



Off-sale date: December 1, 2010

NOVEMBER 2010
£2.00

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 sorties by Somali pirates, once thwarting an attack on a merchantman, the other occasion destroying a pirate 'mother ship' (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 'bittersweet' six months in Helmand where the heavy sacrifices, say senior Royals, were 'not in vain' (see page 8).

The Type 45 destroyer is the great white hope of the surface fleet for the coming generation – and the much-hyped and long-awaited £1bn warships are beginning to make their mark. **HMS Dauntless** made history by firing a Sea Viper missile – the class' principal weapon – off north-west Scotland (see opposite).

Three thousand miles away her older sister **HMS Daring** was flexing her muscles for the very first time with a carrier battle group headed by the USS Enterprise (see page 13).

Meanwhile the third Type 45, **HMS Diamond** has hauled down the Blue Ensign and hoisted the White (see page 27).

And on the Clyde the Type 45 programme – the most complex surface ships ever built for the RN – is drawing to a close with the launch of the sixth and last of the class, **HMS Duncan** (see page 9).

She's in the early stages of fitting out at Scotstoun, where **HMS Dragon** played host to reservists from **HMS Cambria** (see page 22).

Amphibious flagship **HMS Albion** has been in Scotland working with Royal Marines to trial a potential new 'fast landing craft' (see page 15).

HMS Somerset is coming to the end of her six months protecting Iraq's oil platforms and shipping in the Gulf. She took a breather from patrols to visit Saudi Arabia (see page 10).

HMS Portland flew the flag for Blighty in Chile and Peru and joined in the anti-drugs war in both the Pacific and Caribbean (see page 14).

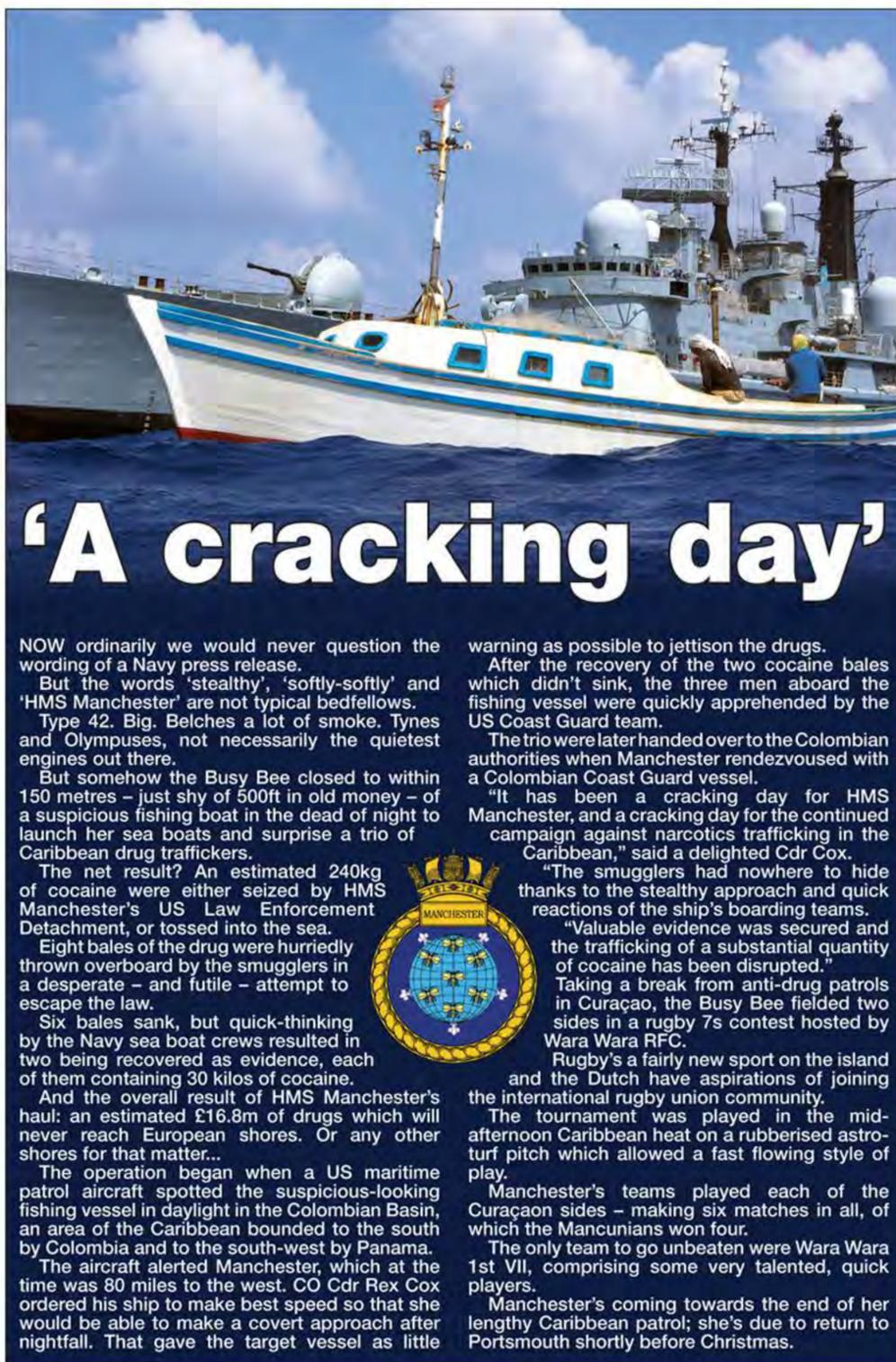
HMS Ocean's grand tour of the Atlantic (North and South) is drawing to a close with the helicopter carrier calling in on Nigeria and Sierra Leone – the latter a decade after the Mighty O played a vital role in restoring order (see page 11).

By far the most beautiful image to cross our desks this month is that of **HMS Triumph** taking part in Exercise Joint Warrior in Scotland (see page 6).

She was one of 15 warships and auxiliaries and two Naval air squadrons partaking in the regular war game (see pages 20-21 and 24-25). The rest were (deep breath) **HM Ships Ark Royal, York, Monmouth, Shoreham, Walney, Brocklesby, Cattistock, Ledbury, Penzance, Echo, Biter, and Turbulent, RFAs Fort George and Largs Bay, 814 and 815 NAS.**

Of those Walney has now passed into history while Ark Royal is the highest-profile victim of the SDSR cuts (see pages 4-5 for details).

With the axeing, too, of **800 NAS** and the entire Harrier force, Britain bows out of fixed wing carrier operations for the next decade – this in the month that we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Taranto Raid, the most salutary lesson of the potency of naval air power in the Royal Navy's history (see our supplement in the centre pages).



'A cracking day'

NOW ordinarily we would never question the wording of a Navy press release.

But the words 'stealthy', 'softly-softly' and 'HMS Manchester' are not typical bedfellows.

Type 42. Big. Belches a lot of smoke. Tynes and Olympuses, not necessarily the quietest engines out there.

But somehow the Busy Bee closed to within 150 metres – just shy of 500ft in old money – of a suspicious fishing boat in the dead of night to launch her sea boats and surprise a trio of Caribbean drug traffickers.

The net result? An estimated 240kg of cocaine were either seized by HMS Manchester's US Law Enforcement Detachment, or tossed into the sea.

Eight bales of the drug were hurriedly thrown overboard by the smugglers in a desperate – and futile – attempt to escape the law.

Six bales sank, but quick-thinking by the Navy sea boat crews resulted in two being recovered as evidence, each of them containing 30 kilos of cocaine.

And the overall result of HMS Manchester's haul: an estimated £16.8m of drugs which will never reach European shores. Or any other shores for that matter...

The operation began when a US maritime patrol aircraft spotted the suspicious-looking fishing vessel in daylight in the Colombian Basin, an area of the Caribbean bounded to the south by Colombia and to the south-west by Panama.

The aircraft alerted Manchester, which at the time was 80 miles to the west. CO Cdr Rex Cox ordered his ship to make best speed so that she would be able to make a covert approach after nightfall. That gave the target vessel as little

warning as possible to jettison the drugs.

After the recovery of the two cocaine bales which didn't sink, the three men aboard the fishing vessel were quickly apprehended by the US Coast Guard team.

The trio were later handed over to the Colombian authorities when Manchester rendezvoused with a Colombian Coast Guard vessel.

"It has been a cracking day for HMS Manchester, and a cracking day for the continued campaign against narcotics trafficking in the Caribbean," said a delighted Cdr Cox.

"The smugglers had nowhere to hide thanks to the stealthy approach and quick reactions of the ship's boarding teams.

"Valuable evidence was secured and the trafficking of a substantial quantity of cocaine has been disrupted."

Taking a break from anti-drug patrols in Curaçao, the Busy Bee fielded two sides in a rugby 7s contest hosted by Wara Wara RFC.

Rugby's a fairly new sport on the island and the Dutch have aspirations of joining the international rugby union community.

The tournament was played in the mid-afternoon Caribbean heat on a rubberised astro-turf pitch which allowed a fast flowing style of play.

Manchester's teams played each of the Curaçao sides – making six matches in all, of which the Mancunians won four.

The only team to go unbeaten were Wara Wara 1st VII, comprising some very talented, quick players.

Manchester's coming towards the end of her lengthy Caribbean patrol; she's due to return to Portsmouth shortly before Christmas.

The very last Sausage role

HMS Cumberland has embarked on what has become her final deployment – and her third tour of duty to the same region in as many years.

The frigate departed Devonport at the end of September – before it was announced that all four remaining Type 22 frigates were to be decommissioned by the end of next year under the Strategic Defence and Security Review (see pages 4-5).

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 exercise 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 10), general security at sea in the central Gulf, and counter-piracy/smuggling/terrorism/people trafficking 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 UK Maritime HQ in Bahrain – 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 toil comes to fruition.

Somewhere within this fire and smoke is the sword of the Sea

Viper weapons 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 Allfree 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)...

... w h i c h 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 the enemy up to 70 miles away.

Or in this case, a solitary target on an interception course at 'considerable distance' (the actual range is, of course, classified).

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

Woooshhhhh.

And when we say woooshhhhh, we mean woooshhhhh. There's no bang – roar, à la Sea Dart. Nor even a woooshhhhh – roar, à la 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.

And quite a nice feeling aboard Dauntless as a ten-year-plus programme, in which £6bn and hundreds of thousands of man hours have been invested, overcomes its final trials hurdle.

Sea Viper is, says Cdr Andy Phenna, D33's weapon engineer officer, the most sophisticated missile system he's worked with in 25 years in the RN.

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.

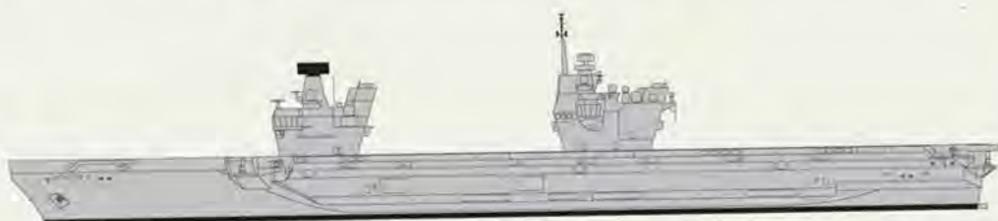
■ You can watch video footage of the successful firing at www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-events/rn-live/all-news/sea-viper





Uncomfortable 'The Naval Service'

The review at a glance

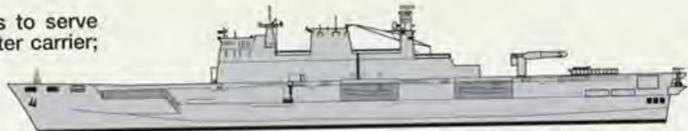


HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales will be built but will have no fixed-wing aircraft until around 2020. Conventional versions of the carriers will be built – with catapult launchers not ski ramps – to accommodate traditional fast jets



Flagship HMS Ark Royal to pay off 'with immediate effect'. HMS Illustrious' fate is bound with that of Ocean (see below)

HMS Ocean or HMS Illustrious to serve as the 'high readiness' helicopter carrier; the other will be in extended readiness until Queen Elizabeth enters service



HMS Albion and Bulwark to alternate as the 'high readiness' assault ship; the other vessel will be held at 'very low readiness'

One of the RFA's four Bay-class landing support ships will be decommissioned



All Type 22 frigates – HMS Campbelltown, Chatham, Cornwall, and Cumberland – to be decommissioned by the end of 2011

Seven Astute-class nuclear-powered Fleet submarines will be built



Vanguard ballistic missile submarines will serve until the late 2020s, when a successor to the Trident deterrent is introduced. The number of warheads on each boat is being reduced from 48 to 40 as part of a £750m savings drive



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 (right) 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 ('Junglies') out of service by 2016



Personnel in the Naval Service will fall by 5,000 to 30,000 in 2015 and by a further 1,000 by 2020

Royal Marines remain an integral part of the Royal Navy and 3 Commando Brigade will remain at the heart of the Corps' deployable capability. The Corps will, however, shrink by 500 over the next five years



AND so no more the clank and clatter of chains being dragged across the flight deck.

No more the thumbs up from the pilot, his checks complete in his cramped cockpit. No more the whine, then howl, then roar of a Pegasus engine.

No more the glance up and down the deck by the Captain of the Flight Deck. No more the red flag lowered, green flag raised.

No more the immortal sight of a Harrier lumbering skywards up that rather awkward-looking ramp.

No more the sight of the waterfront of Portsmouth Harbour lined with tens of thousands of people wishing the flagship godspeed.

No more the name Ark Royal – the most famous, most iconic title bestowed on a warship for the past seven decades.

No more the cry 'Zeal does not rest'.

No more Harrier + Carrier, the defining image of the Royal Navy for the past generation. HMS Ark Royal, 800 Naval Air Squadron – indeed the entire Joint Force Harrier – have been axed.

But the Royal Navy is more than 'just' jump jets and their floating airfields.

No more too the cries 'Up and at 'em', 'Victory through strength'.

No more the deeds of the Fighting 99, the raising of a sausage flag when replenishing, the stirring sight of a Type 22 slicing through the waves at 30kts. All four will pass into history.

No more the dull roar of the Nimrod scouring the skies and seas of these islands, assisting our submarines and frigates in the hunt for potential threats.

The passageways of Albion or Bulwark, which once echoed to the sound of men struggling under the weight of their bergens, will fall silent. No more *Hoofing Chad. Gen dit. Crack on.* One of the two ships will be mothballed.

And perhaps no more the throb of Merlins and Sea Kings about to lift off from HMS Ocean or courtesy of Lusty Airways. One will be the nation's carrier, the other will be laid up.

And no more the names of 5,000 Jacks, Jennies, Royals – from ABs to admirals, marines to generals – on the muster rolls and pay lists.

In five years' time the Naval Service – Fleet Air Arm, Submarine Service, Surface Fleet, Royal Marines, Maritime Reserves, training establishments – will number just 30,000 men and women. In ten, it will total a mere 29,000.

The axe of austerity – as wielded by the Strategic Defence and Security Review and announced in Parliament by Prime Minister David Cameron last month – has fallen.

As Mr Cameron rose in the House to announce the key points of the review, so lower decks were cleared wherever the White Ensign fluttered.

At Navy Command. Aboard HMS Somerset in the Gulf. On Portland and Manchester in the Caribbean. At RM Stonehouse. At Culdrose and Gannet. In Portsmouth Harbour aboard Ark Royal.

There were ashen faces. Many were stunned. Some were angry. Others were tearful. Tuesday October 19 2010 was the black day of the Royal Navy in this epoch.

But it could have been even blacker. For pain today under the review, there is jam tomorrow.

There will be two gleaming aircraft carriers, the largest ships ever to fly the White Ensign.

They will launch fixed-wing fast jets, the F35 Joint Strike Fighter, flown by naval aviators.

There will be a shield of six Type 45 and 13 Type 23 frigates – conjecture in the lead up to the Strategic Defence and Security Review suggested there would be but a dozen escorts.

There will be a permanent nuclear deterrent, first through Trident, then its successor from the late 2020s.

There will be seven Astute-class submarines, the most potent Fleet boats ever built; the Silent Service has fared better than any other arm of the Royal Navy under the review.

There will be a new generation of multi-role surface ships, the Type 26 'Global Combat Ship', entering service from 2021.

There will be a force of Sandown and Hunt-class mine warfare vessels and, from 2018, their replacements.

There will be the Corps of Royal Marines under the wing of the Royal Navy as they have been since 1755.

3 Commando Brigade, deployable on land and sea, as the Corps' motto proudly proclaims, will remain the marines' sword.

Naval engineers will train at HMS Sultan – the plug has been pulled on a £14bn plan to shift training to St Athan.

These are the silver lining on an otherwise dark cloud. In summary, the Strategic Defence and Security Review means a smaller Navy.

It means a Navy which will have to curb certain tasks in favour of others. Its leaders have made it quite clear to the Government that having cut its cloth, the Senior Service cannot cover the entire 'table' as it did before.

The Naval Service – its ships, submarines, aircraft, vehicles, and its men and women – says its ranking admiral, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, cannot bear additional "stretches in tempo". Put bluntly: "Fewer ships mean fewer tasks."

By far the bitterest pill to swallow is the loss of fixed-wing carrier aviation until 2020.

For a decade the curtain raised by Charles Samson, raised higher still by Reginald Warneford, Edwin Dunning, Charles Lamb, John Wellham, Jock Moffat, Robert Hampton

'...It could have been'

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

When he spoke to *Navy News* the day after the Strategic DSR announcement, he was in one respect a happier man because the uncertainty of the last few months had been removed.

But now the business of implementing those decisions begins, he is under no illusions about how difficult the next few years are going to be.

He explained: "The decision to gap the carrier strike capability is without question the most challenging outcome of the SDSR for the Navy."

"The good news is that we are going to get the carriers, and the aircraft we're going to generate from them is a more capable variant with a longer range, greater weapon 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 the skills – not just the pilots but the deck handlers, fighter controllers, bomb bosuns, air engineers – means we will have to regenerate this capability, 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 clear government intent of the way forward, and we must match that with a programme to deliver it."

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

He said: "Of course morale is low. It's the most devastating blow across the whole of the RN. Here is a cadre of very professional people who have delivered excellence in terms of flying in the most challenging of environments for the last 25-30 years."

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

He added: "That's a lot to ask, but solve it we will, solve it we must, and I need to pull forward some of these people to be able to deliver it."

Some will be embedded with the RAF, some will have exchange appointments with the US and French to maintain their skills, and there are some pinch points of engineering within

'Service for all, painful for some' will always endure'



● Admiral Stanhope listens to the concerns of the ship's company of HMS Portland during their visit to Chile
Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson, FRPU East

Grey, Eric Brown, 'Sharkey' Ward, 'Gordy' Batt, 'Jack' London and thousands more, is lowered. 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 next year.

Few corners of the Senior Service will remain unaffected: as the Fleet contracts, so it will require fewer helicopters – there are implications in the review for the Merlin and Lynx/Wildcat forces, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the naval estate, civilian staff.

It will, the First Sea Lord warns, "be uncomfortable for all, painful for some. There will be some big changes in fairly short order."

"I will do everything possible to ensure our people are listened to and treated fairly."

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 Naval Service has faced tough times before in its long history. It always endures and – because we are an island nation – it always will."

He continues: "The Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Maritime Reserves and Royal Fleet Auxiliary – with our civilian 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 highly-capable, internationally-renowned and worthy of your commitment and loyalty. I am confident about our shared future."

■ *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review* can be read at www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset_dg_191634.pdf

'...been a lot, lot worse...'

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.

He explained: "We won't lose all the people we have to through natural wastage, or by virtue of the force elements we have removed."

"We have to look across the Navy to see how we can bring those numbers down, but bring them down we must, as we won't be funded to support them."

"When we get to that point where we can take the reductions, we'll be looking at a voluntary redundancy package and if we don't get enough people then there will be forced redundancy."

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 ones, we retain, with the exception of the hiatus of carrier strike, the same balanced force structure that we had before."

"Tasking decisions haven't been made yet, but 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 killik, 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: "SDSR 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 that give us standing with other nations."

He added: "The outcome of this is a balanced Navy, slightly smaller but delivering all the capabilities we had before."

"There were lots of worse options to be debated and as I view the final outcome, whilst not sanguine about any of it and absolutely not complacent in terms of our delivery, I have to say that it could have been a lot, lot worse."

AS SWINGING cuts to the Fleet were being announced, the passing of minehunter 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 (survey ship HMS Roebuck, already paid off, was the other victim).

In a dockside ceremony, Walney's 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 1992.

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 tugs blasting their fire hoses 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 townsfolk were able to file aboard the ship as she opened her gangway at Town



● Clyde tugs give HMS Walney a traditional send-off, watched by Capt Philip Buckley, Captain Faslane Flotilla
Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Sutton, FRPU Clyde

Quay in the heart of Barrow. (Throughout her career the ship was also bound with Furness General Hospital and the local Sea Cadet unit TS Sovereign.)

"There was obviously some sadness to leaving the Clyde, which has been home to the ship since 2006," said Walney's final CO Lt Cdr Angus Essenhigh.

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

"Barrow has a very proud seagoing 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 counter-measures 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-Measures Group 1. She spent five months in the waters of northern Europe working with allies and taking part in exercises large and small.

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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 Keith Pearson-Roselle and his wife Britta, was duly christened, and as mum said: "The whole day ran so smoothly and was such an unforgettable and 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 Merlins 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.



Picture: PO(Phot) Terry Seward

'Exactly the result we're after...'

THIS is what a .5 calibre M3M gun mounted on a Lynx can do in the hands of a Royal Marines Commando.

Burning fiercely off the Somali coast is a skiff crammed with fuel drums, ladders and other piratical paraphernalia as HMS Montrose thwarts her second attack by modern-day brigands in a week.

In this second 'police action', the Devonport-based frigate was dispatched by NATO chiefs to investigate a suspected 'action group' leaving a known pirate camp on the Somali coast.

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.

Four men fled for shore in one skiff; the remaining six surrendered under the guns of the Lynx.

When the frigate appeared, her boarding party of commandos and sailors gathered evidence and information from the six suspects, then put them in the remaining skiff and sent them on their way.

With their mother ship aflame and acrid black smoke rolling across the sea, the pirates headed back to shore.

"This could quickly have turned into another piracy incident, but our ability to respond quickly in the Lynx meant that we could stop the pirates before they had a chance to do any harm. It's exactly the result we're after," said Montrose's 815 NAS Flight Commander Lt Stuart Irwin.

Just days before, Vixen was on the scene just in time to prevent a North Korean vessel being hijacked.

The MV Mi Rae was passing through the international transit corridor in the Gulf of Aden – the invisible sea lane

protected by warships – when a gang of men in a skiff closed in on the vessel.

The Koreans flashed an SOS, picked up by Montrose which was relatively close and immediately launched her Lynx.

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 dispatched by the international military body to deal with piracy and security east of Suez under the banner of Operation Ocean Shield.

With the monsoon season over, and with the Gulf of Aden fairly heavily patrolled by international warships, those leading the anti-piracy effort have

switched their focus southwards with the aim of interrupting the modern-day buccaneers.

Much of Montrose's time on NATO duties so far has been spent working not far from the Somali capital Mogadishu (you might remember it from *Black Hawk Down*).

The frigate has been sending her helicopter Vixen up at dawn and dusk especially with a view to detecting whalers 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.

For two nights of the Ocean Shield patrol, the ship's complement was 'plus one' – without permission.

Ordinarily we don't encourage stowaways in the hangar of a Type 23...

but in this case we'll make an exception.

A scops owl made the stern of the frigate his home as Montrose prowled the Somali Basin.

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 (temporarily) aboard HMS Severn and in the dim and distant past we seem to recall one enjoying life on Ark Royal.

But how do we know it's a scops owl? Well, luckily Montrose has a resident twitcher: PO(Logs) Ray Duffy is a member of the RN Birdwatching Society and has been feeding back sightings while on board to colleagues in the UK.

And there have been quite a few sightings... yellow wagtails, warblers, hoopoes and swallows have all touched down on the T23.

The reason why? They're migrating south for the winter and use the warship for a brief rest before continuing their journeys south.



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Wally, 90, was awarded the Military Medal for his bravery in a dramatic battle outside Brussels on September 3rd 1944. Later, the D-Day Veteran, who had served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, had a platoon within the Army Training Regiment named after him. Wally is now the main carer for his wife Dolly, and when the couple needed a break he contacted SSAFA Forces Help.

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● The delight shines in both their faces as Mne Ben Slade's daughter Ellie tries out his green beret



Heads held high

IT WAS the best of times and the worst of times for the men of Charlie Company 40 Commando and their families.

As the men returned to their base in Norton Manor Camp where 300 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.

"It's a bittersweet day being back here; 21 people from the battle-group were killed and 14 of them were Royal Marines," said Maj Duncan Forbes, who commanded Charlie Company.

He said: "Their sacrifice 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 those 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."

He added: "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 heads held high."

40 Commando were 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 Ghartse Surlanday, 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-glove 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 Capt Ambrose Peregrine RM said: "Whilst out in this beautiful area I was almost moved to tears when a small group of children, who were joyfully playing outside their village, started waving and calling out to us as the sunlight swept across, illuminating the mountains and the desert plains."

The operation was a complete success, giving all the forces a much better understanding of the area.

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

"This operation was the culmination of our six-month tour and it has made me extremely proud to lead such outstanding Marines."

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 carried by bus back to their unit at Norton Manor Camp, near Taunton to a welcome from friends and family; (below): Sgt Danny Smith celebrates his return with son Oliver



Pictures: LA(Phot) Kyle Heller



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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 Ibbotson, 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 on 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 Belfast and Dundee, 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.

Picture: PO(Phot) Ian Arthur, RNR



The end of the beginning



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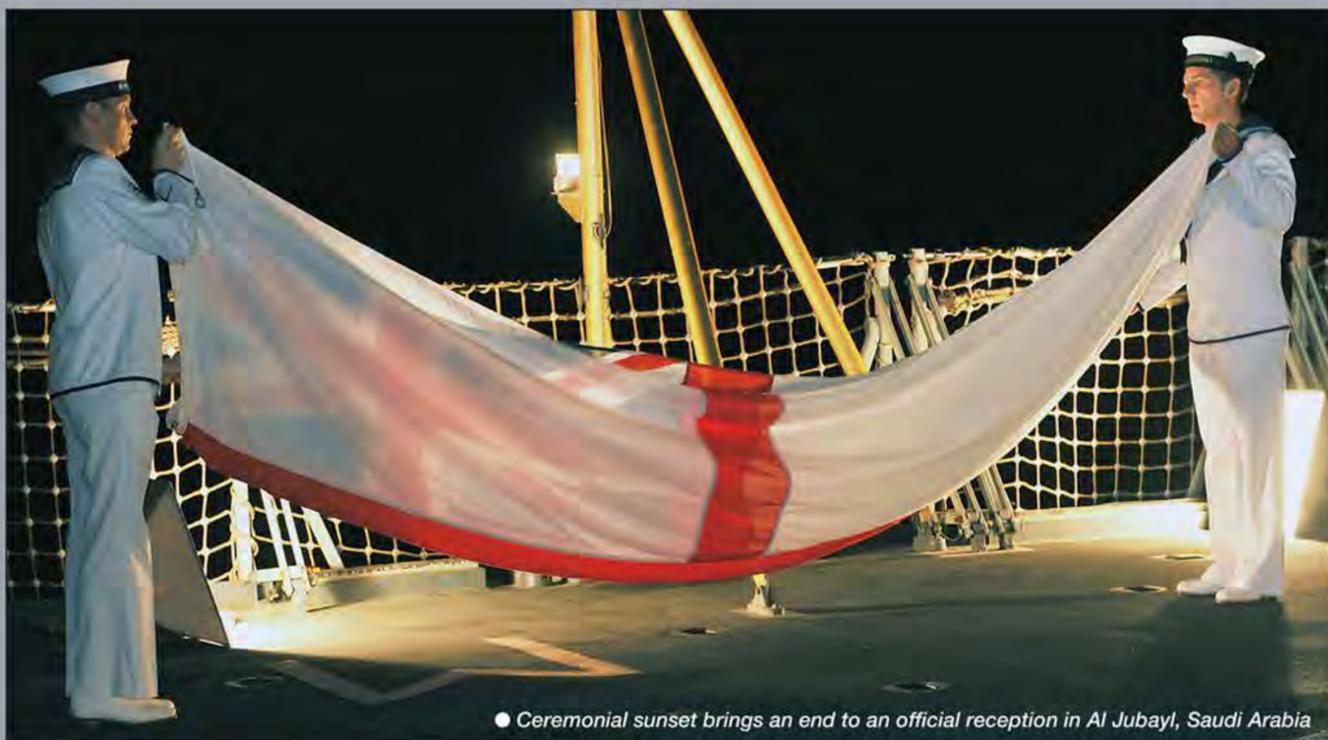
From September 1st, the IET will be launching new technician pricing for Armed Forces applicants: TMIET Membership fee will be £80. EngTech/ICTech application fee of £52 is waived.

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● We go faster if we sail downhill... HMS Somerset punches through the Gulf during CTF 152 patrol duties and (below) the entire boarding team – 815 NAS Lynx Mk8 (with .5 calibre M3M gun to make/ruin your day), two RIBs, and two dozen determined sailors, Royal Marines and airmen – take a break from training to pose for the camera



● Ceremonial sunset brings an end to an official reception in Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia

From Dubai... ...to Jubayl

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 'pain'... Operational 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 who's patrolled these waters simply as ABOT) – the newer of the two platforms which pumps the country's chief export into waiting tankers.

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)... and 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 RIBs 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 undergoes 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 Harkin.

"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 certainly welcome."

In the midst of these patrols, a frisson of excitement... F82 picked up a mayday call from the American destroyer USS Milius also bimbbling (with purpose, of course) around the Gulf.

One of Milius' chefs suffered an injured hand when a heavy metal tray fell on to it, tearing through the tissues.

The injury was sufficiently serious that the Arleigh-Burke considered evacuating the casualty to Kuwait...

...but Somerset to the rescue. Her medical officer, Surg Lt Tom

Stevenson, was dispatched by seaboat.

After a meticulous examination, nine small stitches were painstakingly inserted into the gaping wound, closing it.

"It was a particularly tricky wound to deal with," said Surg Lt Stevenson.

"If the chef had severed the 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."

Frission 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 Jabayl.

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 Pickle Night – commemorating the namesake vessel which brought news of victory at Trafalgar and death of Admiral Lord Nelson to England (yes, 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 residential compounds ashore.

On sailing from Saudi Arabia, Somerset hosted 20 cadets from the naval academy for a day.

They were given a tour of Somerset, witnessed Officer of the Watch manoeuvres and observed an exercise with the Al Farouq, an Al Siddiq-class patrol boat.

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 RAS with the American tanker USNS Joshua Humphreys

Pictures: LA(Phot) Jenny Lodge, FRPU East and Lt Henderson, 815 NAS

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● A Royal Marines Lynx flies above HMS Ocean in Lagos on the day of the fleet review celebrating the 50th anniversary of Nigeria's independence
Pictures: LA(Phot) Guy Pool

African Ocean

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 Nigeria's 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 Ajegunje, 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, joining their British counterparts in a day of firefighting, navigation, first aid and maintenance training.

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 Oride, 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 Guinea 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 Guinea 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.

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 Musa Gbow, 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.

While 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, free 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 warm welcome that the ship's company received from the people of

Freetown is most humbling.

As *Navy News* 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.



● Nigerian Navy personnel train on board HMS Ocean

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● Ocean's Lynx delivers a sick crewman to the carrier in the Gulf of Guinea



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 Crew: one student, one instructor
 Radius: 710 miles

Facts and figures

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. No, 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 RN 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 observers – can not

merely handle an aircraft when it comes to the nuts 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 not like learning 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 owned 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 rejoin the general service).

"The difficulty is the volume of information – and how quickly it comes at you," says S/Lt Mac Nicoll, 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 engineer officers, gives potential Naval personnel an insight into life in the Fleet Air Arm, takes members of University Royal Naval Units 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 mid-1943 and a Gibraltar-based unit charged with patrolling the Mediterranean between Bizerta and Algiers.

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 Brawdy, Pembrokeshire.

Running parallel to this, from the late 1940s, BRNC had two Tiger Moths, based at Roborough, near Plymouth, for use by cadets and Dartmouth.

Naval air stations around the UK also acquired the famous training biplane and each summer these would converge on Arbroath or Lossiemouth.

By 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 Naval 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 formally commissioned as 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.

Picture: Nigel Pitcher

HEROES 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', which would blight the province for a generation – and require soldiers and commandos to serve in an unfamiliar peacekeeping role.

Clashes between civil rights protestors and Protestants in the late summer of 1969 saw 41 Commando hurriedly deployed for a six-week stint.

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 riot a march by eight Orangemen's Lodges.

On the evening of Friday June 26, a crowd of some 2,000 Protestants moved down the road. They quickly came under attack from a hail of rocks.

All hell broke loose. Rival factions lobbed bricks, broken glass, pipes, stones – anything which could be thrown. Along Crumlin Road, the marines, soldiers and police struggled to keep the baying mobs apart. The stand-off lasted all night, finally ending around dawn on Saturday 27.

The lull was short-lived. That afternoon the marches resumed – and so did the clashes. This time the rioters wielded guns.

In the middle of the mêlée, PO(MA) Frederick 'Freddy' MacLaughlin ferried a wounded civilian to hospital, then returned to provide aid to his comrades.

As he drove his ambulance back to the Crumlin Road, his clearly-marked vehicle came under fire. He was shot in the cheek; the bullet smashed his lower jaw and lodged in his throat.

Undeterred, he patched himself up, then drove through the line of fire to rescue another wounded civilian. He safely delivered him to hospital, insisting that surgeons treat the civvy before he was operated on for his bullet.

His actions that Saturday earned him the George Medal. He showed "outstanding courage", "selfless conduct", "bravery and complete disregard for his own safety".

■ THIS image (A 35279) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

The Big E...



...and the Big D

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 (500ft long, 8,000+ tons)...

...and a few(ish) 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 battlegroup 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 fighters 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 first 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 £1bn 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 20 Darings have also been undertaking research on the civil war 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." Picture: LS Rowe, HMS Daring

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Miner diversions

NOW here's a tale from Chile which doesn't feature miners.

It does, however, feature 200 men and women living in a confined environment, with limited communications with the outside world, and who were at the heart of an international celebration.

And that's about as far as our (admittedly very tenuous) connection between HMS Portland and Chile's trapped miners goes...

Four hundred miles to the south of Copiapó, and with the rescue mission for the miners still in full swing, the frigate sailed into the great harbour of Valparaíso for Chile's bicentennial celebrations.

Twenty-six surface ships and submarines gathered in the great port for a bicentenary fleet review – the highlight of a weekend of celebrations in Valparaíso and the country's nearby capital, Santiago.

Ships from around the world RSVPed 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.

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 Esmeralda.

The salute was taken by the Chilean President, Sebastian Pinera, who was joined by Britain's First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope. It was all witnessed by around one million Chileans lining the Valparaíso sea front.

Choreography on the water was matched by choreography in the sky as the aircraft – jets, piston-engined aircraft, helicopters – of the Fuerza Aérea de Chile flew in formation over the harbour.

"The sail past marked a truly fitting end to the Chilean bicentenary celebrations – Viva Chile!" enthused Portland's CO Cdr Mike Knott.

His deputy marine engineer officer Lt Will Smith added: "Taking part will go down as one of the highlights of my career; the crowds and the atmosphere fully displayed the high regard and pride the Chilean nation has for its Navy."

The review was one of a series of events celebrating Chile's 200th birthday. An enormous fireworks display lit up the harbour (and HMS Portland, whose flight deck provided the ship's company with a 'front row seat'), while an impressive parade was staged in the nearby capital Santiago.

From one South American metropolis to another.

Barely were the celebrations in Chile fading than Portland was steaming north bound for Callao, the port of Peru's capital Lima, and a five-day visit which had a bit of everything: military (discussions with Peruvian counterparts), political (visits by diplomats), social (a reception), historical (a wreath laying), commercial (showcase for defence industries), sporting (a spot of footy).

Waiting on the jetty in Callao for Portland to come alongside was the British Ambassador to Peru, James Dauris.

The diplomat and his young family were treated to a tour of Portland by the ship's doctor Surg Lt Rebecca Fry, while the football side were in action against the Liman Fiteflyers.

The sailors, under the direction of CPO 'Slinger' Wood, were holding the Fiteflyers 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".

The Peruvian visit began in earnest with formal visits by Cdr Knott to the Commander-in-Chief of the Peruvian Navy, the Captain of the Port, and Callao's leaders. He got back to his ship just in time to

host a lunch for a number of Peruvian VIPs and Col Richard Currie, the British Defence Attaché.

That hospitality was followed by yet more as Portland's wardroom invited the captain and officers of the frigate BAP Palacios to enjoy some traditional British fare.

Meanwhile ten members of the ship's company could be found in Callao's children hospital where they handed out gifts to ill youngsters and joined them in a singsong to lift the spirits (of children and sailors alike...).

For Cdr Knott and a guard of honour there were more formalities, this time laying a wreath in memory of Admiral Miguel Grau – a 19th Century Peruvian hero who's worshipped in his native land rather like Nelson is here in the UK.

Back on board Portland, seven British defence firms were setting up stalls and displays on the frigate's flight deck and hangar for a DID – 'Defence Industry Day'.

Around 80 high-ranking officers from all three Peruvian Armed Forces filed aboard the frigate to see the best that British defence firms had to offer...

...and the British space agency used Portland to sign an agreement with the Peruvian space agency (yes, we had to look them up as well; officially the *Comisión Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo Aeroespacial* – National Commission for Aerospace Research and Development) to share information.

Guests were also treated to a dynamic tour which included firefighting and boarding demonstrations.

After such a busy morning a tasty British lunch was cooked up by Portland's chefs.

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.

The final day in South America afforded more than 50 members of Portland's ship's company the chance to look around Peru's naval museum, which was opened exclusively for them. The tourists learned that the founder of the modern Peruvian Navy, Jorge Martin Guise, was a midshipman in the Royal Navy at Trafalgar.

Also learning a little about nautical affairs was MP James Brokenshire, Under Secretary for Crime Reduction.

He was in South America to speak to officials from Peru, Colombia and Venezuela about the global fight against drugs trafficking...

...which was rather timely as Portland was about to conduct a counter-narcotics patrol as she made her way through the Caribbean on the final leg of her seven-month deployment.

Peru has a thriving illegal drugs trade – it vies with Colombia for the unenviable title as the world's leading cocaine producer.

The heads of her Air Force and Army, as well as the Admiral for Pacific Operations, the Minister of International Affairs, the Vice Minister for Defence and Mr Dauris joined the MP and Portland's command team aboard the frigate to discuss future cooperation in combatting 'narcoterrorism' and efforts to reduce the supply of cocaine from Peru to the UK.

After such high-powered discussions, something slightly more relaxing: a spot of traditional Peruvian dancing.

Portland's officers were invited to the Naval Officers' Club in Callao where they were hosted by their Peruvian counterparts... who laid on an elaborate display of traditional dance for their visitors.

And that was Callao. After a week-long counter-narcotics patrol 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.



pictures: la(phot) simmo simpson, frpu east

Testing times for Albion

CRASHING through the waters of the Clyde, this is no ordinary landing craft.

No, this is the Pacscat (pronounced 'packs-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 amphibious flagship; the LCUs may be able to carry a Challenger II battle tank, but it trudges along, if you're lucky, at a top speed of 8kts.

Landing craft really haven't changed much since WW2. It's taken a revolutionary hull design to bring speed to the party: the Partial Air Cushion-Supported CATamaran – a sort of hybrid hovercraft/catamaran.

On paper, the 200ft craft should be able to carry up to five of the Royals' Viking armoured vehicles.

The Pacscat has been in the hands of RM Instow for a few months undergoing trials, but what it needed was a more practical workout.

For that you need one landing platform dock (Albion), some green berets (Young Officers Batch 2009 and Recruit Troop 107 from CTCRM in Lympstone), some beaches (the exercise areas of Western Scotland), and some potential inclement weather (not entirely unheard of in the UK in the autumn...).

And so the prototype joined more conventional landing craft on Exercise Wet Raider in and around Loch Ewe.

Wet Raider, orchestrated from HMS Albion and her impressive operations room, was a mixture of mountain/amphibious training for the aforementioned Royals, plus elements of Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines, the Armoured Support Group and Albion's inherent commando unit, 6 Assault Squadron RM.

The trainee officers and marines from Lympstone were in their final stages of training and this intensive exercise – centred on an amphibious raid – was one of the final hurdles the men would have to overcome before earning that coveted green beret.

Raiding is an important skill for commandos – the ability to insert troops in areas inaccessible to other land forces, attack an objective and then extract safely.

In this instance, the young officers and recruits were up against the local militia – Somali Pirates in Scotland (SPIS) – played (with not a little overacting...) by FPGRM.

Reeling from the credit crunch and tired of local cuisine, the pirates were threatening the UK's nuclear deterrent and other key infrastructure

along Scotland's west coast.

The trainees planned and mounted raids against command nodes, logistics bases and observation posts, culminating in a company-size assault on the final enemy stronghold further inland.

HMS Albion was the staging post and command platform for these operations.

The insertions and extractions were mainly carried out at night and involved using the full range of landing craft and inflatable raiding craft of 6 ASRM.

Upon completion of each objective (the dastardly SPIS were defeated, naturally), the tired and muddy Marines were extracted, cleaned, fed and re-clothed by Albion's ships company, ready for re-tasking – known as Operation Dry Out.

"The efficiency of the ship's team in turning round these wet, tired and exhausted commandos was such that we could mount at least one major insertion per day and maintain this high operational tempo for a prolonged period," said Capt Chris Waite RM, Officer Commanding the Support Troop on Albion.

Among those toiling to help the Royals was LET William Atkinson who is afforded the lofty title of marine engineer officer of a landing craft, "much to the amusement of the Albion's Commander E," he says.

Like Albion's senior engineer he's responsible for the "mechanical well-being" of his steed. "Once we have cleared the stern gate all eyes turn to me in the event of any machinery breakdowns," LET Atkinson points out.

Throughout Wet Raider, the leading hand – and his counterparts on Albion's other landing craft – had to work under considerable pressure to ensure that the boats were ever-ready to meet the strict deadlines set by the amphibious programme. That often meant working hard throughout the night and sometimes simultaneously alongside the covert insertion of the commandos.

All this landing craft activity also kept Albion's ABU busy.

ABU? Amphibious Beach Unit – a small team of commandos whose mission it is to reconnoitre the coastline and beaches to find a suitable landing spot.

"This is nearly always done under the cover of darkness; we can't afford to be compromised or we risk ruining the whole operation," explains Mne Scott 'Scotty' Walker.

Clearly fatigued after a prolonged period of sleep deprivation, he describes last night's 'recce'.

"The weather was against us, it was freezing cold with strong winds. We were being battered by high waves crashing both us and the Zodiacs [small inflatable boats] into the rocks and leaving our kit and us totally soaked as we struggled ashore."

Scotty and his comrades found a landing spot. The beach was fine. The egress – a steep slope – less so.

The ABU conducted its initial recce and eventually found a suitable beach to land the main assault, however leaving the beach would mean a rather large, steep hill to climb.

"Not ideal when you are soaking wet carrying a bergen loaded with kit," says Scotty.

"But it won't be us 'yomping' up the hill to conduct the final assault, it will be the young officers!"

Throughout Wet Raider, the Zodiacs proved ideally suited to getting men and their equipment ashore without being compromised.

"At one point, we landed a Troop only a few hundred metres from the enemy position without being detected," Scotty says proudly, adding: "This really has been the best exercise I have done in a while."

Key to successful operations by the beach units are those LCUs again, this time serving as Forward Operating Bases for the reconnaissance teams and their inflatable boats, providing, not least among their services, hot food and drinks from the (rather small) galley.

"You don't want to get on the wrong side of 30 hungry, tired and cold marines," LET Atkinson laughs nervously.

"They soon appreciate me, though, once the Berko is all fired up."

Now if all this wasn't enough to keep Albion's ship's company busy enough, the assault ship's CO Capt James Morley decided to throw a spot of additional navigational training into the mix by paying an unscheduled visit to Loch Torridon (about 20 miles north of Kyle of Lochalsh).

The loch is a regular (if not necessarily) popular haunt of Type 23s and Type 42s conducting specialist navigational training.

At its narrowest the entrance to the upper loch is about 1,100ft across. And HMS Albion? Well, her beam is 95ft.

So plenty of room to spare then...

Manoeuvring is complicated by the fact that for the final wheel-over into the upper loch, there is only 120ft of safe water either side – and then 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 witness the entrance to the loch – a welcome break from the busy operational tempo of Wet Raider.

Lt Simon Shaw, Albion's Second Navigator was given the task of 'driving' the ship into the loch.

"Normally only frigates or destroyers find themselves in Loch Torridon, not 18,000-ton, 177-metre-long assault ships," he said.

"With no leading lights or any buoys, the navigation into the loch was quite tricky and I had to rely on the traditional methods of sextant, stopwatch and ice-cold nerves."

"As we went through the narrow gap, even from the relatively high Bridge, all I could see was the granite rockface on either side!"

Capt Morley added: "Navigation is a core warfare skill and this was excellent training for my bridge team. It also shows Albion's manoeuvrability and our capacity to operate very close in to the land."

And what of the Pacscat some 1,200 words or so ago?

Well, the trials team, led by Lt Col Simon Guyer RM (Retd), learned a lot from Wet Raider.

"The aim of the trial was to demonstrate the practical utility, the advantages – and limitations – of this novel hull form, as well as proving its ability to operate from an assault ship such as Albion," Lt Col Guyer explains.

"The trials have been extremely successful and the trials team has gained a great deal of knowledge both of what Pacscat can, and can't, do."

And what can the prototype fast landing craft do?

Well it can carry and load/unload a Viking as required. The next step is to conduct similar trials at Instow with a Challenger 2...

So that was Wet Raider, a brief, but eventful few days in the life of an 18,500-ton assault ship.

Says Capt Morley: "As you read this, the Royal Marines young officers and recruits will be polishing their boots at Lympstone in preparation for their passing out parades; the Pacscat team will be analysing their trial results; and Albion will be alongside in her baseport for a short, but well-earned period of rest and maintenance."

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





A FORCE FOR GOOD



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 went down a storm, with trays of hot cakes selling like – you've guessed it – hot cakes. During a brief interlude from shadowing a pirate vessel, and once the Lynx was home and shut down to Alert 15, there was time to host a stand-easy in the hangar.

The women sold over 100 cups of tea and ten trays of cakes and at one stage the queues were going out of the hangar door.

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.

Of particular note, Lt Cdr Rory West, the First Lieutenant, was 'bought' by an enthusiastic consortium from the Marine Engineering Department under a 'no constraints' deal.

As such, he spent his day cleaning bilges and the sewage treatment plant and proved himself a creditable tea-boy, even earning himself the honorary rate of ETM(ME)2 in recognition of his hard work.

Within ten minutes of the stand-easy coming to an end and the ship's company returning to work, the aircraft was relaunched to conduct another sortie.

Overall the Big Brew-Up raised £503 for SSAFA, whilst keeping morale high as Montrose continued her operational deployment.

Back in the UK, the Seamanship Training Element at HMS Collingwood raised £240 selling coffees, cakes, wristbands and a raffle to win a SSAFA bear at Big Brew-Up.

And up in Scotland, Northern Diving Group



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 (pictured 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.

Collingwood walk MOD's angels

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 to the bandstand in the town centre, and set up a soup kitchen for walkers and the general public. The walk took place two days before 'World Homeless Day.' Base Warrant Officer Mark Hannibal said: "The day was a great success and we were pleased to be able to help – we raised about £600."

A FUND-RAISING event organised by MOD Main Building in aid of BLESMA, the British Limbless ex-Servicemen's Association, raised more than £25,000. Funds were raised by sponsorship, donations, raffle prizes (including a Brietling watch) and an auction of lots from foreign holidays to a Formula One helmet signed by Fernando Alonso. The evening was held in Peter Stringfellow's Angels Club in London. The MOD fund-raising team plans a similar event for March 2011.

200 miles for 40 Cdo men

SERVING with the Royal Marines, Nick Davis was keenly affected by the heavy losses 40 Cdo suffered on their recent tour of Afghanistan, so when his leave came up, he decided to do something to help.

Nick's goal was to spend his leave walking 200 miles in five days over a route called The Coventry Way, a 40-mile circular long-distance path around his home city.

Nick, a LET(ME) with I Assault Group at Instow, began day one at six o'clock in the morning outside the Queen's Head in Meriden, wearing boots and carrying 26lbs of kit. Among the things he carried were photos of the 15 casualties from 40 Cdo.

He intended to complete the first day in 12 hours, but it actually took him over 13, before he finished in high spirits and returned home to an ice bath and bed.

Repeating it all on day two was tough, but having his mate Matty at his side kept him going, and the pair pulled each other round the 40-mile route in just over 13 hours, despite severe cramp and blisters.

Nick says: "The remaining three days were a constant battle with my body, exacerbated by lack of sleep due to cramp, joint pain, blisters and the thought of the remaining miles.

"I decided to ditch my boots for my trusty trainers and soldiered on, completing day three in 14 hours, 21 minutes and day four in 14 hours 34 minutes."

He went on: "They told me the final day would be the easiest but in fact it was the worst! Half way round and I'd completed 180



miles, but my knees and left shin had swollen beyond recognition.

"After coming so far I knew I had to finish, so with some ice and strapping, I managed to complete the fifth and last day of my challenge in 15 hours 15 minutes."

Nick approached the finishing line outside the Queen's Head to be met by a cheering crowd of family and friends, including Coventry's Lady Mayoress, who

presented him with some generous donations for Help for Heroes.

Nick said: "I couldn't have done this without the support from a lot of people – and a big thank you to landlady Caroline and her staff at the Queen's Head, who provided me with a hot dinner and liquid refreshment each day on my return!"

To donate, go to www.bmycharity.com/coventryway200



● Caption, left to right: POMA Nobby Hall; Surg Lt Cdr Simon Jaques; Lt Cdr Tim Jones; Surg Cdr Rob Milner; Surg Lt Ruth Boddy and Lt Jack Nicolson

INM medics stretch their legs

WE reported in September on the six stretcher-carrying medics who were aiming to complete the 187-mile journey from the Institute of Naval Medicine, in Gosport, to the National Memorial Arboretum, in Staffordshire, raising money for the Royal British Legion.

The route was the equivalent of seven marathons in seven days, but the six made it, carrying the stretcher for about nine hours a day through all weather conditions.

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 Nobby Hall was the lynchpin 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.bmycharity.com/RNMSCarryOnRememberingStretcherChallenge>

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By bike from Bahrain

THE gym in RFA 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 Faslane.

The 14 men and one woman from the First Mine Counter Measures Squadron (three of whom are pictured above), stationed in Bahrain as the UK's on-call Mine Warfare Battle 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 Faslane to Bahrain – a distance of 8,055 miles – during a 33-day operation. With a team of 15, that worked out at between 15 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



Fun at the Farm

The College Farm, a pub in Wiltshire near Shrivenham Defence Academy, raised nearly £3,000 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 corteges 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 deactivated small arms.

Two small woolen figures (pictured above), knitted by Doreen Skelt, of Shrivenham, proved a great draw on one of the stalls. The Royal Marine with a poorly leg and an RN rating with an injured arm were much admired and were donated as raffle prizes.



● 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 30-hour non-stop 100-mile walk around Hampshire

Don't mention the walk

A NON-STOP 100-mile walk across Hampshire by Naval personnel has raised thousands of pounds for a local cancer charity.

CPO (CS) Dave 'Bevs' Bevington and his team of walkers covered 100 miles in just under 30 hours – raising money for the Harbour Cancer Support Centre in Gosport.

"That was an incredible 29 hours," said Dave. "We started at 6am – someone was smiling on us as the weather was superb that day and the sun was shining."

All but one of the walkers made it safely to the finish line, but the darkest hours – literally and figuratively – were around the market town of Romsey (see picture right).

The relentless walking got the better of team member CPO Phil Ludgrove, who was already suffering with a chest infection, on the long dark drag into Romsey; and to the shock of everyone he passed out.

An ambulance was called, and despite Phil's determination to get back on the walk, he was taken away and treated for dehydration.

During the long walk, spirits were kept high by a number of methods.

Bill Beaney was, according to Dave Bevington, "the master of the one-liner" – despite the fact that the joke might have been heard once or twice before on their training walks.

Logs Leanne Ware amused her audience with 'factoids' that she'd amassed of the places along their path – Dave again: "We were looking for a windmill for 13 miles..."

"We did point out to her that either we were in the wrong place or the fact was wrong."

Leanne's other means of keeping her fellow walkers distracted was less intentional; she was the only walker using an iPod – "and didn't we know it? Her singing was 'interesting'..."

And while an iPod can hold a phenomenal amount of music, it seems that Leanne's principally contained repeated versions of Annie Lennox' *Walking on Broken Glass*.

Which no matter how many times her audience heard Leanne's distinctive rendition, they still failed to recognise the similarities to the Scottish singer's voice. "Leanne is a truly shocking singer," we are told.

Dave's White Ensign also added some challenge, as it made the occasional break for freedom, jumping ship to a bramble bush.

Dave commented: "I would have hated to have walked back into Portsmouth under a broomstick."

"That would have been embarrassing..."

Along the route, the walkers enjoyed the support of the public –



a welcoming crowd cheered them into Petersfield, white van man honked his horn on encountering them on the roadsides, drivers and householders tossed donations into their collecting buckets along the way.

The goal was to raise £6,000, and Dave is confident that they are most of the way there, and is hoping to beat that total.

The inspiration for the walk was PO Sharon-Anne Malcolm-Connell. Sharon-Anne was diagnosed with cancer five years ago, and despite treatment and operations, her condition is now terminal.

Sharon-Anne took part in the Race for Life on Southsea Common this summer, and her determination to fight on inspired the walkers to keep going.

Dave said: "Every step of it was worth it. I'd still be walking now if I thought it would cure Sharon's condition."

Sharon-Anne met the team of walkers at HMS Collingwood, and walked the last seven miles with them back to Portsmouth.

Dave said of the final yards: "I was in bits. It was dead emotional. Even more so when we got back to Victory and there were people clapping us in."

The Naval Base Commander, Cdre Robert Thompson, and other officers, along with friends and family were waiting at HMS Victory to welcome the team home.

The team of walkers – CPO Bevington, CPO (CS) Dave Pride, LLogs Baz Paterson, CPO (CS) Phil Ludgrove, Sgt Shaun Rowcroft, PO (CS) Anthony 'Scouse' Kenny, Bill Beaney (of BAE Systems), Logs (CS) Leanne Ware – were assisted by MA Leanne Sandford, Logs Charlie Boyce and LLogs Mark Robbie in the support vehicle.

Show your support online at www.justgiving.com/marchagaincancer.



● Rangers FC cheerleaders lend their support to Scott and Travis

RMs shall go to the ball

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.



Deeps seek peaks

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

Lt Damien Ralls, WO2 Dave Wynne, and CPOET Craig Richardson were joined by POET Adam Gooding as driver (pictured together above) to raise money for the Donna Louise Children's Hospice Trust, which provides respite care for children and support for their families.

The unpredictability of the weather was a challenge for the team, who started out from the base of Ben Nevis at 5pm 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 Scafell offered a chance to grab some shut-eye before starting up the next peak at 2.30am, and running the gauntlet of grumpy cows in 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."

Liverpool carols

A MARITIME Carol Service will be held in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral on Thursday December 2 in aid of the RNRMC and to celebrate the International Year of the Sea.

The service will feature the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Scotland and Canon Roger Royle, of BBC fame, will narrate.

Tickets are available from Mrs Pamela Brown on 0151 677 8508, email p.brown387@ntlworld.com or write to Mrs P Brown, 35, Winston Drive, Noctorum, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH43 9RU.

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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 out

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 front-line 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

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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, be it fishermen hugging the coasts or colossal container ships plying between Asia and Europe.

Prowling along 'Pirate Alley' are warships of numerous navies, protecting 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 the ship's company – and 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 wallowing in the Gulf by the South Korean destroyer Wang Geon, which passed on the position to the Winston S Churchill (WSC), which was operating in the vicinity.

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



● Lt Brian Drewett RN, navigating officer of the USS Winston S Churchill

"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 75 Ethiopians."

The Turkish admiral commanding CTF 151, Rear Admiral Sinan Ertugrul, directed the American ship 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 sea 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, throwing 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 whilst serving on single-role minehunters in Scotland.

"I watched, in what seemed like slow motion, as the passengers all seemed to lurch towards one side, coupled with the helmsman of the skiff turning to port, away from the RIB, which meant the starboard side heeled over towards the water.

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

"I saw the crew start to jump from the boat – 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 brought out this possibility – that is why we had both RIBs in the water.

"I began by arranging for flotation 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



● American sailors pluck refugees and the skiff's crew from the water

Pictures: US Navy

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.

"Despite the valiant efforts of both RIBs, it became apparent, that some of those that had entered the water had died," said Lt Drewett.

"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.

"Miraculously, 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.

"Those 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 ifs', but, what if the coalition 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 compatriot – 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."

"Being on a warship of this size and magnitude is a real privilege.

"The chance to live and work with the US Navy is truly a great experience and I would highly recommend it to anyone."

Lt Drewett's next post is a bigger job on a smaller ship – he will take command of University RN Unit patrol boat HMS Explorer, providing training opportunities for students of Hull, Sheffield and Leeds universities.



● The overloaded skiff shortly before it capsized



● Medical staff on the USS Winston S Churchill attend to survivors from the capsized skiff

What is "Haven For Heroes?"

To demonstrate our support for British Personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and to thank them for their commitment and bravery the VSC offers substantial discounts to those returning on R&R or post operational tour leave from those theatres. Below the "Haven for Heroes" rates are shown against our standard price for a Memorial Wing Room.



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Ordnance

survey



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 spume?

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 'turning 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 guarded and red flags flutter during exercises – and it provides virtually everything an attacking force could need to go through its paces.

The centre is particularly busy during Joint Warrior 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 Faraid Head peninsula north of Durness village.

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

One group was British – 148 (Meiktila) Cdo Forward Observation Battery Royal Artillery, to give them their full name – although 'fire support team' gives a slightly broader hint as to their business.

These are the men who draw down accurate attacks, be it from warships (Naval Gunfire Support or 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, the 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO), normally based in San Diego, California, but apparently equally happy to ply their trade in Durness, Scotland.

The life of a 'spotter' is definitely at the 'Action Man' end of the scale.

Commando and parachute-trained, personnel can expect to be delivered to wherever they are needed through a variety of

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

means, including parachuting straight into the water.

It's a lifestyle that so seduced Steve Hoyland that he left the Navy to pursue it.

Sgt Hoyland is one of two men helping range control officer Lt Col Tim Wood, the Royal Artillery Joint Fires staff officer who is based at Navy Command HQ at Whale Island, Sgt Hoyland's colleague being Bdr Matt Corson.

"I was in the Navy for ten years and left as a Leading Seaman Radio Operator," said Steve.

"I changed over because for five years I was with 148 – I went to the Falklands as a spotter ashore.

"I liked throwing myself out of planes, but I would have stayed at sea with the Navy, with no guarantee of getting back with 148, so I joined the Army instead."

Steve was in the thick of the action in the Falklands, including spotting for the raid on Fox Bay by HMS Plymouth and ending up in an observation post on Beagle Ridge overlooking Stanley as British troops moved in for the kill.

But now his career is going full circle, and as *Navy News* went to press he was due to rejoin the Senior Service, along with Matt – mention of which brings a sad shake of the head from the bombardier.

But it's not a problem for the soon-to-be CPO Hoyland, whose son Daniel is a killick at Northwood but who bumped into his dad a couple of times (in Bahrain and Gibraltar) while he was serving in HMS Monmouth.

And it is easy to see why the NCO is attracted to the life, and why swapping back to extend his career as part of the NGS Training and Advisory Team was a no-brainer.

For one thing, it is not simply about long stints watching ships lob shells on to a Scottish headland.

They have a role to play in the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) serials, on Principal Warfare Officer (PWO) courses and in teaching specialist NGS communicators.

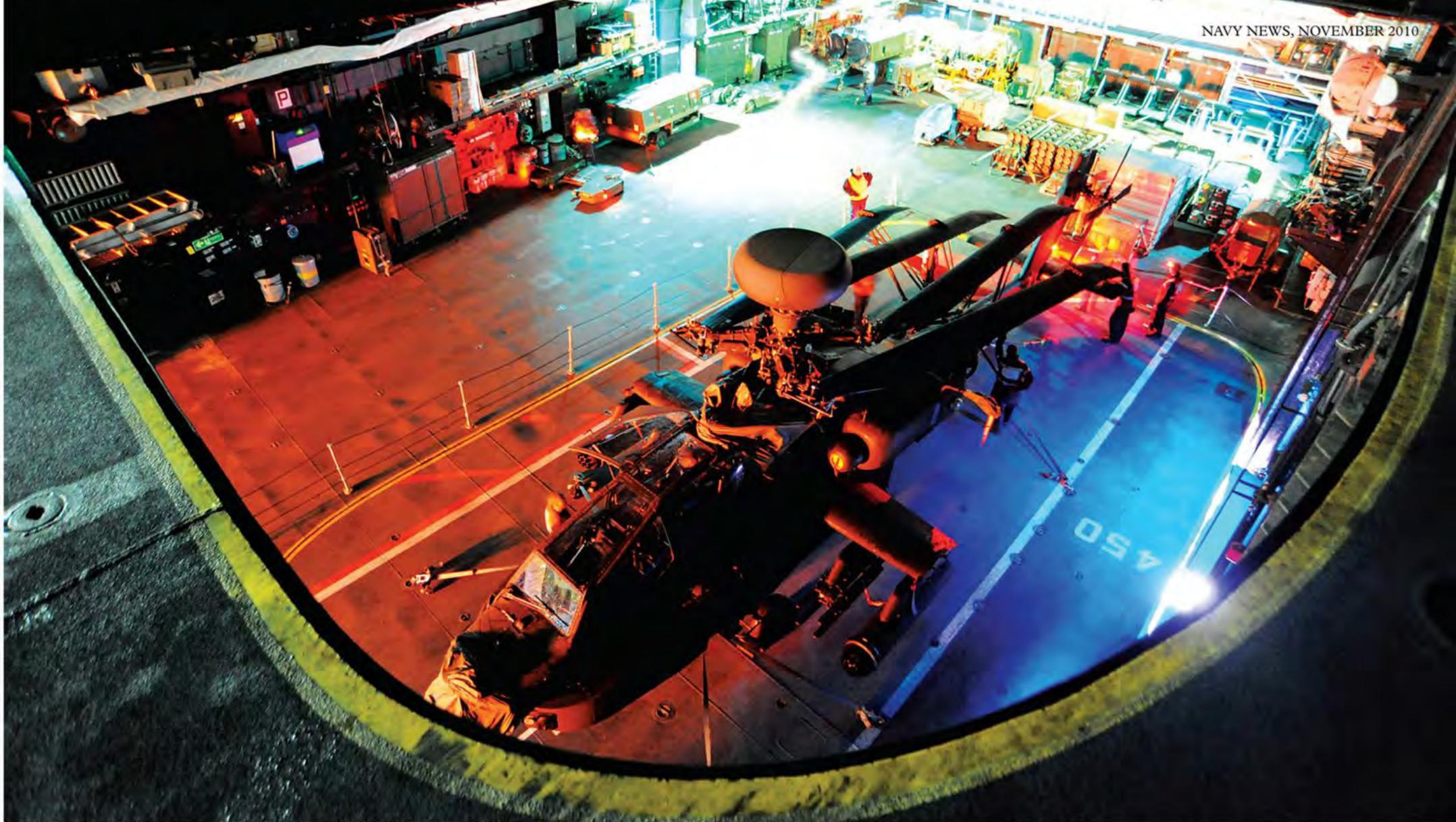
They also back-fill posts at 148 Bty when the unit deploys on exercise or in theatre.

And, as it happens, both 148 Bty and the ANGLICO are earmarked for a return to Afghanistan in the next few months, reinforcing the value they get from working on the range in such close proximity, despite the fact that Cape Wrath does not in the slightest resemble Helmand.

● This page (from top left), the view from the range control building as a shower passes; Apaches lift off from HMS Ark Royal; Sgt Steve Hoyland at Faraid 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 Bainbridge strike Na Glas Leacan island; a Swedish Gripen at RAF Lossiemouth

Pictures: PO(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 lapsed 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 (NGS 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 NCOs, and are proud of the strong links 148 Bty has with the nearby village of Durness.

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 artichoke which transforms into a mobile cinema, in Durness 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 Hoyland).

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, she too flings shells ashore, while spotters work hard to slot in dry runs by Swedish Air Force Gripen aircraft operating out of Lossiemouth and shepherd 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 seconds or so) to prove the point.

After dusk HMS Monmouth takes her turn some ten miles out, her rounds tracing red arcs through the sky as she uses starshells to light the target area – and range staff 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 aircraft controllers are also using Joint Warrior to train for a forthcoming Afghanistan deployment, although they fared better than their colleagues in April, whose tents 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 the 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 be used 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 backstop 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 Faraid Head while the sole Apache – its companion had gone unserviceable just before lift-off from the Ark – was being shepherded round Holding Area 'Maggie' under the gaze of weapons training team SSgts John Cocks and Dee Hague, of Wattisham Station, the Army Air Corps Apache base.

And members of the four-strong

Defence Estates civilian warden team, who look after the ranges all year round, monitor the radar screen, flagging up vessels which look likely to stray into critical areas (warnings of times and locations of firings 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 radios on a Scottish establishment to call in fire from a Danish ship using American spotters.

Sheep graze peacefully as military hardware spins, shoots 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 Protected Bird Areas, as well as some rare (and untouched) sites of archaeological importance.

Joint Warrior picture special – pages 24-25

● This page (from top): An Apache on HMS Ark Royal's flight deck lift; an Apache takes off from the carrier, two Apaches during Joint Warrior; USS Bainbridge on the gun line off Cape Wrath; an Apache on the Ark's flight deck



Belfast masts unveiled

THE installation of two replacement masts on HMS Belfast has been completed two weeks ahead of schedule, and the new kit has been officially unveiled by the Duke of Edinburgh.

The cruiser's fore mast and main mast, dating from a refit in 1957, had become dangerously corroded, and new 20m structures were needed.

The replacements were built at the Severnaya Verf shipyard in St Petersburg, and were a gift from the Russian government and marine industry in recognition of Belfast's role in protecting convoys to Russia during World War 2.

The project was overseen by UK engineering company Houlder, who surveyed the ship and produced a plan for the removal of the old equipment and installation of the new which enabled the ship to remain open to visitors.

At the unveiling ceremony Prince Philip unveiled a bronze memorial plaque, then met veterans of the Arctic Convoys – described by Winston Churchill as “the worst journey in the world.”

The mast project has been dedicated to the Allied and Russian seamen who served in the campaign to keep supplies getting to the Eastern Front, and HMS Belfast is one of the few surviving ships which sailed on the convoys.

Merchantmen and warships made the long journey to and from Archangelsk and Murmansk in temperatures as low as minus 30°C, carrying four million tons of supplies, including more than 5,000 tanks, 7,000 aircraft, nearly 5,000 anti-tank guns and 743 million projectiles for use by the Soviets.

A hundred Allied merchant ships were lost, totalling 604,837 tons – 87 were lost in convoy, the remainder sailing independently or were in Russian ports.

The shipping loss rate of 7.5 per cent made the Arctic Convoy route the most dangerous of World War 2.

In human terms, 1,944 Royal Navy sailors and 829 civilian mariners died in the icy waters.



● Reservists from HMS Cambria visit Dragon in build on the Clyde

Welsh reservists confront a Dragon

NAVAL reservists from HMS Cambria in Wales travelled north to meet a dragon.

Welsh folklore is littered with legends of dragons, but this one is very real – one of the fleet of Type 45 destroyers built by BAE Systems on the Clyde which will form the backbone of the British air defence capability for decades to come.

The party, from Barry, headed for Scotland to visit the ship as she nears completion and prepares to be accepted into the fleet.

Dragon is the fourth of a class of six ships which is rated as amongst the most powerful and advanced air defence warships in the world.

Cdr Simon Cottam, Commanding Officer of HMS Cambria, who led the trip, said: “This was a hugely enjoyable visit for those members of the ship's company lucky enough to attend this oversubscribed trip.

“The ship is hugely impressive in both scale and power, and she is going to be a fantastic addition to the Royal Navy's surface fleet.

“For us, she also offers a great opportunity for training onboard an active warship, which benefits reservists and regulars alike.

“I know a lot of people are already looking in their diary for a chance to spend time onboard her.”

The trip is just one aspect of a varied programme in which the Welsh reservists participate.

With force protection now a key role for the RNR, Cambria

reservists make regular trips to the MOD range at Rogiet Moor, near the Severn Crossing – a bleak, windswept site, far removed from the warmer climate reservists are often deployed to, but it allows skills to be maintained between mobilisations.

Visits by two Type 23 frigates – HM ships Richmond and Montrose – plus survey ship HMS Scott to South Wales over the summer allowed Cambrians to undertake operational sea training; including force protection, fire-fighting, damage control training and counter-piracy techniques.

Summer Divisions were held outside the National Assembly building in Cardiff, when the unit was inspected by the First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones, Cdre Steel (Commander Maritime Reserve)

and Cdre Miller (Naval Regional Commander).

The unit was supported by Royal Marines Reserves from Bristol, the Wales University Royal Navy Unit (URNU), Cardiff Sea Cadets, members of the Scott and Cambria Association and the Royal Marines Band Lymington.

In high summer 13 Cambrians hiked 55 miles along the Taff Trail from Brecon to Cardiff in a team-building exercise which also raised thousands of pounds for charity, while a more sombre visit was made to the village of Gavrelle, in northern France, liberated in April 1917 by the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division, which included volunteer reservists from South Wales – a link HMS Cambria has nurtured for the past two decades.

Cavalier wins Lottery award

WORLD War 2 destroyer HMS Cavalier has won the ‘Best Education Project’ in this year's National Lottery Awards.

The awards highlight the country's favourite Lottery-funded projects while also celebrating the difference such projects make to people and places across the UK.

The veteran warship, restored and open to the public at Chatham Historic Dockyard, is also part of the National Destroyer Memorial, which commemorates the 143 British destroyers and 11,000 sailors lost at sea during World War 2.

Joanne Creighton, director of learning and visitor programmes, said: “It is a great honour to receive this National Lottery

THE HISTORIC DOCKYARD CHATHAM

Award on behalf of all at the Historic Dockyard Chatham.

“The award is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of the education team in the delivery of innovative schools programmes, and the shipkeepers and volunteers for all they have done in restoring Cavalier.”

The ship features in a range of educational programmes with a strong focus on students who under-achieve.

Programmes such as *Windows into War* and *Living Literacy* for Key Stage 2, *Weapons of the Gold War* for KS 4 and *World War Two* for KS 3 and 4, include sessions on board and/or visits to Cavalier to lend an air of authenticity and provide a hands-on experience.

The latest addition is *Crash Out on Cavalier* – an overnight experience for youth groups.

Following extensive restoration to the aft of the ship, up to 30 youngsters and six accompanying adults can stay on board, sleeping in bunks in two of the ship's original mess decks.

A specially-designed cabin for disabled guests is also available.

The write stuff

KINGSTON University Press is running a writing competition to celebrate the 125th anniversary of SSAFA Forces Help.

The project arose out of a conviction that it is important to portray the experience of Servicemen and women in creative and engaging ways.

Anyone over 18 who has been touched by service may enter – a maximum of 2,500 words of prose or 40 lines of poetry – and there is a top prize of £500, with an entry fee of £3. The closing date is December 17.

For details see <http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/kup/competition/>

Remembrance in focus

A NEW exhibition at the Royal Marines Museum looks into the stories behind very personal acts of remembrance.

Why Stay Silent? reflects the fact that people remember loved ones or relatives in different ways, from the mother of a Royal killed in Afghanistan who wears his coat on cold days to the Marines who, in 1939, raised funds for a memorial to an officer who jumped

overboard to save a comrade but was never seen again.

Remembrance did not begin with World War 1, and the exhibition includes the stories of others who pre-date the Great War.

The exhibition will run at the museum, located on the seafront at Eastney in Portsmouth, until October 2 2011.

www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk

Love Southsea and raise funds

ROYAL Navy people are generally good organisers, and pretty versatile too, as a rule.

But even matelots find it difficult to be in two places at once, however good the cause.

So while Cdr Rex Cox, Commanding Officer of HMS Manchester, is clearing the Caribbean of drugs smugglers (see page 2), his wife has been taking a leaf out of his book and organising a raft of charity events back in Portsmouth.

Fergie Cox said the successful Fish Ball on HMS Severn, Cdr Cox's last command, three years ago was typical of her husband's thorough administrative skills.

“He even organised most of our wedding, in St Ann's Church in the Dockyard,” said Fergie.

“I just had to pitch up in a frock...”

But now Fergie has teamed up with friend Louise Whitmore to start a company called Love Southsea – an idea initially dreamed up by Louise's father, who is ex-Navy.

Love Southsea aims to “arrange fun events with a charitable twist”, said Fergie, and four such events have already been organised, all with strong Naval links.

A children's Hallowe'en party sets the programme in train, with the Royal Maritime Club, formerly the Home Club, in Queen Street hosting the event on October 31.

A Christmas market is to be staged on Saturday November 20 at the newly-refurbished Pyramids Centre, whose co-owner Simon Jervis is also ex-Navy.

A Christmas Ball will be held at Boathouse 7 in the Dockyard on Friday December 3, while it is back to the Royal Maritime Club for a children's Christmas party on Sunday December 19.

All four events are in support of Help for Heroes and the Falklands Veterans Foundation.

For more information on times and tickets, see www.lovesouthsea.co.uk or see the associated Facebook site.

Executed mariner is featured

A WORLD War 1 merchant marine captain trapped in a deadly catch 22 situation is being remembered in a new exhibition at Imperial War Museum North.

North Sea ferry captain Charles Fryatt had successfully averted a U-boat attack in early March 1915, but at the end of the same month U-33 stopped his ship, the SS Brussels, and prepared to launch a torpedo attack.

In line with Government instructions Fryatt set a course to ram the submarine, which was forced to crash dive – had he failed to take action he could have been liable for prosecution by his own government.

Just over a year later, in June 1916, the Brussels was ambushed by destroyers and Fryatt captured.

Once his identity was confirmed by the gold watch given to him by the Admiralty after the U-33 incident, Fryatt was immediately put on trial by the Germans as a *franc-tireur* or guerrilla and executed by firing squad.

The execution brought widespread condemnation, from the UK, the United States and across Europe, many describing the act as simply murder.

Following the war, his body was exhumed and given a burial with full ceremonial honours in the UK, and amongst other accolades was the naming of a 3,400m mountain in Canada (a nearby peak is named after his ferry) while his widow and children were granted enhanced pensions and other forms of assistance.

The free In the Spotlight exhibition runs until September 2011 – see www.iwm.org.uk/north for details.



● Former Manly-type tender Pride of Bristol

Manly pursuits

ROYAL Naval Reservists in the West Country are getting their first taste of the sea aboard a former Manly-class vessel.

The Pride of Bristol started life as HMS Messina, a 24-metre Fleet tender which had at one time been used to train Royal Marines officers in coastal navigation.

She is now owned and operated by the Bristol Channel Group of the old Royal Naval Auxiliary Service (RNXS), whose volunteers formed a group on the demise of the service in 1994 and which now exists as the Old Comrades Association of the RNXS.

They felt their years of service – not only in the RNXS but also the RN, the Merchant Navy and the RFA – gained at sea could be put to use for the good of the local community, so in 1994 they formed a charitable organisation the Pride of Bristol Trust.

The Trust bought Messina, and she is now used to provide free or heavily-subsidised youth training in maritime aspects of safety at sea, first aid, fire fighting, ship/boat

handling, husbandry and the like.

Under-privileged and special needs groups are primarily catered for, with school and cadet forces following on.

RNR officers soon saw the benefits of having a purpose-built vessel readily available, and frequently arrange for new-entry recruits to take part in weekend exercises in one of the more ‘interesting’ sections of British coastal waters, the Bristol Channel.

As the Trust is a charity, hiring the vessel for diving, fishing, clay-pigeon shooting and other voyages raises funds.

Social events also augment funds, and a number of naval groups, the Ganges Association, Ark Royal Association and others, have organised functions on board.

Further information on training and charter can be obtained from Stan Hammond, PBT, 3rd Floor, 65 Coronation Road, Bristol, BS3 1AS, tel 0117 9637869, e-mail scr.hammond@hotmail.co.uk or see the trust's website at www.prideofbristoltrust.co.uk

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INTEROPERABILITY.

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

Less benign? 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 bullets 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 personnel transfer.

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

And scores of reservists are brought in to augment the JTEPS (Joint Tactical Exercise Planning Staff) staff 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 pirates, 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 Atalanta, 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 higher 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 2007.

"This was just 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, France, Germany, Spain, Turkey and New Zealand as well as contingents from the Army and RAF.

Capt Richard Allen, Director JTEPS, said: "This has been the most complex Joint Warrior in many years."

The multinational force comprised 22 units from ten

different countries, including two of NATO's standing forces, Standing Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) and Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (SNMCMG1).

Capt Paul Chivers, Maritime Battle Staff Chief of Staff, said: "This demonstrated our ability to command multiple subordinate task groups at sea, from sea, in a realistic environment.

"The Joint Warrior format has enabled us to practise our battle rhythm and validate the NATO staffs while preparing us for our own validation later in the year."

The battle staff will deploy later this month to the NATO Joint Warfare Centre in Ulsnes, Norway, to participate in Exercise Steadfast Juno 10, a large-scale war game commanded by the Joint Force HQ Naples.

But let's stick to the cooler climes of Joint Warrior.

Some 15 British ships took part in various stages of the exercise, led by flagship Ark Royal.

HM ships York and Monmouth provided escort and protection duties, with both peeling off to crash away at the rock of Cape Wrath with their 4.5in guns (see pages 20-21).

And as well as the warry stuff there was a chance to practise other maritime skills, such as replenishing at sea.

York took that one step further by undertaking the transfer of a Sea Dart missile while at sea – those in the know think the last time that happened was almost 20 years ago.

This particular RAS took place with one-stop supply ship RFA Fort George in the Minches between the mainland and the Outer Hebrides early one morning.

And just to keep everyone on their toes, Fort George was refuelling the German frigate FGS Bremen at the same time.

But you would expect the sailors of York – the Fastest 42 – to be up to scratch in such a situation; the ship's tight turn-around programme has seen her conducting weapons training in the South Coast Exercise Areas in readiness for a Sea Dart High Seas Firing, as well as slotting into Joint Warrior.

She is in the hands of Flag Officer Sea Training next, followed by pre-deployment maintenance and Christmas leave.

So who else did the Navy send

to the big show?

The other big hull was RFA Largs Bay, while T-boats Triumph and Turbulent harried the flotilla, with the help of Norwegian submarine HNoMS Ula.

The minehunting element consisted of HM ships Shoreham, Walney, Brocklesby, Cattistock, Ledbury and Penzance, while HMS Echo and Archer-class HMS Biter completed the picture.

Indeed, Echo was a good example of the way units are stretched beyond their normal role – on this exercise, in "challenging" conditions, the survey ship not only provided her usual stream of useful data for the task group, but also provided a launch platform for Royal Marines beach landings and air protection for Largs Bay.

For the record, the other ships taking part were: HS Themistocles (Greece), ITS Aviere (Italy), HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën and Zierikzee (Netherlands), TCG Barbaros (Turkey), US ships Bainbridge, Stout and Nitze, and USNS Leroy Grumman (United States), HDMS Absalon (Denmark), ORPs Kontradmiral X Czernicki and Mewa (Poland), FGS Rottweil (Germany), BNS Crocus (Belgium), HNoMS Hinnøy (Norway) and EML Admiral Cowan (Estonia).

Air power came in the form of British Tornados, Hawks, Merlins, Lynx, Apaches, AWACs Sentry and Pumas, while the Swedes, Germans, Norwegians, Canadians and Americans chipped in with Gripen, F15s, Orions and Auroras.

The complex scenario upon which Joint Warrior is based involves a territorial dispute between the two main protagonists, Caledonia and Dragonia, with the Joint Warrior task group deployed to the fictional Wallian Archipelago to defuse tensions and bring stability.

Virtually every military skill could be found at some point, including electronic warfare, close air support, joint firing, reconnaissance and surveillance.

But once again it is not just the combatants who benefit from this sprawling, complicated two-week exercise.

Logisticians are part of the scenario, but also need to ensure ships are supplied, personnel transferred and other assets placed where they are needed, when they are needed – teams deploy to

● Clockwise from top left: HDMS Absalon arrives on the Clyde; HMS York transfers a Sea Dart missile from RFA Fort George; HMS Ark Royal replenishes at sea with RFA Fort George; HNoMS Ula leaves Faslane for the exercise; Ark Royal's 20mm gun is used to take on an attacking Hawk aircraft; Ark Royal alongside at Faslane; Ark Royal replenishes from Fort George; Ark Royal off the coast of Scotland during Joint Warrior; USS Bainbridge arrives on the Clyde

Pictures: PO(Phot) Ray Jones and LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd (Ark Royal); LA(Phot) AJ MacLeod (Clyde Naval Base); LS(EW) 'Joe' Fraser (HMS York)





rfect

out-stations (aka 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 Lossiemouth, Kinloss, Marham, Waddington, Lakenheath, and Leeming.





● Portsmouth Naval Gliding Centre's new Duo Discus aircraft. Pictures: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby

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 the 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.

Two one-week courses are run through spring and summer for pre-solo and post-solo pilots, and gliding qualifies as an adventurous training activity.

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.pngc.co.uk

● **Yeovilton:** Call Nick Weaver on 07552 121255 or e-mail nick_weaver@hotmail.com or Derek Marpole on 01935 863055 or 07966 237257, or David Green on 01935 850837 or 07843 661642

● **Culdrose:** Telephone Tony Richards on 01326 221670 or 0780 8348450, or e-mail tony@trevonehouse.fsnet.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.



● Part of the Portsmouth Naval Gliding Centre's fleet on the ground at Lee-on-the-Solent

New Year's Eve rescuers honoured

FOUR naval airmen who were 'pushed to the limit' saving four fishermen have been singled out for their bravery.

The last day of 2009 had been quiet for the crew of Rescue 193 – pilots Lt Cdrs Martin Shepherd and Steven Hopkins, observer Lt Alex Stevenson and aircrewman PO 'Cags' Lacy – until, with the sun about to slip below the horizon, their Sea King was scrambled from Culdrose to collect a heart attack victim from Porthowan.

Instead, however, the 771 NAS aircraft was dispatched to the Western Approaches when Falmouth Coastguard picked up a distress call from a fishing vessel, 50 miles south-west of the Scillies.

The four crew of the Trevesa were about to abandon ship after fire ravaged the trawler. The boat had lost power and its life raft was no use. The fishermen huddled on the stern and waited for the Sea King to come.

The helicopter arrived on the scene in darkness, with wind upwards of 40kts, a sea state bordering on six, and driving rain.

There was no radio communication with the fishing vessel, which was cloaked in darkness thanks to the power failure.

With wires, masts and other obstacles – not least the fire still burning – there was just a few safe feet at the stern from which to evacuate the fishermen.

PO Lacy was lowered on to the pitching and wallowing deck of the Trevesa, but as he tried to climb over the guardrail the boat pitched and he was thrown 20ft into the Atlantic.

Still attached to the wire, he was winched back into the Sea King, then made a second attempt to board the Trevesa.

This time he succeeded and the senior rating was able to get all four fishermen off the stricken craft by hi-line transfer.

The rescue lasted 50 minutes in conditions described by PO Lacy as "appalling" and by the fishermen as "a screaming gale".

The rescue earned all four fliers the Edward and Maisie Lewis Award for Skill and Gallantry from the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society; they were, says their citation, "pushed to the limit" last New Year's Eve.

It continues: "Determined professionalism, high order teamwork and bravery enabled the crew of Rescue 193 to transition from a complex airborne medical resuscitation, to successfully executing a perilous winch transfer, thereby saving the lives of four men from Trevesa in treacherous conditions."

PO Lacy, who's subsequently left the Service, has also been awarded with the Queen's Gallantry Medal for his bravery that day.



Diamond jubilation

FROM the shape they've formed on the sprawling flight deck, it's pretty obvious that this is the ship's company of HMS Diamond (watched by a few bemused matelots on HMS Ark Royal).

They're raising their caps to celebrate the new destroyer being formally handed over to the Royal Navy – hence the White Ensign rather than the Blue flying.

It, fittingly, fell to the RN's Head of Destroyers, Cdre Steve Brunton, to formally accept Diamond – the third of the £1bn Type 45s to be handed over.

Diamond arrived in Portsmouth in late September, and found the naval base devoid of Type 45s as both her older sisters, Daring and Dauntless, were away on trials, the former with the Americans off the Eastern Seaboard of the USA, the latter successfully firing Sea Viper missiles off Scotland.

As well as the raft of inspections by the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training, being the new ship in town, Diamond's guest book is fast filling up.

Her passageways, mess decks, as well as the rooms and compartments which are home to her 'business end' have already echoed with the sound of voices from Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, France, Belgium, Germany, and the UAE – each one keen to see what all the fuss is about when it comes to Type 45.

Not that this never-ending procession of VIPs can detract from the core business of preparing Diamond for front-line duties; D34 has an 'in service' date of July 2011. She also has quite a substantial number of sailors who've never been to sea before...

"It's a steep learning curve for each and every one of us – not a day has gone by without an inspection of some sort, but you can feel the enthusiasm on board, with everyone eager to get to sea and really start transforming Diamond into a front-line warship," says her CO Cdr Ian Clarke (pictured at the front of his ship's company by LA(Phot) Kyle Hellen).

"Diamond performed magnificently during its early sea trials. It is an enormous responsibility to command a ship with Diamond's cutting edge."

After a few weeks alongside in Portsmouth, Diamond has now resumed her demanding trials programme.

FOSTies, BOSTie and Westie

WHAT is it with birds stowing away on Her Majesty's Ships this month?

We've had a scops owl cadging a lift aboard HMS Montrose in the Indian Ocean...

...and now a slightly less exotic avian... in a slightly less exotic location...

Enter 'BOSTie the Budgie', a bright yellow budgerigar who dropped in on HMS Westminster off Plymouth as the frigate was 'enjoying' the travails of Basic Operational Sea Training (or BOST – hence the bird's name).

The ship was in the throes of some punishing serials in the Plymouth Exercise Area when Westminster'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 FlyEx" after the ordeal of flying all the way out to the ship.

So the stowaway was treated to bread, nuts 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.



● BOSTie takes a break on LS Mark Priestman's cap when the excitement on Westminster's bridge grows too much for him

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 Bostie," 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 her final inspection from

the FOSTies as Navy News went 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 frigate 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."



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● HMS Sirius

Bright star of the fleet

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

She was HMS Sirius. I served in Sirius, the 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, Sirius (two last ships) were adopted by Portsmouth.

Her motto was the same as Portsmouth's, as was her badge.

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 your Say*) about the Polish submarine mystery, the incident could refer to the sinking of Polish submarine ORP Jastrzab.

The Jastrzab was a Holland-class submarine, originally built for service in the US Navy, but in Polish service from 1941-42, when she was lost to friendly fire.

During the passage of convoy PQ15 to Murmansk, on May 2 1942 she was mistakenly engaged by the (Norwegian) destroyer HNoMS St Albans and the minesweeper HMS Seagull.

She was attacked with depth charges and made to surface, damaged by further fire and had

to be scuttled.

The incident is a matter of some controversy. Sources state that she was escorting the convoy, others that she was covering the convoy's passage by patrolling the Norwegian coast against sorties by German capital ships, one of five submarines to do so.

These sources state that the Jastrzab was out of position by some 200 nautical miles and was fired upon despite showing yellow recognition smoke candles and flags, however, other sources do not confirm this.

Finally, the commanders of St Albans and Seagull were found guilty at a court martial over the incident.

— **Andrew Bates**, Gateshead

Onward, Christian soldiers

I HAD no idea that the Church Army had any units in Cyprus, but thank you for the information on page 24 (October) that 'B Coy of 2 Royal Anglicans' are out there...

On a more serious note, why, when senior naval officers, or indeed senior rates, retire after many years' service, doesn't *Navy News* publish a valedictory biography of that person?

It seems odd that a 1SL or 2SL, for instance, can retire with hardly any acknowledgement of their departure and previous service

history. Otherwise we have to wait until their obituary eventually appears in the *Daily Telegraph*.

Chris Bond, Poole Dorset

Whoops, bit of a slip there, but rumour goes 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 valedictions, we don't really have a policy, but I suppose we prefer to bow to the rising sun

— **Man Ed**

Hankies out for Tom

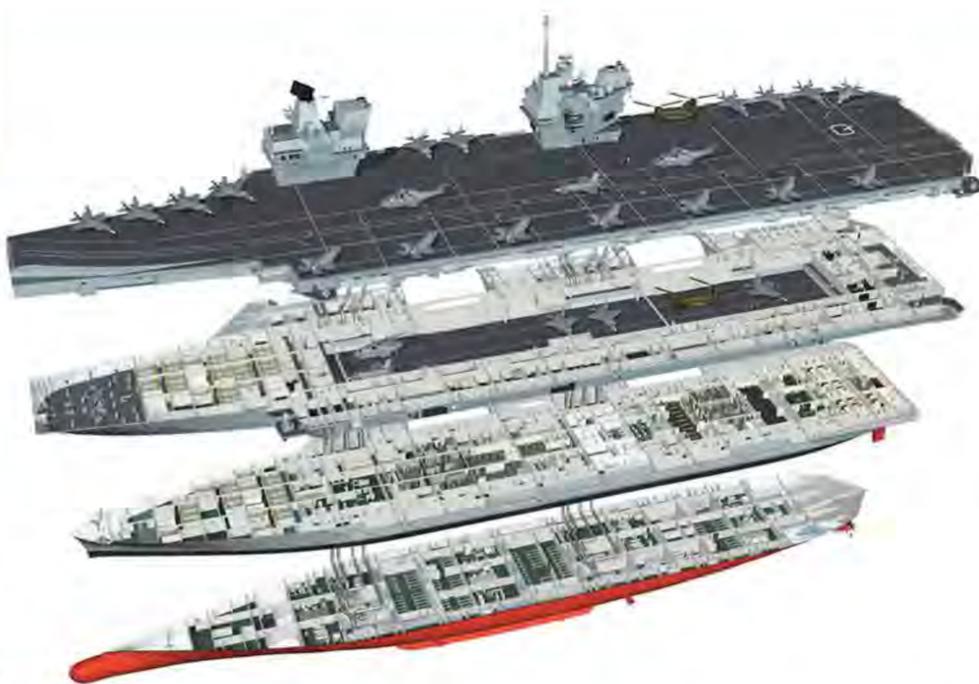
THE LETTER (October) about the *Fantasy on British Sea Songs* at the Last Night of the Proms prompts me to say that it was played at the Proms this year, not at the last night, but at a performance of a 1905 concert a week before the last night.

Luckily the politically correct camp have not deleted Chatham

Division Bugle call!

Incidentally, the aforementioned concert was televised and I noticed that the promenaders have pinched the RM Band Service move of passing a line of handkerchiefs amongst them during the playing of *Tom Bowling!*

— **E G Cole**, Whitstable, Kent



● The cutaway poster of the Queen Elizabeth-class carrier by Ross Watton that appeared in *Navy News* this summer; post SDSR there are some changes to come

Mystery of the missing mess

PERUSING the excellent cutaway of the new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth (July) I cannot find the Warrant Officers' and Senior Ratings' Mess.

Is this a deliberate mistake, or do you know something we do not?

As I was the mess president of the same mess on board Hermes (1980-82) I know we are talking about a large area.

But where is it? With squadrons on board we had around 150 mess members and it was the biggest mess afloat, not counting the POs' mess forward which had about 180 members.

I can see the senior ratings' dining hall, but where is the mess itself? Please put me out of my misery.

— **Paul Fitzgerald**, ex WOMEM(L) Paignton, Devon

Points of note

A QUESTION arose amongst a group of us ex-RNs regarding official numbers. When I joined in 1966 my no. was PO97...etc.

However in the 1970s this was changed to DO97...S. What no-one can remember is what the suffix letter stood for, or indicated?

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'Brian* (page 19, October) you state that Patrick O'Brian was Irish. In fact he was English, born in Chalfont St Giles, Bucks.

— **W A Vandersteen**, Winchester

Cdr Owen McDermott, QEC Mission Systems (and *Navy News*'s honorary cutaway officer) said:

"Thank for you for your comments and question about the cutaway of the Queen Elizabeth Class; we are delighted with the result and the amount of interest it has generated.

"Given the size of these amazing ships we were forced to limit the number of decks we could show on the cutaway.

"The Warrant Officers' and Chiefs' Mess is just aft of midships and covers most of the port side of 6 deck.

"The Petty Officers' Mess is of almost, but not quite the same size (rank still has its privileges after all) and is connected by a very large folding partition that will allow the two messes to be opened up to create a suitably impressive social venue covering

a whole ship's section and most of the width of the ship on 6 deck.

"On current planning QEC's core ship's company of 682 will have 89 Petty Officers, 42 Chief Petty Officers, five WO2s and 14 Warrant Officer 1s.

"We have designed the ship's accommodation and mess spaces to be able to accommodate the squadrons which as you quite rightly say will significantly increase these numbers.

"You may wish to follow progress of the Queen Elizabeth Class on our website at: <http://www.aircraftcarrieralliance.co.uk>."

Shortly before *Navy News* went to press the Strategic Defence and Security Review confirmed that the carriers would be built. Letters about the SDSR were coming in and we hope to run them next month — **Man Ed**

Mauritius escaped

IN your October edition you rightly pay tribute to Lt Cdr Hugh Knollys (*Heroes of the Royal Navy*) for his part in the Corfu incident of 1946 amongst others.

You state "in the lead was HMS Saumarez..." This was not so. Operation Retail had been planned in advance after the earlier gunfire incident mentioned.

On the day in question HMS Mauritius entered the channel, wearing the flag of Rear Admiral Kinahan, followed by HMS Saumarez 500 yards astern; HMS Leander followed half a mile astern with HMS Volage 500 yards astern of her.

The incredible thing was that

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

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

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

Cdr John Torr (Retd) Kingston Gorse, West Sussex

Ark Royal's first hit

I WAS absolutely delighted to read your *Opinion* piece in October about the Battle of Britain.

I agree wholeheartedly that the Royal Navy's part is too often overlooked.

Your figures are the same as I obtained from the Curator of the Fleet Air Museum when I discussed the subject with her a few months ago.

You may be interested in an extract from a book called *Luftwaffe over Scotland*, written by Les Taylor.

In it he writes that Lt McEwen, from 803 Squadron flying a Blackburn Skua from the carrier Ark Royal "attacked immediately and shot down Dornier KY+YK."

"This had the distinction of being the first Luftwaffe aircraft shot down in operations against Great Britain."

I doubt whether this is generally known either!

I thoroughly enjoy my *Navy News*. Lots of photographs and interesting articles. Keep up the good work.

— **Vice Admiral Sir Cameron Rusby**, Melrose, Roxburghshire

Legendary men

I WAS interested to read about the retirement of Cdr SD(B) EW Andrew in the 1990 section of *The Time of Your Lives*.

Is this the same Cdr Andrew whose voice so eloquently belted across the parade ground at HMS Raleigh, directed at any unsuspecting naval rating who only had to think about putting his hand in his pocket or wearing his naval cap at a 'jaunty angle'?

It has to be said that he was actually a legend in his own lifetime for many reasons!

Whatever happened to him? I would love to know.

— **Andrew Lucas**, ex Radar operator, Raleigh 1983, Liphook, Hants

...Admiral le Fanu (*Time of Your Lives*, August) was C-in-C West Indies while I was president of the chiefs' mess in HMS Minerva 1968-69 and Guardship.

Knowing he was visiting the mess at noon I advised that we would not have our tot until he left. He chatted, chatted and chatted until in the end he said: "When's the rum coming up, Chief?", had his tot and left.

Incidentally, I went to pension the day the tot died, July 31 1970, however, I still toast the Queen each day!

— **Bob Styants**, Halesowen

King's patrol

IN YOUR article *Veterans' Double Century* (October) you refer to Cdr Bill King, the commanding officer of the submarine HMS Telemachus.

You say that Commander King's Far East patrols were uneventful, but, with respect, you are wrong.

Cdr King ambushed and sank a large Japanese submarine, returning to its base in Singapore Dockyard, firing a spread of six torpedoes.

— **Topsy Turner**, Ditton, Aylesford, Kent

opinion

WHEN cuts are in the offing, the rumour mills go into overdrive and worst-case scenarios prevail. When the announcements are finally made, there can be a sense of relief that the worst did not happen.

So it was with the Strategic Defence and Security Review. The doom-laden rumours included cancellation of the new carriers, closure of one of the naval bases, a halving of the frigate/destroyer fleet, and integrating the Royal Marines into the Army.

The outcome was not so dire, and for the surface fleet the future is quite positive, with the new carriers on line, the Sandown and Hunt MCMs continuing in service and the Type 26 frigate programme going ahead to replace the Type 23s.

The longest shadow hangs over the Fleet Air Arm with the withdrawal of the Harriers and the capability gap in air power for the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

Bridging this gap will be one of the major challenges of the next decade, because a carrier strike capability and all the skills and support involved in flying aircraft from a deck in the middle of the seas cannot be re-created overnight.

But perhaps the greatest challenges will be maintaining morale among those currently serving, and persuading young people that the Navy still offers a rewarding career.

The Navy is still recruiting and for the next generation who will operate the Type 45s, Type 26 frigates, the Astute-class boats and the new carriers, it still offers an exciting future.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGS



Doubly forgotten ship



Picture: MC1(AW) Cassandra Thompson, US Navy

PAGE 8 (October) shows a great picture of the 'forgotten ships' of the Gulf operation during their Exercise Bilat 10, but the caption is wrong.

The story gives the ships' names but the picture caption leaves out HMS Grimsby (last in the formation) and inserts Cattistock, and additionally there is no Cattistock crest.

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

- **Nicolas Wright**, Bridgwater, Somerset
Indeed you're right - not sure where Cattistock came from but the caption should have read Chiddingfold, Middleton, Grimsby and Pembroke just as the text of the article - Man Ed

A rank discourtesy

REGARDING Mr KA 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, ex CPO OPS HQ RNR

...I WAS surprised to see this old chestnut raised in your letters column.

Mr Holloway as an ex-CPO Writer should be aware of the correct address of officers on the retired list, as he must have been privy to this in his duties, possibly serving in a captain's office.

If his captain were writing to the Prince of Wales would he have shown discourtesy and addressed

the envelope as Mr HRH The Prince of Wales?

I served in the Fleet Air Arm for 42 years, 12 on the lower deck and 30 with a Queen's commission.

When I was transferred to the Retired from the Active list a letter was sent to me by MOD reminding me that I was still entitled to use my rank, further that the suffix (Retd) should not be used.

When the subject arises in conversation with civilians I ask them if they address their GP or a university professor when they retire as Mr and they say no, accepting that they hold on to their titles.

Mr Holloway's attitude is equivalent to one of his junior rates meeting him in civilian life and calling him mate! One which I am sure he would not like.

'Icarus' (name, address and rank supplied)

...THE correspondent who thinks it smacks of snobbery for retired officers to use their rank might think differently were he to know that I sign letters with (Lieutenant-Commander RN) after my name, a practice common in many professions when writing

to print media.

I certainly never address myself as such!

Letters editors often prefer their readers to know that the writer has some knowledge of the subject, particularly when it comes to matters in our sea-blind nation such as the sea, the RN and HM Armed Forces.

In 1971, when age 20, I enjoyed being able to tell people that I was one of the country's Leading Writers.

In truth, I only shipped my hook a few months before being promoted Cadet, but I still have a wry smile when I think that the Royal Navy gave this able seaman's son from a council estate the chance to be styled with ten different ratings and ranks - from Junior Assistant Writer Second Class to that I am now chastised for occasionally using.

Let's direct our guns on those who would diminish the Navy rather than sniping at, and diminishing, ourselves.

Lester May (hopefully still something of a leading writer!)
Camden Town
London

A cure for stiffness? JACKPOT!

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

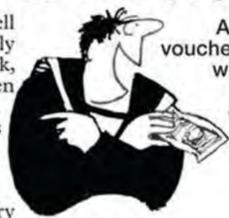
It was said to contain bromide, designed to act, shall we say, as an 'anti-inflammatory' and a sort of cooling agent on one's arduour.

If the NAAFI 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 even notice the side effects nowadays.

I hope you can help in this delicate matter.

Mike Holdsworth ex CAF(O)
Armourers' Association,
Aylesham Lodge, Canterbury



A £25 Amazon voucher to the letter which amuses, impresses or enlightens us the most.

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.

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

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.






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A Naval Charity for ALL service and ex-service personnel of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, QARNNS, and their Reserves

Big day for young and not so young

YEOVILTON hosted a double celebration when the latest students were presented with their wings – and a veteran received medals for his wartime service.

The four students of 3/09 Course had just completed eight months flying training with 848 Naval Air Squadron, the culmination of two and a half years of hard graft.

During that time they spent more than six months in Lincolnshire flying the fixed-wing Firefly, six months in Shropshire flying the Squirrel helicopter, and studying on a number of shorter, ground-based courses.

They finally pitched up at Yeovilton for conversion to the Commando-role Sea King.

Individual prizes were also awarded to the fledgling aviators, including the Westland's Prize to LA Stephen Hendry for best overall student and the Bill Murton trophy to S/Lt Frederick Durrant, the person who best personified the Commando aviation ethos.

The trophy is named after a distinguished naval aviator who was killed in a flying accident.

At the other end of the scale was Douglas Anthony, an 87-year-old former Fleet Air Arm senior rating who never applied for his war medals "because he was just so glad to get home, and felt lucky to be alive," according to his wife Alma.

It was when the veteran chatted to PO Adrian Wallace, a friend and neighbour who serves with 848 NAS, that Adrian volunteered to sort the matter out on his behalf.

On the arrival of the medals the serving senior rating had them court-mounted for the awards ceremony, during which the presentation was made by the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations) Air Vice Marshal Andrew Pulford RAF.

Mr Anthony volunteered for the Navy on the outbreak of the war, serving in HMS Kenya and with 829 NAS, a torpedo bomber reconnaissance squadron.

Awards recognise sacrifice

THE widow of a senior rating who died in the Falklands Conflict in 1982 has been presented with the Elizabeth Cross at a ceremony on board HMS Victory.

Sue Fagan, of Gosport, was given the decoration by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Dame Mary Fagan, at an event hosted by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery.

Mrs Fagan's husband PO Robert Fagan was a chef in HMS Sheffield when the destroyer was struck by an Argentinean Exocet missile on May 4 1982.

She said: "This was a great honour for me and it was presented in such a beautiful setting."

Three other Crosses were awarded at the same ceremony, to Winifred Major, the widow of Quartermaster Sgt Graham Casey RM, who died in Cyprus in May 1957; to Jan Newton, the widow of Lt Kenneth Francis RM, a helicopter pilot shot down in the Falklands, and Tania Watson, the mother of Mne Richard Watson, killed in Afghanistan in 2006.

The silver Elizabeth Cross is national recognition of the loss suffered by the next of kin of UK Armed Forces personnel who have died on operations or as a result of operational service, or as a result of terrorism, since 1948.

Applications for the Elizabeth Cross may be made to the MOD Medal Office, Innsworth House, Imjin Barracks, Innsworth, Gloucester, GL3 1HW.

An application form is available at www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceForVeterans/Medals/

Yeovilton outlook is healthy

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

The fair, brainchild of Leading Dental Hygienist Damien Clayton and organised with the help of



● Surg Lt Cdr (D) Mel Oura performs Indian head massage at the Yeovilton health promotion fair

HMS Heron Dental Department, highlighted current health topics and promoted healthy living and lifestyle choices.

Held in the Junior Rates' 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.

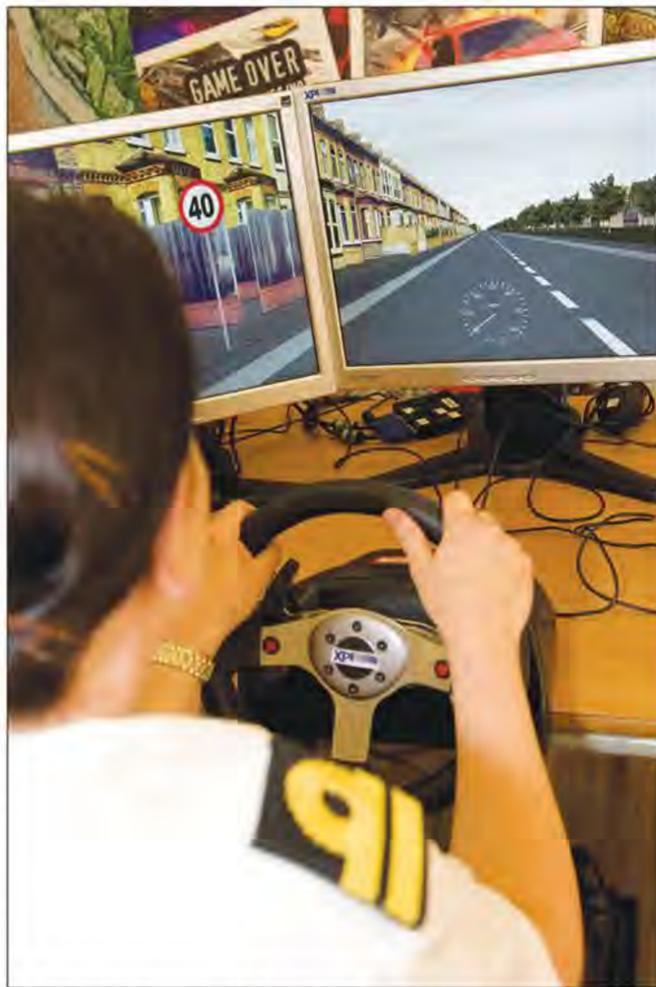
Damien said: "Health promotion plays an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of Service and MOD civilian personnel."

"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 organisers invited exhibitors from a range of charities and health organisations across Somerset and the South West.

The main contributors were Smokefree Somerset, South West Diabetes, Macmillan Cancer, Prostate Cancer, Breast Cancer, Avon and Somerset Road Safety and Police, Cannons Gym (Yeovil), Sexual Health and Genito-urinary Clinic, RN Mental Health and Trauma Risk, and Service medical and dental staff.

Funtasia, a local events



● A naval lieutenant tests her skills at the Avon and Somerset road safety stand

entertainment company, donated equipment for the day to promote fun ways to exercise – which proved particularly popular, with large numbers of brave people donning sumo suits and using the Nintendo Wii to add a different dimension to keeping fit.

Cdr Tim Fearn, 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've 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 this success for another event next year."

Wings link between the generations

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

Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet Vice Admiral Richard Ibbotson awarded Lt Chris Suckling, 24, his flying badge at a ceremony at Culdrose.

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

Chris, who also won prizes for being the best pilot and best overall student on the course, said: "I have looked forward to this day for many years."

"To finally have wings on my sleeve is an amazing feeling."

Chris can now expect to fly the Royal Navy's Merlin in one of three front-line squadrons.

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

First and last

THERE were very different emotions at HMS Sultan when Cdre Mark Slawson and chaplain Fr Mark Jackson attended divisions at the Gosport establishment.

The occasion was Cdre Slawson's first ceremonial divisions as the new Commodore of Sultan – and Fr Mark's last before he leaves the Royal Navy in January.

The padre joined the Navy in April 1983 and has spent time with the Fleet Air Arm, in Hong Kong, with small ships, the Submarine Service, the RFA, the Droggies and the UK Defence Academy.

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.

Father follows in his son's footsteps

ONE in, one out – a military family is maintaining its own presence in Afghanistan as dad takes over from son.

By a fortunate twist of fate, Territorial Army Capt Christopher Wilcock, 41, of 23 Engineer Regt Air Assault, serving with 1st Battalion Irish Guards Brigade Advisory Group, met up with his son, Mne James Hoyes, 22, of 40 Cdo RM, just before the Royal headed back to Taunton after a tour of Helmand Province.

Christopher said: "It's surreal to end up together with so many factors conspiring to keep us apart and yet here we are in the same place."

The reservist said he was very happy to see James safe and well, on his way home for some well-earned leave, and added: "I am extremely proud of what James and his mates have done."

"40 Cdo have had a difficult time in the last six months in a notoriously difficult place."

James was inspired by his father to follow him into the military, joining the Corps in 2008.

Ever supportive, Christopher completed the last ten miles of James' gruelling 30-mile test alongside him, and then had the honour of presenting James' green beret on Dartmoor.

Now Mne Hoyes is on his way back to the UK having patrolled the notorious Sangin district on a daily basis, speaking to local people in Pashtu.

He said: "Pashtu skills helped break the language barrier; the locals were definitely more friendly to me."

"They like banter and having a laugh and a joke."

"It was different to what I had heard of previous tours in Afghanistan."

"We made a positive impact but



● Capt Chris Wilcock with his son Mne James Hoyes at Camp Tombstone in Afghanistan
Picture: Lt Jonathan Boardman AGC

it was a hard fight where we were. "But two kilometres down the road 120 shops opened during the last six months. We definitely made Sangin a better place."

"My experience out here has made me look at life differently. I can now see how much people

take the small things, like hot water, for granted especially after you see how the Afghans live."

Capt Wilcock is on his second tour of Helmand as part of an Army advisory team working alongside infantry and engineers of the Afghan National Army.



● Ray Board with members of the Royal Naval Police team at the RNP Western HQ in Devonport

Arresting memories for former crusher

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

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

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

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

He joined cruiser HMS Kenya in 1940, seeing action on Russian and Atlantic convoys, the siege of Malta and in Norway.

His first post as a crusher was at HMS Nuthatch in Carlisle, and he later served in Plymouth, Sri Lanka – where he was commended for nabbing a fuel thief – and Gibraltar.

Mr Board said: "I volunteered to join the regulators to rise above the most basic level of the Navy and enjoy my career."

"I am pleased to have been invited by the regulators here in Plymouth and I am impressed by their work and standards."

Sports stars visit museum

TWO budding 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 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 Sopwith Pup fighter, flown by their countrymen in Europe during the Great War and one of the star exhibits at the museum.

Montrose trio take prizes

EVERY year the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS) at HMS Raleigh holds an awards ceremony to celebrate the achievements of its 400 students.

This year three winners were unable to attend as they were all serving at sea – in the same ship.

And as they were at sea for Families Day, the Commanding Officer of HMS Montrose, Cdr Jonathan Lett, felt it was the ideal occasion to present their prizes.

The three were:
Log (Pers) Amy Croston, who won the Anthony Cavanagh memorial Trophy for the student who contributed most towards teamwork, Naval ethos and morale during Phase 2 Personnel Administration training for 2009;

Log (CS) Debbie Cole, who was awarded the Worshipful Company of Cooks Catering Student of the Year for achieving the best overall performance during Phase 2 Catering Services (Preparation) training;

Log (CS) Holly Davis, who won the McJimpsey Trophy for the student delivering the best overall performance in Phase 2 Catering Services (Delivery) training.

Cdr Lett 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 stars 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

Riders' tribute

THOUSANDS of bikers joined the third annual Ride to the Wall, a pilgrimage to the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire.

The event, attracting riders from across Europe, is the only remembrance event allowing bikers to show their support for the Forces, and also raises money for the Arboretum.

Blades roll out red carpet for veterans

TWO Falklands veterans who survived the sinking of HMS Sheffield were treated to a five-star day at Bramall Lane when they went to see Sheffield United take on Portsmouth in the Championship.

Sheffield-born Andy Stephenson, who now lives in Helensburgh, 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 at Bramall Lane the night before the match changed their plans.

Andy, who served with the Royal Navy until 2007, said: "We originally had two tickets and a tour of the ground sorted out."

"But on the Friday night in the hotel bar we ended up talking to Mike Farnan, group executive director of Sheffield United."

"Before we knew it Mike decided we should get the red-carpet treatment, with four tickets in the directors' box, four boardroom passes and a champagne reception."

And while the wives of the men looked on, Andy and Chris were introduced to the crowd and enjoyed a noisy reception.

Andy said: "When we walked onto the pitch at half-time the clapping and cheering was quite overwhelming, and it made us realise how much our military service is valued."

"While we lost many friends on that fateful day, the welcome we got showed that the ship and its company will always be remembered and never forgotten."



Andy Stephenson (left) and Chris Evans (right) with Sheffield United chairman Kevin McCabe at Bramall Lane

Chris, a Pompey fan for 48 years, was not too disheartened by seeing the Blues lose, despite putting on a strong showing.

He said: "I have travelled to many grounds, both in the Championship and the Premiership to watch my club, and without doubt no club has come anywhere near matching the organisation and hospitality shown by Sheffield United FC."

"Chairman Kevin McCabe said it was a pleasure to honour us and the least he could do."

"To be honest, we would have just been happy with the tour and the two tickets in the stand, but to have the day out we did and people coming up to us shaking our hands, there really are not enough superlatives to put their way."

Mr Farnan said: "We were delighted to support Andy, Chris

and their wives.

"It was only appropriate they became the club's guests of honour."

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

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

Dartmouth memories on camera

THE top man at Dartmouth has been presented with a DVD which featured his division under 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 member Stephen Daltrey, who was a training contemporary of the Commodore's in Blake Division.

"I remembered the film being made," said Stephen, "and indeed can be glimpsed 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 at how young everybody looked – including the staff.

Footage includes a look at rounds being carried out along with training for Talbot Division, the WRNS officer division.

BRNC archivist Dr Jane Harrold said: "It is always fascinating to look back at film footage and this recent addition to the archives is very welcome."

Minister visits

FOREIGN Office minister Jeremy Browne made a fact-finding visit to Norton Manor Camp in Somerset to meet members of 40 Commando RM who keep the base running while combat troops are deployed.

Mr Browne, the Lib Dem MP for Taunton Deane, also met members of Termoli Troop, the rehabilitation facility staffed by officers, senior NCOs, remedial instructors, physiotherapists and doctors, trained in the 'recovery pathway' which helps Royal Marines who have been injured both in and out of the line of duty.



One of the Portsmouth AFCO 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 in Fareham.

Planned and organised by NA(SE) Tina Baines, the team – consisting of an officer, senior rates and civilian staff – took on the Crow's Nest, Gladiator Challenge and the Leap of Death while the weather varied from sunshine to howling wind and rain.



Encounter with the sun

A RESERVIST who is due to retire this month finally managed to meet up with his sailor son during his last exercise.

CPO Martin Hickson joined the RN Reserves in 1979, and has enjoyed the subsequent 31 years (with the full backing of his wife Denise, Martin adds).

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

ET(ME)1 Nathan Hickson with his father, CPO Martin Hickson RNR, on board HMS Chatham in Limassol

given the role of instructor and coxswain.

"Just prior to the exercise my son Nathan, who joined the RN in 2005, announced that he was in the advance leave party, returning from anti-piracy duties off the Horn of Africa, and his ship HMS Chatham would be visiting Cyprus at the time I was on Exercise Helios," said Martin, of HMS Sherwood.

"I'd often thought how good it would be to meet up with my son whilst on exercise somewhere, so 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 swan-song exercise all the more memorable."

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 Tom 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, in order to be best 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 the salvage 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

Warfare is the family business

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 on board after a major refit, the warfare department could boast a father and daughter, husband and wife, and brother and sister.

PO(Sea) Colin East, the Chief Bosun's Mate, has been joined on board by his daughter AB Rebecca East.

AB Alex Oaks also works for Colin, while Alex's wife AB Charlotte Oaks works out of HMS

Ocean's shore-based seamanship office as a mum-to-be during the ship's refit period.

In the ship's main communication office AB Stephanie Gaffney was joined last year by her elder brother AB Scott Gaffney.

CPO(AWW) 'Swampy' Marsh said: "It can all get very confusing and we have had to think of unique ways to reach them by the ship's main broadcast system or referring to them individually, so that the right person turns up for the right course or meetings and at the right part of the ship."

'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Special welcome for guests

A WARM welcome was extended to two special guests at 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 by their wives Gail and Muriel.

As well as the usual hospitality tot, both men were presented with a bottle of Guzz Ale, brewed in Plymouth by Summerskill's Brewery and donated by owner and director S/M Carl Beeson, who is ex-Navy and a life member of the branch.

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

Members are now 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 the branch annual dinner to follow in the WOs and SRs Mess 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 Palmer on 01752 509931 or social secretary S/M Sue Gutteridge on 01752 849176.

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 Chatham 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 travelled up from the South.

Also in attendance were ex-Services association standards, the leader of Rainhill Council and other dignitaries.



● From left: S/MS Chris Dovey, Trevor Jones and Ken Holloway, of Tenbury Wells branch

Tenbury punches above its weight

TENBURY Wells may not be the biggest branch, and it may be miles from the sea, but in RNA terms it is a force to be reckoned with.

So while it has only a dozen full or full life members – there are 46 dedicated and busy associate members as well – a quarter of that cohort hold key posts in addition to branch duties.

Chairman S/M Trevor Jones is also president of No 8 Area; vice chairman S/M Chris Dovey is No 8's National Council member (and was formerly area treasurer); and S/M Ken Holloway is both branch secretary and area president.

In addition, S/M Chris was recently elected RNA National Chairman.

"Tenbury Wells is a small market

S/M Ken paddles his own canoe

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

More than 600 canoeists from all over 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 France on the occasion of SSAFA's 125th anniversary.

Water levels were low, with rather less current than might be expected to help S/M Ken complete the 30km in less than three hours – his initial aim.

But the hard work was worth it, with 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 Cdr Darren Houston, former Executive Officer of HMS Cumberland, talk about his experiences on two counter-piracy deployments.

Although Darren is a shipmate of Axminster branch, he is affiliated to the French group, as is Mne Jack Lothgow, who is completing his second tour of Afghanistan.

The branch's good wishes are extended to both men, and to their affiliated RFA, Wave Ruler, currently working in the Caribbean with HMS Manchester – "we wish her calm seas and success with her patrols," said S/M Ken.



● S/M Ken Napier during his 30km canoe marathon

Convoy heroes are feted

MALTA has been remembering the veterans who risked their lives to bring succour to the besieged island during the war.

Two of them, Jim Hutchison and Allan Shaw, attended the annual Operation Pedestal reunion, a gathering for those who survived ferocious Axis attacks on the Allied convoy bringing vital supplies to the Maltese.

Allan was a teenaged sailor on board the SS Ohio, a modern high-speed tanker which was barely afloat when it reached Grand Harbour in August 1942, having survived a scarcely-credible succession of hits by bomb-blasts, torpedoes and crashing aircraft.

The tanker – the largest in the world when she was launched – is still regarded as the saviour of the island, and pictures of her limping in, with Royal Navy escort ships strapped to her to act as buoyancy aids, propulsion and rudder, are iconic reminders of the narrow margin between success and failure in the Mediterranean war.

Jim Hutchison was a young sailor on board cruiser HMS Phoebe, which helped provide air cover against overwhelming odds during Pedestal.

The third veteran could not be there in person – CPO Peter McSweeney died last year, and his son Graham was in Malta to have his late father's ashes scattered at Senglea Point, where Peter is known to have dived in the war.

CPO McSweeney was involved in efforts to refloat the Ohio, as well as other salvage operations and the assembly of floating docks.

A number of events involving the veterans and Graham were covered by local print and broadcast media, including S/M Jim leaving his handprints in cement for the island's hall of fame (Allan did the same a couple of years ago) and also opening the packaging enclosing a chair from the master's cabin of the Ohio.

The Times of Malta reported that while more than 100 attended the 60th anniversary of the Santa Marija convoy eight years ago – the Maltese often use that name as the last of the five merchantmen of the 14-strong convoy reached Malta on that saint's day – this year saw just Allan, Jim and local veteran Terry Mahon managing to get to the ceremonies.

Book elicits details of Venomous hero

A BOOK about the battles and narrow escapes of a World War 2 workhorse destroyer has shed light on one of the many unsung heroes of the Royal Navy.

A *Hard Fought Ship: The Story of HMS Venomous*, by Robert J Moore and John A Rodgaard, tells of the career of a V and W-class destroyer from the Baltic in 1919 to her scrapping in 1948.

The first edition of the book was originally published in 1990, the work of Sea Cadet officer Bob Moore, whose interest in the ship was sparked by the fact that the unit he commanded (Loughborough) shared her name.

Bob died suddenly while working on an expanded second edition, and the project was further developed by friend, collaborator

and Naval historian Capt John Rodgaard USN, with the blessing of publisher Bill Forster, of Holywell House Publishing, whose father had served in the destroyer.

To coincide with the publication of the new edition – almost twice the length of the original – in April this year a search was started for the family of WO Jimmie Button, whose bravery in one tumultuous action stands as an illustration of the character of the men of the Royal Navy during the dark days of the war.

Late on the evening of November 11 1942 HMS *Venomous*, under Cdr Hugh Falcon-Steward, was escorting destroyer depot ship HMS *Hecla* and repair ship HMS *Vindictive* through the Atlantic to Gibraltar when *Hecla* was torpedoed by U515.

Venomous had already picked up an echo when the U-boat struck, leaving *Hecla* dead in the water and listing.

The destroyer tried to ram the U-boat but just missed, and the submarine attacked again, striking *Hecla* again then blowing the stern off the brand-new HMS *Marne*, which was helping to rescue survivors.

As *Venomous* picked up as many of the 800 crew of *Hecla* as she could and protected *Marne* from the U-boat, the destroyer's anti-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 McWilliams heading for Gib in *Hecla*.

Button's efforts that night exhausted the senior rate, but he managed to struggle into his uniform to pay his respects as dead sailors were committed to the deep while *Venomous*, with an extra 500 men on board, headed for Casablanca.

Button's condition deteriorated, and when the old destroyer reached Algiers, now in British hands, he died on November 27.

The sinking of *Hecla* was captured by Lt McWilliams, a talented artist, who used iodine and a throat brush from the medical kit on board *Venomous* to sketch out the vivid scenes – these illustrations are now in the Imperial War Museum, and some are reproduced in the book.

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

Sadly, a relative – Ken Nunn, the nephew of Jimmie's widow Florence – was traced through articles in the *Hastings 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 the senior ASDIC operator in HMS *Antelope* in February 1940 when she single-handedly depth-charged and sank U-41, the first time this had happened.

Button was awarded the DSM, receiving the medal from the King at Buckingham Palace.

Button's young widow Florence later married Army officer Tom Wilson, and in 1948 emigrated to Australia.

Years later, while on a Mediterranean cruise, Florence visited the grave of her first husband on the outskirts of Algiers.

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

Capt Rodgaard will be in the UK this month to talk about the book at Society for Nautical Research (SNR) events in Bristol (November 6) and Glasgow (November 13).

The book will be reviewed in *Navy News* in a forthcoming edition.



● Jimmie Button on Hastings beach in 1940



● FOUR crew members of HM Submarine Ocelot met up at Chatham Historic Dockyard for a reunion after almost 40 years. Pictured above, from left, are Freddy Fox (LCK), Spike Hughes (AB), Bungy Williams (LRO) and Vic Groom (AB). The quartet were entertained at the Gillingham Veterans Club, and plan to meet again at the British Military Tournament at Earls Court next month – the show is being staged on December 4 and 5



Naval Quirks

MY FAVOURITE NAVAL SIGNAL OF ALL TIME IS ONE SENT BY A BRITISH SHIP.

.. AFTER THE CONFUSION AND CHAOS OF THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND IN 1916 - AH! HERE IT IS..

JELICOE GPNS

JOIN ME. WHERE AM I?

I LIKE IT..

.. IT COULD BE YOUR FAMILY MOTTO!

MICAH

Brewery trip proved informative

TWO presentations at two different venues has yielded results for Brightlingsea branch, with four new members signed up and one or two more showing interest. And the new members can look forward to an active social life, too.

Branch members recently visited the Greene King Brewery in Bury St Edmunds, where they had to negotiate many flights of stairs to gain an insight into modern brewing techniques.

"By the time we returned to ground level one or two shipmates were complaining of a developing thirst," noted branch secretary S/M Ron Underwood.

That situation was soon righted by a visit to the Brewery Tap for a 'tutored tasting', in which members worked their way through the various beer pumps (the glasses were, admittedly, quite small).

"Luckily (for the brewers) we were served with a magnificent hot and cold buffet which caused an easing-up of the glass refilling," said S/M Underwood.

"A great visit and no, we weren't driving, we came by coach and the journey home was very quiet - sista time!"

Ten days later members were helping to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the first fish and chip shop in England.

Seafarers UK used the occasion to promote a nationwide campaign of fish and chip feasts in aid of the charity - and Brightlingsea, once a busy fishing port, still cuts the mustard in terms of the traditional fast food.

Award-winning chippy Scooby Snax (run by a former Crab "but we forgive him that") dished up some first-class fish and chips, and when the raffle was also taken into account the branch contributed £175 to Seafarers UK - and branch welfare officer S/M Tom Blair, an ex-Royal, went home with the top raffle prize of a bottle of Pusser's rum.



● From left: Former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jock Slater, the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Mrs Valerie Pitt-Rivers, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope and Naval Regional Commander Western England, Cdre Jamie Miller

Illustrious memorial is dedicated



● First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope lays a wreath at the memorial Pictures: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby

PAST and present First Sea Lords were guests of honour at the dedication of a memorial to the 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.

Former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jock Slater also attended, both he and Admiral Stanhope having commanded the current HMS Illustrious.

The Portland stone structure recalls the events of the night of Sunday October 17 1948, when a 36ft open motor launch with a crew of five carrying 45 sailors back to the ship after a run ashore in Weymouth was swamped by heavy seas.

It sank just 60 yards from Illustrious, and boats were immediately launched, while others dived in to save their shipmates, but despite their bravery 29 men died.

S/M Alf Lowe GC made the trip from New Zealand to be present - his George Cross was awarded in recognition of his efforts to save lives that stormy night.

Also there were representatives of the RNA, RNLI, Portland Marina and Albion Stone Ltd, plus a platoon from the current Illustrious.

The ceremony concluded with a Royal Marine Band performing Beat Retreat and a fly-past by Seahawk and Swordfish aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm Historic Flight and Lynx from 702 and 815 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 ambition for many years to establish a permanent and lasting memorial to those who lost their lives that night and I am so pleased that this has at last been achieved and we are all most grateful to those whose 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 commit the ashes of former mariners to the waters of the Solent.

The Maritime Volunteer Service (Portsmouth unit) uses MVS Appleby for seamanship training and team-building events, giving would-be or inexperienced mariners the chance to try their hand at navigation and engineering as well as ship-handling.

But the ship, built for the MOD in the mid-1960s, is also available to the relatives of former maritime and nautical service personnel and enthusiasts of the sea for services to commit ashes to the sea.

Typical nautical touches during such services include the lowering to half-mast of the MVS's red ensign, the crew removing caps and berets for the actual committal and the presentation of a commemorative card recording the exact location of the committal, signed by the commanding officer of the day.

As a charity the MVS seeks a donation for this service.

The Portsmouth unit of the MVS was founded on the disbandment of the RN Auxiliary Service in 1994.

Nationally the MVS has more than 400 members in 30 units around the UK coast.

For more details see www.mvs-portsmouth.co.uk

Medal work on camera

THE work of the MOD Medal Office can now be seen in a videocast on the Internet.

In the second of the series *Veterans Today*, produced for the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency, presenter Don Goldie visits the office at Imjin Barracks in Gloucestershire.

The Medal Office is the sole authority for the issue of Service medals authorised by the Queen to British Service personnel and veterans.

The programme traces the history of military awards and takes a look behind the scenes at the painstaking work which goes into answering the hundreds of medal applications and queries which arrive every week, ranging from World War 2 to current conflicts.

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

Hospital visit

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

The Pensioners were pleased to show the Cheshunt group their newly-refurbished quarters.

Two branch members have recently notched up their 90th birthdays.

Former WO S/M Albert Smith was presented with a cake representing MTB 694, the boat in which he served as a petty officer at the Normandy Landings and Walcheren, and later in Burma.

S/M Ted Lamont, a former yeoman, served in HMS Rodney and the Flower-class corvette HMS Carnation; he was also a founder member of that association.

Tribute to King

SIX members of the Northern Ireland branch of the Submarine Association travelled to Galway to make a presentation to Cdr Bill King, who at 100 years old is believed to be the oldest living ex-submarine captain.

S/Ms George, Erskine, Rooney, Doyle, Martyn and Leslie went to Cdr King's home at Oranmore Castle to present a Submarine Association tie, crest and cap, to the delight of the centenarian, and one or two tots were taken to round off the visit.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our September edition (right) was HMS Tabard, which was succeeded by 'display ship' HMS Alliance, still open to the public in Gosport.

And Mr Long of Taunton was picked as the winner of our £50 prize for submitting the correct answers.

This month we feature one of Alliance's sisters (pictured above in the mid-1960s) whose name featured prominently in our pages over the summer - though not in connection with the boat.

She was launched by Vickers Armstrong in Barrow-in-Furness just weeks before VE Day, and completed in early 1946.

What was her name? Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News,



HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is December 6. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our January edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 189

Name

Address

My answer

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 joined in 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 never having served in the battleship.

The 93-year-old matelot had served in HMS Exeter at the Battle of the River Plate, and he went by the name of London - and members were impressed by their new shipmate's smartness of dress and clarity of memory.

Card marked

TWO styles of Christmas card are available this year, one featuring HMS Daring (£5 for a pack of ten) and the other a semaphore motif (£2 per pack).

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.



● Chelmsford Sea Cadets enjoy the hospitality of shipmates at the local RNA branch

Youngsters join in

MEMBERS of Chelmsford branch welcomed Sea Cadets and instructors from local unit TS Upholder to a recent meeting.

Unit chairman Paul King, Officer in Charge S/Lt (SCC) Sebastian Rowland RNR and Marine Cadet Detachment Commander Sgt Justin Guilder accompanied the youngsters.

During the evening RNA branch chairman S/M Jack Penson

presented plaques bearing ships' crests to S/Lt Rowland for display at their headquarters.

Young and not-so-young shipmates mingled throughout, enjoying a very sociable gathering with refreshments prepared by Mrs Gamlin.

Representatives of the branch often take part in the Sea Cadet quiz nights at their HQ - an association that benefits both groups.

Golden jubilee for Leyland

LEYLAND branch in Lancashire has been marking its 50th anniversary.

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 Harley, president of the RNA North West, both invited as guests of honour, as was S/M Molyneux, who was one of the founding members.

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 Denver.

Throughout its half century of activity, RNA Leyland have supported a host of charities and provided support for their local Sea Cadet branch.

It remains a very popular branch throughout Leyland and the North of England, with the club, situated on Towngate frequently filled to capacity at weekends.

The 50th anniversary dinner was followed by further celebration on the Friday and Saturday of the same week.

'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), writes Jane Williams of the NFF.

We will be highlighting the news as and when we receive it on our website www.nff.org.uk and our magazine, *Homeport*, will carry a four-page centre pullout on the headline announcements and what it may mean to you.

Even with SDSR on the horizon there is still a huge amount of information to keep up to date with...

Defence Secretary's Speech at the Conservative Party Conference – Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox addressed the Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham on October 6.

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 establishment of a tri-Service Military Covenant (Armed Forces Covenant).

The Minister also highlighted recent developments for Service families; children of those killed on operations since 1990 will be eligible for free scholarships for higher education, and a dedicated 24-hour support line will be launched, and 30 additional mental health nurses provided in Mental Health Trusts to ensure the right support is available for personnel and veterans.

Dr Fox's closing statement was as follows: "To all those who serve in our 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.

"We will not let you down." A message from NFF Chair, Kim Richardson: We will hold you to this Minister – watch this space, families!

■ The Fourth Welfare Conference:

On September 21 delegates and speakers from a broad spectrum came together to attend the Fourth Welfare Conference.

The aim of the conference is to unite representatives from the Government, public sector and voluntary sector to discuss and learn about Welfare for Armed

Forces Personnel, their families and colleagues who have moved into the veterans community.

Speakers covered specific areas relevant to welfare, including recovery capability, transition from the forces into civilian life, the Armed Forces Covenant, veterans' mental health issues and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

The Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Andrew Robathan MP, was one of the speakers at the conference, this is what he said: "This government has pledged to treat Service personnel, their families and former Service personnel with fairness and dignity.

"The Armed Forces Covenant will be the foundation of how our nation treats the Armed Forces community and will guide policy across government.

"Specific commitments like this are just the beginning.

"Earlier this summer a task force was asked to trawl for innovative ways to make the Armed Forces Covenant a reality.

"They've recently presented their findings to the External Reference Group for consideration and a final report will be sent to the Prime Minister shortly."

"We've said we'll deal with the invisible wounds of war as well as the visible ones.

"On mental health, the Government is clear that extra support will be provided to those who need it.

"The Prime Minister has asked Dr Andrew Murrison to look at the relationship between the NHS and the Armed Forces community, paying particular attention to mental health of former Service personnel."

Mr Robathan also paid tribute to the private companies, charities and other Government departments who help in the welfare and rehabilitation of Service personnel.

From the Department of Health, Claire Phillips took the stand to talk about what is being done for veterans when it comes to the transition period between Service in the Armed Forces to



● Minister for Defence Personnel Welfare and Veterans Andrew Robathan at the MOD Welfare Conference

life out of uniform, as well as the mental healthcare being offered to those who need it.

Ms Phillips said: "About 22,000 trained Service personnel transfer to the NHS every year, and, from the day they leave the Armed Forces, that's when an individual becomes the NHS's responsibility.

"Obviously we have an interest in what happens to them before they leave so that the transition from care in the Armed Forces to the NHS when they come up to leave is very important indeed.

"Transition is a very important time and we have actually developed a transition to NHS care protocol and that applies in all four administrations across the United Kingdom and we are currently piloting that and working with the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services."

Ms Phillips continued: "We are doing a lot of work with the NHS Armed Forces Network, which is being set up throughout the department and its offices so that each strategic health authority now has a military healthcare lead. This is actually quite a step forward.

"Most of the networks have already been launched, but it's still early days.

"The Department of Health has funded them to do that this year and one of the things we need to think about is how we take that forward as the emerging new structures take place in the NHS."

The conference was closed by the newly-appointed Chief of General Staff, General Sir Peter Wall, who spoke of his admiration for all the work being done to improve the lives of Service personnel.

He commented on the "complex web of Services issues and mechanisms which make up the welfare challenge for us in the Armed Forces" giving acknowledgment to the strides taken over the last five to ten years in delivering aspirations into successful policy, finally concluding that "We need to keep the Service people and their families and indeed all of those, including you, who support them, at the top of our agenda".

The NFF Chair, Kim Richardson, was one of the delegates at the conference; she observed that the focus was very much on serving personnel and veterans and she would like to see a families' perspective next year.

She asked for user feedback next year on the initiatives that were discussed on this year's agenda – not only from serving personnel, but families too.

Andrew Murrison's report, *Fighting Fit: a mental health plan for servicemen and veterans* has been released.

For more information please

go to the NFF website: www.nff.org.uk and follow the links from 'Breaking News' or in the 'Health' section.

■ Free Will Month

Will Aid is a UK wide scheme, which runs every November, to offer free wills to people of any age.

Will Aid teams up with over 1,000 solicitors to provide basic wills, and whilst there is no set fee it is hoped that you make a charitable donation in return.

Suggested donations are around £75 for a single will, £110 for a couple, and £40 for an amendment – much less than it would normally cost. For more information on the scheme, and to find a participating solicitor, visit their website: www.willaid.org.uk.

■ BFPO Posting dates

If your loved one is serving overseas this Christmas please see British Forces Post Office (BFPO) website for closing dates and any content restrictions: http://www.bfpo.mod.uk/latest_dates_posting.htm

■ The Woodlands Garden Trust

This is a project being undertaken by 45 Commando Royal Marines to provide a focal point for remembrance and reflection at Royal Marines Condor – home of the 800-strong unit.

The Garden will provide a space for the Commando, family, friends and supporters to reflect, remember and contemplate, but hopes to strike the right balance of sadness and celebration with an area for children, some of whom have lost fathers.

It will also provide an invaluable tranquil space for personnel to decompress and adjust after operational tours.

The project is very timely given the operation burden of the Unit.

The Commando will soon deploy for its fourth tour of Afghanistan since 2002 and has also seen action in Iraq during this time.

At the heart of the garden will be a large piece of granite, engraved with the names of all those from the Commando that have been killed in action since 1971 – to honour those who gave their life in the Northern Ireland conflict and the Falklands War.

The Woodlands Garden is an ambitious project, which has stirred considerable interest – BBC's *Gardeners' World* presenter Toby Buckland has given the project his backing and volunteered to design the garden.

The aim is for the garden to be completed by October 2011, in order to achieve this the Commando is seeking to raise £150,000 by the end of the year.

For more information on the project, and to make a donation,



visit: www.bmycharity.com/wgt.
■ Childcare Voucher Tax Savings

Do you take advantage of the tax savings to be had from the Armed Forces Childcare Voucher Scheme?

Over 5,000 Service personnel save themselves a total of over £4 million each year through the scheme.

But the rules are changing. Gordon Brown's last gasp was to remove the additional benefit enjoyed by higher-rate taxpayers.

He announced at his party conference last year that all the savings from the scheme would go, but there was such an outcry, including a strong letter from the Service Families Federations, that he relented.

But the higher-rate savings are going for anyone joining the scheme after April 1 2011.

At present, anyone can take up to £55 per week of their salary in the form of childcare vouchers and not pay Income Tax or National Insurance Contributions on that sum.

For a higher-rate taxpayer this generates a saving of up to £1,195 per year. From April 1 2011 this will be reduced for higher-rate taxpayers to a maximum of £28 per week of childcare vouchers (£124 per month), and to £22 per week (£97 per month) for those who pay super tax – not many in the Armed Forces!

Those who only pay Basic Rate Income Tax will not be affected and will continue to be able to take up to £55 per week in childcare vouchers.

So, if you are a higher-rate taxpayer and are not yet in the scheme but are considering joining, do it now, before the rules change.

Remember that you can use childcare vouchers for much more than pre-school childcare.

They can be used for a child up to the September after their 15th birthday and can be used to pay for almost any form of supervised activity outside the compulsory element of education, provided that the organiser of that

activity is registered with Ofsted or one of the MOD-accredited childcare registration agencies (British Forces Early Years Service (BFEYS) and SSAFA Forces Help).

This includes the part of boarding school fees above the cost of the compulsory element of education.

More information is available through the website www.modchildcare.co.uk.

■ Can't afford to get on the housing ladder?

The HomeBuy Scheme, launched on April 1 2006, enables eligible key workers and first-time buyers to buy a share of a home and get a first step on the housing ladder.

Regular Armed Forces personnel (including Military Provost Guard Service), MOD Police, Defence Fire Service and clinical staff in MOD medical establishments have been granted Priority Status to access the Government Affordable Housing Programmes across all regions in England.

Shared equity products are available. There are a variety of schemes including: New Build HomeBuy, HomeBuy Direct and Intermediate Rent Scheme.

The Affordable Homes programme is run on behalf of the Government by 'HomeBuy Agents'. These are housing associations (otherwise known as Registered Social Landlords or RSLs) that run the programme in their area of the country.

HomeBuy Agents can register your interest, assess your eligibility and provide details of schemes in your area.

Interested personnel should contact the 'HomeBuy Agent' who covers the location of your permanent duty unit: www.homebuy.co.uk.

For more detailed information visit our website and follow the link to www.mod.uk/jshao and read the fact sheet on the Affordable Homes programme.

■ JPA...

With our work and personal life keeping us busy, remembering to update information on JPA sometimes goes on the back burner.

A comment that we all hear all too often is that the computer system has let us down or crashed at the most inopportune time.

However, computer error can't be blamed if the personal information has not been kept up to date and is inaccurate.

Just take a moment to consider the consequences of wrong pay or wrong emergency contact details on JPA on you as a family.

If you are a serving person reading this item – ask yourself whether in an emergency or at a critical time whether the details of the person you want contacted are recorded accurately.

If you are a family member reading this, please ask your loved one when they last checked the info.

There have been occasions where this information has been incorrect and has added unnecessary pressure to a family at an already difficult time.

Got a query? If you can't find what you need on the Portal Page, your unit HR or the JPAC Enquiry Centre are the first points of contact.

To contact JPAC, use one of the following numbers:

Military: 94560 3600
From overseas: +44 141 224 3600

Operators are available to take your call from Monday to Friday, 0700-1900 (UK local time).

■ We need you...

Your experiences form the basis of our discussions, to get in touch e-mail: Admin@nff.org.uk, tel: 02392 654374 or write to NFF, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.



● Surgeon Vice Admiral Philip Raffaelli, Surgeon General, listens to speakers at the MOD Welfare Conference

Pictures: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill

DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS

81/10: Spending Review 2010: The Government has conducted a Spending Review to allocate resources to government departments according to the Government's priorities. The 2010 Spending Review covers the four years from 2011-12 to 2014-15.

80/10: SDSR - Civilian Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) and Regular Armed Forces Compulsory Redundancy Programme: Following the outcome of the Strategic Defence and Security Review, the shape and size of the defence workforce required to meet our defence capability must be addressed. This DIB contains information on the proposed Civilian Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) and the Regular Armed Forces Compulsory Redundancy Programme.

79/10: Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: Publication of the Strategic Defence and Security Review: The Government on October 19 2010, published the outcome of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) setting out how we will deliver the priorities identified in the National Security Strategy.

GALAXY MESSAGES

Galaxy 23-2010: HRMC policy changes to Pension Tax Relief Annual Allowance.

Galaxy 22-2010: 1SL Message - outcome of the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

Galaxy 21-2010: Independent Public Sector Pension Commission (IPSPC) Interim Report: Personal note from 2SL.

Galaxy 20-2010: Royal Navy Recruit Training reductions.

DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES

DIN 2010 DIN01-188: Redundancy Provisions for the Regular Armed Forces: This DIN describes redundancy provisions for members of the Regular Armed Forces whose service began before April 6 2005 and who did not accept the offer to transfer their pension rights from AFPS 75 to AFPS 05.

DIN 2010 DIN01-187: Regular Armed Forces Redundancy Programme: This DIN describes the redundancy programme for members of the Regular Armed Forces.

DIN 2010 DIN01-183: Leave Policy Change: This DIN concerns the recording of leave on JPA and the change in policy regarding payment for untaken leave following Death in Service, and also the change in policy regarding Terminal Leave.

DIN 2010 DIN01-178: Tri-Service Arrangements for Wills: This DIN supersedes DIN 2009 DIN01-210. This DIN describes the arrangements for the facilitation, recording, storage and eventual disposal of Wills for all Service personnel of any service or rank.

DIN 2010 DIN06-033: Defence Road User Information, Validation and Education System (DRIVES) Project - Dealing with Inappropriate Driving: This DIN contains guidance for Managers to Deal with Inappropriate Driving.

ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA

Issue 11/10 RNTM 207/10: The aim of this RNTM is to revise NCHQ policy regarding the clothing to be worn beneath Fire-fighting suits (PBI Gold) for between decks fire-fighting in the Surface and Sub-surface Fleet. This RNTM is not applicable to vessels retaining Fearnought.

Issue 07/10 - Nos 139/10: The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity - Naval Service Amenity Fund Approved Grants

Scholarships for children of Forces casualties

THE children of men and women killed on active duty will receive publicly-funded scholarships for higher education.

The new scheme, announced on October 4, applies to the children of service personnel killed on active service since 1990.

The Government also announced the continuation of a scheme to pay tuition fees for Service leavers undertaking level 3 further education or undergraduate higher education courses for the first time.

Minister for Defence Dr Liam Fox said: "I welcome this announcement that highlights the Government's commitment to ensuring our Armed Forces have the support they need, and that veterans and their families are treated with the dignity they deserve."

SDSR: 1SL's message to you

THE FIRST Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, sent out this 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) in the House of Commons:

The Review comes at a time when the Government's key strategic priorities are to tackle the deficit, while prosecuting the campaign in Afghanistan to a successful conclusion.

Both are important for the future of this country.

The Government believes that both, for the moment, must take priority over Defence's investment in some military capabilities needed for the longer term.

The National Security Council (NSC) wants to see the UK's Armed Forces configured over the next decade to deliver a security posture known as Adaptable Britain, flexible enough to operate in all environments and across the range of military operations we may face.

I and my Navy Board colleagues have represented the Naval Case strongly, and we will continue to do so.

The Naval Service always has been - and will remain - fundamental to the security and trade upon which the prosperity of this island nation depends.

Our aim throughout has been to maintain a balanced maritime force, one which is affordable, which is prepared for the tasks of today and able to adapt to the challenges of tomorrow.

However, we all share a responsibility to be realistic about what is affordable in today's economic climate.

We cannot afford to do everything, so we have to prioritise what we do, where and when we do it, and with whom.

This has called for some difficult decisions, and has resulted in the need to take a dip in our ability to deliver certain capabilities, either in scale or complexity.

It is clear, however, that further stretches in tempo for our force structure, or our people, are not possible.

Fewer ships must mean fewer tasks.

It also means that we are looking at doing things differently.

Our guiding principle must be to ensure that our front line outputs - ships, submarines, air squadrons and Royal Marines units on task - are better matched to our inputs - manpower, training, support and force generation.

Inevitably, this degree of change across the Royal Navy brings challenges, something which the Government now clearly understands and is prepared to accept, if that is the price of getting Defence back on a firm footing as we prepare for the future.

Others in Defence face challenges of their own.

We face the following reductions. First and foremost, we will lose around 5,000 billets by 2015, and can expect to lose around 1,000 more by 2020.

We will lose: HMS Ark Royal; four frigates (Type 22s); Joint Force Harrier; one Bay-class RFA; and, by 2016, all Sea Kings.

We will also be studying our options for maintaining a Very High Readiness LPH and will run either HMS Illustrious or HMS Ocean.

One of our two LPDs will be kept in extended readiness.

The Maritime Reserves and the RFA will be scaled to meet our new force structures, as will our Merlin and future Wildcat helicopter fleets.

At the same time, the Government has agreed to continue to build two Queen Elizabeth-class carriers and to switch the investment in the Joint Strike Fighter to the more capable carrier variant of that aircraft.

That is because Carrier Strike will be pivotal to the nation's future defence posture, delivering a guaranteed, global, air intervention capability, without needing to rely on air basing and overflight permissions from other countries.

However, to save money, the Harrier GR9 force will be removed.

The decommissioning of at least one CVS, which together with the Harriers make up the UK's present Carrier Strike capability, means that the delivery of our future Carrier Strike capability in around 2020 will be an enormous challenge.

However, 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.

Summarised, it all means a smaller Navy.

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 manoeuvre at Commando Group level, a similar number of standing commitments as we do today, and all of our MCM and SSN tasking.

With the exception of the gap we must take in Carrier Strike capability, our core maritime capabilities have been preserved, albeit at smaller scale.

The Future Navy we are aiming for remains viable, and is centred around our people and modern, highly-capable platforms.

We already have or can expect to see new platforms with cutting-edge, war fighting capabilities - the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers, the Joint Strike Fighter, 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 Reservists, 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.

However, I regret that I cannot yet say what the future will hold for each of you individually, because this Defence Review is a process, not an event.

There is more work to be done and further decisions to be made.

There will be redundancies, certainly, and allowances will be affected, too.

The detail is being worked through and once I know the implications, you will know the facts.

In the meantime, treat rumour and media speculation with the caution they deserve.

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

Between now and 2015, whilst remaining operationally committed and generating forces for contingency, the Navy will be implementing the cuts and other changes required by the SDSR.

This implementation phase - from April 2011 onwards, and perhaps 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 fairly short order.

In the meantime, for the many thousands of you preparing to deploy or already deployed, whether operating in the Joint Campaign in Afghanistan, the South Atlantic, the Gulf, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean or protecting the UK's waters, we still have a job to do.

The contribution of those fighting, and supporting the fight, in Afghanistan is magnificent, and the work of the sailors and Royal Marines deployed elsewhere around the world is every bit as important.



● Senior Officers of the Naval Service delivered the key SDSR briefing on October 19-21 in many establishments and units: 1SL visited numerous ships and establishments; he is seen here on HMS Kent in a series of visits to warships; Commandant General Royal Marines Major General Buster Howes briefed the RM Corps at RM Stonehouse (below); Cdre Bill Walworth RFA (ACOS Afloat Support) visited RFA Largs Bay in Portland to speak to the RFA ship's company about the SDSR outcomes (lowest picture).

We must ensure that our operational credibility and reputation as a fighting service, our unique naval and Royal Marines ethos and values, are preserved because they are what underpin our future.

The Naval Service has faced tough times before in its long history.

It always endures and - because we are an island nation - it always will.

Time and again, it has been our people, well-led at every level of command, who have made the difference.

As we face the future, we will be judged as much by the quality and competence of our people as by the quality of our ships, aircraft and submarines.

The Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Maritime Reserves and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, with our civilian staff, are here to stay.

Our contribution will remain fundamental to this country's security and prosperity. It is my and the Navy Board's intent to ensure that you are kept informed of all aspects as soon as we can provide the necessary clarity.

I continue to rely on your patience and ultimately your guts and professionalism to see us through this challenging time, assisting in shaping a Navy that, as now, is balanced, capable and ready for business today and in the future.

Like you, I don't welcome these changes.

It will be tough, but I am in no doubt that our Navy will remain highly capable, internationally renowned and worthy of your commitment and loyalty.

I am confident about our shared future.





Warrant Officer of the Naval Service WO1 Terry Casey

WONS and for all

A NEW post has been stood up as Warrant Officer of the Naval Service, and WO1 Terry Casey is the first man to take up the role.

The First Sea Lord's Warrant Officer of the Naval Service (WONS) replaces the Second Sea Lord's Command Warrant Officer.

WO1 Casey said: "As the Warrant Officer of the Naval Service I will be well positioned to ensure that your views, as ratings and marines, are properly addressed at the very highest level."

"We are expecting many changes throughout the Naval Service in the future and there could be some testing times ahead."

In his new role, WO1 Casey will attend all Navy Board meetings as an observer, will take part in several high-level Naval Service Forums, is a trustee for the Victory Services Club and Royal Naval Association and sits on the Fleet Amenities Board.

He will make use of the Fighting Arm Command Warrant Officers to aid him in his duties and travel extensively independently and with senior members of the Naval Service.

How will the pension changes affect you?

IT WAS announced in mid-October that the Pension Tax Relief Annual Allowance (AA) for all UK pension scheme members across public and private sectors will be reduced from £255,000 to £50,000 with effect from April next year.

Galaxy message 2010-23 offers some background and information on what this announcement means to members of the Royal Navy – with the caveat that this is a very complex area of personal finance and work is continuing to understand its effects.

It states: "Based upon the information provided so far, ratings/other ranks and junior officers who are only members of an Armed Forces Pension Scheme (ie do not belong to any other voluntary and additional pension scheme) should not be affected."

"Equally those with a pension already in payment should also remain unaffected."

"However, initial work has indicated that more senior officers may incur an in-year tax liability on promotion, and for the most senior, when an annual pay award is applied."

"Any such changes in personal liability will first occur as a result of the assessment for the tax year 2011-12."

"There is no retrospective effect to an individual's

current allowance."

The Galaxy concludes that the recent announcement still lacks some detail, and further information will be provided once clarification has been received.

In addition, the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission, led by Lord Hutton, published its interim report on October 7.

The Armed Forces Pension Scheme did come under the remit of this report, and Lord Hutton recommended that the Armed Forces should not be asked to increase their contribution rates at this time.

However the Commission will be considering a range of alternatives to the current schemes for the longer term.

The report covers all public servants: health workers, doctors, police, civil servants and fire services are under the same degree of scrutiny.

Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, sent out a personal note in response which can be found in Galaxy 21-2010.

He said: "There are some tough decisions to be made across all Government departments, not least in an effort best to target limited resources, but I am confident that the particular needs of the Armed Forces are well understood and respected."

Is it next of kin or emergency contact? It's your 2-6

DO YOU know the difference between your emergency contact (EC) and your next of kin (NOK) on JPA?

Your next of kin is your closest living relative in order of: spouse (even if separated) or civil partner; children or grandchildren; parents; brothers or sisters; grandparents; uncles or aunts; and if no living relatives, it can be a friend.

You enter details through JPA > Self Service > Personal info > Contacts.

The emergency contact is the person you nominate to be first notified if you are killed, missing,

wounded, injured or ill.

This person must be trusted to be able to inform all interested parties – it can be your next of kin, but if not, you can request that your next of kin be notified separately.

Again, you enter details through JPA > Self service > Personal info > EC.

The MOD is legally obliged to inform next of kin in the event of you dying or going missing, the next of kin are normally the focus of support and assistance provided by the MOD.

Please check your details on JPA – for everyone's sake.

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

The 2-6 TV DVD has been aligned with the Personnel Support Brief providing an enhanced package for use in sharing information.

Feedback received regarding the new-look 2-6 TV DVD is encouraging. Your thoughts and opinions are invaluable.

To feature in the Navy News 2-6 pages contact Lt Cdr Heather Lane or WO1 Cooke.

■ Lt Cdr Heather Lane, 93832 8809, FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC SO2

■ WO1 Baz Cooke, 93832 8821, FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC WO

■ Pauline Aquilina, 9621 85984



NOTICEBOARD

Reunions

NOVEMBER 2010
HMS Falmouth (F113) 1980
Decommissioning: Reunion at a shipmates house on November 20. Already have a dozen stokers/greenies, all looking forward to it. I'll give the venue etc, when you get in touch with me – MEM(L) Dave Scott (Scotty). Contact details dplenty@aol.com or tel: 07801 263330.

DECEMBER 2010
Maritime Carol Service: The service will take place at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, St James Mount on December 2 starting at 1930. It is being held in aid of the RN & RM Charity. Music by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines, Scotland. The BBC's Canon Roger Royle will also be there. Tickets, Adults £10, Concessions £8, Children £4, Children under 5 are free, can be obtained from Mrs P A Brown at p.brown387@ntlworld.com or write to 35 Winston Drive, Nocturum, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH43 9RU.
Portsmouth Field Gunners Christmas Social at HMS Excellent on December 10 at the GI's Club, starting at 1930. Free raffle and food. Come one, come all. Why let the truth get in the way of a good dit? Contact: robdon.wyatt@ntlworld.com or tel: 023 9235 6866.

APRIL 2011
Loch Class Frigates Association: Reunion takes place at The King Charles Hotel, Chatham, Kent from April 15 to 18. All members of the association welcome. Membership is open to all who served on any of the Loch Class ships or their variants (Bay Class, Admirals Yachts, survey ships and repair ships). Some of these types of ships have their own associations but you can always join both. Please contact Andrew Nunn Hon Sec LCFA at andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01179 505835.

MAY 2011
HMS Dreadnought Association: The reunion is being held from May 6 to 8. All ex serving members of the boat including their families and friends are invited to join us for this weekend, being held at the Bosworth Hotel and spa. The hotel is set in imposing grounds in the middle of the countryside near Coventry. Full details can be found on our website <http://www.hmsdreadnought.co.uk> or Peter Ford, tel: 01268 696625 or Bruce Allan, tel: 01206 322313.

HMS Saintes Association: Reunion from May 20 to 23 at the Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford. All former shipmates and guests are welcome. For more information contact Ron Miles on 01404 43177.

OCTOBER 2011
Lascaris (Malta) Association: Reunion at the TLH leisure Resort, Torquay from October 3 to 7. Contact the Social Secretary, Mrs M Burgess at maggbs@gmail.com or write to Jim Goode, Four Winds, Rock Lane, Ludlow, SY8 1SF for more details.

NOVEMBER 2011
HMS Cavalier 1970-72 Commission Reunion: The King Charles Hotel, Chatham, has been booked for November 4-6 2011 and it would be nice if family members and friends can also join us on this occasion, so why not invite them as well and let's fill the hotel? A booking form is available from the hotel info@kingcharleshotel.co.uk or tel: 01634 830303, which gives you the prices for the package and it would also be nice if you could let David Thompson have some indication of your interest as soon as possible at gungobby@btinternet.com or tel: 01934-520216, so that he can gauge numbers for the weekend.

NOVEMBER 2012
789 Squad RM 50th Anniversary Reunion: A reunion is being planned for November 2012, to be held near Northampton, to mark the 50th anniversary of the formation of 789 Squad. It would be appreciated if all former members (or their close relatives) of the squad could contact one of the people below, with your address details, so that if you wish to attend we can plan accordingly, or – at the very least – to put you all into contact with other members of the squad, if you so wish. It would be nice to hear from you all. Contact Brian Bartlett at brianbartlett@gmx.co.uk or tel: 0151 639 8078 or Allan Short at allanshort@btinternet.com or tel: 01933 651816 or Skid Barden at j.barden@live.co.uk or tel: 0117 983 1350.

Sports lottery

September 25: £5,000 – ETWE B T Wright; £1,500 – WS J Bird; £500 – ABHM D S Snape.
October 2: £5,000 – Lt D J Alcinder; £1,500 – WO1 M S Podbury; £500 – OM E L Williams.
October 9: £5,000 – LA(SE) J M Williams; £1,500 – Mne T D Chapman; £500 – Mne A S Keeble.
October 16: £5,000 – Cpl L J McHamilton; £1,500 – S/Lt J R Laverick; £500 – MEM1 D M Hoare.

THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



18 months after its refit, the ski-jump ramp fitted to HMS Hermes came into its own during the Falklands Conflict, the tired carrier is seen here returning to Portsmouth in July 1982

November 1970

FOLLOWING the popularity of *The Navy Lark*, the BBC introduced a new series on Radio 4 featuring amusing anecdotes about a submariner, Leading Stoker Bootle.

The stories were written by a former submarine captain, Richard Compton-Hall, who after 25 years in the Navy had become Director of Services for John Lewis.

They were voiced by broadcaster Martin Muncaster, who visited the submarine HMS Tabard to soak up the atmosphere of Bootle's mess.

They were based on the author's experiences of 25 years in the RN. Bootle was a sort of nautical Andy Capp who even managed to get away with diving his submarine alongside in harbour.

November 1980

HMS Hermes, the biggest ship in the Navy, was due to celebrate her 21st birthday on November 25.

The ship was undergoing a major refit in Portsmouth, acquiring amongst other things a ski-jump ramp to operate the Sea Harrier and prepare her for another role in her varied career.

Hermes had a long gestation; she been launched by Lady Churchill in 1953, and was commissioned in 1959, as an entirely new class of aircraft carrier, boasting three post-war British inventions, the angled flight deck, the deck landing mirror sight, and the steam catapult.

Until 1970 the 'Happy Hermes' operated all over the world as a conventional carrier. She was then modernised at Devonport and converted into a helicopter commando carrier.

November 1990

AS A BATCH of 75 Wrens prepared to join HMS Invincible in late November, the first detachment of women at sea was already settling into HMS Brilliant.

Fourteen WRNS junior ratings had joined the Type 22 frigate in Devonport the previous month after completing their sea training.

Capt Richard Cobbold, Commanding Officer of HMS Brilliant, said: "The Wrens will enhance the operational effectiveness of the ship with their specialist skills."

It was also announced that non-seagoing WRNS – the former NSV ratings – would be allowed to apply for sea service at any time.

November 2000

ROYAL MARINES from 45 Commando were on patrol in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, tackling violent crime and keeping the streets safe for its citizens.

The green berets had already spent two months in the city, where there were two murders and several shootings within two weeks of their arrival.

The Commandos stepped up the number of patrols and carried out routine searches of vehicles, people and property, leading to many arrests and seizures of machine guns and grenades.

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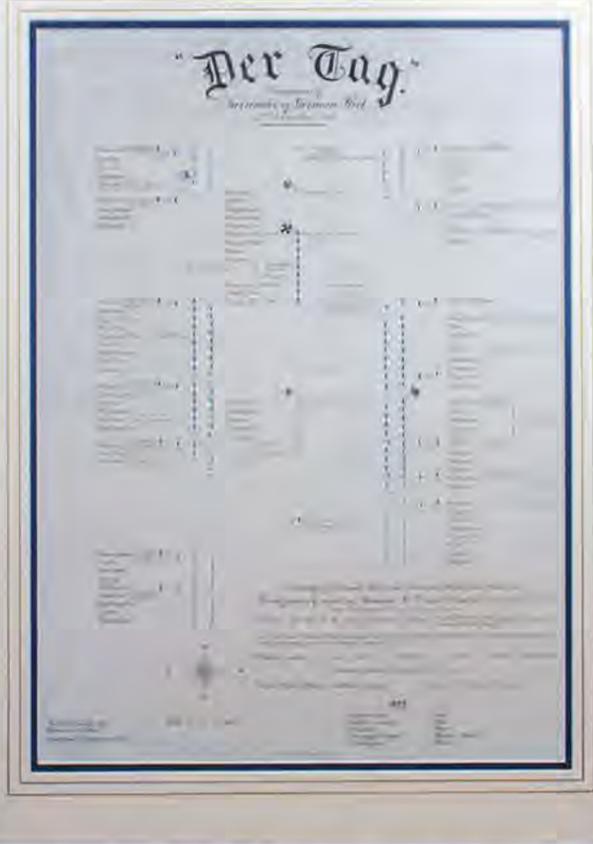
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Trophy lives



ARTICLE 23 of the 1918 Armistice, which ended World War 1, stated that 74 surface ships of the German High Seas Fleet were to be interned in Scapa Flow, in the Orkney Islands, while a decision was made regarding their long-term future.

On November 15 1918 Rear Admiral Meurer met Admiral Beatty, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, on board the battleship HMS Queen Elizabeth to arrange the details for the surrender of his German ships.

The arrival of the cruiser Königsberg, carrying Admiral Meurer and his staff, was delayed by fog, but they were eventually transferred to Queen Elizabeth where they were to meet Admiral Beatty. With the formalities on the battleship's quarterdeck completed, the Germans were escorted below decks to the compartment, heavily guarded by armed Royal Marines, where the internment arrangements were to be finalised.

Under the shadow of a painting of Nelson, the historic conference, unparalleled in history and which was to arrange for the surrender, without firing a shot, of the second Naval Power in the world to the first, began.

Six days later the High Seas Fleet, formed in line ahead and led by the cruiser HMS Cardiff, arrived in the River

Forth estuary where they were met by and passed between an Allied force of over 250 ships formed in two columns.

In a reference to the apparent reluctance of the High Seas Fleet to leave harbour in the closing months of the War, Admiral Beatty is reputed to have remarked to his Staff Officers, "Didn't I tell you they'd have to come out?"

To the Germans he signalled: "The German ensign will be hauled down at sunset today, Thursday, and will not be hoisted again without permission."

Checks were made to ensure that the German armament had been disabled and, once this was complete, they sailed in groups for Scapa Flow over the next five days.

The evolution to ensure the arrival, surrender and internment of the High Seas Fleet was codenamed Operation ZZ, and the arrangement of the two erstwhile rival fleets on November 21 is depicted in **Trophy No.23127**, entitled *Der Tag - 'The Day'*.

The German ships retained small crews while at Scapa Flow and on June 21 1919, with the final terms of the Armistice in the Treaty of Versailles stating that the Fleet was to be surrendered to the Allied powers, the German crews scuttled their ships.

Deaths

Lt Joshua Woodhouse. Joined BRNC January 2007 then Initial Sea Training in HMS Illustrious. On completion of officer training he spent his CFT in destroyer Edinburgh then joined Sultan to continue his training as an engineering officer. Joined Iron Duke as AMEO, served in Nottingham and Scott then completed his course at Sultan joining Ocean January 2010 as SSEO. Died August 10 whilst serving on board Ocean. Aged 25.

Vice-Admiral Sir Louis Le Bailly KBE, CB. Entered as a cadet through Dartmouth at the age of 13. Intended for the seaman (executive) branch but due to defective eyesight became an engineer. Served twice in Hood as a midshipman and as an engineer sub-lieutenant. Appointed to Naiaid (1939) in the Mediterranean attempting to keep supplies open to the Eighth Army in North Africa then Duke of York in the Pacific operating alongside the American. As a result of being asked for a report on why the British Fleet's operational capacities were so far short of the US Navy he sent a critical engineering report listing technical shortcomings and was invited to withdraw it by the senior engineering staff officer, which he refused to do. Later gained a more sympathetic hearing through such appointments as naval assistant to the Controller of the Navy (1960-62) and Deputy Director of Marine Engineering (1964-67) and made his input into a modernising process which ended with gas turbines powering all major naval units. His final appointment was Director General of Intelligence, Ministry of Defence (1972-75). He wrote several books *The Man Around the Engine* (1990), *From Fisher to the Falklands* (1991), *Old Loves Return* (1994) and *We Should Look to Our Moat* (2007). October 3. Aged 95.

Cdr Malcolm Burley. Joined the RN 1945 and served in Frobisher then Leander in the Mediterranean where he witnessed the Corfu Channel Incident on October 22, 1946; he was lent to Volage to list the personal effects of the dead. Promoted sub-lieutenant he joined Kenya for a two-year Far East commission, which was interrupted by the outbreak of the Korean War (1950) and headed to Japan for month-long patrols. His first commission in Protector started in 1960 and repeated in 1964 when he set up an expedition emulating Shackleton's journey of 1916. As leader of the 1964-65 Combined Services expedition crossing South Georgia, he was the first to ascend Mount Paget and Mount Sugartop, while Mount Burley is named after him. He subsequently served as a supply officer in Eagle until 1967 and then as secretary to the admiral at Greenwich naval college followed by a staff post at Fleet Air Arm headquarters. In 1970-71 he led an expedition to Elephant Island in Antarctica and was appointed MBE and awarded a fellowship as well as the Cuthbert Peek prize by the Royal Geographical Society and was appointed to Sultan in the rank of commander; he began a second career in 1973. He held the freedom of the City of London, was a naval diver, a glider pilot and a Royal Yachting Association qualified offshore skipper. August 23. Aged 82.

Capt 'Mickie' O'Brien RM. The son of a Royal Marines officer he lived his childhood in barracks and was commissioned into his father's corps in 1940. Whilst commanding Y Troop of 47 (RM) Commando at Normandy in 1944 he led a patrol on a covert raid on German lines east of Sallenelles, however a man trod on a mine, yet under the heavy machine-gun fire he rallied and charged to take down the enemy; he returned to his own lines with a prisoner to find that some of his patrol were missing, he headed straight back through defensive fire into the minefield staying until daybreak for the rescue of the wounded and was awarded an immediate MC. Later he was posted to the Far East and was seriously wounded in the Battle of Hill 170 at Kangaw in Burma; when he recovered he became a climbing instructor and retired from soldiering in 1950. August 29 in Spain. Aged 89.

John Codrington. Joined the Navy at outbreak of war but when his first ship was not ready on completion of his training he volunteered as a supernumerary officer in the sloop Enchantress, a former Admiralty yacht then joined Vanity and continued his watchkeeping duties on almost 70 voyages; he applied to join the submarine service but his eyesight was poor so he transferred to the Royal Marines where he was temporarily attached to the King's African Rifles, with whom he encountered Japanese patrols on the Chindwin river. Appointed a troop commander with 42 Commando during the landings at Myebon and ended his war receiving the surrender of the Japanese radar station on Hong Kong's highest hill. July 7. Aged 91.

Mary Rundle. WRNS. Her father, grandfather and uncle were all admirals and she was commissioned into the WRNS as a First Officer 1939. Based in Portsmouth 1940-41 she also served at Calloope (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) and Daedalus (Lee-on-Solent). Promoted to Superintendent at the Admiralty establishing the WRNS as a permanent peacetime service; awarded the CBE 1948. A founder trustee of the WRNS Benevolent Trust, vice-chairman 1947-50 then chairman 1950-58 she is recorded as having a great influence on the development of the trust. Aged 103.

Lt Cdr James 'Jock' Mullen. Joined 1947 as a boy seaman at Bruce then served in Cardigan Bay, Jamaica, Illustrious, Vanguard, Whale Island (Long G course), Cambridge and Eagle. Promoted to Lt Cdr then Tradeavie as FOSNI's Staff; retired and took up an RO2's post till final retirement 1978. May 29. Aged 79.

Arthur 'Jim' Green. Ordnance Artificer. Served in warship Liverpool 1941-42 and a member of the association. September 15.

Ralph 'Scouse' Worthington. CMEM(M). Served 22 years in Raleigh, Drake, Tiger, Brawdy, Ark Royal and Scyllia. September 12. Aged 79.

John Faint. CPO (AH1). Served 1965-73 at Naval Air Stations Seahawk, Osprey and Heron (where he received his chief buttons); and ships Victorious, Bulwark, Albion (including 848 NAS). Upon leaving the Fleet Air Arm he joined the Royal Naval Reserve 1986-91 attaining the rank of A/L MEM. Aircraft Handlers Association. June 8. Aged 64.

Jimmy 'Jock' Hall. POREL. Served 1958-67 in Collingwood, Finisterre, Maidstone and Arcthusa. Member of the RNEBA. September 17. Aged 70.

W E 'Wally' Breton DSM. PO Tel. Served 1931-46 in St Vincent, Caradoc (Yangtze River 1932-34), Selkirk, Escapade and Exmouth; L/Tel. W/T Singapore (1937-39) then Cardiff and Whitehall (1939); mentioned in despatches at Dunkirk 1940. Commendation CINC Western Approaches

as PO Tel. 1941 and awarded DSM 1942 whilst on board Malcolm on Russian Convoy PQ18. Specially rated Chief Tel by FO West Africa in Wolverine and finally Drake. Guernsey Association of Royal Navy & Royal Marines. September 19. Aged 95.

Kenneth Edward 'Windy' Windebank. L/Seaman TAS rating. Joined 1956 and served with his brother Ron in his first ship Newfoundland 1958-59 (last commission). 22 years service. September 23. Aged 70.

Griff Juss' Owen. POAA1. Served 1934-45 Chatham ships: Vanquisher (Abyssinian Crisis 1935), Havock (1st commission and search for Graf Spee), Manxham (as Vichy French cruiser Leopard in Operation Mincemeat), Phoebe (Operation Pedestal) and Troubridge (recommended for BEM for outstanding seamanship). August 19. Aged 94.

William 'Bill' Smith. Served as Stoker on board Morecambe Bay for 1955 commission. Died October at the Morecambe Bay Association reunion in Portsmouth.

Ted Stokes. Sto. Served 1943-46 in Wizard, Paragon and Tyne. Wizard and Cadiz Association. August 5. Aged 85.

Dennis Loveridge. Able Seaman. Served in Daring 1952-54 and a member of the association. August 14. Aged 80.

David Beattie. RM. Served 1938-49 in Dorsetshire, Adventure, Hamlicar, Renown, Implacable and LCG 17 at Walcheren. October 3. Aged 89.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Kenneth George Wright. Stoker/Mech. Served 1944-48 in Royal Arthur, Pembroke, Fancy, Recruit (minesweepers) and Apollo. Founder member of Uttoxeter RNA. September 8. Aged 83.

George Williams. Able Seaman. Served on board Daring in Korea (1952-54) and later at Suez. Daring Association. Congleton branch. September 10. Aged 80.

Irene Lancaster. WRNS. Served 1943-45 at Daedalus II. Skipton & District branch. July. Aged 84.

Arthur Norton. Served in Britomart on Russian convoys and part of convoy PQ17. Skipton & District branch. August. Aged 89.

Cyril W Turner. Seaman Gunner. Served 1942-45 Coastal Patrol Service, Ganges, MFV 51, HDML 1017, 1384 and 1252 also MMS 171. Eastbourne RNA. September 16. Aged 85.

Ronald 'Dinger' Bell. Signaller. Trained at Ganges (early to mid 1930s) and served (pre-war) Leander, Calypso, Terror (Singapore) and Adventure. Published his autobiography *Riding Madly off in all Directions* giving an insight to the pre-war Royal Navy. Past member of Sawston branch. August 3. Aged 94.

Stan Averiss. A founder member of Dursley and District branch.

Joan Margaret Kissinger. Associate member Beccles branch. September 19. Aged 77.

Kenneth Summerfield. Durham City branch. August 20. Aged 84.

Robert Simpson. Durham City branch. August 20. Aged 84.

Brian E Soppet. Telegraphist. Served 1951-53 and RNR 1953-65 Fleetwood, Myngs, Verulam, Boxer, MMS 1090 and Staring. Redcar & District branch. Tenerife September 20.

Lt Cdr (SCC) John R D Lewington RNR. Joined the Sea Cadet Corps 1949 and completed National Service aboard Duke of York and Ceres. Past CO of TS Hornet (Gosport) and District Officer for Central District in Southern Area SCC. Member of the RNA and Duke of York Association. September 23. Aged 81.

Leslie Arthur Comber. Served 1943-46. Gunner on board Virago, served on Arctic convoys and Pacific. Llandudno branch. September 30. Aged 85.

James Mercer. POM(E). Joined Raleigh 1951 and served RNB Drake, Inedatigable, Carisbrooke Castle, Alauina, Loch Fyne, Barnstone and Clion. Leicester branch. September 27. Aged 77.

Jean Colechin. Associate member Nuneaton branch. August 21. Aged 84.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
G H 'George' Badland. ERA. Submarine service 1941-45 in Taku. Colchester branch. Aged 95.

J D 'Donald' Byrne. ME1. Submarine Service 1964-69 in Valiant (65-69) and Churchill (69-72) Barrow branch. Aged 70.

E 'Ted' Coll. AB LR3. Submarine service 1944-45 in Urtica and Truculent. New Zealand branch. Aged 86.

Lt Cdr R C H 'Dick' Mason. Submarine service 1943-57 in Varangian (43-44), Statesman (44-45), Tradewind (46), Truculent (47-48), Turpin and Sirdar (51). Australian branch. Aged 86.

A 'Tony' Massey ME1. Submarine service 1966-71 in Tiptoe, Andrew and Tabard. Middlesex branch. Aged 66.

D 'Derick' Ramsdale. AB RP3. Submarine service 1953-56 in Truncheon, Totem and Acheron. Australia branch. Aged 77.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
William 'Bill' Cook. FCPO (Stoker). Served 1952-79 latterly in Sirius, Triumph and FMU Chatham. Also a member of the Ton Class Association and 8th Destroyer Association. September 14. Aged 77.

Henry Day. PO. Served in Trulove. August 21. Aged 92.

Laurie Arnold. Ldg/Stwd. Served in Cockatrice. September 13. Aged 83.

Gordon Newlove. AB. Served in Maenad. September 22. Aged 85.

Derek Bamford. L/Sto. Served in Bramble and Pincher. October 14. Aged 77.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
R G Price. Served LCTs 301, 548 and 560 also LCT(R) 362. September 6.

S T Wright. Served LCT 2437 and with 110th Flotilla. Australia. September 7.

R E Barron. Served LCI(L) 258 and LCT 499. September 7.

W W Croft. Served LSE 2, LSE(LC) 52 and MEMU 50 and 64. September 11.

HMS ILLUSTRIOUS ASSOCIATION
Lt John W B Annesley RNVR. Aboard 1943-46 in Fighter Direction. March 18.

Frank Bishop. L/Seaman. Aboard 1952-54 and remained in the RN until 1971. June 14. Aged 79.

Roy Chapman RM. Signaller. Aboard 1949-50 Communications department. April 19.

HMS GAMBIA ASSOCIATION
Leslie Newman. Sto.Mech. Served in Illustrious 1949-51 and a member of the association; also founder and life secretary of HMS Gambia Association and died whilst attending its reunion in Southsea. September 12.

Bill Casbolt. EM. Ex-chairman. July. Geoff Walker. Ord Tel. February.

Allen Bunch. AB. Rodney Smallridge. Ch.RE. August.

Honours

The operational honours list which recognises service on operations in Afghanistan and national operations for the period October 1 2009 to March 1 2010.

AFGHANISTAN
Conspicuous Gallantry Cross (CGC)
Sgt Robert Turner, Royal Marines
Military Cross (MC)
Maj Nigel John Powell Somerville, MBE Royal Marines
Sgt Richard Edward Wiseman, Royal Marines
Mention in Despatches (MiD)
Mne Tobias Gutteridge, Royal Marines
Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB)
Cpl George Burgess, Royal Marines
C/Sgt Mark Stuart Knowles, Royal Marines

REST OF THE WORLD
Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)
Capt Nigel Anthony Jones, Royal Fleet Auxiliary
Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)
Cdre Timothy Miles Lowe, Royal Navy

MISCELLANEOUS AWARDS
Queen's Gallantry Medal (QGM)
PO ACMN Dian Jonathan Lacy, Royal Navy
Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)
Lt Gary McCall, Royal Navy

Ask Jack

Flying: Flight Lt John Bradbury, formerly WOI WEA, is now a flying instructor at the Central Gliding School RAF Syerston near Newark, Nottinghamshire. John left the RN in October 2005 after 34 years service to take up a full-time flying appointment with the RAF to train instructors in gliding and motor gliding for the Air Training Corp. As well as training instructors he also visits the 27 Volunteer Gliding Schools to carry out standardisation checks. In addition he also flies the Robin DR400 for aero towing as required. Originally from the Nottingham area he now lives at Winthorpe near Newark with his wife Elaine. Although he now lives in the East Midlands he is still a member of the Portsmouth Naval Gliding Centre and regularly helps out on various gliding courses. Always keen to promote aviation John strongly recommends anyone interested in flying to contact any of the three naval gliding clubs at Portsmouth, Yeovilton and Guldrose to arrange a trial flight. It might even lead onto a second career with the RAF! Contact John on 01636 643619 or 01400 264526.

PS Waverley: Seeking any former crew who served aboard PS Waverley at Dunkirk prior to her loss in 1940. Also are there any survivors who managed to escape before she sank. Contact Timothy Smith, 9 Hollybush Close, Chippenham, Wilts, SN14 6RH or tel: 01249 460689.

Ronald Tilley: Seeking any records of Sgt Ronald Tilley, a rear gunner in Lancasters and wartime colleague, flying from the Diss area. I last met him in 1946 in Landon, Essex, where we both were drawn together in the ATC; he went into the RAF and I served in the FAA air mechanic. Ronald Tilley would be now about 85. One of the ironies of those years ago was that he flew alongside my cousin a RCAF bomb aimer, a Sgt Harold Constable, Lancaster Sqd 153 who was shot down but made it home. If anyone has any information regarding Ronald could they contact John Constable at john1926@btinternet.com or tel: 01245 441115.

Wrens: I am an ex-leading Stoker and attend 1940s events with my wife. I have the same uniform style that I had in the 1960s and I have managed to kit my wife out as a leading Wren. What I am finding impossible to get is a Wrens Long service and Good Conduct Stripes. There is plenty of Red or Gold, but alas, no Blue, are there any former Wrens that could possibly help us out? Please contact John Pittcock, 5 Halstead's Way, Steeton, West Yorkshire, BD20 6SN.

HMS Sussex: Found in Perth/Fremantle, Australia, a WW2 whistle inscribed 'HMS Sussex CPO A (possibly R) - W Evans'. We would like to return to W Evans or his family. Contact Jenny O'Toole at jenny01@inet.net.au or write to 65 Melville Beach Road, Applecross, Western Australia 6153 Australia.

Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association: Did you ever serve in Bulwark, Albion or Centaur? The Association is open to anyone who served at any time on these ships. Magazine three times per year plus events including AGM/Social, sea-days and anniversary commemorations. Whilst our 'Home Port' is Pompey, next year's AGM/

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Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Social will be held in Bracklesham Bay on the South Coast from May 13. We also sponsor sea cadets from our affiliated SCCs on the training ship 'Royalist'. Membership is just £8 per annum! Enquiries to Leigh Easton at ngsfo@tiscali.co.uk or website: <http://www.bulwarkassoc.plus.com> or write to Glenmoray, Hayford Place, Cambusbarron, Stirling, FK7 9JX.

HMS Oracle: Planning a reunion for summer 2011. If anyone is interested or requesting further details contact WOI Duffy on 01329 333196 or MOD: 93825 3196.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veterans-uk.info
RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, navysearchpgrc@tnt.co.uk
Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.rmrmc.org.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk
Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk
Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, www.seafarers-uk.org
SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssaifa.org.uk
RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk
Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org
Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com
Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk
RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, www.rnsubmus.co.uk
National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Competition

The World at War competition: two DVD box sets and two supporting books. Competition appeared in our September 2010 issue.

Winning answer: 'Henry V' The World at War DVD Sets: Mr D O'Gorman, Chippenham, Berkshire and Trevor Williams, CTCRM Lympstone. The World at War book: Mr A Hamilton, Inverkeithing, Fife and Terry Hall, Stanley Village, Derbyshire.

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in December's Noticeboard must be received by **November 11**

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.
- There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

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Welcome to senior high

JOHN Terry and Wayne Rooney are no-nos. Captain Cook, VC winner Col H Jones, Admiral Cochrane, Bertram Ramsay, 'Cockleshell Hero' Blondie Hasler are all spot on. Tony Blair's acceptable. Today it's Bear Grylls.

Bear's got to cross a chasm by creating a makeshift 'transporter bridge' – a plank slung between two metal poles, suspended from a rope.

He's close to overcoming the obstacle when 'George' Greening inspects proceedings. An awkward glance at the rope from George followed by a lot of headshaking from Bear. "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 (RNLA), PO George Greening is their instructor.

There's nothing wrong with the rope, George winks. But such is the power of a Royal Navy petty officer that the budding senior rates 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, heavens' later, along with a liberal application of elbow grease, and the Bear Grylls class 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.

Older generations of Senior Rates will no 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 were so many 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 big stick. If that didn't work, you'd hit it with a bigger stick."

This may – or may not – have worked 20 years ago. It doesn't work in 2010.

There is one constant, however. As they were in 1990, so they are two decades later: senior rates are the backbone of the Navy, the vital link between upper and lower decks, the men and women who get things done.

It is a surprisingly small cadre. Some 700 prospective Petty Officers – they've all been selected for promotion – pass through the leadership academy at HMS Collingwood each year... and approximately 600 emerge with the crossed anchors on their sleeves.

"It's not a given – you don't just turn up on the course and go through the motions," says Lt Cdr Russ Haines, Officer Commanding RNLA.

To reinforce his point, the five-week course opens with a fitness test. "If you fail, you're out," Lt Cdr Haines points out bluntly.

"You have to be fit to lead – you have to set an example. If you come here with the right attitude, having fully prepared then there is no reason why you shouldn't pass the course."

And the remainder of the five weeks? Well, the first week is devoted to leadership theory and getting to know your classmates through teamwork exercises.

After that there's a week in the Brecon Beacons for a mix of land navigation (orienteeing), bivvying, first aid and leadership tasks courtesy of the Outdoor Leadership Training Centre in Tal-y-Bont.

Then it's back to

Collingwood for more time in the classroom, learning how to coach and mentor sailors, and instill naval ethos.

The field beckons again on the fourth week and Salisbury Plain for a 'Dynamic Leadership eXercise (DLX)' – think disaster relief, such as the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake. Set up tents and tackle problems using the right kit. Oh, and make sure you order some food; the ration packs only last a day... and the exercise runs for three.

And finally to Collingwood once more for a week on the art of divisional leadership, everything from writing reports and administration to discipline and drug and alcohol awareness.

Each course is named for a leader figure – Bear Grylls in this case, chosen by the students, with the instructors' approval (they don't allow footballers, but do permit politicians).

Before the five weeks end, the potential POs are expected to give presentations – and produce display boards – on their chosen leaders.

The displays line the walls of the leadership academy; one group even produced a Zulu shield in honour of their hero, Chard VC of Rorke'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 do 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 kudos, responsibility 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 human, 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 clichéd, but, as Lt Cdr Haines says, "some things stand the test of time. There's still a need for people to show grit and determination when the moment calls for it."

To the assault course has now been added the 'high ropes' (think assault course 30ft in the air), and softer management skills such as coaching and mentoring but main assessment methods still focus on leadership 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 – loggies, dabbers, engineers and Wafus. Engineers tend to be logical, seaman specialists and warfare rates are practical, specialists 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 benefitting from his experience and guidance is PO(ET) Andy 'Knocker' White, one member of Bear Grylls course. Like his instructors, he realises that stepping up to the senior rates' world is "a big leap".

He explains: "There is a big difference between leadership as a leading hand and as a petty officer. It's not just the promotion, but stature, what's expected of you. You want to move on, but you still have your roots in the junior rates' mess."

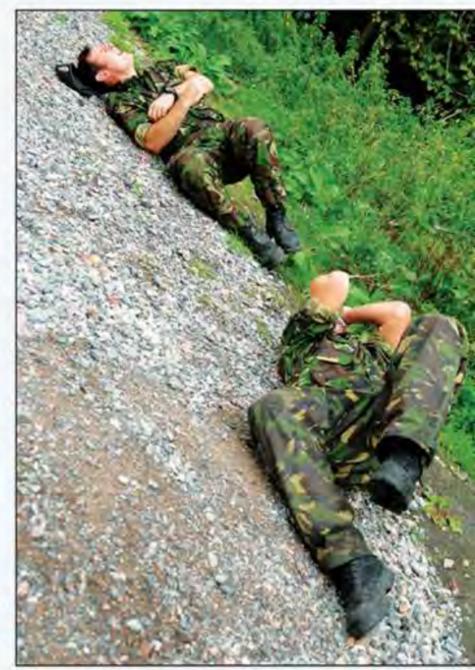
As a fledgling senior rating, he uses his expertise and personal attributes, and draws upon his experiences – "Subconsciously you take the best bits of people who you've been around in the past" – but says the Senior Rates Leadership Course has been invaluable.

"It is hard to be an effective leader without leadership training."

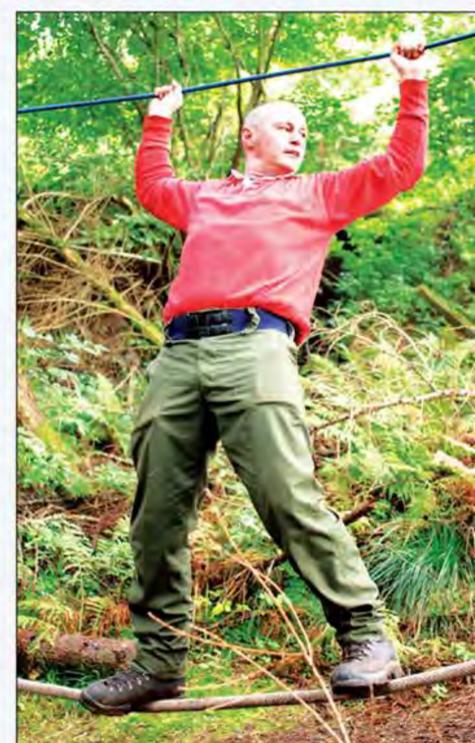
For more details on the Senior Rates Leadership Course see RNTM 194/10.



● Pole position...Members of the Bear Grylls course tackle the high ropes at the Royal Naval Leadership Academy



● (Above) the exhaustion of the DLX on Salisbury Plain while (below) potential petty officers get to grips with life outdoors at Tal-y-Bont



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 MOD's community nature reserve at Peaton Hill, near Coulport, took place after environmentally-conscious members of the Explosives Handling Jetty team at RN Armaments Depot Coulport asked if they could help further develop the site.

The 25 green volunteers were invited to work alongside members of the Turner Estates Solutions 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 tacking netting over wooden walkways.

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

Donna Green, Sustainability Advisor for Turner Estates Solutions, said: "It is 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, the walkways will be safer to use and the path through the reserve is nearing completion.

"This will benefit walkers, local schoolchildren who can be taught about wildlife and also tourists visiting the area."

The Peaton Hill reserve was launched in 2004 after an MOD biodiversity event.

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 numerous local 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 last year when it was awarded the 2009 Sanctuary Silver Otter award for Environmental Projects.

Festival Blazer

PATROL boat HMS Blazer might be compact but she still offers members of the public a chance to look round a Royal Navy vessel.

And many took up the opportunity at a West Country fish festival.

CO Lt Tom Weaver said: "The ship's company was delighted to attend Fishstock Brixham 2010 and thoroughly enjoyed the warm welcome and lively atmosphere of the festival."

Blazer is attached to Southampton University Royal Naval Unit (URNU).

Where's Helen?

HMS SCEPTRE decommissions next month – and the boat is hoping to invite a special guest to the event.

While looking through archive pictures in the Imperial War Museum, CPO Del Briton found a set of snaps of Miss Sceptre 1988, Helen Mason, who hailed from Barrow-in-Furness.

The crew is hoping to invite Helen, the daughter of a Vickers shipyard worker, to the bash in Devonport.

If anyone knows of the whereabouts of Helen, a Miss Great Britain finalist, could they contact CPO Briton on 380-cpos@a.dii.mod.uk

Unicorn date

THE annual RNR Service of Remembrance will take place on board the frigate Unicorn in Dundee at 1500 on Sunday November 14.

For details see www.frigateunicorn.org/events/2010-remembrance-service



● HMS Argyll returns to Devonport after her 'make-over' on the Forth

Picture: LA(Phot) James Crawford

Argyll returns home after 'make-over'

HMS ARGYLL has arrived home in Plymouth after an 11-month extreme 'make-over'.

The Type 23 frigate's refit included 290,000 man-hours of attention to cover modifications, upgrades and improvements.

Cdr Paul Stroude, Argyll's Commanding Officer, said: "It is great to be back home in Plymouth where we will all enjoy getting the well-earned opportunity to spend more time with our families.

"Our return to our base port also signals the next step in our regeneration where we will put to the test and prove the variety of

new systems in place."

The officer continued: "I cannot emphasise enough how much of an achievement it has been for the partnership to get HMS Argyll back to sea – the complexity of the work package is extraordinary, but we have delivered.

"The ship is in superb condition, which was recognised when we passed our ready-for-sea-date inspection.

"We sailed with a whole host of new and exciting capabilities that has made HMS Argyll a potent fighting force, able to support and protect UK interests worldwide for many years to come."

Cdr Stroude said the crew earned a long weekend of leave because they had been working so hard at putting the ship through her paces.

Between 2005 and 2009 HMS Argyll spent long periods at sea on operations worldwide, and she was ready for a spell in dry dock and a deep overhaul.

She is the first Type 23 to complete her second major refit, in her case taking the best part of a year.

Argyll will now undergo further trials and operational sea training next year before she is ready for her next deployment.

Severn swoops

ROYAL Navy marine enforcement officers aboard Fishery Protection Squadron ship HMS Severn detained a Dutch-registered fishing boat which aroused their interest.

And at Hartlepool Magistrates' Court the owner and master of the fishing vessel, the Hanny, pleaded guilty to the offence of failing to maintain an accurate logbook.

Owner Hendrikus De Vries and master Peter Dick De Vries have been fined more than £3,000 between them, with a similar sum in costs.

The fishing vessel was boarded

by marine enforcement officers from HMS Severn in the North Sea on October 5, having been suspected of failing to record a quantity of cod in their logbook when fishing in the North Sea cod recovery area.

The Hanny was detained at Hartlepool for investigation, which revealed 560kg of cod that had not been recorded.

The owner's total fines came to £3,000 plus £3,062 in costs and a £15 victim surcharge, while the master's total fines came to £330 plus £300 in costs and a £15 victim surcharge.



● The original Cod Squad illustration

Police search for original Cod Squad

MINISTRY of Defence Police are seeking an illustration which has disappeared from view.

The Gosport CID office is looking for help from Navy News readers in trying to locate an original silhouette illustration depicting members of the Fishery Protection Squadron on board a fishing vessel checking the catch and the boat's nets.

The original illustration was commissioned in 2006.

Copies of the original illustration are titled 'Cod Squad' and this title is located in the centre of the copied picture.

However, the original does not have the title 'Cod Squad' on it.

If anyone has any information that may assist the police in locating the original illustration it would be appreciated, and information can be provided anonymously on both the charity Crimestoppers telephone number (0845 555111), via the 24-hour MDP control room number at Portsmouth Naval Base (023 9272 2707), or by contacting the officer dealing with the case, DC Phil Phillips (023 9254 4141, answer phone facility available).

If you do have information, please mention when calling that your message is in relation to an appeal made in Navy News on behalf of the MOD Police.

Energetic initiative at Culdrose

ENERGY consumption at RN air station Culdrose has been cut by ten per cent over the past 12 months, and managers hope there is more to come.

In line with the Prime Minister's recent challenge to Government departments, Culdrose personnel will be expected to play their part in continuing to seek opportunities to reduce power usage and achieve an additional ten per cent cut in the coming year.

Energy conservation advisors at Culdrose meet regularly with the various building managers to discuss the latest initiatives in saving energy and making the most of what is being used.

Such simple procedures as shutting down computers and turning off printers at the end of the working day, switching off unnecessary lights and unplugging electrical equipment when not in use are already promoted throughout the Cornish air station.

Aircraft hangars are being fitted with better insulation and more efficient methods of heat distribution, and when linked to a system of interlocking hangar doors this helps avoid heat-loss when the doors are opened to allow aircraft in or out.

New technology such as high-efficiency boilers and more efficient low-wattage bulbs are being used in concert with an education programme to highlight energy savings measures and spread the word to all personnel, whether Service or civilian.

Chris Dowling, energy efficiency advisor at Culdrose, said: "I congratulate those who have contributed to the successful savings so far and urge them to continue the good work and help make further savings in the future."



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Brighter future for Newham

A LONDON unit is hoping to enjoy a revival after coming close to closure.

TS Chester, the Newham (Cornwell 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 appointed – AS/Lt (SCC) Adam Mendrys 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 Cornwell.vccadets@btinternet.com



Out in the (wet) field

TS HAWKINS has played host for the second time to the cadets and staff of 4 Troop (Manchester District) Royal Marines Cadets for a weekend's training.

Cadets and staff from Altrincham and Sale, Stockport and Tameside Detachments got together for a weekend of training in the field at the Stockport unit.

Friday evening was spent packing bergens and revising field orders, ready to go out into the field overnight to practice their fieldcraft. Unfortunately, the extremely

inclement weather (ie torrential rain) forced the cadets back on board late on Saturday evening, but they still survived on their ration packs for 24hrs, and put various skills into practice (including camouflage apparently – see left).

Cadet of the weekend was RMC2 Gemma Gibson of Stockport.

Trp Cdr Sgt Glenn MacLennan said: "We had a total of 17 cadets and nine Staff turn to for this weekend, it has been a learning curve for us all and a great experience for the cadets."

Helping heroes in a song

A SEA Scout has produced a song about military heroes, and he hopes it will help raise money for injured Service personnel.

It even features George Harrison on guitar...

James Smyth, 14, of 1st Watchet Group, composed the song – *Every Hero* – for his GCSE Music exam after speaking to Major Edd Morehouse of 40 Cdo RM at Taunton, near James's home.

The response was such that he was invited to perform it in front of his school as part of their Celebration of Achievements evening; this he did with his friends George Harrison on guitar (you didn't think we meant that George Harrison, did you?), Matt Porlock on piano and Sam Gibbs on backing vocals.

The song is based on the fact that you are not born a hero but that, in his eyes, all the Armed Forces are – especially the Royals of 40 Cdo and 1 Assault Group, whom he sees near his home and while sailing in Poole Harbour.

To help raise money for Help for Heroes, James wants to share the song with as many people as possible (through YouTube, searching on 'Help for Heroes', and through a link on the Heart 102.6FM radio website), and if you like what James has done he would like you to donate to Help for Heroes.

Remembering Ypres

REMEMBRANCE of the victims of the Great War is not an activity confined to the month of November, as far as Sea Cadets are concerned.

A nine-strong group from Sunbury and Walton unit made

a pilgrimage to Ypres in Belgium during the summer, supported by four staff and two parents with an essential piece of kit – a motorhome.

The party arrived at their campsite, just a few minutes' walk from the Menin Gate, on a Friday afternoon, and gathered at the Gate, the iconic memorial to almost 55,000 Allied soldiers who died in the Ypres Salient and have no known grave.

That gave the cadets a taste of what to expect the following evening; a sombre and poignant service which takes place every evening and draws onlookers from across the globe.

On the Saturday cadets and staff, in their No 4s, visited the

Flanders Museum and relaxed in the afternoon before donning No 1s for the march into town, wearing half-blues as it was so warm.

Uniforms and other equipment were housed in the motorhome of the Marchant family – AC Laurens Marchant is a member of the unit.

Fellow campers followed the parade in to lend support, and the sound of marching boots brought plenty of locals out from their homes to watch the cadets on their way through.

With a burial ceremony for the last of 250 Allied soldiers found in a mass grave two years ago taking place at Fromelles the following week, the cadets knew it would be busy in Ypres.



● MSSC President Admiral Sir Peter Abbott presents a certificate of appointment to Honorary Commodore (SCC) Jack Petchey (right)

Commodore Jack

THE MSSC, parent charity of the Sea Cadets, has appointed major benefactor Jack Petchey as an Honorary Commodore in the Sea Cadet Corps.

Mr Petchey's foundation donated £1 million towards the cost of the Corps' latest training vessel, named TS Jack Petchey in his honour.

The Jack Petchey Foundation, now in its tenth year, has also been a great supporter of the London Area Sea Cadets, having made donations of more than £250,000, while the foundation has also recognised

the achievements of hundreds of London Area cadets over the years through an annual awards scheme.

Mr Petchey, who served in the Royal Navy at HMS Collingwood in 1943 and deeply appreciated the opportunities this experience opened up to him, said: "My aim is to raise young people's aspirations and encourage them to achieve their goals."

"For me, today seems a world away from my young dream of becoming an officer – I am truly honoured to receive this title of Honorary Commodore (SCC)."



● Royal Marines Commandos put on a twilight display for the cadets of Sefton unit and Liverpool district

Ex-cadet drops in with his team

A former member of the Sefton unit called on his old ship – and brought his commando display team with him.

The former cadet just happened to be Brig Ged Salzano, Commandant of the Commando Training Centre RM at Lympstone, and when he was in the North West he took the opportunity to stage a series of demonstrations by the Royal Marines Commando Display Team for the cadets of Sefton and the Royal Marine Cadets of Liverpool district.

Led by Maj Jules Rawles RM,

the team showed a range of skills and techniques used by the premier commando force in the world.

"The cadets really enjoyed themselves during the evening with all the various subjects and displays the team put on," said S/Lt (SCC) Ken Griffiths RNR, the CO of TS Starling, the Sefton unit.

"I think the team enjoyed themselves as much as the cadets did, and it was really good to see the cadets getting fully involved, with even the junior section taking part."

Neath training link

FOR the past year C/Sgt John Andrews PW1 (40 Cdo RM) has been attending Neath and Port Talbot College as part of his retraining programme after a distinguished career in the Royal Marines.

Currently seeing out the final two years of his military career at the Infantry Battle School at Brecon, John decided to seek a career in welding and fabrication after visiting an open day at Neath College.

And there he met up with welding lecturer Bob Evans, who in his spare time is chairman of TS Minerva, the Rhondda Sea Cadet unit.

Bob said: "I have trained a number of Navy personnel over my 24 years in teaching, and all have proven to be very successful."

"Neath and Port Talbot College is seeking to become a centre of excellence in welding and fabrication, and will strive to train people to the best of their ability, especially personnel from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines."

"I am privileged to be a part of John's retraining."

The colour sergeant will now progress to his Level 3 certificate, and then to his advanced diploma, where on completion he can apply for engineering technician status.



● Warsash unit with the Mayor and Mayoress of Fareham – and their own elected representatives (in red)

Meeting the mayor

MEMBERS of Warsash unit were invited to meet the Mayor of Fareham in the town's council chambers.

Before being treated to light refreshments, the cadets chatted to the mayor, Cllr Brian Bayford, who told them how Fareham was transformed from an urban district to a borough in 1974.

He also explained the procedures for council meetings, and the function of the borough's mace and crest.

The cadets participated in the democratic process by holding a mock election and voting in their own mayoress and deputy mayor, watched by the real mayor and his mayoress, Cllr Susan Bayford.

The cadets of TS Tormentor have entertained the mayor on previous occasions at the unit's headquarters in the Warsash Maritime Academy, and were very pleased to be able to visit Cllr Bayford in his own HQ at the Civic Offices.



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SEA CADETS

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Get in touch if you were a member

THE Sea Cadet Corps is asking Britain 'Were you a Sea Cadet?'

The charity's records show that over the past 70 years almost one million people have been a Sea Cadet at some point – the equivalent of one person in 60 of the current UK population.

And the Corps wants to reconnect with them to build up a picture of cadets now and then.

Over the years the charity has seen some famous names amongst the Corps, including, Sean Connery, Paul O'Grady, Dan Snow, former deputy prime minister John Prescott, jazz musician Kenny Ball and actor Paul Bethany.

The charity, established in 1854, recently updated its image making it more appealing to young

people, but it also wants to hear from former cadets who can help the charity, either with a one-off donation, a spot of volunteering or who might just be interested to hear what Sea Cadets have been up to.

Today, across the UK, 14,000 young people aged between ten and 18 get involved in Sea Cadet activities, learning vital life skills like leadership and team working via challenging adventure activities on a naval theme.

Former Sea Cadets can get in touch through the website www.sea-cadets.org, emailing info@ms-sc.org, call 020 7654 7000 or write to 'I was a former Sea Cadet', MSSC, 202 Lambeth Road, London SE1 7JW.

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 RNR.

The presentation was made at Longmoor Army Camp in Hampshire during a Southern Area Multi-Activity Staff Training (MAST) weekend, of which Lt Cdr Gooding is the officer in charge.

Such weekends 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 also uniformed members of TS Brighton, and the family has now been joined in uniform by Michael's ten-year-old granddaughter Elisha.

Fishguard celebrates

FISHGUARD unit has been celebrating the success of its Senior Girls pulling team, who brought the national title back to West Wales.

The TS Skirmisher team - Naomi Groves, Emily and Zoe Day, and Laura and Lucy Callard - had previously won all their district and area regatta races, qualifying them for the nationals.

And in a display of faultless pulling technique at the ExCeL in London - along with plenty of determination - the Fishguard girls continued to win, taking the Burton Cup back with them along the M4.

Chatham hosts bands



● Buglers compete at the Southern Area Sea Cadet Band contest at Chatham

THE HISTORIC Dockyard at Chatham hosted the Southern Area Sea Cadet Band contest - the first time in living memory the event has been held outside Portsmouth.

Six bands and ten soloists gave visitors to the dockyard a pleasant surprise attraction in addition to those normally on display.

Coming from as far away as Poole and Warsash - and as near as Ashford and Tunbridge Wells - the 70 or so cadets that competed were watched by a crowd of hundreds, including one group on a yacht that hauled up alongside Thunderbolt Pier when they heard the music.

Guest of Honour Admiral Sir Peter Abbott said after the presentations that it had been "an absolute delight to see the cadets performing at the Historic Dockyard, and the standard of musicianship - even in the novice class - was excellent."

Admiral Abbot also thanked the dockyard for the use of their facilities, the Kent branch of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets for sponsoring the marquee and refreshments, and all the volunteers who had made the day such a great success.

Major Andy Henderson RM (Rtd), Deputy Area Officer (South), noted the "encouraging quality of the playing," and particularly enjoyed one of the bugle solos - and as an ex-Royal Marines Director of Music he should know...

Results:
 Novice Class Band: Folkestone
 Contest Class Band: Herne Bay;
 Premier Class Band: Tunbridge Wells;
 Best Solo Drummer: AC A Heald, Tunbridge Wells;
 Best Solo Bugler: MC2 G Evans, Tunbridge Wells;
 Best Drum Major: MC2 L Reed, Tunbridge Wells;
 Best Dressed Band: Tunbridge Wells.
 Sponsored by the Kent branch of the MSSC and the Historic Dockyard, the day was a great success, raising the profile of the Corps and presenting almost 100 cadets with an opportunity to put into practice the skills they have learned as cadets.

Organisers Lt Cdr (SCC) Phil Coast RNR and S/Lt (SCC) Allison Bowen-Davies RNR agreed that it was a fantastic venue and a real spectacle for those who took part and watched.



● Maria Hoyles

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, passed out of her basic training at HMS Raleigh in the summer.

But her interest in the Senior Service is long-standing.

Maria joined TS Wrekin at the age of ten, and has packed a great deal into the subsequent eight years.

Through the unit she achieved Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Awards, ocean/sports and naval acquaint scuba diving qualifications, a BTEC in Public Services and numerous Sea Cadet Corps qualifications, including kayaking/canoeing, offshore sailing and power boating.

Maria also attended various ceremonies, and was chosen to be the sword-bearer for the High Sheriff of 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 had to be representing 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 stint learning 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 my time in the Sea Cadets going places, doing things and, best of all, the friends I made all over the country, and if 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 experiences."

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



● Cdr (SCC) Barry Glanville, Assistant Director of National Training for the Corps (left) presents the Cadet Forces Long Service Medal to Lt Micky Shone

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 Cadet 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.

Lt Shone, who joined the Navy in 1964 and completed 35 years service, said: "Being involved with the Cadets is an absolute pleasure and I have enjoyed every moment of the past 12 years."



● The Royal Navy section of King's Bruton CCF leads the march-past after the Duchess of Wessex had conducted an inspection

Royalty at King's

THE Countess of Wessex was the VIP guest at King's Bruton School to help celebrate the centenary of the establishment of the CCF contingent.

To mark the occasion the Countess inspected the cadets, and then watched a fly-past by the

Fleet Air Arm.

The day also saw the re-opening of the school's Memorial Hall, in commemoration of former pupil Sgt Ben Ross RMP, who died while serving in Afghanistan in 2009.

A panel created in honour of Ben was unveiled by his family.



● International exchange cadets with their hosts in South Korea

Flying the flag in Korea

A MEMBER of Northampton and Wellingborough unit had a particularly busy summer, training up in boat station skills, learning to be a dinghy instructor - oh, and fitting in an international exchange trip to South Korea as well.

LC Lara Jolley was chosen as one of the top cadets in the UK to take part in the exchange, which saw youngsters from the UK, the United States, Canada, the Netherlands and Russia hosted by South Korean cadets.

The British representatives did not have much time to unwind on arrival in South East Asia, getting some lunch and a little rest before they joined the others for a traditional Korean dinner.

They were then given a briefing on what to expect for the rest of the week, and finally got to bed.

The following day saw a tour to a typical Korean village, where Lara and her group took part in a Korean tea ceremony and had the chance to bash away at Korean drums.

They were then whisked

away from the traditional when they were taken to Lotte World, a massive indoor and outdoor amusement park in Seoul.

The first formal element of the exchange took place that evening with an opening ceremony and speeches over dinner by the President of Sea Explorers in Korea.

That set the pattern for the rest of the week.

The following day was spent at the demilitarised zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea and visited the War Memorial of Korea, then it was on to the Korean Naval Academy, where they toured the museum and took part in the opening ceremony for the Sea Festival.

In between formal events the cadets took the opportunity to get to know their international comrades, a crucial element of such exchanges.

A regatta gave the visitors a chance to indulge in a water fight and ride various craft, including dragon boats and banana boats,

and there were more tours, to a museum and a warship.

Day Seven finished with a good night out, so the following day proved quite tiring, with a full programme of visits to a palace and exhibitions, a little sailing and a trip up Seoul Tower; the cadets were also photographed by the Korean media.

Then it was time for goodbyes - "this was a very sad moment as we had become close friends with the other cadets on the exchange," said Lara.

"This was a brilliant exchange, everything was very well organised and set to a schedule, however the cadets had enough freedom so that they could enjoy themselves and have a good time."

"The co-ordinator planned the event so the cadets could get the most out of their day and made sure that they were having a good time."

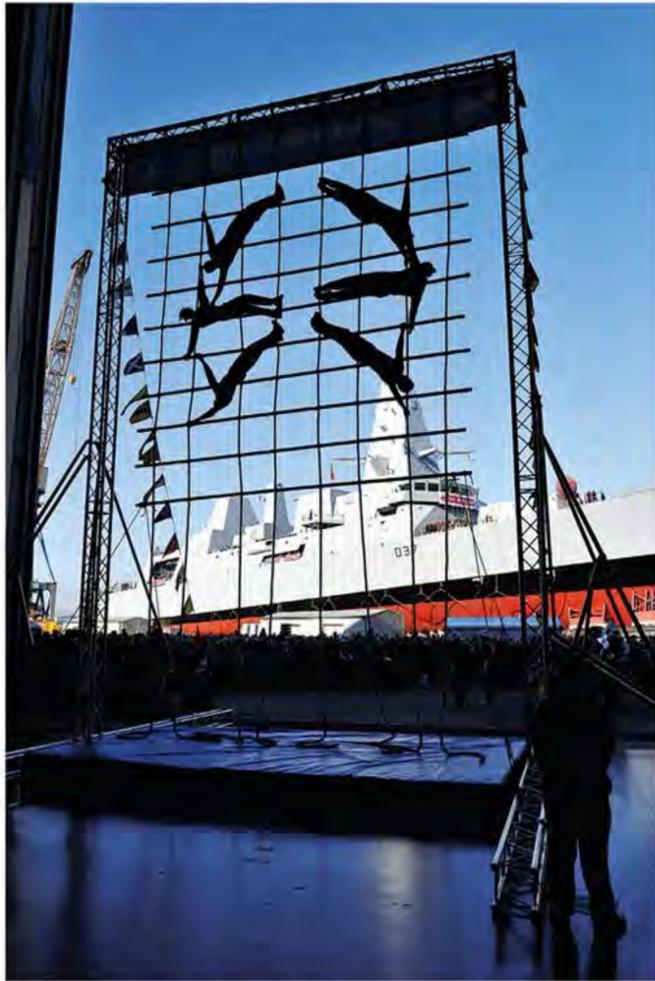
"Everybody was very polite and it was really good to experience other cultures and mix with new people."



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Launch party

SEA Cadets from various units were on hand to help launch the sixth and final Type 45 destroyer in Glasgow.

Duncan rattled down the slipway at the Govan in front of 14,000 spectators on a sunny autumn morning on the anniversary of the Battle of Camperdown, at which Admiral Adam Duncan defeated the Dutch fleet in 1797.

Perhaps most prominent amongst the Sea Cadet representatives were those from Tameside, who staged their renowned window ladder display adjacent to the slipway.

Fireworks and military music were part of the programme, as was a Sea Cadet guard of honour, which kept the crowds entertained with drill before greeting VIPs as they made their way to their seats.

But another 16 units had cadets and staff at the launch, with strong representation from traditional ship-building areas, both central Scotland and from the North-East of England.

Cap badges on display on the south bank of the Clyde included: TS Arbroath (Arbroath), TS William Wilson (Dalbeattie), TS Duncan (Dundee), TS Cunningham (East Kilbride), TS Flamingo (Gateshead), TS Forth (Grangemouth), TS Gold Rover (Greenock), TS Trincomalee (Hartlepool), TS Neptune (Helensburgh), TS Christopher (Lochaber), TS Ajax (Methil), TS Indefatigable (Musselburgh), TS Caledonia (Peterhead), TS Collingwood (South Shields), TS Carron (Stonehaven) and TS Comus (Wallsend).

● The cadets of Tameside go through their window ladder display before Duncan's launch (left) while members of various units were on parade in the Sea cadet guard of honour (right)

Pictures: PO(Phot) Ian Arthur RNR



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.

TS Eastbourne has a complement of 80 cadets, with more on the waiting list, and traces its roots back to 1909 and the efforts of local man Albert Fellowes.

Mr Fellowes 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 her.

Today's cadets regularly attend offshore courses and international expeditions, gain top-level awards in national and inter-Service shooting competitions, take part in Duke of Edinburgh Awards events and attend visits hosted by royalty.

More than 1,000 training days and 300 courses have been completed in its centenary year.

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 and every one of them for what they have done and what they are now challenged 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 Cadet and five CNR officers instructed and acted as Divisional Officers during the camp, looking after a total of 223 cadets – 126 from the CCF, 39 Sea Cadets and 58 potential officer cadets.

Of this cohort, 40 were in the CCF Band – a popular recent decision, as the band performed with distinction at the mess dinner, ceremonial divisions 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 conning, steering, fixing, navigation and ship's husbandry, and made full use of the boats' equipment, while there was also the opportunity to take the Bosun dinghies out as well.

Two Archer-class vessels, HM ships Tracker and Raider, were available to provide sea-time, while cadets were also given the chance to try scuba-diving, various sports (including swimming) and a stint 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.

TS Bee trio face challenge

THREE members of the Whitehaven unit were due to take part in the Royal Marines Commando Challenge.

The 10km 'fun' event was being staged at CTCRM in Lymington.

Simon Gray, Ben Abbott and Carl McFarland, all staff members with TS Bee's Royal Marines Cadet detachment, 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 'sheep dip' – an underwater tunnel.

Anyone wishing to pledge support can contact the team at challenge@tsbee.org.uk

Each member of the team was personally paying around £100 in travel, accommodation and food.



● From left: Lt Cdr (SCC) Alan Fleming, Mrs Mary Bayliss, LC Katherine Thornley and Lt Cdr (SCC) Andrew Grainge

Picture: Stewart Turkington

Berkshire trio win acclaim

THREE members of the Sea Cadets in Berkshire have received awards from the Lord Lieutenant of the county.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Alan Fleming RNR was awarded a Lord Lieutenant's Certificate by Mrs Mary Bayliss for meritorious service to the youth of Berkshire and the Corps.

Alan is Assistant District Officer in Berkshire and Southern Area Officer for parade and ceremonial.

He was also, until April this year, Commanding Officer of the

Maidenhead unit.

He has been in the Cadets since he was 12, and an adult instructor since 1980.

LC Katherine Thornley, of Maidenhead unit TS Iron Duke, was invested as the 2010 Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Berkshire.

And Lt Cdr (SCC) Andrew Grainge RNR was awarded a Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for meritorious service.

He, like his colleague, joined the Corps as a 12-year-old, and has been instructing since 1985.

Recruiting – and more

TWO cadets and three members of staff of Stockport unit who were recruiting hard at the Mayor's Fun Day in Woodbank Park also managed to find the time to check out the other attractions, including lacrosse.

A big BZ to Cdt Griffies and RMC2 Broomhead, who did the business on the recruiting side.

Games theory

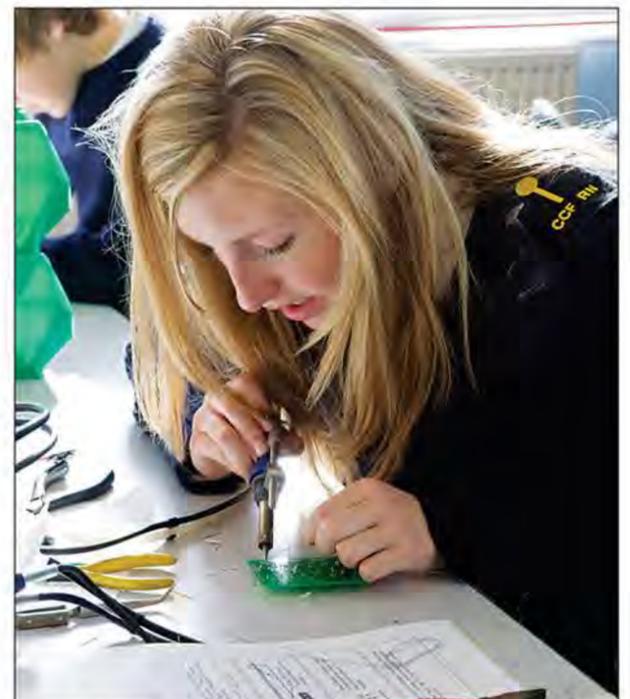
A GROUP of 11 senior cadets from Sutton Valence School CCF RN section visited HMS Collingwood to take a look at electrical engineering training – and went away with their own memory games.

The group, hosted by the Maritime Warfare School, were set the task of building an electronic memory game using standard components and a printed circuit board.

Lt (CCF) Dan Keep, the officer in charge of the RN unit at the school, spoke of the "excellent facilities, impressive organisation and knowledgeable and personable staff" at the Fareham training establishment who guided the cadets through the programme for the day.

"Tasks were performed well, and with excellent advice and instruction, all cadets completed a working game to take away at the end of the afternoon," said Lt Keep.

"This snapshot of the diverse aspects of naval training is one the cadets will certainly remember and one that I hope we will repeat."



● Polly Oakes, of Sutton Valence School CCF, tries her hand at electrical engineering training at HMS Collingwood



● Medal of Honor winner John Basilone (Jon Seda) leads his men during the assault on Iwo Jima, as recreated in *The Pacific*

Picture: HBO

No peace in The Pacific

OK, WE'LL get the obvious out of the way from the off.

There's no Royal Navy involvement in *The Pacific*. This is how the Americans won the war in the Far East. The US Marine Corps to be precise.

And if you can stomach that fact (and, to be fair, this is not some triumphalist US flagwaver), then *The Pacific* (released this month on DVD £39.99/Blu-Ray £49.99) is nine hours of compelling television wartime drama (plus an hour or so of extras).

As it's produced by many of the team behind *Band of Brothers* (now almost ten years old, amazingly) – indeed the blurb celebrates the fact that *The Pacific* hails from the same stable – comparisons with that great series are inevitable.

And in that respect it does fall a little short.

The Pacific chooses to follow the lives of three marines – Robert Leckie, Eugene Sledge (both of whose memoirs provide much of the source material for the storyline) and John Basilone (winner of the American 'VC', the Medal of Honor) – rather than an entire company, as in *Band of Brothers*.

Between them, the three saw action from the first offensive US actions of the conflict – Guadalcanal – to the assaults on Okinawa

and Iwo Jima in 1945 (Basilone died during the attack on the latter).

In focusing on these three, *The Pacific* does have a habit of flitting between them – different locations, different battles – which can make some episodes hard to follow.

In addition, none of the three central characters is as attractive as Richard Winters, the lynchpin (and narrator) of *Band of Brothers*.

Robert Leckie was – on the evidence here – a rather moody character; nor does Sledge, who became a popular and warm-hearted biology professor post-war, come across particularly well – perhaps it was the arrogance of youth.

Of the triumvirate, John Basilone is by far the most 'human'. He is a household name in the US (they still hold parades in his honour 65 years after his death) – the nearest equivalent in the UK might be VC winner Johnson Beharry.

Unfortunately, Basilone drifts out of the series for quite a while (but he did get his leg over with Hollywood starlet Virginia Grey during a propaganda tour of

the USA), leaving the less-likeable Sledge (played by Joe Mazzello) and Leckie (James Badge Dale) to bear the brunt of the war... and the brunt of the programme.

Despite these shortcomings, *The Pacific* is the most impressive thing to appear on TV this year; there's nothing remotely as ambitious produced by British television companies.

The acting is first rate and the production values are more big than small screen.

The Pacific is a much darker programme than *Band of Brothers* – due to the savage nature of the war in the Far East, which was considerably more brutal than the Western Front 1944-45.

That brutality is vividly demonstrated in battle scenes which outstrip anything depicted in *Band of Brothers*. The fighting on Guadalcanal (you'll never forget the Japanese soldier who tries to take on an entire marine unit single-handedly) is brilliantly recreated here.

So too is invasion of the island Peleliu; the several minutes devoted to the amphibious assault are every bit as impressive as those

jaw-dropping opening scenes from *Saving Private Ryan*.

Such spectacles are what have earned *The Pacific* the headlines and plaudits.

But strangely the most compelling episode is the brutally-honest one following Leckie's mental breakdown.

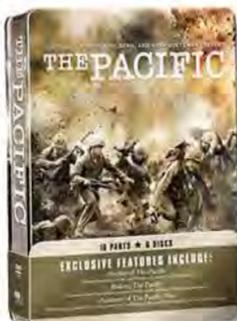
After more than a year's fighting, the strain of battle took its toll.

The young marine began to suffer from nocturnal enuresis – bedwetting – and was sent behind the lines for psychiatric treatment; there he discovers that many comrades have also cracked. It's an episode which gets right to the dark heart of war in the Pacific.

■ We have five DVD boxsets of *The Pacific* to give away courtesy of HBO and Premier PR.

To win tell us the codename of the Allied plan to invade the main Japanese islands at the end of World War 2 – a plan cancelled when Japan surrendered in the wake of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Entries must reach us by mid-day on Friday December 3 2010.

Send your answer – including your contact details – to pacific@navynews.co.uk or The Pacific Competition, Navy News, Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH.



When naval historians go to war...

WHEN I began my career as a professional naval historian in 1971, the major names in the field were Arthur Marder and Stephen Roskill, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

The first – an American academic – had just completed his magisterial *From The Dreadnought to Scapa Flow* which, in five thick volumes, told the story of the Royal Navy from 1904 to 1919, a period Marder called the 'the Fisher era'.

This had followed on an already impressive corpus of naval historiography, starting with a seminal book on British Naval policy from 1880-1905 published in 1940 and followed by works on Admirals Richmond and Fisher, based on their papers.

Capt Roskill was a former Royal Navy gunnery officer who, because of proven literary and analytical skills demonstrated in the *Naval Review* and an important report on the Bikini nuclear tests, was chosen by the Cabinet Office to write *The War at Sea*, the official account of the Royal Navy's role in World War 2.

This appeared in four volumes, together with a shorter single volume summary, from 1954 to 1961.

Roskill then moved on to a notable first volume on *Naval Policy Between the Wars* and was

The Grove Review

then diverted into the biography of Lord Hankey, that vital 'man of secrets' at the heart of British policymaking in the first half of the 20th Century. The second book on inter-war policy, a slightly disappointing volume on the 1930s, came out in 1976.

By this time open warfare had broken out between the two great men. The reason was a dispute over the use of the Hankey papers compounded by an agreement, in Roskill's eyes at least, that Marder had promised not to trespass on his historical territory.

The central issues in the controversy was the extent of Churchill's interference in naval operations. Marder, with his American worship of Churchill, argued that Churchill had not been guilty of this. Roskill, the Naval insider, argued the opposite.

At the time I thought that Roskill had the better of the argument, and nothing in this new study of the controversy – *Historical Dreadnoughts: Arthur Marder, Stephen Roskill and the Battle for Naval History* by Barry Gough (*Seaforth*, £30 ISBN 978-1848320772) – has changed that.

Gough, a distinguished professor of history in Canada with a record of significant writing in Canadian history and Anglo-

Canadian maritime connections, is clearly a fan of Marder whose biography he began to write but who then decided to expand his study to a study of both men. His bias in favour of Marder shows through, however, despite what I am sure were attempts to be more balanced.

This may be no bad thing as Marder has tended to get something of a rough ride from the succeeding generation of naval historians. Prof Jon Sumida of the University of Maryland (interestingly, another American) began a revisionist attack on Marder's orthodoxy at the end of the 1980s that has since become something of a new orthodoxy in itself.

Roskill, rather naturally, encouraged this process. A little surprisingly, Gough only refers to this somewhat briefly and indirectly. Prof Sumida's name does not appear on his list of interviewees, although Sumida's able colleague, Nicholas Lambert, does.

This is something of a disappointment as in many ways there is continuity between the Sumida/Marder controversy and the older conflict. Indeed a new revisionism has begun against the new orthodoxy, which Gough does

not cover at all, although he might agree with it.

The author has clearly swallowed Marder's case for Admiral Richmond, that most intelligent but also most difficult of naval officers, which the previous generation of naval historians built up into a major figure.

He misses out my more critical analysis when quoting my work own work on Richmond for a conference, which is perhaps indicative of Gough's general approach.

I have been informed that he has also ignored documents that demonstrate a rather more uneasy relationship that developed between Marder and the Naval Historical Branch than Gough recounts.

Moreover, the author takes the evidence of Sir Eric Seal, Churchill's principal secretary, as somehow conclusive in proving Roskill was wrong in his criticisms of the First Lord's interference.

Seal had a view but a strong pro-Churchill bias given his position must be taken into account. I certainly do not think Roskill thought that Seal's evidence somehow proved his analysis wrong and that he was "terribly embarrassed by Seal's revelation". The book does also not engage

critically as much as it might have with one of Marder's greatest strengths as well as a potential weakness.

He explains how the historian corresponded with many participants in the events he was recounting and analysing but I have always thought that, because of his real and laudable love for the Royal Navy and respect for its people, he could be rather uncritical of what he was given. Roskill, the insider, had a more mature view – although his own biases could show through also. Historians are nothing if not human.

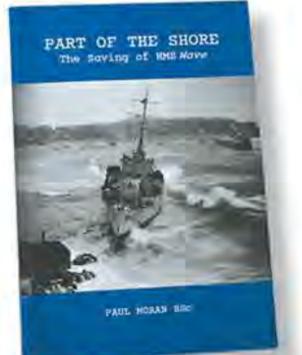
I must declare a pro-Roskill bias as he was very nice to me as a budding naval historian when I pointed out a mistake in his 1977 book *Churchill and the Admirals*.

I am of my generation in regarding Roskill as the sounder historian but there is a valid pro-Marder view that, as stated above, is beginning to mount a counter-attack.

This book provides an important contribution to this campaign and the production of a more balanced view. It is based on much research and it is well written.

It should have had a rather longer epilogue but is a most worthy work nonetheless.

If you want to understand the *dramatis personae* and dynamics of naval historical writing in the mid-to-late 20th Century you need to read this book – but do so critically, and more needs to be said.



As I was going to St Ives...

THE rocks of the Cornish coast have claimed many victims, some through negligence (Torrey Canyon), some through bad luck (HMS Warspite).

That HMS Wave did not join the list of shipwrecks is thanks largely to a superhuman effort by sailors and the good folk of St Ives, who toiled for four days in the autumn of 1952 to save the stricken minesweeper.

Built towards the tail end of WW2, Wave's minesweeping days were brief; shortly after the war's end, she joined the Fishery Protection Squadron.

She was still with the 'cod squad' in September 1952 when she anchored off St Ives to ride out a storm.

In the small hours of the last day of the month, with the tempest raging, the anchor gave way and the ship was driven ashore close to rocks at the southern end of the fishing port's harbour.

Bosun's mate Eric Rice peered out of the starboard to see "a wall of rock with houses perched on top".

Some of his shipmates were later carried ashore by breeches buoy, aided by townsfolk, who gathered in large numbers to watch and assist.

Wave's story – and the four-day salvage operation – is exhaustively recounted by Paul Moran (who witnessed the rescue) in *Part of the Shore* (St Ives Printing and Publishing, £14.99 ISBN 978-0-94838499).

The author interviewed surviving crew and St Ives' residents and gathered scores of excellent images, dramatically showing how close HMS Wave came to disaster – and how the naval and fishing communities rallied to save her.

Wave's Commanding Officer and his bridge team were reprimanded for allowing their ship – and her crew – to be imperilled, verdicts which seem rather harsh as subsequent scientific investigation showed the anchor chains were badly flawed (the starboard one failed on the night of the storm, causing the near-disaster; the port one failed while Wave was being towed to Devonport).

Thanks to the efforts of all, Wave was repaired and continued to serve the nation until the early 1960s.

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Rare triumph for Yeovilton

AFTER a nine-year wait, RNAS Yeovilton Golf Society (YGS) has finally managed to win the Aylward 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 1983 as a memorial to LA Cecil Aylward who was killed in an aircraft accident at Yeovilton in 1945.

The match and cup were subsequently named in honour of Cecil and in recognition of the ongoing relationship between Yeovilton and Guernsey; members of Cecil's family still regularly take part in the event.

Yeovilton have only managed two victories in the tournament's history (1988 and 2001).

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 in the Channel Islands, team captain CPO Nige Pogson explains how the team played to success:

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

"The pairings of WO1 John Sheldon and Lt 'Dutchy' Holland, Bobby Shafto and WO1 Pete Edwards and Steve Reece and Lt Paul Mitchell also gained impressive victories on a demanding links course, with the vital half point being supplied by CPO Nick Carter and Andy Sinclair.

"This ensured a total of 4½ points for the YGS preventing the RGGC from retaining the trophy once again."

Yeovilton's golf society is made up of approximately 90 members of all ranks, retired ex-servicemen and civilians employed at RNAS Yeovilton.

Over 50 of those members have represented Yeovilton at some stage in the past year against other South-West golf clubs, military units including teams from Bovington and Bicester Garrison and one from Yeovil Police.

"The Guernsey trip is the season's closing event and the team is made up of those whom have played the most amount of matches throughout the season and the YGS committee," explained Nige.

"With handicaps this year ranging from six up to 24 the team is never selected on skill, leaving the opportunity to play in the event open to all abilities of golfer."

Tradition dictates that the Aylward Cup remains stored in the trophy cabinet at the RGGC clubhouse, preventing the Heron 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 feat 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-public funds for the benefit of sport in the Senior Service.

These funds, which come from SABS, VSSS, investments and charitable donations, are distributed as grants to RN/RM sports associations and Command sports funds, for coaching and to support individual athletes.

The role of a Trustee is to ensure that the Charity is run efficiently and that support to Sport is fairly distributed.

The majority of the activity will centre on board meetings which are generally three times a year.

More information and application forms can be obtained from Norman Jackson, company secretary, on nssc-cs@sky.com or 07512 857 806. The closing date is December 5 2010.

Picture: PO(AWT) Dutchy Holland



Riders race for Jamie

POET(ME) Matt Page – riding as Team Royal Navy Racing – negotiates the Thruxton track in an emotional Round 14 of the North Gloucester Road Racing Club (NGRRC) 2010 Championship, writes PO(AWT) Dutchy Holland, HMS Collingwood.

The senior rating from HMS Dragon represented the Royal Navy Motor Cycle Club on his Suzuki SV 650, competing in the Open 600 and Minitwin classes.

With free practice due to start at 9am, organisers decided to postpone the session by an hour and a half because of fog covering the full 2.4 miles of the fastest circuit in the UK.

As the fog lifted the organisers

decided to go ahead with the practice sessions.

Matt went out in practice three on wet tyres – the track was still damp from the previous night's downpour although dry lines were appearing so the wets were only just about viable.

The team entered the Open 600 class for some extra practice at this seldom-ridden circuit.

With most machines having between a 30-45 BHP power advantage over Matt's Minitwin, the team were delighted to qualify for the main Open 600 race with a time of 1m 30.05s and an average speed of 94mph, placing the RN 30th on the grid.

By the time of the RNMCC's

main event, the Minitwin class, the track had dried for qualifying, with only the odd damp patch around the circuit to catch out anyone who strayed off line.

After just five laps Royal Navy Racing had secured a front-row start for the afternoon's race, having moved up from 13th on the grid to 4th, another good result that put a podium finish within reach.

In the mid-afternoon all racing was suspended and the NGRRC held a one-minute silence to remember PO Jamie Adam, a North Gloucester Road Racing Club member who lost his life competing at the Isle of Man GP in the summer.

As a tribute, the RN's very own Stig (no we can't identify him...) took Jamie's bike – with its trademark commando livery – for one last lap. Throughout the weekend's racing all bikes wore memorial stickers with a picture of Jamie on their motorcycles as a mark of respect for the work he had done for the club.

When racing recommenced, the Open 600 race got under way. Unfortunately Matt's trusty steed gave up on lap two with a slipping clutch.

With no spare available, the bike was packed away and the hard earned front-row grid position in the later Minitwin class was left empty.

Royals edge Inter-Commands

AFTER a hard-fought and well-played contest, the Inter-Command Championships reached a thrilling conclusion with the Royal Marines pitted against Portsmouth at Victory Stadium.

In a tight first half Portsmouth narrowly edged ahead with a goal from the penalty spot by AET Danny Cummins in the 19th minute. Cummins is relatively new to the Service and showed some good movement and strength of character to step up and successfully convert the spot kick.

Following an inspired half-time team talk, the Royals unsurprisingly came out and took the game to Portsmouth.

In a deadly 15-minute spell Mne Mick Husband (62 min) and Mne Lee Hildreth (75 min) took their chances to put the Royals in the lead.

Both goalkeepers put in outstanding displays to keep the scores down and after a tough match involving two evenly-matched teams the Royal Marines ran out winners.

A fine individual performance by Mne Danny Fox, in which he was dominant in midfield, proved to be the difference and rightly earned him the man of the match award and the Royal Marines the title of Inter Command champions for 2010.

The Inter Commands are the curtain-raiser to the new season and you can look forward to hearing how our representative teams get on in future editions.

As ever, we are keen to hear about Royal Navy football at all levels and wherever you are deployed. Contact Lt Cdr Neil Horwood (398-lo@a.dii.mod.uk) with your match results, along with photographs.

Meanwhile, you might see the



● Sailor (and referee) PO David McNamara (centre) at the launch of the Football Needs You campaign with former England star Graeme Le Saux (second from right) and TV presenter Ben Shephard (third from left)



Onside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

face of PO David 'Jacky' McNamara around England's football grounds in coming months. The senior rating, currently serving at RAF Waddington, is one of half a dozen or so 'ordinary folk' chosen to front a national campaign aimed at fostering grass roots coaches and officials.

The Football Association wants to find 50,000 new coaches and 8,000 fresh referees within the

next two years.

David, from Preston, lined up with an air steward, teacher, singer and firefighter... plus former England and Chelsea defender Graeme Le Saux and ITV presenter Ben Shephard to head the Football Needs You campaign.

As well as posters, the campaign features cinema ads (also viewable online) and is part of a £200m

initiative by the FA to support the national game at the grass roots level.

In the petty officer's case, refereeing is his passion. "I kind of had an epiphany at 33 when I realised I had hit my playing peak, and needed something else to keep me in football," he explains. "Refereeing has enabled me to stay in the game I love."

Since that epiphany, the senior rating has risen through the referee rankings and now officiates almost to Football League level.

More information on the campaign at thefa.com/footballneedsme.

Lifting makes us feel good

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

The Senior Service fielded a team of six lifters: Lt Adam Cooper, Cpl Mark Fleming, LMA John Strange, AB Niall Duncan, AET Simon Cataldo and AET John Locker.

Four of the lifters competed in the full power event with the exception of Lt Cooper, who only benched, and AB Duncan who only deadlifted because of pre-existing injuries.

Before the start of lifting at RAF Wittering – the new home of Combined Services powerlifting – all 45 competitors were tested by the Compulsory Drugs Test team as powerlifting aims to assert itself as the lead sport in drug-free competitions across the three Services.

The competition started well with AET John Locker getting a personal best in the squat of 120kg.

LMA John Strange squatted 180kg in the 125kg class for a new RN record and then Cpl Mark Fleming went on to squat the highest amount in the tournament with 217.5kg.

It was encouraging to see that all female entrants competed in each of the three disciplines and equally impressive was that the RAF managed to field a team of ten female lifters.

While their respective standards varied, all the female competitors showed a great deal of enthusiasm.

Indeed, one lesson taken away from the day was the need to grow the number of female lifters if the Royal Navy are to compete for all Combined Services titles in the future.

The bench event saw the largest number of competitors with the Army having a large contingent of bench-only specialists.

John Locker set another personal best with a bench of 117.5kg.

The largest bench of the day went to Capt Neil Thomas from the Army who successfully benched 180kg and attempted 190kg.

Again Cpl Mark Fleming gave a very impressive display by benching 170kg despite only weighing in at 80kg.

The deadlift event was a fitting finale to the day, with four out of the six Navy lifters hitting personal bests.

AET John Locker gained his third PB of the day by pulling 180kg.

AET Simon Cataldo lifted a healthy 200kg but clearly had spare capacity for more. And AB Niall Duncan then surprised himself by pulling an easy personal best of 210kg.

In the second deadlift flight, LMA John Strange pulled a new Navy record with a personal best of 240kg in the 125kg class before Cpl Mark Fleming closed the personal bests by pulling a massive 260kg – despite not deadlifting since April.

When the time came for the prizes the RAF swept up all of the female lifter awards due to the strength in numbers of their team.

Best individual squat, bench and deadlift awards all went to Army individuals, however Cpl Fleming won the best full power lifter award.

Consequently, having checked the record books it turned out that Mark had missed out on a world record by a mere 10kg, a situation he will no doubt address at the World Championships this month.

When the points were totalled, the Air Force were placed third (better known as last!), and the Royal Navy were squeezed into second place by the Army by a measly three points.

I would walk 100 miles...

WITH apologies to the Proclaimers, but this is a tale from north of the Border...

More than 50 Service personnel and staff at Faslane have signed up to the base's new 100-Mile Club, intended to promote running and general fitness at HM Naval Base Clyde.

With the offer of a free (very bright yellow) T-shirt and possible prizes, LPT Regaina Cawley has managed to entice fellow Faslaners out of offices and ships and on to the roads.

The aim is for each runner to clock up 100 miles (hence the club's name...) at their own pace.

Club members keep a tally of their mileage and, using that old adage of teachers and school tests, Regaina says that "if runners cheat, then they cheat themselves".

Since the 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 is still pounding the roads of Argyll and Bute despite long since achieving the club's goal.

"Not being a natural fitter, I've always struggled to find an incentive to do physical training," he said.

"The allure of a free T-shirt was enough to spark my interest in the 100-Mile Club and it was the incentive I needed to get up and start running again. I've not looked back since.

"I started with small runs and then ramped up to twice around the base, although I must admit that the hill up to the Sportsdrome gets a bit emotional near the top!

"Once past the 100-mile target, I 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, for the first time in years, I'm looking forward to my Royal Navy Fitness Test."

More details on the club is available from LPT Cawley on Faslane 3745.

Indoor fireworks

Continued from page 48

Hockey Cup. Ten teams entered the contest at Temeraire; the first day saw two leagues playing one-way matches of 25 minutes.

At the end of that day BRNC had scored 17 goals in 100 minutes of hockey – and kept a clean sheet.

That guaranteed an appearance in the semi-final against HMS Heron, which proved to be a very tight affair.

A magnificent triple save by keeper Lt Shani Dyer in the last minute ensured Dartmouth held on for a 2-1 win.

BRNC had reached the cup final twice before in the past decade, winning it in 2001/02 and losing to HMS Drake last year.

In 2010 they faced HMS Collingwood and went a goal up in just 20 seconds thanks to a pushback and a clever up field aerial from OC Rich Jenkin to OC John Hamilton.

Capitalising on this early advantage the team went 2-0 up within ten minutes. Collingwood came back with a penalty stroke but BRNC had the upper hand throughout ending up as 4-2 victors.

10s time in the sun

RAF Akrotiri is looking for RN teams to enter its well-known international rugby 10s tournament next year.

The competition – won in the past by the RM and RN U23s – will be staged in Cyprus from May 30-June 3 2011.

Entry is by invitation with men's, women's and veterans' teams welcome.

Details from Flt Lt Trevor Down on trev.down@cyp.mod.uk or Sqn Ldr Steve Williams on theoldgoat@ntlworld.com.

Keith's bronze age

PROUDLY displaying the rewards for his skill and dedication, Lt Keith Bowers shows off the first medals won by a naval fencer at the Commonwealth Games in 60 years.

HMS Dragon's deputy weapon engineer officer (posing here beside his ship at Scotstoun on the Clyde) brought home bronze in the individual and team event for Scotland.

The Commonwealth Fencing Championships have been held separately from the main Commonwealth Games since 1974 and this year were staged over a week in Melbourne.

The individual sabre competition saw Keith placed 11th after the seeding pools.

He then beat a fellow Scot in the last 16, cruised past Antony Selling of Australia 15/3 to reach the final eight and then England's Stuart Marshall (currently ninth in the British rankings) 15/11 to move into the semis, where he unfortunately lost to Ratneswaren, another English fencer, 15/7.

The team competition saw Scotland reach the semi finals where they lost to Australia before managing to win the play off against India to establish themselves as the third-placed team.

Keith has established himself as a very competent fencer at Service level; in recent years he's been RN champion at all three weapons (foil, épée and sabre).

It is at sabre that he excels, however, and 2010 has seen him maintain his position consistently in the top 30 in the British rankings to achieve his selection for Scotland for the Commonwealth championships.

We'll let him describe his Australian exploits:

"The chance to represent my country in a major championship such as this has been an awesome experience.

"The trip to Melbourne was one filled with nerves and trepidation about what to expect, about how I was going to perform.

"If anyone had said I was going to win a bronze medal before I travelled, I would have laughed at them – my expectations were much lower, hoping to finish in the top 16.

"As a men's sabre team our



focus had been on preparing for the team event and gaining a reasonable seeding from the individuals to give us a good chance of winning a team medal.

"The team we built was a very close and supportive unit focused on helping each other to deliver their best performance.

"On the day of the individual event I had just about managed to master my nerves and got 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 proceed to the next round.

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

"The next round was fairly straight forward, but I couldn't have asked for a better draw as my opponent 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 adrenaline flowing.

"I then had to fence a clubmate

from Sheffield, Stuart Marshall, who had got the better of me in our previous four encounters.

"I was so overjoyed when the fight finished and I had won and I knew I had secured myself a medal.

The support from the whole Scottish team through this fight was sensational.

"I don't think I've ever had so much vociferous cheering all for me! I then fenced a GB Junior International fencer who unfortunately was just a step too far for me.

"My result coupled with the others' gave the Scottish men's sabre team a seeding of second behind England and ahead of Australia.

"The team event was scheduled for three days after the individual and the next two days had to be focussed on resting and regrouping so as to be able to deliver another strong performance on the piste.

"For me it was very hard to get my mind back in the game and focussed as I was still riding the high of my first medal.

"In the end we had a very good match where we cruised through Guernsey and then met a very strong team in the form of Australia in the semi-finals.

"We had the lead early on then they established their authority in the fourth bout, winning 45-35.

"We then had India in the third-place play off; they had proven in their semi-final against England that they were a strong team.

"We had to work very hard as a team to overcome the disappointment of not making the final and to ensure that we gave everything to the match against India.

"In the end we won 45-40 in what was a very hard-fought match. It was our team spirit that I think enabled us to achieve what we did.

"Winning a second bronze was the crowning glory for me; I would never have believed that I would be coming back from Melbourne with one medal, let alone two."

For the record, the last Naval fencer to win a medal at this level was Royal Marine Bob Anderson in the épée in 1950 – when the event was part of the main British Empire Games.

Michael Amberg won medals in sabre in 1954 and 1958 but this was after he had left the RN and Barbara Williams, fencing for Scotland, was part of their silver medal team in 1970 prior to joining the Navy.

Allo, allo it's vélo, vélo

TWENTY-TWO members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Cycling Association (RNRMCA) attended the 29th Duo Normand International Cycling Time Trial Race in Normandy.

The event once again proved to be a fitting conclusion to a successful season for the RNRMCA and saw 20 athletes compete in teams of two against the clock in the race contested over 54km (33 miles).

This race is staged in and around the town of Marigny on the Cherbourg Peninsula and boasts Olympic gold medallists Chris Boardman and Bradley Wiggins among previous winners.

It was an early start on race day, which saw the town decked in its best flags and a truly fantastic atmosphere. Eight hundred entrants, in teams of two, started at one-minute intervals throughout the day.

Unlike UK time trials, each pair in the Duo Normand is allowed a support vehicle following them around the course. This, coupled with a ramp start, kilometre markers and the large crowd, added to the sense of occasion.

All RNRMCA riders showed true grit and determination giving nothing but 100 per cent during their rides. Club favourites Garry Drew and Lee Sanderson proved to be the pick of the RN club crop, recording a time of 1h 21m 10s for their ride.

The evening allowed the riders the opportunity to relax and enjoy a dinner in their hotel. The sense of achievement and post race "banter" was plain to see.

In the absence of the RNRMCA President, Cdr Mark Beverstock, who had to cancel his participation in the event at short notice due to Service commitments, general secretary Cdr David Wallace praised the conduct of club members and their performances in the international sporting arena.

The time trial season is now almost over and the many club members who have raced since February are enjoying a well-earned rest of about a month before training starts for 2011.

Refs confer

MORE than 30 Royal Navy rugby union referees gathered at Yeovilton in preparation for the 2010-11 season.

A series of informative lectures and interactive training sessions had been put together by the society training officer, Gaz Fairbairn.

Following a rousing address from Cdr Stew Kilby, chairman of the RNRURS, Matt Kiernan gave an illuminating lecture on how the human brain makes decisions and how to cope with stress and exhaustion during a game; an insight into the workings of the human mind is always fascinating.

South West RFU referee development manager Steve Harland covered some re-emphasis of laws that are being stressed this season before lunch was taken by the delegates.

The society was lucky enough to have a long session with David Dunn, Bournemouth RFC's coach.

There was a lot of banter and good humour, but valuable information was gleaned about how a top rugby club prepares to deal with referees and their foibles. It provided a compelling insight into the preparations a club makes and hopefully David also took away some useful tips.

A lecture about communication from Phil Thornton followed, before Paul Burton offered an insight into the trials and tribulations of a Premiership assistant referee.

The day concluded with a Q&A session with the training officer, before the delegates departed, armed with a plethora of fresh knowledge to take to their forthcoming games.

Anyone interested in becoming a Royal Navy rugby referee should contact Gaz at rugbytime@hotmail.com.

WAFUs enjoy life in drag

A TEAM of engineers from RNAS Yeovilton took third place at the Silverline Power Tools Drag Racing championship.

Yes, you read that correctly. Take one household power tool, adapt it a bit (or a lot) and create a racer, strap yourself in, then race against other similarly sharp, high-speed devices.

A perfectly normal sporting pursuit...

This year the championships descended on RNAS Yeovilton and the FAA Museum and proceedings were filmed by Channel 5's *Gadget Show*, whose presenter Jason Bradbury joined the Heron team in building their drag racer.

"Inspiration came from the extreme sport of downhill luge racing where single person sleds are raced downhill, feet first and steered using bodyweight, often achieving speeds of over 140kmh," explains Lt Helen Craig, engineering training officer overseeing the Yeovilton racer.

The finished design only has to race down a 100-metre track, but it nevertheless took the Heron team three months to create the racer.

They leaned heavily on the sheet metal work expertise of PO Kate Newcombe, machining skills of PO Steve Bomers and engine know-how of CPO Dave Lindsay.

Outdoor tool specialist Stihl sponsored the team with a top of



● AET Ryan McGregor, CPO Dave Lindsay, PO Steve Bomers, the Gadget Show's Jason Bradbury, Lt Helen Craig, AET Chris Lodge and PO Kate Newcombe

Picture: James Dadzitis, Western Gazette

the range 9hp MS880 chainsaw and further helped make some top-secret modifications to get the maximum performance from the saw.

AET Chris Lodge acted as the team's brave test driver during the build before handing the steering over to Jason for the race.

The TV presenter was beaten by a fraction of a second by the leading two teams from Toolstation.

"Our fastest time was just over 8.3s using Jason Bradbury as the driver but we are confident that during our own testing the design can cut this by at least one second.

"We had a great weekend and we are confident that we will return to the competition next year."

The 2010 gathering saw a prize fund of £3,000 up for grabs.

Engineers interested in building a racer for the 2011 event should contact powertooldragracing@silverlinetools.com

Next month



Swiftsure sunset – farewell to the S-boats



School's out – Royals finishing training Nigerian forces



Hoofing time – the submariner sampling life in the cavalry



Sick sense – grim tales from the Navy's old medical files


SPORT

Thai-di-hi

KHRU Yai (assistant master) Gary Gregory (in red) leads the inaugural training session of the Royal Navy Muay Thai Association in its new dedicated training facility in Portsmouth.

Muay Thai – commonly known as Thai or kick boxing – was formally established as an RN-approved sport in June 2010.

The martial art grew from roots at HMS Sultan a few years ago, crossed the harbour, and moved into Nelson gym last year with training sessions each Tuesday and Thursday.

The boxers have now converted a disused area above the Defence Mail Centre (just inside Marlborough Gate) into a gym which is fully kitted out with training equipment, punch bags and even a full-size boxing ring. Portsmouth's Captain of the Base, Capt Paul Lemkes, officially opened the new facility, sparring with Logs Dan Bugden.

The dedicated centre will allow members to develop skills in Muay Thai – still used by bodyguards of the Thai royal family.

Gary has developed ties (sorry) with Muay Thai's governing body in its native country and with people who train the Thai military.

Beyond preparing top-end fighters for competitions, the sport promotes good levels of all-round fitness (cardio vascular, core stability and flexibility).

More details are available from Lt Cdr David Goldsmith (93832 8963). Sessions are now also being run at HMS Heron – contact LAET Jamie Mitchell on 93510 5222 for information.

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby, FRPU East



Indoor fireworks

THE Navy Inter Command Indoor Hockey Tournament was held over a 24-hour period in HMS Collingwood.

Sixteen matches, ten for the five men's teams and six for the four women's teams competed on an 'all play all' basis, writes Lt Cdr Alan Walker, RNHA.

There were 199 goals scored in the 16 matches, 123 in the men's event and 76 in the women's.

The men's top scorers were PO(AET) Mark Stanton of Naval Air Command with 24 goals averaging six a match.

The pairing of LET(ME) Danny Makaruk with 14 and Lt Mark Dixon (13) topped this with a Portsmouth 27-goal combo and usual suspects Woody McNally (RM) with 13, Matt Brokenshire (RM) with eight, Nick Carter with eight for Plymouth and Sean Trevelan six 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; AB Liam Pickford rattled in one for Portsmouth.

The best U23 performances came from MA Mike Nock (Scotland) with five – earmarked as a future U23 captain but sadly due to leave the RN – and Mid George Cave from Glasgow URNU with four.

One hundred and 20 players took part – 45 women and 75 men – of whom there were 13 officials. Just eight U23 male players took part. Fifteen of the over 35s veterans – now known officially as masters – also took part, which was significant because 2010 is the first time in 38 years of Inter-Services indoor hockey that space has been found for an IS indoor masters championships (along with U23 men, senior women and senior men).

Of the 45 women, more than one third have been seen in a RN shirt over the recent past.

Portsmouth Command women's management took the opportunity to present their players with Command Colours – a practice



● Lucy in the sky... Portsmouth's Lt Lucy O'Connor leaps on her way to scoring one of her nine goals during the Inter-Command indoor championships, as her teammate Musn Amy Drinkwater and Lt Sarah Pierce (Naval Air Command) look on

which seems to have died out in recent years but one which went down very well with those selected who turned out to play. Naval Air Women won the ladies event, with Plymouth second and Portsmouth a very close third.

A recent survey has suggested that only about half of the Naval uniformed personnel play sport regularly, inferring that the other half play irregularly.

Many RN sports, now just play an East vs West competition. Hockey is jealously working on keeping its preferred – and entirely achievable – command structure of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Scotland, Royal Marines and Naval Air.

The good news is that the Royal Marines women may have a team next time out.

Navy players Msns Alice Hudson, Kate Beard and Amy Drinkwater of the RM School of Music reckon they will have the support to persuade enough of their friends to play to make up a green machine team.

Royal undoubtedly seems a bit preoccupied elsewhere just now, the men's team were pipped of their nine-year crown in the outdoor event in June by Naval Air and now have been topped by both Naval Air and Portsmouth in the indoor event.

The next event on the calendar is the Inter-Services Indoor Inter-Command tournament at Collingwood on November 17.

Away from Fareham, HMS Neptune undertook a mixed hockey tour of the USA.

A potpourri of 13 seasoned pros and beginners, many of whom are products of the grass roots level and RN Hockey Development processes that are established in Scotland, headed to Washington DC.

The first item on the agenda was to acclimatise to the hot and humid East Coast weather; a novelty for sailors and marines based on the wet and windy west coast of Scotland.

A training session was run by CPOET(MESM) Russ Garner (HMS Vengeance) to ensure that the jet lag was blown away and with the sweat pouring the team prepared for their first indoor match against local side DC Dragons.

Playing against strong opposi-

tion the women's team, captained by AB(Wtr) Laura Laing (Neptune), were unlucky to be beaten 4-0 and 4-1.

The men's team fared slightly better by drawing both their games 4-4.

The final game of the day was a mixed match, which ended in, yes you guessed it, another 4-4 draw.

Next on the schedule was a road trip to Philadelphia. A convoy of three cars, with one sat-nav between them, finally got the team to the next hotel via a few (unplanned) de-tours... only for the pre-arranged game to be called off.

Not to be defeated another training session was organised to prepare the team for the forthcoming outdoor game in New York.

The day in Philadelphia allowed the team to relax and visit this historical city with the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall and the Rocky Balboa Statue of particular interest.

New York was the next stop on this whirlwind tour with a game organised against Rye Hockey Club.

Despite playing against a multi-national team – including four ex-internationals and the current US national goalkeeper – the sailors put up a spirited performance, losing 5-1.

Undeterred by the lack of a victory, the team headed back to Washington DC to prepare for the outdoor game against DC Dragons.

Playing at the University of Maryland, the team played some excellent hockey and recorded their first victory of the tour 3-2 with Mne Kyle Pinnock (FPGRM) and AB(Wtr) Amy Trakos (Neptune) receiving well-deserved plaudits from the opposition for their performances.

Overall the tour was a magnificent success – four games in three cities over ten days against some very strong opposition.

The entire team acquitted themselves extremely well and it is hoped to build on this success in the future.

Meanwhile back in Blighty, BRNC led the charge for the RN

Continued on page 47

100% NEW LIFESTYLE. NEW ZEALAND. NAVY

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This is a spacer page to allow the following cutaways to appear correctly, just click on to the next page



“Illustrious manoeuvre well exe

IN ROME, Eberhard Weichold's patience was wearing thin.

For five months, the German Navy's liaison officer to its Italian ally had grown increasingly exasperated.

Weichold was a man of action. A generation before 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 rump of the Navy left after Germany's 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 masters in Berlin. It was a frustrating appointment. Time and again the Italian fleet procrastinated and obfuscated. 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 refused to offer battle to its foe, Britain's Mediterranean Fleet. The latter sailed around the Middle Sea with seeming impunity. Would, Weichold wondered, the Italian battleships “sortie from their harbours at all?”

Weichold's frustration was shared by the German Navy's High Command. The *Regia Marina* showed “no will for offensive action” while its foe steamed around the Mediterranean “as if there was no Italian fleet at all,” Berlin seethed.

In Malta, three reconnaissance aircraft lifted off and set a northeasterly course on a round trip of a good 700 miles. The twin-engined Martin Marylands were ostensibly bombers, but today they would do nothing beyond take photographs.

As it had been for much of the summer and autumn, the kernel of the Italian Fleet lay at anchor in the great natural harbour of Taranto on the eastern shores of the gulf named after it. This was the weapon with which Benito Mussolini's Italy would be “mistress” of the Middle Sea. The *Regia Marina*, the self-styled *Duce* (leader) proclaimed, had nothing to fear from the British. “The Mediterranean is our sea.”

High over Taranto harbour, the shutters of the Marylands' cameras opened and closed in frantic succession. In a fraction of a second, each frame captured a tantalising sight: five battleships at anchor in the bay, a smattering of cruisers, destroyers lined up along a series of jetties and an umbrella of barrage balloons protecting the base from air attack and anti-submarine nets safeguarding the castles of steel against torpedoes.

At Hal Far airfield in southern Malta, Lt Charles Lamb waited impatiently. The Swordfish pilot had been dispatched by HMS *Illustrious* to collect the photographs the Marylands would bring back from their mission – and hopefully a few Maltese potatoes for the aircraft carrier's galley. The black market flourished on the island. For £5, Lamb was able to purchase spuds. For the photographs, however, he would have to wait till the morning – they were still being developed. The airmen suggested a game of poker to pass the evening. Lamb agreed. Despite the £5 outlay for the potatoes – and the mess bill – he found himself “in pocket” after his evening of cards. Making money – and out of the RAF at that – was “very satisfying”.

HMS *Illustrious* had been at sea for four days now, making her way steadily from Alexandria for the waters off Malta, surrounded by a clutch of battleships and escorting destroyers. Ostensibly this mighty force was shepherding a convoy, but *Illustrious* had other intentions.

For several years the senior officer aboard *Illustrious*, Rear Admiral Arthur Lyster had cherished the idea of dealing the *Regia Marina* a decisive blow – in its sanctuary – not using the guns of battleships, but with air power.

As the world's greatest navy, Britain's fleet had been the very first to commit itself to a vessel whose sword was the heavier-than-air craft. Indeed, for more than 20 years, the Royal Navy had possessed aircraft carriers. But like all the navies of the world it had never entirely embraced this new method of naval warfare. So far the battleship-minded admirals had prevailed and pooh-poohed Lyster's plan.

But not so Andrew Browne Cunningham – the legendary ‘ABC’. The Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean was a sailor imbued with the spirit of Nelson like few others in the Royal Navy since Trafalgar. He came from the ‘big gun’ school – he had commanded HMS *Rodney* between the wars and hoisted his admiral's flag in HMS *Warspite* as the war clouds gathered in 1939. But he realised the potential of the aircraft carrier. At his very first meeting with Lyster, the latter had raised the idea of striking the Italians in harbour. ABC nodded. He gave the carrier man “every encouragement”.

In little more than a month, Lyster had honed his aircrew from *Illustrious* and *Eagle* as they practised dropping flares – to illuminate their targets – and the art of dropping torpedoes by night.

By mid-October 1940, Lyster was ready to strike. He would attack on Trafalgar Day but a hangar fire scuppered that plan. Then *Eagle* dropped out of the equation, courtesy of defects. Some of her aircraft were hurriedly transferred to *Illustrious* to make up the numbers.

This Sunday there was more bad news for the admiral: contaminated fuel caused three of *Eagle*'s Swordfishes to ditch. Of the 30 bombers and two carriers he and his staff had envisaged for the Taranto raid – Operation Judgment – there was now a solitary carrier and 21 aircraft; 63 airmen going into battle with obsolescent biplanes carrying 12 torpedoes and a handful of bombs.

Those crews were now resting. Some had carried out anti-submarine patrols that morning, others had studied the Judgment plan once more. In *Illustrious*' hangar the fitters checked and re-checked the 21 Swordfish and flushed the fuel tanks of *Eagle*'s aircraft to prevent any more losses.

The work lasted through the night. When they finished it was Monday November 11 1940. The day of Judgment had arrived.

If Vice Admiral Sir Arthur Lyster was the progenitor of Judgment, Benito Mussolini was the catalyst.

It was the *Duce* who had thrust his nation into this second global conflagration at the side of his ally, Adolf Hitler, against the will of his generals and admirals.

Back in June, as France writhed in agony from the onslaught of Blitzkrieg, Mussolini plunged his dagger into the back of his neighbour. For good measure, he declared war on the British Empire.

From the balcony of his chancellery in Rome, the Palazzo Venezia, the Fascist dictator called his people to arms. “A nation of 45 million is not truly free unless it has free access to the ocean.”

By far the strongest of Mussolini's weapons was his fleet, the *Regia Marina* – half a dozen battleships, more than two dozen cruisers, in excess of 100 submarines.

But this was a flawed cutlass. None of Mussolini's dreadnoughts possessed radar, his cruisers were poorly armoured, his fleet was ill-trained in fighting at night and the submarines – with which the *Duce* boasted he would “rule the Mediterranean” – were slow to dive and fared badly under depth-charge attack. In addition, Italy possessed not a single aircraft carrier – the Navy's Chief-of-Staff, Admiral Domenico Cavagnari, deemed the battleship the queen of the seas.

Such shortcomings were compounded by an inferiority complex. Since the mid-1930s, Italy's admirals had viewed the Royal Navy as their principal potential foe. They feared the might of the Empire. They feared the might of the Royal Navy – and its tradition. Cavagnari was convinced the “awesome war machine” with its bases in Gibraltar and Alexandria would strangle his fleet. The best the *Regia Marina* could hope to achieve was keeping the supply lines to its North African colony, Libya, open.

If the *Regia Marina* was fearful of the Royal Navy, the Royal Navy was rather less fearful of its Italian adversary. With war clouds gathering and three likely foes – Germany, Italy and Japan – all ranged against it, Whitehall feared its Fleet would be overwhelmed by the tasks facing it across the globe. The Royal Navy could deal with one threat, perhaps two, but not all three. Something would have to give.

The Chiefs-of-Staff toyed with all but abandoning the Middle Sea in favour of dispatching a substantial fleet to the Far East to keep Japan in check. Winston Churchill overruled them. He insisted upon “British domination of the Mediterranean”.

His was an opinion shared by Admiral Cunningham, who was filled “with a burning desire to get at the Italian fleet”, not least because he was convinced he could deal with his foe “with something in hand”.

Perhaps he could... but the foe wasn't keen on coming out to play. Like the German Navy a generation before, the *Regia Marina* showed “no signs of activity”.

When it did emerge from its bases – it clashed inconclusively with a heavily-escorted convoy to Malta in early July – the Italian Navy, Cunningham observed, did not prove to be “very dashing”.

Nor for that matter did Italy's Army, the *Regio Esercito* (Royal Army). In September 1940, it stuttered from Libya into Egypt, its four divisions driving a single British brigade. The aim was to reach the Suez Canal. It got no further than 65 miles inside the Egyptian border, seizing the coastal fort of Sidi Barrani then stopping.

It stuttered into Greece too. Not content with war with London, Mussolini wanted one with Athens too. From his Adriatic colony of Albania, the *Duce* sent his soldiers into Greece – once again overruling his commanders. So badly did things go that soon the Greeks were invading Albania.

On Sunday November 10 he summoned his military leaders to a council of war and lambasted them for turning the Italian Army into a laughing stock around the globe. The

Duce's embarrassment was about to worsen.

When Benito Mussolini plunged the Mediterranean into war in June 1940, Britain's position was unenviable.

The bulk of her continental army – the British Expeditionary Force – had been brought home, beaten, from Dunkirk; the remnants were being rescued from Channel ports by the Royal Navy, which had also just effected the final evacuation of Norway.

In the Mediterranean, a relatively weak British force held Egypt, sandwiched between Italian troops to the west in Libya and to the east in Ethiopia and Somalia.

As for the Royal Navy it had enjoyed superiority and, for long periods, supremacy in the Middle Sea since the days of Nelson. But by the summer of 1940, no great power could claim command of the Mediterranean.

The British fleet found itself stretched across 2,000 miles of sea from Gibraltar in the west to Alexandria in the east, with the lynchpin of Malta half-way between the two. The kernels of the Mediterranean Fleet were concentrated at either end of the sea, but the substantial units at Gibraltar kept one eye on the Atlantic, the other gazed eastwards.

For the next three years, the crucible of the naval conflict in the Mediterranean – for the Royal Navy and the *Regia Marina* – would be the centre of the Middle Sea, from Sicily in the west to Crete in the East, Calabria in the north to the shores of Libya in the south, some 300,000 square miles of water. The British fleet sought to safeguard its east-west supply lines, the Italians theirs running north-south; the latter sought to do so from their base at Taranto.

Taranto lies on the upper ‘inside heel’ of Italy's ‘boot’ and gives its name to the gulf between Calabria and Puglia. The city itself occupies a narrow spit of land which separates two great natural harbours – the sweeping outer harbour, the Mar Grande (Big Sea), and the large, sheltered inner harbour, the Mar Piccolo (Little Sea). Linking the two harbours is a canal barely 1,100ft long and under 250ft wide, spanned by a swing bridge which is Taranto's defining image.

The Greeks and the Romans had both recognised Taranto's potential to dominate the Ionian Sea – and hence the central Mediterranean. The modern day Italian Navy was no different. From here, Malta, the central ‘hub’ of the Royal Navy's Mediterranean operations, was but 300 nautical miles away.

The battleships – half a dozen of them – were arrayed in the outer harbour, close to the shore, surrounded by destroyers and cruisers. More destroyers and cruisers could be found in the inner harbour.

The *Regia Marina* realised the importance of Taranto and protected it accordingly: a series of batteries were peppered around the harbour, plus nearly two dozen searchlights, a

similar number of barrage balloons, and a good 200 machine-guns. What Taranto did not possess was radar. Listening posts would serve as the city's only forewarning of an impending air attack.

East of Malta, intelligence officers aboard HMS *Illustrious* pored over photographs of Taranto harbour taken the previous day by the Marylands. They showed five battleships at anchor. Further reconnaissance reports confirmed the sixth of Italy's dreadnoughts would join them in the Mar Grande before nightfall on November 11.

The carrier's aircrew whiled away the time as best they could. They read newspapers or magazines in the wardroom or mess decks, grabbed something to eat, wandered around the quarterdeck, admired the sight of the Mediterranean Fleet at sea.

In the hangar the fitters had finished their work. The armourers had taken over, fixing magnetic torpedoes and 250lb bombs to 21 remarkable aircraft – remarkable because they seemed to belong to a bygone era.

The Fairey Swordfish was born in 1933 – the year that Hitler came to power and the year that his secret air force demanded German industry produce a single-seat monoplane fighter which would one day become the Messerschmitt 109. In Britain, the biplane was still the dominant design. It certainly was at the Fairey Aviation Company.

In two decades of building aircraft for the British military, most Faireys had been biplanes. When the firm's engineers saw the need for a reconnaissance/gunnery spotting aircraft in the Fleet, they fell back on that tried-and-trusted design.

In April 1934, the Torpedo-Spotter-Reconnaissance II – Whitehall placed an extra demand on Fairey: the new aircraft should also be able to carry a torpedo – took to the skies for the first time. It impressed the Air Ministry – in charge of naval aviation between the wars – who promptly placed an order. From 1936, the Fairey Swordfish, as it became, began to enter service. By the outbreak of war, it was flown by 13 squadrons.

On paper, there was nothing

remarkable about the Fairey Swordfish. It was slow – slower even than the aircraft it replaced. Its range was limited. It could carry a heavier payload than its predecessor, the Seal. But it also demanded a crew of three: pilot, observer/navigator and a telegraphist air gunner, each in his open cockpit.

Powered by a Bristol Pegasus engine, it lumbered into the sky, cruising at 90kts – a little over 100mph. It was, recalled pilot Lt Charles Lamb, “a very slow machine and a vulnerable target for all”. And yet he loved it. The Swordfish was sturdy, robust, manoeuvrable, almost impossible to stall, difficult to see at night. And in its 18in Mark XII aerial torpedo it possessed a devastating weapon.

This 1,610lb ‘fish’ with its 388lb warhead had the potential to sink a 10,000-ton warship. The key was delivery. It had to be dropped in level flight – and just 18ft above the waves – at a distance from its target of no more than 1,500 yards (and typically just 1,000). In Taranto, with its defences, such ranges were impossible. The aircraft would be expected to drop their ‘fish’ at a range of barely 500 yards – 1,500ft. From there, the torpedo would punch through the water at 27kts and, thanks to a magnetic detonator, would explode *beneath* their target to cause maximum damage.

Darkness now shrouded the Mediterranean this Monday, save for the moonlight deemed a pre-requisite for Operation Judgment.

At 7pm, *Illustrious* and her escorting destroyers and cruisers broke away from HMS *Warspite* and made for waters 170 miles south-east of Taranto to launch her Swordfish. Through the gloom, a final message was flashed from *Warspite*'s bridge: GOOD LUCK THEN TO YOUR LADS IN THEIR ENTERPRISE. THEIR SUCCESS MAY WELL HAVE A MOST IMPORTANT BEARING ON THE COURSE OF THE WAR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

In HMS *Illustrious*' wardroom, the aircrew gathered to scrutinise blow-ups of the photographs Charles Lamb had fetched from Malta. The sharpness of the images was stunning. “It was possible to study every aspect of the harbour and its defences,” Lamb recalled. To fellow pilot John Wellham, those defences looked forbidding. There was, he realised, “a formidable array” of anti-aircraft batteries surrounding Taranto – not to mention the guns of all the ships in harbour. “Our staff, sitting in comfortable chairs had decided that the anti-aircraft fire could be discounted.” They hadn't told Wellham or his comrades that they only expected half of them to return.

Illustrious was now scything through the Mediterranean at full speed, 30kts, driving into the wind. On the aft of her flight deck a dozen Swordfish were ready for take-off, the first of two waves to strike at Taranto. It would attack from west to east, across the Mar Grande then over the Mar Piccolo. The smaller second wave of nine aircraft would sweep in from the north, over the land, and pounce upon the Mar Grande an hour later. Eleven Swordfish carried torpedoes, the rest bombs.

There were no air gunners tonight. Just pilots and observers, clad in bulky but warm flying suits. The fitters helped them into their seats and tightened



“Executed” – the Taranto raid 1940

the strappings of their parachute harnesses. In Flyco, a green light flashed. The fitters pulled the chocks away from beneath the Swordfishes’ wheels and the biplanes lumbered into the night.

It took 20 minutes to launch the first wave, a little over ten for the second. One turned back, another was delayed. For the remaining 19 in formation, the sight was intoxicating.

“It was a beautiful picture-postcard evening,” John Wellham remembered. “There were only a few wisps of cloud below us, otherwise the sky was clear and littered with a blaze of stars.” Fellow pilot Lt M R Maund was rather less entranced. “God! How cold it is here!” he recorded in his diary. “The sort of cold that knows nothing of humanism and fills you until all else is drowned save perhaps fear and loneliness.”

It took a good hour, flying at 8,000ft, to reach Taranto. There was no mistaking it. The listening posts forewarned its defences, helped by the arrival of one Swordfish 20 minutes ahead of the rest. “The sky over the harbour looked like it sometimes does over Mount Etna,” Charles Lamb recalled. “The darkness was being torn apart by a firework display which spat flame.”

To the light of flak and tracer was now added the light of flare as Lt L J Kiggell flew across the Mar Grande dropping parachute flares. It was the cue for a fresh shower of steel and fire as the battleships, cruisers and destroyers cleared their guns and gave “a full-throated roar” which, wrote Lamb, “made the harbour defences seem like a side-show”. As the shells burst, they lit up the grey-blue Swordfish in brilliant white for an instant. It was all this venomous defensive fire achieved. Aimed at the flares, rather than the aircraft, it accomplished nothing – but it was mesmerising.

815 Naval Air Squadron’s Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr K ‘Hooch’ Williamson, was bewitched by the “most magnificent firework display” he had never seen as blue and red flak tracer raced through the Mediterranean night, while observer Lt David Goodwin, carrying bombs intended for warships in the inner harbour, thought the “firework display of shells and searchlights was a lovely sight”.

It proved rather less lovely when the Swordfish dropped from 5,000ft to a mere 50, or even 30, for the attack. Williamson aimed his Swordfish at the battleship Conte di Cavour. The final run-in lasted no more than 20 seconds, but each one of those was filled with a wall of flak thrown at the aircraft. The flak, especially from a destroyer, persisted after the officer had released his torpedo. The Swordfish could only absorb so much lead. It plunged into the harbour.

Maund lined up a Littorio-class battleship. He jinked and swerved to manoeuvre his Swordfish into position, keeping his aircraft so low that the undercarriage almost skipped the waves, then a quick release of the button, the torpedo fell away and the machine jerked. He made for a row of merchantmen in harbour for protection, then banked to escape from Taranto. In doing so he crossed the guns of several cruisers whose fire was so close, he could smell the smoke. “This is the end,” he convinced himself. “We cannot get away from this maelstrom. Yet as a trapped animal will fight like a fury for its life, so we redouble our efforts at evasion.” He pressed his



© 2002 Airphoto Agency

Swordfish low – so low the wing tips all but touched the waves when he turned – and sped at full throttle away from harbour.

Charles Lamb, charged with illuminating the harbour and bombing oil tanks shoreside, enjoyed a view of proceedings no other aircraft was afforded that evening. It was a strange sensation. His comrades “were flying into the jaws of hell”, while he was out of range of the Italian guns.

So bright was the harbour from the flares, fires and flak that there was no need for him to add to the brightness. Instead, he headed for the oil tanks, dropped his bombs. The first strike at Taranto was over. It had lasted just 14 minutes.

Like most crews this night, Charles Lamb saw nothing of the effect of his attack – no bombs or torpedoes exploding. It was only afterwards, as the aircraft gained height over the Gulf of Taranto that the fliers began to appreciate what they had achieved. M R Maund turned to his observer. “My Christ, Bull! Just look at that bloody awful mess. Look at it! Just look at it!”

The bombs achieved relatively little – several failed to arm in time and never exploded. Not so the torpedoes. ‘Hooch’ Williamson’s detonated beneath the Conte di Cavour. She quickly settled on the bottom of the Mar Grande. The brand new Littorio was hit twice and was beached by her crew as she took on water.

As the first wave of Swordfish checked their homing beacons and made for Illustrious somewhere off Cephalonia, the second wave could see the glow of Taranto from a good 60 miles away which, John Wellham remembered, “seemed to flicker and pulse”. The sight filled observer Lt Alan Sutton with dread. “I gazed down upon a twinkling mass of orange-red lights, which I knew was a solid curtain of bursting shells, through which we had to fly,” he wrote. “It looked absolutely terrifying.”

The second wave flew past the harbour, then banked right, turning over Punta Rondinella, over the city of Taranto – its streets clearly visible in the three-quarters moonlight. John Wellham watched the attack leader

release his parachute flares which “hung in the sky like a necklace of sparkling diamonds”. The sight of the signals provoked a furious response from the Italian anti-aircraft gunners. “If the tracer was one in five,” thought Wellham, “there must be more metal in the air.” To him the attack seemed to have no more prospect of success than the Charge of the Light Brigade.

He pushed the stick forward. The Swordfish plunged towards torpedo-dropping height, gathering speed. 140kts. 150. 160. 170. A barrage balloon suddenly appeared in front of the aircraft. Wellham turned the Swordfish left sharply. A jolt went through all 35ft of the aircraft. The pilot lost control, his machine was now heading almost vertically into the city itself. Somehow Wellham regained control, hauling the stick back until the Swordfish levelled out – almost at the height of Taranto’s factories and houses. With typical understatement, the pilot observed that it had been “a rather hairy dive”.

Alan Sutton and his pilot Lt Michael Torrens-Spence aimed at the already-damaged Littorio. “They just fired everything they had except the 15in – I could see the shots from the battleship bursting among the cruisers and merchant ships.” The sky above the harbour was filled with the acrid smell of cordite and “wreathed in smoke”. Torrens-Spence pressed the trigger. Nothing. Again. Nothing. Finally, just 700 yards from the Littorio – when the battleship “just about extended over the whole horizon” – the torpedo came loose.

Neither he nor Sutton saw the weapon impact. Turning steeply low over the harbour, the Swordfish’s wheels struck the water before Torrens-Spence hauled the aircraft up slightly, then weaved it through the floats which supported the barrage balloons, away from “that incredible cauldron of fire”.

Now in control of his Swordfish once more, John Wellham sought to orient himself. There was “a massive black object” behind him, almost filling the horizon. He turned his aircraft sharply through 180° and began to aim at his target. Like Sutton and Torrens-Spence before him, Wellham watched as his foe – Vittorio Veneto,

flagship of the Regia Marina – bristle with muzzle flashes. After releasing his torpedo, Wellham struggled to stop his machine bucking up into the path of the Veneto’s guns. Then he pressed the stick forward and raced for the “welcoming anonymity of the darkness” in the Gulf of Taranto, scraping the surface of the bay as he fled.

The second wave was rather more scattered than the initial strike: the first bombs fell before midnight, the last 35 minutes later. Only one aircraft fell victim to the guns, that of Lt Gerry Bayly and Tod Slaughter, brought down by the heavy cruiser Gorizia. As for his comrades, they compounded the damage and chaos caused by the initial strike.

The Littorio was struck a third time, the aged Caio Duilio was beached after shipping several hundred tons of water. A couple of destroyers were damaged by near misses, while the cruiser Trento survived a bomb strike; the explosive failed to detonate.

It took nearly two hours for the two waves of Swordfish – slightly depleted in numbers – to find their way back to Illustrious. The crews made their way to the Air Intelligence Office for debriefing. Charles Lamb was convinced the raid had been a failure and that it would be repeated the following night.

John Wellham shared Lamb’s apprehension. He shared his fellow pilot’s ignorance about the outcome of the attack. Every man did. “With the flak, smoke and general chaos over Taranto, no-one could be clear about what had been achieved,” he recalled.

The intelligence officers conducted their debriefs before the aircrew made for Illustrious wardroom for a stiff drink – several in some cases – and “masses of grub”, before heading to bed in the small hours.

Dawn in the central Mediterranean on Tuesday November 12 1940 was barely distinguishable from night. Black was replaced by grey. A wall of cloud obscured the sun. The only colour this morning, it seemed, came from the mast of HMS Warspite. As Illustrious rejoined the task force, a signal was hoisted aboard ABC’s flagship: ILLUSTRIOUS

MANOEUVRE WELL EXECUTED.

Waking up as for the first time as prisoners of war in Taranto, ‘Hooch’ Williamson and his observer ‘Blood’ Scarlett were shown a copy of the local paper by their captors, claiming the attack to be a failure and that no damage had been caused. The aviators were not fooled.

After breakfast, the survivors of Judgment sat numbly in Illustrious’ anteroom. One of the men broke the silence: the raid would have to be repeated that very evening. John Wellham was appalled. “They only asked the Light Brigade to do it once.”

Above the Ionian Sea, three Italian flying boats tried to find the British Fleet so the Regia Aeronautica could inflict its own day of judgment. They found the British ships. They also found an umbrella of Fairey Fulmar fighters. It was an unequal battle. All three flying boats were downed, the last shot down in full view of Cunningham’s force. “A flaming meteor with a long trail of black smoke fell out of the sky and splashed into the sea just ahead of the fleet,” the admiral recalled.

As the pilots and observers contemplated a return to Taranto, a Martin Maryland was already above the harbour recording photographs. It took several hours to return to Malta, more still to develop the images and analyse them. The results were startling: Littorio down by the bow, her decks partly awash; Cavour also partly awash and beached, as was the Duilio. The inner harbour was peppered with debris and oil slicks, the seaplane hangar was a smouldering shell. There was no need for a second attack... not that the worsening Mediterranean weather would allow one anyway.

At one stroke, half the Italian battlefleet had been eliminated. The Cavour would never sail again. The Duilio and Littorio were out of action until the spring of 1941. Most of the undamaged Regia Marina raised anchors on November 12 and sailed for Naples.

The morale effect of Taranto was no less important. The autumn of 1940 was bleak. The mother country had parried the threat of invasion but nightly the enemy bombed its cities. That week alone the Luftwaffe had razed the heart of Coventry; Nazi propaganda promised to ‘concentrate’ the rest of Britain’s cities.

“Just before news of Taranto, the Cabinet were rather down in the dumps,” First Sea Lord Dudley Pound – the man who had pooh-poohed a carrier strike at the Italian Fleet in harbour when in charge in the Mediterranean – told Cunningham. “Taranto had a most amazing effect upon them.”

Illustrious’ Capt Denis Boyd told his ship’s company the attack would “cheer the entire free world”. Listening intently, Charles Lamb nodded. “It was the first good news to reach the bomb-weary British since the war began.”

To the men of Taranto, the raid signalled the death knell of the dreadnought. The aircraft carrier had come of age.

A big-gun man like ABC acknowledged that “in the Fleet Air Arm, the Navy has its most devastating weapon”. Twenty aircraft – and antiquated ones at that – “had inflicted more damage upon the Italian Fleet

than was inflicted upon the German High Seas Fleet in the daylight action at Jutland.”

On Wednesday November 13 1940, the Judgment force sailed into harbour at Alexandria. The British Mediterranean Fleet at anchor was an imposing spectacle: five battleships – Warspite, Malaya, Barham, Valiant, Ramillies; two carriers – Illustrious and Eagle; row upon row of cruisers and destroyers, plus auxiliaries, depot ships, tenders. “It was a hive of activity and a most impressive sight,” John Wellham recalled. “We pilots, however, could not help thinking: what a superb target.”

In Berlin, the German Naval Staff studied the report from their man in Rome. November 11 1940, they decided, had been “a black day for the Italian Navy”. The staff’s diaries continued:

The English [sic] attack must be regarded as the greatest naval victory of the war. At a stroke, it has changed the strategic situation at sea in the entire Mediterranean decisively in England’s favour. Even more than before, the enemy will move throughout the Mediterranean, taking no account of the Italian Fleet.

Also in the capital of the Third Reich, Lt Cdr Takeshi Naito received instructions from his masters in Tokyo: fly down to Taranto. Naito was the first of numerous Japanese officers to visit the Italian base, and probe senior Italian naval officers about the British raid. The Japanese, recalled Ammiraglio di Squadra (Vice Admiral) Angelo Iachino – put in charge of the Fleet in the aftermath of the Taranto débâcle – kept things very close to their chests. The visitors gave their Axis allies “little helpful information,” Iachino remembered, “but they posed many questions about the night air attack of November 11, of which they wanted from the eyewitnesses all possible details.” When the ‘tourists’ returned to Japan, they briefed their comrades in the Imperial Navy, among them Admiral Yamamoto, while Takehi Naito was “interrogated” by his good friend Mitsuo Fuchida. Fuchida never revealed his reasons for this grilling of Naito.

They only became apparent when Mitsuo Fuchida flashed three codewords back to his masters – Tora Tora Tora – before leading an attack on a Fleet at anchor in port. The date, Sunday December 7 1941. The place, Pearl Harbor.

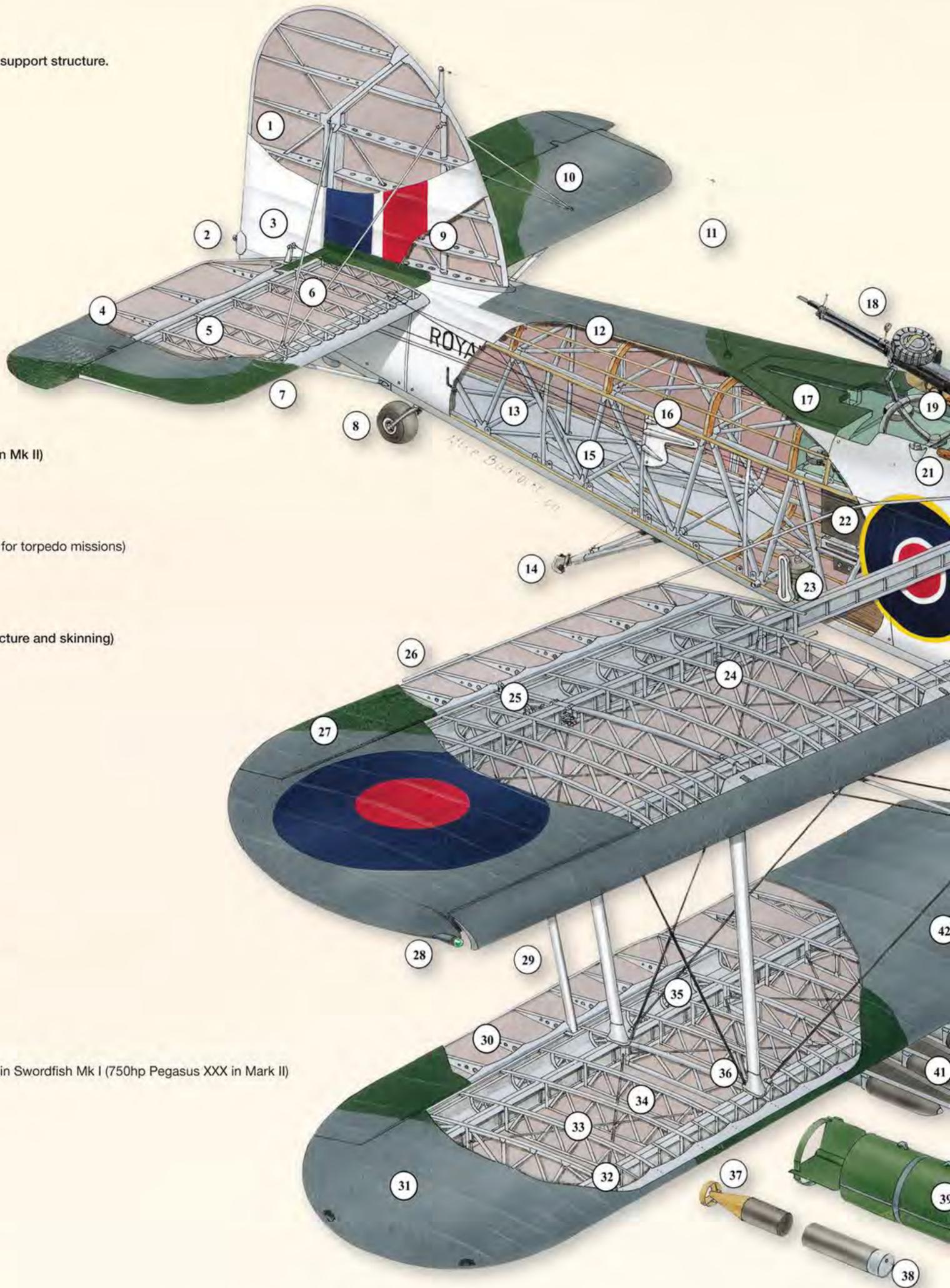
While the wardrooms of Britain’s warships are filled with stirring speeches (and occasionally raucous antics) each October 21, that of HMS Illustrious is quiet, restrained. The officers of the aircraft carrier, successor to the thorn in the Regia Marina’s side, put celebrations on hold for three weeks until the night of November 11, when the dining room is elaborately decorated with mock-ups of castles of steel and biplanes and the actions of two dozen aviators in obsolete aircraft are recreated. Such is the spell of the night of Taranto.

Written by Richard Hargreaves. With thanks to the staff of the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton, and the Bundesarchiv, Freiburg-im-Breisgau. In addition, the following books, documents and internet sources have been used:

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● One Swordfish takes off from HMS Illustrious as another prepares to land during operations in the Mediterranean in late 1940

1. Rudder
2. Tail navigation light
3. Elevator control horn
4. Starboard elevator
5. Tailplane rib structure
6. Tailplane bracing wires
7. Lower bracing strut
8. Castoring tailwheel
9. Fin rib structure
10. Starboard tailplane, fabric-covered tail surfaces
11. Aerial cable
12. Fuselage upper decking, fabric covered with wooden support structure.
13. Primary fuselage structure (steel tubing)
14. Arrestor hook
15. Arrestor-hook stowage
16. Tailplane control-cable fairleads
17. Gun stowage
18. .303in Lewis Gun
19. Gun elevating and swivelling mounting
20. Telegraphist Air Gunner
21. Compass mounting points
22. Radio installation
23. Adjustable ballast weights
24. Upper folding wing panel rib structure
25. Aileron hinge control linkage
26. Fixed aileron tab, ground adjustable
27. Starboard upper aileron
28. Starboard navigation light
29. Aileron interconnection
30. Starboard lower aileron
31. Starboard lower folding wing panel
32. Rolled steel wing spars
33. Wing-panel internal wire bracing
34. Light alloy rib structure
35. Diagonal bracing wires
36. Interplane struts
37. Smoke float
38. Anti-shipping flare
39. Depth charge
40. 60lb rocket
41. Rocket-launch rails
42. Lower wing skin panelling (fabric on Mk I, light alloy on Mk II)
43. Lifting and flying wire bracing
44. Rear spar wing-fold hinge joint
45. Lower stub wing
46. Inverted V-strut stub wing bracing
47. Cockpit decking
48. Wing leading-edge riblets
49. Centre cockpit for navigator/bomb aimer (not occupied for torpedo missions)
50. Upper wing panel rear spar hinge joint
51. Fixed Vickers 0.303in machine-gun
52. Headrest
53. Pilot's cockpit and windscreen
54. Lifting cable
55. Trim-control handwheel
56. Fixed upper wing panel centre section (light alloy structure and skinning)
57. Port wing fold-spar hinge joint
58. Fixed trailing-edge ribs
59. Port upper aileron
60. Port navigation light
61. Port leading edge slat
62. Pitot head
63. Port folding lower wing panel
64. Landing light
65. Port wing rocket installation
66. Diagonal bracing wires
67. Centre-section interplane struts
68. Torpedo sighting bars
69. Machine-gun barrel
70. Main fuel tank
71. Ventral bomb-aiming hatch
72. Wing-fold mechanism, front spar latch
73. Main undercarriage shock-absorber strut
74. Starboard mainwheel
75. 250lb high-explosive bomb
76. 18in, 1,610lb torpedo
77. Boarding step
78. Main undercarriage hinged V-strut legs
79. Forward fuselage, light-alloy detachable skin panels
80. Oil radiator
81. Oil tank
82. Generator cooling air ducts
83. Firewall
84. Engine accessory equipment
85. Engine bearer struts
86. Three-segment engine cowlings
87. Exhaust stub
88. Port mainwheel
89. Bristol Pegasus IIIM, nine-cylinder, 690hp radial engine in Swordfish Mk I (750hp Pegasus XXX in Mark II)
90. Cowling Townsend ring exhaust collector
91. Propeller reduction gear case
92. Fairey-Reed fixed-pitch metal propeller
93. Propeller spinner



THERE are two things which surprise you about a Fairey Swordfish.

One is its size. It is a big beast. It is taller, longer, wider and heavier than a Spitfire... and, to be honest, it possesses none of the fabled fighter's sleek, graceful lines.

The other is the noise. If you're expecting a purr, or even a pleasant drone, akin to a Merlin, forget it. The sound of a Bristol Pegasus at full throttle is more of a roar.

Noise and power do not necessarily equate to speed. The Swordfish lumbers into the air,

seemingly so slowly that you could all but grab it with both hands and pull it back to earth.

And yet each minute it lurches through the Somerset skies, it is a spellbinding sight.

Between 1935 and 1943, the factories of first the Fairey Aviation Company, then, under licence, the Blackburn Aircraft Company, delivered more than 2,400 Swordfishes.

Today there are fewer than ten left in the world and only one in Britain is airworthy: LS326, part of the Royal Navy Historic Flight.

LS326 is one of the later Swordfish, serving

on North Atlantic convoy duties before reverting to a training role. She sank the Bismarck (in the namesake film, admittedly) and has been part of the Fleet Air Arm's historic display wing (since 1972, the RNHF) since 1960 when it was donated to the Navy by the Westland Aviation Company.

It is the longest-serving member of the collection and, as 2010 draws to a close, the only one of three Swordfish cared for by the Yeovilton-based flight fit to fly.

Indeed the skies of Britain have been devoid of the Navy's trademark wartime torpedo-

bomber for seven years, when W5856 last flew; corrosion in steel spars on her wings forced her to remain on the ground.

It was the same flaw which forced LS326 to bow out of the skies back in 1999.

BAE Systems stepped in to replace the aircraft's wings; there are no spare part shops or Swordfish stores to fall back upon, so a replacement set of wings was hand-crafted over eight years.

By the summer of 2008, LS326 was ready to take to the skies again. And she did. Briefly.

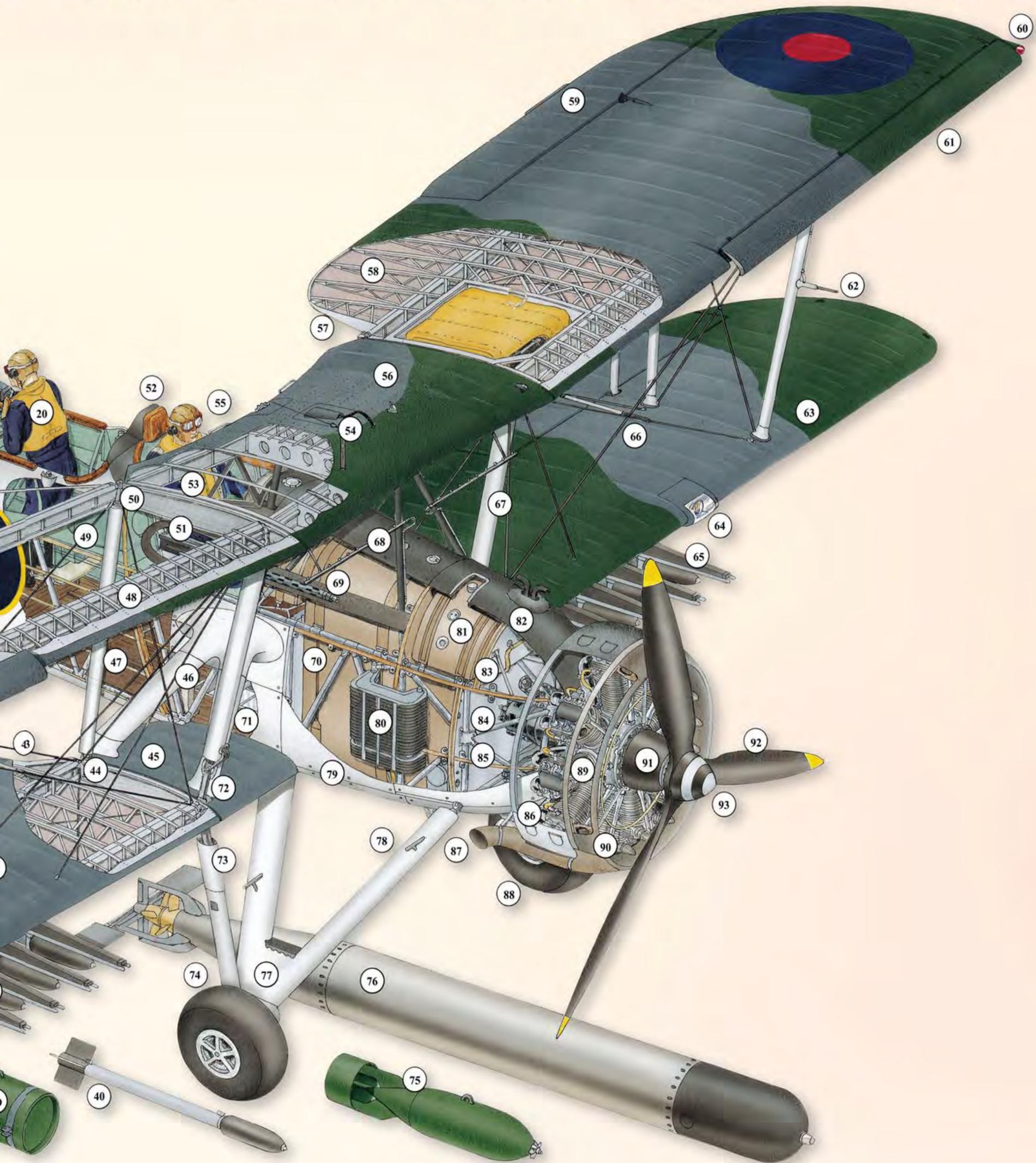
Engine problems curtailed flights and the

Swordfish spent another two years on the ground as replacement parts were manufactured and the engine rebuilt (twice) before in mid-September 2010, ground runs proved successful.

They were followed by five hours of 'proving flights' around Yeovilton before LS326 could be declared fit to appear at air shows; having overcome that hurdle, pilot - and RNHF Commanding Officer - Lt Cdr Mike Abbey and chief



FAIREY SWORDFISH



aircrewman Andy Vanes headed to Duxford and the bookend 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 aircrew are serving personnel; as Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Abbey is the sole pilot permanently with the RNHF, but he's 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 Poppy 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 Gunners – 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 fitters and mechanics at the RNHF to work on the Swordfish with a view to appearances on the display circuit in 2011, plus the majestic 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.