



# NAVY NEWS

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## CHILE RECEPTION

200TH BIRTHDAY  
CELEBRATIONS  
FOR PORTLAND

## GROUND CONTROL

800 NAS  
BACK WITH  
A BANG

## SAMBA DEXTROUS

HMS OCEAN  
VISITS RIO

## G FORCE STRIKES

GLOUCESTER  
BAGS DRUG  
RUNNERS



# SHIFTING SANDS

Royal Marines of 5 Troop, Bravo Company, 40 Commando, carry out one of the final patrols around Sangin before Britain formally handed over responsibility for the district to the Americans. See pages 22-23.

Picture: LA(Phot) Si Ethell, 40 Cdo





## Fleet Focus

THIS month we can offer you something old, something new, lots of (navy) blue... (but we're struggling with the borrowed).

Something new comes courtesy of **HMS Diamond**, making her first entry to Portsmouth (see right); HM Ships **Defender** and **Dragon** being inspected by senior officers on the Clyde (see page 21); **Lynx Wildcat** simulators are preparing Fleet Air Arm aviators for the next-generation helicopter (see page 7); and £1bn submarine **HMS Astute** has formally joined the Royal Navy family, commissioned at Faslane in the presence of the Duchess of Rothesay (see page 4).

And at the other end of the temporal scale... It's 25th birthday celebrations all round this year. **HMS York** marked her silver jubilee with a gathering of former COs (see page 13); the **Gibraltar Squadron** enjoyed a ceremony followed by birthday cake (see page 10); and flagship **HMS Ark Royal** is gearing up for a 25th anniversary cocktail party (she also bade farewell to her CO for the past two years Capt John Clink – see page 9).

Several years of bitter sacrifice around the heavily-contested town of Sangin by British soldiers and Royal Marines officially ended with **40 Commando** handing over responsibility for the district to the Americans (see pages 22-23).

**40 Commando** are on the eve of coming home, as is a four-strong team of frogmen from the **Fleet Diving Group** who've spent the past five months rendering explosive devices safe... usually with a big bang (see page 6).

In the Gulf, **HMS Somerset** has taken a break from patrolling Iraq's oil platforms to enjoy R&R in Dubai (see page 8) while HM Ships **Chiddingfold**, **Pembroke**, **Middleton** and **Grimsby**, plus **RFA Lyme Bay**, linked up for exercises with US mine warfare forces (see page 8).

Although the formal combat mission has come to an end in Iraq, a small RN presence remains both in Baghdad and at Umm Qasr on **Operation New Dawn/Telic**, chiefly training Iraqi sailors and marines (see page 8).

Across the Pond, **HMS Manchester** chased the coattails of Hurricane Igor to help Bermudians (Igor mercifully proved not to be quite as devastating as feared... see opposite).

**HMS Gloucester** snared suspected drug traffickers in an internationally-coordinated bust off the Cape Verde Islands as she made her way to the Falklands (see opposite).

There she'll replace **HMS Portland** which has ended her four months around the South Atlantic islands and swapped oceans, making for Valparaiso in Chile (see page 10).

Also in South America is **HMS Ocean** which paid her first visit to Rio to exercise with Brazilian marines (see pages 14-15).

**HMS Talent's** seven-month stint east of Suez is over. She left Devonport in the rain and, guess what, she returned in the rain (see page 5).

Such weather hasn't blighted the activities of the legendary **800 Naval Air Squadron** whose Harriers decamped to Cyprus (yes, it's a hard life) to practise close-air support and help train Afghanistan-bound troops (see pages 12 and 24-25).

Warm climes often beckon too for the **Mobile Air Operations Team** based at Yeovilton who clear a path for helicopters to land and operate anywhere in the world (see page 18).

A clutch of vessels is emerging from the throes of refits and overhauls: **HMS Bulwark** (see page 13); **HMS Argyll** (see page 21); and **HMS Edinburgh** (see page 11) – the latter is the very last Type 42 destroyer to receive a refit, ending more than 30 years of work for Britain's dockyards.

And finally... spare a thought for 90 or so sailors and marines who are marooned in the flat expanses of Lincolnshire, far from the sea and heartlands of the RN. Worse still, they have to work alongside the RAF (only joking... see page 26).



Picture: Paul Jacobs courtesy of The News Portsmouth

## Jewel of the Crown

GLISTENING in the first rays of sun cast upon Portsmouth Harbour, the third of the Navy's £1bn destroyers makes her inaugural entry to her home port.

It was ten minutes after sunrise on September 22 that HMS Diamond glided past Round Tower, welcomed by a dedicated band of three-dozen wellwishers who were undeterred by the early start.

Tugs and a police launch ushered Diamond to her berth in Portsmouth Naval Base, whereupon frenetic activity ensued.

These were the final hours under the Blue Ensign. Later that Wednesday D34 was officially transferred from the hands of her builder BAE Systems to the Royal Navy, permitting the White

Ensign to be raised for the first time.

It fell to Cdre Steve Brunton, the RN's Head of Destroyers, to formally accept Diamond on the Senior Service's behalf.

The ship, says her Commanding Officer Cdr Ian Clarke, already has "the wow factor". The tricky bit now is to bond his dedicated team and turn "Diamond into an effective front-line warship, ready for operations anywhere in the world."

Things in Type 45 Land are moving up a couple of gears this autumn.

Daring's gone on her first mini-deployment, Dauntless is firing the Sea Viper missile system for the first time (see page 5), Duncan is launched later this month and Defender and Dragon have

received visits from senior officers (see page 21).

The Dragons left their ship behind to pay their first official visit to Cardiff, the city with which the destroyer will be bound for the next 35 or so years.

A formal ceremony was held by civic leaders in the Welsh capital to cement the nascent ties between ship and city in the presence of Cardiff Lord Mayor Cllr Keith Hyde, Dragon's Senior Naval Officer Cdr Ian Jackson, ship's company and Naval Regional Commander for Wales and the West of England, Cdre Jamie Miller.

Then it's back to the Clyde to prepare D35 for sea trials which begin next month.

From the navy's newest destroyer to her oldest, HMS Bristol.

After 17 years immobile at HMS Excellent, the unique warship – she was the only one of a class of four ships designed to protect aircraft carriers which were never built – Bristol has moved across the water into Portsmouth Naval Base for a refit.

Since paying off, Bristol has served as an accommodation and training ship, berthed permanently at the southern tip of Whale Island.

In excess of 17,000 sailors and cadets use her facilities annually – but such high usage has taken its toll, hence the need for a refit.

While work on the ship continues until around March 2011, dredgers will move into her berth to remove upwards of 7ft of silt which has accumulated beneath Bristol since 1993.



# Early-morning wake-up call

HMS GLOUCESTER delivered an unwelcome early-morning wake-up call to a couple of drugs-runners in mid-ocean within days of her starting her deployment to the South Atlantic.

In a multi-national operation, the destroyer, carrying a Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDet) from Cape Verde, to nab a suspect yacht transporting cocaine worth an estimated £40m towards Europe.

Gloucester was less than a week into her seven-month deployment, still north of the Canary Islands and conducting training exercises while keeping an eye on passing traffic – standard procedure for allied warships these days.

The request to assist in tracking down and capturing a known drug-smuggling vessel sailing from South America came from the UK's Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA).

They were working on French and Italian intelligence while the co-ordinating body was the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre (Narcotics) or MAOC(N), based in the Portuguese capital Lisbon.

And at the sharp end, the arresting authorities were to be the Cape Verde LEDet, rushed to the scene by the Royal Navy.

Three days and 1,500 miles later, with the Cape Verde team picked up along the way, the Fighting G delivered an early-morning wake-up call to two surprised smugglers in the yacht Tortuga.

Lt Timmy Elliott, Flight



● Advised by Ops Officer Lt Tom Rowley, Gloucester's CO, Cdr David George, considers his options

Observer in the ship's Lynx helicopter, having reconciled himself to the fact that the only shots he was going to take along his M3M .50-calibre machine-gun sight were with the high-definition evidence camera, snapped a pair of bleary faces.

He said: "They took a while to wake up, even though a Lynx sat on top of you is none too quiet."

"Then one head poked out from the cabin, went back in, and then poked out again as if to check he wasn't imagining things."

"I guess it must have been one of those really bad waking up mornings!"

The actual impoundment had to be conducted by the Cape

Verde LEDet, a team of five law enforcement and judiciary officials, but LS Nick Summers was their chauffeur, delivering them to the yacht in Gloucester's seaboat.

LS Summers said: "There was just an edge because we weren't sure if they [the yacht] had weapons – although if they had tried anything, with everything the ship had pointed at them, it might not have gone so well for them."

"I was more worried about getting the boat alongside though."

"It's not so easy to get five people between two tiny boats in the oggin, especially if they're not used to jumping across."

"A couple of them weren't too keen – fair enough really."

A hitherto unsung part of the operation was the 300-mile tow back to Mindelo, Cape Verde.

Speed was imperative to allow a full search to be made and charges brought within the legal 48-hour deadline of the arrest – but yachts are not designed for towing.

PO Lee Shaw, an experienced yachtsman, was one of the not-so-lucky sailors involved.

"Let's just say that it didn't smell any more pleasant by the end than it did at the beginning, and it wasn't exactly at Captain's rounds standards to start with," said PO Shaw.

"It wasn't a boat I'd have chosen to cross the Atlantic in anyway – you might think drugs smugglers would have something a bit more flash."

The effort proved worthwhile when the yacht was finally lifted out of the water, and 30kg of raw cocaine was found stashed along the stern transmission near the rudder.

The bust was an exciting start to a long deployment, and the



● HMS Gloucester's Lynx inspects the target yacht

ship's company enjoyed following the media attention.

Commanding Officer Cdr David George said: "You're on your way somewhere and you get diverted at a moment's notice to go take down some bad guys, there's some good PR, and then you're back on your way as if nothing had happened."

"That constant shifting-target and variety is one of the things I love about being in the RN."

"Fingers crossed, there'll be some more for us."

"The ocean is a vast place for dubious types to hide in, and it's a long way from people's front rooms – but the drugs on UK streets aren't."

"This is why the Royal Navy is out on the high seas, day in, day out."

Gloucester is now back en route to the Falklands to take over from HMS Portland as the Atlantic Patrol Task (South) ship.

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said: "This is another example of the great work the men and women of the Royal Navy carry out around the world which helps protect us at home."

"The Royal Navy plays a crucial role in intercepting drugs that could be destined for Britain's streets. I am very proud of their efforts."

■ A planned port visit in South America by the destroyer has had to be cancelled at short notice.

A Royal Navy spokesman said: "We can confirm that Uruguay withdrew diplomatic clearance for HMS Gloucester to visit Montevideo from September 15-17."

"The ship, which is currently deployed in the South Atlantic, was scheduled to make a short, routine port visit."

"We are obviously disappointed with this last-minute decision by Uruguay but respect their right to make it."

"We have a long-standing close defence relationship with the Uruguayans; this incident will not affect those good links."

■ HMS Portland bids farewell to Falklands – pages 10-11



● HMS Gloucester's seaboat circles the yacht as the destroyer stands by



● HMS Manchester crashes through heavy seas as she dashes north for Bermuda to stand by as Hurricane Igor approaches the island

# Rough ride north

ROUGHERS. Goffer. Shipping it green. A big sea, in layman's terms – and always fun in a Type 42...

The 42 in this case is HMS Manchester, and the roughers were the calling card of Hurricane Igor, a nasty little Category 3 storm (winds upwards of 130mph) which swept past Bermuda.

The Busy Bee, in the Caribbean on anti-drug-running and disaster relief duties, had spent "a couple of uncomfortable nights" dashing some 900 miles north to stand by as Igor passed directly over the British Overseas Territory.

The Governor of Bermuda, Sir Richard Gozney, had requested that the destroyer was on hand so she could give assistance should Bermuda suffer major damage – in such circumstances the ship's Lynx is of particular value, being able to conduct a rapid aerial survey.

In the event Igor passed close to the west of the Island in the small hours of the night, having weakened to a Category 1 hurricane with winds up to a 'mere' 95mph.

HMS Manchester arrived off

Bermuda a few hours after Igor had passed and was able to launch her Lynx to survey the Island.

"Having been tasked to stand by Bermuda, it was important to get there as quickly as possible after Igor has passed through," said Manchester's Commanding Officer Cdr Rex Cox.

"This involved a sporty fast dash north, surfing in behind the hurricane eye so as to be in a position to conduct humanitarian and disaster relief as required."

"Fortunately Bermuda suffered only slight damage and no casualties and Manchester can now return to the Caribbean Sea and position ready for the next severe weather event."

Manchester had been conducting counter-narcotic operations in the Caribbean Sea when the order was given to travel north.

She also had to cancel a planned visit to St Kitts which was part of their Independence Day celebrations.

During the passage north from her operating areas in the Caribbean basin the ship encountered two days of heavy seas with seven-metre (25ft)

waves that had been whipped up by the hurricane.

"It was excellent that Manchester was able to send in her helicopter," said Governor Gozney.

"From this flight we were able to get the complete picture as to what had happened."

Before her dash north, Manchester had been helping local communities in the Caribbean, with plenty of sailors stepping forward to do their bit.

Taking Barbados as an example, Lt Penny Armand-Smith spent four days at a camp for disabled children, helping with supervision, playing games, singing and making costumes for the Camp Friendship carnival.

And a dozen of Penny's shipmates volunteered to help paint the house of Mrs Elaine Hinkson, widow of a World War 2 veteran and a member of the Barbados Legion.

Despite typical Caribbean weather – sunshine and heavy showers – they managed to achieve much more than planned.

Previously, on Grand Turk in the Turks and Caicos chain, 13 sailors joined the local Rotary Club in clearing a park of rubbish and cutting back overgrown acacia trees, providing a more manageable open space for the islanders.





● It wasn't all sunshine on commissioning day – the Duchess of Rothesay shelters from a shower during proceedings at Faslane

Picture: LA (Phot) Stuart Hill

● The commissioning pennant is raised over HMS Astute during the ceremony at Clyde Naval Base (left)

Picture: LA (Phot) A.J. MacLeod

# Quality is the watchword

SWISS watches are not normally black and cigar shaped, and there can't be many that weigh thousands of tonnes.

But it was the iconic timepiece which came to the mind of a senior officer when HMS Astute was commissioned at Clyde Naval Base in front of nearly 400 people.

Rear Admiral Simon Lister, Director Submarines, said: "To my mind Astute is a 7,000-tonne Swiss watch."

"There is an extraordinary amount of expertise that goes into putting one of these submarines together."

"There are stages when it's like blacksmithing, and there are stages when it's like brain surgery."

"So to see Astute commissioned is momentous not only for the Royal Navy, who have been eagerly anticipating this quantum leap forward in capability, but for the thousands of people around the country who have been involved in the most challenging of engineering projects."

In (mostly) bright sunshine, with the boat tied up alongside 6 Berth, members of Astute's ship's company, VIP guests – including First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, the Lord Lieutenant of Dunbartonshire Rear Admiral Mike Gregory and the Fleet Chaplain – various family and friends watched the ceremony.

The commissioning, overseen by the boat's patron, the Duchess of Rothesay, was a colourful affair, part religious and part military parade, with music from the Royal Marines Band Scotland.

Officers sported gold braid and silver swords glinted in the sun, while the pristine Astute sported a silver ship's bell, a nameplate and a crest fitted to her fin.

The Duchess – Rothesay is the title used by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall when north of the border – inspected the crew and told them: "I would like to say how proud I am of all you have achieved since I last saw you in

Barrow-in-Furness.

"I have no doubt the sea trials have been extremely demanding and that, as ever, you rose to the challenge, performing admirably in what must have been very testing conditions."

"You are a great credit to the Navy and to the country."

Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope said: "The Astute class is truly next-generation."

"A highly-versatile platform, she is capable of contributing across a broad spectrum of maritime operations around the globe, and will play an important role in delivering the fighting power of the Royal Navy for decades to come."

"A highly-complex feat of naval engineering, she is at the very cutting edge of technology, with a suite of sensors and weapons required to pack a powerful punch."

And submarine CO Cdr Andy Coles said: "I believe that the success of HMS Astute and the spirit which she has generated can be attributed to five factors – a first-class submarine builder supported by exceptional companies, great friends amongst our affiliates, a superb ship's company totally committed to the task ahead, a wonderful submarine ready for the challenges to come and, finally, the support of our families."

The sailors who operate her were equally generous in their praise.

WO2(WESM) Kevin Mullen, the first person to join Astute, said: "It is a huge day for the ship's company and for Barrow and for the Clyde."

"I joined from a boat that was 30 years old and the difference is hard to explain."

"Astute is like a big computer that goes underwater. It is absolutely fantastic."

"The technology in there is immense compared with other submarines."

Following the ceremony the ship's company and guests attended a reception at the Warrant



● Members of the ship's company of HMS Astute enjoy their boat's big day at Clyde Naval Base

Picture: LA (Phot) Stuart Hill

Officers and Senior Rates Mess, where the Duchess met sailors, their families and friends.

The commissioning cake was cut by the Commanding Officer's wife, Mrs Emma Coles, and the youngest crew member, ET(MESM) Damien Bell.

The Duchess presented the HMS Astute Man of the Boat award 2010 to PO(TSM) Dave McCoy.

Awards were also presented by Astute's affiliates, the Worshipful Company of Joiners and Ceilers' to WO2(MESM) Jim Wright

and the Welsh Livery Guild's to LS(CISSM) Jamie Benson.

Astute has now reached a crucial milestone on the long road to operational handover – having completed a series of challenging sea trials since the end of last year, the 97-metre boat has achieved her In Service Date.

That means Astute, which displaces 7,400 tonnes when submerged, has proven her ability to dive, surface and operate across the full range of depth and speed independently, providing a basic level of capability.

Astute is half as big again as her predecessors, the Trafalgar-class Fleet submarines, but is also quieter and has a heavier punch, including Spearfish torpedoes and Tomahawk cruise missiles.

Her reactor is designed to operate throughout her 25-year lifespan without the need to refuel, and can drive her at speeds in excess of 20 knots when dived.

And for those who like to chew on statistics, her standard crew of 98 will include five chefs who will serve up some 18,000 sausages and 4,200 Weetabix for breakfast on an

average patrol, though presumably not on the same plate.

HMS Astute will now return to sea for further trials before she is declared operational.

Over the coming months she will undergo signature measurement and weapon trials before deploying to the American AUTEK underwater test centre in the Bahamas for final testing of systems.

Sister boats Ambush, Artful and Audacious are currently under construction by BAE Systems in Barrow-in-Furness.

## Triptych pitch in

THREE major Naval assets have weighed into the war on piracy and terrorism this month.

One-stop support ship RFA Fort Victoria and the Merlins of 820 Naval Air Squadron form a double-headed prong in the Indian Ocean under the wing of the regional anti-piracy anti-smuggling command, the Combined Maritime Force in Bahrain.

Fort Vic – deploying for the first time since a lengthy lay-up in Portsmouth followed by a refit in Birkenhead – has been beefed up for her mission east of Suez with enhanced gun positions, improved Phalanx automated weapon system, and an improved sick bay.

To that have been added a team from 820 NAS, a £40m helicopter, some sea boats, and a specialist boarding party from the Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines – perfect for anti-piracy.

Although primarily a submarine hunter, 820's Merlins will fire up their surveillance kit to monitor shipping routes in the region, with the added firepower and boarding capability of the commandos.

The 3,000-plus mile slog out to the Somali Basin permitted the auxiliary's crew to get used to the presence of WAFUs and Royals, then to learn to operate with them, practising helicopter and boat ops, casualty and prisoner handling ahead of what CO Capt Christopher Clarke RFA said would be "an interesting job".

At least three international maritime forces are overseeing efforts to secure the sea lanes in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean: CMF, the EU and NATO.

The latter's four-strong task group – Standing Maritime Group 1 – is enforcing Operation Shield with HMS Montrose, Denmark's HDMS Esbern Snare and the US Ships Laboon and Kauffman.

Montrose spent four months getting ready for this moment so her crew are, says Lt Aaron Broughton, commanding the frigate's RM detachment, "fully prepared and now determined to sink our teeth into the job at hand".

The Type 23 has been assigned a stretch of the international transit corridor to patrol.

## Quorn tribute

HMS Quorn will lead tributes in Guernsey to sailors lost during a WW2 raid.

Each October islanders pay their respects to HMS Charybdis and Limbourne which were sunk by German torpedo boats off the Brittany coast with the loss of more than 450 men.

The bodies of many of the dead were washed up on Guernsey and residents ignored their Nazi overlords and attended the men's funeral.

Hunt-class minehunter Quorn will be in St Peter Port for the anniversary weekend of October 1-3, open to the public on third from 11am-4pm.

She will provide the Guard of Honour at the memorial service in Foulon cemetery that same day at 3pm.

The Band of HM Royal Marines Collingwood will march through St Peter Port ahead of a Beat Retreat in the Market Square at 4.30pm on Saturday October 2.

The musicians will also perform at the annual concert at St James' at 8pm on October 3.

## Top general drops in on Albion

BRITAIN'S most senior Serviceman spent the day aboard the nation's amphibious flagship as he got to grips with the task of overseeing the three Forces.

General Sir David Richards takes up the post of Chief of Defence Staff this month.

Ahead of that appointment, the general joined HMS Albion at sea off the South Coast with CINC Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar and Commodore Amphibious Task Group Cdre Paul Bennett as his guides.

The general knows a thing or two about amphibious ops; he served with 29 Commando Regiment RA – the green berets' bolt-on artillery unit – but back

# Talent show in Guzz



Picture: LAPhoto Martin Gurney, FRPU West

**IT WAS cold and horrible when HMS Talent last saw the unmistakable outline of Plymouth Hoe...**

... and it was a little warmer, but barely any less horrible when Smeaton's Tower and other well-known landmarks hove into view again for the submariners.

Luckily, there's been a bit of sun in the intervening seven months.

The T-boat returned home from an extended spell east of Suez to West Country rain – but a warm welcome.

For every man aboard there were two people waiting on the jetty at Devonport (by our reckoning that's about 250 wellwishers...).

"Their unwavering support to my team has been key to our success," said CO Cdr Simon Asquith.

Of course, most of the success achieved by Talent over the past seven months is classified as is the nature of the Silent Service.

But not all of it. The boat exercised with 820 NAS Merlins and American maritime patrol aircraft based in the Middle East, and played cat and mouse with HMS Northumberland and American hunter-killer USS Alexandria as 27,000 miles were added to the Talent odometer.

There was also a rare chance to work with an Indian submarine in the latter's 'playground', plus some time above the waves with port visits in the UAE, India, Jordan and Crete.

All of which would not have been possible, *inter alia*, without the efforts of the men in Talent's galley who cooked 22,000 eggs and 11 tonnes of spuds and baked 37,000 bread rolls.

Hopefully they rustled up a few other things as well, otherwise the menu might have become a tad monotonous...

"From cold and grey winter days in the UK, the mild waters of the Med, scorching temperatures in the Middle East, and the Indian monsoon, there was scenery and climate for everyone," said weapons engineer officer Lt Cdr Tim Fry.

The passage back through Suez allowed the growing tradition in the Fleet of 'rowing the canal' with four out of five Talents taking it in turns to complete the 162km (100 miles) distance on the boat's well-used Concept 2 machine.

On the boat's rare appearances on the surface, the rowing machine was whipped out for some alfresco training; 47-year-old ACPOMEM(L) Colin Leiba set the standard, completing 2,000 metres in 6m 38s. No-one aboard was able to beat the senior rating's time.

The real winner, however, was the boat's charity, Hope House Children's Hospice, in her affiliated town of Shrewsbury; the Suez row raised more than £350 for this worthy cause – in addition to more than £1,000 already collected for the hospice from other events while on deployment.

After being at sea for 400 of the past 600 days, Talent's in need of some TLC and upgrades, which she'll receive in the coming months from the team at Babcock in Devonport.

She's due to emerge from her overhaul next year, while east-of-Suez duties are being conducted by her sister HMS Tireless.



## Enterprise needs Daring

ARRIVING in the US of A just about now is Britain's most advanced warship, making her inaugural trip across the Pond.

HMS Daring will spend the early autumn exercising with the US Navy, testing the ability of the new Type 45 destroyer to 'plug in' to the Americans' tried-and-tested military kit.

The climax of the mini-deployment is a three-week work-up with the USA's greatest carrier, the USS Enterprise, off the Eastern Seaboard.

Daring will be charged with safeguarding the Big E and her carrier group from air attack – exactly the sort of mission the Type 45 was designed to carry out.

Using their Sampson radar and command system to pick up potential threats (in theory Daring can monitor a couple of hundred incoming aircraft and missiles) the operations room team will manage hundreds of aircraft sorties carried out by the task group, plus test her ability to defend Enterprise should 'enemy' aircraft penetrate the flat-top's own Combat Air Patrol.

The exercise should be the sternest test yet for the £1bn destroyer, which passed her Operational Sea Training in the summer.

"This is a golden opportunity to prove the Royal Navy's newest capability to integrate – and operate effectively – with the might of the United States Navy," said CO Capt Paddy McAlpine.

As Daring heads across the Pond, her sister Dauntless is due to carry out the first firing of Sea Viper – the Type 45's principal weapon system – in the UK. To date the missile has only been fired from the trials barge Longbow in the Mediterranean.

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# Divers(e) deployment

● AB(D) Phil Brierley conducts confirmation drills during routine training  
Picture: Lt Nick Southall RN



FOUR men clad in khaki, a desert and a great big ball of fire.

Army bomb disposal? Could be...

But there is a clue in the last element. The big explosion.

Because Royal Navy divers like nothing more than to blow things up – they have told *Navy News* as much many times in the past.

And although clearance divers are more often found close to

the sea, small groups have also been deploying to a very different environment.

Which brings us to the blast (pictured below), in the rugged terrain near Kajaki in Helmand – the handiwork of the latest quarter of RN ordnance explosive experts to deploy to Afghanistan; two of them can be seen taking shelter in the bottom right of the picture.

The team – PO(D) Ward 'Sharky' Peers, LD Lee Jackson

and AB(D)s Phil Brierley and Ian 'Skid' Rowe – are almost at the end of their six-month tour of duty, during which they have plied their dangerous trade in Lashkar Gah, Shawqat, Khaamar, Pimon and Nad-e-Ali.

Navy personnel have been taking their place alongside Army (and latterly RAF) ordnance disposal experts for around a year, part of the Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group.

The teams are increasingly called upon to deal with the threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) planted by insurgents.

Kajaki – scene of bitter fighting earlier in Operation Herrick and still a hotbed of Taliban activities – was, says PO Peers, "the place that everyone wanted to go, where all our training could be consolidated into one."

"I think all the Army teams were a bit annoyed that it was us that went up there."

LD Jackson added: "Kajaki has definitely been the best part of the tour."

"We were able to hone our skills and left the area confident

that we would be able to deal with anything that was put in front of us."

Although the way sailors and Royal Engineers deal with unexploded ordnance is pretty much identical, the divers had to go through almost six months of pre-deployment training to prepare for the alien environment of Afghanistan.

They arrived at Lydd at the end of September 2009 and were immediately thrown in at the deep end, being asked to patrol down to the end of the airfield.

"We told them that we'd never patrolled before and were met by a look of confusion, followed by a few choice words of disbelief," said PO Peers.

"I think they expected us to already have these skills, until we pointed out that there's not much call for us to patrol when we're on board."

"We were definitely at a disadvantage and obviously our green skills were lacking, but by

the end of our pre-deployment training we were confident and keen to deploy."

The divers fully embraced new experiences – "learning to drive the Mastiff was definitely a highlight of pre-deployment training," said AB Rowe. "It really is a hoofing bit of kit..."

Luckily, the divers have had an understanding mentor in the form of Sgt Scott Docherty RE – with a father and uncle in the RN he was an honorary matelot as far as the divers were concerned.

"As far as explosive ordnance disposal goes we were all at the same standard", said Sgt Docherty.

"They might have felt they didn't know as much but they weren't at as much of a disadvantage as they thought."

"These guys picked up everything really quickly, from weapon handling tests on under-slung grenade launchers to close-quarters battle lanes and having your oppo firing live rounds just to your left and right, they were

all over it."

The sergeant has joined the divers on the ground in Helmand, as have fellow sappers from 21 Regiment RE.

"I think the best thing about the counter-IED task force is the joint nature – the banter is always good," he continued.

"This is the second time I've worked with the RN and once again it's been a pleasure."

The deployment has not been without its casualties.

"We've lost some very close friends throughout this tour," said PO Peers.

"It's been very sad, losing some good people. That's definitely been the worst part of the tour."

AB Brierley has very much taken to life in Afghanistan – so much so that, with his ability to speak Pashtu, his tan and his beard, he has been mistaken for a local interpreter more than once.

However, the junior rate – who is also the team medic – admits that he does miss the diving.



● From left: AB(D) Phil Brierley, PO(D) Ward Peers, LD Lee Jackson and AB(D) Ian Rowe prime the Dragon Runner remote-controlled robot  
Picture: Lt Nick Southall RN



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# The cat's whiskers

## New kit for Jungly gunners

CATS rely on their whiskers in a tight spot, and the Royal Navy's new Wildcat is no different.

The trouble with sensitive whiskers is that too much information could bamboozle the brain, and the same risk applies to the sophisticated sensors on the Lynx replacement.

So one of the main objectives of trials at the AgustaWestland site in Yeovil has been to allow aircrew members to try out the new systems in a series of simulations.

One such trial, lasting three weeks, involved six experienced Lynx crews, with the programme split into two phases.

The first assessed the latest version of the tactical processor software, including the human-machine interface – a source of some initial disquiet.

"Before this trial took place there had been a concern that the amount of information available from the sensor suite would have been too much for a two-man crew to assimilate," said Lt Paddy McWilliams, of 700 (Wildcat) Naval Air Squadron.

"But the feedback from both the operators and simulator staff has alleviated these initial fears."

The second part of the experiment was to analyse software in the thermal imager.

"This software, developed by DSTL and QinetiQ, is part of a wider study concerning above-water warfare and the fusion of RF [radio frequency] and electro-optic data to lessen the workload of operators," said Lt McWilliams.

"These sorties were based upon force protection scenarios and culminated with search and prosecution of swarm attacks from fast attack craft.

"It quickly became clear that the cockpit design and sensor suite allowed the crew to detect, classify and attack threats within a matter of seconds."



● A computer-created image of the Navy's new Wildcat helicopter

Picture courtesy Agusta Westland

Overall, the trial was declared a success, with all six crews being impressed by the Wildcat's tactical system and its intuitive feel.

There is also considerable work being done to integrate the Future Anti-Surface Guided Weapon (FASGW), which will enable the Wildcat to tackle targets ranging from jet-skis to small corvettes – the programme encompasses two missiles, the lighter a laser-beam guided rocket and the heavier a heat-seeking missile.

The AW159 Lynx Wildcat will replace the current Lynx Marks 3 and 8, which have been the workhorses for the destroyer and frigate community for more than

30 years.

The RN is due to take delivery of 28 of the new aircraft, with the first one scheduled to be handed over in late 2012.

The programme is a collaboration between the RN and the British Army, with the aircraft featuring a significant amount of commonality, which has advantages not only in the cost of introducing, running and maintaining the aircraft, but also in the test and evaluation programme.

The dark blue version – the Wildcat HMA Mark 1 – will be fitted with an impressive array of sensors, including a 360-degree

E-scan radar capable of tracking 100 contacts.

There will also be an electro-optic turret housing a thermal imager, two TV cameras and up to three laser sensors.

The helicopter is expected to enter service with a tactical data link to ensure it is fully hooked up to friendly units as it carries out its tasks.

700 (Wildcat) NAS, based at RN Air Station Yeovilton, has been given the responsibility of bringing the aircraft into service.

Commissioned in May last year, the squadron consists of a small team of aircrew who all have experience in aircraft trials

work – a crucial factor in making a potentially-fruited process run as smoothly as possible.

Calling in expertise from other squadrons to ensure the right decisions are made during development, the squadron will work on the tactical role of the aircraft, operating procedures and will also design a suitable conversion course for current Lynx aircrew.

A plan for the flying activities which will support that programme is being worked on now in the hope that squadron staff will get the machine airborne by the start of 2013, shortly after the delivery of the first Navy Wildcat.

AIR crews in the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) got their hands on a new and improved door gun ahead of 16 Air Assault Brigade's deployment to Afghanistan this month.

Aviators with 846 Naval Air Squadron began to train with the FN Herstal M3M .50-in calibre weapon system while supporting the assault brigade on final training exercises on Salisbury Plain in the summer.

The Mk 4 Sea Kings of the CHF, which have been supporting Operation Herriek since 2007, can now be armed with either the 7.62mm general purpose machine gun (GPMG) or the M3M – the heavier weapon has only recently been cleared for operational use by the Junglies.

It means the Sea Kings can now be used to attack as well as being able to defend themselves, allowing the CHF to undertake a wider range of missions.

Lt Cdr Nigel Gates, Aviation Warfare Officer at CHF Command, said: "The M3M is able to put down a higher rate of fire than the GPMG and, being .50-calibre instead of 7.62mm, each round obviously has greater effect."

He said that the greater range meant the helicopter could operate from a safer distance or altitude.

"The Sea King is a good stable platform for this weapon and we are confident this will give us significant extra capability in support of ground units," he added.

The M3M is already in use with other UK military aircraft, including the Navy's Mk 8 Lynx (as embarked in HMS Gloucester – see p3) and the Army Air Corps' Mk9A Lynx, which have recently been deployed to Afghanistan.



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# A new dawn for freedom

THE place? Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory, Baghdad.  
 The date? Wednesday September 1 2010.  
 The occasion? The formal end of combat operations in Iraq.  
 The arm? Well, that belongs to Cdre Tony Radakin RN, Commander Task Force Iraq Maritime.  
 And the man behind the camera? Liaison officer Maj Dave Fielder RM.  
 The two Senior Service officers were among a handful of Britons who witnessed the historic occasion as Operation Iraqi Freedom – which began more than seven years ago to oust Saddam Hussein's regime and then faced a bitter insurgency – passed into history and Operation New Dawn, a purely training and advisory mission, took its place.

Britain's combat mission in Iraq ended long before that of US forces, but not its training role – principally conducted by sailors and Royal Marines (and unlike the Americans we've stuck with the Operation Telic covername.)

Aside from the two aforementioned officers there's Royal Marine Brigadier Tim Chicken in charge of the Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission (Navy) – ITAM-Navy – which oversees the UK/US team training Iraq's Navy and Marines.

As New Dawn began, so 33 marine engineers filed through the gates of the Iraqi Naval Base at Umm Qasr – the first to do so in years.

All are already engineers. It's the task of the ITAM team to turn civvy engineers into naval engineers in 14 weeks under the guidance of USN and RN engineers like Lt Cdr Helen Ashworth (she kept HMS Illustrious going a couple of years ago during a challenging deployment east of Suez for the old carrier – as you might recall from the first series of *Warship*).

"The engineers on the course hold the key to the future success of the Iraqi Navy," she says emphatically.

"Not only must we train them to be good engineering officers, capable of upholding good engineering standards – but we must also train them to become the trainers of tomorrow – delivering similar training to new recruits of the future."

So no pressure there then for trainer, or trainee...

The Iraqis will be split into PEOs (Platform Engineer Officers – able to deal with marine, weapons and sensors engineering); WSO (Weapon and Sensors Engineer Officers – self-explanatory) and ELOs (no jokes please... Electrical Engineer Officers, again self-explanatory).

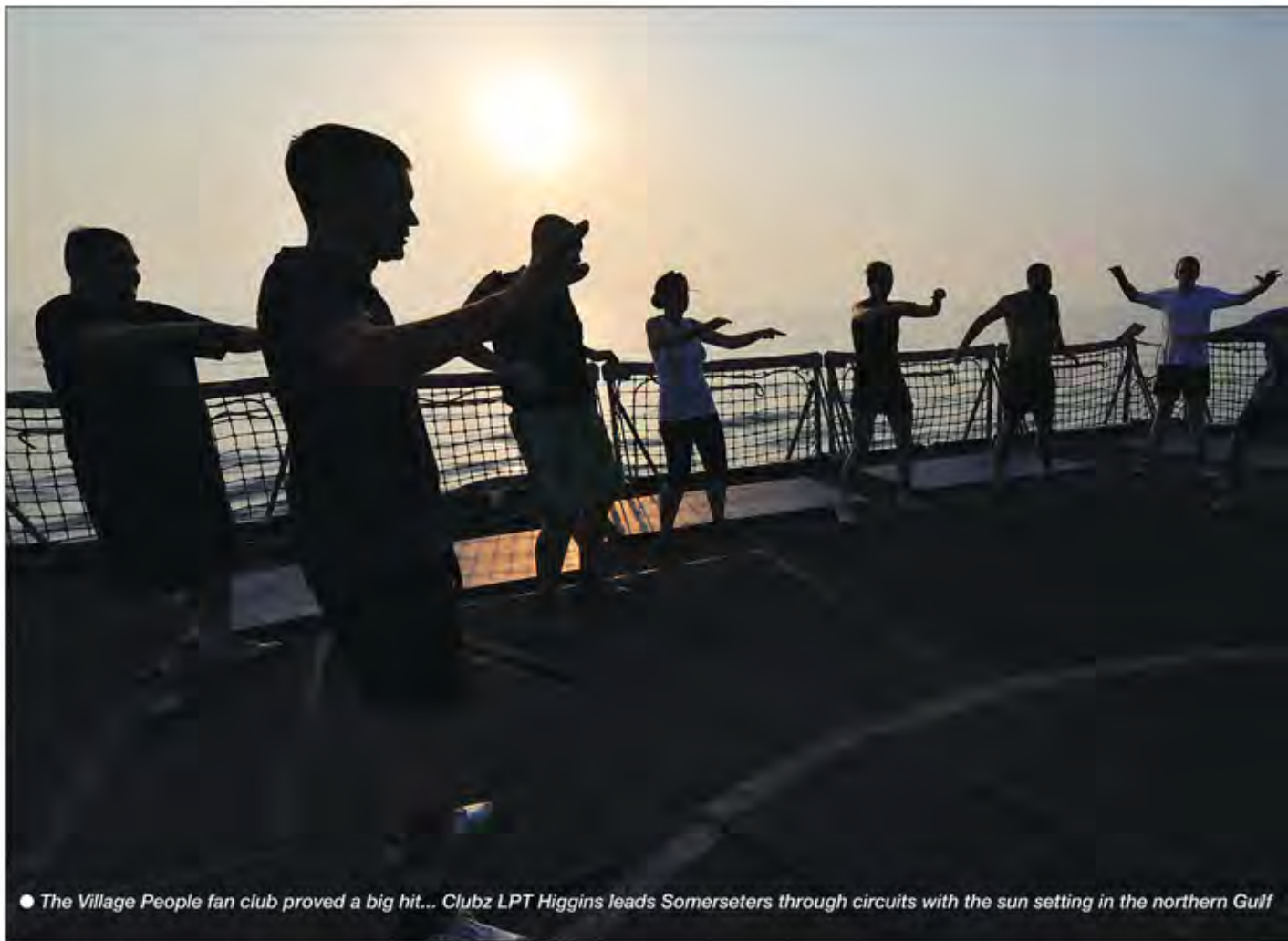
This is the first time the Iraqi Navy has trained specialists in these areas – vital with the leap in technology which its new Swift patrol boats embrace. The first of these 114ft, 35+kt craft has just arrived in the region and crew are being trained up.

Their training involves four weeks of militarisation, five weeks of branch-specific education, four weeks of deep specialist training (including 'work placement' which, for the electrical engineers means time aboard RFA Cardigan Bay), and finally a week of management training and exams.

"The students are doing well so far," says Lt Cdr Ashworth. "They are engaged, keen to learn, and scribble furiously in their notebooks."

"The *madrasa* (school house) is buzzing, and the constant sound of marching as the students move between lessons has brought the base to life and really focussed the efforts of us all."

ITAM in its various guises (NATT – Naval Transition Team – is probably its most well-known incarnation) has been running since the earliest days of the post-Saddam era. It's due to run until at least the end of 2011, by which time the Iraqi Navy will take over responsibility for protecting its assets and shores in the northern Gulf.



● The Village People fan club proved a big hit... Clubz LPT Higgins leads Somerseters through circuits with the sun setting in the northern Gulf

# There's no gain with

THE pain was provided by HMS Somerset's clubz, LPT Higgins, and his demanding daily fitness regime in the Gulf heat.

And the gain? Two weeks in Dubai – the ultimate rest and recuperation destination in this part of the world – for the frigate's 180 men and women.

The Type 23 enjoyed her 'operational stand down' – a fortnight of much-needed maintenance for the ship and much-needed rest for her crew after weeks of defence watches.

Since deploying from Devonport in May, Somerset has divided her time east of Suez

between providing security at sea in the central and northern Gulf and providing protection to the Al Basrah Oil Terminal with Combined Task Force (CTF) 152 (which embraces the entire Gulf from the Strait of Hormuz) and CTF Iraqi Maritime (supporting Iraq's navy and marines to defend the oil platforms and waters).

That's punishing work for man and machine in high summer – temperatures in the northern Gulf reach 45°C (115°F) in July and August and rarely drop below 29°C (85°F).

So the stand-down in Dubai provided an excellent opportunity to conduct vital maintenance of the ship's weapons, sensors and machinery, replenish her

stores, and the ship's company to recharge batteries before returning to patrolling the Arabian Gulf.

As soon as Somerset was secured alongside in Port Rashid, Dubai – slap bang in the centre of the emirate – contractors from both the UK and the UAE filed on board to provide engineering assistance and to improve the condition of the ship's upper deck.

To help coordinate the work on the upper deck, a team of two from Superintendent Fleet Maintenance Devonport provided invaluable support and ensured the local painters provided the

best possible value for money.

Thanks to the work package – and the efforts of the ship's company (it wasn't R&R for everyone in Dubai...) the superstructure is now in excellent condition.

Those Somerseters who did have plenty of downtime flew out friends and family. Not a few decamped to the emirate's many hotels or toured the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building standing some 826m (2,710ft – or half a mile) high, and the iconic Burj Al Arab hotel (shaped like the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth but a tad posher...).



# Fox sees Seafox as mine f

THEY may have stealth fighters, unmanned drones by the dozen, smart bombs, but for all their fancy military hardware, there's one piece of kit the Americans don't have.

So step in the Royal Navy to demonstrate the potency of Seafox, its remote-controlled underwater rover which proves rather effective at disposing of mines.

Britain's Gulf minehunting forces – HM Ships Chiddingfold, Middleton, Pembroke and

Grimsby, plus mother ship RFA Lyme Bay – linked up with their American counterparts for ten days of working-up in the warm, shallow, busy, and invariably murky waters of the Gulf. Four Avenger-class minehunters (which are considerably larger than the UK's Hunts and Sandowns) departed Bahrain with the Brits for Bilat 10 (Bilateral 2010), a heady mix of locating mines,

blowing things up (always the best bit), force protection, navigational manoeuvres, diving training, rafting up – basically all the things you'd expect of a mine warfare task group, all under the direction of the UK's Cdr David Bence, Commander UK Mine Countermeasures Force.

Part of the war games was observed by the senior Allied naval officer in the region,

the US Navy's Vice Admiral Mark Fox in charge of Fifth Fleet in Bahrain.

He joined the Cheery Chid, where Lt Cdr Adam Northover and his ship's company demonstrated what Seafox can do; the submersible was dispatched by the Hunt with a live round and detonated a simulated target.

The US admiral watched proceedings from Chiddingfold's 'combat information centre' (aka operations room)



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● Surg Lt Tom Stevenson catches his breath after a work-out while (below) Lt Becca Burrell powers through gecko press-ups



Pictures: LA/Photo Jenny Lodge

# End of one dream command and the beginning of another

WAVING heartily from the flight deck of the nation's flagship on a gloomy late summer's day in Portsmouth Harbour, the ship's company of HMS Ark Royal bid farewell to the man who's guided the legendary carrier for the past two years.

Capt John Clink (you can just make out him raising his cap in acknowledgment) was given a rousing send-off by sailors as he departed Ark in a WW2-vintage motor gunboat, MGB 81, which is a working museum vessel in Portsmouth.

His two-year tenure of the carrier saw her visit the United States twice (most recently leading the Auriga deployment), take part in a Canadian Fleet Review, operate every type of helicopter in Britain's arsenal (that's Fleet Air Arm, RAF and Army Air Corps) and undergo a mini-refit allowing Ark to operate Harriers again (RN, RAF and US Marine Corps) after a lengthy hiatus.

"It is every warfare officer's dream to command HMS Ark Royal," said Capt Clink. "I have had tremendous pleasure in doing so and take with me fond memories of my sea time."

Before leaving in the veteran gunboat, Capt Clink formally handed over the flagship to his successor Capt Jerry Kyd, who gathered his new ship's company in the hangar.

It's his third spell serving in Ark. He was with her for her first commission back in 1986 and returned in 2001-03 as her navigator, before taking charge of HMS Monmouth for two years.

There's no slackening of the pace on the flagship for Ark's new Commanding Officer.

After a spell of maintenance after the USA deployment during the summer, Ark Royal is currently leading RN input in the latest round of Joint Warrior exercises off the north-west coast of Scotland.

Thereafter the ship's 25th birthday commemorations reach their climax, including a Silver Jubilee cocktail party on board next month.

The carrier will remain as the nation's flagship until her older sister HMS Illustrious emerges from refit in Rosyth next year.

Picture: LA/Photo Abbie Gadd, HMS Ark Royal



# out some pain...

The more energetic matelots took on Dubai Vets FC (vets for veterans rather than animal doctors...) at the Dubai 7s Stadium (which hosts the world-famous rugby tournament).

The match was played in the unforgiving Dubai heat - which clearly affected Somerset's game plan.

Despite giving the experienced home side a challenging and hard-fought game, the Vets secured a 3-1 victory.

Undeterred, the sailors were up for a rematch seven days later.

Oh dear. The Vets FC sent out a number of fresh players, including a pair of Scottish U21s, and promptly subjected the sailors to a 7-0

drubbing. Mind you, that's not the biggest hammering Somerset's suffered.

Oh no. A month before the footballers were put to the sword 9-1 by the Expatriates in Doha during a visit to Qatar as the team struggled to acclimatise during its first run out.

So things are improving evidently...

"The visit to Dubai was a resounding success," said Commanding Officer Cdr Andrew Burns.

"The ship's company are refreshed and ready for the next phase of the deployment and Somerset herself is in excellent material state, ready for any

tasking that she may be asked to fulfill."

Which is precisely what she's doing now under the banner of CTFs 152 and Iraqi Maritime.

The frigate is now half-way through her Gulf deployment.

She has provided defence of the Al Basrah Oil Terminal, in support of UN Security Council Resolution 1790, protecting the Iraq economy's key source of income.

In so doing Somerset's conducted more than 170 'Approach and Assurance Visits' of dhows and merchant ships in the northern Gulf to reassure the seafaring community and ensure the safety of commercial maritime activities.

# forces work together

before joining USS Gladiator to observe the American way of mine warfare.

"I think it was very important for Admiral Fox to see the coalition working together towards a common aim, to try to improve our mine countermeasures capability," said Cdr Bence.

"He was also able to compare and contrast how the UK does its business with how the US does its business - and he will be able to better make

an opinion on whether the US needs to invest in mine countermeasures in the near to immediate future."



Although the kit and ships are different, both navies use crew rotation to maintain a constant mine countermeasures presence in the Gulf - in the Royal Navy's case, sailors spend on average of six months aboard the ships while



each vessel is expected to operate from Bahrain for between two and three years.

● HMS Pembroke leads the Bilat 10 task group comprising USS Gladiator, USS Scout, HMS Middleton, HMS Cattistock, RFA Lyme Bay (she's the big grey slab in the middle of the picture...), HMS Chiddingfold, USS Ardent and USS Dextrous.

Picture: MC1(AW) Cassandra Thompson, US Navy







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# Around the Rock around the clock

RACING away from the Rock at high speed is HMS Sabre, one of the constant guardians of Gibraltar's waters.

The 18-strong Gibraltar Squadron – patrol boats HMS Sabre and Scimitar plus three RIBs – usher all visiting RN vessels into and out of harbour.

They also scour Gib's territorial waters and coastline every day to ensure nothing untoward is happening.

They've been doing so since 1985 – which means it's time to celebrate the squadron's 25th anniversary.

The milestone was marked with a reception and Sunset ceremony at the Tower, the distinctive British Forces HQ in Gib.

At the reception, the squadron's first CO Lt Cdr Maurice Fitzgerald proposed a toast and ordered 'Up Spirits'. Sailors don't ignore orders, of course, so tots were enjoyed all round.

The squadron can trace its roots back to the (cough, splutter) RAF and Marine Craft Unit (No. 1102).

When it passed into history in 1985, its boats Sunderland and Stirling were handed over to the RN, who promptly rechristened them HM Ships Hart and Cormorant.

They were replaced six years later by P2000s Ranger and Trumpeter before Whitehall determined security in Gibraltar should be stepped up in the wake of the September 11 2001 atrocities in the USA.

The Navy dispatched the current patrol craft, fresh from duties in Northern Ireland, in 2003.

Formally, the squadron is responsible for escorting RN vessels from the limit of British Gibraltar Territorial Waters until they enter the security boom in the naval base.

It also carries out deterrence patrols to stop unauthorised access of territorial waters and, if necessary, to respond to any incursions.

In short, says squadron and Scimitar CO Lt Cdr Matt Sykes, the unit is "on the water every day playing a key role".

His deputy, Lt Charlie Luxford, CO of HMS Sabre, adds: "Security here is key. We are not far from many threats."

"We spend a lot of time at sea, working with other units on the Rock and our allies to ensure that we have a full picture of traffic passing through the Strait of Gibraltar."



● AB Jonathan Howie salutes his great great grandfather and fallen comrades lost at the Battle of Coronel in 1914



● Portland's boarding party stalks her 'Cd' Mike Knott oversees the passage through the Canals from his bridge



● The southern sun pierces the Falkland clouds as HMS Portland leaves the islands for good



● Practising boarding operations in the chilly Falkland waters and (below) a ceremonial salute as Portland arrives in Valparaiso



# Kind and Co

## SO FAREWELL to the Falklands.

And farewell to winter. After four months prowling around Britain's South Atlantic dependencies, HMS Portland has seen the last of the archipelago – for this deployment at least.

In the final weeks before departing East Cove Military Port for good, the frigate paid a two-day visit to the settlements of Goose Green and Darwin.

Some of the ship's company managed to get ashore during the day and a lucky few were able to join the Commanding Officer, Cdr Mike Knott, at a leaving party for the Governor of the Falkland Islands, Alan Huckle.

It was a cold night made warm by the Southern Hemisphere's hospitality and entertainment.

His departure was soon followed by Portland's – after a spot of upper-deck husbandry and storing ship.

It was a fine, clear day and the departure was made all the more memorable by the fantastic send-off the ship received from the people and aircraft of the Mount Pleasant Complex, the Falkland Islands' military base.

First, the search and rescue Sea King came out to say goodbye, followed swiftly by an impressive fly-by from two of the islands' Typhoon jets as Portland sailed out of harbour with style and panache.

"After a great deal of time spent in the company of the joint forces of the Army and RAF during the past four months, it was a fitting and memorable way to leave the Falkland as the ship proudly carved her way through an unusually crystal-blue sea, made merry by the white horses of a blustering westerly wind as she headed into the South Atlantic," said Cdr Knott (with a bit of lyrical flourish...).

Destination Chile and the country's bicentennial celebrations.

Portland, perhaps wisely, chose not to negotiate Cape Horn,

but made instead for the calmer waters of the Magellan Strait and Patagonian Canals.

As the passage probed deeper into the Strait, the scenery altered dramatically from a barren Patagonian landscape to one of breathtaking natural beauty in the form of snow covered mountains.

Navigationally, the canals tested the bridge teams to the maximum – but will no doubt be one of most rewarding experiences they are likely to encounter.

As well as snow-covered peaks, many of the tiny islands provided the first glimpse of a tree since the departure from Rio four months earlier.

Once the transit was complete the ship emerged into the Pacific for the final leg of the 2,000 mile journey to Valparaiso.

The 'road' to the Chilean port passes over the 'battlefield' of one of the greatest shocks to Royal Navy prestige during the 20th Century.

The loss of HM Ships Monmouth and Good Hope at the Battle of Coronel – and with them Rear Admiral Christopher Cradock and 1,500 men – in November 1914 was the Senior Service's first defeat in a century.

The Admiralty's response was swift and bloody. It dispatched a vastly-superior force to hunt down Admiral von Spee.

In six weeks the victor became the vanquished as the German squadron was decimated off the Falkland Islands in December 1914.

A century on and Portland paused over the wreck of HMS Monmouth, where the bodies of more than 600 men are entombed, among them LS Joseph Bennetton, a veteran of the RN and Coastguard with nearly 30 years' experience at sea.

That experience counted for nought as the armoured cruiser was outgunned and outfought by the Germans.

Every man aboard the Black Duke was lost. LS Bennetton left

● Last chance to meet... (Below) Portlanders pay their final visits to the remnants of the Battle of Coronel



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Upper deck and (right) CO  
e through the Patagonian



# hearts ronel

behind a wife and four children. His seafaring legacy lives on, however.

His great great grandson, AB Jonathan Howie, serves aboard Portland.

The rating joined shipmates on the frigate's flight deck for a service of remembrance before the sailor cast a wreath into the Pacific.

"Despite the generations between us, I am proud to carry on my great grandfather's legacy," said the young AB.

"It is sheer coincidence that some 96 years later my ship is in these waters and we were able, in some small way, to remember their great sacrifice."

And talking of sacrifice... 150 years ago much of the Chilean capital Santiago was razed by fire, which killed over 2,500 people.

Amid the ruins were three church bells, bought as scrap and then shipped to Swansea where, until very recently, they were housed in All Saints Church in Oystermouth, Wales where their purchaser had a family pew.

Last year the Chilean Ambassador to the UK opened negotiations with the church for the bells' return.

After the earthquake which struck Chile in February, the parish church council decided to donate the bells as a gift for Chile's 200th birthday celebrations.

That was the easy part. Getting the bells from Swansea Bay to the Chilean capital, well you can't just ring up Parcelforce... The largest bell weighs 400kg (880lb) and is over one metre (3ft 3in) tall.

So enter the RN and RFA. First tanker Black Rover carried the bells from Plymouth to the Falklands.

Portland carried the heavy objects the final 2,000 miles of their 10,000-mile odyssey into the port at Valparaiso.

As the bells were being hauled off the frigate, an army of engineers was filing aboard Portland.

After four months of relentless driving rain, snow and at times storm-force winds, Britain's second youngest Type 23 needed a spot of maintenance.

Work on Portland had, of course, been carried out during her time at East Cove in the Falklands.

But much of the maintenance work required warmer weather (17°C rather than 7°C) and less precipitation (.8in rather than 1½in) than the Falklands could offer.

From the most junior to the most senior rating on board, plus local ship maintainers and employees of Babcock Marine – who carry out such work on Royal Navy vessels in the UK – an 'army' swarmed over the frigate in a busy five days.

They worked non-stop, late into the night, erecting scaffolding, sanding, chipping, painting, scraping... and yet more painting.

Ship's company got stuck in working on the foc's'le, boat deck, quarterdeck and the ship's side, stripping down old paint and rust that had accumulated whilst the local maintainers got to work on some of the harder-to-reach areas with cranes and buckets, boats and pontoons.

By the fifth day, after a lot of extremely long hours through early morning fog, strong midday sunshine and warm breezy afternoons, the final flicks of paint added an extra shine to the frigate...

... just in time for Exercise Terra Australis and Chile's Bicentennial Fleet Review, which saw Portland lead three Type 23s, now under the Chilean flag.

"The Royal Navy and the Chilean Navy have a history of close cooperation that dates back to the foundation of Chile in 1810," said Cdr Knott.

"We are proud to be involved in such an historic event and also to be able to celebrate the Chile 200 anniversary in such fine and friendly company."

ote Falkland settlements of Port Louis and San Carlos



● Magnificent desolation... Portland passes through the snow-covered peaks of Patagonia

Pictures: LA(Phot), Sirrma Sirrpson, FRPU East



● Star jumping is taken to the next level... Portland and her Lynx practise winning drills on the foc's'le

## Curtain falls on 30 years of 42 refits

AFTER more than 30 years of refurbishment at yards across the land, refits and revamps for Type 42 destroyers are no more.

HMS Edinburgh is the very last of a line of warships which began with HMS Sheffield in the 1970s to be refitted.

The Fortress of the Seas has just emerged from a £17.5m overhaul in the hands of BAE Systems (now there's just one change from the first 42 refits carried out in Britain's dockyards...) which will see the veteran warship through to the end of her 25-year-plus career.

The refit included the fitting of two refurbished engines (one Tyne, one Olympus), with two new power turbines in the Olympus engines, whilst the hull has been covered with 'go faster' paint – it makes it harder for marine life to stick to the ship, hence she can go faster.

And talking of going fast, a spoiler on Edinburgh's stern – officially a transom flap – will help to cut fuel consumption by up to 15 per cent.

Other improvements carried out include an enhanced computer system and revamps for living spaces, fresh water systems, the galley and the laundry facilities.

Edinburgh passed her 'ready for sea' inspection which meant she was able to depart for sea trials last month.

That's followed later this month by the destroyer being formally handed back to the RN, after which there's a rededication in Portsmouth next month, some Operational Sea Training with those nice folk at FOST in the new year and, come May 2011, a six-month overseas deployment.

"The close partnership between the ship's company and BAE contractors saw the refit programme surge ahead over the final few weeks," said CO Cdr Paul Russell.

"We now have to put Edinburgh through her paces at sea and turn a safe and fully-equipped vessel into a war-fighting unit once again."



## 771 rescue colleague

CULDROSE-based Search and Rescue fliers were called to help one of their own following a freak sporting accident.

Lt Simon Cantrell, who works in the control tower at the Cornish air station, was paragliding over St Agnes Head with 771 NAS trainee pilot Lt Alistair Andrews when a sudden change in wind conditions caused his paraglider wing to collapse 50ft above ground.

Although he tried to regain control, the junior officer fell to earth and landed heavily on a rock.

Ambulance paramedics were able to get to the injured aviator after being alerted by Lt Andrews – a coach of the RN paragliding team.

"We'd been flying together in what seemed like good conditions,"

said Lt Andrews.

"The collapse that the glider suffered could not have been foreseen. I hope that this accident doesn't put Simon off flying again soon."

The ambulance crew deemed an airlift was the best and quickest course of action for Lt Cantrell, who'd suffered a broken leg in the fall and was understandably in some pain.

So enter a 771 Sea King which quickly made the 15-mile hop from Helston to the north Cornish coast and carried the injured sportsman to the Royal Cornwall Hospital in Truro.

"When you are lying on a cliff top, broken and in pain, the words 'a helicopter is on its way' are the best in the world!" said a grateful Lt Cantrell from his hospital bed.

## CHRISTMAS CARD APPEAL

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# Always in the Vanguard



Norway.....	1940-44
Mediterranean.....	1940-41
Spartivento.....	1940
Malta Convoys.....	1941-42
Bismarck.....	1941
Diego Suárez.....	1942
North Africa.....	1942
Southern France.....	1944
Aegean.....	1944
Burma.....	1945
Malaya.....	1945
East Indies.....	1945
Korea.....	1950
Falkland Islands.....	1982

**Motto:** *Nunquam non paratus* – never unprepared  
**Aircraft:** Harrier GR9  
**Engines:** Rolls-Royce Pegasus 105 or 107 turbo fan generating 21,750lbs thrust  
**Wing Span:** 30ft 4in (9.25m)  
**Length:** 46ft 4in (14.1m)  
**Speed:** 662mph (1,065 km/h)  
**Ceiling:** 50,000ft (15,000m)  
**Rate of climb:** 14,715ft per minute (74.8 m/s)  
**Crew:** one pilot  
**Combat radius:** c.350 miles  
**Weapons:** AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missile, AGM-65 Maverick air-to-ground missile, CRV-7 rocket pod, Paveway II, Paveway III, enhanced Paveway, general-purpose bombs

JUST back from the Mediterranean sun where its Harriers have been carrying out some 'top bombing' is one of the legendary names in naval aviation: 800 Naval Air Squadron.

Harding Flame is a fairly regular exercise run out of RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus which involves jets, close-air support, rockets, bombs – what's not to like? – as fixed-wing formations practise vital battlefield skills with tactical controllers on the ground (see pages 24-25).

The latter is something Fleet Air Arm Harrier pilots have become quite used to in recent years: with its sister squadron 801, 800 spent most of the second half of the Noughties deployed as the Naval Strike Wing in Afghanistan, a mission which ended in the summer of 2009.

The formation of the Strike Wing meant that 800 disappeared off the radar for a few years, but since April this year the squadron has been back, upholding proud traditions which stretch back eight decades.

Like most FAA squadrons, 800 has led a varied existence – different roles (fighter and bomber), a myriad of aircraft (the magnificent Buccaneer, graceful Seafire, the legendary Hellcat, the dreadful Blackburn Roc) and a good smattering of homes (Hatson in the Orkneys, Ford in West Sussex, 'Lossie' in Moray and, most recently, RNAS Yeovilton and RAF Cottesmore, although the squadron's due to decamp from the latter to nearby Wittering with the closure of the Rutland airbase).

The 800 story begins in the early 1930s aboard HMS Courageous with Hawker Nimrods and Ospreys as a fighter/bomber/observation squadron. By the outbreak of war, 800 had changed aircraft (Skua dive-bombers) and ship (Ark Royal).

In company with comrades from

803, those Skuas became the first aircraft to sink a major warship: the German cruiser Königsberg in the Norwegian campaign.

800 would return to Norway later in the war, supporting the attacks on the battleship Tirpitz.

In between the squadron attacked the French fleet at Oran, hunted the Bismarck with HMS Victorious and supported the invasions of Madagascar (Operation Ironclad) and North Africa (Torch).

800's war ended in the Far East attacking Japanese targets on land and at sea in Burma.

The squadron's next combat would also come in the Far East as its Seafires – 800's last propeller-driven aircraft – supported the Inchon landings in Korea.

The jet age began with the Supermarine Attacker, quickly followed by Sea Hawks and Scimitars and, from the mid-1960s, the Buccaneer (committed famously against the stricken oil tanker Torrey Canyon in 1967).

When HMS Eagle passed into history in 1972, so too did her associated squadrons.

It was 1980 before 800 NAS reappeared with the Sea Harrier which demonstrated its potency two years later in the Falklands (800's most recent battle honour), destroying more than a dozen Argentinean aircraft.

A 24-year association with the Sea Harrier (FRS1 and later FA2) and Yeovilton ended in April 2004 when 800 stood down.

It re-materialised in Cottesmore in 2006 as a bomber squadron operating Harrier GR7s and GR9s.



● Here are the HUD lines... A cockpit view of one 800 NAS Harrier from another over Cyprus

Picture: LA(Phot) Luis Holden, 800 NAS

## HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.78 – Lt Cdr Hugh Knollys DSC



DOWN by the head, but at least with the fires which killed so many of her crew under control, HMS Saumarez is taken under tow by HMS Volage in one of the earliest flashpoints of the Cold War.

Our rummage around the photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum this month takes us back to October 22 1946 and an incident which caused a rift between two nations for half a century as the Royal Navy was sucked into the global game of Superpower politics.

The focal point of this rift: the narrow waters between the Greek island of Corfu and Albania – the Corfu Channel. Although the war in Europe had been over for 18 months, its legacy remained. The waters of the Adriatic – including the Corfu Channel – had been liberally peppered with mines.

Even now, only part of the Corfu Channel was free of mines, a swept channel which in places passed just a few hundred yards from the coast of Albania.

International law determined that ships of all nations had the right to use the channel. Communist Albania disagreed. Its coastal batteries had already fired on British cruisers in the

spring of 1946 as they sailed past.

The shells missed, but Whitehall was livid. It protested. The Albanians rejected the protests. No ship – merchantman or warship – could sail within three miles of its coast.

And so the lines were drawn. On October 22 1946, a force of ships was dispatched to assert the right of freedom of navigation. Unbeknownst, it sailed into a minefield sown by a Yugoslavian warship at the request of its Albanian communist allies.

In the lead was HMS Saumarez, a veteran of the sinking of the Scharnhorst, of the battle for Normandy and finally the Far East where she had led an attack on the Japanese cruiser Haguro – and helped sink her in a classic destroyer action.

Twelve months later and Saumarez was serving with the Mediterranean Fleet, heading a line of ships including Volage, Maunius and Leander, north through the Corfu Channel, then northwest through the wider waters of the Bay of Saranda. The passage was almost complete when Saumarez was gripped by a tremendous explosion. The mine tore a 30ft

deep gash in the destroyer, just forward of her bridge. Those crew not vaporised by the blast drowned in its aftermath as the Adriatic rushed in, or were incinerated as fires raged.

More than 30 men died instantly; seven more would succumb to their injuries.

On Saumarez's shattered bridge, navigator Lt Hugh Knollys was slowly coming round after being thrown more than a dozen feet by the blast of the mine.

Knollys' brushed off his injuries – "bruised kidneys", as he told his wife, and cuts to his head – and set about resuming his navigating duties, which meant marking the position of the mine.

Such sangfroid was typical of Knollys who described some of the most gripping incidents in Royal Navy history with wonderful understatement.

He had earned his DSC for his deeds in Normandy, safely guiding the 1st Minesweeping Flotilla towards Sword Beach on D-Day so it could clear the way for the subsequent invasion. The mission, he recalled, was "quite taxing". It was also "100 per cent successful".

Eleven months later, Knollys was again flotilla navigation officer, this time in the Far East, helping to orchestrate the destruction of the heavy cruiser Haguro from the operations room of HMS Saumarez.

He did so again with remarkable cool, despite the destroyer being hit by the Japanese... the ship's cat apparently helped him mark positions on the chart.

Knollys (but not the cat...) was mentioned in dispatches for the Haguro action; it was a distinction which would be repeated in the wake of the Corfu Channel Incident.

While those below decks struggled to contain the fires and flooding, the dazed bridge team looked to salvage Saumarez, now drifting towards the Albanian coast – with the constant threat of more mines.

Salvation came in the form of another destroyer, HMS Volage, ordered to attach a tow line to Saumarez.

The rescue mission was barely under way when another terrible explosion reverberated around the Corfu Channel. Volage's bow simply vanished, torn away by another mine. The tow line vanished too.

Not only did Volage not founder, she persisted with the rescue mission. Long after dark that October night, she hauled Saumarez into Corfu Harbour.

Saumarez would never sail again. The damage was deemed too great and she was eventually sold for scrapping. An international court ruled Albania was to blame and ordered Tirana to pay compensation. It did not. London seized Albanian assets and broke off diplomatic relations. It took the fall of communism for relations to be restored and for some, though not all, the compensation to be paid.

Hugh Knollys recovered from his injuries and remained in the Service for another 11 years with a string of seagoing and shoreside appointments.

He became an accomplished artist and illustrator, specialising in marine art and portraits of children. He died in 2006 at the age of 88.

■ THE main image (A 31207) – plus others from the incident... and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at [www.iwmcollections.org.uk](http://www.iwmcollections.org.uk), by emailing [photos@iwm.org.uk](mailto:photos@iwm.org.uk), or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

With thanks to Ian Proctor



# We're 25 by gum

BACK in the late summer of 1985 the world was agog at news of a maritime sensation. Admittedly the commissioning of HMS York didn't quite make the same headlines as the discovery of the Titanic, but it was a deed worth celebrating. And a quarter of a century later there was another late summer celebration as the veteran destroyer marked 25 years in service.

A dozen former Commanding Officers of the Type 42 joined current CO Cdr Simon Staley and the White Rose warship's sponsor Lady Gosling plus York's newest affiliates, the Worshipful Company of Farmers, for a silver jubilee commemoration.

York's in the throes of an overhaul following her recent exertions in the South Atlantic, but that didn't stop Cdr Staley and his ship's company giving guests a tour of the vessel in Portsmouth Naval Base.

Seventeen officers have commanded York since she was laid down just 12 days into the 1980s and since sea trials began in the middle of that decade the destroyer's clocked up 706,271 miles – the equivalent of more than 32 times around the globe; some 26,000 of those miles came during last winter's tour of duty in the South Atlantic.

Once her revamp's complete, York's earmarked to remain in service until 2012 and despite her age she boasts the title of 'fastest 42' (in fact, fastest destroyer full stop) managing an impressive 34 knots (just shy of 40mph) last year.

The ship can trace her lineage back to 1654 with the previous incarnation (York No.11) serving with distinction in the Mediterranean in WW2 before being disabled in Crete by Italian motor torpedo boats.

"The silver jubilee is a very special day. With the Fleet being so busy at the moment it is hard to identify an opportunity to do this type of event but we felt it was important to celebrate the ship," said Cdr Staley.

"Having so many former COs back on board shows just how important HMS York is and how proud the current ship's company is to be serving with her.

"She is a terrifically capable ship and has a great ship's company who are hard-working and professional with a great sense of humour – all of which is extremely important for me as a CO."

Back at sea, York helped with the rescue of a stricken yacht in the Channel.

The destroyer was sailing through the South West exercise areas when her Lynx helicopter picked up a garbled radio message.

The aircrew asked Portland coastguard for clarification and learned that the message came from the struggling Mary Flora.

The 30ft yacht, making for Brixham from the Channel Islands, had lost her engine and her sails blew out southeast of Start Point.

The Lynx headed for the yacht's last reported position, promptly found it and waited till the Type 42 arrived on the scene as the winds grew stronger.

The warship remained with the Mary Flora until the Torbay lifeboat arrived and towed the yacht into Brixham harbour.

# You can't beat a bit of ballet

SAILORS and marines can enjoy high culture for free courtesy of the Tickets for Troops initiative, Mayflower Theatre and the English National Ballet.

The latter are performing *Romeo and Juliet* at the Southampton venue between October 20 and 23 – and used HMS Dauntless' appearance at the city's boat show to launch the giveaway.

Ten free pairs of tickets are available for each performance via [ticketsfortroops.org.uk](http://ticketsfortroops.org.uk). Since the charity was formed it has handed out more than 200,000 tickets to Service personnel for music and sporting events.

# Take a 'wark on the wild (weather) side



# Pre-school for trainers

NAVY instructors who prepare Britain's sailors for the rigours of life on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq headed to the USA to pick up tips from their American counterparts.

Upwards of 1,000 RN sailors undergo Pre-Deployment Training (PDT) each year if they're doing a tour of duty in either theatre.

Like Britain, the US Navy sends its sailors to places you perhaps wouldn't expect to find – but in their case the annual figure's nearer 40,000 men and women.

So the team from the Mounting Centre in HMS Nelson, who provide that key training, headed to Fort Jackson in South Carolina.

The sprawling base a couple of hours outside Charleston is one of eight places where US sailors receive instruction before heading into the sands.

That training covers a wide range of problems and challenges sailors could encounter on the ground: anything from understanding local customs and practices to spotting improvised explosive devices and protecting themselves on foot patrol.

"The courses both run on the exact same principle: to get sailors up to the standard that is required to work with land forces on the ground in Afghanistan," explains Lt Cdr Pat O'Callaghan, Officer in Charge RN Pre-Deployment Training.

"Our course is slightly longer than the US, but they both cover all the fundamental aspects of pre-deployment training. We use real-life amputees in our scenarios, whereas the Americans use mannequins.

"The US have a very good admin system when it comes to issuing kit – we think we may incorporate it.

"The visit was extremely worthwhile – and important – when it comes to providing top-notch training for sailors."

While American sailors are taught by the US Army, for us it's an all RN affair (largely Royal Marines). And whereas the US Navy uses eight bases, Britain uses one. Oh yes, and our chaps don't have to wear those Casey Jones-esque caps...

Each year the Mounting Centre in Nelson runs a dozen courses (despite the Pre-Deployment title, they're still colloquially known by its old name of OPTAG by more seasoned RN personnel).

The first fortnight is dedicated to weapons handling and marksmanship with sailors expected to demonstrate accurate shooting at a target 300 metres (1,000ft) away both in daylight and by night.

PDT reaches its climax with a week at Longmoor Camp near Petersfield where the trainees must live in and exercise around a mock forward operating base, conducting foot patrols and returning fire when they come under attack.

"This is something brand new for many of them – they are no longer on their ships. They're drawing on all their military skills to survive out on the ground," said Lt Cdr O'Callaghan.

Once trained, the qualified sailors can find themselves at forward operating bases across Helmand, training the Afghan Army, working at NATO headquarters in Kabul, or with the Iraqi Navy in Umm Qasr among other postings.

At present roughly one in ten Britons in Afghanistan is provided by the Senior Service, a ratio which will rise dramatically when 3 Cdo takes the lead in 2011.



THIS is the moment 18,500 tonnes of battleship grey is moved to an inner basin at Devonport as a £30m overhaul for HMS Bulwark passes a major milestone.

After 127 days 'feet dry' in No.8 Dock (you might remember the striking picture of the assault ship out of water in our June issue), Bulwark was re-floated then moved to a non-tidal basin for the next stage of the refit process.

It would have been bang on schedule thanks to the efforts of the ship's company and Babcock Marine... but then the British weather intervened.

Near-gale-force winds in the West Country prevented Bulwark being moved safely through the narrow gap into the basin, so the

move was put on hold by one day. During time in dry dock, work on the hull and propeller shaft has been carried out and anti-fouling paint applied.

Computer and combat systems have been upgraded, so too the magazines and defensive armament, and the flight deck is now capable of operating two Chinooks simultaneously, and all Bulwark's landing craft now have full tactical night vision kit.

The ship's company move back onboard at the end of this month and will find their living spaces revamped.

The refit continues till the year's end with Bulwark due to begin sea trials early in the new year.

Picture: LAI(Phot) James Crawford

# Trincomalee joins museum

ONE of the last reminders of the glorious days of sail has become the first affiliate of the Royal Navy's new umbrella museum.

The National Museum of the Royal Navy was set up to tell the story of the Senior Service over the past millennium using all four Naval museums – RN, Submarine, Royal Marines around the Solent and Fleet Air Arm at Yeovilton – and to tell that story around the country to give Britons a greater understanding of the historic role of the Navy.

Affiliation with HMS Trincomalee – a near-contemporary of HMS Victory, now a floating museum in Hartlepool – allows just that.

Trincomalee joined the Fleet five years after Nelson's flagship paid off, but the frigate is typical of the warships which helped to defeat Napoleon.

When her active life was over, the Bombay-built vessel became a training and accommodation ship and, until the 1980s, a cadet training vessel in Portsmouth.

In the late 80s she moved to Hartlepool where, after a ten-year restoration programme, she became a museum and the second oldest ship afloat in the world (only the occasionally-seagoing USS Constitution is older). She attracts in excess of 50,000 visitors a year.

The new affiliation was formalised by the signing of an agreement and the loan of logs and diaries relating to Trincomalee and crew held by the National Museum in Portsmouth to Hartlepool.

It will see the historical expertise and artefacts shared by the two organisations, and possibly see Hartlepool hosting mobile RN exhibitions.

The link-up means the teams involved with restoration, conservation and running of Victory and Trincomalee as museums will share their experiences.

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# Putting the

**Y**OU want a stuffed cat jumping out of a plane at 10,000ft strapped to a Royal Marine? You got it.

You want to swim with turtles (and sharks) in the azure waters of the Florida Keys? Sorted.

You want to chase drug runners around the Caribbean by helicopter and hovercraft? I think we can manage that.

You want to attend the court of the mighty King Neptune? No problem.

You want to don your best war paint for a flight deck tug of war? Yup, we can do that.

A ceremonial entry into Rio? Aye, that's on the menu.

Leap out of landing craft or rapid rope on to white crystal sands of a Brazilian beach? Piece of cake.

All in a month's work for Britain's biggest warship, HMS Ocean.

While the rest of the Auriga task group turned for home when the amphibious exercise ended in August, the Mighty O stayed behind in the States for some mid-deployment TLC before the second phase of her five-month 2010 sortie.

That four-week spell in Mayport permitted downtime for the hundreds of men and women aboard.

And what do you do if you've got leave in Florida? You head to Las Vegas, of course. Or Washington. New York. San Francisco. New Orleans. LA.

For those Mighty Os who stayed in the Sunshine State there was the chance to learn to dive in pools in the Keys before heading into the open waters of the Caribbean to swim with sharks and turtles.

Or, like Capt Andy Pugsley RM, in charge of Ocean's landing craft, you can make for Deland (it's about 20 miles from de sea - sorry) and tandem skydive with Ocean's mascot Ship's Cat (the name's a giveaway). Both survived the jump (the cat apparently landed on its feet...).

Sadly you can't scuba or skydive for ever (unless you're a scuba or skydiving instructor, of course) so it was back to the Mighty O and back to sea for the first foray into the Caribbean

in three years.

Ocean's stay in these waters was relatively brief - but she used the passage to scour the area for drug-runners, working with the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force, the US-led organisation overseeing the war on illegal narcotics in the Caribbean region.

If that's not exciting enough, well there's always a spot of phys.

Now you could run a half marathon (as WO Plant did to help families with children born with birth defects). Or you could run a 30-mile yomp in full kit on the gym treadmills (as RM Captains Abouzeid and Beete did for the RNRM Benevolent Trust). Or you could organise a more leisurely (and, let's face it, fun) horse racing night (as arranged by the POs/Sergeants' Mess for Castle Green Community School in Sunderland). The net total of all this sweat and beers (the latter at the race night)? A cool £2,500.

And so to the Southern Atlantic - possibly for the first time in her 12-year career - as the carrier made for Rio for a spot of defence diplomacy and exercises with the Brazilian Navy.

With the usual fanfare those who'd not crossed the Equator before were hauled in front of King Neptune and his court for the age-old 'crossing the line' ceremony.

After the fun, the formalities. It's a good 2,000 or so miles from the Equator to Brazil's most famous port. Plenty of time to practise drill and ceremonial sunset for the official reception and iron those whites for Procedure Alpha into Rio Harbour.

A British capital ship sailing into Rio is a once-in-a-lifetime moment.

So luckily the ship's official photographer LA Guy Pool was aloft in a helicopter to record the occasion.

He's been here before, many moons ago in HMS Endurance in his pre-photographer days.

The leading hand and the Lynx crew were afforded some stunning views as Ocean glided past Pão de Açúcar - Sugar Loaf Mountain - with the outstretched arms of Jesus (in the form

of the statue of Christ the Redeemer) welcoming her from the Corcovado.

There are some things money can't buy...

In fact, Ocean made two entries into Rio - the first a shortlist affair, the second a longer, more formal visit.

The stops in the famous city bracketed one of the main reasons for this rare foray into such waters for the assault ship: an amphibious landing on an isthmus some 50 miles west of Rio. Aboard Ocean are the Royal Marines of 539 Assault Squadron - men whose skills are honed to a 't' after amphibious war games involving the RN and US Navy on the Eastern Seaboard during the summer.

The commandos were joined by their Brazilian counterparts - 100 marines from 3rd Infantry Battalion, Amphibious Division - for a three-day joint exercise (beach landings, rapid roping from helicopters, lots of camo, green berets shouting "argh" with their best war faces - typical RM fare), while Ocean played host to Brazilian sailors from BNS Rio De Janeiro.

The Brazilian marines proved to be "a professional and impressive force" in the words of Ocean's CO Capt Keith Blount.

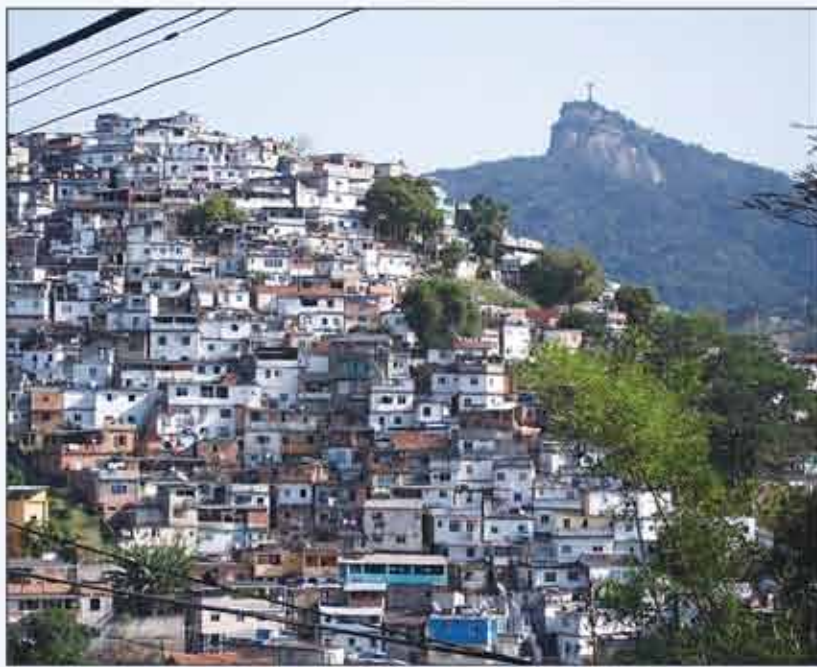
The Os and commandos offered up their amphibious expertise, carrying out drills with the Brazilian marines and pilots, before going ashore by sea (landing craft, offshore raiding craft and hovercraft) and air (Lynx) on the lush island of Marambaia.

"It's exciting to be working with the Brazilians - we don't do it very often and it makes you think differently about how you might go about your job," said PO(ET) Matt Christie.

"To be able to experience such amazing places around the world is one of the main attractions of the job - and this is an amazing part of the world.

He adds a caveat however: "If we don't carry out our roles properly it affects the team, so in that sense it is business as usual."

Still, there are worse places in the world to be conducting 'usual business'...





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So luckily the ship's official photographer LA Guy Pool was aloft in a helicopter to record the occasion.

He's been here before, many moons ago in HMS Endurance in his pre-photographer days.

The leading hand and the Lynx crew were afforded some stunning views as Ocean glided past Pão de Açúcar - Sugar Loaf Mountain - with the outstretched arms of Jesus (in the form

of the statue of Christ the Redeemer) welcoming her from the Corcovado.

There are some things money can't buy...

In fact, Ocean made two entries into Rio - the first a shortlist affair, the second a longer, more formal visit.

The stops in the famous city bracketed one of the main reasons for this rare foray into such waters for the assault ship: an amphibious landing on an isthmus some 50 miles west of Rio. Aboard Ocean are the Royal Marines of 539 Assault Squadron - men whose skills are honed to a 't' after amphibious war games involving the RN and US Navy on the Eastern Seaboard during the summer.

The commandos were joined by their Brazilian counterparts - 100 marines from 3rd Infantry Battalion, Amphibious Division - for a three-day joint exercise (beach landings, rapid roping from helicopters, lots of camo, green berets shouting "argh" with their best war faces - typical RM fare), while Ocean played host to Brazilian sailors from BNS Rio De Janeiro.

The Brazilian marines proved to be "a professional and impressive force" in the words of Ocean's CO Capt Keith Blount.

The Os and commandos offered up their amphibious expertise, carrying out drills with the Brazilian marines and pilots, before going ashore by sea (landing craft, offshore raiding craft and hovercraft) and air (Lynx) on the lush island of Marambaia.

"It's exciting to be working with the Brazilians - we don't do it very often and it makes you think differently about how you might go about your job," said PO(ET) Matt Christie.

"To be able to experience such amazing places around the world is one of the main attractions of the job - and this is an amazing part of the world.

He adds a caveat however: "If we don't carry out our roles properly it affects the team, so in that sense it is business as usual."

Still, there are worse places in the world to be conducting 'usual business'...





## Ocean runners and racers

A STINT on drug-busting duties in the Caribbean has brought in more than £2,500 for charities.

WO Dave Plant completed a half-marathon on board to raise money for the VACTERL Association Support Group which helps families affected by birth defects.

Royal Marines Capt Adam Abouzeid and Jon Beete (pictured above by LA(Phot) Guy Pool) completed a 30-mile yomp on

the ship's treadmills, carrying full kit and weapons, to raise money for the RN & RM Benevolent Trust.

The ship's PO and Sgts Mess hosted a charity 'horse-racing' night on board for Castle Green Community School in the ship's affiliated town of Sunderland.

The school caters for youngsters aged 11 to 19 who have behavioural or social difficulties and other learning challenges.

## Quart tots up

THE Faslane branch of the Royal Naval Engineers' Quart Club raised £1,500 at a black-tie dinner which will go towards refurbishing a cottage in the grounds of Erskine hospital for Armed Forces.

The money will be used for recently-disabled servicemen to acclimatise to family and civilian life whilst having support close at hand.

The Quart Club traces its roots back to 1930 when it was formed near Plymouth to 'discourage the gin drinking habit in the Royal Navy' - an ingenious excuse for a beer-drinking club - and the Faslane branch formed in 1997.

## Pompey boost for RNRMC

PORTSMOUTH Football Club has joined forces with Jobsite to support the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

The RNRMC has been given advertising space in the stadium and on the team clothing.

In addition, 1,000 tickets for Fratton Park games have been donated to RNRMC for 1,000 of its beneficiaries.

The support to the Naval charity will run through the whole football season.

Find out more at [www.rnrmc.org.uk](http://www.rnrmc.org.uk).

# From concept to reality

BY NOW, if you read these pages regularly, you should hopefully have noticed that the March for Honour is taking place next month.

Four teams from each of the Armed Services speedmarching across Britain to raise one million pounds for the Royal British Legion, a concept created and led by Royal Marine L/Cpl Ram Patten (pictured right).

But an idea born out of a very personal experience.

Ram is Royal to the core; his impressive arm is adorned with a massive globe and laurel tattoo; and he laughs and talks with frankness of his experiences in Afghanistan.

And with equal frankness of his struggle months afterwards coming to terms with PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder).

But this isn't a tale of woe; this is a tale of someone who came back from the edge of darkness and wants to help others find their own way back.

Ram said: "For a three-month period after I got back from Afghanistan in December 2007, everything seemed to go wrong.

"The hardest part was not being able to identify what was going on. I was stressed, without knowing what I was stressed about. And it grew exponentially.

"The diagnosis of the PTSD was emotionally complex. On the one hand it was depressing, yet on the other it was a relief to be able to put a label on my condition.

"After nine months of treatment, I realised that one of my main strengths that helped me get through PTSD was my self-help approach.

"Everyone deals with PTSD in their own way - what works for me might not work for another.

"It is like a fingerprint; everyone has individual traits but there are common characteristics."

He continued: "At the beginning, PTSD was like a dark tunnel with no light at the end. Was it never-ending or merely a complex combination of winding turns?"

"Once I was able to see the light, it became progressively larger with time, thus making me feel better by the day.

"I hope that this cause can assist others living with PTSD to understand that there is an end to the sometimes debilitating symptoms.



"The treatment helped me find myself again. If it worked for me, it can work for others."

He adds: "I went for a run in November last year, I was in a better place than I had ever been in my life. And I thought: 'I want to actually do something for other people.'"

And so the March for Honour was born.

Setting out in early November, teams from the Royal Marines, Royal Navy, RAF and Army - distinguished only by their berets and capbadges - will speedmarch across Britain to meet at Wootton Bassett.

From here the teams will head off together to arrive in London for the official Remembrance ceremonies.

And the Royal British Legion is the natural beneficiary.

Ram said: "I am in awe of the Legion's work. They give 100 per cent irrespective of the perceived importance and with no prejudice to Service."

"Next year the Legion celebrates

its 90th anniversary, and I applaud their achievements and dedication to the welfare of the Armed Forces family.

"They have been very committed to the cause. The RBL Riders Branch will also be accompanying the teams along their routes.

"I wasn't aware I was entitled to join the Legion."

He added: "I want to demonstrate that my generation is prepared to reimburse the efforts of our predecessors.

"I want to do this to pay homage and thanks to all who have served in conflicts past.

"If it hadn't been for their sacrifices, I would not have had the honour to serve Queen and country today."

Find out more at [www.march4honour.com](http://www.march4honour.com), or follow the cause on Facebook and Twitter. You can pledge your support online, or by texting the word MARCH to 70222 which donates £3 plus one text at standard network rate.

## Watch out for the wet wives

IT'S October, it's wet, it must be time for the Wet and Dirty Wives to tackle the Royal Marine Commando Challenge again.

Rachel Cousins will be tackling the course for the third year, along with nine other 'willing' volunteers: Joe Riley, Sam Tubbs, Steph Tubbs, Helen Girling, Lindsey Jarwood, Nikki Flack, Reany Sarahs, Nyree McCourt, and Sarah Beattie.

This year the team are running for charity The Group C, who provide support for injured Royal Marines.

If you would like to pledge your support, visit [www.justgiving.com/wetanddirtywives](http://www.justgiving.com/wetanddirtywives).

## A day at the races

THE Royal Navy Royal Marines Children's Fund is holding a charity day at Goodwood Motor Circuit on Sunday October 24.

The organisers promise a fun day out, with picnics on the lawn, a bouncy castle and balloon race, plus the opportunity for visitors to get round the famous racing circuit by whatever means they can devise - except by motor.

Entries will be welcome from those who want to try their hand at cycling, running, going by scooter, space hopper, roller skate - or any way without an engine.

Entry is £5 per family or £2 for an individual. For an information pack, or to register, contact Clare Scherer on 01243 787807 or email [rnchildren@btconnect.com](mailto:rnchildren@btconnect.com)

## Stuart's Scottish run

WHITEHALL watchkeeper PO Stuart Heron ran the Moray Marathon near RAF Lossiemouth (formerly RNAS Fulmar) in September in aid of Cancer Research.

Stuart, who leaves the RN this year after 23 years, works as an engineer watchkeeper in MOD Main Building in Whitehall. He particularly wants to help the charity because his wife has recovered from cancer.

To donate, go to <http://www.runningsponsors.org/stuartheron>

## Cars and rafts

FORCES Cars Direct turned their backs on their customary four-wheeled method of transport to take part in the Deepings Raft Race for Help for Heroes.

The team, from the military car sales company, have so far raised £1,632.50 but hope to top their efforts of £3,500 from 2009.

You can boost their total at [www.justgiving.com/forces-car-direct-raft](http://www.justgiving.com/forces-car-direct-raft).

## Cheaper to Heathrow

THE Heathrow Express has increased its discount for military personnel to 50 per cent off, with a donation to Help for Heroes.

Richard Robinson of Heathrow Express said: "We have always offered a discount for the Armed Forces to show our support for this country's Service personnel.

"We have picked this last quarter of 2010 to make significant enhancements to our assistance for Help for Heroes. We have increased the discount to 50 per cent and implemented a 10 per cent donation for Help for Heroes to show our appreciation."

Find out more at [www.heathrowexpress.com](http://www.heathrowexpress.com) and for full terms and conditions.

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## Woolly bear on the loose

ANYONE who regularly trained on the streets of Plymouth over the summer months may have seen the strange figure of a fellow runner dressed in an old woollen bearsuit complete with hat, scarf and gloves.

Underneath this apparel was CPOMA Daniel Rowley, a Chief Medic from FOST, and there was a reason for his unseasonably warm garb.

This month Daniel heads off to the Amazon Rainforest to run the Jungle Marathon, a 137-mile (or 222km) self-sufficient race through the forest which takes seven days to complete and includes a number of Amazon River crossings, each of up to 200 yards across.

Notoriously unforgiving, with harsh terrain changes including swamps, jungle undergrowth and a whole day running on sand, this

race is only taken on by the most experienced athletic adventurers who can deal with piranhas, parasitic infestations, poisonous plants, and heat and humidity under the jungle canopy.

The run up to the race has required months of preparation and training. Whilst not running in his NBCD fireman's training suit, Daniel has been watching local football on his static bike turbo trainer, in full bearsuit with the heating turned up high.

He has also contacted hundreds of famous people, organisations and sporting teams to ask for donations of kit/memorabilia, and there will be a charity auction for everything received later this year in aid of Help for Heroes.

To read more about Daniel's jungle adventures and to donate, go to [www.bmycharity.com/danielrowley](http://www.bmycharity.com/danielrowley)





● C/Sgt Baz Gray (centre) is joined by other Royal Marines near Lympstone during his 176-mile non-stop run between Poole and the Commando Training Centre RM, and back again. Picture: PO(Phot) Christine Wood

# There's no stopping Baz

ONE hundred and 76 miles. Two days. £5,000. One Royal Marine. Non-stop. On foot.

They're the bare facts of a gruelling charity challenge that C/Sgt Baz Gray completed in mid-September for Corps good causes.

The senior NCO from CTCRM ran from Poole to Lympstone and back in one go – hence the name: the 176 Miles Non-Stop challenge – with the goal of raising at least £5,000 for his fellow Royals (he's already collected more than £3,000).

For the final stages he was joined by some of the green berets badly wounded in action in recent years – some of the very men his run will hopefully help.

Baz's run takes its inspiration from the commandos' annual 88-mile Lympstone to Poole race which is run in stages by Royals, mainly along the coastal route between the two RM bases.

The colour sergeant is a mountain leader chief instructor at CTCRM. He doesn't claim to be an 'enduro athlete' (although he did ski for 24 hours on behalf of the Royal British Legion earlier this year), but he does believe his experiences in Arctic conditions (including lengthy spells awake) did prepare him.

There were no sustained breaks, no 40 winks to recharge batteries (nor pill popping to stay awake). Apart from what Baz calls 'Formula 1-style pit stops' for food, calls of nature and changes of socks and running shoes, he was indeed on the go non-stop.

"It's all about diet and keeping your mind busy. The first 12 hours will be physical, after that it's all in the mind," he said before he set off.

If the challenge wasn't hard enough already, the senior NCO was carrying a baton throughout the run.

Not any old baton, but The Baton – the handle of a stretcher used to carry wounded personnel in Afghanistan which is now used to spread the word about the sacrifices our Servicemen and women make by being carried around the country on high-profile fund-raising events.

As well as a support vehicle accompanying the Royal throughout, he was joined by quite a few friends and supporters for various stretches.

Baz set out from Poole at midday on September 14, and along the way he encountered many of his brethren. At Lulworth Cove he met up with members of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force, before heading on through the night and enjoying dawn at Seaton.

The NCO arrived at CTCRM Lympstone in the early afternoon of September 15, where a brisk massage to relieve some of the lactic acid bolstered him for his return trip.

He arrived in Sidmouth in the afternoon, where his support crew bolstered him with another quick massage and fish'n'chips – and the news that the lady in the nearby ice-cream shop had donated her day's wages.

Another overnight run and more support from his crew and other runners helped push the tired Marine (running purely on determination by this point) onwards towards his final goal, arriving at Poole at 6.30pm to a large welcoming committee.

If you wish to offer your support – or money – towards his goal of £5,000, visit Baz's website [www.176milesnonstop.org](http://www.176milesnonstop.org) or donation site [www.justgiving.com/176milesnonstop](http://www.justgiving.com/176milesnonstop).

Money goes to the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund and The C Group with the emphasis on helping commandos injured in the line of duty.



## A Talent for rowing

HMS Talent's ACPO MEM(L) Colin Leiba took advantage of a rare chance for some alfresco rowing training during a stop-off in Aqaba, Jordan (see picture above).

Normally the boat's well-used Concept 2 rowing machine

can be found in a narrow passageway in the warmth of the Switchboard Room.

All in preparation for the boat's Row the Suez Challenge, where 81 members of the crew each rowed a 2,000m leg of the 162km length of the Suez

as HMS Talent journeyed its course.

Their combined efforts raised £350 for Shrewsbury's Hope House Children's Hospice, with ACPO Leiba notching up an unbeatable time of six minutes 38 seconds.



## Band notch up 7,200 miles

OVER ten weeks 39 members of the RM Band CTCRM ran, rowed, cycled and swam collectively the distance between CTCRM in Devon and Camp Bastion in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

The final big push came from Sgt Jim Butler, Sgt Mark Phillips and Cpl Andy Wainwright (pictured left) running the Taunton Half-Marathon in April.

In total, the Band raised £4,165 which was shared between the Royal Marines Charitable Trust and BLESMA equally.

The RM Band Collingwood donated £354.87.

## Bikers...

OCTOBER 2 will see motorcyclists gather together to show their support to the Armed Forces.

The riders will gather at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire at the end of their ride for a memorial service.

Find out more at [www.rttw.co.uk](http://www.rttw.co.uk).

## Riders...

AND if you prefer your cycling with less engine power, the RBL held its annual Pedal to Paris fundraising bike-ride in early September, calling together some 300 riders to fundraise for the Royal British Legion Back Challenge Centre. Find out more at [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk).

## And diallers

THE Royal British Legion is collecting old mobile phones for its Poppy Appeal. If you have one lurking in a drawer, please send it to WO2 (SQMS) Stuart Gee, HQ London District, Horse Guards' Parade, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AX. Please note postage must be paid by the sender.



## Raj runs for BLESMA

SURGEON Cdr Raj Shah, who featured in our September edition raising money for Arthritis Research, is on the run again.

This time he (pictured above training on a carrier) is pounding the streets to complete the Birmingham Half Marathon in aid of BLESMA. Surgeon Cdr Shah said: "Unfortunately a great number of our Armed Forces have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan with significant injuries including loss of limbs.

"The cost of rehabilitating them is immense but it is vital and BLESMA is doing superlative work in this respect and needs as much support as possible."

To donate, go to [www.justgiving.com/raj-shah](http://www.justgiving.com/raj-shah)



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# MAOT go site-seeing



**T**HE Mobile Air Operations Team are unlike any other unit in the Royal Navy. The standout reason for that is the green beret that every member of the team – RN or RM – has to wear, and they are all specialists in helicopter handling techniques.

The task for this small unit is to provide specialist aviation assault support skills for helicopters and ground troops anywhere in the world – the heat of the jungle, the cold of the Arctic, the dust of Afghanistan, wherever the demand takes them – and that's often ahead of the main ground troops.

"This role is for people who want to challenge themselves further", says CPO Stephen 'Irish' Watson, MAOT's Ops SNCO. "There are only 16 people and our services are in constant demand, so life here is pretty hectic."

And they are all specialists. Because you can't be in MAOT unless you are a proud owner of a green beret.

It's the only Naval unit that demands that of all its RN personnel. And you can't be in MAOT unless you have an aviation background.

So the requirements are strict before you can even knock on MAOT's door and the training is demanding because of the calibre of people they need in this unit.

Of course, with such high demands to start out with, there must be some impressive payback for being in this hardworking team.

Irish again: "I don't want to leave. I don't want the excitement to end."

"I've fast-roped 90ft at night from a helicopter on to the back of a ship. I've abseiled 200ft through the jungle canopy."

"It's a great unit to be in – the sheer diversity and the responsibility given to the people."

"It's their say-so that is depended on if a massive aviation assault gets called in to somewhere like the Al Faw peninsula."

"You get to do things that you would never do again in your Naval career."

The man who heads up MAOT, Lt Cdr Jake Wilkinson, adds: "During the Al Faw attack in 2003, MAOT were at the cutting edge. Our team went in with the US Navy Seals, ahead of the ground forces, to recon suitable landing sites ahead of the main assault."

"We went into a landing site that was hot – enemy activity. It was unexpected and we had to take evasive action."

"Initial checks of the landing site previously had said that it was good, so we had to send a signal back to the ship to put the assault force into a holding circuit."

"That's what we do. We are here to provide a safe environment for that aircraft to land in."

And that environment could be in the snow of Norway or the jungle of Borneo. And could be reached by many means.

So as well as All-Arms trained, the men of MAOT have completed courses such as basic parachuting, abseil and fast-rope instruction, survival and ISTAR training.

And in turn the MAOT team are the Navy's experts in helicopter landing sites, troop-carrying and

under-slinging; they run refresher training for abseiling, fastroping and other air assault techniques.

The small unit is divided into four teams; nominally three operational and one HQ, although due to the small numbers involved, members of the HQ team can be found in any of the operational roles backfilling where needed.

The operational teams rotate through three different roles over the course of a year: Afghan, Black and Green – four months in each role of Afghanistan, maritime counter-terrorism and support to 3 Commando Brigade.

Each team then usually splits into two pairs who share the duties of the role area.

"In the Afghan role, on a job we will be blistering on to the likes of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force or other aviation or assault units," said Irish.

In Afghanistan the MAOT team sit within the Joint Helicopter Force (Afghan) and their tasking comes directly from the Chief of Staff.

"A unit will come to the Joint Operations Centre, say we plan on going on an operation here. We need aviation support," explained Irish.

"Our task is to coordinate the aviation for all that. We'll send a guy in with a ground recon force to recon landing sites, or more often than not, it's done by satellite imaging."

The MAOT unit will join the assault force on the operations, ensuring the Helicopter Landing Site (HLS) is safe, managing casualty evacuations and the tactical pick-up of the ground troops.

"We organise and coordinate all the extractions, try to get it all done as one wave of aircraft. No more than 90 seconds on the ground is the general rule of thumb."

The MAOT men keep a database of Helicopter Landing Sites for the Afghan forward operating bases (FOB) and patrol bases (PB) – not an easy task in a nation where building work, damage and disaster can change the territory on a daily basis.

"It's pretty hectic." This might count as an understatement.

The team can go out on a one-day op, or a two-week aviation assault, where they are blistered onto a unit, take over a compound, set up a new patrol base and landing site. Then back to the base for a two-day break before hurtling on to the next job.

Meanwhile another MAOT team is in the Black role, which is focused on maritime counter-terrorism. MAOT are charged with providing aviation support directly to UK forces whose role is to keep the sea-lanes safe – back to the traditional role of fighting piracy on the high seas.

Which means keeping up to speed with the various methods of

arrival on board a captured ship's deck – parachute, fast-rope, abseil, whatever means necessary.

Again this is a four-month stint, with two two-man teams – both teams on very limited notice to move.

A lot of the team's time is kept up with a steady stream of exercises – a four-month period will contain six different exercises – rescuing ships and offshore installations (oil rigs) taken over by pirates with hostages.

In this scenario, the MAOT team will organise the refresher training for fast-roping and coordinating the air attack.

But the job doesn't just stop there – the last aircraft will contain a MAOT man who will join the assault team on the deck.

Then it's a case of coordinating the aircraft in the sky, and calling in air support for casualty evacuation, whisking off the prisoners, and bringing the team home safely.

The final turn for the MAOT men is the Green role, which appropriately enough for the colour, is direct support to the amphibious forces of 3 Commando Brigade.

So when 3 Commando Brigade are out and about on Auriga, MAOT are on the US beaches too. Or in the Malaysian jungle. Or on the West African shore. Or in the Norwegian snow.

In 2009 during the Taurus deployment, as Irish was going through his jungle training in the Malaysian rainforest, the Royal Marine just in front of him was bitten on the temple by a poisonous snake.

First – once they'd caught up with the man in question – Irish had to check his maps for the nearest possible landing site that he'd spotted from earlier aerial recon, then call in the helicopter from the ship for a casevac.

Once they reached the site, and confirmed its viable status, Irish fired off a smoke signal for the incoming helo scouring the dense jungle canopy, then coordinated the casevac from the ground.

Just 26 minutes after the initial bite in the midst of the Borneo jungle, the Royal Marine was in hospital being treated.

There's a definite sense of unpredictability about life in MAOT; but that spice is what its members thrive on.

And if you're someone who wants that challenge and that variety in your life, then this is the place to go.

Last words to Irish: "Here we are, come and have a really good two years with us, and you'll never look back. I promise you will have an amazing time."

■ If you are interested in joining MAOT, you will need to have completed the All-Arms Commando course. Find out more by speaking to CPO Stephen 'Irish' Watson, MAOT Ops, on 93510 6984.

● (Top) A Sea King and Chinook in Afghanistan and (below) Royal Marines abseiling through the Bornean jungle canopy



## Baltic wrecks discovered

THE wrecks of three Royal Navy warships lost in a forgotten war against communism have been discovered after nearly a century.

Cruiser HMS Cassandra and minesweeping sloops HMS Myrtle and Gentian were sent to the Baltic in 1918 and 1919 as part of British efforts to prevent the Red Army swallowing up the newly-independent Estonia.

All three vessels were lost to mines off the island of Osel (today Saaremaa) in the Gulf of Riga – Cassandra before she could even make her mark, Gentian and Myrtle on the same day in July 1919. Twenty-five men were lost.

Part of Myrtle's wreck was found in the late 1930s – the mine (a relic from a field laid by the Germans during the Great War) broke the ship's back and her stern sheered off.

Her missing bow section, plus the remains of the other two ships, have never been found – until now.

The wrecks were located by EML Ugandi – until six years ago HMS Bridport. The Sandown-class minchunter was sold to Estonia, revamped and fitted with new weaponry and kit (including side-scan sonar) and handed over to the Baltic nation last year.

It was that new kit which located the three ships – based on co-ordinates recorded by the crews of the Baltic task force 90 years ago.

Lt Cdr Ivo Vörk, Chief-of-Staff of the Estonian Navy, said those positions had proved to be "surprisingly precise" – but it still took 21st Century technology to formally identify the three wrecks, which lie in water between 200 and 330ft deep.

From the sonar imagery, Ugandi's commanding officer Lt Cdr Villu Klesmann said he was "quite confident" that all three British ships had been found.

Cassandra was part of a task force of more than 20 British warships dispatched to the Baltic to help Estonia maintain her fledgling independence; Estonians used the Bolshevik Revolution to throw off the Russian yoke... but the Red Army was determined to restore Moscow's rule.

The light cruiser struck a mine at night in December 1918 as she steamed off Osel in company with the rest of the force. Despite the darkness, the Baltic cold and the threat of more mines, all but 11 of her crew were saved.

Myrtle and Gentian barely had the chance to make their mark in the Baltic Campaign (known by Estonians as the War of Liberation). They arrived with the 1st Fleet Sweeping Flotilla in July 1919 and were lost on the same day, July 15, during clearing operations in the Biorco Sound.

Six sailors from HMS Myrtle and eight crew of Gentian died. A handful of dead from the two minesweepers are buried in the Estonian capital, Tallinn.

## Royals backed by Sir Trevor

VETERAN broadcaster Sir Trevor McDonald will emerge from retirement next month at a charity concert for the Royal Marines.

The former *News at Ten* anchorman will narrate *Eternal Voices* – a concert at Exeter Cathedral inspired by the sacrifices of the living and the dead in Helmand.

The concert on November 20 sees the Band of HM Royal Marines perform with soloists such as librettist Ben Kaye, and the 80-strong Exeter Festival Chorus, with proceeds going to RM charities.

*Eternal Voices* is a five-movement work by British Composer Award winner Adam Gorb and is interspersed with news headlines.

The concert will also feature the *Wootton Bassett March*, composed by the Royal Marines to commemorate the role of the Wiltshire town in honouring the nation's fallen in Afghanistan.

Tickets, priced £10 and £12, are available from [www.exeterfestivalchorus.org.uk](http://www.exeterfestivalchorus.org.uk) or 01392 432309.



● Cdre Martin Westwood, Assistant Chief of Staff Aviation, inspects the MASF guard of honour aboard RFA Argus

Picture: LA/Photo Martin Carney, RNAS Culdrose

# MASF step forward

ONE of the Navy's key behind-the-scenes teams stepped into the limelight as it was commissioned.

With RFA Argus and Falmouth Docks as the backdrop, the Maritime Aviation Support Force (MASF) formally stood up, receiving official recognition to stand alongside ships and squadrons.

The force, based at RNAS Culdrose, provides sailors for front-line duties around the world at short notice – be it helping earthquake victims in Haiti to hunting pirates in the Indian Ocean.

MASF grew out of the RFA Naval Support Unit a couple of decades ago to provide engineers for Sea Kings operating from auxiliaries.

From those beginnings – "drawn up on the back of a fag packet" – the small team has ballooned to some 230 sailors, whose remit extends beyond simply supplying RFAs with engineers for Sea King flights.

Today MASF (the name was changed three years ago to reflect the unit's changing role) typically provides a three-

dozen-strong team for RFA Argus, the aviation training ship, and detachments of around 12 sailors for Fort George and Fort Victoria when they deploy.

Aside from engineers there are handlers, medics, aircraft controllers, meteorologists, survival specialists, logisticians. And MASF's men and women can be found in Afghanistan, in the Gulf, in the Indian Ocean supporting anti-piracy work, in the Falklands with patrol ship HMS Clyde.

"Everywhere there's a Royal Navy presence, there's MASF,"



said CO Lt Cdr Tony Dunn.

"We are unique – a body of highly-trained people available for deployment where and when needed to support RN operations worldwide.

"The majority of my 230 personnel are deployed – often at a few days' notice.

"There are a lot of people who've not heard of us – it's very much been a case of unsung heroes."

Apart from Haiti, MASF – motto *auxilio ad alta*, reach the heights with help – has served as a 'one-stop manpower shop' to bolster numbers on some key RN deployments such as Taurus to the Far East last year and Auriga to the USA this summer.

"It used to be regarded as a bit of a sleepy hollow, but that's not the case now," said CPO(AH) Mick Eley. "You used to go on the back of an RFA, now you can go on any ship. Everything's on a much bigger basis."

Cdre Martin Westwood, Assistant Chief of Staff Aviation, was guest of honour at the commissioning ceremony, which – in fine RN tradition – saw Lt Cdr Dunn's wife Jo cut the commissioning cake with MASF's youngest sailor, NA Samuel Fry.

## Band enjoys the 'hai life

YOU can never have too many images of the Navy's finest musicians stood in front of a giant fluorescent cube half-way around the world.

The musicians come courtesy of the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Collingwood.

Half-way around the world is Shanghai. And the giant fluorescent cube? Well that's a 'seed cathedral' (obviously) – the centrepiece of the British pavilion at the world's biggest trade fair.

The Shanghai Expo 2010 is the latest (and largest) 'world's fair' – events which have been showcasing the very best of nations' industries and culture since the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London.

A century and a half later and the exposition has mushroomed to embrace some 190 nations, many of them erecting elaborate pavilions at a two-square-mile site in China's largest city.

The participating countries also stage national days, for them the cultural highlight of the exposition.

In the UK's case, national day was a mixture

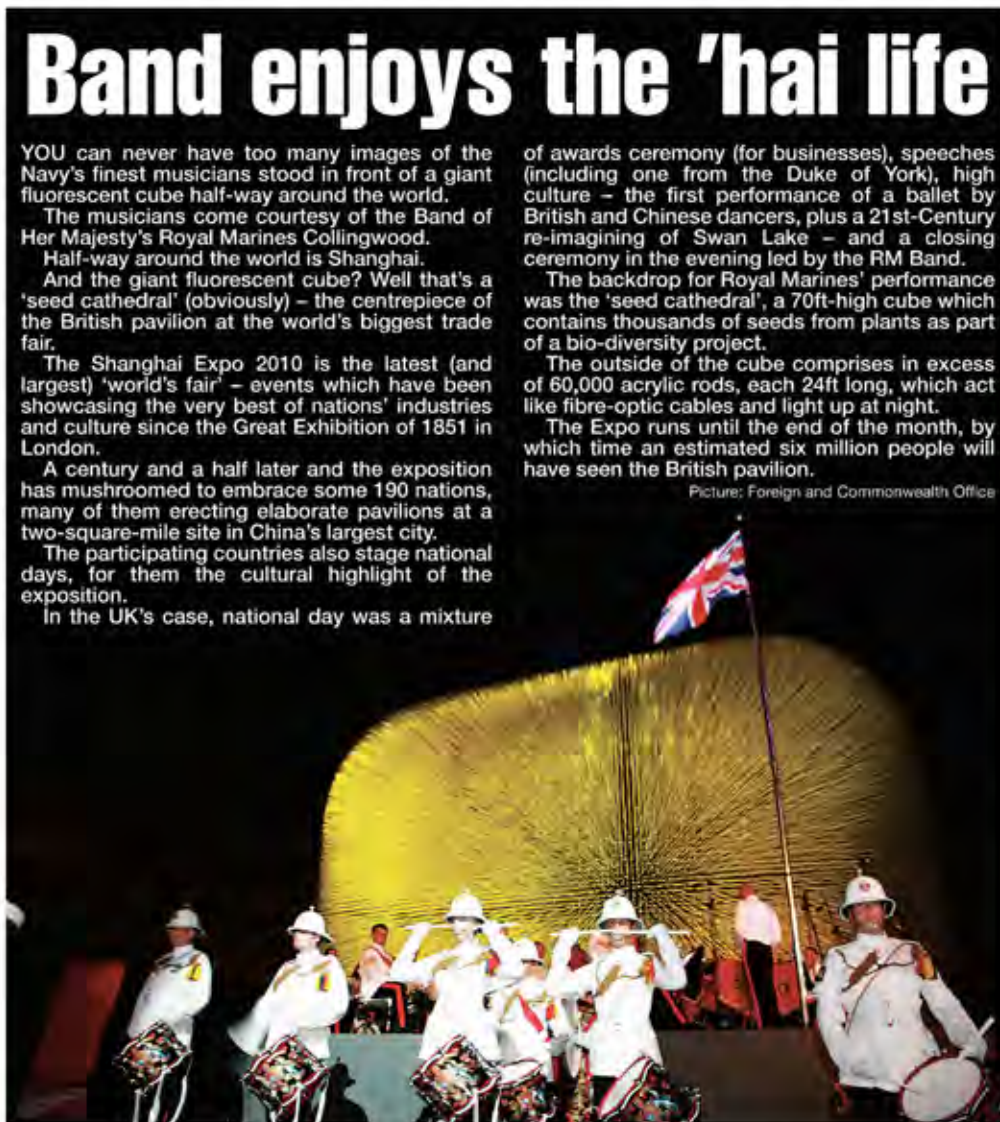
of awards ceremony (for businesses), speeches (including one from the Duke of York), high culture – the first performance of a ballet by British and Chinese dancers, plus a 21st-Century re-imagining of *Swan Lake* – and a closing ceremony in the evening led by the RM Band.

The backdrop for Royal Marines' performance was the 'seed cathedral', a 70ft-high cube which contains thousands of seeds from plants as part of a bio-diversity project.

The outside of the cube comprises in excess of 60,000 acrylic rods, each 24ft long, which act like fibre-optic cables and light up at night.

The Expo runs until the end of the month, by which time an estimated six million people will have seen the British pavilion.

Picture: Foreign and Commonwealth Office



## A quick lick of paint...

PAINTING the Forth Bridge is one of those Herculean tasks with which lazy journalists like to compare major projects.

And we're no exception... because the paint job just begun on the Navy's next-generation aircraft carriers makes maintenance on the world-famous rail crossing look like a cakewalk.

Seventy-five times more paint will have to be applied to HMS Queen Elizabeth than to the Forth Bridge – 1,500,000 square metres (16 million square feet) in all, or enough paint to turn Hyde Park grey.

Both HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister Prince of Wales are being built in sections at six yards around the UK, with the finally assembly due to take place at Rosyth.

With a multi-million pound contract now signed between BAE Systems and Ship Support Services Ltd, painting those sections – every bulkhead, every deck, every engine and machinery space – can begin.

It will take SSSL nine years to apply the special coating of paint to both ships, but once done they'll be able to take a break for a decade as the paint's expected to withstand the ravages of the elements for ten years.

## Sample the life O'Brian

LOVERS of the finest nautical fiction can return to the days of sail with an erudite weekend in Portsmouth devoted to the late, great Patrick O'Brian.

The Irish author brought Nelson's Navy to life through his Jack Aubrey novels (one of which was turned into the movie *Master and Commander* starring Russell Crowe).

The Patrick O'Brian weekend, hosted by the National Museum of the Royal Navy, celebrates his life and work with lectures, a special guided tour of HMS Victory and the chance to dine on her lower gun deck featuring contemporary meals, courtesy of the *Lobscouse and Spotted Dog* cookbook, a companion volume to O'Brian's novels.

Speakers at the three-day event (March 11-13 2011) include renowned maritime artist Geoff Hunt and Mr O'Brian's stepson and biographer Count Nikolai Tolstoy.

There's also a visit to Jane Austen's House at Chawton; two of the *Pride and Prejudice* novelist's brothers served in the Georgian Royal Navy.

The weekend costs £475 (excluding accommodation, although the museum has negotiated preferential room rates with local hotels). Details, including a booking form, can be found at [www.ecomag.co.uk/patrickobrian/index.html](http://www.ecomag.co.uk/patrickobrian/index.html) or from Giles Gould on 023 9272 7583.

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100 Years

# New vista at Chatham



● The Upper Mast House at the Historic Dockyard Chatham, a sombre image captured by aficionado Robert Radford  
● (Below) Part of the Maritime Treasures Gallery in the newly-opened No.1 Smithery

A VISIONARY approach to British maritime history has taken root at Chatham – and as it does so a whole new vista is opening up.

The site of the former naval dockyard on the Medway is thriving as managers seek to combine past, present and future across the fields of business and leisure.

Encapsulating the whole concept is the newly-opened No.1 Smithery, a joint enterprise between the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust (CHDT), the National Maritime Museum and the Imperial War Museum.

The former metal workshop, dating back to 1808, had been the fiery heart of the dockyard in its Victorian heydays, when technology saw wood, canvas and rope succumb to iron and coal.

But the building itself eventually became outdated, and by the end of the last century was in a poor state of repair, with plants growing under broken roofs and signs of foundations settling under later extensions.

Around £3m was needed to simply make the English Heritage-listed building safe – but a much more ambitious plan was enacted.

According to CHDT Chief Executive Bill Ferris, it “needed to be used as a museum but

## THE HISTORIC DOCKYARD CHATHAM



it couldn't just be another story of the dockyard,” and it had to appeal to a wider group than those who already visited.

Talking, some years ago, to Roy Clare, the then Chief Executive of the National Maritime Museum, Bill was told the NMM had its own problem – 3,000–4,000 models to store.

It struck the men that they each had a solution for the other's dilemma, and with the Imperial War Museum also on board, the seeds for No.1 Smithery were sown.

The result is a £13m building which has been renovated, within whose brick walls a series of modern glass and metal rooms and display cases have been created, giving historic models a state-of-the-art setting in a historic backdrop.

The same principle lay behind the transformation of the Joiners Shop, which opened as a business centre at the beginning of last year.

Modern high-spec glass offices have been built inside the solid brick walls, which are let on a

two-week licence, meaning small businesses do not have to risk and commit large sums of money up front.

The facility is designed for entrepreneurs starting up creative ventures, such as web design, sculptors, art restorers and photographers.

And the sympathetic nature of the transformation in the Joiners Shop is demonstrated by the discovery, during the installation of cables, of an old drive shaft and pit in one corner.

The reminder of past technology is now a feature of the building, with a glass floor over the pit and restored brickwork lit to best effect.

The Joiners Shop was something of a dry run for No.1 Smithery, where floors had to be built up, damp walls taken into account and features such as air conduits built into the masterplan.

The original features, painted pale green, and contemporary buildings-within-buildings are, though, merely the backdrop to the collection of models and to other exhibitions, both permanent and temporary.

One looks at the history of the armed merchant cruiser Jervis Bay, relating the heroic sacrifice of the lightly-armed Chatham-

manned vessel as she took on German pocket battleship Admiral Scheer to allow many ships in the UK-bound convoy she was escorting to disperse and escape.

Jervis Bay herself was doomed from the start; the German warship battered her until she sank, taking all but 65 of her crew with her, including her captain, Edward Fegen, who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for valour in the engagement on November 5 1940.

The model collection is eclectic, ranging from warships old and new (Balchen's Victory of 1737 and the odd pre-Dreadnought amongst them) to civilian vessels (the yacht America, which gave its name to the sailing trophy) to associated areas such as Smeaton's Tower lighthouse.

Another section of No.1 Smithery studies Chatham in the Georgian era, and displays – for the first time – a large-scale contemporary model of the yard, previously kept in protective storage and so accurate it can be used as a reference point for historians.

Some models are kept in a 'storage on display' area, allowing such gems as the Aki, a 1:50 scale 10ft model of the 21,000-ton 1907 Japanese battleship, to be seen by the public.

The old pipe bending floor has also been resurrected to allow a glimpse of the building's former use, and scattered between the modern galleries are pits, equipment, artefacts and ash piles from the days of the forges.

Beyond Museum Square the dockyard offers plenty of other attractions.

World War 2 destroyer HMS Cavalier, Cold War-era submarine HMS Ocelot and Victorian slave-chasing sloop HMS Gannet form the yard's historic ships collection, while the Royal Dockyard Museum reflects on 400 years of Naval history across the site.

The Victorian Ropery puts a traditional maritime industry under the spotlight, while the Wooden Walls of England takes the dockyard workers of 1758 – the year before Nelson's Victory was



laid down – as its subject matter.

Beyond the displays of Naval interest are the RNLI's collection of historic lifeboats and the 'Big Space' of 3 Slip, which houses the huge machines of the Royal Engineers Museum (including a tank and a D-Day locomotive).

Another illustration of the philosophy of Bill Ferris is the Railway Workshop picnic and play area.

“We needed money to renovate the building, which was the armour plate workshop,” said Mr Ferris.

“So now, while you watch volunteers working on the renovation of a railway engine – and you can ask them questions about what they are doing – you can sit in the dry and eat your

picnic at the tables while the kids play safely in the play area.

“So conservation was possible as the building is being used and answering a need.”

Last year, before the opening of the new collections, the dockyard welcomed 170,000 visitors, including 30,000 on the first national Armed Forces Day event.

“The intention is to increase that figure by 30 per cent by next year, now that No.1 Smithery is open,” said Mr Ferris.

“But beyond that we have 112 businesses operating on the site, and 400 people who live here, either in new-build houses or converted buildings.

“The Historic Dockyard is a real living, working community.”



● No.1 Smithery before restoration

**No.1 SMITHERY**  
NATIONAL TREASURES INSPIRING CULTURE

For full details of location, opening times (the site is open to visitors until December 12, and re-opens on February 12 2011), special events and ticket prices, see the Chatham yard's website [www.thedockyard.co.uk](http://www.thedockyard.co.uk)

## Only send to a friend

KIND-hearted folk who send presents to sailors and marines at Christmas are being urged not to send unsolicited parcels to prevent the supply chain becoming overburdened.

British Forces Post Office (BFPO) handles around 800 unsolicited parcels for military personnel in a normal week.

But in the two months running up to Christmas, that figure triples – and the sheer amount of mail can mean that parcels and post sent by families and friends are delayed, and key resources in the logistics chain possibly diverted.

In Afghanistan, the extra post means extra flights or road convoys to deliver the parcels to outlying bases – putting personnel delivering them at increased risk.

Since the BFPO system was deluged by unsolicited post back in 2007, the Ministry of Defence has urged the public to show its goodwill and support for personnel deployed over the festive season via well-established charities such as the Royal Naval and Royal Marines Charity.

There's also the Whitehall-endorsed organisation uk4u Thanks! which sends a Christmas gift box to all deployed sailors, marines, soldiers and airmen.

To see how you can help our men and women on deployment over Christmas, visit [www.mod.uk/PublicSupportForOurServicePersonnel](http://www.mod.uk/PublicSupportForOurServicePersonnel)

Thanks to the MOD campaign in the past two years, the amount of unsolicited mail sent to personnel on deployment has been halved.

The existing postal service to send packages up to 2kg free to eligible ships and operational theatres remains in place for families and friends.

# Highs and lows of a T45

## Cool heads on Argyll

AND messes. And cabins. And compartments as the frigate emerges from a year-long overhaul.

Britain's oldest Type 23 frigate (21 years since launch) is now prowling around the North Sea on trials after millions of pounds (and 290,000 man hours) were spent revamping her in Rosyth.

Argyll left the hands of engineers at Babcock three days ahead of schedule 11 months after the Devonport-based frigate headed up the Firth of Forth.

So what can you do to a Type 23 in 290,000 man hours?

Well, you can rip out two of the four diesel generators, replace one of the main gas turbines, spruce up the hull, rebuild the flight deck (it's been replaced with a new composite material).

You can take out the old Seawolf trackers and install the SWMLU (Seawolf mid-life update) which effectively doubles the range of the air defence missile system and counters the latest anti-ship aerial threats.

Argyll's 'brain' – her combat command system – has been torn out and a 'brainier' one (DNA(2)) installed, while the ship is now hooked up to the military's latest e-mail/internet system, DII(F).

On the upper deck there are new boat davits and 30mm automatic gun mounts.

And the coolness? Well that comes courtesy of a 'global' air conditioning system designed to prevent men and machine struggling with the heat should Argyll head east of Suez (highly likely as it's *de rigueur* to send 23s chasing pirates off Somalia or safeguarding shipping in the northern Gulf).

All this has been done by the ship's company and Babcock faster than expected. Argyll emerged from dry dock seven days ahead of schedule, while the ship's company moved back aboard ten days earlier than planned.

### SO HOW bulbous is a bulbous bow?

Well, we're very glad you asked that question because here are several officers to demonstrate.

The bulbous bow in question belongs to Her Majesty's Ship Dragon, the fourth of six Type 45 destroyers built or being built.

In Dragon's case, it's 'being built' – it'll be next September before she sails into Portsmouth, home of the futuristic destroyer fleet.

Although she's still in build, Dragon, plus her sisters Defender and Duncan – both also in various stages of construction on the Clyde – fall under the umbrella of the Portsmouth Flotilla, whose two most senior officers were keen to see the complete ins and out of a Type 45.

And when we say complete, we mean it. From the very top to the very bottom.

The top was provided by HMS Defender, whose main mast is now in place – and surrounded by scaffolding... which allowed Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla Cdre Rupert Wallace and his deputy Capt Richard Farrington to stand next to the 'spinning egg'.

The 'spinning egg' – better known as Radar 1045 or Sampson – has recently been lowered into place atop Defender's main mast, as her senior naval officer Cdr Nick Boyd and weapons engineer officer Cdr Pete Walton explained.

The egg sits some 120ft above sea level – indeed that's how the ship's tremendous range.

Ordinarily, the radar can only be accessed internally – indeed that's how the ship's company will maintain it through Defender's life span – but with scaffolding still up at BAE's



● Will it burst if I prod it?... Cdre Rupert Wallace, Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla, inspects HMS Dragon's bow dome  
Picture: Lt Darren Minty, HMS Defender

Scotstoun yard the visitors were afforded the unique chance to inspect the radar from the outside, albeit after a bit of a hike.



Having seen a Type 45 from above, Cdre Wallace and Capt Farrington moved to Dragon's dry dock to inspect what's normally below the waterline, guided by deputy marine and weapons engineer officers

Lts Gary Collins and Keith Bowers.

Standing next to the bow dome allowed the visitors to appreciate the size of the Type 45s.

All of which is fine and dandy, but however Gucci the destroyers are, it counts for naught without the men and women aboard.

So there was a chance to sit down with Dragon's and Defender's sailors, plus the ship's company of HMS Diamond (who brought their destroyer into Portsmouth for the first time on September 22).

"With access to parts of the Type 45 that are usually inaccessible, this was a great opportunity to fully appreciate the scale of the platform – and

its complexity. It was also an excellent view of the Clyde," said Cdre Wallace.



"The ships offer the crews a significant challenge to get to grips with the new technology – and offer the Fleet exciting prospects."

Dragon will spend the next 12 months fitting out and on work-up; she's earmarked to sail into Portsmouth in September 2011, with Defender following in July 2012.

The last of the class, Duncan, will be launched at BAE's Govan yard at 3.47pm on Monday October 11.

# ISLAND NATION

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Picture: Sarah Yuen, DMOC



Picture: LA(Phot) Si Ethell



Picture: LA(Phot) Si Ethell



# 'In our thought



Picture: Sarah Yuen, DMOC



Picture: Sarah Yuen, DMOC

● Clockwise from top left: Two Royal Marines from 40 Cdo cool off in a compound during an operation in Sangin; B Coy 40 Cdo operating with armoured vehicles in the desert outside Sangin; a Royal from Delta Coy, 40 Cdo, greets a local boy in Sangin during a joint ANA-ISAF operation to clear insurgents from a Taliban stronghold; a patrol by the Police Mentoring Troop, including an American Female Engagement Team and an Army influence officer, pass a school in Sangin – and pick up an extra member; one of the Police Mentoring Team catches up with news back home; a member of the Police Mentoring Troop greets a colleague from the Afghan National Police during a routine patrol around the Sangin bazaar



Picture: LA(Phot) Si Ethell

**THE Royal Marines of 40 Commando have passed the responsibility for security in Sangin over to their American comrades as part of a shake-up of the Coalition effort in Afghanistan.**

The transfer of authority, first announced by Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox in July, is the last piece in the jigsaw which has seen a rebalancing of ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) personnel across Helmand Province.

It follows an increase in ISAF and Afghan security forces in Helmand over recent months and will ensure an equal distribution of ISAF forces amongst the Afghan population living there.

Handing over Sangin will allow UK forces to focus their effort in central Helmand, where they will continue to mount counterinsurgency operations, working alongside the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

British forces have been in Sangin, a key economic and transport hub, since 2006, helping to provide security against the Taliban insurgency on behalf of the Government of Afghanistan – duty which came at a price in terms of lives lost.

The Royals of 40 Cdo, currently deployed with 4 Mechanised Brigade, passed on the baton to the US Marine Corps.

Dr Fox said: "British forces have served in Sangin over the last four years and should be very proud of the achievements they have made in one of the most challenging areas of Afghanistan."

"The level of sacrifice has been high and we should never forget the many brave troops who have lost their lives in the pursuit of success in an international mission rooted firmly in our own national security in the UK."

"The handover of Sangin by UK forces represents sound military rationale and reflects the increase of both ISAF and Afghan forces across Helmand over the course of the past year."

"British troops will redeploy to central Helmand, in support of ISAF's main effort, where they will continue to lead the fight against the insurgency and assist in building a stable and secure Afghanistan that can stand on its own two feet."

Maj Gen Gordon Messenger RM, the Chief of the Defence Staff's Strategic Communications Officer, said: "British troops redeploying from Sangin are handing over a strong, forward-looking operation which has, over the last four years, ensured that the authority of the Afghan Government exists even in an area that the Taliban regard as their heartland."

"Our troops operating in Sangin have been taking the fight to the

# nts and minds forever'



Picture: Sarah Yuen, DMOC

Taliban and by doing so have reduced the threat of violence spreading elsewhere.

"The progress and momentum in central Helmand would not have been possible without their endeavour and sacrifice.

"It is and will continue to be a challenging area because of its strategic importance to the Afghan Government, ISAF and the insurgency – that is why ISAF forces will remain there to build upon the progress already achieved by UK forces."

Lt Col Paul James, CO of 40 Cdo, said: "It's been a hard fight for 40 Cdo in Sangin, but we have achieved much.

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

Lt Col James continued: "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.

"We have lost brave marines, but we will do them proud and return home with our heads held high."

District Governor of Sangin, Mohammad Sharif, said: "The attitude, service, and sacrifice that has been paid by the Royal Marines has been exemplary and has set a very good example for the people of Sangin.

"As 40 Commando goes, they will be missed by the people of Sangin and they will be in our thoughts and minds forever as we will always remember their hard work and efforts."

US Maj Gen Richard P Mills, the Commander Regional Command (South West) – the military HQ responsible for Helmand and Nimruz provinces – said: "UK forces have carved out a solid security bubble that we are moving US forces into.

"They are leaving solid professional relationships with the people and the ANSF in Sangin. "We will continue to build on



Picture: LA(Phot) Si Ethell

● Clockwise from top: Royal Marines from Bravo Coy 40 Cdo on a desert operation near Sangin; Members of the Police Mentoring Troop leap into the River Sangin to cool off at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Jackson after a patrol around Sangin bazaar; green berets from 40 Cdo seek shade while they grab some rest during a four-day joint ISAF-ANA operation in Sangin; the Police Mentoring Troop, on a routine patrol around the Sangin bazaar, stopped over at Fly Over checkpoint for a short break before returning to FOB Jackson

the successes and continue to work with the local population and forces there."

Troops returning to the area over time have noticed a difference in Sangin, a nexus of roads and powerlines, the latter snaking out from the Kajaki hydro-electric station.

Sangin is also one of the most fertile parts of Helmand.

Since 2006 the governance of Sangin has undergone radical change, with the current governor working closely with coalition forces and seeking to win the support of local tribal groupings, some of whom have previously supported the insurgency.

There are now more than 850 shops trading in Sangin's bazaar – a figure which has doubled in a year.

The improvement of Route 611 from central Helmand through Sangin to Kajaki has improved access to agricultural land and markets for local people, while local administrators, supported by the Provincial Reconstruction

Team, have been working to distribute grain and promote the production of legal alternatives to narcotics.

A new health clinic opened a year ago this month, which sees trained Afghan medics treat 300 patients per week from Sangin and surrounding areas.

The handover of Sangin, was the third and final act in a series of changes sparked by a rise in numbers in the province.

There are now some 30,000 ISAF troops in Helmand as well as around 7,000 ANSF.

In January last year there were just 5,000 ISAF troops, mostly British, and very few ANSF forces covering the same patch.

Security responsibility for Musa Qaleh was transferred from the UK to the Americans on March 27, while the same process was achieved for Kajaki on June 25.

The Sangin switch completes the current round of restructuring of ISAF forces in southern Afghanistan.



Picture: LA(Phot) Si Ethell



Picture: Sarah Yuen, DMOC

# Cypriot games

**S**EPTEMBER 2010 and 800 Naval Air Squadron find themselves in Cyprus at RAF Akrotiri for four weeks! Terrible you cry: WAFU's sunning themselves again...

But fear not. 800 are actually supporting the war effort in Afghanistan. Allow Harrier pilot **Lt Chris 'Casper' Roy** to explain... Exercise Hardening Flame is a bi-annual deployment by the Harrier Operational Conversion Unit to RAF Akrotiri, where student pilots can finish their training by utilising the perfect weather and easily-accessible weapons range.

For the 2010 exercise, it was decided that rather than just taking two twin-seat aircraft as normal, 800 would deploy as a full squadron – and for four weeks instead of two.

Despite the fact that the Harrier force is no longer in Afghanistan it would be very wrong to think that they were not contributing to the war effort.

In fact, since coming home the main focus of Joint Force Harrier flying has been to provide as much close air support training to deploying army brigades as possible.

So it was decided to offer the Army the chance to send Joint Tactical Air Controllers – JTACs – to Cyprus where 800 would provide day and night close air support for four weeks – as well as achieving other qualifications for its pilots.

Naturally the Army jumped at the chance of having a dedicated Naval Harrier squadron at their disposal...

"This is what the Harrier does best; versatile and deployable, we can be airborne and giving direct support to the troops on the ground faster than most other aircraft," explains Cdr Dave 'Tinsel' Lindsay, Commanding Officer of 800 Naval Air Squadron.

"Five years of operations in Afghanistan have honed our skills to the point where we are able to give some of the best training and support to our Army from one of the best close-air-support aircraft in the world.

"But we cannot be complacent, this detachment has provided a unique opportunity for us to work directly alongside our Army colleagues, discussing tactics and each other's performance on a daily basis.

"With this relationship and friendship now established, we can continue to develop this truly formidable partnership between warriors in the air and on the ground."

The principal difficulty with close air support missions in the UK is the transit time to and from the ranges where the exercises take place – and the notoriously fickle UK weather.

Not so in Cyprus where 800 were able to fly two-hour missions from RAF Akrotiri in perfect weather.

This allowed unparalleled levels of training both for the JTACs and the pilots of 800, many of whom had not flown on operations in Afghanistan.

For the air controllers, having two jets – both equipped with sniper targeting pods – to play with for two hours at a time, three times a day and once at night, allowed them to get more controls from one mission than many had seen during a full day on the range in the UK.

The excellent facilities at RAF Akrotiri – including a mock Afghan village – allowed six JTACs to achieve 'combat ready' status before deploying on Operation Herrick.

Fifty 'live' controls (with a bang) were achieved using CRV-7 rockets and an incredible 356 'dry' controls (no bangs) in just two weeks. That's a staggering amount compared to exercises in the UK.

One tremendous advantage of 800 and the JTACs operating from the same base, building and even accommodation was the fact that face-to-face briefings and debriefings took place for every mission.

That simply doesn't happen in the UK because of the distances involved from the squadron's base at RAF Cottesmore to the ranges.

Hardening Flame allowed for a huge sharing of techniques and experiences and helped to enhance air-land integration between the Royal Navy and the Army.

"The training has been of spectacular value," says Capt Guy Disney of the Light Dragoons.

"The ability to have access to instant debriefings proved to be key. It has been great to work alongside the Navy."

With the jets loving the hot climate and remaining serviceable, the flying rate was extremely high, but this didn't mean there was no time for fun and games.

The usual beach party barbecues were mixed with sea fishing, go-karting and a fun few days spent with B Company, 2nd Battalion Royal Anglians.

These fine soldiers brought what can only be described as a plethora of equipment for the sailors to fire on the local range.

Despite the scary prospect of matelots with machine-guns on the range, no-one was killed (!) and a healthy respect for the soldiers was guaranteed by watching the Fire Support Group lay down a staggering amount of fire-power before running in the mid-day Cyprus sun carrying and setting up a Javelin missile system...

Despite all this sounding like another excuse for WAFUs to have a good time, the honest truth is that this kind of dedicated close-air-support training just isn't available to Army brigades in the UK.

The chance to operate alongside our Army colleagues has allowed 800 Naval Air Squadron to reach a new level of air-land integration with a much better understanding of what is required from the squadron to support ground operations.

The exercise has also been a good reminder for the Army that training the troops who are about to deploy to Afghanistan is – and will remain – a top priority for the Harrier force and 800 NAS.

"Cyprus has provided an ideal opportunity for the squadron to train alongside Army joint tactical air controllers in surroundings which were often arduous – but realistic," says Cdr Lindsay.

"The friendships and respect we have established for each other will pay absolute dividends in any future conflict, in whichever part of the world it occurs.

"As our motto says, 'Never Unprepared'; this is an ethos ingrained into every pilot, engineer and maintainer. We will be ready for whatever an uncertain future may hold."







pictures: iajphoto/ ian holden, 800 nse



## Hi-tech help for historic vessels

TWO of the Royal Navy's fleet of historic warships are on the receiving end of hi-tech help.

HMS Victory has been bombarded by laser beams to allow millions of highly-accurate measurements to be made of her hull and fittings.

Using Pointools 'point cloud' software, the data was processed to produce precise 3D models, recording details of original features such as planking butts and rigging straps.

These models will now be used to support restoration work on the ship, allowing for accurate reconstruction and relocation of fittings and planking.

The laser survey, by Deri Jones and Associates and Geospatial Survey Solutions, was carried out overnight to avoid disruption to visitors, and required 17 scans, each of 40 million measurements.

This was used as the foundation for elevation models of both sides of the vessel, as well as producing 3D co-ordinates for over 400 key points across the hull.

A more modern warship has had her masts replaced, thanks to the Russians and a company located just yards from her.

The foremast and mainmast of World War 2 cruiser HMS Belfast, dating from the ship's 1957 refit, had become dangerously corroded and needed replacing.

The 20m steel lattice replacements have been built by the Severnaya Verf shipyard in St Petersburg, a gift from the Russian government and marine industry and a gesture to mark the 65th anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War this year.

Belfast was the ideal subject for such a gesture as she defended wartime Russian convoys.

Original structural drawings were supplied to the Russian yard, but accurate sketches were required for many fittings which were not shown on the plans.

These were created by experts from Houlder, a naval architecture and marine engineering company based near Tower Bridge.

A plan was drawn up by Houlder and Lloyd's Register staff to crane off the old masts and install the six-tonne units, barged in from Tilbury Docks.

## Call for cadets

AHOY all former Sea Cadets - where are you now?

The Corps would love to hear from you, in the hope that you can help them as advocates, volunteers or supporters.

The SCC hopes to develop an alumni association, with opportunities to keep in touch with the Sea Cadets and to learn more about what they do for young people and future plans.

For more information contact the Corps at [info@ms-sc.org](mailto:info@ms-sc.org), write to MSSC, 202 Lambeth Road, London SE1 7JW, or call 020 7654 7000.

## Exeter commemorates anniversary of battle

THE White Ensign will once again fly over Exeter Cathedral during the annual service to celebrate Nelson's victory at Trafalgar.

The service starts at 11.30am on Sunday October 24, and will be attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, Eric Dancer, and senior RN and RM officers.

The Address will be given by the Rt Rev Stephen Venner, Bishop of the Forces.

The Exeter Flotilla patron and Commander Amphibious Task Group, Cdre Paul Bennett, will read the first lesson, and the second lesson will be read by Lt Cdr Franks.

HMS Exeter's bell and a cross, presented by the Exeter Flotilla to the destroyer, will be received in the cathedral.

Amongst the congregation will be contingents from HMS Raleigh, HMS Vivid, the Royal Marines,

● An RAF E-3D Sentry AEW1 based at RAF Waddington, on exercise over UK airspace.

Pictures: MOD/Crown Copyright from [www.defenceimages.mod.uk](http://www.defenceimages.mod.uk)



# Naval Lincs

YES, that's right - Lincs, not Lynx (or even Links).

Lincolnshire is something of an RAF heartland.

It's where you will find Cranwell, the home of the RAF's version of Dartmouth and the centre of officer and aircrew selection.

RAF Coningsby boasts Typhoon fighters as well as the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, while the fabled Red Arrows count RAF Scampton as home.

There are also the RAF stations at Digby and Waddington, and it is at such places that you are likely to spot the odd splash of navy blue amongst the wedgwood blue - evidence of the Royal Navy in Lincolnshire.

Close to the historic cathedral city of Lincoln more than 90 RN personnel are working to provide support to front-line operations and future systems development.

Working within joint and combined teams, this contingent operates across a range of highly-specialised areas, including electronic warfare (EW), communications, E3-D aircraft, the Sentinel programme and work on such future projects as the Joint Strike Fighter.

Taking Waddington first, the RN cohort works mainly in the Defence Electronic Warfare Centre (DEWC), based within the Air Warfare Centre.

These sailors provide EW guidance and enable the operation of surface, sub-surface and airborne ECM and decoy systems.

You will find Navy folk analysing intercepted emissions and EW-related information, developing EW system libraries for Fleet units - from carriers and Fleet submarines to frigates and destroyers - testing and validating air platform protection systems and involved in IT support.

It's a million miles from the life of your average skimmer or deep, as acknowledged by LS(CSM) Simon Roberts.

"Having spent most of my naval career based in the harsh, cold



● An RAF Sentinel R1 of 5 (Army Co-Operation) Squadron

regions of west Scotland, serving in numerous sea-going submarines, it was a welcome change to be offered an inboard draft to RAF Waddington and to come back to my roots in the Midlands for some well earned harmony time," said LS Roberts.

"Just being able to go home every night like a normal eight-till-five job was a complete change for me, and the chance to work alongside the RAF, Army and civilian personnel has been an enjoyable and challenging experience.

"Being based in RAF Waddington has given me the opportunity to make use of the leisure facilities and team-building events that are held every few months, and to take some educational courses in and around Lincoln without the risk of cutting it short because of sea-going commitments.

"That's the big difference between working at the AWC in an office environment and a submarine - you get the chance to plan your life."

RN aircrew also operate as analysts on the Sentinel R1 ASTOR (Airborne STand-Off Radar) aircraft flown by 5 Squadron from Waddington.

"I am currently serving on

B flight as an airborne image analyst on 5 Army Co-operation Squadron," said PO(Phot) Jim Fenwick.

"I have been here for three years and was part of the first team of ground image analysts to deploy to Afghanistan for the first ASTOR operational rehearsal.

"After my tour of Afghanistan I attended aircrew selection at RAF Cranwell and then trained to become an airborne image analyst on 54 Sqn.

"I was the first senior rating in the RN to be presented with an RAF image analyst brevet.

"I have recently completed two tours on Herrick and I am the only airborne image analyst on the ASTOR system in the Navy."

At the same airfield, two RN officers fly with the big Boeing AWACS aircraft of 8 Squadron RAF - the E-3D Sentry.

The pair work as weapons controllers, operating over the UK and Europe controlling fighter training missions.

Exercises have taken them to the USA, Canada, Malaysia and India, and they took part in Operation Afghan Assist, flying operational sorties over Afghanistan.

The experience gives officers a valuable insight to air power which they take back to the Fleet

Air Arm and the RN as a whole.

Meanwhile, 20 minutes down the A15 lies RAF Digby, a station dedicated to the provision of round-the-clock support to both decision-makers and globally-deployed UK forces.

The 47 sailors and Marines of the Royal Navy Unit (RNU) work for both the Fleet Information Operations Centre (FIOC) UK and the Joint Signals Support Unit (Digby) or JSSU(D), operating both at home and on overseas deployments.

FIOC UK is a joint UK/US Naval command, responsible to both Fleet and the US Navy's Tenth Fleet - part of the Americans' Cyber Command, established in January this year to fight threats in cyberspace.

As such it provides specialist Communication Information Systems (CIS) support for UK, US and coalition navies, working with numerous national and international organisations to ensure that communications flow freely between all parties.

The JSSU(D) has an integral role in the development of specialist CIS, and includes personnel from all three UK Armed Forces, the United States and expert civilian staff and contractors.

## A monumental day

A NEW painting has been unveiled by the group planning to build a monument marking HMS Vernon's role in Royal Navy minewarfare and diving.

*Vernon Creek* by John Terry FCSD, recent Head of Fleet Publications and Graphics, was launched at Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth, which now occupies the old Vernon site.

The painting was commissioned by Project Vernon, which aims to have a bronze statue of a diver attending to a mine in place in Vernon Basin within three years.

A range of prints is now available, including limited-edition versions including the signatures of several key players in the appeal.

Proceeds from the prints will contribute to the fund.

At the same ceremony, staunch appeal supporter Irene Strange - the widow of Royal Navy diver PO Albert Strange - was presented



● John Terry in his studio with his new painting, Vernon Creek

with another John Terry painting, *Danger at Depth*, by ex-First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathan Band.

The picture was a present from her son and daughter.

The Project Vernon committee

were also able to give final approval for the design of the statue, to be produced by sculptor Les Johnson

For more on Project Vernon see [www.Vernon-Monument.org](http://www.Vernon-Monument.org)



BR 3

NAVAL PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

## Time for a clear-out as BR3 takes over

AS predicted in June's edition of *Navy News*, a number of Books of Reference (BRs) that have provided sterling service for many years have now been superseded.

And that means it is time for a clear-out of the material which has now been rendered obsolete.

BR3 ('Naval Personnel Management') is Second Sea Lord's one-stop shop for almost everything to do with Naval personnel, except conduct of training.

It gathers together in one place what sailors and civilian staff need to know about the Divisional system and Personnel Functional Standards (PFS), and Naval aspects of Unit Establishment Lists, recruiting, complaints, welfare, charities, leave, finance, accommodation, health and recovery, sport, religion, equality and diversity, discipline, uniforms, careers, transfers, career management, assignments and promotions.

In the next few months managers intend to add even more, covering individual training policy, education, lifelong learning, resettlement and the Reserves.

So how do you find all this? You won't find it in the form of an official printed book - it's far too big.

If you have access, go onto the Defence Intranet or the Royal Navy internet website and search for BR3.

Operational units are sent their own copy on CD.

Queries can be addressed to the publishers of BR3 - the Fleet Publications and Graphics Organisation, who will issue an update two or three times a year.

If you have a copy of any of the superseded BRs listed below, or have printed extracts from them, you now need to dispose of them - in an authorised manner, of course:

- BR14 (Drafting Regulations)
- BR81 (Uniform Regulations)
- BR1066 (Ratings and Other Ranks Promotion and Advancement Regulations)
- BR1992 (Divisional Handbook)
- BR4017 (Naval Manning Manual)
- BR8373 (Officers Career Regulations)
- BR8588 (Welfare)
- BR8748 (Terms of Service for RN Ratings and RM Other Ranks)

## Exams result for Society

THE number of Marine Society students achieving the highest grades in this summer's exams was above the national average.

Almost a third of candidates gained the top grade and the overall pass rate was 100 per cent.

A total of 159 GCSE or A-level exams were arranged through the Marine Society, more than four-fifths being Royal Navy or Royal Marines personnel who sat their papers at sea, in overseas embassies or in theatre, including Afghanistan.

The remainder were RFA staff or Merchant Navy.

Almost 40 per cent of students gained an A or A\* at GCSE (national average 22 per cent).

One candidate, John, 24, a Royal Navy medical assistant, said: "There's no doubt I'd not have got this result without the encouragement and support of the Marine Society."

He gained three grade As at AS Level, and is now studying for his A2 exams.

To find out more or to enrol with the charity visit [www.marine-society.org.uk](http://www.marine-society.org.uk)

# Celebrations at St John's College for A-levels

ST JOHN'S College in Southsea is celebrating yet another successful exam results year with a 97 per cent pass rate, which included 57 per cent of its A-level students

gaining A\* to B grades and 76 per cent recording A\* to C grades in their exams.

A record-equalling number of students gained straight A results, with 10 per cent achieving an A\*

grade, including school captains Tristan Hayward and Claire O'Reilly, both pictured below left.

Headmaster of St John's, Nigel Thorne, who retires after ten years of service in September, said: "We are all extremely proud of our A-Level students."

"There were plenty of happy faces around the school this morning and they deserve to enjoy this moment as they have been fully committed to their studies."

"All of us here at the College wish them the very best in their

continued studies and chosen careers."

St John's College in Southsea is unique in the local area in that it is both a day and boarding school.

The school accepts girls and boys, aged 2 to 18. Having a number of boarders on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week helps to create a culture rich in individual consideration and support.

The campus, in the centre of Southsea, houses a well resourced Day Nursery, Junior School,

Senior School and Sixth form.

It is a thriving community which enjoys an outstanding reputation for its high academic standards and superb pastoral care.

St John's provides a broad and varied curriculum for all abilities that encourages children to challenge themselves, to aspire and to succeed – an approach that has once again proved fruitful as demonstrated by their pupils' excellent GCSE and A-level results.

The school also has a long

standing tradition of producing talented young musicians, sports players and budding actors!

When you see the extra-curricular facilities on offer you will understand why.

The college will be holding an open mornings on Tuesday October 5 and Thursday November 18 from 9:30am-11:00am.

For more details or to arrange an individual visit please call 023 9281 5118 or visit the website at [www.stjohnscollege.co.uk](http://www.stjohnscollege.co.uk).



● (from left to right) Phillip Simpson, Claire O'Reilly, Liam O'Shaughnessy, Hannah Khan and Tristan Hayward



## St John's

An independent day & boarding school for boys & girls aged 2-18

Recently declared 'outstanding' for boarding by OFSTED

- ★ Academic excellence
- Continuity
- Firm foundations
- Caring community
- Sport for all
- A chance to perform





Tel: 023 9281 5118 Visit our website [www.stjohnscollege.co.uk](http://www.stjohnscollege.co.uk)  
St John's College, Grove Road South, Southsea, Hampshire PO5 3QW



Fees for families claiming the service boarding allowance are set so that for the current year parental contribution is only £1,935.  
**Open Morning:** 5 October and 18 November 2010, 9:30am – 11:30am (Please see website for more open events)

For full details of our next **EDUCATION FEATURE** and the Navy News website please contact our Advertising Department on 023 9272 5062 or email: [advertising@navynews.co.uk](mailto:advertising@navynews.co.uk)





## The Royal Hospital School

The Royal Hospital School provides exceptional academic and extra-curricular education for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years.

# Open Morning

Saturday 13th November 2010 at 9am


Academic, Music, Art, Sailing and Sports Scholarships.  
Generous discounts for Service Families.  
Means-tested Seafaring Bursaries.


For more information visit [www.royalhospitalschool.org](http://www.royalhospitalschool.org) or contact Susan Lewis on 01473 326210 or email [admissions@royalhospitalschool.org](mailto:admissions@royalhospitalschool.org)

The Royal Hospital School, Holbrook, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 2RX




# Raising to Distinction






## Queen Victoria School

Admissions Deadline is Sat 15 January 2011

QVS is a co-educational boarding school for children of Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, have served in Scotland or are part of a Scottish regiment.

Families are welcome to find out more by contacting Admissions on +44 (0) 131 310 2927 to arrange a visit.

Queen Victoria School  
Dunblane Perthshire  
FK15 0JY  
[www.qvs.org.uk](http://www.qvs.org.uk)



## Six months? That's luxury!

WHAT IS the modern Navy coming to?

I read in a recent newsletter of a naval association I belong to that if the new Type 45 destroyers deploy overseas and the time extends beyond six months (yes, six months) the crew will be entitled to £5,000 compensation.

This must surely be compensation culture gone completely crazy.

I had to check the calendar to make sure it was not April 1.

Whatever happened to the saying *Join the Navy and see the world?* By the time they get anywhere it will be time to come back.

In my day Local Foreign Service commissions were quite common and lasted two-and-a-half years with no break.

None of this flying home in between lark!

General Service commissions normally lasted about 18 months and on average nine to 12 months were overseas.

We had some great trips. These ships did not have the five-star accommodation that the Type 45s have.

I would like to know who dreamed up this one – or is it just a wind-up?

– **Dave Walker**, RN 1955-65, Lindfield, West Sussex

Not a wind-up, but evidently a misunderstanding.

Capt John Lavery, RN Pay Colonel, explained:

"Mr Walker's letter relates to the Operational Allowance, paid to eligible Service personnel in recognition of the significantly increased danger in specified operational locations, over and above that compensated for in the X-Factor within basic pay.

"Qualifying locations for the allowance are determined at least every six months following Permanent Joint Headquarters' advice on the danger of current operations.

"The allowance is paid to Service personnel deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, those serving on Royal Navy ships in Iraqi territorial waters and those undertaking flying sorties over or into Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The allowance is paid as a lump sum following a period of such duty, for example, those deployed on a six-month tour will be paid £5,281.64.

"I hope that this might serve to allay your concern that all personnel serving onboard Type 45 ships deployed outside UK home waters will be eligible for this form of payment."

The doubling of the allowance to the £5,281.64 total was announced by Prime Minister David Cameron within his first month in office – **Man Ed**

# One and only Walker

I WAS fascinated to see your article (September) about trainees from the Walker Division.

I was in fact the first Divisional Officer of Walker after HMS Raleigh's rebuild in 1972/73.

I did a lot of research into Captain Walker's history, as it would appear that it was the only Division in Raleigh named after a captain, rather than an admiral.

Our Part 2 training Officer, Lt Cdr John Gilbert, with FCPO 'Nobby' Rawlings and myself, went up to Liverpool (where I was born) to meet the surviving members of Captain Walker's Old Boys' Association (CWOBA).

We were royally entertained, met the Lady Mayoress of Bootle, in whose offices JW used to rest during his breaks from sinking U-boats – and were presented with a portrait of JW which was hung on the stairs of Walker Division. I understand it has now been moved to the wardroom.

The surviving members of CWOBA came down to Raleigh the following year, witnessed a passing-out parade, and were entertained in typical Naval fashion. They loved it!

It seems a great shame that the power that he have decided to close Walker Division. It meant a lot to me and my team – we had a great (friendly!) rivalry with Vian, Somerville and Troubridge.

It is interesting to see trainees with SA80s – in my long-gone days they were SLRs. And I have photos to prove it!

Patrick Topley, ex-Lt(X)(g) RN, Rochester, Kent

**JACKPOT!**



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



Picture: Imperial War Museum, ref: A\_022020

## Time for plain Mister?

WHILST agreeing with the contents of the letter in September's edition from Lt Cdr Lester May (Ret'd) I would like to know why it is that some ex-officers who served in the RN continue to address themselves by the rank attained on retiring?

Is this an option given on retirement within the confines of some naval publication (such as QR(RN) or similar) and why on earth do they choose this mode of address?

Perhaps Mr May (as I would call him) can enlighten me and no doubt a lot of other serving and ex-naval personnel as to the reasoning behind it.

My own stance is that with no other evidence to the contrary, once retired you become plain Mister and join the ranks of the civilian population.

It also smacks of elitism and a touch of snobbery and frankly in the cold light of day totally outdated to anyone outside the service environment.

And to some or many inside who really cares?

You are what you are now – Mister (ex Lt Cdr)

– **K A Holloway**, CPOWTR (Ret'd) Newcastle-upon-Tyne

A pensionable commission is for life, so anyone who had a full career commission goes onto the retired list and stays there until they cross the bar.

Debrett's Correct Form states "...officers of the rank of lieutenant commander and above customarily use, and are addressed by, their rank after being placed on the retired list."

I know only officers use their rank in place of 'Mr' but I like to add rates and branches if people include them – it all seems relevant for Navy News, and "it adds a certain ton" as the cavalry officer said of himself – **Man Ed**.

# Rum do in Honolulu

I REFER to Cdr Mike Evans' letter (September) about the last rum issued to the Royal Navy.

Between August 1970 and September 1971 I served in HMS Hydra which had been deployed surveying the Malacca Straits.

This is an extract from my naval memoirs: On July 31 1970 the traditional rum ration was stopped in the Royal Navy.

In the Far East all the surplus rum had then been held in the store depot at Singapore naval base.

In his wisdom the CInC allocated this rum to be issued to Hydra, as the ship was employed on an arduous task, with little chance for visits to places other than Singapore.

Towards the end of February 1971 Hydra completed the Malacca Straits survey and the ship's company, including the officers, enjoyed a tot on three consecutive days – surely the last tots issued in the fleet.

– **Dave 'Shiner' Wright**, RN 1953-77, Ex POSA, HMS Hydra, Burwell, Cambridge

...I BELIEVE the ship's company of HMS Fife are the true claimants to take the last tot in the Royal Navy.

The ship was in Honolulu, Hawaii, on July 31 1970. As you would expect, great ceremony

was held on the flight deck of the final tot issue.

Our American friends brought TV crews on board to witness the issue and the throwing of the empty rum fanny over the side, consigned to the deep forever.

They were unaware that the ship's diver was despatched instantly over the other side of the ship to retrieve the very valuable said fanny.

I do believe we sailed next day over the date line and had another July 31, my memory fails me if we had another 'final day of the tot'.

– **Rod Weatherall**, Ex HMS Fife ship's flight

...I WAS serving in HMS Fife at the time. On July 31 we were alongside in the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii.

This must put us in the frame for drawing the last tot!

– **Peter Southard**, Swindon, Wilts

...ON THAT blackest of days, I was a killick sparker onboard HMS Sirius, Caribbean Guardship, alongside Ireland Island (HMS Malabar).

We did draw our last tot at approximately 1230, local time, on that saddest of days.

The following day with all due ceremony, we

held a service on board.

I have a copy of the Order of Service organised by myself, the 'Archbishop' (Surg Lt Peter Agget) and MAA 'Mac' McKay. I was also a member of the ship's band and composed the lyrics to that very solemn hymn.

The rum tub, I hasten to add, was only submitted to the depths of the sea boat!

Furthermore, something that may solve Mike's query as to who drew 'the last tot.'

It was during early August 1970 that two Canadian ships, the Ottawa and Assiniboine, visited Ireland Island.

About 15 of us were fortunate enough to be invited onboard and were officially victualled in at tot time on the day they arrived (I think around August 7 or 8).

That is where, and when, I and the lucky others drew our last tot, with a can of coke!

Does that count?

– **Gordon Hardcastle**, (former CRS 1966-1989)Wrexham

For those who can bear to read it, the final order of service held in HMS Sirius for the tot's committal can be found on the Navy News website under Have Your Say: Dittybox – **Man Ed**

## Watch out Jack, there's a cougar

IN THIS era of financial austerity and the uncertainty of an impending Defence Review, I think it reflects greatly on the RN that it still maintains a sense of humour in an otherwise humourless world.

I am, of course, referring to the name of next year's Task Group deployment. After three years of naming the Navy's global firepower demonstration after star constellations (Orion, Taurus, Auriga) I was delighted to read that the 2011 iteration was to be named Operation Cougar.

By naming such an important deployment after a certain type of older woman rather than a

dull astronomic feature it not only shows that today's Admiralty is 'modern and relevant' (as written on the official website) but also that it can keep a cheery outlook in the face of relentless sniping from the other two Services.

As such, I greatly look forward to hearing what the 2012 trip is going to be called. Perhaps your readers can suggest names as part of a new Navy News competition feature?

I look forward to reading the (inevitably cheeky) results from Jack.

– **J B Ferret**, Thatcham, Berkshire

## Inskip archives held in Historic Branch

I AM writing in response to A W Hodgins' letter (Sept) about Inskip.

The archive he mentions was started by me when I was twice CO of HMS Inskip between 1985 and 1994 and carried on by the Superintendent of the Sea Cadet Training Centre Inskip, Lt Cdr (SCC) Ian Wallace, RNR, from 1995 to 2006.

When notification of the closure of the training centre was given in late 2009 I was very concerned about what would happen to the archive and asked that it be given to me for safekeeping.

The archive consisted of

many articles, photographs, and artifacts of both the RNAS days and the beginning of its days as a transmitter station in 1958.

It was duly passed to me when the cadets left at the end of January 2010.

The archive consisted of four large tomes which I could not reasonably keep at my home and eventually I found a home for it with the Naval Historical Branch in Portsmouth Naval Base.

I passed the complete archive to them in June this year.

– **Lt Cdr P N Furse**, ex-CO, HMS Inskip, Elswick, Lancashire

## Dad's swift return to sweeping

MY FATHER was Lt A L Gulvin, CO of HMS Hebe mentioned by Thomas Russell in the August edition.

Hebe blew up off Bari on Monday November 22 1943, just after 1100 with the loss of 38 lives.

My father was injured and whilst unconscious in the water was supported by Leading Seaman Dodds until rescued by a launch.

After survival leave he went to Toronto to take command of HMS Mary Rose, a new Algerine Class minesweeper.

He took her back to the Med to carry on sweeping mines.

No counselling in those days. – **Roger Gulvin**, Rainham, Kent

# opinion

BENTLEY Priory, the country house in Stanmore, North London, which was the headquarters of Fighter Command in World War 2, is to be redeveloped and the plans include a museum commemorating the Battle of Britain.

What an ideal opportunity this will be to get the role of the Fleet Air Arm recognised as it should be in future generations. Not enough people realise how important the Naval contribution was to this pivotal point of the war.

They may be 'the few of the few,' but 56 Fleet Air Arm pilots are named on the Battle of Britain Memorial in London.

Of these, 23 were loaned to RAF fighter squadrons and 33 served with one of the two accredited Fleet Air Arm Squadrons, 804 and 808, operating under Fighter Command

in the role of dockyard defence.

Naval pilots served with distinction within 12 RAF Fighter Command Squadrons. These young fliers saw some of the fiercest fighting in the battle and produced four fighter 'aces,' S/Lts Francis Dawson-Paul and Arthur Blake, and S/Lts 'Dickie' Cork and 'Jimmy' Gardner who were both awarded the DFC (later converted to DSC) for their actions in the famous 242 Squadron, commanded by Douglas Bader.

Bader indeed had three naval officers in his squadron – not that you'd know it from watching *Reach for the Sky*.

The Battle of Britain has a special place in our nation's collective memory, but the Royal Navy's part in it is too often sadly overlooked.

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

# NAVY NEWS

Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH

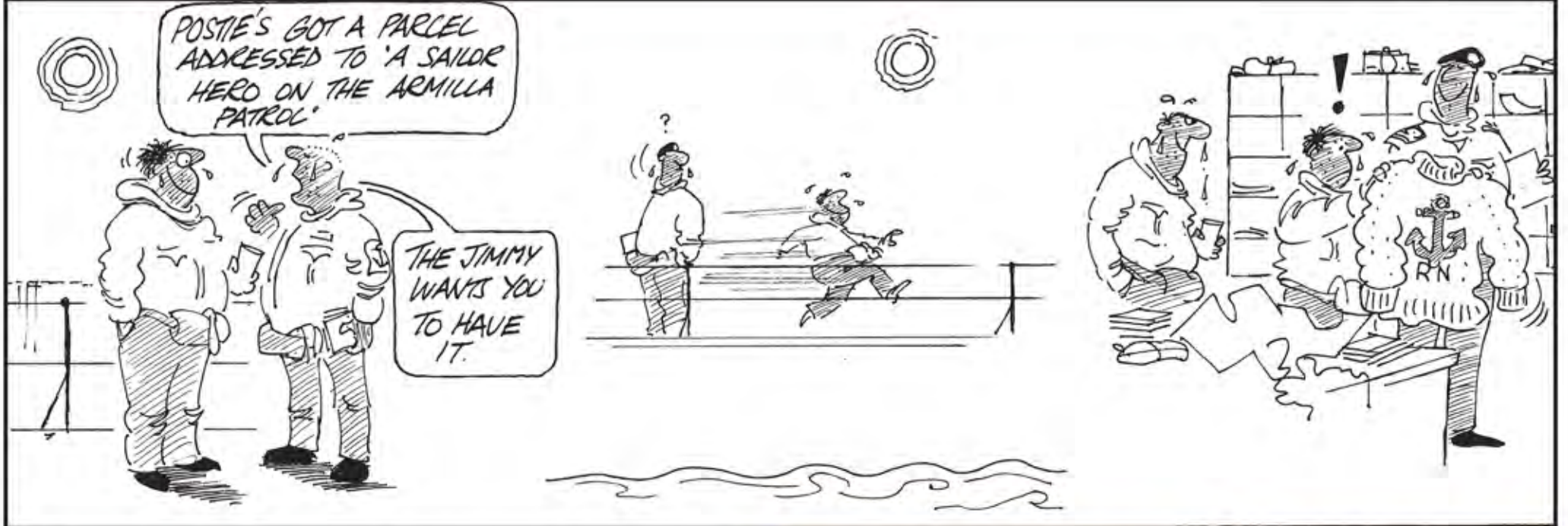
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# CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGS



## Surveying the defence news

AM I alone in being depressed that the Secretary of State for Defence chose to make his announcement in front of an audience at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors?

I have nothing against Chartered Surveyors but perception is important.

Was it so very difficult for the Government to arrange for this important announcement to be made in front of an audience of servicemen and women at a naval or military establishment?

Was the Government so scared of the undoubted searching and blunt questioning they would have received from an informed service audience?

We will never know.

Following the General Election I thought we had seen the last of inept government and policy

announced on the fly, my perception is that I was wrong.

— Ian Stirton Smith, Gosport

This speech was given by the Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Liam Fox, on August 13.

He outlined his approach to the Strategic Defence and Security Review and introduced the new Defence Reform Unit.

The audience included industry and civil servants as well as servicemen and women and his outer office told us this venue was judged to be the most appropriate.

A full text can be found on the MOD website at [www.mod.uk](http://www.mod.uk).

Navy News will cover news about the Strategic Defence and Security Review in our first available edition after it's announced, probably in the December issue — Man Ed

## Farewell to the sea songs?

THE UN's Albert Embankment-based International Maritime Organisation declared 2010 the Year of the Seafarer and indeed it is World Maritime Day on September 23.

What a pity that Sir Henry Wood's arrangement, the jolly and traditional *Fantasia on British Sea Songs*, so much enjoyed by Prommers since 1905, was not played at this year's *Last Night of the Proms*.

Sea-blind an island nation? We're deaf to the sounds of the sea too!

— Lt Cdr Lester May, Camden Town, London.

Yes indeed — I always got my handkerchief out for poor Tom Bowling, but I think he's finally gone aloft.

And I still haven't got over the loss of Radio 4's early morning UK Theme with Rule Britannia, which the BBC dropped in 2006 — Man Ed

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

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

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

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

We do, however, publish many on our website, [www.navynews.co.uk](http://www.navynews.co.uk), accompanied by images.

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

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



## Myth'tery ship



I LEFT the Royal Navy after 34 years in 1995 and have had this question on the back burner for some considerable time.

Now in semi-retirement in Santa Fe, New Mexico, I have found the time to ask it, after doing some research with the aid of a Greek priest I know here.

My question is: Why was one of the many Leander-class frigates, Cleopatra, named after a real person when all the others were mythical?

I gave my friend a list of all the Leanders and he confirmed that, bar Cleopatra, they are all named after Greek or Roman mythology characters.

Can any readers answer this question?

— Roy Banton, ex-WOGI, Santa Fe

● (left) HMS Cleopatra in October 1984



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## Scott is Navy's top bish

A MINISTER from Portsmouth has been selected for the most senior chaplaincy post in the Royal Navy.

The Rev Scott Brown RN, currently responsible for all operational aspects of chaplaincy in the Navy and Royal Marines, will take up the historic office of the Chaplain of the Fleet and Director General Naval Chaplaincy Service with effect from November 1.

He succeeds the Venerable John Green.

The Rev Brown, 42, originally from Hamilton in Scotland, said: "I am deeply honoured to be asked to lead the Naval Chaplaincy Service for the next three years."

"The spiritual and pastoral care of the men and women of the Naval Service, and their families, is vitally important, and I look forward to working with the Kirk and other denominations in that task."



● Lt Sean Krueger USCG

## Ex-771 pilot mourned

AN American exchange pilot who won awards with 771 Naval Air Squadron has been killed in a helicopter crash in the United States.

Lt Sean Krueger of the US Coastguard died in July when his MH-60 Jayhawk crashed off Washington State while en route from Astoria in Oregon to Sitka in Alaska. Only one of the four-man crew survived.

Lt Krueger served with 771 Squadron at Culdrose between January 2007 and March 2009, undertaking 61 missions as part of the crew of Rescue 193.

Most notable was the night of November 10 2008, when Rescue 193 went to the aid of a fisherman with severe abdominal injuries on board Spanish trawler Pesca Verda, 145 miles off the Scilly Isles.

The small trawler was being tossed about by 18ft waves in bad weather, but despite the conditions the stricken mariner was airlifted into the helicopter.

The fisherman died before he reached hospital, but the skill and fortitude of the air crew during the five-hour mission resulted in the awarding of the Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue award by the Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators (GAPAN) and the Edward and Maisie Lewis award for 2008 by the Shipwrecked Mariners Association.

Lt Krueger leaves behind his wife Kyla and three children.

# Puppies are named as training begins



● Scylla, one of the Belgian Shepherd puppies, with her own crest at Devonport Naval Base

Picture: LA(Phot) Martin Carney

## Mew beginnings

TWO sick feral kittens found wandering around new accommodation blocks at Clyde Naval Base are well on their way to recovery thanks to the quick action of the base's Environmental Health Department.

A cleaner spotted the moggies one Monday morning and, realising they were hungry and ill, quickly reported the find.

"It took me quite a while to catch the kittens," said John Belshaw, Base Pest Control Officer (pictured right with the kittens).

"But once I did it became apparent that they were in quite bad condition."

"The smaller kitten in particular was very ill and run down."

Lomond Veterinary Clinic in Helensburgh confirmed the smaller animal had cat flu, but after treatment it was soon running around John's office causing mayhem with its companion.

"Once they are fully better they will be neutered and we will try to find them a good home - I don't think we'll have much trouble finding someone to look after them as they're beautiful cats," he said.

Clyde has around 35 to 40 feral cats, with kind-hearted base staff



usually involved in feeding and looking after them.

"From time to time I hear about people getting a telling-off for feeding the base cats," said John.

"But the truth is that the base has a duty of care to look after all the wildlife at the site, and the feral cat population are no exception."

"If base staff want to use their own money and time to feed them then there's no problem."

THE LATEST additions to the MOD Police Force have been named - and for one trainer it brought back memories of his time in the Navy.

The dozen Belgian Shepherd puppies, born in early July, are the first MOD Police Force dog recruits to be born at the Devonport unit.

Ten of them were named after Leander-class frigates - Scylla, Minnie (Minerva), Cleo (Cleopatra), Rora (Aurora) and Phoebe for the girls, and Sirius, Ury (Euryalus), Juno, Ajax and Apollo for the boys.

The other two are being taken on by Kent police, who will choose their own names.

PC Stewart Bull, of MOD Police in Hereford, took delivery of Scylla, whom he will train initially before she receives full training elsewhere.

PC Bull said: "Scylla is lovely - she has taken to me and I have taken to her already."

"She has a very apt name as

I served in HMS Scylla as an aircrewman."

Police dog handler PC Dave Haddon, who nurtured the litter through their early weeks, said: "I will definitely miss them."

"They all recognise and respond to me. I have literally baby-sat them, sleeping in their creche kennels with them and been kept awake by them."

"It will be a shame they have to go."

"But it is a new beginning for them and they are growing up and have been bred as working dogs."

Mother Willow produced the litter as part of a breeding programme which aims to eliminate the need to bring in new dogs.

The Devonport unit usually brings in German Shepherds, but their increasing susceptibility to health problems shortened their working life.

To guarantee healthy dogs and provide value for money, the decision was taken to breed Belgian Shepherds, of the Malinois variety, in-house.



● The Dyers with PC Simon Clark and Lilly

Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd

## Family is reunited with former pet

AWIN at a charity event brought double delight for the Dyer family.

Lee and Lucinda Dyer, with their two children Maya and Isla, took part in the Wallace and Gromit Grand Appeal, which is raising money for the Bristol Royal Hospital for Children.

Their prize was a day at RN Air Station Yeovilton, including a behind-the-scenes visit and a tour of the FAA Museum.

For the Dyers there was a special reason for making the trip - a chance to meet up again with a former pet.

Lilly was the family dog some years ago, but when they decided she needed to be rehoused, she was passed on to the MOD Police and trained to help with security.

Lilly and her new owner and handler, PC Simon Clark, were delighted to meet her "extended" family and show off her expertise.

PC Clark said: "It was great to meet Lilly's family, and for them to see how happy she is in her new home and as a first-class police dog."

Community Relations Officer Cdr Richard Seymour said: "The air station always tries to help support charities when we can, and the Wallace and Gromit Appeal is an especially deserving one for children."

"In this case, it was marvellous being able to reunite a family with their dog and for them to see her so contented and doing a great job."

www.grandappeal.org.uk

## Branching out

TREE surgeon Dan Holder decided to cut back on his full-time job for a while and serve as a Royal Marines Reservist in southern Afghanistan.

The 23-year-old Portsmouth marine (pictured right by LA(Phot) Si Ethell) is now deployed on a six-month operational tour with 40 Cdo in Sangin, Helmand province.

The handyman, who specialises in gardening and tree surgery, said: "At first I thought I was going to be out of my depth, but I realised that the training I'd done was adequate enough."

"I'm getting on well. I get on fine with all the full-time Royal Marines and, to be honest, I don't feel any different. I'm

completely part of the team."

Dan, who graduated from the University of Portsmouth 18 months ago, has been a reservist for three years, and joined Taunton-based 40 Cdo last September to carry out pre-deployment training.

He added: "I am enjoying it and would recommend it - especially if you want to go for further education and not just join the Royal Marines full time."

"It means that you get the best of both worlds. You experience both sides of life - one as a civvy and one as a Royal Marine."

After his tour ends, Dan intends to swap the green beret for green fingers and pick up his former trade.



● Lesser Leanne

## Less is more for Leanne

A NAVY medic has won a slimming group prize for losing six stone - and an old oppo from HMS Ark Royal's 2003 Gulf deployment helped her on her way.

Leanne Sandford admitted being overweight for much of her life, and "spent the last ten years gradually piling on the pounds."

She tried a variety of diets to lose weight and pass the RN Fitness Test to be eligible for promotion, but said she was always hungry.

When her weight hit 17 stone she realised she would have to find something effective; that something was Slimming World in Portsmouth.

"I never believed that I could eat so much food and still lose weight, but obviously it works as I am now six stone lighter," said Leanne.

"I have gone from a size 22 down to a size 12 and it feels great that I know I can just pick something up and it will fit."

Former LWTR Sarah Harley-Jones took over as the Slimming World consultant for the Portsmouth Newbridge Junior School group earlier this year, and for three weeks didn't recognise her old shipmate from the Ark, such was the transformation her predecessor had wrought.

Leanne was chosen as the group's Woman of the Year, and will compete in the district finals, held as Navy News went to press.

Now Leanne is hoping to pass on the message by becoming a Slimming World consultant in her home town of Tamworth, as well as becoming a fitness instructor/personal trainer on leaving the Navy towards the end of this year.



● Greater Leanne



● B/Cpl Adrian Imm with wife Deborah, a trainee RN Dental Nurse  
Picture: Dave Sherfield

## Parade is family affair

PROUD husband Adrian Imm was there to see his wife Deborah complete her basic training at HMS Raleigh.

But he wasn't watching from the sidelines – Adrian was part of the ceremony itself.

The band corporal managed to gain a place in the Royal Marines Band Lympstone, rather than watch from the stands as Deborah, herself a former bandie, took part in the passing-out parade.

The couple met at Woodroff School in Lyme Regis, and both joined the RM Band Service, Adrian in 1999 and Deborah – whose father was in the Royal Navy – a year later.

Deborah left in 2005 when she became pregnant with their first child, but now, with their three daughters in education, she said: "I felt it was the perfect time to rejoin the lifestyle I have missed."

She decided to take up a new career, one that fitted family commitments a little better, so she is now undertaking 14 weeks of specialist training at the Defence Dental Services Training Centre at Aldershot.

Adrian, who is normally a member of the Portsmouth band, is currently at Lympstone to prepare for promotion.

## Moon man in Pontefract

ASTRONAUT and former US Navy pilot Capt Edgar Mitchell was presented with Royal Navy tie pins by an ex-RN man.

Capt Mitchell recently visited Pontefract to talk to schools and the general public about his mission on Apollo 14, which saw him become the sixth man to walk on the moon.

He narrowly missed flying on the ill-fated Apollo 13 flight when the crews of 13 and 14 were swapped.

Paul Dobson, who escorted the Korean War veteran in Yorkshire, took the chance to chat about their respective Navy careers – Paul served from 1979-86, including time in HM ships Intrepid and Fearless.

Paul said he found Capt Mitchell to be "an extremely interesting man, funny and every bit a gentleman."

## High honour for Robert

A SENIOR rate has been awarded a Winston Churchill Medallion for his leadership of an expedition to the Himalayas.

PONN Robert Wakeford, from MDHU Derriford in Plymouth, was presented with his prize by the Duchess of Cornwall at a ceremony in the Guildhall, London.

PO Wakeford (right) was expedition leader for a 32-strong tri-Service group of doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, nurses and medics who trekked and climbed in Nepal last year.

Exercise Imja Tse was regarded as a journey of personal development and growth which boosted individuals and helped engender teamwork to the overall benefit of the Armed Forces.

The expedition was designed to work on two levels.

The first level focused on the development of novice trekkers, providing an opportunity to experience high-altitude conditions.

The second focused on the further development of the experienced trekkers and climbers in the team, who went on to climb Imja Tse.

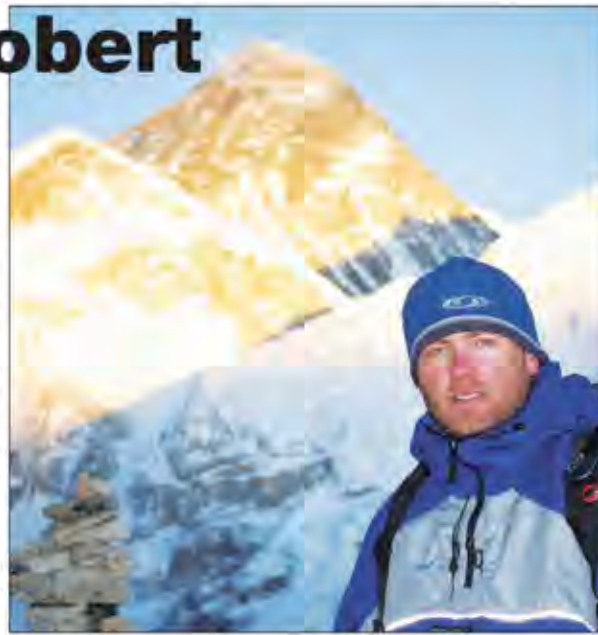
Extensive training throughout the UK and the French and Swiss Alps set the group up for the trek up the main approach to Everest Base Camp and Kala Pattar (5,545m).

The 21 experienced members of the team then summited Imja Tse (Island Peak) at 6,189m.

High-altitude medical research was a fundamental component of the exercise, with the results being submitted for publication.

The overall success has prompted the planning of a future Defence Medical Services expedition in the Bolivian Andes in 2012.

For more information on this and the future planned expedition, as well as the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, contact Robert Wakeford at [rob.wakeford35@googlemail.com](mailto:rob.wakeford35@googlemail.com)



## Ark V salutes Ark III

THE current HMS Ark Royal took time out of her recent busy deployment to the United States to pay tribute to one of her predecessors.

The third Ark Royal played a crucial role in the engagement with German battleship Bismarck, and the Exercise Auriga flagship held a celebratory dinner and picture

unveiling to mark the occasion.

In May 1941 Bismarck, in company with Prinz Eugen, broke out into the North Atlantic to threaten the fragile lifeline of convoys ploughing between Europe and North America.

HMS Hood and HMS Prince of Wales were sent to intercept the German warships, but Hood was

sunk with the loss of more than 1,400 men as the enemy escaped.

Force H – a flotilla including Ark Royal, battle cruiser HMS Renown and heavy cruiser HMS Sheffield – was despatched from Gibraltar to prevent Bismarck, leaking fuel oil, making the safety of St Nazaire.

After a major mishap –

Swordfish accidentally struck at HMS Sheffield but the torpedoes failed to detonate – an attack was launched on Bismarck on May 26.

The Swordfish took off in terrible weather, with the flight deck pitching more than 60ft, and 19-year-old pilot Lt Jock Moffat loosed off a tin fish which crippled Bismarck's steering gear.

With the big ship now incapable of more than a long, slow turn, other Royal Navy vessels were able to finish it off.

At a dinner on the current Ark during Exercise Capella Strike, Commander Air Cdr Rocky Salmon recounted the story, after which Cdre Simon Ancona, Commander UK Carrier Strike Group, unveiled a painting of Ark Royal III launching a Swordfish to attack Bismarck.

And a video of the vivid recollections of 91-year-old Lt Cdr Moffat (rtd) was played to guests, who included Col Russell Sanborn, the CO of Marine Aircraft Group 14 of the US Marine Corps.

■ Bismarck book review – p44



● Up-and-coming politician: Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey in HMS Cumberland

## Minister drops in for war

ARMED Forces Minister Nick Harvey went to war with the Royal Navy – but just for the day.

The North Devon MP joined a Thursday War as a guest of Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) Rear Admiral Chris Snow to see the Royal Navy exercising under pressure.

Mr Harvey, undertaking a fact-finding mission, spent some time with Type 22 frigate HMS Cumberland as she was put through her paces by the

Devonport-based FOST team.

The politician found himself in the midst of the challenging weekly exercise which prepares ships and submarines for operational deployments such as counter-piracy patrols and humanitarian tasking – and ultimately for war.

The frigate was subject to constant challenges at the whim of the FOST staff as they kept the sailors on their toes, with dramatic events including mock attacks from missiles, aircraft and submarines.

He saw the crew fight floods and fires in stressful simulated scenarios, and also eat on the move as chefs prepared meals under fire and in the midst of disaster.

The minister followed his time at sea with a tour of Devonport Naval Base, including HM ships Vigilant and Bulwark, both in refit, and Hasler Company, for Royal Marines needing extra medical and welfare attention.

He also visited HMS Raleigh, attending a passing-out parade.

## 1805 Club keep RN history alive

TWO Naval tombs and a plaque have been restored thanks to the efforts of the 1805 Club, the only charitable organisation dedicated to conserving monuments and memorials to Nelson and other Georgian seafarers.

The tombs, in Kensal Green cemetery in North London, were those of Admirals Sir Thomas Capel and Sir Robert Orway.

Capel was the Commanding Officer of frigate HMS Phoebe at Trafalgar, and he previously served under Nelson on board HMS Vanguard at the Battle of the Nile.

Orway was captain of HMS London at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801.

The plaque was originally dedicated to Admiral Lord James



● The RN Theatre Association production of The Wyrd Sisters

## Curtain falls on Wyrd Sisters

THE latest Royal Navy Theatre Association production, *The Wyrd Sisters*, attracted crowds of more than 1,000 people to the New Theatre Royal in Portsmouth.

During its five-night run, a range of military and civilian personnel performed in Stephen Briggs' adaptation of the classic Terry Pratchett tale.

The RNTA fund a major production such as this every two years, involving members from all affiliated RN theatre groups from across the country.

Association chairman Cdr David Grindel said: "We have been delighted with the success of the Pratchett series."

"It has allowed us to build up a strong following which we hope will transfer to our new venture."

"Our hope is to stage an open-air performance of one of the more humorous Shakespearean plays in the summer of 2012."

"We are all looking forward to the challenge."

And there is every chance that Pratchett may return in future years.

The association is always looking out for new members – contact Cdr Grindel on 02392 325324 or [david.grindel1578@mod.uk](mailto:david.grindel1578@mod.uk)

## Charitable bikers and safer bikers



● The Harley Davidson Geordies at HMS Calliope

BIKERS were high on the agenda at naval establishments at either end of England.

HMS Calliope welcomed 75 bikers from the Geordie Chapter of the Harley Davidson Motorcycle Club at the end of a ride in aid of Help for Heroes.

The motorcyclists had visited Albemarle Barracks, home to 39 Rgt Royal Artillery, and RAF Boulmer near Alnwick before ending at the Gateshead RNR unit, where they were welcomed by Lt Nelson McMillan, CO of HMS Example, the Northumbria University URNU patrol boat.

Down in Devon, 11 military and civilian staff from Britannia

Royal Naval College completed a day of training under the Bike Safe scheme, sponsored by the police.

The day was organised by keen biker MAA Rob Grenfell of BRNC RN Police, who said: "The Bike Safe initiative is a brilliant way to promote a higher level of competency among all bike users, along with greater safety awareness."

Training was led Sgt Gregg Jarrett of the Devon and Cornwall Police, and included a morning of classroom instruction and four hours on the roads of the South Hams with police motorcyclists, practising skills and having riding competencies assessed.



● Bike Safe day at Dartmouth

Picture: Brent Burton (VT Flagship BRNC)

**'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'**

**Tykes earn thanks**

FORMER Royal Marine S/M Bernard Hallas has expressed the gratitude of himself and his colleagues following a fundraising event in Yorkshire.

Bernard, who believes at 92 he is the oldest public relations officer in the Association, said: "A big thank you from the Royal Naval and Royal Marines Associations York branch to the Chief Executive of Tesco's superstore in Tadcaster Road.

"Following an invitation to hold a collection on behalf of Alexander Rose charities the York branch mustered their resources and veterans from all theatres of the past wars spent a day in the main entrance to the store, complete in Association dress and wearing their medals.

"It was a first timer and it was a great success.

"The Tesco customers opened their hearts, their purses and their wallets as only Yorkshire folk can.

"Tiny tots, teenagers, mums and dads and the older generation who remembered what it was all about wanted to show their appreciation to the former members of the Armed Forces and no doubt to express their admiration to the Armed Forces of today who are commanding the respect of the remainder of the civilised world.

"To them, the not-so-ordinary people of York, a special thank you from the Royal Navy."

**Founder dies**

MEMBERS of Norwich branch were shocked and saddened when founder member S/M Colin Ayden collapsed and died at the Canary Social Club following the branch's monthly meeting.

S/M Colin, who was 80, spent 22 years in the Navy, including service in Korean waters during the Korean War, and then a further 17 years in RN recruitment.

He was a major influence on the branch, which now has more than 100 members.



● RNPA members and guests before their gala dinner and dance. Joining chairman Stuart Antrobus (centre) in the front row are some of the most senior members, including Cecilia Philbrick (pink cardigan), who joined the branch in 1942 as a Wren Photographer at the then RN School of Air Photography, Bognor Regis  
Picture: Ex-CPO(Phot) Danny du Feu

**90 years on and still fully focused**

ALL minds were focused on Bournemouth when the Royal Naval Photographic Branch celebrated the 90th anniversary of the branch's formation.

The three-day event, at the Wessex Hotel, West Cliff, was blessed with a weekend of gorgeous weather, allowing an action-packed programme.

Photos old and new got together from all over the UK to celebrate, and in some cases the age difference was some 55 years, but that didn't stop some of the old and bold running off with most of the prizes at the horse racing event on the Friday evening.

Saturday started with local visits, including Bucklers Hard near Southampton, where many Nelson-era warships were built.

Back at the Wessex, a short and interesting AGM and Up Spirits was staged, where Gibraltar was put forward as a possible venue for next year's autumn reunion.

**Algerines travel to Corfu**

MEMBERS of the Algerine Association made a pilgrimage to the island of Corfu to pay tribute to lost comrades.

Thanks to a generous subsidy from Heroes Return, a section of the Big Lottery Fund, and the tireless input of Algerine Association organiser S/M George Patience, 64 members, carers, wives and RNA comrades enjoyed a ten-day break in the Ionian Sea.

The first Sunday in September saw two coaches transfer the party to Corfu for a church service and a wreath-laying ceremony at the British Cemetery.

An unplanned detour via a Roman Catholic church resulted in a steep uphill climb, but the party was met with beakers of iced water at Holy Trinity Anglican church.

The Rev John Gulland conducted the service, which was attended by the Bishop to the Greek Orthodox Church, the Mayor of Corfu, an officer of the Hellenic Navy, vice-consul of the southern area and British vice-consul Sarah Ticherou.

After the service all travelled to the British Cemetery to lay wreaths for those Algerine sailors lost to a mine on HMS Regulus in 1945;

a survivor, S/M Sid Unwin, did the honours.

A further visit was made to the memorial to more than 40 men who died as a result of injuries sustained in the mining of HM Ships Volage and Saumarez, the two destroyers badly damaged in the Corfu Channel Incident of 1946 (see Heroes of the Royal Navy, p12).

A poppy wreath was laid by 92-year-old Amy Sheppard.

A presentation of an Algerine Association plaque was then made to cemetery caretaker George, who has been tending the spot for many years.

**Warm welcome for Arctic convoy group**

FOLLOWING a successful tour to Russia earlier this year, plans are already being made for next year's excursion.

Early May saw nine Russian Convoy veterans (plus two wives, three grandchildren, one daughter, one son-in-law and two friends) fly out from Heathrow to St Petersburg for the first leg of the trip.

Over the next four days the group enjoyed a packed programme of visits, receptions and ceremonies, including the Piskarevskoye Memorial Cemetery and museum and a trip on the River Niva.

The cemetery is the last resting place of close to half a million civilians and soldiers who died in the siege of St Petersburg - then Leningrad - a devastating military campaign which lasted almost 900 days, in which the Germans and Finns tried (and failed) to capture the city during World War 2.

The party paid their respects at the Eternal Flame in the cemetery, and walked to the Mother Motherland statue where they laid wreaths and flowers.

One member of the party -



● Russian convoy veterans and supporters attend a ceremony in Murmansk earlier this year

Russian Convoy Club (London and Home Counties branch) secretary S/M Gordon Long also attended a ceremony at which a new mast for HMS Belfast was handed over at a St Petersburg shipyard - see page 26.

The focus then moved north, first to Murmansk, where more ceremonies were staged.

Here, on Kola Bay, the British visitors called in at a school, university and museum, enjoyed a reception on board a Russian icebreaker, and were guests at the Russian Victory Day military parade.

Another flight took the party

**Colours laid up**

THE HMS King George V Association (also known as the KGVA) have held their final reunion in Portsmouth.

The association laid up their colours in St Ann's Church, in the city's naval base, during a service conducted by the Rev Martin Poll.

Also in the church is the ship's Bible, presented by King George V's son King George VI and recently refurbished thanks to the Association.

The future of the Association itself has yet to be decided, with a number of options being considered; no members of the ship's company now serves on the Association committee.

on to the White Sea and the port of Arkhangelsk, which promised a similar hectic pattern of events.

The party, whose programme was organised with the help of both local authorities in Russia and British Consulate staff, then returned to the UK.

Their visit attracted media attention in each of the cities visited - and next year's trip should achieve an even higher profile, as 2011 marks the 70th anniversary of the first Arctic convoy.

Codenamed Dervish, the relatively-small flotilla of merchant ships and a light naval escort sailed from Iceland on August 21 1941, arriving in Arkhangelsk ten days later.

It set the pattern for the 40 or so gruelling, dangerous return voyages that followed - convoys that claimed more than 100 ships, both military and civilian.

Following Dervish, convoys were classified by number rather than name.



● WEYMOUTH shipmates staged a Drumhead ceremony on the 50th anniversary of the formation of their branch. The ceremony consisted of the laying-up of the old standard, as well as that of Portland branch, followed by the dedication of a new one. A total of 31 standards were in attendance, including four representing areas. The event took place within the walls of Nothe Fort in Weymouth, with a reception at the nearby Sea Cadet Training Centre, TS Duke of York. The service was conducted by the Rev Mike Brotherton, chaplain of HMS Drake, and music was provided by the RNAS Yeovilton Volunteer Band

**Legion tribute to Forces**

THE Royal British Legion of Devon will hold its 2010 Festival of Remembrance at the Princess Theatre, Torquay, on Remembrance Day - Thursday November 11 - starting at 7pm.

In addition to entertainment, this annual tribute to Britain's Armed Forces will feature the traditional muster of standards of the country's Royal British Legion and Service association branches, as well as representatives of the serving Armed Forces, cadet forces, youth groups and emergency services.

It will end with a short Service of Remembrance, including the two-minute silence.

The theme of the festival is the 150th anniversary of the formation of the cadet movement, and in addition to the high profile of these groups, the guest speaker will be a serving Royal Marine whose association with the military goes back to his membership of the Somerset Army Cadet Force.

WO1 Matthew Tomlinson is the holder of both the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross and the Military Cross, and his keynote speech should be an inspiration to all.

Tickets are £8 and available from the theatre, telephone 01803 380842 or 0844 947 2315 (local call), see the website [www.princesstheatre.org.uk](http://www.princesstheatre.org.uk) or call the RBL County Office on 01392 272211.

**Play your cards right**

THE chairman of the Stourbridge and District branch wants shipmates to be aware of the existence of a card which confirms the holder's status as a war disablement pensioner.

S/M Ron Gould contacted Navy Netes as his shipmate, Mick Coyle - who "has campaigned long and hard for this concession" is suffering ill health at present.

S/M Ron said Mick had received a letter from the Veterans Welfare Centre in Kidderminster, replying to a customer feedback form.

The letter stated: "On the forms, you ask whether it is possible to obtain a plastic card for war pensioners to present when attending for medical services.

"I can confirm that a card can be provided, bearing the individual's name, date of birth and national insurance number, and confirming that he/she is a war disablement pensioner.

"Anyone wishing to obtain such a card can do so by ringing our helpline on 0800 1692277 or by email at [veteranshelp@spva.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:veteranshelp@spva.gsi.gov.uk)

**Wren election**

A FORMER member of the Women's Royal Naval Service has been elected to serve on the Council of the Association of Wrens (AOW).

S/M Sheila Houghton joined the WRNS in 1976 and served 22 years before leaving as a CPO (Writer).

Sheila is secretary to the Manchester and District branch of the AOW.

Never say never - see p38

**Naval Quirks**

..THEY USED 15" GUNS AND TURRETS THAT HAD BEEN IN STORAGE SINCE THE 1920s..

..WHEN THEY HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM THE BATTLECRUISERS "GLORIOUS" AND "COURAGEOUS" ON THEIR CONVERSIONS TO AIRCRAFT CARRIERS..

TO SPEED UP THE COMPLETION OF THE RN'S LAST BATTLESHIP, HMS VANGUARD, IN THE 1940s..

LUCKY THE ADMIRALTY KEPT THE PAWN TICKETS..

Doesn't bother me sir! As the youngest of four brothers I'm well used to hand-me-downs!



## Veterans' double century

TWO wartime Naval veterans celebrated their hundredth birthdays over the summer.

First to the three-figure mark was Cdr Bill King, the oldest-surviving submarine commander from World War 2.

Cdr King, who also made a name for himself post-war as an author and fearless yachtsman, celebrated his century with a family party at his home, Oranmore Castle in County Galway.

Cdr King won seven medals, including the DSO and Bar and the DSC, and commanded three boats.

The first was HMS Snapper, which sank several small enemy vessels before the then Lt King moved on in December 1940.

Lt Cdr King moved on to HMS Truist in March 1941 and later HMS Telemachus, which he took to the Far East between July 1943 and August 1945, conducting several uneventful patrols.

Cdr King later became the oldest person to complete a solo circumnavigation, at the age of 58.

Two months after Cdr King reached 100, Jack Milham reached the same milestone.

Jack served in the far East and Eastern Mediterranean, returning to the UK with the Fleet Air Arm in 1943, though he speaks little about his wartime experiences.

He retired at 45 as a lieutenant commander, but remains active today, often helping out at the Emmanuel Baptist Church in his home town of Gravesend.

## Harlow death

HARLOW branch are mourning the death of S/M Pearl Roalf, wife of branch chairman Peter.

S/M Pearl, who died in July at the age of 81, was the first holder of the branch Certificate of Appreciation, and had been an associate member of the branch for some 30 years.

Among the standards at Pearl's funeral were those of No 5 Area and the Essex branch of the Fleet Air Arm Association.

# Norwegian memorial fulfils Glarac ambition

THIS year saw the 70th anniversary of the loss of aircraft carrier HMS Glorious and her escorts HM ships Ardent and Acasta – and veterans marked the occasion at home and abroad.

The three ships were sunk on June 8 1940 by gunfire from German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau west of the Lofoten Islands during the evacuation of Norway with the loss of more than 1,500 men – an event which still arouses controversy seven decades later.

The Glorious, Ardent and Acasta Association (Glarac) started their tribute to the men who died with a simple service at the Glarac memorial in the National Arboretum in Alrewas, followed shortly after by a service at St Nicholas Church in Devonport Naval Base.

The focus then switched across the North Sea to Harstad in

Norway, the last port of call for the two destroyers before they joined Glorious.

The party – including associates from Canada, Australia and Scotland – were taken by Norwegian landing craft out into the Andfjord, with snow-topped peaks standing out against the blue summer sky.

After two hours the craft stopped, the ramp was lowered and a service of remembrance held – 200 miles east of the ship's resting place, but as close as the visitors could be taken.

A relative representing each ship's company laid wreaths on the still waters, with Cdre James Morse laying a wreath on behalf of the Royal Navy.

Later the same day, back in Harstad, a toast was proposed to all three ships at 1825hrs – the exact time that Ardent sank beneath the waves in 1940.

The following day a service was held in Trondenes Church,

attended by members of the local community as well as British Embassy staff.

The congregation then walked the short distance to a plaque, draped in blue silk, which was unveiled by the local mayor and S/M Mike Sellick (Ardent) who, with his wife Jenny, had set the ball rolling for the trip.

With similar plaques established in Alrewas, Devonport and Malta – more Maltese sailors were lost in Glorious than any other single ship – Glarac had fulfilled an aim of its constitution, "to perpetuate the memory of the 1,531 who lost their lives on Glorious, Ardent and Acasta."

With the formal part of the visit now over there was time to see some of the history of the area, including the 16in 'Adolf guns' high above Harstad, while a further small ceremony was held at the grave of Telegraphist Jack Pilkington, who served in HMS Glorious.

With new friendships forged, the party returned to the UK.

Further details of Glarac can be found at their website, [www.glarac.co.uk](http://www.glarac.co.uk)



● S/M Mike Sellick with the Glarac plaque in Trondenes

## Glory's Austral links

A SHIP association is hoping a like-minded group on the other side of the world might be interested in displaying a token of a friendship forged more than 60 years ago.

The HMS Glory Association held a reunion shortly after bushfires ravaged South Australia early last year, and resolved to send a donation.

A cheque for £500 was duly sent via the Australian Red Cross – but members also wanted to recognise the links between them and the Antipodes.

A small, lightweight panel was prepared in time for S/M Bernard Skam to take with him to Sydney, where S/M Peter Wright picked it up and continued to Canberra.

The panel carries the association crest, recalls "the great kindness, hospitality and generosity shown by the Australian people to the ship's company during visits in 1945 and the early 1950s when our two countries were engaged in the fight for democracy during World War II and in Korea."

It also bears a copy of the donated

cheque sent to the people of Victoria affected by the bushfires.

Unfortunately the Australian War Museum could not help, and the panel is now back in the UK awaiting news of another interested party which may be able to put it on display.

## Barham service

THE HMS Barham Association will hold their remembrance service in Westminster Abbey on Saturday November 27.

Members and guests should enter the West Door by 1430hrs and proceed to seating in the centre of the nave.

After the service the book of remembrance will be open for inspection.

Some members have planned to meet at the Methodist Central Hall restaurant for a light lunch and get-together before the service, while the Union Jack Club has given permission for members and friends to use the club's bar and restaurant after the service.



● Members of the HMS Anson Association who served in the battleship gather for their AGM at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth

## Gratitude in print

MEMBERS of the HMS Anson Association have demonstrated their thanks to the Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth by presenting a print of their old battleship.

Association chairman S/M Syd Clapson handed the print to club general manager John Anderson, saying it was a goodwill gesture for all the effort put in by staff and management to make sure the association's meetings went well over the past few years.

A plaque was also presented, and S/M Syd said they had already booked in for next year.

The chairman said that although the Battleship Anson had been a

Chatham-manned ship, it was to Portsmouth that she returned from the Far East on July 29 1946.

S/M Syd was a Royal Marine on board on that day, and recalled how his then girlfriend – now his wife – was there to welcome him home.

Anson had spent the early part of her war career on Arctic convoys, and was involved in the attack on the Tirpitz, but later transferred to the Far East and was present at the relief of Hong Kong, with Syd and his colleagues taking on security duties as there was no police force following Japanese occupation.

## Warriors still not forgotten

THE guns on the Western Front had been silent for a year when a woman visited a London hospital and inquired of the matron whether any wounded Servicemen remained on the wards.

She was shocked to learn that 600 remained too ill or badly injured to be discharged – and that thousands more were in the same situation around the country.

The woman was Marta Cunningham, a celebrated American-born soprano with very good connections in Europe.

Miss Cunningham had a second talent, that for philanthropy, and her concern at the plight of the wounded, bored and lonely warriors led to the immediate establishment of the Not Forgotten Association, with the objective of providing entertainment and recreation opportunities for those whose lives were damaged in the Great War.

Princess Mary was the charity's first patron, and remained so for her entire life, being succeeded by the Duchess of Kent, who handed over the torch to the Princess Royal in 2000.

In 1926 the Association officially defined its task as being 'to provide comfort, cheer and entertainment for the wounded ex-servicemen still in hospital as a result of the Great War', but as the decades passed it has evolved to help a wider group of veterans, including those wounded in more recent conflicts.

As the years went on the Association has adapted to meet changing needs and extended its activities to include those wounded in more recent conflicts, seeking to "act generally for the benefit of Service and ex-Service personnel with disabilities or who are wounded, including the organisation of, or provision of items or facilities for, leisure and recreational activities, travel, holidays and outings."

It now provides "an entertainments programme across the country throughout the year" for injured serving or ex-Servicemen and women who have a war pension or receive compensation from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or are currently suffering ill health.

'Entertainment' includes the provision of TVs and licences as well as holidays and pilgrimages, day trips such as visits to museums, boat and steam train journeys, tattoos and sporting events, and the Association also arranges concerts.

The Queen allows the Association to hold a garden party each year at Buckingham Palace and a Christmas party in the State Apartments of St James' Palace.

Last year the Association provided such entertainment to more than 9,000 people.

Applications for assistance or to join activities are generally made through the Services Personnel and Welfare Agency, the Royal British Legion, SSAFA Forces Help or Combat Stress.

For more information, see the Association's website at [www.nfassociation.org](http://www.nfassociation.org), email [director@nfassociation.org](mailto:director@nfassociation.org) or write to the Director, Not Forgotten Association, 4th Floor, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

## Team Kenya

ALMOST 30 Kenya Navy veterans and friends gathered at the Church House Inn, Rattery, to revive memories of their service in Mombasa in the 60s and 70s whilst training the country's navy.

A warm welcome was extended to three new guests at the RN Training Team Kenya annual reunion.

John Barrington Carver, the CO of patrol craft KNS Chui in the early years from 1962, gave some harrowing accounts of the dangers and difficulties faced by RN training staff during this volatile period.

A bouquet was presented to guest of honour Hilary Hall.

## £50 (AND WOOD'S RUM) PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery frigate in our August edition (right) was HMS Mermaid, originally ordered by Ghana as the Black Star.

And Mr M. Hatton of Whitstable in Kent wins our £50 prize for submitting the correct answers.

This month we have two prizes – our normal £50 and a bottle of Wood's Old Navy Rum.

To be eligible to win the rum you must confirm that you are 18 years old or over, and you must also live in the UK (including Northern Ireland, Eire and the Channel Islands).

Based on a post-war American design, the highly-regarded Commonwealth navy icebreaker pictured above was later transferred to the country's coastguard, and saw more than 30 years service before she was sold for scrap in 1987.

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 two winners. Closing date for entries is November 15. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winners will be announced in our December edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

### MYSTERY PICTURE 188

Name .....

Address .....

My answer .....

I confirm that I am 18 years old or over.

# Tell us what you want to know from NFF

**BRACE, brace, brace,** this is a familiar sound if you are on board and in the middle of exercises or barrelling through rough terrain, but more than ever even the land-loving families are hearing this from government departments and media sources, writes Jane Williams of the Naval Families Federation.

As we anticipate what the middle of October will bring in terms of the Strategic Defence and Security Review the need for feedback and comment is very much sought.

## ■ The Armed Forces Pay Review Body

The next meeting is planned for October 13 and Kim Richardson, Chair of NFF, is sitting at the table with the express purpose of taking forward the constructive comments about issues that are affecting both Serving personnel and families alike.

The NFF has set up feedback buttons on our website to inform the meeting covering views and thoughts on food and accommodation: what do you think of Pay as you Dine; are families finding that the budget for food and accommodation features within the monthly purse; what comment would you like to make about charges for Service Families Accommodation (SFA)?

Feedback up to the wire will be taken... [NFF.org.uk](http://NFF.org.uk)

## ■ Introduction of new Electronic 1132

Entitled Service Personnel, and others who are eligible, who wish to apply for Service Family Accommodation (SFA) in the United Kingdom will soon be able to do so electronically through the Defence Intranet.

Defence Estates Operations Housing has been working on a project to provide an additional way of applying for SFA, with the aim of introducing an e1132 this month.

Applicants will still be able to use the paper version of the application form, as the electronic version will only be available on the Defence Intranet to ensure it is secure.

However, it is hoped the e1132 will give applicants greater flexibility in applying for SFA and also speed up the processing of applications.

## ■ Are you about to become a parent or do you have pre-school aged children?

Qinetiq is conducting a study on behalf of the MOD to identify the impact of becoming a parent on Serving personnel.

Qinetiq are interested in how becoming a parent has impacted in your work. They are also interested in what you feel could be done to address any potential impacts on yourself and your family.

The results of this study will provide a model of what it means to become a parent whilst serving in the Armed Forces, and outline suggestions as to how impacts could be addressed.

Qinetiq are particularly interested in the views of men and women of all ranks, who are about to become a parent and those who have pre-school aged children (0-4 years).

If you agree to take part, a Qinetiq researcher will conduct an interview with you and this will last about one hour.

If you fit the description and would like to find out more or participate in this study please contact: [FLEET-DNPS PPOL E&D Lt Cdr Mandy McBain; 02392 625517; or FLEET-DNPS FP RSCH Liz Moon; 02392 625242](mailto:FLEET-DNPS PPOL E&D Lt Cdr Mandy McBain; 02392 625517; or FLEET-DNPS FP RSCH Liz Moon; 02392 625242).

## ■ FAFDU is the support group for Friends and Families of Deployed Units.

The South West branch, based in Plymouth, is organising a 24-week Deployment Busting workshop for Royal Naval service families.

This new venture aims to support families for whom a current deployment is challenging, or a

forthcoming deployment daunting. The workshops will identify issues and provide information and support. For those after a bit of light-hearted entertainment there will be opportunities to undertake craft activities and learn holistic therapies, with a crèche provided.

The workshop began on September 16, however, please note that families are invited to join the sessions after the start date and book the sessions they may wish to.

The timings are 13:00 - 14:30, at Radford Family Centre in Plymstock, Plymouth.

For further information or to book a place telephone: 01752 406 680.

## ■ Adventure Breaks in Germany

The Naval Outdoor Centre Germany (NOCG) is the Naval Services multi activity centre, based in the beautiful Allgäu area of Bavaria, Southern Germany.

There are plenty of adventurous activities on offer including skiing with no personal contribution for the standard packages (Serving personnel).

The NOCG is now taking bookings for the 2010/2011 Winter season. Additionally the centre is running a family package over the Christmas leave period with subsidies available for members.

Visit [NFF.org.uk](http://NFF.org.uk) and follow the links to find out more.

## ■ Living Abroad? Advice on Credit Checks

When applying for a financial service, such as a loan or mortgage, you are subject to a credit check to determine your suitability.

Financial companies refer to Credit Reference Agencies to confirm your name and address.

Addresses are taken from the Electoral Roll, which can cause problems for Service personnel or families living abroad, who register their main address as outside the UK.

The Service families Task Force has produced a factsheet with useful contacts and information. Visit [NFF.org.uk](http://NFF.org.uk) and follow the links to view or print off the factsheet.

## ■ The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund

How will you get around the famous Goodwood Motor Circuit? Cycle, run, scoot, space hopper, roller skate/blade, crawl... whatever!

On Sunday October 24 join the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund at the Goodwood Motor Circuit with family or friends and experience the thrill of going around the world famous Motor Circuit (unfortunately motorized vehicles are not permitted on this occasion) and raise money for the children from the Navy and Marines - a fun day out is guaranteed.

Everyone is welcome and everyone will benefit: Entry £5 per family or £2 individually. Sponsorship forms are available to raise much needed funds.

The day will also include picnic area on the lawns, bouncy castle, balloon race plus refreshment stands. There is wheelchair access and car parking. For an information pack contact Claire Scherer on 01243 787807 or [rmchildren@btconnect.com](mailto:rmchildren@btconnect.com)

Your experiences form the basis of our discussions, so e-mail: [Admin@nff.org.uk](mailto:Admin@nff.org.uk), telephone: 02392 654374 or write to: NFF, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.



# Stress busters

THERE'S a small team of stress management practitioners based on Whale Island who are helping people learn to recognise the signs of PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) and other issues in the men and women of the Senior Service.

The non-medical operational stress management team - usually known as TRiM for Traumatic Risk Management - has grown from a recognition that people need to talk to someone and tell their story.

The team are primarily responsible for the training of TRiM to all ships, establishments and units; as well as general traumatic stress advice to command teams.

TRiM practitioners are also called in after any specific traumatic incident which may have the potential to cause long-term problems for individuals caught up in the event.

After an incident, people are encouraged to open up about what happened; three days later; then 28 days later.

The initial chat can sometimes work as a group, sometimes as individuals. The follow-up is always a one-to-one consultation.

Maj Cameron March RM said: "It's always very difficult to say 'I'm the wobbly wheel on the wagon' in a group setting."

There are certain well-researched factors that when enough are bundled together,

problems can follow: bad sleep patterns; blame issues; flashbacks; previous incidents; alcohol dependence; social isolation.

"We encourage people to make real contact with their partners. To ask 'What was Herrick like for you?'"

"Sometimes it is the first time they've realised the issues at home - hearing of deaths on the news, seeing a strange car pull up outside the house.

"And once you've heard their story, tell yours. Only a part at a time. Only the bits you are comfortable with. But start to open up."

TRiM works to the concept of Serviceman supporting Serviceman.

"The concept is like a picture - if it fell down and hit the deck, it doesn't take much to push the pieces back together. But sometimes for some reason the impact is too great.

"Most people, by and large, get better; but some need extra help.

"They look at it as psychological Osprey body armour."

The major admits that Royal Marines are more ready to deal with TRiM - they expect to see up close the harsh realities of active service.

He added: "TRiM is a component part amidst a lot of other component parts.

"They are all essential tenets for doing well. TRiM forms a part of that."

# where to look

## DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS (DIBS)

55/10: Changes to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS): The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) was recently reviewed by the former Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral Lord Boyce. The Review found that whilst the scheme is fundamentally sound, there were several areas where recommendations were made for improvement.

57/10: Changes to Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Policy: Secretary of State, Dr Liam Fox announced changes to the policy governing Rest and Recuperation (R&R) for Service Personnel deployed on operations. The Coalition Programme for Government laid out the Government's intention to rebuild the military covenant, including optimising R&R for those deployed.

59/10: Changes to eligibility for the Afghanistan Operational Service Medal and the Iraq Medal: Following a recent review by the Chiefs of Staff, it has now been approved by the Queen that members of the Armed Forces and civil servants will no longer have to serve for 30 continuous days in order to qualify for the Afghanistan Operational Service Medal and/or the Iraq Medal.

60/10: Launch of the Defence Reform Review: Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox launched a full and fundamental review of how the Ministry of Defence is run.

61/10: Strategic Defence & Security Review (SDSR) - PUS and CDS message for Defence personnel: Permanent Secretary Sir Bill Jeffrey and Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup have sent a message to Defence personnel as we move closer to the date when the outcome of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) will be announced.

62/10: Publication of the Army Inspector's Report into Detainee Handling: A report into detainee handling by the British Army.

63/10: New Permanent Secretary appointed: The Prime Minister, with the agreement of the Secretary of State for Defence, has approved the appointment of Ursula Brannish to become Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence.

65/10: Public support for our deployed personnel and sending gifts at Christmas: With 100 days to go until Christmas, the MOD is launching a campaign to remind members of the public how to express their support other than by sending unsolicited gifts and packages.

66/10: UK force rebalancing in central Helmand: UK forces transferred responsibility for security in Sangin in northern Helmand province to US forces on September 20 2010; the final step in rebalancing of troops throughout Helmand, and in response to the overall increase of ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces personnel.

## DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES

DIN 2010 DIN01-132: 2011 Pilgrimage by the Royal Navy Contingent of HCPT - The Pilgrimage Trust

DIN 2010 DIN01-133: Streamlined routes to professional registration with the Engineering Council for Royal Navy Marine Engineers and Technicians

DIN 2010 DIN01-135: Decrease in the Overseas Incidental Expenses Allowance (IEA)

DIN 2010 DIN01-138: Overseas Allowances: Civilian Boarding School Allowance

DIN 2010 DIN01-141: Overseas - Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)

DIN 2010 DIN01-142: The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mutual Support - The Armed Forces International Support Group

DIN 2010 DIN01-146: Manning priorities for the Naval Service

DIN 2010 DIN01-150: Winter Sports Travel

DIN 2010 DIN01-153: Statement of principles of fairness for the handling of Service Complaints

DIN 2010 DIN01-156: Information for Classic, Classic Plus, Premium and Nuvo pension members taking your pension before your scheme pension age

DIN 2010 DIN01-159: Service - Life

## Insurance (SU)

DIN 2010 DIN01-180: Formation of the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit and Cultural Specialist courses

DIN 2010 DIN02-012: Volunteers for Specialist Debriefing Duties (SpDD)

DIN 2010 DIN02-015: National Security Vetting - Extension of validity periods

DIN 2010 DIN02-017: Volunteers for Specialist HUMINT Duties - Op Samson

DIN 2010 DIN05-044: The MOD Policy on fraud, theft, corruption, bribery and irregularity

DIN 2010 DIN05-046: Utilisation of Defence Travel

DIN 2010 DIN06-025: Defence Road Safety Week November 22-26 2010

DIN 2010 DIN07-123: Course dates for UK Special Forces Group volunteers

DIN 2010 DIN07-123: Course dates for UK Special Forces Group volunteers

DIN 2010 DIN07-123: Course dates for UK Special Forces Group volunteers

DIN 2010 DIN07-123: Course dates for UK Special Forces Group volunteers

DIN 2010 DIN07-123: Course dates for UK Special Forces Group volunteers

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DIN 2010 DIN07-123: Course dates for UK Special Forces Group volunteers

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DIN 2010 DIN07-123: Course dates for UK Special Forces Group volunteers

# Marrie is a top learner

CHEF Marrie Bellings scooped a top award at the Learndirect Achievement Awards in Bristol.

Marie is pictured right holding her Outstanding Learner Award which recognises people who have overcome difficulties, disability or adverse circumstances to succeed.

Marrie, who hails from St Vincent, went to Learndirect to improve her English, and successfully completed two qualifications in a matter of weeks.

HMS Drake's Navy Learndirect centre was highly commended in the Learndirect Centre of the Year award.

Marrie will go on to represent the Navy and Army in the national judging later this year.



# Mandy's on the way up

LT CDR Mandy McBain (pictured right) has moved 20 places up the rankings, and is now teetering on the brink of becoming one of the top 50 most influential figures in the UK gay and lesbian community.

Drawn up by *The Independent on Sunday*, Mandy now resides in 51st place, up from 71st last year, in the 'Pink List 2010' and has leapt ahead of such media figures as Lord Mandelson and Gok Wan.

Voted for by a panel of influential gay and lesbian people - including presenter Claire Balding, former Culture Secretary Ben Bradshaw and Stonewall chief executive Ben Summerskill, Mandy was recognised for her efforts in influencing attitudes towards LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual) personnel in the Naval service.

She is currently one of the Naval Service Equality and Diversity policy officers at Navy Command HQ in Portsmouth, working in a small team that develops policy regarding gender, gender reassignment, race and ethnicity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

She said: "I could never have imagined that the changes I've seen to include lesbian and gay personnel fully in the Navy could



have been made.

"I feel very privileged to be in a position to be playing a part in taking the changes forward."

She is the chair of the Naval Service LGBT forum which was established in October 2008.

Mandy joined the Navy in 1986 as a Writer and went to BRNC in 1989.

She is a Logistics Officer and has had a variety of appointments during her Service including being a member of the Admiralty Interview Board and spokesperson to the European Forces in Bosnia.

# Whale Island gets healthier

A HEALTH Awareness Day in the Navy Command Headquarters building at HMS Excellent gave the chance to spread the word about how people can make themselves healthy.

The day coincided with the launch of the Naval Service Health Promotion Campaign Plan, with promotional material such as posters, leaflets and cards to promote self-awareness of a healthy life-style.

Every ship and submarine in the Fleet should by now have received copies of this material.

Lt Doug Wylie said: "This Defence Health Strategy policy will prevent injury, reduce illness and promote a healthy lifestyle."

"This in turn will produce more personnel who are physically fit for their military task and mentally ready for deployment."

The health campaign focuses on six outcomes: reduced smoking; responsible drinking and reduced substance misuse; healthy weight management and improved diet; improved sexual health; improved physical health; and improved mental health.

Further promotional material will come out later this year.

# Medics de-mystified



## Drafty's corner

THERE are eleven personnel who, forming the medical aspect of the Naval Personnel Team (NPT), look after the dental, medical, nursing and allied health professional cadres within the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

The team consists of requirement managers and career managers, with the two dental staff also responsible for their relevant policies.

Any member of the Royal Navy Medical Services (RNMS) is welcome to contact their career manager directly to discuss their future assignments and appointments.

Life within the Medical NPT is challenging but fulfilling.

Medical staff are based within primary care (medical centres afloat and ashore in the UK and abroad) and secondary care options include the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine (RCDM), Ministry of Defence Hospital Units (MDHUs) Derriford and Portsmouth, and the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC), as well as various staff jobs.

Career Managers are incredibly busy finding volunteers (or nominations) to man the enduring operational commitments in addition to regular medical support requests for a wide range of Ops and exercises.

Recent examples include Cougar, Batus and Taurus, and the Role 2 Afloat Team stand-by commitment which has now been activated and currently on board RFA Lyme Bay operating east of Suez.

The newly-refitted hospital complex onboard RFA Argus was fully exercised and validated on Exercise Med Endeavour in July.

A contingent of 182 medical personnel boarded in June and faced a packed schedule of exercise scenarios run by FOST, an assurance visit and a validation exercise assessed by 2 Med Brigade who normally operate out of Strensall Barracks assessing and validating Hospital Squadrons prior to their deployment to Op Herrick.

### Medical Ratings Branch manager

There has been an established WO1 (MA) post for two and half years and it is the first time that there has been a second Medical Branch Manager, in addition to the SO1, dealing with Branch Structure and Sustainability.

Cdr Neil Wagstaff has overall responsibility for the branch as a whole while the WO1(MA) specifically deals with Ratings' issues.

### 25 additional MA lines

In May 2008, the Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA) statistics showed that there was a 40 per cent shortfall at LMA.

This had come about mainly due to a high voluntary outflow (VO) rate (6.3 per cent) against a Naval Service average of 5.7 per cent and second only to the Royal Marines at 7 per cent.

There was also a shortfall in the



Inside the Primary Casualty Receiving Facility in RFA Argus

numbers of ABIs selected for LH against the numbers required ie in 2007 the requirement was 61 but only 36 were selected.

In 2009 we fared better when the requirement was 49 and 41 were selected 'on merit'.

The model DASA produced showed that to recover structurally from this shortfall there needed to be an uplift in MA liability by 25 ABIs which would strengthen the base of the MA pyramid and support the need to 'grow' more Leading Hands.

It also showed that there needed to be a decrease of 11 LMA posts.

The increase of 25 ABI MAs was achieved through the 2009 Financial Planning Round and presented the perfect opportunity to create new lines on the frigates and destroyers for ABI MAs to go to sea to gain the valuable experience they require and to do the job they are trained to do working alongside the POMAs/LMAs for a 12-18 month assignment.

Until 2009, there had only been 11 sea billets on the capital ships for ABIs, therefore not many of them got the opportunity to go to sea.

There are now 36 lines which is a significant increase and is a major step forward in investing in the MA and preparing them for their future roles at sea as Leading Hands and Senior Rates.

This, of course, signalled the end of the singleton at sea with the first MA joining HMS Daring in November 2009 and the other 24 joining their ships during the course of the following months.

With the measures taken and the reduction in the VO rate (now around 3 per cent) the shortfall at LMA has been rectified and became in balance in last month (September).

### Two new CMA posts

These two new posts have been created and our MBRs onboard now have a focal point for them to go to for day-to-day working level support, guidance, advice and mentorship.

The posts are within the Waterfront Logistics Support Group integrated into the Base Logistics Organisation - CPOMA Gascoigne has been in the

Portsmouth line since February 2009 and CPOMA Macpherson has been in the Devonport line since September 2009.

### CAPPS assignments

We now have our first EWO post with liability for a WO1 (MA) to which WO1 (MA) Daz Hemmings was appointed onboard HMS Westminster in November 2009.

This gives the WO1 (MA) the opportunity to go to sea if they wish to follow that route and there is also a WO1 (NN) line within MWS at HMS Collingwood as a Phase II Divisional Officer (currently filled by WO1 (NN) Alison Lawrence).

Senior Rates now have the opportunity to be assigned to Phase I Training at HMS Raleigh and to the Royal Navy Leadership Academy (East) which are providing excellent career broadening opportunities for individuals, whilst also being good for the RNMS in terms of wider exposure and greater utility and employability of personnel when they return to their main trade/specialist area.

### Emergency care practitioner (ECP)

Everybody should be aware of the longstanding aspiration within the branch of achieving registration/professionalisation/accreditation of the MA.

Although not making any promises here, there has been a lot of work gone in to mapping across the ECP and the MA, and there is significant confidence that this pathway will work.

INM and the ECP Working Group, headed by DACOS Healthcare, have been working closely with Skills for Health on what can be achieved.

There is considerable interest from the Surgeon General's Department and in comparison to the other Services the work completed so far is way in advance of anything they have looked at.

Following a meeting in July 2009 between the single Services and SGD, the RN took the lead on this and has taken it forward to the point where six MAs (ranging in rank from AB1 to PO) started ECP training at Portsmouth University last month (September).

### Rolling OPS

A system of rolling OPS for LMAs and MAs was introduced on August 2 2010.

This follows on from the OPS review and takes into consideration the ECP competencies.

This will mandate all MAs to maintain their skills, remain clinically current and competent, and inculcate a requirement for CPD.

All MAs and LMAs will be issued with a workbook derived from the OPS and will be required to complete it within 12 months.

On completion, they will be considered to be 'at OPS' and the competence will be reflected in their JPA record.

LMAs and MAs will not be considered for selection for promotion unless they are at OPS and maintain it.

OPS is to be achieved by Common Reporting Dates (CPD) November 30 2011 for Able Ratings and January 31 2012 for Leading Hands.

RNTM 164/10 - Medical Assistant Junior Rate Professional Development refers and the workbook can be found on the front page of the DRNMS website.

### MA (CDO)

There is currently a 33 per cent shortfall of Commando-trained MAs. Anyone interested in becoming a Royal Navy Commando should read 2009 DIN07-130 and then contact WO1(MA) Hart at RMB Stonehouse on (tel mil) 9375 36411.

### Dental branch

There are career opportunities with the Dental branch to work within specific dental roles at RN establishments and RM units, onboard capital ships and as visiting dental teams to DD/FF, and wider medical roles such as a medical planner in UKMCC, Bahrain or within NCHQ.

Although the Dental Branch is fully manned, there are opportunities to transfer to the DH and DN cadres from any other branch of the RN providing manning clearance is gained.

Selection for DN places has closed for 2011 but look out for the RNTM next year.

DH applications are invited in accordance with the 2010 DIN

07-069 Dental Hygienist Training - Tri-Service and the RNTM 123/10 Sideways Entry to the Dental Hygienist Branch, both released June 2010.

Applications for DH training must reach either Surg Cdr (D) Adrian Jordan or CPODN Julie Williams by December 1 2010.

### MASM(2) plot

Currently, the MASM(2) plot is extremely lean and impact on our personnel is being closely scrutinised.

To mitigate this the Career Managers are working closely with the SM training wing at HMS Sultan and RADPOL which has resulted in the MASM(2) course being delivered twice next year which will undoubtedly improve the strain on this lean plot.

Volunteers or nominations for this course are always welcome.

There is a new CPOMA (SM) post in Diego Garcia starting early 2011, volunteers are requested to contact Lt Cdr Campbell.

### QARNNS

Within the specialist nursing cadres, Intensive Care Nurses have been identified as a Critical Manning Group and work is ongoing to alleviate this across the three Services.

In addition to the already-mentioned operational and exercise commitments, there are regular requests to supplement manning in the Role 4 at RCDM and at DMRC at Headley Court (along with our other tri-Service colleagues).

The turbulence that this is creating is being closely monitored and the Defence Medical Group (DMG) is working towards transferring the liability for these roles (thus making them more permanent) from other secondary care areas which will then reduce the churn.

### CW candidates

QARNNS ratings and MAs are encouraged to consider raising their CW papers earlier in their Service life as recent statistics show that fewer individuals are considering this career pathway (as a MSO or QARNNS Officer) and that those who are successful in the process are joining this cadre at a later stage and thus reducing their longer term career potential.

## Detainee handling report released

MID-SEPTEMBER saw the release of a report into detainee handling by Brigadier Purdy, the Army Inspector.

The Review has consulted widely across all three Services and the Permanent Joint Headquarters, taking evidence from soldiers and commanders in Afghanistan as well as the policy, legal and planning teams back in the UK.

The Review reported that progress from the 2008 Aitken Report, which examined six cases of alleged detainee abuse in Iraq, continues.

The Review also concluded that the systems in place for current operations are essentially sound.

However there have been 31 tactical-level recommendations made for further improvements.

Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir David Richards said: "I take great pride in what the Army, alongside the other Services, has achieved on operations in recent years.

"The vast majority of officers and soldiers have acquitted themselves with courage, integrity and honour, in extraordinarily demanding circumstances.

"The handling of detainees is a critical area and this report provides independent assurance that even more is now being done than before to ensure our officers and soldiers understand the importance of treating detainees properly."

The senior officer added: "But we must not be complacent. Nobody should be in any doubt to the importance I attach to this issue and there are many recommendations here to take forward.

"Detainee handling must be seen as a mainstream military skill rather than a matter for the specialists."

The full report - *The Army Inspector's Report into Detainee Handling* - is available on the MOD website.

## Awards for Navy people

THE winners of the MOD People Awards will be announced as *Navy News* goes to press on September 24.

The awards recognise people who make a difference, improving and inspiring others.

Among those people nominated are Lt Rachel Smallwood who is responsible for the creation and development of a Coaching Advisory Team at the Maritime Warfare School.

Her intervention at the Defence Diving School saw a massive jump in the overall pass rate for junior divers.

The PWN, a network within Fleet, won another nomination for their Growth Workshops programme which aims to promote self-awareness and build self-esteem among MOD employees in the Portsmouth region.

## Serious games

A Technology Demonstration Suite (TDS) has been opened at HMS Collingwood.

Funded by FOST and the Maritime Warfare School, the suite is kitted out with Alienware computers and top-notch gaming gear such as joysticks and steering wheels.

The RN is developing maritime training solutions around games such as Virtual Battlespace 2 and Dangerous Waters.

The gaming software is currently being used to build a boat davit part-task trainer for Type 45 crews and a Submarine Force Protection trainer for MWC.

## A ferry good practice run

NAVAL, maritime and emergency services in the Solent joined forces to practise dealing with a major incident at sea.

Exercise Solfire sought to test the ability of port authorities in Portsmouth and Southampton, plus Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Coastguard and MOD Police to cope with a fire on an Isle of Wight car ferry.

In the scenario played out in Portsmouth Harbour, the ferry had collided with a fuel tanker and caught fire, while 'oil' had spilled from the tanker.

Firefighters were transferred by tug on to the 'crippled' ferry where around 50 volunteers played the role of passengers/casualties.

One 'casualty' was later transferred by MOD Police launch to a Coastguard helicopter.

Portsmouth is one of the UK's busiest harbours (nearly 120,000 shipping movements a year – ferries, merchantmen, warships, yachts) while Southampton handles seven per cent of all the country's waterborne trade.

The Solfire (Solent Fire, if you hadn't already guessed) plan is tested every year with the Queen's Harbourmaster Portsmouth, Associated British Ports Southampton and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency taking it in turns to run the exercise.

This year it fell to QHM Cdr Steve Hopper to direct the response from the Marine Response Centre in Portsmouth Naval Base.

Aside from the practicalities of firefighting at sea and rescuing casualties, the plan also tests the ability of authorities to handle the considerable media interest such an accident would provoke.

WE THOUGHT this image might catch your eye.

This is Lt Cdr James Ashton (based at Abbey Wood) pausing on a ridge on the Allalinhorn which rises to 4,027 metres (13,200ft – or 2½ miles) in the Swiss Alps.

The officer was one of 15 sailors and Royal Marines who took part in the two-week expedition to the mountains around the village of Saas Grund with 100-plus RAF and Army comrades for some serious AT.

The RN has a dedicated Alpine adventurous training centre (formerly Bavarian Surprise, now the Naval Outdoor Centre Germany) aimed at injecting a bit of grit into the Service's 35,000-plus personnel.

But scaling the Allalinhorn and its sister peaks is hardcore adventurous training – with one eye firmly on

the front line.

"Nobody should be exposed to their first real risk on the battlefield," explains Lt Col Simon Hall RM, who led the 2010 expedition of 130 mountaineers for the Joint Services Alpine Meet.

"On this you are achieving things you cannot achieve on an exercise: racing up a mountain ridge in bad weather is a real danger which has to be overcome."

The aim of JSAM, now in its third year, is to see how far people – irrespective of rank – can go safely, but still with that element of fear.

In the case of this year's expedition it meant working above the clouds from a tented base camp, up at dawn and climbing or trekking past nightfall, dealing with crevasses and coping with glaciers thawing at the height of summer.

The rewards? Stunning views for a start, but that's

just the beginning. The rest of the Service should reap the true benefits.

"This is high-level adventurous training, training up instructors, pushing people to the limits, to understand risks – and to make people appreciate their limitations," says Cdr Guy Buckingham (RNHQ Merseyside) a qualified Alpine Mountain Instructor who led a team of Service personnel through the Himalayas on last year's Fortitude Expedition.

"The system has been good enough to me, this is my chance to put something back in."

The next JSAM, run under the umbrella of Joint Services Mountain Training Centre, is lined up for June 2011.

Only experienced mountaineers should apply via [www.ahrc.co.uk](http://www.ahrc.co.uk).

With thanks to Soldier Magazine



## NAVY NEWS

# SHIP of the MONTH

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## 1970 1980 1990 2000 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...

### October 1970

'TOOTHY' Wong, the sailors' tailor in Singapore, was celebrating 40 years of sartorial business in Sembawang village, near the naval base.

There was a certain ritual to the fittings: customers at Toothy's open-fronted shop were always offered a cold beer, conversation and a cigarette before any measurements were taken.

Toothy's nickname, the paper explained in the cheerful non-PC fashion of the day, came about because of his slightly protruding gold-capped teeth.

Toothy, properly named Wong Kwee Yong, was famous for fine tailoring from Chatham to the Caribbean and wherever there was a run ashore, his suits would be pressed into service.

Customers who returned to his shop years later were surprised to find that Toothy, himself a lean, fit and ageless man, would shake his head reprovingly at their increasing waistline inches. "Toothy will not let you down," it was said, and orders were invariably delivered on the day promised.

### October 1980

THREE Royal Navy warships sailed up the Yangtse to Shanghai as part of the British Far East deployment, 30 years after the frigate Amethyst escaped down the river under Chinese gunfire.

This time the three, destroyers Antrim and Coventry, and frigate Alacrity, were welcomed by MIG fighters flying overhead in salute and girls and sailors waving flowers, flags and banners proclaiming eternal friendship between the Chinese and British.

Crowds lined the banks of the river to watch the three ships, and a red and white banner was stretched across the waterfront with a warm (if misspelt) message welcoming 'HMS Coventry'.

Lavish entertainment was provided, with endless banquets and toasts, and a dance with the catchy title: *The Girl Shipbuilders and Sailors are Joyfully Singing and Dancing in Celebration of the Coming Maiden Voyage, Showing their Firm Determination to Establish a Powerful Navy.*

### October 1990

NAVAL forces were strengthening in the Gulf, as warship and support vessels from multinational forces gathered in response to the Middle East crisis triggered by Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August.

Type 42 destroyer HMS Gloucester was allocated to the Armilla patrol as an extra destroyer, frigates Brazen and London left Devonport for spells in Portland before sailing for Gulf duty, and destroyer Cardiff was sent back on Armilla only weeks after leaving.

The Hunt-class mine counter-measure ships Cattistock, Hurworth and Atherstone, were sent as a contingency measure in case of mine-laying, along with support vessel HMS Herald.

In the Gulf area itself destroyer York and frigates Battleaxe and Jupiter continued their patrol work in the fierce heat.

### October 2000

ONE of the best-known names among Royal Marine units changed on October 1 2000 when Comacchio Group became the Fleet Royal Marines Protection Group.

Comacchio Group's primary role was to protect Britain's nuclear deterrent but the name change signalled a broadening of duties to take in additional maritime protection and security tasks.

The title Comacchio had been given in memory of one of the Commandos' most famous actions of World War 2, which provided the Corps with its only VC of the conflict, surprisingly.

The VC was awarded posthumously to Cpl Tom Hunter of C Troop, 43 Cdo, (pictured right courtesy of the Royal Marines Museum) who charged enemy positions, firing a Bren gun from his hip, to allow the company to continue its advance when his unit was pinned down by enemy troops at Lake Comacchio in April 1945.



# NOTICEBOARD

## Trophy lives



NOT surprisingly, this month's featured Trophy is relevant to the Battle of Trafalgar and the defeat of the combined Franco-Spanish Fleet by Lord Nelson.

Those who have visited HMS Victory in Portsmouth Dockyard will have seen the brass plate on the upper deck which marks the spot where Nelson fell, having been shot by a French marksman onboard the Redoubtable.

However, this is not the first plate marking that spot, the original being **Trophy 27316**. After the battle HMS Victory limped into Gibraltar; she was under jury rig and had to be taken in tow by HMS Neptune but once safely docked she became an instant tourist attraction.

Her Commanding Officer, Capt Thomas Masterman Hardy, was kept busy showing a constant stream of curious dignitaries around his ship, and one of the essential sights undoubtedly would have been the place where the Royal Navy's greatest hero fell.

Therefore, so that this location could be properly marked, he tasked the ship's carpenter with the manufacture of a suitable commemorative plaque.

It is apparent, and understandable, that this Trophy was rather hastily constructed – the simple inscription "Here Nelson Fell, Oct 21 1805" on the brass plate was done by punched letters rather than fine engraving and the plate was secured to Victory's deck by a single central pin.

It was clearly manufactured from items already to hand onboard the ship.

The ornate carving surrounding the plate, and carved by A H Helyer, is a later addition and dates from the time of the replacement of the original plate by that which is in place today.

This carving is of laurel leaves surmounted by a Naval Crown, a pair of crossed swords and the text of Nelson's famous "England expects..." signal to his Fleet.

As will be apparent, the original plate is now mounted and framed; the rear of this frame – which is shown on the left – shows a handwritten text by Mr Helyer which suggests that, when the current plate was placed onboard Victory the original was given to his father, who was employed in Portsmouth Dockyard and who, in turn, passed it to his son who then carved the surround.

### 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](mailto: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.
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- 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.

### Swap drafts

Logs(Wtr) J Millard would like to swap for HMS Liverpool for any Portsmouth or Plymouth based ship, deploying or not. Joining date is November 30 2010. Please contact by email [CNS-IS02](mailto:CNS-IS02) or call 9621 86393.

PO(UW) T Pollard-Rice currently HMS Iron Duke will swap for any Plymouth based ship deployed, deploying or not. Contact [309-POUW3@a.dli.mod.uk](mailto:309-POUW3@a.dli.mod.uk).

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**Reporting from the Fleet**

## Reunions

**HMS Bronington** reunion: If you responded to the appeal for crew members of HMS Bronington to get together for a reunion, please could you get back in touch with Mike Sinker on 01395 516997 or [msinker1@hotmail.com](mailto:msinker1@hotmail.com): his email account was hacked and he lost all the earlier responses. He is particularly keen to hear from Ken Dibnah.

**NOVEMBER 2010**  
**HMS Ark Royal Silver Jubilee Cocktail Party:** Ark Royal was commissioned on November 1, 1985. As part of the celebrations, a Cocktail Party for officers and warrant officers will take place on board on November 4, 2010. All serving and retired officers and warrant officers who have been complemented in HMS Ark Royal are welcome to attend and may be accompanied by one guest each. The maximum number of guests is 600 and for security reasons will be by ticket only. Deadline for applications is October 7. For more information contact Lt Pete Davis RN, Silver Jubilee Ball Officer, HMS Ark Royal, BFPO 212.

**HMS Eagle, Last Commission 1969-72:** 'Friends of HMS Eagle' are holding a 'Nautical Experience' weekend reunion at the very nautical and prestigious Liner Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool, from November 5 to 7. After the very successful last three reunions around the country – all Eagles plus wives/partners and guests are very welcome to re-enact the 'Liverpool visits'. Meet & Greet on the Friday evening in the Pacific Lounge. On Saturday there is a choice of visits to the Maritime Museum, Beatles Experience Tour, City & Docks DUKW Tour etc, followed in the evening by a very nautical Dinner, Dance and entertainment with local Sea Cadet & Royal Marine involvement including Ceremonial Sunset & Up Spirits. (All commissions 1952-72 very welcome.) Hotel accommodation at very good rates. For details contact main organisers Bill Melvin at [bill.melvin@virgin.net](mailto:bill.melvin@virgin.net) or tel 07740 439987 or Membership Secretary Danny du Feu at [danny@ddi-photography.co.uk](mailto:danny@ddi-photography.co.uk) or tel: 07891 660715. See you there!

**British Armed Forces Diwali Festival of Lights Celebration:** The Forces Hindu Chaplain has invited members of the Armed Forces to celebrate Diwali on Wednesday November 10 at the Gita Bawan Temple in Manchester, with the Hindu community. For more information please contact Surg Lt Cdr Manish Tayal at [mtayal@dr.com](mailto:mtayal@dr.com).

**Naval Personnel Families Service/Royal Marines Welfare:** Calling all current and former NPFS & RMW staff. A Reunion!

## Ask Jack

**Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association:** Does anyone remember the Instructor on the Electrical Courses at Chatham who hated the word "bulb"? "It's lamp, boy, do you hear – lamp. Bulbs only grow in yer bleedin' garden." That gem was sent in by a member and appears in the latest newsletter of the Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association, with the comment from the newsletter editor, "As a Pembroke trained EM, I too cannot bring myself to call it a 'light bulb'. Are you Collingwood vets similarly traumatised? Ed". Do you have any gems from your days in the Electrical Branch? If you had the distinctive lightning flashes on your branch badge, come and find your old mess mates by visiting <http://www.rneba.org.uk> and download the application form or by emailing Mike Crowe at [mike@rneba.org.uk](mailto:mike@rneba.org.uk) or 7 Heath Road, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8PG.

**Tony Quinn:** Seeking information on the whereabouts of my uncle, Tony Quinn. He served on one of the carriers as a Senior Weapons Engineer. He retired many years ago and until about five years ago was living in the Charente Maritime area of Southern France. Tony, originally from Bolton, moved back to the UK to be closer to his daughter who is studying to be a dentist. I hope that someone can make the connection from this information. Contact Sean Quinn at [sean@bqgroup.com](mailto:sean@bqgroup.com) or write to Corriemuckloch Farmhouse, Amuree, Dunkeld, PH8 0EG.

**HMS Forester,** a WW2 Fearless class destroyer, was adopted by the town of Morley in Yorkshire during warship week March 21-28 1942. The town's people having raised just under half a million pounds in a national savings drive. Population of the borough of Morley was at this time under 10,000 people. I was the first child born during this week, on March 23rd, and was adopted by the ship as battle ship baby. On retiring from a life long career in the Merchant Navy in 2007 I have started to research the career of HMS Forester and would through your pages request any help or information that any of your readers can give. Contact Capt James Westerman at [westerman2003@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:westerman2003@yahoo.co.uk) or write to 1 Wares Cottages, Magazine Lane, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 1LO.

**HMS Ganges:** Trying to trace a Radio Operator C E R Horne. He joined HMS Ganges in Hawke 230 Class in May 1967 and served in HMS Argonaut, Charybdis and Duncan in the 60s and 70s. I have six photograph albums that chronical RO Hornes naval career with a number of personal ones. These albums were found by a builder renovating a derelict property in Halifax and passed to me, as chairman of the Halifax RNA, in the hope that we can re-unite RO Horne or his family with these albums. Please contact GW Cameron, 49 Shaw Lodge, Halifax, HX1 2NB or call 01422 369952.

## Contact sheet

- Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, [www.mod.uk](http://www.mod.uk)
- Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, [www.royalnavy.mod.uk](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk)
- Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info)
- RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, [navyresearch@rntc.co.uk](mailto:navyresearch@rntc.co.uk)
- Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, [www.royal-naval-association.co.uk](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk)
- Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, [www.rnrmc.org.uk](http://www.rnrmc.org.uk)
- RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), [www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk)
- British Legion: 08457 725725, [www.britishtelegraph.org.uk](http://www.britishtelegraph.org.uk)
- Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk)
- Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, [www.seafarers-uk.org](http://www.seafarers-uk.org)
- SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, [www.ssaifa.org.uk](http://www.ssaifa.org.uk)
- RN Community: [www.rncom.mod.uk](http://www.rncom.mod.uk)
- Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
- Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, [www.royalnavalmuseum.org](http://www.royalnavalmuseum.org)
- Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, [www.fleetairarm.com](http://www.fleetairarm.com)
- Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, [www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk](http://www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk)
- RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, [www.rnsubmus.co.uk](http://www.rnsubmus.co.uk)
- National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, [www.nmm.ac.uk](http://www.nmm.ac.uk)
- Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

## 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](mailto: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. Find out more at [www.patn.org.uk](http://www.patn.org.uk).

## Diary dates

**OCTOBER**  
Sea Cadets Trafalgar Day Parade: Sunday October 24, starting at Horse Guards at 11am, then marching along The Mall to Trafalgar Square in central London.

## Deaths

**PO(AET) James 'Jamie' Adam,** joined the RN 1998 and has completed several tours in Afghanistan and Iraq with the Commando Helicopter Force on 846 Naval Air Squadron at RNAS Yeovilton; he worked on the Sea King Commando aircraft at HMS Sultan since March 2010. An enthusiastic member of the RN Motor Cycle Club since 2001 and secretary since January 2006 he played a pivotal role in raising thousands of pounds for charity. Died during the Junior Manx Grand Prix motorcycle race on the second lap. The family would like to thank everyone who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure Jamie's funeral was a fitting tribute to him. The family would also like to thank everyone for all the cards, kind wishes and donations. September 1. Aged 28.

**Cdr His Honour Judge John Sessions,** joined Dartmouth 1959 where he became a cadet captain and passed out second in a strong year of 90 midshipmen. His service in Protector and Agincourt was followed by shore appointments and he spent six months in Italy to qualify as an interpreter. He studied Law under the Navy's scheme and was called to the bar of Middle Temple in 1972. After becoming a barrister his career alternated between legal and naval appointments. He was supply officer of Leopard then staff officer of BRNC Dartmouth resigning in 1981. In 1995 he became the 29th and last holder of the office of Judge Advocate of the Fleet, an appointment created in 1663 for a civilian judge to oversee the court-martial process in the Royal Navy; the office was formally abolished in December 2008 after the Armed Forces Act 2006 came into force. June 16. Aged 69.

**Lt Cdr Tony 'BB' Bentley-Buckle,** joined 1938. As a cadet serving in Duneed he was ordered to board a Swedish vessel, however with issues with the manifest and an uncooperative Swedish captain he took her safely through the minefields into Kirkwall for which he was recommended for accelerated promotion. Later while in Revenge he broke his arm and was landed in Durban to recover, he was made drafting officer and immediately drafted himself home and nearer to the war. He volunteered for special service and trained as a beachmaster at Loch Long and took command of G Comandoro, RN. In 1943 he was the first man ashore at Pachino during the Allied landings on Sicily and his Commando took charge of the beach at Reggio. He commanded a mixed flotilla of surrendered Italian torpedo boats and local fishing vessels at Termoli on the Adriatic coast which operated behind enemy lines rescuing escaped British POWs – mentioned in despatches. Setting up a base on the Yugoslav coast, he was captured by the Germans but escaped by jumping from the lorry. He was betrayed to two SS officers but he seized one of their pistols, shot both men, escaped but ran into a German army checkpoint and was arrested. After a brutal interrogation, he was left badly injured. He spent the last 18 months of World War 2 as a POW where he and his fellow inmates of Mertag-O built a man-sized, dummy called Albert RN which they carried to the wash house outside the camp in sections, it was then assembled and carried back into camp in the midst of the marching men, leaving one man to hide in the latrine to later emerge and make his escape. In 1953 a highly fictionalised version of the episode was made into a film, *Albert RN*. May 24. Aged 85.

**Lt Cdr Tom Brydon,** trained as a Boy Seaman Second Class at Bruce then to Raleigh. After serving in destroyers and submarine depot ships he joined the Royal Yacht Victoria and Albert in 1952; he served on the Shaw Savill liner Gothic which took the Queen on her first Commonwealth cruise the following year and then served eight years on board HMY Britannia becoming the Queen's coxswain. After seven years in survey vessels (Far East and the Pacific) he was appointed an instructor to BRNC Dartmouth where he took part in three Tall Ships races and as a RYA offshore qualified skipper he sailed in the Sail Training Association schooners, Sir Winston Churchill and the Malcolm Miller. He became master of the only operational diving-bell barge left in the world (Gibraltar) then served in Ark Royal, Bulwark and Hermes. He commanded Kellington (fishery protection) and was appointed staff officer Campdown Tay Division RNR in 1977; he retired in 1983 after 36 years. He spent 15 years on the Dundee Sea Cadet unit's management committee, 11 as chairman and oversaw the move to the new HQ to East Campdown Street after 30 years at Campdown. August 23. Aged 77.

**Lt Joe Fowells DSC,** Torpedo Officer. At outbreak of war he joined the RNRV and was trained at King Alfred, Hove. Serving in Foresight 1939-42 he took part in the Anglo-French attack on Vichy-held Dakar, the bombardment of Genoa and as Torpedo Officer on board, he was ordered to sink Edinburgh which was laden with 465 ingots of what became known as 'Stalin's gold' after a bitter battle in Arctic waters. Later he was first-lieutenant of the destroyers Montrose and Tanacious on operations in the Adriatic, Mediterranean and Far East. He was awarded the DSC in 1940 and mentioned in despatches in 1945. August 6. Aged 94.

**Lt Col John Davis RM,** joined the Royal Marines in 1971 as one to the first graduate scholarship entrants. As CO of the RM detachment he was posted to HMS Mohawk in the West Indies, then spent a year in 40 Commando in Northern Ireland and also spent time on deployments in northern Norway and the Mediterranean. He completed the Canadian staff course in Montreal then held a teaching post in Greenwith Staff College. Promotion to major brought him back to 3 Cdo Bde as the Deputy Chief of Staff for operational logistics. Promoted to lieutenant colonel, he took command of RM Pool. His final post was director of the Royal Marines Reserve. After leaving the service, he was appointed harbourmaster in Chichester in 1997, and was a keen sailor. August 28. Aged 62.

**Dennis Muir, RO2(T),** served at Raleigh, Mercury, Lowestoff, Tiger, Cochrane and Eagle. HMS Tiger Association. August 8. Aged 64.

**David 'Dave' Howard,** CPO, One of Britain's longest surviving heart transplantees. August 10.

**Terry 'Ken' Padgett,** CPO PTL. Trained as a boy at Bruce and served in Whitwind, Devonshire, Tiger, Maidstone, Condor and Cochrane. August 17. Aged 78.

**Gordon 'Bimble' Munnings,** W. Ex PTI. Served 1937-61 at Ganges as instructor and boy, Arethusa (cruiser), Victory, Pembroke, Phoenix and Neptune. July 16. Aged 88.

**Leslie 'Les' Bray,** Chief MIE, 1943 HQ rejoined and served 1949-69 in Indefatigable, Maggie, Coquette, Bulwark and Ark Royal. RN Engineerroom Association. August 17. Aged 84.

**Brian Charles,** L/Sea. Served in Bruce; Dolphin, Mauritius, Vanguard, Hornet and Striker. HMS Bruce Association. August 4. Aged 77.

**Les 'Brum' Smith,** AB. Served 1948-55 (a seven and five Man) at Royal Arthur then Victory, Gravelines, St Angelo, Drake Barracks (Guz), Warrior, Drake and Orion; upon leaving the RN he joined the Reserve Fleet for his remaining five. Nautical Club Birmingham. August 27. Aged 79.

**Raymond Paul 'Banjo' West,** CPO. Served 1948-75 in 14 ships including Fiskerton 1958-61, and Ganges as an instructor. Joined RNXS Felixstowe 1977 then Harwich 1993 becoming Head of both units. After disbandment in 1994 he became a founding member and Head of the Maritime Volunteer Service at Harwich. July 26. Aged 79.

**John Peter 'Tugg' Wilson,** CPO Gunnery. Served 1938-47 and again 1951-66 in Belfast, Enterprise, Pincher, Meon, Delight and Ganges. HMS Ganges Association. August 18. Aged 88.

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in November's Noticeboard must be received by **October 11**

# Never say never...

'NEVER at Sea' was the World War I motto of the newly-established Women's Royal Naval Service.

'Never' turned out to be around seven decades - women did not officially go to sea until 1990.

But never say never - there were plenty of opportunities for women to serve at sea before the pioneering group joined Type 22 frigate HMS Brilliant.

Some taking up the early challenge paid with their lives.

Numerous examples of 'unofficial' sea-going Wrens have been chronicled in the magazine of the Association of Wrens, a group which has been celebrating its 90th anniversary throughout this year.

Association members supported and set up the early Sea Ranger units for girls between the wars.

And when Vera Laughton Mathews, County Coxswain and first editor of the Association magazine, was invited to become Director WRNS in 1939, this network of former Wrens was more than ready to serve alongside the RN.

Wren Boat's Crew 'manned' small vessels for conveying mail, stores, and liberty boats for the matedots.

One new Wren, on boarding a 75ft harbour launch, was greeted by the Captain RN with the following: "Scrub the boat from stem to stern, clean the bilges,



clean and grease the chains and point and splice every rope."

The first woman river pilot was a Leading Wren boat's crew coxswain, who navigated HM Ships through the tricky waters of the Plymouth area - for which she received an additional ten shillings pilotage fee per trip.

This payment stopped after ten trips, but her duty didn't...

Some transatlantic ships, both merchant and RN, had WRNS cypher officers serving on board.

Many other Wrens travelled by sea to their overseas postings - sadly with loss of life.

A Book of Remembrance is held at the Wrens' church, St Mary le Strand, listing all those who died whilst in service.

French-born First Officer Madeleine Barclay (or Bayard) WRNS was thought to be the first female Executive Officer on a Royal Navy ship - but this was no

ordinary ship.

HMS Fidelity was a special service vessel, a French freighter converted to land agents and commando raiders on hostile shores.

The largely French-manned ship was sunk in the North Atlantic by U-435 on the penultimate day of 1942, having fallen behind her convoy en route to the Far East.

L/O Barclay drowned alongside 274 of the crew, 55 Royal Marines, and 44 survivors of the armed merchantman Empire Shackleton, sunk by the same U-boat as the Fidelity and who had been plucked from the sea earlier the same day.

The submarine depot ship HMS Medway had two Wren coders on board whilst docked.

The pair requested, and were granted, permission to stay with the ship on passage from Alexandria to Haifa and Beirut, but the big ship was torpedoed by U-372 with the loss of 30 men shortly after leaving harbour.

The Wrens were amongst the 1,105 survivors, and one was mentioned in despatches for her medical assistance work with survivors on the recovery destroyer.

Not all forays to sea ended in disaster - some ended in dinner...

After a dance at Campbeltown a number of Wrens were invited to go for a meal on board one of the RN submarines.

Perhaps surprisingly the Commanding Officer gave his permission, and they duly stepped on board, accompanied by a Wren officer.

They had just finished their first course when the message came in that a ship had crossed the boom, so the boat immediately set sail, passengers and all.

When it was identified to be an American ship the submarine turned back to the jetty and the Wrens finished their meal before returning to their quarters.

The end of the war was greeted by the British public with a sense of elation, and a progressive vision for the building of a new Britain.

Even so, there was still a fundamentally conservative view of women, strengthened by fears about the falling birth rate and the need to recreate a safe domestic setting for ex-Servicemen.

Women lay at the heart of the family, the building block of this new, utopian society.

Many women were happy to return to home life - but others found it difficult to readjust to domesticity.

The calling up of men continued for another five years, with young men completing two years of National Service between 1950 and 1960.

However, there was little prospect of staying on for many of the half million women in the



Sea-going RN photographer and Association of Wrens member PO(Phot) Amanda Reynolds during Gulf boarding operations



The first official sea-going Wrens of 1990 on board HMS Brilliant



PO Wren Ena Howes, Second Officer Musters and LWren Fanshawa, part of the Advance Party ANCEF at Arromanches after the D-Day landings, pictured here in August 1944



AOW Cardiff branch members with appropriate tallybands for the city's starring role in this year's Armed Forces Day event

Services, and the majority of them returned to civilian life.

In particular, many Wrens had undertaken a diverse range of duties in wartime, with tasks that were challenging and required a certain level of authority.

Such Servicewomen must have felt it difficult to reintegrate back into civilian society upon demobilisation - the austerities and conservatism of postwar Britain could not provide the freedom or independence that they had enjoyed during their wartime service.

Those who did remain in the Services also had limited opportunities - though some still enjoyed sea time.

Post-war Wrens had occasional opportunities to work on board RN ships for short periods, perhaps to maintain equipment or take part in training operations, but they were not regarded as ship's company.

The status of Wrens can perhaps be gauged from the Silver Jubilee Fleet Review in 1977, when a Wren serving at the Portland shore office of a participating frigate wore the ship's tally band.

A senior officer thought it would be good fun to have "the little Wren" on board, so she travelled to Portsmouth and lined the ship, along with the rest of the ship's company, generating a fair amount of publicity.

Real sea-going came in with huge blaze of publicity exactly 20 years ago, on October 8 1990, when the first WRNS personnel were drafted to HMS Brilliant - these pioneering Wrens are to be featured in *The Wren* magazine.

There was so much to learn at sea, to say nothing of the domestic dramas to overcome; for example, the advice was "don't send your smalls to the Chinese laundry - with only one setting (boil wash), they'll get smaller..."

Since then the badges have changed from blue to red to gold, and there are 'Wrens' no more, the WRNS being disbanded in

1993 and fully integrated into the RN in 1994.

Even the prefix 'W' has gone.

But the spirit lives on, as the term crops up in national newspapers, here in *Navy News* and also when visiting HM ships.

"We Association members have been amazed to hear of the many 'Wrens' there still seem to be in the Royal Navy," said Celia Saywell, vice chairman of the Association of Wrens, who provided much of the information for this article.

"We noted that just weeks ago, on board HMS Portland, it was reported that 'Wrenominos Pizzas' had been prepared and served by the 26-Woman Mess.

"We like that!"

The AOW has remained a constant factor throughout all those years, all those changes.

Association members recognise and value the contribution made by women of previous years, together with those serving now, and plan to celebrate that contribution alongside the organisation's 90th anniversary.

The celebration will take the form of a service of commemoration and rededication on November 13 at the Naval church of St Martin in the Fields in London.

The AOW currently has 64 branches in the UK and seven overseas, together with two affiliated associations and at least 15 'informal groups.'

In its heyday the association's



national reunion would have been attended by hundreds of members, all wearing splendid hats.

"On one memorable occasion, November 1 1957, the president, Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, announced to 3,500 enthusiastic members in the Royal Festival Hall: 'Dear Wrens, he's really here!' as she turned to greet the guest speaker, a blushing young lieutenant, Prince Philip RN," said Celia.

"More recently the reunions have featured a Thames cruise on two large river boats, and a weekend celebration on campus at the University of York."

The June out-of-town council meeting was hosted by the WOs & SRs Mess at HMS Drake.

The Association has also changed over the years; there are fewer members and fewer formal branches, but the informal groups may prove the way forward.

"One group is planning a 'pampering evening', and other activities range from barbecues, long-distance walks, skittles, Pickle nights, canal cruises, TV programme contestants, lots of eating out and, of course, full support for local military and civic parades," said Celia.

The association's magazine, *The Wren*, has evolved from a small black-and-white pamphlet in 1920 to a large magazine-style publication with colour photos and articles presented alongside historic items, while the *Where Are You Now?* page reunites friends after many years.

One recent example was the publication of a member's photo of the first three WRNS personnel to go to Arromanches with the ANCEF advance party 1944, which drew a response from the other two Wrens in the photo - one of them from New Zealand.

The association's website supplements the magazine and features various events, members' photos, the history of the WRNS, a calendar of events and more.

This year AOW members have run stalls around the UK on 23 occasions at various RN and military events, collecting many new members along the way.

Needless to say, the association is always recruiting - see [www.wrens.org.uk](http://www.wrens.org.uk) for details.

The Association also supports the work of the WRNS Benevolent Trust, [www.wrnstb.org.uk](http://www.wrnstb.org.uk).

Perhaps the last word should go to Wren Lorna Bernard-Smith, and an extract from her poem 1919 published in *The Wren* magazine in June this year:

"And when they asked what won the war?"

Their signal straight appeared,  
The Navy did its damndest.  
But the Wrens it was, we feared."

Other sources: *Blue Tapestry* by Vera Laughton Mathews and *The WRNS* by M H Fletcher.

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● The apotheosis of the age of sail – the destruction of the Franco-Spanish fleet at Trafalgar as depicted by William Wyllie's legendary panorama

Picture: Royal Naval Museum



## You little inkers

MONTH after month we fill these pages with tales of death, destruction, damage, disability and other horrors of war.

So how nice to lighten the mood for once with a breezy jaunt through the halcyon days of end of Empire, of tea parties and ceremonies.

There was a Cold War to be won, of course, plus one brief but very 'hot' one in the Falklands during the three-decade career spanned by Cdr Roger Paine.

But why read all about that when there are tales of irate cooks (before they were given today's rather cumbersome moniker), bothersome pets, dignitaries in need of ice in their drinks, faux pas at dinner parties (the author was referred to constantly as "the officer who called Invergordon a dump" at one function... in Invergordon), and the like to read? And stories involving royalty and a loo are always worth repeating...

**Call The Hands** (Book Guild, £10.99 ISBN 978-1-84624-3189) is a miscellany of tales and anecdotes mainly from the quirkier side of Cdr Paine's career.

Some of the events and occurrences he recounts have probably passed into history. But some are still valid today.

Like that of the cook who slaved in the galley to produce a cake for 200 guests at a visit to the Seychelles. It was a beautiful piece of baked craftsmanship, lovingly topped with the islands' flag. The wrong flag that is. (It changed four times in the 20th Century, which accounts for the blunder.)

With food colouring all but run out for the correct red, green, yellow, white and blue flag, the cook reverted to Plan B: ink. Guests were none the wiser, nor the children of a local orphanage who were presented with the inky cake the following day.

For all the light-hearted anecdotes, however, the author is at pains to point out, that the RN takes its traditions seriously. It always pauses to pay tribute at 36°11'N 6°23'W and 3°33'N 104°28'E – the sites, respectively, of the Battle of Trafalgar and the sinking of Force Z.

# Sail of the centuries

JONATHAN Dull is an American historian of the 18th Century who has already published studies of the French Navy in both the Seven Years' War and the War Of American Independence, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Both won him awards and good reviews, such as Professor Rodger calling the former "a tour de force in combined diplomatic, political and naval history."

His new book – *The Age of the Ship of the Line: The British and French Navies 1650-1815* (Seaford, £25 ISBN 978-1-84832549-4) – is a study of the maritime dimension of the major wars from 1650 to 1815, based on the importance of battle fleets in these conflicts. Dull emphasises the key role played by fleets made up of the 'ships of the line' that form his title.

As in his previous volumes, he puts the maritime operations into their overall strategic and diplomatic context which means there is much fascinating material on the general history of the period. It is easy for amateurs to get lost in such background discussion but this author is too professional to fall into this trap and his account is admirably balanced.

It is balanced in another way too. As an American, the author is able to take an admirably neutral perspective in a period where most accounts come from the British point of view.

The author's knowledge of the French side of the story gives the book a rather Gallic flavour but the British side is well known by the Anglophone audience whereas

## The Grove Review

the French is not. Most readers will learn something from the book and see well-known events in new ways.

The book is short but generally well-written and is an engaging read. Originally published by the University of Nebraska Press it is fully-equipped with endnotes which both display the author's mastery of the literature and give critical guidance for further reading.

The author points to the fundamental advantage that allowed Britain to prevail in the conflicts he reviews. Insular Britain was able to put more investment into its navy than continental France.

In the War of the Austrian Succession of 1744-48, Britain spent the equivalent of 71,300,000 French livres per year on the navy, France less than half that figure, 32,170,000 livres.

In the Seven Years' War the annual figures were even more in Britain's favour, 111,160,000 livres against 36,670,000.

The British Admiralty and Navy Board were getting more than three times the annual provision of their French counterparts.

Only in the American War of Independence 1778-82, with no continental opponent and Britain forced to deploy larger ground forces, was France able to approach Britain's expenditure, 138,435,000 livres against Britain's 157,900,000.

No wonder Britain was able to afford more ships of the line than France as well as a higher

proportion of more heavily-armed ships.

France had a much larger population than Britain and higher overall government income but, as Dull points out, much of the latter "was spent on pensions, public works and administration".

The classes represented in the British parliament allowed themselves to be taxed to a remarkable degree. British 18th-Century taxpayers were paying twice to three times as much per head as their French counterparts.

The British government was also credit worthy and its investors willing to accept lower rates of interest. On such mundane but crucial foundations were the achievements of Anson, Hawke and Nelson built.

Dull sympathetically explains the difficulties the French had in manning their ships with effective crews, an absolutely fundamental factor when men were the mechanism of the ship, both in terms of propulsion and armament.

Even before the Revolution French fleets could be manned, with "novice sailors" prevented from training to efficiency by British blockaders. Thus was Conflans' fleet "run ashore" by Hawke "steering to glory" in Quiberon Bay in the "wonderful year" of 1759.

The balance of training of the two fleets was the decisive factor.

What made it all the worse for the French, as Dull points out, was that it was already clear that invasion was not possible but Conflans' sense of honour forced

him to unnecessary action and defeat.

One reason for French difficulties in 1759 was the serious epidemic that had affected its fleet sent earlier successfully to relieve Louisbourg in North America. When it got back to France its contagions spread to the ports of Brest and Rochefort. Nearly half the fleet's personnel strength of 12,000 died. A similar fate had overtaken a French expedition to Cape Breton Island in 1746.

The superior standards of cleanliness in British ships were a major strategic advantage throughout this period.

Although the author admits that Britain's overall advantages were decisive, he puts forward the interesting argument that the more centralised French political systems did have some advantages, producing "tough and skilled" administrators who could turn situations round quite quickly when required.

An example of this was when Andre Jeanbon Saint-Andre managed to replace the grievous losses of 1793 and put 50 French ships of the line into service the following year.

Sadly, however, a lack of crew training was again endemic, not helped by the disastrous effect of the Revolution on the French officer corps and Saint-Andre's own mistake of January 10 1794 in abolishing the corps of naval artillerymen.

Dull's conclusion is that "on balance, the British Navy was strongest at the bottom with its incomparable sailors and shipboard officers, while the French was



# The WAFU over GAFA

FOR a supposedly unpopular war, Afghanistan is proving to be very popular at the bookstands.

We've had accounts from the guys on the ground – such as Mark Ormrod's gritty *Man Down*. We've had an account from the fast jet jockeys – Adrian Orchard's *Joint Force Harrier*. And we've had the measured eye of a historian – Ewen Southby-Tailyour's *3 Commando Brigade* – taking a more detached view of operations.

Royal Marine Major Mark Hammond adds to that groaning bookshelf with *Immediate Response*, (Penguin, £17.99 ISBN 978-0718-154745), an account of life as a Chinook pilot over Afghanistan.

The book describes two tours of duty in Afghanistan (although the author focuses on the first in 2006).

*Immediate Response* is a quick read – it rattles along. There's some choice language (particularly during an account of a night-time delivery of munitions to a far-flung outpost). There's some scathing criticism of the BBC who reported that a Chinook had gone down with all crew – when it was actually a Nimrod (they'd blundered badly three years before when two helicopter collided on HMS Ark Royal and flashed up images of the wrong type of Sea King...).

Mark Hammond seethed. He had to ring his wife to tell her he wasn't dead. The demand for 'news' outweighed common sense, respect for families, caution, the need



● Maj Mark Hammond RM in front of his Chinook in Afghanistan. Note the Minigun sticking out of the side door

to take a step back and wait for the dust to settle. "The news game had become a dirty business with 24-hour news channels generating a greed for information that too often came at the expense of truth," the



Royal fumed.

This is a brutally honest account of life on the ground and in the air in Afghanistan.

Maj Mark Hammond shares his feelings of life and death. You understand his pain when a wounded soldier his Chinook has rescued dies on the ramp. He concedes that fliers are "up their own arses" – with good reason; they sit in the cockpit and "make big things happen." And he realises that to many people bootneck banter might seem "a tad full-on".

Hammond questions some of the tactics which meant several outlying bases were "just like the Alamo". But he does not question the war itself.

"This war is about keeping Britain safe from terrorists – terrorists train in Afghanistan," he stresses. "This conflict, which is being played out thousands of miles away from the UK, is taking the lives of our sons and daughters. All the papers were interested in were the lives of stupid, gormless chavs who have a high profile but contribute nothing."

Good to see things have changed since 2006 then... *Immediate Response* will introduce some

new words to your vocabulary: Teletubbies (the Taliban), PONTIs (Persons of No Tactical Importance – most of whom seemed to inhabit Kandahar Air Base), GAFA (the Great Afghan Fuck All – the vast tracts of wasteland in Helmand), Lively (heavy incoming fire), Sparky (ditto), Apaches 'schwack' or 'mallet' enemy positions.

As for the foe, well the Taliban aren't the cardboard cutout villains of Hollywoodland. "We had to take our hats off to the Taliban," writes the Chinook pilot. "We had burnt them, we had bombed them, we had mortared them and we were shooting at them. The Taliban were not cowards – no matter what we threw at them they were prepared to have a go."

Mark Hammond was awarded the DFC for his bravery and skill in picking up casualties under heavy Teletubbies fire in September 2006.

It's something he plays down with typical RM understatement. It was, he told the Queen as she pinned the medal on his chest, a bit scary.

Also being honoured at the Palace that day was actor Hugh Laurie for services to drama. He was made an OBE. He received the full Royal Marine banter treatment...

"My wife is so happy that you are here," he told the star of *House MD*. "She loves ER."

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# London does the chance

A SHELTERED harbour in South Wales or on the East Coast of Scotland, or maybe a lazy river in East Anglia, is where it all started.

It all got a bit more serious in the waters of Bristol, or perhaps Nottingham.

And by the time the whole show moved on to London and the vast, historic Royal Victoria Dock there was an awful lot more than pride at stake.

The beauty of the Sea Cadet Corps National Combined Regatta is that, in theory, every cadet stands a chance of making it through to the big stage.

In practice, of course, there are the thoroughbreds of the competition – those units, districts and areas who steamroller their opponents as they add to their illustrious records.

But there are others for whom a place among the elite at the Nationals is a fantastic achievement, or who can look back with pride at running the favourites close in the area and district competitions.

The setting for the Nationals is impressive, and the scale of the 'stadium' is matched by the scale of the logistics required to ensure the event goes off without a hitch.

The man responsible for that is Lt Cdr (SCC) Phil Patterson RNR, HQ Staff Recreation Officer.

"In plain terms, I co-ordinate all the administration, logistics, communications – everything there is to bring an event like this together," said Phil.

He finds an appropriate venue, books it, finds accommodation, organises staff to run and officiate at the event and makes sure the equipment is all there and ready.

In terms of people it is a question of liaising with the areas, the end result being 453 cadets aged between 12 and 17, and 153 members of staff, turning up for a smooth-running competition.

2009 was the fourth time the ExCeL had been used, and the routine is now established.



## Everyone's a winner, but not everyone get a prize

JUST competing at the National Combined Regatta in London is an honour – but not everyone takes home a prize.

Stonehaven dominated the pulling (see p45), winning the Ridgewell Cup for Junior Boys and the Hornblower Cup for Open Boys, also helping Northern Area to take the overall pulling title and the Dawson Trophy, with the North West taking second place.

Port Talbot took pride of place in the Girls Junior, winning the Wain 1999 Cup, while Henley took the Girls Open and the Burton Cup.

The Yole rowing did not count towards the main points tallies, but was still fiercely contested.

The Open Mixed Cup went to Romsey, of Southern Area, while Neath (South West) won the Junior Mixed Cup.

The overall Yole trophy, the Narvic Cup, was shared by North West and South West Areas.

Turning to the paddlesports competition, it was the South West teams which turned in the headline performances, winning three of the four events – the Open Boys (Mike

Poole Cup), Open Girls (Ulster Cup) and Junior Boys (Nottingham Cup).

Their win in the Open Girls was particularly emphatic, finishing 27 points ahead of their nearest rivals, Northern Area.

The Junior Girls title (and Barbara Simpson Cup) went to the North, but with the South West taking second, they were clear winners of the Armitage Trophy for paddlesports.

Portsmouth took the honours for the South in the Pulling Boat Handling (Mitchell Trophy), also finishing second to Maryport of (North West) in the Sailing Boat Handling (P&O Trophy).

With Gravesend winning the Power Boat Handling (the Stirling Wheel), the South were comfortable winners of the Stena Sealink Trophy for overall boat handling.

And when all the results were in and the points tallied, it was the teams from the South who were celebrating as their area took the overall regatta title, and with it the Navy League Cup.

In second place were the North and Northern Ireland, with the South West coming in third.

● Clockwise from top right: Competitors head off towards the City skyscrapers at the western end of the Royal Victoria Dock; cadet helpers line up on a pontoon; sailing boat handlers go through their paces; kayak crews wait for a race to be called; a paddlesports race passes under the footbridge; true colours – from left, the Henley girls show off a new version of the Southern Area kit, while representatives of the North, Northern Ireland, Eastern, London, the North West and South West demonstrate their support; pulling crews from the South (dark blue) and North West go head-to-head; two 'spectators' enjoy the sunshine; kayakers line up at the pontoon before a race; a Northern Ireland competitor prepares her kayak for a race; paddlesport crews on the pontoon in front of ExCeL.



# Week gives all to ExCeL

Event organisers said they get "tremendous" support and co-operation from ExCeL, and as locations go it is hard to beat.

Cadets and staff are accommodated on site, the youngsters 'camping' in the vast exhibition space and the adults in nearby meetings rooms.

Lt (SCC) Kevin Perkins RNR, the superintendent of the Royal Victoria Dock Boat Station, which sits at the western end of the facility, said it is all about convenience.

"The cadets can get up, get washed and have breakfast then just step outside and it is all there for them," he said.

"There is no need to bus them in from elsewhere, or bring the equipment from all over the country."

Supplying the equipment is Kevin's part of the show, as the regatta is run on his patch.

"We are mainly the London Area boat station, though Eastern units use us as well," said Kevin.

"We had to bring in five boats from the Welsh Harp boat station, but the rest is all ours."

"There are a dozen ASCs and 14 powerboats, doing all different jobs - safety, tow boats and some for competitions."

"The only things the areas have to bring in is their own canoes."

Preparations for the combined regatta take around two weeks.

The first sees Kevin put in plenty of scrubbing and polishing, bringing the boats up to the required standard for competition after a full season's use.

By the second week he is also involved in preparing the various courses, laying some 50 different marks in the mile-long dock - and as the water is 30ft deep that requires plenty of weights to keep them in place.

Towards the day of the competition Kevin and his two colleagues have been joined by a further three staff, and as the big day looms the national boat team weighs in as well.

Talking of weighing in, the half-ton ASC, or Admiralty Sailing Craft, enjoyed something of a swansong this year.

Waiting in the wings is the

'plastic fantastic', a new version which will be lighter, more manoeuvrable and easier to pull, and is likely to all but eclipse the venerable ASC (though there will no doubt be those purists who will ensure it never quite disappears).

That, however, is for the future, and the 2009 regatta saw the usual feats of skill, strength and stamina on a warm day under a blue sky.

And the competition itself is the responsibility of Lt Cdr (SCC) Dave Hanley RNR, HQ Staff Officer Boats, who with his team presides over the on-water activity, including judging.

Dave's efforts ensure that all the preparatory work by Phil and Kevin, and many more besides, come together into a seamless series of races, allowing the cadets to turn up and concentrate on their performance without any distractions or stresses.

Dave was content with the way the 2009 regatta was unfolding: "It gets better every year," he declared.

As to the competition itself, the paddlesports were staged at the western end of the arena, with boat-handling in the middle and pulling at the east end, up towards Silvertown and the airport from which a steady stream of jets roared over the proceedings.

The noise of their engines was frequently surpassed by the sound of cheering along the ExCeL railings as races finished in front of the hundreds of spectators, the participants identified by the bright colours of their respective areas.

With the final prizes handed out it was time to prepare for the big disco (courtesy Roger Moody and his gang), then those who were staying for one more night returned to their respective 'campsite' - the area is divided into male and female sections, and the divide is strictly policed.

And that was that.

A couple of days to clear up and dismantle the courses, and then the whole show moved on to Southport for the next red-letter day in the Sea Cadet calendar - the sailing regatta.

See next month for a report from Merseyside.

**Pictures: Alex Lloyd**



## Unit adds standard to collection

MEMBERS of the former Tunbridge Wells Royal Marines Association branch have been hosted by the Marine Cadets of Tunbridge Wells unit.

The evening started with the Colours, with MC2 Montandon as commander of a guard provided by the detachment.

After Colours the branch chairman inspected the guard and other members of the detachment.

With the formalities over a continuity drill display was performed to the 30 members of the branch who attended.

The display, written by S/Lt (SCC) Groves RNR, the unit's First Lieutenant, showed the cadets' competence and ability at ceremonial with the SA80 rifle accompanied by traditional military and more modern chart music – with no words of command.

The evening, organised by detachment commander Sgt (SCC) Martin, concluded with the branch standard being presented to MC2 Evans and the safe custody of the unit's Marine Cadets before a buffet was enjoyed by all.

This presentation now adds to the unit's collection of affiliated insignia; a similar evening in 2008 saw Tunbridge Wells RNA's standard given to the unit for safekeeping after the branch closed, coupled with the presentation of the last White Ensign flown by the unit's namesake HMS Brilliant on her final voyage into Devonport before decommissioning in 1996.

All are proudly on show on the unit's Main Deck.

## Long Eaton form new affiliation

LONG Eaton unit has taken delivery of some top-notch Navy memorabilia, thanks to a new affiliation with the HMS Protector Association.

The Battle Honours board and deck plate from the old ice patrol ship, plus a cup and shield, were presented to the unit at a fund-raising barbecue held at the Seven Oaks Inn at Ilkeston.

Attending the barbecue was the Mayor of Erewash District Council, Cllr Terry Holbrook, who has chosen the unit as one of his charities for his year of office.

Also present was the chairman of the HMS Protector Association, Keith Towle, and members of the association committee – one of whom, Stan March, once served in HMS Indomitable, which is also the name of the Long Eaton unit's training ship.

A more formal presentation took place later at the unit HQ, when AC Alex Brown presented his cap tally to Keith Towle for the benefit of Stan March, while an HMS Protector ship's badge was handed to the Mayor's cadet, LC Natalie Walton.

The Protector Association has pledged to offer support to the cadet unit wherever possible, and hope the affiliation will prosper.

## Course supremo wins award



THE man behind one of the Sea Cadet Corps' most ambitious courses has been rewarded for his dedication to youth organisations.

Lt (SCC) Tony Smith RNR, who developed and now runs course C64 Adventure/Military Training from SCTC Inskip, has been awarded a Clasp to the Cadet Forces Medal.

Tony (left of picture) was presented with the award by Lt Cdr (SCC) Barry Glanville, Superintendent of SCTC Inskip, at the conclusion of this year's exercise.

Tony said: "I suppose around 1,500 cadets have gone through courses I have organised, and it gives me immense pleasure to think they have got so much joy out of it all."

Picture: SqnLdr Eddie Challoner RAFVR(T)



● Cadets Matt and Courtney show off their cookery skills with celebrity chef Nick Martin at the Whitehaven Food Festival

# Whitehaven's cooking

MEETING celebrity chefs, rustling up tea for jet skiers, showing visitors round someone else's tall ships – Sea Cadets take it all in their stride.

Whitehaven unit was on duty at the town's two-day Food Festival, where three tall

ships were among the visitors.

One of them, the Zebu, was short-handed over the weekend, and was considering closing to the public when the cadets stepped in.

"We had a call from the Festival Company who explained the problem and asked if we could provide two or three cadets and a member of staff to help with the

tours," said unit chairman Chas Tinkler.

"The cadets were more than happy to lend a hand and we organised a rota to ensure that the ship was properly crewed and able to take visitors."

Another attraction was a programme of demonstrations by celebrity chefs including Jean Paul Novelli, Nick Martin and Ainsley Harriott.

Two cadets went along hoping to show Nick a Marine Cadet ration pack and watch his show, but ended up on stage with him, cooking chicken chili with rice – from the 'rat pack' – and seafood risotto.

In another part of the harbour cadets were keeping the Xtreme JetSki display team supplied with flasks of hot tea.

PO (SCC) Stuart McCourt, TS Bee's First Lieutenant, said it had been a busy but very enjoyable weekend.

"Most of our cadets and staff were away on annual camp and this left us with only half a dozen or so cadets," he said.

"But, when they weren't cooking or sampling the food, they have had a go at archery, been riding on Segways and tried on deep-sea diving equipment."

To round things off, Ainsley Harriott made a special visit to the Sea Cadets' stall, where he spent 15 minutes or so looking at the display, chatting to cadets, signing autographs and having his photograph taken.

"He's really nice and very friendly" said one cadet, "and much taller than he looks on TV."

## Caterham rebuild a better future

CATERHAM unit TS Zephyr showed remarkable stoicism when vandals smashed in the front of their HQ.

The latest bout of vandalism occurred just three days after repairs were completed following an earlier attack.

But seizing the opportunity, the unit undertook an ambitious building project worth more than £15,000 – more than the unit's annual income – not simply to repair the damage but also to bring the accommodation up to modern standards.

The project, now almost completed, involved the fitting of a state-of-the-art fire alarm system (worth almost £5,000,

and donated by Direction Fire Ltd), emergency lighting, cooking facilities, disabled ramps and improved fire exits.

The work was funded by a Surrey Grass Roots project, a grant from the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, and a sky-dive by 17-year-old cadet, POC Richard Fearis, which raised £2,200.

Caterham moved into the wooden twin-hut building 12 years ago when their old barracks was sold off for redevelopment.

The site is owned by the South East Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (SERFCA), which has supported the work, but the unit is responsible for maintenance and upkeep.



● The UK cadets with IMC delegate Vice Admiral John McAnally

## Italian perspective

SIX cadets – five from Portrush unit and one from Bristol Avonmouth – represented the UK at an International Maritime Confederation (IMC) sail training camp in Italy.

The camp was held at Sabaudia in central Italy, around 100km from Rome, where the Italian

Navy used to train competitors for international sports.

The two-week camp included activities such as sail training, rowing, volleyball and football.

There were also excursions, including one to Rome, and the camp was well supported by the Italian Navy.

## Around the units

CADETS from the South West Area stepped out in style whilst putting on an armed guard drill display for HMS Raleigh's Open Day.

Two female Senior Rates and 45 Sea and Marine Cadets performed two impressive displays in front of large crowds.

None of the cadets had done drill with an SA80 rifle before the start of the week, but with the help of Raleigh's senior parade instructor, PO 'Fred' Perry, and one of the Area's staff drill instructors, CPO (SCC) 'Snowy' Dawes, the cadets blossomed into a superb guard, winning praise from the Captain of Raleigh.

ST ALBANS cadets were delighted to receive confirmation of a £10,000 grant from the Big Lottery 'Awards for All' scheme.

Together with £5,000 from Grassroots, the money will help refurbish the unit HQ at Westminster Lodge, built in 1974 and now in need of major maintenance.

TWO members of Evesham unit are planning to make tandem parachute jumps this month to help towards the running costs of TS Explorer.

Unit management team chairman Rosemary Naylor and colleague Kathy Woodward are set to make the leap into the unknown, and are seeking hard cash as well as a soft landing.

IT'S not every day that you find a group of Sea Cadets helping the mayor pack bags at the local supermarket.

But had you been at one of the Tesco stores in Halifax that's what you would have seen – 12 cadets from Huddersfield unit spent a couple of days lending a hand to shoppers, while Cllr Arshad Mahmood, Mayor of Calderdale, pitched in and chatted to the youngsters.

The cadets raised more than £350 for the Mayor's charity, The Supporting Us Supporting Each Other Trust for youngsters with diabetes.

HINCKLEY cadets pushed themselves to the limit with an 11-hour fund-raising challenge.

In the spirit of the Royal Marines' *per mare, per terram* (by sea, by land), the cadets travelled the 22 miles of the Ashby Canal, first by kayaking from Bedworth to their Hinckley HQ then yomping to the finish at Snarestone.

The event raised just under £1780 for Help for Heroes, and Lt (SCC) Paul Horton RMR, Detachment Commander, said he was proud of the cadets' efforts.

MEMBERS of the Leith (TS Howe) and Edinburg (TS Trinity) units joined war veteran Alf Tubb at a ceremony in a local cemetery where a memorial was unveiled by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in memory of cabin boy Reginald Earnshaw.

Reggie was probably aged 15 when he died in July 1941 on the SS North Devon, having lied about his age to join when he was 14.

His shipmate Alf, a former machine gunner, spent four years trying to find Reggie's unmarked grave.

Alf had shot down one of the aircraft which attacked the ship, but could not rescue his friend from the engine room because of escaping steam.

POC Josh Falconer, of Northampton and Wellingborough unit, spent a week at sea on the yacht TS Leopold Muller, earning his RYA Day Skipper ticket.

During the same cruise Harry Boyde (15) was selected to be part of the 2010 Sea Cadet yacht racing squad.

Seven cadets from the unit also went to sea, this time in TS Royalist, visiting Plymouth, Dartmouth and Brixham.

Members could choose between two summer camps – one on board HMS Bristol in Portsmouth Harbour, the other including abseiling and sea survival techniques at Inskip, Lancashire.



● Nick Nicklin and his wife Lynn

## Farewell to Corps stalwart

SOUTHERN Area staff have bid farewell to stalwart supporter. Lt (SCC) Nick Nicklin RNR at a formal dining-out at HMS Collingwood.

Nick joined the Royal Navy in 1962 at HMS Ganges and served in a number of ships, including Duncan, Nubian, Chichester and Bristol, as well as RFAs Sir Lancelot and Diligence – then MV Stena Inspector – during the Falklands Conflict as a gunnery rating.

Formerly an air cadet, Nick joined the Corps after 24 years in the Service, and throughout his 23 years in the Area Office Nick has enjoyed a reputation for his support, guidance and advice.

Capt Jonathan Fry, outgoing Captain of the Sea Cadet Corps, said they would all miss Nick's "legendary ability to beg, steal or borrow just about anything from within the Dockyard to further the Sea Cadet cause."

He was presented with a letter opener in the form of a Naval officer's sword and a voucher for a flight in a World War 2 Harvard Trainer.

## Stockport hotshots

STOCKPORT unit won the Tipner Trophy for the best Sea Cadet shooting team for the third year running.

The team – PPO Joe Corr, TI Lee Bradley and AC Colin Greaves – also won the Sheerness Trophy as the best cadet team over two distances. Lee won silver at 600yds, the Marine Medal for highest aggregate score by a Marine Cadet, bronze in the individual (two points behind Joe, who took silver) and bronze in the Navy League.

Joe also took the Squire Trophy for highest-scoring individual cadet at the meet and silver in the Navy League.

The unit also put up a good show in the Stockport Carnival, where the good ship HMS Hawkins put in an appearance.

The unit takes its name from the warship that was commissioned in July 1919 and was adopted by the borough in World War 2.

Exactly 90 years on from her commissioning the ship was recreated as a float for the parade.

## Powerful supporters

EDMONTON unit has received a welcome boost thanks to members of the Electricity Alliance.

National Grid set the ball rolling with a £5,000 donation which will help renovate the unit's galley, shower block and boat shed by the River Lee.

The Alliance, a partnership between National Grid and Balfour Beatty, is working in the area, refurbishing overhead electricity lines between Waltham Cross and Tottenham.

And Alliance contractors Red 7 Marine also did their bit by offering three boats to add to the TS Plymouth fleet.

Edmonton CO CPO (SCC) Tony Stevens said: "We're really grateful to the Electricity Alliance for their support – it's a great boost to the young people who use the facilities."

All in all a successful year so far for Edmonton, having just won a burgee for the first time in its 62-year history.

# Sea Scouts celebrate centenary

THERE is more than one Naval organisation celebrating their centenary this year.

Up there with the Fleet Air Arm is the Admiralty Recognised Sea Scouts, part of the Scouts Association.

And 1st Watchet Sea Scouts (RN Recognised Troop 63), from Somerset, have thrown themselves into several events to celebrate the anniversary, in addition to a successful bi-annual Admiralty inspection.

The scouts attended two camps based around Brownsea Island, the birthplace of scouting, and Poole Harbour.

The first saw 18 members of the Watchet troop and the Mariner Explorer Sea Scout unit spend a weekend at the harbour, sailing from Poole to Brownsea Island and pitching camp on the site of Baden-Powell's original scout camp.

Later in the summer 28 from the same

groups enjoyed an eight-day summer camp in Dorset and the Studland Peninsula, undertaking a range of activities including gliding, kayaking, rowing, mountain biking, orienteering, swimming and archery.

Given Lord Baden-Powell's Naval antecedents – his grandfather was an admiral – the troop felt that returning to the birthplace of scouting was an appropriate way to celebrate the centenary.

# Marine Society is in the Matrix

THE Marine Society has achieved the Matrix Standard – the nationally-recognised quality mark for organisations which provide information, advice and guidance.

It is a first such award – made by the Department for Business, Information and Skills – in the maritime sector.

The Marine Society, part of the Marine Society & Sea Cadets (MSSC), provides a range of services to enhance the learning, professional development, well-being and lifestyle of those who serve at sea.

Dealing with 5,000 enquiries annually, the charity is a respected source of freely available, authoritative, impartial and confidential advice and guidance on matters of concern to those who serve in the RN, RM and RFA.

Brian Thomas, director of seafarer operations, said: "We pride ourselves on making sure that seafarers receive the best help."

"This rigorous Matrix assessment of how we do what we do enables us to map our effectiveness."

"We can demonstrate that the information, advice and guidance we offer is of the highest standard."

"This is a source of satisfaction for us and it will be reassuring for our RN beneficiaries, too."

## Andrew to walk the Great Wall

A SEA Cadet PO is to walk parts of the Great Wall of China this month to raise funds for Richmond unit.

PO Andrew Bell-Wright will trek five sections of the wall, each entailing up to seven hours walking.

Andrew has been training in Snowdonia, the Lake District, the Brecon Beacons and along the Thames footpath.

Money raised will go towards a new minibus – the current one is going to have to be modified or taken off the road in the near future to comply with emissions regulations.

Donations via [www.justgiving.com/andrewbellwright](http://www.justgiving.com/andrewbellwright)

# Stonehaven maintain regatta reputation

NOT much time for rest over the summer holidays for the cadets and staff of Stonehaven unit.

With minds focused on local and national events, it has meant hard work – but the rewards have been worth it.

The unit again ran the car park for the Stonehaven Highland Games, raising £250 to add to the £250 raised at a stall at the Harbour Hi-Jinks – a day of *It's a Knockout* type activities – including raft races – on the water.

The TS Carron team also collected the P&J Trophy as runners-up at the event, despite the usual shenanigans where the cadets tend to behave more like pirates than representatives of the Senior Service.

The Hi-Jinks followed hot on the heels of the unit's annual golf outing for adults and supporters, with Alistair Reid taking this year's Cargill Trophy.

The following weekend saw Northern Area Officer Cdr Colin Redstone visit the unit to train and assess the cadets in their paddlesport qualifications.

Having seen the quality of kayaking and canoeing at the unit, Cdr Redstone was delighted to present a range of British Canoe Union awards.

The pulling specialists at the unit were busy concentrating on the National Combined Regatta in London (see pp42-3).

Evening training sessions (with extra morning sessions, starting at 6am, in the final days before



● Sea Cadets on a paddlesports weekend at Stonehaven

the competition) ensured the 23-strong team was in top form before heading south.

And the contingent recorded some of the best results in the unit's illustrious history – it has represented the Northern Area every year since 1960, which they believe is an achievement unmatched in the Corps.

All 23 returned with medals as

the unit won the double for the third time in their history, winning both the Boys Open (a record 12th win) and Junior (a record 10th win) pulling events, cementing their reputation as the most successful boating unit in the UK.

The Girls Open pulling team took third place, helping the Northern Area to first place in the overall pulling competition for the

Dawson Trophy (Peterhead also played their part with a fourth place in the Girls Junior).

In the Pulling Boat Handling Stonehaven were second to Portsmouth, and Northern came third overall – Newburn, the other Northern representatives, managed sixth in the Sailing Boat Handling and second in the Power Boat Handling.

# Group visits Bermuda



BRITISH Sea Cadets took part in a historical re-enactment of the discovery of Bermuda during an exchange trip to the Atlantic island.

Hosted by TS Admiral Somers, the Bermuda unit, the British cadets, along with Canadian and American colleagues, visited historical sites on the island, including the Maritime Museum in the old Royal Naval Dockyard.

And as 2009 marks the 400th anniversary of the discovery of Bermuda, the cadets used one of the Bermudians' ASC boats to help represent the shipwrecked mariners of the Sea Venture struggling ashore during a hurricane in 1609 – and the youngsters showed their pulling prowess and boat-handling skills in the process.

Pictured left after visiting Bermudian premier Dr Ewart Brown, are (from left) POC Adam Parry (Hinckley), POC Stuart Jolley (Northampton), POC Laura Hartwell (Hinckley), S/Lt John Hutchinson (Jarrow), LC Rebecca Nadolski (Stratford-on-Avon) and POC Michael Collar (Whitstable); the group also called in on the Governor of the island, Sir Richard Gozney.



● Ellesmere Port cadets with supporters, including their MP Andrew Miller and their Reutlingen hosts

# Mersey to the Rhine

ELLESMERE Port Sea Cadets have completed an epic journey on some of the great rivers of Europe.

Having trained on the Caledonian Canal and at Holyhead, the expedition began on the Thames, powering along from HMS President to the Houses of Parliament for a formal send-off.

Among those doing the sending off were Kevan Jones, the defence minister responsible for cadets, and the Ellesmere Port MP Andrew Miller.

The cadets took their two RiBs on cross-Channel ferry and headed to the historic city of Woudrichem

in the Netherlands, where they launched on to the River Waal.

Using three teams of three to rotate the crewing of the boats, the party moved on to the Rhine and the Neckar, covering over 1,000km in a record-breaking trip which saw them greeted at Reutlingen in Germany by the Oberbürgermeister, Barbara Bosch.

Andrew Miller and his wife had also flown out to greet the voyagers.

After setting up a stall in the town square to let the locals know who they were, the cadets loaded up the trailers and started the long haul back across Europe to Cheshire.

# Displays win praise

TWO Sea Cadet units played prominent roles during the Fleet Air Arm centenary celebrations at Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey.

The Sheppey unit attended with their field gun, marching with the parade and then performing demonstrations of handling the gun (see right).

Meanwhile the Whitstable Sea Cadet Band led the church parade on the Sunday.

The participation of both units was much appreciated by organisers, members of the RNA and the many visitors who attended.



## Novices lead resurgence

A DAY of strong and gusty winds, with occasional sunshine, greeted rowers from all three Forces at this year's Joint Services Regatta.

The event was held at Dorney Rowing Lake, Berkshire – the location for Olympic rowing events in 2012.

The Royal Navy rowing squad coped well with the difficult conditions on the water and avoided capsizing, although members of the other Services were not so lucky, including a crew who had only been rowing for a week.

In particular the Royal Navy novices did very well proving that recent grass roots rowing has been profitable. The sport is open to all those who would like to give it a go as much as it is for the more experienced oarsmen and women out there.

The men's squad won the novice fours and pairs events, and teamed up with rowers from Welbeck College to win the intermediate fours as well.

In resurgence, the women also won their novice fours and pairs events in grand style. The women's Inter-Service fours event, although won by the Army, saw a plucky fight to the end between the RAF and RN crews, with the RAF taking second place by the narrowest of margins ahead of the never-say-die RN women.

Not disheartened, in the women's open eights race (again won by the Army) a determined RN crew who had not rowed together before the race took second place, well ahead of both the Sandhurst and RAF crews. This bodes well for the 2010 rowing season.

During the break in racing for lunch, the RN put on a lively series of exhibition Cornish gig racing events, seeing gig crews from HMS Raleigh and BRNC Dartmouth competing for South West area supremacy before offering others a chance to take to the water and give gig rowing a try.

To widen the Navy's rowing repertoire further, it was announced that the Navy's first coastal rowing boat had been cut and was to be delivered in good time to afford RN coastal rowers the opportunity to compete at the next FISA World Coastal Championships, to be hosted by Mayflower Rowing Club in Plymouth, on the 23-25 of this month.

If there are oarsmen or women out in the Fleet who would like to row or scull, or indeed anyone out there who would like to give rowing a try, please contact the RN & RM Amateur Rowing Association Secretary Lt Cdr Karen Allsford at [karen.allsford580@mod.uk](mailto:karen.allsford580@mod.uk) or 9621 83455/0207 218 3455.

## Reservists take polo title

ON A warm but damp day at Tidworth, the reservist forces of the Army and Senior Service – the TA and RNR respectively – met on the polo field.

It was expected to be a mud bath but surprisingly was a fast-flowing match with the Navy side winning 4½ goals to 1½.

The RNR unfortunately could only find two players and were supported by Gnr Nicky Hewer RA from the Army and Lt Cdr Al Wilson from the regular Service – both of whom scored the Navy's goals.

At the end of the match so much goodwill and humour abounded that the final result had very little significance.

After great camaraderie and backslapping it was thought the event should become a permanent fixture in the polo calendar.

It is hoped that this will act as a useful and important recruiting tool for both the TA and the RNR and encourage any serving reservists who may wish to play next year.



## ADMITTEDLY, not as crushing as that one, but still sweet...

When HMS Trafalgar was enjoying an operational stand down in Brest, the ship's company were challenged to a football match by their hosts, the crew of ballistic missile boat Le Triomphant.

With the French Navy beaten by the RN in the rugby union (and the national side defeated by England in the Six Nations) there was some national pride to regain.

Good job Traf were 'up for it' then. LET Jackson lead the Brits on to the pitch where they were greeted by outstanding support from the rest of the ship's company.

The first half was a fairly subdued affair as a result of Traf acclimatising to the Brittany heat and recovering from an active night out.

After a much-needed half time break, both

teams came out for what would shape up to be a fabulous second period.

Blistering runs down the right from LET 'Zooie' Twycross lead to decent attempts on goal by CPO Douglas and Trafalgar's XO Lt Cdr Scott Johnson.

It was Le Triomphant who broke the deadlock, however, after AB(CISSM) Miller fouled in the penalty area.

Trafalgar were 1-0 down, but not out. Showing great resolve and fortitude AB(CISSM) Chris 'Ronaldo' Ovel slid a great ball forward to the XO, who was bundled over by the French defence right on the edge of the area.

A free kick was awarded much to the displeasure of the crowd. AB(SSM) Launce took it, laying the ball to AB(CISSM) Puddephat who fired it straight into a French hand resulting in the award of a penalty.

With the ball on the spot, up stepped Traf's

star goalkeeper LS(CISSM) 'Nobby Le Chat' Clark, who slotted the kick calmly past the waiting keeper.

It was 1-1 and with full time approaching both sides pushed harder.

The French defence kept out efforts from Trafalgar attacking midfielder AB(SSM) Greensmith, while the Brits only managed to hold on until the final whistle thanks to some amazing tracking back by defensive LMA 'Basketball' Bastianpulle.

Not content with a draw both sides agreed to finish the match with a penalty shoot-out. With the French goalkeeper distracted by some fancy footwork and pulled faces, Trafalgar achieved a 5-3 victory on penalties.

The day ended in victory but everyone knew it was a hard-fought and closely-won match; the next visitor to Brest had better start practising now.



## XC ecstasy for RM

THREE green berets from the RNR Cycling Association competed at the final round of the Southern Cross Country (XC) series in Pippingford, East Sussex – and all were placed high enough to finish the series in the top 15 of their respective categories.

Even though Maj Andy Plewes suffered a puncture on the second lap, he managed a top-20 finish in the race, giving him seventh overall in the XC Series.

Maj Steve McCulley (pictured left with a bloody knee following a tumble) claimed 14th in the final round and 15th overall, while ex-marine Scott Easter, now an associate member, put in a great performance for third in the sports race and 7th overall in the series.

The Southern XC attracts up to 500 racers at each of its six races spread across the South West, South and South East.

Each race has a slightly different lap-length; on average a sports rider would complete three laps in approximately 1h 15m-1h 40m, while a masters rider would complete four laps in approximately 1h 40m to 2h.

Riders can earn points from any round, but they have to compete in the final round and their final placing is based upon the best five from six results.

This year the RNRMCA MTBers saw racing action in Bordon, Ringwood, Pippingford (twice – different courses), Devizes and Alton, with the Southern XC Champs (a stand-alone race) doubling at Alton with a series' race.

## 110 in 100

NOW by our reckoning it won't be Fly Navy 110 for a good decade.

Unless you're a naval hang glider. To celebrate the centennial of maritime flight, Lt Cdr Rob Dowdell 'climbed aboard' the RN Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association's Moyes Litespeed for a marathon flight.

Actually, it was much longer than a marathon flight – four times longer.

Employing navigational techniques used by his forebears a century ago, ie the Mark One eyeball and a map, the officer negotiated his way from Builth Wells in Wales, past the busy airspace over Bristol, around the ranges of Salisbury and finally touched down at Fordingbridge in Hampshire.

The flight took six hours and Rob, by day CO of 700W NAS, the recently-formed squadron which is paving the way for the next-generation Lynx, covered in excess of 110 miles.

He used rising columns of warm air (thermals) to 'power' his glider from Wales to Hampshire, reaching 5,000ft as he crossed the River Severn (pictured right).



## The things people will do for a medal...

Continued from page 48

my 30-metre waterproof watch actually wasn't. From that point I had no idea what the real time, or race elapsed time was: we set off at 6.10am (apparently).

There was no starting gun, but as soon as I saw the other 1,500 people swimming in the same direction, I joined them.

This was going to be the first time I'd swum 2.4 miles. After the first five minutes of people swimming over me I got into a rhythm.

After 1h 48m I got out of the water. I could physically feel the blood drain down from the top of my body and down to my legs.

I walked to transition, got into my bike gear and then really started shivering.

I got on the bike and it felt like it had square wheels and every nut and bolt was loose. After half a mile, I and the bike settled down. It was a three-lap course and after an initial downhill there were two steep climbs one after the other.

After that the next section was exposed and very windy but settling on to the aerobars helped.

I had strapped my Garmin GPS to the handlebars and used that purely as a timer. The ride was fairly uneventful and I finally finished pedalling after 7h 53m.

It wasn't until the last three or four miles on the bike that I thought about the marathon.

It was also at this time that my left knee started to ache. After about 400m of the run it really started to hurt; this was the first time I thought I wouldn't be able to finish.

I pressed on, stopping occasionally to stretch out. The run was fairly flat. Ten miles from the reservoir to a park outside Bolton town centre, eight miles back the way you had just come then turn and run back to the park, out of the park and into Bolton itself.

During the run my brain had just three commands: run, walk, drink. Nothing else mattered.

I was forced to use a run/walk strategy as I was so tired and my knee was crying out for me to stop.

Finally the end was in sight, the red carpet up to the finish. This had a great atmosphere, it was starting to get dark, the floodlights were on and the crowd were cheering.

The man with the microphone called out my name and then those words that I had waited 14h 37m to hear: "You are an Ironman."

The cough hadn't affected me and my knee soon recovered. Would I do it again? Yes. "

Paul's not the only RN triathlete who's been in action.

CPO Scott Markham (MASF Cudrose) took fourth place in the Double Iron UK held over two days around Lichfield.

As the name implies it's a 4.8-mile swim, 22.4-mile ride and double marathon – with no breaks in between.

The field consisted of 53 determined athletes and is gaining a reputation as an event to aspire to in the Ironman fraternity.

The swim takes place in a 25m indoor pool. The 304 lengths were a 'gentle warm-up' to the main events.

The bike ride followed a 14-mile loop (to be completed 16 times, – most of it in a downpour) while the marathon comprised 42 laps of a 1.2-mile course which passed 'attractions' such as The Devil's Staircase and Blair Witch Woods...

The senior rating crossed the line in 25h 53m in his first attempt at this discipline (for the record, the individual times were: swim 2h 23m 28s; ride 13h 35m 50s; run 9h 54m 31s).

Low points were falling asleep on the bike, nearly crashing into a wall, the rain, and pretty much every lap of the double marathon.

It obviously was far too easy for Scott. Next year he's entering a triple ironman.

## RNRU aim to hold on to cup

THE RN hosts naval rugby union sides from around the former Empire as it defends its Commonwealth Cup title this month.

Teams from South Africa, New Zealand and Australia will lock horns with the Senior Service over six days of first-rate rugby in Plymouth.

All matches will be played in a league competition at Plymouth Albion's Brickfields ground with the RNZN and RAN beginning proceedings at 4pm on October 6.

At 7.15 the same day the Royal Navy and South Africa kick off their campaigns.

The second round of matches takes place on October 9: RAN vs South Africa at 4pm; RN vs RNZN at 7.15pm.

The third and final round of the competition occurs on October 12: RNZN vs South Africa, 2.30pm; RN vs RAN at 5.30pm.

As an added bonus, the best players from all the navies will form the Combined Navies Barbarians to take on Devon and Cornwall on October 15 at 6.30pm.

Tickets are available on the gate - £5 for adults, £3 for under-18s and free for U16s.

The cup dates back to 1997 when RNRU invited the RNZN to tour the UK.

The RAN rugby side also intended to tour the UK in the same year, so it was decided to hold a tri-navy tournament, to be held every three years.

During the 2003 tournament held in Auckland New Zealand, officials from the South African Navy visited to determine if they could also join.

South Africa was invited to participate, bringing the total to four navy teams, and the new Commonwealth Cup, which is sponsored by defence firm Babcock, was born.

Throughout their stay, the visiting teams will be hosted by the RN: the South Africans will be staying at Dartmouth, the Kiwis at Raleigh and the Aussies at Drake.

More details at the website [commonwealthcup.webden.co.uk](http://commonwealthcup.webden.co.uk)

## Hoop-erstars begin season

INVITED to an open tournament in Cornwall, the Royal Navy and Marines Basketball Association's (RNMBA) season got off to the most impressive for many a year.

Building purposefully on the improvement seen in April's close-run Inter-Service tournament, the Senior squad, was strengthened by the return to fitness of Lt Berron Parker (Whale Island) and a number of young players (notably Mnes Thompson, Boden and Coyle). The weekend saw two wins from a three-game tournament with the Senior Service pitched against tough opposition.

Following a hard session of initial training at RNAS Cudrose's enviable sports facilities, a demanding first game on Saturday saw the RNMBA recover from a ten-point deficit in the third quarter to defeat Cornwall Cougars 68-64.

This was followed on Sunday by a second victory over an enhanced Cornwall side 79-69 before a 90-77 defeat in the final game (just 30 minutes after their last) against National League Division 2 outfit Marjons Cannons.

An outstanding all-round team performance - coach Sgt Marty Page (RM Poole) did not want to single out any one individual for particular praise because everyone played their part in what was a hugely uplifting opener to a season that already looks bright.

Next up for the RNMBA is the Inter Command tournament at CTCRM on October 17-18.



## Racing red white and blue (part 1)

SPECIALLY painted in Fly Navy 100 colours, this is Lt Cdr Mark Scott racing his Yamaha R1 in round four of the Wirral Hundred Motorcycle Club superbike competition.

By day, Mark is Commanding Officer of 705 NAS - the helicopter training squadron based at RAF Shawbury in Shropshire.

And by night (well, weekends actually but it sounds better) he clambers on to his racer.

The bike has been re-sprayed in the Fly Navy 100 livery for the 2009 season.

It may not necessarily have made a difference to results on the track... but it had made a difference.

"Since the new Fly Navy paint scheme there has been a lot more interest in the bike," said Mark.

"I was surprised to see how many people in

the crowd have connections with the Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Navy."

So far this year Mark has finished 18th, 15th and 13th giving a total of four championship points.

The first round at Ty Plas race circuit on Anglesey was an ideal opportunity to run the bike for the first time after being laid up for the winter.

The second race at Oulton Park was dry and sunny and despite a slipping clutch, the officer managed his first points-scoring finish.

Sadly in the trophy race later in the same day the clutch failed completely, requiring a full clutch change before the third round back on Anglesey.

With a new clutch Mark managed to knock one second off his lap time, averaging 71 mph

per lap, earning a 13th-place finish.

Round four was also staged on Anglesey. Things went well in practice and the first race saw a 14th-place finish.

The second race ended on lap eight (of ten) when Mark high-sided going into the notorious corkscrew bend before the start finish straight.

Not much damage to either bike or rider, so you'll see the Fly Navy 100 Yamaha Racing Team back at Anglesey on October 3 and 4.

The last race of the season is back at Oulton Park in Cheshire on October 24-25... which handily ties in with HMS Illustrious' visit to Liverpool for the end of Fly Navy 100 celebrations (see page 7).

Mark is also supporting the charity Shelter Box, who have loaned him a tent for use in the paddock.

## Racing red white and blue (part 2)

BRAVING the UK's fastest circuit - Thruxton - Brig Mike Hickson raced his Mallock Mk20 once more for the RN Automobile Club.

A Classic Clubmans double header (qualifying and race on the Saturday and another qualifying and race the following day) supported the International French and British truck racing annual meeting.

Large crowds and some damp weather on the Saturday saw 21 Classic Clubmans line up on slicks for qualifying and Brig Hickson, averaging 105 mph, was pleased with a solid seventh in a very competitive field. Some close racing and a number of good battles during the ten laps of the race saw the brigadier retain his seventh position.

Having learned from his experiences on the Saturday and having made some adjustments to his car overnight the brigadier managed to run significantly quicker in qualifying on the Sunday and was pleased to end up fifth on the grid.

The race that followed was a real battle, with places changing hands on virtually every lap and cars running very close together. Racing very closely with two other cars the officer alternated between fourth and sixth.

Brig Hickson finished in sixth, 0.6 secs behind the fifth-placed car with the car one place down just 0.2 secs behind him.



Picture: PO Dutchy Holland, HMS York

## Bickleigh young riders shine



A TEAM of 20 riders and horses from Bickleigh Saddle Club, accompanied by supporters and family and friends, travelled the long route from the South West to compete at the RNRM equestrian Championships held at Sparsholt College in Hampshire.

The Bickleigh riders competed in all disciplines within the competition against some of the best riders from not only the Royal Navy and Royal Marines but also the Army and RAF.

After the long journey and a night spent camping nearby to their horses the Bickleigh riders performed excellently on the first day of the competition, picking up several rosettes including first and second for the team event and the 'best young rider' trophy which

was won by AB Laura Mealing and presented by Rear Admiral Simon Charlier.

After a well-deserved barbecue on the Saturday evening and another night under canvas the competition on Sunday continued at an increased pace.

The Bickleigh riders again competed in all events, including the show jumping relay against the clock, entering five teams who were all cheered along by a vocal group of loyal supporters who had travelled up for the weekend.

The club is based at Bickleigh Barracks, Plymouth, and membership is open to all Service personnel and their families. Details on 01752 727038 (mil 93788 7038) or [www.royalnavyequestrian.co.uk](http://www.royalnavyequestrian.co.uk)

● LPT Emma Phillips vaults over one of the jumps at Sparsholt

## Navy Days hits hockey

THE scene was set for improved attendance at the revolutionary Navy-wide mixed seven-a-side hockey event with up to two dozen teams earmarked to head to Portsmouth.

But thanks to Navy Days which meant leave was cancelled in Plymouth, around 14 teams dropped out of the event.

On the plus side about 100 commemorative medals were given out to members of the seven teams which contested one day of the envisaged three with 21 matches played on an 'all play all basis'.

The reduced event had the look of an inter-branch event rather than inter specialisation.

Submarine stalwart PO(Logs(SC)) Steve Parfitt was unable to travel but produced a team from Neptune - all Jack and Jenny Dusties - who played their hearts out.

The Naval Air Command team were still on tour in Holland when the event began but they still managed to get a team - complete with a pilot under training and an observer and representatives of most FAA branches.

The Royal Marines have always supported this event and Royal being Royal, they always come to win. A sprinkling of wives and female guests made up for a lack of female Bandies and Royal achieved what they set out to do: first place overall - no cups, just the same medals as everyone else, but once again, the marines have the bragging rights.

There was a big 'thank-you' to all the Warfare people who turned up: there were EWs in the shape of Lt Cdr Lee McEvoy and AB Lee Kadis (who broke a finger - the weekend's only casualty).

Former CPO EW 'Cokey' O'Kane, as a guest, submariner Gav Gettings, schoolie Giles Dunn, guest goalkeeper MEA Singer, navigator Dee McKenna, PWO Lt Cdr Sharky Ward, the three HMs, Navy chairman Cdr Mark Darlington and his sons Josh (14) and Noah (12) completed a splendid family-orientated team.

Staking a strong claim for Man of the Tournament were Lt Cdr Brian Sweeney, the ME team organiser and HMS Sultan's hockey officer, and former lieutenant and Navy U23 boss, now civilian instructor at Sultan, Richard Croker.

## PTIs peak of perfection

ROYAL Navy physical trainers from Portsmouth set a new record for the gruelling 24 Peaks Challenge in the Lake District.

The team from HMS Nelson beat 15 other defence or nautical teams from across the UK, climbing 24 peaks in 16 hours 23 minutes - shaving more than two hours off the previous record set last year.

The victorious quartet comprised CPO Ronnie Scott and LPTs Kev Green, Les Dennis and Matt Shortt.

LPT Carl Thorpe was forced to retire through injury after climbing four peaks and the team's efforts were co-ordinated by safety driver LH Frankie Powell.

"We pushed our pace for the duration with a maximum stop of five minutes every three hours which also included a map check, water and food stop," said Kev.

"We came up against teams who had competed in previous races who were aware of most grid references so had the edge in navigation.

"We found the whole challenge tough as we made it tough on ourselves by pushing the pace hour after hour.

"We didn't expect to win or break the record but through team work and cheerfulness in adversity we overcame wind, rain and pain to win."

The event is on track to raise more than £90,000 for Seafarers UK.

## Next month



## SPORT



**Joint account – in Scotland for international war games**



**Waves and waves – a week of adventurous training at Culdrose**



**Club feat – the front-line role played by 771 NAS**

**Plus**

**Going down to Southport, going to have ourselves a time... Sea Cadets hold regatta on Merseyside**



● 'chuting gallery... CPO Steve 'Shaka' Hähn (824 NAS) and PO 'Pony' Moore (HMS Triumph) unfurl the White Ensign over Beni Mellal in Morocco with the Atlas Mountains in the background

# Beni hills ideal for skydivers

**TWENTY** Royal Navy skydivers headed for the Atlas mountains for a rare – and stunning – foray into foreign skies.

And 20 Royal Navy skydivers, you'll be pleased to know, came back from foreign skies – seven of them as newly-qualified jumpers.

Exercise Freefall Africa (you can guess what's involved and where it was) took seven complete novices – Surg Lt Eames (submarine training), AB Tinsley (HMS Triumph), LH Wyatt (Westminster), LH Legge (SFM Devonport), LS Patterson (820 NAS), POPT Murphy (RAF Halton), and L/Cpl Hogg (847 NAS) – to Beni Mellal in Morocco (about 100 miles northeast of Marrakech).

All wanted to throw themselves out of a perfectly serviceable aircraft. And who is the RN to reject such a perfectly reasonable request...

The accelerated freefall (AFF) course is designed for people who wish to learn how to skydive from scratch.

It comprises an initial ground school, seven jumps under the control of AFF Instructors, and a low-level 'Hop and Pop' jump. The final stage consists of ten solo consolidation jumps, after which they are fully qualified skydivers.

The first load took off with advanced instructor Lt Cdr Gibbs (NCHQ), AFF instructors Cpl Tuckley (1 Para) and Stuart Murtha, formation skydive coaches CPO Hähn (824 NAS) and PO Moore (HMS Triumph), and experienced skydivers CPO Brown (702 NAS) and Lt Adams (849 NAS).

As the aircraft, a Pilatus Porter, climbed through the Atlas Mountains to 15,000ft above the dropzone it became clear that the scenery on the way to altitude would be almost as exciting as the skydive back down to earth.

Despite the realisation that Africa was clearly not always bikini and shorts weather, the seven students were soon able to put the skills they

had been taught into practice, 13,000ft above where they stood.

Although not all of the students had the opportunity to jump on the first day it wasn't long before all had successfully completed their first skydive, some needing slightly more encouragement than others; one of the instructors was heard to say to one reluctant jumper: "You've had two children, how can anything seem hard after that? Get in the door!"

In addition to the AFF course, there were also five intermediate skydivers who had already completed a qualifying course: PO O'Rourke (847 NAS), CPO Parkin (847 NAS), PO Gregory (HMS Vigilant), Cpl Ellis-Stansfield (AFCO East), and Mne Kennedy (847 NAS).

The next stage for these skydivers was to further advance their skills whilst in freefall, not just on their own but in formation with others as well. This progression of training under qualified formation skydiving coaches would earn them their FS1 (Formation Skydiving 1) qualification.

To achieve that, the students were required to complete a skydive with three other jumpers in which they had to achieve a minimum of four specified formations relative to each other, in approximately 35 seconds.

In doing so, they would demonstrate that they could move in all directions, work at close proximity to other jumpers in the air in a safe, controlled manner, and move into clear airspace from the other jumpers to facilitate a safe deployment of their parachute.

They were coached throughout this progression by CPO Hähn, PO Moore and Lt Cdr Gibbs, with assistance from CPO Brown and Lt Adams.

"It was impressive to see the effort that was put in by everyone to overcome sticking points – including PO O'Rourke's tendency to fly in a circle and PO Gregory adjusting his fall rates to work with some of the smaller skydivers after

racing the aircraft down earlier in the week, and almost winning!" said CPO Hähn.

When not in the air the students and instructors alike could either be found at the hotel poolside, or sitting around the balcony debriefing area in the setting African sun.

In addition to a chilled beer there were classic evenings such as the quiz night, with the surprise appearance of everyone's favourite quiz master: Bananaman. Only a POPT could find space for fancy dress when the rest of the skydivers had been so limited on luggage allowance due to the amount of equipment required...

Throughout the progression of the intermediate skydivers the AFF students continued to literally fly through the required levels.

LH Legge continued to have difficulty overcoming her fear at the door, but it was with determination, a smile, even the occasional tear, and the support of her instructors and fellow students that she achieved not only her personal goals, but also joined her fellow students in completing all 18 AFF jumps to qualify for a licence.

It is perhaps more impressive that all the students achieved this milestone as well as learning to pack their own parachutes after each jump.

Since returning from Africa, all of the students have continued to skydive.

LH Legge has overcome her door phobia, and has since completed numerous canopy handling courses, while Surg Lt Eames has demonstrated a natural ability for formation skydiving and is close to achieving his formation skydiving certificate.

The intermediate jumpers all represented the Navy at this year's Inter-services Parachute Competition, while the coaches obtained their required demonstration clearance and are now part of the Royal Navy Raiders Parachute Display Team.



## The things people will do for a medal...

**EIGHTEEN** months ago, Lt Paul Goddard spied an Ironman medal in an antiques shop in Weymouth. "The only way to own one was to buy one," the submariner (pictured above) based at DSTL, Winfrith reasoned.

Ironman requires a 2.4-mile swim in a reservoir ("I couldn't swim a stroke of front crawl"), a 112-mile bike ride ("I hadn't ridden for years"), followed by a marathon ("I was a runner so I had some base fitness").

And so began the road to Bolton, hosting the UK race of the 2009 Ironman championships.

Some 1,500 athletes from three dozen nations descended on the Lancastrian town.

Few last-minute preparations for the race could have been worse than those of the submariner. We'll let him tell the story...

“The first bout of sneezing came on Thursday: this was the first time I thought that a year's worth of training for Ironman could be in jeopardy.

Friday was the full-on nose blowing every ten minutes, Saturday seemed to ease up. Sunday the head and eyes started to ache and my sides were stone cold. Monday I felt so bad that I stayed in bed and Tuesday wasn't much better.

Wednesday I felt well enough to go to work and Thursday I managed a short swim; this aggravated my throat and I developed a cough. Saturday we set off for Bolton.

As we approached the car park/field the traffic was at a standstill. We eventually got into the waterlogged field only for the car to get stuck in the mud.

Luckily some local scallies helped to push me out. I cautiously drove to the other end of the field. I was the last one; they closed the field and then allowed cars to park on the road that I had just spent an hour queuing on.

Now a short walk with the bike down towards the reservoir and another field that resembled Glastonbury. Registration was straight-forward and quick albeit muddy. They announced that the race brief would be in the Reebok Stadium in Bolton. So back to the car for more mud surfing.

I went to bed at 7pm, my two-year-old daughter thought that screaming the hotel down was much more interesting than going to sleep.

She eventually went to sleep at 8pm. I on the other hand didn't sleep a wink until I got out of bed at 3.30am for my breakfast of muesli and room temperature milk. I left the hotel at 0400 to go to the Reebok stadium. I was then bussed to the start.

Next was to put the wet suit on and walk 400m to the reservoir. We entered the water at 5.50am: this was the first time I'd seen the reservoir.

All my open-water training had been in the sea so it was quite pleasant not to taste salty water.

It was at this point I realised

Continued on page 46



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