



# NAVY NEWS

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● *Fire for effect... The main gun of HMS Cornwall launches a high-explosive shell at the Cape Wrath range as the frigate – the Fighting 99 – takes part in Joint Warrior war games off the north-west coast of Scotland.*

*The Type 22 frigate has just relieved HMS St Albans as the Royal Navy representative in a NATO task force. See pages 20-21.*

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson, FRPU East

## HIGH FLIGHT

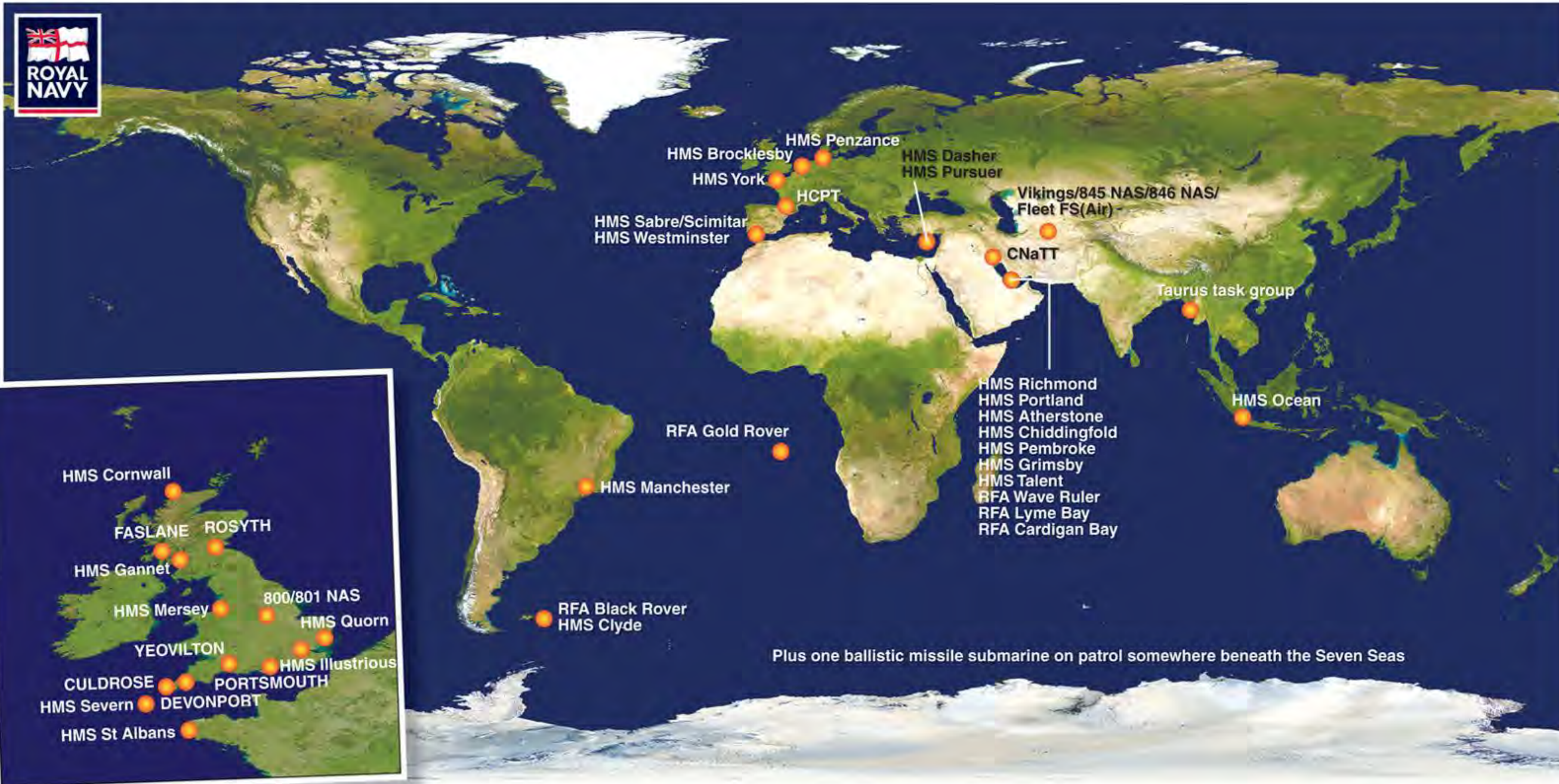
**FLY NAVY 100  
SPECIAL ISSUE**

**TALENT  
SCOUTS  
SUB HOUNDS  
TASK GROUP**



# VOICE OF THE GUNS

# GLOBAL REACH



## Fleet Focus

LOOSE them, and shatter, and spare not. We are the guns!

And loose them we have this month, notably upon the ranges of Cape Wrath and Gib.

This may be the age of micro-this and i-that, but sometimes a raw unadulterated brute force is the order of the day, as demonstrated by the 4.5in guns of Her Majesty's Ships **Westminster** and **Cornwall** (the latter also loosed a couple of Seawolfs for good measure). The Type 23 could be found in the Med (see page 5), the 22 in France and Scotland (see pages 20-21).

Gunnery aside, it's been the Fleet Air Arm's month with naval aviation celebrating its 100th birthday at home and abroad, a celebration which reached its climax on and above **HMS Illustrious** (see pages 23-25).

The fliers will soon have two shiny new playthings. **700 NAS** has stood up again after a very brief hiatus to test the next generation Lynx, the Wildcat, while the first RN pilots will soon begin conversion training for the replacement Harrier, the **Joint Strike Fighter** (see page 13).

And talking of things which fly... sailors aboard **HMS Severn** were somewhat surprised to see a visitor drop in off the Cornish coast - a barn owl, at least 85 miles from home (see page 6).

Right, now to front-line operations. The last element of **3 Commando Brigade - 45 Commando** - is back in the UK after its stint in Helmand, as are the RN surgeons, doctors and medics of the **Joint Force Medical Group** (see page 6), and the Lynx fliers of **847 NAS**, who are our 'squadron of the month' (see page 12).

**HMS Portland** has been in Oman for exercises with local and international forces (see opposite), while hunter-killer submarine **HMS Talent** has been stalking the same seas. Chief among her prey was **HMS Ocean** (see page 10).

Ocean escaped Talent's clutches to reach Singapore, while the rest of the **Taurus** amphibious task group, led by **HMS Bulwark**, could be found off Saudi Arabia and subsequently on the eastern shores of Bangladesh and the Ganges delta (see page 11).

In the Med **HMS St Albans** visited Greece and Spain before handing over NATO duties to **HMS Cornwall** (see page 21).

Tanker **RFA Gold Rover** set out to find a missing yacht several hundred miles from St Helena (she did - see page 7).

Across the ocean, **HMS Manchester** was also doing her good deed for the month, helping Rio's street children (see page 5).

Closer to home, **HMS Torbay** returned to Devonport after the second of three security deployments inside 18 months, the latest of which took her east of Suez (see page 4).

Team Torbay were whipped into shape for their deployments by those friendly chaps at **FOST(Submarines)**. We were given a rare insight into the work (see page 22).

**HMS Brocklesby** has been hunting WW2 ordnance in the Channel and North Sea (see right), while fellow minehunter **HMS Penzance** sailed up the Elbe to Hamburg to celebrate the famous port's 820th birthday (see page 9).

And talking of port visits... **HMS Quorn** paid her inaugural visit to Ipswich, her new affiliated town, plugging a gap left by **HMS Grafton's** demise (see page 9), while **HMS York** berthed in Jersey - a very challenging manoeuvre (see page 7).

**HMS Mersey** found it rather easier to berth in Liverpool when she called it on her affiliates and sampled the Grand National (see page 4).

And finally... the largest floating object in the RN inventory belongs to HM Naval Base Clyde. Just don't send it to war. Faslane is now home to the **Valiant jetty**, 44,000 tonnes of steel, concrete and cabling to support Astute-class submarines (see page 34).

## Beneficial Brocklesby

BOOM, there goes another one.

A plume of water rises briefly out of the North Sea as the diving team of **HMS Brocklesby** look on - and another historic piece of ordnance vaporises.

The Portsmouth-based minehunter has spent the past month HODOPing - Historical Ordnance Disposal Operations - first off France, then off Holland and Belgium with NATO's Mine Countermeasures Group 1.

France proved to be a particularly disappointing hunting ground for the Brock.

The force positioned itself over the site of a WW2 minefield off Dieppe, then began to systematically search the former field.

**Brocklesby** sent her Seafox remote-controlled submersible out 17 times in ten days in challenging conditions, chiefly a strong tidal stream, while the clearance divers plunged into the Channel on 22 occasions.

And for all this effort, how many old mines were found?

None.

They did discover a wartime depth charge, however (and blew it up), and an old piece of submarine survey kit (which they didn't blow up).

But most of the contacts inspected by man or machine were FBRs. Fairly Big Rocks.

Unlike the rest of the force, which happily

detonated more than a dozen pieces of ordnance.

So to Den Helder in Holland and hopefully a happier hunting ground for **Brocklesby**.

For the past four years the Bene part of Benelux have been running Operation Beneficial Cooperation to rid their waters of old bombs.

The operation was prompted by the deaths of three Dutch fisherman back in 2005, killed when they hauled a bomb up in their nets.

Weather frustrated the NATO force initially (May wasn't an especially kind month in the Channel and North Sea).

Although **Brocklesby's** Sonar 2193 was picking up bomb-like contacts, the seas were too rough to launch either Seafox or the sea boat and divers.

Finally at first light on May 19, the weathermen gave the all clear.

And so while half of **Brocklesby's** ship's company were tucking into their breakfast, the other half were making ready the dive boats after the sonar picked up a contact.

AB(D) Boswell was sent to identify. He reported an American WW2-era bomb, most likely ditched by a bomber returning from pounding Hitler's Fortress Europe.

A charge was fixed to the old bomb, the dive team withdrew to a safe distance and then admired their handiwork.

## Marathon in the sun

JUST because you're in the Indian Ocean doesn't mean you can't run the London Marathon.

As a homage to those pounding the streets of the capital, the men and women of **HMS Somerset** staged their version of the legendary road race half way around the world thanks to the organisational skill of POMEAs 'Chip' Monk and Stevie Wilmore.

It would be too much to ask the sailors to run a full marathon in these temperatures (it was already touching 30°C by the time the first racer - CO Cdr Andrew Burns leading by example - set off on a lap of his upper deck), so a relay was the order of the day.

Five competing departments raced around the Type 23 and it was the organisers' shipmates, the marine engineering department, who posted the fastest time - a very impressive 2h 48m 32s.

They - and the rest of the runners - were invited to sundowners on the flight deck. As well as lifting spirits, the marathon raised £320 for Help for Heroes.

That same day - April 25 - saw a rather more solemn affair on the flight deck. With the sun rising over Somerset, the ship's company paid their respects to the fallen of the Gallipoli campaign.

For Australians and New Zealanders, April 25 - ANZAC Day - is as enshrined in the national consciousness as November 11 is to Britons.

Somerset boasts one Antipodean among her ship's company, flight observer Lt Jimmy Hawley. Like Australians and New Zealanders across the globe, he paid tribute to his forebears at a service of remembrance, led by **HMS Ocean's** chaplain, the Rev John Morris.

Moving on to the Far East, the Devonport-based frigate is now enjoying a fortnight's break in Sembawang, Singapore.

There she hosted First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, who's currently conducting a farewell tour of the Fleet before handing over the reins to CINC Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope later this summer.



# Tales of the Arabian nights

**A**BURST of red tracer races into the Arabian night as the machine guns of HMS Portland blaze away.

This is Exercise Khunjar Hadd, somewhere off the north coast of Oman. Early this year, the good folk of Her Majesty's Ship Portland enjoyed war games run by the Pakistanis, Exercise Aman.

From Aman to Oman... Now the frigate has been exercising on the opposite side of the Arabian Sea with Allied navies.

Aman means 'peace' in Urdu. The Omanis had a rather more warlike name for their exercises, Khunjar Hadd – sharp dagger.

Indeed there was little peaceful about the four days of Khunjar Hadd. It began with war, ended with war, and there was a little war in between.

Organisers crammed the whole gamut of surface operations in Sharp Dagger – boarding parties, gunnery serials, air defence, navigation of mine-swept channels, replenishment at sea, basically think 'Thursday War' but run over four days, not one. The Omani Air Force were also keen to test their Super Lynx helicopters at sea.

Despite such a demanding schedule, key to the exercise was the ability to 'mix and match' sailors throughout the force, allowing them to spend a day with one of their Allies to see how they do things.

As in every other walk of life, nothing quite compensates for the personal touch. "There's nothing better in helping an exercise work so well as to actually meet and work with our partners," said Lt Cdr Rob Crabbe, Portland's operations officer. "This exercise was superb for allowing us to do that."

Sharp Dagger was run out of the Omani naval base at Wudam, 75 miles along the coast from the capital Muscat.

Naval bases are not renowned for their beauty. Luckily for Portland's sailors, they enjoyed their down time in the capital.

Muscat is probably the most lush city in the Gulf, thanks to its location on the coast of the Arabian Sea.

Lush or not, it's still redders even in mid-spring. 40°C of redders, as Portland's marine engineers discovered.

It was their lot to change one of Portland's Rolls-Royce Spey gas turbines, helped by specialists flown out from the UK and Muscat dockyard workers. It took six days in all, but the job was done.

Those not involved in the engine change headed off on adventurous training expeditions – diving, mountain biking, abseiling and kayaking – while the rugby team challenged an ex-pat side to a game (and narrowly lost 27-22).

After all that hard work it was only fair the sailors were rewarded... with a trip to Shangri-La.

Plenty of sailors have been promised trips there, few have been. Sadly, it wasn't the mythical Himalayan utopia... but it was a land flowing with beer, buffets (*do buffets flow?* – Ed), comedy and music.

The ship's company were treated to an evening's entertainment at the five-star Shangri-La hotel courtesy of Combined Services Entertainment (who fly around the globe putting on shows for 'our boys and girls').

They laid on top-notch food, stand-up comedians, dancers and a live band to allow the sailors to really let their hair down.

And then it was back to chasing pirates. The frigate is currently on patrol in the Gulf of Aden working with other navies to clamp down on illegal activity, in particular Somali pirates and drug smugglers.



## More days of Daring

IF WEST Country folk fear they're being deprived of seeing the Navy's latest warship, fear no longer.

Already on show – for the first time – to the Portsmouth public next month, HMS Daring is the first warship confirmed for Navy Days in Devonport this summer.

Also open to the public at the September 5 and 6 event will be a Type 23 frigate, a Bay-class amphibious ship, and Trafalgar-class submarine among other attractions.

Unlike the 'RN Past and Present' open weekend in Pompey on July 18 and 19, Navy Days is not free.

Details of attractions and ticket prices are available at [www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navydays](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navydays) or by calling 08445 787878.

Also in Portsmouth, the ever-popular Royal Navy Volunteer Bands festival will be staged in the Guildhall and Guildhall Square on Saturday July 4.

Eight bands from Senior Service establishments – three from the Portsmouth area alone, namely Nelson, Sultan and Collingwood, plus Neptune, Heron, Seahawk, Devonport and Northwood – compete for various trophies both inside and outside the landmark building.

The festival begins in the square at 9.30am with marching displays, before shifting inside the Guildhall in the afternoon where each band will perform a 15-minute programme ahead of a prize-giving ceremony.

Between breaks in proceedings, the massed pipes and drums of the RN Pipers Society will be performing.

The event is free but as space is limited inside the Guildhall, tickets should be obtained from Portsmouth Central Library in Guildhall Square.



Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Crusham, FRPU West

# The silent stalker

**A BLAST from the water jet of the tug Careful welcomes home the men of HMS Torbay as they complete the second of three gruelling deployments in 16 months.**

Deployment two for the Trafalgar-class boat took her east of Suez for four months, disrupting pirate activity in the Indian Ocean.

It's the second deployment inside eight months to the Middle East region – the hunter-killer was

away for three months at the end of 2008 in the same arena.

And after leave for her crew and maintenance for the boat, she's off again in July for five months (but we can't tell you where) before finally relaxing from front-line operations.

Although surface ships and various special forces have bagged much of the publicity – and credit – for anti-piracy operations off Somalia, Torbay's CO Cdr Chris Goodsell said his ship's company could feel proud of their efforts to strangle the brigands.

"We have done our bit, provided support to the surface ships in the

area and helped to prevent pirate attacks," he explained. "The truly amazing thing is that the pirates didn't even know we were there."

"The Submarine Service is unique – our time away has been tough yet rewarding."

He and his 126 shipmates were welcomed home to Devonport by 200-plus friends and family.

"This has been a very strong show of support from our families and friends at Devonport. The crew deserve it because they can take enormous professional satisfaction from a job well done," said Torbay's CO.

"It's fantastic to have such a welcome home. We are very proud of going away and doing our job, we had several key successes, but nothing beats the recognition of your loved ones."

Waiting for Lt Steven Mcallister were his two daughters Lauren and Chloe and his wife Lyndsey.

"It's so good to see my family on the jetty. We had an interesting and successful deployment. But it will be great to be back in a comfy bed at home," said the officer.

His wife added: "This is really good for the children because they can see a submarine for the first time. They are at an age now where they miss daddy a lot and ask where he is."

While the men have been away, their wives and partners back home have been busy – making use of the boat's welfare fund.

"The social events I organised have helped bond families so we all gain from mutual support which is needed, especially when we have little contact with them being submerged," said Laura Roberts, wife of Torbay's logistics officer Lt Mike Roberts.

"The families have said they find this mutual support comforting and valuable. We all get to know each other which would not otherwise happen. I think the men also find it reassuring to know this is provided to us back home."

Thanks to her husband's department, the submariners enjoyed 13 curry nights while away. They also managed to devour 12,780 sausages, 24,500 rashers of bacon and just short of 1,700 ice creams... not all on the same plate.

The deeps have also enjoyed improved communication with loved ones while away with access to e-mails and free phone calls home (obviously not while several leagues under the sea...), while several families flew out to Dubai while the boat was taking a short break from operations.

## National pleasure

WE LAMENT in these pages how often visits by ships so often just miss a big sporting event – grands prix, Olympics, cup finals.

Well, here's one which didn't. No here's one timed perfectly to coincide with the world's greatest horse race.

Taking a break from fishery patrol, HMS Mersey headed to Liverpool to call in on her old friends in her affiliated borough of Sefton – a visit which coincided with Grand National weekend.

The first order of business once safely berthed was a recce of Aintree racecourse in preparation for the big event.

Mersey's First Lieutenant, Lt Adrian Hopwood, took several members of the ship's company to the course to discuss the ceremonial requirements and to enjoy a day's racing on 'Lady's Day'.

Quite a number of the ship's company had never attended a race meet before, let alone the world's most famous horse race.

"There are patient lulls between races and then a calm patience and silence as the horses enter the course and start to race, building to frantic yells of encouragement and woe as the horses make their final approach to the line," said Mersey's navigator Lt Si Preece.

Among those yells of encouragement came from Mersey's XO, Lt Cdr Jason Varty, who picked up a (very successful) tip from one owner.

The sailors weren't here to gamble, of course. They were here to fly the flag for the RN and form a sort of 'ceremonial guard' between the weighing room and the winner's enclosure for the main event.

Which sounds quite a nice 'gig'. Except that come the main race, there was a large crowd pushing and, dare we say, jockeying (*Groan – Ed*) to get close to the riders, making it difficult for Mersey's sailors to keep the route clear.

After two false starts the National finally began; 100-1 outsider Mon Mome was the first horse past the post.

He romped home 12 lengths ahead of his nearest rival and was welcomed back to the winner's enclosure by the sailors – and quite a few delighted punters.

Meanwhile back on the ship... Not all the ship's company enjoyed the Aintree experience: some were looking after the ship on her namesake river, showing members of the public around.

Aside from Joe Public, Sea Cadets, associations and interested organisations were treated to more in-depth tours of the River-class ship.



## Police seek help over Kyle's death

DETECTIVES in Portsmouth are seeking witnesses to the killing of a sailor from HMS Liverpool.

ET(ME) Kyle Bartlett (pictured above) died 24 hours after being assaulted at the Walkabout Bar in Guildhall Walk.

His CO Cdr Craig Wood said the 21-year-old marine engineer's death had stunned the destroyer's ship's company.

"Kyle was utterly professional, dedicated to the Service and possessed a traditional sailor's sense of humour."

"He was a key member of the Marine Engineering Department and very popular member of my ship's company."

"Without doubt he had a very bright future ahead of him in the Service. He will be sorely missed."

The incident which led to his death occurred late on Tuesday May 5.

Police at Fratton want to hear from anyone who was in the Walkabout Bar between 10pm and closing time.

Witnesses should call 0845 0454545 and quote 'Operation Wren'.

Two 21-year-old Royal Marines have been charged with Kyle's murder – Ben Scott of Revenge Close, Milton, and Mark Clarke, of Finch Road, Southsea. ■ POLICE in Hertfordshire are appealing for help in tracing medals stolen from the home of a naval veteran's widow.

Thieves broke into the home of Molly Houghton in Chorleywood, near Watford, on Saturday May 16.

They took all the medals awarded to her late husband, P RW Houghton, for his WW2 service.

Those awards included the DSM for deeds in the run-up to the Normandy landings, as well as the Atlantic Star (with France and Germany bar), Italy Star, Defence Medal and 1939-45 Service Medal.

Anyone who can help with the recovery of the medals – or any dealers who are offered the stolen items – should contact PC Bill Braisher at Hertfordshire Police HQ on 01707 354874.

## Royal quarters

THE Princess Royal opened a new mess complex for senior rates on Whale Island.

The £10m complex features 134 en-suite rooms, a reception area/ballroom, bar, conference room, and internet suite.

The buildings in the new facility bear the names of three NCOs who have left their mark on history: Chief Gunner Israel Harding and Sgt Norman Finch RM, both winners of the Victoria Cross, and PO Edgar Evans who died during Scott's ill-fated South Pole expedition.

Their relatives joined Princess Anne at the opening ceremony.

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# Four-five. Engage!



**WHICH it did. Six hundred and 82 times to be precise.**

Yes, it's been a good month for Westminster. No, not *that* Westminster. The *other* Westminster. Missiles. Guns. Merlin. Sleek grey messenger of death and all that. One hundred and eighty men and women on the top of their game. *That* Westminster.

The frigate headed to the Rock for ten days of live firing exercises.

A Type 23 is not the most spacious of vessels at the best of times.

Now throw in an extra 37 students and staff from the Maritime Warfare School.

Student principal warfare officers, gun controllers, captains of the turret and close range weapons instructors were all under the spotlight as the assessors from HMS Collingwood, er, assessed.

But before the big bangs, there were big wheezes...

The next thing to do in Gib (after stocking up on ammo) was to race to the top of the Rock.

And so as the first shafts of light penetrated the Mediterranean night, hardcore and insane members of Westminster's ship's company mustered on the quay, ready for the assault on the iconic peak.

And 25 minutes later, ET(ME) 'Elly' Elston made it to the top first in an impressive 25 minutes. "It hurt," he complained – but at least the barbary apes weren't awake yet...

Pushing the junior rating all the way was CPOET(WE) Dave Haw, while Commanding Officer, Cdr Ken Houlberg third.

By the time the trio were joined by the rest of the runners for the descent, the apes were awake...

The run was the curtain-raiser to a "cracking weekend in Gib" before the gunnery began in earnest.

The barrels must have been red hot after the ten days' shooting.

Westminster expended 682 rounds of 4.5in ordnance – 272 of the last 275 rounds were fired without a single stoppage which (we're told) is almost unheard of.

There was a good number of 'small bangs' too: 180 rounds of 30mm and 9,600 rounds of 7.62mm also arced over the Mediterranean.

"I was immensely proud of my team who worked tirelessly to ensure that the gun remained available throughout an intense period of gunnery," said Westminster's delighted weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Andy Donaldson.

"It's a feat which is unlikely to be rivalled."

You cannot simply toss all those shell casings into the Med, much as it would be a lot easier for the ship's company. No, they have to be disposed of properly (the shells that is, not the sailors...).

The hangar became a makeshift 'dump' – which meant the ship's 829 NAS Merlin flight had to decamp to RAF Gibraltar for the duration of the gunnery exercise.

From there, the flight served as mailman, aerial observer, pleasure flight operator (the Merlin took 50 Gib-based personnel on flights around the Rock), intelligence gatherer, and all-round good eggs.

The fliers' most rewarding work was hosting around 20 youngsters from Gibraltar Air Training Corps and a number of sick children from St Bernard's Hospital



● HMS Westminster's Merlin returns to mother off the Spanish coast after several days decamped in Gib during gunnery trials

Picture: PO Bob Sharples, 829 NAS/HMS Westminster

for an afternoon, allowing them to crawl all over the helicopter whilst explaining to them the roles that the helicopter fulfils.

"The children had a wonderful time and had the opportunity to do something that very few people get the chance to do which was really exciting for them," one of the nurses told flight commander Lt Simon Stevenson.

The flier added: "The children had a good time understanding what we do and, more importantly, meeting the crew."

And back on the Type 23...

All 16 trainee PWOs – the largest number taken to sea during the international phase of the course in recent times – came through the shooting trials.

That they passed, apart from personal effort and skill on their part, was in no small degree down to the efforts of Westminster's ship's company.

"The week was the culmination of three months' preparation," said Cdr Houlberg.

"It is fantastic that everyone has passed and it has been a huge boost for our team, who have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to demonstrate their gunnery credentials."

So it was only fair that the sailors celebrate with some Mediterranean TAPAs.

Not Spanish savouries, but Exercise TAPAs (Training And Physical Activities), a weekend of sport and adventurous training around the Rock (*I would have preferred the nibbles – Ed*).

The frigate remains on duty in the Med, visiting Barcelona and Algeria between patrols before heading back to Portsmouth.

## A bridge to farm

THESE might look like a few uneven planks but they're actually part of an important piece of naval architecture.

Spanning 20ft of river outside Rio de Janeiro, this is HMS Lancaster Bridge, so called because it was put up by good eggs from the Red Rose frigate back in 2005.

Four years of Brazilian rain had taken its toll of the wooden crossing, which connected two parts of a farm used as a home and rehabilitation centre by some of the country's street children.

Planks were broken or had been washed away by the river in flood – as had some of the road leading up to it.

Over four days, the destruction of the elements was replaced by the construction by some other fine folk from England's greatest county, the ship's company of HMS Manchester.

The ship had her two-week stand-off from her seven-month South Atlantic deployment in Rio, allowing some of her sailors to get out into the country.

Chief among beneficiaries of Manchester's goodwill was TASK Brazil – The Abandoned Street Kids of Brazil – a British-funded charity which looks after some of the country's orphans and abandoned youngsters.

The destroyer provided four working parties for the charity. Some grappled with clearing up inside and outside at two hostels in Rio itself, stripping out debris and blitzing an overgrown garden – which can now be turned into a play area.

Others headed to the farm which helps 12 teenage boys.

There they found HMS Lancaster bridge not only rather rickety (it's now repaired) but the main farmhouse rather run down (it's now looking quite chipper after some fresh paint was applied).



Tired by their exertions on the farmstead, the work party headed into the surrounding jungle to relax at the foot of a 200ft waterfall. Those who didn't take a dip in the pool enjoyed a (hard) water massage at the bottom of the waterfall.

Rio marks the half-way point in the destroyer's deployment – a chance for the engineers to conduct some much needed maintenance on the Type 42 after the rigours of operating in the South Atlantic and a chance for those off duty to explore the legendary 'party city'.

Some families flew out to Rio to be with their loved ones for the first time since the ship left Portsmouth back in January.

The more active-minded took on the Brazilian Navy at football (and lost, perhaps unsurprisingly, 4-1), while Manchester's golfers were invited to play at the exclusive Itanhangá club, one of Brazil's most renowned courses.

But all that's in the past now. The Type 42 is back at sea around the Falklands now. There she's hosting the new Chief of Joint Operations Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach who's seeing what the destroyer 'brings to the party' when it comes to safeguarding Britain's South Atlantic interests.

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**DO NOT** be fooled by this very nice photograph of HMS York dressed overall in Jersey – the veteran destroyer is not just a decorative warship.

York ploughed through the sea at an incredible 35.1kts (a smidgin over 40mph) on her return from the Channel Islands – thought to be a record speed for any Type 42.

Not bad for a ship laid down nearly 30 years ago... (admittedly she's just emerged from a refit).

Most, though not all, RN visitors to Jersey anchor off the island – the Channel Islands are infamous for a very high tidal range (the third highest in the world – 12 metres or a little under 40ft if you prefer your measurements in imperial).

But not York. She became the first

Batch 3 Type 42 to berth in St Helier – in fact the 5,000-ton warship is the largest vessel the harbour can accommodate apparently.

Her CO Cdr Andy Price found it "one of the most testing berths" experienced in more than 20 years of driving warships. Luckily for him, he won't have to do it again as he's just handed over command to his successor, Cdr Simon Staley.

York found herself heavily in demand during her visit. She provided the impressive backdrop to Jersey Boat Show, opened her gangway to just short of 4,000 visitors, not to mention 151 VIPs who were hosted for an official reception.

Aside from flying the flag, the ship's company showed how they – or any RN vessel for that matter – could help islanders should disaster befall Jersey.

They laid on a series of demonstrations

for the island's emergency planning committee on how to set up temporary medical, command and control and decontamination centres, and deal with pollution of the seas should an oil tanker run aground on Jersey's northern coast.

Several sporting and adventurous training activities were squeezed into the weekend visit, including kayaking and football against the island's impressive team.

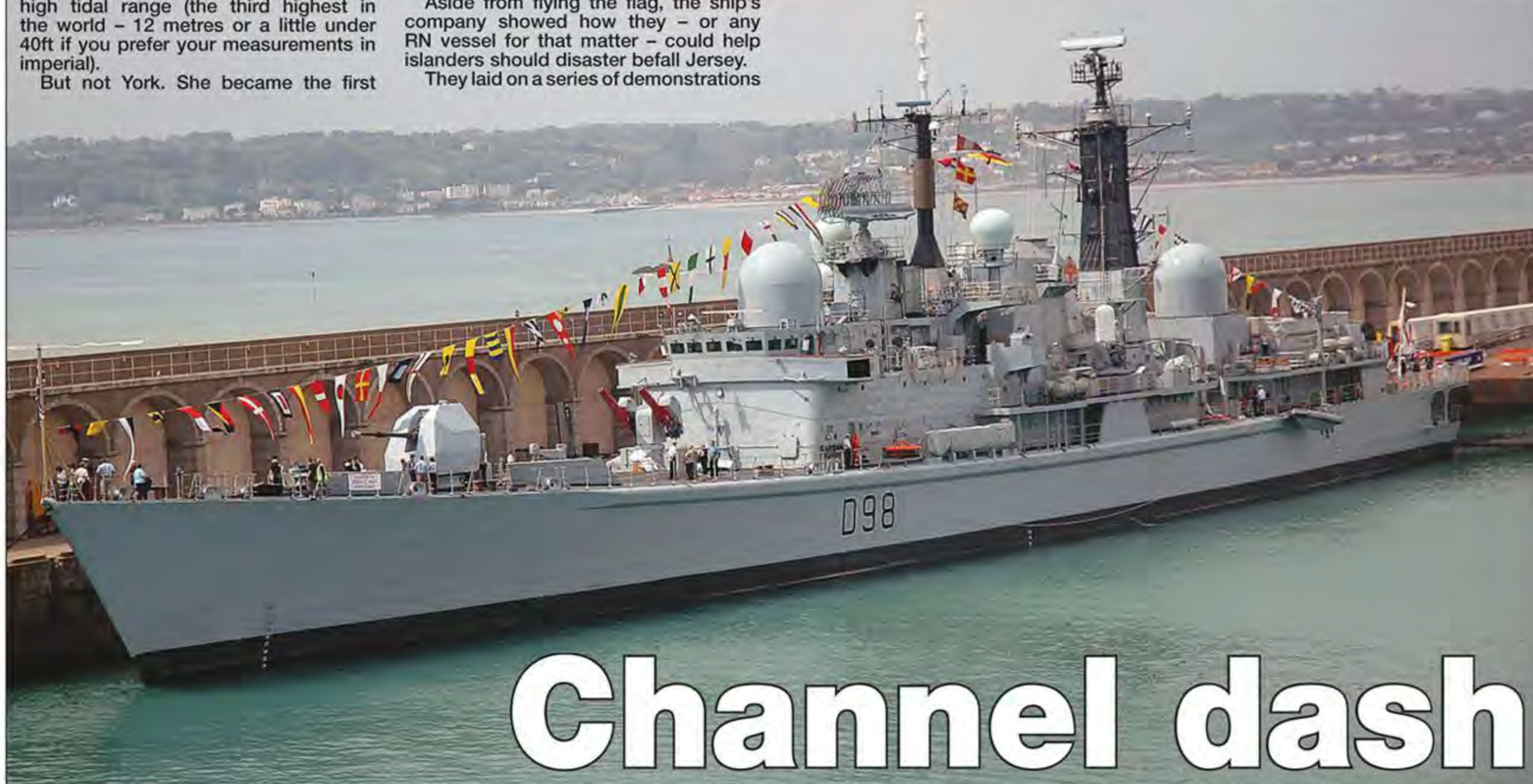
A round-island cycle ride (around 44 miles) was also organised in preparation for the ship's company's sponsored ride from Portsmouth to Hull this month (considerably further than 44 miles...).

The cyclists will meet up with their ship in the Humber port before heading across to Yorkshire's county town.

The ship's company will exercise their freedom of the city by marching through the historic heart of York on June 6 and commemorating the destroyer's achievements with a service at York Minster.

In between Jersey and Hull, the ship could be found in waters off north-western Scotland (following a brief 'pit stop' in Portsmouth) conducting High Seas Firings, using her Sea Dart missiles to intercept several target drones.

Picture: PO Dutchy Holland, HMS York



# Channel dash

## Tanker finds missing yacht

TANKER RFA Gold Rover found herself at the centre of a mid-Atlantic salvage mission to locate a missing yacht.

The auxiliary was visiting St Helena when authorities asked her to track down the Sea Jade, adrift somewhere in the South Atlantic for almost a month.

South Africa yachtsman Nick Robinson left the remote island at the beginning of April to sail single-handed back to Cape Town.

Nothing was heard from him after the first week at sea and nothing was seen of the boat for another three until the crew of a merchantman came across the boat.

They confirmed Mr Robinson was not aboard the yacht – but were unable to salvage the Sea Jade.

Four days after the boat's last sighting, Gold Rover set off with a salvage crew of three volunteers from a yacht visiting St Helena.

The tanker reached that final position, then followed Sea Jade's most likely course – and found nothing.

Capt Paul Minter RFA and his bridge team sat down with weather reports and plotted the yacht's most likely position, then set off in search – akin, says Capt Minter, to "trying to find a needle in a field of haystacks".

But after just five hours they picked up a radar contact which, on visual inspection, turned out to be the missing yacht.

The salvage crew were transferred to take it back to St Helena under sail – the engine was out of action.

As for the tanker, she's on deployment to the South Atlantic, visiting British dependencies such as St Helena and Ascension as she makes her way south.

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# Reservists at sharp end of piracy battle

TWO Maritime Reservists have returned from deployment having played their part in keeping the screws on the pirates off East Africa.

As we recounted last month, MV Handytankers Magic reported that she was under attack from pirates, and RFA Wave Knight set a course for the merchantman.

Well now we can shed more light on the anti-piracy dash thanks to two men who were there.

ABs Nick Boughton, of HMS Cambria, and Edmund Grandison (HMS Forward) joined tanker Wave Knight in Bahrain at the end of March, and were on duty on April 18 in the Gulf of Aden when the ship received a distress call.

By the time the RFA arrived the pirates had fled, but Wave Knight followed the skiff to a fishing dhow which they suspected was the pirates' mothership.

"We called up the Dutch ship HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën - which we had just refuelled that morning - and then circled the dhow and skiffs with our guns manned while we waited," said AB Boughton, who works for HM Revenue and Customs in Cardiff in civilian life.

"The men stood on deck with their hands up for about 40 minutes while we circled, and we spotted at least a couple of machine guns on deck.

"Just as the Dutch ship turned up one of the men picked up a

Dutch flag and held it up - he presumably thought they would be the best people to go with.

"We found out that 13 of the men on the dhow were hostages, and they were released."

The other seven were suspected of being pirates, but as they were not caught in the act they were eventually released - after their weapons were destroyed and the skiffs sunk.

Not a bad result - but there was more to come.

Around two hours later Wave Knight picked up a second distress call - pirates in another skiff were attempting to board the MV Front Ardennes.

ABs Boughton and Grandison were again manning the guns - their specialist roles in the RNR - and this time they were required to put warning shots across the bow of the skiff, not an easy task considering the relative sizes of the vessels involved.

The skiff broke off and fled towards shore, but again Wave Knight tracked it, this time for six hours, allowing Canadian warship HMCS Winnipeg to board it and disarm the pirates.

AB Grandison, who drives black cabs for a living, said: "It just shows how well your parent unit trains you for this.

"We thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience, and would really recommend it to our colleagues."



# Base conversion

## SAILORS face seismic changes following a major shake-up of Britain's three naval bases.

Devonport will be most affected by the Maritime Change Programme, a two-year study into the future of the three bases announced by Armed Forces Minister Bob Ainsworth.

It will lose its submarines from the middle of the next decade - and possibly its seven Type 23 frigates. It will, however, gain Royal Marines from Turnchapel and Poole to cement its status as the hub of amphibious warfare.

With the T-boats leaving Devonport, Faslane will become the UK's sole operational submarine base. All Sandowns will continue to be based on the Clyde.

Portsmouth will remain home of the carrier and destroyer fleet, Hunt-class minehunters and six Type 23s. Aside from plans to shift the rest of the 23s to the Solent, the dockyard is the likely home of the first batch of the class' successor, the Future Surface Combatant in a decade's time.

In 2007, Whitehall determined that it would need all three naval bases - but that it had too much dockyard capacity and too few ships.

The result was the Maritime Change Programme which, Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope acknowledged, "is likely to cause significant upheaval in the beginning".

The admiral continued: "We are working hard to ensure that issues affecting people will be addressed - and resolved - as a high priority."

The admiral said it was vital the Senior Service made the best use of its bases, warships and resources to support the front-line Fleet.

"I must emphasise that this is a good news story for the operation, maintenance and support of the Fleet," he added.

"But I am determined that it will also be a good news story for our people in the future."

To that end, no changes to base ports will take place before 2014. After that, however, major moves will occur.

The three remaining Trafalgar-class submarines - Trenchant, Talent and Triumph - will move to Faslane.

The bulk of submarine training will also shift north of the border, with just some engineering and supporting shore billets left for submariners in Devonport. The SETT will remain in Gosport.

539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines will make the shortish hop from Turnchapel and 10 Training Squadron RM will make the longer move from Poole to bring commando landing craft together in Devonport Naval Base.

Seven Type 23s - Sutherland, Northumberland, Argyll, Montrose, Monmouth, Portland and Somerset - could be transferred to Portsmouth from 2014 (a decision will be made within the next 12 months). All four Type 22s will see out their careers in the West Country.

Devonport will continue to be the centre for submarine refits but it will also take on additional work supporting the Surface Fleet - with fewer refits carried out in Portsmouth.

From 2019, the Future Surface Combatant - replacement for Type 22/23 frigates - is likely to be based in Portsmouth, although studies are under way to consider basing the less-advanced variants of the ship in Devonport.

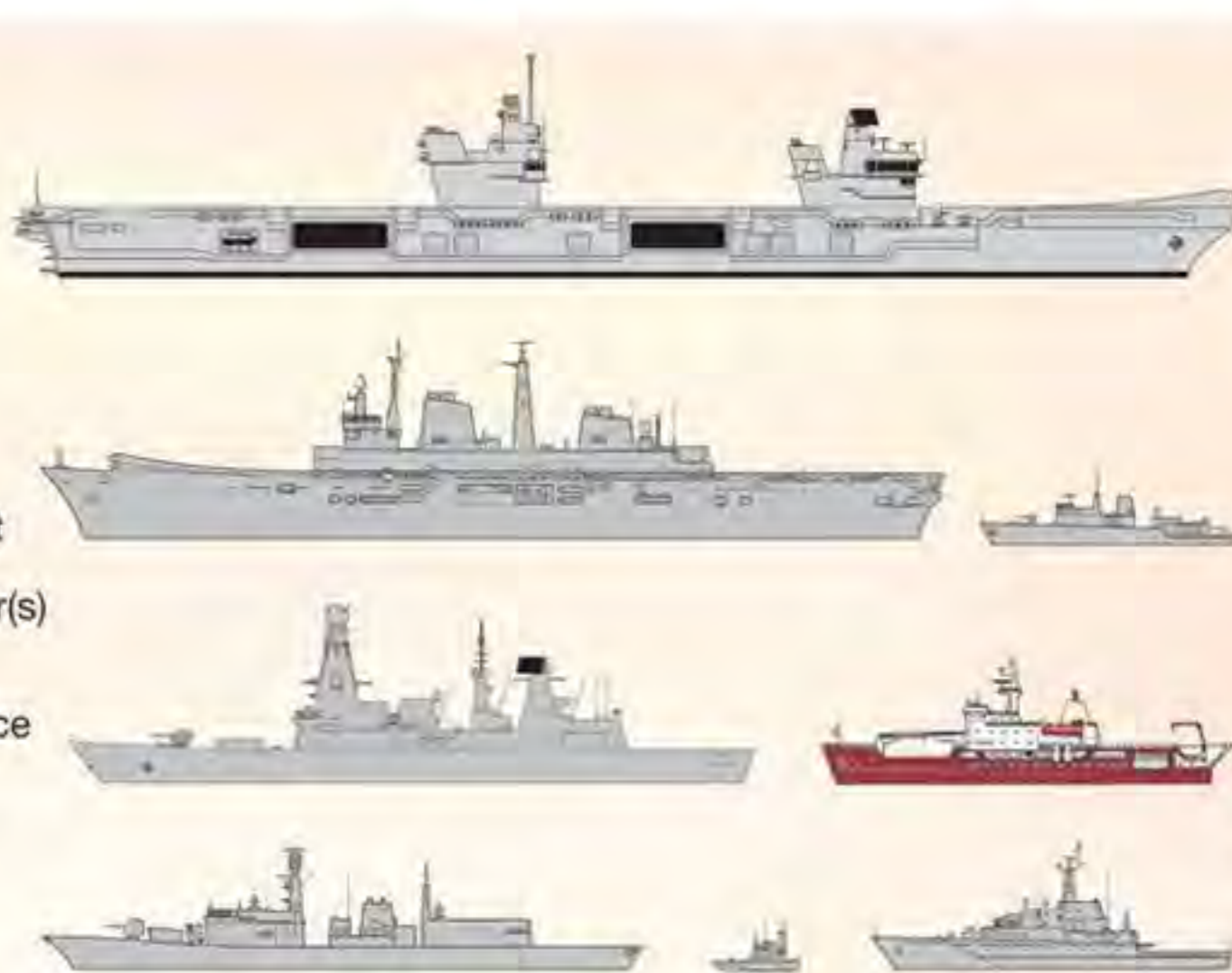
With such a potential upheaval of personnel and their families, there will be questions about homes/accommodation, school provision for children, provision of doctors and dentists for Naval families.

Admiral Stanhope said the Navy would



- Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier(s)
- Invincible-class aircraft carrier(s)
- Type 45 destroyers
- Type 23 frigates
- Ice patrol ship HMS Endurance
- River-class patrol vessels
- Hunt-class minehunters
- Raider-class patrol vessels

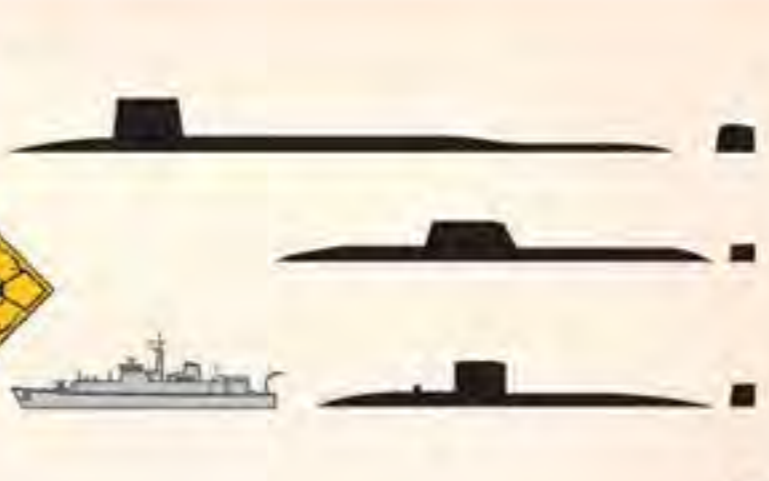
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- Vanguard-class ballistic missile submarines
- Astute-class fleet submarines
- Trafalgar-class fleet submarines
- Sandown-class mine countermeasures vessels



2015

"It will create a more stable basis on which to plan and build rewarding careers."

The plans for Devonport have provoked substantial criticism from political leaders in the West Country who fear the changes will "rip the heart" out of the yard, while many sailors and their families are unhappy about moving to Portsmouth or Faslane.

Naval Base Commander Cdre Ian Jess said rumours of Devonport's demise were unfounded - there would be "significant multi-million pound investment" in the establishment. He continued:

"Devonport will long continue to play an integral role in support of the Royal Navy and these plans confirm that the base will continue to play a vital role in keeping the front line well equipped."

Mr Ainsworth said he was confident the overhaul of the bases would "lead to savings of several hundred million pounds". He added: "Each of our naval bases has a strong future under the plans we have laid out."

At the same time as announcing the Maritime Change Programme results, Mr Ainsworth also revealed the outcome of Programme Belvedere - the future of Joint Helicopter Command 'battlefield helicopter' bases, which included the Commando Helicopter Force.

CHF - 845, 846, 847 and 848 Naval Air Squadrons and their Lynx and Jungly Sea Kings - will be staying put at RNAS Yeovilton as moving personnel and material would bring no benefit to the front line, Mr Ainsworth said.

help as far as it could with the relocation and would talk to local authorities to ensure there would be school places to meet the possible influx of extra youngsters, while there would be sufficient crèche, sports and other facilities at each base.

In the long term, Whitehall hopes there will be less 'churn' and more harmony for families instead of the regular flicking between Faslane and Devonport for submariners and between Devonport and Portsmouth for Type 23 sailors especially.

"The Maritime Change Programme involves complex and far-reaching changes with great potential for long-term benefit - operationally and for our sailors and marines and their families," said Admiral Stanhope.



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# Hail and Orwell

NUDGING slowly up river escorted by Harwich lifeboat in the shadow of the Orwell Bridge, this is HMS Quorn paying her inaugural visit to her new affiliate town.

The people of Ipswich have been without a ship to call their own since frigate HMS Grafton paid off (she too, though considerably larger, could still pass beneath the Orwell Bridge).

Enter the Hunt-class warship to plug the void.

She is already affiliated with the village with which she shares a name – and the hunt for which she is named.

But the Portsmouth-based warship can visit neither, so the chance to sail into the heart of Ipswich, to Orwell Quay, for a four-day visit was something to savour.

At a leisurely pace, it took two days for the minehunter to reach East Anglia from her home port.

But although the ship was taking it easy, her sailors were not; many of the ship's company could be found sweating and straining as they strove to raise money for the RNLI courtesy of a sponsored row-a-thon which began the moment Quorn left Pompey and ended only as the ship arrived in Suffolk.

Once alongside in Ipswich (and hopefully following a shower after all that rowing), the ship invited local dignitaries aboard for an official reception to cement the fledgling bond with the town.

That bonding continued over the weekend of her stay.

Quorn invited Sea Cadets from Walton-on-the-Naze, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich aboard for guided tours, before the gangway was opened to the wider public.

There was also a chance to take on a Suffolk Police XI on the football pitch. The bobbies had a roster of *circa* 1,300 men and women from which to draw their team. Quorn's ship's company? A mere 44.

Foregone conclusion, then...

Yep, the matelots triumphed 3-1.

The sailors also joined a mayoral procession through the heart of Ipswich before taking part in a church service.

They then headed to the civic offices for a reception and formal recognition of the new affiliation.

"It has been absolutely fantastic – the crew had a cracking time meeting hundreds of visitors on board," enthused Quorn's CO Lt Cdr Tim Neild.

"We left Ipswich with a heavy heart but hope to take the town along with us by keeping in regular contact along the way."

The ship is now 'enjoying' a spell of Operational Sea Training north of the border before headed off on exercises next month.

Picture: RNLI

## Aunts and Penzance

MEANWHILE in Hamburg...

The crew of HMS Penzance have also enjoyed being feted, although they were not on their own in the great Hanseatic port of Hamburg.

No, the Sandown-class vessel was joined by more than two dozen other warships from 13 nations at Hamburg's 820th birthday party (which makes it five years older than Portsmouth...).

The party began with a parade of sail in blazing sunshine on the Elbe.

"The river was full of speedboats and yachts and, in true nautical fashion, Penzance was swamped by small craft – almost as much as the star of the show, FGS Hamburg," said CO Lt Cdr Simon Wallace.

The ship eventually berthed among a myriad of other vessels attending the festivities – there were 70 in all: warships, tall ships, vintage boats, yachts.

Somehow, more than 1,000 visitors found their way through this nautical maze to reach Penzance, tour the Faslane-based ship and watch demonstrations of her hi-tech mine disposal system Seafox.

"The end of the weekend came all too soon – the crew hugely enjoyed the visit," said Lt Cdr Wallace.

"After a number of UK port visits in support of the Royal Navy in the Public Eye initiative, the visit to Hamburg provided an excellent opportunity to meet many of our NATO counterparts."

The festival ended with a display by the Patrouille Suisse – the Swiss answer to the Red Arrows – a rare appearance by a *Tante Ju* (Aunt Ju, or WW2 vintage Junkers 52 transporter), and several live bands, one of whom performed *God Save the Queen* as Penzance sailed up the Elbe towards the North Sea in the departing procession.



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# Talent enjoys Indian summer

NO, THIS is not a detail from Claus Bergen's legendary submarine portait *The Commander*, but the sun setting over the Indian Ocean as seen from the casing of HMS Talent.

It's not often that you find one of Her Majesty's Submarines on the surface – they prefer, as their motto suggests, to come unseen.

But the Trafalgar-class boat has spent a surprising amount of time riding the waves, rather than prowling beneath them, not least because there's been a lot of to-ing and fro-ing between Talent and the skimmers of the Taurus task group.

A sizeable number of sailors clambered aboard the T-boat to experience life below the waves, and a sizeable number of men of Talent headed off for day trips with the surface ships.

And what do you always need for a day trip?

A wallet.

A mobile phone's probably a must too these days.

A broly or waterproof coat could come in handy.

But a towel? No, you'll leave that in the airing cupboard.

Unless you're Lt Barry 'Stocky' Stockton. Offered a day aboard Her Majesty's Ship Ocean in the Indian Ocean, the submariner jumped at the chance... then grabbed his towel.

Water's at a premium aboard HMS Talent. Less so on Ocean where coiffured matelots wander around the helicopter assault ship having washed at leisure in her showers.

And Stocky wasn't going to turn down the chance of a Hollywood dhokey (the novelty of *not* turning off the water between soaping and rinsing, something not afforded the poor folks of HMS Talent).

The junior officer was one of numerous deeps invited to pop across to the Mighty O, while a mixed bag of skimmers, WAFUs, Yanks and staff from the Taurus task group squeezed into Talent.

For Stocky, a submariner for more than two decades, even more exciting than a thorough wash and the chance to fill the Talent larder courtesy of the Ocean NAAFI, was his first ride in a helicopter – those nice chaps of 820 NAS winched him aboard a Merlin.

His shipmates soaked up the sun on Ocean's flight deck, knuckling down to a volleyball contest (not a sport which can be practised with ease aboard the T-boat...).

Despite their lack of match fitness, the deeps reached the semi finals (or that's what they told their comrades on their return and, Talent's weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Harry Nottley assures us, "submariners never cheat and rarely lie").

Anyway, when not in the shower, chomping nutty or playing volleyball, the men of Talent have been chasing HM warships around the Indian Ocean... and been chased by HM warships (plus HM Merlins and HM torpedoes).

Once through Suez and the Red Sea, the Taurus group got stuck into Exercise Blue Toreador. We featured the above-water bit last month, but now a view from below.

Talent was charged with evading the destroyer/frigate screen and torpedoing Ocean and tanker RFA Wave Ruler.

Not easy when HMS Somerset has the best submarine-hunting sonar in the world. Throw the Merlins into the equation and it's even harder.

"It was those 'dippers' that gave Talent her biggest headache deep beneath the ocean's surface," rued Lt Cdr Nottley.

Sore head or not, Talent got her shots away and dispatched the two prized assets with simulated torpedoes – watched by more than a dozen visitors from above the waves.

"The opportunity for so much 'cross-pollination' has been a real highlight," said Talent's CO Cdr Simon Asquith.

"It's great to be able to demonstrate our capability first-hand, share tactical knowledge and have the chance to dispel a few submarine myths."

And for those heading in the opposite direction... "It was great to see what they were all about," said Stocky after his first experience of HM Grey Funnel Line in more than 20 years, "but I am really glad to be back amongst the home comforts of HMS Talent."

Sadly, there'll be no more cross-pollination for some time. Talent has parted company with the Taurus group; she headed north to Fujairah in the UAE for a break from operations, while the amphibians made for India, Bangladesh and the Malay peninsula (see right).





● From the ochre sands of Saudi Arabia...

# Red, blue and Green

**R**E-DRAW the colour spectrum – it seems that the three primary colours have a hint of green to them. Well, at least that's the case on this year's massive Taurus deployment.

Red Alligator saw the dark blue Naval ships of Taurus conduct a mighty offload of the Royal Marines of 40 Commando and their Saudi counterparts on to the yellow sands of Saudi Arabia – the first time in 16 years that UK landing forces have worked with Saudi troops in Saudi training areas.

The five-day exercise began with the three British ships HMS Bulwark, RFA Lyme Bay and HMS Somerset joining with their Saudi counterparts to journey down through the Red Sea and land their nation's troops ashore.

4 Assault Squadron RM's C/Sgt Roo 'Dinger' Bell commented: "This was a good run out of our amphibious assets, and it really put our skills to the test over a beach with a constantly moving sandbar."

"This meant that the vehicles driving off the landing craft were almost certainly going to struggle – and struggle they did."

Once safely ashore at Wadi Sirr, the Brits and Saudis took part in combined training ashore and on board, where Commander UK Amphibious Task Group Cdre Peter Hudson welcomed a Saudi Arabian battle staff led by a commodore on board his flagship HMS Bulwark to plan

and coordinate the land assaults.

The last day brought a live-firing exercise, with the impressive sight of the Javelin anti-tank missiles plying their destructive trade.

Further out at sea, British frigate HMS Somerset carried out a successful refuelling from a Saudi tanker, providing future options for ships working in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

From Saudi shores the ships of the task force moved further into the east, although Bulwark's CO Capt Wayne Keble did ruefully remark in his online diary that the Royals and their vehicles did seem to have brought back a great deal of the Saudi desert with them...

"The fact that so many of our sailors and marines are employed in direct support of evolutions such as dock operations, flight deck ops and assault stations means that the standard shininess tends to decline," he lamented.

"So come the need, come the matelot or marine. And it was out with the buckets, mops and Mr Sheen."

"It was a similar task on the upper deck, with some areas requiring a little maintenance – no better place to do the work than whilst basking in the Indian Ocean sun."

The journey through the Bab El Mandeb straits did offer up some temptation to the Marines on board however.

"Once safely on the other side, the pirate hotspot of Somalia was to our starboard side, and at a time the Somali pirates were at the peak of their activity," said

C/Sgt Bell.

"The Marines on board were getting twitchy and obviously wanted to bag a pirate or two. As there is now a dedicated task group to take on the pirates, we sailed past and on with our voyage."

From India the ships moved on to Bangladesh to exercise in some of the most challenging coastlines of the globe.

Exercise Shomudro Torongo (translated to Sea Wave in English) saw the British and Bangladeshi forces forge links in their fight against terrorism and their training for natural disasters in the region.

Another five-day exercise and another amphibious landing for the men of 40 Commando.

This time it was training and working alongside the Bangladeshi Navy – the first joint action between the two Naval forces in more than a decade – and plunging ashore on to the Ganges Delta.

Fast boats and landing craft from 4 ASRM and 539 ASRM carried out their jobs in the riverine environment, prowling the waters in search of suspicious contacts ashore.

The Marines of Charlie Company, 40 Cdo, charged ashore to practise anti-ambush drills, patrols and the setting-up of observation posts.

The exercise brought in a variety of different government agencies: Bangladeshi security forces; intelligence agencies; police; and coastguard; alongside Bangladeshi

Naval ships, helicopters, Air Force assets and Army commandos.

Off the coast RFA Wave Ruler waited with her 820 NAS Merlin for calls for casualty evacuations and intelligence work in this complex scenario.

Cdre Peter Hudson said: "This has been an ambitious and demanding exercise with some complex hurdles in a challenging coastal and riverine environment."

"There has been much to learn on both sides; the Bangladeshi forces have witnessed and learnt from some of the RN's best practices and in turn the Royal Navy has learnt a huge amount from our hosts, who are far more used to working in such complex waterways."

"This sort of activity is vital for us – after all, you don't find many waterways such as these in Devon."

Once in Singapore, the Taurus flagship HMS Bulwark conducted a service of remembrance to mark the centenary of Naval aviation and to remember the men of the Fleet Air Arm who were killed in action or died in captivity during the battles for the island between 1941 and 1945.

A visit to Malaysia's Kota Kinabalu saw the departure of Cdre Hudson, who handed over his task group and title to Cdre Paul Bennett.

The former CO of HMS Daring has taken over mid-deployment while Cdre Hudson returns to the UK to take up his promotion to Rear Admiral, Commander UK Maritime Forces.

● ...the Royal Marines of 40 Commando have carried out shore landings...



● ...To the Ganges delta in Bangladesh, the Taurus deployment has been challenging its ships and personnel to excel in amphibious operations



# High fidelity

**ORDINARILY**, the Royal Navy does not do things by halves.

The Royal Marines especially do not do things by halves.

But for 847 Naval Air Squadron, we'll make an exception.

Such is the demand for the armed reconnaissance fliers and their six Lynx Mk7s – distinguishable from naval Mk3s and 8s by (a) their green livery and (b) skids instead of wheels as an undercarriage – that while half the Yeovilton-based squadron was riding shotgun above the Hindu Kush and steppe of Afghanistan, the other half was gearing up to head to the Far East to join the Taurus task force.

More than 70 squadron personnel and their Lynx Mk7s – actually owned by the Army Air Corps but loaned to the Fleet Air Arm – have spent the past seven months at Camp Bastion, the hub of British operations in Helmand, working alongside Jungly Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force, RAF Chinooks and other Allied helicopters in theatre.

The 847 Lynxes clocked up nearly 2,000 hours in Afghan skies in a wide-ranging mission which covered acting as an umbrella for combat logistic patrols (aka convoys) moving between far-flung Allied bases, to scouting and reconnaissance sorties and escorting Sea Kings and Chinooks carrying troops and supplies.

The squadron's Lynxes were also heavily in demand for security missions during the period of registration for Helmand's election – one step on the long road to the region's recovery from Taleban rule.

For many 847 personnel this was their second, even third tour of duty in

Afghanistan. Previous experience proved extremely useful for fliers and mechanics alike as they maintained a punishing work rate to meet the operational tempo.

To prepare for the demands of Afghanistan, the squadron decamps to the French Alps for a taste of operations where it's 'hot and high'.

The current incarnation of 847 is by far the longest in a rather unusual career spanning seven decades. The squadron has invariably been formed to meet an urgent need – typically war or an international crisis.

It began life as a torpedo bomber/reconnaissance squadron in 1943, serving with HMS Illustrious in the Far East.

Disbanded after just 12 months, it was another dozen years before it reappeared, flying Gannets out of Cyprus trying to spot arms being smuggled into the island at the height of unrest. It was a duty they performed for more than three years before 847 was broken up again.

More unrest – this time in Indonesia – prompted its return in May 1963, a reappearance which lasted 18 months.

Before the decade was out, 847 was back, flying Wessex in the Far East and working with Royal Marines assault ships.

It vanished again in May 1971 and would not return for 11 years, when it was hurriedly formed to support the liberation of the Falklands. More than 20 Wessexes were sent south with 847. They arrived in the South Atlantic in time to support the later stages of the push on Stanley.

With the Falklands safe, 847 was no longer needed and that autumn its brief renaissance ended.



Falkland Islands..... 1982  
Al Faw ..... 2003

**Motto:** *Ex alto conculimus* – We strike from on high  
**Aircraft:** Westland Lynx AH Mk7  
**Engines:** 2 x 900hp Rolls Royce Gem turbines  
**Rotor Span:** 42ft (12.8m)  
**Length:** 44ft (13.4m)  
**Speed:** 180 knots  
**Weight:** 4.8t (4,875kg)  
**Crew:** 3 (2 x pilot, 1 x aircrewman)  
**Range:** 300 nautical miles or 2h 15m  
**Weapons:** General Purpose Machine Gun

Facts and figures Battle Honours

The present incarnation was born on September 1 1995 when 3 Cdo Bde's Air Squadron was stood down and 847 NAS stood up, since when it has taken part in every major operation which the RN has been committed to – the Balkans, Sierra Leone and, especially, Afghanistan and Iraq. In the latter, armed with anti-tank missiles, its Lynx mauled Saddam's armour in fierce fighting around Basra.

● An 847 Lynx lifts off near Gap-Tallard in the French Alps during mountain flying training

Picture: LA(Phot) Billy Bunting

## HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.62

### Lt Cecil William Buckley and Boatswain Henry Cooper VC

A PENINSULAR war bedevilled by deadlock. Commanders famed more for their incompetence than skill.

A daring naval armada dispatched to force the strait and terrorise shipping in an inland sea.

You are probably conjuring up images of the Dardanelles and names such as Dunbar-Nasmith and Boyle.

And you'd be right, of course. But two generations before, an almost identical campaign was waged for two months.

The sea was not the Marmara, but the Azov. The foe not Johnny Turk but the Tsar's Cossacks and Hussars.

By the spring of 1855, the war against Russia was 18 months old – and going nowhere.

The Charge of the Light Brigade and, especially, the eponymous poem had already entered the public consciousness.

The siege of Sevastopol was just that – a siege and it had been dragging on now for eight months.

Perhaps, the Allies reasoned, the Russian hold on the Crimea might be loosened if they widened the war to encompass the inland sea on the opposite side of the peninsula.

And so in late May more than four dozen men o'war and 15,000 soldiers forced the Kerch narrows – a remarkably successful operation in a war dogged by incompetency.

Once in the Sea of Azov, the warships found little opposition, but plenty of plunder. They sank steamers, merchantmen, seized provisions bound for the Crimea – corn, flour, gunpowder and coal.

And once the waters were devoid of shipping, the Allied force turned its attention to the ports of Azov, one in particular, Taganrog.

In 1855, Taganrog was arguably the most important port in the Azov, its warehouses filled with food intended for the Crimea.

Britons and Russians alike realised Taganrog's importance. The former were determined to raze it, the latter, led by their tubthumping governor Yegor Tolstoy, were determined to hold it.

On June 2 1855, a lieutenant was sent ashore to demand Taganrog's capitulation. He was rebuffed by the port's governor. "Russians," Tolstoy proclaimed, "never surrender their cities."

And so the British laid siege to Taganrog, subjecting it to rocket and howitzer fire.

The damage wrought was significant – but far

from complete, until Lt Cecil Buckley, Boatswain Henry Cooper and a handful of volunteers from the steam-driven corvette HMS Miranda rowed ashore in a gig.

And there the two men caused havoc, setting several stores, warehouses and government buildings aflame – while the Russians did everything in their power to prevent them.

It was, in the words of the official despatch, "dangerous, not to say desperate service". And it succeeded. The fires took hold and a conflagration swept through Taganrog.

The fire-raising proved more successful than the accompanying landings by troops which were driven back by Don Cossacks.

On the afternoon of June 3, the attackers withdrew. They would twice more try to take Taganrog – and twice fail. The Allies finally pulled out of the Sea of Azov that autumn – by which time Sevastopol had finally fallen.

Buckley and Cooper distinguished themselves continuously in the Sea of Azov – the officer had already set fire to stores in the Kerch Strait and continued to raid enemy positions on the shore; Cooper carried the Union Flag ashore at Kerch during an assault on a Russian fortress.

He retired to Torpoint, having received his Victoria Cross from Queen Victoria at the first investiture of the medal.

Cecil Buckley's later career was rather anticlimactic – he received a series of rebukes from the Admiralty following various disagreements with their Lordships. His health broken, he left the Service in the autumn of 1872... and was dead within two months.



## photographic memories



OUR latest random dip into the photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum takes us to Lowestoft around 1917 and two members of the Women's Royal Naval Service testing the air pressure of a British Indicator Net Type Mine. These electrically-fired mine nets were laid along the French and Belgian Coast from 1916 as a way of countering operations by coastal U-Boats. (Q 19648)

■ THIS photograph – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at [www.iwmcollections.org.uk](http://www.iwmcollections.org.uk), by emailing [photos@iwm.org.uk](mailto:photos@iwm.org.uk) or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

# Desert Lightning

IN military aviation, the fighter is generally regarded as the ultimate aircraft – it has speed, menace, kudos, the lot.

But the head of the UK Joint Combat Aircraft Team thinks the term 'fighter' does the Lightning II an injustice – it's even better than that.

Air Cdre Mark Green said: "We probably did the greatest disservice to the programme when we called the aircraft a 'fighter'."

"This aircraft is more akin to an 'air combat system' in that it is going to be equally capable at providing unrivalled support to troops on the ground in contact with the enemy as it is doing deep strike missions which might call upon its low-observable characteristics."

Lightning II also represents an evolutionary change rather than the revolutionary improvements which the UK traditionally seeks, said Air Cdre Green.

Three variants of the aircraft will be delivered to eager test teams in 2011 and 2012, of which the UK will be putting the F-35B STOVL (short take-off, vertical landing) through its paces as it prepares to replace the Harrier GR9.

The go-ahead for the first of the UK's Joint Strike Fighters was announced by Defence Secretary John Hutton in March.

Preparations by staff of the Joint Aircraft Combat Team, in both the UK and US, will be taken forward by the UK element of a Joint Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron which will start with conversion training at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida and then move to the Mojave Desert and Edwards Air Force Base.

Navy  
and  
RAF

personnel will be involved in flying and maintaining the aircraft, and UK pilots and support staff have already begun preparations for testing Lightning II, with the first maintenance crews beginning their training at Eglin late next year, closely followed by the initial cadre of operational testing pilots.

Sqdn Ldr Scott Williams, one of a handful of UK staff in the multinational JSF Programme Office team, said: "We work with the contractor [Lockheed-Martin] on a daily basis to ensure F-35 will be a highly potent and stealthy air system, a key tenet of which is affordability."

"Working with so many different partner nations in this environment is incredibly rewarding."

Notable milestones over this year will

include the first UK military test pilot to fly JSF and the first hover of the STOVL variant.

Sqdn Ldr Steve Long, who is due to fly JSF this year, said: "The aircraft is going to be extremely easy to fly, both conventionally and in the STOVL regime."

"This, combined with the unmatched level of situational awareness that the next generation sensors and cockpit provide, will mean that the pilot can focus on tactics."

"The aircraft is capable of defeating or negating every modern threat system out there while executing just about any conceivable mission for an aircraft of this size – from counter air and stealthy interdiction to close air support and surveillance/reconnaissance in environments previously inaccessible due to threats."

"It's not only a pilot's dream to fly, but it's going to be every ground or naval commander's dream to have F-35s operating in support of their mission."

Lightning II will be the sharp end of the strike carrier force based on the two Queen Elizabeth-class ships.



● Lightning II, seen above in 'converted' flight mode with STOVL doors deployed

## Just wild about the cat

MEET the Wildcat – the new name for the next-generation version of the Lynx, which has served the RN with honour for three decades.

And a new squadron has already been commissioned to help smooth the aircraft's entry into service.

Until now, the latest variant of the aircraft has been known as 'Future Lynx', or 'Flynx'.

But at a ceremony at AgustaWestland, where the helicopter is being built, the £16m aircraft was formally renamed AW 159 Lynx Wildcat (rather than plain Wildcat to avoid confusion with the wartime naval fighter...).

The MOD ordered 70 of the aircraft from the Yeovil-based firm in 2006 for £1bn, though since then the order has been trimmed to 62, 34 for the Army Air Corps, 28 for the RN.

There will be little difference between the Army and Fleet Air Arm versions, so that they can quickly switch roles.

The Wildcat is slower than Lynx (a top speed of 184mph rather than 200mph), but more powerful engines means it can carry a heavier load and it has a range a third greater than the older aircraft.

It will carry the Seaspray 7400E radar system, an improved thermal imaging device, and the tactical and aircraft systems will be displayed on screens, a major step forward from the present Lynx.

The first test flight is due in November, with the first aircraft handed over for evaluation in 2011.

Wildcat is due to enter service with the Army in 2014 and the RN the following year.

The new Fleet Air Arm squadron which will take delivery of the aircraft is 700W, the Lynx Wildcat Fielding Squadron.

The fledgling unit is already actively involved in the design and development of the Wildcat and will



● A computer-generated image of how the Lynx Wildcat will look  
Picture: AgustaWestland

form part of the combined test team, along with AgustaWestland, QinetiQ and the Rotary Wing Test Squadron at Boscombe Down, that will bring the helicopter into service.

700W will receive up to five Wildcats from January 2013 to conduct operational evaluation and the conversion training of aircrew and maintainers.



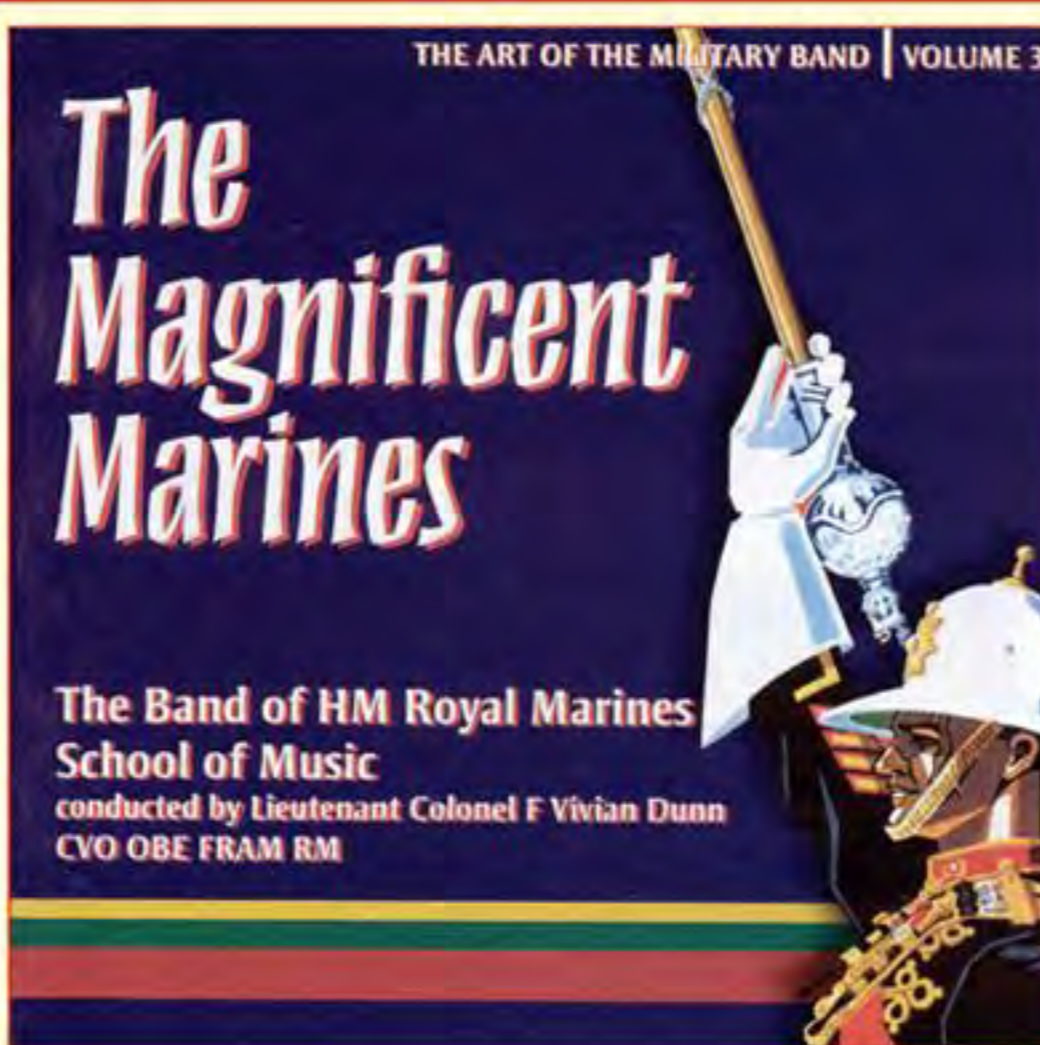
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# Leader-shipshape



**B** RITANNIA Royal Naval College – the most famous training establishment for young naval officers in the world – celebrated its centenary in 2005.

A good time to look forward to the next successful century, one might think – except that a sword of Damocles cast its shadow over the college for the following three years.

In 2004 there was a gloomy expectation that Dartmouth would close and officer training would be moved elsewhere.

The college was expensive to maintain and geographically remote, so the argument went. Perhaps also it was a victim of its own magnificence. With its world-famous façade (designed by Sir Aston Webb, who also designed the east front of Buckingham Palace) it is a piece of breathtaking Edwardian self-confidence, built for a Navy of another age.

Great was the relief when the Second Sea Lord announced in 2008 after a review of Naval Estates that BRNC Dartmouth would be retained.

Now that the threat has been removed for the foreseeable future, the college is celebrating a new lease of life and a generous investment in its facilities.

“I think having this Sword of Damocles lifted has given us the ability to plan ahead, which hasn’t been there in the past,” confirmed Cdre Jake Moores, Commodore BRNC. “Now we can look ahead and make the changes we need.”

The challenge for BRNC is to keep the best of the old, in both fabric and ethos, while turning it into a college fit for the 21st century.

The commodore said: “We have a great building here. We need to hang on to the traditions and ethos of the Royal Navy, but behind that famous façade and quarterdeck I want a modern learning environment, with supporting facilities.

As head of the Naval Core Training Stream, the commodore is responsible for HMS Raleigh; the Admiralty Interview Board; the Leadership Academies at Dartmouth and Collingwood, the University Royal Naval Units; and the 180 or so bursary students at universities across the country. He is also a governor of Welbeck College, where about a third of the pupils are RN.

His responsibilities are not unlike being a university vice-chancellor – appropriately for a training college which is competing for its young talent with the country’s universities, and which now offers its cadets degree-equivalent qualifications.

It represents a massive change in attitude on the part of the Navy over the last 40 years. Perhaps the Navy at the time mistrusted ‘intellectuals,’ but it wasn’t until the 1970s that it was even possible to enter Dartmouth with a degree. Initial officer training started at 18, and only a tiny number of engineers could go on to study – and then only at Cambridge. Now 80 per cent of the cadets have a degree.

“When I came here in 1976, the average age was 19. It’s now risen to 23½. On the plus side today’s cadets are more mature, and they have more life-experience. Most have had a gap year, or worked somewhere,” Cdre Moores said.

“They are more articulate, more mature, and more ready to speak their minds. We were too afraid to do that, at 18 or 19. It makes it more of a challenge, and more fun.”

But there are disadvantages to being an older cadet. One of the most obvious, particularly for the warfare officers, is that the pattern of their career can be out of kilter with their personal lives.

If a cadet joins at 23 they likely to be reaching the most challenging point of their career at about 30 – the very time many are looking to settle down domestically, whereas if they join at 18 or 19, they will spend most of their time at sea in their early 20s.

The commodore would like to see the average age come down. He explained: “What I would like to do is get people before they go to university. Then not only do they get paid for being here, but they don’t leave university with big debts.

“If someone joins without a degree we get them a foundation degree, then we start adding to that with honours, and master, depending what specialisations they do.”

He added: “Some young people are frightened of joining the Navy, because they think they are signing on for 22 years. In fact the return of service could be just five years, depending what career they go for.”

If the college aims to attract more people who would otherwise go to university it needs to meet their expectations in terms of facilities.

“Our accommodation is still stuck somewhere in the 1950s,” confirmed Cdr David Graham, Commander of BRNC.

He said: “University graduates expect a certain standard, from coffee bars to accommodation to gyms. That’s why we’ve embarked on a long-term programme to bring ours firmly into the 21st Century.”

“We’re going to improve the infrastructure and reinvigorate the accommodation. We’re hoping to kick this off with a complete rework of Hardy Block (the old Hawke Building) to provide 168 beds for new entry cadets with purpose-built, 24-man mess-decks, so we have better team-building.

“We’re building a new gym with cardio-vascular suites and weight training facilities and squash courts, we’re also upgrading our leadership assessment stances, obstacle course and running trail around the college.”

The ageing picket boats on the river are to be swapped for twin-screw training craft, with the first due to arrive in 2010. Then the old



“My interest in the Navy all happened when I joined the Royal Marine cadets. The great thing was that I saw plenty of the Sea Cadet side and I really enjoyed the sea part of training. I am training to be a warfare officer.”

I had an uncle in the RN and did work experience with him when I was 15, playing in the ops room in Dryad. I also went on the training ship Royalist. I went to the careers office at 16 because I knew then I wanted to join the Navy.

I didn’t go to university because the opportunity of getting a degree in the service really appealed. I knew I was going to join the RN anyway and I can top up my foundation degree with a full degree from the Open University. I think I was the youngest in the June entry, but there was such a range of ages, from 19 to 26, I didn’t feel much different from the others.

The training has been challenging at times but on the whole it’s good to look back and see what we achieved. ”

– Midshipman Sam Nolan



“I worked in industry for two years after graduating in mechanical engineering from Liverpool University. I had no naval background at all, but I joined the Reserves in 2005. I don’t know how or why – it just happened.

I loved my weekends with them so much it got to the stage where I didn’t want to go back to my job on Monday morning. I thought I’d try to get into the RN as an Air Engineer, although I thought my chances were slim as they only take 14 a year – but I got in. I took a pay cut to come to Dartmouth.

The training has been very tough. Phase One and Two were very, very hard but Phase Three was great. I don’t think everyone realises what good opportunities the RN offers, especially for graduates – certainly I was never approached by any of the Services during my time at university, and yet this is a fantastic career for engineers.

I don’t expect to be spending much time at sea because of my specialisation, but there is no doubt I will be deploying to theatre, and I’m looking forward to it. ”

– S/Lt Sarah Simmons

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# for the 21st Century

officers and 150 international cadets every year, consists of a 28-week programme over two terms, designed to provide them with the necessary skills to become effective operational leaders.

The training package was reorganised to meet current needs and from April the college reverted to taking three intakes of cadets a year, instead of six.

Multiple intakes had been introduced in 2003 to ease the flow out of the training system, but the system was making sea training more and more difficult to achieve.

"Multiple entry is inefficient," explained Lt Cdr Wright. "It breaks the learning momentum, and it meant we were running six of everything – six courses on Dartmoor instead of three, six passing-out parades, and so on."

"In terms of planning it's a nightmare but the most important reason of all for change is that sea training is unsustainable in its present guise."



"I was working in the Home Office and commuting up and down to London and doing the same thing every day. At 25 I wanted more out of life – sociability, adventure, qualifications and an exciting job."

The training here is very hard work but it's diverse. One minute you're running around with logs and the next you're in a classroom, so it's varied but good fun.

I think it makes you understand your character better and gives you the confidence to do things. I didn't realise I could run around with logs and keep up with 18-year-old guys. Now I know I can and it gives me more confidence. Dartmouth is not stuffy and not just for public school people – in fact they're probably in a minority.

I sometimes think people at Raleigh think we sit around drinking tea and then have a nice passing-out parade. I think they would be surprised if they realised how tough the training is."

– Lt Jenny Kedge

Under the new system which started in April, officers in training will be sent for their ten weeks of sea training (called Initial Fleet Time) during their second term. The first batch will be off to sea in September. For the ten weeks they are embarked they develop an understanding of how a ship and its company work, and they live alongside the junior ratings to get a better understanding of the people they will initially be commanding.

The sea training relies on having three capital ships which can each embark 48 cadets (two divisions of 24) for ten weeks. To ease the pressure on the ships, three instructors from Dartmouth will embark in each one.

Lt Cdr Wright explained: "An unintended consequence of the RN having few but more capable platforms is that the number of training billets at sea is reduced."

"We virtually never get our cadets on to frigates and destroyers because their programmes are so fluid. It's always capital platforms now, and we're talking about 48 cadets embarking into capital

ships. It's a big ask in terms of the impact on the ship.

"There is only a certain number of capital platforms available so you have to either reduce the number of cadets you embark or the length of time, or increase the number of hulls – and although I'd love it to be the latter, it's not going to happen."

The first term at Dartmouth includes an induction phase, sea sense training and the Basic Sea Survival Course. The basic leadership development is conducted within the college grounds before the cadets face the tough challenge of ABLE – the Assessed Basic Leadership Exercise, which consists of four days fending for themselves in the wilds of Dartmoor.

Lt Cdr Colin Nicklas, Enduring Leadership Officer, said: "In the first term we introduce the principles of leadership planning and skills with a series of lectures, then the cadets are set 30-minute tasks which include things like theoretical chasm crossings, casualty rescue, or bomb defusing."

"They have to think the problem through, come up with a solution, and brief their team."

After Basic Leadership Development, the cadets go to Dartmoor for the much more challenging experience of ABLE, carrying everything they need to survive for four days.

"The purpose of ABLE is to assess them in a more pressurised environment," explained Lt Cdr Nicklas.

"When they go to Dartmoor the leadership tasks we set them are much tougher – this time the rivers to be crossed are real rivers. The coaching and debriefing are withdrawn and they have to stand on their own two feet and do two tasks each."

"Mentally and physically they learn a lot about themselves. It's about being a team player and having the spirit to fight and win."

He added: "The women do exactly the same as the men. The exercise is gender-neutral, unlike Army training, which seeks to be gender-fair and make allowances in terms of weight and distance."

"Our women carry the same weight as the men, because they carry what they need to survive, and cover the same distance. They are an absolutely integral part of the team."

He continued: "What we're looking for is effective intelligence – the ability to analyse problems and solve them. The best leaders ask their team for ideas, but having got the ideas, it's up to them to brief and motivate. They can't abdicate that responsibility."

"Leadership is not part of the current ethos in many schools today and for many of our cadets whose exposure to the Armed Forces or organised groups like Scouts is very limited, it's not something they're used to."

The first term also includes CODEX, the Command Onboard Development EXercise. This takes place on the former minehunter HMS Cromer, (now renamed Hindostan) on the river below the college, and includes training in damage control and firefighting.

The big and much-feared exercise which ultimately determines whether a cadet passes out or not is MARL – the Maritime Assessed Leadership Exercise, which takes place in the second term after Initial Sea Training.

MARL is a three-and-a-half day exercise on the river using picket boats as 'warships' and whalers as 'ship's boats'. It sets a FOST-type scenario – the usual challenges of a recent hurricane, rapidly destabilising area, insurgents, medical emergencies – plus a few fiendish FOSTie curved balls thrown in.

If a cadet fails MARL it can mean the end of his or her career.

"Each team is given an order at the start of the scenario and has half an hour to read it, analyse it, come up with a plan and deliver it," explained Lt Cdr Nicklas.

"It tests their leadership, performance as team members, assessment skills, and ability to perform under pressure."



● Not the Commando Challenge but a very muddy officer cadet during the demanding MARL exercise

He added: "Our cadets often tell us they enjoyed MARL more than they feared they would – or at least the ones that pass it do."

Along with all the leadership and sea training skills the commodore is keen to ensure that the college produces well-rounded officers with good social skills.

The final two weeks of training, either just before or just after the famous MARL, consist of a 'broadening week' designed to widen their interests.

The commodore explained: "It's very important that we do other things at Dartmouth besides normal training, and we build in a week of broadening training."

"We encourage them to take an interest in music and drama – I am currently planning to start a

volunteer band – and lots of other outside interests.

"It's important for them as well-rounded officers, and also it matters that when they are hosting

a cocktail party they will have something to talk about besides the Navy."

He added: "All the feedback we get is that we are sending

out good people, ready to do their jobs. There is no doubt that Dartmouth is the *alma mater* of officer training."



"I didn't always want to join the RN, but I always wanted to fly. It was a toss-up among the three services but the recruiters did a brilliant job and I chose the Navy. The RAF only have half the number of military aircraft in the skies anyway."

The training was tough and emotional at times, certainly on Dartmoor. The grading is incredibly stressful, but it's also good fun. I would recommend it.

I think the college does a very good job in keeping the balance between tradition and the future navy. It's not easy, but they seem to get it right. The doctrine we're taught is very much future operations, but tradition and heritage are important too. There is a definite core ethos – we all know we belong to the Navy."

– OC Teddy Thurston, trainee pilot



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## Princess catches up with her ship

THE Princess Royal visited Devonport to catch up with the progress of her ship as it undergoes maintenance.

HMS Albion is close to the Princess' heart as she is the sponsor of the assault ship.

So despite time being limited, the royal guest ensured that her time was well spent as she toured the vessel and met a fair number of her ship's company.

Having been introduced to the ship's Commanding Officer, Cdr John Gardner, the Princess also met senior managers from Babcock Marine, the main contractor behind the £30m project.

First stop on the VIP's tour of the ship was the petty officers' accommodation, which has been upgraded, and the Princess met members of the ship's company who spoke of Albion's most recent deployment to West Africa.

This being Princess Anne's first visit in almost a year, she heard how the presidents of Sierra Leone and Nigeria had been hosted on board and of the community projects ashore which were helped by Albion's sailors.

The party then moved on to the junior rates' dining hall, where the Princess met members of the Royal Marines Assault Squadron, several of whom have been deployed to Afghanistan.

Up on the bridge she met Cdr Ian Atkinson and other engineers, including those from Babcock, and the royal visitor proved she had done her homework on the maintenance programme with some searching questions.

Among the enhancements to the ship is a new coat of paint on the hull, which should improve fuel efficiency as well as being more environmentally friendly.

The morning finished with a series of medal and award presentations, including a Joint Commander's Commendation to C/Sgt Dave Young RM, who dragged a wounded marine to safety under fire in Afghanistan last year.

## Ceremony to mark transfer

SENIOR Service personnel were amongst those who attended a ceremony at the Eden Project in Cornwall to mark the operational transfer of Joint Maritime Facility (JMF) St Mawgan to its headquarters in Dam Neck, Virginia.

Advanced technology and cost savings have prompted the move, which will see the majority of the 300 US Navy and 45 RN and RAF personnel transfer across the Atlantic while around 100 civilian employees will redeploy to other jobs in the UK and USA.



● Engraver Nick Hindle adds names to the wall of the Armed Forces Memorial

# Arboretum seeks world-class status

WITH visitor numbers having broken the 300,000 mark, the National Memorial Arboretum has launched an appeal to step up to a new level.

Plans have been unveiled which will transform the 150-acre estate in Staffordshire into a "world-class centre for remembrance", honouring the dead, recognising sacrifice and fostering pride in the UK.

The £8 million NMA Future Foundations Appeal will address some of the issues arising from burgeoning visitor numbers, with specific projects including the creation of a new education facility, a central space for staging major memorial services, a 'veterans pavilion' and improvements to the existing chapel.

As Prince William officially launched the appeal, he also accepted an invitation to become patron, and spent the afternoon exploring some of the 150 imaginative and thought-provoking memorials at the site, near Alrewas, as well as talking to



## Future Foundations Appeal

families of the fallen.

Other high-profile supporters of the initiative, as members of the National Appeal Council, include former Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral the Lord Boyce, actor and screenwriter Julian Fellowes, actresses Susan Hampshire and Penelope Keith and film director Lord Putnam of Queensgate.

The Arboretum opened in 2001 on former gravel and sand workings which were restored and leased out by quarrying company Lafarge on a peppercorn rent.

Numbers of visitors have now far exceeded targets – original estimates were in the order of 60,000 a year.

Much of the recent impetus came from the unveiling of the Armed Forces Memorial, a spectacular construction of Portland stone on a raised site at the heart of the Arboretum.

The memorial was officially dedicated by the Queen in October 2007 and is the nation's tribute to the 16,000 Servicemen and women who have died while on duty or as a result of an act of terrorism since 1948.

Further names are added to the walls annually (see left).

But the Arboretum is not exclusively dedicated to the military – memorials pay tribute to people from all walks of life, such as the police, emergency services and the Post Office.

The site, which now claims to be the main focus for national remembrance outside London, is designed to be a living tribute and a place of peace and reflection, with more than 50,000 trees maturing in the tranquil surroundings beside the River Tame.

It also embraces all ages, from veterans remembering fallen colleagues to schoolchildren learning about the concepts of remembrance and citizenship.

Donations to the appeal can be made through the website [www.thenma.org.uk](http://www.thenma.org.uk) or by sending cheques, payable to the National Memorial Arboretum, to The NMA Future Foundations Appeal Office, 1 Fitzgerald Road, Mortlake, London SW14 8HA.

Enquiries should be directed to [appeal@thenma.org.uk](mailto:appeal@thenma.org.uk) or by calling 01283 792333.

## Names added to walls

THE names of 67 Servicemen and women who died in the service of their country have been added to the walls of the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Every spring, over a period of around three weeks, the names of those who died on duty or in acts of terrorism are cut into the Portland stone, adding to a growing list of more than 16,000 who have been lost since 1948.

PLANS to replicate the Basra Memorial Wall at the National Memorial Arboretum have reached the design stage.

The Prime Minister and Defence Secretary made a commitment in December 2008 to bring the wall home to a fitting resting place in the UK.

And now, with British combat operations in southern Iraq drawing to a close and personnel drawing down from Basra, it has been announced that the wall will be replicated as closely as possible at the Arboretum, incorporating the marble centre-stone of the Basra wall, which is engraved with a quotation from the *Book of Wisdom*.

Work on the foundations of the wall is likely to start later this year with completion by July 2010.

# Country plans for big day

FINAL preparations are being made at dozens of venues around the UK as the countdown begins for Armed Forces Day.

Although Chatham hosts the centrepiece celebration at its historic dockyard, as reported in last month's edition, major events will also be staged at towns and cities the length and breadth of the UK.

Some of the events kick off in advance of the big day.

Weymouth, for example, stages a week-long programme between June 13 and 19, with the focus on Saturday June 13, while an open-air church service, parade and vehicle convoy will be drawing the crowds the following day.

Northampton launches its own programme of celebrations



with a 1940s Nostalgia Night on Saturday June 13, and events then run through to Armed Forces Day itself.

Wick has opted for "a musical celebration of the Armed Forces" in the centre of the town on June

16, while Blackpool is really pulling out all the stops with a packed week-long programme from June 20-28, including an illuminated tribute.

June 20 sees a 'Festival for Heroes' staged at Blenheim Palace, while Sheffield and Stirling are among the other locations to also hold their tributes on that date.

Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland has an Armed Forces and Veterans Week from June 20-27 which features a beat retreat and fireworks, while Plymouth and Southport both opt for June 22-28 for their contributions.

Chesterfield's Armed Forces Day will fall on June 24, while Cardiff has opted for Armed Forces Day itself, when visitors to the Welsh capital will be able to enjoy displays by the RAF Falcons parachute display team and the Parachute Regiment's Red Devils freefall team.

Music will be provided by the Central Band of the RAF and the Welsh Guards Band, and many of the events will be based around Bute Park.

Among the other towns and cities staging events on Saturday June 27 are Lincoln, Brighton, Grimsby and Cleethorpes, Wigan, Ryde, Cromer, Redcar, Carlisle, Chepstow, Doncaster, South Shields, Halifax, Aberdeen, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Manchester and Reading.

In the case of Manchester activities will be centred on Exchange Square and Piccadilly Gardens, and a military band will be marching through the surrounding streets.

Veterans and members of the Armed Forces will be able to take advantage of special offers in the city – an arrangement repeated in many places around the country.

The following day it is the turn of Andover, Durham, Bristol and Salisbury, among others; on that day Dudley stages a special Armed Forces Day Family Event at Himley Hall.

Portsmouth stages its tribute on Southsea Common on the



## Fly the flag

COUNCILS, businesses and homes across the country have been encouraged to show their support for the Armed Forces by flying a special flag this month.

Hundreds of councils have already promised to raise the flag – shown above – at 10.30am on Monday June 22 at the start of a week of celebrations in honour of the Services.

The design of the flag, which measures 5ft by 3ft, is based on the Union Jack. Manufacturers Piggotts are

donating £1 to the Forces Children's Trust for every £10 flag sold.

Every borough, district, city and county council in the country was offered a free flag by the MOD, with individual authorities deciding whether to sign up to receive one.

Every Government department has been encouraged to fly the flag, which should also be seen in Afghanistan, Gibraltar, the Falklands and Cyprus.

For more details on the flag see [www.piggotts.co.uk](http://www.piggotts.co.uk)

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weekend of July 4-5, while others wait even longer to do their bit – Hull, for example, holds an Armed Forces Weekend at East Park on August 1 and 2 with a list of attractions ranging from military vehicles to Eli Jolly's Hillbilly Western Re-Enactment group.

On July 8 there will be an Armed Forces and Veterans Race Day at Lingfield Park racecourse near East Grinstead in Surrey, which will feature a parade of standards.

Caernarfon takes up the torch on July 18 with a programme of events based around the North Wales town's historic castle.

Back to the main event in Chatham, and organisers have emphasised that although tickets for the celebrations in the Historic Dockyard are free, they must still be applied for in advance – and that includes holders of the dockyard's 12-month tickets – as none will be available on the day.

Ticket request forms can be downloaded from the website [www.thedockyard.co.uk](http://www.thedockyard.co.uk) which will also give the latest details of timings and participants.

See [www.armedforcesday.org.uk](http://www.armedforcesday.org.uk) for more details of all these events and more.





# 'The future of our Service'

**THESE** are the men and women of Her Majesty's Ship Raleigh formed up on the sprawling parade ground of the Torpoint establishment as they await Britain's ranking sailor.

After 42 years' service, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band is on a 'farewell tour' of the Royal Navy at home and abroad before he steps down next month.

His final visit to Torpoint came as 51 basic entry trainees completed their nine

weeks of training, passing out of Raleigh and into the bosom of the wider RN.

That achievement is marked each Friday by a parade - with a guest of honour taking the salute, in this instance the First Sea Lord.

Around 1,000 personnel were on parade - members of Raleigh's ship's company, officer cadets from Britannia and Raleigh ratings at various stages of training.

Before taking the salute, Admiral Band visited the outdoor activities centre at nearby Pier Cellars, then sailed up to Jupiter Point where trainees are given a

taste of life at sea aboard HMS Brecon, which serves as a static training ship.

"The energy, enthusiasm and motivation I saw bears testament to the high quality of people that we continue to attract into the Navy," the First Sea Lord said.

"They represent the future of our Service, join in an era of modernisation and have much to look forward to."

If that's whetted your appetite to visit Raleigh, well you'll be pleased to know that next month the base is throwing its gates open to allow the public in.

The base is holding an open afternoon and evening - mixed with various

displays, demonstrations, plus musical performances.

Although it's often regarded as the RN's new-entry school for ratings, Raleigh's also home to the Submarine School, Logistics School, Naval Military Training (the team who teach sailors and Royal Marines the art of board and search).

Visitors will be able to tour the Submarine School (which features a bomb shop for practising loading and removing torpedoes), watch cookery demonstrations by trainee and experienced RN chefs, sorry logisticians (catering services (preparation)), and witness sea survival

and fire-fighting drills.

The base's police dogs will be action, as will Raleigh's field gunners and physical training instructors.

The open day, Thursday July 23, will close with a ceremonial sunset performed by the Band Her Majesty's Royal Marines Plymouth.

Admission is free but under 14s must be accompanied by adults and parking space on the base is limited. Visitors can bring their own food or use one of the various food stalls on site. All baggage will be subject to a search.

Picture: LA(Phot) Steve Johncock, FRPU West



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● Logs Louis and Emma Whitfield together at HMS Raleigh  
Picture: Dave Sherfield

## Welcome aboard, bro'

LOGS EMMA Whitfield was at HMS Raleigh to see her younger brother Louis follow in her footsteps as a Naval logisticians. Logs Louis Whitfield signed up for life at sea some seven years after his sister began her Naval career, and has just finished his apprenticeship at the Defence Maritime Logistics School. His departure from his apprenticeship overlapped with his sister's arrival in preparation for promotion. Emma's seven-year career has so far seen her serve in four RN ships, including her

current tour in HMS Ark Royal, and explore the globe from the Falklands Islands to the USA. She said: "Louis joining up has given me the extra push to work towards my promotion. "I want to set him a good example. "I love the fact that I've got a family member in the Fleet and I'm pleased that he has chosen to follow in my footsteps. "I've had a great time so far. I've seen a lot of the world and met some brilliant people." An example that Louis wishes to follow during his career with the Senior Service.

# Ships take the desert by storm

A MEETING one night with members of 16th Royal Artillery Regiment 14th Brigade resulted in a desert marathon for five matelots from the Navy's C-RAM group (Counter Rocket Artillery and Mortar) who man, maintain and repair the Phalanx guns that protect Basra.

WO2 Leni Leonard first met his compatriots at RAF North Luffenham while under training, where he heard about their entry of a five-man team in the Military Heavy category of the Bataan Memorial Death March.

He confessed: "Whilst not wishing to let the Army get a step ahead of the RN on our first encounter, I declared over a cold beer that we would also enter the Death March, and quickly volunteered five members of the C-RAM team.

"It was not until later that we all realised what we were going to be doing - namely a 26.2-mile desert marathon in Texas that started in just over four weeks..."

A week after taking up the challenge, the men - WO Leni Leonard, Lt Matt Ryder, CPO Daisy May, LET Tugg Wilson and LET Digger Hill - flew to the US to continue their C-RAM training.

Good intentions for marathon training were lost amid the artillery training, although the team did manage a couple of five-mile runs



● Lt Matt Ryder, WO2 'Leni' Leonard, CPO 'Daisy' May may be ruing the cold-beer rivalry that brought them to the Bataan Memorial Death March

in the few weeks before the big day.

Their pre-race preparations were not aided by a 1,000-mile plane journey that landed just six hours before they had to be at race control for the official preparations for the race.

Leni said: "Needless to say we were all tired, hungry and unprepared for what lay ahead.

"The Army, who had arrived from the UK in plenty of time, picked us all up at the airport and got us back to barracks where we managed to get some sleep before we were woken at three to head off."

The race began at 7am, but the racers arrived at 4am to attend the ceremonies of remembrance for those that lost their lives during the original Bataan March in World War 2.

After the first six miles, the Naval five split into two groups, when Tugg and Digger could not keep up with the 'ten-minute run, ten-minute walk' pace.

The desert-bound submariner added: "So with the ensign from the now-decommissioned submarine HMS Superb flying high from my camelback, we carried on into the dusty trails.

"At mile eight, the Army boys we are working with were lining the road in front of us cheering us on and handing out drinks of Gatorade and orange slices, which helped us to push on for the five-mile climb up ahead before we went around the base of what felt like a mountain."

Blisters started to appear on the men's feet, but Leni said: "You could stop at the numerous first

aid posts to be treated, but we decided to keep going, mainly to make sure that the Army team didn't get in front of us - but also in remembrance of the WW2 Bataan heroes that could not stop, as if they did they were shot."

The last miles proved particularly tough, as described by CPO Daisy May: "Up to the 20-mile point we were distracted from the discomfort by some truly spectacular views stretching as far as the eye could see.

"The hardest part was the following 6.2 miles. Beginning with a trudge through an area known as the sandpit. This consists of approximately 1,000 yards through ankle-deep soft sand, followed by a stretch of track that just doesn't seem to end and a final three miles where the reserves of energy are drained."

However the sight of another runner kept the men motivated to continue.

Leni said: "Even here there are heroes as a one-legged amputee on crutches made his way through. He like many other amputees attend this march and complete the full 26.2 miles themselves, so how could we feel tired and worn out - we had to, and were going to, finish.

"As we crossed the finish line we were cheered on by both the RN C-RAM and the Army boys who weren't competing.

"We shook the hands of the last few Bataan heroes who sat quietly in tears and called us the new heroes..."

Oh, and a final note, honour is intact - yes, the Navy did beat the Army team.



## Stan'tastic voyages

CULDROSE-based pilot Lt Cdr Stan Burgess (pictured above) has notched up 7,000 flying hours in helicopters. He joined the Navy in 1976, and has flown a variety of rotorcraft around the world.

His initial time in the air began with 819 NAS flying Sea King Mk1s in SAR and ASW roles, where he carried out the first deck landing on HMS Invincible during her final stages of build in Barrow; between 819 and 826 NAS he flew from Ark Royal, Hermes, Bulwark and Blake before moving on to 705 NAS flying Gazelles, then to 810 NAS.

On an exchange appointment, Stan spent two years serving with Helicopter Squadron 817 of the Royal Australian Navy, before returning to the UK and 706 NAS, 826 C Flight; then converted to the Wessex MkIV, he joined No.32 The Royal Squadron and for three years was personal pilot to the Prince of Wales.

Stan returned to 705 NAS, flying Squirrels, as CO; then moved back to RNAS Culdrose to 771 NAS, then despite having a period with a nominal non-flying role as OIC of the Sea King Simulator, he stayed current as an instructor with 771 NAS. Now back with 771 NAS in his final Service assignment, he had clocked up the impressive total of 7,000 flying hours.

## news in brief

■ **TOP COOKIN':** POLogs(CS) Andy Bailey from submarine HMS Tireless has been named the top chef in the Armed Forces.

His win was announced at the Armed Service catering event, the Cost Sector Awards.

Andy credited his success to his team and added that if the crew didn't like the food, he'd get 130 critics lambasting him. Apparently the boat crew appreciated good home cooking while away at sea, particularly cherishing steak and kidney pudding and the old favourite cheesy-hammy-eggy.

■ **MORE** chefery from HMS Caledonia who won awards at the Scottish Defence Salon Culinaire.

Caledonia's Wardroom head chef John Gow and Senior Rates supervising steward Vincent Greech carried off (respectively) third prize in the Senior Chef of the Year competition and first place in the afternoon teacakes and pastries category.

■ **ROYAL** Marine bandsman Msn Alice Quayle has won the 2009 Cassel Prize for her solo performance.

The bassoon player with the RM School of Music in Portsmouth competed against 40 other trainees at the School to scoop the top prize.

■ **NAVIGATOR** Lt Marc Taylor of HMS Ramsey has been presented with the Carl Zeiss Award from HMS Collingwood.

■ **ANOTHER** award to Lt Cdr John Scivier who has been recognised by the Institute of Leadership and Management with an Award for Excellence for his transition from CO of HMS Victory to an operational role as Senior Air Traffic Controller of Plymouth Military Radar.



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## For the other 364 days of the year...

## Scarce glory

CHANGES in the age limit for Senior Upper Yardmen is bringing to light new recognition for officers who have served through the ranks.

Lt Cdr Steve Henaghen (pictured right), currently serving on exchange to the Royal Netherlands Navy in Den Helder as an anti-air warfare specialist, is believed to be one of only two serving officers to be presented with a clasp to the Long Service and Good Conduct medal.

From his initial entry at HMS Raleigh in September 1977, through his 32 years service Steve can claim to have held every rank and rate between junior seaman and lieutenant commander (although he missed collecting midshipman during his path). Promoted to Warrant Officer in 1999, he was one of the first to take advantage of the rising age limit for Senior Upper Yardmen.

This means that he and one other compatriot from that Senior Upper Yardmen course are thought to be the only serving officers to meet the stringent qualifying criteria of 22 years



service as a rating followed by the additional qualifying time of eight years as an officer.

Steve obviously enjoyed the celebration of his Naval career at the British ambassador's residence at The Hague, and admits: "To be fair, I don't normally do much fuss. I would have rung up the Chief Writer and asked him to just give it to me if I'd been given the option in advance.

"But I really enjoyed the day. Everyone really put themselves out for me. It was quite phenomenal."

# 30 years of dark blue at Lourdes

THE MEN and women of the Senior Service marked a special anniversary at Lourdes this year – the Navy's 30th year as part of the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT).

From small beginnings at HMS Raleigh in 1979, the volunteer helpers from the RN have swelled to well-established groups at Plymouth, Portsmouth and Faslane.

This year the 16 serving personnel from the Royal Navy were bolstered by two extra helpers partway through the week, when the Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Alan Massey and his Command Warrant Officer WO Andy Rainey arrived to help for two days.

This was the first time that a Second Sea Lord has joined the group and seen at first hand the support given to the 14 RN dependant children with disabilities or learning disabilities who travelled to Lourdes for the April week.

Cdr Phil Sparke, chairman of the HCPT RN, said: "2SL and WO Rainey wasted no time in rolling up their sleeves and joining in with the day-to-day business of pushing wheelchairs and chopping up food, helping the children to do things that most of us are able to do without thinking."

WO1 (WS) TSM Alex Orr added: "This was my tenth year going to Lourdes and the seventh as the group leader."

"It never ceases to amaze me at all the joy this opportunity brings to the children that we take away, but it is not just the children that get the joy – the helpers also get a lot from it as it taps into areas they never knew they had within them, and skill they would otherwise never realise they had."

"It is a lot of hard work to fund-raise and get to know the children throughout the year, but believe me I would not be going as long as I have if I did not get a lot of satisfaction and joy from it."

The week away offers many of the children a trip of a lifetime, and a welcome break for both them and their carers from home life.

Gary, the son of WO2 MEA Michael Ferriday, was one of the children who visited Lourdes for the week's events. His father said: "If it wasn't for the wonderful RN volunteers these special needs children and their siblings would never get an opportunity to experience the fun and excitement that they have whilst away at Lourdes."

"Both children and carers alike bring home such wonderful memories and it also gives parents such as ourselves a much-needed break which we appreciate."

WO2 Ferriday added: "On behalf of Gary and ourselves, my



wife Marilyn and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Alex and the team, and hope this tradition can continue for many years to come."

Before leaving, Vice Admiral Massey looked back on his experience with the HCPT helpers and children saying: "It was a privilege to witness at close hand the wonderful things that HCPT has achieved with so many children over the years, and it was impossible for us not to be swept along by the spirit and ethos of the whole uplifting gathering."

"I was very impressed by the dedication and caring professionalism of the group leaders and all the helpers, and it is wonderful to see so many junior and senior rates driving HCPT activities with real gusto."

He added: "Their commitment, attention and loving interest in the children was quite obvious to see and heartwarming to witness."

"There can surely be no doubt as to the good that this week brings to all the participants and I can now appreciate why it is that the helpers are prepared to commit so much to this event year after year."

The week proved a great success for all involved, and work is already under way planning for next year's event – April 4 to 11 2010.

Any Naval personnel who wish to know more about the organisation, as a helper or for a child, should contact John Hill, the secretary of HCPT RN at [hillj@a.dii.mod.uk](mailto:hillj@a.dii.mod.uk).

● (clockwise from 12 o'clock) PO Naval Nurse Anna Snell (DMTC), Harry North, PO Naval Nurse Louise Mason (RNH Gibraltar), Bethany Price and Mairead Hayes

● CPOAEA Shane Hulks (854 NAS), Vice Adm Alan Massey (2SL) and WO1 SM Alex Orr (HMS Drake Tactical Systems Staff)



● Mid Scott Hanlon RNR, Alice Low and CPO Shane Hulks



● MAA Eileen Harvey, Philippa Moreton, PONN Louisa Mason, Mairead Hayes, PONN Anna Snell



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● Flt Sgt Andy Heffer (RAF Brize Norton) with Gary Farriday

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# Fighting

## THESE are the waters off Cape Wrath.

In springtime. Yes, we know it should be blowing a hoolie. The skies should be leaden, the seas mountainous.

But no. And this is Her Majesty's Ship Cornwall manoeuvring at speed (28kts to be precise) during gunnery trials off the Scottish range (you might just have seen the photograph of her 4.5in main gun in action on our cover...).

It's been a long road to Cape Wrath for Cornwall (and we're not talking about the 755 miles from Devonport to the north-west tip of Scotland).

No it's taken a good five months of solid training:

Two months of Operational Sea Training with those less-than-forgiving chaps from FOST: that's eight weeks of shooting down air attacks, sinking submarines, stopping floods, bombarding troops ashore, fighting galley fires, thwarting terrorist attacks, helicopters crashing on deck, providing humanitarian and disaster relief, plus Rocky and Blade - Avon and Somerset Police's trained anti-firearms dogs (they don't like guns, in particular SA80s brandished by Cornwall's upper-deck sentries).

Four weeks of maintenance after all that running around.

A final test of her Seawolf anti-air missile system in the Western Approaches: two towed targets were flown at the Type 22 frigate, one after the other. Both were destroyed: the first by the forward system, the second splashed by a missile from the aft launcher.

Now it would be churlish if we ignored the fact that the ship has had an ill-starred recent history. But a lot has changed in

the past two years. In the RN. Aboard Cornwall.

So let's not pore over the past. Or, as her Commanding Officer Cdr Johnny Ley says forcefully:

**"Cornwall is back. Get used to it."**

Job done, Cornwall could deploy.

Her mission? To safeguard the seas, the Mediterranean principally, Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2), a long-standing commitment for the Royal Navy.



"It's always a wrench to leave our families, but after all the training and preparations we're ready to get on and do the job," says WO1 Trev Trevarthen, a Cornish man by birth as well as by appointment and veteran of many a deployment. Today he's the most senior rating aboard Cornwall, her Executive Warrant Officer.

"For a lot of our young sailors, it is their first deployment and having proved themselves beyond doubt alongside the older hands during Operational Sea Training, they've really earned their place on an operational warship, deployed and on task."

The first stop for old hands and new was but a short hop from Devonport: Brest. It was there that the Type 22 formally relieved the RN's previous representative with the NATO force, HMS St Albans. As the force's distinctive blue and white banner was lowered on St Albans... so it was raised on the other side of the jetty by Cornwall. It requires more than a quick raising-lowering of flags to join an international task group, of course.

There was a short but comprehensive handover between the two RN vessels, including some useful tips on the peculiarities of working in such a diverse force - Greek, Italian, Spanish and Turkish - of proud and established navies.

(We're also told that old shipmates on the two RN frigates swapped tall stories in French hostels as though they had never been apart, although we find it hard to believe.)

**From Brest, the group made for the Minches and Hebrides and Exercise Joint Warrior, the regular test of air-sea-land forces off Scotland's north-west coast.**

For two weeks, these normally-quiet waters teemed with warships from every nation and of every kind: Danish minesweepers, British aircraft carriers (carrier singular, actually, HMS Illustrious fresh from celebratory duties in London), French attack submarines and German frigates.

It is what the RN calls 'Tier 2' training: the ability of fully-trained ships to act and fight as a group.

With two other ships as well as the Cornwall new to the group, SNMG2 was here to prove itself as a cohesive fighting force before going back into the Mediterranean.

It formed the core of a Multi-National Force (the good guys, naturally) trying to ensure peace and stability between Caledonia and Dragonia.

Except that Caledonia and Dragonia didn't seem that keen on peace.

Cornwall and her cohorts were soon fighting off Hawk jets flying at deck-level while the ship manoeuvred at 28 knots in the narrows between Hebridean islands, engaging terrorists on jet skis and playing cat and mouse with submarines trying to sneak among the task group.



● Clockwise from above... The NATO standard is lowered aboard HMS St Albans as she hands over task force duties to HMS Cornwall; a Seawolf leaves its launcher on Cornwall to intercept a target drone in the Channel; the Fighting 99's sea boat races towards mother during Minigun and machine-gun shoots; and Cornwall jinks at speed during a live gunnery serial off the ranges at Cape Wrath



# torque

Once again, Cornwall fired live ammunition, shelling the range at Cape Wrath with her 4.5in gun while travelling and manoeuvring at speed with unerring accuracy that, in the words of the army naval gunfire liaison officer, "hadn't been seen in years".

So it's hardly surprising then that, as the NATO work begins in earnest, says weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Alex Kendrick, "confidence is high, and it is a real confidence based on hard work, hard training and hard-won experience."

So maybe it's time to drop the soubriquet we and others have used for so long: the ice-cream frigate (after her F99 pennant number). Indeed, can you still buy Flake 99s in 2009? (Yes you can - Ed.)

No, the men and women of Her Majesty's Ship Cornwall prefer to be known collectively now as the Fighting 99.

"We have trained hard, proved our weapons and got on task in better shape than ever: our regeneration for this NATO deployment has been a real success, all down to the commitment and effort of Cornwall's ship's company," Cdr Ley adds.

**"HMS Cornwall in 2009 is in peak condition."**

"We are now ready to get on with the job."

And what of the ship she has replaced on NATO duties?

Well, we last caught up with HMS St Albans in Israel enjoying the hospitality of Haifa and the sights of Jerusalem.

Since then she's left the cradle of civilisation, moving first to the realm of the ancients and Thessaloniki (or Thessalonica or even Salonica if you prefer) in Greece.

The Mediterranean sun permitted an open-air celebration for the NATO sailors as the jetty

in the historic port was devoted to a 'pot luck party'.

The 'pot luck' in the title referred to the dishes prepared by the respective ships' galleys, eg pasta and pizza (Italy), ribs (America), curry (UK, obviously...).

But NATO deployments aren't all curry and pasta. No, the ME department found most of its time in Greece fixing St Albans' steering gear. (Faulty steering, we're told, is bad. Fixing it is good.)

And it was fixed. For between Thessaloniki and the force's next stop there's a lot of sea - 2,000 miles (ish) of sea to be more accurate - to cover.

The group conducted two weeks of 'surge operations' - a concerted effort to monitor shipping for any illegal activities.

St Albans' last stop in the Med was the Costa del Sol and the port of Malaga.

The ships timed things perfectly: the city was celebrating a *feria*, a weekend of carnival and fiesta. We have a sneaking feeling the sailors may have joined in festivities...

As well as being the Costa del Sol, it's also the Costa del Golf (apparently).

The European ships pooled resources to take on their American counterparts from the USS Laboon... and promptly regained the Ryder Cup for Europe.

Meanwhile, back on the Type 23... With southern Spain famous for its large expat community, St Albans played host to a local branch of the Royal British Legion.

And that was Malaga done. So on to Brest and handing over to HMS Cornwall.

The Saint is now on exercise in the Baltic, a deployment which sees her visiting St Petersburg among other ports in the region.



pictures: la(photos) simmo simpson and pete smith, frpu east

# Just time for another collision...

# ... then we'll stop for lunch



**FIVE fires and four collisions in one day – not a record of which a submarine commander would be particularly proud.**

But sometimes the officer could be very pleased indeed, depending on how his men handled the problems.

Because this mayhem is manufactured, and the gremlins come in the shape of Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) seariders.

Since 2007, all Naval training, with the exception of aviation, has come under FOST, and falls into one of four streams; core, surface, Royal Marine and submarines.

A valuable part of the Operational Sea Training (OST) process carried out by the FOST(SM) team is the Sea Safety phase which culminates with a safety assessment day to see if the boat has proved itself ready to continue with OST. It also checks that the crew has the ability

to deal with peacetime incidents safely.

During the day, staff change from mentors and advisors to become assessors – this is an exam.

The assessment process involves FOST Director North (DN), his FOST(SM) Heads of Department (HoDs) and safety team spending a day on board after a week of safety training to assess every aspect of the firefighting and damage control organisation.

One such recent FOST(SM) assessment was recorded exclusively for *Navy News*...

0600, and FOSTies breakfast in the hotel near embarkation point, ready for an 0700 boat transfer. With the weather looking better than the previous night had suggested, the go-ahead is given



for an 0800 start.

Time on the transfer boat is used to brief FOST seariders on the day's programme and safety implications, including how to revert to a safe line-up of valves and systems should they be required in emergency.

The Casing Officer arrives on the boat to give his safety brief and check lifejackets and steaming boots, after which the team move on to the submarine, where they are met by the CO.

The 'Safeguard Rule' is now in force – for realism, exercise announcements are not preceded by "For exercise, for exercise, for exercise!" but real emergencies will be preceded by the mantra "Safeguard".

Halfway through the submarine visitor health and safety brief the general alarm is raised – "Fire, fire, fire – fire in the Coxswain's Office!" The assessment has started.

On dealing with the 'fire', the boat gives a Material State Brief (with breakfast rolls) and a relatively calm surface transit to the dive position follows, closely observed by FOST staff in the Control Room.

But, this being assessment day, nothing stays quiet for too long. The FOST Warfare Commander makes a break for the bridge – "Shut bulkhead doors, shut all hatches, brace, brace, brace!" – a surface collision happens forward; electrical failures, air and hydraulic bursts test the crew's reactions.

FOST staff are positioned in key areas at the scene of the incidents, and FOST HoDs monitor their submarine equivalents while the Director prowls the boat taking in the overall picture from all angles, watching and questioning the crew – it will be his decision whether the submarine crew have sufficient skills to continue with OST.

Incidents are taken from a vast library of FOST serials, kept current by the staff and briefed and checked and then approved by the various authorities they might impact on before any valve or electrical breaker is even touched.

Assessments tend to differ, not only to ensure all procedures are checked but also to vary it for the FOST team, who do this day in, day out throughout the year.

Navigation, comms, medical, logistical and engineering checks continue between incidents; logistical checks, for example, may look at planesman duties, medical assistance, supply of mission-critical incident repair store items – and galley operations; even hardened FOSTies have to eat.

The bad times keep on rolling. Just after the submarine dives, a loud bang is heard outside the hull – they have hit a submerged container. This being assessment day, it causes a fire in the weapons stowage compartment amongst the torpedoes, which is quickly tackled by the Attack Breathing Apparatus team.

Engineers aft are busy with a contamination problem and

another minor fire.

FOST staff use a smoke generator to add a sense of realism and urgency; the CPO(SSM), away from his duties as Sonar Chief, is the support party leader and directs his team loudly over the noise of the emergency breathing system everyone is wearing. The fire is doused.

The rest of the crew continues with damage control checks to ensure no other incidents have emerged unnoticed while the submarine returns to periscope depth to vent smoke. As ventilation gets under way the FOST team compares notes and discusses the crew's actions, and recharges the smoke generator.

With the boat ventilating, the Director finds the time to put on an 'Emergency Go Deep' and a second minor collision before lunch.

FOST staff and HoDs discuss the morning's progress over lunch and brief the forthcoming evolutions in detail, while the Director asks individual staff members their views on where the boat stands before forming his own opinion, chatting with the boat's CO about how it has been going.

After lunch the tempo increases with a multiple damage scenario starting with a collision, fire, air bursts and a hydraulic burst, plus an electrical failure for good measure, testing men to the full and allowing FOST staff to see different faces after the watch change.

The final evolution involves a major incident; a galley fire with casualties, with some lead characters 'removed' to gauge onboard organisation.

After the final 'multi' the FOST team muster for a debrief of events along with the FOST HoDs and the Director to finalise the grading and crew's performance.

The Director then briefs the CO on how his boat fared. FOST training reports will be written up so sections can address shortcomings and learn for the future.

After what seems an age to the now quite exhausted crew, the transfer vessel approaches the submarine and the FOST staff start their long journey home.

But be assured – sooner or later they will be back.



● Clockwise from top: the FOSTies' transfer boat approaches the submarine; a smoke machine is activated for extra authenticity; an Attack Breathing Apparatus team tackle a fire in the galley; the Executive Officer and Navigating Officer look on from the bridge of the submarine; damage control HQ





# I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth

## **T**HE propeller on the Swordfish turned furiously.

The frame of the flimsy aircraft jerked and wavered, assailed by the wind.

And at this point the torpedo bomber was still fixed firmly to the rich icing which enveloped the cake celebrating the centenary of Naval aviation.

The buffeting the model Swordfish received was an indication that the Gods did not smile particularly kindly on the Fleet Air Arm's 100th birthday.

It was grey. Sometimes light grey. Sometimes middling. Sometimes dark. Sometimes there was a bit of rain too.

And so it was that out of the murk, somewhere over the four square brick chimneys of Greenwich Power Station, that a few bright lights appeared, growing brighter, ever closer.

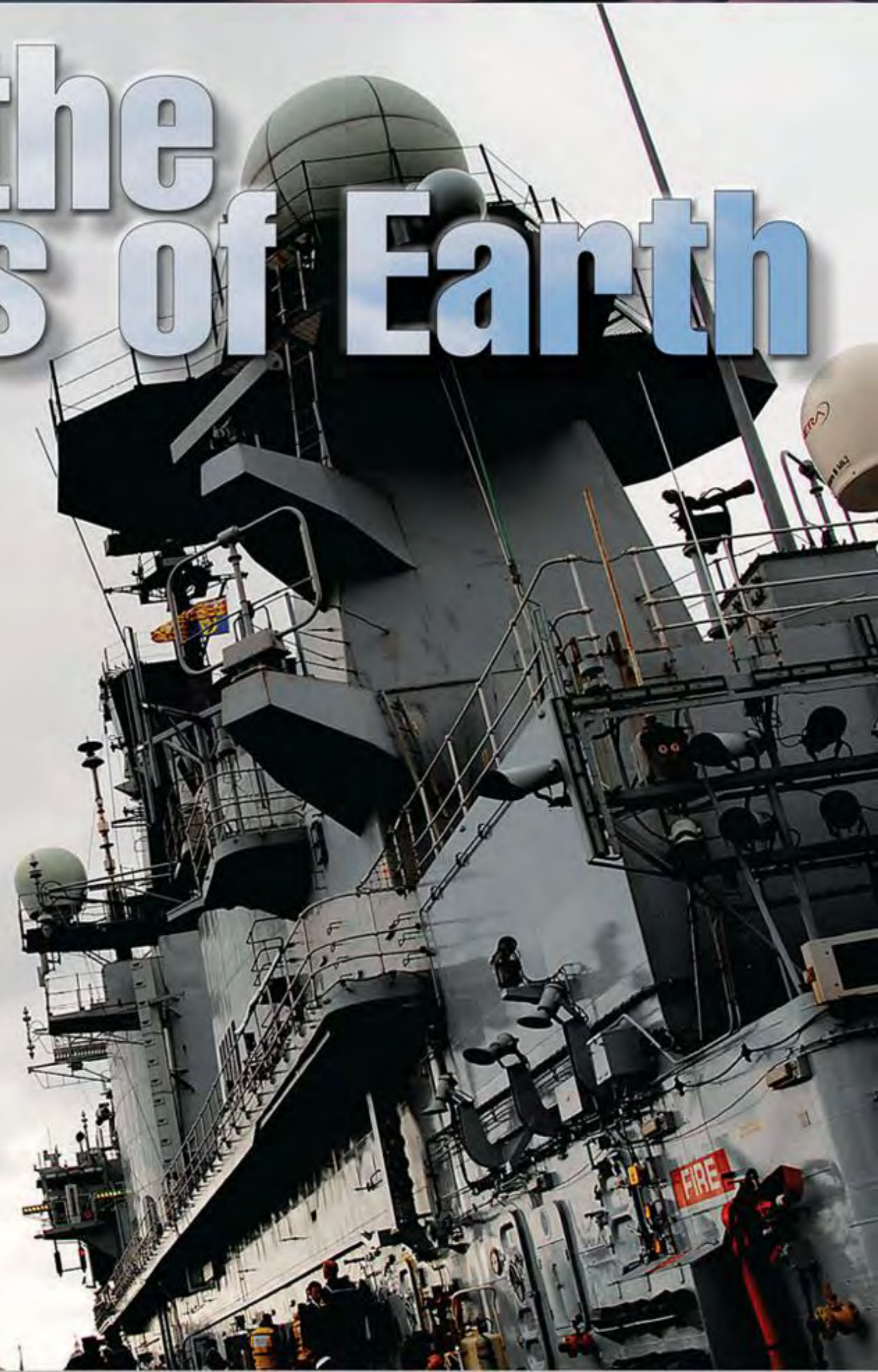
In Balbo formation – named for the pioneering Italian aviator (and Fascist, but we prefer to remember him for the former...) – four indistinct 'blobs' of helicopters in the London sky.

Four Merlins of 824 Naval Air Squadron led the way, guided by Lt Cdr Mike Pamphilon – one of the Fleet Air Arm's most experienced aviators with more than 5,000 flying hours to his credit.

Then a true mixiblob: a 771 NAS Search and Rescue Sea King, accompanied by two Culdrose shipmates, airborne surveillance and reconnaissance Sea King Mk7s with their trademark radar 'bags' lowered.

Behind the trusty Sea Kings, four Lynx from 702 NAS at Yeovilton with Lt Dave Lilly, this year's team leader of the Black Cats display team, guiding the way.

Continued on page 24





● Honour the fallen... (Above) The Guard of Honour outside St Paul's Cathedral for the memorial service and (below) the head of the Fleet Air Arm Rear Admiral Simon Charlier, Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, the Duke of York and HMS Illustrious' CO Capt Ben Key salute the 6,749 naval aviators who have made the ultimate sacrifice



● Prince Charles chats (above) with actress Kristin Scott Thomas – daughter of a Fleet Air Arm aviator – and (below) with Henry Allingham, Britain's oldest airman and our last living link with the Royal Naval Air Service



# ...and touched

Continued from page 23

Another Balbo blob to finish the rotary wing: more Yeovilton fliers, four Jungly Sea Kings from 845, 846 and 848 NAS, and a solitary Lynx Mk7 from their Commando Helicopter Force comrades in 847 NAS.

At 12pm precisely they were overhead, all but drowning out the commentary of Illustrious' Commander Air, Cdr Mark Deller, leaving just a few choice soundbites in the audience's ears.

*A mixblob of helicopters... Everyone loves a Lynx... Merlin – the next best thing to a Playstation... (Or perhaps rather better when it comes to hunting submarines...)*

And then they were gone, jinking above the meandering course of the capital's great artery before vanishing once more into the gloom somewhere over the centre.

Two minutes later, four Jetstreams of 750 NAS droned overhead before, bang on 12.03 as planned, Hawks from the Standards Flight at Yeovilton brought up the rear. RN Hawks, in RN blue that is. "Don't confuse them with other Hawks you might have seen over London," Cdr Deller advised his audience.

Now we know you're going to say: "What, no Harriers?"

What, no Harriers? No, no Harriers. It is the iconic naval aircraft of the past three decades, to be sure.

Icon or not, it cannot fly over London for safety reasons (it possesses a single – admittedly very powerful – engine). There was at least one jump jet parked on Illustrious' flight deck, lest we forget the fabled aircraft.

There were not many naval aircraft in the skies of London – 25 in all, one eighth of the Fleet Air Arm's strength.

There were not many naval aircraft in the skies of London because most were in foreign skies: on the day of its birthday, four fifths of the Fleet Air Arm's front-line squadrons were deployed overseas.

"While we celebrate today, it is business as usual for the Royal Navy around the world, as much inland as at sea, especially in Afghanistan," said Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope.

"The Fleet Air Arm has never been in greater demand. It proves its utility, its versatility and its consistent ability to get the job done."

To echo those sentiments, half a world away 820 NAS could be found on its own stomping ground of Sembawang in Singapore, visiting with HMS Bulwark and RFA Wave Ruler as part of the Taurus task group.

Only that week, the Lynx of 847 NAS returned to Yeovilton from Afghanistan. Their Sea King comrades of 845 and 846 NAS remain committed on a daily basis in the skies of Helmand and Kandahar.

There the men and women of the Commando Helicopter Force paused front-line operations briefly to reflect on their achievements and those by their predecessors, before cutting a cake in their hangar at Kandahar.

"Men and women of the Fleet Air Arm continue to serve their country with distinction, continue the finest traditions of their forebears, demonstrating their 'can do' ethos on a daily basis in this most demanding environment," Col John McCardle RM – former CO of CHF, now in charge of all British helicopters in Afghanistan – told the aviators and ground crew.

Afghanistan is far from the Fleet Air Arm's current front-line service...

A Merlin of 829 NAS safeguards the oil platforms of Iraq from HMS Richmond, while the 'baggers' of 857 NAS provide airborne security for the Taurus force across the Indian Ocean.

On the other side of the world, the Lynx crew of 815 NAS were enjoying a brief rest with HMS Manchester in Rio, while their squadron comrades were flying from HMS St Albans in the Med and HMS Cornwall in home waters.

**Such commitments are typical, routine dare we say. But never too routine.**

Just one short of 6,750 people in the Fleet Air Arm and its Great War predecessor, the Royal Naval Air Service, have made the ultimate sacrifice in war and peace.

"Aviation is a challenging business," the Duke of York – Commodore in Chief of the Fleet Air Arm – assured guests aboard Illustrious.

"It is an extremely challenging business at sea, so that is why I can say that naval aviators have given incredible service."

"The ability of the Fleet Air Arm has always come to the fore. It has – and will continue to have – an illustrious history and that goes for the pilots, observers, engineers and everyone who gets us in the air."

Few aboard Illustrious needed to be reminded of the sacrifices, not least veterans of some of the finest feats not merely in Fleet Air Arm history, but British history.

But eavesdropping on interviews naval veterans gave to the general media, it was quite clear that words such as 'Taranto', 'Channel Dash', 'Bismarck chase' – deeds writ as large in Fleet Air Arm history as the Battle of Britain or Dambusters raid in RAF annals – meant little, if anything to those posing the questions.

The stories, if you can glibly call them that, of John Moffat's crippling of the Bismarck, or Edgar Lee's forlorn efforts to halt Hitler's fleet as far superior enemy aircraft swarmed around his Swordfish, still have the power to impress and move after more than six decades.

"A battleship at 1,500 yards with 500 guns firing at you looks bloody frightening," said Lt Cdr Lee, today the last Fleet Air Arm survivor of the Channel Dash (there were only five in 1942...).

Yet to focus on Taranto, or the Channel Dash, is to overlook the sacrifices made on a daily basis in training, on exercises, in battle.

"Of my original 825 Squadron comrades, just four survived the war," Lt Cdr Lee said starkly.

"Good luck' sums up my time as a flier. Providing you survived you made the best friends in your life and enjoyed the greatest comradeship."





# the face of God

As proved when he joined Mr Moffat and Capt Eric 'Winkle' Brown - Britain's greatest test pilot - in a champagne toast to naval aviators.

"I think this celebration is a fine gesture by today's Royal Navy - they have pushed the boat out for the veterans," said Lt Cdr Lee.

It is understandable, perhaps, that the focus at such events is on those who fly, the aces, the observers, the aircrewmembers, the gunners, so it's worth reminding people that those magnificent men (and women) in their flying machines count for nothing without magnificent men (and women) on the ground (or steel leviathan) looking after them.

"We cannot work without them and they cannot work without us," Lt Anna Harvey, *Illustrious*' deputy air engineer officer, explained succinctly. "It's a chicken and egg situation."

"It's nice for people to mention us. People remember the aviators, but air engineers and mechanics have been lost in battle as well."

**It is easy at these events to remember the past yet forget the future.**

Celebrate, yes. Commemorate, most definitely. But do not forget the future.

"We should not take our eye off the ball and assume that there will no requirement for naval aircraft in the future."

"It's not something you can just pull out of your back pocket. It takes a long time to build up that expertise."

And this from a former RAF man...

David Morgan downed four Argentine aircraft - two helicopters, two Skyhawks - in his 800 NAS Sea Harrier over the Falklands.

"The Fleet Air Arm came back from the Falklands to huge acclaim - quite rightly so given the huge numbers of Argentine aircraft it faced. We were outnumbered, perhaps by ten to one."

"The emphasis since has been on land-based war."

David Morgan is one of the 'few', to borrow a distinction from an earlier aerial battle, immortalised by Brian Hanrahan's commentary "I counted them all out and I counted them all back."

It was fitting that the veteran broadcaster should be chosen to report on the Fleet Air Arm's 100th birthday.

"Should the Royal Navy still be in the business of aircraft carriers?" he asked David Morgan.

The Falklands, the former Harrier pilot reminded him, were a salutary lesson.

"We could not have carried out that operation, retaken the islands without carriers, without those aircraft."

**It is a lesson we should never forget - and hopefully those in the corridors of power have finally learned.**

By its 110th birthday, the Fleet Air Arm will have two shiny new aircraft carriers - HM Ships *Queen Elizabeth* and *Prince of Wales* - and some shiny new aircraft, the Joint Strike Fighter, to fly from them.

"There has been a lot of debate about the future of the Fleet Air Arm, but the next ten years should be a decade of ascendancy," says Lt Cdr Paul Stone emphatically.

He was the last Commanding Officer of 800 NAS in its Sea Harrier incarnation.

He has clocked up more than 3,500 flying hours in more than 100 different types of aircraft.

He still flies today - a veteran Sea Hurricane in his spare time - and tests aircraft for BAE, as well as continuing to serve his nation in the RNR.

"This is an exciting age. New aircraft carriers which will always draw the crowds. Now add a very, very good aircraft in the Joint Strike Fighter and it should be a really important period for the Fleet Air Arm," the pilot emphasises.

"The Fleet Air Arm has always been the lesser understood part of the Armed Forces."

"It's important to bring these historical deeds to the public conscience."

"There is a strand of aviation other than flying from the land."

"We have a deep, deep heritage, a vast amount of history, a rich culture. All this needs to be celebrated."

And it was. Aboard *Illustrious* (there was a birthday dinner for 350 guests). Over *Illustrious* (the flypast and a stunning firework display to bring the curtain down on the day). And in the hallowed surroundings of St Paul's.

More than 2,000 people gathered in Sir Christopher Wren's great house of worship, among them the Prince of Wales, the Duchess of Cornwall and the Duke of York, Admiral Stanhope, veterans and family members, and dignitaries from the City of London.

The Queen's Colour of the Fleet Air Arm was presented at the Dome altar during the first hymn.

The Dean of St Pauls, the Right Reverend Graeme Knowles, told the congregation that service in the Armed Forces was often a hidden service, which only came to light when it hit the newspapers or television.

"You are sitting surrounded by Naval heroes in marble, but sitting next to you is someone who may have offered that service in a quiet way," he told the congregation.

He said: "Our peace - yours and mine - depends on those who serve us. We send them to act on our behalf, and it is our responsibility to see they go out to act on our behalf fully supported and equipped."

Service in the Armed Forces, he said, required qualities of compassion, kindness, humility and patience.

"They are not negative qualities - if they are not found in those who serve us, they will not do their job well. If we do not begin our service with the peace of Christ at the core of our being, then we will misjudge what we've been called to do," he said.

The service remembered the 6,749 RNAS and Fleet Air Arm personnel who have lost their lives in 100 years of naval aviation.

The traditional bosun's call piped the 'still', as the Fleet Air Arm Roll of Honour, six leather-bound Books of Remembrance which list every name, were laid on the altar in a replica of a burial at sea.

The books were brought to St Paul's from their usual home, the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church, St Bartholomew's, at RNAS Yeovilton. They were left on display after the service in the candle-lit Crypt of St Paul's, beside Nelson's tomb and close to those of Jellicoe, Beatty and Cunningham, all Admirals of the Fleet who had a special interest in aviation.

Among those leading the prayers of intercession were Captain Brown, the Fleet Air Arm's most decorated pilot, and Sea Harrier pilot Commander Abe Orchard, author of the most recent volume on modern-day Fleet Air Arm operations, *Joint Force Harrier*.

Actress Kristin Scott Thomas, daughter of a Fleet Air Arm pilot who died in a Sea Vixen in 1966, and step-daughter of a pilot who died in a Phantom in 1971, read 'the aviator's poem' John Magee's poem *High Flight*.

**Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings...**

After the service, the Prince of Wales took the Royal Salute as the Guard from HMS *Illustrious*, serving members of the Fleet Air Arm and veterans marched past the cathedral as the Band of the Royal Marines played *Heart of Oak*.

HMS *Illustrious* is affiliated to the City of London and members of the ship's company supported the service, lining the steps of St Paul's as guests arrived. Afterwards receptions were held at the Guildhall, Merchant Taylors' Hall and Skinners' Hall.

"This is a great occasion. It's wonderful seeing so many people here to celebrate," said Capt Brown.

"The fly-past over *Illustrious* showed the helicopters in all their glory - I just wish we'd had the Harriers as well."

He added: "I had a wonderful day in the ship. Just to see the enthusiasm and dedication of young men and women around the flight deck gave me great hope for future generations."



Sea Kings of 771 and 849 NAS lead Lynx from 702 NAS and Jungly Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force in Balbo formation over HMS *Illustrious* at Greenwich (out of shot are the Merlins of 824 NAS leading the flypast)



A 771 NAS Search and Rescue Sea King - painted in original 1969 livery - performs in front of 9,000 people during a display laid on over the birthday weekend on the Thames and (below) HMS *Illustrious*' ship's company line her upper decks for the carrier's arrival at Greenwich



**A FORCE FOR GOOD**



**RNBT runner**

A CHALLENGE to a perhaps slightly overweight matelot has resulted in over £330 for the RNBT.

The friends of CPO Robert 'Taff' Govier challenged him before Christmas to take part in the Cardiff Sprint Triathlon.

Taff said: "Someone might as well profit from my pain, and I was very aware that charitable donations to the three Services 'core' charities had seen a dramatic downfall, hence I chose the RNBT."

He gave up smoking and lost over two stone in weight, and five months later race day was upon him.

He said: "Nerves almost got the better of me as I lined up for the swim next to experienced triathletes, I realised though that if I wanted to finish I had to go at my own pace."

"It was hard, very hard, but I was determined to put up a good show."

**Marines light up**

IF YOU want to go weak at the knees – spend a day with the Royal Marines in Leeds.

The city's reserve unit has joined forces with Candlelighters Children Charity to hold a fundraising abseil from one of the city's tallest buildings – a prospect almost bound to make your knees tremble...

On June 6-7 any volunteers brave enough to take the challenge can abseil from the 170ft-high One City Square building.

The idea for the event came from Lance Corporal Marc Whitham, whose nephew has recently been diagnosed with leukaemia. Marc and his family have been very grateful to Candlelighters, a small regional charity which helps children with cancer.

The recently-formed but growing Leeds Detachment Royal Marines hope the event will help raise much-needed funds, as well as putting their unit on the map.

For details and an application form, go to [www.candlelighters.org.uk/rmcharityabseil](http://www.candlelighters.org.uk/rmcharityabseil) or ring 0113 247 0372

**Riding for Elkie**

INSTRUCTORS from the Communications Warfare Training Element at HMS Collingwood are getting on their bikes to raise money for an injured friend PO Stephen 'Elkie' Brookes.

Elkie was injured in a motorbike accident last year and is now at the spinal unit in Salisbury diagnosed as a tetraplegic, where he is fighting to restore his independence through a rigorous rehabilitation programme.

WO Bob Fuller, CPO Richard 'Pincher' Martin, LS Richard 'Ronnie' O'Sullivan, and Simon

Aldridge will cycle from their Fareham base to RM Poole (where Elkie was based at the time of the accident), the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, Old Trafford (Elkie's team is Manchester United), then back to HMS Collingwood via the base's Staffordshire affiliation at Stone.

The cycle venture is timed to coincide with the Collingwood Open Day and Field Gun Competition – in which Elkie ran last year with the Collingwood A Crew.

**Stomping the Wall**

THE ROMANS are coming! LLogs(SC) Derek Thompson is leading a party of centurions (or LLogs Douglas Owen, LLogs(Pers) John Ros-Osborne, POLogs(SC) Mark Pooley and Logs(SC) David Emery) to walk Hadrian's Wall in July in aid of Help for Heroes.

Operation Barbarian Stomp is being organised by 159 Support Regiment of the Royal Logistics Corps (V), and Derek and his compatriots are determined to

show the full glory of the *Classis Britannica* alongside their Army colleagues.

The walkers will all be togged out in full Roman regalia, with the Army men garbed as 1st-century Centurions, and Derek – a Roman enthusiast – is seeking out period 3rd-Century kit for his Portsmouth-based Naval team.

Find out more online at [www.justgiving.com/hadrianswallwalk19-24jul09](http://www.justgiving.com/hadrianswallwalk19-24jul09) for more information.

**Rugby raisers**

SIMON BURNS, the Navy's Rugby Union head coach of the under-23s, has joined forces with a young rugby fan to support Cancer Research UK.

Sam John, 12, was an enthusiastic player until he was diagnosed with a brain tumour at the age of nine. His gruelling treatment ended in March and now he has turned his energy to supporting his team at Gosport and Fareham RFC.

Sam, from Fareham, joined Simon to hand over a pair of rugby boots to the Cancer Research UK shop in Havant.

The charity urgently needs goods to stock its shops across the country as more and more customers snap up charity shop bargains.

Simon Burns, who has 17 caps playing for the RNRU against the Army and RAF, also gave Sam a rugby shirt donated by the RNRU Community Rugby Development officer, CPO Dusty Miller.



**Broad stripe for Scott**

COMMODORES get younger every day – in fact the one on the right (pictured) is only 22.

But his rapid promotion was short-lived for Officer Cadet Scott Smith, who paid £350 at a charity promises auction to spend the day as Commodore at Britannia Royal Naval College.

Scott's day started at 6am, running round the ramps at the front of the college, followed by breakfast in the Commodore's house with the real Commodore, Jake Moores, and family.

After a morning of walking the establishment and rounds with the First Lieutenant, Scott was surprised by how much of the college he had not been aware of, and the challenges of making the place run smoothly.

"It was a privilege to get the chance to look at life here in the college from a very different perspective," said Scott, who joined the RN in 2006 as an Aircraft Engineering Technician and was fast-tracked through for officer training.

He added: "I was shattered by the end of the day but it was brilliant and I learned so much. Spending time with the



Commodore has given me an inkling of the challenges faced."

As a memento of the day the Commodore's Executive Assistant, Lt Darren Davies, had an order of supersession drawn up and framed to be presented by the Commodore – this time the real Commodore.

Scott's wasn't the first rapid promotion at Dartmouth. S/Lt Lauren Calvert swapped places with the Commander of the college for 24 hours following her successful charity auction bid.

While Lauren inspected cadets on training divisions and carried out the rounds, Cdr David Graham attended ships' technology lectures and spent a happy Wednesday afternoon playing sport.

"It was quite hard to keep a straight face when inspecting divisions and seeing my friends march past saluting me," said Lauren.

She added: "What was good is that no-one had let standards drop, so re-scrubs were not required!"

Lauren ate in the wardroom during the day and confessed to being a little surprised to realise that staff officers were "really quite human and normal".

But as for who had the harder day – history does not relate.

**Rowe rows**

IN A sublime case of nominative determinism (*look it up – Ed*), LS Alan 'Skid' Rowe of HMS Portland intends to row a marathon for Cancer Research UK.

An experienced indoor rower for over five years, Alan decided to look for a bigger goal after completing the Row the Suez Challenge on board ship.

The chosen charity is close to Alan's heart, as his mother died from cancer in 1989. He said: "This will be an event that marks the 20th anniversary of losing my mum."

"I have lost several family members and friends to different types of cancer, and my wife's step-dad has also been diagnosed with the illness."

Alan expects to complete the row in three hours 30 minutes.

Pledge your support on [www.justgiving.com/alanrowe1](http://www.justgiving.com/alanrowe1).

**Quadruple Collingwood**

FOR the fourth year on the trot, HMS Collingwood has been awarded the Royal National Lifeboats Institution charity shield.

Norman Tattersall, RNLI Fareham branch president, said: "No one has won the shield four times consecutively before so this is a first."

"To win the charity shield four times in a row shows great efficiency."

The money was raised on the warfare officer courses, through a fancy-dress coffee morning and from profits made in the Senior and Junior rates mess.

We wish the Royal Navy many Congratulations on the Centenary of Naval Aviation

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Royal Navy Officer's Sword  
Royal Marines Officer's Sword

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● (Left to right) AB Simon Williams, AB Declan Quirke, Mrs Jenny Thomas (Headteacher), Leading Weapons Engineering Artificer John Ramos, and AB Conor Hardman  
Picture: Dave Sherfield

**Deep's pave the way**

FOUR trainee submariners from HMS Raleigh responded to a plea from Bishop Cornish School, in Saltash, to help put the finishing touches to their new education centre.

The team spent the day at the school preparing the ground for a path to be laid around the new building, which will provide nursery care, music lessons and a before and after school club.

Head teacher Jenny Thomas said: "We are delighted to be associated with HMS Raleigh. Their help has been invaluable in helping us achieve this wonderful building."

**news in brief**

■ **AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL** specialist Lt Jonathan Knight is planning a 24-hour ban on western technology to raise money for his charity work in the Eastern Cape.

Jonathan, who is based at RNAS Culdrose, plans to visit South Africa during his block leave this summer to work on conservation and rehabilitation projects to help the local people and wildlife.

Among his tasks will be maintaining wells and watering holes, monitoring the wildlife in the area, and helping the cheetah and lion release and breeding programmes.

"It's vital that we try to improve the facilities, education and living conditions for the natives in the area as well as trying to restore the once plentiful numbers of wild animals destroyed by poaching and extensive farming," he said.

To fund his trip, Jonathan is planning three sponsored fasts, an 85-hour silence and a 24-hour technology ban.

"I'm trying to emulate some of the conditions and disadvantages the people and animals in this area endure," he said.

If you want to support him, you can contact him at [Jonathan.Knight731@mod.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Knight731@mod.uk).

■ **IMOGEN** James, the daughter of LET Nick 'Taff' James, was born with optic nerve hypoplasia – a condition that causes blindness and other physical limitations.

Taff and his wife Lauren (surnamed Campbell in her Navy days) are seeking to raise £30,000 to send their daughter to China for stem-cell treatment, a pioneering procedure that is not yet available in the UK.

There are already events taking place around the country, with involvement by the Naval folk that Nick has met during his career at RNAS Culdrose, HMS Sultan and most recently RNAS Yeovilton with the Commando Helicopter Force.

If you would like to pledge your support or fundraise for the family, please contact Taff on 0776 141 0053, or visit their website at [www.helpimogensee.org](http://www.helpimogensee.org) which gives details of fundraising activities already taking place.

■ **THERE'S STILL** time to enter the Chara Challenge, a 30-mile race across Dartmoor organised by 3 Commando Brigade to raise funds for colleagues injured in Afghanistan and for dependants of those who died.

The race, which takes place on July 16, replicates the final commando test and will be conducted by up to 100 four-man teams, military and civilian, wearing boots and carrying 32lb in a daysack.

3 Commando Brigade returned from Afghanistan in April after a six-month tour in which 37 Marines died, 169 were wounded in action, and 379 suffered non-battle-related injuries.

For further details go to [www.charachallenge.com](http://www.charachallenge.com)

■ **HMS COLLINGWOOD** was the venue for the first dinner for AWT (Above Water Tactical) specialists, past and present.

The guests came together in the Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess for their inaugural do. The dinner also raised more than £1,100 for Help for Heroes – partly by means of a raffle and partly by a few judicious fines for such misdemeanors as not observing the dinner protocol, and even heckling the guest speaker.

■ **THE PRINCESS** Royal has agreed to become the first Patron of The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, established to bring a single focus to naval charity.

**news in brief**

# Marathon efforts

LESS THAN 24 hours after completing the London marathon, five energetic runners from HMS Gloucester were back on board their ship preparing for three weeks' hard training – this time of the maritime variety.

The five, AB(WS) Robert Barnes, LS(AWT) Roger Shepherd, LWEA Harry Young, PO Logs (Pers) 'Buster' Brown and Lt Dave Berry, aka Chuck, competed the 26-mile run in times varying from four hours 11 minutes to five hours 27 minutes.

The team ran in aid of the ship's affiliated charity, the Spring Centre, in Gloucester, which offers day care and help for parents with disabled children. So far they have raised more than £3,000 and further donations are welcome at [www.justgiving.com/davidhberry](http://www.justgiving.com/davidhberry).

Despite the team's aching legs, there was no respite on their return to the ship, which immediately started her three weeks of Directed Capability Training.

The team presented the cheque during an affiliated visit at the end of May, after which HMS Gloucester and her doughty runners deployed to the South Atlantic for six months of patrol tasking.

Also running in the marathon was CPO (CIS) Antony Collings, from HMS Ark Royal, who earned his chosen charity, Seafarers UK, over £270 per hour as he completed the 26.2 miles run.

Antony's time of three hours 49 minutes (very impressive for a 35-year-old, if he doesn't mind us saying so) reflected his disciplined year-long training regime.

He said: "The day itself was brilliant, although the conditions were a little warm for a first attempt. I felt really good until mile 24 – after that it really was a case of having to dig deep and crack on, walking was not an option."

"It was at that stage that I made the most of my jelly beans, water and energy Gels – but not all at the same time!"



Next Antony plans to join the Ark Royal 24 Peaks Challenge next month.

Marine Ben McBean also ran this year's London Marathon, fulfilling a pledge he made himself soon realising the extent of the injuries he suffered in a Taleban landmine blast.

Despite the loss of his arm and leg in the explosion just over a year ago, Ben set himself a demanding training programme, and fought his way to the end of the marathon in six hours 15 minutes.

Ben spoke about his fundraising charity before the event, saying: "I want to thank Help for Heroes for all the support they have given me through funding other groups."

"I only have one leg and one arm, but I can run and lead a relatively normal life."

"Not so long ago I was worried about stopping off some way from where I wanted to go in town because of the long walk. Now not only am I running, but I am running several miles and think nothing of it."

"That has helped me put everything into perspective and gives me confidence to tackle the smaller things in life."

He added: "This could happen to anyone – it's not just me with

injuries like these. What I want to say is that we have a nation of soldiers who are willing to sacrifice their lives and limbs for this country."

"The men and women who come back with injuries like me deserve help to get their lives back on track – and that is what Headley Court does."

"Troops need to know that if something happens they'll be OK. That's got to be worth a couple of pounds from anyone's pocket."

Pledge your support to Ben online at [www.justgiving.com/benmcbean](http://www.justgiving.com/benmcbean).



● Event organiser AB Samantha Hackett RNR, who also works for Save the Children, in the midst of fundraising with LS Jonathan Davis, the Junior Rates' Mess President at HMS President

## Reservist record

A CHARITY gala at HMS President, the London reserve unit, raised a record-breaking £7,000 for Save the Children.

The event was organised and run by the Junior Rates' Mess and staffed by serving reservists from the ship's company.

Guests were greeted with a glass of champagne and serenaded by professional opera singers on the decking overlooking Tower Bridge.

During the buffet that followed, Rod Davis, a member of John Lennon's original 1956 Quarrymen, entertained guests with timeless tunes and as the sun set over the Thames, they took their seats in the main hall where comedian Steve Furst (best-known for the Orange adverts) compered the auction.

Lots included a signed Chelsea shirt and other rare and sporting memorabilia, which raised £2660 in bids.


Comedians Shappi Khorsandi and Matt Kershner kept the guests amused for an hour before the evening ended with dancing and drinking. All the performers gave their time and talent free of charge.

The money raised brings President's total to £14,500 over the last two years – thought to be a record for a reserve unit.



● Mne Ben McBean ran this year's London Marathon on his prosthetic leg in aid of Help for Heroes

## Far from home?



**Get some prayer support from Naval Christian Fellowship & Armed Forces' Christian Union**

[www.navalcf.org](http://www.navalcf.org)      [www.afcu.org.uk](http://www.afcu.org.uk)  
 02392 814410      01252 311221



# A rocket for a Wren

YOUR REVIEW of the book *Swordfish* (March) reminded me of an incident in 1944, at HMS Nightjar or HMS Ringtail, when we were with a squadron training aircrew and flying Swordfish.

The armourers had fitted this particular aircraft with four rockets to each wing, underneath were 50lb practice bombs and the load was finished off with a practice torpedo.

As electricians, we had made the necessary connections and were waiting the arrival of the aircrew.

A young Wren arrived with a male friend and was handed into the cockpit to look around. As ground crew, we were lounging about on the grass when we heard this female voice asking: "Oh, what does this do?"

She pressed the firing button on the joystick and the next thing we heard was this whirring noise as the bomb release was activated and eight rockets were going off into the wide blue yonder and the bombs and torpedoes dropping with a great thump onto the ground.

That young Wren heard language from our Petty Officer which left a blue haze all around as we scrambled away as fast as we could.

And my last memory of the squadron before going overseas with 724 Squadron was painting black and white stripes on aircraft readying for D-Day.

- D Joynes, Winmalee, Australia

# Looking for Jupiter's lost bell

I AM trying to trace the whereabouts of the original HMS Jupiter ship's bell which was 'misplaced' whilst the ship was on deployment in the Gulf, 1990-1991.

The replacement bell was recently loaned to us at our ship's reunion in Middlesbrough and during some lamp-swinging a story was told that the original bell was lost over the side, or 'misplaced'.

I have since asked through our Association website if anyone has any information regarding the incident and as there was an RM detachment on board at the same time I would like to ask the same question to RM personnel.

The bell, as is the custom, was used on many occasions as the font for ship's company children's baptisms, and the names engraved on the inside for posterity.

The HMS Jupiter Association and in particular those members of the ship's company whose family have used the bell for this purpose are very anxious to know the story of the lost bell.

If anyone has information, please could they contact me by email at [ken.williams@zen.co.uk](mailto:ken.williams@zen.co.uk)

- Ken Williams, (ex CMEM(M))



● The Royal Navy of the whole of Great Britain challenge the French at Portsmouth's Burnaby Road  
Picture: LA(Phot) Owen King

# Don't sideline Northern Ireland

YOUR RECENT report on the Royal Navy's rugby team referred to their international equivalents playing against the French at Twickenham.

I believe you must have been incorrectly referring to the England team, as the British and Irish lions have not played together for nearly four years.

As a serving officer from Northern Ireland who has played for the Navy first team I take great pride in the national diversity of my Service and its sporting teams.

Whilst on transmit, I feel it is rather remiss that no part of the Fleet Air Arm 100 celebrations will be taking place in Northern Ireland.

The efforts of 863 NAS in Co Londonderry to the war effort were substantial, with remarkable tales of

NAS planes getting themselves carpeted flying under merchant navy colours.

The publicity and attention HMS Glasgow raised on arrival in Belfast in 1996 has far outweighed any subsequent port visit I have experienced; sadly the city has been pretty much starved of a sleek grey visitor ever since.

Alas a rare opportunity to remind the regions of their naval heritage will be missed as celebrations will remain focused on the major English cities where a naval visit hardly raises an eyebrow.

If you are unable to help bring focus of the Royal Navy's good work to the regions, please at least take more care in avoiding perpetuating the mistaken belief that the RN is an exclusively English institution.

- Lt Steven Gilmore, RN

# Jenny - a legend in her lifetime

FAREWELL to a legend - Jenny Side Party. When I was serving on HMS Belfast, we were serviced by Jenny.

Following kit muster I was told to buy a new greatcoat. I think they were £3, which out of a stoker's salary (£7 a fortnight) was a lot of money.

Whilst musing over it in the mess, Jenny said she'd fix me up for £1 but would have to take the coat.

I imagined this was to measure it - but the next day a pristine greatcoat was handed to me for said £1.

Later I found the coat had been taken completely apart and reversed.

- P H Fender, Greatstone, Kent  
...JENNY and her girls were amazing people. I first came into contact with the side party while serving on HMS Crane's last commission, 1960-62.

When I was rated Leading Seaman one of Jenny's girls

stitched my hook on all my kit. I gave her five Hong Kong dollars (1/3p to the dollar at the time) and she kept saying "too much" but I said "you share with others".

- Wattie Mason (ex PO BT2) Edinburgh

...IN 1992 it was published in *Navy News* that Jenny's home had been burgled and many of her photographs stolen, and could anyone help her?

She must have had hundreds of replies and yet took the time to write and thank me, and to let me know that she was a grandmother. I will treasure that letter always.

I served in Hong Kong for two commissions in a cruiser and got to know Jenny well. Life during the Japanese occupation had been hard and dangerous, but she and her girls came through.

She once showed me her Long Service and Good Conduct medal - but I'm sure it was made in the Dorsetshire!

- Bill Thompson, Hartlepool



# Goldcrest

I LOOK forward to the souvenir Fleet Air Arm poster in this month's *Navy News*.

My wife and I were stationed at HMS Goldcrest from 1943-44 at Dale, Pembrokeshire.

A member of 790 Squadron hand-painted a copy of the crest - I still have it.

Goldcrest (Dale) was transferred soon after World War 2. Sub Lt Ron Asphim reserved the original crest from the Officer's Mess before transfer.

- Jack B Quin, Newtown, Powys

# Whatever happened to naval standards?

AFTER yet another letters page (April) with only a single contribution from a serving member (March had none) and the usual tedious pseudo-political drips about the dire state of the Navy/modern uniform/warships etc etc from long-retired matelots, I felt I had to write in to point out that from summer 2007 until last month, the Royal Naval Association branch in Portsmouth (the home of the RN and - ironically - host of the RNA HQ itself) has been flying its Union Flag upside-down.

Fairly regular phone calls and gentle reminders to the branch pointing this out were met with denial, indifference or downright abuse and although dozens of my naval colleagues also noticed this

faux pas, seemingly not a single one of the legion of infallible supermen who frequented the Lake Road 'Old Comrades Club' noticed.

So before these guardians of so-called naval 'standards', always droning on in this paper (and, no doubt, in the RNA bar) about such trivia as half-blues uniform or half-forgotten deployments of the 1970s, start bemoaning modern naval practices or criticising the 21st-century sailor, perhaps some of them should think what sort of message it sends when they can't even be bothered to fly their own national flag the correct way up.

For two years.  
- Lt Cdr James Parkin, Op Telic, Baghdad

# A literal defence

I AM puzzled by the front page caption of May's *Navy News* as I have never seen *somewheres* in print before.

Is it intended to be *somewhere's* for "somewhere is east of Suez", not that I have ever seen that, either. I had thought *Navy News* had escaped many of the errors, mainly spelling, found in all papers today.

On a similar note I am sure there are many ex-RN Telegraphists, like my husband, who are not impressed by the use of 'Telegrapher' to describe them!

- Mrs J G Cahill, Saltash RNA and ex-WRNS Education Officer

For any other readers who may have forgotten their Kipling, the lines are taken from his poem *The Road to Mandalay*:

"Ship me *somewheres* east of Suez, where the best is like the worst."

"Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can raise a thirst;

"For the temple-bells are callin', an' it's there that I would be looking lazy at the sea."

As for telegrapher, the term was submitted to our obituary column by an Association - Ed

# Bermuda birthday

I WAS intrigued by the article (May) about the firing of an ancient 12-pounder gun by a serving RN weapons team.

On a recent visit to Bermuda I visited Scaur Fort, not far from the old RN dockyard.

The guns at the fort have been lovingly restored, including an ingenious recoil system which lowers the gun out of sight below the parapet for reloading.

This mechanism is new and in mint condition. This year also happens to be the 400th anniversary of the settlement of Bermuda by the British in 1609.

What a wonderful opportunity for a test firing and some much-needed good publicity for the Navy.

There is also a job to be done to preserve all the many ship's crests painted on the walls of the dockyard by generations of visiting RN warships.

These are highly-valued by Bermudians and they would be delighted to host a working party to restore them. Free accommodation is on offer.

Surely the RN will want to take this up?

- Ed Featherstone, Cdr (Retd)

# Equal pension rights

THE ARMED Forces Pension Group was formed some time ago to battle for equality in the pension stakes. Service personnel who left before June 1975 without completing 22 years pensionable service did not receive a pension.

Personnel who left or leave the Services after June 1975 without completing 22 years DO receive a part pension at the age of 60.

Why the cut-off date? What we want is equality. So far we have 4,000 members and we are growing fast.

Check out our website at [www.afpg.info](http://www.afpg.info).

If you support us or wish to join us please ask your MP to sign EDM46.

ALL are welcome to join.

- Bob McMurrin, Armed Forces Pension Group

# opinion

THE MAN of Action lives! The action toys which enthralled generations of boys is back on the shelves - and this time he's ready to fight and win.

The iconic figures finally went out of production in 2006, after years of falling sales. It seems he fell victim to political correctness. Boys stopped wanting the toy once he was rebranded as 'Action Man Skateboarder' and 'Action Man Surfer'. Perhaps there was a message here?

Now it seems the plucky hero was biding his time all along, plotting a spectacular military comeback, with the help of the MOD and Character Options.

The reborn action figures are based on current Armed

Forces personnel, with clothing and equipment meticulously copied from real life.

Indeed, *Navy News* hears that one of the Navy's Whitehall PR staff claims a figure has been modelled on him, although the company which produces them hasn't confirmed it.

Initially nine figures will go on sale, with optional extras including vehicles, tanks and jets.

There is just one problem with the range. The Royal Navy is represented by a navy diver, in full clearance kit, and a steely Royal Marine.

But we want Jack. And in this year of Fly Navy 100, we want our Fleet Air Arm pilot, too.



Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH  
June 2009 no.659: 55th year

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# CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGS



## Ark at work and play

FURTHER to the letters about 4VO mess in HMS Ark Royal, the photograph (above) may be of interest.

I lived in the mess for the last two commissions, and became the very last Mess President, literally switching the lights off as I left the ship.

During our final months, a competition was held to design a teshirt logo. I was entrant number 13.

The judges can be seen sitting in the background. The writing below the 4VO on the shirt reads: "The Last Farewell". A fun evening, one of many.

Happy Days!

- Steve Chinnock, WO (ret'd) Honiton, Devon

...I REMEMBER the incident of the sick sailor being transferred to the Ark Royal from a US submarine (Letters, May).

It happened in 1976. I was a LMEM(M) on board at the time and the BBC were filming *Sailor*. The camera crew got some really good footage of the event.

You can buy the whole series of *Sailor* and see it for yourself.

Every time I came across the film crew I did an about-turn because my mother-in-law said she'd be "watching out for me!"

- John Meharg, Aslockton, Nottingham

...AT THE time of the incident in February 1976, I was a bridge watchkeeper under the command of Capt 'WID' Graham - one of

the finest officers and gentlemen that I had the privilege to have served with during my 35 years.

That night I had the middle watch and early in the watch Ark became aware of Bergal's problem and request for assistance.

The weather was extremely poor with high winds and heavy seas, typical for the North Atlantic in February.

Capt Graham discussed the problem with his senior officers and it was decided that Ark would make best possible speed towards Bergal and launch two Sea Kings at maximum range to rendezvous with Bergal in the lee of the Azores. Conditions were such that any attempt at medevac would be hazardous even there.

Doc Jones (Surg Lt Cdr) prepared his kit, the Sea Kings were prepped for their long flight and the crews briefed.

Ark launched her Sea Kings at maximum range and continued steaming towards the rendezvous where the medevac was successfully carried out, thanks to the expertise and skill of the pilots and crewmen of Sea King 50, who undoubtedly saved the patient from drowning.

After refuelling at the American Base in the Azores (and Doc Jones having a cigarette) Ark recovered her helos and continued on passage to the USA.

The episode of *Sailor* that records the incident is highly recommended viewing (as is the rest of the series), the patient recovered, and "all's well that

ends well" despite the efforts of the deck crew of Bergal!

- S R Street (Lt Cdr (SD) (G) Retd)

...I WAS the senior steward in the Bridge Mess when one of the ops officers came in with the signal which started the procedure to bring the submariner back.

The first option was to operate on him in the ship, but she was not near enough to start a launch of Sea Kings so the ship turned from present course and steamed at 29 knots, which made the old girl shake.

Other signals came from the boat saying the submariner was in pain so time was of the utmost urgency.

Commander Air, with the ops officers and Lt Cdr Akin from 824 NAS made plans to rescue the submariner, with safety in mind for the aircraft and fuel states they decided three aircraft were to be in the operation, two with personnel including the Lt Cdr doctor, and the third as a fuel tanker.

The operation was shown on *Sailor*, which I eventually saw myself, having been part of this operation even if it was in a minor capacity.

There are also photos of that incident in the Commissioning Book Ark 74-76.

Vice Admiral Joe Williams, ComSubLant in Norfolk, Virginia, signalled the Ark to express his thanks.

- E Shrimpton, ex-RN steward, Northampton

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 which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.



Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News. We do, however, publish many on our website, [www.navynews.co.uk](http://www.navynews.co.uk), accompanied by images.

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

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.

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# 'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

## Vernon statue planned

A PROJECT to design, construct and install a monument dedicated to the minewarfare and diving heritage of HMS Vernon, now Gunwharf Quays, in Portsmouth has achieved one of its early goals.

Although it took longer than planned, the project achieved charitable trust status in early March, defining the campaign as worthy, regulated, not-for-profit and with clear goals and an all-volunteer team.

It is hoped that sculptor Les Johnson's depiction of a larger-than-life diver and mine will eventually stand in the Vernon Canal, but the cost of such a work now means a revised target of £275,000.

To support the project, or see the latest developments, see [www.vernon-monument.org](http://www.vernon-monument.org)

## High-profile supporter

FORMER SAS soldier and author Andy McNab has lent his support to the work done by the NHS to treat ex-Service personnel in London with mental health problems.

Mr McNab visited the Camden and Islington Traumatic Stress Clinic, the home of the Veterans' Community Mental Health Service pilot scheme which started in 2007.

The service handles severe and complex mental health needs related to time in the Forces, including depression, personality disorders and behavioural problems.

Five other NHS mental health trusts – South Staffordshire, Cardiff, County Durham, Cornwall and Scotland – provide similar services outside London.

For more information on the London service call 020 7530 3666 in confidence, or see the website [www.candi.nhs.uk/veterans](http://www.candi.nhs.uk/veterans)

## Yangtze gathering

REPRESENTATIVES of the ships involved in the Yangtze Incident gathered at the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood to mark the 60th anniversary.

Affiliation with the ship's associations of HMS Amethyst – attacked and then trapped on the river for weeks by hostile Chinese Communist forces – and HM ships Consort, Black Swan and London, which were all involved in Amethyst's escape, moved to Collingwood with the closure of HMS Dryad in 2004.

Guests saw training on bridge simulators, two of which are named Consort and London, and attended a church service with Phase 2 trainees, two of whom lit 46 candles, one for each of the men who died in the incident.

PO Anthony Greening also attended; the senior rate's grandfather served with Consort veteran Terry Hodgins at the time of the incident, as did fellow veteran David Morgan, who shared memories of events in China.

# Battle weekend serves as dress rehearsal

LONDONDERRY branch commemorated the Battle of the Atlantic in fine style at its annual commemorative dinner and a well-attended church parade.

The weekend's events, although traditional in the city each year, were something of a dress rehearsal for the Annual Conference this month, which will also have a Battle of the Atlantic overlay.

The Battle of the Atlantic dinner was held in the City Hotel and attracted around 50 shipmates – some of whom were veterans of the campaign – and their partners.

Guest speaker S/M Paddy McClurg, the RNA General Secretary (who for once had little difficulty in being understood), spoke of

the contribution made to the success of the battle by the citizens of Londonderry and the facilities they provided.

The usual high degree of Irish catering was enjoyed by all, while (as they say in Ireland) drink was taken and as always in that isle, there was more than a hint of song in the air.

The church parade on Sunday was an enormous success, with a considerable body of shipmates attending from all over the Province – some 15 standards were paraded and the march was led in fine style by the Churchill Memorial Flute Band.

A fine Service followed, and there were few seats to be had in the packed church.

The march back to the Ex-Services Club

narrowly avoided the rain and, as always, comprehensive hospitality was available to all.

The Battle of the Atlantic weekend normally includes an enthusiastic contingent from the Royal Canadian Navy, who were vigorous participants in the campaign.

However, this year they have postponed their visit so that it coincides with the conference.

The church service on conference weekend will include the dedication of a Newfie/Derry Commemorative Bell, which will be a permanent reminder to the people of Londonderry of the part played by the Royal Canadian Navy and the fond memories they possess of the city and its people.

# Trawler memorabilia takes pride of place

A MESS room upstairs in a pub has outgrown its roots and could serve as a historical resource for a Midlands town.

Tenbury Wells branch meets at the 17th century King's Head Inn in Cross Street, having secured the use of a room when the group commissioned in 1985.

Branch vice chairman S/M Chris Dovey said: "Recent landlords, and especially the newest one who has only just taken over, have been very supportive of the RNA and have actually given us the room to decorate as we like as the Tenbury Wells RNA mess."

"The members redecorated the room just over a year ago, supplied new curtains and paid for nearly all the decoration in exchange for being given the room."

"The branch has acquired many items of Naval memorabilia itself over the years but more recently has bought or been given items from other branches or clubs in the Midlands area which have either decommissioned, closed down, or just handed over items surplus to requirement."

"Notably items have come from Worcester RNA and RMA



branches, Stourbridge, Lichfield and individual members.

"The branch is extremely grateful for this support."

"However, pride of place in the mess goes to three items recently received on permanent loan from Tenbury Town Council."

The items mark the donations made by the folk of the Tenbury area towards Warship Week in

March 1942, which resulted in cash being put towards the adoption of minesweeping trawler HMS Balta.

A large cast iron crest mounted on a black shield was given by the Admiralty, a small plaque was created by the Tenbury National Savings Committee and presented to the ship, while the third item, a hand-written note, tells of Balta's

subsequent history.

She was sold to a private buyer and ended up in a breaker's yard in the Far East, where a former RN sailor noticed the plaque, saw the name Tenbury and acquired it as he had relatives in the town.

All three items hung in the old Council Chamber for 50 years and more, but a move to new offices prompted a rethink.

The town council approached the RNA, knowing of the burgeoning mess room, and offered the items on loan for display.

They now occupy pride of place under spotlights on one wall (pictured left).

"The whole RNA mess room is now fully decorated, and we have very little wall space left to add more items," said S/M Dovey.

"But the landlord is happy for us to adorn the bars with Naval pictures so we can spread out a little more yet."

"We are planning to open the mess publicly for the people of Tenbury to see and also for history students at Tenbury High School to come down and be introduced to some of our Naval history."

## Century of aviation marked at Sheppey

THE CENTENARY of Naval aviation will be celebrated over two days next month on the Isle of Sheppey.

The event, on July 25-26, will take place on the Eastchurch village cricket green, featuring stalls and a funfair, a display of vintage cars and model aircraft, amongst other attractions.

Stallholders will be invited to partake of a barbecue at the end of Saturday's events, which begin at 10am and continue until 5pm.

The show, co-organised by the Isle of Sheppey branch under the guidance of S/M Mick Withington, gets back on the road at 10am on Sunday, and a memorial service will be held at All Saints' Church, conducted by Revd Barry Birch – standards are invited – at 10.30am.

At 11.15 the focus moves the

short distance to the Pioneer Memorial, where a short service will include the laying of wreaths.

At the same time tributes will be paid at the graves of three fliers buried in the churchyard.

Among the others taking part in the weekend's events will be Sea Cadets, who will be staging Field Gun demonstrations, a Guard of Honour for the ceremonies and music in the form of Whitstable Sea Cadet Band

## Helping heroes

HENLOW branch held an inter-branch social at Arlesey Football Club to support Help for Heroes.

Around 120 people attended, raising over £500 – further boosted by a concert by the Vauxhall Male Voice Choir in Arlesey.

## Flying visit to RNA HQ

HAVING spent the weekend in Portsmouth enjoying the local attractions, including a visit to the Spinnaker Tower, Bourne branch secretary S/M Brenda White and her husband Chalky paid a visit to RNA HQ to meet General Secretary S/M Paddy McClurg and Sheila Tarabella, who made them most welcome.

With great views over the harbour and out into the Solent, the visitors could easily spot giant American aircraft carrier USS Harry S Truman – and with more than 1,000 Yanks hitting Portsmouth it was "just like the old days," according to Chalky.

Brenda and Chalky were impressed by the spacious nature of the HQ, and very grateful to the busy people who gave up their time to meet them.



● Competition winner S/M Steven Susans (right) collects his trophy from S/M Jack Harris

## Highest standards

CHATHAM branch hosted the 2009 Area 2 Standard Bearers competition at the REME gym in Gillingham, all under the watchful eye of area ceremonial officer S/M Chris Durban.

The turnout was small, but the quality of competitors was extremely high – seven shipmates attempted to impress the judges in three categories.

The overall winner was S/M

## Talking points on the way

A FULL agenda for the 2009 RNA Conference in Londonderry was expected to be distributed as *Navy News* went to press.

Later-than-expected decisions over motions to Conference meant that the normal deadline of early April could not be met, though a draft agenda appeared in the Association's April newsletter.

According to that there was just one branch motion to be considered by delegates – that of the Isle of Sheppey branch, seconded by Maidstone, which proposed that the 2011 Conference should be at Mill Rythe Holiday Camp on Hayling Island.

A number of other motions of urgency are expected to be put forward for consideration at Conference, which is being held at the City Hotel beside the River Foyle on Saturday June 13.

## Coastal Forces site goes live

THE revitalised Coastal Forces Heritage Trust (CFHT) website is now up and running.

When the Veterans Association paid off it was felt that some kind of replacement was needed for the many shipmates still taking an interest in coastal forces.

The CFHT has stepped in with a new biannual newsletter, and a promise to promote the history and achievements of the branch.

Cash has been obtained, from the Lottery Fund and a generous supporter, which will enable the production of a new documentary tracing the history of the boats and their successes.

And any readers with photos or film clips, memories or artefacts relating to any of the boats (as on the website) are asked to contact Trevor Robotham, 023 9272 4715, [trobtham@coastal-forces.org.uk](mailto:trobtham@coastal-forces.org.uk), John Ascoli, 01243 514440, [jascoli@coastal-forces.org.uk](mailto:jascoli@coastal-forces.org.uk) or the RN Museum, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3NH. [www.coastal-forces.org.uk](http://www.coastal-forces.org.uk)

## Naval Quirks

IN THE "MOONLIGHT BATTLE" OF 1780, ADMIRAL RODNEY DEFEATED A SPANISH SQUADRON OFF CAPE ST. VINCENT...

...AND INCREDIBLY, HE DIRECTED THE WHOLE ACTION FROM HIS BUNK WHERE HE WAS CONFINED DUE TO GOUT!



THEY BRED THEM TOUGH IN THOSE DAYS, EH?



NO... sniff... I HAVE A SLIGHT COLD... MAYBE TOMORROW...



My Battleplan is as follows...

YES – AND THERE'S AN EXHIBITION ON RODNEY AT THE TOWN HALL – SHALL WE GO?

MICAH

## Yotties back in harness

AROUND 50 former Royal Yachtsmen – Yotties – stepped back on board Britannia for a special reunion week, coinciding with the 56th anniversary of the Yacht's launch at Clydebank.

The Yotties once again donned their overalls and picked up their tools to help with the ship's maintenance, and give visitors the chance to hear first-hand experiences of what life was like for the 240 crew when Britannia was in service.

The Yacht served Queen and country for over 40 years and continues to set high standards in 'retirement' – she has been named Scotland's best visitor attraction by VisitScotland, as well as 'Most Excellent Dedicated Venue UK' for corporate events by Condé Nast Johansens.

Since the Yacht opened her doors to the public on October 19 1998, Britannia has welcomed almost three million visitors.

She is now cared for by The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust, a self-funding, not-for-profit, charitable organisation that does not receive any public sector revenue support.

[www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk](http://www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk)



● Shipmates from the City of Glasgow branch spent a pleasant and entertaining afternoon meeting residents and staff at the Sir Gabriel Woods Home for Mariners in Greenock. The home was founded by Sir Gabriel Woods more than 150 years ago and, except for the duration of World War 2, has always been a home for retired mariners. The home is one of the City of Glasgow's chosen charities

## £50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our April edition (right) was HMS Hampshire, built at the John Brown shipyard.

Jan Beer of Plymouth answered both questions correctly, and wins our £50 prize.

This month's vessel (above) was launched 50 years ago at Govan and named after a cathedral city in the East of England.

What is her name, and what is her numerical link with a current RN ship with a West Country connection?

We have removed her pennant number from the picture.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News,

# Busy schedule for Hermes shipmates

MEMBERS of the HMS Hermes Association had a busy schedule when they held their 23rd reunion in Plymouth.

Lamp-swinging was the order of the day on Thursday as new and existing members were greeted at the Invicta Hotel, but it was back to business on Friday as the AGM looked at ways forward for the group.

The meeting finished in time for the veterans to cheer on Royal Marines who had just returned from Afghanistan.

Friday night brought a formal mess dinner at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, with Rear Admiral Euan McLean as guest of honour.

A coach tour got the ball rolling on Saturday morning, with members and guests visiting Morwellham Quay, a museum and heritage centre on the River Tamar which recreates a thriving copper

mine works, port and estate from the 19th century.

Then it was off to nearby Tavistock to call in at the RBL and stroll around the town.

The evening started with a buffet dinner and raffle, which was followed by a cabaret.

Church parade on Sunday morning took members to the Chapel of St Katherine upon the Hoe, in the Citadel.

After the service a wreath was laid at the Cenotaph to remember

more than 300 men who died off Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in April 1942 when the wartime Hermes – the first purpose-built aircraft carrier in the world – was sunk by Japanese aircraft.

Almost 600 sailors survived and were picked up by the hospital ship Vita.

Also in their thoughts were those who died in the Falklands in 1982, when Centaur-class carrier HMS Hermes was flagship of the task group.

After lunch the annual fund-raising quiz was staged, won this year by the Stokers (also known as the Hairy Bar Stars).

Their prize – a weekend at the Invicta for two, donated by owners Ray and Betty Martin – was immediately auctioned off to raise more funds for the association.

For more details on the association and future reunions and events, see the website at [www.hmshermes.org.uk](http://www.hmshermes.org.uk) or call 01752 787697.

## Bristol claim is challenged

SORRY Bristol – your claim to be the oldest association of its kind has been challenged by another West Country group.

Bristol Royal Navy and Royal Marines Old Comrades' Association celebrated its 90th anniversary earlier this year, as noted in our April edition.

But S/M Bill Craven has been in touch to tell the Bristolians: "You are adrift of the Sidmouth Royal Naval Old Comrades by seven years, along with it (I believe) two other Naval Old Comrades that still exist."

"Sidmouth RNOCA can muster over 50 members at our annual Trafalgar stag dinner, and we also meet each month for regular get-together sessions."

"We sincerely hope you enjoyed your 90th annual dinner dance on board the Flying Fox."

Any advance on Sidmouth?

## Cyprus backs Sea Scout group

AMONG the attendees at the Cyprus branch monthly meeting in April were some younger faces – as young as six and seven.

Beaver Cub Scouts Daniel and Logan Roberts were accompanied by Brian Nicolle, leader of the Episkopi Sea Scout Group, and assistant deputy leader Nicola Jones to receive a donation from the branch, which makes an annual contribution to running costs.

Daniel told members how he loved the games they play at Scouts, while Logan's favourite time was singing round the camp fire.

Some of the boys regard a camping expedition to Dhekelia, around 100km away, as a foreign trip...

The branch's donation goes toward the purchase of new flags, flagpoles and training gear.

Members were heartened to hear that vice president S/M Fred Cooper has made a spectacular

recovery from severe illness, and they hope to see him again soon.

The resignation of S/M Alison Kennedy as social secretary was received with much appreciation for her tremendous contribution over the last six years.

The speaker for the meeting, was Rory O'Connor, the General Manager of SSAFA Forces Help in Cyprus, who told of the history of the organisation, its current state and the roles which it carries out.

● Daniel (left) and Logan Roberts receive a donation from chairman S/M Andrew Noyes, watched by group leader Brian Nicolle, assistant deputy leader Nicola Jones and branch vice chairman Ian Gould (right)



## Museum is the stuff of dreams

'SMALL but perfectly formed – and stuffed full of old memorabilia' was how the City of Ely branch described the Marshland Maritime Museum near King's Lynn.

The museum, the brainchild of Mike Smith, is situated at Clenchwharton, just west of King's Lynn, and consists of a large timber room full to the gunwales with former RN items.

Shipmates spent some two hours with Mike, reliving escapades from their various service times and they were almost spot on with the date of their visit; a much-needed timber expansion room was due to open the day after the City of Ely visit.

Amongst the exhibits were uniforms, thousands of photographs, ships' crests, toys, newspaper cuttings, as well as a large collection of different caps.

Some of the Ely crew tried on some of the headgear (even those with delusions of grandeur, our correspondent tells us).

One member found a crest of wartime minesweeper HMS Gleaner – the warship in which her father had served as a sick bay tiffy.

Members decided it had been well worth the effort to visit.

Mike can be contacted at [d.boats@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:d.boats@tiscali.co.uk) or on 01553 765530.

## Early bookings

MANSFIELD branch has booked Shep Woolley to entertain shipmates and guests at their a Trafalgar Night dinner at The Towers on Saturday October 17.

Enquiries over remaining tickets, at £25 each, should be made to Julie Savage as soon as possible by email: [jules75jas@hotmail.com](mailto:jules75jas@hotmail.com)

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WEA Representatives conduct briefings/interviews regularly at Establishments (bookings taken through Resettlement/Education Centres), and by appointment onboard HM Ships.

**A Naval Charity for ALL service and ex-service personnel of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, QARNNS, and their Reserves**

### MYSTERY PICTURE 172

Name .....

Address .....

My answers .....

**TWO SIX.tv**

## Accurate data on leave is 'crucial'

AS PART of its assessment of the workload of Service personnel, the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) takes into account information about the leave taken by Service personnel.

Leave data is therefore a key element of the whole package of evidence that the AFPRB examines when considering both the annual pay award and periodic reviews of the X-Factor.

It takes an active interest in the amount of leave personnel have been able to take during a leave year and, more importantly, the amount of leave carried forward or potentially lost.

It is therefore crucial that statistics on leave are accurate.

The main source of data used to inform the AFPRB's annual reviews of Service leave is JPA.

It should now, of course, be standard practice for ALL Service personnel, regardless of rank or rate, to personally record their leave on JPA but, given the importance of this information to the AFPRB, there is an additional imperative for personnel to take personal responsibility for ensuring their leave records are up-to-date.

Without accurate leave information the AFPRB will be unable to make appropriate judgements in relation to annual pay recommendations.

COs are accordingly encouraged to ensure that their people are fulfilling their obligation to record their leave on JPA.

## Monster alliance

AN ALLIANCE between SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers) and Monster.co.uk will help reservists communicate with their employers over the commitments and spin-offs of their military service.

The link will help develop new advice, in the form of fact-sheets and videos, that will cover subjects such as job interviews, requesting time off for training and discussing mobilisation.

The videos and fact-sheets can be downloaded from the website [www.sabre.mod.uk/monster](http://www.sabre.mod.uk/monster)

Julian Acuari, Managing Director of Monster UK and Ireland - the local content website for the global online employment group - said: "The current employment climate means that it's more important than ever that reservists know how to discuss their military service with employers, and help them see the value of the additional skills and experience they can bring to the civilian workplace."

"This is a great way for Monster to work with SaBRE and help reservists through these difficult times."

## It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

To feature in 2-6 contact WO1 Baz Cooke MBE (Fleet Media Ops), 93832 8821, email [FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC@WO](mailto:FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC@WO)

**TWO SIX.tv**

● The Bin silver jug presented to HMS Southampton

## Glorious victory for Howe

A SILVER jug with floral decorations, Trophy 11376 was crafted in 1892 and originally presented to the Fourth Rate 60-gun ship HMS Southampton.

A previous ship of that name served as part of the Channel Fleet under Admiral Earl Howe which, on June 1 1794, engaged a French fleet under Rear Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse 400 miles off Ushant - the Glorious First of June.

Howe's orders were to protect British trade, block a grain convoy from America to France and

defeat the French fleet.

The 34-strong British fleet broke the French line of battle at several points, and six of the 26 enemy ships were captured while a seventh sank.

Although the grain convoy got through, Howe's success at the first decisive meeting between the Royal Navy and the Republican Navy in the French Revolutionary War removed the risk of a subsequent French invasion.

Some British ships carried soldiers, as was common at the

time, and two of the regiments - the 2nd Foot (now the Queen's Regiment) and the 29th (the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment) - have the battle as one of their Honours.

Earl Howe's career was drawing to a close by this stage.

The strict disciplinarian, who was nevertheless well-liked by his sailors, was recalled to service in Portsmouth in 1797 where he successfully pacified the Spithead mutineers and restored order, but he died two years later aged 74.

## Pension sharing: 55 now an option

SINCE 2001, the courts have been able to award a pension credit - the right to a certain percentage of the value of the pension at the time of the divorce - to the former spouse with an equivalent reduction in the member's pension.

In 2004, these same arrangements were extended to cover the sharing of benefits when a civil partnership is legally dissolved.

This procedure is known as pension sharing.

A pension sharing order (PSO) is an order made by a court on divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership creating pension rights for a former spouse or civil partner out of the benefits that the member has built up in the scheme at the time that the PSO is made.

The PSO will specify the percentage (or a monetary amount if the order was made in a Scottish court) that is to be deducted from the member's benefits.

Once a PSO is made, the serving or former member of the Armed Forces becomes a Pension Debit Member (PDM) and their former spouse or civil partner becomes a Pension Credit Member (PCM).

From April 6 this year, the earliest age when the PCM can claim their pension is 55.

PCMs whose PSOs were made before April 6 2009, and who were expecting to have to wait until either age 60 or 65 to claim their pension benefits, now have the option to have their pension actuarially reduced and paid from age 55, or immediately if already over age 55.

There is no change to the age when the PDM can draw his or her pension.

Should any PCMs wish to enquire about the procedure for claiming an actuarially-reduced pension, please write to:

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA), Pensions Division, Pensions on Divorce Section, Mail Point 480, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX.

SPVA will provide you with an estimate of the benefits you may receive and if the estimate is acceptable to you, will put your pension into payment if that is what you require.

Unfortunately, there is currently a delay to this service caused by the requirement to update computer systems to reflect this recent change.

We apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause, but your letter will be acknowledged and you will be advised when we expect to be in a position to provide you with an estimate.

## First award for RN pair

TWO RN engineers have received their Advanced Apprenticeship Engineering awards having completed the final stages of a new training scheme which is fully supported by VT Flagship at HMS Collingwood.

The scheme is designed to provide a transferable vocational qualification that is recognised by the civilian engineering community.

LET(WE)s Stuart Cameron and Kevin Stead received their certificates at a ceremony held on board Type 23 frigate HMS Kent alongside in Portsmouth Naval Base.

# Do you fancy a spell in the Glasshouse?

AS A member of the Armed Forces, when you hear the name Colchester you instantly associate it with the "Glasshouse".

Being part of the Senior Service, there is no real requirement to travel to England's oldest-recorded town - unless you are checking into the Tri-Service Military Corrective Training Centre.

Established in the 1960s, MCTC is now recognised as a centre of excellence for corrective training. But what goes on there on a daily basis?

The MCTC is based in Colchester Garrison and run by the Army.

The Army way of life can be something of a culture shock, not only for personnel under sentence, but also for tri-Service staff from the Royal Marines, RN and RAF.

But once you've got your head around the fast marching, heel slamming and lack of combat jacket draw cords, it's not that different from any other training depot.

The establishment caters for all Armed Forces detainees, so the staffing is mixed, with a number of tri-Service ranks to bring a wealth of experience and knowledge from all three Services.

The unit is run by the Military Provost Staff (MPS), under the command of Provost Marshal (Army).

The MPS focus specifically on custody and detention for operational and UK-based situations.

When a Service person is charged summarily or by court martial they may be sentenced



● PO Steele RN, Sgt Buchanan MPS, Sgt Scott RM and Lt Blackburn RN, Officer Commanding A Coy, in A Coy Lines at the MCTC in front of the restored signs from the old RN Detention Quarters in Portsmouth, now the RM School of Music

to a period of time in detention. The terminology used to describe this is Serviceperson(s) Under Sentence (SUS).

MCTC has a capacity of 312 SUS, although as *Navy News* went to press the figure was around 110 SUS.

SUS are organized into two Companies, A and D; A Coy are SUS who will rejoin their unit after detention and D Coy are SUS who will be discharged from the Forces after detention.

A Coy focuses on military skills training, which is predominantly infantry-based.

The training program varies week to week, and can cover anything from navigation, fieldcraft, operations in built up areas, mines awareness and marksmanship to command and leadership and battlefield first aid. MCTC is the only place you

might find a submariner, Army chef, aircraft technician and naval steward carrying out break contact drills together.

With such a mixed bag of individuals, training can be challenging for some, but enjoyable.

D Coy places more emphasis on responsible citizenship.

SUS are taught skills such as CV writing, computer literacy and interview techniques to help prepare them for life as a civilian.

There is also the chance to learn basic skills such as plumbing, home maintenance, garage mechanics, fork-lift truck operation and building site safety if they have a long period in detention.

D Company also has a 'projects' department where SUS can carry out community work such as building gardens and wildlife ponds for local schools.

## Defence learning portal given facelift

SINCE its launch in 2004 the Defence Learning Portal has grown dramatically.

The Portal now has over 180,000 users and hosts in excess of 800 courses which are available via the internet and defence intranet.

With scope for all Defence personnel to have DLP accounts in the near future, the system represents one of the largest learning management systems in Europe.

Feedback from customer groups has suggested that, to date, the system has lacked web 2.0 capabilities enjoyed by students and learners associated with



leading organisations.

However, ongoing updates will provide learners and training managers with state-of-the-art technologies to enhance the learning experience.

From May 26, users will have noticed some significant changes to the DLP, including:

■ A new 'look and feel', with the capability of handling personalised

messages for end-users,

■ Forums - users will be able to contribute to existing forum threads related to training and learning,

■ Wikis - a library of training-related reference material posted by authorised portal administrators,

■ Learning - enhanced access to existing learning activities and learning plans,

■ News and announcements - regularly updated announcements for users and training managers.

Existing users will not need to carry out any novel log-in procedures following the upgrades.

For any further information relating to the Defence Learning Portal contact John Galic at [galicj@cbts.raf.mod.uk](mailto:galicj@cbts.raf.mod.uk)

## Learning and respect

TEN Portsmouth youths have boosted their employment prospects by learning new skills with the Royal Navy.

The youngsters, aged 17 to 19, visited HMS Sultan in Gosport under the Visit and Learn scheme, which is being run in

conjunction with Portsmouth FC's Respect programme and targets disadvantaged people who are at risk of drifting in life.

They got their hands dirty in various engineering activities, ate with the junior rates, then spent the afternoon orienteering.

## New channels on BFBS TV

BFBS has launched two new TV channels to cater for younger viewers and film fans.

BFBS3 Kids opens at 5am CET and runs through to 6pm, with programmes for older children, six hours of CBeebies and BFBS's own Room 785.

Moving the children's programming to a dedicated channel frees up space for more lifestyle programming on BFBS1 during the day.

Later in the summer factual entertainment and documentaries will be broadcast on BFBS3 Kids from 6pm.

Meanwhile BFBS4 will alternate two films through the day at fixed times, so viewers will know that one will start at 7pm CET, the other at 9pm; the only likely exception will be Saturdays, when provision will be made for a third title or longer films.



News and information for serving personnel



## What do you want to change today?

MOST people join the Royal Navy with the hope of making a difference and changing something for the better, and then do just that with their commitments to operations worldwide.

However you don't have to look that far afield to make a difference - in fact, you can change something for the better very easily, and it will benefit your oppos and your relief.

Everyone undergoes training at every stage of their career in the Royal Navy, and it is seen as a very important stage in preparing them for their future role, yet the roles that the Royal Navy undertakes keep evolving and the roles that people shoulder have to change to support this.

In order to keep the training relevant and current we need to get feedback from the experts on just how relevant and current the training is.

These experts are the people who are currently doing the job, as they are in the unique position to comment on what parts of the course prepared them well for their roles and what parts could be improved.

It is simple to provide this feedback.

Six months after you have started any new role you will be sent a form S3018Z, either electronically or in hard copy, to complete and return.

It is a very simple form that does not require much of your time but that significantly benefits future training.

Sometimes you may have exceptional feedback to give; for example, you've arrived in your new role and are unable to carry out a task due to lack of training, or you feel that you have received training that is not relevant to your new role, which is just as much a waste of resources.

If this happens then you can report this on a form S3018 at any time.

This can be found on the Defence Intranet by typing 'S3018' into the search box.

The Training Services Group also conduct ship visits where you can give your feedback directly to somebody.

Training feedback triggers a real and noticeable change.

As a result of feedback received from attendees, the LRLC was extended from two to three weeks to give more opportunity for learning consolidation, and both initial officer training and staff training have all evolved to encompass elements of coaching and mentoring.

There are numerous other examples of when feedback from the front line has resulted in the redesign of training to make it more relevant.

Next time you are asked to complete a training feedback return, please be assured that your input does make a real difference.

If you do have any questions about feedback, contact Linda Judd on 9380 23843 or email [FLEET-HRTSG@OM](mailto:FLEET-HRTSG@OM)



● Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope takes the helm of a Landing Craft Vehicles and Personnel (LCVP) in coastal waters off Saudi Arabia during Exercise Red Alligator, part of the Royal Navy's Taurus 09 deployment. Behind Admiral Stanhope is Capt Wayne Keble, Commanding Officer of HMS Bulwark. For reports on Red Alligator and Taurus 09 see page 11  
Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow

## Spotlight on caring heroes

UNSUNG healthcare heroes looking after Britain's Armed Forces and veterans are being invited to step into the limelight.

The second annual Military and Civilian Health Partnership Awards have been launched.

Open to civilian health staff and military medics working within the Defence Medical Services, the NHS and the private or voluntary sector, the awards honour those who care for serving members of the UK Armed Forces at home or abroad, veterans and families.

There are eight categories, including the Deployed Healthcare Award, Mental Health Award, Healthcare Reservist of the Year and Care of Veterans Award.

The closing date for nominations (individuals or teams) which can be submitted by anyone including self-nominations, is June 26, and further details are available from [www.militarycivilianhealthawards.org](http://www.militarycivilianhealthawards.org)

# Review studies Reserves' role

A STRATEGIC review of the UK's Reserve Forces, examining how the Reserves can be better organised, trained, equipped and supported, has been published.

The review was launched in April 2008 to reflect the changing demands faced by reservists.

As well as preparing to defend the country in the event of a major conflict, reservists are now required to work as an integral part of the UK's military force on operations - many have deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq with up to 2,000 (eight per cent of current forces deployed) currently serving in these theatres in roles varying from fighting on the front line to medical support.

The review, the first ever focused specifically on UK Reserves, produced seven central findings, including improving training, creating clearer command structures and increasing the use of individual reservists' skills.

These seven recommendations break down into 80 more detailed recommendations.

The Government has accepted all seven of the recommendations, around half of which are being implemented immediately with work under way to address the others.

In a statement to the Houses of Parliament, Armed Forces Minister Bob Ainsworth said: "Our Reserve Forces have served this country with distinction in all the major conflicts and crises that we have faced in recent times, including current operations, with 18,000 deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003.

"The roles and demands faced by our reservists have changed considerably over the years, and their structures, training and organisation need to be updated to reflect this.

"This comprehensive Reserves Review provides a crucial blueprint for the future of Reserve Forces and recognises the vital contribution they have made and will continue to make."

"When I visit operational theatres I never fail to be impressed by men and women of our Reserve Forces who give up their time to serve their country."

Since 2003, 15 reservists have been killed in operational theatres. Mr Ainsworth said:

He told Parliament that "the review has redefined the purpose of the UK's Reserves and notes that they provide defence with a cost effective way of retaining specialised skills which are invaluable to current operations.

"The review also acknowledges

that reservists remain vital for supporting national resilience and it recognises the very important role that they play in connecting the Armed Forces with the nation."

Providing greater clarity to reservists about what is expected of them and what they can expect in return forms another key point of the review, which for the first time sets out a proposition of what the Reserve Service offers volunteers and clearly states the rewards, benefits and training opportunities available.

It has also set out to strengthen the assistance provided to employers who support reservists through deployments and training, and to accommodate the demands of reservist commitment.

Mr Ainsworth said Reservist training "will be refocused with a greater emphasis on preparation to support current operations.

"Initial training will be restructured so that new recruits receive sufficient military skills to participate in their units' collective training within six months of joining, and are fully trained and eligible for mobilisation within three years.

"Routine training will also be reviewed and sufficient training days allocated to ensure annual military competency standards can be achieved by all."

"I believe this is an exciting opportunity for our reservists. The review outcome is a comprehensive piece of work which has been welcomed by the Service Chiefs."



● Co-organiser MA Michelle Taylor (left) and MA Terri Allen get to grips with a health awareness quiz at Culdrose  
Picture: LA(Phot) Carl Osmond

## Healthy outlook

CULDROSE has staged a health and wellbeing promotion day for personnel and their families at the Cornish air base.

The event was organised by PLT Jamie Caruana and MA Michelle Taylor, and covered topics such as body mass index tests, mental and sexual health, physiotherapy, pilates, yoga, Thai kick boxing, smoking advice, drugs and alcohol

counselling and healthy eating.

Representatives from Jamie Oliver's Fifteen Cornwall restaurant promoted healthy food while the Defence Dental Service offered advice on teeth.

Interactive quizzes, classes and questionnaires engaged a wide range of visitors, from young trainees to more senior members of the air base community.

## House bridges awkward gap

VETERANS minister Kevan Jones helped mark the first birthday of a unique housing project for single ex-Servicemen and women in Aldershot.

Run by English Churches Housing Group (ECHG), Mike Jackson House opened in the spring of 2008 to help bridge the gap between Service and civilian life.

The facility can accommodate 25 people in self-contained flats for up to 18 months, giving them access to IT support and careers advisors in an effort to guide them into employment and permanent housing.

A residents' committee already influences the governance of the hostel, and there are plans for a lodge to be built in the grounds to serve as a private consultation and alternative therapy area - tenants will build the structure and shadow any tradesmen

who are brought in for specialist work, allowing them to pick up new skills.

"It is a year since our official opening and we have been overwhelmed," said Derek Heath, ECHG's manager at Mike Jackson House.

"We have had over 70 Service leavers wanting to come here - more than three times our capacity.

"We have taken in almost 40 Service leavers and have managed to help 50 per cent of our guys who have left to make the positive move back into civilian life and into their own homes.

"Importantly, this has also helped some of those who have suffered family tensions get back together with their partners and children."

Derek said the house is a step in the right direction, but he believes more such facilities are needed.

## RNPT summer dates

THE next RN Presentation Team events are:

■ Wednesday June 3 at Imperial War Museum North, The Quays, Trafford Wharf Road, Manchester;

■ Thursday June 4 at Chester Cathedral, 12 Abbey Square, Chester;

■ Tuesday June 9 at Castell Malgwyn Hotel, Llechryd, Cardigan;

■ Wednesday June 10 at the Guildhall, Brecon;

■ Wednesday June 15 at the Cavendish Hotel, Grand Parade, Eastbourne;

■ Tuesday July 28 at the Berkshire Stand, Newbury Racecourse, Newbury;

Anyone wishing to book a place should contact the RNPT on 020 8833 8020 or visit the website at [www.royalnavy.mod.uk](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk)

## EW support deal

THALES UK has signed a contract with the MOD to provide what it describes as an "innovative support solution for electronic warfare equipment fitted to RN warship and submarine flotillas."





● Valiant Jetty is eased round Rhu Narrows and into Gareloch on her way to Clyde Naval Base  
Picture: LA(Phot) Stuart 'Pusser' Hill (FRPU North)

# New jetty delivered to Faslane

CLYDE Naval Base has taken delivery of a new leviathan after ten years of waiting.

The £150m Valiant floating jetty, built 12 miles away at Inchgreen Dry Dock in Greenock, was towed along the river by five tugs in a six-hour operation.

The 200-metre jetty, which is 28 metres wide, ten metres deep and weighs in at 44,000 tonnes, will serve the Royal Navy's submarines at Faslane for the next 50 years.

Named after the first all-British built nuclear-powered attack submarine, Valiant Jetty was designed specifically to serve the new Astute-class submarines.

It is expected to be in place and fully-operational by the time the second of class, HMS Ambush, arrives at her home port.

Negotiating the Rhu Narrows into the Gareloch required careful co-ordination, as well as the temporary closure of the port to provide a safe route for the tow.

Once in place, the jetty will

float up and down with the tide, secured to the bottom of the loch by four giant piles, each one as big as Nelson's Column.

These will be hammered into place using a 117-tonne device on one of the biggest cranes in the world, Taklift 7, a floating shearlegs heavy lift barge.

The project was overseen by AMEC, and the project team included Defence Estates, Jacobs, DE&S, the Royal Navy and Babcock.

## Top man takes look at training

THE new Commander Maritime Reserves has paid his first official visit to HMS Raleigh.

Cdre Chris Steele was less than four weeks into his new appointment when he toured the Torpoint training establishment and met staff and trainees.

Later he took the salute at the weekly passing-out parade, which included a platoon of 12 reservists who were celebrating the successful completion of their two-week new entry course.

Cdre Steele presented prizes in recognition of exceptional performances during training, and amongst the winners was AB John Cuerden (40), from HMS Calliope in Gateshead, who joined the RNR in January 2008 and took the Captain's Prize as top RNR student.

John, a fire-fighter in County Durham, said: "I joined the RNR for a fresh challenge and the chance to travel."

"It's been an enjoyable two weeks - challenging, but also rewarding."

"I've made some good friends and learned new skills."



● Some of the new Armed Forces action figures produced by Character Options, including an RN diver (centre)

# Navy makes its mark at Tattoo

ROYAL Navy personnel had prominent roles to play in this year's Windsor Castle Royal Tattoo.

Clubsingers were there to, er, swing their clubs, and the Royal Marines Band took its place alongside other military groups including the Massed Pipes and Drums of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards; the Scots Guards, the Royal Scots Borders; Royal Highland Fusiliers, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the Highlanders.

Royal Marines also showed their tougher side with demonstrations of their combat skills.

But perhaps the most eagerly-anticipated Senior Service contribution to the tattoo in Home Park, the grounds of Windsor Castle, was the tribute to the RN Field Gun competition.

Two teams from HMS Nelson battled it out under adapted Brickwoods rules using guns and limbers that weigh more than one tonne.

The two crews received their guns six weeks before the show, and put in some serious training in preparation for the tattoo runs, each of which lasts barely a minute and a half.

Re-enactment of Naval artillery exploits during the Boer War, the inter-command Field Gun



● (Above) Field gunners from HMS Nelson at full pelt with their gun and limber, and talking of limber, a clubslinger in action (right) to the sound of the Royal Marines Band

Pictures: Cpl Ian Forsyth RLC

competition was first introduced into the Royal Tournament in 1907, and the torch was passed on to the Brickwoods teams when the Tournament was ended in 1999.

The tattoo, which is in its second year, is a not-for-profit event which supports the Royal British Legion.



● Royal Marines commandos go through their paces in the gloom of the Windsor Tattoo arena



## Forces set to take toy shops by storm

WHEN was the last time you had so much fun with ten inches of plastic?

Filling the void left by Action Man - he became inaction man a couple of years ago when manufacturers pulled the plug after four decades - is a series of toys modelled on real action men.

Nine 10in action figures, based on real-life personnel in the three Services and endorsed by the MOD, are now on sale.

The Senior Service is represented by two Royal Marines (one in a canoe) and a clearance diver in full kit, but if you really must have a non-naval figure, then there's infantrymen from the Army and a fast jet pilot and search and rescue aircrewman from the RAF, among others.

Manufacturer Character Options has also produced various vehicles - RM quad bike, Challenger 2 tank, for example - for the toys and various accessories for children, including night vision goggles.

There's no bad guy yet, but a generic enemy is in the offing.

Whitehall signed the deal with the toymaker it says to raise the

profile of the forces across society.

"It is not a conscious 'buy this and join the armed forces,' but it is educating people in what we do," said Cdr Steve Pearson, guardian of mascot Salty the Bear during his time as captain of HMS Newcastle, now on the RN's publicity team in Whitehall (the officer, not the bear...).

Psychologist Dr Amanda Gummer, a specialist in play and parenting, said playing with such toys and figures was an important part of growing up and that toys based on Britain's Servicemen and women taught youngsters important values: "standing up for what you believe in, helping those less strong than you."

She continued: "By playing with realistic toys, it replaces the shallow, materialistic showbiz role models with ones based on real people doing a valuable job."

"No-one is advocating that children are given replica guns to start shooting at the people they don't like."

The figures range from £14.99 to £24.99; accessories cost between £4.99 and £99.99.

Comment - page 28

## Projecting Naval power

'THE Royal Navy and Power Projection' is the subject of the second Nelson Legacy Conference, to be held on Saturday September 26.

The conference series, organised jointly by the Royal Naval Museum, the Society for Nautical Research, the Nelson Society and the 1805 Club, aims to take Naval history forward from Trafalgar.

So the spotlight falls on the Navy's role in delivering force on land, and a high-calibre panel of speakers is led by the Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark

Stanhope, soon to take over as First Sea Lord.

Naval historian Professor Eric Grove of Salford University will also contribute.

The conference will be held at HMS Excellent on Whale Island in Portsmouth, the home of Naval gunnery - and the day will include a demonstration field gun run and tour of the establishment, ending with dinner in the wardroom.

Details at [www.nelsonlegacyconferences.org.uk](http://www.nelsonlegacyconferences.org.uk), or contact Peter Green, 023 9266 1175, email [historian@twogreens.co.uk](mailto:historian@twogreens.co.uk)

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## RESETTLEMENT

### Future Workforce

THE CHANGE from Service to civilian life can often be overwhelming at the best of times and with many companies either making their workers redundant or cutting their hours, finding a new career path at the moment can be daunting.

Choosing a new career path, writing a commercial CV and sourcing prospective employers can be mystifying but it is always pleasing for Service personnel to know that because they have worked within a disciplined environment, offer dedicated skills and are known by employers to be deeply committed with strong working ethics, they are considered to be the ideal employee.

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Chris Daniels, for instance, was a Chief Weapons Engineering Artificer in the Royal Navy with 25 years service. Now he's a Senior Project Manager at Westinghouse, responsible for £80 million-worth of projects on the London Underground and in Taiwan.

"I had a fantastic time in the Forces but joining Westinghouse was the best move I ever made. It's a good stable company that is currently changing to become even better and more flexible.

"Right now there are massive opportunities as the business expands into new markets around the world," he said. "It's anything but a nine-to-five desk job. I'd throw myself out of the window if I had to settle for that."

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For further information, call the Royal Fleet Auxiliary recruitment team on 08456 04 05 20 or visit [rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk)

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# From Iraq to Armagh with the OU

BASED at Catterick, North Yorkshire, Sgt Maj Andy Winnett is currently completing his BA Open Degree. The 40-year-old spoke about his experiences with the Open University (OU).

"I've been based in Catterick for three years. I started studying with the OU in 2001. It was mainly out of self-interest really, self-development and self-improvement.

"Good question! I joined the Army Cadets when I was 13 and I got into it in that way. When I used to go away at weekends I enjoyed working in the kitchens, so I joined the Army as a chef and worked my way up to being a regimental catering manager. Fitting in my studies has been difficult at times.

"When I first started I was in Cyprus. For my humanities course I was in Iraq. For the Social Sciences course I was in South Armagh. And last year I was in Iraq again.

"But having the support of my tutor online and the First Class forum has been really useful. I interact on First Class when I feel it's necessary, but a lot of the time I just browse. It's great for getting tidbits for assignments.

"My tutors were very supportive. There were quite a few times I had to get extensions for assignments. I was even able to use the online TMA (Tutor Marked Assignment) system when I was in Iraq.

"Without a doubt I'd recommend the OU to colleagues, if not for self-interest then for future careers. I think taking time out for self-improvement and studying with the OU shows any future employer you've got self-determination.

"At times it has been a struggle, especially in Iraq in the baking heat! And at home you've got to work around the family. My wife is very understanding though; she badgers me to get down to work. I usually put in 20 hours a week. I do a few hours every day, or I try to!

"I went to tutorials on my humanities course and two weeks ago I went to a tutorial in Newcastle. It was very useful fact-finding and information gathering with other students and getting face-to-face time with your tutor. It's good because you get to meet a diverse mix of the public.

"I'm out of the Army next year, so depending what employment I get in the future we'll see if I use my degree.

"People have been asking me a lot what I'm going to do - I'm undecided yet. I'd like to get Honours for this BA degree.

"Through the Army I gained a Diploma in Management. I was able to use this towards the credits for my OU degree, which was quite good. I'm always telling the guys who work with me to do a course with the OU!"

# New start in the South Pacific

THE ROYAL New Zealand Navy is responsible for the maritime defence of New Zealand and its interests.

Its vision is "to be the best small-nation Navy in the world", reflecting the unique nature of its business upon the oceans.

The Navy is based at Devonport, Auckland, where the shore establishment HMNZS Philomel is responsible for administration, supply and training support to the sea-going ships.

The Navy's routine operations stretch across the South Pacific and South East Asian regions, but its roles in international peacekeeping and regional security also mean ships and naval personnel have served further afield.

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The RNZN Recruitment Team will be in Plymouth on October 14 and Portsmouth on October 15 and Faslane on October 26.

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**INSPIRING LEARNING**



● POC Natalie Diaper with her Cornwell Medal

## Cornwell Medal for Natalie

JACK has long been a recognised expression for ratings in the Navy, and two Jacks – Cornwell and Mantle – achieved prominence for the deeds which won them the ultimate honour of a VC.

It seemed appropriate, then, that an award in the name of Jack Cornwell VC, who died of wounds sustained at Jutland in 1916, should be presented to a cadet from Yeovil unit TS Mantle VC, named after Jack Mantle VC, who – though fatally wounded – continued to fire at German bombers attacking his anti-aircraft ship, HMS Foylebank, in Portland in 1940.

This year's recipient of the Cornwell Award for the most outstanding cadet over the year's POC advancement courses, was POC Natalie Diaper.

POC Diaper's name has been added to the silver bars in the medal's presentation case, joining a list which stretches back to 1917.

The case will be held on display at Yeovil until next year, while Natalie receives a duplicate of the medal and a certificate.

# Absolute beginners

FIVE novice sailors from Bideford unit can now scud along in dinghies after a holiday training course.

Run by unit staff – Bideford is an RYA training centre – the internationally-recognised Youth Sailing Scheme course started with the basics of what to wear and what not to wear, as a dip in the water is still a shock to the system in April.

Instructor PO Matthew Tucker, overseen by senior Civilian Instructor Eric Evans, then took the group off to see their Laser Pico boats.

After looking at the various parts of the dinghies, the cadets rigged them for the first time.

Leaving the theory and dry runs ashore, the five – Ryan Southern, Rory Donal, Leanne McKenzie, Oliver Kinkaid and Keiron O'Brien – headed for the water.

They learned how to steer the boat before advancing to tacking and the art of turning the boat through 180°.

Then came the capsize drill, one of the highlights of the course for the cadets despite getting wet.

As the week progressed more basic skills were introduced and on the most part taken in, sometimes through games; because they are concentrating on playing the game and not thinking about the sailing they learn so much quicker.

All five passed the course.

PO Tucker said: "For me on a personal level, I get a great buzz out of teaching sailing, especially to complete beginners.

"We hear so much today regarding the anti-social behaviour of so many youngsters that I myself am proud to represent such an enthusiastic and well-mannered group of young people."



● Bideford cadets learn to sail their Laser Pico dinghies

## Tony is top man in Slough

THE CO of Slough unit has been chosen as one of the town's Citizens of the Year.

CPO(SCC) Tony Atkins joined as a Civilian Instructor in 1985 and rose through the ranks to the top job.

That is in addition to being a family man with three sons and now grandchildren, holding down

a job which involves shift-work, and coping with major surgery for cancer on three separate occasions since being diagnosed with bowel cancer in 1997.

After each operation Tony has returned to his voluntary duties, from the weekly meeting nights and weekend events to week-long courses.

Tony trained the Berkshire Sea Cadet Field Gun display team for the 2002 Queen's Golden Jubilee Festival of Youth at Bisham Abbey – and he also officiated at the Field Gun run for the last Royal Tournament, when the Sea Cadets paraded their guns alongside those of the Royal Navy.

Although he has passed the age of retirement from the Corps, Tony has been granted, and is in, the fifth year of an extension to his appointment.

The Citizen of the Year award, which Tony shared with Slough's 'Mr Clean-up' Les Collins, is sponsored by the town's Rotary Club.

## Across the ages

ACTIVITIES from across the age groups were demonstrated during the 1st Southbourne Sea Scouts' biannual RN inspection.

Lt Cdr David Griffiths saw representatives from Beavers, Cubs, Sea Scouts and Explorers give a flavour of what they have been learning.

Lt Cdr Griffiths gave the group a good report and presented them with their certificate.



● Sea Cadet divers undertake open water training on a British Sub Aqua Club Ocean Diver national course at TS Liverpool in the city's Albert Dock. Any cadet or instructor interested in scuba diving should contact the National Administrator, CPO (SCC) E Davies at [elainedavies1184@hotmail.com](mailto:elainedavies1184@hotmail.com) or, for those in London, PO (SCC) R Waterfield at [londondiver@live.co.uk](mailto:londondiver@live.co.uk)

## Sure shots

THREE members of Loughborough unit gained full-bore shooting qualifications during a course at HMS Excellent.

Others gained qualifications in skills including navigation, chartwork, first aid and cook-stewarding on a district training weekend.

## Masters visit Cossack

CADETS from Southwark unit keep good company.

Not only did the youngsters from TS Cossack welcome members of the Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers (WCSIM) to their headquarters, but they also hosted the Master of the Worshipful Company of Fire Fighters.

The WCSIM provides generous financial support for TS Cossack, while the cadets visit the Livery Hall on special occasions, providing a carpet guard, piping party, bugler and other musical arrangements.

The Master, Brian Lowings, and his colleagues were present for colours, and later saw practical demonstrations of first aid and seamanship, together with a 15-minute band display.

Master of the Worshipful Company of Fire Fighters, James

## Serious fun for Lochaber

SERIOUS fun was exactly what a group of Junior Sea Cadets from TS St Christopher got when they visited a couple of historically significant sites in north Argyll as part of their training syllabus.

First on the itinerary was a visit to the Lord Nelson memorial in Taynuilt – the first such memorial to be erected in Britain after Nelson's death at Trafalgar.

It was built by the foundrymen of the Bonawe ironworks because they had made many of the cannonballs which were fired during the battle some 1,400 miles south.

One section of the Lochaber juniors' syllabus aims to show the cadets what went on during the last World War, so the group carried out a friendly invasion of the Oban War and Peace museum, ably guided by museum staff who were all ex-Servicemen.

Oban was a busy place during the war, and as well as the military artefacts which were on display, the cadets were also fascinated to see cargo which had been salvaged from the SS Breda, which sank after being attacked by German bombers at Christmas 1940.

Among the items on display were a sandal and a jar of makeup.

Blott, along with Clerk Martin Bonham, were also on board to present special mementos for safekeeping.

Everyone listened intently as Mr Blott told the story of Kenneth Rail, a sailor in the fifth Cossack – the destroyer which rescued the prisoners on board the Altmark in 1940, was involved in the sinking of the Bismarck and which was crippled by a torpedo in 1941.

On conclusion, cap tallies, miniature medals and a hand-written account from Kenneth were handed over to the destroyer's namesake unit for display and safekeeping.

Another guest on the day was HMS Cossack Association archivist Keith Batchelor, a former Lt Cdr (SCC) and previous CO of Edmonton unit.

THE VIP guests went on to present various awards to cadets.

## Trek from Teal to Stanley

ALMOST 20 Sea and Marine cadets from the Falkland Islands unit TS Endurance completed a 33-mile walk from teal Inlet to Stanley over a weekend.

The 18 cadets, aged between ten and 17, walked for a total of 14 hours over the two days, spending the night in a shearing shed (which, according to the local paper the *Penguin News*, the younger cadets found to be "rather smelly").

The group, which survived on 24-hour ration packs, was supported by a safety van close to roads and by two officers on quad bikes on the rougher terrain.

This is the fourth year the unit has undertaken the walk, raising funds for the unit and the local mammography unit.

CO CPO (SCC) Ken Newton said he was very proud of what the cadets had achieved.



● The new pontoons at Derwenthaugh boating station

## Lottery plan floated

A NEW boat station on the River Tyne has served as an example of the benefits of Lottery funding.

Derwenthaugh station, known as TS Northumbria, is on a tideway, which restricted the use of boats at certain states of the tide.

The solution – floating pontoons – was realised when Northumbria's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Alfie Simpson

put the scheme forward for the regional People's Millions programme of the Big Lottery Fund, and a public vote made them a clear winner.

The boat station, at Blydon on Tyne, serves units from across the North East, and was chosen as the backdrop for the launch of the 2009 programme on Tyne Tees TV.

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## Ilfracombe dedicate plaque to benefactor

ILFRACOMBE unit celebrated the launch of their new RIB at the same time as they dedicated a plaque to the memory of Mrs Joy Haywood, who left them the building they currently occupy.

The day saw a craft fair and *Dr Who* exhibition staged at the cadets' HQ, which generated a steady flow of people through the door.

A tombola, bric-a-brac stall and refreshments all helped with fundraising – those three stalls alone raised more than £200.

The *Dr Who* exhibition was a big success, with lots of little (and big) kids having their photo taken with a Dalek, kindly supplied by Andrew Argyle, Ilfracombe's Boats Officer.

Andrew used to make Daleks and other paraphernalia for the BBC to use in its filming, and has a huge collection of *Dr Who* memorabilia.

Andrew's wife Julie organised a craft fair on the main deck, and although the event clashed with another craft fair in the town, Julie's perseverance eventually persuaded enough stallholders to attend to make it a success.

Mrs Haywood's son unveiled a plaque commemorating the bequeathing of the building to the cadets, and the unit's new RIB was officially launched and named Joy that afternoon.

The first to use it were a party of VIPs, who joined unit CO CPO(SCC) Shirley Keen on a trip round the harbour.

Members of the public then got a chance to try out the boat.

Ilfracombe were grateful to colleagues from Bideford and District unit who came along to support them.

## Pat on the back for TS Legion

RECENT improvements in training and organisation were commended during Cheltenham unit's recent inspection.

The pat on the back encouraged staff and cadets at TS Legion, as did congratulations for its continued improvement and development over the course of the year, marked by the award of the Most Improved Unit shield at the 2008 drill competition.

Cheltenham has seen some success over the year, winning district football and pulling titles and coming fourth in drill, while cadets won gold medals at the district swimming championships. However, the unit's greatest successes were once again in canoeing, winning both district and area competitions, with individuals entering events at national level, competing against the best of the 400 units nationwide at the ExCeL Centre in the Docklands in London – and winning gold at every event.

The unit's ambitious new HQ building is now complete and equipped to a high standard.

## Third in a row for Buxton marksmen

FOUR cadets from Buxton maintained the unit's run of success in the North West Area .22 shooting competition.

The area, which stretches from Carlisle in the north to Stafford in the south, from Holyhead in the west to Buxton in the east, comprises 60 units.

The cadets of TS Bulwark achieved first place with a score of 331 points out of a possible 400, bringing home the trophy for the third year running.

The successful four were Nathan Fowler, Ben Fuller, Anthony Hargreaves and Ben Stones, who were trained by S/Lt Dave O'Donnell.

# Window display



THE Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester was treated to Tameside unit's show-stopping demonstration when he acted as inspecting officer for the cadets' annual inspection.

The review began with Warren J Smith inspecting each of the cadets, checking their standard of dress and taking the time to speak to each of them individually on their experiences within the Corps and their aspirations in later life.

Mr Smith then settled back to enjoy a series of performances from the different cadet display teams within the unit.

First the Junior Cadets welcomed Mr Smith to the unit using a semaphore flag sequence.

Next the Royal Marine Cadets put on a display of the field skills which they have been developing over the past few months.

And for the grand finale, Tameside Sea Cadets' legendary Window Ladder Display Team – the only surviving team in the UK to put on such a display – accompanied by the unit's club swingers.

Mr Smith and the visiting parents and supporters were then invited to tour the unit headquarters and training facilities before all unit personnel mustered on the main deck with the Lord Lieutenant to pose for the unit's annual portrait.

Unit Training Officer Mid (SCC) A Cooper RNR said: "The event was a great opportunity for the cadets to meet a very senior and well-respected member of their local community, and demonstrate to him the end results of their continual efforts within the unit."

Tameside Sea Cadets very much look forward to hosting the Lord Lieutenant again in the future.

● *Tameside unit's Window Ladder Display Team demonstrate their skills to the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, parents and supporters at the unit's annual inspection*



● Lt Cdr (SCC) Michelle Welsh

## Michelle is community heroine

THE CO of Nottingham unit has been presented with a prestigious community award by her employer.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Michelle West RNR was declared a Best of the Best Community Hero by Boots UK Ltd at the Boots National Pharmacy and Stores conference gala dinner.

The award brings with it £2,000 worth of holiday vouchers.

Over the past 27 years Lt Cdr Welsh has given all her time to TS Orion, having joined as a Cadet in 1982 and reached the rank of Petty Officer Cadet.

On turning 18 in May 1987 she wanted to give something back and make a difference to lives of many youngsters, so she joined the staff.

Having been promoted to sub lieutenant in November 1993, coming top of the board, she soon moved up the ranks, and on New Year's Day 2009 was promoted to lieutenant commander.

Last year Lt Cdr Welsh passed her Masters Degree in Strategic Youth Management through the CVQO, and her work is already being used throughout the UK and internationally.

Over the past 12 months she has raised more than £1,600 to sponsor her cadets on power training ship TS John Jerwood, and raised another £500 on different events which Boots fund-matched with a further £500.

She is continuing to raise even more money this year to enable six cadets to join the offshore yachts, with another 12 going on John Jerwood in November, as well as sponsoring cadets on the District Pier Cellers Camp and the Eastern Area Summer Camp.

On unit review night Boots filmed Lt Cdr Welsh and the cadets – a special evening, as 12 members of the ship's company of HMS Nottingham joined the youngsters.

## Civic honour at the double

TWO members of TS Southampton are to represent the city's unit in two top civic posts awarded to cadets.

Cdt PO Chloe Andrews has been appointed to represent the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire as Lord Lieutenant's Cadet and LC Jenna Smith has

been appointed as Mayor's Cadet for the City of Southampton.

This is the first time since the office of Mayor's Cadet was created some four years ago that both posts have been held at the same time by cadets from Southampton unit.

## Ceremonial request

SIX Sea Cadets and two Marine Cadets from Ruislip unit provided a Carpet Guard and piping party at a reception for the Armed Forces and past mayors hosted by the Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Brian Crowe, at the Civic Centre in Uxbridge.

Officer-in-Charge PO (SCC) James Parkinson and PO Alison

Watkins also attended, along with representatives of cadet and Forces units in Hillingdon.

The invitation to TS Pelican stemmed from a mayoral visit to the unit the previous month, when the mayor, accompanied by his wife Clare, spoke to all the cadets and watched a variety of activities, including Colours.

# Real thing 'is better than computer game'

TWENTY cadets from Fort William and the surrounding area had the trip of a lifetime when HMS Penzance visited the town – the first by a warship of that size in many years.

The Lochaber unit was given guided tours of the Sandown-class minehunter's various departments and witnessed a series of exercises and demonstrations carried out on Loch Linnhe.

Weapons systems, the operations room and the 'hanger', where the ship's remotely-operated Seafox mine disposal system is kept, were all included on the VIP tour.

But a hi-tech hull is ineffective without an expert crew who can work together to bring the best out of her, and each other – in this instance, the sailors had just returned from a tour of duty in the Gulf.

Consequently, while the technology is awe-inspiring, the cadets were shown that there is no substitute for the skill and experience of the crew; the trip down Loch Linnhe included demonstrations of how to deal with emergency situations such as a man overboard or a fire at sea.

Cdt Sarah Whyton said: "The big 30mm cannon was brilliant; it's a shame we didn't get

to fire live rounds." AC Ross Warner added: "I've fired all sorts of weapons in computer games before, but it's nothing compared to a minigun on the side of a real ship."

TS St Christopher's CO S/Lt (SCC) Derrick Warner said: "Events like today don't just happen."

"During the past few months a huge team of people has been involved in putting this together and I can't thank everyone enough."

Things didn't end there though – six of the cadets and their CO were on duty again the same evening in support of the RN Presentation Team who staged an evening at the Ben Nevis Hotel.

"The day's gone really well. If it's not one form of fun, it's another," said S/Lt Warner.

The unit is very keen to hear from adults whom may wish to join their unit management committee – a vital role in the continuation and development of the unit.

You don't need to be a sailor or even ex-Services, but any input will make a real difference.

Contact the chairman on 01397 712779 or call in to the unit on a Tuesday or Thursday night.



● ACs Rebecca Hickman and Ross Warner with the ship's badge on HMS Penzance

 **SEA CADETS**

● The TS Caledonia boys pulling team practise for the national finals in London last year

# Peterhead – pri



EXCELLENCE and modesty – not the most common bedfellows.

But travel to the edge of the Sea Cadets empire and you will find just such a combination perched on a rocky coast 30 miles north of Aberdeen.

Peterhead is not a flashy town, and TS Caledonia shares that reserve – despite being propelled into the limelight in a fashion few staff, cadets or supporters would have dared to dream of in years gone by.

Caledonia – named after a local seafood company rather than a warship – is enjoying the view from the top of the pile, having won the coveted Canada Trophy as the best unit in the country.

And this, the fourth most northerly unit in the UK, won that honour by the simple principle of living up to the values of the Corps.

Everything the Corps stands for is writ large at their headquarters on the fishing town's dockside, and a visit to the unit makes you feel like you have found your way into a recruiting film.

Staff and supporters

● (Above left) AC Sarah Buchan (left) and LC Nicole Rafferty at the launch of HMS Dragon on the Clyde last November

● (Left) The cadets of Peterhead display their new Colours last October



are dedicated to the cause of improving the experience of the youngsters, and the cadets repay that with enthusiasm and endeavour by the shedload.

Peterhead has around 35 cadets, with another dozen or more in the junior section, and the past year or so has been quite an adventure.

TS Caledonia won the regional Stephenson Trophy for 2007, a happy coincidence as it was the North's turn to supply its top unit for the Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall, a duty which rotates between the six regions.

"About 24 cadets and seven support staff went to London, and it was a fantastic experience," said First Lieutenant S/Lt Marleen Mowatt.

"We had a tour of HMS Belfast and the Imperial War Museum to set them up for Sunday and give them an idea of what remembrance is all about.

"We also did a walking tour of London, including Downing Street.

"Ten cadets took part in the actual Festival of Remembrance, and all of them took part in the parade."

Caledonia also sent three teams to the Corps national regatta in London last year – the junior girls pulling, the open boys pulling and the powerboaters, the latter returning north as winners.

This was all in addition to the usual busy schedule of local and regional events, and all as the unit celebrated its 70th anniversary.

It couldn't really get much better – well, actually, it could, and did.

"Winning the Canada Trophy was just the icing on the cake," said Marleen.

"When Ian (the CO) called me to tell me we had won I was jumping up and down in the kitchen – the kids wondered what was wrong with mum..."

In readiness for the presentation of the Canada Trophy by the Earl of Dalhousie, which happened at



● Peterhead cadets POC Euan Wilson (left) and POC Scott Buchan at the Tall Ships Race in Liverpool last year – both are now on the unit's staff

the end of March, the unit spruced up its Seagate HQ and set up displays showing the wide range of events in which the cadets get involved: the Scottish Traditional Boat Festival at Portsoy, a boating week at Easter, a week's camp in the Aviemore area, the Fishermen's Mission carol service and switching on of the Christmas lights.

There was also a report on the unit's visit to their affiliated warship, patrol vessel HMS Tyne.

In the various classrooms were a stripped-down engine, folded napkins, ropework and knots, charts and a severed limb and some vicious wounds – the former a training aid, the latter from Asda's Hallowe'en collection.

A table in the main part of the building creaked under the weight of silverware displayed, everything from sailing shields to a carved tubby wooden cetacean (a swimming trophy).

As preparations for the trophy presentation loomed, cadets rehearsed their drills, the smell of fresh paint and varnish wafting through the HQ as youngsters checked each other's uniforms.

One webbing belt, proving a little tight, prompted the half-

joking warning of 'Nae chips for you this weekend!'

Marleen keeps an eye on proceedings – the unit CO, Lt Cdr (SCC) Ian Wilson RNR, was training at Faslane that evening – often returning to the same theme: "Work on your boots... your boots need to be super-shiny..."

"It's amazing how committed these young people are – they are inspiring," said Marleen.

"To get kids interested in a group like this is something all parents should do – it gets them off the streets and doing something worthwhile.

"Quite a few of our staff officers are area staff officers as well – our unit is very lucky in that our staff have a variety of specialisations, which makes it easier for cadets to get a taste for different options.

"The staff are always trying to improve on their qualifications too – it is a really committed team, and we are quite a close-knit group."

As with many units there are strong family links at Peterhead.

Marleen, for example, joined the unit at the age of 11 – following the example of her brother – and, all told, has been connected with TS Caledonia for around 20 years.



● Members of TS Caledonia on board TS Royalist at Måloy in Norway last year



● Peterhead cadets at Trafalgar Square in October last year

# Side of the Corps

● Sea cadets vie for honours in the district sailing regatta at Peterhead



"Girls had just started being part of the Sea Cadets at that time, and I just couldn't wait to get down here," said Marleen.

Husband Mark, who works in the offshore industry, is also an ex-cadet who is now the engineering instructor at the unit, and he appreciates the value of a stint in the Corps.

"When I did my interview to become an apprentice we spent five minutes talking about my record at school and then spoke for about an hour on the Sea Cadets," he said.

"It is amazing how the Sea Cadets can set people up for life. I think it's a good thing for any kids to come down and take it up.

"The last year has been especially good, particularly when we went down to London.

"As a kid I would have loved that - it was a fantastic weekend for us adults as well as the kids.

"I remember sitting watching the Festival of Remembrance on TV with the cadets, and I remember saying 'I would love to go to see that.'

"I managed to get tickets for me and my daughter last year, and she was amazed by it all."

CO Ian Wilson is now reaping the rewards of four decades of service to the unit.

"In my 38 years in the Corps as man and boy, 2008 has been the pinnacle of my 'career'," he said.

"To be in London for the Remembrance Parade, the Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall and now to be the holder of the Canada Trophy has brought it all home to me how proud I am to command the Peterhead unit and, more importantly, how proud I am of my staff, cadets and unit management committee."

By way of contrast, Eileen Buchan was appointed chairman of the committee last November, the previous holder (Rab Smith) having been in place for more than two decades.

And within a few weeks of taking on the job, Caledonia had scooped the most coveted prize in the Corps.

"I have been a member of the committee, and I have got two children here - Scott joined at 12 and he is now an adult instructor aged 18, the other is Sarah, who is 14," said Eileen.

"That is how I got roped in, and the Sea Cadets has now become our family life.

"We follow the cadets everywhere, but it is absolutely worthwhile. It keeps them out of mischief.

"It is so rewarding as parents to see how they have developed. They really deserve this award.

"But it's more than the cadets though - the committee are so dedicated, as are the staff and parents. We enjoy it as much as the cadets do.

"Our youngsters are respectful - we get no nonsense from them.

They all get on with the younger ones as well. It is like a family unit.

"There is pride in the unit, pride in the uniform and pride in themselves.

"When we were down in London, in the Remembrance Parade, in the Albert Hall, past the Cenotaph, they were not in the least bit bothered.

"Some of them were standing next to Katherine Jenkins, and they all just took it in their stride.

"They will look back at this with pride when they are adults."

Part of the winning formula at Peterhead is the support of the community.

The harbour authority found a plot of land on which Caledonia built their HQ some years back, a number of berths are made available to them at the town's marina, and local businesses chip in to help run the unit.

"We are really fortunate to be well-supported by the Peterhead Port Authority," said Marleen, who pointed out that despite the lack of big-name or big-money sponsors, the busy unit ticks over nicely on a fuel of hard work and dedication to the cause.

The unit meets twice weekly, with the Monday night being 'clean ship night' - staff believe the cadets should take responsibility for the state of the training ship, and senior cadets do rounds to ensure a high standard is maintained.

Friday night is the more traditional parade night, when classes are held in areas including seamanship, engineering and first aid, while practical skills are taught on the water during the summer, including courses over the weekends.

Caledonia is a Royal Yachting Association training centre, with a flotilla of dinghies and a couple of powerboats (which are apparently quite popular with the cadets...).

Alumni of TS Caledonia don't forget their roots.

One former cadet joined the Senior Service last summer, but it wasn't the last they saw of him.

"He is back here every weekend he is home, in his uniform," said Eileen.

"When they reach a certain age they do not want to leave here because it is such a big part of their life."

Another former cadet is now Lt Lindsay Northeast RN, a logistics officer (*shouldn't she be a navigator?* - Ed) in HMS Ark Royal who also keeps close tabs on her old unit.

One of the unit's most enthusiastic cadets is LC Nicole Rafferty (17), who joined at a harbour open day at the age of 11.

"The Sea Cadets had a stall there every year," said Nicole.

"I looked at what it was all about, and I have been here ever since. I would like to stay on as staff, as well."

Nicole has represented the Corps at the launch of the first four Type 45 destroyers (Daring,

Dauntless, Diamond and Dragon), was in the guard of honour at the Trafalgar Square ceremonies last October, and described her participation in the Festival of Remembrance as a "once-in-a-lifetime experience - some stories we heard of what people had been through made me cry."

"I have gained a lot of confidence from the Sea Cadets - I can speak my mind," said Nicole.

"Through Cadets I have made a lot of friends who I would never have spoken to otherwise - everyone in Peterhead knows Nicole!"

Then there is the best of the best - LC Lauren Hossack (15), Caledonia's Cadet of the Year.

"When we look for our top cadet, we are looking for an ambassador for the unit, and someone the unit will look up to - and with Lauren, everything she does she puts in 100 per cent," said Marleen.

So, the \$64,000 question - what makes Peterhead the best unit in the Corps?

"I think it's the teamwork between the cadets, the adults and the committee," said Marleen.

"We just love it here - it's a home from home.

"We are extremely proud of the cadets and all their achievements - if they didn't work so hard we wouldn't have been able to achieve this."



● AC James Watt, the Earl of Dalhousie, Lt Cdr Ian Wilson RNR, CO of Peterhead unit, and AC Sarah Buchan at the presentation of the Canada Cup to TS Caledonia



● View from the top - a picture taken by one of the Peterhead cadets on board TS Royalist last year



## Designs and technology

BRITISH shipbuilders have often come under fire from historians.

They point to the battle-cruisers at Jutland blowing up (while German battle-cruisers survived a pounding), the Hood's catastrophic demise, the sinking of Ark Royal as victims of flawed design or construction.

But more often than not, British yards got it right. More than 350 destroyers flew the White Ensign in WW2; many were lost to enemy action, but none foundered to the elements.

Unlike those of other navies. Nine modern destroyers fell victim to the weather – a French vessel broke in half; a wave tore the stern off the Soviet Sokrushitelnyi (for which her blameless CO was shot and her XO sent to a penal battalion); and three US destroyers sank in a typhoon at the end of 1944 (immortalised on celluloid in *The Caine Mutiny*).

The study of 'Weather and Warship Casualties' by the late David Brown is one of ten articles by eminent naval historians which make up the latest edition of Conway's annual *Warship* volume (£30 ISBN 978-1-84486-089-0).

And as ever, the sweep of its subject is wide and varied: RN submarine design post-war; Japan's bizarre battleship-carriers (half dreadnought, half aircraft carrier); Italian coastal forces; the struggle to convert a fleet powered by wind to one powered by coal in Victorian Britain; the work of the John Brown yard in WW1 – with particular emphasis on the construction of battle-cruiser HMS *Repulse*, built in just a year and a half; the Japanese battleship *Mutsu* which blew up in harbour in mysterious circumstances in 1943 (the Imperial Navy blamed a suicidal sailor for the tragedy, but the latest research presented here suggests a fire caused her demise).

The emphasis in *Warship* is invariably on the machine rather than the men who served in them.

The research is of the highest order, however, as too is the reproduction of images, trawled from the private and public archives spanning the globe.

But back to the Admiralty and its pre-eminence in designing warships...

Back in 1870, HMS *Captain* was cutting-edge, incorporating the lessons of the American Civil War – not least the gun turret – with all that the Senior Service had learned since HMS *Warrior* had arrived on the scene a decade before.

There had been six previous Captains before this one; there has been none since such is the ironclad's infamous reputation.

Her infamy is well deserved – her birth was troubled by political, media and naval circles all sticking their oar in.

The result was a ship with just 8½ft freeboard (instead of the planned 14ft).

There's a strong whiff of the ill-starred R101 or the Tay Bridge disaster about the *Captain*. Sailors dubbed her the *Coffin* – some even refused to sail in her – but *Captain*'s chief advocate and designer, one Capt Cowper Coles, scoffed at such nicknames. "There is not the slightest danger," he insisted.

But there was. Cowper Coles paid for his hubris. Unfortunately so too did 471 shipmates, lost when HMS *Captain* capsized in a squall off Finisterre.

# 'Fiercely proud just to be part of it'

TEN years ago publishers learned a valuable lesson: military history is big business.

They did so thanks to Antony Beevor. His *Stalingrad* was – and remains – a landmark book on WW2. It captured the *Zeitgeist*... and sold over one million copies across the globe.

Since then he's focused on the fall of the Third Reich – and incurred the wrath of Moscow for 'tarnishing the reputation' of the Red Army which advanced on Berlin and raped and pillaged as it went.

His latest volume *D-Day: The Battle for Normandy* (Penguin, £25 ISBN 978-0-670-88703-3) covers rather less controversial ground.

Indeed, Normandy is very-well-covered ground trawled over by a myriad of historians for six decades and more.

Which, of course, begs a question: what new material is there to bring to the table?

A lot, surprisingly. The author has trawled more than 30 archives – those at Caen and Saint Lô seem to be particularly rich – to dig out countless previously-unpublished accounts, stories, anecdotes.

For many Britons, D-Day has come to symbolise the last great national effort. It was an honourable crusade – to liberate a nation, indeed a continent, from tyranny.

And certainly the men of Overlord were convinced of the justice of their cause.

One Royal Marine junior officer looked at the men around him as his landing craft headed for shore on June 6.

"Some were scared shitless, others fiercely proud just to be part of it," he wrote. "Anticipation with nervous excitement showed everywhere."

About the same time, aboard HMS *Largs*, the future broadcaster and author Ludovic Kennedy found the wardroom set up for breakfast as normal. "We might have been alongside the jetty in Portsmouth – the white tablecloth was laid, and then along came a steward saying 'Porridge or cereal this morning, sir?'"

And ashore, a Frenchwoman cycling through the countryside near Caen shouted: "They're landing! The sea is black with ships! The Boches are screwed!"

Despite the title, the story is rather less about the invasion itself (or at least the maritime aspect of it) and rather more about the fighting on land.

Yet long after D-Day, the



● The Norwegian destroyer *Svenner* explodes after being struck by torpedoes from German E-boats in the small hours of June 6. She sank in under two minutes but 185 men survived.

invasion fleet not only ferried men and material on to the shores of Normandy, it had a direct impact on the fighting inland: 12th SS Panzer Division *Hitlerjugend*, perhaps the most stubborn – and among the most vicious – German units in Normandy lost its commander Fritz Witt to a barrage from HMS *Rodney* on June 14.

The Allied armada did not have it all its own way, however. Sometimes the Germans fought back.

HMS *Nelson* – her ship's company probably won't like her being described here as a 'monitor' – joined a force pummeling German positions on the Cotentin peninsula during the battle for Cherbourg.

The foe bit back. "We got salvoes screaming over," one *Nelson* officer recorded in his diary as a German coastal battery fought back. "The first salvo straddled us."

The battleship was not hit, but HMS *Glasgow* and the USS *Texas* were.

The Germans, of course, suffered far worse under the

weight of Allied material. The orgy of death and destruction reached its apotheosis in the Falaise pocket in mid-August where two German Armies were trapped.

Death reaped a terrible harvest. Burned-out panzers were covered in scraps of uniform while body parts were stuck in hedgerows.

"Corpses lay in pools of dried blood, staring into space as if their eyes were being forced from their sockets," one airman touring the battlefield wrote. "Two grey-clad bodies, both minus their legs, leaned against a clay bank as if in prayer."

It's such vignettes which bring *D-Day* alive: the birds in the Orne estuary driven mad by the naval bombardment on June 6, while a few miles away in Caen, locals hoarded baguettes – as did the Germans, who also helped themselves to bottles of alcohol; a senior officer sitting on his jeep in a landing craft was less-than-amused by the stench from his seasick soldiers blowing in his direction.

Indeed, the author is to be

applauded for finding fresh accounts from Normandy – these are not the 'same old stories' repeated.

In fact, perhaps the biggest revelation to English-speaking readers will be the suffering of the French – not at the hands of the Germans, but the liberators.

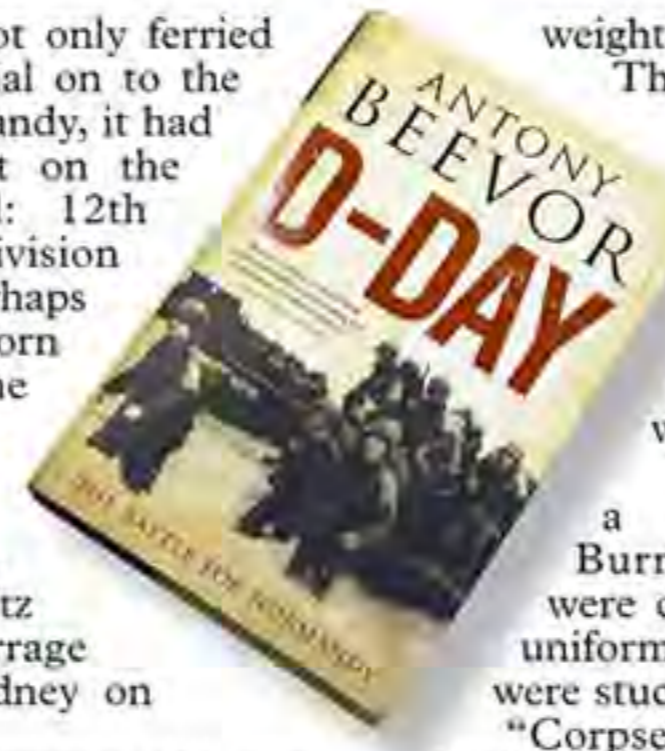
In Calvados, 76,000 people lost their homes – and most of their possessions – during the fighting.

Long after the battle, French children were killed played with live ammunition and grenades which still littered Normandy. In all, 35,000 French civilians died before, during and after the invasion by Allied action.

It was, the author argues, a price worth paying. Without the invasion, a Nazi Europe could have been replaced by a Stalinist Europe with Fritz in his Atlantic Wall bunkers perhaps replaced by Ivan.

There are British accounts of Normandy, American accounts of Normandy, French accounts, a smattering of German ones already lining bookshelves, but *D-Day* offers the best panoramic overview of the human story of the invasion from all sides.

It won't be the last word on the summer of 1944, of course, but it will become the benchmark account for many.



## A life less ordinary

OF MORE than 600 Type VIIC U-boats built for Hitler's Navy, U604 was typical.

Her accomplishments – just six ships sunk on six patrols – were typical. So too her fate – sunk, like nearly 800 German boats.

Or at least that's the way it appears on the surface.

Christian Prag's excellent *No Ordinary War: The Eventful Career of U604* (Seaforth, £25 ISBN 978-1-84832-022-2) shows that even typical boats had atypical lives.

Lawrence Paterson provided us with an excellent 'biography' of a U-boat on patrol, Teddy Suhren's U564.

Suhren was an ace. *Kapitänleutnant* Horst Höltrig, U604's commander, was not. Höltrig was an unusual submariner – he was a naval aviator by trade, but when the Germans pulled the plug on their carrier *Graf Zeppelin*, he switched to the *U-Bootwaffe*.

Höltrig was a cautious commander, not one eager to earn the Knight's Cross. His caution brought few sinkings, but made him popular with his crew who were convinced he would bring them home safely.

And on five patrols he did. He also inflicted the gravest loss on the American Merchant Navy of the war, the steamer *Coamo* sunk by U604 off Ireland in December 1942. Of the 186 souls aboard, none survived.

It wasn't enough. The U-boat arm's chief, Karl Dönitz, rebuked Höltrig frequently for his supposed timidity.

"Unsatisfactory" or "More was expected from this commander during this operation," he scrawled angrily in his diary.

U604 was one of the lucky ones, however. In the first six months of 1943, an average of 18 boats were sunk every month.

With such a fine line between life and death, it was hardly surprising that the U-boat men let their hair down ashore, chiefly at the magnificent red-brick Château de Trevezet. It was supposed to be a sanctuary of peace and relaxation.

But as one U604 crewman recalled, it was full of champagne, wine, food and Frenchwomen. "We had unrestricted use of everything," said the submariner.

They left the château for the last time in the spring of 1943, headed to Brest then took U604 on her final patrol.

With the Battle of the Atlantic now lost, Dönitz sent the boat to strike at Allied shipping between South America and west Africa.

Despite the gravity of the *U-boatwaffe*'s situation that summer, Dönitz ordered the 'crossing the line' ceremony celebrated by his boats.

U604 did so 40 metres below the Atlantic. The men ate a foul 'pill' (comprising mustard, marmalade, pepper, curry and spices), before downing a glass of schnapps and receiving a certificate.

It was to be the last fun the boat had; U604 was mauled by Allied bombers mid-ocean.

She did not sink, however. Instead, Höltrig rendezvoused with two other U-boats and transferred his surviving crew.

Some found sanctuary in U172 and reached Lorient. Others, including their captain, were rescued by U185.

She too was sunk by Allied air power taking many U604 survivors with her. Among them was Horst Höltrig – he chose to shoot himself rather than be killed by the chlorine gas filling the crippled boat.

# Last voyage of a master navigator

WRITING a thought-provoking book using material first published in 1784 and closely studied ever since is quite a feat, but James K. Barnett has achieved that with his account of *Captain Cook in Alaska and the North Pacific* (Todd Communications, £22.50, ISBN 978-1-57833-408-7).

Barnett's local knowledge puts Cook's explorations in a different context – the author, an Alaskan attorney, is president of the Cook Inlet Historical Society and a scholar of early West Coast history.

His Alaskan perspective adds even more lustre to Cook's achievements, as the explorer's work in the region is easily overlooked when compared with the outcomes of his other voyages.

The tone is set early on with a description of Cook's ships groping through fog on the coast of "one of the loneliest and least-known spots on earth" – the Aleutian Islands – in June 1778.

Barnett brings life to droll, understated journal entries as *Resolution* and *Discovery* rode out violent storms offshore before creeping in to pick their way through rocks and shoals.

Superb professionalism, inspired intuition and enormous good fortune kept them from

harm as they scoured the coast for the mythical Northwest Passage which stay-at-home 'experts' confidently predicted.

Cook had little help – virtually fictitious Russian maps proved useless – but he produced a rough outline of a coast which shipmates, including George Vancouver, later used to fill in detail with astonishing precision.

The ships – converted colliers – were ridiculously small; Cook's flagship *Resolution* displaced little over 450 tons and was 28 metres long at the waterline (barely bigger than a tennis court, as Barnett points out – a cramped home for over 100 men), while *Discovery* displaced just 298 tons.

Cook's third voyage was, at four years and three months, the longest journey of exploration ever undertaken, yet only 15 men died – seven from illness and eight by accident or in Cook's fatal skirmish in the Hawaii. Not a single man died of scurvy, a testament to Cook's rigorous health regime and relentless pursuit of fresh provisions.

Before his death Cook and his crews created

records of native people which have since proved invaluable to ethnographers – a facet of the voyage which Barnett examines in detail, capitalising on his local expertise.

The British made copious observations about the people they met – customs, language, dress and habitation – and speculation over links and migration patterns proved far-sighted.

Ultimately the foray to 65° north and beyond, the Admiralty's objective, was fruitless, ending at a wall of Arctic ice, and here again Barnett conveys the sense of frustration.

Painfully slow progress and thwarted hopes of finding the fabled sea passage to Europe (and its associated prize fund) are recorded in locations which reek of disillusion, such as Cape Flattery, Turnagain River and Foggy Cape.

Barnett concentrates on early 1778 off Oregon to their return home in late 1780, with a final chapter looking at the consequences of the voyage.

Although the material is not new the book remains an enjoyable and informative study of enlightened exploration beyond the limit of European knowledge.



# Yelp for Zeros

IF THE British Pacific Fleet is – rightly or wrongly – dubbed the ‘forgotten fleet’, then the Supermarine Seafire is very much its ‘forgotten fighter’.

While the Spitfire takes its place alongside the little ships of Dunkirk and the landing craft of D-Day in British WW2 historiography/mythology, its nautical cousin has rather been sidelined.

It has no iconic battle, no Channel Dash or Bismarck chase, no raid on Taranto.

Yet more than 2,000 Seafires were built and they formed a quarter of the BPF’s fighter strength in the final onslaught against the Empire of the Rising Sun.

Chief among the Seafire’s opponents in the spring and summer was the A6M, better known as the Zero (and sometimes the Zeke). The aerial battle between the two is recounted in the latest Osprey volume of *Duel* (no.16 to be precise), *Seafire vs A6M Zero* (£12.99, ISBN 978-1-84603-433-6) by Donald Nijboer.

As with all Osprey books, it’s very much an introduction to the subject, easy to read and very nicely illustrated.

The *Zero-sen*, as Japanese pilots called it, was a purpose-built carrier fighter – the carrier fighter of the first half of the Pacific War. The Seafire was a ‘marinised’ version of a land-based fighter, the land-based fighter of the war.

As duels go then, this should have been pretty even – but by the war’s end the *Zero-sen* was increasingly outdated having failed to keep pace with aeronautical developments; many served as fighter bombers and kamikaze attack aircraft.

But before we write off the Zero, however, it remained a formidable opponent. Seafire pilots, indeed Allied pilots in general, were warned “never fight with a Zeke – it is too manoeuvrable”.

But fight they did. It was unavoidable and the final fight came over Tokyo Bay on the very last day of the war, August 15 1945.

The appearance of the Seafires evidently came as a shock to some of the Japanese pilots. “Who is that?” Zero pilot Saburo Abe asked himself. “They’re British. What are they doing here?”

Abe’s fighter was crippled by a Seafire’s cannon – the Fleet Air Arm claimed seven Zeros in that final dogfight of the war.

The Fleet Air Arm scored 455½ aerial victories in the second global conflict. American-built fighters – Wildcats, Corsairs and Hellcats – accounted for more than one third.

The Seafire chalked up 37 kills. Only one was shot down by enemy air power, the aircraft of S/Lt Fred Hockley, downed by a Zero in the final dogfight of the war.

Hockley parachuted to safety and was taken prisoner by the Japanese who ordered his execution – nine hours after the war was over. Justice was belatedly served; his hangmen faced the gallows in 1947.

Also from Osprey, and slightly pithier than the Zero volume, is **British Battleships 1939-45: Queen Elizabeth and Royal Sovereign Classes** (£9.99, ISBN 978-1-84603-388-9), a colourful and breezy introduction to the five Queens and five Royals – the ships which formed the backbone of the Royal Navy in the opening years of World War 2.

Do not expect anything in-depth, but as an ‘at a glance’ history this volume by Angus Konstam, with some fine illustrations (including a cutaway diagram of Warspite, Britain’s greatest dreadnought) by Tony Bryan and Paul Wright is a good place to start delving into the world of the castles of steel.



# Fifty calibre

THERE are certain volumes that a serious naval enthusiast should have on their shelves.

At least one copy of *Jane’s Fighting Ships, The Royal Navy Day by Day* is a ‘must’, a full set of Roskill or Marder would be nice (if pricey). Now add John Roberts’ *Safeguarding the Nation: The Story of the Modern Royal Navy* (Seaforth, £30 ISBN 978-1848320437) to that shelf.

It is a comprehensive, fair and largely dispassionate, accurate and copiously-illustrated history of the Senior Service post-Suez.

In 1957, the Royal Navy counted more than 120,000 men and women in its ranks. It still had one battleship on its books, Vanguard, plus more than half a dozen carriers, a dozen cruisers, 56 destroyers, over 100 frigates, four dozen submarines. It still possessed a succession of overseas bases – indeed Britain still possessed an empire. The tot was issued each day. There were still *naval* correspondents in Fleet Street (let alone defence correspondents...).

The RN still proclaimed itself the second largest (but best) fleet in the world – and the nation had a merchant fleet to match, more than 5,500 vessels strong. At the top were men born in the last years of the 19th and first years of the 20th Century, men who had served in the Great War as well as the second conflagration.

But some things never change. There were international crises to police – Cyprus, Aden, Malaysia. There were pirates and smugglers to contend with in and around the Persian Gulf.

There were technological revolutions under way. The helicopter had come into its own at Suez, prompting the first commando carriers to be commissioned. Whitehall was committed to Britain’s first nuclear submarine, following the USA’s lead. It had also ordered its first guided missile destroyers – powered in part by gas turbines rather than steam.

And there were politicians looking to wield the axe. Enter Duncan Sandys, the John Nott of his day, who struck off some 500 vessels in the Reserve Fleet (Vanguard among them) and 100

● The last great endeavour of empire? ... HMS Antelope, her back broken, juts out of San Carlos Water after being destroyed by a succession of explosions following Argentine air attacks during landings to liberate the Falklands



shore establishments. Aside from helping to stop the V-weapon menace in WW2 (he headed a committee set up to stop the flying bombs), Sandys did one other good thing for defence: he prompted the formation of the White Ensign Association.

Sandys’ axe not only scythed through the steel of the RN, it also meant 26,000 sailors were no longer needed. They would require financial assistance – nearly 40,000 ex-sailors have benefitted from the WEA since 1958.

It is the lifespan of the association which is covered by John Roberts’ volume; he charts the charity’s deeds and accomplishments as well as the Service of which it is so proud.

And to return to the latter, the author provides a concise, excellent overview of Royal Navy activity, almost on a year-by-year basis (think *RN Day by Day*, only much more detailed – although the coverage extends across five decades not five centuries).

So you can follow the shrinking RN: 1970 – 87,500 personnel; 1980 – 74,500; 1990 – 63,200; 1999 – 43,747 (Mr Nott might still be reviled in naval circles, but it was the end of the Cold War which really ate into the Senior Service... although the Falklands conflict rather halted Nott in his tracks).

And you can follow every RN/RM operation of the past 50 years (apart from the sneaky-beaky ones, of course). And while the Malaysian emergency, the Cod Wars, two Gulf conflicts, the tanker wars, Balkans, Sierra Leone, Falklands, Afghanistan stand out in the RN annals since the late 50s, page after page reminds you that on an almost daily basis, the Senior Service has been heavily committed at home and abroad.

For the author has chosen to highlight the myriad of exercises, deployments, rescues and incidents which make up the RN calendar.

Most are lost in the mists of

time now – Operation Snowdon, peacekeeping off Haiti in 1993 involving HMS Active and RFA Oakleaf; or Operation Eldorado, another humanitarian mission demanding the RN’s presence, this time off Monrovia and Liberia in 1990.

We should point out that a good deal of the source material (particularly from the 21st Century) and a lot of the images were culled from the *Navy News* archives.

But that should not stop us praising where praise is due, and *Safeguarding the Nation* should become a standard reference work on the modern RN.

It is very nicely presented with countless colour images (a couple have, sadly, reproduced poorly, but that is a minor gripe) and a smattering of paintings, and is easy to read.

It is not a critical work, it is not an academic work, and it is not a ‘human history’ of the men and women of the Senior Service (although there is a handful of personal asides from contributors).

But as a reference book for the state of the Navy, where it was and what it was doing in the post-imperial age, this volume stands in a league of its own.

# Flawed finale to fine trilogy

PETER Padfield is a major figure in recent maritime historiography, writes **Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.**

He produced the standard works on naval gunnery before the field was taken over by Jon Sumida. His work has not just been limited to maritime matters as his biography of Dönitz led to excellent studies of Himmler and Hess.

The magnificent Dönitz book was especially important as it did much to counter the overly-positive image of the *Grossadmiral* that had tended to predominate following his rehabilitation in the 1950s.

Dartmouth officers under training were even encouraged to use Dönitz as a paradigm of naval leadership! That was more difficult after Padfield’s book appeared; I remember giving it a very positive review.

More recently, Padfield has set himself the daunting task of producing a trilogy in which he tries to prove the connection over many centuries between maritime power and a liberal politico-economic order both domestically and globally.

The first two books, *Maritime Supremacy and the Opening of the Western Mind* and *Maritime Power and the Struggle for Freedom* were well received and their author was a worthy recipient of the Mountbatten Maritime Prize.

## The Grove Review

I was therefore much looking forward to reviewing the final volume, *Maritime Dominion and the Triumph of the Free World* (John Murray, £30, ISBN 978-0-7195-6297-6).

Imagine my disappointment therefore when I found that I could not be anywhere near as positive about the new book as I would have liked to have been.

There are many strengths to it. The descriptions of the naval side of the story, the battles in particular, are as clear and lucid as one expects from their distinguished and experienced author.

He has used the latest sources on his subjects, notably on the Battle of Midway, to produce perhaps the best short accounts currently available.

However on some matters he is overly partial. Clearly Padfield is a strong supporter of Professor Sumida in the great gunnery controversy but his reasons for discounting Brooks’ more recent work on the grounds of being “badly organised” and the suggestion of “selective quotation” are not wholly fair.

This is especially so as the author swallows whole (as I did

for a while) the analysis of Grand Fleet ‘medium range’ gunnery doctrine that Professor Sumida has set out so cogently. There really is little evidence for it; indeed one of my PhD students is turning up documents that contradict it.

Padfield’s argument that the absence of documents, perhaps caused by their possible destruction, somehow proves a particular hypothesis is hardly sound methodology.

I also have one or two other problems with the naval content. It is just not true that, after Jutland, Scheer or any other “thinking German naval officer could consider another challenge to British surface mastery.”

Why then was Scheer, once his request for unrestricted U-boat warfare had been denied, out with the High Sea Fleet in August 1916 looking once more for a detached portion of the Grand Fleet? Another paragraph or two at the end of the otherwise excellent chapters on Jutland would have corrected this somewhat misleading impression.

It is also a pity that the author puts too much emphasis on the capture of U110, important though it was, in the vital break into the U-boat codes in the spring of 1941. This is the more surprising as the author cites Hinsley’s *Official History of British Intelligence in the Second World War* which provides a more balanced account.

But it is not the naval dimension of this book that is the real problem.

The broader politico-strategic background is analysed in ways that are sometimes at best superficial and at worst prejudiced.

The author admits that he does not understand why Japan, a maritime empire, did not take the liberal route of the others.

He takes refuge in making Emperor Hirohito into a personal dictator who decides when to make aggressive moves. This totally ignores the oriental complexities of Japanese political culture in the Meiji era.

Exploring the footnotes demonstrates that this thesis is taken primarily from the 1971 book *Japan’s Imperial Conspiracy* by Bergamini, not the best of sources in the opinions of most historians of Japan. Hirohito – like Dönitz – may have been whitewashed for post-war political reasons but the story is a lot more complex than that which Padfield tells.

The final chapter of the book ‘The Cold War – And After’ is a particular disappointment.

No better period could demonstrate the author’s basic point with its victory of the liberal Western maritime coalition over the continental Communist tyranny and the policing of a globalised post-Cold War economic order by a Western-led maritime coalition.

Instead, the chapter contains

little or nothing that is maritime.

It starts ‘ecologically’ with something that reads like a manifesto for the Green Party, gives a brief general account of the Cold War, takes another swipe at Japan and after a paragraph on the maritime dimension of the Cold War ends with a rather intrusive anti-EU diatribe that could have been taken from a UKIP publication.

I do not comment on the content of the two polemical sections but they are at best self-indulgent and do nothing to strengthen the generally sound, research-based arguments of the rest of the book and the trilogy as a whole.


They surely have no place in a study of ‘Naval Campaigns that Shaped the Modern World’.

What about Korea, the Soviet-Western naval confrontation, the Falklands and the operations over the years in the Gulf?

What should have ended with a triumphal bang ends instead with an opinionated whimper – which is a great pity.

There is much that is good in this final volume and I take no pleasure in pointing out its serious flaws.

I hope it does not detract too much from the reputation of a fine historical writer and the overall authority of a most worthwhile and serious major study of the key importance of western maritime power to the creation of the modern globalised world.

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## Next stop, Wimbledon

THIS year's B Team Inter-Services tennis tournament was staged at the Portsmouth Indoor Tennis Centre opposite HMS Temeraire.

All three Services entered squads for the men's and ladies' events, with each team fielding two singles players and two doubles pairs.

Competition was fierce and the game was played to an encouragingly high standard.

The RN men's team saw an all-RM line-up. The singles matches were held on the first day, with Cpl Greg Andrews and Cpl Ryan Nast taking on their RAF and Army opponents.

Having been selected for the Zimbabwe Davis Cup squad before he joined the Corps, Cpl Andrews played in the No.1 slot and found himself against an Army player with a similar pedigree.

At the end of the singles round, the Army were firmly in the lead having won all four of their matches.

The RN team fared much better on the second day. Cpls Andrews and Nast were joined by Sgt Glyn Luke and Mne Ashley Hicks for the doubles matches.

Each pair won one out of their two matches, with Andrews and Nast comfortably beating the RAF in the final contest of the weekend, consequently securing second place overall for the Navy.

Having emerged victorious last year it had been hoped to retain the title, but the Army were too strong this time, winning seven of their 12 matches.

Nevertheless, the RN side showed considerable potential, which will be developed during the coming months with a bespoke training programme provided for the Navy's leading players each month in Portsmouth.

Having been unable to field a team last year the ladies B team made a welcome return to the Inter-Service arena.

Captained by Lt Cdr Sophie Shaughnessy, the team was a mixture of returning players and some new blood.

CPO Di Roast led the singles but, despite some spirited tennis, the Navy team did not manage to carry any wins.

The second day saw the new talent in the form of Lt Cdr Debra Vout and Cdr Diane Stewart USN as the second double pair. The ladies went out fighting and, despite not winning a match, both pairs gave the other two Services a run for their money; the Army came out as the eventual winners.

It was an encouraging start to the season but there is a lot of work to be done if the squad are going to have a chance of winning the Inter-Service A Team championships at Wimbledon later in the year.

More details on that – and training and fixtures, including warm-weather camps and tours abroad – contact RNLTA secretary, Cdr Alan Church (02392 724193) or visit [www.navytennis.co.uk](http://www.navytennis.co.uk).

## President's sole effort

A TEAM from HMS President joined walkers from across the globe on the lanes and roads of Northamptonshire in preparation for a slog around Flanders.

The Waendel international walk – offering distances from five up to 42 kilometres (three to 26 miles) – is a three-day warm-up for the Ypres 100 (cunningly enough a 100km – 62-mile – 'stroll' centred on the historic Belgian market town).

The half dozen or so reservists from the London unit were the sole RN representatives in the event.

You can find out more about endurance walking in the Senior Service at [uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/RNR-Walking-Exped/](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/RNR-Walking-Exped/)

# 'Golden age for RN hockey'

## FIRST the good news.

In their centenary season, the RN hockey squad has been named the Senior Service team of the year.

The title is reward for a sea change in the fortunes of Navy hockey since the turn of the century after a fairly barren 75 years.

Since 2001, naval hockey players have bagged six U23 indoor Inter-Service titles, two consecutive Inter-Service indoor titles for the seniors and four outdoor IS triumphs for the men – 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008 – while a navy command team has reached a national final for five years on the trot.

"After a long wait for success, the last five years has been a golden age for RN hockey and this reached a peak in 2008 with the Navy men at both senior and junior level winning the indoor and outdoor Inter-Service competitions," said Lt Cdr Alan Walker, RNHA secretary.

And so promptly crowned team of the year, now the bad news. Well, not so much bad as disappointing.

Several days of splendid weather helped to put pay to the Navy's hopes of retaining – and improving upon, their splendid record in the Inter-Services.

The RN as hosts have, after all, performed incredibly well in the current two-day format: having watched the RAF play the Army at four levels on day one, the Navy play the losers on the morning of the second day and the winners in the afternoon.

After three successive defeats of the RAF at the indoors in three years, this year the rapidly-improving RN women had begun to fancy having a crack at them outdoors.

They found a well-organised RAF outfit ready for them, being handed a 4-0 defeat in the first match. The ladies then ran out of legs on a lovely warm afternoon to lose 8-0 to the rampant Army.

The U23s dreadfully missed half a dozen Royals in Afghanistan and fared just the same, losing a close game with the RAF then also running out of legs in the second match of the day – again to the Army but by 9-0.

Despite losing six selected players in two days due to injuries, the RN veterans beat the Army 4-2 then proceeded to lose 2-3 to a resurgent RAF (who had walloped the Army 6-3) to get the Navy's only points on the board in coming second.

The veteran women, well marshalled as ever by Julie Voss and Lindsey Jackson, were just pipped 4-2 by the Army and 4-1 by the RAF – both seeming to have more younger players than the RN ladies, most of whom were playing 20 years ago or more.

Disappointing scores came out of the RN senior men. At 2-2 vs the RAF, the next team to score would win it.

After a yellow card to the RN, the airmen took a 3-2 lead and then while the Navy were thinking about it, the RAF had the temerity to get a fourth in the dying seconds.

No problem. 'Just beat the Army 3-0 and it's ours' was the confident view in the RN camp.

The Navy went 1-0 up – on track, one thought. The Army equalised 1-1 – oh dear. Press forward chaps – need to win 4-1 now. Oh dear – left holes at the back, Army got a second. Got to win 5-2 – oh there's the final whistle.

Not the Navy's year this time. The Army lost everything in their centenary year in 2008. The Navy seem to have done the same in their anniversary season.

But through it all the sun shone, the occasion sparkled, the organisation ticked along without major mishap, and 250 Navy, Army, and RAF players all stayed till 6pm for the presentations ceremony.

The evening before, 120 people enjoyed a splendid centenary cocktail party aboard HMS Warrior.

● Retired CPO Paul Congerton challenges Wg Cdr Neil Powell during the veterans match, won 4-3 by the RAF. In the background three grandeees of Royal Navy hockey – former CPO(PTI) Harry Pimblett, Lt Cdr John Coley and Capt Nick Batho – look on

Picture: Keith Woodland, HMS Collingwood



# Things can only get better

## THE 2009 golf season has opened in disappointing fashion with both the men's and ladies teams suffering significant losses.

On the positive side, a development coaching weekend was held at Southwick Park, writes Cdr Gary Skinnis, Secretary RNSGA.

The event attracted 13 players with three current squad members and ten prospective players.

Under the tuition of Eddy Rawlings, the local professional, all aspects of the game were addressed bringing out some interesting findings.

The outcome of the weekend was that a very encouraging number of possible Royal Navy representative players were identified and will be invited to test themselves under competitive conditions in the near future.

Over that same weekend, a team of six travelled to the tough links course at Burnham and Berrow to compete in the prestigious Brent Knoll Bowl.

Having suffered a rather humiliating defeat at the hands

of the Army in September at the Inter-Service Championships, drawing the same opposition in the first round of this event meant a tough start to the competition.

However, the team performed admirably in beating the strong Army six, thus gaining first blood for the season.

Unfortunately, the same form could not be repeated in the afternoon and the team was left to win the consolation prize on Sunday.

Three weeks later saw the traditional annual match against Cornwall played this year at West Cornwall Golf Club, St Ives.

The RN team included three players from the development weekend – ABs Joe Andrews (HMS Drake) and David Thomas (HMS Edinburgh) and PO Peter Thompson (814 NAS).

While all three acquitted themselves well, Thomas was the pick of the bunch, playing the final hole of his singles with unexpected experience and apparent lack of nerves to halve with his opponent.

New RNSGA captain LNN Scott Gilbert (MDHU Portsmouth) led from the front with an excellent singles victory and there were also good performances from

CPO Richard McInstry (HMS Shoreham), LS Connor Macleod, (HMS Neptune) and WO Shaun Matthews (HMS Montrose).

The overall loss by 3½ points to 17½ stresses the strength of the opposition and the management were happy with the majority of aspects from the weekend.

The men then went north to the popular fixture against Leeds and District Golf Union.

Traditional Yorkshire hospitality is always in abundant supply during this weekend and the members of Garforth Golf Club were no exception.

After a very friendly match on the Saturday in which the Royal Navy achieved a rare win, a very social evening together with host players and partners was enjoyed.

The next day saw the RN pitched against the strongest Union side in the history of the event. With their 'worst' player enjoying a handicap of 1.6, results were always going to be hard to come by.

So it was to prove with some fairly heavy defeats suffered by the RN players. Two exceptions were CPO Steve King (DES Bath) and AET Craig Merralls (AES Sultan).

The two paired up in an

enthralling foursomes combination in the morning where no less than 11 birdies were enjoyed between them before an honourable half was declared on the final green.

King went on to an equally exciting final green singles win in the afternoon, and Merralls would have done the same had it not been for a 'miracle' shot from his opponent on the 18th hole. His halved match was still a considerable achievement.

Two more players from the development were given a taste of competitive representative golf.

Lt Al Woodward (824 NAS) showed significant promise but found the step-up in standard difficult and would be the first to admit that work needs to be done; Mne Jamie O'Reilly has enjoyed county golf in the past and with more practice and play should prove to be a significant addition to the squad.

Back to Southwick Park and the RN Ladies were in action against the local club side.

With a very inexperienced team, SPNRC ladies proved to be far too strong and the RN were on the end of what for them, was an unusual 4-0 defeat. Hopefully some of the regulars will return in

the next match.

This year's Navy Championships will be held at Hesketh Golf Club, Southport, from June 22-26.

For those not selected for command teams, opportunities exist to enter as an individual (handicap limit 10).

This year's event will, for the first time, incorporate the ladies and any lady golfer interested in playing should contact the ladies' secretary, Lt Cdr Debra Vout on 93832 3521.

Men should contact Cdr Skinnis on 9380 27880.

## Dan-tastic judo trip

THE RN judo squad headed to Jersey for three days of intensive training ahead of the 2009 season.

Thoroughly prepared, the RN-RM squad then grappled with two Jersey and two Guernsey teams, then took on a Channel Islands' select side (themselves in preparation for the World Island Games).

In all five encounters, the Service judo players came out on top – despite many first-team regulars unable to attend due to global commitments.

That, said trip organiser 4th Dan CPO John Thacker, encouraged some outstanding performances from some of the less-experienced players, notably ABs Alex Stocker (HMS Nottingham) and Andy Ireson (Sultan) and Lt Cdr John Baxter (Northwood) who had only recently taken up the sport.

There was more than just a trophy at stake in the final event in Jersey: this was a very personal contest for the RN team.

They were competing for the inaugural John Manuel Memorial Trophy, named in honour of Sgt John 'Manny' Manuel, a mainstay of judo in the Senior Service who was killed in action in Afghanistan in December.

More details on RN judo are available from CPO Thacker on 01743 232541 or [rnjudo.com](http://rnjudo.com).

## The A, B and sea of gig racing



NO, NOT a recreation of the infamous Cambridge team sinking during the 1978 boat race, but RNAS Culdrose's B squad – from left to right, Andy Tullin, Simon Mitchell, Mark Goulborn, Rolf Newton, Ross Elston, Jeff Smith and Robyn Pyne – struggling with choppy waters off the Isles of Scilly at the 2009 World Pilot Gig Championships.

After a few months training since reforming at the end of 2008, 22 members of the Helston

air station's gig club headed to the Scillies.

There the three Seahawk teams, A, B and Ladies, faced competition from 119 other gig teams in four gruelling races played out in challenging conditions.

As befits their status, the A team posted the best results, taking 68th position overall. The B squad were 13 places behind them, while the Ladies took 96th position.

A warm welcome was extended from other

clubs who were pleased to see Culdrose competing again after a few years' absence due to operational commitments.

"I'm particularly proud of the effort and achievement especially as the majority had never raced before, and I'm grateful to those club members who could not make the championships but contributed by making up the numbers for training sessions prior to the event," said club captain Steve Cass.

## Late blow KOs Joe

ROYAL Marine super heavyweight Joe Harvey was the sole representative flying the RN flag at the Amateur Boxing Association's quarter and semi-finals in Sheffield.

Despite having stepped up from heavyweight, he proved in the preliminary rounds of the competition that he could still pack a punch, stopping every one of his opponents within the distance.

The quarter final against Parsons (Milton Keynes ABC) was no exception.

With his opponent weighing in over three stone heavier, the marine could not afford to be drawn into a brawl.

Clever boxing in the first two rounds ensured that he racked up the points with single shots and speedy footwork.

Parsons was unable to cope with the Royal's speed of punch and movement and felt the toll in the final round. Joe, sensing the fatigue of his opponent, upped his work rate, throwing devastating combinations and phases which saw the referee intervene and stop the bout for another victory by knockout.

With two fights in two days there was very little time for celebration. Despite boxing his quarter final after midnight, he had to prepare for the semi the following evening.

This time he faced Isla (Miguels), fresh after reaching the semi-finals by walkover. Lighter than his previous opponent, but towering over Joe at 6ft 8in, the marine had to demonstrate his resourcefulness and ability to adapt.

Despite the reach disadvantage, Joe maintained his early lead and entered the final round ten points ahead.

But with only 15 seconds of the bout remaining and streets ahead on points, Joe walked on to a wild left hook which knocked him to the canvas. Whilst he made it to his feet well within the eight count, he sustained a large cut below his nose which forced the referee to stop the contest.

Despite the disappointment, RN Boxing Coach Sgt Graham Alderson said Joe "proved resourceful and adaptable, able to change his style to outwit a number of different opponents."

"He offered a boxing lesson to many spectators at the prestigious ABA championship and was a true ambassador for the Royal Navy Boxing Team."

Meanwhile the RN boxing team is preparing a number of female fighters for the this month's national female championship.

In all seven ladies will be representing the RN against civilian counterparts, a range of ranks from lieutenant commander to able seaman and a range of experience from novice to international.

## Nine too fine for students

THE RN entered teams in the men's and women's competitions in this year's Cheltenham Rugby League 9s Festival and – after a long day in warm but windy conditions – the Brothers triumphed over Gloucester University, writes *WO1 Keith Humpleby RNRL spokesman*.

The RNRL ladies – aka the 'Wrenegades' (*we like it – Ed*) – in only their second season put in creditable performances in their four matches, beating the England Students in their final group match by 16-12.

Besides being a great team performance the highlight of the match was a 70-metre try from Fiesha Green.

Neither try nor performance were quite enough to move into the knock-out stage but the performance was a great encouragement to the team and coaching staff of LPT Darren West and Steve Smallbone.

The men's competition involved sides from all three Services, with the Army looking to retain the trophy after a narrow win over the RN in last year's final.

On the other hand the Navy were out to seek revenge for that defeat and, with a mix of seasoned first teamers and Academy players, the Brothers overcame their early-round opponents with ease before coming up against the Army in the semi-final.

The sides swapped tries early on but a successful Army conversion edged the soldiers ahead by two. A purple patch for the Brothers saw them touch down two unconverted tries, easing to a six-point lead. Despite a strong rally from the Army, it was enough to get through to the final.

In contrast to the closely-fought semi, the RN side dominated the final against Gloucester

University from the word go.

With Johnny Platt taking over kicking duties and the pack on top form the students never got a look in. Four converted tries and some great defence were enough to see the Brothers home by 24-0.

A victory over the Army, another trophy for the cabinet and automatic qualification for the Headingley Carnegie 9s in August was just reward for a great day out in the Cotswolds.

The fixture list for the rest of the season sees all three RNRL teams preparing for this year's Inter-Services series in September.

Highlights in June include: RM vs Paras in Bridgend on June 18 and a visit by the Brothers to the Celtic Crusaders between June 19 and 21, including a curtain-raiser match against a Welsh select side. More details on 023 9272 7749.

## Royals keep cricket title

SIDES from the Royal Marines, Portsmouth, Naval Air and Plymouth Commands converged on Pompey for the Inter-Command cricket championships.

Plymouth were only able to field a team of six, sadly, while Scotland withdrew before the event.

The weather forecast was dull with light drizzle, however the first day commenced on time with Portsmouth drawn against a depleted Plymouth side and the Royal Marines against Naval Air.

On paper the Royals and Portsmouth looked to be the strongest teams and maybe it was fortuitous that they had drawn each other in the final match of the competition as both teams made light work of disposing of Plymouth and Naval Air on the first morning.

It was anticipated that with only four teams, the competition might be contained within one day, but the rain persuaded the captains of both the Royal Marines and Portsmouth teams to delay their clash until the second day.

That was almost a fateful decision as rain fell steadily overnight and indeed delayed the start of play, but a game was possible with further delays.

A slightly disappointing match was won easily by the Royal Marines by 92 runs to retain the Inter-Command trophy.

Throughout the competition there were some very good performances with both bat and ball, including Lt Tim Burt (Ports) 206 NO, Mne Alvin Pollard (RM) 102 and 73 NO, Maj Cliff Dare (RM) 72, 46 NO and 3-15, AB Colin Lunsley (Plymouth) 44 and 43, John Grasham (RM) 3-21 and 3-23.

Lt John Batley RN (NAC) was looking very comfortable in scoring 60 before he clipped a top edge into his own helmet visor resulting in seven stitches being required over his right eye.

A number of new names to Navy cricket were unearthed and the occasion enabled grass-roots players to rub shoulders with more experienced players.

## Reservists on target

HMS King Alfred's rifle team are the top marksmen in 'reserve land' after demonstrating their prowess in Edinburg.

The Portsmouth-based reservists formed one of five RNR teams taking part in the International Skill at Arms contest for NATO Reserve Forces, staged over two days at Redford.

PO Mark 'Buck' Taylor, LS Matt Bundy and AB Chris Jones picked up their weapons for the Whale Island-based unit.

The competition comprised stances including the L85 service rifle with SUSAT (optical sight), L85 service rifle with iron sights and a Browning 9mm pistol in a combat snap practice, as well as a battlefield first-aid stance and command task, among other disciplines.

Numerous advanced marksmanship techniques were learned and employed by the King Alfred team (among them: don't leave a team mate stranded on top of a 10ft wall during the obstacle course section... it means dropping a few points).

Despite strong opposition from the Army, RAF and other RNR teams, the King Alfred shooters were ranked first among the UK marksmen.

Aside from the gold medals, particular highlights from the weekend included a trip to Edinburg Castle for drinks and Beat Retreat in the Great Hall following the competition.

The marksmen were treated to a gala meal of haggis and other Scottish 'delicacies', then entertained by the buglers of the Light Infantry and the combined Pipes and Drums of the Scottish Army.

## (Trans)global reach

FOR the first time in more than a decade, the three Services will sail around the globe in a year-long yacht race beginning in Portsmouth next month.

Exercise Transglobe will pit the RN, RAF and Army against each other in identical Challenge 67ft yachts – Adventure, Discoverer and Challenger respectively – in a 368-day, 13-leg odyssey from Portsmouth-South America-South Africa-Australasia-Caribbean-North America and back to Portsmouth.

Not since 1998 has there been a round-the-world race involving all three Forces and while Service pride will be at stake, organisers say the key aim is to reward hard-working personnel for their efforts with this unique experience – and to toughen them up for continued operations.

More than 500 personnel from across the three Services are taking part over the 13-leg race, with RN participants aged from 19 to 48. On most legs, there will be nine inexperienced and five veteran sailors.

And on one unique stretch, between Antigua and Charleston, men and women in the Forces injured in the line of duty or in accidents will crew the yachts as part of efforts to rehabilitate them back to full fitness.

A physiotherapist at Headley Court suggested taking one or two people on one boat for one leg. Transglobe bosses liked the idea – but decided to expand it as part of the wider 'Battle Back' initiative across the Forces. Now around a dozen rehabilitating personnel will go to sea on the three yachts.

The event is intended more as adventurous training than a contest – although two legs are earmarked for race crews, the legendary Sydney-Hobart race at Christmas, and Antigua Race Week next spring – but it's hard to keep inter-Service rivalries in check.



● Three's company... The trio of Transglobe yachts during a run-out in the Solent

Picture: LA(Phot) Owen King, FRPU East

Each leg will be scored with points deducted for any damage to the boats.

"This is the most demanding form of adventurous training," said Capt Nick Fletcher, the RN officer overseeing the Transglobe.

"We all have those 'Why am I here?' moments at sea. You cannot get off, you cannot walk away from your oppos. These are big, powerful yachts demanding a lot of effort."

"One corporal said he was more frightened after one night at sea than during six months in Afghanistan."

"So don't think this is a holiday for our boys and girls – it's a tough business. But that's why it's important. Grit, determination, team spirit. They're all important in the Armed Forces."

Lt Cdr Shane Doran, project manager for capital ships at Devonport and a member of the RN team taking part in the Sydney-Hobart race, said it would

be a privilege going to sea with some of the less experienced sailors; he's one of the trained crew accompanying rookies on the final leg between Boston and Portsmouth next summer.

"Many people sail all their lives but never cross the Atlantic. It is the pinnacle of ocean sailing. It is a 'once in a lifetime' experience, something which is a real achievement."

"The exercise is a 'thank you' to our boys and girls in the front line – you'd pay perhaps £3,000 for the privilege to take part as a civvy. But it's not just about sailing. It's about team building, a spirit of adventure."

Lt Ian Perryman hopes the global challenge will bring young and junior leaders to the fore in particular.

"Ninety per cent of critical decisions are taken by junior ratings, junior NCOs. There is no better practice for making those decisions than out there on the

ocean," he continued.

"I believe the Navy will gain hugely from this. We need to go back to values like commitment, challenges, discipline, leadership, respect. Adventurous sailing in the ocean brings it out."

Submarine marine engineer Lt Cdr Adrian Wheal added: "Ocean sailing is a wonderful place to build confidence – you cannot control the elements."

"Going to the front of the boat at sea, getting the sails in with waves trying to shove you over the side, that's challenging."

The exercise begins on July 11 with the yachts mustering at Gunwharf before formally setting off from Southsea Castle at 1pm. A team from HMS Sultan will crew the RN boat on the first leg to the Canaries. The boats are due to return to the Solent 368 days later.

You can find out more and follow progress at [www.exercisetransglobe.com](http://www.exercisetransglobe.com)



## Not King Cole – but almost

ANOTHER month, another grimace from strongman PO(PT) Sean Cole.

Last month, he was trying to become Britain's strongest man (sadly, he wasn't).

This month, the senior rating from HMS Nelson could be found in Coventry at the British National Powerlifting Championships.

To reach the nationals, Sean had to get through the Southern Counties' qualifier – which he did with a total lift of 512.5kg.

Six weeks of intensive training followed before the petty officer lined up with 13 fellow powerlifters from across the UK in the 67.5kg class.

For the uninitiated, powerlifting is not weightlifting; the latter is a technical event made up of two lifts, the snatch and the clean-and-jerk, where the weight is lifted above the head.

Powerlifting is a test of pure unadulterated, brute strength and comprises three lifts ('full-power'): the squat, bench press and dead lift. Each competitor is allowed three attempts at each lift, the best lift in each discipline being added to their total; the lifter with the highest total is the winner.

The six weeks of training paid off. Sean lifted a massive 527.5kg finishing off with a 240kg dead lift – breaking the previous military world record lift total by 10kg.

It wasn't quite enough to lift the gong, but it was enough to take Sean to second place behind eventual winner, world record holder and England teammate Stuart Ford.

And his performance once again earned Sean a place at the powerlifting World Championships, which this year are being held in Milton Keynes.

You can find out more about powerlifting/strongman from Sean on 9380 28667/023 9272 8667.

Next month



**Brunei of the tiger – jungle warfare in Borneo with the Royals**



**Moor moor's better than war war – 702 NAS head to Dartmoor**



**Dawn of aces – pioneers of naval flight: souvenir supplement**

Plus

**Full report from the 2009 RNA Conference**



SPORT



● AB Silivenusi Buinimasi (HMS Cumberland) tries to lay a pass to off LAET Marsh Cormack (845 NAS) during the Army's 50-7 demolition of the RN at Twickenham

Picture: LA(Phot) Paul 'Wheellie' A'Barrow, RNAS Yeovilton

# Steamrollered

THE Army slapped a thick layer of icing on the seasonal cake when they overran the Navy 50-7 before a record crowd of 55,800 at Twickenham.

The Reds were hot favourites to take their eighth successive Babcock crown but this victory, more than numbers, was delivered with guile and panache, writes Roger Thompson.

The Navy were certainly not overawed at the prospect of playing what is probably the best-prepared Army squad in 20 years.

Indeed they had their moments early on but the Army defence responded with characteristic vigour.

Army skipper Mark Lee led his cohorts into point blank contact, and the Army had only to wait four minutes to show their mettle and stimulate the scoreboard crew.

A fiery ruck allowed Fiji international Jack Prasad to break left where he found scrum half Ian Martin steaming up in support. Martin's great opening try was converted by Mal Roberts.

Minutes later line-out specialist Rob Sugden took one off the top to feed No.8 Ben Hughes. Hughes gave an impression of having started his charge near Waterloo station and there was no stopping this particular train.

Individually, the Navy side played their hearts out but were unable to gain any momentum.

After Plans A and B had failed the tank was empty. The Army seldom allowed the ball to reach the England 7s international Josh Drauniniu who remained on the wing burning a long fuse.

It didn't help that Navy fly half Lloyd, seemingly as a ploy, hoofed hard-won possession miles into the air where it could do no harm. Not so, of course, when it came down into the arms of the Reds back three – Barbarian Mal Roberts, Malakai Magnus and Gus Qasevakatini – and the fireworks started again.

Roberts, the old Twickenham head on a very fit body, Magnus who has made the wing berth his own in very short time and Qasevakatini, stepped up from Academy rugby, crafted a masterful attacking game which stretched the matelots defence beyond breaking point.

It was poor return for the Navy forwards who had their work cut out to salvage anything

from Chris Budgen and Melvyn Lewis.

Twelve minutes into this clash the Army was firmly in the driving seat with Chris Budgen again revving up the front five with a full tank of fuel.

The set pieces were solid, Matt Dwyer delivered precision ball for the jumpers while Rob Sugden and Darrell Ball soared to the point of in-flight refuelling.

With such a solid platform the back row had a field day in attack and sometimes in defence. Ben Hughes and Apo Satala rampaged across Twickenham tundra before providing a further focus for Budgen and Co to ruck, maul and deliver to eager backs.

Centres Gerhard Wessells and Paul Gittins failed to score but it spoke volumes that their wingers Magnus and Qasevakatini notched up four tries between them. Jack Prasad who put on a mesmerising display of fly half play twice crossed the line. Mal Roberts kicked five conversions in his final appearance in a Reds shirt. Apo Satala was Sky TV's Man of the Match for his driving runs and awesome tackling.

The sole RN consolation came five minutes from the end of the drubbing courtesy of a try from Dave Pascoe.

But it's not all been bad news at RNRU HQ...

The 1st XV went into the Twickenham showdown at least crowned with laurels of victory following a comfortable 34-20 victory over a gallant RAF team in Newbury.

The RN were always ahead, but the RAF were never more than one score adrift until the fourth quarter when the Mariners produced a series of punchy moves to break the air defence and, behind schedule, reach calm waters.

Led into battle by No.8 Howard Parr, the RAF scrapped for every ball and every inch of turf. The strategy certainly paid off as the Navy made a series of errors – punished by the boot of the RAF No.10, Philip Thomas.

In truth that is as about as far as it got for the airmen. They had plenty of possession but hardly presented a threat.

Within a sort of forwards stalemate, it was the Navy's back three who caught the eye. Both 7s internationals Barden and Drauniniu looked menacing in open play whilst between them at fullback Andy Vance was always on hand to provide support and it was through Vance

that the Navy opened the scoring when he was on hand to receive a simple scoring pass from Barden.

For the Navy's second it was Greg Barden who continued the break after strong running centre Calum McCrae had again split the RAF defence wide apart.

Indeed much of the story of the night was how the RAF successfully disrupted the Dark Blues at the scrum and lineout and managed to slow down the rucks and mauls.

Playing in his last match for the RAF, Matt Cornish again demonstrated he full repertoire of skills on the ground and was a constant thorn in the side of the Navy all evening. Greatly respected by the Navy players they will not be mourning his retirement from the light blue colours.

The half time score stood in the Navy's favour at 15-9, but the match probably seemed closer than it was.

In the last quarter the Navy introduced HMS Liverpool's half back pairing of Wayne 'Cowboy' John at scrum half and debutant Dane Smallbone at fly half.

With the two pairs of fresh legs continually probing the tiring RAF defence it was no surprise that space was gradually being found and also that Josh Drauniniu was on hand to finish on a couple of occasions.

The champagne moment came from the 'Cowboy', which was almost too fast to catch with the naked eye. A fiercely-contested ruck developed on the RAF '22', John gained clean possession from where he dummied the entire RAF defence, turned on a tap washer and sprinted 30m for a try. Great stuff.

Parr rallied the troops once more and led the way into a string of ferocious rucks and mauls and emerged through the melee to touch-down. It was a fitting consolation for a gallant performance.

For most the mood at the final whistle was subdued. The RAF had deservedly won much respect for their doggedness throughout the match, the Navy fully aware that they would have to find the higher gears for the Army at Twickenham.

However for the five Navy debutants of Gareth Jones, Lewis Taylor, Ritchie Mayson, Dane Smallbone and U23 Kev Macrossan it was a winning introduction to representative rugby.

## RN lay down the gauntlet

AS A warm-up for the Transglobe round-the-world race (see page 47), the three yachts were in action around the Isle of Wight for the Services offshore regatta, writes Lt James Baker.

The result augured well for the impending global challenge. As Adventure crossed the Gilkicker line, skipper Richard Tarr congratulated his crew: "Five on the trot – well done team."

After racing 340 miles around the Channel the RN team finished in first place with the RAF second and the Army third.

In a change from the more traditional format, the regatta took place in Challenge 67s – all liveried in their respective Service logos ready for the Transglobe.

The boats themselves are constructed massively and the loads are an order of magnitude higher than that found on an average 40ft racing boat.

Luckily we had a good spread of Challenge 67 experience in the crew to get us into the mindset of winning absolutely everything, more winning and taking serious care when easing winches.

The race committee laid a challenging course to take us east out of the Solent, then via Owers and Nab across the Channel to CH1. The three yachts were then to leave Alderney and Casquets to starboard and return to the Shambles and head back to the Gilkicker finish line via the Needles.

The RN team crossed the line first, led the Army and RAF through the Solent and built up a five-minute lead by Nab Tower.

In the south-westerly wind the beat across the Channel became difficult as the wind started to drop and the Army, in a band of better breeze, managed to recover and get slightly ahead.

The Navy team made a good call in the dying wind and building tide to tack away and managed to keep some useful VMG towards the mark.

The RAF followed whilst, as night fell, the Army continued to the south. Overnight the wind strengthened to Force 6-7 and veered to the west.

Adventure rounded CH1 and continued beating towards Alderney. The RAF were still astern but where were the Army? Could any of the yachts make it to the Alderney Race before the foul tide?

Daylight revealed that the Army were well astern of the RAF and Adventure led towards the foul tide off Alderney.

Unable to make any progress, even in 25kts of wind, the RN team kedged and had breakfast whilst the Army and RAF tacked to and fro trying to make way.

As the stream slackened the RAF started to make some headway and Adventure needed to weigh in a hurry.

Hauling a 42-ton steel yacht up towards her keel is not an experience to be taken lightly.

Despite all 14 crew heaving and winching there was no way that we could get the anchor to break out and after 15 minutes of straining, heaving and cursing the line suddenly parted and we were underway again, sans keel.

The RAF had sneaked ahead and it took considerable effort to claw that lead back by short tacking up to Casquets which both boats rounded side by side.

After 20 hours of upwind sailing, the reach and run home were an absolute delight.

Adventure pulled out a lead on the broad reach to the Shambles with the helmsmen working hard to keep the boat surfing down waves at 12-plus kts in bright sunshine and a following Force 7.

After the Shambles, Adventure ran downwind with a poled-out headsail towards the Needles, slowly increasing her lead through the western Solent and finishing, in the finest traditions of the RN, just in time for last orders.

**100% NEW LIFESTYLE. NEW ZEALAND. NAVY**

See page 37 for information on the exciting new opportunities available now.

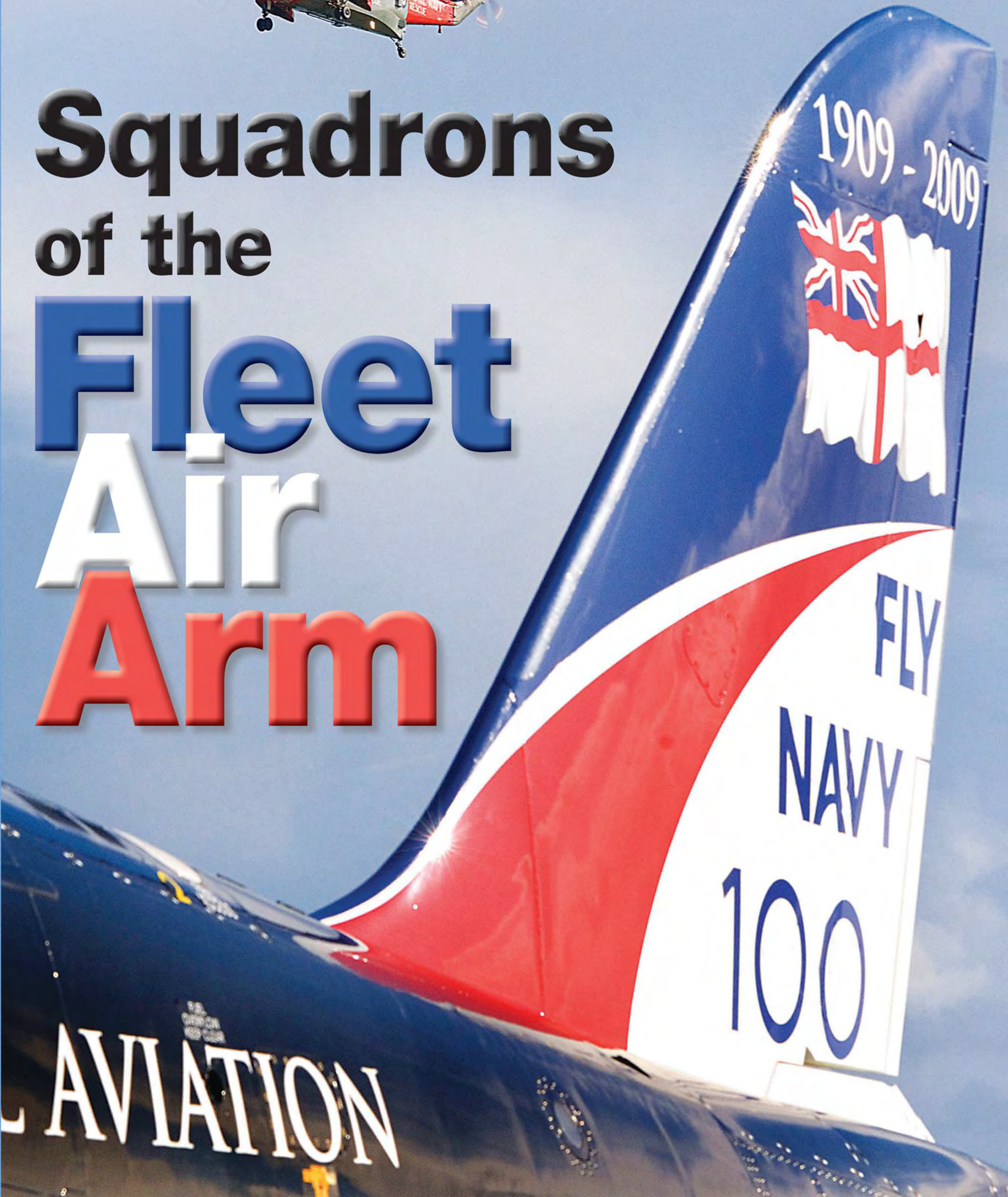


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# Squadrons of the Fleet Air Arm



AVIATION





**Strike Wing** comprising  
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Cottesmore  
ke squadron  
t: Harrier  
GR9A  
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unprepared  
s aura - We



Unit include: Nimrod I, II; Osprey;  
Gladiator I; Roc I; Fulmar I, II;  
Ib, IIb, IIc; Hellcat I, II; Seafire  
XV, FXVII, FR47; Attacker F1,  
hawk FB3, FGA4, FGA6; Scimitar  
I, S2; Sea Harrier FRS1, FA2;  
Gladiator; Spitfire Va, Vb; Sea  
; Sea Fury FB11, T20



1940-44  
1940-41  
1940  
1941-42  
1941  
1942  
1942  
1944  
1944  
1945  
1945  
1950  
1982



al Air Squadron  
no vincet - In this sign you  
Culdrose  
marine and anti-surface warfare.  
include surveillance, troop  
repleishment, casualty



December 1938 with 12  
ard HMS Hermes  
t: Merlin HM1

**Unit: 820 Naval Air Squadron**  
**Motto:** *tutamen et ultor - Safeguard and avenger*  
**Location:** RNAS Culdrose  
**Role:** Anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare  
**Date formed:** April 3 1933  
**Current aircraft:** Merlin HM1  
**Historic aircraft include:** Fairey III F; Seal; Shark I, II; Baffin; Swordfish I; Battle; Albacore I; Barracuda II; Avenger I, II; Firefly AS5, AS6; Avenger AS4; Gannet AS1, T2; Whirlwind HAS7; Wessex HAS1, HAS3; Sea King HAS1, HAS2, HAS5, HAS6  
**Battle honours:**  
Norway 1940-44  
Taranto 1940  
Mediterranean 1940  
'Bismarck' 1941  
Atlantic 1941  
North Africa 1942-43  
Malta Convoys 1943  
Salerno 1943  
Sicily 1944  
Palembang 1944  
East Indies 1945  
Okinawa 1945  
Japan 1945  
Falkland Islands 1982



**Unit: 845 Naval Air Squadron**  
**Motto:** *audios hostem - I hear the enemy*  
**Location:** RNAS Yeovilton  
**Role:** To provide 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines with tactical transport and load-lifting helicopters. Five independent flights, that may be sent to any theatre of operations worldwide at short notice  
**Date formed:** February 1 1943 with Grumman Avenger  
**Current aircraft:** Sea King HC4, HC4+  
**Historic aircraft include:** Grumman Avenger I; Wildcat V; Whirlwind HAS22, HAR3, HAS7; Wessex HAS1, HU5; Hiller HT2; Wasp HAS1  
**Battle honours:**  
East Indies 1944-45  
Burma 1945  
Falkland Islands 1982  
Kuwait 1991  
Al Faw 2003



**Unit: 849 Naval Air Squadron**  
**Motto:** *primus video - The first to see*  
**Location:** RNAS Culdrose  
**Role:** To provide operational and continuation training for the front-line airborne surveillance and control squadrons  
**Date formed:** August 1 1943 with 12 Grumman Avenger  
**Current aircraft:** Sea King ASAC7 (Airborne Surveillance and Control) helicopters  
**Historic aircraft include:** Avenger I, II; Skyraider AEW1; Gannet AEW3, AS4, COD4, T5; Sea King AEW2  
**Battle honours:**  
Normandy 1944  
East Indies 1945  
Palembang 1945  
Okinawa 1945  
Japan 1945



**Unit: 846 Naval Air Squadron**  
**Motto:** *semper instans - Always threatening*  
**Location:** RNAS Yeovilton  
**Role:** To provide 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines with tactical transport and load-lifting helicopters. Five independent flights, that may be sent to any theatre of operations worldwide at short notice  
**Date formed:** April 1 1943 with Grumman Avenger as a torpedo bomber reconnaissance unit  
**Current aircraft:** Sea King HC4, HC4+  
**Historic aircraft include:** Grumman Avenger I, II; Wildcat V, VI; Whirlwind HAS7; Wessex HU5; Sea King HC4  
**Battle honours:**  
Norway 1944-45  
Atlantic 1944  
Normandy 1944  
Arctic 1944-45  
Falkland Islands 1982  
Kuwait 1991



**Unit: 854 Naval Air Squadron**  
**Motto:** *audentes fortuna iuvat - Fortune favours the brave*  
**Location:** RNAS Culdrose  
**Role:** To provide airborne surveillance and control  
**Date formed:** November 15 1943  
**Current aircraft:** Sea King ASAC7 (Airborne Surveillance and Control) helicopters  
**Historic aircraft include:** Avenger I, II, III  
**Battle honours:**  
Normandy 1944  
Palembang 1945  
Okinawa 1945



**Unit: 847 Naval Air Squadron**  
**Motto:** *ex alto concutimur - We strike from on high*  
**Location:** RNAS Yeovilton  
**Role:** To provide armed reconnaissance and direction of supporting arms capability, primarily in support of 3 Cdo Bde RM worldwide  
**Date formed:** September 1 1995 - however history pre-dates to August 12 1968 as 3 Commando Brigade Air Squadron  
**Current aircraft:** Army-owned Lynx AH Mk7  
**Historic aircraft include:** Barracuda II; Gannet AS1, AS4; Whirlwind HAS7; Wessex HU5  
**Battle honours:**  
East Indies 1944  
Falkland Islands 1982  
Al Faw 2003



**Unit: 857 Naval Air Squadron**  
**Motto:** *animis opibusque parati - Prepared in mind and resources*  
**Location:** RNAS Culdrose  
**Role:** To provide airborne surveillance and control  
**Date formed:** April 1 1944 with 12 Grumman Avenger as a Torpedo Bomber Reconnaissance squadron  
**Current aircraft:** Sea King ASAC7 (Airborne Surveillance and Control) helicopters  
**Historic aircraft include:** Avenger I, II  
**Battle honours:**  
Palembang 1945  
Okinawa 1945



**Unit: 848 Naval Air Squadron**  
**Motto:** *accipe hoc - Take that*  
**Location:** RNAS Yeovilton  
**Role:** To train Sea King HC Mk4 Commando helicopter aircrew; to provide support for counter-terrorism operations.  
**Date formed:** 1943 with 12 Avenger I aircraft on HMS Siskin  
**Current aircraft:** Sea King HC4 and HC4+  
**Historic aircraft include:** Avenger I, II; Swordfish I; Whirlwind HAR21, HAR1, HAS22, HAS7; Wasp HAS1; Wessex HU5  
**Personnel trained:** up to 60 pilots and aircrewmen; 150 maintainers each year  
**Battle honours:**  
Norway 1944  
Okinawa 1945  
Japan 1945  
Falkland Islands 1982  
Kuwait 1991



**Unit: Royal Navy Historic Flight**  
**Location:** RNAS Yeovilton  
**Role:** Established in 1972 to preserve Naval aviation heritage and to be a living memorial to all Fleet Air Arm personnel  
**Number of personnel:** 16 service and civilian; all pilots are serving RN or RNR personnel  
**Date formed:** 1972  
**Current aircraft:** Fairey Swordfish I, II; Sea Fury FB11; Sea Hawk FGA6; Chipmunk T10  
**Further information:** [www.royalnavyhistoricflight.org.uk](http://www.royalnavyhistoricflight.org.uk)



**Unit: 824 Naval Air Squadron**  
**Motto:** *spectat ubique spiritus - Behold the wind from all around*  
**Location:** RNAS Culdrose  
**Mission:** To ensure the delivery of all Merlin courses to the standards expected for the front-line by providing correct, relevant and streamlined training for pilots, observers, aircrewmen and engineers  
**Role:** In addition to its training role, the squadron is capable of carrying out all the roles of the other front-line squadrons  
**Date formed:** April 3 1933 as a Spotter Reconnaissance Squadron  
**Current aircraft:** Merlin HM1 helicopters  
**Historic aircraft include:** Fairey III F; Swordfish I, II; Seal; Sea Hurricane IIc; Wildcat V; Barracuda II; Firefly FR1, AS6; Avenger TBM-3E, AS4; Gannet AS1, T2, AS4; Whirlwind HAS7; Sea King HAS1, HAS2, HAS2(AEW), HAS5, HAS6  
**Training statistics:** Two courses of five aircrews run each year (pilot, observer, aircrewman). Engineering and refresher courses also run throughout the year.  
**Battle honours:**  
Calabria 1940  
Mediterranean 1940  
Taranto 1940  
Libya 1940-41  
Malta Convoys 1942  
Arctic 1944  
Falklands 1982



**Unit: 829 Naval Air Squadron**  
**Motto:** *non effugiet - They shall not escape*  
**Location:** RNAS Culdrose  
**Role:** To provide single aircraft flights for six Type 23 frigates to carry out anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare  
**Date formed:** June 15 1940 at Ford with nine Albacores for torpedo spotting reconnaissance work  
**Current aircraft:** Merlin HM1 helicopters  
**Historic aircraft include:** Albacore I; Swordfish I, II; Barracuda II; Whirlwind HAR1, HAS7, HAR9; Wasp HAS1; Wessex HAS1, HAS3, HU5; Lynx HAS2, HAS3  
**Battle honours:**  
Matapan 1941  
Mediterranean 1941  
East Indies 1941  
Diego Suarez 1942  
Norway 1944  
Falkland Islands 1982  
Kuwait 1991



al Air Squadron  
ep  
Yeovilton  
ynx helicopters for the  
ime attack role on the frigates  
f the Royal Navy  
ctober 9 1939 at Worthy Down  
: Lynx HMA8  
**Unit include:** Swordfish I, II;  
r I, II; Barracuda II, TR3;  
T; Grumman Avenger TBM-  
Gannet AS1, T2, AS4,  
HAS7, Wessex  
2, HAS3  
: 1940-41  
1940  
1940-41  
1941  
1944  
1944  
1982  
1982  
1991



# Naval Air Squadrons 2009



**RNAS Yeovilton, HMS Heron**, in Somerset is home to the Navy's 'grey' Lynx helicopters and the jungly Sea Kings and green Lynx of the Commando Helicopter Force. As well as its operational squadrons that excel in the maritime, amphibious and land environments, it trains aircrew and engineers for its home-based aircraft, and both fighter and aircraft controllers for ship and shore.

The air base itself was commissioned on June 18 1940, originally as a base for the Navy's fighter aircraft.

The air station, a site of 1,000 acres employing more than 3,000 people, is one of the busiest military airfields in the UK and among the largest in Europe.

The jungly squadrons of the Commando Helicopter Force, with their Sea King HC4, HC4+ and Lynx AH7, are in constant demand for work with the Navy's amphibious ships and in landlocked Afghanistan, where the famous 'can-do' attitude of the CHF aircraft rule in this sea of sand.

The maritime Lynx HMA8 helicopter force is based at RNAS Yeovilton, that makes up the Flights found on board Naval warships around the UK and globe – forming the biggest squadron of aircraft in the Fleet Air Arm.

The Grob of 727 NAS that are used to assess aspiring Fleet Air Arm officers are a relatively recent addition to the site, moving from their previous home of Roborough airport at Plymouth.

The training squadrons are focused on their primary role to turn out world-class aircrews to support the front line. And standards are kept high by Naval Flying Standards Flight (Fixed Wing), who using Hawk jet trainers are detached from their parent unit Fleet Requirements and Direction Unit (FRADU) at RNAS Culdrose, to carry out familiarisation and continuation training for fast jets, and support the Fleet during operational sea training and Joint Warrior exercises.

And of course, it is also the home of the 'Dunker', formally known as the Underwater Escape Training Unit, which just as the name indicates, trains people to escape from helicopter cockpits after a crash into water.

Yeovilton was once the home of the Sea Harrier, but now the Naval fast jet crews can be found among the gentle hills of Rutland with Joint Force Harrier based at RAF Cottesmore and RAF Wittering, when they're not in Afghanistan, on board an aircraft carrier, or meeting one of their many other commitments around the UK and the world.



**RNAS Culdrose, HMS Seahawk**, near Helston in Cornwall specialises in the state-of-the-art Merlin with its anti-submarine warfare role, the venerable, but sophisticated, Sea King 'baggers' for airborne surveillance and control, and the search and rescue Sea Kings of 771 Naval Air Squadron. Training of the Fleet Air Arm's aircrew, engineers, controllers and flight deck crews ready for the front line continues apace at the Cornish base.

Another 1,000 acre site, HMS Seahawk first took flight in 1947 with a life expectancy of just ten years, a 'use-by' date that has proven a little inaccurate.

Culdrose's location in the far corner of Cornwall is ideal for the 24-hour, 365-days-a-year search and rescue efforts that protect people and craft in danger throughout the south-west of Britain and out 200 miles in the South Western Approaches.

All the Fleet Air Arm's Observers, who operate the surveillance and weapons systems in our helicopters, carry out their basic aircrew training at Culdrose, using simulators and Jetstream aircraft as airborne classrooms.

Here resides the Naval Flying Standards Flight (Rotary Wing) team who take charge of the 'driving test' which all helicopter pilots, observers and aircrewmembers must undergo each year.

Aircraft Handlers from across the Navy are drafted to Culdrose for professional training at the RN School of Flight Deck Operations. Indeed anyone involved in the operation of aircraft from ships will be trained at the school, not just Naval personnel, but increasingly, members of the Army and RAF. Over 700 students every year are trained in the specialist skills of fighting aircraft fires, as well as the fundamentals of aircraft launch and recovery.

A satellite of RNAS Culdrose is Predannack Airfield, half owned by the National Trust – a site of great natural beauty and ideal as a relief landing ground for helicopter pilots under training.

Affectionately known as FRADU, the Fleet Requirements Air Direction Unit is a Serco-run unit, equipped with 13 Hawk aircraft, flown by ex-RAF pilots.

The Hawks are regular features of Thursday Wars and other realistic exercises run by Flag Officer Sea Training for British ships and other navies, where the fast jets bring to life the reality of air attack to ships and their crews.



Front page picture by LA Phot Carl Osmond: A 771 NAS Search and Rescue Sea King from RNAS Culdrose files above a Fly Navy 100 emblazoned Hawk  
 Back page picture by LA Phot Stuart 'Pusser' Hill: The Lynx helicopter from HMS Argyll at work in the skies during a Joint Warrior exercise.  
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