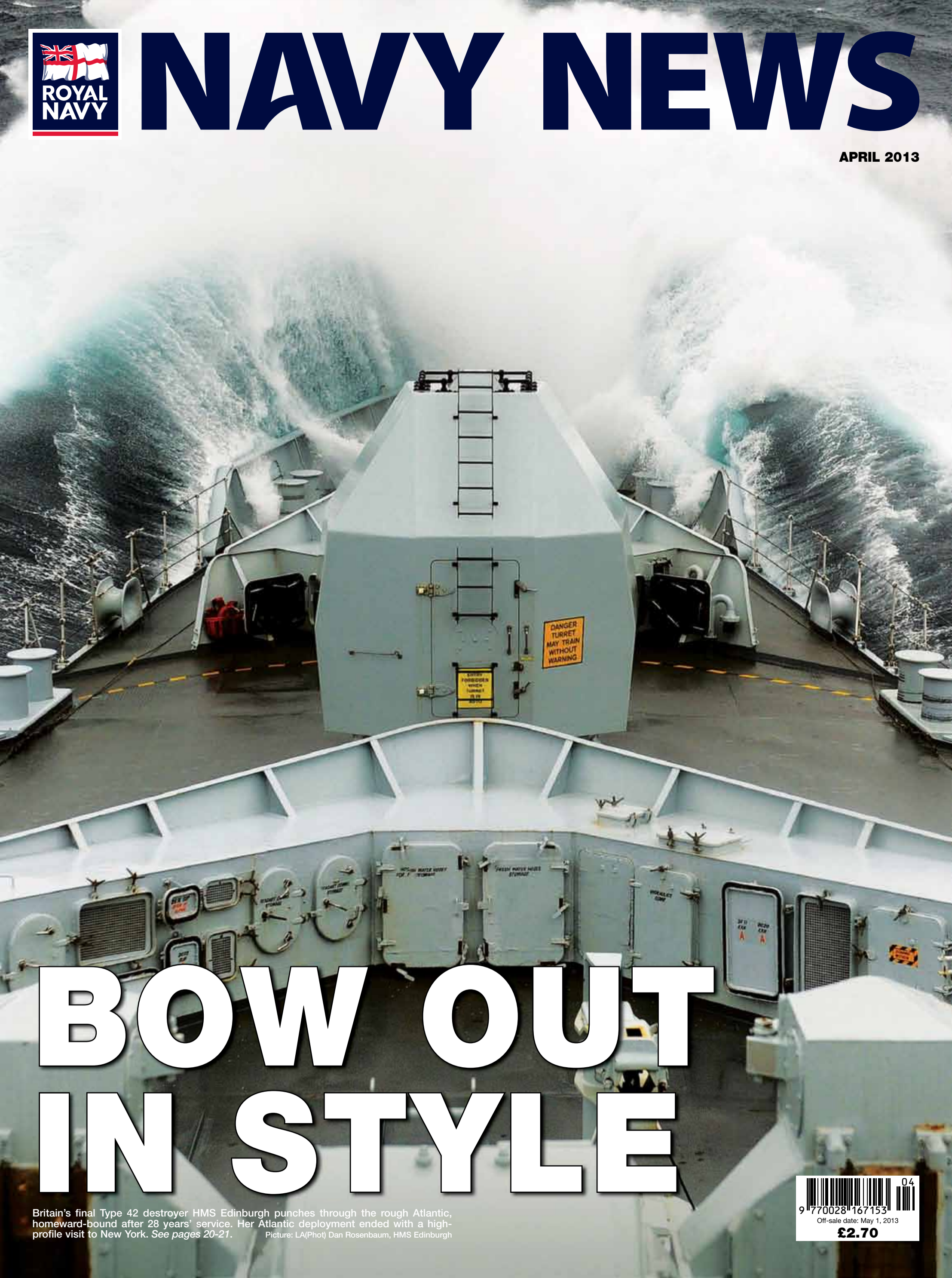




NAVY NEWS

APRIL 2013



BOW OUT IN STYLE

Britain's final Type 42 destroyer HMS Edinburgh punches through the rough Atlantic, homeward-bound after 28 years' service. Her Atlantic deployment ended with a high-profile visit to New York. See pages 20-21.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum, HMS Edinburgh

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SHIPS celebrate red-letter days as much as people do, writes Mike Gray.

First entries into home ports. Commissionings. First operational deployments – all significant milestones in the life of a warship.

And for the Type 45 class, there were three red-letter days due to be celebrated at Portsmouth in under a week.

HMS Dragon, the fourth of six state-of-the-art destroyers, sailed for her maiden deployment to the Gulf (pictured above by LA(Phot) Ben Sutton).

Shortly after she headed west down the Channel her youngest sister, Duncan, was due to steam in the opposite direction to arrive at her new home.

And between those two events Defender, number five in the class, officially became HMS Defender as she was formally commissioned alongside in the naval base.

These big ships – at 8,500 tonnes they are the size of wartime light cruisers – are becoming a familiar sight now.

But they are still very much in the early stage of their lives, and that puts their ships' companies in a very privileged – and influential – position.

The Navy's top brass always say that it is the people that make the difference, not the kit, and a glimpse inside the stealthy hulls of Dragon and Defender confirms that view in spades.

One is around a year ahead of the other, but there are as many links and parallels as there are individual traits emerging.

Take the Weapon Engineer Officers, for example.

Lt Cdr Kevin Miller, taking a brief break from overseeing the loading of supplies on to Dragon during an unseasonal snowstorm in Portsmouth Harbour, joined the Navy in 1995 at the age of 27 as an apprentice.

Having worked in a bank, he decided he wanted to see the world, but was too old to join as an officer.

It didn't matter – after training he was offered an Admiralty Interview Board, and was soon off to Dartmouth, university, and to sea, including deployments to the Gulf, the South Atlantic and the Caribbean.

"And now I am in the best job I have done in the Navy, for the challenge, the people and the difference this ship can make – because we can," he said.

Kevin joined the ship in November 2011 during her trials, taking her through a live Sea Viper firing last summer and on to Basic Operational Sea Training (BOST) and pre-deployment training.

Systems have been modified as patterns emerge – the air conditioning in Dragon has been rebalanced to change the distribution of cool air, a requirement that only becomes clear once the ships have been lived and worked in.

With stores bulging and accommodation near to capacity – the normal complement of 190 or so will be joined by up to 50 more souls providing additional skills and undertaking training – Dragon set off for a seven-month sojourn to the Gulf under the command of Capt Iain Lower.

One of the tweaks being tested by the destroyer is having two complete flights operating a single Lynx helicopter – by duplicating air and ground crew, the aircraft can keep up a much more intense flying programme, and space is not a problem on board.

"Daring went out to the Gulf testing the waters last year, and Diamond built on that," said Kevin.

"Now we can build on the really good



Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool

work done by them and demonstrate that we are real value for money.

"On the way we will undertake anti-piracy and counter narcotics operations – we were at sea just before we deployed and the serials prepared us for pretty much anything we could ask us to do.

"We are quite keen to put it into practice – we are not being gung-ho, but we want to be seen to be a credible asset out there."

Over in Defender, WEO Lt Cdr Jonathan Pearce also started as an apprentice (in 1989) before climbing the promotion ladder.

"It shows what great career opportunities we have and always had in the Royal Navy, which the junior members of the ship's company take on board," said Jonathan.

"I have been in for 24 years, and this is my last job at sea, so it is a fantastic end to my front-line career.

"I could not think of a better way of completing my sea time. It has been amazing."

As with any new class the T45s have had their teething problems, but both WEOs say their ships are now "steady state".

"We push these things hard and things break – that is inevitable. If they didn't, we would not need to send engineers to sea in them," said Jonathan.

"But we are in a good state – we deal with issues as they come up, in good Naval fashion.

"Daring has been in service for a while now, so we are understanding these ships a lot better than when she first rolled off the blocks.

"We are in a hell of a different place. We have been capturing the lessons from other ships, and learning from their experiences."

Back in the snowstorm, Kevin feels the same about his ship.

"Dragon is everything she is cracked up to be. She is very reliable – she has had her issues but nothing we could not overcome," he said.

"If a widget fails when you are on passage between Portsmouth and Plymouth, it may not be much of a problem off the South Coast and within easy reach of shore support.

"But if the widget fails in the Strait of Hormuz, that can really test you. Can you fix it yourself? You really have to think outside the box.

"We get fantastic support from the Type

45 Class Output Management team, but they will be 5,000 miles away, and even with teleconferencing and emails there's nothing better than having someone on board with experience, because when it comes down to it, it is just us.

"And I think we are in a pretty good place right now.

"We had to employ some of the out-of-the-box solutions to keep us going in BOST, and it worked.

"With my team, for example, there are some pretty sophisticated electronics on board, so to come up with a repair is pretty good – and it certainly looks good for me when I tell the boss it's fixed..."

"Although there is a lot of technology on board, it is not a sit back, look at a screen, press a button type of ship.

"It still takes acumen and intelligence to operate it, especially if there is a problem.

"It is still a challenge for people, and people like a challenge."

But, as we said earlier, it is not all about the kit, impressive though it is.

"It is the people that make the ship tick, it is the heartbeat," said Kevin.

"If you look after the guys, they will look after you.

"It is things like making sure they get hot coffee up top on a day like today because it is unseasonably cold, for example.

"We have got a few new joiners who have never been to sea before, so we have got a spectrum of people on board, and the skills of the more experienced people will be passed on to those who are newer, which will be for their benefit and for the good of the whole Navy.

"Even though we are taking quite a few augmentees, such as flight crew, we are still trying to find room to take others so they can get experience – the best way to learn something like engineering is on the job.

"There are sub-lieutenants on Officer of the Watch training for platform endorsements or preparing for weapon engineer or marine engineer boards and the training that goes on with that.

"All that training can be done alongside or in school, but you do not get the decisions or environment that can be seen when you go to sea."

Training is very much on the agenda over at Defender, which is in that interim period between contractors' sea trials and first deployment.

"Everything they were contracted to deliver for the MOD has been

delivered, and now we can continue with the generation of the ship through to deployment," said Jonathan, who joined the destroyer in early 2012 during her first trials phase in Scotland.

"There have been a lot of people in the ship from build who will stay, although we always have an element of turnover.

"It is all about building that RN ethos in the team.

"All departments need their own time to establish their ways of working – building on it in BOST and cracking on to tasking."

He said the time alongside allowed people to get away for career development and training, to play sport (a contingent recently undertook an adventurous training skiing expedition), undertake community projects and the like.

"It is something we are very good at in the Navy – we deal very well with our people, because we are a self-contained unit," said Jonathan.

"When we are away in our four grey walls we have to sustain ourselves.

"Whether it's firefighting or medical support, I think we are really good at that."

A crucial member of any ship's company when it comes to morale and personnel issues is the Executive Warrant Officer (EWO) – a kind of super sea daddy.

Both Dragon and Defender boast different kinds of EWO – one is a Royal Marine (with a dark blue past) and the other almost literally a fish out of water.

"Our Royal Marines EWO – yes," smiled Kevin. "Does he like his phys? Oh yes..."

WO1 Dai Charles is not the first EWO RM, but the others have been in the bootneck environment of amphibious assault ships or shore bases.

"For a frigate or destroyer I am a trailblazer," said Dai.

"I am in my 11th month on board, and it was a steep learning curve, especially with BOST and straight into Directed Continuation Training [DCT – tailored pre-deployment training].

"When I first got on board it was quite daunting – I had not been in a frigate or destroyer since HMS Rhyl in 1979-81, and we didn't have EWOs then. Everyone went to the Master at Arms then."

Dai was second in command of pre-deployment training at HMS Nelson and previously was Detachment Sergeant Major in HMS Ark Royal in her amphibious role, during which time it

was recommended by her CO that Dai take on an EWO job.

"That's how I found myself getting a destroyer, which I have thoroughly enjoyed.

"For the Royal Navy it's a different style of man management and a little bit more aggressive that they are not used to.

"And I like my phys. We were running at 98 per cent for the RN Fitness Test – the Fleet average is about 91-93 per cent."

Dai joined the Royal Navy in 1978 and trained as a radio operator (tactical).

"In 1980 we had a West Indies trip and I was lucky enough to get a couple of days ashore with the Scots Guards in Belize, and then a Royal Marines detachment joined us," he said.

"I used to do my phys before work or after I had finished, but the Royal Marines were doing their phys in their working time – that's the way ahead, I thought: being paid for doing phys."

Before he could transfer the Royal Navy was gearing up for conflict in the South Atlantic, and Dai sailed south as part of Naval Party 2060 on the British Rail ferry MV St Edmund.

"I was the only RO(T) on board, and also did bridge wing gunnery, so from leaving Ascension to arriving in the Total Exclusion Zone I was basically sleeping on the bridge," he said.

He saw action in Falkland Sound, and lost some good friends during the fighting.

"I have never been back to the Falklands since 1982. I need to go back because there are some ghosts I need to put to bed," he said.

"There were lads I knew who were killed in Sheffield, Welsh Guards I went to school with, and on the company of Contender Bezant (now Argus) there was a lad I was in training with who committed suicide on board.

"I want to go back and visit war graves and pay my respects."

With the conflict over, Dai swapped dark blue for the lovat of the Corps.

"I went through recruit training at Lymington with a South Atlantic medal – that didn't go down too well with some of the staff there who could not get down to the Falklands," he recalled.

Dai, who has also served in Iraq and Afghanistan, believes morale amongst his shipmates is high.

"We have a deployment to go on. We are fully loaded, and people just want to get out there and start doing the job."

Dai is originally from South Wales, and like previous 'Welsh' ships Dragon has a sizeable contingent from the Principality – around one in four on board are Welsh.

"It is strange, but I have never served with anyone from the same town as me before, but there are three of us from Felinfoel on board here," he added.

"They are a lot younger than me – I am the oldest one on the ship, including the captain."

Back on Defender, the EWO also had a steep learning curve – though that curve is now approaching its end.

Career submariner WO1 Bob Morrison joined the destroyer in June 2010, and leaves at the end of this month.

"I will be sad to go, but there comes a time when you have taken it so far, and you run the risk of perhaps becoming a bit stale," said Bob.

"You need someone to come in and take it to the next stage. You need that on a ship – a fresh approach.

"I joined the Royal Navy in 1985 as a

comings and goings



submariner, and have served in O-boats, S-boats and V-boats.

"Then my appointer said to me 'we are very short of EWOs – do you fancy it?'"

"I said yes – and the next thing I knew I was on Defender in Glasgow, in build."

"It was very much an engineering project then, which suited me fine because I am an engineer."

"When I joined the ship's company we had 11 people on the books – it was really starting from scratch."

"It is actually easier to start something from scratch than to reinvigorate a mess or team."

"You start it off tight, and as people join they come into your ethos."

"You always have the guys who are a bit wild, but I wouldn't change any of them – you need that mixture, that yin and yang, to have an influence throughout the ship."

"And it keeps life interesting..."

"I am going on to be the Faslane Flotilla EWO, and I have experience of the surface world now so I will not forget the guys in the grey ships at the other end of the jetty there [Faslane's Sandown-class minchunters]."

"I have enjoyed my time in a skimmer, and I will carry that name with pride as I go back."

"And no one is taking my Defender mug off me – that will remain on my desk."

The introduction of new classes of ships always casts a different light on existing and retiring classes, and although the advances are beyond dispute, the comparisons are not always fair.

To the younger members of the ships' companies it is a stark contrast.

ET(WE) Scott Roberts joined in 2010 and his first ship was HMS Liverpool, one of the last of the Type 45's predecessors.

"It was dark and gloomy," said Scott. "When I came on here last July it was quite a shock – I didn't think it would be so big, for a start."

"It is years ahead of the Type 42s – everything there was analogue, big and blocky. Here it is all digital and fibre optics."

Defender is Lt Amy Bolland's first ship – though this is actually her second stint on board.

"I spent some time in Defender when I was at Strathclyde University – I spent two weeks on board when she was in build in May 2011," said the Assistant MEO, who has been in the ship for two months.

"It looked very different then – no furnishings or anything. It is nice to see it now that it looks like a ship."

Amy sought a place on a T45 and is happy, though again there have been plenty of challenges.

"It is quite daunting on my first job – I was not quite sure what to expect or how it worked, but the people on board have been brilliant," she said.

"They are really helpful. They wouldn't leave you looking lost – they would ask you where you wanted to be and tell you how to get there."

"Because I am in training I am trying to get all the qualifications from ET right up to what POs and CPOs have."

"I have to rely on the ship's company to help me out, and they have – you need to get the information from them."

"I am here till July, then back to Sultan for six weeks, then a Board, and if I pass I will look to get on a ship as a Deputy MEO – hopefully on a Type 45, because of my background on here."

"The experience of being on such a new ship would be great for me if I went out to a Type 26 or the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers."

"Not everybody gets the chance to see a ship at such an early stage of its life."

"It's a great insight into how to bring a ship into the Royal Navy – and it is not an easy thing to do."

Accommodation on board the destroyers is perhaps one of the most obvious advances from previous classes.

"This is a big ship as it was designed as a suitable platform for the radar it carries," said Kevin.

"But a big ship means we have maximum space for officers and senior rates, who will be no more than two to a cabin, while junior rates will usually be no more than six to a cabin – and some will be in two-berth cabins if they have some responsibility."

"We have also got an austerity mess for embarked forces, for example – it is classed as 'austerity' but in fact it is no worse than a 39-man mess on a Type 23, and they are regarded as okay."

The D-class can receive satellite TV stations, and have their own cameras, allowing sailors to create news reports from around the ship, as well as information packages for upcoming visits.

"While on deployment, each port visit has its own dedicated liaison team who will cascade as much information as they can about the visit," said Kevin.

"Putting it in writing is fine, but a visual approach with a bit of humour will make it sink in a lot more."

One of the medical staff in Dragon can vouch for the difference – PO(MA) Michelle Caron spent time in two Type 23s.

"I am enjoying it here. This is a good ship," said Michelle.

"In terms of the sick bay, this is a step up from the Type 23 – the set-up is quite similar but there is more space."

"We have got the sick bay, a two-bed ward (better than a 23) and there is an overflow ward we can use, then the standard forward and aft First Aid posts which we use at action stations."

"The additional space makes a lot of difference in day-to-day terms."

"This is a good ship's company, and obviously going through BOST brings everybody together."

Michelle volunteered for the Dragon billet while at the RN Acquaint Centre at Caledonia, and the medical team's hectic pre-deployment schedule included fitting in vaccinations, dental and health checks for the crew, running standard drop-in clinics and ensuring all the equipment was checked as well as supporting shore-based health promotion campaigns such as National No Smoking Day.

"I joined at the beginning of BOST, and it was quite a challenge to get people in date and up to speed for the deployment," she said.

"It is my sick bay to run – I am like the practice manager of a GP's surgery, with the Medical Officer there in the clinical role as the GP."

With almost 12 years behind her, Michelle smiles when she recalls her introduction to the Royal Navy.

"I joined up when my friend from school went along to an Armed Forces Careers Office – she wanted to be a Naval Nurse but didn't want to go along on her own," she said.

"I went along with her, and when I heard the recruitment spiel I thought 'That sounds really good.'"

"I joined up, and she didn't. She went to a big company to train people in first aid – I do that and a lot more as well."

So, new ships in very traditional Royal Navy roles – such as a sense of continuity is vital to the Royal Navy.

HMS Dragon, for example, has close links with the old Type 42 destroyer HMS

Cardiff, carrying models and pictures of the ship and her name board, and she has regularly hosted visitors from the Welsh capital as well as other affiliated organisations.

Defender is developing her own historical links – members of the ship's company from the previous Defender, a 1950s Daring-class destroyer, were invited to the new ship's commissioning ceremony, and the old warship's commissioning pennant has also been passed on.

Defender's commissioning ceremony was a very traditional affair, with ship's sponsor Lady Julie Massey being one of the principal guests, along with Capt Michael Rawlinson, who commanded the previous Defender in 1968-69.

The new ship's CO, Cdr Phillip Nash, read the Commissioning Warrant and the hour-long ceremony was rounded off by his wife Rebecca cutting a special cake alongside the youngest sailor on board – ET(ME) Stephen Smith, whose older sister and shipmate AB(Logs) Samantha Smith was looking on.

"So we maintain and take our history forward with us," said Jonathan.

"Commissioning – formally declaring that the ship is in service – is recognition of the work that has gone by to get us to where we are."

"It is our chance to thank everybody and take some pride in what we have done."

Even the radical changes in a relatively short space of time are, in a peculiar way, part of that continuity that underpins the way the Senior Service works and evolves.

"The Royal Navy is massively different from what it was when I joined," said Dai.

"It was an all-male Fleet then, and much more aggressive – you didn't see Wrens unless you were bimbbling ashore."

He was trained by people sporting medals from World War 2, Korea and Suez – now the staff at Raleigh have honours from 1982, which is as long ago in historical terms to today's trainees as the World War 2 medals were to Dai's colleagues.

Messing is different too – all branches and specialisations mix in larger groups, though there are some – including relative newcomers such as Scott – who are not yet convinced that the end of the 'tribal' messing of the Type 42s and Invincible-class carriers is completely desirable.

Jonathan too has seen a lot of change throughout his career.

"I have served on Type 22s, Type 23s and a Type 42 – that was HMS Cardiff – so I have seen it all apart from carriers, really."

"But from my perspective it is today's Navy. It is about the next 30 years for us."

"To set the ball rolling with six such magnificent ships is fantastic, but you cannot compare the old and the new. It is like apples and pears."

"They are very different beasts."

"Every class of ship in the Navy has brought its own challenges."

"The young ETs on board Defender have the same perspective as I had back when I started – society is as different now to my early days as it was then to my predecessors."

"And I suppose we are not really a new ship now – the first steel was cut in 2006, so we have been on the production line for quite a long time."

The pride of the ships' company is there for all to see as the ships – including Duncan – pass their latest milestones.

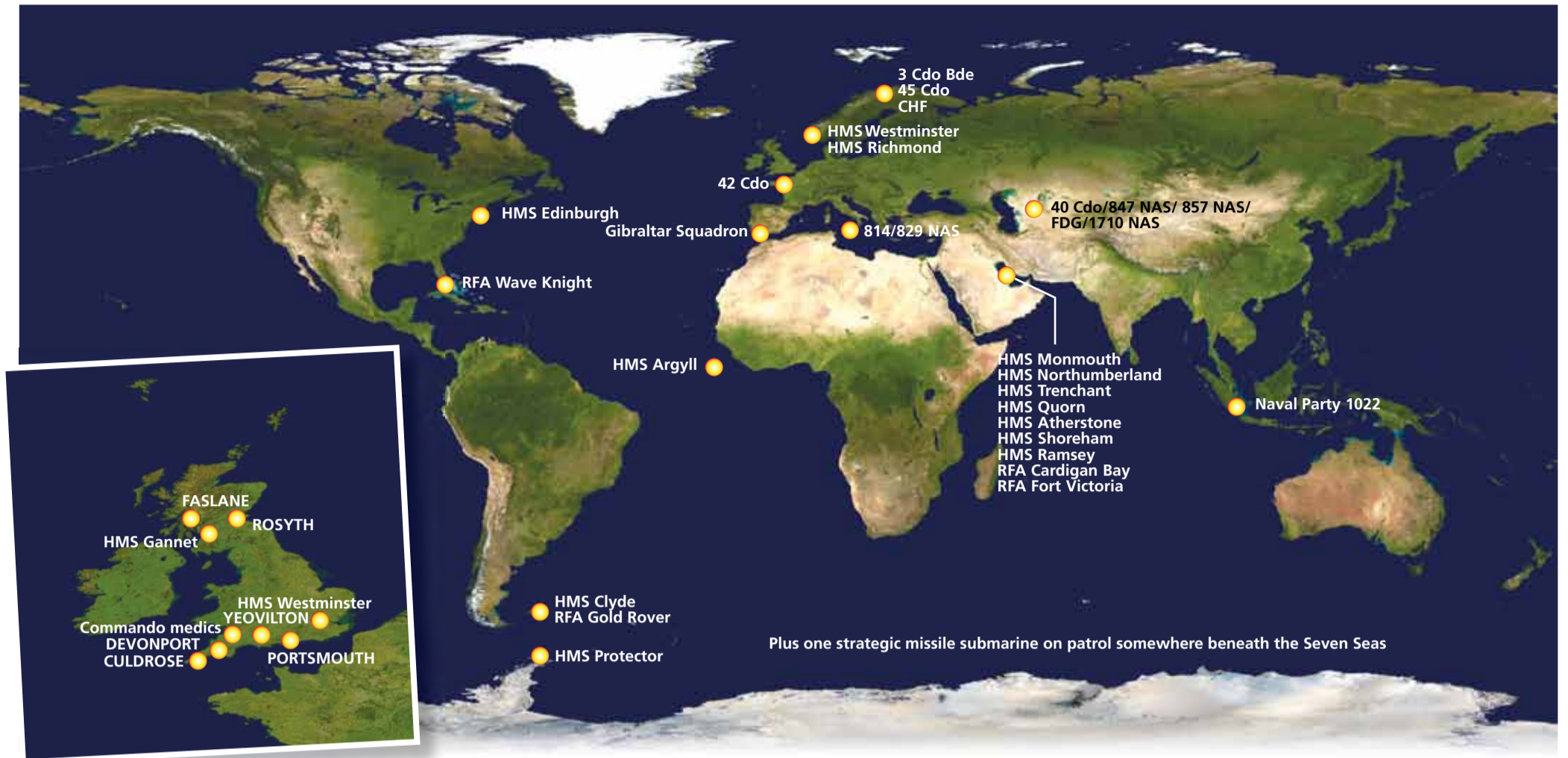
Sailing out past waving, cheering families, parading in Number 1s with medals glittering or navigating into Pompey for the first time – all memories which will remain vivid for decades to come.

As Kevin said: "I am proud to be on here on Dragon – and it has quite a steely name, too..."

● HMS Defender's Guard of Honour conducts a ceremonial march-past on the jetty in Portsmouth during the ship's commissioning

Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Sutton





Plus one strategic missile submarine on patrol somewhere beneath the Seven Seas

SO THIS is month when the curtain begins to fall on one era in the Royal Navy and truly rises on another.

HMS Edinburgh is now home, her final deployment, indeed the final deployment by any Type 42 destroyer, done. She goes out on a high after six months patrolling the Atlantic, making the Big Apple her final port of call (see the centre pages).

And as the age of the 42s passes into history, the age of the 45s is most definitely with us. No.5, **Defender**, is now a commissioned warship. No.4, **Dragon** has deployed east of Suez on her maiden mission (see pages 2-3). And No.6, **HMS Duncan**, has been handed over to the Senior Service in Portsmouth (see page 12); all six of the destroyers are now in RN hands.

Also on the 'new' front, hunter-killer submarine Ambush is now officially **HMS Ambush** courtesy of being commissioned into the Fleet on a fine late winter's day in Faslane – and that's a phrase we don't write too often... (see page 9).

217 Flight of **815 NAS** completed its *période* (stint) with the French frigate *Surcouf* chasing pirates around the Indian Ocean *avec succès* (see right).

And talking of crime-busting success, **HMS Northumberland** ensured more than £5m of cannabis resin will never help fund terrorist activities after stopping two skiffs hurtling across the Gulf of Oman (see page 5).

Elsewhere east of Suez... the RN's minehunting forces are gearing up for next month's massive international mine warfare exercise courtesy of some Anglo-American training (see page 13).

The medics of the **Commando Logistic Regiment** spent two weeks dealing with the casualties of war during a major test of their battlefield surgery skills (see pages 10-11 – please note: the feature does include very graphic images, albeit of fake wounds, so reader discretion is advised).

Much of the Corps has been undergoing winter training in Norway – elements of **3 Commando Brigade**, **45 Commando** and the **Commando Helicopter Force** (see page 14) as have the **Royal Marines Reserves** (see page 31).

Norway's not just useful for Arctic training; it's perfect for charging around the fjords hunting submarines if you're a Type 23... which HM Ships **Richmond** and **Westminster** most certainly are. They and other NATO vessels pitted their wits against Norwegian and Dutch diesel boats putting would-be boat commanders through the Perisher course (see page 15).

Westminster wasn't done there. She popped off (technical term) a couple of *Seawolf* missiles off the Isle of Wight, then headed up the Thames to the capital for a hometown visit and to help **HMS Belfast** celebrate her 75th birthday (see pages 6 and 27).

Also hunting submarines were the *Merlins* of **814** and **829 NAS**, which have completed their detachment to Sicily on Europe's largest anti-submarine exercise, *Proud Manta* (see page 6).

In the far south, ice survey ship **HMS Protector's** divers have been inspecting a shipwreck to ensure the Antarctic waters remain untainted (see page 8).

Sisters **Somerset** and **Portland** can celebrate; the former was officially accepted back into the Fleet after a refit (see page 7); **Portland** was rededicated in a very wet Plymouth (see page 6).

No month passes presently without something eye-catching going on aboard **HMS Queen Elizabeth**. She now looks like a carrier courtesy of her forward island being installed. She's also hosted the crew of **HMS Illustrious**, many of whom will be serving on her in a couple of years' time (see page 13).

HMS Argyll is edging her way southwards down the west coast of Africa, where she's heavily involved in maritime security operations and training with the continent's own naval forces, including the major exercise *Saharan Express* (see page 9).

And finally, congratulations to Cdr Eddie Grenfell RN (ret). Veteran – and survivor – of four convoys to Russia and the very first recipient of the **Arctic Star**, the belated campaign medal struck for men who delivered aid to the USSR during WW2 (see page 6).

A KISS for a sailor from the war returning – here CPO Richard 'Ronnie' Corbett embraces his wife Catherine – is nothing new.

But the 'war' was. Home from a unique three month tour of duty are the air and ground crew of 217 Flight, 815 Naval Air Squadron, who spent the turn of 2012-13 chasing pirates around the Indian Ocean.

They did so from the back of the French frigate *Surcouf* – the first time a Fleet Air Arm flight has deployed with a French warship.

"The experience has been really good," said flight commander Lt Mike Curd – who's been blogging about his time aboard courtesy of the Royal Navy's website.

"Challenges have been more on the human side than operational. One of the biggest challenges was the language – none of us was an expert French speaker, but it worked. There was some excellent teamwork during this deployment."

Closely following that deployment was Catherine Corbett – 28 weeks pregnant when her husband set down on the Yeovilton standings.

"I have missed sharing our pregnancy with him but baby Corbett sent an email every week. Now he's back, it's time for me to put my feet up," she said.

The *Surcouf*, which typically deploys with a Panther helicopter, was dispatched to support the European Union's Operation Atalanta – a double mission to both eradicate the scourge of piracy and to safeguard shipping delivering aid to Somalia.

The highlight of the deployment – for the ship and the Lynx flight – was the capture of a dozen suspect pirates following an attack on the *MSC Jasmine* after she came under attack from men armed with rocket-propelled grenades.

Thanks to the Lynx, the two suspect boats were located, and afterwards it provided air cover for the *Surcouf's* boarding team as they apprehended 12 men. The suspected pirates were subsequently handed over to authorities in Mauritius.

"During the deployment, the



Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, RNAS Yeovilton

Royal Navy Lynx played a full part in everything the *Surcouf* did – protection of a World Food Programme ship between the Gulf of Aden and Mombasa in Kenya, reconnaissance missions to provide maritime situation awareness along the Somali coast and on the open sea, photographic intelligence, and the rescue of ten Indian shipwreck victims on January 10," said *Capitaine de frégate* Hughes Laine, the *Surcouf's* Commanding Officer.

"The results of this mission are very positive and *Surcouf's* crew are proud to have actively contributed to the fight against piracy."

The French officer continued: "From my point of view, the integration of the British detachment has been a success – we used the Lynx helicopter on operations exactly as we would do a French one."

"I am delighted with the excellent spirit which prevailed between the British and French sailors. This deployment has proven our full ability to work together. It certainly opens the way for future co-operation."

The unprecedented link-up between the *Surcouf* and 815 Naval Air Squadron is part of ever-closer Anglo-French co-operation

following the 2010 defence treaty between London and Paris.

As part of that co-operation, members of **Mike Company 42 Commando**, headed across the Channel to Le Mans for Exercise *Gaelic Venture*.

There the Bickleigh-based Royals joined forces with *2e Régiment d'Infanterie de Marine*, to build on Anglo-French military relations and develop an understanding of the two Corps' different operating procedures.

With most of the French regiment deployed to Mali, **Mike Company** mainly trained French 4 Company around Camp D'Auvours.

A 20-km 'yomp' preceded communications testing (which was a challenge with two languages involved) before the British and French companies set themselves up in harbours and conducted reces and operating points, culminating with a simultaneous assault on two 'enemy' strong-points.

The officer in charge of the Royal Marines took command of a platoon of French Marines whilst a troop of Royal Marines deployed into the field as part of the French company.

Having only one French speaker in the troop proved a challenge,

but demonstrated that language is not the main barrier for joint operations.

Once the attacks were over the Royal Marines established themselves on the 'enemy' positions overnight.

They proved themselves an impressive surveillance asset throughout, surprising their French hosts as they routinely contacted counter-attacks before they had even successfully located the harbour they were defending.

The final day was spent on a firing range and 'enjoying' some French-led physical training which the Royal Marines devoured.

After the exercise the Mike men went on a two-day battlefield tour of Normandy to sites of several key D-Day amphibious actions, including *Port-en-Bessin* – between Gold and Omaha Beaches – and the Rangers' cliff assault on to enemy gun emplacements at *Pointe du Hoc* (a feat famously recreated in *The Longest Day*).

The French connection (sorry) continues this month: the air wing of the *Charles de Gaulle* – more than 20 Rafale and Super Étendard, supported by 300 personnel – is taking part in Joint Warrior off Scotland, billed as the biggest military exercise of its type.

pictures: la(phot) maxine davies, hms northumberland



Police, camera, action

AND well he might look up a little sheepishly at the camera. You cannot outrun a Merlin – even if you do throw all your evil cargo overboard.

This is the moment the men and women of HMS Northumberland intercepted one of two high-speed skiffs in the Gulf of Oman – thus ensuring more than £5m of cannabis never reaches its destination.

The seizure also means more than £5m will never reach the hands of extremists; it's believed drugs being trafficked on the so-called 'Hashish Highway' provide funds for terrorist organisations.

In this first drugs bust in the region in nearly 12 months by a Royal Navy warship, the Plymouth-based frigate, her boarding team and her helicopter came across the two suspicious craft – and gave chase for more than two and a half hours over 30 miles of the Arabian Sea.

As they did so, they watched as the crews of the skiffs tossed their illegal wares overboard – actions recorded by cameras in the Merlin.

Seven bales were subsequently recovered by Northumberland's sea boat and her Merlin; they were found to contain pure cannabis resin. The 120kg of drugs seized by the frigate's crew was subsequently destroyed.

It's estimated that nearly 1,500kg (1½ tons) of drugs were thrown overboard in the attempt to flee. In total, it's thought that the cannabis had a street value of around £5.4m (\$7.6m).

Following the high-octane pursuit, which took place around 130 miles north-west of the Omani capital Muscat, were the staff of the UK Maritime Component

Command in Bahrain – the Royal Navy's headquarters in the region, which directs the mission of all British warships, submarines, squadrons and supporting vessels east of Suez.

The drugs bust is the first scored by the RN in its domain since Northumberland's sister HMS Westminster snared a dhow carrying around 70 bales of heroin, worth around £14m, in the Indian Ocean last spring.

"The air in the operations room here as we followed Northumberland's pursuit in real time was electric. When the skiffs were intercepted there was a buzz and a real sense of a job well done," said Cdr Johnny Ley, UKMCC Staff Operations Officer.

"Northumberland and her ship's company stepped up to the challenge, chasing the drug runners down, giving them no option but to surrender. It was a good day for us – and a bad one for them."

And from the man directing the Royal Navy's east of Suez mission, Cdre Simon Ancona, Commander UKMCC, the success was an affirmation of the Senior Service's long-standing commitment to sweep criminals off the maritime highways in the Middle East.

"The Royal Navy is out on patrol, looking for pirates, drug runners and terrorists 24/7, 365 days a year," he said.

"This success merely underlines the enduring UK focus on stability and security in this vital region and it's what the Royal Navy does when it's on the beat."

Northumberland was operating under the banner of Combined

Task Force 150, a force of international warships, currently led by the Australians, prowling 2.5 million square miles of the Indian Ocean for illegal activity.

The frigate's actions were praised by the task force commander, Cdre Charles McHardie RAN: "The destruction of this cargo ensures that it will not fund the activities of extremists."

When not intercepting drug runners, the 'Constable Northumberland' has been flying the flag for the Royal Navy – and the nation – alongside a dozen other countries in Karachi as the Pakistani Navy hosted its biennial Exercise Aman (which is Urdu for 'peace').

It's four years since the RN last had a participant in Aman (Northumberland's sister HMS Portland in 2009).

The first three days of the exercise are spent in harbour at Karachi as the participants bond, taking part in joint events such as the opening ceremony, wreath laying, an international naval conference and sports and cookery contests.

Then proceedings shift to the Arabian Sea – in the case of Aman 13, two days of action covering the full panoply of maritime security operations, with a 'fleet review' to bring the curtain down on events.

The aim is to show the united resolve of the many nations involved in tackling terrorism and other crimes in the Indian Ocean and environs and to honing the skills of disparate Navies – some of whom don't work together too often, such as South Korea and Jordan, or Malaysia and Yemen, Australia and Turkey.

"The opportunity to exchange

ideas with Chinese, American, Australian, Emirati and Italian sailors – all in the same forum – was a fascinating experience," said Cdr Paddy Dowsett, Northumberland's CO.

He also hosted Britain's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Adam Thomson, and the head of the Pakistani Navy, Admiral Mohammad Asif Sandila.

"Both the admiral and I trained at Britannia Royal Naval College – and served on Type 21 frigates, which is indicative of the close relationship between our two navies," Cdr Dowsett added.

At sea there was a chance to let slip the dogs of war with gunnery (blasting 'killer tomato' inflatable targets); counter-piracy demonstrations, cross-deck landings (which means helicopters from the various participants practise landing on different warships); a combined search and rescue exercise; and some replenishments at sea.

Proceedings concluded with formation sailing and a chance to cheer ship as Aman ended with a sail past; Northumberland's sailors lined the Type 23 frigate's upper deck to doff caps in salute of the Pakistani combat support ship PNS Nasr.

"Both the harbour and sea phases of Aman provided my ship's company with an all-too-rare insight into both the culture and tactics of our key regional partners" said Cdr Dowsett.

"In many respects, the harbour phase with its packed programme of social, cultural and sporting activities was as important as the days spent at sea."

Northumberland is coming to the end of her patrol.

She's due home in Devonport next month after eight months away.



● (Top) Northumberland's sailors salute the Pakistani combat support ship PNS Nasr and (above) the frigate's Merlin parked on the flight deck during the sail past while (below) the impressive sight of Pakistani sailors on parade at the opening ceremony of Aman



● Northumberland follows other participants of Aman 13 as the sun goes down over the Arabian Sea

Portland's momentous occasion

AFTER a year out of action, a gleaming, revamped HMS Portland was officially welcomed back into the bosom of the Fleet.

But the shining, refitted Type 23 did not provide the backdrop to the occasion, sadly, for the inclement late winter weather forced her rededication ceremony to move from the jetty to the unusual surroundings of the WOs' and Senior Rates' mess at Drake.

Some 200 family members, friends and affiliates – including the councillors from the town of Portland, the Wrens and Royal Naval Associations – joined the ship's company and VIPs, led by the frigate's sponsor Lady Brigstocke, to celebrate the occasion.

Lady Brigstocke, who launched the frigate at the Yarrow yard in Scotstoun back in 1999, inspected ceremonial divisions as well as members of the ship's affiliated cadet units, TS Penn, TS Swiftsure and Combined Cadet Force Bournemouth, who were parading alongside the ship's company.

Portland's CO, Cdr Sarah West, told her ship's company and assembled guests that a lot of hard work lay ahead for all connected with the frigate to prepare the Type 23 for deployment once more in 2014.

"It is a momentous day for the ship and her company as we look forward to sailing again to face the diverse challenges that Fleet and national tasking bring.

"Having joined Portland during her maintenance period, I have seen the full extent of her impressive regeneration."

Kent goes East

HOT on the heels of HMS Northumberland's drugs success, her sister HMS Kent has sailed from Portsmouth to take her place in the fight against criminal activity in the Indian Ocean.

Having been through intense training, the Type 23 is ready for a challenging deployment as part of the Royal Navy's standing commitment in the Middle East, providing reassurance to the UK's allies in the region, policing busy shipping lanes and carrying out maritime security and counter-piracy patrols.

"This type of deployment is what the ship is all about; deployed far from home, maintaining security of extremely important shipping routes," said her CO Cdr Ben Ripley.

"My ship's company, is looking forward to the challenges of counter piracy operations coupled with seeing parts of the world they may not otherwise experience."

The deployment is Kent's first since an extensive refit in 2011. Upgrades have included a new sonar and 4.5in gun.



Torpedoes and volcanoes

ORDINARILY, we wouldn't get too excited about three Merlins parked on the standings.

Except that those buildings definitely aren't Culdrose (even if the wispy clouds do have a touch of the Cornish weather about them).

The *mise en scène* is US Naval Air Station Sigonella, 1,330 miles from the home of the Merlin.

Three helicopters from 829 and 814 Naval Air Squadrons based at Culdrose and 75 supporting air and ground crew were Britain's input to Proud Manta – the biggest anti-submarine exercise run by NATO.

Ships, submarines and aircraft from 14 nations converged on Sicily for the two-week war game, with the Royal Navy detachment setting up stall at Sigonella air base in the shadow of Mount Etna.

Heading out into the Mediterranean the Merlin crew began their search in earnest and was able to close in on an Italian submarine using their Active Dipping Sonar known as 'Flash'.

Effectively 'cornering' the submarine – not an easy task given the size of the Mediterranean – the Merlin showed its teeth as it swooped in for a simulated attack run.

"Going up against submarines is always difficult," explained 24-year-old Lt Hannah Best, an observer with 814 NAS. "They are extremely capable and often very hard to track, so when we find one it is a great achievement."

The helicopter crew managed to complete four simulated attacks on the Italian boat before heading back to base, maintaining the Royal Navy Merlin's position as undoubtedly the most capable anti-submarine warfare and maritime patrol helicopter in the world.

Lt Best, who only last summer was safeguarding the skies over Weymouth during the 2012 Olympics, added: "It's always exciting when you are operating with real submarines; and working with the other nations in NATO is such a great opportunity and is of massive training benefit to us as aircrew."

The submarines stalking in the Mediterranean aren't the only challenge faced by the Culdrose fliers. The Royal Navy detachment

arrived at Sigonella – described by the detachment's logistics officer Lt Matt Cullen as a "little slice of America tucked away amongst the Sicilian orange groves" to find Nature in full fury.

Etna was erupting for the first time in 2013. "Lava was shooting thousands of metres into the air and an ash cloud – reminiscent of the one that covered much of Europe in 2010 – spread over Catania," said Lt Cullen.

The Brits were also greeted by a violent thunderstorm which transformed the streets of Catania into furious torrents – 50 litres (11 gallons) of rain apparently fell

in every square metre in just 30 minutes.

"I have never seen so much water flowing in a city – it was as if I was driving through a raging river; as parked cars, bicycles and tables and chairs started floating past.

"I reached the airfield just in time as the engineers did their best to protect the helicopters from the downpour."

The weather was, of course, not going to get the best of the Merlin men and women. As the sun came out, the water drained away and the volcanic ash blew clear of the airfield and the aircrews were

back in the air in company with an American P3 Orion Maritime Patrol Aircraft to prosecute a Greek diesel-electric submarine.

For one of 829's observers, Lt Karen Snel, it was a great opportunity to work with other coalition aircrew. "It was a really successful first sortie for me – we established communications with the Americans and then opened up into our search area," she said.

"Although we didn't make contact with the submarine, it was great to be able to work together with other nations, and it is only a matter of time before we will locate and prosecute it."



First Arctic Stars issued

PROUDLY holding the very first Arctic Star is the sailor who spearheaded the 16-year campaign, Cdr Eddie Grenfell.

Britain's most senior military officer – Chief of Defence Staff General Sir David Richards – presented the medal to the 93-year-old World War 2 veteran in Portsmouth's historic Guildhall as premier David Cameron did the same to survivors not just of the terrible convoys to Russia, but also Bomber Command veterans.

Cdr Grenfell – pictured by LA (Phot) Keith Morgan – was not well enough to attend the ceremony at No. 10 for around 40 WW2 veterans, so General Richards came to the sailor's native Portsmouth to present the campaign medal.

Cdr Grenfell served on four convoys to Russia, and survived the sinking of his ship Empire Lawrence; he also received a letter from the prime minister congratulating him on his medal.

The Arctic veteran said: "It is a wonderful day and I am very pleased to be able to receive this medal. It is just sad that so many of my colleagues are no longer with us to receive their medals."

General Sir David Richards said the Arctic Star was a medal to celebrate and commemorate the bravery of a special group of men.

"It is truly humbling and we are all in awe of what you achieved," he told Cdr Grenfell.

"I'm delighted both personally and professionally to present the very first Arctic Star on behalf of the Queen, the Armed Forces and indeed the whole nation."

Up to 120,000 veterans – or their next of kin – are believed to be eligible for the star, whose design mirrors similar WW2 campaign medals, such as the Atlantic Star.

Each star is individually cast by the Royal Mint, made from bronze in the same manner as those post-war were produced.

It recognises service between 1941 and 1945 delivering vital aid to the Soviet Union, running the gauntlet of enemy submarine, air and surface ship attacks.

The campaign cost the lives of around 3,000 sailors and merchant seamen – over 100 civilian and military ships were lost, with the nadir coming in the summer of 1942 when convoy PQ17 was mauled by the Luftwaffe and nine U-boats.

Beyond the threat of the enemy, men endured fearful weather conditions, the darkness of the polar winter and 24-hour daylight at the height of summer. If ships were sunk, sailors perished in minutes in waters barely above freezing.

Arctic veterans have always stressed that their campaign was entirely different from that in the Atlantic (keeping Britain's sea lanes open): different aims, different conditions – and should have been recognised with a specific medal, not the Atlantic Star which was awarded when hostilities ended.

The decision to award the medal was made at the end of last year by Mr Cameron after a long-running campaign by survivors, and a review of medals carried out by Whitehall.

You can download an application form from www.veterans-uk.info/arctic_star_index.htm or write to The Arctic Star, MOD Medal Office, Imjin Barracks, Innsworth, Gloucester, GL3 1HW.

We'll have more on the Arctic Star in our May edition

Serenity and Seawolf

WORDS which are not typically used in juxtaposition...

But lit up by floodlight in the heart of the capital, HMS Westminster indeed looks serene, berthed next to HMS Belfast, which is bathed in green for St Patrick's Day – on the great wartime cruiser's 75th birthday.

The frigate spent six days on the Thames catching up with her affiliates, celebrating her freedom of the City of Westminster, and joining Belfast veterans at a very damp commemoration of her birth (see page 27 for details of the latter).

The ship's company paraded in the Sanctuary outside Westminster Abbey, where Lord Mayor Cllr Angela Harvey inspected the sailors and took the salute.

She then joined the sailors inside the world-famous house of worship for morning prayers, at which Capt Hugh Beard, the frigate's commanding officer, was invited to read.

All of this peace and calm in the abbey was in stark contrast to the frigate's most recent activities – charging around the fjords of Norway hunting submarines, her *raison d'être* (more on that on page 15), and some very fiery Seawolf trials off the Isle of Wight.

The Portsmouth-based warship has been testing a new version of the canisters which hold the 1.9m (6ft 3in) tall missiles.

Some 32 Seawolfs sit in their 'cocoons' (or canisters) in the silo on the forecabin of a Type 23 frigate – waiting for the moment an aerial threat is posed to the ship.

In this instance, that threat came from targets on the end of a very long cable towed behind an aircraft.

The 'capital ship' fired one telemetry version of the air defence missile – crammed with sensors to take readings – and one with a live warhead

(known as a 'war shot') at the targets, one of which was skimming just 20ft above the surface of the Channel.

Seawolf is designed to detonate close enough to a target to cause maximum damage, making it either explode or plunge out of the sky.

But thanks to the upgrade Seawolf has received in recent years – effectively doubling the weapon's range – it's become less of a 'missile' and more of a 'hit-ile', wreaking immediate and total destruction.

Celebrating the success of the double take-down, Westminster's weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Mickey Rooney, whose department is responsible for Seawolf (as well as other weapons and sensors aboard) said all the crew enjoyed what was "effectively a £1m seaborne clay pigeon shoot – and the target lost."

"Both trials were hugely successful in a very crowded sea around the back of the Isle of Wight – we killed the pesky targets stone cold dead."

"It's the first time our commanding officer has used this 'cheap missile system' – he's used to the 'millionaire's option' of a Trident from his submarine days."

Such trials, her work off Norway and, before Christmas, anti-submarine training in home waters and a £14m drugs bust in the Indian Ocean *inter alia*, all make Westminster the RN's No.1 frigate.

We can say that because she received the Frigates' Efficiency Award from Rear Admiral Ian Jess, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Support).

The tempo for F237 doesn't let up much for the remainder of 2013. In the autumn she'll head out to the Med with the UK's Response Force Task Group for the annual Cougar deployment, before breaking away to head east of Suez.

Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool, FRPU East



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Somerset set for action

DON'T beware the Ides of March. Embrace them.

HMS Somerset did. For March 15 2013 was the day she officially returned to the active Fleet after an extensive package of sea trials following a lengthy refit in her home base of Devonport.

Cdre Jake Moores, Commodore Devonport Flotilla, gave the Type 23 frigate the seal of approval when he visited her for a 'Fleet Date Inspection'.

Having spent nine months alongside for a £20m refit, HMS Somerset went to sea in January to carry out a stringent set of trials, to make sure all of her equipment was working as required.

The trials were also used to reintroduce her sailors to life and routines aboard their refurbished warship.

"It's been hard work but exciting," said Std Rachel Tiley.

"I wasn't sure what to expect at first but we all pulled together as a team and I'm really looking forward to the challenges we will face over the next few months."

The trials and inspection proved Somerset's ability to operate safely with her navigation, ship handling and core fighting systems. Her newly-kitted-out galley has been providing exceptional food (with a little help from the chefs). Radars, sonars and communications are all working, guns have been fired and missile systems tested.

"In summary, the ship once again looks and feels like a warship ready for future challenges," said her CO Cdr Mike Smith.

"We have all worked incredibly hard over the last few months to ensure that we return to the Fleet ready and able to play our part. Our focus now shifts to training in preparation for operations."

THE meandering river, the green fields, the ominous skies.

Looks like a Lynx over its traditional Somerset home.

It's not. This is Helmand. And the Lynx Mk9A of 847 Naval Air Squadron is on 'eye in the sky' duties.

The Yeovilton-based fliers are now well into the routine of their five-month tour of duty over Afghanistan – the final appearance by the Commando Helicopter Force squadron in its current guise.

When the 847 team returns, they'll begin converting to the Lynx's successor, Wildcat.

But before you start crying *le roi est mort...* the Mk9A has a lot to offer.

For a start it's got the same powerful

engines as the Wildcat – more powerful than the maritime Mk8 Lynx used by the rest of the Fleet Air Arm on duties with the Fleet – so it can cope with the harsh climate of the Afghan summer.

They're equipped with a .5 calibre machine-gun which will ruin your day should you try to cross its path.

"This weapon is ideal for what we are doing here" says Royal Marine aircrewman/air gunner L/Cpl Jordan Schofield.

847's operations officer Capt Ian Moore RM, adds: "It's enough that we are there as a deterrent, but with a fire rate of 17 rounds per second, everyone we're working with feels much safer



when we are around."

And where are 847 around? Well, they serve as the eyes of the much larger RAF Chinooks when the wocca-woccas are ferrying troops around the various bases scattered around Helmand.

The Lynx, which always travel in pairs, have seen a real change in the pace of operations since the last time 847 was deployed to Afghanistan.

As the numbers of troops are reduced, air moves have become less frequent and reconnaissance flights for future operations are fewer.

"What the Lynx can offer is fantastic. It's perfectly suited to protecting our troop movements – and they free up

the Apache attack helicopters for other tasking," explains pilot Lt James Nottingham.

As we reported at the end of 2012, the 847 team underwent extensive training for their latest mission, including spending a month in southern California, where the terrain and climate mirrors Helmand – to a point.

"The climate there is very similar to the winter here in Helmand but the most challenging thing to deal with both here and there are the dust landings," said pilot Lt Alex Lovell-Smith.

He and his comrades are due to return to Yeovilton in late spring, when they'll become the first front-line unit in the UK's Armed Forces to move on to Wildcat.

Picture: Cpl Jamie Peters RLC



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pictures: la(phot) arron hoare, hms protector



Probably the best job in the world...

BUT which job?

- Photographer?
- Diver?
- Leading hand?
- Commanding Officer?
- Take your pick.

Because from these images, all look pretty fab prospects.

Another month around the ice of the Antarctic Peninsula has provided another set of jaw-dropping images for us... and memories of a lifetime for the 60 or so souls aboard Her Majesty's Ship Protector, Polar explorer extraordinaire.

We generally, though not exclusively, focus on Protector's survey work and those *Multi-Coloured Swap Shop* (ask your mum or dad...) sonar scans of Nature's wonders.

This month, however, a different kind of survey work – although all part of Protector's over-arching mission to safeguard this largely-unspoiled environment.

Back in 1989 these waters suffered one of the worst environmental emergencies since mankind began probing the frozen continent.

The Argentine research vessel *Bahia Paraiso* ran aground near Janus Island in the Palmer Archipelago, a group of islands running almost parallel to the north-west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula.

In doing so, the ship spilled more than 600,000 litres of diesel – that's enough to fill the tanks of nearly 11,000 Ford Focuses.

An Argentine and Dutch team carefully removed all traces of fuel, with HMS Protector's dive team asked to inspect the wreck to ensure there was no further leakage.

The Portsmouth-based ice-breaker carries a four-strong dive team who love getting stuck in (technical term), using icebergs and snow/ice-encrusted terrain as 'jump-off platforms' to plunge into the sea, whose temperature typically hovers around 0°C.

Diving on the hull of the *Bahia Paraiso* – and equipped with an underwater camera – the team were able to confirm that the diesel flow had ceased and also identified a rich eco-system of

hanging sponges and aquatic life.

"Diving in Antarctica is inconceivably amazing – diverse aquatic life and breathtaking sea-bed topography," said LS(D) Chris Hayes, Protector's diving team leader.

"It is a real privilege to dive in the Antarctic – it certainly makes a change from diving in UK waters searching for unexploded World War 2 ordnance or in the very warm waters of the Gulf."

The team also explored a dormant water-filled caldera volcano at Deception Island – which is one of only two in the world – and surfaced to a watching audience of penguins intrigued by their strange looking visitors.

While this risk assessment included exiting safely if there was any sign of volcanic activity, the divers were also warned of the dangers of killer whales and leopard seals as they explored icebergs on the peninsula.

After confirming the icebergs

were grounded rather than floating, the dive team jumped into the waters to examine the mass of ice underneath.

The cold waters provide excellent visibility for this type of diving – around 15 metres (50ft) or more – with the sea bed around the icebergs littered with whale bones, starfish and an array of rare fauna and flora.

Ok, that's the David Attenborough bit... but physically, what's it like diving in these waters?

Well, the team uses the standard RN-issue compressed neoprene dry suit – described by Chris as "fairly warm" – which is worn on top of a combination of thermals and an all-in-one padded suit.

Extremities are, of course, the coldest part of the body; dive gloves and especially mitts help to offset the cold (a little).

A standard air set is used – a combination of a 12 litre or three-litre cylinder – with a full face mask, as used anywhere else in the world.

What the divers do have to ensure is that their masks are completely dry, otherwise they tend to freeze up.

"Other precautions we have to take are for wildlife – before we start the dive we have to check for leopard seals and killer whales – if we see either, we have to abort diving for the day," Chris explains.

The other limitation to diving in this part of the world is the water temperature. Even with gloves, 20 minutes is about the maximum your hands can work comfortably.

"Diving around icebergs tends to be a little shorter due to the salinity of the water which allows it to be colder than normal. There's also another challenge – the bergs produce fresh water pockets which affect your buoyancy, creating a very small yo-yo diving profile."

Icebergs aren't useful solely as diving platforms. No, they're perfectly fine if you want to do a medal presentation.

When LS(CIS) Scott Black completed 17 years' unblemished, dedicated service, he earned the Long Service and Good Conduct medal.

With Protector gathering data about waters around small, uninhabited Detaille Island – 700 nautical miles south of Cape Horn – the leading hand clambered on to a low-lying iceberg with the ship's captain, Capt Peter Sparkes, who presented him with the medal

in a fittingly unique location for such a memorable event.

Originally from Oldham in Lancashire, Scott joined the Navy in 1996.

He's served across the Fleet from frigates *Montrose* and *Northumberland* to the Fishery Protection Squadron, NATO duties in Portugal and most recently with Protector.

He is, says Capt Sparkes, "a superb example and role model for junior sailors in Protector; it was a privilege to present him this award whilst in the breathtaking scenery of Detaille Island."

As for the remote island, situated at 66°52'S 66°48'W, from 1956 to 1959 it was home to 'Station W' of the British Antarctic Survey, but was forced to close when solid sea ice prevented it from being resupplied for the season.

Operating in Antarctica throughout the austral summer, Protector was asked to visit Detaille to collect hydrographic data and to remove building waste from ongoing restoration works by the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust.

Arriving at Detaille in almost perfect weather conditions, Protector sent her survey motor boat, *James Caird IV*, to clear a safe channel to the island, allowing the 6,000 tonne ship to nudge her way through the sea ice and take position against the backdrop of a stunning vista, and spectacular ice flows.



Picture: LA(Phot) Will Haigh, HMS Monmouth



Recharged after their Dubai visit

THE standard billowing in the Gulf breeze is unmistakable – as is the skyline in the background.

HMS Monmouth leaves the metropolis of Dubai after a two-week 'pit stop' allowing the ship – and ship's company – to recharge batteries ready for the second half of their seven-month deployment to the Middle East.

Stores were filled up, oil was changed, rust stripped back and paint applied across the 133m (436ft) length of the ship, all the way from the top of the main mast to the black 'boot topping' which runs along the waterline of the hull.

The break from patrols in the United Arab Emirates also gave the Navy's new Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Philip Jones a chance to meet the ship and her crew first-hand for the first time since he took the reins of office.

The admiral is a familiar face onboard the Black Duke; he was last on the Plymouth-based warship back in September just before she deployed for the Gulf.

During his time onboard he discussed the progress of the deployment and presented efficiency awards to the ship's electronic warfare department, plus medals to Plymouth residents PO Lee Marriott and WO Kevan 'Jan' Stoddard for 15 years' and 30 years' Long Service and Good Conduct respectively.

It was not all work however, with each member of the ship's company taking a turn to have a week's 'station' leave and enjoy the delights of Dubai – known in RN parlance as 'Dubers'.

A good number chose to relax in the comfort of five-star hotels, on world-class golf courses and sandy beaches; the more adventurous took advantage of sport such as skydiving, Wild Wadi water parks and snowboarding in the Emirates snow dome.

Many of the 200-strong ship's company – sailors, Fleet Air Arm aircrew and maintainers and a specialist Royal Marines boarding party – took the opportunity to whisk their partners and families away from the cold of winter in the UK to enjoy some much needed fun in the sun, making the separation of a seven-month deployment that bit easier to cope with.



Noteworthy day for Ambush

ON A fine late winter's morn, a junior rating hoists the White Ensign – and £1bn of space-age Royal Navy technology changes from plain Ambush to HMS Ambush.

The nation's most advanced attack submarine was commissioned into the Royal Navy during a ceremony at HM Naval Base Clyde.

The hunter-killer was formally handed over to the Silent Service in mid-January.

But until she was commissioned – which we can best describe as a 'Naval baptism' – she was never Her Majesty's Ship, at least not officially.

She is now as her crew, Naval base staff and around 500 guests – led by First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, and the vessel's sponsor, Lady Soar – welcomed the 7,400-tonne boat into the bosom of the Senior Service.

They were joined by representatives from Derby, the submarine's affiliated city – and the place where Rolls-Royce built the nuclear reactor which powers Ambush – plus friends and family of the 98 crew.

"The crew are immensely proud to mark the commissioning and to see the culmination of many months of hard work readying Ambush for service with the Royal Navy," said the boat's Commanding Officer, Cdr Peter Green.

"What makes the day especially significant is to have so many of our families and friends joining us during the commissioning ceremony, as well as those who have supported the vessel and with whom we share a special affiliation.

"Ambush's crew are now looking forward to the challenges ahead and to exploring the full range of the submarine's capabilities before she enters full operational service later this year."

Cdr Green's boat – nicknamed The Mighty Bush by crew – was launched at beginning of 2011 and arrived on the Clyde on September 19, since when she's undergone extensive training and trials – including initial exercises with her older sister HMS Astute in the shadow of the snow-capped peaks of western Scotland just before Christmas.

"It is my great pleasure to welcome HMS Ambush into the Royal Navy Fleet during this important and noteworthy occasion," Admiral Stanhope told those gathered on the Clyde jetty.

"HMS Ambush is the second of the Royal Navy's Astute-class submarines. These vessels represent the cutting edge of military technology and the future of UK submarine operations for many years to come.

"The Astute-class vessels will contribute significantly to our mission of protecting the UK's interests worldwide."

Ambush is expected to complete sea trials and be formally handed over to the operational control of the Royal Navy later this year.

The other five vessels – Artful, Audacious, Anson, and the as-yet-unnamed boats six and seven – are currently at different stages of build and development at BAE's yard in Barrow.

Picture: PO(Phot) Ian Arthur, RNR Air Branch

Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan, HMS Argyll



Africa starts

THIS is the moment a Japanese fisherman with a serious head injury is winched to safety by the Royal Navy.

Not off the coast of his native land, but off the coast of West Africa near where HMS Argyll was on patrol.

The frigate, in the early stages of an Atlantic deployment, was sailing some 20 miles off Cape Verde when she was told that a fisherman onboard the trawler Wakashio Maru was seriously hurt in an accident 24 hours earlier. His crewmates had been looking after him after he fell into the ship's bilge, but his condition had worsened.

First, the Devonport-based Type 23 sent her sea boat across with her medical team aboard. Argyll's doctor, Surg Lt James Perry, stabilised the head injury, but realised he needed urgent hospital treatment.

As a result, the Lynx helicopter was dispatched and the injured fisherman carefully winched on board the aircraft and flown to the closest hospital in Praia, Cape Verde.

Flight commander Lt Ben Jewson, pilot Lt John Phillips and winchman LAET Dan Carroll had to overcome the myriad of obstructions on the deck of the trawler to reach the injured man.

"Winch transfers test the skill of all people involved and one slip-up could have catastrophic consequences – however any thoughts of that pale into

insignificance when you have the opportunity to potentially save someone's life," said Dan.

"I'm just so glad to have played a part in this rescue."

LMA Andy O'Toole added: "My training and previous experiences, including time served in Afghanistan helped prepare me for situations like this but nevertheless it gets your adrenalin pumping."

The rescue came at the end of a major week-long exercise involving ten ships and more than a dozen nations.

Exercise Saharan Express 13 attracted forces from Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, France, The Gambia, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, the Netherlands, Portugal, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain and the United States, plus Argyll.

The chief objective of the 2013 variant of Saharan Express (HMS Dauntless took part in the 2012 exercise) was to refine tactics, techniques and procedures to help West African navies and enforcement agencies to monitor and safeguard their waters.

At an official reception in Dakar, attended by 160 military and diplomatic guests, Argyll's CO Cdr Tim Neild told those present: "The Royal Navy is at sea every day, working with international partners to provide global maritime security where it is needed.

"The ability to control the seas helps counter illicit activity such as trafficking of people and illegal material, oil bunkering, drug

trade, illegal fishing, and piracy."

While alongside in the Senegalese capital, the frigate hosted a Liberian law enforcement detachment boarding party that would sail with Argyll for the exercise.

The Liberian boarding team, led by Ensign Salomu, practised the approach to Argyll by sea boat and then learned to safely and swiftly scale the ship's side. Training continued to familiarise the personnel with the ship and help them grow in confidence with the unfamiliar surroundings.

Before entering Dakar, Argyll had paid a brief visit to Mindelo to discuss counter-drugs operations, train with the islands' coast guard and carry out some community work.

Led by XO Lt Cdr Euan Stuart, a team of 34 sailors headed to the Belvista district to plant trees and carry out groundwork in support of Project SOS Villagers, a small charity village which educates and houses disadvantaged families on the island.

HMS Edinburgh had previously conducted renovation of houses in the same village last year and Argyll was quick to pick up the baton and carry on the good work.

"This is the sort of thing that the ship's company really enjoys, as it is a great opportunity to give back to a community that has given the ship a great port visit," said Lt Cdr Stuart.

"It was amazing to see so much hidden talent come out of the woodwork from dry-stone walling to landscape gardening."

Ready for a new Joint endeavour

THE largest military exercise in Western Europe in 2013 takes place this month in the waters off, skies above and soil of Scotland.

More than a dozen Royal Navy warships and submarines are committed to the latest Joint Warrior war game, which will be directed from Faslane.

Those British vessels will be joined by three dozen visiting warships, 40 fixed-wing aircraft and 30 helicopters.

Alongside RN, RAF and Army personnel taking part in Joint Warrior, forces from the Netherlands, Canada, France, Denmark, Belgium, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Germany are involved – nearly 15,000 military personnel in all.

Royal Navy participants include flagship Bulwark, helicopter carrier Illustrious – which has spent much of the early part of 2013 carrying out aviation training off the west coast of Scotland – Type 45 destroyer HMS Diamond, frigates Richmond, Sutherland, Montrose and Westminster, a clutch of minehunters (HM Ships Brocklesby, Hurworth, Pembroke and Grimsby), one submarine, one survey ship (HMS Echo) and amphibious support ship RFA Lyme Bay.

Aerial support will be provided by RAF Chinooks and Junglie Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force, plus 'eye-in-the-sky' Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control (aka 'baggers') from Culdrose, as well as the Lynx and Merlins of the destroyers and frigates taking part.

For the Commander UK Task Group, Cdre Paddy McAlpine, and his staff, Joint Warrior 13-1 (13 for the year, 1 because there are two such exercises each year) is a chance to put into practice lessons from the RN's key deployment last year, Cougar.

That deployment, spearheaded by Bulwark and Illustrious, saw the task group work first with the French off Toulon and Corsica, then with the Albanians in the Adriatic.

COMUKTG introduced many lessons from a dozen years of operations in Afghanistan especially when it came to intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; those were adapted for the maritime environment.

And Cougar 12 taught its own lessons, among them the ability to link-up with French troops and marines, French ships (led by the carrier Charles de Gaulle), a French hunter-killer submarine and how such an international force could be commanded.

Cougar also taught how to mesh the picture of the battlefield offered by RN Merlin and bagger 'eye-in-the-sky' Sea King helicopters with the Army's Apache gunships so the latter could move in to attack.

And it gave a run-out for the pre-landing force concept: a combination of Royal Marines, Army Commandos and Navy divers who carried out reconnaissance missions on land before the main invasion force moved in.

All of these lessons will be incorporated into this month's training in Scotland.

"During Joint Warrior we will practise 'fighting at sea' as well as 'fighting from the sea'," explained Cdre McAlpine.

"We'll practise against a demanding air, surface and submarine threat, practise our 'theatre entry' techniques and then deliver our landing force of Royal and Dutch marines to the right area."

Once Joint Warrior is concluded, the Response Force Task Group staff will pore over the lessons and introduce them in time for the autumn when the force deploys on Cougar 13, once again to the Mediterranean and beyond, with elements including Exercise Djibouti Lion, counter-piracy operations and wider maritime security duties.



pictures: la(phot) joel rouse, frpu west

AN AMBULANCE screeches to a halt on the western side of the perimeter road ringing Chivenor airfield.

Two Royal Marines leap out, run to the back and open the doors then grab a stretcher, carrying a bloody AB Anthony Rowland to the edge of a tented complex.

There's a quick discussion under the netting which arches over the tents as the casualty is put down briefly.

Gun shot wound... Groin wound... Facial wound... Given him 20mg ketamine...

Then inside the tent and on to an assessment table.

As many as a dozen people – surgeons, medics, consultants – crowd around the young sailor.

They carefully remove his jacket, roll him on his side, check for an exit wound, ask him when he ate, whether he has allergies, whether he's got any underlying conditions or taking any medicine. Assistants with clipboards fill in forms, noting each answer.

A white band is wrapped around Anthony's wrist – henceforth, Anthony Rowland will be 008248.

Blood, medicines, all documentation – in short, everything associated with his recovery will be tagged with it. It prevents any confusion over surnames (especially if there are Smiths and Jones among the wounded).

"What happened?" a consultant inquires.

"Got shot."

Ask a straight question...

An X-ray machine is wheeled in on a trolley. In under 60 seconds, the photograph has been taken and appears on a computer screen.

A chest drain is applied to get rid of excess blood and fluids from the sailor's gunshot wound. The X-ray moves in again to ensure the drain is effective.

The team study it, quickly confer, then make their decision: *move to intensive care, prepare for evacuation.*

From the '999' radio call perhaps 20 minutes have elapsed. From the ambulance rocking up outside the tent to the decision to evacuate, no more than six minutes have passed.

This is *Casualty* or *ER*, battlefield-style. It's fast. It's bloody. It's rudimentary. And, above all, it works.

Rewind those 20 or so minutes and Anthony's lying in the tall grass near the north bank of the River Taw.

A medical assistant, the junior



For two weeks in late February and early March, more than 100 medical staff from across the Armed Forces converged on the western end of Chivenor airfield in north Devon.

Exercise Green Serpent was designed to test the men and women of the Commando Forward Surgical Group so they can support the Royal Marines when they deploy around the world. RICHARD HARGREAVES reports.

rating has just completed his civvy-to-sailor training at HMS Raleigh and is waiting to begin his specialist instruction at Keogh Barracks in Aldershot.

He's one of several would-be MAs playing casualties during Green Serpent.

For added realism, three actors from Amputees in Action – the firm which provides amputee extras for film and TV work as well as helping to train the emergency services and military – are also on hand.

In place of artificial legs, double amputee Ian Beach pulls on a pair of shredded camouflage trousers with bloody stumps to simulate the effects of a bomb blast.

A make-up artists adds the finishing touches – as they have done for Anthony: a bloody face, gunshot wound to the right side of his chest.

As Anthony lies in the billowing grass, one of Green Serpent's 'exercise controllers', offers advice based on experience in the field: "Moan, groan, try to grab the medic's jacket."

When the medics arrive, Anthony does.

"Lie down for us, mate," the medic says. "Let go, let go, we're going to help you. Just relax."

As the pair of medics check for an exit wound and administer basic first aid, two Royal Marines stand guard.

When the medics are done, the green berets carry Anthony to the back of the ambulance.

If you're expecting flashing lights, nee-naa, nee-naa, and something kitted out like an NHS ambulance, forget it; this is designed to get you off the battlefield and to an aid post behind the line pronto.

The first port of call should be the Regimental Aid Post – a cluster of tents not far behind the front line and home to medics with advanced training.

In this instance, the ambulance makes straight for the more comprehensive cluster of tents on the western edge of the airfield.

It's a 'damage control surgery facility', known in the business as Role 2 care – Role 1 is a Regimental Aid Post, Role 3 is a

field hospital or the impressive casualty treatment facility on RFA Argus – and it's provided by the Commando Forward Surgical Group.

The surgical group comprises around 80 personnel from the Commando Logistic Regiment, based here at Chivenor, bolstered by surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and specialist medical staff drawn from all three Services working at hospitals across the UK.

What the surgical group provides is medical care stripped down to the bare essentials.

No blue flashing lights on the ambulance. No spotless wards and theatres. Not even any proper beds.

The tent 'complex' features a four-bed assessment area – similar to an A&E department in a hospital – an operating theatre where staff can tend to two patients, two Intensive Treatment Unit beds, a four-bed 'ward' where casualties wait for onward transport to hospital, X-ray and ultrasound facilities, a laboratory and blood bank.

Supplies are packed neatly in large green boxes or in roll packs fixed to the side of the tent; all can be stowed and moved in a matter of seconds; the entire facility can be set up or dismantled in an hour.

The whole facility can be moved around on half a dozen Land Rovers, four large trucks, a couple of signals vehicles accompanied by powerful field generators "on steroids" to meet the heavy electrical demands of the equipment.

That kit includes lights, X-ray machines, defibrillators, monitors – just as you'd expect to find in Derriford or Queen Alexandra, only more rugged; the military green ventilators, for example, are sturdy; knock them over or drop them on the ground (as is entirely possible in the field) and they'll still work.

The generators also supply giant heaters which make sure the temperature inside the facility hovers around 25°C (for the patients, not for the staff...).

Operations are performed on a stretcher, not a table. The floor is canvas. Conditions are cramped

– those boxes of supplies are everywhere.

"We try to provide as high a standard of care here as we might in the UK," explains Surg Capt Andy Burgess, Operation Clinical Director – by day a consultant anaesthetist at Derriford hospital in Plymouth.

"The medical care in this facility is not definitive – it's about stopping the bleeding, it's getting rid of the worst effects. It's damage-control surgery so that casualties survive for the next stage of treatment. We're here to save lives, to do the basics."

Not only does this cluster of tents not have the facilities of a field hospital, but it's not officially classified as a hospital.

"We are just behind the front line – this facility is a target. When there's an attack, we hit the deck with body armour and helmets," Surg Capt Burgess says. "This is where our military training comes in."

For the duration of Green Serpent, personnel endured rugged living conditions: no showers, only ration packs for food and living in sleeping bags under ponchos put up next to the hospital tents on the edge of the airfield at Chivenor.

In 2013, that's something the surgical group has been getting used to; in the first three months of the year, they spent four weeks living in tents (including on a snowy Salisbury Plain).

"The biggest thing is teaching basic military skills, living in the field, looking after yourself, realising that you're not in a state-of-the-art hospital in Camp Bastion, but living and working in a tent," explains Capt Sam Bolam RM, second in command of CLR's Medical Squadron.

Surg Capt Burgess agrees. "It's good to work in this environment. This is what we join up for."

Watching over everything, the validators: senior medical staff from across the Services.

They're not here to assess the proficiency of the surgical group. No *real* operations are being performed and, besides, the consultants, nurses, surgeons and the like work day-in, day-out, at hospitals across the nation.

They want to see that the surgical group meshes together as a team and that everything else such as fuel, food, and medical resupplies is in place.

"The medical staff know their jobs – they're all extremely proficient. What we're testing here is the system. This is a hard environment to work in and in which to provide casualties with

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BATTLEFIELD



the best possible level of care," says Surg Cdr Tony Kehoe.

This validation of the exercise is tantamount to 'OST for medics'. But beyond the constant humming of the generators, heaters and equipment, it's all rather restrained.

There's no shouting, no yelling, no running around. Voices are calm, firm, but never raised. "If things are going wrong, then you get shouting and stress," Surg Cdr Kehoe points out.

The validators are also keen to see that lessons from Afghanistan are being introduced in the field.

After a decade in Afghanistan, the commandos – and hence their supporting medics – are returning to their amphibious roots as the mission in Helmand ends.

Surg Cdr Jason Smith adds: "You cannot replicate everything that we have in Camp Bastion in this facility – we're taking the 'big winners' from Afghanistan and using them in expeditionary warfare.

"We've made massive strides over the past ten years when it comes to resuscitation thanks to our experiences in Afghanistan – we are now seeing lives saved which a decade ago we would not have expected to live."

Given the wealth of experience in the tent – pretty much everyone here has done one tour of duty in Bastion (and some, like Surg Capt Burgess, have done three) – the lessons of Helmand are being passed on to front-line facilities like this one.

"We have a very swept-up system," says Surg Capt Burgess. "Our experiences in Afghanistan have raised us to among the very best."

His words are echoed by Flt Lt Kevin Pickles, who works at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine in Birmingham: "This is how we do it in Afghanistan. 'We're all singing from the same hymn sheet – we're working and living together for two weeks, working as a team.'"

All this blood and mayhem is carefully choreographed, run from an office in the CLR medical squadron's HQ.

All the tests the team on the ground face are marked on a whiteboard: gunshot wound at 9.15, three IED victims at 10.30, wedding party blown up by insurgents at mid-day.

"The exercise is really good fun, really rewarding – but really challenging," said Lt Steve Telford. In 2012 he was being assessed. In 2013, he's the exercise controller.

"Green Serpent is probably the most important thing we do

outside operations. It says that the medical support for the entire commando is fit for the task."

As part of the two-week exercise, the team also repeated an experiment they tested on HMS Montrose last year, turning the frigate's ward room into an operating theatre and intensive treatment unit.

A Merlin from 820 Naval Air Squadron flew the medical equipment aboard, and the surgical group set to work establishing what they call 'forward surgical capability' able to carry out four life-saving operations and holding a patient for up to 12 hours before onward transport.

There'll be another run out for the forward facility in this autumn's Cougar deployment, for which the entire surgical group will provide support once again – as they did last year when the commandos were training in Albania.

Back in Chivenor, Anthony Rowland is lying on a stretcher in ITU waiting for a helicopter to ferry him to hospital, while Flt Lt Pickles monitors his condition constantly.

"We have no idea what's coming through the door next – gunshot wounds, victims of artillery or bomb blasts, vehicle accidents," the RAF man says.

As if on cue, there's a loud, firm voice.

Three Cat As [very seriously wounded casualties] coming in. Two amputees. Stand by. Stand by.

The two amputees are 'Privates' Ian Beach and Pippa Jones, quickly carried into A&E for assessment.

Ian writhes on his stretcher as the consultant examines his shredded lower legs.

"If people have not seen this before, they find it's a reality check. They tell us that they'd rather see it here than out there on the front line for the first time," says the Amputee in Action.

"This is more fun than anything else we do – but it's also really rewarding. The medics say it's really useful."

Surg Capt Burgess agrees: "Amputees make it very real – especially with the make-up and role-playing. It's very easy to become drawn into the scenario as if it is real. And what our collective training has taught is that we have to play this exercise for real."

On the neighbouring stretcher, Pippa – Casualty No.008242 – has lost her right leg below the knee and is whimpering.

"Have you got any allergies?"

"Prawns."

Luckily, prawn cocktail isn't on the ration pack menu...



£150k appeal for Chivenor dead

THIS is how a memorial wall to nearly 80 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Royal Marines who have lost their lives while serving at a military base in north Devon will look at the end of a £150,000 appeal.

Built from Portland stone with bronze plaques and standing 12ft high and arching for 30ft, this wall will be the centrepiece of a garden of remembrance just outside Royal Marines Base Chivenor, honouring sacrifices by personnel going back to the mid-1930s.

The base, near Barnstaple, is home to 1,100 personnel from the Commando Logistic Regiment (CLR), as well as the Army's 24 Commando Regiment Royal Engineers and search and rescue Sea Kings of the RAF's A Flight, 22 Squadron.

Although there's an existing monument inside the grounds of the base, it focuses solely on Afghanistan and it's also far too small for Royal Marines, Royal Navy, REME, Royal Logistics Corps, Royal Engineers, RAF, and veterans to parade together at November ceremonies – as well as their families to watch proceedings.

In its place, all three Services want to create a combined memorial wall and garden – with separate areas of reflection in the latter for Royal Marines, the RAF and Army and their families, plus members of the north Devon community.

Land next to the church, just outside the main entrance – and therefore accessible to all – has been earmarked for the project with work already under way to improve the drainage, while local sculptor John Rodney-Jones has designed the memorial wall and landscape architect Duncan Bachel has come up with ideas for the garden.

More than £37,000 has already been donated or raised with the aim of erecting the wall in time for this year's November ceremonies, and the garden following once the rest of the money comes in.

"This is very much a community project – that's why it's outside the base, accessible all year round for families and friends. It will also serve as a reminder to everyone entering or leaving the barracks," explained Lt Col Stu Tulloch, Second-in-Command Commando Logistic Regiment.

"We intend the garden to strike the right balance between sadness and celebration – and have an area which is suitable for young children.

"It will also provide an invaluable tranquil location for those carrying the unseen mental scars to adjust in the aftermath of conflict."

There has been an RAF presence at the site on the north shore of the River Taw since 1935, although most of the air force moved out in 1995 since when it has been RMB Chivenor, home to the CLR.

The CLR traces its history back to 1971; in the past 42 years, 23 regimental personnel have lost their lives, while 13 Chivenor-based soldiers and 43 RAF personnel have died during their respective associations with the base.

A Valentine's Ball raised £10,000 and proceeds from the Ilfracombe 10K beach run at the end of April will be donated to the appeal.

And on a slightly more light-hearted note, the base has organised a 'cow pat challenge'. The sports ground has been divided into square metres, each one selling for £1. When all are sold, a cow will be invited on to the grass and wherever it does its business, the square owner will receive £1,000 – with the rest going into the garden fund.

You can make a donation via the internet at www.justgiving.com/RMBChivenor-Memorial-Garden.

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The end of the beginning

WE'RE sure a Former Naval Person won't mind us borrowing one of his most famous phrases, even if he was referring to a land battle.

For the arrival of HMS Duncan in Portsmouth as spring began (and just after this edition rolled off the presses...) marks the end of a chapter in British shipbuilding...

...and the true beginning of the age of the Type 45 destroyer, with all six in RN hands and proudly flying the White Ensign.

Sadly, for RN buffs hoping to see the inspiring sight of all six 45s in their home port simultaneously, well, it was not to be.

Dragon had sailed on her maiden deployment and Daring and Diamond were off training, leaving newly-commissioned Defender and Dauntless in port.

Duncan's arrival allowed for her to be formally transferred to the RN – and for all 190 souls to join her.

Although Duncan has had a full complement since early in 2013, around half of the ship's company stayed in Portsmouth training on the other Type 45s to prepare themselves for Duncan's arrival.

Now D37 is in the Solent, there's the first chance for ship and full ship's company to bond.

They'll conduct joint training alongside until June when two months of sea trials off the South Coast begin.

After a spot of summer leave for the sailors and the first maintenance period for the ship, the sea trials resume in the autumn.

Now we all know the jaw-dropping facts about Duncan and her five sisters: the Sea Viper is the size of two phone boxes but can accelerate to a speed twice that of Concorde in under 10 seconds; there's enough electrical cabling aboard to circle the M25 three times; the power plant could meet the needs of a town the size of Bedford (80,000 inhabitants).

But what you don't perhaps know is that, true to her Scottish

Picture: LA(Phot) Will Haigh



heritage, the ship has her own tartan – the 10,268th officially-registered tartan no less, provided by BAE, the RN's Rebalancing Lives initiative and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. So instead of that William Morris-esque chintz which has adorned (or bedevilled, depending on your perspective) Her Majesty's ships for decades, the curtains and soft furnishings in Duncan's messes and accommodation areas are tartan. Duncan is named for 18th Century naval leader Adam Duncan. He carved his name in RN history in October 1797 by

inflicting a decisive defeat to the Dutch Fleet at Camperdown (Camperduin in Dutch) with tactics which inspired Nelson at Trafalgar.

Duncan was born in Northumbria, but his family hailed from Dundee – a city which continues to honour him to this day.

Camperdown House was built in Duncan's memory in the 1820s; it gave its name to a suburb while its grounds serve as a public park.

And the Friends of Camperdown House – a charity which is raising money to restore the eponymous building – have provided each mess on the ship

with a portrait of the naval leader.

Other affiliates have been equally generous in their support of the destroyer.

The Worshipful Company of Cooks bake a cake to mark each birthday (October 11, the date of her launch in 2010 and the anniversary of Duncan's triumph at Camperdown).

The Worshipful Company of Saddlers are making the captain's chair for the bridge (which is *not* a saddle...).

And there's a group of penfriends in Duncan, British Columbia, who are keen to follow the destroyer's progress.

D37 is the seventh Royal

Navy ship to bear the name. The very first was a 5th rate frigate, bought and named the year of the admiral's death (1804).

The title was used twice more in the days of sail, before moving into the age of steel and steam with the pre-dreadnought battleship of 1901.

She saw action in World War 1 pummelling German positions in occupied Belgium, before being transferred to the Mediterranean in support of operations in the Adriatic and the Peloponnese.

None of those actions earned Duncan any battle honours, however. For honours, you have to turn to the 1932 Duncan,



Spartivento 1940
Malta Convoys..... 1941
Mediterranean 1941
Atlantic 1941-45
Diego Suarez 1942

Class: Type 45 destroyer
Pennant number: D37
Motto: *Secundis dubusque rectus* (Upright in prosperity and peril – the motto of Admiral Duncan)
Builder: BAE Systems
Laid down: January 27 2007
Launched: October 11 2010
Displacement: 8,500 tons
Length: 500ft (152m)
Beam: 70ft (21.2m)
Draft: 24ft (7.4m)
Speed: in excess of 30 knots
Complement: 190 (can accommodate up to 235)
Propulsion: 2 x Rolls Royce WR21 gas turbines;
2 x Wartsila diesel generators;
2 x Alstom electric propulsion motors
Armament: Sea Viper anti-air missile system featuring Aster15 and Aster30 missiles held in SYLVER launcher;
1 x 4.5in Mk8 main gun;
2 x 30mm guns;
2 x Phalanx automated Gatling guns;
Surface Ship Torpedo Defence system
Helicopter: Up to 2 x Lynx or 1 x Merlin

Facts and figures

IWM PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES



COLOUR imagery of World War 2, whilst not the norm, isn't too uncommon.

There's quite a bit of colour footage of the war in the Pacific, moving images especially – just watch episodes of the landmark documentary *The World at War*.

But stills – and stills of the war at sea in the Atlantic, well, that's a different matter.

From the seemingly-bottomless archive of the Imperial War Museum, this is an Atlantic convoy – in very un-Atlantic conditions.

Indeed, the majority of images and film footage of convoys invariably concentrate on the bitter conditions faced by merchant sailors and their escorts, principally from the Royal and Royal Canadian Navies.

Take the period between September 1941 and March 1942. There was barely a 48-hour lull in gale conditions somewhere on the Atlantic run.

As for this particular photograph of a classic convoy formation... well there's little to tell.

What we do know is that it was produced on behalf of the Ministry of Information and was not taken before 1942.

Whatever caption originally accompanied this photograph is lost in the mists of time. The current accompaniment blandly states: "View of a convoy from the bridge of one of the ships."

The image is one of nearly 1,400 colour transparencies produced for the MOI during the war and which survive in the museum's photographic archive.

Although the majority of British official photographs from World War 2 were produced in black and white format, the Ministry of Information was able to obtain a limited supply of Kodak's Kodachrome film (developed in the late 1930s) from America after the USA's entry into the war at the end of 1941.

Like the captions, many of the original films were lost, sadly; only the transparencies survive. The 'originals' would have been 4in x 5in colour positive Kodachrome film.

Official MOI, War Office and Air Ministry photographers generated this collection of colour transparencies to supply the few British wartime publications which occasionally ran colour photographs.

In that respect Britain was far behind

its American allies and German foes in the use of colour imagery.

To rival the American Kodachrome, the Germans had developed Agfa Gasparcolor – and they made full use of it.

Hitler's favoured photographer Walter Frenz took formal colour portraits of Nazi and military leaders, while another cameraman close to the self-proclaimed *Führer*, Hugo Jäger, recorded moments of Third Reich pageantry such as the Nuremberg rallies and Hitler's birthday parades in colour.

The Germans also made much use of colour photography in the front line, issuing colour film to *Propaganda Kompanie* reporters and cameramen; their work found its way into numerous propaganda publications, chiefly the glossy *Signal* magazine, produced across occupied Europe in numerous languages with a circulation of 2,500,000 at its peak.

The MOI by contrast almost entirely confined its colour photography to the UK and home waters. Its cameramen were civilians, not military personnel.

In many cases they worked hand-in-hand with movie cameramen. Perhaps the best example is a stunning series of 70 or so transparencies which survive from the filming of the documentary *Close Quarters*.

The 75-minute film was produced in black and white by the MOI in 1942, joining the fictional submarine HMS Tyrant (actually HMS Tribune) on patrol in the North Sea and off the coast of Norway.

But while veteran GPO director Jack Lee and his cameraman Jonah Jones filmed in monochrome, official MOI photographer Jack Bryson was blessed with a good stock of Kodachrome. You can see his Tribune pictures at www.iwm.org.uk/collections/search and using 'Jack Bryson' as a search term.

■ THIS photograph (TR 1509) – 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@iwmcollections.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.





● Divers from HMS Atherstone and Fleet Diving Unit 3 at work in their small sea boats with mother ship RFA Cardigan Bay silhouetted on the horizon by the glare of the Gulf sun
Picture: Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jumar T. Balacy

US and RN train for major exercise

SIX Royal Navy and two American ships, plus helicopters and mini-robot submarines joined forces for the year's first major mine warfare exercise in the Gulf.

Three of the UK's four Gulf-based minehunters – HMS Quorn, Ramsey and Shoreham – their mother ship RFA Cardigan Bay and two Royal Navy frigates, Northumberland and Monmouth, linked up with US forces for eight days.

The aim of the training with American Avenger-class minehunters USS Scout and Devastator was to sweep a corridor of sea free of mines so a (fictional) important ship could safely sail through it.

For this eight-day workout, Cardigan Bay embarked Cdr Jim Buck and the Mine Warfare Battle Staff, plus an additional 70 personnel, two US Navy sea boats and underwater unmanned vehicles – mini-robot submarines – and their associated kit.

That allowed the force to use the full panoply of mine hunting skills and equipment such as the RN's Sonar 2193 which can detect objects on the seabed as small as a tin can; the Seafox submersible – long in service with the Royal Navy and now being introduced by the Americans – which identifies and destroys mines; Fleet Diving Unit 3, who are experts in bomb disposal; clearance divers from HMS Atherstone, the only RN Gulf minehunter not partaking in the combined exercise.

The divers and submersibles made use of Cardigan Bay's loading dock, floating in and out of the cavernous feature on sea boats, while US Navy Seahawk helicopters flew on to and off the ship's flight deck.

Fulfilling her role as a mother ship, the Bay-class ship provided fuel, water, food, ammunition, stores and supplies to the five minehunters – basically anything they required (within reason). This was delivered by bringing the small vessels alongside Cardigan Bay, a manoeuvre known as rafting up.

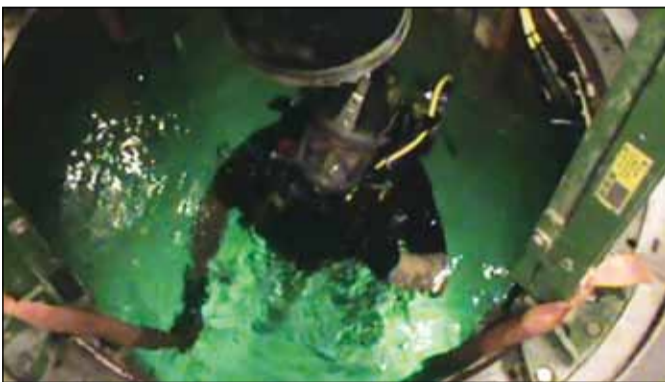
While the mine warfare teams were doing their bit in the warm, sandy waters of the Gulf, for added excitement frigates Northumberland and Monmouth entered the fray to test Cardigan Bay's response to attacks.

These forays were met with stiff resistance from the ship's company, plus US riverine patrol boats which were operating from the loading dock as protection for the task force.

The eight-day exercise was part of an intensive period of training for the RN's Gulf-based mine warfare forces leading up to a major exercise next month.

Navy and forces from more than 20 nations spanning four continents will come together for International Mine Countermeasures Exercise 13, the biggest event of its type in the Middle East region.

It follows the inaugural exercise – IMCMEX 12 – over ten days in September which saw 3,000 personnel from over 30 nations working together across 1,000 miles of ocean.



Dive me to the moon...

IFYOU ever wanted to know what the hole where a sonar on a minehunter is fitted looks like, allow diver Lt Cdr Ben Stait to demonstrate.

This is the 'moon pool' of HMS Ramsey – the purposely-positioned hole in the Sandown-class ship's hull through which the Variable Depth Sonar deploys (and apologies for the rather blocky nature of this image – it's a screen grab).

With the sonar removed for a spot of maintenance, the ship's divers – joined by Lt Cdr Stait who's chief-of-staff of the Royal Navy's four-strong minehunting force in the Gulf – took to cleaning the under side of the ship.

"A clean ship is a happy ship," says Mine Clearance Diving Officer Lt Max Wilmot. "This applies outside as much as it applies inside. The dive team of Ramsey do not believe in the old saying 'a day alongside is a day wasted'."

So armed with wooden wedges and scouring pads the team got to work clearing built-up algae from the 'boot-top' (the black paint around the waterline of the ship).

As well as improving the outward appearance of the ship, removing the marine growth makes the ship more streamlined through the water, increasing speed, improving handling and fuel efficiency.

As for the 'moon pool', cleaning the running gear for the sonar will ensure smooth operation as the heat increases in the coming months – the VDS is a key feature of a Sandown-class minehunter.



Little and LARGE

LITTLE being the scale model – although as with everything involved with the Queen Elizabeth, it's not that small.

And large is the real thing. Very real now, for she has her forward island installed – and looks like a true carrier.

But to little first. Two littles, in fact.

Two highly-accurate one-tonne scale models of Queen Elizabeth and future tanker RFA Tidespring were tested in Europe's largest indoor water tank in Gosport to determine how the two ships can sail safely in company.

Key to any future operations by the carrier – the largest warship ever to sail under the White Ensign – will be sustaining her thousands of miles from home.

For that she'll need to conduct a RAS – replenishment at sea – on a fairly regular basis with a tanker or support ship of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, whose ships provide crucial sustenance to Royal Navy vessels around the world daily.

Hand-in-hand with building the Queen Elizabeth and her sister HMS Prince of Wales will be the construction of a new generation of Fleet tankers – four Tidespring-class ships of 37,000 tonnes, entering service from 2016.

The basic design for the Tidesprings is almost complete – and key to that design has been testing how they perform when working with the future carriers.

When the two ships sail together to conduct a RAS they are subject to hydrodynamic forces which can drive them apart, or pull them together – both of which are highly dangerous.

Two 1:44 scale models – the 37,000-tonne 200m-long (659ft) tanker has been reduced to 4.5m (15ft) in length, while the 65,000-tonne HMS Queen Elizabeth has been shrunk from 284m (931ft) in length to 6.45m (21ft) – were

built and taken to the enormous 'ocean basin' test tank, owned by defence research firm QinetiQ.

The tank in Haslar, Gosport, is 122m (400ft) long, 61m (200ft) wide and 5.5m (18ft) deep – over 15 times more water than in a typical Olympic-sized swimming pool – and can simulate both calm and rougher seas.

Whilst the tank is regularly used by the maritime community, this is the first time that two new ships have been tested for RAS operations.

Tests in the Haslar tank were carried out in up to a simulated Sea State 6 – very rough seas, with waves up to 4m or 14ft high – and the two models also practised emergency breakaways and engine failures.

Once all the data has been gathered and analysed it will be used by the RN and RFA to draw up the guidelines for safe operations when Tidespring joins the Fleet in 2016.

Meanwhile, on the full-sized carrier...

The 700-tonne forward island – home to her bridge among other key compartments – was lifted into place in mid-March during a delicate four-hour operation.

The final moments of the lift – performed by the gigantic Goliath crane dominating the north shore of the Forth – were watched by Defence Secretary Philip Hammond, who was in Scotland to see progress on the leviathan.

Complex mathematical calculations were carried out by the shipwrights at Rosyth – the size and unusual shape of the island meant that the Goliath team had to accurately work out the structure's centre of gravity to ensure the lift went without a hitch.

The construction and assembly of the carriers is one of the UK's biggest engineering projects, with work on them in Scotland alone worth around £1.3bn to the country's economy; more than 2,000 staff are working on

the ships in Rosyth.

Mr Hammond isn't the only recent visitor to the future carrier.

One hundred men and women from the Navy's present-generation flat-top, HMS Illustrious, took the opportunity to tour her successor while their ship was stocking up with ammo at Glen Mallan on Loch Long.

When QE has a full complement, her ship's company will be around the same size as Illustrious' – but the ship is three times Lusty's size.

The Lusties were given a presentation on the new carrier programme followed by the *pièce de résistance* – a grand tour of the ship.

"The scale and ambition of the project is just staggering," enthused WO Lee 'Reds' Redford.

"The crane which is used to assemble the ship is a breathtaking engineering achievement in itself.

"I knew the flight deck was going to be big, but it is only when you stand on it that you really appreciate its size."

Illustrious reciprocated the hospitality shown them by hosting some of the QE crew (current strength 18).

Despite being Britain's second biggest warship, Lusty was, said QE's WO Kenny Reid, "just a little small for me after HMS Queen Elizabeth"

By the end of 2013 his ship will be largely complete outwardly.

The final two flight deck blocks arrived in Scotland last month, after which there's just the aft island – from where flight deck operations will be directed – to add and the ski ramp for launching the F35 Lightning II jets.

Following a rather large lick of paint – top coat grey of course – her structure will then be largely finished.

She is planned to enter the water in 2014 for final fitting out.



Pictures: QinetiQ and the Aircraft Carrier Alliance



Batterie chargers

THINK it was a bit parky in the UK last month?

Think again. The Royal Marines laugh in the face of the -2°C (ish) it was when winter fought back in mid-March.

They stormed Hitler's bunkers in the Arctic wastes. Temperature: -20°C.

The green berets of Arbroath-based 45 Commando, plus the Commando Logistic Regiment from North Devon and their supporting air power, the Commando Helicopter Force at Yeovilton, completed two months of training in the high north with an assault on a wartime relic.

The marines decamped from their bases in the UK to join the Norwegians near Harstad, some 150 miles north of the Arctic Circle for Exercise Cetus 13.

There is no harsher environment in which to live, work and above all fight – deep snow, ice, temperatures regularly below -30°C (and take it down another 20°C with wind chill). Such conditions test men and machines to the limit.

Around 135 green berets from 45 Commando – currently the UK's lead commando group, ready to deploy around the world at short notice should they be required – crossed the North Sea for Cetus 13, using the Norwegian Army camp at Asegarden, just outside Harstad, as their base.

Before fighting, the commandos had to master the arts of survival in the Arctic for, as 3 Commando Brigade's commander Brig Martin Smith puts it: "If you can soldier in this environment, you can soldier in any environment. If you get it wrong here, you will get hurt."

That means getting used to living in snow holes (a man-made 'cave' carved out of the snow), skiing, 'marching' on snow shoes for five kilometres (three miles) with 30kg (66lb) of kit on the back, and extreme personal care (such as not touching exposed metal, because you won't get your skin back if you do...).

Nothing is feared more than the ice-breaking drill – clambering out of water should the ice beneath you give way.

"The cold water hits you and takes your breath away," said Mne Gerald Sargent. "You really have to focus and quickly recall the skills taught to you by the Royal Marines Mountain Leaders in order to survive out here."

Some 300 men from the brigade – including 130 cold weather warfare virgins – took part in this year's deployment, continuing a tradition of Arctic training going back to 1962.

The final stages of that survival training were watched by Defence Secretary Philip Hammond, who saw the marines – and Navy and Army Commandos – displaying their ability to fight off an enemy while moving along the snow on skis, while Norwegian F16s provided air support.

Mr Hammond also took part in the building of a shelter to protect personnel from the harsh weather while the commandos demonstrated how they would live off the land to stay well fed and strong.

With Arctic survival skills taught and learned, it was time to move on to the fighting element of the training.

Cetus reached its climax on the Trondnes Peninsula on the northern side of Harstad harbour – and home to a formidable relic of the Third Reich.

Batterie Theo – today known as Trondnesnes Fort – was part of the Atlantic Wall, the chain of defences built by the Germans from Biscay to the North Cape to prevent the Allies storming Fortress Europe.

The battery and bunker complex serves the 'Adolfkanonen' – Adolf Guns – four mighty 40.6cm (16in) cannons which could hurl a 1,030kg (2,300lb) shell up to 56 kilometres (35 miles). One of the guns is preserved in working order by the Norwegians to this day.

With the Norwegian Army defending the fort – it's home to their coastal rangers – 45's Yankee Company staged a three-hour-long assault on the imposing fortification, launching simultaneous attacks on three enemy positions.

The attack ended with the Adolf Guns in Royal Marines hands before three Norwegian Huey helicopters and Fleet Air Arm Jungle Sea Kings of 845 Naval Air Squadron swept up the fjord to extract the Yankee men – and Cetus 13 was completed.

"It's been good to put into practice the skills we've learned over the past month. This is my first time in Norway and fighting in the extreme cold is a totally different challenge entirely," said 19-year-old Mne 'Tony' Curtis from Newcastle.

Batterie Theo isn't the only relic of the Nazi occupation which the RN has made use of during its winter training.

Just 50 miles to the east – but a good two-and-a-half-hour drive thanks to the Arctic terrain, valleys and fjords – is Bardufoss airfield, which has served as CHF's base throughout their deployment to the far north.

Carved out of the mountain on the edge of the field is the 'rock hangar' – built by concentration camp prisoners towards the end of WW2.

The hangar was designed so aircraft could enter directly from the runway through an enormous armour-plated door into a horse-shoe shaped tunnel.

Inside, the Luftwaffe planes could be re-fuelled, re-armed and repaired in one of the many servicing bays along the infamous tunnel, then roll out of the facility directly on to the runway via another massive door.

Perhaps as many as 800 people from Bardufoss concentration camp toiled on the hangar – there were still 550 prisoners held there when Norway was liberated in May 1945.

For the terrible conditions and ill-treatment they suffered, their work endures and the hangar remains in use to this day with the Royal Norwegian Air Force.

It also provided the ideal place for CHF engineers to work without being exposed to the full fury of the Arctic winter – particularly when they faced the task of replacing a gear box on one of the Junglies.



pictures: po(photos) sean clee, 3 cdo bde, and mez merrill, chf





HARD TARGETS

TARGET bearing dead ahead, 1,200 yards.

And what a target (although, as any submariner will tell you, anything which floats is fair game...): HMS Richmond in the cross-hairs as the ultimate game of naval cat and mouse is played out off the coast of Norway.

Yes, the land of fjords, Norsemen, the midnight sun and ex-parrots isn't just useful for green berets in Arctic camouflage blowing things up – it's also a rather fine environment for submarine and anti-submarine warfare.

Richmond and her sister HMS Westminster – both designed and built to hunt down enemy submarines – joined 20 NATO warships and aircraft from Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark and France.

They were the foes of two submarines – the Dutch HNLMS Bruinvis and Norway's HNoMS Utstein – carrying students on the international Submarine Command Course.

The course – known as Perisher because to fail effectively ends an officer's career in submarines – tests

the would-be submarine commanders in every imaginable scenario.

By far the most exhilarating part of the two-week exercise are the 'eyes only' runs: the submarine must try to make a successful torpedo attack using only the periscope and mental agility, while every warship in the area tries to charge it down.

It's something which Royal Navy vessels have done since World War 1 – battleship HMS Dreadnought famously charged down U-boat ace Otto Weddigen in 1915, while a generation later Germany's greatest submarine commander Joachim Schepke was crushed to death as HMS Vanoc smashed into U100 with the Battle of the Atlantic raging.

Decades later and although technology has moved on, many of the tactics – for submarine and submarine hunter – remain in use. And the sight of a warship bearing down on a periscope at full speed remains a fearful one.

"The aim is to remain at periscope depth in the presence of close proximity warships," says Perisher instructor and former captain of HMS Turbulent, Cdr Ryan Ramsey.

"You need to know where the warships are, determine where they are going to be, and work out whether you can stay at periscope depth or must go deep.

"It tests mental agility, spatial awareness and command presence to deal with warships in close proximity."

As well as being a supreme test of the budding submarine commanders, the exercise has been as good a workout as the crew of a Type 23 frigate are going to get.

"It was also a great opportunity to test ourselves against the very capable Norwegian submarines, operating in the narrow and confined fjords that they know so well," said Lt Cdr Adam Riddett, HMS Richmond's underwater warfare officer.

"Equipped with the latest sonar systems and capable of speeds up to 30 knots, we were able to challenge the Perisher students and test the very limits of their abilities."

While he and his fellow underwater warfare experts were pitting their wits against the submarines, the rest of the ship's company were fighting the internal battle – just like being back in home waters undergoing Operational Sea Training.

As part of the exercise a simulated helicopter crash on deck was declared. Richmond's fire-fighting teams raced into action to deal quickly and decisively with any potential fire danger.

Once the fire had been contained, the rescue teams moved into position and got straight to work using specialist cutting equipment to practice freeing trapped aircrew from the simulated helicopter wreckage.

Once 'freed' from the wreckage, the aircrew were swiftly recovered from the crash site by the ship's first aiders to Medical HQ where immediate first aid drills were carried out, ensuring the crew lived to fight another day.

"We deliberately make our damage control and casualty handling exercises as realistic as possible to ensure that if required, our teams can be relied upon to respond to any type of emergency in an instant. We train hard so we can fight easy," explained Lt Cdr Lucy Ottley, HMS Richmond's logistics and damage control officer.

Cdr Ramsey – who's known as Teacher by his students – says the 'at sea' phase of the course tests the

would-be commanders to the limit. "It's four weeks at sea 'at war' against a variety of ships, submarines, aircraft and troops – they must win - failure is not an option.

"The students develop the skills of command, leadership, strategy and tactics, as they learn to out think the enemy."

For the first time since 1993, the Royal Navy Perisher students are carrying out their training aboard diesel-electric submarines. This is part of a new joint programme, in this instance allowing submariners from the Royal Navy, Netherlands and Norway to share their experiences – and also 'play' with much more opposition than on individual national Perisher courses.

As for the skimmers, Richmond's Commanding Officer Cdr Robert Pedre says his team benefitted hugely from the workout in the "very challenging" waters of western Norway.

"As one of the world's most advanced anti-submarine frigates, my ship's company has relished this training period to prove their mettle against a very capable threat," he added.





We'll take away fond memories of this challenge



Ibrox rocks



The only way is up for Rod and Lisa in South Lanarkshire



These road trips - they're a hard life...

Glen Mallan - or bust

OK that doesn't sound as enticing as Monte Carlo.

But with these words, HMS Illustrious' Capt Martin Connell set six of his ship's company on a 12-day odyssey through the North-West and western Scotland.

Lusty's Leadership Challenge was a test of, er, leadership, wits, guile and resourcefulness - and raised lots of money for charity.

The aim: leave Illustrious in Liverpool after her very enjoyable visit and beat the carrier to her next port of call (Glen Mallan ammo jetty on Loch Long).

Normally, the challengers would hop into a hire car, race up the M6 in fifth gear and arrive at the remote jetty having eaten up the 258-mile distance in around four and a half hours.

But there were a few catches. They had no money, no accommodation and no hire car.

Despite such handicaps, six willing volunteers stepped forward and were split into three teams: AB(Logs) Tom Welham and ET(ME) Steven Tuohys; AB(CIS) Rod McKenzie and LS(AWT) Lisa Appleby; and AET's Matt Berry and Marc Marney.

On the way there was lots of blagging (free food, free train raids, free hotels), lots of blogging (via the Virgin giving website and the Royal Navy's Facebook page), appearances on radio shows, a lot of community work - street collecting for the British Heart Foundation, clearing out refuge kennels in Carlisle, some woodland clearance work at Lochwinnoch - and even singing for supper (courtesy of a karaoke night).

When transport couldn't be found, Plan B was to walk - or run. Steven ran 18 miles (actually 24 miles courtesy of a six-mile-long wrong turn...) through Glasgow from Kilmarnock to get to Ibrox - where Rangers had some memorabilia to give away.

Not to be outdone Matt and Marc strolled on to the hallowed turf at Parkhead, home of Gers arch rivals Celtic, who were equally giving when it came to items to take away.

Indeed, sports clubs along the not-exactly-direct route - there were 'checkpoints' at Lancaster, Carlisle and Cumnock (15 miles south of Kilmarnock) - proved to be outstanding hosts: Wigan, Blackpool, Preston North End, Morecambe and Rangers FCs all opened the doors to their grounds, signed shirts and donated balls.

Rod said: "I will remember this for the rest of my life. It was tough at times, but we met some amazing people along the way and their willingness to get involved was incredible.

"The highlight of the event was our visit to Blackpool, where we were hosted at the Blackpool FC Hotel, driven to our next RV point in a Mercedes and were also donated a substantial amount of money for our chosen charity.

"We have a lot of people to thank for their generosity and assistance." Via their donation website, Rod and Lisa raised £1,125 - the biggest sum of the three teams; Marc and Matt collected £516 and Steven and Tom £235.

With other donations and collections the figure brought in for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity stood at well over £3,000 by early March - with several items of sports memorabilia still to be auctioned off.

But did any of the challengers beat Lusty to the isolated jetty (it's about four miles north of Faslane on the eastern shore of Loch Long)?

No. Despite spending several days training in the Irish Sea with the RAF and 848 Naval Air Squadron, the carrier arrived at the ammo jetty before the six fund-raisers.

"We struggled with the last few miles and I'm sure the captain rung on a few extra revolutions to get there before us! We had a great time, but we are all glad to make it back to the ship," Matt said.



The lads were disappointed by the speed of the transportation offered in Carlisle



Meeting the friendly locals in Cumnock



Getting stuck in at a community project near Dumfries

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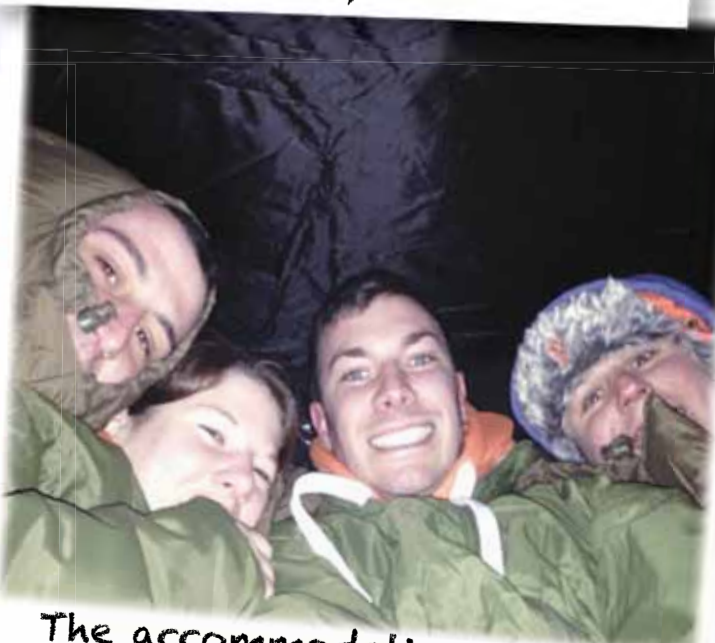
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The guys on Lusty were glad to see us - and we them...



The accommodation was a bit basic at times...



I'm an AET, get me out of here...

WOULD-be leaders from HMS Sultan were shot down behind enemy lines for two days to test their survival and command skills.

The Fleet Air Arm engineers and technicians were expected to fend for themselves during Exercise Comfort Zone, played out in the New Forest training area.

All those thrust into the field are undergoing the leading air engineer technician qualifying course – which can take more than 12 months, depending on whether you're a mechanical or avionics expert.

Hand-in-hand with technical prowess that the rank brings is leadership: as leading hands – the first step up the Royal Navy's leadership 'ladder' – the successful trainees will be expected to take responsibility for sailors under their charge, issue orders and lead them in times of crisis.

Such as being stuck in hostile territory when their helicopter makes an emergency landing, the scenario behind the exercise, which was devised by Sultan's Lt Jamie Strange and CPO 'Irish' Watson.

If you've seen *Behind Enemy Lines*, well this is just like it. Minus the ultra nationalists. And tanks. And minefields.

Once a month, the Forestry Commission let the trainees if not run riot, then at least carry out various military tasks in this 'hostile territory' – prompting strange looks from some passers-by.

The students are expected to get across streams, collect various pieces

of information and navigate to a safe extraction point (the former RAF Beaulieu) so a helicopter can ferry them back to the safety of Sultan.

And whilst the setting of the tranquil New Forest makes it all rather surreal, the scenario is very real – and one the trainees could face once on an operational squadron.

"It's important to remember that not only are we looking for these guys and girls to be highly-trained aircraft technicians – they need to be able to think 'militarily' and operate autonomously, taking charge where necessary," Lt Strange explains.

And take charge they do, using the tried-and-tested practical leadership task format to develop and practice the skills required in a challenging yet fun environment.

"We set out to make the two-day exercise challenging, but invariably we find that once out of the classroom, the trainees easily slip into the military mindset of 'cheerfulness in adversity' and end up enjoying it far more than we could have imagined!" says Irish.

But don't take his word for it. "We'd heard of yomps and various leadership tasks from other classes, heard about building rafts to cross rivers, and leading up to the exercise most of us felt quite daunted but once out there we really enjoyed it," says LAET Sam Ashman.

"The best bit was being lifted back to HMS Sultan by a 'Junglie' Sea King. Some of us have never flown in an aircraft – even though we service and repair them all the time."



Test your military career to the limits

The Empire Test Pilots' School (ETPS), located at MOD Boscombe Down, is established to train selected personnel to test and evaluate the future operational aircraft of the Armed Forces.

The year long course is designed to nurture leadership; promote critical thinking for the evaluation of airworthiness and broaden the students understanding and experience in a wide range of aircraft systems and platforms. Candidates for the 2014 test pilot and flight test engineer courses will be selected this summer.

Application close 1st May 2013.

See 2013DIN07-037 for more information on the courses and how to apply or contact ETPS for more information 01980 662656 or etpssales@QinetiQ.com.

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On the run from Bahrain

MARITIME forces in the Middle East are supporting the RNRMC's Road to Twickenham fundraising campaign.

Bahrain's UKMCC have set themselves the tough challenge of completing the 3,157-mile equivalent distance to Twickenham before April 27, when the clash between the RN and Army rugby teams takes place.

Between them, the UKMCC team are hitting the gym or road to run, swim, walk, cycle and row the distance.

LPT Danny (Clubz) Kerr, organiser of the event, said: "I decided to enter UKMCC into the 'Road to Twickenham' challenge as I believe the charity to be very worthwhile and it makes a difference in many ways."

"UKMCC personnel work in a very busy and important maritime environment, leaving minimal time to conduct personal development."

"This challenge has given them a reason to get out on the road and get some miles under their belt."

"It raises morale, promotes competitiveness and makes them feel like they are part of something from home."

Other teams registered include HMS Argyll, who will cover 1,640 miles with a ship's triathlon during their deployment, with all ranks and rates involved including the Captain and XO, and RNAS Yeovilton's 848 NAS, who will cycle the 111-mile distance.

See the Road to Twickenham on the Virgin Money Giving website or contact the RNRMC team on 023 9254 8289.

Man the stand

THE RNRMC is looking for 30 volunteers to promote and represent the Forces Charity at the Army vs Navy match.

Duties will include collecting money at the stadium, nearby train stations, at the veterans and ladies match at Kneller Hall and manning the RNRMC stand.

There will be opportunities for volunteers to watch at least half of the game.

If you can volunteer, or want to find out more, contact the RNRMC team on 023 9254 8289/fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk



Jack is stretched by 360-mile walk

A TEAM from the Royal Navy Medical Service (RNMS) is embarking on an epic stretcher-carry fundraising challenge on April 4 for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine and Help for Heroes.

Event leader and organiser Lt Jack Nicholson and his team aim to cover 360 miles in 14 days, representing a typical patient's pathway following serious injury.

Jack will attempt to walk every mile at one end of the stretcher, with friends and colleagues taking turns to carry the other end of it throughout the route, averaging out at approximately a marathon every day for two weeks.

To meet this punishing challenge, Jack's training includes running down hills in boots carrying weights to improve the resilience of his muscle tissue.

Jack has also been helped to prepare physically and been taught techniques to maintain himself during the event by a physiologist at the Institute of Naval Medicine who works with Walking With Wounded.

Jack said: "I chose the RNRMC as one of the charities for this challenge because I'm passionate that this event protects its naval identity and that the funds and awareness raised directly benefit personnel from the Naval Service, including the Royal Marines and its veterans."

The challenge begins at the Royal Centre of Defence Medicine, Birmingham, where



● POMA Mogsy Long (left), LMA Lucy Thompson and Lt Jack Nicholson prepare for the long walk

Picture: LA(Phot) Claire Myers

Servicemen and women receive world-class medical care following injury on operation around the world.

The team then heads to Headley Court, Surrey, where patients have access to state-of-the-art rehabilitation facilities to aid their recovery.

The journey will end at Hasler Company in Plymouth, where the next phase of patient recovery, rehabilitation and re-integration

of seriously-injured and ill Naval Service personnel takes place.

Hasler Company is increasingly seeing a rise in terminally-ill patients.

A £15,000 grant has recently been made by the RNRMC to assist in the furnishing of the new accommodation block at Hasler Company's Naval Service Recovery Centre.

Jack previously ran a stretcher-carry event in 2010 and says that

this one will be an even bigger challenge.

He says, "I hope that this event goes from strength to strength in years to come - who knows where I'll be taking it next?"

Follow the team's progress at www.rnmsstretchercarry.org.uk

If you have an idea for your own fundraising challenge, the RNRMC would love to hear from you - whether it's testing your stamina to the limit or baking cakes.

Culdrose's charity champion

WITHOUT the commitment of volunteers, the RNRMC could not make the huge difference it does to the lives of serving and former Naval Service personnel and their families.

One story is that of RNRMC 'charity champion' PO(ACMN) Richie Harker, based at 824 NAS in Culdrose.

Richie has raised considerable funds and support for the charity through activities that range from organising street collections and raffles to a popular bacon sarnie sale at the RNRMC StandEASY event.

He has taken part in the Great South Run, and volunteered for duty at the British Military Tournament, acting as a host in the Royal Box, selling merchandise and talking to the public.

He explained: "I was on exchange with the RAF for three years in Iraq and Afghanistan."

"While in Iraq flying in a medical response helicopter, I saw the injuries that the troops



● PO Richie Harker

sustained and it really brought home to me the work that the Armed Forces charities do for them.

"When I returned to the Royal Navy in 2010, I wanted to do what I could to support the RNRMC."

Richie's most memorable event

was co-ordinating and taking part in a static cyclethon in Truro on behalf of the RNRMC.

The team, from 824 NAS, had planned to 'cycle' 146 miles, the equivalent distance between Culdrose and Derriford Hospital in Plymouth and back, but actually

managed to cover 180 miles in bitterly cold wet conditions,

£1,000 was raised through the sale of RNRMC goodies and a bucket collection.

This year Richie is acting as the charity's liaison for Flambards, a theme park near Culdrose, which is a firm sponsor for the RNRMC.

Richie says that he is also now known as the 'go-to' person at Culdrose for those who want advice on how to get involved in fundraising activities for the charity as well as on how to apply for grants.

This year he will be applying for an amenity grant to help fund the 80th anniversary event for 824 NAS.

RNRMC Chief Executive Robert Robson said: "We are enormously grateful for the hard work of our volunteers who make such a tremendous contribution to the charity."

"Richie Harker is a shining example of such commitment."

Going nowhere in Vanguard



DESPITE a packed programme and the confines of a pressure hull, the starboard crew of HMS Vanguard found time to raise money for charity in a marathon cycle race on board.

Two teams, the first led by Vanguard's CO, Cdr Paul Blyth, and the other by XO, Lt Cdr Scotty Johnson (left), battled it out over a 48-hour endurance race on exercise bikes situated in the heart of the submarine.

The team achieving the furthest distance would win. Most managed a punishing hour on the bike, with some completing three before handing over to a team-mate.

Organiser LCH Tinker, among the few who cycled for a two-hour session, said: "The RNRMC donated some money towards cycling gear, so we ran this event as a means of saying thank you."

After a gruelling hour on the bike, Lt Cdr Johnson managed to retain his sense of humour:

"Not bad for an old man," he joked. "Maybe this will dispel the myth that submariners haven't the appetite for maintaining their fitness."

The XO's team managed an impressive 536 miles, beating the CO's team by a mere four miles.

The distance covered by the cyclists totalled more than the return journey from Faslane to Devonport.

Special mention was reserved for the oldest man and the only grandfather who took part - Cdr Blyth - who achieved the greatest distance in one hour but regretted that he hadn't skipped pudding during dinner.

A total of £140 was raised for the RNRMC.

Great reception guaranteed

A CALL from HMS Sultan to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity to help fund the conversion of two unused phone booths to a fully lit glass trophy cabinet in the newly refurbished mess reception area has proved one well worth making.

A 'minor grant' (under £5,000) of £1,432 has been made from the Naval Service Amenity Fund, a subsidiary of the RNRMC, to help with the project.

WO1 Jimmy Tarbuck, Mess President for the Warrant Officer and Senior Rates' Mess, said: "The mess has around 500 members, as well as a number of RAF and Army serving members, and the reception area is the first thing that they and visitors see when they arrive."

"But it looked very much a 'blast from the past' with two defunct phonebooths dominating the area."

"Mess Manager Steve Murray came up with the idea of a trophy cabinet."

"Up to now, any upgrades of furniture and decorating have been carried out at our own cost from mess fees and we have not bid for grants previously."

"Our mess funds were able to contribute £500 towards the project, and through the great assistance of the RNRMC grant, the transformation of the reception area has now been completed."

For details of grants available, please contact: RNRMC Grants Administrator via Michelle Midgley@rnrmc.org.uk or call 023 9254 8191.

Sailors walk to the capital

WITH the Queen in hospital as 'her' ship was set to sail into London to host a royal visit, seven members of HMS Lancaster's ship's company decided to make the journey by foot in the form of a 100-mile sponsored walk.

CO Cdr Steve Moorhouse and EWO WO1 Matt Fisher saw the team's departure on foot from the ship's berth.

The fundraising event, in aid of the RNRMC, was led by LPT Robinson and followed a rowathon in the ship's hangar that had already raised £500.

LPT Robinson explained this marathon trek was a much harder challenge.

"We averaged 25-30 miles a day in some very cold and wet conditions but nevertheless the lads all seemed to enjoy themselves and knew they were doing it for a great cause."

The team raised over £500 from this event.

Trustee needed

THE search is on for a new RNRMC Trustee to join the Board of 15 Trustees.

The volunteer can be from any rank or rate serving in the Naval Service.

Help ensure the RNRMC is run effectively while making a valuable contribution towards our future direction. The term of office is for three years with the Board meeting four times a year, with occasional strategic away-days.

Contact kate.jack@rnrmc.org.uk/023 9254 8128. Closing date is April 25.

CONTACT RNRMC
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity
Building 29, HMS Excellent
Whale Island
Portsmouth
Hampshire PO2 8ER
fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk
023 9254 8289

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

www.rnrmc.org.uk

Call goes out for maritime heroes

THE Shipwrecked Mariners' Society is calling on members of the maritime community and air sea rescue organisations across the UK to nominate colleagues for their heroic acts of bravery at sea for its annual Skill and Gallantry Awards.

Presented by the Society every year since 1851, the awards recognise the UK's unsung sea rescue heroes as well as those who have given outstanding service to the charity, which supports ex-merchant seafarers, fishermen and their dependents in times of financial hardship.

Last year's ceremony saw the crews and individuals from four dramatic sea rescues honoured.

Helmsman Roger Jackson and his crew battled rough seas to save four lives after a boat capsized in the River Exe estuary.

The crew of 'Rescue 193' from 771 Naval Air Squadron based at RN Air Station at Culdrose in Cornwall rescued a yachtsman in dangerous conditions and Helmsman Darren Crowe from Berwickshire saved the life of a man trapped in a narrow tunnel on a rising tide.

Master Aircrewman Richard Taylor from Holyhead in Wales was presented with an Individual Commendation for showing courage and determination whilst saving the lives of two merchant seamen.

Nominations for this year's awards ceremony are now open and the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society is calling on the maritime community to forward examples of outstanding acts of bravery and heroism.

Malcolm Williams, Chief Executive of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, said: "The society's annual October Skill and Gallantry Awards are an important event in the maritime calendar and a chance to honour all those unsung heroes who risk their lives to keep seafarers' and members of the public safe."

"Every year I am struck by the qualities shown by the men and women who are nominated and the courage they display in helping those in distress at sea."

For more information about the awards, or to submit a nomination, contact: Malcolm Williams, Chief Executive, Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, 1 North Pallant, Chichester, PO19 1TL, tel: 01243 789329, email: general@shipwreckedmariners.org.uk or visit www.shipwreckedmariners.org.uk

Heart of the matter

STAFF at Clyde Naval Base's Medical Centre were all heart recently when they wore something red to raise funds for a heart charity and awareness for National Heart Month.

The Naval Base's Principal Medical Officer gave health staff permission to hold competitions and sell charity goods at the event. Workers wore something red – for a £2 donation – and managed to raise an impressive £113.30 for the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

There was a serious message about healthy hearts behind the day's fun events.

Medical Centre visitors were encouraged to take leaflets about how to look after their heart and become a member of the BHF's Heart Matters initiative.

Those joining receive a free membership pack that included a quick guide to heart health, a five-day food diary, a recipe folder and tape measure to monitor waistline.

For more information on the BHF and Heart Matters, visit www.bhf.org.uk/heartmatters

Bored swimmer reaps rewards



A YEAR ago, Clyde-based LET(WE) Gordon Russell could barely swim five lengths of a pool without becoming bored but was inspired to take up the Swimathon Challenge to raise funds for Marie Curie Cancer Care and get himself fitter in the process.

"I did my first Swimathon in 2012 and managed to swim 64 lengths (one mile) after just two months regular training," he said.

"I began to enjoy regular training and the non-impact nature of the exercise is really beneficial – very lenient on a few old sporting injuries in the joints.

"Plus there is added sense of achievement in raising money for a good cause."

This year Gordon has set himself the greater target

of 200 lengths non-stop in the nearby Swimathon-registered Allender Leisure Centre on April 28, and hopes to bring the three miles home in under three hours.

"I hope to triple my fundraising efforts from last year as I have tripled my challenge – the work that Marie Curie do is invaluable and is such a benefit to those who need it."

To stop boredom setting in, the swimming sailor listens to music on an underwater MP3 player, although he added that he "gets some strange looks when he gets into the pool wired up."

Anyone wishing to sponsor LET Russell can click on the Sponsor a Swimmer icon – typing in 'Gordon Russell' on the official Swimathon website www.swimathon.org

A piping hot dinner nets £20,000

LONE piper L/Cpl Charles Maclean from 5 Scots (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) (right) entertained generous guests at the sumptuous setting of Glasgow City Chambers during a Royal Marines dinner and auction that has so far raised £20,000 for the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund (RMCTF).

Organised by 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group (43 Cdo FPGM) and co-hosted by personnel from 45 Cdo and Royal Marines Reserve Scotland, the charity event attracted a number of prominent dignitaries including Bernard Gray, Chief of Defence Materiel, and Brigade Commander, Brig Martin Smith.

The evening saw many prize draws and auctions, with diners bidding for special activity days with the Scottish Royal Marines units. Signed Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers tops were just some of the sought-after items up for grabs.

The event, held with the kind permission of the City's Lord Provost, was a great success.

Cash raised will be going towards achieving the charity's target of £6 million by 2014, which

is the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Marines Corps.

RMCTF funds ensure the Corps' wider family receives support; helping the wounded on the recovery pathway, funding homecoming events, maintaining Royal Marines heritage and funding memorials, but most importantly providing a grant to the next of kin of those Royals who die in the Services, within 48 hours of the event.

During the dinner, guests also enjoyed the musical accompaniment provided by the Royal Marines Band Service followed by the lone piper from 5 Scots.

The 'Argylls' are affiliated with the Royal Marines and have strong connections dating back to Balaclava in the Crimean War and Singapore in World War 2.

Those interested in contributing to the charity's target can contact the event organisers Major Jon Clare on 3CD0X-43CDOFPGRM-COMD-OC@mod.uk, or Mrs Mel Gaynor on 3CD0X-43CDOFPGRM-HQ-COSEC@mod.uk. Alternatively call 01435 674321 extension 5466.

Visit www.rmctf.org.uk/our-challenge/ for more information.



Kit on for the Hounds

FIT IN KIT is challenging people to take part in a fitness event and support *Hounds For Heroes*, the charity providing specially-trained assistance dogs to injured and disabled members of the Armed Forces and emergency services.

The Fit In Kit Charity Challenge starts June 13 and is encouraging people from all walks of life to "get their kit on", wearing uniform, work-wear or team colours.

They can take part as individuals or teams but the organisers want to inspire people to get into training now.

The challenge is the brainchild of former Naval Leading Radio Operator Garry Botterill, now a serving police sergeant with the Sussex Police Force.

Garry is a successful marathon runner and is keen to see work

places around the UK forming teams to do the challenges together.

He said, "We're encouraging fitness and team participation in a fun and rewarding way."

There are four set Fit In Kit challenges and you can choose the one that best suits your own level of fitness.

There are also sporting challenges for children, disabled persons and people are being encouraged to involve pet dogs.

Hounds for Heroes is inviting gyms around the country to take part; approaching schools, sports clubs, boot camps, military barracks, ships and air squadrons.

Police, ambulance crews and fire stations will be getting in on the fun and action too.

It costs £20,000 to train and support a Hounds for Heroes dog



● Former Naval LRO Garry Botterill (left), now a police officer, and West Sussex firefighter Ben Goodridge

throughout their working life – but for the people the dogs help, they become invaluable.

The Fit In Kit website is packed full of ideas, downloads and information. Visit the website: www.fitinkit.com

There once was a sailor...

WITH seafarers well known for their tall tales, one of the UK's oldest seafaring charities is launching a national limerick competition designed to celebrate life at sea to mark World Poetry Day.

The Shipwrecked Mariners' Society (SMS), which provides financial support and assistance to retired and incapacitated seafarers in need, is encouraging adults and school pupils to enter its Seafaring Limerick competition following overwhelming support for the 2012 contest, judged by the Bard of Barnsley and renowned English poet Ian McMillan.

This year it's the turn of comic poet and voice of Radio 4 Matt Harvey to sit in the judge's seat – Matt's way with words has taken him from Totnes to the Wimbledon tennis championships via Saturday Live, the Edinburgh Festival and the *Guardian*.

Being run in limerick form via the charity's website www.shipwreckedmariners.org.uk participants are encouraged to pen a five-line poem about the ocean and the people who dedicate their lives to working at sea.

There is a separate category for under-18s, encouraging pupils to take part.

In 2011-12 the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society

made regular and one-off grants in over 2,500 cases of need to retired and working-age mariners and their families amounting to over £1.47 million.

SMS Chief Executive, Malcolm Williams, said: "The sailor's life should provide inspiration to budding poets and help to get the creative juices flowing."

Matt has penned a limerick of his own to inspire budding poets to enter the competition:

*A short-sighted sailor called Shearer,
Was sure Scotland's shoreline grew nearer,
He was no navigator,
For one hour later,
He ran aground off South Utsire.*

To enter the competition visit www.shipwreckedmariners.org.uk or the Society's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/shipwreckedmariners.

The deadline for entry is 5pm on Monday April 11 and the charity is offering an engraved barometer and video recording of the winning poem read by Matt Harvey as a prize.

Marathon for Dad...

KRISTINA Warren will be pounding the London streets in the city's marathon in memory of her late father, the well-respected WO Brian Lawson, who died suddenly on holiday last summer following a 34-year career in the Royal Navy.

Kristina wonders if those who served with him might remember him by helping her to meet her target fundraiser of £1,800 for the Royal British Legion.

Already well into her tough training schedule Kristina has completed two 20 miles training days and an 18-miler and is keen to do justice to her father's memory. She said,

"Dad was a big character and I am sure many people will remember him well. He was an active supporter of the British Legion in Blyth, Northumberland and saw service in Devonport and Rosyth. So I am really honoured to run for the British Legion achieving one of my own lifetime goals and raising money in his honour for his favourite charity."

To support Kristina visit www.virginmoneygiving.com/Kristinawarren

Cadets spring big surprise

DELIGHTED infants returned from their half-term break to find their Dartmouth Pre-school had received a spring makeover thanks to a group of officer cadets from their neighbours at BRNC.

The 17 cadets gave the school outdoor play area a fresh new look.

They weeded the garden, power-washed bikes, painted chairs and planted some hanging baskets.

The cadets' practical leadership task involved constructing new ride-on cars – fortunately with instructions provided.

Pre-school manager Pam Reeves said: "The cadets worked really hard and we are very pleased with the results."

"We had a lovely working atmosphere – the children are going to love playing on their new cars."

Tracking back

WHEN an urban conservation charity asked for help to clear an overgrown bridleway, Victory Squadron trainees at HMS Collingwood didn't hesitate.

They spent a month working with Groundwork Solent, which specialises in helping communities with restoration and conservation projects, to regain public access to a bridleway.

The Phase Two recruits trimmed back overgrown bushes, tidied away debris and laid a new pathway to make the track usable once again.

BECOME A TRUSTEE

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) is the leading charity of the Naval Service, providing a single focus for supporting the whole Royal Navy and Royal Marines family.

We are seeking a new Trustee from any rank or rate serving within the Royal Navy or Royal Marines. There are 15 Trustees, made up of serving and ex-serving personnel and independent members. You will help ensure that the Charity is run efficiently and effectively whilst making a valuable contribution towards its future direction.

Apart from a strong empathy for the aims and work of the Charity you will need to demonstrate sound judgement, a willingness to speak up and the ability to make a positive contribution as part of the team.

The board meets four times a year, generally in Portsmouth, with occasional strategic away-days. The term of office would be for three years; this may be extended for up to two further periods. The role is unpaid (expenses can be reimbursed).

For an application form contact Kate Jack 023 9254 8128 kate.jack@rnrmc.org.uk

Closing date: 25 April Interviews: week commencing 7 May



visit rnrmc.org.uk to find out more

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (no. 6047294) and is a registered charity (no. 1117794) and Scotland (SC041898). Registered Office: Building 29, HMS EXCELLENT, Whale Island, Portsmouth, PO2 8ER.



Taking the rough with the



THE rough being the Atlantic at its very worst (and it's rarely a clement ocean, summer or winter).

The smooth? The Caribbean in the late winter – long after the hurricane season.

And in between for HMS Edinburgh? An outreach project in Nouakchott, capital of Mauritania, helping out an orphanage.

A spot of football coaching for youngsters in Cape Town.

Some shark diving.

A two-week break for ship and ship's company in Simon's Town to give the Royal Navy's last Type 42 destroyer a spot of TLC...

...which was needed because she took a pounding from the steep Atlantick on the way to South Georgia...

...although the waters there were rather calmer, if somewhat peppered with icebergs.

Honouring the fallen of 1982 by paying tribute at memorials and cemeteries in the Falklands.

The very final replenishment at sea by a Type 42 destroyer (RFA Wave Knight provided the sustenance).

A spot of sunshine in the Caribbean, calling on Barbados, St Vincent and the Grenadines, interspersed with a much-appreciated hands to bathe.

And then some doughnuts. Not the jam, iced or sugary kind. Maritime doughnuts.

No, not salty. It's turning at full speed – over 30kts – rudder hard over first left, then right, testing both engines.

It's an impressive manoeuvre – particularly seen from the air, which is where Edinburgh's 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx was – with the ship's photographer, LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum hanging out of the side door, camera at the ready.

The result? From the air: a very impressive circle carved through the Caribbean (the experience on the upper decks might be slightly more exhilarating).

"She may be getting on a bit, but Edinburgh has lost nothing of her power, speed and manoeuvrability over her years of service," said her Commanding Officer, Cdr Nick Borbone.

After doughnuts, to the land of donuts (*dodgy segue – Ed*) and a quick port of call in Mayport in northern Florida, before edging up the Eastern Seaboard through some pretty choppy seas, destination: Brooklyn.

With the destroyer due to be otherwise engaged on Friday March 15 with official duties and the like in New York, the ship's company marked Red Nose Day early.

A goodly number of noses were flown out to the ship to get her into the Comic Relief spirit... and the sailors improvised with the rest.

Chief among the fund-raising activities: a fancy dress assault course featuring leopard crawls, egg and spoon running, locating items in a pool, basketball dunking and also balloon popping. If only Lymptone were that much fun...

By the time the exhausted (and in many cases wet) crew had finished the course – spurred on by Edinburgh's clubz, LPT Gareth Cadmore – Comic Relief's coffers were more than £300 better off.

"Red Nose Day is close to all of our

hearts and despite being far from home we still like to put on a show and raise money for really worthwhile causes," said 22-year-old ET(WE) Sinead Molyneux from Wembley, who donned a witch's costume for the occasion.

Event organiser Surg Lt Kat Rowlinson added: "It's always a big event for us as most of the ship's company know it well having grown up with it, so in a sense we carry the Red Nose message around the world."

FROM red noses to the Big Apple.

New York – "just one stop from home" – was the very first overseas run ashore for a young Nick Borbone in 1986 (that's a year after Edinburgh commissioned...) as a junior rating.

Twenty-seven years later, he guided the Fortress of the Sea safely past the Statue of Liberty to her berth at Pier 7 in Brooklyn.

"When we set off from Portsmouth our visit to New York seemed a long way away," he said.

"But as we arrived in the city the true magnitude of this journey became clear. We were entering the final chapter in the Type 42 story."

His ship's company lined the upper decks as she gracefully manoeuvred through New York Harbour, past Liberty Island and the skyscrapered backdrop of Manhattan to her temporary home for a few days.

A three-gun salute from the Portsmouth warship's ceremonial gun echoed up the East River to announce her arrival on a very gloomy day in the Empire State.

There was, of course, down time in New York; it is generally regarded as the No.1 run ashore in the world – and if you wear your uniform, the American public really can't do enough to show their appreciation.

And Edinburgh showed her appreciation for New Yorkers by hosting a reception for leading Big Apple-ites and 100 of the city's leading pro-British businessmen and women.

NOT a man or woman aboard is unaware of the significance of this deployment.

It's not just about flying the flag for the UK and upholding our interests in far-flung communities around the North and South Atlantic.

This is the end of an era.

This is the very last time a Type 42 destroyer will sail outside home waters.

This is the last chapter in a proud – and sometimes tragic – story which goes back to the days of the Harold Wilson government.

It is a story which has seen three wars directly involving British forces – the Falklands, two Gulf conflicts – not to mention NATO or UN peacekeeping actions such as operations in the Adriatic or the evacuation from the Lebanon. Throw in drugs bust in the Caribbean or Atlantic, escort duties for American carriers, round-the-world deployments.

And that's only scratching the surface of the Type 42 story (and *Navy News* will be scratching a bit more later in the year...).

Although it's not a hard-and-fast rule, once you join the 42 community, you often don't leave.

Take 38-year-old CPOET(WE) Mark Hooper, 38, from Whiteley, near Fareham.

"My first ship was Edinburgh in



ILFORD FP3 ILFORD FP3 ILFORD FP1 ILFORD FP3 ILFORD FP3



h smooth

1999, when I was a new recruit, before returning in 2009, so I'm glad to be on this final international journey," he says.

Yes they're a rabbit warren of compartments. You're ducking here, dodging there, trying not to hit that bulkhead or crack your head against some ladder or obstruction. You have to turn sideways so two people can pass down the main thoroughfares.

And for all these faults and many more, 42 men and women have an affinity for them (there's a thriving Type 42 Association, for example).

"I have always loved the Type 42 and will be sad to see Edinburgh go," says Mark.

Shipmate POET(ME) Mike Howes adds: "Type 42s have been my life - there has always been a family mentality onboard and I have some great memories."

Author and veteran BBC correspondent Nick Childs defines the past 35 years of the Royal Navy as 'the age of Invincible'. It could just as easily be 'the age of the Type 42'.

And of course, two 42s - Sheffield and Coventry - never came home, both lost in the brief but bitter struggle in the South Atlantic 31 years ago.

Both, fittingly, were honoured by the Fortress of the Sea during her stint in the southern ocean.

So too another ship which never came home - from a different, much bloodier, life-and-death conflict.

As Edinburgh made her way across the Atlantic one last time, she paused briefly at 52° 19' N, 40° 28' W, as empty and remote a spot in the North Atlantic as you're likely to find.

Greenland is 550 miles to the north, St John's in Newfoundland 600 miles to the west.

It was here that destroyer HMS Beverley sank in barely 45 seconds in April 1943, taking all but four of her crew with her.

She was torpedoed trying to safeguard maritime traffic between the Old World and the New.

The Atlantic in mid-March 2013 was as cold, bleak and forbidding as it had been 70 years earlier.

With sailors gathered on the flight deck and wrapped warmly in their foulies, Edinburgh's chaplain David Yates asked his shipmates to remember those who died between 1939-1945 keeping the Empire's 'maritime motorway' open.

There are no specific casualty figures for the Royal Navy's losses in the Battle of the Atlantic - but it did lose 84 warships from the Mighty Hood and carrier Courageous through destroyers like Beverley and minesweepers and submarines.

In all, roughly one in every 15 Royal Navy personnel who went to war against the Axis Powers never returned. One in six of the merchant sailors they tried to safeguard was killed - more than 30,000 souls in all.

With the details of such terrible wartime losses resonating among his ship's company, Cdr Borbone cast a wreath into the water.

His sailors stood silent for a minute before the strains of the Last Post from the bugle of POME(ET) Damion Allen drifted across the grey wastes.

FOR HMS Edinburgh too there will soon be tears.

In just two months the prefix 'HMS' will be removed, the furnishings and usable equipment stripped from her.

Every ship and every class of ship has its day. You can't win wars at sea with nostalgia - you need state-of-the-art technology (and the skilled sailors to operate it).

"Like most things, the Navy also needs to modernise and Type 42s have served their purpose well," says PO Howes.

With all six Type 45 destroyers now in RN hands and four of these successors to the venerable Sheffield class deployed or deployable, the age of the Type 42 has passed.

But not all new destroyer ratings have been sent straight to the D-class when they completed their basic training.

"Edinburgh is my first ship but it has been an absolute honour serving in her - especially as she was built on Merseyside," says 20-year-old AB(WS) Michael New from Bootle.

"I know I will definitely shed a tear when she sails into Portsmouth for her decommissioning."

As for the old and bold like PO(CIS) Gregg Wood, from Dunfermline - 21 years in the RN: "It will be a sad day when Edinburgh is decommissioned," he says.

"I will always remember the sense of pride I felt when showing my clan around her at a Families Day in Leith."

"The Scottish public took HMS Edinburgh and her company to their hearts and we have always felt really welcome in the Scottish capital."

They will get the chance to show their appreciation for their ship shortly - Edinburgh is one of her final ports of call in Blighty during a farewell tour.

"When we sail into Leith on her UK farewell tour I will be standing on her deck, proud to be Scottish and privileged to have served in Edinburgh," said Edinburgher LCH Joseph Neale.

"42s have pretty much become a part of my life, but Edinburgh has seen 30 years of service and now she deserves to be rested."

The destroyer will also return to the land of her birth, Merseyside, to take part in national Battle of the Atlantic commemorations next month.

Edinburgh was laid down at the Cammell Laird yard in Birkenhead on the eighth day of September 1980 and hurried down the slipway into the waters of the Mersey on April 14 1983 after Lady Heseltine - wife of the then Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine - launched her with the time-honoured words: *I name this ship...*

Liverpool always pushes the boat out for visiting RN warships - witness Illustrious' reception in February.

"I have worked in Edinburgh for the past three years and will be full of pride when we sail into Liverpool," said CPO(WE) Claire Teeling, 26, from Bootle.

"I say 'proud' because it will be the first time I have sailed into my home port, but also because my granddad worked at Cammell Laird and used to say that he built half the Navy's Fleet."

A final entry into Portsmouth, charged with high emotions, is planned later this spring - there'll be fly and sail pasts to mark the occasion (and no doubt a big turnout from the very loyal Type 42 community) before Edinburgh - and with her the entire class - passes into history on June 6.

Now that's a date you are not likely to forget.



pictures: la(phot) dan rosenbaum, hms edinburgh

ILFORD FP3

ILFORD FP3

ILFORD FP3

ILFORD FP3

ILFORD FP3

Morpeth honours Collingwood

THE Commanding Officer of HMS Collingwood travelled north to unveil a bust of the 'Northumbrian who saved the nation' in Morpeth, where the celebrated admiral once lived.

Newcastle-born Admiral Lord Collingwood took command of the British fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 on the death of Nelson, who was struck down by a sniper at the height of the action.

Much loved in the Navy for his kindness to his sailors and his political finesse, as well as his skill in battle, Cuthbert Collingwood often wrote of his love for the town, where he could frequently be seen walking his dog.

He died at sea off Menorca in 1810, as his ship was set to sail back to England, and to mark the bicentenary of his death a group of British ex-pats on the island commissioned a bust of Collingwood which now overlooks the harbour at Port Mahon.

Members of the Greater Morpeth Development Trust attended – and decided the same should apply back home.

The cost – £4,000 – was raised from donations, the Lottery Fund and various associations, and the life-sized bronze bust was duly unveiled by Cdre Mike Mansergh at the Butter Market, close to Collingwood's old home.

Also in attendance was a small contingent from the Fareham training establishment and buglers from the Royal Marines Band Collingwood.

Award for administrator

AN administrator at HMS Collingwood has been awarded an MOD Quality Award.

Babcock employee Kevin Blenkinsopp is the Learning Content Management System (LCMS) Administrator for the Technology Based Training Unit (TBTU).

Kevin was rewarded because, according to his citation, he "consistently drives for quality across the scope of his role."

The LCMS delivers Type 45 software for marine engineer and weapon engineer maintainer training at Collingwood and Sultan.



● Chief Officer Simon Booth (left) receives his commendation certificate from Commander UKMCC Cdre Simon Ancona

On account of Montecristo

CHIEF Officer Simon Booth, Executive Officer of supply ship RFA Fort Victoria, has been presented with a Chief of Joint Operations Commendation for his efforts when the Fort-class fleet stores ship was successful in suppressing Somali pirate attacks and recapturing the Italian bulk carrier MV Montecristo in a joint operation with the USS De Wert in October 2011.

The commendation certificate was presented to him by Cdre

Simon Ancona, "I was honoured and humbled to receive my Joint Commander's Commendation from Cdre Ancona, Commander UK Maritime Component Command (UKMCC).

"The teamwork essential to pull a disparate group together to achieve such success was a challenge and tested us all.

"Cdre Ancona reminded me how few of these awards are presented each year and how

carefully they are scrutinised, placing me in the exalted company of those engaged in operations in Afghanistan with a far more difficult job to do, but requiring the same skills of leadership I hope I was able to display.

"To be congratulated for doing a good job is always gratifying, but a ship does not run on one individual, rather a whole team of dedicated professionals who I've had the privilege to work alongside."

Back in tandem, 25 years on



TWO sailors who first met on January 5 1987 as they began their Navy careers as apprentice artificers have been reunited on board Trident-missile boat HMS Vanguard as Weapon Engineer Officer and Strategic Missile Officer respectively.

After three years of specialist trade training together, John Rostron and Dan Greenwood went their separate ways, although both opted for a career in the Silent Service.

For John it was straight to work on hunter-

● From left: Lt Cdr John Rostron, Cdr Paul Blyth, Commanding Officer of HMS Vanguard, and Lt Dan Greenwood

killer submarines, so-called as their primary role was to hunt out and destroy enemy nuclear missile submarines as well as surface ships.

He spent his time in Swiftsure-class boats and reached the rank of Chief Petty Officer before gaining a commission in 2002.

Meanwhile, Dan took the bomber route, ending up being promoted to Warrant Officer 2 after time served in both Vanguard and Resolution-class nuclear ballistic missile submarines, becoming an officer in 2008.

Now, 25 years on, their story has come full circle for WEO Lt Cdr John Rostron and (SMO) Lt Dan Greenwood, as they are now.

Actor returns to meet new recruits

OSCAR-winning actor Sir Ben Kingsley met some of the Royal Navy's newest recruits during a visit to HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

Sir Ben, who is currently working on a film project about World War 1, and his scriptwriter Prasanna Puwanarajah were able to see first hand the discipline, camaraderie and commitment of members of the Royal Navy, which is instilled in them from the very start of their careers.

Sir Ben and Mr Puwanarajah were able to meet recruits at varying stages of their ten-week course and also witnessed the pride of the successful Cornwall 15 class and their families during their passing-out-parade.

Capt Bob Fancy, the Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh, said: "We were very pleased to welcome Sir Ben and Mr Puwanarajah to HMS Raleigh and hope that we have given him a true sense of what it means to be in the Royal Navy and our pride in its heritage."

Sir Ben first visited the Royal Navy training base in 2011 to view the painting of Boy Seaman John Travers Cornwell VC, who was mortally wounded at the Battle of Jutland in 1916, aged just 16.

The portrait, painted by renowned society artist Frank Salisbury in 1916, currently hangs



● Oscar-winner Sir Ben Kingsley (dark glasses) and Cdre Jamie Miller, Naval Regional Commander for Wales and Western England, sit in on one of the lessons given to the Royal Navy's new recruits

Picture: Dave Sheffield

in St Paul's Church at HMS Raleigh and depicts Jack, as John was known, standing next to his gun on board light cruiser HMS Chester during the battle.

The gun received four direct hits, and although mortally wounded, Jack remained at his post until Chester retired from the battle.

The sole survivor of the gun crews, Jack died from his wounds at Grimsby General Hospital two days after the battle, on June 2 1916.

He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for bravery, as a result of his actions.

Capt Fancy said: "One of our

training divisions is named in honour of Jack Cornwell.

"At 16 he was very close in age to the recruits, and we regularly tell his story to inspire them as an example of someone who displayed the Royal Navy's core values of commitment, courage, discipline, respect, integrity and loyalty."

25-year career rewarded

A LONG-SERVING MOD Civil Servant with a Royal Marines amphibious unit has been presented with the Imperial Service Medal.

The ISM is awarded in recognition of a minimum 25 years of service within the Civil Service upon retirement.

At an informal ceremony at 11 Amphibious Trials and Training Squadron in Royal Marines Instow, Devon, Colin Ballard was presented with the medal by Commanding Officer 1 Assault Group Royal Marines, Col Garth Manger.

Amongst the highlights of his career were helping to build an adventure playground for children at a special school in Reading, and being involved in BBC TV's *Top Gear* episode which saw the waterproofing of several Ford Fiestas for use by Jeremy Clarkson in a stunt involving driving the cars up Instow beach.

After a spell with British Rail as a trainee train driver, Colin was persuaded by his father to get a 'proper' trade so he started an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering.

He joined 11 Amphibious Trials and Training Squadron at RM Instow in 1986, where he worked as a welder, then in the workshops and finally in the projects section.



● Capt Jerry Kyd, CO of BRNC, inspects the lieutenants on parade at the end of their Senior Upper Yardmen course

Picture: Craig Keating

Experienced tyros

AGROUP of newly-commissioned officers paraded in front of their families and friends – and they boasted almost 140 years of Royal Navy service between them.

The group of seven lieutenants on the passing-out parade at Britannia Royal Naval College were marking the end of their ten-week Senior Upper Yardmen course, which trains sailors who have been promoted from the ranks.

The course builds on the students' existing Naval knowledge and helps develop their command, leadership, management and navigation skills.

Among the seven was a former Royal Marine, a submariner and a Naval Nurse.

Capt Jerry Kyd, CO of BRNC, inspected the parade and took the

A NAUTICAL charity has won a prestigious award from Buckingham Palace.

The Maritime Volunteer Service (MVS) was given the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award for work carried out during 2012, including marshalling duties at the Olympics.

Formed from the ashes of the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service, the MVS trains its members in valuable maritime skills, including boat-handling, seamanship, basic marine engineering and communications.

A ROYAL Navy warrant officer has won recognition for his outstanding role training warship crews.

WO1 Wayne Burbury was awarded a Commendation from Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone for his outstanding work at Flag Officer Sea Training, training crews to manage logistics while on operations worldwide.

A MINISTRY of Defence PC Andy Palmer has received a Police Long Service Good Conduct medal for helping to protect Devonport Naval Base as well as providing security nationwide, including the London Olympics.

The marine unit officer joined the MOD Police in 1991 after seven years as an engineering mechanic in the Royal Navy.

A SENIOR rate has been presented with his Valedictory Certificate marking 27 years of service to the Royal Navy.

CPO (AWW) Jeff Russell was given his certificate by Cdre Mike Mansergh, Commodore HMS Collingwood.

Starting as a missile specialist in the 1980s, Jeff was also a gunnery mentor to the Iraqi Navy and ended his seagoing career in what was then the newest ship in the Fleet, HMS Diamond. He is now starting a career as an HGV driver.

THE National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire has a new managing director as it gears up for a new development.

Former Royal Navy officer Cdr Charles Bagot-Jewitt stepped down as Chief Executive, and Sarah Montgomery, former general manager of the Chatsworth House Trust, has been confirmed as managing director.

The arboretum, part of the Royal British Legion family of charities, is planning to open a new £12 million Centre for Remembrance next year.



Military Cross for life-saver

A ROYAL Marine who rescued a severely-wounded colleague and gave him life-saving first aid while under fierce enemy fire has been presented with his Military Cross.

Mne Mark Williams (*above*), who received the honour at Buckingham Palace, said: "It is such an honour to be here – I still can't quite believe it."

"When I was told I was getting a Military Cross I was really shocked."

Mark, now of 30 Cdo RM, was on his second tour of Afghanistan in May 2011 when his patrol was ambushed by insurgents who shot a lance corporal in the chest, leaving him lying in no man's land.

Mne Williams – who was with 42 Cdo RM at the time – raced out under a hail of bullets and began treating his colleague's wounds before dragging him 30 metres to what he thought was a safer position behind a compound wall.

Yet as he continued to treat his colleague, the pair came under further attack and, once the stricken man was stabilised, Mne Williams rejoined the firefight.

He said: "When I saw him lying out there I just knew I had to get him; there were bullets hitting the ground around me as I went over to pull him back."

"I don't remember being really afraid at the time – I was just thinking he was a big lad and hoping I could drag him back safely."

"Another lad came and helped me and we took him behind the wall, which we thought would be safe, while I looked at his wounds."

"The bullet had hit his chest and I used the equipment in the first-aid pack that we all carry to try to stem the bleeding."

"It was really nerve-racking because all I could think about was making sure he stayed alive."

Mark's patrol pushed back the enemy, allowing a helicopter to land and transfer the casualty to Camp Bastion hospital where the medical team were in no doubt that Mark had saved his colleague's life.

Mark's citation said he displayed "enormous strength of character, bravery and coolness of thought" by acting quickly.

His "selflessness, valour and tenacity in the face of a determined enemy" were recognised as exceptional given his rank and limited experience.

Youngsters recognised

CHILDREN of Armed Forces personnel have been rewarded for their community spirit by the Royal Navy.

A presentation evening was held at the Royal Navy's Crownhill Family Centre in Plymouth to celebrate the work of the young volunteers with the Naval Area Community Organisation Volunteer Project.

The youngsters help with activities run by the organisation, part of the Naval Personal and Family Service and Royal Marines Welfare.

During the presentation evening the young volunteers were presented with certificates in first aid, food and hygiene, youth work and 'Plym' and 'V'



● Singer Katie Melua plays a gig for troops, including Royal Marines, serving in Afghanistan at their base in Nahr-e Saraj, Helmand Province

Picture: LA(Phot) Rhys O'Leary

Katie serenades the troops in Helmand

SINGER Katie Melua has played a gig for Royal Marines serving in Afghanistan at their base in Nahr-e Saraj.

The multi-platinum-selling artist performed an acoustic set during her visit to Main Operating Base Price in Helmand Province, home to bootnecks from 40 Commando Royal Marines.

The evening concert, held in the camp's vehicle park, was organised by the British Forces Foundation (BFF) charity as part of a three-day tour visiting soldiers from Catterick's 4th Mechanized Brigade (the Black Rats) on operations in Helmand.

The day before, the chart-topping singer performed an acoustic set during a visit to Forward Operating Base Shawqat in Nad-e Ali district, temporary home to soldiers from 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment.

Speaking afterwards, she said: "It felt like such a special gig – all the soldiers were there and it felt really incredible."

"I was frankly captivated by the scene, just being out here in the desert, pitch black, just me and my guitar."

"I hope they liked it as much as I enjoyed being on stage."

The singer spent the day before the concert touring the base

and speaking to a number of 1 Mercian troops on duty.

Katie continued: "It is just incredible to see the troops doing this very unusual and very special job, really trying to move things forward and make things better for the Afghan people."

"This is really the frontier of history so I feel honoured to have come here."

Following her meeting with one of the 1 Mercian soldiers she agreed to a personal request to play his wedding song, *Just Like*

Heaven.

Pte Robin Warburton, from Lincoln, explained: "As a big fan of Katie Melua it's pretty special to see her played live."

"I've got all of her albums and I just appreciate her music."

C/Sgt Glenn 'Dusty' Miller, from Newcastle, serving with Logistics Company, 40 Cdo Royal Marines, said: "It is great to see the support of such a high-profile artist as Katie, and to come out and see us at HMS Price – it's fantastic."

This is the second occasion that Katie has worked with the British Forces Foundation after the singer performed for injured soldiers at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham last December.

40 Cdo lead Transition Support Unit Nahr-e Saraj, with responsibility for overseeing the transfer of security duties to the Afghan Army and police in the district as part of the UK-led Task Force Helmand.

The troops are due to return to the UK this month.



● Officer Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College scour the shores of a misty Dart Estuary for rubbish during Operation Beach Clean

Rubbish day on the Dart

OFFICER Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College joined forces with Keep Britain Tidy to carry out a beach-cleaning operation along the shores around Dartmouth.

The team of 15 cadets, from St Vincent Squadron, spent the day picking up cans, bottles, plastic and even a full drum of oil, which had been abandoned or washed up on the beaches.

Operation Beach Clean was organised as part of Keep Britain Tidy's Beach Care Project.

Officer Cadet David Emmerson said: "The cadets were shocked by the quantity and variety of rubbish

that had been left on the beaches, but overall the day was a great success.

"We enjoyed the opportunity to take a break from the normal college routine and aid the community."

The cadets taking part are in the second phase of their 30-week course, known as the marination phase.

Each group is required to undertake a project in the community during their time at BRNC as a way of testing their leadership, organisational and communication skills outside of the Naval environment.



Taxi saint joins ranks in garden

THE patron saint of gardeners – and Parisian taxi cab drivers – is the latest addition to the ranks of statuary in the Porter's Garden in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The small stone statue of St Fiacre (*above*) was a special commission by Southsea sculptor John Phillipson, and was unveiled by Naval Base chaplain Rev Keith Robus.

St Fiacre is said to have been born to nobility in Ireland in the late sixth century, but rejected his material comfort and sailed to France to seek solitude for his devotions.

He travelled to the community of Meaux, around 25 miles from Paris, where he came to the attention of the local bishop, St Faro.

The bishop was so impressed by the anchorite (or religious recluse) that he provided an isolated cell and garden.

The hospice he set up for travellers developed into the village of St-Fiacre in Seine-et-Marne, and his care of the land around his forest cell led to him becoming the patron saint of gardeners.

As for his connection with taxis, the first establishment to hire out horse-drawn carriages in Paris in the 17th Century was in the Rue Saint-Martin, near the hotel Saint-Fiacre.

Such vehicles became known in Paris and beyond as *fiacres*, just as a later two-passenger British equivalent became known as hansom cabs after Joseph Hansom, the man who patented the design.

The Porter's Garden has been in existence for at least 250 years, and served the needs of the man who was responsible for the security of the dockyard, the timing of the in- and out-musters and the locking of the gates.

Now refurbished, the garden – which is open to the public – also contains statues of King William III and Capt Robert Falcon Scott – Scott of the Antarctic.

www.portersgarden.hampshire.org.uk

Hot prospect

A MEMBER of the Dumbarton Young Fire Fighters Association stepped up a notch when he undertook work experience with the firefighters at Clyde Naval Base.

Stuart Thomson, aged 16, worked at heights, tested breathing apparatus, brushed up his first aid and put out a range of fires during his stint with the team at Faslane.

Young people aged between 13 and 18 from Dumbarton and surrounding areas can apply to join the Young Fire Fighters Association, where they learn relevant skills and undertake visits in the community.

The cadets meet at Dumbarton Fire Station on Thursday evenings.

Arctic medal has come too late for some

WHILE the government's very belated decision to award an Arctic Medal gives some satisfaction to the relatively few of us still around, it is only half the story.

In April 2012 the Russian government, which has already awarded us no fewer than four commemorative decorations, contacted survivors to say they proposed to give us the prestigious Ushakov Medal for bravery, provided the British government agreed.

It did not, because of a strange rule that no foreign government bravery award could be given more than five years after the event.

It has now come up with another excuse – that no foreign award can be accepted if a similar award is in the process of being given by the British government; this in spite of the fact that the Russian award was offered nearly a year earlier than the recent announcement.

Particularly irritating is that fellow shipmates in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have already received the Ushakov Medal as their governments have raised no objection.

Surely this is a case where our government could make an exception to its current restrictions without causing itself any embarrassment. It is, after all, a unique situation never likely to be repeated.

And so to the choice. I, and I think many of my fellow survivors, would prefer to receive the distinguished and willingly-offered Ushakov Medal than one which the British government has

found itself forced to issue after years of haggling.

By the way, I trust the government will act soon as we are all gradually drifting across the bar.

– Mike Alston, Hon. Secretary
HMS Middleton (L74)
Association

...The government have always refused to award a special medal for service with the Russian Convoys.

They did, however, offer a rather pathetic lapel badge, as a sop, several years ago.

Their complete turn-around has been brought about, not by any change of heart, but by them having been shamed by the Russians!

Last year the Russian government offered to award their Ushakov Medal to all veterans who had served on Arctic Convoys and sought our government's permission to award it to UK veterans.

Unfortunately our government did not agree!

It is interesting to note that Australia, New Zealand and the USA have all agreed to accept this award and gesture of comradeship for their nationals.

The reason given is very thin – that the potential recipient has "not done any relevant service specific to Russia within the past five years".

What do they expect? Apart from the fact that many of us are over 90.

It makes one ashamed of one's government.

– Ian Callan (Lt Cdr RNR Rtd)
Llanybydder, Dyfed, Wales

Pension grab in the post

IN the interests of all serving and retired personnel I would draw their attention to the following.

Last month I was informed by Xafinity Paymaster (administrators of the Armed Forces pensions) that my naval pension would be reduced by almost £16 per month.

Apparently, this reduction under National Insurance Modification Rules will apply to all ex-Service personnel on reaching state pension age.

I had no prior notice of this

until March 1 2013 (my 65th birthday) when my March payment advice was posted through my door.

This once again demonstrates how much successive governments think of men and women who volunteer to defend our country.

It also shows there is now a third certainty in life – after taxes and death you can add 'Armed Forces pension reduction at 65'.

– Paul Russell, Lowestoft,
Suffolk

Whirlwind tour of Brooklyn

IN June 1963 HMS Whirlwind visited New York City on her way home to the UK after 12 months' guardship duties in the Caribbean.

Whirlwind was berthed in Brooklyn and the ship's company were told not to drink in bars in downtown Brooklyn.

First ashore and straight into a bar in downtown Brooklyn were me and my oppo Dave; we ordered two 'Bourbon-on-the-rocks'.

There were five customers drinking and one approached Dave and asked what his uniform was.

Dave told him that it was the uniform of the British Royal Navy. The man pulled at Dave's silk bow and Dave pushed him away.

Within five seconds two New York police officers rushed into the bar, grabbed hold of us and manhandled us out of the bar and into a patrol car.

We were then driven over the Brooklyn Bridge to the New York City Precinct (police station), taken to the custody room and went in front of the custody sergeant who warned us about our foolish liberty decision of drinking in downtown Brooklyn.

He instructed the two police officers to return us to our ship and report our conduct to the ship's duty officer.

This gave us another ride over the Brooklyn Bridge, which was quite a lovely surprise and experience as we had only been in New York City approximately three hours and had already been across the Bridge twice (not planned on our run ashore).

Both police officers escorted us up the gangway and briefed the Officer of the Day as to our liberty decision with a serious explanation that we were two very lucky people drinking in the lawlessness, gangsterism, worsening criminal area of downtown Brooklyn and very lucky that the barman rang the police as quickly as he did or the results would have been very jeopardising and unimaginable.

Ray and Dave had (again) led the stokers' branch into another ironic, humiliating conflict with their versatility, unrelenting, compelled stokers' idiosyncrasy.

– R T Ayre, HMS Whirlwind
1961-64
Cleethorpes

● HMS Sandown leads RFA Sir Galahad into the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr ten years ago

Picture: CPO (Phot) Tam McDonald



Sandown's clean sweep

Ten years ago I had the honour to be the Old Man of RFA Sir Galahad during the Gulf War.

I was removed from the ship before I managed to thank the Captain and ship's company of HMS Sandown for the excellent six-hour swept channel

lead-through which ensured the safe arrival of my ship's company, including the RN Protection Force and RLC Detachment in Umm Qasr.

Thank you Sandown, it was a superb job.

– Roger Robinson-Brown, RFA Rtd



Cache in the attic

I WAS most interested to see that the military are being encouraged to give up their smoking habit.

I joined the RN in 1950 at the age of 18 and never tasted tobacco in any form until I was 27.

I then took up smoking, no doubt greatly encouraged by the cheap, duty-free issue.

I became a very heavy smoker of cigarettes, using some 40-60 a day; this continued until the late 60s when, realising what damage they were doing, I quit overnight and have not smoked since.

However, the point of this letter is not to boast, but to point out that I recently came across a packet of 100 blue liners in my attic, well-sealed against the elements and probably in pristine condition.

I left the Service in 1970 after 21 years.

I wonder how many others have managed to keep their issue for around 45 years?

– Frank Melhuish, Lt RNR
(Retd)
Coleford, Gloucestershire

TV coverage disappoints

AFTER reading the letters (February and March) about the documentary *How the Bismarck sank HMS Hood*, I was surprised not to read any comments which challenged the statements and conclusions made by this programme.

The sinking happened before my time and I have neither any experience nor expertise on this subject.

At the end of the programme I found myself confused and dubious of the final conclusion that categorically stated that a lucky shell penetrated the lightly armoured deck and then the heavily armoured magazine which then exploded and was the sole reason for Hood sinking.

There is a comment by Professor Eric Grove, in his review of a study *The Battle of the Denmark Strait* (March 2013, *Navy News*) in which he states that much further research is required (most sadly not apparently undertaken by the recent failed expedition to retrieve Hood's bell).

I assume he is referring to this programme.

My own doubts on the veracity of at least one of the statements made by this programme came at the end when they stated, and I quote: "No large warships would ever be built again."

This statement spoiled a story I have been telling for many years, that as a Junior I once helped paint a battleship.

In the summer of 1959 I and about 2,000 other ratings were temporarily drafted to HMS Vanguard to paint her in time for the August Portsmouth Navy Days.

The Vanguard was laid down on October 2nd 1941, launched in November 1944 and commissioned in May 1946 – and she was, I believe, classified as a battleship.

– Richard Richmond, Welwyn
Herts

... I am a huge fan of the Royal Navy and read and watch as much as I can.

In the viewing category, it is difficult to find up-to-date material.

So I was immensely disappointed to find that both new series last year, one on the demise of HMS Ark Royal and the other on Britannia Royal Naval College, were broadcast exclusively on satellite TV.

No, we do not have satellite or cable TV – I think the prices they charge are excessive!

Restricting access to these programme does little to tackle the issue of "sea-blindness" – many people who have Sky may not include the *Discovery* or *Military History* Channels in their packages.

Will these two programmes be available to buy any time in the future?

– E Foster
Gedling, Nottinghamshire

Cadets are our future

IT BROUGHT back so many happy memories when I read the *Sea Cadet* pages in March.

I was a Sea Cadet some 80 years ago. Having served in the Royal Navy since 1936, my life was changed forever from my early days in the care of the local authority.

I am one of the last children to have lived in the workhouse, a hell of a life.

In World War 2, I served in destroyers and minesweepers including the Malta convoys, sweeping along the North African coast to get supplies to the Desert Rats, who were at last pushing the adversaries back to the peninsula. All so long ago.

I met Newhaven and Havant and Waterloo cadets in Dieppe, when they came to remember the fallen.

My five sons, all with families of their own, have been cadets and volunteers when needed.

I owe so much to my instructors, and thank all who lend a hand to give our young folk the chance they all need.

– George Drewett,
Shepperton, Middlesex

Pour show by young killick

AS A young naïve killick scribe in the late 60s aboard my first ship HMS Leander, I had the misfortune to get roped in to help the supply department at a wardroom party to be held on the quarterdeck.

The ship was in Massawa for Ethiopian Navy Days, which also included the US and French navies.

This event took the form of Naval exercises and competitions amongst the crews of the Navies present.

Highlight for me was the Royal Marines Band with their drums lit up in the dark playing sterling music – highly professional and entertaining.

With Leander all lit up in her floodlit splendour the party developed with all the various royals, dignitaries and high-ranking officers in attendance.

When given the nod my allocated task was to refill Emperor Haile Selassie's coffee cup. As I waited, I thought 'no problem here – basically a piece of cake.'

When beckoned, off I trotted with my coffee pot at attention, napkin clean, etiquette in place and prepared to pour the coffee from the right side of the Emperor.

Unfortunately not all went to plan.

There must have been a million eyes watching me – did they anticipate something would go wrong? Well, yes it did.

As I poured the coffee from the curved spout it ran down the side and before my very eyes the Emperor's coffee cup and saucer were floating in a mini coffee

tsunami.

The sparkling white table cloth had changed colour and with Haile Selassie no doubt wanting me pegged out in the desert covered in jam the Supply Officer quickly hastened me away

– I could not understand why it was strongly advised that I did not venture ashore whilst the ship remained in Ethiopia.

It took a few weeks before the Supply Officer spoke to me again – funny that...

Whilst serving on Leander I was not asked again to help out at future functions – for the life of me I could not understand why.

Some nights I still wake up in cold sweats wondering what would have happened if this scenario had occurred when I was rum bosun and spilt rum when dishing out tots.

There definitely would not have been any queens sippers or gulpers that day. I would have been hung, drawn and quartered by my three-badge killick seaman mess mates in our small forward mess adjacent to the Naafi shop.

Yep, I can still see LS (Foxy) Fowler, LS (Taff) Evans and LS (Needles) Cotton drawing out their holster knives and hoisting me up against the bulkhead and muttering "this is your one and only chance of making a tot time mistake".

These words still echo today – what magic memories of the RN, some of the greatest days of my life.

PS – the tot time story was not a dream – it happened!

– T J Smith (ex-CPOWR)
Benfleet, Essex



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 former CPO T J Smith

ROYAL NAVY NAVY NEWS

Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH

April 2013
no.705: 59th year

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

Big plans for Bognor

COMMUNITIES large and small are putting the final touches to their plans for this year's Armed Forces Day.

The main national event will be hosted by the city of Nottingham, culminating in Armed Forces Day itself on Saturday June 29.

But other towns and cities are also aiming high – towns such as Bognor Regis, in West Sussex, where the celebration of the country's Armed Forces past, present and future will be held on Sunday June 23.

Organisers' plans include fly-pasts by a Lancaster bomber and an RAF Chinook helicopter, rescue and cadet force displays, bands and choirs and a number of military vehicles.

All will take place in and around the pier and Waterloo Square.

See www.armedforcesday.org.uk for more details of events.



Homage at Home Park

SAILORS from HMS Raleigh lent their support to Plymouth Argyle as the npower League 2 club staged its fifth annual Armed Forces Day for the match against Fleetwood Town.

A group of 34 new recruits (some pictured above with instructor PO Louise Faull and club mascot Pilgrim Pete) were among more than 200 RN personnel and their families who were invited to the match, along with families of those currently deployed.

PO Faull said: "The recruits

A farewell to RN

Sailors return to Iron Duke

FIRST Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope may be stepping down this month, but he has still been taking a keen interest in the future of the Royal Navy on his farewell tour of establishments.

The Navy's most senior officer met sailors at the start of their careers and saw some of the state-of-the-art equipment they will be using on future ships when he called in at HMS Raleigh.

Admiral Stanhope was the VIP Inspecting Officer for the last passing-out parade on his watch, then took the controls of the Heavy Replenishment at Sea simulator, built by Rolls-Royce Engineering plc and currently undergoing trials before being handed over next year.

Time at the Defence Maritime

Logistics School was well-spent – Sir Mark was presented with a cake to mark his retirement.

The First Sea Lord also paid a visit to RN Air Station Culdrose to bid farewell to personnel in the various workspaces and hangars at the Cornish air base.

Moving on to Hampshire, Admiral Stanhope was guest of honour at HMS Collingwood's Termly Divisions, receiving three cheers from the personnel as the parade drew to a close.

He was given a tour of the RN Leadership Academy where he saw the recently-opened Close Range Training Simulator, and he later formally opened the new Chaplaincy coffee bar facility, a revamped version of the Chaplains coffee bar first opened 17 years ago by 'Mad Bish' Revd Mike Brotherton – who was there as a special guest at the opening.

The Admiral was then hosted



● First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope in the control cab of the new replenishment at sea training rig at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield

to lunch in the Wardroom in a gathering of officers and ratings, where he was presented with a gift by Mess President Cdr Andy Phenna.

On leaving, Admiral Stanhope said: "I thank everyone at HMS

Collingwood for making me so welcome today.

"It is evident that your enthusiasm and professionalism continue to deliver high quality results. The operational success of the Fleet depends upon it."

Memorial names brought to life

THE Duke of Kent has unveiled information panels on Portsmouth's naval war memorial accessing smartphone technology to bring to life the personal stories of sailors who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The Duke, who is President of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, met relatives of the sailors featured on the boards after he was shown how to scan the QR code using a smartphone.

The scan accesses CWGC-managed web pages providing insights on the lives of those whose names are inscribed on the bronze panels of the memorial.

The story of one sailor, LS Bertram Ives from Banstead, Surrey, is featured, and several members of his family were at the unveiling to be introduced to the Duke.

Bertram's granddaughter Jane Chilton came to see the new technology displayed and found Bertram Ives' name on the newly-renovated memorial amongst the

25,000 names that span both World Wars.

"My grandfather was lost on HMS St Achilles on May 31 1940 as the ship made its third crossing to evacuate troops from Dunkirk," Jane said.

His story is also featured in local historian Lewis Wood's book on the Banstead Memorial – *These Men of Banstead*.

Mr Wood, who also attended the Southsea event, was inspired to research every name of the men of Banstead inscribed on the memorial in his village.

He said: "Four years of research has taught me that information is out there and that time and patience reaps rich rewards.

"Just days before my book went to print, I received news that a wooden box belonging to L/S Bertram Ives had been recovered

from the sea after the St Achilles hit the mine in 1940.

"It is full of letters, photographs certificates and other documents.

"We've uploaded more information on the website about him and many of the other men on our memorial at www.bansteadhistory.com."

The panels are among 500 the CWGC is installing as part of a drive to provide more information during the centenary of the start of World War 1 next year.

The Duke said: "The Commission is at the heart of events to mark the centenary of World War 1.

"This initiative will help inform visitors, while putting a human face to the names of those who died."

He added that the information panels are a "powerful means" to ensure we never forget.



Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies

Keeping tabs on Big Cig

THE Royal Navy's annual assault on Big Cig saw the ashen-headed antihero battered, stamped on and hosed down in the pursuit of better health.

Establishments around the country and units at home and deployed used National No Smoking Day on March 13 to push their own message, outlining the benefits of quitting the habit.

HMS Nelson's Medical Centre handed out leaflets and offered advice and stop smoking clinics – Dr Lisa Randall pointed out that there were also financial benefits, as a 20-a-day smoker could save over £2,000 a year by quitting.

NN Fishburn and Senior Naval Officer Lt Cdr Wright-Jones also dressed as cigarettes to brave the snow and encourage personnel to 'swap fags for swag' – the theme of this year's campaign.

The real Big Cig was seen at other locations – at RN Air Station Culdrose, for example MAs Codey Seldon (left of picture) and Morwenna Nichols gave the



Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Herron

sour-faced butt a soaking. Health and fitness staff at RN Air Station Yeovilton also took a direct approach to the subject, with LPT Collins favouring direct action (pictured top).

As well as the usual information and advice service, Devonport Naval Base marked the day with a one-mile treadmill challenge for charity, with Naval Base

Commander Cdre Graeme Little and Capt Mark Knibbs the first to complete their miles in aid of the British Heart Foundation.

The no smoking initiative sees a number of departments combine to push out the message, including occupational health teams, health centre, dental departments, PT staff and health and safety specialists.

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RM 'family' gathers at funeral

MORE than 200 people attended the funeral of a former Royal Marine after a Portsmouth vicar put out an appeal amid fears that he would be buried without mourners.

The Royal Marines Association was approached directly by Revd Bob Mason notifying them of the death of former bootneck James McConnell, who died in January at the age of 70 at the Bluebell Nursing Home in Southsea.

It was believed that James did not have any close family, and care staff feared that they would be the only ones at his funeral.

Harnessing the power of social media networking, Richie Puttock, Operations Manager of the RMA, put out a call across websites and fellow Marines spread the word on their Facebook pages.

The cyberbuzz soon spread, galvanizing a group of 200 well-wishers to turn out on a Thursday morning at Milton Cemetery to attend the service.

Ex-Royal Richie, who left the Corps in 2010, said: "The websites lit up and went bananas with many commenting on our post."

"I said it was a tragedy if, in this day and age, a serving member would be buried without family representation."

"When you join the Royal Marines, it's drummed into you that every Marine is your brother and remains your brother, whether he is 19 or 99."

"I saw at least 35-50 of our Corps family represented – some in blues, some retired with their green lids on, proudly wearing their suits."

"This 'family' ethos is special to the Royal Marines Corps and long may it remain so."

TV crews and news reporters also covered the ceremony.

Royal British Legion standard bearers led a procession through the cemetery, followed by a group of flag-bearing motorcycles, and the burial service concluded with two buglers, Ben Streeter and Gareth Evans from the Royal Marines School of Music (RMSM), who played the *Last Post*.

James Pinney, concert marketing manager at the RMSM, said: "As soon as we heard, we thought it would be right and proper to send two of our students along – they are trainee musicians for the Royal Marines Band Service."

"This was a fitting tribute to a former Royal and the first opportunity for them to experience what they may be called upon to do in the future, once they have formally qualified."

Rev Mason said he received a "marvellous response from around the country" following the appeal and thanked the mourners for their kindness in turning out on a cold morning.

Hotel switch

THIS month's HMS Loch Fada Association AGM and reunion has been moved to a new hotel.

The new venue for the event, on April 12-15, is the Sketchley Grange Hotel in Hinckley, and all booking will be transferred to the new location and a new confirmation sent out.

Any queries to Vanessa or Shirley at IOW Tours – email enquiries@iowtours.com or call 01983 405116.



Standards are lowered during the unveiling ceremony for the Cockleshell Heroes memorial in Birkenhead

Picture: Wirral Borough Council

Birkenhead honours heroes of Bordeaux

LIVERPOOL is renowned for its maritime heritage, and will next month be the focus of international attention as the nation marks the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic.

But there are other communities along the banks of the Mersey that are also proud of their history.

Bootle, for example, a couple of miles north of the Liver Building, was the lair of Johnnie Walker, scourge of the U-boats.

And just across the water is Birkenhead, where Cammell Laird launched over a thousand ships in 150 years – nearly 200 commercial and military vessels to support the war effort between 1939 and 1945 alone.

Today the yard maintains and

repairs RFA ships, and is also involved in construction work for the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

One link of which Birkenhead is particularly proud is that of local Royal Marines commando Cpl Albert Laver, one of the Cockleshell Heroes who took part in the Operation Frankton raid on ships in the port of Bordeaux in France in December 1942.

Leaving submarine HMS Tuna off the Gironde estuary, ten men in five canoes ('cockles') set out to paddle 60 miles upriver to launch their attack.

One boat was quickly lost, another later capsized and a third was discovered while its crew rested up, leaving two to press home the attack.

Now Wirral Council has unveiled a memorial on the

Woodside promenade to the men of the Royal Marines Boom Patrol Detachment, including Cpl Laver, who was one of the four men to reach Bordeaux and plant limpet mines on enemy ships' hulls.

With his crewmate Mne Bill Mills, Cpl Laver was captured after the raid and handed over by the French *gendarmierie* to the Germans, who executed them and four of their comrades.

Former Royal Marines commando and leading Liberal Democrat Lord Ashdown unveiled the memorial with the Mayor of Wirral, Cllr Gerry Ellis, at a ceremony attended by 300 people.

As well as veterans' organisations, Service personnel and the general public, members of Cpl Laver's family attended – including his second cousin, Mrs

Eileen Smith, whose late mother Florence 'Dolly' Smith was the last person to see Bert the day before he left for action.

"My mum thought the world of him and the day before he left, he had called round to their house while his ship was berthed at Cammell Lairds," said Mrs Smith.

"They went to the Savoy picture house together and my mum remembered him telling her that he was leaving to do something he couldn't tell her about."

"All he knew was that he was unlikely to return."

Years after Bert died, Eileen recalls going to the pictures with her mother to see the 1955 film *Cockleshell Heroes*, starring Trevor Howard and Anthony Newley.

"She just cried through the whole thing – I think it really hit her that he was such a young man and so brave," said Mrs Smith, who was a young child during the war.

The memorial was designed by Wirral Borough Council's War Memorials Officer, Peter Lee, himself a former Royal Marine.

Ex-Service organisations represented included the RNA and RMA branches covering Liverpool, Blackpool, St Helens, Manchester and Salford and North Wales, while amongst the wreaths laid were those from the CO and members of the Special Boat Service, and the SBS Association.

RMR Liverpool provided a Corps flag for the ceremony, and two buglers from the Royal Marines Band Service also took part.

After the ceremony, Lord Ashdown gave a talk on the raid and signed copies of his book about Operation Frankton at Birkenhead Town Hall.



FOUR members of Derby branch were invited to the commissioning of HMS Ambush at Clyde Naval Base. Pictured on the jetty, with the City of Derby's affiliated boat in the background, are (from left) S/IMs John Grisman, branch vice chairman Arthur Norman, David Clarke and branch chairman Tom Smith

Memorial to Affray to be unveiled

A MEMORIAL to HMS Affray is to be unveiled close to the former home of the Royal Navy's Submarine Service.

As *Navy News* went to press, the final touches were being put to plans for a ceremony on Tuesday April 16 at a site close to the town's ferry terminal.

Last year a similar memorial was unveiled on Alderney, the nearest landfall to where the wreck of the submarine lies in the Channel.

The memorials, created by the Affray Submarine Memorial Trust, will mark the beginning and end points of the boat's final voyage on April 16-17 1951 as part of Exercise Training Spring.

Affray, with a large number of augmentees and a reduced number of experienced crewmen on board, was due to carry out a number of training serials, but failed to surface and radio her position on the morning of April 17 as expected.

A major search for her finally found the wreck on the edge of Hurd Deep two months later, on June 16.

Although the cause of her destruction has never been established, her snort mast was found to have snapped off at the base and this is thought to have led to the inundation of the boat, killing all 75 on board.

Fundraising is still under way to pay for the building and upkeep of both memorials.

Donations are still welcomed; cheques should be made out to 'Affray Submarine Memorial Trust' and sent to Alderney Trustees Ltd, The Old Presbytery, Les Rocquettes, Alderney, Channel Islands GY9 3TF.

Malcolm is on song

EIGHT members of Chard branch attended Area 4's 38th annual reunion, which was staged at the Durrant House Hotel in Bideford, Devon.

And to make the weekend even more memorable, one of the Chard contingent travelled back to Somerset with an extra piece of luggage.

S/M Malcolm Day was awarded the Yeovil Rosebowl – presented to the association in 1995 – for the third time for the best individual act at the Sunday concert, after he performed excellent renditions of songs by Tom Jones, Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra.

Gizzits and gazebos

BRANCHES should be planning PR events and promotions this year, and bids for RNA hats, forms, bookmarks, car stickers and other such items should be made to HQ.

Gizzits such as place mats, ice scrapers, pens, gonks and key rings are available from Stephen.Caulfield@dhl.com – and they are going fast.

As National Events co-ordinator, Steve is also in charge of gazebos.

Join the parade

ALL branches are invited to parade along Whitehall in the RNA Biennial Parade on Sunday September 8.

Marchers will muster from 9.30am, and on completion there will be post-march refreshments at the Civil Service Club.

The reviewing officer this year will be Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel.

An invitation to join the Association on parade has been extended through the Conference of Naval Associations (CONA) to other Naval associations, while

training establishments HMS Collingwood and HMS Sultan have agreed to provide marching platoons.

The Irish Naval Association has already indicated that they will be attending – and intend to maintain their superiority in the singing department...

Organisers have urged shipmates to join to ensure a large turn-out as it is a valuable privilege to be able to parade at the Cenotaph in such a prestigious fashion – so put the date in your diary.

↓ RNA HQ, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.
 ↓ admin@royalnavalassoc.com
 ↓ 023 9272 3747
 ↓ www.royal-naval-association.co.uk



Relentless hunt for old shipmates

FORMED at the end of last year, the HMS Relentless Association aims to reunite old shipmates and foster friendships from all commissions of the R-class destroyer and Type 15 frigate.

Relentless had three distinct periods of service.

First were the wartime commissions from 1942, then she underwent conversion to the Type 15 class in 1951 until 1956, and the final phase was from 1964 until she was paid off in 1968.

More than 40 members have been recruited through the website (www.hmsrelentless.co.uk) but more are welcome.

Among those who have already joined is one who went on to greater prominence – former Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson, now Lord Lawson of Blaby, who served in Relentless as a sub lieutenant during his National Service.

A reunion is planned in Chatham at the end of November.

See the website, Facebook page, call 023 9259 9640 or write to the Secretary, HMS Relentless Association, c/o 73 Redwing Road, Clanfield, Hampshire PO8 0NG for more details.

Search for lost trophy

DERBYSHIRE Submariners have put out an appeal for a missing trophy which was created in memory of a wartime deep.

The shield was commissioned in memory of Stoker 1st Class Tommy Appleby, and had the words 'Submariners Association (Derbyshire)' and 'TS Kenya' inscribed on scrolls on its face.

The trophy was presented to a suitable recipient from the local Sea Cadet unit, but in recent years one of the recipients left the area and the unit, and the Association, have been unable to trace it.

If anyone knows where the shield is now, please contact S/M Terry Hall at nobbyderbysa@yahoo.co.uk or ring 07979 424680.

Any postage and packing will be refunded, or it can be collected if that is possible.



● Former Wren Beth Hutchinson and Lt Cdr Polly Hatchard in front of a Swordfish at Yeovilton
Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies

Gallant Beth dragged man from wreckage

A HEROINE of World War 2 visited RN Air Station Yeovilton to take a trip down memory lane – though the memories were by no means all pleasant.

Beth Hutchinson was a driver with the Fleet Air Arm when she was awarded a gallantry medal in 1944 – believed to be the first to be awarded to a female in the Royal Navy.

With complete disregard for her own safety, Wren Booth (as she was then), a driver with the Fleet Air Arm, dragged an Observer from a crashed Swordfish aircraft in the Kintyre peninsula in Scotland on the night of November 18 1943.

She removed his smouldering clothing with her bare hands, beating out the flames while explosions in the aircraft scattered debris over them.

She then drove the Observer nine miles for urgent medical treatment but, by the time she arrived, he had died.

Beth, now 92, was awarded the British Empire Medal (Military) for her act of outstanding bravery near RN Air Station Machrihanish at the age of 23.

Of her actions that night Beth said: "Gosh, it was nothing – I don't know what all the fuss is about."

"I'm nothing special – anyone would have done the same in my position. We just got on with it."

When Beth arrived at Buckingham Palace to receive her medal from King George VI in May 1944 she was the only woman amongst nearly 300 men.

"I didn't know how to curtsy," Beth confessed.

"So I had all these men outside the throne room of Buckingham Palace showing me how to curtsy – you wouldn't believe it."

"It was such good fun and we did laugh. There were certainly

more good bits than bad bits."

Beth's story was told some years later in two publications, *Blue for a Girl* and *Women of Glory*, each recognising her act of gallantry.

Blue for a Girl describes Beth's visit to the Palace and how the King "pinned the medal to her proudly heaving breast", adding her vital statistics ("35, 23, 36") – a sign of the times and how they have changed.

Beth, now a great-grandmother living near Bath reminisced with Lt Cdr Polly Hatchard, the Royal Navy's first female air engineering officer, about her life as a Wren in World War 2.

Polly is currently the senior air engineering officer for the Lynx Wildcat Maritime Force – the Navy's next generation of helicopter.

Polly said: "I have always been interested in engineering and studied mechanical engineering at Bristol University."

"My maternal grandfather was a Naval Commander, my paternal grandfather one of the few surviving Battle of Britain pilots and my father is also a civilian pilot."

"I joined principally because of

these role models."

Polly's achievement is not the first time she has written her name into the Royal Navy's annals – she was also the first RN female to reach the South Pole.

Her career has not stopped Polly from enjoying family life, either, as she has two children under the age of five – "something that would have been unheard of back in my day," observed Beth.

"You had to leave the Navy to get married and have a family in those days."

As part of her day at Yeovilton Beth shared coffee with the Commanding Officer, Cdre Jock Alexander, after which Polly took her to the Royal Naval Historic Flight, home to the only airworthy Swordfish aircraft in the world – the type of aircraft from which Beth dragged the injured Observer.

Polly said: "Beth is an absolute inspiration."

"Seventy years ago she got stuck in and went into life-saving mode without a consideration for her own personal safety."

"It has been such a pleasure to meet a lady who has paved the way for women in the Royal Navy today."

Morecambe Bay items on display

A MODEL of HMS Morecambe Bay and her White Ensign are on display alongside the ship's bell at Morecambe Town Hall.

S/M Doug Turk, Chairman of the HMS Morecambe Bay Association, contacted Lancaster City Council last year offering the model of the Bay-class frigate to the council for display at the town hall together with other memorabilia, including the ensign flown by the ship whilst in action during the Korean War.

The radio-controlled model was constructed in 2003 by a member of the association who served on board during the 1952 conflict.

The model, flag and other items are now in a case alongside the bell on the first floor landing at the Town Hall.

Doug said: "It is with great pleasure that the HMS Morecambe Bay Association is able to hand over memorabilia of the ship for display."

"There are very few of the ship's company left now, and those of us that are still here are well into our 80s."

"It is therefore reassuring for us to know that items we have treasured are now in safe hands and will provide an excellent historical record of the ship for visitors to Morecambe Town Hall for many years to come."

Clr Sheila Denwood, Mayor of Lancaster, said: "I am sure the collection will provide a fitting tribute to all those who bravely served their country on HMS Morecambe Bay for many years to come."

London plans are discussed

PLANS are being laid by the Falkland Islands Association for a service of remembrance at the Cenotaph in December 2014.

The FIA currently holds a joint service every year that covers both the 1914 battle and the 1982 Conflict but is keen to see what interest there is in an enhanced service.

Organisers would like to hear from ship's associations of vessels which took part in both campaigns, and for relatives of those who served in the 1914 battle, when von Spee's cruiser squadron, which had been victorious weeks earlier at Coronel, was routed by Doveton Sturdee's superior force.

Ship associations could bring their Colour and lay a wreath, with a get-together afterwards.

Robin Wager (ex-HMS Protector and Northwood 1982) would welcome suggestions at robin@relativem.co.uk

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our February edition (right) was HMS Ventura, previously known as the Suffolk Harvester, and Mr M Beeby, of Devon, wins the £50 prize.

This month's mystery ship (above) was a Fleet replenishment tanker, built at the Hawthorn Leslie yard at Hebburn on Tyneside and launched at the end of 1962.

She saw service in Cod Wars, on the Beira Patrol and – while on her way to new owners – was diverted to play a role in reclaiming the Falkland Islands in 1982.

She was subsequently released to join a South American navy as planned in August of that year.

(1) What was the name of the oiler when in the RFA, and (2) what was the name given to her by her new owners?

We have removed her pennant number from the image. Complete the coupon and send



it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is May 10. 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.

Happy birthday to Belfast

VETERANS from HMS Belfast were joined by sailors of the 21st Century to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the cruiser.

Belfast was built at Harland and Wolff in her namesake city and launched by Mrs Neville Chamberlain on March 17 – St Patrick's Day – 1938.

Although she was badly damaged by a mine early in the war, she returned to the Fleet a more powerful ship and saw extensive action on Arctic convoys, supported the Normandy landings and later patrolled extensively in the Korean War.

She is the last surviving Royal Navy ship of her type, and has been a familiar sight on the Thames between Tower Bridge and London Bridge for the past 40 years, where she is now part of the Imperial War Museum.

Type 23 HMS Westminster was alongside the veteran warship when she celebrated her birthday, and members of the frigate's ship's company joined sailors of earlier generations and Sea Cadets to

mark the occasion.

The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Alderman Gavin Robinson, and the Deputy Mayor of London, Victoria Borwick, broke a bottle of champagne over the ship's side.

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said: "HMS Belfast is an iconic monument to Britain's naval history, which sits proudly on the Thames."

"It is a reminder of one of the most momentous periods in our history and has become an important, tangible legacy to help educate our children, as well as being an important attraction for visitors from the UK and overseas."

"Here's to many more years of this great ship watching over our city."

Visitors to the ship are given a vivid glimpse of what life was like for the 800-900 or so souls on board during her active service, with recreations of the scene inside a gun turret during the Battle of the North Cape at Christmas 1943, the operations room and the engine room.



● Sailors from the past and present await birthday ceremonies on the fo'c'sle of HMS Belfast in London
Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool



It's KO for the QEWO

FOLLOWING the review of the through-career education requirement it has been decided that the Qualified Educationally Warrant Officer (QEWO) competence is no longer required.

This is due to the fact that no additional qualification over and above that required for Petty Officer/Sergeant is necessary for promotion to WO.

The requirement will be removed post-2013 promotion boards and there will be no legacy rights.

If you are currently QEWO (GCSE English plus one other GCSE) then you will need to obtain a Level 2 Functional Skills maths competence.

What next? This will depend on your circumstances but there are a number of potential options:

If you already have a Level 2 Functional Skills maths competence and it is recorded on JPA, you do not need to do anything else.

Nothing recorded on JPA?

In the first instance contact your local Education Centre to check your qualification equates to a level 2 qualification.

If the competence is not annotated, it is the individual's responsibility to provide evidence that they are indeed educationally qualified.

Requests for changes to educational status are to be submitted to **FLEET-FOST-TA EL3 E1A** together with certified true copies of the certificates.

Once qualifications are confirmed as suitable, **FLEET-FOST-TA EL3 E1A** will enter the new educational status directly onto JPA.

If not qualified to Level 2 Functional Skills maths you will need to contact your local Education Centre at the earliest opportunity to arrange to undertake a Functional Skills maths course.

Check that the correct educational qualifications are recorded on JPA – you will need to have one of the English and Maths competences annotated on JPA to be educationally qualified for promotion.

The legacy QEWO and the current QEPO competences cannot be used to articulate that an individual has achieved the required standard for WO.

DIN 2012DIN07-10 provides details but if in doubt contact your local Education Officer.

New network support

A NEW initiative focused on improving retention of women called the Naval Servicewomen's Network (NSN) has been launched.

It is a professional network for women serving in the Naval Service, Royal Naval Reserve and RFA.

The aim of the network is to increase links between women and make the most of the equality of opportunity already enjoyed in the Service.

Women have served at sea since 1991 and were integrated into the Naval Service when the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) was disbanded in 1993.

With the exception of close combat roles undertaken by RM Commandos and, until later this year, service in submarines, women enjoy the same diversity of employment as men.

The implementation of mixed manning in submarines will begin later this year when the first women submariners complete their training.

Head of the Naval Servicewomen's Network Cdr Ellie Ablett said: "Despite varied and exciting opportunities open to women, recruitment has reduced from 21 per cent of intake in 1987 to just ten per cent today.

"Research also shows us that, for a variety of reasons, women tend not to serve as long as men.

"Although we believe this gap is closing and the Service already benefits from proportionate promotions by gender, women continue to be significantly under-represented at senior levels.

Royals cut teeth in General Duties roles

KING Squad Pass Outs (KSPOs) provide over 550 new General Duties (GD) Royal Marines each year.

It is important to ensure that these new Marines are provided with the right opportunity to 'cut their teeth' as a Marine in GD roles, and to achieve this they are assigned GD positions within the four 'combat' commando units – 40, 42, 43 and 45.

Many GD Marines in commando units will specialise, via the Direct Specialisation Scheme or into another Specialist Qualification (SQ), and will therefore vacate GD positions for those arriving from KSPO.

In order to create the required space for KSPO, individuals will need to move on at their Future Availability Date (FAD), which is typically after two years.

However, there will be those who remain GD through choice.

It should be noted that second tour GD assignments are most likely to be at 43 Commando Force Protection Group RM and the Commando Logistics Regiment RM, and that a second tour in a GD position in the same unit is not the norm and should not be anticipated.

If a unit wishes to retain a GD Marine for a second tour as a L/Cpl, they are to identify an appropriate (and vacant) L/Cpl position and inform the Naval Personnel Team – NPT(RM) – so a new assignment can be generated.

In all cases, NPT(RM) will examine the best career management of the individual considering the needs of the Service, unit or individual.

In sum, units and individuals should anticipate (both for GD



Drafty's corner

and SQ trained personnel) that they are due a new assignment at their FAD, and discuss with NPT(RM) and Specialisation Advisors in good time.

Early engagement will assist in securing the best opportunity of getting a subsequent assignment of choice.

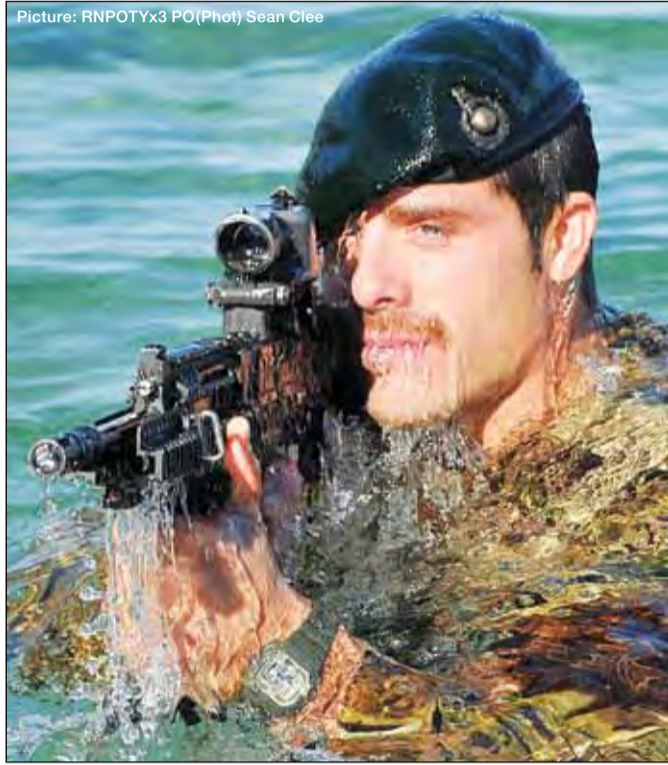
Transfer of RM Chef Liability to the RN Logistics Branch

In late November 2012, the RM Strategy Group approved the transfer of the liability and strength of the Chef specialisation from the RM to the RN.

The transfer will result in all the Career Management duties for RM Chefs moving from NPT(RM) to NPT(Logistics), however, the RM WO1 Chef Specialisation Advisor will remain as a central POC for all RM Chef queries.

The practice of RM manpower being managed by RN career managers is not a new concept; the RM Medical Assistants

Picture: RNPOTYx3 PO(Phot) Sean Clea



and RM Aircrew have been managed by NPT(Logistics) and NPT(Warfare) respectively for many years.

NPT(RM) and NPT(Logistics) intend to draft and release a DIN which will cover all the nuances associated with the transfer, so that all RM Chefs are fully aware of the implications of this transfer on their career.

Impartial Career Advice

NPT(RM) employ three careers advisors who are in effect

GD and SQ advisors, but will provide impartial careers advice to any rank or SQ.

Personnel are advised to make use of their knowledge and expertise and call if they need careers advice, whether in regard to information in this brief or any other career related matters.

Their contact details are:

WO1 Batchelor, NPT(RM): 93832 5531

WO2 Ellis(CTCRM)93785 4222 and WO2 Moxham (CTCRM) 93785 4542.

Carrier engineers a careers fair

DURING her visit to Liverpool, HMS Illustrious threw her doors open to a broad range of students to promote careers in engineering, writes Lt Elizabeth Leckey, Deputy Air Engineer Officer of the helicopter carrier.

The hangar was transformed into an exhibition hall filled with demonstrations of engineering applications.

The aim was to enthuse young students in engineering technology by showcasing the full range of hi-tech equipment the Royal Navy relies upon and explaining the principles behind them.

The event was staged in conjunction with Captain Naval

Recruiting staff, but was not specifically a recruitment event.

In all, 253 students from local colleges and universities – including Wirral Met College, Kirkham Grammar School, Southport College and Liverpool University – attended the four-hour event representing the full range of vocational training and engineering degree students.

The event attracted much positive feedback – Rob Lockyer, a local careers advisor, said: "The day was top quality, informative, helpful and good humoured throughout, much complimented upon by the accompanying educational staff."

HMS Illustrious has a ship's company of around 650 although the addition of temporarily embarked staff can double the number of personnel onboard.

Around half of Lusty's ship's company are made up of engineers across the full range of trades and specialisations, and the students now have a much clearer picture of what careers in engineering can offer and more specifically of careers and opportunities within the Royal Navy.

Cdre Dickie Baum, the Naval Regional Commander Northern England and Isle of Man, said: "This is a classic example of the sort of positive interaction that we need, not only from a recruiting aspect but also in influencing the UK's future tax payers.

"Not all of these young engineers will go on to join the RN but they will have a lasting impression of the professionalism, can-do attitude and friendliness of the staff."

Seeking the six per cent

FOR an Asian person with blood cancer, a bone marrow transplant from an Asian donor is often their only chance to survive.

That's why the Anthony Nolan charity urgently need the six per cent of the UK who can give them that chance to stand up and be counted.

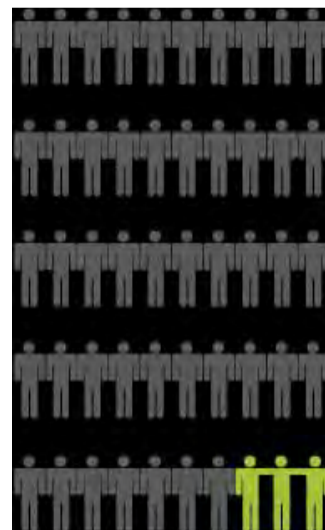
And that's why they urgently need your help.

If you know anyone aged 16-30 from a South Asian background, make them aware of the lifesaving difference they can make by joining the Anthony Nolan register.

Simply tweet about it, post it on your Facebook page or check out their website for more ways you can help them reach that vital six per cent.

Give more Asian people the chance to survive.

www.anthonynolan.org/Hidden/the-six-percent.aspx



WILL YOU HELP US REACH THE SIX PERCENT?

New pay award kicks in

ALL Naval Service personnel will see the impact of the Pay Award in their April pay statements following the publication of the 2013 report of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) in mid-March.

The government accepted the recommendations in full, except for the recommendation on X-Factor, where consideration was deferred.

April pay statements will, where relevant, show:

■ An increase of one per cent to all base military salaries;

■ A one per cent increase in Specialist Pay (now renamed Recruitment and Retention Payment), Compensatory Allowances, Reserve Bounties and Call-Out Gratuity;

■ A one per cent increase in Compensatory Allowances;

■ Overall increases to accommodation charges for Single Living Accommodation and furnished Service Families Accommodation ranging from 4p to 99p a day – rental element increases in line with the rental component of the Retail Price Index (RPI);

■ A decrease in the Daily Food Charge of 3p a day;

■ And (from November 1 2012) a £25,000 (before tax) Financial Retention Incentive for suitably qualified PO and CPO personnel serving in the Weapon Engineering Submarines Strategic Weapons System specialization.

The AFPRB also recommended a 0.5 per cent increase in the level of X-Factor, which is a pensionable addition to base pay that recognises the relative disadvantage of conditions of service experienced by members of the Armed Forces compared with civilian employment.

The X-Factor recommendation would result in costs for which the Department has not currently budgeted.

The outcome of deliberations on this matter will be announced in due course.

For more details and a useful Q&A and examples of what this means to your pay packet, see 2013DIB/17 – the DIB includes the revised rates of pay effective from April 1 for Regular personnel.

Reserve rates of pay will be uplifted pro-rata in line with changes to the pay of Regular counterparts. Annual increments will not be affected.

Military reading

CHIEF of Defence Staff Gen Sir David Richards has commissioned a new list of books and articles as core reading for military professionals.

The list will present contemporary works in a modern format, with the aim of allowing readers to graze over a wide range of texts and to attract them into deeper and more extensive reading.

The list is available not just to the military, but to a wider audience reflecting Defence's partnerships – be they international, cross-government or with civil partners, industry and Reserve forces.

The list is available on the Defence Academy's website at www.da.mod.uk/recommended-reading – a handy 'one-stop shop' for anyone interested in the strategic security context.

Get in touch

NEED to get your message across?

To feature in the *Navy News'* Two-Six pages contact Navy Command Media – Internal Comms Staff Officer:

■ Lt Cdr Emma McCormick, 93832 8809, FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC SO2

Navy Media and Comms will be changing all their role titles and email addresses on Apr 22.

The new Internal Comms email will be: (Dii) NAVY-MEDIACOMMS-IC-TL or (External) NAVYMEDIACOMMS-IC-TL@mod.uk

Hey big spender, feel the Force

SAILORS, as much as anyone, can find themselves with too much month left at the end of the money.

In the past, in serious debt cases, COs had to confiscate cheque books and order strict supervision in order to manage the finances of hapless individuals.

"We definitely don't do that any more," said Wg Cdr Justin Fowler, of the MOD's non-operational welfare and families team.

"We're a good employer for looking after our people and keeping an eye out for people under stress."

However, facts show that worry about spiralling debt is the second-biggest cause of stress for Service personnel and their families, while the number of personnel slipping into debt is rising.

The MOD has teamed up with the Royal British Legion to deliver a financial awareness campaign and advisory service backed by the Standard Life Charitable Trust.

MoneyForce is an impartial web-based service available free online to help show how to stick to a budget, encouraging responsible savings planning for big-ticket items like a car or home.

Delivering MoneyForce is set out as a commitment in the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2012 – it represents the Covenant in action with business, charities and the MOD all working together towards a shared aim.

Standard Life is exercising its corporate responsibility through its trust and the RBL is helping address welfare problems.

Worries about money can lead to distraction and underperformance at work and on duty, and can also

create welfare problems.

MoneyForce (www.moneyforce.org.uk) highlights the sorts of financial considerations that personnel should be making at different stages of their career and provides the information to help them make sound decisions.

The site includes the following: Managing money – useful information on borrowing, saving, budgeting and spending, as well as planning for the future;

Your career – including pay and career structures, allowances, managing finance as you deploy, assignment in the UK or abroad and making plans for when you leave the Service;

Life and family – managing life's challenges, setting up home, marriage, divorce, children;

Managing crises – information and guidance for tough times;

Tools – budget, car cost and credit card calculators to help you make informed decisions;

Get Help Now – signposts to organisations that can help on issues such as alcohol problems, debt, emotional issues, war pensions and compensation.

This programme builds on work that the MOD has already done to address financial disadvantage, such as obtaining a commitment from the major representative bodies of the financial industry to seek to avoid disadvantaging our personnel in the provision of products and services.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/financial-top-tips-for-service-personnel

The MOD has also worked with Royal Mail to introduce UK postcodes for those living in overseas military bases.

All change at Casualty Cell

FROM April 1 the Naval Service Casualty Cell (NSCC) will become the single point of contact for all casualty notifications, management and tracking within the Naval Service.

Previously there were four Notifying Authorities (NA) for the Naval Service, responsible for informing individuals' Next of Kin (NoK) or Emergency Contacts (EC) of any injuries etc.

These NAs were the Captains of the Naval Bases for Portsmouth, Devonport, Faslane and the RM Corps Casualty Officer.

From April 1 the four NAs will merge into the Naval Service Casualty Cell, which will deal with all aspects of the Casualty Notification (NOTICAS) process.

The NSCC will liaise directly with the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) ensuring that the KINFORMING (informing of a casualty to NoK) procedures are dealt with in a timely and correct manner.

The structure for the NSCC will be located in West Battery on Whale Island in Portsmouth.

Once the casualty has been identified, a Casualty Notification Team, comprising Casualty Notification Officers (CNO) and RN Chaplains, will be formed to inform the NOK/EC of the casualty's condition and location.

Once this task has been completed the NSCC will arrange for a Visiting Officer (VO) or Casualty Visiting Officer (CVO) from NPFS/RMW to visit the individual's NoK/EC.

If a Funeral Officer (FO) is required, then again the NSCC will task individuals accordingly.

All these tasks will be co-ordinated by the relevant Casualty Officer.

A national database of both CNOs and Funeral Officers will enable the NSCC to respond quickly throughout the UK and abroad, ensuring the correct level of coverage of all geographical areas.

To ensure the national footprint is at the right

level, the NSCC is seeking additional CNOs/FOs.

CNO/FO training will be co-ordinated by NSCC, with CNO training taking approximately four hours, after which a competency will be annotated on JPA.

This adqual qualification lasts for three years.

Once qualified, the CNO responsibility will remain for the duration of your assignment and Naval Service career.

Funeral Officer training is a two-and-a-half day course, and once trained, a JPA competency will be annotated and again last for three years.

As a CNO you should be aware that you may be contacted outside of normal working hours as the KINFORMING system is a 24 hours a day process.

The NSCC has produced guidance to help inform the Naval Service and wider defence contacts of the changes.

A Galaxy and DIN were being produced as *Navy News* went to press and will be highlighted in *Where to Look* next month.

A NOTICAS Directive distributed recently across the Service is to be used in conjunction with JSP 751, the overarching document.

The NSCC team is visiting establishments/units to update individuals on the role and responsibilities of the NSCC as well as co-ordinating CNO/FO training in all areas.

The role of a CNO/FO may feel daunting and something that none of us want to do, however, sadly we are members of an Armed Force who experience casualties and deaths in both times of peace and conflict. Our families deserve the best service we can provide.

If you feel that, with training, you could undertake either of the CNO/FO roles, please contact a member of the NSCC team at West Battery.

The NSCC is manned 24/7 and if you need to contact them, email: NAVY-PERS-WS_NSCC_MAILBOX, tel: 023 9262 8684 or 93832 8684.

Full contact details will be published in the DIN.

Where to look

GALAXY 05 – 2013: Armed Forces Pay Award 2013
 GALAXY 04 – 2013: Warrant Officer of the Naval Service
 DIB 10/13 – Introduction of Armed Forces Independence Payment
 DIB 11/13 – Operation Newcombe (Mali)
 DIB 12/13 – Defence Chief Information Officer
 DIB 13/13 – Improving Leadership Managing Change
 DIB 14/13 – Launch of MoneyForce
 DIB 17/13 – Armed Forces Pay Award 2013
 DIN2013DIN0133 – Employment and Careers Support for Wounded, Injured and Sick Service Personnel
 DIN2013DIN0140 – 2013/2014 Pilgrimages HCPT
 DIN2013DIN0142 – London Pride June 29 2013
 DIN2013DIN0143 – Guidance for Applying for Mortgages and Unsecured Credit
 DIN2013DIN0145 – BR3 Issue of Feb 13 Edition
 DIN2013DIN0507 – Review of Joint Service Publications
 DIN2013DIN0722 – Diversity and Inclusion Training
 DIN2013DIN0725 – JSAT Gliding Foundation Gliding Courses
 DIN2013DIN0735 – Joint Services Adventurous Training Course Programme 13/14
 DIN2013DIN0739 – Exercise Canary Gold 2013/14
 DIN2013DIN0743 – Defence Language Training 2013/14
 DIN2013DIN0902 – Armed Forces Day 29 June 13
 DIN2013DIN1010 – Services Offshore Regatta June 10-14 2013
 RNTM 030/13 HMS Edinburgh Decommissioning & Disposal
 RNTM 035/13 Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport - Accreditation Opportunities for the Royal Navy Logistics Branch
 RNTM 039/13 Branch Transfer to Medical technician - Radiography Branch
 RNTM 041/13 CBRNDC Ship Team Training Allocations
 RNTM 044/13 Exceptional Cervical Screening for Personnel Under 25
 RNTM 048/13 Deployed Welfare Package (DWP) (Overseas)
 RNTM 55/13 A Guide to Understanding Human Factors and Human Behaviour in Safety Management and Accident Investigation
 RNTM 056/13 Welfare Grants
 RNTM 061/13 Trustee Vacancy within the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity (RNRMIC)
 RNTM 063/13 Eastern Area (Portsmouth Command) Golf Championships 2013
 RNTM 070/13 RNISA (Portsmouth) Windsurfing Courses 2013

Families have a voice on the Board

NFF Chairperson Kim Richardson spoke to the Navy Board on behalf of Naval families.

Here is an edited version of her observations, with some of the comments from the Navy Board in response:

"NFF offers a voice to families.

"The majority of Naval Service families are independent and resourceful. They don't need anyone to speak up for them.

"Our families only get in touch when they feel they have to and usually when there is a genuine concern, they have a question they are struggling to get an answer to elsewhere, they have seen something in the press that bothers them or when they just want to register a view.

Push and Pull

"Our remit is very neatly divided into two distinct areas.

"Firstly, representation and ensuring that the voice of the smallest but most senior of the three Services is heard, acknowledged and understood.

"Being able to do this involves both push and pull – pushing information out in person, via our website, *Homeport* and other social media, and then pulling back in views and concerns using the above.

"This can, in itself, become a challenge as we found out recently when we asked for feedback to inform the Commons Defence Committee Inquiry into Education.

"Everyone who got in touch had a different view – cull CEA, enhance it, give our families priority over civilian families when applying for school places, and don't even consider making us different from the civilian population.

"I ensured that all comments were passed on to the Defence Committee team and all were given due consideration.

"The second area that we have taken on is individual issues and concerns – something we were never set up to do.

"Interestingly, we noticed a marked increase in contact after the introduction of JPA and the loss of writer expertise in UPOs.

"Families and serving personnel have for some years now been using us as a sort of customer service.

"I think it is important at this point to say that we are cognisant of the importance of the divisional system.

"If a serving person contacts us – and many do – we will always ask if the divisional system is aware of the issue and encourage them to engage accordingly.

Expectation Management

"So what have families been talking about over the last year? In the main, that same old chestnut, housing.

"We must remember that only around 5,000 of our families live in SFA, and it would be very easy to focus the entire NFF resource in this direction.

"SFA is tight, with little choice available in some areas. Managing expectation, and in some cases saying 'No', can be a challenge.

"The process undertaken by DIO in moving from eight Housing Information Centres to two Housing Allocation Service Centres in April 2012 did not help as it went less than smoothly.

"Only now do they have full staff levels at the HASC, almost 12 months later. We lost a wealth of knowledge and expertise when this change took place.

"For many of our families, it was a time of intense pressure and frustration.

"At all times during this process, we engaged with DIO, the Chain of Command and Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans (Min DPWW), making them all aware of the impact on families.

Contact increasing

"NFF undertook 573 commitments and meetings on behalf of Naval Service families in 2012.

"Our website visitors have increased by 39 per cent over the past year. Facebook fans are up 57 per cent and Twitter followers up by 80 per cent.

"We survey people who contact us to find out how they found the experience.

"Taking into account the fact that we are an organisation who can't always resolve an issue, we are delighted to report that 96 per cent would contact us again and would also recommend us, and 97 per cent were happy with the speed of our response – a testament, I believe, to the dedication of the small, hardworking team of six NFF staff.

"A survey respondent said about NFF: 'A very useful tool, run with passionate professionalism. As a member of the RN and a Divisional Officer, the NFF is definitely something I will consider in the future for either myself or members of my

division when the situation requires it.'

"Communication issues for our families also seem to raise their head more often than I would like.

"They are varied in type, and often centre around how much the Service Personnel chooses to tell their family.

"Communication with home for all ships, submarines, squadrons and units is equally important, and we would rather see an informative and regular comms package put in place throughout the time away than minimal comms and then an 'all-singing all-dancing' return celebration.

"I am delighted to say that in 2012 contact with ships was better than a year ago. COs have engaged and invited us along to their families' events.

Welcome News

"On the good news front, we welcome the role undertaken by Col Dewar as the first Naval Service Director for Families. It is timely.

"Admiral Steel really understands the families' agenda and has instigated monthly meetings, which is great news for families.

Shuffle, reshuffle

"I said in my last brief to the Navy Board that I felt we were just beginning to get to know the then Min DPWW Mr Robathan when another reshuffle took place and he moved on.

"Mark Francois is my seventh minister since coming in to my post. I am comfortable that relationship is firm.

"May I suggest that if he is visiting any of your areas and wants to speak to families that you may consider inviting the NFF along?

"FOST did this a couple of weeks ago and it was very welcome as the families raised a few things with the minister that he homed in on that weren't accurate.

"Next day, I contacted his office to give a little more meat on the bones and hopefully deflect a few questions that weren't required.

Unpredictable tasking

"One thing that has become apparent to me is that the pressures on a family are different when ships are day-running, in and out for short periods and tasked to be

ready to sail at short notice. Inability to plan life becomes more challenging.

"I have spoken to families who find that a six-month deployment with a start, an end and a welcome home on the jetty is much easier to manage than an unpredictable programme.

"When visiting ships that are undertaking an unpredictable programme, could I ask you to be sensitive to the fact that the ship's company are very likely to be experiencing added pressure from home?

"Acknowledging this is important to all concerned.

"We also find that when visiting these ships, closing the loop and feeding back information immediately is extremely important.

"Are you doing that? Who organises your visits and ensures that feedback goes back to the ship in order for the ship's company and their families to see that the visit has been worthwhile and that you have listened?

The Board takes note...

THE Navy Board welcomed this independent perspective.

The Service has never been more invested in families but the Federation's role is invaluable in highlighting areas where we need to do better.

Shortfalls in what should be well-established processes for keeping families informed of developments during deployments is a particular concern, and will be investigated.

The Board acknowledged that more needed to be done to ensure that personnel, and their families, understand the operational imperatives that drive programme uncertainty, and that what they do was important.

The following points were also made:

It is important to raise families' awareness of the New Employment Model before official announcements are made. Naval Service personnel tend to buy houses near their families rather than their workplace, so investing in Centres of Specialisation may not be a benefit to all.

The Board also wondered whether

Big decisions

"Next year sees us focus on the Armed Forces Covenant and our dispersed families including Maritime Reservist families.

"As the New Employment Model unfolds how we live in the future could be different. Some of our people may have to make life-changing choices and decisions.

"Spouses and partners want jobs – they need them if they're to get on the housing ladder. An affordable, accessible and sensible housing scheme is still what our people want.

"The sooner we get firm indication of the way ahead on the house purchase front, the better. Pay freeze, pension and allowance changes have knocked our confidence.

"We know we are doing a good job. We understand that Civvy Street is having its own challenges but what we can't see is any good news on the way.

"I see the Future Naval Service family having to become even more robust than they are now, but personnel need time at home when they are alongside and an opportunity to plan when possible.

"If they don't, then it will be the family who drives the career decisions.

"The phrase 'life in a blue suit' carries no weight in many homes, I'm afraid."

the Federation should have a regulatory role, but accepted the contention that the existing practice (maintaining good contacts with a senior command that listens and will help where possible), was a more constructive dynamic.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope paid tribute to the work of the Federation and to Kim Richardson's drive and commitment over the past ten years.

The Navy asks a lot of its people and it was important that families understand that what they do was vital and appreciated.

Based on NFF feedback, there was room for improvement and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel would investigate whether the existing processes for communicating with families were being implemented properly, and consider whether additional measures were needed.

This includes taking steps to ensure that senior officers understand how an unpredictable operational tempo adds to family pressures and, in particular, that this is recognised during visits and when providing feedback.

New roles for former regulars

WHEN Rob Lowe left the Royal Navy after 27 years service last autumn, it did not take him long to find a new role – he joined the Royal Navy the following day...

Or, to be precise, the 43-year-old chief petty officer transferred to HMS Vivid in Plymouth, where his vast store of experience is proving of great value to the RNR unit.

His Naval career has seen him involved in a wide range of activities, from radar specialist and PT instructor to training local Army officers in Afghanistan and working as a Navy Rehabilitation Officer.

Rob said he did not quit regular service because he had had enough – he felt he still had plenty to offer but was not likely to progress much further and needed to move into another profession.

Now studying for a degree in podiatry at the University of Plymouth (alongside his wife Caroline), Rob is also a New Entry Lead Instructor at Vivid – a vital role as the unit is expanding.

He is not the only former regular who found it difficult to give up life in a dark blue suit.

CPO Ann Jones had a 24-year Naval career, mainly in a training role, which took her as far afield as Africa and the South Atlantic.

She left in 2011 but missed the camaraderie, so when approached by the RNR she did not have to think too hard about the prospect.

"I find it inspiring that the people who come to us, many very young but some in their 30s, are so keen and eager to learn," she said.

"And in many cases they do it while holding down full-time jobs."

Dynamic masters and commanders

NAVAL Reservists from seven countries gathered in locations across Europe to test their ability to co-ordinate international shipping during a crisis.

Exercise Dynamic Master, conducted for the first time from NATO's Maritime Command HQ in Northwood, allowed the 65 reservists to apply revised NATO tactical procedures at six Naval Co-operation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) units activated in naval ports in Norway, France, Germany, Turkey and the Netherlands, and in a government HQ in Athens.

The 'Dynamic Masters' in Exercise Control (EXCON) delivered a challenging scenario with multiple training tasks for the specialist officers and ratings, directing them to provide the Force Commander of the fictional operation with a clear picture of all commercial shipping across an area of ocean and coastal region.

The scenario included providing emergency plans for embargo operations, close warship escort of humanitarian aid ships, issuing navigation warnings and guidance to commercial shipping in response to a variety of scenarios involving pirates, terrorism, oil spills, mines – even a volcanic ash cloud.

Exercise Director Lt Cdr Gary Brogan, based at HMS Eaglet in Liverpool, spent two years preparing for Dynamic Master, while also managing his full-time civilian job as a financial consultant in Liverpool.



● Lt Cdr Gary Brogan (left), of HMS Eaglet, with NATO colleagues at Northwood during Exercise Dynamic Master

"By taking the operational experiences gained by Navy Reserves who have deployed recently in real-world maritime operations, working together with HQ military planners, EXCON here in Northwood has provided very realistic training serials to the participants deployed in the NCAGS units.

"Basically the last ten years of NATO experience from many nations is crystallising in delivering Dynamic Master's training objectives and will ratify NATO's new procedures in this field.

"Each day brings the deployed

units more problems to solve, allowing the NCAGS specialists to work through the procedures to deliver their recommendations to the commander.

"Each unit may well come up with a different solution, but the priority is to deliver accurate, timely and effective recommendations to allow the commander to make his executive decision."

Addressing the 18 EXCON staff on the penultimate day of training, Lt Cdr Brogan said: "Yesterday we were playing at being warriors – today we are playing God..." as he introduced a serial involving a huge ash cloud from an erupting volcano triggering a requirement for an evacuation by Naval assets.

"We want the NCAGS units to think outside of the box and to build on each other's wider operational experience," said Lt Cdr Steve Fry, an EXCON controller.

Lt Cdr Fry was mobilised as the officer-in-charge of the UK's Maritime Trade Operations unit (UKMTO) in Dubai in 2009-10 during the surge of Somali piracy in the Indian Ocean and knows first-hand the terrible effects of piracy on seafarers' safety, having been on the end of calls from panicked Merchant Navy masters reporting pirate attacks.

"The majority of the evolutions in Dynamic Master have happened for real – and the merchant seafarers involved have paid a heavy price," he said.

"Much of our role involves having a real empathy and understanding of the merchant seafarer."

The strategic implications of

disrupted energy and trade supply routes across the world's oceans has seen the work of the MTO branch become highly valued by military commanders, while the UK RNR specialisation has adapted and the RNR is planning to expand the branch size under the UK Government's Future Reserves 2020 programme.

Building close relationships with the international merchant shipping lines and engagement with wider stakeholders is more active than ever and NCAGS officers are kept busy briefing the masters of commercial vessels in the strategic ports in high-risk areas, while mobilising on a regular basis in response to crisis events.

Specialists from the MTO branch are also serving on the European counter-piracy initiative Operation Atalanta and also with the Joint Force Commander in Northwood, providing expert advice, tracking merchant shipping policy and arising issues.

Most of the NATO navies employ Reserves either as part of their operational NCAGS or MTO branches while the UK RNR MTO branch includes the little-known role of Awnis (Allied Worldwide Navigation Information Systems) specialists.

NATO exercises such as Dynamic Master are part of a wider programme which also covers the Indian and Pacific Oceans, which helps to develop best practice in the management of crisis incidents across the world.



Crazy Fox on run from Flying Fox

A RESERVIST from Bristol has set himself a daunting ultra-running target over the next 18 months which could raise significant amounts for charity.

Lt Henry Watts (above), of HMS Flying Fox, is aiming to run a series of ultra-distance events culminating in one of the ultimate challenges at Mont Blanc in August 2014.

Henry's racing programme is based on a 50-mile warm-up last November along the Two Moors Way in Dartmoor, followed by 100 miles last month on the White Cliffs of Dover route, then the 100 miles South Downs Way Challenge in June and also another 100 miles in September across the North Downs, near Farnham.

These conditioning runs will then allow him entry into the Mont Blanc 100 miles that will include 10,000 metres of ascent in over 40 hours.

'Crazy Fox' Watts will raise money for charities that are close to his heart – the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) and Sparks, the children's medical research charity.

More information can be seen on Facebook (www.facebook.com/2014MontBlancChallenge) and a donation page at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/HenryWatts>

In his diary Henry said: "I like to constantly challenge myself."

"Last year I had the 50-mile challenge, this year it is 100 miles and next year it is Mont Blanc."

He has previously run in the Tough Guy Challenge and the South West Coast-to-Coast but found these "quite easy".

Henry's weekday starts at 6am with a short cycle to work, then home around 4.30pm ready for a 60-90 minute run four days a week. The weekend sees a longer run or two of 20 or 30 miles each.

Having been in the RNR since 2006, Henry is a veteran of Afghanistan – he spent six months there in 2011 as a mentor to the Afghan National Army.

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● RNR medics line up for the camera on Operation Telic ten years ago

Medics gather ten years on

TEN years ago 40 RNR medics – doctors, QARNNS officers, Naval Nurses and medical SAs – deployed to Iraq on Operation Telic, the biggest mobilisation of the Reserve branch since World War 2.

And their destination was the furthest forward-deployed field hospital since the Somme.

The medics went initially to support 34 Field Hospital in Camp Fox, Kuwait, and then crossed over to Shaibah in Iraq soon after the coalition advance.

To mark the anniversary, 25 of them gathered at the Institute of Naval Medicine in Alverstoke, Gosport, for a formal mess dinner and reunion.

WO Elaine Grist, from HMS King Alfred, who arranged the reunion dinner, was delighted that so many of the original team attended – some from as far as Abu Dhabi – to reaffirm the strong bonds of friendship they had forged in wartime.

"I remember clearly the very mixed emotions when we left Portsmouth on a 'one-way' ticket as we didn't have a return date – unlike the regular deployments some of us have made since, out to the hospital in Camp Bastion, the Herrick experience doesn't come close to Telic 1's extraordinary bonding experience.

"If you asked any of us if we would do something like it again – you bet we would!"

Mitch Mitchell, an LMSA when she deployed, said: "A big Bravo Zulu to Elaine for all her hard work in organising this great evening, the fantastic atmosphere filled with nostalgic memories of life at war."

"I miss the Navy and, especially all my buddies in the RNR medical branch. The weekend reminded me what my 24 years was all about – comradeship, until we meet again..."



Dalriada settles into new home

MOVING house is never easy, especially over a winter leave period, but with plenty of military precision planning and serious effort from the RNR unit's support team on Operation Exodus, Support Manager Rupert Mozley reported that HMS Dalriada's Reserves are now settling happily into their new home in Birkmyre Road, Govan, just a quick march away from the Ibrox stadium.

The RNR unit's move to Glasgow from Greenock's Navy Buildings followed the closure of the coastguard unit previously based there.

The location had served as the West Coast Reserve Training Centre since 1965, though there was a four-year hiatus when the unit was relocated to Inverkip in the Anti-aircraft Operations Room until later re-establishing itself back in the Navy Buildings.

On their final drill night there in December, friends, family, former Dalriadans and ex COs gathered with invited guests to bid a fond farewell to the building as they lowered the White Ensign at Evening Colours for the last time.

The Provost of Inverclyde, Robert Moran, thanked Dalriada for supporting the annual acts of Remembrance and countless community events in the Inverclyde area.

For CPO Ann McGarva, her last evening at Navy Buildings was poignant as it is where she previously worked for many years as a civil servant.

"When I looked back at all my experiences and the things I have achieved over the last 34 years, I realised that it has been the people that have made it all memorable – the place could have been anywhere," said Ann.

"So, as much as I am very sad to see Dalriada leave Greenock, we have moved before."

"Govan is a new chapter, and I look forward to making many new memories there."

The 70 Reservists opened for business in their new home with almost everything ready – the re-surfacing of the car park and Parade Ground had to be delayed until weather conditions were suitable.

The unit will hold a special rededication ceremony on April 19.

Capt Mark Wyatt, responsible for the revitalisation of the Reserves estate, said: "Navy Infrastructure has been focusing on the development of the Maritime Reserves in the West of Scotland."

"This work has been progressing at a pace with the opening and rededication of HMS Dalriada."

"The work will revitalise the Maritime Reserves and Royal Navy estate in Glasgow, Scotland's largest city, although this is only part of the infrastructure development under way and further works will be carried out in Edinburgh and Dundee."

"Additionally the Maritime Reserves will be able to exploit modern techniques and training solutions as part of the roll-out of project work within Future Reserves 2020 (FR20)."

HMS Dalriada is recruiting now – males and females aged 18-40 (45 if ex-RN) – call 08456 075555 for more information.



● Royal Marines Reservists skijoring behind a BV-206 all-terrain tracked vehicle – a rapid method of travel in snowy conditions

Hairspring runs smoothly

THE Royal Marines are the cold-weather warfare experts of the British Armed Forces.

Originally trained to protect the northern flank of Europe during the Cold War, with the end of the Soviet threat the bootnecks continued to learn to survive and fight in frozen terrain.

And with the Arctic rich in energy and other natural resources, the same training regime and expertise is as valid for protecting such resources as it was for shoring up the defences against invasion.

It is also the ultimate test of ability – operate here and you can operate anywhere.

The bootnecks are renowned for their prowess in Arctic and mountain conditions, and regularly exercise their skills in the far north of Norway.

Their aviation support – the Jungle squadrons – also train well inside the Arctic Circle in an annual exercise named Clockwork.

And another vital piece of the jigsaw is the Royal Marines

Reserves, who have their own take on cold-weather training called Exercise Hairspring.

The RMR are the only Reserve Forces who regularly conduct this type of training in such arduous conditions, and Hairspring has two distinct elements – learning to survive, then learning to fight.

'Personal admin' – ensuring equipment, from gloves to tents, is used correctly and safely – is a crucial basic element of such training, as a pair of damp socks or a damaged glove can quickly lead to debilitating injury, and the wrong drill in a tent (particularly with heaters and cookers) can kill.

"It's a fantastic training area," said Col Rory Bruce, acting Commander of the Maritime Reserve.

"The RMR provides an expertise, unique amongst the Armed Forces in the UK, for cold weather warfare."

"We have to be able to do exactly what our regular counterparts can do – training, surviving and fighting in extreme conditions."



● L/Cpl Peter Harrison, of RMR Mersey, takes the plunge during ice-breaking drills

Pictures: Capt Chris McGinley RM

"We're here to exercise those conditions, to challenge our reservists, to put them through a fairly tough and intensive programme."

"It's very challenging conditions. We're fortunate with the weather this year, perhaps hovering at -10° Celsius, with relatively light winds and great snow cover."

"Imagine, when the wind gets up a bit in the middle of the night, undertaking a ski across the ground in -20° to -30°. It's tough."

"We have to teach our reserves how to survive in that environment and to be able to then fight the enemy and do the job that they're being asked to do."

"With the focus now on energy resources, much of that is centred around the Arctic, northern Norway."

"The Cold War threat has gone, but we're focused on energy security in the UK."

"It's crucial that we have the necessary troops with the expertise to be able to cope and to survive and fight in this environment to protect the energy that we're

dependent on, not just in the UK, but in Western Europe as well.

"I think the mental strength and resilience of our reservists is quite incredible."

"They manage to balance the demands of families, jobs, careers – demanding careers in many cases – with their reservist commitment."

"Giving up two weeks of their precious time to come out here and put themselves through their paces in a difficult operating

environment – we ask a lot of them, but they in turn give a lot."

"What they bring to the regular force is a degree of additional worldly experience from their civilian work and they certainly add a degree of maturity and expertise to the regular force."

The Commodore-in-Chief of the Maritime Reserves, Prince Michael of Kent, paid a visit to Norway to see how their training was progressing.



● Mne Sonny Smith of RMR London (left) and Sgt Nigel Sweet (RMR Bristol) in a four-man tent during survival training



● An RMR sentry takes up position at a temporary camp

Cambria's severed crossing



● LNN Nadine Anderson (HMS Forward) gives emergency treatment to a volunteer casualty during Dragon's Claw

Picture: LA(Phot) Claire Myers

A HURRICANE smashes into western Britain from the Atlantic.

Anxiety about the original Severn bridge linking England and Wales is confounded when the catastrophic winds destroy the second Severn crossing.

Just how quickly can vital manpower, medical expertise and resources to treat mass casualties – with all of the hospitals in Gwent and the Vale of Glamorgan at saturation point – be organised?

This grim scenario was created and unveiled by Lt Cdr Eileen Munson, as the RNR Medical Services branch gathered at HMS Cambria in South Wales to test their capability to provide military aid to the community in Exercise Dragon's Claw.

"I wanted to push the medical teams to their very limits" said Lt Cdr Munson at the Command Centre in the Sully-based Naval Reserve establishment.

As the simulated wounded (Wales URNU students and Sea Cadets from Barry unit) poured into the makeshift treatment facility, the Naval Reserve doctors and nurses, supported by members of HMS Cambria's ship's company, quickly established an efficient handling centre.

The severest of cases were moved to

a temporary holding ward and given life-saving support in preparation for discharge to district medical care facilities or rehabilitation centres.

The walking wounded were dealt with by a reactive first aid team and comforted in a tented recovery area.

To ensure a sense of realism was maintained, some of the casualties would not survive, so bereavement had to be handled in both a clinical and dignified manner.

As if not stretched enough, a couple of unsavoury characters managed to break into the establishment to pilfer vital medical supplies.

The nefarious pair were swiftly dealt with by the establishment's force protection team, who maintained a security cordon around the hospital and manned a vehicle control point.

Enter the media...

A pushy simulated press team (*don't recognise that description – Ed*) arrived, demanding information and chasing interviews from those in charge.

Led by Lt Cdr Grassy Meadows from the Media Operations specialisation, the TV crew was quietly and efficiently dealt with by exercise press officer Lt Cdr David Grist.

David, based in HMS King Alfred, Portsmouth, said: "I learned a great

deal today working with the press team."

"In a real-life situation of this magnitude the media would and should be a major consideration in your overall planning and strategy."

An imaginary fire was starting to stretch manpower, resources and the Command Control Team almost – but not quite – to breaking point.

The medics were not only there to demonstrate their medical capabilities – they were also subjected to a range of military training.

Weapon handling, vehicle and personal search drills, fire fighting and radio communications exercises were conducted during the day.

On completion of the exercise, Cdr Pauline Small, staff officer RNR Nursing, said: "It has been a terrific day for everyone concerned. The exercise achieved all of its intended objectives."

"We have gained in experience and learned some valuable lessons, all of which will improve our capability and prepare us if such a scenario ever became reality."

With the exercise taking place on the St David's Day weekend the medics took up an invitation to celebrate the Welsh National Day with their hosts at Cambria on completion of the training.

Reunions

APRIL 2013

HMS Loch Fada Association K/F390: Please note: This is a change of venue. Reunion and AGM at Sketchley Grange Hotel, Burbage, Leicestershire, from April 12 to 15. The AGM will be at 1000 Saturday with a tot time being held o/c. The reunion dinner is at 1900. There will be a full day's outing on the Sunday to the NMA during which we will celebrate 70 years since K/F390 commissioned. This weekend is being arranged in conjunction with IOW Tours. All shipmates and guests are invited to this special weekend. Details and booking forms from Frenchy at frenchy.delahaye@ntlworld.com or the F390 website or tel: 01252 310767, or write to 91 Ayling Lane, Aldershot, Hants GU11 3ND.

HMS Families Association: The 22nd Annual Reunion will take place at the Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth from April 15 to 19. For more information contact the Secretary, Mick French, at stivshake@btinternet.com or tel: 01209 820844.

MAY 2013

HMS Bulwark, Albion, Centaur Association: Did you serve in any of these light fleet carriers? Our association is open to anyone who served at any time on these ships. We send a magazine three times per year and run events including AGM/Social, sea trips with HMS Bulwark and anniversary commemorations at home and abroad. Whilst our 'home port' is Pompey, last year's AGM/social was held at the Hilton Hotel, Blackpool. This year we will be at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, on May 11. We also sponsor Sea Cadets from our affiliated Sea cadet units on one sail and two motor Training Ships. Membership is all of £8 per annum. Enquiries to Leigh Easton at ngsfo@tiscali.co.uk or the website at www.bulwarkassoc.co.uk or write to Glenroy, Hayford Place, Cambusbarrow, Stirling FK7 9JX.

HMS Edinburgh (D97): Reunion dinner for ex-members of HMS Edinburgh's ship's company at the Apex International Hotel, Edinburgh, on May 18. Further details can be obtained from David Bonas at david_bonas@hotmail.com or the website: <http://d97reunion.simplesite.com/178570936> or tel: 07824 381611.

RN Chefs, Cooks and Caterers: Grand reunion will take place from May 24 to 26 at the Nautical Club, Bishopsgate Street, Birmingham, B15 1ET. All Cooks and Caterers past and present very welcome.

For more information contact Colin Joy at colinjoy@hotmail.com or write to 27 Coombe Lane, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5XA or tel: 07717 11441.

HMS Coventry D118 Association: Reunion (Falklands Islands era) will take place on May 25 at the Warwick Club, Coventry. Base Hotel is the Premier Inn, Belgrade Plaza, Coventry. Muster for church service at 1720 adjacent to Britannia Hotel, march to Holy Trinity Church for service at 1750. Full details can be found on the website at www.hmscoventry.co.uk/reunion.php or contact Chris Howe MBE on 07786 156763.

HMS Hood Association: AGM at 1630 and 38th reunion dinner 1900 at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, May 25. Church Service at St Ann's Church, HM Dockyard, Portsmouth at 1000, May 26. June 2 at 1100, Service of Commemoration at St John the Baptist Church, Boldre, near Lympington. For further details of all these events contact vice chairman Keith Evans on 01428 642122.

JUNE 2013

HMS Blackcap, RNAS Stretton: Any shipmates or civilian staff who were at Blackcap between 1942-58 are invited to the 25th annual service of commemoration at St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn on June 2 at 1200. Standards are very welcome. For more information contact Bernie Cohen at b.cohen2@ntlworld.com or tel: 0161 946 1209.

JULY 2013

Royal Marine Deal GD Instructors: A reunion for all General Duties (GD) Branch Instructors who served at RM Deal (The Depot RM) during the '60s, '70s and '80s will take place at Walmer & Kingsdown Golf Club on July 13. The format will include a three-course meal and entertainment at a cost of £25 per head. Numbers are limited to 80. Guests are welcome. Cheques to 'Deal Instructors Reunion Fund'. This date has been selected to coincide with the annual RM Band concert on Walmer Green on Sunday July 14. For further information contact Bill Howie at wrmhowie@hotmail.co.uk or write to Calluna, Hawkhill Road, Walmer, Kent CT14 7LN or tel: 01304 375900.

SEPTEMBER 2013

Bulwark Comms Dept 1978-81: A get-together is being planned for September 2013 in Portsmouth. If anyone wants to come along, contact Mac Macdonald at jmbg17277@aol.com or tel: 07984 713301.

HMS/M Repulse Reunion Association are holding their next reunion on

September 6-8 at the Apollo Hotel, Birmingham. For more information contact Frank Scutt at frank.scutt@gmail.com or see the website at www.hms-repulse.co.uk or tel: 01480 393228.

Plymwich Reunion: A Plymwich reunion of those who served in HM Ships Plymouth and Serwick during the time in command of Cdr Hames is taking place from September 13-15. For details contact Tony Izzard at sueizzard@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 01329 282115.

Royal Navy Boom Defence Ratings: The next 'Boomers Convention' will be held in Scarborough from September 20-21. For details contact Alfie Mumberson at barcarole1956@blueyonder.co.uk or on 01302 811898 or Lance Hollingsworth at Lthpsh@aol.com on 01723 369798.

OCTOBER 2013

HMS Caprice (1968) Association annual reunion at the Bentley Hotel, Lincoln, on October 4-5 with reunion dinner on the evening of October 5. If you were aboard HMS Caprice (D01) during her memorable world cruise 45 years ago in 1968, and are not already a member of our (over 80 strong) association, why not join us and meet some of your old shipmates? Contact Graham Latter at gl@hmscaprice1968.org.uk or see the website: www.hmscaprice1968.org.uk or tel: 01482 632276.

HMS St Brides Bay reunion will be held at the Leyland Hotel (4-star), Leyland Way, Leyland, Preston PR25 4JX, on October 4-5. Cost is £50 pppn, which includes bed, breakfast and evening meal. For full details please contact Alan (George) Dobson at dobson142@ntlworld.com or tel: 01202 721678.

Nore Command RNPTIs Association: Annual function on October 6 in the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent. Open to all. Details from Orlando Jemmett on 01227 263691.

Survey Ships Association reunion will be held from October 25-28 at the Sketchley Grange Hotel, Hinckley, Leicestershire. For information on membership and reunion contact the Secretary SSA, 8 Grosvenor Court, 74 East Lodge Park, Portsmouth PO6 1BY, email: secretary@surveyships.org.uk or phone 023 9279 1258.

NOVEMBER 2013

HMS Relentless Association: The first reunion will take place from November 30 to December 1 at Judd's Folly Hotel, Faversham, Kent. Did you serve in Relentless at any time? You are welcome to join the association. Visit the website at www.hmsrelentless.co.uk and find out a little more about us or contact Steve Newton at secretary@hmsrelentless.co.uk or tel: 023 9259 9640.

Ask Jack

36th Flotilla, Coastal Forces: I am seeking information/photographs, of the men who served with the 36th Flotilla from 1943-45. My father served with ML847, a Fairmile B, built in South Africa and commissioned in Simons Town before being deployed to Kilindini, then Aden before being sent to join SE Asia Command. They spent time at Adu Atoll, Colombo, Trincomalee, Vizakapatnam (where they were given a 40mm Bofors aft and their torpedo tubes removed) and then deployed to the Arakan Coast. The book *Trombay to Rangoon*, which mentions them, doesn't give much information, but what it does give doesn't accord with my father's diary. Almost every book on this theatre mentions the part coastal forces played, then focuses on the 'big' ships, ignoring anything smaller than a destroyer. The 36 and 37 Flotillas were mainly manned by a mix of South African members of the RNR and UK personnel. The ships were laid up in late 1945 and according to my father's diary, burned on a mudbank as they were fitted with 'lend/lease' engines and armament. If you can help contact Patrick Cox at p.gcox@btinternet.com or write to Lahnstrasse 19, D-65232, Taunusstein, Germany.

LT(E) William Redvers Forster RNR: joined HMS Kent at Gareloch on January 10 1946. His son, Bill Forster, has written a book about his father which he plans to publish as *Forty years at Sea: A Voyage with my Father*. He would like to talk to anybody who served in HMS Kent while it was part of the Reserve Fleet at Gareloch in 1946. Contact him by phone on 01727 838595 or email: billforster@hollywellhousepublishing.co.uk or by writing to him at 88 Holywell Hill, St Albans, AL1 1DH.

RFA Wave Victor in Malta: While serving in RFA Wave Victor in the late 1950s I heard a song in a boozier in Malta. Can anyone tell me how it came about. It went something like: "From the halls of Montezuma, To the Halls of RNB, There's a 'buzz' going round the harbour, That the Yanks are putting to sea. With their bottles of Pepsi Cola, And ruddy great tubs of ice-cream, They are mighty good guys in harbour, But oh, my God, at sea." During our RAS exercise, the US warships were very sloppy, twice breaking the fuelling connection, spilling oil over their wooden decks. Contact Derek Bond, 45 Esher Place, Beacon Lane, Cramlington NE28 8JH.

Sports lottery

February 16: £5,000 - Maj R Edye; £1,500 - Mne D Worsell; £500 - AB D J Garlick.
February 23: £5,000 - Mne P MacCallough; £1,500 - AB1 G C Hudson; £500 - Cdr C Harvey.
March 2: £5,000 - AB1 D Storey; £1,500 - CPO K Evans; £500 - PO D Gwalchmai.
March 9: £5,000 - AB B Wardle; £1,500 - LH P Dobson; £500 - AB K O'Sullivan.

Swap drafts

LET(WE) Clayton. Ordnance section. Currently onboard HMS Diamond, would like to swap to any fishery protection vessel or small ship. 273-w34@diu.mod.uk
AB McKnight. Onboard HMS Argyll in Plymouth, would like to swap for any shore base in Portsmouth or any ship alongside Portsmouth for a year. 2050 mini-gun, gmg, sp 103 courses must have been completed. HMSARGL-War-WSAB6@mod.uk
AB(SC) McKie. AB(SC) at Faslane Naval Base, would like to swap with a Plymouth-based AB(SC). DESNCB-DOB-BLC-W-Refit4@mod.uk

Deaths

Lt Cdr Peter 'Toby' Davis DSC. Peter Steel Davis, known as Toby, joined the RN at BRNC in 1940 aged 13. Served as a Midshipman in HMS Howe, then volunteered for the Submarine Service but, following a 30-day underwater endurance trial, switched to the Fleet Air Arm. He flew Sea Fury fighter-bombers as part of 804 and 802 NAS from aircraft carriers Unicorn, Glory and Ocean during the Korean War. He flew 313 sorties in ten months, more than any other UN pilot, and took part in a dogfight which claimed the first enemy kill for the Fleet Air Arm since World War 2; he was awarded a DSC, December 18, Aged 85.

Norman Colley RM. Joined the Royal Marines in 1941, he served with Labour Corps 813 at Scapa Flow before volunteering for 'hazardous duty' as part of the Royal Marines Boom Patrol Detachment, made famous by Operation Frankton (the Cockleshell Heroes). He did not complete the mission due to injury, but joined the Special Boat Service and took part in Combined Operations Pilotage Party operations, surveying potential landing sites behind enemy lines in the Aegean. February 17, Aged 92.

Maj Mike Banks RM. Joined the Royal Marines in 1941, serving in two battleships before joining 42 Cdo just prior to the landing on the Arakan coast in Burma. Following the end of the war he joined the Commando Cliff Assault Wing, climbing Matterhorn, and later commanding the unit on its relocation to Bickleigh. He saw active service in Radfan and took part in a two-year long joint military-civilian expedition to the Arctic, retiring in 1968. February 9, Aged 90.

Lt Terence Eric Bromley Mills. Joined the RN as an Air Fitter during World War 2 then chosen as a 'Hostilities Only' officer. He served with distinction in MGBs and MTBs and was mentioned in despatches. Chosen to serve Admiral Lord Mountbatten's Flagship HMS Liverpool as his boat officer (Mediterranean). Drafted to HMS Tyne in the Far East during the Korean War; he retired after 12 years service. Member of HMS Ladybird (Sasebo Japan 1950-53) Association. February 1, Aged 92.

Jack Mills. Served as a L/C in HMS Newfoundland 1954-55 also served HMS Warrior, Siskin, Pickle and Vernon. HMS Newfoundland Veterans. February 16, Aged 81.

George Gibson. Served as AB 1944-46 in HMS Newfoundland, also HMS Glendower and Drake. HMS Newfoundland Veterans. January 28, Aged 93.

Richard Harry 'Bunny' Austin. A Jack Dusty and worked in stores. Served 1939-48 HMS Royal Sovereign, Kent, Verdun and Nereide (South Atlantic Station 1946-48) then reserved until 1957. January 2.

Thomas 'Tom' Mackay. LSA on board HMS Cheviot 1947 and a member of the association. February 16.

Douglas 'Doug' Matthews CAF/AE. Served 1949-69 at RNAS Yeovilton, Gannet (Eglington), Paisley, Gamecock (Bramcote), Lossiemouth, Daedalus (813 NAS), Arbroath, Culdreast (Brawdy 897 NAS), Ford, Hal Far (Malta); also HMS Indomitable, Eagle and Albion. February 16, Aged 83.

Kenneth 'Ken' Schofield. CPOMA Royal Naval Medical Service 1952-75. Served at RN Hospitals in Plymouth, Malta and Haslar also Loch Fada (1960) and Dunkirk (1962-63) and was part of the surgical team on board the hospital ship during the Suez campaign. Final appointment as CPO, second-in-charge of the operating department at RN Hospital Haslar, RN Medical Branch Ratings & Sick Berth Staff Association and HMS Dunkirk Association. February 18, Aged 77.

Albert 'Geordie' Burton. Served as AB on board HMS Peacock 1944-45 and a member of the association. February 3.

Richard 'Rick' Pullan POAF. Served 1963-76 at HMS Raleigh, Changi (Singapore), Bulwark, Eagle, Yeovil and Culdreast. February 8, Aged 66.

William John Turner CPO. Served 1944-1968. Completed his ERA apprenticeship at HMS Fisgard, served onboard HM Ships St Brides Bay, Bulwark and Alert and HM Submarines Tapir and Tiptoe. November 4, Aged 84.

Derek Bird AB(TAS)/(SR). Served 1966-75 in HM Ships Eastbourne (1967-68), Forth (1968-70), Bulldog (1971), Fox (1972-73) and Hydra (1974-75). February 2, Aged 62.

James 'Spud' Murphy LWtr. Served 1949-56 in many ships, including HMS Kenya during the Korean War. February 9, Aged 81.

Owen Pigott L/Sea. Served 1939-45 in

HM Ships Sheffield, Wayland and Renown. February 5, Aged 91.

Archibald 'Archie' MacLaren DSM CPO NA(SE). Served 1964-86. Completed training in HMS Ganges, Daedalus and Fulmar. Served in HMS Eagle (1967-68), Ark Royal in 809 NAS (1970-71), RAF Leuchars (1972-73), Ark Royal in 824 NAS (1974-75), Seahawk in 824 NAS (1975), Gannet in 819 NAS (1976-78), Intrepid (1978-82), and Daedalus (1982-86). December 19, Aged 64.

William 'Bill' Large Fleet CEM. Served for 27 years in various ships, including HMS Chevron, Norfolk and Loch Fada. February 25, Aged 76.

NOTE: Apologies to Gerald Nash, whose name was submitted to us as deceased for the March issue. Mr Nash is very much alive and read his obituary in Navy News with interest...

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Danny George Shelley LS RP3. Served 1947-54 HMS Sparrow, Victorious, Oakland Castle and Harrier. Member of Devonport Field Gun crew when they won all four trophies in 1954. After leaving the RN he served ten years with Wolverhampton Sea Cadets reaching Lieutenant. HMS Sparrow Association and Wolverhampton RNA. February 3, Aged 83.

Arthur Davies AB. Served 1948-58 at St Vincent and in HMS Termagant, Ulysses, Vigilant, Gambia and Glory, Newport (South Wales) RNA, January 31, Aged 79.

Jeanette 'Jean' Sedgwick Wren. Uffoxeter and District RNA Secretary, Welfare Officer, Editor and Publisher of the branch Gazette (*RagMag*) and past branch Chairman and Standard Bearer; also kept in touch with the Wrens through reunions and *The Wren* magazine. February 11.

David John 'Dusty' Miller MEM1. Served 1964-73. March branch. Recently moved into Pembroke House and died in the Maritime Hospital February 9, Aged 68.

Russel 'Slinger' Wood. Served 1956-68. Completed training at HMS St Vincent and served in HMS Chatham, Scarborough, Plymouth and Dido. Ramsgate RNA. February 9.

Doug Lothead. Served 1941-1946. Completed training in HMS Collingwood where he was an extra in the film *In Which We Serve*. Served in HMS Wishart, Tartar and Marshal Soult. Founder member and

Vice President of Hertfordshire branch. March 4, Aged 89.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

H A 'Harry' Dilley AB Radar. Served 1943-46 in HMS Thrasher and Trenchant. Welsh branch. February, Aged 90.

R R 'Badges' Duckett WOMEM(M). Served 1958-82 in HMS Tiptoe, Sea Devil, Sea Scout, Truncheon, Tabard, Trump and Andrew. Gosport branch. February, Aged 75.

J E 'Jim' Hall LS GL. Served 1943-45 in HMS Taku and Tantiy. New Zealand branch. February, Aged 90.

J 'Joe' Morton Sto 1. Served 1943-47 in H34 and HMS Venturer, Tudor and Thermopylae. Nottingham branch. February, Aged 87.

R A 'Richard' Pearse LS UW2. Served 1952-62 in HMS Aurochs (1952), Telemachus (1953-54), Thermopylae (1955), Through (1956-57) and Tireless (1958-60). Australia branch. February, Aged 74.

B G 'Bert' Phillips CPO UC1. Served 1953-75 in HMS Tradewind, Solent, Springer, Scorchers, Aeneas, Dreadnought, Walrus, Grampus and Odin. Gosport branch. February, Aged 78.

L J B 'Les' Thornton ERA. Served 1955-71 in HMS Tactician, Thorough, Sea Scout, Auriga, HMS Tradewind, Aeneas. Gatwick branch. February, Aged 86.

T 'Tommy' Welsh ME1. Served 1956-61 in HMS Seneschal, Tireless and Rorqual. Manchester branch. February, Aged 76.

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION

Douglas 'Roy' Scadden Air Fitter (E). Served 1941-46 at HMS Pembroke, Medina, Daedalus, Jackdaw, Waxwing, Buzzard, Goshawk and Goldcrest. Kent branch. February 15, Aged 90.

Donald 'Don' Noel Patrick PO(AF) Engines. Served 1946-58 in aircraft carriers HMS Indomitable, Bulwark and Albion, as well as at the shore bases HMS Excalibur, Kestrel, Fulmar, Heron, Gannet, Daedalus, Condor, Sanderling, Curlew and Victory. Birmingham branch. February 17, Aged 84.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

Fred Shelsler AB. Served in HMS Albacore. January 25, Aged 87.

Tom Barnes AB. Served in HMS Cockatrice. February 4, Aged 90.

Les Frank Gray AB. Served in HMS Bramble. February 4, Aged 77.

Entries for the Deaths column and Swap Drafts in May's Noticeboard must be received by April 12

Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

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- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
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RN Divers Dinner & Dance
Open to all ex Royal Navy Divers and their Ladies to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Association of Royal Navy First Class Divers.

Date: Saturday 18th May 2013
Time: 1830 for 1930
Venue: Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth
Dress: Black tie - Medals & Decorations optional
Cost: £40 per person. Pre-Dinner Drinks. 3 Course Meal, Wine, Port and entertainment

Names and remittance to; Brian Tempest
18 Greyshott Ave., Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3JD
or email: rndivers@hotmail.com

Accommodation available in R Maritime Club.
£70 per night double room including breakfast.
Arrange direct on 02392 824231

1973 1983 1993 2003 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...

April 1973

The Royal Family put 'Royal' firmly into the Royal Navy this month. First, a Royal Navy Guard of Honour was present when the Queen opened the new London Bridge; Princess Margaret took the chance to visit HMS Intrepid when she called in to Barbados; Sub Lt The Prince of Wales tried, to no avail, to help secure a victory for HMS Minerva's tug-of-war team against HMS Sirius; and Admiral of the Fleet Earl Mountbatten of Burma paid a surprise visit to aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal in the Mediterranean, accompanied by Admiral Sir Edward Ashmore, the Commander-in-Chief Fleet.

April 1983

The Fleet is expanding, with the commissioning of new Type 42 destroyer HMS Nottingham, the launch of 'stretched' Type 42 destroyer HMS Edinburgh, and the addition of three new fast patrol boats for the RNR and URNUs. The RFA has also been supplemented by Sir Lamorak and Sir Caradoc, both chartered as temporary replacements while Sir Tristram returns to operational service and a purpose-built replacement for Sir Galahad is delivered. Finally, HMS Orpheus, under Lt Cdr Mark Stanhope, visited London on her first home courtesy visit since re-commissioning after her two-year refit.

April 1993

Naval operations continue in the Adriatic as part of Op Grapple in support of British forces in Bosnia, with HMS Ark Royal leading a task group of eight RN and RFA ships. Meanwhile, the Royal Marines and RFA have officially been placed under the command of the Commander-in-Chief Fleet. Finally, the Operations and Weapon Engineering branches are soon to be amalgamated into the Warfare branch, with the first OM joining to Surface Flotilla in early 1994.

April 2003

As Navy News goes to press, Royal Marines are on the front line of the onslaught against Saddam Hussein as Op Telic enters its second month. Meanwhile, the RN presence in the Gulf comprises 25 ships, including RFAs, led by Rear Admiral David Snelson in Bahrain and Cdre Jamie Miller in HMS Ark Royal. At home, Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, CinCFLF, and Cdr Elaine Baker, Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, have turned the first turf on the site which will become Fleet HQ on Whale Island.



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Queen's tops the academic table

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"We are a warm and caring school community, committed to fulfilling the potential of each individual. We aim for excellence and high standards in all our activities" says headmaster Chris Alcock.

"It's very important to me that I still do some classroom teaching and I make it my business to know and support each and every pupil in the school".

The school is also well known for excellent results in the creative and performing arts with three art students this year going onto the Oxbridge of the art world, Central St Martin's.

Other students have gone on to drama schools such as Bristol Old Vic and facilities for drama and dance are exceptional. There is a wide variety of musical groups on offer in school and talented musicians are, in addition, encouraged to become members of external groups such as the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and to take part in



international music tours.

Surrounded by the beautiful Exmoor and Dartmoor National parks it is not surprising that Queen's is a centre of excellence for outdoor pursuits with

opportunities for students to ride, canoe, dive, sail and mountain bike.

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Hockey Academy led by Olympic athlete, Ian Haley, launched in September.

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EDUCATION

The Best Start In Life



● Duke of York's CCF students inspect HMS Kent's Merlin when the frigate visited her namesake county last year

A Victorian education north of the border

QUEEN Victoria School (QVS) is a co-educational boarding school fully funded by the MOD to provide stability and continuity of education for the children of UK Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, have served in Scotland or are members of a Scottish regiment.

Set in 45 acres of beautiful Perthshire countryside, Queen Victoria School is easily accessible by road, rail or air.

QVS is tri-Service and all of its pupils have at least one actively-serving parent when they enter the school.

Our main intake is into the Scottish system's Primary 7 year; there is no exact equivalent with the English system, but most of our P7 intake are aged ten when they join us.

That said, there is a wide age range within the year groups. Many of our pupils have come from educationally-disrupted backgrounds as they have moved from school to school and education system to education system, according to their families' postings.

Pastoral care is given a very high priority along with careers guidance and personal and social education.

Queen Victoria School aims to promote the welfare and happiness of each individual child and develop their self-esteem. In addition, there is a very full programme of sporting, cultural and spiritual development.

QVS is a unique boarding school which seeks to achieve the best that is possible for its pupils, priding itself on

developing them in the widest possible sense and aiming to achieve success academically, in sport, music, drama and many other extra-curricular areas.

A unique dimension of QVS is the ceremonial side which preserves the very best of the school's traditions.

Marching as part of the school on one of its six Parade Sundays a year, and on Grand Day – the final day of the academic year – is one of the proudest moments of a Victorian's life (as well as that of his or her parents!).

The Pipes, Drums and Dancers of QVS are internationally renowned, having played at tattoos both at home and abroad, most recently in the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo 2012.

More than just a school

"THE Duke of York's has never been just a school to me and it never will be. It's a Dukie community – everyone looks out for each other."

The Duke of York's Royal Military School is a distinguished non-selective full boarding school for children aged 11 to 18.

Set in 150 acres of Kent countryside near Dover, your child will feel safe and secure in a close-knit community where their friends and teachers will understand military life.

The school has adopted a military ethos in its approach to education for over 200 years as we recognise that children in all walks of life thrive in schools where traditional values such as self-discipline, self-reliance, spirituality, leadership and respect for others are present.

What makes our community fun, vibrant and successful is a fusion of these military values with the other elements present in all good schools.

Our pupils enjoy Combined Cadet Force activities from Year 9 to 13, and they have many opportunities to develop their leadership and team working skills. Our patron is the Duke of Kent and we are sponsored by the MOD – meaning that spectacular military parades and ceremonies remain firmly at the heart of

our school, culminating in Grand Day.

The school's GCSE provision is comprehensive and our success rate is significantly higher than the national average at GCSE (A* to C including maths and English). The introduction of BTEC Public Services has been very popular and we are trialling BTEC Military Music. In the Sixth Form, a wide range of courses are available – currently 16 at AS Level and 17 at A2 Level.

A good school is about more than just what is learnt in the classroom; sport and outdoor pursuits continue to play a leading role in the lives of all of our pupils and over 65 students received Duke of Edinburgh Awards this year. Our acclaimed military band continues to perform at events and members of our talented senior choir recently appeared on national TV at The Military Awards 2012.

You will only pay boarding costs of £9,975 per annum (£3,325 per term) and if you qualify for CEA this will mean that school fees could be less than £1,000 per year.

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Kat is the cream of the Corps

BRIDGWATER unit is proud that one of its members has been appointed a Navy Board Cadet.

Kathryn Jay (above) – Kat to her friends – was selected as one of six exceptional young leaders from around the UK to represent the Sea Cadet Corps alongside the most senior Royal Navy admirals, including the First Sea Lord, at major national ceremonial events.

Dominic Gregory, Officer-in-Charge, said: “Kat has been a member of our community for nearly eight years.

“She has been an incredible ambassador for the unit, having been a regular participant on sea training cruises in TS Royalist, and the Rona Sailing Trust’s fleet of ships.

“She also represented UK Sea Cadets on an international exchange to Hong Kong.”

Kat, whose appointment will run until the end of the year, has recently been promoted to the adult rate of Probationary Petty Officer (PPO).

Dedication rewarded

TWO adult volunteers at Sheffield unit who have clocked up almost a century of service between them have been rewarded with Lord Lieutenant’s certificates.

The certificates were presented to Lt Cdr Stewart Pocock and CPO Jack Martin by David Moody, the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire, in recognition of their outstanding contribution and dedication to the Corps.

Stewart, who retired last year, joined the Corps as a civilian in 1963, and apart from helping run units including Doncaster, Sheffield, Dartford and Gravesend in a career spanning 50 years, he also helped with the design and build of the training ship John Jerwood.

Jack was a Sea Cadet himself for four years from 1955, and joined the Merchant Navy in 1960.

He returned to the Corps in 1967 as an adult instructor and has remained ever since, clocking up 45 years service to Sea Cadets, particularly in the fields of seamanship, navigation and adventure training.

WALTHAM Forest unit struck gold once more at the London Northern District Drill and Piping competition, hosted by Finchley unit.

Waltham Forest took five teams totalling 29 cadets, including Juniors, Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets – and took home four out of the six trophies, and one second place.

The Junior Drill team beat ten rivals to the prize, as did the Seniors and Royal Marines Detachment.

MC2 Zihle came first in a field of eight in the Individual Piping section, while Junior Cdt Hutchison came second out of five in the Junior Individual Piping section.

AB Long won the award for the best Senior Squad commander, while AB Rampere took the same prize in the Junior competition.

Last chance to join long-distance row

THE final weeks of preparation are under way for the Sea cadets’ rowathon challenge – but it is not too late for units to add their muscle to the effort.

The Row the World event, held from April 18-21, has a touch of Phileas Fogg about it – cadets have been challenged to collectively row a total of 24,900 miles in 80 hours in an echo of the task set to the hero in Jules Verne’s classic adventure story *Around the World in 80 Days*.

Leading the way, aiming to row 100 miles from Abingdon to HMS President, are the 15-strong Headquarters team, who should reach the capital on the day of the London Marathon after completing their long-distance relay.

The team, which includes the Chief Executive, Martin Coles, and Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor RN, put in a practice weekend at the Welsh Harp Boat Centre – and it was much needed, as for some it was the first time they had rowed.

But they are a committed



● Members of the HQ rowing team test the water at the Welsh Harp Boat Centre

bunch, wanting to show their support for the campaign to build a replacement for the Corps’ sail training ship TS Royalist.

The Corps is seeking to raise £250,000 to help reach the £5.6m target for the New Ship Appeal.

Around the country units will

be taking part, many of them using static rowing machines at British Rowing clubs across the UK – the special partnership between the organisation and the Corps means that all units will be able to take part at a site in their area.

Organisers need each unit to

row about 200 miles so that the target can be met.

To show your support you can donate by going to www.justgiving.com/row-the-world or text Ship Ahoy08 to 70070 and include your amount, for example £3.

Dartmouth mark 70th anniversary

DARTMOUTH unit started celebrations for the 70th anniversary of their formation with a visit by one of their founding members.

Local resident John Distin was invited along as guest of honour to talk to cadets about his experiences.

John and his family moved to Dartmouth in 1924 from Salcombe.

After leaving school at 14 he started crab fishing and then joined the Sea Cadets.

He went on to spend most of his working life at sea, from supplying Navy ships during World War 2 to working on passenger boats, conducting tours of the river and eventually becoming a qualified pilot, guiding vessels into Dartmouth.

The 85-year-old said: “It was wonderful to see all the cadets lined up.

“Being at the unit brought a lump to my throat with fond memories of my time as a Sea Cadet.”

The unit, which currently has 24 youngsters on its books, is planning a series of events to mark the anniversary, including a reunion for former cadets in June.

Based within the grounds of Britannia Royal Naval College, the unit has access to many of the college’s training resources.

The unit will be sending some of its members to sea on training ships Royalist and John Jerwood,

part-funded by a donation from BRNC’s charity fund.

The unit is also supporting a project to have a memorial plaque made to remember six former members who lost their lives when Cable Ship Alert was sunk off Ramsgate in 1945.

With evidence of an explosion, the ship was thought to have either struck a mine or been torpedoed by a German U-boat with the loss of all those on board.

The plaque will be placed in the unit with an unveiling ceremony at the reunion.

Welcoming party

A DOZEN Sea Cadets from Gosport unit were invited by Hugo Boss, the main sponsors of Gosport yachtsman Alex Thomson in the Vendée Globe round the world yacht race, to man the pontoon to welcome Alex back to his home base of Haslar Marina.

Alex came third in the race, during which he went to the aid of a fellow competitor who was in trouble.

Several hundred well-wishers crowded Gosport Pier to lend their cheers to the welcome home reception as Alex cruised gently past on his way to his home mooring.

Alex first took his boat

up-harbour escorted by a flotilla of vessels including the Police and Harbourmaster launches and the Hugo Boss and RNLI inshore ribs.

Although the weather was indifferent, the lack of wind meant manoeuvring the flotilla of craft was that much simpler.

The Cadets, in their Number 1 uniforms, gave a very smart and well disciplined welcome to Alex as he stepped ashore to be officially welcomed by the town’s Mayor, Cllr Richard Dickson.

Everyone then moved on to the Mary Mouse retired lightship, owned by Haslar Marina, moored outboard of the pontoon where the Mayor spoke and further photographs were taken.

Focus your efforts

WOULD you like to take part in one of the top photographic awards competitions in the UK?

Each year the Royal Navy recognises excellence in photography with the Peregrine Photographic Awards – and Sea Cadets have their own special category.

To take part in this year’s competition you need to be a serving Sea Cadet or Royal Marines Cadet aged between 13 and 18 and submit a photographic image you have taken between March 2012 and May 6 2013.

It can be any Sea Cadet activity (not just drill!) or something that symbolically represents the Corps ethos and values. Credit will be given for composition, use of light and creativity.

If you do take a photo of another cadet make sure you have their permission to do so (in writing).

To take part, read and conform to the entry requirements found www.scheadquarters.com

Return completed forms to marketingsupport@ms-sc.org and post the hard copy you also need

to send to Communications Team, MSSC, 202 Lambeth Road, London, SE1 7JW, marking your hard-backed envelope with ‘Peregrine Trophy’.

The deadline for submitting your entry is May 14. The overall winner’s image will be shown in the RN photographic exhibition, with a presentation made by the First Sea Lord, and will appear on the Sea Cadets UK website home page.

The winner and one adult can attend the awards ceremony in London in July at the Royal College of Art. Sea Cadet HQ will cover the travel and accommodation costs.

And the winner also wins an offshore voyage and their unit will get £100 in Sea Cadet vouchers.

The runner-up or Highly Commended entry will win a Royal Navy Awards certificate and the image will be used on the Sea Cadet UK website and Sea Cadets Facebook page.

There will also be £70 of Sea Cadet vouchers and their unit will get £50 of Sea Cadet vouchers.

Liverpool unit helps Illustrious



● City of Liverpool Sea Cadets visit HMS Illustrious when the carrier called in on Merseyside

HELICOPTER carrier HMS Illustrious hosted 24 Sea Cadets from the City of Liverpool unit when she paid a visit to the Mersey.

The cadets boarded Lusty, alongside at the city’s impressive Cruise Liner Terminal, to assist in an official reception, and no sooner had they arrived than they were thrown into a rehearsal for Ceremonial Sunset – the highlight of the reception – and a briefing on their roles for the evening.

After earning their supper, they were duly fed, then it was straight into the reception.

Some of the cadets assisted in serving canapés to guests whilst some others were involved in

marshalling those attending the reception.

Ceremonial Sunset went smoothly, after which there was time for a tour of the carrier, with the bridge proving to be the most popular part of proceedings.

Lt Elizabeth Kennedy was the sponsor for the visit, assisted by PO Logs Sean Lovely.

Lt Kennedy said: “This was a really good opportunity for the cadets to understand what life on a ship in the Royal Navy is like.

“It was also an opportunity to discuss the various career options that the Royal Navy offers.

“Not all the cadets will go on to join the Royal Navy, but we hope that they have all at least had an evening to remember.”

Red noses on for Blue Peter

SEA Cadets showed their comic side when they agreed to get involved in Helen Skelton’s *Blue Peter* Comic Relief Challenge.

Members of the Gosport, Portsmouth and Salford units featured in filming over two days in two locations – on board TS Royalist and at Salford Quay.

The Hampshire cadets raced Helen in a sponsored challenge of bobbing for red noses on deck in a stunt which saw the Offshore Commander and Deputy Offshore Commander both magnanimously agreeing to be ‘sponged’ by the youngsters.

A couple of weeks later local cadets travelled to Media City in Salford, regional home of the BBC, to take part in Helen’s second challenge – a rope walk across the Quay.

The cadets were encouraged to throw sponges at Helen to knock her off – they tried valiantly but in vain.

The final film was broadcast last month, and was a good record of a twofold opportunity for the cadets – to get involved in a good cause and to work alongside a national treasure – *Blue Peter*.

Pageant print now available

THE Corps has been contacted by artist James Milroy, who was commissioned to paint scenes from last year’s Queen’s Diamond Jubilee River Pageant, and has produced a colourful scene of the Sea Cadet flotilla.

The resulting painting is a vibrant reminder of that epic day.

The Corps has 100 limited edition signed prints available (as well as tea towels and posters) and money raised from sale of these prints will go towards the new ship appeal.

For more information contact fleet@ms-sc.org

Victory Shield for Poole

POOLE unit have been presented with the Victory Shield for the unit within Wessex District which gained most points in competitions over the course of 2012.

The presentation took place at the unit’s Royal Naval Inspection, which was attended by cadets, staff, management committee, guests and parents.

Guests included the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, Mrs Anthony Pitt-Rivers, and the Mayor of Poole, Cllr Carol Evans.

Inspecting Officer Cdr John Greene also announced at the end of the evening that the unit had been successful in retaining its efficiency burgee status – the highest recognition of achievement within the Sea Cadet Corps.

Chiltern appeal

CHILTERN unit is looking for volunteers to help the CO, CPO (SCC) Keith Jones, and First Lieutenant CPO (SCC) Mark Stephenson, keep the unit going.

The staff of two are working their socks off but are looking for help from ex-Forces personnel, Corps staff moving on from other units or people who could provide time and skills to help develop the unit, based in Chesham.

CPO Jones can be contacted on 01494 783244.

Medal for Maria

BABCOCK employee Maria Dean has been awarded the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal for services to the Volunteer Cadet Corps.

Maria, who provides administrative support to the organisation, received her medal at the Corps’ end-of-term awards night – and as the news had been kept from her, it came as a complete surprise.



Title goes to Burton

IT was third time unlucky for Eastbourne's Royal Marines Cadets as they went in search of a hat-trick of Gibraltar Cup victories.

For it was X-Ray Company – the team from Burton-on-Trent representing Eastern Area – who

took the honours after three days of pushing themselves to their limits at the Commando Training Centre RM at Lympstone in Devon.

The Gibraltar Cup is the ultimate challenge for a Royal Marines Cadet – mud, fresh air and a range of tests to see what

skills have been learned and honed back on the teams' own patch.

And for the Burton team it ended a 29-year wait to lift the silverware – though they were pushed hard all the way.

Only three points separated them from Alpha Coy (South West, represented by Walsall at

their first attempt) in second place – and only 40 points (out of 480) separating all six teams, which represented the best of the 127 detachments across the UK.

Yankee Coy – South Shields from Northern Area – took third place, followed by Lima Coy (Bromley for London), Zulu Coy (Eastbourne, for Southern) and Bravo Coy (Rochdale representing North Western).

The teams started with a kit inspection and a Royal Marines Cadets general knowledge test before moving on to first aid, map reading, observation/area search, command task, judging distance and rope and river crossing skills tests on the Saturday.

Sunday morning saw an early start with the commando slide, high obstacle course, assault course, a 4x4 push and the gruelling log carry.

Cadets were marked on behaviour as well as performance during the tasks.

Burton's Detachment Commander Sgt (SCC) Sandra Sullivan was delighted with the victory.

"It's probably going to go down as one of the best weekends of my life so far," she said.

"It was phenomenal, and I could not be prouder of the eight cadets."

There was also a prize for the best section commander, which went to Bromley's Cpl Anderson.

South Shields (Yankee Coy) were pleased with their third place, especially after the problems of last year, when they lost a team member with a broken leg the day before they travelled – which meant they started with points docked, and they finished in last place.

The preparation put in by deposed champions of Eastbourne indicates the value detachments place on the competition.

"We train most Saturdays down at the unit, focusing on a particular skill set each time, such as fieldcraft," said team member Georgia.

"We also do weekends away to Crowborough and Longmore, where we sleep out in the field and practice their assault courses.

"Our training is really tough, but it's meant to be.

"We trained really hard last year and went into the cup expecting it to be even worse.

"Our training had made it seem much harder than it actually was, so that felt really good."



Pictures: James Champion



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Boston makes us feel good Marathon effort in Bahrain

ROYAL Navy Indoor Rowers braved snow and ice to line up against 2,300 competitors at the World Championships in Boston, USA.

Excellent performances by the 18-strong RN contingent in Team GB, including six top-ten finishes across the age groups and a number of personal and seasonal bests, writes Paul Winton.

The venue is notorious for its harsh dry-air environment and the consequent effect to knock up to seven seconds off expected times – even for top-class rowers.

LPT Ollie Osborne (BRNC) was both the fastest and highest-placed finisher of any Team GB rower. His fifth place in 6m 16.5s in the men's 30-39 heavyweight race was at the cost of a long recovery; he was grateful for the oxygen provided by the attendant medical staff.

Osborne stuck to his pre-race plan, briefly moving into third place with 600m to go, finishing just ahead of fast-closing Lt Cdr Jim Thomson's (Lancaster XO Desig) 6m 18.6s.

CPO Shaun Gibbs (Sultan) rowed close to a personal best to finish ninth in 6m 23.2s, recovering far more quickly than his stricken colleagues. Not even the Germans had three in the top ten – although they did have first and second places...

Four slightly older RN men took high-placed finishes in the 40-49 heavyweight, with Lt Stu Moss (Vengeance), coxed by Gibbs, in sixth place, close to a personal best with 6m 27.2s.

Both are exponents of a truncated form of warm up with the epithet 'Grip it and Rip It'. Whatever sports science suggests with respect to warming up, Moss and Gibbs both row good races with relatively short recovery times.

CPO Collin Leiba (Drake and still ex-Mr Plymouth 1992) adopted a sensible race plan for a pb by 0.3 secs to finish seventh in 6m 28.5s. Next year he will move up an age group with the chance of a higher place finish. Lt Cdr Rory West (NCHQ Northwood) came 17th in 6m 39.6s and Derek Powles (NCHQ Portsmouth) was 20th in 6m 41.6s – season's bests for both. The winner's time of 6m 2.6s was faster than the equivalent



Picture: Marjorie Roome

for the 30-39 heavyweight... and Paul Winton (MCTA) finished sixth in the men's heavyweight 55-59 in 6m 52.9s.

CPO John 'Jellyboy' Eales rowed a personal best of 6m 43.2s for a fine sixth-place finish in the men's 30-39 lightweight. His time was more than four seconds faster than he rowed as a heavyweight in 2012. Also competing at lightweight was WO2 Adrian Walker (Neptune) who finished tenth in the 40-49 race in 7m 10.4s.

Lt Maxine Ashby (BRNC) competed in the women's 40-49 lightweight and rowed a personal best of 8m 36.8s to finish 19th.

The open heavyweight categories were very competitive with a much greater number of participants.

NA(SE) Francesca Morton had worked to develop her aerobic capacity whilst deployed overseas; this enabled her to realise the potential of her natural sporting aptitude and physical strength to achieve a personal best of 7m 23.2s to finish 55th in the women's race. Her time is believed to be the fastest ever by an RN woman.

AB(CIS) Sophia Burns (Collingwood, now Dragon) also rowed a best to finish in 7m 55.2s. Both women rowed to race plan, gave their all and seemed content after extended recovery times.

The men's open heavyweight saw a 76th place in 6m 20.9s for ET(MESM) Ian Allen (Sultan); he continued his record of successively-faster race times through the season.

Lt Chris Matthews (824 NAS) was next in 6m 32.3s. Both the aforementioned benefitted from a good technique honed 'on the water'.

ET(ME) Craig Caddis (Diamond) finished in 6m 43.7s, overhauling PO(PT) McCoy Turner (Temeraire) with 600m to go as the latter, afflicted by a muscle cramp, finished in 6m 48.9s.

NA (SE) Mike Pugh (Culdrose) conducted personal research into the debilitating effects of excess lactic acid production in the latter stages of his 7m 25s on the machine.

The C2 UK monthly challenge – with three rounds of the nine left to complete – remains the post-racing-season motivating factor for a wide range of abilities among RN indoor rowers.

SIXTEEN runners from UKMCC and CTF150 took part in the 32nd annual Bahrain Team Marathon – an event which has become one of the biggest sporting and charity events in the region.

The main venue for the relay (as well as local roads and streets) was the Bahrain International Circuit, better known as the Kingdom's Formula 1 track.

This year 153 teams entered the race, representing private and public sectors, hotels, running clubs, schools and military.

Down the years the marathon has also attracted world-class athletes and international press coverage; the 2013 event saw teams from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and some all the way from Europe, pounding the tarmac.

LPT Danny Kerr organised the UK team assisted by Lt Cdr Debra Vout and CPO Steve Canney. They and the rest of the runners had to raise the BD 175 entry fee (about £290). The welfare fund of UKMCC donated £100 and the remainder was paid by way of personal contributions from the runners; the money was subsequently distributed to local charities.

Temperatures on the day of the event reached a 'cool' 35°C, so plenty of water was taken onboard by the UK team in the lead up to the race.

The logistical side of the event proved to be hard work as all 16 runners needed to be at their start point, then collected at their finish point after they had each run their leg – not an easy task with half the roads shut, 153 runners running each stage and only two vehicles. Fortunately things ran smoothly (excuse the pun) and all runners were in the right place at the right time.

Each of the 16 RN runners covered around 3km with a baton – which might seem a short distance but in the desert heat of Bahrain, this was no easy task.

Add to that the fact you are trying to run it as fast as you can for the best possible time for the team.

The RN runners posted some impressive times: LPT Danny Kerr's time was only beaten by seven runners (out of 153) and Lt Skinner posted the 17th-fastest time.

Overall, the UKMCC/CTF150 team finished in a very good 56th place out of 153 – a sterling effort considering the majority of the teams above them consisted of running clubs.

ROYAL NAVY REVIEW

'The Navy kept Britain safe...'

SAM Willis has emerged as one of the leading historians of the age of sailing warfare and his latest offering adds to his reputation.

It is based on his discovery in the British Library of a collection the Admiralty made in 1821 of the original despatches covering the major engagements in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, thus taking them out of the normal run of Admiralty records, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Thirty-eight years later, it was decided by Their Lordships that this collection be bound into a large and highly impressive commemorative volume, together with pictures of the victorious commanders put between the documents. Care was taken to mount the documents so as to preserve them. The volume was then presented to the British Museum as an exhibit demonstrating the role of the Royal Navy and sea power in general in the creation and maintenance of the British Empire.

Sadly, the Museum decided not to continue to display this piece, but lodged it in its library as 'Additional Manuscript 23207'. It was soundly and handsomely



● The mizzenmast of L'Imperial begins to fall as she clashes with British flagship HMS Superb at the Battle of San Domingo in 1806 – as painted by the legendary Nicholas Pocock

THE GROVE REVIEW

boxed, accessible, but largely forgotten, only having been cited by a few historians over the last half century (it is not quite 'previously unseen' as asserted on the dust jacket...).

The author found it when researching his excellent study of the Glorious First of June. He had the idea of basing a new work upon it, using the documents as the basis for not only an analysis of the engagements themselves, but of the importance of sea battle itself in the contemporary conflicts, both maritime and ashore.

Seven battles are covered by *In The Hour of Victory: The Royal Navy at War in the Age of Nelson* (Atlantic, £25 ISBN

978-08578-95707): Glorious First of June 1794, St Vincent 1797, Camperdown 1797, The Nile 1798, Copenhagen 1801, Trafalgar 1805 and San Domingo 1806.

For each engagement, the author puts the events into context and supplies excellent commentary on the despatches themselves, which are reproduced with little alteration.

Other relevant documents, such as casualty returns, are also reproduced, again with useful commentary.

The whole book is, in effect, an excellent compact documentary history of the major actions of the last great war against France.

The author's style is attractive and interesting and the book could be an excellent introduction to someone new to the field. It will also appeal to those who are already expert.

The approach is suitably critical. His discussion of the impact of Trafalgar is both sceptical and sophisticated; he points out that the battle did nothing to prevent Napoleon's domination of Europe for the next decade. What it did do was to prevent the French launching more major maritime campaigns.

All they could do was send out squadrons to wage economic warfare in synergy with Napoleon's blockade of Britain through the Continental System. Such a sortie led to the final battle: Duckworth's rather accidental victory at San Domingo.

Willis goes further in his conclusion and examines the role of fleet action in determining the outcome of wars. He calls them the starbursts of attrition that enabled the war to be won. They led to Wellington's 15 peninsular victories – and, it might be added, the decisive Continental campaigns of 1812-14.

The battles, however, had wider effects at home, making the nation feel more secure in a general sense. As far as the population was concerned "the Navy kept them safe; the Navy kept them free; the Navy kept them British."

The victories also created a favourable environment for trade and helped wealth creation. Willis sums it up thus: "Naval victory meant public support for the Navy

and public support translated into political support. Money was found and infrastructure improved and ships were built. The relationship was symbiotic."

Indeed – and one wishes this was still the state today, where public perceptions no longer reflect strategic realities.

I only have two quibbles with this excellent piece of work. I was surprised that the author ascribed

Nelson's rapidly developing career to ability alone.

It does not denigrate his exceptional professional skills to recognise that rather than being the son of a poor parson, his family was a vital factor in launching his career.

Anglican priests were clearly middle-ranking members of the social

elite and his mother was the sister of Capt Suckling, an officer at the heart of the administration of the Royal Navy and that 'interest' in the best sense continued a vital factor in the hero's rapid rise. It had to be; this was the 18th Century.

I was also a little sad that he missed out one of the battles in his source book, the quite large fleet-scale action in 1795, when three French ships of the line were captured off the Isle de Groix by a fleet commanded by Alexander Hood.

The trio are listed in the appendix on captured ships, but the author decided not to put in a chapter on this action. He defends himself in this decision by saying that the material was not so great as for the other actions, but Their Lordships thought the

action was worthy of comparison with the others. The action was controversial and I am sure that Sam Willis would have provided an excellent and in depth contextual analysis. What a pity!

As a specialist on the later periods of naval history, I think Sam Willis makes a little too much of the impact of technological development on naval warfare in the 19th Century.

His touch post-1815 is rather less sure than that in his own period. Technology was indeed transformed but it was precisely the period on which he is a leading expert that provided the experience that drove the development of sea power thinking and maritime strategy in the new battlefleet age.

This began about 1890 when steamers at last approached the old ships of the line in range, sea-keeping and ability to damage other ships at sea with gunfire. It really was a case of 'back to the future'.

The key importance of this 'classical period' makes Sam Willis' brilliant new book and its many insights even more important.

It should be on the shelves of not only the large number of people interested in the history of the Nelsonic age, but everyone with an interest in navies of any period. For the true enthusiast a two-volume deluxe 'exclusive special edition' is promised for September; details are available from www.atlantic-books.co.uk.

The 'ordinary' 396-page volume is handsome enough, however. There is an ebook and a paperback edition is also listed but I recommend getting the normal hardback. This great book deserves proper appreciation.

Are you ready for Twenty20 2013?

THERE are little more than two months to one of the key dates in the **cricketing** calendar: the Twenty20 showdown with the RAF and Army at Lord's on June 18.

Last month we reported how former England captain Mike Gatting had been putting the Navy's batsmen through their paces in the nets of the Ageas Bowl (formerly the Rose Bowl) – but that was just scratching the surface of what the RNCC have already done and, indeed, plan for this year, *writes Lt John Stephenson*.

Under the watchful eye of RNCC Coach – and former captain of RN cricket – Paul 'Buzzers' Barsby (ex WO1) this year's hopefuls have already been steeling themselves for the challenges of the summer and their Service rivals.

The RN will join battle with their RAF and Army counterparts on four occasions this year: the Ladies, U25s, the Twenty20, and main 50-over Inter-Service competition.

Keen to improve on last year's relative success, where the full representative side came second in the senior competitions, Buzzers has already had those surviving members of the 2012 squad training hard.

And he will need to. The season breaks down neatly into three parts. May's focus is on the U25 squad, culminating with their Inter-Service competition at the end of that month; June sees the senior squad – with the option of the successful U25 team members – assemble and prepare for that all-important date at Lord's, while

July brings a switch back to the 50-over format of the game, with the main Inter-Service contest at Burnaby Road in Portsmouth on August 6-8.

With this much cricket it's fortunate that Buzzers has a clutch of freshly-qualified coaches to help him harness the potential that is found.

Warm-up fixtures and training days abound as the teams hone their skills toward their competitions. High-profile fixtures are spread across the UK and include The Royal Household in the grounds of Windsor Castle, the British Police in Derby, and Wiltshire in Corsham.

Once again they will be led on the field by ET(WE) Matt Thompson of HMS Ambush, and Lt John Stephenson (MOD Abbeywood).

"No one is a shoo-in into the team – there are 11 places up for grabs as the season begins" says Matt.

John adds: "A two-day training camp is planned for Thursday May 2 and Friday 3. All cricketers who want a shot at getting into that squad for Lord's and our other Inter-Service competitions, come along to Burnaby Road and throw your hat in the ring for selection."

"If we don't know about you, we can't pick you – last year's squad was mostly junior rates which emphasises the fact that the squad is picked on your ability not your rank or rate."

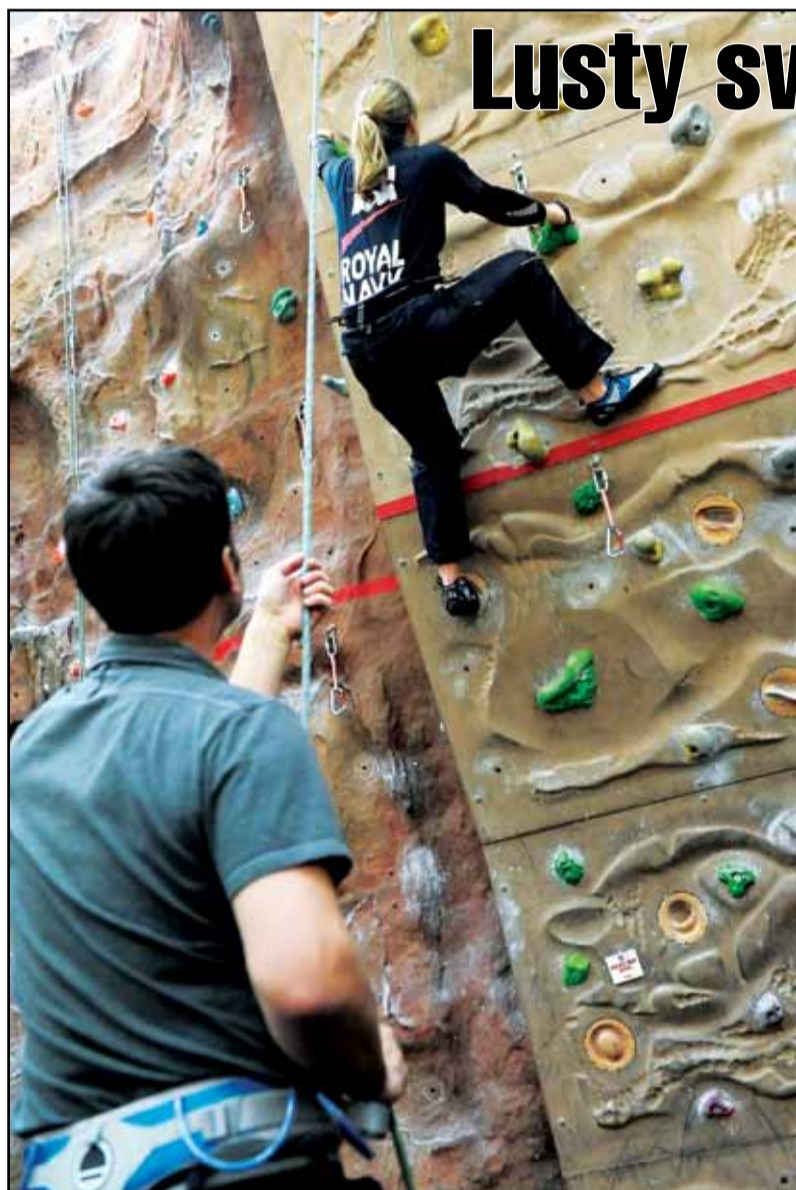
For more details about the training camp, contact John at john.stephenson282@mod.uk.



● The RN team make use of Hampshire CC's impressive indoor facilities

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby, FRPU East

Lusty swept by AT bug U23s share trophy



WHAT do two in every five members of the ship's company of HMS Illustrious have in common?

That's right, they all left the carrier behind and headed into the Scottish wilds for some **adventurous training** while Lusty herself was at the Glen Mallan ammunition jetty on Loch Long.

Around 260 ship's company were able to enjoy AT of some form or another.

Sixty personnel – from AB to commander rank – were able to achieve a four-day package in the Cairngorms with activities including winter climbing, ski touring and mountaineering.

During the expedition, the team advanced their mountaineering skills and clocked up plenty of walking in the snow and ice. The team's morale increased when crampons and ice axes were added to the mix, making the climbs much more interesting.

The teaching style was mainly based around 'on the job learning', with specific skills covering distinct serials, such as scaling verticals with and without crampons and arrest procedures in the event of a fall.

Four one-day packages were also offered, including skiing, mountain biking, walking and whitewater rafting.

OC Matthew Milsom was one of five cadets from BRNC Dartmouth who took the opportunity to take on the Carron Valley north of Glasgow on mountain bikes.

"This is one of the best tracks around and is suited to all styles of riding whether you are a novice, or experienced rider," said Matthew.

"The entire course is on man-made tracks where parts were only as wide as the tyres going over them which added extra danger to the day and brought people out of their comfort zones when at high speed. However, this is what adventurous training is about, releasing yourself from the comfort of your everyday routines."

Jase Wallace, Lusty's CPOPT, said although AT wasn't "everyone's cup of tea", it had huge benefits for anyone in the military.

"From getting into the habit of preparing and checking your kit for the day, or sorting your personal admin that is essential when out in the snow-covered mountains in extreme conditions," he added.

"AT gives people the opportunity to be in a situation that is not an exercise; it is real life. It makes people realise how important it is to rely on each other, that everyone has an important role to play."

● OC Emma Ryde makes use of the indoor climbing wall at Faslane, assisted by POAET Nick Searle.

Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan, HMS Illustrious

Continued from page 40

RN 2-0 RAF

After that thrilling draw, the RN hosted the RAF at Burnaby Road, knowing that they would lift the Inter-Service trophy if they could out-score the Army's 2-0 triumph over the Air Force.

Earlier RN pressure from both open play and set pieces should have led to a commanding lead within 15 minutes but some outstanding play from the RAF keeper kept the Navy at bay.

The breakthrough came after the RAF handled in their own area and Mne Ross Hoyland calmly slotted home the resulting penalty for a 1-0 lead.

RN pressure continued and the Air Force were pinned back in their own half for prolonged periods with the Navy continuing to trouble them.

A free kick mid-way inside the RAF half gave NA Hugh Howlett the chance to deliver a well-driven cross into the danger area. A combination of clever movement and a deceptive bounce meant the ball looped over the opposition keeper and the RN closed out the first half 2-0 up.

The RAF made some changes at the break and were unlucky not to get a goal back within two minutes of the restart, striking the base of the RN post and further testing the keeper with a lofted attempt that Mne Little managed to pull out from under the bar.

The Navy continued to push for the third goal after a serious injury to ET Phillips forced a re-shuffle of the line-up but the goal would not come and the game finished with the RN matching the Army score against the RAF – which meant sharing the IS trophy.

Middlesex 2-3 RN 1st XI

The Middlesex Southern Counties Championship men's team entertained a lively Royal Navy side at AFC Hayes

The RN took the lead on 21 minutes through Cpl Dave Carns' (CTCRM) glancing header from CPO Andy Todd's (HMS Kent) cross. They doubled their lead after half an hour when CPO Phil Archbold's (Nelson) centre was headed home by Todd.

Middlesex were fortunate when LAET Tom Ardley (Heron), reduced the arrears by heading past his own keeper.

The RN twice went close to restoring their two-goal advantage during the five minutes leading up to the interval.

Todd was tripped just outside the penalty area and the free kick by ET Jacko Jackson (Montrose) hit the crossbar.

Shortly afterwards Middlesex keeper Kieron Jimmy saved from LPT Steve Young (PJHQ), diving to his right to ensure the RN went in at the break only 2-1 up.

Middlesex put the RN defence under pressure in the early stages of the second half and were near to scoring when Navy keeper POPT Matt Short (Nelson) turned a free kick from Michael Murray around his post.

In the 53rd minute, Mne Liam Campbell (43 Cdo) restored the Navy's two-goal lead by converting a pass from LPT Lee Foxhall (HMS Collingwood). Lee then had a scoring chance of his own, but headed wide.

With five minutes left, Middlesex were awarded a penalty for a trip and Michael Murray netted with aplomb.

Middlesex pressed for an equaliser but the visitors' defence held firm.

The force is strong with the Thai fighters



BUILDING on the success of the past six years, a team of three fighters from the RN Muay Thai Association entered an inter-club bout at Portsmouth's Gym01.

AB(WS)Lewis Diamond, LS(WS)Chris Harrison and AB(WS)Stuart Foulds, rose to the challenge after only ten days' notice, under the guidance of the Royal Navy instructor Kru Yai Gary Gregory, *writes Chris*.

Lewis was up first – after only two months' training and the first time in any competition. He was matched with a fighter from Kenshiro Muay Thai.

Muay Thai – also known as Thai boxing – is normally fought in a boxing ring, but the other team opted for a cage bout and so the stage for the opening fight was set.

Showing great control and discipline throughout the three rounds, Lewis out-matched his opponent with great low kicks and boxing work.

After two rounds and with his opponent reluctant to come close, Lewis went on the hunt and took the fight to his opponent, finishing strong with knees in the clinch. A decisive win on his first bout.

Chris stood to and entered the ring against a fighter from Gym01. Another first timer in competition, after a year's training, Chris took control of the ring immediately.

His opponent – six or seven inches taller – came on strong, entering the clinch on a few occasions.

Showing great courage and thinking sensibly throughout the bout, Chris fought strongly and held ground in good order.

In the third and final round Chris changed his style

to 'navarach' (military Muay Thai) and broke his opponent, taking him down to the ground. The bout ended at the bell with another win.

Finally Stuart entered the ring. With some previous experience, he was fighting an opponent from Graham's Academy – another local fighter.

After a mad start, with his opponent rushing out to get involved, Stuart held his ground and turned the fight instantly with sensible knee work in the clinch and good kicks.

The fight continued after a quick adjustment to the safety equipment and almost instantly Stuart caught his opponent with a sharp cross that rocked him. A quick count and the fight continued to the bell.

Coming out in the second round, Stuart took his opponent down with a great sweep; it was only a matter of time.

The next exchange ended the fight after Stuart's right cross hit home. A second-round TKO to finish the day.

The RN Muay Thai Association has been running since 2007 and is currently a fully-approved status sport in the RN and RM. It's dedicated to teaching authentic Muay Thai to all Service personnel, from beginners to experienced fighters.

Traditional classes are held at MWS Collingwood on Monday evenings, in the jujitsu dojo between 6 and 8pm.

Boxing/sport classes are held at Stony Lane Gym in Portsmouth Naval Base on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 6 and 8pm.

New tennis facilities

THE Navy is updating its outdoor tennis courts in Burnaby Road and has teamed up with the Portsmouth Tennis Academy (PTA) to refurbish the adjacent indoor centre – adding a new roof, car park, floodlighting and completely overhauled changing facilities in the heart of the city.

In a major boost for the RN Lawn Tennis Association (RNLTA), Navy Funding was authorised for the new roof over the four indoor courts and further re-modelling of the facilities.

“We’re getting a new car park, re-landscaping around the outdoor grass courts (three of which have been converted to floodlit AstroTurf), replacement indoor court lighting and, most significantly, we found a contractor to make the newly designed roof which will be in place in time for the squad training before this year’s Inter-Service B Tournament,” said Cdr Nigel Bowen, captain of the RN men’s team.

Chairman of the RNLTA, Cdr Sean Winkle, says beyond improving facilities for Navy tennis players of all standards, the goal is “to get away from the perception that tennis is an elitist sport and open up the facilities for all players regardless of standard.”

The coach of the RN men and director/head coach of the PTA, Kevin Baker, added: “We’ll be opening again for business in mid-April after the extensive rebuild and I am particularly proud that we’ve opened up tennis for all in our inclusive community programme – while being fully supportive of the RN’s resurgent success in tennis.”

“With players from three years old enjoying the mini court to those well into their 70s still playing, we’ve also had over 400 come through the academy’s coaching programmes, including many children from Service families. Our success is widely known across the tennis community and is spread by word of mouth across the city and beyond.”

An official opening ceremony will be held on Friday May 3.

Argyll triumph in Dakar

GOLFERS from HMS Argyll pitted their talents against the RAF when the ship visited Dakar.

Golf de Dakar, a challenging 18 holes on the outskirts of the city, was the venue and although the course had a championship layout from its heyday in 2003, it had suffered from a lack of TLC – and had been reduced to a nine-hole course due to flooding.

Argyll’s golf captain, CPO Chris O’Gorman, assisted by the ship’s EWO and golf secretary WO Al Davison quickly agreed the format with their RAF counterparts and play began.

Said Chris: “The course looked amazing but difficult and I was worried about the amount of sand involved.”

A lack of grass on the fairways made second shots interesting and the standard rule was to tee the ball up on the fairway, reducing the risk of damaging a club striking stones on the ground.

As the match progressed it soon became evident the RAF were as determined to win as Argyll and the game settled into a nip-and-tuck affair with a lot of halves on the front nine.

The back nine (a replay of the front nine) again proved tight but with the closing holes approaching, Argyll’s players rallied and won through on the 18th: a 3-1 victory.

“With the heat and the pressure of today’s match, it was anyone’s to win or lose, but overall a great game to play in,” said Al.

The overall individual winner was Lt Cdr Simon Cox, Argyll’s ops officer, with an amazing 42 stableford points, earning him the ‘Bandit’ prize and a cut in handicaps for future events.



You can't beat a bit of Lusty...

PO KEVIN ‘Just Kev’ Helm takes aim in the hangar of HMS Illustrious in what may be the first major darts championship at sea in the Royal Navy, certainly in recent years.

The event, organised by Sub Lt Dale ‘Frankie’ Howard, attracted 37 entries in a hard fought competition. Fortunately, the benign sea state in the Irish Sea during the contest ensured that no Sea King helicopters in the hangar were damaged by errant darts.

The event culminated in a dart-for-dart clash between the number one seed ET(WE) Callum ‘The Avatar’ Toft and PO Helm who was making his debut to the Illustrious oche.

Kevin proved just too consistent in hitting the doubles, eventually taking the inaugural title three games to one.

Super. Smashing. Great. “Considering the difficulty we have at sea in practising the essential skills for this sport, the standard was remarkably high,” said Frankie.

“The final attracted well over 100 spectators and the atmosphere was tremendous.”

The HMS Illustrious darts trophy, made by CPOET(ME) Nigel Pead, will next be fought for in January 2014, when Frankie hopes to return to the carrier for his first complement job following promotion to sub lieutenant in order to compete.

When not hosting darts tournaments, the carrier is conducting aviation training – currently the Jungle fliers of 848 Naval Air Squadron and their Sea Kings are aboard – in the Irish Sea and around western Scotland.

Now admit it: you were humming the *Bullseye* theme while reading this... Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones, HMS Illustrious

Narrow win in Dublin U23s share trophy

ON A bitterly-cold afternoon on the south bank of the Liffey, the Royal Navy Rugby Union 1st XV faced the Irish Defence Forces (IDF) for their annual fixture.

There was a bright start by the Irish who were spurred on after last year’s heavy defeat and were looking for their fourth win in 12 fixtures against the RN, writes Maj Steve Melbourne, RNRU.

Indeed, the hosts earned two early penalties – but neither was converted.

The Navy got back into the game and put the Irish scrum under pressure. A subsequent penalty saw POAET Dave Pascoe (Culdrose) slot over the lead after quarter of an hour.

Continued pressure from the RN resulted in another penalty; this time the kick was pushed into the corner and a scrum followed the line-out. Early dominance led to a try by No8 LET(WESM) Ian Cooper (Collingwood).

Uncharacteristic missed tackles and mistakes by the Navy put them under pressure – and meant they conceded penalties.

This time the Irish put the ball in the corner and, after sustained pressure from the line-out and a scrum, their No8, Capt Rob McCann, stretched over the line for a try; the conversion brought the IDF within one point of the Navy at 7-8.

The final minute of the first period witnessed the best play of the game by the RN.

After turn-over ball, a clear line break by LNA(AH) Ben Priddey (Culdrose), supported by the John Walton ‘man of the match’ Mne Dom Taylor (42 Cdo), who checked his run, threw an excellent long ball out to support, putting LAET Ollie James (RNAS Yeovilton) over in the corner for a half time lead of 13-7.

The second period opened with a fired-up Irish team putting the RN under pressure, dominating the scrum and making life very difficult when it came to gaining any momentum or increasing the tempo of the game as they were starved of possession.

Several rearguard efforts stopped the IDF crossing the line and when they did the Navy defence held them up.

A single penalty after 60 minutes was the IDF’s only success and it was not until the final kick of the game that the Navy stretched their lead to 16-10, the final score.

“The Irish made it very difficult



for us to get any pace in to our game, we gave away possession too easily and we struggled to dominate the breakdown area,” said RN head coach POAET Owen Salmon.

“It will be a lesson for our guys who have not played in Ireland before and I think the IDF can feel a little unlucky they did not come away with a home victory.”

Some new players lined up for the RN women against a very-well-drilled Trojans RFC (pictured above). The game started badly for the Navy; the strong-running Trojans backs scored a try within the first minute.

Having got over that initial shock the RN team, captained by Lt Charlotte Fredrickson (COMUKMARFOR), put that setback behind them and started to play some decent rugby. Although under pressure at the scrum, Lt Paula Bennett-Smith (NATO Northwood) worked hard to continually get over the gain line, putting in the hard yards in tight rucking phase play.

The RN maintained possession well but despite asking questions of the Trojans’ defence could not make an incisive break.

The Trojans’ superiority at the set piece told in the 16th minute as their competent back line showed good handling skills to score an unconverted try for a 10-0 lead.

Navy heads did not drop however; through NAAH Caroline Penrose (Culdrose) and LAET Pam Williams (702 NAS) they continued to attack close to the fringe defence and, with the support of the pack, continued to drive the Trojan’s defence back, gaining penalties in the process.

Quick taps were an effective weapon employed by ‘man of the match’ Logs Lauren Morton (Nelson) as she looked to speed up

the pace of the game by running into the heart of the Trojan pack, always making in-roads to get over the gain line. Morton was rewarded for her efforts and scored a very good try after 30 minutes to make the score 5-10 at the break.

The beginning of the second half saw an attritional battle up front with neither pack giving an inch. Strong defence by both sides – but particularly good tackling by LAET Emma Swinton (Collingwood) – ensured the stalemate continued.

There was excellent work by LStd Helen Ing (DNPERS PDT) at full-back as she made covering tackles. With the ball in hand her first instinct was always to run and find space.

The Trojans continued to make rolling subs and their straight running backs conjured up a well-worked (converted) try after 70 minutes for a 17-5 lead.

The brutal nature of the close-quarter exchanges meant Bennett-Smith was replaced, suffering an injury, by Lt Helen Stevenson (Collingwood), who made an immediate impact with her play at the base of the scrum, work at the breakdown and with ball in hand.

Coach PO(MA) Chris Jones (Nelson) applauded the women’s efforts, particularly in defence: “The Trojans had to work very hard for their victory and this now sets the Navy Women up for a very challenging fixture against the Marine Nationale Femminines.”

That clash takes place in Portsmouth on Wednesday April 3 at 2.30pm, followed by ‘Le crunch’ – the showdown between the respective 1st XV’s of Europe’s two greatest navies. The clash to decide the home of the Babcock Trophy for the next 12 months begins at 6pm.

Army U23 3-3 RN U23

IN the opening fixture of the U23 2013 Inter-Service championships, the Senior Service came out of the blocks at Aldershot flying – AET Danny Brookwell (854 NAS) rattled the woodwork after just 12 seconds.

That set the scene for the opening 30 minutes, with the RN working well through the central positions as a result of some intelligent play from the midfield trio of Mne Ross Hoyland, Martin Finneron and Sam Logan (all from 42 CDO RM).

The pressure eventually paid off with a well-crafted goal by Mne Spencer Clark (42 Cdo) giving the RN a deserved lead.

To their credit the Army came straight back at the Navy and when the ball broke loose in the box from a set piece Mne Karl Little (CLR) was beaten in the RN goal; 1-1 at halftime.

The Army regrouped and came at the Navy straight from the off in the second half.

A turn-over of possession in midfield allowed the Army to apply pressure and they were first to react to a ball lofted into the

Navy’s 18-yard box for a 2-1 lead.

A well-crafted delivery from a set piece from Wtr Ross Beech (Collingwood) allowed ET Martin Phillips (HMS Duncan) to challenge the Army centre-half and the score was even at 2-2.

The opposition attempted to respond and a commanding performance by the RN central defensive pairing of LS Steve Harding (Fleet Ops) and NA Hugh Howlett (824 NAS) ensured the Navy maintained control of the game.

With under ten minutes left to play, the Navy made the breakthrough thanks to a positive run from Mne Finneron who shot from range and thanks to a deflection the RN took the lead 2-3.

The Army showed their renowned fighting spirit, never giving up.

In the third minute of injury time, a set piece lofted speculatively by the Army keeper into the RN 18-yard box fell kindly for the Army captain, who found the space he needed to lash in the equaliser – Final score 3-3.

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ONSIDE with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

ARMY VS NAVY
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