

NAVY NEWS

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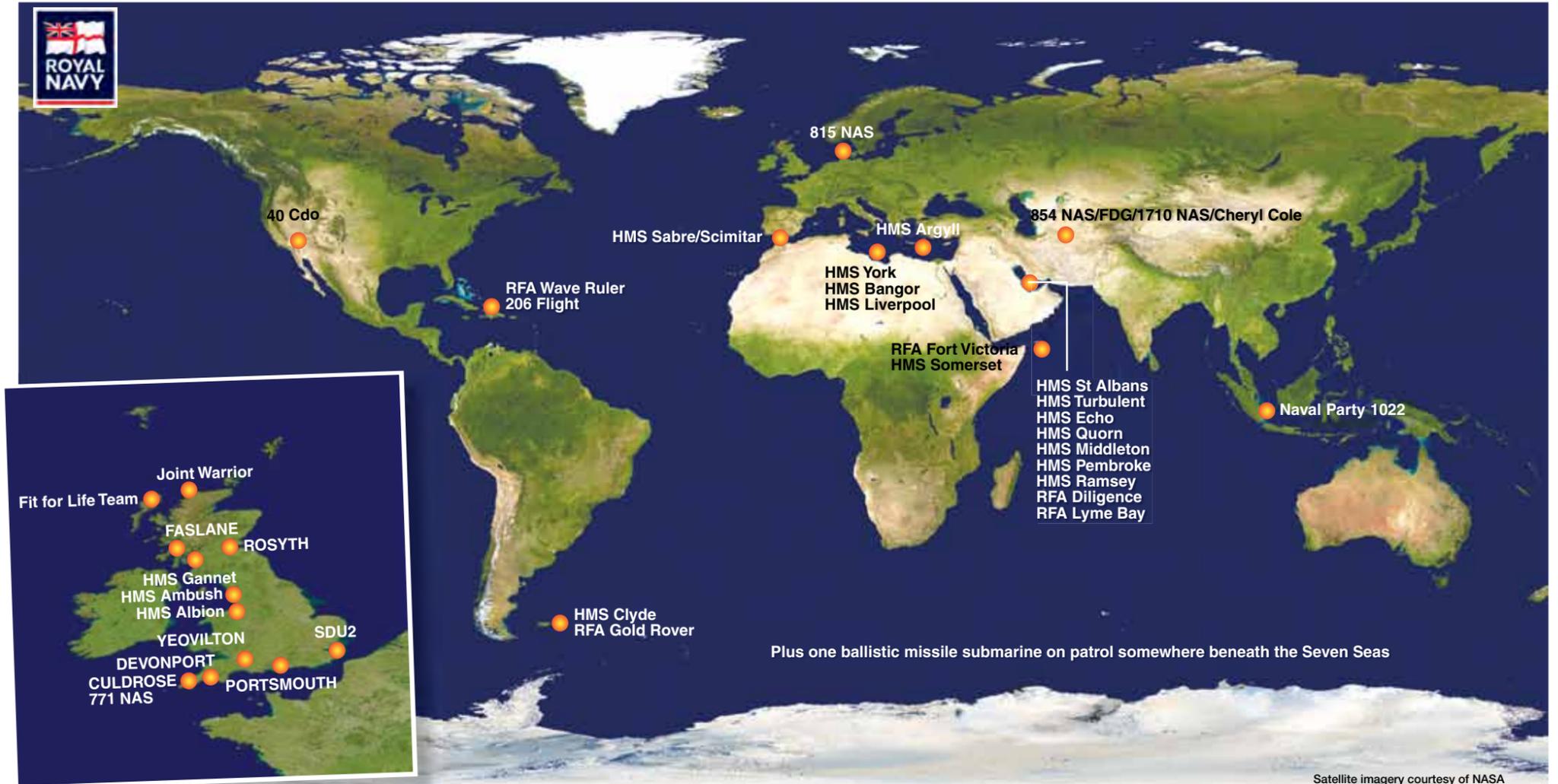
THREE STRIKES TRIPLE BLOW DEALT TO PIRATES

**DUTY
DONE
MARINES
RETURN**

THE KING IS BACK

TWO Jungly Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force lift off at Camp Bastion on their final mission over Afghanistan. After more than four years supporting Allied troops the veteran helicopters have returned home to Yeovilton. See page 7. Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill, CHF





Fleet Focus

THEY warned the end of the monsoon would see a surge in pirate activity off the Horn of Africa.

And international naval leaders were right.

Luckily the pirate-busters are out in force too. In a "good week for the UK" and a bad week for the freebooters, one attack was thwarted, two mother ships seized, 20 or so suspects in the hands of the authorities thanks to **RFA Fort Victoria** and **HMS Somerset** and their concerted efforts in the Indian Ocean (see opposite).

Key to two of those busts was a Merlin of **829 Naval Air Squadron** – a helicopter which this past month has celebrated ten years on the front line. We look at the aircraft's achievements (see page 22), while the Merlin training unit, **824 NAS**, is our Squadron of the Month (see page 12).

The Merlin of **HMS St Albans** has been in action in the Gulf as the frigate conducted exercises with the Kuwaitis and helped save the lives of three Pakistani sailors (see centre pages).

St Albans will soon be replaced by her eldest sister, **HMS Argyll**, while **HMS Monmouth** has finished her east of Suez tour of duty by returning to Devonport on a glorious autumn day (see page 5).

With the death of Colonel Gaddafi, operations off Libya are winding down – but certainly not over. Minehunter **HMS Bangor** has been surveying the country's harbours and dealing with the detritus of war (see page 9) while **HMS Liverpool** clocked up her 150th day on patrol. She should be on her way home right now as **HMS York** is taking over NATO duties from her (see page 6).

The Libya mission is over for the 'eyes-in-the-sky' Sea Kings of **857 Naval Air Squadron** who played a crucial role in clearing the way for Apache gunship strikes. Meanwhile, 857's sister squadron, **854**, continues to deal blows to the Taleban in Afghanistan, helping snare weapons, drugs and insurgents (see page 6).

The Lynx of **815 Naval Air Squadron** decamped from Yeovilton to the Baltic for NATO's 'Danex' (Danish Exercise) – a very large war game involving 40 ships and boats, and more than 3,000 troops (see page 40).

The Royal Marines from **40 Commando** decamped even further from Somerset; they've spent three weeks in California's Mojave desert for live-fire training alongside the US Marine Corps (see page 15).

There's good news for the Silent Service: A-boat No.2, **HMS Ambush**, has conducted her first test dive, while boat No.5, **HMS Anson**, has been formally laid down (see page 11).

In home waters, **HMS Bulwark** led the RN input at the latest Joint Warrior exercise in North-West Scotland (see page 14). The war game was the 'final piece of the jigsaw' which ensured the assault ship was ready to assume the duties of Britain's flagship from her sister **Albion** which is beginning a three-year lay-up (see right).

The clearance divers of **Southern Diving Unit 2** were heavily engaged in Kent, dealing with scores of aged ordnance off Sheppey and blowing up a German wartime mine picked up by a trawler (see page 4).

Another constant presence around the UK is the **Fishery Protection Squadron**. We focus on its vital and often unsung work (see pages 20-1).

And finally... Thank you and a very warm welcome home to the men and women of **3 Commando Brigade** who have completed their six-month **Herrick 14** deployment in Afghanistan and are now back in Blighty (see page 8).

And an equally warm welcome to the Jungly air and ground crews of **845** and **846 NAS** whose Sea Kings have returned to Yeovilton after more than four years in Helmand (see page 7).



Farewell – for now

EYES right.

The Guard of Honour of HMS Albion line up for the highlight of the assault ship's belated birthday celebrations.

Led by the Band of HM Royal Marines Scotland, roughly two thirds of the ship's company marched through the historic heart of Chester – Albion's affiliated city – as hundreds of Cestrians cheered and applauded them.

The Freedom of the City Parade – the highest civic honour the good folk of the city can bestow – concluded with a Royal Salute in Town Hall Square, where the Princess Royal was the guest of honour.

She launched Albion down the slipway in Barrow in 2001 and has followed the ship's progress avidly ever since.

The high tempo of operations meant that the 18,000-ton assault ship could not mark her birthday on the actual day (March 9) or even in the spring.

Albion led the RN's keynote deployment of the year (Cougar 11), the first run-out for the nation's new Response Force Task Group, formed under last year's defence review.

As well as long-planned exercises in the Mediterranean and Middle East, for a short time she found herself taking part in operations off Libya, assisting with the first Apache helicopter strikes launched from HMS Ocean.

With Cougar completed and the ship's company, including the permanent Royal Marines Commando unit attached to Albion, 6 Assault Squadron, suitably rested courtesy of post-deployment leave, they

took the ship to Liverpool (Albion can navigate the Mersey, but not the Dee...) for six days berthed at the great port's impressive cruise liner terminal.

Although the visit to nearby Chester (which included a civic reception to satiate appetites after all that marching) was the highlight of the stay on Merseyside, Albion did open her gangway to hundreds of visitors for two days.

The visit to the North-West was pretty much the last opportunity for Albion to enjoy her place in the sun.

After a whistle-stop trip to the Baltic in support of the British defence industry, Albion sailed into Plymouth on Saturday October 15 – the last time she will do so for three years.

In line with last year's Strategic Defence and Security review, she's being put into extended readiness in Devonport for three years, followed by a refit before working up and taking over from her sister **Bulwark**. It will be 2016 before she resumes her front-line duties.

Before that lengthy lay-up, however, the ship's company are engaged in five months of 'de-storing' – removing equipment and stores.

"Although it's a sad day to see such a modern ship placed alongside for such a long time, we all look forward to welcoming Albion back into the Fleet in 2016," said her Commanding Officer Capt James Morley.

"Everyone onboard is tremendously proud to have served in such a capable and versatile ship."

Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright, HMS Albion

Lancaster alive again

ROUGHLY half the ship's company are now living aboard HMS Lancaster as she passed another milestone in her lengthy revamp in Portsmouth Naval Base.

October 4 was the latest date chalked off by the sailors and engineers and shipwrights from BAE Systems as the messdecks and 'hotel services' were ready for use once more.

Of the 160 sailors currently drafted to the Red Rose frigate (she'll have in excess of 180 when fully manned), around 90 are now living aboard.

Lancaster is one of the few 'stag ships' still left in the Fleet – although female officers serve aboard the frigate, the messdecks are men only.

And they are quite chuffed with the revamped accommodation, where new carpets, bulkheads, mess squares and numerous alterations have significantly improved inhabitability.

"I'm really impressed with the messdeck that I'll be calling home for the next couple of years," said 20-year-old ET David Daish, for whom Lancaster is his first ship. "All the lads have pulled together to make it a great place to relax when not at work."

The move aboard marks the handover of security and safety to Lancaster's Senior Naval Officer Lt Cdr Charlie Guy, who's in charge until Cdr Steve Moorhouse takes over as Commanding Officer this month.

"I'm delighted with the refit progress which has allowed us to meet this major milestone of moving back on board our ship. An extraordinary amount of work – both from BAE Systems and the ship's company – went into ensuring the ship was ready," he added.

The Type 23 frigate – named after the Queen in her capacity as the Duke of Lancaster – is undergoing her fourth refit in her 21-year career under the White Ensign.

The ship's due to return to sea very early in the new year, to add to the 512,000 miles already on the clock. It will take in excess of a year to fully regenerate her; she's not due to deploy on active service before spring 2013.





Gotcha!

A BURST of fire from HMS Somerset's Merlin sends fountains of water shooting up from the Indian Ocean – and the third pirate take-down by the Royal Navy in a week reaches its climax.

Minutes after this photograph was captured by LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, Royal Marines boarded the dhow, freed 20 Pakistani sailors held hostage and arrested four men, bringing the actions of a suspected pirate 'mother ship' to an end.

The dhow is believed to have been the launchpad for pirate attacks off the Horn of Africa – among them a hijacking which resulted in international coverage for the Senior Service – and international praise for freeing 23 men trapped aboard a brand-new Italian merchantman.



The seizure of the Montecristo heralded a dramatic week for the men and women aboard HMS Somerset and RFA Fort Victoria – and a very bad week for the freebooters.

ACT I
The monsoon season is over and naval leaders warn of a likely increase in pirate activity off the Horn of Africa...

The 56,000-tonne merchant ship Montecristo was bound for Vietnam with a cargo of scrap metal when she came under attack from pirates some 620 miles off the Somali coast.

Her crew had taken precautions to protect their ship – the upper deck was covered with barbed wire in a bid to thwart any hostile boardings and there was an impregnable 'citadel' to retreat to if pirates got aboard.

Armed with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades, pirates did indeed get aboard the Montecristo and the crew fell back on their citadel in the engine room – where they were safe and from where they could steer the ship.

After flashing an initial distress signal, "everything went quiet" from the cargo vessel as the pirates cut off all communications from the Montecristo.

The SOS was flashed to Fort Vic and the American frigate USS De Wert, carrying out a concerted piracy sweep for NATO's Operation Ocean Shield.

Fort Victoria normally serves as a 'one-stop supply ship' for Royal Navy vessels providing food, stores and ammunition, but right now – as she was last autumn – she's home to a specialist counter-piracy team of sailors and Royal Marines, headed by Capt Gerry Northwood.

With the faster De Wert in the lead and Fort Victoria following, the two ships sailed for 30 hours to reach the Italian cargo ship's position.

"When the US frigate arrived, we hoped the pirates would surrender," said Capt Northwood.

They did not – nor did they feel threatened by the presence of a maritime patrol aircraft overhead. But the British and Americans were able to observe that the pirates did not hold any hostages – they were not parading them on deck.

It was at this point that a member of the Montecristo's crew climbed into the funnel and threw a message in a bottle over the side.

Thanks to a flashing device to reveal its location, that bottle was picked up by the De Wert's sailors – and the message passed on to Fort Vic.

Capt Northwood explained: "It said: There are 11 pirates on board with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades, all communications on the ship are down, and the crew are safe, in the engine room, and have control of the engines and steering. The crew's final comment was: Please help.

"And that's what we went in to do."

Fort Victoria's Lynx helicopter was sent up in the air to circle the ship, and when that failed to persuade the gunmen to give themselves up, Royal Marines and Royal Navy teams hit the water in sea boats and Offshore Raiding Craft – a "collective overwhelming show of force", said Capt Northwood.

"At that point they got the message and came out on deck and surrendered. Our boarding teams were then able to go on board, detain the pirates and search the ship to make sure there were no pirates hiding. Then we got a message to the crew to tell them everything was safe."

ACT II
The Montecristo resumes her voyage in the hands of her crew while the Italian Foreign Ministry and the ship's owners offer their "utter and most felt gratitude" to her rescuers.

Meanwhile just 100 miles off the Somali coast, Somerset is closing in on the dhow Hibid Fidi which has been acting suspiciously...

Devonport-based Somerset was on patrol under the banner of the Combined Maritime Forces – the Bahrain-based international coalition of 25 nations determined to sweep criminal activity from the waters of the southern Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Somali Basin, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

She was alerted to the actions of the 100-tonne fishing dhow Hibid Fidi, which was not acting the way a fishing vessel would normally behave.

Somerset spent the month-long passage from the UK to her operational area honing her boarding and counter-piracy skills both in the Mediterranean and east of Suez. Practice made perfect in this textbook take-down.

The frigate scrambled her Merlin to shadow the dhow before the frigate's Commanding Officer, Cdr Paul Bristowe, sent in his commando boarding team.

Once the dhow was under their control, it became evident that the Pakistani crew were being held against their will by the Somalis – whose weapons were then seized and destroyed. The suspected pirates were subsequently handed over to Coalition forces.

"This was a good day for the UK and Combined Maritime Forces – and another victory for all nations who rely on these waters for trade or fishing stock," said Cdr Bristowe.

"We have not only set free these fishermen, but denied criminal elements the use of an ideal command platform."

"Our extensive training set us up for success. Somerset's team reacted calmly and professionally in this swift and effective boarding."

ACT III
HMS Somerset has rejoined Fort Victoria and the hunt is on for the mother ship suspected of launching the attack on the Montecristo.
The first rays of light are cast upon the Indian Ocean on Friday October 14 as HMS Somerset's Merlin heads out on patrol...

At dawn Somerset's helicopter struck gold: one dhow, two dozen men aboard, two skiffs – a typical pirate action group.

Cdr Bristowe brought his boarding teams to alert as the frigate made best speed for the vessel's position.

Also closing in was Fort Vic and the suspect dhow was soon surrounded: two imposing grey hulls, one RIB, one offshore raiding craft and one Merlin.

"This operation demanded high levels of seamanship to ensure that the dhow was kept under close observation as the boarding party moved in," said Fort Victoria's Commanding Officer, Capt Shaun Jones RFA.

And still the dhow refused to stop. Overhead, the helicopter's crew watched as the suspected pirates cast a skiff adrift and tossed weapons and other piratical paraphernalia into the ocean.

It was only when there was a burst of fire across the bow from the .5 calibre machine-gun on 829 NAS' Merlin and Royal Marines Commandos were scaling the side of the dhow that the suspected pirates capitulated.

"Approaching the dhow before boarding was quite tense. Through my weapon sight I could see dark figures moving in the shadows on the bridge. We quickly boarded and secured the dhow then mustered the 24 occupants on her bow," said Capt Rod Yapp RM, the commander of the boarding team:

His men found ample evidence that the vessel was being used as the launchpad for pirate attacks: there was a large cache of boarding ladders, weapons, a second attack skiff and equipment from a previously-attacked ship.

"There was a clear indication that the suspected pirates found on the dhow were well-practised and knew what they were doing," Capt Yapp added.

"One of the weapons had recently been fired and was well maintained – as was the RPG rocket. I think that if we hadn't disrupted this group of suspected pirates, it is quite possible that they would have attacked another merchant vessel."

The green berets also found 20 Pakistani sailors being held hostage.

While they were free to go on their way once evidence gathering had finished, the four suspected pirates who were apprehended were handed over to the Italian authorities on suspicion of their involvement in the attack on the MV Montecristo.

"This decisive and timely action by the Royal Navy, along with the rescue of the Montecristo on October 11, will send a strong message to those who wish to commit piracy in this part of the world," said Capt Northwood.

"Somali-based piracy seeks to undermine the freedom of the seas across a wide area. Their victims are local traders and fishermen of the Indian Ocean as well as sailors in the large merchant ships carrying the vital trade on which the UK economy depends."



FINIS



Astute jetty over-runs criticised

A MULTI-million pound project to provide future submarines with a hi-tech jetty has been singled out as a scheme which is too expensive – and too late.

The huge Valiant jetty – a 44,000-tonne structure specifically designed as a home for Astute-class boats when they are alongside in Faslane – is four years overdue and will cost £92m more than the original £134m estimate.

The jetty was placed on the MOD's 'Project of Concern' list by the then Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox as Whitehall looks to get a tighter grip on the 50 most expensive military equipment projects.

Earlier this year it established the Major Projects Review Board to hold those top 50 projects – with a total value of more than £100bn – to account.

Dr Fox said the board was satisfied with the progress made by Falcon and Watchkeeper, but not with Valiant.

It will come under scrutiny again when the committee reconvenes next month.

The jetty was ordered in 2003 and was delivered to Faslane in 2009 – later than its original estimated completion date of October 2008. It is not expected to be ready for use by boats based on the Clyde until 2012.

When operational, the Valiant jetty will not only be able to meet the needs of the seven boats in the Astute programme, but also the Trafalgar-class submarines due to move to Scotland later this decade. The structure is expected to support the Silent Service for 50 years.

Revamp for Richmond...

HMS Richmond has become the latest Type 23 frigate to be 'souped up' as she receives a £20m revamp package.

The Portsmouth-based warship has moved down the coast to Devonport and entered the 'frigate shed' in the dockyard where ten months of work began.

Between now and next summer the remaining ship's company plus engineers from Babcock will fit the second-generation Seawolf missile system ('mid-life update') which effectively doubles the range of a 23's air defences.

That accounts for one fifth of the cost of the refit. A further £800K will be spent on new command system.

As for the remaining £15m, that will be devoured by improved venting to make life aboard more bearable for the ship's company in challenging climates; the range and accuracy of the 30mm guns are being enhanced; and the MOD's latest computer system for use by the 180 crew day-to-day, among other enhancements.

Richmond is due to return to the Fleet in the summer of 2012.

...and Torbay

A FEW hundred yards away from Richmond, 13 months of work have begun on HMS Torbay – which should be harder to spot when she emerges from her overhaul.

The Trafalgar-class submarine is receiving a new shade of paint to better camouflage her if she has to operate in shallow waters (long-standing *Navy News* readers might remember the same boat trialled a similar paint scheme about five years ago).

Around 300,000 man hours of work are lined up for the hunter-killer during the 'Revalidation and Assisted Maintenance Period' (RAMP).

The boat will spend 33 weeks in dry dock undergoing work on her hull inside and out, plus her propulsion systems, while the communications kit aboard will be substantially improved.

Baggers' key role in Helmand and Libya

DON'T judge a book by its cover.

And don't judge a Sea King by the fact that it's a rather sluggish, 40-year-old flying bus, for want of a better word, with an incongruous black sack hanging off one side – because the box of tricks inside the venerable Bagger version of the helicopter has played a key role in two conflicts in recent weeks.

The Baggers – officially the Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control, the nickname comes from that distinctive sack – helped to defeat the forces of Colonel Gaddafi in Libya and have been singled out by American commanders in Afghanistan for helping to trap insurgents on the ground.

In the case of the Libyan mission, 50 personnel from 857 Naval Air Squadron are safely back at their home in Culdrose after paving the way for Apache gunship strikes.

Using two Mark 7 Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control helicopters, crews flew almost 100 operational sorties over Libya – all at night and usually lasting around three hours. In one month alone, the helicopters were airborne for nearly 150 hours. 857 was only due to go to sea for around six weeks in the spring on the Cougar 11 deployment.

But in late May it was ordered to support operations off Libya and all the people, kit and helicopters were shifted to the 20,000 tonne helicopter carrier HMS Ocean.

The mission was to clear a path for the Apaches – finding safe routes in and out of Libya without being spotted.

The Baggers also fed back real-time information about ground movements in Libya, passing vital information back to headquarters in Britain and at NATO for analysis.

"We did what we did at short notice, on war-fighting operations at sea with a squadron just back from Afghanistan. We very quickly got to grips with operating at sea again," said Lt Cdr Geoff Hayward, 857's CO.

"Our main task was 'wide area surveillance', protecting Ocean and her escorts, providing awareness of shipping and movements so that Ocean could be in the best position to launch the Apaches and maintain surprise.

Lt Cdr Hayward continued: "The key to Ocean's success was launching Apaches on their strike missions and to do that our Sea Kings were critical.

"It wasn't just because of the situational awareness of land and air, but also because we acted as a communications link between the Apaches and the command on Ocean. That link was crucial to the success of missions.

"There's a great feeling coming back to the ship, seeing the Apaches there, attending the briefing and realising that the information that you passed to them was absolutely vital."

As well as the aircrew flying the demanding missions, 857's CO praised the squadron engineers back on HMS Ocean who worked around the clock ensuring the helicopters were always ready for action. "They deserve a big pat on the back – they've worked extremely hard and achieved a fantastic serviceability rate."

Air Engineering Officer Lt Mark Roddy said everyone in the squadron was aware of the importance of the missions – and were kept fully up to date with events.

"People were told what we were trying to achieve, and that motivated everyone. The first night of strike operations stands out – seeing the lights on the shore, we could see the tangible results of all the effort that we'd put into that mission. It made a massive difference."

"We set out for seven weeks – and managed to stretch it to four months, maintaining a very high operational tempo. I think we've proven again how versatile these squadrons are."



Post leave and training, the 857 team will take their place on the front line once more in Afghanistan...

...which is exactly where their sister squadron 854 has once again proven its worth ensuring yet more busts on the ground – this time more than £2m of heroin and two bomb makers were snared.

Ground troops intercepted drug runners trying to smuggle 2,200lb of heroin – with a street value in the UK in excess of £2m – after being guided by naval aviators and their Sea Kings bristling with state-of-the-art sensors.

In another strike, US Marines of 2nd Light Armoured Reconnaissance Battalion apprehended two bomb makers suspected of being behind producing improvised explosive devices which are a menace to Allied and Afghan peacekeepers – and the civilian populace.

The helicopters of 854 Naval Air Squadron – based at Camp Bastion, hub of the British operation in Afghanistan – fly on average one mission a day, using the radar in the bag which gives the Sea Kings their nicknames to track movements thousands of feet below on the ground.

The aircraft, four crews and a couple of dozen maintainers and engineers ensure that the Baggers, which have flown more than 1,000 missions over Helmand since they arrived from Culdrose in Cornwall back in May 2009, are constantly ready to

support the international mission.

Cdr Pat Douglas, Commander of the Maritime Sea King Force – 849, 854 and 857 Naval Air Squadrons as well as the rescuers of 771 NAS and Gannet Flight in Prestwick – says that working as part of a larger team including UK and Coalition troops in the air and on the ground, his men and women are scoring successes nearly every week, be they drugs busts, arrests of insurgents or capturing arms and bomb hauls.

The Baggers' most recent successes are:

- tracking vehicle movements in southern and central Helmand to provide near-real time information to ground troops and disrupt insurgent supply routes and drug-smuggling activities;

- ensuring the US Marine Corps seized 2,200lb of heroin, prompting US commanders to comment: "Sea King support is invaluable in denying freedom of movement to insurgents and smugglers."

- tracking a suspicious vehicle and sharing information with other coalition reconnaissance aircraft which meant the US Marines intercepted and captured two experienced insurgent bomb makers.

"We are strangling the insurgents' lines of communications," says Cdr Douglas categorically. "Almost weekly there's a seizure of heroin, arms and the ingredients for improvised explosive devices which could claim many more lives. We fully understand what we're achieving."

"The Baggers are unique, they are on the spot, they can react quickly, they're working with people they know and they're having an impact."

Unlike the Bagger mission in the Mediterranean which is now over, the Helmand mission goes on – and, says Cdr Douglas, it is worth acknowledging that it is a physical and demanding mission for all.

"In early October it's 42°C by day in Bastion. Inside the helicopters it's 50°C. By the time the aircrew have walked to their Sea Kings with all their kit on and climbed in, they are soaked in sweat. Then they are flying demanding six and seven-hour missions. They are exhausted by the time they return," Cdr Douglas adds.

"The ground crews work exceptionally hard too in the same dusty and hot environment – the Sea Kings are airborne 180 hours a month, supported by a very small team, but it's a rare day indeed when all 3 aircraft are not available to be flown when needed – frankly a Herculean effort from the maintainers."



Divers have a blast in Kent

THIS is a 400lb German wartime mine snared in the netting of a fishing boat off the Kent coast.

Just days after detonating a massive haul of British wartime bombs from the mud off the Isle of Sheppey, Royal Navy clearance divers were back in the county, this time to deal with 400lb of German ordnance.

A four-man team from Southern Diving Unit 2, based at Horsea Island in Portsmouth Harbour, was ferried out to the trawler Wayward Lad in a police launch, after the fishermen reported their dangerous catch about a mile off Margate.

The quartet – led by PO(D) Ken Smith – attached a charge to the World War 2 device, which measured about a metre (3ft) in diameter, and carefully lowered it about ten metres (33ft) to the sea bed.

A 1,000-metre (3,280ft) cordon was put in place by the Coastguard while a controlled explosion was carried out, causing a 25-metre (82ft) plume.

Even more impressive, however, was the haul from a four-day operation to clear a beach on Sheppey, when more than 80 bombs from the two world wars were safely detonated.

After being called to three jobs in quick succession on the Sheppey shoreline – resulting in two dozen old bombs and explosive devices being rendered safe – the team decided a concerted search of the beach and mud near Leydown-on-Sea might prove fruitful.

Four divers from SDU2 – CPO Ian Fleming, LD 'Cags' Lacey and AB(D)'s 'Billy' Piper and 'Sid' Lawrence – spent four days working in the mud off the east coast of the island.

Donning waders and carrying 35kg of kit on their backs, the quartet spent up to five hours at a time in mud up to their shins and knees half a kilometre offshore.

Their thorough search unearthed 86 pieces of ordnance – four 16lb high explosive bombs of Great War vintage and 82 WW2 11½lb practice bombs.

After so long in the sea, many of the bombs were encrusted with mud and marine life which had to be carefully chipped away by the divers with hammers.

"Some looked like rocks – but picking them up you knew they weren't, they were too heavy," said AB(D) Lawrence. "Most of them were in amazing condition once we'd carefully got the crust off – the mechanisms were still working."

Once all the ordnance was gathered, the divers dug a hole in the mud, put two charges on top, then covered it all with 30 mud-filled sandbags before detonating the lot in a controlled explosion.

"We're fairly certain we got most of them – you can never be sure you got them all. From our point of view it was good training, and the locals were brilliant – they were really good to us. The café kept making us drinks which was much appreciated."

Of the ordnance destroyed, the four WW1 bombs were used by the Royal Naval Air Service – the forerunner of today's Fleet Air Arm – which began life just a few miles away from where the divers were working at Eastchurch aerodrome.

The 16lb bombs were used by, among others, Submarine Scout Zero airships which patrolled the North Sea in search of U-boats.

As for the WW2-era ordnance, they were practice smoke bombs which gave off white smoke when they impacted.



● Mission accomplished... Four 857 Naval Air Squadron aircrew walk away from their Sea King on the standing at RNAS Culdrose after four months supporting operations in Libya
Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, RNAS Culdrose

Strength and Argyll

BRITAIN'S oldest – but also most powerful – frigate is heading east of Suez to join her sisters in the ongoing international effort to keep the sea lanes free and clamp down on illegal activity.

HMS Argyll – and her Lynx flight from 815 Naval Air Squadron in Yeovilton – are conducting intensive training as they push through the Mediterranean, bound for the Gulf to relieve HMS St Albans.

Argyll sailed from Devonport at the end of September and, after a brief pit stop in Gibraltar, has continued eastwards through the Med with training exercises daily for her ship's company and Royal Marines boarding team to ensure they're ready for the challenges of six months east of Suez.

Among the training serials the 200+ souls aboard have conducted are night flying and winching exercises involving the 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx and a 'crash on deck' (lots of water from the fire-fighters, no actual crash, thankfully).

Although at 22 years old Argyll is now the oldest frigate in the Fleet, an 11-month £20m refit in Rosyth ensures she's also the most capable.

Some 300,000 man hours were spent overhauling existing systems and machinery and fitting new ones: the latest version of the SeaWolf air defence missile system, a new main gun, new command system, one new main gas turbine, two generators, and the MOD's latest e-mail and internet system, DII(F).

It's taken 13 months to bring the Type 23 out of that refit and turn her into a cutting-edge warship ready for anything that global events can throw at them.

After passing Operational Sea Training in May and June and conducting a 'High Seas Firing', the launch of a live SeaWolf missile at a drone target, Argyll spent two weeks loading stores and ammunition, and specialist equipment designed specifically for her impending mission was installed.

Having not seen operational service for over two years and with an extensive and at times arduous trials and training process under their belt, the men and women aboard are keen to get back to the Royal Navy's core business on the front line.

"I have absolutely no doubt that the ship and her crew are ready in all respects to face whatever challenges lies ahead and importantly, we recognise the sacrifices made by our families as we leave home for what is a substantial period of time," said Argyll's Commanding Officer, Cdr Paul Stroude.

"I am delighted to be sailing for operational tasking today and am extremely proud of the hard work, perseverance and sheer determination that the whole ship's company and supporting agencies have put in to get us to this point."

Family fun for Montrose

HMS Montrose took more than 120 friends and family to sea off Plymouth just days before the frigate deployed for seven months.

The ship is sailing south to relieve HMS Edinburgh as the Atlantic Patrol (South) Ship.

Before departing Devonport, the Type 23 hosted a traditional families day in recognition of how important the support from loved ones is when deployed for months on end.

The ship was serenaded out of harbour by the skirl of the bagpipes from Ian Kempshall.

Families were treated to the rare chance to see (and hear) a gunfire salute exchanged with 29 Commando Regiment RA in the Citadel on Plymouth Hoe, fire-fighting, a children's magic show (not typically part of life aboard...), and a tour of the ship to see where the 180-strong ship's company work, eat, sleep and relax at sea.



Picture: LA(Phot) Joel Rouse, FRPU West

Westminster's DCT to go back to sea

THE 'capital ship' – HMS Westminster – should be coming to the end of a four-week rigorous training package about now.

The Portsmouth-based frigate is gearing up for an impending maritime security patrol, tackling all forms of illegal activity on the high seas.

That shouldn't come as too big a shock to the Westminster men and women; they deployed at very short notice earlier this year to enforce the arms embargo imposed on the Gaddafi regime and support UN Security Council resolutions during the open stages of the civil war in Libya.

That was six months ago, however, so before she could deploy again 'top-up training' was the order of the day in the hands of the Flag Officer Sea Training team off Plymouth.

They devised a four-week package – 'Directed Continuation Training' or DCT – which is adjusted to meet a ship's needs, depending on where she's deploying and her mission.

For the initial stage of DCT, there were 68 assessors embarked – roughly one FOSTie for every three members of the ship's company. They will pass judgement on Westminster's performance on November 3, the day of their final inspection.

"My ship's company have been keen to get going on this demanding, but professionally-satisfying period of training," said Westminster's CO Capt Nick Hine.

"We deploy next year and DCT hones our skills to ensure that we are confident to meet whatever awaits us."

'A credit to the RN'

I SEE a large silhouette of a Duke...

Fittingly, this is the Black Duke, outlined against a glistening Plymouth Sound and environs on a beautiful early autumn day, thus bringing to an end six months chasing pirates and other ne'er-do-wells months east of Suez.

There were some 500 people waiting to welcome home HMS Monmouth in unseasonal October sunshine – temperatures were more akin to those the 185 souls aboard Monmouth enjoyed in their operational theatre.

Among those alongside, the family of 37-year-old sonar expert PO Stephen Slaney from Devonport. Five generations of his family ranging from his grandmother aged 88, to his children Calum, three, Shane, 12, and Immarni, eight.

"It was a good deployment with top achievements being counter-piracy successes," the senior rate said.

"I'm ecstatic to be back. The highlight was having my dad sail back from Gibraltar with other fathers on board as a goodwill gesture."

His wife Carmen said: "It's fantastic to have him back. It has been a long trip. We've all missed him. He has arrived back in time to see Immarni's ballet competition, having missed one, she is very excited. We hope this is his last time deployed at sea in his career."

LS Joe Halliday from Liverpool, was hugged by his fiancée Lynsey who was holding their five-month-old son Dylan who was dressed in a baby's sailor suit and hat.

"It's fantastic to see Dylan and the family again. I was allowed to fly home to see his birth, but he has changed so much already. He looks very healthy," said Joe, while his fiancée pointed out that "Now is the time for Joe to take over night shifts at home and enjoy bonding with his new son."

Fellow leading hand Gavin Smith, 30, was met by his fiancée Hayley, 24, of Plymouth, and their children Chloe, six, and Riley, 18 months. Gavin said: "I'm really looking forward to spending time with my family. We did have some interesting port visits and it was my first time on a deployment when we have had direct engagement with pirates. It shows how important it is to have the Navy out on these deployments."

Since Monmouth left Devonport in the spring, the ship has patrolled a vast area – the Red and Arabian Seas, Somali Basin, Indian Ocean and Gulf – working with numerous other nations to tackle terrorism, smuggling, drug running and piracy. She also found time to take part in large-scale multi-national exercises.

In doing so she's clocked up more than 30,000 miles on patrol (using up more than three million litres of fuel in the process – enough to fill the tanks of around 55,000 Ford Focuses).

Her Lynx helicopter, callsign Black Knight, was launched on 140 sorties – that's 208½ hours airborne or more than eight and half days.

And in the galley the chefs chopped, boiled, roasted and mashed 16,250kg potatoes (which is about the weight of ten Ford Focuses), grilled 1,134kg steak, fried 2,015kg sausages, baked 2,280 loaves of bread, all washed down with 59,400 cups of tea.

But the most important statistic of all: 17 hostages freed. Following an intelligence tip-off, the Black Duke closed in on a suspected pirate mothership in the Gulf of Aden.

Those suspicions proved well-founded.

The boat ignored every warning Monmouth issued. It did not ignore a boarding party of commandos and sailors, who promptly freed 17 men held hostage – and detained several suspected pirates.

Most encounters with shipping in these waters, thankfully, is rather less dramatic.

Much of Monmouth's time was spent establishing the 'pattern of life' on the waters of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean – understanding what is a fishing vessel and what might be a pirate mother ship (because the two look pretty similar).

In between, there were breaks in the island idyll of the Seychelles, where the ship's company took part in National Day celebrations and offered some engineering assistance to the local coastguard, and a longer period of rest and recuperation in the UAE metropolis of Dubai.

Throughout this demanding deployment – in addition to the vast swathes of ocean to cover, the ship's company have had to contend with the vicissitudes of weather in the region from the monsoon season to scorching summer temperatures – the men and women aboard the frigate have shone, according to their Commanding Officer, Cdr Dean Bassett.

"My ship's company have given their best and ensured that Monmouth was always well prepared to deal with the many challenges encountered whilst deployed," he said.

"I'm immensely proud of their commitment and professionalism; they are a credit to the Black Duke and the Royal Navy.

"The biggest challenge was coping with the separation from

families and loved ones who are left behind. It was fantastic to see hundreds of people lining the jetty waving and cheering as we came alongside.

"I would like to extend my personal thanks and that of my ship's company to all the people who have given their support to us both before and during our deployment. Without

the knowledge of and practical support given at home then providing operational effectiveness would be that much harder."

Monmouth's mission east of Suez has been taken over by her sister Somerset. Upon arriving in the Mediterranean in mid-September, the Black Duke was on stand-by to support operations off Libya, but was not required and so continued on her journey home.



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Beginning, middle and end



Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, FRPU East

SHE was there almost at the beginning.

She was certainly there at the end. Veteran destroyer HMS Liverpool notched up her 150th day on patrol off Libya as the country's former dictator was killed and NATO prepared to wind down its seven-month mission, Operation Unified Protector.

After six months in the Gulf of Sirte – with only a few short breaks to pick up stores and supplies, some key maintenance and a bit of a breather for the 240-strong ship's company – the Portsmouth-based warship was due to be relieved by her sister, HMS York, as *Navy News* went to press.

"It has been a long deployment but the ship's company have risen to every challenge put in front of them," said the destroyer's Commanding Officer Cdr Colin Williams.

"We've seen a huge amount of change since we arrived. To be part of it has been a huge privilege."

The destroyer was originally earmarked to carry out her traditional function of air defence for a task group – in the form of the Cougar deployment headed by HMS Albion.

Instead she was ordered to leave Portsmouth at the end of March and take her place in the international naval force mustered off Libya to support UN resolutions and enforce an arms embargo and no-fly zone to protect the country's citizens.

Since then she has spent 81 hours at Action Stations, been fired at ten times – and opened fire on 12 occasions, launching 111 high-explosive and 98 star shells from her main 4.5in gun.

All that gunfire has meant six resupplies of ammunition at sea, plus a further 29 replenishments at sea to top up on fuel, stores and food.

The destroyer's fighter controllers have taken charge of 14 different types of Allied aircraft over Libya and the Med, directing their actions for 360 hours.

And Liverpool's own air power, her 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx, has notched up 230 hours

conducting maritime security operations in support of the NATO mission.

As for the ship herself, she's spent three out of every four days at sea since leaving the Solent, adding more than 43,000 miles to her 'odometer' in the process.

Statistics only tell a tiny part of the Liverpool-Libya story, however.

"As one town after another fell under the advance of the rebels, the view from the sea of the fall of Tripoli is something the crew will never forget," said Lt Ebony Dalton, one of Liverpool's officers of the watch.

"Instead of artillery and rocket fire, fireworks lit up the capital's skyline and jubilant cheers were heard via the radio."

There was more jubilation a few days later when the ship escorted the new flagship of National Transitional Council forces, the Al Hani, into the capital.

Cdr Williams said a Libyan vessel contacted the warship and said thank you to the crew for helping overthrow Colonel Gaddafi.

He added: "That was hugely satisfying. To know what we've been doing is appreciated by the Libyan people makes a huge difference because we can show the guys and girls on the ship what we have achieved and what we have been a part of."

With that handover looming, thoughts on the ship are beginning to turn to home (had Liverpool stuck to her original Cougar mission, she would have been back in Portsmouth in August).

"We can't wait to get back and see our families," said Cdr Williams. "I'm hoping we get a tremendous welcome and I'm sure we will."

"Stopping and talking to people around the ship, it's the number one topic of conversation: which friends and family are going to be there? What they're going to do the first night they're back? What meal they are going to have? There's a lot of excitement and expectation."

His ship is due home, world events allowing, on November 7.



Libyan return for HMS York

MEANWHILE, it is back to Libya for the White Rose warship as HMS York leaves Portsmouth to relieve her sister Liverpool.

The destroyer left the Solent bound for North Africa, where eight months ago she was called upon to deliver aid to Benghazi and evacuate 43 civilians to Malta in the opening moves of the Libyan civil war.

In the intervening period, the Type 42 resumed her original deployment in the South Atlantic and Pacific.

Britain's fastest destroyer (top speed 34kts – although there's some dispute that one of her sisters went faster in the 1980s...) sailed to support NATO's ongoing Operation Unified Protector – a mission still 'on' as we printed.

The quick turnaround to deploy again put a considerable amount of pressure on the 240 ship's company but, as ever, they rose to the challenge.

"There was a hell of a lot to squeeze in before being waved off by the families – summer leave, a major engineering package, range re-qualification, some upper-deck TLC – and the usual trip to Devonport to see the FOSTies!" said Lt Tom McPhail.

LS(AWW) Steve Austin added: "It's been a tough few weeks but everyone has just got on with it and made sure we were ready to take over from Liverpool."

"We've heard all about the action she's had, especially the gunnery, so getting out there and hopefully getting amongst the action drove everyone on."

Almost a year to the day after firing off Sea Dart missiles in preparation for her previous deployment, the destroyer was back off the north-west coast of Scotland to fire some more.

"It was brilliant seeing the missiles go off from the flight deck," said AB(WS) Danny Maloney.

"It was a beautiful day and you could see them blasting away for miles. It's nice to know that our main weapon system still works so well – even after all these years."

York didn't have any time to revel in a successful missile shoot though – she was firing up her Olympus engines and heading for the Cape Wrath gunnery ranges while tiny fragments of the Sea Dart target were still falling into the sea.

Exercising the mighty 4.5 main gun was next, practising Naval Fire Support procedures used so successfully by Liverpool to take out Libyan targets ashore.

One of the 4.5 Gun Controllers, LS(AWW) 'Pony' More, was the man with his finger (actually his foot) on the trigger.

"We were on the gunline for most of the day, getting called by the spotters to fire on the shore targets."

"There was a lot of high explosive sent down and we destroyed everything they asked us to – it was a pretty awesome day."

LET(WE) Scott 'Slinger' Wood, the captain of the gunbay added: "We worked up a proper sweat down in the magazine. The 4.5 kept pounding away and we just had to keep sending more and more rounds up. Lifting so many 4.5 rounds is definitely good for your own 'guns!'"

As York left Portsmouth accompanied by a rousing send off from loved ones – who might not see the ship's company for up to seven months – the destroyer's Commanding Officer Cdr Rex Cox said: "I am immensely proud of my ship's company who have put in a remarkable effort in preparing the ship for operations in very short order."

"We deploy to the Mediterranean focussed on the mission ahead and supported as always by our families and friends, who remain firmly in our thoughts."

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Medals of honour

SAILORS, Royal Marines and airmen who distinguished themselves in the fight against piracy, the insurgency in Afghanistan and the now-completed mission in Iraq to have been recognised by the Queen.

Some 15 men and women have been singled out for bravery, selfless acts and dedication to the Service in the latest series of Operational Honours announced by the Ministry of Defence.

From recent counter-piracy operations, Lt Joseph Thomas – now serving with 820 NAS at RNAS Culdrose – receives the Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air.

He demonstrated "calm captaincy and consummate professionalism under hostile fire" as first pilot of a Merlin which was supporting boat teams involved in an anti-piracy operation east of Suez.

HMS Cornwall spent six months on a concerted effort to keep buccaniers in check – a mission which was highlighted by a BBC news crew.

The deployment, which proved to be Cornwall's last, was led by Cdr David Wilkinson. The 45-year-old from Titchfield, near Fareham, is made an OBE for providing "an outstanding example of exemplary service". His citation says he "made an enormous contribution to the reputation of the United Kingdom on the international maritime stage in the Middle East."

He says the award is as much for his 250 men and women than his personal actions about the Type 22 frigate: "This is a huge honour for me but I am the first to acknowledge that this is recognition for the wonderful efforts of my ship's company who were a superb inspiration."

Unsurprisingly given the heavy British commitment there, numerous awards go to personnel who have served in Afghanistan.

Aside from the expected decorations for gallantry – three Royal Marines Commandos have been awarded the Military Cross for their deeds – among the more unusual roles in theatre recognised is that of Lt Cdr Pauline Aird.

The 37-year-old marine engineer from Plymouth served

with the Joint Support Force at Camp Bastion, but visited all areas of operation in Helmand, Kabul and Kandahar, travelling to a number of Forward Operating Bases and Patrol Bases.

It was Lt Cdr Aird's job to report operational accidents and non-battle injuries – and then identify ways to prevent them happening again... which she did, a key safety role which has been recognised with the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

She had to use her initiative to 'hitchhike' using whatever means available; her colleagues joked that she had travelled more widely than anyone else in theatre.

A very different, but no-less-demanding task was performed by Lt Cdr Sarah Oakley in the Gulf during the latter stages of the Royal Navy's mission in support of Iraq. She acted as the operations officer on the Al Basrah oil platform, one of two terminals in the northern Gulf which are key to Iraq's prosperity.

From the platform, some ten miles off the Iraqi coast, Lt Cdr Oakley co-ordinated not only the day-to-day business of defending the terminal, but also the training of Iraqi sailors and marines by personnel from the US Navy, US Coast Guard and Royal Navy.

Her commanding officer at the time, Capt Andrew Betton – now in charge of Britain's biggest warship HMS Ocean – said: "Sarah Oakley worked tirelessly to sustain the delicate balance between operations and training, displaying imagination, intelligence and pragmatism to deliver a robust and effective defence of the critical oil infrastructure. She deserves public acclaim for her unrelenting commitment to the Iraqi Maritime mission."

That acclaim comes in the form of the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

■ A full list of Royal Navy and Royal Marines operational honours can be found in our 2-6 section on pages 37.

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● Four Junglies conduct a farewell fly-past over the sands of Camp Bastion before departing for Yeovilton

Picture: Sgt Steve Blake, RLC

'Hugely impressive' deeds

IT IS mission accomplished for veteran Naval helicopters over Afghanistan after a gruelling four-year mission.

The dark green Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force are returning to Somerset after more than 12,500 hours in the skies of Helmand supporting the international mission on the ground.

The Sea King Mk4s – known throughout the Royal Navy as Junglies thanks to the deeds of their forebears in the Far East in the 1960s – are flying back to base at RNAS Yeovilton where their crews will begin converting to newer, faster and more capable Merlins.

The Junglies flew their final sortie in support of Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan) on September 30, the last of more than 3,800 individual missions since arriving in theatre back in 2007.

Since then they have safely transported more than 80,000 troops from numerous nations around the country and delivered more than 700 tonnes of ammunition, water and supplies to various outlying bases.

The duties of the helicopters – flown and maintained by the men and women of the two front-line Jungly units, 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons – have included ferrying battlefield casualties to field hospital, inserting sniper teams into mountain observation posts and carrying fighting troops and their kit into the heart of enemy territory.

Throughout, the squadrons have carried out their duties with minimal fuss – the Commando Sea King Mk4 has not been the poster pin-up of operations in Afghanistan.

Despite the workhorse tag, however, those in theatre are sorry to see the Junglies leave after giving such loyal and reliable service.

"The Commando Sea Kings have been hugely impressive during their time in Afghanistan," said Cdr Matt Grindon, Commander of Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan) – and a former CO of the Jungly training squadron, 848 NAS.

"They will be missed by the troops and by my operations team, who often rely on the Sea King crew's ability and versatility to get the job done."

The Sea Kings deployed to Afghanistan with

improved rotor blades and engines to cope with the climatic challenges posed by the country, as well as defensive aid suites to fend off attack.

For each hour in the sky the helicopters require around seven 'man hours' on the ground – which has put considerable demands on the engineers, technicians and maintainers.

Luckily, thanks to more than 40 years' experience working with Sea Kings and the aircraft's simple, rugged design, it rarely suffers any significant maintenance issues and, when it does, it is relatively easy to repair.

"My engineers have performed admirably to keep our aircraft flying in a difficult and testing environment," said Lt Cdr Lloyd Shanahan, the last detachment commander of the CHF Sea Kings in Helmand.

"My thanks also go to the aircrew: through their determination and will to help our troops on the ground, they have made a real and quantifiable contribution to the war effort in Afghanistan."

Air and ground crew have now returned to Yeovilton for reunions with loved ones and a spot of leave before returning to work.

Their deeds – and those of their predecessors since 2007 – are much appreciated by Capt Matt Briers, the Commanding Officer of Commando Helicopter Force.

"For four years, the sailors and Royal Marines of CHF have provided vital support to the people that matter: the troops on the ground," he said.

"Whilst the Sea King is reaching the end of its life, we now have the certainty of a new aircraft to take the Force forward, and return to our core role of supporting the Royal Marines.

"We leave Afghanistan offering our best wishes to those who continue to serve there."

The Junglies will now begin the conversion process to the newer Merlin Mk3, currently being operated by the RAF in a troop-carrying role; as a larger and more powerful helicopter, it can carry more troops and cargo – and faster too.

Other duties back in the UK include returning to the more usual task of supporting the Royal Marines – CHF's *raison d'être* – including training for amphibious operations, desert training overseas and cold weather/mountain training in Norway.



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Lusty in hands of FOSTies

THE flight deck of Britain's last aircraft carrier hums and throbs again as two months of rigorous training begin for HMS Illustrious off the South Coast.

Lynx helicopters from 702 Naval Air Squadron in Yeovilton and Merlins of 820 NAS in Culdrose have joined Lusty in the Channel ahead of seven weeks in the hands of the Navy's most exacting training organisation.

The Portsmouth-based warship – converted to a commando and helicopter carrier during her £40m refit completed in July – is on Operational Sea Training off Plymouth.

The package tests the 750-plus men and women aboard on everything the 22,000-tonne ship might be expected to deal with in the real world, for in the new year she'll be Britain's on-call helicopter carrier, taking over from HMS Ocean which is currently deployed east of Suez.

That includes the battle damage, enemy threats and general mayhem that is part and parcel of the work of FOST sea riders.

The programme will also allow Fleet Air Arm air and ground crews to conduct at-sea training.

In the case of 702 NAS, it's a chance to give trainee Lynx fliers a taste of operating from a warship at sea on their long path to front-line duties with 815 Squadron.

And for the Merlins of 820 it's a chance to reacquaint themselves with their traditional role of operating *en masse* from a flat-top (with sister unit 814 NAS, 820 has typically been a 'carrier squadron').



● Brig Ed Davis, CO of 3 Cdo Bde, addresses the troops as his team hands over to 20 Armoured Brigade at Lashkar Gah in Afghanistan
Pictures: Sgt Wes Calder RLC

Mission completed

THE battle standard of the Royal Marines no longer flies over the headquarters of British operations in Afghanistan – the commandos' latest mission in Helmand is complete.

The Globe and Laurel was lowered and the banner of 20 Armoured Brigade – a white gauntlet on a blue background – hoisted at Lashkar Gah, home to Task Force Helmand.

The formal ceremony marked the end of Operation Herrick 14, led by the green berets for the past six months, and the beginning of Herrick 15.

Elements of the Royal Marines brigade, such as 45 Commando from Arbroath and the Commando Logistic Regiment from North Devon, have been returning to the UK over recent weeks as the complex *roulement* of forces in Helmand is completed.

But with the Royals' mission largely complete, 3 Commando Brigade's CO Brig Ed Davis formally handed over command to his incoming opposite number from 20 Armoured Brigade, Brig Patrick Sanders.

Brig Davis said the tour had seen significant developments in the capabilities and confidence of Afghan partners.

He added: "We have concentrated on strengthening our relations with our Afghan partners in the Army, Police and Helmand provincial government.

"They have worked hard to build up their capacity to provide security and protect the people from insurgents, as seen by the transition of security authority for Lashkar Gah to the Afghan National Police in July.

"We have worked closely with the Provincial Reconstruction Team to continue to stabilise and develop insecure areas.

"The men and women of 3 Commando Brigade – some of who have made the ultimate sacrifice – and their families can be immensely proud of what they have achieved in keeping our country safe by improving the lives of the Afghan people."

Brig Sanders praised the men and women of 3 Cdo Bde – in addition to the Royals, the brigade comprises sailors, Naval clearance



● The Globe and Laurel of 3 Cdo Bde is replaced by the banner of 20 Armoured Bde at Lashkar Gah

divers dealing with the threat of homemade bombs, Royal Marines musicians providing medical support to teams of Royal Navy medics, not to mention Army gunners and engineers – for making "real and lasting progress" since arriving in Helmand in March.

"Our objective is to continue to build on the success of 3 Cdo Bde and continue to help the Afghan people achieve their own goals of

providing their own security," said Brig Sanders.

His force will total some 6,500 personnel from across the Services – the Royal Navy's mission does not end with the return of 3 Cdo. Not least, the Fleet Air Arm is committed in the form of the 'eyes in the sky' of 854 NAS and its 'bagger' Sea Kings which provide crucial intelligence on insurgent movements on a daily basis.

Back-up teams in front line

THE men and women who've provided the vital back-up support for Royal Marines in Afghanistan have returned to Britain after completing their six-month tour of duty.

The Commando Logistic Regiment Royal Marines – not just green berets, but also sailors and soldiers – is responsible for a raft of duties in support of 3 Cdo Bde: medical aid, maintaining vehicles, and running 'combat logistic patrols' (crucial resupply convoys).

The regiment, based at RM Chivenor in North Devon, deployed *en masse* to support its parent brigade, but with Operation Herrick 14 now ended, the CLR men and women have come home.

Throughout its six months in theatre, the logistic regiment was split into four distinct units – with very differing missions to perform:

■ Landing Force Support Party (LFSP) Sqn contained the majority of deployed troops and worked

alongside the regiment's HQ staff, in commanding and running the Combat Logistic Patrols. The party covered miles of hostile, unforgiving terrain as they delivered vital supplies to front-line troops in forward operating bases, patrol bases and checkpoints;

■ Logistic Support (LS) Sqn; 68 strong, part of an advisory training team with the goal of developing the 5 Kandak (Regt), Afghan National Army in logistic specialisations, enabling them to take on responsibility for sustaining Afghan troops in Helmand;

■ Equipment Support (ES) Sqn, partnered with 2 Close Support Btn REME, has been responsible for equipment maintenance and repairs and comprises mechanics, metal-smiths, technicians and armourers;

■ Medical Sqn; the 26 personnel from CLR were part of a larger 96-strong Close Support Medical Regt, providing all medical support to front-line troops, Combat Logistic Patrols and training teams.

Herrick 14: the view from the top

FOLLOWING their return to the UK, the Brigade Commander and COs of two of the main British units deployed to southern Afghanistan over the summer have spoken of a tour during which UK forces worked closer than ever with their Afghan partners to mutual benefit.

Brig Ed Davis, Commander of 3 Cdo Bde RM, Lt Col Oliver Lee, CO of 45 Cdo RM, and Lt Col Giles Woodhouse, CO of 3rd Btn The Mercian Regt, spoke to the media in London to give their accounts of the achievements made during Herrick 14.

Brig Davis talked of the campaign in Helmand as being on track, thanks not only to the efforts made during 3 Cdo Bde's tour, but because of the hard work and sacrifice of those on previous tours and by local forces.

"Increasingly the progress is Afghan-led. The Afghans have developed an appetite to seize back sovereignty from the insurgent," he said.

Putting people first was one of the four main principles that guided the work of 3 Cdo Bde over their tour:

"We put the people first and the insurgents second. The people had become disenfranchised, and we knew that what we had to do was convince them that the opportunity for a better life was through a different route than having to become an insurgent," he said.

Speaking of the population in Nad 'Ali (South), Lt Col Lee said: "When we met the people, they spoke with one voice.

"They unanimously despised insurgency, but felt that if they did anything, there would be reprisals.

"We knew that by convincing them that they could do something about it, effectively we would have potentially 80,000 counter-insurgents to draw on."

To make that change the troops knew that all their decisions and actions must stem from a deep understanding of the people and the difficulties they faced.

"You never stop learning about Afghanistan, especially when you are operating among the people," said the Brigadier, "because it's not obvious immediately what is going on, even with all the clever technology at your disposal."

The concept of 'front-footed precision', not just in the application of lethal force, became the mantra for Herrick 14:

"That was at the top of our list – making sure that we applied force in the certainty of who we were applying it to, why, and relating all of that to the impact it was having on the wider community," said Brig Davis.

From the start of the tour in April, 3 Cdo Bde's approach was to build on the previous Task Force Helmand concept of 'Shape, Clear, Hold and Build' operations, to what was going to be needed for the future – the transition of authority to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and the national government.

"And that's exactly how it played out," said Brig Davis. "The tipping point was July 20 when we handed over lead security authority for metropolitan Lashkar Gah to the ANSF."

"That really lit the touch paper for Afghan appetite and confidence to seize back their sovereignty. From then on that's what underpinned everything and gave the whole thing momentum."

Over the tour, the British force seized 7.5 tonnes of home-made explosives – around eight months of contact IEDs.

In comparison to previous years, across their patch 3 Cdo Bde saw a 45 per cent fall in insurgent attacks against ISAF and ANSF forces – a drop of 86 attacks a week – and an 86 per cent reduction in Nad 'Ali (South):

At the end of their tour, 3 Cdo Bde leaves behind a protected community about a third of the size of Dorset, with 450,000 inhabitants – 65 per cent of the area identified as the target for the transition of authority by 2014.

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SO, DO you come here often?

In the azure waters of the Mediterranean off the historic port of Tobruk two of HMS Bangor's clearance divers disappear into the abyss as they practise descent and ascent drills.

After spending much of her time off Misrata helping to keep the sea lanes to the then besieged port open earlier in the civil war, the Faslane-based minehunter was given a new mission as part of NATO's Operation Unified Protector: to check other ports and deal with the residual threat of mines and other unexploded ordnance.

The result? A 2,000lb mine sitting at the bottom of the Mediterranean, 475ft (145m) down, off Tobruk.

Today it is no more, a legacy of the Gaddafi era blown up by Bangor using her Seafox mine disposal drone.

As she prepared to leave Tobruk, Bangor found a torpedo nearby, and blasted that as well.

Bangor's Commanding Officer, 38-year-old Lt Cdr Neil Marriott said: "To find two pieces of ordnance and destroy them safely is a great result for my ship's company."

"We have been hunting for mines since June, working from port to port, and a success like this means shipping into Libya is that much safer."

Both weapons were spotted by a mine warfare team working in Bangor's darkened operations room, as they kept a close eye on the data fed back by the Sandown-class ship's cutting edge sonar sensors.

Ops room supervisor PO Steve 'Stirling' Moss, 40, from Scarborough, said: "When we're mine-hunting we have several people watching the screens for any contact."

"On this task we saw several items which looked about the size of a mine, and two of them turned out to be real."

"It's not a regular thing to happen, so we're really pleased we found them and we were able to destroy them."

Bangor's 38-strong crew have been part of Operation Unified Protector since taking over from the minehunter HMS Brocklesby, which blew up a mine near Misrata as the war with Colonel Gaddafi raged.

Lt Cdr Marriott, from Edinburgh, said: "We were due to go and work in the North Sea and Baltic when we deployed, but this task took priority and we were ready to do it."

"We have hunted for mines off Benghazi and Brega already, and are ready to search in any other Libyan port that needs it."

"With both of these explosives they were historic, and their detonation methods had corroded, but they could still have been set off accidentally so it was the right thing to do to destroy them."

After completing her search of the waters off Tobruk, Bangor sailed back across the Gulf of Sirte and resumed patrols on the approaches to Misrata, providing assurance to shipping entering and leaving the port, where authorities are working hard to restore normal commercial activities.

Picture: PO(Phot) Paul Punter, FRPU East



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Four-figure bonus

THE small Navy is expanding.

Sadly, we've not gone and ordered more Type 45s... just a new range of officially-sanctioned miniature action figures.

Following the success of the first batch of small Lego-esque figures – which included a Royal Marines Commando and Jack Tar in No.1s – back in May, four more RN characters are being added to the range.

For £1.99 apiece you can pick up a commando sniper, a flight deck handler complete with marshalling wands, a Silent Service officer with trademark submariner's sweater and binoculars, and a Royal Navy diver in full kit.

Also released as part of the new range are four soldiers, including a paratrooper and guardsman, and from the RAF another four personnel, among them a fire-fighter and officer in ceremonial rig.

All the characters come in a sealed bag – which means youngsters have no idea what they're getting until they open it. Alternatively, you can buy a pack of five Royal Marines Commandos for £9.99 if you don't fancy the lucky dip.

The miniature figures are part of an ever-growing range of licensed toys produced by Character Building, with money fed back into the Forces as part of the deal.

Already on toy shop shelves are a Royal Marines commando RIB (price £9.99) and a Type 45 destroyer set (£49.99) which was launched in the summer aboard HMS Diamond.

You can find out more about the range at www.character-online.com/products/Character-Building/HM-Armed-Forces.

We have one Type 45 model set and five random characters each for ten runners up to give away.

To win, tell us the name of the sixth and final Type 45 destroyer currently being built in Scotland.

You can e-mail your entry to toycompetition@yahoo.co.uk or send it in the post to Toy Competition, Navy News, Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH. Entries must be received by mid-day on December 2 2011. Normal *Navy News* competition rules apply.

Alliance work starts

WORK has begun on the Silent Service's most treasured relic as a £6.5m project to restore submarine HMS Alliance gets under way.

HMS Alliance – centrepiece of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum in Gosport and visited by around 50,000 people every year – is badly corroded and sorely in need of a complete overhaul.

In the three decades she's been on show to the public the elements and birdlife have taken their toll of the boat – museum staff were concerned that parts of the submarine might literally fall into the harbour which she sits above in a cradle.

The first step in the challenging restoration project involves building a permanent floor beneath Alliance which means visitors will be able to walk underneath her at last – and from a conservation viewpoint makes it much easier for experts to work on her severely-corroded outer hull.

Earlier this year the Heritage Lottery Fund announced it would pump £3.4m into the restoration

project; more than £2.5m has been raised through fund-raising and donations, but a further £1.5m is required to create a new Alliance gallery.

For in addition to the physical conservation of Alliance – expected to take until the summer of 2013 – the aim is to bring the boat 'back to life' for visitors.

Built to wage war against Japan, the conflict in the Far East ended before Alliance could enter service. Instead, she became a Cold War warrior, serving from the late 1940s until the 1970s.

Inside, the messes will be kitted out to reflect the decades in which the boat served and what museum staff call 'interactive soundscapes' installed to reflect how Alliance looked and felt on operations.

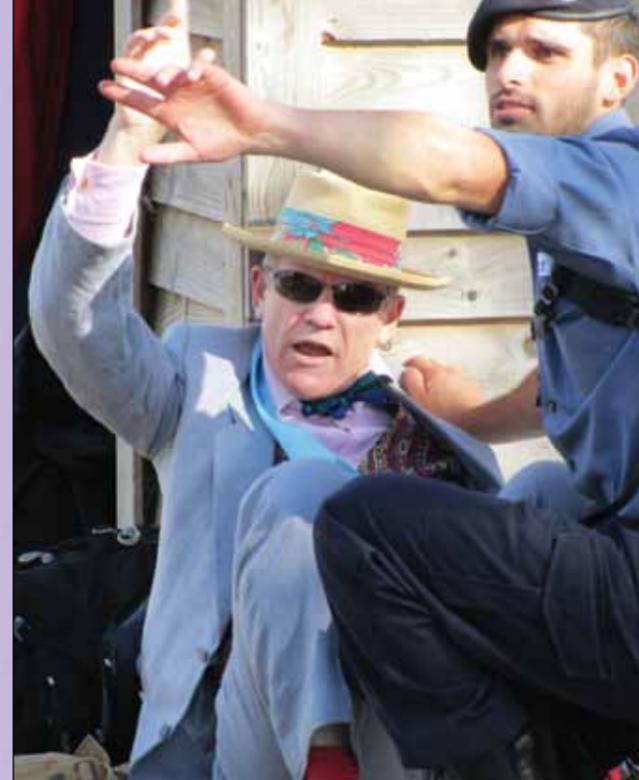
The proposed £1.5m Alliance gallery will tell the boat's story, as well as that of submarine weaponry, to add to the existing exhibition halls on the site.

You can continue to support the Alliance appeal at www.submarine-museum.co.uk or by calling 023 9251 0354 x 244.



● Sailors carry Fred (and what looks like a barrel of rum) to hospital while (right) the Mayor of Gardoqui, Señor Thomas Hardy – aka Collingwood's Chief-of-Staff Capt Michael Evans – receives aid after Hurricane Villeneuve swept through his town

Pictures: S/Lt Lee Fallows, HMS Collingwood



A test of 'neuves

A CAR has run over mines unearthed by a landslide, power to the local hospital is out, the mayor's missing, the locals are panicking.

Luckily 130 sailors are here to save the day.

What are the chances of that happening? Well, with the exception of the mines, quite high...

Trainees at HMS Collingwood were thrown into a three-day disaster relief exercise for some character-building and to test their fledgling command and leadership abilities.

The grounds of the Fareham establishment became the fictional Caribbean island of Santísima Trinidad, ravaged by Hurricane Villeneuve.

The storm had caused a landslide, which sent long-buried land mines tumbling on to a road; a car promptly drove over the devices, detonated them and careered into an electricity pylon carrying power to the local hospital. There were casualties amid the rubble in the town of Gardoqui, where no-one was in charge and the terrified survivors were clamouring for water.

With the exception of the mines, much of the above was based on HMS Manchester's experiences in St Lucia last year – and provided the perfect scenario for Operation Trafalgar (hence Santísima Trinidad, the Spanish flagship in 1805, and Villeneuve, the ill-fated Frenchman defeated by Nelson).

The aim of the exercise was to deliver "intensive action-based challenges for Phase 2 officers and ratings" undergoing training at Collingwood – Phase 2 being

the specialist instruction in weapons engineering and warfare to propel sailors into their chosen careers.

Around 130 trainees from Victory Squadron – the umbrella unit for Phase 2 sailors – were involved and, headed by two young officers on the initial warfare and system engineers and management courses, they separated into nine teams – each named for a Royal Navy vessel at Trafalgar.

Those nine teams were roused at 5.30 on a Saturday morning, put through a wake-up workout regime courtesy of Collingwood's clubswingers, then treated to a hearty breakfast before knocking down to some humanitarian assistance as they dispersed to the four corners of Santísima Trinidad which, wouldn't you know it, was about the same size as the Fareham base...

It wasn't long before one team stumbled across a unique road accident: a car carrying four passengers had been severely damaged by mines, careered off the road, ploughed into the electricity pylon etc etc.

All four people in the car needed medical assistance, power needed restoring, and there was the small matter of a minefield to cross.

A few hundred yards away and another team was busy in Gardoqui trying to restore order, shoring up buildings, tending to casualties who were scattered across a wide area. Among the latter were the mayor Señor Thomas Hardy and his consort Señora Louisa Emily Anns Berkeley.

The nine teams were awarded points for their performances at each stance – judged on their leadership, communication skills, ability to assess a situation and work as a team to resolve it.

With aid suitably dished out and a semblance of order restored to Santísima Trinidad, the sailors staged 'Collingwood's got talent', a variety show laid on to boost the morale of islanders, with guest presenter Doughnut O'Leary (WO1 Mark Fisher) and a host of celebrity judges – Bonita (LCIS Hannah Woodhouse), Amanda Holdall (Lt Debbie Breen), Simon Cowbell (Lt Rich Bowen), David Hasselhoff (Lt Cdr Joe Wood), and Tim Barlow of Take Fat fame (aka Collingwood's CO Cdre Tim Lowe).

Team Orion and their demonstration of Swedish PT (a very regimented physical workout which has recently been reintroduced to the training regime at HMS Raleigh) took the talent gong.

Proceedings ended with a thanksgiving parade where the now-located mayor (who looked uncannily like Collingwood's Chief-of-Staff Capt Michael Evans) took the salute before prizes were distributed for some of the top contributors – and the Freedom of Gardoqui bestowed upon HMS Collingwood.

Aside from all this fun, Cdre Lowe said overall the weekend had been an important milestone in the trainees' careers.

"The purpose of Operation Trafalgar is to develop leadership and teamwork for this new generation of naval personnel," he said.

"Over the weekend the teams and organisers displayed this in abundance and the pride that they generated and portrayed as they tackled the various challenges was nothing short of inspiring."





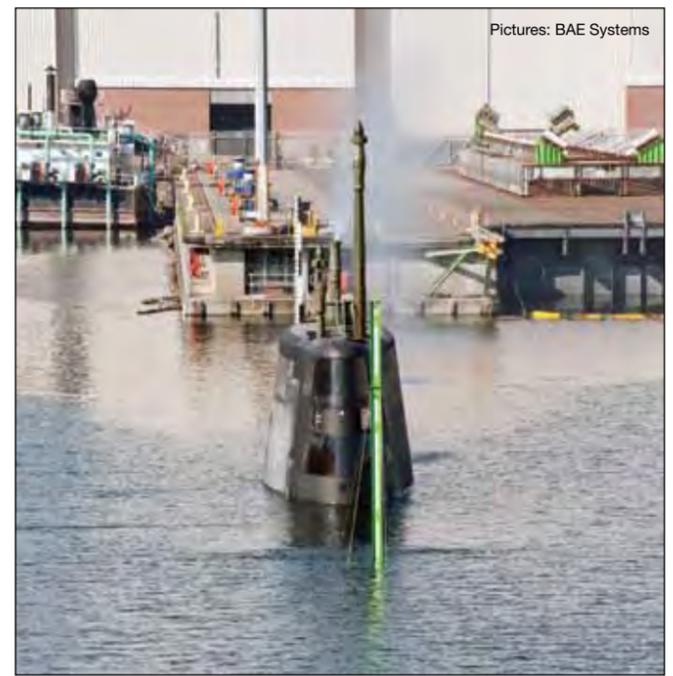
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Pictures: BAE Systems

Going... Going... Gone...

WELL ish, because chasmic though the 'dive hole' in the basin at Barrow is, it's still not deep enough to swallow an Astute-class submarine.

This is the very first dive of the Silent Service's latest sleek black messenger of death: HMS Ambush. The second of seven Astute-class boats made her maiden dive in the basin at BAE Systems' yard in Cumbria, ten months after she was officially unveiled to the world.

The hunter-killer was moved from her berth to a 25-metre-deep (82ft) 'dive hole' long enough and wide enough to accommodate her – and almost deep enough to completely submerge the submarine.

The dive – known to engineers as 'the trim and inclining experiment' proves that

Ambush is safe and stable in the water and measures the submarine's performance at a depth of 16 metres (52ft).

The trials took place over two days and involved more than 70 people including BAE Systems' engineers, Ministry of Defence personnel as well as Ambush's crew.



"This is a major milestone for Ambush and shows she is firmly on track to exit Barrow early next year in order to commence her sea trials," said Cdr Peter Green, the boat's first Commanding Officer.

"Nuclear submarines are some of the most complex machines on earth and therefore to see everything come together in order to dive the boat for the first time is very satisfying.

"It has been a superb team effort between BAE, the Ministry of Defence submarine project team and Ambush's

ship's company."

Preparations for the first dive were extensive; on the equipment side, weeks were spent ensuring all the systems on the boat were tested, commissioned and ready for use by the crew.

Ambush's ship's company spent months training for the moment and, in addition to mastering their own jobs aboard the 7,400-tonne submarine, have also honed their skills in firefighting, damage control, first aid and submarine escape – skills required of every man who wears the coveted dolphin badge on his uniform.

"The first dive marks the start of what is likely to be a 30-year career for Ambush," said the boat's weapons engineer officer Lt Cdr Richard Brooking.

"We've seen from the Libyan operations how important submarines are in the modern defence arsenal – and everybody on board is keen to get the boat to sea.

"We're delighted that things are

progressing so well."

Ambush is due to make her maiden voyage to her future home at Faslane early in the new year.

Meanwhile in the cavernous shed where Ambush was built, work has begun in earnest on the fifth A-boat, HMS Anson.

Defence Minister Gerald Howarth officially marked the start of the main construction on the boat by formally laying the keel.

He unveiled a 190-tonne section, some 11 metres (36ft) high and seven metres (23ft) wide.

It will house 'manoeuvring' – the control centre for Anson's propulsion plants – and the diesel generator module. In the words of their constructors, together they form "the electrical pulse of the submarine".

It's also one of the most sophisticated

and technically-challenging parts of the 97-metre-long (317ft) boat.

Mr Howarth was watched by local school children and some of the 5,000 shipwrights and engineers employed at the Cumbrian yard.



Although keel laying is regarded as the moment the submarine begins to take shape, considerable work has already been carried out on Anson; various sections of the pressure hull have already been completed and will now be pieced together.

Such is the complex nature of this class of nuclear submarines – the most potent and sophisticated hunter-killer boats ordered for the RN – it will be the end of the decade before Anson is in service.

The boat is named after 18th Century Admiral of the Fleet George Anson who guided the Royal Navy through the Seven Years' War

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The wizard factory

IN A month when we're celebrating ten years of Merlin on the front line we shouldn't forget the unit which makes it all happen.

Without 824 Naval Air Squadron – by far the largest of the four Culdrose-based Merlin units – there would be no men and women to fly or maintain the helicopters of the Flying Tigers, their sisters in 820 or the Kingfishers, the dedicated Type 23 frigate 829 squadron.

Everyone who serves in or looks after a Merlin must pass through 824, the feeder training squadron – equivalent in the Merlin world to 849 for the Baggers, 848 for the Jungles and 702 for the Lynx community. Of the 650 or so men and women attached to Merlins, 300 serve in 824 NAS which splits its activities between the real world (ie flying around Cornwall) and 'the synthetic environment', the Merlin Training Facility, an impressive high-tech complex next to the main entrance to the air station.

Since the late 90s the MTF has been training on average 40 aircrew – pilots, observers and aircrewmen – 100 AETS and an equivalent number of mechanical and avionics experts at the leading hand level each year.

Inside the facility's halls are a mock-up Merlin for the engineers to work on and a 'cabriolet version' with the top missing so, among other things, armourers can learn how to load depth charges and torpedoes.

There's a hall containing rear crew trainers, which features the observer's console and back of the cab for the aircrewman.

And in the next hall along the Gucciest (*made-up word – Ed*) of all the MTF's bits of kit, the hydraulic cockpit simulator.

It can be used to practise cockpit procedural, such as pre-flight checks, as well as simulated missions featuring pretty realistic graphics of the current Fleet, and the judders, vibrations and other sensations of flight realistically recreated by hydraulic systems.

With the observer and aircrewman at the console in one hall, the pilots in the cockpit in the simulator in the next hall along, conversing by radio, and the staff in the control room choreographing everything, you can, says 824 NAS' CO Cdr Gav Richardson, "do a full mission rehearsal – a Thursday war, minus the ships. It is a brilliant piece of kit."

Lt Cdr Gary Jagers, Officer in Charge of the Merlin Training Facility concurs.

"It is big brother out here – we see everything they do, what goes right, what goes wrong."

Roughly two thirds of all Merlin training is done in this 'synthetic environment': pilots and observers spend around 150 hours each in the simulators, and around 100 hours flying in the real thing before they earn their wings.

Ground crew arrive at 824 from HMS Sultan where they learn the nuts and bolts (literally) of aero engineering; pilots come from RAF Shawbury where they've mastered the basics of rotary wing flying; and observers make the short move from 750 NAS which teaches the art of fighting in a 21st-Century naval helicopter. For pilots, conversion to Merlin typically takes 13 months.

After more than a decade training personnel for the Merlin Mk1, the complex is about to undergo a major upgrade costing upwards of £60m so it can prepare people for the next-generation naval Merlin, the Mk2.



Calabria.....	1940
Mediterranean	1940
Taranto	1940
Libya.....	1940-41
East Indies	1941
Malta Convoys.....	1942
Atlantic.....	1942
Arctic.....	1944
Falkland Islands.....	1982

Motto: *Spectat ubique spiritus* (Behold, the wind all around them)

Aircraft: Merlin HM1
Engines: 3 x Rolls Royce Turbomeca 2,200shp gas turbines

Rotor Span: 18.6m

Length: 22.8m

Speed: 167kt

Crew: one pilot; one observer; one aircrewman

Endurance: operational radius of over 200 nautical miles

Sensors: GEC Marconi Blue Kestrel 5000 radar; Thales

Flash AQS 950 dipping sonar; GEC-Marconi sonobuoy

acoustic processor

Weapons: 4 x Stingray

torpedoes or Mk 11 Mod 3

depth bombs

Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, RNAS Culdrose

The very last Mk1 aircrew will train next May – by which time the first 824 personnel will be converting to the Mk2 – a case of training the trainers.

Until it re-formed in 2000 as a training squadron, 824 Naval Air Squadron was a front-line Fleet Air Arm unit in many, many guises.

First commissioned in April 1933 as a spotter reconnaissance squadron, the squadron disbanded no fewer than ten times between 1934 and 1970.

It distinguished itself during World War 2 in convoy and escort

duties, bombing raids, spotting for gunnery bombardments and carrying out attacks on enemy destroyers with various aircraft types including Swordfish, Seal, Barracuda and Firefly.

The high point of an illustrious career was its attack on the Italian Fleet at anchor in its main base of Taranto in November 1940.

It knocked several Italian capital ships out of the war for several months and tipped the balance in the Royal Navy's favour at a time when the Mediterranean Fleet was sorely pressed.

In 1982, the squadron deployed with the task force sent to liberate the Falklands and, as well as operational commitments, it was responsible for trials of the Sea King Airborne Early Warning ('bagger') variant, which led to part of 824 NAS re-forming as 849 Naval Air Squadron in November 1984.

As for 824, it finally disbanded in August 1989 and its aircraft were transferred to 819 Squadron at Prestwick before standing up again 11 years later.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES – THE MEN OF 40 COMMANDO

YES it's blocky and blurred, but if you want an image which says 'band of brothers' in the 21st-Century style, then this is as good as any.

These are the men of 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando, pausing briefly for the camera of their fellow Royal, Mne Daniel Gaul, after a successful operation in Sangin.

Our dip into the Imperial War Museum's photographic archives takes us back barely 12 months to the summer of 2010.

For Britain's foremost war museum is not merely a repository for images and accounts of wars past; wars present are just as important.

That's highlighted this month with a year-long exhibition at the IWM's flagship museum in London marking the tenth anniversary of Britain's involvement in Afghanistan.

The Royal Marines were involved in the very first moves in Afghanistan and they have been heavily engaged there ever since – almost continuously.

42 and 45 Commandos, plus their parent 3 Commando Brigade, have just returned.

40 Commando are currently training for an impending return to Helmand.

And it is the Norton Manor marines who feature heavily in War Story: Serving in Afghanistan – and in particular their six-month tour of duty on Operation Herrick 12 during the spring and summer of 2010.

The key Sangin district came under 40 Commando Battlegroup's charge. Some 600 green berets deployed. Fourteen never returned.

The final days of Herrick 12 saw the Royals hand over control of Sangin to American forces.

The Union Flag, incredibly neatly folded, but weather worn and rather dirty, lowered that day of hand-over is one of the



artefacts on display – loaned to the Lambeth Road museum by 40's then Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 Martin Pelling.

From Mne Andrew Hickman, of Charlie Company's Fire Support Group, a knife

used in their attempt to rescue the crew and passengers of a downed American helicopter; it was shot down by a rocket-propelled grenade while trying to save an injured Royal Marine.

From Mne Deeley, boots personalised for amusement (pictured right). And from Cpl Ben Mitchell, Helmet, Mark 7A, with multi-cam helmet cover.

The Norton Manor men have also offered countless images and RSM

Pelling and Sgt Danny Smith gave their time to the museum's oral historians; their first-hand accounts feature in the exhibition.

For Sgt Smith, the exhibition is a chance to honour his fallen comrades.

"I am proud of the



guys we lost, proud of the guys that came back. I like to talk about it, make people interested and maybe make them proud of us," he said.

The exhibition is the result of the museum's War Story project which is endorsed by Whitehall.

The IWM has spent the past couple of years collecting testimony from men and women who've served on Operation Herrick.

Its staff are conscious that unlike previous wars, when participants kept letters and diaries which would in time prove to be vital for historians' understanding of conflict, the fleeting nature of the internet, emails, Youtube, and mobile phone conversations means that testimonies from today's operations could easily be lost.

Among those to support the initiative are the RN's first female recipient of the Military Cross, MA Kate Nesbitt.

"I think it is a fantastic project for people on the outside to get an insight into how we are feeling and how hard it is for us," said the medical assistant, who saved the life of a soldier under fire to earn her decoration.

The first-hand accounts, ephemera, everyday objects and raw footage of troops on patrol, video diaries from patrol bases and candid snapshots showing life off duty, gives a flavour of life on the line, if not the real thing.

Those who were there find combat hard to explain to those who were not.

"The only way I can describe it," says MA Nesbitt, "is that I was detached from the moment and looking down on myself."

The exhibition, supported by Boeing Defence, the UK arm of the defence giant, runs until

November 2012 – as does the IWM's quest for first-hand accounts.

Service personnel wishing to submit their stories can do so via the website www.iwm.org.uk/warstory.

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09/11/2011 10:00 AM

What's the Navy? Ask that nice man in uniform...

IT ISN'T every day you get a history lesson from an Admiral and peer – but it happened to a schoolboy in London who found himself travelling on the Tube with Lord West of Spithead.

The former First Sea Lord was on his way to the annual Seafarers' Service in St Paul's Cathedral when he changed trains at Bond Street and was joined in his carriage by a group of schoolchildren.

Lord West said: "I got on wearing my reefer jacket with aiguillettes, star and medals when a mass of youngsters and a couple of parents and teachers climbed on."

"I was sitting in the corner opposite a young lad, about nine years old, who kept staring at me as though I looked rather strange – which I suppose I did."

"Finally he could contain himself no longer and leant across to ask 'what do you do?'"

"I told him I was in the Navy and was taken aback when he said: 'What's the Navy?' Imagine the shock of a former First Sea Lord to discover this young man had no idea what the Navy was."

As the Tube moved on through Oxford Circus to Tottenham Court Road and Chancery Lane, Lord West of Spithead launched into an impromptu history lecture about the Royal Navy.

He said: "It was a stream of consciousness really. Those few stops didn't give me a chance to cover much of the story, but I told him and his young friends about the importance of the Navy to our nation's history."

"I told him the Navy was there to protect our country and our merchant shipping and of course I included Trafalgar, as we were near to Trafalgar Day."

As he got up to leave the carriage at St Paul's, the pupils and other passengers all clapped. One passenger suggested that he spend his days travelling on the Circle Line giving informative lectures about military history.

Lord West said: "Thirty years ago boys of his age dreamt of joining the Navy but now they don't seem to be interested."

"That thought depressed me – but my spirits were uplifted when I got to St Paul's and went to this wonderful service."

Lord West of Spithead was dressed in a double-breasted jacket with eight gold buttons and a large star – the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Bath.

He was also wearing a Distinguished Service Cross for bravery, won when his frigate, HMS Ardent, was sunk during the Falklands war; a South Atlantic Medal and a Jubilee Medal.

New home for Cornwall bell

AND fittingly it is Truro Cathedral.

The last act of the Type 22 frigate's life – just two days before she was handed over to the Disposal and Reserve Ship's Organisation – was to present the weighty object to Canon Philip Lambert, the cathedral's Canon Missioner.

He blessed the bell – and the ship's company, wishing the latter well in their new ships or establishments.

It fell to deputy weapon engineer officer Lt Andy Rowell to perform the honours in Cornwall's county town; also in Truro, the Fighting 99's ceremonial peribuoys, a signed photo of the ship and the door plaque from the WOs' and CPOs' mess were presented to Chris Jackson, chairman of the city's branch of the Royal British Legion.

The ship was axed along with her three sisters under last year's defence review – although there's already a hope that the name will be resurrected by the Ships' Name and Badges Committee when it comes to titling the Type 26 frigates.

C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre

NO YOU'RE quite right, it's not war. It's an exercise.

Joint Warrior to be precise, the largest military exercise staged in the UK.

And for the latest of the biannual war game, there was a certain *je ne sais quoi*.

One hundred and thirty *je ne sais quois* in fact, plus kit, all aboard assault ship HMS Bulwark in North-West Scotland.

With 3 Commando Brigade otherwise engaged in Afghanistan (see page 8) and training in the Californian desert (see opposite), the amphibious sword of Bulwark was provided by 130 troops from France's 2nd Marine Infantry Regiment (2RIMA) – under the latest link-up between the respective corps since British and French marines were 'twinned' back in 1995.

Bulwark was the largest Royal Navy participant in the two-week exercise, which this time attracted forces from the USA, France, Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Turkey and Poland lining up alongside UK air, land and naval units (minehunters Ledbury, Cattistock and Hurworth were among the other British participants).

The exercise – ranging from Faslane to the north-west tip of Scotland at Cape Wrath and along to Eriboll – is run each spring and autumn and intended to test Allied forces across the full spectrum of 21st-Century conflict, from fending off air attack and hunting mines and submarines to putting – and, crucially, supporting – troops ashore.

As far as Bulwark and *les marines* were concerned, they first conducted wader drills – putting troops and kit ashore at a more gentle pace than a full-scale operation – in Loch Ewe before moving on to the more dynamic phase in Loch Eriboll.

The Fleet's one time anchorage was quickly renamed Loch Teriboll by Bulwark's ship's company as it can be a bleak place (although from the photograph below it looks quite pleasant...).

In addition to transferring the French marines from ship to shore – courtesy of Bulwark's own Royal Marines unit, 4 Assault Squadron, and their panoply of landing craft and boats – the assault ship's task on Joint Warrior was 'command and control', choreographing all the elements of naval warfare to ensure the troops get ashore safely and can push in on land to meet their objectives.



Bif encounter

DON'T take our word for it that the French Marines enjoyed their time with Bulwark – take the word of *Caporal* (corporal) Font, a section commander in 3 Company, 2RIMA:

"Overall it has been a fantastic experience to work with the *Rosbifs* over the last couple of weeks.

We found the ship's crew a little distant at first and I suppose the language barrier didn't help, but over time the atmosphere lightened and we got on really well, especially with the guys from the assault squadron.

We feel bad for the young sailors that they don't have their own bar and have to use the main galley but this created some excellent moments during the rugby (excellent French moments clearly!).

Everyone has been really helpful even when we were lost and wandering around the ship trying to find our rooms again in the first week.

The programme was pretty full and we never got to see the ops room or the bridge which would have been interesting.

We were impressed by the gym facilities though and I think ('ow do you say?) 'Jacque' [sic] got used to seeing the Frenchies in our matching yellow sports kit. A highlight was watching guys fall off the rowing machines and bikes during the storm.

We were also impressed by the English breakfast and most of us agree it is actually better than the French croissant and a coffee.

We would particularly thank the Brits for the 'Op Dryout' when we came back in from our cold and wet wader package. Getting fed and having our laundry done was a new luxury for us and a great surprise.

The missions in Loch Ewe and Loch Eriboll were great training opportunities. Back to basics but there is always much to learn and relearn. Getting our VAB [armoured personnel carrier] stuck was less fun!"

So overall, it has been a great exercise: our only regret is that none of us got to compare British girls to French girls!"

The Frenchies (their word, not ours) enjoyed their time with the *Rosbifs* (see above) although they did manage to nearly lose an armoured personnel carrier in a bog; thanks to an international superhuman effort it was recovered.

For Bulwark's Commanding Officer Capt Alex Burton, working with the French marines was a "fantastic opportunity" for his ship's company.

"With the current emphasis on combined operations, it's vital we gain as much experience as possible working with other nations in a joint environment," he added.

As for the overall exercise, it was "the final piece of the jigsaw puzzle" in the long nine-month road of regeneration (apologies for the mixed metaphors...) which began when Bulwark emerged from her £30m refit at



the beginning of the year.

Piece firmly in place, L15 could assume the proud mantle of Britain's flagship – just two days after her sister HMS Albion made her final entry to Plymouth for three years (see page 2).

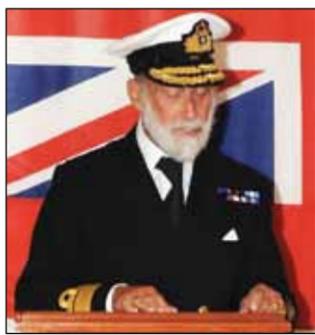
Right now she's at two days' notice to move anywhere in the world to deal with global events

as the most important ship of the UK's Response Force Task Group, formed under last year's defence review.

"I know I speak on behalf of my ship's company in saying that we are tremendously proud and excited to take over the mantle of the Royal Navy's flagship," said Capt Burton.



pictures: la(phot) chilli carney, hms bulwark



● Prince Michael of Kent addresses Reservists at HMS Vivid

Vivid hosts Prince Michael

HMS VIVID hosted a royal visitor when Prince Michael of Kent visited the Plymouth Naval Reservists at their Devonport HQ.

The Prince, who is Commodore-in-Chief Maritime Reserves, watched sailors undergoing training during their weekly drill evening, and went on to present a series of service medals.

Speaking at the end of his visit, Prince Michael said: "I much enjoyed my visit to HMS Vivid and was impressed with the Royal Navy Reservists that I met during the evening.

"I have the greatest respect for the Maritime Reserves.

"HMS Vivid is a thriving unit that contributes a huge amount to the Royal Navy and to the local community of Plymouth."

The CO of Vivid, Cdr Ian Pethick, said: "This was a great opportunity for Prince Michael to meet the Reservists and hear how they recruit and train their officers and sailors to meet operational commitments.

"Prince Michael was also able to meet some of the families and friends who provide so much support when Reservists put their lives on hold and mobilise to global operations."

Fox at Flying Fox

AND talking of visits to Reservist units, South West MEP Ashley Fox called in at HMS Flying Fox to meet returning veterans and learn more about the Reservist presence in Bristol and the region.

Mr Fox is a participant in the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme.

Navy blue initiative

SEPTEMBER may be long gone, but the echoes of Blue September should be heard throughout the year.

Because Blue September was a nationwide initiative to raise awareness and funds to tackle cancers that affect men, including prostate, testicular, bowel, lung and liver cancer.

HMS Edinburgh warmed to the theme, thanks to clubs LPT 'Papa Smurf' Taylor, who organised fun events for the ship's company to take part in whilst the ship was deployed on Atlantic Patrol Task (South).

The first was a Smurf circuit on the flight deck where sailors were encouraged to wear the colour blue and take part in the Smurf theme.

It was a good turnout and the flight deck was packed with people attempting Smurf Jumps and Smurf sprints.

The next was the 24hr WII Dance-athon, where 13 brave souls competed against one another.

With the boys, dressed in blue, versus the girls, dressed in pink, all danced the night away in their finest fancy dress, giving them the opportunity to show off the best dance moves they have picked up over the years.

The team danced more than 250 times during the event, with the girls emerging as clear winners by a massive 267,008 points.

They managed to raise over £250 which was equally divided, half going to the Men's Health Forum and the other half going to Women's Cancer Research.

Other members of the ship's company popped down to show their support and even participate, while the chefs looked after the dancers by providing refreshments and food – some of it coloured blue.

Those who took part were RPO 'Laura Maniac' Evans, POET(ME) 'Funky Jay' House, LPT 'Two Left Feet' Taylor, LReg 'No Rhythm' Woodhall, LS 'Twinkle Toes' Maloney, LS 'Laura Hardcore' Hallis, LStd 'Becky Moonwalker' Mudie, AB



Congratulations, loser

CHEF Sharman is a big loser.

So congratulations to him – and a free T-shirt too, for winning a competition to see who could lose the most weight on board frigate HMS Portland.

LPT Paul Ormston (above, with Ch Sharman, left) set up the challenge over a ten-week period before summer leave kicked in, with the aim of promoting a healthier lifestyle and higher levels of fitness.

Participants could carry out their own training regime or take part in ship circuit training.

There were 45 names on the list at the start – around a quarter of the ship's company – and in a carefully-monitored programme 28 sailors saw it through, losing a combined total of 178lb (80kg) and 44in (112cm) from their waists.

But there could only be one winner/loser – and Ch Sharman managed to shed 21lb, giving him the platform to get get back into shape for boxing.

"It is also great to see more people now eating healthier and more members of the ship's company who would not normally go to the gym now becoming regular attendees," he said.

Green lid for RN Reservist

A Royal Naval Reservist from HMS Flying Fox in Bristol has become the first of his ilk to achieve a coveted green beret.

Lt James Taylor, a 32-year-old investment surveyor, underwent 18 months of intense training with RMR Bristol, based in Clifton, before he tackled the gruelling Royal Marines commando training course with colleagues from the Royal Marines Reserves.

At the end just five of the 54 candidates who began training were still standing – James and four Bristol Reservist bootnecks.

Lt Taylor said: "It was certainly tough having to fit commando training around a busy work and home life.

"As we worked through the training phases, what was expected of us got dramatically harder.

"I'm extremely proud to have earned my green beret and I couldn't have done it without the support of my unit at HMS Flying Fox or the guys from RMR Bristol, who were with me literally every step of the way."

The training progressed from basic soldiering skills to ambushes, battle preparation training and exhausting tests of endurance – the final hurdle being the 30-mile yomp across Dartmoor carrying 50lbs which must be completed in under eight hours.



● Some serious shapes are thrown by two participants in the HMS Edinburgh WII dance-athon

Picture: LA(Phot) Kyle Heller

'Secret Weapon' Redford, MA 'Dancing Queen' Gibbons, AB 'Claire Footloose' Lackenby, AB 'Conor 50 Pence' Lovett, AB 'Bouncing Ballerina' Beswick and ET(ME) 'Maxwell Jackson' Maxwell.

The Blue September campaign is a response to the fact that 154,000 men each year are

diagnosed with cancer in the UK, and 81,000 men die of the disease in all its forms.

British men are about 60 per cent more likely to develop one of the cancers that affects both men and women, such as lung or bowel cancer.

For more details see the website www.blueseptember.org.uk

Key role for President in Merchant Navy parade

NAVAL Reservists from London played a key role in the Merchant Navy Day parade in the capital.

HMS President provided the Guard of Honour and parade marshal for the event, held on the nearest Sunday to Merchant Navy Day – September 3 – in memory of merchant mariners who died in the world wars and subsequent conflicts.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope was the principal guest and inspecting officer, while former Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey and Mike Penning, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, also attended.

President's First Lieutenant, Lt Cdr Mark Van Den Bergh, acted as parade marshal, supported by a team of eight from the London RNR unit who guided the parade on its route to the memorial in Trinity Square Gardens, Tower Hill.

S/Lt Charlotte Dangerfield, performing the role of guard officer for the first time, said: "It was an honour to lead the guard at the annual memorial service.

"As Reservists it is always a privilege to represent the Royal Navy at events such as this.

"We also enjoyed meeting current and past members of the Merchant Navy."



● Tri-Service award winners with BBC broadcaster Jane Hill

Picture: www.ChrisJepson.com

Diversity win for Service team

A TRI-Service team has won a prestigious prize at the inaugural European Diversity Awards in London.

Proud2Serve.net (P2S) took the laurels as the Outstanding Employee Network Group of the Year.

P2S is the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender e-network for the UK Armed Forces, providing support, information and networking for the LGBT serving and ex-serving personnel and their families.

The event showcased some of Europe's highest achievers in the field of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Sponsored by Google, organised by Square Peg Media and hosted by the BBC's Jane Hill, the awards were attended by a number of public figures including Minister for Equalities Lynne Featherstone, MP Ben Bradshaw and MEP Michael Cashman.

From grass roots campaigners to large corporations the awards highlighted the achievements made in this area, and more than 250 nominations were received.

Proud2Serve.net was established in 2005, five years after the European Court of Human Rights ruling which resulted in the ban on LGB military

being lifted, providing an informal communication route outside the military.

The confidentiality that this afforded was, and remains, critically important to many serving personnel. The website has matured in membership, usage and provides vital, relevant support to users and is now endorsed and funded by all three Services.

P2S now reaches out to 1,500 registered users in over 22 countries.

Also shortlisted, in the European Diversity Champion of the Year category, was Lt Cdr Mandy McBain, and although she did not win she said she was thrilled that her contribution to equality, diversity and inclusion in the Naval Service had been recognised by her nomination and short-listing.

The event was attended by ten RN, Army and RAF personnel from both the LGBT Forums and the Policy areas.

Cdre Paul Bennett, Director Naval Service Personnel Strategy, said he was delighted by the way which P2S had matured and now provided support for both LGBT personnel and their line managers.

Laud of the Isles

THE Royal Navy is spreading the 'Fit for Life' message far and wide – as far as the Outer Hebrides, in fact.

The Fit for Life team – C/Sgt Mike Beaton RM and LPTs Gavin Rees and Wayne Dawson – were joined by WO2 Mike Slater, of Inverness Armed Forces Careers Office for the long journey to the Western Isles.

Part of a mobile recruitment team which travels to schools across the country, the small group delivers fitness sessions and cookery workshops, offering guidance on diet and nutrition, and the four can also talk about the Armed Forces and potential careers.

For Gavin and Mike Beaton the journey began in Bristol on a Friday with a six-hour drive to Glasgow, where they stopped for the night and picked up Wayne.

The next leg was to Fort William, with a little time for a walk up a mountain in Glencoe, then on to Ullapool (where they met up with Mike Slater) on the Sunday and a five-hour ferry to Stornoway.

Their first visit was to the Nicholson Institute, where around 450 of the 1,100 students took part in a fitness or cookery session.

Two nights in Stornoway were followed by a picturesque drive and a short ferry hop to Berneray and on to North Uist and Benbecula, where the team worked their magic on most of Lionacleit High School's 320 pupils.

The following day saw an early start and another ferry, this time to the smallest and most remote of the three beautiful locations visited – Barra, where there was a warm welcome at the island's only secondary school.

No sooner had they packed their gear away than they were on the road again to catch the ferry to Oban (seven hours at sea) and another couple of hours on the road before returning to Glasgow.

A successful and scenic (if tiring) trip, the team concluded – and well worth making, whether by a similar team or by holidaymakers...

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Gunning for glory in 2012

THE Maritime Reserves made their fourth appearance at the RN Field Gun competition this year, making the First Plate Final – a creditable achievement, but not good enough for them.

The plan is to make the final in 2012, but in order to do so the teams needs at least 25 fit, committed people to form the squad each year, with new blood making up a sizeable proportion of the crew, said Lt Alan Bradley RNR, the MR Field Gun manager.

Field Gun is recognised by the RN and tri-Service now to instil the Navy ethos, and it promotes team work, personal courage and fitness.

Having given their all in the competition, the Reservist crew can now enjoy a turn in the spotlight at the Lord Mayor's Show in London, the gun and limber being pulled by this year's crew and support staff.

Not everyone who competed as part of the Reserves crew can attend the show, in the City of London November 12, but the crew is still represented by eight RNR units – HM ships King Alfred, Eaglet, Calliope, Vivid, Ceres, Cambria, Sherwood and the Fleet Air Arm.

In true Maritime Reserves fashion, all training is done in two weeks and a couple of weekends, whereas the regulars get at least five weeks of physical conditioning then five weeks working on their drill with the gun and limber.

Dialogue over Reservist plans

MARITIME Reservists across the UK have been contributing to the debate and asking questions about the future of their volunteer service in the RN and RM Reserve as part of the Whole Force Concept, an idea explored and recommended by the Future Reserves 2020 (FR 20) Independent Commission, which published a report in the summer.

In Portsmouth more than 100 RNR personnel from HMS King Alfred, including recently-mobilised Reserves, heard Cdre John Keegan, Commander Maritime Reserves (pictured above), discuss the recommendations in the FR20 report, part of a broader Navy Command project that aims to integrate Reservists more closely with the regular Naval Service.

The plan will define new roles, identify resources, with the aim of investing in improved training and deployment opportunities to grow and further develop the Maritime Reserve Force.

As the plans for all three Services are drawn together, the MOD expects to announce the way forward shortly.

Former Defence Secretary Liam Fox confirmed Defence's commitment to the Reserve Forces in his announcement to Parliament in July.

He said: "The Government will proceed with a £1.5 billion investment package over the next ten years to enhance the capability of the Reserves and consequently increase their trained strength, £400 million of which will be spent during this Parliament.

"We will work with employers and legislate if necessary to ensure that the Reserves are more readily usable on operations."

Currently, the MOD is assessing how the Commission's recommendations can be adopted and resourced.

The £1.5bn package has been designed to meet the Commission's immediate recommendations and thereby place the Reserves on a more healthy footing.

Contained within this work will be a detailed examination of legislation and employer attitudes through research and engagement activities.

Cdre Keegan is determined that his senior management staff get out and about to explain the principles of the FR 20 project, to listen, to encourage innovative

ideas from people in his diverse and talented community and to fully understand any concerns about the project.

Acknowledging the numerous challenges ahead, he explained that he does not yet have all the answers but his team are working hard in association with the MOD to come up with the goods.

"The Royal Navy needs to consider and fully understand how best to tap into the talent and experience of our Reserve community, balancing civilian/military careers to best effect, generating the specialist cadres/skills required of the RNR and providing appropriate training resource at a time when both regular human resource and budgets are taut," said Cdre Keegan.

Reserves were keen to raise their points, demonstrating a keen interest in prospective new opportunities but remaining



● Capt Gareth Derrick (Deputy Commander Maritime Reserves) addresses commando-trained ranks and recruits from RMR Scotland on the Barry Buddon range near Dundee

concerned about how their civilian jobs can be protected while mobilised in support of military operations and national security.

Stuart Harland, from Portsmouth, who works as a computer scientist in his civilian life, is an AB2 in the Sea (Warfare Branch) of the RNR.

He said: "It was good to have the opportunity to raise our own questions about the future shape of the Reserves.

"Some of the questions I want to ask are quite technical but its useful to speak to the management directly and we have been encouraged to continue raising our queries as the project matures."

AB2 Kathy Azopardi said: "It's certainly an interesting time to be in the Reserves, and the programme raises some exciting new prospects – I joined the RNR to learn seamanship skills, and am

looking for more opportunities to train at sea.

"It's really important to make onboard opportunities available to keep us well motivated.

"I'm hoping the transformation will make it easier for us to achieve our training objectives."

New Entry Reserves – even those in the recruiting pipeline – trained ranks and rates have had the chance to air their questions in an open forum debate.

The face-to-face briefing sessions took place in September and October with CMR senior management staff visiting Royal Marines Reserves undergoing training in Scotland, in units in Bristol, Tyneside, Plymouth, Birmingham, Nottingham, Wales, London and the Merseyside units, including the satellite divisions in England's cities encompassing the Maritime Reserve audience.

One more tour – 43 years on

AT 15 years old, with his heart set on a career in warships on the high seas, Brian 'Grassy' Meadows could never have imagined that 43 years later he would be deploying to land-locked, mountainous Afghanistan.

Yet as he was presented with the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal at a ceremony at Naval Command HQ, Lt Cdr Meadows was preparing for one more challenging operational tour while most of his Navy contemporaries have long since consigned their combat boots to the garden shed.

"I am very excited to have the opportunity to once again serve as a Media Officer in an operational role," said Grassy.

"Although it is a great commitment when mobilised as a Reservist, it is also a great honour to serve the country and to become fully integrated alongside your full-time colleagues."

Around 100 Maritime Reserves



● Cdr Kevin Robertson RN, CO of HMS King Alfred, with Lt Cdr Grassy Meadows RNR

at HMS King Alfred heard Grassy praised for his high level of personal commitment and the outstanding integrity of his character and motivation in support of RN peers and RNR colleagues.

Presenting the medal, King Alfred's CO Cdr Kevin Robertson said: "Grassy is known to so many of the RNR for his tremendous work at the Wales-based Reserves

unit HMS Cambria, but it's his unflinching dedication, patient guidance and rugged fitness training of the Navy Command Field Gun teams that we also know him for."

Grassy transferred to the PT Branch as a young rating, rising through the ranks to become an officer and ultimately one of the RN's most senior sports officers and training managers.

With his RN career drawing to a close, and noted for his excellent communication and management skills, in 2004 he joined the Media Ops Branch, an RNR branch which escorts journalists at sea in conflict scenarios and provides advice to Naval Command on PR, influence and Media Ops.

He has been mobilised and recalled several times, serving in the UK's Maritime Component HQ in Bahrain, and he also took charge of TV coverage of Prince William during his introduction to the RN.

'Ambassador' is rewarded



WITH the stunning backdrop of King Arthur's round table in the medieval Great Hall at Winchester, PO Ken Turley was honoured by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Dame Mary Fagan, for distinguished service with the Reserve and Cadet Forces (left).

PO Turley, 51, of HMS King Alfred, received the Lord Lieutenant's Meritorious Service Award, his CO, Cdr Kevin Robertson, highlighting PO Turley's outstanding energy and efficiency in devising a variety of challenging military training that benefits Reserves across the South.

PO Turley said: "This award is a great achievement and recognition of my Naval career to date.

"I have seen the significant benefit to both the Naval Service and the civilian sector during my Reserve Service, so I'm always acting as an ambassador for all the Reserve Services, not just the RNR.

"I'd really recommend it – I have been lucky enough to visit parts of the world I would never have gone to, and have been able to work alongside the regular RN as an equal."

Ken has served the RNR for 27 years. A member of the Warfare (Sea) branch, in civilian life he is a quality performance manager.



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Wildcats dig the garden

WHEN you are 95 years old and your garden gets too much for you, what do you do? Well, in the case of Arthur Whitty, call in the Royal Navy.

Arthur, from Podimore, in Somerset, worked on the ground staff at RNAS Yeovilton for 35 years. When the air station heard that his own garden was in need of some attention, a team from the Wildcat Transition Team decided it was time for action, and jumped at the chance to repay Arthur for all his work at the naval air station.

The team of six were not gardeners, but under Arthur's expert eye they were directed towards the weeds, and learnt very quickly. Richard Seymour, the Community Relations Officer at Yeovilton air station, said: "Arthur is a very old friend of the base, and we were delighted when the Wildcat Team made the offer of a day's gardening for someone who had done so much for us. They did really well."

The Wildcat Transition

Team are currently engaged in preparations for the exciting new aircraft which will replace the ageing Lynx from 2012, but they were able to take a few hours out in the fresh air.

And a team of Air Traffic Controllers from Yeovilton stepped forward to help a primary school which needed some essential garden maintenance.

Led by WO Aircraft Controller Andy Sinnett, the five-man team went to Bedenham Primary School, in Gosport, to lend some muscle.

Headmistress Tracy Potter said: "They did a tremendous amount of work, digging up weeds and old plants from our vegetable plot, as well as clearing other beds that were overgrown to make them tidy and more manageable."

She added: "The work that they did over the three days was incredible and a huge help to the staff at school whose time is limited, especially at this time of year when there is so much to do."

Collingwood goes marathon crazy

TEAM COLLINGWOOD is going marathon-crazy. The small group of sailors from the training establishment who run for charity are planning more marathons in the next few months, to add to the three they've just completed.

PO Tony Bennett and Chiefs Dave Hunt and Daniel Janicki both completed the Robin Hood Marathon, which takes place through the streets of Nottingham, while their colleague CPO Andy Bibb ran the half marathon.

Now the team are planning to take on the Maidstone Half Marathon and the Great South Run in 2011 and more next year.

Tony Bennett said of the Robin Hood marathon: "The first half of the course was undulating and the weather was sunny with a light breeze, this made running conditions quite comfortable."

"After 20 miles the course

led us back into the city, this is where we had a 26-mile-an-hour gust, head on. This sapped all our energy, making the last six miles unbearable.

He added: "But I love the Nottingham Marathon, I feel it is an extremely well-organised race."

"The support from the public is always a huge advantage as this spurs you on, and on parts of the course the supporters were lining the streets four or five deep."

"The medals and aftercare are always of a high quality and I shall continue to run the Nottingham Marathon each year."

The team run in aid of the RNRMC and have already raised £500.

They've already booked Brighton and London marathons into their diaries for 2012 and are always looking for new recruits, if you're interested, ring Tony Bennett on 01329 333551.

Tim grits his teeth

CYCLING 82 miles is a tough call at the best of times, but for Navy dentist Tim Green there was an additional challenge to overcome.

Tim, a Surgeon Lieutenant Commander based at HMS Raleigh, has an inflammatory joint disease, Psoratic arthritis, which causes him severe pain and lack of movement, particularly in his hands and feet.

Despite being diagnosed earlier this year, Tim accepted the challenge to cycle from Land's End to St German's Primary School where his sons Henry and Fergus are pupils, to raise money for the school.

He explained: "I have cycled all my life, but I'm normally a mountain biker. This was the first time I had done a road ride and admittedly it was only a fraction of the more common charity ride from Land's End to John O'Groats, but believe me it was far enough."

"My illness is at last coming under control, but I did wonder how my feet would cope. Despite the soreness, to arrive at the school to a welcome from about 200 people gave me a huge sense of elation and achievement."

The organiser of the ride was Lt Cdr Steve Strange, whose children also attend St German's. After camping overnight nearby the team of cyclists set off from Land's End in the pouring rain, following the A30 and heavy traffic, but transferred at St Enoder to quieter roads travelling through Indian



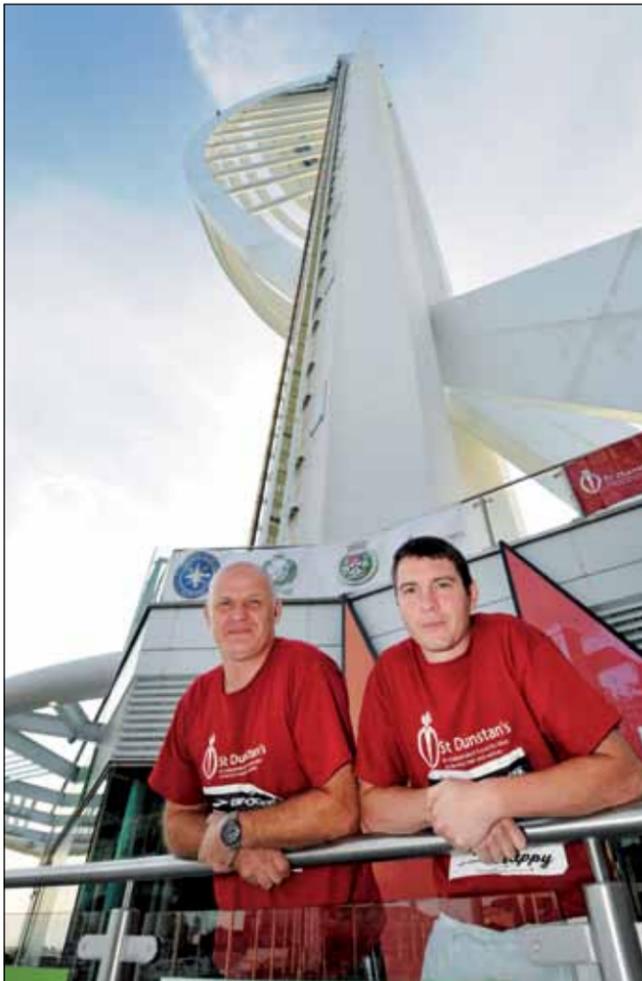
Queens, along the Goss Moor trail and cross country towards Bodmin.

Tim said: "Thanks to the weather we were absolutely soaking and I think we all had one miserable moment, just shy of Lanhydrock as we prepared to mend the team's third puncture."

"We were all shivering and questioning our sanity. However, we began to warm up again when we reached West Taphouse and realised we were on the home straight."

"We finally completed the 82-mile trip when we reached the school gates at 3.45pm. I'm grateful to my colleagues at HMS Raleigh and my friends and family for their generous donations. So far we've raised in the region of £1,600, with money still coming in."

'Blood' sports with run to the top of the Tower



THE Spinnaker Tower, one of Portsmouth's best-known landmarks, has 560 steps. These presented an irresistible challenge to Chief Petty Officer 'Blood' Read and Leading Seaman Danny Tregarthen, who decided to run up them one fine autumn evening.

Blood, from HMS Collingwood, and Danny, from HMS Dauntless, started their run on a beautiful if chilly evening just as the sun was setting over the harbour.

Just over five minutes later they had both reached the top and were feeling chilly no longer – in fact were extremely grateful for the cold water provided.

Blood said: "It was like being a spaceman, a long way from the earth's surface wearing what feels like lead boots!"

"The last 25 metres were a real challenge, I spent most of that hoping that the finishing line was on the lower level – thankfully it was."

Danny and Blood raised more than £500 for St Dunstan's, the charity for blind ex-servicemen and women.

Blood said: "The event organisers from St Dunstan's were very good and looked after us all really well after the challenge, providing some much-needed cold water at the top followed by a reception in the café under the tower."

■ If you are in the Portsmouth area, and want to see first hand what the lads did, this is a reminder that if you are in the military, you can obtain a 25 per cent discount on entry by presenting a valid warrant card when purchasing tickets.

Naval Nurse Ellie runs to remember

NAVAL nurse Ellie Walls has taken on a personal challenge – she plans to run a mile for each UK serviceman or woman that has died in Afghanistan.

Ellie has already run for 124 names, so is 124 miles into her Memorial Mile Challenge. Sadly, the number currently stands at 377, so there are plenty of miles left to go.

Ellie, a second-year Naval nursing student at the Defence School of Healthcare Studies in Birmingham, started at the beginning of July with the Birmingham Black Country Half marathon.

She has gone from there, doing various races including a 40 mile race along the length of Hadrian's Wall.

Ellie is raising money on Virgin Money Giving for SSAFA – Forces Help and has received sponsorship from family, friends and many people who she has

never met.

She said: "I'm happy for people to contact with me if they'd like to run with me for a specific name or if they'd just like to join in."

"I have had several friends join me so far. There are two reasons for doing this, I'd like to raise money for SSAFA but I also think it's important to remember those who are not coming back, it's a like running a mile out of respect for them."

She added: "Sometimes it hurts to run but it's nothing compared to what some of those who have been killed experienced and certainly nothing like the pain of losing a loved one."

Ellie's contact email for the challenge is memorialmilechallenge@hotmail.co.uk and her donations page is: www.virginmoneygiving.com/memorialmilechallenge

Poppy Day proves popular read

AUTHOR Amanda Prowse writes from personal experience – she's an Army wife and like most wives of military men has lived for years with all the fear and tensions his deployments bring.

Now she's used her experiences to write a novel, *Poppy Day*, a love story spanning half the globe from East London to Afghanistan.

The heroine, the aptly-named Poppy Day, is a 21-year-old hairdresser, devoted to her soldier husband Martin, who is taken hostage in Afghanistan.

Battling against Army culture and procedure, Poppy decides to try to bring her 'Mart' home herself, and enlists the help of Miles, a journalist with contacts in Middle Eastern terrorist organisations.

Amanda said: "*Poppy Day* gives an insight into life beneath the

uniform, a peek at what it's like to be the one left at home, ticking off the days until your loved one returns and what happens when there is the knock on the door that every Forces wife, husband, mother, father or lover dreads..."

Poppy Day is already winning rave reviews from readers and was recommended by Richard Madeley on Radio 2.

It is available from many bookshops and supermarkets and online from Amazon in paperback, audio book and Kindle download. Amanda has given all rights to the Royal British Legion and all proceeds will go to the Battle Back Centre to help injured servicemen get their lives back on track.

Amanda and her husband, Major Simeon Prowse, are hoping to raise a million pounds for the RBL in its 90th anniversary year

Culdrose rocks the runway

A 'ROCK the Runway' festival organised by Culdrose air station was a massive success, with more than 300 guests gathering for a musical evening which raised £4,200 for the Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes.

The audience enjoyed music ranging from rock bands and soloists to choirs and a tribute band. A Royal Marine bugler was given a standing ovation when he played evening colours in front of a flickering ensign at Flambards, the venue in Kingsford.

Event PR manager Sue Gibson said: "We wouldn't have been able to deliver the concert without the combined generosity and support of local companies, from the musicians who waived their normal fees, to Flambards for all their help."

The organisers at Culdrose air station are now hoping to repeat their success next year with a Rock the Runway 2012.

999? Call the Marines

COMMANDO 999, the charity dedicated to Royal Marines commandos who now serve in the UK emergency services, has its annual speedmarch marathon coming up this month.

Keep an eye out in central London on Saturday, November 12, for the team of some 100 former Royal Marines as they cover at speed the 26 miles course past some of London's finest landmarks.

The final stage will see the speedmarchers met by the Royal Marines Corps of Drums at Waterloo Place, before donning their green berets and marching down the Mall to the Royal Marines National Memorial close to Admiralty Arch.

If you would like to keep track of their efforts, follow [bootneckfamily](http://bootneckfamily.com) on Twitter, or visit www.commando999.com online.

And to show your support, you can pledge money online at www.bmycharity.com/charities/commando999, or alternatively by texting 'MARINES' to 70300, you will make a donation of £5.

Explosion of support

SAILORS from the Victory Squadron at HMS Collingwood spent three days helping to clear an overgrown site at the Explosion Museum in Gosport.

The area, once containing a fort and later used for weapon storage, had become overgrown with trees, weeds and bracken. The museum's aim is to use it to re-enact battles for the public to watch.

The sailors picked up their machetes after a call for help from Kerry Jarvie, who works at the museum and whose husband, Philip, is a Petty Officer at Collingwood.

Phil Hazell, assistant manager at Explosion, said: "I'm absolutely delighted with the support and time the sailors gave – they did a fantastic job."

Calliope and Ceres all rigged up

SEVEN reservists from HMS Calliope and Ceres, the reservist units in Tyneside and Leeds, turned a few heads when they completed the Great North Run in seven different rigs.

The seven wore No 1s, No 4s, 4 Tropics, Red Sea Rig, Combat 95s, Deserts (plus webbing) and the Intrepid Once Only Suit.

Together with the money raised from a dragon boat race in Chester, the team has so far raised more than £2,000 for the RNRMC.

March for RNRMC

SHOWERS did not deter 600 pupils of Widey Court Primary School in Plymouth marching around their sports field five times in aid of Help for Heroes and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

The children of HMS Heroes, the service family group, supported the headmaster Paddy Marsh and Parent Support Assistant Sarah Maiden, to get children and their families marching to garner money for Service personnel.

The Devonport Field Gun Association have thrown their weight behind the March a Mile initiative at junior schools, and are encouraging more schools and organisations across Devon and Cornwall to get involved.

The association's president Rear Admiral Mike Thomas was the official starter, and members of the association added some military bearing (and high fives!) to the procession, along with marching music from the Plymouth Pipe Band.

Albion boost for Jeremiah

THE WARRANT Officers' and Chiefs' mess from HMS Albion raised £2,227 for the charity Jeremiah's Journey over the ship's four-month Cougar deployment.

CPO John 'Ruby' Murray and the other mess members organised a series of events from horse-racing to quizzes and casino evenings. At the end of their efforts the Executive Officer, Cdr Nick Washer, invited Louise Orchard from the charity to the ship to receive the cheque and have lunch.

Louise said she was amazed at the amount of the money the mess was able to raise in such a short time. She added: "During our six-week programme we can see up to 60 bereaved children at a time, this money and raised awareness is exactly the sort of support that keeps us going. HMS Albion and her crew have shown humbling kindness."

Jeremiah's Journey is based in Derriford Hospital, in Plymouth, but is hoping to raise enough funds to be able to run its own drop-in centre for children who have lost someone they love. For details, visit the website, www.jeremiahsjourney.org.uk

Wishes for Wave Ruler

ALSO raising money on deployment were the ship's company of RFA Wave Ruler, who were able to send a cheque for £356 to the Make-a-Wish-Foundation charity after a number of events from sports, barbecues and horse-racing.

The money was raised during her APT(N) (Atlantic Patrol Task North) patrol on which she provided humanitarian aid and disaster relief in the Caribbean.

Thinking big

WHY would five civilians who have never climbed a mountain in their lives decide to get off their backsides and climb five of the highest mountains in the UK in only five days?

The reasons were twofold, firstly, Mark Little's son who is a serving Royal Marine was seriously injured in Afghanistan and both Mark and his wife Karen went through a very difficult time supported by the casualty visiting officer, W02 Screw Driver, from RMR Tyne.

They were extremely impressed and very grateful for that help which made a huge difference to their lives.

It was this incident that spurred Mark to want to give something back and he chose to undertake a challenge that would raise funds for the RMCTF (Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund).

Secondly, a very good friend of Mark's, Ian Richardson, was involved in a head-on collision en route home following his brother's wedding in Scotland.

The car that hit them was travelling the wrong way and in the car were Ian, his wife Joanne and their two daughters Mya, six, and Ava, 10 weeks.

Joanne died at the scene and young Mya was to die from serious injuries 16 hours later. Ian's life was torn apart; he himself sustained serious injuries that saw him on oxygen for several months and hardly able to walk.

Once back on the road to recovery, Ian decided to start the joandmya memorial fund (www.joandmya.co.uk). This now registered charity aims to help the children left behind at the toughest times in their lives, through providing counselling, support and assistance.

The charity will help children under the age of 16 who have either lost a sibling or parent or have a sibling or parent undergoing treatment for a terminal illness or in preparation for organ donation.

Ian opted to allow Mya's organs to be donated, which meant five other families got another chance at life, to date and due to Mya's story and Ian's work, over 1,000 people have joined the organ donation register.

The idea was formed like all good ideas over a pint in the local pub which grew to them actually being at

the base of their first mountain and some seven hours later the first mountain was in the bag.

The team swiftly moved on to Hellvellyn where they were joined by a few of the Marines from RMR Tyne and completed that mountain in only six hours. Although the fatigue was now starting to show they cracked on across the lakes to the base of Scafell.

The weather really hampered the team and they did not achieve the summit of Scafell Pike but did make the summit of Scafell.

Four down and a very tired team dragged themselves down to North Wales to do the final summit, Snowdon.

Six hours later, the chat in the pub had been realised and a very tired but extremely proud team had made it.

The Big Yomp Team consisted of Mark Little (Pancho Porridge), Mark David Dickson RM (Teaside Chav), Ritchy Defty (Boss Defty), Jonny Armstrong (Special K), Keith Jackson (Anchorman), David Robson (Holiday Dad), Frazer Little (The Goat) and Ian Richardson (Winnie the Monk).

There is a final twist in the tale. The team not only wanted to raise awareness and funds for the RMCTF but were very keen to do something for the joandmya memorial fund, so the Little Yomp was formed.

This consisted of many of Mya's school friends and other members of their family and the rest of the team's families.

The meeting point was to be at the base of Roseberry Topping near Gisborough in preparation to do their own little climb.

The turnout was fantastic and included 17 members of RMR Tyne to help with the children, the climb and smooth running of the day.

All the children achieved the climb to the top of Roseberry Topping and were awarded a certificate and T-shirt for their efforts.

This team of seven civilians and one Royal Marine achieved a fantastic feat given their experience.

The team have framed the Big Yomp flag and can now be seen in the new charity corridor of RMR Tyne.

The teams efforts managed to raise a staggering £3,095.73 for the RMCTF which was handed over to the 2IC RMR Tyne, Major Dave Hall.

Find out more about the RMCTF online at: www.rmctf.org.uk



Time for tea

The 'Tea Ladies' of HMS Ocean's resident Royal Marine assault squadron, 9ASRM, tend to their guests at the 2011 SSAFA Big Brew Up tea party.

The macho Royal Marines took to their new role with aplomb, serving up delicacies to their

matelot guests in an impressive array of tea dresses and other flamboyant outfits for a ship that has been away from home for a while now...

The afternoon of tea and sticky buns boosted the charity coffers by some £500.

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Looking after a wh



● A crate of fish is checked by a member of a Royal Navy Fishery Protection Squadron boarding team (above); HMS Severn's sea boat returns to the mother ship having safely deployed the boarding team to a fishing vessel (below left); AB Kimberley Smith, one of HMS Mersey's sea boat drivers, on the bridge of the patrol ship (below right)



Pictures: LA(Phot) Jay Allen;
LA(Phot) Darby Allen (no relation);
Lt Nick Radue

BOARDING a fishing vessel is tough work, especially on a cold winter's night, writes Sarah Fletcher.

The sea is rough, the decks may be icy, it's cold and dark, and the boarding team has 15 minutes to don rubber immersion suit, wellies, hard-hat and lifejacket.

They pack their kit – radio, language crib cards, safety knives (for cutting lines), gloves (for handling fish), camera and notebook (for evidence), documents and net-measuring device, before climbing into a jet-propelled RIB for a bumpy ride up to 12 miles across the icy waves to climb up a ladder to a fishing boat which probably won't be pleased to see them.

Once aboard, they introduce themselves to a crew who may or may not speak English, and request, using crib cards if necessary, to examine all their documentation.

They check the skipper's licence to make sure he's allowed to fish in the area and that he's allowed to catch the type and quota of fish he's recorded.

They go through his logbook and make an assessment of his catch. If a visual check isn't enough, they will dig the fish out of the ice in the freezing hold to identify it and measure it.

If they suspect he's hiding anything, the team can carry out a thorough search of the whole vessel, looking for illicit catches in secret compartments.

If the skipper is still fishing, the boarding officer asks him to haul in his nets to measure their size, and he checks all his gear to make sure it's legal.

If everything's in order, the boarding officer can take the opportunity to tell the fishermen about any new regulations or policy changes from the EU or the MMO, before he or she calls the sea-boat back to return to the ship.

Throughout the boarding, which can last up to 11 hours, the boarding officer keeps in radio contact with the ship and with the Marine Management Organisation, whose officers will take the decision on any sanctions.

If there are minor infringements, the MMO will probably tell the boarding officer to give the skipper a 'verbal rebrief.'

If there are serious infringements and it's a foreign vessel, they may tell him to detain it in the nearest harbour – which can mean escorting it up to 200 miles.

Back on the ship, if the boarding officer isn't needed on watch or another boarding, he can make a start on the lengthy paperwork, which must be accurate enough for a court of law.

And he must check all the kit is in order, get the batteries recharged and make sure the radio's working ready for the next boarding.

As all this happens, information is coming in from aerial surveillance, tracking fishing vessels by day and night and identifying each one by name and country of origin.

Throughout all this, he is on 15 minutes' standby to start the whole process over again – and again.

This is the world of the Royal Navy's Fishery Protection Squadron – the oldest front-line squadron of the Navy, and one of the busiest.

A British Sea Fisheries Protection officer is sailor, lawyer, policeman and diplomat rolled into one. It's a tough, tiring, repetitive and risky job – but everyone in the squadron seems to love it.

"There's never a dull moment in this job," said Lt Cdr Mark Anderson, CO of HMS Mersey.

"It's very hard work, and takes a heck of a lot out of you, physically and mentally. But you meet some fascinating people working in a real industry, and there is a conviction that what you're doing is worthwhile.

"Sailors may join the ship not knowing much about the industry, but within a few weeks they become very committed to sustainable fishing."

The Royal Navy sets the gold standard for fishery protection. Their operation is seen as the best in Europe, and there is a lot at stake – no less than the future of the fishing industry.

The UK, as Aneurin Bevan famously observed in World War 2, is "an island built mainly of coal and surrounded by fish."

Seventy years on, up to 70 per cent of all the catch landed in the EU is caught within UK waters – which is one reason why the seas that surround us are no longer teeming with fish.

The fishery limits of England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Scotland has its own arrangements for fishery protection) cover 80,000 square miles of sea and stretch 200 miles from the coastline.

Within them lie some of the richest fishing grounds in the world, created by the comparatively shallow European continental shelf.

As demand grows for fish, not just as primary food but vitamin oils, animal feed and fertiliser, there may be more than 500 vessels fishing within the British Fishery Limits on any one day.

The Fishery Protection Squadron is contracted by the MMO to enforce the current national and EU law, and ensure the survival of sustainable fishing for future generations.

Based in Newcastle, the MMO took over from the old Marine and Fisheries Agency, and runs fisheries management, Marine Planning and Licensing, and Marine Conservation.

Policing these waters and protecting fish stocks is a full-time job for HM ships Severn, Tyne and Mersey, who fly the historic blue and yellow squared pennants of the Fishery Protection Squadron.

In 2010 they boarded 1,486 vessels (about a quarter by night) and averaged two boardings per ship every day.

It's a phenomenal workload, made possible by the availability of the ships and the system of rotating the ship's company.

The three River-class ships are leased from BAE Systems, which maintains them and undertakes to keep them operational for at least 320 days a year.

Lt Cdr Anderson said: "The operational tempo is very different from a frigate or destroyer, which tends to be sprint – sprint – and then stand still.

"This is more like a marathon. The routine is 12 days at sea followed by two days alongside in the nearest port. HMS Mersey spent 305 days at sea last year, which is probably a unique return."

Fishery protection is the ships' main job, but all three are Offshore Patrol Vessels, capable of a wide variety of roles, from Search and Rescue to security operations, intelligence gathering and support to Special Forces.

Earlier this year, HMS Tyne took part in the Bournemouth Air Show and the Barry Waterfront Festival, immediately followed by a visit to London for the biannual Defence and Security Exhibition International, changing her operational role to a hosting platform for UK Trade and Industry.

Her Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Will Peters, said "It requires a change in mindset to switch from the role of fishery protection, working hard at sea in unforgiving conditions, to becoming an ambassador for the RN at high-profile festivals and exhibitions.

"It's a challenge on several fronts; maintaining the ship's appearance, meeting additional catering requirements, hosting Ship Open to Visitors and putting on capability demonstrations with just 32 crew is demanding – but it's something we enjoy.

"These ships are very good at filling the gap between the URNU patrol boats and the frigates, and flying the flag for the Navy in all sorts of places where we aren't usually seen."

The fourth ship of the squadron, HMS Clyde, is the only one of the River class modified to carry a helicopter.

She patrols the territorial seas and monitors the airspace around the Falkland Islands and regularly visits other British Overseas Territories such as South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

Most of her ship's company are drawn from the three UK-based River-class ships, where they have honed their skills.

Cdr Ian Lynn, Commander of the Fishery Protection Squadron, said: "These ships are the only UK vessels on patrol 365 days of the year.

"They are extremely versatile, and although their routine tasking is to provide fishery protection, they are also part of a layered defence, ensuring the maritime protection of the UK."

The River-class ships are two-thirds the size of a Type 23, with her ship's company of about 185. But they are lean-manned, with a company of 43 on three watches, so only about 30 are generally onboard at any time.

This makes the ships spacious and comparatively comfortable, with two-man ensuite cabins and a large gym. For the lads and lasses, the routine is 26 days on followed by 12 days off, which makes the squadron a popular draft for those who want to be able to plan their lives and work within a few hours of home.

But having such a small ship's company means there's no room for passengers.

"When these ships come alongside, every single person has a job to do," said Cdr Lynn. "Every sailor takes part in seamanship tasks, from handling ropes and wires to launching and recovering sea boats and anchoring."

He added: "This makes the squadron probably the best training ground in the Navy for a seamanship skills."

The sea-boat drivers have to be among the best in the Navy, working as they do alongside fishing boats, often in atrocious weather and rough seas.

Every sea-boat driver completes a two-week training course at HMS Raleigh. AB Shaun Young, one of Mersey's drivers, said: "People have to trust you and you've got the safety of three other people to consider.

"Night boardings add another element of danger because it's dark.

"You're coming alongside a fishing vessel which isn't expecting you, and doesn't always know to give you a lee to help you board.

role industry

Every boarding's different and there is always some danger.

"There is a great feeling of satisfaction when you get back from a particularly tough boarding."

He added: "We are ABs doing the job, but doing it at a Leading Hand level."

The level of responsibility makes for an excellent training ground for promotion – the only drawback to this is that promotion for junior rates generally means leaving the squadron.

"I can stay on as a killick, but not a petty officer caterer," said Chef Richard Bonar, who worked on bigger ships and a carrier before he came to HMS Mersey.

"Going from a 40-man mess to a two-man ensuite cabin was a bit of a change – but the best thing about these ships is that they treat you like grown-ups."

For officers too, the level of responsibility is higher than in larger ships. Every four weeks the XO of Mersey, Lt Rob Lamb, takes over as CO for a fortnight. "For a lieutenant to drive a ship of this size is a fantastic opportunity," he said.

It also allows an exceptional level of training for the four Young Officers in each ship.

Cdr Lynn said: "As a training platform, these ships are phenomenal. They have four warfare Young Officers and a very high pass-rate at IWOC."

S/Lt Becca Brown, who left Dartmouth in April and joined Mersey in June, explained: "You get continual sea time, and one-to-one tuition. The rotation of people means you get different people mentoring you which is good for teaching, as it gives you different viewpoints."

Generally the CO, the Executive Officer, Gunnery Officer and Operations Officer are all qualified Marine Enforcement Officers, or British Sea Fisheries Officers as they used to be called, allowed by law to inspect foreign-registered fishing vessels in UK waters, and all British-registered vessels in UK and international waters.

To qualify, they complete a three-week training course run jointly by the Navy and the MMO.

Lt Cdr 'Beasty' Williams is the Royal Navy's 'Mr Fish', responsible for the daily running of the contract with the MMO, the quality assurance of the fishery protection task, and the training of the RN's Marine Enforcement Officers.

He describes himself as the latest of a long line of Schoolies – Education Officers – who have been lucky enough to take on the mantle of Fishery Protection Inspector.

His office walls in Portsmouth are lined with nets and fish posters, and the tools of the trade, measuring gauges and books of legislation, sit on his desk.

He said: "MEOs have considerable powers, and have to successfully complete a demanding five weeks of training delivered by

both the Navy and the MMO before they can fill the role; three weeks at the National Marine Aquarium and Sutton Harbour Fish Market in Plymouth, and two weeks practical training at sea in their ships.

"The shore phase involves long, brain-intensive days that start at 0545 in the fish market. Week one covers the fishing industry and its methods, how to run a boarding, and the famous fish identification module that tends to stay with MEOs for years after leaving the job.

"I've met dozens of ex-squadron officers who can still reel out the memory aids that we still teach to recognise fish; Horrible Hake, Manky Megrim, Parallel Pilchard...."

He explained: "In week two we hit the law books in earnest, learning the legislation and trying it out in case studies.

"We also throw in practical net measuring for a little light relief. Week three has the students learning how to gather and present evidence, conduct an interview under caution and, for a lucky couple of students, the chance to be cross-examined by the MMO's barrister in the witness box of Plymouth Magistrates Court.

"The best student on course wins the coveted 'Top Fish' trophy, and although taxing, it is widely regarded as an interesting and enjoyable course."

After the classroom comes the two-week practical sea phase. This is more physically demanding, involving boarding two or three times daily for up to two weeks on as wide a range of fishing vessels as possible, in a range of sea-states in sea areas with varied legislation, by both day and night.

Lt Cdr Williams said: "The new Marine Enforcement Officer is observed and coached by a sea rider from the MMO. If successful, the sea rider will pass them out as a Marine Enforcement Officer, fit to enforce the EU and UK legislation that is designed to ensure sustainable fisheries."

MEOs, or boarding officers work in teams of at least one qualified officer accompanied by an assistant, a junior rate or a Young Officer.

For a routine boarding, the ship will contact the fishing vessel by radio and announce that they intend to visit in about 15 minutes.

A tactical boarding is designed to take the fishermen by surprise. Often organised at night with the FPS ship stalking the fishing boats with all her lights off, the first the fishermen know about it is when the RIB arrives alongside and the boarding party requests a ladder.

It's the CO's call which fishing boats he chooses to board, but he receives a steer from the MMO. They will point him towards fishing vessels which they think have a high risk of infringing the law, perhaps because of previous 'form' or because they appear to

be in the wrong place, or using the wrong gear.

All fishing vessels of 15 metres and over carry VMS, the vessel monitoring system, which relays their position to the MMO in Newcastle.

The information is also relayed to the fishery protection ships, where on the bridge is a screen classifying every fishing vessel in the area by colour code – blue for British, red for French, green for Irish and orange for Dutch.

The FPS ship does not broadcast her position, so fishermen do not realise she's there until they see her.

The ships frequently run Joint Deployment Patrols, where they embark fishery inspectors from other nations who have the legal right to board their country's vessels outside UK Fishing Limits.

This means the fishing vessels cannot avoid being boarded by leaving UK waters, and it breaks through the language barrier, useful in explaining new rules or scientific surveys on certain species of fish.

"I really enjoy boardings," said Lt Lorraine Clasby, Correspondence Officer in HMS Mersey. "I enjoy meeting people, and I find 99 per cent of the fishermen appreciate you're there to do a job, and that job helps them to sustain their industry."

She added: "I've never had a problem being a woman on a fishing vessel. There are so many of us in the squadron the fishermen have got used to seeing us over the years and I think they like having us there.

She added: "I like working with the French – they have a great respect for you if they see you're doing a good job.

"Once I spent two hours in the hold of a French ship measuring their catch very diligently. You'd think they would be a bit annoyed because I was really ticking every box – but when I came up they'd made me a mushroom soufflé!"

She added: "Until you come to the squadron, you don't realise how much of an impact fishery protection has. It's a silent issue not spoken of as much as Libya or the Gulf, but it's a whole industry we're looking after."

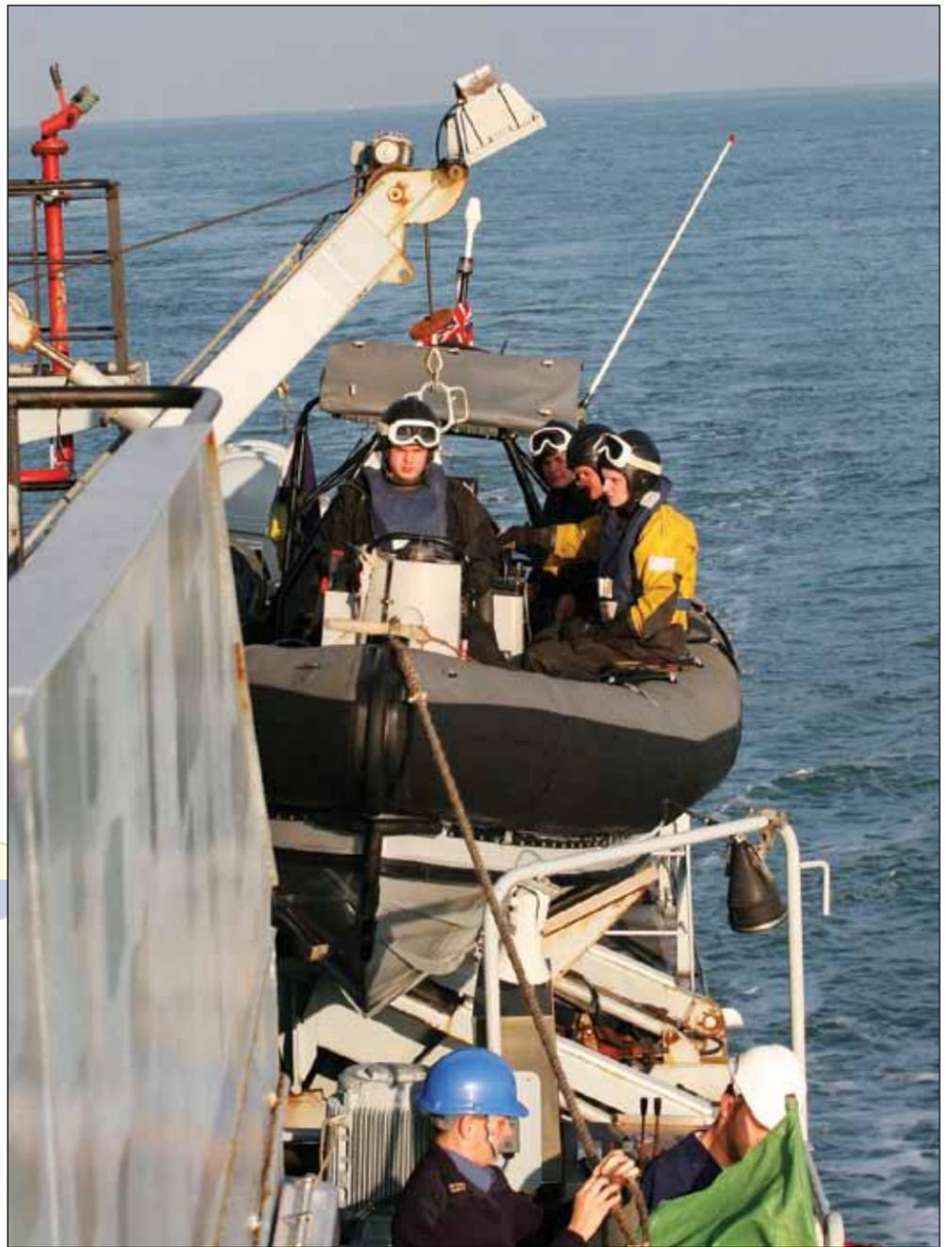
The sailors of the Fishery Protection Squadron may be the policemen of the seas, but this doesn't stop them having an empathy with the fishermen.

Cdr Lynn said: "There is a mutual respect from one seafarer to another that both are operating in an atrocious environment and both doing a job – and fishermen after all are the last of the hunter-gatherers."

He added: "This has to be one of the best jobs in the Navy. The pace is relentless but the rewards are huge and it's the sort of work the Navy does best.

"No wonder we currently have a waiting list to join the squadron.

"I'm very proud of the ships and their crews and to have held the reins for the last two years."



● HMS Severn's boarding team prepare to launch in HMS Severn's sea boat (top); fishing gear on the deck of a trawler (above); a Reims Cessna F406 Caravan Fisheries Patrol aircraft flies over HMS Severn (below); A member of a Royal Navy Fishery Protection Squadron boarding team digs fish out of the ice in the hold of a fishing boat (below left)



IT IS ten years since the Fleet Air Arm's newest, largest and most potent helicopter, Merlin Mk1, first deployed on front-line service. A decade on, today's Merlin crews reflect on ten years of achievement – and look ahead to the imminent arrival of the next-generation Merlin, the Mk2. **Richard Hargreaves** finds that the helicopter is



Still full of tricks

I'M SURE the Gerd Sibum hasn't any idea how useful she is.

Buzzed repeatedly by more than 14 tonnes of pusser's grey hurtling through Cornish skies at 140kts (nearly 170mph), the small container ship makes her way innocuously and obviously westwards across Mounts Bay.

For the purpose of today's flight she's a Type 23 (practising landing approaches) as well as a 'contact of interest'.

In the case of the former, the flight commander in the back uses Merlin's wizardry (sorry) to follow the merchantman's course – and her anticipated location in a few minutes' time – and guide the pilot in 'blind'. Only when we're within ¼ mile of the ship does the pilot take over.

That's if he or she can see the ship... If the weather's particularly foul, Merlin closes to within range of where a ship should be, and inches its way forward, zig-zagging over where the wake should be, looking for flares thrown off the stern as markers, hoping that the flight deck – "lit up like it's Christmas" – appears out of the gloom. If it sounds a bit extreme, it's not.

"We did this a couple of times for real last year off Canada – the fog just came down on us in an instant."

As for the contact of interest, well the intelligence community would quite like comprehensive imagery – bow, stern, overheads, a good portfolio.

The observer – who just happens to be the commanding officer of 814 Naval Air Squadron, the Flying Tigers (or Soggy Moggies if you ask the rest of the Merlin community...), and flight commander, Cdr Darran Goldsmith – straps into dispatcher straps and leans out of the side door and clicks away on a camera.

"The idea is to do it all in one pass," he imparts.

Three passes later and he concedes he's a little rusty...

Of course, any helicopter, let alone a naval helicopter, can do all this.

A quick glance out of the window. There's a swirl of white in the ocean and a big lump of grey hovering above it.

That's 'pinging' – a sonobuoy's in the water and hunting for a submarine.

And not any helicopter can do that.

In fact, cast your eye westwards from the shores of the Lizard peninsula on pretty much any given day and the sky over Mounts Bay is abuzz with Merlins pinging, winching, practising intelligence gathering with the fishing

boats and merchantmen below providing the unsuspecting targets.

All the time the headphones are filled with instructions and guidance. And if there's a contact of interest, says Cdr Goldsmith, "everyone wants a piece of you".

So busy is the bay that it's divided into half a dozen sectors so that helicopters can work safely in each one.

It is, in short, one big playground for WAFUs.

But then so is the entire world.

As Merlin marks ten years on front-line operations it's a perfect opportunity to look back at what has been done and – more importantly – ahead to what's just over the horizon.

In that decade, the helicopter has seen action in two wars (Iraq, Libya), trapped drug runners in the Caribbean and pirates in the Indian Ocean, paved the way for amphibious forces to move ashore in exercises from the Eastern Seaboard of the USA to the jungle of Brunei, as well as maintained its ability to hunt down submarines in home and foreign waters.

Some of the above operations – certainly Iraq and Libya – probably couldn't have been foreseen when the first operational Merlins began working with HMS Ark Royal in 2001.

"What happened to the Twin Towers changed everything," says Cdr Jason Phillips, Commanding Officer of 820 Naval Air Squadron.

"The real change in what Merlin does is down to the change in mentality of what the Navy does. Yes, Merlin is brilliant in the deep blue ocean – our main role is still anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare – but the aircraft does so much more. Merlin has been part of everything the Royal Navy's done these past ten years."

He continues:

"You're a golf club for a ship's commanding officer. Merlin always gets you out of trouble – it can do everything."

"It's like nothing else in the Fleet Air Arm. I would not want to fly anything else. It's awesome."

Within 12 months the first air and ground crew at RNAS Culdrose – home to the £40m-apiece helicopters since the first trial models were handed over in the late 90s – will get their very eager hands on Merlin Mk2.

And it is needed. While writing this feature, the latest issue of *Jane's*

Navy International landed on the *Navy News* doormat. 'Submarine surge in Southeast Asia' trumpets the cover headline, while inside the issue there's talk of a 'submarine arms race'.

To keep pace with submarine technology, you need the latest anti-submarine technology (it's why for example we won the Battle of the Atlantic...), which means you need new Merlins (or at least new innards – outwardly the Mk2 looks virtually identical).

Climb in the back of a Mk1 and the Gucci consoles which wowed aviators a decade ago actually look quite dated now.

What was revolutionary in the late 90s when pretty much every ops room, and certainly every display in the back of a Sea King, was monochrome, has now been overtaken by rapid changes in technology. A visit to an ops room, even on an old 42, is a multi-coloured treat with large displays, sometimes touch screens too.

Of course, you don't spend £800m on overhauling three dozen helicopters just so some naval aviators can have nice shiny touch screens – especially in today's very tight economic climate.

The second-generation Merlin will be better able to deal with submarine operations closer to shore, rather than the deep oceans which have been the traditional domain of anti-submarine warfare.

There will also be improved night vision goggles and fast roping facilities for Royal Marine boarding teams, and an M3M machine-gun. It's also receiving improved radar to better track inshore targets for surface, rather than sub-surface, roles and a new location system for rescue missions.

With the imminent arrival of the Mk2 at Culdrose, this is, says Cdr Kev Dodd – Commander Merlin Force – "an exciting time" for the 650 people in his domain.

They're spread across four squadrons: training squadron 824 accounts for 300 souls (more about them on page 12), the rest are divided among the front-line units of 814 and 820 (traditionally 'carrier squadrons') and 829 which provides ship's flights for Type 23 frigates.

Merlin crew will tell you two things: that the aircraft is very good; and that comparisons with Lynx do neither aircraft any favour.

You can buy three Wildcats – the

next-generation Lynx – for the price of one Merlin. But three Wildcats can't do everything that one Merlin can... and one Merlin can't be in three places at once...

"We need Wildcat and we need Merlin Mk2 to dominate the battlespace of the future. They do very different jobs," stresses Cdr Dodd.

"Merlin is one of the most versatile aircraft the UK has – it's here until 2029 and maybe beyond. It is a key pillar of the future Navy."

Okay, enough of the future. What about right now? Well, you'll find Merlins

- conducting counter-piracy/counter-terrorism/counter-smuggling/counter drugs-running duties east of Suez;

- flying from the back of Type 23 frigates, including HMS Somerset and St Albans currently on patrol in the Middle East;

- providing protection for the Royal Navy's ultimate weapon, the strategic missile submarines on constant patrol;

- training by day and night around the Cornish coast (typically there are half a dozen buzzing around Mounts Bay and beyond).

In the case of the 23s, having a Merlin is "like having a second, flying ops room", says 829 NAS' CO Cdr Martin Bravery. It's his task to ensure that if needed, a frigate sails with one Merlin, four aircrew, nine maintainers and one aircraft controller.

"You get the most value out of Merlin of any military aircraft," he says adamantly. "Look at what we do, where we work, on our own or together. We go everywhere."

"We are passionate about Merlin, passionate about flying at sea. If you're not, you shouldn't be doing this job. Eight months at sea? Bring it on."

Among those who shares those sentiments is trainee pilot Lt Simon Benton. Earlier in his career he would, he says, "have preferred Lynx. I got Merlin, came to Culdrose and now I don't want to leave."

Before we get too misty eyed about a grey flying brick, there's more to Merlin than just £40m of hardware. Lt Benton adds:

"It's not just about the Merlin. It's about a big family that you're taken into. It's a nice part of the Navy to be in."

It's also quite a nice aircraft to look

after. It is, says 820's LAET 'Rhodey' Rhodes, who's spent eight years tending to Merlins, "pretty good – lessons have been learned from Sea King making it maintainer-friendly. It's easy to track down any errors in the system. You never have too much trouble."

"Yes there are cramped spaces, and it is a demanding aircraft, requiring a lot of hours work, but it's nowhere near as bad as a Sea King."

And talking of 'nowhere near as bad as a Sea King'... Merlin's certainly a damn sight cleaner. The *Navy News* team has spent a lot of time in the back of Junglies getting covered in grease and oil, knocked-out by exhaust fumes spilling through the open side door, or fidgeting endlessly on those uncomfortable canvas seats.

As a passenger, flying in Merlin is quiet (ish), comfortable, you can move around freely, stand up even, you can hear instructions over the headsets easily and, above all, you're not shaken to bits.

"In a Sea King you notice moving at 30kts," says pilot Lt Ryan McGovern. "In Merlin you barely feel 120kts."

The Flying Tiger has spent five years on the helicopter which he describes as akin to "flying around in a Rolls-Royce. It is an absolute joy to fly."

Certainly the cockpit consoles fill you with confidence. Look at the business end of a Sea King and it's largely analogue: dials and gauges. Merlin is a wall of computer displays and the like.

"The computers make things a lot safer, but anything tricky, anything which requires skill, that's down to the pilot," Lt McGovern quickly points out.

It's the old Navy adage. However good the kit, it's nothing without the operator.

One day the pilot is practising in the simulator, the next he's practising those blind approaches for real in Mounts Bay.

"If you're Jungly for example, you just do Jungly," he says. "That's why I love this. It's the versatility: anti-submarine, counter-piracy, search and rescue, troop carrying."

In the back, his CO, Cdr Goldsmith chips in.

"If you're the captain of a ship, you want something which can do anti-submarine warfare, can do counter-piracy, can drop off 11 troops. So if I was captain of a ship, I'd want a squadron of Merlins."

"It's a brilliant aircraft – it does exactly what it says on the tin... and it's a very big tin."

Time to get the can opener out...



Halcyon days on Albion

IN LATE September ten CCF cadets from Trinity School Teignmouth enjoyed the hospitality of Capt James Morley and his ship's company on HMS Albion, the affiliated ship of their unit.

This was probably the last opportunity for a few years to learn about life on board this versatile flagship, observing navigation from the bridge and participating in various watches.

Last opportunity for a while since Albion is going into extended readiness from the end of October.

The cadets were accompanied by their Contingent Commander Lt Cdr (CCF) Geraldine Poulet-Bowden RNR (pictured right with Lt Scott Hamer, liaison officer for this affiliation, and Capt Morley).

The cadets arrived on board on the Sunday evening of September 18.

Cadet Emma Hayes of the Navy Section put down her first impressions on paper: "After boarding the large ship we excitedly gathered our things in a small room waiting to be led to our messes, eager to start exploring."

The next morning they left Devonport. In the Irish Sea, she felt: "the days were thoroughly enjoyable, packed with tours and briefings that were interesting and fun."

"People on the ship helped us to understand what it was like when you are in war circumstances."



"Overnight we were able to attend one of the watches and allowed to actually steer the ship which was scary but exhilarating."

The demo by a helicopter landing on the flight deck was one of the highlights on Tuesday.

These positive vibrations are echoed by Cadet Woodbridge (Army Section) who was most impressed by the professionalism and size of the Royal Marines and their facilities on board: "They were all very big guys. I remember the fitness section."

The aim of these days as affiliates at sea is to provide an

enjoyable experience and an opportunity to spend routine time at sea in an RN warship, which was well and truly achieved.

Trinity School Teignmouth's affiliation to Albion goes back to the very beginning when cadets and officers were present at her Commissioning Ceremony on June 19 2003.

"It seems like yesterday," said Lt Cdr (CCF) Poulet-Bowden, "Our recruit platoon of young cadets are hoping for a visit alongside at Devonport in early November before Albion goes into complete hibernation."

Duke delights in RHS success

THE Duke of York (pictured right with headmaster Howard Blackett) visited the Royal Hospital School, Suffolk this summer.

As the School's 'Official Visitor', he was keen to see developments at the School since his last visit in October 2006.

The School has been very fortunate to have benefited from the generous support of its parent charity, Greenwich Hospital and this support has enabled the School to go through an £18 million five-year development programme.

This has included the refurbishment of the boarding houses and the building of a music school that would rival any in the country. It is these developments that the Duke was keen to see on a normal 'working day'.

The Royal Hospital School was established nearly 300 years ago in the buildings that now house the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. It grew in size and aspiration and relocated to Suffolk in 1933.

Today the School, in Holbrook, retains some of its naval traditions but is very much a mainstream independent boarding school with 700 boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years.

More than a quarter of these pupils are from services families and the School has a long history of superb pastoral care that caters for children with a services background.

To find out more go to www.royalhospitalschool.org contact Admissions on 01473 326210 or admissions@royalhospitalschool.org



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Saints are

NOW that's bound to grab your attention...

Ears on the upper deck!

Gunners on HMS St Albans try to fend off a low-level attack from one of the world's most potent strike aircraft – an F18C Hornet.

The 'attack' came courtesy of the Kuwaiti Air Force during what the frigate's crew say was "an adrenaline-fuelled" air defence exercise – arguably the highlight of a demonstration day where the Portsmouth-based frigate showed what the Royal Navy brings to operations in the Gulf...

...and the host nation showed off some of their awesome aerial firepower from supersonic F18s to equally fearsome Apache gunships.

The jets came in fast and low in a bid to evade the Type 23's radar – a test for the Saint's Seawolf missile system as well as the sailors manning the 30mm and Miniguns, while the Apaches practised their attack profiles, using the frigate as their target.

Now F18s and Apaches are awesome bits of military kit, but they do have their limitations.

For a start, an F18 is positively rubbish at launching sea boats.

And the carrying capacity of an Apache if you need to, say, rapid

rope in a Royal Marines boarding party is zilch.

What you need for that is one Type 23 frigate and one 829 Naval Air Squadron Merlin.

So up went Talisker – callsign for the ship's helicopter (as well as a popular brand of Scottish whisky) – which promptly simulated the manoeuvres and profiles it would use to protect the Saint's boarding team as they swept through the Kuwaiti Coast Guard ship acting as a suspect vessel.

The commandos in turn demonstrated their well-honed board and search techniques in front of senior Kuwaiti military officials.

With the display done, proceedings moved ashore as St Albans berthed in Kuwait for a three-day visit.

Barely were the lines across and the gangway in place than the red carpet was rolled out and the ship's company flicked the 'turn from sleek grey messenger of death to champion of all things British' switch.

Making the most of the Royal Navy's traditions of meticulous attention to detail and precise official ceremony, the ship hosted senior officials and influential figures from Kuwait on behalf of

the Foreign and Commonwealth Office: lunch at the Captain's table for high-ranking Kuwaiti military officers, followed by an official reception that evening, closing with a ceremonial sunset.

The ship also played host to the new Kuwaiti Commander of Combined Task Force 152, one of three international naval task forces trying to clamp down on all illegal activity in the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and Gulf.

In the case of 152 – to which St Albans is presently attached – it's responsible for the Gulf from the shores of Iraq and Kuwait in the north to the Strait of Hormuz in the south, just under 97,000 square miles of sea (about one third the size of the North Sea).

And on a lighter note, while alongside in Kuwait, the Saint's flight deck was turned into a rock arena for an 'open mic' evening for sailors and marines to show off their musical abilities (and some rather garish shirts...).

Performances of note including the El Divso Barbershop Quartet (which included the ship's Commanding Officer Cdr Tom Sharpe) and LS(EW) Whisky Walker entertained with his acoustic guitar.

Away from the ship there were opportunities to enjoy sport –

despite the late summer heat (highs in September are typically over 40°C) the ship's company took part in rugby (see our sports pages), football and running and, for the slightly-less-strenuously-minded, a round of golf and a look around Kuwait City and environs.

"Being in the Navy isn't a 9-5 job – when you are onboard a warship at sea you are ready to react to an emergency or crisis 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said St Albans' most senior rating, Executive Warrant Officer WO1 Shiner Wright.

"Having the opportunity to visit foreign countries, meet the locals and enjoy the local culture is a welcome break from our patrols and allows us to spread the good word of Britain and the Royal Navy."

AFTER 72 hours alongside it was time to leave Kuwait and resume patrols – with the added challenge of a visit from a specialist mobile team from the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation in Plymouth.

As well as preparing ship's companies for a front-line

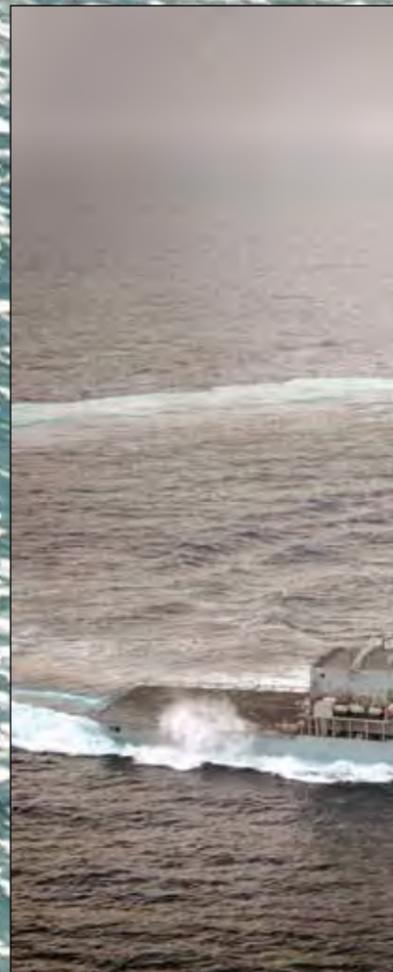
deployment courtesy of two months of very rigorous training off the South Coast, the FOSTies also visit warships at some point during the tours of duty thousands of miles from home to provide 'mid-deployment top-up training'.

If that's not enough to keep the Saints on their toes, then how about working with the world's most powerful surface ship?

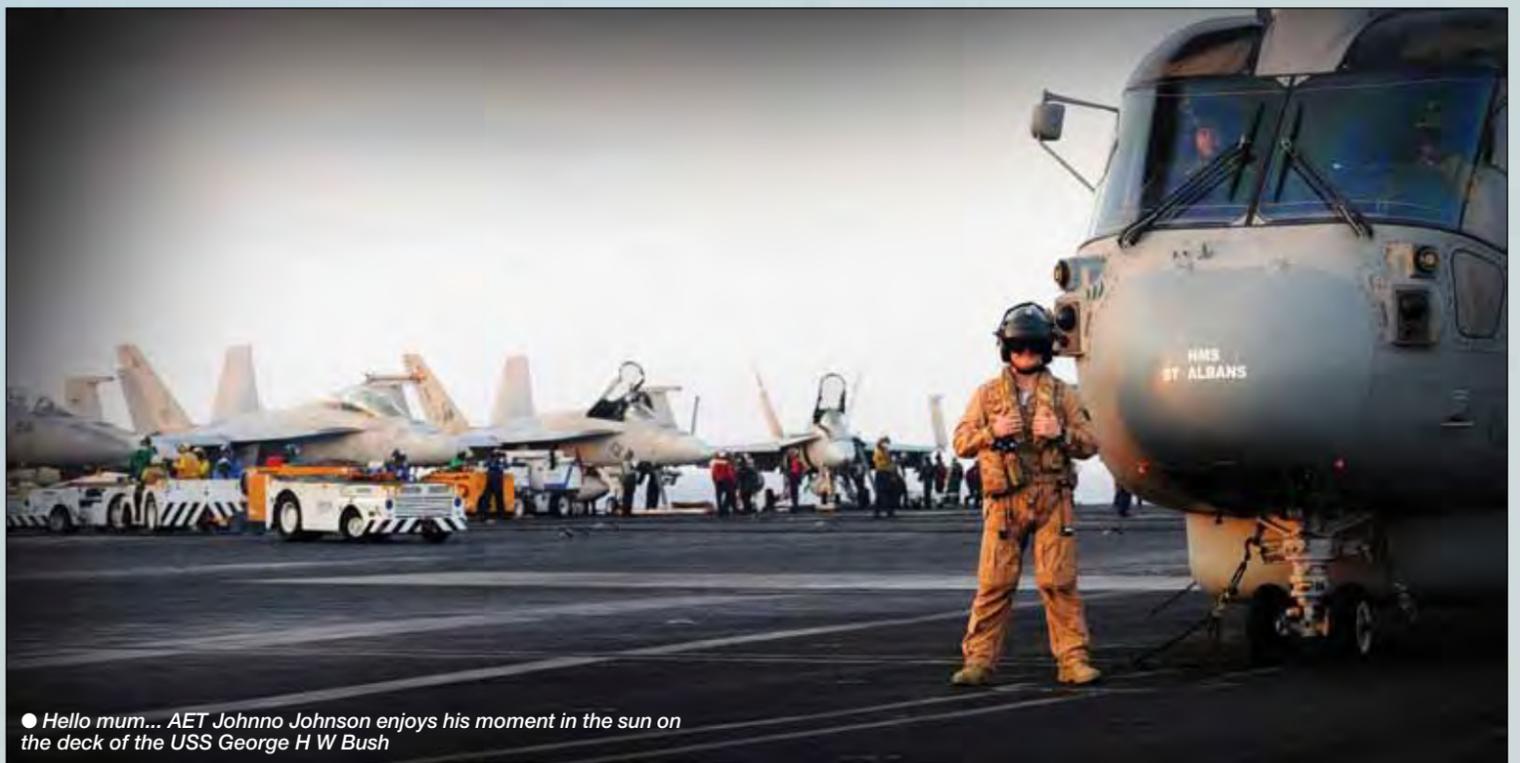
The USS George H W Bush (named after the older of the two former Presidents Bush) is on her maiden voyage supporting ongoing US operations in Iraq (Operation New Dawn) and Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom) in addition to the wider east of Suez maritime security mission.

For three days the Bush Carrier Battle Group was joined by two Type 23s (St Albans plus her sister Somerset, also in the region on maritime security patrols) for a 'passex' – passage exercise.

The link-up in the Arabian Sea saw the assorted warships, which on the American side included United States Ships Mitscher, Gettysburg and Springfield,



oar



● Hello mum... AET Johnno Johnson enjoys his moment in the sun on the deck of the USS George H W Bush

conduct air defence exercises, fend off surface threats and practise anti-submarine skills.

As part of the link-up, St Albans' CO was invited aboard the Bush – as was Pakistan's Capt Muhammad Naveed Akhtar, Commanding Officer of the destroyer PNS Shahjahan, also in the vicinity – to receive a gift of thanks from the carrier's Commanding Officer Capt Brian Luther for their support: a framed photograph of the 100,000-ton flat-top.

That wasn't the only photograph of the Bush St Albans' sailors left with...

When the frigate's helicopter flew across to the carrier, a volunteer was needed to ensure the helicopter was lashed down properly on the Bush's flight deck (Merlin is renowned – or is it infamous? – for its very strong downdraught).

Step forward AET Johnno Johnson of 829 NAS, by day (and night) one of the small band of technicians and engineers who maintains the frigate's helicopter.

(Yes, there are 5,000+ Americans on the Bush who could probably have done it and it sounds like a jolly, but at least he'll get crated by his mess mates for posing in front of the Merlin on

the flight deck and subsequently appearing in these pages...).

WHEN not making flying visits (pun intended) to US supercarriers, the Merlin has proved very useful in saving mariners' lives.

Earlier in the deployment, the helicopter saved all 13 souls aboard the foundering tanker Pavit in the middle of a monsoon.

It was called on once more when the frigate picked up an SOS from the dhow Al Mukhtar.

Whilst the rescue of three ill sailors aboard the cargo-carrying vessel wasn't as dramatic as the Pavit incident, the story behind their survival was.

The Al Mukhtar flashed a distress signal after it picked up three men from the ocean.

St Albans' Merlin quickly found the dhow roughly nine miles west of its reported location.

In spite of a significant language barrier, the Merlin fliers managed to establish communication with the Al Mukhtar so it could meet up with the warship, making best speed towards it.

With the dhow in sight, the Saint put her sea boats in the water with Royal Marines Commandos and RN personnel, plus one Army interpreter aboard.

It was their task to secure the Al Mukhtar so that the frigate's medical officer could embark and assess the casualties.

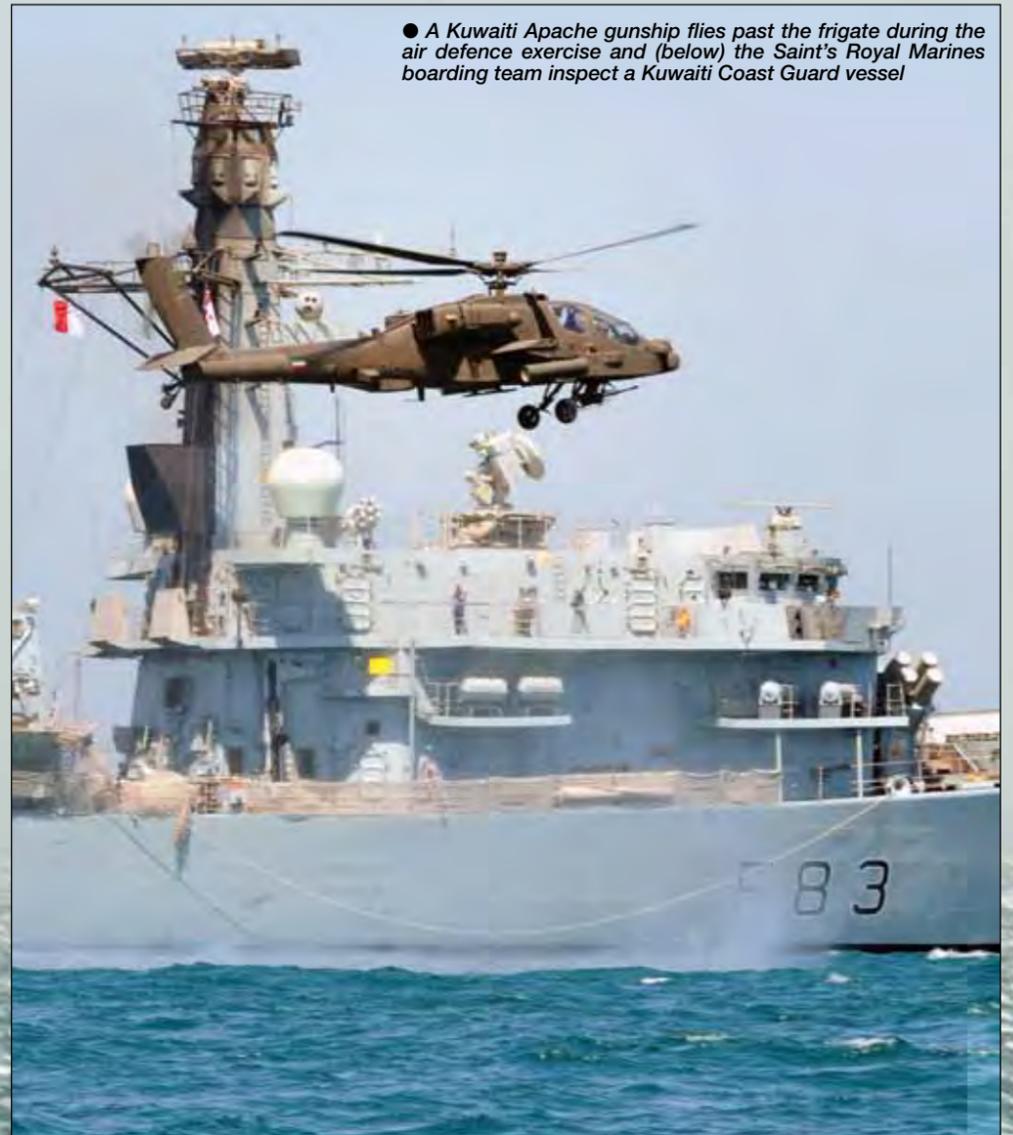
With the help of interpreter Cpl Emma Warburton, the three men recounted their ordeal: they were Bangladeshis, forced into the water when their boat was seized by pirates. They had clung on to barrels and crates, surviving in the water for three days until the Al Mukhtar came across them and hauled them out of the sea.

The trio were in an unstable condition so time was of the essence. The medical team worked fast to stabilise them so that they could be transported ashore by the fastest means.

Thanks to staff at the operations cell of Combined Task Force 150 – the international maritime force to which St Albans is currently attached – the fastest means proved to be two fast Omani Police boats that had arrived at the scene.

With the rescue mission complete, the Portsmouth-based frigate resumed her patrol – to throttle criminal activity and provide reassurance to law-abiding mariners.

She's due to return to Portsmouth next month with her sister Argyll taking her place.



● A Kuwaiti Apache gunship flies past the frigate during the air defence exercise and (below) the Saint's Royal Marines boarding team inspect a Kuwaiti Coast Guard vessel



● She might lack the firepower of the Bush, but the Saint shows she's rather more manoeuvrable





Manxman, fleetest of the fleet

IN REPLY to letters in the October edition regarding speed of ships (HMS Edinburgh and York), I served in HMS Manxman, Fast Minelayer, on a two-year plus commission to the Mediterranean Fleet, from mid-1951 to December 1953.

During that time we were in dry dock in Malta when our Captain, Trevor Lean, cleared lower deck and told us that there was trouble in Egypt as King Farouk had been deposed by the military and a Colonel Nasser had decided to nationalise the Suez Canal.

We were told that we would be leaving the next day to protect British interests in Suez.

At the time both screws were off and the bottom was being painted.

The dockyard workers got cracking and at midday next day we left dry dock and once outside Grand Harbour went full ahead to Suez.

We arrived at action stations after overtaking all other ships that left Malta before us.

All three funnels went yellow with the heat from the boilers and

the paint fell off.

We went stern to at the naval compound and as I came out of the wheelhouse I heard our Captain asked Commander E "How much fuel left, Chief?"

Commander E replied: "I have enough to fill your cigarette lighter."

We spent a lot of that commission in the Suez Canal zone and we only received our Naval General Service medal in 2003, 50 years later, with the Canal Zone clasp.

The photograph (above) shows Manxman at speed trials in the Mediterranean in 1953 after a refit in Gibraltar.

I was on the wheel at the time and the speed was in excess of 44 knots.

The entire ship was vibrating with the power from the massive engines that drove her.

Manxman was recognised as the fastest ship in the Royal Navy and nothing has been built since to take that accolade away from her.

— Vic Everest, former L/Seaman, Cheshunt, Herts



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest rum to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Vic Everest.

Not forgotten and forgotten?

I HAVE just read the review *No Longer Forgotten* in the September edition, which states that there is only one memorial to the British Pacific Fleet.

Here in the Naval Memorial Park in Rockingham Western Australia, we have a memorial that is dedicated to both the British Pacific Fleet and the East Indies Fleet.

So they are Not Forgotten.
— Terry Rawe, Vice chairman, Rockingham and District Branch RNA, Shoalwater, Western Australia

...AS a part of the Gosport Heritage Week I was privileged to have the opportunity to visit the Royal Naval Cemetery in Gosport.

Following a most informative tour I was saddened to learn that despite the cemetery being the resting place of many who gave their lives in the service of their country and of those who served their country during both war and peace, it is many years since a representative of either the Ministry of Defence or the RN alone laid a wreath there on Armistice Day.

Whilst I appreciate there are a number of occasions and places that this does happen, I truly would expect that a cemetery in the heart of the 'naval countryside' be duly remembered officially by its own.

— Lt Cdr Michael E Pearson, Fareham, Hants

opinion

THE wonderful Victorian painting the *Boyhood of Raleigh* shows a salty old seadog enthralled by the young hero-to-be with tales of his adventures across the Seven Seas.

This image irresistibly sprang to mind when we heard that Lord West of Spithead (who we trust won't mind a connection with the above description) met a young lad on the Tube who asked him 'What's the Navy?' (see page 14)

The Admiral, on his way to the Annual National Service for Seafarers, gave the schoolboy and his classmates an impromptu lesson in British history, imparting as much as he could about the Royal Navy within five Tube stops.

When Lord West got up to leave, the whole carriage gave him a spontaneous round of applause.

On hearing this tale, one could be depressed by more

Our freedom rests at sea

THE theme for World Maritime Day on 29 September was piracy. While most piracy is taking place many thousands of miles away, it still has an effect on Britain.

As an island trading nation, dependent on the sea for our very survival, maritime trade is less secure and more expensive while the scourge of piracy continues.

These additional costs will surely be borne by consumers.

The freedom of the seas is paramount and it is appropriate to reflect on freedom, in a maritime context, in this of all periods.

For, 70 years ago, in September 1941, Franklin D Roosevelt launched the SS Patrick Henry, first of over 2,700 Liberty ships.

British in concept, but built in the United States, these remarkable 14,000-ton ships made a significant contribution to the war effort, replacing vessels sunk by German U-boats in the Battle of the Atlantic, and helping to keep open the lifelines of Britain — the seas.

The average time to build a Liberty ship was 42 days but one ship, in a publicity stunt, was built and launched less than five days after the keel was laid.

Today, some 95 per cent of Britain's trade is in ships and much of what we buy in the shops, and online, has arrived by sea.

Liberty and freedom of the seas are more relevant than most landlubbers might imagine and one must hope that HM Government is not left all at



● A Royal Marine from HMS Somerset guards suspected pirates aboard the *Hibid Fidi*, 100 miles off Somalia — the Pakistani fishing vessel was freed from pirate control by HMS Somerset and its crew liberated

sea when it comes to naval and maritime policy.

The beautifully-written Naval Prayer, in daily use since 1662, makes clear that the Royal Navy

must always provide 'security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasion.'

— Lt Cdr Lester May, Camden Town, London

We're the Senior Service, not Army wannabes

OH, HOW I chortled with merriment at the sight of a Warrant Officer and three Petty Officers skylarking about by pretending to be Army drill sergeants (*Navy pacesetters*, page 40, October).

Who could resist breaking into a broad smile at the thought of the Royal Navy aping the 'Grand Army' parade manner with its "You 'orrible little man — I've seen smarter maggots!" style of instruction?

Imagine then, how my unfeigned jollity turned to horror when I read that this was not a joke, but actual, serving, members of the Royal Navy trying to pretend to be soldiers.

Beer for the rat pack

NAVAL *Quirks* (Sept) reminded me of another anecdote of that era.

The British Pacific Fleet was anchored off Ulithi, a small island near Okinawa, prior to attacking the Kamikaze bases in the Sakishima Group.

The American Fleet was also there, and because Japanese soldiers were still on the island, nobody was allowed ashore.

To compensate for this,

Who has allowed this farrago which stands against every tradition, custom, and practice of the Senior Service?

Where did the Warrant Officer get that disgraceful cap?

With it jammed horizontally on his head and with its ridiculous near-vertical peak, he looks like a cross between an SS milkman and an Aldershot traffic warden.

What next? The stamping of feet and the wagging of open palm salutes? God preserve us!

— Lt E C Coleman, RN, Bishop Norton, Lincolnshire

American lighters drew alongside each and every ship every morning to deliver bottles of beer.

Our crane on *Lusty* lifted the cardboard cartons of beer onto the flight deck, and hoses were played on them to try to keep the bottles from getting too hot.

When *Up Spirits* was piped, each man filed past the now soggy heap of cardboard, delving in it to emerge with his bottle of beer.

After we upped anchor, 'Jimmy the One' put a notice on his noticeboard, saying that a few bottles of beer were left, and that any man bringing him a dead rat could have one.

After a week, another notice went up: "Any rating found breeding rats will be severely dealt with."

— R Wadmore, Orpington, Kent

Deep admiration across the pond

HELLO from the States!

While travelling recently, I was able to watch all three episodes of the documentary series *Royal Navy Submarine Missions* on Channel 5, following HMS *Turbulent* on active mission.

I did not know who to write to about this, but I just wanted to say from an American, this was one of the best documentaries on your service I have ever seen.

It was realistic, respectful, and showed the world why the Royal Navy is still the greatest Navy on the planet.

This is coming from a family of nothing but American Navy sailors.

So, if there is any way possible, please forward my respects and admiration to the crew of HMS *Turbulent*, including but not limited to Captain Ryan Ramsey, Executive Officer Gareth Jenkins, and AB Dan Gardyne.

I loved watching them work, and wish them nothing but success.

— Devin Copeland, North Carolina, USA.

The clue's in the name

I NOTE with satisfaction your short piece in October's edition (page 30) in which you mention Lt Cdr Steve Thomas, Senior Pilot of 820 Squadron, and Lt (now Lt Cdr) Dave Thomas, each of whom collected awards on behalf of the squadron.

You describe them as 'namesakes.'

This is, believe it or not, because the senior pilot and the training officer of 820 Squadron are *brothers*, or didn't you know that?

— Lt Cdr Alun Thomas, (Ret'd)

PS You might notice that I am a 'namesake' too. That's because I'm their *father*!

Navy-Blue-blooded family

I AM writing to ask if there are any other families who have had a continuous serving member in the Royal Navy since 1955?

I ask because my dad served from 1955 to 1985 (as a Writer, then went SD Lieutenant), my elder sister joined in 1981 (when Dad was still in) and served in QARNNS until 1988.

I joined in 1984 (when Dad was still in) and served as a writer until 1996.

My younger sister joined in 1987 (when I was still in) and is still serving (Stores)

— Samantha Dunn, Fleet Information Management Unit, Portsmouth

I have to admit that it would surprise me if we could not find another family with a similar record — let's see what the postbag produces — Ed

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Editorial

Managing editor: Sarah Fletcher 023 9272 4194

Editor: Mike Gray 023 9272 5136

News editor: Richard Hargreaves 023 9272 4163

Production editor: Helen Craven 023 9272 5067

Fax 023 9283 8845

edit@navynews.co.uk

Business

Business manager: Lisa Taw 023 9272 0494

Subscriptions 023 9272 6284

subscriptions@navynews.co.uk

Accounts 023 9272 0686

Advertising 023 9272 5062

advertising@navynews.co.uk

Fax 023 9273 4448

General enquiries and archives: 023 9272 5061/5064

JACK

BY TUGG



Labour of love keeps Harrier flying

YOUR story of the last British Harrier pilot (*Pilot ends era of the Harrier*, October, page 31) reminded me that a few weeks ago I was astonished to see an ex-RN Sea Harrier flying in America and amazed to hear that it is privately owned and displayed.

The aircraft in question, XZ439, is the oldest surviving Sea Harrier and the second one to roll off the assembly line in March 1970.

It was bought by a retired US Marine Harrier test pilot, Art Nalls, in 2005, shipped to the USA and restored until 2007 when it flew again.

Art now displays his iconic aircraft at air shows around Virginia and I saw his impeccable display at NAS Patuxent River in September.

It could only happen in America!
- Roger Hackman, Gosport



By George he's right

I ALWAYS have a strong feeling of nostalgia when I see HMS Collingwood mentioned in *Navy News* - as in the visit of the First Sea Lord (September).

I trained there as a Radar Mechanic from 1944-45 and after some time at sea in the Far East, returned as a Petty Officer instructing in radar mechanics and electronics.

Your correspondent George Drewett (letters, September) is right - Once Navy Always Navy.

Otherwise, why would I, at 85 years of age and a retired solicitor, still enjoy reading *Navy News* from end to end every month the way I do?

- W Gordon McNay, Strathaven, Lanarkshire

Red missed

READING the article about navigational training in the Solent (May) reminded me of serving onboard HMS Redpole in 1954-55.

One occasion that I always remember is that on one training run, it was extremely foggy. After just completing one run, we saw this very big, dark shape off the quarterdeck.

We rang the bridge and the captain had to do a rather rapid change of course! It was the Queen Mary, sailing from Southampton.

The captain radioed the master saying that the ship had just missed us, and the master replied: "I do apologise, I will try to do better next time."

- Len Simpson, Cramlington, Northumberland

My memories of friendly Libya

I FIRST went to Libya in the early 1950s when serving as a trainee Droggie on the Hydrographic Survey Ship HMS Owen.

We surveyed Tripoli Harbour and carried out a wreck sweep in Tubruq harbour where we found a First World War type spiky mine and lots of German vehicles which would be collectors' items now.

An Italian salvage company was collecting war debris from the desert.

The actual removal was carried out by local Bedouins who brought it to the edge of the desert. It was then collected by the Italians because of landmines.

When I left the Navy I became an engineer working in the oil and gas industry specialising in offshore work.

I visited Libya on many occasions and was impressed by the friendliness of the locals, from the engineers down to the worker level.

Getting in and out of the country was the biggest challenge in beating the bureaucracy. Although Libya was very oil-dollar rich there was the fetish about foreigners taking money out of the country.

When you entered you were required to declare all your money and this was checked when leaving against expenditure such as hotel bills.

On one visit when going through

the departure procedure at Tripoli airport which normally took about four hours, I was asked by a very bossy female immigration officer to turn out my wallet.

At the time I was working in central London where we were given luncheon vouchers to subsidise our meals, of which I had about £30 worth in my wallet.

I used to save mine and take the wife out for a slap-up meal. I was accused of withholding currency and the vouchers were confiscated.

To this day it narks me to think that some Arab family had a slap-up meal in London on my vouchers.

The country is ripe to be opened up for tourism as there are vast, sandy beaches and a climate as good as the current holiday resorts such as Dubai.

Of course, there is very little tide in the Mediterranean. I do hope the new regime opens up the country.

When visiting Libya there are two things to remember, as an engineer who regularly worked there told me; always take a bath/sink plug with you because they always get nicked in the best hotels, and never walk into the desert to relieve yourself when travelling on the desert highways, because of the landmines left over from the war even now.

- Alan Sargent, Peacehaven, East Sussex

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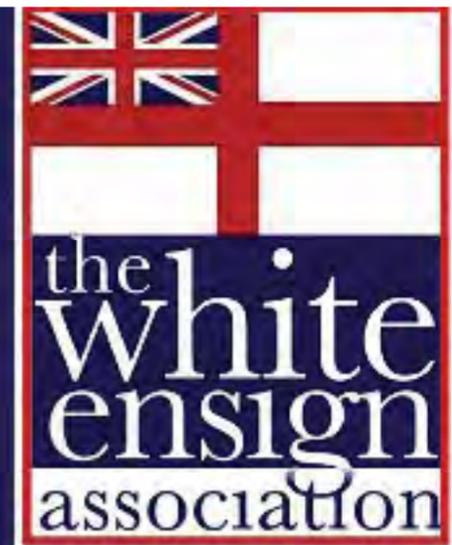
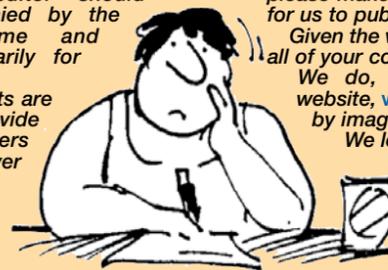
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Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*.

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

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

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



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

Lethal to our enemies, safe to ourselves

THE Royal Navy's ranking sailor has launched a new safety initiative with a promise. Last month First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope made this pledge: "I am personally committed to making the Royal Navy a workplace where safety and risk are properly managed."

"I will ensure that I, and all those in my Command Chain, take positive and timely action to address safety weaknesses."

The Safety Pledge marks the start of the Navy Safety Improvement Programme (NSIP) under the banner of NAVYSAFE – lethal to our enemies, safe to ourselves, which will seek to improve the way safety and risk management is conducted throughout the Naval Service – on ships, in naval bases and all shore establishments.

The programme intends to re-energise the safety culture within the Service and make sure the Royal Navy is able to do safety well, keeping ourselves safe and maintain fighting effectiveness – being lethal to the enemy.

Safety has always been the backbone of good seamanship and a top concern of Navy Command, but it is recognised that rules, regulations and processes alone do not ensure safety, and more can be done to improve our attitudes and approach to safety and thus avoid unnecessary accidents and injuries.

Improvements will be made through a re-shaped organisational framework for safety and risk management that will establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability.

Within this framework, key senior officers have been named as Duty Holders, and they have been personally tasked by the First Sea Lord to ensure the safety of activity within their areas of responsibility.

A fundamental task of Duty Holders will be to learn from experience and ensure accidents and incidents aren't needlessly repeated.

To do this will require an awareness of hazards by timely reporting of events when they happen and effective ways of identifying the root causes of the

events.

Therefore, new mechanisms will be developed to make it easier for people to report incidents and for the subsequent management of lessons.

In making such improvements it is firmly recognised that numerous processes already exist in safety management.

NAVYSAFE will not seek to re-invent the wheel or create more things to do.

All improvements will aim to rationalise what we do now, where possible reducing the number of processes, and making them more relevant and appropriate to our business.

The most important change will be our collective attitude towards safety and the development of an effective safety culture.

This will require leadership from those in positions of responsibility and engagement by those conducting activity in the office, at the waterfront, at sea, and on the front line.

The First Sea Lord has articulated his commitment through his Safety Pledge, and in this pledge he also requires everyone in the Naval Service to 'play their part'.

For this to happen the NSIP programme will also include education and development at every level to ensure all personnel understand safety principles and how we do safety in the Royal Navy.

The aim here is to make all personnel competent and confident at safety and risk management such that we can be risk aware and not risk averse – doing safety sensibly.

A copy of the First Sea Lord's personal Safety Pledge and NSIP information leaflets have been despatched to all ships and establishments, and will be posted on all main noticeboards.

Personnel will be informed of changes and improvements as they are delivered.

More information on the NSIP can also be found at the NAVYSAFE website on the RN Intranet.



Picture: CPO(Phot) Kev Preece



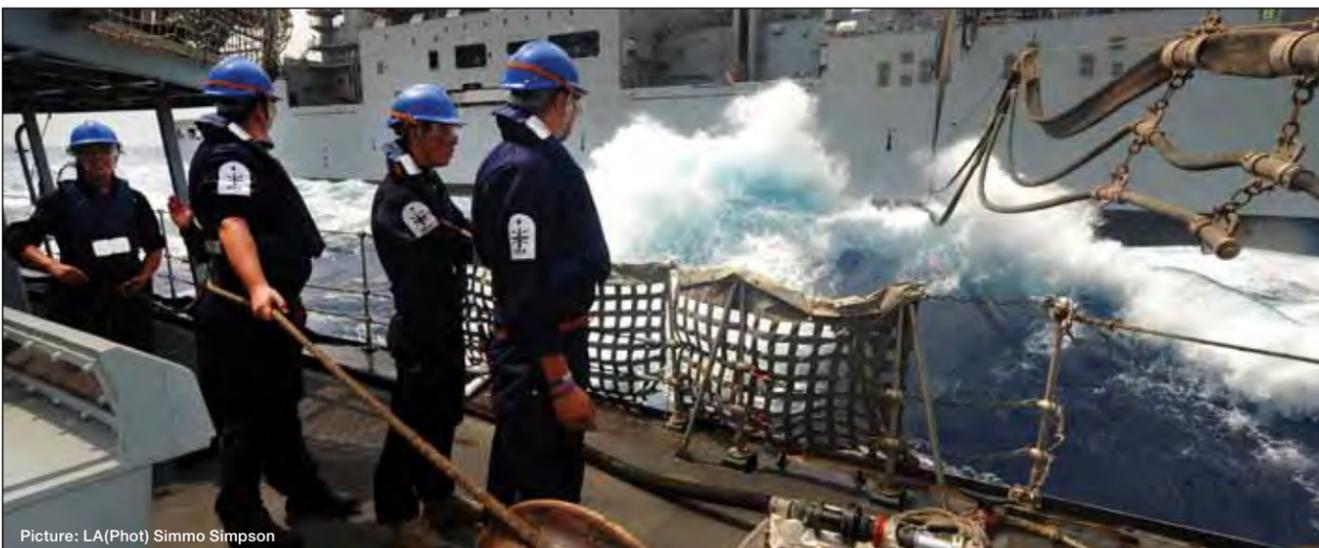
● Safety first (clockwise from top) HMS Invincible leaves C Buoy in Plymouth Sound in heavy weather; a security patrol escorts a foreign submarine from the Clyde; Royal Marines board a ship during an exercise in the Gulf; HMS St Albans RASes with USNS Alan Shepard in the Gulf of Aden; an aircrewman watches as his Merlin approaches HMS Westminster. Above: First Sea Lord's Safety Pledge



Picture: LA(Phot) AJ MacLeod



Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clew (RNPTOTY x 3)



Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins

Taste of success for Naval catering team



NAVAL caterers won more than 50 medals and certificates in competition against the best of the Army and RAF.

The 65-strong Naval Service Culinary Arts Team (NSCAT) put themselves under the spotlight at Exercise Joint Caterer, the intensely competitive three-day event at Sandown racecourse in Surrey.

And when the steam had cleared and the last crumbs were swept up after 36 classes spread across two live theatres, a field catering competition, a *parade des chefs* and a display *salon culinaire*, the Senior Service emerged with nine gold medals, 13 silver, 22 bronze, 18 certificates of merit and five best of class awards.

The pressure-cooker atmosphere at this flagship competition allows military and civilian chefs and stewards from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and RFA to hone their culinary skills in terms of ability, imagination, innovation, adaptability and flair, preparing them for the operational field, whilst nurturing pride in professional achievement and building a team spirit.

Now in its 11th year, Joint Caterer attracted more than 350 Service competitors and around 800 supporters.

Among the highlights were Std Filson's gold (which requires score of over 90 per cent) and best of class in the Open Steward Skills class staged in the live theatre, while LStd Theobald also took gold in the same competition.

POCS MacDiarmid struck gold in the Open Pastry Skills class.

The Royal Marines mashed the opposition in the team events, taking four golds in the Open Field Team Challenge, with Mnes Moth, Evans and Aitken (45 Cdo RM) winning the Best in Class.

The NSCAT was supported by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and Multinational Logistic Services (MLS).

Joint Caterer 2012 will take place on October 23-25, with the RN day taking place on October 24.

For further information on competing, mentoring, organising or supporting Exercise Joint Caterer 12, contact the Fleet Catering Officer on 93832 5798 or [FLEET-CAP LOG SPT CS S03](#).

More than 20 of the awards went to personnel from the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS), based at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

The Torpoint contingent included DMLS instructor and captain of the RN front-of-house team PO Wayne 'Rocky' Champs,



Pictures: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan

the leading Naval performer with two golds and a silver, including Best in Class for the Senior Steward Restaurant Flambé dish class.

As well as experienced sailors like PO Champs, the team also featured newly-qualified chefs and stewards who have recently completed training at the school, including Ch Tomas Griffiths, one

of the youngest members of the team.

Having only joined the Royal Navy in October last year, he was awarded a certificate of merit for his curried cod dish in the Open Ethnic Dish category.

Diners at Culdrose are also assured of top-notch service, as four of the air station's staff picked up gongs at the foodfest.

Std Michael Theobald won gold, silver and bronze, Ch Tony Jordan and Std Ki Tuitubou claimed a silver each and POCS Craig McCallum took bronze in the *parade des chefs*, when three chefs have to cook a three-course meal for 68 covers; preparations start at 0800 with service commencing at midday and finishing at 1400, all diners having been served.

Senior Service winners

Gold medals:

PO W Champs (DMLS)*; PO W Champs; Std F Filson (HMS Tireless)*; LStd M Theobald (Culdrose); CTCRM; Mnes M Moth, M Evans and M Aitken (45 Cdo RM)*; PO G MacDiarmid (DMLS)*; L/Cpl W Kuva, Mnes K Gills and P Gilbert (CLR); Cpl T Merrick, Mnes A Fairbank and R Davison (30 IX Grp).

Silver medals:

Ch S Fewtrell (Culdrose); Mne P Gilbert (Raleigh), LStd M Theobald; Std Z Braithwaite (HMS Mersey); LStd A Waldron (Culdrose); LS K Tuitubou (Culdrose); LStd T Borrowdale (DMLS); Ch M Abbott (DMLS); LCh C Broadbent (DMLS); LCh Andrews (DMLS), Ch T Jordan (Culdrose) and PO Champs; LCh C Gray (Battlestaff) and LCh C Taylor (Bulwark); PO P Pringle (Drake), PO J Spencer (DMLS) CPO J Potts (Collingwood), LCh L Willison (Somerset), Ch M Barnett and Ch M Abbott.

Bronze medals:

LCh B Ewen (Admiralty House)*; Ch A Cole (DMLS); Ch T Usher (Illustrious); Mr R Hickmott



PO Wayne 'Rocky' Champs, the top RN performer, with his medals
Picture: Dave Sherfield

(Collingwood); Ch G O'Neill (Iron Duke); Ch A Elston (DMLS); Std A Walker (RFA); LCh E Tarr (Albion); LCh S Andrews; LCh C Taylor; Ch J Brady (DMLS); Ch R Brown (Albion); RM Stonehouse; LCh C Erwich (Richmond); Mr V Rust (Raleigh); Miss J Ahearne (DMLS); Ch M Barnett; PO G MacDiarmid, Cpl J Cox (DMLS), Std A Walker; LCh A Davis, Ch R Sykes, LStd T Rowe (Sutherland); LCh C Scott, Ch C Boyne, Std C Murray (Talent); Sgt P Wilson (CLR), LCh J Ellison (Triumph), LStd K Tuitubou; POCS C McCullum (Culdrose), LCh Wilson (Atherstone), LCh C Scott, Ch C Boyne.

Certificate of Merit:

LCh B Ewen; Cpl J Cox; Ch T Andrews; LCh C Erwich; Ch R Brown; Ch G Hunt (Cornwall); Ch J Miller (DMLS); Miss M Slight (Collingwood); Ch T Griffiths (DMLS); LCh J Ellison; Mne C Shelbourne (Raleigh); Ch T Andrews; LCh S Andrews; CPO J Martin (DMLS); Ch J Shanes (Nelson); LCh C Broadbent; Mr G Perkins (Collingwood); Mr K Dimmock (Collingwood).
*indicates Best in Class



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Air-sea rescue lauded

A LYNX aircrew who displayed great skill and gallantry in a high seas rescue have been acknowledged at an awards ceremony.

The crew of HMS Chatham's helicopter, from 815 Naval Air Squadron, were alerted by a distress call from the freighter MV Dubai Moon, whose cargo of trucks and cars had broken loose during a tropical storm in the Indian Ocean in May 2010.

The 5,800-tonne ship with a crew of 23 was rolling heavily, unable to manoeuvre and was at risk of capsizing or running aground.

While Lt Cdr Peter Higgins fought to maintain steady hover over the wallowing ship, with expert assistance from Lt Craig Castle RAN, AET Richard Wilmot – a newly-qualified winchman – was lowered onto the oily, rolling deck.

Wilmot's exertions on the stricken ship made him violently ill, so Lt Cdr Graham Chesterman, who had been visiting Chatham to conduct an aviation audit and who had not flown for 15 years, was asked to take over.

The officer went on to make 22 difficult and exhausting transfers over three hours.

The team's efforts won them the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society's Edward and Maisie Lewis Award, while Lt Cdr Chesterman also won an individual commendation for his bravery.

The Society's Chief Executive, Cdre Malcolm Williams RN, said: "Lt Cdr Graham Chesterman and the crew of HMS Chatham's Lynx helicopter showed outstanding professionalism, superb teamwork and courage in rescuing the crew of the MV Dubai Moon.

"The rescue demonstrated all that is best in the seafaring tradition."

Founded in 1839, the Society helps merchant mariners, fishermen and their dependents who are in need.

For more information see www.shipwreckedmariners.org.uk



Bish on a mission at Lympstone

EARNING the green beret is (a) a tremendous badge of honour and (b) really very hard to attain, as any commando will tell you.

So hats – or perhaps berets – off to Paul Andrew, the newest chaplain in the Royal Marines who can don that coveted headwear.

And all at the ripe old age of 41. The padre has come through more than three months of arduous physical and mental training so he can give spiritual and morale support to the men of the Corps on the front line.

Although the Commando Training Course – widely acknowledged as the most gruelling test of any basic military training in the world – is slightly different for a chaplain from that undertaken by would-be fighting commandos (there's no weapon handling or drill, for example), staff at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines in Lympstone, near Exeter, did not allow the father-of-three any special treatment.

Paul's first visit to Lympstone was in 2006 whilst on placement as a Church of England Ordinand.

Following ordination and time in parish ministry, he joined the Royal Naval Chaplaincy Service last year.

After completing training at

● **Royal Marines padre Paul Andrew tackles an assault course at Lympstone, where he earned his green beret**

Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clew

Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth and spending time at sea in the recently-decommissioned Type 22 frigate HMS Cornwall, he arrived at the commando 'school' in January, beginning recruit training with 128 Troop.

There he completed Phase 1 Training, which consists of the first 15 weeks, plus the four commando tests which are the seal of a green beret:

1 a nine-mile speed march carrying full kit, which has to be completed inside 90 minutes;

2 a six-mile endurance course through demanding terrain and obstacles;

3 the Tarzan assault course, which rookies have to finish inside 13 minutes in full combat kit;

4 and the legendary '30 miler' – a yomp around Dartmoor, once again with full kit, which a trainee must finish in under eight hours.

Paul – like all chaplains in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines known simply as 'bish' – passed all four tests first time.

The 30-miler, says Paul, "was the most evil thing I have ever faced."

"I have prayed a lot during my time here, and I am grateful for all the support I have received, especially from Maj Dai Phillips, the remedial instructors in the gym and of course my family.

The chaplain is now due to join 40 Commando, who are currently training in California during the early stages of their work-up to another tour of duty in Afghanistan.



● **ABs Ryan Sladden and Aaron Powell lift weights in front of the urban art at Nelson gym**

Picture: LA(Phot) Gary Weatherston

The art of phys at Nelson

INSTEAD of being covered in the blood, sweat and tears of exercising sailors, the walls of HMS Nelson's gym at Portsmouth Naval Base are now flooded with colour, thanks to a local graffiti artist.

Fark – the artist's street name – spent several days at the base to decorate the bare, white walls of the gym with the urban art at the invitation of CPOPT Clayton Patilla.

And as part of Portsmouth City Council's Passport to Success scheme, Fark was given a helping hand by local schoolchildren who adorned the walls with inspirational messages and pictures.

LPT Paddy Stephens said: "I never thought I would be stood watching people spray paint a military gym."

"It's brilliant – it was amazing to see the kids come in and get on with it."

"There were a couple of things we wanted on the walls but everything else the artists have come up with themselves – it looks great."

"HMS Nelson gym is the envy of other military establishments because we have the best equipment – and now we have the best walls as well."

"It's a big community initiative for us, and from a Royal Navy perspective that is what we at the gym wanted to do."

"For someone like myself, I look at this place like it's my home so it's nice for them to come in to do this for us."

Cleaning the sands

IT WAS hardly beach weather, but it didn't stop a party from RN Air Station Culdrose heading down onto Praa Sands.

The group of students from 849 Naval Air Squadron were not there with towel and swimsuits, however – they were joining other volunteers from Helston Baptist Church and local residents for the annual Beachwatch at Hendra Beach, to the east end of the sands.

Their survey recorded 1,127 items of rubbish along a 100m stretch of beach, the most common being polystyrene or plastic such as net, rope or fishing lines – all particularly hazardous to wildlife.

Although this year's haul of shame was less than half the level recorded in previous years, recent strong winds and sea surges were thought to be a significant factor.

The teams removed 24kg of detritus from the sand, bringing the 13-year total to 33,047 items (almost 670kg), despite the fact that the local authorities regularly clean the beach and provide litter bins.

The main sources of rubbish continue to be beach users, fishing and shipping.

The annual Marine Conservation Society's Beachwatch litter survey and clean-up event takes place across the UK every autumn, covering more than 350 beaches.

'Evacuees' explore Dartmouth

A LONG, straggling line of children in 1940s garb made their way through the gates of Britannia Royal Naval College as part of a school project on World War 2.

The pupils, aged between four and 11 and from Stoke Gabriel Primary School, walked through the town from the Lower Ferry carrying their home-made gas mask boxes and wearing name labels.

Once inside the college, the visitors had a World War 2-themed tour with college lecturers Drs Richard Porter and Jane Harrold, who are also the college museum curator and archivist.

"The pupils were genuinely interested by

all they saw in the college," said Dr Porter. "I was impressed by the range of questions that were asked."

During the tour the 'evacuees' were taken into one of the air raid shelters in the grounds, were told about the bomb damage sustained in a raid in 1942 and studied an inert, unexploded bomb which is on display at the college.

School staff member Selene Paxton-Brooks, who organised the visit, said: "We were absolutely delighted to be able to take the children into BRNC."

"It was a great start to the long-term project, really bringing it to life for them."

The RN in a week

MORE than 70 students from the Plymouth area were given a taste of the Royal Navy during a week's work experience at HMS Raleigh.

The week-long summer programme gives students an insight into the RN's ten-week initial training course, and they learn the practical skills of firefighting.

They learn how to march, take part in physical training sessions and get the chance to save their ship in the establishment's Damage Repair and Instructional Unit (DRIU), a simulator which rocks from side to side and floods with water.

The students, aged between 14 and 16,

get out on the river in Pacific 24 sea boats and tour the training ship Brecon, a decommissioned minehunter.

The RN Submarine School and Defence Maritime Logistics School are also on the programme, which is put together with the help of the Tamar Education Business Partnership.

Cadet Hollie Hardwick, aged 15, of Stoke Damerel School, said: "I want to be a weapons officer in the Royal Navy."

"This has given me an insight into what the recruits have to go through during training and has made me want to join even more."

Hydraulics powerhouse

THANKS to a concerted effort by a senior rate, Morrell Block – part of the RN School of Marine Engineering (RNSME) – has been appointed a fully-approved hydraulic training centre.

The seal of approval comes from CETOP (the Comité Européen des Transmissions Oléohydrauliques et Pneumatiques) – the European Fluid Power Committee, the umbrella organisation for national fluid power associations across Europe – and the BPPA (British Fluid Power Association).

This not only raises the profile and scope of the Sultan-based training facility, but also means the school can become more active in the commercial world, opening training services to civilian companies and allowing the training of technicians from a wide range of organisations.

And it was CPO Steven Petty who shouldered the burden of making this happen, and who led a tour of the establishment for BPPA staff.

Scanning the Tyne for wildlife

HMS ECHO. HMS Enterprise. HMS Example. All Royal Navy survey ships.

Well, technically, the first two are survey ships, and the third is a University RN Unit patrol boat.

But Example's recent activities include a cruise down the River Tyne and into the North Sea to help a group of conservation experts conduct a survey of marine wildlife off the coast of North-East England.

The Durham Wildlife Trust aims to protect wildlife and promote nature conservation in County Durham, the City of Sunderland and the Boroughs of Gateshead, South Tyneside and Darlington, managing nature reserves and initiating projects while providing education and volunteering opportunities for thousands of adults and children every year.

So the Commanding Officer of Example, Lt Nelson McMillan, and his ship's company set off from their base at HMS Calliope, in Gateshead, to give the boffins – equipped with waterproofs,

binoculars and clipboard – every opportunity to record the wealth of wildlife in the region.

"Although we didn't see any on this voyage, the North Sea has many harbour porpoises, white-beaked dolphins and even minke whales," said Jim Cokill, the director of the trust.

"We did, however, see an abundance of birds including gannets, common terns, guillemots and cormorants."

"It has been a very worthwhile and rewarding experience for us to see the birds in their natural environment."

Lt McMillan said: "This was a tremendous opportunity to use the ship to help the local community and at the same time train our students in seamanship and navigation."

"We all have a duty to protect our wildlife and I am happy to help the Durham Wildlife Trust with their work."

HMS Example is attached to the Northumbrian University RN Unit.



● **Volunteers from the Durham Wildlife Trust on board HMS Example off Sunderland**

Villagers' tales are recorded

A COLD War submariner has helped preserve the memory of men and women from three Oxford villages who served their country in times of war.

Robert Forsyth was the CO of HMS Alliance – and consequently a trustee of the RN Submarine Museum – as well as being XO of HMS Repulse, CO of HMS Sceptre from launch and Teacher to the Perisher course.

But now, with Michael Allbrook, Robert has recorded the stories of some 600 men and women from Deddington, Clifton and Hempton, under the title *A Parish at War*.

The tales go back as far as Waterloo, and include the names and experiences of those who kept the home fires burning as well as those on the front line.

The Royal Navy is represented, an example being baker's lad Sid Berry, now deceased, who became a naval cook; he was sunk in the destroyer HMS Mashona, was involved in the raid on the Lofoten islands, the hunt for Bismarck, Malta and Arctic convoys – and applied for transfer to submarines to be safer...

A Parish at War is due to be published in Remembrance week, and is available at a price of £12.50 from Cdr R Forsyth RN at The Stile House, New Street, Deddington, Oxon OX15 0SR, or email robert.a.forsyth@gmail.com

Further information about the book – along with archived research material – and how to order it is available at www.deddington.org.uk/history/worldwars

Adventure club visit

A CLUTCH of adventurers gathered in Cornwall to visit a charity HQ, and to take part in a firefighting exercise at Culdrose.

The *Cordon Rouge Club* includes notable explorers, adventurers, sportsmen and women who have achieved outstanding success in their fields, such as Sir Ranulph Fiennes, Dame Ellen MacArthur and Sir Robin Knox-Johnson.

Seven members of the club visited Helston to see the headquarters of the ShelterBox charity, which provides emergency shelter and lifesaving supplies such as purification equipment, stoves and basic tool kits for families hit by disasters.

The seven, which included David Hempleman-Adams, Dee Caffari and Ed Stafford, then went on to the Naval air base at Culdrose to take part in a firefighting exercise.

Culdrose is regularly involved in the training of ShelterBox response teams.



● From left: LH Rob Gillies, Sgt Dale Hunt, Jeremy Vine, Jill Misson, AB Paul Halliwell and LH Maxine Davies

Exercise turns real

A TRAINING exercise at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire ended up with fledgling Navy photographers providing support to forthcoming BBC Remembrance broadcasts.

The photographers were at the NMA to work with the public 'in the field' as part of their course.



● Blue Peter presenter Helen Skelton takes a ride with the newly-rebranded Sea King of 771 NAS

Pictures: Manchester Evening News

Rescue team help Blue Peter switch

A ROYAL Navy Search and Rescue Sea King helped legendary children's TV show *Blue Peter* move into its new home in the North of England.

A helicopter from 771 Naval Air Squadron delivered presenter Helen Skelton to the long-running programme's new studio at the Media City Complex in Salford Quays – just in time for the first live show from the new location.

Helen jumped in the back of a distinctive red and grey aircraft, based at Culdrose, which was in the middle of a long-range training mission.

After a recce of the landing site in front of the studio complex in Salford, a safety briefing for the presenter and the redecoration of the Sea King with some *Blue Peter* logos, Rescue 193 headed out over the Manchester conurbation.

The aircraft and crew were on a planned training flight for two students, Lts Mark Rose and Ben Carthey under the instruction of Lt Al Summers, supported by the Lt Cdr Rob 'Smoke' Suckling and aircrewman CPO Dave Rigg.

Such long-range navigation exercises highlight the skills of planning, briefing and co-ordinating with air traffic services if a long-distance rescue is required, as demonstrated on a Rescue 193 mission last month when transferring patients to Exeter and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

With broadcast time fast approaching, the aircraft and Helen took off, circled over the Old Trafford, football stadium

then set down right on cue at Media City, where co-presenter Barney Harwood was waiting, having arrived by jet ski.

Helen enthused that she had "a really fun time" and the Sea King was "such an impressive piece of kit".

Indeed, the *Blue Peter* team are looking to visit 771 later this year for a feature on RN search and rescue missions.

Blue Peter moved north along with the Beeb's children's TV output and sporting department among others to Salford as the Corporation looks to move away from its London-centric image.

The *Blue Peter* team reciprocated 771's hospitality by inviting them to tour the set; they posed with the presenters and Barney the dog, relaxed on the *Blue Peter* couch and also had a sneak look inside the Tardis, which can also be found at the BBC's new studios when not travelling through time and space.

"The crew had a fantastic experience and were extremely well looked after by the *Blue Peter* presenters, producer Sid Cole and his staff," said Lt Cdr Chris 'Damage' Canning.

"I am delighted that we were able to assist *Blue Peter* on such an auspicious occasion and look forward to their visit to 771 Naval Air Squadron later in the year for a more detailed programme on the role of Royal Navy Search and Rescue."

You can watch some video footage of Helen's flight at www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-15027778



● Helen Skelton dashes from the Sea King, accompanied by co-presenter Barney Harwood (who arrived by jet ski) to the new *Blue Peter* studio at Media City in Salford for the show's first broadcast from its new home

Years of effort in 'Day by Day'

SIX years of graft, and a career spanning decades, were two key factors in the production of the latest version of an invaluable guide to the long and illustrious history of the Senior Service.

The *Royal Navy Day by Day* (*The History Press*, £50, ISBN 978-0-7524-6177-9), by Lt Cdr Lawrie Phillips RNR, is a catalogue of events involving the Navy over 500 years, – anniversaries of triumphs and disasters, with ships large and small, presented chronologically (making it a boon for XOs who need to brighten up Daily Orders).

The author acknowledges it cannot be comprehensive – too much to squeeze in, even though at 864 pages it boasts 220 pages more than its 2005 predecessor.

It is illustrated with prints and photos, many taken around the world by the author, who was a much-travelled Fleet Public Relations Officer in the 1970s, the first Head of Media Ops at Permanent Joint HQ 35 years later, and much in between.

In retirement he has devoted much time to naval history and he was lately Senior Vice President of the Navy Records Society. Former First Sea Lord Lord West of Spithead refers to Lt Cdr Phillips as a leading naval historian "with a deep admiration for the Royal Navy and a profound understanding of its business."

Even with more space, the book presented significant challenges in terms of giving due weight and space to events:

"To condense into 20 or 30 words splendid acts of gallantry, like those of L/Cpl Matthew Croucher GC or AB Kate Nesbitt MC, and so many others in ages past, has been a chastening task," said Lt Cdr Phillips.



7,000 hours and counting for RN pilot

ONE of the Royal Navy's most experienced helicopter pilots has achieved the rare milestone of 7,000 flying hours.

Lt Cdr Roger Stringer, aged 49, passed the magic figure at the controls of a Sea King Mark 5 Search and Rescue helicopter from HMS Gannet at Prestwick.

Returning from an emergency call out, and in the skies above Clyde Coastguard's offices in Greenock – one of the authorities with which the SAR teams work most closely – Roger mentioned to his fellow crew that he had just passed his 7,000th hour.

Commenting on the occasion, Roger said: "It was quite strange to pass the 7,000 flying hours mark on a SAR mission just as we passed overhead Clyde Coastguard."

"It seemed rather fitting as this is a job that I love and it is one in which the Coastguard and emergency services come together with the common purpose of saving or aiding life."

"The camaraderie in SAR is special as it crosses the boundaries between the military and civilian agencies."

The CO of HMS Gannet, Lt Cdr Debdash Bhattacharya, who was also on board the Sea King at the time, said: "7,000 flying hours represents a tremendous achievement and it is a milestone that very few aviators will pass in their careers."

"Roger's aviation experience is second to none at HMS Gannet and we are very fortunate to have him flying with us."

"As a previous CO of the unit, Gannet is Roger's spiritual home and we'll have to see if he manages to complete another thousand hours before he leaves the unit next year to retire from the navy."

Roger joined the Navy in September 1982 and began flying training in February 1983, gaining his wings just over a year later.

An anti-submarine warfare specialist, he has flown 18 different types or models of aircraft, and 2,000 of the 7,000 hours were in an instructional capacity.

Roger said: "To a long-haul commercial pilot, 7,000 hours will not sound very much."

"But within the military, where the average sortie is around an hour-and-a-half to two hours, it is quite significant – you can see why it has taken more than 28 years to amass this amount of flying time."

Notable events in his career included his involvement in rescuing Richard Branson following his balloon crash-landing in the Atlantic in July 1987 and assisting in the clean-up and investigation in the wake of the Lockerbie bombing of Flight 103 in 1988.

He also took Prince Andrew airborne on his last day of full-time service, and hosted the US Presidential Squadron at HMS Gannet during the G8 Conference in Gleneagles in July 2005.

Si is back in Scotland

A NAVY survival equipment expert returned to his old Scottish stamping ground to pick up a crucial qualification.

CPO Si Lanzon works on the flight survival equipment desk at Navy Command HQ in Portsmouth, but spent almost half of his career at Prestwick, first with 819 Naval Air Squadron and later as part of Gannet Search and Rescue Flight.

And it was to Gannet he went to be presented with his Level 7 Certificate in Executive Management from the Institute of Leadership and Management, gained through the IBP Academy in Largs.

Si is due to leave the Navy in the spring after nearly 26 years, and hopes this qualification will allow him to return to Scotland and take up a role in the offshore industry.



Americans see training at Raleigh

STAFF at HMS Raleigh hosted their counterparts from across the pond to show how the Royal Navy trains new recruits.

Capt Steven Bethke, CO Recruit Training Command of the US Navy (pictured above with a Raleigh recruit), paid a three-day visit to the training establishment at Torpoint, accompanied by his Command Master Chief, Richard Dodd.

During his visit Capt Bethke and Command Master Chief Dodd – roughly equivalent to a Command Warrant Officer in the RN – were able to meet with the instructors who turn civilians into sailors during the ten-week Initial Naval Training course.

The visitors also met recruits and watched aspects of the newly-enhanced training programme.

They were then given a tour of the facilities at Raleigh, including a look at the training ship Brecon.

There was also a briefing on the wider role the establishment plays in preparing sailors and Royals for operational duties in Afghanistan and for board-and-search duties.

Capt Bethke also acted as the VIP inspecting officer for the passing out parade.

Capt Steve Murdoch, the CO of the establishment, said: "The visit came about at the suggestion of the Commander of the US Navy Supply Corps, who visited us in 2009.

"We found that there is a lot of common ground in the way our two navies train recruits, but also some differences, most notably in the scale of the US operation."

The US Navy's Recruit Training Command is based in Great Lakes, Illinois, and is the US Navy's only boot camp providing training annually to more than 35,000 sailors.

Raleigh will train 1,200 new recruits this financial year, in addition to providing specialist training in seamanship, submarine operations and logistics.

Wor Cheryl in war zone to meet troops

SINGER Cheryl Cole paid a morale-boosting visit to Service personnel in Afghanistan to film a tribute to their efforts.

The Geordie celebrity flew out to Helmand Province for three days to make a record of military life in Afghanistan for the *Daily Mirror* Pride of Britain Awards.

As 2011 marks ten years of UK operations in Afghanistan, Cheryl travelled to Camp Bastion to present a Special Recognition Award which honours all Britain's Armed Forces.

Presenting the award to Commander Task Force Helmand, Brig Ed Davis RM, Cheryl said: "I have so much respect for our Forces.

"We all owe them so much."

Of her visit she said: "My time in Afghanistan was amazing, really

amazing.

"It was scary. I was terrified, I'm not ashamed to say I uttered a few expletives."

She maintained a breakneck pace during the visit – starting with the RAF flight from Brize Norton, when she helped serve food and drink.

She watched Royal Marines clear a compound in a training exercise, took part in a casualty evacuation serial, and took to the skies over the base in a Royal Navy Sea King helicopter.

And everywhere the former Girls Aloud singer went she was mobbed by Servicemen, for whom she happily posed for photographs and signed autographs.

Task Force Helmand spokesman Lt Col Tim Purbrick said: "We can't thank Cheryl enough. She's been fantastic and gone down a storm."



● Cheryl Cole watches a demonstration of compound clearance by Royal Marines of 42 Cdo (left) and reflects on her trip to Helmand in a rare quiet moment (above)
Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Hillhouse

BRNC woodland wins award

AN AREA of woodland within the grounds of Britannia Royal Naval College has won a Britain in Bloom award.

The Britannia Wood won a Thriving Wood award in the It's Your Neighbourhood category – a considerable achievement as it has attained such status within five years of being planted.

Planted during 2005 to mark the Trafalgar 200 anniversary, as well as the centenary of the college, the Britannia Wood was judged within the Dartmouth in Bloom awards, a section of the larger UK-wide competition.

Oak trees were planted at a variety of locations

around the country; the ones in BRNC were planted in a formation to represent the ships of the line in the Battle of Trafalgar.

The award was accepted by Steven Osborne, the bars supervisor at the college who serves on the Dartmouth in Bloom committee and escorted Britain in Bloom judges around the woodland earlier in the year.

"The award was a complete surprise and marks the continuing progression and maturing of the wooded area within the college grounds," said Steven.

"When I took the judges round I knew they were noting the variety of flora and fauna that lives there."

Family effort in Afghanistan

A SAILOR has returned to the UK after spending six months in Afghanistan – alongside his son.

WO Dave Swann, aged 47, was working as part of the Provincial Reconstruction Team, managing building projects in the Lashkar Gah area.

Dave's son, 24-year-old L/Cpl Simon Swann, was in Afghanistan as a Royal Marine commando in 30 Cdo.

"It was brilliant to be living like that alongside each other again," said WO2 Swann.

"It was a friendly, smiley face to see every morning and it was great to see Simon there getting on with his job.

"I couldn't be any more proud. I think it made it easier for the rest of the family to know we were out there together as well and when we both came back safely I think everyone was very relieved."

Dave was involved in reconstruction projects including the building of an irrigation dyke and the construction of a new prison, erected to UK standards.

"It was an interesting place – I enjoyed my time out there; it was very different from previous deployments on ships," said Dave.

"Of course it was definitely made all the better by having my son there as well."

Princess checks on Diamond

THE Princess Royal paid a flying visit to HMS Diamond as the new Type 45 destroyer builds towards her maiden deployment.

The royal guest arrived by helicopter as the ship took part in the exacting BOST (Basic Operational Sea Training) package off Plymouth.

As well as touring the ship, the princess met members of the ship's company as they went about their daily routines.

Diamond's Commanding Officer, Cdr Ian Clarke, said: "Her Royal Highness has seen Diamond progress, having visited during build in Glasgow, last year in trials and now as we commence operational sea training prior to deploying in 2012."

Activities on the bridge, the sickbay, the galley (where lunch was being prepared), the ship control centre and the operations room – during warfare serials – all featured on the princess's schedule, but there was also time for more informal meetings with the ship's company in the various messes.

The princess rounded off her brief stay by presenting medals to several sailors, including a Long Service and Good Conduct award to LReg Howard Harris.

College awards

SOME of the 130 students of Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College who completed their Institute of Leadership and Management Level 3 Award in Leadership were presented with their certificates by Lt Gen Sir William Rollo, Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel and Training).

The students are the first at the college to receive the award, which was introduced last year – and Welbeck is the third largest provider of the qualification in the country.



Truck event for officer

NOW here's something you don't see every day in Portsmouth.

A senior officer in a military truck festooned with balloons being serenaded out of the naval base by a Royal Marines band.

Staff from across the base turned out to bid farewell to their outgoing commander – Cdre Rob Thompson – as he left the establishment for the last time.

Service and civilian personnel lined the route as Cdre Thompson was chauffeured out in a six-tonne Army cargo vehicle from Marchwood military port at Southampton which also comes under his command.

The band of the RM School of Music played outside the naval base HQ in Victory Building as he departed for the final time.

After three years in post, Cdre Thompson is moving to Edinburgh for a secondment to a civilian finance firm.

"I am delighted to say that in my short period as custodian of the naval base, the job has been as interesting, varied and indeed challenging as I had expected," he said.

His successor is 45 year-old Cdre Tony Radakin whose last job was commander of a maritime task force off Iraq.



● Capt Jerry Kyd greets Admiral Sir Jock Slater and other members of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights to HMS Illustrious
Picture: LA(PHOT) Dean Nixon

Shipwrights call on Illustrious

THE Commanding Officer of HMS Illustrious, Capt Jerry Kyd, hosted the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights – including a very special guest.

Former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jock Slater, Lusty's first CO, returned to the carrier for a day which included a tour and the Shipwright's Court Meeting.

During the visit, Captain Kyd was also installed as a member of the organisation, whose qualification for admission is a professional maritime background.

"It is fantastic that HMS Illustrious is affiliated with the Shipwrights, able to enjoy our mutual interest in all things maritime and their superb support to the Royal Navy, and my ship's company

in particular," said Capt Kyd.

"It was a great honour to host the Court onboard in Portsmouth, and very special to welcome back the Deputy Prime Warden, Sir Jock Slater, the first Captain of Lusty back in 1982, when he commissioned her at sea en route to relieving HMS Invincible, just after the Argentine surrender in the South Atlantic."

The Shipwrights Company supports charitable works and education and training with the focus on maritime and waterborne projects and activities.

The Shipwrights also earmarked prizes for a number of the ship's company.

Keep track of your pension

THERE has never been a more important time to keep track of your pension, writes David Marsh of the Forces Pension Society.

With redundancies just being announced and uncertainty around every corner, the future and finances won't be far from your mind.

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) has produced a few surprises and there are a number of issues which will affect your pension.

The question that needs to be asked is: Can you keep track of all the issues that have had an impact on the Armed Forces Pension Scheme in the past five years, and the likely changes that are to be implemented in the next five years?

To help you keep fully up to speed on matters as we know them today, we have put together a list of some of the most important changes that have occurred in the past five years that you should be aware of, if not for now, then perhaps the future:

Changes to bear in mind:

a. The introduction of the new AFPS05 Pension Scheme and the rules surrounding the opportunity to transfer to the new scheme.

b. The change to the age which Pension Credit members can receive their portion of pension in respect of a Pension Sharing Order following divorce.

c. The changes to the rules on the eligibility to receive Resettlement and Life Commutation to those who apply after leaving the Armed Forces.

d. The changes to the rules regarding qualification requirements for the award of an immediate pension for those on AFPS75 who are made redundant, together with a change to the amount of Special Capital

Payment payable when compared with previous redundancy rounds.

e. A reduction of over 80 per cent in the Annual Allowance a pension can increase by in value in a given year, before an Income Tax liability is due, bringing many more serving personnel into an area of taxation that they would not normally have expected to be part of.

f. The change of prices index used to increase pensions in issue or deferment from the RPI rate to the CPI rate.

Expected Changes by 2015

g. A reduction in the Life Time Allowance from £1.8m to £1.5m.

h. The introduction of a brand new pension scheme that is not a final salary pension scheme.

As you can see, this is quite a radical shake-up in a world where the mere mention of the word 'pensions' is often sufficient to induce deep sleep: ignore all these things at your peril.

Over 80 per cent of the UK population has no form of income in retirement other than their Occupational/ Private pensions, and their State Pension (which is also undergoing some major changes in the next five years or so) therefore it is in your interest to know how all of these changes are going to affect you.

The change in the index to be used to increase a pension once it is in payment will mean that the average Petty Officer/Sergeant will receive over £200,000 less in pension receipts in his/her life time (assuming s/he lives to an age of 85 - and s/he is likely to live longer), on the assumption that there is an average difference of just 1 per cent between the RPI and CPI indexes.

This April alone we saw a difference of 1.5 per cent that was not in the favour of the pensioner! The Forces Pension Society has



FIGHTING FOR THE FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES

had numerous enquiries as to how its pension experts believe the new scheme will affect those serving at the time of change.

The answer to those enquiries is we don't yet know enough to give you a solid steer that you can plan towards.

This woolly answer is not through lack of professional knowledge, but because the Treasury, on behalf of the Government, has still to instruct the various public sector pension schemes with Terms of Reference laying out the criteria under which the skeleton of the scheme is to be built.

Until those Terms of Reference are issued we can all make speculative guesses until the cows come home, but with no concrete

foundation.

We do know that the new scheme will in all probability be a Career Averaging type of scheme - we like to describe it as a pension scheme that is not in the Premier League, but at the top of the Football Championship.

If you want to know how the structure and machinations of such a scheme works, the Civil Service already have it as their principal scheme (they call it NUVOS - 'Google' it on the internet).

The Forces Pension Society has undergone a significant transformation in the last few years.

We are now enrolling new members at an unprecedented rate - 2,700 last year.

By joining the Forces Pension Society, members have access to deep pension expertise which is independent of the Ministry of Defence.

Our help desk receives many enquiries, about: (in no particular order):

a. Divorce and the consequences of a Pension Sharing Order being issued.

b. Medical Discharges and potential pension entitlements.

c. Multiple Pension Forecasts.

d. Reduction of Armed Forces Pension at State Pension Age.

More recently there has been a flood of enquiries on the subject of:

e. Additional Voluntary Contributions to try to boost one's pension value.

f. Redundancy.

g. Annual Tax Allowance.

h. Possible New Pension Scheme

i. Change of Prices Index used to calculate pension increases from RPI to CPI.

Because we are independent, there is no 'party line' when it comes to responding to our member's enquiries, they get a full response, 'warts and all'.

All Armed Forces personnel, serving or retired, are eligible to join the Forces Pension Society and enjoy the benefits such membership offers.

If you are not already a member, and would like to join, visit our website at www.forcespensionsociety.org or call us on 020 7820 9988.

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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Guernsey remembers lost ships

SURVIVORS of HM ships *Charybdis* and *Limbourne*, attacked in the English Channel in October 1943, joined relatives of those who died and islanders in the annual memorial weekend hosted by Guernsey.

In unseasonably hot weather a crowd gathered in Foulon cemetery, where the bodies of 21 sailors washed ashore were buried (in a military funeral attended by huge crowds) after the cruiser and destroyer sank following an attack by German torpedo boats.

More than 40 of the destroyer's crew were killed in the skirmish, and the ship had to be sunk by other British warships after a tow failed; 426 died in the *Charybdis* sinking – 80 per cent of her ship's company.

As there was no guardship for the occasion the Sea Cadets of TS Sarnia provided a guard for the memorial parade, at which the Royal Marines Band from HMS Collingwood performed – the band later staged a concert.

Another highlight of the weekend was the dinner on the Friday night, at which Lieutenant Governor Air Marshal Peter Walker was Guest of Honour.

The weekend was once again staged under the auspices of the Guernsey Association of Royal Navy and Royal Marines, who welcomed members of the *Charybdis* and *Limbourne* Association.

Warning over bench decay

THE Secretary of the HMS Cardigan Bay Association has issued a warning to groups who provide benches at the National Memorial Arboretum: care for them – or lose them.

S/M Gordon Green said: "Our association bought a bench seat for the Arboretum two years ago, and every year since we have given it a coat of paint.

"This is essential as the weather that timber deteriorates rapidly if not regularly maintained.

"In the RN section there are quite a number of seats and many of these are decaying.

"The Arboretum staff are mainly RBL volunteers and are not able to do maintenance work.

"What they do, however, is examine the seats and, when they have gone too far, after notifying the sponsors, they destroy them under Health and Safety regulations.

"These seats cost over £600 – usually raised by donations – and it is a tragedy that they should last only three or four years due to lack of care."

Cavalier fires her gun

HISTORIC destroyer HMS Cavalier has fired one of her 4.5in guns for the first time in almost 40 years.

The Heritage Naval Gun Crew have been working closely with the Historic Dockyard in Chatham to restore the A and B mountings and their Mk IV guns, which were built during World War 2.

Crew member Martin Oxley – who is also a locomotive driver on the North Yorkshire Steam

Railway – said the volunteer group possessed a wide range of skills, including Rolls-Royce and RN engineers, a master painter and a blacksmith.

Both mounts can fire (blanks, naturally, though the sound they make is quite impressive), and the B mounting now elevates through its full range with ease, and also trains fully to port and starboard, all elements having been restored to working condition.

Final reunion for LST and Landing Ship group

THE Landing Ship Tank and Landing Ship Association has held its last annual reunion.

Almost 300 shipmates and partners gathered at Mill Rythe on Hayling Island for the reunion and a remembrance service, at which the association's standard was laid up.

"There were many tears and heavy hearts throughout the service, and many happy times

remembered," said association chairman S/M Roy Sanderson.

"I wish to place on record our grateful thanks to the Dean, Verger and all at St Mary's Church for their help in setting up the service and for the hard work during the laying-up ceremony.

"My thanks also to the president and staff of

the Hayling Island Royal British Legion, who made us so welcome."

The decision to call a halt to national reunions was because of the increasing number of members becoming too old to travel far.

Hayling was chosen as the final location as many involved in amphibious operations trained at HMS Northney on Hayling.

Invitation to all veterans

VETERANS from all the Services have been encouraged to attend the annual RN Ceremony of Remembrance at the Royal Naval Memorial on Southsea Common this month.

S/M David Stephen Butler, secretary and chaplain of Portsmouth branch, said attendees should muster at 0900 for the 0930 ceremony on Sunday November 13.

The ceremony will be attended by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Cllr Cheryl Buggy, and officers of flag rank from all three Services.

S/M David said: "The number of veterans attending over recent years has lessened and we would like to encourage anyone who has served in HM Armed Forces to attend, especially but not exclusively RN personnel.

"Please would they wear medals, badges and berets, with blazers or overcoats, depending on the weather."

Details from S/M Stephen on 023 9229 1652 or 07890 661628.

Derby date

THE HMS Kenya Association has held its annual reunion – as always, in Derby, the citizens of which adopted Kenya by collecting an average of £15 per head during Warship Week in 1942.

The gala dinner was attended by the Deputy Mayor of Derby and the CO of the City of Derby Sea Cadet unit.

On display were superb scale models of HMS Kenya, HMS Vanguard and the wartime HMS Sheffield, beautifully made by local modelmaker Tony Fern.

After the AGM, members travelled to the National Memorial Arboretum where they held a service to dedicate a new plinth to the memory of all who served in HMS Kenya.

Warm welcome for Arctic warriors

THE first convoy to Russia in World War 2 – Operation Dervish – arrived in Archangel on August 31 1941.

To mark the occasion, a dozen travellers – including six veterans of the Arctic convoys – arrived in Arkhangelsk (Archangel) for the 70th anniversary.

And one of the number, S/M Gordon Long, reported: "We had a great welcome.

"We had the honour of the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, joining us for the celebrations – but I am sorry to say without a ship."

Among the ceremonies were wreath-laying at wartime memorials, and at the monument to the victims of the submarine *Kursk*.

The Governor of the Arkhangelsk hosted a reception at the Northern (Arctic) Federal University.

"There was also a wreath and flower-laying ceremony at the Vologoskoe Cemetery, where there are graves from World War 2 convoys, which includes a DEMS Gunner from my ship *Empire*

● Veterans and VIPs attend a memorial service for the *Kursk*



Scott, May 1943," said S/M Gordon.

On September 1 the visitors boarded an airliner for the flight to St Petersburg, where another four days of celebrations and ceremonies awaited them, including a wreath-laying at the Piskarevskoe

Memorial Gardens, where some half a million victims of the siege of Leningrad, military and civilian, are buried in a mass grave.

There was also a trip on a Russian minesweeper down the Neva River to the Gulf of Finland, to lay a wreath on the sea.

The Arctic convoys saw millions of tons of vital military supplies delivered to the Soviet Union between 1941 and 1945, but more than 3,000 sailors lost their lives in voyages that frequently had to contend with thick fog, pack ice and raging storms.

Algerines reminisce

A SMALL group of members of the Algerines Association visited the Mine Warfare Section of HMS Collingwood during the association's reunion at Hayling Island.

One of the visitors, S/M George Langford, was serving at the Fareham establishment in 1943 as an able seaman completing his seamanship training when the site was hit by a bomb.

George said: "I remember how a number of new recruits that had joined that day were killed.

He went on to thank everyone for making the group feel very welcome and "as interested in us as we are in them."

S/M Stan Muckle, a former lance corporal REME, explained that the visit was a trip down

memory lane, especially for those who had served at Collingwood.

"The approach from the young sailors to the senior citizens of the Algerines Association was very respectful and understanding," said Stan, who served in the Army, RAF, Royal Marines and Royal Navy.

Signal occasion

THE inaugural Special Communications Unit (SCU) reunion abroad was held at the WOs and Sgts Mess, Ayios Nikolaos in Cyprus.

Many of the ex-CTs attending had served in the former 9 Signals Regt, now Joint Service Signal Unit Cyprus.

"They listened to what we had to say, and it was an interesting learning curve for both."

The visit was organised because the granddaughter of one of the members, S/M Herbert Darnell, knew a VT Flagship employee at the base, and the programme developed from that first contact.

Many attendees used the occasion to revisit old haunts – and one even managed to get in a dive on the wreck of the 10,000-ton roll-on, roll-off ferry *Zenobia*, which sank in Larnaca Bay, diving with his old club Dhekelia BSAC.

The toast to absent friends, made with a tot of Pusser's rum, was proposed by ex-CT Smudge Smith, who made the trip from Australia.

The event was organised by the current JSSU serving CT, WO1 CT Clint Eastwood, and ex-CTs ESBA RNA chairman S/M Eric Hirst and from the UK S/M Eddie Clamp.

S/M Eric took the opportunity to present an ESBA RNA branch plaque to S/M Eddie to take back to his branch at Selsey.

Birthday cake – and a cruise

A SHIPMATE from Hanworth branch was presented with his 90th birthday cake by the wife of the branch chairman.

S/M George joined the Royal Navy at HMS St Vincent as a Boy 2nd Class aged 15, and his first drafts included Iron Duke and Nelson.

After serving in minesweepers and later Hunt-class destroyer HMS Aldenham, he left the Navy as a petty officer in 1947, but was recalled for Suez and again for Korea.

To celebrate his birthday he is taking his Hanworth shipmates for a fully-victualled Thames river cruise.

Tribute to Cossack

IN October thoughts of those in the Royal Navy invariably turn towards the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

But for the HMS Cossack Association, October has extra significance – particularly this year, which sees the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the destroyer L03 with the loss of 159 lives.

Because of other commitments, the commemoration could not be held on the exact anniversary, so an act of remembrance was organised at the National Memorial Arboretum on September 9, the 14th anniversary of the original dedication of the Cossack tree.

The association is holding a reunion in Southsea on April 20-23 2012 – details from 01252 613052 or 01420 83521.

She was torpedoed in October on Mediterranean convoy duties, sinking under tow four days later.

The service was led by S/M Peter Hampstead and the tribute given by Graham Berthon, son of Capt E L Berthon, CO of Cossack who went down with his ship.

A wreath was laid at the Cossack tree by Association president Admiral Sir Jim Eberle, who served in the later Cossack.

Cossack famously rescued captured British sailors from German auxiliary *Altmark* in a Norwegian fjord in 1940.

She was torpedoed in October on Mediterranean convoy duties, sinking under tow four days later.

The association is holding a reunion in Southsea on April 20-23 2012 – details from 01252 613052 or 01420 83521.

Two standards, a bosun's call and ageing shipmates managing to stay upright – Brightlingsea branch's Guard of Honour on their best behaviour at a more pleasant duty recently. The occasion was the wedding of S/M Chris Billings, a Falklands veteran, to Lisa Smith at Brightlingsea United Church

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Biennial parade was 'an honour'

ONE of the participants in the RNA Biennial Parade in London has written to express her pleasure at being part of the day.

S/M Susan Duncan said: "I would like to say what an honour it was for me to parade the standard of the Association of Wrens (Rhyl, North Wales) at the Biennial Parade with our oppos from the Royal Naval Association.

"The National Standard Bearer made me feel very welcome, as did all the other standard bearers including our own National Standard Bearer, Carol Gibbon.

"I also had Barry Hurst, standard bearer of Llandudno branch, marching behind me - little me!

"My oppo Anne Gibson, also an ex-Wren, proudly marched with the RNA veterans.

"We felt extremely proud to march to the Cenotaph for the short ceremony following the Royal British Legion Band Llanelli, although we did miss our wonderful musicians of the Royal Marines Band who unfortunately were deployed on other duties.

"The salute was taken by the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, and we were able to let our standards fly.

"That, for me, was thrilling to see them fly in the wind, free."

Derek mourned

THE former chairman of the Bournemouth and Malta GC branches, S/M Derek Anthoney, has died at the age of 83.

S/M Derek, who was also an active supporter of Sea Cadet units in the UK and in Malta, moved to the Mediterranean island in 1981.

He never served on the island but was brought to hospital at Biggi after being injured in Palestine, before being transferred to Netley near Southampton.

He leaves a wife, Barbara, and sons Robert and Stephen.

An arm around the shoulder for leavers

WITH the first wave of redundancies from the Royal Navy announced at the end of September, the RNA's Shipmates campaign is shifting into top gear.

Officially unveiled at this year's National Conference in Plymouth, the campaign is designed to help ease the transition back to civilian life for sailors who are leaving the Service, whether through redundancy, retirement or other reasons - giving them the best start on Civvy Street.

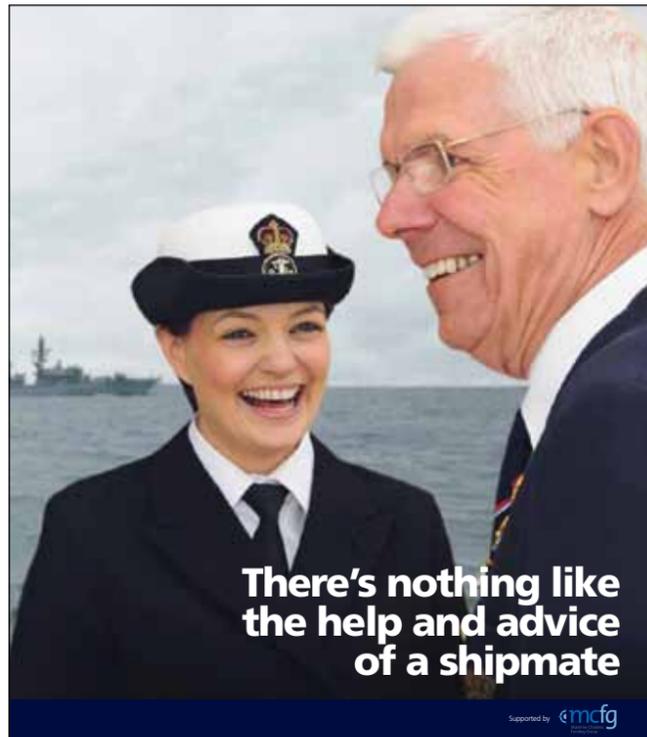
Although aimed particularly at those who are leaving through the redundancy programme, the Shipmates initiative is based on the fact that most RNA members have gone down the same path.

Resettlement packages are strong on training and interview technique, but the RNA scheme is aimed more at providing a 'local Divisional Chief' for the new civvies.

RNA HQ exhorts members and branches to welcome the new leaver to their patch, find out about them and their plans, and see if any advice or help can be offered in such areas as

- Finding a doctor or dentist;
- Information on local schools;
- Local contacts for jobs;
- Reliable local tradesmen;
- Good local child care;
- RNA meeting times;
- Local clubs, facilities and the like.

With 353 branches in the UK and 32 overseas, the RNA see this as an ideal role for their 20,000 members - and it also offers a Navy-friendly social environment for the new leaver.



There's nothing like the help and advice of a shipmate

● Part of the promotional material being rolled out to branches for the RNA's Shipmates campaign

The RNA's new Assistant General Secretary, Lt Cdr Andy Christie, has been on the road to all Service Resettlement Advisors to provide them with the Shipmates literature and to ensure that the system is in place to give every Service leaver who wishes, a personal invitation to the RNA branch nearest to where they will

be resettling.

All materials are being personally delivered by Andy to HM ships Drake, Yeovilton, Raleigh, Culdrose, Nelson, Collingwood, Excellent and Sultan.

The guide to RNA branches should have arrived to provide the necessary advice to branch

secretaries about how the campaign works.

The guide is also available on the newly re-launched website RNA www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

In essence, the Service leaver will already be a member of HQ Roll, so HQ will invite him or her and their partner to attend a branch meeting at their convenience.

If they wish to follow the visit up, there would then be a simple transfer of membership from HQ to the relevant branch.

They will then be presented with a full member's lapel badge, which HQ will replace or refund.

The cost of the Shipmates initiative, including stationery and promotional material, is covered by a grant from the Maritime Charities Funding Group.

And the Shipmates campaign has friends at the highest levels - First and Second Sea Lords and the Chief of the Defence Staff have all been appraised of the scheme and give it their full support.

At the other end of the career spectrum, the Commodore of HMS Collingwood has approached the RNA to provide mentors for the Phase 2 trainees in Victory Squadron, which has received a most positive response from the local branches.

It is hoped that the system can be set up before Christmas.

A similar programme of RNA mentors already exists for fledgling sailors undergoing Phase 1 training programme at HMS Raleigh, the Royal Navy's new-entry training establishment in Cornwall.

Standards laid up in Lincoln

THE old standards of the RNA and Submariners Association, Lincoln branches, were laid up at St Mary le Wigford - the oldest church in the city.

On completion of the laying up ceremony the branch's new standards were dedicated.

The service was conducted by the Rev John Moore, branch chaplain, and Rev Jeremy Cullimore, vicar of the church, which was full of RNA and SA members from as far afield as York and Liverpool, including RNA National Vice Chairman S/M Keith Crawford, who is also Area 9 chairman. Standards from across Area 9, and SA standards from Hull, Derby and Nottingham, were paraded, as well as ex-Service association standards from the local area.

A reception and buffet was held at the RNA Club after the service, during which RNA branch chairman S/M Chris Buckley and SA branch chairman S/M Sandy Powell gave speeches of thanks.

Names in print

A COMMEMORATIVE book outlining the history of the WRNS Benevolent Trust is to be published to mark the organisation's 70th anniversary in April 2012.

And supporters are being offered the chance to sponsor the publication, which will entitle them to a personal entry in the book.

For £10 each sponsor's name, and dates of service, will be recorded in a special section of the book, which features hundreds of photographs and documentary contributions.

Closing date for sponsorship applications is December 31.

For more details see the website www.wrnsbt.org.uk, from which an application form can be downloaded.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our September edition (right) was RFA Hebe, and her ill-fated sister was RFA Bacchus.

Mr J Welford of Hunstanton in Norfolk wins the £50 prize for identifying the auxiliaries.

This month's mystery warship pictured above - which boasted a very apt name for a wartime destroyer - was launched at Swan Hunter in September 1917 as part of the successful ninth order V and W-class programme.

She was sold for scrap 20 years later, though some of her sisters saw service in World War 2

What was her name?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw



to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is earlier than usual - December 2 2011, to fit in with our print schedule for Christmas. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our January 2012 edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 201

Name

Address

My answer

Memories of 'best-loved' ship

THE memories of Dave Maton (REM1) [reported in October's *Navy News*], who was part of the 59-60 commission of HMS Protector, are very much the same as the other sailors who ventured south on board her from 1955-1968, not all of them "jollies", writes S/M Peter Latham, PRO for the HMS Protector Association.

Many more memorable moments occurred during some of the commissions, for instance during the 1955-56 commission Protector went to the rescue of the MV Theron trapped in ice and gave sustenance to two celebrated explorers, Dr Vivian Fuchs and Sir Edmund Hillary (see right).

The 1956-57 commission saw Protector race from Gibraltar to the Antarctic to rescue two members of a Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (FIDS) team and their dogs from an ice floe - this is believed to be the first helicopter rescue carried out in Antarctica, south of the Antarctic Circle.

A much later commission, 1966-67, had Protector stationed off the Horn acting as a safety vessel for intrepid sailor Francis Chichester during his single-handed circumnavigation.

However it was the memories of another man, Harry Pinkerton LME 1963-65 commission, who, after being diagnosed with a terminal illness, decided to look for some of his old shipmates.

As a result of the advert he placed in *Navy News* the HMS Protector Association was born in June 1999.

The common denominator in all this was that HMS Protector was a 'special' ship with a special remit, despite the fact that as a flat-bottomed vessel she would have rolled on a wet bowling green, she held a place in the hearts of all the men who sailed south in her.

This feeling still remains to this



day when the association gathers for reunions and the talk amongst members of their experiences continues into the small hours.

The association now has 554 members, from wartime service when the ship was a fast netlayer, through to 1968.

Some members are Friends of the Ship and have connections with the Falkland Island Association, BAS or the Antarctic Philatelic Society, and after spending time with those that went south they now have a deeper understanding of what we firmly believe in that HMS Protector (A146) was "the best-loved ship in the Royal Navy".

The association has over the years been given or has acquired artefacts such as the Battle Board, which held pride of place in the wardroom and is now being carefully looked after by the officers and crew of the new HMS Protector, the deck plate, which is in the care of the association's affiliated Sea Cadet unit TS Indomitable in Long Eaton, Derbyshire, year books for the various commissions plus

numerous photos donated by former crew members.

The ship's bell, we understand, is in safe-keeping in the museum in Stanley.

The different crews of the 13 commissions undertaken by Protector from 1955-68 all shared the same awe-inspiring experiences of the breathtaking Antarctic scenery, the 'roughers' around the Drake Passage, the aquatic wildlife plus the sincere friendliness of the Falkland Islanders.

The tragic loss of two of Protector's ship's company, LS Hodge and AB Lane, in an accidental explosion on board on December 6 1963 is remembered by all in the association (an eyewitness account of this can be found at www.antarctic-monument.org - see memories of HMS Protector by AB Large).

They are also remembered on an Antarctic memorial stone in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral.

There are many more stories to be told and photographs hidden in ditty boxes, the owners of which are not members of the

association.

Those shipmates are invited to join and benefit from the regular reunions, the next one being at the Suncliff Hotel, Bournemouth, from Friday April 20 to Monday April 23 2012 - the 13th birthday of the group and the same number as the commission years.

Members of the Association have bid Godspeed to their counterparts on the newly-commissioned HMS Protector, wishing them safe passage to the southern hemisphere.

In time, when they are reflecting on their time "down the ice" and wondering whatever happened to old so-and-so, the association will be there so that they can share their experiences with like-minded ex-sailors.

During weekend gatherings members still observe the Naval tradition of up spirits at tot time - old habits die hard.

Any readers who served in HMS Protector 1936-68, HMS Protector (ex-Seaforth Saga) 1983-87 or the latest ship to bear the name are welcome to join - details at www.hmsprotector.org

Promotions have to be earned, and not expected

WELCOME to this month's article, sponsored by the RN Ratings Promotions Office. This article is intended to update and inform all RN ratings of promotion policy and procedures as well as providing an overview of other related information and issues.

To start with, it is important to understand the purpose of promotion, this is best described by the policy statement from BR3 (Naval Personnel Management):

The aim of both promotion and advancement is to keep the Royal Navy and Royal Marines manned at the right levels to meet its commitments within the overall numbers authorised by Parliament. Promotion is not a right. Promotion on merit is a system employed throughout the Naval Service to sustain a robust and effective regime for the command, leadership, discipline, inspiration, motivation, management and administration of a diverse structure of officers, warrant officers, ratings and other ranks, augmented by MOD civil servants and contractors.

It also supports the requirement to maintain a hierarchy of appropriate status and authority to exercise responsibility for war-fighting and decision making, or procurement, development, custody or operation of a wide range of complex equipment, materiel and procedures.

To ensure that the right people are selected to meet this requirement, promotion selection boards are convened at various times throughout each year to identify those individuals that merit such promotion.

Director Naval Personnel (DNPers), on behalf of the Second Sea Lord and Commander in



Drafty's corner

Chief Naval Home Command, delegates the responsibility for the arrangement and administration of these boards to the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff (Promotions) (DACOS Prom) via the Ratings Promotion Section (RPS), an organisation currently located in Victory Building HM Naval Base Portsmouth.

Promotion Boards

WO(Promotions) promulgates a viable programme for the various boards required across the wide spectrum of branches and specialisations and identifies appropriate board members and observers, ensuring that all personnel identified for this duty have the right level of experience, authority and standing.

Promotion Selection Boards (PSB) are conducted in strict accordance with current rules and regulations ensuring that all board members are conversant and constantly mindful with

the provision for Equality and Diversity and that all eligible candidates are considered in line with these requirements.

The RPS is currently responsible for managing approximately 20,000 ratings' promotion dossiers, ensuring that eligible candidates are presented to the relevant PSBs throughout the reporting year.

This is a formidable task for a relatively small team who rely on individuals, reporting officers and units to ensure that the appraisal process is managed efficiently, ensuring that all candidates are given the very best chance to be afforded the opportunity to be considered for selection.

Appraisal

Appraisal is one of the most important leadership functions; the proper selection of the most suitable ratings and other ranks on merit to fill the range of assignments in the Service depends largely on the quality and accuracy of appraisal reports.

Therefore, an active interchange of views on a frequent basis between the subject of the report and their Reporting Officers and Line Managers is essential for individual development, efficient use of valuable manpower and resources and good management practice.

This requires a pro-active approach from all concerned in the process, with the individual understanding, accepting and taking responsibility for their own SJAR.

This includes ensuring that all of their personal and professional details, Competencies, Roles and Responsibilities, Personal Objectives, Career Preferences and Aspirations are up to date and correct on JPA as well as tracking the progress of their SJAR to ensure that it is finalised by promulgated deadlines.

With these statements and factors in mind, it should be noted that although the appraisal process is steadily improving, there are still a number of disturbing issues across the Fleet that can have a severe impact on individuals who may be disadvantaged in the promotion process.

These include:

- Mid-Period Appraisal Review (MPAR) not conducted/recorded.

- Competencies not recorded on JPA (RNFT/OPS/SEA TIME) – particularly waivers where appropriate.

- Incorrect/out of date Roles and Responsibilities/Objectives/Preferences/Aspirations

- SJAR narratives and recommendations not justified.

- Spelling and grammar incorrect

- Well-worn clichés or inappropriate remarks

- Late finalisation of SJAR – 30 per cent are not received by promulgated deadlines.

Focus by all interacting personnel in the appraisal process can guard against such issues and therefore ensure the selection process is complemented by a high standard of available candidates.

Of course, up-to-date information only provides the basis for an eligible candidate, the most important factor will always be potential and associated merit for the next higher rate.

Merit needs to be understood by both individuals and Reporting Officers and is defined as: suitability and capacity and having sufficient experience to be employed in at least the next higher rank.

Promotion is not always awarded for current and previous good performance.

Factors such as consistency of success especially in the face of particular challenges,

leadership and management acumen, accomplishment with people, ability to think on a level above peer group, potential flair for command and future employability in both specialist and broader assignments all constitute merit.

In summary, assessment of potential is critical for the selection of future leaders, as well as ensuring the Service gains the best from its people and that all personnel, regardless of rank, are given every opportunity to have a satisfying and rewarding career.

Information

Information regarding all aspects of promotion is available through various media:

- BR3 Naval Personnel Regulations

- JSP 757 JPA Appraisal

- Promotions area of DNPers website on RN Web.

Individuals are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with this information.

Common Reporting dates/deadlines

RN rank	Common Reporting Date	Latest date to be finalised on JPA
WO1	July 31	Aug 15
WO2	Sept 30	Oct 15
CPO (non tech)	Sept 30	Oct 15
CPO (tech)	Apr 30	May 15
PO	Mar 31	Apr 15
LR	Jan 31	Feb 15
AB	Nov 30	Dec 15

Trophy Fund needs new trustee

DO YOU take pride in the Navy, its heritage and its trophies? If so, the Royal Navy Trophy Fund is looking for a new volunteer trustee.

The aims of the RN Trophy Fund are to maintain, issue and account for all registered Naval trophies and, as a charity, its objectives are to promote the efficiency of the RN and to maintain and uphold its traditions by the provision of trophies within the Service.

These aims and objectives are achieved by a Board of Trustees comprising three standing members – the Naval Base Commander (Portsmouth), the Head of the Naval Historical Branch and the Base Logistics Commander (Portsmouth) – and two volunteer serving Warrant Officers or Chief Petty Officers of any branch.

One of the current volunteers, CPO Colin Armstrong, is due to retire from the Navy in 2012 and applications are invited from any WO or CPO who wishes to be considered for the position.

The duties are not onerous, but a Trustee can expect to have to attend two formal meetings per year, and to accept the legal responsibilities that trusteeship bears.

Potential applicants may wish to study the relevant guidance and advice available from the Charity Commission (www.charity-commission.gov.uk or 0845 300 0218).

Additionally potential volunteers wishing to discuss the practicalities of being a trustee may do so with CPO Armstrong by email at HMS_Montrose-CPO@logs.sc.

Applications should be submitted by letter to:

Lt Cdr D A Costigan
Secretary to the Trustees
RN Trophy Centre
Hardy Block
HMS Nelson
Portsmouth PO1 3HH.

The closing date for applications is January 31 2012, and volunteers other than from Portsmouth are particularly welcome.

■ See also *RNTM 250/11*

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION

Homes under the spotlight

"THANK you so much for everything you have done for us. We greatly appreciate all your hard work."

These were the most welcome comments we received after working alongside a family for ten months, writes Jane Williams of the Naval Families Federation. The issue seemed straightforward but as can sometimes happen how it unravelled was another matter.

The family required alternative Service Families Accommodation (SFA) after the property they were residing in presented big problems with damp and mould.

The family supplied information to the NFF which went to the Chain of Command and to the Head Office of DIO.

DIO undertook work to establish what could be done and what budget may be provided to improve conditions not only for this family but other SFA in the area.

Alternative SFA was allocated to the family, but this then raised the question of who was going to undertake the move? Was it a move for personal reasons, or was it a required move?

Whatever the answer to that question was would determine whether the family had to move themselves or whether there would be some assistance.

In this case the Divisional system asked the NFF to provide

our casework to assist with their PACCC case, the outcome of which was positive.

The message, if you have tried everything and are not sure where to go, give us a shot.

Review of Continuity of Education Allowances (CEA)

The Minister for the Armed Forces, Nick Harvey, has announced that the review he led into Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA), has been completed and its conclusions accepted by the Defence Secretary.

The aim of the review was to identify options for reducing expenditure and improving value for money in supporting accompanied service.

The review confirms that CEA policy contributes to operational effectiveness by supporting family mobility and accompanied service.

For at least the near to medium term there will be no changes to the key principles of CEA:

- Current rates for parental contributions (a minimum of 10 per cent of the school's fees) will be maintained
- Parents will continue to be able to choose the school that is most appropriate for their children from the wide range of independent and state schools on the MOD Accredited Schools Database
- There will be no change to the allowances for Special Needs,

North Wales and Day School provision.

However, some significant changes to the policy regulations will be introduced:

- There will be one new restriction on the age range for eligible children: initial claims for year 12 and 13 children, who have not previously been in continuous receipt of CEA, will no longer be permitted

- The MOD will seek to establish a central payment system so that CEA is paid directly to the school rather than to the claimant.

In addition to these initiatives:

- Parents will be encouraged to use state boarding schools, which provide continuity of education at a lower cost to both the MOD and to parents
- The MOD will continue to simplify CEA policy to ensure that its purpose and procedures are well understood.

In the longer term, withdrawal from Germany, concentration on fewer bases and the likelihood that many personnel will have more settled careers allowing greater

stability of home life should reduce the requirement for CEA.

The New Employment Model programme will develop the more stable employment, career and living arrangements for the Armed Forces in the future and will be set a clear target to reduce the expenditure on CEA by at least half by 2020 compared with the pre-Strategic Defence and Security Review baseline.

It may well be that greater stability will enable the reductions in expenditure to be achieved without major changes to the CEA.

But, in addressing this issue, the project will also have to look more radically at the best ways to support personnel and families within future resources, given the high costs of boarding education and the relatively small numbers of personnel who could be expected to be eligible for CEA by the end of the decade.

For further information personnel should read the Defence Internal Brief 2011 DIB/86 on the Defence Intranet.



For further information personnel should read the Defence Internal Brief 2011 DIB/86 on the Defence Intranet.

The Tranche 1 Naval Service Redundancy announcements

The NFF has put a comment section up on the website for anyone who has a view on the announcements to register their comments. There is an unlimited character text box available.

These comments will be forwarded onto the Fleet Redundancy Cell and the Chain of Command: www.nff.org.uk

Insurance liability – are you covered?

If you occupy Service Family Accommodation (SFA), be it either SFA or SSFA you will have signed an agreement when you moved into the property called a Service Licence to Occupy Service Family Accommodation - known as a Licence to Occupy.

Due to this, you are not classed as a tenant as you would be in a civilian rental property.

Within the Licence to Occupy, there is a clause that states that you are liable for damage up to at least the sum advised currently by the MOD, which, from August 1 2011, was set at £20,000.

Because you occupy the property under this agreement and are not classed as a tenant, standard home insurance policies do not cover your liability. Similarly, 'buildings' insurance is not appropriate for this element of your liability either.

The Services Insurance & Investment Advisory Panel

(SIAP) website has details of a number of insurance providers who can organise liability insurance policies that have been designed specifically for Service families living in SFA.

Visit www.siap.org/120 for further information.

If you are found to be liable for the damage, and have no insurance, the MOD will still charge you for the repairs and you will have to find the funds from your own pocket.

The recommendation to families living in SFA or SSFA is to take out insurance to cover for such an eventuality.

You may well feel that this is yet another expense you can well do without at a time when household incomes seem to be stretched to the max, but if you damage your quarter, you could find yourself facing a bill of anything up to £20,000.

Information about this update is in JSP 464 (tri-Service Accommodation Regulations), Chapter 7.

Your experiences form the basis of all our discussions. The NFF can be contacted via e-mail admin@nff.org.uk, telephone: 02392 654374, or write to:

Castaway House,
311 Twyford Avenue,
Portsmouth,
PO2 8RN.

Honours

AFGHANISTAN
MBE
 Lt Col Simon O'Herlihy; Lt Cdr Gary David James Criddle
Military Cross
 Major Alistair Scott Carns; Mne John Matthew Watson
Mention In Despatches
 Mne Dexter Bogle; Cpl Michael Robert Waker
Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)
 Lt Cdr Pauline Aird; LS Daniel Michael Roche; Cdr Joseph Seymour Hume Turner
REST OF WORLD
OBE
 Cdr David Henry Wilkinson
MBE
 WO1 John Thomas Lambert
Queen's Commendation for Bravery
 C/Sgt Wayne Barfoot
Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air
 Lt Joseph Maximilian Thomas
Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)
 Lt Cdr Sarah Elizabeth Oakley

Jungle Squadron tops media awards

845 NAVAL Air Squadron have won one of the most coveted naval awards (particularly in the eyes of *Navy News*, which relies greatly on units sending good stories to fill our pages) – the Desmond Wettern Fleet Award.

The award is presented annually to the ship, Naval Air Squadron or Royal Marines unit which has done the most to project a positive image of the Naval Service in the preceding year.

It was named in memory of the late Desmond Wettern, who was for many years the Daily Telegraph's naval correspondent.

The award itself is a cut glass ship's decanter mounted on a plinth of oak from HMS Victory bearing a silver plate inscribed 'Heart of Oak' – and Desmond Wettern directed that while at sea it should never run dry...

A panel of independent judges reviewed this year's entries. Capt Mike Beardall, Head of Fleet Media, said: "The overall standard was simply outstanding and clearly demonstrated the excellent work being undertaken to raise the profile of the naval service."

"All units are to be congratulated on their considerable efforts."

The other winners are:
 Submarine category: HMS Turbulent
 Small ships category: HMS Mersey
 DD/FF category: HMS Liverpool
 Best use of the web: HMS Brocklesby
Navy News award for outstanding contribution: HMS Gloucester

South-west sanctuary

THE China Fleet Country Club has recently celebrated its 20th year in its current location on the cusp of Devon and Cornwall.

Despite the difficult economic climate with the current redundancy programmes and Defence Estate rationalisation, the Trust and Committee of China Fleet, (made up from all arms of the service) are optimistic about the Charity's future and the service it continues to offer its beneficiaries – all RN & RM non-commissioned personnel and their immediate families.

This year has seen the club investing in a major refurbishment programme including all accommodation, restaurants and outside areas as part of the drive to provide the very best in holidays and leisure facilities to its beneficiaries.

Graduates fly high

A BAKER'S dozen of Royal Navy officers raised the roof at the Barbican, in London, when they marched onto the stage to receive their aviation degrees.

The 13 aircrew who had all completed their Operational Flying Training were presented with a Foundation Degree in Military Aviation Studies from The Open University.

Commander Ivor Milne, who designed the Foundation Degree in Military Aviation Studies, said: "It was quite a deal for the 2,500 civilian people present who raised the roof with applause when our people marched onto stage to receive their degrees!"

"Especially when Lord Haskins, who presented them, pointed out that they were between deployments and that others were unable to attend because they were in Afghan, off Libya, or off Somalia."

He added: "In the circumstances to get 13 aircrew to the Barbican in London between deployments made for an exciting day."

The officers graduated alongside other OU graduates, delighted to be able to support their practical experience with a qualification.

The Fleet Air Arm has an innovative Military Aviation Academy which has successfully combined military flying training and education into a Foundation Degree in Military Aviation Studies, validated by the Open University and providing the skills needed for service in combat aircraft combined with academic recognition.

The initial degree programme provides budding pilots and observers (tactical navigators) with the skills, attitude and knowledge to become fully trained aviation warfare officers and use state-of-the-art simulation and computer-based training combined with more practical tasks when airborne.

The degree gives students the option of topping up to gain an Honours qualification while going straight into a frontline Naval Air Squadron.

Lt Chris Jones, from Portsmouth, was named the scheme's top graduate. Chris has completed operation service in Afghanistan in 2010 and Libya in 2011.

Commander Milne said: "The real value of having flying training as a validated degree programme is that we can now recruit people



● Lord Haskins is pictured conferring a degree on Lt Marion Taylor

in competition with universities. That means we can recruit A-Level students; they will come in younger, they will stay longer and reach a higher rank younger.

"So, the value is to them, it's part of the education for life process; they get to do the first part with us, in terms of a degree,

and they can go on throughout the services and even take it to Masters or PhD level.

"So we're the start of their lifelong learning, which is very rewarding. And we also benefit by attracting younger recruits who stay with us longer. It's a win-win situation for everybody."



All change

THE LOOK of concentration is intense as sailors get to grips with the all-new ops room training facilities now to be found at Collingwood and Devonport. The Maritime Composite Training System (MCTS), described as "the most radical change in maritime training" for 40 years and designed by defence contractor BAE Systems, has now been officially opened by former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jock Slater at the Fareham training establishment. A modular system allows for separate computer-based units to be reconfigured to represent the operations rooms of any of the major class of warships currently in use by the Royal Navy.

Second Sea Lord writes to staff on pension changes

PENSIONS are very much in the news at the moment.

It's difficult to keep up with all the changes to the state pension and reform of public sector pensions, let alone work out how to ensure a secure financial future.

The whole of the public sector pension scheme is currently under review.

The outcome of a revised Armed Forces pension scheme will not be known until the consultation process is finished – and changes won't be implemented before 2015 and maybe later.

It's too early to speculate on what the impact of the recommendations will be on the structure and value of future pensions – as ever, the devil is in the detail, and while everyone is waiting to see how the changes will affect them, there is

plenty of scope for rumour and disinformation.

With this in mind, the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, has issued Galaxy 28-2011 to reassure RN personnel who are worried about the changes any new scheme will have on them – and to stress that he is committed to looking after their interests.

In particular, the Hutton Report on pension reform makes it clear that pension benefits already earned will be protected on adoption of a new scheme.

For the years you have already served and until reforms are made you will keep all the pension benefits you have already earned.

These benefits will be worked out in the same way, you will be able to draw them at the same age as now and they will be based on

your final salary at the date you retire.

The Second Sea Lord said: "I promise that further information will be cascaded through the Command Chain as this work proceeds and as soon as information becomes available.

"Be assured that I will continue to advocate and promote your very best interests.

"In the interim 'no news is good news' and I feel sure that ultimately the revised Armed Forces pension scheme will remain among the very best, if not the best, available."

The other principal points of Second Sea Lord's message are:

■ A tri-service MOD team, the Future Armed Forces Pension Team, has been established, consisting of three serving officers and two civil

servants.

The team's remit is to develop competitive, effective, fair and appropriately targeted financial Conditions of Service for the Armed Forces.

The Government has agreed that because the Armed Forces do not have Trade Unions to represent their views, a separate consultation process will be needed for them.

■ The whole process will require extensive consultation and communications before any changes are made, and consideration is now being given on how to collate and present your views on pension reform.

■ The Government has been clear that they will remain amongst the very best available, with protection for your pension already earned.

where to look

GALAXY MESSAGES
 Galaxy 33-2011 Resettlement Provision during the redundancy programme

Galaxy 34-2011 Message from 1SL on the Redundancy Tranche 1

DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS
 81/11: Public support for our deployed personnel and sending gifts at Christmas: With 100 days to go until Christmas, the MOD launched its annual campaign to remind members of the public how to express their support other than by sending unsolicited gifts and packages.

82/11: MOD Your Say survey 2011 The MOD Your Say survey 2011 launched on Monday September 19. The survey is designed to measure and understand what drives employee engagement.

DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES

DIN 2011 DIN01-204: New Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Provision for Payment of Overseas Medical Expenses

DIN 2011 DIN01-201: Refund of Professional Body Fees

DIN 2011 DIN01-199: Education for Bereaved Service Children at The Duke of York's Royal Military School (DYRMS)

DIN 2011 DIN01-198: Voluntary Transfer of Naval Service Personnel selected for Compulsory Redundancy in Tranche 1

DIN 2011 DIN01-197: Army Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) Conference - 2 Dec 11

DIN 2011 DIN01-193: New Average Property Price List - July 1 2011

DIN 2011 DIN01-192: Changes to the SSAFA-FH ForcesLine (Formerly Confidential Support Line)

DIN 2011 DIN01-189: Remembrance Day 2011 and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

DIN 2011 DIN01-188: Employment for Wounded, Injured and Sick Service Personnel

DIN 2011 DIN01-187: Defence Recovery Placements for Wounded, Injured and Sick Service Personnel

DIN 2011 DIN01-186: Royal Navy Fitness Test - Revised instructions for conducting the Rockport Walk

DIN 2011 DIN01-185: Pension Tax Relief Lifetime Allowance - Introduction of Fixed Protection Notice

DIN 2011 DIN01-184: Naval Service Redundancy Programme - Appeals Procedure

DIN 2011 DIN01-181: Pension Tax Relief Annual Allowance - Introduction of Scheme Pays

DIN 2011 DIN01-180: Winter Sports Travel 2011/12

DIN 2011 DIN01-179: Planning for Retirement

ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA

Issue 12/11 RNTM 237/11: Process for managing Front Line Unit EGS Officer and Rating SQEP (Supersedes RNTM 021/10)

Issue 12/11 RNTM 238/11: The Royal Navy Endurance Training Leader (ETL) ADQUAL Course

Issue 12/11 RNTM 239/11: Streamlined Routes to Professional Registration for Royal Navy Air Engineering Personnel

Issue 12/11 RNTM 240/11: White Ensign Association Autumn Term Visit Programme 2011

Issue 13/11 RNTM 241/11: Revision of Direction for LUCIE NVG Use and Operation

Issue 13/11 RNTM 242/11: HMS Vigilant Rededication Events

Issue 13/11 RNTM 243/11: Medical and Dental Equipment Servicing Certificate

Issue 13/11 RNTM 244/11: Royal Navy Effectiveness Trophies

Issue 13/11 RNTM 245/11: The Nuffield Trust for the Forces of the Crown

Issue 13/11 RNTM 246/11: BR 2170(1) Paragraph 1938 Emergency Cable Run Diagrams - Revised

Issue 13/11 RNTM 247/11: Medical Department Handover on HM Ships, Submarines and RFA Platforms - Revised Procedure

Issue 13/11 RNTM 248/11: Purchase to Payment (p2p) - Implementation on RN Platforms for the Demanding of Medical Stores

Issue 13/11 RNTM 249/11: Dental Valise

Issue 13/11 RNTM 250/11: RN Trophy Fund - Volunteer Trustee Required

where to look



NOTICEBOARD

Deaths

Marine David Fairbrother, Royal Marine. Kilo Company, 42 Commando. Joined the Royal Marines November 2 2009. Qualified as a Team Medic and a member of an All Arms Search Team suffered fatal wounds in a fire-fight with insurgents in the Khorghajd area of threat Nah-e Saraj District of Helmand province, Afghanistan. September 19. Aged 24.

Capt Paul Badcock. Joined 1948 and whilst at the RN Engineering College, Manadon was capped for the Navy and for Devon at rugby. Served as watchkeeper in Ocean and Decoy before in 1960 being appointed to a training job at the apprentices school Figgard. He served two eight-month voyages to the Antarctic in Protector in the early 1960s before tours in Dido and Phoebe as marine engineer officer then senior engineer in Eagle and promoted to commander 1968. He took up several roles in the dockyards, including two years in Gibraltar and as staff marine engineer to Flag Officer Sea Training in Portland and promoted to captain in 1976. When the Argentines invaded the Falklands he was immediately appointed officer-in-charge of Naval Party 1810 and assigned to the Swedish MV Stena Seaspread, a requisitioned North Sea oil rig support vessel. In just a few days (April 12-16 1982) he modified and stored the 6,000-ton vessel, cramming a party of 160 engineers into a ship which normally accommodated 30 crew. His primary duty was to carry out weather and battle damage repairs to some 40 ships including four captured Argentine vessels; notable cases were Glasgow, Brilliant, Argonaut and Arrow; he was appointed CBE in the Falklands honours list. His last appointment was as Captain, Fleet Maintenance. August 13. Aged 81.

Capt Maurice Usherwood DSC. Joined the RN 1925 and became an anti-submarine specialist. On board Walpole 1938 he was part of a secret demonstration of the capabilities of Asdic for the First Sea Lord, Lord Chatfield and Winston Churchill. He was the naval commander of a joint force that liberated the Greek island of Corfu (Operation Mercised), for which he was awarded a DSC and spent most of the war in destroyers on Atlantic and Arctic convoy duties. Postwar he commanded Loch Arkig, Verulam, Torquay and Scarborough; he twice held important staff appointments in America (1950-53) helping to develop new sonars (as Asdic was now known), write the anti-submarine chapter of *Allied Tactical Publication No 1* and head of the naval intelligence division of the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic (1960-62). After retiring in 1964 he was an active vice-president of SSAFA (Suffolk), September 8. Aged 99.

Lt Cdr Geoffrey Holder-Jones DSM VRD. Wartime Captain of anti-submarine trawlers. Joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, first went to sea for training in Renown becoming a signalman. Mobilised in 1939 he joined the minelayer Adventure which was badly damaged by a mine; he was flung out of his bunk injuring his hand. Drafted to

a converted drifter called Tritonia at Scapa Flow he volunteered to help dismantle a magnetic mine and was awarded the DSM. He was commissioned in 1941 and was sent to the Lake-class armed whaler Grasmere renamed Wastwater that was first based in Iceland then dispatched to the US eastern seaboard. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor he was given command of the better-armed Isles-class trawler Baffin. After three years overseas he was appointed an auxiliary naval pilot at Portsmouth, mustering landing craft for the D-Day invasion. He commanded the trawler Guardsman and received the surrender of U-boat U2334 for which he was awarded the Volunteer Reserve Decoration. His biography *Signalman Jones*, written by Tim Parker was published last year. September 10. Aged 95.

Eric de la Torre. 3 Cdo. After rigorous training in 1941 as a wireless operator he took part in the raid on Vaagso, Norway that engaged in fierce hand-to-hand street fighting and eliminated the enemy garrison. He was sent on a dock demolition course in Southampton where immediately after was marched on board ship to be briefed; the aim of the operation was to destroy the only dock in France that could be used by the battleship Tirpitz, so preventing her from attacking convoys in the Atlantic. Leaving Falmouth March 1942 he was in one of the motor launches following the destroyer Campbelltown. Packed with delayed-action explosives she hit the dock gate and De la Torre jumped over the rail of his launch heading for the swing bridge at the entrance to the submarine pens but was caught in a huge explosion. By the time he struggled from under rubble the bridge was blocked and the order to abandon ship was given. Grabbing a Carley float he leapt over the side eventually getting hold of a raft laden with wounded men he held on as it drifted down river and was picked up by German soldiers. He was taken to hospital and the next morning all the windows were blown out when Campbelltown exploded putting the dock out of action for the rest of the war. He was taken prisoner at St Nazaire and sent to Stalag VIIIb camp at Lamsdorf then to a working party at Sternberg near the German border with Czechoslovakia; he managed to escape on his fourth attempt. For many years he was secretary of the St Nazaire Society, founded to commemorate Operation Chariot. He was appointed MBE in 1997 and to the Legion d'honneur in 2006. August 22. Aged 92.

Lt Cdr Robert Graham Gutherson. Served 1955-90 in Mounts Bay, Devonshire, Fife, Hermes, Bulwark, Lincoln and Cleopatra, also shore bases Collingwood, Lochinvar, Fleet Engineering Staff (Portsmouth), DES(N) Bath and CDCN (Corsham). On loan to the Royal Malaysian Navy in Kuala Lumpur (1972-74) and was the Defence Communications Agency Liaison Officer based in Washington DC (1987-90). Involved with RN Drama and successful at the Drama Festivals over several years he also worked with SSAFA and Lions Clubs International. Association of RN

Officers. September 8. Aged 75.

Adrian David 'Simmo' 'Ade's' Simmons. Leading Writer. Served 1970-94 at Dolphin, FOF2 Staff, Centurion (1972-75), Endurance and Nelson (SMA); also HMY Britannia (1979-94) and a member of the Association of Royal Yachtsmen. June 26. Aged 57.

Eric John 'Tug' Wilson. LAM(E) FAA. Served 1940-46 885 Squadron 1942-43; Victorious, Formidable, Furious, Battler, Norfolk and Unicorn also shore bases Royal Arthur, RAF Locking, Medina, Merlin, Landrail, Daedalus, Cormorant, Dipper Flycatcher, Golden Hind and Nabswick (Monab V). Operations included PQ17, Pedestal, Torch, Husky and Avalanche also British Pacific Fleet 1945. May 22. Aged 90.

Roy Bate. Able Seaman. Served Ganges, Zephyr, Vernon, Consort (1947-49) and a member of HMS Consort Association. July 25. Aged 81.

Norman Dennis Cotton. LSM. Served in Howe, St Austell Bay and Consort. HMS Consort Association. August 24. Aged 83.

John 'Armi' Armitage. Sto/Mech. Served in Gambia 1946-48. HMS Gambia Association. September 6. Aged 84.

Frank Farmer. Signalman. Served in Gambia 1955-56. HMS Gambia Association. September 16. Aged 76.

W H 'Mike' McMinn. CRS. Served 1944-68 in Adamant, Amethyst, Daring, Drake, Orion, Russell, Cochrane, Ganges, Graham, Mauritius, Flint Castle and Drake. HMS Daring Association (first commission 1952-54). September 29. Aged 83.

Jonathan Vincent 'Vinny' Dixon. FAA. Served in Implacable. September 22. Aged 86.

Edward 'Ted' E Compton. Stoker Mechanic. Served on board Liverpool 1949-52 and a member of the association since 1984. September 24.

William 'Bill' Lewis Young DSM. CPO (Gunnery). Served 1932-46 on board Queen Elizabeth (1933-36), Scotsman, Aberdeen (C-in-C Mediterranean yacht 1936-39), Illustrious (1940) during operation Pedestal, Malta and Taranto when she was badly damaged by German bombers; after temporary repairs he travelled with her to the USA for proper refit and was promoted to PO and left her in the USA 1941 to bring warship Malaya to UK after her repair. Joined Broke as PO and was mentioned in dispatches for actions in landing American Marines in Algiers; she was badly damaged and sank outside the harbour. Served in Saumarez (1943-46) on Russian convoys and took part in the sinking of the Scharnhorst, D-Day Landings (Sword Beach), Channel Islands and involved in sinking the Japanese cruiser Hag in the Malacca Straits; he was awarded the DSM and promoted CPO April 1945. Russian Convoy Association and 23rd Destroyer Flotilla Association. September 30. Aged 95.

Alexander 'Jock' Sutherland. Chief Steward. Served 1946-69 aboard Malcolm, Fulmar, Ganges and Pembroke which included Fontainebleau, Portland, Paris, Scotland and the West Indies and Instructor

at RNSS. Mess Manager to Wardroom RNR HQ President and Sergeant at Arms to Rochester upon Medway City Council. October 4. Aged 83.

Peter Barrett. PO Diver. Served on board Raleigh, Anson, Excellent, Glasgow, Vernon, Osprey, Benchley, Rooke, Triumph, Pembroke, Royal Arthur and Dampier. October 2. Aged 81.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Donald Sydney 'Doc/Darby/Don' Allen. AB RDF (Radar). Joined 1940 and served throughout World War 2 on board Ledbury. Veteran of Malta Convoys (Operation Pedestal) and 12 Arctic convoys. Gained a doctorate in homeopathy forming Ashford's first Clinic of Complementary Medicine in 1970. George Cross Island Association; past Chairman of North Russia Club; RNA No 2 Area Committee Member; branch welfare representative; Conference Delegate and past Chairman of Ashford (Kent) RNA. August 12. Aged 88.

Denis Kenyon. FAA Armourer. Served 11 years including Eagle. Chairman St Helen's branch for a number of years. Aged 75.

Edward 'Ted' Wilson. Served in Forth and several shore bases. Wigston & District branch for 17 years. September 2.

George Harold Beswick. Seaman. Served 1942-46 Royal Navy Patrol Service, Lowestoft (Europe) in minesweepers and trawlers. A founder member of Uttoxeter branch. July 3. Aged 88.

Frederick Michael 'Mike' W J McGinn. L/Telegraphist. Served 1939-54 in King George V, Swiftsure, Golden Hind (Australia), FND Melbourne (Australia), Camperdown, Scorpion, Tuscan and Gateshead. Injured during the war and left disabled. Uttoxeter branch. August 31. Aged 87.

John Eric Grant. Sgt Maj RM Cdo. Served 1939-46 in India, Burma, France and Germany. President of Letchworth RNA for 20 years and founder member of three other branches. September 11. Aged 91.

Robert Lawson. Seaman S/D Rating. Served 1940-46 at Raleigh and after S/D training volunteered to join the RN Patrol Service. Drafted to the Sparrows Nest then into Harry Tates as a Seaman S/D Rating aboard the mine sweeping trawler Loch Tulla sweeping in E Boat Alley and in Icelandic waters; later (1945) on smaller craft sweeping in the North Aegean. A founder member, past secretary and treasurer Letchworth RNA; and RN Patrol Boat Service Association. September 20. Aged 89.

George Sutherland. Joined Ganges as a Junior Seaman and served 1964-75 in Vernon, Maidstone, Maxton, Wolverton, Brinton and Kedleston. City of Inverness branch. September 27.

Lt Cdr Derek 'Tony' Peter Anthony. RNR. Served in several ships also TS Phoebe, Bournemouth. Injured in Palestine he was taken to Malta then transferred to Netley Hospital, Southampton. Chairman of Bournemouth RNA before moving to Malta in 1981 where he instigated the Cadette Bahar as TS St Paul which is now a very successful unit. Committee member, Chairman and then President of Malta branch. September 11. Aged 83.

Ray 'Raymond Henry' Frost. Leading Airman. Served in the Fleet Air Arm for eight years. Dursley & District branch. September 27.

Dennis Robbins. Chief Diving Instructor. Served 1946-70. Served in Ganges, Vernon, Newfoundland and Survey Ship Adamant. Fulham and Chelsea Division of HMS Ganges Association, HMS Newfoundland Association and the RNA. September 19. Aged 81.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

Lt Cdr B D 'Brian' Head RNR. Submarine Service 1954-75 in Amphion, Seacout, Trepasser, Astute and Porpoise (all during RNR training). Dolphin branch. Aged 79.

D 'Derek' Lowe. PO UW. Submarine Service 1968-80 in Andrew, Osiris, Repulse, Opportune and Porpoise. Barrow branch. Aged 71.

R A 'Chester' Quick DSM. CPO Tel. Submarine Service 1938-46 in Rover, Regulus, Tuna, P552 and Vitality. Essex branch. Aged 95.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
E A Reed. Served LCF 9, 12, 13, 37 and 42. Ilford. June 9.

E E Spanton. Served LST 401. Kettering. September 19.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

David Hills. POSM. Served in Pincher and Chameleon. July 11. Aged 83.

Leslie Downs. AB. Served in Romola. September 15. Aged 83.

Talking Navy News

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. Call 023 9269 0851, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com, or visit www.patn.org.uk.

Ask Jack

Rugby Tour through the Borders (England-Scotland) also including the Wool Colleges - around 1960s. Ex-LME Bernard Gardine is hoping someone can jog his memory; he can't remember the exact date either when he was on board HMS Ark Royal 1963/64 or HMS Grenville 1969/70. If anyone can help with information or photographs he will gladly pay for material. He would also like to hear from the Chief Stoker who assisted him to pick daffodils from the Admirals garden at HMS Lochinvar after playing a game (a lot later). The stoker was a Taffy and a Hooker, Bernard was a Wing Forward. Contact Bernard Gardine on 01928 565674 or bjag47@yahoo.co.uk

Alistair Robertson born in Glasgow served in the RN during the 1960s married an Australian girl and lived in Sydney. His father, Bill (b1904 d1981), mother Mary (née Munro b1905 d1997), sister Christine. In the 1970s parents lived at Unit 1, 4-6 Major Court, Major Street, Coogee 2034, Sydney,

1971 1981 1991 2001 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● Frankie Howerd on board HMS Aeneas in 1971

November 1971

Ooer missus - Frankie Howerd looked as though he found something of interest as he peered through the periscope of HMS Aeneas to see what was happening around Hull docks.

The film-star and comedian was appearing at a local nightclub during the submarine's visit to Hull, so her commanding officer invited him to come onboard and entertain the messes for a couple of hours, which he did in his inimitable style.

Other highlights of the boat's visit included a brewery run, football and rugby against local teams, and a tug-of-war match.

November 1981

HMS Southampton, the eighth of the Type 42 guided missile destroyers, was making her debut (she was commissioned on 31 October 1971) and among her early visitors was one Ted Woods, son of Albert Woods, 'the sailor who returned from the dead.'

Leading Seaman Albert Woods had been in the cruiser HMS Southampton at the Battle of Jutland in 1916 and was presumed dead after the fearsome battle of 31 May.

However, much to the joy of his family it turned out to be a case of mistaken identity - he was one of seven Woods in the ship - and he was very much alive for another 58 years.

Albert always said his time in Southampton was the happiest of his Naval service, and before his death he asked his family to make an appropriate presentation if there was ever a new HMS Southampton built.

So it was that Albert's son, Ted, a rigger in Portsmouth Dockyard, presented a silver gallery tray to the CO of the new Southampton, Capt Garth de Courcy-Ireland, who received it on behalf of the new ship.

November 1991

A rare event occurred on the River Thames opposite the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, when for the first time in living memory two major British warships passed each other there.

The Type 42 destroyer HMS Manchester was leaving London just as the Type 22 frigate HMS Brave was heading up-river for the start of her two-week visit to the capital.

November 2001

The first front-line Fleet Air Arm Squadron equipped with the new Merlin helicopter was created when 814 Naval Air Squadron was rededicated at Culdrose.

814 Squadron's air and ground crews had operated the Sea King Mk 6 until 2000, and had been training since then to operate the new Merlin.

814 was to form the anti-submarine (ASW) element of the Carrier Group of the newly refitted Ark Royal.

Embarked trials were to take place in the ship during the autumn and following spring, to get ready for full operational readiness in May 2002.

Assignments

Vice Admiral G M Zambellas DSC to be promoted Admiral and to be Commander-in-Chief and Commander Allied Maritime Command Northwood in succession to Admiral Sir Trevor Soar KCB, OBE with effect from January 6 2012. This appointment also carries with it the title of Vice Admiral of the United Kingdom.
Rear Admiral Philip A Jones to be promoted Vice Admiral and to be Deputy

Commander-in-Chief Fleet and Chief of Staff Navy Command HQ from December 13.

Cdr Stephen M R Moorhouse to be CO HMS Lancaster from November 14.

Cdr Nicholas J Wheeler to be CO HMS Turbulent from December 16.

Lt Cdr Matthew J Dennis to be CO HMS Victorious (Stbd) from December 20.

Lt Cdr Richard H (Hywel) Griffiths to be CO HMS Tireless from January 11 2012.

NAVY NEWS

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Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in December's Noticeboard must be received by **November 11**

Trophy lives



Trophy No 27702 is a painting in acrylics of the heavy cruiser HMS Cumberland as she appeared during World War 2. At the outbreak of the war she, with the cruisers Ajax, Achilles and Exeter, formed Commodore Harwood's South Atlantic Squadron.

In December 1939 she was under self-maintenance in the Falkland Islands when the other ships engaged the German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee in the Battle of the River Plate. On hearing of the battle Cumberland sailed for Montevideo; although destined to not fire her guns at this time she arrived in time to witness the scuttling by the Germans of their ship.

In November 1942 she was one of the supporting ships for the Allied landings in French North Africa, codenamed Operation Torch. Britain and America were under severe Russian pressure to open a second front and while the Americans were keen to land in Europe the British felt that the time for this was not yet right.

Instead, the decision was made to attempt to clear the Germans from northern Africa – success would both improve Allied control of the Mediterranean and prepare the way for eventual invasion of southern mainland Europe.

Three landings were planned; the British would attack Oran and Algiers while the Americans would assault Casablanca.

Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham was placed in overall charge of the maritime operations while the American General Dwight Eisenhower, whose headquarters were in Gibraltar, was in overall command.

Almost 400 merchant ships and 170 warships were needed to transport and protect the 70,000 troops destined to attack the three ports.

British forces sailed from the Clyde in two convoys, in October and November, while the American force sailed directly for Morocco from the United States.

The assaults actually started on November 8 with the British landings being preceded by heavy bombardment from the sea; the Americans decided against use of this measure and – unfortunately – heavy

casualties were inflicted on their troops by the Vichy French defenders.

The British ships involved included three battleships, one monitor, 11 cruisers – one of which was Cumberland – and nine aircraft carriers.

One Algiers airfield was captured by Fleet Air Arm Grumman Martlet fighters from the carrier HMS Victorious; led by Lt B H C Nation, this was the first time that a shore enemy airfield was captured by maritime aircraft.

Naval losses were relatively light; the destroyer HMS Broke penetrated the boom at Algiers harbour and landed her troops but was then damaged by Vichy shore batteries.

She had to be abandoned and was later scuttled while two ex-American Coast Guard Cutters, HMS Walney and HMS Hartland were lost in Oran harbour.

Walney was severely damaged by Vichy guns; hits to her bridge killed everybody except her CO, Capt Frederick Peters, although he was blinded in one eye.

Nonetheless, he got his disabled ship alongside and landed his troops before Walney sank; Capt Peters and 13 of his crew managed to get ashore but were taken prisoner by the French – he was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross and the American Distinguished Service Cross for his gallantry. Hartland was badly damaged by gunfire from the French destroyer Typhon and she, too, had to be abandoned.

Later, also off Oran, the cruiser HMS Aurora and her escorting destroyers attacked and sank Typhon and three other destroyers – Epervier, Tramontane and Tornade – while, in the same area, the destroyer HMS Brilliant had the better of an engagement with her French counterpart La Surprise.

HMS Cumberland survived the war and while her sister ships were gradually scrapped she remained in service as a trials cruiser, notably for the rapid-firing 6-inch and 3-inch guns eventually used in Tiger class cruisers of 1958.

She was finally paid off and scrapped in 1959, and a White Ensign from this ship still hangs today in Carlisle Cathedral.

New faces in RNPT

THERE are new faces at the helm of the Navy's roving presentation team – the multimedia roadshow which highlights the global mission of the Service to movers and shakers across the land – but the message remains the same: the RN plays a pivotal role around the world.

The team, based at RAF Northolt on the edge of London, has begun its autumn programme of talks and presentations, travelling the length and breadth of the UK to address 'key opinion formers' in society – government representatives, senior academics, heads of industry, community leaders.

And if there are any days left in the month when the team's free, it also presents at a more general level to universities, colleges, rotary clubs, associations and the like.

Where possible, the RNPT also tries to tie in with ship visits to affiliated towns and ports, as well as supporting major maritime events and air shows.

The team comprises a mix of officers and ratings, and a Royal Marines Commando, and is now headed by Cdr Simon Staley, who recently guided HMS York through operations off Libya and a deployment to the South Atlantic.

They're supported by a multimedia presentation – a 30-minute video and stills backdrop featuring pretty much everything today's Senior Service does: operations in Afghanistan, counter-piracy, humanitarian aid, the strategic deterrent, drugbusting in the Caribbean, fishery protection, as well as training in the UK and recognition of the support families and the community give.

There's also a personal message from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope and the presentation closes with a question-and-answer session.

If you're interested in the team visiting your town or event, contact events director Lt Colin Duffin on 020 833 8029 or email rnpt-ed@mod.uk

This month the team can be found at:

- November
- 2 – Hampshire County Council;
- 3 – Plymouth Institute of Engineering and Technology;
- 7 – UCS Hampstead;
- 9 – Harrogate Business Breakfast;
- 10 – Oxford University;
- 11 St Helen's School, Northwood;
- 14 – Bracknell Probus Club, RAF Cranwell;
- 18 – HMS Illustrious;
- 20 – Combined Cadet Force Conference, HMS Excellent;
- 24 – Carlton Barracks, Leeds;
- 25 – Hull/Humber Chamber of Commerce;
- 28 – Francis Holland School, London;
- 30 – RMA Sandhurst, Cranfield University.

Competitions

Citizen Sailor: The correct answer to the 'Citizen Sailor' competition that appeared in the September edition of *Navy News* was "Total Germany" and a copy of the book will be sent to the following winners:

- M Yates, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton;
- Malcolm Hall, Tonbridge, Kent;
- Trevor Preston, Rye, Sussex;
- Phillip Goodbody, Titchfield Common, Fareham and David Thompson, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset.

Character Building Type 45: The correct answer to the Type 45 competition was "Hamleys" and a Character Building model set of the Type 45 will be sent to the following winners:

- J McBride, Southwark Sea Cadets, Surrey;
- Doug Proctor, INM Training, Gosport and Lyndsay Oldridge, Portsmouth, Hampshire.

Character Building have launched a new range of mini-figures and there is another chance to win a Type 45 and the new figures in this month's *Navy News* – see page 10.



355 paces mark a Royal title

THE Parade was just 355 paces – each step marking the loss of Service personnel whose bodies arrived at RAF Lyneham and were driven through the town of Wootton Bassett.

Led by the Band of the Royal Marines Collingwood (pictured above), who played a new march written by Maj Peter Curtis at the behest of the Principal Director of Music, marines, sailors, airmen and soldiers joined with veterans and cadets to mark the town's ascension to the title of Royal Wootton Bassett.

Princess Anne brought the red-sealed Letters Patent, representing her mother, that heralded the town's preferment, an honour last given to Tunbridge Wells in 1909.

Prime minister David Cameron and his Defence Secretary Philip Hammond watched in the bright autumn sunshine, as the parade honoured the town that had stood in silence as the bodies of 355 Service personnel had passed through in 167 repatriation ceremonies.

At the ceremony, the Princess Royal said: "This community has come together in the most extraordinary way."

"I am privileged to be allowed to add my thanks to those of Her Majesty and the whole

country for the example you set in respecting with dignity the losses that this country's operational responsibilities have forced upon us."

The Mayor of the town, Councillor Paul Heaphy, commented: "Royal status is a privilege, yet it is received with sadness, mindful of the high price paid by our Armed Forces."

"This is not a day for celebration but one for commemoration, one of recognition, and one to mark the beginning of a new chapter for our town."

"We did not ask for recognition and we find the attention rather humbling." The flag, lowered by the town of Wootton Bassett on 167 occasions, has been sent on to Oxfordshire's Carterton, the nearest town to the new route.

On repatriation days, the flag will fly at the heart of the town's new memorial garden, found in Norton Way, Brize Norton.

The townsfolk of Royal Wootton Bassett were the first to benefit from £10,000 of funding from the new Community Covenant Grant Scheme, which went towards funding this commemorative event.

The town of Royal Wootton Bassett has changed its coat of

arms to feature a heraldic lion and assumed a new motto: "We honour those who serve."

Information on repatriations from RAF Brize Norton can be found at <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/repatriation-fallen-service-personnel>

Sports lottery

September 17: £5,000 – Cdr D A Bessell; £1,500 – PO R O Derham; £500 – PO T G Marshall.

September 24: £5,000 – Lt Cdr N S Oviden; £1,500 – AB1 M C Uren; £500 – CPO A D Thurgood.

October 1: £5,000 – AET M Corrigan; £1,500 – AB1 A E Scudder; £500 – AB1 J R O'Callaghan.

October 8: £5,000 – Lt Cdr S E Goodrum; £1,500 – LH M A Eastham; £500 – Cpl A J Billingsley.

October 15: £5,000 – AB1 M C Paddock; £1,500 – AB1 N Hodskin; £500 – AB1 J M Elliott.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk

Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk

Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veterans-uk.info

RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, navysearh@tnt.co.uk

Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.rnmc.org.uk

RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk

British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk

Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk

Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, www.seafarers-uk.org

SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafa.org.uk

RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk

Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600

Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org

Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com

Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk

RN Submarine Museum: 023 9251 0354, www.rnsubmus.co.uk

National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk

Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Reunions

JANUARY 2012

50th Anniversary Term Reunion of Supplementary List (Executive) Officers: It is proposed to hold a reunion of the above entry on January 7, 2012 and will take place at the Floating Bridge Inn at 1430 and thence to BRNC for a conducted tour. This will be aimed primarily to those who live in the UK and wish to mark the exact time and date of their fateful decision. It is further anticipated to hold a plenary reunion, to include WAGs, later in the year. The Nominal List is as follows: Cadets: P D Ambrose, P Banyard, J P A Blake, G J M W Broadwater, R De F Browne, M P C Burke, M J Cullford, R J Dall, J I Deeley, M Goodman, R D T Hobbs, O J Hornby, D M A Howard, J L S Jones, B S Lefort, T W Loughran, J F O'Driscoll, M J Pollitt, A J Spiller, D A Waghorne, R E Walters, D R Ward, A P Williams, J R Wood, C P Young. Anyone wishing to attend should contact Lieutenant Cdr J F O'Driscoll (Rtd) at oscardelta@hotmail.com or tel: 07881 901359.

BRNC, 1987 Spring Entry: The 25th Anniversary Reunion Dinner will take place at BRNC, Dartmouth on January 7, 1900 for 2000. The event will be without partners. For more information contact Cdr Martin Mackey tel: 07796 020648 or email: martin.mackey@hotmail.com

FEBRUARY 2012

HMS Andromeda Association annual reunion at the Britannia Hotel, Birmingham from February 24-26. Contact Rick Matthews, 6 Common Road, Hemsby NR29 4LT, tel: 01493 730681 or email: rickmatthews@btinternet.com

MARCH 2012

HMS Vernon: Roedean School seeks those who served at HMS Vernon 1940-45 for reunion Spring 2012. Contact Zoe Marlow, Roedean School, Roedean Way, Brighton BN2 5RQ.

HMS Brilliant 30th Anniversary Reunion at Livermead House Hotel, Torquay March 23-25. Further details: www.hmsbrilliant.com

APRIL 2012

Commando Helicopter Force will hold its annual Jungle Dinner April 19 2012 at the Wardroom, RNAS Yeovilton. Both serving and retired Junglies are welcome but numbers are limited. Details available from chf-jungledinner@mod.uk

HMS Hermes Chefs 1968-70: A very successful reunion this year with guest of honour Cookery Officer, Fred Motley, who will also be present at next year's reunion taking place at the Royal Maritime Club April 21. Contact Scouse 'Ruby' Enright at

scouseenright@hotmail.co.uk or tel. 07884 040041.

MAY 2012

HMS Saintes Association reunion at Grosvenor Hotel, Torquay May 11-14. All commissions, associate members and guests welcome. Contact Ron Miles on 01404 43177.

HMS Cavalier Association reunion at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea May 18-21. Contact David Shardlow tel: 01163 678134 or email: davemooseman@aol.com

HMS Solebay Association 15th annual reunion at the De Vere Barony Castle Hotel, near Edinburgh 18-21 May. A full weekend of activities is planned to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the ship paying off. Ex-Solebay guests are also welcome. Malcolm Clarke 0117 962 2500 (evenings) or email: malcolm@solebay.org

801 NAS Sea Harriers during the Falklands War: Reunion to be held at RNAS Yeovilton May 26 2012. Details from John Keenan, Mailbox 145, Ambelia 1B, Kamarens Village, PO Box 60156, Paphos 8101, Cyprus john.keenan23@btinternet.com

JUNE 2012

Glorious, Ardent & Acasta (Glarac) Association commemorating the 72nd anniversary of the sinking of these ships and the loss of 1531 men with a Memorial Service at St Nicholas Church, HMS Drake, Devonport, Plymouth on June 10. For more details contact Vince Marcroft 0161 654 7638 or email: clarionst@yahoo.co.uk

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

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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● CPO Mark Craddock carries the ceremonial key

Picture: Dave Sherfield

HMS Raleigh parades in Torpoint

CROWDS lined the streets of Torpoint to watch as HMS Raleigh exercised the right to march through the town 'with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and Colours flying.'

Some 200 sailors from the training establishment took part in the biennial Freedom of Torpoint parade, led by the Royal Marines Band, Plymouth.

Local links were provided by Raleigh's second-in-command, Cdr Mick Harris, CPO Mark Craddock and PO Steve Hutchings, who live in Torpoint, and PO Sharon Clarke, who was brought up there.

The parade mustered at the Sports Hall at the top of Antony Road and marched through the town to the ferry lanes, where an inspection took place by the Mayor, Cllr Eddie Andrews, and the Commanding Officer of Raleigh, Capt Steve Murdoch.

The parade then marched back through the town with the salute being taken by the Mayor at the Comrades Club.

Capt Murdoch said: "The parade is hugely important because it demonstrates that the people of Torpoint trust HMS Raleigh.

"It's about pride, and how proud people in the Royal Navy are both of the Navy and the community of Torpoint.

"Since 1939 we've worked together to ensure a mutual development, and we're looking forward to that continuing for some time".

Cllr Andrews said: "Raleigh is a key part of the town. It's part of the family of Torpoint, and the parade gives the community the chance to show its appreciation of that fact."

HMS Raleigh was first granted the Freedom of Torpoint in 1997 and since then has paraded through the streets of the town approximately every two years in a ceremony which dates back to the days when a group of armed men would only be permitted to march through a town if they enjoyed the trust of the citizens.

Lynx force thwarts Pescadian Empire

THE Pescadians are revolting, and things are looking decidedly dodgy as the evil empire seeks to expand.

Not a plot synopsis from *Doctor Who*, but the premise upon which DANEX/NOCO 11 was based – believed to be the largest NATO exercise ever to be held in the Baltic.

DANEX/NOCO 11 gathered 20 nations, two NATO groups and one Special Forces group – a fleet of more than 40 ships and boats, some 20 aircraft and helicopters and around 3,500 troops on the ground.

And for two weeks in September 70 engineers and aircrew from 815 Naval Air Squadron headed through Holland into Northern Germany and Denmark in support of the wargames.

In a Hollywood-like scenario, the aim was to ensure that shipping lanes remained open in the midst of rising tensions as the evil Pescadian Empire sought to satisfy its expansionist ambitions and appetite for global domination.

From a squadron perspective it was important to demonstrate that 815 remains a highly-flexible force capable of deploying large numbers of assets around Europe and beyond.

Secondly, as a member of NATO, the Royal Navy remains committed to improving international cooperation through combined training of tactics and procedures and a deepening of mutual understanding.

And the German beer was apparently quite good too...

Three of the four deployed aircraft, along with a team of flight maintainers, were based at MFG 5 SAR base in Kiel, northern Germany, with the fourth Lynx embarked on the Danish combat support ship HDMS Absalon throughout.

Sorties were flown daily into Denmark, using German and Danish naval units as forward operating bases, with all manner of tasks carried out as required by Force Commanders.

The aim of the opening week was to provide a period of combat enhancement training and force integration training to confirm

the uniformity of operating procedures and ensure that all members of the task force were fully integrated.

Tasks ranged from simple cross deck manoeuvres with foreign warships and flying exercises to anti-surface warfare tactics, in order to ensure that units were ready for the coming battle.

The Lynx Mk8 aircraft also offered a maritime interdiction training capability to the fleet, offering a 'work-up' roping and sniping package for Special Forces from various NATO countries.

Day and night assaults on land and maritime targets were carried out, including the instruction of Special Forces in fast roping using night vision devices.

Absalon is based on a frigate-like design, but with an internal multipurpose flex deck for assault landing craft and troops – a highly-capable vessel and a true demonstration of Danish ingenuity.

(The squadron added that the Danish "also do good bacon.")

Despite weighing in at over 6,000 tons she has a complement of just 93 and, fittingly for the nation who gave the world Lego, she benefits from a 'plug and play' weapons system that allows a plethora of different weapons to be added or removed as required by any particular conflict scenario.

Offering a long-range refuelling option as well as engineering support, Absalon was an impressive forward operating base, allowing flights deep into enemy territory to carry out reconnaissance for the coming conflict.

"Weapons Loose!"

The call in the cockpit confirmed that a Sea Skua anti-ship missile had been sent hurtling towards an enemy vessel.

The second week of the exercise was in full flow, and the order of the day was to protect the task force against the Pescadians (who bore a passing resemblance to Sweden...).

The exercise scenario that was played out took place in the imaginary region of Pescadia, which was exactly the same shape and size as the Baltic, and



● A Royal Navy Lynx of 815 Naval Air Squadron operating from the flight deck of Danish combat support ship HDMS Absalon

involved sovereign nations fighting over rights to shipping lanes.

Over the preceding two days the exercise had developed through a period of military and political tension into simulated hostilities, and the Royal Navy's Lynx were sent out on patrols to find and neutralise the seaborne hybrid threat.

It wasn't long before the crews were doing what they do best as the scenario saw a rise in smuggling, piracy and terrorist activity in the region.

Drawing on operational counter-narcotics and counter-piracy experience gained in real world operations, 815 helicopters spearheaded the fight against these illegal activities.

At one stage a boarding of the largest container ship in the world was carried out, with Special Forces fast roping down to practise forced entry and hostage rescue techniques.

Over the next few days the conflict began to turn in the favour of the allies.

In a last-ditch attempt to turn the tide, the feindish Pescadian forces launched low, slow-flying aircraft and all manner of small attack craft, jet skis and rigid inflatable boats loaded with explosives, towards the fleet.

Once again 815 Squadron spearheaded the defence and counter-offensive as enemy vessels were first located and then

unceremoniously dispatched with the M3M machine gun.

After 11 days of outstanding cooperation and combined operations, the task force had guaranteed safe sea lines of communication so as to create sustainable regional security in Pescadia.

Thus DANEX/NOCO 11 helped prepare allied forces for real operations by improving international cooperation.

And through world-leading training of tactics and procedures and combined training in a multinational task group, 815 Squadron has been instrumental in the deepening of mutual understanding between the UK and her NATO partners.

For the aircrew it was a fantastic opportunity to operate with foreign navies and, for many of the junior air engineers it was a chance to detach 815 Squadron for the first time either to a ship or an overseas air base.

A core capability requirement of any 815 Flight is the ability to overcome logistical challenges and transport an engineering team and large amounts of equipment across the world to operate as a self-sufficient unit for months on end.

This exercise confirmed the ability of the squadron to fulfil this requirement on a larger scale with a significantly greater number of people and equipment.



● A Fleet Air Arm Lynx was based on board HDMS Absalon throughout DANEX/NOCO 11 in the Baltic

High drama at low altitude

A MERCY dash by the Royal Navy's Search and Rescue helicopter in Cornwall had to be flown at ultra low level as fog shrouded the county.

The 771 Naval Air Squadron crew from Culdrose were scrambled to the scene of a road traffic accident at nearby Goonhilly on the Lizard Peninsula in which two people had suffered significant injuries.

Within a few minutes the helicopter was on the ground at the scene and the casualties were removed from their vehicle and transferred to the waiting aircraft.

In thick fog the aircraft took off and headed to the east, the crew having planned a descent over Falmouth Bay and transit at low level up the River Fal to the relief landing site at Malpas, near Truro, from where the casualties could be transferred to the Royal Cornwall Hospital.

However, Falmouth Coastguard radioed in to alert the Navy aviators that the visibility in Falmouth Bay was down to 80 metres, although the visibility and cloud base to the west of Truro had improved.

The SAR crew then changed the plan and flew to the west coast to descend over the sea and approach the land at the coastal village of Portreath, to follow

one of the pre-planned low-level routes which would take them to Truro.

Shortly after the helicopter coasted in over Portreath the weather deteriorated, with fog rolling up from the south forcing the pilots to fly down as low as 50ft and sometimes reducing speed to less than 25 knots.

With the casualties stable but in urgent need of hospital care, the crew flew along the low-level route following familiar landmarks and at times the railway line leading to Truro.

Residents in villages such as Scorrier, Chacewater and Threemilestone may well have heard, but perhaps did not see, the red and grey helicopter as it picked its way to Trelliske with the injured motorists on board.

After handing the casualties to the hospital staff the helicopter was shut down and stayed at the hospital landing site overnight until the weather improved.

Aircraft commander, Lt Cdr 'Damage' Canning said: "With such poor visibility and low cloud base the use of the low-level routes, which we regularly practise on, was vital to the success of the mission.

"These well-tried procedures allow us to do our job in all weathers."



● From left: Lt Vasco Barber, Lt Cdr Richie Full, PO(ACMN) Taff Ashman (Paramedic), Capt Burge, Lt Cdr 'Damage' Canning, POACMN 'Boogie' Knights

Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow

Hurworth calls in at Holyhead

MINEHUNTER HMS Hurworth has paid a short visit to the island of Anglesey.

The Hunt-class ship went alongside at the port of Holyhead and welcomed a stream of visitors on board.

Among those invited were the Chairman of Anglesey County Council, Cllr Gwilym Jones, and the Mayor of Holyhead, Cllr Jeff Evans, as well as the Deputy Naval Regional Commander for Wales and the West of England, Cdr Tom Herman.

The first evening was set aside for the ship to show what she can do – a capability demonstration, putting Hurworth's role in the wider context of Royal Navy operations.

A bugler from the Royal Marines Band Collingwood was drafted in to end a reception with Ceremonial Sunset.

Groups of Sea Cadets and students from local schools were also invited on board over the weekend to give them a glimpse of life in the Senior Service.

"We are delighted to be paying this visit to Holyhead," said the ship's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Simon Rogers.

"Though on this occasion it is a low-key visit, and regretfully we are not open to the general public, we do hope that our various guests will enjoy learning more about the ship and her capabilities, as well as about the Royal Navy in general."

Convoys in spotlight

ARCTIC Convoy veterans will be among the attractions in the autumn programme at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

The veterans, both Royal Navy and Merchant Navy, will be on site on Saturday November 19 to share their experiences of what Churchill called "the worst journey in the world" – the lifeline which saw vital supplies shipped to the Soviet Union through Arkhangelsk and Murmansk.

First-hand accounts of the bitter cold, the deadly attacks and day-to-day life on board during a convoy can be heard between 1130 and 1630 at the museum.

The event is part of the programme which marks the 70th anniversary of the first Allied Arctic convoy.

The free exhibition, which runs until February 28, covers the period 1941-45 and includes contemporary photographs, paintings by war artists and clothing worn by sailors.

Some of the striking images featured in the exhibition have never been on display before.

There is also a special screening of *In Which We Serve*, the classic wartime film directed by Noël Coward and David Lean.

For more details see the National Maritime Museum website www.nmm.ac.uk

Bay no more

RFA LARGS Bay has a new owner – and a new name.

The landing ship has completed a refit at A&P Falmouth, and was formally handed over to the Australian Department of Defence in the middle of last month.

She will be known as ADFS Choules, named after British-born Claude Choules, the last combat veteran of World War 1, who died in his adopted home of Australia earlier this year at the age of 110.

Suitable home

THE flying suit of the last British pilot to fly a Harrier, as reported in last month's *Navy News*, has been delivered to the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

Initial reports from the US, where Lt Cdr Nathan Gray flew an AV-8B in August, suggested the suit would be heading to the British Museum in London.

But the clothing is now at Yeovilton, and museum staff will be putting it on temporary public display from the beginning of this month.

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For more information, contact Birmingham URNU, at HMS FORWARD, 42 Tilton Road, Garrison Lane, BIRMINGHAM, B9 4PP; Mob: 07786174713 or email URNU-Birmingham-COXN@mod.uk

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Former cadet lays wreath

A FORMER Whitehaven cadet has laid a wreath at a Remembrance Day ceremony on Prince Edward Island off the East Coast of Canada.

In a tradition going back more than 90 years, the town of Cornwall remembers the fallen at a ceremony held on the last Sunday in September.

The former Royal Marines Cadet, now Kingsman Ben Abbott of the 1st Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, was visiting a family friend on PEI who invited him to attend the Service of Remembrance and lay a wreath at the City's Cenotaph.

"I was surprised to receive the invitation but considered it a great honour," said Ben.

"I was proud to be able to represent my regiment, my country and my old Sea Cadet unit."

The tradition of holding the town's Remembrance Day ceremonies in September goes back to the days when many of the island's roads were muddy and often difficult to travel on in November.

Michelle joins unique boat arts project

A MEMBER of Hastings unit has been given the opportunity to sail a unique yacht on its maiden voyage next year.

PO (SCC) Michelle Die'tt, the unit's Boats and Competition Officer, was selected from hundreds of applicants to be a crew member for the Lone Twin Boat Project.

The project will see an as-yet unnamed boat, made from wooden objects donated by members of the public, sail along the South Coast and featuring in a series of festivities at each port of call.

The objects include items such as drumsticks, a hairbrush, part of a table – and all have a significant personal story attached, which makes the boat a floating archive of memories.

Also included are items from HMS Victory and HMS Warrior.

Michelle said: "I feel very privileged and honoured to have been chosen to sail on this truly amazing vessel."

"It's a wonderful opportunity and I am looking forward to the adventure."

The performance art project will see the finished 30ft boat touring the South-East of England during the Olympic and Paralympic period next summer, after which it will be handed over for community use.

For more details on the project, donations and the building of the boat itself, see www.theboatproject.com



● Sea cadet chaplains at Gosport

Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen

Padres gather at Blockhouse

MORE than 30 Sea Cadet chaplains attended a Corps national training course at Fort Blockhouse in Gosport.

During the week members of the course heard a variety of visiting speakers on subjects such as youth culture, 'the difficult child', the role of chaplains and knife and gun crime.

During the chaplains' branch dinner, former Corps Chaplain

Dragon boat scouts blaze trail of glory

BACK in May scouts from 3rd Frodsham Sea Scout Group (RN35) took part in the annual Cheshire Scout Dragon Boat competition, with the juniors (under 14s) finishing well up the table, and the open age crew – including some of the leaders – winning their section and setting a new course record.

After racing, the group spent some time with Warrington Orientals, a Scout dragon boat team who have a great record of winning competitions, including the former National Scout Championship, held in September on the Thames at Marlow.

They had entered two teams again for this year's competition, a junior team and an open age team, but were struggling to make up two crews.

3rd Frodsham were invited to join them initially to make up the numbers, but in the end they made up over half of each crew.

Due to other commitments, including a summer camp at Fishguard, 3rd Frodsham scouts were unable to train more than twice over the summer in preparation for the big event.

A 0600 start at Warrington on the Saturday saw their coach arrive at Marlow by 1100 for pre-arranged practice sessions, which went well, especially for the juniors, despite them having never paddled together as a full crew before.



Award for Bryan

A MERITORIOUS award was presented to Bryan Pearce at New Romney unit by unit chairman Lt Cdr (SCC) Don Davies RNR Rtd (pictured above).

The award from the MSSC recognises his dedicated service to the unit and local youth.

The Officer-in-charge, Acting CPO (SCC) Alan Bell, said: "This is a well-deserved award for



● No, not a senior rate – the sign identifies this dragon boat as being one of the Warrington Oriental entries, carrying a good many scouts from 3rd Frodsham Sea Scout Group with them

When racing started for real, heat one saw them win by a comfortable 25-second margin, setting the fastest time for the heats, and sending them straight into the semi-finals.

They won the semi-final by a whisker – 0.04 seconds – and found themselves in the final.

Some of the juniors also paddled in the open age boat races too, and finished fourth,

three seconds behind the third-placed boat.

The final was a very hard-fought affair, the Frodsham crew having a very poor start, losing a half boat length to the competition.

By half-way they had fought back to even terms and started to push for the finish.

With a huge effort they made it over the line in front, winning

by 0.7 seconds, and becoming the National Youth Dragon Boat champions at their first attempt.

Unsurprisingly, they are already booked to go back next year, and have decided to make up a full team from 3rd Frodsham to try and win outright for themselves.

They are also designing a team shirt to use during competitions based on their group colour of black and gold.

Real drag for Orpington

ORPINGTON unit have signed up to the Teamwork Challenge, part of the Scott Centenary Sledge Pull.

The youngsters will join thousands of other participants across the country to mark the centenary of Scott's Antarctic expedition by pulling sledges for charity.

Under the initiative – for more details see www.sss100.org – groups are invited to set themselves a challenge by pulling their sledges in whatever conditions they choose, from tough cross-country terrain to laps of a local park.

Orpington are hoping to use

the track of Kemnal Manor Technology College, a local school, and the cadets will tackle the event as an inter-divisional competition – Port vs Starboard – with each division organising their own team, sponsorship and training.

The aim is to complete 11 miles (17,000 metres) – the distance by which Scott's expedition fell short of safety.

Each cadet has been given a target of £50 to raise, with the overall aim of garnering £2,000 to be handed out to cancer research (starboard), RNRMC (port) and event organisers the Scott Polar research Institute.



● Tewkesbury unit drummers who paraded with a combined Air Cadet band – from left, AC Brendan Gardner (tenor), OC Shannon Ashley (snare), OC Jack Griffiths (snare) and PO (SCC) Marianne Cottee (snare)

Drumming up support

MEMBERS of Tewkesbury unit joined an Air Cadets band at a parade in honour of the pilots of the Battle of Britain.

The parade was organised by Westbury-on-Trym branch of the RAF Association to give thanks to 'The Few' who protected this country in one of its darkest hours.

A combined band of Air Cadets from 2442 (West-on-Trym) Squadron, 2152 (North Bristol) Squadron and Sea Cadets from

TS Otter led the parade, which consisted of members of the RAFA and 30 cadets and staff from 2442 and 2152 Squadrons.

The squadrons also paraded their banners and the RAFA Standard was carried by an air cadet.

TS Otter cadets travelled to Bristol to support the Air Cadet band, whose members had travelled to Tewkesbury on many occasions to support TS Otter Corps of Drums.



Norwich medal is shown

NORWICH unit welcomed a special visitor to their TS Lord Nelson headquarters.

Mrs K C Masters, daughter of Mr D Masters, showed her father's Cornwall Medal (above) to members of the unit – the medal is awarded to Sea Cadets who excel in seamanship.

It all came to light when the training ship was open to the public during the Norwich Heritage week.

Mrs Masters went aboard and asked if the unit had any information on her father, who used to be a cadet and later, after Naval service, a member of the training staff.

It was during his time as a cadet that he embarked on the very hard road towards the presentation of this rarely-awarded medal.

Mrs Masters said: "I was very pleased to show the medal to the unit."

"My father always said that out of all the medals and decorations he received whilst serving in the Navy, the one he was most proud of was the Cornwall medal."

"I was very pleased to find more information about my father from the comprehensive records of the history of the Sea Cadets which is maintained at the unit."

The medal, one of two which was hard-earned by TS Lord Nelson cadets, reflects the very high standard of training within the Norwich unit, which next year celebrates its centenary – making it the longest continuous-running youth organisation in the city.

Beccles teams get stuck in

BECCLES unit cadets continue to make a splash in high-level competitions.

Three female cadets from the Eastern Area unit took part in the paddlesport events in the National Combined Regatta in London, recording second and fourth places in kayak classes.

Shortly after, two teams of four cadets travelled to Cambridge to take part in the Area Expedition training competition, having won the district version in both junior and senior categories.

And in their first foray into the competition, the juniors claimed third place out of nine and the seniors fourth.

Beccles managed to enter almost a full complement for both the district five-a-side and swimming competition, with the Senior Girls football team winning their trophy, while Beccles also took the Y Class boys and girls trophies in the swimming pool.

First pennant

JUNIOR Cadet 1st Class Adam Murray, of Clydebank unit, has achieved a first for the Clyde North district.

Through hard work and application, Adam achieved the Commodore's Pennant, which was presented to him by Cdr Mark Buchan-Steele of HMS Caledonia at the unit HQ, TS Queen Elizabeth.

Also attending were the Lord Provost of Clydebank, Denis Agnew, and Kenneth McKinnon, chairman of the City of Glasgow branch of the RNA.

Buxton in final push for funds

ATTENTION at Buxton unit is now on raising the last £6,000 towards the new extension building, work on which will start next spring.

The unit welcomed representatives of two local organisations who made generous donations to the building fund.

The Charity Steward of the High Peak Lodge of Freemasons, Philip Warhurst, donated £400 and pledged a further donation later in the year.

And Charles Kitchen, President of the Buxton and District Lions Club, presented the unit with a cheque for £500, bringing their total donation for the year to £1,000.

A team of cadets also took part in a sponsored bike ride along the Monsal Trail leisure route, with the bikes provided for the day, free of charge, by Cheryl and Simon Ashton of Blackwell Mill Cycle Hire and Lazy Days tuck shop.

But it has not all been about fundraising – during the summer months ten members of the unit went to Weymouth, picking up several Royal Yachting Association qualifications, and five Buxton cadets were selected for the North West Area sailing team for the national sailing regatta.

Accolades for two

THE Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, Mary Bayliss, made two presentations to members of Sea Cadet units in the county.

POC Aaron Povey, of Newbury unit, was awarded his certificate and badge as the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet.

Aaron has been a cadet since 2005, is keen on paddlesports and holds boat-based coach and lifeguards aquatic first aid qualifications.

He has also achieved the RYA Sailing Stage 4 qualification with a coastal endorsement, and is working towards Day Skipper level.

The Lord Lieutenant's Certificate of Meritorious Service was presented to A/PO (SCC) Andrew Francis of Maidenhead.

Andrew served on the unit management committee for many years – part of that time as vice chairman and he was instrumental in raising funds for the unit's Trinity 500 boat.

Regarded as the unit's 'Mr Fixit', he repairs the boats and drives the minibus as well.

Callum notches a first for Rushden

THE satellite division of Rushden has its first Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Northamptonshire in the shape of LC Callum Hodgson.

Callum attended Newbottle Manor to formally receive his certificate and badge.

Callum joined the Cadets in 2005 when the new unit started up at Wellingborough, and he has worked his way up through the ranks ever since.

After Wellingborough unit found its current home in Rushden, the unit continued to develop, as has Callum's career – he is due to attend his Petty Officer Cadet Board this month, hopefully creating a new landmark for the fledgling unit.

The Northampton and Rushden cadets came together once again to compete in the District five-a-side football competition.

The girls' senior and junior teams both won their events despite stiff competition from Hinckley, Loughborough and Kettering, while the boys' teams were beaten into the runners-up spot in both competitions, though the youngest cadets also won their tournament in a series of thrilling matches.

The boating season ended with two cadets getting in some training



● Northampton cadets take part in a sponsored bike ride to Stoke Bruerne

for the windsurfing competition at the national Sailing regatta, while a unit sailing weekend at Thrapston boat station rounded things off nicely for the year with a spell of excellent warm weather.

On land, a group of cadets were busy raising funds on a sponsored bike ride, collecting more than £200 by riding the eight miles to Stoke Bruerne along the canal and river system from Northampton.

Whilst in Stoke Bruerne the cyclists were greeted by the festivities as the villagers dressed up for their 'Village at War' celebration – even the unit mascot, Quacky the Duck, enjoyed the

journey along the waterways.

The unit also participated in the expedition challenge against other cadets in the region, the event being hosted by Mansfield.

The senior team of four came second, while LC Patrick Green was awarded the trophy for the best expedition leader this year.

The team walked 12 miles around the Nottinghamshire course where they were tested in their skills in the field, including cooking, first aid and mapwork.

A junior team also took part for the first time, led by OC David Martin, learning plenty of useful information for future challenges.

The unit was preparing for the annual Trafalgar parade as *Navy News* went to press, with best uniforms being prepared for this event at Kettering.

Costume of a very different kind was also being prepared for the cadets' Hallowe'en evening, hosted at Northampton, which will also be the venue for the unit's bonfire evening and fireworks on the day before Guy Fawkes night.

Looking even further ahead, Friday November 25 sees the unit's open evening and prizegiving at Rushden; parents and guests are welcome to go along to see what the Rushden cadets get up to.

Abingdon looks for new chief

A THRIVING Oxfordshire unit is looking for an enthusiastic new leader.

The CO of Abingdon, Lt (SCC) Phil Pether, is retiring from the post at the end of the year after many years service, and the unit now needs a volunteer, male or female, preferably with Royal Navy experience, to lead the team.

The role includes overseeing training and administration, ensuring proper discipline amongst staff and cadets and ensuring the safety of cadets, staff and visitors, to oversee ship's routines, and the effective running of the unit.

TS Marlborough held its first parade in 1983 and today boasts a strong ship's company, including a junior section and a thriving and competitive band.

The unit, situated on the outskirts of the town, has use of moorings on the Thames, allowing cadets to spend the majority of the summer honing their skills in rowing, sailing, canoeing and power boating; TS Marlborough has an assortment of boats including one Admiralty Sailing Craft and a new Trinity 500 for pulling, a Viking and two Dorics for power boating, two Bosun sailing craft and two Laser Pico dinghies and a selection of open canoes and kayaks.

In the winter, training covers knowledge-based activities, including drill, and the unit has a rifle range on site.

Potential recruits should initially contact Unit Chairman, Hilary Green, on 01235 535896 or hgreen9366@aol.com

Glasgow showcase

GLASGOW unit, based at the tall ship Glenlee at the Clyde Maritime Centre, invited members of the local Royal Naval Association, officers from new Type 45 destroyer HMS Defender, civic dignitaries and parents and supporters to an evening of drill, entertainment and evolutions.

The evening started with colours, followed by an inspection by the officer in charge of all Sea cadet units in Scotland, Cdr Mark Buchan-Steele from HMS Caledonia.

Evolutions included the proper use of block-and-tackle gear, and a demonstration of how to maintain the outboard engine of a boat.



● Staff and cadets from Southport unit took part in a bag pack over three days at the town's Asda supermarket to raise funds for Help for Heroes. They raised £1,591 to add to £1,567 raised from the sale of merchandise, making a grand total of £3,158

Royal guest marks Merton centenary

MERTON welcomed a royal visitor to help celebrate the unit's centenary.

The Duke of York – who is also Admiral of the Sea Cadets – was greeted by unit CO CPO (SCC) Mark Walker, unit management committee chairman Carol Steel and president Keith Martyr.

Prince Andrew was piped aboard TS Trafalgar by POC Vincent Walker and Cdt Emma-Roase Warnes, and conducted to the main deck where he inspected his Guard and divisions of the cadets.

To the delight of the youngsters, the Duke spent some time chatting with them.

He then unveiled a

commemorative plaque and, assisted by one male and one female cadet, cut the re-commissioning cake.

The VIP guest went on to thank and congratulate the ship's company, both uniformed and civilian, for all their efforts over the years, and he also remarked on the cadets' smartness, achievements and standard of drill, as demonstrated on the evening.

A bottle of champagne was cracked to mark the occasion, held in the unit's new building, and toasts drunk to the next hundred years.

The occasion was rounded off by three rousing cheers for the Duke.

Barnsley joins Eden Camp veterans

CADETS and volunteers from Barnsley unit have made their annual trip to the Eden Camp veterans' parade.

After a good journey to the self-styled modern history theme museum at Malton in North Yorkshire, the cadets were given the opportunity to explore the site whilst meeting veterans from many conflicts.

The cadets, especially the juniors, are always a hit with the veterans who are only too pleased to see young people in uniform.

One young junior excitedly announced he had met some Normandy veterans, while other cadets chatted to old sailors about life on the Russian Convoys.

The cadets paraded the unit's standard and that of the Barnsley branch of the Royal Naval Association, carried by POC S Clark and AC R Clark.

AC S Norton performed the job of cenotaph guard, along with cadets from the ATC and the Girls Venture Corps.

The service was led by Barrie Hollis, chaplain of Ryedale RAFA, with wreaths laid by Cdre Paul Sutermeister and Stan Johnson.

Cdre Sutermeister took the salute from veterans and cadets.



● Above and left: cadets from Barnsley unit meet veterans, interpreters and fellow participants in the veterans' parade at Eden Camp in Malton (and yes, we do realise that the medals top left appear to be worn in an unconventional fashion...)

On the domestic front, the unit is looking for a new bandmaster – TS Diomedes has instruments and talented cadets, but no one to train them.

No qualifications are required – just the ability to play and teach others, though anyone with a military music background would be particularly welcome.

For more details contact 01226 295531 or email info@barnsleyseacadets.co.uk

And that is not the only item on the Barnsley wish list.

With the unit's 70th anniversary falling next year, Barnsley has launched an appeal to buy a new minibus to ensure cadets are still able to undertake the full range of activities.

A programme of fundraising events is being put together for the coming year.

Cadet activities, training and competition are organised around an area which stretches from the Fens in the south to Harrogate in the north, to say nothing of national competitions and courses.

For some cadets the opportunity to attend a week's training course may be the only week they get away, and without a bus it is nigh-on impossible to get large groups of cadets to events.

One of the fundraising events planned for next year will be a charity skydive – anyone interested in taking part should contact the unit.

Details of other events will be released as plans are finalised – see www.sea-cadets.org/barnsley for further updates.



New standard for Stonehaven



STONEHAVEN opened another chapter in the unit's annals with the presentation of new Colour.

The original Colour was presented to the unit in April 1963 by the then Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr A G Mitchell RN and his wife in memory of their son Laurence, who died the previous September.

But that Colour had become old and worn, and the first part of the day's proceedings saw it laid up in the South Church with all due ceremony.

The new Colour was then presented in the town's Market Square by Cdre Charles Stevenson RN, Naval Regional Officer for Scotland and Northern England (pictured left, by Paul Mitchell).

Among those watching proceedings were former cadets of the unit who had taken part in the original ceremony in 1963, including Robin Barclay, Mel Christie, Terry Middleton, Robert Ross and Tommy Ewing.

Within the Royal Navy, as with other military organisations, Colours are treated with reverence and seen as a bond between the Royal Navy and the sovereign – a symbol of honour for all who serve under them.

The training ship's company and guests were surprised and delighted to hear a message sent by the Queen to mark the special occasion, which was read out in the South Church by unit chairman John Agnew.

After Cdre Stevenson presented the new Colour, the assembled cadets were inspected by the guest of honour, then performed a march-past led by the Northern Area Band, with the salute taken on the Town Hall steps.

All involved then enjoyed a reception in the Town Hall.

The Commanding Officer of TS Carron, A/Lt (SCC) Kevin Morris RNR, said the unit thanked everyone who had helped prepare for this major event, and who had ensured the day went so well – BZ TS Carron.

Trio chase top honours



THREE cadets from Southern Area were celebrating after winning Regional Canoe England Volunteer and Recognition Awards.

PO (SCC) Triona Mackley from Gravesend, POC James Duckmanton from Slough and AC Jason Bailey from Reigate were all selected as representatives from the Canoe England regions of Southern and South East in recognition of their effort and commitment as volunteers.

PO Mackley (centre left) was nominated for both Female Coach and Community Volunteer in the South East for her time spent developing the sport.

She has run a very successful programme of introductory paddlesport courses for West Kent in her role as District Paddlesport Coordinator, carrying out visits to units within the district to enthuse and inspire participation.

Impressively, two Cadets were shortlisted for Young Volunteer in their regions, beating off competition from young volunteers from canoe clubs – and in both cases the cadets were recognised for their commitment to fundraising in a bid to get paddlesport up and running in their units.

POC Duckmanton (top left) led an impressive list of actions, from raising and acquiring up to £20,000 worth of paddlesport equipment, competing well in competitions at all levels, as well as moving on to become a BCUC-UKCC Level 1 Paddlesport Coach, which has inspired other cadets to paddle more often.

AC Bailey (left) worked tirelessly to plan and complete a sponsored cycle ride from his home in Reigate to Land's End – a distance of 335 miles – raising just over £1,500 which he donated to Reigate for the purchase of kayaks.

This money was match-funded by a donation from the BCUC Canoe Foundation. He also completed a 25km challenge along the River Wey to help raise funds for expedition kayaks to allow cadets to take part in Duke of Edinburgh expeditions.

Together the three Regional Award winners have been shortlisted and will now go forward to the National Awards, which take place this month.

Walk this way for unit funds

TWO members of staff from Reigate unit completed an 80-mile walk in 48 hours to raise money for unit funds.

CPO Neil Smith and CI Lara Brown finished their marathon walk at 1951 on a Sunday evening in late September – nine minutes inside their two-day target.

The pair walked from Canterbury, along the North Downs Way to the TS Ark Royal HQ in Hooley Lane, Redhill.

Neil and Lara, both volunteer instructors, carried 40lb rucksacks on the walk, camping overnight in bivvy bags at Boughton Lees on the Friday night and

Wrotham the following night.

They set off for the final leg at the crack of dawn on the Sunday to ensure they met their target.

"Both Neil and I were Sea Cadets when we were younger, and have experienced first-hand the frustrations of not having sufficient suitable equipment for many of our activities," said Lara.

"The money we have raised from our walk will buy equipment for the unit for the cadets to use."

To date the intrepid walkers have raised more than £700, and there is still more sponsorship cash to be collected.

Eastern at Bristol in Portsmouth

ALMOST 70 staff and more than 180 cadets aged 12 to 17 from Eastern Area, including over 70 cadets from Yorkshire and Humberside, travelled to Whale Island in Portsmouth for a week on HMS Bristol.

This was the first Eastern Area camp on the Type 82 destroyer since it returned to Portsmouth in April from its six-month refit in the North East of England.

For many cadets this was their first experience of being

accommodated on a ship, albeit a training vessel.

Cadets undertook courses including sailing, power boating, windsurfing, rowing, seamanship, chartwork, marine engineering, first aid, cook steward and piping, between them achieving over 250 qualifications.

The group played host to a number of visitors to the camp, including a delegation from the Australian Sea Cadets command team, and from closer to home the Area Officer (Eastern) as well as the Captain of the Sea Cadet Corps, Capt Mark Windsor RN, and an alumni visit.

Cadets from Grimsby and Immingham attending the piping course were chosen to pipe the Captain onboard the ship, while members of the cook steward course prepared the Captain's buffet.



● Air Vice Marshall Tony Mason meets Sea Cadets from Gloucester unit

Plaudits for Gloucester

GLOUCESTER unit welcomed the Honourable Company of Gloucestershire and distinguished guests to a ceremony at which the unit was awarded a certificate and £500 in recognition of their services to the local community.

VIP guests including the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, the Mayor and Sheriff of Gloucester and a number of members of the Honourable Company, including their Prime Warden, John

Thurston, and Vice Warden, Air Vice Marshall Tony Mason, who made the presentations.

Mr Thurston outlined the activities and complimented the unit for its hard work throughout the previous year, stating: "In presenting you with this certificate, we congratulate you and we thank you for your contributions to our communities and for the example that you set to others."

Unit CO S/Lt (SCC) Benjamin Nash RNR, said: "The evening was a complete success with the large number of invited guests being able to witness the recognition of the cadets' level of dedication and commitment to the unit and everything it does."

"The words from the Honourable Company of Gloucestershire were received with great appreciation and we thank them sincerely for their kind generosity".

Pivotal role for Southwark

SOUTHWARK unit is just about the most centrally-located unit in the capital, and as such it often finds itself at the heart of some pretty prestigious events.

For example, members took part in the Royal Naval Association Biennial Parade, with cadets Lewis Szmidt, Alfie Button and Sian Cummins marching out from King Charles Street into Whitehall to take up their prominent position as wreath-bearers for the VIPs, who included First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope and RNA President Vice Admiral John McAnally.

Cadets from Bromley unit also took part in proceedings, with one of their number carrying the Sea Cadet Standard.

London Area drill team coordinator PO Parsons, of Walton-on-the-Naze unit, said he was very pleased with the cadets' contribution.

The youngsters of TS Cossack were out again the following day when two of their number were there in the VIP enclosure to pipe comedian David Walliams ashore after his epic swim along the River Thames for Comic Relief.



Association goes to Ayr

MEMBERS of the Sea Cadet Association in Scotland (MSSC Scotland branch) visited Ayr unit, where they talked to the keen and forthcoming youngsters and their enthusiastic staff.

In the afternoon, members and cadets enjoyed a visit to HMS Gannet, the busiest Search and Rescue station in the UK (pictured above).

This was one of two annual visits by the branch to units in Scotland, the first being to Rosyth for the branch AGM in May.

Richmond tour tall ship

A GROUP from Richmond unit were invited to visit the Colombian Navy's tall ship ARC Gloria when she visited London.

The youngsters were given a guided tour of the three-masted ship by one of the officer cadets,

and met the 'navy-trained' ship's dog, a friendly black Labrador named Argos.

The visit culminated in a group photograph on deck with the captain, Capt Gabriel Pérez, and the presentation of T-shirts.

Commanding Officer needed for Guildford Unit after 11 successful years under Colin Whitear.

Those interested should contact Commander Mike Evans (Chairman) on: mikeandchrisevans@btinternet.com by Monday 14th November 2011

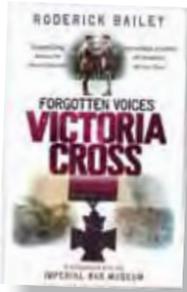


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The voices of heroes

PROOF that the Imperial War Museum is our richest source of testimony from the front line is reinforced with the latest volume in the popular Forgotten Voices series.

Forgotten Voices: Victoria Cross (Ebury, £7.99 ISBN 978-0-0919-3817-8) recounts the greatest deeds in the annals of Britain's 20th-Century military conflicts – through the words either of the VC winners or the men who were with them.

The first-hand accounts come courtesy of the IWM's sound archive. Since the 1960s, museum staff have interviewed veterans about their experiences; the oral archive currently runs for some 60,000 hours – that's nearly seven years.

Despite that rich seam, there are gaps – there were it seems few, if any, Jutland survivors to give accounts of that fateful battle – Maj Francis Harvey RM's deeds aboard HMS Lion would certainly have been worthy of inclusion within; his self-sacrifice saving the battlecruiser is probably the bravest act by any Royal Marine in the long and proud history of the Corps.

Indeed, the first RN hero to make an appearance in Roderick Bailey's excellent anthology is Lt Augustus Agar who (very) loosely interpreted his orders in the campaign against Russia just after WW1 and raided the Red Navy in its base at Kronstadt with a torpedo boat (which would have been akin to driving an MTB into the middle of Scapa Flow...).

Agar gave a breathless account of his destruction of the cruiser Oleg to his interviewer; the Soviets weren't too chuffed at his escapades and fired at him from all sides.

"I was like a rabbit being chased by all and sundry. There was hardly time to think or look. I could hear the shells whistling overhead and it's not very pleasant when they splash and one has to send the boat through the columns of water the splash throws up, but we got away."

Agar was praised by his admiral for his verve – "The Bolshevik fleet will know now that I have a sting and I can use this sting if I want to" – but the Admiralty, with one hand tied behind its back politically, was rather more reticent.

Agar is in excellent company in this volume: the mortally-wounded LS Jack Mantle who continued to shoot at Stukas over Poole Harbour; legendary submariner Lt Cdr Wanklyn of the Upholder; Lt Peter Roberts and PO Thomas Gould who removed a bomb from the casing of HMS/M Thrasher; Capt Robert Sherbrooke whose actions in the Battle of the Barents Sea thwarted the Hun and led to Hitler all but writing off his surface fleet; X-craft men Lt Godfrey Place and Donald Cameron, who led their midget boats against the Tirpitz.

In many respects, their accounts are similar – they are generally unassuming men who play down their deeds. They would surely balk at being called 'heroes', a word all too freely banded about by today's press.

Certainly Augustus Agar wasn't out for personal glory.

As far as he was concerned he was "glad for our team that we'd achieved success." He was surprised to have been awarded Britain's highest honour.

"Anyone who's been awarded a medal like that will know what it means," he said.

Rewriting the day of infamy

IT IS not often that one can say that an outstanding and important book transforms our knowledge of a well-known event but this can be said of this month's work, Alan D Zimm's **Attack on Pearl Harbor: Strategy, Combat, Myths, Deceptions** (Casemate, £22.50 ISBN 978-1-61200-021-3).

Cdr Zimm is a professional policy analyst and strategic planner, currently heading a section in the Aviation Systems and Advanced Concepts Group at Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

He has, in the past, used his skills to produce an award-winning computer simulation of World War 2 naval surface warfare and more recently turned them to deconstructing the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to explode the myths and 'folklore' that have grown up in the standard historical understanding of this epochal event.

Zimm demonstrates that the Japanese pilots were not the 'demigods' they are often portrayed as being. Indeed the aircrew of the newly-commissioned carriers Shokaku and Zuikaku were so inexperienced that they delayed the attack both in date and time.

He argues convincingly that, contrary to accepted views, the US Fleet would have suffered much less if it had been out of its base. He also puts to bed the oft-repeated contention that the Japanese might have achieved more decisive results had they attacked the Hawaiian base's repair and fuel infrastructure.

Moreover, the base was much less vulnerable to being bottled up by a ship being sunk in the Channel than several historians have argued.

Two assertions put forward in recent television programmes are also comprehensively demolished. It has been argued that if only the typist at the Japanese embassy had been quicker the Japanese would have delivered a declaration of war before the attack and thus defused the American anger that roused the nation to defeat Japan. The problem with this thesis is that the message delivered that morning was not a declaration of war, merely a note breaking off negotiations.

The other is the story that one of the midget submarines deployed to supplement the carrier strike carried out an attack on the American battleships.



● Sailors in a motor launch rescue a survivor from the water alongside the sunken battleship USS West Virginia in a rare colour photograph from the raid on Pearl Harbor, December 7 1941

Picture: US Navy

Zimm demonstrates that this is extremely unlikely and that the midget submarine attack was a major error as it risked compromising the operation for a very limited possibility of success.

The architect of the Pearl Harbor raid was Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, an officer who has generally been well treated by the conventional historiography. His comments about waking a sleeping giant are well known but these are hardly compatible with his strong personal advocacy of a surprise attack.

Indeed Yamamoto's very experience of the USA led him to make a fatal misjudgement of the American response to a successful attack on their fleet base.

He thought that the loss even of one battleship would so demoralise the Americans that they would acquiesce in Japan's 'Great East Asia Co Prosperity Sphere' and make a negotiated peace. He ignored warnings from his subordinates that the opposite would more likely be the case and the Japanese would be drawn into a long war of attrition they could not possibly win.

A gambler, Yamamoto was willing to take enormous risks with the Japanese carrier force that Japanese officers thought foolhardy at the time. Zimm makes a convincing case that, far from being the genius he is often portrayed as being, "his strategic vision was seriously flawed."

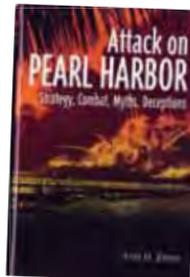
The Grove Review

Yamamoto is also often portrayed as a naval progressive with an enthusiasm for aviation. His desire to sink battleships above all does not chime well with this and it seems that it was the airmen themselves who put into the Pearl Harbor plan an emphasis on attacking carriers if these could be found.

It is an index of the serious weaknesses of the attack planning that this insistence on attacking carriers greatly distorted the actual operation even when it was known from excellent intelligence reports that no carriers were there. A large torpedo bomber attack was directed at the carrier anchorage on the off-chance they might be in port and the main attack on battleship row seriously weakened as a result.

Zimm clearly shows that, far from being the impeccably planned and executed operation it is usually cited as being, the Pearl Harbor attack was as seriously flawed as its principal architect.

The plan was too inflexible and the poor state of Japanese communications made it impossible for commanders to respond when the tactical situation



The A to Z of words at sea

THERE aren't too many books, let alone in the nautical world, which generate a succession of chuckles.

Open **Jackspeak** (Conway, £12.99 ISBN 978-1844-861446) at any page and you're pretty much guaranteed to laugh.

A labour of love for more than four decades, Falklands veteran Rick Jolly has produced the third edition of his legendary guide to naval slang and terminology.

It's by far the nicest produced of the editions to date – a retro hardback stretching to more than 500 pages, packed with a good 200 illustrations from the sorely-missed Tugg.

There are more than 4,000 terms defined within – since the last edition a decade ago, correspondents and serving personnel have helped to plug gaps and update various phrases.

There is probably still room for another edition – one omission we found flicking through randomly is 'chad', the antithesis of all things 'hoofin' in the world of the Royal Marines. (At one time Chad Valley toys had a reputation for not being very good...).



As the author points out in his introduction, some of the content might be a 'bit strong' for some readers.

Jackspeak's humour is ribald and often dates from the days when PC meant the local bobby – certainly today's Jack, Jenny and Royal would probably be hauled over the coals for using some of the expressions within.

Indeed, not an insignificant number of entries (if you'll excuse the double entendre...) refer to various parts of the anatomy and sexual activities.

That caveat aside, grab a wet, maybe a Julie Andrews or neaters, lie down in your pit and flick through *Jackspeak*. You'll have dipped in – it's a book which should be on the shelf of every matelot.

■ Thanks to publishers Conway, we have three copies of *Jackspeak* to give away to the reader who can translate the term 'gen dit' into layman's English.

Send your answer to *Jackspeak* Competition, Navy News, Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH. Entries must be received by mid-day on December 2 2011.

differed from that expected.

The serious weaknesses in the Japanese navy's radio equipment led directly to the use of visual signals which caused major confusion. The Japanese fighters were not employed in a coherent manner, the torpedo bomber attack route not deconflicted and the dive bombers seriously misused. Japanese bombs had serious defects.

Nevertheless the attack did exceed its basic objectives. Five rather than the four American battleships planned were disabled and the US Pacific Fleet cut down to a size with which the Japanese fleet, covering Japan's southern advance, could cope.

This, however had more to do with the American commanders General Short and Admiral Kimmel not responding to their warning messages than Japanese skills of planning and execution. General Short had actually stood down his defences, compared to previous levels of alert. Only a day or two previously, alerted guns and fighters would have created serious problems for the attackers.

It was very lucky for the Japanese that they had been forced to delay the attack until December 7.

The infrastructure for a proper air defence system was in place but not activated because of supposed shortages of personnel. It seems that the exoneration of Short and Kimmel by the Senate in 1999 was rather misplaced.

It looks very much as if American errors rather than Japanese effectiveness were decisive in allowing the attackers to achieve the destructive results they did. One can understand why conspiracy theories have been produced, ideas that Commander Zimm happily avoids.

His excellent study complements the equally-important book *Shattered Sword* in which Parshall and Tully put the record straight on Midway.

Zimm's analysis shows again how the self-serving testimony of Mitsuo Fuchida has misled too many historians of the Pacific War. It also demonstrates how the cultural weaknesses of the Japanese Navy which would contribute to its eventual destruction were there from the start.

The only problem with the 464-page book its slightly slipshod production. The text needed more experienced editing and the photographs, while well chosen and critically captioned, are rather 'flat' in reproduction.

Zimm's analysis is however of such groundbreaking significance that the book is well worth its UK cover price. It sets straight the record of a key historical event and I both enjoyed and learned a great deal from it. *Attack on Pearl Harbor* is essential reading for all those interested in the naval history of World War 2.



...and more heroic voices

AVAILABLE on CD in the middle of this month is the first collaboration between the nation's finest military band and the world's biggest record company.

The Band of HM Royal Marines have signed a recording contract with the classical wing of Universal Music, Decca Records.

Decca approached the Band Service's Principal Director of Music Lt Col Nick Grace with an offer to record together – an opportunity, says the officer, "not to be missed".

The clout of Decca means the first fruit of the link-up – the 17-track *Summon the Heroes* – will be available to the mass market through supermarkets, record stores and major online retailers.

The debut album on Decca features some well-known names from the world of popular-classical music crossovers such as *Les Misérables* star Alfie Boe and rising talent Mary-Jess, plus, er, George VI.

The king's speech – as depicted in the eponymous Oscar-winning film – broadcast upon the outbreak of war in 1939 can be heard against the Naval Hymn playing in the background as the closing 'number' on the album.

The other unusual contribution on the disc – which features signature tunes such as *A Life on the Ocean Wave*, *Ashokan Farewell* and *Sunset* – comes from the men and women of HMS Illustrious.

The ship's company of the carrier, currently undergoing extensive training off the South Coast, were asked to form a choir for a new recording of the classic *Sailing*.

Summon the Heroes is available from November 14 priced £8.99. Proceeds from each sale go to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

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Big fish... big pond

MYTHAT'S one scary-looking hulking great beast you wouldn't want to encounter on a dark night... and a huge common carp, all 26lbs of it.

PO(Phot) Sean Clee (CTCRM) holds up the biggest fish caught at the RNRMAA's 2011 carp championships.

Eighteen carp anglers from across the Senior Service descended on the abundant Barston's Fishery in the West Midlands – expectations were high, with previous rounds of the British Carp Angling Championship seeing huge weights caught at the venue.

With conditions almost perfect, the draw got under way with a degree of excitement in the air; on completion ranks moved to their swims and set up eagerly awaiting the following morning.

It took fewer than 20 minutes for LAET Andrews to win the first fish prize with a 16lb mirror carp.

At the end of the first day, every competitor had caught fish but CPO Broughton and Andrews headed the pack, having drawn pegs close to the productive fountain area.

The concluding day saw PO Clee take the largest fish prize – it took considerable skill and patience to land on light tackle.

By close of play on Sunday morning some very tired looking individuals tallied weights and gathered for prize giving.

The top five were: CPO Broughton (460lb 13oz); LAET Andrews (406lb 9oz); CPO Gay (219lb); WO1 Wellen (153lb 14oz); and C/Sgt Bowden RM (136lb).

With points allocated for final positions the season's leader board was updated and Royal Marine Capt Ben Sercombe was declared the overall RNRMAA champion for the 2011 season, closely followed by CPO Broughton in second place.

Academy take back trophy

Continued from page 48

In another great measure of the progress of the Wrenegades squad, head coach Darren West was delighted to have six of his charges in the starting line-up for the Combined Services ladies' fixture against England Students.

The match, played at Thatto Heath on Merseyside, saw the CS team come from 18-0 down to take the match 28-18 and retain the Pankhurst Cup.

RN representatives in the side were Lou Clarke, Emma Swinton, Zoe Wareing, Sophie Hinds, Fiesha Greene and Francesca Morton.

Full reports and photos of all the above matches can be found on the RNRL website at www.pitchero.com/clubs/royalnavyrugbyleague.

Saints in the sun

AMONG a number of sporting fixtures during HMS St Albans' three-day visit to the Gulf state (see the centre pages), there was a very tight game of ladies' rugby with the Kuwait Scorpions Ladies' Rugby Team on a very Middle Eastern sand pitch.

Packed with end-to-end drama in the sweltering heat of the Gulf, the St Albans Ladies were eventually undone by a well-read interception that gave the Scorpions the winning try and conversion.

"It has opened up my eyes to the sport and I was surprised how much fun it actually was," said AB Laird Craig, a new addition to the ladies' team.

Cracking show, Gromit

LT SHARON Brown flew the flag as the sole representative for the Royal Navy Showjumping and Eventing team at the RAF Championships at Cranwell.

Sharon took both her horses, Gromit (aka Hidden Meaning) and Timba (aka Lord Shannoy), and was up early, horses plaited and ready for action on the opening day of the competition.

The event started with a dressage test on each of the horses. Gromit did a sound test and got a solid score but was just outside the prizes, but Timba stole the show and bagged the first prize for his eye-catching dressage performance.

No time to bask in the glory as juggling both horses meant Sharon was hot en route to the showjumping ring with Timba.

A short warm-up and he was good to go; he confidently stormed round his 80cm class with a speedy clear round, netting another first prize and a welcome bottle of bubbly for Sharon.

He was soon back in the ring for the 90cm class but fatigue perhaps setting in from the long journey and his previous performances he clipped a couple of fences which put him out of the running for prizes on this occasion.

A quick jog back to the stables and Sharon was back in the showjumping ring, booted and spurred ready for action with Gromit.

Gromit's classes were the 90cm and 1m – and he had a good crack at both but unluckily rolled a couple of poles in the process.

The appropriate show jumping and dressage scores were added together for the one-day event overall competition to be completed the following day.

After two dressage tests and four showjumping rounds Saturday's competition had come to a close for Sharon and her trusty steeds.

Sharon's weary legs still had to walk the two cross-country routes for the following day's events – which took an hour and a half.

The next day the weather again was bright and breezy, ideal conditions for the long, arduous cross-country phase.

First to go was Timba on the 90cm track. Reluctant to leave the



● Lt Sharon Brown – with a little help from Gromit – clears one of the fences during the RAF Championships at Cranwell

Picture: Julia Shearwood Photography

start initially, Sharon had to ride him strongly to get up and going but once he had cleared the fourth fence he was in his stride and thoroughly enjoyed the round.

The course had some interesting and challenging fences including jumping the wing of a large wooden plane and a tricky water fence towards the end.

Timba netted a very respectable sixth place then it was back to the stables for Gromit, tacked up ready for the biggest class of the day.

An incident with an injured rider and an escaped horse halted the competition for more than an hour. During this time Sharon tried to keep Gromit cool in the shade of trees and calm so he didn't get overly excited too early.

Once they were asked to proceed to the start box Sharon struggled to contain her excitable

horse as the starting steward counted down 5...4...3...2...1.

Gromit jumped around eager to get going on the course and with a loud Gooooooooo they were off!

Gromit started like he meant it and certainly more positively than his stable companion Timba.

The course was bigger and more technical than the previous one Sharon had ridden with Timba, but Gromit's experience shone through and he tackled the fences with ease.

Mindful that there was a tricky water fence later in the course which had proven troublesome for many, Sharon rode positively and accurately and Gromit flew over the jump into the water with Sharon remaining 'onboard' ... Phew!

The second last fence was a large bank with four steps up to a fence at the top and three drop

fences back down; this had also proven tricky for many but Sharon and Gromit popped up and down the technical combination with ease.

A great fast and clear round which resulted in second place. On completion Sharon picked up a few more prizes at the presentation. Timba's one-day event team (combining the dressage, showjumping and cross-country Phases), which was made up of a Police chief and Army officer took first place.

Gromit's team ended a respectable third. With a handful of rosettes, two bottles of bubbly and a couple of equestrian prizes Sharon headed back to Portsmouth satisfied that she had made a significant contribution with results for the RN at the RAF annual championships.

Rugby refs get together

ROYAL Navy rugby union referees gathered in Yeovilton for their annual training day with the theme this year of 'game management'.

The varied and interesting programme was put together by the Society Training Officer WO2 Gaz Fairbairn.

The day provided the opportunity for retiring Chairman Cdr Stew Kilby to present last season's society awards.

The Referee of the Year was presented to Lt Jane Pizzi who has been the shining light for the progression of women officials.

She is the senior female official in the Armed Forces and has carried out duties at last year's Women's Rugby World Cup, she has been promoted to Level 7 and this year refereed the Army- RAF Women's Inter-Services.

Newcomer of the Year was presented to Cdr Donald Doull; having completed ELRA at the end of the previous season, he made himself available at every opportunity and was graded Level 10 by the season's close.

The first session, injury management, taken by Surg Lt Steve Woolley followed by a presentation from Lt Cdr Duncan McClement on pre-match management.

Duncan would have done well to take advice from the first presentation as he had suffered a ruptured achilles during a pre-season fitness test.

The gathering found both talks thought-provoking and sparked some lively discussion.

The society was extremely lucky to have the services of Aviva Premiership referee Andrew Small and national panel advisor Mick Coleman.

Andrew was able to give an insight into the management of the contact and tackle area at the top level although many of his tips were still relevant to lower levels of the game and Mike spoke knowledgeably about the management of negative play.

More details about officiating are available from Gaz Fairbairn (rugby@hotmail.com) who's running a course in Portsmouth, December 6-8.

Squash dates

TEMERAIRE hosts the 2011 RN squash championships on December 2 and 3.

The early rounds of all competitions take place on Friday, the finals on Saturday.

Players of all standards are encouraged to enter one or more of the following categories: men's open, men's U25, veterans (over 40), masters (over 50), men's doubles, ladies' open.

There will also be a taster racketball contest – an exciting variation of squash and one of the country's fastest-growing sports.

Entrance forms are available from RNSRA secretary Lt Cdr David Cooke at rns04@fleetpost.mod.uk / temeraire-rns04 or 023 9272 3741 / 9380 23741. Applications must be received by November 28.

Rest are no match for Air indoors

Continued from page 48

The West Countrymen were spurred on by Cdr Ackland's example and with five minutes left CPO Andy Hyder (claimed by Plymouth as not required by Pompey) made it 3-3, not without a certain degree of satisfaction.

The fifth contest was a humdinger as Plymouth faced Naval Air who'd enjoyed an hour's rest after their 40 minutes' play.

The airmen began like they had come to win with the remarkable Jenkin scoring four goals in 8 minutes (one corner, three from open play).

Add one from Ian Bellehew and another from the long-serving Baz Ayling and Air were 6-0 up by half time.

With a further 20 minutes in their legs and lungs Plymouth looked out of it.

The imported 'red shirted' Andy Hyder was not having any of that, converting two cracking short corners past the impressive Lt John Bishop in the Air goal.

That man Jenkin again sought to put Plymouth back in their place by netting his fifth of the match, one minute after the restart 7-2 to Air.

Trevethan replied from open play and then Will Cave got another with ten minutes remaining – Air 7 Plymouth 4.

Lt David Dale immediately reminded Plymouth that they were not yet back in contention with a timely eighth for Air.

Plymouth's Trevethan, celebrating impending fatherhood,

got it back to 8-5 before Adam Forsyth calmed Air nerves with a 'just what the WAFU doctor ordered' ninth for 9-5 to Air.

With two minutes to go Hyder notched up his hat-trick before veteran Cdr Heber Ackland converted a penalty corner past the outstretched Bishop for 7-9.

That was it and with three wins out of three, Naval Air were crowned champions.

There still remained the small matter of Portsmouth versus the Corps.

Pompey had beaten Plymouth and had played 80 minutes this day.

The Royals had drawn with Plymouth but had only played 40 minutes all day.

And both had lost to Naval Air. Let battle commence...

Guy Dale Smith hit the opener for Portsmouth on four minutes.

Not to be outdone Matt Brokenshire got two in two minutes, then Dale Smith bagged his second; after ten minutes it was 2-2.

Six minutes later a now-cooled-down Matty Wesson despatched a corner for 3-2 to Portsmouth. Then AB (CIS) Liam Pickford (Liverpool), released from Libya specifically to play, was rewarded with his second goal of the tournament for 4-2 to Portsmouth.

After half time door gunner Cpl Graeme Smith in a penalty corner for 3-4.

With ten minutes left, Lt Mark Dixon put in a nuclear-powered corner for 5-3 to Portsmouth.

Smith grabbed his second and the Royals' fourth before Brokenshire completed his hat-trick.

Corners were now coming thick and fast.

With about 75 seconds left, Dixon must have thought he had won it for Pompey when he buried a white-hot penalty corner past the WO 'Jan' Nicholas in the RM goal.

Not so. A Royal Marines corner, awarded for a despairing but overstretched illegal Pompey tackle, was put just where it needed to go – bottom left – as the remarkable 'Brock' grabbed his fourth. Final score 6-6.

In the ladies' contest, the opening 40-minute clash was a dour affair shaking out the cobwebs. Becca Burrell scored then Emma Bakewell bagged a second for a 2-0 win for Portsmouth over Naval Air. Not much to say for 40 minutes competitive hockey.

Luckily the second encounter between the two was much better. A hat-trick from Burrell and brace from Bakewell gave Pompey an unassailable 5-0 lead, but Naval Air got on the score sheet thanks to strikes from Lou Wrightson and Leah Payne.

By the third match the Portsmouth squad was severely depleted – only five players were available to take on the Air's six.

Jenny Saxton scored a penalty corner to give Naval Air a 1-0 half-time lead.

Skipper Burrell equalised for

Portsmouth – she was worth two players for Pompey.

Eight minutes from the end Vee Dale Smith put in an open play purler which her husband Guy would have been proud of to give the fliers a 2-1 lead.

The lead lasted just three minutes; debutante Amy Rawcliffe bagged the Portsmouth equaliser.

Naval Air have won this event for a number of years in succession but on this 'making the most of the circumstances' occasion, Portsmouth were crowned 2011 women's winners.

BRNC are a fourth for good

The Britannia Royal Naval College clay pigeon shooting team took fourth place in the annual Combat Stress Charity Shoot – out of more than 25 teams taking aim.

In excess of 100 competitors in teams of four took part in the event at the Royal Berkshire shooting ground near Reading, including six teams from the three Services.

CPO Bill Amery captained the Dartmouth shooters of Lts Sam Stephens and Iain Andrews and S/Lt Sam Balmound.

The event also included a charity auction where the lot donated by BRNC raised over £300 for the charity. The prize included a variety of opportunities within the college including lunch in the Senior Gun Room with cadets.

This is the fourth time a team from the spiritual home of the Officer Corps has taken part in the shoot and over those years has helped raise over £1,500.

The 2011 event collected more than £23,000 (and still counting) helping to fund the work of Combat Stress, the UK's leading military charity specialising in the care of veterans' mental health.

Clay pigeon shooting takes place most Wednesday afternoons at Dartmouth and for novice shooters a free coaching session is available through the 'grass roots' sports initiative within the college.

In the past two years more than ten BRNC staff and officer cadets have represented the Royal Navy at Inter-Service level.



● **Chip and pin...** A deft touch from Ticker Hart, overall winner of the 18th RN Engineers' Golf Tournament
Picture: LA(Phot) James Crawford, FRPU West

Ticker's just the ticket

TRETHORNE Golf Club in Launceston hosted the very successful 18th RN Engineer's Open Golf Tournament.

The competition was open to serving and former engineers of the General Service, Submarine Service, Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Seventy-two competitors, which included a very welcome contingent of generous sponsors, competed over 72 holes.

The week before the competition the South West of the UK was battered by the remnants of Hurricane Irene and all the staff at Trethorne Golf Club had worked tirelessly to ensure that the course was in immaculate condition.

Despite the very challenging conditions many of the competitors were able to play some amazing golf and post very respectable score cards during both the medal and Stableford rounds.

Sponsorship Director WO1 John Reha (HMNB Portsmouth) had once again come up trumps with a hoard of fantastic prizes which would have not looked out of place at a professional tournament.

This 'stash' ensured that there were plenty of prizes on offer to ensure that all standards of player were rewarded for the 'longest drive', 'nearest the pin' and 'professional's approach' during both rounds.

Unfortunately, the prize of £5,000 for a 'hole in one' on the challenging eighth hole over water during the medal round was not won despite the efforts of Ginge Ashbridge who struck a superb shot which came to rest fewer than three feet from the hole.

Overall champion, sponsored by Case Chemicals, was Ticker Hart – also 2009's overall champion.

With a beaming smile he received a £250 voucher for American Golf, a shield, glassware and a stash of golf items.

The overall runner-up, sponsored by Maxaura, was LAET Mike Deady who also received an impressive haul of prizes.

During the prizegiving dinner a raffle, Irish bingo (it's played backwards) and the selling of charity wrist bands and lapel pins enabled the sum of £1,000 to be raised, split equally and donated to Help for Heroes and Children's Hospice South West Charities.

Tournament director Lt Paul Holvey (HMNB Devonport) thanked everyone involved in the organisation of the event and all the players who took part; many travelled more than 200 miles to participate and meet old colleagues.

Next year's tournament will once again be held at Trethorne Golf Club on September 3 and details can be found at www.engineersopen.net.



Vikings beat Ocean

FRESH from conducting operations off Libya, HMS Ocean's visit to Malta provided an ideal opportunity to issue a challenge to the Malta Sailing Federation to compete for the **Illustrious Challenge Cup**.

The cup, donated by Illustrious and presented in 2001, is raced for between visiting Royal Navy units and Maltese yachtsmen, writes Lt Cdr Chris Grey, HMS Ocean.

Being the holders of the Cup, the Viking Sailing Club graciously offered to defend it by hosting a day of match racing, entertainment and fine hospitality.

Almost ten years to the day since it was first competed for, a combined team of ship's company, WAFUs from 857 NAS and Army Air Corps aircrew from 656 Sqn – reflecting the wide mix of personnel embarked – arrived at the Club confident that they could bring the trophy home.

With light airs and some WAFUs over the recommended 'Maximum All Up Mass' it was going to be a tricky day.

Her Excellency Louise Stanton, the British High Commissioner for Malta, started the first race.

After a bad start, Ocean 1 started to gain ground and flew to the front where they were not troubled again on the windward, leeward course which was a 20-or-so-minute race.

With win one to Ocean, her luck departed with the High Commissioner, as the following race was relinquished to a strong crew, helmed by Viking's commodore's son and master of the local waters.

After an equal start their boat speed proved too much upwind and although the gap was closed, downwind it proved too great and a comfortable win was recorded by the Viking crew.

That unfortunately set the pattern for the following two races and thus only one Ocean boat progressed through to the next round.

Winning the trophy was now looking a little less likely, but the crew put to the water and fought well.

After an equal start and constant jostling for advantage, the Viking crew opened on rounding the windward mark, never to be caught, leaving Ocean to take solace in the superb theatre that the harbour presents.

So with all Ocean's teams eliminated the Viking Club had retained the trophy, but in the spirit of the day the Vikings threw down another challenge.

The best two Viking boats would race the helicopter carrier's best crew. With the sun setting and a golden hue over Valletta harbour, the imperative to attain maximum boat speed was not just to take line honours, but equally to sample a cool beer on Viking's balcony.

Ocean fielded a joint crew from all her disciplines, wisely selecting a WAFU at 'Minimum Landing Allowance'.

After a good start, Ocean opened from Viking 2 and tailed Viking 1. Changing helm throughout, such that all had a crack of the whip, Ocean managed to cut the gap whilst routing to the windward mark, but after a bad rounding this ground was lost again.

Although the gap was dramatically cut on the remainder of this extended course, Viking 1 took another impressive win, being the deserved winner having shone consistently throughout the day.

After a long day in the sun, the only thing that remained was to retire to the club's balcony for a superb spread of food and a few cold beers, all most kindly laid on by the Viking Club.

The High Commissioner returned to present the Illustrious Challenge Cup to the victorious defenders and pass on her condolences to the vanquished.

Back in the big league

Continued from page 48

two anglers achieved this in the division), and CPO Nik Tompkins (Devonport) caught a creditable four fish.

This meant that the team went into the autumn match at Hanningfield Reservoir needing to beat 'Queen Mother Fly Fishers' to earn promotion.

Conditions were the same as the spring match – cloudless, hot and no wind.

Lt Cdr Al Mundy (UKMCC staff), who had only returned from his posting a few days earlier, managed to catch a beautiful 5lb 11oz trout, which went some way to ensure that the RNRMAA finished in second place – ahead of Queen Mother, resulting in promotion to Division 1 for the 2012 season.

The statistics for the season show that the RNRMAA achieved the heaviest total weight of fish of any team in all four divisions, and were only two fish behind Queen Mother for the highest amount of fish caught.

Competing in the top division next season will ensure that the team will fish alongside some of the top anglers in the country, which will undoubtedly improve the team as a whole.

Aside from the AMFC matches, the RNRMAA has had relative success this year, winning matches against the Prison Service plus the inaugural 'tri-match' against the Police and Prison Service.

In addition, we fish against other civilian teams such as British Telecom, as well as the English Fly Fishing Association.

Another high-profile match is the Services match – teams from the Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance, Civil Service, Prison Service, Army and RAF. This year, we gave a good account of ourselves and finished fourth.

The Inter-Services in September was the biggest disappointment, mainly due to the after-effects of Hurricane Katia – one of the practice days had to be called off; it also hampered the fishing on the competition day. The RNRMAA came third – but by a closer margin than in recent years.

More details at www.mandrmaa.org.uk or from CPO Jones at Neil.Jones198@mod.uk.

Fill Twickenham for Help for Heroes

SOME of the greatest rugby players from around the world will line up at Twickenham on Saturday December 3 for the 'Heroes Rugby Challenge'.

The match, which kicks off at 4.30pm and is supported by J.P. Morgan, aims to raise a substantial sum of money for Help for Heroes, the charity which provides practical support for wounded Servicemen and women.

England World Cup winners, Lawrence Dallaglio and Jason Leonard, together with Welsh legend Ieuan Evans, will manage the H4H Northern Hemisphere XV against an all-star Southern Hemisphere XV side which will be overseen by Australian and All Black World Cup winners Michael Lynagh and Sean Fitzpatrick.

The two teams will comprise players selected from the northern and southern hemisphere professional game and the best players from the Armed Forces.

This year's fixture, which will mark the tenth anniversary of Britain's Armed Forces Operations in Afghanistan, promises to be an even bigger attraction than the first Help for Heroes match in 2008 when more than 52,000 spectators helped raise £1.46m for Help for Heroes.

"The aim of the Heroes Rugby Challenge is simple – to pack out Twickenham Stadium and raise more than £1 million for Help for Heroes in the process," said Jason Leonard.

"To achieve this, we need the public to really get behind this game and show their support by buying a ticket and encouraging everyone they know to do the same."

Jeff Blackett, chairman of the Heroes Rugby Challenge, added:

"The Heroes Rugby Challenge is a great opportunity to see some of the best rugby players in the world in action. But it's also an opportunity for rugby fans to come together and show their support for the brave Servicemen and women who serve our country in areas of conflict.

"Life-changing injuries are an inevitable but very sad fact of war and it is essential that those who are hurt are given the best possible care and rehabilitation.

"Every penny raised from the Heroes Rugby Challenge will help provide even better facilities and care for injured troops."

More details and tickets (£30-£40 for adults, £10-£15 for juniors, £70 for a family ticket) can be found at heroesrugby.org.uk.



HEROES RUGBY CHALLENGE

In support of Help for Heroes



H4H Northern Hemisphere XV

v

Southern Hemisphere XV

Prices from:

Adult £30, Junior £10

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Telephone:

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J.P.Morgan

Twickenham Stadium • Saturday 3rd December 2011 • Kick off 4.30pm

All proceeds from the match will go to Help for Heroes. Tickets are available from the Twickenham Ticket Office on 0203 824 2000. Tickets are available from 10.00am on 22nd October 2011.

EARLY BOOKING OFFER for Serving Personnel

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● **Man of Steel and Young Player of the Year Ben Taylor races away with the ball during the Brothers' 12-12 draw with the Army in the Inter-Services**

Richard Beattie sbsphotos.co.uk

Academy take back trophy

FOR the second time in the six year history of the NAAFI Trophy rugby league competition, the RN Academy beat their opposite numbers from the RAF and Army to take a title last won in 2006.

A comprehensive 48-0 demolition of the RAF Academy and a hard-fought 14-4 win over the Army on home ground at Burnaby Road were enough to see the team home, writes WO1 Keith Humpleby, RNRL spokesman.

Coached by Lee Hunter in his first year at the helm and skippered by Johnny Platt, the squad highlighted the skills of several new players to the RNRL setup this year and continues the ongoing development of players through to the Senior squad.

Of seven matches played, the RN won three, drew one and lost three.

For senior squad head coach Danny Johnson this year's IS Series was a case of what might have been; a try three minutes from the end gave the RAF victory at Cranwell whilst a last-gasp Army penalty earned them a lucky draw at Burnaby Road.

The RAF defeat was particularly hard to take as the Brothers had come from 16 points down to lead 18-16 with 15 minutes to go.

Unfortunately a series of injuries during the match stripped the RN bench of fit players and so, despite a heroic effort in defence, the RAF took the spoils.

The development of the RN Ladies Wrenegades continues apace with a fantastic performance against the always-strong Army side.

A shock was on the cards as the Wrenegades took a 14-8 lead into the final quarter of the match, but the Army came back strongly to take the match 34-14.

The Wrenegades' performance against the Army came on the back of another great showing against the RAF, continuing their unbeaten run in the fixture.

This year's veterans competition was reduced to a single fixture between the RN and the Army; although the soldiers won the match, the RNRL 'Older Brothers' put in another top performance, losing 24-12.

Off the field the annual players' awards dinner took place at the end of the Inter-Services in Excellent's WO and SR mess.

For the first time two players received double awards this year: Ben Taylor took Man of Steel and Young Player of the Year whilst Emma Swinton took Ladies Player of the Year and Wrenegades Player of the Year.

Other awards went to Kyle Larvin (Academy Player of the Year) whilst Ritchie Metcalfe took the 'Most Valuable Contribution' for his work off the field while recovering from injury.

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Last-gasp Royals take the spoils

AFTER one of the most thrilling finals in years, the Royal Marines snatched the Inter-Command Cup with a last-gasp winner over Naval Air.

After an exciting 90 minutes of end-to-end football, both teams had opportunities to score and only excellent goalkeeping from AET Roy Emerson (Naval Air) and Lt Eddie Campbell (RM) kept the score at 0-0.

Extra time was much of the same until the 122nd minute when everyone was expecting the final to be resolved by a penalty shoot out only for the marines to break the deadlock.

Mne Mark Connet slammed home a close-range shot, which was closely followed by a second from Cpl Si Bochenki.

Ex-Pompey, Ipswich Town, Colchester, West Brom and England forward Ray Crawford was principal guest and presented the man-of-the-match trophy to Cpl Ads Fowler of the Royal Marines.

Overall it was very successful championships which highlighted some new talent to go forward with for the forthcoming season.

The first match of the 2011/12 for the RN Ladies season saw them host Gosport Ladies in a friendly at Temeraire.

This was the first opportunity for the squad to assemble and a chance for the management team to try out new players that had been highlighted at the Annual East and West 7s tournaments.

The starting XI comprised the more experienced squad members, although some were played out of position.

A cautious start to the game from both sides saw them struggle to get their passing rhythm going. The only person to block the ball in the early stages was the referee who took the full impact of a shot at about three yards – much to the crowd's delight!

Gosport finished the first half the stronger moving the ball well, and RN keeper LStd Angie Comrie, making her debut, was called into action to pull off some good saves.

Three changes were made at half time. LReg Kelly Riddell replaced Comrie in goal; LPT Lucy McKenna replaced PO Shaz Aconley on the right of midfield, who in turn moved to centre forward to replace the substituted POPT Sam Covey. Lt Jen Parker RAN also made her debut replacing AET Hannah Canning on the left of midfield.

Gosport started the second half strongly and quickly broke forward down the left-hand side.

A shot was taken from 15



● **LAET Tom Ardley goes to ground trying to stop a Royal Marines' attack led by Mne Micky Husband in the Inter-Command final**

Picture: LA(Phot) Jason Ballard, FRPU East

Onside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

yards out which the RN keeper struggled to get across to and the ball fell into the back of the net.

The RN then upped their game and produced some positive runs forward with CPO Wendy Frame linking well with Mckenna down the right.

The game was becoming quite physical, with strong challenges going in from both sides.

Gosport continued to dominate and sixteen minutes into the second half it was 0-2 with Riddell unable to keep out a fierce shot from ten yards.

The RN failed to create any clear chances and on 75 minutes, the visitors made it three following some good link-up play.

Further changes were made giving the management team a chance to look at some new players. From the resulting kick off RPO Michelle Garrett took a long range shot which nearly caught the Gosport keeper off her line.

On 82 minutes the RN failed to clear the ball effectively and Gosport capitalised on this error making it 4-0.

There were now some tired RN legs out there, this having been the first match of the season for many of the players and it started to show. Gosport rounded off the

evening with a fifth goal to seal victory.

This was a tough fixture for the RN and, despite the scoreline, there were many positives to take out of the match.

The RN veterans fared rather better in their first outing of the season against Newport (Isle of Wight) at Victory Stadium.

Playing their first games for the Navy were Paddy Stephens (Nelson) and Mark Raybould (INM).

With the settling-in period over, the 23rd minute saw a great ball out of defence by Ian Rew, finding Steve Johnson whose left flick put Raybould clear to half-volley an unstoppable shot past the Newport keeper.

The RN were now putting the Newport defence under great pressure. Excellent vision and another great ball by Rew found Quirke in space, a pin-point square ball across the penalty area found Johnson who was taken down by a strong tackle. Penalty! Johnson dusted himself down to fire the spot kick home. 2-0.

Newport responded well and forced the RN keeper Bond into action. The Navy's defence of Merritt, Wallace, Rew and especially Barton were in excellent

form and kept the Newport attacks at bay.

With the RN continuing to apply the pressure on the visitors, their efforts were rewarded with a 3-0 lead when that man Rew pinged a great ball into the box for Johnson to volley home for his second strike.

In midfield, the experience of Willets and the younger legs of Stephens kept the RN going forward and in attack the mobility of Johnson and Quirke were causing all sorts of problems for the visitors defence.

Four changes were made at half time – Lewis for Merritt, Burdett for Barton, Hodkinson for Smith and Hawes for Stephens.

These changes disrupted the RN play for a while and it took a couple of good saves by Bond to keep a clean sheet for the home team.

In the 65th minute great inter-play between Johnson and Quirke put winger Hodkinson clear, only to see his shot go wide.

The RN were under great pressure in the final quarter of the match, but increased their lead when a great individual run by Quirke forced the visiting keeper into a good save, only for the ball to rebound to Quirke to score from close range.

The Navy lost Johnson and Wallace to injury late on but held on to an impressive 4-0 win. Man of the Match for his first-half performance was Paul Barton.

Back in the big league

AFTER 12 years, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Angling Association (Game) have been promoted back into Division 1 of the Association of Major Fly Fishing Clubs (AMFC).

Most top clubs belong to this association and have teams in one or more of the four divisions of the league, writes CPO Neil Jones RNRMAA Game Secretary.

Matches are fished on a variety of major reservoirs in the Midlands and the south.

The competition usually starts in April and runs to October with all matches fished in two-man boats; the boat partner is always someone from an opposing team.

The RN team (organised and captained by WO1 Mark Close, Devonport) were competing against four others in the division, including sides from the Army (Soldier Palmers A) and RAF (Fish Hawks B), so each match became a 'mini Inter-Services', with the hope of giving us some intel for the IS match itself.

The season started with the Spring Association match at Rutland Water. Conditions were far from ideal for fly fishing: a cloudless, hot and flat calm day, which in turn meant visibility in the water was less than ideal due to an algae bloom.

Nevertheless, one of our anglers (LAET Steve Scott, RNAS Yeovilton) who was new to both the association and the RNRMAA, achieved a 'bag limit' of eight fish, which went some way to ensuring our start to the AMFC league with a win.

The second match was at Chew Valley Lake – affectionately known as our 'home' water – but the original match was 'blown off' the water due to the high winds (reports showed a boat had sunk during a competition a couple of days before).

The rearranged date in September turned out to be a very good day for the team, with five out of the six catching 'bag limits' of eight fish well within the eight-hour time period, resulting in significant time bonuses for the team – leading to another win.

The third match at Bewl Water had lots of cloud cover and light winds. This again meant that five out of the six caught their 'bag limits' but competition was so fierce that the team ended up fourth out of the five teams.

July saw Match 4, again at Rutland Water, this time with more favourable weather and better fishing than the opening match. Two bag limits were recorded by the team (AB Charles Bowers, Northwood, and Tony Wilkinson, RNRMAA Associate), meant the team had three wins from the first four matches.

The fifth match was held at Graftham and was hampered by strong winds the previous day, preventing any practice from being carried out.

Again, Tony Wilkinson achieved a bag limit of eight fish (only

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Rest are no match for Air indoors

HELD over an evening and a day at Collingwood, the current uplift in the turbulence of Service life left its mark again on the RN Indoor Hockey Inter-Command Tournament – there were no-shows from Scotland's men and women and Plymouth's women.

The women's contest became a World Series 'best of three' event of 40-minute matches between Portsmouth and Naval Air, while Plymouth and Portsmouth Men were each forced to play three 40-minute matches – two of them consecutively – in under five hours – as Plymouth were only able to travel for the Wednesday.

Surmounting the difficulties, they got a team – well done Guzz!

This extra-tough programme produced some splendid, super-fast indoor hockey which must bode well for next month's Inter-Services event in Aldershot.

In years gone by the tournament

usually comprised 13 matches contested by 130 participants in five men's teams and four women's; this year was down by one third – nine matches, 75 participants, four men's teams and two women's.

Proceedings opened with the Marines against Naval Air.

Surgeon Lt Dave Potter converted Capt Ritchie 'Gucci' Moore's cross from the left for 1-0 to RM on 12 minutes.

Moore himself scored three minutes later, before PO Steve Smith pulled one back in open play and the effervescent Lt Richard Jenkin converted a corner to level 2-2 at half time.

The second period opened with Doc Potter again accepting Moore's cross – this time from the right – for 3-2 only for another strike from Jenkin to equalise.

The ding-dong scrap continued. LA(SE) Callum Watkins put Air

in the lead. Col Rory Copinger-Symes slammed in an equaliser.

With eight minutes left, Naval Air skipper Lt Adam Duke embarked on a determined run from the back, somehow riding three crunching tackles to arrive top D and shoot past the advancing RM keeper.

Seven minutes left, 5-4 to Air. Royal won a corner, well saved by Lt John Bishop in the Air goal. Jenkin and Ian Bellehewe exchanged passes for 6-4.

Royal got another corner but the shot was snuffed out before Air's Ian Bellehewe ran down the right wing to make the final score 7-4.

Pompey were 4-0 up over Plymouth in the second game thanks to AB(CIS) Liam Pickford, LPT Rowan Edwards, Lts Matt Wesson and Tim Lomas before Lt Sean Trevelyan put away a couple of corners for 4-2.

Almost immediately, the ubiquitous Lomas and Edwards struck back to give Portsmouth a 6-2 half-time lead.

In the second half it was the turn of the veterans. First for Portsmouth, former Welsh international Cdr Guy Dale Smith rattled in a brace supplemented by Lt Matty Wesson putting away a switched-left short corner for 9-2 to Portsmouth.

It was good to see Cdr Heber Ackland, head of the supply school at HMS Raleigh scoring a right Royal effort for Plymouth for 9-3 – the last score of the game.

Next a chance for Portsmouth to dent Naval Air's hopes – and things began well.

Lomas opened Portsmouth's account on three minutes; Jenkin equalised from a corner a minute later.

A controversial deflection gave Air a 2-1 lead – which quick as a

flash became 4-1.

Pompey got back to 4-2 from the promising MCM2 man Rob Fisher but then the ever-improving Bellehewe hit a fifth and Watkins hit the final Air nail in the Portsmouth coffin for a 6-2 victory.

Clash four and the Royals and Plymouth, still smarting from their opening defeats, hit the 'pitch'.

Capt Moore opened the Corps' account in the fourth minute, then Doc Potter put a corner in four minutes later.

Trevelyan hauled it back to 2-1 just before the break – but only briefly as Capt Matt Brokenshire gave the Royals a 3-1 lead at half time.

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