



NAVY NEWS

APRIL 2012

FIRE AND ICE

PROTECTOR TO
THE RESCUE

WATER CHUTES

MEN IN BLACK
LEAP INTO
THE MED

V AND A

HI-TECH
BOATS
ARE BACK

JACK FROST

AN all-terrain Bv 206 tracked carrier makes short work of a snowy slope during cold weather training at the Junglies' annual Clockwork deployment at Bardufoss, Norway. See pages 24-27 for details.

Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill, CHF



Defying fire and ice



A FEW months ago we remarked that despite being an icebreaker, Antarctic survey ship HMS Protector had never actually broken any ice, that is.

Well she has now. And some. She had to punch her way through miles of the stuff in one of two dramatic rescue missions which bookended her past month's activities.

The first of those rescues came too late, sadly, to save two Brazilian researchers – but did halt a raging inferno which swept through the remote Ferraz research station on King George Island in the South Shetland Islands.

The ship arrived after the survivors – mainly Brazilian military and scientific personnel – had been evacuated from the base, but with the fire continuing to devour the site.

Twenty-three sailors from the survey

ship were put ashore with fire-fighting and other equipment, including a quad bike and trailer so portable pumps and other kit could be moved around the base.

The landed Protector men and women spent several hours finally ending the fire's rampage.

ONE hundred miles to the northeast and a tragedy might have occurred were it not for the skill and fortitude of arguably Britain's greatest explorer.

On the forbidding shore of Point Wild on the northern coast of Elephant Island – 780 miles from South Georgia, 550 miles from Cape Horn, the southernmost tip of the Americas – the men of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition hunkered down and awaited rescue.

It was from Point Wild that Sir Ernest Shackleton sailed in a makeshift boat,

the James Caird, to save his ill-starred expedition in 1916. He succeeded – bringing every man home alive.

And it was at Point Wild, in the austral summer of 2012, that a small party from HMS Protector came ashore in small inflatable boats to survey this incredibly-inaccessible spot.

On previous visits to Elephant Island, the Royal Navy has tried to survey the waters of Point Wild – but has always been thwarted by the elements.

“To survey a remote place is always a challenge. To do so in the shadow of where one of my boyhood heroes walked, in one of the most evocative places I have been to, was one of the highlights of my survey career,” said Protector's coxswain CPO(SR) Ken Smith.

“Point Wild is one of those places that is synonymous with Ernest Shackleton and all that he represents. To finally step ashore after three attempts, on

three different ships spanning 27 years was a truly memorable occasion.”

His ship is on her maiden voyage to the ice, helping to update charts of the seas around Antarctica for the UK Hydrographic Office who supply maps of the world's oceans not merely for the Royal Navy, but international seafarers.

Point Wild – named after Shackleton's deputy, Frank Wild – is 350 metres (1,150ft) long and around 50 metres (164ft) wide, but the ‘beach’ is just 20 metres (65ft) square.

The survey team set up camp on the western edge of the island, generally referred to as the ‘penguin end’, as the whole area was completely covered with chinstrap penguins.

This seemed the most appropriate place to pitch tents as the eastern end consisted of large, mainly fur, seals, which although not openly hostile were not that receptive to guests.

The glacier provided a spectacular backdrop for the shore party, who

camped in almost exactly the same spot as Shackleton's stranded party.

The latter were eventually rescued in the summer of 1916 after spending several months stuck on Elephant Island – and after their leader had sailed to South Georgia to raise the alarm.

Throughout the three nights at Point Wild, Chinstrap penguins seemed to squawk in harmony to ensure the surveyors could not sleep; the only sound that broke their incessant callings was the crash of ice breaking away from the nearby glacier – the thunderous noise was impressive, similar to that of an artillery battery.

The penguins would remain silent (for once) until the resulting wave broke on the island, this seemed to signify safety and once again the chirping continued.

The tidal gauge required checking every 30 minutes around the clock – more difficult after dark as the fur seals seemed to favour the viewing platform. In the pitch dark of night their brown fur



● Work boat Terra Nova heads ashore between the ice at James Ross Island with Protector a short distance away





● Capt Peter Sparkes stares at the searchlight-lit floes of ice off James Ross Island as Protector carefully punches her way out by night

made impressive camouflage; at one point Lt Craig Guest had the shock of his life by almost stepping on a rather angry seal.

The seals proved very curious creatures, on the final morning as Lt Si Lockley opened the tent flaps, a large fur seal growled disapprovingly.

Quietly closing the tent again he thought it best to leave the seal to rest and use the opposite entrance for that particular morning.

The waters around Point Wild have never been charted accurately until now. The survey party collected data about the tide, shoreline and water allowing very accurate depths to be plotted on the chart – particularly important as the area is visited heavily by cruise ships, and passengers which visit this remote and unique location every year.

"This has been a dream come true for me," enthused LS(SR) Toby Castles.

"I never thought I would be lucky

enough to survey this part of the world, let alone spend three nights on such a historically-significant island, this is the highlight of my career so far."

Offshore, the ship's survey motor boat – fittingly called James Caird 4 – collected echo sounder data from the shallower waters, while Protector herself surveyed the deeper, more exposed offshore regions.

"Successful completion of this task is a major achievement," said Protector's Commanding Officer Capt Peter Sparkes.

"The charts that will be produced from the data collected will help to ensure the safety of the numerous cruise ships, and passengers which visit this remote and unique location every year."

NOW about that icebreaking we promised...

Having completed her work around

Elephant Island, Protector sailed a couple of hundred miles south to the eastern tip of the Antarctic peninsula and the waters off James Ross Island.

Protector was charged with putting a small team from the British Antarctic Survey ashore so they could collect geological samples.

Because of the ice it took three attempts to get to James Ross.

When Protector did get through she sent forth her small work boat, Terra Nova, which carefully negotiated the ice field to land the scientists and their equipment, including sufficient food and fuel to last up to 30 days in one of the world's most inhospitable locations.

While the scientists got to work, the weather and ice forecasts aboard the survey ship began to look increasingly unfavourable.

After four days on James Ross Island, the decision was made to pull

the scientists out much earlier than anticipated – a change of wind direction meant there was a chance ice from the Weddell Sea would be driven towards James Ross Island – potentially blocking HMS Protector in, like a cork in a bottle.

Capt Sparkes decided the safest and least risky option would be to sail through the ever-increasing pack ice and send in the Terra Nova, fast rescue craft Yelcho and the inflatable boat, Whiskey 1.

The scientists were extracted with all kit and were back aboard HMS Protector within 90 minutes of the first boat entering the water thanks to a textbook operation.

But now the ship had to fight her way out of the ice.

"Then the daunting task of breaking out of James Ross Island and into open water where the ice density was not as thick began in earnest," said Capt

Sparkes.

It took the ship 24 hours to negotiate three dozen miles of ice which, in places was four metres (13ft) thick. She got through the Erebus and Terror Gulf just in time, for just hours after reaching open waters, the pack ice closed.

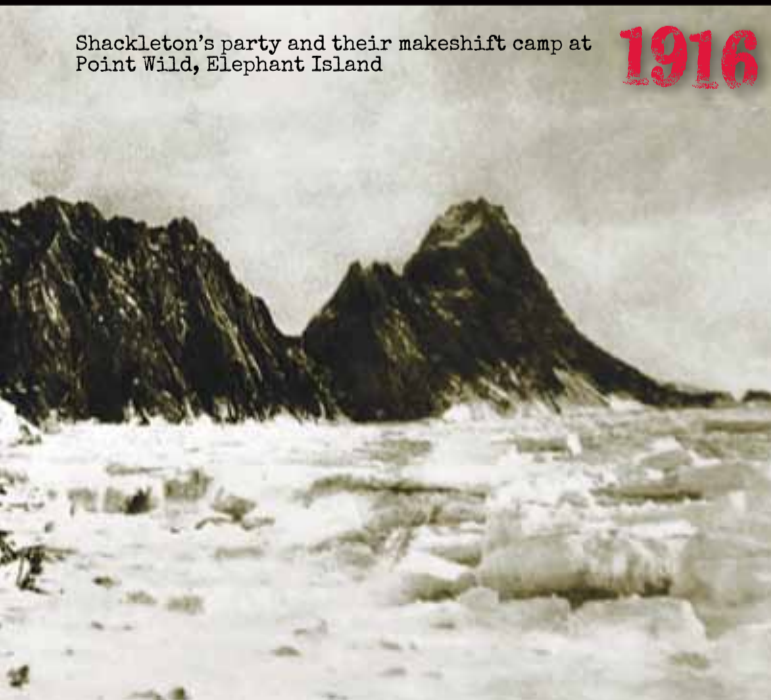
By night, the 'breakout' was particularly challenging – "like navigating Hampton Court maze in the dark with a miner's lamp on" in the words of Capt Sparkes.

As well as being relieved not to be marooned on James Ross Island, the scientists were pleased by the results of their abridged visit to the isle.

"We are grateful to the crew of HMS Protector for their persistence in eventually finding a way through the ice, although this left us with only four days on the island, we achieved a lot in that time," said Prof Mike Hambrey from Aberystwyth University, working with BAS.

Shackleton's party and their makeshift camp at Point Wild, Elephant Island

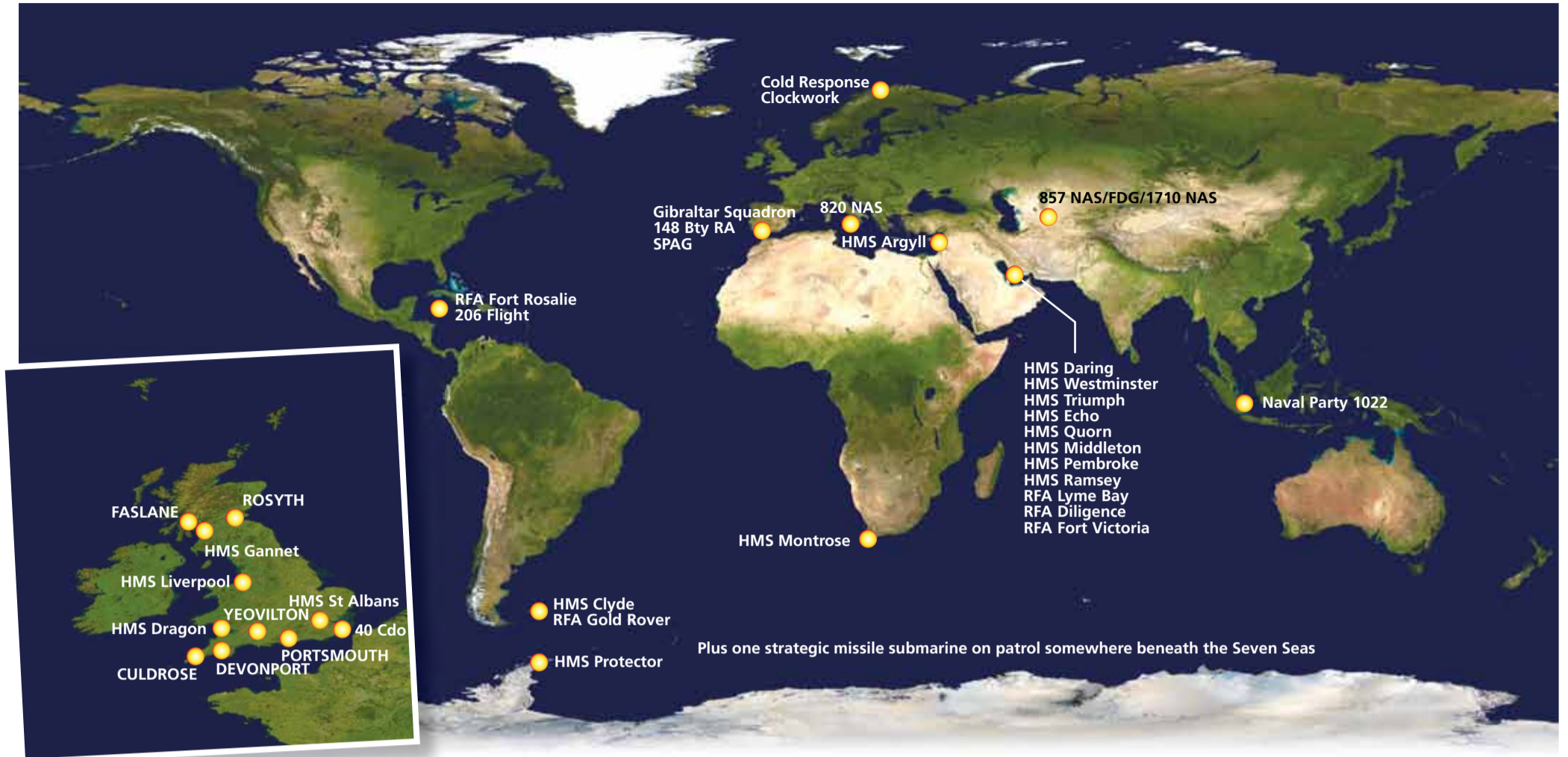
1916



Protector's survey team land supplies in a RIB at Point Wild

2012





Satellite imagery courtesy of NASA

ALTHOUGH it's now turned spring (we know because it says so in the *Navy News* diary...), things wintry continue to dominate much of the Senior Service's activities.

Where survey ship **HMS Protector** has been, the Antarctic peninsula, it rarely warms up – even in the austral summer. The icebreaker found herself in two dramatic incidents – putting out a fire which tore through a Brazilian research station with fatal consequences and punching through three dozen miles of ice to prevent being trapped off James Ross Island (see pages 2-3).

Protector also visited Elephant Island – from where Sir Ernest Shackleton sailed to rescue his fellow explorers in 1916. That legendary rescue mission will be repeated next year by one Royal Marine and a senior rating (see page 35).

Some 10,000 miles away in an equally-challenging cold environment, HM Ships **Bulwark**, **Illustrious** and **Liverpool**, **815**, **845**, **846** and **847 NAS**, the Royal Marines of **42 Commando**, the staffs of the **Commander Amphibious Forces** and **Commander UK Task Group** mustered for Exercise Cold Response in the fjords, NATO's regular winter workout (see page 22).

Before being thrust into the ten days of Cold Response, the men and women of the **Commando Helicopter Force** endured several weeks of training in and around Bardufoss to acclimatise to the harsh weather on their Clockwork deployment (so called because it's as regular as... see pages 24-27).

In warmer climes, **HMS Daring** is now in the Gulf on her maiden deployment where she's also trialling new dark blue No.4 day uniforms (see opposite) which will probably lead to an interesting postbag next month...

Daring relieved **HMS Argyll**, which has paid an historic visit to the Lebanese capital of Beirut – the first RN ship to do so in more than five years (see page 19).

HMS Montrose dispatched her **815 NAS** Flight to 'play' with the South African Air Force during the frigate's break from her South Atlantic deployment (see page 17).

The **Submarine Parachute Assistance Group** and gunnery spotters of 148 Battery jumped into the Med off Gib to hone their chuting skills (see page 14).

In Afghanistan **854 NAS** has finished a marathon tour-of-duty, handing over to her sister Bagger squadron **857** after 15 months in theatre (see opposite).

Fellow Culdrose squadron **820 NAS** sent two Merlins across Europe to take part in the annual large-scale anti-submarine exercise Proud Manta (see right).

In home waters, **HMS Dragon** has been completing a series of gunnery and decoy trials before paying her inaugural visit to Cardiff (see page 7), while her younger sister **Defender** is carrying out her second period of sea trials (see page 6).

HMS Somerset returned home to Devonport after six months east of Suez (see page 6) while **HMS Liverpool** paid her final visit to Merseyside before paying off (see page 9).

The **Fishery Protection Squadron** – HM Ships **Tyne**, **Mersey** and **Severn** – linked up for their annual get-together off the Isle of Wight (see page 13).

On land, marines not involved in winter exercises in Norway have been carrying out amphibious training in the West Country (**Zulu Coy**, **45 Cdo**), or urban combat/compound clearance training (**X-Ray Coy**, **45 Cdo**, in Scotland, **40 Cdo** in Kent – see page 16).

Let's not forget the Silent Service, **HMS Astute** is home in Faslane after five very successful months in the USA on her most exhaustive series of trials yet (see page 8).

HMS Vigilant is about to join the hunter-killer in Faslane after emerging from a three-and-a-half-year £300m revamp in Devonport. As one bomber leaves the Hamoaze, a second, **HMS Vengeance**, has arrived – the last of the V-boat quartet to undergo the mammoth mid-life overhaul (see page 8).

And finally... There is no greater name in the Royal Navy than **HMS Victory**. Her long-term future is secure thanks to being transferred to a charitable trust – with a £50m endowment (see page 10).

Flying sorcery in Sicily

FLYING over the barren landscape of France's Tarn valley – and past the tallest bridge in the world, the Millau Viaduct – the world's best submarine hunting helicopter makes for the world's biggest submarine hunt.

Two Merlin helicopters from 820 Naval Air Squadron at Culdrose left Cornwall behind and flew 1,400 miles across Europe to Sicily in the search for five boats lurking in the Ionian Sea for NATO's annual Proud Manta Exercise.

The two-week-long war games, played out off the east coast of the Italian island, saw naval air and surface forces gather to track down submarines from France, Greece, Italy, Spain and Turkey and hone their sub-hunting skills, while the boats practised their evasive skills.

The team from 820 – one of two Merlin squadrons which can deploy *en masse* with the Navy's two helicopter carriers – flew air and ground crew out to the US Naval Air Station at Sigonella, 15 miles south of Mount Etna.

Once in Sicily, the squadron flew their Merlins alongside helicopters (including Italian Merlins of the Marina Militare) and fixed-wing aircraft from NATO partners, working with NATO ships to counter underwater threats played by NATO submarines.

The two helicopters notched up 66 hours during the exercise – flying more airborne time and more missions than any other nation participating... and, more importantly, they managed to detect – and carry out simulated attacks against – the boats they found beneath the sea.

Thanks to its sonar, Merlin is renowned for its ability to find submarines which don't want to be found – but at times the conditions in the Ionian Sea meant the distinctive outline of a boat

could be seen with the naked eye by an aircraft overhead.

"Plenty of simulated attacks were carried out by the Merlins and the aircrew gained valuable insight into how our NATO partners operate and also demonstrate to them the awesome submarine-hunting capability that is the Merlin helicopter," said Lt Cdr Stuart Finn, Senior Observer and the 820 detachment commander.

"The challenges posed by operating at a foreign base far from home were also met with gusto by the engineering team, engendering a close relationship with our Italian Merlin colleagues in order to provide serviceable aircraft for the exercise missions.

"Proud Manta 2012 was an extremely valuable exercise for us."

In addition to the aircraft and submarines, a sizeable force of surface ships took part in the two weeks of Proud Manta, including vessels from NATO's Standing Maritime Group 1, destroyers from France and Italy, an Italian frigate, two Italian auxiliary ships, a US cruiser and destroyer and a NATO research vessel.

"The assets put into this year's exercise really allowed us to put all the players through complex and escalating scenarios. We had enough ships, planes and people engaged that we could really simulate plenty of threats – and therefore train hard in how to work together to deal with and neutralise those threats," said Capt Walter Luthiger of the US Navy, chief planner for the exercise.

Including the flights across Europe to and from Sigonella, 115 hours in total were clocked up by the two aircraft, 'lilypadding' at military airbases on the way to relax and refuel, including Hyères, near Toulon in southern France.

Picture: Lt Cdr Dave Thomas, 820 NAS



Dark 4s take over Daring

Cheery Chid's caterpillar track record

DO NOT let the bevy of baseball caps fool you. This is the bridge of a Royal Navy, not American, warship – the most advanced ship in the Fleet no less.

Aboard HMS Daring on patrol in the Gulf, the ship's company of the £1bn destroyer are trying out a new day-to-day uniform which is going through its first colour change since World War 2.

The 180-plus sailors aboard the Portsmouth-based warship, on her maiden deployment, have been given the new Personal Clothing System (Combat Uniform) to wear during the working day.

The new No.4s – as working rig is known throughout the Fleet – come in numerous layers, making it suitable in all weathers, and comprises a T-shirt, shirt, thermal fleece and windproof smock. It also includes a belt and a new pair of boots with a zip in place of shoelaces.

The traditional rank insignia on the shoulders are now worn on the front, while a large ship's badge is now emblazoned on the arm.

And blue is the new, er, blue. Just in a darker shade.

The current No.4s worn daily by sailors and submariners comprise a light blue shirt and navy-coloured combat trousers.

As such, despite different materials used and minor tweaks, the working rig hasn't fundamentally changed in 70 years – so Daring's ship's company were a little lukewarm at first, but the new uniform has grown on them.

"So far the reaction on board the ship has been very positive," explains Daring's logistics officer Lt Cdr Ben Hughes.

"People were initially apprehensive but it is a comfortable, practical uniform that looks much more modern.

"The boots are very comfortable as well, especially for people who are stood on their feet all day and with the zip it makes it easier to just pull them on and off. I think people will find it hard to go back to the old uniform now."

The PCS, which has slanted pockets on the legs for easier access when sitting down, has been designed to save the wearer the maximum amount of time possible when getting ready.

As well as zipped boots, the collar can be turned up and fastened instantly with velcro rather than fiddling with buttons – essential for sailors needing to get changed in minutes for fire-fighting duties.

"It is basically a dark blue version of the Army's new Multi



● A pensive moment for Daring's CO Capt Guy Robinson on his bridge
Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan, HMS Daring

Terrain Pattern Uniform," Lt Cdr Hughes adds. "People here are really proud to be wearing it, HMS Daring is a new ship on her first deployment and the fact that we get to trial a new uniform seems appropriate."

The trial aboard Daring is being mirrored on HMS Westminster – also on patrol east of Suez, clamping down on piracy – and hunter-killer submarine HMS Talent.

When not trying out new uniforms, Daring has been showing what she brings to the east of Suez 'party', taking part in international exercises.

The first of those was the Anglo-Antipodean-Pakistani Operation Scimitar Anzac, a sweep of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden for criminal activity; more than 23,000 vessels a year pass through the waters covered in the sweep.

The Type 45 joined Pakistan's PNS Babur – in days gone by she was HMS Amazon – tanker RFA Wave Knight and Australian frigate HMAS Parramatta.

And for the first time, Daring put her command abilities to the test as she hosted an Australian and New Zealand staff – they're currently directing the at-sea activities of Combined Task Force 150, to which the Type 45 belongs on her east of Suez mission.

For as well as being able to shoot down incoming missiles travelling at three times the speed of sound, the Portsmouth-based warship has specially-built command facilities, including a dedicated planning room, from where the movements and actions of a task group can be directed.

In addition to the command team, Daring also embarked Yemeni observers, whose contribution proved extremely valuable, providing expertise and in-depth knowledge of the region to the ships involved as the group moved around the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Yemen.

The task force also enjoyed the support of tanker Wave Knight, which kept the ships supplied

with fuel and stores and also contributed her Lynx helicopter.

"Seeing all of the different nations working together aboard Daring was very encouraging. The in-depth knowledge provided

by the Yemenis has also been particularly useful," said Daring's PO Lee Butler.

Daring has now relieved HMS Argyle as Britain's long-standing Gulf guardian.

AFTER nearly 30 years of being powered around the oceans by trusty Deltic engines, HMS Chiddingfold has become the first Hunt-class minehunter to receive a pair of new replacements.

The Portsmouth-based ship has been fitted with Caterpillar C32 Acert engines during a year-long refit in her home port.

Two sections of deck had to be cut out to allow access to the bowels of Cheery Chid.

After removing the old engines – which not only powered many of the Ton-class minehunters before the Hunts but also a famous class of British Rail locomotives – their replacements were carefully craned into the ship and on to their new mounts.

The revamp, which began in January, also includes fitting new gearboxes and propellers and upgrading her hydraulic bow thrusters.

Lt Peter Davis, the ship's executive officer, said: "It is very exciting for us to see the new engines being put into Chiddingfold after months of preparation.

"She is the first of the re-engined Hunt-class minehunters and we are looking forward to putting this new system through its paces later this year to find out exactly how the ship will perform."

Mark Draper, BAE Systems Project Manager for the Hunt Re-propulsion programme, added: "Chiddingfold is the first of class for this project and we are learning a lot.

"The engine installation is a real milestone. The team is working hard and know there is a lot left to complete this challenging programme."

Baggers' marathon duty ends

THE longest tour of duty by the Fleet Air Arm in recent memory is now over as the 'eyes in the skies' of Afghanistan return to Cornwall after more than 15 months away.

854 Naval Air Squadron have flown back to RNAS Culdrose near Helston with a string of plaudits to their name having helped find millions of pounds of drugs and tonnes of explosives used to make improvised explosive devices – which have been the scourge of troops and the civilian populace on the ground.

The squadron helped score the biggest drugs bust by the Royal Navy anywhere in the world in the past two years: 1,800kg of narcotics with an estimated street value of £40m, seized just before Christmas.

Using their state-of-the-art radar, the squadron's Sea King helicopters – known throughout the Navy as the 'baggers' thanks to the distinctive sack on the side of the aircraft, and known by Afghans as the 'cloudwalkers' – have monitored vast swathes of land and airspace, searching for those insurgents who would wish to move drugs, arms and bomb-making equipment around southern Afghanistan.

Once suspicious activity was found, the aircrews passed the information on to ground troops – and the insurgents were swiftly foiled.

The squadron's successes were particularly notable through the summer of 2011: over a five-month period more than seven tonnes of explosives were captured – enough to make 1,500 homemade bombs – and a similar amount of drugs, worth well over £10m on the streets of the UK. With every success in Afghanistan, Allied commanders passed on their

gratitude to the squadron.

854 and its sister front-line squadron, 857, were originally designed as the 'eyes of the fleet', used to provide early warning of aerial threats to a task group and guide jets and helicopters on to targets.

But the Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control has proved equally adept at tracking ground movements from operations in Iraq in 2003 to the sands of Afghanistan – prompting the new tag 'eyes of the desert'.

The baggers have been based at Camp Bastion since May 2009 with 854 and 857 taking it in turns to patrol Afghan skies; each mission typically lasts around five hours.

For their latest tour of duty, 854 deployed in late November 2010. To sustain continuous operations, all members of the team have spent upwards of eight months away, undertaking tours of three or four months followed by a similar period back in UK before returning to the fight for a further tour.

The squadron was due home to Culdrose late last year, but with 857 deployed aboard HMS Ocean for operations over Libya, 854's stint was extended. They were finally relieved this week – and flew back to praise from Cdr Pat Douglas, Commander Maritime Sea King Force.

"Having handed over to 857 NAS, 854 squadron return home after 15 hard months of hard work in Afghanistan," he said.


"They can be truly proud of what they have achieved; from the 2,500 odd hours flown in theatre and the numerous hauls of drugs, weapons and explosives, to the extraordinary serviceability of their aircraft, they have surpassed expectations at every turn."




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Lusty sets the safety standard

IF YOU'RE planning on flying at sea in the next 12 months, you will find no better 'airport' than HMS *Illustrious*, singled out by the Fleet Air Arm for its outstanding flight safety.

The Portsmouth-based carrier has been presented with the Bambara Trophy, awarded each year to the unit with the best flight safety record.

Lusty, which only emerged from an extensive refit last summer, was assessed on the tasks she had to complete, her flight safety organisation, awareness and contributions to flight safety.

She did so with a very demanding post-refit programme, many inexperienced ship's company aboard, and seven different helicopter types from all three Services on her flight deck at various times.

Indeed, in the past nine months, *Illustrious* has seen a consistently busy flight deck with numerous squadrons embarking for only short periods of time – including some aircrew and engineering personnel who hadn't previously had exposure to the maritime aviation environment.

Successfully engendering flight safety awareness and ethos within the 670 members of the ship's company hasn't always been easy. However, *Illustrious*' flight safety committee found numerous ways to keep it at the forefront of the crew's minds. These have included mess deck flight safety newsletters, aviation stakeholder discussions, mess deck 'chats' and the efforts of the 'Foreign Object Debris' working group.

The hard work and tireless efforts have been rightly rewarded with the award of the Bambara Flight Safety Award (the trophy itself dates back to the end of the 1950s when HMS *Bambara* paid off in Ceylon – today Sri Lanka; the funds from her decommissioning led to a silver cup being given to the Fleet Air Arm).

"I am immensely proud that the ship's efforts have been recognised in this way," said Lt Cdr Pete Haywood – known by many aboard simply as 'F', short for Lt Cdr Flying.

"We have set a standard for others to follow as *Illustrious* now takes on the responsibility as the nation's on-call helicopter and commando carrier."

Cut off in his prime

MORE attentive *Navy News* readers might have noticed last month's feature on Merlin training ended rather abruptly, with 824 NAS' Lt Cdr Mike Currie cut off mid-sentence.

Apologies to him – and you – the gremlins sabotaged the final column of the feature.

For those of you who did make it that far, here's the concluding paragraph *in toto*...

"Things have moved on since the Mk1. It has served us well – and still serves us well – but it's time to move on."

You can read the other 2,042 words in the article here: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/features



Picture: LA(Phot) Rob Gillies, FRPU West

A moment to savour

IF YOU could capture the raw emotion of a ship's homecoming in a single image, then this is as good as any.

A kiss for one of HMS Somerset's ship's company from his beloved – one of 200 such passionate welcomes as a six-month counter-piracy mission came to an end.

More than 600 joyous families and friends waited on the Devonport jetty for the frigate to come alongside and the brow to go across.

Waiting to see her daughter LMA Donna Gale after her first time at sea was mum Julie. Donna's incident-packed patrol included looking after a patient in Tanzania and providing medical cover at a football match in Saudi Arabia. Julie said: "Donna's had a really busy time on her first ship. It's brilliant to see her again."

At the head of the queue when the brow was across to meet her husband CPO Rob Lawes come off the ship was his wife Leanne with their first child, 15-week-old son Daniel, bouncing in her arms dressed in sailor suit, specially made by his mother for the occasion.

Rob said: "It's wonderful to see Daniel again. Leanne has done a wonderful job looking after him. Mind you I was lucky enough that the Navy flew me home to be there at his birth. Others have had to wait until today to see their families. It is a great day for everyone."

Leanne added: "It has been hard being pregnant without Rob around. He has missed most of Daniel's very short life so far. But he has been a great dad and kept in contact daily."

A special combined Christmas and homecoming party is planned for the Lawes family to mark missing the festive break in their home town Walsall, West Midlands.

Somerset was at sea for up to six weeks continuously at any one time on her various patrols, visiting Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania and the Seychelles for breaks.

Whilst in various ports her sailors engaged with their host nations on a variety of issues ranging from maritime security tactics to playing football; all of which served to strengthen international co-operation based on the shared need to protect maritime trade routes.

PO Jamie Newman, of Plymouth, hugged his children Evie, seven, and Owyn, ten, who were delighted to see their father. Evie said her dad was taking her to Brownies – the first time he had been able to, while her older brother is looking forward to football with dad. Their mother Lisa said: "Although it has been hard keeping these two (children) occupied, Jamie is back and that more than made up for everything."

Her husband added: "The deployment has been successful, especially with counter-piracy ops. It is tough being away from my family, but this is a wonderful welcome home."

They're now enjoying some much-deserved leave while the ship herself is about to undergo a major overhaul – after four six-month deployments in the past five years, she's lined up for a lengthy refit which will take her out of the front line until 2013.

So the warm welcome the ship

and her 200 souls received was a fitting end to this chapter in Somerset's proud career.

"It is fantastic to be met by hundreds of families and friends on the jetty. The crew deserve this moment from their families who have been so hugely supportive which is appreciated so much by us all," said her CO Cdr Paul Bristowe.

"My ship's company have been really professional, enabling the ship to conduct effective maritime

policing operations including counter-piracy and counter-smuggling.

"One of the incidents came about when we came across a ship in which the crew had been effectively taken captive by pirates. We secured the vessel from the pirates and released the captured Pakistani crew.

"As well as disrupting two piracy acts we also rescued two separate crews in distress on the high seas. This was very rewarding and exactly why we were there and what we have trained for."

Bottom inspection receives thumbs up

TWO dozen people were given the rare chance to inspect a duke's bottom in Plymouth – and leapt at the opportunity.

The duke in question was HMS Monmouth – the Black Duke – whose bottom is very rarely exposed.

High and dry in dry dock in Devonport's frigate shed, the ship hosted her affiliates, keen to learn of the recent deeds of 'their' warship.

The frigate underwent six weeks of maintenance following a demanding seven-month deployment east of Suez last year, including some time out of the water.

Affiliates are used to visiting ships in full fighting form – everything looking spick and span – but who could turn down the chance to walk under 4,500 tonnes of battleship grey?

The 'dock bottom tour' was the highlight of the visit for the affiliates, who included Welsh Assembly Member for Monmouth Nick Ramsey, the Lord Lieutenant's representative Lt Gen Sir Robert Hayman-Joyce, the High Sheriff of Gwent, representatives from Monmouth Town and Monmouthshire County Councils, the Worshipful Company of Drapers, the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia) and Sea Cadets.

The visitors had a packed day; they discussed Monmouth's recent successes on deployment, watched a firefighting exercise, learned about machinery in the ship control centre and experienced

a simulated attack by aircraft and anti-ship missiles in the operations room, and above all, they had a good chat with the ship's company, renewing strong bonds between the ship and the town for which she was named.

"This was a great opportunity to see first-hand the dedication of our Navy to our defences," said Mr Ramsey. "Monmouth is a great ship, proud to bear our town's name. The people of Monmouth can be justly proud of the invaluable work being done at sea in our name. Well done HMS Monmouth!"

Simon Sauze of the Worshipful Company of Drapers also left the ship impressed: "Clearly demonstrated was the very important and often dangerous role they play in our defence, as well as the contribution they make to stability in other, less predictable, regions of the globe."

The Black Duke is now back at sea preparing for a gruelling period of Operational Sea Training ahead of another deployment later this year.

"This was an excellent opportunity for us to build on the strong links we have with 'our' town and to give our affiliates the chance to view the ship from an unusual vantage point," said Cdr Dean Bassett, Monmouth's CO.

"Our affiliates have been strong supporters of HMS Monmouth and are very much part of the wider 'Black Duke' family. It was a pleasure to host them onboard."

RFA finds new life in MARS

FOUR new large tankers are to be ordered for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – but they won't be built in UK yards.

No British firm bid to construct the 37,000-tonne tankers, but South Korean firm Daewoo did – and is Whitehall's 'preferred bidder' for the £452m order.

But around one third of the money invested in the quartet, which will replace existing single-hull RFA tankers from 2016, will be spent in Britain.

Some £90m will go on key equipment, systems, design and support services. The winning design is being provided by BMT Defence Services.

And a further £60m will be spent in the UK customising the four tankers, as well as trials and specialist engineering support.

As for the ships themselves, they will be more than 200 metres (650ft) long and be able to pump enough fuel to fill two olympic-sized swimming pools in an hour.

The replacement tankers form one half of the RFA's Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) project; the other half seeks to replace the 'solid support ships' – floating warehouses which provide food, ammunition, spare parts and other 'dry' stores.

The decision to select a foreign firm to build the tankers drew criticism from some quarters of the media, but Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said no UK firm had submitted a bid for the project.

"When we are building complex warships or highly sophisticated weapons, of course, we must protect Britain's industrial base," he explained.

"But when it comes to non-military type equipment, I am clear that my responsibility is to get the best deal for the UK taxpayer and plough the savings back into the front line.

"In this case, the choice we were faced with was to buy South Korean and save hundreds of millions of pounds for the taxpayer, or let the work to an Italian shipyard. I believe we made the right choice."

■ New RAS rig progress, p10

More trials for Defender

THE fifth Type 45 destroyer should be completing her second series of sea trials by the time you read this.

HMS Defender left the BAE Systems yard where she was built in early March for 28 days of tests and trials in the waters off western Scotland.

Her mixed crew of Royal Navy and BAE personnel are building on what was accomplished during Defender's first trials last autumn, carrying out final testing of the ship's power and propulsion, combat systems, navigational and communications equipment.

If all goes well on this second 'workout', the £1bn destroyer will be formally handed over to the Royal Navy this summer.

"Defender's departure on her second set of sea trials marks another milestone in the life of the ship and her company as we prepare to join the fleet later this year," said the destroyer's Senior Naval Officer Cdr Nicholas Boyd.

"We are looking forward to operating her sophisticated equipment and systems during trials and beyond, putting our experience and training into practice."

As well as completing the arduous task of fitting and testing the thousands of components and systems, Defender has used her time on the Clyde to begin to forge relationships with her affiliates, notably the cities of Glasgow and Exeter.

Upon her return to Scotstoun this month, Defender will undergo three months of final testing and checking her systems.

In July, she sails for Portsmouth to join the bulk of the Type 45 flotilla.



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ESCORTED by three tugs and HMS Express – the Royal Navy vessel bound with Welsh universities – HMS Dragon approaches Penarth Head on her maiden visit to her affiliated city, Cardiff.

Britain's fourth Type 45 destroyer spent five days in the Welsh capital – in what proved to be a momentous weekend for ship and nation alike.

D35's debut in Wales coincided with the country's rugby union Grand Slam triumph. Cue mega party...

Sailors from the ship were guests at the Millennium Stadium for the thrilling decider between Wales and France, as well as at Cardiff City Stadium where the hosts entertained Burnley in a rather less thrilling encounter (it ended in a goalless draw).

While some of the Dragons were being royally entertained at sporting venues, their shipmates were showing off their £1bn vessel to eager Cardiffians who crossed the brow at Queen Alexandra Dock. Indeed, it's the first time the innards of Dragon have been seen by the wider public.

Among those keen to show off the new destroyer were brothers – and South Wales natives – PO Christopher and AB Johnathan Hughes.

For 32-year-old Christopher, this was the first time in his 14 years in the RN that he'd visited the city of his birth in a warship.

"Being a proud Welshman and Valley boy, serving on a Cardiff-affiliated ship with my brother, this is one of the highlights of my career so far," he said.

Those touring the ship witnessed the 21st Century revolution in RN technology that the Type 45 symbolises – likened by Dragon's CO Cdr Darren Houston as going from ZX81s (early 1980s computers with 1KB of memory) to iPads (which are more than one million times more powerful...).

He explained: "The operations room is all just screens, touch pads and keyboards, and it all does really revolve around the iPad generation and the technology suits them, which means they can work it well and they can use the ship easier."

Among those looking around Dragon during her time at the mouth of the Taff were schoolchildren, college students, and a sizeable number of VIPs including the Secretary of State for Wales, MP Cheryl Gillan, and First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones AM.

Young and old, VIP or ordinary member of the public, what none witnessed was live action featuring some of Dragon's firepower (for rather

understandable safety reasons...).

Before arriving in Cardiff, Dragon let loose her guns for six days as she completed gunnery trials.

Her main 4.5in Kryten and two 30mm automatic cannons were both fired up as expert engineers from BAE Systems, whose firm built the Portsmouth-based warship, checked the weapons' alignment.

Dragon's 4.5in gun carried out shoots against towed surface targets and conducted Naval Fire Support – as so ably demonstrated by HMS Liverpool off the coast of Libya last year.

The destroyer also put her killer tomato into the water – a large, bright orange, inflatable target launched from her flight deck.

During the six-day shoot the main gun fired 290 shells – all loaded by hand on to the gun's feeding by the gun bay team.

"The gunnery trials proved the first real test for Dragon's gun crews. There were a few teething problems with the gun testing our engineering skills to fix defects to allow the serials to be completed," said 26-year-old CPO Daryl Pounder, the 4.5in maintainer.

Next it was the turn of the 30mm gun crews. The port and starboard guns fired against towed surface targets and more killer tomatoes.



The engagements against the towed airborne target were the pinnacle of the trials. Dragon's gunnery teams tracked the foe – which was towed nearly a kilometre behind a Falcon aircraft – using her electro-optical sensors and laser range finders.

The destroyer's gunnery computer processors calculated the target's trajectory and produced the firing solution before a hail of 30mm shells was sent hurtling towards it.

The system proved to be so accurate that the target was hit and completely destroyed with only the third round fired. Fortunately the aircraft was able to deploy a 'spare' to allow the trials to be completed.

Gunnery is just one of a complex series of trials D35 has completed in the run-up to her formally being declared operational at the end of April.

Dragon left a trail of sparks and smoke over the English Channel as she tested one of her last lines of defence against missile attack.

She used the ranges off Portland Bill, with a team from DSTL – the MOD's in-house scientists – ashore monitoring the destroyer's radar cross section and infra red characteristics as she fired off her decoy flares, designed to lure away heat-seeking missiles.

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby, RNAS Yeovilton



A visit filled with roar emotions



Lisa Allen

Lisa has been a community volunteer for four years. She helps service families and personnel by offering practical support and help.

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'The future is here...'

SHE'S big, she's black and she's back.

The most advanced submarine Britain has ever sent to sea returned home to the Clyde after a 142-day deployment to North America for her most important series of sea trials to date.

It was also a voyage of discovery for HMS Astute which was tried and tested as never before – and she came through with flying colours.



She spent 77 days at sea, 65 alongside, and was inspected by 18 stars worth of American and British naval authority – including the First Sea Lord and America's naval equivalent, the Chief of Naval Operations.

She 'battled' against USS New Mexico, America's newest and best Virginia-class hunter attack submarine. She deep dived, fired her Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles... and over the course of the deployment she sailed 16,400 miles.

Her Commanding Officer, Glasgow-born Cdr Iain Breckenridge, 45, was met in the Clyde by his wife, Steph, and she sailed with him the last few miles to the Coulport side of HM Naval Base Clyde.

He said: "We are looking forward now to a bright future – this is a submarine of tremendous capability."

Of the deployment, which saw them visit the giant US Naval Base in Kings Bay, Georgia, Cdr Breckenridge said: "We met and surpassed every expectation. She is just better than any other submarine I have ever been on."

"Astute is still on trial and she is first of class which always brings its own problems but we are beginning to look beyond those problems and see the promise."

"We fired off four Tomahawks, aimed at a corner of Eglin Air Force Base to test for accuracy and we fired six Spearfish torpedoes, including the first salvo firing by a British submarine for 15 years."

"Our sonar is fantastic and I have never before experienced holding a submarine at the range we were holding USS New Mexico. The Americans were utterly taken aback, blown away with what they were seeing."

Astute's captain, whose first submarine was diesel-boat Olympus, basically a redesign of WW2 technology, said: "This is the future – Astute is on its way – and she is still a trials boat."

The oldest man on board, coxswain CPO John Adam, 50, said: "To have achieved what we achieved is a very significant milestone. The whole world was watching us and we did it."

"To serve on a boat like this in the twilight of my career has actually been the highlight of my career."

From the oldest to the youngest man on the 7,800-tonne boat, stoker Jonathon Ball, 19, from Ballyclare in Northern Ireland, who only signed up in January of last year. Astute is his first submarine and the deployment marked his first trip to America.

"I volunteered for this because it was the bigger challenge and submarines are a lot more interesting than skimmers," he said. "America was just great."

Astute will never need refuelling. Her sonar can track ships 3,000 miles away and her missiles have a target range of 1,200 miles – with accuracy measured in metres.

Not only that, naval command in Britain can re-programme the missiles in mid-flight and aim for another target, even if the submarine is thousands of miles away.

Next in line for her is a Base Maintenance Period at Faslane, before returning to sea later in the year for more trials.

Cdr Breckenridge said: "She is one awesome piece of kit – and I am very proud of the fellowship that has formed in a very fine crew."

Picture: LA(Phot) Paul Halliwell, FRPU North





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Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow, FRPU West

Vigilant era resumes, Vengeance deferred

HOWEVER large Britain's ultimate weapon is, it's still not big enough to accommodate all 224 souls currently assigned to the awesome fighting machine that is HMS Vigilant.

The crew of the Navy's third ballistic missile submarine formed up on the casing to mark the conclusion of arguably the biggest engineering task in the Senior Service – save actually building one of these 16,000-ton leviathans.

Vigilant is beginning the long road back to deterrent patrols after three and a half years away from the front line undergoing a £300m mid-career revamp in Devonport.

She emerges from that revamp – officially a Long Overhaul Period (Refuel) – effectively as a new boat inside. In all, 26,000 items were removed from the V-boat and overhauled or replaced, 400 systems aboard thoroughly tested. Externally 32,000 litres of paint (enough to fill the fuel tanks of more than 550 Ford Focus cars) were applied to Vigilant's 491ft hull.

"She's been fully stripped out – every nut and bolt polished, and replaced shiny and new. It's probably the biggest job of its kind in Europe – it's absolutely massive," said Vigilant's Executive Officer Lt Cdr 'Freddie' Fox.

Indeed, it has taken a dedicated team of some 2,000 experts from the Royal Navy, MOD and Babcock, and 2.3 million man hours to prepare Vigilant for the second half of her active life.

The refuelling of her nuclear reactor will power the boat well into the mid-2020s.

Vigilant arrived at the specialist refit complex in Devonport in the autumn of 2008, refuelling was completed in November 2010 and waters lapped around her hull once more in June 2011, since when she's undergone thorough testing ahead of sea trials this spring and her return to Faslane.

Her first period of trials lasting nearly four months will eventually take her to the USA, where she'll launch a dummy Trident missile – each V-boat must do so at least once following a refit...

...which will be a novelty to some aboard, but not sonar expert Lt Dean Ingram. He's been aboard all three of Vigilant's sisters (Vanguard, Vengeance and Victorious) when they've carried out a test firing. He's also served aboard all four of the V-boats' predecessors, the R-class which completed their patrols in the mid-90s.

In fact, among the wardroom alone on Vigilant there's a wealth of experience. Only six of the 24-strong officer cadre aboard haven't come up through the ranks (among those former ratings is Commanding Officer Cdr Mark Lister, whose application papers to join the Navy were signed back in 1978 by one James Magennis VC, fabled WW2 submariner who sank a Japanese cruiser in an X-craft).

"We're possibly the most experienced wardroom in the Royal Navy," says Lt Cdr Fox (laying down the gauntlet to other boats or ships...). "There was a joke going around



● First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope chats with one of Vigilant's senior rates as the boat's Commanding Officer Cdr Mark Lister looks on during the rededication ceremony

Picture: LA(Phot) Rob Gillies, FRPU West

during refit that we'd had a stairlift fitted..."

From the old and bold to the young. It fell to the very youngest man aboard, 19-year-old ET Sam Magowan, to help Cdr Lister's wife Susan cut the rededication cake at the ceremony formally welcoming Vigilant's return to the fold of the Fleet.

Guest of honour (and a submariner himself) was First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope who joined Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Martin Poll, ship's sponsor Lady Frere, Babcock Chief Executive Archie Bethell and Rolls-Royce Submarine Programme Director David Orr plus ex-Vigilant COs, friends and family at the fold of the Fleet, to which the Band of HM Royal Marines Scotland provided the appropriate music.

Admiral Stanhope told those gathered on the Devonport parade ground: "It is a moment to recognise the high degree of innovative thinking, technological skill and collaborative endeavour that exists between industry and the Ministry of Defence."

Getting Vigilant out of the large No.5 Basin, into the Hamoaze and out into Plymouth Sound is particularly demanding – and restrictive. If the wind is stronger than 10kts, for example, she won't be departing.

So to practise the challenging manoeuvre, the boat's navigational team plus tug drivers headed to Wageningen, near Arnhem, in the Netherlands, home to the MARIN simulator. Although the Royal Navy possesses bridge simulators which can replicate numerous scenarios at sea, it does not have one where tug crews and a ship's company can train side-by-side.

As Vigilant begins the long process of taking her place on the right of the line again, her younger sister Vengeance has bowed out of service for the same demanding overhaul.

After 11 years of providing the nation's round-the-clock strategic deterrent, the fourth and final Vanguard-class nuclear submarine has arrived in Plymouth to begin her LOP(R).

To mark the end of the first chapter of the life of the Faslane-based boat, a 'de-dedication' ceremony was held to thank all those who serve in her – and their families who support them.

Around 150 family and friends met at the Clyde Off-Site Centre in Rhu for the ceremony, with the boat's sponsor, Lady Robertson, also attending.

Witnessing the ceremony was Commodore of the Faslane Flotilla, Cdre Stephen Garrett and many former commanding officers of the vessel, while soundtrack to proceedings came from the Band of HM Royal Marines Scotland.

After the ceremony, the crew, VIPs and guests travelled the short distance to HM Naval Base Clyde's Supermess where the event was marked by a cake-cutting ceremony.

The youngest sailor on board HMS Vengeance, 19-year-old ET Shane McPherson, was given the honour along with Diane Blythe, the wife of the current Commanding Officer.

Events drew to a close with a ship's company dinner and dance at Scotland's national football stadium, Hampden Park.

Lady Robertson and her husband, former Secretary of State for Defence Lord George Robertson, were in attendance along with around 180 fellow guests.



WITH Liver birds looking down from their namesake building, a Mersey tug shoots a traditional salute with its fire hose to the warship which has carried Liverpool's name proudly for the past 30 years.

This was the last chance the people of Liverpool had to see their ship as HMS Liverpool departed the city for the final time.

A five-day visit to Merseyside by the veteran Type 42 destroyer concluded with the sound of gunfire echoing on both sides of the great river.

In celebration of her 30-year exceptionally-close affiliation with Merseyside, the Portsmouth-based warship first saluted Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead, where she was 'born' more than three decades ago, before turning to fire a five-gun salute in front of the Royal Liver Building.

Crowds gathered on the Wirral waterfront and a mile away in Liverpool to witness the occasion – as they had done throughout the Crazy Red Chicken's curtain call on the Mersey.

Three quarters of the destroyer's 240-strong ship's company paraded through the streets for the last time – an honour permitted them thanks to the Freedom of the City – ending with Lord Lieutenant, Dame Lorna Muirhead, and Liverpool's Lord Mayor, Cllr Frank Prendergast, taking the salute at Exchange Flags outside Liverpool town hall.

There was applause and cheers of thanks from Liverpudlians who broke away from their daily routine to show their support for the sailors.

That support meant a great deal to all, not least the hometown sailors in Liverpool's ship's company such as PO Leanne Ainscough.

"The march was absolutely brilliant – going through the city and seeing people lining the streets

is something I won't forget. This is a really fitting farewell to the ship in her home town on a great visit, the decommissioning ceremony is going to have to be very special to top this."

The sailors were also invited on to the hallowed turf of Anfield ahead of Liverpool's home clash with Arsenal for a special presentation (although the Reds lost 2-1) as part of a weekend of events which also saw thousands of people file up the gangway at the destroyer's berth at the Cruise Liner Terminal for a last look around – and a chance to chat to the sailors.

The ship's company aboard have rarely been out of the headlines over the past 12 months, chiefly thanks to Liverpool's deeds off Libya which saw her fire more than 200 rounds from her main 4.5in gun – and become the first Royal Navy ship in 30 years to come under enemy fire.

"This has been an uplifting and, at times, emotional

visit to the ship's spiritual home," said Liverpool's final Commanding Officer, Cdr Colin Williams.

"We have been thoroughly overwhelmed by the kindness and interest of Merseysiders and humbled by the support shown to crew and ship alike.

"We could not have wished for a better farewell celebration for HMS Liverpool's service.

"She has an exceptional Merseyside pedigree and this visit is one which will live long in my memory and that of my crew. We are extremely proud to have called Liverpool our home."

Although there were fewer than four weeks left in Liverpool's operational life when she visited the Mersey, the destroyer had one final duty to perform before decommissioning in Portsmouth; the destroyer headed to Norway to join HMS Illustrious and Bulwark among other Allied ships on Exercise Cold Response (see pages 22-27). She was due to make her final entry to Portsmouth flying her decommissioning pennant as *Navy News* went to press.



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Artist's impression courtesy of Rolls-Royce

Super RAS rig takes shape

TOWERING above Torpoint any day now should be a 25-metre (82ft) mast which will help to usher in a revolution in the way the Navy sustains itself at sea in the long-run.

The mast (tall enough to warrant navigational warning lights for passing aircraft...) is the key to the Heavy Replenishment At Sea (HRAS) complex, a £26m centre which will more than double the speed of the long-standing art of RASing... and be the envy of the world.

For the past two decades a mock-up of part of a Type 22 frigate (now all out of service) and auxiliary a few metres away across a chasm has served the Navy and RFA well.

What it cannot do, however, is meet the needs of the Navy of tomorrow. The Type 45s now debuting on operations are double the size of their aged predecessors, the next-generation carriers Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales are three times the size of HMS Illustrious and Ocean.

Size matters. The hydrodynamic/physical effects of two large ships, one 65,000 tonnes, one 30,000+ steaming a parallel course at speed in rough weather, means that 55 metres (180ft) is deemed to be a safe distance for a RAS.

A 55m gap between, say, a Type 23, and a Rover or Ruler is considered the outer limit of the distance between two ships RASing (the lower limit is about 30m or 100ft, the optimum is 36m – 118ft).

At present ships resupplying transfer no more than two tonnes by wire on a single load – equivalent to a pallet of around 20 rounds for a 4.5in main gun.

The aim of HRAS is to transfer five tonnes at a time. Twenty-five such loads in an hour. Continuously for five hours. That's one pallet every two minutes and 24 seconds, or 625 tonnes of stores in all.

No Navy in the world possesses such an ability at present. Even with fully-honed teams on both RN and RFA ships, the best you could hope for presently would be 200-250 tonnes.

This increased speed of transfer is key to operations. The less time it takes to resupply, the more it can carry out its mission. In addition, a warship is possibly at its most vulnerable when replenishing – cutting the time to a minimum cuts the danger.

Cuts the danger to the ship overall, that is. RASing itself remains one of the most dangerous manoeuvres at sea.

"If you were to tell health and safety you wanted to transfer food, stores, ammunition, sailing two ships together in bad weather in busy shipping lanes, they'd probably have an aneurism," says CPO Mark White.

Which is why something like the existing rig or HRAS are vital to him and shipmates at the RN Seamanship Training Unit.

"RASing is our bread and butter, and this new training rig is awesome. A quantum leap. For our branch, these are good, no, exciting times.

"Very often in the world of seamanship the only way to train is to do the thing for real. RASing is a dangerous manoeuvre – transferring ammunition and stores between two ships, steaming through busy waters – so anything like this facility which makes it as safe as possible has got to be good."

Although the mock-up ships on the HRAS are not on hydraulics, a hi-tech computer-driven jigger winch can simulate the motion of the sea and its effect on the load being transferred – bringing added realism.

"This will be the best replenishment at sea training facility in the world – as close to the real thing as possible," explained Lee Gristwood, project leader for Rolls-Royce.

Given the revolutionary nature of the HRAS system, it will undergo 18 months of assessment and trials by the Rolls-Royce team before the RN gets its hands on it in the spring 2014.

£50m triumph for Victory

HMS Victory, the most famous historic warship in the world, is to be transferred to the National Museum of the Royal Navy with a £50 million endowment which will safeguard and preserve her for generations to come.

Nelson's flagship will pass to the custody of the HMS Victory Preservation Trust, a charitable trust set up with a £25 million donation from the Gosling Foundation, matched by an equal amount given by the Ministry of Defence.

The initiative paves the way for HMS Victory to receive further charitable donations.

Victory, the only surviving example of an 18th-Century ship of the line, will continue as a commissioned warship with a Commanding Officer and a ship's company, open to visitors and flying the White Ensign in her Portsmouth dry dock.

She will remain the flagship of the Second Sea Lord and subsequently become the flagship of the First Sea Lord.

Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, Second Sea Lord, said: "I am absolutely delighted with this initiative. It will significantly enhance the way in which Victory can be preserved for the benefit of the nation and future generations, while retaining her links with the Royal Navy."

"She will be in the hands of an organisation which will look after her unique status and has all the professional experience that her continued and enhanced preservation requires."

"On behalf of the Service, I am immensely grateful to Sir Donald Gosling and the Gosling Foundation for their generosity in making this possible."

He added: "The ship has been at the heart of the Royal Navy for centuries and is symbolic of the fighting ethos and values of the Service. These are as important and relevant in current times, for example in Afghanistan, Libya and the Gulf, as they were at the time of Trafalgar."

Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, Chairman of the National Museum of the Royal Navy, said: "This is fantastic news. The National Museum of the Royal Navy is the Navy Board's adviser on naval heritage and therefore we are the ideal charity to oversee the Trust that will be looking after this world-famous historic warship."

Admiral Band said: "We certainly never underestimate the place HMS Victory occupies in the national consciousness."

"The ship, the sail, the wood to repair her and her collection of historic artefacts will all be transferred to the museum. The ship will remain open to visitors as a charitable trust."

"This will ensure people will engage with the story of our navy and understand its unique impact in shaping not only Britain but the modern world we know."

Admiral Band added: "This transfer emphatically does not open the way for inappropriate commercialism of this ship. She will remain a warship flying the White Ensign and will behave as such."

"We will remain true to her ethos as a unique and irreplaceable cultural icon, and partnerships will be brokered in a safe and sensitive manner."

He added: "The MOD has passed its jewel in the crown to the museum for safekeeping and we the museum will not fail in our duty to secure the long-term future of this ship, to oversee the most significant conservation programme ever undertaken and to ensure that Victory will remain at the centre of the Royal Navy and the history of the nation for generations to come."

The maintenance of the ship was given a significant boost last October when BAE Systems Surface Ships were awarded a £16 million contract to support HMS Victory.

The contract involves the most extensive restoration since the ship returned from the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The work will become the responsibility of the new Trust.

A 100-gun first-rate ship of the line, Victory was launched in Chatham in 1765. Her crowning place in history came 40 years later when she won fame as Vice Admiral Lord Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar. This resounding triumph for the Royal Navy was instrumental in the defeat of Napoleon, leading to Britain's control of the seas for over 100 years.

With the demise of the Navy's wooden walls, she languished as a training vessel anchored in Portsmouth Harbour. In the 1920s her future was secured for the nation by the Society for Nautical Research when she was brought into dry dock in Portsmouth Naval Base. She was restored to the condition in which she would have fought under Nelson and opened to the public.

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson



A bridge not too far

THE Princess Royal joined schoolchildren aboard HMS Cattistock in Poole Harbour as the minehunter helped the Dorset town celebrate the opening of a £37m bridge.

As it was road resurfacing work meant the royal guest was the sole person to drive across the Twin Sails bridge – but that did not prevent ceremonies marking its completion taking place.

Princess Anne boarded the Hunt-class minehunter at Town Quay, joining local dignitaries for the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the event.

The Portsmouth-based minehunter's weekend in Dorset opened with a two-hour-long event accompanied by music from, *inter alia*, the Band of HM Royal Marines Collingwood. Tickets for the event sold out – and a large crowd lined the quay to witness proceedings.

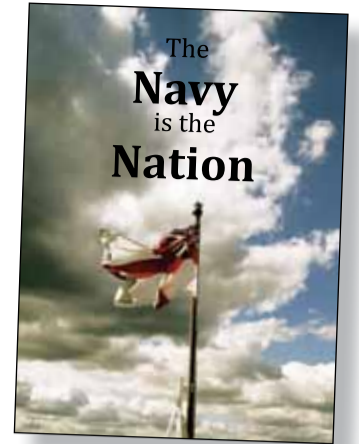
Cattistock's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Andy

Ingham and his ship's company hosted a formal lunch for invited guests – the ship's affiliated namesake village is just outside Dorchester – before inviting local students and cadets on board.

The highlight of the minehunter's visit was opening the gangway to the general public for two days, allowing locals to learn about the work of the ship, her 40-plus sailors and career opportunities in the RN. Hundreds of members of the public took advantage of the open invitation.

The penultimate day of the visit to Poole saw the Princess Royal and her host, Naval Regional Commander for West England, Cdre Jamie Miller, embark on Cattistock for the bridge ceremony, while the public turned out in force in glorious late winter sunshine to watch proceedings from the quayside.

It was the second time the ship had visited Poole in ten months.



The Navy is the Nation

How the Navy shaped our Island story

AS A nation, do we understand the role the Royal Navy has played in our history?

To readers of *Navy News*, the answer is probably 'yes.'

But the brains behind a major conference to be held in Portsmouth this month believe many British people are astonishingly ignorant about the maritime history which has shaped our nation.

Simon Williams and Matthew Chorley, both military historians, are the organisers behind the two-day conference, *The Navy is the Nation*, which takes place at the Royal Naval Museum on April 18-19.

It has two purposes – to celebrate Britain's historical relationship with the sea and to try to address the problem of 'sea-blindness.'

Simon Williams explained: "It seemed appropriate to hold the conference in a year that marks the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the 30th Anniversary of the Falklands War and the 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812 – but which has no traditional fleet review."

He added: "Our other motive is that maritime and naval history is shamefully lacking in the national curriculum both at school and university."

"The Education Secretary and notable historians bemoan the patchwork nature (one week the Tudors, the next, the Nazis) of history teaching in schools."

"There is no better way to give children a sense of national identity and a greater understanding of why Britain is as it is, than to study Britain's historical relationship with the sea."

The conference is to be held at the Royal Naval Museum, with an opening speech by the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope.

The two days will bring together many leading academics in the maritime field, including Profs Andrew Lambert and Eric Grove, and the author Captain Richard Woodman, an expert on the Merchant Navy and maritime trade.

Among those chairing the sessions will be Admiral Sir Jonathon Band and Vice Admiral Sir Jeremy Blackham.

Simon Williams said: "Studying how Britain has used the sea explains why a small nation was able to control a global Commonwealth."

"It explains why the United States exists; why there is never enough room to 'swing a cat'; why the British Monarch is also head of state of far-off and remote islands; why something is 'first rate' and why we get 'three sheets to the wind' on a Friday night."

He added: "The Royal Navy has for centuries provided this nation with the security she takes for granted."

"It has defined our struggles in countless wars; secured resources to ensure we survive as we always have done, and in ensuring this security, has never been on the losing side in some 500 years."

There is still a handful of tickets remaining for the two-day conference at a cost of £70 – contact Simon on williams2424@googlemail.com

For those unable to attend, Simon and Matthew hope to publish a book of all the debates and conclusions in due course.

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THE RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight might boast the nation's most famous fighter and bomber, but it doesn't possess a single jet.

Nor, for that matter, do the RAF fly the only British piston-engined aircraft to down a jet. For both of those – the Hawker Sea Hawk and Fairey Sea Fury respectively – you have to go to Somerset and the Royal Navy Historic Flight.

The flight probably doesn't enjoy the same national level of recognition as its Air Force counterpart.

But the mission is the same: to uphold the memory and legacy of those who have taken to the skies, in its case either in the Fleet Air Arm or the Royal Naval Air Service in 103 years of British maritime aviation.

It does so courtesy of half a dozen legendary aircraft, a dedicated team of 16 naval aviators, ground crew and fund-raisers, currently headed by experienced Harrier pilot Lt Cdr Ian Sloan.

He's one of seven pilots who give up their spare time to fly with the Historic Flight up and down the land.

Lt Cdr Sloan is the sole qualified Sea Hawk pilot on the flight's books – but sadly you won't see the graceful jet in the skies during 2012.

The fighter, which spent five years on the front line and has been on the display circuit with the flight for the past 30 years as the world's sole airworthy Sea Hawk, is sitting in the hangar at RNAS Yeovilton awaiting a report on the state of her Rolls-Royce Nene engine.

To ensure the Ark Royal and Bulwark veteran continues to grace UK skies, in the long term, she will ultimately require a replacement engine.

Which brings us nicely on to funding. The Historic Flight draws its money directly from the MOD, from display appearance fees, from sponsors such as BAE Systems, AgustaWestland and Rolls-Royce, and benefits in particular from the work of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust (which also supports the FAA Museum and looks after the memorial church in Yeovilton).

The Trust aims to raise at least £300,000 a year just to keep the flight's aircraft serviceable.

It's an impressive figure – but when big jobs are needed it's quickly devoured.

An overhaul for a Swordfish's Bristol Pegasus engine will set you back around £90,000, while a new set of wings for the biplane costs around £1m.

There are currently two Stringbags on the flight's

inventory. 2011 saw a welcome return to the display scene for North Atlantic convoy veteran LS326 after more than a decade out of action.

She'll be appearing on the display circuit again this year – accompanied, fingers crossed, by her older sister, W5856, towards the end of the season.

The goal is to have both torpedo bombers fully serviceable for 2013 so they can take part in 70th anniversary commemorations of the Battle of the Atlantic.

The flight showcases two Sea Furies – the final piston-engined fighter to serve with the Navy; the Fury saw action in Korea, where Lt 'Hoagy' Carmichael shot down a Russian MiG-15 jet.

Sea Fury T20 G-RNHF should be back at Yeovilton about now after her annual 'service'; following pilot refresher training she's lined up for a season's performances.

She'll be joined, hopefully, later in the summer by FB11, which has flown with the flight for the past dozen years. Before her active career ended in 1961, she had flown from HMS Vengeance with 802 Naval Air Squadron.

Weather and serviceability permitting, all the aforementioned aircraft can be seen at air shows around Britain each year.

The only place to catch the final RNHF aircraft

is in the skies of Somerset.

Chipmunk T.10 WK608 doesn't appear on the display circuit – the veteran two-seater (only retired from RN service in the early 90s) is used all year round to train the flight's pilots and maintain their currency.

It falls to a team of eight engineers, fitters and mechanics – mostly ex-Fleet Air Arm – to keep these great aircraft airborne. Collectively they have 333 years' experience of working with aircraft.

The Historic Flight does not, of course, go back that far. It traces its history back to 1960 when its first aircraft, Swordfish LS326, was donated. When it was joined by Sea Fury FB11 in 1971 and Fairey Firefly AS5 WB271 the following year, the decision was taken to formally establish the flight.

Sadly, the Firefly was lost in an accident while displaying at Duxford in the summer of 2003, killing both its crew, Bill Murton and Neil Rix.

The two men are among the 6,000-plus naval aviators killed since 1909 – and whose deeds continue to be championed by the team's ongoing efforts.

The 2012 display season will shortly be announced at www.royalnavyhistoricflight.org.uk and you can support the fund-raising efforts to keep the vintage aircraft airborne at www.fnht.co.uk.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper



Legends of the air

IWM PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

WAVE your hands in the air if you're on a record-breaking patrol enforcing an oil embargo off the coast of Africa...

Our random dip into the vast holdings of the Imperial War Museum's photographic archive takes us to April 1966 and the Indian Ocean, where HMS Eagle was the latest Royal Navy vessel on the recently-established Beira Patrol.

Here, a sizeable proportion of the 2,500-strong ship's company enjoys a spot of physical training on the great carrier's flight deck between the Wessexes, Gannets, Sea Vixens and Buccaneers taking a rare break from the embargo mission.

Eagle had departed Singapore on the penultimate day of February to relieve her younger sister Ark Royal.

The Beira Patrol was established late in the winter of 1965-66 as tensions between Britain and the newly-independent Rhodesia reached crisis point.

When the colony's white minority broke away from the UK in late 1965 – and ignored Whitehall's preconditions for independence (racial equality and with it equal political representation for the country's black populace), there was international condemnation.

The United Nations passed a Resolution calling for sanctions against Rhodesia – and the Empire struck back, trying to enforce an oil embargo.

Some of the land-locked country's oil came by land from South Africa. But much also came via pipeline from the port of Beira in Mozambique.

Using RAF land-based surveillance aircraft and Royal Navy warships, the embargo – which quickly became known as the Beira Patrol – sought to intercept tankers bound for the port, and prevent them discharging their cargo if it was



intended for Rhodesia.

It was a particularly challenging mission – when Eagle arrived on station her aircraft were charged with monitoring shipping in an area of more than 150,000 square miles (one and a half times the size of Britain).

It meant round-the-clock aerial operations – some 20 sorties were launched daily from her flight deck – including the first air-to-air refuelling of her jets on active missions. In April 1966, her aircrews notched up more than 1,400 flying hours.

And, save for the odd success

(two tankers were sighted on the first month of Eagle's patrol for example), the Beira mission was largely unsuccessful.

By the time it was wound down in 1975 (by which stage the powerful force mustered in 1966 had generally been reduced to a solitary frigate

thanks to the RN's other global commitments) it was reckoned that the whole operation had cost £100m – upwards of £650m today – with 76 warships involved throughout the nine-year mission.

And for all that effort, just 47 oil tankers were intercepted –

and all but five of those were allowed to continue on their way.

Moreover, just months into the beginning of the patrol, Whitehall reckoned fuel rationing in Rhodesia already negated the effects of its blockade.

What the Beira Patrol did do – particularly in its early days – was demonstrate Britain's disapproval of the breakaway nation. It was morally in the right.

As for Eagle, she returned to Singapore on May 10 1966 after 71 days at sea non-stop – at the time the longest continuous patrol in peacetime. In all, her aircraft had flown more than 1,800 sorties and sighted 767 ships, 116 of them tankers.

Whilst her Commanding Officer Capt John Roxburgh was delighted by Eagle's record off Beira, expressing his pride in "such men, such machines and such a ship", not everyone in the Indian Ocean was quite so delighted by the intense aerial activity.

The merchantman Stirlingshire complained by signal of being constantly overflown:

*The holocausts of noise
and fire
Have thrice disturbed our
hours of sleep
So please desist while we
retire
And on the deck your
planes please keep.*

To which the carrier responded:

*Apologies for noise and fire
Which obviously have raised
your ire
But oil embargo we must
keep
Regardless of the need to
sleep.*

■ THIS photograph (A 035023) – 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.

Fish 'n' ships



LITTLE ducks and all that.

Admittedly they're not in a row, but *en echelon*.

Nearest the camera is HMS Severn, then her sister Mersey and the final ship in the fishery protection triumvirate, HMS Tyne.

For a few days every year, the trio and the men and women responsible for monitoring fishing vessels around the UK converge on their home port of Portsmouth for conferences ashore and exercises and manoeuvres off the Isle of Wight.

Invariably, conferences don't provide eye-catching imagery (lots of people in a room looking pensive normally...)...

...Whereas squadron exercises are rather more appealing.

The exercise began as all three ships, returning from fishery protection patrols around the UK, closed each other at the rendezvous point off Sandown Bay just before sunrise on the first morning.

Falling into formation they wasted no time in commencing the first in a series of intricate manoeuvres with Severn directing the rest of the squadron into

a co-ordinated anchorage at Spithead.

Safely anchoring three ships in close proximity is no simple task and it posed an early challenge for navigating officers and their bridge teams.

Once clear of the anchorage it was Mersey's opportunity to take the lead for a series of Officer of the Watch Manoeuvres - with the trio moving perfectly in time in a series of coordinated movements at set distances from each other.

Zig-zagging and weaving her way at the head of the formation, Mersey guided her sister ships into open water for a photo opportunity with a Lynx helicopter from 815 Naval Air Squadron and on to the serial that was certainly to make the most 'impact' during the day.

While all three River-class ships have guns (one 20mm, a couple of machine-guns), the nature of their day job means they don't often fire them.

So the squadron exercise provides a perfect opportunity for the weapons directors and their crews to dust off the anti-flash and test their sharp-shooting skills.

Tyne took control as the three ships

engaged in coordinated gunnery, combined with a series of complex manoeuvres around a floating target.

After an enjoyable - and certainly worthwhile - day all that was left was for Mersey, flying her recently-awarded Fleet Efficiency Pennant as number one ship in the 'Cod Squad', to resume command and lead her sisters back into Portsmouth for a coordinated entry, marking the shift from the sea-based element of the exercise to events to take place ashore.

On the second day of the get-together, commanding and executive officers met representatives from the squadron staff for their annual command conference. Marine Enforcement Officers from all three ships held a similar discussion event with visiting staff from the Marine Management Organisation, which enjoys overall responsibility for the enforcement of fisheries legislation in the UK.

Meanwhile, the rest of the three ships' companies could be found on the sports field.

Rivalry on the football pitch was fierce; after a number of close contests,

Mersey claimed the winner's spot with Severn finishing second and Tyne a close third.

The focus then shifted to 'back-pass' - a team sport vaguely resembling rounders but requiring the whole team to assemble on a mat and pass the ball over heads and between legs in an impressive feat of coordination in order to get an opposition player out.

Countless unexpected displays of athletic prowess later and the tournament came to a close with Mersey taking overall spoils.

Lt Samira Pashneh-Tala, Mersey's wardroom representative, said: "Whilst the exercise at sea was challenging in a professional sense, the sports field is the ideal arena in which to bring out the teamwork and determination we rely on so much in small ships."

"It also makes a nice change to see everyone enjoy themselves out of uniform after such a busy few months."

With 'work' over, it was time for the squadron to relax and put rivalries aside as all personnel came together for the annual 'Fish Ball'.

Held at the Royal Maritime Club in

Portsmouth's Queen Street, the ball is an opportunity for all ranks and rates to get together, meet up with old friends, and above all, let their hair down for an evening.

Guests were treated to a three-course meal and live entertainment featuring contemporary classics from the Frank Sinatra back catalogue as well as a DJ and dancing into the early hours. (Photos are, sadly, not available...)

"Overall, the exercise was a great success," said Lt Rob Lamb, Mersey's executive officer.

"The ships proved they could work together effectively and that even in evolutions not routinely part of their daily business, they were still able to perform to the high standard expected within the Royal Navy."

"The shore-side aspects were of great use, providing an important opportunity to renew the connection between the Marine Management Organisation and the RN who work on 'the front line' of fishery protection - and, of course, for everyone to relax in a more informal setting at a very enjoyable ball."

Picture: LA(Phot) Al Macleod, RNAS Yeovilton



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● A senior NCO watches as the jumpers leap into the Med and (above right) a RIB from the RN's Gibraltar Squadron races to pick up one of the parachutists
Pictures: Cpl Al Crowe, BFHQ Gibraltar

Shooting tsars turn 'chuting stars

WE COULD not have put it any better than the cargo ship *Belgian Reefer*.

This is indeed 'cool'. It's also vital to the ability of Royal Navy frigates and destroyers to pummel targets ashore with their main 4.5in guns.

These are the troops of 148 (Meiktila) Commando Forward Observation Battery Royal Artillery leaping into the Mediterranean in the shadow of the Rock.

The naval gunfire support teams and naval gunfire liaison officers are required to direct and co-ordinate the barrages from the guns of the Fleet – or NATO warships – anywhere in the world, jumping by day or night, carrying equipment.

It was thanks to them that more than 550 rounds of high explosive shells crashed down with pinpoint accuracy on to Colonel Gaddafi's military machine during last year's civil war in Libya.

The experts could have been parachuted into the Med to be picked up by HMS Liverpool, Iron Duke or Sutherland (which all fired their guns in anger) – but as it was, they didn't.

But it's a skill which needs to be maintained, so 20 personnel from the battle-proven formation spent five days climbing into the back of an RAF Hercules... and then jumping out of it on Exercise Medsplash (no explanation needed...).

They joined members of Fleet Diving Unit 1 and the Submarine Parachute Assistance Group – the latter, commonly known as SPAG, are at six hours' to go anywhere in the world to leap into the ocean to help stricken submariners.

For the 148 Battery troops, Medsplash gave experienced observers the chance to refresh their parachuting skills – and for NGLO rookies (who are actually Royal Artillerymen, mostly commando-trained, and employed by the Navy) the opportunity to complete the five requisite jumps to qualify.

Leaping into the ocean is about as tricky as it gets – jumpers must release the parachute at the exact moment of impact to prevent being dragged along.

Once in the water, the chuting stars (sorry) and their kit (in a waterproof container) should be quickly picked up by a small boat whereupon they're taken to the mother ship – or ferried ashore if they're conducting observations on land.

"The parachuting itself involves kitting up in dry suits with life jackets, donning parachute harness and reserve, and packing and attaching equipment in a waterproof container," explains Lt Col Tim Wood RA.

"Approaching water, the key is to release the 'chute on hitting the water to prevent any chance of it dragging the parachutist."

"The drysuits – and lifejackets – support the parachutist as he gets the equipment off and recovers his equipment, and with a bit of luck, he is picked up by a small boat as soon as possible.

Lt Col Wood continues: "In the balmy waters of the Mediterranean, bobbing around for a while is no hardship – but in the cooler waters off Scotland and Norway, this can be critical.

"Finally, depending on role, the parachutist moves to shore to conduct operations, or is recovered to the ship, where like James Bond, he rips off his dry suit (hopefully not leaking), puts his wet boots back on, and proceeds to tasks."

What's the experience like? Well... as one of the jumpers put it... "If you don't like big expanses of deep water, and being prepared to jump out of perfectly serviceable aircraft in the dark, to float by yourself hoping that the Royal Navy will pick you up from a high seas swell, this is not for you..."

For the forward observers, the chance to train around the Rock made Medsplash "a great exercise, making best use of time, resources and opportunity, and another chance for the highly-trained operators

of 148 Battery and the liaison officers to demonstrate their capability," said Lt Col Wood. "You never know where it might be needed next."

Which is pretty much identical to the conclusion drawn by the SPAGers, who ran the overall exercise...

The assistance group is always at six hours' notice to take-off, twenty-four-hours-a-day, all-year-round, while at RAF Brize Norton, there is always a C-130 Hercules aircraft available in the event of a submarine emergency.

Sixty SPAG members flew to Gib to jump into the bay – sometimes carrying out three jumps a day, and like the spotters, there was a mix of experienced parachutists as well as half a dozen novices.

The team needs to learn how to fly as low as 1,000 feet (305m) over a precise target, with parachutists jumping from the tailgate. "Gibraltar is ideal for this kind of training," said Lt Jan Ziolo, SPAG's Officer Commanding.

"We get huge support from Headquarters British Forces, the weather and the sea states are usually good, and, of course, we can achieve a very fast turnaround from the sea back to the airfield. We don't waste any time at all."

CPO Neil Stevenson, the exercise co-ordinator, added: "We plan to come back in July to rehearse the other part of the operation – that of building a floating triage and medical centre.

"This is the first time I have ever organised this exercise and I am very happy with the way that it has gone."

■ Royal Navy volunteers from the warfare branch are always required by 148 (Meiktila) Commando Forward Observation Battery RA. Interested applicants in the first instance should consult RN DIN (2010DIN01-205), and contact 148 Bty at RM Poole on 01202 20 2276 or via DII at **3CDOX-29 CDO-148 BTY CPO CIS** (CPO Glenister) for further information.



Picture: LA(Phot) Martin Carney, HMS Bulwark

Premiere event for the premier ship

THE thing about being a sailor on the nation's flagship is that you never know when you might meet a former Harry Potter star at a movie premiere in a foreign capital...

One of HMS Bulwark's ship's company is flanked by actors Rupert Grint (*on the right*), known to most people under 30 as Ron Weasley from the hugely-successful wizard franchise, and relative newcomer Lachlan Nieboer, who's previously featured in *Downton Abbey* and Dr Who-spinoff *Torchwood*, in Oslo's Folketeateret at the premiere of multi-million-pound WW2 movie *Into the White*.



The war film brings a true story from the German invasion of Norway to the big screen, with Rupert playing the part of an RAF gunner and Lachlan stepping into the role of a Royal Marines captain.

In April 1940 an RAF fighter was forced to crash land after downing a German bomber over central Norway between Trondheim and Bergen.

After initially taking pot shots at each other, the surviving crew on both sides were forced to take refuge from the elements in the same cabin (think *Hell in the Pacific*... but with Brits and Germans in a hut surrounded by snow...).

With Bulwark in Oslo as she made her way from the Baltic to the Arctic for Exercise Cold Response (*see page 22*), her captain and a couple of dozen members of the assault ship's company were invited to provide a suitable military backdrop to the event, lining the red carpet.

When not attending film premieres, Bulwark has spent the past month or so training around the Baltic, flying the flag for Blighty and taking part in ceremonial events.

Perhaps the most moving of the latter came at one of the most hallowed sites on Polish soil: the Westerplatte in the Polish port of Gdansk, once the site of an ammunition depot, today dominated by a huge monument in the form of an inverted sword with only the hilt and handle visible.

It was there, at 4.45am on Friday September 1 1939 that the first shots of the second global conflagration of the 20th Century were fired when the guns of the German battleship Schleswig-Holstein roared, heralding a week-long assault on the Westerplatte peninsula and its garrison of around 225 Polish troops.

They held out in the face of infantry assaults, naval bombardment and Luftwaffe attacks until the exhausted defenders surrendered. For 15 dead, they inflicted 30 times as many casualties on their attackers.

More than 70 years after that bravery – likened by many Poles to the stand by the Spartans at Thermopylae – Bulwark's senior marine engineer Cdr Nigel Wright laid a wreath on behalf of his shipmates.

Bulwark herself was ten miles away across the Bay of Gdansk in the harbour of Gdynia.

Before arriving in the port, the assault ship was greeted by two Polish frigates – ORP General Kazimierz Pulaski and General Tadeusz Kosciuszko – to practise replenishment at sea manoeuvres; the two host ships also took part in an exercise to shield Bulwark from attack by sea and air, and conducted a short exchange of personnel to experience life aboard a different warship.

Once in Gdynia, the ship was visited by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, who was in Poland to discuss ongoing co-operation with the Polish Navy – as well as Bulwark he toured the host's specialist diver training centre.

Around 4,000 Gdynians braved freezing conditions to queue for hours to tour Bulwark – there's no amphibious assault ship in the Polish Navy's inventory.

And 15 brave Bulwarks took on the challenge thrown down by Ogniw Sopot – the second best rugby team in Poland. Bulwark conceded just shy of 100 points while scoring a consolation try and conversion towards the end of the match.

After passing beneath the 1,600ft central span of the magnificent Øresund Bridge linking Denmark with Sweden, Bulwark negotiated the Kattegat, where she carried out some very useful training with the Swedish marines.

The latter are experts in the use of the CB90 fast combat boat (which is also currently being assessed by the Royal Marines at Instow as part of future landing and assault craft requirements for the future Fleet) and met up with Bulwark off Gothenburg.

The Swedes showed off their 40kt boats – quickly dubbed Swedie Gonzalez by Bulwark's ship's company – racing past the assault ship (top speed 18kts) in a series of combat demonstrations, before slowing down to enter her dock.

And in return, the Royal Marines showed off their small Zodiac raiders – small inflatable boats capable of carrying half a dozen commandos in combat kit at speeds up to 20kts – and in particular its navigational aids. The Swedes were also introduced to English tea (served, of course, out of suitably Union Jack-adorned mugs...).

Next stop the narrow, misty waters of Oslofjord and a berth in the shadow of one of the Norwegian capital's landmarks, the mediaeval Akershus Fortress.

Whilst alongside, the ship hosted an official reception, Capt Burton maintained tradition by calling on the fortress' commandant and laid a wreath to Norway's fallen at a nearby memorial, and Bulwark's teddy bear mascot Prince Bishop continued his globe-trotting adventures.

Aside from posing with stars at the film premiere, the teddy visited the town hall, saw Munch's *The Scream* at the National Gallery, was delighted to meet a myriad of Norwegian bears when they came aboard with youngsters, and was treated to a run ashore (although he – and not a few matelots – balked at the asking price for a beer: between £6.50 and £8).



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Tors of duty

EVEN from the outline you'd guess these men, silhouetted against the Devonshire dusk on a late winter's day, are Royal Marines.

They are. To be precise these are the men of **Zulu Company, 45 Commando**, toiling at a disused quarry on Dartmoor as they train to become the tip of Royal Marines spear.

Right now the Arbroath-based green berets are the UK's Lead Commando Group – and within each of the three groups (40, 42, and 45) companies take it in turn to be the lead unit, ready to deploy around the world at very short notice – hence the very tip of the metaphorical Royal Marines spear.

To sharpen that tip – and to return to the marines' normal realm of amphibious warfare after a demanding six months in Afghanistan – Zulu decamped from RM Condor on the eastern coast of Scotland to Devon and Cornwall for Exercise South-west Sword.

The training began not at sea, but on land and the barren rocks of Foggin Tor, an abandoned quarry about one and a half miles west of Princetown, in the hands of Sgt Richard Jeffrey, Zulu's expert mountain leader, with a day and night refreshing the company's vertical assault skills – roping up, abseiling, scaling using caving ladders and hauling kit.

Those who failed to meet Sgt Jeffrey's high standards were forced to perform star jumps – including company commander Maj Jon Delahay who had to produce 40 such jumps...

The day and night on Dartmoor (which was as wet as ever) was the precursor to amphibious exercises in Plymouth Sound aboard RFA Mounts Bay.

After reacquainting themselves with various forms of landing craft, offshore raiders and inflatable boats, the Zulus came ashore by night at Jennycliff on the eastern shores of Plymouth Sound, just south of Turnchapel.

Scaling the 100m-high steep cliffs – using the skills learned at Foggin Tor – led to an assault on the nearby Staddon Heights ranges, before crossing the Tamar estuary and doing the same at Tregantle Fort, commanding the cliffs over Whitsand Bay.

Both assaults taught the 45 Cdo men valuable lessons – that good planning is vital, that a stealth attack pays dividends, and that amphibious operations are exceedingly difficult.

"There's nothing more detrimental to a bootneck's morale than low tide – except when you combine low tide with considerable surf, a midnight extraction from a flat, sandy beach, and four Offshore Raiding Craft with engine trouble," explained Zulu's Lt James Lindsay.

From South Devon to North: to RM Chivenor and Braunton Burrows, to meet up with 16 Vikings of the Armoured Support Group RM to re-learn the art of getting into and out of the tracked vehicles – and using them on the battlefield, culminating in a company advance with Viking support.

"South-west Sword marks the start of a shift in focus away from the Afghan-centric role towards a more conventional one," said Lt Lindsay.

"Throughout the company – and the unit as a whole – there's now a real desire to return to and reconnect with what makes us Royal Marines Commandos."

While the Zulus, re-learned the art of amphibious warfare, their **X-Ray Company** comrades demonstrated some of the skills learned in

Afghanistan at Strone Camp.

About a mile east of Faslane, just off the Glen Fruin Road, the camp was once home to the Admiralty Hydro Ballistic Research Establishment.

Since the 1980s the disused buildings have been used not for their original purpose, but for modern urban combat training.

The one-time tank building – used to test the hydro-ballistic properties of torpedoes and missiles – has now been converted into a training centre for FIBUA (fighting in a built-up area, known more commonly by troops as FISHing – fighting in someone's house).

Not to be outdone, the green berets of **40 Commando** did the very same – but they made use of ranges at Lydd and Hythe in Kent for Exercise Hawk.

The Norton Manor men spent a week at the two training areas on the Channel practising close combat.

The ranges at Lydd, about five miles west of Dungeness, have been used by troops for more than 150 years, while those at Hythe, a dozen miles to the east, are two centuries old and are dominated by a couple of Martello towers and Grand Redoubt, built to keep Napoleon at bay.

Some 200 years later, the ranges are in use almost daily – and have been adapted to meet the demands of today's Armed Forces, with a mock modern-day housing estate, complete with roads, roundabouts and cars, built at both, while the Lydd ranges are strewn with wrecked old armoured vehicles.

40 Commando made full use of their week in Kent, from the annual combat marksmanship test to compound clearance and defending forward operating bases.

There was also the opportunity for the Royals to let loose with heavy weapons and each company carried out nighttime live firing.

And for the first time 40 tested the new ELCAN sight – there's a small red cross for the aiming point – which is easier to use and better in the dark than the existing sights; troops still need to understand its capability, how to mount it on SA80 rifles and how to zero it – all of which was done in Kent.

For close quarters battle (also known as close combat or, in old parlance, hand-to-hand fighting), a separate sight is fitted on top of the ELCAN sight to allow the commandos to rapidly engage their targets.

As well as live firing, the Norton Manor men also used 'simunition' – simulated ammunition, which possesses the dynamics of the real thing, minus the lethality – to add an extra layer of realism to Exercise Hawk.

"40 Commando had plenty of time to practise close quarters skills and the simunition added a realistic dimension to the training," explained Lt Dougal Loadman.

Matching the quality of the training was the quality of the food offered in Kent.

"Many grizzled bootnecks judged the mean quality of the exercise victuals the best ever. With single-digit temperatures on the Kent shingle lowered further by a biting wind off the Channel, a mess tin full of hot 'range stew' was a necessity," Lt Loadman added.



MORE chameleon than Lynx...

The maritime grey of HMS Montrose's helicopter blends in rather nicely with the rugged, rocky terrain of western South Africa as the frigate's flight trains with their local counterparts.

The Mk8 Lynx – callsign Rosie – left her mother ship behind when she carried out her mid-deployment maintenance period in Simon's Town.

While the Devonport-based frigate enjoyed TLC after her South Atlantic exertions, the flight from 815 Naval Air Squadron flew over Chapman's Peak Drive north up the Cape to Ysterplaat (*pronounced ace-ter-plart*), based just four miles from the heart of Cape Town, where it enjoyed the hospitality of the South African Air Force maritime squadron.

There was no rest for the 815 NAS crew, however, as they squeezed 12 hours' flying into the next four days.

After meeting the Super Lynx and Oryx (Super Puma) crews of 22 Sqn SAAF, the aircrew were briefed on operating in South Africa – "Plenty

of airspace available; do try to avoid the ostrich farms" – was the gist as training began.

Rosie began solo familiarisation and low-level navigation training around the mountains of the Western Cape under a blazing sun.

The contrasts of South Africa became apparent from the air. Only 20 minutes from the gleaming metropolis of Cape Town the Lynx was buzzing over vineyards, mansions and shanty towns, heading on to deep valleys and high mountain passes.

There were more flights, including tactical low-level work exploring the dusty hinterland and valleys of the Cape; instrument and general flying practice at Air Force Base Langebaanweg, 60 miles to the north, and an incredible morning in the mountain flying training area, approaching 6,000ft pinnacles without a breath of wind and views to the coast 70 miles away.

A day later, as the sun set behind Table Mountain

the helicopter lifted into the night and conducted another training sortie over the lights of towns and villages.

"Disembarkation to somewhere like Ysterplaat is invaluable," said Montrose's flight commander Lt Cdr Paul Ellerton.

"Not only does it allow us to conduct mandated training such as instrument flying but we also have the opportunity to conduct challenging mountain flying, amidst some of the world's most beautiful scenery."

After leaving their 22 Sqn hosts the Lynx left to re-embark in Montrose, flying low over the sea south of Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned, past pods of whales as the crew honed their anti-surface warfare skills.

Two random vessels – a merchant ship and a leisure boat out of Cape Town – were targeted with a simulated missile attack before the helicopter returned to Simon's Town.

Back aboard Montrose, flight observer Lt Rich Bell said: "Atlantic Patrol Task South has been an incredible deployment so far, with some unforgettable flying at different locations and we can now add South Africa to that list.

"To be able to keep your training current in different environments and ones which are so spectacular is a real privilege. South Africa's 22 Sqn were fantastic hosts."

Picture: Lt Cdr Sam Law, HMS Montrose



Lynx effect over the Cape

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Prime seats available for Mountbatten Festival

A NUMBER of prime tickets are available for this month's Mountbatten Festival of Music.

This will be the 40th consecutive year that the Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines have played to capacity audiences in one of the world's greatest venues – the Royal Albert Hall in London.

The Festival runs for three nights – Thursday April 12 until Saturday April 14, with the Saturday performance sold out already.

However the RM Event Planning office has a number of prime 'Member's Tickets' available for the Thursday performance.

These are the privately-owned seats that have been donated back to the Royal Marines and are some of the best seats in the Hall.

They are £35 each and can be ordered through WO2 Reg Sheen RM on 93832 7205 or FLEET-MFMWO.

As the bandies put it: "If you have never seen the world's finest military band in the world's finest concert venue, then you have missed out so far."

"Put that right and order your tickets now."

Mystery at the museum

FIRST romance, now death.

Following the success of their speed-dating evening last year, the national Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth is staging a murder mystery evening next month.

Guests will travel back to wartime Britain on Saturday May 19, between 7.30pm and 10.30pm, using their detective skills to solve a tangled tale of spies, secret codes and a genuine Enigma machine.

Fancy dress is optional, but booking essential as spaces are limited – tickets cost £45 per person, including meal and drinks.

Email events@nmrn.org.uk for more details of the event, which is part of Culture 24's Museums at Night programme.

Air heads-up

YEOVILTON has hosted a flight safety evening for local pilots.

Under the auspices of the General Aviation Safety Council, a sizeable audience of aviators from the South West were briefed on areas of safety awareness including Olympic airspace planning considerations, while as part of the Royal Navy input S/Lt Nathan Steele of Yeovilton Air Traffic Control spoke of more local issues.

Antarctic expedition ends on two highs

THE British Services Antarctic Expedition 2012 is over – with "an awesome end to an awesome day to an awesome expedition."

The final hours in Antarctica saw many of the explorers taking a last opportunity to admire the stunning scenery of the frozen continent, including a ski tour by

the Blue Team.

According to Surg Lt Simon Hornby's blog, after negotiating a crevasse field and the Nye Glacier, he and some team mates were looking for a peak to tackle.

"After a 4km ski we approached the base of the mountain.

"Despite the steep snow slope we began our ascent with Jez (Maj

Justin Stemp RM) leading the way.

"After a few difficult moments and some impressive zig-zagging we reached the final rise in good time. At the top we had the most amazing view across the sea towards Adelaide Island and back down the glacier.

"The ridge line in the distance was being reflected in the mirror

that was Whistling Bay and a humpback whale was feeding in the krill-rich waters hundreds of metres beneath us.

"Words cannot really do the view justice."

Back at camp most members of Blue Team took a (brief) dip in the sea to ease their aching limbs.

As the sun set on their final day, Flt Lt Steve Riley RAF summed it up: "That was an awesome end to an awesome day to an awesome expedition. Awesome!"

The fact that the expedition has ended successfully is probably something of a relief for Green Team member Lt Rob Tristram, who was leading a group of five roped together when he fell through a snow bridge into a crevasse in February.

His colleagues spent an hour getting him out – and still made it back to base in time for supper.

The expedition set up land bases and used the yacht Australis as a sea base to achieve its aims – to conduct scientific research, contributing to several key science programmes of major institutions, and to explore remote areas of the Antarctic Peninsula, including ascents of unclimbed mountains.

Undertaken in the 'Spirit of Scott, and marking the centenary of the fabled explorer's death, the expedition's team of 24, including seven from the Naval Service, packed up their equipment and headed back north to the staging post of Puerto Williams in Chile.

Deputy expedition leader Lt Cdr Paul Hart also spoke in his blog about the beauty of the vista from a mountain at the port.

"We were treated to the awesome panorama of Tierra Del Fuego covered in snow while the glassy Beagle Channel reflected much of the mountains of this part of Patagonia," he said.

"It is hard to believe that only 150 years ago Charles Darwin sailed up this passage onboard HMS Beagle while deciphering the mysteries of evolution."

Lt Cdr Hart was one of the last to return home, taking responsibility for a container of kit which was flown back to the UK via Punta Arenas.

Ship reopens

THE iconic sailing ship Cutty Sark is due to open to the public again at Greenwich on April 26.

The clipper, badly damaged by fire during restoration work in May 2007, has been raised three metres above her dry dock to allow visitors to walk underneath, and her history is explained in an exhibition on board.



● Gosport (foreground) and Portsmouth from a glider at night

Stunning sights for soar eyes

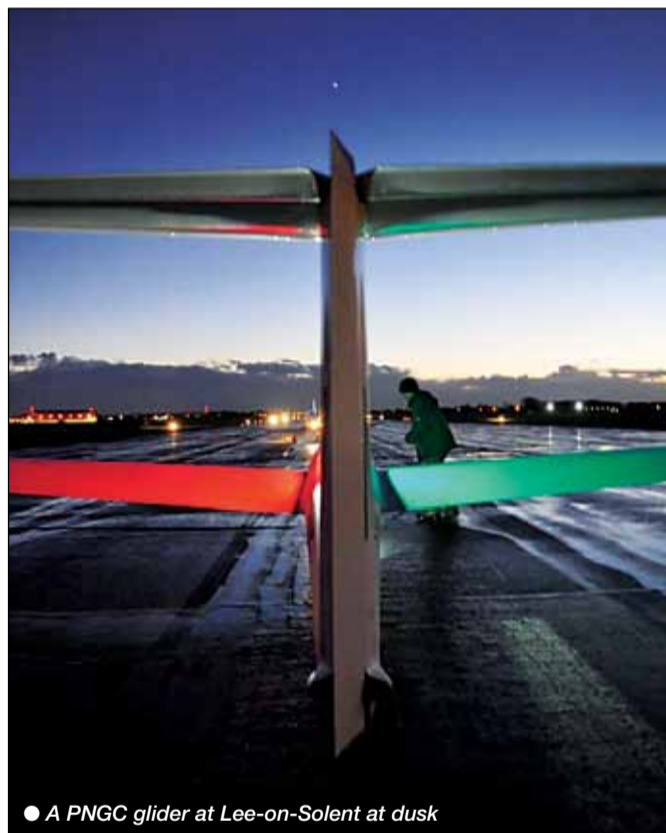
WHETHER you want a new pastime, or would like to admire Hampshire's scenery from the air, Portsmouth Naval Gliding Centre (PNGC) at Lee-on-Solent offers fully-qualified instructors that can take you from your first flight through to completing your glider pilot's licence or national private pilot's licence and beyond at a fraction of the cost of commercial flying organisations.

For serving personnel, membership is free for the first year, and there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in AT courses.

The centre boasts one of the largest aircraft fleets in the country with nine gliders, a motor-glider and two towing aircraft.

Service personnel, MOD employees and contractors, along with accompanying friends and family are all very welcome.

Visit www.pngc.co.uk or call our flight bookings team on 0845 600 8518 for more information.



● A PNGC glider at Lee-on-Solent at dusk

Butting out...

BIG Cig took a traditional battering around the Royal Navy in the run-up to national No Smoking Day last month.

At Yeovilton, Big Cig – aka Surg Cdr (D) Ian James, Senior Dental Surgeon) was snuffed out in the air base's Underwater Escape Training Unit (UETU) (pictured left by LA(Phot) A/J Macleod).

Keeping the bad guy firmly in their grasp are dental nurses, medical assistants and PTIs, all of whom offered advice and support to colleagues who wanted to break the habit.

Also pictured are divers from the UETU, making sure that although he is suffering, the villain of the piece didn't actually drown...

Big Cig also turned up at HMS Collingwood, where Dental Hygienist Pip Dredge, working closely with practice nurses, was keen to raise awareness of the availability of smoking cessation clinics.

Pip's main objectives were to highlight the effects that smoking has on the oral cavity, particularly



linked with alcohol and oral cancer.

A tri-Service lifestyle survey showed that around a quarter of RN personnel smoke, and that smokers are nearly three times more likely to be medically downgraded than non-smokers.

And the kicking delivered to Big Cig was not confined to

shore bases – pictured above (by LA(Phot) Dean Nixon) is PTI Roy Michael Cronin booting Cig off the flight deck of HMS Illustrious in Norway as he and his colleagues joined the carrier's medical department in raising awareness about the help available to those who seek to beat the habit.



Joint Force Command is set to launch

THE new Joint Forces Command was due to be launched as *Navy News* went to press.

Established to ensure that a range of vital joint enabling capabilities, functions and organisations are organised and managed effectively and efficiently, the Joint Forces Command will work alongside the single Services to champion and deliver joint enabling capabilities to support success on operations.

The capabilities, functions and organisations include medical services, training and education, intelligence, and cyber.

Over the next year the Joint Forces Command will assume the full range of its planned responsibilities in support of defence objectives for current operations, future contingencies, and for the longer term.

It will reach full operating capability by April 2013.

The launch ceremony was due to be staged at Northwood HQ, with Defence Secretary Philip Hammond presiding.

Robots fight at Yeovilton

A BUSY programme of events over this month at the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton will feature everything from wildlife to robots.

On April 2-3 a sponsored workshop will allow visitors to make and paint an Airfix model to take home.

April 4-5 sees the robots take charge, when there will be chance to build a working robot and join battle in an arena against other first-timers.

If you prefer the heavyweights, a second arena – surrounded by bullet-proof glass – will stage mechanical mayhem as stars of the TV show *Robot Wars* knock lumps out of each other.

The natural world takes centre stage on April 9 when RN Air Station's Bird Control Unit gives a presentation on how they use peregrine falcons to keep the runways free of birds, reducing the risk of a bird strike on an aircraft.

From April 10-13 the museum stages 'fun family flying activities', when visitors will be invited to make an aircraft out of everyday scrap items.

And every day from March 31 for two weeks there will be family trails, with each successfully-completed trail sheet will be awarded a creme egg.

SAR exhibition

A NEW exhibition featuring the work of the Royal Navy's search and rescue teams has opened at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall in Falmouth.

A retired RN Sea King Helicopter – painted red and grey one side and RAF yellow the other – is a key part of the exhibition, which recounts tales of bravery by all the SAR units around the country, including the RNLI, Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the RAF.

Unicorn support

FORTHCOMING talks by the Unicorn Preservation Society on board HM Frigate Unicorn in Dundee include 'Dry-docking the Royal Yacht Britannia' on Monday April 2 and 'The Black Watch' on Monday May 7.

The talks are in aid of the ship's preservation – Unicorn is one of the six oldest ships in the world.



YOU'LL probably recognise the silhouette in the foreground – one Type 23 frigate.

But the cityscape in the background? You won't have seen that in more than five years.

HMS Argyll became the first Royal Navy warship since 2006 to visit the Lebanese capital of Beirut as she made her way home from her tour of duty in the Gulf.

The last time British warships were off the 'Paris of the East' they were helping to evacuate civilians as Israeli and Hezbollah forces clashed in a month-long war.

Since then peace has returned to the country, Beirut is once more regarded as one of the world's best tourist destinations, and Britain has re-forged close ties with Lebanon's armed forces, not least the Navy, many of whose officers are trained at Dartmouth.

As Argyll arrived off the Lebanese coast she was met by the Lebanese ship Tabarga, which embarked the Type 23's communications officer Lt Roger Skelley as liaison officer.

The two vessels practised ship handling and communication exercises before Argyll entered

harbour. After the usual round of official calls on local dignitaries, a lunch was held aboard for senior members of the LAF and the British Ambassador Tom Fletcher.

While they were dining in style, simultaneously 20 sailors and Royal Marines took part in the British Embassy-led Sports Relief mile run alongside local schoolchildren as part of global efforts to publicise the London 2012 Olympics.

"It was a great experience to run through Beirut marina and as far as I could tell the children were loving it, although not as much as they enjoyed their tour of the ship afterwards," said Argyll's navigator Lt Mark Webster.

The first day of the four-day visit concluded with an official reception held on the frigate's flight deck attended by the city's diplomatic community, senior military officers, United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon, and local dignitaries and businessmen.

The following day gave Argyll another opportunity to show off her full range of capabilities with 60 members of the LAF being given tours of the ship and the chance to chat with her crew.

Away from the ship, Argyll's Royal Marine detachment and Lynx helicopter visited Hamat Air Base, which features a military training area funded by the UK and managed by ex-British Army personnel.

A day of professionally-rewarding training with the Lebanese Air Force and Sea Commando Regiment then followed, culminating in a joint power demonstration of a rapid helicopter insertion and extraction of troops; Argyll's Lynx aircrew revelled in the opportunity to fly in formation with the iconic Huey helicopter operated by Lebanese.

Later in the day the ship's company also tested their sporting prowess with a football match against a LAF team. In a hard-fought affair HMS Argyll went behind by two goals, pulled one back before conceding a third to go down 3-1.

The final day in Lebanon saw one party from the ship visit the ancient town of Byblos and spectacular caves of Jieta Grotto, while another party enjoyed the unexpected treat of a day's skiing in a nearby mountain resort, complete with views of the Mediterranean Sea and the ship below.

Meanwhile back aboard the children of British Embassy staff were thrilled to receive guided tours of the ship, with many pronouncing themselves determined to seek a career in the Royal Navy as a result.

And that was Beirut. The visit, said Argyll's Commanding Officer Cdr Paul Stroude, was "one of the most rewarding and fascinating of my Naval career."

He continued: "Such an unusual visit was guaranteed to be high profile, and it was no surprise that it attracted enormous interest across Lebanon."

"The warmth of the welcome extended to the British ship was overwhelming, and underlined the high regard with which the Royal Navy is viewed in the country. Throughout our stay we have been looked after and hosted superbly well by the Lebanese Armed Forces and the local community."

"It has been a pleasure to discover what a thriving, friendly and cosmopolitan city Beirut is and my ship's company have thoroughly enjoyed themselves."

"I sincerely hope that further ship visits are made by the Royal Navy in the near future."

Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, HMS Argyll



Historic return to the Levant

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APRIL 1982

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Wednesday March 31: As anti-government protests grow, the Argentine Junta rubber-stamps the invasion of Falklands on April 2.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Thursday April 1: As the UN Security Council ca Falkland Islands Governor Rex invasion is expected. Nuclear s Splendid sail for the South AT</p> 
<p>5</p> <p>Monday April 5: Aircraft carriers HMS Hermes (pictured right) and HMS Invincible sail from Portsmouth with RFA Olmeda; other warships sail from Devonport, including HMS Alacrity and Antelope. Lord Carrington resigns as Foreign Secretary, and is replaced by Francis Pym.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Tuesday April 6: The first RAF aircraft – Nimrod MR1s – arrive at Ascension and begin patrols of the area on April 7.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Wednesday April 7: British Government announces 200-mile exclusion zone around the Falklands will be created. P&O liner Canberra is requisitioned at Southampton on her return from a cruise, and converted to a troopship. Amphibious group, led by HMS Fearless, leaves Portsmouth.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Thursday April 8: American Secretary of State Margaret Thatcher in London diplomacy. His first meeting w held late the following day, bu had clearly failed.</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Monday April 12 (Easter Monday): 200-mile Maritime Exclusion Zone declared around the Falklands, initially enforced by RN submarines.</p>			<p>15</p> <p>Thursday April 15: Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward Task Force operational comman</p>
<p>19</p> <p>Monday April 19: Requisitioned on April 10, educational cruise ship SS Uganda (below) leaves No. 2 Dry Dock Gibraltar as HM Hospital Ship Uganda, and prepares to sail south.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Tuesday April 20: Canberra arrives at Ascension Island.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Wednesday April 21: Operation Paraquet – the retaking of South Georgia – gets under way with British forces being flown ashore to the Fortuna Glacier to set up observation posts. Ships taking part in the operation included HMS Antrim, Plymouth, Brilliant, Endurance, Conqueror and RFA Tidespring.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Thursday April 22: British task force arrives in Fa Leopoldo Galtieri, leader of th islands.</p>
		<p>28</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Thursday April 29: RAF Vulcan bombers land at A for various Black Buck raids.</p>

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

2

Friday April 2:

The Argentine invasion, Operation Rosario, begins, with the first forces landing at 0430, just over an hour after Rex Hunt declares a state of emergency. Royal Marines kill at least one invader, but as more enemy forces land by sea and air, Rex Hunt orders the surrender of British forces at 0925 local time. Brig Gen Mario Menendez is appointed Governor of Islas Malvinas, and the islands' capital Stanley is renamed Puerto Argentino, by the Junta in Buenos Aires. Nine RN warships on exercise near Gibraltar are ordered south and an emergency cabinet meeting in London approves the deployment of a task force. 3 Commando Brigade RM brought to 72 hours notice to move, and 3 Para added to the list.

calls for avoidance of force, Hunt is warned that a full submarine HMS Spartan and Atlantic.



3

Saturday April 3:

Parliament endorses deployment of task force to 'restore British administration' to the Falklands (Operation Corporate).

4

FALKLAND ISLANDS



9

Friday April 9 (Good Friday):

The bulk of 3 Commando Brigade sail from Southampton on board Canberra (below) as the European Economic Community approve economic sanctions against Argentina.

Haig meets Prime Minister at the start of his shuttle with the Argentine Junta is cut by April 19 the initiative



17

Saturday April 17:

Conference between senior officers on Ascension Island decides detailed plan to liberate the Falklands. HMS Invincible and Fearless arrive at Ascension, a day after the HMS Hermes group.

appointed Falklands under.

18

Sunday April 18:

British Carrier Battle Group leaves Ascension Island for the South Atlantic as ships of the Amphibious Landing Group gather at Ascension to follow on later.



Falklands waters as General visits the Argentine Junta, visits the

25

Sunday April 25:

Operation Paraquet sees Argentine submarine Santa Fe beached after being attacked by Wessex (HMS Antrim), Wasp (Plymouth and Endurance) and Lynx (HMS Brilliant) helicopters. Argentine forces at Grytviken surrender, those at Leith formally follow suit on Monday April 26. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher later interrupts journalists' questions on the next stage of Operation Corporate and says: "Just rejoice at that news and congratulate our forces and the Marines... Rejoice!".

30

Friday April 30:

Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ) around the Falklands, applicable to any aircraft or shipping supporting the Argentine cause, is activated. Haig's shuttle diplomacy ends. Admiral Sandy Woodward's Carrier Battle Group approaches the TEZ.

Ascension Island in preparation

1

2

FROM HMS ANTRIM:

BE PLEASED TO INFORM HER MAJESTY THAT THE WHITE ENSIGN FLIES ALONGSIDE THE UNION FLAG IN GRYTVIKEN. SOUTH GEORGIA.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.



TOTAL WHITEOUT

PARTIALLY obscured by a flurry of snow, the flight deck of HMS Illustrious is caught in a blizzard in the Arctic.

Flying operations were brought to an immediate halt aboard the Portsmouth-based helicopter carrier, leading Britain's participation in NATO's winter exercises in northern Norway, as flurries swept through Vågsfjorden, near the port of Harstad.

Commando Helicopter Force Lynx and Sea Kings were all set to embark the Royal Marines of Kilo Company, 42 Commando, when the weather took a turn for the worse – and all flying operations were temporarily postponed.

With aircraft arrayed on deck, however, there was the small matter of making sure they were safe for the duration of the snowstorm.

Flight deck crews and aircraft maintainers had to battle high winds and blizzard conditions to secure the aircraft to the deck or move them to the relative warmth of the hangar before retreating inside for a well-earned cuppa.

And once the snow had abated somewhat, the aircraft handlers returned to 600-ft-long deck to shovel the snow – now several centimetres deep – over the side so the helicopters could resume operations.

For much of the opening stages of Cold Response it was quite mild around the port of Harstad – one of the hubs of the exercise – with temperatures hovering around 0°C by day and dropping to about -6°C or so by night, but away from the coast, where some training was played out, it did plunge to -30°C.

Illustrious was acting as the command ship for Maj Gen Ed Davis, Commandant General Royal Marines, who with his Commander Amphibious Forces staff will be directing the movements of Allied warships during the NATO exercise.

The ten-day war game – reaching its climax as **Navy News** went to press – saw an international task force gathering in the waters of the Arctic as the situation in the fictional 'Nerthus' region (actually northern Norway) deteriorates with the forces of 'Gardarland' refusing to withdraw its troops from neighbouring 'Borgland'.

The multinational naval force was being held at high alert offshore, readying itself for potential intervention in the disputed area.

For Lusty, that meant her ship's company worked around the clock in preparation for amphibious operations that may be required of them, the embarked Royal Marines and the helicopters of the Commando Helicopter Force.

It was particularly challenging for those working on the flight deck. Day and night, they faced blizzards and strong winds that could drop the temperature to -40°C as they

marshalled and refuelled the helicopters. At temperatures that low, exposed skin can freeze almost instantly.

Illustrious had eight helicopters embarked, all from RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset: four Sea King Mk 4 from 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons, three Lynx Mk 7 from 847 Naval Air Squadron and one Lynx Mk 8 from 815 Naval Air Squadron.

With all of the aircrew needing to prepare for operating from the ship in arduous conditions the result was a very busy flight deck.

"Illustrious and her embarked helicopter squadrons certainly faced some tough Arctic conditions," explained the carrier's Commanding Officer, Capt Martin Connell.



"We prepared for this, both in terms of training and with all our equipment, and I am very pleased with the way the crew have approached the exercise throughout the ship.

"In particular the positive attitude and cheery enthusiasm of those operating on the flight deck was vital and allowed Illustrious to conduct helicopter operations round the clock in support of the multinational task force."

Unfortunately, Lusty's participation in Norway was cut short – not by the weather but by a tug.

A collision with one of four vessels helping her alongside in Harstad left the carrier with small holes above the waterline.

Although Illustrious' engineers patched up the holes and the carrier could have continued to participate in the exercise, the decision was taken to bring her back to Portsmouth for more substantial repairs so she can resume her planned 2012 programme.

Illustrious' bump meant 90 men of 42 Commando had to be transferred from her deck to that of flagship HMS Bulwark.

Never an easy manoeuvre given the amount of equipment the commandos carry in the bergen packs on their backs, the Arctic weather added to the challenges air and flight deck crews faced, while the marines had to wear the bright-red watertight suits when flying over the ocean to protect them should the Sea Kings have to ditch.

They didn't, thankfully, but the whole transfer took the three aircraft from the Commando Helicopter Force several hours.

Once aboard Bulwark the new arrivals found accommodation rather austere, calling corridors, passageways and camp beds their home – although unlike the 320-strong ship's company, they were only aboard temporarily; for short periods, Bulwark can accommodate more than 650 troops.

The Fleet flagship had two roles to perform during the Arctic exercises: to act as the command and control hub for all task group activity and to put men and machines ashore (marines from the UK, US

and Netherlands) by sea via landing craft or by air using Fleet Air Arm helicopters.

Amphibious operations remain the most complex operation any nation's military can undertake, as Bulwark's Commanding Officer Capt Alex Burton explained.

"It is not simply park the ship and offload it. In war – and therefore in training – we have to take account of the environment, enemy forces in the air, sea and on land, coordinate people into boats and naval helicopters all to arrive on target, in the right order, at the right time, to achieve the battle winning effect," he added.

"Few navies deliver this successfully and most aspirants look to the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Fleet Air Arm, with our war proven capability, for guidance: on the sea, in the air and on the land."

And so despite the constant snow flurries, the landings on the sand and shingle of the exercise area near Harstad – designated Red Beach – went ahead.

As well as putting commandos ashore, Bulwark landed equipment and vehicles, not least BV tracked vehicles (which are perfectly suited to operations in the Arctic), and the BEAST recovery vehicle – the Royal Marines' ultimate 'tractor' capable of shifting anything if it gets stuck on the shoreline.

At least some of the landings were planned with the help of yellow and black masking tape.



Confused? In true improvised fashion, the gaffer tape was rolled out and stuck to the deck in a planning room aboard Bulwark to create a rough map of the shores around Harstad, with small pieces of card to designate ships and ground troops in the area.

The two-hour-long planning session was overseen by Cdre Paddy McAlpine, Commander UK Task Group, and his staff, directing amphibious operations by Bulwark and her subordinate ships and units.

"Taking the fight ashore from the sea using helicopters and boats is not for the amateur but I have a ship's company of complete professionals. For us it's what we do," Capt Burton explained.

"My ship is phenomenally versatile and in this exercise we act as the hub to bring together all the units that make up the modern-day complex battlefield."

In all, some 16,000 sailors, soldiers and airmen from 15 nations, led by the hosts Norway, converged on the fjords around Harstad and Tromsø for the ten-day exercise with HMS Liverpool completing the triumvirate of RN warship participants – her very last active duty before decommissioning.

■ We'll have more from Cold Response next month; in the meantime turn the page for more action from Norway



**Giving a better quality of life
for serving and former Naval personnel**



Liz's long burst

(Jackspeak: a lengthy conversation that is mostly one-way)

AS you can see, we are only three months in to 2012 and judging by the photo above, you will know that we are all prepared to make fools of ourselves in order to promote the grants we give out!

During April, May and June we are dedicating all our time and effort into making it easier for you to support us (and for us to reward you) this year – so that in 2013 we can give out even more money.

If you are serving, you may already have seen our leaflets and posters promoting our **Fundraising Trophy** – this is up and running and I have been told that HMS Lancaster has already laid down the challenge and declared that they are going to win!

So, make sure you either pick up a leaflet or visit our website to find out more and how to win the £4,000.

And, we are launching our **Get involved** campaign. You will all be aware that many charities run fundraising events such as the Big Brew Up and the Big Curry.

We decided to kick off your bank holiday in style and launch: **The Standeasy**.

All we are asking is for half an hour on June 1 for you to 'do something – anything' and **make a world of difference**.

Visit the website today www.rnrmc.org.uk/standeasy to register and download a fundraising pack and keep up to date on what everyone else is doing.

Please encourage all your friends and family to 'Get Involved' as well.

And don't forget to post on our Facebook page or Twitter.

Liz Ridgway
Director of Fundraising and Marketing,
The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity
liz.ridgway@rnrmc.org.uk
or fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk



**YOU HAVE
HALF AN
HOUR TO
MAKE A
WHOLE
WORLD OF
DIFFERENCE**

REGISTER AT
RNRMC.ORG.UK/STANDEASY
OR FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Get involved on June 1

WE are launching our big new campaign later this month – The Standeasy!

We are asking each of you to give just half an hour of your time to make a difference for the charity.

Devote thirty minutes on June 1 to raise money by whatever method inspires you. And we have plenty of ideas, if you don't.

To find out more, register online at www.rnrmc.org.uk/standeasy, and a fundraising pack will be winging its way to you.

Thank you to everyone who has been fundraising for us already, whether by doing sporting challenges or organising events from race nights to 1940s themed parties and dinner dances, writes *Hilary Jukes*, RNRMC Community Fundraiser.

We don't have room here to thank everyone individually but here are just some of the things that have happened or that are coming up to inspire you!

Royal Navy Marine Engineer, David 'Yorkie' Stout, left the Navy

after almost 30 years service in February.

He handed his warrant card in at HMS Neptune, north of Glasgow, and walked home... a distance of 252 miles!

The walk took Yorkie two weeks and he used the opportunity to raise funds and awareness of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Here he is pictured (right) having a well deserved pint at the end. Thanks, Yorkie!

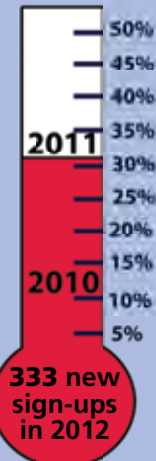
A big thank you to Petty Officer Richie Harker and his team from RNAS Culdrose who raised £935.60 by doing a 180-mile static cycle ride and bucket collection in Truro (see picture right).

The Gala Performance at Plymouth Pavilions by Jim Davidson, Jethro, Bobby Davro, Claire Sweeney, Rick Wakeman and the Band of HM Royal Marines Plymouth raised a staggering £20,000 thanks to all the performers giving their time free of charge (pictured below).

The night was a great success and hugely enjoyed by everyone.



Who do I talk to about payroll giving?



333 new sign-ups in 2012

THE MAN who can tell you everything you need to know about payroll giving is Dean Rogers – probably a familiar face to many of you from his long career in the RN.

Dean joined the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity in March 2011 after completing 35 years in the Submarine Service and reaching the position of Command Warrant Officer Submarines.

His last post in the Royal Navy was to promote payroll-giving to the Naval Service on behalf of the

Second Sea Lord.

On retiring from the Navy he moved across to the RNRMC and continues to promote payroll giving.

For further information on payroll giving or to arrange a 40-minute presentation with discussion contact Dean using any of the methods below:

Dean Rogers
Payroll Giving Manager
dean.rogers@rnrmc.org.uk
Tel: 023 9254 8498
Mob: 07714 306178



SAVE THE DATE
1
JUNE

UPCOMING EVENTS

In May, two cycle challenges are taking place. The ship's company of HMS Illustrious are doing a 925 John O'Groats to Land's End ride. <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/illustrious>



And another as the Aircraft Carrier Alliance are building on an amazing performance last year, doing a 500 mile cycle from Portsmouth to Scotland: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/beattheblock2>

In June a team from HMS Sultan are pulling a Field Gun 90 miles from Gosport to London to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Falkland Islands conflict: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/falklandsfieldgunpull>

VIDEO LAUNCH



Visit our website to view our new video that introduces the charity that supports the whole of the Naval family; this includes the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Maritime Reserves, QARNNS, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and former WRNS.

CONTACT US

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity
Building 29
HMS Excellent
Whale Island
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO2 8ER



Join us on Facebook: search for 'Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity'

www.rnrmc.org.uk

Winding



● Joint Helicopter Command personnel head into the Bardufoss training areas during a Cold Weather Survival Course field exercise

TO FIGHT effectively in the bitter cold of the Arctic, you have to train there, writes Mike Gray.

To train effectively, you have to learn how to survive there. And your trainers have to learn how to work and survive there too – as do the people who keep the training base ticking over.

Clockwork has been providing that training for more than four decades.

And as the aircraft and kit have changed dramatically over the years, Clockwork itself has been adapted and fine-tuned, but the basic mechanism is still running smoothly, furnishing Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) personnel with the wherewithal to operate effectively in one of the harshest environments on earth.

Ply your trade successfully here, and you can do the same with confidence in the dust of the desert or the chill of the mountains.

It doesn't get much harder than Clockwork.

But the annual exercise is not just about Junglies zipping through the mountains and landing in clouds of powdery snow (although there is plenty of



that – see centre pages).

Clockwork is a self-contained, self-supporting (self-winding?) world which acts as a springboard for bigger, more complex evolutions which lie at the heart of the Navy's business.

And when people say that living in the wild, desolate expanses of Norway is a bit like life in a submarine (see left), or on a warship in mid-ocean, it isn't quite as strange a comparison as it seems.

Clockwork starts ticking in the late summer when a team flies out to Norway to carry out maintenance on buildings and infrastructure, cut the grass and apply a lick of paint, which could not be done during the winter.

In November the people who run the base at Bardufoss – the 40 or so CHF enablers and base party members, around half of them logisticians, who provide the training facility under the auspices of the tri-Service Joint Helicopter Command (JHC) – gather their cold-weather gear and prepare to fly out to Norway.

They are greeted by bitter cold weather, but not the snow and ice which are the hallmark of Clockwork – in December 2011 the temperature was below -20° Celsius but there was no white stuff to be seen until well after the Christmas break.

Once the landscape is swathed in snow, the first phase of training can get under way, with the enablers being put through their paces.

Old hands who are returning to 69° North – almost 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle – are required to do a refresher course.

For the rest – from senior officers to the junior chefs and stewards – it is the full Cold Weather Survival Course (CWSC).

The training starts back in Yeovilton before Christmas, including a day of lectures on aspects of life in the deep freeze.

It is a varied programme, including elements of physiology and meteorology alongside memorable anecdotes and aphorisms – a thought-provoking introduction for those heading to the Arctic for the first time.

We heard tales of tent eye (caused by stove fumes in an enclosed space) and frostnip, of human skin sticking to ice-cold bare metal, and there

Former deeps in mountains high

ISOLATED, self-contained and operating in a harsh environment – a common description of the world of submarines.

Isolated, self-contained and operating in a harsh environment – an apt description of the Clockwork training organisation.

So the switch from Trident boats to Bardufoss was perhaps not such a leap in the dark for Clockwork's Logistic Officer as it might have seemed.

Lt Mike Howarth's job back in Yeovilton is LO for the CHF Combat Support Squadron, and he takes on the particular requirements for Norway for half the year.

Originally a sonar operator on Polaris boats, Lt Howarth accepted a commission in 2005 and returned to bombers – he reckons he has served around eight-and-a-half years below the waves, and is one of only 25 or so serving personnel with a gold deterrent pin for completing more than 20 patrols.

"The job here is that I run all the logistics," said Lt Howarth.

"I own the supply chain elements – all the rations, fuel, ammunition, equipment and all the personnel that provide services, such as human resources, medics, pay and admin."

That doesn't just mean getting chefs, stewards, stores specialists and the like into place for the deployment – he also has to ensure that enough cold-weather trained personnel are available in Yeovilton to replace anyone who has to drop out of Clockwork.

Supply lines are varied. Food comes up in refrigerated lorries on a three-day trip from a central MOD supplier in Germany – the food is essentially from the same stocks as that sent to Afghanistan.

"We have to make sure that we order in good time, giving us enough flexibility if the drivers do not make it across some really quite small roads in difficult conditions to get here," said Lt Howarth.

"If the people here do not have enough food in their bellies, no training goes on."

"While this is obviously bigger than a submarine, it works the same way – you are confined for much of the time in a

small section.

"I would say there are some very striking similarities to the way a submarine works, including working with a small team of people.

"We do punch out into the local society, though, as I deal with local banks and suppliers."

Calorie intake has to be high on Clockwork, so food is plentiful and welcome (Navy chefs relish the chance to ply their trade in such circumstances), and hot drinks are readily available.

"You will not find a big burly chef ready to rap you on the knuckles if you take too much," said Lt Howarth.

One of the biggest banes of his life ("an emotive subject," he sighs) is the lack of fresh milk – UHT is much more readily available in the area.

Replacement equipment comes a different route.

Priority material will be at Bardufoss within 48 hours, with couriers DHL delivering from Tromsø Airport.

But larger items, such as a replacement engine, would most likely arrive directly at Bardufoss/Snowman International Airport (the civilian airport's recently-adopted name) by RAF Hercules.

Vehicles and large machinery used throughout the deployment, which may stay out in Norway for more than a year, are shipped in and out by military roll-on roll-off ferry through the small port of Sørreiso, a 30-minute drive from Bardufoss.

Lt Howarth left Bardufoss earlier than many of the base party in order to plan for his 'other' job, rear-supply for this month's Joint Warrior exercises.

But he will not be sad to go back to the next Norwegian winter.

"It's brilliant – how can you not enjoy it?" he said.

"I spent all of my career to date just sneaking about the oceans, and all of a sudden this set me free in the highlands of Norway."



● A Bv206 in the Bardufoss training area

Pictures: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill (CHF)



● A Junglie Mk4 Sea King during a load-lifting exercise at Bardufoss. (Right) The Clockwork camp at the RNoAF base at Bardufoss



Up frozen Clockwork

were warnings about eating well, drinking well (hot wets, preferably) and making regular visits to the heads.

While on that subject, the old chestnut of drinking one's own urine in an emergency was firmly crushed.

"Do not drink your own piss," a Royal Marines Mountain Leader announced bluntly.

"If you are in so bad a situation that you have to drink your own piss it's not going to help, because it's full of uric acid crystals and that's the crap the body is trying to get rid of.

"Whack it back in and you're not doing any good."

In any case, he said, the 'gold standard' for water supplies in a tight spot would be white, fluffy snow – and there was, we had been assured, going to be enough of that for everyone...

The enablers are the first to go through the fabled Cold Weather Survival Course (CWSC), which is all in a day's work to commandos but a little more daunting for someone who wields a spanner rather than a weapon.

C/Sgt Al Grant RM said: "The guys that come out here are in a totally different environment.

"Temperatures can drop to -30° Celsius in January, so they have to get used to not being in a nice comfortable hangar, and learn to survive here as well as work."

Personal admin is a phrase that crops up a good deal around Bardufoss – looking after yourself and your clothing and equipment.

This is taught through a couple of days of lectures, then three or four days in the field.

"They start off in ten-man tents, slowly getting them into sorting out their admin, sleeping and cooking in a tent, make sure they do not set fire to themselves or the tent because there are stoves or lanterns," said C/Sgt Grant.

They then go into four-man tents, and spend a night in a snow shelter, which can be "quite comfortable" at a degree or two below zero (thanks to body heat and a candle) while the temperature plummets outside.

The downside is the need for ventilation and at least one person on watch at all times to avoid the heat source going out or poisoning the air.

There is tactical training – sentry duty, contact with the enemy – in preparation for a tactical exercise at the end of the course and the FOBEX which concludes Clockwork in March.

And then everyone – all ranks, all specialisations, pilots, engineers, everyone – does the ice-breaking drills.

"The ice-breaking is quite interesting. It's character-building," said C/Sgt Grant.

"The dit creep [a tale which gets taller in the telling] means the hole gets bigger, the water gets deeper and colder..."

"It doesn't really, but it almost grows arms and legs."

"But it's not that big a problem. It's just cold water."

"The first time we did it this year it was -22° Celsius, so it's actually warmer in the water."

Each candidate slides into a hole cut in the 3ft thick ice on a small lake at the wartime German airfield, adjacent to Bardufoss.

The bergen is pushed out of the water, then the individual drags himself out using ski-poles to bite into the ice.

They roll around in the snow to absorb water, down a tot of rum and dash to a tent where their colleagues whip their freezing clothes off and dress them in warm dry apparel from the waterproofed bergen.

"That cold shock can be quite something to matelots. Royal Marines tend to be more used to these conditions, and are used to the shock," said C/Sgt Grant.

"That's why they do it in mankinis and that kind of thing, to lighten it up."

Another Royal who raised a smile through chattering teeth was the signaller who went into the water and did 14 lengths of the ice hole before climbing out.

"We have had a few failures this year, and it is usually through admin," said C/Sgt Grant.

"Unless you have been out here and done it, you do not know what to look for.

"When you get really cold you get lethargic, and do not put your coat on or get into your sleeping bag, so you get more cold and you are on the way to hypothermia.

"It is things like getting a hot wet inside them – it is easier to sit around chatting because making a hot wet is more effort, but it is the thing you should do.

"Failure – which is basically getting a cold weather injury – means they go home, and clearly had not looked after themselves.

"Others occasionally clearly do not have the wherewithal to look after their personal safety – there is something lacking."

Again, what is second nature to bootnecks – such as living out of a bergen – needs to be trained into sailors who rarely, if ever, have had the need to worry about such things until Clockwork.

"A Royal Marine coming in can produce a well-packed Bergen, whereas a matelot's would look like a Christmas tree to start with..." said C/Sgt Grant.

"Some matelots have a problem – 'I didn't join up to do this, I joined up to fix a helicopter. Give me a spanner in Yeovilton and I'm happy...'

"But most get it eventually."

For some the change of climate is even more pronounced, such as two of the stewards on this year's Clockwork enabling team.

"The Caribbean guys find it cold – they pretty much wear everything all the time," said C/Sgt Grant.

The weather can be deceptive – Logistics Officer Lt Mike Howarth said -10° Celsius in Norway often feels more comfortable than -2° Celsius in the UK, because it is so dry – but it still seeps in and hits you if you are not prepared.

With the survival side of things wrapped up, it is time to move on to the business end – working and fighting in C2 (that's Arctic to you and me).

Which is where Bardufoss really comes into its own, according to Maj Dave West, who in the UK is in charge of all training for the CHF, and is Officer Commanding Clockwork during the winter.

A qualified Helicopter Instructor with experience at the controls of four or five types of aircraft, Maj West is well-placed to reflect on the role of the only British 'base' on Norwegian soil (though as it is not actually British, no Union Jack or White Ensign is flown from a flagpole).

"The beauty of this place is that it is just over ten miles from the fjords and five miles from training grounds, and there are ranges where you can fire all kinds of weapons. It is ideal," said Maj West.

"We have land, sea and air training facilities right on the doorstep, full-spectrum ranges, the sea and ports, and a local landing facility where you can land a C-17 or a Hercules to get staff and equipment in and out.

"There is also fast air capability, and there are not many people living around here, and not many horses and riders, so low-level flying is not a problem.

"We train mostly within a 15-mile radius of here, and the ships can get close too, ideal for Cold Response because there is a short flying time and a short drive for vehicles."

According to Maj West, Clockwork has three main aims; to support Joint Helicopter Command units deploying on operations by providing environment qualifications and pre-deployment training; generating Fleet littoral (amphibious) capability; to train personnel to survive, operate and fight in extreme C2 environment, through which they develop resilience.

Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral George Zambellas, himself a former helicopter pilot, recognises its value – he visited Norway in February and declared: "Clockwork training at Bardufoss is a jewel in our defence crown."

"We are training about 700 personnel a year in specialist skills,

● Clockwork personnel cut a hole in the 3ft-thick ice on a lake to prepare for Cold Weather Survival Course ice-breaking drills (pictured below right)



in outstanding facilities, for a very good price."

Maj West added: "C2 is Arctic conditions, ie very cold conditions.

"C2 could therefore be the Rockies, the Antarctic, or high in the mountains of Afghanistan in the winter.

"Because little things become more difficult and take longer over here, because of the cold, people go back full of confidence.

"For some it is after they go through the ice – they feel they have achieved something, because it was a challenge.

"They are trained to maintain aircraft in the field.

"That might mean changing rotor blades, which could mean people on a lorry holding a rotor blade in place while another bolts it on."

The collection of huts which sit on the Royal Norwegian Air Force base are a vital component in the morale of those who pass through the training.

The three messes – wardroom, senior rates and junior rates, all fashioned from the shells of old railway carriages fixed side-by-side – share the same galley facility, and feature unique home comforts built by the sailors themselves over the years, including bars and wood-burning stoves.

Social life is pretty much confined to the base, as the one local club, down the road in the

village of Andselv, is not easy on the wallet or purse.

Theme nights at Clockwork this winter included a Caribbean night – the stewards from Trinidad and Tobago advised the chefs on food and one provided the music of a steel band from his iPod, as an icy wind whipped up the snow outside.

Local civic dignitaries were invited into the camp for a Burns Night celebration, though what the mayor thought of the kilts and haggis, tatties and neeps has not been recorded.

Accommodation is in seven wooden huts and two smaller cabins – there is also an overspill block which can be rented from the Norwegians – giving a maximum bed count of around 250.

A well-specified gym was this year the fiefdom of LPT Joe Thornton, who had already undergone the appropriate training and was on his first Clockwork.

As well as the usual fitness session, circuits, RN fitness tests and football competitions, using local gyms where necessary, LPT Thornton also maintains an impressive ski store (paid for by profits from the Clockwork bars) and has run a successful 'Clockwork's Biggest Loser' competition, the winner of which was expected to have lost 10kg in ten weeks.



● A Commando Helicopter Force Lynx of 847 NAS over the Forward Operating Base at Bardufoss





● Recirculating snow shrouds a Junglie Sea King near Bardufoss

● (Left) LAET Karl Byrne, of 847 NAS, creates a weapon rack to keep rifles off the snow at the FOB



Ice and

WHEN the dust (or snow) finally settles, Clockwork is all about the helicopters, and their ability to carry Royal Marines into battle and support them, writes Mike Gray.

The 2011-12 deployment saw four Sea Kings and three Lynx of 845, 846 and 847 Naval Air Squadrons parked out on the Line,



● Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral George Zambellas (left) at the controls of a Junglie Sea King on a flight over the Bardufoss training areas during his visit to Clockwork

Cold? It's 0°C – almost tropical...

THE training value of Clockwork is widely acknowledged amongst the CHF fraternity and beyond.

Pilots and aircrew clearly benefit from the experience of flying in difficult conditions, in the half-light of the Arctic twilight, in sub-zero temperatures – see main story.

But there are numerous other courses and skills to be gained at Bardufoss besides the cold weather survival techniques described on pages 24 and 25.

Snow and ice driving is one such course, which this year saw almost 60 candidates take up the challenge.

Sgt Richie Ellis, of 9 Regt Army Air Corps, was on his fifth Bardufoss deployment, and with two colleagues delivered a course which was designed by the Defence School of Driving at Leconfield.

The first day sees students in the classroom, looking at Norwegian traffic law and the Highway Code and moving onto braking distances and preparing vehicles for a harsh winter deployment.

The practical element kicks in on Day 2, with a look at vital stores (including safety equipment) and snow chains before moving on to the skid pan, where they learn how to cope with skids without the benefit of an anti-lock braking system.

Day 3 sees the students leave Bardufoss for the long-distance road drive, a trip of at least 50km which may take in Tromsø to the north or Narvik to the south, making a mental note of airports, ports and facilities such as hospitals along the way in case they are required to drive there on duty.

Day four of the week-long course is spent on specific vehicles, including minibuses, Service Land Rovers, Oshkosh tankers, Bv206 tracked personnel carriers and MAN trucks.

After more practical tuition in fitting snow chains and the like, the final day is spent on the recovery of vehicles, even down to such tips as keeping everyone involved to avoid anyone suffering cold weather injury.

Sgt Ellis said that although safety was paramount across the range, it is really apparent in the case of the 44-tonne tanker, laden with thousands of litres of aviation fuel – “it goes downhill sideways quite easily if you are not careful...”

The kit that really chews up the snowbound countryside is the Bv206, for which there is a special ‘Whiteshod’ course (as opposed to the Blackshod for normal terrain).

The 4.5-ton articulated Hägglunds all-terrain vehicle barely sinks into the soft snow, and thinks nothing of crawling up (or down) ridiculous slopes, as was demonstrated by Sgt Ellis on a tank obstacle course close to the old German airfield.

There is also a specific Arctic training course for air engineers, TEM 78, which covers a range of techniques and tips such as fitting and removing aircraft Arctic covers and pre-heating engines and other on-board equipment.

Some of the tips have been handed down from earlier Clockworks, such as the double-chocking of aircraft wheels overnight.

That came about after an incident when the wind changed direction by 90 degrees overnight and strengthened well beyond the speeds forecast.

When the engineers came out to the Line the following morning, they discovered one helicopter had skated sideways across the apron, ending up some distance from where it had been left.

As Maj Dave West, Officer Commanding Clockwork, said: “It is important to learn lessons here, even as simple as keeping track of your gloves while you work.”

“It is important that we keep the golden thread of expertise going, because it has been built up over 43 years.”

That kind of expertise is carried out into the field by people like PO Jim Barkshire, Mechanical Supervisor with 847 Squadron.

“This is my fifth Clockwork, and they do get easier,” he said.

“You generally get to know the lie of the land and what to expect.”

“It is not a difficult evolution, but the first time out here you are a bit starry-eyed.”

“Sometimes it does change – someone puts something into the mix to make it better (or worse), but so far this one has been one of the better ones, for sure.”

“The weather helps. Last time out here we were facing 25-30 knot winds with falling temperatures, and the decision was made to evacuate.”

“It was the right decision, because when we got back the following day most of the tents had been flattened.”

“The weather today is almost tropical, just around zero – in the first week of February it got down to -34° Celsius.”

“That was a bit of a baptism of fire, trying to acclimatise – but it’s all good experience.”

“Plus you get to see the Northern Lights, there is cheap skiing, and there are fabulous views.”

“The guys who have come out for the first time seem to be coping fairly well, and we are certainly keeping the aircraft flying.”

“The Lynx generally copes very well with the cold weather.”

On the ground, the latest Clockwork put more than 230 people through the Cold Weather Survival Course – either the basic qualification or the slightly-longer Military Tactics version – 58 did the snow and ice driver training (three more qualified as instructors), 30 qualified through the Bv206 Whiteshod course (plus one as an instructor), and 75 went through TEM 78.

In the air, 68 aircrew went through training courses, and by the time Clockwork finally runs down more than 700 people will have been involved as students, instructors or enablers and base staff.



● A Junglie Sea King on a load-lifting exercise during Clockwork

Pictures: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill (CHF)

, snow FOB...

the apron outside the hangar where they can be worked on

And the experience gained from working and flying in the Norwegian mountains is particularly valuable after extended deployments to Afghanistan, where there are similar problems to Bardufoss – but also some major differences.

One engineer from 847 Squadron pointed out that in May 2011, at the end of his stint in Afghanistan, the thermometer was rising above 40° Celsius as they worked on their aircraft.

Just eight months later they were doing the same work with the mercury at almost -30° Celsius. CHF are nothing if not adaptable.

For some of the aircrew Clockwork was a chance to polish up some skill sets, while for others it was a completely new experience.

Lt Col Jaimie Roylance RM, Commanding Officer of 846 Squadron, said as well as preparing for his role as CO of task group Tailored Air Group (TAG) he was “getting my own training, remembering how to fly in the snow.”

He added: “It also enables the regeneration of CHF’s capability to conduct amphibious operations because we have been in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

One of the Sea King pilots cutting their teeth in the north of Norway was S/Lt Natalie Grainger, of 846 Squadron.

“This is my first Clockwork – I only finished training on 848 NAS in December,” said S/Lt Grainger, who qualified as the best pilot on her course.

“I came out here on January 22, did the Cold Weather Survival Course and then went straight on to the flying – I did everything in a oner.

“I have been out here for six weeks, and it has been really cold, but very good, though. The training benefit has been incredible.

“I had a couple of flights where we had to put the aircraft down two or three times in a few minutes because the weather was so appalling.

“It is clear one minute and the next you can’t see your hand in front of your face.

“This is what I kind of expected – I knew it was going to be hard work, but it has been absolutely worth it.

“I have been training for four years, and to come out and do this straight away is a kind of treat for me – doing something fun.”

Flying in snowy mountains is probably as tough as it gets for a helicopter pilot, and journalists visiting Bardufoss were given a glimpse of what they have to cope with when two Lynx of 847 Squadron made a brief sortie into the high ground.

Flown by Maj Nick Venn RM, Commanding Officer of the squadron in the left seat, and Capt Ian Moore RM, our Lynx lifted off from Bardufoss and headed north over the village of Andselv to a snow-covered hillside where the aircraft came in to land.

As we neared the pristine snowfield on a gentle, angled approach, the aircrewman peered out of the side door and talked the pilots down, taking a small sapling as a reference point.

As we came within feet of the ground, the aircrewman confirmed the landing site was clear, then closed the door before the recirculating snow beneath the rotor disc caught up with us and enveloped us in a dense white cloud – a whiteout, the Arctic equivalent to the sand-blown brownout of Afghanistan.

Taking off again, we headed south, back across the RNoAF air base and along the Bardudalen valley towards Setermoen.

As we flew, the pilots and aircrewmen were constantly communicating – engine performance, the position of the other Lynx, weather conditions, reference points and escape routes.

The last point is of utmost importance; with the weather being so volatile, an aircraft can be engulfed by dangerous cloud within minutes, so every manoeuvre is undertaken only when a viable escape route has been agreed – usually a 180° turn,

though the aircrewman in the rear of the helicopter is always keeping an eye open for potential problems approaching from behind.

At one point the Lynx hovered just above a rocky shelf high above a valley, then swooped north again towards Bardufoss, threading through a high mountain pass above the treeline where the snowy valley floor and walls merged with the cloud overhead to create a white tunnel effect.

We didn’t get a chance to see the *pièce de résistance* of the Sea King pilots – setting the left wheel down on the 5,000ft pinnacle of Mount Istindan, south of Bardufoss.

“It gives the pilots confidence to be able to do that,” said Maj Dave West. “You wouldn’t drop troops up there, but you have to be very skilful to do it, and the confidence it gives you is great.”

Lt Adam ‘Spook’ Spike, Clockwork Training Officer 1 and an instructor with 848 NAS, said the pilots get through 19 sorties during the Clockwork training package, with just shy of 24 hours flying time including nine hours at night.

“We start with familiarisation, start-up checks and so on, because out here everything just takes a bit longer in 3ft of snow.”

The aircraft are loaded with Arctic equipment, such as smoke grenades for checking wind direction and as markers, and brakes, linkages and switches all freeze, and have to be heated up first – the helicopters are kept outside in ‘cold soak’ conditions to avoid problems such as condensation when heating up in hangars then cooling down outside.

Pilots learn techniques like using the tail rotor pedal to stop the aircraft yawing on icy surfaces when the main rotor is engaged.

Even getting to the taxiway can be a problem when the snow is piled high and the helicopter is engulfed in a white cloud.

Getting to taxiway may be awkward, having to get through 3ft of snow, because rotors build up recirculation. So take offs and landings are done as running take offs and landings to avoid being caught in a snow cloud.

Back on the ground, last-minute preparations were being made for the *grand finale*, the FOBEX or Forward Operating Base Exercise, and CPO ‘Topsy’ Turner, Senior Maintenance Rating in the Clockwork Air Engineering Department, has been busy.

Topsy and his small team do not touch the aircraft – that is done by the squadron’s own engineers, as the Clockwork team of five are enablers and provide guidance – but he knows most of them from his time on the squadrons back in Yeovilton.

He also handles engineering requests for the other Services when they bring their aircraft to Clockwork, including RAF Pumas and Chinooks.

Using his local knowledge and contacts, one of the Lynx has been in the rock hangar – a James Bond-style tunnel complex on the far side of the runway – for an engine change, and a Sea King has been out of service while the sealant for a replacement windscreen has been curing (slowly, in the cold).

But the FOBEX advanced party left Bardufoss on time, a convoy of Bv206s and an Oshkosh tanker moving out to set up the command post, engineers’ work area, refuelling point, perimeter security and the like, with MAOT (Mobile Air Operations Team) staff helping smooth the way for the aircraft.

Jungle helicopters followed on with troops and more equipment underslung, and the exercise was in full swing.

Although trained to operate a FOB for 30 days, the three-day exercise is more realistic, as it would be expected to move on as the troops cover ground on the way to their objective.

At one end, away from the camouflaged tents and command post, is the FARP (Forward Arming and Refuelling Point), and personnel observe one of the tactical tips they picked up in training – keep to a few well-defined tracks so the enemy cannot determine how many people



● PO Jim Barkshire removes the gust lock from the tail rotor of a Lynx at the FOB



● Sgt Jon Insley RM of 845 NAS demonstrates one aspect of living out in the field – the open-air FOB heads at Bardufoss



● A Junglie Sea King during a load-lifting exercise at Bardufoss

are at the base.

On the way back to the FOB is the heads – an open-air thunderbox screened from the FOB by just a sheet of material.

The back-to-basics approach is also evident in the accommodation hidden in the forest.

Lt Ben Daniel, Officer Commanding B Flight, 847 Squadron, is on his third Clockwork, and was ruing the fact that temperatures had risen.

“I actually probably prefer it at about -10° Celsius, because at the moment it is around zero and everything is really quite damp,” he said.

“At -10° Celsius or so the snow is crisp and clean and dry, and you can just brush it off. I would much rather be cold than wet and cold.”

The night in a four-man tent had been relatively comfortable – just boxer shorts in a sleeping bag was all that was needed as the four inhabitants lay top and tail – although the best arrangement is when one inhabitant is particularly short and can lie across the tent, giving more room for everyone (and, apparently, acting as something of a draught-excluder...).

With the completion of the FOBEX the Junglies could look forward to the ramping up of a training programme which culminates in this month’s Joint Warrior and warm weather training in the United States later in the summer.



● The advance party leaves the Clockwork base in Bv206s and an Oshkosh tanker to set up a FOB on the old German airfield at Bardufoss



● A Junglie Sea King on a reconnaissance mission seeking helicopter landing sites near Bardufoss

RNR pair join the Rock pool

TWO Royal Naval Reservists have swapped Civvy Street for a year serving as part of the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron.

The pair are helping to man the patrol boats that monitor the waters around Gibraltar, the iconic peninsula at the entrance to the Mediterranean.

ABs Alex Harper, 22, and Matthew Amelan, 40, have swapped their civilian lives to coxswain the three Pacific rigid-hulled inflatable boats (RIBs).

On opposite watches, they are an integral part of the squadron, which consists of two Scimitar-

class patrol boats – HMS Scimitar and HMS Sabre – and three Pacifics.

The role of the boats and people of the squadron is to safeguard the Rock's shores, while contributing to joint operations.

In addition, the Gibraltar Squadron provides a maritime quick reaction force to support ships in the area, and keeps a watchful eye on shipping passing through the Strait of Gibraltar.

The craft of the squadron are often busy supporting British and NATO exercises in the region, or other nations' maritime forces.

Achieving speeds in excess of 30 knots the RIBs are more than



● AB Alex Harper in his role as coxswain of one of the squadron's three Pacific RIBs, against the backdrop of the Rock of Gibraltar

capable of providing maritime security and monitoring maritime activities in the area.

One of only two permanently-deployed sea-going units in the Royal Navy – the other is Falkland Islands Patrol Ship HMS Clyde – the Gibraltar Squadron is staffed by 21 sailors.

Alex said: "I am really enjoying

my time at the Gibraltar Squadron.

"It can be a challenging maritime environment to operate, and so far I'm finding it particularly rewarding."

He added: "Joining the Reserves has been an excellent opportunity for me to learn new skills, take part in exciting activities and transform my spare time."

Matthew said: "I am enjoying my full-time Reserve commitment at the Gibraltar Squadron.

"My duty involves routine patrols off British Gibraltar Territorial Waters as a coxswain, and on duty I'm at short notice to perform a variety of tasks."

The Commanding Officer of HMS Scimitar, Lt Tom Knott, said: "As part of Future Reserves 2020 the Royal Naval Reserves will have an even more significant role.

"Using reservists for us is mutually beneficial.

"It gives us flexibility in the squadron whilst providing the reservists with depth and experience patrolling in a challenging environment."

The Senior Naval Officer of the squadron and Commanding Officer of HMS Sabre, Lt Adam Stevenson, said: "We're delighted to have Able Rates Alex Harper and Matthew Amelan as part of the Gibraltar Squadron.

"I have been particularly impressed with the dedication and commitment they have shown.

"The enhancement they have

provided to the operational capability of the squadron reflects highly on them and the wider contribution that the RNR are making to the Future Naval Force."

Alex has been a naval reservist at his local unit in Plymouth, HMS Vivid, since 2006.

Back in civilian life he is a trainee chef in the city.

In the short time since joining, he has had an action-packed career, conducting anti-piracy patrols onboard RFA Wave Knight and carrying out force protection onboard RFA Lyme Bay.

He has also been awarded an Iraq medal for the time he spent deployed on Operation Telic in 2010.

Since joining he has also managed to travel to the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Kenya.

Matthew is a member of HMS Eaglet, Liverpool's reservist unit, and since joining the Maritime Reserves in 2009 he has served onboard HMS Ocean on anti-drugs operations in the Caribbean and been part of the force protection team onboard RFA Cardigan Bay.



● AB Matthew Amelan practises his marksmanship skills with an SA80 on the weapons ranges in Gibraltar



● Lt Nathan Ditton (left) and Lt Cdr Simon Lewis, two Reservists supporting the European maritime security Operation Atalanta at the organisation's headquarters in Northwood

Officers support Atalanta initiative

NAVAL Reservists Lt Cdr Simon Lewis and Lt Nathan Ditton are supporting a European maritime security operation which is run from Northwood.

The pair have temporarily swapped their civilian lives to support Operation Atalanta, which has seen naval and military forces from across Europe monitoring and protecting the busy sea lanes off the coast of Somalia.

Nathan, who normally works as a social work team manager, is working as the Safety of Navigation Coordinator (SONIC).

This high-profile job involves requesting – via relevant national authorities – that navigation warnings be issued to merchant shipping about potential piracy threats, so that ships' masters can avoid those areas, thereby reducing their risk of being attacked.

This requires close liaison with other military organisations including NATO, Combined Maritime Forces and the UK Maritime Trade Operations Office (UKMTO), while it is also essential that an ongoing two-way interaction is maintained with the merchant shipping industry so that the naval forces can understand their requirements and pressures.

Nathan said: "I joined the Naval Reserves so that I could undertake a role completely separate from my civilian career – although the communication and planning skills that are required in social work are readily transferable to my current role within the EU HQ."

In the reserves Nathan is in

the Allied Worldwide Navigational Information System (AWNIS) branch, which provides safety of shipping advice to merchant and military shipping.

Lt Cdr Simon Lewis, who has been a reservist since 1990, has been mobilised to act in a logistics role within the HQ.

This job involves everything from personnel, mail, cargo, infrastructure to host nation support overseas for Atalanta.

An important aspect of the job involves supporting the Atalanta Support Area logistics team in Djibouti – three of whom are fellow Naval Reservist logisticians.

In his civilian career he works as a sales manager in a naval marine engineering organisation.

On his role at Operation Atalanta, Simon said: "It's been an interesting role and quite refreshing to serve back in a blue suit instead of the desert rig of Telic and Herrick – and great to work with new nationalities."

Atalanta was launched in December 2008 following the concerns of the EU on international maritime security and economic activities off the Horn of Africa.

As a result Operation Atalanta was formed within the framework of the European Common Security and Defence Policy and in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and international law.

The Council of the EU has decided to extend the operation until December 2012.

FIVE PAIRS OF TICKETS TO BE WON!!!

ROYAL NAVAL AIR STATION YEOVILTON INTERNATIONAL

AIR DAY

SATURDAY 23 JUNE 2012

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALKLANDS CAMPAIGN

RNAS Yeovilton will be commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Falkland's Campaign at this year's International Air Day on Saturday 23 June with an extensive flying and static display. Participants already confirmed include Swordfish, Sea Fury, Sea Vixen, RN Black Cats, Royal Jordanian Falcons, RAF Red Arrows and BBMF Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane. The finale to the event will be the renowned Commando Assault Demo with plenty of pyrotechnics!

There's plenty to enjoy on the ground too, including the Fleet Air Arm Museum, interactive military displays, classic and military vehicle exhibitions, funfair, simulators, helicopter pleasure flights, trade stalls and much more.

Enter our competition and you could be one of five lucky winners of a pair of adult tickets to this internationally famous event. Simply answer the question below, complete the entry form and post to: Yeovilton Air Day Competition, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, Hants. PO1 3HH or email your answer and details to: bm@navynews.co.uk

Closing date: 3rd May 2012

Question: What anniversary is RNAS Yeovilton commemorating this year?

Answer:

Name

Address

Post Code

Phone

Email

Entries must reach the Navy News office by 12 noon 3rd May 2012. Five entries will be drawn at 15.00. Each lucky winner will be notified by email, phone or post and will receive a pair of adult tickets by post direct from the Air Day office. The decision of the judges is final and there is no alternative prize. Employees of Navy News are not permitted to enter the competition.



TICKET HOTLINE: 08445 781 781
Tickets also available from our website www.yeoviltonairday.co.uk



● Royal Marines Reservists on a bleak mountainside make their way towards a group of BV 206s

Cold comfort in hothouse training



WITH cold winds bringing wintry showers to much of the country, a group of Royal Marines Reservists packed their bags and flew out of the UK.

But this was to be no break for the Commando Reserves, as their plane banked north-east out of RAF Brize Norton and headed for the icy Finnmark region of northern Norway.

Around 30 Arctic novices from across the Reserve were on that RAF Hercules, hoping for two weeks of winter training that would qualify them as 'Cold Weather Warfare Trained' and allow them to deploy operationally in support of 3 Commando Brigade in a cold weather environment.

The standard three-week syllabus had been condensed into a fortnight to create an intense and demanding hothouse course that would push the reservists physically and mentally in an environment which was heavy on the 'cold'.

The deployment was organised by RMR Tyne, and although the administrative preparations had started the previous October, the first real challenge was actually getting to Norway.

Against the commandos' (Naval-biased) expectations the Herc left just 20 minutes after schedule, and after a five-hour flight dumped the group at the airfield in Lakselv.

There was to be no warm welcome as the doors of the Fat Albert opened to a temperature of -25° Celsius, and although there was little snow there was plenty of wind and ice.

It was also getting dark – in the early afternoon...

This is typical for an area

almost 250 miles inside the Arctic Circle in January, and no one can fully acclimatise.

To avoid a cold injury at this temperature, any exposed skin must be covered and iced-up eyelashes are par for the course.

Unfortunately one Marine from RMR Bristol barely made it out of the terminal before a slip on the ice prematurely ended his chances of completing his first 'winter'.

The course was based at the Norwegian military camp at Porsangermoen – at 70° North, just 70 miles south of the North Cape, thought to be the most northerly garrison in the world – which provided fantastic facilities and plenty of hot scran courtesy of the visitors' Bootneck chefs.

However, members of the course did not get the chance to see very much of the camp as the majority of the training took place on the extensive, desolate and intimidating training area in the immediate area.

The course was run by RM Mountain Leader instructors, and true to their maxim that you 'never keep men waiting in the Arctic' the course cracked on with lectures, demonstrations, kit familiarisation, ski-fitting and running and jumping about to keep warm.

Bergens and sledges were packed to the gills with all manner of unfamiliar specialist kit, and the 'bizarre-looking' 'face mask' became an absolute must due to the cold.

By day three the first foray into the field saw the course living initially in ten-man tents, then four-man tents, putting their Arctic survival skills into practice and developing their basic skiing ability.

The unrelenting cold provided



● It was not all hard work and military drills – the reservists also had the opportunity to try activities such as ice-climbing. (Above) The full face mask is a vital piece of kit in the Arctic winter

no respite – the temperature dropped towards -30° Celsius and the wind continued to howl, making it even colder.

Training was only possible in bite-sized chunks.

The steely commandos gritted their chattering teeth, but the unimaginable cold was starting to affect training and vital time was being lost.

After a brief stint back in the camp to warm up, have a beer, watch some rugby and receive more instruction the course set out once more for the second phase in the field.

By this stage the conditions had effectively scuppered the opportunity to complete the

necessary tactical phase to achieve the full qualification, and a decision was made to aim for the basic Cold Weather Survival qualification.

As a result of a few cold-weather injuries a slightly-depleted course redeployed to the training area in 'perfect' conditions.

At -10° Celsius and sunny – at least for the few hours that the sun was out – the course made good progress.

Taking advantage of the excellent conditions and location, the commandos spent the remaining time consolidating their newly-acquired skills and skiing.

Inevitably in such extreme conditions, with the opportunity

to ski came more injuries, and several more of the course were forced to take an 'early bath' following an unplanned yeti (falling over RM-style).

Those that remained built and slept in their own survival shelter, and the course wound up with the traditional ice drills.

Back in camp there was a flurry of activity to pack everything away for the RAF flight home.

It even snowed for a few minutes...

The flight returned to Brize Norton ten hours behind schedule and the newly-trained Reservists and a few 'walking wounded' emerged from the C-130 to start properly warming up and reflect

on what they had just achieved.

It had been very, very cold and yet they had learned how to use their specialist kit and techniques to survive and operate in this extreme environment – and they had done it all with true commando qualities in doing so with a smile on their faces – especially when going for a dip in the lake for ice drills.

The commando reserves typically deploy to Norway for two weeks every winter, and plans are already being developed for the 2013 deployment.

It is definitely not for the faint-hearted, but northern Norway is spectacular – and the Northern Lights are an added bonus.

Sunderland stands in for Gulf port

RESERVISTS in the North East took the opportunity to hone their military skills in a typical Gulf scenario – without leaving the jetty at Sunderland.

Members of HMS Calliope's War Sea Reserve and Logistics Specialisations transformed the Wearside port into a Middle Eastern harbour, complete with an 11,000-tonne cable-laying vessel, in order to create realistic consolidation training in force protection and Forward Logistics Site (FLS) operations.

Working alongside the crew of the CS Sovereign, two force protection teams operated at a high-tempo battle rhythm to conduct an initial deployment, established watch routines, and performed weapon handovers as well as the monitoring and reporting of movements around the ship and port areas.

A team of logisticians used the port HQ to establish an FLS, identify local assets and services and establish lines of communication.

Field-style action messaging was provided by the Royal Marine Reserve Tyne.

Many of the 25 personnel involved in the day were familiar with operating on Royal Fleet Auxiliary and British-flagged shipping in the

warmer climes of the Northern Gulf, Muscat and Dubai, but were more than happy for the opportunity to refresh their skills closer to home.

HMS Calliope's Training Officer, Lt Cdr Graeme Deighton, praised both the Port of Sunderland and the owners of CS Sovereign, Global Marine Systems, for providing the training facilities and a current sea-going vessel that was representative of those the reservists would expect to encounter in theatre.

One impressed visitor to the exercise was the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, Nigel Sherlock, who was given a briefing by Calliope's Commanding Officer, Cdr Andrew Collier.

"This has been a fantastic opportunity for the Maritime Reserves to forge links between the local authorities and the wider maritime community," said Cdr Collier.

"Today's Royal Navy can be called upon to react to a number of scenarios anywhere in the world at any time, and the chance to exercise on a ship of this size and stature gives our team the opportunity to role play realistic situations that they may be called upon to act out for real."

● A force protection team from HMS Calliope on exercise aboard cable-laying ship CS Sovereign in Sunderland





Flagging up our customs

Thumbs up for Jolly Jack

MIKE North's letter about 'Natty Jacks' (March) brought back some good memories and made me recall my two main experiences with the uniform.

Being an ex-Arethusa boy, I was well-schooled in making yourself look 'tiddly' when on leave.

All the nice girls love a sailor – of course they do, so when I left the Arethusa and went to Ganges already wearing a good suit of navy blue, it seemed only right that I ended up helping the Instructor Boy as soon as we all arrived at the annex.

After the clothing issue, the Instructor Boy had the job of getting all the lads' uniforms, collars, silks and whatever ready for our first Divisions on Sunday and so I joined with him an extra ironing board and iron, getting all the uniforms pressed and ready for inspection.

As it turned out, we received good marks as the Instructor Boy and I made sure all was worn correctly, which was certainly a feather in his cap.

I loved the rig and always kept it clean and presentable.

The uniform served me well, inasmuch as it soon became my rail ticket home on countless occasions, as in the 1950s and early 1960s Jack was always ashore in uniform.

Get up into the main A2 from Chats or the A3 from Pompey – out thumb, and hey presto! "Hello Jack, going to London?"

How wonderful that the light blue collar and white hat could be seen so easily in the headlights of a car as Jack wended his way back after a long weekend.

In those days we only received three rail warrants a year, so the rig was always well-received, and yes, the girls in the dance-halls were very much available to dance with those bell-bottomed trousers.

Of course, when things changed for security Jack was no longer spotted on Waterloo or Liverpool St stations, and the image of Jolly Jack became a thing of the past.

What a shame this was!

I used to feel so proud and confident down in my home town, bells swishing away, and maybe a gust of wind blowing my Mediterranean Blue collar up to the back of my neck – wonderful!

Just to back up Mike North please lads and lassies, bend those hats a little.

A hat's not a hat till it's tilted!
– Doug Ballands, Bishop's Stortford, Herts

...TO ME the current crop of ratings' caps do not have any style



● "Now that's what I call a cap" – W S Neale in his glory days

at all. They look like plant pots no matter which way they are worn.

Which is why I've sent the photo (above) which shows that cap of mine which was really a part of me.

It was my 'duty free' carrier, 'rabbit' holder, holder for weekend requisites, and best of all, it had style.

How cool is that 'bow wave,' the 'tiddly' cap ribbon bow to front?

That cap – and I still have it, together with its cap tallies – could speak volumes. And as you can see, the collar is pale blue.

Seven horizontal creases in the bell bottoms, (28 to 32 inches wide) represented the Seven Seas we sailed.

A silver 3d bit covered over by the tally ribbon in the centre of the 'bow' which could be stitched on to the ribbon (anywhere) after the bow was made separately. I saw them, but never went that far.

Flap-fronted trousers, with canvas money-belt, and knee-high gaiters when required for parades, etc, not today's short ones.

The tunic was almost skintight (tailor-made) and often you would require your oppo (or others) to pull it off over your head arms outstretched.

The answer to Stan's question as to whether other branches did the same is soundly 'yes'.

We were individuals, we were Navy.

Those were the days!
– W S Neale, Bitterne, Southampton

I AM most grateful to you for printing my letter (March) concerning the right way up to fly our national flag and was interested to see the other letters on the subject.

I note your comment "...and as to whether it's a Union Jack or Flag we dare not go there."

I will take that plunge and guarantee to raise the blood pressure of several readers in so doing.

The terms Union Flag and Union Jack are both historically correct for describing our *de facto* national flag.

Union Flag is more formal and Union Jack more populist but either will do.

Nevertheless, despite the flag's longevity, no statutory instrument has ever declared it to be the national flag, nor has its name, design, proportions or colours ever been established unequivocally in law.

There is continuing debate and contrary opinions about all these matters, often strongly held.

Designed in 1606 initially for use at sea, it was later acknowledged that it had usage on land within the three Acts of Union (Scotland,

England and Ireland), but as a royal or government flag and not a national flag.

The current design is a development of the heraldic blazon created by the College of Arms in 1801 and flags in different proportions are in official use today.

I offer some references supporting the two names, of which perhaps the most significant are the parliamentary responses from 1908 concerning its status as the national flag, together with the remark by the Head of Naval Law in 1943.

1606: *Following its introduction by King James I/VI, the flag was variously known as the King's Jack, the Jack Flag or simply the Jack.*

1908: *House of Lords on July 14 in response to a question by Earl Howe, the Earl of Crewe replied My Lords... I think it may fairly be stated, in reply to the noble Earl, that the Union Jack should be regarded as the national flag, and it undoubtedly may be flown on land by all His Majesty's subjects.* (Hansard Fourth Series Volume 192)

1943: *Lord Mountbatten requested a flag for the Supreme Commander South East Asia, and used the term Union Jack.*

Following debate, the Head of Naval Law wrote: *Union Flag and Union Jack are both used in King's Regulations and other official books... Both terms may be taken as officially correct.*

Custom, practice and common usage over several hundred years may fairly claim to establish our *de facto* national flag as having two equally correct names – Union Flag and Union Jack.

Nevertheless, until an appropriate statutory instrument declares it to be the national flag, and defines its properties, people will argue about every aspect of it.
– Captain Malcolm Farrow RN, Assistant General Secretary Forces Pension Society London

...HOW many people know for sure which way up a Union flag should be flown?

Even if they did, they would need to be nearby and have a clear view, not the sort of conditions in which a vessel is likely to be in distress.

The plain fact is that it is an ensign flown upside down that is the sign of distress.

A practical example of this occurred in the Yangtze in the 1930s.

Chinese pirates seized a merchantman.

Her master persuaded them that if he did not show a flag in the morning it would be thought that something was wrong.

He hoisted his ensign upside down. A Royal Navy patrol craft moored nearby promptly sent a boarding party and dispatched the pirates.

– Charles Addis, Bury St Edmunds

Many thanks to vexillologist Capt Farrow for taking the plunge.

The debate was sparked by our photograph in January of the British Services Antarctic Expedition flying a flag upside-down at their base camp.

The expedition's press officer, Melissa Gerbaldi, told Navy News: "The flag was initially flying correctly and the incident occurred after a period of high winds which broke our flag pole.

"A group from the expedition were tasked with repairing the pole and strengthening it, and in their haste inverted it.

"They noticed the error shortly afterwards and rectified it, but not before some pictures had been taken and transmitted back to the UK." – Managing Ed

Sorry Gov, for off-cue Rock band

WHILST serving as a National Service AB in 1955-57 on HMS Albion I was instructed to learn to play the Bosun's pipe, practising in the cable locker so as not to annoy any of the ship's company.

On January 20 1956 I was called upon to pipe the Governor of Gibraltar aboard ship.

The Band of the Royal Marines and all the top brass were mustered on the quarterdeck.

Feeling quite nervous, I saw a man in uniform step on to the quarterdeck and I piped him aboard, while the band struck up *Hearts of Oak*.

The next person to set foot was a well-dressed man in civvies but I didn't bother to pipe him aboard.

It turned out that the man in uniform was a sub lieutenant testing the gangway, and the man in civvies was the Governor of Gibraltar.

After several minutes of embarrassing confusion, the band struck up a second time with *Hearts of Oak* and I did my best to melt into the background.

HMS Albion was a happy ship, and I was lucky to visit Denmark, Norway, Bombay, Aden, Ceylon, Singapore and Hong Kong during that time.

– Trevor Metcalf, Hatherley, Cheltenham



Boys' crowning efforts

THIS photo might be of some interest in this Diamond Jubilee year.

It was taken at the Festival of Remembrance in the Albert Hall in November, 1952, the first festival attended by Her Majesty as Queen.

It is a picture of a performance of club swinging and maze marching display by boys from HMS Ganges, finishing with this tableau of the new Royal Cipher.

I can't recall my position in the maze marching and club swinging but I was in the bottom leg of the 'E'.

The whole programme was devised and planned by the Sports and PT Officer in Ganges (possibly a Lt Hewson or Houghton) and involved some six weeks' training and rehearsal.

– J A Ennis, Carlisle, Cumbria

Opinion

HMS Victory is the most famous warship in the world, whose importance goes far beyond her value to naval historians.

Her spirit, which is almost tangible to the many thousands of people who visit her every year, represents the living heart of the Royal Navy and the sailors who have served in it down the generations.

Her most celebrated battle, Trafalgar, is redolent of duty, heroism and death.

But the years of preparation which led up to the famous victory required endless planning, training, logistics, and repetitive patrolling – a list not unfamiliar to our sailors today.

Keeping such a precious ship in good repair has required considerable funding for many decades, so it is excellent news that the MOD, thanks in large part to the generosity of

Sir Donald Gosling, has been able to transfer HMS Victory to a charitable trust, under the custodianship of the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

HMS Victory will continue to fly the White Ensign as a commissioned warship, but will be able to apply for further grants and also to raise income by carefully considered commercial enterprises.

The burden of her financial upkeep will no longer fall on the MOD, which can instead concentrate those funds on today's Royal Navy. All in all, it's the best of all worlds for HMS Victory and safeguards her future, while preserving her in a way that befits her unique status and symbolic importance.

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

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CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGS



No way to say goodbye

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.



ON October 10 1978, I walked through the gates of HMS Raleigh for the first time.

I was met by the CO of Raleigh and all of the training staff of Benbow Division, and formally welcomed into the Royal Navy.

The training staff were strict but fair and full of pride as they started the arduous task of turning us into matelots. Within 48 hours, they all knew our names, and not just because it was stitched on our kit, but because they took an interest in us.

As I left Raleigh some eight weeks later, I will always remember the words of my New Entry Instructor (CMEM Tarrant) as we prepared to move onto trade training: *Wear your uniform with pride, respect your peers and they will respect you, do not disgrace the Service, your ship or yourself.*

Be proud of what you are to become and enjoy what is the best job in the world. You will make mates for life, who will stand by you through thick and thin, through the good times and the bad, and even shipmates that don't like you will help you when times are troubled.

I hope that you never see the anger of war, but if you do, do your duty as you have been taught and you will be fine. As you progress through the ranks, support your seniors and guide your juniors.

As we got on the bus to take us to Chatham Barracks, he shook the hand of each and every one of us and wished us all the best. That moment has stayed with me all my career, and I hope I have always been what he taught us to be.

On February 28 I left HMS Nelson for the final time after a career spanning 33 years five

months and 18 days.

During my time I have had some terrific experiences and runs ashore, and some that should never be experienced by anyone, but I will try to forget the bad ones, and always remember the good ones.

The only downside to this was in my last week. After the fantastic welcome to the Mob, and the pride shown to us by our peers, to leave the service without even a thank you from any of the hierarchy was disappointing, to watch as an AB writer collected my ID card, and then tell me that if I wanted a veteran's badge, she could get me a form to fill in and post once I got home was a disgrace.

I was not even offered a valedictory certificate. Not her fault, but would it have hurt to have had someone say: *Thank you for the last 33 years. You have done your duty to your country and the Fleet, now go home and be with your family, for you deserve it.*

I am not bitter, just a little sad that it ended this way.

To those of you still serving, enjoy, and when the day finally comes for you to pack your kitbag for the last time and head off harry homers, just steal a glance at the ensign fluttering from the flagstaff that you have faithfully served, and feel that pride in your soul.

There is no feeling to compare it to, trust me.

Take care, have fun, and ladies and gents, it has been my privilege to work and serve alongside you all.

That's it, Endex, Return and stow all gear.

- Kipper MacRae ex PO(SC)



Each month Pussers Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tittle to the writer of our top letter.

This month's winner is: Kipper MacRae

Right hand down a bit and you'll soon reach Falmouth...

WAY back in the late 1970s or early 1980s I was on holiday with my family in the beautiful Cornish town of Mevagissey.

Myself, my late father and my older brother (who incidentally was due to start basic training at HMS Raleigh within months) were standing on the quay observing a rather large, frigate-sized warship apparently motoring in towards us.

The sight drew quite a crowd. Not too far out the ship came to a halt and a figure

was despatched to the foc'sle with a megaphone, whereupon he asked the assembled onlookers: "Can you tell us where we are?"

A little stunned but without the aid of a megaphone, members of the crowd managed to convey the location of the ship and, through gesticulations, the general direction of Falmouth.

After a brief exchange of thanks the ship withdrew and powered away.

My brother and I were

recounting the story recently and I was minded to write this letter, in the hope that sufficient time has passed that the events of the day can now be disclosed.

At the time I was an avid 'ship-spotter' and identified the ship as a Leander Class frigate.

Maybe other readers can fill in the details of how she came to be lost - and if she ever made it to Falmouth?

- Gareth Evans, West Byfleet, Surrey



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



● Lt Edwin 'Coops' Cooper of 824 Naval Air Squadron

Edwin takes the challenge that little bit further

LANDS End to John O'Groats is so yesterday.

Falmouth to Stromness in the Orkneys is the ultimate challenge for cyclists in 2012.

At the end of March as this edition of *Navy News* goes to press, observer Lt Edwin 'Coops' Cooper of 824 Naval Air Squadron at Culdrose set off on the 'home to home' challenge: from his home in Falmouth, to the family home in the windswept Scottish islands.

He is due to cover the near 1,000-mile distance in seven days with no backup drivers – with the goal of raising £2,000 for the 'Home to Home for Help for Heroes' ride.

In addition to the mileage Edwin reckons he'll have to climb 62,000 ft – more than twice the height of Everest on the roads of England and Scotland to reach his goal.

The 33-year-old Merlin flier is a keen endurance athlete and cyclist but the impending challenge is a tough one.

The more usual Lands End-John O'Groats ride beloved by fundraising military cyclists is a near-identical distance, but cyclists typically set aside two weeks for the journey – and are normally accompanied by a back-up van to support them.

In Edwin's case he'll carry minimal stores and supplies – the bare essentials of clothing, food and bike maintenance kit – but post additional stores, in particular

Carry on yomping

ONCE a Marine always a Marine – it must be the reason former Commando Thomas 'Taff' Davies can't give up the yomping.

Taff plans to do a sponsored walk from his old stamping ground of Arbroath, where his career began, to Poole, where it ended 25 years later.

Taff joined the Royal Marines in 1972 and served first at 45 Commando at Condor. When he left in 1997 he lived in Arbroath with his wife, Audrey, who accompanied him on most of his walking trips.

Audrey was diagnosed with

protein bars (he'll burn an estimated 8,000 calories each day of his ride) to the B&Bs in which he'll be staying on the way north.

If all has gone according to plan, he'll have spent the end of the first day in Tiverton, the second night in the Cotswolds, the third in the Manchester area, night four in Lockerbie, then Loch Lomond and Inverness, before the seventh night in the Cooper family home on the Orkneys.

The officer has been helping to instruct student Merlin observers aboard RFA Argus off the Cornish coast, but shipped his bike aboard to keep up his training regime. He says, however, that the challenge is as much about mind over matter.

"Endurance sports are all about setting yourself short-term goals – you just keep on hitting those little goals."

"Most people think the Highlands will be the worst, but Cornwall and Devon are probably the toughest counties – certainly in England. I have to climb 12,000ft to get out of them."

"After each of the previous events, I say to my wife: 'That's the last one I'll do for a while.' But I'm determined to push myself and Help for Heroes is a charity which is so close to everyone in the Forces."

So far around £500 has been donated to the cause. You can support Edwin – and follow his progress at www.bmycharity.com/h2hforh4h

cancer and died in 2005, which is why Taff has chosen Breast Cancer Care as one of his charities – the other two are the SBS Association and the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund.

Taff will start his epic journey in Arbroath next month (May) and will walk along the Fife Coastal Path, the Water of Leith cycle path, the Pennine Way, Limestone Way, parts of Staffordshire and Heart of England Ways, the Cotswold Way and the Stour Valley Way, ending his yomp in Poole in July.

To support Taff, visit www.justgiving.com/arbroathtopoole



City ship races to Red Sea

MORE than half the ship's company of HMS Westminster knuckled down in the Middle East heat to row the length of one of the world's greatest man-made waterways.

Some 105 sailors and Royal Marines aboard the Portsmouth-based frigate vowed to 'row the Suez' as the warship passed from the Mediterranean into the Red Sea – and into her operational theatre.

Rowing the canal – courtesy of rowing machines – has become an increasingly popular event for ships heading through Suez with the goal of covering the 162-kilometre (100-mile) length of the waterway faster than the vessel herself (which is usually around 12 hours).

The challenge for each participating member of the ship's company is to row 2,000 metres apiece in the fastest possible time with the quickest 81 times being aggregated to make the overall 162km length of the canal.

In the end 105 members of the Ship's Company participated and the aggregate time for the best 162km was an impressive 10h 27m 4½s.

The officers led the way, bagging the top four times, with the fastest two kilometres rowed by Capt

Chris Viggars RM, in charge of the Royal Marines Commandos detachment aboard the 'capital ship'; he covered the distance in 6m 19s.

Most impressive, however, was Lt Carl Isherwood who came third, completing his 2km in 6m and 55s. What made this an astonishing achievement was that this was the culmination of a massive endurance effort: over the previous four days Lt Isherwood had rowed the entire 162km himself (his total time for this impressive feat was 11h, 15m and 51s).

The junior officer's motivation was raising money for Great Ormond Street Hospital which is caring for his nephew, Ocean, who suffers from Hunter Syndrome, a debilitating genetic illness.

Lt Isherwood, a Royal Navy Commando, is planning to take part in the Marathon des Sables next year, a multi-day endurance race across the Sahara Desert.

Lt Isherwood, who lives in Portsmouth, said of his feat: "This was excellent preparation for the Marathon des Sables. I received superb support from the ship and am looking forward to raising as much money as I can to help Ocean and the other children who suffer from this debilitating illness."

Cars rally round for RBL and H4H

A NAVY commander will help two charities by driving five miles for every British Service person who has died in Afghanistan.

Steve Shaw, who works at the Royal Navy's headquarters in Portsmouth, will drive across Europe in the Rally for Heroes 2012.

A group of 50 drivers and navigators will travel via memorial sites at Dunkirk to famous race sights including Germany's Nurburgring and the principality of Monaco.

Cdr Shaw is the only Royal Navy entrant in the army-led event, which aims to raise £100,000 for Help for Heroes and the Royal British Legion.

Speaking at the launch at Thruxton race track, he said: "It's going to involve long days – around 500 miles each time – but we're confident we can cover the distance and raise a substantial amount of money for the two charities."

Steve will be driving in a TVR Chimera with his brother Don, who served in the Navy as a Warrant Officer before becoming Head of Rugby Operations at Harlequins.

The group will leave from the Top Gear test track at Dunsfold Aerodrome on Saturday August



18, stopping around Europe to raise more money.

Cdr Shaw said: "£100,000 may sound a lot but put into perspective, it is only £300 for each life lost."

"Whatever the total is will pale into insignificance when compared to the unstinting loyalty and bravery of the men and women in our Armed Forces."

"It also does not take into account the many hundreds injured on active duty or the

suffering resulting from conflict that is endured after they have left the Armed Forces."

Cdr Shaw was told about the event by Warrant Officer 2 Benn Laidler – the two are pictured above – who is in the Army Air Corps and also owns a TVR car.

Cdr Shaw said: "Benn effectively recruited me to be part of the team and I am now delighted to be working with him to meet the aims and objectives of Rally for Heroes."

St Dunstan's changes its name to Blind Veterans UK

THE historic charity for blind veterans founded in 1915 as St Dunstan's has changed its name.

In February 2012 it became Blind Veterans UK. The new name was chosen to describe what the organisation does and who it helps.

The charity's Director of Fundraising and Communications, Andrew Jones, explained: "Being the only charity in the UK for blind veterans, the new brand reflects much better what we do."

"The name Blind Veterans will allow us to raise awareness among the general public as to the life-changing services we provide."

The new name was introduced at the charity's three rehabilitation and training centres in Brighton, Llandudno and Sheffield, with the help of the Armed Forces.

In Brighton the Royal Marines abseiled down the front of the building, while in Sheffield an Army bomb disposal robot opened a curtain unveiling the new name, and an RAF helicopter delivered a new flag to the Llandudno centre in North Wales.

Blind Veterans UK is the only charity in the country for blind veterans and is committed to providing specialist support and care to more than 5,000 members and their families.

The charity believes there may be up to 50,000 people who could benefit from their support, many of whom do not realise they are eligible for help.

Retired Wren Sheila Withers Green, 88, who lives in Oswestry, has been a member of Blind Veterans UK for the last six years, since she lost her sight from glaucoma.

The charity has helped her take part in various courses, including arts and crafts courses at its Brighton centre, and computer courses in Sheffield.

Sheila, who worked at Bletchley Park in World War 2, has visited the Llandudno centre for a holiday.

She said: "Blind Veterans UK has a wonderful, positive spirit and offers lots of encouragement and support, enabling all of its members to be as independent as possible."

She added: "People didn't really know who St Dunstan's were, but the new name is excellent and has been chosen wisely."

"Blind Veterans is the most marvellous institution and I wish them all the best in continuing their great work."

RM veteran's dedication to his past

FORMER Royal Marine Nat Temple and his friend Chris Dodd have made a joint donation of £21,714 to the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund.

The two visited CTCRM Lympstone to meet the King's Squad – the culmination of 32 weeks training and a long-standing honour granted by King George V in 1918.

Nat served in the Marines from 1964 to 1976, specialising as a sniper and serving with 40 Commando and 41 Commando in the Borneo Campaign and Northern Ireland.

The veteran and member of the Royal Marines Association said: "Knowing money is going to help Royal Marines is fantastic."

"The professionalism and dedication of the Corps as shown to us at CTCRM was outstanding."

For Chris, a friend and colleague of Nat, this was his first visit to Lympstone. He said: "An outstanding day which showed me what a close knit family the Royal Marines are. The day brought a lump to my throat and made me proud to be British."



Gibbo just keeps on going

ANOTHER week, another £10,000 in the Help for Heroes kitty thanks to the efforts of the Navy's super-fundraiser – and walker par excellence – Andy 'Gibbo' Gibbs (pictured above).

The petty officer, based at NATO headquarters in Northwood, North London, hit the streets of the capital for his favourite good cause (for which he's so far collected a staggering £125,000): walking to the 12 London football grounds, finishing at Wembley in time for England's clash with Holland in February.

Last year, Gibbo clocked up more than 400 miles on three sporting-themed walks – taking the match ball from Wembley to Cardiff (and back again for the reverse fixture) for the England-Wales Euro 2012 qualifiers. He also carried the match ball for the H4H rugby match, taking it to Twickenham in December.

It took five days to get around all 12 league grounds – from minnows such as Dagenham and Redbridge to Premiership giants Arsenal and Chelsea – plus stop offs at St Margaret's station (used by rugby fans ahead of the England-Wales Six Nations clash) and Baker Street station in the heart of London (it's one of the main Tube exchanges for fans travelling to Wembley).

Fans at the England friendly helped fill two buckets with coins and readies – helping the senior rate to smash his £8,000 target by a cool £2k.

"I love raising money," says Gibbo. "Hate counting it though."

The capital odyssey began at Dagenham and Redbridge, then a short 6.3-mile stroll to Upton Park, home of West Ham United, before continuing to Leyton Orient, next White Hart Lane and home of Spurs, and finally, after a daily total of 21 miles, Arsenal, where, says Gibbo "the staff at

the Emirates were wonderful and couldn't do enough to help". They invited him pitch-side so he could take a few snapshots. A great end to the first day!"

On the second day, the sailor had a walking partner in the form of CPO JC Cameron Wood. The pair crossed the capital to Chelsea, who again allowed the sailors to the side of the pitch for the obligatory photos, remaining in West London to visit Craven Cottage, home of Fulham, and QPR at Loftus Road.

After collecting £800 at St Margaret's after the rugby game at Twickenham and £3,100 around Baker Street and Wembley ahead of the Carling Cup final, PO Gibbs resumed his walk crossing the Thames for a 12-mile trudge to Selhurst Park, of Crystal Palace fame.

For the penultimate day, he remained south of the river, departing Palace and walking to the Lions' Den at Millwall, where he was given access to the stadium and pitch side for some photos before completing the final leg to Charlton. Once at the Valley, the walker was again allowed pitch side.

With all grounds covered, all that was left was to walk to Wembley. Admiralty Arch seemed a good starting point for a sailor... arriving at the spiritual home of English football 10.2 miles later.

Throughout the support from the clubs and Football Association was first-rate – Millwall were "outstanding", Charlton offered "a nice cuppa" and the FA sorted out free tickets to the England friendly.

You can support Gibbo's ongoing efforts at www.bmycharity.com/DOINGITFORHEROES and follow his latest fund-raising activities via www.facebook.com/DOINGITFORHEROES or www.twitter.com/GIBBODIFH



● Jenny Hollington in HMS Warrior with Allen Parton's dogs EJ (Endal Junior) and Rookie and Des Cox, quartermaster of HMS Warrior 1860

Yomper Richie honoured in canine form

HOUNDS for Heroes has a new recruit – six-month old puppy Yomper Richie, who met his sponsors and some of the charity's volunteers at Crufts dog show.

Yomper Richie was named in honour of Richard Hollington, a Royal Marine Commando who became the 300th British casualty of the Afghanistan conflict when he died in June 2010.

His parents, Jenny and Robin Hollington, have found great comfort in their involvement with Hounds for Heroes since Richard's death, raising significant funds and helping as volunteers.

Jenny is currently organising the Hounds for Heroes' Summer Ball, which takes place on HMS Warrior, Portsmouth on June 15. She said: "Since finding them

on our doorstep, we've been right behind 'Hounds', and will do all we can to make them a success.

"Whilst nothing can make up for losing Richard, our dream that Yomper might one day be to another Marine what Endal was to Allen is a great comfort to us."

Endal, as many readers of *Navy News* will know, was the yellow Labrador working for Canine Partners who changed CPO Allen Parton's life after he was badly injured in the Gulf War.

Endal became famous throughout the UK when he was pictured helping Allen do his shopping, post his letters, and work the washing machine.

Allen later wrote a book about his life with Endal, who died in 2009. Allen registered the charity

Hounds for Heroes in 2010.

Now Yomper is going through basic training at the charity's Hampshire training centre under the watchful eyes of his 'puppy parent' Roma Fielding and her family.

He is being sponsored by Commando 999, a group of ex-Royal Marines all now working in the emergency services.

At the charity's Crufts stand they presented a cheque for £20,000 to Hounds for Heroes, which will fund Yomper's two years of training and eight years as an assistance dog.

Hounds for Heroes are unique in being the only assistance dog charity to completely fund their dogs throughout their working life.

Beat a path to the Beat Retreat

EVERY now and then the opportunity arises for us all to be a part of something that Britain seems to do better than any other country in the world.

Such an opportunity presents itself in June immediately following the National celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Musical support to these celebrations will play a vital role in ensuring that the Diamond Jubilee is seen across the world as a remarkable spectacle of ceremony and pageantry with all three of our Armed Forces Bands taking centre stage in London.

The Massed Bands of HM Royal Marines are the Royal Navy's musicians and have a reputation as being one of the finest military bands in the world.

Following hot on the heels of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, the Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines will once again perform their world-renowned Beating Retreat on London's Horse Guards Parade

in celebration of the birthday of their Captain General, the Duke of Edinburgh on June 6 and 7 at 6.15pm.

Only performed every two years, this magnificent pageant of military music, precision drill and colour dates back to the 16th century and is regarded as a piece of living history.

Included in the Musical Spectacular are the ceremonies of Beating Retreat and Ceremonial Sunset, which once witnessed on the hallowed ground of Horse Guards Parade are something that will never be forgotten.

Two hundred of the world's finest military musicians will be performing with all five Royal Marines Bands on parade.

Tickets for this magnificent event are available from £15, with all proceeds going to Naval Service Charities.

For more details and to buy tickets please visit www.royalmarinesmusicalspectacular.co.uk

Yorkie is stout-hearted

AFTER 30 years in the Navy Petty Officer Yorkie Stout felt like stretching his legs. So when he retired he walked out of the main gate of Faslane – and walked – and walked.

Yorkie took the long road south to his home county (the clue is in his name) and 13 days and 252 miles later arrived in Queensbury, near Halifax, to a warm welcome at his local, the George.

Yorkie said: "There was a fantastic turn-out to welcome me, with parents, ex-Navy mates, lifelong friends, and the local scooter clubs who escorted us in."

"The walk itself was good, I aimed at a steady 20 miles a day and friends and colleagues walked part of the way with me. The route took us from Faslane to Largs, Cumnock, Dumfries, Carlisle, Kendal, Kirby Lonsdale, Settle, Skipton, Keighley and home."

He added: "I asked for volunteers to join me when they could and told them to bring their giggle sticks with them – we had a good laugh."

Yorkie, 47, spent a large part of his career in Scotland, at Faslane and Rosyth. His ships included HMSs Antrim, Glasgow,



● Yorkie Stout celebrates his homecoming in style

Ark Royal, Dumbarton Castle, Anglesey, Shoreham, Bangor and Echo.

His home-town is in the heart of rugby league country, but having made his mind up very early to join the Navy, Yorkie dedicated his sporting ambitions to rugby union and enjoyed a distinguished playing career.

After 30 years in the Navy, he intends to spend his retirement

with his wife Heather, running his mobile caravan servicing company.

Yorkie aimed to raise £100 for every year of service with his long walk home.

He has already raised more than £2,000 for the RNRMC and money is still coming in.

To donate, visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/YorkieStout>

Liver birds are calling for Paul and Tim

YOU can take the man out of Liverpool, but not Liverpool out of the man, so the saying goes.

Perhaps that's why Lt Tim Johnson and CPO Paul O'Shaughnessy are heeding the call of the Liver Birds and returning to their home city to raise money for charities close to their hearts.

When Paul and Tim, who are now based at HMS Collingwood, in Fareham, decided to raise money on a charity bike ride, they agreed the destination should be Liverpool, 230 miles away.

The pair plan to set off from Fareham in June and cycle across country, avoiding major roads and cycling through the South Downs, Basingstoke and Reading, before stopping the night in Bicester.

On day two, their route will take them through Banbury, Stratford upon Avon, Kidderminster and Bridgnorth.

Finally, on day three, they will cycle through Cheshire and into Merseyside, stopping for a well-earned cup of tea at Paul's mother's house in Speke, before finishing their journey at the Liver Building in the heart of Liverpool.

Paul, 46, and Tim, 32, will be collecting money at MOD establishments en route and hope to raise at least £1,000 in sponsorship for each of their charities, the Royal National Institute for the Blind, the RNRMC, and Cancer Research.

Paul's mother, who attends Bradbury Fields for the Blind in West Derby, Liverpool, recently lost her sight due to macular degeneration, and Paul is keen to raise as much as possible for the RNIB, so they can continue their good work.

Tim was due to be married last year, but the wedding was cancelled after his fiancée's mother died from cancer, which is why Tim will be cycling to raise money for Cancer Research.

At 46, Paul realises that the journey will be challenging, but he feels he is up to the task. He joined the RN in 1982 and has served with the Royal Marines in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Iraq.

Recently he served in Afghanistan, where he worked for the counter-IED Task Force. He is a keen Everton supporter, but does not get to the game as much as he would like.

Paul's web page is at <http://www.justgiving.com/Paul-O-Shaughnessy>

Knocker aims high

AT THE end of March, a team of Naval Physical Training Instructors were due to be scaling the height of the Spinnaker Tower on a Functional Training Rig over the course of ten hours in Portsmouth's Guildhall Square.

Gareth 'Knocker' White is a former RN PTI, who after a history of competing for the Navy in rugby, boxing and soccer, suddenly found himself facing the challenge of Multiple Sclerosis.

This was seven years ago, but Knocker was determined to turn his adversity to the good.

Anything for a Life is a charity set up by Gareth to support people and families who are experiencing tough times through illness, injury or disease.

POPT Danny Fallon is a long-standing friend of Knocker, and is determined to raise as much money as possible to support his friend and his charity.

Find out more online at: <http://anythingforalife.com/> and <http://www.justgiving.com/anythingforalifechallenge>



● Lt Cdr David 'Topsy' Turner
Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell

Instructor passes milestone

A ROYAL Navy pilot has clocked up 1,000 airborne instructional hours whilst teaching trainee pilots to fly the Lynx helicopter.

Lt Cdr David 'Topsy' Turner, from Sherborne in Dorset, reached the milestone whilst serving as Senior Pilot on 702 Naval Air Squadron, the home of maritime Lynx training at RN Air Station Yeovilton.

Topsy joined the Navy in 1991 and originally flew the Sea Kings, serving in 810 and then 820 NAS until 1997.

He then undertook Lynx conversion and since has served at 702 NAS, 815 NAS and the Lynx Simulator Facility.

Whilst he undertook a short instructional tour at DHFS Shawbury, all of his other teaching has been on the Lynx, the majority being flown at 702 Squadron.

Topsy also flew for the Black Cats RN helicopter display team in 2004-5.

Lt Cdr Turner said: "It's a great personal achievement to reach this milestone and I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to teach for this long."

"Every day in the cockpit is different, and teaching always brings unexpected challenges that keep the job interesting."

"Ultimately, seeing people reach the front line because of your efforts is what it's about, and I still enjoy that to this day."

Topsy will come to the end of his tour at 702 in September and move on to another assignment, most likely away from the cockpit.



● LWtr Tom Keddy

Contribution recognised

LWTR Tom Keddy has been presented with a Herbert Lott Award for his "immense" contribution to the Cash and Movements Office in HMS Nelson.

Described as "an exceptional rating", the citation continued: "His customers receive the best possible advice, guidance and service regardless of his time constraints or workload."

"Utterly reliable with a can-do attitude, he put this to good effect assisting with the smooth transition of the SDSR Allowance review through presentations and workshops."

"He is certainly an example to others, not only within his branch but as a Leading Hand in the Royal Navy and rightly deserves a Herbert Lott Award."

Christening staged in Illustrious



● PO Jonathan Barnes and Michelle with Keeleigh Grace and Rev Martin Evans
Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon

A SAILOR from North Shields took the perfect opportunity to 'borrow' his ship's bell for his baby's christening when the vessel paid a visit to the Tyne.

The bell was that of helicopter carrier HMS Illustrious, which made a brief stop at PO Jonathan Barnes' home town.

PO Barnes is a catering manager on board the carrier, and he and his partner Michelle brought daughter Keeleigh Grace – who has just turned two – along to the ship for a special christening baptism.

The ceremony was conducted by ship's chaplain Rev Martin Evans, who was also in familiar surroundings – he served in the Diocese of Newcastle as a curate in the parish of Morpeth for three years before joining the Royal Navy in 1998.

The service was attended by around 30 family members and friends, many of whom travelled a considerable distance to attend – in one case from as far away as Ullapool in the West

Highlands of Scotland.

The congregation gathered, as is traditional, on the quarterdeck for the service, and afterwards the guests were hosted for lunch in the Senior Rates mess on board.

The Royal Navy's baptism tradition dates back several hundred years when baptisms were carried out in foreign ports, sometimes for infants born at sea.

Tradition calls for the child to be baptised in the ship's bell, which acts as a font, and for their name to be engraved inside the bell following the ceremony.

Jonathan said: "It has been an enjoyable and memorable experience for everybody and an honour that Keeleigh was baptised in such an amazing environment and in keeping with such a special naval tradition."

"I must thank everybody involved from HMS Illustrious who helped make the day possible, particularly Chaplain Evans."



● LStd Anne-lise Davis

Literacy effort is rewarded

A LEADING Hand has been rewarded for her sterling efforts in overcoming reading difficulties.

LStd Anne-lise Davis volunteered to develop her reading skills with the help of a tutor and a new initiative called the Six Book Challenge.

The challenge is a national scheme currently being piloted by the RN Education and Learning Team in Portsmouth Naval Base as part of a raft of support provided to sailors wanting to improve their education.

It invites less confident adult readers to read six 'quick-read' books in six weeks, earning a £10 book token and certificate for their efforts.

Anne-lise is keen to get promoted and knew that she would need to improve her English skills to do so.

Having plucked up the courage to ask for help, Anne-lise worked with RN Basic Skills Tutor Linda Wallace to develop her reading and writing skills.

She has now completed Level 2 Literacy, which she needs to be considered for promotion, and has gone on to achieve her GCSE English.

Anne-lise said: "The support and encouragement from my tutor is just what I needed to get me started. I have really found my confidence."

"Not only is this helping me at work but it's given me the confidence to take exams and get more involved in my children's education."

"I've been able to help them more with their homework and reading, and they are coming on leaps and bounds as a result."

Lt Cdr Beki Lancaster, Officer in Charge of the Education and Training Team in Portsmouth said: "The Royal Navy has Education Officers in every ship and unit across the country and actively encourages personnel to develop in all areas of learning."

"Reading initiatives like these help support and enhance operational capability at the front line by equipping personnel with increased written and verbal communication skills."

First book for Olly

A FORMER sailor turned illustrator is celebrating the publication of his first book.

Olly Oliver was a radar specialist in HMS Amazon and Navigator's Yeoman in HMS Roebuck, amongst other postings.

He left the Senior Service to pursue a career in illustration and graphic design, with his artwork being published in comics, books and magazines around the world.

A member of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Olly's first book ties in with his interest – it is entitled *Po-Tolo – Plan Bee from Outer Space*.

Olly wrote and illustrated the book, and there are plans for it to be transferred to television.

He recently returned to his old school to talk about the importance of reading – and addressing the problems of the loss of bees and other flying pollinators.

Artist captures a moment in history

FRIGATE HMS Iron Duke has had a moment in her history captured forever through a painting created especially for her by ex-sailor turned maritime artist Ross Watton.

The painting, which was recently presented to the ship personally by the artist, shows the moment HMS Iron Duke provided Naval Gunfire Support to operations off the coast of Libya.

Ross said: "I am delighted to have been on board HMS Iron Duke to present the painting."

"It is significantly different from my normal work as it's an action picture from recent history – an important event the ship is proud to be a part of."

"I aimed for it to be dramatic while remaining realistic and I am extremely proud of the finished piece."

Iron Duke's Commanding Officer, Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest, said: "For many months Ross and I collaborated over the detail of his painting and the ship's actions on the night of the July 20, depicted in the painting."

"He has captured the ship and the night perfectly, and for the many members of the ship's company who have bought prints it will serve as a tangible reminder



● Ross Watton shows the painting to Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest, CO of HMS Iron Duke
Picture: LA(Phot) Darby Allen

of a very proud moment in the ship's history."

"I think Ross has done a wonderful job."

For three consecutive nights Iron Duke used her firepower to destroy a gun battery outside the besieged town of Misrata and fired starshells

into the night sky to illuminate pro-Gadafi positions for NATO aircraft to destroy rocket launchers, fuel dumps, ammunition stores, artillery batteries and command and control centres.

Iron Duke returned from operations last July having spent

almost seven months east of Suez.

Ross has been responsible for the production of the centre page cutaway illustrations for *Navy News*, and throughout three decades he has also painted numerous ship portraits for commanding officers.

50 years and counting for Peggy

PEGGY Caren celebrated 50 years working as the tailoress at Yeovilton with a special presentation by Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral George Zambellas.

Peggy started at Yeovilton in 1962 when she was 23, after learning her suit-making and tailoring skills at Parsons & Shutes Tailors of Yeovil.

She had applied for the Yeovilton job after seeing the advert for a "high-class tailoress", and she still has her original contract.

The tailors' shop was situated in one of the World War 2 Nissen huts, long since demolished.

Back in those days, the skies around Yeovilton were full of carrier-based Sea Vixen jets, on which Peggy's husband Malcolm was serving.

Her first jobs were uniform alterations, stitching medal ribbons and sewing on badges.

"I charged thrupence for a badge and I would take about five pounds a week," said Peggy. Her husband would often advise about where the badges should go.

"Sailors' uniforms were called monkey suits; there were no fly buttons or zips back then – you had a hell of a job taking it off over their heads."



● Peggy Caren cuts her 50th anniversary cake, watched by Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral George Zambellas

Few sailors had a chest full of medals when she started. Nowadays they could have three or four and some have as many as a dozen.

It doesn't matter if they are a rating or an admiral, marine

or general; everyone is treated alike, and the shop is packed with uniforms of every rank and service.

"We can be so busy, but I wouldn't change it for the world," Peggy said, looking across at her fellow tailoress Brenda Purchase,

who's put in 27 years herself.

"We have a laugh and a joke with all the lads."

One of her regular customers is Admiral Zambellas. Others come from military bases across the South West, all seeking the service and charm of Peggy's little shop.

"Peggy is part of the Yeovilton family – everybody is thankful to her dedicated service," said the Admiral.

One of Peggy's fondest memories is of the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002, when she prepared all of RNAS Yeovilton's uniforms and medals for a big parade at the air station.

She and Brenda were rewarded with front row seats in the main stand, and they watched the parade with pride knowing they'd sewn all the medal ribbons and badges.

"It was a wonderful day which I'll remember forever", said Peggy. She also recalls the long hours it took to prepare the uniforms, when she and Brenda worked late and took work home at the weekends.

Any suggestion of taking it easy or retiring her needle and thread is dismissed straight away. Peggy said, "I love working here and I would like to carry on for as long as I can."



● **Martin 'Stumpy' Stoner**
Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow

Stumpy flies into retirement

A PILOT based at RN Air Station Culdrose has retired after clocking up 10,000 hours in a 40-year career.

Martin 'Stumpy' Stoner flew his last trip in a FRADU Hawk from Culdrose on a radar-controlled aircraft interception exercise.

It brought down the curtain on a career which began when Martin joined the RAF in 1966, rising to the rank of wing commander.

In the next 33 years he flew Lightnings, Tornados, Hunters and Gnats – at one point he was a member of the Red Arrows team.

He joined the Fleet Requirements Air Direction Unit in 1999, flying Hawks to provide realistic airborne threat simulations against ships undergoing sea training, whether acting as attacking planes or missiles.

The Hawks also fly missions for trainee fighter controllers and Airborne Surveillance and Control (ASaC) observers.

After his final flight, friends and colleagues met him as he climbed out of the cockpit for the last time, welcoming him back to earth with 'a glass of something cool...'

Calliope tour

STUDENTS from Whitburn Church of England Academy now know a lot more about their local river thanks to a unique learning programme developed by the Clean Tyne Project.

The project aims to clean up the river and raise awareness of environmental issues.

And the students began their programme with a fact-finding visit to the Royal Naval Reserve base at HMS Calliope in Gateshead, where they toured the buildings, watched a demonstration and talked about life in today's Royal Navy.

Olympic honour for Navy couple

ROYAL Naval Reservist Cdr Jane Allen and husband Frank Allen, a former Royal Marine, have been selected as London 2012 Torchbearers for the Olympic Flame.

The Allens (pictured right) were nominated and selected by London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) to carry the Olympic torch through Torquay.

Both Jane and her husband were nominated and selected separately, which makes it even more unusual.

Jane has over 30 years' service in the RNR, including six months' active service in Iraq, all fitted around a civilian career as an IT project manager.

A tireless fundraiser, on her return from Iraq Jane used her leave to self-finance a 1,200-mile solo walk from John o' Groats to Land's End, raising £12,000 for the RBL, for which she is a volunteer caseworker.

During 2012, at the age of 55, she plans to walk 5,000 miles around the entire coastline of mainland Britain. This will be a major (unpaid) personal campaign to promote and raise money for the RN's central charity before finally retiring from the RNR.

Cdr Allen said: "It is a great honour and award to be selected to take part in this prestigious once in a lifetime event, to be doing it as well as my husband makes it even more special."

Retired RM PTI Capt Frank Allen was a Commonwealth Games steeplechaser for Guernsey, a 3,000 metre steeplechase champion for Devon, SW

Cousins both run airfields



THE Commanding Officer of RN Air Station Culdrose took particular pleasure in welcoming his opposite number from Middle Wallop to the Cornish base.

Because Col Murray Whiteside is not just a fellow aviator.

He is not just a former schoolmate of Capt Willy Entwisle either.

And the two men have not just got a common career path behind them in terms of aircraft type.

● **Capt Willy Entwisle, CO of RNAS Culdrose (left) with his second cousin Col Murray Whiteside, Commandant of the Army Aviation Centre at Middle Wallop**

The two men are also second cousins.

The Army Air Corps officer, Commandant of the Army Aviation Centre, flew down from Hampshire in an Apache for a visit to Culdrose by the 22 Group Flying Training Command Board.

The cousins both flew Lynx helicopters at one stage, Col Whiteside the Army version, Capt Entwisle the Navy version.

Photographer LA(Phot) Dave Sterratt captured the moment for posterity as Capt Entwisle thought it highly unlikely the pair would meet up again in such circumstances, each commanding a busy military air station.

Party set to retrace Shackleton's route

AN exact replica of the remarkable boat which made one of the worst journeys in the world is going to carry Royal Marine WO2 Baz Gray, PO Seb Coulthard and four other volunteers on the same journey early next year.

Next January the six will guide the Alexandra Shackleton across 800 miles of stormy ocean from Antarctica to South Georgia before crossing 20 miles of the rugged, remote island to reach the disused whaling station at Stromness.

In doing so they will recreate the 1916 journey of arguably Britain's greatest polar explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, and his successful attempt to save his stranded Trans-Antarctic expedition.

In the century since Sir Ernest took his whaler, the James Caird, from Elephant Island to South Georgia to raise the alarm, no one has successfully recreated the entire rescue mission.

Come January, the Shackleton Epic looks to do just that. It has the backing of the explorer's granddaughter Alexandra, expedition patron, who launched the boat named after her at Portland Marina.

"It's a great honour to have a boat named after me and I'm very proud that this expedition is going to recreate for the first time since 1916 my grandfather's epic boat journey," his granddaughter said.

The 22½ft boat (pictured above right by LA(Phot) Chris Mumby) is a precise replica of the James Caird. Her crew will also endure



the hardships of that age, wearing clothing of the time.

All the rigging and features on the whaler have been faithfully reconstructed, and the crew will eat the rations of the day.

The only concession to modernity is present-day emergency equipment.

"We've taken away all the complicated aspects of modern equipment, and we've gone back to basics. It brings out the more resourceful side of you," explained Seb, based at RNAS Yeovilton.

On reaching South Georgia after 16 days – a journey

Shackleton described as "one of supreme strife" – the leader set off with two colleagues and scaled peaks up to 3,000ft, with virtually no mountain equipment or maps, to reach Stromness.

Even when he reached the isolated whaling station, it was several months before a rescue party successfully reached the rest of his men on Elephant Island. Every man was brought back alive.

Crossing South Georgia is where Baz will come into his forte as a Royal Marines Mountain Leader.

"It's only been done once before, it's going to be horrible,

damp, cold, uncomfortable, there'll be nothing nice about it, and that's why this will be such an awesome challenge," he said.

Beyond being a tremendous test of mental and physical strength, the Shackleton Epic aims to honour the explorer's legacy and show how human spirit and endeavour triumph in adversity – and demonstrate the impact of climate change on Antarctica. The expedition intends to film the effects of ice melt in the region.

You can learn more about the adventure at www.timjarvis.org/shackletonpic



● **Victoria McQueen with one of her paintings**

Artwork on show in London

A CIVILIAN worker at Clyde Naval Base was invited to submit artwork to a prestigious London show.

By day Victoria McQueen works for the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) organisation at Faslane, helping run the Submarine Command Team Trainer.

However, in her spare time Victoria is a keen amateur artist who has sold more than 100 paintings.

Victoria was asked to contribute to the Secret Art Show, an event run by the Public and Commercial Services Union in conjunction with the Tate Modern to showcase the creative talents of members.

The event took place last month at the Rag Factory, near Brick Lane, with the public being given the opportunity to buy the original artworks.

Victoria's painting, entitled *Boomerang Nebula* and thereby reflecting her other passion – astronomy – went for an undisclosed amount at the show.

The evening included live poetry, performance and talks from the artists. All money raised went to the Culture Sector hardship fund which is used by the union to assist members experiencing financial difficulty.

The next level

A WORKER based in Plymouth has been awarded an NVQ Level 3 Certificate in Community Development Work – the highest award yet achieved by Naval Personnel and Family Service (NPFS) staff.

Jackie Eades was presented with her certificate by Col Duncan Dewar RM at the Crownhill Community Centre.

Jackie, a community work assistant for the past four years, works with the Naval Area Community Organisation at the Radford Family Centre in Plymouth, supporting the community development worker in planning and delivering activities for Armed Forces personnel and their families.

Following in dad's footsteps

THEY might be hard footsteps to follow, but Christopher Durham is following his father and has joined the Submarine Service.

For his dad, Kevin, is no ordinary submariner – he has served on 21 patrols, which equates to more than five years beneath the waves.

Kevin is the proud wearer of a Gold Deterrent Pin, given to submariners who have completed more than 20 deterrent patrols, and it is believed that there are only around 25 of them.

Chris is still awaiting his first trip to sea in a submarine as he completes training for his Submarine Qualification at Clyde Naval Base – where his dad has just finished his final patrol in HMS Vanguard.

He admits that there was a lump in his throat when he walked down the gangway for the last time.

"I don't say it very often, but I've loved every minute of it. I am very proud to have been a submariner," he said.

Kevin, a communications specialist, was a late starter, joining the Navy in 1988 at the



● **Chris and Kevin Durham**

Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Sutton

age of 29 after a spell in the RAF and then time as a civilian in a sweet factory.

When the call of the sea came he went straight into the Silent Service and has spent 23 years on – in strict order – Renown, Resolution, Ocelot, Vanguard, Victorious, Trafalgar, Victorious, Vanguard, Vigilant and Vanguard. The 52-year-old Leading Hand

is taking up a land job at the RN Acquaint Centre at HMS Collingwood in Portsmouth.

Chris, 24, has already seen service in Afghanistan with the Army, but has now made the switch to submarines.

He's now studying Strategic Weapons Systems, and will start collecting missions for his own pin.



Standard bearers compete

THE National Standard Bearers competition takes place at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth on May 12, and entries must be in by April 15.

The event is open to area standard bearers, deputy area standard bearers and the serving National Standard Bearer and Deputy.

Where an area has not held a competition, a nominated standard bearer can enter.

Deputies are to be equipped with their branch standard and all associated equipment – sling, gloves and drapes.

All trophies are to be returned (cleaned and polished) on the day of the competition.

Competitors are to make their own arrangements for accommodation, bearing in mind that the Royal Maritime Club is hosting a major reunion that weekend, and all Senior Rates mess double rooms are booked up.

Names of competitors should be forwarded to Mick Kieran (NCA) at linda.kieran@virgin.net or to Mick at 38 Rookery Lane, Keresley, Coventry, West Midlands CV6 4HE.

Special callsigns

THE Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society is to run a special event amateur radio station at HMS Collingwood's open day.

It is expected that the call sign GB6COD (Collingwood Open Day) will be used again at the event, on Saturday May 26.

The station will be operational on all amateur bands from 1.8MHz to 440MHz, and the society HQ station will be open to the public from 0930 to 1800.

Collingwood's open day will also feature the RN Field Gun competition, the Royal Marines Band Collingwood and a funfair.

A special callsign is also expected to feature at an association social event in the autumn, held in Coventry.

Highlight of the three-day event will be a gala dinner to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee on Saturday September 15.

A coach trip is planned for earlier that day to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, and the cost is included in the overall price – £125 per person for three nights DBB, or £105 for two nights and £80 for one night.

Non-members are welcome but numbers are limited so bookings will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

For full details of the Coventry social event email the organiser at g4beq@btinternet.com

Contact the society by post at RN Amateur Radio Society, HMS Collingwood, Newgate Lane, Fareham PO14 1AS, or see the website www.rnars.org.uk

Plaque installed

A MEMORIAL plaque honouring the memory of Royal Navy Boy Seamen has been installed in Portsmouth Cathedral.

A dedication service for the new memorial was due to be held as *Navy News* went to press.

Ex-Greenies see how training has changed

THE biting March wind cutting across the 197 acres of the Maritime Warfare School, HMS Collingwood, failed to chill the spirits of ex-Royal Navy Electrical branch members and their wives, as they returned to their old stamping ground to see training 2012-style.

The party of 21 was first directed to the wardroom on arrival, for both tea and coffee and a briefing by Cdr Giles on changes in the department since their time in the Royal Navy.

They were then taken to the missile outside Atlantic Building for a photo of the president Mike Crowe presenting a plaque of the Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association to Cdre Mike Mansergh, the CO of the establishment, who in turn presented a copy of *The Greenie*, the history of the Electrical Branch, to the president.

Under the direction of Lt Greg Bartram, who organised the programme, the visitors saw various classrooms where instructors explained the stages and methods of the 'hands-on' instruction.

A demonstration of the Phalanx gun then took place.

Based on the old Gatling gun principle, this six-barrelled model fires 47 projectiles per second, and its ability to lock on to a target was shown in the training room.

Then it was on to the bridge of a warship...

The veterans joined the ship as it left Plymouth Sound, passing RN and commercial vessels – all on a very realistic simulator, of course.

Indeed, it was so lifelike that the instructor asked the guests to turn around and look at a doorway to prove that the deck did not heave and bank as the virtual ship turned.

A leisurely lunch was served in the wardroom before they visited the HMS Collingwood Museum, followed by tea and coffee back in the Wardroom before departure.

The party was very pleased to see that the very high standard of teaching and training, whilst done in a different manner to that carried out years ago, has not dropped back in any way – they believed that it has improved, and that the latest technology is incorporated wherever possible.

It is hoped further visits will be arranged, taking in other parts of the massive training establishment – and one or two are hoping there might even be the opportunity to

get their boots polished and join one of the parades...

The visitors noted that HMS Collingwood is for Weapons Engineering and Control covering radio and radar as well.

The old 'Electrical' side of

things (the generation and distribution of electricity and its use in motors, lighting, fans and the like) is now carried out at HMS Sultan – where a similar visit is planned....



LOCAL fundraising is the staple fare for most branches of the RNA, but these three went a little further afield to help their shipmates at Stafford. Alex Stockton (left), Barry Roberts (centre) and Russell Jones completed the 42-mile Snowdon Cycle Marathon last month, raising £200 for the branch while getting wet, bedraggled and tired in the process. The trio completed the marathon in three hours 20 minutes

Force Z ships memorial dedicated



A MEMORIAL has been dedicated at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to the those who died in the sinking of HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse on December 10 1941.

Pictured (left) holding the White Ensign is 88-year-old John Hall with three more of the nine survivors who attended the ceremony at the end of last year.

John had just turned 18 when his ship, the battleship Repulse, was sunk by the Japanese off the east coast of Malaya.

Repulse and battleship Prince of Wales formed the core of Force Z, which had set out from Singapore to deter a Japanese landing, but which fell victim to heavy air attacks by the Japanese.

Having put up a tremendous defence against wave after wave of attackers, the ships sank within an hour of each other.

A total of 840 men went down with the two ships – 513 in Repulse, 327 in Prince of Wales – and the memorial also pays tribute to the survivors of the sinking who were taken prisoner-of-war by the Japanese and subsequently died in captivity.

Among those lost in the action were Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Fleet, and the CO of Prince of Wales, Capt John Leach.

Force Z also included E-class destroyers Electra and Express, old S-class destroyer Tenedos and Australian V and W-class destroyer HMAS Vampire, all of which survived the attack.



Yorkshire branch of the Fleet Air Arm Association pays tribute to Lt Cdr Eugene Esmonde VC at Thurgoland, the village where the pilot was born

Brave warriors are honoured

ON March 1 1909 Eugene Esmonde and his twin brother James were born in the tiny village of Thurgoland, which lies in the foothills of the Pennines near to Barnsley and Sheffield.

Eugene went on to be one of the outstanding Royal Navy heroes of World War 2, being awarded the DSO for leading 825 Naval Air Squadron's attack on the German battleship Bismarck.

He later gave his life in the so-called Channel Dash – an attempt to stop the German battleships Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen escaping through the English Channel back to their home ports. For his courage and bravery Esmonde was posthumously awarded the VC.

As reported in last month's *Navy News*, members of the Yorkshire Fleet Air Arm Association (FAAA) honoured their fellow Tyke at a memorial ceremony in his home village on February 12.

Although there was a stone vase with his name on it, it is believed that no other service had ever been held in his honour.

The service took place in the Holy Trinity Church, conducted by Rev Canon Keith Hale.

Londonderry host Atlantic weekend

LONDONDERRY branch will be holding a Battle of the Atlantic commemoration event next month.

One highlight of the weekend will be the dinner on Saturday May 5 at the City Hotel starting at 2000, cost £30.

Any shipmates who wish to attend the dinner should contact S/M Frank Brown at 4 Myrtlefield Road, Kilfennan, Londonderry BT47 5PG or email frankjbrown@ntlworld.com

The following morning there will be a church service and parade review.

Personnel should muster at the Services Club in Spencer Road at 1015, with the parade marching off to All Saints', Clooney, at around 1030, to arrive ten minutes later and be seated by 1045.

The service will begin at 1100, and participants will march back to the Services Club at 1215, with the salute being taken en route.

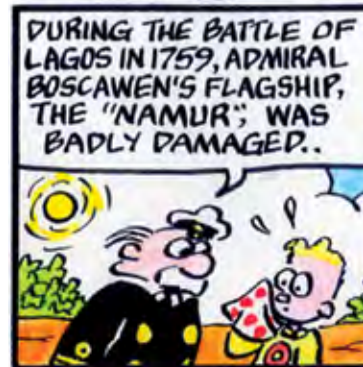
President mourned

HUNTINGDON and District branch are mourning the passing of their president S/M Chris Thomas, who died aged 80.

Chris had happy memories of his time as a National Serviceman in the RN, and as a lieutenant he was Navigating Officer on board HMS Magpie on a 'flag-showing' commission across the globe.

Chris played rugby for the Royal Navy and the Barbarians, was a member of the MCC and was also a keen yachtsman.

Naval Quirks





Poignant date for Concord

APRIL 23 2012 will be a poignant day for crew members of HMS Concord who served in the 1951-53 commission.

For that date marks the 60th anniversary of the ship's Y gun turret being struck by a North Korean shell, killing two sailors and wounding several others.

One of the wounded, AB James Evans DSM, was so traumatised that several years later he took his own life – a victim of what we now know as post-traumatic stress.

During that three-week patrol off North Korea in 1952, Concord fired 2,700 rounds, destroying railway lines and gun installations.

The brother of AB Evans campaigned for his name to be entered on the war memorial in his home town of Sandbach but the bid received no support until a letter from the HMS Concord Association and Admiral Sir Charles Mills persuaded the local authority to add his name.

So wherever surviving members of the 51-53 Commission are on April 23, they will pause for a moment to remember their shipmates ABs Alan Greenwood, John Bravington and James Evans.

Concord was launched on May 14 1945 and went to the Far East in 1947 as part of the 8th Destroyer Squadron.

She returned to the UK to pay off into reserve in 1958 and became harbour training ship to HMS Caledonia, before being towed to Inverkeithing on October 26 1962 to be broken up.

The HMS Concord Association was formed in 1995 and decommissioned in May 2010, though members still attend 8th Destroyer Squadron Association reunions in Scarborough.

The Association has published a book entitled *The Life and Times of HMS Concord*, and any former shipmates who did not join the association and would like a copy can obtain one from Alan Ausden, 55 Fairway Drive, Hythe SO45 5GX, tel 023 8084 6765.

Ton-class books mark group's anniversary

IT'S more than our lives are worth at *Navy News* to claim any association is the biggest, but we can state with some confidence that there were more Ton-class ships built than any other class – 118 in total.

And when two new books about the Ton class were launched in Portsmouth, more than 140 guests turned up – proof of the enduring appeal of these small, wooden ships in which so many sailors learnt their skills after World War 2.

"With about 1,300 members, we think we're the biggest RN ship or class association, although our friends in the *Algerines* run us pretty close," said Peter Down, honorary secretary of the Ton Class Association (TCA).

A project team comprising TCA members Rob Hoole (editor), Peter Harrison, Peter Down, Stuart Johnson, TCA chairman John Soanes and TCA historians Jeremy Stewart, Bob Dean and Rick Furnival spent three years collating information for the books, *Jacks of All Trades* and *Last of the Wooden Walls*, which were published to mark the 25th anniversary of the association's founding in 1987.

When the association appealed for help in putting the books together, anecdotes, photographs, and information poured in from all over the world.

"We spent the first six months putting together the contents and chapter headings and refined them over time," said Peter.

He added: "Despite the fact that sailors are very good at standing at the bar and talking, getting them to pick up a pencil and put it to paper is a different challenge."

"But despite that, we got



● Cdr Martin Mackey (Commander Second MCM Squadron), Capt Mark Durkin (Captain MFP), Capt Mike Barrow (CO of HMS Glamorgan in the Falklands) and John Soanes (Chairman of the Ton Class Association) at the Ton Class Association book launch

enough material to fill the books ten times over, some of which will go into future editions of our magazine *Ton Talk*."

He added: "Ton-class ships served all over the world. 37 were transferred to other navies and we've had contributions from as far afield as Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Argentina and the USA, both from retired Royal Navy men and some from those other navies."

The Prince of Wales famously served in a Ton-class – HMS *Bronington* – and as President of the association, wrote the foreword to *Last of the Wooden Walls*, in which he said it was one of the best times of his life – despite the ships' reputation for rolling, even on wet grass.

The two books were launched

at the Princess Royal Gallery of the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth, where the guests included a group of Norwegian minesweeper veterans, senior officers from the current Mine Countermeasures force, and three young Royal Marines from Lima Company 42 Cdo, which was involved with Ton-class patrol ships in the Limbang Raid in December 1962 at the outset of the Indonesian Confrontation.

The chairman of the TCA, Rear Admiral John Lippiett – who commanded HMS *Shavington* in the mid-1970s – presented copies of the books to some of the guests, including Lady Cox, widow of Admiral Sir John Cox, the association's first president.

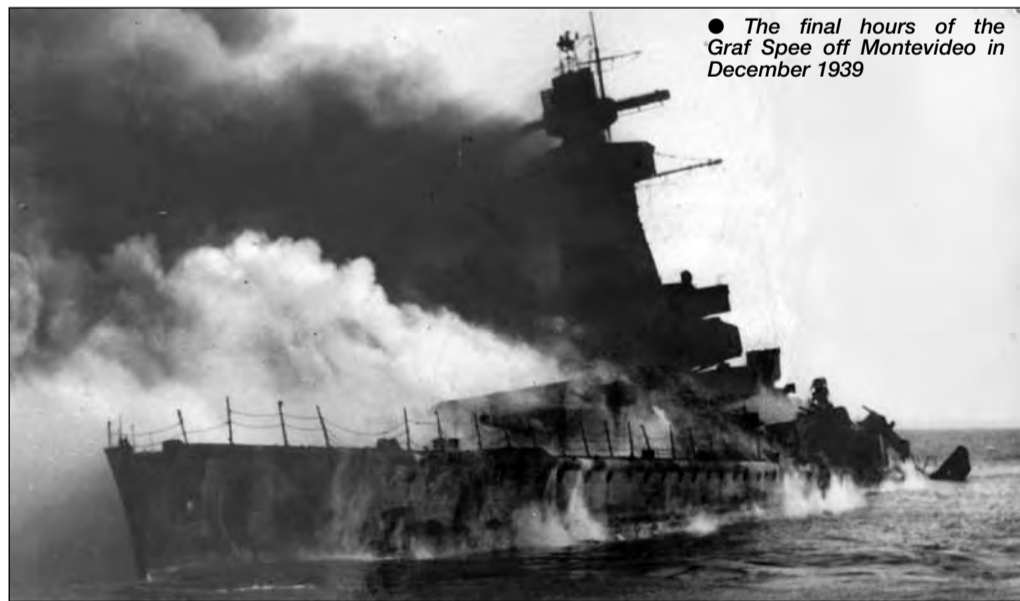
Rear Admiral Lippiett said: "Many of us cut our teeth in

these much-loved ships and I wish we, like the Norwegians, had preserved a minesweeper."

He added: "But we have to look forward, not back, and we are always keen to welcome to TCA new members who served in Tons."

Alongside the 90 or so members of the TCA and wives who attended the launch were representatives of the RNA, the *Algerines* Association and Sea Cadet units supported by the TCA, plus the builders of radio-controlled models of three generations of mine countermeasures vessels from World War 2 to the present day.

● We intend to review *Last of the Wooden Walls* and *Jacks of All Trades* in our May edition.



● The final hours of the Graf Spee off Montevideo in December 1939

Three battles commemorated

STEPHEN and Jonathan Harwood, son and grandson of Cdre (later Admiral Sir Henry) Harwood, gave a talk at Catherington in November 2010 on the three South Atlantic battles in 1914 and 1939.

At the Battle of Coronel on November 1 1914, Admiral Graf Spee, leading a German squadron that included the two armoured cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, attacked a British squadron of cruisers under Rear Admiral Cradock, sinking two ships and killing Cradock.

At the Battle of the Falkland Islands on December 8 1914, Admiral Sturdee, with the battlecruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, sent out by Churchill and First Sea Lord Admiral Fisher to avenge Coronel, killed Admiral Graf Spee and sank his ships.

In World War 2, Cdre Harwood

commanded the British cruisers *Exeter*, *Ajax* and *Achilles* at the Battle of the River Plate on December 13 1939, after which Captain Langsdorff scuttled the German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee in the River Plate off Montevideo on December 17 and committed suicide.

Funds were raised through the talk for the installation of a plaque to remember all who died in these three battles.

This was dedicated by Rev Gill Hill at All Saints Church, Catherington, where a wreath was laid by great grandson Harry Harwood (pictured below).



Falmouth pays tribute to Falklands

FALMOUTH branch are hosting a lunch to mark the 30th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict this month.

The lunch will be at the Falmouth Beach Hotel on Saturday April 14, 1230 for 1300.

Guest speaker will be Admiral Sir Michael Layard, Principal Naval Officer on the Atlantic Conveyor, who went on to command RN Air Station Cudmore and was later appointed Second Sea Lord.

Tickets for the lunch are £15 each, and can be obtained from the branch secretary S/M Ron Burdekin, tel 01326 221851 (home), 07810 404418 (mobile) or email ronburdekin@yahoo.com

Space is limited, as the restaurant has a maximum capacity of 150.

On the same day, before the lunch, a short memorial service and wreath-laying ceremony will be held at the War Memorial in Kimberley Park, Falmouth, with a muster at 1045.

The service will be conducted by branch chaplain Rev Stephen Tudgey.

Standards of RNA branches and other organisations are welcome, as are approaches by others who wish to lay a wreath.

Those who wish to attend in any capacity should also let S/M Burdekin know in advance.

John is mourned

CHATHAM branch lost one of their longest-serving members when S/M John Rudd crossed the bar shortly before Christmas.

John joined the Mob in 1948, retiring as a Chief Writer in 1970.

He served in HMS *Hermes*, and was Lord Mountbatten's chief writer in HMS *Surprise*.

His stints in stone frigates including *Ceres*, *Pembroke*, *Rooke* and in Malta allowed him to indulge in his passion for hockey, a sport in which he represented the Royal Navy.

Although increasingly affected by Parkinson's disease in his latter years, John continued to attend Chatham meetings when he could, thanks to the efforts of his wife Audrey, and he attended his last meeting just ten days before his death at the age of 81.

Club celebrates

THE Naval and Military Club, one of London's oldest private members' club, has celebrated its 150th birthday.

It is known unofficially as the In and Out Club, because of the prominent signs marking the entrance and exit of the original Piccadilly site.

Established in 1862 by a group of Army officers, its naval and military heritage remains a vital part of its character though membership has long since been opened to the wider public.

Past members have included Capt Robert Falcon Scott and Naval Intelligence Officer Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond.

HQ open days

THE RNA is opening up its headquarters again this year for three open days – although one is already at full capacity.

April 27 and October 5 still have spaces available, though the July 6 event is fully booked.

For more details contact RNA HQ on 023 9272 3747 or email nigel@royalnavalassoc.com

Doors remain open

AFTER 34 years the Nautical Club in Birmingham is still going strong – contrary to some beliefs.

The club is 'home' to more than 15 naval associations, representing groups including the Fleet Air Arm, Royal Marines, Wrens and engine room personnel.

It is open every day except Monday and Thursday.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our February edition (right) was W-class destroyer HMS *Wizard*, which was converted to a Type 15 frigate.

Mr P Musker, of Chester, wins the £50 prize for providing the correct answer.

This month's mystery ship, above, commissioned in the spring of 1985, was designed for deepwater team minesweeping and assigned to a Scottish RNR division.

But under a review in the 1990s she and many of her sisters were withdrawn from RN service and subsequently sold abroad – this ship was sold to the Bangladesh Navy, with whom she is still in service today.

(1) What was her name in the Royal Navy, and (2) What is her name in the Bangladesh Navy?

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 May 16 2012. 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 June edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 206

Name

Address

My answers (1)

(2)

Keep up to date with the NFF

HIGHLIGHTS in the Spring 2012 edition of *Homeport* include: updated information on the electronic e1132 (Service Accommodation application form), an insight into Initial Naval Training at HMS Raleigh, details on the Boost for the Troops initiative, and information on improved access to internet shopping for those living at BFPO addresses, writes Jane Williams of the NFF.

There is also an article on study support for young adults, a useful series of financial top tips from the MOD, an article on drugs and alcohol misuse, and information on the mental health charity Forces in Mind Trust.

You could be in with a chance of winning some great prizes in the Reader Offer section; including a night's B&B stay in a luxury hotel.

To sign up to the *Homeport* mailing list please complete the online request form and we will post the magazine out to you free of charge: www.nff.org.uk

Armed Forces Pay Award 2012

The 2012 report of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) has been published. The Government has accepted the recommendations in full with implementation effective from April 1 2012.

Personnel will see the following impacts of the award, where relevant, in their April 2012 pay statements:

- An increase of £250 for full-time personnel earning £21,000 or less (inclusive of X-Factor) – in line with the Government's 2010 Emergency Budget;

- An enhancement to Longer Separation Allowance (LSA) – A reduction in the qualifying interval between each of the 14 levels for LSA from 240 to 180 days;

- Overall increases to accommodation charges ranging from 2 pence to 76 pence a day – Rental element increases in line with the rental component of the Retail Price Index (RPI). Accommodation charges include a discount to reflect the disadvantages of living in Service accommodation;

- An increase in the Daily Food Charge of 21 pence a day – to reflect the trend of rising food prices;

- From April 1 2013, the harmonisation of starting pay for Direct Entrant graduate and non-graduate officers.

Full information is available in the Defence Internal Brief 2012 DIB/14 on the Defence Intranet, or follow the link via www.nff.org.uk.

There is detailed information including the revised rates of pay for personnel earning £21,000 or less (inclusive of X-Factor) per annum, and examples of the effect of the 2012



AFPRB recommendations for those based in the UK and those deployed on operations.

The 2012 Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) report has also been published, but in light of the pay freeze, makes no pay recommendations for the more senior Military officers.

Following the AFPRB report's publication on March 13 many forums and media outlets have picked up on the subject, including the printing of an open letter to the Chancellor in the press from some former Armed Forces leaders, pressing the Chancellor to review his budget announcements made last autumn regarding pay awards for serving personnel...

What do you think? We meet with the AFPRB later this year. Let's really make it count.

What comments would you like to make? Please use the poll on the NFF website to post your feedback... www.nff.org.uk

Council Tax discounts: are you clued in?

The NFF has been alerted to two cases whereby Naval Service personnel have applied for a Council Tax discount under the terms of the Armed Forces Covenant but been told that they will not receive any discount.

The case has been appealed and gone to the Local Government Ombudsman. It has also been supported by the local MP and a Minister. The result?

The Council decides whether it wants to award a discount or not.

Our serving personnel now face a postcode lottery when buying houses. We don't believe this is right.

If you are either moving into an area or if you are vacating your property because the Service

has assigned you a job elsewhere the message is, check with your local council what their policy is, don't assume the answer...

If you have any experiences on this subject, then please get in touch, we would welcome your feedback.

Launch of New Single Government Website – GOV.UK

The Government Digital Service (GDS) has launched: www.GOV.UK beta; the first step towards a new single domain that will bring all Government services and information together in one place.

GOV.UK will eventually replace many of the separate departmental sites run by Government organisations.

The idea behind it is to reduce costs and to make Government information more accessible and usable.

The beta site includes a new 'Inside Government' section containing trial MOD corporate information.

Personnel are invited to visit the MOD section and are encouraged to provide feedback. Please revisit the site regularly as changes and improvements are being made daily.

The citizen-facing section of GOV.UK has been launched and aims to speed up and facilitate essential activities, such as registering a birth or renewing car tax.

The ambition is for it to replace DirectGov and BusinessLink in 2012.

For more information personnel should see Defence Internal Brief: 2012DIB/09 on the Defence Intranet.

Your experiences form the basis of our discussions.

To get in touch with the NFF: Tel 02392 654374.

E-mail: admin@nff.org.uk, write: NFF, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

Congratulations to Wellington

ON February 24 2012, the Contingent of Wellington School Combined Cadet Force was inspected by Col A Smyth QVRM TD, Deputy Commander of 43 Wessex Brigade.

On being presented to the Contingent by Cdt RSM Will Chapman, Col Smyth then inspected the Guard of Honour and Corps of Drums, followed by cadets from the RN, Army and RAF sections, accompanied by the Headmaster and Contingent Commander.

Other guests included Capt M Robinson, Flt Lt J Dipper, Lt L Parker, Dr A Daniel, Mr J Elder and the Rev J Hellier.

Awards were then presented: Hodder Trophy for the best recruit section shooting to Agincourt

Platoon; Contingent Commanders' Commendations for cadets in their second year; Senior Trophies; Sword of Honour for the best cadet in the Leadership Cadre.

After a traditional curry lunch, Colonel Smyth reviewed a typical afternoon's training, involving skill-at-arms, climbing, leadership tasks and signalling as well as seeing a lesson on "principles of flight" in the Physics Dept wind tunnel and watching cadets navigate a remote-control model frigate around buoys and channel markers in the swimming pool.

The afternoon concluded with a 'Sunset parade', where Col Smyth congratulated the Contingent on their turnout and their drill and thanked them for a stimulating day.

Trinity flies high at Yeovilton

SPRING half-term held a surprise in store for 12 lucky CCF cadets from Trinity School Teignmouth who were chosen for an Air Experience Day with 727 NAS at RNAS Yeovilton.

An early start from Teignmouth saw the group arrive on schedule for an 0800 rendezvous with S/Lt Will Ellis and Fg Off Rebecca Flannagan RAF, officers currently on holdover with 727 NAS.

Being kitted out with flying suits, boots, gloves and emergency knives was speedily completed and then it was off to the other side of the airfield, close to the control tower, for a full safety briefing by Lt Mike Craig, the Training Officer at 727 NAS.

Parachute drills were perfected in the lecture theatre. Then it was time for the first three cadets to be briefed by their expert pilot instructors.

Soaring above Somerset in bright spring sunshine, the cadets were taught the basic operations of the Grob 115E Tutor aircraft and were soon entrusted with the controls for exhilarating aerobatics such as loop-the-loop, barrel rolls and the thrill of flying upside down.

Cadet Alberto Pitocco after landing and taxiing back to HQ thanked his pilot and the ground crew with the words: "That was the best experience I have ever had! It was truly amazing to be trusted with control of an aircraft at my age – just turned 15."

Alana Crago, whose father Phil was, until recently, a serving Commander with the RN, flew with Cdre Martin Westwood (Ret'd) who clearly relishes his role of training future RN pilots.

Lt Mike Craig wound up the day with a final debrief and 12 happy cadets.

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Diamond day for RHS

THE Suffolk-based Sailing Barge SB Victor has been invited to be part of the Avenue of Sails at the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant on Sunday June 3 and the crew will be made up of pupils from the Royal Hospital School.

The barge will be representing Suffolk and will carry the County Standard on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Lord Tollemarche. The crew will include pupils from the Royal Hospital School in Holbrook.

Not only does the school have 300 years of seafaring heritage and links with the Royal Navy but it has strong Royal connections and, prior to moving to its current site in Holbrook in 1933, it was situated on the banks of the River Thames at Greenwich in the buildings that now house the National Maritime Museum.

SB Victor is one of only 30 Thames Barges still sailing. She was built in 1895 in Ipswich for commercial work carrying linseed and general cargo in Suffolk and Essex.

She was decommissioned from trade in the late 1950s and re-rigged in the 1970s by a Chatham shipwright. She was acquired by her current owners in 2005 and fully restored to her former glory.

Twelve pupils aged 13-18 years have been specially chosen to represent their school and Suffolk.

They are all experienced sailors who take an active role in sailing at the school; all have RYA sailing qualifications and some are trained to instructor level.

Pupils joining the Royal Hospital School aged 11 all learn to sail and the department has a comprehensive fleet of racing dinghies, traditional Cornish Shrimpers for coastal cruising and outstanding RYA training facilities.

The pupils selected are: Alex Alderton, Jack Burge, Andrew Choules, Alex Ewart, Beth Ford, Emily Hassall, Ben Kelland, Achala Matthews, Andrew Miles, Rachael Miles, Christian Proctor and Alex Slatter.

Many have parents currently serving in the Royal Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Fleet Air Arm or Merchant Navy, most are members of local sailing clubs and all have grown up with a passion for sailing and all-things maritime.

During the pageant the pupils will be joined by the school's Guard of Honour and will be wearing their full naval 'number one's' to salute Her Majesty as she passes the barge that will be tied up on the north side of Thames near Billingsgate.

This event is likely to be watched by more than 2.4 billion people.

Each pupil selected has been asked to raise in the region of £100 sponsorship which will go towards the school's new Heritage Centre due to open later this year.

The centre will house important historical artefacts and archive materials and is being created to celebrate the school's 300 year anniversary.

Since it was established in 1817, around 20,000 former pupils went on to join the Navy from the Royal Hospital School and around 1,500 gave their lives in serving their country.

The SB Victor and a crew of six pupils from the Royal Hospital School will depart Suffolk on May 30, navigating the coastline of Suffolk and Essex, up the Thames into position in the Pool of London for the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant.

The crew will be joined by Suffolk dignitaries and the Guard of Honour. SB Victor will make her return journey with another six pupils on June 4.



● The Duke of York's Royal Military School's Military Band at the Historic Dockyard in Chatham for Armed Forces Day

Military music at Duke of York

THE Duke of York's Royal Military School will provide your child with a quality education and the precise security, stability and support that's needed for Service children during their time at the school.

All the pupils in the school are full-time boarders aged 11-18 years of age. Superbly resourced, the school is situated in an attractive 150-acre site between Dover and Canterbury. It has an excellent academic record and specialises in science, sport, outdoor education and music.

Opportunities abound for pupils to excel in a wide range of activities including educational and sporting trips abroad.

Last year the school's Military Band was asked to attend the Armed Forces Day in Chatham and last Christmas the choir was featured on the Chris Evans show on BBC Radio 2 and on ITV's *This Morning* having recorded a version of the Military wives song *Wherever You Are*.

The pupils enjoy Combined Cadet Force activities from Year 9 to 13, and they have many

opportunities to develop their leadership and team working skills. Military parades and ceremonies remain at the heart of our school.

The school is non-selective, but all pupils are invited to a 'suitability for boarding' interview with the Headmaster.

The school offers Taster Weekends if your child would like to experience boarding life to see if they like it and encourages you to visit to see what an extraordinary school this is.

The Duke of York's Royal Military School was founded by the 'Grand Old' Duke of York in 1803 in Chelsea and was Britain's first co-educational state-funded and state-administered school.

In 1825 the school was granted by King George IV the distinction of carrying Colours, similar to those borne by infantry regiments.

In 1909 the school moved to its present location in Dover and in September 2010 the school became an Academy with Military Traditions, sponsored by the MOD.

Visit www.doyrms.com for more information.

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Subsmash: the loss of HMS Affray

LAST month we reported on the Canty family's record of service in the Royal Navy, including that of Brian Canty, former PO Radio Electrician and Governor of Anguilla.

We also mentioned that Brian was involved in the search for the submarine HMS Affray, which went missing in the Channel on April 16 1951 – and Brian has been in touch to pass on his recollections of the operation, as described in his autobiography *The Lives of Brian*.

Here is an edited version of Brian's account:

In April 1951, HMS Reclaim was due to go into the dockyard to have a new diving bell fitted.

I was granted permission to return to HMS Collingwood for a week's training on the Canadian 268 radar, and did my joining routine on Monday, April 16.

The following morning I reported to the 268 Radar building for instruction. It never happened.

The only instruction I got was from a Tannoy broadcast, ordering me to report immediately with my kit to the Officer of the Watch for return to my ship.

A staff car rushed me to Gosport, where a naval launch awaited me at the ferry pontoon. Willing hands propelled me and my kit aboard, and the launch set off for the other side of the harbour.

There, I could see Reclaim was preparing for sea, with the special sea duty men already closed up fore and aft. The gang-plank was being taken in as I scrambled up the harbour wall, necessitating a pier-head jump across the last three feet to the ship and a quick duck to avoid my kit which was following, through the air, closely behind.

Down below, in the mess, there was an air of excitement, and I soon learned that HMS Affray, a submarine from HMS Dolphin, had failed to surface following exercises and was now overdue.

'Subsmash' signals, that alerted all ships to the possibility of an accident to a submerged vessel, had been transmitted, and every ship in Portsmouth Harbour was putting to sea to join in the search.

I went to the radar office and reported my presence to the bridge. I was told to switch on the radar and hand over to the operators for continuous watchkeeping.

Heading for the W/T office behind the bridge, as I stepped on deck Reclaim was picking up her full speed of about ten knots, and was closing the entrance to the harbour, where I saw what I think was an old Grimsby-class frigate flying an Egyptian flag.

She was on a head-on collision course with us. Both ships veered to port simultaneously, and Reclaim slid unscathed down the starboard side of the frigate, missing her, I believe, by inches rather than feet.

I stood transfixed, until the pressure of both bow waves forced Reclaim to heel violently to port. Before I could change position, I was deluged by the wake of the now fast-receding, frigate.

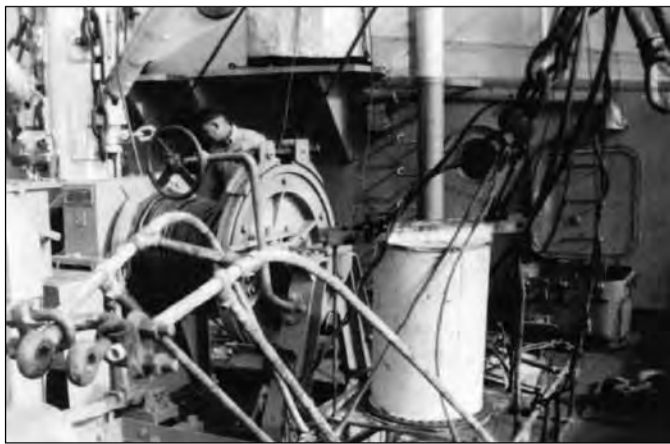
We had only just left harbour, and already I was cold and wet...

In the W/T office, the air was alive with static and the sound of Morse signals, as the various ships in the channel kept in touch with each other and reports and instructions were flashed to and from the shore.

With everything working well, I stayed in the W/T office to lend a hand. My Morse code was well below operational standard, so I manned the R/T position and listened on the broadcast network.

All I had to do was listen for Reclaim's callsign – Mike Sugar Victor Peter – and alert the Leading Telegraphist who then operated the key.

Dusk was falling on the first day of the search. There was no news, and no respite from the tension we all shared. It was going to be



● The experimental underwater TV camera used to locate HMS Affray on the well deck of HMS Reclaim during diving operations in 1951

a long night.

Piece by piece the story came together. HMS Affray, a modified A-class submarine, had sailed for exercises in the Channel on Monday April 16. She was due to surface the following morning but never did. At 1.45pm a full search was ordered and the Admiralty released the news to the public.

The submarine's patrol area was to the south of the Isle of Wight, and a fleet of ships now fanned out across the area, scanning the seabed in the hope of finding some trace of her.

That first night, there was a report that a submarine had detected underwater signals from 37 miles south of St Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wight.

All ships converged on this area, and their searchlights tracked to and fro across the calm black sea in an attempt to locate survivors.

The consensus on Reclaim was that no survivors would attempt to come to the surface until daylight – the crew of the Truculent had made the mistake of escaping in the dark and had been swept away unnoticed on the ebbing tide.

Hand grenades were dropped overboard to let any trapped submariners know that aid was at hand. We waited anxiously, but there was no response, and when the dawn broke, we realised that the submarine was not below us.

The search became more frantic as the hours went by, with the knowledge that Affray's air supply could not last much longer.

No buoys, wreckage or oil on the surface gave any clue as to where she might be, and so much wreckage lay on the seabed, following two world wars, that good Asdic contacts were made every few miles along HMS Affray's assumed track.

Gradually, more than 150 contacts were logged, any one of which could have been Affray.

Reclaim's divers could not dive and identify even a fraction of them in the time available. Strong tides and currents made it difficult to keep the ship in position, and even when a diver was lowered over a seabed contact, he was liable to be swept off his feet.



● A diver from HMS Reclaim prepares to descend to HMS Affray in the Channel

Poor visibility on the bottom often meant that the diver had to rely on his sense of touch to recognise even the type of wreck.

On the third day the search was scaled down, and the frigates, destroyers, other vessels and aircraft went back to their routines – the experts had calculated that there was no chance of anyone on the submarine still being alive.

It would now be left to Reclaim, over the summer, to work through the long list of Asdic contacts, putting divers down on each one until the mystery of Affray could be finally solved.

The knowledge of failure was hard to bear as we returned to port to refuel and re-supply. Parliament and the public expected better of the Royal Navy, and we were determined to do better.

A small flotilla was formed, comprising RFA Salvictor, sister-ship to Reclaim, and two boom defence ships which were to be used to put mooring buoys down at sea when required.

The operations were, I believe, controlled from HMS Vernon by the Director of Naval Salvage.

The problems of putting divers down in the Channel remained, and in the weeks that followed, progress in identifying the charted wrecks was painfully slow.

One contact proved to be the wreck of an American Liberty ship from World War 2 with a cargo of tanks still on deck. A hatch was broken open, and a trapped air bubble boiled to the surface, bringing with it tyres in their original yellow wrappings; as pristine as the day they were loaded.

Another, off Portland, turned out to be an old British submarine that had apparently broken free from a tow to the breaker's yard, and sunk in bad weather sometime between the two wars.

There were others, probably the huge experimental submarines M1 and the M2.

Our Captain, I recall, was hoping to find a sunken ship with an undamaged bridge, from which a diver might retrieve a good pair of binoculars. His luck was out...

A team from the RN Research Establishment came aboard in Portsmouth one day in May, bringing crates labelled fragile.

As they were unpacked, I was summoned and questioned about electrical supplies, test equipment and spares carried aboard.

I helped unpack a crate in the Captain's cabin, which contained a domestic TV, an English Electric Model 1550 – with its 15in tube, this monochrome, console model was in the luxury class.

In Portsmouth, however, we were well beyond the coverage of the scheduled BBC TV service from the Alexandra Palace and Sutton Coldfield transmitters. Evidently it had another purpose.

On the well deck, crates were opened to reveal a Heath Robinson contraption containing a Marconiphone TV camera which, thanks to a local garage, had been sealed in a watertight metal drum and fitted to a tubular steel frame, mounted with

underwater lighting.

The contraption was intended for lowering to the seabed, and would hopefully speed up the identification of contacts.

The equipment had been put together by civilian scientific officers, members of the Home Civil Service, some of whom sailed with Reclaim to help with the operation of their invention.

They were accompanied by an acknowledged expert in underwater matters, one Lt Cdr 'Buster' Crabb, the famous frogmen, who disappeared in mysterious circumstances five years later.

We soon discovered that, even with an underwater camera, the search operation was not going to be easy. The metal drum leaked badly under the pressure of deeper water, which shorted the electrics.

Strong currents also caused the camera rig to drift, and visibility for the TV lens was no better than for a diver; indeed, with bright lights reflecting from a fog of mud and plankton, it was often worse.

Though it was better than risking the life of a diver, we were still restricted to waiting for periods of slack water and dead calm weather.

Then we got lucky.

On June 4, investigating the ninth contact of the 150 logged, in ideal conditions the camera was lowered in 258ft of water, 67 miles south west of St Catherine's Point.

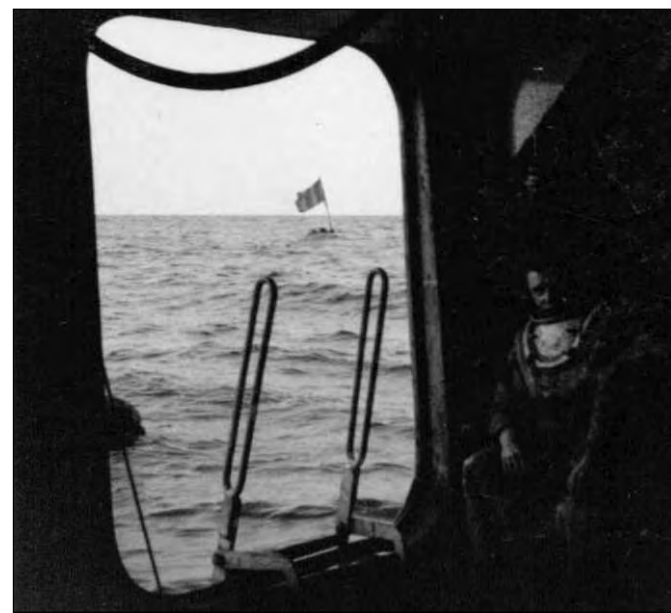
In the Captain's cabin, the TV screen began to reveal the outline of something large on the seabed. As the current moved the camera, a more distinguishable image came into view, and the letters Y A R F F A slowly began appearing.

The camera had, fortuitously, focussed on the submarine's nameplate, on the side of the fin, as it tracked fore to aft.

HMS Affray had been found some seven weeks after she sailed on her final voyage. An investigation into how the disaster had occurred could now begin.

It was quickly established that Affray appeared undamaged, but before the divers could get to work on a minute examination, it was necessary to secure Reclaim accurately over the submarine's last resting place.

The boom defence vessels



● A DAN buoy marks the last resting place of HMS Affray in the Channel, as seen through HMS Reclaim's starboard diving hatch

laid mooring buoys and made Reclaim's huge manila 'grass' lines fast to them. By making adjustments with the ship's capstan and winches, it was possible to manoeuvre the ship above the wreck with the degree of accuracy required.

The camera had done the job for which it was intended – its next task was to be as an aid in making a detailed examination of the boat's hull and superstructure.

We remained moored over Affray, carrying out diving operations throughout the summer and well into the autumn; except for the occasional return to port for supplies.

Reclaim became a beacon in mid-Channel that summer.

Ocean liners passed by regularly on their way to and from Southampton – Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mary and Mauritania became so used to us being there that they would pass the time of day by signal lamp as passengers lined the decks to take photographs.

Visitors also came from the corridors of power, by MTB from HMS Hornet in Gosport.

Reclaim's divers quickly discovered that the snorkel or breathing tube, had broken off. Metal fatigue was suspected, and all other submarines fitted with snorkel equipment, were surveyed as a matter of urgency.

One was found to have faulty welding, and an opinion formed that a similar failing might have contributed to the loss of Affray.

The damaged snorkel was raised and sent back to Portsmouth for examination, which confirmed that an accidental fracture of the tube would have been a possibility.

However, other opinions were advanced – the break could have occurred when the submarine hit the bottom, after the crew had

been overcome and lost control of the vessel, for example. A battery explosion was suggested.

It became clear that the only way to be certain as to what had happened would be to raise the submarine, and bring her back home, or at least to gain access to her by some means.

It was especially important that the cause of the disaster be determined because Affray had not been on just another routine patrol. She had on board, in addition to her usual complement, another 20 submarine officers under training and, it was whispered below decks, a special group of Royal Marines.

They, it was said, were rehearsing a secret technique for clandestine shore landings which involved exiting the submerged submarine by way of the torpedo tubes.

It had been ascertained, with almost complete certainty, that the submarine was flooded throughout and as such would weigh more than 2,000 tons. A salvage operation to raise the vessel in this condition was beyond the capability of RN resources, and to mount a commercial operation would take time. Furthermore, it had now been discovered that the wreck had become unstable, and was in danger of slipping into the Hurd Deep, where old munitions had been routinely dumped.

Further investigations had to be carried out where she lay, and as quickly as possible – though in diving terms, 'quickly' involved weeks, possibly months, of work, dependent as it always was on fine weather, calm seas and good visibility on the sea bed.

Apart from a few seamen involved with diving operations, the rest of the ship's company now had little to do with the daily routine. Moored in mid-Channel, our lives became as exciting as those of lighthouse keepers.

The Channel Islands were clearly visible on the horizon, and to keep up morale, the Captain decided that occasionally, when the weather permitted, a boom defence vessel could come alongside and take small groups of off-duty crewmen to Jersey for a few hours run ashore.

In mid-summer, during a particularly hot spell, cargo nets were lowered over the side and swimming was permitted at periods of slack water.

Other technical advances followed the introduction of underwater TV. An electromagnetic grab was designed to rip steel plating from Affray's hull; it was never able to pick up anything more than a few loose stanchions.

A radioactive isotope was sent out to the ship, with some X-ray plates, so that the divers could capture images through the hull. The isotope went missing, and we all had to check to see if we had become radioactive...

In mid-November 1951, with the onset of winter storms, further attempts to unravel the mystery became impossible, and all ideas of salvage were abandoned.

We sailed back to Portsmouth to resume a normal diving training programme in time for Christmas.

There was, to the best of my knowledge, never another attempt to unravel the mystery of Affray's last voyage – I believe the broken snorkel and metal fatigue were officially accepted as the most likely causes of the disaster.

■ *The Lives of Brian* is published by Authors Online Ltd, ISBN 978-0755213870.

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Cheshunt top for third time

HERTFORDSHIRE Royal British Legion run an annual cadets challenge to see who raises the most money for the Poppy Appeal.

And Cheshunt unit proudly picked up the award for Best Sea Cadet Unit – for the third year in a row – at a ceremony held at Watford Football Club.

The unit collected £2,400 in the run-up to Remembrance Day. And Cheshunt also took away Best Sea Cadet Individual achievement and Runner-Up Sea Cadet Individual achievement.

The winning cadet was Luke McArdle, who was handed his award by the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire for managing to raise more than £800.

Due to legal requirements, staff hold the collecting tins, allowing the cadets to concentrate on dishing out the poppies and the PR side of things.

The winning cadets have only been with the unit for just over a year, but the enthusiasm generated at Cheshunt seems to have encouraged the youngsters to great things.

Cheshunt unit currently parades at Haileybury College, thanks to the generosity of their CCF detachment in allowing the cadets to use their premises.

A new HQ is currently being built at Aldbury Rise.

Special role with Vigilant

TWO senior cadets from the Teign Valley unit were honoured to be asked to play a role in the recommissioning of the Trident missile submarine HMS Vigilant.

The ceremony, at Devonport Naval Base, was carried out by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, following the boat's three-year Long Overhaul Period (Refuel) or LOP(R).

In a rare honour, the Commanding Officer of Vigilant asked for two senior cadets from TS Canonteign to meet, greet and then escort the First Sea Lord and his VIP party around the submarine following the rededication service, presided over by the Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet and Archdeacon to the Royal Navy, Martin Poll.

TS Canonteign also has a new Officer in Charge (OIC) in the shape of RN WO1 Ian Hurst, a senior instructor at HMS Raleigh's Submarine School.

WO1 Hurst takes over as the Teignbridge District OIC from Sea Cadet PPO Andy Mortimer, who as Unit Sub-Division Officer will concentrate on the development of cadets at Teignmouth Community School, known as Ajax Division.

That means there are two serving Warrant Officers First Class at the unit, as WO Hurst recently welcomed fellow submariner WO1 Class Brian Hall to the Unit as his 1st Lieutenant.

Pershore revives link with Scimitar

HISTORIC links between a Worcestershire town and a Royal Navy warship have been revived with the official affiliation of a new Sea cadet unit.

Pershore unit first opened its



● That's got to hurt... LC George Goddard with his fake wound

Buckets of blood at training session

ON A cold winter morning eight cadets from Thurrock unit received appalling injuries – but no one got hurt and it was all in a good cause.

Blood flowed, patients screamed and ambulances surrounded the area as the cadets took part in a training day to help the St John Ambulance combined Grays Adult division train their new duty officers.

Thurrock, who hire their unit facilities from the St John in Grays, were approached by the officers from the leading first aid charity to 'borrow' some cadets to act as casualties for staff training.

The aim of the event was to assess adults in their abilities to prioritise and control a major incident, and the cadets jumped at the chance to play casualties.

Throughout the day six candidates were assessed in

doors in 2009 at the Riverside Centre, taking the form of an 'embryo' unit.

But on December 2 last year, the unit had its Captain's Inspection, when Capt Mark Windsor, Captain Sea Cadets, recommended that Pershore

should formally be accepted into the Corps.

The official letter confirming the Captain's decision arrived at the unit just before Christmas.

And last month members of the town's Royal Naval Association turned out in force for a service at Pershore Baptist Church during which the unit and their standard were dedicated.

The standard was bought with funds provided by the RNA, and the unit was officially recognised as Training Ship Scimitar.

The name was chosen because the old S-class destroyer HMS Scimitar (H21) was adopted by Pershore during Warship Week in 1941, when the people of the town raised £200,000.

According to archives searched by the Worcester News, Warship Week ran from November 15-22, and was a spectacular event encompassing the town itself and 42 surrounding villages and parishes.

Among the fundraising initiatives were:

- 1 The Plaza Cinema donating three evenings' takings from the film *Target for Tonight*, shown together with a stage programme by local music hall performers;
- 2 Two pigs were donated as prizes in a bowling competition at the Pershore Bowling Club;
- 3 The General Manager of Pershore Co-operative Fruit Market found a 16in marrow which roughly resembled a duck. Naming it Cuthbert, the resourceful official put the marrow – worth about 3d – up for auction, and attracted a bid of almost £3,100;
- 4 A flag was auctioned at the market, raising £371.

Other events included dances,

Fifth burgee is reward for Buxton

BUXTON unit has been awarded a Burgee for its excellent all-round performance for the fifth year in succession.

The annual inspection by the Royal Navy took place in February, and saw a number of important guests, including the Mayor and Mayoress of the High Peak, Cllr David and Mrs Hilary Lomax, and the Chairman of Derbyshire County Council, Cllr George Wharmby and his wife, Cllr Jean Wharmby, invited along.

With the unit being named TS Bulwark, it was with great pleasure that they received a trophy from the family of a former member of the ship's company of HMS Bulwark (RO8), the post-war Centaur-class light fleet carrier which was converted to a commando carrier

entertainment, competitions and a major rally by the Croome Hunt Pony Club.

Warship Week launch day saw the town's streets decorated with bunting and flags, and thousands of townspeople turned out to watch the grand parade.

Pershore had been set a target of £100,000 for the week but managed to raise double that – reckoned by the Worcester News to equate to £16 for every man, woman and child in the area, at a time when the weekly wage averaged £3.

The town did not hear much about its adopted ship during the war, for security reasons, but the old ship served Pershore well.

Launched in 1918, she was in action (and damaged in a collision) at Dunkirk in May 1940, sustained bomb damage at Portland a month later, and was involved in the sinkings of two U-boats the following year.

After months of gruelling Atlantic convoy duties – she escorted more than 70 convoys throughout the war – the ageing destroyer was redeployed on coastal convoy work, and played a part in the rehearsals for D-Day at Slapton Sands in Devon in April 1944, where she once more sustained damage in a collision.

By the time she was scrapped in South Wales in 1947 she had earned Battle Honours for Dunkirk 1940, Atlantic 1940-44, Arctic 1942 and English Channel 1943-44.

The youngsters of Pershore unit have a current HMS Scimitar to follow closely – one of the two Gibraltar Squadron fast patrol boats permanently based at the Rock is named Scimitar.

New recruit makes debut at Methil

CADETS from Methil and District unit welcomed the newest honorary recruit recently, when PO (SCC) Kevin Ralph and his partner Michelle brought their new-born daughter Maisie-Rose to the unit for her first visit.

"We have all been really excited – it's the first baby for our instructor, and she is so small," said Mai Dair.

Maisie-Rose, who was born on January 10, was welcomed by all the cadets, staff and officers.

"I can remember when PO Ralph was a cadet, and it is wonderful to see cadets come back as instructors and involve their family, although it will be a while before we see Maisie-Rose in uniform," said unit management committee chairman Jack Leishman.

Trophy for Maldon unit

MALDON unit has been presented with the National Sea Cadet McBeath Trophy.

The award is made to the Sea Cadet unit which has shown "a particularly meritorious performance during the year and worthy of special recognition".

The prestigious trophy was presented by the awards namesake's son Rowlie McBeath last month.

This is the first national award picked up by the unit, based at Park Drive, in its 15-year history.

The unit has been honoured because it has shown great fortitude during 2011, with a major premises move, which didn't distract them from winning the area sailing championships or prevent them from providing cadets with a huge range of boating opportunities.

The McBeath Trophy Award was founded by Rear Admiral John McBeath, Honorary Commodore of the Sea Cadets from 1958 to 1975.

Nicholas Temme, Maldon Sea Cadets Commanding Officer said: "I'm really proud of our cadets, staff and committee for all the work they did last year.

"This prestigious award is a great recognition of what we have done for cadets and all the effort that has been put in by staff over the year in keeping the unit going."

South Shields win accolade

SOUTH Shields unit has been awarded the prestigious District Achievement Award for Tyne South.

The award is a new initiative from the local branch of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC) to try to raise the levels of achievement in the North-East of England.

Further presentations were planned for similarly successful units in Northumberland (Newburn unit) and Teesside (Redcar unit).

The awards are made on the back of the units' annual RN inspections, in which they are marked on a range of achievements and standard, deciding the level of efficiency at which the unit operates – a pennant or the higher burgee.

The Officer in Charge of TS Collingwood, CPO (SCC) Jim Simpson, has brought the unit to a very high standard, and the icing on the cake was the winning of this first District Achievement Award.

The night of the presentation also saw 15 cadets being formally enrolled by District Officer Lt Cdr Alfie Simpson and a display by the unit band.

The trophy was presented by the Chairman of the MSSC Tyne Tees branch, Victor Spong, to unit chairman John Eltringham.

Youth bands team up for night of music



TWICKENHAM unit's band teamed up with young musicians from Sapphire Brass, a brass ensemble from the Richmond Music Trust, to share an evening of music.

The two bands met up at the Sea Cadet unit (pictured left) and performed to an audience of serving military personnel, veterans and proud parents.

The programme included standards such as *Colonel Bogey* and the *Muppets* theme tune.

Lt (SCC) Keith Walker RNR, the Commanding Officer of the unit, said: "I know both bands have been practising hard for the evening and I'm sure that everyone who was there will agree it was a fantastic night.

"I'm very proud of all the cadets and the young people from Richmond Music Trust, and I hope that next time we perform our band might even be bigger and better."

Vickie Curran, Brass Team Leader at Richmond Music Trust, said: "Our musicians were very impressed by how well the cadets played, and also how smart they were in their uniforms.

"It was a great opportunity for two groups of children to play some wonderful music together.

"I'm pretty sure this won't be the last time that we will work together."

Raleigh hosts Sea Scout swim gala

“OVER to you Mr Starter!” This was the phrase repeated more than 100 times by referee Matthew Richards when 200 Sea Scouts, Explorer Sea Scouts and their leaders converged on Torpoint in Cornwall to attend the annual Royal Naval Recognised Sea Scout swimming gala.

The gala takes place at HMS Raleigh in February each year, with Scout teams consisting of three under-14s and three under-12s, while Explorer teams are for under-18 and under-16 competitors.

On the Saturday morning the backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle heats were followed by relays for each age group.

The highlight of the morning was then the line-throwing event, when each team member has to ‘rescue’ the next by throwing a line to ‘save’ their team-mate – bringing with it the potential for skill and speed from some teams.

Some teams display great skill and speed – others generate bags of fun and excitement.

The Explorer Sea Scouts spent the Saturday afternoon on the River Tamar, being given power boating tuition, while the Sea Scouts took part in a scouting skills competition, including navigation, football skills, seamanship and scouting knowledge.

The swimming resumed on the Sunday morning with the finals for each event and a team swim for all six members of each team.

Cdr Chris O’Flaherty RN, representing the Captain HMS Raleigh, and Graham Hamilton, the Scout Association’s Deputy UK Commissioner, awarded plaques to winners and trophies to the overall winners, 6th Hamble (Scouts) and 2nd Warwick (Explorers).

Cdr. O’Flaherty said “HMS Raleigh is delighted to host this key event in the National Sea Scout calendar.

“The enthusiasm, commitment and discipline shown by the 200 Sea Scout competitors exemplifies the high standards of these young people and is in the best traditions of our maritime nation.

“They should all be proud of what they achieved throughout the swimming gala, which the Royal Navy was proud to be a part of.”

Having a ball

NORWICH unit celebrates a special anniversary with its Centenary Ball at the Oaklands Hotel in the city on Friday June 8.

Guest speaker at the event will be Captain Sea Cadets, Capt Mark Windsor.

Tickets, at £25, will include a three-course meal and dancing.

For further details contact unit chairman Irene Spinks or First Lieutenant, S/Lt (SCC) Sally Spinks RNR on norwichseacadets@hotmail.co.uk

Mayor presents Harrogate awards

THE Mayor of Harrogate has become something of a regular sight at Harrogate unit engagements in recent weeks.

Cllr Les Ellington was guest of honour at the unit’s annual awards night at the beginning of the year, when he was welcomed to TS Cleopatra by Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Richard Cockell RNR and unit chairman Cdr Paul Wearmouth RN.

Once colours and inspection of the ship’s company was completed by the mayor the awards ceremony got under way, during which the VIP guest presented awards.

At the end of the evening the mayor presented the unit’s 2011 Burgee to AC Daniel Fabretti.

Cllr Ellington, Cdr Wearmouth and Lt Cdr Cockell joined forces again later to pay tribute to one of the few remaining service

● HM ships Express (P163) and Exploit sail from Watchet Harbour for Penarth with a party of local Sea Scouts on board



Exploit, Express and Explorers...

MEMBERS of two Admiralty-recognised Sea Scout groups spent time with two of the Royal Navy’s patrol boats when they called in at a Somerset harbour.

1st Watchet Sea Scout Group made sure that the crews of HMS Express and HMS Exploit were made welcome when they visited the town on the south side of the Bristol Channel, while a second group from 1st West Bay Sea Scouts in Dorset travelled to Somerset to join the proceedings.

HMS Exploit, the Birmingham University Royal Navy Unit (URNU) boat, arrived on the late evening tide on Friday February 24 and moored up at the town’s marina.

The following morning the student crew members were taken back out into the channel with the Watchet Sea Scout group’s Royal Yachting Association instructors in the unit’s rigid inflatable boats (RIBs) for some small boat-handling skills.

Whilst outside the harbour walls the small power boats met up with HMS Express and escorted the Wales URNU boat into the

picturesque harbour.

Once Express was safely alongside, the student crews swapped over and those from Express went out in Watchet unit’s RIBs.

The West Bay Sea Scouts arrived late Saturday morning, and were hosted on board the two Royal Navy vessels before going ashore to the Watchet group’s headquarters for a VHF radio course in the afternoon.

The various sections of the Watchet group – Beaver Scouts, Cubs, Sea Scouts and Explorers – were next on board the patrol boats, where several new cubs and

scouts were invested into their sections on the foredecks of the vessels.

On the Sunday morning both patrol boats left their moorings as they headed out to sea with 11 members of the Watchet Explorers and older Sea Scouts on board, ready for a cross-channel navigation exercise back to Penarth Marina near Cardiff, where both vessels are based.

Other members of the Explorer Scouts launched the group’s power boats and went more than half-way to Penarth escorting the Royal Navy boats on their 20-mile journey to South Wales.

Joining the two Archer-class vessels as they left Watchet was former Royal Navy fast patrol Gay Archer, which is now privately-owned and moored at Watchet.

All three boats formed up for manoeuvres – the first time such a formation has been seen in the Bristol Channel for many years.

During the passage to Penarth the Scouts had the opportunity to helm, navigate and take bearings and distances from the boats to the shore before an investiture ceremony was held at Penarth for two new Explorers.

The seafaring scouts returned to Watchet by minibus.

Noel collects his MBE

A SEA Cadet officer who has been involved with the Corps for almost 40 years has collected his MBE from Buckingham Palace.

Cdr (SCC) Noel Wheatley RNR took charge of Sutton unit back in 1987 and is still working with disadvantaged youngsters in south London.

The 51-year-old from Caterham, who first went to cadets aged 12 in 1973, said: “I am speechless but extremely proud to have been honoured in this way.

“It is in no small way due to the support and assistance I have had from my family and my friends and colleagues in the Sea Cadet Corps throughout my time with this marvellous organisation.”

Noel is the senior volunteer for cadets in the London area, representing adult volunteers and making sure they and cadets have what they need to get the best experience.

He added: “I am especially pleased to have been appointed as a member of the Military Division of the MBE and recognise this as testament to the long-established, ongoing and very much appreciated support of the Sea Cadet Corps by the Royal Navy.”

Noel went to Elmwood High School in Hackbridge in the 1970s and is a retired Metropolitan Police officer.

He transferred from the Met to Croydon’s Youth Offending Service in 2000 as a team manager and is a trustee with the Croydon Youth Development Trust. He



● Cdr (SCC) Noel Wheatley RNR with his MBE at the Palace

deals with 10-18 year olds who are involved in the youth justice system, including those receiving final warnings at pre-court stage.

His 39-year connection with the Sea Cadets has taken him to Carshalton, Sutton and Wallington units.

Rear Admiral David Steel, Naval Secretary for the Royal Navy, wrote Noel a letter of congratulation.

He said: “Since taking command of Sutton Sea Cadet Unit in 1987, your achievements have been remarkable.”

He later said: “From transforming the moribund Sutton Sea Cadets into an award-

winning unit to fund-raising and participating in major public events, you have demonstrated selfless devotion and leadership.

“At the same time you have been the driving force behind some of the most successful community initiatives in South East London.”

Noel said: “My wife Kerry would say that I am too driven to do this work but I really get great satisfaction from it.

“There is nothing better than watching our boys and girls get involved in activities they would not normally have access to, be it sailing, rock climbing, kayaking or water-skiing.”

Keira gets top role for East Area

A MEMBER of Kettering unit has been chosen to represent thousands of her colleagues in the East of England.

Keira Yeoman has been chosen to be the Eastern Area’s Navy Board Cadet for 2012.

The title is given to one cadet from each of the country’s areas, meaning Keira is one of just six Navy Board Cadets nationally.

Marc Pether, Commanding Officer of Kettering, nominated Keira for the position.

He said: “Keira is an outstanding young person and is head and shoulders above, in comparison with her peers.

“For someone of 16 she is already showing the qualities of a natural-born leader.

“She’s very bubbly and enthusiastic, and a well-rounded person for someone so young.

“She’s been with us since she was 12, and when she joined she was quite quiet and shy and reserved.

“I think the cadet experience has brought her out of her shell.”

Keira won an award for getting the highest mark in the country in her Leading Cadet board in 2010, attended the first Sea Cadet exchange to Portugal as a senior cadet and went on to pass her Petty Officer Cadet Board at the age of 15 – a year earlier than expected.

And to top off a successful couple of years, Keira has been given a flying scholarship to help realise her dream of being a pilot in the Royal Navy.

She said: “I’m very proud. I had to have a lot of qualifications, and the awards I’ve already been given helped contribute.

“I can’t wait to start my scholarship, I’d like to go into aviation.”

Poppy thanks

SEVEN Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets from Hastings unit were invited to attend the Lord Lieutenant’s Poppy Appeal presentation evening in recognition of their efforts last autumn.

To date the 2011 appeal has raised £36 million, of which £1.25 million came from Sussex.

Each of the cadets involved had completed a minimum of 20 hours service towards the appeal – they were (now Unit Assistant) Sharna Whitlock, LC Ryan Whitlock, CL/Cpl Dominic Izzard, OC Aliesha Whitear, Cdt Kieran Gladwish, JC Daniel Jukes and JC Jonathan Parodi.

All received their certificates from the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Peter Field.

Membership drive

IN THE year of its 70th anniversary, Portrush unit is making a concerted effort to attract new Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets.

Apart from their online presence, special banners are prominently displayed on the outside of the unit’s recently-refurbished HQ building.



SUPPORT YOUR SEA CADETS

Volunteer, donate or even leave a legacy

Visit sea-cadets.org or call 020 7654 7000

SEA CADETS

● Gibraltar Cup competitors tackle the assault course at CTCRM



Second Gib success for Eastbourne team



TO take the Gibraltar Cup you have to be rock-hard.

And the eight-strong team from Eastbourne unit's Royal Marines Cadet detachment proved their mettle by taking the prized trophy for the second year running.

The annual Gibraltar Cup competition takes place at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines, Lympstone, in Devon.

Forty-eight cadets from the top six Royal Marines Cadets detachments in the Sea Cadets gathered for the weekend-long event to compete to be the best detachment in the UK.

And while Eastbourne took the laurels, there was a scrap for second place between Bristol Adventurer and Bedford, who finished second and third respectively.

For the record, Hornchurch and Upminster were rated fourth, followed by St Helen's and South Shields.

The competition is a series of challenges and assessments that test the skill, knowledge and fitness of the teams.

Only a fit, dedicated, well-trained and cohesive detachment stands a chance of taking the trophy.

Assessed on leadership, teamwork/spirit, discipline, communication, interpersonal skills, initiative and resourcefulness

– plus the Sea Cadet spirit and values – the cadets demonstrated those qualities in bucketloads as they worked their way through various stances, including first aid and casualty evacuation, practical leadership, map-reading and navigation (day and night), fieldcraft skills, weapons handling and the assault course.

The achievements of each and every detachment was a testament to the dedication and skill of the volunteers who trained them.

Capt Mark Windsor, Captain Sea Cadets, said: "I really enjoyed the Gibraltar Cup this year.

"What a privilege for the cadets, walking in the footsteps of the Royal Marines Commando role-models.

"They did themselves, their volunteer staff, parents, individual detachments, units and the Royal Marines Cadets proud.

"Well done to all, and particularly Eastbourne, who won the overall competition, and a big thank-you to the volunteers and Royal Marines staff for making this happen so safely and successfully."

● Eyes on the prize – the Gibraltar Cup is displayed to competitors at CTCRM, Lympstone. The trophy was taken by Eastbourne (above right)



Cubs visit Yeovilton

A WOLF pack of Cub Scouts from the Holy Trinity group in Yeovil visited Yeovilton air station.

During the evening they were given a talk by aircrew from 848 Naval Air Squadron about flying and the work of the Sea Kings in the Commando Helicopter Force.

After the briefing they went on to visit the Survival Equipment section, which specialises in supplying and repairing the clothing and equipment worn by the aircrews based at Yeovilton.

Pack Akela Angela Dollard said: "This visit will go towards them achieving their 'Air Activities' badge.

"We'll follow it up with some drawing and project work next week."

WO Stu Redgrave, who organised the visit and was the host for the evening, said: "The Cubs were really interested in the briefs and really enjoyed climbing all over the Sea King."

Bravo Zulu for Northampton

NORTHAMPTON and Rushden unit put on its customary polished performance for its biannual efficiency inspection – and was rewarded with a score of 93 per cent and a glowing report.

It is all looking rosy for the landlocked unit as its management committee has recently successfully negotiated a 99-year lease, and can now push on with the unit's long-term framework strategy.

Planning permission is being sought for an extension to the current building alongside fundraising to support and improve the facilities.

As part of the new marina alongside the unit, grounds and slipways are also being extended and improved.

And it is not just local Sea Cadets who benefit – the unit is an official Royal Yachting Association Training Centre, affiliated to British Rowing, and is the first unit within the area to

award the new fixed-seat rowing qualifications.

The unit also operates the OnBoard scheme in conjunction with three local schools, teaching youngsters to sail.

A smooth handover has also been planned for when the Commanding Officer stands down shortly in order to take the post of District Officer.

The Captain's report concluded: "TS Laforey is a shining example of what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication to the cause and focused and unswerving commitment.

"The unit consistently excels across the broadest spectrum of experiences and activities that can be delivered.

"Furthermore, I was extremely pleased to be able to visit again for your Royal Navy Parade and to present national trophies in addition to awarding three Captain's Medals for 50 years service to the Corps.

Busy month at Gosforth

FEBRUARY turned out to be a cracking month for Gosforth unit.

Teams from the Tyneside unit represented Northern Area at both senior boys and girls level at the national five-a-side competition at HMS Sultan in Gosport.

And two Gosforth cadets, LCs English and Harper, headed straight from the football to HMS Raleigh in Cornwall to successfully complete their POC advancement, with LC Harper gaining a credit pass.

The unit also took delivery of a new Yole rowing boat, and enjoyed some time on the water on both the River Tyne pilot boat and the unit's affiliated ship, HMS Example.

The month also included victory in the Northumberland district piping competition, the selection of Gosforth cadets in the armed guard and unarmed squad for the Northern Area drill competition, and the award of the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for

outstanding service to the unit's Commanding Officer, S/Lt (SCC) Chris Healy RNR – not bad for the shortest month (even, as S/Lt Healy observed, it is a leap year).

Trophy presented to Stonehaven

CADETS at Stonehaven and District unit used plenty of elbow grease in making sure they and their HQ – including boatsheds, boats and uniforms – were up to scratch for the annual Unit Review Visit by Grampian District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Brian Mair RNR.

At the end of the evening Lt Cdr Mair presented the 2011 Area Officer's Trophy to POC Michael Blacklaw on behalf of the cadets – the trophy is awarded to the runner-up unit to the Stephenson Trophy winner (best unit in Northern Area) which in 2011 was Greenock.

Faster by the dozen

TWELVE Royal Navy track and field athletes took part in the annual invitational indoor athletics fixture, hosted by the RAF in Sheffield at the English Institute of Sport.

The eight teams participating included the Army, RAF and five elite sporting universities headed by the might of Loughborough and Brunel, writes Paul Winton, RN Athletics Team Manager.

Consequently, the standard of competition was very high, but the Royal Navy were fortunate to have the former 2008 World Indoor 60m Champion representing the Service for the first time.

Logs Olusoji 'Flash' Fasuba (Drake) had just completed his Phase 2 training days before the event and had not trained since the previous December.

He finished as third scorer in a 'blanket' finish in the men's 60m in a time of 6.95s.

Note that he won the World Indoor Championships in 6.49s and Dwain Chambers won 2012 World Indoor bronze over 60m in 6.60s.

There was no disgrace in confessing to "feeling rusty" in such circumstances and there was considerable pride in beating all other (non rusty) Armed Forces sprinters!

Mne Jim Galvin (42 Cdo) returned from operational duties in good form and ran a very good 60m too, 7.27s for the 12th fastest time of 40 sprinters competing in a high-class event.

AB Logs 'Bertie' Barker (HMS Edinburgh) ran 7.42s for 19th fastest time overall.

LPT Regaina 'Reg' Cawley and MA Suri Mackie (both Neptune) ran personal best times for the women's 60m in 8.26s and 9.41s respectively.

The former ran 27.28s in the 200m to finish sixth overall, beating all other Services athletes, to confirm her potential for repeat medal successes up to 400m in this summer's Inter-Services Championships.

Cpl Charlotte Stuss (RM Band Plymouth) ran close to a personal best in the 400m with a time of 66.28s to finish sixth after warming up with a respectable 29.79s in a non-scoring 200m.

'Reg' Cawley also set a personal best of 4.08m to finish fifth in the women's long jump.

Mne Ruben Erasmus (42 Cdo) demonstrated a range of ability in all three jumps with very respectable leaps of 5.88m (fifth)/1.75m/11.42m in long/high/triple jumps respectively.

Cpl Jim Galvin finished in fourth place in the high jump at the same height.

AET Matt Wild (824 NAS) was the RN decathlon champion in 2011; he competed in the pole vault (seventh, 2.30m) and shot (10.90m as guest), beating WO2 Rupert Williams (Neptune) (sixth) in the latter.

Long time RN Athletics team member, LLogs Rhian Hanson (Nelson) made her return to competition after missing most of the previous year following surgery on a foot injury. Gradually re-establishing performance through training, the leading hand finished seventh in the women's shot in 7.99m.

The best performance of the day was the men's 4x200m relay team comprised of Fasuba, Galvin, Barker and Erasmus.

ET(ME) Kern Toussaint sadly missed out after straining a hamstring in an earlier 200m race.

Fasuba showed his mettle, muscle and pride to take the Royal Navy into the lead at the first changeover (as planned).

Thereafter it was grit and determination to maintain the highest possible position, ultimately taking the scalp of the RAF sprint relay team for the first time in many years.



● The RN 1st XI try to clear their 18-yard-box during the defeat to the RAF

Picture: Gareth Davies/http://www.gdpcpsphotography.co.uk/



Bobsleigh gold for cool Flash

OLYMPIC medallist-turned-Royal Navy sailor Olusoji Fasuba has lived his Hollywood dream – winning with his Royal Navy teammates in the bobsleigh.

The Nigerian-born athlete, who now works as a logistics specialist in Devonport Naval Base, took gold in the Navy's 2012 bobsleigh event – and bronze in the Inter-Services contest with the Army and Air Force.

Logs(SC) Fasuba (pictured above about to leap into his bob with a colleague) holds the African 100m record and is the tenth fastest man in history at that distance.

The junior rate – known as Flash by his Navy colleagues – gave up life on the track as a professional athlete last spring (although not for good – see left), looking for a more settled life for his family – his wife Ngozi, a fellow athlete, and daughter Annabelle.

But the 27-year-old also had one eye on the Royal Navy's winter sports, inspired by the Hollywood comedy *Cool Runnings* which (very loosely) recounted the deeds of the Jamaican bobsleigh team at the 1988 Olympics in Calgary.

He gave himself five chances to see if he'd enjoy racing down an icy track in a bob...

...and in his first outing in a bobsleigh at Igls in Austria, Flash's bob came third overall in the Inter-Services, having led the event during the first day.

His bob did, however take the Royal Navy 2012 title – on the Nigerian's sixth day in the sport.

Air Force won

RN Seniors vs RAF

THE two Senior teams opened their 2012 Inter-Services account at Fratton Park.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding Portsmouth FC, the club were once again first class hosts to the Royal Navy.

In a competitive first half, neither side asked for – or gave – any quarter.

Throughout the opening 30 minutes, the match was finely-balanced with the main battle fought in midfield; neither goal keeper was really tested.

Just when the spectators thoughts were turning to a half-time cup of tea, the RAF put together an excellent counterattack with the ball being passed the length of the pitch.

The result was an outstanding left-footed half-volley which flew into the corner of the net leaving the RN keeper with absolutely no chance.

The teams went in to the break with the RAF 1-0 to the good.

The RN came out and fought very hard to get back into the



ONSIDE with Lt Cdr Neil Hordwood, RNFA

match but a well-organised RAF side absorbed the pressure comfortably and offered a couple of counterattacks which tested the Navy defence.

A momentary lapse in defence half-way through the second half saw the RAF punish the RN severely to go 2-0 up.

A nasty injury to the Navy's centre back just after the second goal – which eventually saw an additional ten minutes of added time – broke the RN rhythm and left them chasing the game.

With little time left against a busy and quality RAF side, the RN prevented further goals but offered little in attack.

The Air Force eventually recorded a well-deserved victory.

RN Ladies vs RAF Ladies

The two ladies' teams met at Victory Stadium.

The first half was primarily

played in midfield, with both sets of midfielders working hard to try to gain the upper hand.

The RAF's dangerous forward line was comfortably controlled by the Navy's impressive back four.

Chances at both ends were few and far between with the Navy's forwards trying hard but failing to significantly trouble the RAF keeper.

Just as it looked like the teams would be going into the break all square, the RAF caught the Navy with a sucker punch. A momentary lapse in concentration enabled the RAF to bundle a close range effort across the line for a 1-0 lead just before half time.

This was hardly justified as although the RAF had shown more attacking threat they had not troubled the Navy's keeper.

With only one change at half time for the Navy, the second period followed a similar pattern

to the first.

The Air Force played nice football but failed to break down the Navy's solid back four.

The RN keeper's long kicks were starting to cause problems for the RAF's back line and chances for both teams started to materialise as a mixture of tiredness and direct attacking opened up spaces.

In a final throw of the dice the Navy reverted to three at the back, releasing the impressive Pat Butcher to supplement the attack.

Indeed, the Navy were starting to get through, with the RAF keeper busier than her Navy counterpart towards the end of the game.

Unfortunately the break the Navy was looking for didn't come and the score remained 1-0 to the RAF.

RN Vets vs RAF Vets

In a precursor to the seniors' match at Fratton Park the Vets from both the RN and RAF met to compete in a well-fought match.

The result favoured the RN who recorded a well-deserved 3-1 win to nicely set up the evening's fixture.



Saints triumph at URNU 'Olympiad'

ALMOST 500 university students descended on Portsmouth to take part in the 2012 University Royal Naval Units (URNU) sports weekend, writes Lt Dafydd Bryden, CO HMS Explorer.

All 14 units contributed teams to play rugby, hockey, sailing, Concept2 rowing, netball, and the game the RN has introduced to these students; bucket-ball (pictured, left – being students they couldn't afford colour film...).

Cdr David Wilson, presiding over his third and final sports weekend, described the event as a "fantastic opportunity to get URNU cadets together at the home of RN sports to promote sports and a healthy lifestyle".

Units came from all over the country, with Aberdeen sending the largest contingent, arriving in high spirits, despite the long coach journey involved.

Although a few students would sleep ashore or onboard familiar P2000 training ships, the majority were housed aboard HMS Bristol – a new experience for many.

Whilst some students have spent short periods on ships when in UK waters, this was the first time for many that they slept in a 30-man mess or come to grips with the internal geography of a larger ship. It was an experience described as positive by all... once they had finally found the heads.

Sports began on Saturday morning after a decidedly un-student-like 6.30am start, and a very welcome cooked breakfast ashore. A small fleet of coaches and mini-buses then took students to HMS Temeraire for a speedy briefing; plus a quick reminder of RN values such as respect – for each other and officials – and teamwork; as individual teams and units and as URNU cadets as a whole.

Sports kicked off with a rush on all available fields and continued well into the afternoon with only a quick break for bag meals. When cadets were not actively taking part they were providing vocal support.

Some teams produced highly-creative mascots: HMS Biter's students sported a shark mascot, while Explorer's students had a memorable Dora the Explorer lookalike cheering on Yorkshire's successes.

However, it was Liverpool URNU who claimed the 'best mascot' prize for their beautifully-crafted yellow submarine.

The care and preparation put in by so many units illustrated the importance the students accord this annual get together – sports weekend is unique in bringing together so many members of all 14 URNUs. With a social event on Saturday night after a full day of friendly competition, this was a rare chance for URNUs to mingle.

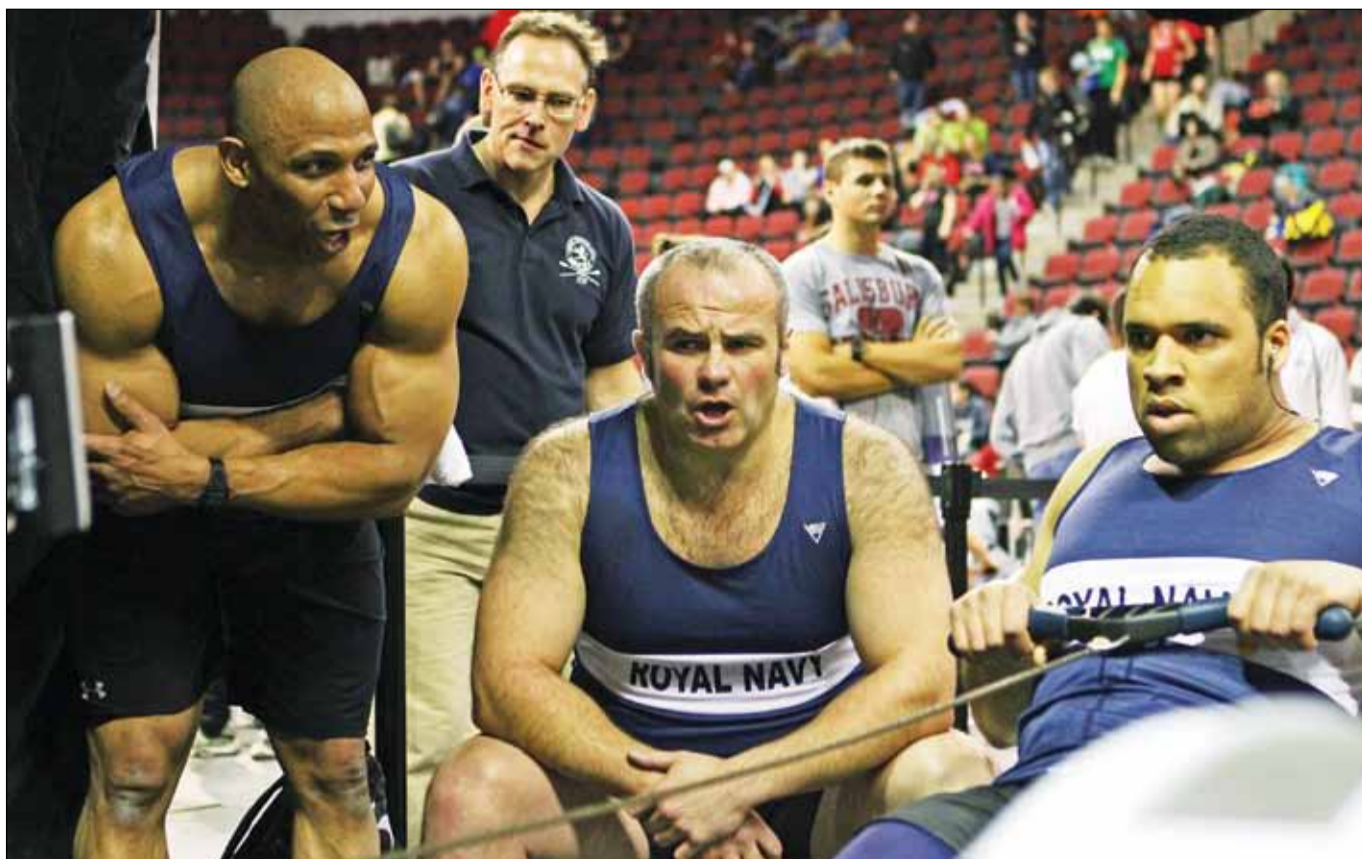
The exciting finals took place on Sunday with the final honours going to Southampton URNU.

Sarah Barnes, having just received the Inter-URNU trophy on behalf of her unit, explained how they had trained each Wednesday against OTC, UAS, university, and other civilian groups.

This fostered effective teamwork, established links with military and civilian groups and helped broaden students' horizons.

This theme was shared across the units; URNU sports weekend provides a valuable focus for wider activities.

Months of training and preparation were spent preparing for this event, and this showed in the quality of the sportsmanship, and the good spirit in which the 2012 'Olympiad' took place.



● CPO Collin Leiba and Lt Stu Moss urge CPO Shaun Gibbs to a personal best – and 14th place – at the WIRC

Picture: Anne Yeats

Olympic honours

SAILORS and Royal Marines will line up alongside their Army and Air Force comrades at more than 900 Olympic ceremonies this summer.

Some 176 Servicemen and women have been selected to take part in welcome and flag-raising victory ceremonies at the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Dressed in their ceremonial uniforms, they will take part in 100 'Team Welcome' ceremonies and 805 Victory Ceremonies during the sporting spectacle.

The personnel have been chosen through an MOD nomination process, highlighting those with sporting or operational achievements – or who are involved in their local community.

Teams will consist of six flag bearers and one flag manager. There will be eight apiece from the RN and RAF, and nine from the Army.

Victory ceremonies take place after a medal event finishes: after the awarding of medals the flags of the gold, silver and bronze medal-winning athlete's countries are raised while the national anthem of the country or territory of the winning athlete – recorded by the London Philharmonic Orchestra in advance of the Games – is played.

As for the 'Team Welcome' ceremonies, they formally welcome the athletes and team officials to the Games and include the protocol of raising flags.

There will be more than 100 such events taking place on the days leading up to the opening ceremonies of both the Olympic and Paralympic Games.



Fun in the sun(seeker)

THE 2012 Rallye Sunseeker which started off at Poole Pier before progressing to Somerley and the forest stages on the Saturday ahead of a Bournemouth Pier finish was a bit of a tri-Service affair.

Members of the Royal Navy/Royal Marines Motorsports Association marshalled some of the stages while the Armed Forces Rally Team – currently comprising RAF and Army personnel – competed in five Wolf Land Rovers, writes PO Dutchy Holland, HMS Collingwood.

After 65 miles of forest track, the Sunseeker Land Rover class was convincingly won by Tom Aldridge and Mark Brown, having led all the way from Special Stage 2 after an uncharacteristic roll had put Alan Paramore and James Sunderland out of the event.

Finishing in second place, Curtis McKerlie and Ross Hunter had chased Ross Cookman and Mal Lofthouse from the start, but struggled to make up an early

deficit – despite being faster on five of the 11 stages.

Going into the final stage they were trailing by 24 seconds until a disappointing time for Cookman and Lofthouse allowed McKerlie and Hunter to leap into that second place.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the service crew, Paramore and Sunderland were back in the event from SS7 under the Super Rally rules and set the fastest times on all of the remaining stages and proved that a Land Rovers can set a competitive time.

After SS1, the pair took ninth place in a class of 20. In fourth place Adam Entwistle, in his first event as a driver, set a steady pace, ably guided by new co-driver Robert Birch, and as confidence grew, so their times improved.

For any member of the Royal Navy wishing to compete log onto the Armed Forces Rally Teams website www.armedforcesrallyteam.com.

Unique round-island race

HMS Collingwood is organising a unique yacht/road race around the Isle of Wight this June.

The Solent Amphibious Challenge, aimed at all three Services, will see competitors leave Gosport in a yacht, stop briefly in Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight to drop off a runner and back-up cyclist, before continuing around the island.

While the yachts are making their way along the coast, the runner must get to Bembridge Harbour – to rejoin the yacht in time for the final leg, back to the start/finish line at Gilkicker Point.

The aim of the Wednesday June 27 event is to provide a physically demanding, leadership, navigation and seamanship challenge for competitors.

The yachts will set off at 9am with all members aboard. After depositing the runner and rider (the latter is only support and cannot trade places with the athlete) at Yarmouth Marina, the pair must reach Bembridge Harbour by 7pm for the rendezvous so the final leg back to Gilkicker can be completed; if they fail to make it, the whole team will be retired from the race due to the tidal window.

On a trial run, a team of experienced athletes took more than four and a half hours to cover the distance – as well as the 20-plus miles to run, there's the matter of hilly or undulating terrain with some steep climbs and a total of over 1,600ft of ascent and descent.

The race is open to Service teams consisting of five personnel: a day-skipper-qualified team leader, two crew members (one competent crew qualified), a runner and a support cyclist.

A maximum of six teams may participate and will be selected on a first come, first served, basis.

More details on 01329 332088.

Hard WIRC pays off

THE Royal Navy contingent at the 31st World Indoor Rowing Championships 2012 (WIRC 2012) comprised 16 rowers – including two MOD staff – as part of a 39-strong Team GB.

The event was held at the Agannis Arena (Boston USA), where nearly 2,500 competitors competed in numerous categories: men's and women's, heavyweight, lightweight and age ranges from teenagers up to 90 year olds, writes Paul Winton.

There were also events for adaptive rowers, with some amazing displays of determination to overcome a wide range of mental and physical disabilities – very humbling to watch.

WIRC is also known as the 'CRASH-B' sprints, an acronym for Charles River All-Star Has Beens. This reflects the origins of the indoor rowing machine which was developed to meet the needs of University rowers when the Charles River in Boston was frozen over during the winter.

Some may query the sanity and attraction of competing in a maximal effort 2,000m indoor rowing race for just six or seven minutes, to a point of near exhaustion?

Many of those involved have a background in another sport; indoor rowing is non-weight bearing, non-impactive and thus is more benign to joints, especially those which may have suffered wear and tear over the years. Indoor rowing is also very good for whole body exercise and aiding the development of aerobic fitness.

RN team members competing at WIRC for up to seven months to optimise potential results at considerably under seven minutes. Indoor rowing performance over 2km favours those with a smart and committed training regime.

Fastest of the Royal Navy team members was S/Lt Adrian Long (Sultan) who achieved a personal best of 6m 13.7s in the very-

competitive men's open heavyweight. Adrian has a penchant for poetry and his smooth rhythm over 2km almost led to the fastest Team GB time, but he tired over the final 300m and just missed out.

Arguably the best performance by a Royal Navy rower was Lt Cdr Jim Thomson (FOST) in the men's 30-39 heavyweight, where he finished sixth in 6m 18s. This was just reward for his commitment to a structured training regime balanced against a demanding job. Adrian and Jim both gave their all and consequently posted the longest recovery times for RN rowers.

POAWT Robert 'Buster' Brown (Collingwood) was tenth in the men's 30-39 heavyweight in 6m 19.4s, similar to his previous year's performance, but worth so much more after illness affected his ability to train for seven of the ten weeks leading up to the competition. Buster's long levers are a distinct advantage to his rowing ability.

Leading up to WIRC, mind games abounded within the RN 40-49 heavyweight contingent, as potential alpha male supremacy was sought.

Lt Stu Moss's (Sultan) 14th place finish in 6m 28.8s achieved that supremacy in his debut 2km championship race.

Lt Cdr Jules Stevenson's (Temeraire) training performances with rigid application to heart rate zones had predicted a return to a sub-6.30 result, but on the day he finished 24th in 6m 34.3s.

Close behind were Cpl Shaun Hickson (RMR London) in 6m 38.4s (26th), CPOET (MESM) Collin Leiba (Talent) in 6m 41.6s (30th) and Lt Cdr Rory West (Navy Command) in 6m 42.8s (33rd).

Both of the latter managed back 'tweaks' (more than a tweak in Rory's case) leading up to the race. The talented Leiba remains the UK Record Holder for 40-49 age group over 500m, having recently lost the 1,000m record in the same category.

Lt Kev Anderson (Shrivenham) actually had

the fastest personal best (6m 19s) of any Royal Navy 40-49 men's heavyweight, albeit set a while ago – he narrowly missed a 'sub-seven' as he finished 52nd in 7 mins 2 secs.

Competition within the Royal Navy 30-39 men's heavyweight was also fierce. CPO (SE) Shaun Gibbs (Sultan) posted a personal best of 6m 26.3s to finish 14th, reaping the benefits of a training programme that included significant elements of functional strength training.

Lt Cdr Derek Powles (pre-Afghan op tour) has been a regular and consistent performer over 2km in recent years, he finished 24th in 6m 40.8s.

LET (ME) Andy Campbell (Bangor) finished in 6m 48.9s (31st), slightly ahead of WIRC debutant CPOET (MESM) John 'Jellyboy' Eales (FOST Faslane), who finished in 6m 52.6s (36th) – a close battle between both Scotland-based rowers. The latter has improved his 2km time by over 20 seconds in the past year.

S/Lt Chris Matthews (824 NAS) was the most experienced 'on the water rower' within the Royal Navy team and thus benefitted from a smooth and economical technique – he rowed an even-paced 6m 39.4s in the men's open heavyweight (150th).

The two elder statesmen of the contingent were in the men's 55-59 heavyweight, 'Stevie P' Penberthy's (Temeraire) 6m 59.8s (17th) briefly showed as the winner after false starts in the faster group delayed the final result, but Steve just wanted a return to a 'sub-seven' time – finely judged! Paul Winton (MCTA) was 10th in 6m 52.0s.

Participation in training and competition on indoor rowing machines has grown significantly over recent years, both within and outside the Service.

First point of contact for those keen to exploit opportunities using indoor rowing machines should be local PT staff. Additional advice is available from Paul Winton 9380 23644 or DES.MCTA-MS-MVAU1.

Can-do taekwon-do athletes shine at annual awards



MARTIAL arts experts performed strongly at the Service's sports awards.

The 80-strong association scooped the best sportsman and best team trophies at HMS Nelson in Portsmouth.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery also presented trophies to the best sportswoman, best sports official and a special award to 400-metre runner Neil Edwards.

Cpl Philip Tovey from 30 Commando (pictured left demonstrating his prowess) won the men's award for his taekwon-do performances last year.

He said: "I'm completely humbled, this is an outstanding achievement.

"It's a reflection of how well we have performed as a team and I couldn't have done this without the support of my Royal Navy and Royal Marines colleagues."

The 27-year-old also represented England last year at the European Championships of ITF taekwon-do – one of two different formats of the self-defence art.

Maj Graham Adcock RM of the Royal Navy's martial arts team picked up the Sports Control

Board Cup.

He said: "It's absolutely outstanding to win best team. It's the first time in more than ten years that we have done so.

"We train one or two times a year at Whale Island as a group of about 40 or 50, to take part in competitions in both forms of taekwon-do, kendo and karate.

"We had 18 inter-service champions this year and 27 of our members placed on the podium at inter-service tournaments."

NA(AH) Rhian Phillips won best sportswoman for her performances in pole vault and other sports in 2011.

The 23-year-old from Bridgend, Wales who is based at RNAS Yeovilton said: "I'm shocked, really shocked.

"I've not been nominated before so that was great, and to win is superb. I've had great support from Paul Winton and my other coaches."

Rhian's mum Ceri Phillips ran 100m hurdles for Wales, which inspired her daughter to compete nationally against Scotland, Ireland and England at youth athletics.

She said: "I was lucky to have the chance to compete as a child and have my mother's input on training and technique."

Lt Cdr Vicki Sollitt won best sports official for her efforts promoting Royal Navy horse-riding.

Based at Abbey Wood where she is managing the introduction of a new tri-Service logistics system, she said: "I'm really proud. It has taken some years to get the momentum going where we can put multiple teams into events like show-jumping.

"To get two teams at Royal Windsor into the top 12 to meet the Queen was great from a team perspective."

Lt Neil Edwards has just turned 40, but picked up the special award for an outstanding contribution to naval sport with his athletic prowess.

He has won numerous Inter-Service titles and is ranked in the top 3 in the UK for age group at 400m, which means he can compete for European veteran titles.

Vice Admiral Montgomery said: "Over and above promoting our core values, which it does, sports does so much to promote leadership and teamwork; two very important factors."



Picture: LA(Phot) Jason Ballard, FRPU East

Navy blow away the Eire force

THE Royal Navy Rugby Union Senior XV renewed its rivalry with the Irish Defence Forces in Portsmouth last month.

This was the 11th meeting of the two sides, the first being in 2002 at London Welsh. The overall series stood at seven victories to three in the Royal Navy's favour, with the home side being the current holders of the trophy after a win in Cork last season, writes Maj Steve Melbourne RM.

Results aside, this encounter has been notable for the closeness and competitiveness of the games. Every game played has gone to the wire; last year was no exception and could easily have been won by either team, with the margin of victory being just seven points.

The RNRU is currently building its senior squad as a result of higher than normal changeover of players due to operational commitments, retirements and

redundancies. However, the new management team is keen to quickly bring together a squad from across the full spectrum of the Navy life.

This match against the IDF undoubtedly provided a good opportunity for aspiring players to make their mark and stake their claim to wear the coveted Navy shirt in this year's Inter Services.

The game started with both teams testing each other's defence, the IDF close in and the Navy continuing as they had done against Cambridge University playing a wide expansive game.

It didn't take long before the Navy caught the IDF 'napping' and right wing S/Lt A Vance (Yeovilton) ran 60m to score the first try of the game with captain POAET Dave Pascoe (Culdrose) converting the try, 7-0.

A score so early in the game 'rousted' the IDF and they continually pressurised the Navy line only to be thwarted by

handling errors which were caused by an aggressive RN defence and good set piece play from lineout specialist POAET M Cormack (Yeovilton) and a back row of Mne B Fox (45 Cdo), MA S Laird (Collingwood), ET (WE) I Cooper (Ambush) who all made the life of the IDF back row difficult.

As the clock ticked to 25 minutes the Navy constructed a good move that provided AET Davis - a late replacement for Navy centre Dale Sleeman - a gap which he exploited to perfection.

This pulled the IDF defence to the right and with the overlap on the left, the RN switched the attack to allow AB D Bamford (Dragon) to score a well-worked converted try 14-0.

Pascoe added to the total a few minutes later as the IDF were penalised for an infringement at the breakdown for 17-0.

If anyone left early to get a place at the US Portsmouth clubhouse bar then they missed a great try.

This provided proof of the hard work the coaches and squad had put in as both backs and forwards worked together; excellent off-loads in the tackle and support play that gave NA(AH) J Quarnivalu (Culdrose) his first converted try of the evening 24-0.

From the restart the Navy made clear its intentions to keep the pressure on the IDF to keep them out of the game, as history of this fixture had seen the IDF always come back hard when behind.

The Navy pushed the IDF back into their own five-metre line and gained a lineout.

From this the forwards showed great patience which paid off to give hooker Lt D Smith (Vanguard) another late replacement for Ben Priddey his first try 31-0.

From the restart, the Irish again pressured the Navy line and eventually gained a penalty 31-3.

From the restart, fly half Mne N Huntley (40 Cdo) lofted his kick

off which allowed Cormack to claim the ball and set up another phase of play which the IDF illegally disrupted.

This was a kickable penalty, but the Navy selected to kick to the corner for a lineout on the IDF five-metre line.

The catch and drive from the lineout was dropped by the IDF for another Navy penalty. The ball ended up in the safe hands of man-of-the-match Quarnivalu for his second try.

The restart did not go well for the IDF as Worcester Warriors winger Josh Drauniniu (HMNB Portsmouth) eventually did what he had threatened to do all game and got on the score sheet for 41-3.

The IDF continued to drive close to the break-down in an attempt to drag in the Navy players to make some space for their back line.

This tactic did have an effect in a way, as after several warnings the referee yellow carded the Navy.

This didn't stop the 14 men of the Senior Service as they raised their game and good work between the forwards and backs that gave Vance his second try for 48-3.

The final action of the game saw the IDF attack make some good ground with their close-to-the-breakdown driving game and then spinning the ball wide to free the back line.

However, a floated pass was intercepted by the ever-present Drauniniu who had a free run to the line, conversion by AET J Humphrey (Yeovilton) for a final score of 55-3 to the Royal Navy, giving it an 8-3 lead in the series.

This game now sets the Navy up for a trip to Bath on April 3 before travelling to Toulon to face the Marine Nationale the following week.

Miners strike too late

SUCCESS for the RN in Rugby Union was mirrored by success in the other code of the sport.

The Brothers are through to the third round of Rugby League's prestigious Carnegie Challenge Cup - the sport's equivalent of the FA Cup - after a thrilling tie at home in Portsmouth, writes WO1 Keith Humpleby, RNRL spokesman.

After a draw for the competition aboard HMS Illustrious a few weeks earlier, RNRL had to face top Lancashire Amateur side Leigh Miners Rangers.

The first-half performance by the RN was probably the best 40 minutes of attacking rugby league seen at Burnaby Road for many years and saw the Brothers stack up a 22-0 lead at the break.

Former St Helens player and RN Full Back Darren Bamford scored a first-half hat trick as the Navy pack dominated midfield, allowing the backs to penetrate the visitors' defence time and time again.

The final score of the opening period half went to Royal Marine Kitione Kamicamica who shrugged off three defenders to touch down, capping a fantastic performance by the home side and with Jon Humphrey scoring three good kicks it seemed the RN had an unassailable lead.

The second half began with 'business as usual': Kyle Larvin and Tim Vodonaivalu scoring early on for the RN, Darren Bamford converting one of the tries.

Then the game changed dramatically as the Leigh outfit began to show their class to score at over a point a minute during a frantic 20-minute period in the middle of the half.

Inspired by their skipper Scott O'Brien, the Miners threatened to spoil the RN party coming within eight points of the home side before the Brothers, led by Mark Robinson, regained their composure and held off sustained pressure in a nerve-jangling final ten minutes making for a fantastic climax to the game.

The 32-24 result was a great start to the 2012 season for coach Danny Johnson, who had to call up three new caps from the Academy side to cover deployed players - but all 17 men played their part in this historic victory.



Picture: LA(Phot) Darby Allen, FRPU East