

NAVY NEWS

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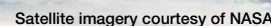
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A ROYAL MARINE barks orders during amphibious exercises at Bull Point in Plymouth as HMS Bulwark completes months of training. The assault ship assumes the mantle of the nation's flagship from her sister Albion this month. See page 23 for details.

Picture: LA(Phot) Martin Carney, HMS Bulwark

MEAN, KEEN AND GREEN





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SO THIS must be symmetric warfare...

Cutting through a remarkably calm English Channel on her way to her future home for the first time is HMS Dragon, ship No.4 in the £6bn Type 45 programme.

And she is, her Commanding Officer Cdr Darren Houston proclaims, the most complete and most capable of the futuristic destroyers yet handed over to the Royal Navy.

That handover came shortly after the ship made her inaugural entry into Portsmouth Harbour on the final day of August, 2011.

There were some 100 early risers – largely, though not exclusively, relatives of the ship's company – on the Round Tower in Old Portsmouth to witness the occasion.

She glided past the historic gateway to Portsmouth Harbour with the Red Ensign flying and with distinctive red dragon motifs on her bow.

Both are now gone.

The afternoon of her arrival, Dragon was formally handed over to the Royal Navy for safekeeping for the next 25-plus years, and her mixed RN-civilian crew was replaced by an entirely Senior Service one (there were some 100 Dragons waiting on the jetty to join the ship for the first time).

The transfer to the RN marks the end of nearly six years' work by shipwrights, technicians and engineers in Portsmouth and on the Clyde (the first steel for the ship was cut back in December 2005). Around 100 BAE employees watched the ship leave BAE's Scotstoun yard, where she's been fitted out since launch.

And the two fiery banners? Well, now Dragon's officially one of Her Majesty's Ships, the motifs are deemed 'inappropriate', compromise the Type 45's camouflage (although at nearly 9,000 tonnes with a distinctive silhouette she does rather stand out visually...) and maintaining them could prove costly.

So dragons be gone by the time you read this (much to the disappointment of some of the ship's company and quite a few Welshmen – the destroyer, aptly, is affiliated with Cardiff – who had petitioned for the mythical beasts to be retained)...

More importantly, of course, is turning this 500ft leviathan into a sleek grey messenger of death – which means a lot of training for the 180-strong ship's company in the months ahead.

Dragon has already come through two extensive periods of sea trials while still in BAE's hands – during which she surpassed all previous expectations (and, to date, the entire Type 45 programme has proven to be more capable on trials than anticipated) – so she arrived in Portsmouth, says Cdr Houston, "in top condition for the rigours of the next stage of her sea trials and the challenges ahead."

"Dragon is eager to play her part and we can start operating the newest and most advanced warship in the world."

While Dragon was paying her first visit to Portsmouth, her older sister Dauntless became the first 45 to sail into the capital.

The ship was the star naval attraction at the Defence and Security Equipment International show at the ExCeL Centre in London's Docklands – widely regarded as one of the world's premier showcases for defence firms and technology.

Indeed some 1,300 companies from 50 nations were looking to attract interest from the 25,000 visitors.

In the case of Dauntless, she was at the event to represent, in the words of her Commanding Officer Capt Will Warrender, "the future for the Royal Navy" and "the newest military technology".

He continued: "The ship represents the finest shipbuilding skills the UK has to offer and is a great example of the high standards and capabilities of the British defence manufacturing base."

He will be taking Dauntless to sea on her first operational deployment in 2012, as will his counterparts in Daring and Diamond – the first three Type 45s are all classed materially ready for front-line deployments.

Still being fitted out on the Clyde are ships five (Defender) and six (Duncan) which will be handed over to the RN in 2012 and 2013 respectively, thus bringing to an end the ten-year programme to replace the veteran Type 42 destroyers.



Here be Dragon

Life for killer submariner

A SUBMARINER who killed an officer during a ‘murderous onslaught’ aboard HMS Astute has been sentenced to life behind bars.

The boat’s weapon engineer officer, Lt Cdr Ian Molyneux, was shot dead and his colleague Lt Cdr Chris Hodge injured as AB Ryan Donovan went berserk aboard the boat when she was on a high-profile public visit to Southampton in April.

He fired four rounds at two senior ratings aboard the boat – but missed, Winchester Crown Court heard.

The shooting alerted Lt Cdr Molyneux, who tried to tackle Donovan – who shot the officer in the head at point-blank range. The father-of-four from Wigan was killed instantly.

Prosecutor Nigel Lickley QC told the court that the able seaman continued his rampage, moving into the control room where he shot Lt Cdr Hodge before he was finally disarmed by the Southampton Council leader, Cllr Royston Smith, who was visiting Astute at the time.

The court heard that Donovan resented being denied a draft to RFA Cardigan Bay because he’d disobeyed orders.

After two days of heavy drinking, the junior rate returned to the nuclear submarine and told a shipmate he was “going to kill somebody” – although his remark was not taken seriously.

The rating, from Dartford, pleaded guilty to one count of murder and three charges of attempted murder.

Sentencing the submariner to life – with a minimum of 25 years in jail – the judge Mr Justice Field told Donovan his “murderous onslaught” had robbed Lt Cdr Molyneux “of a bright future within a loving family.”

Speaking after the case, Lt Cdr Molyneux’s widow said: “There is no pleasure or relief for me today – only the ongoing, heartbreaking sadness for the loss of Ian.

“I find huge comfort in the abundance of love and support I have received from my family, many friends, and Ian’s colleagues in the Royal Navy.”

Goodnights, Irene

TANKER RFA Wave Ruler delivered essential aid to the storm-hit Turks and Caicos Islands as the first hurricane of the 2011 season – Irene – struck the Caribbean.

Damage on the islands included flooding and minor structural damage, with hurricane winds of 90mph (145km/h) having blown down power lines and roofs.

Wave Ruler – which is in the region with a twofold mission to provide disaster relief to Britain’s overseas territories and support the international effort to strangle drug running – sailed from Curaçao as the storm barrelled its way towards the islands.

The tanker’s cargo included 5,700 sheets of corrugated iron to build shelters, 40 vehicles, and 15 containers of general stores.

The ship arrived off Grand Turk around midday on August 25 and set about delivering the stores and equipment, including tarpaulins, for further distribution throughout the islands.

The ship’s Lynx helicopter, from the Yeovilton-based 815 Naval Air Squadron, carried out an aerial survey with the islands’ deputy governor on board to assess damage to outlying islands and settlements.

The ship carries a dedicated team of Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Royal Navy personnel specially trained to support operations and deliver assistance to local communities in the event of a disaster.

In this instance, a Royal Navy humanitarian aid and disaster relief team provided extra manpower.

Kent floods up

THIS is the very bulbous bow of HMS Kent – as seen through the fish-eye lens of LA(Phot) Ben Sutton – in dry dock in Rosyth.

Or rather this was the very bulbous bow of HMS Kent before the dock was flooded and the waters of the Forth caressed the hull of the 4,500-ton frigate once more.

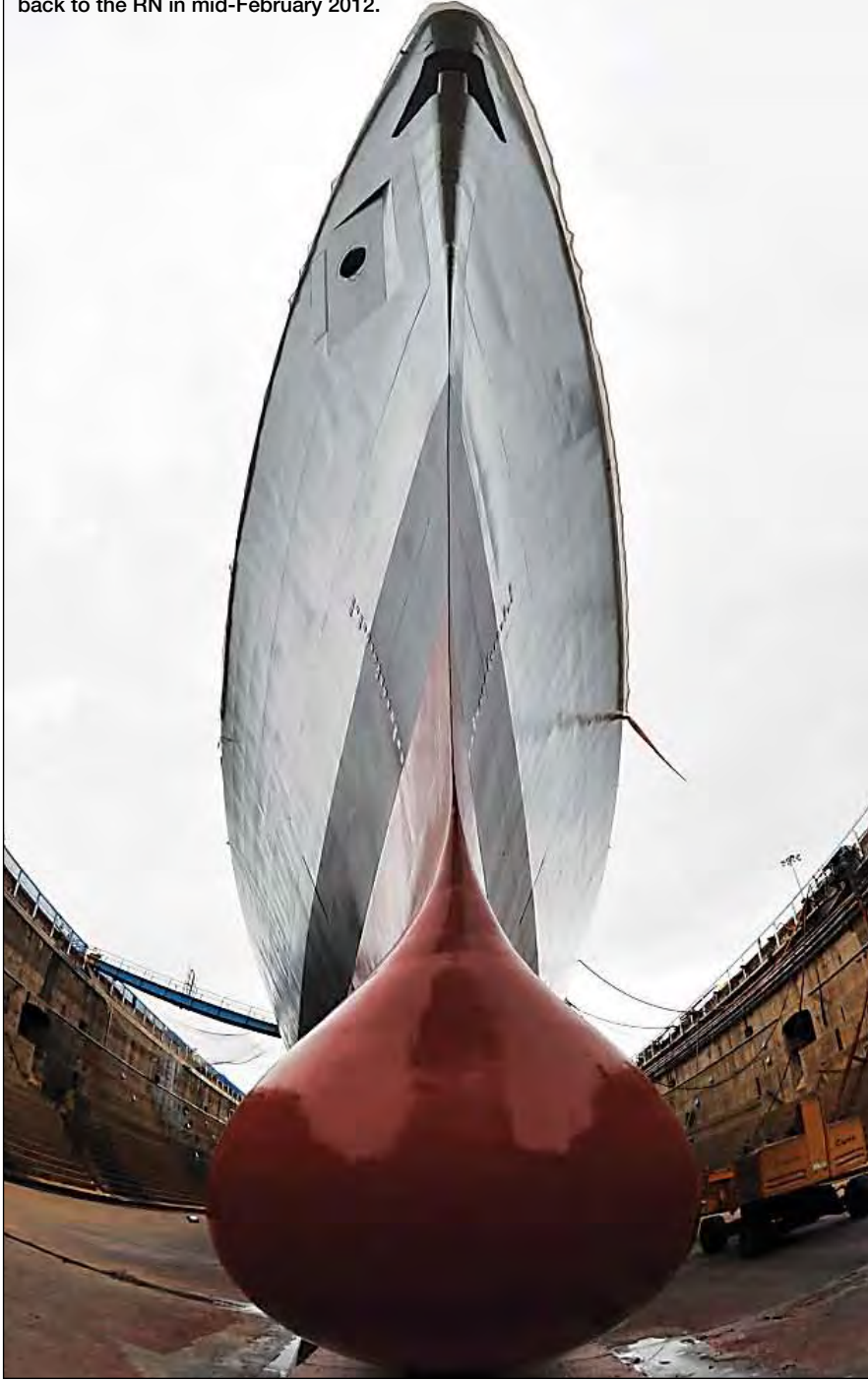
After 245 days high and dry in dock at the Babcock yard, the sluices were opened and Kent’s refit passed a key milestone.

As well as several repairs and a large number of coats of paint to the hull, all water inlets and outlets were changed to ensure the Portsmouth-based warship is good below the waterline until her next spell in dock in a few years’ time.

Some £24m work is being carried out on the 11-year-old warship, from cosmetic improvements to make life more comfortable for the 180-strong ship’s company to hardcore warfighting upgrades, not least a new main 4.5in gun, the latest version of the Seawolf anti-air missile system (effectively doubling its range), Sonar 2087 – the most advanced submarine-hunting kit in the Royal Navy – and a new command system to choreograph all this enhanced weaponry and sensors.

With Kent once again floating, normal life on the frigate is beginning to resume. Her latest commanding officer, Cdr Ben Ripley, has just joined and the ship’s company have moved back on board having occupied offices on land for the past year.

The ship’s due to be ready for sea on November 11 and should be officially handed back to the RN in mid-February 2012.



Family 'gyll proves popular

WITH a tour of duty looming in the challenging waters east of Suez, HMS Argyll showed families what the frigate will be doing in her six months away – minus the warm weather.

The Devonport-based Type 23 took 87 loved ones to sea off the South Coast for a day of non-stop action: helicopters buzzing about, man overboard rescue, dealing with (fake) fires and flood, some deft manoeuvring from the bridge team as they threw the 4,500-ton warship about.

The families day had a threefold aim: firstly to thank relatives for their ongoing support and understanding (the past 12 months have been demanding for the ship, even before she deploys); secondly, to give them a brief insight into life onboard; and finally to explain some of the welfare support and information they can expect while the 180 sailors are away.

The deployment which begins later this autumn – and will keep the frigate away from home over Christmas (some of the ship’s company have already celebrated yuletide with their families) – is the acid test for Argyll following a £20m refit.

It’s taken 13 months to turn an inanimate, largely lifeless, hull in the middle of a refit into

a cutting-edge warship ready for anything that global events and nature can throw at her, culminating in Operational Sea Training.

During her time in refit in Rosyth, 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 Ministry of Defence’s latest e-mail and internet system, DII(F).

All those new sensors and weaponry have made Argyll the most potent ship in the Royal Navy’s frigate fleet (although the title’s soon to be snatched by Lancaster and Kent as they emerge from their respective revamps – see above).

For now, however, Argyll is the queen and her ship’s company were delighted to show her off to families.

“Families Day gets your family to see what you’re actually doing, it gives a support network by meeting others in the same situation,” said Lt Cdr Patrick Hunt, Argyll’s weapon engineer officer.

“It’s very hard for friends and families because they don’t always know what you’re doing on long deployments.”



A ‘father figure’ and a marine showing ‘huge promise’

IT HAS been a bitter month for Kilo Company, 42 Commando, with the loss of one of their most experienced – and popular – non-commissioned officers, killed by a roadside bomb, and a young Royal Marine who showed “huge promise” – but was fatally wounded by small arms fire.

Sgt Barry ‘Baz’ Weston was mortally injured while helping another patrol to safety and draw out insurgents near the village of Sukmunda – the most dangerous area of the Nahr-e Saraj district on August 30.

The 40-year-old – a veteran of 20 years’ service and pretty much every campaign the Corps has served in: Iraq, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Northern Ireland – leaves three daughters, Jasmine, Poppy and Rose (pictured above left with dad), and his wife, Joanne.

His family say they are “devastated by the loss of Baz – he was a caring, loving husband and son and a devoted father. He died doing the job he loved and we are very proud of him.”

Sgt Weston was sent to Check Point Saqra in May at short notice to help the Black Knights of Kilo Company, 42 Cdo, and soldiers of 1 Rifles, plus Afghan police, deal with a menacing insurgent threat.

Since the spring they have been locked in a “constant and pernicious” battle against insurgent fighters and their attempts to lay improvised explosive devices.

As a result, the experience, professionalism and morale of Sgt Weston – known as ‘Wets-on’ by comrades because of his love of a brew – was instrumental.

“The men of Check Point Saqra came to rely on him as a father figure,” said Maj Jase Durup, Officer Commanding Kilo Company.

“This was unsurprising – Baz was first and foremost a loving father to three beautiful daughters.

“His loss will be deeply felt amongst his friends across the Corps – of which there are many. Once a Black Knight, always a Black Knight.”

WO1 Neil ‘Pea’ Peacock of 30 Cdo Information Exploitation Group – Sgt Weston’s previous unit in the Corps – said his fellow green beret was renowned as “an instantly likeable character and unfeasibly fast runner” whose cheerful response when asked about day-to-day life in Helmand were typically: “Living the dream.”

Junior Royals looked up to the sergeant as a morale raiser, devoted father and experienced warrior – although they were baffled by his love of the latest series of *Big Brother*.

“Thinking about Baz, two memories stand out automatically; his overwhelming love for his beautiful family and his infectious laugh. Baz would follow you around the check point, even into the shower and tell you how amazing his wife was, followed by some story about his girls. His devotion to them was amazing,” said Cpl Dearan Withall.

“If you were not present in Baz’s company, you could hear him laughing and chuckling to himself, often about the smallest of things which would shortly be followed by the sound of others laughing.

“Baz was so much morale in the check point. He would always have a witty comment to make or something funny to say when we were having a bad day. We cannot believe Baz is gone; he is going to be missed. Our thoughts are with his family who he

cared about so much.”

Mne David Fairbrother (pictured above, right) suffered fatal wounds in a fire-fight with insurgents during a search of compounds in the village of Old Khorgajat, Nahr-e Saraj, on September 19.

Despite the best efforts of his colleagues to administer first aid, the 23-year-old from Blackburn died of his wounds.

This was the Lancastrian’s first tour of duty with 42 Commando. He joined the Corps in November 2009 and earned his green beret in September 2010 before joining 42.

He enthusiastically immersed himself in training for his deployment to Afghanistan, qualified as a team medic and was assigned to Kilo’s All-Arms Search Team, which meant clearing numerous compounds in Helmand – at significant risk – to ensure the safety of his comrades.

A keen skydiver and water polo player, Mne Fairbrother was hoping to specialise in landing craft upon his return from Afghanistan.

“David, not only are you the sunshine of my life but you were a devoted, beautiful and giving son,” said his mother Julie.

“I am so proud of the determination you had to become a Royal Marine. You were always fun loving, caring and lived life to the full. Not only were you the perfect son but you were my best friend and you will be in my thoughts forever.

Those sentiments were echoed by his fellow commandos.

“Mne Dave Fairbrother was a young man with a mischievous smile, a glint in his eye and huge promise,” said Maj Durup.

“He has been a key component of the glue that has bound the men at Check Point Saqra together through some extremely difficult times and his ability to raise a laugh amongst his comrades when the situation looked dire will be sorely missed.”

As a fighting man, the young green beret excelled.

“He was never afraid of hard work and was a vital member of the patrol due to his alertness and ability to always remain suspicious of everything and everyone,” said L/Cpl Robert Hill.

“He was a walking human surveillance asset with hawk-eyes who would even report something as small as a rat that was ‘acting suspiciously’.

“He was professional and methodical in everything he did and his searching as an All Arms Search Team member was impeccable.”

His comrades at the check point say Mne Fairbrother was a vital ingredient in the cement holding the men together thanks to his storytelling, jokes, quick wit and ability to grow a dubious Mexican-style moustache.

“Dave, what a legend – you made me laugh daily,” said Kilo’s L/Cpl David Goodman.

“You were, without doubt, one of the most interesting blokes I’ve ever had the pleasure of meeting. You would be talking about the patrol we had just done – the next minute you would be telling me a peanut is not part of the nut family, but a part of the pea family. That’s what I loved about you.

“Nothing seemed to faze you, no matter how difficult times got. You will be greatly missed here at Check Point Saqra.”

Kenya helps tackle piracy

FRESH from a recent exercise between British and Kenyan warships, one of the Navy's most senior officers east of Suez headed to Nairobi to discuss tackling crime in the troubled waters of the Indian Ocean.

Cdre John Clink, who has recently taken over command of the international Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150), visited Kenya and Tanzania to discuss co-operating with the two nations' armed forces in the concerted effort to deal with criminal activity at sea.

Talks with Kenya were helped by the fact the head of the country's navy, Maj Gen Ngewa Mukala, is a classmate of the British commander; the two trained at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, the spiritual home of the RN's Officer Corps, back in 1984.

During a productive meeting, the two old friends discussed the success of a recent exercise involving HMS Monmouth and Kenyan patrol boats KNS Nyayo and Umoja.

The trio met in the Indian Ocean for some rare joint manoeuvres. The Kenyan sisters were returning home to Mombasa after a two-year refit in Italy and demonstrated their speed and agility, keeping Monmouth's bridge team on their toes.

The few hours together allowed the ships to share their experiences of maritime security operations; the Kenyans will be supporting the international naval security mission in the Indian Ocean.

Cdre Clink and Maj Gen Mukala also explored the possibility of further interaction between the Kenyan Navy and Combined Maritime Forces, which controls three different naval task forces in the region, dealing with counter terrorism, counter piracy and maritime security operations.

While in Nairobi, Cdre Clink also met Kenya's senior intelligence officer, Director of Military Intelligence, Major General Philip Kameru, to discuss similar themes.

"This was my first visit to Kenya, and I was struck by the professionalism and dedication of their senior officers, as well as their commitment to safeguarding the seas around Kenya," said Cdre Clink.

"I was thrilled to see my old classmate, Major General Mukala. We shared some stories about what we have both been up to in the 27 years since we last saw one another, and he took great pleasure in showing me how well trained and capable the Kenyan Navy is and how successful it has been in protecting Kenya's maritime borders."

The senior Royal Navy officer, who has commanded HMS Kent and Ark Royal, is, with his staff based in Bahrain, responsible for the safe passage of shipping across two million square miles of ocean (that's roughly seven times the size of the North Sea) covering the Gulfs of Aden and Oman, Red and Arabian Seas and large swathes of the Indian Ocean.

The task force comprises warships from across the globe – as well as the UK and USA, Germany, France, Denmark, Australia, Singapore, South Korea among others have committed vessels to CTF 150 – with the aim of strangling terrorism, smuggling and other illegal activities in these waters.

Illustrious guest visits Lusty

HMS Illustrious' first captain – and former First Sea Lord – Admiral Sir Jock Slater returned to his old ship as Lusty hosted the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights in Portsmouth Naval Base.

Sir Jock, who took the then brand-new carrier to the Falklands to relieve HMS Invincible back in 1982, is also Deputy Prime Warden of that worshipful company.

Members of the company were treated to a tour of the 20,000-ton carrier (which now serves as a helicopter assault ship) before holding their Shipwright's Court Meeting, where Illustrious'

Scott of the, er, Atlantic...

NO MORE ice for the Navy's biggest survey ship which has resumed her regular duties of peering into the depths.

After a couple of seasons surveying waters around the Antarctic – thus plugging the gap left by HMS Endurance after her unfortunate flooding at the end of 2008 – HMS Scott is heading out into the Atlantic to chart slightly warmer waters.

The Devonport-based vessel – at 13,500 tonnes and 430ft long the fifth largest ship in the Royal Navy's fleet – is enjoying a week's training and trials off the South Coast before heading into the steep Atlantic for a prolonged period of deep-water surveying.

Scott is the Navy's sole deep bathymetric survey ship – which means she can measure the depth of the water with pinpoint accuracy

and map the ocean floor in areas of the Seven Seas where existing data is sparse.

Families and friends (plus at least one canine) stood at Devil's Point in Plymouth to wish the 78-strong ship's company well as she sailed yesterday.

The ship is fitted with a suite of advanced sensors and can survey an area twice the size of Nottingham – 150 square kilometres/58 square miles – of ocean floor every hour, gathering navigational, gravitational and bathymetric data simultaneously.

Since returning from the polar region in the spring, Scott has been in her home port undergoing maintenance following her exertions in the southern ocean – the longest period, apparently, she's ever spent in Devonport.



Picture: LA(Phot) James Crawford, FRPU East

Daring does a Channel dash

BRITAIN'S most advanced warship crossed the Channel to visit her affiliated island for the first time in 18 months.

HMS Daring's busy trials programme has kept the £1bn destroyer away from Guernsey since April 2010, and after a summer of work in Portsmouth Naval Base, where "Gucci new kit" was fitted to prepare her for her maiden deployment, it was time to reaffirm old friendships.

The size and draught of the Type 45 warship means she cannot enter the harbour at St Peter Port so she anchored within sight of the Guernsey capital throughout her weekend visit.

Barely was the anchor lowered than the first visitors were arriving by boat: Guernsey Sea Scouts and the Sea Cadets of TS Sarnia who were given a guided tour of the state-of-the-art warship.

While the ship's company were hosting youngsters, Commanding Officer Capt Guy Robinson was host 21 VIPs, including Guernsey's Lieutenant Governor Air Marshal Peter Walker – the Queen's representative on the island – and its Bailiff, Sir Geoffrey Rowland.

"It is important to get out the message to the public about what the Royal Navy does. We rely on our affiliated communities to support us and we do charity work for them, so it is a two-way street," said Capt Robinson, paying his first visit to Guernsey as Daring's

Commanding Officer.

A reception and capability demonstration followed in the evening for more than 100 guests who braved the boat transfer to the ship to witness Daring's sailors showing what they do on a day-to-day basis...

...something which ordinary Guernsey folk were treated to the following day when Daring was opened to visitors. More than 500 people hopped on to the pas boat and a few minutes later clambered aboard the 45.

They were shown the Lynx, the Ship Control Centre – where the engineers monitor all Daring's machinery and propulsion systems – and the hi-tech operations room which is the envy of the Fleet: a spacious, computer-console-filled room from where the ship directs a battle.

"It was great to show the public around our ship, including its state of the art capabilities and Gucci new kit," said warfare rating LS Sommerville.

That "Gucci new kit" includes Phalanx automated Gatling guns which were fitted over the summer so Daring can fend off any enemy aircraft which might penetrate her Sea Viper missile system – as well as fast attack craft on the ocean.

The destroyer is currently exercising off the South Coast as she tests her new equipment and prepares for her first operational deployment in the new year.

current CO, Capt Jerry Kyd, was installed as a member of the organisation (qualification for admission is a professional maritime background).

The Shipwrights' Company supports charitable works, education and training in their respective field and following their visit members earmarked prizes for a number of the ship's company.

These will be awarded to sailors and marines in recognition of their professionalism and maritime skills as the carrier continues her regeneration toward assuming the role of the Royal Navy's helicopter and commando carrier following her recent refit.

Albion's belated birthday

AFTER leading the RN's keynote deployment of the year (Cougar 11) and before she hands over flagship duties to her sister later this month (see page 23), HMS Albion visited Liverpool so she could call upon her nearby affiliated city of Chester.

The assault ship was spending six days on the Mersey, berthed at Liverpool's impressive cruise liner terminal as *Navy News* went to press.

The visit was part of the Devonport-based warship's tenth birthday celebrations.

She was actually launched in March 2001, but she was a tad busy this spring to mark her birthday officially, heading an amphibious force to the Mediterranean and Middle East and, for a short time, taking part in operations off Libya.

So six months later, the ship's company took part in a Freedom of the City parade through the historic heart of Chester before being invited to a civic reception.

Guests of honour at the march past were: the Princess Royal, who launched Albion down the slipway in Barrow in 2001 and has followed the ship's progress avidly ever since; Chester's Lord Mayor Councillor Eleanor Johnson and Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire David Briggs.

Back in Liverpool, the ship opened her gangways to visitors for two days.

Once her visit to Merseyside was over, the ship was due to head north for exercises and training around north-west Europe.

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At the going down of the sun...



HEADING into the Mediterranean sunset, an Army Air Corps Apache gunship carries out a dusk training mission as her launchpad, **HMS Ocean**, prepares to take her place in the line of battle once again.

For a short while Britain's biggest warship bowed out of Operation Unified Protector for some much-needed TLC in Crete.

Specialist engineers (RN and civilians from Babcock) from her home base of Devonport were flown out to Souda Bay to carry out essential repairs and maintenance.

Now they're done, Ocean's back at sea and ready to return to the coast of Libya to continue in whatever role is necessary to see the job finished.

The Mighty O departed Devonport in April in support of the Cougar task force deployment to the Mediterranean and Middle East, the first work-out for the UK's new Response Force Task Group, formed under last year's Defence Review.

The helicopter assault ship never left the Middle Sea – her Apaches, deployed for the first time at sea, were deemed an invaluable asset in the campaign against Colonel Gaddafi's forces in Libya.

She's been attached to the NATO operation now for three months, prompting a visit from Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, to thank the hundreds of men and women aboard for their unstinting efforts.

He spent two days aboard the helicopter carrier, enjoying top-level briefings – from Cdre John Kingwell, Commander of the United Kingdom Task Group, and Ocean's CO Capt Andrew Betton *inter alia* – as well as chatting to the rest of the ship's company, Royal Marines and Army Air Corps personnel.

And, in a popular move, he made himself available throughout his time on board to answer questions on personnel and training issues – which are his remit – as well as wider defence matters.

"I am immensely proud of all of the sailors, soldiers, airmen and marines serving in HMS Ocean," said Capt Betton.

"Everybody has worked tirelessly since we sailed in April to contribute to our evolving mission, so having the opportunity to demonstrate our professionalism and brief the Second Sea Lord on this unique ship's capability was an honour."

And talking of honours...

It fell to **HMS Liverpool** to escort the first Free Libya warship into Tripoli, just days after the capital fell to rebel forces.

And it was quite a moment – not least as the veteran destroyer's spent most of the past five months stopping warships leaving Libyan ports.

The Al Hani is the only Libyan frigate in working order. The Russian-built warship fell into rebel hands when Benghazi was seized during the opening moves of the civil war. Her sister, the Al Ghardabia, was knocked out by an RAF air strike in Tripoli harbour last month.

Flying the flags of Free Libya and with most free spaces on the upper deck packed with soldiers ready to support comrades already on the ground in Tripoli, the Al Hani was escorted by NATO warships from Benghazi, across the Gulf of Sirte, first to Misrata, then 120 miles further west to the capital.

It fell to Liverpool to accompany the ship on the final leg of her historic journey, exchanging ceremonial in a close pass of the Al Hani. The Libyan sailors and soldiers responded with enthusiastic waving and shouts of thanks from the frigate's upper deck.

"As the Al Hani became visual on the horizon, Free Libya flags flying, it was clear that not only her ship's company were onboard – the upper deck was crowded," said Liverpool's Commanding Officer Cdr Colin Williams.

"It was a significant milestone in the rebel campaign – to take a former Gaddafi warship into the capital – until very recently held by Gaddafi – shows the extent of the achievement by the Libyan people."

And talking of significant milestones... the Crazy Red Chicken has passed the 100-day mark on her Libya duties (by now well past – it's nearer 130 days...) since relieving HMS Cumberland back in April.

In that time she's grown to become a well-oiled fighting machine, carrying out varied missions from enforcing the arms embargo to support of the no-fly zone and air strikes against the Libyan government's military machine, and a significant amount of naval gunfire support.

"The sight of personnel calmly donning white anti-flash suits in the middle of the night has become commonplace," said Cdr Williams.

"To work this hard has required sailors to show stamina and resolve."

Throughout the challenging Libyan mission, Cdr Williams says he's been struck by the attitude and sheer professionalism of the 240-plus men and women under his command – and that it's clear to all that they've achieved something worthwhile on their 100+ days on patrol.

"I am immensely proud to have had the opportunity to command them – they have once again proven why the Royal Navy remains a benchmark for others to follow," he added.

"The real sense of pride in seeing tangible results ashore as a result of our actions at sea is felt by all onboard."

"When we took over from Cumberland, the besieged city of Misrata was under imminent threat of collapse. Since then we've seen the rebels push the pro-Gaddafi forces back, allowing shipping access to the port and a semblance of normality to return to these once-troubled streets."

There were – in the third week of September – just a handful of pro-Gaddafi strongholds still refusing to give in to Free Libyan forces, chief among them the former dictator's birthplace, Sirte.

In the preliminaries to the fighting for the port, 230 miles east of Tripoli, Liverpool was ordered to sail close to coastal positions occupied by troops still supporting the dictator.

The Portsmouth-based warship fired star shells over two suspected vehicle check points; the light cast on them confirmed the intelligence reports – and caused the pro-Gaddafi troops to hastily climb in their vehicles and disperse.

Misrata mosaic

IT'S easy to get sucked in by the death stars.

More men. More women. More firepower. Her Majesty's Ships Ocean and Liverpool have bagged most of the RN side of headlines since the Libya mission began at the end of March – although minehunter Brocklesby did step into the limelight when she disposed of a mine off Misrata.

And steadily doing her bit for the past three months and more, unsung, unheralded, has been Brocklesby's relief, HMS Bangor.

The Faslane-based warship has divided her time between keeping the sea lanes to Misrata open – the city was under siege on-and-off from mid-February until rebel forces finally secured the surrounding area at the end of August – and monitoring shipping entering Libyan waters as part of NATO's Unified Protector.

The three months on patrol have demanded the utmost from the 38 men and women aboard the Faslane-based minehunter.

Working in six-hour shifts round the clock is demanding enough, but even more so for the sailors who man the upper deck guns: the 30mm main gun, the fire-spewing minigun (it can fire up to 2,000 rounds a minute) and the general purpose machine-guns.

In addition to the white anti-flash worn by their shipmates, they must also wear steel helmets and body armour in temperatures now regularly in the mid-to-high thirties Celsius – nearly 100°F.

"The body armour and helmets are very heavy and the stress this causes in the extreme heat is unbelievable," said diver AB(D) James Oakley; when not doing the 'day job' he's helping his shipmates manning the minigun or machine-guns.

"It feels awesome to play such an integral part in ship's safety. We do our best to maintain 360° cover at all times – it's satisfying to know that you're playing your part in helping to keep your shipmates safe."

Since joining Unified Protector, the Sandown-class vessel has conducted six different patrols off Misrata to allow humanitarian aid to arrive by sea.

"We spend so long training for times like these that it is fantastic to get a chance to do our jobs in a real, high-threat environment," said PO(MW)

Steven 'Stirling' Moss, one of two minehunting directors on the vessel.

"Uncertainty is always just around the corner, but our job, clearing the way so that humanitarian aid can reach civilians caught up in the conflict makes me feel that I am really making a difference."

Further out to sea, the emphasis is on maritime security operations – ensuring all shipping is conducting lawful business on the high seas.

Each vessel – whether it's a small fishing boat or large merchantman – must be identified and questioned by Bangor to ensure that there are no breaches of the arms embargo in force.

To maintain Bangor's presence off Libya for such a sustained period, the ship has had to call upon her Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary 'friends'.

Twice supplies have been delivered by helicopter – no mean feat as there really isn't much clear deck space on a Sandown-class ship and the aircraft produce tremendous downwash for the sailors 20ft below trying to grab hold of the delivery – as well as by tanker RFA Orangeleaf (at 40,000+ tonnes the largest vessel on the RN/RFA books... and displacing 80 times more than Bangor) and from helicopter carrier HMS Ocean.

On two occasions the minehunter has 'rafted up' with the Mighty O. "The weather was perfect, but the challenge was no less daunting as Bangor neared the overwhelming side of Ocean," explained Lt Heather Thomas, Bangor's navigating officer. Fuel was supplied via the landing craft fuelling points – which proved ideal for the Sandown-class minehunter. Bangor was also able to take advantage of other stores aboard the helicopter carrier.

"Ocean's 22,000 tons and 700 people weren't going to miss the relatively meagre fuel and fresh produce requirements of a 500-ton, 38-people Sandown," Lt Thomas added.

And so Bangor, like Ocean, Liverpool, Fort Rosalie and Orangeleaf, remains on patrol off Libya.

"It's a good feeling, knowing that I am making a real difference to the civilians in Libya," said AB Oakley. "I am enjoying my first deployment and can't wait to see what else it brings."



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The famine and the feast

ROYAL Marines from 42 Commando helped their Afghan comrades celebrate the end of the Muslim holy month Ramadan in traditional style with the festival of Eid.

In a specially-erected tent not far from Patrol Base 5 in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand, Afghan National Army troops invited the men of Kilo Company, local elders and mullahs to a feast of rice and chicken and handed out gifts to local children.

Throughout Ramadan Afghan soldiers, who are devout Muslims, did not eat or drink during the hours of daylight in accordance with their religion.

So the end of the austere month of fasting is marked with quite a celebration, known as a *Katan Koran Sharif*.

After the feast, the soldiers and Marines returned to their base and took part in a shooting competition (pictured below by 3 Cdo's PO(Phot) Hamish Burke), won by a team from 1 Rifles; the soldiers have been working hand-in-hand with the green berets for the past four and a half months to train and mentor Afghan soldiers, helping to develop their military skills.

In that time, the Royals and soldiers have forged strong bonds with the men they've been mentoring; they also carry out joint patrols of the district on an almost daily basis and recently staged a football match which was watched by locals.

Kilo Company's Capt Chris Armstrong says working with the Afghans has been a great experience and seeing how they've progressed has been rewarding.

"They definitely add value. It wouldn't be fair to compare them to UK military standards but to their credit they react quickly and have the advantage of speaking the language and being able to communicate with the locals better than we can. They are doing very well."

Eight months ago, there was no International Security and Assistance Force presence in the area around the patrol base. Now locals regularly see both Royal Marines and Afghan soldiers on the streets helping to keep the insurgents at bay.

The improved security situation has helped to boost people's confidence, says Capt Chris Hurt, Kilo's second-in-command.

"This is a stable but immature area; a year ago there was no ISAF presence here and the insurgents had control. Our focus is providing security in the villages of the protected community by deterring the enemy and building the capacity of the Afghan forces."

"As the Afghan National Army gets more confident and more capable, we will start to hand over the checkpoints. Progress is being made and Kilo Company is helping to drive it and the Afghan National Army forward."



● The skas of war... The bandies perform some Two-Tone classics



It's Madness in Helmand...

THAT'S the band rather than a comment on life in the troubled province of Afghanistan...

Donning pork pie hats, the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines sax things up a bit in the hospital at Camp Bastion – one of a string of 'gigs' performed across Afghanistan for Britons on the front line.

A 15-strong band was flown out specifically to entertain UK and Allied forces in Helmand, having undergone combat training in Hampshire, including two-days at a mock-up forward operating base, to prepare them for the rigours – and dangers – of Helmand.

The band, comprising a rhythm section, two vocalists and a host of instruments, did not just perform at Bastion, but also headed to numerous outlying bases to ensure all units of 3 Commando Brigade – in charge of UK operations in Helmand since April – and their supporting Army and RAF formations have enjoyed live music.

The first personnel to be treated were the surgeons, medics and patients in the Role 3 Hospital in Bastion itself. The playlist included favourites such as songs from the *Blues Brothers*, *The Commitments* and James Brown as well as some more modern

covers which band leader Major Tony Smallwood said went down particularly well:

"We have so many good numbers; it is hard to choose a favourite! Glee is very popular and was written and assembled from a CD by one of our sergeants!"

"We wanted to come and entertain the troops, give them a break from the hard work and raise morale."

It worked.

"Music always makes you feel good and it raises morale. It was excellent for everyone here in the hospital," enthused Cdr Carol Betteridge, the Commanding Officer of the Role 3 Hospital.

During their month-long tour of Afghanistan, the band has performed in a wide range of locations; from forward operating bases in Helmand to a large ISAF camp in the capital Kabul.

At Task Force Helmand headquarters in Lashkar Gah, hundreds of people at the base took an hour out of their evening to enjoy a barbecue and listen to the band perform a string of hits.

"Most people based in Lashkar Gah have now spent five months away from home, working long hours in a high-pressure environment, supporting the 6,500 men

and women that comprise Task Force Helmand," said Lt Col Dominic May, the task force's Deputy Chief-of-Staff.

"We're sincerely grateful to the Royal Marines Band Portsmouth for coming to entertain us and giving everyone a very welcome respite from our daily routine."

In addition to the visiting musicians, there's a sizeable Royal Marines Band presence already on the ground in Helmand; they've largely (though not entirely) abandoned their instruments for the six-month tour of duty, working as ambulance drivers and stretcher bearers, supporting the medics at the hospital.

Five of the visiting musicians have previously served in Afghanistan, but not Major Smallwood who returns to the UK with his first impressions of Helmand.

"I have been amazed at the dedication of the troops out here, especially in this oppressive heat," he said.

"I am thoroughly enjoying getting around the area of operations, meeting all the soldiers and Royal Marines. Hopefully, we've been able to give them a bit of a boost with a bit of entertainment and by putting on a show!"



● Thank you very much... 'Elvis' leaves the stage after a rousing concert at Camp Bastion
Pictures: PO(Phot) Hamish Burke, 3 Cdo Bde, and Sgt Alison Baskerville, RLC



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HAVE you ever wondered what HMS Protector looks like from directly overhead?

Well now we can satiate your curiosity because the ice ship's photographer LA Arron Hoare climbed in the back of a helicopter as the survey ship conducted her first aviation trials off Plymouth.

Although Protector won't carry a helicopter on her maiden deployment to the frozen continent (there's no hangar to accommodate one), the ability to operate a whirlybird is a prerequisite for the ship taking her place in the front line.

Over two days the ship conducted various manoeuvres with a Dauphin from the FOST Helicopter Support Unit (the helicopter unit which, er, supports, FOST), testing command and bridge teams, flight deck officers and crew.

Aside from their skill and expertise, the Protectors were helped by the ship's 'dynamic positioning system' – computers which accurately maintain her position and heading with impressive accuracy, even in heavy weather.

The net result? The ship is now cleared to operate the FOST helicopters and will, in the near future, take it to the next level by launching, recovering and refuelling Lynx Mk8 helicopters – the mainstay of aerial operations by the Navy's frigate and destroyer fleet.

It's the latest step down the road which is steadily turning a civilian support vessel into a Royal Navy ice patrol and survey ship.

The icebreaker, formerly MV Polarbjørn, has spent the spring and summer steadily being converted into a hydrographic survey ship to plug the gap left by HMS Endurance which nearly sank during a flooding incident in late 2008.

The ship now boasts miniguns (Gatling guns) and General Purpose Machine Guns to protect herself, Pacific 22 sea boats and their cradles, new

communications kit, the Navy's standard digital map system WECDIS, used for navigation by surface ships and submarines in place of traditional paper charts, and – crucially for Protector's impending mission to Antarctica – a multi-beam echo sounder for hydrographic surveys.

Lined up imminently is a spot of Operational Sea Training courtesy of the FOSTies, who'll test the response of the 88-strong ship's company to fire, flood, terrorist attacks and other challenges they might face while deployed 10,000 miles from home.

Protector's first Commanding Officer Capt Peter Sparkes is sure his men and women will come through with flying colours, because they've accomplished all that has been asked of them so far.

"The achievements of my ship's company thus far have been singularly impressive, the rapid progress made over the last three months is a testament to their drive, determination and professionalism; I couldn't be more proud of them."

Their progress in the run-up to Protector's maiden deployment is being followed, understandably, by Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar.

He visited the ship for a day at sea off Portsmouth, presented various awards and commendations to members of the ship's company on behalf of Capt Sparkes, thanked all aboard for their efforts in working so hard to ready Protector for that impending first tour of duty, and finally witnessed her impressive manoeuvrability as the sailors – using the 360° panoramic bridge and its state-of-the-art navigation and control consoles – brought the icebreaker back alongside.

On ice patrol with Protector, 1959-60 style, pages 32-33



The red plumb



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Picture: MC1 Lynn Friant, US Navy

Pembroke on public show

A MINI rainbow (minus the rain or, er, bow for that matter) is created as downwash from an SH-60 Sea Hawk whips up the waters of the Gulf during a UK-US minehunting exercise.

Three of Britain's quartet of minehunters joined in the workout (Ramsey on the left, Pembroke on the right and, out of shot, HMS Quorn) while the Americans committed aircraft from their specialist Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron HM15 plus Avenger-class minehunter USS Gladiator – like the RN vessels a seemingly constant presence in the Gulf.

The American naval forces come under the banner of the US Fifth Fleet which directs operations from an impressive modern headquarters in Bahrain...

...which is also home to the senior Royal Navy HQ in the region, the UK Maritime Component Command, responsible for directing the operations of the dozen-plus Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels spread across some 2½ million square miles of ocean east of Suez.

Some of the UKMCC team left their desks behind for a day and joined Pembroke for a demonstration day to see what the small Sandown-class warship can do.

Pembroke was accompanied out of harbour in Bahrain by US security boats who provide extra protection for ships using this vital hub of naval operations in the Gulf.

With the American boats still in company with Pembroke, demonstrations were already under way onboard the vessel courtesy of a fire-fighting exercise.

Fire dealt with by the damage control team, the ship made her way to the exercise area where a dummy mine was laid...

...and promptly found by the ship's Sonar 2093.

For confirmation that the contact was indeed a mine, Pembroke launched her small red Seafox system.

Steered from the Sandown-class ship's operations room it first finds the contact by sonar, then its camera, and, if necessary, disposes of the target by attaching a small warhead.

Once back on the surface, Seafox was placed in the hands of the visitors who had a go at steering the small underwater vehicle back to the ship.

The guests also got their hands on another joystick, this time driving Pembroke herself after the bridge team had shown just how manoeuvrable the warship is thanks to her unique Voith Schneider propulsion system which means she can spin on the spot if required.

With the minehunter back in the hands of the ship's company she was guided safely back to Bahrain.

Next stop Abu Dhabi and an unexpected visitor. Pembroke was taking a break from training in the Gulf with a few days in the UAE metropolis.

The stop-off coincided with a visit to the region by Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt, who's responsible for North Africa and the Middle East.

A change to the MP's programme afforded him the chance to visit Pembroke and learn about the RN's work in the region, accompanied by a journalist from *The National*, Abu Dhabi's English-language newspaper.



The ration revolution

YOU never forget your first rat pack.

We're not sure whether that's a good or bad thing, but it's the thought that counts.

In the heat of the Gulf, HMS St Albans' boarding team hand some food to the crew of one of the countless dhows plying their trade in these waters – part of the hearts and minds effort by the Saint to show she's here to help.

Hence this AA – Alongside Assurance – visit, one of hundreds carried out by the Portsmouth-based frigate on her patrols around the Gulf.

Sailors and Royal Marines draw up in the Type 23's sea boats alongside the fishing dhows, discuss any blazing issues, and present gifts of food and water – always welcome in the sweltering conditions experienced this time of year. The ship's doctor is also on hand to assist with any medical issues under our commitment to assist ill mariners.

If it sounds a bit touchy feely,

it's an indispensable way of gaining the trust and respect of local mariners – and above all to find out what's going on.

Whilst the very presence of a warship can represent a substantial deterrent to smugglers, the Saint needs to single out criminals from the law-abiding fisherman and merchants that ply their trade in the area.

Not only is the Gulf and its coastal region the single largest source of crude oil in the world with hundreds of supertankers transiting through every day; it is also at the crossroads between Europe, Africa and Asia, making it an important route for trade among these continents.

And yes, you can use all that wizardry and gadgetry with which St Albans bristles. The infra-red cameras, radars, the 829 NAS Merlin with its surveillance suite, the satellite

imagery beamed in from headquarters alongside other intelligence reports.

Or you can have a nice chat with fishermen. There's always room for the human touch.

"We normally visit over ten fishing dhows a day and the people we meet onboard are always glad to see us," said L/Cpl Ben Glover, one of the Royal Marines Commandos in the Saint's 'green' boarding team.

"It's amazing to watch the effect that giving them just a simple ration pack can make!

"These guys are obviously used to living on the bare essentials, so a bit of cold water and food goes a long way.

"The fishermen are normally happy to chat with us and every little thing we learn about their way of life can potentially help us beat the smugglers."

His ship is currently operating under the banner of

the Combined Maritime Forces, the three international naval task groups (150, 151 and 152) which strive to keep the waters east of Suez safe and free.

In the case of the Saint, the pertinent number is 152, responsible for the entire Gulf from the shores of Iraq to the Strait of Hormuz, working alongside the other navies and coastguards in the region to ensure the safe passage of mariners.

"Everybody onboard understands that the important work we are doing in the Gulf, helping to secure these important trading routes is vital to both the UK and the rest of the world," stresses the frigate's operations officer, Lt Cdr Will King.

"Whilst we go about our security patrols, building our understanding of the area, we will remain at a state of high readiness, able to react to any event whatever it may require of us whether it's humanitarian relief or military combat operations."



Pictures: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson, FRPU East

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Ultimate spear's shield



RIDING the choppy waters of the Clyde, HMS Dasher – one half of the Faslane Patrol Boat Squadron – makes her way out to meet the most potent weapon in Britain's military arsenal.

With her sister HMS Pursuer, and a cluster of raiding craft from the Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines, Dasher enforces Operation Imperious: safeguarding the nation's strategic deterrence on the surface.

Imperious ensures that the Royal Navy's quartet of ballistic missile boats – HMS Vanguard, Vengeance, Vigilant and Victorious – are escorted out and down the Clyde, providing an outer ring of steel for the leviathans as they set out on or

return from their three-month deterrent patrols.

It's a force protection role that for a long time was carried out by police launches.

But in the late Noughties, cover was beefed up initially by the Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines (who also defend the armaments depot at Coulport on Loch Long, home of the V-boats' Trident missiles).

And since the spring of last year, an extra layer of protection has been given by new arrivals on the Clyde, Dasher and Pursuer.

The two boats were sent to Cyprus to safeguard its waters and Allied warships using them – the island was a crucial hub during operations in Iraq – and brought back home to the UK when they were no

longer needed in the Mediterranean.

Rather than resume her pre-Cyprus duties – like the rest of the P2000 fleet, Dasher served a University Royal Naval Unit, in her case Bristol – she was assigned to Imperious.

In addition to protecting the bombers, the boat carries out similar duties in support of warships and submarines using Clyde Naval Base.

The small 25-year-old boat is the fifth Dasher in a line going back to the end of the 18th Century.

The first was an 18-gun sloop of 1797 which became a convict hulk in 1832 and was broken up in March 1838.

Next came a wooden paddle packet of 357 tons, launched at Chatham Dockyard on 5 December 1837 and sold in 1885.

A late Victorian destroyer, launched at

Poplar in November 1894, was the third Dasher, but it did not remain in service to fight in the Great War, being sold in May 1912.

Dasher No.4, formerly the Rio de Janeiro, was an 8,200-ton escort carrier, launched in the United States on 12 April 1941.

She is the most well-known Dasher by far, thanks to her unfortunate demise which has been surrounded in mystery for nearly 70 years.

Warrior's captain forbade his men jumping in to save him, but Rutland was convinced there wasn't "any real risk". He attached a bowline, jumped in and succeeded in hauling the poor soul back to the Engadine.

Picture: CPO Tam McDonald, FRPU North



Java.....1811
Atlantic.....1942
North Africa.....1942
Arctic.....1943

Class: Archer-class P2000 patrol boat
Pennant number: P280
Builder: Vosper Thornycroft, Southampton
Entered service: 1986
Displacement: 54 tonnes
Length: 20.8m (68ft)
Beam: 5.8m (19ft)
Draught: 1.8m (6ft)
Speed: 16 knots
Range: 550 miles
Complement: 5
Propulsion: 2 x Perkins CV 12 (Challenger tank) engines
Armament: 3 x 7.62mm General Purpose Machine Guns; Kevlar armour protection

Facts and figures

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES – Sqn Cdr Frederick Rutland

OCTOBER 1 1917.

The world has been at war for more than three bloody years.

The British Army is bearing the burden of fighting on the Western Front, struggling through the Flanders mud in the Third Battle of Ypres – better known as Passchendaele.

Bolshevik agitation is on the verge of toppling Russia's provisional government and instigating the second revolution of the year.

And on top of one of the Royal Navy's newest 'castles of steel', the mighty battle-cruiser Repulse, a seemingly ramshackle structure of wood and steel mounted on the turret of one of her 15in gun turrets: a

'runway' just 50ft long.

The upper deck of the ship was crammed with sailors, eager to witness history in the making – history recorded for posterity by a naval photographer, whose image is now held by the Imperial War Museum.

Aircraft had already been launched from similar platforms on cruisers since the early summer – and had scored a considerable success when a Sopwith Pup fighter launched from HMS Yarmouth downed a Zeppelin in the North Sea.

The Admiralty was still rather reluctant to convert its capital ships – it didn't want to turn an entire battleship into the wind so it could launch aircraft.

It fell to one of the most celebrated fliers of the day to devise the solution: Sqn Cdr Frederick Rutland – 'Rutland of Jutland'.

He suggested building a short platform on top of a turret – B Turret in the case of Repulse – only it needed to turn into the wind, not the entire ship. To prove his point, Rutland climbed into a Pup and took off.

Born on Trafalgar Day 1886, Frederick Joseph Rutland was typical of the colourful characters who pepper the early years of naval aviation: most possessed a somewhat renegade nature. All possessed

bravery bordering on the reckless.

He earned his sobriquet in the eponymous battle in 1916.

Rutland took a Short seaplane from HMS Engadine and scouted for the Grand Fleet, reporting the positions of numerous German light cruisers and destroyers (a communications mix-up meant his reports were never acted upon in time).

The next day, with Engadine still supporting the Grand Fleet in the aftermath of the battle, the seaplane carrier was asked to recover wounded men from the crippled cruiser HMS Warrior.



The two ships pitched violently as they conducted a transfer – not by jackstay, simply by being handed over from one ship to the other. The vessels bumped frequently, finally causing one of the wounded to slip from his stretcher into the North Sea.

Warrior's captain forbade his men jumping in to save him, but Rutland was convinced there wasn't "any real risk".

He attached a bowline, jumped in and succeeded in hauling the poor soul back to the Engadine.

Rutland's efforts had been in vain; the casualty had been crushed between the two ships. That the flier did not suffer the same fate was "miraculous".

He was rewarded with the Albert Medal – his bravery, stated the citation, "is reported to have been magnificent".

So too his flying skills. In the right conditions, Rutland could get a Sopwith Pup airborne at sea from the makeshift platforms he so strongly advocated in barely 20ft.

In a few months the advent of the first aircraft carriers Furious and Argus would render Rutland's platforms largely obsolete.

But in the summer and autumn of 1917, Frederick Rutland was one of the doyens of the Royal Naval Air Service.

So why is Rutland of Jutland not No.87 in our long-running series championing Heroes of the Royal Navy?

Well, largely because his post-war career is chequered – to put it mildly. In the 1920s – and now an officer in the fledgling Royal Air Force following the transfer of naval aviators to the new Service in April 1918 – Rutland was ordered to the Far East.

Whitehall ordered Rutland to share his expertise in naval aviation so that Japan could forge its own naval air force and carrier fleet.

But at some stage during his time in the land of the rising sun, Rutland 'went native'; his advising turned to spying, using

his import-export business as a cover.

For several years, he fed Tokyo with reports on the US Navy in particular, acting as one of their agents in America – although at various times the FBI, MI5 and MI6 were monitoring his activities (among those spying on the spy was one Anthony Blunt... who all the while was feeding Moscow state secrets).

As war between Japan and Britain and the USA loomed, however, he offered to act as a double agent – an offer which was rejected.

A few weeks later, in the wake of Pearl Harbor, he was interned, held captive without charge.

Among those lobbying for Rutland's release was old warhorse Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes – then MP for Portsmouth North and never a man to suffer fools.

Keyes had no time for defending someone who "seemed to be hunting with the hounds and running with the fox."

But he was convinced that Rutland had done "nothing inimical to British interests" and his insights into the Imperial Japanese Navy could prove invaluable.

Keyes' pleas to Parliament were to no avail. It was another 18 months before Rutland was released.

The pioneer flier never succeeded in clearing his name and took his own life in early 1949 aged 62.

As for Repulse, star of Rutland's demonstration in 1917, she was sunk within days of the outbreak of hostilities in 1941, destroyed by the Japanese air power the naval aviator had been sent to Tokyo to foster.

■ THIS photograph (Q 65579) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

Explorers and rescuers



A PARTY of VIPs was shown the ropes when University reservists from the East Coast staged a special demonstration day on board a Royal Navy patrol boat.

The distinguished guests, including the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Dr Ingrid Roscoe, took part in a training and rescue exercise on board Archer-class vessel HMS Explorer on the Humber.

Organised by the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) in Yorkshire and the Humber, the day allowed students from the universities in Leeds, Hull and Sheffield to show the type of training they undertake as part of the Yorkshire Universities Royal Naval Unit (YURNU) while studying.

Students from other universities in the region within reasonable travelling distance are also welcomed.

While under the wing of an URNU, students are members of the Royal Naval Reserve, as officer cadets or honorary midshipmen, though there are special conditions attached to that membership.

The exercise presented an opportunity for Dr Roscoe to take the wheel and drive Explorer down the Humber before handing over to the ship's company to witness a rescue serial with a Sea

King of 202 Sqn E Flight from RAF Leconfield in Beverley.

Two of the URNU midshipman reservists, Heather Thexton, of Leeds University, and Rebecca Perkins, of the University of Hull, were winched from the bijou deck of Explorer into the aircraft and then returned to sea level.

Other guests attending the day included Cdre Richard Baum, Naval Regional Commander Northern England, Cllr David Horton, the Lord Mayor of York, John Holtby, High Sheriff of East Riding of Yorkshire, Charlotte Britton, West Yorkshire Chair of the Institute of Directors, Dr David Sands, University of Hull and Dr Roy Millington, Sheffield Military Education Committee.

HMS Explorer, currently

commanded by Lt Dafydd Bryden, is based at Hull Marina, though the URNU itself has a HQ at Carlton Barracks in Leeds.

Although small by RN standards – the Archer-class boats displace a little over 50 tons when fully loaded – Explorer operates up and down the East Coast of England and can range further afield on the longer summer deployments; recent trips have included the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the Baltic nations.

The RFCA in Yorkshire and the Humber is a community-based regional organisation which has a remit to advise the Defence Council on Reservist issues.

Besides promoting and supporting Reservists and cadets in the region, it also helps bridge the gap between the military and civilians, particularly employers of Reservists.

■ URNUS in the Baltic – p28



● A Yorkshire URNU student is winched up to an RAF Sea King from HMS Explorer (left); Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire Dr Ingrid Roscoe at the helm of the patrol boat with URNU member Mid Heather Thexton (right)



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● A rare chance to let rip with Monmouth's 'Kryten' 4.5in main gun



● Mne 'Stretch' Taylor uses the laser targetting on his 5.56mm SA80A2 carbine during a training serial aboard HMS Monmouth



● Keeping Somerset's boarding teams on their toes, LPT Vicky Jarvis organises 'phys' on the flight deck and (left) the team search HMS Sabre off Gibraltar



Sister a

THE sisters in question being Her Majesty's Ships **Monmouth** and **Somerset**, who've traded places on the Fleet's most important mission presently: keeping the sea lanes of the world open for ships to sail safely.

It was off Aqaba in Jordan that the Black Duke handed the counter-piracy baton to her Devonport sister Somerset.

For the former thoughts turned to home (which the Black Duke will be entering just about the time you read this).

For the latter, thoughts turned to the demanding task at hand – although in fairness, Somerset's ship's company have thought about little else since leaving Devon.

Pretty much since the moment she left the jetty wall, F82 was pushed to the limit to ensure the 200 men and women aboard were ready for the rigours of the mission east of Suez, above all the sailors and Royal Marines of Fleet Protection Group who comprise Somerset's blue (RN) and green (RM) boarding teams. They've been up in the air in the ship's Merlin and on the water in her sea boats, roping on to deck from the helicopter or clambering up the ladder from the boat.

Both are dangerous and physically challenging manoeuvres. Throw full body armour into the equation, weapons, ammunition, communications kit and you understand why fitness is important.

In the case of 'rapid roping' from the helicopter, the commandos must support all that weight with their upper body strength alone as they slither around 50ft typically on to a ship below – so hand-in-hand with the practice boardings, there's a

lot of keep fit.

In Somerset's hangar, ropes have been rigged so the boarding team can conduct 'hang tests' – ie rapid roping minus the helicopter and massive drop.

Nor has there been any let-up for ship's company not involved in boardings (which, admittedly, isn't many – boarding operations are viewed as a 'whole ship' manoeuvre) as the frigate's physical training instructor, LPT Vicky Jarvis, has a thorough fitness regime in place.

She oversees four training circuits a day – two for the boarding parties, two for the ship's company.

The first real test of Team Somerset came as she left Gibraltar, where one of the Rock's patrol boats, HMS Sabre, decided to play the part of 'MV Star', a small coastal freighter... and a rather obstinate one at that.

The Star's 'master', Lt Adam Stevenson, stonewalled the frigate as she hailed the vessel. He had engine problems, he explained, was behind schedule and wished to make for Algeciras at full speed. He was not at all keen to be visited by a boarding party.

Somerset's operations room team weren't satisfied and subjected the Star to a barrage of questions.

"What nationality are you?" "How many crew?" "What is the cargo?" "Do you have any livestock on board?"

"Yes, a ship's parrot." (Which wasn't necessarily true...)

Somerset wasn't satisfied. Minutes later two RIBs packed with sailors and commandos were buzzing about the Star, before the green berets stepped on to her aft deck – and forced the crew to lie down on it.

The commandos quickly found a (toy) submachine gun, some (fake) drugs and a quantity of (fake) ammunition, but the Star's crew continued to be obstructive and the boat's violent pitching and rolling in the heavy swell gave the green berets rather green faces...

Perhaps it was the onset of seasickness which was the reason it took the boarding team half an hour to locate the prize: an officer cadet hiding in the engine room.

Once he was located the training ended, Star was once again HMS Sabre and the debriefing began.

"We learned a lot from this," a Royal Marines sergeant told Sabre's crew. "We're not used to working on such small boats and yet this is very similar in size to the craft we'll be boarding on this deployment."

Lt Stevenson was glad Sabre – a distinctive sight in Gibraltar waters thanks to the shark's teeth painted on her bow – had been of use to the frigate and her boarding parties.

"We enjoy helping RN ships prepare for their deployments – and it provides us with a greater variety of work," Sabre's CO said.

ALL of which is bread and butter to the ship's company of HMS Monmouth. They've been doing this day in, day out, minus the odd break, since the spring.

Much of what the Black Duke carried out during her five months on patrol east of Suez is, sadly, classified (which is why her appearances in these pages have been rather spasmodic).

That does not, however, mean we can't tell how busy she's been.

So how busy has she been? Very.

As of mid-September she'd



● Monmouth's sea boat races through the Red Sea





● One of Monmouth's boarding team drops in from Black Knight, the frigate's Lynx and (left) Somerset's Green team searches Saudi Arabia's HMS Taif



act(ion)

clocked up 28,494 miles on patrol (using up more than three million litres of fuel in the process).

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

And in the galley the chefs chopped, boiled, roasted and mashed 16,250kg of potatoes (which is about the weight of ten Ford Focuses), grilled 1,134kg of steak, fried 2,015kg of 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 fishing vessel and what might be a pirate mother ship (because the two look pretty similar).

THAT pattern of life is about to get a whole lot busier.

The monsoon season is drawing to a close, which means the pirates, people traffickers, smugglers and drug runners will be venturing to sea, as one of

the senior RN officers in the region imparted in the Red Sea.

Cdre John Clink, who heads the international Coalition Task Force 150, joined F82 off Jordan as she prepared to relieve Monmouth.

The commodore told the ship's company they would be "busy in the important work of counter-terrorism and counter-piracy".

Which is exactly what Monmouth said too as the two ships formally handed over duties off the historic port of Aqaba and the Black Duke passed on tips to her successor.

"HMS Monmouth has done a fantastic job over the last six months," said Somerset's CO Cdr Paul Bristowe.

"It is now time for Somerset to take up the tasking and I have complete confidence that we are ready to deliver what is required of us."

"During Britain's economic recovery the free and safe passage of sea trade is vital."

He and his shipmates doffed caps and saluted the Black Duke.

Overall, says Monmouth's Commanding Officer Cdr Dean Bassett, it has been "a very active and successful deployment in which every single person onboard has played an important part."

"My ship's company have given their best to ensure that Monmouth was ready for the many challenges we faced on operations, and I am immensely proud of their commitment and professionalism; they are a credit to The Black Duke and the Royal Navy."

With pirate duties done, the Black Duke began the three-week journey home via one

pitstop (Cyprus) to drop off her advance leave party (they take charge of the ship when she returns to Devonport on October 3) and two 'post operation decompression' visits.

The latter allow the ship's company to relax and let their hair down after the strain of five months east of Suez. Palermo in Sicily and, more popularly, Barcelona were picked. In Catalonia, Monmouth collected PACAS (not tapas) for the final leg of her deployment: parents and children at sea, to give them a taste of life in the Black Duke... and a taste of Biscay.

Meanwhile, somewhere east of Suez...

AFTER exercising with the Jordanian fast patrol boat King Abdullah, Somerset headed south through the Red Sea and a rendezvous with Saudi Arabia's HMS Taif.

As a key link between Suez and the open waters of the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea is one of the world's busiest and most important shipping lanes.

So after conducting some deft handling manoeuvres, the combined crews of the Somerset and Taif (pronounced *tie-eef*) maximum use of their rendezvous by honing boarding drills, culminating in the Saudi ship's captain allowing the commandos to demonstrate how they board and search, after clambering aboard from their frigate's two sea boats.

Practice over, the green berets shared tactics with their fellow mariners.

After a traditional exchange of ship's badges and formal salute as the two frigates sailed in company, the ships went their separate ways with HMS Taif's captain Cdr Fahad Al-Shomrani declaring it had been "a pleasure to work with the Royal Navy."

Amen to that.





Making MASF contributions for a year

ONE of the Navy's unsung – but vital – units has marked its first birthday with a bit of cake and coffee.

Well the Culdrose HQ did; the front-line men and women of the Maritime Aviation Support Force (MASF) were rather busy, committed across the globe on operations.

MASF was set up initially to provide aviation specialists for ships and land bases around the world requiring personnel to support flying operations – hence the unit's title (and motto – helping to reach the heights).

But its role has expanded to become a 'one-stop shop' for the entire Senior Service, providing additional bodies – chefs, stewards, stores accountants, ops room experts, engineers and medics – wherever the Fleet needs them.

Right now that means (deep breath) home waters, the Mediterranean, the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, the Gulf, Caribbean (where there's a team on Wave Ruler supporting the ship's 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx on a disaster relief/counter-drugs duties), the Falklands, off north-east Africa (counter-piracy duties) and off Libya (supporting NATO's Unified Protector).

In addition, MASF maintains a permanent presence on HMS Clyde, the Falklands' constant guardian, and RFAs Argus and Fort Victoria (the latter has just begun a sustained counter-piracy operation), while teams from Culdrose are always aboard Fort Vic, Wave-class tankers and Bay-class amphibious ships to maintain their Phalanx automated Gatling gun systems.

We don't do 'grip and grins'

BUT in this case, we'll make an exception...

This is not the inaugural meeting of the Royal Navy's Darth Vader fan club, but a new complex in Portsmouth Naval Base to ensure sailors are fully prepared for the invidious threats of 21st Century warfare.

Naval Base Commander Cdre Rob Thompson (on the left in LA(Phot) Jenny Lodge's photograph, just in case you didn't recognise him...) formally opened the test facility for respirators – the first of three such centres being built across the Fleet ahead of the roll-out of a new mask.

The General Service Respirator, which has been under development for the past seven years, is replacing the existing S10 mask and is an essential piece of lifesaving equipment carried by all personnel on ships.

It protects against a wide range of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats, and also allows sailors to continue their day job while wearing it.

All the respirators have to be tested once a year to ensure there are no leaks and that the filters and mask still work effectively.

To that end the new Advanced Respirator Test Set building at Sheer Jetty in Portsmouth Naval Base features six cubicles which are designed to fill with smoke

while the sailor wearing the respirator stands inside.

The mask is connected to a laptop and around eight minutes of tests are carried out to ensure the respirator works effectively.

For each ship's company the testing can take between two days and two weeks to complete, depending on the number of people going through the facility.

The new respirator has a better field of vision, and breathing and talking are much easier for the wearer than with the existing S10 mask.

The GSR will be introduced to the Fleet in 2014, but until that day the new facility will test the existing masks – and relieve ships of that burden.

"Having this type of facility on the naval base ensures that each ship rigorously tests their respirators prior to deployment and avoids an unacceptably high burden on the ship's staff," said Lt Cdr Rob McClurg of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Damage Control Team.

"The new respirator is a fantastic replacement for the S10 and we are delighted to be bringing it into service."

Following the Portsmouth facility, ARTS centres will be opened at HMS Raleigh and Faslane next autumn.



'Not one unhappy matelot to be found'

THE last time the people of Ledbury showed their appreciation of the men and women in the ship which carries the town's name around the world it was 'chucking it down'.

But when sailors from HMS Ledbury returned to Herefordshire to parade through the historic market town, the gods were smiling on them.

Around 1,500 people – that's one in eight Ledburians – lined the streets to applaud the ship's company who were exercising their right of freedom of the borough.

The visit to the small town, between Hereford and Gloucester, was the highlight of a six-day visit to the West Country by the Portsmouth-based minehunter.

The ship herself cannot negotiate the River Leadon; she berthed 40 miles away in Bristol for the duration of the stay.

She was joined for the last stretch of her passage to Bristol – a short hop from Avonmouth to Arncliffe in the heart of the city's rejuvenated harbour district – by Ledbury's Mayor Cllr Allen Conway.

The Avon is not an especially navigable river; it's only passable for larger vessels in a relatively brief period straddling high tide. "At all other times, the river's nothing more than a deep, muddy gorge with a small stream running to the sea," explained navigator S/Lt Matt Millyard.

Luckily he got all his calculations spot on and the ship safely arrived at her destination. Once alongside, there were more guests to host: 40 VIPs who were treated to tours of the vessel, given an insight into life aboard and what the ship's company do day-to-day.

For ordinary Ledbury folk, buses were laid on the next day so they could look around (the gangway was also opened for some 1,000 Bristolians to wander aboard for a tour too), and Sea Cadets from Ross and Monmouth, plus members of the Ledbury Hunt (for whom the warship is named) and Hereford Royal Naval Association were invited to look around the RN's

oldest operational vessel.

Meanwhile in Ledbury... In addition to the freedom parade (surprisingly, despite the ship's longevity, only bestowed as recently as 2007), there was a clash on the football field between a select XI from the minehunter and Ledbury Town; the latter won, says S/Lt Millyard "by a score too great to print", although the wounds of defeat were healed somewhat by a hog roast and drinks at the rugby club.

As for the march past, it saw music provided by the South-west Sea Cadet Band and youngsters from TS Ross and Antelope accompanied the ship's company through the streets as did local Army cadets and Royal British Legion veterans, with Lady Darnley, Herefordshire's Lord Lieutenant taking the salute.

And as with the football clash, the parade was followed by generous local hospitality with plenty of food (lots of homemade pies from the RBL) and drinks laid on. Some sailors went back for third and fourth helpings and, we're told, "there was not one unhappy matelot to be found".

The crew have been aboard the ship for the past eight months and are preparing the vessel for a deployment with a NATO minehunting force in January, so a few days with their affiliated town was a very welcome break from lots of training.

"The strong links that have been forged over the ship's 30 years of service have been a great source of support when we're away from home on operations around the world," said Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Tony Williams.

"We've been blown away by the hospitality and generosity of the town and I look forward to coming back to Ledbury in the near future."

Back on board Ledbury, the sailors found their stay in Bristol extended as storms lashed the UK.

"There are many things that the oldest operational warship in the Fleet may be able to do, but sailing into that sort of sea was probably not wise," said S/Lt Millyard.

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson, RNAS Yeovilton





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The Martians have landed!

AT HMS Collingwood no less...

Rather than fleeing for the hills, the local populace of warfare trainees are flocking to get to know the new visitors.

The 'martians' are, in fact, modular computer blocks – more akin in appearance to Pixar's Wall-E than anything out of *War of the Worlds* – and are a key element of the new Maritime Composite Training System (MCTS).

The blocks can be swiftly rearranged, refitted with different keyboards, and with screens that represent accurately the different panels within various operation rooms, even down to digital bolts.

So within an hour the ops room of HMS Daring can become that of HMS Ocean; or perhaps HMS Kent and HMS Argyll could join forces with veteran destroyer HMS York.

On the day the new complex was formally unveiled, York's crew were in full flow in an exercise.

For anyone familiar with the interior of a Type 42's ops room, the set-up seems somewhat spacious and bright in comparison, but all the units are arranged in the appropriate sequence and it doesn't take long for the mind to adjust to the immersive environment.

As the lights lifted for end of exercise, headsets were pulled off

and voices are heard: "That was emotional, that was"; "That was bang on."

It is impressive as you see a bulkhead depicted on an overhead screen, with the physical switches, lights and readouts that are characteristic of ops rooms life, there to be switched on in a touch.

The MCTS, designed and built by defence firm BAE Systems, can be found at Cunningham Building in HMS Collingwood, and in Discovery Building in HMNB Devonport.

But don't let the distance fool you.

A ship's company in Devonport can be tackling the same exercise in the same virtual battlespace as the crew of a destroyer in Collingwood – and indeed with allies and coalition partners as needed.

Cdre Tim Lowe, the commodore of the Maritime Warfare School, introduced the new training system stressing: "This is a revolution in the way we do our Naval training."

"With this system, we are delivering premier league footballers – the best striker, the best defender, the best goalkeeper – to the Fleet."

Of course, the arrival of the MCTS martians at Collingwood mean a farewell to the Cook simulators at the former HMS Dryad.

Cook Building in Southwick Park closed its doors to the last training course at the end of July.

During its almost four-decade lifespan, some 50,000 trainees ventured into the ship simulators within.

For many the final closure of the Cook simulators may seem like the end of an era, but Cdr Bill Evans, the officer commanding the Warfare Training Group, admits that he is "very impressed" by the MCTS.

He said: "Cook looked and felt right, but it was not that complex.



● Sailors from Type 45 destroyer HMS Diamond training in the simulated ops room with MCTS

"There is real operational software behind these systems, we can rehearse missions, tactics and procedures."

He praised the flexibility and adaptability of the new system, and the improvement in training capability offered by the new facilities.

As well as different ships operating in the same scenario in the same room, or even in different counties, there are a team of roleplayers who can take up a variety of supporting roles in the exercises, whether filling missing billets or bringing a whole new vessel into the mix.

For anyone who remembers Dryad, the Warspite debriefing

room in Collingwood will seem somewhat familiar, although – of course – it is somewhat higher tech.

Ian Carter explained: "We can playback what people have done in the trainers."

He admitted: "In MCTS, the wind is always spookily in the worst direction, driving you towards the submarine."

"Funnily enough – wind, tides, the whole of the environment, it's never in their favour..."

There are five Warfare Team Trainers – three at Collingwood and two in Devonport – and nine Electronic Classroom Trainers (ECT) – the majority in Collingwood.

The trainers array the martians – the staff's name for the consoles, not ours before anyone asks – into the appropriate layout for any of the major classes of current Naval ship.

The ECTs mirror the expected form of classroom-based training, although again networking offers flexibility in classroom usage and set-up.

Last words to Cdre Lowe: "When I first joined Collingwood there were a lot of questions from the team about losing the Cook facility at Dryad."

"But once put into the training here, and once they realised the versatility of what they can do here – they wouldn't go back."



● A petty officer from Type 23 HMS Argyll uses a training unit in the simulated ops room with MCTS

Pictures: BAE Systems



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A FORCE FOR GOOD

HMS Heroes sets the standard

YOU might see an unusual standard on parade during November's remembrance ceremonies on Plymouth Hoe.

Children in the Plymouth area have banded together to form HMS Heroes – although in this case HMS stands for Her Majesty's Schools.

The group offers support to children and young people of Service families.

The Plymouth group has 1,500 members from all three Service backgrounds, drawn from 14 schools and seven pre-schools in the area – and is keen to share its experience with other regions.

Each school has a regular meeting, then the Plymouth HMS Heroes group meets once a month, with two or three children from each school attending.

And that standard? Provided courtesy of the Royal British Legion and Serco.

Which is why the children of HMS Heroes are dedicating their energies right now to raising money for the 90th anniversary of the Legion.

So far the children have taken part in the 70th anniversary of the Blitz in the Minster Church of St Andrew, given a presentation to education experts from the MOD, had their standard dedicated at HMS Drake, and been at the heart of Armed Forces week at Plymouth Hoe.

HMS Heroes runs on a shoe-string, relying on donations from businesses and the Legion, so if you would like to offer support or find out about setting up a similar scheme in your area, contact Heather Ogburn, Senior Adviser to Plymouth Services for Children and Young People, Plymouth City Council on heather.ogburn@plymouth.gov.uk, or call 01752 307485.

Tries to help

SOME of the greatest rugby players from around the world will line up at Twickenham Stadium on December 3 for the Heroes Rugby Challenge, which aims to raise money for Help for Heroes.

The H4H Northern Hemisphere team will be managed by Lawrence Dallaglio, Jason Leonard and Ieuan Evans, while the Southern Hemisphere XV will be overseen by Michael Lynagh and Sean Fitzpatrick.



Bastion to Blighty

"REMIND me again whose idea this was?" asked Surg Lt Alex Scott as she started to row another 15 miles in the gym for 'Bastion to Blighty' – a challenge that will see Forces medics in Afghanistan collectively rowing, cycling or running from Camp Bastion to the UK the long way round.

Bastion to Blighty was the idea of four RN General Duties Medical Officers – Surg Lts Iain Edgar, Tom Stevenson and Alex Scott and Surg Lt Cdr Justin Hassett.

The four initially planned to raise money for Service charities by getting in to the gym and cycling, running or rowing the 'as the crow flies' distance from Camp Bastion to Blighty, some 5,000 miles over land and just 26 miles of sea.

Other staff at the hospital in Camp Bastion wanted to get



● Members of the Quart Club, in their trusty vessel the Floating Firkin, on the River Thames

Oars for good

SIX Engineer Lieutenants are now tending their strained backs and blistered hands (and blistered other bits) after rowing the spectacular Great River Race along the Thames.

Oar-ver the moon to have finished (and running out of oar-based puns) the team put in a respectable time of three hours, 15 minutes and 43 seconds to row the 21-mile course from London's Docklands to Ham in Surrey.

Alongside 300 other rowing boats of every shape and size, Lts James Binns, Matt Cox, Gregor Davidson, Ian Guild, Shaun Riordan and Paul Thomson propelled their Quart Club vessel *The Floating Firkin* through wind and rain to the finishing line to be placed a very respectable half-way through the field at 143rd overall.

They were the first to cross the finish line rowing their particular

design of Sea Cadet boat (although to be fair the others were crewed by under-16s) and were also among the best-dressed rowers.

"We were wearing proper shirts and a club tie," said Lt Cox "and we also took our Quart tankards with us, which was quite lucky really, as we ended up needing something to bail water out of the boat!"

The six were flying the flag (literally) – a distinctive quart tankard flag – for the Royal Navy Engineers' Quart Club.

The club was formed in 1930 to encourage (yes, seriously) sailors to take up beer drinking and ditch the gin habit.

Since then it's widened its remit with the emphasis less on drinking (boo) and more on fundraising (hooray).

"Some people assume the Quart Club's only about sampling real ale by the two-pint measure,"

Class act by Sultan team

CHILDREN at Lee-on-the-Solent Junior School returned to bright new classrooms last month, thanks to some timely help from HMS Sultan sailors.

While the pupils were enjoying their summer holidays, students on the Petty Officers' Air Engineering Technicians qualifying course painted and renovated four rooms.

LAET Liam Ball, who led the team, found some time in the training schedule for a community project and approached the Hampshire school, whose headmistress Mrs Charlton was delighted to have the Navy's help.

School caretaker Mike Newman, who provided help and guidance, said: "The rooms look great and the children loved having fresh new classrooms when they returned in September."

Blockbusters

AS THE 8,000 tonne mid-section of the first Queen Elizabeth-class carrier made its stately way by sea from Govan to Rosyth, 76 cyclists were pedalling their hearts out to beat it by land.

The 'Beat the Block' contest was organised by members of the Aircraft Carrier Alliance to mark the journey of the section to its final outfitting and assembly destination.

The cyclists tracked the route of the block, with overnight stops at Fort William, Elgin, Peterhead and St Andrews, to raise money for the RNRMC.

says Lt Guild, "but I reckoned we had a team here that could put in a credible time."

"We're very grateful to MBDA who covered our entry costs and provided a good boost for the charity pot."

Aside from RN pride, the real reason for the club's participation in the race is to help Walton-on-the-Naze Sea Cadets and the Shadwell Basin Outdoor Activity Centre.

The latter runs watersports and outdoor activities for

underprivileged young people in east London and along the Thames.

"Both the Sea Cadets and Shadwell Basin do fantastic work providing opportunities for young people who wouldn't otherwise have the chance to experience them. Both rely on charitable donations to reach as many people as possible," said Lt Riordan.

You can support the officers' efforts at www.charitygiving.co.uk/quartclub london

Central London sanctuary

THERE aren't many places to stay in central London which offer superb accommodation, food and facilities for as little as £40 a night, but the Victory Services Club is one of them, and is keen to spread the word within the Royal Navy.

The club, in Seymour Street, near Marble Arch, is a registered charity offering accommodation and dining facilities for retired and serving members of all ranks of the Armed Forces.

It also provides respite and welfare breaks for wounded Servicemen and women and prides itself on being London's 'Haven for Heroes' and their families.

The 'Haven for Heroes' scheme offers a special room rate of £32.50 per night for a single en-suite room, £45 for a double, and £65 for a family room for those returning from Afghanistan.

Serving personnel can join the Victory Services' Club free of charge – they just have to fill in an application form. Membership can then be extended to parents and children over 18, at modest annual rates. It is also open to all veterans, reservists, widows and widowers.

The club held an all-ranks lunch for the RN last month, attended by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, to publicise its work to the Service.

For details see www.vsc.co.uk

Pub donation

A FUN day held at the College Farm pub at Watchfield near Swindon raised £2,500 for the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund (RMCTF).

The cheque was handed to the chairman of RMA Poole, Geoff Hayward.

The pub is at one of the 'vigil points' along the former repatriation route from RAF Lyneham to Oxford.



● CPO(D) Ian 'Scouse' Fleming and Lt Cdr Al Nekrews in their running kit...

Great South Trudge

THE Mark 6 Explosive Ordnance Disposal suit is something of a distinctive bit of kit... and participants in this month's Great South Run may be somewhat surprised to see two men tackling the run in the full 70lb suits.

No surprises, then, to discover that these men are part of the Navy's Bomb Disposal Unit, SDU2, based in Horsea Island in Portsmouth.

CPO(D) Ian 'Scouse' Fleming and Lt Cdr Al Nekrews will be covering the distance in the hefty suits to raise money for BLESMA, the veterans' organisation that helps people who have lost limbs serving their country.

Scouse said: "Obviously there's a lot of servicemen coming back from Afghanistan, and we've got lads

out on the ground doing IED (improvised explosive device) work.

"This could affect any of our guys – but hopefully not."

"It's a great cause to run it for with the line of work we're in."

Scouse, a veteran of the small ship and minehunter fleets, has tackled a few charity challenges before – Land's End to John O'Groats, the London Marathon, a 65-mile non-stop run – and admitted: "I never make it easy for myself. It would be boring if it was easy."

The duo are hoping to raise £5,000 through their efforts.

If you would like to pledge your support, please visit www.justgiving.com/scouse-cruise.

Sailors pedal north

THE northbound roads of Britain have been full of pedalling sailors of late.

A dozen 'Fosties' from Flag Officer Sea Training left their base in Plymouth to set off on a 1,025-mile cycle ride to raise money for wounded colleagues.

And seven submariners from HMS Vigilant hopped on their saddles at Devonport for a journey to Clyde Naval Base, 550 miles and six days distant.

The 12 Fosties set off from Land's End for the first of 12 stages to John O'Groats, taking - you've guessed it - 12 days.

Their route took them through HMS Drake, over Dartmoor, over the Severn Bridge and through Wales, skirting the edge of the Lake District before heading west of Glasgow, through Fort William to John O'Groats via Inverness.

The team ascended over 45,000 feet during the event.

They hope to raise £5,000 for the RNRMC and BLESMA.

Team leader Cdr Mike Smith said: "Cycling the length of the country is considered one of the great UK cycling challenges and completing it required mental and physical endurance as well as a sense of humour."

"It was a tremendous opportunity to raise money for these worthwhile causes, as well as providing a fantastic, once-in-a-lifetime team-building experience for us all."

As for the seven deeps, the idea for their fund-raising ride was hatched over a beer in the bar.

Organiser PO Mike Hughes said: "What started as an idea over a few pints turned into a very challenging event which was painful, tiring, wet and windy at times, but always enjoyable."

During their journey the cyclists ascended some 14,777 feet (half the height of Everest) and collectively burned more than 312,000 calories - that's five-and-a-half stones of fat.

"The first two days were definitely the hardest," said Mike, "but after we got that out of the way we began to settle into the journey."

"The Welsh hills were still a challenge though, as were the hills at Kendal."

Luckily the local Sea Scouts of the old Westmorland town were on hand to offer the sailors some hospitality, providing hot meals, accommodation and some cash towards their charity total.

"It was a fantastic feeling to have finally reached our destination when we got to Faslane," said PO Hughes.

"We are still tallying up our total, but it looks as though we raised in the region of £500 for the RNRMC."

WAGS to riches for the Bootneckettes

TWO groups of WAGS - wives and girlfriends of Royal Marines - are digging for gold on the charity front.

First, the Bootneckettes. It took a few beers and a lot of thought before a group of Royal Marines agreed on an affectionate name for their female supporters.

The Bootneckettes (*some of whom are pictured below*) are a team of wives, girlfriends and sisters who aim to complete the tough 4km Commando Challenge endurance course across Woodbury Common in Devon this month.

Team captain Jenny Robey said: "Some of us want to improve our fitness, others want to get back into shape after having a baby and others want to conquer their fears."

"What better way is there to overcome claustrophobia than by taking on the sheep dip?"

She added: "Currently, the Bootneckettes number 20, and what a mixed bunch we are..."

"We started last year, a band of sisters made up of RM wives and girlfriends, but it has developed into something else as women who have met online through RM WAG groups have roped in friends and family."

She said they all have one thing in common: "A connection, an affinity, a bond with the Royal Marines."

"Some have partners serving in Afghanistan, but all care deeply about the work of the group and have signed up for the challenge for a variety of reasons."

She added: "Those with partners in the RM just want to do one thing. They want to make their partners proud."

They aim to raise over £1,140 for the Devon Air Ambulance Trust and the C Group and are already nearly three-quarters of the way there.

To donate or find out more, go to www.justgiving.com/ReturnOfTheBootneckettes



Hot on the heels of the Bootneckettes comes another initiative from the Booties' better halves - the 2012 WAGS' calendar.

A group of RM wives and girlfriends posed for photographer Nicola Grimshaw-Mitchell, who specialises in turning wives and girlfriends into drop-dead gorgeous cover girls.

The results can be seen in the calendar, on sale for £8.99 plus postage - all proceeds going to the RM Charitable Trust Fund.

WAGS organiser Becci Banfield (or Miss December, *pictured above*) said: "All the girls had a wonderful time at the photo-shoot."

"To say some of our girls were nervous was an understatement as, understandably, everyone had their own reservations and worries

about getting their kit off in front of the camera, but all the girls were put completely at ease."

"After hours of hair and make-up each picture was shot in a matter of minutes - hard to believe when you see the end result."

Navy News is publicising the WAGS calendar on the strict understanding that our readers

aren't tempted to buy it instead of the more traditional Navy News calendar, with its equally exciting photos of ships and helicopters, which will be on sale very soon...

So, for those who want ships and WAGS on their wall, visit www.mwagscalendar.co.uk and see p33 for details of the official RN Navy News 2012 calendar.

Divers blow up trees...

...AT THE request of the Forestry Commission, we hasten to add.

The bomb disposal experts from HM Naval Base Clyde's Northern Diving Group swapped ocean floors for forest floors when they helped the Forestry Commission clear up woods at Puck's Glen, near Dunoon in Scotland.

The team were called in to help after several large trees fell during recent storms, blocking some of the popular public walkways through the scenic site.

The divers used controlled explosions to remove seven fallen trees, clearing the way for Forestry Commission workers to get in to use their chainsaws.

The idea of asking the Navy divers for help came when Forestry Commission workers approached Army personnel training in the area for advice, and they passed them on to the RN bomb disposal unit.

"We were really happy to help," said WO(D) Karl Roberts, who was part of the clear-up team.

"We treated it as a training exercise. We are used to disposing of mines and ordnance at sea and improvised explosive devices on land, so it was a technical challenge to assist with this type of work."

He added: "It went extremely well and we even managed to disintegrate one tree which had fallen on a bridge leaving the bridge intact."

Centre opened

ST Dunstan's, the charity for blind and visually-impaired serving and ex-Servicemen and women, opened the doors to its brand-new rehabilitation and training centre in Llandudno in September.

Adventurous break for happy campers

CULDROSE-based 771 Naval Air Squadron had fun in the sun (well, fun, anyway) with a series of adventure training and team-building events.

Over five days at the CO's Summer Camp at Penhale, near Newquay, squadron members were able to take part in a huge range of sports and activities including archery and paint-balling, mountain biking, golf, deep-sea fishing and surfing.

While the activities were light-hearted, there was a serious purpose too - the aim was to strengthen the camaraderie and excellent working relationships within the squadron and also raise money for charities.

POACMN Shaun 'Boogie' Knights, one of the event organisers and a Search and Rescue aircrewman, explained: "The pressure of maintaining a 24-hour, 365-day search and rescue response in addition to our key training role needs to be balanced with an opportunity for the whole squadron of aircrew, engineers, logistics and support staff to get away and experience challenging and new opportunities."

He added "It's great that we are able to offer such a wide-ranging series of activities that cater for all levels of fitness."

AET Lee Samuell, whose young son is currently training for Newquay Juniors Football Club, saw the summer camp as an ideal opportunity to arrange a

friendly football match between a 771 NAS XI and a Newquay AFC XI to raise funds for the Help for Heroes charity and as a fitting finale for the summer camp.

Lee said: "My young son regularly trains with Newquay Juniors AFC, and having seen all the hard work during last season, he wanted to help them raise funds and Help for Heroes seemed ideal."

"We had a series of raffles and the prizes have been kindly donated from local companies."

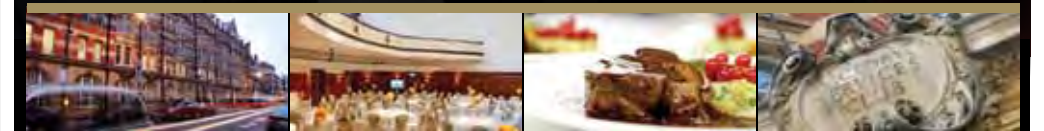
There is also a website for anyone who may wish to make a contribution: www.bemycharity.co.uk/NewquayAFCVs771NAS

The squadron's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Chris 'Damage' Canning, said: "This week truly reflects an opportunity to use the well-planned series of challenging Adventurous Training activities to test ourselves and strengthen the team camaraderie."

"This will ensure that the squadron personnel are fit in mind and body, ready for all the demands of our profession as the autumn/winter period approaches."

771 Naval Air Squadron is one of two busy Royal Navy Search and Rescue units - the other is Gannet SAR Flight based at Prestwick, Scotland.

Often featuring in the pages of Navy News, 771 NAS undertook 260 search and rescue call outs in 2010 and a further 183 up to September this year.



Regimental Dining at the VSC

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For further information on military private dining please ring 0207 616 8334/8305 or email events@vsc.co.uk

www.vsc.co.uk/events

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● Royal Naval Reservists training on the firing ranges in Cyprus

Reservists' solar power

IT IS all very well training with all the kit, all the weapons and all the tactics.

There is another factor that can make all the difference – the climate.

That's why the Arctic warfare specialists in the Royal Marines head off to Norway in the depths of winter – you cannot replicate those conditions outside a deep freeze (and it's difficult to launch a meaningful attack inside a deep freeze...).

And that is why a group of 78 Royal Navy Reservists, mainly members of the Seaman Reserve Branch, plus two invaluable medics and a chaplain, made the trip from RAF Brize Norton to Cyprus to conduct Exercise Helios Encounter 2011.

The purpose of the exercise was to qualify members of the branch in the first part of the new Basic Close Combat (BCC) course, featuring the SA80 A2 rifle, and First Aid Level 2.

With blue skies and fierce sunshine virtually guaranteed, it also gave realistic exposure to the heat and stress which Servicemen and women would encounter on operations in the Near to Middle East – far higher than you would find even in the hottest summer in the UK.

Every RNR unit in the UK was represented, from HMS President in London to HMS Hibernia in Lisburn.

A course of such ambitious scope also required the pooling of many of the Seaman Reserves' most experienced senior ratings to form the training staff.

In this regard Helios Encounter was a true 'gathering of the clan'.

The exercise was commanded by the Branch SO1 Cdr David Bucknell, with Regional Force Protection Officer (East England) Lt Suzanne Wood as 2I/C.



● A reservist concentrates on firing on the range at RAF Dhekelia in eastern Cyprus

However, as acknowledged by Cdr Bucknell, the brains and organisation behind the course was WO Hurlow, the branch WO Training.

Upon arriving at RAF Akrotiri, personnel were transferred to RAF Dhekelia in the east of the island, to allow access to its extensive

range facilities.

With less than a day to acclimatise to training in temperatures of more than 40°C, work began on weapon drill practice, rifle maintenance and calibration.

These are all straightforward tasks for the competent reservist,

but the combination of soaring heat and full fighting order (body armour, webbing, helmet, ammunition and rifle) was to prove demanding for even the fittest of participants.

The next day was the first of a week of intensive live fire training on Dhekelia range.

Firers were required to achieve tight groupings in a variety of physical stances, at distances ranging from 50 to 300 metres.

This was not limited to fixed targets, with some shoots involving 'pop-up' targets, requiring students to apply all the marksmanship principles they had learned in achieving 'snap' and rapid-fire shots.

All personnel learnt that shooting is a science, with multiple factors to consider, always compounded by the roasting temperatures.

Fortunately, there was a wealth of experience in the instructors, and more than one firer exceeded their own expectations.

AB Shaw said: "I never expected to suffer so much with training in full combat gear in this heat.

"It really knocks it out of you, but I feel now that I am better prepared not only with my firing ability and confidence with the SA80A2, but also a greater understanding of how to handle working in conditions found in the Gulf or Afghanistan."

Training was not limited to the day, with students required to complete evening sessions in the Dismounted Close Combat Trainer simulator, as well as PT sessions conducted by ex-Royal Marine PO Shaw.

The latter were the rare occasions where the troops were not required to muster in full Fighting Order...

The intensity of the course was further compounded by the frequent power cuts caused by the explosion at the Cypriot Naval Base that wiped out half the island's power generation capacity, which affected on range equipment and accommodation.

Determination and flexibility were required throughout the two weeks.

The first Friday of the exercise

saw a particularly hard day for the team.

Time was limited on Dhekelia range owing to the power cuts, and completing the necessary shoots by close of play required a tremendous effort by both staff and students; thanks to a colossal effort all round, the programme was completed, allowing the exercise to transfer to RAF Akrotiri for Phase 2.

After a physically and mentally challenging week, the words of the CO summed up his pride on the reservists' achievements: "After forming, storming and norming in our training, we had now proved that we're performing," said Cdr Bucknell.

The second week qualified students in baton-handling techniques, as well as introducing the Rules of Engagement (ROE) – critical knowledge to any deployed Seaman Reserve member who might be required to use his weapon in defence.

Week 2 also featured the Limit of Night Visibility (LNV) shoot, as well as the opportunity for students to familiarise themselves with the SUSAT optical sight, with the majority of students completing the RN Level 2 First Aid course.

The course also allowed branch members to bond and develop friendships – a valuable opportunity for ratings that will deploy and form a SPF (Ship Protection Force) team.

The conclusion at the end of the two weeks was that Helios Encounter achieved what it set out to do – initial training for reservists committed to protecting through arms the fleet and personnel of the RN and RFA.

Plans are already in place for next summer, where the Branch Management Team aim to target the courses that seem to be the most difficult to complete.

Tribute to a 'forgotten' invasion

OVERLOOKING St Tropez harbour – waters typically associated with playboys, starlets and the jet-set – LS Steve Churcher lays a wreath on behalf of his HMS President shipmates.

The wreath rests on the monument to men who gave their lives in a 'forgotten' invasion – the liberation of southern France in August and September 1944, known as Operation Dragoon.

Part-time sailors from London's reservist unit spent four days on a battlefield tour of the Dragoon sites, from parachute drop zones and the assault beaches to the ports of Marseille and Toulon.

This is the ninth year President sailors have headed overseas to visit the sites of wars past, led by perennial guides Lts Roddy Urquhart and Tony Scott, better known as 'Scot and Scott Tours'.

In the past they've taken their shipmates to France, Belgium, Malta, Estonia, Finland, Gibraltar, Spain and Germany – and one day of the tour always features a visit to their host nation's navy.

In this instance, the *Marine Nationale* invited the Presidents into Toulon – the home of the French fleet in the Mediterranean – and showed them around.

The visit coincided with the arrival of France's flagship FS Charles de Gaulle in port after



● The President tourists in front of French frigate FS Forbin at Toulon

operations off Libya.

"Seeing the French carrier at close quarters was very special," said OC Debbie Willis, a new addition to the organising committee.

"Given the strategic importance of the Anglo-French alliance, it seemed so apt seeing the pride of the French Navy in her home port, fresh back from action off Libya."

The highlight for most tour attendees, however, was the moving service of remembrance on the St Tropez waterfront.

In brilliant sunshine, LS Churcher laid a wreath while Lt Scott read prayers and locals and tourists paused to watch.

Other less formal, but equally-moving, ceremonies were held in the large US military cemetery at Draguignan, 20 miles north-west of St Tropez, and the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery in Marseille.

The liberation of southern France cost the lives of at least 13,000 Allied servicemen – the majority Free French forces – but their sacrifice is

often overshadowed by D-Day and the fighting in Normandy which were on a much greater scale and lasted considerably longer.

The Dragoon landings effected by sea and air on August 15 1944 helped to drive the Germans out of southern France.

Some three dozen Royal Navy warships were committed to the operation, including a task force comprising five escort carriers. In all, upwards of 200,000 Allied sailors, soldiers and airmen were committed to the landings – double the German forces they faced.

Marseille and Toulon fell within a fortnight, Lyons was liberated a few days later and within four weeks, the Dragoon forces had linked up with Allied troops pushing south and east in northern France after the collapse of the German front there.

"It was a brilliant tour, and we were very privileged," said Lt Rohan Moorthy, a regular on Scot and Scott tours.

"For me, the highlights were the tour around the naval base in Toulon and the detailed talk on Operation Dragoon at the US war cemetery.

"The pace, as ever, was frantic, but it had to be to see everything. I now have a good understanding of the importance of the events that took place 67 years ago in Provence."



● The wreath-laying ceremony in Saint Tropez
Pictures: Mark Mann

Cambria CO meets Secretary of State

THE contribution made by the Royal Naval Reserve in Wales was top of the agenda when the Secretary of State for Wales met the Commanding Officer of HMS Cambria.

Cdr Simon Cottam told Cheryl Gillan MP that the volunteer specialists who make up the 2,000-strong RNR are “a credit to the Armed Forces, providing essential supplementary manpower in times of need.”

Mrs Gillan said: “I was delighted to meet Cdr Cottam, who commands an essential unit in Sully.

“Reservists are playing an increasingly vital role in the Navy, often taking part in operations around the world.

“Not only do they potentially risk their lives, they also play a crucial role in promoting a greater understanding of the Royal Navy and its work among the general public.

“The Royal Naval Reserves are a credit to our Royal Navy.”

Cdr Cottam presented Mrs Gillan with a decorative ship’s badge to highlight the strong personal link between the Secretary of State and the Senior Service – Mrs Gillan’s mother was a Wren.

Speaking after his visit to the Wales Office in London, Cdr Cottam said: “HMS Cambria is the only commissioned unit of the Royal Navy in Wales and flies the White Ensign for the Naval Service at high-profile events across Wales.

“It was a great honour to present the ship’s badge to the Secretary of State for Wales and brief her on the contribution made by Naval Reservists to national security.

“This visit further strengthens the strong links between Wales and the Armed Forces.”



● The CO of HMS Vivid, Cdr Ian Pethick, with artists Gary and Thomas Thrusell and members of the ship’s company of HMS Vivid at the unveiling of the new Devonport Heritage Trail plaque

Picture: Lt Daniela Cliffe

Vivid portrayal of RN heritage

A PLAQUE to celebrate Devonport’s naval heritage has been unveiled by the Commanding Officer and Ship’s Company of the Plymouth Maritime Reserves unit HMS Vivid.

The Devonport Heritage Trail plaque marks the special relationship between the Royal Navy and the Devonport area over the centuries.

The plaque, designed and made by Cornish artists Gary and Thomas Thrusell, is situated at the end of Richmond Walk at Mutton Cove in Devonport, near the figurehead of King Billy, and has a magnificent backdrop looking over the Hamoaze to Mount Edgecumbe.

Sailors from HMS Vivid helped the artists develop a theme for the plaque, taking inspiration from the Naval Museum exhibits in the naval base’s South Yard.

It is intended to recognise all the arms of the Royal Navy including the Royal Marines, the Naval Air and Submarine Services as well as the Maritime Reserves.

It depicts Royal Navy vessels such as HMS Argyll, HMS



● Royal Marines Reservists target defending snipers on the beach at Bournemouth

Golden beaches and green berets

THERE are undoubtedly British people on the beaches of Bournemouth who find themselves in a distressed situation, whatever the cause.

What is less likely is that they will need the full force of the Royal Marines Reserve storming ashore from landing craft to solve the problem.

But storm ashore the part-time bootnecks did in a bid to rescue those poor British subjects.

The prospective evacuees

were not seeking to escape the flash floods which had battered the Dorset resort, but innocent civilians involved in a notional international crisis involving a failing state.

And it was all part of the training which prepares the RMR to work alongside their regular comrades on real operations around the world.

The reservists conducted amphibious landings from landing platform dock RFA Mounts Bay, with more than 60 commandos and recruits from units including RMR Tyne, RMR Bristol and RMR Mersey combining to form a ‘force for good’ and stage beach assaults to liberate the innocent civilians.

They were supported in their objective by around 30 officers and ratings of the Amphibious Warfare, CIS and Logistics branches of the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR), meaning that more than 100 maritime reservists were involved, making it one of the RNR and RMR’s biggest exercises of the year.

The drama on the beach, staged as part of the Bournemouth Air Festival, unfolded as the commandos fast-roped from a Sea King and came ashore in landing craft and rigid inflatable boats.

No sooner had they assumed their positions than they came under fire from RNR sharpshooters from HMS Cambria and HMS Flying Fox, concealed in trenches, with their faces hidden.

A fire-fight ensued but eventually the Royal Marines won



● Royal Marines Reserve commandos storm ashore on a Bournemouth beach

through (well, they did outnumber the RNR by six to one) and were able to extract the civilian population before withdrawing to their landing craft.

They then disembarked the ‘victims’ back on RFA Mounts Bay.

The spectacular display not only provided great entertainment for the Bournemouth public, but was also an invaluable training opportunity for all concerned.

Maj Cliff Dare, RMR Bristol, said: “The RMR spent a day in Wader training, which involves practising boat drills and fast roping, before bringing those skills together to entertain festival-goers with a number of very slick amphibious landings, as well as conduct a night raid exercise to really consolidate what they had learnt.”

CPO Diana Cope, of HMS Flying Fox, added: “The RNR

worked well as a team – I hope the audience on the beach didn’t mind us interrupting their sunbathing...”

Cdr Tom Herman, Deputy Naval Regional Commander Wales and Western England, concluded: “Conducting this type of professional training has been a unique opportunity to not only prepare our men and women for operations, but also tell their story to their fellow countrymen.”

● HMS Tyne keeps a close eye on proceedings as Royal Marines Reservists come ashore from RFA Mounts Bay (partially hidden)

Pictures: LA(Phot) Jason Ballard





● Trainees build a makeshift radio mast on top of Scraesdon Fort



● Recruits show off the 'map' of Scraesdon created using ration pack boxes, twigs, leaves and anything else they can find and (below) you never forget your first corned beef hash...



Diamond in the rough

YOU fly. You fight. You chase. You push. You pull. You shoot. You shout. You help. You live.

Life without limits and all that, to quote the Navy's recruiting ad.

But here's the bit they don't tell you.

You bivvy. You eat a rat pack. You run around a Victorian fort. You rescue Fred from the engine room. You're dog tired. You can't shower. You're spooked. You love it.

That's a bit nearer the reality of the last major hurdle sailors now have to overcome in basic training at HMS Raleigh: the 48 hours of Bright Diamond.

It's the final of three new outdoor exercises introduced to the extended and revamped course which takes a civvy on day one and ten weeks later turns them out as a fledgling sailor.

Basic training for ratings was overhauled this spring with the emphasis on more combat training – sailors are increasingly being deployed on the front line far from a grey funnel steamer, notably in Afghanistan.

That training reaches its climax (at this stage of sailors' burgeoning careers at any rate) with Bright Diamond (there's already been Daring Leap and Hidden Dragon, but sadly nothing for fans of Dauntless, Defender and Duncan...).

It begins with the trainees bivvying – that's a roll mat, sleeping bag and strip of canvas to protect them from the elements (only the instructors get to sleep in proper tents...) – in the grounds of Raleigh.

Next morning they're up early to march two miles with full kit (Bergens with ration packs, helmets, sleeping bags, canteens, clean clothes) plus beams of wood (think the bit from *Life of Brian* where they're carrying the crucifixes) to Scraesdon Fort, one of Palmerston's Follies which ring Plymouth on both sides of the Tamar.

The fort didn't see any action in its heyday. It's proving much more useful now in its dilapidated state as a training area for Royal Marines, ships passing through Operational Sea Training and now trainees.

Of course, they have to get into it first.

Instructors have laid an improvised explosive device on the bridge leading into Scraesdon, so the recruits have to find an alternative route.

On satellite imagery, only the upper part of the fortification – half an octagon with a sprawling

parade ground – is visible. Hidden from view by masses of trees and foliage are the two lower sections of Scraesdon. It is a marvel of Victorian engineering – and the perfect playground for the core bit of Bright Diamond.

"It takes them completely out of their element," says Lt Cdr Chris Hogg, who's in charge of initial recruit training.

"The trainees have done everything that's in Bright Diamond during the preceding eight weeks in some form – it's just a slightly different scenario. Every sailor here has the capacity to come through this, it's about them realising it."

Once in the fort – via a series of pitch-black stairways – the trainees are expected to map the vast complex.

In one of the stone brick former barrack rooms, a collection of twigs, branches, rocks, pebbles and leaves are laid out – not Ray Mears' tea but a rudimentary 'map' of the fort.

Now the rookies know the lay of the land, instructors have various challenges in store from reconnaissance patrols and guard duties to rescuing Fred, the RN's disaster-prone dummy, and making sure the civilians of Cornistans and Devistan don't run around causing chaos...

...which they have a habit of doing. At night especially. Say about an hour after the recruits have bedded down for the evening.

Scraesdon is a forbidding place by day (the tunnels are pitch black, the walls slimy and covered with spiders), by night it's something right out of Edgar Allen Poe. Rats. Bats. More bats. Voices in the dark, shadowy figures moving, metal chinking against the walls (that'll be the instructors again). All that's missing is Vincent Price...

"The night was eventful," says Lt Craig Hastings. "Running around causing chaos, screaming, shouting, or simply saying 'hello' in the darkness and scaring them."

The narrative – think ship's log – kept by one of the trainees tells some of the story:

20.50 Crys (sic) for help

heard in the operational area

21.05 Six members of naval

party check main wall

21.07 Three unidentified

body (sic) in response to

security check

21.22 Unidentified body

found. Calls himself Andrew,

about 5ft 11in, looking

for missing friend who is

wearing all black and wellies.

Et cetera, et cetera...

Or in the words of AET

Craig Symes... "A manic night – everything going Pete Tong, people getting kidnapped all over the place."

Despite that the exercise has been, he says, "good fun". "It's different from everything else we've done."

Life at Scraesdon is rudimentary. No electricity. No running water (jerrycans only). Food is courtesy of boil in the bag ration packs – once the rookies have completed a half-hour physical training session.

And trainees are still expected to maintain standards – all must wash in the morning using water warmed in their mess tins and male recruits have to wet shave.

Once ablutions and admin have been completed – long before dawn on day three – the exercise moves into its final phase. While half the group are yomping down the Cornish lanes the three miles to Jupiter Point to join HMS Brecon, those left behind in the fort are erecting a radio mast (those wooden beams have come in handy...)

atop Scraesdon to establish communications with the minehunter moored in the River Lynher (pictured below).

By the time the trainees have got on board Brecon, they're tired. There's a fairly weary "Yes, chief" as they receive their latest instructions (which, ironically, are: relax in the messes).

They're given five, maybe ten minutes to chill out (generous lot these instructors) before bells and klaxons are sounding. Cue 90 minutes of general mayhem.

If you're after the sort of polished performance you'll get from a well-honed ship's company on a Thursday War, forget it.

Fire-fighting's haphazard; the main broadcasts show, as one instructor pointed out, "complete unfamiliarity with nautical terminology" – oddly, for example, the word 'carbonaceous' doesn't come naturally to them; and Fred was probably in better condition before being rescued from the engine room (he rather got trampled on in the stampede to put out a subsequent blaze).

But if you're looking for willingness and enthusiasm, which is what the instructors want to see (as well as using some of the skills learned in the preceding two months), then on the evidence here, the rookies give their all.

"It's not OST," says trainer PO Bob Cockburn. "That lasts ten weeks, this only lasts an hour and a half, but it does give an insight into what it's like on a ship, what

it's like when you shut the air conditioning off, what smoke smells like, how to seal off a compartment."

Bright Diamond is a pass/fail exercise. By this stage of the basic entry course, what little chaff there is has been winnowed out (failing the fitness test, poor attitude, or simply quitting because it's not for them), so the ones who get this far want to be trained sailors.

Like ET(WE) Hayley Mott who shed 5½ stone to be fit enough to join the Service and is having a second crack at Bright Diamond (illness thwarted her first attempt).

The exercise is "awesome". She's had very little sleep, been bitten or stung by something nasty which has caused her face and hand to swell, but is she downhearted? Er, no.

"The great thing is that no-one tells you what's happening next. That's what makes it exciting and keeps everyone on the ball."

This group of trainees is the fifth to complete Bright Diamond. Group four "looked dead" when they returned to Raleigh and provided the next batch with lots of handy hints to get through the trial (such as: beware the headless woman in the fort...).

"We were a bit apprehensive, says AET 'JP' Van der Horst. "We knew that as the last exercise this would be the most demanding."

"You can do so many jobs where you're just a number. Here it's one big family, a team helping each other. If I had to do this on my own, I probably couldn't manage it. But we're all in it together. That really brings you through."

Bright Diamond is still a work in progress. It needs tweaking – more Raleigh personnel to run amok in the evenings wouldn't go amiss and there needs to be more time on Brecon because, however heavily committed RN sailors are ashore, the sea is their natural home.

But overall, the enhanced ten-week training course is producing "a better rating" in the eyes of PO Ady Morton, one of the instructors.

"We're not green lidded – and we're not teaching them to be Royal Marines," he adds. "But they're not going to be cruising the world in a grey ship. It's an operational job, you will get shot at. So we're looking for people who are switched on, ready to go, who are tougher."



pictures: la(phot) martin carney, hms bulwark

Shingle combat



YOU just can't beat a quiet late summer's morning in Hampshire.

And this is nothing like one (although, despite the forbidding sky, it is late summer, the first week in September to be precise...).

Two Vikings of the Royal Marines Armoured Support Group roll on to the shingle at Browndown Beach near Gosport, protected by commandos in Rigid Raider craft with two leviathans of Britain's amphibious force at anchor in the distance: RFA Mounts Bay (on the left) and HMS Bulwark.

These are the final moments of six months of extensive tests, trials, exercises and training for Bulwark, which imminently assumes the mantle of the nation's flagship.

The Devonport-based assault ship is due to take over that proud and historic duty this month, relieving her older sister HMS Albion which has performed the role since HMS Ark Royal's premature demise last year.

Before there could be any thought of being proclaimed flagship, however, there was the small matter of Operational Sea Training, the last hurdle Bulwark had to overcome since emerging from a £30m refit at the beginning of the year.

As well as being a protracted and very thorough work-out for the ship and ship's company, OST has permitted some useful trials for other elements of the Royal Navy's armoury.

The Royal Marines have tested whether it's feasible to move a Viking from ship to shore without the need for an intermediary (ie landing craft).

The green berets have also been testing the CB90, a Swedish fast attack craft on loan with 1 Assault Group Royal Marines, using Bulwark's floodable well dock as a base.

Two of the 40kt boats have been loaned to the Corps, which has spent the past few months evaluating them to see what lessons can be incorporated when Britain designs its planned future 'force protection craft' which are capable of fending off enemy fast boats and depositing commandos ashore if required.

And the long-standing disaster relief exercise, a mainstay of Operational Sea Training for years, is evolving. Typically matelots clear up in the wake of a hurricane or tsunami, saving life, restoring essential services such as water and electricity.

All of the latter are still part of the test at Bull Point, but the scenario – for Bulwark at any rate – was the aftermath of a bomb explosion. Once the sailors and marines had accomplished the initial tasks of providing aid and sustenance to the ill-starred Bull Pointers, the mission

shifted to preservation of evidence as the area turned into a crime scene.

Given the unique nature of an amphibious ship with its ability to deliver troops and kit from the sea directly to the shore, in addition to all the usual OST tests such as fire, flood, air, sea and submarine attack, and disaster relief, the instructors from the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation also assess Bulwark's sailors and marines on their adeptness at choreographing all the machinery of war from the ship to a beach, before moving inland.

So the last fortnight of the three-phase training period saw assaults staged by air (courtesy of the Jungly Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force) and sea (courtesy of Bulwark's inherent Royal Marines unit and their landing craft, 4 Assault Squadron) as the ship, bolstered by trainee Royal Marines from the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, dealt a blow to the dastardly 'Ginger' forces at Browndown Camp in Stokes Bay on the Solent.

In doing so they knocked out key targets – a Challenger 2 main battle tank (the largest piece of armour a landing craft can carry) and Royal Marines in Viking armoured vehicles will ruin your day if you're a bad guy – and helped with the evacuation of civilians eager to escape the war zone.

All of which is pretty challenging to direct, however well equipped the 18,000-tonne assault ship is. Throw some very "particularly inconsiderate weather conditions" into the mix, and you're testing the 350+ souls aboard Bulwark (plus the FOST staff) to the limit.

The FOSTies are tough taskmasters, but were evidently suitably impressed by Bulwark because she passed her ordeal, much to the delight of her Commanding Officer Capt Alex Burton.

The FOST seal of approval means (a) Bulwark can deploy, if required, and (b) can relieve her sister HMS Albion as the flagship.

"I'm immensely proud of what we've achieved since starting our training, and how hard the ship's company have worked throughout," said Capt Burton.

"We still have plenty of challenges ahead as we prepare to take on the responsibility of the Royal Navy's flagship – but we are ready to deliver whatever may be required in the future."

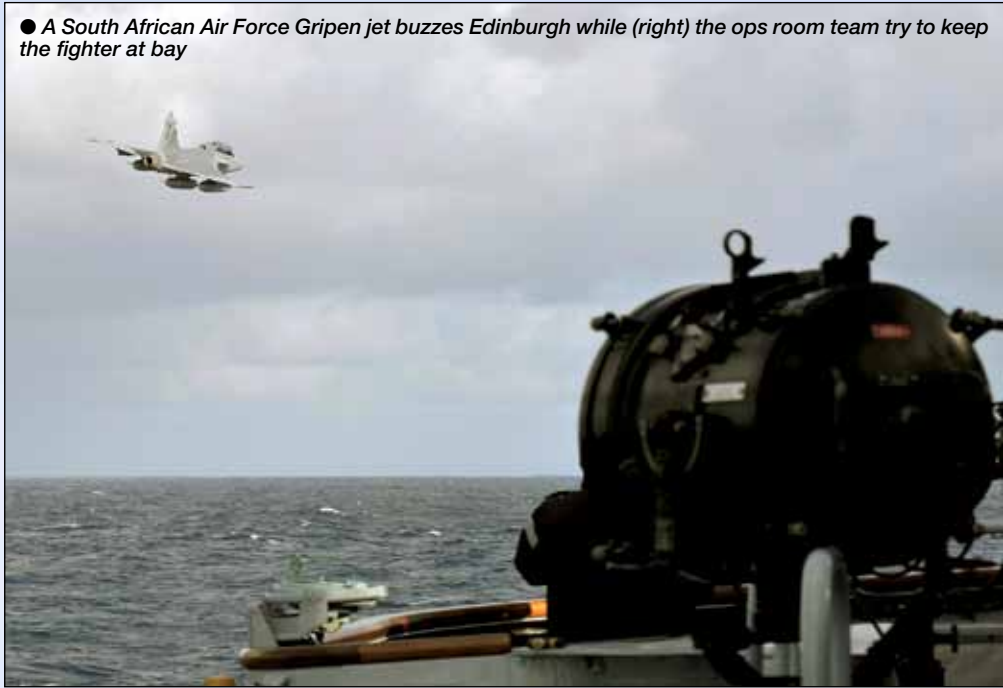
That immediate future involves a brief visit to Brest in Brittany to pick up around 100 French Marines before heading north to the Clyde to take part in the second of this year's Joint Warrior exercises, a combined air-sea-land war game run from Faslane.



● Pingu doesn't seem especially interested by Edinburgh's presence in South Georgia



● A South African Air Force Gripen jet buzzes Edinburgh while (right) the ops room team try to keep the fighter at bay



Fortress of

SADLY, that's the South Atlantic, not South Pacific...

The latter's vast, often unforgiving, sparsely populated, and exotic. The former's vast, often unforgiving, sparsely populated and exotic – just not in the tropical sense. According to the calendar, the nadir of winter has long since passed in the southern hemisphere, but the 250 souls aboard HMS Edinburgh aren't exactly feeling the heat just yet.

The Portsmouth-based destroyer is in the latter stages of a six-month stint in the southern ocean to provide reassurance to Falklanders and fly the flag for the UK in this part of the world.

The latest phase of the Fortress of the Sea's deployment took her, in company with tanker RFA Black Rover, from East Cove Military Port in the Falklands to King Edward Point in sight of the South Georgian 'capital' Grytviken.

The trip south had a three-fold aim: to show the sparse population of the UK's continued interest in the islands; to allow soldiers to train in a cold weather environment; and to give Edinburgh's sailors the chance to operate a warship in a challenging environment.

The three-day passage to South Georgia takes the ships into the Antarctic Convergence Zone – where the warmer waters of the Atlantic meet those of the frozen continent – and means there needs to be a constant iceberg watch from the ship's company.

Once in the confined waters of King Edward Cove, there was a chance to offload troops from A Company 2 Battalion Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment. The Tigers,

as the regiment's known, (a) prefer warmer climates and (b) prefer the land to the sea – the passage to South Georgia was a bit sporty and the soldiers set foot ashore proclaiming they were glad they were in the Army...

Or as one of the Tigers imparted: "I'm amazed at how the rocking around can affect you – it's terrible! Greatest respect to all Royal Naval personnel."

Also glad to get ashore was journalist Liz Roberts, who joined the destroyer for the trip south to record programmes for Falkland Islands television and radio about the day-to-day life of a warship patrolling this part of the world.

While she was off gathering material and the Tigers were conducting cold weather training, the ship's company were meeting the local human and wildlife populace – the former in the shape of the British Antarctic Survey scientists who operate a research base at King Edward Point.

All returned to the ship awestruck by the beauty of the island – and conscious that it should not be spoiled by visitors.

"South Georgia's a unique – and fragile – environment. It needs protection in every sense of the word," said Edinburgh's Commanding Officer Cdr Paul Russell.

"We had to be very conscious of 'bio-security measures' when landing personnel.

"It was a great privilege to be able to experience one of the most naturally-stunning and remote places on the planet."

And so back to the comparative hubbub of the Falklands (population about 100 times greater than South Georgia).

It's also a whole lot warmer than Grytviken. A balmy 7°C in September (compared with 2°C in South Georgia).

Perfect conditions, then, for a spot of sport. A duathlon (run/ bike ride).

Bertha's Beach is only about

three miles from Mare Harbour, home to RN vessels when they're alongside in the Falklands.

From satellite imagery it looks like something out of a Bounty advert (brilliant white sands).

And perhaps it is in summer.

But right about now... Bit of a mudbath. Hence Bertha's Beach Dirty Dash. Dirty it was. Dash it wasn't as sailors ran and rode from the ship to the beach, battling strong winds, mud, snow, ice, more mud.

It was all in aid of the Piam Brown Ward at Southampton General Hospital which cares for children with cancer and leukaemia – and was the chosen good cause of CPO(ET) William Hart.

The combined efforts of his shipmates helped raise more than £200.

No patrol of the Falklands is complete without paying homage to the men of '82.

Edinburgh paused at 51°3'36"S, 59°42'12"W, some 15 miles north of Pebble Island, last resting place of HMS Coventry. A service of remembrance was held for 'Hart Dyke's Heroes' who put up a valiant fight against Argentine air attack before succumbing to two bombs on May 25.

Coventry had been dispatched to the waters off West Falkland to act as a forward shield for ships in San Carlos Water, where the Argentinians did their utmost to halt the liberation of the islands – striking at the Royal Navy's invasion force over five bitter days.

They could not stop the landings, but they did sink and cripple numerous ships, among them HMS Ardent, bombed and sunk, and HMS Antelope, blown apart when an unexploded bomb was triggered during efforts to disarm it.

The sacrifices made in May 1982 are honoured at San Carlos Cemetery, where a wreath was laid by Edinburgh's ship's



● Edinburgh's Lynx demonstrates its Cape ability over South Africa before (below) setting down in an unusual spot



the South Sea

company and a service of remembrance was led by the destroyer's chaplain Fr Charles Bruzon.

Edinburgh's older sisters – now alas all out of service – played a pivotal role in shielding the Operation Corporate task force from air attack.

Nearly 30 years on and the *raison d'être* of a Type 42 destroyer remains the same – although the technology inside the ship has moved on in leaps and bounds: to ensure no enemy aircraft or missile attacks the Fleet.

To that end, Edinburgh took advantage of the RAF Typhoon jets based at Mount Pleasant to practise her air defence skills.

Two supersonic fighter-bombers of No.1435 Flight carried out a series of mock bombing attacks on the Fortress of the Sea.

Fortresses are not just vulnerable to assault from the air (apologies for that very dubious segue...). To ensure no craft slips through her surface defences, the gunners conduct regular exercises by day and night.

The killer tomato (a large orange inflatable target) is cast into the ocean allowing the upper deck gun crews to hone their marksmanship (night vision goggles for the gunners bolsters the Mark 1 Eyeball in the dark) using the 20mm GAMBO and General Purpose Machine Guns.

Or if you don't trust the steady hand of Jack and Jenny, you can put your faith in Phalanx, the automated Gatling gun which will shred anything in the air or on the surface of the ocean within about a mile range of Edinburgh. The gun was fired up for its six-monthly workout.

And if 20mm of lead doesn't spoil your day, 4.5in of lead and high-explosive will. And probably

the rest of the week to boot. The expanses of the South Atlantic – and the relative lack of maritime traffic in this part of the world – permit some opportunities to let rip with the destroyer's main 4.5in gun.

And sometimes you only need to fire your gun for effect, say when entering a friendly port.

The ceremonial gun was wheeled out to salute the South African Navy as the destroyer paid her second visit of the deployment to Simon's Town.

The port, two dozen miles from Cape Town, is the home of the 'rainbow nation's' Navy – as well as being a one-time and much loved home to the RN in days gone by.

It was chosen as the location for Edinburgh's mid-deployment maintenance period – a fortnight's TLC for the ship and her hard-worked machinery, plenty of downtime for the ship's company, so that both are fully rested and raring to go for the second half of the destroyer's tour of duty.

That second half will see her make the 4,000-mile passage across the South Atlantic towards South America and on into the Pacific – hopefully with calmer waters than her first crossing of the great ocean.

The protracted stop on the Cape allowed many of the sailors on board to fly friends and family out for a well-deserved reunion.

Not everyone's been taking it easy in South Africa, however.

The ship's Lynx flight disembarked and decamped to Ysterplaat, the South African Air Force base which is a stone's throw from the heart of Cape Town.

Opportunities to fly in the mid-Atlantic were somewhat limited thanks to the inclement weather (again), so the chance to get

airborne in the skies over the Cape was invaluable.

Even better, it allowed Edinburgh's flight the rare chance to fly in company with South African Super Lynx. The hosts treated their British cousins to some low-level, formation and finally mountain flying, which concluded with the 815 chaps setting their Mk8 down (at quite an angle) on top of a giant boulder.

The destroyer's sporting teams – football, rugby, netball, volleyball and basketball – took part in a tri-nation tournament with the South African and German Navies (the latter were also paying a visit to the Cape). Sadly for British honour, the South Africans proved too strong... but Edinburgh did edge the Germans on the football pitch.

The mini-Olympics wasn't the only physical exertion occupying the ship's company in South Africa. On the day the destroyer entered port, 18 members of the ship's company were huffing and puffing away on Day One of a 90-day rowing epic.

Between them the sailors have vowed to cover 8,054 miles on the destroyer's rowing machines – the distance from the Falklands to Portsmouth.

Whatever the sea state, the 18 sailors will be putting in eight kilometres a day on the machines over 90 days, all in aid of the charity Bliss which helps premature and sick babies across the UK.

Moving in an emotional sense was a visit to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in Dido Valley, just north of Simon's Town.

A six-strong guard accompanied Cdr Russell to lay a wreath at the memorial honouring the British Servicemen and women who were stationed at Simon's Town and are laid to rest there.

Throughout Edinburgh's fortnight in South Africa, the host

nation proved to be extremely accommodating.

"Simon's Town was key to ensuring that we're in a good material state for the remainder of our deployment – the South Atlantic is a harsh environment in which to operate and the extreme low temperatures and significant sea states all take their toll on our equipment," said Cdr Russell.

"The support given to HMS Edinburgh by the local community at all levels, from the use of sporting facilities and clubhouses to logistical and infrastructure assistance is a true example of the long-lasting ties that exist between the UK and South Africa."

The support from the South Africans extended beyond their shores. About 400 miles to be precise.

With the Fortress of the Sea ploughing through the South Atlantic, the ship was buzzed by a South African Air Force Gripen jet.

The pilot flew 400 miles from his home base just so he could practise with the destroyer.

He was eager to carry out mock attacks on a fully worked-up warship...

...and the ops room and upper deck gun crews were keen to play with a fully worked-up jet capable of flying at twice the speed of sound.

With the air defence exercise over, the pilot reported to the ship that his long transit had been well worth it.

And so Edinburgh's third transit of the South Atlantic this deployment draws to a close.

The latter stages of her seven months away from home take her into the Pacific via the Patagonian Canals.

After inching her way up the west coast of South America, the destroyer will pass through the Panama Canal, into the Caribbean and finally home in Portsmouth in time for Christmas.



● A sailor struggles through the morass on bike as does his shipmate on foot during Bertha's Beach Dirty Dash while (above) Cdr Paul Russell pays his respects at Dido Valley cemetery near Simon's Town



● A shell leaves Edinburgh's 4.5in main gun during a spot of gunnery practice





Risky business, model-making...

YOUR photograph of 'shipbuilders' putting together a model of a Type 45 destroyer (September) amused me no end.

I am now 87 and have been modelling (mostly aircraft) for more years than I care to think about, but I have never found it so dangerous as to need to wear a hard hat, even when at sea during World War 2!

As an afterthought, what about wearing goggles, day-glo overalls and footwear to comply with 'elf and safety'?

– C B Bramzell, ex-Leading wireman MS (Minesweeper) Hunstanton, Norfolk

How I nearly joined the First Division

THE 'JACKPOT' letter (September) from Mr George Drewett impressed me, and got me thinking that readers might be interested in reading my story about the time I joined the Royal Navy.

I left home to join when I was 16 years' old. I was taken to Newcastle Central station to be put on the train to take me to Ipswich via London, on my way to HMS Ganges.

I was quite a shy lad in my youth. I always walked with my head down and only looked up every now and then to see where I was going, or hear if someone was talking to me.

I arrived at Ipswich station and when I got off the train saw some men in uniform. I asked them what I needed to do and where to go. I was told by the person who seemed to be in charge 'get on the bus outside the station' which is what I did.

While I was leaving the station I looked up and saw a familiar

figure standing outside looking rather resplendent in a smart suit. He was looking at his watch, I remember.

I realised that it was Sir Alf Ramsey, the manager of the 1966 England World Cup winning team. So I continued to look at him whilst boarding the bus. It seemed to be quite new. It had toilet facilities and air conditioning, which were unusual in those days.

When I got on the bus I sat at the back, being quite a shy lad. After a short while others started to board the bus too. The ones getting on seemed quite familiar to me for some reason but I couldn't figure out where I knew them from.

After a while they started to point and talk about me. One of them came up to me and asked who I was and where I was going. I explained that I was joining the Royal Navy that day.

I was then told that I was on the wrong bus – this was the bus for Ipswich Town Football Club players and staff! Mine was on the other side of the road.

I wanted to die with embarrassment. All the other lads that were joining with me were on the other bus, one that didn't look so new and seemed to be in quite a sorry state.

And to conclude my story, the day that I joined was April 1 1975.

– Stephen Scullion, ex RN/RM, Felling, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear (*Stephen's bewilderment did not rub off on the Ipswich players – according to our sources they beat Birmingham City 3-2 at Portman Road that day to go top of the old First Division – Ed*)



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Stephen Scullion

Is medals policy still valid today?

THANK you for printing my recent letter on the subject of the Diamond Jubilee Medal and your response.

That said, the latter confirms my view that this has not been properly thought through.

I quite understand that the medal is not awarded for operational service – that is not the point.

But say a junior rating or Royal Marine with under five years service is on parade and has the temerity to ask 2SL why he (the other rank) doesn't have the Jubilee medal when he has fought in Afghanistan and the officer escorting 2SL, who has no operational service, has one because he has just happened to have served five years, what I wonder will be the response?

I doubt that the explanation will persuade him that he has not been slighted.

It may be in line with a policy established in 1953 but is that fit for today's very different circumstances when we have been engaged in continuous combat for a decade?

I am a great supporter, but not a blind follower, of tradition.

The Queen is the titular head of our Armed Forces so why is she being advised that it is inappropriate to award the medal to all those who are on the trained strength and serving her at the time of her Jubilee?

The length of her reign could well be unprecedented in the annals of this country; this anniversary will be a splendid and momentous occasion that should be marked for all servicemen on the trained strength.

– Cdre Malcolm Williams, Southsea, Hants

...I WAS most interested to read the letter from Cdre Williams about the qualifying time for the medal.

In 1977 I was the Deputy Naval Provost Marshal in Portsmouth, responsible for the 50-plus Leading Patrolmen (later Leading Regulators, now RN Police) who were on duty for the Silver Jubilee Fleet Review.

Needless to say, neither I nor any of my

team, nor anyone I know, received the Silver Jubilee medal.

The only person who received one in HMS Nelson that I was aware of was an AB who had just been released from RN Detention Quarters.

Perhaps they were saving money then. I gather that you can now purchase this medal, which does somehow degrade it from its original purpose, despite that so few were awarded.

– Lt Cdr Robert Bloomfield, Portchester, Fareham

...THE five-year length of qualifying service as at February 6 2012 for members of the Armed Forces (Regular and Reserves) and emergency services who have been in paid service, who have to face the prospect of dealing with emergencies as part of their conditions of service, is similar to that of the Golden Jubilee medal awarded in 2002.

These two Jubilee medals are awarded for what is in effect five years' service on a specific date.

Coronation and royal commemorative medals awarded between 1887 and 1977 (Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee medal) had no such qualifying length of service.

In general, they were awarded to the Armed Forces, members of the Crown services and to people engaged in a wide range of activities – industry, trade, local services, voluntary workers, the Arts, entertainment, and sports.

– Michael O'Brien, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire

...I WAS serving in 1977 (and had done so since 1958) but I received no medal.

I believe that senior officers, commanding officers and certain selected officers and ratings (a nominal percentage) only received this medal, and certainly not those who had served five years or more.

I was not aware of a defence budget criteria at that time, as Cdre Williams believes may be the case now.

– David Thompson, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset

...I DISAGREE with the statement made in your editorial comment that *a five-year length of qualifying service criterion has been customary for previous Coronation and Jubilee medals back to the 1953 Coronation Medal at least.*

I am sure I am not the only ex-member of the RN who remembers the totally random criteria which was apparently used to award the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal.

I and many of my contemporaries were on ships at the Spithead Review in 1977 and were proud to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of our Queen.

If the five-year criteria had been used, as you state in your article, I and many more of my shipmates would have received this medal. In fact the allocation to my ship was FIVE medals.

I remember distinctly that there was at the time a great deal of feeling within the Service that the allocation of medals had been unfair and totally arbitrary.

I also remember that there was even a move by some members of the RN to offer to pay for the medals themselves, if, as was mooted at the time, the reason so few were allocated was lack of funds.

In conclusion may I suggest that if the five-year criteria is the qualifying criteria for the award of medals of this special type, the MOD should review its records and award Silver Jubilee Medals owed to all suitably-qualified personnel.

– Bill Bailey, ex-WOWEA, Fareham, Hants

...I FEAR I must take a slight exception to your reply to Cdre Williams.

I was in 700 Lynx Squadron at Yeovilton in 1977 when the Silver Jubilee medal was awarded and only two of the Squadron received it, the CO (naturally) and one of the Naval Airmen.

I had at this time been in the RN for 16 years.

– R C Booth, Yoxford, Saxmundham, Suffolk

Rocking, rolling and racing

THE article (August) about HMS Edinburgh's 'roughers' experience crossing the Southern Ocean from Cape Town to Mare Harbour took me back to 1947 when HMS Nigeria did the same voyage in the same weather or worse.

I was a 17-year-old boy seaman at the time and this was my first experience of foul weather. Was I sick? I'll leave that to your imagination.

Nigeria, an 8,000-ton Colony-class 6in gun cruiser, was at that time the flagship of the Southern Atlantic Squadron based in Simon's Town, then an RN base.

What had happened was the Argentinians and Chileans, sensing a weakened Britain after World War 2, attempted to take over British bases in the Antarctic, mostly meteorological, to use for their own purposes.

After refuelling and revictualling in Port Stanley we proceeded south, first to South Georgia and then South Shetlands where in Deception Isle bay we found several ships, both merchant and warships, anchored.

They were given 24 hours to leave British Antarctic territory or take the consequences. Our Royal Marine detachment then went ashore and cleared out their soldiers encamped on the isle itself.

Thank goodness they didn't decide to stand and fight – it might have just turned out differently.

I remember our Capt Robertson announcing over the tannoy "Don't worry men – if they sink us the Fleet in Britain will avenge us," – wouldn't have done us much good, of course!

Overall quite an adventure, you'll agree, although as with the Edinburgh lads, the most lasting memory was the gale force winds whipping up huge waves and the ship being tossed around like a toy in this part of the ocean known as the 'Roaring Forties' – I wouldn't want to do that again!

– T J 'Chuck' Egan-Fowler, Fish Hoek, South Africa

... IN 1987 HMS Edinburgh did a full power trial off the measured mile at St Abb's Head, in Scotland.

I was working away below the bridge in my cabin/office (I was Supply Officer) when I suddenly realised the trial was on – yet the ship was

barely pitching or rolling, certainly not slamming.

Up to the bridge, where we were gas turbinning 100 lever (not steaming) into a Force Six gale off the starboard bow, we were doing 35 knots across the ground, on the official range. No tide effect.

That makes Edinburgh faster than York, I believe. The point was that despite the considerable sea state and going into wind (70 knots plus across the decks, check the picture of Edinburgh off South Africa in July) the superb shape of the stretched 42 made sure that the ship's actual deck movement was minimal – a good gun or missile platform indeed.

I have confirmed this with our CO at the time, Bob Williams.

– Ken Napier, Chazarem, Beaugas, France

Estonian tribute

I RECENTLY visited Tallin with my wife and took the opportunity to visit the church where the Royal Naval Memorial is sited.

The corner where the plaques listing the names of RN personnel killed supporting the Estonians in 1918-19 is well-maintained and the White Ensign over the memorial is clean, as my photo shows.

Capt Michael Barrow, Petersfield



opinion

EMAILS and mobile phone calls fly through the ether, communications are beyond what we dreamt of only 10-20 years ago, but any sailor in a ship will tell you that nothing beats the excitement of the mail drop and a personal letter.

Or, as Christmas approaches, a box of goodies affectionately put together by friends and family.

Of course it's more difficult to get mail out to ships than to field units, but the British Forces' Post Office does a fantastic job in tracking Royal Navy ships as they move around the world.

The BFPO workload increases hugely over Christmas, not only with mail from friends and families, but because generous members of the public are keen to send parcels

and letters to forces overseas to show their support for the troops.

However, this generosity has an unintended consequence – it overwhelms the system and holds up mail from families.

Additional resupply flights have to be laid on if the mail is destined to forward operating bases, which in some cases means additional convoys with all the risk those involve.

So please take heed of the BFPO's advice, and instead of sending goodwill parcels, donate to a Services charity such as the RNRMC, SSAFA, or uk4u Thanks! which delivers a box of practical gifts and fun treats to every sailor, soldier and airman deployed overseas in time for Christmas.

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



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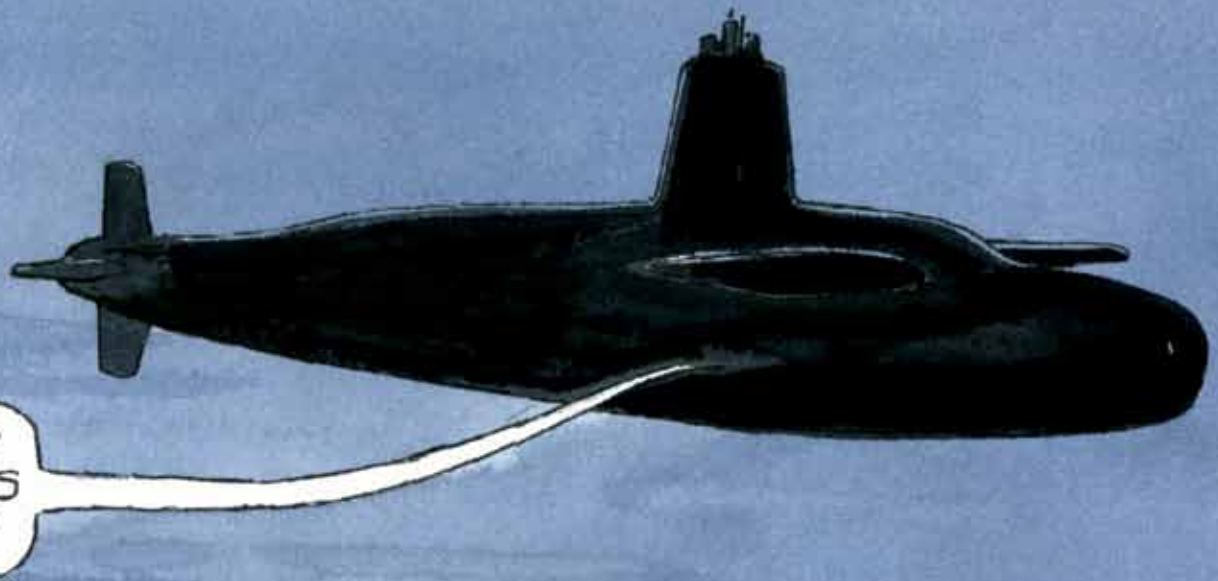
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CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUGG



If not Boy Cornwell, who?

I WRITE to comment on the letter from Eddie Summerfold about Boy Cornwell (September).

I forwarded the photograph in good faith believing it to be of Cornwell VC. It was given to me in an oak frame, glass-fronted, after a former Royal Marine friend of mine died.

As you know from my first letter it included a photograph of HMS Chester together with a type-written note *John Travers Cornwall* (sic), *Boy First Class. Battle of Jutland on board HMS Chester.*

It then related his story and the fact that he died in Grimsby hospital and is buried at Manor Park.

It went on to say that he is the youngest person to have received the Victoria Cross, although we now know that this is not true as the youngest was an Army private, aged 14 years, who died about his age in World War 1.

I scanned the whole presentation in the first instance. I have now taken the frame apart and found the following.

The photograph of the boys is actually a copy. The writing, *Jack Cornwall VC. Standing. HMS Chester 1916-18 and Your affectionate Brother Bill* and what looks like *StevLLING* was obviously written on the original photograph. It is also very faded. There is nothing on the back.

The picture of HMS Chester is actually a postcard and has on the back *HMS Chester Uncle Will and Jack Cornwall VC.*

The mystery is still not solved. Who are they?

Tony Davie, RNA Woking,
RMA Reading

Memories both good and bad

YOUR article *The strain of war at sea* (Review, August) brought six years of my life back to me.

Serving on the lower deck from 1935-45, I witnessed and endured the life you described from cruisers to battleships, HMS Montrose to Prince of Wales to Dorsetshire to Polruan.

I am a survivor of HMS Prince of Wales and Dorsetshire. Montrose was decommissioned due to severe bomb damage.

The actions were only part of the strain – it was the constant sea watches and weather conditions, closed up for four days chasing Bismarck in the Denmark Strait, with a toilet bucket lashed to the guardrail in Arctic conditions, and having HMS Hood blown up some 600 yds ahead – would it be us next?

The Navy's war spanned from east to west, north to south – you could be in any theatre in a short time.

Now at 92 years I still have flashbacks, but it was not all bad. We mucked in together and crossed the Line, which was an occasion to remember.

We also had runs ashore and met some lovely people.

– 'Shiner' Wright, Stonehouse, Gloucester

...I HAVE just read my letter in the August edition, and also read other stories that bring back memories.

One was the article about the Queen and Prince Philip visiting Bletchley Park to unveil the memorial to the wartime codebreakers there.

Since I was on two of the 300 'outstations' mentioned, one at sea on a destroyer, the other ashore in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), I had a personal interest in that.

I was also interested in the article about the roll of honour containing the names of sailors who were based at Devonport (we called it Guzz) and wondered if the names of my shipmates on HMS Punjabi, which was a ship manned primarily by men from the Devonport barracks – some of whom lost their lives when the ship was sunk – have been entered.

I also have a memory of the World War 2 HMS Brocklesby, a Hunt-class destroyer that operated in company with other Hunts including mine, HMS Quorn, off the coast of England and France.

The modern minehunter Brocklesby looks somewhat different to those ships of long ago!

Navy News continues to evoke memories for this old chap – many thanks.

– Ken Tipper, Ocala, Florida

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

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

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself,

please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.

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

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

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

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



Calpe's bell lives on

YOUR story about the Dieppe Raid in 1942 (*Trophy Lives*, August) brought my attention to HMS Calpe which was the flagship.

Readers may be interested to know that her bell has been a part of Littlehampton Lifeboat Station for some 40 years.

It is proudly displayed with a photograph of HMS Calpe and a record of services.

Visitors to the Lifeboat Station always show a keen interest.

– David Woolven,
Littlehampton Lifeboat Crew
1968-88, Littlehampton,
West Sussex

Sinister...

WHILST reading Sid 'Sails' Elbro's dit (September) I wondered if there were any left-handed sailmakers' palms?

I still have my 'right-handed' one which occasionally comes in handy.

I remember tales of sailmakers who would take your threadbare working blue suit apart and sew it together so that the worn surface was on the inside and you finished up with what looked like a new suit.

All for 100 blue liners.

– Roger Breakwell, Drayton, Portsmouth

John's flying visit to Paris

NO DOUBT many of us will have read of the recent death of John Howard-Davies, who brought us great pleasure over the years as the producer of such shows as *Fawlty Towers*, *The Good Life* and *Monty Python's Flying Circus*.

Some mention has been made in the media as to his National Service, but with scant detail.

I was in training as a 'Sparker' in HMS Mercury in 1958-59 and John was also there as part of the last intake of National Servicemen into the Royal Navy.

He was training as what was then known as a Coder. He was a first-class bloke and good to talk to about the film industry, etc, as I did with him on a couple of occasions.

We had a couple of RPOs at Mercury at that time, Catchpole and Cable as I recall, who queried a Short Weekend Leave (SWE) request from John, ie, 1200 Saturday to 0730 Monday, for which he gave his leave address as Paris.

RPOs being what they were, they queried how he intended to get there and back in this short time when, let's not forget, transport wasn't what it is now.

They thought he had foiled his SWE, with that usual look of satisfaction given to RPOs.

"Oh, don't worry," said John, "I have a plane at Hurn Airport and I'll be spending the weekend with Sir Alec Guinness [an ex-war-time RN officer and Fagin to John's *Oliver Twist*] and be back in plenty of time."

This took the smile off their faces and back he was – on time.

– Michael Murphy, ex LRO(G) Devizes, Wiltshire



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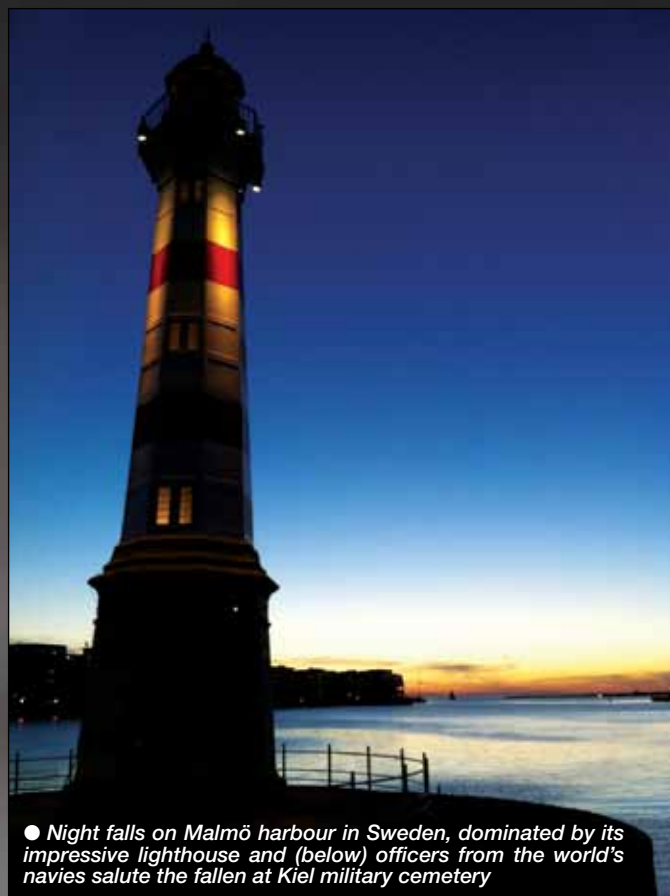
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● Night falls on Malmö harbour in Sweden, dominated by its impressive lighthouse and (below) officers from the world's navies salute the fallen at Kiel military cemetery



● Express follows Puncher into Flensburg, spiritual home of the German Naval Officer Corps



● A panorama of warships in Kiel for the city's sailing spectacular with Express and Puncher on the right

Kiel pictures: Moritz Rennecke/www.mono-photography.de

THIRTY-two sailors. Two ships. Eight countries. Three thousand two hundred miles on the clock. Two hundred and fifty VIP visitors. An audience of 4½ million.

And these statistics barely scratch the surface of a summer epic involving two of the smallest vessels on the Royal Navy's 'books'.

Her Majesty's Ships Puncher and Express were sent east on the annual summer deployment of University Royal Naval Units – the 14 patrol boats which give students a sample of life under the White Ensign.

All 14 units spread around the UK and north-west Europe over the summer – the extended break enjoyed by universities allows them to range much further than during the shorter Easter holidays.

In the case of Puncher (based in Portsmouth and attached to London's universities) and Express (based in Penarth outside Cardiff and serving the universities of the Welsh capital, Swansea and Glamorgan), the first task was to represent the Navy – and nation – at the world's premier sailing festival: Kiel Week.

First you've got to get there.

The P2000 patrol boats have a pretty limited range (550 nautical miles) and the students aboard can't be expected to spend more than ten or 12 hours at sea in one go because they're not full-time sailors, which means each evening the ships put into port.

That means a lot of hopping from harbour to harbour – made even more challenging for Express; just seven days before departure the craft was in North Wales undergoing her annual overhaul.

She had a week to complete it, finish training and get to Portsmouth – so the summer deployment could actually begin.

After bounding from one port to another and negotiating the Kiel Canal – where the pair were dwarfed by container ships – the two patrol boats arrived in the Baltic.

Kiel Week draws 4½ million visitors to the waters off Schleswig-Holstein. Given its status it also draws a substantial naval presence – warships and submarines from a dozen nations attended.

Puncher and Express were by far the smallest warships present. Did it stop them attending more than two dozen official functions or hosting 250 VIPs? Not a bit.

Among the visitors to Express was the captain of the Russian amphibious ship Minsk for drinks and a tour of the ship; his signature in the visitor's book is only a few pages after the Queen (who was onboard briefly during an official visit to Gloucester in the autumn of 2009).

"It was a remarkable opportunity as a junior commanding officer to enter the diplomatic world, acting as an ambassador not only for the Royal Navy but for Great Britain as well," explained Lt Jon Browett, a one-time member of Wales URNU and now Express' CO.

"By the end of the first day we were well versed in moving from event to event with the hordes of diplomats and attachés and all the official reception and capability demonstration training kicked in and came to the fore."

Whilst in Kiel, the crews also competed in a number of inter-ship and sporting events – including a 7s triumph (24-7) over Kiel Rugby Club.

In addition to the functions, fun and festivities there were poignant ceremonies during this nautical celebration.

The two ships provided a marching platoon to accompany the two commanding officers at a joint Polish and British memorial service in Kiel military cemetery.

Most of the 897 men laid to rest in the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery are aircrew lost in bombing raids over northern Germany.

But there are also nine Poles and several Royal Navy sailors honoured here too, the latter from HMS Esk which was lost in the North Sea in August 1940.

The destroyer sank off the Dutch island of Texel after striking a mine as she came to the aid of her sister Express, which had also been damaged by a mine. More than 130 men were killed.

The entrance to Kieler Bucht is dominated by a 235ft red brick tower in the small town of Laboe, across the water from the port.

The imposing structure serves as a memorial to sailors of all nations lost at sea in the 20th Century's two terrible conflicts and participants at Kiel Week converged on the monument for a large-scale wreath-laying ceremony, with Puncher and Express representing the Royal Navy.

"Small ships, big impact" was the phrase of the week and by the time we left Kiel everyone in the diplomatic, civic and military circles knew the Royal Navy was in town," said Lt Browett.

"We received an incredible welcome – regardless of the junior status of the ships and their COs relative to other nations – and we made a concerted effort to do everything we did better and with more pride than any other nation present."

As the two P2000s left Kiel, they were bidden farewell by admirals, mayors, other COs and well-wishers – and were the only

ships to exchange ceremonial with the German flagship on departure; admittedly no other ships were small enough to do the co-ordinated pirouette under their bridge wing...

Now many P2000s might have concluded their summer tour in Kiel and begun the long journey home.

But Puncher and Express continued eastwards. Two hundred and fifty miles eastwards. Through the Baltic. Past the Danish islands. Past Rügen. Up the Pias Canal. Across the huge Szczecin Lagoon and up the Oder into the heart of Poland's biggest port: Szczecin (pronounced Stetch-eeen).

Express and Puncher believe they're the first RN warships to visit the port since the end of WW2 (when it was Stettin and part of Germany) – certainly they were very warmly welcomed by locals. A marching band and the mayor's representative greeted the vessels on arrival and the ship's companies were hosted by the regional president.

Szczecinners were evidently impressed – one visitor described the duo as "sensational – Polish crews can learn from them."

And then it was time to turn around and make the long return journey.

The ships' size does allow them to visit harbours typically off limits to the rest of the Fleet (the small fishing towns of Heiligenhafen east of Kiel, or Sønderborg in Denmark, for example) as well as larger havens – Malmö, Travemünde (Lübeck), Warnemünde (Rostock), Cuxhaven, Ostend.

The sisters also paid an official visit to Flensburg Naval Academy, north of Kiel, the German Navy's counterpart to Britannia Royal Naval College, and carried out demonstration manoeuvres.

While Puncher put into Portsmouth, her deployment done, Express had to continue down the South Coast, around Cornwall and up the Bristol Channel. She stopped off in Padstow to pick up an ITV Wales TV crew and the Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla Cdre Rupert Wallace – the entire URNU fleet falls under his domain – and into Penarth.

And so ended an eight-week 3,200-mile odyssey (the equivalent of an Atlantic crossing) in a 68ft ship.

"No other navy that I know of does deployments of this size and complexity in vessels of this size," says Lt Browett proudly.



Small ships... ...big impact

The sacks trade

SOLDIERS and airmen expect it daily – they'll certainly kick up a fuss if they've not had any for four days.

And matelots? Well, sailors lower their expectations. They're happy if they get it once a fortnight – but if they don't get it at Christmas, they won't be happy.

We're talking post (*Obviously – Ed*) and in the world of military mail, rather like the High Street, Christmas begins in October.

The team at British Forces Post Office – simply BFPO to anyone who sends letters and parcels to our Servicemen and women – are preparing for the annual deluge of mail for those on duty over the festive season, *writes Richard Hargreaves.*

There will be an estimated 16 ships deployed on Christmas Day 2011 (we're discounting the bombers because a V-boat isn't going to surface just to pick up a knitted pullover from your gran...), not to mention personnel in Afghanistan (chiefly Fleet Air Arm because 3 Commando Brigade will be home by then).

And it's down to a team of just nine on the Royal Navy side of things – one officer, one leading regulator and seven civilians – to make sure things get to their destinations in time.

The staff here can expect the amount of post to increase by a third in the Yuletide run-in – there will be 800 sacks per day heading out to the 9,000 Britons on deployment in Helmand alone.

Thanks to free postage for parcels up to two kilogrammes to operational theatres and HM Ships in support (all year round) and the Christmas free mail service for operational theatres and ships deployed on Christmas Day, the volume of mail sent from the UK to Service personnel at Christmas has risen by 25 per cent over the past three to four years.

Which is why Lt Edward Bean, the Fleet Mail Officer, and his colleagues are keen to stress two things: post early – and no unsolicited mail.

The first advice is obvious, but not always heeded. The last posting dates – this year for deployed ships/ Afghanistan, December 2 (1st or 2nd class); ships in their UK home ports December 16 (2nd class)/ December 20 (1st class) – are long before the big day, but Christmas at the BFPO runs well into the new year; there are still people posting pressies on Christmas Eve expecting them to arrive in time...

As for 'no unsolicited post', it might seem mean spirited, but it's not. Look at it this way: would AB Bloggs prefer to get cards and presents from his/her family on December 25, or a selection pack from Mrs Miggins – however well intentioned she might be? Put simply, there is only so much space on aircraft carrying the sacks and the BFPO team want those sacks to be filled with goodies from friends and family. (If you are desperate to send an unsolicited gift to deployed personnel, use the website www.uk4u.org.)

While the next three months are the peak period for the forces post office, the rest of the year's a pretty impressive effort.

No two ways about it, 'snail mail' is on the decline thanks to email, free phone calls home on deployment and mobile phones. In the past decade, letters sent to ships has fallen roughly fivefold.

Nevertheless, around 11 tonnes of mail are still dispatched to ships every month – typically to around 18 destinations across the globe.

By the time it's arrived on board ship, it's gone through at least one dozen steps – from Pat picking it up in his red van from the post box via mail centres and sorting offices to BFPO for distribution to the front-line.

The military come in about half-way through the chain; your first or second class stamp will effectively get a letter to BFPO's headquarters, a cavernous shed on the edge of RAF Northolt in Middlesex. From here onwards, the Forces pick up the tab of freight costs – mail is seen as a key factor for morale.

Around four to five truck loads a day arrive at the forces



● *Packet boats... Mail for ships in the 400s (minus the grocer's apostrophe – Ed) – that's Talent to York and all the RFAs – is sorted at BFPO HQ and (right) HMS St Albans' LReg Jon Hunt empties the post aboard the frigate in Bahrain*

Pictures: Chris Banks, BFPO, and LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson, FRPU East

sorting office. The mail is put on moving belts, scanned by an X-ray machine in a blast-proof room to make sure nothing illegal – not just drugs or weapons, but aerosols and shaving foam – is packed before actually being sorted.

If the machine finds contraband, the police are called in; for that can of Lynx or Boots foam, it is returned to sender where possible – or removed with a note inserted for the recipient explaining what's happened; if unclaimed after six months, the item's auctioned off for Service charities.

Next comes the clever bit. A synchronised loading system pushes the mail on to a huge rectangular-shaped carousel. It passes through the 'red box' (it's a large box with a red light...) which reads the BFPO address on the letter or packet – it doesn't matter if it's handwritten.

Like baggage reclaim at an airport, it circles and circles. Unlike at an airport, the parcel's given a gentle nudge by the belt when it passes the correct BFPO number (200-499 for RN/RFA vessels) and slides down a chute, ready for transfer to a waiting sack.

"Everybody's like a big kid when they see the conveyor belt in action," says Lt Bean.

Having seen the *Navy News* post bag, I'm just amazed the machine can read people's scrawl...

At the bottom of the chute is where the technology ends and the manual labour begins. There's not one slide per ship – even with today's shrunken RN, there isn't the space, so it's down to a handful of men and women to put the correct mail in the correct sack.

There are 106 RN and RFA ship/unit addresses in all from the big (Illustrious, Albion) to the very small (Gleaner) and some diverse Naval Parties (there are small RN detachments inter alia on the tropical islands of Diego Garcia and Andros in the Bahamas – home of AUTECH, the underwater test centre – Ottawa in Canada, Den Helder in the Netherlands).

On an ordinary Tuesday in September, it's pretty quiet in the sorting office. A few sacks of mail for deployed ships – Liverpool, Ocean, Somerset – are filling up nicely. Others – the P2000s, the V boats – have barely a letter in them. No bag will be sent to a ship until it weighs at least two kilos because otherwise, in all likelihood, it would get lost, er, in the post.

What's striking about the whole operation is how clean and quiet it is. No-one running around manically. No shouting. "Come back at the end of November, and there will be cages filled with mail sacks all around the walls, waiting to go," Lt Bean points out with one-eye on the Christmas rush.

The cages wait until the ships are ready to receive their mail – it's not down to BFPO to chase vessels around the globe, with HMS X's mail playing 'catch up' trying to find them hopping from port-to-port. It's down to the ships to inform BFPO that they'll be in Port X on Day Y and it would like its post, please. Ideally, they should give the BFPO team three weeks' notice... although operations (Libya earlier this year proved 'interesting and challenging' in the

tradition of RN understatement) do have a habit of messing up this well-ordered machine.

The aim of BFPO is to give the men and women of the Armed Forces the same "universal postal service that they get from the Royal Mail"; put simply, wherever sailors, soldiers and airmen are deployed, they should get letters and parcels, just as if they were at home and Postman Pat was walking up their drive.

There are, of course, limitations: no parcel sent to ships through the mail can be longer than 105cm or weigh more than 11kg – the restrictions are determined by those grey mail sacks.

Ideally, no ship should go without a postal delivery wherever it is in the world. Given the changeable nature of life in the RN, it's understandable it occasionally goes missing or, more likely, misses its original destination because of operations (instead of a few days in Las Palmas last year, HMS Gloucester spent four hours; she bagged drug runners in doing so, but it was a few more days... and another country, before the post arrived).

Having spent 23 years in the Service, including five on the Royal Yacht in his previous career as a Royal Marines Musician, Lt Bean understands the power of post.

"The morale boost from getting post is huge – you cannot describe it," he says. "I naively thought that my family posted a letter and it magically got to the ship. I never thought that if you break one link of the mail chain, the system will collapse."

"So to be at this end, it's really rewarding. You can go home at the end of the day feeling that you've made a difference, particularly for the ships on the front line."

His sentiments are shared by Tilly Clifton, the ships' office manager, who knows the movements of RN vessels pretty much as well as the First Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Fleet and has spent 14 years doing her utmost to ensure the sacks are delivered. Ships offices at sea know her simply as 'Tilly BFPO'...

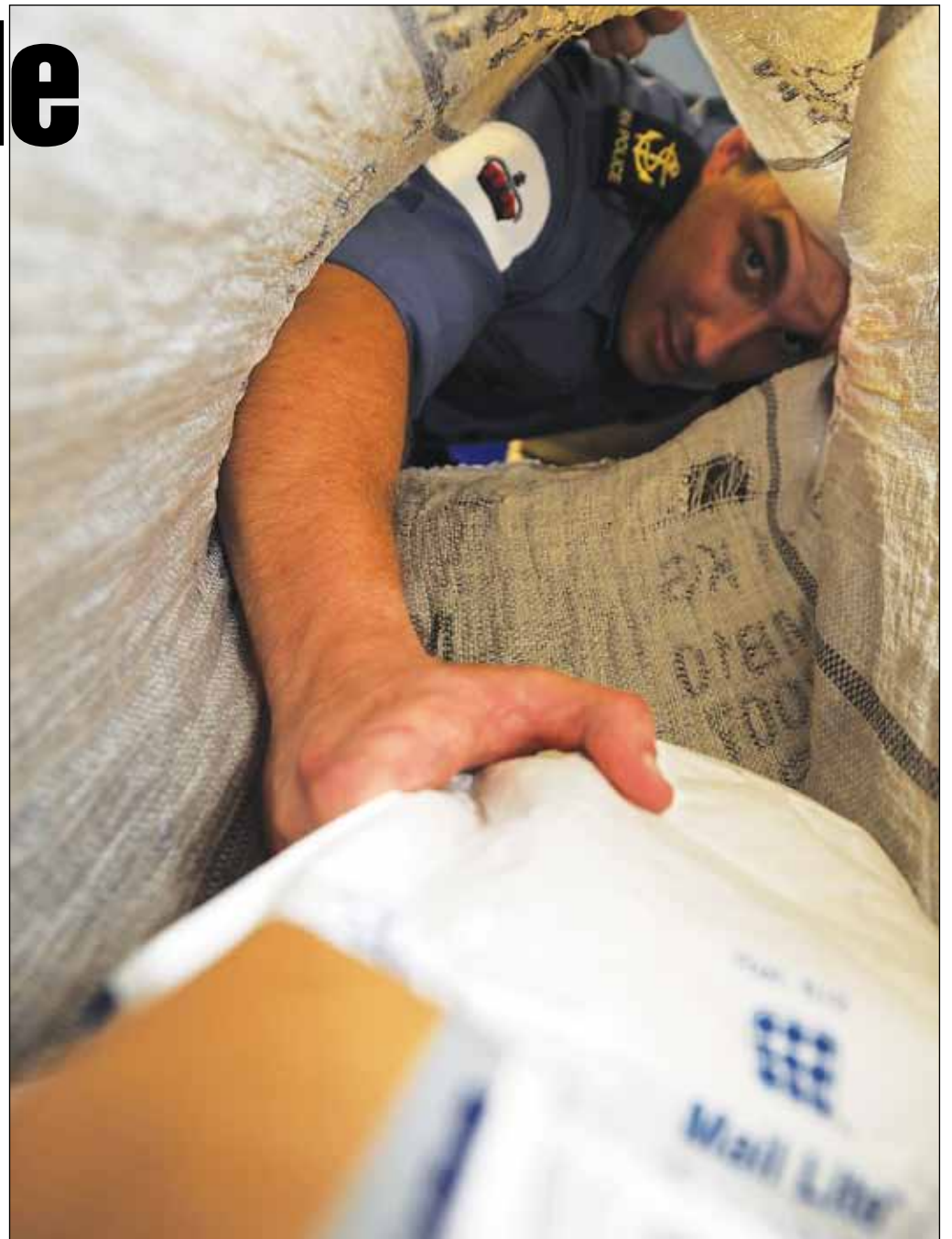
"I understand how emotional it is getting your mail. I get emotional if I cannot get it to the ships, especially those deployed at Christmas. I think of them as my boys and girls."

The whole BFPO operation is run by the Army – you can actually be a postie in the Royal Logistics Corps – so for the soldiers, seeing how the Navy deals with mail is an eye-opener.

"In the Army or RAF you expect to get your post delivered maybe every day – certainly at least every three or four days," explains Lt Col Denis Dillon, deputy head of BFPO. "With the Navy, it's not expectation, it's more appreciation – they appreciate the effort that's been taken to get their mail to them."

But soldier, sailor or airmen, there's a common factor. Says the Army officer: "Mail still makes a big difference, that someone's written a letter, it's something tangible from home. Don't underestimate it."

More details on sending mail via BFPO at <http://is.gd/JKPeSC>.



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Unique haul of prizes for Merlin unit

ONE of the Navy's top officers visited Culdrose to see just how one squadron bagged an unprecedented four glittering prizes.

Flight safety, operational efficiency and capability are all essential in military aviation units, and Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet Vice Admiral George Zambellas paid tribute to the standards set at the Cornish base.

And no unit has done more to tread the path of excellence than 820 NAS, which flies the Merlin.

820's performance is remarkable in the light of the fact that no unit has won more than one top trophy in a single year since the first prize was created in 1959.

That Bambara Trophy, for the unit with the best flight safety record, was handed by Vice Admiral Zambellas to Lt Cdr Steve Thomas, 820's Senior Pilot and Squadron Flight Safety Officer.

His namesake, Squadron Training Officer Lt Dave Thomas, was handed the Breitling Trophy, which recognises the squadron or flight which achieves the best overall performance during a Naval Flying Standards inspection.

The Australia Shield, for the front-line squadron demonstrating the highest degree of operational capability, was received by LAET Gaz Foulkes.

And the Rolls Royce Engineering Efficiency Trophy was picked up by CPO Chris Stuart, the longest-serving member of 820 NAS.

At a separate ceremony at 771 NAS the Bambara Shield was presented to the Sea King Force HQ in recognition of the entire force's excellent flight safety record, including operations in Afghanistan.

'Salty wizard' spent 250 days in the air

A HELICOPTER observer who blasted an Argentinian submarine during the Falklands Conflict has just passed a rare aviation milestone.

HMS Daring's Flight Commander, Observer Lt Cdr Joe Harper, has achieved 6,000 hours of helicopter flight.

The magic number was clocked up whilst flying at night from the flight deck of Daring, the first of the Type 45 destroyers which he had only just joined.

Lt Cdr Harper is one of the most experienced Observers in the Fleet Air Arm, and is the only Observer in the Lynx helicopter force to achieve 6,000 hours.

As Lt Cdr Harper landed after reaching the milestone, the hangar doors were raised to reveal a large 6000 sign held by the ship's flight and members of the ship's company, including Commanding Officer Capt Guy Robinson with a bottle of champagne.

The chefs had also made a cake especially for the occasion inscribed with 250 days – the amount of time Joe has spent in the air.

The pilot of Daring's Lynx, Lt Wes Blackwell, a US Navy pilot on exchange, clearly looks forward to going on operations with such an experienced old hand.

He said: "It is comforting to know that such a salty wizard is in



● Lt Cdr Joe Harper (right of helicopter) and pilot Lt Wes Blackwell are welcomed back to HMS Daring by the ship's flight and ship's company after the Observer passed the 6,000 hours milestone

the left-hand seat, he has always got my six [looking out for him]."

Lt Cdr Harper said: "Being recognised for achieving this milestone was both very humbling and a great surprise.

"Despite all my hours airborne, operating the Lynx at sea is still hugely rewarding, especially from such a fantastic platform as Daring. Roll on 7,000!"

The 6,000 hours were achieved

during 32 years of constant service in the cockpit of many of the Royal Navy's helicopters, in operational theatres all over the world.

Lt Cdr Harper was involved in the Falklands Conflict, where in the opening engagement he targeted the already-damaged Argentinian submarine ARA Sante Fe with a missile from his Wasp helicopter, scoring a hit.

He became a Qualified Observer Instructor in 1996, training junior Lynx aircrew on 702 Naval Air Squadron, and in 2001 achieved the standard of A2 Instructor, one of the highest levels of instructor in the Fleet Air Arm.

He subsequently returned to operational flying, but has still remained at the lead for developing and teaching new techniques and capabilities for the Lynx Helicopter Force, including the wider introduction of Night Vision Goggles and maritime counter-terrorism operations, both key techniques which he himself will use when Daring deploys on operations early next year.

Lt Cdr Harper has also spent three years as the Naval Flying Standards Flight (Rotary Wing) Assessor or 'Trapper', as they are known in the Fleet Air Arm, checking whether pilots and observers still make the grade.



Ex-bandie still in the running

A FORMER Royal Marines bandie still has her eye on a breakthrough recording contract, having won a place in the regional finals of a national singing competition.

Professional singer and multi-instrumentalist Michelle Forde, aged 33 (above), who now lives in Colchester, entered the Open Mic UK competition, which reaches a crescendo at the National Grand Final in the O2 in London in January.

She has to negotiate the regional heat, held in Basildon on October 2, and the Area finals which follow, if she is to appear in front of the movers and shakers in the UK music industry in London in the New Year.

Open Mic UK bills itself as "the biggest music competition in the UK for singers, songwriters, rappers and solo artists to showcase their music and get signed," though that shouldn't prove too daunting for Michelle, who appears under the stage name Destiny Michelle.

She featured in *Navy News* in 1997 when she sang at the Edinburgh Tattoo and the Festival of Remembrance, and her military career – which also included a spell in the Royal Military Police – saw her perform in front of numerous VIPs, including the Royal Family, and at locations including Buckingham Palace.

Her singing career built on an impressive musical pedigree; she trained on a wide range of string, woodwind and brass instruments, and was a member of the National Youth Orchestra before joining the Forces.

For more details on the competition, see www.openmicuk.co.uk and for information on Michelle see www.destinymichelle.com

Australian fellowship

A JUNIOR officer is back in the UK after carrying out research in Australia, thanks to a prestigious fellowship award.

Lt Andy Burns, of the CHF HQ, spent six weeks taking a close look at the Royal Australian Navy, after winning the Naval Review Fellowship.

The award, sponsored by the defence firm Ultra Electronics, allows a junior officer the opportunity to select and study their own essay for the *Naval Review* whilst travelling around Australia visiting RAN establishments.

"It was a fantastic experience to see the RAN up close and to meet a Navy that is, on the surface, so similar to ours but, by digging a little deeper, you find they take a different approach to training and operations," said Lt Burns.

"Maybe we can each learn a lot more from each other than perhaps we both realise."

On completion of his research Lt Burns duly submitted an essay to the quarterly magazine, which celebrates its centenary next year.

The Fellowship is open to any RN lieutenant or RM captain, and potential candidates should see RNTM 222/11, which gives full details of the 2012 award, or contact their career manager.



● From left: Lt Cdr Gavin Marshall, Lt Cdr Guy Lewis RAN and Cdr Tom Sharpe

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson

Dubai rendezvous leads to reunions

REUNIONS came thick and fast when HMS St Albans went alongside in Dubai.

For at the jetty just astern of the Type 23 frigate was the Australian frigate HMAS Toowoomba.

The Marine Engineer Officer on board the Anzac-class ship is Lt Cdr Guy Lewis RAN – but in 2001 Guy was the MEO of St Albans, guiding her out of build, through work-up and on to the ship's first operational deployment which saw her complete anti-piracy and anti-smuggling patrols in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean.

His DMEO on that first deployment was one Lt Gavin Marshall, now promoted and delighted to have returned as her

current MEO.

This might have been coincidence enough – but there's more.

The Commanding Officer of St Albans, Cdr Tom Sharpe, joined Dartmouth at the same time as Lt Cdr Lewis and played in the same RN cricket team for a number of years.

So it was with great pleasure that the three met up to reminisce.

And with the two ships lying in such close proximity, the chance to foster ties between the two navies wasn't wasted; sailors from both ships took the opportunity to tour that of their oppos, and the COs of RFA Fort Victoria and St Albans attended a most enjoyable lunch on the Toowoomba.

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Engineers help out at nursery

ROYAL Navy engineers in the Middle East have been helping renovate a nursery set up by an ex-pat.

Professional singer Christine Gordon set up the RIA Institute in Bahrain in 1999 and started with seven children.

The nursery, which has a British curriculum, now runs mixed classes for 150 children with and without disabilities.

When the sailors of Fleet Support Unit 2, or FSU(2), heard about the centre they adopted it as their charity and set about selling T-shirts, collecting donations, growing beards and organising a charity horse-racing night.

Having raised more than £750, they also added some muscle to the equation.

Over two very hot days the team carried out repairs and decorated parts of the facility; five classrooms were repainted, doors were fitted to kitchen cupboards, and the worktops resealed before the team headed out into 40°C to sort out the playground.

WO Mike Gowers said: "The lads have really taken the RIA Nursery to heart and are proud to have an affiliation and interaction in the local community."

"A couple of their children have learning difficulties so when they were told Christine needed their help they were only too willing to give up their time and skills to help out."

Christine said: "It's an immense emotional support for me to have the Royal Navy's help as running the nursery takes all of my energy."

"The lads have given the place a real lift and I know the children will love it."

"We rely on local donations and help. To be able to send a child home with a smile and know their parents are happy is all that we ask for."

"I'm proud to be British and can't thank the FSU enough."



● Less FOD, more fodder – Lts Sid Shaw (left) and Ben Kerley tidying up the hayfield

Merlin flight crew reap the whirlwind

A LOVELY, warm, sunny late summer's day in Cornwall.

The general drowsiness is only punctuated by a farmer who is cutting and collecting hay into neat piles in a field.

A steady breeze drifts across the bucolic scene – bringing with it a

faint sound which grows steadily to a roar.

The roar comes from the three Rolls Royce engines of a 15-ton Merlin helicopter, returning to base at RN Air Station Culdrose, the perimeter of which lies just beyond the farmer's field.

Unfortunately (for the farmer),

the Merlin is renowned for the powerful downdraught from its rotor blades – and the low-flying aircraft blew some of the hay up into the air, spoiling the neat rows of hay awaiting collection.

Perhaps understandably, the farmer was not best pleased, and contacted Culdrose to make his

feelings known.

Very shortly after hearing about the incident, the two pilots who had been flying the guilty Merlin volunteered to go into the field to apologise to the farmer in person and tidy up the hay in readiness for the baler to collect it.

Armed with pitchforks, it was a simple – but warm – job to put the hay back where it belonged.

Lt Ben Kerley, one of the pilots, said: "With the hay being dry and light, our downdraught easily picked it up and threw it around."

"The very least we felt we could do was to apologise and help replace it."

Dee given honorary RN rank

RECORD-breaking yachtswoman Dee Caffari has been appointed an Honorary Commander by the Royal Navy in recognition of her service to maritime affairs.

Dee, who set her third world record this year by sailing non-stop around the world more times than any other woman in history, joins the likes of adventurer Bear Grylls and fellow yachtswoman Dame Ellen McArthur.

On receiving the news that her appointment had been approved by the Queen, Dee said: "It is an honour to be recognised for my achievements and support of the Armed Forces."

"I have enjoyed the links I have established and maintained with the Royal Navy and look forward to being presented with my uniform!"

"Having not worn a uniform since school, I am excited about preparing for my role at Dartmouth, being fitted with a uniform and learning to salute correctly."

One particular link with the Forces has been Dee's work as an ambassador for the tri-Service Toe In The Water project.

The charity uses competitive sailing as part of the rehabilitation process carried by the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) Headley Court to re-inspire profoundly and traumatically-injured Service personnel to explore life beyond their injuries.

Dee first competed with Toe in the Water at the Dartmouth Regatta in 2009 and has continued to work with them since, racing alongside many injured and able-bodied RN and RM crew members, as well as soldiers and airmen.



● Assist dog Xylo welcomes the Navy swimmers ashore after their challenge Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Sutton

Dogged determination

A TEAM of seven sailors from Clyde Naval Base have completed a gruelling day-long relay swim in Loch Lomond in support of a charity which supports people with disabilities.

The team, from the First Mine Countermeasures Squadron (MCM1), began at 6am at the northern tip of the loch near Ardlui.

And led by their Commanding Officer, Cdr David Bence, the team finished the 22.3-mile slog more than 12 hours later at Lomond Shores in Balloch.

Although the swimmers covered most of the distance in relays, they all jumped back into the loch for the final leg and to wade out at the finish.

Cdr Bence said: "The Squadron has close ties with the charity Canine Partners and last year we raised £5,251 for them through our charity drive."

"We were thinking of ways we could top that target and it was suggested that we undertake a charity swim."

Last year sailors from MCM1 ran and cycled more than 13,000 kilometres for Canine Partners – the distance from their home port to Bahrain, where they were stationed at the time.

Using the gym on board RFA Lyme Bay, the team clocked up the miles and the pounds, raising enough to pay for the first year of training for a Canine Partner, golden retriever Xylo – who was there at Lomond Shores to greet the tired swimmers this year.

"We did as much swimming as our busy programme allowed while deployed to the Gulf over recent months," said Cdr Bence.

"With the team now back in the UK, we have been taking advantage of the swimming pool at the naval base's Sportsdrome to get in shape, as well as training in the loch to get used to open water and low temperatures."

Spectators at the finish line – apart from Xylo – included the Captain of the Faslane Flotilla, Capt Phil Buckley, and members of Canine Partners, which provides specially-trained dogs to help people enjoy greater independence and quality of life.

The money raised from the event is still being counted, but the latest calculations indicate that they have gathered over £6,000.

To donate, and for more details and pictures of the event, see www.justgiving.com/mcm1

Pilot ends era of the Harrier

IT IS almost a year since the Pegasus engines were shut down at RAF Cottesmore after the final flight of the fabled Harrier.

The afternoon of Wednesday December 15 2010 was the swansong for the British Harrier – but not, as it happens, for British Harrier pilots.

For a Navy man has belatedly claimed a place in history as the last Brit to fly one of these much-loved machines.

Lt Cdr Nathan Gray has been plying his trade across the Atlantic, serving with the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing's Marine Attack Squadron 542 and Marine Attack Training Squadron 203.

And as an instructor in the AV-8B Harrier, Lt Cdr Gray had the honour of being the last British serviceman at the controls of the American variant of the British design, on Friday August 5.

"It is bittersweet," said Lt Cdr Gray. "I have been flying the Harrier for about ten years, and after this flight I will never set foot in the cockpit of a Harrier again."

Gray said he is happy that he is going to be known as the last British Harrier pilot, but dedicated the final flight to his former instructor, Lt Cdr Jack London, the Navy's most distinguished Sea Harrier pilot, who had won acclaim for bringing his aircraft back to HMS Invincible safely after the cockpit canopy exploded at 40,000ft in 1998, four years before he died in a training accident.

"I went on my final training flight in a TAV-8B two-seated Harrier with Lt Cdr London," said Lt Cdr Gray.

"I was flying and there was a mechanical malfunction so we had to eject."

"We ejected parallel to the ground and my chute deployed while his didn't."

"We lost a great pilot and I'm dedicating this last flight to the man who taught me everything."

Lt Cdr Gray's last flight, in VMAT-203's Harrier number 22, ended with the aircraft's signature salute – the mid-air bow.

And his place in the annals of aviation is acknowledged by the British Museum, who are to take delivery of Lt Cdr Gray's flight suit from that final sortie.



● From left: Paul Drake (OU), Professor Geoff Peters (OU), Capt Paul Lemkes (second prize), Lt Tom O'Brien (first prize), Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone (FOST) and Capt Jerry Pett (SDE)

Valuable studies

POINTS mean prizes, as far as two officers studying with the Open University (OU) are concerned.

For the past four years the OU has sponsored a prize competition for Naval Service personnel undertaking undergraduate or postgraduate study with them.

The aims of the competition are to reward and highlight the considerable effort made by Naval Service personnel who voluntarily undertake an OU course and also to encourage participation in lifelong learning for the benefit of the individual and the Service.

The prizes are awarded annually to the students who achieve the highest overall examinable score for a course of Level 3 or above

that attracts 30 points or more.

Prof Geoff Peters, Professor of Systems Strategy at the OU, presented this year's prizes on board HMS Victory, watched by Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone (FOST) and Capt Jerry Pett (Service Director of Education).

First prize, an iPad 2, went to Lt Tom O'Brien (DSTL, Portsmouth), with second prize, a Netbook, going to Capt Paul Lemkes (Portsmouth Naval Base).

If you wish to enter for the OU Prize 2011 and have studied a 30-point module with final exams within the 2011 calendar year you can find entry details and an application form within BR3 Part 9 Section 14 (Educational Prizes).

Protector: Plus ça

EXTENSIVE preparations finally over, ice patrol ship HMS Protector could at last slip away from the jetty and out of Portsmouth Harbour into a benign autumn Channel.

In prospect: a wide-ranging deployment to South America, the Falklands and the Antarctic, with a heady mix of port visits, defence diplomacy and some memorable runs ashore.

Even fierce gales and stormy seas – the first just days out of Portsmouth – would not dampen the enthusiasm of young Dave Maton as he recorded the highlights of his first deployment in a series of letters to his family.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose – the more the world (and the Royal Navy) changes, the more it stays the same.

For Dave's Protector was the old wartime netlayer, and the deployment was more than half a century ago – yet there is much that will be familiar to a rookie on the current Protector, due to sail south in the coming weeks.

The assaults on the senses came thick and fast from the very beginning for Dave and his shipmates.

The storm of October 21 1959 gave way to a sea so calm "one could have played billiards on it" as Protector arrived off Gibraltar on October 25.

"One night I saw the moon as I had never seen it – I thought it was a ship on fire just on the horizon.

"It did not appear to be in the sky and just on level as if it were actually floating in the sea. A tremendous sight."



● Dave Maton on his first deployment in HMS Protector

With the temperature rising, the ship called in at the Canaries on her way towards the southern hemisphere: "We work in the mornings and swim and eat ice-cream etc for the rest of the day. Sometimes in the evening we have a film show.

"We now spend most of the day clad in swimming trunks."

Dave became a 'son of King Neptune' on November 9 in a Crossing the Line ceremony on the Equator; he was later to add a Bluenose certificate to his collection, giving him membership of a select group who cross the Equator and a polar circle in the same deployment.

Brazil made quite an impression on the young Londoner, with Rio de Janeiro looking "a very fine city – the buildings all along the coast look like giant tea-packets and all

different colours."

A trip in the cattle wagons of the Santos to Sao Paulo railway also kept a group of British matelots amused for a day, as they negotiated cable-hauled mountain sections and wooden trestle bridges over gaping gorges.

The effort was worth it – "30 of us were entertained... we had a lovely day at the British Athletics Club. Free drinks, chicken and all the trimmings, plus all the Brazilian beauties!"

After a brief stop in Uruguay it was "roughers all the way to Port Stanley – everything rolling and pitching all the time" as the temperature dropped noticeably.

Protector passed the Darwin – the steamship which linked the Falklands and South America – late on November 30 but "it was too rough for her to take the mail aboard", which meant loved ones back in the UK would have a wait of several weeks before they received the latest news.

The sheltered waters of Port Stanley were a welcome sight.

"We have been in the Submarine Service for the past two days as we have been more under the water instead of on it.

"We had to eat sandwiches as ordinary meals were out of the question – waves 30-40ft high were pounding us."

Life settled into a routine in this "quiet, desolate place" – brilliant sunny days, fresh cold air, football matches, a scramble up the local mountain, decent food and "our own private cinema shows in the mess at night, sitting there drinking coffee and eating toast."

On December 9 Protector sailed south into a placid Southern Ocean.

Penguins flocked around the ship, Dave saw his first whale spouting (he was to get a closer look at these leviathans later) and Protector's radar picked up the first iceberg.

"As we passed closer, we went through floating pieces of ice like houses. This scattered ice is known as 'growlers'.

"The iceberg was about the size of Woolwich – it took us 15 minutes to pass it."

But the icefields would have to wait for a later patrol; her first foray south saw the ship undertake a helicopter survey of South Georgia – once the fog had cleared.

Dave was working on the fo'c'sle at one point, his hands numbed after just ten minutes despite gloves, but when the sun broke through the scene was transformed from forbidding grey.

"The island is a photographer's paradise, for with the clearing of the sky and the dawning of the sun, by mid-morning brilliant colours began to reflect themselves off the mountain sides.

"All the colours of the rainbow began to glint at us across the icy waters as the sun's rays began to sparkle and dance on the snow and icy slopes.

"In the space of one whole day I have seen the wonders and beauties of nature as I have never seen them before.

"Down here is a world that you only hear about and never have the chance to see.

● (Above left) One of HMS Protector's Westland Whirlwind helicopters; (left and below) the ice patrol ship at sea



● (Above) HMS Protector on deployment; (right) the view of the ship's flight deck from the cockpit of one of her helicopters

"This world and its beauty is beyond one's wildest dreams, and even photographs do not bring out its true natural beauty."

Going ashore at Grytviken brought out another aspect of this harsh outpost.

The whaling factory was home to numerous Argentinians and Norwegians, with a handful of British 'controllers'.

"On Saturday there had been nine huge whales lying alongside the slipway waiting to be cut up.

"By Sunday dinner time all that remained of these whales was flesh and bones.

"The stench was awful and one or two of the chaps were sick.

"We had a walk around the factory and we were continuously ankle-deep in whale oil and blood."

On a later visit some of Dave's shipmates would see a baby whale, barely six feet in length, hauled from the womb as they carved up its dead mother.

Dave and his shipmates visited Shackleton's grave and clambered 1,600ft up a mountain – Dave left his name spelled out in rocks near the top for posterity – and their trudge across icy slopes and through waist-deep snow was rewarded by a spectacular view of their ship far below in the fjord.

Engine trouble forced Protector to stop at the British whaling station at Leith for repairs, but Dave had other things on his mind – wine and cigars, to celebrate his 20th birthday.

A rough four-day passage back to the Falklands meant the ship was back in port for Christmas, and to pick up sea mail direct from the UK (via RMS Rotterdam) and air mail (via South America and RMS Darwin).

Christmas brought parties, big eats and drinks and telegrams; the mess was decorated with paper chains, rum and beer flowed, nuts, fruit, cigars and cigarettes were passed around, then came the full Christmas dinner, some more drinking, a strawberries-and-cream tea and a film show, by



the end of which "the ship looked a shambles."

The first day of 1960 saw Protector rolling heavily in the Southern Ocean *en route* for the Drake Passage and the Antarctic.

Weaving past icebergs, the command team ordered some gunnery practice, leaving bergs peppered with black scars from the 4in shells.

Now in the realm of the midnight sun, the sight of Deception Island surpassed even the beauty of South Georgia, though frequent blizzards and high winds interrupted flying and surveying.

By the time Protector returned to the Falklands on January 12 1960 she had fallen behind her schedule.

Her next patrol saw Protector breach the Antarctic Circle (and qualified Dave for a Bluenose certificate as he slept in the small hours of January 19). It took several more days of skirting the ice field before a route could be found through the pack-ice.

"This ice belt, about half a mile wide, stretched from horizon to horizon across our bows and it seemed rather peculiar to suddenly see the water turn into a wall of solid ice.

"The gentle, undulating swell

caused the ice to rise and fall like a huge breathing monster."

A frustrating search for leads through the ice meant the visit to Adelaide Island was cursory, the bridge team constantly on the look-out for dangerous icebergs: "It is rather like driving down an avenue of enormous white houses, except these houses are as big as towns."

Shore leave was granted at Deception Island, where the politics of these chilly regions became starkly apparent in tales of feuds between the Falkland Islands Dependency Survey (FIDS) teams and the Argentinians across the harbour, with staff at the nearby Chilean base looking on.

The volcanic nature of the island ("there are a few hot lakes ashore and the water is literally boiling – I know because I have put my hand in one") meant little snow or ice on lower slopes, where the ground emitted steam.

Returning to Stanley at the end of January, Dave and his shipmates set about painting the ship for their visit to Montevideo – a welcome break from the glare of the ice and long weeks at sea.

With the half-way point of the deployment reached, Protector headed for the bustle, heat and noise of Uruguay.

Good food ("last night I tasted the biggest steak that I have ever seen – it literally covered the whole of a large dinner plate and was about two to three inches thick"), and leisure time – particularly barbecues and swimming in the pool of the Montevideo Cricket Club – were worth the risk of taking a local taxi ("drivers in this part of the world are quite mad... we found it quite amusing and terrifying at times").

The passage back to the Falklands was quiet, and Dave was pleased to be able to glimpse the wreck of the Graf Spee as they left Montevideo.

Another 18-day patrol south followed, during which Protector's



change...

ship's company spliced the mainbrace to celebrate the birth of Prince Andrew on February 19.

Another fierce storm – with towering waves crashing off the bridge and funnel – slowed their progress, but once into calm waters off Graham Land, part of the Antarctic Peninsula, survey work could proceed.

There was an unexpected and tense encounter with an Argentinian ship on February 21; the vessels took the measure of one another in silence before the Argentinians sent over a boat to protest at Protector's presence in what they claimed to be Argentinian waters.

"All we did was lean over the rails and glare at them."

The boat returned to the Bahia Aguirre, followed in short order by a British boat, White Ensign prominently displayed, refuting the Argentinians' claim and asserting Protector's right to be in international waters.

The Argentinian ship remained for a further hour before abruptly steaming away: "That was one example of the cold war that exists down here and it has been going on for years and will probably continue for years to come."

Visits to the South Sandwich Islands and South Georgia completed the patrol – almost 5,000 miles in 18 days – but with winter starting to make its influence felt, there was still one more patrol to complete, setting out on March 11.

The weather was affecting all ventures in the far south – British explorer Sir Vivian Fuchs would eventually need help from the US Navy icebreaker Glacier when his ship, the Kista Dan, became stuck in ice (Protector was put on alert but did not actively participate in the rescue), while Protector's proposed route through the Gerlache Strait was now impassable.

"That afternoon we started contacting small chunks of loose ice floating about.

"Within half a mile these chunks had grown bigger in size and quantity. They rolled over and over as they passed us and the whole area as far as the eye could see was one mass of small floating ice – like huge snowballs rolling aimlessly across a blue carpet.

"Then we saw another wonderful sight of Mother Nature at work.

"The whole sea held a thin crystal film of ice all over its surface. Here and there were small pockets of clear sea water but they were no bigger than tennis balls.

"The whole sea was in the act of freezing solid."

By March 22 the "white wilderness" was astern of Protector, and the tropics lay tantalisingly ahead – conditions on board had become increasingly unpleasant as "the cold air whirled between decks until it brought us nothing but agony.

"Many were the bedclothes that were drawn more tightly around our shivering bodies, trying to seek protective warmth."



● HMS Protector's Westland Whirlwind helicopters ashore in the southern hemisphere

With just a brief final stop in the Falklands, Protector steamed on towards Chile, howling gales and savage seas dogging them until the relative shelter of the Strait of Magellan (a short cut through the tip of South America) and the Patagonian Channel (a spectacular inshore passage on the west coast of Chile).

At Valparaiso Dave and a friend invested in a first-class express bus ticket to Santiago, seeing gauchos at work on the pampas before reaching the capital city.

"We had only just alighted from the bus and had walked across to the railway station to buy our return tickets for the evening when we were stopped by two very nice middle-aged women, one of whom spoke very limited English.

"Apparently they were nurses and great friends, and after helping us buy our tickets invited us home for dinner.

"Their home consisted of a very modern four-roomed flat in the elite area of town.

"Apparently one of these nurses had a daughter who spoke English very well and we were introduced to this very nice young lady.

"We sat down to a four-course meal with a maid on hand. Wine accompanied the dinner and tea and fruit followed."

After a pleasant afternoon, the two matelots left in the early evening with presents – Dave's was an Indian hat.

Protector left Valparaiso and continued north, with tropical routine easing the workload on the ship's company.

Receptions at the British Embassy in Lima and the Lima Cricket Club lived up to expectations at their next port of call, as did a day trip by steam train to around 15,000ft in the Andes, when the railway laid on an extra carriage for the British sailors (complete with bar).

On April 24 Protector returned to the northern hemisphere, and two days later she reached the Pacific entrance of the Panama Canal, with the temperature nudging 30°C.

The sailors were fascinated by the massive project, whether the 'mules' or moving bollards which tow ships or the military installations throughout the Canal Zone, which in 1960 was

still under the control of the Americans, who built the 48-mile waterway.

Once in the Caribbean Protector skirted Jamaica, Cuba and Hispaniola before reaching Bermuda on May 3.

Here the letters home stopped, as the ship turned north-east and steamed for Portsmouth, arriving on May 16 after cheering ship in mid-Atlantic for the Royal Yacht, which was taking Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong Jones on honeymoon.

For Dave it was the start of a 23-year Naval career, which later embraced the Submarine Service.

Before that he had a stint in the communications centre at Simons Town in South Africa, where he and his oppo, having helped a shipmate celebrate earlier in the day, managed to doze off during their night watch.

"Every night we were required to change the night-time frequencies to day-time frequencies, at about 3 or 4am," said Dave.

"About 5am I was shaken by a South African PO who said their commcen had been getting signals saying the ships could not hear us – we hadn't done the QSY [change of frequency] and so ships in the South Atlantic hadn't been getting anything through for an hour or more...

"I got an all-night watch for that..."

As a senior rate Dave joined the Silent Service in the mid-1960s, paying off the last active wartime T-boat, HMS Tiptoe, for scrap.

He also spent some time on loan to the Canadians before leaving the Navy in late 1979.

But memories of that first trip stayed with him throughout his career and long after.

"The scenery and wildlife was absolutely fantastic – lots of penguins, seals and walrus," said Dave.

"I found a whole whale tooth at the whaling station which I carved as scrimshaw. I have still got it.

"I also found penguin flippers and tried to save them.

"I tried to dry them on the heater in the workshop in the ship but just managed to stink the place out.

"I had to chuck them through the scuttle in the end."



Picture: PO(Phot) Ian Arthur

Unicornucopia of thrills

WITH the Royal Navy taking pride of place at this year's Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo there had to be a role for Scottish-based HMS Unicorn.

The 19th Century frigate is open to the public at her berth in Victoria Dock, but the spirit of the wooden warship was on prominent display as one of her

spare figureheads added the finishing touch to a ship-shaped field gun course at the tattoo, staged on the Castle Esplanade (pictured above).

The ship, launched in 1824, also lent two 18pdr cannon which were 'fired' daily.

For more details on the ship see www.frigateunicorn.org

Day by Day grows edition by edition

HALF a millennium of Naval history, from the great battles to the minor skirmishes and a good deal besides, are crammed into the latest edition of *The Royal Navy Day By Day*.

Published by The History Press on Trafalgar Day, this £50 hardback book presents the events which shaped the Senior Service chronologically, day by day, month by month.

Compiled by former MOD senior media operations officer Lt Cdr Lawrie Phillips RNR, the book has been extensively revised

and expanded since the last edition, and the format changed to make it easier to use.

It covers the Fleet, the Royal Marines, the Fleet Air Arm, the WRNS, the Maritime Reserve, the RFA and the Merchant Navy up to the present, and is described by defence expert Vice Admiral Sir Jeremy Blackham, former Deputy CINC Fleet, as "probably one of the most well-thumbed and valued books captains of Her Majesty's Ships possess."

The book's ISBN number is 978-0-7524-6177-9.

HMS Egeria restorer found dead

A RETIRED Royal Navy sailor has died while renovating a former survey ship in the upper reaches of Portsmouth Harbour.

Darren 'Daz' Tully, a warfare specialist with 22 years service behind him, had bought the Echo-class inshore survey vessel HMS Egeria with a view to preserving it and opening it up to visitors, charities and former crew members, as well as using it as a houseboat for his family.

The 42-year-old was found with a head injury on mudflats beside the vessel at Portchester at the end of August, and initial investigations suggest he may have been hurt falling from the ship.

Daniel Hoyland, who was helping with the restoration, said: "HMS Egeria was Darren's pride, life and soul, and helping people was his main in life."

"He is a huge loss to all that knew him."

Tributes to Daz have been posted on the forum of a website which he set up to chart the progress of his restoration programme on the vessel – see www.egeria.tk.

Records online

ALMOST one million 20th century records from the Merchant Navy have been published online.

The project, undertaken by findmypast.co.uk in partnership with the National Archives, sees details of crew members of UK ships between 1918 and 1941 available for scrutiny, as well as photos of the mariners and National Archive images of docks of the period.

Although some searches on the site are free, charges may apply for detailed information including viewing the cards from which the information is taken, and to see individual photos.

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● HMS Protector negotiates the Panama Canal on her way home in 1960



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Memorial is unveiled to Sportsman

MEMBERS of the Medway Towns Submariners Association were invited to the opening of a new development named Saxon Shore House in Gillingham by Cdr David Waters, Naval Liaison Officer (and himself a submariner), for the unveiling of a plaque in memory of HMS Sportsman.

The new apartment block was built on the site of a pub called The Sportsman, named after the S-boat which was adopted by the Kent town during their Warship Week in 1942.

HMS Sportsman was built in Chatham and completed in December 12 1942, though the boat – given the number P229 – did not take a name until the following year.

The boat served in Sicily (1943), the Aegean (1943-44), the Mediterranean (1944) and Atlantic (1945) with a good deal of success against enemy shipping – her captain, Lt Richard Gatehouse, was awarded a second DSC for the number of successful patrols he carried out.

One member of the Association, S/M Bill Vowden, served in Sportsman during the war, and attended the unveiling ceremony.

The boat commissioned for a second time in July 1945 after a refit in the United States, and after further refits and a third commission was modernised at Barrow in early 1951 and handed over to the French the following year.

Tragically, while on exercises in the Mediterranean, the now-renamed Sybille appears to have dived out of control to an estimated depth of 2,600ft with the loss of all hands.

The memorial plaque is mounted on a massive block of granite on an area of grass alongside the apartments.

It was made possible through the efforts of MHS Homes' Ashley Hook, Cdr Waters and Cllr Paul Harriott, who worked on a number of submarines in Chatham Dockyard.

Residents came to join the event and listened as Mr Hook and Cllr Harriott gave a shot talk on the project, while Cdr Waters outlined the history of Sportsman.

A buffet rounded off the event, which saw residents chat to members and make them feel very welcome.

Red Ensign day

SHIPMATES and standards gathered at the Tower Hill Memorial in London on the closest Sunday to Merchant Navy Day, September 3.

The memorial, to the south of Trinity Square, commemorates the men and women of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who died in two world wars and who have no known graves.

Festival date

THE 2011 Devon Festival of Remembrance will be held in the Great Hall of the University of Exeter on Thursday November 10 at 7pm; tickets cost £8.

Further details are available from the Devon County Office of the Royal British Legion on 01392 272211.

New arrangements for repatriations

NEW arrangements have been agreed with police and local authorities for Royal Marines veterans who wish to pay their respects during repatriations following the closure of RAF Lyneham.

Repatriation flights now land 30 miles from Lyneham at RAF Brize Norton – as they did until 2007 – which means the corteges no longer pass through the town of Wootton Bassett, where spontaneous gatherings of veterans and local people grew over the years.

But as the official route from the air station to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford (where mandatory *post mortems* are carried out) has been discussed

and formalised, so too have the opportunities for ex-Service personnel to honour the fallen Serviceman or woman.

The repatriation ceremony and procedures are carried out at the air station, after which the cortege leaves via Britannia Gate, situated at the south-east corner of the airfield, according to RMA Poole member Derek 'Blondie' Boorn, a bootneck back in the late 1950s.

Corteges will now turn left onto Station Road into Brize Norton village, passing the Chequers Inn after three-quarters of a mile.

Shortly after passing the pub the cars will turn left at the mini-roundabout into Carterton Road, then right at the next roundabout into Norton Way, site of the new

Memorial Gardens, which will provide another focal point for those paying their respects.

At the next roundabout the cortege will take the second exit, taking it up onto the A40 and on to Oxford, some 16 miles distant, where the third main 'vigil point' will continue to be at the so-called 'final turn' outside St Anthony of Padua parish church in Headley Way.

Derek, 'Jim' Hawkins and Royal Dragoon Guards veteran Johnny Walker have reced the route, and decided that the Chequers Inn in Brize Norton would be an appropriate gathering point for the serving and ex-serving Royal Marines community to maintain their low-profile presence, thereby

doing their best to avoid disrupting village life.

"We liaised with the licensee of the pub, the parish council, the community centre situated opposite, RAF Brize Norton, MOD Police and Thames Valley Police, and all approved our new location," said Derek, adding that the location of the standards and those lining the route might have to be modified through experience gained.

Prospective attendees are asked to direct queries to Derek at derekboorn@tiscali.co.uk

Derek also pointed out that there will be little warning about the cortege leaving the airfield – around five minutes – and that the bereaved families will pass them on their way to the Memorial Gardens.

However, as the route is much shorter than that from Lyneham, Derek said members of the RMA Repatriation Network should be aware that the text messaging service giving details of the progress of the cortege will not be continued, and that Oxfordshire County Council's repatriation team will be putting their own version into operation.

Those intending to attend repatriations are asked to let Derek know, and to share transport wherever possible.

Plaque unveiled

A PLAQUE has been unveiled at the College Farm Inn, Watchfield, to commemorate all those who regularly manned a vigil point on the A420 during repatriations from RAF Lyneham.

Organised by the RMA Poole branch, the ceremony was attended by up to 40 people and the plaque was dedicated to Andy and Debra and their staff at the inn for their support.

The RM Repatriation Network became active in January 2009 with the return of Cpl Liam Elms RM and Sgt Chris Reed (The Rifles), since when they have helped at a further 99 repatriations for 220 Service personnel.

Return to Raleigh for Dave

AREA 10 chairman S/M Dave Tollerton, of Crosby branch, had a chance to roll back the years when he went to see his great-nephew Kieron Johnson pass out of training at HMS Raleigh.

Dave did his basic training at the Torpoint establishment in 1961, and S/M John Whitman, of Plymouth branch, offered to show him around so that he could see how much things had changed – John is an RNA mentor at Raleigh.

Dave, who has been a critic of the RNA/RN Memorandum of Understanding over the years, was pleasantly surprised to see the Area 4 mentoring initiative in action.

Guided by John, and speaking with young recruits, Dave said he was heartened to see the RNA taking a lead and a positive role in introducing serving sailors to the RNA.

Time for a tot of RN rum

WHEN S/M Donald McNee left the Navy – from HMS Lochinvar, the former minesweeper training base on the shore of the Firth of Forth – he joined a brewery.

Some years later there was an auction following the closure of the Naval victualling yard at Dalmeny, close to the Lochinvar site at Port Edgar.

S/M McNee's company bought the last wicker jar of Pusser's rum and bottled it.

One of the bottles was presented to S/M McNee – and this month, on the occasion of his 75th birthday, he says he intends to open it with family and friends and raise a toast to the Queen, while remembering his old stamping ground on the Forth.

Hermes reunion

AROUND 50 members of the Hermes Association gathered at Market Bosworth in Warwickshire for the 25th annual reunion.

Among the highlights of the weekend were the gala dinner, a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum, an evening of 'Naval horse racing', and a gathering at the local memorial to pay their respects to those who lost their lives in previous Hermes.



● Shipmates from Pershore branch gather at the war memorial in Wootton Bassett

Branch pays tribute in Wootton Bassett

TWO dozen members of Pershore and District branch attended the Sunset Ceremony at Wootton Bassett, marking the end of the town's official involvement in the repatriation programme.

The union flag was lowered and handed to the chaplain to be laid on the altar in St Bartholomew's Church for 24 hours before being handed to RAF Brize Norton.

RNA welfare officer and standard bearer S/M Arthur Young has represented the branch more than 40 times, alongside other standards from across the UK, to pay their respects to those killed on active service as their bodies were driven from RAF Lyneham to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

Various branch members have accompanied Arthur over the years, and a special plaque was presented to the manager of the Cross Keys pub, which has been a branch supporter of visiting shipmates.

Branch chairman S/M Ted Annis said it was one of the most moving ceremonies he had ever attended.

"From the moment we arrived at 6.30 there were crowds of people who had turned up to pay their respects and by the time the streets were closed, you

could hardly see in front of you," he said.

"There were representatives from all areas of the Armed Forces and veterans, and despite the mass number, when the prayers were said over the loudspeaker you could have heard a pin drop.

"The sight of the Union flag being lowered brought a lump to my throat and the whole event really brings home to you the ultimate sacrifice paid by too many.

"Like the rest of our branch, I am so proud that our standard has been there amongst all the others and I cannot thank Arthur enough for his commitment and loyalty.

"It was a proud moment to walk into the pub and see the Pershore RNA plaque in pride of place."

Branch treasurer S/M Terry Brimmell added: "It was very moving to see so many people there for all the right reasons – whether it was their first time or their last.

"It was a fitting end to a town that has shown so much respect and dignity to our troops and their families.

"I hope that those grieving have gained just a little comfort from the show of public support."

Standard in Paris

THE No 9 Area standard was given an outing in the French capital at a parade down the Champs Elysees.

S/Ms Brian Payne and Jane Kingsnorth were in Paris for the anniversary of the Great Pilgrimage, organised by the Royal British Legion.

The Area standard was paraded alongside the National RBL standard and that of the Paris Polish branch as well as the Union flag, which comprised part of the Colour Guard to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arc de Triomphe – parading with them were 40 other French standards.

"I felt so proud knowing that I was the only RNA standard bearer representing our association and, of course, Great Britain," said S/M Payne.

The two UK visitors also managed to get to the Bailleul Communal Cemetery close to the Belgian border in Northern France, where they laid a wreath and poppy spray at the grave of S/M Payne's grandfather.

The cemetery, which is under the care of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and lies just 14km from Ypres, is the final resting place of more than 4,340 victims of the Great War.



● S/M Bill Bannerman was invited to represent Erskine Hospital at the opening of a new Sainsbury's store in Dundas Street, in the centre of Glasgow. Bill was chosen as his wife is resident at the hospital. Bill served on Russian convoys during the war and later became an engineer on Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. He is a long-serving member of the City of Glasgow branch. S/M Bill is pictured cutting the ribbon with store manager Eric Shiels and staff before declaring the branch open. Sainsbury's donated £900 to the hospital





Plymouth group marks Black Tot Day

MEMBERS of Plymouth branch once again gathered round the rum tub to mark Black Tot Day – the abolition of the daily rum issue in the Royal Navy, which happened on July 31 1970.

While serving members of today's Royal Navy remain alert to a high degree without the daily tot, RN veterans suffer no such restrictions and turned out in force and in period costume (though in some cases the period was not at all clear) to commiserate with each other at the loss of their favourite tippie.

The branch thanked Cellar Trends, suppliers of Pusser's Navy Rum, and Annette for the provision of a fine buffet; also members of the WO&SRs Mess at HMS Drake for allowing the use of their superb facilities – and finally thanks to Tony Allen for the evening's entertainment.

Kenya team get together

VETERANS of the RN Training Team Kenya and their friends gathered at the Church House Inn, Rattery, to rekindle old memories and practise their kitchen Swahili, picked up during their service training new recruits for the fledgling Kenya Navy in Mombasa during the 1960s and early 1970s.

A warm welcome was extended to three new guests, veterans' wives Ann Anderson and Ruth Cooper and Ann's daughter Pat Armstrong, who was born in the Catherine Bibby Hospital in Mombasa.

A glass rose bowl, engraved *rafiki etu* (Swahili for 'among friends'), was presented to guest of honour Hilary Hall.

Those gathered again extended their thanks to landlord Ray and his staff at the inn, on the edge of Dartmoor, and thoughts are now turning to next year's event.



● MCA emergency towing vessel Anglian Sovereign pays tribute at the ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the first Arctic convoy

Picture: Ewen Weatherspoon, www.russianarcticconvoymuseum.co.uk

Ceremony marks Dervish anniversary

A SERVICE of thanksgiving and remembrance has been held in the Scottish Highlands to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the first Russian convoy.

Dervish sailed from the UK via Iceland in August 1941, bound for Arkhangelsk in Russia – and the first six merchantmen, plus a fleet oiler, got through safely at the end of August, landing a cargo that included rubber and army boots.

Some 40 convoys subsequently sailed for the Soviet Union, many suffering a mauling from German submarines, ships and aircraft, and

3,000 mariners lost their lives in the bitter cold northern seas as just over 100 ships were lost, more than 80 per cent of them merchantmen.

Many of these convoys assembled at Loch Ewe – hence the memorial, the memorial service, the gathering of hundreds of residents and supporters (including more than a dozen Arctic Convoy veterans) at Cove and the project to create a permanent museum for the convoys, which Churchill acknowledged to be amongst the most dangerous journeys of the war.

Among the VIP guests at the windswept ceremony were Prince Michael of Kent, Sergey Krutikov, the Consul General of the

Russian Federation in Scotland and representatives of the United States, Canada, Norway and New Zealand.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency emergency towing vessel Anglian Sovereign played her fire hoses offshore and a Coastguard helicopter conducted a flypast at the end of the service, after which refreshments were served at the village hall in Poolewe by the St Maelfrubhas volunteers, while the VIPs were entertained by the Harrison family at Pool House.

The chairman of the Russian Arctic Convoy Club Scotland, S/M Jock Dempster, was presented with an award by Mr Krutikov, which he said was "an

honour to receive."

The Russian Arctic Convoy Museum project team organised the event, with chairman and vice-chairman Francis Russell and Jacky Brookes saying they were delighted with the event, and thanking the community for their valuable support on behalf of the veterans.

More details on the museum project in future editions of *Navy News* – see www.russianarcticconvoymuseum.co.uk

Similar ceremonies were held around the UK and abroad to mark the anniversary, including Portsmouth and Arkhangelsk – see full report next month.



● Ellis 'Norrie' Norrell with his bronze counterpart

Norrie is a model Yachtsman

BACK in August we told you about the unveiling of a statue of a Yottie in Leith, close to the berth of the former Royal Yacht Britannia.

The life-sized bronze statue was unveiled during a week-long visit by more than 60 former Royal Yachtsmen, during which time they helped the current maintenance team carry out work, as well as swinging the lamp socially.

What we couldn't tell you at the time was on whom the statue was modelled.

Having checked our sources thoroughly, and as you can see from the likeness in the photograph above, the model for the bronze Yottie was Ellis 'Norrie' Norrell, who served on board the ship for 34 years, making him the longest-serving Yottie.

The unveiling of the statue also officially cemented Britannia's status as the official headquarters for the Association of Royal Yachtsmen.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our August edition (*right*) was torpedo boat destroyer HMS Laurel, and Mr R Long, of Taunton in Somerset, wins the £50 prize for identifying her.

This month's mystery submarine, pictured above around the time of her completion, was launched in Birkenhead in the summer of 1959 and towed to Spain to be scrapped in 1988.

At one point in her career, when serving in the Far East, she was fitted with an Oerlikon gun just forward of her fin.

What was her name, and what was the name of her eight-strong class, which paved the way for the Oberons?

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 November 15 2011. 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 December edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 200

Name

Address

My answers



● S/M Dave Tollerton enjoys a libation as the boat passes HMS Illustrious

Shipmates welcomed to HQ

SOME 25 shipmates joined the HQ staff for an open day in the RNA's Semaphore Tower offices in Portsmouth.

Members had a chance to see the HQ facilities, the full range of slops and grab the new recruiting materials and a few gizzits.

They then enjoyed a sandwich lunch in the Semaphore Arms, with stunning views over the harbour, and a brief from General Secretary Capt

Paul Quinn, before a harbour cruise on an MOD boat.

The visitors were delighted to see the new Type 45 destroyers and HMS Illustrious all bathed in sunshine, and National Chairman S/M Chris Dovey arranged a cake for a farewell cup of tea after they returned from sea.

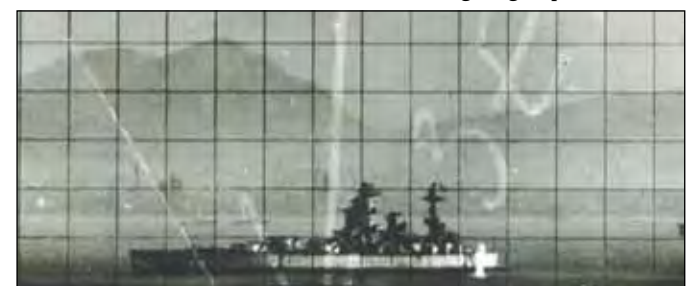
HQ staff have had some lovely e-mails thanking them for a great day, and already planned the next open day on November 4 – bookings through HQ.

Nelson under attack

NAVY News reader Fred Copp sent us a photograph of HMS Nelson anchored in the Firth of Forth during the summer of 1948, when she was involved in bombing trials – hence the plume of water from a near-miss aft.

Nelson was one of a number of former RN and wartime enemy warships used to study the effects of explosive shock on hulls, paving the way to better designs.

The aerial attack trials on Nelson were carried out between June and September 1948, including a number by Barracuda dive-bombers, and she was sent off for scrapping early the following year.



Crawley's 60th

CRAWLEY branch celebrates its 60th anniversary on Friday October 21 at midday in the Crawley Labour Supporters Sports and Social Club, West Green, Crawley.

Members intend to make it a special event with an emphasis on the Royal Navy and RNA and their service to the country.

The Mayor of Crawley, the leader of the local Borough Council, senior councillors, the National Chairman of the RNA, representatives of the other Armed Forces and cadets in Crawley will all be there on this historic day for the branch.

Arboretum survey

THE National Memorial Arboretum is putting together an application for a £1.5m Heritage Lottery Fund grant, and to assist in the bid managers are seeking the views of visitors through an online survey.

The survey, which takes just a few minutes to complete, can be found at <http://tiny.cc/okfsx>

Any grant obtained would go to the NMA Appeal, launched in 2008 and designed to raise £8m to create a world-class centre of remembrance at the Staffordshire site, which is part of the Royal British Legion group of charities.



Up for the antipodes?

SAILORS are being encouraged to sign up for a four-month exchange with the Royal Australian and New Zealand Navies in 2012.

Each year a few dozen British sailors head to Australia and New Zealand for sun, sea, surf and, er, ships... and Aussies and Kiwis head in the opposite direction for sea and ships.

The aim of the Long Look exchange is to broaden the experiences and professional knowledge of sailors travelling in both directions – which makes it easier for the Royal Navy, Royal Australian Navy and Royal New Zealand Navy to work together and means personnel will take back fresh ideas about the way their day jobs can be carried out.

The programme runs from March to July and generally works on a straight swap basis – namely a Royal Navy diver, for example, trades places with his counterpart from Australia or New Zealand. Typically around two dozen personnel take part.

During this year's Long

● **LET(ME) Michael Monnington**, of HMS Albion, in the engine room of HMAS Manoora during Long Look

Look, LPT Dean Goulding from RNAS Culdrose found himself putting recruits through their paces at HMAS Cerberus, the RAN's main training establishment near Melbourne.

There, trainees get their first taste of life as sailors (on an 11-week course, one week longer than the equivalent training at HMS Raleigh for Royal Navy newbies). Early morning physical training begins at 4.45am(!) and Dean found himself in charge of 300 recruits – all on his own.

Four hundred and fifty miles to the northeast, marine engineer LET 'Tugg' Wilson spent four months in Sydney keeping frigate HMAS Newcastle running as she patrolled the east coast, visiting Brisbane, Mackay, Cairns and her namesake city.

On a more poignant note, Long Look sailors who were attached to the New Zealand Navy found themselves supporting their Kiwi comrades during the massive aid and clear-up operation after the earthquake which killed more than 180 people in Christchurch.

Feedback to the Long Look organisers on Whale Island in Portsmouth from some of this year's sailors who took part in the

swap includes:

■ "It's a fantastic opportunity. Not only does it allow you to work alongside a different Navy, but it's also excellent for meeting new people, travelling and experiencing a different culture. It's enhanced my personal and professional development."

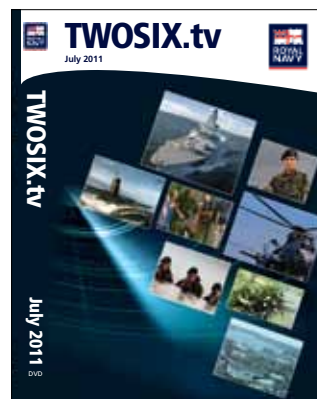
■ "I travelled all over New Zealand, immersing myself in Maori culture, getting up close with local wildlife and sampling the best Kiwi cuisine. There is so much to see in New Zealand."

■ "Long Look has been a great learning experience – I've brought a number of lessons back to the UK. I would recommend people to give it a go."

Long Look is open to most branches but only at sub lieutenant and lieutenant ranks for officers and leading hand through to warrant officers for ratings. Able seamen will only be considered from the diving branch.

Entries must be received by November 25.

Details can be found in RNTM 213/11, including an application form, or you can contact the programme's co-ordinator, Julia Rooney, on 93832 3531 (mil)/023 9262 3531.



TwoSix pix

THE latest edition of *TwoSix.tv* features reports on current operations worldwide. The *TwoSix.tv* DVD has been aligned with the Personnel Support Brief to provide an enhanced package for sharing information.

If you want to get your message out to the Naval service through these pages or the *TwoSix.tv* DVD, please contact:

■ Pauline Aquilina: 9621 85984
■ WO1 Russ Billings: 93832 5081

Pauline Aquilina is also the first point of contact for the Royal Navy Facebook site.

Search for Royal Navy and follow the Service online.



NFF NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION

NFF website offers redundancy help

FOR SOME, redundancy news will be what they wanted, for others redundancy news will be very unwelcome, writes Jane Williams of the Naval Families Federation.

For those not affected personally by Tranche 1 there will be a continued busy schedule of work, some short-notice assignment notices and quick changes to plans.

The NFF has launched a dedicated redundancy section on our website www.nff.org.uk to help in providing timely and correct information for those who need it.

Simply click on the dedicated button for 'Naval Service Redundancy Programme' to find information under the following headings:

- Redundancy News;
- Resettlement Process;
- Employment/Trainings;
- Housing;
- Pensions/Compensation/Allowances;
- Appeals process;
- Fleet Redundancy Cell;
- Charitable Support.

Each of the headings is set up with links providing further information on the selected subject.

The Fleet Redundancy Cell (FRC) will handle all individual questions from those Royal Naval personnel who are affected by the announcements, ensuring information and guidance is consistent and accurate.

For families with questions please contact the NFF.

Contact details for The Fleet Redundancy Cell:
Room G43
West Battery
Whale Island
Portsmouth
Hampshire PO2 8DX
Tel: +44 (0) 2392 628987
Mil: 93832 8987
E-mail: [FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX @ MOD.UK](mailto:FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX@MOD.UK)

DII: FLEET-REDUNDANCY CELL MAILBOX
The FRC office is open from 0800–1630 Monday – Friday. The office will also be open on the weekend following the redundancy announcements (October 1–2).

■ **Job-Seekers Allowance**
Job-Seekers Allowance may not be paid to wives,

husbands and civil partners who give up their job to follow their spouse on assignment if it is recorded that they 'left their previous job voluntarily'.

The Job Centre Plus Armed Forces Champion offers this advice to ensure spouses receive Job-Seekers Allowance (JSA) and are not disadvantaged due to Service life:

When a person states on their JSA claim form that "my spouse/partner got a job somewhere else so I had to leave" their employer will be sent a form to complete and the claimant will also be asked to provide further information around the circumstances of leaving that job.

The claimant may also be asked "have they moved out of the area they were working in beyond daily travelling?"

All this information will then be sent to a decision maker who will look to see if the claimant may have 'just cause' in their personal or domestic life for leaving their job.

There are no hard and fast rules as to when claimants have shown 'just cause' for leaving employment, because the circumstances in which they leave employment are so varied.

The decision maker should consider, as a whole, all the circumstances in which the claimant left employment.

Some additional guidance located on the Armed Forces Champion intranet site states:

"Spouses of Service personnel who leave employment to follow their partner will have just cause for leaving that employment provided they did not leave earlier than was reasonably necessary in order to arrange the move.

"This means they should not be precluded from receiving Job-Seeker's Allowance (JSA) on the grounds of voluntary unemployment.

"Each case should be considered on an individual basis using the relevant legislation and the information

provided by the person claiming JSA.'

■ **NFF Survey Report – Future Accommodation for Service Families**

The results of the survey are now available in a report on-line at www.nff.org.uk

Many thanks to everyone who completed our survey on *Future Accommodation for Service Families*.

We had a fantastic uptake with 2,057 personnel and family members taking part. The survey ran from June 10 to July 31 2011.

Questions looked at the importance of home ownership and gathered attitudes towards Service accommodation. Fresh criteria for accommodation policies were suggested and opinions collated.

We received interesting comments via e-mail and on the message boards, making the data we feed back to the MOD more meaningful.

Many different points were raised with some common themes emerging. The results of the survey have been presented to the MOD's Future Accommodation Project Team, key personnel within Navy Command and Government. The team's report is due to be published in April 2012.

■ **Changes to CEA Governance**

Since September 2008, the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) has, in addition to its roles in providing impartial information, advice and support to Service families about anything to do with their children's education, worked with assignment authorities and Commanding Officers in assessing the eligibility of potential applicants to claim the Continuity of Education Allowance – Board (CEA), and of existing claimants in respect of their continuing eligibility to claim the allowance.

CEAS has undertaken much of the administrative work associated with this, the result being its overall performance has suffered and its impartiality in the eyes of the Service community has been compromised.

In the light of these concerns and MOD's continuing determination to ensure that CEA eligibility rules are scrupulously observed by all concerned, it has been decided that this aspect of CEAS's CEA functions will be managed and administered by a new team within the Service Personnel and Veteran's Agency (SPVA), established and resourced specifically for the purpose.

The new Team is called the CEA Governance Team (CEAGT), based at Imjin Barracks in Gloucester, and will be operational from October 3.

Service personnel and their families wishing to make initial or further applications for CEA Eligibility Certificates will still be required to approach CEAS (Tel: 01980 618244) in the first instance, to receive advice about the process and to be sent the appropriate forms.

CEAGT will operate a Helpline for Service personnel and their families, in respect of case work already submitted to them; the number will be: 01452 712612 Ext 5693 and the email address will be: SPVA-DMSCEAGTGroupMailbox@mod.uk. All this and more about the change will be published imminently in a DIN.

Despite repeated requests to establish when CEA announcements are due no firm information has been given.

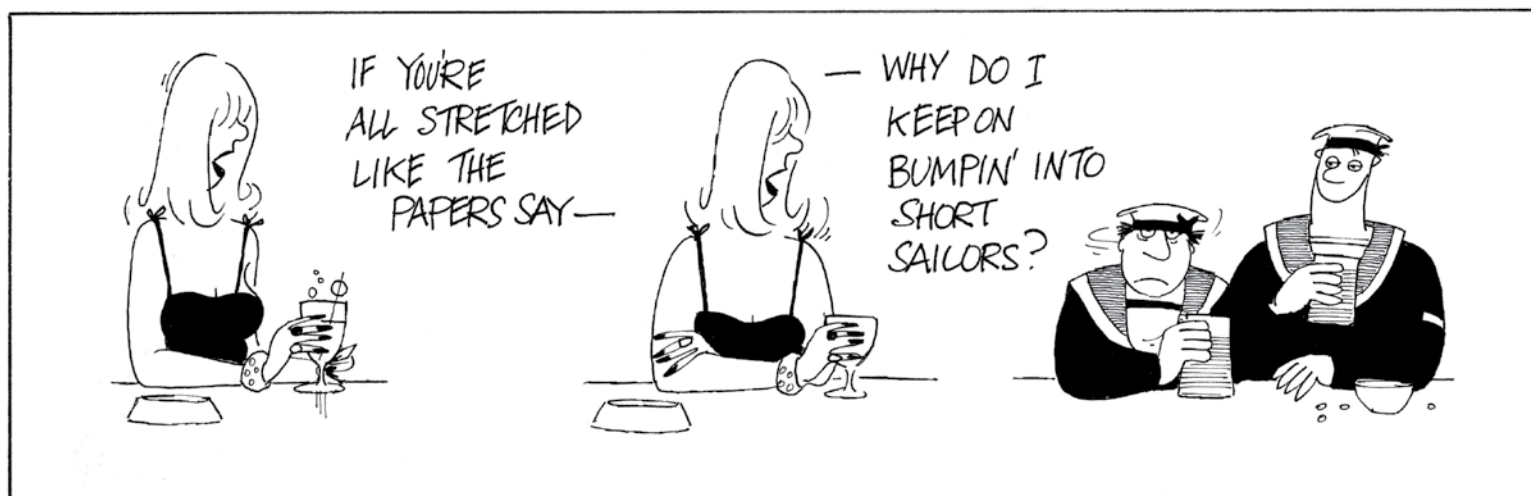
The three Federations have become frustrated with the lack of news so a collective letter has been sent to Dr Liam Fox outlining the concerns families are highlighting regarding the difficulties of basing decisions on information yet to be announced. Watch this space for updates...

Your experiences form the basis of our discussions. To get in touch with the NFF tel: 02392 654374, email admin@nff.org.uk or write to: Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN.

We look forward to hearing from you.

JACK

BY TUGG



where to look

GALAXY MESSAGES
Galaxy 31-2011: CinCFleet updated priorities 2011

DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS
74/11: Accumulated Campaign Service Medal 2011 (ACSM 11): The Queen has been graciously pleased to approve an amendment to the qualifying criteria for the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal (ACSM) for members of the Armed Forces, MOD Civil Servants, and Contractors on Deployed Operations (CONDO).

77/11: Publication of the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2011 Report: The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2011 Report has been published on September 1.

DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES

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 – This DIN supersedes DIN 2010DIN01-230
DIN 2011 DIN01-186: Royal Navy Fitness Test – Revised instructions for conducting the Rockport Walk

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 DIN01-179: Planning for Retirement

DIN 2011 DIN01-176: Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant Scheme

ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA

Issue 11/11 RNTM 213/11: Long Look 2012 – annual reciprocal exchange of personnel among RN, RAN and RNZN.

Issue 11/11 RNTM 216/11: The Naval Service Dependents' Fund

Issue 12/11 RNTM 227/11: The Naval Service Prizes and Awards Fund (The Charity) Charity No:1117794/6

Issue 12/11 RNTM 229/11: Seasonal Influenza 2011/2012 Vaccination and Treatment

Snapshot of attitudes is published

REDUCED levels of morale and satisfaction with general Service life but increased satisfaction with major and personal equipment are two of the findings to emerge from the latest Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS).

Data was collected during a period when the Forces were involved in demanding operations in Afghanistan and Libya, and the MOD was going through major financial and structural changes.

And while some areas – including levels of pride and feelings of being valued in the Service – showed lower levels of satisfaction, others, including pre-deployment training and the sense of achievement derived from a job, have led to increased satisfaction.

Almost 28,000 surveys were distributed between February and May to Service personnel across the Armed Forces, of which just under 12,600 were returned – a response rate of 45 per cent.

Overall, 57 per cent were satisfied with general Service life – a three per cent drop since 2010.

Satisfaction with different types of remuneration fell, the greatest drop being in relation to allowances, which fell 18 per cent to 37 per cent.

Some 83 per cent of respondents reported that they were proud to be in the Service, down two per cent on 2010, 74 per cent believe they are treated fairly by their Service (four per cent up), while satisfaction with the overall standard of Service accommodation rose three per cent to 57 per cent.

X marks the spot



Drafty's corner

WELCOME to 'Drafty's Corner' sponsored by NPT(X) and in particular focusing on Rating Career Managers (RCM(X)).

Based in West Battery, Whale Island, RCM(X) provides career management for all Warfare Branch Senior Rates and some Junior Rates. Base Port Career Management Cells (CMCs) have a responsibility for managing the majority of Warfare Junior Rates.

■ Current Challenges

Augmentation. Huge efforts are made to reduce the impact on individual Commands through apportionment and taking volunteers for Operational Tours but occasionally the impact is far greater than we can envisage.

If you are a volunteer for an Op Tour then you are advised to speak with your line manager before contacting your CM as the pain and grief of sparing you from your current appointment may be significant enough to prevent you being considered.

The Op Tour requirement is always changing, and we endeavour to keep all personnel informed of such changes, which are invariably at short notice.

If you are interested in an Op Tour, please talk to your line manager and your CM.

Operational Pinch Points (OPPs)/Critical Manning Groups (CMGs). These are two phrases you may hear a lot when you ask for a particular course or assignment or make a request for early release.

An OPP is a category which is given priority by the FCIG for manning. A critical manning group is one level below an OPP.

Your Career Manager can advise you if your rank/specialisation falls into either of these categories.

If you are considering a request for an extension of service you may be favourably considered if your rank/specialisation cadre is in one of these categories.

■ Contacting your Career Manager (CM)

How to get in touch. A lot of time is spent conducting one-on-one career interviews, attending meetings and visiting establishments and consequently you may have difficulty in reaching your CM by telephone.

An email is always preferable as it allows the CM time to examine the plot and investigate options before replying.

If the matter is urgent or affects ship's OC a phone call may be more appropriate and you will be able to leave a message, contact the RCM Office Manager or relevant SO2.

When to get in touch. Ideally, you should make contact with your CM with around 12 months left in post.

Any earlier than this and we will not be able to gauge your performance to date and any forward planning time is reduced.

As soon as your relief is nominated let your CM have your AVDATE.

Why you should get in touch. We are interested in your preference changes, moving house, personal circumstances (married, children etc) and any other information that you think may have a bearing on your career plans.

Career Interviews. If you are content with your next assignment and do not require a more in-depth look at your promotion or transfer prospects then you probably do not require a formal CI.

If you do then a proforma will be sent out prior to the interview – please complete this honestly with as much information as possible including preferences, priorities and aspirations.

It is of little use to you or us to say that you are career-minded with focus on promotion to make yourself look good when what you really want is base port and quality home-time.

This is an opportunity for a professional and frank two-way discussion about your career and both the proforma and meeting allow your CM to consider all

options and come up with a credible plan and honest feedback.

■ JPA and Administration

JPA contact details. Please ensure your contact details are registered on JPA and are up-to-date. In some cases, this is the only information CMs have to contact you.

Work addresses/email addresses are useful but your civilian email and a current mobile and home number are also very useful to your CM.

JPA Preferences. Make sure that JPA reflects your true and realistic preferences.

The needs of the Service will take priority in all CM assignment decisions but we will endeavour to match this against personal preferences wherever possible.

If JPA does not reflect your current preferences, then you may be disappointed with assigning consequences.

Your preferences should also reflect reality; if the majority of jobs for your specialisation are in Portsmouth and you record a JPA 'negative' preference area of 'Portsmouth' this is likely to result in assignment to an area you wished to avoid and further disappointment.

Future Availability Date (FAD). FADs are used by the CM as an administrative tool to plan your move-on date and can be amended to suit unit programmes.

If you are aware that you are due to leave your ship shortly after a work-up period or half-way through a deployment, flag this fact up with your chain of command and ensure that your CM is aware.

Prior planning allows your CM to help you.

Developed Vetting (DV). If you are sent a Developed Vetting Form you must make this a priority to complete. Fill them in accurately, honestly and quickly. Photocopy the information and return the original form to the address provided.

If you can arrange recorded delivery then it is wise to do so. Incorrect or incomplete forms will

delay the DV process.

DVs can take up to six months to complete so if you know that your DV is about to expire or that your next assignment requires a DV then bring this to the attention of your CM.

Voluntary Outflow (VO). Please discuss this with your CM before submitting Voluntary Outflow (PVR).

Your CM will attempt to manage your leaving aspirations which may include a request to leave the Service within a reduced notice period.

RNFT. If you wish to be considered for promotion then JPA must reflect that you are in date for RNFT on the Common Reporting Date (CRD).

Once selected you must be in date on the promotion date. In essence, you should be in date for RNFT at all times.

It is your own responsibility to ensure that you are in date (or that a medical/operational waiver is registered) and that JPA reflects this. 2010DIN01-024 refers. Note, if you are serving on exchange abroad you should contact HMS Temeraire to secure exemption if applicable.

Leave. Excessive leave balances hamper assignments and may prevent you being considered for a particular job.

Make sure that your leave is accurately recorded in JPA.

Assignment Cycle. Be aware of your likely sea/shore rotation – it should not come as a surprise if your SAV date is due and you get assigned back to sea.

For example, for the majority of Warfare POs the default value is 36 months sea/18 months shore, but this will vary by main trade and rate.

If in doubt, check with your CM and manage you and your family's expectations accordingly.

Your FAD reflects your CM's target date, but it is advisory; clearly circumstances do change.

Annual Appraisals. The Subject is personally responsible for the accuracy of his/her JPA Details (JSP 757 Art 4.05).

Whilst mechanisms will be in place within your ship or unit to ensure that you are reported upon annually it is your responsibility to ensure this happens.

If you have not had a timely report raised, flag the matter through your chain of command.

The comments box on the SJAR creates a permanent record and is also seen by the promotion board – be careful what you write! It is also important to ensure

that your SJAR page 1 is completed accurately and to inform your CM of your wishes.

Take your time in completing the 'comments' and 'aspirations' area.

■ **ORs reporting dates reminder:**
Date: RN/RM Rank (Latest date to be finalised on JPA)

Jun 30: RM – WO1, WO2, C/Sgt & Sgt (July 15)

Jul 31: RN WO1 and RM Cpl (Aug 15)

Aug 31: RM – L/Cpl & Mne (Sept 15)

Sept 30: WO2 RN (Oct 15)

Sept 30: CPO (non-Tech Branches) (Oct 15)

Apr 30: CPO (Tech Branches) (May 15)

Mar 31: PO (Apr 15)

Jan 31: LR (Feb 15).

LFS Assignments. LFS assignments are still available but, surprisingly, can be hard to fill.

There is a common misconception that you will never get an LFS. This is not the case; if you don't ask, you don't get!

Managing your career. Looking for a new challenge? Then look no further. Consider branch transfer opportunities that are on offer. Vacancies exist at AB/LH level:

Non-Commissioned Aircrew. As an Aircrewman you will fly either in the Sea King Mk 4 (soon to be replaced by the Merlin Mk 4) if streamed Commando or Merlin Mk 2 if streamed ASW.

Commando Aircrewmen are mainly based at RNAS Yeovilton whilst ASW Aircrewmen are mainly assigned to RNAS Culdrose, however broadening opportunities away from the two Naval Air Stations, including LFS, are available.

Open to both RN and RM personnel, this hugely rewarding career comes with the added bonus of flying pay.

RN Policeman. There are openings in the RN Police with Service Policemen becoming more aligned to their civilian counterparts.

PTI. There are limited opportunities but if you are sports-mad you may wish to consider the PT branch.

Opportunities also exist to become a Remedial Instructor assisting in the recovery programme for personnel with sports injuries or to specialise in Adventurous Training (AT).

Take charge of your future and make it happen!

How do I apply? Full details are set out in BR 3. Speak to your DO.

Defence model is refined

AN updated version of the Defence Operating Model is due to be submitted to Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox this month as work continues on reform and defence transformation.

The emerging model is still very much a work in progress, with some areas – such as Head Office – covered in more detail than others.

Working to the recommendations of Lord Levene's

Defence Reform report, planners will now produce a more detailed blueprint of the future department by the end of the year, and some initial changes to the organisation will be implemented next April; the main implementation date follows a year later.

For more details see DIB 2011DIB/79, dated September 13, which also includes links to the Transforming Defence intranet portal.

Give, and you may receive

A GRAND for your welfare fund – if you can get enough people to sign up to a charity scheme.

That is the offer from the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity in their payroll giving competition, which runs until the end of next month.

The second phase of the competition began on September 1, offering four cash prizes of £1,000 towards the welfare fund of the ship, submarine, unit or establishment which signs up to the Payroll Giving Scheme and achieves the highest percentage increase in sign-ups.

For £5 that comes out of an individual's salary before tax, each person receives automatic sports insurance.

It also helps the RNRMC support sailors, their oppos and family through bereavement, injury and tough times.

Larger donations are welcomed.

Sign up through your Payroll Giving representative, or through the RNRMC website, where you can download a form.

Alternatively contact Dean Rogers on 023 9254 8076 or 07714 306178.

The closing date for the second and final stage of the competition is November 30.

The RNRMC was set up in 2007 as an umbrella organisation for naval sector charities, and provides aid in the form of dependants' grants, benevolent grants to charities, amenity grants to units, support for sports and providing prizes and awards.

■ www.rnrmc.org.uk

Medal change

AN amendment to the qualifying criteria for the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal (ACSM) has been approved by the Queen.

Two keys changes have been introduced.

The first sees the qualifying time for the ACSM reduced from 36 months (1080 days) to 24 months (720 days).

And while the medal itself will remain unchanged, a new ribbon will be awarded, essentially the addition of a second gold stripe to make it clearly different.

The medal, which is available to military personnel, MOD civil servants and contractors on deployed operations, will now be known as the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal 2011 (ACSM 2011).

■ See DIN 2011DIN09-008

CinCFleet updates priorities

COMMANDER-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar has updated his Priorities for 2011, first published in January:

"As we enter the autumn of 2011, it is timely to refresh my Priorities, which were issued in January this year as Galaxy 02/11.

"While much of what I wrote remains pertinent, the context in which we are operating has shifted.

"My first priority remains support to Defence's main effort with large numbers of RN/RM personnel deployed in Afghanistan, but with a growing focus on developing the plans for their return, supporting the operational lessons process and recognising our significant achievements and sacrifices in that campaign, collectively and individually.

"At the same time, operations in Libya are not yet complete; we may be in the last ten yards there, but finally delivering success will demand as much effort as the first 90 yards.

"While the maritime contribution to both NATO's Operation Unified Protector and our national Operation Ellamy continues, we are also planning for the next phase of operations

and scoping the options to recover our people and equipment.

"After seeing to it that our many and varied mandated commitments around the globe are being met, contingencies closer to home are rising up my list of priorities as Navy Command considers the emerging detail of planning for both the Olympics and other non-operational commitments in 2012, while simultaneously horizon-scanning for other risks that may call for our involvement.

"We also continue to work through the detail of implementing SDSR-mandated manpower draw-downs, both Service and civilian.

"It is vital that we remain alert to the impact on all of our people as Redundancy Tranche 1 and VERS are implemented and change programmes are developed.

"We must also keep a close eye on the related safety implications across the maritime domain; Phase 2 of the Navy Safety Improvement Plan will be enacted this Autumn with the launch of 1SL's Safety Pledge, underpinned by improved management processes, training and cultural change.

"In the Ministry of Defence, the Planning Round for the next financial year (PR12) is already in full swing and we will be called upon once again to make hard choices in helping Defence provide best value for the taxpayer.

Meanwhile, Defence Reform has begun the transformation of the entire MOD enterprise.

"1SL recently issued a Defence Reform Implementation Initiating Directive to the Navy Board, which is being cascaded through the Chain of Command.

"It is a clear statement of his intent to capitalise on the opportunities which Defence Reform offers the Naval Service and I commend it to you.

"Given the continuing importance of these ongoing issues, my key message to you is that operational success must remain firmly at the forefront of our minds.

"It remains my over-riding priority, both in terms of protecting the UK's national interests across the globe and in shaping the future through NCR and Defence Reform."

Galaxy 31-2011



Prize honours Gerwyn

Write here
for chance
to win



● Rear Admiral David Steel, Chief Naval Logistics Officer, presents the Gerwyn Williams Memorial Trophy to CPO Colin Hanson

A NEW award presented in the memory of a Royal Navy officer who died while still serving was among the prizes presented at the Defence Maritime Logistics School annual awards ceremony.

The Gerwyn Williams Memorial Trophy was donated to the school by the family of the late Lt Cdr Gerwyn Williams, who died of a pulmonary embolism in 2009.

Lt Cdr Williams was born in 1962 and joined the Royal Navy as an Assistant Writer in 1984.

He made his way up through the ranks, transferring to the Officer Corps in 2002.

His first ship was HMS Ark Royal, and it was while serving on the carrier that he met his wife Kay.

During his long career Lt Cdr Williams served all over the UK and abroad, including a spell at the British Embassy in Moscow and in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as well as serving in five warships.

The trophy is a piece of silver from Ark Royal.

Mrs Williams said: "HMS Ark Royal was very special to my husband.

"I wanted something to remember him by and would like to thank all those who raised money to enable us to sponsor the award, and in particular the people at the MOD Saudi Armed Forces Project, BAE, our friends in Saudi and all my husband's Naval friends.

"I was keen for the prize to go to someone who'd come through the ranks and achieved what my husband did."

Mrs Williams and her daughter Louise were invited to the ceremony to present the prize to the first recipient, Lt Glen Miller, aged 35, who undertook an 11-month course at the DMLS last year.

Lt Miller's citation read: "Lt Miller gave an outstanding performance throughout his Initial Logistics Officers Course, successfully passing the five-day final assessment to a very high standard.

"Taking advantage of his previous experience in the Navy to lend his personal support to other members of his course at every opportunity, Miller was an excellent team player who contributed significantly to the overall success of the group.

"A quality performance by an individual who will be a valuable asset to his future units in the Fleet."

Lt Miller joined in 1993 as a Writer in the Logistics Branch, and was promoted to the Officer Corps in 2010.

He is currently serving in the Type 23 frigate HMS Kent, where



● Lt Cdr Gerwyn Williams

he is putting his training into practice as the Deputy Head of the Logistics department and as the Command Legal Adviser.

Lt Miller said: "To be nominated for this award ahead of all the other officers who have undergone training in the last 12 months is extremely humbling.

"The calibre of those that would also have been considered makes me doubly proud to receive this award."

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity this year became the sponsors of the Chief Naval Logistics Officer award.

The award will now be presented to the logistics officer or rating who makes a significant contribution to delivering or promoting high-quality training and coaching in the Fleet.

This year's winner was CPO Colin 'Tracker' Hanson, who is currently assigned to the Waterfront Logistics Support Group, Portsmouth.

There he acts as the first point of contact for all Wardroom-related and Central Fund Accounting professional problems.

The award recognised CPO Hanson's efforts in providing extra professional training and mentoring to less-experienced stewards in a sea-going environment.

He regularly conducts bespoke manual accounting training for small ships' XO's and URNU staff following external audit.

The DMLS are keen supporters of the RNRMC and as well as the presentation of prizes, a cheque for £6,576.76 was presented to the charity during the award ceremony, raised by sailors showing their appreciation for the meals prepared by trainee chefs in the school's realistic working environment.

This year 31 prizes were presented to RN, RNR and RFA personnel, mainly to young officers and ratings beginning careers but also to personnel on professional promotion courses and instructors making a wider contribution to training in the Fleet.

Many of the prizes were

sponsored by professional bodies who support the school as well as previous members of the Service and their families.

The contribution made by the instructional staff was also recognised on the evening.

Cdr Heber Ackland, the Commandant of the DMLS, said: "This awards ceremony recognises the professional and personal achievements of our young men and women as they prepare for operational service with the Royal Navy, Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

"Many of the award winners are currently serving in Afghanistan and off the coast of Libya, which underlines how important the training is.

"These men and women are the future of the Royal Navy and I congratulate them on their dedication and professionalism."

FOR those who have a way with words there are prizes to be won in the Society of Civil and Public Service Writers' annual competitions for short stories, travel articles and poems.

The competitions, which close on February 28 2012, are open only to society members.

Those eligible to join include serving or retired members of the Armed Forces, Civil Service, NHS, local government, police force or any public service.

For details of membership send an SAE to Mrs Joan Lewis, 17 The Green, Corby Glen, Grantham, Lincs NG33 4NP, or email joan@lewis5634.fsnet.co.uk or visit the website www.scpsw.co.uk

Short stories should be no longer than 3,000 words, travel articles no more than 2,000 words and poems not more than 40 lines.

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...



● USS Winston S Churchill visiting the UK in 2001

October 1971

A NAVAL Command stretching back more than 150 years was to end at sunset on October 31, when the flag of Commander Far East Fleet was due to be lowered in Singapore.

From the following day, Rear Admiral D C Wells, of the Royal Australian Navy, would assume command of the British, Australian and New Zealand sea, land and air forces under the Five Power arrangement for the defence of the republic and Malaysia.

By the time the flag was lowered, most of the buildings and land of the naval base had already been transferred to the Singapore Government, except for most of HMS Terror and a part of the stores basin complex.

October 1981

A RESOUNDING moment of naval history was made when HMS London, on deployment to the West Indies, fired the Royal Navy's last broadside.

The destroyer was the last operational warship to be fitted with two turrets, and fired all of her 4.5 inch guns simultaneously.

HMS London had made her last deployment in September, and was due to be paid off and sold before Christmas.

Her broadside ended a long naval tradition, as it was more than four centuries before that broadsides had become the accepted form of fighting at sea.

October 1991

THE ROYAL Naval Museum in Portsmouth was celebrating its latest acquisition for the Nelson collection – a prayer book thought to be adorned with the Admiral's thumb-print.

The book was originally given to Nelson by one of his first commanding officers, Captain William Locker, in 1777. Nelson presented it to Lady Hamilton in 1799, a few months after they began their affair.

The mark was found on the page carrying the famous Burial at Sea prayer, which Nelson, as a Captain on active service, must have read many times, so museum staff thought there was a good chance it belonged to the great man.

October 2001

ONE of America's most powerful ships, the USS Winston S Churchill, drew huge crowds when she visited Portsmouth for the International Festival of the Sea just five months after she was commissioned.

The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer, navigated by RN officer Lt Angus Essenhigh, was escorted into harbour by the historic motor torpedo boat MTB 102, which had carried Churchill and Eisenhower to view the D-Day fleet in the Solent in 1944.

More than 36,000 visitors queued for hours to visit the ship over the course of the festival. She then left for Devonport for a two-week training package, courtesy of Flag Officer Sea Training, before visiting Cardiff, Edinburgh and Newcastle.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.

■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

■ Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in November's Noticeboard must be received by **October 11**

Trophy lives

THE outbreak of the Crimean War was largely the result of a dispute between Turkey and Russia over the protection of Christian sites in Ottoman-held Palestine; other similar claims made by the Russians led to their occupying Moldavia and Wallachia in the Balkans.

The European powers demanded that Russia withdraw but when the Russians refused to comply Turkey declared war on October 4 1853.

Within a month the Turkish army had beaten a Russian force at Oltenitza but the Russian fleet then destroyed a Turkish flotilla at Sinope in late November.

The subsequent Russian invasion of Bulgaria led to Britain and France declaring war on March 28 1854; a fleet under the command of Vice Admiral Richard Dundas ships entered the Black Sea, an Anglo-French army occupied Varna and, in April, Odessa was attacked by the Allied Fleet.

The taking in early August of Moldavia and Wallachia by Austrian troops resulted in the Russians withdrawing from the Balkans.

The British and French then decided to lay siege to and capture Sevastopol; their troops landed on the Crimean peninsula in September, defeated the Russians at Alma that month and then advanced on the city.

This strongly fortified Black Sea port, on the south west Crimean coast, was the main base of Russia's Black Sea Fleet; it had good anchorages and dock facilities and was well protected by batteries in the Konstantine, St Nicholas and Alexander forts.

The British established a base at Balaklava, the French did likewise at Kamiesch and the Allied fleet blockaded the harbour entrance.

On October 8 bombardment commenced of Sevastopol from the land; the Russians made two attempts to raise the siege but were beaten at Balaklava on October 25 and



at Inkerman on November 5.

Meanwhile, on October 17, Dundas had bombarded Sevastopol from the sea – his force consisting of one Turkish, 11 French and 26 British ships.

One of the British ships involved was the wooden paddle-frigate HMS Terrible – which was also the Royal Navy's first ship with four funnels.

She is depicted in action off Sevastopol in **Trophy No 25886**, which is an engraving taken from an original painting by William Knell.

Terrible and Agamemnon were the only British ships involved in this action which did not rely solely on sails and the wind for propulsion, both were able to bombard Sevastopol effectively due to their manoeuvrability.

The stubborn resistance by the Russians finally ended on September 8 1855 when, having lost the Malakoff redoubt to the French, they razed their fortifications and abandoned Sevastopol.

The loss of the city was a significant factor in their finally conceding defeat in 1856.

Deaths

Sergeant Barry 'Baz' Weston RM Kilo Company, 42 Commando, Joined the Royal Marines September 30 1991 and served in many operations including Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Iraq as a reconnaissance operator, platoon weapons instructor and recruit troop sergeant. Fatally injured by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in the Sukmunda area of Nahr-e Saraj Helmand Province, Afghanistan August 30. Aged 40. *See page 4.*

Rear Admiral 'Chico' Roberts DSO. Volunteered for the FAA, learned to fly 1940 and was commissioned into the RNVVR. In 1942 he was flight commander of Manchester's two Walrus seaplanes (Operation Pedestal) when she was hit and scuttled. Although 312 crew were picked up he was in a group that reached the North African coast where they were interned by the Vichy French. After being rescued by the US Army in November 1942 he was appointed personal pilot to Admiral Sir Lumley Lyster, Flag Officer Carrier Training and 1944 qualified as a batsman and joined the escort carrier Trumpeter on Arctic convoys and mine-laying duties off Norway. Post-war he was Commander in Glory and later Senior Pilot of 815 NAS and CO of 813 and 767 NAS. During the Korean War he commanded 825 NAS, leading rocket and bombing raids, however, after an unsuccessful attack on a radio station, he was hit by small arms fire and his Fairey Firefly ditched five miles off the coast where he was picked up by an American amphibious aircraft and returned to Ocean. He was forced to make two other emergency landings, one in Seoul, another on Ocean; for his service off Korea he was promoted commander and awarded a DSO. After the Korean War he was lent to the Royal Australian Navy as Deputy Director Naval Air Warfare, to help build up the Australian FAA, then returned to Britain where he commanded the naval stations at Portland (1962-64), Culdroe (1964-65); was Flag Officer Naval Air Command (1968-71) and appointed CB 1970. July 29. Aged 93.

Capt George Edward Hunt DSO*, DSC*. As a Reserve officer his training involved anti-piracy operations up the Yangtze. In 1936 he passed his second mate's certificate and joined the Blue Funnel line and the following year took up a permanent commission in the RN qualifying as a submariner and at the outbreak of war was navigator of the Unity. 1940 after six war patrols she was run down by a Norwegian merchant ship off Blythe and sunk, but nearly all the crew survived and he was mentioned in despatches for his service in Unity. 1941 he was appointed second-in-command of Proteus, based at Alexandria, and was awarded his first DSC. 1942 he flew back to UK to complete the commanding officers course and was given command of H50 followed by command of the newly-built Ulitor. On her first patrol 1943 she sank a ship at anchor inside Augusta harbour in Sicily, then bombarded a wireless station on the Aeolian archipelago. He was awarded his second DSC for these early patrols and a mention in despatches for Ulitor's creditable role as a beach marker during the amphibious assault at Anzio in 1944 (Operation Shingle). On one occasion off the south coast of France, Ulitor sank a large tanker which was escorted by nine surface vessels and five aircraft, obtaining hits with both torpedoes; she was pursued and counter-attacked with more than 100 depth charges; he was awarded the DSO for eight war patrols to February 1944 and a bar in December. After a total of some 32 war patrols, 17 in Ulitor, with two DSOs and two DSCs, he was still a lieutenant aged 28. Receiving accelerated promotion to Lt Cdr he finished the war at Staff College. After an appointment to the aircraft carrier Triumph he returned to submarines and commanded Ambush before being appointed as CO of the commanding officers qualifying course Perisher; promoted captain 1953 at the age of 37. As a commodore he commanded Bigbury Bay and the 7th Frigate Squadron as the Senior Naval Officer, West Indies; subsequently he was Chief of Staff to the Flag Officer Submarines and retired 1963. August 16. Aged 95.

Capt Douglas M H Stobie. Joined before the war, serving in destroyers on convoy duties until his ship Hardy was sunk by torpedo; he and other survivors leapt onto the deck of Venus which was also sunk. As torpedo officer in Saumarez he was part of the Flotilla stalking the Japanese cruiser Haguro in the Malacca Straits and he managed to fire all eight of his torpedoes and assist in the sinking of Haguro, even though Saumarez was badly damaged; he and several officers and men of the 26th Destroyer Flotilla received awards for their outstanding courage coolness and skill during the action. Post-war he commanded Creole, served on the staff of the Flag Officer Flotillas in the Mediterranean (1952-53) and in Trincomalee while the Sri Lanka Navy was being established. Later he commanded Vernon (1963-65), served on the British Naval Staff in Washington and was captain of the Admiralty Underwater Weapons Establishment at Portland; he retired in 1971. August 16. Aged 92.

Lt Colonel 'Pug' Davis DSC. A member of the cadet force at school, he enlisted in the Corps in 1942. After training at Chatham which included the use of landing craft he was sent to command RM Flotilla 561 in the Adriatic where he acquired the nickname 'Pug'. In 1944 he was off the Dalmatian coast in command of a flotilla of Landing Craft (Assault) and landed a large raiding force but after four days of heavy fighting and numerous casualties the main body of commandos was forced to withdraw; Davis landed reinforcements but these were ambushed. Waiting in his LCA he organised five men into a search party, arming them with rifles, he recovered the force's heavy weapons which had run out of ammunition and without waiting for

any more commandos to return, he set off to the village where the ambush had been staged. After a two-hour climb he found a wounded officer, who had been left for dead and evacuated him safely back to the beach. He was awarded a DSC for his initiative and courage far beyond the call of duty. Post-war several small groups were rationalised into the Combined Operations Beach and Boat Section (COBBS) and in 1951 under his command it was renamed Small Raids Wing. He was sent to Germany and set up the RM Demolition Unit of the Rhine Flotilla, intended to deny the Russians any means of crossing the Rhine and on his suggestion his team was renamed the 2nd Special Boat Section (2SBS), while 1SBS remained in England; later several sections were formed, each comprising an officer and a dozen or so men; some of which operated behind enemy lines in Korea. 1952-54 he created a Special Boat Section in Malta to support 42 Commando RM and this became 6SBS which operated in the eastern Mediterranean and the SBS moved their headquarters to Poole and it was retitled the SB Wing. 1957-59 he became senior RM officer in Eagle taking command of the SB Wing (1959-61). As company commander 40 Cdo RM deployed from Albion he landed by helicopter deep in the jungle (Indonesia Confrontation), he served at HQ Plymouth Group RM 1964-65 then returned to Albion as Amphibious Operations Officer (1965-67). 1968 he returned to Poole as second-in-command of JSWAC and on his rapid promotion he moved to the Joint Warfare Establishment at Old Sarum to teach amphibious warfare; he retired in 1971. August 18. Aged 87.

Lt Cdr Peter Twiss DSC*. Joined the FAA 1939 and trained as a pilot, initially flying Hurricanes with the Merchant Ship Fighter Unit. 1942 he was flying Fairey Fulmar fighters with 807 Squadron from Argus in support of the Malta convoys (Operation Harpoon) and was awarded the DSC for shooting down an Italian fighter and damaging an enemy bomber. His squadron converted to the Seafire and flying from Furious over Morocco and Algeria (Operation Torch landings) he was awarded a Bar to his DSC. 1943 he transferred to night fighters before joining the RAF's Fighter Interception Unit where he flew Mosquitos over France and the period after D-Day shot down two Junker 88 bombers. In 1944 he joined the British Air Commission in the United States to test naval fighters; he returned 1945 to join the Empire Test Pilots' School before a loan period with Fairey Aviation as a test pilot. Upon leaving the RN he remained with Fairey and became chief test pilot. 1955 at the controls of the Fairey Delta 2 (FD2), a supersonic research aircraft he broke the world speed record and was appointed OBE 1956; the aircraft is now on display at the FAA Museum at Yeovilton. He appeared in the film *Sink the Bismarck* (1960), when he flew a Fairey Swordfish torpedo aircraft and the Bond film *From Russia with Love* (1963) at the helm of a Fairey Marine Speedboat; his autobiography, *Faster than the Sun* was published in 1963. August 31. Aged 90.

Lt Simon George Warrender DSC. Joined the RNVVR 1939 and was spotted and commissioned whilst serving in his first ship Southdown. After training at King Alfred he was appointed to the fast minelayer Manxman. In 1942 he commanded a flotilla of boats which landed Royal Marines during the capture of Madagascar. He next took part in minelaying operations in the Mediterranean during the relief of Malta which were briefly interrupted when Manxman was torpedoed and he spent several hours clinging to a raft. Attached to the staff of Admiral Sir Frederick Edward-Collins in Gibraltar he was successfully involved in an undercover wartime mission to arrest Princess Philippa of Braganza who was known to be smuggling industrial diamonds from Uruguay for use in German munitions factories, by posing as a civilian at an hotel in Estoril where the diamond handovers were believed to be taking place. 1943 he was appointed to the new destroyer Savage and spent two years on Arctic convoy duties and was the torpedo control officer during the Battle of North Cape; he fired a full salvo of eight torpedoes against the German battleship Scharnhorst claiming three hits before turning away to allow other destroyers to deliver the coup de grace; he was awarded a DSC. In 1944 he was posted as a Flag Lieutenant to Melbourne to prepare for the arrival of the Pacific Fleet under the command of the US Navy, and his last duties were the relief of a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp and helping to re-establish British administration in Hong Kong. May 8. Aged 88.

Edward 'Oscar' Wilde. LS (SEA). Served 22 years from 1985 in Sirius, Westminster, Boxer, Cornwall, London, Cumberland and Campbelltown. August 23. Aged 42.

Paul 'Lumpy' Lomas. POAEM. Served 1979-2004 in Liverpool, Invincible and RNAS Yeovilton. August 18. Aged 50.

A W 'Ben' Downer. AB QA2. Served 1949-64 in St Vincent, Concorde, Vanguard, Corunna, Excellent, (XP), Jaguar (FC) and Victory (AD). March 19. Aged 77.

Alan 'Gardy' Gardner. Gunner and Diver. Served 1959-69 in St Vincent, Cambridge, Drake, Jutland (Victory IV), Dampier, Lynx, Victory, Bellerophon, Excellent and Fearless. August 17. Aged 67.

Reginald 'Reg' Harrison. Able Seaman. Served 1948-54 in Royal Arthur, Victorious, Bermuda, Orion, Seagull (Halcyon class minesweeper that became a survey ship in 1945) and Drake. HMS Diana Association. August 1. Aged 81.

Darren 'Daz' Tully. Served 22 years including Type 42 York. Died tragically whilst restoring a 54-year-old ex-navy inshore survey vessel Egeria. August 28. Aged 42. *See page 33.*

Fred Judson. MAA. Served 1946-70 in Ganges, Newcastle, Wizard, Eagle, Rooke,

Heron, Ark Royal, Daring and Drake. August 6. Aged 80.

James 'Jim' Payne. AB RP3. Served 1950-60 in Opossum and Vervan Bay. HMS Opossum Association. August 27. Aged 80.

James 'Jim' Harris. CPO Mechanical Engineer. Served 1938-62. Survivor of Dainty sunk by German navy torpedoes at Tobruk, also served MGB, Wasp, Indomitable, Despatch, Loch Katrine, Indefatigable, Whelp, Barcote, Barndale, Whitesand Bay, Brocklesby, Laleston Castle, Solebay, Bellerophon, Starling and Trafalgar. August 29. Aged 94.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Maurice 'Bud' Abbott. Served 1948-56 as AB in Peacock 1952-53 and a member of HMS Peacock Association. Branch committee at Peterborough RNA for a number of years, latterly Vice Chairman. July 14. Aged 80.

Lilian 'Lil' Mary Trevethan. Wren. Served 1942-45. Nuneaton branch. August 7. Aged 91.

John Sweeney. Telegraphist. Served Allington Castle and Arctic Convoys 1944-45. Past Secretary West Lothian RNA. August 13. Aged 86.

Roy Stanley Richards. Electrician. Served 1943-45 in rocket ships during invasion of France June 1944 then infantry landing craft. Long-serving committee member of both Dereham and Swaffham branches and founding member Swaffham. June 11. Aged 88.

Tom Thompson. Seaman gunner. Joined aged 15 and served 1948-56 in carriers including during Borneo Confrontation and Malay Peninsula operations. Swaffham branch. June. Aged 78.

Horatio Wilson 'Nick' Nichols. Served 1948-55 in Crispin, Glasgow, Adamant and Undine. A major force behind the recommissioning of Selby RNA in 1999. August 18. Aged 82.

Russell 'Guy' Cook. CPO Coxswain. Served 1943-68 in St George, Glasgow, Actaeon, Zephyr, Wager, Hardy, Tartar and St Vincent. Selsey RNA member for 31 years including 16 years as Chairman and eight years as Life Vice President. September 1. Aged 83.

Tony 'Nobby' Hall. Served as Radio Supervisor (RS) on board Loch Fada in Far East (1962-63), Nigeria, MMS1579, Teaser, Apollo, Birmingham, Albion (twice), Devonshire, Verulam, Tartar and Forth also shore bases Bruce, Heron, Sea Eagle and Mercury. Leamington Spa RNA. August 30. Aged 80.

Dorothy Vanda Rawe (née Brown). Ldg Wren Supply. Served 1948-52 in Dauntless, Ceres, Vulture, Ariel and Seahawk (Naval stores). Founder of the RNA in Western Australia with the founding of the Perth branch. Instrumental in founding Rockingham and District branch for which she was made a Life member and later Life Vice President; also served as treasurer and secretary for many years. September 10. Aged 81.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
H 'Herman' Eilertsen. Submarine Service Norwegian Navy WW2 in Ula. Scotland NE branch. Aged 89.

J T 'Jackie' Old. Ch. Sto. Submarine Service 1943-62 in Taurus, Seneschal, Tireless, Acheron, Aurochs, Tudor and Narwhal. Merseyside branch. Aged 94.

L 'Les' Slack. Sto.1. Submarine Service 1945-48 in Thermopylae, Tantalus and Ambush. Sheffield branch. Aged 83.

HMS UNICORN ASSOCIATION
Ronald Spriggs. A/L S Diver 3-3. Served in ship 2nd commission (1949-51). March 10. Aged 84.

Eric Albert Jackson. AB. Served in ship 1st commission (1943-46). June 21. Aged 86.

Rena Houston (née Reading). WRNS. Enlisted for the war. Served in Unicorn, Dundee, Gibraltar including invasion of North Africa (Exercise Torch), Antelope on official visit to the Azores returning to UK on board Activity and worked with Commander Flying at RNAS Yeovilton. Only female member of association. July 3. Aged 92.

Deryk Edward 'Lofty' Thomas. Telegraphist. Served 1942-46 at Royal Arthur, Shrapnell, Glasgow, Scotia Ayr, Drake, Unicorn 1st commission (1943), Boscawen, Bangor, Owl, Fearn, Ross & Cromarty. August 18. Aged 89.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
W V Bosanko. Served LCTs 520 and 4098. Belfast.

A Arnold. Served LCVF Flotilla 803, Eltham. August 10.

C T Hitchcock. Served LCA Flotillas 523 & 551, LCM Flotilla 485, LSI(L) Empire Javelin and LSI(S) Princess Margaret. London. August 14.

A W Busbridge. Served LCT 671. Codicote. August 15.

Dick Foster. Served LCI(L)s 380 and 488. Sale. August 17. Aged 95.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
Wilfred Foulds. AB. Served in Octavia. April 20. Aged 84.

Arthur Watley. Sto1. Served in Waterwitch. May 31.

Fred Bracegirdle. AB. Served in Felicity. July 28. Aged 86.

Arthur McEvoy. ME(E). Served in Welcome. August 2. Aged 79.

S/Lt John Nichols. Served in Mystic. August 12. Aged 84.

Walter Ashcroft. AB. Served in Sylvia. August 16. Aged 86.

Fred Cook. AB. Served in Gozo. August 18. Aged 86.

Hector Bricknall. AB. Served in Rattlesnake. August 18. Aged 85.

Ray Fenn. AB. Served in Fancy. September 2. Aged 87.

S/Lt William Burrows. Served in Myrmidon. September 4. Aged 84.

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.rnsubmarines.co.uk
National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

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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.ssafo.org.uk
RN Community: www.rncomoduk
Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600

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, navysearhpgro@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.nrmc.org.uk

Reunions

OCTOBER 2011
HMS Diamond Association: This year's reunion is being held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Portsmouth, on October 29. All welcome. For more information please contact Ray 'Legs' Shipley at shipleyraymond@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 01634 267084, or write giving all your details to 20, Winchester Way, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 8DD.

FEBRUARY 2012
The Penelope Association: 26th Annual Reunion at the New President Hotel, Blackpool, FY1 2LG from February 17 to 19 (open to all who served in the cruiser 1938-44 or frigate 1963-92, or are relatives of those who did so). For details of membership and the reunion, contact the Secretary, Mike Bee at mike.bee@ntlworld.com, the website at <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/mike.bee/index.htm> or write to 1 Oddfellows Street, Mirfield WF14 9AB.

APRIL 2012
HMS Newfoundland Veterans weekend will be held from April 13 to 16 at the Bancourt Hotel, Torquay. Details available from Alan Waite at alan04@live.co.uk or tel 01162 833266.

HMS Fisdarg Series S41/44: A 50th Anniversary Reunion for those who trained in HMS Fisdarg in 1961-62 will take place at the McDonald Burlington Hotel in Birmingham B2 4JQ from April 27 to 28, 1930 for 2000. Please register your interest and for further information contact Dave Uden at dave-uden@talktalk.net or Bob Mason on 01935 851120.

MAY 2012
HMS Phoebe Association, Cruiser (C43) & frigate (F42) have their annual (16th) reunion from May 11 to 13 at Hinton Firs Hotel in Bournemouth. All ex-crew are welcome to join us. Please contact the secretary, Roy Pavely, at r.pavely@ntlworld.com or tel: 01235 211501.

JUNE 2012
Gib '78: A reunion will be held at the Ambassador Hotel, Llandudno, on June 16 2012 for all branches/ratings who served in Gibraltar between the dates of January 1977 to December 1979. Contact Jeff 'Taff' Thomas at thomastwicethomas@hotmail.com or see website at www.gibraltarcouncil.com or tel: 07837 386244.

Competition

The name of the plan for the German invasion of Britain in 1940 was *Operation Sealion*. The two winners are D Boden, Kingswinford, West Midlands, and A C John, Winchester, Hampshire.

Ask Jack

Passing Out Parade, HMS Raleigh: Please does anyone have the video from the passing out parade at Raleigh on July 26, 1985. My son Glen Larkin was in Benbow 20 Division and won the Raleigh Medal for the highest individual marks. Glen then went on to join HMS Arethusa. I would much appreciate it if anyone has it. I will pay for a copy whether it's on video or DVD. Contact Alan Larkin at ukalan11@aol.co.uk or tel: 01709 380255.

Richard Charles Barnes: My father, Alan 'Gardy' Gardner, crossed the bar recently. The family would like to trace Richard Charles Barnes with whom Alan served on several ships. Contact his daughter, Michelle Gardner at mgardner@crypt.gloucs.sch.uk or tel: 07966 914173.

HMS Diana Association: Trying to find Lance Royston, who was a chef on the 1963-64 commission. Lance was best man for his oppo chef Bob Hanna, who was also on the 1963-64 commission. Bob has lost contact with him and hopes that someone out there can help him to get back touch with Lance. Anyone with information please contact J Fisher (Secretary) on johnjackie.fisher@talktalk.net or 01163678360.

HMS Caprice: Trying to find LME Raymond Price with whom I (Trevor Cole) served in HMS Caprice in 1968. Raymond left the mob shortly afterwards. If anyone has any information on his whereabouts could they contact Trevor Cole at trevor@trevorcole3.wanadoo.co.uk or tel: 0191 528 0009.

HMS Jufair, Bahrain: Seeking whereabouts of Victor Fry, Pay office in 1967. Contact duncan-jackson@hotmail.co.uk or 01275 855040.

HMS Howe, 1944-46, Mess 103: Are there many ERAs of that period still around? I am trying to fill in a few gaps in my memoirs, and would like to hear from them, before it is too late! Write to me, Reg Goldsmith (Goldie) at 28 Hamtun Crescent, Totton, Southampton, Hants SO40 3PA or tel: 023 8086 2927.

Sports Lottery

August 13: £5,000 – Cpl T W Holliday; £1,500 – CPO E R Dunn; £500 – AB1 J E Bowes.

August 20: £5,000 – AB1 R J Brayshaw; £1,500 – PO E L Edwards; £500 – LH K L McCarthy.

August 27: Hyundai i20 – Mne R S Williams; £1,500 – LH J M Oakley; £500 – LH B Booker.

September 3: £5,000 – Lt W J Flegg; £1,500 – AB1 C A Sutton; £500 – PO S W Summers.

September 10: £5,000 – Cpl S A Vincent; £1,500 – Lt Col M J Tanner; £500 – PO T J Lee.

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. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com, or visit www.patn.org.uk.

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Police to swear oath of allegiance

A LITTLE piece of history has been made by RN police – swearing allegiance to the Queen.

Thanks to royal prerogative, sailors – unlike the RAF, Army and even Royals – are not required to pledge loyalty to the monarch.

But RN police officers are, thanks to changes under the Armed Forces Act of 2006.

So before August 2011 had expired, every one of the 300 or so men and women in the RN Police did what all members of civilian constabularies also do, and swore to uphold the law by preventing, deterring and detecting crime or criminal conduct by personnel subjected to military law.

The oath is the latest change to affect the force under the Act, which also led to the historical title Regulating Branch being replaced by RN Police.

The legislation also means that RN police officers are outside the military chain of command whilst conducting investigations, come under Service Provost Marshals who are accountable only to the Defence Council, and must undergo inspections by HM Inspectorate of Constabularies.

The wording of the oath is: “I do solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that as a member of the Royal Navy Police I will well and truly serve Her Majesty the Queen, acting with fairness, integrity, diligence and impartiality, upholding fundamental human rights and according equal respect to all people; and that I will, to the best of my power, maintain service law and investigate independently and impartially all service offences against people and property; and that while I continue to be a member of the Royal Navy Police I will, to the best of my skill and knowledge, discharge all the duties of that appointment faithfully according to law.”

An Anglo-German

A GERMAN naval officer with strong links to the UK has high hopes of a rising career path after passing a year-long course at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham.

Cdr Chris Clausing was one of 286 students who graduated from the Advanced Command and Staff Course.

Chris was educated at King's School, Bruton in Somerset, and his son Max was born in the UK.

He has served as PWO and XO in German warships, including frigate FGS Niedersachsen, but his next post will see him join the Planning Division in the NATO Maritime HQ at Northwood.

Step into Christmas

FORGET the 12 days of Christmas – it will be the 12 years of Christmas at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The yard is hosting the 12th Victorian Festival of Christmas from Friday November 25 until Sunday November 27, offering the chance to step back in time for a different perspective on Yuletide.

Visitors will step into

● Lynx XZ250, the new gate guardian at the Dean & Reddyhoff Portland Marina



Lynx guards gate to former RN air base

AFTER touring the world and wowing crowds around the country, one of the Royal Navy's veteran helicopters is back 'home'.

On a blustery summer day the Lynx, once of 702 Naval Air Squadron based at Yeovilton, was formally welcomed back to its original home at the former RN Air Station Portland – HMS Osprey, which closed in 1999.

The Westland Lynx (XZ250) completed its service life after 32 years and eight days, during which time it accumulated 7,667 flying hours with 702, 815 and 829 Squadrons and nine ship's flights operating around the world.

The aircraft completed its long life as one of the Black Cats Lynx Display Team, and has taken up its new home as the 'gate guardian' at the Dean & Reddyhoff Portland Marina, where it is on loan from Yeovilton.

Dean & Reddyhoff hosted the ceremony, which was attended by Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Mrs Valerie Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers, Naval Regional Commander Cdre Jamie Miller, representatives from AgustaWestland, former Commanding Officers of Osprey,

serving members of the Lynx Helicopter Force from Yeovilton and many local representatives from Portland and Weymouth.

Guests included the current Black Cats display pilots, Lts Chris Chambers and David Fleming.

The Portland Marina already has two strong links with Royal Navy heritage.

A Mk8 torpedo is on display, highlighting the fact that Whitehead's Torpedo Factory opened 120 years ago, and where torpedoes from World Wars 1 and

2 were developed and tested.

The last test firing took place in 1966.

It is also the site of a Portland stone memorial, unveiled in 2010, to the 29 men from HMS Illustrious who died on October 17 1948 when their liberty boat capsized in Portland Harbour.

The ceremony was opened by Cdre Jamie Miller, and Lynx Force Commander Cdr Mike Ryan spoke of the history of naval aviation at Portland which stretched back to World War 1.

He said: “This particular aircraft spent much of its life at Portland and embarked in many ships around the world.”

The Lynx was formally unveiled from beneath its battle ensign by Cdre Paul Chivers, the Commanding Officer of RNAS Yeovilton, and Lt Cdr Russ Clark, an Observer who flew this aircraft.

Portland Marina's new gate guardian will remain in place throughout the Olympics in 2012, sailing events for which will be staged locally.



● Setting the pace: from left, POs Chantell 'Oggie' Cox, Lee 'Fred' Perry and Alan 'Jonah' Jones with WO1 Scott Stephenson

Navy pacesetters

WHEN trainees at HMS Raleigh are put through their paces by drill instructors they can be sure they are dealing with experts.

Because parade instructors from the Torpoint establishment lifted the best newcomers prize at this year's British Army pace stick competition, held at the Royal Military College Sandhurst.

POs Alan 'Jonah' Jones, Lee 'Fred' Perry and Chantell 'Oggie' Cox were the only RN team taking part in the competition.

And they faced stiff competition – apart from the cream of the Army, which apparently spends a lot of time doing this sort of thing, the other 16 teams included entries from Canada and South Africa.

PO Jones said the Senior Service got a good reception and were quickly put at their ease (*bound to happen at a drill competition – Ed*).

“While we were waiting to go we had the chance to watch one of the teams, who happened to be the ones that won the overall competition, so that was a little off-putting.

“However, we had trained hard for the competition and went out and did our best.

“It was fantastic to win the best newcomers prize and it really was the cherry on the top of a very good cake.”

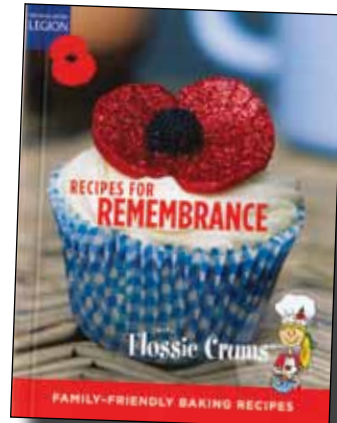
They trained for eight weeks between lessons and other commitments, coached by WO1

Scott Stephenson, currently with Flag Officer Sea Training.

The Raleigh team was brimming with experience – between them POs Jones and Perry have taught some 2,000 sailors to march since becoming parade instructors in 1996, while PO Cox, who qualified in 1999, has passed on her knowledge to 800 sailors.

The team routinely carry pace sticks when teaching RN recruits to march during basic training; the pace stick ensures that each sailor takes a uniform step and maintains the regimented line.

At Sandhurst teams carried out a slow march with pace sticks open by their sides and then a quick march.



Baking for the Poppy Appeal

THE Royal British Legion has launched a pocket-sized baking book aimed at families and children in particular.

The book (*pictured above*) features recipes from children's 'baking star' Flossie Crums, and is designed to help families mark the 90th anniversary Poppy Appeal while also participating in the act of Remembrance.

Helen Hill, of the RBL's Learning Team, said: “As part of our role as the national custodian of Remembrance, the Legion reaches out to over two million children across the country each year.

“We saw our landmark 90th birthday and Poppy Appeal as a great way of using baking to gently introduce families with children of ten or younger to the importance of Remembrance where children engage in a positive way.

“Funds from the sale of the book will be used to help Forces families, both now and in the future.”

The book is the result of a link-up with Helen Nathan, who created Flossie and her brother Billie. The characters talk about the Legion, its work and the role of the poppy.

It features ten recipes, divided into 'Easy Peasy', 'Not Too Tricky' and 'Worth the Effort' categories, and they include Mini Poppy Cupcakes, an 11 o'Clock Remembrance Day Victoria Sponge Cake and a Welcome Home Chocolate and Vanilla Cupcake Tower.

The book, RRP £2.50, is available from www.poppysshop.org.uk and www.flossiecrums.com, and all the profits will go to supporting the Armed Forces and their families.

And for those keen to follow the adventures of Flossie, Royal Baker to the fairies that live in a tree in her garden, she already appears in three books, including the recently-published *Flossie Crums and the Royal Spotty Dotty Cake*.

Trincomalee recognition

FOUR men who worked on the restoration of historic wooden frigate HMS Trincomalee have been recognised for their efforts with a unique set of awards.

Members of the International Society for Nautical Research visited the ship in Hartlepool to award Victory Medals and commendations for the “monumental achievement which is HMS Trincomalee”.

Victory medals were presented to Capt David Smith RN, President of the HMS Trincomalee Trust, and to Les Gilfoyle, Works Superintendent for the project.

He went on to become Ship Maintenance Supervisor until retirement in 2010.

A Certificate of Commendation was given to Keith Johnson, who was Senior Technical Officer/Chief Draughtsman during restoration work between 1990 and 2001.

And a second certificate was collected by Jackie Stevenson on behalf of her late husband Bill Stevenson, who was project Restoration Manager from 1987 until his death in 1999.

It is the first time the Victory Medal has been awarded to anyone other than those working on Nelson's flagship, and the first time that Certificates of Commendation have been awarded.



● RN Leadership Academy (RNLA) Outdoor Leadership Training Centre (OLTC) staff at Talybont conducted their annual Staff Training/ expedition by making the short trip from Brecon to Gavnrie in the French Pyrenees to provide the staff with an opportunity to receive a little of what they deliver to Phase Two students on the Beacons. Admittedly, there was a little more height and distance covered on their day walks, more technical climbing endured and an opportunity to experience *via ferrata*, a form of climbing, without the use of standard equipment, but it all went to prepare them for the new term, ready to pass on what they learnt and to inspire by example



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Diamond days for division

NORTHAMPTON and **Wellingborough** unit sent eight cadets to the National Combined Regatta in London which, they believe, demonstrates the quality of the training delivered by instructors on the River Nene.

And it was not just cadets who benefited from the instruction – through the RYA OnBoard sessions in the early summer some 30 children from three local primary schools learned to sail with the unit.

More recently ten **Rushden** and **Northampton** Sea and Royal Marines Cadets spent a week on board HMS Bristol in Portsmouth Harbour as part of the Eastern Area summer camp.

Apart from sailing, power boating, pulling and training in seamanship, cook stewarding, marine engineering and first aid, there was a chance to visit ships – including one of the Navy's newest destroyers, HMS Diamond, which shares its name with the Rushden division's training ship.

Members of the division also supported the Mayor of Rushden at various civic events, including the Party in the Park and the Wellingborough Carnival.

Their Northampton colleagues raised £400 for good causes when they supported the Rotary Club Dragon Boat Festival – in part by providing an enthusiastic crew.

Breaking the triangle

MEMBERS of **Chippenham** unit visited the fire station at MOD Corsham to learn useful tips – and have a bit of fun.

Under the careful tutelage of veteran firefighter Colin Gordon, the cadets tried out different fire extinguishers on a range of blazes, from chip pans to computers and TVs.

Some dressed in protective clothing (though none could dress as quickly as the professionals, who achieve it in just ten seconds) while others used powerful jets of water to knock over cones.

Chippenham First Lieutenant Robby Allen said: "It's an important part of training for cadets to be aware of hazards that can cause fires and what to do if they find one."

"We teach them about the fire triangle of oxygen, heat and fuel and how removing any one of those can extinguish the fire – the MOD Fire Service has been wonderful in showing how it works in practice."

Beccles cadre starts in style

BECCLES Royal Marines Cadets started their six-month probationary period in style when they enrolled five new recruits and advanced them to Marine Cadets.

After a speech by the unit's chaplain, the recruits were asked to recite their promise and were welcomed into the Sea Cadet Corps by the Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr (SCC) Joe Meadows RNR.

A large number of parents and supporters were present to celebrate the enrolments and the Sea Cadets and Junior Sea Cadets were also present to receive qualifications earned during the previous two months – a total of more than 40 qualifications, including sailing, kayaking, pulling and power boating.

The Welsh marchers

ABERYSTWYTH unit cadets and instructors managed to march 120km in four days to pick up individual and team medals in the annual Nijmegen March in the Netherlands.

Officer Commanding Lt (SCC) Kelvin Jones said: "Due to various circumstances both at home and abroad this may well be the final time that Aberystwyth Sea Cadets partake in this prestigious event in our current format, but sad as that may be I could not have wished to end our involvement with a better team of instructors and cadets whose teamwork, behaviour and effort were all exemplary."

The event attracted 45,000 people from across the world, with 38,422 completing the course.



Leading edge

SEA Cadets from around the UK joined with RN CCF cadets for the first time in the Senior Leadership courses at HMS Raleigh's **Vigilant Squadron**.

The group of ten Sea Cadets were put through their paces in a

wide range of activities designed to demonstrate leadership in action.

The Combined Cadet Force RN Senior Leadership course has long been regarded as one of the most challenging courses, helping to strengthen team-working skills as well as boosting self-confidence.

Learning about the power of command and even how to look and sound the part of being a leader also form an important part of the week's activities.

"Learning to trust people you have only just met isn't easy, but doing things together as a team

was a good way of learning who we all were" was one of the typical responses to the course as the cadets drew breath and prepared to return home.

Having successfully passed all the elements of the course and been awarded their Leadership badges, cadets went back to their units to take on new responsibilities, whether that was becoming instructors for junior cadets, assisting their unit officers or assuming the role of unit cox'n.

And they made a few friends along the way as well...

Top prize

THE Cadet of the Year at **Rotherham** unit will enjoy a week on board sail training ship **Royalist** thanks to a sponsorship deal with the HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association.

Members of the Rotherham branch of the association met the top cadet, Kyle Billups.

Model cadets win model warships

TWO cadets from **West Kent** who excelled at training have been presented with model ships by the Chairman of the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

The models, of HM ships **Bedouin** and **Loch Alvie**, were commissioned by the father of Admiral Sir Ian Garnett, Chairman of the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

"My father's last appointment in the Royal Navy was at Chatham Dockyard as Captain of the Dockyard, Queen's Harbour Master and Chief of Staff to Flag Officer Medway 1964-66," said Admiral Garnett.

"Both ships were connected with Chatham, so I thought it

NTC carry on despite bad weather

FOR the first time in years the **Nautical Training Corps'** Founders Day event was dogged by bad weather.

Heavy rain and driving winds provided challenging conditions on Littlehampton seafront, though adjustments to the programme helped make the most of the opportunities between squalls.

More than 20 ships were represented, and despite the incessant rain the cadets maintained their smart appearance and good humour throughout the service and parade.

Patron Rear Admiral John Lippiett said: "I'm most impressed this year; the smartness, spirit and determination of cadets and bands to continue playing considering the weather... it's all been taken with a great dose of humour. That's great."

The day was also an ideal opportunity to welcome new Corps Chairwoman **Laura Moffat**, who was a cadet herself at previous Founders Day ceremonies.

"It really is great to be back at the NTC – in some respects, it feels like I'd never left," said Laura.

"I've been made most welcome and it is a great privilege to see everyone out today."

TSs **Ambuscade** and **Montrose** both celebrated their first Founders Day, while TS **Explorer** marked its 50th anniversary with an impressive cake.

And while many units called it a day after the official ceremonies were over, local unit TS **Implacable** kept entertaining until the bitter end.

And those responsible for colours in the trying conditions will have been grateful for a comprehensive training day provided before the summer season got under way, with Ceremonial Training Director Cdr **Brian Mitchell** again inviting CPO **Arty Shaw**, the Navy's State Ceremonial Chief Instructor, to make sure the youngsters were on top of their game.



● Sea Cadet musicians from **Poole** unit perform on **Plymouth Hoe**

Music on the Hoe

THE finest musicians in the Sea Cadet Corps rose to the occasion – and the spectacular location – when they competed for honours in the National Band competition.

Plymouth Hoe was the venue for the contest, held every two years, and the blue sky and sunshine ensured good crowds to see a display of good music and precise ceremonial marching.

Cadets aged 12 and 18 from across the UK practised all year to give themselves a chance of glory, and the very best Sea Cadet units won the right to compete against each other at the National Finals – some travelling from as far away as Scotland.

This year's winners were as follows:

Soloist Bugle – **Portland** (South West): OCT Cox

Soloist Drum – **Plymouth Drake** (South West): MC2 K Jennings

Drum Major – **Tunbridge Wells** (Southern): OC L Roberts
Original Composition – **Sutton Coldfield** (South West): LC H Frazer-Morris

Best Dressed – **Portland** (South West)

Best Premier Arena Display – **Tunbridge Wells** (Southern)

Best Contest Class – **Herne Bay** (Southern)

Best Premier Class – **Tunbridge Wells** (Southern).

Second link for Loughborough



LOUGHBOROUGH was one of the first units to affiliate with a Royal British Legion branch.

Now it has gone a step further and become the first unit to affiliate with a second branch.

Woodhouse and Quorn was the first link, back in 2001; now Loughborough has signed an accord with its namesake Legion branch.

Legion members **Mick Wells** and **David and Diane Hobday** presented the CO of the unit, Lt (SCC) **Kay Adey RNR**, with an affiliation certificate, praising the cadets for the support they have given to the Legion over the years.

Lt Adey said the affiliations

● **David Hobday presents an affiliation certificate marking a formal link between Loughborough Royal British Legion and the town's Sea Cadet unit**

meant a lot to the unit, ensuring that the young of today never forget those who gave their lives to protect our freedom.

The cadets will be helping both Legion branches in the coming weeks by selling raffle tickets for the Poppy Appeal.

The unit also welcomed a medal-winner back from the National Combined Regatta – the first in many years, though the cadet felt the need to apologise...

OC **Kieran Martin** won a silver medal in the kayak sprint event, a sport he only took up last year, but his first comment to Lt Adey was to say sorry for not winning gold.

Lt Adey said: "The whole unit is very proud of what OC Martin has achieved – he was the only one from the unit to be invited to the Nationals and has shown true commitment to the values of hard work to get there."



● The Jennie H is named by Linda and Richard Hannington

Boat is named in honour of Jennie

A NEW boat for Hove and Adur unit has been dedicated in honour of the woman who donated it.

In a ceremony at the unit's Lizard boating station in Shoreham Harbour, the boat was named Jennie H after Jennie Hannington from Heathfield, East Sussex, who died in May this year after a long fight against cancer.

The ceremony was conducted by unit chaplain Rev Talisker MacLeod in the presence of members of the Hannington family, and cadets, staff and parents from the unit, after which the boat was named in traditional fashion – with a bottle of champagne – by Richard Hannington, Jennie's uncle, and Linda Hannington, her sister-in-law.

On completion of the formalities, cadets took the boat out in Shoreham Harbour.

Aged 56, Jennie was a keen off-shore sailor and strong supporter of youth activities.

She was the great-granddaughter of Bishop James Hannington, the first Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa who was martyred in Uganda in 1885.

Cdr Ian Wright, chairman of the Hove unit, said: "The boat is a Trinity 500, the newly-introduced training boat for Sea Cadets as a modern replacement for the old Admiralty cutter.

"We are extremely proud to have this boat donated to us, and in recognition of Jennie's generosity the boat was formally named the Jennie H.

"We hope that the Jennie H will provide essential afloat training for our cadets for many years to come."

Another local connection with the sea is that Jennie's father, Michael Hannington, was commissioned as an RNVR officer at HMS King Alfred in World War 2. He went on to command an MTB in the Mediterranean where he was Mentioned in Despatches.

Detachment is 'Very Good'

THE Royal Marines Cadet detachment at Hastings has just been put through its paces – and found to be well up to standard.

They completed their annual assessment with a 'Very Good – four out of five' grade.

And that put them third out of the 19 detachments which were put under the microscope.

"These results are very hard to come by and are a true reflection of all the hard work and dedication given by not only all the cadets but also all the adult volunteer instructors and supporters of Hastings Sea Cadets – thank you all," said the unit's Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Alison Brennan-Wright RNR.

The training and ethos of the Royal Marines Commandos provides the template for the physical and mental challenges faced by Royal Marines Cadets.

This training includes learning many of the skills needed by a green beret to operate as a 'sea soldier', including:

- ☑ Camouflage and concealment,
- ☑ Map reading,
- ☑ Marksmanship,

AN old Admiralty Sailing Craft, lovingly restored by cadets under the guidance of RN veterans, has now been dedicated to the memory of a sailor who was part of the Yangtse Incident.

For six months the youngsters from Teign Valley unit in Devon used traditional boat-building

techniques to repair and restore the ASC.

They were instructed and helped by members of the Newton Abbot branch of the Royal Naval Association, led by WO Ian Hurst, senior instructor at the RN Submarine School at HMS Raleigh.

With the boat fully restored, it was decided to name it Amethyst,

and a brass plate was created which dedicated the boat as a 'living and working memorial' to Jack French, who died in May at the age of 84.

Jack, born and bred a Teignmouth man, was the telegraphist on board HMS Amethyst when the ship was trapped on upper reaches of the Yangtse River by Communist

Chinese forces in the summer of 1949.

Jack was awarded the DSM for his devotion to duty, manning the constant flow of signals during the ship's enforced stop-over and the headlong dash for freedom past the Communist guns.

More than 35 members of Jack's family attended the ceremony at Teignmouth Community School, including Jack's 82-year-old brother Tony, also a former CPO who had 22 years of service in the Fleet Air Arm in HM ships Ark Royal, Illustrious and Bulwark.

Tony unveiled the plaque in honour of his brother, while the boat was named by 80-year-old Roy Butler who, as a teenaged sailor, was in July 1949 on board HMS Concord, the destroyer that went to the aid of Amethyst during her escape and which escorted the sloop past the massive guns of the Woosung Forts, the last obstacle before the open sea.

Roy has also been one of the RNA veterans passing on their boat-repair skills to the next generation.

Taking account of tides and logistics the service and ceremony began at 5pm, which allowed those attending to stay on for a showing of the 1957 film *Yangtse Incident*, starring Richard Todd, the same evening.

Text ahoy...

LAST month we mentioned how Llanelli unit was raising money through Vodafone and JustGiving.

Well, you can also use the same JustTextGiving system to donate money to the Corps as a whole.

By texting AHOY10 to 70070, you can give £1, £2, £3, £4, £5 or £10 to help the charity raise vital funds that will give young people the chance to learn new skills through nautical challenge and adventure.

You do not have to be a Vodafone customer to give or receive donations through JustTextGiving.



● Action from the National Combined Regatta in London's Docklands

Regatta title heads south

MORE than 400 Sea Cadets converged on the Docklands of London to pit their wits against each other at the National Combined Regatta.

And it was the team from the Southern Area which left the Royal Victoria Dock and adjoining ExCeL exhibition centre with the main prize, though other areas also wrote their names into the annals of the Corps.

Northern Ireland took the paddlesport title, Southern and South West shared the honours in the Yole competition (a small two-handed sculling boat), and Southern also took the boat handling.

The rowing (Trinity) championship was won by the squad from the South West, which also took the overall rowing title.

The competition, which tests

skills in a range of skills including rowing, boat handling and kayak paddling, is the culmination of a year's preparation by Sea Cadets throughout the UK.

Teams represent their units in the district competition, with the winning unit teams going on to represent their district at the area events and, if successful, to wear the area colours at the national finals.

Twenty brand new rowing boats, the Trinity 500, officially launched just this year, were in play at the regatta as well as 15 power vessels and 50 kayaks.

Winning units in each event were:

Rowing: Junior Boys – Port Talbot (South West); Junior Girls – Salisbury (Southern); Boys Open – Fishguard (South West); Girls Open – Port Talbot;

Yole: Juniors – Greenock

(Northern); Open – Neath (South West);

Boat handling: Rowing – Nottingham (Eastern); Sailing – Swansea (South West); Power – Southampton (Southern);

Paddle sports: Boys Open – London; Boys Junior – Northern Ireland; Girls Open – Northern Ireland; Girls Junior – Northern Ireland.



● Members of the Guernsey unit Royal Marines Cadet detachment undergoing fieldcraft training on Jersey

Jersey training for Guernsey Royals

THE last two weekends of August saw a burst of activity at TS Sarnia, the training ship of the Guernsey unit.

First, under the new command of former bootneck Lt (SCC) Paul Mooney RMR, cadets from the unit's Royal Marines Cadet detachment took part in a fieldcraft training weekend in Jersey.

The session was supervised by Jersey unit's detachment NCO Sgt (SCC) Mick De La Cour.

TS Jersey was the perfect host for the Guernsey cadets, teaching them techniques and activities which they were unable to undertake on their own island.

The five cadets returned home

tired but having had the time of their lives – and very much looking forward to the next inter-island unit adventure.

Hard on the heels of the fieldcraft session, the unit was invited to pay a visit to HMS Daring – their affiliated ship – which anchored off the island to host groups on board.

Cadets were shown what life on board a cutting-edge destroyer is like, with a tour taking in everything from the bridge to the flight deck, including weapons systems and firefighting gear.

The 20 cadets who went on board were left full of admiration for what the officers and ratings do for a living.

Swindon get a close look at Big Ben

CADET and staff from Swindon unit visited London to take a close look at Big Ben.

The unit has previously visited Westminster on a couple of occasions in the past few years, enjoying tours of the Houses of Parliament where they experienced the pomp and ceremony of proceedings.

That included a look at the House of Lords and House of Commons, where they watched the day's business from the balcony – and later that day saw the same issues discussed on news programmes.

They also toured the Jewel Tower, part of the original Palace of Westminster, and were allowed a close look at the front door of 10 Downing Street.

Their latest foray to London was to climb the clock tower and to see Big Ben itself – although most people use the name to refer to the tower, Big Ben is actually the 13-ton great bell which sounds the hour.

The gruelling climb up the 334 stone spiral steps was interrupted half-way up by a briefing on the tower, clock and bells – each of the clock dials is 7m in diameter and the figures on the faces are 0.6m tall.

The clock tower, which is almost 100m tall, was built in the mid-19th century after the original palace burned down.

The bell first sounded across Westminster in May 1859, but cracked after just two months.

A lighter hammer was fitted and the great bell rotated to present an undamaged section for striking.

Once the group had gathered their breath at the half-way point they continued up the tower to the clock faces and the clock itself, the motion of which is fine-tuned by adding or subtracting pre-decimal pennies to a container on the pendulum.

Cadets then donned ear-defenders and climbed to the bells, where they heard the chimes ring out.

Once back on *terra firma*, the group enjoyed some R&R in the park next to the headquarters of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, where they also had the opportunity to meet Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor, and to show him the unit's new minibus in full livery.

Accrington belle

THE daughter of PO (SCC) Carol Lee, of Accrington unit, has been baptised using the upturned bell of the unit's training ship TS Nubian.

Caitlyn Imogen Hylton Lee was baptised by the unit's chaplain, Rev (SCC) John Tranter RNR, at All Saints Church in Clayton-le-Moors, with unit CO S/Lt (SCC) Thomas Pask RNR stood in as a godfather at short notice after a family member was unwell.

Following Naval tradition, Caitlyn's name and the date of the christening will be inscribed in the bell.



SUPPORT YOUR SEA CADETS

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Visit sea-cadets.org or call 020 7654 7000

SEA CADETS

High old time in the Peaks

MORE than 60 cadets and staff from London Eastern District travelled to Buxton for a week of Outward Bound-style activities and adventures.

The 44 cadets brought with them their own cooks, activity instructors and group leaders, and the group was based for the week at Alleyn's School Buxton Field Centre, just outside the Derbyshire town's centre.

Cadets were accommodated in large tents on the adjacent field whilst the 20 adults were accommodated in the main cottage.

The week was organised into a number of activity periods, with the cadets split into four groups that travelled around the various disciplines over four days of activities.

These included gorge scrambling, go-karting, archery, air rifle shooting, a Go Ape high ropes course, climbing, mountain biking, swimming and a final-day visit to the Alton Towers.

Go-karting and gorge scrambling featured high on the list of the cadets' favourite activities – as did the visit to the Staffordshire theme park.

As well as testing their mettle in a challenging environment, the cadets also had the chance to put into practice some of the techniques and disciplines which they learn back at their units.



● Charlie Telford (at the controls) and Ross Walker of Maryport unit

One-two for Maryport pair

MARYPORT unit managed a first and a very close second in the North West Area finals of a national power boat competition.

Cdts Charlie Telford and Ross Walker entered the junior and senior sections respectively of the Honda RYA Youth Rib Challenge, for youngsters aged between eight and 16.

The competition at the Lakeside Adventure Centre saw three candidates for the junior title and 16 for

the senior, including cadets from the Wallasey and Hoylake units.

Handling a 60hp outboard engine in less-than-ideal conditions – heavy rain and winds gusting to Force 7 – Charlie won his class and qualified for the national finals at the Southampton Boat Show, due to take place as *Navy News* went to press.

Ross was beaten into second place by just one second in the senior event.



● Cadets from Carrickfergus unit are given a lesson in gunnery on board their namesake ship HMS Warrior in Portsmouth. It took a year of fund-raising to get the trip, for 30 cadets and ten staff, off the ground. Staying on board HMS Bristol at Whale Island, youngsters enjoyed a week of watersports, museum visits, a session in Action Stations (including an assault on the climbing wall) and even a trip to Thorpe Park theme park in Surrey

New team takes title

BUXTON cadets excelled themselves at the North West Area sailing regatta.

A new, young team brought home the Topper trophy, having won first, second and third places, second in the Pico race and fourth in the Bosuns.

They prepared for the national finals with a week of sea sailing at Weymouth.

The unit is hoping to start building the first phase of its long-awaited extension this autumn, providing more space and better facilities.

Despite generous donations and active fundraising, more money is needed for phases two and three – please contact the trustees on buxtonseacadets@yahoo.co.uk

Portrush puts boats on display

THREE new rowing boats and two power boats were put on public show by Portrush unit at the international air show early last month (right).

The three Trinity 500s bear the name of Trinity House, which donated £100,000 to cover almost all the design and development costs of pulling boat.

Then staunch Navy supporter Sir Donald Gosling's eponymous trust donated a further £200,000 to the Marine Society Sea Cadets to allow units to buy the boats for £3,000 each.

As with units across the country, fundraising was racked up a notch



or two – and in Portrush's case the generosity of the general public was a source of wonder to the youngsters.

Even an event as simple as

packing bags for shoppers at a local supermarket resulted in not just pennies and low-value coins, but £5 and £10 notes being placed in collection buckets.

The display at the air show was made possible by the generosity of Coleraine Borough Council, which allowed the unit to use display space it had obtained in the main arena.

Portrush unit was formed in 1942 in a room over the coal sheds at the harbour in Portrush.

1960 saw the completion of the present building in Dunluce Avenue, which was built by the cadets themselves and a team of volunteers.

The unit attracts youngsters from Coleraine, Limavady, Londonderry, Ballymoney and Moyle.

Rye youngsters join RFA for air show

ONE of the highlights of a Sea Cadet's career is the possibility of visiting a warship or an auxiliary.

Often it will be a P2000 patrol boat, perhaps a fishery protection vessel or maybe even a frigate.

The group will pitch up at the jetty, file on board, enjoy a

tour and a chat with some of the sailors and then file off again, all completed in a day.

However, nine youngsters from Rye unit spent two days onboard the RFA ship Mounts Bay whilst the LSD(A) – landing ship dock (auxiliary) was attending the Bournemouth Air Show.

Mounts Bay is 176 metres long,

weighs 16,000 tonnes, and is a very capable ship, her floodable dock allowing her to undertake complex docking manoeuvres in support of Royal Navy and Royal Marines operations and exercises.

The nine cadets stayed at their Rock Channel headquarters overnight on the Friday before the visit, allowing them to leave early for the long journey to Bournemouth Pier.

They were then transferred by boat from the pier to the ship.

Whilst onboard, the cadets got a feel of what it is like to live and work on an operational vessel.

They were also able to gain qualifications, with some getting their Heart Start First Aid and

Seamanship awards.

Ten-year-old Tom Best said: "The weekend was absolutely brilliant and Mounts Bay is massive – it's the size of a small town."

The OIC of Rye unit, CPO (SCC) Steve Smith, said: "We like to get our cadets out and about as much as possible, taking part in as many activities as they can."

"I'd just like to thank the CO of RFA Mounts Bay for the ship's hospitality."

"The cadets have also asked me to thank the members of staff who took them to Bournemouth for the visit."

"They are all volunteers, and without them things like this wouldn't be possible."

Ceremonial duties in Ypres

MEMBERS of Tunbridge Wells unit have paid their respects to the dead of the Great War during a visit to the Ypres and Tyne Cot cemetery in Belgium.

The two-day trip by coach to the battlefields of the Ypres Salient allowed the cadets and staff to take part in the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate, on the eastern edge of the town.

The gate is a memorial to the British and Commonwealth soldiers who died in World War 1 and who have no known grave.

Marking the start of a main road Allied soldiers took to the Front, the Menin Gate contains the names of almost 55,000 men.

The Last Post ceremony has been held every evening since July 1928, with the exception of the occupation of Belgium during World War 2.

At 8pm four volunteers from the local fire brigade stepped into the roadway below the arch and



played the Last Post (above).

Following a minute's silence, AC Connor Woodhams, PO Dave Woodhams and Rosemary Hubbard laid wreaths, then unit buglers played the Reveille.

The following day the group moved on to Tyne Cot, where a service was conducted by unit chaplain Dave Ware-Jarrett.

Unit buglers played the Last Post then the Reveille, and cadets placed crosses at the graves of unknown soldiers.

More than 8,000 of the almost 12,000 Allied soldiers buried at Tyne Cot – the largest Commonwealth military cemetery in the world – are unidentified, and simply "Known unto God."

A week under canvas

FOUR teenagers from Rye and District unit spent a week aboard the sail training ship Royalist.

Kieran Baker, Harley Gale, James and Andrew Austen joined Royalist on a Saturday and became the working crew until the following Friday.

During this time they developed their leadership and teamwork skills and learned to appreciate the benefits of being a member of a dedicated team – sails can't be hoisted unless all of the team are working and communicating together properly.

Above all else, they learn self-discipline and co-operation, since they are reliant on one another for their safety.

CPO Steve Smith said: "We are absolutely delighted that all four of our cadets had such an excellent week away onboard the Royalist."

"I asked them if they had enjoyed it and they told me it had been the experience of a lifetime."

The cost of spending a week offshore on the Royalist is £240 per person, but two sponsors paid half the costs.



● Sea cadets enjoying the sunshine on board TS Royalist



Musicians' symphony finished

IT'S nearly a decade since John Ambler chronicled the Naval Services' legendary musicians to mark the centenary of the School of Music.

Now he completes the story in the second volume of **The Royal Marines Band Service** (RM Historical Society, £20 hardback/£15 softback) which recounts the story of the drummers/buglers, the divisional bands, and in particular the role of the Corps' musicians since 1950.

There is probably no more public face of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines on a day-to-day basis than the RM Band – be it homecomings, the Mountbatten Festival, Beat Retreats, concerts up and down the land (and beyond frequently).

But over the past 30 years, the 'bandies' (not a nickname they particularly like) have increasingly been called upon on the front line.

Right now they are supporting medical teams in Afghanistan, and were called upon in both Gulf Wars and Kosovo.

Indeed, around one sixth of the book is devoted to the 'military role' of the Service. There's a very detailed overview of the musicians' work during the invasion of Iraq where they served with HMS Ark Royal, Ocean and above all on RFA Argus with its impressive medical facilities.

"Some of the things seen were quite horrific – the sights, sounds and smells were really difficult to take in," one musician wrote. "At some points many of the staff had lumps in the throats."

Such accounts are worth noting because the Band Service is not just 'decorative' – something the general public probably doesn't appreciate.

As for the music, there are a couple of excellent chapters on the training required to be a RM musician. Their instruction might be very different from sailors and green berets, but deep down they're not all that far apart. One student at the School of Music complains in their diary of not enjoying physical training and fitness tests and that "at the end of the month nobody has any money".

Together, Mr Ambler's books form the Bible of the Band Service for the general reader (although he himself modestly says "there is much still to learn, research and record").

Volume 2 of this proud story is copiously illustrated (partly in colour), with some extremely useful – and very detailed – appendices.

Since the first volume appeared, the musicians have been deployed to two theatres of war and, like the rest of the Armed Forces, faced the grim squeeze of the 'Credit Crunch'.

Penny pinchers may yet look to wield the axe at military bands in forthcoming defence reviews regarding them as a luxury an austere Britain can no longer afford.

They would be unwise to do so, argues the current head of the Band Service, Lt Col Nick Grace.

"There will be a greater reliance on the positive impact that military music brings to defence – both at home and abroad," he writes.

"There will still be a place for the pageantry, spectacle and emotion that military music brings to British life. Once it is removed, it will not be regenerated."

How Bond was born

FRIDAY, February 22 1946. Courtroom 600, the Palace of Justice, Nuremberg.

Watched over by a dozen military policemen wearing gleaming white helmets and smart white belts which stood out against their dull olive-green uniforms, 20 men fidgeted on two rows of wooden benches.

Some made notes, some leaned forward, some put their hands to their Bakelite headphones as they struggled to understand the translation of Major General Mark Raginsky's words.

The Russian was in full flow as he laid Charge Three, War Crimes, against the men in the dock – the "Hitlerite conspirators", as he called them.

Raginsky listed charge after charge against the former German leaders, each charge supported by testimony or, better still, by contemporary documents.

One such order was dated September 22 1941: 'The Future of the City of Petersburg' – known then to the world as Leningrad. It was a chilling document which stated quite simply: "The Führer has decided to wipe the city of Petersburg from the face of the earth."

That the Soviet prosecutor could wield such evidence was thanks to a small unit of sailors and Royal Marines formed by 007 creator Ian Fleming to steal enemy intelligence.

The deeds of 30 Assault Unit – forerunners of today's 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group currently deployed in Helmand – are told in Nicholas Rankin's excellent **Ian Fleming's Commandos: The Story of 30 Assault Unit in WWII** (Faber and Faber, £20 ISBN 978-0-571-250622).

The specialist troop was born in Fleming's mind in the spring of 1942, based on early commando raids and also studying the work of the German intelligence agency, the *Abwehr*.

His idea was simple: "special intelligence commandos" should accompany sailors on raids against enemy ports and installations

and capture documents and equipment, particularly code cyphers, before the Germans could destroy them.

The unit's bleeding came at Dieppe – and it was almost wiped out in the failed attempt to take the French port; no intelligence fell into Fleming's hands.

It proved more successful a few months later during the North Africa landings, seizing an Enigma machine and two tonnes of documents.

From then on Fleming's commandos would range across Europe accompanying every major operation with mixed fortunes.

Amid the chaos of the Axis collapse in Tunisia there was more loot than intelligence to be had (although one attempt to crack a safe, in true *Italian Job*-style, resulted in a roof being blown up...), but in Sicily huge stocks of mines and their vital trigger mechanisms were seized, and Italy's head of naval underwater engineer was spirited away from Capri.

Ian Fleming's Commandos is packed with the eccentric characters you'd expect to find in the wartime spy world. Aside from the renegade figure of Fleming himself (who wasn't

especially popular with his men evidently), there's the aristocratic 'Peter' Huntington-Whiteley who reprimanded his marines for use of the 'f' word – it was "improper language" – and liked to strum his banjo singing the nonsensical rhymes of Edward Lear, and the gung-ho 'Sancho' Glanville, a butterfly expert and Foreign Office official who was rebuked for letting his men "behave like Red Indians".

Yet by the time the Allies invaded France in the summer of 1944, Fleming's somewhat unruly bunch had become a well-honed unit.

The German collapse in France provided rich pickings: senior officers, scientists behind the V weapons, ciphers, new types of propellers, plans for midge submarines used extensively (and with relatively little success) at the war's end by the *Kriegsmarine*.

And in the chaos of the Third Reich's defeat, the hunt began for the archives of the German

Navy. It started in a spa town near Weimar in Thuringia, took the commandos on a wild goose chase to central Bavaria, then back to Thuringia and Tambach Castle, wherein lay treasure: 75 years worth of documents – war diaries, logs, orders and instructions, plans, technical reports – relating to the Imperial, Republican and finally Hitler's Navy.

At the same time, other elements of 30 Assault Unit were scoring striking successes: the city of Bremen surrendered to a handful of marines, who then captured the shipyard, 16 of the latest U-boats, the plans for them and the technicians working on the project. Similar booty was seized at Hamburg and in Kiel they took Dr Hellmuth Walter, the man behind ultra-fast hydrogen peroxide-powered submarines, captive.

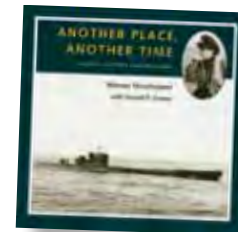
This was booty of historic importance. U-boat technology would be incorporated in the RN's Silent Service (with mixed results), while the Tambach archives – shipped back to Blighty in Munich beer crates – would clear up many of the war's mysteries (at sea and on land) and, as translators worked through the documents feverishly, they helped to seal the fate of Germany's leaders, not least the former head of the *Kriegsmarine*, Erich Raeder, driving force behind the invasion of Norway. He was sentenced to life imprisonment at Nuremberg as a result.

This is a story as riveting as any spy tale Fleming subsequently sent his fictional creation on; the characters the officer worked with and their deeds would pepper or provide the inspiration for the Bond stories.

Those stories have rather eclipsed the deeds of the men who served as his inspiration, but be in no doubt of 30 Assault Unit's importance to history.

"Fleming's commandos helped bring Nazis to justice at Nuremberg and German technology to Barrow-in-Furness," writes Rankin. "30 Assault Unit managed to get its hands on the software of the past and the hardware of the future."

Not bad for a force never more than 300 strong and never entirely approved of by the military establishment.



The U-boats' last hurrah

GIVEN the horrendous losses they suffered, the bookshelves are not awash with first-hand accounts from U-boat men.

So new memoirs should be snapped up with both hands, especially when they're as good as those by engineer officer Werner Hirschmann: **Another Time, Another Place** (Robin Brass, £19.50 ISBN 978-1-896941-64-6).

Hirschmann didn't qualify until 1943 and only joined the Battle of the Atlantic with U190 in the last 18 months of the war – a period dubbed the 'sour pickle times' by German submariners.

"The odds of our survival were getting steadily worse," he writes, "yet it rarely became a subject of discussion among us – in our minds, it would always be the other boat that wouldn't make it."

U190 did make it. It escaped besieged Lorient – the author paints a vivid description of a mixture of fatalism and hedonism in the fortress – and began its final patrol in February 1945, concentrating its efforts off Canada.

Not much was expected of her patrol. "Never mind sinking ships," the flotilla commander imparted as U190 sailed from Norway, "Please just come back."

As it was, the boat sank the last Canadian warship of the war, the minesweeper HCMS Esquimaux just three weeks before hostilities ended.

His autobiography is a mixture of memoir and diary and packed with photographs (one clearly shows the youth of U-boat crews at the war's end). It's not *Iron Coffins* or *Das Boot*, but it is a very good read and offers a real insight into the men of the U-boat arm, particularly in the closing stages of the war.

As such it's a must for U-boat buffs.

The A to Z of ME and WE

THE Electrical Branch of the Royal Navy, inaugurated at the beginning of 1946, was distinguished by its officers wearing a green stripe between their gold rings, an echo of the green cloth stripes worn by warrant electricians since 1918.

Inevitably, perhaps, electrical personnel became known as 'Greenies' although the distinction stripe lasted only a decade and in 1961 the Electrical Branch was subsumed into a single engineering specialisation with both Marine Engineering and Weapons and Radio Engineering Branches, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Within a few years electrical work was reunited in the Weapons Electrical Engineering Branch but ten years later there was yet another reorganisation that reverted to the 1961 pattern except that there was now a single Engineering Branch with electrical duties divided between Weapons Engineering (WE) and Marine Engineering (ME). This reorganisation was completed by 1981.

Then, after just over another ten years, many Weapons Engineering ratings were transferred to the new Warfare Department as operator/maintainers.

In the 21st Century significant changes have continued, the WE and ME artificers and mechanics having become Engineering Technicians, Operator Mechanics being transferred back to the WE sub branch to provide personnel. Weapons Engineering Officers' responsibility for equipment maintenance has also been extended.

The complex story of constant reorganisation has been gleaned from Cdr Patrick Moore's history of the Electrical Branch, its predecessors and successors, **The Greenie**, (Spellmount, £25 ISBN 978-0-7524-6016-1).

It is the result of a project begun in the 1990s to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Electrical Branch and was in its

The Grove Review

inception a good idea as we need more detailed organisational and social histories of the Royal Navy, utilising oral evidence as it remains available.

In a way this book continues the *Torpedomen*, the history of the Torpedo Branch that I ghosted for Admiral Poland and which was published in 1993.

Before 1946 it was these torpedomen who had primary responsibility for electrical matters.

Cdr Moore found that the development of electrical engineering was closely bound up with the overall development of the Service since the coming of electricity in the second half of the 19th Century.

This led him astray. Instead of concentrating on his specialist subject, he proceeded to produce what has turned into an attempt, as the sub-title has it, to write 'The History of Warfare Technology in the Royal Navy', something of a daunting prospect at any time but an especially challenging one based on a bibliography of less than two pages.

I was perplexed when I first opened the book to find illustrations of galley warfare and the Mary Rose which as far as I know had no electrical fittings or personnel. Neither did the Norman galleys illustrated from the Bayeux tapestry that we are told had 'no evidence of any rowing capability'; the ports for the oars are clearly present in the picture. This elementary error is all too typical of the early part of the book that tries to cover far too wide a canvas to little purpose.

The book also spreads itself too widely on social and personnel matters. Although the Selborne scheme of officer

training is covered at some length, remarkably, the Special Entry (an excellent study of which I recently reviewed) is ignored, an especially serious gap as most of the engineering officers the development whose branch the author is trying to describe came from that source.

Only when one gets to page 95 (out of a book of 287 pages) does the reader get to the actual subject of the origins of electrically-trained personnel in the Royal Navy. Again and again, however the author continues to divert

into sections on the development of ships and equipment that can be easily found elsewhere and add little to his basic account. Unfortunately some of this material is seriously garbled as well.

The author's basic problem is that faced by their Lordships and the successor Admiralty and Navy Boards in that electricity has become the dominant factor in almost all aspects of the Service's activities.

From electrical tube vents, mines and searchlights to radar, sonar, computers and control systems the electron has come to dominate maritime warfare.

The correct organisation of those called upon to operate and maintain these increasingly complex electrical systems, against a background of rapid social change, was inevitably a challenging one.

Given the constant organisational tinkering after the creation of the Electrical Branch and its brief existence in its original form, one wonders if its creation as a separate entity turned out to be entirely wise.

One would have liked much more discussion of these interesting issues rather than time and effort wasted on poorly understood irrelevancies. The interview material should also

have been used more thoroughly and integrated with the text, rather than confined to an appendix.

A relatively brief introductory section on the origins of the engineer and the torpedoman plus a summary of the evolution of electrical technology and its impact on the fleet would have set the scene for the creation of the Electrical Branch at the end of World War 2.

Then a much more detailed and analytical study of the interaction of rapid technological proliferation and development with personnel structures would have produced a really important book. This is an opportunity disappointingly missed.

Although hardly the 'Triumph of Scholarship' as described on the cover the book does contain material of value, although this would have been further enhanced if the documents used had been properly referenced.

Given its excellent intentions and the effort expended, it is such a shame that the project so seriously lost its way. Proceeds of the book go to Royal Navy charities so readers are recommended to buy it as a charitable donation and read those parts that tell the main story. It is a handsome and well produced volume and would grace any bookshelf.



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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

'Every one of you should be proud...'



MORE than 60 standards proudly fluttered in the sun in the heart of London as the Royal Naval Association exercised its right to parade and lay wreaths at the Cenotaph.

More than 360 shipmates paraded with 62 area and branch standards, along with the National Standards of the RNA, RMA, WRNS Association and the Irish Naval Association.

The Reviewing Officer was the First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, while the National President of the RNA, Vice Admiral John McAnally laid a wreath, as did Les Dwyer, the President of the Naval Association of Australia, and

● (Top left) The National Standards of the RNA, the Association of Wrens and the RMA before the parade; (left) First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope and National President Vice Admiral John McAnally at the Cenotaph

Pictures: S/M Nigel Huxtable (HQ)



the President of the Irish Naval Association, Gerry Kennedy.

The service was led by the Chaplain of the Fleet, the Very Rev Scott Brown.

The RNA was joined by their comrades of the Royal British Legion Llanelli band.

The First Sea Lord addressed the parade on completion, then Vice Admiral McAnally called for three cheers for the Naval Service – and had two re-scrubs until it could be heard in Nos 10 and 11 Downing Street, 500 metres away.

Shipmates enjoyed a finger buffet and a libation in the Civil Service afterwards, and had the chance to meet Admiral Stanhope.

The Irish Association contingent lead the singing but the drinking competition was declared a draw.

More than 40 members had crossed the Irish Sea to take part in the event, and before travelling on to London they spent the evening with Birkenhead branch, complete with a buffet meal and another singing competition (result not recorded).

The visitors were grateful to their hosts for their welcome, and INA National PRO Terry Cummins presented the branch with a framed embroidered INA crest.

In his address to the RNA contingent, Admiral Stanhope said that the day was all about “our predecessors, about those on operations, about you and about your families.

“Today, on a day where beyond our presence at the Cenotaph the world remembers the events of 9/11, we here celebrate the many fine and enduring qualities of human endeavour that stand against such atrocities.

“Qualities of courage, leadership and professionalism – quietly, consistently and heroically displayed in all that has been achieved by our forebears, and is undertaken by our Servicemen and women today, at home and abroad, for the nation and for freedom.

“Which is why out there,

● (Left) Parade Marshal Mick Kieran in action; (below) standards are dipped at the Cenotaph in Whitehall



● The General Secretary of the Irish Naval Association, Declan Pendred, parades the INA colours in Whitehall

right now, there are over 30 ships and submarines at sea, and nearly 6,000 sailors and Marines deployed on ops, from Afghanistan to the Atlantic, from providing the UK's strategic deterrent to fishery protection, and from conducting counter-piracy in the Indian Ocean to providing maritime security in the Gulf and Mediterranean.

“Indeed, the Royal Navy's contribution, over the last seven months in the Med – to protect the Libyan people, 80 per cent of whom live within ten miles of the coast – is telling.

“Be it, for example, evacuating civilians to safety in our frigates and destroyers, conducting long-range precision strikes from an SSN [attack submarine], undertaking mine-clearance ops by our MCMVs [mine countermeasures vessels], conducting embargo ops and naval gunfire support by our frigates and destroyers, not to mention supporting AH [attack helicopter] and maritime surveillance missions from HMS Ocean.

“Take HMS Liverpool – well over 100 days on patrol, at action stations on numerous occasions, engaging with the enemy time and time again.

“Their actions define what

the Royal Navy is all about – professionalism, courage and teamwork.

“Today we therefore not only recognise those in Service but it is also an opportunity to honour your accomplishments.

“Every one of you – whether serving personnel, veterans or cadets – should be proud, very proud, of what you stand for.

“Proud of all that you have achieved.

“Proud to be a part of the valuable work and family of the RNA and all those associations and organisations here represented.

“And I might add my thanks to, in particular, the Irish Naval Association for travelling to join us on this auspicious occasion.

“Today, it is appropriate to express our gratitude to our families and friends.

“For it is their immeasurable encouragement and support from which we all draw our strength and resolve.

“Shipmates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Royal Navy, thank you all for your faithful work in support of your Associations, your continuing commitment to the Naval Service; and, most importantly, your support for our people currently serving this nation.”



A summer on the ice

Continued from page 48

Jesters responded soon afterwards to level the score but the RN did not flinch, scoring three rapid goals in succession to put the game out of reach and the Jesters out of contention for the championship.

The Senior Service topped their group with two wins and a draw for five points and advanced to the championship group on the Sunday. The Army struggled through their group games and would only make it into the plate again, this time only managing to finish third in the plate group on their way to seventh overall.

On the second day of the event, the Navy faced the Swindon Nationwide Knights, Milton Keynes Hurricanes and the Sheffield Squealers, who qualified as the best second-placed team through a playoff at the end of day one.

The RN faced the Knights first, the local team with a large bench and a number of talented players which would ensure the Navy players had their hands full.

A lot of hard work and effective defensive play saw the Swindon side frustrated for the majority of the game until the puck managed to find a Knights' player alone at the back post late in the game.

He did not waste the opportunity, beating the sprawling Navy keeper with only seconds left on the clock.

After that frustrating 1-0 defeat, the Navy needed to win their next two games to have any chance of taking the title.

The next match against the Hurricanes saw some even end-to-end play, but the RN could not find a way past the MK goalie who would be later selected as the best goaltender of the competition.

The game ended in 0-0 draw and effectively ended any chance the Navy had of winning the tournament.

The last game once again pitted the Royal Navy against their first-day opponents, the Squealers.

Despite tired bodies, the Navy were determined to do better than the day before and swarmed the Sheffield goal, but their netminder was having a scorcher and kept the door closed until the final five minutes when the RN skaters managed two goals in quick succession for a 2-1 win.

The win in this final game gave the RN three points and third place overall, a marked improvement on the ninth place in Sheffield a month earlier.

The 2011-12 season is now under way with players re-registering and fixtures being planned out against other service and civilian teams. This year, RNIHA general secretary Alain Bernhard sees his task made even harder by the loss of a number of core 'Pompey' players.

With most of the association's players spread out across the UK, it makes organising a challenge.

One reason to be optimistic however is the return of many of the Navy's and Marines' best players from Cougar and Herrick, something that will significantly bolster the Inter-Service squad.

In addition, four of the RNIHA's top players have made the squad of the Bristol team in English National League Division 2, proving that Service players continue to improve and can compete at the higher levels of the sport within the UK.

The exposure to high level competition will help in the Navy's drive to reclaim the Inter-Services title.



Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RNPOTYx3

A day at the races

A COUPLE of Royal Marines have just won a packet on the gee-gees (hint: top left of the picture...)

Green berets from the Command Training Centre Royal Marines enjoyed a day out at Newton Abbott Racecourse which devoted a day to celebrating links with the Corps in aid of Royals injured in the service of their country.

A crowd well in excess of 2,000 (and a satellite TV audience of upwards of 900,000) enjoyed seven National Hunt races on the day.

In addition, there were displays from commandos showing off their unarmed combat skills between races, the Corps of Drums provided a suitably rhythmic beat to proceedings, and there were stands demonstrating the various kit used by the commandos.

As well as treating Lympstone-based marines to a fun day out – and giving them a chance to meet the public – the main aim was to help a cause very close to the Royals' hearts.

The C Group charity, based at CTCRM, was set up three years ago to work with Devon's business community to support injured or ill Royal Marines, helping their rehabilitation and re-integration into duties with the Corps – or to help them adjust to life in civvy street.

"With so many Royal Marines currently deployed overseas on operations this was a great day out and a chance for us to get together both serving and retired Royal Marines with the families of those deployed," said Lieutenant Colonel Neil Willson, CTCRM's Commanding Officer.



'I'm a zumba Jack and I'm okay...'

TAKING a breather from a punishing workout in the scorching Middle East are some of the male ship's company of HMS Somerset – doing their bit to fight cancer.

The lads on the frigate worked up a sweat to support Blue September – a national campaign endorsed by the RN to raise awareness of cancers afflicting men.

The campaign is the male counterpart of the 'pink ribbon' crusade which has proved hugely-successful at highlighting women's cancers since the mid-80s.

For men the ninth month of the year has been chosen – as well as a nice manly colour, instead of girly pink.

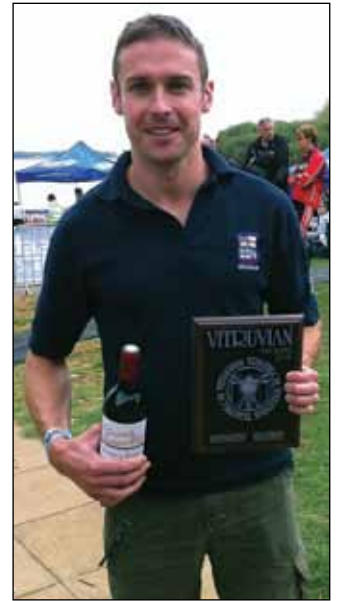
Staff at HMS Temeraire have been painting their faces blue, but sailors on deployment can't do likewise (rather goes against Queen's Regulations...), so the next best thing is to wear something blue (although from the evidence of this photo, some did struggle with that rather simple concept...).

Still it's the thought that counts. And a physical training session in the heat of the Red Sea really isn't pleasant, so hats off to the lads.

Somerset's Leading Physical Trainer LPT Vicky Jarvis – who's been keeping the ship's company on their toes since the frigate left Devonport – orchestrated the workout: a spot of zumba which, for the uninitiated, is a cross between keep fit and Latin American dancing (God bless Wikipedia...) – and is typically the domain of the fairer sex.

Proving that she's a good egg, she joined in the routine (she's the one dressed in all blue, giving the thumbs up in the photograph by LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd.)

When not introducing the men to zumba, clubz is making sure the Type 23's Royal Navy/Royal Marines boarding team are at the peak of physical fitness ready for the demands of boarding operations which now begin in earnest as the ship has reached her patrol area east of Suez.



● 2011 Inter-Services triathlon champ Maj Charlie Pennington RM

Chinese blisters

Continued from page 48

There were great performances from Graeme Bryce (12th), Andy Jackson (13th), Richard Lomas (22nd), Matt Stokeld (27th), Jeremy Gusterson (39th), Alistair McKean in 44th (only his second triathlon), Ben Kadinopolous (68th), Tim Parish (175th), Shawn Gimbert (204th) and Oskar Rylah (310th).

The first six finishers count for the team score and all were within the top 40 – a convincing win and a good day out for all involved. Certainly we had earned our tired legs.

More details on the sport at www.rnmtri.co.uk.

Faslane 'Gers role revealed

HISTORIANS tracing the roots of world-famous Glasgow Rangers visited Faslane to highlight the base's often-overlooked role in the football club's birth.

Three members of the Founders Trail – an organisation which researches the history of the Glasgow giants – were keen to see Belmore House, better known to any Clyde-based sailors and marines as headquarters of the Faslane Flotilla.

Long before there was a naval base here, however, the house was owned by the wealthy Honeyman family, who employed a master gardener, one John McNeil, and his growing family.

The youngest members of the McNeil clan, Moses, born in the house in 1855, and his older brother Peter, grew up to play in the club's first game in 1872.

Peter would subsequently become its secretary and Moses would become its first Scottish international player.

The Rangers historians were given a quick tour of Belmore House by WO Craig Campbell of Faslane's First Mine Countermeasures Squadron.

"As a life-long fan of Rangers I was delighted to show the group around," he said. "I've worked in Belmore House for a number of years now but had no idea of the historic links to the football club."

"It was fascinating to speak with the guys and learn about the connections. I don't think I'll look at my workplace the same way again."

He joked: "Parkhead season ticket holder Leading Seaman McFadden of MCM1 staff highlighted how impressed and intriguing the story was, and has commenced reading the book 'The Gallant Pioneers'!"

The Founders Trail run a website tracing the history of the club and also provides a popular guided tour of the areas in Glasgow associated with the early years which includes an Ibrox Stadium Tour. 'Gers fans can find out more at www.thegallantpioneers.co.uk.

Toux steps forward

THE Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment hosted an international showjumping and eventing exhibition as part of their open weekend.

As well as teams from the Swedish, Italian and French Armies, the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force made a debut appearance, each sending four riders to represent their respective Services, writes Lt Sharon Brown.

The Royal Navy, led by team captain Lt Cdr Vicki Sollitt, also comprised Lt Beth Leckey, CPO Wayne Leatham and LPT Kelly Gooch.

All team members headed up the night before and LPT Kelly Gooch put the Navy motto 'The Team Works' to the test having arrived at the show at 1900 with her horse, Bertha, out of date for vaccinations which meant the horse could not be allowed onto the show ground – nightmare...

Lt Cdr Sollitt, in true logistic officer style, threw herself into action, negotiating a compromise whereby Bertha would be allowed on to the showground if the team could organise a vaccination to take place that night.

Having persuaded a not-so-local vet to administer the vaccination at 9.30pm and a local stud to provide a stable for the night, next challenge: getting the horse to the practice.

With CPO Leatham's lorry out of action with a loss of power steering, LPT Gooch without transport, it came down to the toss of a coin between Lt Cdr Sollitt and Lt Leckey to take a late-night jaunt round the countryside with Bertha.

Horse jabbed and tucked up in bed. 0600 Buzzzz...wide awake!! Off to collect Bertha from the local yard.

Bertha had other ideas and having dragged LPT Gooch around the yard whilst refusing



● Toux-by-four (legs)... CPO Wayne Leatham and his trusty steed leap clear of a fence

to get in the transport, headed off into the early morning sun, with Kelly hot on her heels in the wrong direction.

Plan B needed to be enacted and back they came to the showground to get tack and Kelly was going to have to ride the horse the 40 minutes from the local yard. Could she make it in time for the competition? It was going to be close...

Class 1. First in: Lt Leckey with her young horse Opal, who made a valiant start; next to go Lt Cdr Sollitt who rode a fast round, much to the crowd's excitement. CPO Leatham also put in a sterling performance with his faithful steed, Toux Dimond Highlight.

Two riders left to go in the competition and still no sign of LPT Gooch. Things were getting tense as the RN needed the fourth rider. As the second-to-last horse entered the arena, all cheers from the Navy team: LPT Gooch made it!

After a rapid warm-up, in she went to the arena to put in a

fantastic clear round and help secure second place in the Inter-Service Loriners Cup.

Class 2 which was the eventer challenge, one rider to jump a smaller course of show jumps, the second rider to jump a course of fixed XC fences and the third rider to take on a bigger show jumping course.

Having witnessed the British Army team put in a very fast clear round, the pressure was on. LPT Gooch was first and put in a steady clear, handing the whip to Lt Cdr Sollitt who galloped off to storm round the XC, executing a smooth transfer of the stick to CPO Leatham, he went on to ride a very skilled round.

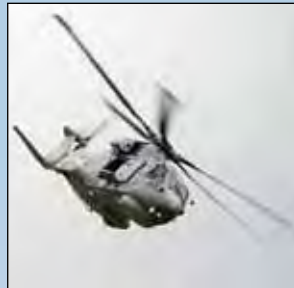
The wait was on as other teams blasted round the course. But a cool head and clean riding won the day and the Navy out of a total of nine teams were just pipped by the Army to take a very respectable second for the second time that day.

Another excellent performance from a team growing in strength with each outing.

Next month



SPORT



A decade of wizardry – ten years of Merlin on the front line



Never mind the pollocks, here's the Fishery Protection Squadron



Have winch, will travel – a spot of exercising with the Kuwaiti Coast Guard for St Albans

Chinese blisters

TWO Royal Navy endurance athletes achieved top five rankings in the world as they represented their nation in Beijing.

Cdr Kris Nicholson came in fourth and LPT Steve Young fifth in the ITU World Age Group Triathlon Championship Grand Final staged over five days in the Chinese capital.

The event is the highlight of the year for the sprint and standard-distance triathlon world championships with Kris and Steve representing Team GB in their respective age group categories (40-45 and 25-30).

To add variety an aquathlon (made-up word – Ed) – a 2.5km run, 1km swim and 2.5km run – was held at the beginning of the five-day event. That event was open to both sprint and standard-distance triathletes.

Kris entered this race when applying for the series but, having arrived only the day before and feeling jaded from the long distance travel, did not rate his chances: the 30°C heat and near-100-per cent humidity did not make it conducive for a fast race.

The officer finished the first run in 9m 20s before diving into the relatively-cool (25°C) reservoir for the 1km swim. By his own admission he took the first half of the swim steadily before speeding up and emerging from the water for the final run.

Overall Kris managed a respectable eighth in a packed age group race. Or as he put it: "That was an unusual way to get over the jet-lag and blast away the cobwebs. I need to recover quickly to get ready for the triathlon at the end of the week."

Recovery was helped by a trip to the Great Wall of China which, according to Chairman Mao, is necessary to become a 'complete man'. Having finally reached 'manhood' in the morning, the two Navy triathletes attended the main Team GB race meeting.

The final practice day was dedicated to rest although the two men gently completed the swim and cycle course in practice sessions to ensure they had sound knowledge of the routes for the race proper.

The main event began long before dawn: up at 0400, porridge, drink some Red Bull and then up to transition for final body marking and setting up the bike.

The heavens opened and in weather akin to a very wet April day in the UK the two sailors did their best, along with one thousand or so other athletes, to keep warm prior to race start.

It rained persistently throughout the day making the cycle course very slippery for bikes mounted with the skinniest of slick race tyres.

Steve departed at 0630: swimming is not his strongest discipline but he got a good tow and recorded a decent swim time of 13m 53s.

From then on it was all about speed and the clubz made a quick transition before throwing caution to the wind and through the pouring rain, blasting around the 20km cycle course in 33m 58s – the fastest time for his age group.

An excellent runner, Steve did not disappoint and completed the 5km run course in 17m 6s. He completed the overall course in 1h 8m 13s.

Kris was off at 0710 in the largest wave of 98 athletes (ten of whom were from Team GB).

The group was mustered early by the officials and spent 15 mins getting cold (13°C air temperature and raining) on the platform waiting for the start. Relieved to get in the water, which was 23°C, to warm up, Kris got away well with a good 40m sprint to clear the congestion of nearly 100 swimmers, before settling into a steady pace at the back of the lead group. He recorded the fifth fastest swim time of 12m 39s.

On to the bike course and his first time racing in the wet on tubular tyres resulted in a cautious approach but no accidents, unlike a few athletes who fell off. This translated into relatively-slow time of 35m 59s (eighth fastest).

Kris motored out of the second transition, overtaking a fellow GB athlete and on to the 5km running course. Steadily increasing the pace allowed him to reel in other athletes and he finished strongly in 17m 50s which was the fastest time in his age group.

Recording 1h 9m 49s and fourth place overall, Kris said:

"As there are other age group athletes – who start at different times – around at the end of the race, it is hard to determine what position you actually finished in. You have to wait for an hour or so for the data from your timing chip to be processed and results reported.

"I had trained hard and wanted a top-ten place so I was absolutely thrilled when I found out I came fourth.

"My participation would not have been possible without the enduring support of my family especially my wife. I am also grateful for assistance by the RN Triathlon and Sports Lottery which effectively made this opportunity possible."

As the 3rd fastest Team GB athlete in the Top 10, Kris automatically qualifies for the same event in Auckland, next year.

"To automatically qualify for Team GB is particularly satisfying as I know the high calibre of the other GB athletes – and it's particularly useful as I am returning to sea next year and the ship's programme is unlikely to afford me the opportunity to get to the qualifying events."

RN Triathlon chairman, Cdr David Pollock, added: "Both Kris and Steve have had outstanding performances in Beijing.

"To finish fourth and fifth at the world championships in their respective age groups is a fantastic achievement and testament to the hard work and dedication they have both put in to train and prepare for this event.

"Steve and Kris are key members of the RN Triathlon team and, in addition to their individual success, have both made a significant contribution to what has been a highly-successful season for the team."

Meanwhile back in Blighty... the RN/RM entered a very strong team for the Vitruvian long distance event around Rutland.

Although a civilian-owned and run event, it incorporates the Inter-Service middle-distance championships, with teams of ten from each Armed Force competing for top honours, writes Capt Stevie Lewis (45 Cdo).

The event distances are

1.9km swim (two laps of 950m), 84km bike (two laps of an undulating 42km course) and a 21km run (two laps of a 10.5km flat course) all staged at Rutland Water near Stamford, Leicestershire.

As with most races in the UK, the day started early with the first wave (done by age group) off at 0620, meaning that the team needed to be at the venue for about 0500.

So it was in the dark that the competitors set their bikes on the racking and made last-minute checks to kit, having made up drinks and sorted out whatever nutrition might be needed before arrival.

The key to this process is to get it done quickly but properly – there are always too many people "just checking" their kit for the umpteenth time and generally staring – a contagious nervous atmosphere which is not productive.

The promised good weather never really materialised and it threatened to rain for the majority of the bike leg. The wind had picked up too which made it hard work on some sectors, although the course was a loop and therefore athletes would have a tailwind at some point.

The key was not to go off too fast as 84km was a decent-length ride even before you think about the half marathon after!

The only issue was traffic: getting caught behind slower cyclists from other waves. However, on the basis that everyone was in the same situation, it was a case of grin and bear it.

The results were promising: Maj Charlie Pennington RM finished the race in 3h 54m 48s, feeling that he had done all that he could (excepting traffic which was out of his control) and knowing that he had won his age group.

It took a little while for the results to be consolidated before the team found that he had not only won his age group, but had come second overall – and meant that he was the Inter Services Champion for 2011.

As a team the RN/RM did exceptionally well too, winning the Inter-Services team category.

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A summer on the ice

EVEN though we've just gone through the warmest months of the year, it's been a busy period for the RN ice hockey team, writes Alain Bernard of the RNIHA.

After another successful Combined Inter and Tri-Service Command Championships in June, the Senior Service set its sights on the annual English Ice Hockey Association Recreation Section tournament, where it hoped to improve on last year's fifth place overall – despite having only seven players.

The Senior Service travelled to Yorkshire along with the Army Blades, taking part in the competition for the first time.

Confident and sporting two full lines compared with the reduced numbers of 2010, the Navy started the competition against local team Don Valley.

A shaky performance and 1-1 draw would be a sign of things to come and despite a 2-0 victory against a weak Norwich side, the RN team could not get things going offensively, losing their next two first-round games to Whitely Bay 2-0 (the eventual winners of the competition) and Blackburn 2-1.

Despite only getting three points, the Navy managed to squeak into the Plate (for positions six to ten) along with the Army.

The dark blues took solace from the fact that two teams from their group had advanced to the championship, arguably indicating that they had faced more difficult opposition in the opening round than the other groups.

As it had on the first day, lack of goal scoring potency would cost the Kings dearly and they would go on to draw all their fixtures 0-0, including their last game against their land counterparts, where the matelots and marines could not finish despite spending most of the game in the Army end of the rink.

The four draws and four points in round two would see them finish third in the plate and ninth overall, a generally disappointing result given the talent on hand.

From a Forces point of view, there was one positive outcome: the Army collected the plate, ensuring the Services left their mark on the civilian competition.

A month later, the Navy team had a chance to redeem themselves in Swindon with the newest competition in the ice hockey calendar inaugurated at the Link Centre in Wiltshire.

The Navy, Army and ten other teams played for the title – a competition modelled on the successful Sheffield tournament.

The contest was divided into two rounds with three groups of four teams playing three games each to see who would advance to the championship, plate and consolation rounds on the Sunday.

The Navy saw itself drawn with the Sheffield Squealers, Milton Keynes Jesters and the Cardiff Demons.

With a majority of royal marines making up the team, the Senior Service took to the ice sporting their green away shirts.

The first game pitted the RN against Sheffield and as was the case a month earlier, the team was slow off the bat. Despite scoring first, the Navy had to rely on a late goal to muster a 2-2 draw from the opening match.

The second game was against Cardiff who were arguably the weakest team in the group. With first game jitters out of the way and a lot of open ice to play in, the Navy outplayed their Welsh opponents and skated rings around them en route to a 6-1 win.

The final group game was against the MK Jesters, a team who had trounced the RN 7-1 in their previous meeting.

With a place in the championship group at stake and a strong win under their belt, the RN were keen to avenge their previous defeat.

The Navy came out of the gate flying and confident, scoring a quick goal to take the lead. The

Continued on page 47

