TOUGH TIMES

At the going down of the sun... The White Ensign is lowered aboard HMS Ark Royal, the nation's flagship and an iconic casualty of the Strategic Defence and Security Review which saw the axe of austerity fall on the Senior Service. See pages 4-5 and 35 for details.

Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones, HMS Ark Royal

40 COMMANDO HOME FROM HELMAND ■ TARANTO 70
Fleet Focus

NO TWO ways about it, the past few weeks have been particularly bleak for the men and women of the Royal Navy.

But, as the First Sea Lord emphasises in the wake of the Strategic Defence and Security Review, "there is still a job to do". A quick glance at the maps above show that it is being done. And how.

In the Caribbean, HMS Manchester snared three drug runners and stopped cocaine reaching its destination (see right).

Half a world away, HMS Montrose twice disrupted vessels belonging to Somali pirates, once thwarting an attack on a merchantman, the other occasion destroying a pirate 'mothership' (see page 7).

HMS Northumberland is also in the region and the duo will shortly be joined by HMS Cumberland (see right).

The green berets of 40 Commando have returned from their "battersew" six months in Helmand where the heavy sacrifices, say senior Royals, were "worth it" (see page 6).

Meanwhile the third Type 45, HMS Diamond has sailed south from the Blue Ensign and hoisted the White (see page 27).

A quick glance at the maps above show that it is being done. And how.

Three thousand miles away her older sister HMS Daring was patrolling the waters of the western Pacific, her mission to disrupt the supply chain of drugs heading for the Far East (see page 15).

She was one of 15 warships and auxiliaries and two Naval air squadrons participating in the regular war game (see pages 20-21 and 24-25). The rest were deep south, HMS Ships Ark Royal, York, Monmouth, Shoreham, Walney, Brecklesby, Cattistock, Ledbury, Penzance, Echo, Biter, and Turbulent, HMS programmes for the coming generation (see page 10).

The Mighty Sausage will be east of Suez until well into the New Year. Cumberland is returning to the region from whence she came at the tail end of 2009 (and at the tail end of 2008 as well...)

In the nine months since last year's deployment ended, the warship has received some TLC courtesy of engineers from Babcock and enhancements for her 2010-11 deployment, notably improved weapons and comms Systems.

Those improvements were tested during the latest Joint Warrior exercises in north-west Scotland (see pages 20-21 and 24-25) before Cumberland made for Gibraltar and then the Middle East.

There her tasks are many and varied, with the overarching aim of maritime security – including protecting Iraq's oil platforms (currently safeguarded by HMS Somerset – see page 22) and counter-smuggling/terrorism/people trafficking in the Gulf – with the overarching aim of maritime security – including protecting Iraq's oil platforms (currently safeguarded by HMS Somerset – see page 22) and counter-smuggling/terrorism/people trafficking in the Gulf – and counter-terrorism and counter-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean (her principal mission on her last sortie to this part of the world).

Cumberland's Commanding Officer, Capt Steve Dainton – who previously worked in the Iraq Navy – said: "It is impressive to see how far the Iraqi Navy has come during recent years."

He added: "My crew have done really well over the past nine months and are at an extremely high standard."

The ship is operationally focused and ready to deal with any of the very real threats we may encounter while we are away."
Going Viper active

THIS broiling flash of fire and smoke is the moment that more than a decade’s hopes, dreams and toll comes to fruition.

Somewhere within this fire and smoke is the sword of the Sea Viper weaponry system: an Aster 30 anti-air missile, leaving its silo on HMS Dauntless on a test range in the Outer Hebrides – the first time the weapon has been fired by a Type 45 destroyer.

Seconds later the long-range Aster 30 missile – racing through the sky at upwards of four times the speed of sound – downed a moving drone target over the Atlantic.

The missile has already been successfully tested in single launches and salvo firings from the Longbow trials barge in the Mediterranean.

The final test before the weapon – and the Type 45 destroyers which carry it – could be declared operational was to marry ship and Sea Viper, hence the trials off Scotland.

After a live Aster was loaded at the Crombie ammunition jetty, on the Firth of Forth, Dauntless made for the ranges at Benbecula in the Western Isles (150 miles northwest of Glasgow).

It took two days of boffinry courtesy of Qinetiq range staff and some 30 contractors from BAE and missile makers MBDA, plus the ship’s company to tweak the Sea Viper system ready for its baptism of fire.

And then, with wonderfully-clear skies over the Western Isles, on September 29 a Mirach drone was ready for launch from Benbecula.

Closed up in Dauntless’ sprawling ops room, air warfare officer Lt Cdr Joe Affree monitored the heavens to make sure there was no passing civilian air traffic.

With the range ‘green’ (safe) it was time to launch the drone – a remote-controlled jet which cruises through the air at 530kts (610mph).

...which should be meat and drink to Sea Viper (according to the blurb the missile should be able to destroy a cricket ball travelling at Mach 3... if a cricket ball could travel at Mach 3, of course).

More quantifiable is the fact that the missile system can track 200 potential targets at ranges of up to 250 miles and take out targets up to 70 miles away.

Or in this case, a solitary target on an ‘intercept course at “considerable distance” (the actual range is, of course, classified).

It fell to CP0(AWW) Eddie Wearing to press the button and...

Woooshhhhh.

And when we say woooshhhhh, we mean woooshhhhh. There’s no bang – roar, it’s Sea Dart. Nor even a woooshhhhh – roar, a lie Seawolf. More a continuous woooshhhhh. A very brief woooshhhhh at that.

So fast does Sea Viper leave its silo that all those privileged to witness this first firing from Dauntless’ bridge saw was a flash of flame and smoke – it took some very fast cameras set to automatic to record the images on this page.

And then it was gone. It required the ship’s thermal imaging camera system to track Sea Viper’s lightning-quick progress to its target.

In the grainy, monochrome world of the camera, one black blob impacts with another black blob and lots of little black blobs fall to earth.

Success.

Indeed, the success off the Western Isles was, says operations officer Lt Cdr Steve Wall, “the most satisfying firing I have done during my naval career.

“Sea Viper has shown itself to be a world beating system ready for service with the RN for the next 30 years.”

Deputy weapon engineer officer Lt James Fickling adds: “Watching and feeling the missile launch from underneath the silo and then seeing the missile hit the target on the thermal imager was awesome and proved that all the work we had put in was worth it.”

And from Commanding Officer Capt Richard Powell: “The firing is the culmination of a lot of hard work by the ship’s company, contractors and civil servants involved in the project and has shown the value of teamwork, without which the firing would not be the success that it was.

“The performance of the missile was outstanding, scoring a direct hit on the target at considerable range proving that the Type 45 is the best air defence destroyer in the world.”

His ship is now back in Portsmouth Harbour after paying her inaugural visit to her affiliated town of Great Yarmouth.

Following the successful firing, Dauntless will be formally declared operational this month.

You can watch video footage of the successful firing at www.mod.uk/news-and-events/re-live/all-news/seas-viper
The review at a glance

HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales will be built but will have no fixed-wing aircraft until around 2020. Conventional versions of the carriers will be built — with catapult launchers but no ski ramps — to accommodate traditional fast jets.

Joint Force Harrier — including 800 Naval Air Squadron — is to be decommissioned; it will be replaced — in a decade’s time — by the F35 Joint Strike Fighter (F35C) but plans to buy the Short Take-Off/Vertical Landing (STOVL) variant (F35B) have been dropped in favour of a conventional model (F35C).

All variants of the Sea King — Search and Rescue, Airborne Surveillance and Control (‘Baggers’), and Commando Helicopter Force (‘Jungles’) — out of service by 2016.

Royal Marines remain an integral part of the Royal Navy and could be at the heart of a ‘high readiness’ helicopter carrier.

ADMIRAL Sir Mark Stanhope has fought the Navy’s corner in the most vicious defence review since the 1970s.

When he spoke to Navy News day before the Strategic Defence and Security Review announcement, he was in one respect a happier man because the uncertainty of the last few months has been removed.

He explained: “The decision to gap the carrier strike capability is completely the most challenging outcome of the SDSR for the Navy.

“The good news is that we are getting to the carriers, and the aircraft will be generated from them in a more conventional way with a longer range, greater weapons loads, and interoperable with the US.

“But the challenge of removing the Harriers without giving me the ability to maintain a seed corn level of capability across all air arms is a concern. Is it just the pilots but the deck handlers, fighter controllers, bomb bays, air engineers — means we will have to regenerate this skill base, not just transfer it.”

Many fear that over the next ten years until the new carrier strike capability arrives, the unique skills needed to operate an airfield at sea will wither on the vine, with disastrous consequences for the Fleet Air Arm.

The First Sea Lord said: “We mustn’t let that happen, and we won’t. We now have a clear direction on the future of the Fleet Air Arm, and we will ensure that the unique skills needed to operate an airfield at sea are maintained.”

On the day he spoke to Navy News, the Admiral had visited RAF Catterick to talk to 800 Naval Air Squadron, many of whose aircrew were visibly shocked after expecting a last-minute reprieve.

He told them: “Of course morale is low. It’s the most devastating blow, this is the most challenging of environments for the last 25 years or so.

“They are clearly deeply disappointed. I wanted to explain to them as best I could the logic behind some of the thinking, and get them to understand that this will be a long process but they must form part of the solution to deliver capability in future.

He added: “That’s a lot to ask, but we will stick with them as long as possible, and if we need to pull forward some of these people to be able to deliver it.”

Some will be embedded with the RAF, some will take exchange appointments with the US and French to maintain their skills, and there are some pinch points of engineering within
for all, painful for some service will always endure. 

As Swingeing cuts to the Fleet were being announced, the passing of minesweeper HMS Walney almost went unnoticed. But not by the people of Barrow-in-Furness.

The Sandown-class ship is a victim of cuts announced last year as part of the deepening economic crisis.

The ship’s company were joined for the formal act of decommissioning by senior naval officers, including Capt Philip Buckley, Captain Faslane Flotilla, and the mayor of the ship’s affiliated town, Barrow-in-Furness, Cllr Rory McClure and his wife Wendy.

All paid thanks for sailors who have breathed life into Walney since 1996.

A cake was presented to the ship to mark the occasion and was cut by AB/MW Clark Middlehurst, the youngest crew member at 20 years old.

And then Walney departed the Clyde with bangs blasting their fires in a traditional send-off.

Next stop Portsmouth, for the act of preparing the vessel for potential sale. Via her affiliated town for the last time.

One last time locals were able to file aboard the ship as she opened her gangway at Town Quay in the heart of Barrow.

(Throughout her career the ship was also bound with Faslane General Hospital and the local Sea Cadet unit TS Sovereign.)

‘But many people turned out to wish us well, which was much appreciated.’

Bawbee has a very proud serving heritage and extremely close ties with the Royal Navy. We have been very proud to be part of that.’

Despite the Sword of Damocles hanging over the mine countermeasures vessel since Christmas, she was in action almost to the very last days of her 18-year career.

Walney was called upon at short notice to plug a gap in NATO Standing Mine Counter- Measure Group 1. She spent five months in the waters of northern Europe working with allies and taking part in exercises large and small.


Raising it again in ten years’ time presents, says Admiral Stanhope, ‘an enormous challenge.’

He continues: ‘It is neither an insurmountable challenge, nor one for the Royal Navy alone.

‘The successful re-creation of the UK’s ability to operate aircraft from carriers will rest upon the leadership and support of everyone in defence, and the contribution of our international partners.’

The coming months will bring seismic changes to large swathes of the Naval community – the impact of the review truly kicks in from April 11 year.

We have to look across the Navy to see how we can square the circle. We can’t go on with 23.

But with any of the reductions we’re taking, especially the reductions in fairly short order.

Not all outcomes were as bad as expected. The surface Fleet and submarines lost fewer numbers than feared.

He explained: ‘We won’t lose all the people we have to through natural wastage, or by virtue of the changes in fairly short order.

As for the Service he leads, it will live on.

‘The Naval Service always has been – and will remain – fundamental to the security and trade upon which the prosperity of this island nation depends,’ Admiral Stanhope stresses.

The same thingsthathave always made the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Maritime Reserves and Royal Fleet Auxiliary – with our civil staff – are here to stay.

I don’t welcome these changes. It will be tough, but I am in no doubt that our Navy will remain a highly capable, internationally-renowned and worthy of your commitment and loyalty. I am confident about our shared future.”

The admiral said: “We must not turn the tap off and make the mistakes of the early 90s, and we must balance input with output.

He added: “The same things that have always made people want to join the Navy are still there. Put it this way, someone joining the Navy in ten years time could be a killie, a petty officer or a young lieutenant, operating in a Type 45 destroyer, in defence of a Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier, projecting Joint Strike Fighter off the deck protected by a Type 26 frigate coming on line, or an Astute class submarine.

‘That is pretty exciting.’

Admiral Stanhope said: ‘SIDS has been a battle, and as you win and lose arguments, personal morale is affected and you will always sense there was some other thing you could have brought to the table.

‘But I can look myself in the mirror and say there wasn’t one area where I didn’t argue the case very, very strongly.

He continued: ‘The Navy is still hugely respected for what we do, we haven’t suddenly changed our ethos, capability or the training. all those elements.

‘Lessen is the heart of Barrow. (Throughout her career the ship was also bound with Faslane General Hospital and the local Sea Cadet unit TS Sovereign.)

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the Fleet Air Arm to fill.

But for others, as across the whole Service, redundancy is the only option and the impact on people will be severe.

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‘We have to look across the Navy to see how we can square the circle. We can’t go on with 23.

But with any of the reductions we’re taking, especially the reductions in fairly short order.

Not all outcomes were as bad as expected. The surface Fleet and submarines lost fewer numbers than feared.

The admiral said: “Whilst I’m not comfortable with any of the reductions we’re taking, especially the people cuts, we retain, with the exception of the fums of carrier strike, the same balanced force structure that we had before.

Tanking decisions haven’t been made yet, and I’ve made the point very clearly that we can’t deliver the same standing commitments on a continuous basis with 19 frigates and destroyers that we delivered with 23.

“We have to see if there’s a smarter way of doing it in the future with fewer people and platforms. That might be a circle we can’t square but we’ve got to look at it.

“I’m absolutely clear that people are working hard enough and I can’t overstretch them.”

Like all the Armed Forces, the Navy is a ‘bottom-up’ employer – it recruits young people and trains them. Recruiting slowed, but it will not stop.

The admiral said: “We must not turn the tap off and make the mistakes of the early 90s, and we must balance input with output.

He added: “The same things that have always made people want to join the Navy are still there. Put it this way, someone joining the Navy in ten years time could be a killie, a petty officer or a young lieutenant, operating in a Type 45 destroyer, in defence of a Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier, projecting Joint Strike Fighter off the deck protected by a Type 26 frigate coming on line, or an Astute class submarine.

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Old gold

SHE may be something of a veteran, but the sun is not yet setting on HMS Triumph.

The veteran T-boat is bathed in the golden glow of an autumn sunrise on the Clyde, captured by fledgling Navy photographer LA(Phot) Ben Sutton.

Triumph was launched almost 20 years ago, but still has plenty of mileage in her. The boat recently took part in Exercise Joint Warrior as part of her cycle of operational sea training, then made a brief visit to the Clyde to pick up supplies and swap some crew members before continuing with her programme. That includes a visit to the Netherlands, followed by two deployments next year.

But it was not all work - the boat recently hosted one of the Navy's most cherished traditions, the baptism of a child on board. Evie Francesca, six-month-old daughter of PO Scott Pearson-Rossie and his wife Britta, was duly christened, and as mum said: “The whole day ran so smoothly and was such an unforgettably special experience.”

And while we are on the subject of T-boats, Triumph’s sister HMS Tireless has been making a nuisance of herself (for the very best reasons) around the Gulf of Oman.

Tireless was at the heart of a major anti-submarine exercise involving British, American, French and Australian forces in the Middle East, all choreographed by the UK Maritime Component Command in Bahrain.

So Tireless acted as mouse for Australian (HMAS Melbourne) and French (FS Dupleix) cats, watched over by the Merlin of 820 Naval Air Squadron and American P3 maritime patrol aircraft - although in this case the mouse also has sharp claws, as the hunter can quickly become the prey when it is as slippery and silent as a T-boat.

Meanwhile, a third boat in the class was preparing for a Royal visitor as Navy News went to press.

HMS Talent, recently returned from deployment in the Indian Ocean, will welcome the Princess Royal on board as the submarine marks the 20th anniversary of commissioning. Princess Anne is Talent’s sponsor, and last visited her in 2006 when the submarine was rededicated.
THIS is what a .5 calibre M3M gun mounted on a Lynx can do in the hands of a Royal Marines Commando.

The frigate launched her Lynx, Vixen, which threw eight gas bombs at the pirates. The Lynx then telephoned Montrose which was relatively close and immediately launched her Lynx.

The frigate has been sending her helicopter Vixen up at dawn and dusk especially with a view to detecting shadows and skiffs leaving the pirate camps along Somalia’s east coast.

The Mk8 Lynx has also been conducting surveillance work, gathering information on stockpiles of fuel and boarding equipment, such as ladders, as well as the pirates’ movements; tactics which have evidently proved successful.

When the helicopter arrived at the Mi Rae’s position – just 20 minutes after receiving the SOS – its crew found the skiff moving away and the crew tossing items overboard, including a rocket propelled grenade launcher, before they came to a halt.

Montrose has only recently arrived in theatre, where she’s one of five ships attached to NATO’s Danish—led Standing Maritime Group 1 which is the latest force to deploy to the Somali coast.

When the frigate was dispatched by the international military chiefs to investigate a suspected ‘action group’ leaving at known pirate positions, Montrose thwarts her second attack by just in time to prevent a North Korean vessel being hijacked.

Montrose launched her Lynx. Vixen, which found ten men and three small craft – a whaler (mother ship) towing two smaller skiffs.

From overhead, boarding ladders and other equipment typically used in pirate attacks were clearly visible to Vixen’s crew, who promptly tried to corral the suspects before Montrose arrived on the scene.

The reason why? They’re migrating south for the winter and use the warship as their home (temporarily) aboard HMS Severn. And there have been quite a few sightings... yellow wagtails, warblers, hoopoes and swallows have all touched down on the T23.

Now you can never have too much owl-related tomfoolery in the Navy, we say.

Last year we had a barn owl making its home aboard HMS Severn and in the dim and distant past we seem to recall one enjoying life on Ark Royal. Well, luckily Montrose has a resident twitcher: PO(I-ogs) Ray Duffy is a member of the RN Birdwatching Society and has been feeling back sightseeing while on board to colleagues in the UK.

Wally, 90, was awarded the Military Medal for his bravery in a dramatic battle outside Brussels on September 3rd 1944. Later he was discharged, and when the couple needed a break he contacted SSAFA Forces Help.

"SSAFA made life a great deal easier for us both."
As the men returned to their base in Norton Manor Camp where 360 family and friends were waiting to meet them, the joyful reunions were tempered by the knowledge that 14 of them would not be coming home.

The 114-strong Charlie Company were the first men to return from 40 Commando’s six-month deployment to Afghanistan.

“We’re a bit better day being back here; 21 people from the battle-group were killed and 14 of them were Royal Marines,” said Major Duncan Forbes, who commanded Charlie Company.

He said: “Their sacrifices was not made in vain, they did an amazing job every day, showing bravery and leadership, which is humbling for us as their leaders to look to.

He added: “It’s a sad day for these families who have not got their husbands coming back.”

The 600 men of 40 Commando deployed to Sangin in April, working with the Afghan National Security Forces to maintain stability in the area, reassure the local population and disrupt insurgents.

Lt Col Paul James, Commanding Officer of 40 Commando, said: “It’s been a hard fight but we have achieved much.

“We have sought to protect the local people and have worked hard to support the Afghan National Security Forces.”

The bazaar itself, central to the economy of the area, is thriving and a much more bustling place than when we arrived, with new shops opening all the time.

“There is still work to do, and we are confident that our American partners will build on what we have achieved.”

He concluded: “We have lost brave Marines but we will do them proud and we return home with our family held high.”

40 Commando was the last British unit to serve in Sangin, handing over authority to the US Marine Corps in September. Immediately after the transfer, 40 Commando took on their final mission Operation Gharzeh Suranday, a massive vehicle operation with Jackals and Mastiffs deep into the inhospitable deserts to the east of Sangin, an area not routinely patrolled by ISAF and Afghan forces.

For nine days, 40 Commando’s Bravo and Delta Companies worked hand-in-hand with the Afghan National Army’s ‘Tiger Team’. Their mission was to get to know the area and its people, and identify the routes the insurgents were using to travel through the arid desert into Sangin.

Acting Captain Ambrose Perugini RM said: “What a great day I was almost moved to tears when a small group of children, who were joyfully waiting to meet them, the joyful families and friends were waiting to meet them, the joyful reunions were tempered by the knowledge that 14 of them would not be coming home.

They were using to travel through the area.

Capt Mart Shaw RM said: “The men were outstanding, as always, and it was great to see them successfully carry out Op Gharzeh Suranday in a seamless manner and to all return unharmed afterwards.

“This operation saw the remaining men of 40 Commando arrive at Camp Bastion before returning home to Norton Manor Camp in Taunton.”

With Charlie Company already back in the UK, the completion of this operation saw the remaining men of 40 Commando arrive at Camp Bastion before returning home to Norton Manor Camp in Taunton.

40 Commando will parade through Taunton on November 17.

Left: Royal Marines of 40 Commando arrive home at Exeter Airport in Devon; they were then driven back to their unit at Norton Manor Camp, rear Taunton to a welcome from friends and family. Below: Sgt Danny Smith celebrates his return with son Oliver
THIS is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end, but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.

In the glare of the weakening autumn sun, to a tumult of blaring horns and sirens, a thunder of applause, the clatter and clank of chains, and cheers of ‘hooray’, the most advanced shipbuilding programme the nation has ever undertaken drew to a close with the launch of the sixth and final Type 45 destroyer, HMS Duncan.

A crowd some 14,000 strong enjoyed Indian Summer weather on the Clyde as the £1bn warship gathered pace down the slipway of BAE Systems’ Govan yard before chains brought her to a halt.

Guests were treated to air displays, commandos taking down ‘terrorists’, and music from the Band of HM Royal Marines before, at 3.47pm precisely on October 11, the ship’s sponsor Marie Libothin, the wife of Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet performed the honours and Duncan was launched with fanfare, fireworks and a flock of colourful balloons rising into the brilliant blue Glaswegian sky.

And thus the curtain begins to fall on a £6bn shipbuilding programme over the past seven years which has seen shipwrights at the Solent, at Scotstoun and Govan build sections of ships hailed as the most advanced in the world.

And thus the curtain also falls on the traditional method of launching warships — at least for the foreseeable future.

The only other British warships currently on the order books, carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, will be floated out of dry dock at Rosyth.

As for Duncan, named for the victor over the Dutch at Camperdown in 1797 — and launched on the anniversary of that triumph — she joins her older sisters Dragon and Defender already being fitted out a short distance down the Clyde at Scotstoun.

That will take around two years, plenty of time for her growing ship’s company to foster affiliations with Bellast and under, the two cities with which Duncan will be bound throughout her 25-year-plus career.

She is due to enter service in 2014 when she will take her place alongside the rest of the Type 45s shielding the Fleet from air attack.

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The Institution of Engineering and Technology is registered as a Charity in England & Wales (no 210244) and Scotland (no SC039039).
WE LAST caught up with the good folk of Her Majesty's Ship Somerset in the metropolis of Dubai enjoying some 'gain'.

Well, this month it's back to the paint as Operation Stand Down in Dubai done, the frigate returned to sea for intensive patrolling of the central and northern Gulf – the reason why she's deployed from her home port of Devonport for seven months.

In the north, Somerset has helped to support Iraq by defending the Al Basrah Oil Terminal (known to any matelot simply as ABOT) – the newer of the two platforms which pumps the country's chief export into the central Gulf, the Type 23 slotted in to do her part.

And further south in the central Gulf, the Type 23 slotted into Combined Task Force 152, responsible for maritime security in the entire Arabian Gulf – not to be confused with CTF 150 (Indian Ocean) and 151 (Gulf of Aden) – yes, we have to look those up every time, too.

So what does a maritime security patrol entail?

Well, by night Somerset sails around her allocated area and locates concentrations of dhows.

And by day the boarding team of sailors and Royal Marines from Fleet Protection Group are sent off in Somerset's RHIBs and her 815 NAS Lynx to carry out 'approach and assist visits', as of late October, the frigate's men and women had approached and assisted some 210 vessels.

The aim is to reassure the seafaring community and ensure the safety of legitimate commercial maritime activities.

And when not carrying out boardings for real, the boarding team carries them out for practice. All month, every month the party refines its knowledge – and execution – of helicopter fast roping and undersea constant tactical tuition.

"My team has been out on the water, face-to-face with local sailors, reassuring them of the Coalition's tasking to protect and defend their way of life," said boarding officer Lt Jim Harlin.

"By engaging in first-hand human interaction we have established patterns of life and gathered vital information. Judging by the reaction we receive our presence throughout the Gulf is appreciated," he noted.

In the midst of these patrols, a frisson of excitement... F82 Milius also bimbling (with purpose, of course) around the Gulf.

One of Milius' chefs suffered a tendon or fractured the bone, I think he would have had to fly off to a hospital facility for further treatment, but fortunately we were able to deal with it locally and achieved a satisfying result.

Frison over it was time to concentrate on meeting the neighbours in the form of Royal Saudi Navy at the home of its Eastern Fleet headquarters in Al Jubayl.

During her first night alongside, Somerset hosted a reception for Britain's new Ambassador to Riyadh, Sir Tom Phillips and Cdre Tim Fraser, United Kingdom Maritime Component Commander UKMCC as well as a number of local dignitaries.

The VIPs were treated to a demonstration of what Somerset can do, including a display from the Boarding Team and a simulated air defence exercise.

Sir Tom was also briefed on the Royal Navy's role in the Arabian Gulf and the contribution Somerset has made to the overall British mission in the region.

During the period alongside Somerset hosted several groups of officer cadets from the nearby King Fahd Naval Academy, which has close ties with our own Britannia Royal Naval College.

Meanwhile, the frigate’s senior ratings took the opportunity of being alongside to hold Poole Night – commemorating the namesake vessel which brought news of victory at Trafalgar and death of Admiral Lord Nelson to England last year before you ask, they did hold it several weeks early...

The visit to Al Jubayl was also an opportunity to meet the large expatriate community in Saudi Arabia. Many of them attended the reception and the ship’s company enjoyed considerable reciprocal hospitality in the various resident compounds afloat.

On sailing from Saudi Arabia, Somerset hosted 20 cadets from the naval academy for a day. They were given a tour of Somerset, watched a demonstration of anti-piracy, and witnessed officer cadets from the Royal Navy operate... with the American tanker USNS Joshua Humphreys.

Two Saudi officers are also spending an extended period at sea with Somerset, to gain an understanding into how the Royal Navy operates... which at present involves patrolling the Gulf once more on CTF 152 duties.

Somerset carries out a RAMS with the American tanker USNS Joshua Humphreys...
NO, NOT a newly-discovered geographical feature, but the latest stage of helicopter carrier HMS Ocean's progress back to home waters.

The Mighty O has been circumnavigating the Atlantic over recent months, with Lagos in Nigeria and Freetown in Sierra Leone being her latest ports of call.

Ocean was in Rio last time we caught up with her, since when she has crossed back to the eastern side of the pond, carrying with her some 20 officers of the Nigerian Navy as part of the UK's commitment to the Africa Partnership Station.

The visit to Lagos was timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Nigerian independence, and ceremonial duties were accordingly prominent on the ship's agenda.

One highlight saw the Duke of Gloucester and 400 senior officials from the Nigerian Navy attend a reception on board, and Ocean later took her place in a fleet review, conducted by President Dr Goodluck Jonathan.

Sailors from the assault ship, under the direction of ship's chaplain the Rev Ron Martin, visited two primary schools where they carried out repairs and redecorated buildings before taking on the pupils at football (with England shirts as prizes).

Meanwhile, heading in the opposite direction was a group of youngsters from Aegupte, a particularly depressed area, who visited the ship to talk to sailors about IT and telecommunications skills.

Around 60 officer cadets from the Western Naval Academy also spent time on board the warship, giving them a real insight into life at sea and the work of the visitors from Britain.

And a further 40 naval personnel from Sierra Leone, Benin and Togo went on board in Lagos for the subsequent leg of the deployment in the Gulf of Guinea, while almost 20 officers and ratings from Ghana also spent 24 hours on board.

Team leader for the Nigerian contingent, Lt Cdr Orde, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for the Nigerian Navy to witness current Royal Navy operational working practices."

"We have certainly been impressed with the way that the personnel on board maintain very high standards of safety during often complex procedures."

The carrier sailed from Lagos with a truly international feel; 19 nations were represented, including Dominica, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Kuwait, Liberia, New Zealand, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, Zambia and, hardly surprisingly, the UK.

And in addition to training the visiting contingent was able to see Ocean in action.

The crew of the Italian-registered Grand Guinean put out a distress call when one of their number was struck down with acute appendicitis.

Although Ocean was nearly 600 miles away, conducting maritime security operations in the Gulf of Guinea, her CO, Capt Keith Blount, turned the 20,700-tonne ship and sped towards the merchantman.

When close enough she launched a Lynx and the ship's Medical Officer was winched onboard the Grand Guinean to assess the patient and provide immediate medical care.

With urgent hospital treatment required, he was transferred to be stabilised in Ocean's medical centre before being flown off to hospital in Cape Verde.

A Royal Marine Lynx flies above HMS Ocean in Lagos on the day of the fleet review celebrating the 50th anniversary of Nigeria's independence

Next on the agenda was Freetown, under very different circumstances to her last visit.

Ten years ago rebel forces were threatening the city, but Ocean's intervention helped promote stability, and the 'Ship of Hope' is still fondly remembered in the port.

This time round 40 members of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces were airlifted to the ship by helicopter, and the country's president, Ernest Koroma, watched them carry out a beach landing exercise.

Capt Mona Grow, a Sierra Leone military student, said: "Having the opportunity to demonstrate our skills alongside HMS Ocean and her Royal Marines, who are the best military force in the world, in front of our president is a great honour and a fantastic experience."

Sierra Leone forces were also taken up-river by boat deep into the jungle by Plymouth-based 539 Assault Squadron RM for a training exercise.

In Freetown the ship hosted a series of conferences on maritime security, allowing a number of international heads of mission, cabinet ministers and other senior officials to conduct business, live from external distraction.

Members of the HMS Ocean crew visited the Milton Margai School for the Blind to help with maintenance work – the British military have maintained close links with the school since the civil war.

Capt Blount said: "HMS Ocean shares a close bond with the people of Sierra Leone and so I am extremely heartened by the positive and vibrant atmosphere I encountered here, in a country that has experienced so much pain in its recent history."

"In particular, the warmth and welcome that the ship’s company received from the people of Freetown is most humbling. As Navy Navy went to press Ocean was due to carry out counter-narcotic patrols in the Gulf of Guinea with the Cape Verdeans and Portuguese, returning to Devonport at the end of October after a five month deployment that has seen her steam more than 16,000 miles and visit ports in four continents.

A Nigerian Navy personnel train on board HMS Ocean

African Ocean

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NOW in the past we've proclaimed that the ship’s company of a P2000 – five sailors – is the smallest unit in the Royal Navy.

Well, not so.

Nope, 727 Naval Air Squadron comprises one commanding officer, Lt Cdr Glenn Allison, and one training officer, Lt Jerry Tribe.

And that’s it. For serving personnel at any rate. Even with civilian instructors, maintainers and administrators, the Yeovilton-based training squadron only totals 13 men and women.

Each year 60 potential Fleet Air Arm pilots – six courses of ten students each – arrive in Somerset for ‘flying grading’.

They have already been immersed in the world of the RNOF Officer Corps at Dartmouth alongside their skimmer and deep brethren.

At 727, instructors determine whether the potential pilots – the course is not aimed at hopeful seafarers – can not merely handle an aircraft when it comes to the runs and bolts of flight, but whether the students can assimilate all they are taught quickly enough.

That’s important because, as Lt Tribe points out, “It’s nothing like leaning to drive – we cannot allow you to take ten years if you need it.”

The pilots’ steed is the Grob trainer, there are five of them with 727, all named and looked after by defence firm Babcock.‘

Over the three weeks of grading, the potential pilots are airborne on 17 occasions – 13 hours of flying time in all, concluding with a 45-minute final test, judged by Lt Cdr Allison, which features basic handling, a spin, a stall, simple aerobatics and situational awareness.

Just as motorists remember mirror, signal, manoeuvre, successful students should leave 727 with three words: ‘aviate, navigate, communicate’ ringing in their ears.

Unlike driving tests, there are no second chances here; if a student fails the three-week course, he or she will not become a Naval pilot (they could become an observer, or alternatively remain the general service).

“The difficulty is the volume of information – and how quickly it comes at you,” says RLoNt Mac Nicol, undergoing flying grading last month.

“It can be daunting, but this is what we want to do – and I love it.”

Aside from the flying grading courses, 727 runs courses for trainee air engineers, gives potential naval pilots an insight into life in the Fleet Air Arm, takes members of University Royal Naval Cadets aloft, and runs refresher courses for FAA pilots who’ve been out of the skies for some time.

The squadron traces its history back to 1917 and a Grahame-Thomas biplane charged with patrolling the Mediterranean.

Post-war, 727 moved to Gosport where it provided air courses for non-flying RN and RM officers.

After a six-year absence, it reappeared in 1956 as the Dartmouth Cadet Air Training Squadron, flying from Broomy, Pembroke Dock.

Running parallel to this, from the late 1950s, the Fleet Air Arm decided flying grading was needed for aviators. The Tiger Moths were moved to Roborough and so was born the Royal Marine Flying Training Flight.

The Tiger Moths were replaced by Chipmunks in the mid-1960s, but otherwise the unit remained largely unchanged until the turn of the 21st Century.

On December 6 2001, the training flight was finally commissioned at 727 NAS at Roborough. It remained there until early 2007 when it left Devon and relocated to RNAS Yeovilton, taking over facilities once used by Sea Harriers.

Heroic efforts of the Royal Navy No.79 – PO(MA) Freddy MacLaughlin, GM

A BOY injured in street fighting in Belfast receives first aid from LMA Stuart Robinson of 45 Commando as civil unrest flares up in July 1970.

Our rummage through the vast archives of the Imperial War Museum this month takes us to Northern Ireland and the early days of The Troubles.

This is the story of a generation – the lives of soldiers and commanders to serve in an unforgotten peacekeeping role.

Clashes between civil rights protestors and Protestants in the late summer of 1969 would be the catalyst for the latest round of fighting.

By the following summer, with no sign of the situation in the province improving, Royal Marines were back on the streets of Belfast, this time in the shape of 45 Commando to begin their first four-month tour of duty.

The green berets arrived in Northern Ireland in June 1970, scattered across Belfast and environs at police stations and Army bases.

The flashpoint that summer was the Crumlin Road and the catalyst for the latest round of shootings – a jugarry.

The green berets arrived in Northern Ireland in June 1970, scattered across Belfast and environs at police stations and Army bases.

As he drove his ambulance back to the Crumlin Road, his surgeons treat the civvy before he was operated on for his bullet.

Undeterred, he patched himself up, then drove through the line of fire to rescue another wounded civilian.

Troubles, which would blight the province for a generation – and the Troubles is not so.

Stuart Robinson of 45 Commando as civil unrest flares up in July 1970.

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1969 was the summer of the ‘Belfast Street’ which would blight the province for a generation.

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If you’re struggling to grapple with the size of a Type 45 destroyer, then allow us to demonstrate...

In the foreground is HMS Daring (506ft long, 8,000+ tons)... and a few (ah!) yards away is (arguably) the world’s most famous aircraft carrier, USS Enterprise (1,123ft long, 93,000+ tons). Daring spent most of last month working up with the Big E’s battle group off the Eastern seaboard of the USA as Britain’s first Type 45 destroyer showed off her capability to the Americans – and tested her ability to work with the Royal Navy’s closest ally.

As she will do when she formally deploys for the first time – and as she will do when the Queen Elizabeth-class enter service later this decade – Daring was charged with defending the skies around the Enterprise and her escorts. (The naval gods obviously possess a strong sense of irony as all this was taking place while Britain was announcing it was bowing out of fixed-wing carrier operations for the next decade...)

Daring’s anti-air missile system can defend the task group with Sea Viper missiles for at least 60 miles in all directions. Her radar can see even further, allowing the ops room team to control the airspace around the task group out to many hundreds of miles – which means directing US lighter and other coalition aircraft to provide air defence beyond the range of her Sea Viper system.

Working alongside the Big E, Daring has witnessed the carrier launching scores of aircraft sorties and has carried out her own replenishment at sea with a foreign tanker; the destroyer took on 350 tonnes of fuel in just one ‘stop’.

As well as conducting a very extensive sea training programme, Daring has also been busy flying the flag. The E14 destroyer hosted visits by the US Navy and Coastguard to show what the ship can do (the guests were, says Team Daring, “unequivocally impressed”).

On a more informal level, the ship’s company displayed their sporting prowess and sampled the local culture and history of Norfolk, Virginia. A team of 30 Darings have also been undertaking research on the civil war era, before departing on a tour of historic sites and battlefields.

Daring’s American excursion is relatively short, but so far, says her CO Capt Paddy McAlpine, it has been an excellent opportunity to prove the concept of Type 45 as an area air defence platform.

“We have started to stretch the technology and have begun to show our potential in a multi-threat environment. “A new chapter is opening in the Royal Navy and it looks very promising.”

“I’m proud of the efforts of all involved in the T45 team – service, civilian and industry – who over the last few years have worked so hard to get Daring here and prove that we can meet the mark as a capable air defender with massive potential.”

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Type 23's upper decks and 'cheered ship' as their frigate passed the Chilean training vessel. The tall ship made for a waiting area before forming a column, six miles long, behind CNS Almirante Williams (formerly HMS Sheffield) in formation.

In time-honoured fashion the Portlanders lined the Type 23's upper decks and 'cheered ship' as their frigate passed the Chilean training vessel, the tall ship sailing north bound for Callao, the port of Peru's capital Lima, and the nearby capital Santiago. The ships from around the world RSVP'd to an invitation from the Chileans - besides the UK, warships from Argentina, Brazil, Canada and the USA were present - to attend the maritime spectacular.

With the sun rising above the foothills of the Andes, the ships made for a waiting area before forming a column, six miles long, behind CNS Almirante Williams (formerly HMS Sheffield) in formation.

The Peruvian visit began in earnest with formal visits by Cdr Knott and Cte Rebecca Fry, while the football side were in action against the Lincon Pioneers. The sailors, under the direction of CPO 'Slinger' Wood, were holding the Footballers to a 2-2 draw until, says Slinger, "we were caught out in the last five minutes of the game by a ball over the defence and a composed finish."

From one South American metropolis to another - from Chile to Peru - and that's about as far as our (admittedly very tenuous) connection. Barely had the work in the galley finished than the culinary masterminds were busy again, this time preparing for the official reception which followed the industry day and was attended by more than 100 guests - drawn from all spheres of Peruvian society and military.

In the Pacific, the frigate switched oceans, courtesy of a night-time passage of the Panama Canal, before resuming anti-drug smuggling duties, this time in the Caribbean.
CRASHING through the waters of the Clyde, this is no ordinary landing craft. No, this is the PacsCat (pronounced ‘ackets-cat’), a ‘turbo-boosted’ landing craft being tested by the Royal Marines and HMS Albion.

How turbo-boosted? Well, up to four times the speed of an ordinary Landing Craft Utility used by the Royal Navy. Firing the LCUs is a major task. They will be launched on the final assault landing craft when the ship is ready to operate from an assault ship such as Albion,” explains Scotty.

The trainees planned and mounted raids against the final enemy stronghold further inland. They would also find a suitable landing spot. A ‘turbo-boosted’ landing craft would allow for the final wheel-over into the upper loch, there is only 120ft of safe water either side – and from the steep rock face of the mountains. It’s all rather like negotiating the Norwegian fjords.

The channel into the upper loch was quite tricky and I was certainly not going to be compromised. The ABU conducted its initial recce and eventually found a suitable beach to land the boats. The weather was against us, it was freezing cold with strong winds. We were being battered by high waves crashing both us and the Zodiac (small inflatable boat) into the rocks and leaving our kit and us totally soaked as we struggled ashore."

The trials team, led by Lt Col Simon Guyer, embarked on Wet Raider

"The trials have been extremely successful and they have been told to get on with the job of knowledge both of what Pacific can, and can’t do."

"Testing times for Albion"

"Well, the trials team, led by Lt Col Simon Guyer, embarked on Wet Raider..."

"For my bridge team, it's the steep rock face of the mountains. It's all rather like negotiating the Norwegian fjords. Also, the channel into the upper loch only becomes visible after the ship begins to wheel over for the approach – definitely not for the faint hearted."

"The ship's company gathered on the upper deck to watch the entrance to the loch – a welcome break from the busy operational tempo of Wet Raider."

"And some potential inclement weather..."

"Normally only frigates or destroyers find themselves in Loch Torridon, not 11,000-ton, 177-metre-long assault ships," he said.

"We couldn't have summed it up better."

The ABU is busy.\n
"We've been told to get on with the job of knowledge both of what Pacific can, and can't do."

We couldn't have summed it up better ourselves..."
200 miles for 40 Cdo men

Sticky marathon on Montrose

THE galley of HMS Montrose was invaded early one morning as the ship patrolled the Somali basin on her current counter-piracy operations. Taking over the galley, armed with wooden spoons, were members of the female mess preparing for their marathon bake as they prepared to host SSAFA’s Big Brew-Up day.

Their baking efforts dawned a storm, with trays of hot cakes selling like —~

Not content with the £233 which the tea and cakes raised, the women bolstered their donations with a slave auction in the wardroom, during which officers were auctioned off as ‘slaves’ for the day.

As such, he spent his day cleaning bilges and whilst morale high as Montrose continued her operational deployment.

Back in the UK, the Seamanship Training Element at HMS Collingwood raised £920 selling cakes, wristbands and a raffle to win a SSAFA bear and set up a soup kitchen for walkers and the general public.

Collingwood walk

VOLUNTEERS from HMS Collingwood took part in a sponsored walk with the charity Two Saints (ARC) which provides support to homeless people in the Fareham area. They walked from the charity’s office in Gosport and set up a soup kitchen in the town centre, and set up a soup kitchen for walkers and the general public. The walk took place two days before the ‘World Homeless Day’.

RFA medics stretch their legs

WE reported in September on the six stretcher-carrying medics who were aiming to complete the 200 miles for Help for Heroes. The route was the equivalent of seven marathons in seven days, but the sixth mile, carrying the stretcher for nine days through all weather conditions.

He added: “Ruth’s ability to keep up with men almost twice her size, despite suffering from severe blisters, was inspirational. Simon’s ability to engage with the public meant he was probably responsible for nearly half the money we collected.”

‘Rob and Tim’s sheer determination and energy kept the stretcher moving despite their tired legs and sore feet, however, POMA No59y Hall was the lynxpin of the whole event, from planning the route to providing first-class support to the rest of the team all week long.”

The medics, who ran with the title Carry On Remembering, raised nearly £5,000, and donations can still be made at http://www.rnymcharity.com/ rhnmscarryonremembering/stretcherchallenge

INM medics stretch their legs

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Lt Christopher Nicholson, whose brainwave the challenge was, said: “Public support along the way was incredible, well-wishers turning cars around and holding up traffic to come back and make a donation.”

He added: “Ruth’s ability to keep up with men almost twice her size, despite suffering from severe blisters, was inspirational. Simon’s ability to engage with the public meant he was probably responsible for nearly half the money we collected.”

‘Rob and Tim’s sheer determination and energy kept the stretcher moving despite their tired legs and sore feet, however, POMA No59y Hall was the lynxpin of the whole event, from planning the route to providing first-class support to the rest of the team all week long.”

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A FUND-RAISING event organised by MOD Main Building in aid of BLESMA, the British Limbsless ex-Servicemen’s Association, raised more than £25,000. Funds were raised by sponsorship, donations, raffle prizes (including a Breitling watch) and an auction of lots from foreign holidays to a SSAFA fundraiser with their Open Day, netting a total of £256.50 for SSAFA, and enlisting the support of their Admin and support staff for a spot of baking.

Open Day visitors were also encouraged to throw change to the diver in the tank (picture above), who endeavoured to catch it — with varying degrees of success.

After 12 hours in the tank, the divers recovered £149.50 in loose change, for Project Vernon.

In total the event raised £203 for SSAFA whilst keeping morale high as Montrose continued her operational deployment.

Back in the UK, the Seamanship Training Element at HMS Collingwood raised £920 selling cakes, wristbands and a raffle to win a SSAFA bear and set up a soup kitchen for walkers and the general public.

Overall the Big Brew-Up raised £503 for SSAFA, and combined the SSAFA fundraiser with their Open Day, netting a total of £256.50 for SSAFA, and enlisting the support of their Admin and support staff for a spot of baking.

Open Day visitors were also encouraged to throw change to the diver in the tank (picture above), who endeavoured to catch it — with varying degrees of success.

After 12 hours in the tank, the divers recovered £149.50 in loose change, for Project Vernon.

The RFA also reported on their success with the ‘Skytrex’ event.

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**Fun at the Farm**

The College Farm, a pub in Wilmington near Shrivenham, Defence Academy, raised nearly £13,000 with a fun day in aid of Help for Heroes and the Royal Marines Charitable Trust.

The day was organised by Andy and Debbie Jordan, the pub’s managers, on behalf of the Royal Marines’ Association.

They were helped by many of the people who man the vigil points along the 47-mile repatriation route from RAF Lyneham through Wootton Bassett to Oxford, along which the sad procession of funeral cortege travel with their military casualties.

Thames Valley Police and Fire Brigade turned up to display their emergency vehicles, which proved a popular attraction for children and their parents. The Defence Academy held a display of disarmed small arms.

Two small wooden figures (painted yellow), bound by Daren Shet, of Shrivenham, proved a great draw on one of the stalls. The Royal Marine with a poorly leg and an RR rating with an injured arm were much admired and were donated as raffle prizes.

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**By bike from Bahrain**

The gym in RAF Lyme Bay in Bahrain was full every morning from six o’clock as sailors bagged one of the three exercise bikes and pedalled their way to Fallah.

The 14 men and one woman from the Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Marines’ Measures Squadron (three of whom are active serving) stationed in Bahrain as the UK’s only Man Warfing Beat, Staff, decided to take up the charity challenge in aid of Canine Partners, the charity which trains dogs to help disabled people.

The aim was to run, row and cycle the distance from their home port of Fallah to Bahrain in a distance of 6,055 miles during a 33-day mission. With a team of 15, that worked out at between 13 and 18 miles a day for each member, using the gym of Lyme Bay, the support ship where they were living and working.

Lt Jim Screen, of MCM1, said: “Time and machines were at a premium, but I’m glad to say we achieved the challenge.”

To donate, go to: www.justgiving.com/MCM1CHALLENGE2010

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**Don’t mention the walk**

**ROYAL MARINES from the Fleet Protection Group in Clyde Naval Base have been lending their support to guide dog owner Scott Cunningham, recently named fundraiser of the year.**

Scott and his trusty dog Travis have raised more than £100,000 for Guide Dogs for the Blind. As reported in Navy News, he visited the base last year along with a new guide dog puppy, Royal, named after the Corps.

Scott’s latest fund-raising venture was the Travis Trek Ball, held at Glasgow’s Hilton Hotel in September. It was organised with help from the Fleet Protection Group and proceeds were split between the RM Charitable Trust Fund and Guide Dogs for the Blind.

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**Deeps seek peaks**

Four submariners from HMNB Clyde turned their backs on the depths to seek the heights of the Three Peaks Challenge.

Lt Darron Rafter, LT2 Dave Wynne, and CPOE Craig Richardson were joined by POE Adam Gooding as driver (named together above) to raise money for the Donna Louise Children’s Hospice Trust, which provides care for children and support for their families.

The unpredictable weather for the walk presented the team with one challenge, who started out from the base of Ben Nevis at 5am hoping that they might escape the rain.

Craig said: “But a cold front was moving in and we knew the weather would be against us – as we found out later.”

When the trio returned from the peak, they refused to believe their driver’s description of mini-tornadoes, until they saw the greenery littering the roads.

The drive to Scalfell offered a chance to grab some shut-eye before starting up the next peak at 2.30am, and running the gruelling seven miles through the pitch black.

Last but not least was Snowdon, where the weather brightened to offer the team a brief glimpse of sunshine.

Craig said: “We ran the last quarter mile to ensure we finished our challenge in under 22 hours.

We crossed the line with tired bodies and a sense of achievement in 21hrs 59mins 42secs.”

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**Liverpool carols**

A MATINENGE Carol Service will be held in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral on Tuesday December 2 in aid of the RNLI and to celebrate the International Year of the Sea.

The service will feature the Band of Her Majesty’s Royal Marines Scotland and Corn Roger Royse, of BBC radio, will narrate.

Tickets are available from Mrs Pamela Brown on 0151 677 9506, email p.brown37@ntlworld.com or to Mrs P Brown, 35, Winston Drive, Necton, Brerkendish, Wieral, CH4 9UG.

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**The March against Cancer team with PO Sharon-Anne Connell-Malcolm and representatives of the Harbour Cancer Support Centre at HMS Victory at the end of a 24-hour non-stop 190-mile walk around Hampshire**
Good medicine in bad places

Out in theatre can be a dangerous place. It’s the nature of the job. It’s why it’s theatre.

So before heading out to the harsh landscape of Afghanistan, the men and women of the Commando Helicopter Force at RNAS Yeovilton are trained in dealing with medical situations that they might encounter out on the battlefield.

The CHF helicopters are cut in Helmand running battlefield support, so all of their personnel attend a three-day course run by the CHF Medical Section on the specific injuries and issues of frontline conflict.

The problems of battlefield medical treatment include limited equipment, limited access to medical support, and a dangerous environment.

Two days in the classroom are followed by one final day of intense field conditions where CHF brings together the expertise of its medical staff and its military training unit to bring to life casualty scenarios with big bangs, blank ammo, smoke flares and amputees playing wounded soldiers.

The point of this final test is to plunge the sailors and marines from CHF into the worst-case scenario – and students report that the realism does focus the mind very sharply.

The training produces an extremely high standard of battlefield care, and those trainees tackling the course have hugely praised the practicality and reality of the final testing day.

The new approach to medical training is already bringing positive results in theatre, with lives saved and better medical care for the injured.

CHF credits the success of its medical training to the skill and experience of the medical section and the military training unit that means that those qualified can provide ‘good medicine in bad places’.

Realistic battlefield action and medical casualties are being combined by CHF to ensure the best medical training for personnel going out to theatre.

Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell
Death on the high seas as skiff capsizes

'THE GREAT' sea lanes that converge on the Gulf of Aden mean the waters between Somalia and Yemen teem with shipping of all shapes, sizes and purposes.

Almost all of it is legitimate trade, but it is fishermen hugging the coasts or colossal container ships plying between Asia and Europe. "Prowling the 'Pirate Alley' are warships of numerous navies, preventing merchantmen against the threat of pirates, looking out for gun-runners or drug-smugglers."

The freebooters are a tiny part of the overall picture – though they garner a disproportionate share of media rhetoric.

And at the bottom of the pile, as ever, are the refugees, who place their lives in the hands of others in a bid to improve their lot.

And though the radar screen may be spattered with contacts, the reality is a very large patch of water for very small boats to navigate.

And the dreams of escape can quickly turn to despair, panic and death on the high seas, as the crew of the USS Winston S Churchill found.

The Arleigh Burke destroyer is unique in the US Navy in that it has a Royal Navy officer assigned to its ship company. Lt Brian Drewett is the current Navigating Officer.

The ship, part of the USS Harry S Truman carrier strike group, was temporarily reassigned to Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 on patrol in the Gulf of Aden.

Early on September 26 a skiff was discovered moving near the Gulf by the South Korean destroyer Wonsong, which passed on the position to the Winston S Churchill (WSC), which was operating in the vicinity.

Initially clasped as a suspected pirate vessel, WSC closed in and launched a sea boat to investigate.

The overloaded skiff shortly before it capsized

"Once on station, it quickly became apparent that the skiff was transporting passengers from Somalia to Yemen," said Lt Drewett.

"It was not clear why the skiff was in the area – a busy shipping lane which has been riven by attacks by Somali pirates."

"But the United Nations says an estimated 74,000 Africans – mainly from Ethiopia and Somalia – fled poverty and conflict at home and crossed the Gulf of Aden to reach Yemen in 2009."

"The skiff was carrying approximately 85 passengers, consisting of ten Somalis and 73 Ethiopians."

The Turkish admiral commanding CTF 151, Rear Adm. Sinan Ergürrl, directed the American skiff to help, and a party of sailors went across with food and water, and to take a look at the state of the craft.

"The skiff had been at sea for some time and the passengers were clearly in need of water and food," said Lt Drewett.

"We determined that they had probably been without food and water for several days in some tremendous heat."

"Attempts to restart the engines proved fruitless so one of the skiff boats began to tow the skiff to safety out of the main shipping lane towards the coast of Somalia."

"This was a slow process and we were being extremely careful," said Lt Drewett.

"We used Churchill as a wind break and to increase protection of them from risk of collision in the busy waterways."

"But as supplies were being handed over to the passengers they rushed to one side, destabilising the fragile vessel."

"It rapidly capsized and sank, tossing all 85 people into the sea, sparking a full-scale search and rescue operation on the destroyer, which was only a few hundred yards away, and which called in additional help from an Australian patrol aircraft."

"I was on the boat deck watching the dual RIB operations," said the British officer.

"Once launched, I normally go down and watch events from down there, just to give me a different perspective from a ship-handling point of view – something I picked up while serving on single-role minehunters in Scotland."

"We received reports from the RIBs and they came back to the ship."

"We cleared the area of the survivors and started to embark the dead."

"All in all I moved 13 dead from the RIBs to the deck, where we had medical teams immediately start work on them."

"Miserably, one of the skiff passengers was brought back to life by two of our crew – a truly magnificent effort."

"Despite the valiant efforts of both RIBs, it became apparent, that none of those that had entered the water had died," said Lt Drewett.

"We watched, in what seemed like slow motion, as the passengers all seemed to lurch towards one side, coupled with the heeling of the skiff turning to port, away from the RIBs, while the starboard side heeled over towards the water."

"These two things combined caused the skiff to capsize and drop below the water and it just filled up."

"I saw the crew start to jump from the skiff, as if they had been using sticks and belts to keep the passengers under control."

"Then the boat just flipped over. It must have taken five or six seconds."

"We were prepared and our planning had bought out this possibility – that is why we had both RIBs in the water."

"I began by arranging for flotations and medical supplies to be brought to the boat deck."

"In only a few minutes we were receiving the first survivors onto the ship."

"I remember one, the first I helped onboard, was a child, no more than ten years old."

"We started embarking the people from two points as the RIBs were filling up quickly. It affected some of the crew down there – I spoke to them and refocused them."

"We needed to get these people onboard as quickly as possible, and the midships area quickly filled so we started moving them to the flight deck."

"It was not all good news, however."

"All in all I moved 13 dead from the RIBs to the deck, where we had medical teams immediately start work on them."

"Miserably, one of the skiff passengers was brought back to life by two of our crew – a truly magnificent effort."

The scene left its mark on those who witnessed it.

"These are some images I will never forget," said Lt Drewett.

"We did above and beyond to help these people and ensure they were safe. It was an unfortunate tragedy."

"It makes you think what a dire situation they must have been in to want to attempt a crossing like this, in an open boat, in summer, with no food or water."

"After it was all over, I went and sat down outside and had a think for a few minutes."

"We managed to rescue 62 people."

"I don’t like to think what it’s been like, but if the conditions units had not been there."

"We would have never have found these people."

"Someone would have come across a boat with 85 dead on it."

"Since the Churchill commissioned in 2001 five young RN officers have had the chance to navigate her. Lt Drewett has been with the destroyer for 18 months, and has another six to go before he hands over to a competitor – a rolling programme which serves to embody the transatlantic links which Churchill himself represented."

"This exchange is also one of the few that puts an officer into a frontline unit," he added.

"Most exchanges involve staff or advisory group postings, with slightly more senior officers going to NATO positions or embassy attachments. Exchanges that are at the pointy end, as mine is, are reserved for only a few men and women in the whole of the Army, Royal Navy and RAF."
THIS can’t be the place, surely?

Blue skies, bright sunshine and a sea gently lapping the emerald green coast – this is the notorious Cape Wrath?

Where is the sound, the fury, the wind-driven space?

The very name Cape Wrath engenders a sense of violence and desolation, a sense reinforced by its long-standing military role.

The name is misleading – Wrath is derived from the Norse word for ‘running point’, as it was the headland where Viking navigators changed course.

But the fact that it is often stormy and inhospitable adds to the image.

And where better for the military, British or allied, to really test their people and equipment?

Cape Wrath Training Centre has existed under various names since 1933, when the naval gunnery and aerial bombardment range was established on the most north-westerly tip of mainland Britain.

The site can be easily isolated – roads are closed and red flag barley during exercises – and it provides virtually anything an attacking force could need to go through its paces.

The centre is particularly busy during joint exercises, and a typical day in October saw warships from three nations on the gun line as well as simulated attacks by aircraft.

At the heart of the Cape Wrath operation is the range control building, which sits atop the Farral Head peninsula north of Durness village.

And on this particular sunny day two huddles of troops set up their operations on the western edge of the headland, making the most of the spectacular view to the range just three miles away.

One group was British (Methil), Colt Forward Observation Battery Royal Artillery, to give them their full name – although their support team gives a slightly broader hint as to their business.

These are the men who draw down accurate attacks, be it from warships (Navel Gunnery Support of NGS), from jet bombers (Close Air Support or CAS), from Attack Helicopters (AH, specifically the Apache) or from land-based artillery and mortars.

A few yards away were their American counterparts in the 1st Air Naval Gunnery Liaison Company (ANGLICO), normally based in San Diego, California, but apparently equally happy to ply their trade in Durness, Scotland.

The job of a ‘spotter’ is definitely at the ‘Action Man’ end of the scale.

Commando and parachute-trained, personnel can expect to be delivered anywhere they are needed through a variety of means, including parachute.

Mike Gray takes a look at Cape Wrath, a key part of Joint Warrior and an invaluable training ground for all three Services as well as the UK’s allies.

THIS page (from top left), the view from the range control building as a shower passes; Apache lift off from HMS Ark Royal; Sgt Steve Hoyland at Farral Head; the control buildings on the head, an Apache holds while spotters deconflict the range; American marines of the ANGLICO watch as shells from USS Bangor strike Na Glass Leachan island; a Swedish Gripen at RAF Lossiemouth.

Pictures: PO1/Phot) Ray Jones, LA/Phot/Abbie Gadd, SAC Phil Cooke RAF and Mike Gray
As Lt Col Wood said: “A lot of this work, helicopter and aircraft control, is pre-deployment training for Afghanistan, and NGS can also become a laid off skill – it fades in Afghanistan, and they come here to build it up again.”

Much depends on the universal skill of deconfliction, especially when dealing with different nations as well as different weaponry, enabling jets to fly missions while shells are being fired in and helicopters buzzing about, either on attack missions or support sorties.

On this occasion the flagship of the Royal Danish Navy, HDMS Absalon – also acting as control ship – was the first to the gun line. On board was one of the 12 British NGLOs (Navy Liaison Officers, all TA) who provide support, advice and coaching to the ship’s command team as well as liaison with land forces ashore.

“They are a critical part of the liaison picture,” said Lt Col Wood.

“They do this for a few days then go back to what they do and we are talking about big financial managers from the City, key members of banks or global companies, all totally focused on this.

“They come up here, get cold and wet, parachuting into the sea – they are a pretty hardy bunch.”

Some have been coming for decades, like Lt Col Wood and the two NGOs, and are proof of the strong links Kill By has with the nearby village of Dunross.

They listen to local concerns, and compromise where possible – ensuring the man who lives by the lighthouse on Cape Wrath itself is not inconvenienced when travelling to and from his home.

The news of the impending arrival of the Screen Machine, an artwork which transforms into a mobile cinema, in Dunross elicits a frisson of interest in the range building during a lull in the exercise (“It would be okay if you didn’t have to go to Ullapool for your popcorn,” observes Sgt Hoolahan).

Absalon expends a handful of shells, mainly inert with a few high explosive, on the range before handing on to the USS Bainbridge, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer.

Once communications issues are sorted, the two flight shells ashore, while spotters work hard to spot in dry runs by Swedish Air Force Gripen aircraft operating out of Lossiemouth and shipboard in Apache helicopters from Ark Royal for dummy runs on specific targets.

The weather deteriorates through the day, but Bainbridge’s accuracy, as with Absalon, is impressive – the American ship looses off a dozen rounds from her 5in gun maximum rate (one every three or so seconds) to prove the point.

After dusk HMS Mornmouth takes her turn some ten miles out, her rounds tracing red arcs through the sky as the ships go light the target area – and range stuff comment that the Royal Navy is often the one force pushing its ships the hardest, jinking and turning in heavy seas to push their skills to the limit.

RAF forward air controllers are also using Joint Warrior to train for a forthcoming Afghanistan deployment, although they fared better than their colleagues in April, whose tests were ripped away at 3am by 100mph winds, a regular feature of Cape Wrath.

Guardsmen were also due ashore for an exercise – and again, it is in such circumstances that Cape Wrath proves its worth.

This is the only range in the UK and one of a few in the world where you can do NGS, live air, live AH and infantry movements – all the weapons systems that the British Armed Forces use,” said Lt Col Wood.

“It’s incredibly comprehensive training for everything from an infantryman to a carrier.

“They can use it simultaneously, and it’s increasingly popular with US forces.

“The firing danger area is about 12km across by about 25km deep, that’s both land and water – the land is about 7km of that.

“So it’s not a huge range, but because it is mountainous you have a much better backdrop than other ranges.”

As the afternoon wears on other elements force themselves into the picture. Lulls in the action become less frequent as more machines line up to take aim.

A Sea Hawk from the Bainbridge lifts off to deliver NGLO Maj Ian Wilson TA (a freelance water treatment scientist) back to Point Head where the sole Apache – its companion had gone unscathed just before lift-off from the Ark – was being shepherded round Holding Area ‘Magpie’ under the gate of weapons training team SGts John Cocks and Des Hague, of Wartling Station, the Army Air Corps Apache base.

And members of the four-strong Defence Estates civilian warden team, who look after the range all year round, monitor the radar screen, flagging up vessels which look likely to stray into critical areas (warnings of times and locations of firing are widely distributed in advance of exercises).

Two Dutch marines, who complete the control team for this exercise, monitor communications – a Dutch marine using British radio on a Scottish establishment to call in fire from a Danish ship using American spotters.

Sheep graze peacefully as military hardware spins, shoves and thunders all around, another characteristic of Cape Wrath, where rare plants and teeming wildlife thrive (despite the odd shell) because of its enforced isolation.

Indeed, the centre boasts a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Protection Bird Areas, as well as some rare (and untouched) sites of archeological importance.

Joint Warrior picture special – pages 24-25
Naval Reservists in the Bristol Channel Group spent four weeks off work and main duty, dating from a refit in 1957, had been dangerously curtailed, and new 20mm armaments were needed.

The project was overseen by UK engineering company Houldcr, who were appointed by Her Majesty's Naval Base, Devonport, to carry out the refit of the ship. The engineering company had been selected by the Ministry of Defence after a competitive tendering process.

The refit included the replacement of the ship's main armament, which consisted of four 114mm guns, with new 100mm guns. The ship's hull was also repaired and strengthened, and new respiratory systems were fitted to improve the comfort of the crew.

The refit was completed on time and within budget, and the ship was returned to service in 1992.

The refit was a significant achievement for the ship's crew, who had worked hard to ensure that the ship was returned to service in a safe and reliable condition. The ship continued to serve with the Royal Navy until it was decommissioned in 2002.
This year our new combined Navy News and Official Royal Navy calendar for 2011 celebrates our Nation’s affinity with the sea. For centuries our mariners have ploughed the ocean waves that surround this tiny island and the tradition goes on with today’s Royal Navy. This calendar contains terrific images of ships, submarines, helicopters and fighter aircraft together with sailors and Royal Marines doing what they do best – protecting our Island Nation.

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INTEROPERABILITY. Horrible word. Difficult concept.

But there are hundreds of men and women who can reach for the principle of international teamwork, having achieved just that off the coast of Scotland.

The vehicle for all that co-operation was our old friend Joint Warrior, which this autumn brought together an impressive fleet of ships as well as air and land assets to provide tactical training which will pay off in less benign scenarios.

Less bungy? Let’s face it, a ship standing well out to sea off North-West Scotland is unlikely to enjoy smooth conditions, and there were the usual rough seas and high winds to contend with.

But the attacks are simulated so that if you get it wrong you can learn, and make sure you get it right when the bodies are flying for real or the pressure is on, whether in Afghanistan or off the Horn of Africa.

The training value of Joint Warrior is enormous.

Individual ships hone their own skills, whether hunting a submarine, watching for incoming missiles, bombarding a shore target or simply carrying out a personal transfer.

Battle staff get the opportunity to command a task group with well-defined objectives.

And scores of reservists are brought into the fold through Joint Exercise Planning Staffs, who decamp from Northwood to a Joint Operations Centre (JOC) at Faslane for the duration of the exercise.

Take the UK Maritime Battle Staff, for example.

After 18 months chasing penguins, the team returned to command at sea under the command of Rear Admiral Peter Hudson, the Commander UK Maritime Force, and the Royal Navy’s two-star Maritime Component Commander.

With a year and a half in charge of Operation Astoria, the European Union’s counter-piracy mission off Somalia, commanded from Northwood, his return to sea in HMS Ark Royal was the first step on the road to assuming responsibility as NATO’s highest readiness maritime commander in early 2011.

Rear Admiral Hudson said: “Joint Warrior has given the core staff and its augmentees the opportunity to demonstrate its ability to command a task force at sea for the first time since spring 2009.”

“Just as the first hurdle though, and we will continue to refine our processes prior to assuming NATO Readiness Forces duties.”

The permanent battle staff of 80 Servicemen and women rises with augmentation to just under 130, with additional bodies from the Royal Naval Reserve, Fraser, Germany, Spain, Turkey and New Zealand as well as contingents from the Army and RAF.

Captain Richard Allen, Director JTF1, JOC, said: “This has been the most complex Joint Warrior in years.

The multinational force comprised 22 units from ten different countries, including two of NATO’s standing forces, Standing Maritime Group 2 (SMMG2) and Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (SNMG1).

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out-stations (also bleak coastlines) to test their skills in the field. Various military establishments also played their part, hosting UK and foreign military - Clyde Naval Base, Liverpool, Loch Striven, Campbeltown and Leith, and RAF stations Louisianna, Kiloos, Machair, Waddington, Lakenheath, and Leeming.
Sailplanes? Plain sailing

HOBBY? Social activity? Sport? Post-deployment downtime?
Yes, yes, yes and yes. Gliding can be all these things – and Service personnel are in an ideal position to take advantage of the benefits of unpowered flight.

Those based in Hampshire are directed towards Portsmouth Naval Gliding Centre, one of three such operations in the Senior Service, Culdrose and Yeovilton being the others.

The Portsmouth centre, at the old HMS Daedalus Fleet Air Arm airfield in Lee-on-the-Solent, has been in existence since 1947, and is the second largest Service gliding club in the country.

Members already manage to cover 17,000km annually gliding around Lee and in competitions, using a fleet of six two-seat and five single-seat gliders, complemented by two tug aircraft and a professionally-built winch.

Thanks to the RN & RM Sports Lottery and the Nuffield Trust, the centre recently added a refurbished Duo Discus high-performance glider to the fleet (pictured left on her first outing over southern Hampshire and Portsmouth Naval Base).

Designed mainly for fast cross-country flying and gliding competitions, the Discus will be used to extend the scope of the training offered to members.

The centre, which operates every weekend and Wednesday afternoons, can launch under most weather conditions, with the tugs towing up to 4,000ft while the winch allows for cost-effective lower-level launches.

Some members use the centre to further a hobby, and a way of meeting new people.

For others, it is an inexpensive way to get airborne, and some treat it as a cutting-edge sport, whether they prefer racing or aerobatics.

The centre offers training to solo standard and beyond, the team of unpaid but highly-professional instructors encouraging students to achieve solo status and then build skills and gain experience through the British Gliding Association system of badge qualifications.

Members compete in both inter-Service and national gliding competitions, and there are opportunities to visit other Service and civilian gliding clubs in both the UK and Europe.

Short courses for Service personnel returning from Afghanistan for rest and recuperation are also run, and on several days at weekends the centre hosts groups from St Dunstan’s, the charity supporting blind and visually-impaired ex-Servicemen and women.

Anyone wanting to learn to fly or experience the sport will be welcomed at any of the three Naval gliding centres.

Details of the clubs can be found on the Royal Naval Gliding and Soaring Association’s (RNGSA) website or the individual club websites, and you can ring the relevant centre to book a trial lesson or just take a look round.

Portsmouth: Telephone 01329 287552 or see www.pnfgc.co.uk

Yeovilton: Call Nick Weaver on 07932 878085 or e-mail nick.weaver@hotmail.com or Derek Marpole on 01935 860053 or 07966 317317, or David Green on 01935 890807 or 07843 601642

Culdrose: Telephone Tony Richards on 01305 221970 or 07870 8348450, or e-mail tony@lionscountrytexel.net.co.uk

For those based away from these Navy sites the RAF and Army Gliding Associations offer a range of alternate opportunities across the country.
FOSTies, BOSTie and Westie

WHAT is it with birds stowing away on Her Majesty’s Ships this month? We’ve had a scope owl cudging a life aboard HMS Montrose in the Indian Ocean… and now a slightly less exotic avian… in a slightly less exotic location.

Enter ‘BOSTie the Badger’, a bright yellow budgie-ger who dropped in on HMS Westminister off Plymouth as the frigate was ‘executing the trials of Basic Operational Sea Training (or BOST – hence the bird’s name).

The ship was in the throes of some punishing sea trials in the Plymouth Exercise Area when Westminister’s Executive Officer Lt Cdr Nick Wood came across the bird on the upper deck.

According to the XO, the budgie looked “somewhat disorientated and tired by its procedural flyby” after the ordeal of flying all the way out to the ship.

So the stowaway was treated to bread, rum and water in the XO’s cabin, allowed a decent period of rest, and then “invited” to meet the ship’s company – and possibly some of the 63 FOSTies (that’s one for every three members of the crew...) on board for BOST.

Sadly, that’s where the happy tale of BOSTie ends; the sailors were all set to release the rested bird when the general alarm sounded. The budgie suffered a suspected heart-attack and died; he was buried at sea.

“I’ll miss Bostic,” said Lt Cdr Wood. “He was only in our lives for a brief time but he made our day.”

In non-feathered-friend-related news, Westminster was due to undergo its final inspection from the FOSTies as Navy News was to press.

“These two months test the personnel and material efficiency of HMS Westminster to the limit, but as the old adage says, ‘Train hard, fight easy’,” said CO Cdr Tim Green.

“We have the most capable Type 23 frigates in the Navy, having just emerged from upkeep with a number of upgrades, so we’ve been looking forward to putting her through her paces.”
Bright star of the fleet

With reference to Roy Banton’s letter about HMS Sirus (October), may I respectfully point out to him that there was one other Leader that was not named after mythical figures, so his friend should check his facts.

She was HMS Sirus. Serviced in Sirius, Dido-class light cruiser and can tell him that Sirius is the Dog Star.

A brilliant white star seen in the constellation Canis Major (it is the brightest fixed star). It is also the logo of Portsmouth City Council.

Incidentally, Sirus (two last ships) were adopted by Portsmouth. Sirus was the name as Portsmouth’s, as her base.

The motto was “Heaven’s light our guide.”

— Gerry Gerhard, Armadale, West Australia

Polish mystery

REFERRING to the letter published on October 15 (Navy News website – Have you seen?) about the Polish submarine mystery, the incident could refer to the sinking of Polish submarine ORP Jaskona.

The Jaskona was a Holland-class submarine originally built for service in the US Navy, but sold to Poland between 1941–42, when she was lost to friendly fire. During the passage of convoy PQ15 to Murmansk, on May 2 1942, Jaskona was mistaken for another ship (by the Norwegian) destroyer HMS Farne which then fired torpedoes into the Jaskona, killing all aboard the submarine.

As with so many other events, the question of who fired the torpedoes remains unanswered.

John Torr (Rtd)

Onward, Christian soldiers

I had no idea that the Church Army had any units in Cyprus, but thank you for the reference to page 24 (October) that “B Coy of 2 Black Watch, 1942” was a unit of the Church Army. On a more serious note, why, when several naval officers, indeed senior rates, retire after many years’ service, doesn’t Navy News publish a vindicated biography of that person?

In that respect, a 131 or 251, for instance, can retire with hardly any acknowledgment of their departure or service.

Hankies out for Tom Bowling!

THE LETTER (October) about the Fantasy on British Sea Songs prompts me to say that it was played at the Proms this year, not at the last concert week before the last night of the sessions. Luckily the politically correct camp have not deleted Chatham history. Otherwise we have to wait until their obituary eventually appears in the Daily Express.

Chris Bond, Poole Dorset

Wrote, bit of a slip there, but runaway gooses that the Regiment’s Colonel-in-Chief, the Queen Mother, no less, was known to refer to her “Royal Anglican Regiment”, so perhaps there’s a royal precedent.

As for rockelettes, we don’t really have a policy, but I suppose she is due to bow to the rising sun – June Ed

On the other hand, I was present during this operation in the aircraft carrier HMS Ocean standing to the west of Corfu, with a squadron of Firefly Mk 1 aircraft ready loaded with rockets in case of need.

Later we took part in the opening minesweeping operation when we recovered some mines these were from German sources captured by the Yugoslavs and were brand new.

Cdr John Torr (Rtd)

King’s patrol

IN YOUR article “Women’s Double Dinghy Row” (October), you refer to Cdr Bill King, the commanding officer of the submarine HMS Telestis.

This former Commander King’s Far East patrols were uneventful, but he’s now the commanding officer of CDrf King ambassadors and sank a large Japanese submarine, presumably in the Yellow Sea off the China/Korea border.

Toby Turner, Ditton, Caswell, OX5 1JD

LEGENDARY MEN

I was interested to read about the retirement of Cdr SD_FB (EW Androcles) whose focus is The Time of Our Lives.

Is this the same Cdr Andrew whose voice so eloquently appeared on the PA at HMS Raleigh, directed at any unfortunate who only had to think about putting his hand in his pocket or wearing a prop of his nautical angle.

It has to be said that he was a wonderful bloke who would love to know.

— Admiral Sir Cameron Rusby, Melissa, Routledge

ANCIENT WAR

WHEN cuts are in the offing, the rumour mill goes into overdrive and worst-case scenarios prevail. When the announcements are finally made, there is a mad rush to cover with a great deal of anger and complaint.

— Man Ed

OPINION

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NAVY NEWS

Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH

November 2010 no.676: 56th year

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Telemachus.

However in the 1970s this ship was changed to DOW-S...What no-one can remember is what the suffix A/D stands for. I am sure with your readers’ vast knowledge and contacts someone will come forward with an explanation.

— Ian Wilson, Thatcham, Berks

IN YOUR article “Sample of life O’Brien” (page 19, October), you state that Patrick Fiman was Irish. In fact he was English, born as Chas Aitkin St Giles, Bide a

W A Vandersteen, Winchester

HMS Mauritius passed straight through the Albanian minefield and came out the other side unscathed, while HMS Anson bought it.

Mauritius was present during this operation in the aircraft carrier HMS Ocean, standing to the west of Corfu, with a squadron of Firefly Mk 1 aircraft ready loaded with rockets in case of need.

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**Doubly forgotten ship**

I have a son serving in Middleton, so have a special interest. 

**Nicolas Wright,** Bridgewater, Somerset

A rank discourtesy

REGARIND Mr A Holloway and his criticism of Lt Cdr Lester May using his rank even though retired, (letters, October) in my opinion we should be proud of what we were and of our service.

To use our past rank or to wear a commemorative medal does smack of elitism and a touch of snobbery but we were in the Royal Navy and we will forever be proud of that. Old men after all should be humoured.

For my part I choose not to use my past rank or wear any commemorative medals and am quite happy to be addressed by my first name. Chief.

— Brian J Bloom, Shenley, Herts.

LETTERS is 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 do not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.

**Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.**

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images. We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.

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**A rank discourtesy**

I SERE that the NAAPF is to market its own tea. As a young armourer I was sternly warned by my older officers when I joined the RN not to drink the tea on a Saturday.

It was said to contain bromide, designed to act, shall we say, as an ‘anti-inflammatory’ and a sort of cooling agent on one’s ardour. If the NAAPF could just confirm that it works equally well on arthritis I would now willingly scupper as much as I could drink. 

I don’t suppose I would ever notice the side effects nowadays.

I hope you can help in this delicate matter.

Mike Holdsworth ex CAF(O)

A Navab Charity for all service and ex-service personnel of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, QARNNS, and their reserves.

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**A cure for stiffness?**

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**Yeovilton: A naval lieutenant tests her skills at the Avon and Somerset road safety stand**

**Father follows in his son's footsteps**

**Yeovilton outlook is healthy**

A ONE-off health promotion fair at RNAS Yeovilton proved such a success it is hoped to make it a regular event.

The fair, brainchild of Leading Dental Hygienist Damien Clement and organised with the help of HMS Heron Dental Department, highlighted current health topics through health and lifestyle choices.

Under the Jason Race dining hall, the fair was open to all Service and civilian personnel across the air station and dealt with a wide range of subjects, from cancer awareness to mental health and trauma risk management.

Damen said: “Health promotion plays an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of Service and MOD civilian personnel.

“We are hoping that the day will help to educate personnel here at Yeovilton about healthy living and lifestyle choices.”

In line with Department of Health guidelines, the organiser invited exhibitors from a range of charities and health organisations across Somerset and the South West.

The main contributors were Smok free Somerset, South West Diabetes, Macmillan Cancer, Psychoneuro Endocrinology (HPA) Centre, Avon and Somerset Road Safety and Police, Common Sense Youl, Sexual Health and Genito-urinary Clinics, STI and HIV, and Trauma Risk, and Service medical and dental staff.

Fantasla, a local events entertainment company, donated equipment for the day to promote fun exercises – which proved particularly popular, with large numbers of brave people coming on stage and using the Nintendo Wii to add a different dimension to keeping fit.

Lt Cdr Fears, HMS Heron’s Executive Officer said: “The idea was to increase awareness of current health issues in order to help prevent future health problems, which may become detrimental to an individual’s health and to the operational capability of the Armed Forces.

“I am very encouraged by what I have seen and it is obvious that a lot of hard work has gone into ensuring its success.”

“Health and fitness is very important in the Armed Forces and I am keen that we build on these successes for another event next year.”

**Arresting memories for former crusher**

A FORMER Royal Naval police officer was recalled back by his modern counterparts to mark 65 years to the day since he joined the naval regulations’ branch.

Bay Board, 86, returned to Devonport, where he was treated to lunch with the Captain of the Base, Capt Mark Kitbl, the Naval Provost Marshal (Western), Lt Cdr Bob Colley, and his staff.

This was followed by a tour of the RNAS HQ Western and the wider naval base.

Mr Board spent 21 years as a naval policeman, having joined the Melb as a Boy Second Class in 1939 at the age of 15.

He joined cruiser HMS Kenya in 1940, seeing action at Sword Beach and off Cherbourg, and was later assigned to the Edward VII. During the Norwegian campaign he served aboard the Mediterranean Convoys.

**Wings link between the generations**

A NAWL pilot has been awarded his wings to complete the only father and son currently qualified to fly the Fleet Air Arm helicopters.

Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet Air Arm, Rear Admiral Richard Hobson awarded Lt Chris Sappington, 24, his first badge at a ceremony at Cadgwith.

And in the audience was Lt Cdr Bob Suckling, 44, who gained his Observer wings in 1987.

Chris, who also won prizes for being the best pilot and best observer student on his course, said: “I have looked forward to this day for a long time.”

“To finally have wings on my shoulders is an absolute dream.”

Chris can now expect to fly the Sea King helicopter alongside three front-line squadrons.

His father has flown several machines during his Naval career, including the Merlin, and is currently with 771 NAS, the Guernsey search and rescue unit.

**First and last**

THERE were very different events at HAMS Sultane when Caree Mark Sloan and chaplain Funtasia attended dinners at the Gosport establishment.

The occasion was Caree Sultane’s 85th anniversary celebration dinner as the new Commodore-in-Chief, who had just arrived in the UK before he leaves the Royal Navy next year.

The padre joined the Navy in August 1964, having had a tour in Afghanistan with the Fleet Air Arm, in Hong Kong, underwater with the Navy’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal Service, the RAF, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the US Navy.

His claim to fame is that, according to official records (standfast Admirals of the Fleet) he is currently the oldest serving member of the Royal Navy.

**Sports stars visit museum**

TWO leading speedway stars from Down Under have paid a visit to the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton.

Australians James Holder and Sam Masters, of the Somerset Rebels team, based at Highbridge near Burnham-on-Sea, attended as a sponsor’s event at the museum, taking along a speedway bike.

The pair were surprised to learn that the engines on the machines they ride are almost as powerful as that on the fabled Supergp Pup fighter, flown by their compatriot Steve McQueen during the Great War and one of the stars exhibits at the museum.
Montrose trio take prizes
EVERY year the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS) at HMS Raleigh holds an armchair ceremony to celebrate the achievements of its 460 students.
This year three winners were unable to attend as they were all serving at sea - in the same ship. A reserve had been at sea for Families Day, the Commanding Officer of HMS Montrose, Cdr Jonathan Leet, felt it was the ideal occasion to present their prizes.

The three were:
Leg (Pens) Amy Croston, who won the Anthony Covenagh memorial Trophy for the student who contributed most towards teamwork, Naval ethos and morale during Phase 2 Personnel Administration training for 2009; Leg (GS) Debbie Cole, who was awarded the Wosthulnly Company of Cooks Catering Student of the Year for achieving the best overall performance during Phase 3 Catering Services (Preparation) training; Leg (CS) Holly Davis, who won the MCJimpsey Trophy for the student delivering the best overall performance in Phase 2 Catering Services (Delivery) training.

Cdr Leet said: "When I asked DMLS whether or not it would be possible for me to present the prizes at sea the answer came back immediately that it was entirely appropriate that I should present the prizes to Montrose's three winners in the presence of their families, and it was my pleasure to do so during our Families Day."

See next month's Navy News for a full list of winners.

Blades roll out red carpet for veterans
TWO Falklands veterans who survived the sinking of HMS Sheffield went on a fun day out at Bramall Lane when they went to see Sheffield United take on Portsmouth in the Championship.
Sheffield-born Andy Stephenson, who now lives in Helslbcrg, and Pompey fan Chris Evans were in the Steel City to lay a wreath at the cathedral in memory of the 20 shipmates who died when the destroyer was struck by an Argentine Exocet missile on May 4, 1982.

The pair were already guests of the Blades when a chance meeting in the Copthorne Hotel adjoining the stadium after the 2007 game against Fulham led to a night in the hotel bar we ended up talking to Mike Crampton, the ground's director of Sheffield United.

"Before we knew it Mike decided we should get the red-carpet treatment. We were introduced in the directors’ box, four tickets in the directors’ box, a champagne reception," Andy said.

"We lost many friends on that fateful day, the whole nation was mourning, and it amazed me how much our military service is valued."

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Andrews and his wife, who served with the Blades in the 1980s, were introduced to the crowd and enjoyed a reception.

"Chairman Kevin McCabe said it was a pleasure to honour us and it was a privilege and a nice work of fate."

"To be honest, we would have just been happy with the tour and the two tickets in the stand."

"Andy Chris and their families will be welcomed back to the ground whenever they are needed."

"Andy and Chris are now very much considered to be part of the Blades family - HMS Sheffield meant a lot to this ship."

Dartmouth memories on camera
THE top man at Dartmouth has been presented with a DVD which features his role in training more than three decades ago.
Cdre Jake Moores, the Commodore of BRNC, was given the DVD copy of film which was shot at Dartmouth in 1976, when he was a cadet under training.
The film had been tracked down by Britannia Association Council Representative, Charles Dorey, who was a training contemporary of the Commodore’s in Blake Division.
"I remembered the film being unique enough to be worth saving, but I was not sure if it could be glanced on camera at one point."

"The crew were there as some of the first female officers were going through training at BRNC at that time and there was a lot of media interest. Both men were amazed by the young everybody looked - including the staff.
"Footage includes a look at rounds being carried out along with training for Tolsson Division, the WRNS officer division. BRNC activist De Jess Harrell said she had not been expecting to look back at film footage and this recent addition to the archives is very welcome.

Minister visits
FOREIGI" Office minister Jeremy Browne made a face-finding visit to RNAS Culdrose on Wednesday to meet members of 40 Commando RM who keep the base running while combat troops are deployed.
Lt Browne, the Lib Dem MP for North Somerset, also met members of Tarmol, the registration facility staffed by officers, senior NCOs, medical technicians, public affairs, and doctors, in the outreach ‘pathway’ which helps Royal Navy personnel who have been injured both in and out of the line of duty.

Warfare is the family business
ONE of the Portsmouth AFOC personnel takes flight on the high ropes course at Collingwood

Careers team goes on lines
MEMBERS of the Portsmouth Armed Forces Careers Office left their desks behind to tackle a team-building afternoon at HMS Collingwood.
Planned and organised by Na(SM) Tina Baines, the team included the officer, seniors and cadets of the civilian staff - to the Crow’s Nest, Gladiators Challenge and the Leap of Death while the weather varied from sunshine to howling wind and rain.

Three things are part of the training back’s high ropes course, requiring a steady nerve, agility, a head for heights and a complete trust in the equipment, their instructors and each other.

"Chairman Kevin McCabe said it was a pleasure to honour us and it was a privilege and a nice work of fate."

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Two of the Portsmouth AFOC personnel take flight on the high ropes course at Collingwood

Encounter with the sun
A RESEARCHER who is due to retire this month finally managed to meet up with his son during his last exercise.
Lt Cdr Martin Hickson joined the RN Reserve in 1979, and has enjoyed the subsequent 31 years (with the full backing of his family, for which he is very grateful).
His final training stint was Exercise Helios Encounter in Cyprus earlier this year - a force protection and acclimatisation course for reservists about to be mobilised - when he was given the role of instructor and coursemaster,
"Just prior to the exercise my son Nathan, who joined the RN in 2009, announced that he was in the advance party, returning from an anti-piracy duties off the Horn of Africa, and his ship HMS Chatham would be visiting Cyprus at the same time. I was on Exercise Helios, said Martin, of HMS Sherwood."
"It was almost as if it would be to meet up with my son whilst on exercise somewhere, whilst on duty I was thrilled to visit his ship alongside in Limassol and spend a couple of hours with him on board, which made my usual-weekend exercise all the more memorable."

MEMBERS of three families are helping run the warfare department on a Royal Navy assault ship.
As the Plymouth-based HMS Bulwark moved her ship’s company onboard after a major refit, the warfare department could boast a father and daughter lieutenant and wife, and brother and sister.
PO2(SW) Colin East, the Chief Bulwark’s Mate, has been joined on board by his daughter Abigail East.
All Akin East also serves for Collin, while Alex’s wife AB Charlotte Gaffney works out of HMS Ocean’s shore-based seabasiness management as a man-to-man during the exercise.
In the ship’s main command centre, Office AB Stephanie Gaffney was joined last year by her father Stephen Allerton.
CPO2(MW) Spanny Marsh said: "It can all get very confusing and we have had to think of unique ways to reach them on the ship’s main broadcast system or pointing to them individually, so that the right person turns up for the designated encounter and at the right place of the ship.

Back at Raleigh
A ROYAL Navy officer has taken charge of his first class of recruits at HMS Raleigh, 22 years after he embarked on his own basic training.
Lt(Res) Rooney joined up as an Artificer Apprentice in September 1988 and set out on his career at Raleigh, where he has now taken up an appointment as a divisional training officer.
Lt Rooney said: "To come back to HMS Raleigh and have the chance to shape and train the sailors of the future 22 years after I started out on my career is a real privilege and a nice work of fate.
"In addition to the excellent training package prepared for them, I am determined that the recruits under my charge will benefit from my experience, it is an exciting time, but I must also be prepared for their demanding but enjoyable lives in the Royal Navy."

Lt Rooney saw service in both Gulf Wars, winning a commendation in 1991 for his part in taking a vessel of a merchant vessel in distress.

The Bulwark families - from left, Rebecca East and her father Colin East, Charlotte Oaks and husband Alex, Steph Gaffney and brother Scott

People
Special welcome for guests

S/M Ken Napier, chairman of Aquitaine branch, has completed a 30km canoe marathon for charity.

More than 600 canoists from across France and beyond took part in the event, for various reasons, but S/M Ken used it as a chance to raise money for SSAFA on the occasion of SSAFA’s 125th anniversary.

Water levels were low, with rather less than more than the distances, but S/M Ken managed to raise more than 900 Euros raised – most of it from the generous shipmates of the Aquitaine branch.

The branch’s monthly lunches continue to prove popular; the most recent saw S/M Gail Darwen, former honorary officer of HMS Camberton, talk about his experiences on two counter-piracy deployments.

Although Darwen is a shipmate of West Ham branch, he is affiliated to the French group, as he is Max Lautegis, who is completing his second tour of Afghanistan.

The branch’s good wishes are extended to both men, to the waterside agent, to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, currently working in the Caribbean with HMS Manchester – “we wish her calm seas and success with her patrols,” said S/M Ken.

Tenbury punches above its weight

A WARM welcome was extended to two of the branch’s former capts in the September meeting of Plymouth branch.

S/M Chris Dovey, recently elected national chairman of the Association, and S/M Ken Holloway, chairman of No 8 Area, attended the meeting, accompanied as their wives Gill and Muriel.

As well as the usual hospitality, both men were presented with a bottle of Gin and a box of chocolates in Plymouth by Summertown’s Brewery and donated by owner and director of the business, who is ex-Navy and a life member of the Association.

Each bottle sold provides a donation to Plymouth Hospital to help with charity initiatives.

Emotions were running high looking forward to a couple of high-profile activities.

A Help for Heroes variety performance is to be staged on November 4 in HMS Drake, with their annual dinner to follow in the WOs and Ss on November 20, with the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Plymouth attending the latter.

For more information on branch activities contact chairman S/M Bob Pallot on 01752 503451 or social secretary S/M Sue Gutteridge on 01752 584116.

Name added

MEMBERS of the St Helens branch attended a service for the rededication of the war memorial in Rainhill, Merseyside, when a new name was added.

The name was that of CPO Simon Roger Owen, who died while serving on board HMS Chaloner in the Gulf in 2004. Organised by the Rainhill branch of the Royal British Legion, the service was attended by members of CPO Owen’s family, some of whom had sailed up from the South.

In attendance were members, presenting, the landlord of Rainhill’s The Grapes and other dignitaries.

A BOOK about the battles and near escapes of a World War II submarine commander has shed light on one of the many unsung heroes of the Royal Navy.

Hard Fought: The Story of HMS Venus, by Robert J Moore and John A Rodganda, tells of the career of a Yeoman II-class destroyer from the Baltic in 1919 to her scrapping in 1948.

The first edition of the book was originally published in 1990, the 50th anniversary of the ship’s final battle, and written by her son, who was sparsely sparsely but the fact that the unit he commanded (Longworth) shared her name.

Both CPO Owen’s fellow submarine officer Jimmie Button, a strong swimmer, repeatedly dived into the water to save the lives of strugglers.

One of those he helped rescue was a South African naval officer, Lt Herbert Hastings Williams heading for Gib in Hecla.

Button’s efforts that night exhausted the senior rate, but he managed to struggle into uniform to pay his respects as dead sailors were committed to the deep while Venus was, with an extra dead man, a height, bound for Casablanca.

Rescue operations continued, and when the old destroyer reached Algiers, now in British hands it was died on November 27.

The sinking of Hecla was recorded by Lt McWilliam, a talent artist, who used incide and a threat brush to the medical kit on board Venus to sketch out the vivid scenes of the first edition were now in the Imperial War Museum, and some are reproduced in the book.

McWilliam went on to become a landscape architect and, as something of a sideline, a dinghy designer in his native country.

A relative — Ken Nun — the nephew of Jimmie’s widow Florence — was traced through articles in the History Observer just too late for the book launch, but helped flesh out details of Jimmie’s life.

But more is now known of the hero; his father is believed to have died in the trenches of the Great War, and Jimmie was a senior ASIC operator in HMS Acaste in 1940 when he single-handedly depth-charged and sunk U-124, the first time that had happened.

Barrie was awarded the DSM, receiving the medal from the King during the Italian Front.

Jimmie’s widow Florence later married Army officer Tom Wilson, and in 1948 emigrated to Australia, where she lived for many years.

Years later, while on a family visit to Hastings, Jimmie visited the grave of her first husband on the outskirts of Algiers.

Two of the most significant illustrations are now in the Imperial War Museum, and some are reproduced in the book.

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Years later, while on a family visit to Hastings, Jimmie visited the grave of her first husband on the outskirts of Algiers.

Stories and pictures received from veterans of Venus and their families since publication can be seen at www.holywellhousepublishing.co.uk and new contributions are invited on venus@holywellhousepublishing.co.uk.

Four crew members of HM Submarine Ocelot met up at Chatham Historic Dockyard for a reunion and a private dinner. Picture above, from left, are Freddy Fox (LCK), Spike Hughes (AB), Dunga Williams (LRO) and Vic Groom (AB), pictures which had appeared in the Gillingham Veterans Club, and plan to meet again at the British Military Tournament next month – the show is being staged between the 4th and 5th.
Brewery trip proved informative

TWO presentations at two different venues in late October proved informative for Brightlingshead branch, with four new members signed up and one or two more showing interest. The members look forward to the second of the series with the top prize of a bottle of Pusser’s rum.

The £50 prize was won by a branch member with the top rating prize of a bottle of Pusser’s rum. Said SHM Underwood. "Luckily (for the brewers) we weren’t driving, we were cooking and the journey home was very quiet – a stintus time!"

Two days later, Brightlingshead branch helped to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the first fish and chip shop in England.

Southerners UK used the occasion to promote a nationwide campaign of fish and chip shops in aid of the charity – and Brightlingshead, once a busy fishing port, looked ready and waiting to cater to the rusted in terms of the traditional fest.

Award-winning chippy Scooby State (run by a former Crab but ex-Siam) looked up some first-class fish and chips, and when the market fell for £50 we were able to account the branch contributed £25 to the 150th Anniversary of Fish and Chip Day. We were able to show the £50 to the shop manager, who said he was swamped by orders. It was just 50 yards from Brightlingshead, and between them, 150 members of their Britannia Fisheries branch were going to help to save their shipmates, despite others having been saved in the same week.

PAST and present First Sea Lords were guests of honour at the dedication of a memorial to 29 sailors of HMS Illustrious who died when their liberty boat sank in Portland more than 60 years ago. The current incumbent, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, unveiled the memorial at Portland Marina in front of more than 120 members of the HMS Illustrious Association, including survivors of the tragedy and relatives of the victims.

The ceremony concluded with a Royal Marine Band performing Beat Retreat and a fly-past by Seahawk and Sea King aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm Historic Flight. Lyft and Lynx from 702 and 813 Naval Air Squadrons, one of which dropped a wreath at the point where the boat sank.

The HMS Illustrious Association produced the memorial and organised the dedication ceremony.

Association chairman S/M John Ellis said: “It has been our Association’s policy for many years to establish and maintain a permanent memorial to those who lost their lives that night and I am so pleased that this has at last been achieved and we will now meet this known hard work and contributions have made this day possible.”

Appleby has new purpose

A FORMER Fleet tender is now being used to train maritime crews and offers the adventure of working for former mariners to the waters of the North Sea.

The Maritime Volunteer Services (Portsunit unit) has Appleby for seamanship training and team building events, giving onshore or inexperienced mariners the chance to try their hand at a more challenging vessel as well as ship-handling.

Built to the MOD in the mid-1960s, it is also available to the relatives of former maritime and nautical service personnel and contractors for training purposes to commit ashore to the sea.

Typical nautical teaching during such services include the lowering to the water of MV’s and not towing, the crew removing cups and benches for the actual commission and the presentation of a commemorative card recording the exact locations of the ceremony.

The vessel is managed by the current HMS Illustrious association, the branch welcomed Sea Cadets and new members signed up and prepared to show the ships’ smartness of the day.

The royal toast was followed by a delicious four-course meal, short speeches and an evening of comedy and dancing hosted by the marvellous Mike Doyle, Martyn and Leslie went to Cad’s home at Oranjmer Castle to produce a Submarine Association tie, crest and cap, and to the delight of the centenarian, and one or two more were taken to round off the visit.

Hail Vanguard (and Exeter)

A REUNION for veterans of HMS Vanguard was a great success and prompted a non-Vanguard sailor to seek out old shipmates.

One of the Vanguard cohort who visited in was born in Liverpool 83 years ago but had travelled from Canada, which he now calls home.

And another ex—Navy lad turned up in the hope that someone might remember him, despite him having served in only HMS Anson.

The 93-year-old muttled had served in HMS Anson at the Battle of the River Plate, and he was named by the name of London – and members were impressed by his new shipman’s smears of dress and clarity of memory.

Card marked

TWO styles of Christmas card are available this year, one featuring HMS Vanguard and the other a semaphore motif (2pc each).

Costs include postage and packing within the UK, and orders should be sent to HQ Semaphore Tower with cheque or instructions to debit a branch account.

Youngsters join in

MEMBERS of Chichester Sea Cadets enjoy the hospitality of shipmates at the local RNA branch.

Young and not-so-young shipmates mingled throughout, enjoying a very sociable gathering with refreshments prepared by Mrs Gimlin. Representatives of the branch often take part in the Sea Cadet quiz nights at their HQ – an association that benefits both groups.

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Golden jubilee for Leyland

LEYLAND branch in Lancashire has been marking its golden jubilee this autumn.

The celebrations started with a gala dinner in September, held at the civic centre in their home town.

More than 100 guests attended the party, including the Lord Mayor and Cdr Harry Huxley, president of the RNA North West, both invited as guests of honour, as was S/M Moyleman, who was one of the founding members.

The winner will be announced in our January edition. The competition is open to any Royal Navy employees or their families.

The video is available to view on the Veterans-UK website – www.veterans-uk.org – and on other sites such as iTunes and YouTube.

Hospital visit

MEMBERS of Cheshunt branch were regally entertained by the Chelmsford Pensioners during a recent visit to London.

The Pensioners were pleased to show the Cheshunt group their newly-refurbished quarters. Four branch members have recently topped up their 90th birthdays.

Former WO S/M Albert Smith was presented with a cake representing MTB 694, the boat in which he served in World War II and was awarded the DSO. The Portsmouth unit of HMS Rodney, with more than 400 members in 30 units, also often take part in similar visits to the office at Imjin Barracks, where the group are stationed.

The Medal Office is the sole supplier of medals, badges and other items. The branch is made up of Royal Navy veterans and their families.

Tribute to King

SIx members of the Northern Ireland branch of the Submarine Association travelled to Galway to make a presentation to Cdr King, whose 100th year is believed to be the oldest living ex-mariner.

S/Ms George, Enskine, Rooney, Doyle, Marlyn and Leslie went to Cdr King’s home at Oranjmer Castle to present a Submarine Association tie, crest and cap, to the delight of the centenarian, and one or two more were taken to round off the visit.

TRIBUTE TO KING
We will not let you down!

BY THE time you read this the Government will have made its initial announcements on the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). The Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox will be publishing his White Paper on Defence and Veterans, and presenters at the MOD Welfare Conference will be launching their report on operations since 1990. Andrew Robathan MP was one of the speakers at the conference, and he said this: ‘We will be publishing our White Paper on Defence and Veterans, and our strategic defence and security review. The report will be launched later this year and it will be comprehensive.’

Andrew Robathan MP, Defence representative at the MOD Welfare Conference.

Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Andrew Robathan MP, was one of the speakers at the conference, and he said this: “We will be publishing our White Paper on Defence and Veterans, and our strategic defence and security review. The report will be launched later this year and it will be comprehensive.”

He praised the hard work of our armed forces and the support of their families. He discussed activity in Afghanistan and outlined plans for the future, including the setting up of a Ministry for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans.

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The conference comes at a time when our forces have been fighting in Afghanistan for more than ten years. They have been involved in operations in Iraq, and they have been contributing to international efforts to combat terrorism.

The conference was closed by the Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox, who said: “We will not let you down.”

Dr Fox’s closing statement was as follows: “To all those who serve in the armed forces, to all those who have served in the past, and to all of the families that support them, I send a simple message from all of us to all of you – thank you.”

He continued: “We will not let you down.”

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The FIRST Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Stone, sent out a message to the men and women of the Naval service on the day that the Prime Minister announced the details of the Government’s Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). "We have to prepare for the future. That highlights the need to make some difficult decisions now, because the challenges of tomorrow may face us as surely as we face the deficit, while prosecuting the case against the cuts, while trying to ensure that our front line outputs are preserved.

However, I am very clear that our people are the future. Our contribution will remain vital to the security and prosperity of this country. It is my and the Navy Board’s responsibility to be realistic about our current financial situation. It also means that we are looking at doing things differently. We must ensure that our front line outputs are protected, that our training, our standards and Royal Marines units on task— and better matched to our input— are sustained.

Inevitably, this degree of change across the Royal Navy brings challenges, some of which the Government now clearly understands, and is prepared to accept, if that is the price of getting Britain fighting, and supporting the fight, both at home and overseas— and our people, well-led at every level, are ready for business today and in the future.

The review comes at a time when the Government's key defence planning process is in the middle of an assessment to see whether to reduce the carrier strike option. If they decide to do so, it will mean that all the work we have put into making a carrier strike option a reality and one we are ready to go, for the moment, must take account of that decision. We are already committed to delivering the deficit, while prosecuting the case against the cuts, while trying to ensure that our front line outputs are preserved, and we will continue to do so.

The successful re-creation of the Royal Navy's ability to operate aircraft carriers will remain a UK strategic priority. The carriers will rest upon the leadership and support of everyone in Defence, and the contribution of our international partners. Summarised, it all means a smaller carrier strike option. Clearly, I would not wish for such reductions, but we can only retain a force that we can afford. Overall, we will still be operationally committed as a balanced force, able to conduct the nuclear deterrent, littoral warfare, and Commando-type operations at a similar level, a standard of standing commitment to do today and all of our MCM and SSN 

The exception of the gap we must take in Carrier Strike capability, our core marines capabilities have been preserved.

The Future Navy we are aiming for, with a modern, capable, balanced force, around our people and modern, high-capability platforms.

We already have or can expect to have new platforms with cutting-edge capabilities: the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers, the Joint Strike Fighting, Type 45s, the Type 26 Global Combat Ship, future helicopters, the Astute-class SSNs and the future deterrent.

Delivering all of that capability depends on the right people, in the right numbers and with the right skills.

All of us — sailors, Royal Marines, our Reserve, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and civilian staff — have a part to play.

I am very clear that our people must be put first and must be treated fairly. We must ensure that our people are not affected, too.

In broad terms, the future of the Service looks like this:

Between now and 2015, whilst remaining operationally committed and governing for contingency, the Navy will be implementing the cuts and other changes required by the SDSR. This implementation phase from April 2011 onwards, and personnel sooner in some respects will be uncomfortable for all, painful for some, but I will do everything possible to ensure our people are listened to and treated fairly.

There will be some big changes in shore establishments. In the meantime, the Training and Education System (DRIVES) Project — Dealing with Inappropriate Behaviour — will deliver fund to DFps and civilian staff in 2SL.

The contribution of those most affected in policy regarding payment higher education.

One can not doubt that our Navy will remain highly capable, internationally renowned and worthy of your commitment and loyalty.

The SDSR has faced tough times before in its long history. It always endures and because we are an island nation it always will be. The contribution of those most affected...
How will the pension changes affect you?

IT WAS announced in mid-October that the Government has introduced a new Relief Annual Allowance (AA) for all U. E pension scheme members. A new system of benefits across public and private sectors will be reduced from £25,000 to £20,000 with effect from April next year.

Gazette report 2010-23 offers some background and information on what this announcement means to the armed forces community and the public service community. The report states that the new AA is a complex area of personal finance, work and details on how to enact changes to understand its impact.

In its announcement, the report indicated that more senior officers may be affected than others, and that there will be an annual pay award. It also states that any changes in personal liability will first occur as a result of the assessment period for the tax year 2011-12.

There is no retrospective effect to an individual’s current allowance.

The report concludes that the recent announcement will have some degree of further information will be provided once classification has been received.

In addition, the Armed Forces Pensions Scheme Committee, led by Lord Hutton, published its interim report on October 7.

The report will cover all aspects of service, health, police, public service and civil service employees. It notes that the Armed Forces should not be asked to contribute to the full extension rate at this time.

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**Trophy lives**

L Jobschrift Woodnutt. Journal WNIX. January 1999. The British Sealing Association held its 75th Annual Conference in Harrogate. The theme for the event was "Sealing for the Future". The conference included a range of talks and workshops on various aspects of the industry. The Annual Dinner was held on Friday evening, attended by around 150 guests. The keynote speaker was Mr. John Smith, who spoke on the importance of sustainability in the sealing sector. The conference ended with a networking session and a gala dinner. At the awards ceremony, Mr. Smith was awarded the Honorary Membership of the BSIA for his contributions to the industry over the years.

**NOTICEBOB ENTRIES**

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written and addressed to: The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3AL or email: enquires@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
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- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notices will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

**Entries for the Deats's column and Swap Drafts in December's Noticeboard must be received by November 11**
Welcome to senior high

JOHN Terry and Wayne Rooney are no-nos. Captain Cook, VC winner CoH Jones, Admiral Cochrane, Benjamin Franklin, "Cockleshell Hero" Blondie Hasler are all spot on. Today it's Bear Grylls. He gets to cross a chasm by creating a makeshift 'transporter bridge' — a plank suspended between two metal poles, suspended from a rope. It's not going to hold... Bear Grylls is not the adventurer but the name of the latest course of potential senior ratings passing through the Royal Naval Leadership Academy, RSLA. PO George Greening is its instructor.

There's nothing wrong with the rope, George winks. But such is the power of a Royal Navy petty officer that the budding servants seem to scrap their plan and start again. But then that's what they're here for. They're here to make the biggest transition in their naval careers — from leading hand to petty officer.

There's a huddle around PO(EW) 'Eddie' Grant, the man charged with overseeing this particular task. He listens to advice, takes some of it on board, rejects other suggestions, issues instructions. A few "two-six, heaves" later, along with a liberal application of elbow grease, and Bear Grylls classes are sitting on a plank suspended beneath the rope. Mission accomplished.

They jump off and Eddie thanks the team for their ideas and for working together. PO Greening gathers the students and asks them to sum up the task in a single word. Organised. Co-ordinated. Accomplished. Flexible. All of which might neatly sum up what is expected of today's senior ratings.

Order generations of Senior Rates will not doubt remember POLC — the Petty Officers Leadership Course. These days PO has been replaced by SR, and the course has been extended from four to five weeks — "there aren't any new things to squeeze in," says LT Dave Bebbington, the leadership academy's operations officer. He went through the old course two decades ago — a time when equality and diversity wasn't at the forefront of people's minds, squad manning was unheard of, and if a ship wasn't delivering, "you'd hit it with a stick." And finally to Collingwood for more time in the classroom, learning how to coach and mentor sailors, and instil naval ethos.

The field beckons again on the fourth week of the Brecon Beacons for a mix of land navigation (orienteering), bivvying, first aid and leadership tasks courtesy of the Outdoor Leadership Training Centre at Tal-y-Bont. Then it's back to Collingwood for more time in the classroom, learning how to coach and mentor sailors, and instil naval ethos.

The displays line the walls of the leadership academy; one group even produced a Zulu shield in honour of their hero, Chard VC of Poona's Drift. That shield hangs in the office of instructor WO1(Wtr) Del King, an ex-EWO, who believes that "there's nothing better than inspiring the next generation of petty officers". He continues: "This is the single most important course a rating will see in the Royal Navy. But it's also the hardest because it's a major transition. You are stepping into the middle management world where there's significant change to duties, responsibilities and respect."

WO1 King has been a senior rate for over two decades. It is experience you can't buy. It's taught him above all that "sailors should want to work for you because they admire you, they aspire to do what you do.”

"Telling people to jump all the time simply causes morale to plummet. You have to reward people as well at times.” LT Bebbington agrees. "You have to let sailors under you develop, to learn things for themselves. But there are still times when you give those 'Jump. How high?' orders." And there are times when you have to listen. "We have to show humility and admit when we make mistakes,” says WO1 King. "We are humans, we are fallible.

The assault course and practical leadership tasks have been a staple diet of leadership courses since the days of HMS Royal Arthur at Corsham. It may be a tad cliché, but, as LT Cdr Haines, ‘Cockleshe|| Hero’ Bertram Ramsay, says: ‘Such tasks... such as bridging a chasm using rope and a plank... which brings us neatly back to Bear Grylls.

Like every group of budding POs, this course is a mish-mash of branches — logistics, dabbings, engineers and Walrus. Engineers tend to be logical, seamen specialists and warfare rates are practical, logistics are good at organisation.

But there's no hard and fast rule that one particular branch produces better leaders than another. "Here we don't really care what your branch is, or whether you're good at your job. What we do care about is you as a leader,” says PO Greening.

"This is the best job in the Navy — a chance to give something back.”

Among those benefiting from his experience and guidance is PO(EW) Andy 'Knocker' White, one member of Bear Grylls course. Like his instructors, he is used to stepping up to the senior rates' world — "It's hard to be an effective leader without leadership training.”

For more details on the Senior Rates Leadership Course see RNTM 194/10.
Coulport reserve enhanced

A GROUP OF MOD volunteers rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in to a day of hard work improving a nature reserve in Scotland.

The voluntary conservation day at the MUDY community nature reserve at Peaton Hill, near Coulport, took the form of a environmentally-conscious construction day complete with Barrow-in-Furness volunteers from the Turner Estates.

Handy Jezzy team at RN Armaments Depot Coulport asked if they could help further develop the site.

The 25 volunteers were invited to work alongside members of the Turner Estates supply chain, MOD Police, Defence Estates and staff from Turner Facilities Management in constructing pathways around the reserve.

And the team were soon hard at work, cutting and laying matting, spreading chips and netting over wooden walkways.

There was also an opportunity to help put up owl boxes and paint seats and fencing around the pathways.

Donna Green, Sustainability Advisor for Turner Estates Solutions, said: “It’s fantastic that we had so many keen volunteers from various companies.

“It allowed us to work together to give something back to the community.

“With all the hard work we put in, this hard-earned opportunity to create nature and improve the site will be for the use and the path through the reserve will be open to all 

“Which will benefit walkers, local schoolchildren who can be taught about wildlife and conservation, sites which might be underused or just have not been visited before.”

The Peaton Hill reserve was launched in 2004 after an MOD tidy-up and clean up of the site.

Both MOD and the Scottish Government’s natural environment advisors recognised the benefits of developing the site, and a start up grant of £9,900 was awarded.

Since then the reserve has gone from strength to strength, attracting local primary schools to show pupils the importance of biodiversity, and also many rare animals including smooth newts, hen harriers and common frogs.

The MOD’s achievement in transforming a forgotten piece of wasteland into a thriving home for wildlife was formally recognised two years later when it was awarded the 2009 Sanctuary Silver Otter award for Environmental Protection.

Festival Blazer

The Royal Navy’s Fast-Response Unit 2707, or the Blazer as it is known to the crew, has been loaned to HM Naval Base Devonport to help the festival take place.

The Hanny was detained at the Dutch-registered fishing boat which aroused their interest.

If you do have information, please mention when calling that you are involved in the case, DC Phil Sturdy, dealing with the case, on 0845 5551111, via the 24-hour police phone facility available.

If anyone has any information that may assist the police in locating the original illustration it would be of interest to them.

Copies of the original illustration are titled ‘Cod Squad’ and the title is located in the centre of the captured picture.

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rrcplymouth@ctp.org.uk
or call 01752 553393/76

Mon 22 Nov 10: 1000-1200 Clyde Learning Centre HMNB Clyde.
To register please call 01383 425960
or email rrcrosyth@ctp.org.uk

Tue 23 Nov 10 1000-1200 RRC Rosyth, Building 3016 HMS Caledonia.
To register please call 01383 425960
or email rrcrosyth@ctp.org.uk

To register please email rrcplymouth@ctp.org.uk

Mon 29 Nov 10: 1000-1200 RRC Portsmouth, Rodney Block, HMS Nelson.
To register please call 02392 724595
or email gtyrell@ctp.org.uk
**Brighter future for Newham**

A LONDON unit is hoping to move into a new unit after coming close to closure.

TS Chertsey, the Newham (Cornwall VC) unit, suffered a period of hardship when it found it difficult to retain volunteer staff, and also struggled with funding as cadet numbers dropped off along with staff.

In a vicious circle, low numbers meant the unit could not be represented at many local events, which made recruitment even more difficult.

Now a new officer in charge has been established (SSC) Adam Mendy RNR and with the help of a new cadre of volunteers, more cadets are coming in through the unit’s doors.

If anyone is interested in joining, as a cadet or adult instructor, they should email Cornwall.cadets@biftonnet.com

---

**Foundation, own elected representatives (in red)**

**appointment to Honorary Commodore (SCC) Jack Petchey (right)**

**vessel, named TS Jack Petchey in**

**A LONDON unit is hoping to**

**MEMBERS of Warsash unit**

**foundation has also recognised**

**London Area Sea Cadets,**

**now in its tenth year, has also**

**opened up to him, said: “My**

**in 1943 and deeply appreciated**

**in his spare time is chairman of**

**headquarters in the Warsash**

**mock election and voting in their**

**REMEMBRANCE of the**

**a pilgrimage to Ypres in Belgium, supported by four staff and two parents with an essential piece of kit – a**

**the party arrived at their**

**TS Hawkins has hosted play**

**out in the (wet) field**

**Cadets and staff from Altrincham**

**inclement weather (ie torrential rain)**

**THE Macc, SJ (40 Cdo RNI)**

**sound of marching boots brought**

**THE Jack Petchey Foundation**

**from former cadets who can help**

**Meeting the mayor**

**MEMBERS of Warsash unit**

**Cadets participated in the**

**THE Sea Cadet Corps is asking**

**people, but it also wants to hear from**

**people, but it also wants to hear from**

**who might just be interested to hear**

**future, he hopes it will still need**

**people, but it also wants to hear from**

**people, but it also wants to hear from**

**people, but it also wants to hear from**
Clasp is awarded to chief

A MEMBER of staff at Brighton unit has been recognised for more than 35 years of service to the Corps.

CPO (SCC) Michael O’Keefe was awarded his third clasp to his Cadet Forces Medal by Lt Cdr (SCC) Peter Gooding RN.

The presentation was made at Longmoor Army Camp in Hampshire during a Southern Area Marching (MABT), weekend, of which Lt Cdr Gooding is the officer in charge.

Such presentations are held twice a year, and for the past decade or so CPO O’Keefe has regularly attended to support the logistical side of the camp.

The senior rating’s wife Cathy and son Karl are both uniformed members of TS Brighton, the family has now been joined in uniform by Michael’s 21-year-old granddaughter Elthia.

Fishguard celebrates

FISHGUARD unit has been celebrating the success of its Senior Girls pulling team, which has been rewarded for his efforts.

Senior Girls pulling team, who attended to support the logistical unit has been recognised for more than 35 years of service to the Corps, administering the training programme for visitors to the Sea Cadet Training Centre, which offers 15 bespoke training courses.

Lt Shone, who joined the Navy in 1994 and completed 35 years service, said: “I have enjoyed each and every moment of the past 12 years.”

Medal for Micky

A SEA Cadet officer from Torpoint who has organised training at HMS Raleigh for around 80,000 young people has been rewarded for his long and dedicated service.

Lt Micky Shone was presented with a Legend Forces Long Service Medal in recognition of 12 years involvement with the Corps, administering the training programme for visitors to the National Sea Cadet Training Centre, which offers 15 bespoke training courses.

Ex cadet steps up to Navy

A FORMER Sea Cadet from Shropshire has joined the Navy and is training for a career in logistics.

Maria Hoyles, who was a member of the Telford unit, graduated from her basic training at HMS Raleigh in the summer.

But due to her talent and Senior Service is a long-standing tradition.

Maria joined TS Winkles at the age of 12, and has picked up the pace during the past decade.

Through the unit she achieved Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Awards, ocean sports and naval cadets sports diving qualifications, a BTPE in Public Services and numerous Sea Cadet Corps qualifications, including knowledge training, offshore sailing and power boating.

Maria also attended various ceremonies, and was chosen to be the sword-bearer for the High School Shropshire.

Two things stand out in Maria’s career.

The first was reaching the rank of Petty Officer Cadet, the highest rate a cadet can achieve.

And the second was being a represetanting the Corps and the UK on a three-week international cadet exchange to Perth in Australia.

During her time Down Under Maria stayed on a Royal Australian Navy base.

With the gruelling nine-week basic training course at HMS Raleigh under her belt — Maria admitted that “it was hard at times”, despite her thorough grounding in all things Naval — she then faced Phase Two training.

That involves a 14-week training block in learning all about supply chain logistics back at Torpoint before going to a naval base for a year to put her training into practice.

Maria said: “I enjoyed the time in the Sea Cadets going places, doing things and, best of all, the friends I made all over the country, and I had not joined the Cadets a lot of this would not have been possible.”

“Just because you join the Sea Cadets does not mean you have to want a career in the Navy — just enjoy the fun, friendship and experience.”

“But the Cadets can help if you want a career with the Royal Navy.”

The last formal exchange for the Corps and the UK on a three-week international cadet exchange to Poland in June.

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Trio face challenge

Three members of the Whitehaven unit were due to take part in the Royal Marines Commando Challenge. 'The 10km Fun Run event was being staged at CTCRM in Lympstone. Simon Gray, Ben Abbott and Carl McGurk, all staff members with TS Bee's Royal Marines Cadet detachments, have been sponsored for the event, which is raising money for the Devon Air Ambulance and 'C Support', a charity which provides help to injured Royal Marines.

So far over £500 has been pledged. 'The challenge course is used daily by the Royal Marines and is guaranteed to be tough. 'It involves a 3km multi-terrain run to a 4km obstacle course then another 3km run back to the starting point," said Ben, adding that the obstacle course included steep terrain, mud, water, more mud, tunnels, still more mud and the infamous ‘shark dip’ – an underwater tunnel. Anyone wishing to pledge support can contact the team at commandochallengeuk.org.

Each member of the team was promised a special medal, travel, accommodation and food.

Berkshire trio win acclaim

Three members of the Sea Cadets in Berkshire have received awards from the Lord Lieutenant of the county. Lt Cdga (SC) Alan Fleming RNR was awarded a Lord Lieutenant’s Certificate for his meritorious service to the youth of Berkshire and the Corps. Lt Cdga (SC) Andrew Strange RNR was awarded a Lord Lieutenant’s Certificate for meritorious service. He, like his colleagues, joined the Corps in a 12-year-old, and has been instructing since 1985.

Launched party

But another 16 units had cadets and staff at the launch, with strong representation from traditional ships building at both central Scotland and from the North-East of England. Cap badges on display on the spot included the Clyde including, TS Arbroath (Arbroath), TS Whitehaven (Whitehaven) and TS Dart (Dundee), TS Cambus (East Kilbride), TS Whitehaven (Whitehaven) (Grangemouth), TS Gold Rover (Greenock), TS Trincomalee (Hartlepool), TS Neptune (Hull), TS Christopher (Lochaber), TS Aux (Mehil), TS Inverness (Musselburgh), TS Calcutta (Peterhead), TS Chichester (South Shields), TS Carvin (Stornoway) and TS Genoa (Walsend).

Eastbourne marks centenary

EASTBOURNE unit celebrated a century in the local community with a full parade and a visit from the Captain of the Corps, Capt Mark Windsor. Mr Fellows established a Sea Scout unit in the town in 1910, and five years later the scouts became part of the Sea Cadet Corps, under the name TS Marlborough. In 1940 HMS Eastbourne, a Bangor-class minesweeper, was launched, and the unit was adopted by the then Commander of the unit was Ernest Handy. Speaking on behalf of the unit, chairman Bob Hamblyn said: "Our staff and volunteers are the seeds from which a new century in the history of TS Eastbourne will grow. "The future is very much in their hands, and we thank each one of them for what they have done and what they are now challenging to do!" • Eastbourne cadets put on a display at the Redoubt Fortress in the town, attended by Captain of the Corps Capt Mark Windsor and other local and SCC dignitaries.

BRNC welcomes combined camp

TRAINING across the board was on offer at the combined CCF, Sea Cadet Corps and Captain Naval Recruiting summer camp at Dartmouth. Organisers have been putting their heads together to make the 2011 camp even better – but there was plenty to reflect on with a sense of satisfaction after the nine-day gathering at the RN’s officer training establishment. A total of 54 CCF, seven Sea Cadets and five CCF officers instructed and acted as Divisional Officers during the camp, helping a total of 223 cadets – 126 from the CCF, 10 Sea Cadets and 58 potential officer cadets.

Of this cohort, 60 were in the CCF Band – a popular recent decision, as the band performed with distinction at the mess dinner, ceremonial dinners and ceremonial sunset, while also contributing to general activities. The band was also invited to parade through Dartmouth, and was reviewed by the mayor of the town.

Down on the River Dart cadets were instructed in canoeing, sculling, dinghy, navigation and ship’s husbandry, and made full use of the boats’ equipment, while there was also the opportunity to take the Bowan dights out as well.

Two Archer-class vessels, HM ships Teazer and Rader, were available to provide sea-time, while cadets were also given the chance to try scuba-diving, various sports (including swimming) and a visit on the bridge trainer.

Organisers were grateful to the efforts of catering staff at the College, and to BRNC river staff, for their help in smoothing the path for the cadets – no small undertaking with so many youngsters descending on Dartmouth for a brief and busy period.

Sutton Valence School CCF, tries her hand at electrical engineering training at HMS Collingwood.
When naval historians go to war...  

WHEN I began my career as a naval historian, the best-known first-hand account of naval operations in World War II was John Stoker’s The War at Sea (1951). This epic account of the war at sea was based on the author’s experience as a naval officer in the Royal Navy. The book was published in 1951 and quickly became a classic. It provided a detailed account of the battles and engagements that took place during the war, and it was praised for its accuracy and readability.

In the 1960s and 1970s, a new generation of naval historians emerged, including authors such as Andrew Judd, who wrote The Guns of the Spanish Armada (1966), and John Keegan, who wrote The First World War (1976). These authors brought a new perspective to the study of naval history, and their works helped to establish the field as a respected and well-respected discipline.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the study of naval history continued to evolve, with new authors and new perspectives emerging. One of the most prominent of these was Andrew Adkin, who wrote The Last Great Fleet (1989), a detailed account of the Battle of Trafalgar. Adkin’s work was celebrated for its depth and its accuracy, and it helped to establish the Battle of Trafalgar as one of the most important battles in naval history.

In the 2000s and 2010s, the study of naval history continued to grow, with new authors and new perspectives emerging. One of the most prominent of these was Julian Corbin, who wrote The Atlantic War (2011), a detailed account of the Battle of Midway. Corbin’s work was celebrated for its depth and its accuracy, and it helped to establish the Battle of Midway as one of the most important battles in naval history.

In the 2020s, the study of naval history has continued to grow, with new authors and new perspectives emerging. One of the most prominent of these is Daniel R. Vickers, who wrote The Battle of USS Monitor (2020), a detailed account of the Battle of USS Monitor. Vickers’s work was celebrated for its depth and its accuracy, and it helped to establish the Battle of USS Monitor as one of the most important battles in naval history.

In conclusion, the study of naval history has come a long way since the days of John Stoker. It has evolved from a simple account of naval operations to a complex and nuanced field of study, with new perspectives and new authors emerging all the time. The study of naval history is a rich and rewarding field of study, and it continues to grow and evolve as new perspectives and new authors emerge.
**SPORT**

**Rare triumph for Yeovilton**

**AFTER** a nine-year wait, RNAS Yeovilton Golf Society (YGS) has finally managed to win the Rydon Cup in Guernsey.

Now in its 27th year, this prestigious event is played in its traditional slot of the last Sunday in September, and is an annual event between the YGS and Royal Guernsey Golf Club (RGGC).

In the format of a Ryder Cup-style, four-ball match-play, the event commenced in 1984 as a memorial to Royal Marine Allen Fairhall who was killed in an aircraft accident in Yeovilton in 1945.

The match and cup were subsequently donated by Commandant of Cecil and in recognition of the close relationship between Yeovilton and Guernsey.

Members of Cecil’s family still regularly take part in the event.

Yeovilton have only managed to win the trophy a total of three times — in 1991, 1995 and 2004. The 2008 and 2009 matches ended in ties, so the YGS team were more determined than ever to take the next step and win the event.

With the weather unusually good for the time of year, the Channel Islands team captain CPO Nige Pogson explains how the team played to success.

“My playing partner, CPO James Thompson, and I took the first match of the day with a convincing five and four victory.

“The pairings of WO1 John Appleton and Lt Cdr Dave Horton, Bobbie Shaffo and WO1 Penny Reed and CPO Reece Lt and Paul Mitchell also gained excellent results, demanding little course, with the vital half point gained by CPO Nick Carter and Andy Pinner at 5-4.

“This ensured a total of 4½ points for the YGS providing the RGCC with no chance of retaining the trophy once again.”

Yeovilton golf society is made up of approximately 90 members of all ranks of the armed forces and civilians employed at RNAS Yeovilton.

Over 50 of those members have represented the Royal Navy team on previous occasions, each stage in the past year against other South-West golf clubs, military units including teams from Bosington and Bickleigh Garrison and one from YEO Foxtrot.

“The Guernsey trip is the season’s closing event and the team is made up of those who have played the most amount of matches throughout the season and the YGS committee,” explained Nige.

“With handicaps this year being played as well, the Yeovilton team is never selected on skill, leaving the outside players a chance in the open event to all abilities of folk.”

Tradition dictates that the Away Cup remains steered in the trophy cabinet at the RGCC clubhouse, preventing the Hen of the Golfers showing off their trophy back at Yeovilton.

But for a short while the 2010 team managed to get their hands on the cup, a fact that 24 other Yeovilton teams have tried — but failed — to achieve.

Trustee sought

THE Naval Service Sports Charity is looking for a trustee to support its work.

The charity distributes non- nutritive funds for the benefit of sports in the Senior Service.

These funds, which come from SASS, VSSS, investments and charitable donations, are distributed to grants to RM/NAV sports associations and other sports funds, for coaching and to support activities.

The role of a Trustee is to ensure that the charity’s aims are run efficiently and that support to Sport is given in the most effective way.

The majority of the activity will come from the grant-making and there are generally three times a year.

More information and application forms can be obtained from Norman Jackson, company secretary on main telephone number of 07122 837 800. The closing date is December 5 2010.

**Lifting makes us feel good**

THE Combined Services Powerlifting Championships proved a very successful event, even though the Royal Navy were edged into second place by the RAF.

The Senior Service fielded a team of six, led by Lt Adam Cooper, Cpl Mark Fleming, LMA John Strange, Cpl Mark Fleming, AET Simon Catado and AET John Lock.

Four of the lifters competed in the 113kg category with the exception of Lt Cooper, who only bench, and Alistair Duncan who was unable to compete due to pre-existing injuries.

Battling through a session at RAF Wattisham — the new powerlifting — all 45 competitors put their best efforts forward to support the Drug Test team as powerlifting comes to assert itself as the new sport in drug-free competitions across the three Services.

The competition started well with AET John Lock and winning a position best in the squat of 120kg. LMA John Strange squatted 169kg in the 125kg class for a new RN record and Cpl Mark Fleming went on to grab the highest amount in the tournament with 217.5kg.

It encouraging to see that all female entrants completed in each of the respective categories also equally impressive was that the RAF’s team was the first ever team in the history of the event to have a woman’s team represent the Services.

With no respective standards varied, all the female competitors performed a great deal of enthusiasm.

As the day came to a close, the RAF were the clear winners of the year, having moved up from 13th on the previous year to the top four.

The combined services Powerlifting Championships is not going to be the last, and this will continue as the RAF set their sights on next year's RAF Wattisham Open powerlifting event.

**Riders page for Jamie**

**AFT**er a hard-fought and well-played contest, the Inter-Command Championships reached a thrilling conclusion with the Royal Marines picked up the Portsmouth at Victoria Stadium.

In a tight first half Portsmouth narrowly edged ahead with a goal from the quality spot by AET Danny Commins in the 19th minutes and where ever they were on the service and showed some good movement at the beginning of the first half. Never mind the counterattack, the Royal Marines showed up strong.

In the second half the Portsmouth team was never scored as a result of their back 6 points. This allowed the Royal Marines to hold on for an impressive victory.

Both sides put in a great showing to keep the scoreboard close and after a tough match between two evenly-matched teams the Royal Marines ran out winners.

The individual performance by RNC Male Huddleson (57 min) and LNC Male Huddleson (57 min) took their chances to the putting the Royal in the lead.

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I would walk 100 miles... 

WITH apologies to the Proclaimers, but this is a tale from one of the RN's Living History groups. More than 50 Service personnel and civilians at Faslane have signed up to take part in the new 100-Mile Club, intended to promote physical fitness at HM Naval Base Clyde. With the advent of a free (very bright yellow) T-shirt and possible prizes, LPT Regiment, Clyde has managed to entice fellow Faslaners out of offices and ships and onto the roads. The atmosphere was electric as runners clocked up 100 miles (hence the name) over their own pace. Club members keep a tally of their miles, as well as doing that old sadge of teachers and school texts, Regins that "if runners cheat, then they cheat themselves".

Since club was launched in the summer, some of the runners have already reached the milestone. Among them is WO Daniel Joyce, Waterfront Safety Officer, who has logged 100 miles on the roads of Argyll and Bute despite long hours spent on the job. "Not being a natural athlete, I've always struggled to find an incentive to do physical training," he says.

The allure of a free T-shirt was enough to spark my interest in the 100-Mile Club and boost my fitness. I've been running daily, but I had never looked back since.

I started with a 10-mile run and then ramped up to twice a week, aiming to run 25 miles a week. I've kept going. and I now run between 25 and 40 miles each week.

As a result I've lost a stone and a half and am looking forward to the next year. I'm looking forward to my Royal Navy fitness officer.

More details on the club is available at LPT Cowley on Faslane 3745

Indoor fireworks

Continued from page 48

"The chance to represent our country and get off to a good start, winning four out of six matches in the seeding round which placed me 11th in the knockout stages."

"It was at this stage I found out I had to fence a teammate to reach the next round."

"We had been working with each other a lot in training and he had been getting the better of me on occasions so I was very nervous. In the end I won but I had to knock out a teammate."

"The next round was fairly straightforward, but I couldn't have a better draw as in my opinion I had knocked out the sixth seed in the previous round."

"I was jubilant at having made the top eight and by this point there was a lot of pressure flowing."

"I then had to fence a chabane from Sheffield, Stuart Marshall, who had got the better of me in our previous four encounters."

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THE Navy Inter Command Indoor Hockey Tournament was held over a 24-hour period in HMS Collingwood.

Sixteen matches, ten for the men’s teams and six for the women’s teams competed on an all-play-all basis, with La Galle Alice Walker, RN64.

There were 199 goals scored in the 16 matches, 125 in the men’s event and 74 in the women’s.

The men’s top scorers were PO(AE) Mark Stanton of Naval Air Command with 29 goals averaging six a match.

The pairing of LET(ME) Danny Mahan in 14 and LT Mark Davis (13) topped this with a Portsmouth 27 goals combo and usual suspects Woody McAlary (RM) with 13, Matt Breakshere (RM) with eight, Nick Carter with eight for Plymouth and Sean Trevelyan for Plymouth.

With over 100 U23 male players on the database, not many of them were selected in their Command teams which is something RN Hockey must address. It was left to Lee Milton (two) and Callum Watkins (three) for Naval Air All

Brian Pickford rattled in one for Portsmouth.

The best L723 performances with over 100 U23 male players took place with eight for Plymouth and Sean Trevelyan (13) topped this with a very close third.

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This is a spacer page to allow the following cutaways to appear correctly, just click on to the next page
IN ROME, Eberhard Weichold's patience was wearing thin. For more than 10 years, the German Navy's liaison officer to its Italian ally had grown increasingly frustrated.

Weichold was at a loss of action. A promotion he had commanded U-boat UC22 on three patrols of the Mediterranean in the final months of the war. Pickings had been slim—just three ships sunk—but the rumble of the Navy left Germany after her defeat considered the young Weichold a talent worth holding on to.

Two decades later the now 49-year-old was back in the Mediterranean—observing the actions of the Regia Marina (Royal Navy) and reporting to his superiors in Berlin. It was a frustrating appointment. Time and again the Italian fleet punctuated and obliterated. Its battleships were not ready. Fuel was in short supply. Air power was not available.

The reasons were many and varied, but the result was the same: the Italian Navy simply offered to fight to Britain's Mediterranean Fleet. The latter sailed poorly against the Middle Sea with scanting impunity. Would, Weichold wondered, the Italian battlehips sortie “from their harbours at all?”

Weichold's appointment was shared by the German Navy's High Command. Mussolini, they knew, “will no longer offer offensive action” while its defenses could be overwhelmed. “As if there is no Italian fleet at all,” Berlin said.

In Malta, three reconnaissance aircraft lifthouses were poised to turn the Royal Navy's flank on a round trip of 700 miles. The ships were ostensibly bombers, but today they were nothing but ordinary photographs.

As it had been for much of the summer and autumn, the Italian Navy's fleet lay at anchor in the great natural harbours of the Mediterranean. But their aircraft did not. Roads between the ships and coast were obliterated by the war clouds gathered in 1936. But he did not know that his Italian ally was on the move.

At his very first meeting with Lord Louis Mountbatten, the future Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean, Weichold knew he was talking to a man with a burning desire to upset the naval balance in the central Mediterranean.

In little more than a month, Lord Louis himself was back in the Mediterranean. He flew to Malta, and Eagle, as they practiced dropping bombs and torpedoes at night.

By mid-October 1940, Lord Louis's orders were to attack Taranto. He bade farewell to Luton, and Eagle as they practiced dropping bombs and torpedoes by night. For a week the British covered the search for turning the Italian Army into a modern fighting force.

The British had no counterstrategy. A new weapon was born. The Swordfish was delivered. It had to be dropped in level flight, and difficult to see at night. And in the hangar the filters had finished their work. The armoured was taken off, torpedoes and a handful of bombs. When it did emerge from its hangar the night, it was a formidable array of anti-aircraft and anti-submarine defences.

From the balcony of his chancellery in the final months of the war, Adolf Hitler. against the will of his generals, ordered the Italian fleet to sortie. “The Mediterranean is the domain of the Italian Navy,” he came from the ‘biggun' plan. The Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean, Benito Mussolini, had arrived. Domenico Cavagnari. deemed the might of the Royal Navy the ‘ABC'. The Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean, Benito Mussolini, had arrived.

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The city itself occupies a narrow spit of land. The battleships from Gibraltarin the west to Alexandria in the east, with the lynchpin of Calabria in the north. The city is sheltered by the large. sheltered inner harbour. close to the shore. The docks are divided into two harbours is a canal barely1,100fl long and under 250li wide. The waters of the harbour. plus the breakwaters, are so well protected that the ships can remain undamaged by storms.

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The Williamson’s detonated its ordnance— the Taranto raid 1940

...and the flares. Rather than the aircraft, it was the flares. It was the flares that the enemy was looking for— the searchlight for a fresh shower of steel and shells burst. They lit up the grey-blue Swordfish in brilliant white for several seconds, before fading into the night...
THERE are two things which surprise you about a Fairly Swordfish.

1. Size. It is a big old beast. It is taller, longer, wider and heavier than a Spitfire... and, to be honest, it possess none of the fabled fighter’s sleek, graceful lines.

2. Noise and power do not necessarily equate... It is the longest-serving member of the Fleet Air Arm’s historic display wing (since 1972, the RNIIF) and has been part of the Royal Navy’sAfalon display since 1960 when it was donated to the Navy by BAE Systems.

LS326 is one of the later Swordfish. serving on North Atlantic convoy duties before revertiog to a training role. She sunk the Bismarck (in the intensions film, admittedly) or Swordfish stores to fall back upon. so a replacement set of wings was hand-crafted from steel and the engine rebuilt.

By the summer of 2008, LS326 was ready to take to the skies again. And she did. Briefly. Engine problems curtated flights and the Swordfish spent another two years on the ground in replacement parts were manufactured and the engine rebuilt (twice) before in mid-September 2010, ground runs proved successful.

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alacrewman Andy Varies headed to Gosford and the bi-centenary of the 2010 display season.

“There’s nothing like her on the display circuit,” says Lt Cdr Abbey, “Even if people are not especially interested in aviation, they love to see a Swordfish.

“She’s easy to fly – as a pilot of complex aircraft, you can see why people love the Swordfish. It’s so simple. Keeping them flying is a bit more difficult.”

All the historic flight’s aircrews are serving personnel: as Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Abbey is the sole pilot permanently with the RNHF, but he is joined by volunteers from the rest of the flying community who give up their time to crew the vintage aircraft, such as Lt Cdr Glenn Allison, CO of 727 Naval Air Squadron, who’s recently qualified as a Swordfish pilot.

Before the end of 2010, the vintage biplane was due to take part in Royal British Legion Poppies Appeal launch in Hampshire, HMS Ark Royal’s 25th birthday in Portsmouth, as well as a Taranto anniversary flypast over Yeovilton, and one on behalf of Telegraphist Air Gunnery – who with the pilot and observer completed the three-strong crew of a Swordfish – over Lee-on-Solent. The winter will be used by the littered mechanics at the RNHIF to work on the Swordfish with a view to appearances on the display circuit in 2011, plus the magnificent Sea Hawk jet, the Sea Fury – the Navy’s last piston-engined fighter – and a small Chipmunk trainer, which completes the flight’s inventory.

Whereas the engines of today’s jets and helicopters can last, say, 3,000 hours, the engines which drive these museum pieces need replacing after perhaps just 250 hours.

Given the age of the aircraft, maintenance work is time consuming – there’s a team of just ten people, plus a small band of volunteers, working at the flight’s home on the south side of RNAS Yeovilton.

As for the financial challenges of looking after these wonderful naval aircraft, well, overhauling a Pegasus engine alone devours around £90,000. As for a new set of Swordfish wings, they’ll set you back some £1m.

The flight receives funding from the Royal Navy and from the Fly Navy Heritage Trust (which was born out of a fund set up in the 1990s to keep the Swordfish airborne) and receives considerable advice, expertise and assistance from BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce and Westlands.

To learn more about the collection, upcoming appearances by the aircraft – and to help keep these magnificent machines airborne – visit www.royalnavyhistoricflight.org.uk/home.