often been characterised by tremendous contradictions: an immense technical revolution from sail to the cusp of the Dreadnought on the one hand and slothful and complacent on the other, rather resting on its laurels in those golden years of *Pax Victoriana*.

Except that *Pax Victoriana* wasn't as 'paxful' as we've been led to believe – and the latter years of the Victorian Navy were rather dynamic.

The common assumption is that the 'modern Navy' was born when Jackie Fisher took office and made a clean broom of the cobwebs of Victoriana.

But as Roger Parkinson demonstrates in his authoritative *The Late Victorian Navy: The Pre-Dreadnought Era and the Origins of the First World War* (Boydell, £75 ISBN 978-1843-833727), the seeds of Jutland were sown a good three decades before that fateful clash of battleships.

Parkinson concentrates on the political, technological and strategic thoughts which dominated the officer class in the last quarter of the 19th Century.

In doing so, he casts light on an officer corps far less introspective than previously assumed.

Indeed, far from being complacent, the Victorian officer kept a close eye on his potential enemies.

Attachés sent back detailed – and often highly-technical – reports on the state of foreign fleets and the latest naval innovations.

The French Navy of the mid-1880s appeared to be filled with "men of first-rate physique, well dressed and in good discipline". Not so the Tsar's fleet. Russian ships were poorly-built by shipwrights with cursory skills.

"So far as I have been able to ascertain there is not one powerful or effective ship in the whole navy," one British captain scathingly concluded.

Ineffective or not, the Russian Bear was viewed as a threat to British ambitions at sea. Indeed, Russia and France were perceived as the Royal Navy's most likely foes in the final quarter of the 19th Century.

Through the 1870s – sometimes referred to by RN historians as the 'dark ages' – naval spending in Britain surpassed both these two nations combined.

Not so in the following decade, and other possible competitors – USA, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Germany – were beginning to swell their Fleets.

The growth of foreign fleets demanded the Royal Navy keep pace.

Naval intelligence was born in the 1880s when a (tiny) dedicated staff was formed at Whitehall. In time it would not merely study the navies of the world, it would shape the Royal Navy of the future and its strategy.

For a start, it dismissed the idea of convoys in time of war to protect trade routes: convoys were cumbersome and indefensible. The merchant fleet agreed, fearing such a move would merely delay the trade on which the Empire was founded.

More than three decades later merchantmen – and Britain – would pay dearly for such attitudes.

But then the Royal Navy of the age wasn't really interested in defence. Capt W Hall, the first head of the Foreign Intelligence Committee, outlined a policy of which Nelson would have been proud: engage the enemy more closely.

"A defensive policy is utterly at variance with the traditions of the British Navy whose role has always

been that of attack and not defence."

In Hall's eyes, the Navy would maul the enemy merchant fleet, ravage his ports, destroy his ammunition depots and coaling stations.

Except that the Press of the day did not believe the Royal Navy could carry the fight to the enemy.

In the mid-1880s, the *Pall Mall Gazette* led a tireless – and some might say unscrupulous – campaign decrying the state of the RN, too small to meet the demands made of it at a time when "the scramble for the world has begun in earnest".

The bigger the lie, the more people will believe it.

The scaremongering was fed by one renegade naval captain – and MP – Charles Beresford who leaked at least one confidential report (of which he just happened to be the author...) to the press to further his aim of a larger Navy.

The Press and Beresford captured the *Zeitgeist*. The Admiralty too was becoming increasingly worried by the growth of the French and Russian fleets, which, it believed, would enjoy near parity in some fields by the last decade of the 19th Century and superiority in others.

And so in March 1889, Parliament committed more than £20m to shipbuilding – 70 vessels in all over the next five years. The Royal Navy had to maintain its ascendancy over the combined might of its two closest enemies.

And yet the tubthumping did not end with the Act. It continued into the 1890s.

The Mediterranean Fleet was too weak, Fleet Street proclaimed. More money poured into the RN, more castles of steel headed down the slipways.

The truth of the matter was that there were never enough ships.

The Royal Navy which mustered for the review to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 was magnificent – and it was stretched to the limit. Home waters, South Africa, the Mediterranean, India and Ceylon, the China Station – the Royal Navy had too many commitments to be master of all the oceans.

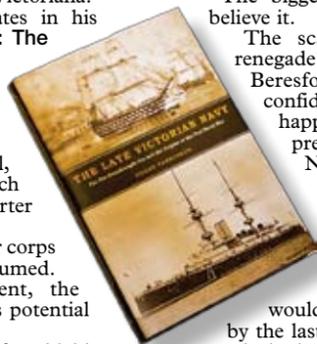
As the author points out: "It did not matter how many battleships Britain built, there were never enough, and each addition to Britain's building programme ensured the expansion of someone else's programme."

And all of this was mirrored a decade later. Dreadnought sparked a building frenzy of other dreadnoughts around the world, while the Press lamented that the Royal Navy was too small... except that now the threat was Germanic, not French or Russian.

This is impressive naval history – the author has drawn on manifold sources, published and unpublished – which strips away many of the myths surrounding the RN at the end of Victoria's rule.

It is more academic than narrative history – as reflected by an asking price at which many readers will no doubt baulk.

Yet the author argues forcefully that far from being a complacent, monolithic behemoth, the late Victorian Navy was one dominated if not by social change, then certainly by huge technological advances, expansion and powerful shifts in tactics and strategy.



'A definite tingle of pride'

ON SUNDAY November 12 1944, 12,000lb bombs smashed through the armour plating of Hitler's flagship in a Norwegian fjord, causing the vaunted Tirpitz to capsize.

Several hundred miles away, the men of HMS Rodney were returning from gunnery off Cape Wrath. They didn't know it yet, but Tirpitz's demise also sounded the death knell for their own battleship.

There was no longer a threat from enemy big ships in European waters.

All could be dispatched to the Far East to plunge the knife into the belly of the Japanese beast.

But not Rodney. She was tired – she had sailed more than 150,000 miles since her last refit. She would not receive another one.

It was a rather lacklustre end to the career of a ship which, in the words of one former marine, "saw as much action" as any other British battleship.

Her story is now told definitively by Iain Ballantyne in *HMS Rodney* (Pen & Sword, £25, ISBN 978-1844-154067).

Rodney is not perhaps the obvious choice for a biography – of WW2 vintage ships, Nelson, Warspite, Ark Royal spring more immediately to mind.

Yet Rodney's is a story rich with incident and drama. Indeed, in almost every major engagement of the second global conflagration, HMS Rodney was there.

Norway, the Bismarck chase, the Malta Convoys, Salerno, Normandy, the Murmansk run, HMS Rodney saw action at each one.

In keeping with the author's previous biographies of ships – Warspite, London and Victory – this is a story less of the machine than the men who sailed in her.

And it is not just the most recent Rodney in which Ballantyne is interested.

He begins his story in the 18th Century, from which time on there was a succession of Rodney's, ending with the pre-dreadnought of the 1880s (the last RN vessel to mount a figurehead).

The core of the book, however, is devoted to the inter-war and WW2 battleship.

Rodney and her sister Nelson were Britain's newest battleships in 1939 (the King George V class were still being built).

They were also the most unusual dreadnoughts Britain ever built; restrictions on displacement limited the vessels to 35,000 tons.

The resulting design was unorthodox: all Rodney's main armament – 16in guns – was forward of her superstructure.

She could have been a very different ship, however. Work had begun in 1916 on another Rodney, a super battle-cruiser, sister to the Mighty Hood. The Admiralty pulled the plug on the project; only Hood was completed.

Hood came to

epitomise the inter-war Royal Navy. But facing Rodney in battle was a far more fearsome proposition.

"I challenge any one who claims to possess a soul to stand on Rodney's fo'c'sle and contemplate the stark, grey mass of turret and gun that stretches before him," one officer enthused. "I challenge him to stand there by himself and not feel a definite tingle of pride and fear."

In the late summer of 1931, no-one would face Rodney's guns, however. The leviathan was branded 'the red ship' for her role in the Invergordon mutiny.

Rodney's sailors learned of pay cuts imposed on them by Whitehall from the BBC and newspapers just three weeks before such cuts were introduced.

There was uproar – uproar entirely preventable, one of her junior officers observed. "The Board of the Admiralty were completely out of touch with the feelings of the lower deck," he fumed. "A despicable bunch of sods was our immediate, undisciplined, feeling about them."

The men of Rodney mutinied for a simple cause: they were not communists, not anti-patriotic. They were simply trying to pay their mortgages, loans and other bills.

Rodney's subsequent deeds eclipsed her role in the Invergordon mutiny.

She was bombed in the ill-starred Norwegian campaign, played a key role in Operation Pedestal, and hammered the Wehrmacht in Normandy.

No man who witnessed her barrage on D-Day would ever forget it.

"The sheer volume of noise, the blast of the guns was incredible and you could feel it through your body even if you were quite a distance from the gun doing the firing," recalled Allan Snowden. "You couldn't help feeling a bit sorry for the guys on the receiving end."

There was no such magnanimity shown in May 1941, however.

News reached the bridge of Rodney that Bismarck had sunk the Hood. The Rodney's were determined, one officer remembered, "to square the deal".

That she did on the morning of May 27 – after Bismarck had been crippled by Swordfish torpedo bombers.

A sub-lieutenant marvelled at the men in his turret delivering Bismarck's mortal blows.

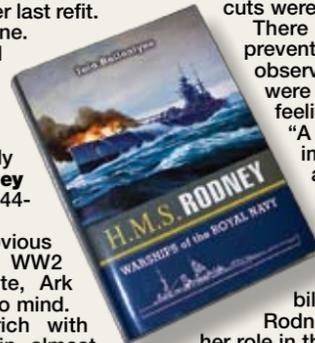
"They remember Coventry, London, Plymouth – especially the latter which is home to most of them," he observed. "Justice, you still exist in this world."

Today there are few Rodney's left. The ship herself was broken up in 1948. But the men of Rodney still remember her fondly.

One former marine told the author that he considered her "the finest battleship ever built".

Another's sentiments will no doubt be shared by many who go to sea.

"It's hard to explain to a civilian one's feeling for a ship. You forget the hardships, the discomforts, the monotonous food and the dangers, but you remember the comradeship, the runs ashore, the lower deck, indestructible humour. How can you fall in love with a big hunk of steel? But you do, and you never forget."



The enigmatic heroes

SO MUCH of the subject matter of Phil Shanahan's book *The Real Enigma Heroes* (The History Press, £19.99, ISBN 978-07524-4472-7) reads like a well-plotted thriller that it is hard to know whether to learn from it as a historical book or just enjoy it as a cracking good story.

That it works so well on many different levels – it is also a textbook illustration of good old-fashioned journalism at its best – is a testament to the skills of the author, first in spotting this hidden gem of a story, and then in driving through a campaign to win public recognition for their deeds.

At the heart of the book is the story of how three men serving in HMS Petard – Lt Tony Fasson, AB Colin Grazier and young civilian canteen manager Tommy Brown – risked their lives to recover Enigma code books from the sinking U 559 in October 1942 off Palestine.

The gamble failed for the two Navy men, who drowned when the boat suddenly sank beneath them. But the recovery of Enigma material before they died is recognised by some historians as one of the pivotal episodes of the war.

It allowed Bletchley Park to break the U-boat code, and among other things meant that Allied Atlantic convoys could be protected from the rampaging German wolf packs.

The Nazis never knew the code had been broken, because the incident was kept under wraps for decades – hence the lack of recognition of the nature of Fasson, Grazier and Brown's actions.

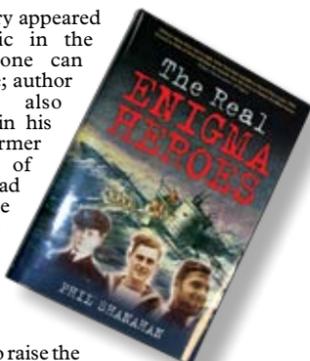
Around this incredible tale Shanahan – deputy editor of the *Tamworth Herald* – weaves in other, equally unlikely, elements as his growing fascination with the story leads him to delve deeper into the mystery of the local hero whom history had forgotten.

The heroes' story appeared in a boys' comic in the 1960s, but no one can identify the source; author Robert Harris also mentioned them in his book *Enigma*; former shipmates spoke of three men who had changed the course of the war, and without whose intervention D-Day may not have been possible.

The campaign to raise the profile of the trio also received a timely boost from Hollywood blockbuster *U571* which, in creating a fictional American-centric account of seizing Enigma, caused sufficient friction to draw attention from around the world.

The two main strands of the book – the story of the heroes and Shanahan's initiative to make them household names – are expertly intertwined, and genuinely tweak the emotions; prominent figures stand up to shout the worth of the men and a breath-taking monument is built, yet members of the men's immediate families – including his widow Olive, a bride for just two days before Colin's final fatal voyage – die without seeing or realising the impact of Shanahan's campaign.

It is indeed a fitting tribute to Fasson, Grazier and Brown, to the RN U-boat hunters, to the code-crackers of Bletchley Park – and to a local 'hack' who doggedly pursued a long and frustrating campaign because he genuinely wanted to right a wrong.



● The Boys Division of HMS Rodney pictured in 1939

Picture: Eddie Simpson

Getting to the heart of Oak

CHRONICLING HMS Royal Oak has become a personal labour for David Turner, whose uncle Cdr Ralph Woodrow-Clark was among the 833 casualties when U-boat ace Günther Prien sent torpedoes hurtling into the leviathan in Scapa Flow.

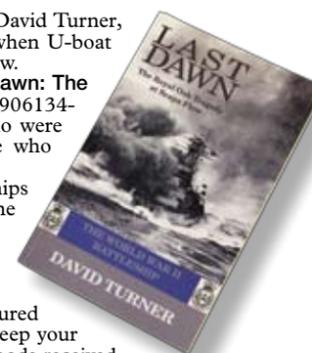
It is his uncle's letters and papers which form a central part of *Last Dawn: The Royal Oak Tragedy at Scapa Flow* (Argyll Publishing, £7.99 ISBN 978-1906134-136), a story less of the battleship and her tragic fate than the men who were entombed within her that fateful October night in 1939 – and those who survived her sinking.

His book is reminiscent of Nixie Taverner's homages to HM Ships Neptune and Hood – anecdotes, press cuttings and photographs of men the world has long since forgotten, but not their families.

Particularly poignant are some of the letters reproduced: a plea from Woodrow-Clark's son John: "Dear daddy, come home soon. I love you."

and the final words of 18-year-old ordinary seaman Jack Wood. "I have not been troubled by the war and I am not worrying," he assured his parents in his last letter home. "Really I am safer than you are. Just keep your chin up and don't worry." The letter was delivered on the very day the Woods received notice of Jack's death.

■ The author will be signing copies of his book at the Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth on Saturday July 26 between 10am and 4pm.





● French civilians inspect the wreckage of a downed Gotha

Gothas and vandals

HISTORY invariably falls into two categories: academic and narrative.

The former is usually detailed, offers unique insights and can be as dry as the Sahara in a drought.

The latter normally rattles on at a cracking pace but rarely skims the surface of serious research.

To marry the two is a rare art – and it is an art Neil Hanson has mastered.

After first-rate histories of the Spanish Armada and the Great Fire of London, Hanson has turned his attention to the Great War in the Air in *First Blitz* (Doubleday, £17.99 ISBN 978-0385-611701).

There is a smattering of books on the ‘first Blitz’ as it became known (only after ‘The Blitz’ Blitz a generation later) – but almost all of these focus on the raids of 1917.

A year later, a far more destructive series of raids were planned, however – a story which is the hub of this work – which would have been a mirror image of what Londoners would face in 1940. But there are echoes of WW2 throughout this volume.

Blackouts – limited initially – were imposed in the autumn of 1914. Street lamps, bright shop signs, bus headlights were all dimmed. Black curtains were the rule in every window. The darkness exacerbated people’s panic and fear – and sparked an upsurge in criminal activity.

There were (nonsensical) inter-Service rivalries. The Royal Naval Air Service would defend dockyards and naval facilities but would only operate over the hinterland when German bombers or Zeppelins crossed the coast. Soldiers manned anti-aircraft guns (or ‘archie’) in ports, while naval guns ringed London to defend the capital.

In the early days of the war it was the RNAS which dictated Britain’s aerial strategy, not the Royal Flying Corps; it attacked Zeppelin sheds up and down the German frontier, including the works at Friedrichshafen. Naval bombers violated Swiss airspace to attack the factory and, protested the Germans, dropped their loads “in a barbaric manner upon innocent civilians”. This from the nation which had jackbooted through Belgium and put civilians to the sword...

Major Wilhelm Siegert was gripped by no such feigned outrage. He assembled Germany’s finest aviators in the innocuous-sounding *Breiftauben Abteilung* (Carrier Pigeon Unit) and began to wage war against Allied strategic targets.

The ‘carrier pigeons’ did not achieve a great deal with their pinprick raids but they did, the Allies press protested, cause “the death of that standard trinity: women, children and old people”.

But as 1917 dawned, a new breed of pigeons was arriving at front-line units. Little more than a dozen years after man had taken to the skies in heavier-than-air craft, German industry was producing machines beyond the wildest imagination of the Wright Brothers.

The Gotha IV could carry a payload in excess of 1,000lb; its successor, the Gotha V, could drop bombs twice as heavy on its target.

Such payloads paled when compared with the *Riesenflugzeug* (literally ‘huge aircraft’, or in common parlance ‘Giants’) which could carry up to 4,400lb of bombs – similar to Hitler’s principal bomber, the Heinkel He111 a generation later.

And the Gothas and Giants set out to do just what the Luftwaffe attempted in 1940: to raze London and bring Britain to her knees.

Only the resources available to the German Air Force in 1917 were rather meagre. Luckily for them, so too were the resources of the defenders.

In the spring of 1917 as the Gotha campaign against London – *Turkenkreuz* (Turk’s Cross) – began, there were barely 70 pilots defending the skies of Britain, and archie wasn’t allowed to open fire at anything in the skies, friend or foe.

The first significant blow was struck not against the capital, but Folkestone in May 1917, a raid which served as a wake-up call to Britain’s defenders. The Press was indignant at the Hun ‘babykillers’ who’d been dragged out of the Belgian and French brothels where “they spent most of their time” to bring misery to Britons.

And bring misery to Britons they did. Throughout the summer and autumn of 1917, the Gothas and Giants raided London. The death and destruction caused, however, was rather less than the panic. The attacks unsettled Londoners. They vented their anger by smashing shops with German-sounding names, forced their way into the homes of ‘Germans’ and ransacked them. Such riots invariably sparked widespread looting.

The Hun protested at their treatment. Captured German airman did not “go to war to kill women and children,” they told their interrogators. “Such things happen accidentally in war.”

Or perhaps not. For in the summer of 1918 Major Wilhelm Siegert set out to systematically destroy the capital of the British Empire.

That he could do so was thanks to the perfection of the incendiary – the Elektron fire bomb – by German industry.

With Germany on the cusp of losing the war on the Western Front – the great spring offensives had run their course – she planned massed raids against Paris and London; the latter city would be engulfed in flames “the likes of which had not been since the Great Fire of London some 250 years earlier.”

Five heavy bombers could drop 5,000 incendiaries on the city, sparking 800 blazes which fire-fighters would be unable to deal with.

They were all lined up to do so. More than 80 aircraft were lined up on German airfields on September 23 1918 to strike at London and Paris.

They never took off. The *de facto* head of the German military, Erich Ludendorff, forbade the raids. Publicly he said he could not permit “destruction for its own sake”. Privately, Germany’s leaders feared Allied retaliation; they were right – a combined Anglo-British-French-Italian bomber force was being formed whose might would have eclipsed anything the Reich could throw at Paris or London.

Six weeks later, Germany sued for peace. The Elektron bombs were tossed in the Scheldt, the aircraft earmarked to carry them scuttled by their crews. The men of the Gothas and Giants, liked their comrades on the ground, struggled to accept defeat. “In our innermost beings we wanted nothing but to be warriors for Germany,” one lamented.

These warriors for Germany had raided Britain for just shy of a year.

They killed fewer than 1,000 Britons and caused damage valued at £1.5m (over the same period rats, Hanson pointed out, destroyed crops and other material worth nearly 50 times).

This is a compelling story compellingly told. The author has made full use of published and unpublished sources, British and German, and knitted a gripping narrative using them.

It is a story of brave men on both sides, Army, Navy and – latterly – RAF aviators who took to the skies to defend Britain against German airmen equally determined to bring the Empire to its knees.

With hindsight, the ‘first Blitz’ was neither as potent nor as destructive as contemporary accounts on both sides proclaimed.

The Giants and Gothas were unreliable. Rarely did raids involve more than 20 aircraft – and all failed utterly in their aim: to demoralise enemy morale such that he would sue for peace.

Two decades later, airmen would climb into more reliable bombers and fighters and do the same again. They failed again, but not without razing much of Western Europe.

Revisiting the Mighty Hood

FOUR years ago Bruce Taylor, a Briton living in the USA, produced a handsome volume on HMS Hood, full of interesting photographs and with truly excellent computer graphics provided by Thomas Schmidt, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

I was so impressed that I paid over the odds for a copy at a fundraising auction held at that year’s meeting of the Hood Association, of which I have been proud to be a member since playing a part in the Channel 4 *Hunt for the Hood and Bismarck* project in 2001.

A new edition of the book – *The Battlecruiser Hood: An Illustrated Biography 1916-1941* (£35, ISBN 978-1-84832-000-0) – has now appeared, a co-production of the new Seaforth stable and the United States Naval Institute.

It retains all the positive features of the original – not least the detailed appendices including lists of senior officers, the great ship’s scheme of complement, a chronology of her life and a roll of honour of those who perished when she blew up in the Denmark Strait.

It is still beautifully-produced and remains excellent value. All interested in Hood and, indeed, the 20th-Century Navy should obtain it – but it must be treated with care.

Potential readers are requested to take the following as a ‘health warning’ from a professional naval historian with a profound interest in the pride of the inter-war Royal Navy.

It is to be regretted that the author seems not to have taken advantage of a new edition to make some amendments to his fascinating and generally well-sourced account.

On the question of gunnery, for example, a great deal has been written in the last few years about the weaknesses (or otherwise) of the Dreyer fire-control table with which Hood was equipped.

It seems the author did have access to the work of John Brooks but his negative analysis remains untempered by the balance that has recently entered into this polarised debate.

Indeed, the author quotes Hood’s gunnery officers without fully developing the profound differences of professional culture that separated the British and American navies in this key area.

He clearly has ‘gone native’ in his new Californian surroundings to see things rather uncritically from the point of view of the US Navy observers whose interesting, but inevitably partial, criticisms he approvingly quotes.

One of the real strengths of the book is the range of sources the author has consulted to give a comprehensive account of the social side of the ship and for this he is to be congratulated.

However the result tends to give a slightly-blurred picture.

The Grove Review

It might seem to a reader more steeped in the history and traditions of the Service than Dr Taylor that certain people settle into the naval life and others do not.

There were difficult patches in the Royal Navy’s adjustment to 20th-Century social development but in general it succeeded with very few Invergordons.

Hood appears to have been essentially a very happy ship, despite the negative domestic impact of her obvious signs of age as her career progressed.

If one trusts the testimony of the unreliable (in every sense) Len Wincott one is bound to obtain a negative picture. People often do not write about experiences they like.

One glaring example of this is the juxtaposition on the same page of the memories of Ted Briggs – one of three men who would survive the ship’s cataclysmic sinking – and those of the clearly-disaffected Coombs twins on their first impressions of Hood.

Briggs, clearly a round peg in a round hole, gazed in wonder at his surroundings. Coombs, on the other hand, saw conditions on board as making him and the newly-joined boys feel like ‘flies in a dungheap’.

One suspects that relatively few of Hood’s sailors over the years were so disappointed.

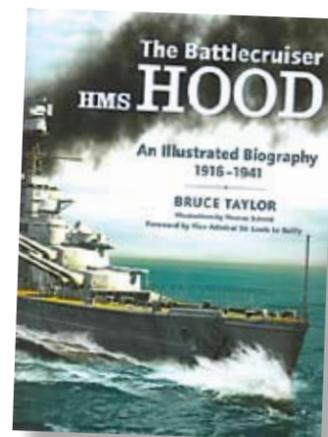
Other distortions of perspective come from too great a reliance on the rather jaundiced reminiscences of one particularly articulate member of the Engineering Branch.

The picture thus obtained of mainstream officer training and background is therefore inevitably skewed, with, for example, an amazing description of the inter-war Dartmouth as a hive of homosexuality!

Dr Taylor clearly has not taken account of basic service tribalism.

His knowledge of officer training is rather confused and there are other signs of limited background in general naval history, for example, in the sections on the rum ration.

The origins of the battle-cruiser concept are also completely misunderstood.



Inevitably the circumstances of HMS Hood’s loss are important and when first seeing the new edition it was to this section I first turned – only to be rather disappointed.

There is no reflection on the fixed ideas of Bill Jurens, my slightly frustrating colleague on the *Hunt for the Hood* expedition – and another bearer of the view there are two ways of doing things, the US Navy’s and the wrong way.

Interestingly, Jurens is the only member of the expedition to stick to the ‘single explosion’ theory.

The key evidence for a secondary explosion is not the severed bow but the huge conning tower which, much to our surprise, we found at a remarkable distance from the wreck. We find it hard to believe it just fell out as the ship sank.

I originally thought that the explosion went straight forward but the absence of much of the starboard side on the main part of the wreck of Hood, coupled with the testimony of eyewitnesses of flames licking along that side is indicative of a possible path for hot deflagrating gases forward.

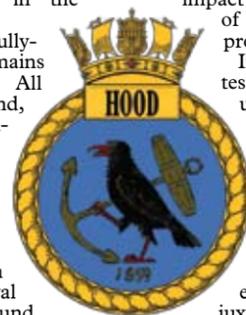
More work is needed on Hood’s loss; we are still some way from a ‘definitive’ account.

The decisive shell seems to have entered where extra armour had not been added above the secondary armament magazines, just forward of the main armament magazine.

This oversight – probably the true Achilles heel of HMS Hood (rather than the torpedoes as I previously thought) – deserves further attention than the author gives it. The detailed story of the ship’s up-arming is easily available in the ship’s cover at Woolwich.

There is still more to be said on this key subject and ‘expert opinion’ on the subject is not quite so united as Dr Taylor thought in 2004.

As I have said, this is a wonderful and informative book. It is well and engagingly written. The fact that, like its subject, it has serious flaws does not detract from its overall enormous value. But please – use with care.



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Join the khru at Sultan

SAILORS from HMS Sultan have been trying their hand at a growing martial art: muay Thai.

One of the top teachers (or khru) Gary Gregory has been sharing his knowledge of the sport – better known as Thai boxing – to growing numbers at the Gosport establishment.

From one student and one instructor, the sport has now grown to 20 regular Thai boxers from Sultan and also HMS Collingwood training regularly under Gary's stewardship.

They also practise the older form of Thai boxing, muay boran.

"I have been training in Muay Thai for the last 2½ years and started out with no background in any martial arts or fighting skill," explained PO(MEA) Stuart Sharp.

"The fitness is great and with a varied fitness work out you can take to your own level whether it is a gentle workout, or an extremely intensive session.

"I have also developed a great self awareness in how effective the body is and the level to which it can be taken. The club isn't just about teaching self defence or how to fight; it is a chance to learn an ancient battlefield art form and its history."

Now muay Thai is established in Gosport, Gary (pictured in action above) is looking to set up similar camps at other RN bases.

More details from him at thehanumancamp@hotmail.co.uk

Grade A result from B team

FOR the first time in 11 years the men's RN tennis team won the Inter-Services 'B' championships.

After three full weekends of coaching and preparation over the preceding two months a squad of five RN and RM personnel was selected by the team manager, C/Sgt Liam Devine.

Last year's event had seen the RN beaten narrowly into second place by the RAF. This year the result was even closer: the dark blue and light blue won an equal number of rubbers but the RN claimed victory by securing a total of one set more than the RAF.

Day one saw L/Cpl Adrian 'Oz' Talbot and Mid Simon Mayell play two matches each in the singles. Adrian, a player of immense talent, won both his rubbers fairly convincingly; apart from suffering from a severe bout of cramp at match point in his second match it was very much routine business for him.

Simon in the other singles matches found his introduction to this level of tennis a bit daunting at first. After overcoming this – and much to his credit – he ground out a win in the first game in three sets in a 2½-hour match against his Army opponent.

A similar routine was to follow in his next match against the RAF – again, a very close-fought duel seeing Simon put up a great fight but eventually losing 6-3 in the final set.

The scores at the end of the first day score saw the Army on no rubbers and the RAF and RN sharing the lead on three apiece.

Day two continued as a finely-

It's big and it's pink

PUT together a team of five trainee naval officers who have never sailed with each other before, give them three hours' training on a different class of vessel from what they will be racing in and send them to the **World Naval Academy Championships** in Italy and what can you expect?

Well, if the team is hand picked then silverware is not an option, it is an expectation, and fun is spelled W I N, writes Lt Jonathan Bannister (BRNC).

We chose last year's helmsman S/Lt Darren Roach, sail-trimmer S/Lt Max Wilmot, mast-man 'Guns' S/Lt Mark White, spinnaker-man Mid Luke Perrett and lightweight 'ferret' Mid Ivana Burnett.

Flying out to compete for the Trophy of the Italian Naval Academy in Livorno (Leghorn), only two of the team had ever sailed a J-24 before.

After two days of fitness training and the opening ceremony, we wanted nothing more than to be out on the water, getting the feel of our assigned J-24, Polominia.

As soon as we could we were down on the jetty, stripping

the boat down to the bare necessities and kitting her out with all the best kit we brought with us. The atmosphere on the pontoon was electric; everyone was buzzing with thoughts of the forthcoming races subtly hiding the tension of focussed minds.

The first day saw three races. We became intimately aware of what we had to do at which precise time and how exactly to manoeuvre our weight onboard: quickly and forcefully when tacking in strong winds; ever so gently when running downwind so as not to upset the carefully balanced spinnaker. This first day was judgment day: *who do we have to beat to win?*

The Turks, United Arab Emirates and Brazilians seemed to be the team to beat.

The first race of day two finished UAE, TUR, GBR, then it was UAE, GBR, TUR.

On the last mark before the mad dash past the committee boat we jibbed with the

spinnaker, hoisted the gib, and dropped the spinnaker whilst Darren sneaked a jib in for us to slide past the Turks for an 'all weight out' sprint to the finishing line.

The final race of the day and Polominia was full of tension and desperate determination which paid off as we slipped ahead of both the Turks and UAE.

Day three opened with the knowledge that three victories would guarantee a win overall – not an impossible task. With every race we grew in confidence, ability and sheer grit and determination.

We beat them all once; we would do it again. Every day we got out on to the water soon after 9am but did not start racing until after midday.

The local climate sees the wind swing from off-land to sea breezes only in the afternoon.

Today, we did not start until 2pm due to three recalls on the start line. Everyone had something to play for, everyone was tense and the start line was manic: boats just centimetres from each other but calmly aware of the situation; boats metres from each other with shouts in many languages rising on the now strong breeze;

every ear straining to hear the gun.

Finally, we were off and due to strong teamwork and constant vigilance, both inside and outside the boat, we won the two races of the day. We still needed one more race.

It was not to be, but that had nothing to do with the team's efforts.

Midday on the fourth day came and went, then 1pm. We knew the committee boat would not start a race after 2pm. 1.30pm and a number of boats began heading back towards the harbour. We were resolute; we would stay until the committee boat had gone; besides, UAE and Turkey were still out.

1.55pm and the committee boat picked up its anchor. We believed there to be enough wind – it would have suited us but, as every mariner knows, Mother Nature has the last say.

And so we came third this year, sailing proudly in under our bright pink spinnaker. Next year we will retrieve our gold I am sure: self-confidence is the key.

The team collected their silverware in front of a crowd of 1,000 people, where the third-place trophy was handed to skipper, Darren Roach, by the naval academy's admiral, Cristiano Bettini.



High hoops dashed

ALTHOUGH once again suffering from a greater turnover of players than the other Services, preparations for this year's Inter-Service basketball championships in Grantham went pretty well for the RN with an even mix of victories or close-run defeats.

With most games taking place 'on the road' at schools, colleges and universities across the South West, the connections made with communities throughout the week will potentially bear fruit in terms of recruiting at some stage in the future as a clear interest in the Service and sport was generated.

Setting off for Grantham with a great deal of optimism, organisational difficulties and an underestimation of the progress made by the RAF and Army in recent months resulted in losses at all levels.

The U23 side opened their account by competing against a well-drilled but smaller RAF squad and lost 51-82. Lacking sharpness and know-how to grind out the win that their season's effort deserved, their reward for this first defeat was an even harder game against an Army side – the eventual winners – who boasted two dominant Great Britain junior internationals.

The U23s eventually lost 60-114 although Mne Dale Solf (CHF Yeovilton), who led from the front, caught the eye in particular, boding well for his future as he now moves up to the senior squad.

For the second year running the ladies were the surprise package.

Drawn together at the last moment and suffering injuries along the way, the spirit, sound organisation and coaching skill forged an understanding that again saw the team compete for everything.

Despite going down to strong opposition, the fact that the RN ladies were once again able to nominate three players – AB(WS(CIS)) Izzy Molyneux-Jacobs (HMS Exeter), Lt

Hannah Byers (854 NAS) and Logs(CS) Nedra Daniel (Raleigh) – speaks volumes for how far a team can come in this sport in such a short space of time.

Despite losing to the RAF 36-52 and the Army 47-72, a lot of the positives here can be put down to the combined efforts of coach Cpl Marty Page (RM Poole) and manager/assistant coach PO Jayne Ashley (Collingwood).

On paper – and given recent results – the Senior squad stood the best chance of winning their category at the Inter Services, but in reality lacked the necessary skill sets, sharpness and fitness to do the job when it came to the crunch.

Having conjured up minor miracles in the past, head coach Mick Byrne was unable to shuffle the pack for the right formula against either the RAF or the eventual easy winners the Army.

Losing to the RAF 51-72 and Army 56-100, in truth the other two Services were well out of reach by half time in each game; it will take greater collective commitment to reverse the current trend of defeats.

That said, AET Kelli Wise (Sultan) did extremely well having dragged himself from his sickbed.

In Mne 'Oz' Labbate (FPGRM) and AET Danny McLeod (RAF Wittering), ET(ME) John Ennifull (Ark Royal) the Navy also unearthed some new talent; POWEA 'Jack' Paxton (Kent) made a step up to the seniors and finally LET(ME)s Blair Charles and Myron Campbell (Sultan) fully justified selection for the Combined Service squad that will prepare for the SHAPE International tournament in late November.

A sad note upon which to bow out for Mick Byrne, who has done so much to galvanize the whole squad over the past six years, but a positive plan for the future of RNMB is being established.

Spring box success

Continued from back page the referee to disqualify him and give the win to Thompson.

Going into the final bout the big boys stepped into the ring to decide who won the team match.

PO Todd won the match for the warship by putting on a near perfect display of boxing to stop Collingwood's AB Scott in the second, sending the 400 spectators wild.

Meanwhile, the RN ladies boxing team faced their toughest test yet as they crossed the North Sea to take part in the prestigious Maj Box Tournament in Stockholm.

With over 120 female competitors – from novice to international – the team of four navy ladies faced some of the strongest opponents yet in this multi-nations clash, writes Lt Lucy Abel, RNBA.

AB Aimee Kelly (HMS Collingwood), the team's only junior competitor, reached the semi-finals and faced a Swedish opponent.

Using her long range Kelly kept her rival at bay for much of the fight, enjoying the upper hand throughout but the judges favoured the local girl and Kelly lost by a split decision.

AB Emily Locke (HMS Collingwood) faced a far tougher test in her semi-final against a strong stocky Swede.

Unfazed, Locke began confidently and did not allow her opponent to dominate the fight.

With experience on her side the local fighter again managed to edge the decision on a majority, but in only her second bout, Locke rightly walked away pleased with her performance.

LET(WE) Claire Teeling (HMS Cumberland) reached the finals, an excellent achievement given that she boxed two weight categories above her natural fighting weight.

A nervous start led to her opponent gaining the upper hand early on, but once she realised that she had the skill advantage, Teeling took control of the fight in the second and third round.

Unfortunately her slow start stayed with the judges and she had to settle for a silver medal.

Lt Lucy Abel (HMS Sultan), having comfortably won against her Finnish opponent in the semi-final, faced old rival and local heroine Tatiana Obradovic in the final.

A fast and furious bout ensued as Abel maintained unrelenting pressure on the Swede.

She landed heavy blows as Obradovic held relentlessly without warning. A frustrating fight led the local judges to again award the decision to the local boxer and Abel had to settle for silver on this occasion.

RN ladies coach LPT Stuart O'Connor was nevertheless delighted with all of the performances: "I couldn't have asked for anything more from the team. Two silver medals is a tremendous achievement given the team's relative lack of experience and this tournament has provided an ideal platform from which we can prepare for the ABA finals in June."

Rugby stars help wounded

ENGLAND rugby legends Phil de Glanville and Lawrence Dallaglio will be managing two unique teams in aid of the Help for Heroes campaign.

The duo will be in charge of a Heroes XV to take on an International Select XV (managed by Welsh favourites Ieuan Evans and Scott Gibbs) on the hallowed turf of Twickenham on September 20.

The match is part of the Help for Heroes appeal for Headley Court, the military rehabilitation centre.

Ticket prices range from £50 for a family to £20 for adults and £10 for children. They are available from www.ticketmaster.co.uk or 0844 8472492.



Irons for Iron Duke

WATCHED by fellow members and opposition, retired Lt Mike Ratsey prepares to tee off (above) in the long awaited return match between members of Came Down Golf Club in Dorset and HMS Iron Duke's golf team.

The match is the first one to be held at the Southwick Park course following Iron Duke's long association with the club, one which dates back to 1931.

Officers of the previous Iron Duke (Jellicoe's flagship at Jutland) were invited to join the club while the 25,000-ton battleship was stationed at Portland.

As a token of their appreciation the members of the ship's company presented the club with the Iron Duke silver salver, contested ever since.

The day started with a tour of the ship, which was preparing for her current North Atlantic deployment, and a brief chat with her CO Cdr Mark Newland.

Following the match both teams enjoyed an excellent meal in the 19th, shared dits and the ship's company were presented with a print of the previous Iron Duke.

As for the result, despite home advantage the result of the day was similar to that of the first match played all those years ago when Came Down were victorious over their seafaring opponents winning 4½-1½. But as always with these matches the real victor was the friendships both new and old enhanced by the day.

Further west, the China Fleet club hosted the 2008 Naval Air Command Championships with 63 players from Culdrose, Yeovilton, Wittering, Wyton and Fleet contesting individual and team trophies over three days.

The weather before the event had not been too kind, with the course playing all of its 6,600 yards off the medal tees, ensuring wet conditions under foot for the first day, with lift, clean and place on the fairways in operation.

Some good scores were never the less recorded with Yeovilton's LAET Lamb (815 NAS) and POAET Saunders (848 NAS) claiming the Premier Cup in a 3/4 Betterball Stableford format with 42 points.

The following morning the first of the two medal rounds were contested to find the NAC champion for 2008 and winner of the Heliotrope trophy.

AET Craig Merralls (829 NAS) returned a very good gross 77 in challenging conditions. Leading the net handicap competition for the Wylie Cup after the first round was LSA Paul Myerscough (Yeovilton) with a net 72.

In the afternoon a respite from the medal saw an individual 18-hole Stableford competition off full handicap for the Regan Cup. Four players scored 35 points.

It eventually came down to count back over the last three holes between two players with AET Bradley Keenan (771 NAS) declared the winner, playing in his first NACS since joining the Navy late last year.

Friday's final round of the medal saw AET Merralls lead the gross scoring with another fine 75 for a total of 152 and title of NAC Golf Champion 2008, a full ten shots better than his nearest challenger.

The Wylie Cup was much closer with Myerscough not quite producing the same standard of golf as in his first round. His 74 net for a 156 total was just enough to claim the trophy from some stiff competition.

Culdrose were the winners in the Jackdaw Trophy – best five from six net scores over the two medal rounds counting – and will therefore go on to represent the Air Command in the upcoming Navy Cup.



● The RN's No.17 looks on as the Army defence thwart a Navy attack during the 3-3 draw

Picture: LA(PHOT) Steve Johncock, FRPU West

Ice Kings again

THE Navy's elite ice hockey team, the Kings, held on to their tri-Service title after a thrilling series of encounters at Ice Sheffield.

After victory against the RAF Aces 13-5 in the opening game, the RN Kings went on to draw with the Army Blades 3-3 in a classic game where the teams exchanged goals and solid checks in a hard-fought battle with lots of fast-paced action and some excellent goaltending from both sides.

LS Armstrong of HMS Liverpool distinguished himself again in the RN goal, turning away most of the shots he faced.

Mne Adam Hankins and Dan White (40 Cdo) lead the Kings' attack, providing most of the offence during the tournament.

The Kings would have to wait for the result from the RAF-Army

clash before they could be crowned 2008 champions.

Although the Army were keen to make up the required goal difference, they faced a determined and resilient RAF squad and the eventual 5-2 Army victory was not sufficient meaning the trophy would remain with the senior service for the second consecutive year.

"This is a significant achievement for the RN Ice Hockey Association," said the chairman Lt Cdr Alain Bernard.

"With victories two years running, we have proven to the sceptics that we have the necessary talent and determination to compete and dominate at the top level of service ice hockey and we look forward to defending our title again next year and continuing to co-operate with both the RAF and Army in the promotion of ice hockey within the Services."

The Inter-Services Command Championships also saw the standard of play improve over the previous year, although the result was similar for the RN sides.

They finished third and fifth with Std Sean Lorimer (Ark Royal) and Mne Brandon Hubbs (FPGRM) being selected as the most valuable players of their respective teams.

The Army All-Stars, who narrowly edged out one of the RN teams into the final on goal difference, retained their 2007 title by beating the RAF Lossiemouth Jets 4-0 in the final.

The next milestone for the RN elite squad will be its participation in the 2009 European Military Championships to be held in Switzerland in February 2009.

Personnel interested in joining the RN team should contact Kevin Cave on cave903@hotmail.co.uk or visit www.rndestroyers.co.uk.



Jamie bags first points

FROM wet and windy to blistering heat...

After the damp of Brands Hatch, motorcyclists tore around a very hot Snetterton track in Norfolk for rounds five and six of the North Gloucester Road Racing Championship.

And once again LAET Jamie Adam (RNAS Yeovilton) was flying the flag for the RN Automobile Club on his Suzuki 600.

Saturday saw Jamie (pictured above) starting 15th on the grid for the first qualifying race of the weekend.

As usual he got a good start and held his position into the first corner, and was learning the track as he went, having only been there once before.

With good settings on the bike he soon started to make up a few positions, but with the tyres going off he eventually finished the race in 12th.

That meant he lined up for the final in 24th position and strove with great determination, pushing the tyres as hard as he could.

The determination paid off; the leading hand progressed through the field, making up one position every lap to eventually come home in 16th.

On the Sunday, Jamie again started 15th on the grid for qualifying, hoping for a better finish than on the Saturday now that he had a better knowledge of the track, and giving him a higher starting position for the final.

From the moment the start light turned green, the racers set a fast pace, and again Jamie pushed hard and to eventually finish in seventh.

That ensured 14th place on the grid for the final race of the weekend. The air engineer was lucky to avoid a pile-up on the first corner involving four bikes.

Having cleared the danger area, he exited the first corner in seventh position, hoping the race would not be halted. Unfortunately, it was, so he had to restart from his original position with the race shortened.

By now his tyres were struggling and with the bike sliding all over the track and kicking him from the seat a few times, Jamie was glad to see the chequered flag in fourteenth place, earning him his first points of the season.

Picture and words, PO 'Dutchy' Holland, Phoenix CBRNDC School

Ladies on cloud 9s

THE highlight of a busy month for RN rugby league was the victory by the newly-formed women's team in the Army Medical Services 9s, writes WO1 Keith Humpleby, RNRL PRO.

The RN Ladies won all their matches including the final against the second-placed team in the contest; the final score of 20-6 did not flatter the RN, who thoroughly deserved their win and to round off a great competition AB Jodie Davies was awarded the player of the tournament award for a great performance including a hat trick of tries in the final.

The men's season continues apace with the Inter-Command competition providing great entertainment for the spectators.

Portsmouth Command came close to pulling off a shock result against the Army U23s at Fort Blockhouse. They were denied by a contentious last-minute try for the Army going down 23-22.

The coaches and management of the Command side, however, were delighted with the result as the game highlighted several talented players on the fringes of the full RN squad.

The RM team also had a close-run match against the RAF Regiment and in similar fashion to the Portsmouth side lost out to a last minute-score. With the side missing many of the Corps' RL stars this was nevertheless an impressive performance by an inexperienced team which bodes well for the rest of this and into next season.

A week later the annual 'State of Origin' match took place with the new format of Sailors vs Marines continuing.

On a cold blustery evening at Temeraire it was the sailors who came out on top with an emphatic victory over a severely-weakened Marines squad who once again had to field an inexperienced side.

What the Corps side lacked in experience they nonetheless battled hard throughout the match led by skipper and coach Jamie Goss who played the full 80 minutes at loose forward.

Several of the marines look very good prospects for the future, especially scrum half Ben Quick who picked up the Royals' 'man of the match' award.

The night, however, belonged to the blues who ran in an impressive number of tries, several of which were scored from deep in their own half after some thrilling lead up play.

On the night loose forward Wayne Dugan took the sailors' 'man of the match' award for an outstanding performance including bagging a couple of tries.

RN players out of rook

THE spiritual home of military aviation, RAF Cranwell, was the setting for the Combined Services 2008 Chess Championships.

The posting of 12-times title holder Sgt Andy Hammond to the USA meant PO Scott Crockart (Tireless) was the highest-graded player – with an excellent chance of breaking the RAF's stranglehold on the trophy.

The odds of a Senior Service triumph improved further when WO1 Dave Ross (CAPFASLOT) defeated the second highest-ranked player, Sgt Alec Toll (RAF).

Sadly the RAF had a dark horse in the form of Flt Lt Glen Parker who won six out of seven matches to clinch the title, despite PO Crockart challenging him throughout the contest.

There is some consolation in the fact that the airman spent the past three years on Ark Royal.

The highlight of the tournament was a lecture given by grand master and Times chess correspondent Ray Keene, which raised £450 for charity.

PO Crockart and WO1 Ross have been picked to represent the CS team in a NATO tournament in Brussels next month.

More details at www.servicesschess.co.uk

Ton up for RN hockey

THE 100th birthday of Navy hockey will be celebrated from the autumn with a season of fixture and events, starting with an inter-part/inter-specialisation competition on September 5-7.

The Centenary Season's Vice President's Day will be held on September 28: past vs present, all age groups, and RN vs England LX. The emphasis will be very much on a 'veterans' centenary day'.

A veteran team will also be entered in the 2009 World Masters Tournament in Australia between October 11 and 18.

The RN centenary showpiece will take place June 3-7, when it is intended to host the Inter-Commands, RN representative matches, and an international invitation weekend.

A black tie ball is also planned at HMS Nelson Friday June 5 for up to 600 RNHA members and

their partners.

All of these events require financial backing and a centenary fund has been set up for donations. Already more than £4,000 has come in with a £30 donation earning a bronze centenary membership, £60 for silver, £100 for gold and £200 for platinum.

Donations can be made by cheque, payable to 'Royal Navy Hockey Centenary Fund' through Lt Cdr Alan Walker, Secretary of the RNHA, HMS Temeraire, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 2HB.

In the meantime, and as Navy News was going to press, five days of RN hockey were dominating sporting events in Pompey culminating in the the RN-Army veterans match (played to 'old world' rules), Veterans' Inter-Command, and RN Women and Men versus the Army on Sunday June 29 at Temeraire.

Next month



Land and deliver – 9 ASRM sharpen their boat skills



Are you dancing? – the thrills and spills from air day at Yeovilton



Fresh lease of life for HMS Brecon

Plus

Fleet 2008 – pull out and keep poster



● A full-blooded encounter... Collingwood's AB Reeves (left) and HMS Nottingham's LET Thompson square up during the unique fight night at Temeraire

Picture: LA(Phot) 'Simmo' Simpson, FRPU East

A fight to remember

OVER the past seven months the RN boxing world has seen MWS Collingwood crowned Portsmouth Area champions, RN Novice champions and winners of the annual Sultan Dinner show.

And while the Collingwood trophy cabinet was filling up, across the gulf of ocean, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded Collingwood with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against them (with apologies to H G Wells).

As HMS Nottingham conducted her South Atlantic deployment, the destroyer's clubz, LPT Kev Green – you might remember him under his *nom de plume*, the baby-faced assassin – introduced a fun 'boxercise' circuit to keep shipmates fit.

That soon turned into a full-blown boxing club with both male and female competitors sparring on the flightdeck.

With Nottingham back in the UK, Kev decided it was time to take on the RN's No.1 boxing team in front of a full house at Temeraire for the first fight night of its kind.

Rear Admiral Charles Montgomery was guest on honour and watched as the RM Band opened proceedings in Pompey with a tremendous display which set the tone for the night.

The first bout saw AB Stocker (Nottingham) get the verdict on the judges cards versus a very game AB Tregarthen (Collingwood) in what was a great battle between two sailors big enough to punch holes in Mike Tyson's knees.

The women then took to the ring for the next bout: LET Broad overpowered Collingwood's ET Davies, forcing the referee to stop the contest in the second round. Broad's performance also merited the 'brave award' for the evening.

The third contest brought Collingwood's first win of the competition when AB Gamick forced the referee to save the very brave AB Jefferson in the second.

With the score at 2-1 in Nottingham's favour it was time for the special bout of the evening between Lt Vicky Whale (RN champ) and Pte Kane (Army champ).

This was a box-off to see who would represent the Combined Services in the National Championships. Pte Kane won the bout on a unanimous decision.

A strong AB Xeureb (Collingwood) stepped into the ring against a very inexperienced AB Copley (Nottingham) and stopped Copley in his tracks in the first.

With the match now tied, it came down to both teams' best boxers to do battle.

AB White (Collingwood) deserved the decision winning a very interesting fight and 'boxer of the night' accolade versus LET Bond (Nottingham).

Collingwood were now in the lead going into the final two bouts.

It was up to team captain LET Thomson (Nottingham) to win for his shipmates. His drive and determination forced his opponent AB Reeves to spit his gum shield out five times, forcing

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Flash jumping Jacks

THE RN showjumping team enjoyed a run of success at two key Inter-Service shows.

Lt Cdr Kate Welch (Collingwood), Lt Cdr Alasdair Peppe (Fleet HQ), Lt Cdr Rachel Firth (COMMARES) and Mid Rose Neave (Flying Fox) beat more than 20 other military and police teams to take top spot in the military team class at Aldershot Show.

After the first phase, only two teams were sitting on zero faults (the RN being one of them) and so the top two places had to be decided by a jump-off against the clock.

Although there was a healthy dose of good-natured banter between the RN and Household Cavalry team as the course was being set, there was also a touch of 'non-horsed' versus 'horsed' unit rivalry, with the other 'non-horsed' units (RAF, Customs & Excise, Surrey Police) adding their support to the RN side.

The RN rider went first (Kate on her own Irish sport horse 'It's Himself') and managed to nip round the course clear in a fairly swift time.

Sadly for the Army, their rider felt the pressure and just tipped the final fence, so it was a win for the RN.

A week later, the RN fielded two teams of three senior riders for the most prestigious and high-profile military showjumping event of the year: the Royal Windsor Horse Show.

As its name suggests, it is set in Windsor Home Park, adjacent to the castle – a magnificent setting and probably the biggest show that many of our horses and riders get to ride at, with international show jumping, carriage driving and other displays filling the packed five-day programme.

Twenty-six military teams contested the Queen's Challenge Cup (awarded to the overall winning team), with 14 of them also contesting the Queen's Plate (awarded to the highest-placed



● The rise of the horse of Windsor... The RN A Team – (left to right) Lt Cdr Kate Welch, Mid Rose Neave, Lt Cdr Alasdair Peppe – celebrate their triumph with a parade of honour

non-horsed unit).

All teams jumped one round of nine fences in the main arena first thing (7am!). At the end of the class all individual scores were counted, with the teams being placed in a batting order based on overall team scores.

After this first round, the RN A Team (Kate Welch, Alasdair Peppe and Rose Neave) were in pole position on three clears, with the Defence Animal Centre's A Team just a whisker behind them, also on three clears but with a slightly slower aggregate time.

The RN B team – Rachel Firth, Lt Cdr Suzanne Clark (Yeovilton) and Lt Victoria Whale (DLO Andover) – were lying in 12th – a crucial position as only one rider from each of the top 12 teams went forward to the jump-off in front of the Queen in the afternoon.

Before the jump-off, all 26 teams paraded around the main arena in front of packed public stands and marched past the Queen.

Then came the tense bit – the top 12 riders had to jump in reverse order which meant the RN riders went first and last.

Rachel Firth jumped for the B Team and rode a swift round and was just unlucky to knock a couple of poles down. It was nevertheless enough for them to move up a place and secure 11th position overall.

Kate Welch was last to go for the RN A Team and had to suffer the added pressure of knowing that her closest rival from the DAC team had just gone clear.

One fence down would have lost the Navy the Challenge Cup and two fences would potentially have lost them the Queen's Plate.

Despite a slightly hairy moment

over fence two, Kate and It's Himself managed to go clear and shave just under two seconds off the Army rider's time, so it was another win for the Navy with the A Team lifting both the Challenge Cup and the Queen's Plate.

The icing on the cake was that Her Majesty presented the prizes to the top three teams and spoke to all of the top dozen teams.

In all, a fantastic result for Navy showjumping and an excellent start to the season.

The RN Showjumping and Eventing Team is actively recruiting for competent and capable Royal Navy/Royal Marine and reservist riders with competition experience, ideally with their own horse or with regular access to one.

Details from Lt Cdr Welch (93825 3259) or Lt Whale (94391 2361).

100% NEW LIFESTYLE. NEW ZEALAND. NAVY

See page 35 for information on the exciting new opportunities available now.



The Fleet Air Arm

Sea King ASaC7

Type: Airborne Surveillance and Control
Entered service: 2002
Length: 22.15 metres
Height: 4.9 metres
Rotor diameter: 18.9 metres
Max speed: 138 mph (120 knots)
Range: 374 miles (325nm)
Endurance: 3.5 hours
Engines: Two 1,600shp Rolls-Royce
Gnome H1400 gas turbines
Crew: 1 pilot and 2 observers
Based at: RNAS Culdrose
Squadrons: 849 NAS, 854 NAS and 857
NAS
Background: The existing Sea King AEW
Mk2 (Airborne Early Warning) helicopters
were upgraded with the Searchwater
2000, a state-of-the-art long-range
radar system which can track up to 400
targets, to become the ASaC Mk7.
Photo: An 849 Sea King ASaC7 on the
deck of HMS Illustrious
Photographer: LA(Phot) Darby Allen

Sea King HU5

Type: Search and Rescue helicopter
Length: 22.15 metres
Height: 4.9 metres
Rotor diameter: 18.9 metres
Max speed: 144mph (125 knots)
Endurance: 5 hours flying time under
normal conditions
Engines: Two 1,600shp Rolls-Royce
Gnome H1400 gas turbines
Crew: 3-4
Squadrons: 771 NAS at RNAS
Culdrose and HMS Gannet at
Prestwick, Scotland
Background: In 2007, Gannet proved
itself the busiest Search and Rescue
unit in the UK by smashing all
previous records; a trend that is likely
to continue in 2008
Photo: A Sea King HU5 winches an
RM officer from a boat
Photographer: LA(Phot) JJ Massey

Lynx HMA8

Type: Helicopter Maritime Attack
Length: 15.24 metres
Height: 3.67 metres
Rotor diameter: 12.80 metres
Max speed: 201 mph (175 knots)
Operational range: 328 miles (285nm)
(standard tanks)
Engines: Two Rolls-Royce Gem
turbo shafts
Armament: Sea Skua anti-surface
missile; Sting Ray torpedo; depth
charges; M3M heavy machine gun
Crew: 2-3
Based at: RNAS Yeovilton
Squadrons: 702 NAS, 815 NAS
Background: The Lynx HMA8 is the
upgraded maritime attack version
of the Lynx HAS3 with an improved
avionics and communications fit.
It is equipped with a computerised
Central Tactical System (CTS) which
allows the crew to manage highly
complex tactical situations; and a
Passive Identification Device (PID)
which is a long-range infra-red
camera.
Photograph: A performance by a Lynx
HMA8 of the Black Cats helicopter
display team
Photographer: PO(Phot) Terry Seward

Jetstream T2/3

Type: Fixed-wing training aircraft (T2)
and support aircraft (T3)
Engines: Two 940hp Turbomeca Astazou
16D turboprops (T2) or Garrett TPE331
engines (T3)
Max speed: 246mph (214 knots)
Service ceiling: 25,000 feet (T2), 27,000
feet (T3)
Crew: minimum 2
Endurance: 4 hours
Range: 1,000 miles
Squadron: 750 NAS at Culdrose (T2)
Based at: RNAS Yeovilton and Culdrose
The T2 is used to train observers for the
FAA and the T3 (based at Yeovilton) in
operational support

Grob G115D2

Type: Two-seat, single-engine
fixed-wing aircraft
Max speed: 213mph (185 knots)
Used to grade young Royal Navy and
Royal Marine officers for further training
with the FAA
Squadron: 727 NAS
Training aircraft also include the
Squirrel HT1, single-engine light training
helicopter, used by 705 NAS; and
Slingsby Firefly T67, light training
fixed-wing aircraft, used by 703 NAS

Hawk T1

Type: Fixed-wing aircraft
Max speed: Mach 1.2 (or 660mph at
low level)
Used for training for Harrier pilots, and
by FRADU, Fleet Requirements Air
Direction Unit.
FRADU is operated by Serco Defence
and Aerospace, using 14 Hawk T1 on
lease to the Royal Navy from the RAF,
based at RNAS Culdrose.
Two of these aircraft are permanently
detached to Naval Flying Standards
Flight (fixed wing) at RNAS Yeovilton
where they are flown by RN pilots.
FRADU is capable of launching
three waves of six aircraft a day in a
wide variety of roles. These include;
coordinated simulated ship attacks,
Fighter Controller training, AEW
exercises, and helicopter fighter
affiliation training

Photograph: A fixed-wing sortie over
RNAS Yeovilton
Photographer: CPO(Phot) Kev Preece

Lynx HMA8

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Operational range: 328 miles (285nm)
(standard tanks)
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Crew: 2-3
Based at: RNAS Yeovilton
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Background: The Lynx HMA8 is the
upgraded maritime attack version
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It is equipped with a computerised
Central Tactical System (CTS) which
allows the crew to manage highly
complex tactical situations; and a
Passive Identification Device (PID)
which is a long-range infra-red
camera.
Photograph: A performance by a Lynx
HMA8 of the Black Cats helicopter
display team
Photographer: PO(Phot) Terry Seward

AS3

Anti Submarine
Length: 13.80 metres
Max speed: 175 knots
Range: 328 miles (285nm)
Engines: Rolls-Royce Gem

Based at: RNAS Yeovilton
Squadron: 815 NAS
Related older sibling of: AS339L
AS339L of 702 NAS
Photographer: LA(Phot) Mark Hipkin



Lynx AH7

Type: Army Helicopter
Entered service: 1985
Length: 13.4 metres
Height: 3.5 metres
Crew: 2-3
Rotor diameter: 12.80 metres
Rotor: four blade, semi-rigid
Max speed: 207 mph (180 knots)
Operational range: 230 miles (standard tanks)
Powerplant: Two Rolls-Royce Gem turboshafts
Armament: one General Purpose Machine Gun
Squadron: 847 NAS within the Commando Helicopter Force
Based at: RNAS Yeovilton
The 'jungly' Lynx of CHF is an Army asset flown by RN and RM aviators of the FAA.
Photographer: LA(Phot) Billy Bunting



Merlin HM1

Type: Maritime Patrol Helicopter
Entered service: December 1998
Length: 22.8 metres
Rotor width: 18.6 metres
Max speed: 192mph (167 knots)
Operational radius: 230 miles (200nm)
Engines: Three Rolls-Royce Turbomeca RTM322 gas turbines
Armament: can carry four Sting Ray torpedoes, Mk 11 Mod 3 depth charges; can mount GPMG (general purpose machine guns)
Crew: 3
Squadrons: 814 NAS, 820 NAS, 824 NAS and 829 NAS
Based at: RNAS Culdrose



Photographer: LA(Phot) Brett Turner

Sea King HC4/4+

Type: Helicopter Commando, known as a 'Jungly'
Length: 22.15 metres
Rotor diameter: 18.9 metres
Max speed: 143mph (125 knots)
Range: 750 miles (651nm)
Engines: Two Rolls-Royce Gnome 1400-1 Turboshafts
Armament: can carry GPMG (General Purpose Machine Gun)
Load: 27 fully equipped troops
Crew: 3
Squadrons: 845 NAS, 846 NAS and 848 NAS within the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF)
Based at: RNAS Yeovilton
These helicopters, along with the Lynx AH7 used by 847 NAS, make up the Commando Helicopter Force to support the actions of the Royal Marines and other ground troops in operational theatres around the world.
The HC4+ is an upgraded version of the commando helicopter HC4 for use in extreme conditions, such as the arid, high and cold conditions of Afghanistan.
Photographer: A CHF 'jungly' Sea King HC4+ lands amid the swirling dust of Afghanistan
Photographer: Cpl S Dove AGC (Army)



Harrier GR7/9

Type: Strike jet fixed-wing STOVL (short take-off, vertical-landing) aircraft
Length: 14.12 metres
Wingspan: 9.25 metres
Height: 3.56 metres
Crew: 1
Max speed: 662mph (Mach 0.87)
Operational radius: 346 miles (300nm)
Service ceiling: 15,000 metres
Powerplant: one Rolls-Royce Pegasus Mk 105 turbofan, or upgraded to a Mk 107
Squadrons: Naval Strike Wing encompassing elements of 800 NAS and 801 NAS
Based at: RAF Wittering and RAF Cottesmore
In 2006 the last Sea Harriers retired from service with the Royal Navy and the Fleet Air Arm's jet expertise transferred into the Joint Force Harrier.
Variants of the RAF Harrier include GR7, GR7a, GR9 and GR9a dependent on avionics, weapons and engines upgrades.
The Harriers are used by all three squadrons of the JFH: 1(F)Sqn and IV(AC)Sqn and the Naval Strike Wing; and the training squadron 20(R) which is made up of personnel from both Services
Photographer: SAC Travis (RAF)

