

NAVY NEWS

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HEROES OF HERRICK

**MARINES HOME
FROM HELMAND**

TRIUMPH OF ENDURANCE

**SAVING THE
RED PLUM**

● HMS Somerset leads three ships of the Taurus task group through the Suez Canal as the Royal Navy's flagship deployment of the year begins its second stage.

Behind the Type 23 frigate are the USS Mitscher, HMS Ocean and RFA Wave Knight - joining amphibious flagship HMS Bulwark and hunter-killer submarine HMS Talent for exercises in the Indian Ocean and beyond. See pages 18-19.

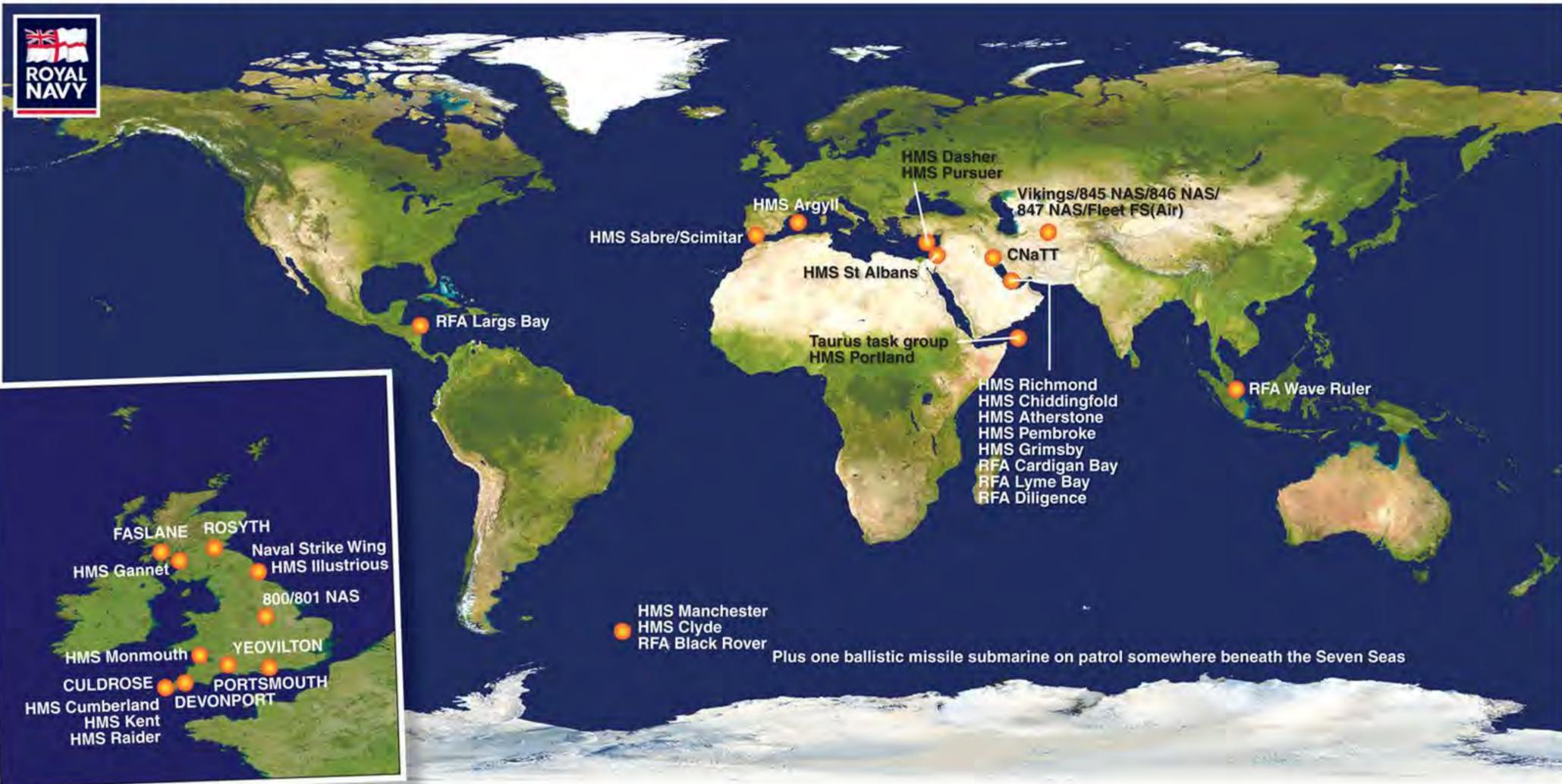
Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow, HMS Bulwark



SOMEWHERE'S EAST OF SUEZ



GLOBAL REACH



Fleet Focus

WELL, two milestones have been reached this month, significant on both a personal level and as part of the bigger picture in the war against terror.

3 Commando Brigade's latest six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan is over, while the British pull-out of Iraq is well under way with the senior command, **Commander UK Amphibious Force**, having handed over to the Americans.

The men and women of both forces were welcomed home, praised for their achievements from within and without the UK, (see pages 4-5) and, in the case of 3 Cdo Bde, took the fight to the enemy to the very last round (see pages 23-25).

But do not think that with their return, there is no RN presence in either Afghanistan or Iraq. **HMS Richmond** continues to patrol the oil platforms in the Gulf (see page 6), **RFA Cardigan Bay** is still the floating base for the Iraqi Navy (see page 38), and in Afghanistan – among other Senior Service units – the Commando Helicopter Force continues to support Allied ground troops.

The mainstay of the latter's operations is the Sea King, celebrating four decades of service with the RN this year. We visited CHF HQ at **RNAS Yeovilton** to look into the aircraft's future (see pages 20-21).

Also 40 this year is the Harrier, which also entered service in 1969 (with the RAF admittedly, but that's not going to stop the RN partying...). The FAA men and women at **20(R) Sqn** at RAF Wittering tell us what it's like to fly and look after an aviation legend (see pages 20-21).

Wittering feeds the **Naval Strike Wing** just up the road at Cottesmore, but the jets left Rutland behind and joined **HMS Illustrious** in the North Sea for the first work-up with the carrier in nearly a year (see opposite).

If you want unmanned aerial action, **HMS Kent**'s the place to be; the Type 23 has been testing her Seawolf missile system against drone targets (see page 4). The frigate and **HMS Cumberland** had to fend off 'attacks' from supercharged P2000 **HMS Raider**, which joined in a training exercise off Plymouth (see page 9).

The bulk of the **Taurus 09** task group is now east of Suez having exercised off Turkey (see pages 18-19), although **HMS Argyl** has left the Taurus trail (groan – Ed) and headed home (see page 9).

Tagging on to Taurus briefly was **HMS Portland**, which has been chasing pirates (and is back chasing pirates). The frigate's also enjoyed a trip to Goa... and suffered a nutty shortage (see pages 8 and 19).

Portland's partner in crime, or rather partner in crime-fighting, **HMS Northumberland**, has ended her piracy patrols after six months and returned to Devonport (see page 6).

In the Med, **HMS St Albans** continues her patrol with NATO around the cradle of civilisation (see page 10) and particularly enjoyed avenging a rugby defeat in Israel (see page 46).

A relative stone's throw from Haifa (well, 160 miles) is Akrotiri, home to the RAF (cough, splutter) and, more importantly, **HM Ships Dasher** and **Pursuer** – aka the **RN Cyprus Squadron**. See page 22 for a look at life on the island.

And in the cold... **HMS Manchester** and **RFA Black Rover** headed to South Georgia (see right), while **HMS Clyde** was hot on their heels (see page 4).

Those waters are traditionally the domain of ice patrol ship **HMS Endurance**. For the first time since her flooding incident last December, her ship's company speak about the ordeal – and how they saved the Red Plum (see page 14).

And finally... pretty much anyone who served in or visited Hong Kong before 1997 will remember **Jenny Side Party**, who has sadly passed away. We pay tribute to her on page 17.

The birds and the (Busy) Bees

FANCY meeting you all the way down here.

Pausing to reflect on the achievements of Britain's greatest polar explorer, the Princess Royal and her husband Vice Admiral Tim Laurence admire Shackleton's Cross with **HMS Manchester** behind them in South Georgia.

The royal couple travelled half way around the world to perform the honours at a very remote opening ceremony.

And the Busy Bee, in company with tanker **RFA Black Rover** (gas-guzzling Type 42s need topping up fairly regularly) made the comparatively short hop from the Falklands.

Manchester is the current South Atlantic patrol ship, while the **RFA** is a slightly more permanent presence, on station in the Falklands until early 2010.

The paths of Royal and Royal Navy crossed at King Edward Point, opposite Grytviken.

Princess Anne was on the idyllic island to formally open a hydro-electric plant which will provide South Georgia's British Antarctic Survey base with an environmentally-friendly source of power in this most sensitive of lands.

Manchester and **Black Rover** were popping in to fly the flag for Blighty at one of the most isolated remnants of the Empire.

No-one visiting South Georgia can fail to be struck either by the abundance of wildlife or by the deeds of Sir Ernest Shackleton, with whom the island is synonymous.

The explorer died off King Edward Point in 1922 on the eve of a planned circumnavigation of Antarctica to discover its 'lost' islands. A cross on the headland lies closest to the spot where Shackleton died (he's actually buried in Grytviken).

Some 200 of **Manchester's** ship's company – more than two thirds of her complement – got ashore to visit the BAS station and museum and pose with the abundance of wildlife: fur and elephant seals and king penguins.

"Every one aboard **Manchester** and **Black Rover** found the natural beauty of the landscape, the variety – and the quantity – of the wildlife, and the memories



of Shackleton's feat of extreme endurance an inspiration," said Cdr Paul Beattie, **Manchester's** CO.

"We've been visited by curious dolphins, porpoises, whales and sea birds, including albatross and petrels.

"Although our photographers are all amateurs, collectively they've managed to capture some excellent images."

The tranquility of South Georgia was a welcome change after a few days of war (or rather war games).

The **Busy Bee** provided some of the RN input to the latest Exercise Cape Bayonet – the six-weekly war game in the Falklands intended to test the combined abilities of the **RN-Army-RAF**.

The **RAF** involvement is pretty constant – **Tornadoes** based at Mount Pleasant. The **Army** and **RN** participants change constantly (this time it was 120 troops from the **Mercian Regiment** and the **Type 42** destroyer).

But the general premise remains

the same: how can the three forces work together to best defend the islands?

In **Manchester's** case the answer came in two parts: naval gunfire support and fighter control.

The former came in the shape of her 4.5in gun. From a distance of more than ten miles, the destroyer sent over 100 high explosive shells crashing down on three 'enemy' targets, guided in by 'Royal Marine spotters' from 148 **Commando Forward Observation Battery**. For three hours the steel rain came down – firepower in support of the **Mercians** which was equivalent, says the ship, to a **Royal Artillery** battery.

While the gun barked and the gun crew sweated hauling the heavy shells and empty cases, there was ruthless calm in the operations room as the fighter controllers directed the **Tornadoes** on to their targets to support troops on the ground, as well as provide air defence against possible incursions by enemy aircraft.

From war practised to war real.

Twenty-seven years ago, AB Bill Parry was a sonar specialist aboard **HMS Antelope** which was crippled by Argentine bombs during the San Carlos landings; photographs of the frigate exploding at night take their place among the iconic images of war.

In 2009, WO Bill Parry is **Manchester's** Executive Warrant Officer – the senior rating aboard.

He was joined by all 250 shipmates as his present ship paid tribute to his previous ship – plus **HMS Ardent**, also sunk during the invasion – casting wreaths into now-quiet San Carlos Water, while **Manchester's** chaplain Mike Wagstaff led a service of remembrance.

After a number of readings and hymns, the service concluded with a flypast from the destroyer's **Lynx**.

Manchester is away for seven months, splitting her time between Atlantic and Pacific before heading back to Portsmouth in high summer.

☒ Clyde in South Georgia, p4



TOPSY-TURVY LUSTY

HELLO, hello, it's good to be back.

A little exuberance from a Naval Harrier pilot as he performs a barrel roll past HMS Illustrious.

And why not? It's been almost 12 months since naval pilots last touched down on the hallowed flight deck of Lusty.

Commitments in Afghanistan, followed by some top bombing in the USA, kept the Naval Strike Wing away from their traditional home: an aircraft carrier at sea.

And so it was in the final days of March that a mix of six GR7 and GR9 Harrier bombers, a dozen pilots and 80 engineers, technicians and staff joined Lusty for a fortnight's work-up in the North Sea.

The jets flew 84 sorties – enough to see four new jump jet jockeys earn their deck landing qualifications, and two experienced Harrier pilots re-qualified.

It wasn't merely a case of 'simply' taking off and landing again.

There was some air combat training

involving Hawks from 100 Sqn at RAF Leeming and, more impressively, some Eurofighter Typhoons.

And there was some ground-attack training – after all it's what the Harriers are here for – against land 'targets' in eastern England.

For fliers and ship's company alike, it's been good to be back.

"The ship feels better when her flight deck is busy and we are able to demonstrate delivering air power – safely and effectively – whenever and wherever it is required," said Illustrious' CO Capt Ben Key.

"It's been fantastic to have the Harriers of the Naval Strike Wing back on board."

Pilot Lt Simon Rawlings added: "The squadron's spent a lot of time in Afghanistan, so it's great to be on Illustrious, doing our core job of delivering air power ashore."

Among those watching the Harriers roar up the ramp and drop back on to the flight deck at the end of their sorties were ten experienced aviators from Lusty's affiliate.

Members of the Guild of Air Pilots

and Air Navigators – which has been promoting safety in the skies for eight decades – witnessed every aspect of life aboard the 20,000-ton warship.

"I've never been to sea with the jets on board," said Arthur Thorning, a former aeronautical engineer with Boeing.

"It was very impressive – clearly the Navy has machines and pilots of the highest standard."

Before we get too hung up on the aerial aces, however, Mr Thorning was full of praise for the rest of Team Illustrious who make that flying possible.

"What has really impressed me was the quality and morale of the crew – they seem keen, very helpful and friendly."

"I always come away from military units thinking how lucky we are to have such quality people. Illustrious seems a shining example of this."

The GAPAN guests weren't the only visitors to the strike carrier during the North Sea work-up.

The Armed Forces Pay Review Body spent three days at sea to discuss financial issues with the ship's company – notably this year's pay rise

and pay as you dine. The independent review body advises Whitehall on pay and allowances across the three Services.

They've now left Lusty, as have the Naval Strike Wing. The Harriers were last aboard the carrier off Oman in the spring of 2008. Since then the jets have worked up for – and operated over – Afghanistan.

After leave over the New Year, the Harriers headed across the Pond for a month's bombing with live ordnance on the ranges at the US Air Force's Davis-Monthan base in Arizona.

Now back home at RAF Cottesmore in Rutland, the jets will be back on the carrier later this year, first for Joint Warrior exercises (previously known as JMC and Neptune Warrior) in Scotland, then for Loyal Arrow, war games involving aerial forces from 15 Allied powers in the Baltic.

Ahead of all that, Illustrious will be the focal point for Fly Navy 100 commemorations in the capital.

The carrier will be moored on the Thames at Greenwich from May 6-10,

servicing as the backdrop for the 'big day', Thursday May 7, the 100th birthday of naval aviation, nay, military aviation, in the UK.

It was on that date in 1909 that the Admiralty invested £35,000 in Her Majesty's Airship No.1 (better known as the Mayfly).

That milestone will be marked at mid-day on May 7 by a flypast over Illustrious involving all frontline RN helicopters.

Although the carrier will not be open to the general public during her stay at Greenwich (due to the logistics of ferrying people back and forth from the riverbank), there will be an 'aircraft park' in the grounds of the Old Naval College with a Gazelle, Lynx Mk3, Sea Harrier and Sea King on display, plus a Merlin simulator, a Royal Navy display stand, and the RN's hot air balloon. Admission is free.

On Saturday May 9 and Sunday 10 there will be 'dynamic displays' involving helicopters and surface vessels on the Thames between 2 and 2.30pm.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Des Wade, Naval Strike Wing



Clyde's BAS relief

IF THEY had buses in South Georgia, it would have been like waiting for one.

Barely had HMS Manchester left these far-flung waters than another ship painted battleship grey and flying the White Ensign appeared off King Edward Point.

This time it was HMS Clyde, conducting a five-day patrol of the British Overseas Territory and leaving her normal domain, the Falklands, behind.

Despite the onset of the austral autumn, the patrol ship was blessed by some unseasonably warm weather – so unseasonably warm that some sailors jumped into Cumberland Bay for a (very brief) dip.

Suitably dried out, some then took to the football pitch (half bog, half thistle) for a match against British Antarctic Survey scientists.

The BAS-ers were delighted by their resounding victory. They were even more delighted by the delivery of fresh fruit and veg provided by Clyde.

The ship left Grytviken for Fortuna Bay, dropping off a shore party to recreate part of Shackleton's famous journey to raise the alarm in Stromness.

The whaling station there is now deserted. Luckily, Clyde was on hand to collect the intrepid explorers for the next leg of the patrol: on to Gold Harbour.

Despite the name there's no gold in the harbour (*boo – Ed*). There are, however, tens of thousand of fur and elephant seals and king penguins

clustered on the shore.

The combination, said Clyde's CO Lt Cdr Ian Clarke, is "a heady mix of aroma and noise to assault the senses".

And sometimes the absence of wildlife can be equally impressive.

Clyde's next stop was Drygalski Fjord where "plunging rock faces dripping with glaciers" towered above the warship. "Drifting fog and cloud lent the entire scene an ethereal air and added to the sense of awe," said Lt Cdr Clarke.

The last port of call before the 700-mile journey back to East Cove in the Falklands was Bird Island off the northwest tip of South Georgia.

The island is, apparently, one of the few rat-free places on the planet.

It is, however, home to a lot of birds (hence the name): nearly 30,000 albatrosses and around 50,000 macaroni penguins. There's also one fur seal for every six square metres of land (*which by my reckoning means there must be about 65,000 in total – Ed*).

What Bird Island doesn't have is many humans – few are permitted to visit because of the importance of the avian population.

The sailors were, however, allowed ashore by the BAS teams (thanks in part to that fresh fruit and veg and some welcome contact with the outside world), which allowed them to get close to the gigantic wandering albatrosses nesting on the island.



'Ordinary people, ex'

'AS HONOURABLE WARRIORS

WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE...'

THE strife is o'er, the battle done – for now.

The men of 3 Commando Brigade have returned to this sceptred isle as their latest six-month tour of duty amid the steppe and slopes, the lush green zone, the arid plains of Helmand and Kandahar.

From late March and throughout April, the green berets and their attached Army units flew home to the UK, bringing the curtain down on Operation Herrick 9 – the ninth rotation of British forces on their peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan ended.

Exeter airport was invariably the setting for many a tearful homecoming.

Some might say that stepping off an aircraft into an arrivals lounge doesn't have the same raw emotion as a ship returning from deployment.

But tell that to the families who filled the airport with balloons and banners to greet loved ones.

There were more formal greetings too.

Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope welcomed Brigade commander Brig Gordon Messenger and 120 comrades from his staff on the Devon tarmac.

The brigadier and his eclectic force – Army artillerymen and infantry, RM Band Service, sailors and submariners, naval medics and surgeons also served alongside the commandos – had left Afghanistan "a more governable place," said the admiral.

Brig Messenger agrees. "It was a fight for the month of September, but what we've seen since is a marked improvement in security.

"This is a campaign that is going in the right direction."

Sadly, 32 of the brigade's number paid the ultimate price – "something that will stay with me for the rest of my life," the Royal Marines' commander added.

For the members of the brigade who did return, there was the knowledge that face-to-face, in a straight fight, the commando spirit triumphed over the insurgents.

"Our engagements with the

insurgents only ever ended one way," said WO Ed Stout, Company Sergeant Major, Lima Company, 42 Commando.

"We were quite happy to engage him – it played to our strengths as commandos and allowed us to demonstrate our capability to everyone in the area."

On TV screens and in news reports back in the UK, the war in Afghanistan is little more than a statistic, each casualty merely raising the tally of British dead.

To the men on the ground, such as Mne Phill White, "it's difficult to put into words what it was like out there". Statistics mean less to soldiers than gut feelings and raw instincts.

"We have definitely made a difference out there, I could see that in the seven months I was there," the green beret added.

Lt Col Charlie Stickland, 42 Commando's Commanding Officer, said for six long months, his men had "given their all"; four had made the ultimate sacrifice.

The Bickleigh-based unit took part in 19 helicopter assaults among other patrols and operations.

Lt Col Stickland continued:

"We feel very comfortable stating that – as honourable warriors – we have made a difference.

"I pay tribute to my marines and those who supported them: to their robustness, strength of human spirit, their trust in each other, and ability to dance from firefight to drink tea with elders and back again at a moment's notice.

"They have soldiered in some of the most extraordinary – and vexed – of circumstances and never let me down."

Lt Col Neil Wilson, in charge of 3 Commando's artillery, 29 Regiment RA, said his gunners were "without fail, upbeat about what they have achieved and how they have fared."

He continued: "They have good reason to be. Despite living

in austere conditions, in a harsh working environment, and under an ever-present enemy threat, they have all performed superbly and have received endless praise from all directions for their sheer professionalism, dedication to duty and defiantly positive attitude."

His words are echoed by Capt Jamie Jamison, second in command of X-Ray Company, 45 Commando:

"It's been a very hard tour for all of X-Ray Company, but it is very humbling to see how the men deal with not only the considerable physical challenges, but also the very real mental anxiety of operating in the conditions which Afghanistan presents," he said.

"The bravery and professionalism shown on a daily basis by the men of X-Ray – and 45 Commando – is of the highest order."

"We should all be proud of the assistance we are providing the people of Afghanistan – and the contribution we are making to the security of the UK."

Behind every assault, every patrol, every thrust and foray by the fighting forces was an enormous support organisation who delivered fuel, food and material to the Forward Operating Bases scattered across southern Afghanistan.

In an eclectic brigade there was no force more diverse than the Commando Logistics Regiment, the constant 'prop' upon which all operations rested.

To that end, the regiment was on the road almost daily running Combat Logistic Patrols – formerly convoys, renamed to reflect the fact that there is no conventional 'front line' in Afghanistan – to the far-flung Allied bases.

The men and women on these patrols were, said their Commanding Officer Col Andy Maynard, "ordinary people achieving extraordinary results – I'm very proud to be one of them."

Logistics are not 'sexy', but they are vital to any military operation. So too the shadowy world of

military intelligence.

The work of the UK Landing Force Command Support Group rarely appears in these pages, probably because of the nature of its work.

But like the CLR, the group was at the heart of every 3 Commando Brigade operation – providing the ground troops with information on the enemy, or trying to win over the Afghan populace.

"Our work here has had a terrible cost, but a stable Afghanistan is in the direct interest of the UK and the work that this and future units undertake is fundamental to the long term achievement of that aim," said its CO Lt Col Andrew McInerney.

It's not merely Afghan hearts and minds which are an issue in Helmand and Kandahar.

"The support from families – and from the wider UK population – has been incredible. We really could not have done it without them," said Lt Col McInerney.

"So many people sent letters and gifts to the troops – anything from a letter to a small parcel with shower gel and a packet of sweets is great for morale."

And so Herrick 9 is over. The Corps' Colours and White Ensign have been lowered at Camp Bastion and the battle flag of 19th Light Brigade raised in its place.

■ A NUMBER of homecoming parades have been or are being organised to honour the brigade's sacrifices in Afghanistan.

29 Regiment RA marched through Plymouth and held a service of remembrance on April 17. Some 450 green-bereted gunners were applauded through the heart of the city before Lord Mayor Cllr Brian Vincent presented the men with their campaign medals.

The streets of the same West Country city will also resound to the boots of 42 Commando, parading on May 7, and the UK LFCSG on July 1.

The homecoming parade by their parent unit, 3 Commando Brigade, is due to take place in Exeter on July 3.

■ To the bitter end, pages 23-25

Double boom for Kent



WHOOSH! Being a newspaper, we can't do sound, so you'll have to provide your own suitable soundtrack as a Seawolf missile leaves its silo aboard HMS Kent.

After pre-wetting herself last month (washing the upper decks using her sprinkler system), the Portsmouth frigate warmed up – and how.

The Type 23 is shaking off the cobwebs of some winter maintenance, first with trials, currently with Operational Sea Training, ahead of a deployment east of Suez later this spring.

As part of that work-up, Kent had to make sure her anti-air defences were tip-top.

So she headed to the exercise ranges – well away from other shipping or aircraft – and targeted a drone hauled on a (very long) cable by a control aeroplane.

At several hundred thousand pounds a pop, we don't fire live Seawolf missiles too often – there was a substantial number of ship's company who'd not seen the impressive sight before.

"It's always amazing to see such a complex system in operation – but it's only possible because of the people behind it," said Lt Cdr Peter Pipkin, Kent's weapon engineer officer.

"When you see the efforts of the maintainers to keep these systems at their optimum performance levels and the repeated practices of the operators to make sure the drill is correct, then you begin to understand how warships work.

"The real value for me as the senior weapon engineer onboard is to be able to demonstrate to the CO that his systems work correctly. Nothing does that better than actually firing them."

Two missiles were launched and seconds later intercepted and destroyed the two drones.

● The Band of HM Royal Marines perform during ceremonies marking the handover of command in Basra and (left) a balloon – and a smile – for dad. Delight for one Royal and his daughters as 3 Commando Brigade return to Exeter airport

Pictures: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, FRPU East, and Cpl Adrian Harlen



RFA saves the day

TANKER RFA Wave Knight was at the heart of an anti-piracy operation which freed 13 hostages and thwarted a second attack in the Gulf of Aden – on the same day.

The fleet tanker is providing fuel and support to Allied vessels east of Suez, but she carries an armed boarding party – a party called into action around breakfast time on April 18.

The auxiliary picked up a mayday from tanker MV Handytankers Magic, under attack from Somali brigands.

The pirates broke off their attack when the 31,000-ton RFA appeared on the scene and fled in their skiff – which was followed by the Brits.

That led Wave Knight to a dhow, the pirates' 'mother ship', where 13 Yemeni fishermen had been held hostage for almost a week.

Under the guns of the RN boarding party and RFA's own weapons team and Dutch frigate HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën, the pirates released their hostages, who have been returned to Yemen.

As the seven suspected pirates were not actually captured in the act of piracy, they were released – but their weapons were destroyed.

Barely had Wave Knight submitted her reports following the rescue mission than another distress signal came in, this time from the MV Front Ardennes.

The merchantman reported she was under attack from a skiff – an attack still under way when the RFA arrived on the scene.

Wave Knight was forced to fire several warning shots before the pirates broke off their attack and fled.

The tanker gave chase again, aided by helicopters from the USS Halyburton and HMCS Winnipeg. A team from the latter ship eventually boarded the skiff and disarmed the pirates.

"This is a clear demonstration of how cooperation between more than a dozen international naval forces can successfully disrupt piracy," said Cdre Tim Lowe RN, Deputy Commander of Combined Maritime Forces in Bahrain – the central command which directs security operations by two dozen navies in the region.

"In one 72-hour spell, the coordinated efforts of six different nations resulted in the release of 49 innocent mariners held hostage by armed pirates."

● Seven pirates and 13 hostages on a dhow traced by RFA Wave Knight; the hostages were freed



traordinary results'

'THE GREEN SHOOTS OF RECOVERY ARE OBVIOUS EVERYWHERE...'

THE first act in Britain's handover of power in Iraq was a formal, military affair.

Less-well-publicised, but far more human, was an event 24 hours later on the lush lawns of Whale Island in Portsmouth.

A swoop in by three Sea Kings, a quick daisy chain to remove all the kit, and then the men and women who transferred that power could finally be back in the arms of loved ones again.

Since last summer the sailors and marines, headed by Maj Gen Andy Salmon RM, had been in charge of British forces in southern Iraq.

Their eight months at the helm saw the situation in Basra substantially improve. The people of that city can now, says the general, look forward to "a more stable future".

The staff's return was the first step in the withdrawal of British forces in Basra throughout the spring.

By the end of July, the 4,000-plus sailors, soldiers and airmen currently deployed in the country will have fallen to around 300.

Until the last day of March, those 4,000-plus Britons were led by Maj Gen Salmon and the staff of the Commander UK Amphibious Force, normally based on Whale Island in Portsmouth.

In the staff's eyes, there is no doubt that their mission has been worthwhile.

"Being the 'last shift' out there, we can look at the balance sheet and say 'yes, we have achieved something'," said Maj Rembrand Posthumus, a Dutch Marine on exchange with Gen Salmon's staff.

"During my time there, around US \$50m was spent on essential services – schools, electricity, water.

"This is what the Iraqis want: they want electricity 24 hours a day, clean water, sewage systems which work."

Maj Posthumus said key to any success in Iraq was ensuring the Iraqis themselves took charge of their own destiny – and decided how reconstruction and rebuilding of their country took place.

"Being military men we want to go in there and sort things out. But you cannot do that. You have to see things through Iraqi eyes – otherwise you are pumping money into things which the Iraqis don't want.

"Let's not forget that many of the changes have been made by the Iraqis – you could see the steady rise in the ability of their forces.

"But the British forces also made a huge difference. They did a good job."

Maj Gen Salmon – known to Iraqis as 'General Andy' – told *Navy News* that the situation in Iraq's second city had improved substantially during his staff's tenure of command.

"Last summer, security was not guaranteed, but for a few months we worked hand-in-hand with

the Iraqis to defeat the militia.

"By October and November, we could see a big difference. Ramadan and Eid were celebrated – the people of Basra had not experienced such freedom for 30 years.

"We have built a foundation for Basra and its children to look to a much more stable future.

"The green shoots of recovery are obvious everywhere – but there is a lot of hard work to do."

Maj Richard Mears, one of the general's staff officers, added: "It was noticeable that the security situation improved and people had a more positive attitude.

"The Iraqi forces are taking responsibility and showing they can do the job."

Among those Iraqi forces are the Basra-based 14th Infantry Division who have received substantial training and guidance from British troops.

Their commanding general, Major General Mohammed Huweidi – Commander of Basra – invited many of those responsible for the transition over the past six years to a feast alongside the Shatt Al Arab, Basra's artery to the Gulf.

"I would like to thank the British nation, through General Andy, for helping rid us of a dictator," the Iraqi commander told the 250 guests.

"The Iraqi Army – and people – will remember the sacrifices of the British for many years to come."

With the general and his staff back in the UK, the principal RN presence left will be the training team working with the Iraqi Navy and Marines in Umm Qasr, and sailors looking after the Phalanx guns defending Basra airbase.

For those men and women, and those who have gone before them, there were words of praise from General David Petraeus – the senior US officer in Iraq between January 2007 and September 2008 and a man generally regarded as the most respected military figure in the world.

In a letter to all three Services, the general writes: "On behalf of the American service members who have served proudly alongside you in Iraq, I would like to thank you for your hard work and sacrifice over the last six years.

"You and your comrades in arms have helped produce important achievements,

"Your expert assistance has been instrumental in building and professionalising the new Iraqi Navy and Marines.

He continues: "Our shared experiences in Iraq have brought our militaries even closer than they were before the operation in Iraq was launched.

"As we look together beyond Iraq, your American comrades are heartened that we will continue to serve together in Afghanistan. Thanks to each of you for your commitment, your sacrifice, and your skill.

"Congratulations on a job well done!"



EXPERIENCE SOUL STIRRING PAGEANTRY BEATING RETREAT

THE MASSES BANDS OF HER MAJESTY'S ROYAL MARINES

HORSE GUARDS PARADE LONDON 9, 10 & 11 JUNE 2009 AT 6.15PM

TICKET PRICES £12

FAMILY TICKET (2 ADULTS AND 3 CHILDREN) £40

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Same ship, different day

WHERE are we now? What are we doing?

The questions are posed by HMS Richmond.

And the answers are the same as last month: the Gulf and keeping Iraq's oil platforms safe.

Yep, ground forces might be enjoying the drawdown from Iraq, but it's business as usual for the ships attached to Coalition Task Force 158 which patrol the waters around the two terminals.

It is, as anyone who's spent time doing the CTF patrol will tell you, rather *Groundhog Day*-esque.

As TV viewers will soon find out.

A crew from the Discovery Channel joined the Portsmouth-based Type 23 to interview the ship's company and capture footage for an impending programme, provisionally entitled *Life At Sea* and earmarked for screening in the early autumn.

There has been some bad weather at least to break up the repetitive nature of steaming around the KAAOT and ABOT terminals.

"We've had the most amazing lightning storm we've ever seen," enthused LET(WE) 'Robby' Robertson.

His enthusiasm was possibly also sparked by the fact that the storm meant there was no need to wash the upper deck with fresh water for once.

"The dust just gets everywhere; the 4.5 inch gun had a lovely sultan due to the sand and dust stuck to it," said Robby.

"It looks like the fake stuff that you buy and when it runs you look like the Tango man/woman in disguise."

There's an impending break from the repetitive patrols as the frigate is now heading for Dubai for a stand-down period.

Statistically speaking

SUCCESS on a naval deployment can often be unquantifiable.

There was a good exercise here, we learned some lessons there, had a good run ashore in Port X, rebuilt a school in Town Y.

But facts, statistics are even better. Here's one for the record books. Two and a half million people did not starve for a month thanks to the efforts of 180 Britons aboard HMS Northumberland.

The frigate arrived back in Devonport after six months away with the feeling of something very worthwhile achieved.

Northumberland departed these shores on a whistle-stop tour of three oceans – Indian, South Atlantic, South Pacific.

Events dictated that she would see only the first of those oceans as the frigate was committed to a new European Union task force to grapple the increasing piracy menace off Somalia.

Among the victims of the brigands were ships of the UN's World Food Programme which deliver sustenance to Somalis unable to feed themselves.

Northumberland became the first vessel to safely escort some of these food ships to Somalia – some singly, some in convoy, including a 1,500-mile escort mission shepherding ships to Mogadishu, then around the Horn of Africa to Bosaso, and Berbera.

The warship's achievements were not lost on any of her ship's company, nor their friends and family.

"We managed to ensure the delivery of 50,000 tonnes of food – enough to feed 2½ million people for one month," said her CO Cdr Martin Simpson.



● The balloon says it all (and there's a good chance the word 'Northumberland' wouldn't fit)... The frigate returns to Devonport after more than six months away, most of the time on anti-piracy patrol

Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd, FRPU West

"Delivering food aid was my proudest moment. I am especially proud of my ship's company for the way they rose to the challenge, they responded magnificently.

"We had many successes in the Gulf of Aden on counter-narcotics duties and general policing of the sea to counter destabilising activities, basically anything illegal on the water."

Some of those activities you will have read about in these pages, some you might have seen in national newspapers, and some you will see on the telly in the future.

TV hard man Ross Kemp – formerly Grant Mitchell on *EastEnders* – has carved out a new career championing Britain's forces on the front line. He spent a couple of weeks aboard the frigate while she chased pirates to film footage for a forthcoming documentary.

With Ross and the film crew landed in Djibouti, the frigate prepared to head for home... except that the marine engineers decided Northumberland needed a new engine to carry her home.

An engine change is a complicated manoeuvre at the best of times. Half a world away it needs one very big aircraft, a large mobile crane, and a port capable of doing the job.

The port chosen was Salalah in Oman. A big aircraft was found. And so too was a replacement diesel engine.

"After five days of round-the-clock graft, sweat, and swearing by the marine engineers, the diesel

was installed and tested," said Cdr Simpson. "To a huge sigh of relief from all, the engine obligingly started first time."

The only ones not breathing a sigh of relief, perhaps, were the owners of the Salalah Hilton and Oasis Club – among a few places in the Omani port with alcohol licences – who (unsurprisingly) did "brisk business". Cdr Simpson added: "To their regret, and our delight, we finally sailed."

Probably few of Northumberland's ship's company were more delighted than LReg Ken Stokes.

His son Ethan leapt into his arms on the Devonport jetty – after proudly showing off his younger brother Dylan.

Dylan was born as Northumberland left; dad was given permission by the ship to stay behind for the birth and join the frigate in Mombasa, which he did.

"It's great to see the family again, especially little Dylan," said Ken.

"The deployment was very rewarding – the World Food Programme was a very good cause."

Fighting G's got fighting spirit

THE name HMS Gloucester now sits alongside those of Hood, Rodney, Nelson and King George V among others.

The Fighting G joins others inscribed in silver on a trophy once awarded to men of 1st Battle Squadron who manned those castles of steel in two global conflagrations.

For 55 years, the squadron's Racing Cutter Crew trophy has lain unused, but now it's back – although the reason for awarding it has changed.

The silver trophy has been reinstated as the FOST Herbert Lott Efficiency Award for major warships, in recognition of the destroyer/frigate or capital ship whose sailors most impress the tough taskmasters of the Flag Officer Sea Training.

Every warship must undergo the rigmarole of OST either in Devonport for larger surface ships, or in Faslane for mine warfare vessels and submarines.

The two-month 'workout' is intended to test a ship's company to the limit – so that when they are tested for real, they are more than a match for a challenge.

Most ships earn a 'satisfactory' – pass – from the FOSTies. Some earn 'very satisfactory'. But in 2008 none of the big ships impressed as much as Gloucester, which was working up to an impending South Atlantic deployment.

Newly-appointed FOST, Rear Admiral Chris Snow, said the destroyer's sailors had shown "fighting spirit" and "determination" throughout the arduous of training – arduous made more arduous by some engineering breakdowns and the lack of a dedicated ship's flight.

"The positive attitude and strong motivation of the ship's company was fundamental to a resounding success at OST," says the trophy citation.

"Far exceeding her formal training objectives, Gloucester proved her readiness for active tasking with style and charisma."

Aside from the trophy and a framed citation, FOST also handed over a cheque for £1,000 to the ship's welfare fund which is likely to be spent when the destroyer visits Rio.

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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Audacious era begins

THIS is a ship's badge not seen for 95 years.

Not since the waters of the Atlantic closed over a stricken battleship has the name 'Audacious' appeared in the annals of the RN.

But now it's back with the keel for the new attack submarine HMS Audacious laid down in Cumbria.

Work gathering material for the fourth of Britain's Astute-class nuclear boats – replacements for the Swiftsure and Trafalgar class – has been under way since 2007.

But the boat only truly begins to take shape with the formal laying of its keel, a task performed by Defence Secretary John Hutton at BAE Systems' yard at Barrow-in-Furness.

As the fourth of a proposed class of seven boats, engineers at Barrow are including lessons learned building her sisters and the submarine will feature minor changes to her equipment, such as improved chilled water plants.

The role of all Astutes will be the same: to root out potential enemy above or below the surface of the waves, to gather intelligence, conduct beach reconnaissance and launch Tomahawk missile strikes against targets on land.

Of Audacious' three older sisters, Astute has been launched but is undergoing work while Ambush and Artful are in various stages of completion.

Around 5,000 workers at Barrow are involved in the Astute programme. Mr Hutton praised them for their efforts over the past eight years (the first boat was laid down in early 2001).

"Submarines are extremely demanding engineering projects, and the Astute class is no exception," he said.

"The skills, expertise and commitment of the Barrow workforce are absolutely fundamental to the success of the Astute programme."

As for her predecessor, the King George V-class battleship HMS Audacious struck a mine while exercising with the Grand Fleet off the northern coast of Ireland in October 1914.

All of her ship's company were saved, but despite a major salvage operation, the dreadnought could not be and foundered two dozen miles off Malin Head.

Daring on display

WE THINK the queue for this one could be quite long...

The public will be able to tour the most-talked-about British warship in a generation over two days this summer.

The gangway of Type 45 destroyer HMS Daring will be open – for free – during the 'Royal Navy Past and Present' weekend of July 18 and 19.

As well as Daring inviting the public aboard, the Royal Marines Band and RN physical training instructors will be performing in the Victory Arena, next to Nelson's flagship, and model boat displays will be held on the Mast Pond.

Although entry to the historic dockyard, the arena and Daring is free, visitors will still have to pay to tour Victory, Mary Rose, Warrior and the museums in the historic dockyard.



European Parliament and local elections



Have your say on 4 June!

On Thursday 4 June elections will be taking place for the European Parliament, and for county councils in England.

Polls are open 7am - 10pm.

For further information:

- Contact your Unit Registration Officer
- Visit www.aboutmyvote.co.uk
- See DIN 2009DIN01-043.



The
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● Indian frigate *INS Talwar* exercising with *HMS Portland* off Mumbai



● LS(AWT) *Stevie Toogood* on the quarterdeck shouts to members of his team on the flight deck as *HMS Portland* enters Goa



All systems Goa

ALL work and no play would make Jack very dull indeed – and would not do much for our pages, either.

So the latest leg of *HMS Portland*'s deployment east of Suez provided some pretty hard work as well as the chance for sailors to let their hair down, all in pretty short order.

First the hard work – two days of exercises with Indian frigate *INS Talwar* (not forgetting *RFA Wave Knight*, of course) as the British ships steamed for Mumbai.

The little flotilla carried out a profusion of drills and serials including Officer of the Watch manoeuvres, medium-range gun firings, cross-deck flying sorties, boarding demonstrations, personnel exchanges and maritime interdiction operations (MIO) training.

Not surprisingly, considering the common ancestry of the two navies, the exercises were deemed a great success, and helped both parties prove their ability to operate with allied nations.

On arrival in Mumbai the emphasis was on formality and preparations for a visit by Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, for whom *Portland* acted as flagship during part of his trip to the subcontinent.

The frigate hosted a reception and a dinner for 16 senior guests, including the British Deputy High Commissioner, senior Indian businessmen and admirals from the Indian Navy.

While on board Admiral Stanhope, who takes over as First Sea Lord later this year, toured the ship and talked to sailors.

"The visit has greatly assisted the objective of enhancing the UK's links and relationships with the Indian Navy and wider business community," said Admiral Stanhope.

"I found the ship's company focused, professional and upbeat. Well done."

During their brief stay in the city members of the ship's company visited tourist attractions, particularly the Gateway to India on the waterfront and Elephant Island.

But any disappointment at leaving Mumbai would probably have been assuaged by the fact that 24 hours later the Type 23 warship was easing her way into the port of Mormugao in Goa for a chance to unwind.

Members of the crew were able to enjoy a couple of days ashore in the numerous hotels and B&Bs along the coast of the tropical paradise.

While in Goa the ship officially supported the Chief of Staff (Aviation), Rear Admiral Simon Charlier, who used the opportunity of an evening reception on board to host his Indian Navy counterpart and a number of other VIPs.

Portland's Commanding Officer, Cdr Tim Henry, said: "These recent visits have demonstrated our versatility as we operate with regional partners and coalition allies."

"My ship's company continues to show its breadth and depth of skills as they switch seamlessly between our core operational mission and those rarely-exercised but crucial engagement tasks."

"Acting as the flagship for the Commander-in-Chief has been a singular privilege for all in *Portland* and the opportunity to exercise and train with the Indian Navy is a rare honour which we will remember for some time to come."

"After this break from the action, *Portland* is raring to return to the fray."

● AB(Sea) 'Burt' Reynolds enjoys a joke whilst hoisting the Jack as *Portland* enters Goa



Pictures: LA(Phot) Alex Cave

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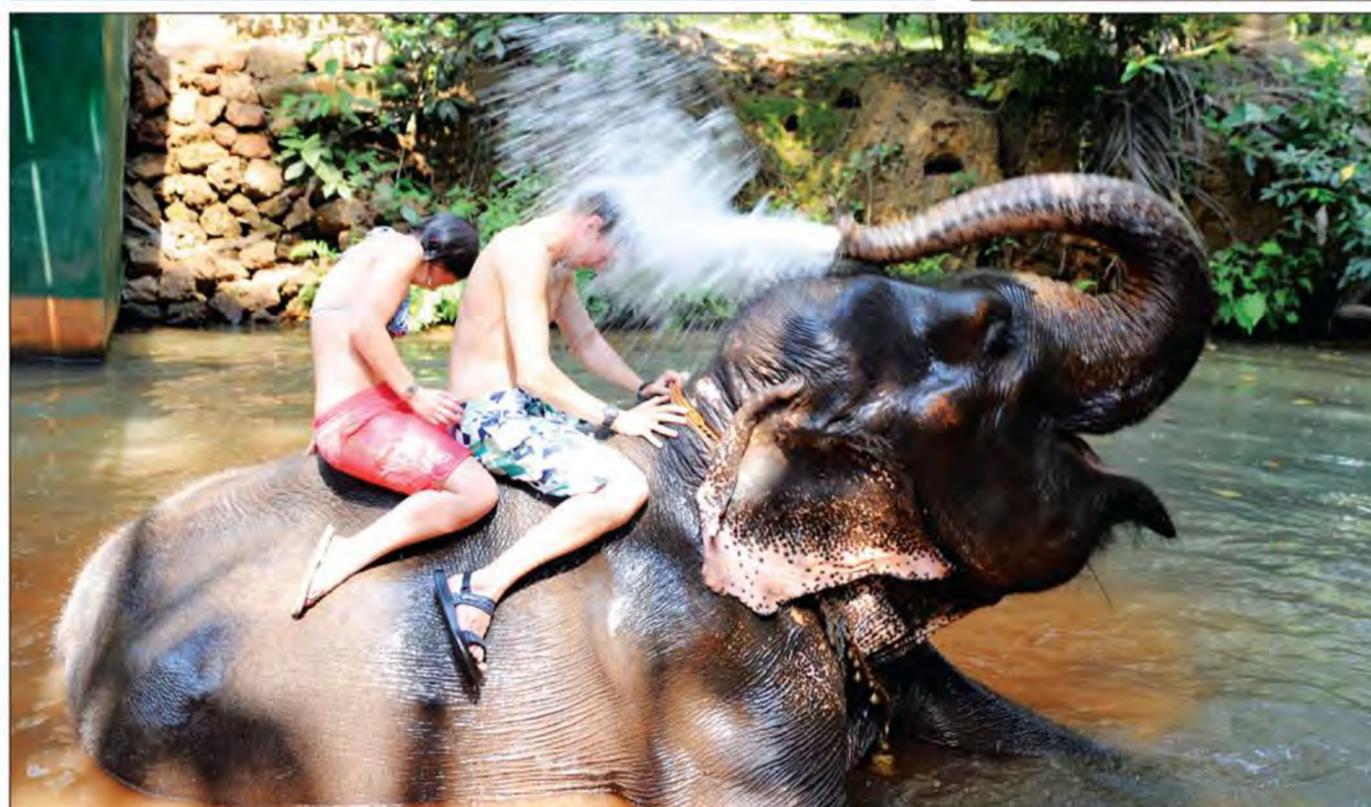
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● Logs (CS(D)) *Kayleigh 'Flash' Gordan* and LET(WE) '*Jasper*' *Scarrat* cool off with an unnamed inmate (*Jumbo? - Ed*) at a spice plantation in northern Goa

You saw us on Taurus



Watch out, Raider's about

... AS HM Ships Kent and Cumberland discovered during some top-up training from FOST in the Channel.

The two frigates bumped into the P2000 off Plymouth as the small patrol boat was heading from Fowey to Torquay.

Raider – one of two souped up P2000s, capable of around 25kts instead of the more sedentary 14kts – broke off her passage eastwards and joined in the Flag Officer Sea Training exercises.

First, the boat played the part of MV Helena Blue requiring safe escort, running a pirate gauntlet. Just for good measure, as well as 'dhows', the boat and her guardian Cumberland came under air attack.

The fighting paused for Sunday Service at sea – it was Easter Day, after all.

Then it was time to play the bad guy, attacking Kent and Cumberland – the latter was trying to protect an oil platform (which bore an uncanny resemblance to the Eddystone Light).

After some stern warnings from Kent to keep clear – all of which were ignored by the naughty Raider – the two ships engaged each other; Kent fired blanks, Raider responded with water balloons.

The blanks won out and Raider peeled away, before deciding to annoy Cumberland instead; this time the patrol craft played the part of a dhow which refused to obey the rules around the oil platform.

"It's been a great opportunity for us to provide support to the front line, and it's given my students an excellent opportunity to see the Royal Navy in action," said Raider's CO Lt Adam Riddett.

Raider is normally found in Ipswich, serving as the university boat for Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin and the University of East Anglia.

... BUT now we're home.

HMS Argyll's two-month attachment to the Taurus amphibious task group is over with the frigate back in Devonport.

After exercises in Turkey (see pages 18-19) the force split. So no Brunei, Singapore and other far eastern delights for Argyll.

Still, Palma's not a bad substitute.

The Type 23 (pictured above off Souda Bay in Crete) spent six days enjoying a stand-off in the Majorca tourist trap on the way home from Exercise Egemen.

The journey through the Med permitted some unusual activities, not least a change of command.

Cdr Peter Olive stood down and headed off to the galley to become a steward, sorry logistician (catering services (delivery)) for the day.

And LET(WE) Craig 'Milo' Garstang left all the weaponry behind and stepped on to the bridge after winning a charity sweepstake (which raised £125 for the ship's affiliated good causes) to be captain for the day.

It was a day which began badly (a – mock – fire in the hangar) but got better for Milo, first as he hoisted the flag of his beloved Tottenham Hotspur FC, and later sat down with six messmates to an evening meal served by 'Logs' Olive.

Back in charge, the reinstated Cdr Olive guided the Type 23 frigate alongside the Dique del Oeste, Palma's famous west pier which permits the finest views of the harbour and La Sue, the city's

famous cathedral.

"I have been to Palma many times and fallen in love with the island – it's one of the most beautiful spots in the world," said Argyll's CO.

As no doubt his ship's company discovered, in between diving, golfing and shopping, and perhaps the odd night out.

The six days' relaxation in the Balearics were well-deserved, says Cdr Olive.

"Taurus was the culmination of several months' hard work and training by my ship's company, so we were ready for anything that could be thrown at us," he added.

"It's been a challenging time – but the ship has come through with flying colours."



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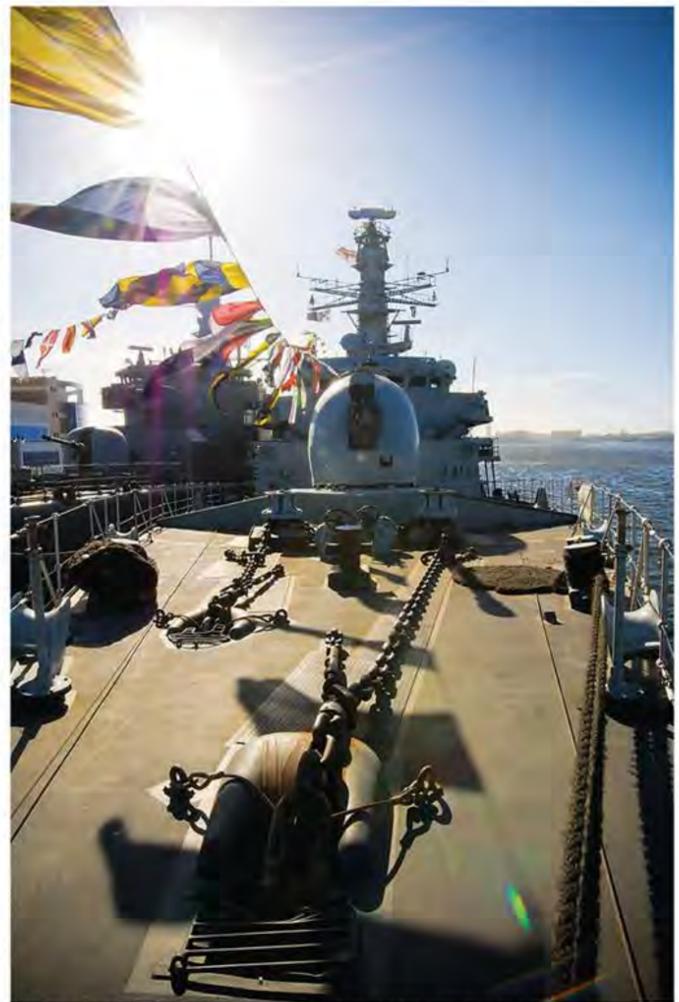
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● The frigate's boarding parties train for boarding ops



● Dress ship alongside in Alexandria for Egyptian national day and Commonwealth Day

IN THE CRADLE OF CIVILISATION



● HMS St Albans at work as part of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 in the Mediterranean

HARRYING and harriers. It's been a busy few weeks for HMS St Albans.

The Naval frigate took to heart her NATO role patrolling the Mediterranean waters between Libya and Crete in a period of surge operations.

Surge means that the ship's four Officers of the Watch and Bridge team kept a careful eye on all ships, boats and vessels in the area.

Swift discussion with the Ops Room highlighted those craft that needed a hail from the Naval warship's VHF radio.

The hunter St Albans had to get close to its quarry, tracking down further information on the warship's onboard database, and watching out for any taint of wrongdoing in the craft's nature.

So sharp were the warship's eyes that in just two weeks over 200 merchant vessels were hailed.

Of course, most of these ships were simply the hefty merchant traffic of cargo ships and oil tankers labouring their long journeys from the Suez Canal to the Strait of Gibraltar, and back again.

This intensive period of labour was brought to an end with a four-day stretch alongside in Haifa, Israel.

Well, we say to an end, but that wasn't so true for St Albans marine engineers who laboured long and hard in cramped conditions to sort out a problem with a pump.

Even the advent of specialist contractors flown out did not free up the marine engineers, some of whom had to sacrifice runs ashore

to ensure that their ship could do its job at sea.

However speaking of runs ashore, this visit to Haifa brought out the harriers of St Albans' Hash Runners.

Lest the name should cause alarm, the sport (supposedly) dates back to bored British officers posted to the 'Hash' House (so called because of the quality of its food) in Kuala Lumpur in the years leading up to World War 2.

The sport itself is akin to the traditional paper chase, with hares (in St Albans' case her LPT and an Officer of the Watch) fleeing along the streets and paths of downtown Haifa leaving a trail of flour, with some misleads and misdirects, for the pursuing harriers to follow.

Forty sailors from St Albans and her sister NATO ship USS Laboon ran through the byways and backways of the Israeli town, cheered on by the locals.

Before you become too misled into the pure athleticism of the sport, let it also be recorded that Hash Runners often describe their group as "a drinking club with a running problem".

Which could explain the lack of imagery available for this successful and social jaunt on Israeli shores.

Further, and sober, sociability took place between the British and Israeli Navies with the RN matelots enjoying a tour of an Israeli corvette and Israeli Defence Force sailors getting a glimpse inside the Type 23 frigate.

Sailors also journeyed out to Jerusalem and the Dead Sea to see and learn about this historic and fascinating part of the world.



● A Lynx Mk8 of 202 Flight, 815 Naval Air Squadron attached to HMS St Albans carries out winch training



● Their sporting endeavours know no limits – an inter-mess Dodgeball competition was held on the flightdeck, much to the amusement of all with the Petty Officers mess acquiring the winners' laurels



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BOY VC WINNER'S HEROIC LEGACY

**Famous Portrait Restored
YOUNGESTER INSPIRES TODAY'S SAILORS:
"I'd definitely think back to Cornwell."**

COURAGE, SELFLESS COMMITMENT AND LOYALTY

WINSTON Churchill, Queen Elizabeth II, Field Marshal Montgomery, Benito Mussolini, Earl Mountbatten of Burma, Franklin D Roosevelt.

All have been immortalised on canvas by the brush of Frank Owen Salisbury. All are figures of international renown (some rather more infamous than others...).

It's hard, however, for a 16, 17, 18-year-old sailor to relate to such figures.

But not to John 'Jack' Travers Cornwell also immortalised on canvas by Salisbury.

It's one of the defining images in Royal Navy history: a young boy stood by his gun amid the tumult of Jutland.

Cornwell would earn the VC, posthumously. Salisbury would become the pre-eminent portrait painter for the next 30-plus years.

And the painting? Well, today it gleams in St Paul's Church at HMS

Raleigh – where Cornwell's successor generations follow in his footsteps – having been painstakingly restored.

Restorer Matthew Goldsmith set to work on both the 8ft by 5ft canvas and its frame.

When he was done, the painting was rededicated with full honours – fittingly as 50 rookie sailors of Cornwell Division passed out of Raleigh.

"If I was put in that position I'd definitely think back to Cornwell, how he stuck by his post and how he was courageous and loyal to his country," said 18-year-old AB(Sea) Paul Newcombe from Plymouth – one of those sailors who had just completed their basic training.

Cornwell is one of a five new-entry divisions at the Torpoint establishment. Sailors in all five learn about the 16-year-old's actions on May 31 1916.

"I use the portrait on a weekly basis to tell Jack's story to help recruits reflect on values – courage, selfless commitment and loyalty – that are as relevant today as they were in Jack's time and to remind them that they will be called to fight," said the Rev Scott Lamb, Raleigh's Church of England chaplain.

"Among those killed alongside Jack was the chaplain, so the painting is also a good way to remind recruits that we will be there to share their hardship."

Londoner Cornwell signed up for the RN in October 1915 and after basic training in Devonport headed to Rosyth to join cruiser HMS Chester at Easter 1916.

Six weeks later, the ship found herself in the middle of the greatest clash of warships the world had ever seen at Jutland.

Jack Cornwell was a sight setter on a 5.5in gun – protected from the enemy and the elements only by a shield.

The cruiser was hit 18 times by German shells. Four landed near Cornwell's gun, killing all but two of its crew and gravely wounding the 16-year-old.

Cornwell did not seek help. He remained by his gun – which could not be brought to bear against the enemy because of the damage – awaiting orders under heavy fire

IMMORTALISING THE BOY V.C. ON CANVAS.



Mr Frank O. Salisbury, R.A., at work on the painting of Jack Cornwell, V.C., the youthful hero of J.M.S. Chester, which is to be hung in the Admiralty to perpetuate the hero's splendid deed. The young sailor's name is written in the artist's model. In the picture of Jack Cornwell and his father, whose death occurred very suddenly, yesterday. Like his son, he served his country and was in the Army.

● A contemporary newspaper cutting shows Frank Salisbury at work on his portrait of the young VC winner, using Cornwell's brother Ernest as his model

"with just his own brave heart" as protection, until Chester withdrew from the fight. Finally he was carried below for treatment.

There was little Chester's surgeons could do for him and doctors at Grimsby Hospital, where Cornwell was taken the following day after the cruiser headed up the Humber, were unable to help either.

His mother was sent for, but the boy seaman died on June 2 1916 before she reached his bedside.

The young sailor was laid to rest in a common grave in Manor Park Cemetery, but when news of his bravery was revealed to the world, a clamour grew to honour him.

Cornwell's body was exhumed then reinterred with full military honours in the same cemetery. September 30 was hailed 'Jack Cornwell Day', penny doggerels were penned – "Fate set his name in honour grim / And even death is proud of him:" – stained glass windows were commissioned, memorial funds set up, the Scouts named a medal in his memory, the Victoria Cross was posthumously awarded and Frank Salisbury was

commissioned to produce that portrait... which he did with great thoroughness, as his grandson Richard Salisbury Norris explained at the rededication ceremony.

"My grandfather was taken on board HMS Chester by a cutter under sail. The story goes that when the picture was painted – aboard the ship – the wind was so strong that two sailors had to hang on to the canvas and my grandfather's easel on the deck as he painted," Mr Norris said.

"I've seen prints and copies of the Jack Cornwell portrait, but this is the first time I have seen the original. It is a great privilege."

The completed portrait was originally presented to the First Lord of the Admiralty, Edward Carson, in 1917. It has hung in HMS Impregnable in Devonport and at HMS St Vincent in Gosport, before arriving at Raleigh.

As for the gun which Cornwell stood by so bravely – and which his brother posed beside for Salisbury – it can be seen at the Imperial War Museum in London, which also holds the 16-year-old's VC.



● Looking up to inspiration... Trainee sailors Bethany Howard and Roderick McKenzie admire the newly-restored portrait of Cornwell VC at HMS Raleigh
Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh

Flag seals a six-decade bond

A WHITE Ensign which 'flew' on the wreck of HMS Exeter will find peace in the surroundings of the namesake city's cathedral.

Veterans of the wartime cruiser were invited aboard the present-day destroyer for a final time – the current ship is decommissioning – to receive the treasured flag.

The heavy cruiser took her place along the lions of Royal Navy history thanks to her crucial role in the Battle of the River Plate in 1939.

She survived the heavy damage she suffered that day at the hands of the 'pocket battleship' Graf Spee, but was not so fortunate two and a half years later in the Java Sea.

Mortally wounded by Japanese attack, the cruiser was scuttled by her crew. Most of her ship's company survived the ordeal, but then faced more than three years in Japanese Prisoner of War camps, where they suffered starvation, disease, and brutality.

More than six decades later, their numbers are few, but eight survivors of the Java Sea battle – Bill Francis, Admiral J P K Harkness, Steve Cairns, Joe Asher, Johnny King, Jimmy Hegney, Admiral Sir Peter Anson and Bill Guy – made the pilgrimage to Portsmouth, where they were hosted both by Exeter and her slightly younger sister HMS Nottingham.

The latter treated the eight veterans to lunch in the wardroom as well as the obligatory photographs for the albums.

The wreck of the heavy cruiser was located by divers after a protracted search of the Java Sea.

She lies around 200ft below far from the site her CO, Capt Oliver Gordon, reported more than six decades ago, and close to the last resting place of her escort, HMS Encounter.

The divers initially attached an ensign to the port torpedo tube as mark of respect.

It has since been recovered and was presented to Exeter veteran Stoker 1st Class Bill Francis, on behalf of his shipmates on the eve of their annual reunion. The ensign will go on display in a



● Java Sea survivors (standing) Bill Francis, Admiral J Harkness, Steve Cairns and Joe Asher, (seated) Johnny King, Jimmy Hegney, Admiral Sir Peter Anson and Bill Guy pose in the shadow of the 4.5in gun of HMS Exeter

wing of Exeter Cathedral which is dedicated to the ship and her men.

As for the current Exeter, she formally leaves the ranks of the RN on May 27 with a decommissioning ceremony in Portsmouth Naval Base.

Anyone connected with the Falklands veteran who wishes to attend the event should contact the decommissioning officer on 346-vip1@a.dii.mod.uk or call 02392 722466.

■ YOU may – or may not – have been one of 5½ million Britons who received a flag in the post from the Royal British Legion.

The unusual delivery is part of the veterans' organisation's efforts to commemorate the sacrifices made in Normandy 65 summers ago.

Next month marks the 65th anniversary of D-Day and the subsequent campaign to drive the Germans out of France.

It could be the last major gathering of the men of 1944 – the youngest of the 165,000 soldiers,

sailors and airmen who took part in Operation Overlord are now in their early 80s.

Sword Beach, near the village of Lion-sur-Mer, has come to be regarded as the focal point of the British effort on Tuesday June 6 1944. It will be the focal point of commemorations on Saturday June 6 2009 when several thousands of those flags – inscribed with messages of dedication and gratitude – will be planted in the sand.

The flag mail-out is part of a £2.5m campaign by the RBL to support veterans.

It is also organising a service of thanksgiving in the magnificent cathedral at Bayeux.

And, hand-in-hand with the Normandy Veterans Association, the Legion is arranging a picnic from mid-day and pop concert on Southsea seafront (where entry to the D-Day Museum will be free on June 6), plus similar picnics in Weymouth, Coventry and Christchurch, as well as on the shores of Normandy.

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Last of the old breed



Heligoland..... 1914
Mediterranean..... 1940
Calabria..... 1940
Arctic..... 1942
Malta Convoys..... 1942

Class: Type 42 (Batch 2) destroyer
Pennant number: D92
Builder: Cammell Laird, Birkenhead
Laid down: July 5 1978
Launched: September 25 1980
Commissioned: July 1 1982
Displacement: 4,820 tons
Length: 125 metres (410ft)
Beam: 14.3 metres (47ft)
Draught: 5.8 metres
Speed: 30 knots
Complement: 287
Propulsion: COGOG: 2 x Rolls Royce Olympus TM3B gas turbines; 2 x Rolls Royce Tyne RM1C gas turbines
Armament: Twin Sea Dart missile launcher; 4.5 inch Mk 8 gun; 2 x 20mm close range guns; 2 x Phalanx; Seagnat and DLF3 decoy launchers
Helicopter: 1 x Lynx Mk8

Facts and figures



OF THE ten original Type 42 destroyers built as guardians of the Fleet against air attack, only one remains on active service.

Her name is HMS Liverpool.

The Liver Bird is the last of the shortened 42s (batches 1 and 2) which can be called upon for front-line duties service (Nottingham is currently winding down in Portsmouth Naval Base).

But she won't be called upon just yet. Liverpool is undergoing a substantial overhaul in her home port for the last act of a career.

The 29-year-old vessel needed a bit of a makeover following six months in the South Atlantic and African waters – Falklands, South Georgia, Brazil, South Africa, Angola, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Senegal – during the summer and autumn of 2008.

So since the end of last year, she's been a hive of activity in Pompey where lots of Intersleek 500 (not a train but a special coat of paint which makes the destroyer scythe through the waves more efficiently) has been applied, adding a transom flap (an underwater 'spoiler' on her stern which also makes the ship scythe through the waves more efficiently), a revamp for her aft machinery space, upgrades to the weapons systems and general tweaks throughout the 410ft hull.

All that work will devour the time and energy of the ship's company and shipwrights and engineers until September, when she undergoes initial trials and tests.

Rededication follows on November 27, then it's Operational Sea Training with the taskmasters of FOST in the new year and finally deployment.

Aside from affiliations with her namesake city and good causes on Merseyside, the ship is bound with 47 (Air Defence) Regiment RA, Duke

of Lancaster's Regiment (which has picked up the banner of the King's Regiment), RAF 12(B) Squadron at Lossiemouth and the Worshipful Company of Pewterers.

Understandably given the city's seafaring heritage, there's an equally long and proud list of previous HMS Liverpools.

The line begins in 1741 with a fifth-rate frigate which served for 15 years before being sold for the princely sum of £494... before the Admiralty bought her back and recommissioned her as HMS Looe.

They couldn't bring her back as HMS Liverpool because by 1758, the second ship to bear the name had arrived, a sixth-rate frigate which served, on and off, for the next two decades until wrecked off Long Island in 1778.

Liverpool III – a fourth-rate frigate – served for a mere eight years during and after the Napoleonic wars. It was another four decades before the name was resurrected as a screw frigate in 1860. Such was the pace of change that she was obsolete in a decade.

Into the 20th Century and the fifth HMS Liverpool, a Town-class cruiser, served with distinction in the Great War, notably at the Heligoland Bight in the first month of the conflict. She also tried to tow dreadnought HMS Audacious to safety – alas unsuccessfully – after she was mined.

And so to the previous holder of the name, a Gloucester-class cruiser which was heavily engaged in the Mediterranean. She helped sink the Italian destroyer Espero with a substantial cruiser force in the 'Battle of the Espero Convoy' off Crete in June 1940.

Twice the cruiser survived being badly damaged by aerial torpedo attack, off Crete in 1940 and during the Malta convoys in the summer of 1942. She was paid off a decade later and broken up in 1958.

photographic memories

THE moment naval aviation was truly born. The date is May 2 1912. The place is HMS Hibernia at sea off Weymouth. And the deed is the first launch of an aircraft from a ship under way. The man at the controls is Charles Rumney Samson, one of the first four sailors to learn to fly and the father of naval flight. The historic moment was captured on camera by Oswald Short (of the eponymous aircraft firm). Samson's S38 T2 aircraft had air-bag floats to allow it to land on water and was launched via a trolley-shuttle system down a ramp which stretched from Hibernia's bridge to bow, over her forward 12in guns. (Neg Q71041)

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



HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.61

S/Lt David Balme DSC

Kapitänleutnant Fritz-Julius Lemp was a rather contradictory figure.

Cool-headed – he sank 17 vessels and damaged the battleship Barham – he could also be hot-headed and rash at times. Instructed once to remain on patrol merely to send weather reports to U-boat HQ, he signalled home one particularly terse report: 'Shit. Lemp.'

And he could lose his head. He had lost it on the first day of war, torpedoing the 13,000-ton liner Athenia bound for Montreal, convinced she was a merchant cruiser when a more thorough inspection would have told him otherwise.

U-boat chief Karl Dönitz tore a strip off the 26-year-old officer – and tore a strip out of his logbook to cover up the attack. But his U-Bootwaffe needed skilled commanders and Fritz-Julius Lemp was skilled. Within four months he earned the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Class. Within a year, the Knight's Cross – Nazi Germany's second-highest decoration – had been pinned to his chest.

Faith in Lemp seemed well placed. In the spring of 1941, he was given a fresh boat to take the fight to the enemy, U110. His first patrol proved disappointing. Two ships damaged, none sunk. His second would change the course of history.

After a dozen barren days, Friday May 9 1941 offered hope. Lemp and U201 were closing on convoy OB318, 350 miles east of the southernmost tip of Greenland. U110 would strike first.

Today was a day for Fritz-Julius Lemp the hot-headed. There were nine escorts shepherding the merchantmen westwards. Lemp attacked anyway.

His bravado paid off – initially. Steamers SS Bengore Head and Esmond were mortally wounded. But then Lemp's radio operator heard the ominous sound of pinging in his headphones.

And then: *Wasserbomben* – depth charges. Valves cracked. Fuel and water poured from broken pipes and tanks. The depth gauge shattered. The engines failed. U110 was crippled. Her crew contemplated being crushed as she sank deeper and deeper, but somehow the boat surfaced.

Lemp was the first up the conning tower ladder. He flung open the hatch, then yelled down: "Endstation Umlandstrasse. Alles aussteigen!" "Last stop: Umlandstrasse. All change." There was no time to collect the cipher and code books and throw them over the side. "Leave everything," he urged. "Get out."

Bearing down on Lemp's stricken boat was

HMS Broadway. Stopped perhaps 100 yards away was HMS Bulldog.

Aboard the latter, 20-year-old S/Lt David Balme was rounding up eight shipmates to form a boarding party. His instructions from his captain were succinct: "Get what you can out of her."

As U110's crew spilled into the Atlantic, Balme and his comrades rowed towards the stricken U-boat. She was down by the stern – but she was not sinking.

David Balme realised it. So too did Fritz-Julius Lemp. He turned to swim back to his boat and scuttle her or at least destroy the codebooks. He never made it. Some say he drowned. Some say he was struck by one of the many British bullets which were whizzing around. Some even say he committed suicide.

Whatever Lemp's fate, David Balme could not believe the Germans "would have just abandoned this submarine". He was convinced a Hun or a booby trap lay in wait for him as he began searching the deserted, stricken boat under the blue hue.

There were no pitfalls, only prizes. Balme's telegraphist, Allen Long, headed for the radio room. He found papers, signals, codebooks, and a typewriter. He pressed a key – and a little light on a different letter flashed on a display panel.

The 'typewriter' was unscrewed, passed down a human chain and eventually transferred to HMS Bulldog. All the time compressed air hissed from broken pipes and the U-boat shook under the distant detonations of depth charges being dropped on other prey.

The boarding party spent some six hours taking what they could from U110. Bulldog tried to tow the crippled submarine to Iceland, but she foundered the following day.

The real prize was not the boat, but the 'typewriter': a working Enigma machine. "We have waited the whole war for one of these," an intelligence officer enthused when he saw it three days later at Scapa Flow.

Not that Bulldog's ship's company could celebrate their success. The capture of the machine – Operation Primrose – was, the Admiralty ordered, "to be treated with the greatest secrecy and as few people allowed to know as possible."

And so when George VI presented the 20-year-old junior officer with his DSC later that year, the monarch apologised that "for security reasons" the award could not be higher.

The actions of Balme and his boarding party were, he added, "perhaps the most important single event in the whole war at sea."

New man spreads the word

THE Maritime Reserves are doing a splendid job – but not enough people are aware of that.

The new man at the head of the Maritime Reserves (MR) has set himself the task of ensuring everyone – particularly senior Naval officers – appreciate the valuable role played by the Reserves.

Cdre Chris Steel, Commander Maritime Reserves, took over the hot seat in January this year, becoming the first regular officer to assume the role – but he does not believe that the die is cast.

“I’m delighted and honoured to be in this position as the first regular Naval officer to take on the role of Commander Maritime Reserves,” Cdre Steel told *Navy News*.

“Why me? Why now?”
 “Well, since the Commander Maritime Reserves organisation stood up three years or so ago the Navy Command HQ here at Whale Island has developed, and I don’t think Maritime Reserves have played as big a role in that as it should have.

“There just hasn’t been the ability to have staff in on the various meetings that have helped develop the HQ.

“At worst we were forgotten, at best we were an afterthought.

“That is no slight on anybody in the organisation, past or present – everybody has been busy here, with people tied down to horrendous deadlines.

“If something is not in the mind’s eye it is passed by.

“I have worked on and off in this headquarters for five years in the past six.

“I have been involved in change, and I know people from the top



● Cdre Chris Steel meets reservist Amphibious Ops Officer Lt Richard Brookes, an AWSTOM specialist 9ASRM, on board HMS Ocean in Cyprus during the Taurus 09 deployment. Picture: LA(Phot) Bernie Henesy

down – and, more importantly, they know me.

“I have a seat at the table, and pushing the Reserves’ cause which is easier for me to do than for someone not known to this HQ.

“It’s a real positive for the Reserves, and they should see this as a huge fillip – it’s recognition their input is important, that they need a full-time representative.

“I see myself as the right person

in the right place at the right time to deliver for the Reserves – although that’s not to say this post will always be taken by a full-timer.

“In my view it’s too early to say what sort of person will replace me – it depends on the needs at the time.”

So besides his prime role of supplying a stream of ready-trained men and women, many in

specialist niche roles, to support and augment the regulars, Cdre Steel is also out to inform his HQ colleagues and beyond that the Reserves has a crucial role in RN operational capability.

At present around 17 per cent of trained strength of the Maritime Reserves – which covers both the Royal Naval Reserve and the Royal Marines Reserve – is mobilised or on full-time reserve service (FTRS).

“We need to look at the way we sell ourselves, and the scale of military tasks that could not be delivered if we were not there,” said Cdre Steel.

“It is shifting the argument from ‘this is what the Maritime Reserves is’ to ‘this is the impact

and effect the Maritime Reserves brings’, which will hopefully stand us in good stead with the planners.”

That, the commodore believes, is particularly important as budgets and spending are decided, and he and his senior officers are making sure the message is heard at every level of the process.

Cdre Steel believes the new command structure, using the conduits of Captains North and South, has helped the message percolate upwards, and he is also taking every opportunity to get out of Leach Building to see reservists at work, whether that is at their local unit or on deployment.

That has taken Cdre Steel as far as Cyprus, where he met almost 20 reservists playing key roles on the Taurus 09 task group – “people who are making a real difference,” said the commodore.

He is seeking the views and perspectives of all ranks, from commanding officers and specialist staff officers to able seamen.

“I’m very well aware the MR has to balance three strands of effort; work, family and a Naval career – one more than a Regular has to,” said Cdre Steel.

“It is getting inside the mind of the reservist to be able to put forward the case for the Maritime Reserves in the best way.

“I’m not an expert on Reservist ways. I am here to deliver leadership and direction and rely on Maritime Reserves experts to offer opinions and guidance to supplement the experience I can gain over the next few months as I visit units.

“What I’m already picking up is the unique contribution the MR provides – the so-called ‘Twice the Citizen’ effect.”

Cdre Steel said this can bring a number of benefits.

Supportive employers find that their employees pick up valuable skills and are more rounded characters, while military chiefs can count on mature, trained individuals who can slot seamlessly into roles alongside regulars, earning respect from their full-time colleagues.

That ability in theatre is likely to

be in demand for the foreseeable future.

“The whole of Defence is incredibly busy, and that filters down to the MR and makes them very busy,” said Cdre Steel.

“It’s a question of when and not if the majority of Reservists are mobilised, and I do not think that is a bad thing.”

He believes it not only creates opportunities for reservists to put their skills to practical use, but also provides “an awful lot of excitement” for them as well.

Cdre Steel said responsible recruitment must continue – the ‘black hole’ from a recruitment freeze would cause problems for years to come – and specific branches for the MR should be targeted, such as the heavily-used Seaman Reserve branch, which he sees as being able to provide the all-round capability of a regular seaman rating.

Demand is such that the commodore said he could not rule out mobilisation of the unwilling.

“I have got no doubt that the demand for mobilised reservists will continue,” he said.

“The level might go up or down, but the need will remain and there’s an increasing likelihood that we will not find willing volunteers from the MR to service that.

“So there may be a future requirement for mobilisation of the unwilling.

“Every mobilisation of the unwilling will be made against a particular task, and that task would be agreed on a case-by-case basis, outside general war – specific approval is needed.”

With a strategic review of reserves currently in progress, Cdre Steel is continuing his twin-track approach – supplying the needs of the regular Navy and making sure everybody knows what a great job the MR is doing.

“I intend to be regularly talking to the two- and three-star officers, treading the fine line between being informative and being a pain in the backside,” he said.

The Maritime Reserves

- Current trained strength is around 2,200
- The Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) stands at around 1,600 trained men and women
- The Royal Marines Reserve (RMR) weighs in with around 600 trained personnel
- Birmingham unit HMS Forward saw more than a third of its members deployed or on full time reserve service in 2008
- The unit had a presence, through

- deployment or exercise, in 13 countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and the Sudan, as well as members at sea.
- Reservists bring specialist expertise in a number of areas, including medical, logistics, maritime trade, communications and force protection
- The Maritime Reserves can trace its modern roots back to 1859 and the RN Volunteer Act



● HMS Vivid sailors march past the Lord Lieutenant of Devonshire, the Lord Mayor of Plymouth and Commanding Officer Cdr Angie Hancock (saluting) on Royal Parade. Picture: LA(PHOT) Abbie Gadd

Vivid enjoys its day in the sun

A DAY in the sun was the perfect start for a reserve unit’s 50th anniversary celebrations.

HMS Vivid clocks up its half-century next month. But members of the unit were out on the streets of Plymouth to accept the Freedom of the City from Devon’s Lord Lieutenant Eric Dancer.

Bright spring weather ensured perfect conditions for the sailors as they exercised their right to march along their home city’s streets, starting at the Armada Way piazza.

The award recognises the unit’s close association with the local community, and follows the Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership’s Volunteer of the Year award, earned by the unit’s efforts at summer and Christmas fun events.

HMS Vivid’s Commanding Officer, Cdr Angie Hancock, said: “The men and women of HMS Vivid are tremendously proud and grateful to be awarded the Freedom of the City.

“As we marched through the city centre, with bayonets fixed, drums beating and banners flying, we felt justly proud of the honour bestowed upon us.

“We are always looking at ways to strengthen the already close bond we have with the local community.”

HMS Vivid has more than 140 personnel, of whom more than 20 have deployed in support of UK operations in the Middle East in the past year, working alongside their full-time counterparts in a range of tasks.



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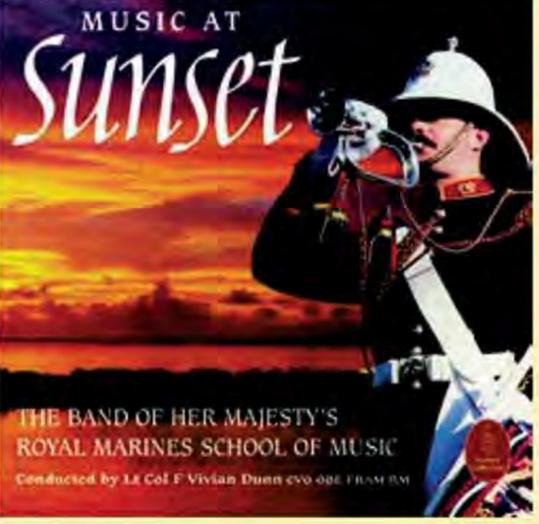


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SECRET



NOW IT CAN BE TOLD



OVER the Easter weekend, an 8,000-mile piggy back for ice ship **HMS ENDURANCE** ended as she was brought home to Portsmouth for repair following a flooding incident off Chile.

You'll never believe how close she came to foundering, as **SARAH FLETCHER** learned from the ship's company.

IT WAS about four in the afternoon, mid-December, with the wind funnelled between the snow-capped peaks, whipping the frenzied waters of the western Magellan Strait into an Irish Sea chop.

It should have been routine – as routine as any routine job is in these seas, with this ship, with that weather: to carry out maintenance on a sea water system.

But that was until half the icy Pacific poured in, swirling, bubbling, gurgling, killing the generators, killing the engines, buckling the bulkheads, forcing its way up, out, everywhere. No force of Man seemingly could stop the force of Nature.

Apologies for the Ersatz Raymond Chandler, but for four months what happened aboard **HMS ENDURANCE** on the afternoon of Tuesday

December 16, 2008, has been shrouded in secrecy.

But now it can be told.

Not all of it, mind you – the flooding incident is still the subject of an official Service Inquiry report – but most of it.

Our story begins shortly after 4pm that fateful day with the waters of the western Magellan Strait racing into the Antarctic survey ship...

ENDURANCE immediately went to emergency stations, but as it was impossible to shut the valve, water continued pouring into the engine room. With all her major machinery in one compartment, it wasn't long before the ship lost power and propulsion.

"When I first entered the engine control room there was no water but a definite atmosphere of something being up – a great urgency in what everyone was doing," said PO Rieder

Freeland, who was in charge of the Standard Sea Emergency Party.

"Then one of the Chiefs came out soaked from top to bottom – that's when I knew there was something up. This chief was a very experienced man and I knew he would be able to deal with any minor incident.

"The water was flooding in at a tremendous rate and we were fighting a losing battle. We did our best.

"The attitude of our youngsters was tremendous – they put such energy into bailing out."

For the next eight hours the ship's company fought to bail her out and contain the flood, drifting in a 40-50 knot north-westerly perilously close to rocks in the Strait of Magellan, and rolling 30 degrees either side.

"Although we were in the strait of an inland waterway it was like an Irish Sea chop, so when

we lost propulsion we were rolling around very aggressively," recalled Lt Cdr Tom Sharpe, **ENDURANCE'S** Executive Officer – and in temporary command of the ship at the time. "Just holding on on the bridge was hard work, down below it was really hampering our damage control efforts."

He continued: "The engine room flooded so quickly we had to evacuate it. Then it was a case of trying to contain the spread.

"The water was forcing its way out of the engine room in all sorts of places we weren't expecting but most significantly through the deckhead and onto the accommodation deck so we now had two major floods – and the water was sloshing around, making us unstable."



HMS ENDURANCE lost power to the Communications Office so signals and emails were disabled but she could make outgoing calls via her hand-held satellite telephones.

Back in the UK, teams had mustered at Fleet HQ in Northwood and Abbey Wood to monitor the situation and give what help they could to the stricken ship 8,000 miles away.

Lt Cdr Sharpe explained: "Everyone had descended on the Fleet Ops cell in Northwood. It was a heartening response, with very senior people offering first-class advice through the Fleet Operations Officer. The engineer was also talking to the Fleet engineers and between the two of us we had good lines of communication."

The naval architects in Abbey Wood, studying plans of **ENDURANCE**, told Lt Cdr Sharpe she was close to the limits of her stability and advised making plans to evacuate the ship.

Lt Cdr Sharpe said: "We knew we could get everyone off on the life-rafts, though that would be perilous as our emergency evacuation system is port-side, which was down-wind.

"Another option would have been to walk the inflated life-rafts around to the back, which was nearly awash by now, and step in. But I was working on the principle that 'this is the best life-raft we've got, so stick with it' until the situation became desperate – and it never became desperate."

PO Freeland added: "You don't think of worrying or panicking. The only time you might stop to worry is when there's a lull in the action or a lull in people coming up to you for advice.

"You keep people busy, focused and get on with the job in hand. I don't

think losing the ship crossed our minds, we were so focused on doing our job."

The first vessel that came to help was a pilot cutter – too small to do anything with the ship, but Lt Cdr Sharpe asked the skipper to stay around in case he was needed to corral the life-rafts.

The next, larger vessel to make its way to help was a 70,000-ton cruise liner with 3,000 passengers. **ENDURANCE** had seen her earlier in the day and gave her name to the Northwood team, who looked her up on the internet, contacted the captain, and asked him to reverse her course and stand by to help.

As the little cutter declared that it was too rough for towing and the liner altered course to reach **ENDURANCE**, Lt Cdr Sharpe let the starboard anchor out to its fullest extent – and now the ship's luck began to change.

He said: "We were in 300-500 metres of water, so nowhere near the seabed, but I thought it might act as a drogue. It was worth a try, so we let it go.

"It didn't slow us, but our direction of drift changed by about 10 degrees and that bought us some extra time.

"It also meant we were now going over a shallow patch. We were crossing the 80-metre contour – the only shallow patch in the western Magellan. It is a Norwegian-type topography and beyond the 80 metres it drops almost immediately down to 500 metres.

"We had 250 plus metres of cable out. It was rocky – you wouldn't choose this as an anchorage in a million years – the wind was 40 to 50 knots and we were drifting at about two knots. I didn't think the anchor would

hold, I just thought it was worth a try – and at 11 pm the starboard anchor held on to this rocky pinnacle, and that saved us.

"The ship's head started to come into wind and I knew the anchor was holding. If it hadn't, the next option almost immediately would have been to get off."

He continued: "The next thing was to get the port anchor down, and when that held too we had five or ten minutes to take stock. Thankfully the violent rolling had been replaced with a much less disruptive pitching.

"I rang Northwood and said 'We're at anchor'. They had what was later described as an Apollo 13 moment – everyone cheering! It was heartening to hear that people were backing us that much."

The situation was not without a certain grim humour. As the cruise liner approached, it requested help from **ENDURANCE** – a critically-ill passenger on board urgently needed a doctor, and could the ship fly hers across?

"At that moment I was looking around for FOST staff, thinking this was the sort of evolution they throw at you," said Lt Cdr Sharpe.

"We were formulating a plan for the cruise liner to tow us, but this was a 70,000 tonne vessel with 3,000 passengers on board – and we would be asking them to come within 100 metres of the rocks.

"They're good ship handlers, but at night and in that wind it would have been a very interesting evolution." In the event the ship stayed on her rocky anchorage until the following morning, when the Chilean salvage tug arrived.

Lt Cdr Sharpe said: "We'd flown on some extra pumps to boost our efforts and they had come with a Chilean naval officer, whom I refused to let go.

"When the salvage tug arrived, the master didn't speak a word of English, but I could tell he and his ship were very capable and our communications were excellent, thanks to our Chilean officer and helped by a Spanish speaker on the staff of the British Schools Explorations Society.

"I debated whether to wait for the second tug, but the weather was getting worse and I knew the sooner we went the better as we'd have to turn across the sea before we could get to the sheltered section of the Magellan. We had no hydraulics for our anchor so we had to cut the chains with a gas axe.

"That was quite a moment – we cut the anchor that had been out lifeline all night. But we trusted the tug and within two hours it had towed us into calm water."

THE RED PLUM was taken into Punta Arenas and then to the Falklands. Most of the sailors were flown home from Chile.

Lt Cdr Sharpe said: "The sailors were superb. They responded extraordinarily quickly, with several isolated incidents of great bravery.

"In a situation like this it's essential to keep a cool head, and instead of panicking, I think people went the other way.

"I was very keen to get a comprehensive photographic record from the start as I knew it would subsequently be important, but when I saw them later I wondered if we

were ever in trouble, as everybody seems to be grinning – and that's the best way to combat it."

"What this incident showed was how inhospitable life at sea can get and with how little warning.

"However, the training kicked in and everyone onboard – including the civilians before they could be evacuated – pulled their weight with good humour, applied expertise and bravery. I am immensely proud and grateful for everyone who helped save **HMS ENDURANCE** that day under the most testing conditions."

ENDURANCE'S CO agrees. "I was not on board at the time, but I am very proud of the ship's company and what they did in keeping the ship safe," said Capt Gavin Pritchard.

"Taking **ENDURANCE** to Antarctica is a very thrilling experience but it does carry a whole series of additional risks, operating at extreme distances in very, very remote environments where the weather can change and deteriorate very quickly.

"Of all the ships in the Navy she's the one that's regularly literally thousands and thousands of miles from home. These are things I have to take into account when operating the ship in Antarctica."

A full survey of the work needed to return **ENDURANCE** is now under way before she is repaired and refitted in Portsmouth.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams, **HMS ENDURANCE**

Chatham provides second US gift

AT THE heart of the government of the most powerful nation on earth stands a little piece of RN history, thanks to Chatham Dockyard.

Many Presidents of the United States have carried out their business using the Resolute Desk, made from the timbers of a Tyne-built exploration vessel of the mid-19th Century.

The ship was abandoned when she became trapped in Arctic ice but was later discovered by an American whaler more than 1,000 miles from where she had been abandoned.

Resolute was brought back to New England and a year later, in 1856, having been refitted, was sailed back to the UK as a gesture of national respect.

When the ship was broken up in 1879, the British Government arranged for a desk to be made from her timbers by craftsman William Evenden at the joiner's shop of Chatham Dockyard.

It was sent back across the Atlantic and presented to President Rutherford Hayes.

It has been used, either in the Oval Office or in the president's private study, by all except three presidents – Lyndon Johnson (who was reportedly too big to use it comfortably), Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

Now another such gift has followed the desk across the Pond – Prime Minister Gordon Brown presented new President Barack Obama with a pen-holder made in the same Joiner's Shop at Chatham.

The craftsmen on this occasion were shipkeepers David Appleton and Chris Jones, and the timber was an off-cut from HMS Gannet, a Victorian naval sloop now preserved on public display at Chatham, and which entered service in 1879, the same year the Resolute was broken up.

Scene is set to pay tribute to Services

CHATHAM Historic Dockyard is promising an occasion to remember when it hosts the first Armed Forces Day national event – and access will be free.

A wide range of activities, displays and entertainment is planned for the day itself – Saturday June 27 – as well as the week leading up to it.

The event is designed to cater for the entire Service community, from cadets through to veterans.

But those wishing to go along should keep an eye on the dockyard's website, www.thedockyard.co.uk, to be aware of any ticketing arrangements which may be necessary when numbers need to be restricted.

Armed Forces Day will begin with a celebration parade through Chatham town centre featuring contingents from the three Armed Forces led by the Royal Marines Band.

Cohorts of veterans, complete with standards, will join the parade as it proceeds into the Historic Dockyard, where a royal salute will take place prior to an open-air Drumhead service.

Throughout the day displays and activities will be staged on land, on the water and in the air.

For Crab fans there will be an area at Anchor Wharf which will concentrate on the RAF, and allow visitors a close look at three aircraft – a Typhoon, a Tornado and a Chinook.

The Army will have an Expo site of their own, there will be a Sea Cadet village, and 'Soldiers through the ages' tableaux are also due to feature.

Maritime and airborne events will be centred mainly on and above the Medway.



● The RM Band will feature in the Beat Retreat and Ceremonial Sunset on Armed Forces Day

At the heart of the Historic Dockyard, Museum Square will become a 'Veterans' Rendezvous', featuring music, catering, promotions and charity information tailored to the interests of the ex-Service community.

In the main Armed Forces areas there will be plenty of action and hands-on activities, such as driving a digger, bricklaying and mine-detecting with the Sappers, an inflatable assault course, a

shooting range and climbing wall with the RAF regiment.

At the yard's Thunderbolt Pier, a Royal Navy ship – identity yet to be confirmed – will be open to visitors.

The Red Arrows are scheduled to put in an appearance in the skies over the Medway towns, as are the veteran aircraft of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, while organisers are hoping to confirm the inclusion of other

fast jets and helicopters to the programme in due course.

Other organisations expected to participate besides the military include the RNLI, Kent Fire and Rescue, BAE Systems, HM Coastguard, military vehicle preservation groups and many others.

Chatham plans for a day to remember

THE Beat Retreat and Ceremonial Sunset which will ring down the curtain on Armed Forces Day will be a separately-ticketed event.

Seats in the tiered grandstand will cost £12 while the stalls (non-tiered) will cost £8; tickets are limited so organisers suggest those interested in attending should visit the Historic Dockyard ticket office in person or call 01634 823826.

Other events of note during Medway Armed Forces Week include:

● Cruises on the Medway on paddle steamer Kingswear Castle on June 24-26: www.pskc.freereserve.co.uk,

● Armed Forces and Veterans Film Festival at the Central Theatre, Chatham, including *In Which We Serve*: www.medway.gov.uk/theatrebookings,

● Service of Thanksgiving for the Armed Forces at Rochester Cathedral on June 28.

The following attractions are amongst those which have offered free admission to Forces personnel and veterans on presentation of ID or Veterans' Badge for certain events during the week: the Historic Dockyard, the Royal Engineers Museum, Rochester Castle, Upnor Castle, Dickens World and Fort Amherst.

For more information on events and accommodation see www.medway.gov.uk/tourism



● The gun is fired by the Ark Royal team, including PO Mark Boyles (left), shown priming the weapon
Pictures: Cdr Chris Clough

Ark to the sound of a gun

AN HISTORIC cannon on show at a South Coast tourist attraction has been fired by serving Royal Navy personnel for the first time in 150 years.

The original 1805 12-pdr gun at Fort Nelson, near Portsmouth, was decommissioned in the mid-19th century but sailors from the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal brought it back to life during a team-building exercise.

Almost 40 sailors from Ark Royal's Weapons Engineering Department fired the cannon using the exact gun drills from the period, as taught by staff at the museum.

They also saw the fort's national collection of artillery and historic cannon and heard the experiences of a gunner at Trafalgar courtesy of an actor from Royal Armouries, which owns the fort. Cdr Chris Clough, Ark's Commander Weapon

Engineering, said: "Technology has changed over the last two centuries, but the need for well-trained and motivated young men and women, working together as a close-knit team, is what wins wars."

"The sailors learnt a lot about the weapons and gun drills of the period which they found fascinating."

ET Kevin Clucas said: "Operating the cannon as part of a 12-man crew was an interesting experience – we are used to firing the Phalanx gun and small arms, but using the cutting edge technology of 200 years ago gave us an interesting insight into life in Nelson's Navy."

The exercise was also a chance for the sailors to bid farewell to Cdr Clough, who leaves the carrier to take up a new post at HMS Excellent.

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Terry and dunes

NEWSPAPER and television reports tell us what's happening in Afghanistan, but they focus (as is the nature of news) on events – casualties, fire-fights and insurgencies.

The Royal Marines Museum's latest exhibition, *Return to Helmand: The Royal Marines in Afghanistan*, aims to give visitors a flavour of day-to-day life for a Royal Marine deployed on Operation Herrick.

What's life in camp like? How do they relax? What do they eat? What happens when the mail arrives? How do they cope when one of their mates get blown up by an improvised device? And, importantly for their families, how do they cope when they get back home?

Given the nature of the operation, a mixture of extreme danger and tedium, is the famous Royal sense of humour alive and kicking? (As they apparently refer to the enemy as 'Terry Taleban', the evidence looks promising.)

The exhibition uses photography, video footage and memorable quotes from the men on the ground to build up a picture of life in Afghanistan, told from the viewpoint of the individuals. There is also a series of paintings by the war artist Gordon Rushmer and a range of kit and other exhibits brought back from the field.

"It is a risky decision for a museum to open an exhibition on an ongoing operation," said Maj Gen Garry Robison, Commandant General Royal Marines, who opened the exhibition.

"But what we are looking at will form part of the Corps' history in years to come, and it is important that it is recorded."

The Helmand exhibition is in a new, purpose-built exhibitions gallery, the latest in a series of exciting new developments for the museum, which recently won a prestigious award, the 2008 Tourism ExSellece award for Small Visitor Attraction of the Year.

In the last 18 months the museum has refurbished its Minstrels' Gallery and its famous Medal Room, redeveloped its foyer and gift shop and introduced a new audio-visual presentation.

Return to Helmand runs until August 31.

● *Sangin in the dry... Men of Whiskey Company, 45 Commando, on patrol at dusk near Forward Operating Base Jackson*

Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Tryon, 45 Cdo



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National treasure

THE history of the Royal Navy is the history of the United Kingdom, but up to now there has never been a National Navy Museum to tell its story.

The Army and the RAF have national museums, but the Navy has four separate ones for its branches, each one popular and successful, but none which gives an overall picture of the Navy's role in shaping the nation.

It's a gap which the Navy Board wanted to fill when they decided in 2006 to create a National Museum of the Royal Navy, writes Sarah Fletcher.

Keeping naval heritage alive and well is an expensive business. The Navy has to fund HMS Victory (still a commissioned warship and going to remain so) and the four naval museums out of an already stretched budget.

The Navy Board believed a national museum would have much more clout and influence in a competitive market place, as well as making the grant-in-aid funding more efficient.

"Museums and libraries are easy places to make a cut," confirmed Dr Dominic Tweddle, the new Director General of the National Museum.

He explained: "To secure the future of our four naval museums, we've got to be much more focused, get more people through the door, and one way or another generate a lot more income."

"That doesn't mean having them on one site – although it does beg the question why they are so heavily concentrated in the left-hand corner of England, when the Navy has a nationwide presence?"

"What it does mean is better combining their skills and resources. I'm currently working with the four directors of the separate naval museums to produce a combined strategy."

He continued: "It's too early yet to announce any plans, but I have many ideas. We need to look at our marketing, exhibition spaces, events, catering – there is a lot of potential there."

"Portsmouth Naval Base is particularly interesting because it is a complex site, with Warrior and Mary Rose, which are not part of the navy-funded museums but have a huge historical importance."

Dr Tweddle, who took up the post of Director General in January, is an archaeologist with a special interest in mediaeval and Viking ships.

After a degree and doctorate in archaeology at Southampton University he took a second degree at Cambridge, then studied at University College, London, and worked for a year at the British Museum.

But as well as his academic credentials he has huge experience in running commercially successful visitor attractions.

He was one of the founders of the world-famous Jorvik Viking Centre in York, and was Chief Executive of Continuum, the UK's leading tourism and visitor attraction consortium, responsible among other things for the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth.

Now his task is to bring commercial success to the Navy's national museum. But the educational and research element is equally important. As every curator knows, balancing commercial success with academic integrity is quite a challenge.

"I think we're much more open to expertise in other areas than we were 25 years ago, when every

museum post was filled by academics," he said.

"It's a myth that academics can't handle change – they can change. They can acquire other skills – as I did."

His aim is to put naval history firmly back where it belongs – in the forefront of education.

"The history of the Royal Navy is the history of the United Kingdom, but I think the Navy story has gone walkabout. It's just not there in schools anymore," he explained.

"It's missing from the curriculum, because it's not fashionable, or it's seen as imperialistic – but it is part of this country's past. And if we can't be truthful about the past, what can we be truthful about?"

He added: "We need a more visible sense of the Navy's history and importance. We've got to attach ourselves much more strongly to the present and the future."

"The great advantage of our four naval museums is that in each one of them you can see the Navy doing its everyday work."

"In Portsmouth Naval Base and across the water at the submarine museum, you can look at the history, and then see, say, HMS Daring, and that gives you a sense of continuity."

"It's the same at Yeovilton where the Fleet Air Arm Museum is on a working air station. This relationship between the past and the present is what makes it so interesting."

He believes there is a huge public appetite for history – if it is presented in the right way.

"Museum statistics show visitor numbers going up and up year on year. If you go back 25 years museums were perceived as boring, but it's not the case anymore."

The Jorvik Viking Centre, which opened in 1984, was a step change in visitor attractions – it recreated a Viking village on the site of an archaeological dig, with sights, sounds and smells.

Dr Tweddle believes it had a huge influence in increasing public interest in archaeology.

"When the Jorvik Viking Centre opened there was very little public interest in archaeology," he said.

"But it quickly became associated with success, and every minister wanted to visit it."

"It even influenced legislation about archaeology, because the government started to make developers pay for studies on the sites they were developing."

"That brought a massive growth in archaeology, with more opportunities for archaeologists, and an increase in the public appetite."

"I'm not saying we brought about that change. What I am saying is that we were part of a movement that fuelled a public interest in archaeology."

Now he hopes a national Navy museum will have the same effect.

He said: "I think providing we've got galleries that tell the stories, that constant drip-feed of information is incredibly important."

"There isn't anyone else doing it – at least in historical terms."

"The Navy has its own public relations, but it has more complex things it's got to deliver from day to day. It's still doing incredibly important things and its people are still dying for their country."

"But we can tell its history every day."

ROYAL NAVAL
MUSEUM

ROYAL
NAVY
SUBMARINE
MUSEUM

the ROYAL
MARINES
MUSEUM

FLEET AIR ARM
MUSEUM

A summer of flight

AS BEFITS the 100th anniversary of naval flight, the Fleet Air Arm's hogging the limelight at three of the UK's biggest air displays this summer.

Culdrose and Yeovilton air days are a given – they're home turf – but those nice Gingers and Algies in the RAF are giving centre stage (well, for some of the time) to a naval flypast at their annual showpiece, the Royal International Air Tattoo (billed as the world's biggest military air show).

All three public shows will witness a 'Balbo' – a phalanx of various aircraft grouped together in the sky, made famous by the Italian aviation pioneer Italo Balbo.

Around 40 fixed wing aircraft and helicopters from front-line and training squadrons – about one sixth of the strength of the Fleet Air Arm – will mass for the three flypasts.

Apart from the Balbos, Yeovilton will stage its ever-popular commando helicopter assault (hopefully in better weather than last year's event).

Other aerial displays lined up for the Somerset show include the *Frecce Tricolori* (Tricolour Arrows – Italy's 'Red Arrows'), *Patrulla Aguila* (Eagle Patrol



– Spain's 'Red Arrows') and the Red Arrows (Britain's, er, Red Arrows).

The Royal Jordanian Falcons will be performing at both Culdrose and Yeovilton, as will a RAF Typhoon and the glitterati of naval aviation – a Swordfish, Sea Hawk and Sea Fury from the Royal Navy Historic Flight.

Here comes the info bit...

Yeovilton Air Day takes place on Saturday July 11. Discounted tickets – adults £17, OAPs £14 and children £5 – are available on 08445 781 781 or www.ticketzone.co.uk.

RIAT runs at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire on July 18 and 19.

Tickets are only available in advance, priced £34.95, from airtattoo.com or 0800 107 1940. Under 16s go free.

Culdrose Air Day is staged on Wednesday July 29. Discounted tickets – adults £12, children £4 and families £30 – are available in advance at www.ticketzone.co.uk, selected tourist information centres in Devon and Cornwall, or by calling 08705 321 321.

Nuclear veterans' health studied

THE Ministry of Defence has announced that it will be conducting an assessment of the health needs of nuclear test veterans and their descendants in a move welcomed by the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA).

MOD experts will join representatives from the BNTVA and MPs to form a working group designed to finalise details of the research and identify a sample group to study.

Veterans Minister Kevan Jones said: "I am determined to address the ongoing concerns of nuclear test veterans and their families.

"To that end, I am extremely pleased to announce that we will be undertaking a project to investigate the particular health needs of the nuclear test veterans and their descendants.

"This work will enable us to ensure that this group are getting the best care possible and identify where any improvements can be made."

The MoD will also follow up on last year's New Zealand chromosomal study. This work is in the planning stages but the aim is to create a study that will provide veterans with practical, relevant and timely results.

It is hoped that these research projects will both be under way by the end of this year.

The UK carried out 21 atmospheric nuclear tests in Australia and at Malden Island and Christmas Island in the Pacific between 1952 and 1958.

Around 28,000 UK Service personnel were involved in the test programme.

This and previous Governments' frequently-stated position is that there is no evidence of excess illness or mortality amongst the veterans as a group which could be linked to their participation in the tests or to exposure to radiation as a result of that participation.

The Government states that formal and well-documented procedures were in place to ensure the health and safety of those participating in the tests, Personnel Safety Plans were prepared and used for each operation, and environmental monitoring was undertaken.

Furthermore, it asserts that personal monitoring and protective clothing was used where appropriate for each trial.

Get down to Sheppey

THE Fly Navy 100 celebrations take off on May 1 with a ceremony at the Pioneer Memorial at Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey, followed by a Fleet Air Arm flypast of Harriers, Hawks, Falcons and an historic Sea Vixen.

The first four Royal Navy pilots learned to fly at Eastchurch in 1911, the same year that the site became the first Royal Naval Air Station. The first RN aircraft was also built at Eastchurch.

For more details of the Fly Navy 100 programme, see the Royal Navy website www.royalnavy.mod.uk and follow the link on the right of the screen.

Farewell to a legend

THE annals of the Royal Navy are peppered with larger-than-life characters who attain legendary status.

Just Nuisance. The Lady in White. The gully gully man. And Jenny Side Party, who has died in Hong Kong at the age of 92.

The death of the modest, steely but ever-smiling Jenny puts a little more distance between the modern Senior Service and the halcyon days of the Commonwealth navy.

Details of Jenny's life are a little hazy - she was widely reported as being 92 when she died on February 18, though other sources put her year of birth as 1920; most agree she was born in a sampan in Causeway Bay.

She was either the second or third generation of her family to work the harbour - her mother was described variously as Jenny One or Jenny Two - but what is absolutely incontrovertible is that through a lifetime of astonishing industry and unflinching good humour Jenny won a place in the heart of the Senior Service.

Side parties were teams of sailors detailed to keep the hull clean and tidy.

But that task in Hong Kong was fulfilled by a number of side parties which, over time, each became associated with certain types of ship, alongside or at anchor.

Jenny's mother was recorded as having "provided serviceable sampans for the general use of the Royal Navy, obtained sand, and was useful for changing money."

Her daughters were brought up in the family business, and Jenny - her real name was Ng Muk Kah - became the doyenne of Victoria Harbour.

Her official Date of Volunteering was 1928, and from then until the colony became a Special Administrative Region of China in 1997, she made herself invaluable to the Royal Navy and Commonwealth navy ships which passed through.

Her girls - Jenny's own team numbered more than 30 at one point - worked quickly and efficiently at cleaning and painting ships; an aircraft carrier would be painted in ten days by the women working ten hours a day.

But that was really just the bread-and-butter work; the girls also waited on guests at cocktail parties dressed up to the nines, they repaired uniforms, looked after laundry, advised on sights to see, visited sick sailors ashore and ran errands which made life that little bit easier for Jack when he was far from home.

COs and Jimmys would find fresh flowers in their cabins, and



● Jenny (left) and Mary Gash (who made a living recycling rubbish from ships) at the HMS Tamar Locally Employed Personnel Farewell Divisions in December 1996

many a departing officer received a generous gift from Jenny as a memento of their time in Hong Kong.

Jenny never took payment for this work; she and her side party earned a living by selling soft drinks (goffer) to the ship's company and accepting 'arisings' - unused wire, rope, paint and so on.

A huge collection of photographs and letters was kept in a large brown envelope, and commendations and letters of reference were kept in two albums - including one from the Duke of Edinburgh in 1959.

Her most prized possession was the BEM which she was awarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 1980.

And despite the fact that the number of RN ships dwindled as the 20th century drew to a close, making it increasingly difficult for the side party to make a living, Jenny was still a familiar presence in the naval base, wearing her traditional baggy black trousers and high-collared smock, hair in a pigtail and a huge smile on her face - still willing to undertake any work there was to be done.

With thanks to Charles Addis



● Jenny's side party is presented with a farewell cake by Capt Robertson, Commanding Officer of aircraft carrier HMS Eagle - at 54,000 tons the biggest RN job they had to undertake - in 1971



● Jenny's side party works on a Royal Navy ship in Hong Kong

Picture: Capt Bob Brown

Side party was welcome sight

"I WAS saddened to hear of the death of Jenny Side Party. She was known to several generations of naval officer because she was in harness for almost 70 years, indeed the greater part of the 20th Century," writes Lord West of Spithead, former First Sea Lord.

"My first meeting with her was over Christmas 1969 when I was foc's'le officer of HMS Whitby.

"Jenny and her girls reduced part-of-ship work for my lads to a bare minimum and were a welcome sight as they approached in sampans with long brushes and big grins.

"I remember there was a certain tension between Jenny and Susie Side Party.

"Jenny did all the ships at buoy or anchor and Susie did those inside the basin.

"I next met Jenny in 1973 when I took command of one of the Hong Kong patrol craft.

"What always amazed me was how the girls working on the ship's side, thoroughly work-stained (although they never got

as grubby as the average sailor), would then transform into perfect stewards for our cocktail parties dressed in elegant cheong sams, hair done, spruce and elegant.

"Of course, from the early 1970s onwards the ship visits dwindled from the halcyon days before and after World War 2.

"The Hong Kong Squadron was reduced just to patrol craft and the Royal Navy presence ended with the hand over of the Colony in 1997.

"I last met Jenny in 1996 when I was in Hong Kong preparing for my battle group deployment to stand off during the handover the following year.

"She was as bubbly as ever and still immensely proud of her British Empire Medal, awarded in 1980.

"She is one of those people whose name always brought back happy memories for thousands of Royal Navy people.

"She seems to be of a bygone age yet so many of us were part of it."

Ferry was named for Jenny

TO MANY members of the Senior Service Jenny was synonymous with Hong Kong.

The sight of her side party bobbing up and down in tiny sampans, long bamboo poles being used to paint the sides of ships which towered above them, was a familiar and comforting sight to COs, buffers and the men relieved of the chore of chipping rust and making good the paintwork.

And employing Jenny was far from an act of charity or nostalgia - the paint jobs were uniformly excellent, whether the subject was a destroyer or an aircraft carrier.

Jenny, whose generosity was boundless, was in turn showered with tokens of appreciation.

In 1938 she was given a mock Long Service and Good Conduct medal by HMS Devonshire (with bar, from HMS Leander in 1975), and in 1995 she received a gold-plated bosun's call on behalf of the RN Boatswains Association.

She also had a ship named after her.

In 1983 the first of three ferries was delivered to the RN, designed to carry personnel between HMS Tamar, the Star Ferry terminal and Stonecutters Island, where a new base was being built.

That new ship was given the name Jenny, and on its trial run Jenny and her side party were VIP guests, taking part in a religious ceremony opposite a temple to bring the ferry good luck.

Former RN AB Mike Brown said: "To many matelots and ex-matelots, Jenny was as much a part of Hong Kong as Wanchai, Kowloon or Happy Valley, and to thousands of sailors she was something of a 'mother figure'."

Mike recalled a time when the First Lieutenant on HMS Crane asked for a job to be done, and Jenny respectfully suggested an alternative which would prove more effective.

After a prolonged discussion, Jenny prevailed, the job was done efficiently to everyone's satisfaction, and the Jimmy graciously admitted Jenny had been right all along - eliciting no more than a smile of satisfaction at a job well done from Jenny.

"For many 'old-timers' and quite a few 'not-so-old-timers' there will be moments of sadness when they read of her passing, but, hopefully, it will rekindle memories of happier times," said Mike.

Alan Cole referred to Jenny as "Hong Kong's Mother Angel to the Fleet," adding: "The speed and efficiency with which her team of 'girls' could paint a warship from stem to stern was simply amazing."

And Mike Hinsley wrote: "Jenny was a treasure to the First Lieutenants of ships visiting Hong Kong as they knew that her side party would do a far better job than the upper deck parties who usually had the task.

"From memory (rather ancient!) Jenny's girls were all as thin as racing snakes but their work ethic would put that of the average sailor to shame."

Dogs of war are unleashed

A FLEET of nearly 200 new armoured vehicles has been ordered by the Ministry of Defence to support frontline troops on operations.

The £74m order for more than 100 Jackal 2 vehicles and more than 70 Coyote Tactical Support Vehicles (pictured right) has been awarded to Supacat, which has formed an alliance with Babcock to deliver the new machines.

Minister for Defence Equipment and Support Quentin Davies announced the contract during a Supacat vehicle drive day at the Long Valley test ground in Aldershot.

Mr Davies said: "These impressive vehicles will give our troops increased

protection on frontline operations and with their purchase, we are showing our commitment to provide our service personnel with the very best equipment we possibly can."

The enhanced Jackal 2 features improved manoeuvrability, improved reliability and will be able to carry an extra crew member.

The Coyote Tactical Support Vehicle (TSV (Light)) is based on a 6x6 derivative of the Jackal, and will support the go-anywhere, high-mobility Jackals across the harsh terrain in Afghanistan.

Both vehicles have been bought as

part of the £700m Protected Patrol Vehicles package unveiled by Defence Secretary John Hutton last October.

Jackal 2 and Coyote are scheduled to be delivered to the MOD from this summer onwards, and the first vehicles are expected to support operations in Afghanistan from the autumn.

Supacat, based at Dunkswell, Devon, will be the prime contractor and will be responsible for design, development, prototyping, integration and overall programme management.

Babcock will be responsible for detailed production planning, purchasing and manufacture at their Devonport dockyard facility.



● Landing craft from a Dutch Rotterdam-class landing ship move towards shore during the assault phase of Exercise Egemen and (below) a Royal Marine of Alpha Company, 40 Commando, surveys the Turkish terrain



Next stop on t

“THE rain clouds could be seen clearly over the coast as we approached.

“The chilling wind blew and you could have been forgiven for believing the mountainous coastline shrouded in cloud was that of the west coast of Scotland.

“But no. This was Turkey on a spring day in the Eastern Mediterranean.”

So lamented Cdr Simon Asquith, Commanding Officer of Her Majesty’s Submarine Talent as the hunter-killer boat arrived for Exercise Egemen.

Talent mustered with the forces of Turkey, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United States and the rest of the RN’s Taurus 09 task group.

Having warmed up (metaphorically rather than literally as it was a tad cool) in Cyprus, the British amphibious forces shuffled into Turkish waters for the climax of the first stage of the Taurus deployment.

With so much amphibious power to hand – 40 Commando, Turkish, Belgian and Dutch marines, HM Ships Bulwark and Ocean, RFAs Mounts and Lyme Bay, the Dutch HNLMS Johan del Witt and



Rotterdam – there really was only one scenario for the exercise: get the troops from ship to shore.

The crux of Egemen was a five-day battle/rescue/evacuation mission.

But long before that, 40 Commando’s Recce Troop were already ashore, keeping a low profile with their Turkish counterparts as they scouted for ‘enemy’ positions on Turkish soil.

The fist was delivered by sea – Charlie Company on to a deserted beach – and by air, Alpha Company dropped off by helicopter behind enemy lines.

“It was then that the real work began,” said Lt Paul Newall of 40 Commando.

“As the companies reorganised, the ships had to begin sending the rest of the unit – the medical facilities, food, water, equipment, vehicles, communications – ashore.”

The aim of the exercise was to evacuate civilians, holed up in a refugee camp, saving them from a terrorist threat.

While the Turkish marines set about helping the non-combatants, the Royals began hunting down the foe – again courtesy of a helicopter drop behind enemy lines.

“The marines had soon taken the positions and the few remaining enemy were on the run and being chased down,” said Lt Newall, “including, it was rumoured, the Commander of the Amphibious Task Group, who wanted to see for himself what we’re capable of.”

While Cdre Peter Hudson was catching

his breath, the commandos were preparing to shut up shop.

Amphibious warfare is – rightly – regarded as the most challenging of naval operations, and for five days the ships had supported the marines on their push inland.

So with the enemy routed and the refugees safe, the tricky bit was over, right?

Wrong. “If bringing everything ashore after the initial attacks was difficult, restowing it after all our objectives were clear would prove even more of a test,” explained Lt Newall.

“Not only did we have to take everything off the beaches by a variety of means but we also had to plan ahead for the next phase of Taurus, ensuring that each vehicle, Marine or piece of kit went to the correct ship, which was not necessarily the same one they left on the first day.

“It was in everyone’s interest to get this right, not least because a mistake would mean sailing on the wrong ship in the wrong direction.”

So how long did it take to get the right men back on the right ship with the right kit? Well, less than 12 hours amazingly. Naval efficiency...

NOT all the Egemen action took place on the surprisingly-lush Turkish hills. There were a few flies in the ointment, notably submarines trying to thwart the landings (and escorts trying to stop them).

Among the ‘silent assassins’ were HMS Talent and Turkey’s TCG Burakreis.

Two men of Talent – Lt Andy Beck and LS ‘Trago’ Mills – left the cramped confines of the T-boat behind...

... and found themselves in the even more cramped confines of TCG Burakreis for a dozen days. The diesel-electric boat is a quarter Talent’s size with a third of its crew.



pictures: la(photos) shaun barlow, bernie henesy and al macleod

the Taurus trail

And heading in the opposite direction were Lt Kubilay Koyuncu and Chief Ozan Orhan in what is thought to have been the first 'x-pol' between the two silent services.

Submariners the world over share a common bond, so we're regularly told, and the Turks were quickly into the Talent routine.

Meanwhile aboard the Burakreis... The Brits expected a 'compact' vessel – and were not disappointed. What was a surprise was the make-up of the crew: there are no junior ratings aboard, only officers and artificer-style petty officers.

As for the boat, it's a German design and carries anti-ship missiles and wire-guided torpedoes. And the Turks operate their submarines with the same professionalism and skill as their British cousins.

All of which is very interesting, but what really caught the visitors' eye was the lifestyle aboard: a constant supply of coffee and sweet cakes (in the control room no less).

Submariners, apparently, cannot live on cake and coffee alone, as LS Mills explained:

"Yeah, it was a good experience with the sweet cakes and all that, but they don't have steak night on a Saturday do they?"

And back on Talent... the two Turkish guests did enjoy steak. They were "bewildered" by the size of the boat and impressed by her speed and the kit squeezed into her steel frame.

The visiting deeps returned to their usual boats in Aksaz when the exercise ended.

And thus finished the first stage of Taurus 09.

"The main objective of the first phase of Taurus was to exercise the UK's Amphibious Task Group in a testing and challenging environment," said Cdre Hudson, the task force's commander.

"We have fully achieved this: nearly 2,500

Royal Naval personnel have honed their skills and demonstrated what a powerful capability the task group can deliver."

WITH that, the 'bull ships' split. Mounts Bay and Argyll headed for home (the former carrying the bulk of 40 Commando), while the core of the task group sailed through Suez.

So for Phase 2 of Taurus our cast is: Bulwark, Ocean, Somerset, Talent, Wave Ruler, Lyme Bay (although she's now left the force to work with the minehunters in the Gulf) and the USS Mitscher.

On the other side of the canal, the surface ships threw themselves almost immediately into an exercise.

Blue Toreador (in keeping with the bovine theme of the deployment) was a hunt for submarines (well, submarine singular, actually – Talent).

Things weren't made easy for the T-boat. Firstly, there was HMS Somerset on her tail (which has Sonar 2087, the world's best sub-hunting sonar), then HMS Portland (which doesn't have 2087 yet). Then the Merlins of 820 NAS started dropping sonobuoys.

"While the spotlight is rightly on operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Royal Navy must work hard to maintain its ability to control the sea," said Cdr Jason Phillips, 820's CO.

"The Merlin's a world-beating anti-submarine helicopter – training like this exercise allows my aircrew to practise using it to full effect."

And that Merlin-23 combination made things, as they say in RN circles, "interesting and challenging" for the deeps.

Not that Cdr Simon Asquith and his men were just going to sit there and be pinged.

"We were a worthy opponent for our surface and air colleagues," Talent's Commanding Officer added.

"For Talent, our highlight was an 'underwater look' at Somerset.

"It meant pushing my team hard, taking

the submarine underneath the frigate at a range of only a few metres to practise gathering intelligence on her hull and propulsion systems."

Somerset was a substitute for HMS Portland, which had been due for a 'bottom inspection'.

She broke off from the force to resume chasing pirates – a bit of a shame because she'd been away from Devonport for the five months in a largely RN-free environment (although there have been fleeting meetings with other HM/RFA ships).

So Portland was delighted to be in the bosom of a sizeable British naval force – albeit for a few days. That delight was possibly heightened by a much-needed resupply of the NAAFI stores; the shortage of chocolate – Maltesers especially – had reached a critical level apparently...

Other benefits of meeting up with the Taurus force were also sweet, if short, for Portland.

Logs Russell Keitch was able to spend a couple of hours with his girlfriend AB Emma Rice from HMS Ocean, while LS Kevan Gibson and his fiancée, LS Justine Schofield, serving with Somerset, were able to catch up on plans for their impending nuptials.

"I have not seen Justine for over five months and it will be August before we are able to spend any time together," said Kevan.

"The opportunity to meet up today, even just for a few hours was too good to miss and I am thankful for the opportunity. The next time we meet we will be frantically planning for our wedding, which is due to take place in September."

Portland has now resumed her anti-piracy duties, while the Taurus force was exercising with the Saudi Armed Forces as Navy News went to press before heading for the first exercise with the Bangladeshi Navy in more than a decade.

With thanks to Lts Lindsey Ashwood, HMS Bulwark, and Paul Newall, 40 Commando



● A Merlin and a Sea King conduct rapid roping drills with the men of 40 Commando aboard HMS Ocean and (below) a flotilla of tugs accompanies HMS Bulwark, HMS Somerset and the USS Mitscher through the Suez Canal – as seen from HMS Ocean





1970
First Harriers
on HMS Eagle



1980
Jungly Sea Kings
join HMS Bulwark



1982
Sea Harriers launch
from HMS Hermes



1993
A Jungly serving with
the UN in the Balkans



1994
An OEU Sea Harrier
over Sarajevo

THERE is an ongoing Naval presence out in the sea of sand that is Afghanistan.

The Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade and their supporting Naval brethren may be making their way homewards to our island nation.

But the landlocked country is still guarded by the Naval fliers of the Commando Helicopter Force.

The helicopters of the CHF have been committed to the Afghan dust and mountains for most of the last two years.

And that commitment shows no sign of slackening.

As the vast dust clouds slowly drift to settle around the stilled rotors, it is the Sea King of 845 NAS and 846 NAS that rules here, far from its natural habitat.

The Sea King, by its very nature a helicopter for the sea, has had to adapt hard to its new realm.

THERE'S not much these days that's truly British.

Not the Merlin (Anglo-Italian). Not the Tornado (Anglo-German-Italian). Not the Eurofighter (the clue's in the title). Not the Concorde (Anglo-French). Not even the Sea King, that mainstay of naval aviation (American, built under licence in Blighty).

Perhaps that's why one aircraft has the power to inspire like no other since the Spitfire.

"When I speak to friends, tell them what my job is, they're interested - they're impressed by the Harrier," says CPO(AEM) Mick Oates.

"We take it for granted, but then sometimes, the aircraft even amazes me."

Mick has been working on Harriers for the past decade. That's just a quarter of the lifespan of the aircraft which defined British air power in the late 20th Century.

It was April 1 1969 when the first Harriers were delivered to the RAF on its 51st birthday.

That's a long time ago. Most of today's Harrier pilots weren't born. Half the *Navy News* team weren't born either. Man hadn't set foot on the moon. The Beatles hadn't split. Golda Meir had just taken the reins in Israel, while de Gaulle's leadership of France was entering its final days.

It was only the RAF which got its hands on the Harrier, the GR1 (Ground attack/Reconnaissance 1) on April 1 1969, first the Harrier Conversion Team then, in October (after man had landed on the moon, but still before half the *Navy News* team had been born...) 1(F) Sqn, the first operational formation.

Although the 40th birthday is, strictly speaking, an RAF milestone, the celebrations are not purely Air Force.

The RN's involvement both pre-dates that 40th anniversary (the prototype Harrier, P1127, touched down on HMS Ark Royal IV in 1963) and post-dates it (the Sea Harrier entered service in May 1979).

And, let's face it, think 'Harrier' and you probably think 'Falklands'.

"We have every right to celebrate this birthday with the pedigree we have," says Lt Cdr Neil 'Bing Bong' Bing.

Indeed, it's quite a pedigree. Falklands aside, RN Harriers have been at the heart of pretty much every military operation UK plc has been committed to in the past two decades: Gulf War 1 and the enforcement of the Iraq no-fly zones, the Balkan wars of the 1990s, Sierra Leone and today Afghanistan.

Lt Cdr Bing came to the world of the jump jet 13 years ago: first the Sea Harrier, for the past half decade the RAF GR variants (we're now up to versions 7 and 9). Today he's executive officer (in Crabspeak) or senior pilot (in Jackspeak) of 20(R) Sqn, based at RAF Wittering - 'home of the Harrier' - between Peterborough and Stamford.

Every Harrier pilot, RN or RAF, must pass through Wittering, be it to convert from the Sea Harrier (although most Fleet Air Arm pilots now have), refresh their skills (after desk or non-jump jet jobs), or to learn how to operate this still-remarkable aircraft.

But it's not just pilots who

have to undergo the Wittering experience.

Every Harrier mechanic - electrician, hydraulics expert, avionics wizard, engineer - must also serve at 20(R) Sqn. It's where they learn the specifics of Harrier maintenance after more general instruction at Sultan.

Sultan is an RN establishment. Wittering is, of course, not.

For those who feared that the RN might be overwhelmed by all things crabfat blue at Wittering, it's not all bad.

Yes, it's an RAF station. Yes, the RAF own the aircraft, the hangars, the infrastructure. Yes it's the RAF, not the White, Ensign flying on the mast...

But on the coalface, well things are rather equal. As of late March the number of RN/RAF personnel were pretty much even (75 RN ratings to 81 RAF ranks, for example).

"I thought there might be a line in the hangar - the RAF to the left, the Navy to starboard. Not a bit. Everyone works side-by-side," says Sqn Ldr Tony Bobbin, the squadron's senior engineering officer (air engineer in RN terms).

"The Navy does do some things differently, but basically it's the same people doing the same job in slightly different uniforms.

"As far as I'm concerned you get the best of both worlds."

There is banter. "The RAF cannot drink," chides Lt Cdr Bing. "The RN cannot fly," a squadron leader in the corner chimes back instantly.

And there was resistance - on both sides - initially about the joint force. The RAF didn't like surrendering some of their Harriers to the Navy and the RN didn't like losing its Harriers full stop.

Some RAF lads don't like going to sea (30-man messes instead of en suite rooms on base), the RN lads didn't join up to live in a tent in Afghanistan (tents at Kandahar have now been replaced by cabins).

But a few years down the line, Lt Cdr Bing - he was one of the early ones to enter this brave new RN-RAF Harrier world - believes "it works - it's the jewel in the crown of joint operations.

"There's no squabbling between the RAF and RN - not at this level. We have a job to do and we do it. What strikes both sides is how professional we are."

PO(AET) Roy Roebuck agrees. "When I first came here there was resistance on both sides - resistance to change, but that didn't last long."

It didn't perhaps because Roy and his fellow air engineers are busy. Very busy.

The RAF variants of the Harrier - which all naval aviators now fly - are avionics intensive.

"The equipment that is

crammed into the airframe is new, even if the aircraft itself is old," says PO Roebuck - like Lt Cdr Bing and CPO Oates a Sea Harrier veteran.

"There's been a lot to learn on the avionics front. It's quite a bit different. I did enjoy working on the Sea Harrier - but the GRs are much more challenging from a work viewpoint."

The GR7/9s have a larger wing (and 7As and 9As have the more potent engine, as designated by the 'A') and nine pylons allowing more than a dozen different payload configurations.

"Essentially, they're the same aircraft," says CPO Oates. "One's a mud mover, one's a fighter."

The workload of the chief and fellow AEMs has tailed off substantially with the demise of the Sea Harrier ("It's great for me," he smiles).

By the end of the Sea Harrier's life, the jet was spending roughly ten hours in the hangar for every hour in the skies.

"The amount of scheduled maintenance on a Sea Harrier was enormous. They were becoming a museum piece. I was always doing something on them," says CPO Oates.

"I definitely prefer working on the GR Harriers - it's a lot easier to find problems."

Those in the cockpit are flying essentially the same aircraft. Wings. Tail. Big jet engine. Ability to hover.

As a pure flying experience, the Sea Harrier and GRs are very similar aircraft - they both have the big shiny lever to adjust the nozzle," says Lt Cdr Bing. "But to operate, they're worlds apart."

What the GR7 or 9 are not, unlike the Sea Harrier, are fighters. For those who flew the former, the switch to the GR7/9 is less about what's in the cockpit than what's in your head.

"It's a real change of mindset - in the 'sea jet' your job was to protect. In the GR7 and 9, your job is to strike," says Lt Cdr Bing.

The number of Sea Harrier 'convertees' is dwindling - both in the air and on the ground. Of the mechanics working with CPO Oates and PO Roebuck, perhaps only one in five maintained the famous interceptor.

In fact, a substantial proportion of air and ground crew at Wittering have not been to sea.

Working with Illustrious or Ark Royal is not part of the training programme at 20(R) Sqn; you only go to sea as a qualified Harrier pilot either with the Naval Strike Wing or the RAF front-line jump jet squadrons. And if the jets don't go, neither do the ground crew...

If going to sea has become an uncommon experience, going to Afghanistan has not. There's been constant rotation of the RN/RAF Harrier force through Kandahar for the past two years.

The Harriers' time in Afghanistan is drawing to a close (to be replaced by the Tornado), which hopefully means - for the naval aviators at least - more time at sea.

But more pressing for the current generation of 'fast jet jockeys' is the need to train tomorrow's pilots. The number of trained RN fixed-wing pilots needs to pretty much double inside a decade - a challenge both of resources and personnel.

"We don't have a big super-carrier, we don't have Buccaneers, we don't have a headline war like the Falklands," says Lt Cdr Bing.

"People see a jet and think 'that must be RAF'. It will probably be a generation before that changes. It's important to have Navy pilots flying Navy jets off Navy carriers."

Naval fliers arriving at Wittering, face nine to ten months of intensive Harrier instruction. They've already been through Dartmouth, Barkston Heath (where the basics of flight are taught), RAF Linton-on-Ouse (where more advanced flying is taught), and RAF Valley (where fast jet flying is imparted). Six rookie RN jump jet pilots



2000
801 NAS on
above Freetown

(and an equal number of RAF trainees) pass through the Cambridgeshire air base every year - the figure is limited by the number of instructors and aircraft rather than the demands of the front line.

At present, you can count the number of Fleet Air Arm jet pilots on four pairs of hands. When the Harrier's successor, the Joint Strike Fighter, enters service next decade, there will be in excess of 80 RN officer posts alone to fill - pilots, flight commanders, engineers, administrators, and so on.

To bolster the number of aviators, the RN is training fliers on the US variant of the Harrier, the AV8B, while one student can be found at Miramar (one-time home of Top Gun outside San Diego) learning to fly the F/A18 Hornet.

And when that 'big Navy carrier' (HMS Queen Elizabeth) comes along around 2015, they'll be flying Harriers, not the Joint Strike Fighter.

"The Harrier still has ten years left in it," says Sqn Ldr Bobbin.

"The air frames are in good shape, there's no lack of spares,

and the aircraft are very well maintained - the engines are taken out every 500 hours and completely refurbished."

As things stand at present, the last Harrier will leave service in 2018. But don't write off plans for that 50th birthday party just yet...

And somehow, come 2018, there's a good chance it will still have the power to inspire - pilots, groundcrew and public alike.

"It's an airborne icon with a big British flag on it," says Lt Cdr Bing proudly. "Something you always look twice at. The best of British."

■ ANYONE who wishes to attend either the anniversary

Something special

40 years Sea King

Not bad for a craft that celebrates its fortieth year in the Navy's service this year.

The Sea King first broached the dark blue as an anti-submarine warfare helicopter at 700S NAS in August 1969.

A decade earlier Sikorsky flew the first prototype in March 1959, while the first commando version would not appear with 846 NAS until December 1979.

But it would be a mistake to equate the Sea King's venerability with vulnerability.

Cdr Jim Donnelly, Senior Aircraft Engineer with CHF, stressed: "It was an old workhorse – an old pickup truck where you could chuck everything in the back and fly around."

"That was true. But now it's a hugely different beast."

The Sea King has not stood still during its 40 years with the Royal Navy – the airborne early warning baggers of Culdrose will also attest to that – and the

engineer has nothing but praise for the recent changes that have brought the Sea King up to speed and more than capable for the hot and high demands of the fierce Afghan country.

"The fact is it always keeps going, if a Sea Harrier gets an engine fault it falls out of the sky."

"The Sea King pilots are pretty confident that it will always fly, one recently took nine or ten rounds, but kept flying."

Inside the CHF hangar at RNAS Yeovilton a team from the Mobile Air Support Unit (MASU) are repairing the wounds of conflict of the bullet-scarred Sea King.

Inside the helicopter's belly a panel has been removed from the roof, showing two twisted ropes of silver wire that run between cab and rear rotor.

It's a sight reminiscent of a light-hearted *Looney Toons* cartoon but this is deadly serious – one of the ropes is held together by a single thread of wire, the rest are splayed, broken and snapped.

One bullet came through the skin of the Sea King, ricocheted inside and almost entirely shredded one of the crucial links that allow the pilot to control the tail rotor.

Apparently it is still possible

to land safely without that. But it's a task that is euphemistically described as 'tricky'...

"A more modern aircraft wouldn't have survived that," said Cdr Donnelly.

"I describe the Sea King as agricultural, but that's a good thing."

"Because they are robust, and they do survive a lot of things that a modern aircraft couldn't survive."

"A pilot is fairly confident that no matter how much damage they take they will still keep flying."

And its pilots are confident in this hard-working long-proven rotorcraft.

Perhaps it doesn't have the agility of the Lynx, the ferocity of the Apache, the lift of the Chinook but the Sea King does have the can-do go-anywhere attitude of the Commando Helicopter Force.

Senior Flight Commander Lt Cdr Rory Lynch said: "Nobody drives out there by choice. You don't drive to get from A to B. You drive to patrol, or if you want to dominate an area, but you certainly don't drive for any other reason."

"So helicopters really are the only way to shift people around."

This means of course a massive burden of work for the helicopters out there, and the men and women who fly them, fly in them, and keep them flying.

"So it's very busy and there will never be enough helicopters."

Lt Cdr Lynch sighs: "But then there never has been really, in any conflict. Commandos are always

asking for more."

It should be no surprise that the Commandos place such a heavy tasking on the helicopters of the CHF.

Once a Commando in his desert fatigues is clad in his body armour with his helmet, he's already carrying 28lb.

Add to that a weapon, a magazine, a radio, a waterbottle, plus all the other ancillaries that come with a patrol out in those extremes of heat and risk and he is carrying 70-80lb of equipment.

Most of the operations that the Royal Marines have been carrying out during their stint in the dry hills of Afghanistan have been on foot.

Demanding a high resupply rate, as rations, water and weapon resources are kept topped up by the Sea Kings and other helicopters of the Joint Helicopter Command.

"And then routine tasking, which is the meat and veg of it really, packs and stores all around the place, all around the forward operating bases, zigzagging around the bases."

The pilot has a vivid way of describing the Forward Operating Bases, or FOBs, that are scattered through the Afghan territory.

"The FOBs are very little different from a Wild West fort that you'd see in a John Wayne movie."

"The only difference is that they're made with that 'HESCO bastion' – baskets filled full of sand and rocks – instead of wood, and instead of having arrows stuck in the big doors it has rocket-propelled grenades stuck in the big doors."

"They're almost invariably in a town. So it's a fort in the middle of a town, and the guy can be in his compound 300m away and just climb onto his roof and loose

off a magazine's worth of AK47 and then disappear back into his house."

Lt Cdr Lynch added with rather British understatement: "So they are not pleasant places in the slightest."

These dangers are a fact of life for all the Forces operating out there. And for the Sea King crews it's part of everyday life.

"The flying out there is very tactical. Basically if you're low level and flying over a populated area, then someone is likely to have a pop at you."

"So you avoid flying low level over populated areas. But obviously to get into a landing site you have to fly low-level."

The demand on the Sea King crews and airframes is unremitting.

"We just don't really have the helicopters back here because they're being modified to go out, being cleaned up after they've come back, and so on."

"It's quite busy out there. I got more than half of my annual sortie rate flying out there in just three months. And that's pretty standard."

"It's pretty busy. But that's what most air crew like."

Of course the Sea King, this child of the Cold War era, a maritime helicopter bought with an eye to the cold flanks of Russian aggression into Europe, required a few changes before entering a new realm.

"When we first went into Iraq we got new engines. And it's developed further from there."

"It's certainly performing better with the new kit than it would have been otherwise. It wouldn't have been particularly capable. But nor would all the others."

The officer stresses that the Sea King is only one of the British helicopter fleet that has had to be transformed to face the Afghan storms – "Everybody gets modded up. You have to keep up with the conditions and the theatre of operations."

The modifications that earn the + symbol for the jungly HC4s include the new Carson blades, a

five bladed tail rotor instead of a six, developed night vision goggles (shortened to DNVG) – basically a head-up display inside the pilot's goggles, the defensive aid suite to deter missiles or to decoy them away and the recent acquisition of a port-door gunner with a GPMG.

The Flight Commander, a pilot whose customary seat is on the left of the cockpit, states: "We like the port door gun."

"Previously the only armament that was outside the port side of the aircraft was my Browning 9mm pistol – which is not much use, but it's better than nothing."

Both aircrew and air engineers agree about the one unavoidable enemy out there – dust.

Cdr Donnelly said: "The only other big challenge in theatre is the dust."

"It sticks to everything that has grease on – the whole rotorhead is covered in grease. An awful lot of man-hours is spent cleaning up."

Photos of Afghanistan show the helicopters disappearing into the ochre clouds of swirling dust but can't convey the lingering reality of it.

"If it's a still day that cloud of dust will probably be a cube of 300 or 400m across and 500 or 600ft high that will just hang in the air," said Lt Cdr Lynch.

"So if you're the number two aircraft to land the dust just isn't clearing out the way."

"It does erode the front of the blades very quickly because we're in and out of it so much."

"There are incidents because you lose visibility because you're in the dust cloud. But that's just what happens."

Yes, there are tougher, quicker, smarter, nimbler aircraft out there. And most estimates give the Sea King perhaps another decade in the Navy's service.

But for the men and women of CHF the Sea King's birthday seems of little relevance.

It is of a generation of siblings that still flourish in Britain's Joint Helicopter Command – the Chinook, Lynx and Puma; and merits little note for its age among this crowd.

Does it do the job? Yes. Do the men and women of 845 and 846 NAS trust it to do the job? Yes. Do the troops on the ground who rely on it trust it to do its job? Yes.

Long live the long-lived King.

■ MORE on the Sea King's 40 year history with the Royal Navy will be appearing later in the year.

000
Royal Marines come
shore by Sea King
Sierra Leone



patrol
own



2003

Night assault on the
Al Faw peninsula



2009

A Naval Strike Wing
Harrier over Afghanistan



dinner at Wittering on July 23 (black tie, no partners, price £40) or families day at Cottesmore on July 24 (free) should visit www.homeoftheharrier.com

No tail, all teeth

"ARE we going to be ship of the month?" CPO Paul Mercer asks enthusiastically.

No, the bad news, chief, is that HMS Dasher is not our 'featured ship' for May 2009.

The good news is that we have a whole page on Dasher and her sister Pursuer – aka the Royal Navy Cyprus Squadron.

Back in January we proclaimed that 792 Naval Air Squadron – in charge of missile drones – was the "only RN unit you can fit in a minibus".

Not necessarily so...

The Cypriot sailors can beat the Culdrose unit by three.

We do not, ordinarily, have space to list entire ships' companies. Here we can.

Pursuer: CO Lt Cdr Alex Bush, XO C/ Sgt Tom Harkins RM, MEO CPO(ET) 'Fred' Perry, WEO LET Gav Byers, navigator's yeoman AB 'Julie' Andrews and gunner's yeoman AB Anna Hastie.

And for Dasher: CO Lt Charlie Barrow, XO CPO Will Willets, MEO CPO Paul Mercer, WEO LET 'Dodge' Long, navigator's yeoman AB 'Gibbo' Gibbons and gunner's yeoman AB 'Mitch' Mitchell.

And that's it. That is the Cyprus Squadron (plus a handful of civilian ancillary staff).

"There's no tail here," says Lt Cdr Bush, CO of both the squadron and the 'flagship', Pursuer. "We're all teeth."

You'll find him and his 11 comrades at the eastern extremity of RAF Akrotiri on the southern shores of Cyprus. Drive through the base, past the petrol station, cinema and officers' mess, past the Greek caves, turn right at the fuel depot, continue half a mile and, hey presto (or you can look on *Google Earth* – 34°34'16.17"N, 33°01'58.90"E – you'll even see a P2000 alongside).

"I used to think the best view in the Navy was at the Northern Diving Group in Faslane until I came here," says Lt Cdr Bush.

It is, as they say, not bad. Beneath his squadron's offices is the small man-made harbour, Akrotiri Mole, home to a cluster of boats, Army landing craft, Rigid Raiders and the two RN P2000 patrol boats.

The squadron was formed on the eve of the 2003 campaign against Saddam Hussein. Vessels were needed to safeguard the waters around the British 'sovereign base areas' on Cyprus.

The finger of Fate pointed at Dasher (formerly Bristol University Royal Naval Unit's boat) and Pursuer (Sussex).

They haven't changed a great deal since then – save for the general purpose machine-guns added, an awning on the bridge to keep the Mediterranean sun at bay, and military comms kit.

Dasher's CO Lt Charlie Barrow remembers the boat from his student days. Not necessarily fondly.

He points to a small cubbyhole behind the wheelhouse. "I spent a lot of time being very ill in that corner," he says.

Luckily, the 90 square miles of ocean for which the squadron is responsible are fairly benign for much of the year – although it's fair to say that Dasher and Pursuer still rock quite violently if you're throwing them about.

The routine at Akrotiri is reasonably relaxed – 6.45 to 13.30 every weekday, apart from Mondays when the day ends at 16.30.

One of the P2000s is at 60 minutes' notice to move, the second at 12 hours'.

The boats are expected to conduct three patrols a week, as well as providing force protection and a 'workout' for visiting RN ships by 'attacking' them (as we reported in our April edition).

Leaving harbour is a complicated affair for most ships – sailors closed up, a succession of navigational fixes taken from the bridge.

Here it's more like parallel parking. Cast off, manoeuvre around the landing craft berthed in front and a minute later you're in Akrotiri Bay. No need to look at the charts.

At the wheel of Dasher today is CPO Mercer. He's also the boat's quartermaster. And marine engineer officer.

His 'day job' is to look after the engines – just like the ones you'll find in a Challenger 2 tank – which guzzle 250 litres of fuel an hour if you push them hard.

There's plenty in the 5,400-litre tank to support operations in waters off the 'sovereign base areas' – or carry the boats to Beirut (150 miles to the east) or even Port Said – gateway to Suez (220 miles to the south). There has been talk of spending a few days in Egypt, but so far, there's not been the time.

"It is a unique command and a demanding job, flying the White Ensign thousands of miles from home," says Lt Cdr Bush.

"It's the closest you get these days to the Mediterranean Fleet."

To prove it there's a trophy in his office – the Med Fleet's water polo cup, last won by the Royal Marines four decades ago.

And next to it there's a tin of baby spuds. "Sometimes you need reminding that certain things in life are just small potatoes," the Cyprus Squadron CO explains.

His domain extends not merely to the two Archer-class patrol boats moored at the mole. He's also responsible for overall command of 17 Port and Maritime Regiment's landing craft and also a couple of Rigid Raiders owned by the Royal Engineers.

So, we have a Navy-Army potpourri – the Cyprus Joint Maritime Unit – stuck on the end of an RAF base.

"I love the fact that we're doing an operational job in a joint environment," enthuses CPO Mercer. "You see how the other Services work and live."

And they live quite nicely. Cyprus is a two-year posting which means families come out as well invariably – they live on Akrotiri base, where there's a school, cinema, gym, shops and so on.

"I enjoy the life out here. The family enjoy the life out here."

says CPO Mercer.

"There's an awful lot provided – loads of adventurous training, diving, gliding, parachuting off the cliffs.

"If you like being outdoors, this is the place to come."

We do not, of course, deploy two boats and 12 sailors 3,500 nautical miles from Pompey to enjoy life.

"Force protection is our key aim, particularly for the tankers which come here about once a month to deliver fuel for all the British forces here," says Lt Barrow.

Guarding the tankers is a lengthy and rather laborious job. Just the sort of moment you don't want the FOSTies on board for one of their regular inspections, causing mayhem and watching the sailors' response at the same time as carrying out their real mission.

But a dozen FOSTies came – a one-to-one ratio of instructors to squadron personnel. And they were impressed. Most ships get 'satisfactory' or 'very satisfactory'. The squadron was rated as 'good'.

Perhaps that glowing assessment from the FOSTies is down to the fact that life aboard Dasher and Pursuer is "not quite in the typical Royal Navy mould", according to Lt Barrow.

"When you have such a small ship's company, you cannot have the formality of the big ships. It has to be a bit relaxed."

And that's a good thing.

"You have a WEO who's counting bullets and firing a GPMG. The next minute he's on the ropes tying up. Everyone understands each other's job," says CPO Mercer.

"And that's good for the lads. Then they go back into the wider Fleet with a much broader knowledge of the Navy."

Main picture: LA(Phot) Brian Douglas, FRPU North



● A brief pause for half of Dasher's ship's company (above) while (below) the boat trails her wake across Akrotiri Bay



● A Chinook throws up huge clouds of dust as it drops off Royal Marines of 42 Commando during the first stage of Operation Aabi Toorah, a month-long swipe at the Taliban



To the bitter end

THEY ended as they began.

On the front foot. The last act of 3 Commando Brigade's six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan was like their first: thrusting a knife into the belly of the beast. Operation Ghartse Tamsa - Pashtu for crocodile - was the final blow struck by the green berets of 45 Commando, days before they returned home to Arbroath. The men of Yankee and Zulu Companies set out into the terrain around Sangin and Gereshk, 25 miles away, determined to find - and destroy - enemy arms caches. And they did. FOB Inkerman and environs near Sangin had come under sporadic rocket fire from insurgents. A helicopter drop took the men of 42 to the suspected hotbed of enemy activity north of Sangin - itself once a Taliban stronghold. There the commandos found two firing positions - effectively makeshift bunkers - and a plethora of ammunition, including mortar rounds, rocket-propelled grenade charges, rockets and detonation fuses. As Yankee returned to base, downstream on the Helmand River, Zulu Company set out on foot from FOB Gibraltar shepherded by the

marines' armoured Vikings, and accompanied by demolition experts from the Royal Engineers. Their aim was to search for - and destroy - any improvised explosive devices (bombs or mines) planted by the Taliban. And here the enemy was less supine than it had been around Sangin. Some of the Zulus came under fire from 107mm rockets. "The first one missed us by 300 or 400 metres," said Cpl Chris Mullin of Zulu's fire support team. Which is a good thing because the rockets have a killing radius of about 25 metres, although shrapnel can be flung around 100 metres from the impact point. Unsurprisingly, the Royals weren't going to just sit there and take it. "We engaged with Javelin, grenade machine-gun and with sustained fire from our GPMG and destroyed their firing platform," said the non-commissioned officer. "The last enemy rockets landed about ten metres from our position. It was very lucky that no-one was hit." The probing mission was, says Maj Kenny Craig, Zulu's Officer Commanding, typical of his men's experiences over the past six months. "The company was in constant contact with

a very tenacious enemy - there has been little respite," he added. Crocodile was one of a series of operations unleashed by the Royal Marines in their final month in Afghanistan, operations which ranged the length and breadth of Helmand. **BY FAR the most concerted push against the enemy was Operation Aabi Toorah - Pashtu for Blue Sword - staged in Helmand's 'Fish Hook' region (so called for the bends in the Helmand River).** Fish Hook was *terra incognita* for Allied forces whose foray this far downstream was supplied by helicopter drop. What the men did know about the Fish Hook was that it was largely lawless which allowed the Taliban, the drugs and arms trades to continue almost unhindered. More than 300 Royal Marines were flown in by Chinooks, while more commandos mustered in Viking and Jackal vehicles, and 60 Afghan National Army soldiers joined the force - as did experts in Baluch and Pashtun culture to advise the troops on life in this remote region. They moved along a 40-mile stretch of the Helmand River, spending a week building up

an intelligence picture of life in the Fish Hook, holding *shuras* - chats - with elders across 40 square miles of the lush valley in the 'green zone' which flanks the waterway. At the heart of the Fish Hook region is the town of Khan Neshin, a latter-day Port Royal, infamous for drugs and weapons trading and a hotbed of Taliban activity. After a week of sizing up the area, the Royals moved in by Vikings, clambering out of the steel beasts just outside the town, yomping the final distance. They arrived in Khan Neshin at dawn and while the main bazaar was quickly cleared, the insurgents' labyrinthine compounds were the scenes of ferocious close-quarters fighting. Commandos and Taliban traded grenades, lobbing them over walls at each other. The enemy regularly tried to ambush the British and Afghan troops with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades. Two suicide bombers also tried to inflict carnage but were spotted by the troops; the fundamentalists killed only themselves as they detonated their explosives. The fighting reached its climax on the edge of

Continued on page 24



● Vikings roll into action during the opening stages of Operation Aabi Toorah while (centre) smoke rises over a smashed Taliban compound and (far left) jackals on the prowl

“Marjah had been a safe haven for the enemy.

We have shattered that illusion – and more will follow.”



● Band of brothers... Silhouetted against the new day are men of X-Ray Company on patrol between Forward Operating Bases Robinson and Nolay

Continued from page 23

the bazaar, the enemy spraying the area randomly with bullets, until an Apache gunship was called in to neutralise the Taliban positions with its 30mm cannon.

With that, Khan Neshin had been cleared of the enemy and the men of 42 Commando could survey their haul: raw opium, guns – including AK47s – ammunition, RPGs, and two suicide bomber vests ready for use.

With the Taliban dead or fleeing across the Helmand terrain, the troops set about restoring a semblance of law and order in this one-time lawless town.

The Afghan troops and commandos sat down to *shuras* with village elders to discuss locals' concerns and needs. Commando medics and dentists (after all, jaw-jaw is better than war-war) set up makeshift clinics to attend to the villagers' health problems.

“If we can present a human face, an understanding of local culture, customs, and show that we are honourable warriors, the locals engage with us and respond positively,” said 42 Cdo's Chief-of-Staff Maj Neil Willson.

“They offer a degree of hospitality that is, frankly, humbling.”

With the men satisfied that Khan Neshin and environs were secure, they made the next ‘lunge’ of Blue Sword, striking west into the villages of Malakhan and Taghaz, close to the border of neighbouring Nimruz province.

This last sortie proved to be one of peace not war, with the emphasis on discovering the needs of the populace, what facilities they had and required, who

the local leaders were and how they looked after their communities.

“Before our arrival, no-one knew what was here,” said Lt Col Charlie Stickland, Commanding Officer 42 Commando. “It was largely a blank map.”

“We've walked, fought and talked across a huge area. We've drunk endless cups of tea with the locals. We've achieved more than we could have imagined a month before.”

THE final thrust of Blue Sword came not in the ‘green zone’, nor even in the Fish Hook region, but just over a dozen miles west of the British headquarters at Lashkar Gah.

Earlier this year we reported on the Battle of Nad E'Ali, to the northwest of Camp Bastion.

A dozen miles southwest of Nad E'Ali lies Marjah, a district regarded by the insurgents as their safe haven, a region where they could rally, train and equip their forces, where they could build up stockpiles of weapons and trade drugs with seeming impunity.

That, says Lt Col Al Lister, the Royals' chief of operations in Helmand, is now a shattered illusion.

As with the assault to wrest control of Nad E'Ali from the fundamentalists, the battle of Marjah was an Anglo-Danish-Afghan affair.

The Danes provided Leopard tanks, which lined up alongside RM Vikings, 500 green berets of 42 Commando, British Army bomb disposal teams and the Afghans' 205 Hero Corps.

As the armour mustered, Jungly Sea Kings ferried the green berets of Kilo Company, 42 Commando, and the Commando Reconnaissance Force to their jump-off positions on the edge of Trik Nawa – half-way between Nad E'Ali and Marjah.

Thus began a three-day thrust, as the Royals yomped, struck in the rear of Taliban positions, and forced the enemy to either fall back or turn and fight, while the Leopards shelled enemy positions from the high ground.

The result was some particularly fierce fighting with no true front line.

“The tempo of the battle and the 360-degree nature of the close-quarters fighting brought out the very best in the guys,” said 2Lt Sean Connolly in charge of 5 Troop, Kilo Company.

“Fighting from compound to compound with up to 100kg of kit under constant – and accurate – enemy fire, the commando ethos allowed the troop to decisively overmatch and defeat a determined enemy force.”

Lt Col Lister added: “This was a very successful operation that demonstrated clearly to the enemy that the task force continues to operate where and when it chooses.”

“Marjah had been a safe haven for the enemy. We have shattered that illusion – and more will follow.”

AS THE men of 42 Commando were taking a breather after their exertions during Blue Sword, their comrades in the Brigade Reconnaissance Force were in action in the Snake's Belly (again a name taken from the meanderings of the Helmand River).

Kapcha Baz – Pashtu for Cobra Eagle – was a largely British and Afghan National Army thrust into a string of villages on the right bank of the Helmand River some 60 miles south of Garmsir.

The Gurkhas and the Queen's Dragoon Guards advanced from the north of the belly against

Taliban positions – and faced fierce opposition from the enemy, until the weight of allied ground and air power told.

When the insurgent lines finally broke, they fled up the valley in pick-up trucks and on motorcycles... and into the arms, or rather roll cages, of the BRF in its Jackals.

The recce force had deliberately stayed out of the fighting until now, waiting in a jump-off area to the south-east of the Army assault, moving into position in two villages – codenamed Dingo and Coyote – as the fundamentalists began to flee.

ONE hundred and 50 miles to the north, at the most remote of the various British strongpoints scattered around Helmand province, one weapon strikes fear into the foe.

Not an Apache. Not a Viking. Not a Jackal. Not a Sea King. Not a Lynx. But a Dragon.

You'll struggle to find it in Jane's. It's the Taliban nickname for the Royal Marines' 105mm gun.

The Royals' gunners, 29 Commando Regiment RA, hauled one of their howitzers – in scenes reminiscent of the RN's legendary field gun run – to a rocky hilltop outside Musa Qaleh in northern Helmand.

The peak of Roshan Tower, a couple of kilometers north of the regional centre, dominates the town and surrounding terrain.

It took four days to get a gun from 8 (Alma) Commando Battery to the top of the tower and prepare the peak as a gun platform, as gunners moved not merely the two-ton gun, but also its ammunition boxes, each weighing 100lbs.

But once in place, the gun commanded the

● Two Jungly Sea Kings set down at a Forward Operating Base in Sangin at dawn and (right) men of 42 Commando move through the drab ‘Fish Hook’ region





town, the British forward operating base and other strongpoints in the Musa Qaleh valley.

Above all, it commanded respect from the enemy.

"The Taliban are running scared because of the Dragon," said Gnr Thomas Alder, whose gun is so dubbed by the insurgents thanks to "the huge belching flame that spits out of the barrel when it fires".

And what's not to be afraid of? The 105mm can acquire, engage and hit a target at two miles' range in under five seconds.

The gunners' vantage point on Roshan Tower allows them not merely to engage Taliban forces moving in the valley below, but also give British troops a running commentary of enemy movements.

"The gun is phenomenally accurate – the Dragon's the most feared weapon in our area by the Taliban. They are genuinely frightened by it. And it's the most loved weapon by our forces," said Maj James Vigne, Commander 8 (Alma) Commando Battery.

"Since it was nicknamed the Dragon, the effort of uncamouflaging the gun is now called 'bringing the Dragon from its lair'."

AFTER war eventually comes peace. The town of Gereshk, 50 miles south of Musa Qaleh, is regarded as the hub of Helmand's economic life.

It was a Taliban stronghold at one time. In fact, barely a year ago it was still deemed unsafe by many civilian organisations looking to rebuild daily life in Helmand.

Twelve months on, an 18-strong Anglo-Danish

group – the Military Stabilisation Support Team – finds life in Gereshk has been rejuvenated.

That is thanks largely to small – but vital – changes to the lives of ordinary Gereshk residents.

Bridges and wells have been built, water towers erected, roads improved, schools refurbished, clinics and the town's hospital overhauled.

Work has been given to local men clearing rubbish and cleaning the irrigation ditches.

"They're small steps at the moment, but we are seeing definite progress," said Lt David Joyce RN, the senior British member of the Anglo-Danish team.

"Working in Gereshk has been a fantastic challenge. We're making every effort to win the consent of the local people."

His boss, Maj Anders Johansen, says that sustained effort over the past 12 months is paying off: more and more locals are tipping the Allies off about Taliban movements.

"There hasn't been an attack in Gereshk since August 2008 and the last suicide bomber was in June 2008. That's a good indicator that the insurgents are not welcome," the Dane added.

"The majority of Afghans do not wish to go back to the way things were in 2001."

Stable though life is slowly becoming in Gereshk, the Taliban presence in northern Helmand can never be discounted.

A routine search by 45 Commando near Sangin, another one-time hotbed of insurgent activity, unearthed yet another Taliban weapons cache.

The insurgents left improvised explosive devices – bombs – ready for use, rifles, pressure plates to

trigger mines, and other bomb components in a series of compounds and old trenches from the war with the Soviets in the 1970s and 80s. All were destroyed by the men of X-Ray Company.

"The enemy has been hiding weapons and explosives for years in this area. To find anything is always a plus and, most importantly, it gives the lads confidence in their own ability," said section commander Cpl Alex Tingle.

Capt Jamie Jamison, second-in-command of X-Ray Company added: "The devices we destroyed were obviously ready to be used and would have had a catastrophic effect. No doubt we saved some lives or spared others life-changing injury."

"The Taliban know that they cannot match us in a fight and have had to resort to the cowardly use of bombs which target local men, women and children as much as us or Afghan forces."

ALL these operations have been driven by intelligence, a shadowy area in warfare which normally doesn't appear in these pages... for about 30 years.

And we're not about to change that. But we can give a broad brushstroke of operations by the Royal Marines' UK Landing Force Command Support Group – at the heart of the intelligence effort on the ground in Helmand.

With local and international forces bolted on, the support group became the 'information exploitation group' or IX Group.

In simple terms, its role is to find the enemy, understand him, then strike, and at the same time

undermine him by bringing the local populace onside.

To that end, IX Commanding Officer Lt Col Andrew McInerney had a plethora intelligence gatherers to call upon:

Brigade Reconnaissance Force – 3 Commando Brigade's elite scouts who are sent ahead of the main body of troops to observe the enemy. In Helmand, they have been joined by the Afghan Territorial Force who have shared their knowledge of the terrain and culture.

Y Squadron – the Royals' electronic warfare specialists who've been listening in on Taliban 'chatter'. "As any self-respecting member of Y Squadron will tell you, ears are weapons too," said Lt Col McInerney.

Unmanned drones – robot eyes in the sky providing 'real time' (live) video footage as well as still images for experts to analyse at more leisure.

'Info ops' – once called propaganda – is the attempt to influence the morale and attitude of the populace. There's little in the way of 'media' in Afghanistan, so the Allies have set up radio stations and handed out wind-up receivers to the populace to tune into a mix of music, news and educational programmes. Leaflets have also been scattered among towns and villages.

"What should be clear to anyone is that there are no quick fixes. It's been an intense and demanding experience, and a challenge to which everyone has risen admirably," said Lt Col McInerney.

"I am proud to say that the unit delivered an outstanding performance – but this success carried a high price."



● A green beret of Whiskey Company, 45 Commando tests a grenade launcher and (right) two men from 42 Commando pause while clearing out a suspected Taliban compound during the final stage of Operation Aabi Toorah



A narrow field of activities

SHE cannot match HMS Daring for speed, firepower or wizardry.

But the newest addition to the RN inventory perhaps can compete with Britain's super-destroyer for comfort.

Narrowboat Warneford VC will run up and down the Kennet and Avon Canal, providing a tranquil haven for Service personnel to escape the exertions of front-line life.

The boat, built by ABC Leisure Group, was commissioned by RNAS Yeovilton for use not only by sailors and marines at the Somerset air base 40 miles down the road, but by other Senior Service personnel. It will also be available for private hire when not in demand from the Navy.

The idea is to allow personnel to unwind with a gentle cruise after front-line operations – especially Afghanistan, where Yeovilton-based helicopters and their crews are currently heavily committed – either as a group or with their families.

Janet Palmer, the wife of the Yeovilton's Commanding Officer Cdre Chris Palmer, performed the launch ceremony in traditional style (smashing a bottle of bubbly), before presenting the narrowboat's 'captain', CPO Steve Tidswell, with a traditional canal barge 'Buckby can' – a colourful watering can.

"The boat will play a vital role in rest and relaxation of those returning from very high tempo theatres of operation," said her husband.

"The narrowboat is just magnificent. It will be used extensively by Naval personnel as well as being available to naval families."

The boat takes its name from the first Victoria Cross winner in naval aviation, S/Lt Reginald Warneford.

He downed a Zeppelin in June 1915, dropping bombs on the leviathan which set it on fire and almost killed Warneford himself, throwing his aircraft upside down.

Ten days later, the young aviator was dead, killed when his aircraft broke up during a test flight.

The narrowboat which bears his name can be found at Staverton Waterside in Hilperton, where it will be looked after by volunteers on behalf of HMS Heron's central fund.

● The massed bands of the Royal Marines perform during the last Beating Retreat at Horse Guards in 2006
Picture: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper



Band on the birthday Beat

THERE is only one place to see the Massed Bands of the Royal Marines on parade this year – in London next month, when they salute their Captain General, the Duke of Edinburgh, in their famous Beating Retreat ceremony.

More than 220 musicians from the Portsmouth, Plymouth, Lymington and Scotland bands will be on parade on Horse Guards for the evening ceremonies, which promise a memorable mix of music and spectacle.

Beating Retreat has taken place here every two or three years for the past 50 years, ever since the Duke became Captain General of the Corps.

The main purpose is to celebrate his birthday – he will be 88 on the 10th of June – but the event also raises money

for charities including Help for Heroes, Seafarers UK, and the RNRMC.

The parade takes place over three evenings, on June 9-11, although anyone passing Horse Guards on Sunday June 7 will be able to hear the bands rehearsing from about 10am.

The programme includes most of the old favourites – *Sarie Marais*, *Heart of Oak* and *A Life on the Ocean Wave* – plus a new fanfare for Fly Navy 100 celebrations written by former bandmaster Michael McDermott.

The last time the Massed Bands played together was at the Mountbatten Festival of Music in the Albert Hall, in February.

"The Mountbatten Festival shows off their skills in the concert hall, but this is more ceremonial," explained Corps Drum Major WO1 James Whitwham.



He said: "We have exceptional musicians, many of whom could play in professional orchestras. But most people listen to music with their eyes – and that is where we add another dimension."

The event promises to be colourful, with the RNA and RMA providing standard bearers, Sea Cadets on parade, and 120 volunteer sailors and Marines who will be selling programmes and showing people to their seats.

Lt Col Nick Grace, who will be directing the musicians, said: "This will be my first major ceremonial event as Principal Director of Music Royal Marines and it certainly does not get any better than having the privilege of conducting the Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines on Horse Guards for the Duke of Edinburgh."

He added: "There will be musicians and buglers who have just returned from operational duty in Afghanistan performing in this major ceremonial event demonstrating the versatility and flexibility of the Royal Marines Band Service to not only provide ceremonial excellence, but also operational capability to the Royal Navy."

"There is nothing like the sight and sound of the Massed Bands of the Royal Marines marching on to Horse Guards Parade, it still makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end and this time I will have the honour of conducting the Massed Bands."

Tickets are available from Ticketmaster, call 0844 8472504 or visit www.ticketmaster.co.uk/Royal-Marines-Beating-Retreat-2009-tickets/artist/983800.

Prices are £12 each or £40 for a family ticket (two adults and three children).

Forces friendly footie Ark's sexual healing

IS IT a bird?

Is it a plane?

No, quite clearly it's a football mascot carrying a bucket.

And thus began Armed Forces Day at Plymouth Argyle FC's – a day dedicated to Servicemen and women in the South-West.

More than 1,000 Service personnel and families sat down to an afternoon's entertainment at Home Park as the Championship side entertained Burnley on a fine spring afternoon.

They were offered discounted tickets to watch the clash – but it wasn't just football on the menu.

Kicking off a series of youth and family-orientated sporting and entertainment events was Argyle's Football in the Community team, the Royal Navy's physical training instructors coaching football skills and Plymouth Raiders coaching basketball skills for 6-16 year olds.

Younger children learned circus skills with their parents and were entertained by clowns.

The crowd was treated to the Plymouth Pipe and Drum band who performed rousing tunes while marching around the pitch.

And then the Royal Marines Commando Display Team abseiled off the new Lyndhurst stand with 'Pilgrim Pete', Argyle's mascot, and the match ball in a bucket.

After winding up the Burnley fans, Pete finally handed the ball over to outgoing Flag Officer Sea Training, Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson, to get proceedings under way, presenting the match ball to the ref.

A poster competition run by Naval Personal Family Services offered the winners the chance to be match mascots for the day.



This resulted in 22 winning children walking on the pitch holding the hand of a player all dressed up in Argyle colours. One lucky child walked out with the referee to take part in the coin toss for the start of the match.

There was a serious side to all this fun, however.

The aim of the day was to celebrate and commemorate service personnel and their dedication to duty and to show the deep-felt support the city of Plymouth feels towards 'its' Servicemen and women and their families.

Rev Alen McCulloch (COMDEVFLOT) prayed for the men and women currently deployed and their families who support them back home.

He then called for a one-minute silence to remember all those from the West Country who had fallen in service. An unscripted poignant moment occurred with everyone in the stadium standing and clapping to show their support in a heart-warming and encouraging way.

When the sides trotted in at half-time with the score at 1-1, the display team trotted out again for another demonstration.

Eventually the Royals turned on Pilgrim Pete, who – much to the amusement of the crowd – beat them at their own game and won 'King of the Mat', standing on his defeated opponents.

The afternoon raised more than £2,300 – there were RN and RM cadets throughout the stadium collecting – for Help for Heroes and the Khumbu Challenge.

The latter good cause will see 87 personnel from all three Forces who have been injured in the line of duty heading to the Himalayas for a climbing/trekking expedition designed to help their rehabilitation.

Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd, FRPU West



HMS Ark Royal's medical department supported the National Chlamydia Screening Programme by becoming the first RN ship to arrange a screening facility.

Around one in four members of the ship's company – some 150 sailors – took advantage of the screening and were checked for the infection.

Chlamydia is the world's most prevalent sexually transmitted infection and, despite often starting as a symptomless condition, can lead to serious infection and even infertility.

The most at-risk age group is the under 25s – one in ten people is believed to be infected although often no symptoms are noticed. The infection is simply dealt with by a course of antibiotics.

Ark's medical department, in conjunction with the nurse co-ordinator of chlamydia screening in Portsmouth and the nursing officer from HMS Nelson, invited members of the ship's company to attend a confidential and painless health screen; a simple urine test was all that was required.

Sailors who are unfortunate enough to be infected will be notified by text message to their mobile phones.

The nurse will also discuss contact tracing in order to track other people who may have become infected.

awards in brief

THE chaplain of RNR unit HMS Eaglet, Rev John Williams, has been awarded the Citizen of Honour award by Liverpool City Council. The priest was specifically given the award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the community and his 30 years as a RN chaplain at HMS Eaglet.

CPO Nathan Geddes, HMS Cattistock's Deputy Marine Engineer Officer, has been awarded the Trafalgar Prize from the University of Portsmouth as the best RN undergraduate student. He graduated last year with a first-class BSc degree in Engineering and Management, and served as a champion of the course at HMS Sultan, increasing the number of entrants to the scheme during his time in post.

IN recognition of his time as commanding officer of HMS Victory, Lt Cdr John Scivier has been awarded the William J Diffley award by the Historic Naval Ships Association. The award honours directors of HNSA Fleet Member organisations who have contributed significantly to the success of their museums – and Lt Cdr Scivier is the first UK recipient.

The citation recognises his innovation, enthusiasm, drive and commitment in 'ensuring this world-renowned icon of maritime heritage remained in the forefront of national and world attention'. Lt Cdr Scivier stressed that the award was achieved due to "the dedication of a wonderful ship's company".

OFFICER Lt David Brannighan has been awarded the 2008 Goodenough prize in recognition of his performance on an Initial Warfare Officers course at the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood.

Lt Brannighan, now training at the RN Submarine School at Raleigh, said: "It was a complete surprise to receive the prize, particularly given the calibre of my colleagues on course."

"I am honoured to receive it and I'm looking forward to putting my training into practice on board my first submarine."

The Goodenough prize was founded in memory of Capt J C Goodenough who died from poison arrow wounds in Santa Cruz in 1875.

A LYNX helicopter Flight from 815 NAS at RNAS Yeovilton has been awarded the Sopwith Pup Trophy for 2007-08. 202 Flight, commanded by Lt Cdr Spike Milligan, on board HMS Manchester made a significant contribution to the ship's deployment within a US Carrier Group.

AFTER 26 years continuous service at RNAS Culdrose (the last 16 years as a cleaner in the Air Traffic Control Tower), Carol Prior has retired with the award of the 2008 Sodexo Regional Star Cleaner Award, which was presented to her by Cdr David Cunningham at a ceremony in the Tower watched by most of the Control Tower staff.

AND finally, a mention of WO1 AEM(R) Paul Togneri, who retired at the end of April from RAF Wittering after 33 years of service in the Royal Navy.

CPO Peter 'Dogs' Barker said: "This year marks the 100th anniversary of Naval aviation, and WO1 Paul Togneri has been at its foundations for a third of its history. As one of our tokens of gratitude, we are secretly going to be paying for two years' subscription to Navy News so that he will not miss us all too much."

"A few words to tie in with this will be quite a surprise for him and would be appreciated by the entire Navy contingent up here who are sorry to see an end to 'Big Brother' and will miss him dearly."

awards in brief

A tale of two Michaels

AFTER nine weeks basic training, trainee sailor Michael Sandbrook is proud to stand beside his father PO Michael Sandbrook as serving members of the Royal Navy at HMS Raleigh.

The elder Michael – better known by a classic form of Naval nickname as 'Sandy' – is himself serving at HMS Raleigh as an instructor at the RN Submarine School.

Sandy signed up back in 1983 and as a communications specialist has served on boats and ashore in London and Gibraltar; and 26 years on he has seen his son follow in his footsteps.

He said: "This is my second time as an instructor at the Submarine School and it's a great privilege."

"I get a great sense of achievement and pride seeing ratings that I have taught at Able Seaman level return for their Leading Hand or Petty Officer promotion course."

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Royal Navy and seeing my son pass out of HMS Raleigh and carry on the family tradition was a very proud moment for me."

The younger Michael is now at HMS Collingwood further following his father's path as a communications specialist.

He said: "I really enjoyed weapons training and the



Trainee sailor Michael Sandbrook and his father PO Michael 'Sandy' Sandbrook at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield

camaraderie between the lads throughout my course. Training was the first phase of the rest of my life.

"I've got a long way to go to achieve my goal of eventually becoming a pilot officer, but I'm looking forward to the challenges ahead."

Michael probably wishes he could follow in his father's footsteps a little more closely over

the next few months, as Sandy is jetting south to New Zealand where he will spend four months working with the Royal New Zealand Navy within the Long Look exchange programme.

And it isn't just father and son who could be found toiling at Raleigh, mother Katrina works at the Torpoint training establishment for contractor Sodexo.



Culdrose-based air crew enjoy a taste of home from home with pasty celebrations of St Piran's Day

Oggy Oggy Oggy Joy Joy Joy

TRADITIONAL Cornish celebrations of St Piran were carried overseas by the Cornish-based men and women of 820 NAS on board HMS Ocean.

Despite the Mediterranean environment, Cornwall was there in force when a Cornish bakery donated a stack of pasties to 820 NAS and Ocean to give sailors on board a taste of home.

And in true Cornish style the pasties were served to celebrate St Piran's Day – to general shipboard appreciation. St Piran is closely connected with Cornwall, and is the patron saint of tin-miners.

Paul Pearce from Rowe's Bakery said: "We were delighted to be able to donate some traditional Cornish fare for the squadron personnel from RNAS Culdrose to enjoy whilst on deployment."

"We hope the food, made with

Cornish ingredients wherever possible, brought them a little taste of home and that they enjoyed having some real Cornish food on St Piran's Day."

Falklands men

THREE comrades from the Falklands War met on board HMS Cornwall during her visit to Avonmouth. The programme for the weekend was driven by Cdre Jamie Miller as Naval Regional Commander for Wales and Western England, on board he was met by the ship's EWO WO1 Trev Trevarthen with whom he served in HMS Coventry. The evening reception brought Cdre Ron Warwick RNR who was Chief Officer on the QE2 which brought them home after the Coventry was sunk by Argentine aircraft.

Burglar brought to book by RM

A BURGLAR made a big mistake when he broke into a house in Barnstaple...

Next door Royal Marine Cpl Adam Rundle was enjoying a break at home with his father Malcolm when their neighbour came knocking to say that he could see a torchlight shining through his own frontdoor.

Cpl Rundle stood waiting at the front door while his father and neighbour crept around the back to gain entry to the kitchen.

A security light came on and the burglar fled through the front door, into the path of Cpl Rundle.

Cpl Rundle said: "I told the

burglar to get on the floor and not move. However he told me in no uncertain terms he was leaving and then lunged towards me."

The burglar continued to kick, punch and issue threats as he was bundled to the ground.

Cpl Rundle, a seasoned veteran of Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo, said: "For me it's just one of those things."

His father Malcolm said: "The word hero is over-used. The lads in Afghanistan are heroes, we are just good neighbours."

The subsequent case saw Steven Hommel sentenced at Exeter Crown Court to 45 months in prison for burglary.



Nina explains submarines to her young audience for BBC TV children's programme Nina and the Neurons

Neuronic Nina visits submarine experts

CLYDE Naval Base welcomed a BBC film crew for popular CBeebies kids' show Nina and the Neurons.

Nina – real name Katrina Bryan – was joined by three children to film for an episode called 'Get wet', and they visited the NATO Submarine Rescue System.

Cdr Jonty Powis (Retd) and his team offered a warm welcome to the BBC crew, explaining how the submarine works and allowing them to film around the specialist rescue craft.

HMS COLLINGWOOD OPEN DAY

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Staying with SSAFA

SSAFA has recently opened its second home near Selly Oak's Royal Centre for Defence Medicine; a partner for its Norton House, Headley Court, near the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre.

Both homes offer a place to stay for relatives of injured Service men and women being treated at Headley Court or Birmingham.

OM Liam Clyde suffered a car crash in February 2007, which left him with a broken hip, a badly fractured leg and head injuries.

Liam has recently started the slow process of rehabilitation at Headley Court.

While treated at home in Doncaster, his family were able to see him most days, but the move to Surrey has meant that the SSAFA Norton House at Headley Court has proven a lifeline to Liam's family.

His father George said: "The house is excellent. It is at least a four-hour journey each way."

"Liam is only at the assessment stage at Headley and we have already stayed at the house twice and been made to feel really welcome. "It is a lovely place, and in the months to come having somewhere like this will be really important to us to help us support Liam."

Mne Mark Ommrod lost both legs and his right arm after a landmine explosion in Afghanistan on Christmas Eve 2007.

He, along with his fiancée Becky and other family members, was the first serviceman to stay at SSAFA's Headley Court home.

Becky said: "The house is really a great place."

"It allowed us to have some quiet time on our own but also to meet and speak with others in a similar situation."

"It can be such a huge help at a very difficult time. The staff at the house are amazing and do a wonderful job."

The SSAFA Norton House at Selly Oak opened in February this year, and offers a home for the families being treated at the Birmingham Royal Centre for Defence Medicine (RCDM) – the first port-of-call for injured personnel returning to the UK.

Lt Col Phil Carter Royal Army Medical Corps, commanding officer of the RCDM clinical unit, said: "The SSAFA House at Headley Court has proved a great success. The new house here in Birmingham will augment our existing families' accommodation, providing that much-needed home from home that allows families to concentrate on supporting their loved ones through the early phases of recovery."

"Families arrive with us, sometimes only hours after they have been told about their loved one's injuries, and to be welcomed and looked after is a crucial part of how we care for them. SSAFA Norton House will help us do that."

The name of the homes recognises Major Peter Norton GC, who was seriously injured in Iraq in 2005. He was initially treated at an American facility in Germany with his family staying at a nearby house run by a US charity.

On his return to the UK for two more years of treatment, his wife struggled to find similar facilities for families with young children in Britain and later helped spearhead the SSAFA appeal.

To date more than 200 troops and members of their family have stayed at SSAFA Norton House.

Find out more about the charity at www.ssafo.org.uk or call 0845 1300 975.

The pikeman cometh

COLLINGWOOD had a visit by a 17-Century pikeman when CPO Malcolm Cray turned up at the Maritime Warfare School in his full attire to promote his John O'Groats charity walk in aid of Help for Heroes.

Malcolm retires from the Navy this month and plans to celebrate his retirement by walking the length of Britain in his full 17th-Century rig.

He expects the walk to take 75 days, walking 15 miles each day, with a Help for Heroes flag on the end of his pike.

Malcolm said: "I've been fortunate that in the

whole of my career, even as far as working up in the northern Arabian Gulf, I've never sustained any injury. Unfortunately there are those who have.

"Collecting for Help for Heroes is my way of acknowledging their sacrifice."

So far Malcolm has raised £2,292.16, £900 of that from Collingwood alone – but his aim is to raise £10,000.

Malcolm sets out on the 17th of this month, and you can follow his progress on www.thecharitypikeman.blogspot.com or pledge your support at www.justgiving.com/pikeman.



Wives risk a wetting for H4H

THIS month some 40 women – wives or family of Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel living around Plymouth – are tackling a wet and wild assault course in aid of Help for Heroes.

Colette Wilson explained: "We all know each other because we live on the same married quarter estate, so we use the same community centre and preschool."

"The idea started when a few of the husbands went away to Afghanistan, which brought to light the Help for Heroes charity."

"We decided we wanted to do something a bit different to help and came up with the idea of an assault course."

Once that idea had taken root, Colette got in touch with some outdoor adventure centres seeking their help in tackling the challenge.

She said: "Mountain Water Experience in Kingsbridge got back to me and offered us free use of their assault course, zip-wire, climbing wall and crate-stacking facilities, in which we will compete in teams against each other."

If you would like to pledge your support send a cheque for Help for Heroes to Colette Wilson, Radford Family Centre, Stokingway Close, Plymstock, Plymouth PL9 9JL.

THERE'S something admirably frank about someone who admits: "I'd rather shave my own eyeballs than run another marathon."

Admittedly that negative reaction to the marathon from CPO Nobby Clarke is compounded by running in full combat gear, with combat boots, and bergens bursting at more than 15kg weight. In the heat of Cyprus.

Nobby, who is part of the Joint Service Signal Unit Cyprus, took on the challenge to uphold the honour of the Senior Service.

He explained: "In November 2008, Cpl Adam Fear ran the Amathunta half-marathon in Cyprus wearing CS95, combat boots and bergens."

"Having destroyed his feet for this relatively short distance he decided that it would be yet more fun if he completed the Paphos marathon in the same attire."

But not content with this, the Army's Cpl Fear decided to lay down the challenge, looking for



● Cpl Adam Fear (RS), Capt Paul Whillis (RS), Cpl Paul Cardall (RS), Cpl Lee Halsall (RS) WO1 Jim Reeves (RS), Cpl Steve Jones RAF, Cpl Kai Phillips (RS), Sgt Robbo Robson (RS), CPO(CT) Nobby Clarke and Sgt Paul Bone (RS)

volunteers from all three Services to tackle the distance.

Nobby continued: "I, as an RN CPO(CT), realised that anything the Army could do, I could do better – and with more style."

"So along with eight others I decided to pick up the gauntlet that had been thrown down."

Twelve weeks of training ensued, before the starting line 26 miles from Paphos.

"The sun was beating down, the wind was blowing a gale in our faces, and the start was at the bottom of a hill. In short everything that a naval athlete dreams of..."

It quickly became clear at the 1km mark that the team of ten were not going to be able to stick together for the duration of the marathon.

"The racing snake form of Capt Paul 'I throw nutty bars at Mister T' Whillis of the Royal Signals was already making some serious headway through the rest of the runners," said Nobby, who was in second place.

"At the halfway point, the pack had spread out even further and at 26km we suffered our first and

only casualty – Cpl Paul Cardall (Royal Signals) whose feet had 'exploded' at 10km but he had managed to soldier on (no pun intended) for a further 16km before succumbing to the pain."

Despite the constant headwind and the heat, the remaining competitors got through to the end, where they were welcomed by other members of JSSU who had taken part in the half marathon and the 10km run.

Nobby added: "This was an incredibly rewarding challenge to take part in and one that I would definitely recommend to others. "Personally I would rather shave my eyeballs than do another marathon, but I will gladly donate to someone else's chosen charity."

The charity chosen by the Paphos runners was Help for Heroes, as several members of the unit have received treatment from Headley Court, and a large proportion of the RAF Regiment were either deployed or about to go on operations.

To date the JSSU runners have netted 1,500 Euros (£1,337) for the charity's funds.

Dauntless diggers

THE new Type 45's crew spent some time at their adopted city of Newcastle cleaning up the city's parklands.

Forty of HMS Dauntless' company worked with residential groups and the council's Neighbourhood Response Team to clean up green spaces and public footpaths in the Byker area.

They also brought back to life benches and park seating in the city's Leazes Park; and readied the city's Ouseburn Farm for the

introduction of livestock.

The farm's Mandy Oliver said: "It really is wonderful to have the Royal Navy here to help."

"Just one day will make all the difference and I can't thank HMS Dauntless enough – it will be so good to see sheep and goats grazing on the fields again, the first time since 2002."

The ratings and officers are already looking forward to bringing the ship herself up the Tyne once she enters service.

Clyde for CHAS

TWELVE cyclists from Clyde Naval Base will be climbing upon their saddles to pedal 450 miles northeast to Aberdeen, then south to Rosyth, then back to their homebase of Neptune as *Navy News* goes to press.

All to raise money for the Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS).

Before setting off, Lt Cdr Billy Adams said: "The training is going well and the group are getting lots of miles under their belts."

"It will be an immense challenge for all of us, but we are determined to complete the event and raise money for this worthy cause."

"To further inspire the team we are scheduled to visit CHAS' Robin House in Balloch where we will see first-hand the superb care that is offered to both the children and their families."

Pretty in Portland

DESPITE being away from the UK for eight months, the entire female portion of the crew of frigate HMS Portland have committed to supporting the Race for Life.

The women, who number 32 on board, decided en masse to take part in the three-mile run in aid of Breast Cancer Research.

Which in their case will involve 22 laps of the upper deck in temperatures probably rather warmer than their counterparts in the UK.

The ship's PTI, LPT Jules Stroud, has been putting the women through their paces with a demanding training programme to get them at their best for the race.

Although some of the runners have decided to make the task that bit more difficult by skipping, or running three-legged.

Organiser CPO Ali James said: "As a group of females we were disappointed that being away from the UK for eight months meant that we could not do our bit for Breast Cancer Research."

"I decided that we ought to try to do something in our own way – and this is the result."

"The girls have trained hard for the event and we hope that we are able to raise a substantial amount of money for this very worthwhile cause."

If you would like to pledge your support, visit www.justgiving.com/hmsportlandpretties



● Lt Cdr Sharky Finn

Marathon mission

THE streets of London are being pounded by the footfalls of many Navy folk as *Navy News* goes to press.

Another RN man taking on April's London Marathon is Lt Cdr 'Sharky' Finn, the commanding officer of 771 NAS, who is putting his body through the challenge in aid of the RNLI.

Even during the squadron's recent Clockwork deployment to Norway, Sharky kept up his training regime, despite the chilly external temperature of -20°C.

Sharky's goal is to raise £3,000 for the RNLI, and due to generosity of local organisation and people has already raised almost £2,000.

If you wish to pledge your support contact Kat Cartledge at 771 NAS on 01326 552670.

Paintcrew

SAILORS from Culdrose picked up their paintbrushes and tools to complete the refurbishment of a community centre near Truro.

PO Andy Wilkinson led a team from the Maritime Aviation Support Force to help decorate the St Erme and Trispen Community Centre.

The new centre, the funds for which were raised by the local community, replaces an old agricultural shed on the verge of collapse and in desperate need of replacement.

Hair-raising antics at Collingwood

'AS mad as a March hare' has been reinterpreted by Rowan's Hospice in Portsmouth which benefited from the madness of staff at HMS Collingwood who dressed their hair differently for Mad March Hair Day.

Stewards working in the wardroom got some strange looks from officers as one donned a bright pink wig and another a long black one.

Chaplain Janice Pettipher charged colleagues £1 to bedeck her hair in a riot of multi-coloured ribbons.

The day, which had support from RN, civilian and VT Flagship staff at the training base, netted £97 for the hospice which offers palliative care to people in Portsmouth and south-east Hampshire.

And Open Day boon for old folks

COLLINGWOOD'S Lt Kevin Miller paid a surprise visit to Langdale Nursing Home to donate £200 raised at last year's Collingwood Open Day.

Tammy Kent, the home's activity therapist, said: "The money will be greatly appreciated."

"We are thinking of getting a couple of rabbits to keep in our dayroom; there are constantly people in this room including visitors of all ages."

"The rabbits would be taken out and smoothed every day by our residents and our visitors."

"The money will be used for a new indoor hutch with wheels so that people that can not hold the rabbits can still see them, and an outdoor run so that the rabbits can go into the massive garden in the summer."

The Fareham home cares for the elderly, the disabled and the terminally ill.

You can't beat a bit o'Bully

HMS Bulwark, the Navy's amphibious flagship, has pulled ahead of her rivals to become the first military unit to be offered the title of Service Friend status with charity Help for Heroes.

As a Service Friend the 10,000-tonne warship rubs shoulders with L/Cpl Johnson Beharry VC, Jeremy Clarkson and Andy McNab.

The ship's involvement with the charity began in 2008 when she supported the Big Battlefield Bike Ride, carrying 276 cyclists from the beaches at Dunkirk to bring them back to Dover.

Since then her work with the charity has been ongoing with the most recent exploit being sailors and marines from the assault ship cycling around Malta.

Bulwark's CO Capt Wayne Keble said: "All of us in HMS Bulwark are delighted to have been accorded the tremendous honour of Service Friend status for this wonderful charity.

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

"We couldn't be more pleased."

Lt Col Mike Bestwick, the officer commanding 4ASRM, said: "After we saw, at first hand, servicemen from Headley Court learning to deal with terrible injuries and the use of prosthetic limbs it inspired all of us onboard.

"This led to increased awareness of the plight of our colleagues and much fundraising in Bulwark.

"To be recognised for our efforts is a fantastic honour."

Help for Heroes founder Bryn Parry said: "None of us who were 'evacuated' from Dunkirk after our 350 mile ride will ever forget the experience of being taken off the beaches 68 years to the day that the Miracle of Dunkirk was at its height.

"The welcome, generosity and superb underplayed professionalism shown by the crew of HMS Bulwark was in the very best traditions of the service.

"All of us at H4H greatly appreciate the efforts made by all on Bulwark.

"While all the units, stations and ships of the Armed Forces are special, there are some that are particular friends of H4H - Bulwark is our favourite ship and we very much look forward to our continuing friendship."

Lighting a beacon

FOR the first time the Outdoor Leadership Training Centre (OLTC) is organising the Beacons Challenge - a two-day competition consisting of mountaineering, canoeing and mountain-biking.

The Naval competition on June 2-4 will raise money for Help for Heroes.

This multi-activity event that takes place at Tal-y-Bont was inspired by the Alpine Challenge run in Bavaria by the Army.

RN teams wishing to enter should contact their local PT office. More information can be sought from the event organisers CPOET(WE) Simon Piles and LPT Jamie Buttle on 01874 676269 or beacon_challenge@hotmail.co.uk.

Alternatively if you're not feeling energetic yourself, pledge your support at www.justgiving.com/beacons_challenge.

Red with Relief

RED faces, red hair, red noses - it's always all go for Comic Relief among Naval circles and this year was no exception.

In no particular order, these events featured:

Divers from the Defence Diving School in Portsmouth (right) took part in a diving relay, fetching red stones from the depths of the Horsea Island lake.

They then competed to grab red noses (or balloons) floating on the lake surface before any of their oppos could catch them - the losers had to donate to the charity.

LPT 'Jack' Daniels said: "The water was extremely cold and visibility was low as the divers sifted through the bottom of the lake in order to find the painted pebbles.

"Various artefacts were also uncovered, including some odd-looking shells.

"A fun time was had by all in the search for the truth behind the rumours of the red noses in the lake.

"There are so many red pebbles and noses in the lake that they will probably be dragging them out for the next five years."

At HMS Collingwood the ceremonial training staff (right) proved they did have a sense of humour, bearing red noses during the establishment's training divisions.

Of course, divisions is serious business, so the red noses were worn by the team's pace sticks rather than their noses...

WO1 Paul Barker, State Ceremonial Training Officer, said: "In these times of credit crunch it's great to see people raising money for those less fortunate than themselves, and having some fun along the way."

In Portsmouth Naval Base it was the Royal Marines musicians who stepped out (right), although the red noses were mainly the result of the cold March day and the somewhat scanty nature of some of their attire.

The sight of the parading playing Superman, pirate and nurse was enough to cause traffic to come to a standstill in the busy base.

BRNC's Lt Cdr Fred Radcliffe (Retd) (right) decided that Red Nose Day was time for a change of image.

Fred spent 38 years in the Royal Navy with a short back and sides, so when his sixtieth birthday struck he decided that as he had never had long hair he wanted to grow it.

But three years on he came to the conclusion that it was time to revert to a more traditional style.

He said: "Three years was long enough, and of course I checked that my wife Shaunagh agreed too."

It seems that Shaunagh was not the only one who thought a haircut was a good idea, as BRNC's commodore, Cdre Jake Moores, began the snipping process, and the haircut raised over £900 for Comic Relief.

Fred added: "All the comments I've received since having my hair cut have suggested the serious trim I've had makes me look ten years younger - so definitely worth it!"

However particular respect for rapid hair loss must go to the Collingwood's VT Flagship's IS department who underwent a sponsored chest wax at the end of their fancy dress day.

Paul Hackney, a schoolboy for the day, volunteered for his extremely hairy chest to be waxed (right).

He said: "I'm very sore and also very, very relieved that it is now over. So far over £100 has been raised, so at least this has been worthwhile."

But his chest is still stinging...



● Trainee sailors from HMS Raleigh at the Monkey Sanctuary Trust at Looe

Monkeying around at Raleigh

TRAINEE sailors from HMS Raleigh have taken time out for a spot of monkeying around.

Three groups of trainees headed over to the Monkey Sanctuary Trust at Looe to prepare for its 2009 season.

The sanctuary is a charity that promotes the welfare of primates and works to end their abuse in captivity.

The sailors helped build a new 100m fence for the five rescue monkeys who are the latest arrivals at the sanctuary.

The Sanctuary's Katie Hobbs said: "It was excellent to have help from the Navy.

"The perimeter fence would have been a painstaking task

for our two-man maintenance team.

"It was a big job that needed completing before we opened in April.

"We needed some extra help so we got in touch with HMS Raleigh - thankfully they were more than happy to lend a hand.

She added: "We can't thank them enough."

Raleigh instructor CPO Roger Fradley said: "It's good to get the trainees out into the community to expand their life experience.

"There was a great deal of job satisfaction when they saw what they had finally achieved."

A spot of light reading for CHF

MEN and women from the Commando Helicopter Force in Afghanistan received a welcome gift from the Bruton and district Support Our Troops organisation - a donation of £500 to spend on magazine subscriptions of their choice.

Cdr Bob Norris (Retd), the driving force behind the organisation, said: "Bruton and the surrounding district have forwarded a large consignment of welfare packages to service men and women deployed in Afghanistan.

"Indeed some of these packages have been flown to the forward bases in Afghanistan by CHF helicopters, so it is nice to show our appreciation in a practical way.

"I am confident this gift will improve the morale of these brave service men and women who are doing a marvellous job in an extremely dangerous and challenging environment."

Capt Jon Pentreath RN, commanding officer of CHF, said: "In terms of stress levels, life in Afghanistan can be a rollercoaster of emotions, at times our people are enormously busy but there are also quieter moments.

"This extremely generous gift will provide a welcome distraction from the rigours of life on the front line."

Janet has a break with the RNBT

THE Royal Naval Benevolent Trust remain stalwart supporters of the RN, whether former or still serving.

LS Craig Hull's wife Janet struggled with post-natal depression after the birth of their fifth child.

The family lives in married quarters at Lee on the Solent, and neither parent drives - which left Janet feeling isolated.

She said: "I like to do things, especially with the children, but feel quite cut off.

"We had not had a holiday for some years, but with a growing family just could not afford the cost of a break away."

The RNBT made a grant to cover the cost of a holiday at a Haven Holiday Park.

Janet said: "I screamed with

delight when I opened the envelope telling us what had been given.

"It was just what we needed and was nice to stay local; neither of us drives so the holiday venue was easy to get to - no mean feat with five kids!

"We had a wonderful family time, no pressures, just doing things like going on bike rides, having a day on the beach, sitting around the table in the evenings playing cards and games."

She concluded: "We really are very grateful to the swift help provided by the Royal Navy Benevolent Trust just when we all needed a lift."

If you would like more information, contact RNBT at rnbtrnbt.org.uk or call 023 9266 0296.

Badge over medal

WHILST I have every sympathy with the campaign for a National Defence Medal (Comment, April) I cannot see how it can bear that name.

There is already a Defence Medal, struck at the end of World War 2, and widely distributed among the Forces. At the same time, a War Service Medal was introduced.

In seeking an alternative, it is to be hoped that Blair's American 'veteran' can be avoided.

Mind you, there is a theoretical advantage in the existing lapel badge. It can be worn on any kind of civilian clothing, whereas a medal badge has restricted use on specific occasions.

The badge gives the opportunity for members of younger generations to say "Second World War, sir? Please give me the privilege of buying you a drink," (or picking up your restaurant chit).

It hasn't happened to me yet!
— Maurice K Tither, Chesterfield

Heavyweight canine

THE ARTICLE *Canine nine nine for Cornwall* (April) about using firearms support dogs for the first time in an RN warship may not be totally accurate.

In 1983 HMS Peacock was about to be named at Hall Russell's shipyard, in Aberdeen, by Princess Alexandra. I was the MOD (Navy's) Senior Naval Overseer and along with the shipbuilder's management team we assisted Grampian police to search and secure the ship.

A policeman brought along a large German Shepherd dog as part of the search team.

The constable instructed the dog to jump into the 76mm gun turret, and was standing outside the turret hatch balanced on a steel rung when the dog was recalled.

It ran and jumped through the opening into the handler's arms, almost knocking him down a metre to the deck. He told us the dog weighed seven stones.

Later at a break in the search we adjourned to a messdeck where the company provided a beer for the everyone in the search, including the dog, who drank it from a glass ashtray.

As this event was the night before the actual naming your report is possibly correct!
— Jim Jarvie, Dunfermline

Mystery jobs

I AGREE entirely with WOSA Michael Carrigan's letter (April) regarding the titles now bestowed on Logistic Branch ratings.

At least the former titles, Writers, Stores Accountant, etc, were descriptive of the tasks performed.

How is anyone supposed to know what a Logs (Pers) does?
— Lt Cdr (SD)(W) Derek Bovey, Laide, Ross-shire

I'm proud of you, Bernard

I HAVE just read the letter from Bernard Hallas RM (April) about standing up for the Corps.

I have mixed feelings about what he has to say – I am proud, humbled and disgusted.

Proud – because he is a Royal through and through and not ashamed of being so.

What on earth are these people afraid of, that they should stand

and be pointed at?

Humbled – because it takes a corporal to stand when both of our marches are played, and yet those people with all the finery sit still.

Disgusted – that those people who sit on their butts are good at shouting about their Corps but won't back it up.

— Ian Campbell, RM (ret'd)

Our man in Gibraltar

AS A subscriber to *Navy News* and a Gibraltar living in the UK, with reference to the article *Rain on our parade* (page 2, April), I would like to bring to your notice that there is no such thing as Governor General of Gibraltar.

Lt General Sir Robert Fulton RM is Governor and Command-in-Chief Gibraltar.

— Ernest Reading, Harrow, Middlesex

Ah, apologies for our error. We should have known better – Ed

Scapa – love it or hate it

I WISH to reply to Maurice Cross and his letter about Scapa Flow (April).

I am very proud to have been born an Orcadian and my house overlooks Scapa Flow.

I married a sailor in 1961 who had served in many ships including HMS Warrior at Christmas Island. It was there he swallowed contaminated seawater whilst swimming and died in 1968 aged 29.

In 1971 I married again, to another sailor who served on HMS Centaur and 12 years in the Fleet Air Arm. He is now the chairman of the RNA in Orkney and very proud to be so.

He belongs to Northampton but has come to love Orkney as his home.

Orcadians are very proud of the RN's long association with Scapa Flow.

Our weather is no worse than anywhere else, maybe a little windier because we are surrounded by the sea. The seagulls do not pose a problem and we have plenty of trees, sycamore grow like weeds up here and I have whitebeams in my garden.

Our islands are beautiful for scenery and historic places of interest abound. We have a low crime rate and can walk safely in our streets at night.

My apologies to Mr Cross for having such a rotten time here but for me and my husband it is heaven on earth.

I hope all sailors who came to Scapa Flow did not feel the same way. My mother told me the sailors who were on HMS Royal Oak left Kirkwall on lorries to go

back to the ship singing *Roll out the Barrel*.

One local man who was on Royal Oak told my mother that the German submarines used to follow them all the way up the Scapa, so it must have been a frightening time.

I live here all the time and I'm teetotal. I haven't been off the island for 36 years and I'm going on holiday to Yorkshire in May this year.

I don't need alcohol to live in Orkney and I haven't got rosetinted glasses, however it is home so perhaps I'm biased but apart from Yorkshire I wouldn't live anywhere else.

I haven't heard of HMS Seagull (or is it a Shite Hawk?) Is it a three master with wooden decks?

— Lana Hughes, Kirkwall, Orkney

...EX-SIGNALMAN Maurice Cross's memories of Scapa mirror my own but for one thing.

When we went ashore in 1942 to that barren, uninviting part of the Orkney Islands we were rationed to two pints of the NAAFI beer that he and his shipmates were able to imbibe in vast quantities.

I don't recall whether anyone actually lived on Scapa, not that anyone would want to.

But then we had the solace of knowing that when *Up Spirits* was piped at 1100 each we could draw our rum ration, which was 'neaters' when we were at sea, and that that potent, sublime elixir would do more to ease our fears of the next trip into icy, northern waters than two pints of indifferent beer.

— Kenneth Tipper, Ocala, Florida

'Arking back

FOR SEVERAL years past I have been sending my monthly copy of *Navy News* to a relative in Pennsylvania who served in USN submarines.

He took the paper each month to share with the members of his Veterans' Club at their regular meetings. My relative has unfortunately died, but I am keeping up my connection with another member of the club, Mr. Mike Sobkowski.

Mr Sobkowski was most interested in the recent cutaway drawing of HMS Ark Royal and sent me the following story which I thought you might find interesting.

"I found the insert on HMS Ark Royal IV especially interesting because it brought back memories of an event with them in the mid 70s. My submarine, USS Bergal, SSN 667, was involved in a NATO exercise with Ark Royal.

"Although the weather was terrible, the exercise was going well until one of our sailors became critically ill with a ruptured appendix. Communications with Ark Royal were arranged to conduct a personnel transfer by helicopter in the middle of the night in a very heavy sea state.

"After surfacing, the helicopter transfer was attempted numerous times but with the high winds and pitching boat was extremely difficult and dangerous.

"The frogmen from the helicopter with the basket were having trouble setting down on the deck of our submarine and we were having difficulty getting our sailor topside for the transfer.

"Waves were pouring down our open hatch and flooding our boat each time we tried to get him topside.

"Finally, the brave Ark Royal frogmen were able to secure our ailing sailor in the basket, but right before he was ready to signal the helicopter to raise the basket, a giant wave slammed into our sub' and swept both our sailor and the frogmen overboard into the icy North Atlantic.

"Thankfully, the helicopter pilot was able to raise both the basket and frogmen up before they were drowned. I shall never forget that evening and the bravery and professionalism displayed by the helicopter crew from Ark Royal.

"They saved our sailor's life that evening."

— Martin W. Young, Stubbington, Fareham



WITH reference to *Ark's home for the Aged* (Comment, April) known as 4VO Chiefs Mess, it was in the port after end of the lower hangar.

Originally, in 1960, it comprised two CPO and one PO messes with the guided weapons section below them.

In 1969 it became 4VO for 106 chiefs with the Sparrow magazine below. The magazine blast chamber vented up through the bunk space, through the armoured bulkhead and out to the port weather deck.

4RO was a new chiefs' mess built forward of the 4V cross passage.
— E Murphy, ex-CAF(O), Ark 1961-1975, St Budeaux, Plymouth

...I WAS one of the original geriatrics in the mess. We did have a large number of 'fifth fivers' but they were a great bunch, and having so many departmental heads in one mess was a big advantage.

The mess was unique in that we had a tropical fish aquarium which we built from scratch with the materials obtained from the dockyard.

We also had a piano. Getting it into the mess was literally a dockyard job, but it was a big asset when we had a social. I remember the late Dudley Moore having a drink then giving us a few tunes.

We shared a bathroom with 4RO mess which was usually referred to as the 'baby tiffs' mess' – that's the only other mess I can remember.

4VO was a great mess in a great ship with a great captain, now Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo.

— Jim Flynn, Edinburgh

...IN 1971 4VI was a stewards' mess – I was one of them for 18 months, doing general duties, night cleaning and then to the captain's staff (Capt Cassidi) before I went to HMS Dolphin for submarine training.

I feel very privileged to have served on her.
— K Sowden, Delabole, Cornwall

Fifth man was out of the frame

IN REPLY to Mr Scott's letter (April) regarding the RN trophy depicting Capt Scott's expedition to the South Pole in 1912, I can answer most of the points he raised.

The trophy was commissioned as a new centrepiece for the current HMS Scott.

It was ordered jointly by the RN Trophy Fund and BAe Sema Ltd (which firm provided much of the ship's technical equipment).

It was manufactured in 1997 by Joel and Adam Langford, of the London Silver Vaults, and bears their makers' mark and a London 1997 hallmark.

It was formally presented to HMS Scott at her initial commissioning on September 16 1997 at Devonport.

I have spoken to Joel Langford who has confirmed that he spent some considerable time at the Scott Museum, photographing many of the relics, in order that the finished item would be as accurate as possible.

He has assured me that the fact there are only four persons represented is not intended as a slight against any of the brave men who marched to the South Pole, and that the poses depicted in the model are copied from a photograph of the party.

Therefore it seems probable

that an honest error has been made in making no representation of the fifth member of the party – it is likely that the silversmith overlooked the fact that, when the photograph which he used was taken, the fifth member of the party was operating the camera.

— Lt Cdr David Costigan, RN Trophy Centre, HMS Nelson

Good send-off

WHEN I joined Ganges in 1961 it was stated that if I completed 22 years' service (not including boys' time) as a naval pensioner I would be entitled to a military funeral paid for by the MOD. Is this still the case?

— Peter Smith, London
Not according to JSP 751 Chapter 11. Was it supposed to cheer the Ganges boys up? – Ed

HMS Plymouth

A RELAUNCHED petition to try to get HMS Plymouth back to Plymouth can now be viewed on the Prime Minister's website at <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/hmsplymouthkeep/> for anyone to sign.

Please spread the word, we cannot let it go to the breakers' yard like HMS Intrepid.

— F E Sharpe, Plymouth

opinion

AN AIRCRAFT carrier is a wonderful thing – and so is hindsight. Nowadays we take it for granted that the success of the Royal Navy, past and future, owes much to naval aviation.

But when the Admiralty placed an order on May 7 1909 for a strange contraption called an airship, there were plenty of sceptics who thought the decision was a step too far – and indeed the success of the first airships was variable, to say the least.

But the principle of air power from the sea was established, and it was to transform naval operations for the next 100 years.

The Fleet Air Arm is an integral part of the RN and of the UK military aviation capability. More than 80 per cent of front-line Naval

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

Air Squadrons are currently deployed on operations around the world.

In the last century 6,000 Royal Naval Air Service and Fleet Air Arm personnel have lost their lives in the dangerous business of flying aircraft from decks at sea.

Fly Navy 100 is an opportunity to remember them, as well as looking to the future.

Exactly 100 years after that historic signing, on May 7, the Fleet Air Arm will be celebrating the centenary with a flypast over HMS Illustrous at Greenwich.

So if you are lucky enough to be in London, raise your eyes to the sky to see 50 aircraft fly in formation over the Thames – and raise a glass to that visionary decision 100 years ago.

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CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGS



The Terror of Tobermory kept us afloat

THE ARTICLE on Tobermory (April) revived many memories. Few who were there will forget the experience, but in spite of the arduous training, the recollections can be pleasing and amusing.

I went there for two weeks in August 1943 as a young Midshipman RNVR on board a newly-commissioned Algerine-class Fleet minesweeper, HMS Sparker, straight from our Belfast builders.

Our arrival fortuitously coincided with a rare visit by Commander-in-Chief Western Approaches, Admiral Sir Max Horton, and so, when almost our entire ship's company assembled in the village hall for the introductory talk, we were addressed by both Commodore Stephenson and Sir Max.

To my lifelong delight, Horton, who had been one of my boyhood heroes because of his Great War exploits, shook hands with me, amongst several others.

One of our exercises was to shore up a bulkhead after a theoretical collision. In charge was an elderly but very experienced CPO shipwright and he felt he had done a first-class job, but when the Commodore inspected it he pointed out any number of faults.

The CPO listened in silence, but was obviously shaken to have his efforts criticised. At the end of Stephenson's comments he said: "Well sir, everyone's entitled to his own opinion."

We all waited for the explosion - but it never came. There was a brief pause and then the Commodore's face broke into a smile and he gave a chuckle before moving on.

It put him in good humour for the rest of his visit. When we assembled on deck to see him off he paused at the top of the gangway, looked round for the CPO's face, spotted him, gave a knowing shake of the head, and departed.

Memories to be cherished indeed!
- Mike Alston, Hon Sec HMS Middleton (L74) Association, Maidenhead

...I WAS at Tobermory in a Captain-class frigate, HMS Tyler, as a young PO in charge of a torpedo party, looking after depth charges.

We had heard of the training programme and of Admiral Stephenson in charge of training (his nickname was Monkey Brand).

What a place! We didn't stop running or exercising



● The Terror of Tobermory - a portrait of Admiral Sir Gilbert Stephenson by Alan Mold, reproduced by kind permission of the Stephenson family

for what seemed a lifetime.

He treated captains and officers worse than the rest of us.

He was only about 5ft 6ins tall and all my service life I found the smaller the man the worse he was.

We were sent to Tobermory to get ready for the D-day landings and when we left we were ready for anything. They had Spitfires firing live ammunition at us. We had to practise loading depth charges on throwers and rails.

The little admiral would come on board anytime, day and night, and make us do some sort of ship's exercise. The first day at Tobermory we all had to go ashore for a lecture in a church hall.

At the end of the lecture that little admiral stood in the middle of the double door and shouted: "Clear the hall!"

I thought we could trample him to death and get him off our backs but he was still standing when we were all in the road.

Another time he went up the gangway, threw his hat onto the quarterdeck and said: "That's an incendiary bomb."

The bosun's mate kicked it over the side. Monkey Brand said: "Well done, my man. Now call the sea boat away and God help you if my hat sinks before they reach it."

HMS Tyler did not come through with honours because you knew how you'd done if you got out of that harbour and at sea without Monkey Brand sending a signal for you to lower your boats and slip all Carley floats.

Then it would take you half the night getting them inboard again. I'm sure Capt Rankin was just as pleased as the rest of us getting away from Tobermory.

The training stood us well. We were the first batch of ships in Normandy and we were still afloat when the war ended.

That little admiral made us into sailors and I always said it was because of him that we were still above the waves when the war was over.

- Roy Emmington, ex PO TASI Chatham, Kent

...I WAS on a newly-built River-class frigate in 1944. The Commodore was irreverently nicknamed 'Monkey' Stephenson because of his amazing agility.

He would climb all over a ship during an inspection and the rest of his entourage could hardly keep up with the 60-plus year-old.

Nowhere was safe from his prying eyes!
- N T Brigden, Bath

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, 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'

Naval posties get back together

LAST autumn members of the old RNR Postal and Courier branch held their first reunion since the branch was closed by defence cuts in 1992.

Many who attended had not met up since last serving together on training, 17 years ago, prior to the closure.

The branch was formed during World War 2 from former Post Office employees who volunteered for service in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve.

In its heyday the organisation numbered 2,000 personnel working in Fleet Mail Offices worldwide.

After the war it was decided to retain a regular Postal branch in the RN, with the Regulating branch undertaking the task with the support of the Postal branch of the RNVR – a state of affairs which came into being in 1951.

The new branch took a Belgian post-horn as its badge.

Eight years later the branch was transferred to the Specialist branch of the RNR, and it became a branch in its own right on June 1 1976.

Prior to closure there were 45 officers and 425 ratings enrolled from the Post Office and British Telecom volunteers, some of whom were ex-serving members of the Royal Navy.

Officers and ratings undertook live joint training.

One year was spent with the RN and alternate years with the Royal Engineers Postal and Courier Service both in Europe and further afield, in places such as Hong Kong, ensuring mail got through to ships and units.

The mail operations for the Coronation Review and the Queen's Silver Jubilee Review were carried out by the branch, and some members were used on courier runs to the Falklands directly after the conflict.

The next reunion of the RNR Postal Association will be on October 16-18, and any ex-postie with connections to the branch who is interested in attending should email rex.w.clark@btinternet.com

Satisfactory Resolution

A FLEDGLING ship association has already welcomed its 100th member.

The HMS Resolution Association was formed at the beginning of the year to bring together crew members from the old Polaris missile submarine, which was part of the UK nuclear deterrent patrols between 1968 and 1994.

Chairman S/M Ron Baird said the association was designed to allow former shipmates to meet, swap dits and share memories with others.

The group is also investigating the possibility of visiting their old boat at Rosyth.

For further details, see website www.hmsresolution.org.uk

Claude celebrates 108th birthday

THE Perth branch in Western Australia has been in touch to report the 108th birthday celebrations of World War 1 veteran Claude Choules.

Claude was born in March 1901 in Wyre Piddle, Worcestershire, and before the Great War two of his brothers and a sister had emigrated Down Under.

At the age of 14 he was sent to TS Mercury on the Hamble, and completed his training in the Impregnable on the Hamoaze.

He joined HMS Revenge in October 1917 and was on board to witness the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet off the Firth of Forth in November 1918.

He was still serving in the battleship when she was deployed in the Mediterranean to support the Greeks in their war of independence, and also entered the Black Sea to be on hand for the White Russians.

Claude also served in HMS Valiant and the aircraft carrier HMS Eagle, but in 1925 as a Leading Torpedoman he answered the call for volunteers to man the Royal Australian Navy and sailed south.

The RAN promptly sent him back to the UK for a course at HMS Vernon, then he joined HMAS Canberra and sailed back to Australia in her.

Much of the 1930s were spent training

recruits in the art of torpedo warfare.

In World War 2 he was Chief Demolition Officer on the West Coast, preparing the demolition of harbour and fuel facilities at Fremantle in the event of an invasion by Japanese forces.

He was obliged to leave the service at 50, but served a further five years with the Dockyard Naval Police until retirement in 1956, when he bought a 20ft boat and spent the next decade crayfishing.

Claude now lives at the Gracewood Hostel at Salter Point in Perth, and celebrated with some of his 38 direct descendants, including his 79-year-old daughter Anne Pow.

Special honour for the RNA's oldest salt

BRITAIN'S most senior citizen has been awarded life membership of the RNA.

National President S/M John McAnally and National Chairman S/M David White travelled to St Dunstan's in Brighton to induct S/M Henry Allingham as the most recent Life Member of the Association.

S/M Henry, who is 112, joined the Royal Naval Air Service during World War 1, compulsorily transferring to the newly-formed Royal Air Force on April 1 1918.

His war service included time at the RNAS air station at Great Yarmouth, and a stint on the armed trawler HMS Kingfisher, which carried a Sopwith seaplane and shadowed the British fleets at the Battle of Jutland in 1916.

S/M Henry also served on the Western Front with a training squadron, and at Dunkirk, where he recalled the depot being bombed and shelled.

In World War 2 he was involved in a successful project to counter German magnetic mines.

Although now a resident at St Dunstan's because of his deteriorating eyesight, S/M Henry lived independently until he was 110, and was still riding a mountain bike around Eastbourne at the age of 100.

He still enjoys a busy social life, with frequent outings both official and unofficial, in the company of his friends Dennis and Brenda



● S/Ms David White (left) and John McAnally (right) present S/M Henry Allingham with his Certificate of Life Membership

Goodwin and particularly enjoys senior "old salt".

Perhaps the most important memento was an engraved RNA hip flask topped up with Speyside malt, since it is well-known that S/M Henry enjoys the good things of life.

S/M Henry attributes his longevity to recognising one's capacity and living within it – certainly his capacity is amazing, as is his performance.

The RNA believe they are lucky to have him.

Carrier veterans meet up

VETERANS from the wartime aircraft carrier HMS Indefatigable have gathered in Portsmouth to recall the good, and not-so-good, times aboard their old ship.

Almost 60 people sat down to dinner at the Royal Maritime Club in Queen Street, and other highlights of the weekend included a visit to HMS Victory, where they were hosted by her CO Lt Cdr 'Oscar' Whild, and a service at the city's Anglican cathedral.

Members of the HMS Indefatigable Association are also looking forward to playing their part in the events to mark the centenary of Naval aviation, Fly Navy 100.

The 32,000-ton HMS Indefatigable, commissioned in mid-1944 but still saw plenty of action.

One of her first forays was in Operations Mascot and Goodwood against the German battleship Tirpitz in the Norwegian fjords in the summer of 1944 before

she underwent modification at the end of the year in preparation for service in the Far East.

In early 1945 she led air strikes against oil refineries at Medan and later Palembang.

She was the first British victim of a kamikaze attack, on April 1 1945, but was back in business in around an hour, and by the summer was launching air strikes against the Japanese home islands.

She then operated as part of the American Third Fleet, and it is claimed her aircraft flew the last sortie of the war on August 15, when her Seafires shot down eight enemy aircraft.

Indefatigable was present at the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on September 3, and later spent some weeks repatriating POWs from Japan to Australia.

After the war she served as a training ship, but a decade after entering service she was deemed surplus to requirements and was scrapped in late 1956.

Fulmar features in museum

A MUSEUM has been created at RAF Lossiemouth thanks to the efforts of Sgt Tony Carlin RAF and a select bunch of colleagues.

The museum was created out of the station history room, and despite a disaster – when two cabinets collapsed – the museum was open to visitors last Christmas.

WAFUs will know Lossiemouth better as HMS Fulmar, between 1946 and 1972, and any veterans wishing to visit the museum can contact Sgt Carlin, Fg Off Welding (Station Adjutant) or Fg Off Gunn (Media and Comms Officer) at RAF Lossiemouth, Moray, IV31 6SD to make arrangements.

The museum would also like to hear from anyone with artefacts, pictures or mementoes from the base during its Dark Blue years.

Brass treat

CHESHUNT branch were regally entertained by Welwyn Garden City branch in April – including dancing to a big brass band.

S/M Peter Triggs, of the Burma Star and Normandy Veterans Associations, is the new president with S/M Joe Wright as vice president, while the last three crew of corvette HMS Dahlia, adopted by Cheshunt and Waltham Cross, were made honorary members.

Health and wealth on the agenda in Cyprus

EVERYTHING from the health of old shipmates to the health of members' pensions was on the agenda at the March meeting of the Cyprus branch.

Branch chairman S/M Andrew Noyes spoke of his recent visit to RNA HQ in Portsmouth, and there was good news in that one of the branch's honorary life vice presidents, S/M Fred Cooper, was reported as making a good recovery after much ill health in the past year.

Paid-up membership so far this year is reported as being 64.

Branch RN representative S/M Jonathan Birley gave an amusing report on current activities in the Service, including the large-scale Exercise Cyprus Wader which was being staged in the island's waters.

S/M Jonathan also mentioned local areas where relaxing Royals and sailors might be encountered.

The speaker for the evening was St John Coombes, an independent financial adviser, who explored how recent trends in the money and stock markets have affected life in Cyprus – of particular interest to members' hearts as ex-pats have suffered a double-whammy of the Cypriot pound joining the Euro last year and the loss of UK income through the deteriorating exchange rate.

S/M Ian Gould is the new vice chairman of the Cyprus branch.

Officer is awarded membership

A SERVING RN officer was awarded honorary membership of the Association at the annual general meeting of Wetherby branch.

Cdr Mark Lister was presented with his RNA lapel badge by branch president S/M Eric Drummond.

S/M Eric said: "After Mark spoke at last year's Trafalgar Night dinner shipmates were so impressed by the regard he showed towards veterans of the service and a willingness to assist the branch when his service commitments permitted, they wanted to show their gratitude."

Cdr Lister is also due to be guest of honour at the HMS Ceres reunion in Harrogate in August.

At the same meeting S/Ms Richard Knight and Vince Parks were elected branch secretary and social secretary respectively, while outgoing secretary S/M Reg Maycock was appointed vice president in recognition of the service he has given to the branch.

Minesweeper men honoured

A MEMORIAL parade and service will be held in September in Queenborough to commemorate the ship's companies of the minesweepers that operated out of the town.

HMS Wildfire III was the wartime minesweeping base in the port, on the Isle of Sheppey.

This year's events will be staged on September 13, with the parade marching from Holy Trinity Church Queenborough at 1345.

The service and wreath-laying will take place at Queenborough Park at 1400, followed by a buffet and singalong at the Borough Hall, Main Road, Queenborough.

For more details contact Janet Flew (Secretary), Queenborough and District Naval Ensign Association on 01795 663784, write to 11 Chalk Rd, Queenborough, ME11 5AJ or email michael.flew@tesco.net

Naval Quirks

ENGLAND HOLDS A UNIQUE ANTI-SUBMARINE RECORD..



..IN A 12 DAY SPELL IN MAY 1944, 6 JAPANESE SUBMARINES WERE SUNK BY ONE DESTROYER ESCORT..



..NO NAVY HAS EVER MATCHED THAT!



OH WELL, IF YOU'RE GOING TO SPLIT HAIRS..



One more lads, then we'll have breakfast!

Just a minute – it was the USS England!

MICAH

Full diary for Area 2 members

AREA 2 members have a busy schedule over the next few months, with some major events happening on their 'patch'.

On Friday May 1 there will be a flypast at Eastchurch, on the Isle of Sheppey, which stakes its claim as the birthplace of the RN Air Service a century ago.

Saturday May 9 sees the Area standard bearers' competition at the Brompton Gym.

Armed Forces Day is on Saturday June 27, and the focus will be on Chatham Historic Dockyard, which was chosen to host the national event for the inaugural year (see also page 15).

Over the weekend of July 25-26 the spotlight returns to the Isle of Sheppey for Fly Navy 100 events.

Sunday July 12 marks the 90th anniversary of the Dover Patrol, with a ceremony at the memorial overlooking St Margaret's Bay, while on Saturday August 8 a memorial service will be held at St George's Chatham Maritime for HMS Picotee.

On Saturday August 29 a new memorial to the victims of the Channel Dash - a full-scale replica of a Fairey Swordfish - will be unveiled at the RAF Manston Museum in Kent.

And on Sunday October 18 the Margate annual Trafalgar Day parade will start at St Paul's Cliftonville at 1015.

Standards are invited to attend all of the above.

Model guest

MEMBERS of Littlehampton branch enjoyed an illustrated talk on Portsmouth Dockyard by fellow shipmate Mike Ross, a member of the dockyard's Historical Society.

The talk was based on a scale model of the base as it was in August 1939.

The successful evening also included a fish and ship supper.

Veterans invited to Little Ships cruise

VETERANS who played a part at Dunkirk and the Normandy landings are invited to join a river cruise this autumn.

Not just any old cruise, of course - this is the annual Veterans Cruise on the River Thames, organised by the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships (ADLS), which this year takes place on Sunday September 13.

The ADLS is formed from current owners of Little Ships that were involved in the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk in May 1940, their objective being to keep afloat for as long as possible as many as possible of the original Little Ships in order to preserve 'the Spirit of Dunkirk'.

Starting at around 1000 from Horse Fair Quay, Kingston Bridge in Kingston-on-Thames, the flotilla will navigate Molesey and Sunbury locks before arriving at Weybridge Mariners Club at around 1300.

At that point veterans will be



● Molesey Lock on the River Thames during the Veterans Cruise last September

hosted for lunch before being returned to Kingston in authentic World War 2 vehicles.

The route is lined with well-wishers, and the Little Ships are

supported by Royal Navy officers and ratings to help with manning - RN crews helped man the Little Ships at Dunkirk.

Local Sea Cadet units also lend

a hand by helping with berthing of the ships in the locks and providing an escort vessel for the initial leg of the journey.

Event co-ordinator Ian Gilbert said: "There is no doubt that the annual Veterans Cruise is a unique event."

"The combination of the veterans, the Little Ships, civic leaders, serving RN personnel, Cadets, re-enactors, classic military vehicles and an enthusiastic public response makes for a unique and emotive spectacle."

Applications for attendance at the 2009 cruise are welcomed from all World War 2 veterans and should be made to Ian, who can be reached on 07515 026970, or via e-mail papillon1930@yahoo.com

Dress for the day for attending veterans is blazer and medals.

Further information can be obtained from Ian as above in the first instance, or from WO1 Mick Gentry on 07977 982110, e-mail nr-ee-arm2@mcareers.mod.uk

Penelope survivors are guests at dinner

THE President of the HMS Penelope Association, Cdre Paul Sutermeister, hosted a gala dinner at the association's reunion weekend in Blackpool.

Guests of honour were the Deputy Mayor Cllr Val Haynes and her consort.

More than 72 members and guests attended, including two of the 200 or so survivors from February 18 1944, when the light cruiser was torpedoed in the Mediterranean by U-410, killing more than 400 men (including her CO, Capt George Belben).

The attack caused the cruiser to sink rapidly, and was remarkable in that the ship was steaming at more than 25 knots when hit - believed to be the only time a ship running at such speed was sunk.

The weekend's activities included a visit to the local Sea Cadet unit TS Penelope, where the Harry Pugh Trophy and a cheque for £225 was presented to the unit's Cadet of the Year, POC Fiona Young, which will cover the price of a week's sea training in TS Royalist.

At the Annual General Meeting on the Saturday morning a further £550 was donated to other local charities, including Highfurlong School, Blackpool's RNLI and St John's Parish Church.

The church was also the venue for the annual memorial service in honour of the sailors who died in the sinking of HMS Pepperpot, so-called because of the number of holes she acquired from bomb shrapnel while operating as part of Force K in the Mediterranean.

Tribute to landing vessels

A SERVICE of Remembrance will be held on Saturday June 6 in Ouireham, the Normandy end of the Brittany Ferries route from Portsmouth.

The service will focus on the memorial to the crews of the landing vessels at the D-Day landings, which lies outside the ferry terminal.

Guest of honour for the 65th anniversary will be Cdre

Jamie Miller, Naval Regional Officer for Wales and Western England, a man with a wealth of experience in amphibious operations.

It is hoped that minehunter HMS Cattistock will put in an appearance.

The driving force behind the monument will be sadly missed - Maurice Hillebrandt died in March this year.

Memories of Diana

MEMBERS of the HMS Diana Association cast their minds back more than half a century when they gathered on the island of Malta.

The reunion included members of the destroyer's 1954-55 and 1957-58 commissions, and 21

ex-matelots and their wives and partners made the trip - including one man who had travelled from Australia.

The ship took part in the British nuclear weapon tests in the South Pacific, and was sold to the Peruvian navy in 1969.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our March edition (right) was HMS Thunderer, correctly identified by Mr R Strickland, of Plymouth - congratulations for the second month in a row, Mr Strickland - who wins our £50 prize.

This month's vessel (above) is pictured in the early 1970s in the outlying waters of her home port at the time.

Affiliated to the Edinburgh hotel of an international chain, this ship also played a role in the Suez Canal clearance of 1975, and was broken up in Portsmouth in the late 1990s.

Can you name her and the overseas station in which she is



pictured? We have removed her pennant number from the picture.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is June 12. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

Old boys joined by instructor

THE 'old boys' of Exmouth 46 Mess who joined HMS Ganges in March 1959 are no spring chickens.

But the most senior party-goer at the 50th anniversary reunion was ex-class instructor 'Jack' Cornwall.

Jack joined the RN in 1937 and served for more than 30 years, mainly in destroyers.

He was involved in Force H and the Pedestal convoy to Malta, and survived the 1943 sinking of fast minelayer HMS Welshman.

Class members came from as far away as Australia and France to attend the weekend in Ipswich.

Dinner on the Friday night was followed by an excursion.

"On the Saturday morning we set off for Shotley to look through the main gate at what remains of our famous establishment," said Chris Bell.

"We were extremely lucky in that the caretaker of the Ganges site unlocked the gates and we were allowed to spend a considerable time wandering about.

"I personally found the experience quite emotional.

"Nelson Hall, the Chiefs and POs' Mess and the swimming baths are still standing, as is the old NAAFI and bits of the Wardroom.

"The parade ground is breaking up and covered in weeds and brambles. The mast looks very distressed with the main yard hanging Judas.

"Never mind; we consider ourselves very lucky to have had the opportunity to get inside the gates."

There was also a visit to the Ganges Museum ("a credit to all who have been involved" and "well worth a visit" according to Chris), and the day ended with a "superb" dinner in Shotley Marina.

MYSTERY PICTURE 171

Name

Address

My answers

the white ensign association

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Has sail training a role in the modern Navy?

Warfare AB2s – take note

CALLING all Warfare AB2s. Have you ever wondered what goes on in the big grey box on Whale Island?

Well, it's the Navy Command Headquarters, aka Leach Building.

It exists to support the Fleet; that means planning the manpower, training, logistics, engineering and deployments so that the Navy can do what it's supposed to do when it's supposed to do it.

When a problem materialises, the staff in the Headquarters try to fix it.

One example is the speed of promotion to AB1 in the Warfare Branch.

Currently, it should take 12 months for CIS and WS and 18 months for Seamen to complete their task books and get promoted; in reality it has been taking longer, and the people responsible for manning are trying to find out why.

As part of this, from the end of April all ships are going to be asked to provide additional information on their monthly return to Fleet HQ.

This information will then be used to inform the branch manager and target any extra effort needed on specific ships.

Buddhists hold spiritual course

BUDDHISTS in the Armed Forces are planning to celebrate the 2,553rd Buddha Day on May 19 during their annual spiritual course.

This event, the third to be staged, is open to Buddhists serving in all three Services, and one of the main themes will be to look at British military core values in the light of Buddha's teachings.

Buddha Day, also known as Vesak or Buddha Jayanthi, marks the birth, enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha which, according to tradition, all occurred on the full-moon day of May.

The course will be staged at Ampert House in Ampert, near Andover, the British Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre.

'SO STAFF, which side is port and which one's starboard?' writes Dr Mark Ashman.

I was asked this question by a Phase Two trainee aboard one of HMS Sultan's sail training vessels.

Although, the question may seem unbelievably simple to those of us who spend our working life at sea, it clearly illustrates the limited exposure some trainees have to the maritime environment despite several months with the RN.

In 2006 an initiative was taken to address this problem.

Senior staff at HMS Sultan, under the guidance of Capt Woodcock, developed a short training package to develop the character of trainees in the maritime environment through team building and basic seamanship training.

The course was designed to use existing facilities, primarily MOD-funded yachts managed by Sultan Boats.

The Command, Leadership and Management (CLM) course, now managed by VT Flagship Training, has been running for almost two years, but has it met its objectives?

The broad objectives are 'character building', so we could start by asking what character traits do RN personnel need to have?

The specifics are in the Naval Service Core Values and standards of the Dark Blue Line; in general they are positive self-image, developed by building self-confidence, with the added ability to work as an effective part of a team.

Commercial organisations use sailing to develop self-confidence, personal responsibility and to assess and take controlled risks.

They believe sail training allows people to discover hidden strengths and understand the value of working as a team, all of which are very relevant to the RN.

The CLM course aims to foster and develop these core values.

Generally, the trainees arrive with little knowledge of seamanship so the course starts, like all sail training courses, with a brief introduction to sea safety followed by knots – which invariably sees trainees trying to recall whether the rabbit goes up or down the hole as they struggle with bowlines.



● Vice Admiral Alan Massey joins Phase Two trainees on MOD yacht Gauntlet during an inshore race

On their first day at sea the trainees are already on a steep learning curve as they are shown the various skills they will need.

On the second day trainees are expected to operate much more as a unit, with a growing sense of self-confidence and teamwork.

Having run the course successfully for two years CLM training staff now wanted to find an opportunity to test the quality of the instruction and offer an even greater challenge to trainees.

Alan 'Willie' Thornewill, Sultan's Sail Training Supervisor, suggested a team of trainees be entered in the 2008 Service Offshore Regatta in two MOD yachts, Gauntlet and Flashlight.

This event consists of two stages – an offshore race followed by a series of inshore races for the Princess Elizabeth (PE) Cup.

The trainees would have no prior training, and would be up against more experienced crews.

Since the majority of trainees had never been to sea before, the object was to finish the course and evaluate the training package.

The offshore element started at Giltkicker and went straight into a long slog to the Needles. The

outward trip saw the crews having to tack as both boats beat west.

Later the winds dropped leaving larger boats becalmed on a slow, frustrating passage to Weymouth.

The competitors started on the return passage to Cowes with winds at Force 4-5, freshening to a gusting Force 6-7 causing a 6ft swell.

A crew change in Cowes saw another group of trainees take over for the PE Cup.

A gruelling series of five races around buoys in the Solent was followed by a race from Spit Bank Fort to Wootton Creek and back.

Although CLM training staff were extremely pleased with the crews, nothing had prepared them for the outcome – the boats took first and second place in offshore race and Gauntlet second place in the PE Cup.

On the final day of the race the trainees on Gauntlet were joined by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Alan Massey, who said: "Although the crew had only been sailing for 48 hours they were already confident, getting competent, trusting each other and working

as a team – with everyone pulling in the same direction."

He noted: "It's notable that Naval training establishments such as Raleigh and Dartmouth no longer offer sail training within the core syllabus – I'm delighted that it's been reintroduced at Phase Two so that young people get an early taste of what it means to be exposed to the elements of wind, tide and sea, which are, after all, the components of our working environment."

He applauded HMS Sultan for grasping the idea of the CLM package as a fundamental part of its core leadership training.

The CLM package has also had other positive benefits – those who are bitten by the bug are pointed in the direction of RNSA and JSASTC, hopefully enabling the RN to maintain its four-year run of regatta victories.

It seems paradoxical that the ancient skill of harnessing the wind to propel a boat is now helping instil the character traits needed by sailors in the modern Navy.

It is now hoped that the opportunities offered by CLM training can be extended, allowing all RN trainees to benefit.

In brief...

HMS SULTAN will be playing its part in what has been described as the skills Olympics.

Worldskills is the biggest international skills competition on the planet, attracting thousands of hopefuls from 40 member states and covering specialities from web design to cabinet making.

Sultan will stage the Southern UK Engineering Challenge, an event co-hosted by the VT engineering academy and the Royal Navy on May 13-14.

Teams of three will build an electro-mechanical component, competing for a place in the UK final and a possible berth in the national squad for 2011.

HINDU service personnel from all three Armed Forces gathered at the Shree Geeta Bhawan temple in Birmingham to hear speakers from their faith and others at their annual conference, hosted by the Hindu Chaplain to the Armed Forces, Acharya Krishan Kant Attri.

THERE is good news for Service personnel who became fans of BFBS Radio while posted overseas.

A BFBS initiative now means the unique blend of Forces news, music requests and dedications will be available on digital radio in the UK.

Analysis of a three-month trial on DAB digital radio last year identified an audience of more than 850,000 keen to keep in touch with the Forces community.

So from last month, as well as being heard in more than a dozen countries from Afghanistan to the Falklands and online at www.bfbs.com, BFBS Radio was being beamed loud and clear to the UK.

RN families living on the Trevorder naval estate at Torpoint in Cornwall have a 'Super Park' to play in, thanks to funding from Modern Housing Solutions and Defence Estates.

The park, in use since March, was officially opened last month.

A ROYAL Navy Police initiative at Faslane means sailors and Royals in single living accommodation can rest a little easier.

A security record pack has been developed, containing a permanent ultraviolet marker, hologram security labels and door warning labels, which will be placed in every permanent cabin on the base.

The aim is to deter would-be thieves by making the property much harder to sell on, and it also makes it easier to reunite owners with any stolen items.



● Rear Admiral Steve Lloyd with (from left) WO1s Steve Salem and Ritchie Crome, Lt Dale Craven, POET Tommy Teague, WO2 Rupert Williams, Cdr Bill Fraser and WO1 Kevin Apedaile

Bomber bonus

A NEW award has been introduced to recognise outstanding efforts by seagoing personnel towards the British nuclear deterrent patrols.

Since 1968 the Americans have awarded a lapel pin to military or civilian personnel who made significant contributions to the Fleet Ballistic Missile programme, and although that included

Britons, eligibility was restricted to strategic weapons system-qualified applicants.

Now the First Sea Lord has approved the Chief Strategic Systems Executive (CSSE) Commendation Scheme, which consists of a presentation coin and certificate.

The commendation is available to RN officers and ratings who have completed both:

Ten years accumulated service appointed/drafted to a Resolution and/or Vanguard-class submarine.

A minimum of five deterrent patrols.

For details see RNTM 201/08.

Unified legal system goes live in autumn

ON OCTOBER 31 this year the Naval Discipline Act 1957 (NDA 57) and the Army and Air Force Acts 1955 will be repealed to be replaced by the new tri-Service Armed Forces Act 2006 (AFA 06).

From that date, all Service personnel will be subject to a single system of Service law, regardless of where they are serving.

Why?

The three Services are working together a great deal, particularly on joint operations, so it makes sense – and supports operational effectiveness – to have one system of law for all personnel.

The new Act will harmonise the arrangements for discipline and align discipline and Command responsibilities, increasing fairness and efficiency in all units, particularly joint ones.

As the law was being completely re-written, the opportunity was taken to bring legal aspects up to date and introduce new elements.

What are the changes?

Some changes have already been made to make the transition to the new system easier, such as the introduction of the new Service Complaints process.

AFA 06 covers a huge range of subjects, including enlistment, offences, summary discipline and punishments, Courts Martial, Service Complaints and Inquiries.

Day-to-day it is the changes to summary discipline that will be most noticeable.

The CO will be kept at the heart of Service discipline – he or she is responsible for the standards of behaviour of the people under his or her command and must have the power to enforce discipline.

The procedure at RN 'table' and RM summary dealing will change slightly, but the effect will be much the same.

There will be a right to elect court martial trial and to appeal, and to take legal advice to help make the decision.

At the start of the hearing the

accused person will admit or deny the charge – a bit like a guilty or not guilty plea.

The accused will have a right to assistance by an officer or senior rating/SNCO, who will help before and during the hearing.

For the RN, warrant punishments will be abolished, but COs will be able to apply to higher authority for extended powers of punishment before hearing more serious charges.

The court martial will still deal with more serious or complicated cases, and cases where a person has elected for court martial trial.

The case will be prosecuted by a lawyer from the Service Prosecuting Authority, who could be from any of the three Services.

A defendant will have the right to legal representation, to apply for legal aid, and to be assisted by an officer or senior rating/SNCO.

Everyone needs to be aware of the new law so that they can understand their rights and

responsibilities.

COs, XO's, Naval lawyers, command advisers, Service police and coxswains in particular will need to familiarise themselves with the new legal and disciplinary procedures.

There will be road-show presentations conducted by the RN Armed Forces Act Implementation Team from July to October at RN and RM establishments in the UK and abroad, as well as Joint road-shows where appropriate.

Dates and venues will be promulgated by signal, and it is essential that COs and their teams attend one of the presentations.

Further specialist training will be given to Service police and legal staff.

A new Manual of Service Law (JSP 830) will replace BR 11 as the main legal reference publication for Service discipline and law from October 31.

FLAGO and PLAGO guidance will also be updated.





Service pay rises by 2.8 per cent

SERVICE personnel received a 2.8 per cent increase in basic salary as a result of the latest report by the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body.

Specialist pay, compensatory allowances and Reserves' bounties increased by the same amount, while a range of targeted measures included a reduction in the qualifying periods for Longer Separation Allowance and a new RN Clearance Divers' pay spine and two new supplementary rates of Diving Pay for EOD-qualified divers.

There will be a minimum pay increase on promotion to the rank of petty officer of five per cent, and the AFPRB also endorsed the improved commitment bonus arrangement.

Announcing that the AFPRB's recommendations would be accepted in full, Defence Secretary John Hutton said: "This pay increase is thoroughly deserved and recognises the key contribution our Servicemen and women are making both overseas and at home."

"We continue to ask a great deal of our Armed Forces and they meet those challenges with unwavering courage and professionalism."

"It is only right that their service is rewarded."

Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Sturup said: "This pay rise is welcome and appropriate acknowledgement of the burden our people are carrying on behalf of the nation, and of their remarkable achievements in the face of great adversity."

For the full AFPRB report and recommendations see www.ome.uk.com

Dorsetshire applies the coup de grâce

IN May 1941 the German battleship Bismarck and heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen sailed from Norway for the Atlantic to prey on Allied convoys.

They were engaged at 0535 on May 24 in the Denmark Strait by battlecruiser HMS Hood and new battleship HMS Prince of Wales, but within 25 minutes Hood had blown up, killing all but three of her crew of over 1,400, and the Prince of Wales was thwarted by gun malfunctions.

However, Bismarck had been damaged and headed for St Nazaire for repairs.

Bismarck, slowed by damage, was sighted again two days later and attacked by Swordfish from HMS Ark Royal; a torpedo jammed her rudders and left her unable to steer.

Five destroyers, led by Capt Philip Vian in HMS Cossack, harried Bismarck on the night of May 26-27.

Early on May 27 the battleships HMS King George V and Rodney caught up and sighted Bismarck and within 90 minutes had reduced the German ship to a burning hulk.

HMS Dorsetshire, commanded by Capt Benjamin Martin, had left a convoy she was escorting and headed towards Bismarck's reported position. On spotting her, the cruiser fired three torpedoes and at 1040 Bismarck sank.

Dorsetshire and HMS Maori rescued 110 of her crew, but over 1,900 Germans died as their ship sank, her battle ensign still flying.

Trophy No 16789, a watercolour by Eric Tufnell, depicts the battered Bismarck being attacked by Dorsetshire, with two British capital ships visible on the horizon.

Capt Martin was awarded a DSO for his part in the action.



● HMS Dorsetshire prepares to sink the Bismarck

Ark team go west for AT challenge

AIRCRAFT carrier HMS Ark Royal may be out of circulation for the time being.

But that does not mean her ship's company will be able to take it easy.

The Ark is docked down for a summer of maintenance and work which will prepare her for her role as strike carrier at the end of the year.

So Cdr Rod Ashman, the ship's Commander Logistics, has developed a Command, Leadership and Management (CLM) framework to 'develop a cohesive, confident, innovative and well-motivated ship's company.'

The three tenets of the programme are to provide skills, to change attitudes and to provide opportunities to apply the knowledge.

Cdr Ashman said: "It is vital we all develop our leadership skills."

"The ship's CLM programme applies at all levels from AB to the Captain with bespoke training programmes delivered."

"The most fundamental component of leadership is self-awareness and what better than adventurous training to awaken our senses and challenge our fears?"

With no space left in Bavaria, the Adventurous Training team headed for the Brecon Beacons for a memorable week which included caving, canoeing, day walks on Pen-y-Fan, climbing and a high ropes confidence course.

Being RN AT, there was the odd twist – the week started with wet and dry challenges in the Ogof y Ci or Cave of the Dog, 548m long and prone to flooding.

At one point PO Rob Robertson turned out the lights to simulate an evacuation scenario on board; despite a fair bit of nervousness, the challenge was completed successfully and the team had become that little bit stronger.

The Commanding Officer of Ark Royal, Capt John Clink, said: "This is exactly the type of activity to develop leadership and grit."

"Each member of the team has learned something about themselves and is committed to their own personal development, as an I."

"When Ark Royal conducts its work-up to 'strike' after our Contract Support Period, it is through developmental events like this and our CLM framework that the ship's company will be in the best possible state of preparedness."

JPA criticised

THE House of Commons Defence Committee has criticised aspects of the JPA programme in a report published on March 27.

Designed to streamline pay and personnel administration across the three Services in a single system, JPA came under fire from the National Audit Office for lack of sufficient financial controls which led to payroll errors, both overpayments and underpayments, and now the Defence Committee has declared it hopes "to find evidence of vastly improved service when we report again next year."



Relaunch results in new look for Two-Six

IN RESPONSE to feedback from across the Royal Navy, the seventeenth edition of the award-winning internal communications DVD, Two-Six, was re-launched in April with a new look and feel.

TWOSIX.tv is the internal communications video channel for the RN and RM, covering a wide range of topical and entertaining subjects as well as offering support and information to Navy personnel.

The re-launch reflects a more multi-channel feel, and the new programme is being created in an engaging, faster-paced, magazine-style format.

The programme will also be presented by a new face, TV presenter Kate McIntyre.

The new look, new feel TWOSIX.tv will continue its close alliance with the PSB and aims to reach out further and include the areas of the Navy who may have felt that previous editions were not aimed at their inclusion.

TWOSIX.tv is by the Navy, for the Navy, and feedback is integral to the shaping of future programmes.

There are myriad areas of RN business to incorporate in future editions, but your suggestions are integral. Topical issues from the front-line or support areas that need to be aired would be especially welcome.

This is particularly relevant to a section of the new programme called *Focus On*, which can be adapted to many scenarios or units.

Focus On provides your opportunity to show off your

unit's role, people, and activities to the rest of the Navy. Guidance and support is available for units wishing to contribute.

As with previous editions, TWOSIX.tv will still be delivered to all ships and shore based establishments via DVD, but greater emphasis has also been placed in the delivery of the new programme online.

For those with the appropriate IT support, this and all future programmes can be found at www.twosix.tv in conjunction with the RN Community website.

The online interface will include simple, effective "chaptered" navigation with a direct feedback channel.

Ian Smalley, Executive Producer at CTN, said: "We are really excited about how the new format has taken shape."

"We've made a conscious decision to increase the multi-platform and online presence of the programme, which in turn will

make the whole programme more accessible and increase access to feedback channels.

"We really want people to let us know what they did and didn't like in the current edition, as well as any thoughts and opinions for future programme content."

Amongst a range of features, the next edition will highlight the RN and RM contribution to Operation Herrick, provide an update on the Command Paper and will *Focus On* the Northern Diving Group.

More details of the new programme will be supplied in the next edition of *Navy News*, including an interview with new presenter Kate McIntyre.

Remember, we really want hear from you, so to get involved, or supply your thoughts and opinions, please get in touch with Pauline Aquilina (Pauline.aquilina962@mod.uk, tel 0207 218 5984/9621 85984) or submit thoughts and opinions via twosix@ctn.co.uk.



● Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Alan Massey officially opens the new high ropes facility at HMS Collingwood

Admiral learns the ropes

THE Second Sea Lord has opened a new facility at HMS Collingwood by leaping from a platform 40ft from the ground.

With the words "I hereby declare the Collingwood high ropes open," Vice Admiral Alan Massey jumped from the fan descender, part of the new high ropes installation at the Fareham base.

The site, the first of its kind for the Royal Navy, was created to teach sailors teamwork and to help them overcome their fears.

Candidates on the Senior Rates' Leadership Course tackle the high ropes, while the Leading Rates

equivalent use the new low ropes site.

Whilst there is an element of fear to overcome on the first two solo tests, the majority of stances involve teamwork and trust.

Vice Admiral Massey said: "First and foremost it's a brilliant environment to have at the leadership school – it's about teamwork, trust and grit."

Lt Cdr Karl Santrian, Officer Commanding the RN Leadership Academy, said: "Our motto is 'Inspire by example' and this site enables our future leaders to do just that."

RNPT summer dates

THE next RN Presentation Team events are:

● Tuesday May 12 at the Acorn Arts Centre, Parade Street, Penzance;

● Wednesday May 13 at the Thistle Hotel, Queen Street, Exeter;

● Tuesday May 19 at Buckingham House, Murray Edwards College, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge;

● Thursday May 21 at the Lord Nelson Grandstand, Great Yarmouth Racecourse, Jellicoe Road, Great Yarmouth;

● 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

RN trainers learn all about learning

TRAINING specialists from across the Royal Navy met at HMS Collingwood for the E(TM) Conference, which served to demonstrate that the 'Schoolie' specialisation has as important a role as ever in delivering operational capability in the Fleet.

The theme of the morning session was modernisation of training, with presentations by two experts in the field – Laura Overton, of Towards Maturity, and Graeme Duncan, of Caspian Learning.

The RN's own expert, Cdr Richard Clarke, also delivered a brief on the subject, followed by a contribution on coaching skills by Lt Rachel Smallwood.

The session also included the use

of modern classroom technology in the form of interactive handsets lent by Promethean Ltd.

Various specialisation issues were considered in the afternoon, with contributions by Rear Admiral Bob Love, the Chief Naval Engineering Officer, and Capt Richard Stokes, head of the Engineering personnel team, amongst others.

During the afternoon Cdr Ian Stidson was presented with his Iraqi Campaign Medal.

After the chance to unwind with a little sport, conference delegates convened in the Collingwood wardroom for the biannual TM mess dinner, at which the guest of honour was Rear Admiral Charles Montgomery.

The metal is the key

FURTHER to the article in the March issue of *Navy News* (*Don't miss your medal*) the MOD Medal Office has sought to clarify the issue of the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal (ACSM).

Lt Col Peter Lockyer (Retd), SO1 MODMO, said: "I would like to inform your readers that service in the South Atlantic 1982 and the Gulf 1990-91 was recognised by the award of the South Atlantic Medal and the Gulf Medal

respectively.

"This service is not counted towards the ACSM."

"There is a very broad rule of thumb regarding eligible time towards the ACSM, and that is: if it's silver it is counted and if it's not it isn't."

"The South Atlantic and the Gulf conflict were considered to be wars, and as such the medals were made of copper and nickel, which is consistent with the precedence set since WW2."

Hope for Explosion!

A LIFELINE could be thrown to a struggling naval museum in Gosport which is on the verge of closure.

Explosion! – the museum of naval firepower – was due to shut on April 1 after Gosport Council decided it could no longer foot the £10,000 monthly bill for running the Priddy's Hard attraction.

But the execution has been stayed as bosses of Portsmouth Historic Dockyard are in final talks with the council to take over the site – once the RN's ordnance depot.

Explosion! opened in the spring of 2001 but has been dogged by funding problems and has struggled to attract the anticipated visitors – although it has won a string of museum and tourism awards.

The museum was intended to be at the hub of a development which would see shops, bars and restaurants, plus homes built around the historic site. The housing materialised, but not the amenities.

Another key factor in Explosion!'s struggle for survival has been its location – a good 20-minute walk from Gosport ferry and at the end of a two-mile road from the A32.

To that end, Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust is looking to save the site – and pump visitors into it.

It plans to introduce a waterbus service this summer linking the historic dockyard with both Explosion! and the RN Submarine Museum; tickets for both attractions will be on sale in the dockyard and at Gunwharf Quays.

Trust chief executive Peter Goodship said given the extent of development which had already taken place at Priddy's Hard there was "little room for manoeuvre", but he hoped to bring about a "successful transformation which the site richly deserves".

The key to success, he believes, is encouraging visitors to the area's many nautical attractions to sample both sides of the harbour.

"We hope that by saving Explosion! from closure, we can realise our ambition of uniting the two sides of the harbour – we need to forget artificial local boundaries and create Portsmouth Harbour as the visitor destination," Mr Goodship added.

Concorde applaud

IN CELEBRATION of another 40th anniversary this year, the Fleet Air Arm Museum at RNAS Yeovilton planned a special day of talks and films under the birthday girl's unusual delta wings.

Concorde 002 first took off from Filton on April 9 1969, and seven years later she arrived at the Fleet Air Arm Museum where she is housed in a purpose-built hangar.

Speakers at the event included Concorde captains David Rowland and Ian McNeilly, first officer Peter Benn and senior flight crew Jo Bramley.

There will be an unusual way to cap this anniversary year, a Christmas concert with mulled wine and mince pies held under Concorde herself on December 10.

The HMS Heron and Northwood HQ Volunteer Bands will perform their Christmas Concert under Concorde.

The new Fly Navy 100 exhibition at the museum brings to life the development of Naval aviation from the first airship in 1909 to the current crop of Naval air power.

Dating back to the earliest days of the Royal Naval Air Service visitors can see a complete replica of a 1912 Short S27 seaplane and the relics of a Short 184, the first aircraft to have fought in a Naval battle in 1916. Other exhibits include a Sea Harrier, a Fairey Firefly and more.

Find out more at www.fleetairarm.com or by calling 01935 840565.



Bringing down the wall of China

LINKS between the Royal Navy and China continue to flourish after a team of four doctors and scientists from the Institute of Naval Medicine in Alverstoke visited the country in December.

At the invitation of the People's Liberation Army (Naval) Medical Research Institute, Surg Capt David Brown led his party over to the Far East for an extensive programme of scientific exchanges with presentations from both sides on a variety of maritime subjects.

The group spent three days in Shanghai where they were hosted by the Institute's director Senior Captain Tao Yongua and Political Commissar Senior Captain Huang Xiaohu.

Up to 200 Chinese doctors and scientists attended the presentations by the UK medics who were asked about all aspects of their work.

It became clear that the two Institutes have similar programmes of work and capabilities, and in consultation with the Naval attaché Beijing, Capt Andrew Tate, areas for future collaboration were identified.

In between the briefings, meetings and presentations, the British team had a chance to explore the city of Shanghai (described as "amazing") and enjoy some Chinese cuisine ("extraordinary").

The highlights were visits to a freezing Forbidden City where the Royal Naval uniforms attracted as much attention as the sights (pictured above) and to a snow-covered Great Wall.

The visit was concluded by a trip to Beijing where the INM team met with the heads of the Navy Logistics and Medical Departments, Rear Admirals Xu Lili and Ling Yongquing.

Field Gun returns at Royal Tattoo

THE military and musical spectacular that is the Royal Tattoo takes place on May 13-16 and this year features a tribute with a near copy of the Brickwoods Field Gun Race.

Organisers claim the last time that a Field Gun Race took place at a Tattoo was during the Inter-Command Field Gun Race at the last Royal Tournament.

This year two 18-man teams from HMS Nelson in Portsmouth will compete head-to-head on an 85yd track with a 190 Pattern Field Gun.

Of course the traditions of the Field Gun Race have been kept alive with the annual Field Gun Day at HMS Collingwood.

And the Royal Tattoo at Windsor Castle will see the teams compete over four nights to abridged Brickwoods rules with the overall winner awarded the Royal Tattoo Trophy, which is presented in perpetuity by Land Rover.

Event director Simon Brooks-Ward said: "The Field Gun Race is a truly iconic competition.

"We are proud to be the first Tattoo to showcase the tremendous skill and sportsmanship of the competitors – the crowd will not be disappointed."

This is only the second year of the Windsor Castle Royal Tattoo, a not-for-profit event supported by the Royal British Legion, that exists to serve and celebrate the endeavours of our Forces' soldiers, sailors and airmen.



NOTICEBOARD

Ask Jack

Coastal Forces Heritage Trust: I am a Trustee of the above. A current project is to produce a historical documentary DVD of Coastal Forces history from WW1 through to their operational demise in 1957. We are trying to trace an advertising film made in 1954 featuring Senior Service cigarettes and depicting a mock Coastal Forces battle. All our searches of the relevant archives have drawn a blank so far. If you have any information could you contact Hugh Campbell at fincastle2000@tiscali.co.uk

HMS Endurance: I am building a model of the old HMS Endurance around 1882. I am looking for photographs of her taken ideally on board showing deck detail, and any other shots that are clear and can be used to help interpret the drawings I have. I am happy to pay for making copies. Contact David Calderwood at djac@calderwoodhan.com or write to 43c Alma Road, Windsor, SL4 3HN.

RN Veteran Fencing: Anyone interested in RN Veteran fencing over 40 with the purpose of competing against other teams and navies is asked to contact H De Silva at gd4ptv@manx.net or write to 6 Little Meddows, Andreas, Isle of Man, IM7 4HY.

Minewarfare Badge 2: Trying to locate a Minewarfare Badge 2 from when the operations branch came into being. It differs

from today's badge in that it has MW through the middle. If you can help, contact Marjory Moran at marjory.moran@btinternet.com or tel: 01467 672448.

HMS Birmingham, cruiser, last commission 1959: Whilst returning from visits to the Eastern Mediterranean, the ship was involved in a 'side swipe' with the Crossbow. Two engine room ratings were sent to check for damage of the hull via the double bottom. These were overcome by fumes and were found to be dead on retrieval. They were buried at sea prior to the ship arriving in Malta. I am unable to fix a date for this incident, nor the names of the victims. Can anyone help? Contact John E C Mead, The Moorings, 3 Ladymead, James Lane, Burgess Hill, RH15 0QW.

Telegraphist Air Gunner: Seeking anyone who remembers Lt Cdr C B Kennedy, my father. He served in Hood 1938-39 and later trained as an Air Gunner at Kestrel, Worthy Down. He served in Ark Royal (803 NAS), Furious (801), Indomitable (800), Heron (794) and 795 inc NAS off Madagascar. He became an AGI and spent time at Excellent, Siskin and also served in Starling, Redpole, Striker, Ulster, Bastion, President, Pembroke and Lochinvar. If you can help contact C J Kennedy, 28 Weavers Walk, Bell Green, Coventry, CV6 7LH or tel: 02476 267245.

Where are you now?

'R' Independent Commando Coy; RM Poole, 1973-75: Does anyone know the whereabouts of (then Lt) I D McGowan RM He was 'The Boss' of 1st Schools Visiting Team, and later the 'Big Red & Blue'. I was one of his 'Kelpers', there were five of us who had served in the Falklands, either on NP 8901 or the Red Plum. There was Jim Affrin, 'Lou' Lewington, George Macbride, 'Taff' Green and myself, 'Swamper' Campbell. Contact me at iancampbell191@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 023 9236 9842.

Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association: Did you ever serve in Bulwark, Albion or Centaur? The association is open to anyone who served at any time on these ships. Magazine three times per year plus events including AGM/Social, sea-days and anniversary commemorations. Whilst our 'Home Port' is Pompey, next year's AGM and social will be at Sand Bay Holiday Village, Weston Super Mare, Somerset. We also sponsor sea cadets from our affiliated SCCs on the training ship Royalist. Membership is just £8 per annum. Enquiries to Leigh Easton at nsgfo@tiscali.co.uk or website: <http://www.bulwarkassoc.plus.com> or write to Glenmoray, Hayford Place, Cambusbarron, Stirling, FK7 9JX.

HMS Caledonia 1965-67: Can anyone help me locate five ex RN buddies who trained with me at HMS Figgard 1964 and HMS Caledonia 1965-67. They are Shipwright Artificer Pete Emery, originally from Bedworth and now possibly residing in France. The other four are Engine Room Artificers, Kenny Bell, Ian Carter, Pete Coney and Barry Rose. I have very little info on these four except Ian was also known as George or Judd and was last heard of in Bodmin in 1986. Apart from knowing Barry was also a nuclear submariner I have very little other information. Not much to go on but maybe someone out there may have part of the jigsaw which might help locate them. Classmates during their training years will be holding a reunion in Jan 2010. Contact Don Fawcett at donald.fawcett1@ntlworld.com or tel: 023 9269 2964.

The Survey Ship Association: Any past or present member of ships' company of any RN Survey ship is eligible to join as a full member. For further information send a stamped addressed envelope to: The Secretary SSA, 8 Grosvenor Court, 74 East Lodge Park, Farlington, Portsmouth, PO6 1BY or e-mail: secretary@surveyships.org. uk or telephone 023 9279 1258.

The best of NTV: A double DVD is now available from the creators of Newcastle Television, the Geordie Gunboat's finest media outlet during 1992-95. Both DVDs feature the programmes involved, recent footage of D87's sad departure on her way to the breaker's yard, karaoke evenings on the flightdeck, the Christmas Pantomime in MPA and countless unseen bits of footage which appeared on television at the time. Cost of this is £11.99 inc P&P. Please contact Vic Woods at aerodynamik2004@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 023 9235 8055 to reserve your copy of nostalgic bliss.

HMS Yarmouth 1970-72: Seeking Dennis 'Scarlett' O'Hara – Cook who came from the Portobello area of Edinburgh and also 'George' Barry Paraby – L/Cook who came from the Sunderland area. Please contact Stewart Ramsey on 01241 854318 or 07703 528121.

HMS Cardiff: Barrie is seeking former shipmates of his father, Glyn 'Taffy' Willacott. Taffy joined the Navy in 1966 and served in HMS Cardiff 1982-85, based in Portsmouth. Taffy was from and still lives in Cardiff. He is 60 in October and Barrie is organising a surprise party for him. Contact Barrie at barriejohn158@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 07766 802596.

HMS Sultan: Seeking Stuart Murray (MEM), a submariner, married to Donna and has three children. As far as I am aware he is at Sultan on a three-year training course. Simon lost touch with him a couple of years ago. If you know of Stuart could you contact Simon Buck at simon.buck@sky.com or tel: 01775 761674.

HMS Ganges Upperyardmen: Were you at Ganges living in sick quarters in 1967-68? I'm sure it will be interesting to see what we all did after those two great years. This also includes the Tiffs. Get in touch with Phill Hadfield at phillprhadfield@talktalk.net or tel: 01425 654736.

Wrens: Seeking an old friend William 'Bill' Spencer, of the 1960s. I was in the Wrens from 1961 to 1970 and was at Whale Island around 1964-65. Bill came from Newcastle, I came from Prudhoe on Tyne. We travelled up there once on my Vespa scooter. We also had a weekend in Chatham at the Royal Marine pub where I worked. Bill rang my father in the 1980s while I was in the USA. I am now Vito but was then Eileen Ward. Contact me at vitoileenward@ukgateway.net or tel: 020 8677 0937.

Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veteransagency.mod.uk
Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
RN and RM Service records: 023 9262 8779 or 023 9262 8667
Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk
Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk

Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, www.seafarers-uk.org
SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafa.org.uk
RN Community: www.rmcom.mod.uk
Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org
Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com
Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk
RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, www.rnsubmus.co.uk
National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
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THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● Just months after the first 'touch and go' exercises on board HMS Eagle, a RN Phantom (F4K) completes its first arrested deck landing on June 2 1969; in the background is HMS Diana

May 1969

The May Navy News reported that the Navy's new Phantom jet fighter had made contact with the flight deck of a British aircraft carrier, flying two 'touch and go' exercises with HMS Eagle in the English Channel. Fully-arrested landings were predicted to take place in June in preparation for 892 NAS joining HMS Ark Royal in 1970. The squadron commissioned at RNAS Yeovilton on March 31, and the article calls it "the Navy's last fixed-wing squadron". Not quite true.

May 1979

In May 1979 we reported the Service's newest aircraft, the Jetstream T2. The First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Terence Lewin was one of the first passengers on board the Navy's new turboprop Jetstream. The aircraft took over the observer training role from the piston-engined Sea Prince which had served in the Royal Navy for the 25 years before. We also reported on the Navy's newest warship, described as an "anti-submarine cruiser" – not the first description that springs to mind for HMS Invincible...

May 1989

And last in our jet-setting decades, in May 1989 we reported that the latest version of the Sea Harrier – the FRS2 – had passed another milestone in its development and flight-test programme. The FRS2 (prototype of the FA2), among other changes, brought to the mix four advanced medium range air-to-air missiles (AMRAAM). The then British Aerospace announced that it was successful and the second pre-production model was ready for test flights.

Deaths

Col Richard Allan Pickup RM. Defence Advisor British High Commission, South Africa. March 20. Aged 48.

Rear Admiral Colin Dunlop. Joined the RN as a special entry paymaster cadet in 1935. His first seagoing appointment was Shropshire, involved in sanctions against Italy; also the blockade of Bilbao during the Spanish Civil War; then in Kent hunting for the Graf Spee and torpedoed during bombardment of the Italian-held Fort Cappuzzo and had to return to Alexandria with her helm jammed 15° to starboard. In 1941 he was appointed to the staff of C-in-C Plymouth then to Valiant operating from Killindri (East Africa). During the Salerno landings he was in the operations plotting room team that was attacked by the Germans' new flying bombs; afterwards he was awarded six months additional seniority for meritorious war service. The last months of the war he spent in the cruiser Orion that was attacked by the Germans as they evacuated Italy. Mid-1950's he sat on the committee that introduced a single general list for officers; later was personal staff officer to the Defence Secretary Denis Healey. He was Director of Defence Policy; then 1969-71 was Chief of British Naval Staff in Washington handling the US Navy's interest in Diego Garcia; he also persuaded the Americans to take an interest in British advances in VTOL fighters. Last appointment was as Flag Officer Medway; CBE in 1963 after three years as secretary to the First Sea Lord; CB in 1972; retired in 1974 and served as Deputy Lieutenant of Kent and took an active interest in SSAFA and the Sir John Hawkins hospital at Chatham. Association of RN Officers, March 8. Aged 91.

Cdr Ian Bailey-Willmot. His early naval career included service in the Gulf, Diamond and Pellew and command of the gas-turbine powered torpedo boat Brave Swordsman; also South Atlantic in Lynx gunnery officer of Decoy in the Far East, Diomedea and an Admiralty R&D post. From 1981-83 he commanded Londonderry. Successful offshore racing sailor in his various boats he was appointed race director of the Round the World Yacht Race in 1989 and was CEO and race director from 1991-98. After leaving the Navy he was prominent in persuading Volvo to come on board and the official name became the Whitbread Race for the Volvo Trophy, the eighth race in 2001-02 becoming the Volvo Ocean Race. February 10. Aged 68.

Capt Michael St John DSC. Attended Dartmouth 1929 joining the fleet as a midshipman in the cruiser Dorsetshire just after the Invergordon Mutiny; appointed to the submarine service in 1935. Junior officer in the submarine Pandora on the China Station and when war began was first lieutenant of the training submarine L26; on completing his Perisher in 1940 he returned to take command of the boat in dry dock during the blitz of Plymouth and his first war patrol was in Tuna. While in command of Traveller in 1942 he landed part of an SBS section raiding German airfields and returned a fortnight later to rescue its two survivors by hauling them from the water over Traveller's foreplanes; they had been hunted, hungry and thirsty, and had swum a considerable distance before being rescued. Traveller was lost two months later while St John was in hospital on Malta; he lost 70 of his comrades. He took command of Parthian in which he was awarded a DSC for bravery in attacking coastal shipping and German warships in the eastern Mediterranean; and commanded Otway; he then took Totem to Fremantle, Western Australia, where his war ended. He was promoted to captain but his appointment to command the cruiser Caylon was cancelled when the Navy was divided into a 'wet' and 'dry' list and he left the Navy in 1955. January 23. Aged 93.

Cdr Norman Tod DSC. Joined the Navy at 13 and throughout the 1920s and early 30s sailed around the Mediterranean and the Baltic, at one time crewing for the King's yacht Britannia. Qualifying as a navigator he served two years in Gulf sloops helping to establish the Bahrain naval base. Joining Ajax in 1938 in the West Indies he was awarded the DSC for his courage at the Battle of the River Plate in 1939; his charts of the preliminary action are at the Imperial War Museum. He was navigator of the cruiser Norfolk when she and Suffolk both intercepted, reported and shadowed the battleship Bismarck and the cruiser Prinz Eugen as they broke through the Denmark Strait in May 1941. He navigated the battleship Queen Elizabeth in the East Indies campaign against the Japanese and was promoted to commander in 1944, a post on the staff of the fleet commander at Colombo. Post war he was assistant naval attaché in Shanghai followed by command of the frigate Loch Glendhu (East Indies), a tour at the naval tactical school and as naval attaché in Lisbon; he retired in the rank of acting captain based at Karachi and as naval adviser to the High Commission in Pakistan. Association of RN Officers. March 6. Aged 98.

Eric Evans. AB. Served in Vanoc 1943-45 Atlantic Convoys (Mediterranean); involved in sinking U392 straits of Gibraltar 1944. February 10. Aged 83.

Peter Knight. AB. Served in Ulster and Heron. HMS Wizard and Cadiz Association also RN & RM Gunnery Association and managed 'slops' for both associations. February 8. Aged 77.

Maurice Hewitt. CPO Shipwright. Served 1947-86 in Magpie, Fort Cumberland Eastney (RM Amphibious School), Theseus, Zulu, Collingwood, Terror (Singapore), Sultan, Bellerophon, Fearless, Rooke (Gibraltar), Diomedea (Cod War), Vernon (small craft unit). February 11. Aged 83.

Kenneth John 'Yorky' Hale. AB Gunner. Served 1960-71 at Ganges and in Whirlwind, Bellerophon and Bulwark. March 9. Aged 64.

Harry Steele. March 16.

Patrick 'Colin' Smith. Served in Belfast. November 8 in San Antonio, Texas. Aged 63.

Paul Anthony Vergen. WO AEM. Served 1962-91 at St Vincent, Condor, Fulmar, Bulwark, Terror, Lossiemoth, Daedalus, Royal Arthur, Osprey, Ashanti, Charybdis and Hermes. November 4. Aged 62.

Trevor 'Len' 'Jan' Hutton. PO Steward. Served in Heron (also FONAC), Matapan, Ark Royal (appearing in TV series *Sailor*), Ambuscade, Nelson, UKMILREP Brussels, Diomedea, Exeter, Mercury, Fearless and Osprey. March 11. Aged 55.

Bernard 'Clem' Clemson. Joined as

a Torpedo man circa 1940 becoming an electrician on the formation of the branch in 1946. Served in Emerald at D-Day (evacuation of troops from Normandy) and the surrender of the Japanese in Singapore 1946. Left RN 1948 and joined the South African Navy until retirement. HMS Emerald Association. As a result of an attack in his drive in Rondebosch, Cape Town. February 6. Aged 83.

Low Tristram. Naval Airman. RN Featherweight champion 1954. Known as Derby's 'Mr Boxing' having set up the city's longest surviving Merlin Youth Club that produced many amateur champions. March 11. Aged 78.

Kevin 'Yorky' John Whiteley. POM(E). Served 1959-70 Far East Minesweeper Squadron last berth flight deck; 1969-70 Hermes then 30 years HMP. March 9. Aged 65.

John 'Bogie' Rhymes RM. 45 Commando SBS. Served in Israel, Egypt, Tripoli, Malaysia, Korea, Hong Kong and Immacable. January 30. Aged 80.

John 'Lofty' Marrant. Served St Vincent, Barham, Effingham, Malines, Formidable, Illustrious, Whitesand Bay and St Vincent (Instructor). HMS Whitesand Bay Association. March 29. Aged 86.

Trevor 'Paul' Newman. CPO Cook. Served 1959-84 at Pembroke, Goldcrest, Eastbourne, Victory, Dolphin, Porpoise, Dreadnought, Ark Royal, Falmouth, Neptune, Repulse, Revenge, Nelson, RNSS Pembroke (cooking school), Aldershot (combined services catering) and Raleigh. March 23. Aged 67.

Cyril Wolstan Cravos. Served 1949-70. March 22.

Ken Cox. AB. Served for 12 years including HMS Morecombe Bay 2nd Commission Far East 1951-54 (Korean war) and a member of the association. January. Aged 83.

Lt Bryan Jarvis. Served for 30 years in various ships including Ceylon and Morecombe Bay 2nd commission Far East 1951-54 (Korean war) and a member of the association. April. Aged 83.

Jack Roberts. Chief Shipwright. Served 1937-57 in Kent (1938-45 on 17 Russian convoys), Highway, Franklin, Unicorn (Korea) and Ocean (Suez Crisis 1956). Aged 91.

Geoff Elwood. Warrant Officer. Served 1946-73 joining as an air mechanic then later in 1946 transferred to stores branch. Served St Angelo, Phoenicia, Pembroke, Neptune, Jufair, Bellerophon, Ark Royal, Eagle and Heron. One of the first to be promoted to the new rank of Warrant Officer in July 1971. April 1. Aged 82.

Reg Avery. Sto Mech. Served in Peacock 1947-48 and a member of association. Aged 79.

Bernard 'Bill' Knerritz. PORS. Served 1952-76 in Corunna, Ederton M1111 with 105th MSS at Suez and Cyprus (1956). Reclaim, Rothsay and HMY Britannia (1971-74) also at Ceylon and Malta. The Ton Class Association. April. Aged 72.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Lionel de Ternant. CPO. Served 1948-73. Boy Seaman in Wakeful, Victory, Concord, Jaseur, Dolphin, Wave, Loch Killisport, Bellerophon, Leopard (evacuation of Tristan da Cunha), Keppel, Ganges (as an instructor), Terror, Medway, Forth, Rothsay and Sefton. Played rugby for the RN, Carterton RNA. October 20. Aged 75.

Pat Hamblin. FAA. Served in Illustrious 1944-45. President of Reading RNA also member of HMS Illustrious and FAA Associations. December 27.

Edward Pownall. Associate member Runcorn Branch. February 26. Aged 84.

Matthew Hilditch. Stoker. Committee member West Lothian branch. March 7. Aged 67.

Robert 'Bob' Edgar Clegg. DEMS Gunner during WW2. Dursley and District branch. March 17.

Frank Batterham. Stoker. Served in Furious, survivor of Swift and served Russian Convoys and D-Day Landings. Chairman 1998-2008 Newport (S Wales) RNA. March 13. Aged 84.

Allan Snowden. LTO. Served 1940-47 at St Georges as Boy Seaman and Rodney, Mullion Cove and Mermaid. Member of Crieff RNA and last surviving founder member West Lothian branch. March 22. Aged 84.

Maurice Douglas Vincent RM. Served 1940-45 in Egypt, Palestine, Ceylon and Europe. Uttoxeter branch.

Frederick George Alison. AB (QM). Served 1940-46 at Royal Arthur, Victory, Pembroke, Fabious, Tanatside and St Angelo. Uttoxeter branch.

William Henry Goldstraw. Leading Stoker later Reverend. Served 1934 and again 1939-46. Uttoxeter branch.

Dennis Mountfort. Telegraphers Ord. Served 1942-47 at Royal Arthur, Scotia, Drake, Canopus (Special Service) and Sphinx. Founder member of Uttoxeter branch. November 3. Aged 83.

Peter Francis William Nicklin. SBA. Served 1945-48. Uttoxeter branch.

Ernest James Saunders. PO Telegrapher. Served 1944-58 at St George and Ganges, Indefatigable, Patroller, Tamar (Hong Kong Radio), Hornet (MTBs and MGBs), Ocean, Sea Eagle (Jast), Brides Bay and President (Whitehall W/T). Uttoxeter RNA.

William Deville. FAA PO Air Elec. Served 1945-57 in Illustrious, Eagle, Albion and Fleet Air Arm shore stations. St Helens RNA. March.

Joseph 'Joe' O'Connell. CRS. Served 1937-61 at Ganges (Button Boy), Kent (cruiser bombed), Zinnia (one of only three survivors when she was torpedoed and sunk), Arethusa (bombed), St Angelo, Triumph, Chequers and Adamant. Harrogate & District branch. March 23. Aged 88.

The 9th Earl Nelson. Though a private man, he was extremely proud of his ancestry and his illustrious forebear. He served on various bodies associated with the Royal Navy; a strong supporter of the RN Sailors' Fund, the charity more commonly known as the Tot Fund which receives a substantial donation from the sale of each bottle of British Navy Pusser's Rum; was president of the Royal Naval Commando Association and of the Nelson Society. March 28. Aged 67.

Henry 'Harry' Sherwood. Chief PO 3rd. Served 1940-46 as a mechanic on MTBs (coastal forces). Founder member of Herne Bay RNA and a life member of the Coastal Forces Association. Rockingham & District branch but previous member of Perth branch (WA). March 23. Aged 88.

Donald Jack Misson. Ldg Sgt. Served 1942-47 at Pembroke, Starwort and

President 2. Member of the NVA and Russian Convoy Association. Life member and past chairman and president of Uxbridge RNA club and branch. April 4. Aged 86.

Douglas Seaman. POGI. Served 1938-60 in Foylebank, Hood, Formidable (Pacific WW2), Whitesand Bay (Far East, Korean War) and Scourge. Gosport RNA and Whitesand Bay Association. April 4. Aged 90.

HMS ILLUSTRIOUS ASSOCIATION
Alfred Henry Edwards. PO Stoker Mechanic. Served in ship 1949-50 and 1954-55. A founder member. November 24.

Ernest A Hammonds. Member of association since 1985.

Peter Knight. Onboard Ulster when it was Crash Boat to Illustrious 1949-50. February 18.

Colin Pickford. Served 1951-53. Member of Victoria Barracks Young Seaman's Field Gun Crew who were winners of the Willis Cup in the Brickwood Trophy Competition. A founder member and national secretary of the Illustrious Association from 1987 until retiring in 2005. February 10.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
George Pearce. CPO Sto. Served in Seabear and Truelove, March 6. Aged 92.

Lionel Rossiter. ERA 3. Served in Clinton and Skipjack. March 12. Aged 88.

Jack Sherman. Cox'n. Served in Seabear, Marvel and Mary Rose. March 13. Aged 87.

Dennis Burgess. Stoker PO. Served in Romola and Magicienne. April 3. Aged 88.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS
Lt Cdr N C Atkinson. Served in Ganges, Vengeance, Maidstone, Cobham, Plucky, Britannia, Russell, Eagle, Victorious, Centaur and Puttenham.

Lt Cdr T F Biddlecombe. Served in Newcastle, Invincible, Heron and Dryad.

Lt Cdr D N Harding. Served in Newcastle and Miner V.

Capt J A Hassard-Short. Served in Cook, Phoenicia, Galeonia, President, Condor and Daedalus.

Col L E Hudson RM.
Lt Cdr I R Humphrey. Served in Warspite, Kent, St Angelo and Immacable.

Cdr M B Lanyon. Served in Birmingham, Caledonia, Surprise, Drake, Duchess and Victory.

Chaplain J O'Farrell RD RNR
Lt A D Pearson. Served in Queen Elizabeth.

Lt W H Price. Served in Newcastle, Kenya, Collingwood, Kempenfelt, Tumult, Excalibur, Loch Arkaga, Indefatigable, St Vincent and Pelican.

Lt J M Purdie. Served in Bulwark, Simbang, Gamecock, Falcon, Heron and Seahawk.

Cdr R E Stainbank. Served in Ganges, Dolphin and Neptune.

Cdr F G Travers. Served in Excellent, Black Swan, Crane, Osprey, Warrior and Torway.

Lt E S C Wall. Served in Nelson, Brilliant and Achilles.

HMS UNICORN ASSOCIATION
Bernard 'Nurdy' Norman. Air Mechanician 1st Class. Served in ship 1943-46 Mess 36. December 24.

Sidney 'Scribe' Percy Francis. Leading Writer 824 NAS. Served in ship 1943; also President, Victory, Landrail, Owl and Jackdaw. January. Aged 86.

Stanley 'Stan' Phillips. Leading Naval Airman. Served in ship 1951-53; also Glendower, Nelson, King George V, Duke of York, Blackcap, Siskin and Vulture. March 25. Aged 80.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
P D Monk. Served on board LCM 39. February 17.

G A Wright. Served with LCA Flotillas 126 and 552. March 2.

Jim Uren. Served on board LCI(L) 117. March 13. Aged 84.

R E Grafton. Served on board LGAs and LCMs. March 18.

John Holden. Served on board LSTs 322, 418, Scott and Anson. March 23. Aged 86.

Assignments

Lt Cdr I C Wiseman to HMS Mersey as CO on June 25.

Cdr P L Allen to HMS Northumberland as CO on May 12.

Lt Cdr N P B Armstrong to 750 NAS Seahawk as CO on April 23.

Maj Gen G S Robison, Commandant General Royal Marines, to be additionally appointed to be Captain of Deal Castle with immediate effect. The appointment of Captain of Deal Castle will henceforth remain tied to the appointment of Commandant General Royal Marines.

Maj Gen A Salmon, Commander UK Amphibious Forces, will in addition assume the duties of Commandant General Royal Marines on June 26.

Sports lottery

March 21: £5,000 - Lt Cdr I W Thomson; £1,500 - MEM A J Lague-Smith; £500 - Mne K J Bonner.

March 28: VW Polo - S/Lt L B Harrison; £1,500 - Mne D Gray; £500 - LS(F) W K Ashby.

April 4: £5,000 - Diver T P Chudley; £1,500 - WO1 S A Moyles; £500 - Mne G J Jackman.

For all your RNR Sports Lottery information visit the new website at www.rnsportslottery.co.uk for results, news and events, and details on how to apply for a grant.

Swaps

LogsCS(D) Coombs. Currently serving on HMS Grimsby with MCM1 Crew 1 looking for any Portsmouth ship. Contact: 292-CS@a.dli.mod.uk.

LogsCS(P) Kingscott. Current draft HMS Illustrious. Looking for any swap draft to any Plymouth-based ship deploying or not. Contact: 305-pocaa@a.dli.mod.uk or 07545 535 162.

LS(AWW) Dahlgren. Current draft HMS Cumberland. Would like to swap for HMS Albion, Bulwark or Ocean. Contact: HMS Cumberland-LSAWW2.

Diary dates

MAY
May 1: Fly Navy 100 - Fly Past over Eastchurch Pioneer Memorial, Isle of Sheppey, Kent.

May 2: Army vs Navy Rugby Match at Twickenham. Tickets cost £18-20 (adults), £10 (children). Call 0870 444 6633. www.navyrugbyunion.co.uk.

May 7-8: Fly Navy 100 - HMS Illustrious in London - Centenary Fly Past Greenwich, London, 12 noon, May 7.

May 13-16: Royal Tattoo - The Massed Military Bands from all three Services at Windsor Castle. Tickets cost £15-£60. Available from 0871 230 5570 or online at www.windsortattoo.com.

JUNE
June 6: Collingwood Open Day and Field Gun Competition at HMS Collingwood, Fareham. Tickets cost £7 for adults, £4 for children/OAPS at the gate (£5 and £3 in advance). See www.royalnavy.mod.uk/server/show/nav.6943 for more information.

June 9-11: Beat Retreat - The Massed Bands of the Royal Marines at Horse Guards Parade, London. Tickets cost £12 (family

Reunions

MAY 2009
HMS Ganges Association: 27th annual reunion May 8-11 at Sinah Warren Hotel, Haying Island, Hants. A weekend of fun, frolics and friendship. Ganges veterans from 1931 to 1976. New members and visitors welcome. Late bookings being accepted. Contact: Tony Thipthorpe at thipthorpe@btconnect.com or 01702 341968.

HMS Eagle, Last Commission 1969-72: A 'Nautical Extravaganza' reunion takes place at the Northern Hotel, Aberdeen from May 15 to 17. Following on from the last two reunions, all 'Eaglets' plus wives/partners and guests are very welcome to make this one even better. For any information contact Bill Melvin at bill.melvin@virgin.net or tel 01224 820603 or 07740 439987.

HMS Hood Commemoration Service: Takes place on May 17 at 1100 in the Church of St John the Baptist, Boldre, Hampshire. The guest preacher will be Reverend Albert Braithwaite RN. The RN will be represented by the CO of HMS Collingwood, Cdre Steve Kirby. More details are available from Nigel Henley on 01590 678323.

HMS Hermione Association: Annual reunion from May 22 to 24 at the Maritime Club, Portsmouth. 023 9283 7681. Drinks aboard HMS Victory on the Saturday. More details from the secretary on 01925 824504 or see the website at www.hmshermione.com

JUNE 2009
HMS Rooke: Are there any Chefs and Caterers who served in HMS Rooke out there? Would you be interested in a reunion to be held in Gibraltar from June 4 to 9? If so please contact Frank Carroll at funtime56@inbox.com or tel: 07879 644544.

D-Day: Neville saw service on HMS Southdown, a Hunt-class destroyer during D-Day alongside her sister ship HMS Quorn which was sadly lost. He would like to trace anyone who served on those ships or relatives of crew members of that time to arrange for a short wreath laying ceremony from the car ferry to Caen on June 4, in memory of those lost 65 years ago. Contact Neville Halifax at Halifax5@aol.com or tel: 01983 281605.

Majestic/Caledonia 1937-39 Boys Association: Annual reunion and AGM will be held at the Sea Crest Hotel, Morecombe, on June 5 and 6. Further details from chairman, Syd Shilling, 49 Windsor Drive, Cleadon, Sunderland, SR6 7SU or tel: 0191 536 9708.

HMS Glorious and her destroyer escorts, Ardent and Acasta: A memorial service to commemorate the 69th anniversary of the sinking and the loss of 1,531 men, takes place at St Nicholas Church, HMS Drake, Devonport, Plymouth on June 7. More information from Vincent Marcroft at vinny847022@hotmail.com or tel: 0161 6547638.

2nd HMS Manchester Association: The association was formed in 2001 with the first reunion being held in the spring of 2002 in the WO SR and SNCOs Mess at HMS Nelson. Our next reunion, our eighth, is scheduled to take place on June 20 and 21, once again in HMS Nelson. See the website at <http://www.2ndhmsmanchesterassoc.org.uk> or contact Steve at stevie27@hotmail.com tel: 07855 628255 or lan at lantids@ntlworld.com tel: 07710 282633.

JULY 2009
HMS Londonderry 1981-84 Stokehold Association: The annual reunion will be held on July 4 in Birstwith, North Yorkshire. This will mark the 25th anniversary of the decommissioning. Details from Peter Hill on 07971 498607 or Peter Ritchie on 01647 24271.

40 Years of the Harrier: 2009 is the Harrier's 40th Operational year. Flown by numerous Air Forces and Naval Services around the world, this unique aircraft has flown in many operational theatres and its continued success has secured its place in aviation history. The 40th anniversary celebrations will take place over two days, 23-24 July, and are open to everyone who served on a Harrier Squadron, in any service and in any capacity, along with all those who helped in the aircraft's development and continued success today. For further details please log on to the website at <http://www.homeoftheharrier.com> or tel: 01780 783838.

AUGUST 2009
HMS Fearless Stokers Reunion takes place on August 15 in the Ship Anson on the Hard, Portsmouth from 1700. All welcome. If you require further information, contact 'Rug' McKinley at mmckinley1975@aol.com or tel: 07894 249536.

SEPTEMBER 2009
HMS Diana Association hold their next reunion and AGM at the Nautical Club Birmingham from September 4 to 6. Accommodation will be available at the Edgbaston Palace Hotel, Hagley Road, Birmingham. We welcome new members from any commission. For further details please contact J Fisher at johnjackie.fisher@virgin.net or tel: 01530 242850.

British Pacific & East Indies Fleets 1941-45: Reunion from September 11 to 13 at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry. Family and friends welcome. Same price as last year, three nights £130pp half board. Contact John Grosssett on 01943 600588 or Alf Lonsdale on 01293 432049.

ticket £40). Telephone 0844 847 2504 or www.ticketmaster.co.uk.

June 20-21: Sultan Show at HMS Sultan, Gosport. More information will be available in time at www.sultan.org.uk.

June 27: National Armed Forces Day - main event at Chatham Historic Dockyard with smaller events going on through the week around the country. Find out more about the main event and events in your area at www.armedforcesday.org.uk.

JULY
July 11: RNAS Yeovilton Air Day: Celebrating 100 years of Naval aviation. See www.royalnavy.mod.uk/server/show/nav.4948. Tickets cost £21 (adults) and £8 (children) on the day, with concessions for advance booking (£17, £14(OAP) and £5. Call 08445 781 781.

July 18-19: Royal Navy Past and Present at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. Commemorating the 250th anniversary of the laying of HMS Victory's keel. Visitors will be able to board a modern Naval warship, amid many other displays. Enquiries: 023 9283 9766. www.historicdockyard.co.uk.

SEPTEMBER
September 5-6: Navy Days: Meet Your Navy 09 at HM Naval Base Devonport, Plymouth. Tickets cost £14 (adults one-day) with concessions for pensioners and children, and multi-day entry. Ticket line 08445 78 78 78. Further information at www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navydays.

September 11: Dedication of Fleet Air Arm Memorial, National Arboretum, Staffordshire.

RNR 150: A dinner will be held at HMS President on September 18 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Royal Naval Reserve which was formed in 1859 as a reserve of merchant seaman. All former Lst is wishing to attend should contact Cdr David Whitby RD' RNR Rtd at davidwhitby@aol.com or tel: 01268 759245.

RN Boom Defence Ratings: Reunion at Scarborough from September 18 to 20. For more details contact Alf Mumberson at barc00re1958@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01302 811898 or Lance at lthpsh@aol.com tel: 01723 368798.

HMS Renown 1939-48 Association: 22nd annual reunion from September 22 to 24 at the Holiday Inn, Armada Way, Plymouth. Contact John Roche on 01752 775926.

HMS Protector Association hold a mini reunion at the Afton Hotel, Eastbourne from September 25 to 28. Further details available from Doug Harris at dougatspindrift@aol.com or via the website at <http://www.hmsprotector.org> for booking form downloads.

HMS Ocean Association: 22nd reunion will be held at the Grand Hotel, Scarborough from September 25 to 27. More details from W Entwistle, Chairman/Social Secretary on 01282 433910.

OCTOBER 2009
HMS Vanguard (Battleship) Reunion takes place at the Maritime Club, Portsmouth from October 2 to 5. All members of the crew should make the effort to attend. Ring up the club and book yourself in. More details from D R Scrivener on 01253 873807.

HMS Daring, first commission 1952-54: Reunion to be held at Warners Hotel, Alveston Hall, Nantwich, Cheshire from October 2 to 5. Details from Owen Simpson at owen553@btinternet.com or tel: 01453 860564.

From VIPs to breweries

THE Black Duke spent four days in Cardiff as her ship's company caught up with affiliates.

HMS Monmouth arrived at Britannia Quay in the Welsh capital having carried Sea Cadets from Tenby and Swansea, plus South Wales business leaders from Devonport.

HMS Monmouth last exercised her freedom of her namesake town in 2008, so the emphasis on this Welsh sojourn was to renew ties with affiliates including the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers, Monmouth Borough, Monmouth School, the RNA, and Queen's Dragoon Guards.

On a more formal level, the Type 23 frigate hosted official receptions for members of the Welsh Assembly and Monmouthshire council.

On the sporting front, a Fire Service XI and Monmouth RFC were challenged at football and rugby respectively, while Cardiff RFC offered the ship 40 tickets to watch its match against old rivals Llanelli.

And perhaps best of all... a tour of Brain's Brewery in Cardiff (they're among the biggest beer producers in the country).

Prince learns why Cardigan's needed in Gulf

THE mainstay of training the Iraqi Navy for the past 12 months took a break from operations to head to Bahrain.

And it was there that RFA Cardigan Bay played host to Prince Michael of Kent who was keen to see the work of the ship's company and her RNR reservists.

The Royal is an honorary Rear Admiral of the Royal Naval Reserve and Commodore-in-Chief Maritime Reserves.

And the Bay-class ship's company is bolstered by a Force Protection Team who safeguard the auxiliary at sea and alongside, plus two RNR

communications experts.

Cardigan Bay has been in the Gulf since the beginning of last year, serving as a floating 'school' for Iraqi sailors and marines.

The latter use the ship as their base as they conduct patrols of the two oil platforms under the watchful eyes of experts from the RN-US Coalition Naval Advisory Training Team (previously the Naval Transition Team, or NaTT).

Cardigan Bay's CO Capt Nigel Jones RFA stressed the importance of his ship's mission in the Gulf before taking Prince Michael on a tour of the ship.

First stop was the accommodation area where AB Hopkins showed the Prince the living spaces occupied by the embarked RN reservists.

Next was the starboard fast rescue craft where PO(D) Ian Walker and LH(D) Dave Todd discussed the boat's features and handling. The Prince was then shown around the hospital by MT Steve Storer and Surg Lt Charlotte Wake.

The galley and dining hall for the Embarked Military Force (in the Gulf, the Iraqis) was next on the tour,

then down to the vehicle deck where the stern door had been lowered to illustrate the capabilities of the dock.

Finally the Prince was whisked up to the flight deck for a group photo (below, taken by LH(HC) Chris Hayes) with embarked RNR personnel and the staff of UK Maritime Component Commander based in Bahrain, headed by Cdre Tim Lowe.



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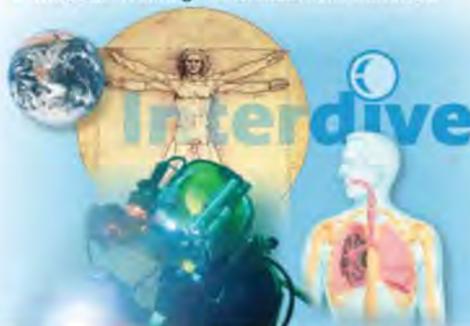
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Rapid-fire questions for hosts

A GROUP of 20 cadets and staff from Stowe School visited HMS Collingwood to learn more about the Royal Navy.

On arrival, the party from Buckinghamshire were welcomed by Lt Kevin Miller and given a guided tour of the weapon engineering training unit.

The visitors were impressed by the discipline and professionalism of personnel at the Fareham training establishment.

They were particularly impressed by the speed of operation of the automatic 4.5in gun.

And they were almost blown away by the power of the air-shot from the magazine-launched torpedo system unit.

Some cadets became caught up in a discussion on the differences and relative advantages of the Phalanx and Goalkeeper close-in weapon systems, and their hosts were happy to answer questions which went way beyond the usual polite enquiries and standard tour brief.



● WALTON unit cadets organised their own event for Comic Relief, and raised some serious money in the process. LC Ben Chandler and POC Harry Adams took on the challenge of planning the day's activities, including face painting, car washing, a cake stall and hot food. Radio station Coastal FM provided entertainment throughout the day. CO S/Lt Gary Dodd said the whole event was set up and run by the cadets with little involvement from unit staff. "It is very pleasing to see, with a little encouragement, how young people have the ability to work on their own initiative," he said. "As a training exercise, I would have been happy to break even, but for the cadets to raise a staggering £700 for charity is just amazing."



● POC Dean Englefield

20-year wait is over for Basildon

AFTER a wait of two decades Basildon unit TS Nautilus has a new petty officer cadet.

POC Dean Englefield has recently been awarded his gold badges after attending a POC Board where he achieved a pass with credit.

During the Petty Officer Board candidates were assessed in a number of different elements, including drill and ceremonial, practical leadership tasks, delivering a 15-minute presentation and knowledge of the Sea Cadet Corps.

This marks the pinnacle of any cadet's career in the Corps, and is something Dean has worked very hard to accomplish over the years.

Dean, who is currently studying for his A-levels, hopes to join the Royal Navy as an officer.

Hurworth welcomes party from TS Norfolk

ROUNDING off a year of celebrations, the cadets of Great Yarmouth took advantage of a civic occasion to visit a warship in the town's harbour.

Great Yarmouth has been marking the 800th anniversary of the granting of a charter by King John, making the town a free borough.

And minehunter HMS Hurworth was one of the main attractions in the final bean-feast – the first Royal Navy vessel to visit in 13 years, according to the historians.

With a major parade in the offing, it seemed sensible for the cadets of TS Norfolk to take part, particularly as the unit was celebrating its own 70th anniversary.

The weekend started with a parade through Great Yarmouth Quay, led by the band of TS Fearless Marine Cadets, followed by the ship's company of HMS Hurworth and cadets from TS Norfolk.

On the Sunday, staff and cadets from the unit were invited by the minehunter's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Charles Maynard, to tour the ship, a trip which ended with the minehunter's Navigating Officer presenting TS Norfolk with a White Ensign.

Great Yarmouth's First Lieutenant, PO Richardson, said: "It is always exciting to see a warship in Great Yarmouth, and the cadet unit was only too happy, and extremely proud and excited, to take part in the celebrations."

"It was also a fitting finish to our own 70th anniversary events."

Unit honours lost destroyer

NORTHAMPTON and Wellingborough cadets have played a prominent role in commemorations for the loss of HMS Laforey.

The L-class destroyer, commissioned in mid-1941, was affiliated to the town of Northampton, a considerable part of the wartime cost of £700,000-plus having been raised locally.

Laforey, the lead-ship of her class, saw plenty of action, including assisting the doomed aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal in the Mediterranean in November 1941, doing the same for the Eagle in the summer of 1942 and bombarding landing sites in Europe and North Africa.

She met her end when, on an anti-submarine patrol to the north

of Sicily, she helped force U-223 to the surface on March 30 1944.

The German vessel was pounded by gunfire from four British warships, but before she succumbed she fired a salvo of torpedoes, one of which hit Laforey.

Only 65 of her ship's company of almost 250 survived, being plucked from the sea alongside survivors of the U-boat by the other Allied warships.

The cadets of TS Laforey and TS Diamond trained throughout the weekend to form a ceremonial guard to parade the Laforey Colour.

Kettering unit's marching band and a 26-strong Colour Guard led the parade, getting through a good deal of training to achieve the high standard required.

Some 150 Sea Cadets paraded

in all, including some who had travelled from Rotherham, Loughborough, Leicester and Hinckley, and they were inspected by Admiral John Roberts, the CO of HMS Ark Royal in the 1970s.

The Northampton unit presented Admiral Roberts with a certificate of appreciation for his long-term support of the unit stretching back over two decades. The admiral was joined by HMS Laforey survivor Stan Brow (84), who now lives in South Australia and had travelled to Northampton for the event.

Seven of the unit's boats – six bought under grant – are to be named after survivors of the sinking, including John Farmer, who died last year; another, Sharkey Ward, died just before Christmas.

Rushden cadets have been helping in their community by spending a day clearing litter – part of the local council initiative to improve the environment.

And a group of cadets joined colleagues from Lincoln unit at a training weekend at RAF Cranwell in preparation for the National Drill Championships, held at HMS Raleigh last month.

And as Navy News went to press, the unit was preparing for its annual Easter camp at Thrapston, where 30 youngsters will spend a week power boating, sailing and windsurfing – half of them having rowed 21 miles to get there as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award expedition.

Future looks brighter...

MEMBERS of the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale unit undertook a sponsored walk which raised more than £500 towards new lighting for their HQ.

Unit staff and members of the RBL joined the cadets on their walk from the TS Lookout HQ in Burnley to St John's Methodist Church in Colne.

Their aim is to raise the £2,000 needed to fit emergency lighting in the Sea Cadet building.

CO S/Lt Liz Jubb said: "Recently, changes in legislation

have meant that buildings used by the Sea Cadets for accommodation require emergency lighting and, to be able to continue to offer activities for our cadets, we are actively seeking funding for this lighting to be fitted.

"The Sea Cadets are not funded by the Ministry of Defence and are a charity, which means that we have to raise money for the emergency lighting ourselves."

The cadets were supported by the RBL, St John Ambulance and the methodist church.



● LC Maria Hoyles (with sword) and High Sheriff of Shropshire Anne Gee with ATC Cdt Sgt Zac Hampton (left) and ACF Cdt C/Sgt Maj Catherine Mulloy (sword bearers)

Maria responsible for bearing sword

PROTOCOL dictates that the current High Sheriff of Shropshire should not carry her own sword.

That honour falls to one of her three cadet assistants – and protocol dictated that the role of sword bearer should fall to the Senior Service.

Thus it was that LC Maria Hoyles, of Telford unit, took a leading role in the High Sheriff of Shropshire's Legal Service in Thanksgiving for the Queen's Peace and Our Heritage.

High Sheriff Mrs Anne Gee invited a cadet from each Service to take part, and as TS Wrekin is the only unit in the county,

they were pleased to take up the invitation.

The ceremonials started at the Beacon Rooms at Ludlow Castle then paraded down to St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, for the service itself.

When it was over, everyone headed for afternoon tea at the Harley Centre.

Mrs Gee subsequently wrote to LC Hoyles to thank her for her efforts, noting that "everyone was impressed by your steady and calm performance."

"You really were a splendid representative of the Telford Sea Cadets – well done."

Frank exchanges at charity cabaret night

CADETS from Whitehaven unit met legendary comedian Frank Carson at Cleator Moor Celtic Football Club when the 82-year-old trouper was booked for an appearance.

The sell-out cabaret evening, in which Frank topped the bill, had been organised as a fundraising event.

But in a typical show of generosity, a group of World War 2 veterans from the local area were invited to attend as the club's guests.

"We knew it was going to be a busy evening, so we asked the Sea Cadets if they would come along to look after the veterans for us," said organiser Les Mitchell.

"The cadets have supported our Veterans' Evenings for the past two years and, to us, were the obvious choice to act as hosts to this very special group of ladies and gentlemen."

Whitehaven CO Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR said that although the invitation had

been received at fairly short notice there was never any question about supporting the event.

"It is a pleasure and a privilege for us to attend events such as this," he said.

"Many of the veterans have become firm friends and our cadets really do enjoy meeting with them."

"In fact, so many of our cadets volunteer to help that we have to draw lots to choose who can go."

Since his first appearance on television, Frank Carson has established himself as one of the country's most popular comedians.

His tireless work for many charities and good causes was recognised in 1987 when the Pope knighted Frank into the Order of St Gregory in a private audience in Rome.

● Cadets and staff from Whitehaven unit meet Frank Carson at Cleator Moor Celtic Football Club.



Chairman pays visit to City of Salford

ONE of the top officers of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC) has paid a visit to the City of Salford unit.

Vice Admiral Sir Tom Blackburn, Chairman of the MSSC watched members of TS Ilex perform Colours, then inspected the cadets.

The VIP guest toured the unit, watching youngsters training in seamanship – in this instance, the task was to tie a bowline when returned, though to demonstrate their proficiency, they managed it behind their backs.

Admiral Blackburn also met the Writers (with new computers – the cadets raised some of the money to pay for the new equipment) and Marine Cadets, amongst others.

At the end of the evening the admiral was asked to present some of the unit's awards.

These included:
District Trophy for Engineering: AC Sarah Hopley,

Most improved cadet for 2008: Recruit Leslie Mitchell,

Marine Cadet for 2008: L/Cpl Harry Barrett,

Sea Cadet for 2008: Cdt Keely Wright,

Cadet Force Medal: CPO Dave Roberts,

4th bar for Cadet Force Medal: Lt Cdr Mike Herbert,

BTEC First Diplomas in Engineering/First Class Marine Engineering: TI Craig Rowe, LC Phil Barlow, AC Matthew Houghton.

The unit's youngest cadet, Cdt Callum Davies, was presented with the 2008 Efficiency Pennant.

Afterwards staff, cadets, parents and visitors retired to the wardroom for a buffet, and for one – PO Kevin Rowe – it was a chance to become reacquainted with the admiral; Kevin was Routine Office Writer in HMS Antrim when Sir Tom was the Commander.

Jersey Royals have recipe for success

THE term Jersey Royals usually refers to the excellent new potatoes produced on the Channel Island.

But another crop of Jersey Royals have been making a name for themselves – the Marine Cadet detachment of the Jersey Sea Cadet unit.

For the island youngsters yomped away with the Gibraltar Cup, the trophy which defines the best detachment in the country – last year Jersey finished third.

Competition for the prestigious trophy is fierce, and takes place annually at Lympstone, the home of the Royal Marines Commando Training Centre.

Cadets aged between 13 and 18 from the best detachment in each area go head-to-head; the contenders this year were Jersey, Bristol, Warrington, Haringey, Burton-on-Trent and Portrush.

They had emerged from six months of training and regional competitions, and for their troubles faced a series of challenges including tackling the commando assault course, map reading and a command task, designed to test problem-solving skills and group leadership.

The Marine Cadets are part of the Sea Cadets, being the cadet equivalent of the Royal Marines in the Royal Navy.

The Gibraltar Cup competition was established in 1955, and takes its name from the Battle Honour gained by the Royal Marines in 1704, the only Battle Honour which the Corps displays.

C/Sgt Mark Allen RM, Staff Royal Marines Officer for the Marine Society & Sea Cadets, said: "This is a great opportunity for cadets to test their mettle.

"They complete very hard tasks over a demanding cross-country route both during the day and at night.

"The Sea Cadets believe in young people and we want to help them meet the challenges they will face in life by giving them an opportunity to grow their confidence and life skills."

● (Right): Members of the Jersey unit Marine Cadet detachment who won the Gibraltar Cup at Lympstone

● (Below): Marine cadets from Portrush tackle one of the challenges during the Gibraltar Cup competition



● Lt Phil Jones

Certificate is reward for officer's hard work

A DEDICATED Corps officer who has worked hard to improve the lot of cadets in the Yorkshire area has been rewarded with a Lord Lieutenant's Certificate.

According to the commendation of his CO, Lt Cdr J Spink, Lt Phil Jones has been associated with the Sea Cadets for 19 years.

He left the Corps at 18 to attend university, returning to the Plymouth Drake unit as Admin Officer in 1994.

Lt Jones transferred to Huddersfield unit to take the post of Training Officer in 1997, managing the unit's training from various survey ships around the world whilst undertaking his day job at sea.

He moved up to become First Lieutenant at Keighley unit in 2000, taking command for six months in 2002.

With Huddersfield experiencing major staff problems in 2003, he stepped in and transformed the failing unit into an exciting place for young people to be, bringing top recognition back to the unit.

Seeking more responsibility, in addition to his role as Commanding Officer, he became the Deputy Area Recreation Officer in late 2003, responsible for the organisation surrounding major area events.

In 2007 he was appointed Assistant District Officer for West Yorkshire.

The awarding of the certificate recognises Lt Jones' dedication and commitment to the Corps.

Sea Scouts honour Cornwall Trophy visit

MEMBERS of the Sea Scouting fraternity have visited HMS Raleigh to mark the restoration of the painting of Boy Seaman Jack Cornwall VC.

Hertfordshire Scouts archivist Frank Brittain joined Scout historian Roy Masini, Chief Commissioner of England (South) Wayne Bulpitt and others at Raleigh on a programme masterminded by RN Anglican chaplain Rev Scott Lamb.

Lt Cdr David Griffiths, Inspector of Sea Scout Troops in the UK for RN Recognition, met the new arrivals.

The visitors enjoyed a six-course dinner, as guests of Capt Jonathan Woodcock, CO of HMS Raleigh, in the HMS Sutherland Realistic Working Environment trainer, a mock-up of facilities on a real frigate in which trainee chefs (sorry, logisticians (catering services (preparation))) (loco parentheses – Ed) learn their trade.

The following day saw the visitors tour the Torpoint establishment, guided by Cdr Nic Dodd (Commandant Defence Maritime Logistics School), who is also an Adventure Scout Leader.



● Emma Dovey receives her print of the painting of Jack Cornwall VC from Capt Jonathan Woodcock

They saw the audio-visual presentation outlining the training programme which new recruits view on their first day at the establishment, and were given an idea of the size of the task – some new entry candidates, apparently, had never been away from home, could not iron their own clothes or have ever

been parted from their mobile phone.

Scouts, Guides, cadets and the like tended to stand out in initiative tests – especially those using pulley, ropes and spars – but many others had to be taught how to shower, clean their shoes and make a bed.

Next on the tour was the assault course and other outdoor facilities, and then all repaired to the Chaplaincy coffee lounge to meet other guests before the commemoration service.

Among those attending were Emma Dovey from Kidderminster Sea Scouts, who had received the Cornwall Scout Award in 2004 at the age of 19, and Richard Salisbury Norris, grandson of Frank Salisbury, who painted the portrait of Jack Cornwall in 1916.

During the service Cornwall's enduring influence was outlined by representatives of the London Borough of Newham, the Scout Association and the Royal Navy.

And after lunch the party joined hundreds of friends and relatives at Raleigh's vast parade ground to see Cornwall Division officially complete their training and pass out from HMS Raleigh.

■ Jack Cornwall's legacy – see p11

Trophy visit

AS *Navy News* went to press, Northern Area Deputy Area Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Alan Stewart RNR was due to visit Stonehaven unit to present them with the Area Officer's Trophy as the area's second-best unit last year.

■ Next month: Peterhead – best in the country

Silver reward for Marine adventurers

EIGHT members of a team of ten from the Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet Corps Portsmouth were presented with their Duke of Edinburgh Silver awards by explorer Hannah McKeand.

In 2006 the British adventures broke the record for the fastest journey to the South Pole, skiing almost 700 miles (1,100 km) solo in just under 40 days.

The cadets had completed the award requirements by undertaking an expedition to France in order to re-enact the 86-mile kayak raid up the Gironde River by the so-called Cockleshell Heroes, led by Maj 'Blondie' Hasler in December 1942.

That heroic raid, from the Atlantic estuary to the docks of Bordeaux, resulted in the deaths of eight of the 12 Royal Marines commandos – six of them executed by the Nazis and two who drowned; another pair could not take part in Operation Frankton as their kayak was damaged as they left the submarine off the Gironde.

But freighters and a German minesweeper were

damaged, the workings of the port disrupted and a large number of enemy troops were diverted to search for the two surviving British commandos, who made it back to safety with the help of the French resistance.

The eight who received their awards, at a ceremony held by the Portsmouth Awards Forum, were: Cdt RSM Mitchell Cooper and Cdt Cpl Owen Steel, both serving; former cadets Officer Cdt Robert Allan RN, Lewis Andrews, Samuel Grant, Ashley Shaw, Ashley Mills and David Beynon, the last two both now serving with the Royal Engineers.

Former cadets Christopher Carr and Joseph Bulbeck, both in training with the Royal Marines, could not attend because of work and military commitments.

The expedition was funded by sponsorship, donations and public speakers, and the unit, which is based at HMS Excellent, intends to repeat the expedition this year.

Further details of the latest expedition can be seen at www.cockleshell-cadets.com

Huntingdon cadets praised for dedication

HUNTINGDON and District unit cadets were honoured for their dedication to the community at the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire's awards ceremony.

The group from TS Cromwell received certificates for their commitment working within the local community, and helping raising funds for other local charities.

Those receiving certificates were AC Newland, AC Rayner, OC Critcher, OC Beiderman, OC Newland, Cdt Beiderman, Cdt Ratcliff, Cdt Johnson and Juniors Beiderman, Clarke, Creek, Johnson, Paige and Flude.

The ceremony took place at St Ives School, St Ives Cambridgeshire.

AC Rebecca Rayner had recently been selected as the Mayor of Huntingdon's Cadet, having been nominated by AOIC Foord for her

continued hard work with the unit.

The cadet received the High Sheriff's Special Award for her exceptional contribution, outstanding work in the community, her dedication in attending numerous training courses throughout the Corps, enabling her to instruct juniors at the unit, and for giving up her spare time to attend civic events and working with other local organisations and charities to raise funds.

The unit was presented with a cheque for £500 to enable cadets to take up further training opportunities.

As *Navy News* went to press, four cadets – AC Rayner, OC Beiderman, OC Newland and Cdt Ratcliff – along with PPO Rayner were preparing for a trip aboard power training vessel TS John Jerwood.



● AC Rebecca Rayner proudly shows off her certificate, watched by High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire Judy Pearson



● POC Beverley Marriette



● POC Michael Reid

Huyton pair are set to travel

TWO members of Huyton unit will represent the UK on international exchange programmes.

POC Michael Reid said: "I've always wanted to visit Canada.

"My hard work and dedication to this organisation has really paid off for me."

POC Beverley Marriette is to travel even further afield: "Being accepted on the Australian exchange is a huge achievement for me as I am going to have the chance to enjoy some fantastic cultural experiences and gain new friends.

"Being selected to go to Australia is fantastic - I have always wanted to go. I'm honoured to be able to represent the UK in Australia."

Huyton CO Lt (SCC) Mike Farrell RNR said: "These opportunities are fantastic, and I am delighted that two cadets from my unit have been selected.

"Furthermore, the Sea Cadets is all for creating opportunities for the youth of the country, and to have two cadets from working-class families in Huyton selected is tremendous."

The CO also praised the two cadets for their achievements.

"It is a privilege to be able to support the youth within our area with such affordable opportunities.

"It is important that the youth within our community get recognition when it is deserved and I am delighted that two of my most hard-working cadets have been rewarded such valuable experiences for their endeavours.

"They will serve the unit and the Sea Cadets proudly as ambassadors for the Corps during the exchanges."

POC Marriette has also been selected as one of only six cadets across the country to be awarded the prestigious role of Navy Board Cadet for the year.

She will represent the North-West Area on formal occasions and ceremonies, accompanying senior RN officers and other VIPs.

POC Marriette said: "Being selected as the Navy Board Cadet was a really big shock for me as I wasn't even aware of the nomination.

"To be really honest it had never even passed through my thoughts that I would ever be selected as a nominee.

"I am really pleased as this will give me a chance to enjoy new and excellent experiences.

"I am also delighted as the award will help me in the future with my career in the Royal Navy and hopefully it will be a help to me pursuing my dream to become a Royal Naval officer.

"It is also an honour for me to be chosen as an ambassador for North West Area Sea Cadets, Liverpool district and my unit."

Right Royalist fun



● TS Royalist in pride of place at last year's Royalist Regatta off Portsmouth

HERE is your chance to test yourselves against other Sea Cadet yacht crews - and one from the Royal Navy - while raising money for two worthy causes.

The annual Royalist Regatta, now in its 12th year, will be staged off Portsmouth on May 12 and 13.

Organisers are hoping to at least match the success of last year's event, which raised £250,000 for the Sea Cadets and Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

It all starts with an afternoon of informal races in the Solent to help crews familiarise themselves with the Sunfast 37 yachts.

This is followed by a champagne reception and black tie dinner at Boathouse No 7 in the Historic Dockyard, with the Royal Marines Band providing jazz music.

The Royal Thames Yacht Club organises the racing on Wednesday, using TS Royalist as their committee boat, and the

event concludes with a prize-giving ceremony in the afternoon.

Last year's blue riband winners, insurers Heath Lambert, will again be vying for the honours this year.

But the regatta is not just about competitive racing - there is plenty of fun to be had as well.

Besides the Shipwrights Trophy for the race-day winner, sailors can tilt for the award for the best-dressed crew or the Bonham Telescope for "the crew most in need thereof."

Eight crew members can take part for £5,500 per yacht, which includes a days' sailing, the champagne reception and formal dinner on Day One, and breakfast, lunch at sea and an afternoon buffet on Day Two.

To take part call the Marine Society & Sea Cadets on 0207 654 7016 or soneill@ms-sc.org

● Action from last year's Royalist Regatta in the Solent



Weekend of warfare at Raleigh

MORE than 120 cadets from CCF RN units around the country converged on HMS Raleigh for their annual Warfare Weekend.

A busy programme included water activities at Jupiter Point, an assault course competition and a ship's visit to Type 22 frigate HMS Cumberland.

For many of the cadets it was their first contact with the working Royal Navy.

The weekend ended with a parade and inspection by Capt Bob Stewart, Hydrographer of the Navy - the units are affiliated to the survey ships which are based at Devonport.

After the parade the cadets attended a church service alongside RN trainees.

The shield for the winner of the weekend's competition was won by Reading Blue Coat School CCF, who finished ahead of contingents from Newcastle-under-Lyme School, Taunton School and Wellington School.

Next year will be the 25th year of the competition and Cdr Nick Carter, senior CCF Officer for the weekend, is planning a special event to mark the occasion, and hopes to include it as part of the Cadet 150 celebrations.

In addition, Hydrographic officers who have been involved in the event over the past quarter-century will be invited to attend.



● The Band of the CCF march off after the Morning Colours ceremony at HMS Raleigh
Picture: Dave Sherfield (HMS Raleigh)

Band warms up at Colours

THE Band of the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) provided a special musical accompaniment to the traditional Morning Colours ceremony at HMS Raleigh.

Normally the ceremony is conducted by the Torpoint establishment's duty watch without music.

But with a group of aspiring musicians on hand, it seemed a good idea to get the youngsters on board, and an invitation was issued by Commander HMS Raleigh Cdr Mike Flynn.

The CCF members were two days into the annual week-long band course, but this year's course has a rather different feel as the

CCF looks forward to the Cadet 150 anniversary celebrations in London next year.

CCF instructor Lt Cdr Sue Moody said of the course: "This time it is being used for auditions and as a warm-up for next year's celebrations

"This was the first time this particular group had played together.

"They only had the afternoon before the ceremony to learn the pieces and put their performance together.

"The cadets were very excited on the day and finished on such a high. It has given them something very special to take away from this course."

Watched by the Commanding Officer of Raleigh, Capt Jonathan Woodcock, and senior officers, the band - which represents all three Armed Forces - played the National Anthem.

During the week they had extensive use of the facilities and expertise of the RM Band Plymouth in order to learn and practise new pieces, with plenty of Royals keen to organise training sessions and offer advice.

The band's next engagement will be during a summer camp at Dartmouth, when they will provide the musical accompaniment for ceremonial divisions.



● POC George Whitfield

Busy day for award winner

SOUTHWARK unit cadet POC George Whitfield could have been forgiven for taking a few moments to reflect on his success when he was presented with a certificate declaring him the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet.

But George did not have the luxury of a few moments.

He had to dash off from Fulham House to the London Hilton Hotel Tower Bridge in Bermondsey for the Southwark Stars and Active Citizens awards, staged by the Volunteer Centre Southwark.

To his surprise, George had been nominated in the Rising Star category, recognising the young people of the borough who are active in community work.

And George took the title to make it a double cause for celebration.

The Lord Lieutenant's Cadet is chosen from more than 40 London units, and joins colleagues from the Army and RAF equivalents on civic duties around the capital.

George's Rising Star award reflects a wide range of activities, including TS Cossack (where he is a cadet drill instructor and Band Master), the London Nautical School (where he is a voluntary drill leader) and the London Irish Rifles Association Volunteer Band in which he plays bugle, side drum, cornet, flute and just about anything else required.

Other Southwark Star Award winners from Cossack included PO Cathy Mahony, PPO Nathaniel Davenport, Trainee Instructor Lee Ambersley and AC Kerry Szmidt.

Dive team meet star at show

PART of the Sea Cadet Corps national dive team have paid a visit to the London International Dive Show at the ExCeL Centre in London.

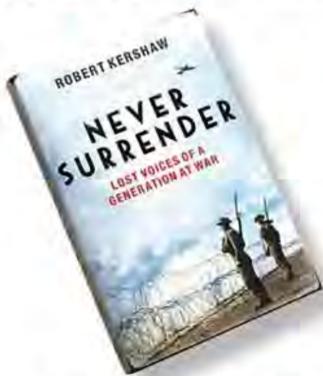
The Docklands show featured numerous organisations and traders with stands displaying equipment, extolling training programmes and advertising holidays and events.

The weekend also provided a platform for a number of speakers on various diving topics.

The Sea Cadet team attended a talk by Paul Rose, who has been seen on TV recently in the *Oceans* programme, which comprised a series of underwater expeditions in the style of the classic Jacques Cousteau documentaries - the French explorer *par excellence* was one of Paul's heroes.

Paul took the time to talk with the Corps dive team, and was delighted to hear how a youth organisation is helping to train the next generation of people to appreciate and explore the waters we depend on.

Any Sea Cadet or instructor interested in scuba diving should contact the National Administrator, CPO (SCC) E Davies at elainedavies1184@hotmail.com or, for those in the London area, PO (SCC) R Waterfield at londondiver@live.co.uk



The voices of war

OVER the past two decades there has been a seismic shift in the historiography of the world wars.

For years, military operations, the movement of corps and armies, the actions of generals and politicians dominated books and studies of the conflict.

Yet increasingly historians have concentrated their efforts on the ordinary experience – *Krieg des kleinen Mannes* (the war of the little man), the Germans call it.

The result has been some groundbreaking books. We've had Charles Messenger's excellent study of the Army in WW1, Richard Holmes' very human tribute to the Great War warrior Tommy, Brian Lavery's impressive history of the RN officer corps' in WW2, *In Which They Served*.

The 'war of the little man' dominates every one of Robert Kershaw's books. He has cast his net far and wide in studies as diverse as Arnhem, Little Big Horn and his magnificent study of the first six months of the Russo-German war.

At the heart of every book is the fate – and plight – of the ordinary soldier. *Never Surrender: Lost Voices of a Generation at War* (Hodder & Stoughton, £20 ISBN 978-034096-2022) is no different.

What did it feel like on an Atlantic convoy or storming ashore during a commando raid in Norway? Kershaw wonders.

He cherry-picks episodes from World War 2 – Blitzkrieg in Norway, plans to defend Britain from invasion, the strain of the Battle of Britain, the exertions of desert and jungle warfare, landing on the shores of Normandy – using letters, diaries, memoirs and interviews. "Now," he says, "is our last chance to hear this generation's voice before it is gone forever."

That voice is very similar to the voice of today's warriors. Men joined the fledging commandos two generations ago for the same reason today's rookies walk through the gates of Lympstone.

Peter Young, a veteran of the defeat in France, was fed up with losing. He wanted to strike at the enemy. Too many people regarded the Germans as invincible supermen. "If you shot them, they bled. In a word: they were human."

The image of WW2 commando ops is very much cloak and dagger, men throatslitting unsuspecting Jerries... which isn't very authentic. "The skulduggery, devil-may-care, gangster-warfare kind of things – that was never the style," says one commando.

And as for the dagger which is the commando 'flash' to this day "it lay in its concealed pocket as an emblem only," recalled Bill 'Tiger' Watson of 2 Commando.

Kershaw chooses the St Nazaire raid as his symbolic commando raid. Its course is well known, its aftermath perhaps not.

Four hundred men left Ayr to take part in the assault. Only 16 returned. "The women stood in layers in the streets and wept," recalled David Paton, a medical officer with 2 Cdo. "Terrible to see."

Such accounts can be found on every page of this moving and very human book.

If you want to know how the ordinary man and woman lived through these extraordinary times, Robert Kershaw takes you to the heart of the conflict – although, as he readily admits, he can only provide 'snapshots' of WW2 within the confines of 350-plus pages.

Cockles and muscles

THANKS to the film made about their exploits many will have heard of the 'Cockleshell Heroes' the group of Royal Marine canoeists who carried out a daring and successful attack, Operation Frankton, using limpet mines on German blockade runners at Bordeaux at the end of 1942.

Little has been written, however, about all the types of canoe used by British forces around the world in a range of operations – of which the Bordeaux attack was but one, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Much of what has been published is inaccurate. To answer the need for a comprehensive and accurate record Quentin Rees has produced an excellent and ground-breaking work on all types of British military canoe used in WW2 in *The Cockleshell Canoes* (Amberley Books, £19.99 ISBN 978 1 84868 065 4).

The first suggestion for the use of collapsible canoes in raiding and other clandestine operations came in 1940 and suitable boats were obtained from the Folbot folding boat company, the first being issued to submarines.

These began the 'Cockle' Mk 1 series, the generic term being adopted for all types of collapsible canoe in 1942. Special Boat Sections of the newly-raised commandos were created to use these boats both in the Middle East and Europe.

The war order was not enough to save Folbot from bankruptcy but 'Foldboats' of basically similar design were built by other firms.

The best Mk 1 series Cockles were built by the furniture producer H Lebus, an interesting example of industrial mobilisation.

Another procurement quirk was that some canoes were purchased through the Ministry of Aircraft Production. The boats were made of wood and rubberised fabric, making them not dissimilar to aircraft in materiel terms.

The boats used in the Bordeaux raid were not of this type but a stronger design specified by the officer who would eventually lead Frankton, Major H G 'Blondie' Hasler. This boat had to have a rigid flat bottom so it could be dragged over beaches.

The canoe was based on an

The Grove Review

existing design by Fred Goatley and it emerged as the Cockle Mk 2, 70 of which were ordered the first being delivered in September 1942.

The boats were made of canvas which, in the author's apposite metaphor, collapsed on the 'opera hat' principle. Most were built by another firm with aviation connections Saro Laminated Woodwork Ltd on the Isle of Wight and were ordered for the Royal Marine Boom Patrol Detachment (RMBPD) formed by Combined Operations HQ at Hasler's suggestion in July 1942.

The canoes were used for both offensive and defensive operations.

The Mk 2s were much more robust than the Mk 1 series but this was bought at the price of reduced speed and seaworthiness. The boats were still good enough in rough water but the Mk 2 was considered of more limited utility than the Mk 1.

More Mk 2s than any other type of Cockle were built, most by Parkstone Joinery of Parkstone, Dorset. A later version of the Mk 2 'Canoe' as it had been officially redesignated in 1943, was Operation Sunbeam A, an attack on German-manned Italian warships at Leros in the Aegean in June 1944.

The Canoe Mk 3 was built to a rigid plywood trimaran design with advantages of still greater seaworthiness for use as a sailing boat.

It was designed by Norman May of the Boat Construction Company and William Luard, an RNVR officer liaising with the RAF at St Eval in Cornwall.

The design was later modified by the Directorate of Naval



● A Cockle Mk 7 canoe undergoing trials

Picture: Quentin Rees

Construction before being built for the Admiralty by various contractors. They were used by various small boat users including Combined Operations Pilotage Parties (COPP).

There seems to have been no Mk 4 canoe. The Mk 5 was an electrically powered plywood development of the Mk 3 built in small quantities for the Special Boat Sections while the Mk 6 was a more widely used petrol powered canoe used by the COPP at Lake Comacchio, among other operations.

The Mk 7 was a light alloy unpowered canoe designed by the Warwick Aviation Company for use in the Far East, while the Mk 8 was a four-seater version of the Mk 6. The Mk 9 was a motorised alloy boat whose delivery was cut short by the war and the Mk 10 was a four-man version.

All these craft are described in great detail by Quentin Rees whose research has been most thorough and commendable.

One can sense the author's

enthusiasm and excitement in setting the record straight and in finding new material.

He concludes with a wonderful device, the 'Sleeping Beauty' an electrically-propelled one-man 'Motor Submersible Canoe' invented by Hugh Quentin Reeves, one of the candidates for the character 'Q' in the Bond novels.

The author has found that this was indeed used during the war in Norway and off Normandy and on inland waterways and rivers in northern Europe as well as quite widely against the Japanese.

It was developed post-war and its designer even saw it as a possible nuclear delivery system. The Americans also seem to have used it for covert operations.

There are a few editorial blemishes here and there and there is a crying need for an index in what is in effect a major work of reference but this volume really is one of the most original, interesting and informative to have appeared recently.

Wings over the oceans

NOT one but two oversized naval aviation books have landed (heavily) in our laps this month.

Until not that long ago David Hobbs was curator of the Fleet Air Arm Museum and, before that, he was a flier of some merit (800 deck landings, a quarter of them at night and he was also instrumental in the Harrier programme on both sides of the Pond).

Despite the author's background, *A Century of Carrier Aviation: The Evolution of Ships and Shipborne Aircraft* (Seaforth, £40 ISBN 978-18483-20192) is not an Anglo-centric work, but an excellent, all-embracing study of the airplane at sea.

And Cdr Hobbs expands the definition of 'aircraft carrier' to include all ships which launched fixed-wing aircraft.

So that means seaplane carriers with their take-off decks such as HMS Pegasus, the ramps built on the turrets of battleship guns, the spotter/reconnaissance aircraft launched by capital ships and cruisers, experiments with aircraft-carrying submarines.

But the crux of the book is carrier operations – and there can be no better guide to how a Royal Navy aircraft carrier

operated than the author's chapter on HMS Implacable – a name perhaps eclipsed by Ark Royal or Illustrious, but a ship which was the zenith of British wartime design.

In his decades as a flier and historian, the author built up an enormous photographic archive. There are some great images reproduced here. The seaplane carrier HMS Ark Royal in action (she was not a ship of beauty...), trials with skids, arrestor wires and a rope barrier to assist landings on HMS Furious, some great images of the world's first true aircraft carrier HMS Argus.

There are also some great diagrams of all the various signals given by flight deck crew to direct incoming and outgoing aircraft safely, and movements on deck.

But this is not a picture book *per se*. The hundreds of images are accompanied by authoritative text which is based on research in the archives and libraries of the world.

Hobbs tantalisingly looks at the 'might have beens' – the enormous carrier 'made of ice', two-million-ton (!) monster which was, says the author "a wartime 'bright idea' taken further than it deserved".

The end of Project Habbakuk

was no real loss to the RN. The end of CVA01 – HMS Queen Elizabeth cancelled in the mid-60s – was.

She would have been apogee of British carrier development, designed by the best and the brightest.

"Her loss was the traumatic beginning to a long period of decline which has sapped the morale as well as the fighting capability of the Royal Navy," the author writes scathingly.

If there is a gripe, then it is that the human side of carrier ops – the flying experience or the exertions of the mechanics – rather takes second place to technical and operational developments as naval aviation. A few more first-hand accounts would have been very welcome.

That said, as a comprehensive history of carrier operations around the globe these past 100 years, it will take some beating.

No less filled with imagery is Alan Key's impressive *Fleet Air Arm: An Illustrated History* (Casemate, £30 ISBN 978-1-902236-100). Indeed rarely have we seen so many colour photographs. Some, of course, you expect from the last two-three decades.

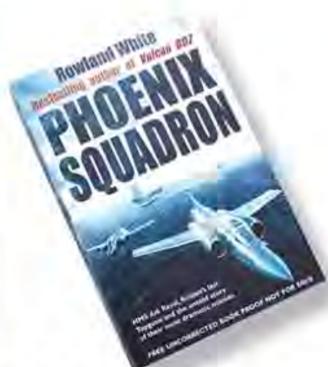
And seeing these great aircraft – Sea Venoms and Sea Vixens, Douglas Skyraiders, Wildcats and Avengers – in their original liveries really does bring them to life.

Like Cdr Hobbs' volume, the emphasis is on the facts, aircraft and ships, rather than the human story of the Fleet Air Arm/Royal Naval Air Service.

And also in keeping with Cdr Hobbs' work, Key's book is accompanied by a very comprehensive narrative history; the phrase 'illustrated history' normally means 'picture book', but there's a lot of text in this work, making it an extremely useful reference work.

Indeed, one glance at 'FAA firsts in naval aviation' – which fill four pages at the back of this volume – demonstrates that most (though not all) innovations in air power at sea (and quite a few over land) were conceived by men in the RN.

First night bombing mission, first 500lb bomb dropped, first incendiary dropped, first take-off from a ship under way, first strategic bombing mission. All these were down to 'sailors with wings' – one sailor with wings, to be precise. Charles Samson. He also invented the armoured car. Quite a guy...



A lesson in carrier air power

DO NOT, as the old adage goes, judge a book by its cover.

Pick up Rowland White's *Phoenix Squadron* (Bantam, £18.99 ISBN 978-059305-4505).

It looks like a Patrick Robinson or Tom Clancy novel. It reads like a Patrick Robinson or Tom Clancy novel (which is no bad thing...).

Except that it's a true story of HMS Ark Royal's efforts to save a nation.

Yes, you read correctly. For in the winter of 1972, the great carrier was dispatched to the Caribbean in one of the last acts of British gunboat diplomacy.

A long-running dispute between Guatemala and British Honduras (today Belize) threatened to boil over with the former invading the latter.

The British Army was overstretched and its garrison in British Honduras – rather like the Falklands a decade later – could not withstand a full-scale attack. The colony would be occupied, intelligence chiefs warned, "in a matter of hours".

The solution was to send Ark and her Buccaneers and Phantoms as a show of strength.

Ark Royal was ordered to "proceed with all despatch to British Honduras"...

... which was not entirely how the Whitehall spinmeisters put it in a press statement: "Exercises planned for a little while."

The reality was rather different: And the reasoning was simple.

"The added attack power of the Phantoms and Buccaneers will serve as a much more powerful brake against any Guatemalan attempt to put into practice her old claim to British territory," as one ministry official put it.

And so Ark dispatched two Buccaneers on a very long-range mission to make their presence felt over Honduras.

Guatemala did not invade in 1972. Or in 1975-76 when it was poised to strike again (Mother Nature came to the colony's aid when an earthquake struck Guatemala and dispelled all thoughts of military action).

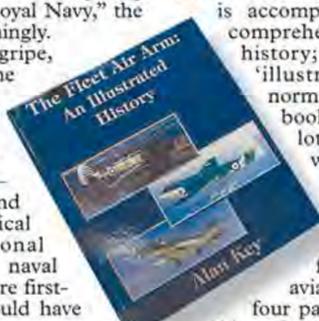
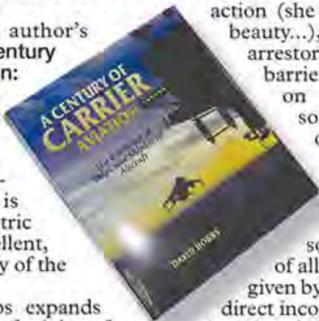
British Honduras eventually declared independence in 1981. By then Ark Royal had passed into history and RAF Harriers were safeguarding the Commonwealth state.

This is a cracking read. Based on official documents, interviews, contemporary accounts, White weaves a lively – and complex – narrative on a subject few readers will be familiar with.

Phoenix Squadron is set against the backdrop of the cold war (a sizeable chunk of the book is devoted to Ark's NATO role and exercises) and the still-rumbling carrier debate. Eagle had just been paid off. Whitehall was toying with the idea of a 'through-deck cruiser' – which would grow into today's fleet of flat-tops.

The author is a staunch supporter of naval aviation (something for which we have to thank *Sailor* and *Jim'll Fix It* – the latter arranged a day at sea on Ark IV for young White 30 years ago).

The 1972 crisis was a salient lesson in the concept of striking from the sea. Two Buccaneers had helped to tip the balance from war to peace. As one Labour MP pointed out in the House, "how handy it is to have an aircraft carrier around occasionally".



Islands of fire



Life on a string and a prayer

AN AMERICAN naval officer stared at a Swordfish for the first time during World War 2.

"Where did that come from?" he asked.

"Fairly's," came the answer from an RN officer nearby.

"That figures!" the American replied.

The Stringbag, so named because it could carry so much gear, may have been ungainly, slow and obsolete, but it was also deadly – tough, resilient, and full of surprises just like the men who flew them, writes Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns, former Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm.

Charles Lamb was one of those men. He was, by any standards, a quite extraordinary man who packed a lifetime's worth of experience into just a few years of WW2.

War in a Stringbag – (Orion, £8.99 ISBN 9780304358410) reprinted to mark the 100th anniversary of naval aviation – is Lamb's personal account of that experience, a story of danger, endurance, raw courage and irrepressible humour.

Charles Lamb started in the merchant service and the RNR in the 1930s. He wanted to fly but there was no pipeline for reservists and no opportunity to transfer to the Royal Navy.

So he joined the RAF in 1935 but less than three years later the FAA was transferred back to the Admiralty and Lamb along with many others were delighted to change back into dark blue uniform.

He was sunk in HMS Courageous only a fortnight after the outbreak of war having been the last man to land onboard in his Swordfish minutes before the carrier was torpedoed by a U-boat.

He subsequently saw service attacking E-boats off Dunkirk, mining heavily defended German shipping lanes, path-finding for the raid on the Italian fleet at Taranto, flying combat sorties in the Mediterranean and from a secret base behind enemy lines in Greece, ditching after HMS Illustrious was disabled by *Stukas*, defending Malta, raiding over North Africa, and enduring 18 months in a Vichy French prisoner of war camp.

This is an epic account of a legendary aircraft and the men who flew in it. Lamb tells his story in such a readable, matter-of-fact way, but his personal courage, determination and resilience shine through every page and stand as an inspiration for all who serve in today's FAA in this centenary year of naval aviation.

■ NOT content with one illustrated carrier volume (see opposite), Cdr David Hobbs has produced an entirely British photographic record of 'ships with wings', the latest in *Maritime Books 'In Focus'* series.

RN Aircraft Carriers (£14.99 ISBN 978-1-904459-347) is packed with 150 images from the first (Furious-Vindictive-Argus) to the last, or rather the latest, Queen Elizabeth.

What's striking flicking through these pages is that despite the change from biplane-monoplane-jet-helicopter, despite ski jumps and catapults, fundamentally, the carrier hasn't changed too much since HMS Eagle in the 1920s.

EVERYONE knows the back of Cpl Peter Robinson.

Strapped to it is his kit and one Union Jack, billowing in the fierce South Atlantic breeze.

It is a moment captured forever on celluloid and burned into the public consciousness: the iconic photograph of the Falklands conflict.

A decade later, the green beret would be immortalised in a statue erected outside the Royal Marines Museum in Eastney and unveiled by Lady Thatcher.

He had the "most famous back in the world". But his celebrity status would put an intolerable strain on his marriage and contribute to its break-up.

But the image lives on – and the barren track is no less windswept, no less austere now than it was one June day in 1982.

How can we say that? Because the exact spot was photographed a generation later for Gordon Ramsey's monumental photo-history of the conflict: *The Falklands War Then and Now* (After the Battle, £47.95 978-1870067713).

The After the Battle team has produced some magisterial volumes down the years with a 'then and now' theme: Arnhem, D-Day, Battle of Britain, the fall of France.

The Falklands War Then and Now is undoubtedly in the same league. It is profusely illustrated with contemporary images of the conflict and, for the landward side, the same location on the islands as it is today (hence the 'then and now').

Those 'today' shots show that much of the detritus of war remains on the islands. Time and the elements have not yet devoured a short-up Pucara at Goose Green, mortars and a field kitchen rust on the barren slopes of Mount Harriet.

This is neither a conventional account of the campaign, nor a typical coffee table photo history.

It is a mix of anthology – scores of first-hand accounts from both sides – with detailed captions to every photograph, all printed on excellent paper throughout this outstanding 600-plus-page volume.

There is no passing judgment here, no assessments of the rights and wrongs of the war. The protagonists speak for themselves.

The result is arguably the most fair-minded and even-handed treatment of the conflict (the rolls of honour of both sides are listed at the end and as much prominence is given to Argentine dead throughout as to the British).

That even-handedness means that the reader appreciates the bravery of friend and foe all the more.

Argentine pilots do not look all that different from their Fleet Air Arm and RAF counterparts. The dead of HMS Sheffield and Ardent smile back from the pages of photo albums, as do Argentine troops posing near Goose Green, shortly before being killed in the British assault.

Indeed, poring over these pages, it's clear that differences over the Falklands/Malvinas aside, there is much linking friend and foe.

Argentines and Britons were convinced of the justness of their cause.



"We are with you, we feel the deep roots of the soil that is enclosed by our borders and to be free and proud, generations of Argentinians have had to give and sacrifice everything," one Buenos Aires doctor wrote to a soldier.

Paratrooper L/Cpl Vince Bramley sailed with the Canberra from Southampton. The banter between green and red berets on the liner subsided as the men waved to loved ones on the quayside.

"I didn't feel, nor have I ever felt to this day, that our actions were wrong – nor did any member of that task force I spoke to then or since."

Men signed their bombs – the Argentinians named them after their girls, the Brits drew sharks and called them Eric (well, some did).

And letters to and from the front reveal the same hopes and fears as those from soldiers, sailors and airmen of previous generations.

"I never before thought that I might not see you again," Lt Cdr Glen Robinson-Moltke, HMS Coventry's XO.

"I have been through such periods on this trip and it is very thought-provoking. Life is too short – and I started mine with you far too late."

Glen Robinson-Moltke died when Coventry was sunk on May 25.

Peter Walpole was more fortunate, although his ship, HMS Sheffield, was not.

From the bridge, he saw the Exocet racing inexorably towards the Type 42. A generation ago, *The Sunday Times* quoted his reaction: "My God, it's a missile." His true reaction was rather less stiff upper lip. "What the fuck is that?"

After alerting the ops room, he threw himself to the deck. In a flash, his world – and that of 300 shipmates – was changed forever.

"It really was the most frightful crash, like your worst car accident, but ten times worse – the noise, pressure wave, the sound of such a terrific explosion."

Sheffield had been a "perfect working ship". Now, one second later, she was "irrevocably changed".

Understandably, there are few 'men of 82' not haunted by their experiences.

"Seeing the missile from the bridge is something you don't forget. It was a sense of awesome power coming towards you. For ages afterwards I closed my eyes and that's all I could see," recalls HMS Sheffield's S/Lt Steve Iacovou.

Former Argentine Skyhawk pilot Hector Sanchez was also dogged for years by what he went through.

"I have looked death in the eye and cheated my way out," he says.

He lost three comrades in a single day –



● HMS Coventry's XO Lt Cdr Glen Robinson-Moltke on his wedding day. The officer was filled with foreboding as the campaign took its toll of the Fleet

June 8 – but has since befriended one of the men responsible, 800 NAS' David Morgan.

"I can proudly say I will wake up every morning to be a better man for I have used what life gave me and learned from it."

He and his comrades, as well as the 30,000 British veterans, have the most fitting tribute in this magnificent book. It is a very moving and human memorial to the men and women of 1982 and belongs on the bookshelf of anyone interested in the conflict.

For many, the Falklands war defined their lives. To many Britons it defines the islands.

To islanders, it is a reminder of the price of freedom – something they cherish daily, as anyone who has visited the Falklands will tell you.

And so, understandably, Falklanders celebrated the 25th anniversary of their liberation in 2007, while veterans on both sides recalled fallen comrades.

At the National Memorial Arboretum, the family of AB Iain Boldy – killed in HMS Argonaut – laid a wreath "to a much-loved brother, still sadly missed" at the newly-dedicated cenotaph.

Ten thousand miles away, in Ushuaia hundreds of Argentinians gathered in front of an imposing memorial, with the outline of the islands carved out of it, and an inscription:

"To the people of Ushuaia who, with their blood, irrigated the roots of our sovereignty over the Malvinas. We will return."

Such is the long shadow of the Falklands war.

When the sands ran with blood

OMAHA Beach, 6.30am, Tuesday June 6 1944.

"I can still see those fresh-faced boys getting out of the boat. It comes back to me from time-to-time, that I was a link in their death."

"I know I had to do my job, they had to do their job, but I was in some way responsible for putting them there and it does haunt me."

The words of Jimmy Green. Not an American but a Briton, a Royal Navy sub-lieutenant and commanding officer of a landing craft (assault) flotilla in Normandy.

His is one of the *Forgotten Voices of D-Day* given an 'audience' by Roderick Bailey (Ebury, £19.99 ISBN 978-0-09-193011-0).

Britons – probably rightly – bemoan the American-centric focus on the Normandy landings. Instrumental to the success of the invasion was British naval, air and land power (as well as the island itself as the springboard for the operation).

Hundreds of the thousands of British participants subsequently recorded their experiences for the sound archive at the Imperial War Museum, accounts which have

been transcribed and included in this anthology.

The result is a cross section of voices from Normandy – planners, intelligence experts, the pilots, the infantry, the paratroopers, the commandos, the gunners and, yes, the sailors (who often seem to be the most forgotten of the Overlord participants).

Mne 'Tommy' Treacher was aboard a landing craft bound for Sword Beach when it was struck by a German shell. Eleven dead, 12 wounded in a flash.

"As we were getting closer, the matelots were ready to push the ramps down and there was blood everywhere. Another shell hit us and killed all four – they were decapitated."

Tommy Treacher waded ashore to Normandy. First through the blood of comrades, then through the waters of the Channel.

Along the coast at Omaha, where British personnel crewed landing craft and cleared the obstacles on the beach, things were even grimmer.



"I crawled back to the water's edge," recalled landing craft commander S/Lt Hilaire Benbow. "There was literally a wall about two-foot high of dead bodies all along the surf line."

"The sea had washed all their clothing off and they were naked – their shirts and so on had disappeared, washed off by the surf."

"They all had cropped heads and as the sea came inwards, the hair lay flat and as the receded it all stood up on end, so you had all these coconuts if you like, the hair on these heads, going backwards and forwards."

This is an excellent addition to an ever-growing series which has already covered subjects as diverse as the Somme, the Holocaust and the clandestine world of WW2 spies.

But it is not without a couple of flaws. It's a real shame the photographs were not printed on glossy paper.

More serious, however, is its one-sidedness. The author readily admits that his book "cannot

touch on every aspect of D-Day".

The result is that his work is very British (there's only one American voice within its pages, no Canadian as far as we could see, and no German).

Perhaps that is understandable, for the accounts are drawn from the archives of the Imperial War Museum, but it would nevertheless have been nice to have a snapshot at least of experiences from friend and foe.

Dock around the clock

IF YOU ever needed proof that the skyline of Portsmouth wasn't – and still isn't – a thing of beauty, you'll find it in Stephen Courtney and Brian Patterson's *Home of the Fleet* (History Press, £14.99 ISBN 978-0-7524-49425).

Their excellent little photo-history charts Portsmouth Naval Base from the days of the pre-dreadnoughts to the Type 23 era (it stops short of HMS Daring).

Portsmouth of the 1920s, 30s and 40s is more Lowry than Wyllie with the chimneys of the dockyard belching and the ships in port getting up steam.

And Portsmouth of the late 60s and beyond is peppered with equally unattractive tower blocks within and without the base.

But it's not just chimneys and great ships that we've lost down the years, but also that sense of community spirit and the human touch.

Take scenes of the launch of HMS Sirius in the mid-60s and HMS Effingham four decades before – far more emotional and memorable than the (nevertheless impressive) unveiling of HMS Clyde a few years ago.

Nor is there anything these days to replace the Christmas party for children of welders and burners held in a cafe on The Hard on the eve of World War 2.

And stunning though the lightshow at the end of the 2005 International Fleet Review was, it can't quite match the fireworks for the 1935 gathering of naval might at Spithead with the fleet 'all lit up'.

Perhaps, after all, the Pompey skyline is beautiful...

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Oldies, but goodies in Manchester

WHAT started out as a bet between two HMS Manchester shipmates over the odd beer or two in the Cape Verde Islands became reality on the windswept (rather than hallowed) turf of the Falklands.

The vital question: age and experience or youth and agility? It would be settled on the rugby pitch.

Two 20-man squads were formed – one over 35s, one under – with clubz LPT Lou Clarke trying to keep the two sides apart. It was, she says “the most difficult game I have ever had to ref.”

There was feverish betting – first score, first sin bin, first red card – and a ‘three-line whip’ for those who were not on watch to attend as spectators.

The game was split into four 15-minute quarters to allow some of the older players time to re-group.

The match was doomed to end in injury for some. From the first whistle arms and legs were flying in every direction, closely followed by elbows, head butts and the occasional fist. There is no rank on the rugby pitch.

“The first blood injury came after about nine minutes – which surprised the crowd who had hoped it would have been sooner,” said Lou (runner-up Dudley BMX free style championship 1986, member no.30,310 of the Jason & Kylie Fan Club 1990).

ET ‘Zac’ Mulaulau opened the scoring for the Over 35s, rampaging down the blindside. A superb break from LS ‘Pony’ Moore allowed AB Mossop to level the scores at the break.

The only serious injury came in the final quarter when CPO(M) Brian Scullion was trapped at the bottom of a maul. He was helped off the pitch by the Ship’s Medical Team to a rapturous round of applause.

Despite being in considerable pain, he showed true grit and determination to make it to the bar later in the evening.

By that time, of course, the issue of bragging rights had been settled. In spite of a final flourish from the youngsters, the older heads prevailed 10-5, thanks to a try from PO(CIS) Rattler Morgan following some excellent work by CPO(ET) Will Thomas.

There was more than age and pride at stake here: the match was chiefly staged to raise money for the Busy Bee’s affiliated charity, St Ann’s Hospice.

And the match also provided an opportunity for the ship’s company to pay their condolences to shipmate Logs Luisiano Varea; he flew back to Fiji three days before the game following the sudden death of his two-year-old daughter.

Two minutes’ silence were held before the game and it was decided that the money raised from the donation of four Sale Sharks ‘executive day out’ tickets would be allocated to a charity of Logs Varea’s choice.

In all, the match raised more than £1,300 for the two charities, while the four Sale Sharks tickets brought in £600.

● LPT Lou Clarke (in black) officiates as HMS Manchester’s under 35s (red and black) and over 35s (orange and black) lock horns



Sportingly Daring

ALL eyes might be on the whiz-bang things the world’s most advanced warship can do, but despite her punishing programme, HMS Daring has managed to find time for plenty of sport.

The new destroyer is affiliated with the city of Birmingham and the island of Guernsey.

Thanks to the former, Daring’s footballers have a gleaming strip, courtesy, not of Birmingham Villa, but their arch rivals Aston Villa.

Villa’s famous claret-and-blue strip has been modified slightly to incorporate the ship’s name and the RN identity.

As for the affiliation with Guernsey, well that prompted the entry of several Daring sailors in the Itex walk – a 40-mile saunter around the Channel Island (no running is allowed, which is a good thing because the first half of the walk is particularly taxing thanks to the terrain).

Back to Birmingham and Daring put teams into both the city’s half marathon and the British Indoor Rowing Championships.

CPO Paul Buckley posted an impressive time of 1h 36m in the former, while Lt Chris ‘Redgrave’ White rowed the 2,000m sprint in an equally-imposing time of 6m 57s.

Forces horses on the web

A ONE-stop shop website has been set up for the forces horing world.

Forcesequine.co.uk has been set up by Army riders Captains David and Debi Heath French to round up details of events, competitions, saddle clubs, polo matches and training centres.

The site is aimed at the Services both at the combined and individual branch level, and also police horse sporting clubs.

Fencing begins at forty

VETERAN RN fencer Henry de Silva is looking for fellow over 40-year-olds to pick up their weapons and compete against other pastmasters.

The former St Vincent and HMS Indomitable veteran can be contacted at 6 Little Meddows, Andreas, Isle of Man, IM7 4HY or gd4ptv@manx.net.

He’ll be defending his Commonwealth over 70 épée title in Jersey in July.

The ‘butz stops here...

PRIDE comes before a fall – as true a saying in sport as it is in politics or war.

Menachem Ben Menachem, president of Israel Rugby Union, was rather looking forward to the impending clash between Haifa side Technion and visitors HMS St Albans, taking a break from Active Endeavour duties.

Technion had given HMS Summerset (sic) a “thrashing” when the Type 23 visited Israel last year, Mr Menachem told the local English-language newspaper *Haaretz*.

Would, the journal wondered, the clash “be used by HMS St Albans crewmen to reclaim the honour of Albion lost in that last encounter? Or will the Technion boys take the opportunity to sink another visiting British Navy team?”

Well, let us find out. Haifa Technion are among Israel’s better sides (they count a couple of internationals among their ranks), hence the reason for the locals’ confidence. But it wasn’t just the thought of drubbing the Brits which fired up the Israelis – “afterward,” said Mr Menachem, “the beer flows freely.”

So there we have it. A solid Israeli side with a couple of star names versus a bunch of matelots who’ve been at sea for most of 2009 and only played together on the rugby pitch three times in a year.

So the outcome of the clash at Kibbutz Yizreel, 40 minutes outside Haifa, was a foregone conclusion, then...

And it began as expected. Technion were the stronger of the two teams in the

opening period – but could not convert that pressure into points. The first half ended scoreless.

The second half reflected the first in effort and stubborn defence from both sides.

St Albans didn’t tire; in fact they dominated most of the game and spent the best part of 70 per cent of the time in the opposition’s half.

They were rewarded for their efforts after 55 minutes when the evasive running of full back Lt Charlie Symcox resulted in him crossing the line.

With the conversion missed, but a subsequent penalty kicked by RPO Jim Noughton, the visitors were in control of a very tight match.

With ten minutes to play Technion scored a try 20 metres in from touch on the left but failed to convert and the frigate men managed to hang on to their 8-5 lead until the final whistle.

Meanwhile in Larnaca...

April 1 – April Fools’ day, the RAF’s birthday and, most importantly for the lucky members of HMS Somerset’s (or should that be Summerset? – Ed) ship’s company, Inter-Mess Touch Rugby 7s Tournament Day.

Seven 7s from Somerset took to the field and the Army garrison at Dhekelia, who hosted the event, provided three additional teams to spice up the competition.

Blue skies, sunshine, and a hot day with a cool breeze and firm ground: the perfect ingredients. A magnificent 7s (groan – Ed) prize was all to play for and sailors and soldiers turned out in full support, cheering on their sides.

Entries included an all-female Schoolgirls side from the 18-man mess, held together by LMA Esther Tuff. She was ferocious on the rugby pitch – inspired by the recent win of her home nation Ireland’s Grand Slam triumph.

The Schoolgirls fought admirably in the group stage of the competition, and came away with the prize of ‘best-dressed team’!

The wardroom mustered two teams who ended up fighting for the wooden spoon. It was lifted by Dutch exchange officer Lt Michiel Wijn, captain of the Red Roar.

The wardroom’s alternative side, the head-of-department-heavy Gentleman’s Pursuit, had a great day and were delighted to be voted ‘worst dressed team’ with their reincarnation of Victorian-era attire.

The PO’s mess played with passion. ME department colleagues PO Fiona Crompton and Chippy ‘Soapy’ Moy combined to play some sizzling rugby, but the 45-man mess and the Army’s Dhekelia Pumas did just enough to deny them an appearance in the plate final.

In a glimpse of sheer brilliance, the play of the day came out of the blue when Somerset’s CO, Cdr Andrew Burns, slipped his opposition line a dummy pass, which opened space on the wing for a well timed off-load to Bradley ‘The Doctor’ Tomkins, allowing a match saving score in the corner.

By the same token – and directly in front of the eyes of the onlooking WO and SR’s mess – the same star man lost his title as player of the tournament when he failed to apply downward pressure in what was, in the eyes of the crowd, a ‘certain try’.

The cup and plate finals were showdowns between Dhekelia Garrison Tigers and the 45-man mess and the Dhekelia Pumas and the 30-man mess respectively.

Both finals were close contests with all four teams pushing the boundaries of touch rugby rules.

It made for exciting rugby to watch but both Army sides arrived at the final whistle as winners.

The 45-man mess, led to the final by LPT ‘Kenny’ Kennett, took home the title of most successful RN team of the day and were crowned Somerset’s Inter-Mess touch rugby 7s champions.

And in Scotland...

The key to success in any sport is starting young.

Rugby stalwarts at HM Naval Base Clyde donated dozens of water bottles and woolly RN hats to Babcock Minis, Helensburgh’s youth rugby side for local six to 12-year-olds.

Not surprisingly given the location, there’s a fairly heavy RN presence in the backroom staff, including submariners Cdr Chris Bull as youth team secretary and coach CPO Billy Myers.

Youngsters in the area wishing to play – or dads wishing to help out – should e-mail chris.bull884@mod.uk or paul.myers378@mod.uk.

● St Albans (in blue and white – yes we know it’s hard to tell) prepare for the scrum against Technion (in burgundy – yes we know it’s hard to tell) during the frigate’s narrow victory over the Israeli side. The match was switched from Technion’s normal ground because of a lack of floodlights...

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East



Cole power not quite enough

A FARMER'S walk dead lift, an overhead press medley (up to 100kg), a 320kg tyre flip, 15-metre 240kg yoke walk and a 118kg tyre carry.

It can only mean one thing: England's strongest man.

The southern qualifier for the contest was hosted by Strength-Tec gym in Fareham – and there was a matelot bidding for the title.

Regular readers of these sport pages will know that POPT Sean Cole is a very strong chap thanks to his weightlifting successes.

But he entered the 'under 90kg' strongman contest after only three weeks' training and was the lightest competitor weighing in at a 'mere' 70kg.

There were 14 competitors with only the top four qualifying for the next stage.

The senior PTI missed out on qualification by 9 points but managed a respectable sixth place overall thanks to a 290kg farmer's walk dead lift and a distance of 78 metres with the 118kg tyre carry amongst his better events.

Now it's back to powerlifting for Sean. If you're interested in joining him and fellow strongmen call 9380 28667 or Lt Cdr Simon Wynn (96218 5220).

● **Staffing shortages at Kwikfit demanded drastic measures... POPT Sean Cole digs deep during the tyre flip event**



Mighty in Aphrodite

Continued from page 48

and enjoyed the experience as much as the most junior member on tour some 35 years younger.

The tour was just one event in a calendar full of fixtures and training sessions for all levels of ability.

The RNLTA provides funding for coaching sessions with a professional tennis coach every Monday evening (1900-2000) and Tuesday lunchtime (1200-1300) at the Portsmouth Indoor Tennis Centre ('The Dome') opposite HMS Temeraire.

Sessions are free and are open to all Naval personnel.

Likewise, RNLTA money has been allocated for similar activities at every Naval establishment.

Later in the summer the Navy Tennis Championships will be held on July 23-26 using grass courts, again in Portsmouth just behind the Dome – players of all ability are welcome.

Fixtures planned for 2009 include a match against ex-Davis Cup player Chris Wilkinson's club in Lee-On-Solent and at the prestigious London clubs of Queens' (home of the AEGON ATP event – formerly known as the Stella Artois tournament) and Hurlingham.

The highlight of the year is the Inter-Services A Team Championships (August 3-4) played on the famous courts of Wimbledon.

Lastly, on alternate years tours reach further afield; recent visits have included Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro. Next year's tour is expected to be a two-week visit to the USA or Canada.

For more information about these tours, and Navy tennis in general, visit www.navytennis.co.uk or contact Cdr Alan Church (RNLTA Secretary) on 9380 24193 or rns02@fleetpost.mod.uk.

Royals bag the spoils

A WARM dry day, with a strong north-westerly blowing down the pitch saw HMS Seahawk and FPGRM contest this year's Navy Cup final at Victory Stadium. Both teams had won handsomely to reach the final and played their part in an entertaining match.

Impressive displays from Mnes Ben Hebditch and Jim Hill secured FPGRM a 3-0 win in only their second appearance in the final.

A brace in four minutes, early in the first half from Mne Hebditch made it an uphill task for Seahawk to get back into the match.

The Culdrose side performed admirably and tried hard to turn around the two-goal deficit and get back into the game.

NA David Devlin hit the crossbar with a well-struck shot in the 21st minute.

LAET Collick tested the FPGRM keeper with the resultant rebound only to see his shot parried out for a corner. During a tight second half the score remained at 2-0 until – with seven minutes remaining on the clock – Mne Connitt latched on to a cross supplied by man of the match Hebditch, putting the result beyond doubt with a simple tap in.

AET Marvin Brooks and NA Devlin will no doubt have enjoyed the experience of representing Seahawk in the final. Both players are in the RN U18 squad and demonstrated a great deal of promise for the future.

The RN women share the Knight Trophy for the second consecutive year after a 1-1 draw with the Army in Portsmouth in their final match of the Inter-Services. LS Julie Hewitt was on the scoresheet for the RN.

The game saw a marked improvement from the women over their previous IS performance – a disappointing 3-1 defeat at the hands of the RAF.

Despite starting the game at a high tempo, a defensive slip-up allowed the RAF to open the scoring against the run of play.

Concerted RN pressure and a



● Two RN players put concerted pressure on the Army during the women's Inter-Services clash in Portsmouth which ended 1-1
Picture: Lucy Henry



Onside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

goalmouth scramble following a corner saw the ball deflected into the net off an RAF player to level the score.

The RN strikeforce could have bagged two more, but another defensive mix-up led to the Air Force taking a 2-1 lead at the break.

Three minutes after the re-start, it was 3-1 to the RAF following another failure to clear the RN lines.

Meanwhile, the men's U19s faced Kent in the final game of the 'County' season.

Kent are national county finalists, so the RN were always going to be in for a tough game.

They made a good start keeping possession well and testing the Kent keeper early in the first half.

Kent were first to score, however; a mistake in midfield left the Navy short at the back and despite appeals for the ball being out of play, Kent's No.9 converted a simple header from close range.

Despite several attempts on goal, luck was not with the home side. Kent again took advantage of a defensive error, punishing the RN to go in 2-0 up at half time.

A good passing side, Kent moved the ball comfortably around the defence and midfield areas to make it difficult for the RN to get the ball and fight their way back into the game.

Despite this, the Navy's defence were solid in the second half, keeping the visitors out until the last five minutes when they scored a well-crafted goal.

Squash goes Down Under

THE Combined Services squash team – comprising ten men and six women – will tour Australia between May 2 and 19.

Lt Julian Crew and Lt Matt Ellicot, both strong first team players, will be representing the RN on the tour.

Flying into Darwin, the squad will include participation in the Northern Territories Open, an annual tournament attracting some of Australia's top squash players.

Next up will be the Arafura Games, a leading international sporting competition for emerging champions of the Asia-Pacific and beyond. The games are held every two years and encompass numerous sports. They are seen as a stepping stone for future professional players, so competition expected to be fierce.

After that comes a three-match test series against the Australian Defence Force. The CS squad will also travel to Sydney to compete against some of the city's strongest club sides.

Although, the tour will require extensive training in order to deal with the gruelling schedule, there will also be opportunities to enjoy the delights of both Darwin and Sydney.

(Sports)men of valour

Continued from page 48

a special award to the British Services Makalu Expedition which succeeded in putting the sixth, seventh and eighth Britons on the summit of Makalu. At 8,463 metres (27,765ft) Makalu is the world's fifth highest mountain – and more challenging than Everest.

The RN's representative who made it to the top was Lt Lara Herbert and she became only the second British woman to stand on its summit.

Web revamp

AND finally... Those nice chaps at the RN RM Sports Lottery have revamped their website, www.rnsportslottery.co.uk.

The site features details of lottery winners as well as how to apply for a grant and donations made to RN/RM sporting causes.



A Holt from the blue

THE badge might be small, but the achievement is not.

These are the Royal Naval Sailing Association Colours in the hand of AB Natalie Roach, one of the Service's most dedicated – and skilled – young sportswomen.

The junior rating skipped one of the boats of the winning Feet Air Arm team in the Royal Navy Inter-Command dinghy racing regatta.

Held annually at Dartmouth, teams from the Fleet Air Arm, Portsmouth, Plymouth and Britannia Royal Naval College compete for the cup, originally presented in memory of Vice Admiral RV Holt.

After a day and a half of very exciting team racing, Natalie, based at RNAS Culdrose, and her crew, which included fellow Culdrose LAC Alex Pickles, lifted the trophy.

Natalie is an accomplished sailor and has been sailing since she was five years old. She is to be seen virtually every weekend at sea around Falmouth, Plymouth, Weymouth – in fact, anywhere around Britain where there is good sailing – and has competed as far away as South Africa.

She was formally presented with the cup by the Cornish air station's CO Capt Graeme Mackay, who also presented the sailor with the colours, acknowledging her sailing expertise and commitment to competitive sailing at the Inter-Services level.

Next month



Squadrons of the Fleet Air Arm – souvenir poster



Dust in time – Taurus force heads to the Saudi desert



Top of the grit parade – BRNC shows its mettle

Plus

Round-up of Fly Navy 100 celebrations



● Mayell service... Mid Simon Mayell prepares to deliver an ace during the training tour to Cyprus
Picture: Lt Richard Moss

Mighty in Aphrodite

FIVE days of glorious sunshine and balmy spring temperatures in the Aphrodite Hills resort near Paphos in Cyprus put paid to the winter blues for the RN tennis B team squad.

The trip was a warm weather training camp in preparation for the Inter-Service Tennis Championships, forming part of a structured season of coaching and fixtures to develop tennis at all levels within the RN.

There were some tired, aching bodies throughout the week, proving that this was more than just a bit of R&R. With a punishing four to six hours a day on court all players showed significant improvement, thanks mainly to coaching by the team's new find, the inspirational Cpl Greg Andrews RM – also an excellent player.

Cpl Andrews' method was popular and effective, and was pitched at exactly the right level for the mix of ability and appetite amongst the team.

"Cyprus was the perfect location for this training camp," said B Team manager Cdr Nigel Bowen.

"Both hard and clay courts were available, which together with reliable weather and excellent facilities, enabled us to train hard. We are now in good shape to retain our men's Inter-Services title."

A match against a combined Army/RAF team from Episkopi seemed to confirm this with a comprehensive win for the Navy.

Amongst the squad was Capt Chris Osborne who has been either Chairman or on the Committee of the Royal Navy Lawn Tennis Association (RNLT) for the last 16 years, and has been instrumental in the major drive to bring more people to Navy tennis. Chris is soon due to leave the Service,

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(Sports)men of valour

TO GOLD at Beijing now add a ceremonial dirk and the title of Sports Personality of the Year to rower Lt Peter Reed's growing list of accomplishments – for the second time.

Three years after lifting the coveted title, the junior officer – a member of the triumphant coxless fours at last year's Olympiad – was honoured again at the 2008 Combined Services Sports Awards.

Two of the four titles up for grabs at the RAF Club in London were taken by Senior Servicemen.

"I didn't even realise that you could win the award a second time, as I looked down the list of previous winners before the presentation and there weren't any repeats in the nominations, so I sat down and relaxed and waited for someone else's name to be read out," said Lt Reed.

"But mine was called out and I was surprised and proud and now I have a matching set of daggers."

The engineer is now in training to hold on to his gold when the games come to the UK in three years' time.

"It looks like there are a lot of sportsmen going to the London Olympics from the Services and that's something that the Services should be very proud of and I'm glad to be, at the moment, heading that up," he added.

The sports official award was presented by the Earl of Wessex to Lt Cdr Micky Norford for his experience as a boxing referee and for his major contribution to Navy boxing as both a Combined Services Champions and later as a main influence in the RN Boxing Association.

Last year, Lt Cdr Norford refereed in eight international matches and European Championship Tournaments; his reputation as one of the most astute and professional officials



● Services' sportsman of the year Lt Peter Reed, boxer Lt Lucy O'Connor – runner-up in the sportswoman of the year contest – and boxing stalwart Lt Cdr Micky Norford, official of the year
Picture: Allan House

on the European circuit is widely acknowledged. In 2007 he gained his world class referee's qualification placing him in the highest category in the country and qualifying him to officiate worldwide at any level of amateur boxing up to, and including, Olympic Games, and he has his sights firmly set on refereeing at London 2012.

"I was absolutely flabbergasted to start off with; I didn't expect it at all," said Lt Cdr Norwood.

"It's really superb to be awarded this. You try and work it out, you think 'OK, Peter Reed's an Olympian so he's bound to get Sportsman of the Year' but I didn't know anything about the other two nominees but they've obviously

put a huge amount of effort into the sports that they do.

"I'm so proud. Pleased as punch."

The RN's nominee for Combined Services Sportswoman of the Year was Lt Lucy O'Connor – you'll know her better by her maiden name of Lucy Abel.

Having taken the ABA and European Union boxing titles in 2008 and having come fifth at the World Championships, Lucy was a fantastic contender for the award, but she found herself up against a world champion weightlifter from the RAF and so had to settle for runner-up.

With the strong possibility that women's boxing will be an Olympic sport at the 2012 Olympics, it is

hoped that Lucy will represent GB at those Games.

The winners of the Combined Services Team of the Year Award were the CS Rugby League Team – winners of the inaugural Defence Forces World Cup.

The RN was strongly represented in the team with WOPT Wayne Okell as coach, CPO Perry Mason as tour secretary, and the following players: LS(WA) Kevin Botwood, ET(ME) Alex Scruton, LPT James Barnes, Cpl Lee Rossiter, POWEA Dane Smallbone, Sgt Jamie Goss, AET Lewis Taylor, AB David Gee, Logs(SC) Silivenusi Buinimasi.

To mark an exceptional achievement, the Combined Services Sports Board presented

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