



NAVY NEWS

Off-sale date: April 1, 2010

MARCH 2010

£2.00

DOUBLE D CLASS

DARING AND
DAUNTLESS
GO TO SEA

**HELP
FOR HAITI**

**RFA LARGS BAY
ON AID MISSION**

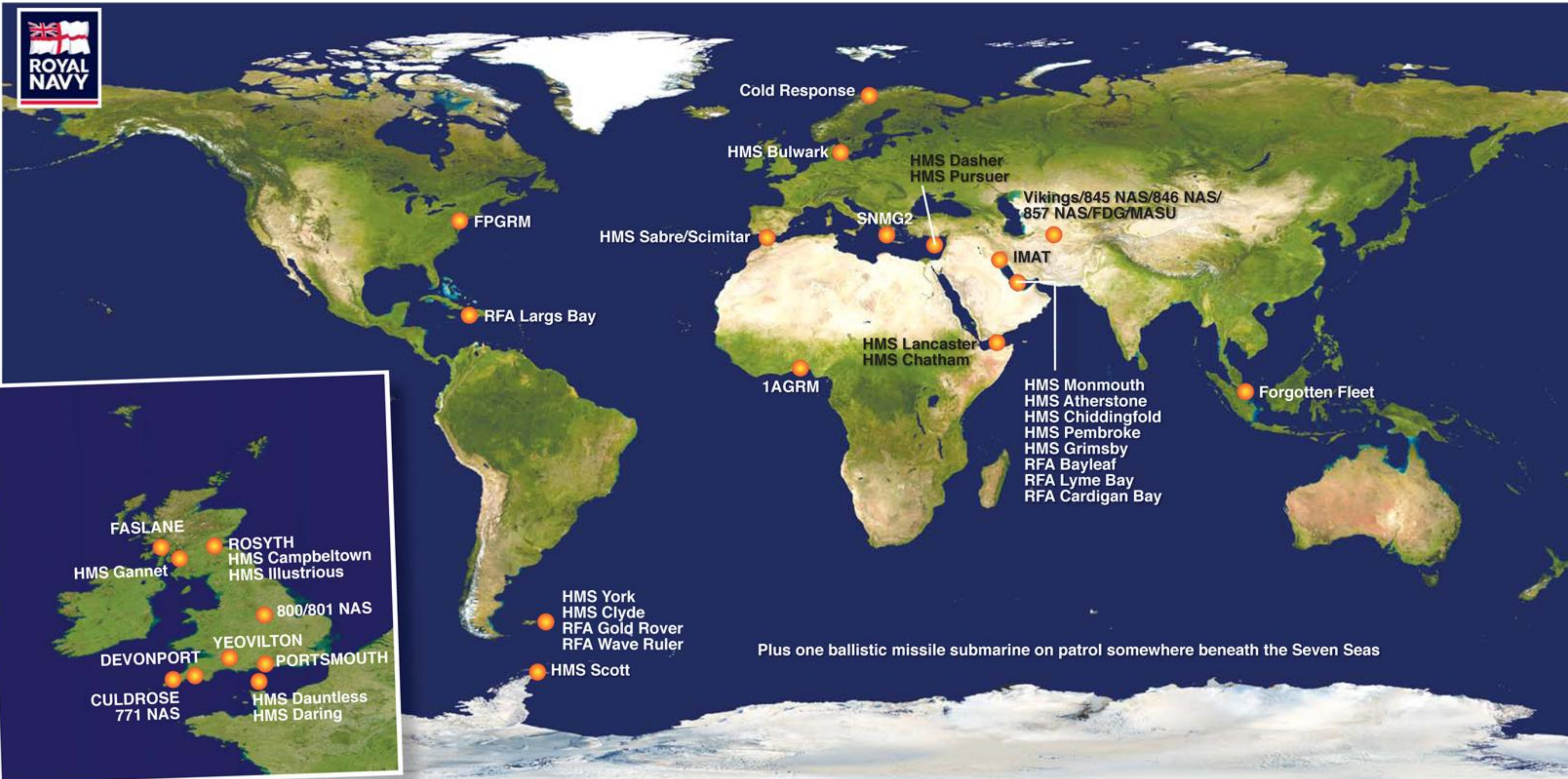
**COLD &
BOLD**

**UP TO THE NECK
IN ICE IN NORWAY**



Life is just beachy for the Royal Marines of 42 Commando on Exercise South-west Sword along the south coast. Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan

SWORD CRAFT



Fleet Focus

WE'RE going to extremes in this edition of *Navy News*.

Extremes of weather, that is. If you're a sailor or Royal Marine, there's a good chance you're either hot (Haiti/Gulf/Pirate Alley) or cold (Arctic Circle/Antarctica).

We'll start where it's chilly: in the far north, HM Ships **Albion**, **Ocean**, **RFA Mounts Bay**, **Sea King** and **Lynx** from the **Commando Helicopter Force**, **45 Commando**, the **Commando Logistics Regiment**, and **29 Commando Regiment RA** are involved in Exercise Cold Response, testing the Navy's ability to, er, respond to a threat in the cold (see pages 23-25).

Norway's not the only cold climate CHF is currently operating in. Its Sea Kings have clocked up more than 10,000 hours in Afghan skies as they pass their two-year anniversary in theatre (see page 7).

HMS Bulwark spent January and February chasing snow. First she delivered 45 Cdo to Norway, then spent a few days in snowy Edinburgh, then got frozen in in Copenhagen, before back to Tyneside... and more snow (see page 4).

And at the opposite end of the globe, **HMS Scott** is beginning her inaugural deployment to the frozen continent. The survey ship's unique sonar suite has provided some stunning images of the Antarctic seabed (see pages 20-1).

A short(ish) distance away, destroyer **HMS York** is settling down to her duties as South Atlantic patrol ship. She's paid her respects to the fallen of 1982, then pummeled the Falkland gunnery ranges with her 4.5in main gun (see page 9).

Right, time to warm up. In the Gulf, **HMS Monmouth** continues to guard Iraq's oil platforms and work with Allied navies; her sister **HMS St Albans** is heading east to join her; **HMS Lancaster** is chasing pirates as is **HMS Chatham**, although she's also proved a very handy lifesaver (see pages 14-15).

Submarine **HMS Torbay** has finally left the Gulf region behind. The T-boat's paid no fewer than three visits to waters east of Suez in the past 18 months (see page 5).

RFA Largs Bay has arrived in Haiti to deliver a mix of government and charitable aid to the earthquake-ravaged nation, aided by a RM-led team on the ground, dubbed **HMS Haiti** (see page 5).

Royal Marines from **1 Assault Group** have been helping to train riverine units in Nigeria (see page 19).

Meanwhile, the latest exchange between **Fleet Protection Group RM** and the US Marine Corps saw the former join the latter on its home turf for the latest Tartan Eagle (Tartan = Scottish; Eagle = American) exercise aimed at improving mutual co-operation (see page 8).

The RN-led staff of NATO's **Standing Maritime Group 2** provide a unique insight into life aboard a Greek warship, currently the force flagship in the Med (see page 6).

Back to the cold and HM Ships **Daring** and **Dauntless** sailed in company for the first time during their latest trials off the Isle of Wight (see opposite).

You won't read much about **HMS Illustrious** for some time as she's just arrived in Rosyth... but **HMS Campbelltown** should feature rather more prominently in coming months as she's left the same yard emerging from refit (see page 10).

And you won't be seeing much more from the good ship **Nottingham**, sadly. She's paid off after a quarter of a century's service (see page 13).

And finally, there are two new warships based in Portsmouth Harbour. When we say 'new' we mean 70 years old: **High Speed Launch 102** and **Motor Gunboat 81** - 'the Spitfires of the Seas' - have been bought for the nation by Portsmouth Historic Dockyard (see page 17).

SAR shake-up

THE red-grey Sea King - to which thousands of climbers and mariners owe their lives - will be gone in six years in a £6bn shake-up of Britain's Search and Rescue service.

A civilian firm will take over all helicopter rescue duties in the UK - including those performed by two Royal Navy units: **HMS Gannet** near Ayr and **771 NAS** at Culdrose in Cornwall.

Naval and RAF aviators will continue to fly rescue missions, but they will operate alongside civilian aircrew in non-military helicopters.

And SAR missions currently operated by **Gannet** - Britain's busiest rescue unit with nearly 450 call-outs in 2009 - will be transferred to **Glasgow Airport**, 25 miles away.

Despite that proposed move, the deal with consortium **Soteria** - comprising Canadian firm **CHC**, defence firm **Thales**, helicopter giant **Sikorsky** and the Royal Bank of Scotland - ensures that 12 bases around the UK will continue to be responsible for search and rescue provision.

At present helicopter search and rescue around Britain is provided by the two Fleet Air Arm units, plus six RAF bases and four Maritime and Coastguard Agency stations.

The SAR-H project (cunningly, it stands for Search And Rescue Helicopter) aims to bring all the units under one organisation, flying the same helicopter operated by a mix of Fleet Air Arm, RAF and civilian aircrew.

Sixty-six Service personnel will be required under the new set-up,

with civilians making up three-quarters of all SAR aircrew eventually.

The four Coastguard units will begin the switchover first in 2012 with all the military units transferred to the new set-up by the end of March 2016 - the last day in service of all Sea Kings after 47 years' flying.

The venerable **Sea King Mk5s** will be replaced by the **Sikorsky S92A**, already in service with some Coastguard units.

The replacement helicopter flies 20kts faster and has a much-improved range of 260 nautical miles - which means a **S92A** based at **Gannet** could, in theory, conduct rescues in the Bristol Channel or Orkneys, or one at **Culdrose** could range as far as **Morecambe** or **Dover**.

They will not, of course, but the new helicopters - painted orange and black for improved daytime/nighttime visibility and 'wearing' the RN, RAF and Coastguard insignia - have improved carrying capacity: ten passengers and one stretcher or two stretchers and six passengers.



PO(ACMN) Jay O'Donnell is lowered from a 771 NAS Sea King during winching drills over the Channel

Picture: PO(Phot) Donny Osmond

Payouts for injuries revamped

THE way sailors and Royal Marines are compensated for injuries in the line of duty - and the amounts they receive - will be changed following a review led by a former First Sea Lord.

Admiral the Lord Boyce headed a study of the existing Armed Forces Compensation Scheme with an independent scrutiny group.

The scheme provides compensation for Service personnel/their families as a result of injury, illness or death in service on or after April 6 2005.

The review concluded that the scheme is fundamentally sound, but does require improvements in a number of areas.

Those recommendations, which have been accepted in full by the MOD, include:

- an increase to the Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP) paid throughout an individual's lifetime to reflect the fact that those seriously injured will be unable to work, even beyond Service retirement. The payout will also increase to take promotions foregone as a result of injury into account;
- increases to the level of all awards, except the top payout which was doubled as recently as 2008; it remains £570,000. Maximum awards available for mental illness will also be increased;
- a new expert medical body will be created to advise on whether compensation levels for particular injuries/illnesses are sufficient;
- the time limit for making claims extends from five to seven years;
- a new fast interim payment so seriously-injured Servicemen can receive some compensation before the entire claims process is complete, where the cause is clear (e.g blast injuries arising from operations).

More details can be found in DIB2010-006.

Double Ds on display

TWO little boys had two little toys...

Well, actually two rather big boys (Captains Paddy McAlpine and Richard Powell)... and two very big toys (8,000+ tons, big gun...).

This is a sight you've never seen before: Britain's £1bn warships at sea, together. Her Majesty's Ships Daring (D32) and Dauntless (D33) headed to the RN's 'playground' off the Isle of Wight as work-up for eventual front-line duties.

The sisters conducted speed and communications tests, as well as officer of the watch manoeuvres in tandem before parting company to carry out individual trials.

Daring is due to be declared operational later this year (she's lined up for her inaugural Operational Sea Training off Plymouth this spring).

Her younger sister has slightly longer to go; she only arrived in Portsmouth just before Christmas, when she was handed over by builders BAE to the Senior Service. She's earmarked for commissioning in June and won't be fit for action until some time in 2011.

Embarked on Dauntless for the trials in the Channel was the Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Admiral Sir Trevor Soar.

"I'm really positive about these ships," the admiral enthused. "I have seen them from the very beginning, through the design and planning to the trials.

"It is very much like watching the children growing up. They have been great kids and now they are growing up to be great adults."

Dauntless' CO Capt Powell said he and his 180-strong ship's company had learned a lot from the trail blazed by Daring.

"We have been able to build on the successes of Daring over the last year and in HMS Dauntless we are delivering a warship that the Royal Navy and the nation will be really proud of," he added.

If you didn't see the pair sailing out of Portsmouth or off the Isle of Wight (and let's face it: grey ships, grey sea, grey February skies - there's a fair chance you didn't...), then fear not for Daring and Dauntless will be stars of the show at the Fleet's key public event of 2010.

You'll be able to look around both at Navy Days from Friday July 30-Sunday August 1.

Also lined up for the three-day event is newly-revamped RFA Argus which doubles as a casualty treatment/aviation training ship.

Other attractions confirmed so far include two Type 23 frigates, an Italian warship, the Royal Marines Display Team, the Royal Navy Black Cats helicopter display team, Army parachute and motorcycle displays, field gun runs and a military band.

Tickets range in price from £16 to £19.50 (£55 for a family ticket), although discounts of up to ten per cent are available in advance.

Details at www.navydaysuk.co.uk or 023 9283 9766.

The show alternates between Portsmouth and Plymouth every other year.





Illustrious is in a 'fix

WE KNOW the Navy's grown smaller over the years but this is ridiculous: a carrier on your mantelpiece.

Yes, you can now have HMS Illustrious in your front room courtesy of those wizards with plastic at Airfix.

They've recreated the Fleet flagship in miniature – 1/350th scale to be precise. The result is a model Lusty (complete with Harriers, Merlins, Sea Kings, flight deck vehicles, Goalkeeper defence system, RIBs and admiral's barge), the first of which was presented to the carrier's CO Capt Ben Key by Airfix's marketing manager Darrell Burge.

The kit version of Illustrious comes in 276 parts; once pieced together, they make a replica of the carrier 603mm (23 3/4in) long and 104mm (4in) wide – precisely 350 times smaller than the real thing.

The complicated kit was tackled by numerous members of the ship's company, including AB(Sea) Ben Kersley (pictured above by PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow).

"It will be great to see models of the Illustrious sold around the country," said Capt Key. "It's a real thrill to have a replica – those of us who serve onboard Illustrious are very proud of her."

A few privileged Airfix buffs got their hands on the model in advance and gave it glowing reviews, saying it's "a pleasure to build" and a replica the firm can be proud of.

The kit (number A50059), is on sale now, retail price £49.99 (including paints, brushes and glue).

Aside from an instruction manual, a booklet detailing Illustrious' history will be included in the pack.

You can see a video of an early version of the model on Airfix's Youtube site: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwazMd-oBHQ

Echo around the mountains

THE Cairngorms to be precise as the survey ship's company headed to Scotland for some adventurous training.

They picked the right time (lots of snow) and the right guides (Royal Marines, Britain's cold weather warfare experts) for the week in the Highlands.

Those sailors who weren't climbing mountains could be found undergoing various courses or overhauling their ship in Devonport following her 18-month deployment, most of which was in the Far East.

They also hosted numerous affiliates – the ship is, fittingly, bound with Taunton, home of the UK Hydrographic Office – many of whom were paying their first visit to Echo.

They learned about the ship's accomplishments during her lengthy spell away, from the vast amounts of hydrographic/oceanographic material she collected, to the various high-profile diplomatic visits conducted.

Echo's gearing up for a spell of Operational Sea Training in the summer before deploying later in the year.



Pictures: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow, HMS Bulwark

Snow White and the five wharfs

SNOW White would be HMS Bulwark.

And the five wharfs?

Harstad, Rosyth, Copenhagen, North Shields and finally back home to Devonport.

Bulwark's last act before beginning a refit in her home port was a whistle-stop (and very cold) tour of northern Europe.

Leaving the Hamoaze with Christmas trees still up (well, they were ashore), the assault ship made for the Arctic Circle and the small Norwegian port of Harstad, base for Exercise Cold Response, Britain's regular winter war games (see pages 23-25). Bulwark's taking no part herself in Cold Response, but the men she delivered, 45 Commando are.

As the assault ship sailed, the heavens deposited the heaviest snowfall on the UK in a quarter of a century.

Meanwhile in Norway... Upon arrival in Harstad (150 miles inside the Arctic Circle) sailors and marines found little fresh snow.

Luckily, there was plenty back in Scotland. Next stop was the Forth for a snowy weekend sampling the delights (apparently there are some...) of the former naval base in Rosyth (although there's a fair chance most ship's company headed across the river to Edinburgh...).

More snow beckoned during a brief visit to the Danish capital. So bitter was it in Copenhagen – the official meteorological term according to Commander Logistics Cdr Phil Waterhouse was "seriously cold" – that the 18,000-ton warship was frozen into her basin in the heart of the city. Still, she looked pretty (see above).

Back to Blighty and yet another dump of the white stuff. Bulwark made for North Shields so she could pay a visit to her affiliated county, Durham over four days in the North-East... which saw a particularly heavy snowfall.

The ship also hosted – or visited – her numerous affiliates (take a deep breath): Forest of Teesdale Primary School, Trinity School (Durham), Harbour Lodge Care Home (Seaham), Aycliffe Young Person's Institute (Durham), the Diocese and Bishop of Durham, Giggleswick School Combined Cadet Force (North Yorkshire), Durham and Bishop Auckland Hospitals and numerous local Sea Cadet units.

The sailors also handed over a cheque for £1,000, split three ways among Durham affiliates, Help for Heroes and the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity. The cash came courtesy of a 192-mile run (the same distance as the circumference of County Durham) which the ship's company completed on running machines during the two-day passage from the Kattegat to the Tyne.

There was another cheque to present, too: £250, this time to Redcar Sea Cadets. Having read *Navy News* cover-to-cover (*quite rightly* – Ed), the ship's company discovered that the Sea Cadet Corps is looking to replace its sail training vessel TS Royalist, so they dipped into their pockets to help out.

Bulwark also threw her weight behind Durham's bid to be 'City of Culture' in 2013 (all 400 or so sailors and commandos joined the 33,000 or so names who've already given their names to the push).

"We really looked forward to this visit and we weren't disappointed," said CO Capt Gavin Pritchard.

"It was an action-packed four days with opportunities for every single member of the crew to get involved with some aspect of the visit. All visits are enjoyable, but one to a ship's affiliated area is doubly so – and we are very lucky to be affiliated to an area which has shown great pride in Bulwark and has always extended hospitality which is second to none."

So much did some affiliates enjoy their tour of Bulwark that they stayed aboard for the passage to Devonport where you'll now find the ship undergoing her first docking period.

"It's been a hugely busy first five years in the RN, with the last two arguably being the busiest," said Cdr Waterhouse.

"You may have heard L15's sigh of relief at her opportunity to draw breath."



Forth Bridges



County Durham



Copenhagen

Tracker's cracker off Cornwall

JUST one day after completing her annual slip and repair period university boat HMS Tracker was back at sea – and being a nuisance.

The Portsmouth-based P2000 put her usual duties as training craft for Oxford's many universities to one side to help the larger fleet fend off fast-attack boats.

She headed out of harbour and turned right to find HMS Albion and RFA Mounts Bay disgorging Royal Marine commandos on to Browdown Beach in Gosport as part of Exercise South-West Sword – work-up for winter war games in Norway (see pages 23-25).

Tracker's job was to play an enemy Fast Inshore Attack Craft, intent on attacking not just the large amphibious vessels, but also the Royal Marine landing craft bobbing around Stokes Bay.

As one of the second batch of P2000s, Tracker has the speed to pull off the act (25kts as opposed to a maximum of 14kts for most URNU boats).

For two days she became 'Cleeve's Clipper' – named for XO, CPO(Sea) Jim Cleeve – an innocent fishing boat one moment, a terrorist craft full of armed insurgents the next.

The terrorists were in fact Oxford students and the ship's company in desert combats

(not necessarily ideal clothing in January...) and the only weapons onboard were water balloons, but it was realistic enough to give Albion's warfare teams some good training and Tracker's Commanding Officer, Lt Conor O'Neill, the chance to do some close-in ship handling.

He didn't have all the fun however, as Lt Richie Gray, CO of slower sister boat HMS Trumpeter, came out to help for one of the days and the students enjoyed returning 'fire' against Albion's gunners.

Susie is thrilled by Dragon

FIFTEEN months after sending HMS Dragon down a slipway on the Clyde, the destroyer's sponsor returned to Glasgow's great artery to see the progress made.

Susie Boissier, plus her husband Vice Admiral Paul Boissier, were given a thorough tour of Type 45 destroyer No.4 which is in the latter stages of fitting out at BAE Systems' Scotstoun yard – a short distance from where Dragon was launched, the firm's Govan yard.

Dragon's sailors showed their guests the hangar, operations room, living spaces, galley, Sea Viper missile silo and bridge.

"What a thrill it was to finally step onboard Dragon," said Mrs Boissier.

"She is making fantastic progress and I'm sure it will not be long before the ship's company are all on the high seas."

"The technology, and layout are awe inspiring and it must be thrilling to see the whole thing come together."

The Boissiers then joined Dragon's sailors for dinner the evening before at the Oran Mór, a converted church in Glasgow.

"It was great fun to meet most of the crew," the sponsor added.

"I thought they were a terrific bunch, full of warmth, enthusiasm, professionalism and humour."

Mrs Boissier will be back aboard Dragon later in the year – when the Type 45 destroyer sails on her first series of sea trials.

Training days finally over for Torbay

AFTER four months in defence watches – and with only 11 days rest – the crew of hunter-killer submarine HMS Torbay are back in home waters.

For the third time in 18 months, the Devonport-based T-boat found herself east of Suez, this time conducting exercises in the Indian Ocean.

In the past six months alone the team aboard have trained the equivalent of one and a half submarine crews (that's 172 deeps for those whose maths is a little fuzzy).

Indeed, since coming out of a refit period in Faslane in 2008, Torbay has nurtured more than 200 trainee submariners.

Seventy of those were new to the Silent Service and were welcomed to this close band of brothers by being awarded their coveted dolphins when the nuclear submarine arrived in Soudha Bay, Crete.

After presenting the latest batch of deeps with their dolphins, Torbay's CO Cdr Ed Ahlgren said proudly: "In just six months we have managed to train the equivalent of one and a half crews which is remarkable given our recent operational tempo."

"We fully recognise the importance of training 'one's relief' and I think it is a credit to the training organisation both at sea and ashore that we have ensured a substantial throughput."

To prepare for their third period of operations in the Indian Ocean, Torbay's crew completed a series of training exercises with Flag Officer Sea Training before commencing the long passage through the Straits of Gibraltar to the Suez Canal.

Despite the best efforts of 50 windsurfers to slow her down as she sailed through the Straits of Messina, the submarine made it to Suez on time in preparation for her fifth transit of the canal since the submarine's commissioning in 1986.

Having successfully fulfilled operational requirements east of Suez for the time being, Torbay returned home to the South Coast for a maintenance period in preparation for her 2010 tasking.

Take me to your leaders on Ocean

THE RN's head of personnel dropped in on Britain's biggest warship to observe progress in leadership training.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey arrived aboard HMS Ocean in a landing craft, courtesy of the helicopter carrier's inherent Royal Marines unit, 9 Assault Squadron.

CO Capt Simon Kings took the admiral on a guided tour of the 22,500-ton assault ship – including a look around the Mighty O's newly-improved commando accommodation.

And then CPO Glynn Fellows, the ship's leadership training co-ordinator, took over, explaining how Ocean's men and women were taking to the command leadership course; it's a Navy-wide initiative aimed at encouraging leaders to come to the fore.

"While all members of the Armed Forces receive formal leadership training at various stages of their career, it is essential that they continue to receive additional training in the Fleet," said Glynn.

"This is an important part of our personnel development and is a key factor in preparing people for promotion."

On completion of his tour, Vice Admiral Massey had lunch with the ship's officers and senior non-commissioned ratings to discuss current issues.

Ocean can now be found in Norway on exercise (see pages 23-25).



Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East

'Aid is getting out...'

LINED up on the jetty at Marchwood, a column of Land Rovers awaits loading aboard RFA Largs Bay as Britain's relief mission to Haiti prepares to set off.

And as you read this, said Land Rovers should be delivering millions of pounds worth of aid – especially makeshift shelters – to that ill-fated Caribbean nation.

The amphibious support ship headed into ten-metre seas and was knocked about by gusts in excess of 50 knots as she made her way to Haiti.

Despite the heavy weather in the eastern Atlantic, Largs got there – right as we were going to press (which is why, sadly, we can't tell you what she did upon arrival).

But we can have a good stab at it...

Largs carried a mix of aid, donated either by the British government or by Britons through various charitable appeals in the wake of the January 12 earthquake which devastated an already-impooverished nation.

The vessel's loading dock and Mexeflotes – powered rafts – means she can offload stores and deposit them on a beach when there is no port, or when dock facilities have been wrecked, which they were in the country's capital, Port-au-Prince.

"The plight of Haiti has clearly caught the sympathy of the entire world with millions of pounds of aid being donated," said 3/O Dave Mann.

"It's a matter of pride that my ship, my colleagues and I have been selected to deliver some of it and assist in the rebuilding."

The two-week passage as Largs covered the 4,300 miles from Southampton to Haiti allowed the ship's company to plan the relief mission – Operation Panlake (courtesy of the MOD's weird and whacky and codename-generating computer) – once they arrived in the Caribbean.

The usual RFA crew of 70 has been bolstered by 40 troops from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment (who especially enjoyed the rough seas, we're told) and 15 or so RN and RM personnel for this mission.

"Everything is in place to deliver the cargo of humanitarian aid – and indeed to stand by for further tasking," said the amphibious ship's CO Capt Ian Johnson RFA.

"We have discussed 'what ifs' and are ready to react to change."

The most pressing need for Haitians as Largs Bay reached their waters was shelter.

"The wet season is not far away – the priority has to be shelter. The question has to be whether it will be in place in sufficient time," said Maj Steve Melbourne RM, heading a British Forces team on the ground – dubbed 'HMS Haiti'.

The team was despatched by Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood as part of the international relief effort.

As well as offering advice and assistance, the team also laid the groundwork for Largs Bay's arrival – aided by WO1 Jamie Secker from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment.

More than a month after the quake, the country was still being shaken by after-shocks, causing already unstable structures to collapse and inflicting fresh casualties – including among rescue teams.

There was also a particularly poignant reminder of the disaster when Haitians spent a weekend in mourning on the one month anniversary of the earthquake.

"The colour of mourning in Haiti is white – the streets were flooded with immaculately-turned-out women in dazzling white outfits going about their daily business," the Royal Marine officer said.

Based in tents at Port-au-Prince airport – now so busy that the noise of aircraft is keeping the PJHQ team awake (as well as their adopted tarantula, Terry...) – the Brits say in the six or so weeks since the tragedy, things have improved.

"The aid is getting out to the people and the general feeling is that the population are in a far better situation than they were a week ago," said Maj Melbourne.

"Haiti is returning to some sort of normality – street vendors sell everything from the latest 'Addidos' backpacks to fresh fruit and veg. The roads are up and running with vehicles on both sides – not always in the correct direction."

As for the relief team, it has managed to strike up good relationships with the international force based at the airport.

There have even been some cultural exchanges (ie swapping ration packs).

The British tikka massala is an excellent bargaining 'currency'; Italian meals come with cognac;

the Dutch are well supplied with chocolate (good) but also a lot of paté and biscuit browns (bad); French meals (surprisingly) aren't as good as the UK rat packs; US MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) are

bland – "who really eats cold pop tarts for breakfast?" but better than Canadian rations which are, apparently, "a blatant US copy" made worse by the fact that the instructions are in French.

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Hellenes high water

Cdre Steve Chick and his predominantly-British Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) Staff found themselves embarked in Hellenic frigate *Limnos* for two months, prior to rejoining British flagship *HMS Chatham* in the Gulf of Aden. This is a snapshot of life on board. Pictures by PO(Phot) Owen King

AS A team we were somewhat apprehensive about the prospect of moving to a Greek unit, writes CPO Andy Welch.

Language, routines, accommodation, laundry, satcom connectivity, food and drink were all areas of concern for us.

I was lucky as I speak a little Greek; the rest of the lads were busy buying 'Learn Greek quick' books...

It was made doubly difficult to leave because of the welcome afforded to us by *HMS Chatham* - bespoke senior rates accommodation, good mess life,

decent food and a great ship's company.

So it was with trepidation that we moved our equipment to the *Limnos*, temporary group flagship.

On arrival the ship's EWO, Kostas, a friendly man with a great sense of humour, immediately apologised for the accommodation, before we had even seen it.

The lockers were a little smaller than we were used to, which led to a reassessment of kit - we all ended up with basic steaming kit and a set of civvies plus bags of British nutty and crisps, just in case the food was not to our liking.

Our staff officers fared much

better, with the commodore getting a rather plush cabin to say the least.

Throughout the move the ship's company were extremely welcoming, and every request or recommendation was greeted with enthusiasm and a can-do attitude.

A social event was held on board *Limnos* which was very well attended by all members of the force, the other ships being *ITS Scirocco* (Italy), *TCG Goksu* (Turkey) and tanker *ESPS Marques De La Ensenada* (Spain).

SNMG2 put to sea and the Brits settled into the routine of a Greek warship as they went through exercises and training.

Nothing was too much trouble for the Greeks, and it was clear we both wanted to learn from each other.

Meal times and food took a little getting used to - breakfast tended to be bread and honey or jam, though British cereals and teabags did make the odd appearance.

The midnight meal was the best-attended - apart from RN personnel, who were all tucked up in bed or on watch.

At night time the mess was packed from 8pm right through to the early hours of the morning.

Lunch seemed to be the main meal of the day and we were pleasantly surprised by the food - chicken and chips, spagbol, souvlaki (pork kebabs) with a kind of pitta bread (really good), lentils with feta cheese, lots of salad and olive oil.

We quickly learnt that when the EWO offered you a glass of home-made wine from Crete to accompany your meal, you only had one glass, otherwise the rest of the day was quite a challenge.

Dinner was smaller, and there was no duff; however some of us were grateful for the opportunity to shed some middle-age spread.

Laundry was done once a week, and the ratings in the laundry were ship's company who did not charge or get paid any extra.

That said, you sent your dirty dhobi screwed up in a bag and it came back clean screwed up in a bag...

I provided the Bridge team with main broadcast announcements in English, so every pipe was first in Greek, followed by English.

The majority of the ship's company spoke some English, and tried very hard to make themselves understood, as did we.

It got to the stage that we asked

● Mess games or tactical training? Staff of different nations enjoy down-time on board *HS Limnos*

for things in Greek and they replied in English.

The staff Chops(R) bragged of his prowess with the Greek language, but proceeded to give us an example in Italian. It's a start.

Politicians could learn a lot from the way sailors from different nations exchange information - we openly discussed all aspects of life, showed pictures of wives, children and girlfriends and engaged in intellectual conversations about pretty much everything. Okay, mainly women and sport.

But we did talk a lot about our respective Navies, countries, standard of living and pay. Sailors are sailors no matter where they're from.

Football was a common bond. Most of the ship's company supported Panathinaikos or Olympiakos, but were also very

knowledgeable about English football and had favourite teams.

On joining *Limnos* these teams were mostly Manchester United, Liverpool, Chelsea etc, however, I managed to convert a lot of them to Birmingham City.

Some now follow Norwich City (Staff CRS' team) and even Crawley Town (PO(Phot)'s team).

We have exchanged some useful terms that you will not find in any Greek or English phrasebooks - along with the swear words, I have explained that hot is redders and sausages are snorkers and so on, so if you're on holiday in Greece and someone comes up to you and says "Hey up oppo, it's flippin' redders" you have SNMG2 Staff to thank.

Sunday was a big day in the mess - football day, when the atmosphere was electric, passionate and extremely vocal, when club

shirts, flags and scarves appeared and cigarettes were chain-smoked in front of the big screen.

Myself and Kostas had a daily Greece vs England PS3 football rivalry which drew large crowds.

Mess life was excellent; backgammon, card games, chess and PS3 into the early hours.

They had a ready smile, a sense of fun and an excellent sense of humour. We were fully integrated, and banter flowed both ways - it was easy to adopt the Greek way.

They had a great sense of national pride; every member of the ship's company wore a Greek flag on his or her arm, and they had a strong loyalty to their ship, with ship's badges, t-shirts, pens, fleeces and baseball caps a very common sight.

They had access to the internet with fewer restrictions, allowing them to use social sites such as Facebook, giving them the ability to have visual and regular contact with loved ones back home.

There was a very relaxed but disciplined and quietly-efficient atmosphere; everything was conducted without any fuss.

They had bags of enthusiasm and Greek hospitality was second to none.

They spoke very highly of our sea training package and admired our professional reputation - I am proud to say they held the Royal Navy in high regard.

We all enjoyed the experience, made great friends and were very sorry to leave. Something that we initially worried about turned into a fantastic experience that I for one will treasure for the rest of my life.

It was with great sadness that we had to leave our friends on board Hellenic Ship *Limnos*.



● Cdre Steve Chick in relaxed mood in the Chiefs' Mess aboard *HS Limnos*. Top: The *HS Limnos* boarding teams prepare for a training exercise

A Greek perspective

When we first heard that the Commodore and the Staff of SNMG2 would come on board *HS Limnos* for two months, I was a little bit worried, writes EWO/MAA Warrant Officer (FC) Kostas Mavraganis HN.

First of all I wasn't sure about the quality of hospitality our ship could offer, considering its age and in comparison with *HMS Chatham*, which I visited in Piraeus, and secondly I didn't know how we were going to get on with each other for so long, knowing the cultural differences between North Europeans and Mediterranean people.

Now, after almost 40 days on board *Limnos*, I have only three

words to say: it was great.

Our British friends didn't seem to have any particular problems with the accommodation, although entirely different from what they are used to.

They have followed the ship's routine and in the mess we have all had an excellent time.

We have all learned a lot from each other - and not only words that you cannot find in the dictionary - and we came up with the conclusion, that sailors are all the same, no matter where they come from.

I am happy to say that I have made new friends for a lifetime and I am looking forward to meeting them again.



The Royal Maritime Club

(Formerly The Royal Sailors' Home Club)



-NOTICE-

The 146th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth, will be held in the Trafalgar Ballroom of the club on Tuesday 20th April 2010 at 1030. Commanding Officers are requested to encourage maximum attendance from their ships and establishments. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

THERE are 168 hours in every week.

And for 100 of those hours you will find the men and women of the Commando Helicopter Force in the skies of Afghanistan.

The Jungly fliers have passed two important milestones in the skies of that troubled land: they've notched up more than 10,000 flying hours in support of Allied troops on the ground and commemorated their second anniversary at Kandahar.

Indeed by the time you read this, the hours flown has passed through the 10,500 barrier with the Sea King Mk4s – modified with improved engines, special rotor blades for Afghanistan's challenging environment, and extra defences/counter-measures – averaging some 100 hours each week.

Although the CHF burden in Afghanistan is currently borne by the Sea Kings of 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons, it was shared for eight months by the Lynx of 847 NAS during the winter of 2008-09.

Home to most of the CHF force – we can't tell you the precise numbers of men or machines for security reasons – is Kandahar Air Base, hub of Allied air operations in southern Afghanistan, with elements deployed at the British HQ in Helmand, Camp Bastion.

It's about 80 miles from Kandahar to Helmand – entering the latter province on missions is known by aircrew as 'crossing the wire'.

With good reason. The veteran aircraft have often come under fire from the Taleban, leaving the RN engineers of Fleet Forward Support (Air) with challenging repair jobs.

Among them Lt Cdr Gavin Simmonite's Sea King...

We reported the pilot's award of the DFC for nursing his damaged helicopter home in our October 2009 edition.

The citation for the decoration only tersely describes the dangers faced by CHF aircrew and their passengers.

The officer was delivering an under-slung load to a drop zone when his Sea King was subjected to sustained and accurate Taleban small arms fire. Bullets pierced the aircraft's skin and ricocheted around the cabin.

Door gunner NA Thomas Saunders returned fire and kept the enemy pinned down long enough for the aircrew to manoeuvre the Sea King out of danger and eventually return to base. The junior rate was subsequently rewarded by CHF for his skill and bravery.

It was only on the ground, and after a thorough inspection of the damage, that the crew realised how close they had come to crashing.

A bullet had sliced through the tail rotor control cable, leaving just one strand in place; had it snapped, the helicopter would have most likely spun out of control.

As Lt Cdr Simmonite observed – and he's not the first to do so in the helicopter's 41-year operational history: "The Sea King proved its resilience yet again in battle."

Air and ground crew have had to adapt to conditions in Afghanistan – weather, terrain, enemy action.

In July, temperatures nudge 50°C (122°F) which forces engineers to work at first or last light or during the hours of darkness.

"The aircraft work a lot of hours and are pushed to their limits," said 846 NAS avionics expert CPO Paul Worton. "They come back covered in dust, so it does take its toll."

"All the aircraft struggle in the heat, but the Sea Kings hold up. Our people like it, it's a good and reliable airframe that is proven to be able to do its job."

The heat of high summer also means the Sea Kings operate mainly by night, which may be cooler and better for lift, but brings additional dangers for the aircrew.

Fliers have come to know Afghanistan's moonless nights as 'red illumination'. "It's pitch-black with no ambient lighting and the dust on landing sites can make things even worse," explained aircrewman Cpl Lee Hegerty.

"It's tough but the pilots are spot-on – I would say they are the best-trained pilots in the military. It all comes together when we are out on sorties."



Commandos in CHief

Picture: Cpl S Dove, AGC

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FPGRM are good to go!

"WELCOME to America!"

With those words, shouted by a young US Marine as his British counterparts climbed off the school bus which picked them up at the airport, Exercise Tartan Eagle Part II was under way.

The annual exercise sees units from the States travel to the UK for a lively exchange of cultural and tactical views, with the Brits making the return journey on a separate occasion.

The most recent Tartan Eagle saw US Marine Corps personnel

head to Scotland in June 2009.

And towards the end of last year almost 90 members of Fleet Protection Group RM (FPGRM) jetted across the Atlantic to meet up with the 2nd Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team Company, who have a similar role to that of their British guests.

According to a joint report by Mne Richard McDonald and L/Cpl 'Taff' Owen (9 Tp, R Sqn, FPGRM), as they stepped off their transport "we all knew it was going to be a good two weeks."

Using Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia – covering almost 100 square miles – as their temporary home, the Royals quickly got stuck in.

In the words of our FPGRM correspondents: "To paint a picture of Quantico, it is basically made up of bomb shelters and pig pens surrounded by red mud. Hoofing accommodation!"

"Shortly after arrival it was straight on to the USMC's version of the Endurance Course.

"This consisted of an obstacle course followed by a five-mile run, so with an MRE (aka ration pack) in our bellies we were 'good to go!'"

"Under test conditions the Americans would usually wear body armour and helmet plus rifle (less than 21lbs) but today was just light order and there was no way that Royal was going to lose!"

"The fastest time of 45 mins went to Cpl 'Ads' Fowler PTI; RM 1, USMC 0."

The following day saw a visit to the USMC museum, another test of their initiative, then a Hummer acquaint to prepare for the following day, when they were promised they would get their hands on "a Gucci piece of kit"...

"The Gucci bit of kit turned out to be Hummer in a room with a 360° screen; this was linked up to another three buildings with identical Hummers in identical rooms.

"It was the biggest multiplayer computer game I have ever seen!"

"The control room created different scenarios that were designed to test our reactions and so that we could apply the skills and drills that we had been taught.

"At the end of the week we put our training into action in a Close Quarters Battle (CQB) village.

"This evolution saw us driving round in Hummers disposing of the enemy and IEDs.

"After that the US Marines remained in the village to play enemy, and Royal went off to formulate a battle plan.

"We formulated our diversion, our gun line position and our plan of attack.

"Needless to say the Americans didn't know what hit them; RM 2, USMC 0."

A weekend of sport provided a break from military training; the results went according to form; the Americans won at American football and baseball ("but who wants to win at rounders anyway?") while the Brits easily



● Royal Marines tackle one of the many 'interesting' challenges provided by Quantico US Marine Corps base obstacle courses

Pictures: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan

took the football and cricket.

The tiebreaker – ten spins around the pole with a race to the line – also went to the visitors.

After a couple of "hoofing" runs ashore in the local Yorktown area and at Virginia Beach, the second week of Exercise Tartan Eagle began.

More CQB and Initiative Based Tactics (IBT) – or what bootnecks would call the ability to think and act for yourself under pressure.

They learned some "mega Gucci" ninja and martial arts moves during phys sessions, and also had a crack at the USMC O-Course, which they had to complete five times as part of the phys session.

"The O-Course consists of some strange obstacles, and a rope climb at the end; easy enough!"

"We were shown the proper techniques to tackle the obstacles and when it came down to it, it was just a case of getting yourself over the things.

"The O-Course achieved its aim, as we were all blowing out by the end."

It wasn't all brute force – there were lectures on handling the M9A1 (M9) Beretta and the M4 Carbine, followed by shooting serials on the ranges, with American instructors bellowing in their ears the whole time.

"They are very good instructors and definitely experts when it comes to CQB – we all learnt a lot throughout the week," said our correspondents.

Lectures became more in-depth and covered the fundamentals and principles of IBT, door procedures, stacking, methods of entry and much more, each demo being followed by an obligatory "Good to go!"

The base's CQB house was also regarded as "hoofing" by the green berets – interchangeable walls, doors and furniture, allowing for any scenario you wanted "providing you had a drill and some nails.

"Mega basic but a massive learning tool, and it seemed cheap as chips to build – wink-wink nudge-nudge..."

As they grew in confidence they moved on to 'simmunition' rounds – essentially paintballs (although as they hurt like hell when you got hit it added to the sense of realism).

After rehearsals the instructors upped the ante by allowing FPGRM to pick a 12-man dream team to take on four of them in the house; if the Brits managed to clear the whole house with two men left standing, they would buy the first round of drinks at Hooters that night.

The Bud Lites were on the Yanks that evening.

The final day saw drills on how to take a vessel, using a building set up like a ship, including steep ladders and cramped corridors.

And with that FPGRM headed home, officially 'Good to Go'.



● Fleet Protection Group RM personnel carry out Close Quarters Battle (CQB) drills in a specially-designed facility at Quantico US Marine Corps base in Virginia



● Shooting practice on the Camp Upshur range at Quantico – with American experts bellowing encouragement into British ears

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● A member of FPGRM fires a machine gun from a USMC Humvee watched by an American instructor



York's d'Arc blue sea

UNDER leaden skies, this is the suitably solemn – and impressive – memorial to the fallen of the Falklands.

There is one fresh wreath among the weather-worn tributes.

Among the first duties for HMS York on her arrival in the remote islands was to say 'hello' to the people of San Carlos.

Dropping in on these isolated, sparsely-inhabited settlements is bread and butter to any warship deployed to the Falklands – offering reassurance to the islands of support from the mother country.

Five hundred yards up the bay lies San Carlos Cemetery, a memorial not to every Serviceman killed in the conflict, but to the 174 men whose bodies were not repatriated after the conflict.

Aside from paying their respects on land, the White Rose warship paused to reflect on past sacrifices at sea.

CO Cdr Simon Staley and WO2 David Horler – one of the dwindling number of still-serving Falklands veterans; he sailed with HMS Plymouth in 1982 to liberate the islands – cast wreaths into the silent waters in memory of HMS Antelope, destroyed by an Argentine bomb during the landings at San Carlos.

"It was a sombre day for many of the younger members of the ship's company who are too young to remember the war itself, but who were

enthralled by stories of actual events," said Cdr Staley.

York spent her first period around the remote islands in company with HMS Scott (paying her first visit to these waters), plus the islands' constant Naval guardian HMS Clyde and tanker RFA Gold Rover.

The latter's now homeward bound as the South Atlantic theatre trades Rover for Ruler.

RFA Wave Ruler has left UK shores for 12 months in the Atlantic, first taking over from Gold Rover.

Later in the year, the fleet tanker swaps the South Atlantic for the North and joins the concerted effort against drug trafficking in the Caribbean.

This is the first visit to the islands by Wave Ruler – the Rover class have been the mainstay of South Atlantic operations in recent years.

The tanker's not the only rare sight down there.

France sent her oldest active warship – helicopter carrier Jeanne d'Arc, laid down in 1959 – and a more modern 'stealth frigate', Courbet, to the South Atlantic for exercises with York.

Britain's fastest destroyer also exchanged pleasantries with the Argentinian corvette Drummond as the two ships encountered heavy seas in international waters.

Anyone who's ever been to the Falklands

will tell you it's very windy. But that won't deter sportsmen.

The destroyer's cricket team dispatched a Mount Pleasant side in a Twenty20 match, thanks to an unbeaten 54 from S/Lt Ed Rees (who also bagged three wickets), while York's footballers saw off a challenge from a combined Scott-Clyde team 4-2.

Although the wind didn't disrupt sporting activities, it did prevent a visit to the capital.

The good folk of Stanley could see HMS York... and HMS York could see Stanley, but never the twain did meet as high seas prevented any thought of disembarking/re-embarking.

Which was a shame, but some people who did embark were the mobile FOST team.

They're keen to see that the ship's company meet the same exacting standards half-way around the world as when they're going through the rigmarole of Operational Sea Training off Devon.

And evidently, the men and women of York are. The gunbusters most definitely are.

For five hours the destroyer's main 'Kryten' gun (so named thanks to its angular shape and resemblance to a certain Red Dwarf character...) hammered 100 high explosive shells at a range in the South Atlantic islands without any stoppages.

In pummeling the target, the gun clocked up 1,000 shells since it was installed, while the

gunners were delighted with their marksmanship; every one of the 100 rounds launched during Exercise Cape Bayonet – a regular exercise involving all three Services in the Falklands – landed within 60ft of its designated target.

Aside from Cape Bayonet, which saw fellow White Roses involved in the shape of 3 Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, the Type 42 destroyer has spent much of her time recently patrolling West Falkland.

The island is far less populous than its eastern neighbour (which itself isn't exactly Manhattan...), so York's sailors called in at some of its far-flung settlements to pass on their good wishes.

West Falkland is also home to two RAF radar sites – Mounts Alice and Byron.

With each temporarily down for routine maintenance, York filled the gap, providing an 'air picture' for the islands' military command.

"To sum up, HMS York has made her mark out here and the ship's company can be very proud of what they have achieved so far, although there's still a lot to do," said Cdr Staley.

That 'lot to do' includes visits to South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands this month followed by goodwill visits to countries in West Africa in April and May as the Type 42 makes her way home slowly to Portsmouth.

Her place south of the equator will be taken by HMS Portland.

Picture: AB(WS) Oldland, HMS York



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One in, one out

IT'S been a case of revolving doors on the Forth: one sleek grey messenger departing the famous estuary, another taking her place.

Leaving Rosyth after a multi-million pound overhaul was HMS Campbeltown... and sailing into the famous docks was HMS Illustrious, her flagship duties handed over to her sister Ark Royal.

Campbeltown spent 14 months north of the border undergoing a thorough revamp in every department: upgrades to comms kit, weapons systems, sensors, machinery, and accommodation areas have all been performed since she arrived at the Babcock yard in late 2008.

Beams have also been fitted to her hull to improve longitudinal strength in the forward area of the ship in accordance with

Lloyds Naval Ship rules – an enhancement which will be fitted to the remaining three Type 22s at their next upkeep.

Her ship's company was whittled down from the usual 250 to a mere 35 for much of the refit, but as the new decade opened the frigate was back to full strength.

After a formal inspection from Capt Tom McBarnet, Capt Surface Ships at Devonport, and John Ridley from DE&S, the pair declared ship and ship's company fit to return to the high seas.

Which both promptly did, bound for their home port.

Rather than take the usual route (North Sea, Strait of Dover, Channel, Plymouth Sound), Campbeltown has taken the long way home (North Sea, Pentland Firth, Outer Hebrides, Irish Sea, Bristol Channel, Western Approaches, Channel, Plymouth Sound).

The reason? Well, aside from stretching sea legs, it allowed the ship to visit her affiliated town on the Kintyre Peninsula for a weekend.

As well as being an old, loyal friend, Campbeltown is home to the distillery of the year (Springbank, who also provide the ship with her own private-labelled malt whisky) and one of the best surfing beaches in the UK (Machrihanish) which both received visits from sailors – the latter from hardier souls among the ship's company.

"This visit was a bit of a 'drive-by' while we were on sea trials, and I hope we can return soon," said CO Cdr Keri Harris.

"Campbeltown may be a modest-sized town for a frigate's affiliation, but they share our pride in our ship and do their utmost to provide a warm welcome and an eventful visit."

More trials are lined up for his ship once she's back on the South Coast, followed ultimately by the rigours of BOST.

"Upkeep is a long, but necessary, process," Cdr Harris added. "You wouldn't scrimp on servicing a Ferrari."

"Campbeltown's now revving up for her true role – on deployed



● Scottish Secretary Jim Murphy, on board HMS Archer, watches Illustrious arrive at Rosyth

operations, doing her duty, and that is where we want to be."

The 14 months work his ship provided for the Babcock engineers, electricians and shipwrights will be eclipsed by the year and a half they'll be toiling on Lusty.

Scottish Secretary Jim Murphy sailed out to welcome the carrier as she passed under the Forth Bridges on her way to the jetty at Crombie, where all ammunition and stores were offloaded before she returned to Rosyth.

Work refitting the 32-year-old warship begins in earnest next month, and some £40m will be spent on the veteran carrier, providing employment for around 300 workers on the Forth.

The revamp is the first substantial package of work for Illustrious since she left refit in Rosyth six years ago.

This work is not on the same

scale – for one thing there's no need to add a new mast like the team did during the 2003-04 refit – but that doesn't mean the task isn't daunting.

There are 500 metres (1,640ft) of pipework to replace, plus 650 valves and all eight exhausts.

New paint which allows the ship to scythe through water more efficiently will be applied – 540,000 litres (118,000 gallons) of it.

Living quarters face an upgrade and there will be safety checks on the carrier's hull as well as essential equipment.

The work is intended to help Illustrious through to the end of her service life by the end of this decade when her successor, HMS Prince of Wales, joins the Fleet.

Indeed, the reduced ship's company will be able to observe progress on the supercarriers during Lusty's maintenance period: there are already 400

people at Rosyth working on the two leviathans whose hulls will be pieced together in the yard.

Before she left Portsmouth on her trip north there was one final ceremony to be held.

With the ship's company gathered in the hangar, Rear Admiral Mark Anderson presented Illustrious with the Desmond Western Fleet Media award for the second year running.

The admiral spoke of the appreciation of the Fleet for the ship's efforts in maintaining the momentum of the development of carrier operations.

Speaking of a busy year, with Lusty undertaking exercises as sole carrier while Ark Royal was in refit, Rear Admiral Anderson said: "If you had dropped the ball... it would have caused us a huge problem."

"The fact that you did not drop the ball is something we are hugely grateful for."



● HMS Campbeltown leaves Rosyth

UK pilot flies new fighter

THE first UK active-duty Service pilot to fly the Joint Strike Fighter has taken to the skies.

Sadly (for us here at *Navy News*) he was a Crab, not a WAFU.

But the F-35 Lightning II which Sqn Ldr Steve Long took aloft at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station in Maryland is an aircraft which will eventually become a familiar sight in the pages of *Navy News* (as well as *RAF News* – the aircraft will be operated by both Services).

Taking off in conventional style from a runway, Sqn Ldr Long was flying BF-2's 18th mission – the designation identifying the aircraft as the second STOVL (short take off/vertical landing) machine.

The pilot took his charge to 20,000ft during the 80-minute morning flight.

"Flying the F-35 was exactly like the simulators that I've been flying for over 18 months now, which gives you a lot of confidence in all the modelling and simulation work that has been done in all the other areas of the flight envelope," said Sqn Ldr Long, adding that it was a "privilege" to fly the F-35.

"What this aircraft really gives the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy is a quantum leap in airborne capability because of the sensor suite it carries.

"An F-35 pilot will have an unprecedented level of situational awareness about what's going on in the airspace around him or her, and also on the battlefield or ocean below.

"Not only that, but the F-35 will plug into coalition battlefield networks and be able to pass that picture on to all other players in the network."

Capable of operating from carriers or rough-and-ready air strips, the F-35B can deploy closer to shore or near front lines, shrinking distance and time to the target, increasing sortie rates and greatly reducing the need for support assets.

The Lightning II's sensor suite is the most powerful and comprehensive of any fighter in history, and will combine with an advanced networking capability to give unparalleled situational awareness.

The UK has invested two billion dollars in the F-35's development – the largest contribution among the programme's eight partner nations.

The Joint Combat Aircraft programme announced last December that the UK received financial approval to purchase its third F-35B operational test aircraft, reinforcing the nation's continued commitment to the



● The new F-35 takes off with Sqn Ldr Steve Long at the controls

Picture: Andy Wolfe (Senior Flight Test Photographer, Lockheed Martin)

JSF programme's upcoming Operational Test and Evaluation phase.

The F-35 Lightning II is a fifth-generation fighter, its builders claiming it boasts advanced stealth with fighter speed and agility, fully fused sensor information, network-enabled operations, advanced sustainment, and lower

operational and support costs.

Lockheed Martin is developing the aircraft with principal partners Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems.

Two separate, interchangeable F-35 engines are under development, the Pratt & Whitney F135 and the GE Rolls-Royce Fighter Engine Team F136.

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The
Electoral
Commission

Quorn beefed up for 2010

THIRTEEN'S unlucky for some.

Despite being ship number 13 – the very last – of the Hunt-class to be delivered to the Royal Navy in the late 1970s and throughout the '80s, we're not aware of any ill stars dogging HMS Quorn.

Indeed, her ship's company might consider themselves to be very fortunate. Last year they enjoyed the No.1 run ashore in the world (New York, although we believe Newcastle-upon-Tyne runs it a close second...). And this year they're enjoying some quality time at home.

That does not mean the ship's company are putting their feet up.

No, after five months attached to NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1, their vessel is in need of a little bit of attention (plus some additions and alterations to existing kit to enhance her mine warfare capability).

She's in Portsmouth for a 'mini refit' which should allow her to return to sea in June with thorough training for ship and ship's company beginning in September so Quorn will be ready to deploy once more come 2011.

Last year was among the busiest in Quorn's 22-year career. It began with a party to mark the ship's 'coming of age', and ended with 11,000 miles added to the odometer and a Christmas welcome from friends and family at the end of that NATO deployment.

In between, a new affiliate – Ipswich – was added (the ship's already bound with Melton Mowbray, the borough which includes Quorn Hunt for which the vessel is named), there were five weeks in Scotland in the hands of FOST, visits to Canada and the USA (where the ship was dwarfed by the carrier USS Harry S Truman during exercises off the Eastern Seaboard) and a final

spell of mine hunting in European waters, following one of the longest passages in the class' history.

To avoid autumn storms, a passage from Bermuda to the Azores became a passage from Bermuda to La Coruña – 2,725 nautical miles during a 13-day non-stop crossing.

The NATO deployment also saw the ship pass over the resting place of the previous vessel to carry the name.

The second HMS Quorn, also a Hunt-class, but this time a destroyer, served her nation with distinction for four years. She survived three serious encounters either with time-delayed bombs or mines, one of which blasted a hole 9ft by 15ft in her port side.

She scored her greatest success sinking the German commerce raider Komet in the autumn of 1942 in company with four other destroyers.

Her luck finally ran out in the small hours of August 3 1944. Quorn had been assigned to the fleet safeguarding the Normandy invasion.

She was struck amidships – either by a German human torpedo (*Neger*) or by a motorboat packed with explosives (*Linsen*).

The blast tore Quorn in two. She sank rapidly, taking four officers and 126 men down with her.

No such fate befell the first Quorn. The lineage began in 1916 with a minesweeper built on the Clyde, one of a class of more than 150 sloops – capable ships but renowned for needing high-grade coal and leaving huge trails of smoke across the water (such that men dubbed the class 'Smokey Joes').

Like most of the initial batch of 20 Hunts, Quorn was no longer needed after the Great War and was sold for breaking up in Southampton in 1922.



North Sea..... 1941-44
English Channel..... 1942-44
Normandy 1944

Class: Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessel
Pennant number: M41
Builder: Vosper Thornycroft, Woolston
Launched: January 23 1988
Commissioned: April 21 1989
Displacement: 750 tons
Length: 197ft (60 metres)
Beam: 33ft (10 metres)
Draught: 10ft (2.9 metres)
Speed: 15kts
Complement: 45
Propulsion: 2 x Ruston-Paxman 9-59K Deltic diesels generating 1,900hp; 1 x Deltic 9-55B diesel generating 780hp; 1 x bow thruster
Sensors: Sonar 2193 minehunting sonar
Armament: Seafox mine disposal system; 1 x 30mm gun with a range of 5½ miles; 2 x Oerlikon 20mm guns; 1 x minigun

Battle Honours
Facts and figures

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No. 71 – Lt Richard Aitken Waters RNVR GM

THIS remarkable series of images – recently unearthed in the photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum – catalogues one of the longest, most difficult and most dangerous salvage operations in World War 2.

A team of mine clearance experts, led by Lt Richard Aitken Waters RNVR, pose proudly next to their unique prize – a German *Seehund* (seal) midget submarine on a Dutch beach in early 1945.

It was an operation which took the men three weeks, but the story begins 12 months earlier on a bitter Baltic night in Lübeck Bay, as two midshipmen were ushered into a heavily-guarded hut.

Already veterans of S-boat patrols, Karl-Heinz Pettke and Karl-Heinz Potthast had volunteered for special duties.

The hut held the key to those special duties. Inside were the remnants of two midget submarines, HM Ships X6 and X7, recovered from the fjords in the wake of the attack on the Tirpitz.

The remains of the two salvaged boats would serve as the inspiration for a desperate attempt by Germany to turn the tide in the war at sea.

The *Kleinkampfverbände* (small combat units) – frogmen, midget submarines, 'human torpedoes' and the like – would harry and harass Allied shipping and help defend the shores of Hitler's vaunted Fortress Europe.

There would be one-man submarines, the *Neger* (negro), *Biber* (beaver), *Marder* (marten) and *Molch* (pike), but the true successors of the *Kleinkampfverbände*'s captured X-craft was the Type XXVII U-boat, better known as the *Seehund*.

Its speed was sedentary – seven knots on the surface, just three submerged. Its range was limited to no more than 270 nautical miles. The heat generated by the diesel engine

often made life unbearable for crew on the surface, while temperatures plummeted when the boat dived and the two men inside could suffer from hypothermia.

Despite these shortcomings, the *Seehund* was feared. Its size and the little noise it generated when submerged made it almost impossible to detect.

The weather proved a far more dangerous adversary for the two crew. Most of the three dozen Seals lost fell victim to bad weather.

Yet the two torpedoes strapped to the outside of the hull would help the small craft sink eight Allied ships and cripple three more. The Royal Navy needed to find an antidote.

The North Sea weather came to its assistance. In mid-January 1945, a *Seehund* was found stranded on a sandbank in Domburg, Holland.

'Stranded' was perhaps a little misleading. 'Buried' would be more accurate as mine clearance expert Lt Richard Waters discovered when

he arrived on the Domburg sands.

He found the Seal's two torpedoes still attached. Both had to be rendered impotent and removed before the Admiralty could inspect its prize.

And so began a three-week recovery operation. Waters had to dig out sand before he could tackle the port torpedo pistol – using a chisel and hammer.

Now, the salvage team could begin excavating the Seal, attaching floats so it could be righted at high tide.

And then Waters could grapple with the starboard torpedo – which proved equally difficult to defuse. The officer worked in two feet of icy water, again with a hammer, to free the firing pistol. Even then it was not safe, for the pistol's detonators and primers needed removing – a dangerous task which took the officer more than three hours; at any moment the charges could have exploded.

And so the first intact *Seehund* fell into British hands. The salvage mission was captured on camera by a Lt Cdr Halliday of Naval Intelligence in this fascinating series of images, while Lt Waters was decorated with the George Medal for his efforts. (HU 97476)

With thanks to Ian Proctor.



■ 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.

photographic **memories**

Nott going out

BILLOWING fiercely in a very stiff February wind, the White Ensign is lowered for the final time aboard HMS Nottingham as the veteran destroyer bows out of service.

Nearly 30 years to the day since she was launched, the Type 42 was formally decommissioned on a bright, but bitter, day in Portsmouth Naval Base.

In the shadow of the Daring-class destroyers which are Nottingham's successors, former commanding officers, friends, family, plus the ship's sponsor, Henrietta Wood, bade farewell to the veteran warship.

Naval chaplain the Rev Ralph Barber led the service, with music provided by the Band of HM Royal Marines from HMS Collingwood, before Mrs Wood and Nottingham's youngest sailor, 18-year-old ET James Deeley thrust a knife into a decommissioning cake.

Only a relatively select few were invited to attend the decommissioning ceremony on Victory Jetty, but another of Nottingham's farewell acts was far more public: a celebration of the ship's deeds in her namesake city.

Nottingham has enjoyed a close affiliation with the historic East Midlands city since 1984 when civic leaders bestowed freedom upon the ship's company.

That's a privilege they no longer enjoy having handed back the freedom scroll in a farewell visit.

Before they did, the ship's company attended a service of thanksgiving in St Mary's Church, then a march through the heart of Nottingham led by police on horseback.

City grandees invited the sailors into the imposing civic hall in Nottingham's main square for a reception.

And then it was off to the pub – in uniform. As affiliations go, the link with the historic Bell Inn (it proclaims to be Nottingham's oldest pub) in Market Square is probably (a) among the more unusual and (b) among the more popular.

The sailors presented a plaque as a token of their appreciation for the Bell Inn's support and interest in them down the years.

Other ties have also sadly ended, including links with local Sea Cadet and Combined Cadet Forces, the RNR unit HMS Sherwood, the city's RNA and Royal British Legion branches, three schools and a children's ward at Nottingham City Hospital.

"There's been a huge affinity with Nottingham throughout the ship's life," said the Type 42's last Commanding Officer Cdr Andy Price.

"We felt especially privileged to be able to seal our relationships with the opportunity to parade through this fine city. The enduring support and encouragement that the people of Nottingham have traditionally given – not only to their adopted ship but also to the wider Armed Forces – is much appreciated."

And so ends the active life of a ship which clocked up 700,000 miles on deployments to the South Atlantic, Gulf and Far East. She tackled the growing problem of maritime crime in the Mediterranean, paid the first visit by a British warship in three generations to the Georgian port of Poti, and helped train the Russian Federation in counter-terrorism – another first.

Her ship's company were praised for their response in saving the vessel when the destroyer crashed into Wolf Rock off Australia in 2002. The damage put the ship out of action for 18 months as she underwent upwards of £26m of repairs.

Nottingham's final tour of duty was a six-month deployment to the South Atlantic which ended in April 2008.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, FRPU East



Horatio? No, Cuthbert

NELSON might be remembered by the rest of the nation, but on Tyneside it's his deputy – and local hero – Cuthbert Collingwood who's revered.

So much so, in fact, that this month there will be a weekend of festivities to mark the 200th anniversary of his death.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope will join other dignitaries including the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Cllr Mike Cookson, for the commemoration of the vice admiral's deeds on Sunday March 7.

The Band of HM Royal Marines Plymouth will lead a parade of 215 sailors from HMS Cumberland – berthed in North Shields for the weekend – plus colleagues, appropriately, from HMS Collingwood in Fareham and local reservists from HMS Calliope and RMR Tyne.

The parade leaves Newcastle Civic Centre at 11.45am, making its way to the Cathedral Church of St Nicholas for a service of thanksgiving at 12.30pm.

The Collingwood 2010 Festival features a series of events across the North East including an exhibition at Discovery Museum and a spectacular event at Tynemouth's Collingwood Monument over the weekend of March 6-7, including warship and gun salutes.

Express growing grey with age

NO LONGER are there any black-hulled surface ships in Her Majesty's Navy with the last of the Fleet finally succumbing to the all-pervasive battleship grey.

University boat HMS Express was the last of a quartet of P2000s with a black hull.

The vessels – Exploit, Example and Explorer complete the foursome – were originally built for service in the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service in the 1980s, hence the different livery.

All the boats were subsequently transferred to the Royal Navy and one-by-one the black was replaced as they underwent overhauls.

Express' black disappeared during a two-month lay-up in Holyhead for the boat's 'annual slip period'.

She's now returned to her berth in Penarth, near Cardiff, to resume her duties as the University Royal Naval Unit serving students from Swansea and the Welsh capital.

"We were disappointed to lose the black hull initially as it made us unique among the URNUs, but now we realise that it's the Welsh Dragon on the side of the ship and the people inside that really count," said senior Mid Aaron Corp.



Win a Harrier tribute

WE HAVE a treat for fast jet fans this month, courtesy of *AirForces Monthly*, the world's number one military aviation magazine.

It's produced a 32-page tribute to the work of Joint Force Harrier – including the Naval Strike Wing – in Afghan skies.

Their five-year mission – one of the longest in the history of UK fast jet operations – came to an end on July 1 last year.

The *Herrick Harriers* supplement, written by the magazine's editor, Alan Warnes, is free with the March issue of *AirForces Monthly*. This in-depth account of Harrier operations features exclusive interviews and photos from Kandahar.

The magazine and supplement are on sale now from all good newsagents – or you can have a crack at winning one of five copies. Just tell us the name of the engineering firm which produces the Harrier's Pegasus engine.

Answers, marked 'Herrick Harriers', to the address on page 26 – or email herrickharriers@navynews.co.uk. Entries must be received by mid-day on Friday April 16 2010.

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GARY WATERFALL, Group Captain, Joint Force Harrier Force Commander, Royal Air Force

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Whirl of activity

ROYAL Navy ships deployed in that nebulous area 'East of Suez' are there for very good reasons.

They are always ready to fight – that goes without saying, wherever they are in the world. The clue is in the word 'warship'.

Conversely, they are there to prevent conflict through the deterrence of potential enemies and by providing a reassuring presence for friendly nations.

RN warships, and those of other maritime powers, provide security on the high seas, protecting commercial vessels in the shipping lanes which converge at pinch points such as the Gulf of Aden – many of those vessels bearing cargoes of oil, gas and consumer goods for the UK market.

Burgeoning partnerships with other nations ensures the most effective use of scarce resources in a massive area of water, covering millions of square miles far out into the Indian Ocean.

And British sailors stand ready, as always, to bring vital emergency aid to nations reeling after natural disasters, as was the case with the Boxing Day tsunami.

This nexus of strategic aims is all well and good, but sometimes it all boils down to something much simpler, much more human in scale.

So it was that HMS Chatham, deployed on NATO counter-piracy duties in the Gulf of Aden, broke off to rescue a seriously-ill sailor on an oil tanker.

The Type 22 frigate, part of Operation Ocean Shield, responded to a distress call from the master of the MV Zakyntos, a Liberian-flagged tanker which was ploughing through the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor – the sea lane policed by international forces.

He told the warship that one of

his Filipino sailors was suffering severe abdominal pain, from which Chatham's medical officer, Surg Lt Sarah Droog, surmised that he was suffering from appendicitis, and required urgent treatment.

Chatham's CO, Cdr Simon Huntington, sent Surg Lt Droog across in one of the frigate's sea boats to provide immediate care, and while she stabilised the Filipino, Chatham's Lynx helicopter was launched.

Despite the deck of the Zakyntos pitching sharply in the three-metre swell, the air crew gently winched the patient up and carried him back to the frigate.

Once safely on board his medical care continued while the ship sped towards Salalah in Oman, at which point the Lynx went aloft again to transfer the man to hospital ashore.

This was the second rescue mission in a fortnight, the ship having already come to the aid of a group of Yemeni fishermen adrift in the Gulf of Aden.

The dhow, with 21 fishermen on board, was spotted wallowing in the middle of the transit corridor, so Chatham dispatched her Royal Marines boarding team to investigate.

It quickly became clear that the dhow needed assistance – they were without power in the middle of a busy shipping lane, more than 80 miles from land, with no fuel.

The frigate was able to provide enough fuel to the Yemenis to enable them to return home.

Cdr Huntington said: "Twice in two weeks HMS Chatham has been able to render assistance to fellow seafarers.

"This is one of the many roles the Royal Navy performs as part of the NATO task force.

"Whilst our core business is

counter-piracy, my ship's company have demonstrated that we are trained and equipped to respond to rapidly-changing circumstances wherever we are needed."

In both cases Chatham quickly resumed her duties with Standing NATO Maritime Group 1, which consists of flagship HDMS Absalon (Denmark), HMCS Fredericton (Canada) and USS Boone (US).

So that's Chatham – who else is in the region?

Well, there was a Saudi, a Yemeni, Singaporean, Australian, Frenchman and Briton...

Not the start of a convoluted joke, but the scene on board HMS Lancaster when senior officers from six navies convened in 'pirate alley' to discuss the ongoing challenges of illegal activity in waters off the Horn of Africa.

The Portsmouth-based frigate is approaching the half-way point in her deployment as part of Combined Task Force 150, just one of numerous international naval forces tackling piracy, drug-running, people trafficking, arms smuggling and other criminal/terrorist actions in the region.

As the Red Rose patrolled off the Yemeni coast, Singaporean Rear Admiral Bernard Miranda, currently in charge of the sister task force, 151, hosted the security conference in the frigate's wardroom.

Although piracy has grabbed most of the headlines over the past couple of years, there are substantial problems caused by Somalis fleeing their country, paying smugglers to take them across the Gulf of Aden.

So one of the important outcomes of the gathering aboard Lancaster was improved communications with the Yemeni Coastguard so they can take action

against criminal activity discovered by the coalition warships.

After Christmas in Dubai, Lancaster spent the next few weeks at sea in and around the transit corridor.

Moving on to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, amphibious ship Cardigan Bay hosted a visit by her sponsor Lady Jan Stanhope.

Lady Stanhope and her husband, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, were welcomed on board by the auxiliary's Commanding Officer, Capt David Buck RFA.

"It was a great pleasure to host Lady Stanhope on board Cardigan Bay and to have the opportunity to show her what the ship has been doing whilst out here on operations in the North Arabian Gulf," said Capt Buck.

"Her visit whilst we were alongside in Bahrain was a wonderful boost to the ship's company and we were very pleased that we had the opportunity to welcome both Lady Jan and the First Sea Lord to the ship."

Capt Buck took over command on January 31, succeeding Capt Nigel Jones, who retired after 41 years service with the RFA.

The ship spends most of her time patrolling the waters of the Northern Arabian Gulf, supporting the training of the Iraqi Navy.

Back to the frigates, and HMS Monmouth, in the Gulf as part of Op Telic, has taken part in major multinational exercises.

Stakenet Plus lasted 11 days, with 22 ships from the UK, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, France and the US participating.

The aim of the exercise was to test a range of scenarios aimed at bolstering the ability of the players to protect key economic and energy infrastructure.



East of Suez

Highlights for Monmouth included a surface warfare serial against FS Primauguet, a 12-hour 'battle' which proved extremely useful in practising detection, tracking and missile release – and proved a warm welcome for the French ship, which had arrived in theatre only 30 hours previously.

One of the Principal Warfare Officers on board HMS Monmouth, Lt Cdr Paul Coverdale, said: "The serial was fantastic, allowing both sides to fully test their warfare teams."

"The French proved extremely capable opponents and really pushed us to our limits."

Stakenet Plus also provided an opportunity for the Black Duke's boarding teams, both green berets and ship's company, to board the USS Cleveland, whose sailors really got stuck in to their role and put Monmouth's Blue and Green teams through their paces.

The search and rescue aspect of the exercise centred round UAENS Ban Yas, with the UAE fast attack craft sustaining simulated 'damage' after a fire in her engine room.

Monmouth sent her search and rescue teams, including medical care, to aid the 'debilitated' vessel.

LS Kev Garrett, a warfare specialist on Monmouth, said: "The exercise has been valuable as it allowed us to test our reactions to a variety of scenarios we could face whilst on task in the Gulf."

"To see the capabilities of the other nations was impressive, and we've definitely learnt a lot from how they operate."

Turning to dry land, members of the crew of HMS Atherstone took a break from their busy deployment by going for a run in Bahrain when they took part in the Seef Mall Half Marathon challenge.

The event started outside the Seef Mall in the heart of the city, snaked its way to an outlying island, then back again to complete the 13 miles plus.

LD Johnnie Heightley was the first of the team to finish, in a respectable 1h 45m, closely followed by CO Lt Cdr Gordon Ruddock.

For those who suffered in the heat of the race, the afternoon took a turn for the better when the cheerleaders from the Baltimore Ravens American football team arrived on board.

Gunnery Officer S/Lt Ross Goodley said: "Usually the best

we can expect is the shore-side guys bringing the freshwater hoses or the post – it was a bit different to have a squad of cheerleaders turn up."

And finally, in this far-from-comprehensive round-up of affairs in the region (we'll have lots more in our next edition), two ships which are heading towards the Suez Canal.

The ship's company of HMS St Albans made the most of a sunny weekend stop in Gibraltar to banish the memories of cold snaps in the UK.

Sport was very much the order of the weekend; apart from the almost-obligatory Rock Run, the lasses from the ship lost to a well-drilled HM Forces netball team.

Rugby players and footballers trained and others managed to fit in some golf, sailing... and watching the start of the Six Nations rugby competition on the telly.

As *Navy News* went to press the Saint was heading further east on her six-month deployment to the Gulf.

And as *Navy News* went to press, Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessel HMS Middleton was due to set off from Portsmouth to take on her share of duties in the Gulf.

● This page, right: HMS Monmouth's Green Team in the sea boat; a firefighting exercise on board Monmouth; Air Engineer 'Higgy' Higinbotham on force protection duty on board Monmouth as she comes alongside in Dubai, close to RFA Bayleaf; (below) HMS Chatham's Lynx airlifts an ill sailor from the MV Zakynthos; crew members from UAE patrol craft Ban Yas on board Monmouth during a rescue exercise in the Gulf; Chatham's RM boarding team helps a fishing dhow; opposite page, from top left, a US Coast Guard sailor from USCG Typhoon training on board Monmouth; Leading Weapon Engineer 'Gogsy' Donald, LLogs (CS) 'Mary' Winehouse and AB 'Taff' Warner during a flight deck crash exercise on Monmouth; activity over Monmouth on Kuwaiti Staff College Sea Days Monmouth pictures: LA(Phot) Stu Hill





Permanent tribute to mine warriors

THIS is an impression of a twice-life-size sculpture which will one day serve as a lasting tribute to sailors in one of the loneliest – and most dangerous – professions: underwater warfare.

A frogman struggles to disarm a moored mine, a defining image of one aspect of the challenge faced by sailors in mine countermeasures, protecting life at sea and the nation's seaways for more than a century.

The Vernon Monument – named after the RN's long-standing home of mine warfare and diving branches – is earmarked for a spot in the former non-tidal creek at the defunct establishment.

HMS Vernon closed nearly 15 years ago and the site has since been redeveloped into the hugely successful Gunwharf Quays shopping-leisure-housing complex on Portsmouth's waterfront.

A little of the Victorian part of this venerable site remains, notably the Customs House (today a pub) and images of Vernon in its heyday can be found around the Gunwharf complex.

But a determined group of men who served there felt something was missing – the human element. The result is the Vernon Monument, which we alluded to briefly in an article championing the wartime deeds of John Ouvry in our January edition.

Well, this is how Australian sculptor Les Johnson imagines that memorial.

Thirteen artists vied for the prestigious contract, whittled down to three who then visited Gunwharf, HMS Collingwood's minewarfare section and the Fleet Diving Squadron HQ on Horsea Island for inspiration.

They produced maquettes – small-scale versions of their intended sculptures – for a panel of experienced ex-Vernon servicemen to examine; the latter decided Mr Johnson's concept would most closely epitomise the combined branches' mine disposal role.

The full-size version of the sculpture will cost around £250,000 to create and install. The team behind Project Vernon – motto 'nothing too awkward to achieve' – is already around one fifth of the way to its target.

To assist the fund-raising, a series of limited edition prints, *Danger At Depth*, depicting a diver attaching explosive charges to a moored mine, has been produced by marine artist John R Terry FCSD.

Some of the 215-sized run of A3-plus-size pictures are still available via the dedicated website, www.vernon-monument.org, with prices starting at £75. Mr Terry has now been commissioned to produce a second oil painting which will highlight the Ton class vessels which played such a significant part in the history of HMS Vernon.

More details about Project Vernon can be found at the above website where you can now also make a donation directly to the appeal.

SAR turn from Jungly crew

A SEA KING crew back from Afghanistan found themselves on another rescue mission – this time in Dorset.

Their 846 NAS Jungly was on a training flight over Musbury when the crew spotted a lengthy tailback on the A358 between Axminster and Seaton. Following that queue, they found an overturned car.

Pilot Lt Cdr Gavin Simmonite (who received the DFC for his

skill in Afghan skies – see page 7) set the Sea King down in a field, while aircrewman Sgt Lloyd RM discussed the driver's plight with a paramedic.

They decided the woman, who suffered head injuries, needed flying to hospital in Yeovil, which the Sea King did via the Agusta Westland site in the town.

She subsequently underwent tests for her injuries.

SECRETARY of State for Defence Bob Ainsworth is a man with a keen historical sense of the Navy's importance in shaping our island destiny.

"People say it's that strip of sea, that 20 miles of channel which keeps us safer than continental Europe has been through its history.

"But it's the people who have effectively patrolled it for centuries who have kept us safe," he told *Navy News*, when he spoke about the Green Paper and forthcoming Strategic Defence Review.

The Strategic Defence Review, the first since 1998, will be produced shortly after the election.

As a prelude, the Green Paper sets out the options for defence, raising serious questions about the UK's place in the world, the threats we face, how we can best protect ourselves and crucially, how much we are prepared to pay for it (*see opposite*).

"There are a couple of big questions that we need to ask the public," explained the Secretary of State.

"One is, what kind of country do they want us to be, what kind of a role do they want us to play in the world?

"And the other is, how much are they prepared to pay? You can't get away from those two issues, because they are opposite sides of the same coin."

A struggle for funding is inevitable, not just for defence as a whole, but among the three Services.

In this battle for resources, the Navy tends to feel at a disadvantage. It is not as visible as the other services and its contribution to land operations is not always recognised by the general public.

Mr Ainsworth acknowledges this as a problem. He said: "At sea is out of sight, certainly under the sea is out of sight, and so making people aware, particularly when you've got high end operations going on is a real difficulty."

"HMS Iron Duke might pop up in the middle of the Caribbean with a great big drugs seizure but it's a relatively fleeting glance at a patrol reassurance capability that's been provided for months on end."

He continued: "Showing the flag, presence, influence, coercion, deterrence – they're all effects we rely on the Navy and different aspects of the Navy to deliver."

"And we ask an awful lot of them in terms of the amount of output for the number of platforms that they've got and the amount of money and resources. People are working enormously hard in order to deliver defence."

He agrees that the recent focus on land operations tends to under-represent the Navy's contribution.

He said: "If you look at current operations in Afghanistan and Haiti, the contributions that the Navy is making are huge and I think if they saw the percentage figures, people would be really surprised."

"But even when the Royal Marines are not deployed and running Task Force Helmand, the Navy is still making a huge contribution."

The defence secretary added: "When I talk to constituents and family members about the level of visibility and understanding of what the navy is doing, it's not where we would like it to be."

"I know there are a lot of senior people in the Navy worried about the visibility of the Naval Service and I think there is a degree of truth in that with regards to population at large."

"What people do understand is that we're an island nation and far, far more dependent upon trade and therefore the free passage of goods in the world than practically any other nation on earth."

"If the security systems and the trade systems of the world fall over we catch cold as much, if not more, than anybody."

Now that other countries including China, Russia, India and France are building up their navies,



● Scope for change... Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth tries out the periscope on HMS Trafalgar shortly before the veteran submarine was paid off
Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow, FRPU West

Since the last defence review...

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1999
peacekeeping operations in the Balkans | 2004
RN and RFA personnel provide assistance after Asia's Boxing Day tsunami | 2008
minehunters and divers complete survey work in Gulf; RFA helps rebuild the harbour in Tristan da Cunha |
| 2000
major commitment of RN/RM forces in Sierra Leone | 2005
RN-led rescue of trapped Russian submariners | 2009
concerted effort against pirates off the Horn of Africa (operations ongoing) HMS Iron Duke scores record drugs bust in Caribbean |
| 2001
major commitment of RN/RM forces in Afghanistan (operations ongoing); sailors support efforts to contain Foot and Mouth outbreak | 2006
Naval task force evacuates 4,500 civilians from Lebanon | 2010
at least 4,000 RN and RM personnel deployed overseas daily; continuous Search and Rescue duties; continuous fishery protection patrols; continuous nuclear deterrent patrols |
| 2002
upwards of 19,000 Service personnel provide cover during fire-fighters strike | 2007
RN and RFA help Belize in wake of Hurricane Dean; sailors drafted in following floods in Gloucestershire | |
| 2003
invasion of Iraq – largest RN force assembled since Falklands (operations run until 2009) | | |

is this a good time to contemplate running the Royal Navy down?

He said: "It's lovely to think we can just go back to the old days where we had lines of battleships that we could display and a fleet the size of the second and third most powerful nations' fleets put together."

"But we can't defend ourselves in isolation – I don't think even the Americans believe that they can do that – so we have to defend ourselves as part of a partnership, or alliances, NATO, the EU. To be credible members of those alliances we have to be able to play a role and make a contribution."

"At sea is out of sight, certainly under the sea is out of sight, and so making people aware, particularly when you've got high end operations going on, is a real difficulty."

"I think our ability to play that role in supporting everything from peacekeeping operations to stabilisation buys us considerable influence."

Some defence reviews in the past have been criticised for not being tied in with foreign and security policy – would this one be different?

"I don't think we'll fall down on that," he said. "The last SDR was grounded in foreign policy

objectives and I think this one will be as well."

"Our security policy has been updated fairly recently and we've got to see defence as part of that security in the round, so the Strategic Defence Review is certainly going to do that and the Green Paper sits within."

There is a fear that the Navy's frigate and destroyer numbers have been sacrificed for the new carriers, and may be run down even more.

Can the Navy continue to deliver when its frigate and destroyer forces are so reduced?

He said: "We've bought the Type 45 now and it is a fantastic ship with an

amazing capability, but at the end of the day they cost us about £1 billion apiece."

"We're soon going to have to replace the Type 22/23s and the Navy is already working on this, but if the future surface combatant is going to cost £1 billion we're not going to have many of them, and we're not going to be able to sell them in the export market."

"And if we can't do that, how can we maintain the skills base

needed for our defence capability going forward?"

One solution may be to build cheaper ships, and more of them – did he think this was a reasonable option?

"That is something that's got to be considered but at the same time we need a sonar capability that's been provided at an impressive level by the Type 23," Mr Ainsworth said.

"Life moves on and the threat moves on, and getting the balance right, so that we can protect a capital ship at sea and yet be able to cover the grounds is an enormously difficult choice."

"The Navy is wrestling with all these issues and I know the review is going to have to wrestle with them as well, so all we can do at this stage is flag them up as issues in the Green Paper."

There is also another study into the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – why is this taking place so soon after the last one?

The minister explained: "We should welcome efficiency examinations, and I don't believe we can afford to do anything other than look all the time to see whether or not we're operating as capably and efficiently as we can."

"But what we've got to do is make sure those studies capture all the complexity of the job – and the job is sometimes more complex than people imagine."

"Supplyships to the Navy sounds



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Email: rnchildren@btconnect.com

nation's heart'

THE nation – and the Royal Navy – face “hard choices” when the first fundamental shake-up of Britain’s Armed Forces in 12 years takes place.

The government has set out its broad vision for the future of the Services, inviting comment from the public so it can shape the Navy, Army and Air Force.

The Green Paper – Adaptability and Partnership – is the first step down the lengthy path of a full strategic defence review – the first since 1998.

It invites comments from within and without the Services – the latter can have their say via defenceconsultations.org.uk – which will help Whitehall shape the defence review, due to be produced after this spring’s general election.

Because it’s a consultation document, there are few specifics relating to any of the three Services.

But there are some basic issues which are unlikely to change as a result of the paper: the need to protect incoming and outgoing trade worldwide; the need to protect the 12 million Britons who live overseas; the need to defend the UK’s borders beyond the confines of our islands.

The paper also believes that military operations in the first year of the review will continue to be dominated by the conflict in Afghanistan.

Beyond that, the document’s authors believe our nation faces threats from global terrorism – not just Al Qaeda and its associates, but also on the domestic front from dissident Republic groups in Northern Ireland.

Fragile or failing states, such as Somalia, will also pose continuing problems directly or indirectly.

Whitehall believes our Armed Forces could increasingly be called upon to deal with international crime – as presently tackled by the RN and RFA in the Caribbean and Middle East.

And there is the ever-present problem of natural disasters at home (the floods in 2007) and abroad (hurricanes in the Caribbean or the recent earthquake in Haiti) which invariably lead to a response from Britain’s Armed Forces.

To meet these, and other, challenges the nation does face substantial obstacles, notably cost – at a time when the economy is in a very fragile condition.

With that in mind, the paper wants to look at whether the number of senior personnel – military and civilian – is justified and whether more of the defence estate can be sold off.

Put simply, says the paper, “the more we prepare to do, the higher the cost”. And that cost, both of maintaining a technological edge over our adversaries and of paying for the men and women to do the business of war, will rise above the rate of inflation.

These are not challenges faced by the UK alone. To that end, Whitehall believes we should work more closely with our Allies, especially the European Union.

Announcing the paper, Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth said fundamental to the future of Britain’s Armed Forces were two questions: what role did Britons wish their nation to play on the world stage; and how much were they prepared to pay for defence?

While there has been considerable media speculation about the future of some of the RN’s most expensive programmes, notably the replacement carriers, when the nation is embroiled in an indefinite conflict on land, the Defence Secretary stressed maintaining a balanced military remained the core aim.

“Afghanistan is the top priority today, but we must also ensure that our Armed Forces are ready to confront the challenges of tomorrow. There is no more important function for a government than defence,” Mr Ainsworth said.

“We cannot assume that tomorrow’s conflict will replicate today’s. In planning for the future we must anticipate a wide range of threats and requirements.

“Hard choices and important decisions lie ahead.”

The full document can be found at www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/ConsultationsandCommunications/PublicConsultations/TheDefenceGreenPaper2010Discussion.htm



● RAF rescue launch HSL 102 and veteran RN Motor Gunboat MGB 81 return to their old ‘stomping ground’ in the Solent

Spitfires of the Seas saved

THESE magnificent boats – among the last reminders of craft which scythed through the narrow seas at high speed – have been saved for the nation.

Seven decades ago, Motor Gunboat 81 and High Speed Launch 102 were ‘the Spitfires of the Seas’, among the fastest craft the nation possessed.

Seventy years later, they’ll be tearing around the Solent thanks to a £580,000 grant which allows the duo to be preserved.

The craft have been snapped up by Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust, aided by that handout from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, plus private and public donations and fund-raising.

The result is that both boats, currently on display in the marina at Gunwharf Quays, should be running around Portsmouth Harbour and the Solent – not just for the public to admire, but to ride as well.

The aim is to allow people to charter the boats and experience the thrill of a plywood boat cutting through the Solent at upwards of 40kts, as well as travel at a more leisurely pace from Portsmouth to the Explosion Museum at Priddy’s Hard – where motor boats were once based.

“Those of us who particularly cherish these boats are very grateful,” said Lt James Shadbolt (pictured right), a veteran of 8th Motor Gunboat Flotilla with which MGB 81 served.

“It’s wonderful to know that future generations will be able to experience these extremely exciting machines first-hand, just as we did as young men during the war.”

Of the two craft, MGB 81 was operated by the Royal Navy between 1942 and 1945, serving with the 8th MGB Flotilla and later 1st MTB Flotilla.

She saw action in the Channel and North Sea, suffering damage in a clash with a German convoy off the Hook of Holland and harassed enemy traffic of the Cotentin Peninsula during the Normandy campaign.

She was sold after the war and eventually turned into a houseboat before a lengthy programme to restore her began in 1988.

HSL 102 was used as a rescue boat by the RAF – a precursor to the search and rescue function performed today by the RN, RAF and Coastguard.

The air force craft is credited with saving the lives of 102 downed airmen (including two Luftwaffe crews); it’s thought around 10,000 aircrew owe their lives to the HSL class.

Both vessels were built by the British Powerboat Company at Hythe in Southampton Water, where the designs were tested by a certain T E Shaw – a pseudonym of T E Lawrence, Lawrence of Arabia.

The two craft can still reach the top speeds they were capable of when in service – 39kts for HSL 102, one knot faster for MGB 81.

The boats join a growing list of more than 1,000 iconic objects in the UK which have received money from the National Heritage Memorial Fund over the past three decades, including the Mary Rose, Flying Scotsman, HMS Cavalier and the papers of Sir Walter Scott.

“The purchase of these boats is just what the fund was set up to do – to defend the most outstanding parts of our national heritage at risk as a memorial to those who have died for the UK,” said Bob Bewley, the fund’s director of operations.

“These gunboats are integral to our rich seafaring history.”



very sensible, and reasonable, and easy. But these people and these ships have to be totally integrated with RN capability – and that’s without even talking about a high-threat environment that might arise.”

He added: “So long as we capture all of the requirements, and as long as we really look at it in the round, then I don’t think we should run away from efficiency studies. If we can do things better, we should.”

Against the backdrop of a global economic crisis, the Government is struggling to meet rising fuel and utility costs, increases in pay and pensions, and cost growth on major equipment projects. So is there much chance of getting more money out of the Treasury for defence?

“We are in difficult financial times and I don’t think they’re going to get easier in the next couple of years,” said Mr Ainsworth.

“Assuming that we’re going to get more money is going to be very difficult, and we’ve got to be able to prove over time that we’re capable of delivering value for money.”

He continued: “We do get attacked on the procurement programme and while ours might not be worse than other countries in the world, I’m sure there is room for improvement. We’ve got to be seen to deliver real effect in all the theatres and give good value to the taxpayers.”

“What they’re paying for is an insurance policy, and our Armed Forces are our ultimate insurance policy.”

“But it has to be the right policy, otherwise it’s not worth buying. And they have to be able to afford the premium as well.”

The Secretary of State is quick to scotch recent media reports about infighting among the Service chiefs protecting their interests in the light of the forthcoming Defence Review.

He said: “We have three new single Service chiefs who all came into post in the summer of last year, just after I did, and they’ve been a fantastic team.”

“Of course there’s a difference of emphasis. The First Sea Lord has a responsibility to make sure that people understand the naval side of the house, just as the Chief of the General Staff makes sure that we understand the land environment.”

“But I’ve been hugely supported by all of them and they have taken some very difficult decisions together.”

“We moved £300 million last year in order to get more money into the Afghan campaign. Some of that was at the expense of naval capability, and put a little bit more squeeze on certain aspects of the Naval Service.”

He added: “There are massively difficult decisions to be taken and they take them in the best interest of defence, aware of the consequences of every single part. They work as a team.”

As Secretary of State for Defence since June 2009, Bob Ainsworth’s career could have taken a very different turn.

He clearly loves the Navy and as a boy growing up in Coventry he became a Sea Cadet and seriously considered joining up.

He said: “I very nearly joined the Navy when I was a young lad. I thought the young girls would go for me in the uniform as much as for anything!”

“But I bottled out – I was very young and I wound up getting

involved in all kinds of other career opportunities.

“But I would love to have done – I would absolutely love to have done. I think it was an opportunity missed.”

“There is something very romantic about sailing out of port. Whether it’s a warship or any other ship it’s a fantastic experience. I would have loved the adventure, and there’s still a huge opportunity for that.”

Given the Navy’s declining size and influence between those days and now, would he still encourage young men and women to join?

He said: “I think it has got a lot to offer. It still turns boys into men and girls into women. I think it’s a great opportunity, whether it’s the Navy or the forces generally.”

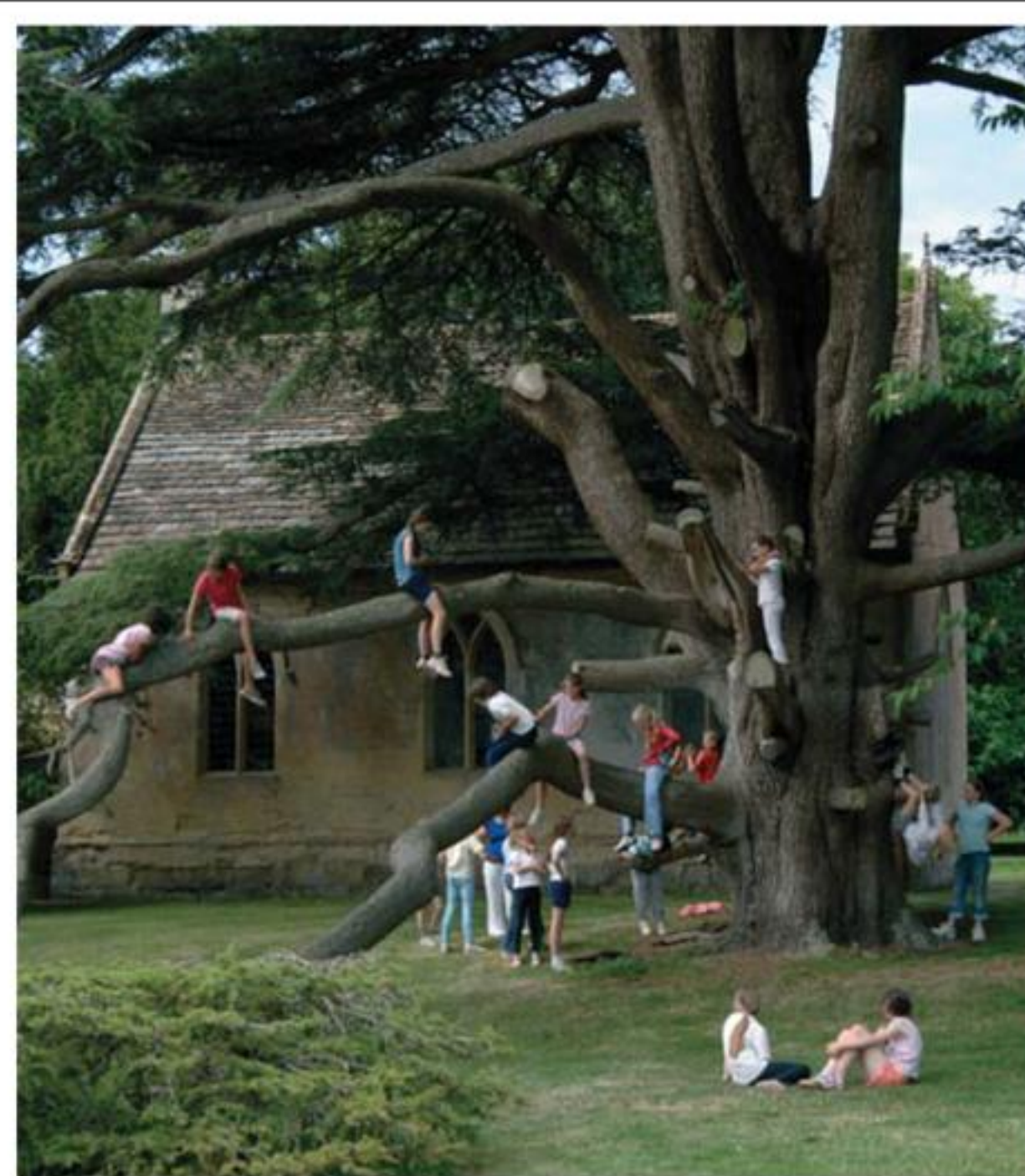
“I meet lots of bright guys in the Forces and I meet lots living in civvy street for whom I think the Armed Forces would have been a fantastic opportunity.”

Mr Ainsworth continued: “But there is a great tradition in our country of supporting the Navy.”

“There was a love for the city-class ships – I know, coming from Coventry, which is about as far away from the sea as you can get – and a real reaction that we weren’t able to have a new HMS Coventry.”

“I think the whole of the country is romantically connected to the Navy because of our history and the sea and because we’re an island. The Navy has got the most fantastic tradition and the nation for centuries has owed it so much in terms of its safety and its character.”

He added: “It’s got a fantastic history, it’s embedded in the nation’s heart. We depend on the Navy for our security today and we will do tomorrow.”



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Illustrious goes green before refit

AIRCRAFT carrier HMS Illustrious has proved her green credentials as she enters refit on the Forth.

The warship's recycling programme switched to overdrive on her arrival at RNAD Crombie to start shedding stores and equipment prior to docking down in Rosyth.

Led by her French liaison officer, S/Lt Julien Salis, a team of four initially sifted through eight cubic metres of gash to recover anything re-useable or recyclable.

A recycling station was set up in the hangar, and over the first three days more than 28 cubic metres of material was collected.

Lusty's First Lieutenant, Lt Cdr Mike Walker, who suggested the increased recycling effort, said: "The Royal Navy takes environmental issues very seriously, and we were keen to ensure that as a ship we could recycle as much material as possible and reduce our impact on the environment."

■ **Illustrious arrives at Rosyth** – page 10

Hangars are handed over

A SQUADRON hangar and offices at RN air station Culdrose has been handed over to Ascent Flight Training for major refurbishment as part of the UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS) project.

The rationalisation programme will see RN and RAF crews train in navigation and radar procedures at Culdrose, and the refurbishment paves the way for the arrival of new King Air aircraft, which will replace the Jetstreams and set the standard for observer and navigator training.

The £52 million project should see the new training regime in place by next year.

Data decision

THE Stonewood Group has been selected by General Dynamics UK Ltd to design and develop the on-board encrypted data storage systems for the AgustaWestland AW159 Lynx Wildcat helicopter.

The bespoke systems will be used in both RN and Army aircraft to protect mission and communications system data.

Anti-piracy initiative lauded

THE Royal Navy's anti-piracy IT initiative was named as a finalist in the e-Government national awards.

In partnership with Polymorph and on behalf of the EU's maritime campaign off Somalia, the Operation Atalanta collaborative

No butts – it's time to quit

THE smouldering looks, the ash-grey barnet – yes, it's that time of year when Big Cig steps into the spotlight.

National No Smoking Day – and the tenth anniversary of Military No Smoking Day – is on March 10, and the Royal Navy is again doing its bit to help matelots and bootnecks kick the habit.

All RN and RM units have been strongly encouraged to organise their own campaign to persuade smokers to quit, using the expertise of the Medical Department and Unit Smoking Cessation Advisors.

This year's theme – of breaking free, depicted by a broken chain of cigarettes – has been developed in collaboration with smokers themselves.

Organisers hope this year's campaign is as effective as NSD 09; across the UK it is estimated that one in ten smokers kicked the habit – up to 900,000 people.

All RN and RM units were given NSD packs containing starter material to enable local campaigns to take place.

The NSD website, www.nosmokingday.org.uk, contains a considerable amount of additional information to assist units with their campaigns at a local level, and comes highly recommended.

Four 'Big Cig' costumes are available on loan to help units with their campaigns.

Units who wish to bid for a 'Big Cig' costume should forward details of their campaign, using the proforma at Annex A of TEM 20100209, dated 09 Feb 10, to Lt D Wylie by Wednesday March 3.

The four most innovative applications that best portray the 'Big Cig' on NSD will be allocated the costumes.

● **Big Cig on an outing in 2008**

Healthier fare at Faslane health fair

FOOD was high on the agenda at the second annual Clyde Naval Base Freshers' Fayre and Healthy Lifestyle day.

A number of departments and clubs set up stalls in the Sportsdrome, telling workers about the benefits of staying healthy and giving them the run-down on the many associations and pastimes available on the base.

One of the most popular stalls was that of the base's catering department.

Setting up their mobile kitchen equipment in the gym, the chefs prepared a tasty and healthy oriental-style salmon fillet with stir fry noodles that had mouths watering.

"The idea is to show people how easy it is to prepare a healthy and nutritious meal," explained CPO Steve Benn.

"After a busy day at work there's the temptation to pick up the phone and order a chippy or Chinese meal.

"But it doesn't have to be like that. The meal we've prepared today is good for you, tastes great and, best of all, only takes 15 minutes from preparation to plate."

The base's Adventurous Training department was represented by Sgt Roger Palin, fresh back from winter mountain training at Glen Coe.

Roger's department has a full programme of events for Royal Navy and Royal Marines, including summer mountain leader training, canoeing, climbing wall, mountain biking and exercises in the Cairngorms.

On the medical front, both the base's Medical Centre and the Dental Department were represented on the day. Nurse Maureen Anderson and MA Arran Stratton were informing visitors of the dangers of too much salt – challenging them to guess the sodium levels in some popular fast food meals.

From salt to sugar, and Jenny Thornhill of the Dental Department manned the display



● Clyde Naval Base catering department's Logs (CS) Joe McCafferty cooks up a storm at the event

Picture: LA(Phot) AJ Macleod

featuring a variety of drinks.

Wine, beer, cider, fruit juice, water, Coke, smoothies and Irn-Bru were all present, and visitors had to guess which ones contained the most sugar – and it surprised most to learn it wasn't the booze or the goffer, but rather the smoothies.

"It's the old message," said Jenny, "everything in moderation. Brushing is, of course, also essential, and we've brought along an electric toothbrush and different heads to show what the best options are."

Those looking for a pastime were spoilt for choice during the event

– the HMS Neptune Sailing Club, Neptune Ski and Snowboarding Club, the Archery Club and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Amateur Rowing Association were all there, demonstrating equipment and chatting to anyone who might be interested in taking up the sport.

Learning centre opens

THE Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton has opened a new learning centre to strengthen its education programme.

Sponsored by AgustaWestland, the new facility occupies around 80 square metres in a former

exhibition room, and has been fitted with new desks, chairs, flooring, projection equipment and a bank of computer desks with software explaining the history of flight.

Every year the museum welcomes more than 14,000 school and college students to take part in a wide range of National Curriculum-based activities.

For some it could be an 'evacuation special', where primary school children dress in 1930s clothes and learn what it was like to be evacuated from home.

For others it could be science and technology-based activities to tie in with a college curriculum.

The museum has been heavily

involved with the Heritage Lottery funded 'Their Past Your Future 2' project, and has produced a set of web-based resources that help improve youngsters' knowledge and understanding of the impact and significance of conflict.

The project has filmed interviews with numerous veterans, including Henry Allingham, the Navy veteran who died last year at the age of 113.

All 15 education packs, including the films and supporting resources, will be available for teachers and students to complement their history and citizenship studies.

The packs will also appeal to anyone with an interest in aviation.

Safety drive is yielding results

CLYDE Naval Base is slashing the number of accidents and bumping up reporting procedures in a safety initiative – and central to that is a new training centre.

Naval Base Commander Cdre Chris Hockley and Managing Director of Babcock Craig Lockhart cut the ribbon to open the base's new IIF Venue, the new home of Incident and Injury Free, the successful programme which the base uses to promote safety in the workplace and beyond.

Within the first year of IIF being adopted, there was a 256 per cent increase in near-miss reporting, coupled with a 48 per cent decrease in reportable accidents.

Almost 4,000 base workers have been through an IIF orientation, and it has become a mandatory

programme for new joiners.

Workers at Clyde have grown accustomed to the numerous IIF signs, posters and displays which have popped up around the site developing from a puzzling acronym to an initiative that has permeated the entire base.

Launched at the base in April 2008, the programme has been constantly striving to put people's wellbeing first and to send them home safely each day.

"People on the base have perceptions about what IIF is all about," said Mark Eltringham, senior IIF co-ordinator.

"It is part of our job to change these and to show workers that what it's actually about is taking personal ownership for the responsibility for safety.

Boat in build has tilt at gun run prize

THE Silent Service is about to enter what is claimed to be its first team into a historic Field Gun competition.

HMS Ambush, currently being built by BAE Systems in Barrow-in-Furness, is thought to be the first submarine in the history of the Royal Navy to enter a field gun crew for the annual Brickwood Trophy competition at HMS Collingwood in Hampshire.

The field gun competition is infamous for being the world's toughest team sport, calling for leadership, camaraderie, courage and passion.

Teams compete for a trophy which was presented by the Portsmouth-based brewery in 1907 in recognition of the heroic qualities needed to succeed on the field gun track.

Ambush's team will be made up of 18 crew members with seven 'spares' in case of injury.

Key members of the team are Coxswain Steve Thorpe, who will be the No 1 trainer, WO2 Andy Coomes, who will be the team captain, Lt Cdr Ian Molyneux, who has the privilege of being the Gunnery Officer, and POPT Stu Conder, who will have the thankless task of getting the team into peak physical condition.

The field gun competition is a commemoration of an action that occurred in 1899 during the Boer War which prevented the key British garrison town of Ladysmith in Natal falling to the Boers.

As Boer troops advanced, an urgent message was sent requesting that Naval field guns be rushed to Ladysmith from HMS Powerful, over 100 miles away in the port of Durban.

The guns were transported overnight by train to Ladysmith, whereupon a Naval Brigade of 280 men unloaded and manhandled them to the front just in time to check the advancing Boers.

The town was surrounded and besieged on November 2 1899 but held out for four months until its relief on 28 February 1900.

This feat of arms caught the public imagination and the Field Gun Tournament was established. The tournament was originally held at Earls Court in London until 1999, when HMS Collingwood took up the mantle.

At this year's competition, apart from the major shore bases, only one ship has submitted a team.

The HMS Collingwood Open Day, featuring the RN Field Gun competition, is on Saturday June 5.

And just to make sure Lady Luck is on their side, the Ambush team has a historical link with the Siege of Ladysmith.

PO 'Al' Grover, who is working within the support staff of the field gun team, discovered that his great-great uncle was Pte Charles Grover of the Rifle Brigade, who was injured during the siege and removed from the front line on December 11 1899.

The actions that resulted in his injury also earned him the Queen's South Africa medal and bar.





● Board and search training alongside a tanker



● Formation training in boat driving in Nigerian waters

● The newly-acquired RIBs are taken out in Lagos Harbour

Driving school **L**



● RIB training past the tankers in Lagos Harbour

A ROYAL Marines team of boat experts headed out to Nigeria late last year to sharpen up the training for the Nigerian Armed Forces that will operate in the oil-rich Niger Delta region.

The team – seven Royal Marines and one Royal Navy engineer – from 1 Assault Group Royal Marines (1AGRM) and 9 Assault Squadron Royal Marines (9ASRM) spent seven weeks in the African nation.

They arrived for a UK-led training package, coinciding with the procurement of six rigid inflatable boats (RIBs) and the construction of a Joint Maritime Security Training Centre in Lagos, all coordinated by the resident British Military Advisory and Training team (BMATT).

The short-term training team (STTT), under the command of Maj Matt Churchward, left behind the cold and wet UK to arrive in the warm and wet Nigeria. However it became clear early on that the humid weather was not the only thing to which they had to adjust.

Sgt 'Mids' Middleton, the second in charge of the training team, said: "The team had an eye-opening experience into Nigerian driving styles with associated off-road procedures and numerous games of chicken."

He added: "The working day started and finished with more exposure to Nigerian drivers, who when confronted by broken-down vehicles will simply seek

an alternative course of action – it was not surprising then that the STTT found themselves driving the wrong way down a dual carriageway weaving around oncoming fuel tankers..."

Fortunately things were a little different on the water.

The marine team were there to run a 'train the trainer' package.

Their first week in Lagos was spent receiving the training area, meeting the key Nigerians who would keep the course running, and going through the necessary preliminary procedures.

Although some of the reconnaissance was a little more in-depth than perhaps necessary...

"The first week involved a recon of the jetty where the RIBs would be launched," said Sgt Middleton.

"The Boss was leading from the front when the jetty gave way and he ended up checking the depth of water in an area where a 75kg crocodile was pulled out the day before."

As well as training coxswains and ground combat teams for the security patrols, CPO Russell Wilson was on hand to make sure that there were engineering instructors who could train people to maintain the six RIBs.

In total 32 potential instructors from the Nigerian Army and Navy came under the watchful eye of the British maritime team.

Their days began with an early morning PT session – not greeted with universal enthusiasm.

Training swiftly progressed through the basics of rules of the road and map reading, then on to basic boat handling, engine servicing and navigation.

Once the basic knowledge had been drilled into the willing participants, the Royal Marines started to bring in their specialist skills of amphibious and riverine operations.

The Nigerians tackled beaching drills, close-quarter battle, ambushes and break contact drills – during day and night hours.

Training wasn't all on the move however – the rules of engagement and international humanitarian law were also covered.

And it wasn't all work, work, work – the Royal Marines held a Corps birthday dinner to which they invited Col Telfer and WO1 Clarke from the British Military Advisory and Training Team and two civilians from the boatmaker Ribcraft.

The evening saw the traditional speeches and port fines – and one guest, who remains nameless, had to make a quiet exit feeling slightly the worse for wear.

On a more sombre note, the British boat team represented the

Royal Marines and Royal Navy in a remembrance ceremony at the Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery in Lagos, where Sgt 'Mac' McDonald read out the 23 names from the 2009 RM Roll of Honour.

And coxswain instructor Mne Paul Mayfield headed to Kano in the north of Nigeria for a remembrance ceremony. It seems that the characteristics of Nigerian driving are infectious, as in Mne Mayfield's words: "We began the five-hour car journey up to Kano during which the defence attaché's driving was almost as unnerving as pacing drills with the course."

"With the temperature rising up to 40 degrees we were very grateful for the ice cold beer on arrival."

Other compensations for the Marine included a game of golf during his northern visit for the memorial ceremony.

He added: "The Harmattan arrived on the day of the parade, a condition where the dust of the Sahara desert blows into the city."

"It does not sound pleasant but

it cools the place down by about 15 degrees and with the ceremony being held with no shade, it was well received."

The last week saw the Nigerians put through their paces in board and search techniques using a Nigerian Navy fast patrol craft and an amenable tanker in Lagos Harbour.

Nineteen instructors qualified and will form the initial staff at the Joint Maritime Security Training Centre, which is due to begin to run courses this year.

The last act for the Nigerians was a graduation ceremony, described by Maj Churchward as "particularly interesting".

Or in Sgt Middleton's words: "At the end of the course the Nigerians held a barbecue which involved an entire goat, intestines and all, a famous Nigerian rapper Zule-Zoo, and some rather interesting dancers."

"Overall the team had a hoofing time and are looking forward to returning to assist with the running of the first JMSTC course."

● A perfect pacing drill demonstrated to the Nigerians by Royal Marine Cpl Mick Newton



Scott of the



● An albatross circles HMS Scott during surveying work off the South Shetland Islands

“TO strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield” is the motto of HMS Scott, and one she is doing her very best to aspire to on her current deployment.

Emerging from a lengthy refit the ship worked hard to achieve her re-acceptance into the surface flotilla, pass her Operational Sea Training and deploy as the temporary ice patrol vessel for the current austral summer – HMS Endurance’s normal role.

After a brief stop for her first watch handover in Tenerife, where members of the ship’s company attended a Remembrance Day

service, she surveyed her way across the Atlantic, arriving in Montevideo in early December.

The visit coincided with two significant events in the Uruguayan capital – the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate and the official opening of the new naval museum.

Despite a crew of only 52 the presence of the extra watch allowed a strong naval presence in support of both events, with sailors attending a service of remembrance 70 years to the day since the battle that cost the lives of 72 British and 36 German sailors.

Scott’s Commanding Officer, Cdr Gary Hesling, said: “It was an honour for us to participate in the commemorative ceremonies for the Battle of the River Plate, to pay tribute to the courage of all those in the battle but most particularly to remember the sailors who lost their lives on that day.”

The South American capital was the first visit to Uruguay for many, and the sunshine came as a welcome break from the winter back home.

A little rest and recuperation squeezed in amongst the official visits, maintenance and defect rectification was gratefully received before returning to survey operations.

For the formal opening of the museum a small contingent formed smartly outside the Museo Naval, adding to the overall sense of occasion and pride for the Uruguayan *Armada*.

Cdr Hesling accompanied the Defence Attaché, Col Allan Thomas, and ship’s company to a commemoration ceremony followed by a reception at the

ambassador’s residence.

A wreath was also laid at the grave of Ord Tel Neville Milburn, a New Zealand sailor from HMS Achilles who died in the battle.

After a big slurp of fuel – over 700 tonnes – and a restock of supplies Scott sailed from the River Plate and turned right for Antarctica.

With the weather on her side she conducted the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) tasking in the exposed icy waters to the north of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Using her state-of-the-art multibeam sonar system Scott surveyed a poorly-charted area to the north-west of the South Shetland Islands.

The 13,500-tonne ship’s unique sonar fit allows her to survey the deepest oceans in continuous lines of up to 400 miles in length.

The ship’s three-week mission in Antarctica fulfilled a number of commitments – work for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), support to BAS and hydrographic surveying for the UK Hydrographic Office.

Surveys were very much dependent on the weather and ice concentrations at the time – Scott is not an icebreaker, but she is by class a 1A Ice Strengthened vessel and can drive through first-year ice up to 0.8m thick.

With such constraints, and being at the mercy of the weather, the ship’s company had to plan and undertake operations at short notice and at unusual times of the day.

Primarily, work for the FCO consisted of conducting informal base visits of other nations’ stations and surveys of Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPAs).



● HMS Scott at Port Lockroy



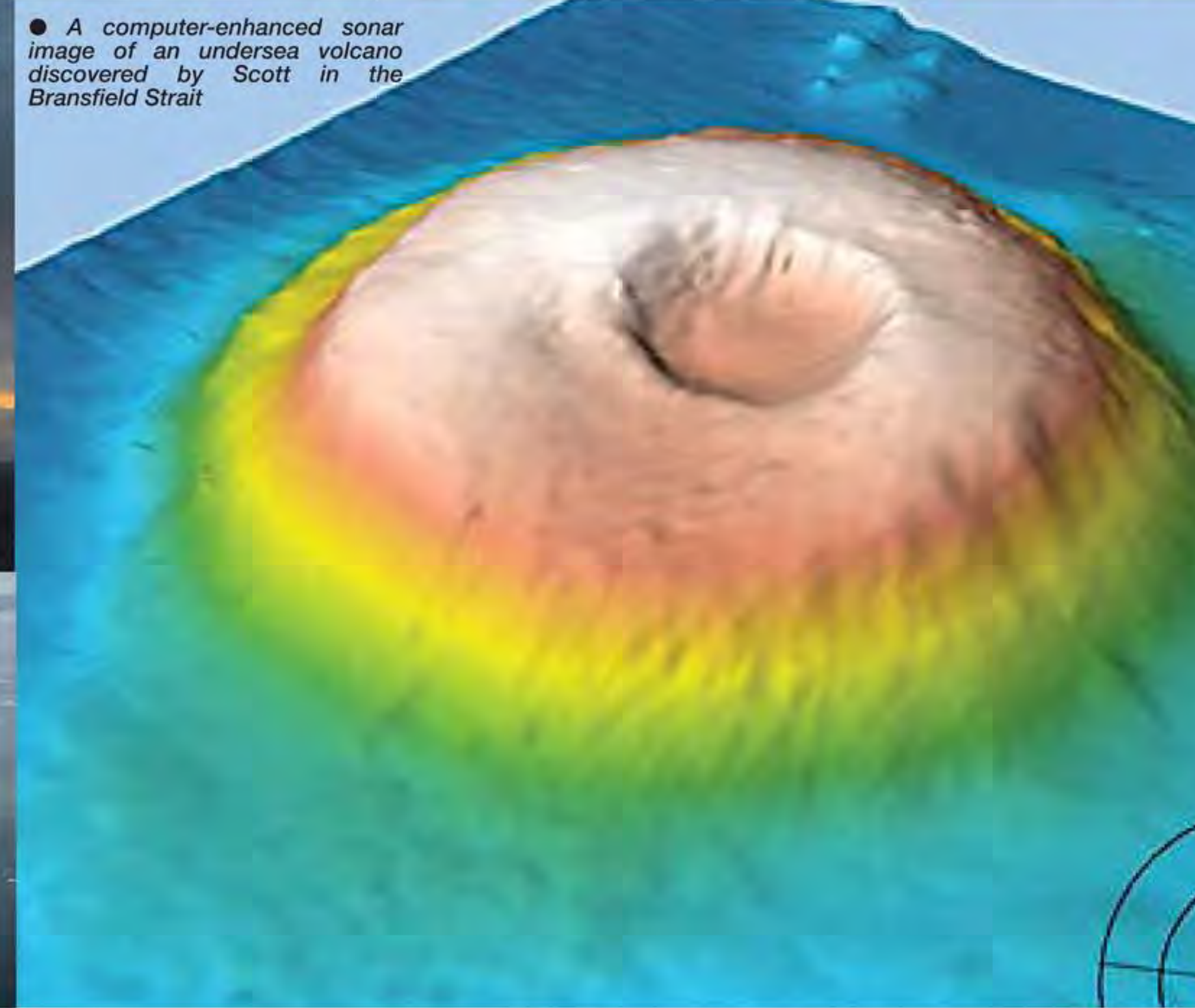
● Artist Rowan Huntley at work



● Sunset over Kingston Island; Scott remained off the island overnight, ready to drop two BAS staff ashore for an informal base visit



● A computer-enhanced sonar image of an undersea volcano discovered by Scott in the Bransfield Strait



● Scott sails into Port Lockroy to deliver glass panels for the base’s new ‘conservatory’



● Scott pictured off Brabant Island



Pictures: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams

Antarctic Ocean

The ASPA located at Byers Peninsula on Livingston Island was the first survey for the BAS and FCO personnel on board.

Accompanied by the Royal Marine cold weather specialists, they surveyed one of Antarctica's most important locations for terrestrial biology.

Between base visits Scott conducted survey operations within the Bransfield Strait, collecting over 3,000 square miles of multibeam survey data, providing unprecedented detail of the ocean floor within the strait – including the discovery of two uncharted underwater volcanoes of significant size within the strait.

This detailed data will provide information allowing for the development of high-resolution navigational charts of the Bransfield Strait, setting the standard for future surveys.

The data Scott gathers is usually classified, but her Antarctic work is unclassified and will be of immense value to the scientific community, greatly helping the understanding of the geological construct of the frozen continent.

It will also provide valuable information on glacial effects in the underwater domain.

There are also safety issues – Antarctica is a popular cruise destination, with more than 35,000 tourists visiting during 2008-09, the vast majority to the Antarctic Peninsula.

After a few days operating in the Bransfield Strait, Scott stopped off at Half Moon Island, where representatives from the FCO and BAS led an informal base visit.

Base visits can be conducted by any signatory nation of the Antarctic Treaty on another nation's base to ensure that all treaty obligations are being adhered to, with particular respect being paid to not having any adverse impact and preservation of the local environment.

One of the most memorable places for the ship's company was the visit to Port Lockroy, requiring the ship to steam into an inlet surrounded by mountains and glaciers.

Port Lockroy is a heritage site which is run and maintained by the British Antarctic Heritage Trust, and Scott was able to lend her support by delivering essential

stores and mail to this remote outpost.

To capture the breathtaking scenery and beauty of Antarctica LA(Phot) Kaz Williams and artist Rowan Huntley spent a great deal of time braving the elements on the upper deck.

Rowan joined Scott for the time in Antarctica, having been selected and sponsored by the Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI).

Rowan said: "I'm the lucky recipient of the first Artist Residency offered by the Friends of Scott Polar Research Institute and the Royal Navy."

"For 15 years I've specialised in painting snowy, glaciated mountain environments, but never before from a large, moving ship."

"I'm hugely enjoying the specific challenges that such an unusual residency has presented

to me – not least those of working quickly and of remaining upright while doing so."

With Scott's tasking successfully completed and the South Orkney Islands fading into the horizon the ship returned north to continue with the remainder of her deployment; she is due to return to Plymouth in early May.

Cdr Hesling said: "We are proud to be playing our part in helping to protect the Antarctic."

"Everyone on board recognises the importance of this fragile and unspoiled environment and its value to science especially in understanding climate change."

In the summer Scott is due to visit Cardiff to take part in the 100th anniversary of Captain Scott sailing for his final Antarctic expedition – an appropriate gesture by a ship so recently breasting the waters of the far South.



● Mid-ocean coxswain and bowman training in the South Atlantic



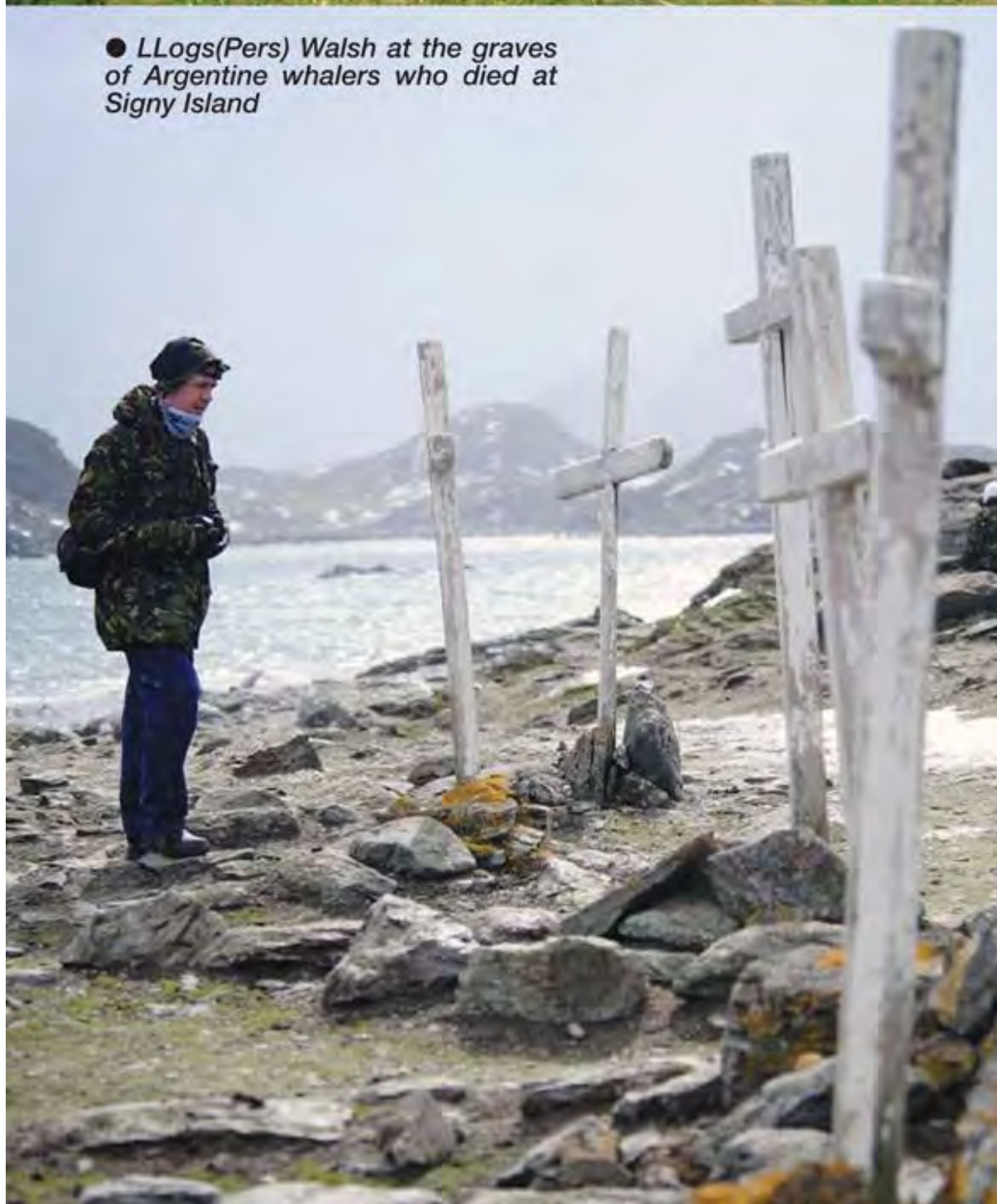
● A whale breaches near the ship off Melchior Island



● Cdr Hesling at the grave of Ord Tel Neville Milburn in Montevideo



● Contented wildlife at Half Moon Island, Yankee Harbour, in Antarctica



● LLogs(Pers) Walsh at the graves of Argentine whalers who died at Signy Island



● Scott at Port Lockroy

Astute arrival is covered

THE Royal Naval Philatelic Society has produced a limited edition commemorative cover to mark HMS Astute joining the Fleet.

There are five categories of cover, three of which are signed, and all use the Royal Mail stamps from 2001 which were produced for the centenary of the Submarine Service.

They range in price from £10.90 for the plain version to £52 for those signed by senior RN officers and Astute's CO and XO, though society members receive a 50 per cent discount.

All 410 covers also contain a text sheet and four double-sided colour photographs.

For details of this and other sets still available see the RNPS website www.rnphilatelic.org/

Museum recruiting

CODEBREAKING museum Bletchley Park had a record-breaking 2009, and now needs more volunteers to help this year's visitors get the most from the site.

Last year saw a 30 per cent increase on 2008, and the museum – home of the boffins who cracked the German Enigma code in World War 2 – smashed through the 100,000-visitor mark.

The National Codes Centre is seeking to recruit volunteer tour guides and stewards, with the initiative being formally launched at a special recruitment fair on Friday March 12 and Saturday March 13, when the park's existing tour guides will be on hand to meet potential new recruits and show them the ropes.

For more information see www.bletchleypark.org.uk

Polar epic revisited

A SNOW-encrusted statue in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard is a timely reminder of the start of a series of anniversaries over the next two years.

The bronze statue is of legendary Antarctic explorer Robert Falcon Scott, and was sculpted by his widow Lady Kathleen Scott in 1915 to commemorate her husband's doomed attempt to be the first to reach the South Pole.

A century ago Scott, who was born near Devonport, was preparing for his ill-fated second foray to the frozen continent – the Terra Nova expedition.

Today museums in Portsmouth and Cambridge are preparing to celebrate the centenary of this important scientific voyage.

In 2012, the centenary of Scott's death, the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth plans to display a sledge and pair of skis from that expedition.

The sledge was used by PO Thomas Williamson in the search for Scott's missing polar party.

In June this year – the anniversary month of Scott's departure – the Polar Museum at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge will reopen with new galleries.

The Institute, a sub-department of the University of Cambridge, was established in 1920 by Frank Debenham as a memorial to Scott and his companions.

Debenham was a geologist on the expedition, and a member of the support party who turned back before the final push to the South Pole.

While wanting a fitting tribute to Scott, he was also keen to see the explorer's work continue.

The Institute developed into an international centre for polar explorers, scholars and enthusiasts, and has been in the van of polar work for more than 85 years.

The new galleries will include



● Heavy snow, a masted ship and Capt Scott – the pictures by Phil George (above, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard) and Lt Rolf Williams (right) evoke the events of a century ago

exhibitions on the explorers who mapped out the Arctic and Antarctic, while the section on Scott and his expedition will display clothing, food, transport and scientific equipment, as well as Capt Oates' sleeping bag – recently selected as one of the top 100 items in the BBC's *A History of the World*.

Lawrence Oates, an officer in the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, was one of the four men who accompanied Scott in his attempt to be the first to the South Pole.

On their return, disheartened at having been beaten to their goal by Amundsen (who reached the pole a month before the British party), Oates became increasingly troubled by war wounds.

Conscious that he was slowing the progress of his companions, and thus reducing their chances of reaching safety, Oates sacrificed

himself to give the others a better opportunity.

The sacrifice was in vain, as his companions were later brought to a standstill by unusually severe weather conditions, and their frozen bodies were discovered by a search party in late November 1912, barely a dozen miles from a stores depot.

Diary entries suggested the last man alive – probably Scott – had succumbed to cold and exhaustion at the end of March that same year.

A number of events will be staged over the next two years to commemorate the Terra Nova expedition, Scott's career and polar exploration.

More information will be posted on the museum websites, www.spri.cam.ac.uk and www.historicdockyard.co.uk, as it becomes available



A sporting gesture by Billy

MINISTRY of Defence Police officers at Couplort in Scotland have been doing their bit to ease the lives of people in Afghanistan through the international medium of sport.

Constable Billy Hayes, currently serving at the Interim Helmand Police Training Centre at Lashkar Gah, issued an appeal to MOD Police and Guarding Agency colleagues to collect old sports tops and equipment.

He had noticed that although the locals enjoyed sporting activities during their spare time, they lacked basic clothing and equipment.

Officers at Couplort, the RN armaments depot near Faslane, where Billy is normally based, rose to the challenge and so far have collected around 170 tops and other clothing.

"When the working day is done, after evening prayers, the recruits and local people like a kick-around and other sports," said Billy.

"It is a way for them to unwind and come together."

Billy is a part of the international peacekeeping force in the region, training around 150 new police recruits every three weeks.

Marines cleared

FOUR Royal Marines have been cleared of all charges over the death of a sailor in Portsmouth last year.

Mne Ben Scott was charged with manslaughter and affray, and Mnes Mark Clarke, Luke Morton and James Taylor charged with affray, following the death of ET Kyle Bartlett, of HMS Liverpool, on May 5 2009.

But a jury at Winchester Crown Court acquitted all four defendants – who had originally been charged with murder – on all charges.



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● Bloodhound pictured in 1964, with Prince Philip at the helm

Picture: Copyright: Beken Ltd

Classic yacht goes on show

A CLASSIC 1930s ocean racing yacht owned by the Queen and Prince Philip in the 1960s has been bought by the Royal Yacht Britannia Trust and will go on display alongside Britannia in Edinburgh.

Built in 1936 by the Camper & Nicholsons yard in Gosport, Bloodhound was one of the most successful ocean racing yachts ever built, winning scores of races along the South Coast.

On the back of this success she was acquired by the Royal Family in 1962 and Prince Philip enjoyed much success competing with her at the Cowes Week regatta off the Isle of Wight, often carrying members of foreign royal houses and dignitaries.

During that period Bloodhound would also

accompany Britannia in the Western Isles when the Royal Family had their family holiday.

On these occasions Prince Charles and Princess Anne learned to sail on her, and when not in use by the Queen the yacht was crewed by a number of youth organisations, using Bloodhound to teach other young people how to sail.

In 1969 she was sold, and was finally retired from racing in 2001. Thereafter she fell into disrepair and had almost gone beyond salvage when she was bought by classic yacht restorer Tony McGrail in 2003.

He had her brought back to pristine condition, and it is now hoped that the yacht will go on display alongside Britannia at Leith from next month.



● Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel join X Factor 2009 finalists Ollie Murs and Stacey Solomon on stage at the opening of the 2010 Tullett Prebon London Boat Show at the ExCeL in London. Pictured with the singers are (from left) L/Cpl Ian Daulton (FPGRM), ABs Perry Hayward (back) and Ollie Perkins (HMS Cumberland), Cpl Neil Fellows (FPGRM) and Lt Liam Flatt of (Navy Command)

Picture: PO(Phot) Yam Yam Reynolds

Sword play

SWORD and Beach.

Put the words in close proximity and you'll conjure up images of a five-mile stretch of the Calvados shore from Ouistreham to St Aubin-sur-Mer stormed on the morning of June 6, 1944.

Not the sands of Pentewan in Cornwall... or the shingle of Browdown in Gosport.

In truth, neither was 'Sword Beach'. More accurately, they were beaches 'attacked' during South-west Sword, the warm-up by Britain's amphibious forces for exercises in Norway.

Perhaps we're being a little generous with the phrase 'warm-up'.

Neither Mevagissey nor Stokes Bay are toasty in January. Especially not in January 2010.

South-west Sword opened in a Cornish fog and ended in the Solent murk ten days later.

In between, there was quite a bit going on...

Amphibious flagship HMS Albion parked off Pentewan in company with RFA Mounts Bay and promptly began to ferry the green berets of 42 Commando ashore on to sands beloved by tourists... but not in the depths of January.

Aside from staff from 1 Assault Group Royal Marines – the parent organisation for the Corps' amphibious arm – who set up shop on Mounts Bay to direct 42's landings, experts from the Flag Officer Sea Training were also on hand to observe how Albion performed.

The exercise was the final test for the assault ship after emerging from refit last year.

And she needed to be on top form, because she's heavily in demand in 2010.

Aside from Cold Response in Norway (see next month), the ship is spearheading the RN's flagship deployment of the year, Auriga, which will see her cross the Atlantic with HMS Ark Royal to exercise with the US Navy and US Marines.

All that's a long way in the future. For now it's fog, mud, mist and two English beaches.

Pentewan was the warm-up part of this, er, warm-up exercise.

South-west Sword really kicked off in the Solent, where the Royals were joined by troops from the King's Royal Hussars and Royal Logistic Corps and something the green berets don't have in their arsenal, but the Army does: a Challenger 2 main battle tank.

Two Challenger 2 main battle tanks to be precise, ferried ashore by LCUs. And a few other tracked vehicles.

Which was jolly nice of them.

"It was good to work with the Army – they have assets like the tanks that we could use," said Cpl Louis Martinez, section commander, Mike Company 42 Cdo.

"It's good practice for us and it shows just what we are capable of."

With South-west Sword done, the Royals returned to their base at Bickleigh (their sister unit 45 is in Norway, but the 42 boys will be back aboard Albion for Auriga).

Meanwhile, within sight of Devonport Naval Base...

Not all the work-up for Cold Response took place at Browdown and Pentewan. There was a much smaller scale exercise for HMS Ocean's inherent RM unit, 9 Assault Squadron.

Ocean wasn't involved in South-west Sword, but she is taking part in the exercises in Norway and needed a little amphibious 'refresher'.

Hence a week of training around Plymouth. With 42 and 45 Commandos engaged elsewhere, the men to be deposited ashore came courtesy of 993 Troop, recruits in the final stage of training at CTCRM in Lympstone.

The would-be green berets arrived on the Mighty O fresh from Foggin Tor on Dartmoor which was characteristically wet.

After 'Operation Dryout' (warm food, bit of laundry) aboard the helicopter carrier, there was a re-introduction to the art of boarding Ocean's landing craft and inflatable raiders, followed by yet more warm food ("a classic range stew") and a repeat of the first drills... but in the dark (and the rain to boot).

It culminated in the troop's reconnaissance team being dropped on a beach without being spotted so they could yomp to the top a cliff.

Their cargo safely dropped off, 9 Assault Squadron returned to mother in what we're told were 'on limits' sea state (ie a bit sporty) which resulted in some 'exciting' (ie hair-raising) davit drills.

Still, crack on.

For the rest of 993, there was a night above Ocean, followed by a return to the beach by day to meet up with their recce comrades and march to their objective.

"The week was a great opportunity for the squadron to bring the new-joiners in to the swing of things – and to exercise with some real troops," said Mne Evans of 9 ASRM.

"The recruits had the bonus of a trip on board a ship which many of them may find themselves operating from after they pass out of training.

"If that wasn't enough benefit, we were able to bring a group of Royal Naval Reserve amphibious watchkeepers on to the beach to experience the watch they'll be keeping on exercises and operations when they're deployed."



● In the bleak midwinter... (Clockwise) A solitary commando on Pentewan Sands watches a landing craft in the mist; a 'stick' from 42 Commando join a Jungly Sea King aboard Albion in Stokes Bay; a Challenger 2, Scimitar and green berets emerge from the smoke at Browdown; a CHF Sea King in dramatic action; a pensive moment for the men of 42 Commando; and landing craft and raiders approach the Browdown shingle with RFA Mounts Bay docked down in the distance



pictures: (al)photos) keith morgan and Iuron wright



● Ski-borne and gun-bearing, the fight phase of the Cold Weather Warfare Course for the men of the UK Landing Force Command Support Group

● Marines, sailors and soldiers from the Commando Logistic Regiment head into the hills of the training area



Snow p



● Section attack and contact drills on the Cold Weather Warfare Course for the UK Command Support Group

THERE'S a Tugg cartoon which features two cheery matelots basking in the sun being bathed in a storm of invective from a Royal Marine. One Jack turns to the other and says: "What'samatter wiv 'im!?" The reply: "You know what they're like... It's becoss 'e's not up in Norway buried under ten feet of snow."

And it is indeed the season of Royal Marines up to their necks in Norwegian snow, plus assorted others connected with 3 Commando Brigade who have ventured into the green berets' frozen area of expertise.

Exercise Lupus II has drawn into the Arctic Circle the green berets of 45 Commando for their harsh winter training along with personnel from 29 Commando Royal Artillery, 24 Commando Engineering Regiment, 539 Assault Squadron RM, the Command Support Group and the Commando Logistic Regiment (CLR).

45 Commando's Commanding Officer Lt Col Oliver Lee summed up the value of this exercise in extreme cold weather skills: "The biggest challenge for the men here is coping with what are very demanding conditions.

"You pay a hard price for a mistake up here."

THIS Lupus stint saw the recently set-up Logistic Task Group of CLR head north - this team is made up of some 100 people all ready to deploy in less than five days to provide second-line support to smaller operations worldwide.

Lt Bobby Pearson, the Regimental Education Officer, brought a fresh approach to the cold but not overly snowy land of Norway - unfortunately just a few days before their arrival at Harstad on RFA Largs Bay the weather thawed, it rained, and the snow was washed away...

"The first step for most of us was to complete a Cold Weather Survival Course, which is the minimum qualification for anyone to operate safely in the harsh and unforgiving arctic environment.

"Although there was little snow, the damp and cold conditions made the course even more challenging."

Mountain Leader Sgt Law made sure his charges were put through their paces to get the most from their training.

His words were obviously taken to heart, with the first night in the field in ten-man tents seeing the CLR team pull together with the

buddy-buddy system, watching over each other for the telltale signs of cold weather injuries like frostbite and hypothermia.

But Lt Pearson admitted: "Once we were inside the tent though, life was actually quite pleasant when scran and hot wets had been put on and the cooks had warmed up the tents."

After days of yomping and nights of camping, the Logistic Task Group (LTG) team encountered the final phase of the course - basic survival skills.

Stripped of everything but the clothes they stood up in, they set to with a will to build shelters from nearby trees and wood.

Lt Pearson picks up the story: "For our hard work we were presented with a live chicken, and Sgt 'Bertie' Basset rolled up his sleeves and demonstrated how to kill the chicken humanely, then use every piece in a survival situation.

"Even at minus 20°, as the temperature dropped following the sun, with a roaring fire and a freshly stewed chicken, the inside of the brushwood shelter was relatively cosy."

Some may not consider the next event as lucky as Lt Pearson... "We were also fortunate enough to witness a demonstration from

a local Sami tribesman on how to slaughter a reindeer, which included a chance to drink its st warm blood."

Although the finale is without doubt a scene to be envied: "I top it all off that night, the natural phenomenon of the Northern Lights danced in the sky overhead to congratulate us on passing the Cold Weather Survival Course."

FROM survival the training moved into its second warrior phase - the Cold Weather Warfare Course (CWWC)...

In Lt Pearson's words: "The aim of cold weather training is to exist, move and fight."

Movement did rely on some usage of those well-known 'Pusser's planks' and the logistic team headed further north to Bardufoss to a civilian ski slope.

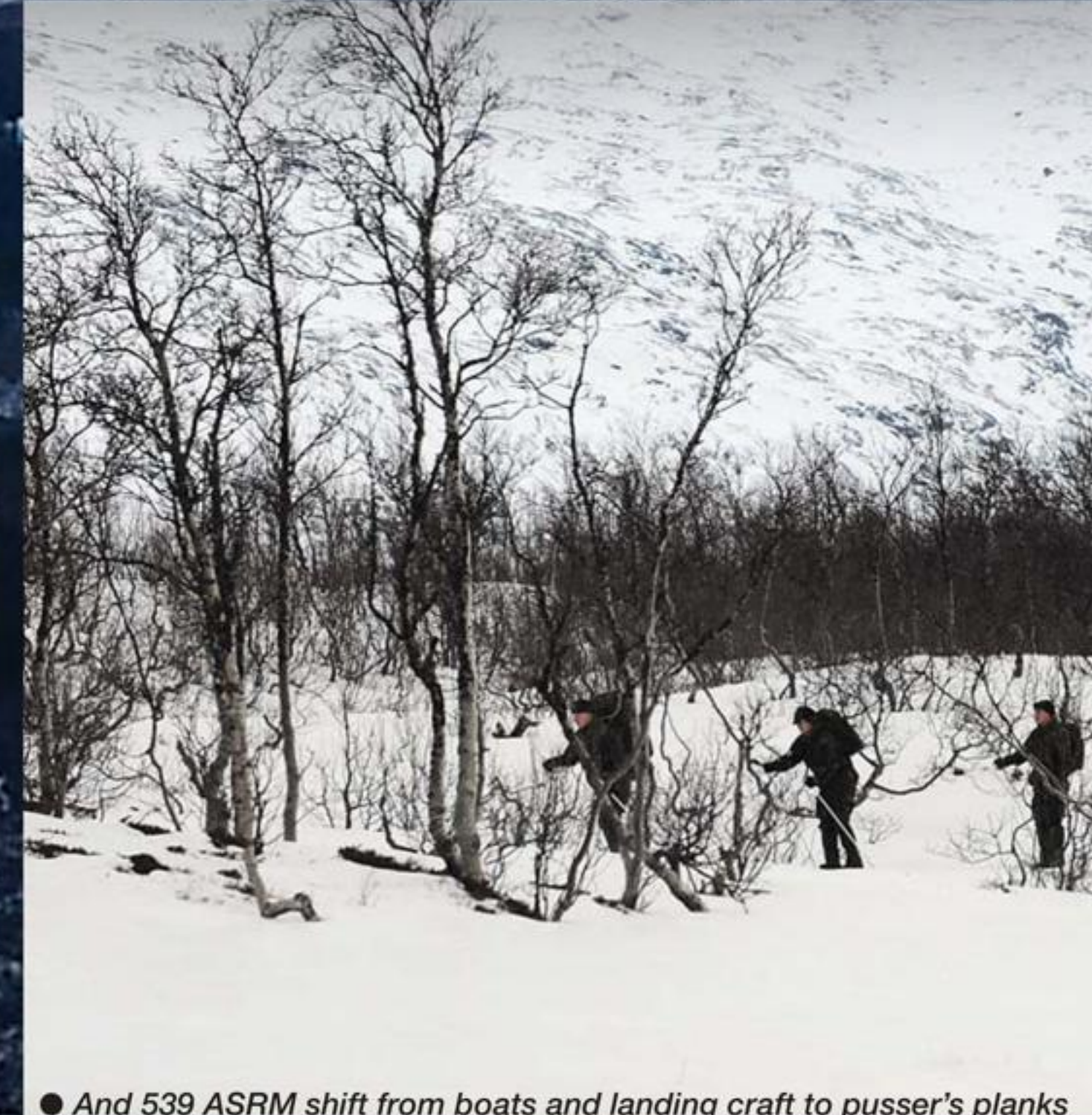
"On arrival we erected our salubrious accommodation ten metres from the piste, allowing us to literally ski in and out of our self-catered abode - something you would pay a fortune for in Chamonix or Courchevel.

"The next three days was mostly spent on our behinds - although not through choice - as we tried to master the snowplough stop, the side step, herring boning and snowplough turns."

The team spent three days on the



● The men of 539 Assault Squadron are grilled on name, rank and number amid icebreaking drills



● And 539 ASRM shift from boats and landing craft to pusser's planks

● Royal Marines from the Air Defence Troop set up their command position for the final week of training



Patrol

ski-slope honing their skills before heading off to a new campsite away from the civilisation of the commercial skiing world.

"The next two days were spent refining our ski touring skills, learning how to double pole and diagonal gate in order to cover more ground using less effort, therefore conserving energy.

"One of the most enjoyable lessons from the course was ski-joring.

"This is when up to 16 men hang on for dear life to a rope which is attached to the back of a BV (a tracked vehicle), which subsequently dives over the snow dragging its victims along behind.

"This is great fun. Until the front man 'creams in' - falls over - and the trailing snake of skiers behind end up face planting on top of him."

And life on skis progressed from light order - carrying no equipment, through patrol order - light order plus a daysack, to added burdens.

"The first piece of extra equipment that we needed to ski with was a weapon, this was strapped to our side to ensure that when we fell over it didn't meet us half-way down in the face," Lt Pearson graphically described.

Once weapon was securely

stowed, the team were put through section attack and contact drills, mastering skis, poles, weapons, firing positions and magazine changes. On the move. With thick mittens.

Naturally as this is Royal we are talking about, such challenges were merely a teaser before the fun and games began with a 70lb bergen on their backs.

"The unit Mountain Leader referred to this as the equaliser, causing even those who had a lot of skiing experience to be now equally terrible skiers.

"The sheer weight is not necessarily the problem," explained the naval officer, "but it is firstly the lack of balance it brings and secondly, when one does inevitably fall over, it is an epic just getting back up and putting the bergen on again."

The tactical phase of the exercise brought all these skills together as the CLR team pushed into an area under the cover of darkness, digging tents into the snow and camouflaging them beneath white netting.

AND so to that final iconic image of Norwegian training: the channel cut through the ice, the freezing blue water, the expectant audience, the overseeing instructors, the drenched victim -

icebreaking drills.

"The skill is practised in case you fall through the ice whilst crossing a lake or river; firstly this means that you know how to climb out using your poles, but secondly it means your body gets a chance to experience the cold water and therefore if you were to go in for real it would reduce the initial shock," explained Lt Pearson.

"We therefore dutifully lined up and one by one plunged into the icy pool, took off our bergen and pushed it out of the water, swam to the other side of the hole and sang out our name, rank and number and then asked permission to exit the ice.

"It was at this point that Sgt Law decided to give each of us a verbal test on some of the theory lessons learnt earlier, treading water in a frozen lake definitely sharpens the mind.

"Once we were finally allowed to crawl out of the hole it is traditional, and medicinal, to drink a tot of rum, so we toasted the Queen before sprinting back to the warm tent to get changed."

Lovely...

■ More on the men, women, ships, units, landing craft and helicopters working in Norway in next month's Navy News



● Royal Marine vehicles wait to join HMS Ocean alongside in Harstad (photographer unknown)



● Driving onto Ocean's vehicle deck from the side ramp (photographer unknown)



Globe, laurel and anchor?

IT WAS not my intention to ruffle any feathers with my comments about where the Royal Marines stand within the Royal Navy (Comment, December)

My sincere apologies for that. I was trying to make a strong point that we are 100 per cent Royal Navy and should under no circumstances be taken as Army, as a lot of civilians tend to think.

The number of elderly people and youngsters I've spoken to here in Pompey that don't know who the Globe and Laurel cap badge belongs to is quite astounding.

What do readers think about changing our cap badge to Globe, Laurel and Anchor (see inset)?

This may sound like a drastic move, but it isn't really.

Think about it. The Army have the Parachute Regiment with wings to show they are airborne, so why not have an anchor in our cap badge, to show we are seaborne?

We have it on the crest, sure. But we don't wear the crest on our covers (lids). This is after all the 21st century.

To finish with, why do we salute the same as the Army? Why not like the Navy?

I do hope Messrs Bernard Hallas, T H Crawford and Tom Smith and everyone else who responded to my initial letters take the time to think about it.

I served 16 years and was, and am, proud to have served under the White Ensign.

I feel very passionate about this subject. Maybe a few Admirals will read this.

- Ian Campbell, Southsea, Hants

...IT IS not in my nature to keep a story ongoing from month to month but I must take up the cudgels against Mr Crawford (affectionately addressed as 'Crackers' no doubt) when he wrote about the Dabtoes carrying the Royals ashore at our most famous battle.

If he goes back to his history books he will discover that, far from carrying the Marines ashore to prevent them from getting their feet wet, they actually hove to and dumped them in the shallows, then raising sail, turned about and vacated the area.

Being already soaked to the skin (but keeping their powder dry) they stayed in the sea, walked around the Rock and attacked the enemy in the rear.

It was a resounding victory, which could never have come to pass if the 'dabtoes' had done their duty and carried them ashore and got their own feet wet in the process.

- Bernard Hallas, Haxby, York

...IN REPLY to Ian Campbell, the second verse of Kipling's poem *Soldier and Sailor* too goes:

For there isn't a job on the top of the earth the beggar don't know nor do -

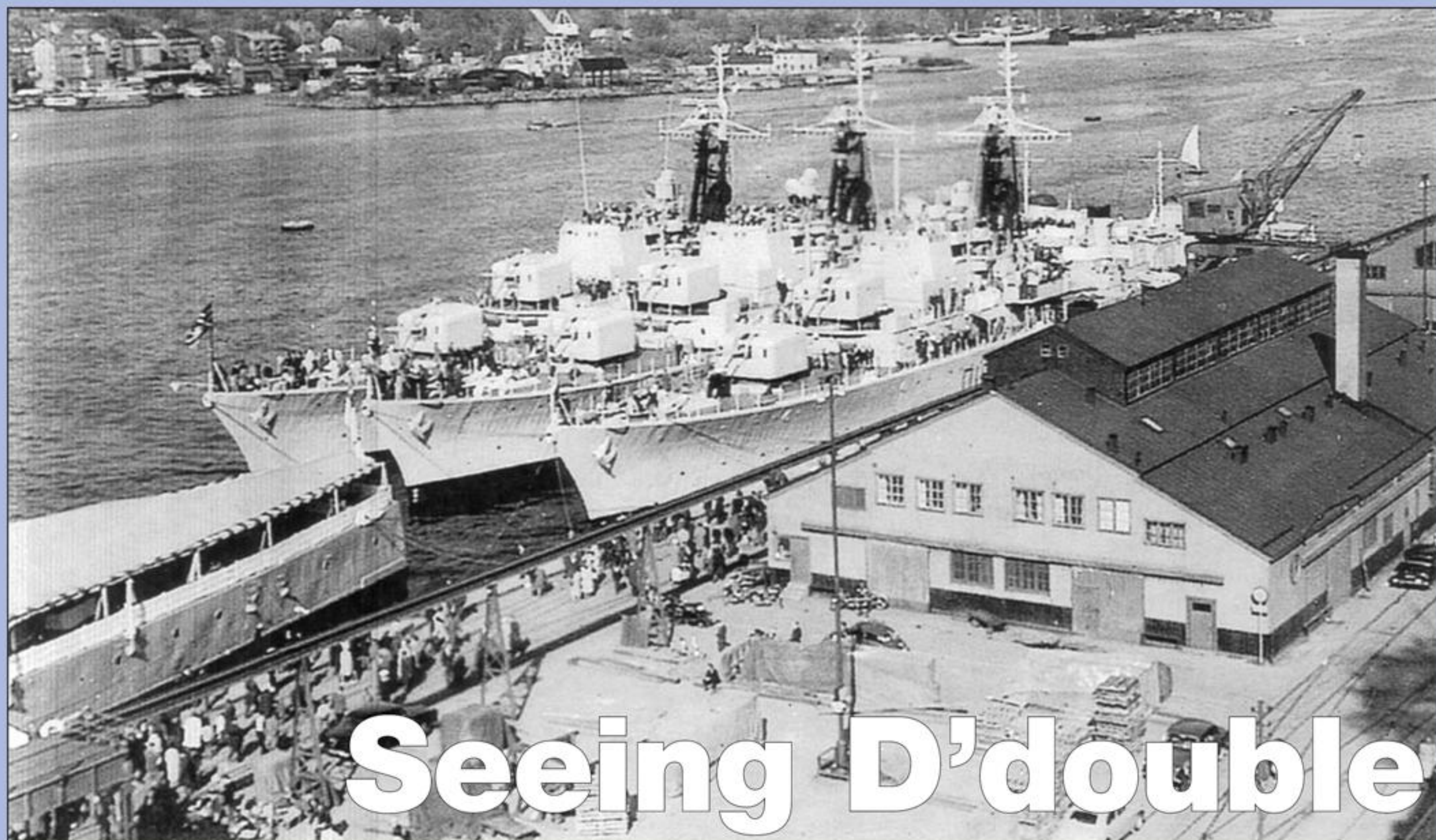
You can leave 'im at night on a baldman's 'ead, to paddle 'is own canoe -

'E's a sort of blooming cosmopolouse -

Soldier and sailor too.'

So there you are Ian Campbell - you chooses yourself and you takes your pick!

- R F Hallam, Beeston, Nottingham



Seeing D'double



I WAS down the Clyde opposite BAE at Clydebank, and as there were four Type 45 Daring-class destroyers all together it was too good a chance to miss them - so I took this photo (see left).

It shows Dauntless as the outboard ship, D33, on her inside is the Diamond, D34, to the left in the drydock is Defender, D36, and I'm afraid I did not manage to photograph the top hamper of the Dragon, D35, which is in drydock behind the shed to the left of Defender.

I served on a Daring class, HMS Diana (D126) from October 1960 to September 1962 as an ME1.

My photo of the older Daring-class ships was taken in Helsinki in the late summer of 1962 when the ships were open to visitors.

HMS Duchess is alongside the jetty, with HMS Diamond and Diana outboard. Bermuda's stern can just be seen ahead of Daring's.

The three Darings were part of the 5th Destroyer Squadron along with Crossbow and Battleaxe.

- Norrie Thirrouez, Moodiesburn, Glasgow

Open arms in Ajax

I READ with great interest about HMS Ajax (January) especially the last four or five paragraphs about the town of Ajax, near Toronto.

I remember quite clearly visiting this town in 1965 while serving on HMS Torquay.

We were part of the Dartmouth Training Squadron along with Tenby and Scarborough, showing the flag in North America.

We went into the Great Lakes via the St Lawrence River and Seaway, calling at Montreal and Quebec before visiting our assigned posts.

The reception in Toronto was fantastic.

Members of the Toronto RNVR made us welcome at their HQ Club and the townsfolk of Ajax invited the ship's company to a sports tournament which was readily accepted - and a fabulous time was had by all those who attended.

But of course, in 1965 it was nowhere near the size it is now - certainly not 800 streets!

I cannot recall what the outcome of the tournament was, maybe some old shipmates can?

What I can say is thanks to *Navy News* and the people of Ajax, Toronto, for wonderful memories.

- Don Bowman, POMA(D) Wellingborough, Northants

Medal matters

IN *Across the Generations* (January, page 14) it states that AB Mark Cotts was awarded his Good Conduct Badge.

He already has three GC badges. I suggest that he is holding his ancestor's Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

Rather different and more worthy.

- Cdr Peter Selfe, Fareham, Hants

...I THINK you had what we septuagenarians would call a 'senior moment.'

AB Mark Cotts was awarded his RN LS&GC medal and is holding his great-grandfather's LS&GCM - it is a medal for 15 years of good conduct, not a badge.

- Michael O'Brien, Biggleswade, Beds

...I KNOW things have changed since I left the Royal Navy.

Congratulations to AB Mark Cotts on receiving his third Good Conduct badge.

But that is his grandfather's

Facebook fans

I AM an AB serving at HMS Drake and I have just set up a Facebook group called Shipmates Reunited.

The idea is to get sailors old and new to join this group and then they can look for old shipmates who they thought they might have lost contact with.

The group was set up one

LS&GC and not his GC badge - or is this a typing error on your part?

- J Bowen, King's Lynn, Norfolk

...I RETIRED from the Navy in 1991 after 39 years' service.

Reading correspondence in *Navy News* about the LS&GC medal has resurrected the feeling I have always had of being 'seen off' because the regulations do not consider me eligible.

The regulations state that an officer shall be eligible for award of the LS&GC medal if 12 or more of the 15 years' service requirement has been in the ranks and provided that the other criteria have been met.

Having joined as a Boy Seaman at 15, I was commissioned as an SD Officer at 27, which meant that I only achieved nine years' man's time from the age of 18 (the other criteria.)

So if 39 years isn't long service, what is?

- Lt Cdr John Pope (Ret'd)

Missing you sew much

I AM a degree student studying embroidered textiles.

My next module focuses on 20th and 21st century embroidery.

Recently my mother gave me a bundle of table linen, and it transpired that the treasures contained a table cloth, beautifully crocheted by my grandmother.

My mother tells me that while my grandfather was fighting at the front in World War 1 my grandmother worked on this tablecloth.

History was repeated when my mother became a Wren and met my father, who was serving in the Navy. He was an engineer. While he was at sea in HMS *Illustrious* my mother stitched a tablecloth, this time embroidered.

The final link in the chain is myself. I was in the *QARNNS* and met a Surgeon Lt who was to become my husband.

He went to sea in HMS *Glamorgan* for 18 months. While he was away I did a piece of canvas work. It was the officer's cap badge.

I knew nothing of the history of our family stitching when our men were serving away and wonder if through *Navy News* you could ask your readers if they have similar stories to tell and have found solace in using a needle?

- Sue Flood, Devizes, Wiltshire



● A typical motor minesweeper, about 119 of which were built. Photo supplied by Bill Day

Crossing a stormy pond

READING *Small ships in a big pond* (December) stirred my memories of a North Atlantic crossing I made (I am now 90) and I sympathised with the crew of HMS Quorn.

In August 1943 the newly-commissioned 104th Minesweeping Flotilla set sail from St John's Newfoundland - destination Londonderry.

These four purpose-built minesweepers, MMS 242, 243, 244, 245 were 250-tons, 105-foot on the waterline and shallow draught built entirely of wood at

a small shipyard in Methagan on the bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia.

Despite being split up due to severe bad weather, they all arrived, albeit a bit battered, safely between nine and 12 days later.

The flotilla did sterling work in the Channel during D-day including clearance of the Seine estuary.

I served on MMS 244 as Leading Wireman, having joined in January 1940 and left in 1947 as Petty Officer Wireman.

- W J Day, Rhos on Sea, Conwy

opinion

GONE ARE the days when a young lad, attracted perhaps by a jolly 'Join the Navy, see the world' poster, walked into his local recruiting office, had an aptitude test and was signed up for one branch or another.

Nowadays new technology has taken over, with a new vocabulary to go with it.

Potential engineer officers, for instance, are assessed by the Navy's recruiters as being 'tech-savvy optimistic achievers' and targeted accordingly.

When the recruiters wanted to find these engineer officer candidates recently, they worked out that the best way to reach them was via mobile phone. Research shows that 97 per cent of people in the UK own one.

So the recruiters commissioned the Royal Navy iPhone app, complete with interactive game, call-back facility and links to the

website, among other impressive 'cutting-edge' features.

The scheme worked, the iPhone App received over 60,000 downloads in its first four weeks and is still going strong.

We quill-pushers at *Navy News* have joined the march of technology too, perhaps not in the front row, but not so far behind.

First we had a website, then our e-edition, now we, like AB Gaz Seeley (see *Comment* above) have ventured into Facebook, with a page of our own, where we were delighted to see that we already have a few 'fans'.

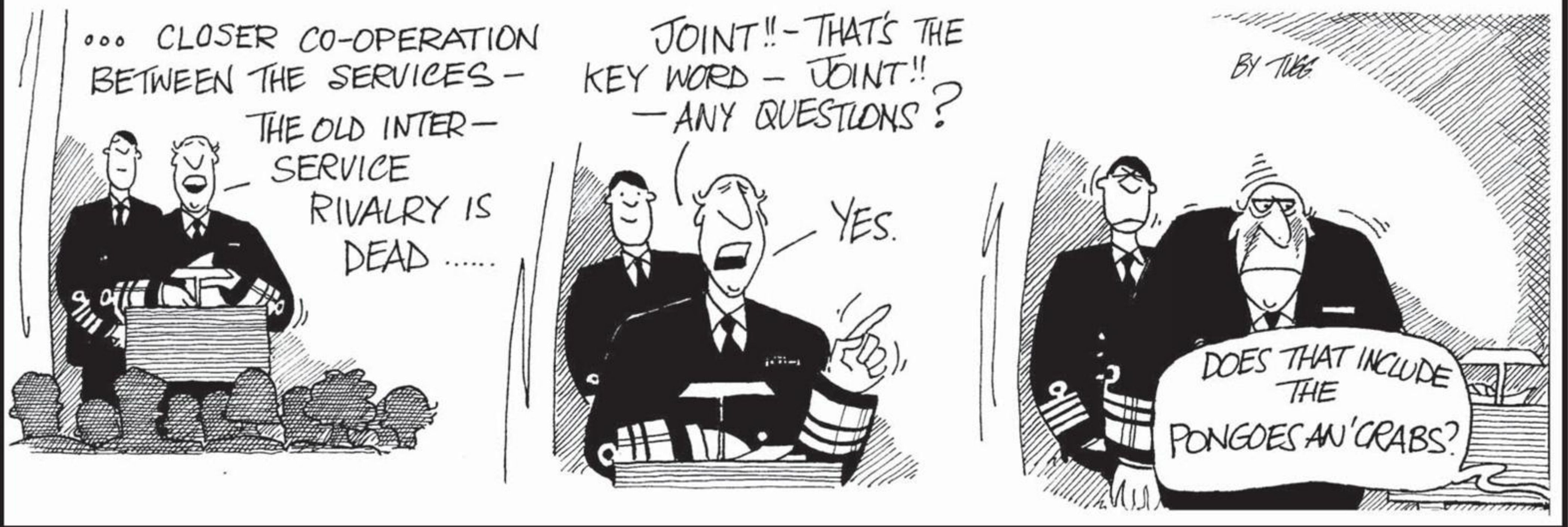
Not all of our older readers embrace this technology wholeheartedly. For every 'silver surfer' there is one who finds even the present is another country, let alone the future.

The next few years will doubtless bring more technological advances for us to marvel at - but there will always be room at *Navy News* for the good old hand-written letter.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGS



Brave Barrington


IN HIS letter *Clearing Mines with Caroline* (December) Peter Fowles mentions the BAR ship whose name he had forgotten - she was HMS Barrington, P259 (pictured above).
At the time I was one of the two stoker POs (POSMs) onboard. I recall one of the mines enclosed in a rotting wooden case being lifted onboard for inspection.
Most of the crew of 32 had been ordered aft where we viewed the operation from behind the aft winchhouse.
Brave sailors all.
- M R Golding, ex submariner Mech 1, Dumbarton

Costly tot

THE year 2009 was the 100th anniversary of naval aviation, and in general we did commemorate it in good and true naval fashion, with a great week in London in early May, and various events up and down the country throughout the year.
There was one exception however, and that was a distinct lack of *Splice the Mainbrace!*
Surely with a major anniversary in naval history, this is something that should not have been allowed to go amiss?
I understand that paying for it may have been a problem - *Jackspeak* states: "If the Lord High Admiral ordains Splicers [as she did for her Golden Jubilee] then the Exchequer pays."
"Anyone else requesting this evolution will subsequently receive a rather large bill."
So has the credit crunch put paid to our naval traditions and robbed us all of a less-than-frequent tot?
- CPO ACMN J J Walker, RNAS Culdrose
We are concerned that you may have missed out since as far as we know, Splice the mainbrace was ordered on May 7th... - Ed

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.
E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.
If you submit a photograph 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.



George's tall tales

HAVING read several of the letters about George Parker I must add my two pennyworth.
From June until December 1957 I served in HMS Camperdown as a MEM(1) and A/LMEM. At that time the ship was undergoing a refit and upgrade in Liverpool after being taken out of mothball reserve.
Some time late in the refit, George Parker wandered on board, probably with some officers from St Kitts, and everyone wondered who this strange person was.
He arrived looking like something out of the scran bag dressed in overalls, sea jersey, white cap and sea boots plus sporting a full 'set'.
At the time the coxswain (Nobby Clark I believe) had already firmly established himself in an office, fitted out by the shipyard, in the area of the foremast.
As I remember there was some consternation when George Parker announced that this was to be his caboose. He got very short shrift from the cox'n.
We were told stories about him being allowed to have the copper ball at the top of the mast - the reason, we were told, was that Lord Louis Mountbatten had allowed this in recognition that George had been in the Navy for two weeks longer than he (Lord Louis) had.

We were also told the yarn about him sending himself recall telegrams, which we thought was a bit far-fetched, although it was confirmed by D J Clayton's letter in the February issue.
- John Sexton, ex FCMEMN(P), Walton-le-Dale, Preston, Lancashire
...I SERVED on HMS St Kitts with George. We started our commission on HMS Gravelines but had to change to St Kitts because of rust in the hull.
George (right) was on board when we changed over. We were Devonport and he was Chatham, but he would not leave St Kitts.
He had a brass ball on the mainmast and aircraft carriers wanted us as escort because they said it was a good omen.
He was a legend. It was said he never did any duties and had been in the RN longer than Lord Mountbatten, who was Commander-in-Chief at the time.
- F Talbot, ex AB, St Kitts 1953-1954 Bath
...I JOINED St Kitts as 5th class ERA in 1947 and remember AB George Parker, or 'Stripey' as I seem to remember we called him, always in overalls and sea boots and a caboose lined with vintage photographs of his old ships.
There were many stories about him and his disregard for 'pusser'



authority but I was left with the impression he was not beloved by all, some seeing him as an Executive Officer's pet who got away with too much for the good of general discipline.
- Dave Watkins, ex ERA, Oxted, Surrey





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Turbulent times for Lizard lifeboat

SUBMARINERS from HMS Turbulent, alongside on a defect rectification period since last June, have been spending some of their time in Devonport raising money for charity.

From the £2,000 raised so far they chose the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's Lizard Lifeboat Appeal to receive a hefty sum.

Officers and senior rates (pictured above) paid a visit to the charity's divisional support base in Saltash to present a cheque for £630, the money raised through a raffle at their Christmas ball.

Cdr Ryan Ramsey, PO Christopher Wright, Lt Cdr Gareth Jenkins and WO Stuart Brown were treated to a guided tour of the base, which serves 35 lifeboat stations across the south-

west. They met some of the management team who oversee more than 90 beaches.

The deeps pledged to support the RNLI's biggest fundraising event, SOS Day, when hundreds of people across the region take part in cash-collecting events.

Cdr Ramsey said: "I am delighted that my ship's company has decided to donate the proceeds from our ball to the local lifeboat appeal in support of their fantastic work."

Robin Martin, Fundraising and Communications Manager for the RNLI's South Division, said: "It was a pleasure to accept such a significant amount from the HMS Turbulent and I am delighted that our fellow seafarers are supporting us."



● Volunteers from the Maritime Aviation Support Force

Picture: Jenny Lodge

Parc's good wood

A NEW woodland walk has been created at Parc Eglos Primary School, in Cornwall, with the help of Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose.

Volunteers from the Maritime Aviation Support Force cleared the site of previous structures and debris and 'recycled' the materials to create new structures and pathways in the nature walk.

The winter weather was not particularly kind to the workforce but with good humour and plenty of morale-boosting cups of tea and biscuits provided by the school's dinner ladies the team achieved far more by the end of the week than they hoped.

Headmaster Brett Dye said: "We were trying to develop a wonderful outside environment which includes woodland walks, safe play areas and some really special secret places for the children to enjoy."

He added: "The start given to us by RNAS Culdrose has been absolutely invaluable."

"Despite the appalling weather, they were brilliant and achieved so much."

The walk was given the seal of approval by its first visitors, the children of Pathways nursery class who tested every path and feature, giving a special thumbs-up to the sailors of the support force.

Battle auction at Drake

A CHARITY auction in aid of the RNRMC raised around £7,000 at a dinner held in HMS Drake to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate.

More than 170 guests, including four British veterans who took part in the battle and Capt Stephen Harwood, son of the Allied commodore, attended the dinner, which was staged by the West Country branch of the Chartered Institute for Securities and Investment.

Among the top military guests attending were Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson, Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet.

Naval historian Professor Eric Grove gave a summary of the battle, which took place off the coast of Argentina and Uruguay, and saw three British cruisers engage the German pocket battleship Graf Spee.

Highlights of the event included a mess beating by the Royal Marines Corps of Drums and the presentation of a specially-commissioned painting of the battle to the Royal Navy.

URNU digs deep for Valley kids

MEMBERS of the Wales University Royal Naval Unit have been following the example of ships and establishments in taking on a charity to support throughout the year.

The students, or Honorary Midshipmen in URNU terms, were given the task of finding a local charity and Mid Rebecca Saunders found Valley Kids, a few miles from Cardiff in the Rhondda Valley.

The charity has been established for 32 years working with disadvantaged children and their families.

The unit plans to raise funds for the charity throughout the year, but the first thing they gave was their time.

The undergraduates, 51 in total, spent the day setting to work in a *Ground Force* style, cleaning, decorating and repairing their charity's centres at Dinas and Penynglyn, both of which serve the local children by providing a vast range of services and a safe place to 'hang out.'

It wasn't only the charity which benefited from the day but also the midshipmen from Wales URNU. They worked in small groups and were able to develop



● Lt Thomas and Mid Roach at work at Valley Kids

their leadership and team-working skills, putting their drill-night experience into practice.

It also took them to a part of Wales they would probably never have visited while studying at the Universities of Cardiff and Swansea.

Senior Midshipman Aaron

Corp said: "It has given us the opportunity to put something back into the community and when the kids who attend the centres came up at the end of the day and thanked us it gave us a real buzz knowing we had helped with something which is so important in their lives."

Show me the way to row home

CLUBZ Mathew 'Ruby' Murray felt like a fish out of water when he first arrived in Afghanistan.

It wasn't the country that bothered the PTI, nor the job – it was being the only sailor in an Army unit.

Ruby explained: "Being a matelot assigned to a Pongo unit in a landlocked country, I was truly a fish out of water and didn't know what to expect."

"I soon settled in and quickly learned that there really wasn't much difference between your average soldier and sailor."

"We both like beer, women, working out, and are only happy when we are dripping about something."

Acting CPO Ruby's main jobs were to mentor the Afghan National Army's PTIs, give physical training lessons for the Afghan Officer Cadets at the Military Training Centre in Kabul, and keep the British mentors in shape.

The latter wasn't too difficult, as most of them were already extremely fit from devoting much of their spare time to 'phys'.

So he looked around for another challenge, and finding several keen rowers in the unit, an idea began to take shape.

Ruby takes up the tale: "As we were in a landlocked country I thought it would be quite ironic to be able to row out of Afghanistan and all the way home."

"Our chosen charity was always going to be the one which is close to all our hearts – Help for Heroes."

"Brilliant, I thought, that's settled, we will row from Kabul to Headley Court. A total distance of 3,088 nautical miles."

He continued: "My boss, Major Garry McLeod, had previous experience of many fund-raising events and was the driving force behind our sponsorship."

"WO1 Andy Owen also wrote off to many companies to gain support and Concept 2, whose rowing machines we were using, sent T-shirts and water bottles and their best wishes for the task ahead."

"The original challenge was to complete the distance within a month, but due to operational commitments and the sheer exhaustion of the lads it took us eight weeks."

"They would arrive back from days and sometimes

weeks in the field only to be sent to the rowing machines to clock the metres they had missed whilst being away.

"Towards the end, it was becoming a real struggle to stay focused on the target, as everyone was sick of the sight of rowing machines."

"However, we eventually got down to the last 100 miles and decided to complete these outside in the middle of the camp, in order to shake the collection tin at our coalition partners and raise the last few well-deserved pounds."

"Due to the nature of your average soldier and sailor, the last 100 miles turned into a competition of its own. We each had a 15-minute slot in which to row as many metres as possible."

"Capt Gareth Jones, Royal Signals, set a good distance early on in the day of 4,040m. There were a few people that pushed close to this target but never quite reached it."

"As the brainchild of the event I was ordered to go last by the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Nick Ilic, from the Rifles. The pressure was now well and truly on, because as a PTI I was not going to settle for second-best."

"Everyone gathered around me and the rowing machine, all egging me on to beat the gargantuan effort of Capt Jones."

"I rowed my heart out and gave every ounce of energy that was inside me. I had my eyes closed as I pulled the last metres and had no idea if I had won or not."

"I eventually looked up and saw that I was 35m short and was absolutely gutted. I was gracious in defeat and shook Capt Jones' hand."

"Although I had been beaten, we and Help for Heroes had won and I went to bed that night happy that we had completed our challenge and raised £3,000 for them."

Ruby, who is now swinging the clubs in HMS Collingwood, ends: "My thanks go to all at the United Kingdom Leadership Training Team for their sheer guts and determination to get the job done, which epitomises the spirit of British service personnel."

"I would also like to relay my appreciation to everyone who sponsored the event for such a worthy cause."

Bears for babies

OVER 70 children were welcomed to the Wyvern Centre at HMS Drake for a Christmas party with bouncy castle, children's entertainer, face painting and a festive feast of party food.

The event was organised by husband and wife team LPT Charleine Wain and POPT Scott Wain, and raised £1,447 for Derriford Hospital in Plymouth.

The money was used by Charleine and Scott to buy a teddy bear for every baby in the hospital, including the neonatal intensive care unit as well as three other wards.

And every child in the hospital received a present too, all delivered by the Wains and their children Ethan and Maia on Christmas Eve.

In addition, due to the generosity of all involved at the fundraising party, the family presented a cheque for £560 to the neonatal intensive care ward.

Sausage month

BUTCHERS A Turner and Sons have declared March as the month of the sausage with Bangers for Cash.

The idea is for military bases around the UK to host a sausage day, selling off bangers to raise money for Help for Heroes.

And if the A Turner sausages – The Hair of the Hog and the Pickled Pig – are bought from Tesco's, then 5p goes to Help for Heroes, or from military supplier DBC & Purple Foods then 20p goes to the charity box.

If you register your event through the Help for Heroes website (www.helpforheroes.org.uk/bangers-for-cash), then the charity will send to you collecting buckets, banners and posters for your event.

BRNC Dartmouth are planning an event for the end of this month, along with RMA Sandhurst and RAF Cranwell.

But there must be a few more sausage lovers out there...

Draw deep

YOU'VE HEARD of the *Two Fat Ladies*, now meet the *Two Fat Submariners*.

Friends Steve Mills and Barry Bishop both left the Navy ten years ago but have kept in touch ever since.

They're getting together to take on three major charity events later this year, a bike ride, a run, and a swim, in aid of Help for Heroes, the NSPCC, and Make a Wish Foundation.

As well as having full-time jobs, both former deeps find time for charity and voluntary work. Barry is the chairman of the Oxford Sea Cadets and Steve is Secretary of Area 5 of the RNA.

To find out more and support their fund-raising efforts, go to their website at www.twofatsubmariners.com

Stroke for stroke

ROYAL Marine Lt Col Justin Smallwood, based in the Maritime Warfare Centre at HMS Collingwood, has completed a 10km rowing challenge entitled Stroke for Stroke, in aid of the Stroke Association.

His efforts, which took place in the MWC foyer (right), lasted 40 minutes to raise £261.30.

Stroke for Stroke is a partnership between the Stroke Association and Siemens to help support Siemens' sponsorship of the GB rowing team, and to raise money to help fight stroke in the UK.

Justin said: "I had a stroke 18 months ago and, although I have recovered well, I am now very aware of what stroke can do to people and their families and friends."

"I am also keen to raise awareness of how to spot a stroke in others, so don't forget the following ways to spot a stroke: F – Face, has it dropped; A – Arms, can the person raise their arms and hold them up; S – Speech, is their speech slurred; T – Time, get help now!"

"Speedy medical attention may reduce the impact of the stroke."



Heron help

TWO recent fund-raising events at HMS Heron have seen nearly £1,000 raised for Help for Heroes.

The first cheque, for £432 was presented to Fiona Rainbird-Clarke, the Somerset Group co-ordinator for the charity, after the sale of cider at the Nuffield Sports Bar.

The cider, donated by Gaymers of Shepton Mallet, was originally destined for a charity village fete at the air station, but it was cancelled because of bad weather so it was sold behind the bar.

The second cheque, for £515, was raised following a popular *The X Factor* competition held in Jester's Bar.

Assorted jumpers

ABOUT the time this edition of *Navy News* was coming off the press, six brave friends linked to HMS Drake were preparing a 15,000 feet parachute jump in aid of Help for Heroes.

The idea came to Lt Cdr (now retired) Nick Bradshaw, a Burnham lecturer who teaches maths to sailors and marines at Drake.

Nick's first recruit for the jump was his daughter, Jenny, 25. As she was walking past him one day he reminded her that she owed him a favour.

He'd fed her pony, why didn't she do something for him, and agree to jump out of a plane strapped to a six-foot parachutist?

Jenny agreed on condition that her father joined her.

Then, one of Nick's students, AB Robert Laskey, said he was keen to jump, and within a short time they had been joined by Sarah Paz, a civil servant from the Civilian Training Organisation; Kathryn Harvey from the Learndirect Organisation at Drake, and finally Lt Cdr Ian Taylor, the head of the Naval Education Training Service in the West Country.

Nick said: "It seems an appropriate mixture of jumpers. Drake's education centre teaches sailors, marines and civilians as well as their families, and Learndirect provides a wide range of courses for personnel at the base."

He added: "All the funds raised will go to Help for Heroes, close to the hearts of HMS Drake and Devonport, with its connections to 3 Commando Brigade, the newly-appointed Hasler Division and the remedial work done in Drake."

"Any offers, money and sponsorship would be very welcome – please send contributions to Lt Cdr Nick Bradshaw at the Base Learning and Development Centre, HMS Drake, HM Naval Base Devonport, PL2 2BG, or go to www.justgiving.com/Nick-Bradshaw."

Cadet force

DIPTFORD PRIMARY School, in South Hams, Devon, enjoyed a visit from some Senior Cadets of Britannia Royal Naval College who came to help them with some heavy duty tasks in and around the school playground.

Eight cadets and their divisional officer, Lt Dan Parnell, made the journey across to Diptford to meet the headmaster, Tony Callcut, and find out what jobs the school would like them to do.

On the agenda were moving a shed, building a fence, laying a patio and pathway as well as numerous other 'little' yet time-consuming jobs.

Mr Callcut said: "It was just brilliant to meet the team from BRNC. They were all keen to get on with the tasks in hand and actually achieved far more than we hoped for."

"Once we got there we all wanted to get on with the project as we knew we could make a difference," said Lee Norton, who had organised the visit. "It was useful that one of us, Stu Moss, professed to be an expert fence builder!"

Despite sporadic showers of rain the team managed to whitewash the climbing wall and lay the patio and path. "Our expertise was fairly negligible when it came to path and patio but we learned a lot as we went along," commented team member Jamie Smithson.

During the day some governors and parents from the school joined in and everyone was very satisfied with the day's work. The best bit, by all accounts, were the pasties provided for the workers.

Lee Norton and John Roberts later returned to the school to join the morning assembly and explain to the pupils the true significance of the Remembrance Ceremonies.



Royal canine makes his debut

ROOKIE guide dog 'Royal' is one of the latest puppies to be trained by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

The yellow Labrador was named in honour of the Royal Marines who helped raise the money to sponsor him.

Royal was one of two puppies sponsored by the Legends Trek, a journey over the West Highland Way taken by Scott Cunningham and his guide dog, Travis.

Scott decided to walk the route for the charity, reversing the traditional direction by travelling north to south.

One of his friends, a former Royal, recommended getting Marines from Faslane's Fleet Protection Group involved and four of the elite troops joined him on his way.

C/Sgts Rab Murray and Billy Rodger, WO2 Dusty Miller and Cpl John Maughan accompanied Scott and Travis on their journey, joined by several former Rangers' players in what became known as the "Legends Trek".

Andy Goram, Terry Hurlock, Arthur Newman and Mark Hateley were among the players who each tackled a leg of the five-day journey, as well as have-a-go hero John Smeaton, the baggage handler from Glasgow airport who tackled two Islamic terrorists in June 2007.

C/Sgt Murray said: "Scott was a real inspiration to us all during the trek. He battled through some horrendous weather along the way and everyone was impressed by how he took it in his stride."

"Being Royal Marines we are no strangers to the rigours of the outdoors, but Scott really made it look easy."

"We were delighted he approached us to help and were only too glad to accompany him



Picture: LA(Phot) AJ Macleod

and raise some money for such a good cause."

Scott visited HMS Naval Base on Clyde after the walk to thank the Royals and bring along his four-legged friend Royal to show them where their sponsorship money went (see picture above).

"It was a real honour to have

Nigel is dog tired

WO Nigel Buckley (left) from HMS Collingwood handed over a cheque for £316.50 to the Rainbow Centre in Fareham.

The centre is a specialist unit that helps children with cerebral palsy across the south of the UK, and a frequent beneficiary of fundraising by people at the Fareham-based training establishment.

WO Buckley raised the money after managing an impressive time of one hour, 18 minutes and six seconds in the Great South Run.



Walking the plank for RNBT at Raleigh

RNBT makes a splash at Raleigh

STAFF at HMS Raleigh were taken hostage and forced to walk the plank when a band of ruthless pirates arrived demanding money.

Members of the executive department and other key staff were forced to jump from the high board into the Raleigh pool by a Johnny Depp lookalike wielding a cutlass.

Among the victims were Cdr Mick Harris, the Commander of HMS Raleigh and WO Master-at-Arms Alex Sharpe. Even the chaplains, the Rev David Wylie and Father David Yates, were not spared.

Staff from VT donated £140 to see the company's Head of

Site, Barbara Mann, go in at the deep end.

Under the circumstances a group of 20 volunteers agreed to 'walk the plank' and spectators were asked to pledge their support as each victim plunged towards Davy Jones's locker.

The event was organised by members of the Initial Logistics Officers' Course to mark the final week of their eight-month course at the Defence Maritime Logistics School.

Together with a special charity performance by the ILOC band in the wardroom, the group of officers raised £610 for the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust.

...and needs you to make a spectacle of yourself

THE Kings Theatre in Southsea is holding an event to raise money for three military charities – the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, SSAFA (Hampshire) and RBL (Hampshire).

The night's event is being hosted by former sailor, and local boy, Shep Woolley, who will introduce plenty of individual skits/sketches based on Armed Forces humour and way of life.

Can you sing, act or dance? (What a question to ask shy and retiring Naval folk... – Ed) Are you in Portsmouth on August 1?

If anyone wishes to enter an act, or would be prepared to help out as stage crew or would even like to sponsor the show by way of advertising in the programme, then contact Tug Wilson by the end of March by email: guy4god.wilson@hotmail.com.

If you are reading this whilst

away on deployment and will not be back by the end of March, don't worry, late entries will be considered, subject to availability, just drop Tug an email to express your interest.

The RNBT's Lyn Gannon said: "Please come along and see the show, your support could make a great difference to someone who needs help."

"All three charities provide financial support to serving and ex-serving personnel in need and distress.

"Help us to help them."

The Review will take place on Sunday August 1 at the Kings Theatre in Southsea with the show starting at 7:30pm and finishing at 10pm.

Tickets will be available from the theatre at prices: £20, £15 and £10, with concessions for groups and OAPs.

How much is that puppy?

AND ON the subject of dogs, Dunstan is looking for a new home.

Or rather, several Dunstans from the same litter (cute tee-shirt, cool shades, long cane and combat trousers – it's what you get when you cross a dog with a teddy-bear apparently...) are looking for various homes.

The teddy-bear dogs were the idea of St Dunstan Cpl Simon Brown, of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, who lost his sight when hit by sniper fire in Iraq.

Several 'Dunstans' have been adopted by various units across the three Services to raise funds for St Dunstans, the national charity providing lifelong support and rehabilitation for blind ex-Service men and women.

At least one of the dogs has already scaled the heights of Everest, sailed part-way around the world and visited the plains of the Masai Mara. This Dunstan was presented to Nigel Lithgow, a Royal Marine with 42 Commando who was involved in a vehicle

IED strike during his third tour of Afghanistan, sustaining serious injuries.

Nigel was taking on the Khumbu Challenge 2009, the first of five expeditions being run over five years to integrate Marines and sailors injured in Afghanistan and Iraq back into Service life, when he met Dunstan.

Another Dunstan is onboard HMS Grimsby, currently on patrol in the Gulf. He was adopted by Leading Marine Engineering Technician Leighton O'Doherty and is helping the crew with their watch duties.

Although the dogs all look the same, they all have their own identities and some have already been named by their adoptive units.

There is a limited number of Dunstan dogs to adopt – if your unit would like one, or would like to support the original Dunstan on his travels, visit www.st-dunstans.org.uk or email colin.williamson@st-dunstans.org.uk to find out how you can get involved.

A cuddly Dunstan at Everest



With increasing demand for its services, St Dunstan's is planning to open an additional centre in Llandudno, North Wales.

The centre will offer a full range of services to teach independent living skills such as getting around safely, navigating a kitchen and using a computer.

No delays for these Neutrons

FOR SEVERAL years HMS Sultan has sent teams to the Keswick to Barrow 40-miles road race.

Every year the (appropriately named) Fast Neutrons and (not so appropriately named) Delayed Neutrons are a familiar sight as they pound over the Cumbrian hills.

In the 2009 annual event, as we reported at the time, the 12 runners netted the K2B World Champions 2009 title, despite battling against the worst weather conditions for ten years.

HMS Sultan sent two teams. The 12 runners' record-breaking run, getting all of them back in less than eight hours 15 minutes, earned them the Keswick-Barrow Challenge Cup for the Best Walking Performance by a team from outside Cumbria; the W Richardson Trophy for the Best Team from the MOD and Armed Forces; and the L Redshaw Cup for Best Team overall.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan, Cdre Al Rymer, and Capt Graham Watts presented cheques to Steve Hobbs for the Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue Service; and Rebecca Grant in aid of KIDS – Fareham and Gosport Young Carers.

Teams from HMS Sultan have been involved with this race for many years and have raised thousands of pounds for charities in the Portsmouth area.

Pre-school staff given childcare certificates

ROYAL Naval pre-school staff have received childcare certificates at a ceremony in Plymouth.

The four recipients from the Royal Navy Preschool Learning Organisation (RNPLLO) were rewarded for completing their Level 4 NVQ qualification in Child Care Learning and Development.

Jo Jenkins, the RNPLLO area co-ordinator, said: "This is a fantastic achievement for the staff of the Royal Naval Preschools."

"By undertaking this level of qualification it ensures that RN childcare continues to be committed to providing quality childcare to all our families and children who use the organisation for their childcare."

Three of the staff received their certificates at a ceremony in the Crownhill Family Centre from Capt Charlie King, Captain of Devonport Naval Base.

The three who were presented with their certificates were Kathleen Mitchell, from Crownhill Pre-School, Lorraine Ellery, from Radford Royal Navy Childcare Centre, Plymstock, and Lydia Chinnock, from the Little Tugs Royal Navy childcare at Plympton.

Julie Nixon, from Eggbuckland Royal Navy Preschool, qualified but was unable to attend.

Jo Jenkins also received a Level 4 Institute of Leadership and Management award.

They all undertook the qualification with the support of the company Achievement Training.

Capt King said: "I am delighted to be presenting these certificates at NVQ Level 4 Childcare, especially as I am so personally aware of the importance of these qualifications in the childcare environment."

"The reason for my personal connection is that I have a two-year-old at the Naval Base nursery, and I am also the Chair of Trustees for another naval nursery at Crownhill."

VIPs on hand for milestone

IF you are going to notch up a milestone in your flying career, you might as well do it with a couple of VIPs on board, so they can help mark the occasion.

So when Lt Jon Wade achieved his 2,000th hour while aloft with Michael Aron, the British Ambassador to Kuwait, and Cdre James Morse, CTF Iraqi Maritime, on a VIP sortie, there was not much debate over who should hand over a bottle of bubbly as soon as the Merlin landed.

Lt Wade, currently serving in HMS Monmouth in the Gulf, said: "I feel privileged to have achieved this professional milestone on an operationally-deployed warship."

"The champagne was a total surprise – I had no idea that the Flight knew that this sortie was my 2,000th hour."

Lt Wade is now looking forward to returning to 824 NAS, where he is an Instrument Rating Instructor.

Top technicians

TWO trainees based at Culdrose have been presented with Air Engineering Technician awards.

AET 'Buck' Taylor, of 771 NAS, and AET Daniel Davis, of 824 NAS, were presented with their awards by Cdr Dave Bartlett, Commander Air Engineering, for their high level of motivation, professionalism and excellent results attained during their specialist training.

Naval image analyst takes flight



THE first airborne image analyst brevet has been awarded to a member of the Royal Navy.

PO Jim Fenwick graduated from ASTOR Conversion Course No 7 along with ten other students, a mix of Sentinel pilots, air operators and ground operators.

PO Fenwick joined the Navy in 1999 as a marine engineer mechanic and served HMS Coventry.

In 2004 he changed branch to RN photographer and served with various units as a photographer until 2007, when he became one of only 15 RN Image Analysts.

He joined 5(AC) Squadron as a ground image analyst and was with the first crew to deploy with a ground station into theatre.

Following this conversion course PO Fenwick is now a fully-qualified airborne image analyst.

● *PO (Phot) Jim Fenwick is pictured alongside the first Army image analyst brevet holder, WO2 Dave Carson and their colleague Flt Sgt Dean Wilkinson, who took that honour for the Royal Air Force*

Need a pusser? Try Helmand...

AFTER a six-month tour of Afghanistan, the Logistics Officers (and CPOLOG(Pers)) of Headquarters Joint Force Support 8 hand over to the incoming Joint Force Support 9 team at Camp Bastion.

Arriving in theatre in June last year, the JFSP(8) team worked tirelessly in support of some of the busiest operations since the beginning of the Afghanistan campaign, including Op Panther's Claw and the Afghan elections.

Heading off as the year ended for some well-earned leave, the JFSP(8) team are no doubt looking forward to exchanging their desert kit for a blue suit and returning to normal 'seagoing' routines – even if it is on Whale Island or at PJHQ...

The JFSP(9) team embarked on a six-month tour which promises to be just as busy and challenging before they too return home in June.

In the meantime, if you are short of a Logistics Officer, you might look no further than Camp Bastion in the landlocked Helmand Province, Afghanistan.



● From left: Lt Cdr Wright, Cdr David, Lt Cdr Knock, Lt Cdr Hardwick, Lt Imrie, Lt Turner, Capt Kyte, Lt Evans, Cdr Ashman (PJHQ), Lt Cdr Thomas, Lt Smedley, Lt Cdr Russell, Lt Cdr Wells, Lt Cdr Scandling, Cdr Rance, Lt Cdr Holland, CPOLOG(PERS) McGinn

Picture: PO(CIS) 'Gilly' Gilbertson



● And while we are featuring Royal Navy personnel deployed ashore, four matelots could still be found supporting Operation Althea in Sarajevo, some 15 years after the end of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Lt Cdrs Willis, McBain, Grayson and Hayden (above) were managing press, finance and CIS issues for the 26-nation EUFOR mission which continues to ensure a safe and secure environment for the development of stability

Like mother, like son...

A MOTHER and son have just completed training stints at RN establishments.

ET(WE) Kerrie Jackson has finished at HMS Collingwood in Fareham and joined Portsmouth-based frigate HMS Westminster, undergoing a refit at Devonport.

And a little further west, Kerrie's son Jason Jackson has

just completed basic training at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall, and is now embarking on specialist training as an air engineering technician at HMS Sultan in Gosport.

And watching all this with pride is Kerrie's boyfriend Shaun Hopkins, a former green beret with 42 Cdo, who now lives in Portsmouth.

FOST pass – and a Blue Peter badge

THERE is always a bit of pressure applied to a ship when the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) teams are on board.

So you might as well add a bit more, in the shape of a camera from an iconic TV programme.

Assault ship HMS Albion completed her operational sea training package on a very wet and blustery day under surveillance from the BBC's *Blue Peter*.

FOST staff are renowned for their challenging make-believe scenarios, such as floods and fires, and attacks from missiles, planes or submarines that they launch onto ships in a mock conflict and other exercises.

These can take place while the ship and supporting vessels play the part of a supply convoy, relieving a 'threatened country' in the shape of familiar parts of the West Country.

Or the challenge might be a mock humanitarian exercise.

In the latter scenario Albion, complete with *Blue Peter* crew, arrived off the 'town' of Bull Point in Brittanica to deliver humanitarian aid in the wake of Hurricane Sophie – the Navy has a fair amount of experience in restoring stability to nations devastated by a natural disaster.

On this occasion, there was added pressure as *Blue Peter* presenters Joel Defries and Kate

Walton joined the ship's teams ashore in Plymouth to get some experience of the action on the disaster exercise site.

Kate played the role of a TV journalist covering the disaster, while Joel got busy with the ship's team, helping the fire-fighters and repairing burst pipes.

Cdr Geoff Wintle, Commander Logs of the assault ship, said: "It was great fun working with the *Blue Peter* team – their enthusiasm and willingness to get stuck in was in true *Blue Peter* style."

■ Albion in Norway – see pages 23-25

Pilots return to roots

TWO Royal Navy pilots returned to their old stamping grounds to help keep the Senior Service in the public eye.

First on the list was Greater Manchester, where Lt Jim Hall dropped in on Our Lady's RC High School at Higher Blackley in the morning then hopped over to Woodford Lodge School at Winsford later the following day.

Jim, who was due to deploy to Afghanistan as *Navy News* went to press, flies the Mk 7 Airborne Surveillance and Control (ASaC) version of the Sea King with 854 NAS, based at Culdrose.

Students looked around the Sea

Royal VIP presents medals to reservists

MEMBERS of two Midlands reserve units had royal appointments to receive a variety of awards.

Eight reservists from Birmingham unit HMS Forward – who have more than 100 years' service between them – met Prince Michael of Kent, the Commodore-in-Chief of Maritime Reserves.

PO Russ Key, a reservist for 27 years, and AB Lee Parker received Operational Service Medals (OSM) for their recent deployment to Afghanistan.

PO Key designs, develops and installs computer systems in civilian life, and used those skills as information systems support manager for 3 Commando Brigade RM in Afghanistan, while Logistician Parker, an ammunition storeman in the MOD, was honoured for his role in 45 Cdo's stores at Camp Bastion.

Taxi driver AB Edmund Grandison was awarded the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (VRSM); CPO Helen Bush and PO Stephen Wales were awarded bars to their VRSMs while AB Adrian Bott received an OSM.

Capt Paul Burnham and Cpl Matthew Harness, from the Birmingham Detachment of the RMR, both received VRSMs.

Three members of HMS Sherwood, the Nottingham reserve unit, were honoured by the Prince at a separate ceremony.

CPO Andrew Robinson received an Op Herrick campaign medal for his time on the front line in Afghanistan, while AB Chris Stanton was presented with an Op Telic campaign medal for his stint with Fleet Protection Group RM in Iraqi waters.

And last but not least, AB Paul Dyke picked up his VRSM.

A song for Lancaster

A SONGWRITER has paid tribute to his son's efforts, and those of his ship, in the way he knows best – through music.

Steve Atkinson's son 'Ron' is serving in HMS Lancaster, on anti-piracy duty east of Suez.

"I write songs, and when he went off for seven months I came up with one, pretty much a tribute to HMS Lancaster and those who serve in her," said Steve.

The track ("it's not sentimental or boring stuff, it's a rock track", said Steve) is called *Ron*, has been professionally recorded and is available to hear on the *Navy News* website – go to www.navynews.co.uk/news/707-naval-chiefs-gather-aboard-lancaster-to-fight-crime.aspx

Outstanding Pete

A RATING from HMS Illustrious has won a merit award for his 'outstanding contribution to operational capability'.

POAEM Pete Maskell attended the Worshipful Company of Lightmongers annual dinner, where he was presented with the David Rowden Merit Award, worth £750.

King and chatted to the sailors about life in the Navy and the role of the Fleet Air Arm.

Lt Hall, who hails from the Manchester area, said: "It is a real thrill to be able to bring one of our helicopters to this area, as it helps strengthen relationships between schools and the Royal Navy."

The following week it was the turn of Lt Jon Green, originally from Co Durham, to visit schools, this time in the North East.

Lt Green, also at 854 NAS, flew his Sea King to Longfield School and Hurworth Maths and Computing College in Darlington.



● Alan Jackson receives his medal from Maj Gen Nikolay Koval at the Russian Embassy

Rescue hero finally gets his medal

THE Russians finally got their man – and a Navy aviator got his medal.

MA Alan Jackson has had two Royal Navy postings, completed a four-year degree and moved house since he was involved in a lifesaving mission over a stormy Atlantic.

In late 2001, Alan was a medic with the RN search and rescue unit at HMS Gannet in Prestwick, and was part of a five-man crew scrambled to save a Russian sailor.

After an emergency appendectomy aboard the Vasily Tatischev, the sailor developed an infection and became critically ill.

So the Gannet duty crew was called to the outer limits of their coverage area – 200 miles into the Atlantic north west of Ireland – to airlift the man to hospital.

In atrocious conditions, the Navy aircraft flew to the scene, recovered the man from the pitching ship and delivered him to hospital in Londonderry, where he recovered.

All five aviators were awarded the Russian medal for Strengthening of Brotherhood in Arms.

“Obviously I feel greatly honoured to be recognised in this way for my part in the rescue, but we were all just doing our jobs and we just tried for the best outcome possible – which we did manage to achieve,” said Alan.

He was presented with his medal by the Defence and Military Attache of the Russian Federation Embassy to Great Britain, Maj Gen Nikolay Koval.

Inaugural award for Roebuck chippy

CPO(MEA) Paul Dent became the inaugural recipient of a Captain HM Commendation.

As the chippy in HMS Roebuck for three years, Paul saw her through a variety of challenges, not least during her time as NATO command platform in 2008.

He is regarded as a character on board, and an example for young stokers to look up to.

Captain HM, Capt Bob Stewart, also highlighted the key role Paul played in ensuring the davit for the survey motor boat, unserviceable for some time, was back in operation for the resumption of survey duties.

Siblings to the fore at Dartmouth ceremony

SIBLINGS were very much to the fore at the last passing out parade of 2009 at Dartmouth – those who were there and, in at least one case, those who were not.

First those who were there. A total of 377 personnel formed the end of term parade before the Earl of Wessex.

Of that 377, just under 170 had reached the end of their 28-week Initial Officer Training course at Britannia RN College, which has been turning out Royal Navy officers for more than 100 years.

The young men and women have faced many and varied challenges as they developed their leadership skills and understanding of the Royal Navy.

They were the first cohort of cadets completing the restructured course, which now includes ten weeks at sea on capital warships where they get a first-hand introduction to life at sea.

On parade were sister and brother Sarah and Adam Vines – the first time such siblings have passed out together having carried out their training simultaneously.

Sarah (23) and Adam (19) joined BRNC in April and, although in separate divisions, have obviously seen each other throughout training.

Their family travelled down from their home town of Stroud in Gloucestershire for the day.

Sarah decided to join the RN

as she completed her degree in applied marine sports science at Plymouth University.

She graduated in September 2008 and is to train as a warfare officer.

Adam joined after taking A-levels at Downfield Sixth Form College in Stroud and is now to undertake the rigours of pilot training.

The training he has undertaken at Dartmouth is all accredited towards a foundation degree course, so he has the option to work towards a degree whilst serving.

Now for the sibling who was not there.

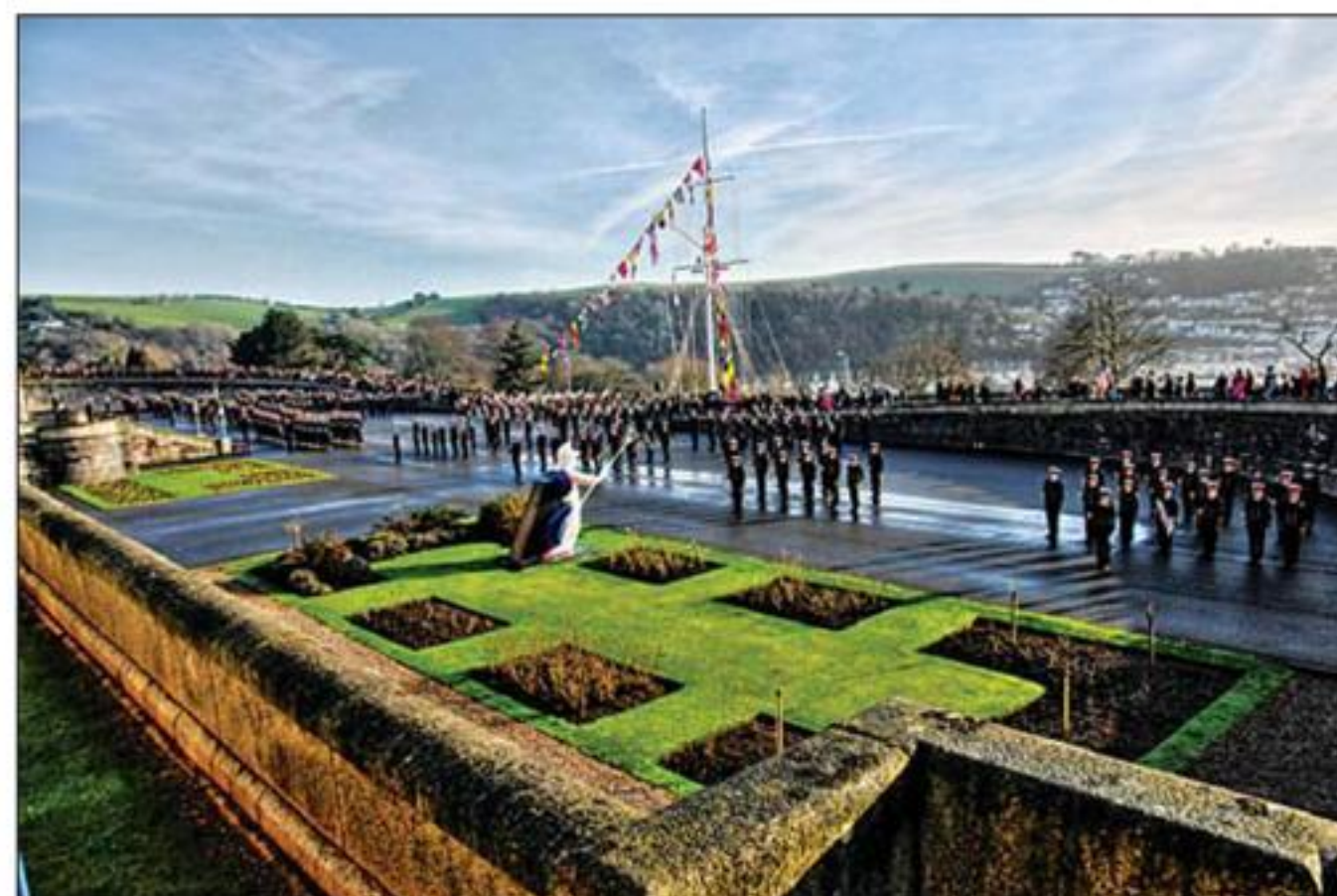
The family of S/Lt Christopher Barber had a real dilemma on their hands.

Twin brothers Chris and Thomas (23) were both on parade.

But while Chris was marking the completion of his training at BRNC, Thomas was on parade at the Commando Training Centre Lympstone, Exmouth, where he has just completed the gruelling 15-month Officer Training Course.

The solution? Something of a compromise – as soon as the parade in Dartmouth finished, Chris travelled to Exmouth to join all his family who were there for the double celebration.

And before we finish with the family theme, one of the senior officers in attendance with strong



● The passing out parade at Dartmouth

Picture: Craig Keating, VT Flagship college photographer

links to Dartmouth was there for personal reasons.

Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt attended the parade as a proud father, watching his eldest son Edward march round the ramps and then make the slow march up the steps and in through the College's central front door.

Such parades are nothing new to Rear Admiral Johnstone-Burt, who was the Commodore of BRNC between 2002 and 2004, but he commented on how inspiring and emotional it was to witness Edward on the parade.

As Commodore-in-Chief of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the Earl of

Wessex took particular interest in the 14 RFA cadets who have completed a seven-week training course at BRNC.

The course is designed to introduce them to various aspects of leadership and provide a comprehensive understanding of the Royal Navy before they move forward with careers in the RFA.

The RFA's main task is to supply warships of the Royal Navy operating around the world with fuel, food, stores and ammunition, and a deeper understanding of each other's organisations should bring benefits to both sides.



● Thomas Bullivant with his grandfather, Windsor Davies

It wasn't half cold, mum...

THE grandson of a TV sitcom soldier has completed his basic training as a sailor.

Trainee Air Engineering Technician Thomas Bullivant, from Sutton, joined the Navy towards the end of last year.

And one of the family members who watched him pass out of HMS Raleigh was grandfather Windsor Davies, who played Battery Sgt Maj Williams in the BBC's *It Ain't Half Hot Mum*.

Thomas was attracted to life in the Senior Service by the career opportunities and the chance to travel.

“The course pushed me to put in maximum effort to achieve my goals,” he said.

“My favourite part was the expedition across Dartmoor.

“We hiked 18km over harsh terrain, after sleeping in tents and washing in a freezing stream.

“I had a real sense of achievement at the end.”

Thomas is now undergoing specialist training at HMS Sultan.

Engineers rewarded

SHIP'S sponsor Lady Anne Kerr has visited HMS Northumberland to present the award that bears her name.

Lady Kerr, who attended with her husband Admiral Sir John Kerr, was present at the launch of the Type 23 frigate in 1992 and has maintained close ties with the ship ever since.

The Lady Anne Kerr Trophy was donated as a means of rewarding a team or individual who, in the view of her Commanding Officer, have made a unique and significant contribution to maintaining the ship's operational capability during the previous year.

The award for 2009 went to the

Marine Engineering department for their outstanding diesel repair work in Salalah last March.

Northumberland faced major defects on the engines just as she was about to return to the UK after a six-month deployment off Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.

With the frigate alongside in Oman, her marine engineers, alongside colleagues from Devonport Fleet Maintenance Unit, worked exceptionally long hours in challenging conditions to completely change an engine in record time.

The award was received by POs Mackay and Geofroy on behalf of the ME Department.

Third time round for officer

THE new Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands is on familiar territory.

Cdre Philip Thicknesse was a bridge watchkeeper in HMS Fearless during the Falklands Conflict, and after hostilities ended he remained in the islands as second-in-command of the prize Yehuin, an ex-Argentine rig support vessel known as the Black Pig in theatre.

In 1996 he returned to command Falkland Islands Patrol Vessel HMS Leeds Castle, and said his latest appointment to a place which has “played a huge part in my naval career” is “the greatest privilege.”



to have headlined most performances at the theatre – a plaque was mounted at the Palladium to mark the achievement.

Steele's career, from teen idol to veteran songster, includes more than 20 hit singles, Hollywood movies and award-winning musicals including *Half a Sixpence*.

ONE is a household name with a maritime background and a place in the annals of Britain.

The other won the Battle of Trafalgar... Showbiz legend Tommy Steele – he's the one on the right – visited the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth during a break from appearing at the Mayflower Theatre in Southampton.

And the singer widely acknowledged as Britain's first rock 'n' roll star was particularly keen to see the Nelson gallery, as it has been mentioned he bears an uncanny resemblance to the admiral.

Graham Dobbin, Chief Operations Officer at the museum, said: “It was a delight to welcome Tommy Steele back to the museum and HMS Victory and to show him the transformation since his last visit.

“He really enjoyed *The Trafalgar Experience* and was extremely knowledgeable about the Navy of Nelson's day.”

Tommy (73), who served four years in the Merchant Navy from the age of 15, last visited the Dockyard 30 years ago.

The entertainer was starring in Bill Kenwright's touring production of *Scrooge*, and it was his performances at the London Palladium in the same show which put him into the record books as the star



THE ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

(Charity Number: 266982)

Once Navy Always Navy

What the Association does:

Supports the Royal Navy

Maintains Naval traditions

Enjoys social activities

Re-unites Shipmates

Remembers the fallen

Helps the disabled

Looks after the needy

Cheers up the distressed

Stands together in Unity



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Those in sympathy with our Objects, especially families.

Contact Nigel Huxtable at RNA HQ

Rm 209 Semaphore Tower, PP70, HM Naval Base, PORTSMOUTH PO1 3LT

Phone - 023 9272 3747 E-Mail - Nigel@royalnavalassoc.com

Website - www.royal-naval-association.com

Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship

where to look

DINs
DIN 2010 DIN01-031: Adventurous Training
DIN 2010 DIN01-025: Changes to PAX Scheme effective from March 1 2010
DIN 2010 DIN01-024: Royal Navy Fitness Test
DIN 2010 DIN01-023: Purchasing of added pension
DIN 2010 DIN01-022: Update of BR 8373 (Officers Career Regulations) Chapter 21
DIN 2010 DIN01-021: Ruth Carter Prize for Nurses and Eliza McKenzie Prize for Student Nurses
DIN 2010 DIN01-020: Naval Service awards of the acting higher rate on a local acting basis to RN ratings and local acting rank to RM other ranks – revised procedures
DIN 2010 DIN01-018: Senior Officers' course – NATO Defence College, Rome
DIN 2010 DIN01-016: All England Lawn Tennis Championships – Wimbledon 2010
DIN 2010 DIN01-011: Late Entry (LE) commissions in the Adjutant General's Corps (AGC)

DIN 2010 DIN01-010: Armed Forces Pension Scheme 05 (AFPS 05) – notifying changes to those who have changed from Gratuity-Earning Terms to Pensionable Earning Terms with effect from April 6 2009
DIN 2010 DIN01-008: Future involvement of DNPers Terms of Service Litigation Team in personal injury liability cases involving current and former regular Naval Service personnel

DIN 2010 DIN01-007: Relocation allowances – additional housing costs
DIN 2010 DIN04-002: Current restrictions on travel and the JSP 800 Vol 2 (2nd ed.) passenger travel instructions
DIN 2010 DIN04-026: Sanctuary Awards 2010 – Calling notice for nominations
DIN 2010 DIN04-015: Minister (DES) Acquisition Awards 2010 – Calling notice for nominations

DIN 2010 DIN05-009: Support to non MOD sponsored Cadet organisations
DIN 2010 DIN05-007: Relocation of the Families Travel Service
DIN 2010 DIN05-004: Relocation of the Defence Travel Team

DIN 2010 DIN05-001: MOD Policy on Unidentified Flying Objects
DIN 2010 DIN07-002: Tri-Service language examinations (diploma, advanced certificate, functional and survival) 2010/11
DIN 2010 DIN07-018: Temporary duty visits to, training within and transit through the Federal Republic of Germany
DIN 2010 DIN07-008: Joint and single Service security, language, intelligence, photographic and geo-spatial training courses for training year 2010/11
DIN 2010 DIN10-004: RN Lawn Tennis Association – Wimbledon Tickets 2010

RNTMs
Issue 01/10 Nos 002/10: Royal Navy Submarine Command dinner March 11 2010
Issue 01/10 Nos 003/10: Royal Navy Amenity Fund subsidise holidays in France – 2010 season
Issue 01/10 Nos 004/10: Divisional training in the Royal Navy

Issue 01/10 Nos 005/10: Risk assessment – Navy Command TLB policy
Issue 01/10 Nos 007/10: Nuclear Marine Engineer officers financial retention incentive.
Issue 01/10 Nos 009/10: Communications Security (COMSEC) organisation within Fleet units

Issue 01/10 Nos 011-10: Competences in JPA – Change control process
Issue 01/10 Nos 014/10: Navy Command Personal Information Charter
Issue 01/10 Nos 015/10: Awards of the acting higher rank on a local acting basis to RN ratings and local acting ranks to RM other ranks – revised procedures
Issue 01/10 Nos 016/10: Service support to the All England Lawn Tennis Championship at Wimbledon

Issue 01/10 Nos 017/10: Engineering Technician (Marine Engineer Submarines) Fast Track Pilot Scheme
Issue 02/10 Nos 025/10: HMS Roebuck's decommissioning and disposal
Issue 02/10 Nos 026/10: Encryption of removable media clarification of regulations.
Issue 02/10 Nos 032/10: Dependents ID Cards (Form S.1511) – to show expiry date target date November 5 2010

DIBs
07/10: Launch of the Army Recovery Capability: Supporting sick and injured personnel.
06/10: Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Review: To deliver increased payments.
05/10: The Future of Defence: Publication of the Defence Green Paper and the Strategy for Acquisition Reform: Secretary of State Bob Ainsworth announced on February 3 2010 the publication of a Defence Green Paper, *Adaptability and Partnership: Issues for the Strategic Defence Review*, and the Strategy for Acquisition Reform.

4/10: London Conference on Afghanistan – key agreements: The London Conference on Afghanistan took place on Thursday January 28 2010.
03/10: Changes to PAX Scheme from March 1 2010, and changes to the Service Risks Insurance Refunds (SRIPs) scheme effective from February 1 2010: After a thorough review by the scheme's providers, it is considered necessary to increase premiums for the PAX insurance scheme. From March 1 2010 there will be a 10 per cent increase in premiums for personal accident.

02/10: Armed Forces Home Ownership Scheme (Pilot): A pilot shared equity scheme, the Armed Forces Home Ownership Scheme (Pilot), has been launched to test a specific approach towards encouraging home ownership in the Armed Forces and will run until Spring 2013.
01/10: MOD Afghanistan Narrative Briefing: An updated MOD Afghanistan Narrative has been agreed by Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth in order to ensure consistency of messaging and enable individuals at all levels to communicate the campaign effectively.

Galaxy messages
Galaxy 01-2010: CinC Fleet 2010 Directive: CinC Fleet sets out the priorities for the Spring Term 2010.
Galaxy 02-2010: SAR-H: Changes to SAR services.
Galaxy 03-2010: Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Review
Galaxy 04-2010: The Navy Board
Galaxy 05-2010: RN Identity rules

Change life by learning

FROM the day you joined the Service until the day you leave, the Naval Education and Training Service (NETS) is there to support you.

It may be that you are looking to gain extra qualifications to advance your Naval career. Or you want to gain a new skill or learn a particular subject. Or maybe you're wondering what you'll do after you leave.

Well, NETS is on hand to help you get started and keep going on the road of learning for life.

NETS operates from the three major Naval Base port learning centres, the Waterfront learning centres, the regional resettlement organisations and online in a network of learning centres provided through Learndirect.

But NETS personnel aren't just in the bases, an Operations team is out on deployed ships and visiting other units making sure that the education service is on offer around the world.

NETS visitors often prove popular guests on board – NETSO Lt Paul Gill joined HMS Sutherland late last year, and the ship's CO Cdr Jonathan Cook commented: "His time on board was extremely well received and I have heard nothing but positive feedback from all those who took the opportunity to see him."

"Fourteen personnel are now attending Maths or English classes and a further 34 undertaking distance learning courses.

"His positive and helpful attitude has made a real difference on board."

Similarly on board submarine HMS Sceptre, Lt Martyn Tai's visit was welcomed by CO Cdr Steve Waller: "Almost half of my ship's company sought and received advice."

"Martyn provided valuable and much appreciated assistance in public speaking and formal presentations to junior and senior rates preparing for Senior Rates Leadership Course and Leading Rates Leadership Course."

"He also spent time discussing the LANTERN scheme, ensuring that those who needed to be qualified were identified."

The NETS team also support the education staff in air stations, joint establishments and at commando bases.

While NETS does provide a range of courses, including GCSEs, the team can also help find a suitable provider outside



● The GCSE English class in NETS(E) in HMS Nelson

the Service – such as the Open University or a local college.

NETS staff can also provide their expertise in helping a prospective learner balance their commitments in home and worklife.

AB(Sea) Katie Anelli, who works in the Type 23 pooled squad, has just completed her ITQ in the NETS(E) Learning Centre in Portsmouth.

She said: "It's a great qualification."

"Someone asked me how to do something with spreadsheets and I was able to tell them. I couldn't have done that before."

There are also financial benefits available to people who want to develop their skills, and early contact with NETS staff can help you to understand the Standard Learning Credit scheme – which offers up to £175 per year – and the Enhanced Learning Credit scheme – which offers up to £6,000 over three separate years.

The three regions of NETS are divided among East in Portsmouth, West in Plymouth and North in Faslane, with the operations team scattered among the regions.

The regional NETS bases are also open to the families of Service personnel, offering individual consultations and Learndirect courses.

The past year saw a big growth in the use of Learndirect by the



Royal Navy.

Learndirect hosts the computer-based training and testing for the Navy's LANTERN programme (Literacy And Numeracy Testing and Education in the RN).

It is this LANTERN programme that is the principal means to achieve the necessary educational qualifications for promotion to leading hand or corporal, or promotion to petty officer or sergeant. (There are also various proxy qualifications that people can use.)

The old NAMEET scheme was replaced in 2006 and from April 2012 any NAMEET scores will no longer count for those seeking promotion.

For more information contact your ERO or nearest learning centre.

management, team leading, customer service, IT and business administration;

■ full and part-time taught courses in various GCSEs;

■ an IGCSE registration and administration service;

■ advice on the commissioned warrant process for promotion of officer;

■ advice on specific learning difficulties – such as dyslexia, Irlen syndrome, scotopic sensitivity – for Service personnel;

■ a language CD loan service;

■ modern languages aptitude test testing;

■ a textbook loan service

through the Joint Services Central Library;

■ advice on the funding for learning activities – Standard Learning Credits, Enhanced Learning Credits and University Summer Schools – for Service personnel;

■ most centres have an interactive Learndirect suite, offering a range of courses;

■ advice on the University short courses programme;

■ a reference and fiction libraries.

NETS East: 9380 25292

NETS West: 9375 65362

NETS North: 93255 3641

NETS Ops: 9380 20698

NFF – families come first

SPRING is in the air, and with a nod to a new season we have decided to give this issue of *Navy News* a slightly different feel, focusing on some parts of our business that might not always be readily connected to the NFF, writes Jane Williams of the Naval Families Federation.

■ Deployment commitments have always meant difficulty for RN and RM families trying to tie in R&R dates with school holidays, as schools that grant holidays during term time to the families of serving personnel can risk skewed reporting from Ofsted inspections.

We are delighted to have received the following announcement, after raising this point with the Department for Children, Schools and Education:

"Ofsted has confirmed that these absences should be recorded as authorised and that when the school leaders are discussing this with inspectors, they should specify how many children from Service personnel are in the school and how much of the absence relates to the R&R.

"Inspectors should discount this in their overall assessment of attendance for the school. Whilst inspection documentation does make reference to percentages for attendance and absence, this is to guide inspectors and should not drive the judgement – inspectors must use their discretion and professional judgement."

Fantastic!
Please note that Ofsted inspect English schools, we will report back once we know about plans for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

■ Harriet Harman, Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the House of Commons and Minister for Women and Equality is on the social networking service Twitter.

Ms Harman has vowed to personally respond to messages posted on her Twitter page, so if you have any comments or questions about Service life please get in touch with her and make sure your opinions are included. Follow the link: <http://twitter.com/harrietharman> to tweet.

■ Free and independent legal advice for bereaved Service families – the Royal British Legion and MOD have announced a new joint initiative to help families who have lost loved ones in the Armed Forces by providing free and independent legal advice.

Advisers can provide information and guidance, in particular about the inquest process, to ensure that families are fully prepared.

The Independent Legal Advice Service will be available to the families of all those who have lost their lives in Service, whether or not the death occurred on operations. It will be in place in the late Spring/early Summer of 2010.

Further information can be found using <http://www.britishtelegraph.org.uk/> or calling the Legion Line 08457 725 725.

■ BFBS Radio now features the Naval Families Federation once a month, so if you tune in via the internet or DAB digital radio in the UK or overseas you will be able to pick up all the topics that are current. Take an opportunity to listen to the dedicated Forces Station and maybe you could even be tempted to get involved with your own message or dedication to a loved one. <http://www.bfbsradio.com/index.php>

■ Poppy Adventure Breaks for children: If you answer 'Yes' to just one of the questions below, then your children (between the ages of 12 and 17 at next birthday) qualify for a free week's adventure break.

● Are you a one-parent household because of bereavement or break up of the family?

● Is one parent currently serving on overseas operations?

● Is one parent caring

for a disabled partner?

● Have you not had a holiday away from home in three years?

● Do you support your household with less than £25,000 gross annual income per year?

Working in partnership with Klub Group, a provider of adventure holidays for many years, the RBL is offering free week-long adventure breaks to children of current or former Service personnel.

This Poppy Adventure Break is a great opportunity for young people to enjoy themselves, meet new people, experience new things, improve their self-esteem – a nd most of all have fun. Needless to say parents get a well-earned break as well.

An adventure break package includes seven nights' accommodation with three meals a day plus activities including quad biking, kayaking, swimming, arts and crafts, DVD nights, a day at a local theme park and even pocket money.

For further information on how to apply for a Poppy Adventure Break call Legionline on 08457 725 725.

■ If electronic voting was available for military families to participate in elections online, would you use it? You can log onto our website and register your answer, or contact us in a way that suits you. <http://www.nff.org.uk/>

■ New Welfare Package for Service families – New measures have been announced as part of the Service Personnel Command Paper to ensure that Service families are no longer disadvantaged in obtaining jobs, or accessing public services such as childcare, education and healthcare.

The new initiatives include:

● The establishment of an Employment and Skills Task Force to support Service families' access to the same employment, further education and training opportunities as the civilian community

● An Armed Forces Champion for each Jobcentre Plus district who will act as first point of contact for Service families and keep up-to-date with local activities to support Service families

● A further Government review of local authority plans to reflect the needs of Service families, and what good practice examples and problems there are around transport, and consider if additional guidance is necessary

● The Government will review the guidance given to local authorities on school allocations policy to ensure it reflects the needs of Service families

● The Government will publish a report on this work in 2010, focussing on practical steps that improve the lives of Service family members.

We will keep you informed as these initiatives develop.

■ Thinking about what life might be like in civvy street? Before you make any hasty decisions to log onto JPA and put your notice in, ask yourself this one question, why did I join?

Don't focus on a problem that can be solved. The scope to change your mind and withdraw your notice may no longer be an option. Talk through your concerns with friends or professionals, whatever works for you, but make sure you are clear in your actions before taking them.

The NFF can be contacted via e-mail admin@nff.org.uk, telephone: 02392 654374, or write to Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.



It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the Royal Navy?

To feature in the *Navy News* 2-6 pages contact Lt Cdr Heather Lane or WO1 Baz Cooke (Fleet Media Ops) on 93832 8809 or 93832 8821, email FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC SO2 or FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC WO.

Prize writers in Review

THE Naval Review invites Warrant Officers to enter for the Royal Naval Association centenary prize, a new annual prize of £250 for the best article by a warrant officer, chosen for publication in *The Naval Review*.

All Warrant Officers currently serving, or retired, may submit an

article and the first award will be in summer 2011.

The editor will select the best submitted article and the winner will receive £250 and two years' complimentary membership of *The Naval Review*.

Please see www.naval-review.org/ for further information



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Dagenham honoured by VIP list

DAGENHAM branch invited national president S/M John McAnally to their annual dinner, hosted by chairman S/M George Lester and his wife Eileen.

S/M McAnally proposed the loyal toast then delighted the assembled shipmates with an interesting and informative speech, following up by visiting each of the tables to chat with members and their guests.

The VIP guest did admit to having some difficulty in locating the accommodation provided by the branch – in his letter of thanks to the chairman, he observed that having been a very senior navigation specialist in the Royal Navy he had somehow managed to get himself hopelessly lost on a visit to East London/Essex.

Dagenham counts itself most fortunate with regards guests of honour; the previous year saw national secretary S/M Paddy McClurg attend the event.

Branch public relations officer S/M David Billett said: “We were honoured by their attendance and would wish to thank them and all the staff at RNA HQ for the hard work and effort they put into running the affairs of the Association.”

Awards at Inverness

A MEDALLION and two certificates have been presented to three founding members of the City of Inverness branch.

National president S/M John McAnally presented the RNA Medallion to S/M Brian Chambers who, as founding secretary (and without e-mail), did an amazing job in getting communications up and running to ensure the branch got off to a great start.

S/Ms Mike Bull and John Graham, who with Brian were instrumental in setting up the branch, were presented with life membership certificates.

There were also congratulations for S/M Raymond Moore, who has been awarded an MBE for his services to SSAFA – that makes it three MBEs in the branch so far.

Former mariners are entertained

RESIDENTS of the Sir Gabriel Woods Mariners Home in Greenock were invited to join the City of Glasgow branch for an evening of entertainment.

Apart from the refreshments, there was a chance to exchange dits and tall tales, and there was a successful raffle – with many of the prizes going to the shipmates' guests.

The evening concluded with branch chairman S/M Frank Halliday presenting a cheque.

Family double

IT was a family affair when awards were handed out at the South Harrow presentation evening.

S/M Tony Turner was presented with the Peter Cant Award for services to the association while his wife, S/M Finola Turner, won the Shipmate of the Year Award, voted for by members of the branch.



● Oliver Hillier prepares to address delegates at the No 4 Area AGM

Cadet reports on camp

ONE of the speakers at the No 4 Area AGM and area meeting was 15-year-old Sea Cadet Oliver Hillier.

Oliver's attendance at the International Maritime Confederation camp in Italy last year was sponsored by the RNA – the organisation sends one cadet each year to the maritime camps, held in various locations around the EU – so the Avonmouth unit cadet was invited to the meeting to give an account of his adventures.

And the youngster made it quite clear that the trip was hugely enjoyable and provided plenty of things for him

and his international colleagues to see and do.

Usually held in August, the camps allow young people between the ages of 12 and 17 to gain sailing experience, learn boat work and the like, taught by professional instructors in the host country, usually staying at a naval base.

More than 30 branches attended the AGM at Street Royal British Legion base.

Oliver indicated that he intended joining the Royal Navy as soon as possible – perhaps a bounty forthcoming for the RNA?

Model way to mark birthday

AQUITAINE branch's senior shipmate John Hudson has been presented with a model of his old ship to mark his 90th birthday.

S/M John served in the County-class heavy cruiser HMS Cumberland at the River Plate in December 1939, and was a guest at the RN and Military Club in London last December to help commemorate the 70th anniversary of the battle which led to the scuttling of the Graf Spee.

While in London S/M John met an ex-colour sergeant RM, who had swapped turrets in HMS Ajax with a Petty Officer Gunnery Instructor (POGI) – the turret was subsequently badly damaged and the POGI killed.

In those days X turret in such cruisers were often manned by the Royal Marines company, said S/M Ken Napier, chairman of the branch.

Aquitaine shipmates had a busy 2009, with monthly lunches, on occasion joined by amis de bord (shipmates) from nine local French AMMACs, the Gallic equivalent of the RNA.

And branch members have also been regularly invited to join French lunches, which S/M Ken notes are both extensive and friendly.

Aquitaine also enjoys an active affiliation with RFA tanker Wave Ruler, and kept in touch throughout last year as the ship supported the Taurus 09 deployment and operations in the Gulf and off Somalia.

“The standard has been paraded at French Liberation Day parades, and at November ceremonies, usually with 20 to 30 French standards, where again the branch has been made very welcome indeed,” said S/M Ken.

“November 11 is a national French holiday, and every town, village and parish has its own ceremony, attended by all ages.

“The ceremony is treated very seriously indeed.”

S/M Ken also noted that every Department (roughly equivalent to a British county) in France has its own Reserve Officer who attends events and supports their local AMMAC.

Colleagues mourn loss of 'genial' Frank

CDR Frank Ward, until lately Deputy General Secretary of the RNA, crossed the bar on Boxing Day 2009 in the Countess Mountbatten Hospice, Southampton, after an illness, writes RNA General Secretary S/M Paddy McClurg.

Frank, who was only 56 years of age, was a genial individual with a wide range of interests and an extensive network of friends – it was no surprise that his funeral, which was held in the Church of the Holy Rood, Stubbington, on January 14, was extremely well-attended and an appropriate tribute to this friendly giant with

a special sense of humour and a wicked sense of fun.

Frank was an MCD Specialist who was the first Commanding Officer of HMS Sandown, and he was held in high regard by his mine warfare colleagues who consulted him frequently, even after his retirement, on a wide range of MCD matters.

He could not say no, and was secretary of the HMS Vernon Monument Committee, set up to erect a memorial at Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth (the former HMS Vernon site), and gave generously of his time and effort to this worthy project.

In addition he was secretary of

the Royal Naval Bird Watching Society and gave freely of his talents and time to this hobby, producing a magazine appropriately entitled *Sea Swallow* for the entertainment and edification of those who engage in this arcane pursuit.

Frank was ‘Mr Gadget Man’, and if anything was new he had to have it.

But he was also a hard-working and amusing colleague, invariably smiling and in a great good humour.

He approached his work as he approached his life, with drive, enthusiasm, optimism and a grin.

He was generous to his friends and approachable to

acquaintances, while he had an abiding curiosity about where he and the RNA were going.

He leaves a widow and a daughter and will be greatly missed, particularly by his colleagues in RNA Headquarters and those in the branches with whom he had dealings.

We are glad to have known him.

Glorious and consorts remembered

THE 70th anniversary of the sinking of HM ships *Glorious*, *Ardent* and *Acasta* is to be marked by a memorial service in Plymouth this summer.

Aircraft carrier *Glorious* and her two escorting destroyers were ambushed and sunk by German battleships *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* on June 8 1940 between Norway and Iceland.

Although hundreds survived the sinkings, many died in rafts and boats in the following days – the final death toll was 1,531 men.

The service will be held at St Nicholas Church, HMS Drake, on Sunday June 6.

The previous Friday a service will be staged at the National Memorial Arboretum.



● Maurice Burgess' model of HMS Dulverton

Dulverton to be welcomed home

A WARTIME destroyer lives again – but in a considerably smaller form than before.

Maurice Burgess has spent more than a year perfecting a scale model of the first of the Navy's two Dulvertons, a Type II Hunt-class ship with a brief but action-packed career.

She was launched in April 1941 on the Clyde, commissioned five months later and took part in numerous operations in the Mediterranean, including Malta convoys.

But on November 13 1943, off the Greek island of Kos, she was struck by a glider bomb launched from a Dornier aircraft and sustained heavy damage.

Consorts managed to rescue 120 of *Dulverton's* ship's company before scuttling her, but three officers and 75 ratings died in the incident.

In just two years the ship amassed seven Battle Honours.

Maurice's 1:96 scale replica, which took 15 months to complete, was built from scratch using original drawings, and is accurate right down to the shade of paint on her hull.

Two ships have borne the name; the second –

a Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessel built by Vosper Thornycroft – was launched in 1985 and enjoyed a good relationship with the town of Dulverton in Somerset until she was decommissioned almost six years ago.

The town is planning a reunion on April 11 of those who served in *HMS Dulverton*.

The occasion will be the dedication of Maurice's model, which he plans to donate to the church.

For further details, contact Trish Couzens (formerly Green) on 01398 323697 or Rev John Thorogood of All Saints at johnthevicar@toucansurf.com

Sevenoaks makes 50

SEVENOAKS branch celebrates its 50th anniversary on March 21 with a service at St Luke's Church in the town, starting at 2pm.

Standards and shipmates will be most welcome at the service – maps and fuller details will be available shortly.

For more information please ring S/M Fred Faircloth on 01732 741966.



● The SS Coamo, depicted on a Colourpicture Publishers Inc postcard of the day

Coamo saved Scouse

FOR one *Navy News* reader a book review published last year brought back poignant memories.

John ‘Scouse’ Gee was a stoker on board the SS *Lady Hawkins* which was sunk by a U-boat off Virginia on January 1942.

Scouse and 70 fellow survivors drifted for days in a lifeboat before being picked up by the SS *Coamo* of the Porto Rico Line, which transferred the seamen to Puerto Rico for hospital treatment.

The 7,000-ton *Coamo* was, by that time, in her final year of service.

By now a US Army transport ship, in November 1942 *Coamo* delivered Allied troops for the campaign in North Africa then retraced her route to the UK.

While off Ireland, she was ordered to return to the USA alone, and on the evening of December 2 she was struck by a torpedo from U-604 – subject of the book *No Ordinary War*, by

Christian Prag, reviewed in June 2009.

All 186 on board died; some were seen by the Germans to scramble into lifeboats but they were presumed to have been swamped by the gales which swept the area over the subsequent three days.

The sinking of the *Coamo* is believed to be the greatest single loss of a merchant crew on any US-flagged merchant vessel during World War 2.

U-604 only lasted another eight months before being damaged and scuttled in the South Atlantic with the loss of a third of her crew of 45.

Survivors were picked up by U-185, and some of those transferred to a third boat, which returned to France.

U-185 was herself sunk in an air attack just days later, with the majority of U-604's survivors going down with her.

Naval Quirks



Final accounts produced

THE final accounts of the HMS Newfoundland Association have now been completed, and a list of final donations to charities and associations compiled.

The RNBT was given £1,000, as was Pembroke House and the RMBT.

TS Newfoundland and the Not Forgotten Association both received £300, and Help for Heroes was given an initial sum of £142.35, followed by a further donation of £1,357 at the final Association reunion.

One other loose end has also been dealt with.

In the spring of 1944 the Colony-class cruiser visited St John's in Newfoundland following repairs in Boston, and during that time the then mayor gave the cruiser's crew the Freedom of the City – but no record survived.

During a visit to the Canadian city in 2006 by Newfoundland veterans, S/M Alan Waite, treasurer of the decommissioned association, made some initial enquiries.

As a result, the current mayor, Dennis O'Keefe, last year confirmed the award of the Freedom (which had been recorded in 1944 by the local paper, the *Evening Telegram*), and presented the former association with a freedom certificate.

Although the association no longer exists, 'unofficial' activities will continue, starting with a reunion at the end of May at the South Downs Holiday Village, Chichester.

Talent on show for Shrewsbury visitors

SIX ex-Service personnel were given an insight into life on board a nuclear submarine when they visited Devonport.

HMS Talent welcomed members of Shrewsbury branch and the town's Royal British Legion.

Although none of the group had served in submarines, between them they represented a wide range of Service disciplines – their number included retired Royal Marines, a retired Army medic and former members of the Fleet Air Arm and RAF.

The guests were given a tour of the submarine – and were surprised at the cramped conditions on board.

Additionally, a simulated torpedo attack allowed them to get a feel for the operational side of submarines.

As well as touring Talent, the group went on board helicopter carrier HMS Ocean for a look around.

The largest ship in the Navy offered rather more room to move, and one of the group, ex-Royal Marine S/M John Turner, was able to compare his time in the Corps in the 1950s with his modern-day counterparts.

The visitors were taken around



● The visitors from Shrewsbury line up with the CO of HMS Talent, Cdr Simon Asquith

the landing craft – a piece of kit which left S/M John mightily impressed.

HMS Talent's Commanding Officer, Cdr Simon Asquith, said:

"It was a real pleasure to host these ex-Servicemen, to repay their previous hospitality and to give them a taste of life in a modern submarine."

The visit was thoroughly enjoyed by both hosts and visitors, and further strengthened the ties between Talent and her affiliated town of Shrewsbury.

Free day out

AN AMUSEMENT park in West Sussex is offering a free day out for serving and ex-serving members of the RN and RFA and their dependents in connection with Armed Forces Day this summer.

Gary Smart, who owns the Harbour Park complex in Littlehampton, has offered a free book of tickets for rides on June 26, which will be issued on proof of identity.

The offer is Gary's way of showing appreciation for the Forces – his son recently left the Army to join the company.

Details of the complex can be found at www.harbourpark.com

Pictures may be key to mystery

ONE mystery solved – but more created.

A Widnes couple, Alan and Elaine Leather, found a cache of wartime photos while clearing the home of Elaine's mother Phyllis Osborne.

The World War 1 pictures belonged to Elaine's grandfather Pte Frederick Lowe and his son Freddie (Elaine's uncle), who served in the RN in World War 2.

Freddie Jnr's pictures were something of a mystery, as they showed a figure on a hill above a blazing town, and at this point the story was taken up by Oliver Clay,

a reporter on their local paper, the *Runcorn and Widnes Weekly News*.

As a result of the story, a friend of Freddie's came forward, but the couple would still like information on Elaine's relatives – Freddie could possibly have been on the Leopold when it was torpedoed.

Any information can be sent to oliver.clay@liverpool.com

The pictures could also be the key to a further mystery.

A commando's daughter identified the war-torn town in the pictures as the Norwegian port of Vaagso/Vågøy, one of the first targets of British Combined Ops

forces in December 1941.

Ann Jones hopes the pictures, which she believes were taken by an official war photographer, can help unravel the mystery surrounding the death and burial of her father, L/Sgt Harold Povey, a commando on that raid.

Ann is keen to find anyone who has notes or memories of those buried at sea, which could help narrow down the names of five men buried anonymously in Trondheim.

She was also told that some commandos were taken prisoner and shot.

Fine dinner

IT was best bibs and tuckers all round for the Plymouth branch annual dinner and dance at the WO and SR Mess in HMS Drake.

A combination of fine speeches, a "superb" meal, an immaculate ceremonial turn-out from Sea Cadets and an organisational triumph from the social committee, headed by S/M Sue Gutteridge, made for memorable evening.

Diana sailors return to Malta

MEMBERS of the HMS Diana Association travelled to Malta for a reunion more than half a century after serving on the Mediterranean island.

Some 40 former sailors and their partners toured former haunts, some still familiar from their time in the destroyer in the mid-to-late 1950s.

They were based in Qawra, a dozen or so miles from Valletta, for the week, but much of their time was based around the Grand Harbour, including a cruise.

Cruisers could band together

AN association chairman has put forward proposals to breathe new life into groups associated with wartime cruisers.

"The present Colony and Fiji Class Associations appear to be shrinking at an alarming rate," said HMS Kenya Association chairman S/M Dennis Patterson.

"I am of the opinion that now is the time we should be considering forming an 'umbrella' association covering all the above classes of ships," said S/M Dennis.

"This would in no way be a takeover of the existing associations, but an entirely new association.

"Members could join as individuals or existing associations could join *en bloc* while still retaining their own autonomy.

"Most of us have two reunions a year; what I would like to suggest is one of these reunions becomes the AGM of the new association while the other remains as the normal AGM of the current association.

"Details of all the pros and cons would have to be worked out and agreed at an inaugural meeting.

"This meeting of course would also have to elect the officers and committee of the new association.

"If you are interested in this proposal, I can be contacted by email on psmx903-pirate@yahoo.co.uk or call 01912 584694.

"There are 11 ships of our classes: HM ships Bermuda, Ceylon, Fiji, Gambia, Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritius, Newfoundland, Nigeria, Trinidad and Uganda.

"We were all in the same Royal Navy so let us put our parochial issues aside and get together to our mutual benefit and comradeship."

Event may be the last

THIS year's memorial service for Far Eastern prisoners of war is likely to be the last formal gathering of its kind.

The service, organised by the National Ex-Services Association along with the Far East Prisoners of War community and the Irish Guards singers, commemorates all who died in captivity or who have died since.

It is thought there are around 300 survivors, and they and their families are invited to this year's ecumenical service, which will be held at Christ the King Roman Catholic Church, 78 Queens Drive, Childwall, Liverpool.

The service will also remember all those who fought in the Far Eastern campaign.

For more information see website www.nesa.org.uk

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our January edition (right) was HMS Ashanti.

Mr W Waltho, of Portchester, wins £50 for providing the correct answer.

This month's ship (above), with a strong link to a recently-decommissioned RN vessel, has a name inextricably bound up with Nelson and a battle of almost legendary status.

What was her name – and what was the name of her sister ship which accidentally rammed her in the Mediterranean in the early 1960s?

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 April 15. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winners will be announced in our May edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 181

Name

Address

My answers

Branch is hit hard

SOUTHEND branch was hit hard in 2009 by the loss of several members, two in leading roles.

Branch president S/M Stan Horner died in June having carried out his duties for two years – though he was no stranger to high office, having been branch chairman for the previous 17 years.

Treasurer S/M Bert O'Brien survived over three years in Japanese POW camps, and celebrated his 90th birthday last April.

For more than a decade S/M Bert had served as branch treasurer, and had been appointed branch vice president for his

services to the Association.

S/M Bert died in October, and fellow shipmates will miss him, S/M Stan and all the others who have crossed the bar.

The subsequent changes have seen S/M Roger Kemp take over as secretary and S/M Norman Summerhayes become treasurer.

S/M Norman had been secretary for almost 40 years, and brings a wealth of experience, but the move will still allow him to clock up four decades as branch officer while easing the workload.

He will, however, continue as treasurer for No 5 Area.



● ON January 5 1960 a group of lads travelled to Shotley in Suffolk to join the Royal Navy at HMS Ganges. 50 years later the day a handful of brave souls retraced their steps, battling through snow and ice to meet up and celebrate 28 recruitment's anniversary. The picture shows Shep Woolley, Ivan Eves, Mick Cox, John Windust, David Fagg, John Brown and Bernie Taft at the HMS Ganges Association Museum. The celebration continued later at the Swan in Needham Market

Supporting independent living for our ex-Service community



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you are. SVR is here to support ex-Service men and women who are homeless or in need. Every year we provide high quality en-suite accommodation and meals for over 300 veterans in our residences in Dundee and Edinburgh. Dignity, privacy and respect for our residents are our principle objectives.

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Forgotten fleets remembered

THE Royal Navy's 'Forgotten Fleets' were once again remembered for the sacrifices they made during World War 2 at an event which was officially billed as their 'last hurrah'.

More than 100 Royal Navy veterans were welcomed back to Singapore for a final memorial service to commemorate their fallen comrades from the British Pacific Fleet (BPF) and East Indies Fleet (EIF) 1942-1945.

Both Fleets ultimately witnessed the Japanese surrender 65 years ago.

The trip was made possible by a generous grant from the Big Lottery Fund's Heroes Return 2 programme, which helps veterans make commemorative journeys.

The final service of remembrance for the veterans was arranged by Naval Party 1022, a team of four Royal Naval personnel under the command of Cdr Paul Haycock.

NP 1022 supports the Royal Navy's commitment to the Five Powers Defence Arrangement in Singapore and the wider South East Asia region by managing the day-to-day running of the Sembawang Naval Wharves, Singapore.

The Battle for Singapore in December 1941 saw the loss of 840 sailors on board HM ships Prince of Wales and Repulse, and the memorial at Sembawang Naval Wharf which honours the memory of these men was the focal point for the ceremony.

A prominent role was played by the British High Commissioner, Paul Madden, who was supported by high commissioners, ambassadors and defence advisers from Australia, Canada, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand and

the United States – representing the huge diversity in ships and sailors that went to make up the two Fleets.

They joined survivors and war veterans, led by Lt Gerry Purnell RN (rtd), to commemorate the memory of their shipmates and comrades who gave their lives in the fight against the Japanese.

One veteran said: "I am very proud to be here today and to have served with the men standing with me."

In true Naval tradition, he also had other concerns, enquiring of PO Steve Simpson at what time the rum ration was to be handed out.

After the service the veterans continued their pilgrimage to Changi to pay tribute to the "Palembang Nine", Fleet Air Arm aviators who were shot down during an attack on the local refinery and subsequently beheaded by ceremonial swords after the Japanese surrender.

The BPF was created in November 1944, and combined with the restructured EIF it proved to be a formidable fighting force – the largest Commonwealth Fleet in history, with participants from Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, India, Netherlands, New Zealand and South Africa, totalling more than 500 ships.

This was also the most powerful conventional fleet ever assembled by the Navy and included eight battleships, 34 aircraft carriers and 24 cruisers plus many smaller warships and support vessels.

The RN fleet operated alongside the US Fifth and Third fleets, both in the Pacific and Indian Ocean in order to put an early end to the war against Japan.

Lt Purnell served as part of the BPF on the carrier HMS Indefatigable, the first British ship to come under attack by a



● *Forgotten Fleets veteran Gerry Purnell salutes at the Last Post*

Pictures: Nicola Payne

Japanese kamikaze.

Indefatigable more than proved herself with their resistant armoured steel decks as opposed to the vulnerable US fleet's wooden decks – a US Navy liaison officer commented "when a kamikaze hits a US carrier, it's curtains, or six months in dock. In a Limey

carrier it's 'Sweepers, man your brooms!'"

With support from the Allies and Americans the BPF and EIF relentlessly attacked the enemy by air and sea until the Japanese

surrender in 1945, witnessing the liberation of Hong Kong, Shanghai and finally Singapore on the way.

After they repatriated many POWs the fleets were "like the old

ladies in the lavatory", according to one attendee – nobody knew they were there, yet they continued their humanitarian and reconstruction duties before fading into history as the 'Forgotten Fleets'.



● *Veterans, guests and dignitaries at the Singapore memorial service in Sembawang*



● *Three veterans from the West Midlands – Desmond Jones, Douglas Heath and George Treadwell*

 **NAVY NEWS**

SHIP of the MONTH

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(Older photographs will be in Black & White)

Deaths

Rear-Admiral Frederick Lawson CB DSC and Bar. Joining the Navy in 1934 he trained for four years at the engineering school at Keyham, Plymouth setting a record as first in his class in every examination. At the outbreak of war he was tracing steam pipes in HMS Belfast when the ship's back was broken by a magnetic influence mine. He served in Berwick on northern blockade duties; then to Greenwich naval college; in 1941 he joined Liverpool under repair in San Francisco and later in the Mediterranean he instituted damage control as a whole-ship activity and studied Liverpool's stability; this paid off when attacked by Italian torpedo bombers in 1942. He flooded the forward ammunition magazines which prevented capsizing and was awarded the DSC. After a tour in HMS King George V he was appointed to Aurora under repair in Taranto; swift promotion brought him to commander aged 27. Taking part in the invasion of southern France and the liberation of Greece he was awarded a second DSC. He was engineer officer of the carrier Albion and took part in the Suez crisis. Promoted to captain in 1960 he was the last commodore superintendent of Singapore dockyard 1965-69. Promoted Rear-Admiral his final posting was Flag Officer Mediterranean and superintendent of Chatham dockyard; appointed CB he retired in 1971. He spent three years as chief executive of the Royal Dockyards until his final retirement in 1975. **January 25. Aged 92.**

Lt Cdr Michael Langman DSC. Volunteered for the Fleet Air Arm joining St Vincent as a Naval Aviator 2nd class in 1940; he learned to fly at Luton and further training at Kingston, Ontario. Assigned to 775 NAS he was on communications duties then flew Swordfish in 815 NAS, based at Buggush, making daily sorties to bomb German targets. His squadron was suddenly ordered to evacuate as Rommel's tanks broke through Allied defences and for the next six months, in which he accumulated 355 hours day and night flying, he conducted regular sweeps over the Mediterranean, interrupting enemy supplies into El Alamein; he was awarded the DSC in 1943. He emigrated to Canada and in 1948 joined the Royal Canadian Navy flying Avengers from the Canadian carrier Magnificent, CO of 881 squadron and senior pilot in the carrier Bonaventure; retired in 1966 and was awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration. He returned to the UK. **November 16. Aged 88.**

Reg Gurney. Able Seaman, served in Wren 1942-46 A Gun; also served with Capt 'Johnnie' Walker. **November 24. Aged 84.**

Frank 'Pusser' Hart. PTI. January 18. Aged 87.

John Wilby. Served in Peacock as AB 1947-50. October in Canada. **Aged 80.**

Ted 'Spud' Murphy. C/A/O. Served 1943-75; last unit Ark Royal (1961-75). **January 28.**

Dick Collier. Stoker. Served 1947-54 in Forth, Childers, Mull of Kintyre, Vanguard and paraded at the coronation of the Queen. **September 27. Aged 80.**

Walter Bell. Naval rating and survivor of sinking of Repulse 1941. **January 6. Aged 88.**

Brian 'Soapy' Hudson. CPO Air(AH). Served 1952-74 in Eagle, Ark Royal and RNAS Daedalus, Lossiemouth and Culdrose. Joined Coastguard upon leaving the Service reaching the rank of station officer and known affectionately as 'Sir'. Aircraft Handlers Association. **January 10. Aged 75.**

Anthony 'Tony' Clarke. AM(L) FAA. Served 1942-46. Bristol and District Fleet Air Arm Association. **January 26. Aged 85.**

Don Kempson. St/Mech. Served 1947-54 St George, Ceylon, Aurora, Diadem, Zodiac, Cadiz and submarines Scorch and Thorough. December 30 in Auckland, New Zealand. **Aged 80.**

Reginald George Walker. AB. Served 1942-46 in Queen, Valiant, Binjoe, Rifleman, Lochinvar, RMS Franconia and Antenor. **Aged 84.**

William 'Bill' Lawrence Catlow. CH/Tel (CRS). Joined 1937 training at Ganges and Scapa Flow at the outbreak of war. Served in Tartar, Woolwich, Ceres and Mentioned in Dispatches in the Battle of North Cape whilst serving in KNMS Stord (Norway); also at D-Day landings. Further ships Swale, FONA (Pacific), Warrior, Gravelines, Battleaxe, Sea Eagle and Caroline also RNAS Falcon, Hal Far, Malta from 1958-61. Joined the Careers Service in Derby 1976 after coming off active service and retired 1991. The North Russia Club, HMS Gravelines Association and the D-Day Fellowship. **January 18. Aged 88.**

Roy William George Sims. Served 1947-59 at Excalibur, Collingwood, Fraser Gun Battery and in Barrosa, Magpie, Vanguard, Cleo/Dido (Reserve), Albion and Paladine. **December 6. Aged 80.**

Dave 'Del' Trotter. Leading Logistician (L/Chf). Served 1971-2008 in Ark Royal, Soberton, Gurka, Ardent (1982), Nottingham, Liverpool, Illustrious, Abdiel, Edinburgh (twice), York, Cromer, Manchester, Atherton, Grimby and Campbelltown. **February 8. Aged 54.**

Stanley 'Stan' Alfred Chorley. Joined the Royal Navy with his three brothers and served for four years until 1947. Bristol Royal Naval and Royal Marines Old Comrades Association. **December 29. Aged 84.**

Ken Shuttleworth. Able Seaman. Served in Faulknor 1942-45 and a member of the association. **December 11.**

N E Cross. Served on board LCS(M)101 and LSI(S) Prince David. LST & Landing Craft Association. **December 31.**

Alwyn Thomas. Stores Assistant (S). Served on board LST 3025 Bruiser. National Committee of the LST & Landing Craft Association. **February 4.**

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Trevor Anthony 'Tony' Pickard. Joined Torpoint Barracks serving 1962-70 mainly in the submarine service including submarines Acheron and Revenge. A founder member of Wetherby RNA. **November 24. Aged 65.**

Sydney 'Syd' Leslie Hall. Chief Shipwright. Joined Pembroke 1947 as an Acting Shipwright to complete his apprenticeship that he started a year earlier at Sheerness Dockyard. Served in Phoebe, Swiftsure, Ceres, Vidal, Caledonia, Bulwark, Adamant, Maidstone and HMMS Malaya. On loan to the Royal Malayan Navy as an Instructor and Barrack Master on two occasions between 1952-65. Final draft Fleet Liaison duties for the Captain of Chatham Dockyard; retired 1969. Long term member of HMS Phoebe Association and a founder member of Wetherby RNA. **December 9. Aged 84.**

John Mitchell Sheppard. POREL (P/OWM(R)). Served 1958-82 in St Vincent, Collingwood, Vigilant, Ursa, Kent, Hecla, Plymouth, Mauritius, Alderney, Zulu, St Angelo and Osprey. Former chairman and secretary of Bury St Edmunds RNA.

Reunions

November 3. Aged 67.

Frank Deverson Fox. Signalman (T/P) TO. Chatham rating served 1944-47 in Royal Arthur, Scotia, Sphinx, Canopus, Stag, Eurocity and Nile also SS Nea Hellas and IS Attilio Regolo and on staff of Flag Officer Eastern Mediterranean. Vice chairman of Bury St Edmunds RNA. **October 25. Aged 83.**

George Leach. Leading Seaman. Served 1942-46. Served three years in Newcastle. Treasurer Wrexham branch.

Malcolm Green. Served the Army 1939-45 and later the Merchant Navy. Associate member of Norwich branch. **December 12. Aged 89.**

Barrie John Turner. Leading Seaman. Served 1956-66 in Ton minesweepers Chawton, Chilcompton, Highburton and Brereton. Kingston upon Thames branch. **December 20. Aged 70.**

D Vann. Associate member Wigston and district branch. **January 10.**

Jack Horton. LEM. Joined 1947 Portsmouth division in Glasgow and Theseus in the 1950s. Hanworth RNA. **January 1. Aged 79.**

Harry Haines. Served 1942-46 in DEMS and trained Glendower. Founder member Mexborough RNA; chairman for 28 years. **January 17. Aged 86.**

Harry Barnes. Ordinary Seaman. Joined 1941. Served in Grashopper sunk in 1942 by Japanese dive-bombers and taken prisoner-of-war until repatriation having laboured on Burma-Siam railway. Member of FEPOW and Chelmsford RNA. **December 29. Aged 88.**

Albert W 'Bert' Maddox. CPO. Served 1943-46 in Cyclops, 7th Submarine Flotilla at Rothsay. Lichfield branch. **January 31. Aged 85.**

Harry Anderson. LEM. Served 1948-56. Served Royal Arthur, Bicester, Pembroke, Woolwich, Constance, Collingwood, Swiftsure, Jamaica, Korean War and China Station. Watford RNA, 8th Destroyer Squadron and Swiftsure Association. **November 16. Aged 79.**

Ronald Myers. Served 1940-46 in Fraserburgh minesweeping between Scotland and Iceland transferring 1943 to Bellona on Arctic convoy duties. Bourne branch. **Aged 87.**

Ron Warbeton. Singaller/Wireless Telegraphist. Joined Devonport 1942 and served mainly in escort carrier Khedivé; Western Approaches, Mediterranean, South Africa, Indian Ocean, Far East and was in Singapore for the formal surrender of the Japanese forces. Lichfield RNA and also Lichfield RBL. **Aged 87.**

HMS ILLUSTRIOUS ASSOCIATION

Lt Cdr Michael Hugh Evans Gregson. Served on board 1943-45 as a lieutenant in Engineering. **October 9.**

William Smith Hewitt. FAA. Served on board with the Fleet Air Arm 1943-44. **November 2.**

Ronald Preston. Served in the engine room on board 1951-53. **December 9.**

Jack Griffiths RM. Served on board 1943-46. **November.**

George Lindfield RM. Served on board 1944-45. **November 2.**

Jim Sellars RM. Served on board 1943-45. **September 27 in Canada.**

Frank Ellinson. Associate member. **December 20.**

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

Bernard Franklin 'Buster' Brown. PO EMI. Joined as a Boy Seaman 1943 and served for 12 years in Furious, Orion, Nepal and submarines Affray and Astute. Associate member of Gatwick branch. **November 30. Aged 84.**

J 'Jack' Blampied. L/Sea HSD. Submarine service 1942-50 in Splendid, Tudor, Stygian, Scotsman and Alaric. New Zealand branch. **Aged 88.**

W E 'Bill' Britton. L/Sto. Submarine service 1941-46 in Otway, H28, Sibly, U1105 and Umbra. Gatwick and Portsmouth branches. **Aged 87.**

J 'John' Stewart. AB SD. Submarine service 1943-46 in Proteus and Scotsman. Merseyside branch. **Aged 87.**

D L 'Tomo' Thompson. CPO Cox'n. Submarine service 1953-67 in Seadevil, Artemis, Andrew, Ambush, Aeneas, Token, Rorqual, Sentinel and Alliance. Norfolk branch. **Aged 91.**

14TH CARRIER AIR GROUP ASSOCIATION

Lt Cdr Tom G Davies. FAA Pilot. Served with 812 Naval Air Squadron (Black flight) 14th Carrier Group and 814 Naval Air Squadron 7th Night Air Group. CO of Scottish Air Division and ships Glory, Vengeance and Eagle also RNAS Abbotsinch, Culdrose, Hal-Far, Macbrishanish and RAF Valley. **January 13. Aged 85.**

Roy 'Rollo' Rollings. L/A Pilot's Mate. Served with 812 Naval Air Squadron, Glory (Korea) Royal Arthur, Kestrel, Fulmar, Dipper, Eagle and Theseus. **January 14. Aged 82.**

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

Alan Sankey. AB. Served in Lioness. **January 25. Aged 78.**

Robert Cooke. AB. Served in Aries. **January 25. Aged 85.**

S/Lt Peter Collins. Served in Lioness and Laertes. **January 26. Aged 90.**

Leonard Manning. AB. Served in Thisbe. **February 3. Aged 84.**

MARCH 2010

848 NAS Malaya, 1952-56: Reunion in Bromsgrove on March 27. All members are urged to attend and invitation extended to old 'Rotorheads' of 2 MU, Gosport (1950-51) Dragonfly era. Contact Les Smith on 01584 711910 or Ray Gilder on 02476 445913.

APRIL 2010

The Fourth Destroyer Association: HMS Agincourt, Aisne, Alamein, Barrosa, Corunna, Jutland, Matapan and Dunkirk are holding their annual reunion from April 16 to 19 at Hadleigh Gables Hotel, Great Yarmouth. All ex-ships companies welcome. Contact Terry Parker at mvdcj.corunna@mypostoffice.co.uk or tel: 01303 249242.

HMS Dunkirk Association: Reunion at the Park Hotel, Liverpool on April 17. Contact Jackie Carroll at jandee.carroll@talktalk.net or tel: 01692 678721 or George Selvester at george.selvester@btinternet.com or tel: 01381 600315.

HMS Peacock Association (U/F96 and P239): Reunion, AGM and dinner at the RNA Club, Royal Leamington Spa on April 17 at 1200. All enquiries to Dave Pearson, 12 Ashridge Rise, Berkhamstead, Herts, HP4 3JT or tel: 01442 862274.

HMS Ramillies Association hold their 20th annual reunion at the Stretton Hotel, North Promenade, Blackpool, FY1 1RU from April 19 to 24. Further details from acting secretary, Mick French at stives@hake.eclipse.co.uk or tel: 01209 820844.

RN & RM ex-Boxers Association: Reunion at Eton from April 30 to May 2. Those interested and for further information contact Alan Dolman at alan.dolman@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 023 9248 3388 or PO PTI Kevin Green at kgg112victories@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 023 9272 3777.

MAY 2010

Omani Reunion: Did you serve in the Sultan of Oman's Forces? The 21st reunion of military and civilian personnel who served for the Sultan's forces is taking place in Hull, East Yorkshire on May 1. For more details contact Jim Dyson at jimandjan@jimandjan.karoo.co.uk or tel: 01482 846599.

Battlecruiser HMS Hood, Southeast London Memorial Group: Annual memorial service and parade on May 30. Assembly point is Bromley Road Retail Park (next to Catford bus garage) and will march off at 1300, turning right into Bromley Road and then right into Allerford Road to the Allerford ex-Serviceman's Club, where it will dismiss and proceed into the Memorial Gardens for a short service. Refreshments are available at the Club afterwards. More information from Duncan Heaney at duncananddan90@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 020 8291 0813.

HMS Impregnable/Drake Association: Reunion will be held in Plymouth from May 7 to 9. New members are always welcome from both ships, any year. Further information can be obtained from the secretary at hawkins75@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 0121 532 6141

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: Our 25th AGM and reunion is being held in Skene from May 7 to 10. If you are interested in joining then contact the secretary Warwick Franklin at warwickfranklin@hotmail.com or tel: 01752 366611.

HMS Hood Association: AGM at 1600, 35th anniversary reunion dinner at 1900 on May 22 at the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth. Memorial service at St George's Church, Portsea at 1145 on May 23. Service of commemoration at St John Baptist Church, Boldre, near Lyminster at 1100 on May 16. Further details from vice-chairman Keith Evans on 01428 642122.

JUNE 2010

HMS Blackcap, RNAS Stretton: The Greater Manchester Branch of the FAA invite any shipmates or civilian staff who were here between 1942 and 1958 to the 22nd annual service of commemoration at St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn at 1200 on June 6. Standards are very welcome. For more details contact Bernie Cohen at b.cohen2@ntlworld.com or tel: 0161 946 1209.

HMS Ganges, 14 Recruitment, 1958: A reunion for the boys who joined Ganges on June 10, 1958 and lived in Grenville 23 Mess, will take place at the Union Jack Club, London on June 9 and 10. Anyone who lived

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.veterans-uk.info

RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, navyservice@tnt.co.uk

Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.rnmcc.org.uk

RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk

British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishegion.org.uk

Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk

in that mess at the time is very welcome to attend. We are also looking for our Instructor, POGI George Hare, who must be in his 80s now! If anyone knows of his whereabouts or you want to come along to the reunion contact Bill Rosewell at billrosewell@btinternet.com or tel: 01884 841901.

Gibraltar '78 Reunion: A reunion for all who were based in Gibraltar between January 1977 to December 1979. Royal Navy/Wrens (all branches welcome) will be held in Scarborough on June 19. Contact Jeff 'Taff' Thomas at thomastwicethomas@hotmail.com, visit the website at http://www.gibraltarcouncil.com or tel: 07837 386244.

JULY 2010

41 Cdo RM (Deal) 1977-81: A dinner and dance for all those who served in the unit between 1977 and 1981 will be held at the St Margaret's Holiday Resort, Deal, on July 3, at a cost of £28 per head. Limited space, cheques or requests for more information should be accompanied by an SAE and sent to Graham Dear, 19 James Hall Gardens, Walmer, Deal, Kent, CT14 7SZ or email: grahamdear@aol.com or tel: 01304 363523. Cheques should be made payable to: 41 Cdo RM (Deal) Reunion Fund.

AUGUST 2010

National Ex-Services Association: This year the National Ex-Services Association will be holding their final memorial service to all those who died during their captivity or have died since. Today there are possibly around 300 survivors and we invite them and all members of the FEPOW families to attend. The ecumenical memorial service will be at Christ the King RC church, 78 Queen's Drive, Chidwell, Liverpool, L15 6YQ on August 15. For further information contact Arthur Lane at arthurlane@ntlworld.com or tel: 0161 480 0114 or visit the website at http://www.nesa.org.uk

HMS Saracen, S-class submarine 1942-43: A Cameo (come and meet each other) of Saracen surviving crew, crew families and friends of Saracen is planned for August 14 (the 67th anniversary of her sinking) at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Gosport. Contact Annie Nicholas at nicholdan@aol.com or tel: 01508 493655.

SEPTEMBER 2010

HMS Jamaica Association: Reunion at the Grand Atlantic Hotel, Weston Super Mare from September 17 to 20. Also looking for RN and RM who served in her. At present our members cover all commissions from 1942 to 1957. Details from the honorary secretary, Malcolm Wilkinson at boxcar@btinternet.com or tel: 01843 582283.

HMS Arethusa Association: 22nd reunion September 24 to 27 at the Ambassador Hotel, Scarborough, North Yorkshire. All Arethusa friends and families welcome. Contact Tom Sawyer at roland.sawyer@btinternet.com or write to honorary secretary and founder, HMS Arethusa Association, 6 Sycamore Close, Slingsby, York, YO62 4BG or tel: 01653 628171.

OCTOBER 2010

Castle Class Corvette/Frigate Association: Annual reunion October 1 to 4 in Torquay. Did you or a relative serve on one of these 39 WW2 escort ships? All ex shipmates and friends are welcome aboard this event. To join the association and/or obtain further details please contact the secretary Mike Biffen on 0121 429 3895 or write to 81 Beakes Road, Smethwick, B67 5RS.

The Regulating Branch & Royal Navy Police Association hold their annual reunion from October 1 to 2. For further information please contact W Dick, social secretary at MAAWAGD@sky.com or tel: 023 9234 5228.

Artificer Apprentice, October 1946 Entry: Classmates from Exmouth (Fisgard) and Duncan (Caledonia) will be holding their next reunion at Warners, Holme Lacey (just south of Hereford) from October 4 to 8. Details from Ivor Norsworthy, 22 Thornhill Road, Mannamedge, Plymouth, PL3 5NE or tel: 01752 663330.

HMS Bruce Association: AGM/Reunion from October 17 to 20 at the Ambassador Hotel, Scarborough. Further information can be obtained from the secretary Mr D T Heath on 0121 532 4058.

Ask Jack

WW2 Light Coastal Forces: I wonder if you can help with some research I'm undertaking for the Aldeburgh museum? The town was awarded an admiralty shield for raising sufficient money to pay for a motor launch (HMML 118) in 1941, and this shield is now in our museum. I've found out quite a lot about the vessel herself from the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth, who have been most helpful with technical details, (she was a Fairmile B, motor launch) and I understand that she was attached to the 2nd Motor Launch Flotilla at Portsmouth, but I would like to try to find out where she was deployed and what kind of operations she carried out. Also, if at all possible, names of the men who crewed her. Do any readers either have such information or be able to give me some ideas about other sources to consult? I'd be most grateful if anyone could help. Contact Margaret Ballard at margaret.ballard1@btinternet.com or tel: 01728 453776.

Blackwood Type 14: In 1959-60, I was in the Duncan on fishery protection. At that time there was a poem going round called *The Ballad of the Type 14*. Does anyone have a copy of this? Contact K Blute, 19 Shurlock Avenue, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7SU and email a copy to edit@navynews.co.uk for our records.

RN Concert Party, Chatham 1943: Joining the RN as a teenager in 1943, I must be the only person in history to receive an Admiral's uniform on his second day in the service. Having been interviewed by several people on my first day, including the entertainments officer, it was discovered that I had done some acting and singing around Manchester where I lived. The officer explained that the rating due to play the admiral had been suddenly drafted and the play was due to go on the next day, would I be prepared to tackle it. I would, I did and it was a roaring success and played at all the establishments in the Medway area over the next few weeks. Following the tour, a group photo was taken of the cast in costume, on the barracks square in Collingwood Block. Over time I have lost a lot of photographs and would like to get another copy of it and maybe catch up with other members of the cast. The play was called *Alf's Butten Afloat*. If you can help contact John Garland, Two Jays, 23a Ruddyard Road, Biddulph Moor, Staffs, ST8 7JD.

Rowner Estate: Tez Chappell was living in Rowner from 1972 and was on a course at HMS Sultan along with LMEM John Griffin. Tez and his wife were at John and June's wedding in 1972 at Gosport Registry Office. They had a daughter Stephanie, born in 1973. If you are or know of their whereabouts could you contact E Chappell, 20 Fairview Close, Romsey, Hants, SO51 7LS.

HMS Glowworm: Tom Lightburn, ex SBPO is researching a novel about HMS Glowworm in World War 2. Anyone, relatives or survivors with any information, please contact Tom at actionscribble@msmail.net or tel: 0151 630 3289. Donations to the local RNVR will be made when the book is published.

Worner, John 'Jack': I am looking for anyone who has memories of my brother who crossed the bar some time ago. On leaving the Navy he retired to Scotland, so

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.

HMS ACHATES 1942

1942 H12 survivors, we would like to hear your stories.

HMS ORLANDO SHORE STATION

Do you have any information on this GREENOCK WW2 Shore Station? We are making a documentary, if you can help please contact: Joanna Davies, Air Moving Image, Po Box 40027, London N6 5WF Tel: 07958 961054 Email: postsoup@yahoo.com

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR 'BLUEYS'?

Have you and your wife collected the Forces Free Air Letters, 'blueys', you sent each other over the years? Would you like them to have a current impact? At the University of Cambridge we're researching how couples experienced military life. For this, we're collecting sets of 'blueys' in exchange for a modest remuneration. The originals can be returned. Your anonymity is guaranteed and all information fully confidential. If you are interested, please email Achim Edelmann at socmil@hermes.cam.ac.uk and we will gladly explain the research and answer any questions.

Back Copies

Available from 1998 to the current edition

Please call 023 9273 4448 for details or email: subscriptions@navynews.co.uk

Reporting from the Fleet

The collage shows several covers of Navy News magazine. One prominent cover features the headline 'NEPTUNE HAS HIS TRIDENT' with an image of a submarine. Another cover has the headline 'Back Copies' in large, stylized letters. The covers are arranged in an overlapping fashion, showing various maritime scenes and headlines.

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drjan in April's Noticeboard must be received by **March 12**

**Assignments**

Capt Keith Blount to HMS Ocean as CO from April 12.

Capt Toby Williamson to assume Command of RNAS Culdrose from June 22.

Cdr Kevin Robertson to HMS King Alfred as CO from May 4.

Lt Cdr Angus Essenhigh to MCM1 Crew 1 as CO on June 1.

Cdre Timothy Lowe to HMS Collingwood as Commodore Maritime Warfare School on June 30.

Col Gerard Salzano to Commando Training Centre Royal Marines as Commandant from May 4 and to be promoted to Brigadier.

Cdr David Wilkinson to HMS Cornwall as CO from April 30.

Lt Cdr Philip Dennis to MCM2 Crew 7 as CO from April 26.

Maj Peter Kemp to RMR Scotland as CO from July 27.

Lt Christopher L'Amie to TS Jack Petchey as CO from February 8.

Sports lottery

January 16: £5,000 - Lt Cdr K D Hutton; £1,500 - ABLogs S S Vadiga; £500 - OM2 O J Barker.

January 23: £5,000 - PO M B B Andrews; £1,500 - Cdr M R Honnoraty; £500 - CPO M T Hammond.

January 30: £5,000 - CPO P G Grey; £1,500 - Lt Cdr M C Lacey; £500 - WO2 MEA J White.

February 5: £5,000 - MA I N Roberts; £1,500 - Mne B J Hollingworth; £500 - ALRO P J Woodward Knight.

Competition

Winner of the Corgi competition of a model Sea King is: Iain Abbot of Great Wakering, Essex.

A subject of study

A RESEARCHER at Cambridge University is looking into the experiences of leaving the Mob for civvy street.

Achim Edelmann is a researcher at the Department of Sociology at the University of Cambridge.

His research interests include the sociology of military life, social relationships, and social networks.

His recent research projects have focused on how military families experience the transition from military to civilian life.

If you are interested please email: socmil@hermes.cam.ac.uk

Trophy lives

TROPHY P8995 is a silver quart-size tankard upon the body of which is engraved the ship's badge of HMS Eskimo.

It was originally presented to the Tribal-class destroyer of that name by Lady Best, who launched the ship on September 3 1937.

On March 1 1941, 500 Royal Marines, 50 Royal Engineers and a number of Norwegian troops sailed from Scapa Flow in the former cross-Channel steamers Prinses Beatrix and Queen Emma on Operation Claymore.

The troop ships were escorted by the destroyers Eskimo, Bedouin, Legion, Somali, and Tartar, the submarine Sunfish and the cruisers Edinburgh and Nigeria.

Their mission was to destroy the Norwegian oil factories in the Lofoten Islands, the products of which were of considerable use to the occupying German forces.

Sunfish preceded the surface ships to Norwegian waters, where she acted as a navigational beacon and the first landing, at 0500 on March 4, took the occupying German forces by complete surprise.

By 1300 that day all objectives of Operation Claymore had been achieved - the oil factories and a fish factory ship had been destroyed, the British troops had re-embarked together with 200 German prisoners - and the force returned safely to Scapa Flow two days later.

Largely by chance a set of rotors for the German Enigma cryptographic machine were captured from the trawler



Krebs; two months later their use led to the capture of the German weather ship München which, in turn, led to the Enigma keys for June 1941 being captured and thereby allowed the British to read more German radio traffic.

Operation Claymore demonstrated clearly that a small force of well-trained troops, supported by sea power, could keep large numbers of the enemy committed to guarding many places against the threat of attack.

The difficulty in protecting a multitude of sites prompted a Royal Marines officer to send a telegram from the Lofotens to A Hitler, Berlin.

The telegram read: "You said in your last speech that German troops would meet British wherever they landed.

"Where are German troops?"

"Signed, Nicholson 2nd Lt, Royal Marines."

There is no evidence that A Hitler ever replied to this message.

1970 1980 1990 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...

March 1970

THE NAVY was celebrating the news that the Prince of Wales was to join its ranks.

Buckingham Palace had announced in February that Prince Charles would enter Dartmouth the following September, in 1971, under the graduate entry scheme.

The first three or four months would be spent on attachment to the RAF on an advanced flying course.

And after that it was intended that he would spend three to five years in the Navy, with further service if he wished, in the Royal Family's time-honoured tradition.

The statement from Buckingham Palace continued: "It is hoped that during his service with the Royal Navy Prince Charles may, from time to time, undertake royal duties."



● In March 1970 we reported that Prince Charles would join the Navy at Dartmouth the following year

March 1980

HMS INVINCIBLE made her first entry into her base port of Portsmouth on March 19, having left Vickers in Barrow to a warm send-off from the local people who had watched her being built.

She was the largest warship built for the Navy for 25 years and her birth had been far from easy.

Originally ordered as a "through-deck cruiser" in 1973 at a time when the future of aircraft carriers was seriously under threat, she became a carrier almost by stealth.

She was launched on May 3 1977, 230 years to the day after the capture of l'Invincible from the French off Finisterre.

The French ship became the Royal Navy's first HMS Invincible, RO5 became the sixth.

March 1990

THE FRONT page of Navy News was almost entirely taken up with the recent decision to send Wrens to sea. It was, the paper said: "probably the most emotive decision since abolition of the Tot 20 years ago."

The letters page was full of correspondence, for and against. A "Navy wife" from Gosport wrote that "putting Wrens on board is like putting a match to a gasoline station."

The paper reported protest marches in Portsmouth and Plymouth, with people carrying banners which read "Higher Divorce Rate" and "Broken Marriages."

And an anonymous letter from "Leading Hand" in Hong Kong made the cheeky suggestion that escape hatches would need to be enlarged, as the existing hatches were not big enough to accommodate the average Wren.

**RESETTLEMENT**

If you've served in the Armed Forces, you can qualify to become a British Military Fitness instructor!

British Military Fitness is the UK's leading outdoor fitness provider, running fitness classes in over 80 parks in 44 different cities across the UK.

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With Government funding for training coming under pressure at present and an increasing number of people needing help to get new skills for new jobs, the Pitman Training Centres in Winchester, Eastleigh and Brighton, operating the Government-funded scheme Skills Accounts told *Navy News* that they only have limited places remaining on this funded project.

The project offers the chance for people to gain a full Level 3 qualification and, at Pitman training centres, the Text Processing Diploma at Level 3 is on offer right now to those over 18 seeking secretarial skills.

Commenting on this Skills Accounts opportunity, Martin Ladd who is leading the project told *Navy News*: "We only have funds for about 20 learners in the south-east region remaining for this year and those living or working in that area and interested in the challenge need to contact us without delay."

"Starting in March, learners can expect to achieve their diplomas by the summer or early autumn depending on their availability for training."

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Kia ora Shipmates,

I thought I would drop you a line from Auckland, New Zealand. We (my wife Jo and daughters Hannah (7) and Rosa-May (4)) have been here for six months now and a busy six months it has been.

We were picked up when we arrived and taken to a transit house, which was ideally situated for all of the Devonport amenities. The lateral recruiting team made life easy, even putting food in the fridge which enabled us to get straight down to the beach, a taxing ten minute stroll away.

Induction into the RNZN was straight forward, with a week of picking up kit and presentations all organised. One nice thing was the involvement of the family from day one. We really felt like the family had been recruited, and not just me. Family is very important to New Zealanders and to the RNZN, your family is taken seriously with a whole lot of support available if needed.

We didn't hang around as far as buying a house was concerned and have already bought our own, which proved to be a surprisingly easy process compared to the UK. There is an excellent school just around the corner (in fact there are lots of great schools on the North Shore), a beautiful beach five minutes walk away and a mere ten minute bike ride to work. We've even got a good pub down the road. Life is sweet as the Kiwi's say.

The kids settled easily at school and day care (which is hugely subsidised by the government). They love the amount of freedom they get here, and are regularly down on the beach after school and work. We have already become a taxi service for Brownies, art clubs, swimming lessons etc

Work wise I'm the Engineering officer for a little patrol boat named HMNZS KAHU, which has helped to get me into the Kiwi way of doing things, not to mention see a lot of the breathtaking scenery of North Island. I'll be off to one of the new IPV's soon, 30 knots of nice new technology. Compared to a MCMV in the RN it's pretty chilled out, with time to actually enjoy the job.

Well what are you waiting for? This is a great place to live and work. At the end of the day the Kiwi's drive on the left, speak English, play rugby and cricket and drink beer. It's not a hard place for a British Matelot to live.

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● Stepping out: Amanda Wilkins, of TS Defiance (right) with the Mayor of Brighton and Hove, Cllr Ann Norman

Running total for Newhaven

THE public relations officer for the Newhaven and Seaford unit does not just tell everyone about the unit's fund-raising activities – she is raising cash herself.

Amanda Wilkins (65) is training with the Mayor of Brighton and Hove, Cllr Ann Norman, for the city's first full marathon, on Sunday April 18.

It will be Amanda's seventh marathon, and she is raising funds for her unit.

Amanda said: "Last year I completed my fourth London Marathon and my first overseas in Dublin, so I'm delighted there is now one virtually on my doorstep. "I hope to raise a lot of money for the unit I am so proud to be attached to."

If you would like to sponsor Amanda you can email her at a.wilkins560@btinternet.com or send donations to her c/o TS Defiance, Newhaven and Seaford Sea Cadets, Sea Cadet Hall, Chapel Street, Newhaven BN9 9QD, marking the envelope Brighton Marathon.

Help is needed

BARNSELY unit is in desperate need of a new galley and the refurbishment of the heads.

Cadets have been holding sponsored events and there are more in the offing.

But they are also keen to seek "in kind" donations – not cash, but the offer of skills and time which would save money on the cost of the projects, which is estimated to be around £10,000.

Sponsorship would also be gratefully received by the cadets and staff of TS Diomedea.

For further information about the projects, or to offer help, contact staff at co@barnsleyseacadets.co.uk



● The Queen talks to the Sea Cadet contingent at a special reception at Buckingham Palace

Picture: Cpl Steve Wood RLC

150th celebration officially launched

A GROUP of young ambassadors visited the Queen to mark the start of celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the cadet movement.

Cadet150 will see 150 events take place around the UK this year which will reflect the spirit of fun, excitement, adventure and community service which is at the heart of the cadet movement.

The year of anniversary events honours the role the Cadet Forces play in assisting young people towards responsible adulthood through learning new skills and developing self-confidence, and celebrates the contribution they make to their local communities.

As patron of Cadet150, the Queen started the celebrations along with the Duke of Edinburgh when she greeted 26 cadets from across the country at a special reception at Buckingham Palace.

Among them were six Sea and Marine Cadets, representing the six Corps areas.

The group also met Minister for Young Citizens and Youth Engagement, Dawn Butler, and Under Secretary of State for Defence Kevan Jones, at Downing Street, and senior Service personnel at the MOD.

In the evening the cadets enjoyed a reception at Lancaster



● In Downing Street are (from left): Lt Cdr (SCC) Michelle Welsh (Eastern); POC Danielle Ervine (Blackburn); POC Paul Huggett (Hastings); POC Stefan Le Roux (Cambridge); POC Douglas Stinton (Wootton Bassett); POC Ben Chandler (Walton-on-the-Naze); POC Kathryn Murdoch (Greenock)

House hosted by the Ulysses Trust and the Council of the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.

The Ulysses Trust supports challenging expeditions by cadets and reservists, and adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes attended the event in support of the Cadet150 expedition to Lesotho.

Cadet150 events throughout 2010 will include a royal review of the Cadet Forces at Buckingham Palace in July; expeditions to locations as diverse as the Himalayas, Nigeria, the Italian

Dolomites, Peru, the USA and Kenya; a special residential camp for cadets participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award; and the planting of 150,000 trees in partnership with the Woodland Trust.

Sea Cadets will take the lead at a weekend event at a shopping centre in the Glasgow area next month and the Trafalgar Day anniversary in the autumn.

With origins dating back to 1860, the cadet movement is one of the oldest and most successful

voluntary youth organisations in the world, and today numbers 131,000 young people, led by 25,000 adult volunteers, in well over 3,000 sites across the UK.

The Cadet Forces welcome young people and adults from all backgrounds and abilities.

No cadets or adult volunteers will ever be called upon for duty with the Armed Forces, and whilst some cadets do follow a career in the Armed Forces, the Cadet Forces are not used as a recruiting opportunity.

Root and branch effort pays off

ST ALBANS unit cadets demonstrated they were not fish out of water when they worked the land to take part in an attempt to break a record.

The cadets' target was to help plant 20,000 trees in one hour at the Heartwood forest in the city.

Working with cadets from Welwyn Garden City, they formed a team for the record attempt at the Sandridge site.

And the combined might of the Corps helped smash the existing record of 18,000 trees by topping the 20,300 mark – pipping another record attempt in Kent by just 14 trees.

PO (SCC) Steve Heard, St Albans' First Lieutenant, said: "This was a fantastic effort with cadets planting an average of 2.5 trees a minute for a solid hour's hard work."

"They all deserve to be congratulated – and they are record-breakers."

PO (SCC) Ted Hill, the unit's Training Officer, said: "We didn't do much training for this one but all of the cadets worked well, demonstrating exceptional teamwork."

"They have also left a lasting landmark which will be visible for generations."

Vocational award for Barry

SEA Cadet leader Cdr Barry Glanville, currently serving at Fort Blockhouse, Gosport, has won recognition for his community-based learning achievements at a national CVQO (Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation) graduation ceremony.

Admiral the Lord West of Spithead presented the award in front of Barry's colleagues, family and friends at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

The officer was awarded the City and Guilds Membership in Strategic Youth Management, comparable to a Master's degree and achieved through his experiences as an instructor with the Sea Cadet Corps.

Cdr Glanville started his Sea Cadet career in 1985, after university, as an adult leader.

He now has responsibility for the seven National Sea Cadet Training Centres throughout the UK.

"Providing good quality training to our adult leaders is absolutely critical so as to offer the best possible examples of good leadership to our young cadets," said Barry.

Farewell from (and to) Trafalgar



● The party from TS Trafalgar gather on the jetty at Devonport

A PARTY of nine cadets and four adults from TS Trafalgar attended the decommissioning ceremony of their namesake submarine.

The 13, led by CPO (SCC) Mark Walker and including two members of the Merton unit management committee, travelled to Devonport for the occasion – and the youngsters were afforded a special status.

The final Commanding Officer of the T-boat, Cdr Charles Shepherd, invited the uniformed members of the visiting group to parade as an integral part of his ship's company, a source of great pride to the cadets.

Furthermore, a tour of the veteran submarine was laid on for the visitors.

Some unit members present had attended the commissioning of the submarine 27 years ago, and although there will be a reunion in the Mitcham HQ, a memorable day was tinged with great sadness as it brought to an end a close, highly-valued and productive affiliation.

Brazen remembered



● OC Ella Edwards and the CO of TS Defiance, S/Lt Steve Townsend, at the Brazen memorial

ON SEA Cadet Sunday members of the Newhaven and Seaford unit attended a special service in St Michael's Church, Newhaven.

The Sea Cadet service was combined with a memorial service for the men of HMS Brazen, which sank in a storm off Newhaven 210 years ago.

Brazen was originally a French ship which was captured by the Royal Navy.

James Hanson was appointed captain and he sailed the vessel to the Isle of Wight, where they captured another French ship.

In January 1800 the ship was sailing off Newhaven when it was caught in a ferocious storm.

The ship was dashed against the rocks and sank on January 26 with all lives lost bar one.

Capt Hanson's pregnant wife offered a reward for the recovery of his body but it was never found.

The bodies that were recovered were buried in St Michael's Churchyard and a memorial stands there in memory of Capt Hanson and his crew.

Every year on the Sunday nearest the tragedy officers and cadets from TS Defiance attend a service and lay a wreath by the memorial. This year the wreath was laid by Ordinary Cadet Ella Edwards.

Hornchurch pay visit to Cambridge URNU boat

HORNCHURCH and Upminster cadets paid a visit to a Royal Navy patrol boat, reviving a county link in the process.

The youngsters from TS Hurricane were invited on board HMS Raider while it was alongside HMS President, the Royal Navy establishment at St Katherine's Dock in central London.

The World War 2 R-class destroyer HMS Raider was adopted by Romford, a couple of miles north-west of Hornchurch.

While on board the current Raider, the Cambridge University RN Unit boat, cadets were shown the engine room.

They were also challenged to see how fast they could put on a survival suit, and asked to plot their position on the Thames using the ship's charts on the bridge.

They rounded the evening off with a photograph with the boat's CO, Lt Adam Riddett.

Hornchurch had its own ship during the war, but her history did not have the same happy ending as that of Raider.

The R-class warship survived the conflict and was transferred to the Indian Navy in 1949.

HMS Hurricane, a Havant-class ship, was built and launched as war broke out, and she was bombed and sunk in Liverpool during an air raid in May 1941.

She was raised and returned to service in January 1942 but just hours before Christmas the following year she was struck by a German torpedo off the Azores and crippled; three of her crew died and the ship sank hours later.

By that time the link with Hornchurch had been cemented, and one surviving illustration is in the name of the Hornchurch and Upminster unit.

Nottingham represented

TWO representatives of Type 42 destroyer HMS Nottingham, Lt Cdr David Temple and CPO Tony Murphy, attended the Dining Out of Lt Cdr (SCC) Michelle Welsh RNR, the Commanding Officer of Nottingham unit.

The event was held at the Park Yacht Club Nottingham.

The principal guest was Sea Cadet Area Officer Cdr Clive Smith – it was also a final farewell to Cdr Smith and a fitting tribute was presented to him.

The occasion was also marked by a presentation of a cheque from HMS Nottingham towards the redevelopment of TS Orion.

Throughout her working life the destroyer, which was formally decommissioned at Portsmouth Naval Base last month, has maintained a strong affiliation with Orion.

Affiliation with RNA celebrated

THE affiliation of Falmouth RNA to Falmouth and Penryn unit was cemented at a presentation evening at TS Robert Hichens.

Following an introduction by unit president Cdre Peter Fish and Colours, RNA chairman Mike Stevens inspected the Guard and Colour Party before presenting the awards and bursaries.

S/M Mike said some of the Cadets present would go on to careers in the RN or RM; they represent the future.

The presence of members of 849 NAS from RNAS Culdrose, also affiliated to the unit, represented the present, and the affiliation with the RNA completes the link between past, present and future.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of a new RNA Cup to Cadet of the Year Tristram Paull. The RNA are also providing a bursary, for one cadet to sail with TS Royalist for a week.

Westerham pay tribute to HMS Gallant

TWO cadets from the Westerham unit braved sub-zero temperatures to pay their respects to the men who lost their life when HMS Gallant struck a mine during World War 2.

LCs Alex Dean-Roberts and Mikey Groombridge were unperturbed by the snow and ice as they laid a wreath at the national World War 2 destroyer monument in Chatham Historic Dockyard as close as possible to the date and time of the ship's loss.

Both cadets were determined to lay the wreath, saying it was the least they could do in

the light of the sacrifice made by the men on board the G-class destroyer.

The unit itself is named TS Gallant in honour of the fact that survivor Cyril Edwards lives locally and is a keen supporter of the unit.

Gallant had joined a flotilla of warships assembled to escort a convoy in the Mediterranean when she hit the mine south-east of Pantellaria on 10 January 1941.

The blast blew off her bow, killing 65 and injuring 15 of her complement of around 150. Survivors were mostly picked up by HMS

Griffin, while the stern section was taken in tow by HMS Mohawk and delivered to the dockyard in Malta for repairs.

That was scheduled to take the best part of 18 months, but she was seriously damaged by a bombing raid in April 1942 and beached at Pinto Wharf.

Gallant was declared a total loss and whatever equipment she had on board was salvaged.

In 1943 the hulk of this ship was used as a blockship in St Pauls Bay, but was finally broken up a decade later.

Neville (almost) retires

NEVILLE Hallifax – now in his 85th year – has announced his retirement from his long association as president and life president, as well as trustee of the unit and the county council lease for TS Osborne.

Neville's voluntary service has spanned almost 40 years with the Corps as committee member and vice chairman of TS Lion, the Slough unit, and president of TS Windsor Castle, the Windsor and Eton unit.

Since moving to the Isle of Wight 18 years ago he has served the Cowes unit as president and acting chairman, when needed.

He also assisted as a committee member of the Sea Cadet Association at HQ in London. Having seen service with the Royal Navy during World War 2 – he is a veteran of the D Day landings on HMS Southdown and later on HMS Superb on the Mediterranean station as well as assistant to the naval officer in charge of the port of Naples – his experience has been invaluable in the youth organisation.

Neville has offered to use his experience, should this be required, at any time in the future.

School link

WELLINGBOROUGH School CCF hosted nine cadets and instructors from TS Laforey and Rushden Diamond Division to a day's target shooting on their 25-metre indoor range.

All those involved enjoyed firing the Mk 8 .22 rifle at a variety of static and moving targets, with all cadets achieving very creditable scores, including several bull's eyes.

The school's CCF contingent was established in 1901, and its current senior officer, Maj (CCF) Steve Garfirth, said: "It was a pleasure to see such enthusiasm from the Sea Cadets and I look forward to hosting many more similar days."

Members of TS Laforey, the Northampton and Wellingborough unit, are also hoping to forge closer links with their colleagues from the CCF.

Lodges help Worthing start to rebuild fleet

WORTHING cadets were among the beneficiaries of a distribution of donations throughout Sussex.

The "Sussex for Sussex" initiative by the Masonic Lodges of the county resulted in the £90,000 handout to various charitable causes, presented during a ceremony at the Charmandean Centre in Worthing.

Because of advances in technology, the sailing dinghies owned by TS Vanguard were becoming outdated.

A bid was made, through Ross Everett, Worshipful Brother of the Sompting Lodge, for funds to purchase a Laser Pico, the new standard of dinghy for the Corps.

The application was approved, and the boat, complete with a full suit of sails, a launching trolley and road trailer, was presented to the unit by the Regional Grand Master, Ken Thomas.

Representing the unit were CPO (SCC) Rob Picknell, AC Smallpiece, MC O'Neill, Junior Cdt 1st Class Picknell and unit chairman David Shipley.

Brother Craig MacKay, the charity co-ordinator for the Sompting Lodge was also in attendance, saying that the cadets were a credit to the Corps, and to the youth of the county.



● Worthing cadets and members of the Sussex Masonic Lodges with TS Vanguard's new dinghy

Drill event 'shows cadets at their best'

CADETS from across the Severn district, including Malvern unit, donned their best uniforms and competed in their annual drill and piping competition.

The event, which included armed and unarmed marching drill, as well as piping, attracted strong competition from all over the region.

Malvern were runners-up in the unarmed drill section, with OC Aaron Cale awarded the title of Best Dressed Cadet and AC Alleisha Fletcher adjudged runner-up in the Best Parade Commander section.

Staff at TS Duke of York hailed it as a creditable performance as many of the team were making their competition debut.

Cadets from Malvern excelled in the piping competition, where the centuries-old skills of using the whistle known as a boatswain's or bosun's call are assessed.

The traditions of using a bosun's call comes from issuing orders on board ship when a voice could often be drowned by the sound of the sea and wind.

Malvern cadets swept the board in both sections of the competition, with AC Oli Turner winning the Individual piping section and his brother LC Ben Turner close behind him as runner-up.

They, together with AC Nathan Parry, went on to win the Team Piping competition with the highest

marks awarded for many years.

District Officer Lt Cdr Mike Pritchard said: "This competition shows the cadets at their best."

"They train hard for this competition and it shows – the results are outstanding again this year."

"The piping was of a particularly high standard."

"Sea Cadets have been around for over 200 years and we still uphold traditions used many years ago."

"We are, however, a modern, forward-thinking organisation helping young people towards responsible adulthood by providing adventurous training based on a nautical theme."

The Severn District winners will go on to compete in the South West area competition, which will be held later in the year at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

Severn District has a number of annual competitions in which cadets aged from 10 to 18 compete in numerous sports and activities, including football, sailing, canoeing, seamanship, cooking, athletics, expedition and power boating.

Competitions are held throughout the year at different locations within the district.

Attendance at Trafalgar Day and various remembrance parades on their own territory allows cadets to use their marching and drill skills in public.



● From left, AC Oli Turner, LC Ben Turner and AC Nathan Parry



● Pictured above are VIP guests from the Stretford unit's annual awards ceremony, along with some of the winning cadets. At the back, from left, are Wendy Higgins, the Mayoress of Trafford; Lt Cdr Jim Garner, the Manchester District Officer for the Corps, David Higgins, the Mayor of Trafford; Cdt Nathan Stevenson, who won the award for best attendance; Bev Hughes, MP for Stretford and Urmston; Cdt Katie Graham, award for most potential; Cdt Sheridan Murray, award for Cadet of the Year; PPO Mike Jackson, Commanding Officer of TS Vengeance; and Lt Col John Davies, North West Area Officer for the Corps. Kneeling are Cdt Louise Birchall (left), who won the award for the best-dressed cadet, and Cdt Daniel Stevenson, award for most improved cadet

Support your Sea Cadets

Volunteer, donate or even leave a legacy.

We need you: get inspired at www.sea-cadets.org or call us on 020 7654 7000.

Swansea link is now in 33rd year

ONE of the longest-standing links between a Sea Cadet unit and the national training centre in Cornwall has just notched up its 33rd year.

Boat work on the river, fire fighting and a visit to Type 23 frigate HMS Somerset were among the highlights of the annual visit by cadets of Swansea unit to the National Sea Cadet Training Centre at HMS Raleigh.

A group of 16 cadets from TS Ajax, aged between 12 and 17, spent a week at Torpoint undertaking a range of activities designed to give them an introduction to the Royal Navy, increase their self-confidence and build their teamwork skills.

Commanding Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Bill Davies RNR first brought a group from Ajax in 1976, when they stayed in wooden huts.

Accommodation blocks today are much improved, and amongst the wide range of activities is the much-loved assault course, where the unit recorded a very satisfactory time of 5m 36s.

Lt Cdr Lee Sanderson, the Officer-in-Charge of the NSCTC, said: "Around 6,000 cadets from units all over the country visit us here at Raleigh each year to undertake one of the 15 bespoke courses we offer.

"TS Ajax still remains one of our longest-standing visitors, and the fact they keep coming back is extremely encouraging.

"The cadets visiting Raleigh this year were a credit to their unit and their strong performance earned them runner-up spot in the Vigilant Cup, an annual competition awarded to the best visiting Sea Cadet Corps unit."

Over the past 33 years more than 200 cadets from Ajax have gone on to opt for a career in the Armed Forces, with an average of three per year choosing either the Royal Navy or Royal Marines.

Warfare Specialist Alistair Green (18) joined the Royal Navy last October and was also training at Raleigh, while Cdt Katie Hickman joined the following month.

Ceremonial bell

CAITLYN Lee has been baptised using the bell of TS Nubian.

The Naval tradition was followed for the christening of the baby daughter of PO (SCC) Carol Lee at All Saints Church, Claytonle-Moors, with the ceremony performed by Rev (SCC) John Tranter RNR, Accrington and District unit chaplain.

Unit CO S/Lt Thomas Pask RNR stood in as godfather when a family member became unwell.

Army platoon hosted by Naval air station

THIRTY members of a unique Army cadet contingent have spent a day with the Fleet Air Arm at Yeovilton.

The cadets of Lufton Platoon Salamanca Company, Somerset Cadet Battalion (The Rifles) ACF, accompanied by eight members of staff, spent time at HMS Heron and the Fleet Air Arm Museum to experience life at a busy, front-line naval air station.

The Lufton Platoon ACF, commissioned a year ago, is the only disabled cadet unit in the country.

Based at Lufton College, Yeovil, the cadets all have moderate to severe learning disabilities, and the unit is designed to enhance the college curriculum which encourages and supports the students to be independent through a wide range of work-focused experiences.

Accompanied by Salamanca Company's Commanding Officer, Maj Paul Bunce ACF, the cadets were given a behind-the-scenes tour of many areas of the base, including 848 Naval Air Squadron and the fire station.

The visit was a highlight in the term's activities, and had been eagerly anticipated by the cadets.

Speaking during the visit, Maj Bunce said: "Personnel from the air station have visited the college to tell the students about their lives and experiences in the Fleet Air Arm.

"The students were very keen to come and see it for themselves, and I am delighted that we have been able to do this today"

Whilst touring the fire station the cadets also enjoyed a visit by two falcons and their handlers from the bird control unit.

This unit is vital in keeping birds away from the runway, thereby protecting the aircraft from potential 'bird strikes'.

After lunch the cadets visited the museum where they toured the Centenary of Naval Aviation exhibition and were shown a variety of uniforms that have been used by naval aviators throughout the decades - and some of the uniforms were there to be tried for size by the visitors.

Stu Rainsbury, a former CPO in the Royal Navy and now an 'explainer' at the museum, said: "We have schools visit the museum all of the time, and our new Education Suite is particularly effective, allowing us to pass on so much more information.

"The cadets were genuinely interested in what they saw today and their enthusiasm made the visit very enjoyable for everyone."

Lufton College is one of three Mencap National Colleges in the country, and skills for life are encouraged through a curriculum that embeds literacy and numeracy, preparing students for a successful transition to adult life.



● Army cadets from Lufton Platoon explore a helicopter at RN air station Yeovilton
Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd

Wanderwall for instructors



● Members of the North West Area Walk the Wall team line up for the camera

CORPS instructors from the North West Area will be walking coast to coast along the line of Hadrian's Wall to raise money for Service charity Help for Heroes.

The 11-man team intends to complete the 84-mile trek in four days, starting on April 30.

Organiser Sgt (SCC) Glenn MacLennan, of the Altrincham and Sale unit, said: "We decided to walk for Help for Heroes to raise money for our wounded.

"This is a cause close to our hearts. We all have ex-cadets serving in the forces, plus myself, [Capt] Keith [Crowe] and [PO] John [Buckett] have sons currently serving.

"My son Carl is currently in Afghanistan with his regiment, 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards. "This is our way of showing we are thinking of them.

Donations can be made through www.justgiving.com/NWSCCWALKTEAM

The remaining eight Walk the Wall team members are C/Sgt Dave Carter, Sgts Andy Edgar, Phil Proctor, Ryan Horsfield, Kevin Field and Chris Cooke, TI Dave Dale and S/Lt Simon Trustwell.

Indian exchange visit was 'mind-blowing'

A CADET from Northampton and Wellingborough unit has been speaking of his experiences on an international exchange programme to India.

Water sports fan LC Matt Rixon was chosen to attend a sailing regatta in Mumbai, and spent ten days sizzling in the sunshine along with cadets from Sweden, the United States, Canada, the Netherlands and local Indian cadets.

As well as soaking up cultural and culinary differences ("it was a lot of curried chicken for ten days, which was really nice but after while you really start to miss red meat...") there was a chance to compare notes on water activities.

"I really enjoyed the shopping and sightseeing parts of the trip; one reason was that it was so cheap and it was so bustling and busy it made you really feel alive," said Matt.

"Another part of the trip that

was fun was the competition side of it, which only really took a day, in which I won the sailing and kayaking categories and was in the winning teams for pulling and canoeing, and the overall winning teams.

"Some evenings we had special dinners; in one we wore traditional Indian dress which we bought at the market - it was great fun, and they were very cooling and comfy.

"All in all, my trip was mind-blowing and fantastic, and I am so grateful I was selected to go and represent the UK at the regatta."

Another cadet, Jade Darlington, spent five days at sea in the tall ship TS Royalist.

Although some sea time was lost to the weather, there was plenty of opportunity for Jade and her colleagues to learn the ropes (literally) and steer the ship along the South Coast, visiting Falmouth, Plymouth and Brixham.

● LC Matt Rixon with two of the five prizes he picked up while on exchange in India

Grant will upgrade unit HQ

STOCKPORT unit has received a grant from Seafarers UK towards the cost of upgrading the fire alarm and emergency lighting system at their HQ at Pear Mill industrial estate.

S/Lt (SCC) Anna Mullin RNR, the Officer-in-Charge of TS Hawkins, said: "We are delighted to receive this money, which will enable Stockport Sea Cadets to offer a safe environment for cadets to sleep-over at TS Hawkins' HQ, and means that we can offer weekends on board, not only to cadets from Stockport, but also to cadets from other units."

The following cadets won awards at the unit's annual prize-giving ceremony: **Best Sea Cadet:** AC Rachel Hulme; **Best Marine Cadet:** MC Michael Broomhead; **Highest Achiever:** AC Cyrus Fan; **Best Junior Sea Cadet:** JSC1 Jordan Hargreaves; **Overall trophy:** MC Josh Hargreaves; **CO's Trophy:** Cdt Luke Yates; **Shipmate Award:** AC Marie Greenhalgh.

The Invincibles

BOTH of Sefton unit's five-a-side teams - junior girls and senior boys - displayed Premiership-level footie skills at the recent Liverpool District five-a-side competition.

Both teams won every one of their matches, and went on to win their respective sections of the competition.

TS Starling has always been a very sporty unit, and are just as proud of their most recent achievement.

Their success put both teams through to the North West Area competition.



● Crossing the line, Llanelli-style

Crossing the line - in South Wales

A CROSSING the Line ceremony with a difference has been staged by the cadets of Llanelli.

The junior section of TS Echo invited many people from the town to attend their take on the traditional Naval ceremony, including the mayor, his deputies and consort, the rural council leaders and Carmarthenshire council leaders.

This, however, was no ordinary event.

Staff at Echo were planning a surprise; Lt (SCC) Killick RNR was to be presented with gifts of appreciation for 19 years in command.

Rather than marking the crossing of the equator, the Echo event marked the crossing of the

line of command - Lt Killick stood down last year and PPO (SCC) Jenkins has now taken command.

It was perhaps something of a natural progression - PPO Jenkins is Lt Killick's daughter.

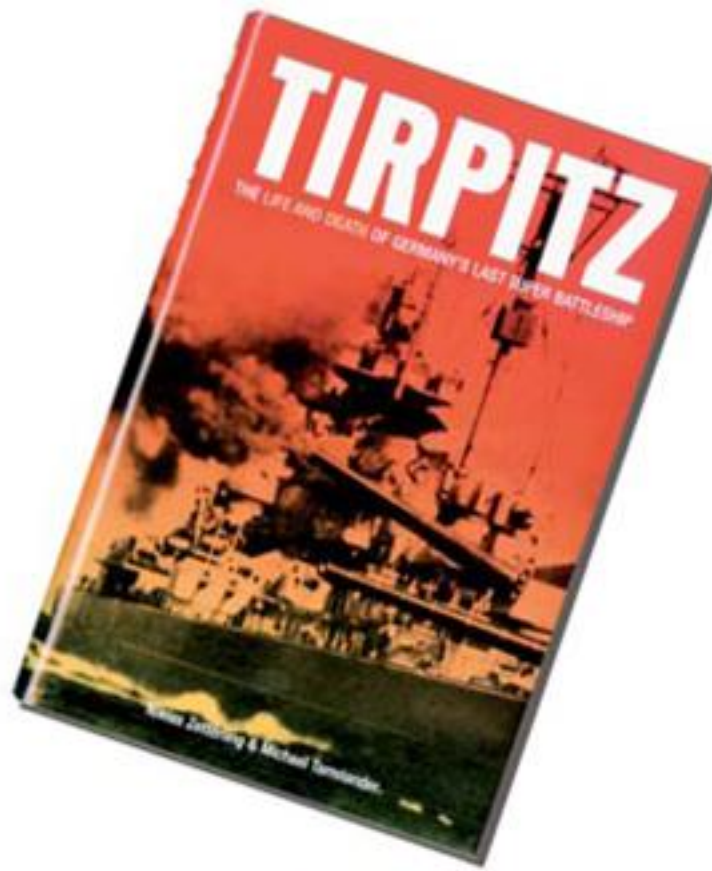
The event saw the two eating raw onions, spicy kidney beans and mixed sauces, being egged, mock shaved and then having buckets of water thrown over them.

The event was a great success and the mayor and councillors all presented gifts to Lt Killick.

They also promised their continued support for Llanelli.

Many of those present commented on the unique event and how honoured they were to have been a part of it.





Past and present imperfect

'pitz battles

HAVING provided us with arguably the most balanced account of the life and death of Germany's most famous warship, Swedish authors Niklas Zetterling and Michael Tamelander perhaps predictably tackle the fate of her sister.

The story of the Tirpitz lacks the drama of her older sister Bismarck – she sortied on a handful of occasions, only fired her guns in anger once and never sank a single ship.

But that does not mean there is not a great deal of incident in *Tirpitz: The Life and Death of Germany's Last Super Battleship* (Casemate, £19.99 ISBN 978-935149-187).

Tirpitz was the largest battleship built by a European Navy. Only HMS Vanguard, Britain's last castle of steel, could have outgunned her – although the 'superiority' was minuscule (381mm main guns as opposed to Tirpitz's 380mm).

Vanguard didn't arrive on the scene until 1946. From the moment she was commissioned in 1941, there was nothing to challenge head-to-head supremacy.

Except that Hitler – who at least once commented that he was a coward when it came to the sea – stifled almost every attempt to send Tirpitz into battle.

And when she did sail, it was all rather underwhelming. Twice in the spring and summer she sortied against convoys to Russia, but retreated to harbour at the sight of enemy aircraft.

The only other offensive action was the pummelling of the remote island Spitsbergen.

For the remainder of her career, Tirpitz was the anvil, not the hammer as (respectively) submariners in X-craft, then carrier-borne aircraft and finally RAF heavy bombers tried to eliminate the threat of this 'fleet in being'.

Using the Tirpitz's records (many of which amazingly survive), the authors show conclusively that by the time the battleship capsized in November 1944, she had long since ceased to pose a threat.

We commented in our review of the duo's previous work that a book written in English by two Swedes did result, understandably, in some unusual phrasing at time.

That's certainly far less evident in the Tirpitz book (although the copy editors somehow managed to lose the last 50 source notes covering the battleship's sinking – infuriating to heavyweight historians, if not to the lay reader...).

Indeed, Tirpitz is a bloody good read and a very good overview of the war in the northern theatre – the Arctic Convoys and German attempts to thwart them.

Like the Bismarck volume it's exceptionally balanced; there's no tubthumping which you might find from a British author or *vae victis* tone prevalent in much German WW2 history.

The Brits – the X-craft crews especially – are shown to be exceptionally brave and skilful; the maps show just how difficult it was to get at Tirpitz with the midget submarines.

And despite the damage inflicted on his ship by the X-craft, Tirpitz's CO *Kapitän zur See* Hans Meyer comes across as a man of honour. He ordered the captured submariners to be well treated: "Give them food and allow them to sleep. They have deserved it."

IN 2007 Geoff Puddefoot published an interesting and useful book, *No Sea Too Rough*, on the vital role the Royal Fleet Auxiliary played in the Falklands Conflict.

Although it had its blemishes, not least a lack of properly-constructed paragraphs, it did fill a gap and contained much original material, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

The author's style, with an emphasis on lengthy quotations from participants, worked adequately enough in a description of a single campaign.

Sadly, however this methodology fails when applied to a wider canvas, as is demonstrated by this new book which attempts a history of the RFA since 1945.

The RFA has played a vital role throughout the post-war period, indeed an increasingly important one as the Royal Navy's global chain of bases has had to be given up and afloat support has become the foundation of the fleet's strategic mobility.

A young warship enthusiast such as myself in the early 1960s wondered why so much was being spent on tankers as the more combatant fleet reduced in numbers.

Later it dawned that without such logistical assets the carrier and amphibious groups could not have been the fundamental factor they were in the East of Suez strategy of the time.

Even when the legions were called home to European waters in the 1970s afloat support remained crucial and it was absolutely vital to the Falklands campaign. It remains a key element in the UK's strategic reach.

A full history of the post-war RFA would therefore be a work of great importance but sadly Puddefoot's new *The Fourth Force: The Untold Story of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary* (Seaforth, ISBN 978-1-84832-046-8) does not provide it.

The long sections of reminiscences of RFA personnel,

The Grove Review

some of which appeared in his previous work, are not set against an informed analytical historical narrative.

The bibliography contains no work on post-war defence policy or one which sets naval development against the general policy context. RFA development as described by the author tends to take place in something of a policy vacuum.

There is no in-depth discussion of the reasons developments did or did not go the way they did.

What background there is too often consists of general historical material, for example on the Suez Crisis, that does not really have a place in a book of this type. What policy discussion that does appear is usually superficial and not very well informed.

There are some significant errors. The important Kuwait operation which did so much to vindicate the Admiralty's ideas on power projection took place in 1961 not 1960. Also it is hardly correct to say that the fleet was being deployed on an "increasingly global scale during the 1970s".

There are also gaps, notably on the genesis of the 'Fort' class AORs with their integral role in the Type 23 programme. The grand (if rather abortive) design of operationally forward deploying armed and operations room-equipped helicopter-carrying RFAs with the new frigates in the front line had as much to do with the 'Navalisation' of the RFA in the 1980s as the perceived lessons of the Falklands war that the author stresses.

This is not to say that the book is without interest. The numerous quoted reminiscences from RFA personnel shed interesting light on the developing nature and duties of the RFA and what life was like in it. They needed a more informed commentary than that provided, however – and much better copy editing by the publisher.



● Fleet tanker RFA Wave Ruler sails away from HMS Cornwall after conducting a replenishment at sea during anti-piracy patrols east of Suez in late 2009
Picture: PO(Phot) Owen King, FRPU East

The author has, like others, gone from Conway to Seaforth for this book. The latter's copy editing would, it would seem, sometimes leave a great deal to be desired.

The author, we are told, was apparently 'trained as a teacher'. Not of English it would seem, as the tendency to avoid constructing proper paragraphs seen in his last book continues in the new work.

The first full page contains no fewer than ten paragraphs! No editor of mine (nor school English teacher of the 1960s) would have let me get away with that!

This is not just form, it hinders the book's ability to make strong and coherent arguments.

Writing a book is like cooking. It requires good ingredients but even the best require preparation and attention to the cooking process itself if the result is to be both digestible and satisfying.

It is such a pity that the Seaforth people, whose recent output I have justly praised, did not try to persuade the author to produce a rather different kind of work, more

within his capabilities. The main strength of *The Fourth Force* is the comprehensive and very useful 37-page section of ships' data tables which cover the entire RFA fleet since 1945.

It would have made sense to fully illustrate these in a central reference section complemented by a section of edited reminiscences and a more coherent policy introduction.

This would have greatly increased the book's value, as would some more information and citation of the anonymous documentary sources claimed to have been used in the very short bibliography.

Having just been marking undergraduate dissertations I could see in the book many of the characteristics of such works, an apparent inability to use sources to construct an argument rather than just quote them as well as a tendency to make errors and produce shallow analysis because of limited knowledge and background research.

This is sad in a book from a maritime historical publisher with a growing and generally well earned reputation.

I should probably have bought the book for the reference section alone, but less committed readers need to consider whether it is worth £25.

Yet it does, however imperfectly, fulfil a timely purpose. It contains strong evidence that the RFA ought to remain as it is – as a closely-associated part of the Naval Service and not be hived off in privatisation.

Such would go against the positive effects of the evolution traceable in the author's account of the RFA since the 1980s.

We are told on the dust jacket that the author is preparing another book to cover the RFA before 1945.

It is to be hoped that he takes a bit more time to broaden his reading and to reflect on his sources to produce something rather better than this seriously-flawed volume. The subject deserves it.

Heads and tales

BOOKS on the collective subject of ship's figureheads – both Naval and merchant – are relatively rare.

Books on the more specific and detailed subject of British Naval figureheads are rarer still.

Retired Rear Admiral David Pulvertaft has been researching British figureheads for more than 15 years, during which time he has been able to build up a vast collection of related material, writes figurehead historian Richard Hunter.

For the past two years with Southsea-based artist Kevin Dean he has been working on a project to redress this situation and as such should be congratulated on *The Warship Figureheads of Portsmouth* (The History Press, £25 ISBN 978-0752-450766), an invaluable and must-have addition to the library of any true figurehead enthusiast – or anyone interested in the rich Naval heritage of the United Kingdom.

Published in association with the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth, the author

guides us through this museum's important collection of surviving figureheads and other related maritime carvings.

The surviving figureheads are published in chronological order, from the brooding head only of HMS Warrior – a witness to both the Battles of the Saints and Copenhagen before being taken to pieces in 1857; of its huge figurehead only the head and neck were saved for posterity – to the charming female figurehead from HMS Espiegle (pictured; evidently an inspiration for *Batgirl* – Ed), a sloop built in 1900; one of the last traditional figureheads to be carved and fitted for a vessel of the Royal Navy, a fitting swansong for a tradition of carvings on the bow of British warships going back to the early 16th Century.

The Warship Figureheads of Portsmouth is more than a catalogue of an important collection. The first three chapters of this book follow the development of the figurehead in the Royal Navy from the fleet of Henry VII and the Mary Rose to its demise towards the end of the 19th Century.

It then moves on to the fasci-

nating subject of ship names and the task of the figurehead carver, before shifting to the history of the Portsmouth collection with its formation as the original dockyard museum during the first quarter of the 20th Century.

Thirty-six of the museum's most important figureheads are described in great detail, one page provides information of the vessel's history from launch to its ultimate fate at the hands of the ship-breakers, complemented by a history of the figurehead itself. Wherever possible the name of the carver or carver's workshop is listed and in several cases,




through his painstaking research in both local and national archives, the admiral has been able to find the original carver's designs and sketches – it's interesting to see a number of significant variations from the carver's original ideas to the finished carving.

On the books' opposite page can be found Kevin Deans' evocative watercolour paintings, produced over many hours in the museum's main gallery, showing the diversity in both subject and style of carving, from the delicate and feminine Royal Adelaide (a yacht of 1833 and one of the smallest figureheads in the collection), to the vast bust figurehead of HMS Asia built in Bombay in 1824.

This book is a celebration of the surviving figureheads at Portsmouth which represents one of the four major collections in the United Kingdom (the others being the National Maritime Museum, Chatham Historic Dockyard

collection in Kent, and the Devonport Dockyard collection).

The Warship Figureheads of Portsmouth is a fascinating look at a wonderful and interesting part of our rich naval heritage, it would be encouraging to hear that other publications are in hand on the subject of the other important collections. This book is a great leap in the right direction, and will I hope encourage others to study and understand the importance of these wonderful carvings, not only as works of art, but as surviving icons of an age of power and confidence.

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NAVY rock climbers took two titles in the inaugural tri-Service bouldering league.

Bouldering? Allow Surg Lt Steve Glennie from BRNC to explain...

Bouldering is a type of rock climbing which focuses primarily on power, strength and problem solving ability, and is done over crash mats but uses no ropes

Climbers perform at – or near – their absolute limit.

In recent years it has boomed with indoor facilities opening all over the country, and now even draws from the 'gym junkie' audience due to the muscle-building benefits it gives.

The popularity of the sport led to the formation of a tri-Service league this season.

Five events, held at different locations around the country over five months, culminated at JSMTC Indefatigable in February.

Each climber's best scores from three of the rounds counted towards their overall score.

The Royal Navy entered a small but competitive team of climbers in this inaugural league.

Indeed, only two Senior Service boulderers were able to attend the required three competitions – but both claimed titles.

S/Lt Lee Packer (Collingwood) took the U25 gong, and Surg Lt Glennie won the open category – both by considerable margins.

The final competition was held alongside the Army bouldering championships at JSMTC Indefatigable, where the Navy firmly established themselves as a force to be reckoned with. Guest entrants Surg Lt(D) Lucy Matthews and Surg Lt Glennie took the 'best guest' titles in women's and men's categories... and first place overall.

More details on this fledgling sport can be found at www.climbnavy.com.

Lancaster enjoys boxing days

HMS Lancaster has become the first Royal Navy unit to complete the non-contact boxing tutor awards.

In all, 20 personnel on the Type 23 frigate (that's one in nine of the ship's company) have completed the preliminary, standard and bronze awards.

Impressive enough. Even more impressive when you consider the frigate is chasing pirates half-way around the globe (see pages 14-15).

Indeed, completing the awards was a battle in itself; lessons often had to be cancelled due to boarding stations and clearing the upper deck just as sessions were getting started.

The team battled through and progressed to complete the bronze award before getting alongside in Dubai.

All 20 pugilists passed with flying colours.

"It's a great way to start and people who would have never put on a pair of gloves enjoy it so much they want to continue," says Lancaster's clubz LPT Daz Hoare (he's also been busy on the footballing front – see right).

"We have a few in the group who want to go one step further and actually go to a boxing club now. This will certainly improve the chances of RN boxing."

"If as a team we can do it while on operations in the Gulf anyone can do it."

Matelots in Gibraltar can look out for these awards – Daz is heading there next.

Grass grows on ice

RN ice hockey players were heavily in action last month, writes Lt Cdr Al Bernard, RNIHA general secretary.

First, the Navy developmental side took on their Army counterparts in Gosport – and triumphed 9-3, although the final score did not really reflect the even play seen throughout the game.

Then, two 'grass roots' sports events, one in co-operation with HMS Collingwood at Gosport's Planet Ice and the other with HMS Raleigh at the Plymouth Pavilions were staged to raise awareness of RN sport, promote physical fitness and attract new players to ice hockey.

The events were also a perfect opportunity for RN ice hockey, enjoying new-found 'recognised status', to 'give back' to Navy Sport after four years of fantastic support received from the Director Naval Physical Development (DNPd) and the RN/RM Sports Lottery.

It's great that we have matured to a point when we can run such large-scale events.

This would not have been possible without the continued help from Capt Farrage and his team at DNPd and I believe it is the RNIHA's responsibility to participate in these events, to help promote RN sport in general – and our own in particular.

Thirty-five Phase 2 trainees from Collingwood and 20 from Raleigh participated in the events organised by LPTs Ormston (Collingwood) and Jefferson (Raleigh).

A great deal of enthusiasm was shown by all the trainees and it hoped that a few will decide to take up the sport on a more regular basis.

The good proportion of female attendees at these grass roots



● Lt Cdr Al Bernard tries in vain to stop a shot during the 'grass roots' session for HMS Raleigh personnel at the Plymouth Pavilions

Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh

events also raises hopes of entering a women's team in the next HM Forces Championships in Sheffield in June.

Although there were no obvious experienced players in attendance, there was sufficient potential displayed to be optimistic about the future of the sport.

In recognition of this, the RNIHA hopes to set up a 'beginners' league in the South, playing similarly-skilled players from the RN, Army and RAF in friendly competition.

It is also hoped to be able to play during the day to avoid one of the major drawbacks of hockey in the UK – the unsociable hours.

Next, the Navy representative

side hosted the Invicta Knights at Gosport.

The RN managed to dress one of its strongest sides of the year while their travel-weary Kent opponents could only muster ten players.

The Navy took a substantial early lead and dominated most of the play in the first and third periods on their way to a 14-6 win.

We expect a very different and much larger Invicta team to face us when we travel to Gillingham for the return match.

The final major event of the month was the first RN Cup, where teams from the Royal Marines, Fleet Air Arm and RN ships and

establishments competed for the title of Navy champions.

The contest was another fine example of how much the sport has grown in the past four years that it has reached a point where we can hold a major intra-RN competition.

Results were not available at the time of going to print but are available on the RNIHA website (www.rniha.org.uk) and will be reported in the next edition.

Personnel interested in joining the team can visit our website, the DII landing page or find and join our group or fan page in Facebook. There's some spare kit available for loan but players are encouraged to have their own skates.

The taming of the screws

THE past two months have seen a number of matches cancelled due to the horrendous weather that swept across the UK. But there has been some footie action...

Opportunities for the senior side have been limited since mid-December.

With the friendly against Gosport Borough cancelled due to the weather, the RN were delighted at the prospect of getting their boots back on for a competitive fixture against the Prison Service.

In what has historically been a gruelling match, the RN side were keen to extend their unbeaten run which began in early November.

This fixture also heralded the debut of the striker, Mne Henry Husbands (45 Cdo).

On a pristine surface, the RN's overwhelming early pressure paid dividends in the 11th minute.

A corner from AET Jamie Thirkle (Sultan) was flicked on at the near post and bundled into the net by the ever-dependable C/Sgt Richie Hope (CTCRM).

The lead was almost doubled one minute before the break. Thirkle played a one-two with Hope on the edge of the Prison Service box. The shot was saved, but the keeper spilled the ball to Mne Shea Saunders (CTCRM), who slotted home. Sadly, the ref ruled the Royal was offside.

The highly-vocal Prison Service coach obviously gave his side a bit of a roasting at half time; they began the second half very aggressively.

The RN back four – who have remained consistent for the bulk of the season – managed to comfortably soak up the pressure and Mne Adam Fowler (FPGRM) prevented an equaliser with a superb goal-line clearance.

At the other end, Saunders struck a direct free kick inches wide. He would come close in the



Onside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

closing minutes, only for his strike to be saved.

The game ended with the RN side enjoying absolute domination and a well-deserved win.

Following the victory, the Seniors lost 1-0 to Havant & Waterlooville before returning to winning ways with a comprehensive 3-0 win against Middlesex FA.

In the Southern Counties Cup, the Seniors have won three and drawn one; they are riding top of the table with one match to go against the Army at Aldershot Town FC on the March 17.

Before that there's the small matter of the Inter-Services clash with the RAF at Fratton Park on March 10. Kick-off is 7.30pm and admission is free.

After a protracted period without competitive fixtures, the U23 development squad played their second game of the season against London University – a traditional precursor to the Inter-Services competition.

The game started at pace with the RN side applying the early pressure resulting in a number of set pieces which kept the students' defence busy.

London University managed to stifle those early efforts and applied a degree of pressure in the latter stages of the first half with AB Matt Hilbourne (Ark Royal) being tested in goal on more than one occasion.

The second half started brightly with AET Marvin Brookes (RNAS Cudrose) taking a more central role in attack. His strength allowed him to out-muscle the London centre half and play a looping ball for LPT Ross McEvoy to steer past the advancing keeper on 64 minutes.

With the game looking as if it

was heading for a 1-0 RN victory, a loose ball in midfield allowed London to gain possession on 88 minutes. A cross and a header later and the ball was in the back of the Navy net.

The Royal Navy ladies played a rearranged away fixture against Bridgwater Town having not had a competitive game since November.

With the Inter-Services fast approaching it was vital that the ladies got some much-needed game time.

Due to work commitments and an unfortunate injury during the morning training session to LA(SE) Amy King, the ladies were only able to field two recognized defenders, these were RPO Michelle Garrett and AB(W/S) Lisa Fraser, who were assisted by Logs(Pers) Naomi Marsh dropping back from midfield into a 3-5-2 formation, of which none of the players had any experience.

During the opening ten minutes the lack of games combined with the players settling into formation proved noticeable: Bridgwater Town enjoyed the majority of play and looking dangerous especially on the attack.

With 20 minutes on the clock, the RN started taking control of the game, playing some impressive pass-and-move football.

Two minutes later, a great move involving four Navy players culminated in Ingram being played in down the left. She easily beat the Bridgwater defender and drove at the goal, freeing up centre forward Mansfield. The latter accepted Ingram's pulled-back pass to calmly slot the ball past a stunned Bridgwater keeper.

With every passing minute the RN ladies were improving and

gaining in confidence, playing some of their best football of the season. With a bit more composure in front of goal they could have stretched their lead prior to half time.

The second period opened with Bridgwater putting the RN under pressure and a mistake by Bavister on 52 minutes nearly undid all the Navy's hard work. Marsh came to the rescue with a great challenge just as the Bridgwater player was about to shoot.

On 65 minutes, Fraser slid a great ball inside to Bavister who made up for her earlier mistake finding Ingram with a superb pass. She made no mistake, needing only one touch to control the ball and fire past the Bridgwater keeper.

Tired legs became a problem on an increasingly heavy pitch and this took its toll as both teams tired in the closing stages, but the RN held out for a fully-deserved 2-0 victory.

The U18s were on the wrong end of a 3-1 scoreline against London FA.

The RN veterans narrowly lost out to the Prison Service on a heavy Burnaby Road pitch.

A second-minute strike settled the contest, which was played in the true spirit of the game.

In the Navy Cup, HMS Heron became the first team to claim a place in the final beating Illustrious 8-7 on penalties.

At the time of going to press, the other semi between CTCRM and 45 Cdo was still to be played.

Finally a big 'well done' to HMS Lancaster who achieved FA Charter Status.

The Red Rose becomes the 11th RN team to receive this prestigious award, presented to LPT Daz Hoare.

I'm now at sea with HMS Sutherland.

If you tire of reading about the mighty F81 each month, email your match reports with photos to 398-lo@ad.ii.mod.uk.

Brothers grapple Panthers

Continued from page 48
behalf of the RFL.

Capt Murdoch drew the RN out of the bag... and Cdr Hughes their opponents, the Nottingham Outlaws.

This was always going to be a step up from the students so RNRL coaches were glad to welcome back several first teamers.

Despite the final score of 46-6 this was no Valentine's Day Massacre especially as the Outlaws posted the first points after just five minutes.

Gradually as the first half wore on the Brothers began to exert more and more control over the match, however.

Tries for Mark Robinson and the ever-influential Lewis Taylor – both converted by Kev Botwood – nudged the home side ahead 12-6 as the break approached.

The killer blow came on the stroke of half-time. A great move saw quick hands from Wayne John and prop Jamie Goss get the ball out to left winger Aaron Hanson who took his chance brilliantly to score. With Botwood converting magnificently from the touchline the Brothers were ahead 18-6 at the break.

RNRL dominated the second period, allowing little opportunity for the Outlaws to get back in the game. The Brothers spent most of the half camped in their opponent's territory. The result of this pressure? Five more tries shared among the backs and the dominant RN pack.

Johnny Platt scored one of his trademark hooker's tries while Jamie Goss stormed over from 20 metres, taking the defence with him. Among the backs Tim Vonderavulu finished his chance well and Nick Bell came off the bench to score his first try since returning to the fold. Scrum half Botwood scored a try of his own to add to his near-perfect seven from eight conversions.

Épée epic in Bristol

FENCERS new and old from across the South-West joined the RN for the Bristol Royal Navy Fencing Competition.

A friendly event aimed at introducing beginner and intermediate fencers to the competition format, it has proved so popular that it's in its fourth year.

Twenty-three teams from seven clubs in the Bristol and Bath area entered, with more than 100 fencers taking part.

The aim of the day was not to find a winner, rather to get as much fencing done as possible.

Teams of three fought against each other using the rolling 45 format, and with 55 matches completed, everyone gained a lot of fencing experience.

As Rachael from Bath Sword said: "A big thank you from all of us! It was a great day of fencing, and really useful for our beginner fencers. We are all looking forward to next year's event."

Starting on time and finishing at the planned time, no early exits and with no dragging on, the drill hall at HMS Flying Fox was full to capacity.

Old rivalries fuelled some closely-fought matches, and despite there being no prizes, some very competitive fencing.

The day also raised £233 for the British Heart Foundation through a charity lunch made by LNN Leanne Parry.

"It was great to be able to help get people fencing as it enables people of all ages to get some good exercise in an unusual sport," said Leanne.

"It's much more physical than people expect." With team competitions for beginners and intermediates so rare, the RN fencing community is organising similar events in Portsmouth and Birmingham in the next couple of months.

● *L/Cpl Pete Dunning RM represents the Corps in the Combined Services disabled ski team*



Miracle in Meribel

Continued from page 48

Lac is a five-minute free bus ride away and the team worked hard to provide as many discounts in the local bars and restaurants as possible.

With snow falling across most of Europe it was challenging getting all competitors there in the first place.

With people spread as far as Milan still trying to get to Tignes 24 hours after the event had started ETC had their work cut out, but eventually everyone arrived safely and the intensive period of instruction and racing commenced.

With perfect snow conditions the instruction began in earnest. There was teaching available for all levels from

beginner to race training (delivered extremely well by S/Sgt Tony McGill, on loan from the RLC) and from feedback received by the RNWSA, Evolution 2 provided top-quality instruction.

Week one ended with a plethora of races: the beginners', the boardercross as well as the giant slalom B and C races. These were very popular and proved the race piste and the snow park for the first time.

The second week started with an enormous dump... of snow. This set the week up perfectly. Not only had transfer day been good weather with few snags, but sunshine and more fresh snow made for perfect conditions for racing – the focus of the second week.

There was a full race programme added to the already full instructional programme, with the snowboarders enjoying parallel giant slalom, boardercross and for the first time slopestyle.

For skiers, there was something for everyone: beginners, C races, B and A races and for the experts attending, a premier super G for the first time.

We also welcomed a team from the Australian Defence Force, training and competing with the RN before attending the Inter Services Championships in February.

Racing week was made even more spectacular by the number of people venturing forth to the start gates.

Competitors this year rose by 50 per cent and the number of teams competing in the A races doubled.

This is exactly what was required as we look to develop the next generation of RN skiers.

The boarders also welcomed their new event, slopestyle, to the championships with much success (see the back page).

The Australians gave the teams a good run for their money but the overall Navy Ski Champions were Chris Sharratt closely followed by Rob Corcoran and the ladies

● *It's downhill all the way for Lt Kate Hopkins in the, er, downhill final*



champion was Holly Henderson, with Samantha Dunbar a close second.

For the boarders, Mick Hawkes prevailed with 'Smudge' Smith close behind and Lyndsay Griffiths was followed by Gemma Britton in the ladies' category. There was a very-hard-fought battle in the team competition and it is testament to the personnel and PTIs of HMS Illustrious that they came away with both the A and B major unit prize; to get more than 40 of the ships' company away for the event was a spectacular effort.

The Flying Tigers of 814 NAS reigned supreme over their rivals 820 NAS for the minor unit A prize while HMS Vengeance (with a strong contingent) took the B race prize.

The Command prize was won this year by the Fleet Air Arm.

Particular highlights from this year's racing included the selection of two women to race train and represent the

RN at the Inter Services.

This was a testament to the excellent race piste, the calibre of the racers, but most of all the committee who prepared the events.

Arthur Steiner – the RN alpine team trainer – commented that he witnessed the best Super G race ever staged.

Well done to those involved and hopefully the experience this year will prompt bigger and better things next year.

2010 saw the departure of a number of key personnel from the event.

Cdr Andrea Crook has been involved with the RNWSA for 15 years and has managed the tricky financial balancing task of RNWSA treasurer with a firm hand and good humour.

Lt Col Nick Daukes RM has led the snowboarding discipline for many years as the sport grows to near parity with the skiers.

His sense of humour, extravagant

but minimal fancy dress outfits and exceptional instruction have proved invaluable. He will be sorely missed, along with his dulcet and entertaining commentating skills.

The final goodbye is for the legend that is Tommy Wallace.

Tommy has been supporting the championships in many guises for 25 years and leaves as the head of the skiing instructors' team. He's been instrumental in ensuring the highest standards of instruction are provided for Service personnel and civilians alike, and there are few people skiing in the Service today that haven't been taught by Tommy at one stage or another.

Looking ahead, there's no doubt that the alpine championships provide some of the best adventurous training on offer and are a significant morale boost to those attending thanks to the opportunity to develop skills from beginners to experts, along with the potential to bring family to the largest single Service sporting event in the calendar.

That said the championships are not exempt from financial pressures, both personal and within the military. This places demands on personnel to attend and there is no doubt that the event will be under threat if attendance falls.

It is absolutely vital that numbers are maximised in the coming years, not only for the well being of the attendees but for the championships itself.

To that end there will be a significant effort to maximise attendance at the 2011 event between January 8 and 22, with incentives for those organising groups as well as roadshows and advertising. Keep an eye on www.rnswa.co.uk for further details.

The committee is also looking for people to help sell the event on their base or within their unit. If you want to promote the championships, organise a team for next year or just provide feedback or suggestions e-mail rnwsacd@yahoo.co.uk.



● *Ultimate board meeting... Competitors jump a ramp in BFBS Sport snowboard cross final*

Next month



'An episode of which Britain can be rightly proud' - Channel Dash memorial unveiled



'The effect must have been terrifying' - triumph at Narvik 70th anniversary supplement



End of an illustrious ERA - farewell to the Tiffs

Plus More from winter war games in Norway

SPORT



● Lord of leaping... One of the RN snowboarding team rises above the Meribel slopes as the Navy post their first 1-2-3 podium finish at the Inter-Services
Picture: PO(Phot) Donny Osmond, FRPU North

Miracle in Meribel

THE Royal Navy snowboard team's most successful year of competition saw a landmark 1-2-3 for the men on the slopes of Meribel - and a first podium finish for the ladies.

AET Ross Taylor from RNAS Culdrose took the slopestyle competition.

He was joined on the podium by team captain - and the oldest competitor at the championships - CPOPT Mark 'Smudge' Smith of the FLEET FOSNNI Youth CCF Organisation.

Completing this unique whitewash of the other Services was another Faslane-based boarder: AB(D) 'Skins' Rudkin from the Northern Diving Group.

It was, says Smudge, "a sight to treasure".

The icing on the cake was provided by Lt Alex Kelly (RNAS Culdrose).

She was leading the Combined Services snowboarder cross event into the closing round.

Sadly, she was pipped by the more experienced RAF boarder

Cpl Donna Hargreaves, who took first place courtesy of a drop-off jump in the final straight to push the RN officer into second place.

In her first Alpine Championships, Lt Kelly proved to be a force to be reckoned with for many years to come but was unfortunate to break her arm in the final slopestyle competition the following day.

The triumphs were witnessed by Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, and the chairman of the RN Winter Sports Association Capt Richard Stokes.

And a special 'thank you' must also go to team coaches James Sweet and Stephane Wiehe who worked miracles to bring the RNSB team justified success.

■ Leading up to events in Meribel were the RN championships, staged for the first time in Tignes.

While the UK shivered under repeated blankets of snow and slid around on the ice causing mayhem everywhere, it proved to be a bumper year for snow at the (deep breath) Royal Navy Winter

Sports Association 2010 Alpine Championships.

This year the event underwent the most significant change in its history, writes Lt Cdr Rob Taylor.

Not only did it move from Les Menuires to Tignes Val Claret, but also a new tour operator partner was introduced, Event Travel Company. There was also a new instructor provider (Evolution 2) and equipment supplier (Favre Sports) as well as a new insurance company (Rush Insurance).

With so many variables changing it had all the ingredients for potential chaos, but thankfully the opposite was true.

For those who don't know Tignes, it is served by the large ski area L'Esplanade Killy, with over 300 km of pistes.

There are areas available for all standards of skiers and snowboarders from the absolute beginner to the expert thrill seekers.

A ski tranquille area allowed newcomers to get miles of snow under their board/skis and progress

rapidly to the more challenging slopes.

There is incredible off-piste skiing, as well as a half pipe, boardercross course, some great freeriding and the 1992 Olympics downhill course should you feel up for it.

Unlike previous venues for the event Val Claret itself is a compact village with an excellent spread of restaurants and bars, a place where we established a strong RN community.

If you needed to stretch your legs the nearby town of Tignes Le

Continued on page 47

Brothers grapple Panthers

AN HISTORIC three weeks in the annals of Navy rugby league saw the Brothers finally join the 'big boys'.

The team reached the third round of the Carnegie Challenge Cup - the rugby league counterpart of the FA Cup - after a decade's trying.

The Brothers are the sole Services' representative left in the competition and have been handed a home tie with Championship 1 side Blackpool Panthers over the weekend of March 6-7 (see www.pitchero.com/clubs/royalnavyrugbyleague/ for match details nearer the date).

The teams met at last year's Carnegie 9s in Leeds, where the Panthers proved too strong for the Brothers on the day.

The road to the third round - where Championship and Championship 1 sides such as Keighley and Widnes enter the fray - began with a long trek north to Tyneside to take on Northumbria University in the first round.

A higher than usual number of first team regulars were missing through injury and operational duties, giving many players on the fringes of selection a chance to shine, writes WO1 Keith Humpleby, RNRL spokesman.

Shine they did. A starting line-up fielding only four of the team which beat the Army in September effectively controlled a students' side which had no real answer to the RN's power and fitness.

Led by Lewis Taylor playing at No13 RNRL ran in 11 tries, converting five of them. The students' only reply was a late consolation try to leave the final score 54-4.

The action then switched to the poop deck of HMS Victory where officials from the Rugby Football League and Leeds Carnegie joined RNRL staff to make the second round draw.

Also present was the trophy itself, the magnificent silver Challenge Cup.

RNRL President Capt Steve Murdoch and Chairman Cdr Gareth Hughes drew the home and away sides respectively with Craig Spence officiating on

Continued on page 46



● Major Huan Davies RM on his way to fifth place in the IBM Telemark Sprint Classic at Meribel
Picture: Blueski Photography

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